

## The Mafia 231

### Chapter 231 Last Day in the Alpine Woodpecker Forest (3)

When Vicente appeared where 16 beasts were fighting each other or the four exhausted humans in the area, he immediately noticed that Rory wasn't there.

Faced with this situation, Vice didn't immediately worry about what might have happened to some of his men. Seeing that four of his soldiers were wounded and out of ammunition but also surrounded by enemies, he immediately distorted the electric and magnetic fields in the area.

As he did so, the insects facing the woodpeckers and the insects surrounding the men of the Mazzanti family realized that something was wrong.

Beasts were beings with extraordinary sensorial abilities. They could detect physical or magical changes in their surroundings much more easily than humans.

When a woodpecker, about 0.9 meters tall, with black feathers over most of its body and a brightly colored head, tried to pierce the armor of one of the ants nearby, it missed the move and felt something messing with its senses.

At the same time, one of the snake-like insects about to wrap itself around one level 1 human felt the distance between it and its target become infinite.

As it was about to cover the human, crushing him and poisoning him simultaneously, the space in front of it distorted, and the poison coming out of its many legs missed its target and fell to the ground.

"Boss!"

"We're saved!"

The four men realized that only Vicente could be behind the strange phenomena around them, and they shouted with joy as they realized that they might not die.

They had been surrounded by these insects a few minutes ago when the peace of the last two hours, during which one of them had absorbed his second pentagram, ended, and they became desperate.

Low on ammunition, they thought they were about to die.

Fortunately for them, the woodpeckers and insects of this mountainous region were ancient enemies. When they encountered them almost simultaneously, the groups of insects and woodpeckers were much more focused on destroying each other than on dealing with these humans!

If the group of humans who had entered this underground area that night had been able to perceive the insects' plans, it wouldn't have been the woodpeckers who ignored this obvious fact. As much more territorial creatures than humans, woodpeckers would obviously know the significance of these tunnels so close to their main outpost!

When they met in that chamber, there was no way one side could ignore the other just because of the presence of humans!

But even though they didn't have to face all those beasts, Vicente's men still suffered from the attacks of the most numerous insects in the last moments.

After seeing their leader there, their situation changed from desperate to hopeful.

While Vicente was drawing the attention of the 2nd stage beasts, Vicente's men suddenly heard several shots coming from the same direction.

Bang!

Even though they were used to the noise and effects of Vicente's weapons, the four wounded men were taken by surprise by the gunfire.

Looking at the targets of the shots, they saw a strange scene unfolding in front of them.

They didn't see the movement of the bullets because they didn't have the visual skills to follow a shot faster than the speed of sound. However, when they looked at the insects hit, the four men immediately saw uncommon consequences appear on the targets of those bullets.

Even though they were level 5 beasts and Vicente's men's bullets weren't strong enough to penetrate their bodies, they still caused damage and made the beasts grunt in pain.

One of the woodpeckers was hit in the head and felt a twinge in its neck. But after the bullet stopped at its head, blue lightning suddenly appeared around its body, electrocuting it.

Some of the other beasts suffered the same, but that wasn't the only special phenomenon.

One of the hit ants also didn't have its natural armor pierced. But after being hit by a shot from one of Vicente's men, a magnetic pulse damaged its geographic orientation, making it even more vulnerable to Vice's powers.

The four men were excited to receive new ammunition and saw the change in their surroundings with a gleam in their eyes.

"Watch out, boss!" One of them shouted as he saw two woodpeckers manage to flap their wings and fly toward Vicente. At the same time, a scorpion-like insect with a bright purple tail launched a spear-sized stinger at Vice's chest.

'Attacking me?'

Vicente saw it and continued to float in the air, extending his arms as he manipulated the field lines around him.

To everyone in the chamber, he merely positioned his arms 180 degrees from each other, nothing more.

But as his two pentagrams appeared around his body, Vice could clearly see the field lines around him forming what looked like a sphere.

The enemies were about to hit him when all the men in the area looked at him with a bit of fear. But before anything happened, the stinger and the two woodpeckers found a powerful barrier in their path.

The barrier slowed their movements more and more as they approached Vicente and began to push them in the opposite direction, like a rubber band.

Vicente smiled behind his mask as he saw the three practically stop in mid-air in front of him.

"Now you come back." He muttered as each of them was thrown in the opposite direction.

However, Vicente used his powers to accelerate the three, giving them three times the speed they had used to approach him.

Boom!

When the woodpeckers hit the floor of that chamber, they didn't stand a chance, breaking their necks and leaving small craters in the area.

At the same time, the scorpion's sting came back at it, piercing its body mercilessly.

"Hm, I like this power." Vicente clenched his fists as he floated in the air.

But even he had his limits, and before he reached his exhaustion, he looked at the frightened beasts around him and made his last move.

Electromagnetic Pulse!

Flashes of lightning appeared throughout the chamber while the beasts still alive were fried by Vicente's spell, unable to defend themselves while their electromagnetic fields were altered by it.

With such a move, all the enemies in the area died!

"Wow! Boss, that's the power a yellow pentagram gives to Acolytes?" One of the less injured men in the chamber asked aloud.

"Don't waste your breath being curious." Vicente descended from where he was, no longer using most of his abilities but still keeping an eye on his surroundings. "Help your companions. It's time to leave!"

"Boss, I don't know if you already know the situation of the rest of us. But when we stayed behind to get in the way of the enemies, we split up to get in the way of those chasing us. Our group is down to four, but it's not because the rest of us are dead... Maybe."

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"So you separated from the others..." One of the soldiers from the group that had returned to this area with Vicente said with a sigh of relief.

That meant there was still a chance that the deputy and the rest of the group were still alive!

"Sigh! Good! I don't know what I'd do if I had to go home without some of those guys."

"But I'm surprised you got a new pentagram, Cole. When did that happen?" One of the men asked the strongest of the four Acolytes who had just been rescued.

Cole replied as two comrades helped him. "I was lucky enough to find an insect compatible with me while we were hiding from the woodpeckers. It was a level 4 insect with an orange pentagram. I used its distraction and killed it with a single shot.

Upon hearing it, others commented. "It seems we can kill magical beings with our weapons and conquer pentagrams like when we use our skills."

Ever since they had started their hunt, their group had had this doubt about using their weapons in the hunt. As far as they knew, the chances of success in absorbing pentagrams increased when one killed their targets with their skills.

Therefore, Vicente's men had avoided using their weapons to kill their targets these days.

However, that soldier had tested it himself earlier.

"It seems that when we use our mana on the bullets in our weapons, we get the same result as when we use our skills. I thought it would take a while to absorb my pentagram, but in less than an hour, I managed to complete the absorption process." Cole said.

