

The Mafia 281

Chapter 281 Serious Sermon

While the royal forces moved around Millfall, preparing the local defenses for a possible basilisk attack, Viscount Symons was at his estate dealing with his foolish heir.

Having been out of town for weeks, attending a meeting of provincial nobles led by Duke Scott, Viscount Symons had just learned of all that had happened locally in his absence.

The Viscount was not so surprised to learn of the fall of the Defiant Tyranny and the rise of the Scarlet Syndicate and the Mazzanti family. Something like what had happened was entirely possible, and he had foreseen such a scenario during his trip to Saltstar City.

From the point of view of the head of the Symons family, the chances of Cesar surviving the previous troubles and raising his family's standing were very slim. But they existed, and when the Viscount heard how Cesar had succeeded in his absence, he was not so shocked, despite his surprise.

But there was something that really irritated him about what he had heard. It was the way his son had handled the affairs of the Mazzanti family, but also Marcus' involvement in the kidnapping of a deaf child.

From the Viscount's point of view, Marcus had only made mistakes in his absence!

So he was in his office, with Marcus standing before him, this man avoiding to look him in the face, deeply embarrassed.

But what embarrassed Marcus was not his actions but his failures!

"Boy, what's wrong with you?" Viscount Symons was not careful with his words as he had a dark expression on his face, looking at his son and feeling like beating Marcus until this boy learned the lesson.

"Why were you wasting your time kidnapping a deaf 8-year-old girl when you should have been worrying about your marriage? Damn it, Marcus, we're less than three weeks away from your wedding to Shelby Staples. What's wrong with your head?"

"Father, that Shelby was..."

"Tsk! Shut up!" The Viscount said, already aware of his son's jealousy.

Marcus didn't love Shelby. But he was possessive of everything that 'belonged' to him. As the fiancé of that beautiful woman, he was extremely irritated by rumors that she was seeing men, especially Vicente.

Vicente was only a fool from a distance. But it was with this fool that Shelby showed the most intimacy, which irritated Marcus intensely.

The Viscount already knew all that, but he still wouldn't listen to his son.

What if Shelby was having an affair with Vicente Fuller? It didn't matter one bit to the Viscount! Marcus' marriage to Shelby was political, an alliance between two of the four most influential families in Millfall!

All that mattered was that the marriage took place and that they had an heir. As for whether Marcus or Shelby would be in other people's beds in the meantime, that didn't matter one bit to such a nobleman!

Even though the local customs didn't allow that kind of behavior, especially for women, the Viscount had much more important interests than his son's honor.

He didn't want to be hindered by Marcus' foolish act!

"If you want to restrict that girl, wait until you marry her, you idiot!" The Viscount shouted. "When she's your wife, no one in the Staples family will have anything to say to you if you restrain her for questionable behavior.

But taking action against an 8-year-old girl won't help you now, you fool! Do you realize how much you've embarrassed your family? Now all the nobles look at us like we're creep fellows who abduct little children!"

The Viscount didn't care about Nina. But he cared a great deal about his family's name, how it was associated in the public eye, and especially how other nobles saw it.

To have his name associated with the kidnapping of a deaf child was something the Viscount didn't want for his family, no matter what happened.

It was better for Marcus to be known as a cuckold than a child abductor!

Marcus clenched his fists in humiliation and said. "I'm sorry for my mistakes, Father. I'll do my best not to make them again."

"And why did you go after Cesar fucking Mazzanti by trying to kill him? Are you stupid?" The Viscount continued harshly while his men stood in silence, listening to the worst sermon Marcus had ever heard.

Viscount Symons continued. "Why didn't you do like most of the nobles in the city and make a deal with that damned Cesar? Did you happen to think that all the nobles more experienced than you were wrong and you were right?"

That was what Marcus had thought. But he wouldn't dare say that to his father now.

"I'm sorry." That was all he said.

"I bet you are!" The Viscount looked away, no longer able to bear the sight of his foolish son.

'Unfortunately, I have no other heir, otherwise...' He closed his eyes, regretting his wives hadn't been able to give him another male child.

'But I may live long enough for this fool to have a son. I'll train my grandson more seriously and exclude this idiot from the line of succession.' The Viscount made up his mind, imagining that Marcus and Shelby's son could draw on his mother's intelligence and become truly capable of ruling the Symons family.

Then the Viscount said. "Go to your room. You are under house arrest until your wedding."

"Father..."

"Be thankful that your wedding is near. Otherwise, your punishment would be much more severe, Marcus." He said when he finally saw his son looking into his eyes.

Gulp!

"Use the time you have and try to advance to level 5. Shelby recently advanced to level 3 and is only one level below you."

"I'll do my best!" Marcus said before leaving with one of his men without further question.

Left alone with one of his men, Viscount Symons was curious about local matters and asked. "What happened to Mister Amnesia? I heard that the Staples family lost contact with him recently."