Vicente heard it and spoke. "That is good. We'll pass this on to the rest of the family when we leave this area. In the meantime, we have no more time to talk. Time to get to Rory's group."

"We have no idea how to find the deputy in this maze, boss." One of the wounded men said, eager to leave this dark network of tunnels that seemed to have no end.

As for him and the other three, they had barely escaped from the woodpeckers, as even the rulers of this region didn't know about the complex network of tunnels the insects had secretly built in the area.

"Don't worry. I know where to go." Vicente expressed before he ordered his men. "Distribute some of the ammunition I gave you earlier with them."

Then, Vicente threw the men some resources with free mana, food items that had a lower recovery performance than potions but were useful when one was without those higher-level resources.

They set off, again cautiously marching as Vicente led the way, scanning their surroundings and slowly recovering.

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A few minutes after rescuing the group of four soldiers from the Mazzanti family, Vicente noticed a disturbance in the surrounding mana that made him uneasy.

Feeling the magical mark of the 3rd stage woodpecker in the same direction where he thought he might find Rory, he rushed ahead of his men in a cold sweat.

Rory wasn't just one of his soldiers. He was his best friend, the one Vicente trusted most in Polaris Realm. He was someone Vicente was willing to make sacrifices to help.

Concerned about Rory's situation, Vice hurried ahead of his group.

"We're a minute away from where the 3rd stage woodpecker might be acting right now. Keep moving forward. I'll go ahead and help our companions." He said as he used his ability to fly on a metal plate resembling a skateboard.

"Shit! I hope the deputy's group has already left the area!" One of the men said as they increased their speed.

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Meanwhile, further ahead of Vice and his men, the 3rd stage woodpecker had finally gotten rid of the strongest insects in the group behind the construction of these tunnels.

It had followed the mana signal of the yellow pentagram for a while. Still, after Vicente's body had absorbed such an essence, it had lost the signal and was left without a path to follow.

That had led it into the labyrinth of tunnels of the insects' enemies of its tribe, where it had met the enemy leaders and fought for a long time.

It won, but when it was wounded and alone, it felt the aura of one of the humans who had attacked its tribe early.

Following its instincts, it reached the chamber where it encountered three armed humans and a young level 1 Acolyte who had just absorbed his second pentagram.

Seeing part of the group of thieves that robbed its treasure, the woodpecker, who was pretty bad at the moment due to the many feathers it had lost that night and the blood dripping from various parts of its body, attacked the strongest one there without thinking too much.

Like an instinctive creature, its main impulse was to eliminate those lowly Acolytes who dared to act against it!

Sensing someone quickly approaching him and his men, Rory moved the mana through his body, flooding his Magic Gem.

'Fuck! I will need all of myself right after I absorb my second pentagram!' The young redhead thought to himself as he watched the bird fly furiously towards him, its beak as sharp as a sword aimed at his heart.

He didn't hesitate to combine the power of his two pentagrams and form his strongest move right after finishing his meditation.

Fire Aura!

The two pentagrams glowed around Rory, causing orange flames to appear around his body, completely covering him as he jumped toward the woodpecker.

He also used his abilities separately, a possibility for magicians.

Pentagrams gave abilities to their users. However, these abilities could influence each other and create new powers, such as the manipulation of electromagnetic fields that Vice was currently capable of.

However, each pentagram could be used either to create a unique phenomenon caused by more than one ability at the same time or to use both abilities separately.

In short, it was possible to use the ability of the first and second pentagrams and even mix the two abilities simultaneously.

That wasn't easy and required a lot of energy from the magician. But it was mainly possible for people with superior talents.

Aware of the disadvantages, Rory followed the plan anyway because using all of his abilities at once could give magicians like him much more temporary power than they could handle in normal situations.

He made explosions appear near the wounds of the 3rd stage bird while he was covered in flames before using his second ability separately.

Heat Manipulation!

He clasped one of his hands in the bird's body direction, instantly raising the woodpecker's internal temperature by a few dozen degrees Celsius.

"Go to hell, you bastard!" He shouted something he had learned from Vicente as he attacked with all his might.

### Chapter 233 Apprehension on the Run

As its entire body temperature rose while being attacked on multiple fronts by explosions on its wounds, the 3rd stage woodpecker opened its beak in pain, temporarily affected.

Even though its mana and characteristics were far above those of a level 1 Acolyte like Rory, the bird's injuries and underestimation of its opponent caused it to scream in pain, revealing its plight to those around it.

But Rory's movement was far from enough to stop the 3rd stage woodpecker's attack, let alone endanger the beast's life!

The woodpecker continued on its way to Rory's chest, glaring furiously at its target now that it had seen a bit of the human's abilities.

Bang!

The three men next to Rory fired the last bullets in their guns at the wounds on the relatively large body near them.

These were bullets that could kill the bodies of level 3 Acolyte humans. However, even though the woodpecker hit by those bullets was far superior to humans of that level, it didn't mean it wouldn't feel pain from being wounded even more by those bullets.

Under normal circumstances, the woodpecker wouldn't even have its skin pierced by such bullets. But with open wounds all over its body, it was defenseless against the shots fired by the men in the area.

Even though the bullets that hit it were not lethal, they could cause it as much pain as a superficial blade cut on the body of an ordinary person on Earth.

Would a superficial cut kill someone? Hardly. But even someone with a strong mentality might have trouble fighting with several such wounds on their body.

Suffering a dozen more wounds in the face of Rory's men, the woodpecker was even more enraged when it was about to hit its target.

If it could speak, then it would say aloud that it would slowly kill everyone there while promising to eliminate all humans who got in its way from that night on.

But it couldn't speak and acted against Rory, trying to pierce the chest of the young man in flames in front of it.

Rory jumped back in the face of the enemy, but he didn't have much space.

Even with the flames around his body, he knew he would be in trouble if the opponent hit him.

'Shit! I'm screwed!' He lamented as he felt the frustration of having nothing left to use against an opponent who had put up with the best he could do.

"Aaaaaagh!"

Rory opened his mouth as the long, sharp beak of the 3rd stage woodpecker hit his body.

The flame aura surrounding his body helped him greatly, burning the woodpecker's beak so badly that the creature missed his heart and hit his left lung.

Still, Rory's chest was pierced with ease, and he screamed in pain as he felt the bird collide with him against one of the chamber walls.

"Help the deputy!"

The three men dropped their weapons and let their pentagrams appear around their bodies as they moved to help Rory.

As they cast their skills or spells, the men's eyes momentarily widened as they saw the woodpecker strangely stop attacking Rory and look in their direction.

'Huh? Did we get its attention?'

'Maybe we've become stronger than...'

One of them was thinking with a smile when the woodpecker suddenly dropped Rory's wounded body against one of the chamber's walls and flew towards the men, scaring them considerably.

Just as they were about to regret what they had done, the three level 1 Acolytes saw a person appear above them, floating on a metal plate.

Vicente ignored his men as he entered the area, using his two skills simultaneously against the woodpecker he had spotted from afar, using more than 90% of the mana in his body.

"Get the fuck out!"

He did the same as he had done earlier when he was attacked by two woodpeckers and the sting of a scorpion, using the field lines around him to drive his enemy away.

The woodpecker was powerful, but its intelligence was far behind that of humans like Vicente.

Its instincts would normally help it in times like this one. Yet, tired and with many wounds on its body, it fell into Vicente's trap, feeling the same way some of its tribe members had felt earlier.

Instead of hitting its new target, it was thrown in the opposite direction of Vicente while several shots were fired in its direction.

Bang! Bang!

Vicente didn't want to waste time and yelled in the middle of the woodpecker's uncontrolled flight. "Quick, get your deputy. We're running away now!!!"

Vicente then made a series of hand signals and stopped in front of the tunnel he had used to reach this chamber.

"Vice!" Rory shouted as he saw his friend standing, smiling, even in pain, bleeding from his left chest.

But that was all that was said between them. Following Vicente's orders, the less injured men quickly grabbed Rory and started running toward the tunnel where Vicente stood at the entrance.

As he watched the last of his men pass by and the 3rd stage woodpecker stagger dozens of feet ahead after hitting a wall and then the ground, Vicente used the rest of what he had on a spell.

Concentrating the mana in his hands, he struck the ground with his right palm, instantly making the surrounding ground tremble as the walls of this tunnel closed in on him.

"Run!" He shouted as he ran in the direction that led to the insects' home. At the same time, the woodpecker noticed its enemies fleeing and jumped into the air to fly at high speed towards them.

As it flew toward the tunnel, the woodpecker saw the space in front of it narrow, with the walls of the tunnel moving toward the center of it, the radius of the tunnel reducing with each breath.

Rory was being carried, so he watched as Vicente, the last of his team, ran as the tunnel closed.

'Damn it! Hurry up!' He saw the woodpecker getting closer and closer to Vicente and was worried that his friend would be caught by the woodpecker or crushed by the tunnel's walls.

Just as Vicente was about to be crushed by the tunnel, he slid down it while Rory saw the walls of the tunnel closing in on the woodpecker's body, inches from reaching his friend.

Their escape had been pushed to the limit!

But would it be enough for them to escape without any more problems?

Chapter 234 Mission Completed?

"Vicente, you bastard! You almost got yourself killed!" Rory shouted with a smile on his face, sighing when he saw his friend long after they had reached a new chamber where they were no longer in danger of being crushed by their leader's spell.

Vicente looked back and sighed, seeing how his group had acted on the brink and narrowly escaped suffering at the hands of his own move or that woodpecker.

"A 3rd stage beast is truly powerful. Even with so many wounds on its body, exhausted, almost at its limit, it still almost reached us." Vicente commented. "Sigh, my bad, folks. I had to use what I had. But it was worth the risk. We're safe for now."

"Are we really?" Rory asked him as he made an ugly expression and looked at the darkened surroundings.

"This wall will hold it for a few minutes. Beyond that, I can't guarantee anything. Even if it's not easy to escape being buried, it is a Mage... It will surely escape sooner or later." Vicente said.

"So what do we do?" One of the level 2 Acolytes there asked, eager to leave the area and return to Millfall.

Rory picked up a recovery potion and threw it in Vicente's direction. "Drink up. You can get us safely out of this underground area. When we reach the surface, we'll be able to follow the path we took to get here. I think we'll be able to escape in relative safety."

Everyone looked at Rory, realizing he wasn't in mortal danger but needed the potion more than Vicente.

But no one questioned him because Rory was right. If there was anyone who could get them out of the depths of the Alpine Woodpecker Forest, it was Vicente.

Vice took a deep breath and accepted the potion Rory had avoided using all day, the last of the group.

"Okay. I'll get our group out of here." He drank it.

The effects of potions were quick. In less than 30 seconds after drinking the potion Rory had given him, Vicente felt his mana return to normal while the minor injuries and fatigue in his body disappeared.

With 100% of his strength available, he looked up and jumped into the air, forming a few seals before reaching the top of the chamber.

A cylindrical tunnel 15 meters long and 3 meters in diameter opened up.

Metal bars from Vicente's armor then flew into the tunnel, instantly forming what looked like a staircase.

Realizing their escape route, the group immediately followed the path to the surface while Vicente stayed behind to seal it off as they moved upward.

'This escape mode is tiring, but that woodpecker will surely escape and head for the center of this insect-dominated area.' He thought as he spent much of his energy creating the escape route for his people.

'That way, we can finish our mission in this forest!' He sighed and gradually climbed with his men, using his elemental affinity with the Earth to the fullest in this part of the escape.

Two minutes after his recovery, Vicente would be the first to pass through the end of the tunnel he had manipulated and reach a part of the forest on that hill.

Realizing where he was and seeing no enemies around, Vicente brought his men to the surface and closed the tunnel they had used.

"What do we do now?" One of the level 2 Acolytes asked.

"We will complete our mission," Vicente replied. "Now that we're stronger, getting the missing pentagrams for some of our companions will be easy."

The 14 men who were with Vicente agreed and then set off back the way they had come, returning to where they had left their carriages.

Now, it would only be a matter of hours before they finished their journey through the forest!

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As Vicente and his group drove away from the central area of the Alpine Woodpecker Forest, Nova and Casey had eliminated the enemies from earlier and were returning to the Fuller family's house.

In the arms of the man with the tanned skin and black hair was a sleeping young girl, dirty, with dry lips and a tired look, like someone who hadn't eaten or slept well for days.

Meanwhile, Casey and Nova had terrible looks, unable to feel good about finally rescuing Nina.

She had certainly suffered in captivity the last few days, and even though she was safe now, what had already happened couldn't be changed!

Once again, she had faced despair and felt powerless!

"What are you going to do?" Casey asked as he saw Vicente's official residence near where they were running.

"I don't know. I'll make some contacts within the army to understand my options. Nobles aren't like common people like us. The rules only work for them as they do for us when other nobles are involved." Nova commented, feeling terrible. "Even if we can prove that Marcus ordered Nina's kidnapping, nothing will happen to him, and that will give the Symons family even more reason to act against the Fuller family."

"Like I said, Vicente Fuller won't care about that. He'll get into trouble because of Nina's kidnapping."

"I know. But he's traveling now. Maybe I can do something before he returns." Nova sighed, not knowing how to tell Vicente everything that had happened.