"About that..." One of his men was about to say when a soldier from the kingdom entered the estate shouting.

"Your Grace, please gather your men. The 3rd stage basilisk is coming to town!" The soldier, sent by the local Commander's brother, shouted so loudly that everyone on the estate heard his warning.

The Viscount immediately changed his countenance, leaving the problem he had recently heard from the Staples patriarch to deal with this other, more pressing matter.

When the soldier entered his office, the Viscount asked him. "What are you talking about? Weren't your parties hunting it in the Rocky Gorge?"

The soldier summarized as quickly as he could, knowing the basilisk was fast and would soon reach Millfall. "Yes, one of our groups in that area sent us a message a few minutes ago, alerting us to the basilisk's movement. It's coming to the city right now!"

Please, Your Grace, gather your men and come with me. The standby Commander wants to stop the creature before it enters the city and causes casualties."

Viscount Symons rose from his chair, worried but not afraid.

"Gather our strongest men. Let's see what this damned beast is capable of!" He said to the man standing beside him.

Chapter 282 The Basilisk Arrives in Millfall

Millfall's main forces were on alert within minutes of news of the 3rd-stage basilisk's movement.

Many powerful local magicians were in the area of The Rocky Gorge, seeking to profit from the basilisk hunt and unable to join the local resistance at this moment.

Without the presence of many level 5 Acolytes in the city, the group of soldiers commanded by Christopher Hogan's brother met with the strongest members of the Symons family on the side of the city where the beast was expected to arrive.

Arriving at where Arthur Hogan was, Viscount Symons immediately approached the soldier.

"What is the situation, Arthur? Why are we being attacked when your parties should be hunting it?"

Arthur looked at the Viscount and said. "I don't know. Strangely, it decided to attack us like this. But beasts are beasts. We can't predict everything they can do."

"Then how do we deal with it?"

The soldier from the provincial capital replied. "We will fight it, of course. This basilisk should be almost at the mid-level of the 3rd stage. The two of us should be able to keep it entertained long enough for it to lose its strength, or at least until our men return from The Rocky Gorge.

The group that informed us of the basilisk's movement is already on their way here. So our hope is to hold on until they arrive."

"Okay. So let's keep it entertained and prevent it from destroying the city." Viscount Symons muttered, agreeing with Arthur's plans.

"Anyway, I didn't expect to meet him like this. I was in the capital recently and thought I'd pay you a visit... Who knew you would come here?"

Arthur greeted the nobleman, an old acquaintance of his through his younger brother's position as Commander of the army post in Millfall.

"We'll talk business later. Right now, we'd better focus on that creature." Arthur pointed to the sky as he saw the body of the 3rd-stage basilisk appear on the horizon.

Viscount Symons looked in the direction the 3rd-stage soldier next to him had pointed out, narrowing his eyes as he saw the magnificent beast from afar.

Such a beast was valuable in any condition, alive as a mount or dead, as food, or even as a source of ingredients for various types of consumable and non-consumable items.

Such beasts were difficult to tame or kill for people like him and Arthur.

One would have to overcome the power of such a beast by far to tame it as Vicente had done. But even if one had the magic stones to give them the necessary mana difference, the beast would have to be in a state of submission when the seal was placed on it.

If something like a crushing defeat didn't happen before the one-sided seal was used, the beast might even commit suicide to avoid being tamed.

In short, it wasn't so easy to tame a beast. Several conditions had to be met, and power wasn't enough. Sometimes, the beast's consciousness had to recognize the power of the one who could become its master. In other cases, it wasn't necessary, but other requirements could get in the way of a magician's domination over a beast.

Even though they were 3rd stage magicians, the two men watching the basilisk didn't have mounts of that rank at their command.

That was the reality for most magicians in this world. Most people at the 2nd stage would have at most 1st stage beings under their control, while those at the 3rd stage would have 2nd and 1st stage beings under them.

Only a few had creatures of a similar or higher stage as their mounts.

When they saw that basilisk, they couldn't help but think about it until they saw what was on the creature's back.

As the basilisk approached the city and gradually lowered its height, the two and all the men at the entrance to Millfall would soon notice someone on the back of the beast.

"What? Is there a man riding the basilisk?" Arthur was the first to cry out in surprise.

As far as he and his party knew, the 3rd-stage basilisk in The Rocky Gorge was supposed to be a wild, masterless beast. How could anyone ride it?

But that was the reality, and no one could say otherwise. Someone was riding that beast!

While these men between levels 4 and 5 and the two Mages there watched the beast strangely, Vicente stood behind Bart's back and looked down.

"It looks like we got some attention, huh?" He looked at the magicians watching him, a mask on his face hiding his expression of doubt.