She had promised him that she would help him take care of Nina. But because of the turmoil in the army lately, she had to leave the city and therefore couldn't keep her promise.

"Sigh... With the danger of the 3rd stage basilisk, everything is so complicated." She said as she reached the door of Nina's house.

Arriving there with Casey at her side, they didn't even have to touch the door. Just as they were about to reach it, the door opened, and a blonde woman jumped at Casey, grabbing Nina from his arms.

Eve shed a few tears when she saw Nina again, feeling terrible that she hadn't been able to do anything for the girl in the past few days.

As she hugged Nina's sleeping body, she said softly into one of the girl's ears, knowing she couldn't be heard but saying it anyway. "Nina, I will never let this happen again! I will become stronger to serve you better in the future!"

Being already a level 1 Acolyte, Eve could quickly become stronger when Vicente and Rory returned, and a new group of the Mazzanti family set out to hunt pentagrams.

She was determined to join the next group that went hunting and to take advantage of the opportunities Vicente was giving her to make herself more useful to Nina!

But even though she was very emotional, she looked at Nova and Casey and said. "Thank you for saving Nina. We in the Fuller family will never forget it!"

Not only Eve thought that. The Mazzanti family soldiers hiding on the outskirts of the mansion thought the same.

But while they were grateful to these two, they were furious at the daring people who had plotted against their young miss!

## Chapter 235 Going Their Separate Ways

'Symons families, huh? This doesn't end here.' A masked man at the Fuller mansion dressed all in black and standing in front of a rifle positioned towards the mansion's entrance thought to himself.

Everyone in the family adored sweet little Nina. Even though she was disabled, she didn't act like a victim and often tried to help, even though Vice kept her out of everything he did.

It wasn't uncommon for Nina to climb the stairs of her home and deliver a snack to Vicente's men, who were usually in charge of security of the residence.

For such interactions, she was well-liked by everyone in the family. Hence, her kidnapping could not fail to irritate even the less fanatical men in the family.

Some of Vicente's men were even willing to die for their leader, certain that their families would not be left helpless by their deaths. But even those who were not so determined could not take Nina's kidnapping lightly.

For them, any chance of a relationship between their family and House Symons had ended with Nina's kidnapping!

'We will show this town what happens to those who attack our people!' Thought another Vicente soldier nearby as he watched Nina return to her estate.

'We'll just have to stand still for a while... With the chief going to Ironcrest, we'll get resources to strengthen the family a few more levels.' A man at the door of House Fuller thought while keeping a neutral expression on his face.

"Now that Nina is safe, I have to go," Nova commented to Eve. "Unfortunately, I can't stay any longer. I have some problems to solve in the army."

"Thank you for your help," Eve said sincerely, seeing that Nova really was a good friend to Vicente.

Casey didn't want to stay either and soon left to meet Shelby.

But even though tonight's affair was over, it didn't mean everything was settled regarding Marcus Symons!

'I may not be strong enough to deal with you, but that won't always be the case. Just wait me, Marcus. If Vicente doesn't bring you down, I will!'

Casey thought as he ran through the shadows of Millfall.

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Hours later, the day had already broken over the Scott Province as Vicente's group prepared to split up again.

This time, however, it would not be to explore more of the Alpine Woodpecker Forest or to divide the enemy forces that might be pursuing them. After days in this forest area, the group had finally served its purpose there.

After escaping from the 3rd stage woodpecker hours ago, the group had moved away from the deepest part of Alpine Woodpecker Forest. However, on their way, they spotted a group of beasts, which they carefully hunted so as not to attract the attention of enemies. Eventually, they obtained two new pentagrams for the group.

Over the next few hours, they would return with their carriages to an area where Vicente had sensed a group of three beasts compatible with some of his men.

They hunted these beasts for the last two hours when the one who had not yet conquered his second pentagram finally killed his target and began to absorb it.

The last man in the group to absorb his second pentagram had just done so a few minutes ago when Vicente gathered his group for one last chat before they split up.

It was time for Rory and most of them to return to Millfall, while Vicente and a few men would go to Ironcrest.

Looking at the 13 of the 18 men who had left Millfall with him and Rory, Vicente said to them. "We lost some of our companions on this journey, which is a shame.

However, everyone was aware of the risks when we left, and I will, of course, keep my promises. The families of our dead comrades will now be taken care of by the Mazzanti family."

The men around the group's three carriages, standing on a dirt road trail, heard their leader's words and didn't complain, confident that Vice would take care of these five families.

At the same time, they couldn't help but look down at the ground, feeling bad about losing five of their companions.

"Anyway, be careful on the way back to Millfall. Until you reach the city, you may have to deal with dangerous people of all kinds. Be prepared for anything."

Everyone nodded as Vice looked at Rory. "When you get to town, split off a small group to accompany our Acolytes who didn't come with us to hunt for their pentagrams. Otherwise, just do what we've already planned. Avoid any additional actions during my absence."

"Okay. But be careful in Ironcrest. There will certainly be powers looking for someone selling the Irwin family jewels."

"I know. I'll save the jewels for when we leave the province." Vicente was no fool to trade such stolen resources so close to House Irwin.

Then he looked at the three men who would accompany him and nodded to them as he walked toward his carriage.

"A good journey to you. If I'm successful in Ironcrest, I'll be back in Millfall in no more than 20 days."

With those words, the group split up, with Rory and 10 men, level 1 and 2 Acolytes, heading back the way they came weeks ago to Alpine Woodpecker Forest.

Vicente and his three level 1 companions took a new route, beginning a journey to circle the forest area's core to avoid problems with the woodpeckers.

Already in his carriage, as it moved along, Vice thought about how his family must be doing, looking forward to returning home and spending some time with Nina and Eve. Of course, Nova was also on his mind.

'Things will get better soon.' He smiled.

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While Vicente's carriage was moving, in another part of the Alpine Woodpecker Forest, three level 5 humans were moving at high speed towards the core of this area.

"Are you sure, Jasmine?" Mark asked the light pink-haired woman in front of him.

Jasmine's ability to track humans was phenomenal. But when she told him their targets were heading towards the heart of this dangerous area, Mark couldn't help but feel uncertain.

The group they were following was supposed to be made up of low-level Acolytes. How could they venture into that area?

It would be too dangerous! The risk of losing almost the entire group, or even the entire group, would be enormous!

"I'm sure of it, Mark. But why did you convince me to come here if you don't trust me?" Jasmine looked back seriously.

"Of course I trusted you. I just find it strange... Anyway, are we away from them?"

"No. We'll catch up with them in one more day, two at the most, no matter where they went."

"Good!"

## Chapter 236 Royal Academies?

Alpine Woodpecker Forest was very close to Ironcrest. Since it was only a little farther away from it than The Rocky Gorge was from Millfall, a group traveling by carriage could get from the town to the mountainous area, or vice versa, in just over a day's journey.

That's exactly how long Vice and his men had to take the longest but least dangerous route to reach the vicinity of this important provincial seaside city.

Arriving near Ironcrest late that afternoon, Vicente and his men looked down from the mountain and saw the beautiful view of the province's second-largest city.

On one side was the vast, clear green sea, with dozens of miles of beachfront stretching as far as the eye could see from where he stood.

On the other side were the mountains of this area, which were part of the Alpine Woodpecker Forest and could be seen from the city.

But as much as this was a seaside city, a large part of it was in the middle of several small hills in the area, which gave a special charm to the city famous for its blacksmiths.

With more than 110,000 inhabitants, that place was much larger than Millfall, which was easy to see from a distance, as the urban area was three times larger than Millfall's.

The men in front of Vicente's carriage were seeing Ironcrest for the first time, so they all had smiles under their masks as they looked at the place with interest.

Then one of them asked. "Boss, where do we go first?"

"Rexnelts Academy." Vicente came right to the point.

"That..."

"Won't that be dangerous?" One of the men at the front of the carriage looked back as he questioned his Don.

Julian and the other teachers who had survived their journey in the Alpine Woodpecker Forest knew he had absorbed the yellow pentagram. Not only that, but they were on a mission to collect that essence.

That meant that those who were to receive the pentagram could target Vicente as an enemy!

But Vice wasn't as worried as his men. "Since we're going to be in Ironcrest for a few days, we're going to attract the attention of this academy anyway. Don't think we'll be able to hide from the local powers."

He remembered Shelby as he thought about it, imagining that there must be several people like that woman in Ironcrest, people who could quickly find out about important things happening locally.

What had happened to Vice and those teachers would surely become news as soon as they reported what had happened.

If they didn't die, it would affect Vice and his group very quickly.

"I don't want to reveal my identity as the leader of the Fuller family, so we have nothing to do. Besides, I need to find some good local scholars. The best way for me to do that is through the best academy in Ironcrest." Vicente declared, making it clear to his men that they could do nothing about it.

'I hope those professors don't screw us over.' One of the men at the front of the carriage looked ahead and saw one of the entrances to Ironcrest not far from them.

...

Twenty minutes later, Vicente's group entered Ironcrest after passing the local guard at the entrance to the city.

The cities in the province did not charge entrance fees, and in normal times, one could easily enter any of them one wanted to go to. However, there were always guards at their entrances, especially larger ones like this one.

That was a way for the local powers to control who entered and left their cities, not necessarily a barrier to prevent certain groups from moving around.

Vicente had to wait a few minutes to gain access to Ironcrest, and soon, their carriage was on the main avenue, heading toward Rexnelts Academy, following the instructions of the local guards.

But even without instructions, they could easily identify it.

In the middle of this relatively simple city, with many buildings in similar patterns, was a group of buildings completely different from what one would see in the rest of the city.

There was the local Awakening Temple, the army headquarters in this city, and the building of the academy they were looking for, one of the Royal Academies of the state, which had access to the Seidel Magical College.

The Rexnelts Academy was not an academy like the one Nina was studying at or the Academy of Stars Vicente and Rory had attended.

That was a royal academy, which was not only closer to the greatest power of the state but also suitable for those between the ages of 10 and 14, young people who had already completed their basic studies.

That was the ideal age to learn professions that could be pursued after magical awakening, the focus of the royal academies.

Royal academies were not just places to train soldiers for the kingdom. Only a fraction of the students at these academies actually became soldiers.

The great purpose of these academies was to create professionals capable of meeting the needs of the state, to stimulate the areas most lacking in the kingdom, and to direct these young people to the right places.

Arriving in front of the academy building that Julian had been working on for the past few months, Vicente and his men noticed the difference between this place and ordinary academies, immediately seeing young people who were bigger and more mature than the children in ordinary academies.

Unlike the yelling and screaming one would hear around the usual academies, in this place, one would see many students in small groups chatting, but many others studying their various areas of focus.

Considering how much easier it was to deal with young people between the ages of 10 and 14 than with the younger ones, the number of students there was far greater than one would normally see in juvenile academies.

'This place looks interesting... Ian must have grown up in the Royal Academy of Saltstar City.' Vicente remembered that his village friend had gone to such a place after he turned 10.

In such a place, one could discover one's affinities even before awakening and receive all the materials, lessons, and incentives to develop skills in any known profession.

Knowing how talented Ian was, Vicente imagined that the blond boy must already be a 1st or even 2nd-grade professional in Saltstar City.

But he didn't think much of Ian. As he got out of his carriage and made his way to the enormous building that looked like a religious temple, Vicente quickly put his friend out of his mind when he saw the academy staff approaching him.

"Cesar Mazzanti?" A man in royal army armor, someone on guard at this institution of the kingdom, asked Vice in a thick tone as his group surrounded the four men approaching the entrance to the academy.

"That was faster than I expected..." He laughed, imagining that Julian and the others had survived. "Yes, this is me. I'm here to see some old friends. But I think you'll take me to them anyway."

The soldier ignored Vice's good humor and said. "Follow us. Envoys from the Seidel Magic College want to see you."

#### Chapter 237 The Rigorous Criteria of the Royal Academy

Vicente and his men didn't make it difficult for the soldiers there to lead them to the envoys of the Seidel Magic College. Knowing that they would be led to these people sooner or later, they followed the group of soldiers and entered the inner area of the Rexnelts Academy.

After passing through the outer courtyards and gardens, they entered the Academy's main building, where the administration operated.

Passing through one of the most important corridors in the entire academy, Vicente and his soldiers noticed the signs in front of some doors.

From what they could see, there were departments in this academy for each magical profession that could be pursued!

The number of possibilities for students at this institution was not small!

There was no limit to how many professions a magician could have. Many would have only one profession, the most normal thing to see. However, cases of people with two or even three specializations were not completely uncommon.

Above three, things got complicated, and such people were extremely rare.

A person's magical power was closely related to what they could do. But usually, magical powers were very concentrated in particular areas, which made them more compatible with one or two different skills.

For example, it was very common to have alchemist warriors, blacksmith warriors, and so on. However, it was extremely unusual to see a blacksmith-alchemist-doctor, as the magic form required for one of these areas wouldn't normally be as interesting to the others.

Still, there was no limit to how many activities one could learn and specialize in. So studying in a place like this could be a great opportunity for anyone!

Contrary to what one might think, having more professions wouldn't necessarily get in the way of a magician reaching their peak in each of them.

It would indeed be more work to raise one's skill to the maximum if one had multiple areas of activity. But some magic forms might be compatible with more than one profession, and the magician with such a form would only have to learn the content of two areas. They wouldn't have to develop completely different powers. They would just have to adapt to different ways of using the same power.

That would be a lot of work at first, but once done, one would only have to read the books and understand the rules behind their profession, which is relatively easy to do.

Given the large capacity for storing information that the magician's mind had, having up to three areas of expertise wouldn't necessarily make one less skilled in each of their professions.

But while it wasn't that complicated to have more than one profession, there were tremendous advantages to having more than one occupation.

Aside from the obvious ability to work in two areas and earn more coins by working in both professions, one could become stronger faster.

For example, Vicente was a blacksmith and a warrior. By training his skills in either combat or forging, he could stimulate his growth in magic in both ways.

Why was this interesting? Simple, even magical training loses its effectiveness over time.

If one practiced the same training, it was natural that one day it would produce fewer results, just like a drug would produce fewer results after the body built up a resistance to it.

Having more than one profession was an interesting way to access different stimuli more easily and thus raise your level more quickly.

But as fantastic as all this was, if you didn't prepare well before the Awakening, even learning a single profession could be more difficult, even if you had the compatibility for it.

That's why a place like this was so valuable!

"There are blacksmiths, alchemists, engineers, sorcerers, poison masters, doctors... Impressive!" Vicente thought as he saw the plaques in the rooms of that corridor.

Then one of his men said. "A place like this is incredible... But it's also a bit unfair. Ordinary people must suffer to get a master to agree to teach them something. Here, the students get it easily."

"Unfair?" One of the soldiers serving at the academy looked with a smirk at the face of the Mazzanti man who had just uttered such nonsense.

He explained, showing he was proud to serve in that post. "You don't know anything. Do you think just anyone can enter our academy? To become a student here, you must have great qualities.

When we select students, we don't care where they come from. Only those with the skills we are looking for are selected.

Even the children of nobles can be rejected if they don't meet our requirements."

That was no lie. As much as corruption and favoritism prevailed in this world, the royal family of the Seidel Kingdom took the Royal Academies and the Seidel Magic College very seriously.

These two institutions were vital to the kingdom, and their mismanagement would only lead to the decline of the state, which was unacceptable!

The kingdom had sensitive data on the surplus or shortage of certain professionals. For example, if there were a shortage of doctors in Scott Province, all the Royal Academies in the province would have more places for students with an affinity for medicine the following year.

But if there were too many blacksmiths, the following selection would have a minimum number of places for young people with skills compatible with forging.

In short, every year, the configuration of places in the kingdom's academies changed to better meet the demands of the population.

Amidst this, even favored young people from the nobility could have problems getting into the academies.

For this very reason, it was not uncommon for some children of noble houses to be sent to other provinces or even states to study at academies with similar purposes.

"Is that true?" Vicente asked when he heard that soldier.

"Of course."

Then he asked a question. "But how do the associations deal with you? I mean, do you train professionals?"

The men leading them laughed. "Of course not. The academy provides theory, useful methods to improve one's abilities after the Awakening, and contacts that can make it easier for students to find their masters when they leave the academy.

But their masters do the final part of their training, and only the associations can give them a license to operate or even recognize their abilities."

'That's why these academies have no problems with the associations... Still, these young people have many advantages. If someone like Rory had had the same opportunities as some of the students at this academy, he could have gone much further.' Vicente pondered, but he didn't feel wronged or want things to be different.

Life was as it was, and he had to deal with it!

"But you're not wrong. As fair as the academy is, some really do have advantages over others." Another soldier of the kingdom commented. "Don't forget Professor Newton, Myles."

Myles looked at the man and became more serious but said nothing, for Professor Newton was truly unique.

"Oh? Talking about our men to strangers? Where did you train those fools, Scott?" A female voice reached the ears of everyone in Vicente's group as a woman and a man appeared at the door of the room the group was going to.

Chapter 238 Genius?

The moment he saw the purple-haired, sharp-eyed woman speaking in his direction, Vicente's eyes narrowed as he looked at the group of Mages in front of him.

'3rd stage magicians... What a problem.' He realized that the emissaries from the Seidel Magic College could only be some of the Mages in the room before him.

The man next to the purple-haired woman sighed as he closed his eyes. "Miss Philips, don't give us any trouble. Newton's situation is no secret to many relevant people in the province."

"But are these people important?" She asked, pointing in the direction of Vice and his men.

"According to Reid, yes. How could someone capable of absorbing a yellow pentagram while only at the 2nd stage not be relevant?" The old director of this academy, Jaxon Scott, a mid-level Mage, said as he looked toward the one who seemed to be the leader of the group being escorted to them by the royal soldiers.

Vicente heard that and realized the academy's leadership was already fully aware of everything that had happened in the Alpine Woodpecker Forest over the past few days.

'Damned Julian and his colleagues...' He sighed, but he already knew there was a good chance of that happening.

Arriving in front of the two in the doorway of the academy director's office, Vicente made a common gesture of greeting and said. "Nice to meet you, seniors. I heard emissaries from the kingdom's magic college would like to see me. Are you them?"

The white-haired man with a beard and mustache, standing next to the light-skinned woman with purple hair, said to Vice. "Young Cesar, the one next to me, is the group leader that came from the kingdom's magic college, Alice Philips. I'm Jaxon Scott, the director of Rexnelts Academy."

He looked at the soldiers standing there and said. "You are dismissed. I will take young Cesar and his companions to my office."

"Yes, director Scott!

Vicente entered the office and soon saw four other people there. Among them was another woman who had pink hair, a relatively young man with long brown hair, and a middle-aged man with short white hair and no beard, standing with his back to the rest of the group next to a window.

They were all Mages!

Sitting on a sofa in the middle of the office, Vicente remained silent, waiting to see what these people wanted from him.

The two youths who were there with Alice looked intensely at Vicente, staring at him in a way that frightened the young man's soldiers.

Meanwhile, director Scott sighed when he saw this difficult situation.

Then he opened his mouth, breaking the silence that had followed Cesar's arrival.

"Young Cesar, you're here because of the pentagram you absorbed. It was to be young Joshua Lambton's prize." The director pointed to the brown-haired young man, who had an ugly expression as he looked in Vicente's direction.

Vice looked at the Mage, who had recently advanced to the 3rd stage and was supposed to win the pentagram naturally formed in the region of the Alpine Woodpecker Forest, which, according to the experts of the magic

college, was very compatible with him.

As a high-ranking nobleman in the kingdom who would soon join the army to serve the king, Joshua naturally felt 'damaged' by what had recently happened between Vicente and the yellow pentagram.

He was the one who had to absorb the pentagram!

He was the one who had successfully graduated from the magic college and would soon begin to serve the kingdom!

Yet, a stranger had come into his affairs and 'stolen' what should have been his...

Naturally, he felt wronged by Cesar!

Then Vicente opened his mouth. "I understand that my pentagram was previously the target of someone from the magic college of the kingdom. But seniors, how am I to blame for everything that happened? I didn't try to absorb the pentagram. It chose me. I had no choice and faced great danger in trying to prevent the worst from happening."

"We know that..." Director Scott was about to say when he was interrupted by the man with his back to them looking out the window.

"Cesar Mazzanti, can you show me your second pentagram?" Newton opened his mouth for the first time since these Mages had gathered there to discuss the subject of Cesar and what had happened in Alpine Woodpecker Forest.

Everyone looked at him, aware such a man was not someone they could ignore.

Newton didn't come from a very powerful background. But his innate ability was supreme!

His ability gave him the capacity to learn everything. Aside from the skills of pentagrams and natural essences, he could learn any technique or knowledge as long as he concentrated on it for a while.

He was one of the greatest geniuses of the Seidel Kingdom of the current generation, someone who, at the age of 45, was already a mid-level Mage with 10 professions, and in all of them, he was classified as a 3rd-grade professional.

However, Newton was not an active professional but a scholar, someone who developed spells and studied the theories of each of these professions.

Vicente looked at the man and didn't refuse. "I can. Shall I do it now?"

"Hmm, if the others don't mind, I want you to do it now." He said as he turned and looked at Vicente.

Looking at the man's face, Vicente saw an unusually shaped green gem on Newton's forehead, with two circles with the same center and what looked like an asterisk above it.

"Do what the scholar Newton suggested," Alice told Vice in an authoritative tone.

Vicente stood up and didn't hesitate to move his mana into his Magic Gem, activating his second ability and revealing a beautiful yellow pentagram in front of his body.

Seeing it, everyone opened their eyes wider, seeing that professor Reid's words were not lies.

Even before that, they had doubted the veracity of the words of the teachers who had returned alive from Alpine Woodpecker Forest.

Even after hearing that Cesar Mazzanit had arrived in Ironcrest and they had sent men to bring him to them, they still had doubts, for in the kingdom's history, no one had ever accomplished the feat of this young man.

At the sight of Vicente's second pentagram, everyone there paused for a moment to witness this unprecedented fact, realizing just how powerful such a level 1 Acolyte's magical fluctuation was.

"You really did it..." June, the woman next to Joshua, murmured as she looked at Vicente with interest.

'This young man...' Newton stopped scratching his folded hands behind his back, seeing Vicente was unusual on a much deeper level than the other Mages could realize.

"Enough, Cesar Mazzanti." He commented, once again turning his back on the people in the room.

"You truly have an incredible talent. Can you show us your Magic Gem?" Director Scott asked.

#### Chapter 239 Terrible Deal?

Newton didn't waste time looking back when he heard the director's question.

Vicente answered the obvious. "No. For that, I'd have to reveal my identity. But that's something I'm not interested in doing, seniors. I hope you understand."

Vicente could have easily hidden from them by dropping his mask and using his real identity. But he hadn't, which indicated he either wanted to be found when he entered Ironcrest or had hidden intentions to protect his identity.

Either way, he would protect his identity with everything he had and not reveal himself so easily to these people.

Newton saw this when Vicente entered the office and didn't waste his time trying to force the young man to show his face.

However, the others there, especially those sent from the kingdom's magic college, didn't like his behavior.

"Kid, what you did was a crime, even if it was an accident," Alice said. "You are just as guilty of absorbing that yellow pentagram as a warrior would be of killing innocent people near a fight with an opponent. Even if it wasn't your intention, that doesn't absolve you of responsibility.

Whether you like it or not, you have taken something that should be ours. How will you repay the kingdom?"

That was unfair. Vicente knew it. But these were the kingdom's rules, and these people could get him into legal trouble in the Seidel Kingdom if he didn't benefit them somehow.

As members of the kingdom's magic college, these Mages could easily make his life difficult!

"What can I do to make up for this incident?" Vicente asked without getting upset.

Getting upset and screaming about how unfair it was wouldn't help him.

Joshua looked at the holes in Vicente's mask and said. "Just get me a new pentagram."

Everyone was silent after these words. It would be almost impossible to find another pentagram like that!

Not only are naturally formed pentagrams extremely rare, but finding one with the characteristics of Vicente's pentagram would be even more difficult.

'Shit! It would be easier to win the lottery on Earth than to find something like that.' Vicente sighed and felt he would have problems.

Then he suggested. "Senior Joshua, you know I won't be able to accomplish such a feat."

"Then we have problems, Cesar. I need a new pentagram." He said while making an even uglier expression.

Vicente thought of something and said. "I can't promise you that. But I can promise to help you get your fourth pentagram when you become a Sovereign."

Everyone looked at Vicente strangely, even his men.

"You what?"

"Of course, I can't help you with that today. But when you become a Sovereign, I'll probably be much stronger than now. I'll help you find your fourth pentagram or even collect it for you if there's something compatible that you know about."

"Tsk! Absurd!" Joshua thought it was a joke and turned away from Vicente.

Alice noticed the seriousness in Vicente's words, and even though it was probably a bluff, she asked him. "So you're willing to promise us that you'll return to Joshua something worth a green Magic Pentagram?"

The ideal pentagram for a Sovereign was one with a green rating. Naturally, Alice would include something of that value in the deal Cesar seemed willing to make with them.

"Yes, I am. However, I need time. But as soon as I have the capacity, I'll pay off this debt. I'm willing to sign a Magic Agreement promising that." He said, not wanting any trouble with high-level magicians or even the kingdom right now.

Everything was beginning to change for him. Vice saw a chance to grow quickly in Millfall, perhaps even expanding his operations throughout the entire Scott Province.

Having a problem with the royalty now could jeopardize his plans and even derail his goals!

He was willing to promise these people anything to avoid further problems!

Alice and June looked at Joshua, knowing this was a very good deal for him.

What Joshua had lost, or rather not won, was a yellow pentagram. But what Vicente had just offered him was a green pentagram. Even if Cesar couldn't keep his promise, he would still have to give Joshua something of similar value.

That meant that by agreeing to these terms, Joshua would have a promise with Vicente worth between 5 and 10 times more than what he had failed to earn now!

That was a big deal!

Joshua was angry with Vicente because this young man had taken what should have been his. But he was no fool!

When Joshua heard that masked man's proposal, he didn't refuse while everyone in the room stared at him.

"We can make this deal." He smiled, speaking in a quieter tone as if he had just received an award. "How much time do you need?" Joshua asked. "I can't wait for you to live your whole life to pay me back."

"How much time can you give me?" Vicente asked, fearing the time he was about to say would be too short.

But he didn't want to have to pay off such a debt in a short time. He preferred to let the person choose the time, which would probably give him more time because Joshua would underestimate him.

'I'm 29, and I've just reached the 3rd stage. It will take me about 15 years to reach the 4th stage if I don't have any problems that prevent me from progressing as before.'

Joshua had a green talent and an unusual magical form. Moreover, he was about to join the army as a Commander and would have several advantages from attending the Seidel Magic School. Therefore, it wouldn't be as difficult for him to advance as it would be for unsupported magicians with lesser talents.

Therefore, he knew it wouldn't be impossible for him to reach the 4th stage, even though the road ahead was challenging, and there was no guarantee that he would reach such a level of power.

'He probably won't be able to give me a pentagram. So, he'll have to fulfill his promise with resources or items of the same value.' Joshua's eyes lit up.

He answered Vicente's question. "I'll give you 10 years."

"All right, I'll do my best to fulfill this promise in 10 years." Vicente wore a relieved expression on his face while director Scott and professor Newton looked at him strangely, for that was a short time for an Acolyte like him.

"Are you sure, Cesar Mazzanti?" Newton turned his face away, too curious about this young man's future to ignore such a promise. "You have no chance of reaching the 4th stage in that time. It's simply impossible. Even a magician with cyan talent wouldn't be able to do it." He said, citing the talent of the most talented magician in the history of the Seidel Kingdom.

#### Chapter 240 Warning

When Newton opened his mouth to speak again, this time, the members of the kingdom's magic college looked at him strangely, not liking his words.

What Newton had said was obvious to them. None of them needed to be geniuses to say it would be impossible for Vicente to reach the 4th stage in ten years, the time he needed to fulfill his promise to Joshua.

But even so, the deal with Vicente would still be precious to Joshua because even if Vice failed, the young man who would soon become a soldier of the kingdom would still have a deal that would make Cesar owe him a huge debt.

Vice could even lose his freedom and become Joshua's slave if he didn't keep the promise he had just made!

But with Newton opening his mouth to talk about it, it might dissuade Cesar from going through with the deal, which would be terrible for them.

'What is wrong with him? Why is he against us?' Joshua looked at Alice, uncomfortable with Newton's words.

Alice looked back at him but made a very obvious expression, telling Joshua to keep quiet and not to question what Newton was doing. As an essential genius for the state's future, such a teacher from Rexnelts Academy had a lot of freedom.

Vicente looked at the man and thought silently. 'I'm not sure. But even if I don't reach the 4th stage, I'll still be a Mage by then. As a Mage, won't I be able to handle the challenges of the 4th stage?'

Vicente was confident in his abilities and possibilities because he had two Magic Gems with a very solid and rich foundation.

What was difficult for others was not necessarily so for him!

These people knew nothing about him, so even a genius like Newton could easily be mistaken about him.

At the same time, Vicente saw no alternative but to make that deal. As bad as it was, the deal could put some distance between him and a problem that was difficult for him to deal with in the short term and give him some breathing room.

So Vicente replied. "I am confident I will be able to fulfill my promise within the time set by senior Joshua."

Joshua heard it and smiled, letting out a big sigh of relief.

'What a fool!'

"Haha, young Cesar is very determined in his promises. I like that." He said as he approached Vicente and lightly patted one of the masked young man's shoulders.

But Newton didn't care what was best for those sent by the magic college and instructed Vicente. "Cesar Mazzanti, do you know the consequences of failing in this deal? Joshua could claim his rights before the king. You could be forced to sign an agreement making you his slave.

Do you agree with that? I hope you understand the risks you're taking."

"Professor Newton..." Joshua was about to question him when Alice called his name, silencing him.

"Joshua!"

Vicente noted the situation of those sent by the magic college and Newton's position. 'It seems this man is quite important...'

But he was already aware of the local traditions and laws.

Slavery did exist in Polaris Realm, but it was different from what had happened on Earth for much of its history. Here, there was only debt slavery.

Anyone who made a promise, took out a loan, or even damaged the property of others could be forced into slavery if they could not compensate the injured party for their actions or failure to keep their promises.

Once one failed to fulfill such responsibilities and became a slave, getting out of that condition was virtually impossible.

A slave had no rights. They were like objects, and everything they achieved belonged to their master.

With the magical methods of keeping one under control, even beings with great powers and talents could be trapped in that condition without much chance of changing their status.

Even after the death of their owner, a slave would continue to serve their master's lineage until there was no one else to inherit them.

Only when an entire lineage disappeared would the slaves of that lineage become free.

Considering how terrible it would be to see a prodigy like Cesar become someone's slave, Newton couldn't help but be annoyed by the whole thing and try to make the young man think more carefully about what he was getting into.

'I don't want you to be limited by someone like these people. It would be terrible not to have the chance to analyze the growth of someone capable of absorbing a yellow pentagram while only at the 2nd stage.' Newton thought as he looked at Vicente.

But Vicente knew of the possibility of slavery in this world, a problem feared by many debtors like the brothers River and Zander from the tavern he protected.

"I'm aware." He said, aware of the risks but still preferring not to have to deal with some problems right now.

'In ten years, everything could be different. There are no guarantees in this world, and these men can't decide my chances. Like it or not, I'm beyond the normal rules of this world.' He thought, not being arrogant because his thoughts were facts.

As the only one with two Magic Gems in the world, he really couldn't be analyzed in the same way as ordinary people.

'Since I absorbed a yellow pentagram at the 2nd stage, I'll try to absorb a green one when I reach the 3rd stage and become a Mage.' He thought, willing to take that risk now that he had a better sense of his limits.

Newton sighed as he turned away again. "Is that so? I hope you're right. Either way, you'll have ten years to fulfill the most ridiculous promise in the kingdom."

Joshua and his two teammates were finally relieved to see that Cesar Mazzanti really was a fool and wouldn't back down from his words.

"All right, Cesar, here is the Magic Agreement for you and Joshua to sign." Alice smiled exuberantly, already having a contract ready for them.

As much as Joshua would benefit the most from all of this, with this settled, she wouldn't have to report a problem to the magic college, something that could harm her.

On the other hand, the pink-haired woman next to Joshua was his girlfriend and was naturally happy about his agreement with Vicente.

At worst, he would gain a very capable slave, someone he could use to grow beyond his expectations!

Only director Scott and professor Newton were neutral or unhappy about the deal. Still, they didn't try to get in the way when Vicente left his magic mark on the papers in Alice's hands.