Vicente wasn't afraid these people would do something against him and Bart. This basilisk would have been a danger as long as it was a wild beast, but now it was a tame mount, something completely different.

The kingdom's cities allowed tame mounts and beasts to circulate within their borders. They had their rules, and their owners had to make them obey those laws, or the state could persecute them.

Tame beasts, however, were completely free to enter and leave a town like Millfall. Vicente knew this and was relaxed about these people.

Even if they had hunted the basilisk or were against Bart, that was in the past, and now they didn't have any arguments to act against it.

However, with so many people watching his arrival in Millfall, some of Vicente's plans had to change!

'After today, Scarlet Syndicate will no longer make things easy for me and my group. With Bart on my side, Brody fucking Wright won't make it easy for us. He will use everything he has to limit me...' Vicente's eyes narrowed as he saw the Viscount and Arthur's group closer and closer.

'I should visit the Scarlet Syndicate.' He decided, feeling it was time to settle his affairs with this local underworld group.

Keeping this decision in mind, Vicente soon focused on the men of the royal army, jumping off Bart's back as this beast landed 200 meters away from the group of armed humans with ugly looks on their faces.

"Friends of the royal army, nobles of Millfall, do not fear. This beast is my mount. It is no threat to Millfall!" Vicente said in his mana-distorted voice so that everyone there recognized him.

"Cesar!"

"This is Cesar Mazzanti!"

"He's level 3 already? Hell, how does that bastard grow his mana?"

"He's a genius. No one knows the level of his talent, but considering his power, he must have a talent beyond green."

Several Acolytes commented among themselves while the Viscount looked at Vicente, seeing Cesar face to face for the first time.

'So, this is the young leader of the Mazzanti family? It looks like he's quite impressive.' He saw how foolish his son was to make trouble with such a person and felt a little of the magical aura around Vicente, which was very strong for a level 3 Acolyte.

Then Arthur stepped forward. "Cesar Mazzanti, your words are insufficient to convince us. Can you prove you are the master of this beast? I find it hard to believe that an Acolyte could tame it!"

Chapter 283 Change of Leadership?

"But of course! You can see my mark on my mount." Vicente said loudly, pointing to the back of the 3rd-stage basilisk, where there were still some open wounds, but also the symbol of the union of two pentagrams.

Part of this symbol was red, while the other was yellow, just like Vicente's pentagrams.

Seeing it, no one believed the basilisk was actually one of Vicente's mounts. But everyone was startled to see such a mark, which indicated that someone with a second yellow pentagram had tamed the creature.

"Impossible! That must be some kind of trick by this young man to fool us!" A level 5 Acolyte shook his head, afraid this was not a tamed beast and that they would let it into Millfall.

Vicente didn't want to waste time with these people. Knowing that sooner or later, he would have to reveal his pentagrams by acting locally and that people beyond his control already knew of his reality, he decided to show everyone there he was indeed Bart's master.

By circulating his mana and revealing his two pentagrams, Vicente shocked all those magicians, especially with how much stronger his aura became after he stopped restricting himself.

"What?" The Viscount couldn't stand it any longer and exclaimed in shock, seeing and feeling the most ridiculous thing he had ever felt.

"That..." Arthur also opened his mouth in astonishment as he saw Vicente's pentagrams and the symbol on Bart's back glowing, indicating it was 100% real.

"Is that proof enough for you?" He asked as he stood between the group of humans and Bart in this area outside Millfall, where there was a dirt road and lawns on the outskirts.

"How did you do that? Tell the truth, Cesar!" Arthur shouted as he took a step forward.

As he did so, Bart opened its mouth and stepped closer to Vicente, its muscles twitching as it let out a warning hiss.

Gulp!

"Shit!"

"That bastard actually tamed a fucking 3rd-stage basilisk!"

The soldiers could feel sweat forming on their bodies as they raised their guard as high as they could, afraid to face the basilisk and Cesar.

Cesar was already extremely difficult to deal with before. But now, at level 3, with a yellow pentagram, he was just as dangerous as the basilisk behind him!

As much as they were confident in their ability to entertain the 3rd-stage basilisk, they were not confident in their ability to entertain Cesar and this beast simultaneously.

Under the command of a master, beasts tended to become stronger due to the rationality and strategies of the party commanding them.

That was another problem for them!

The Viscount realized the tension in the air. "Commander, let's retreat." He said in a serious tone. "There is no danger here. Cesar is a citizen of Millfall, and his mount obviously won't act without his command."

Vicente let his guard down when he heard it, seeing the Viscount was much more intelligent than Marcus.

Still, he wouldn't forgive that family!

'If you had taken care of the situation from the beginning, maybe...' He thought, but then shook his head and let it go.

'Ifs' didn't matter. Everything had already happened, and thinking about how things could have been different wouldn't make any difference!

"If that's all, I'll say goodbye now." He climbed back onto Bart's back and pointed it in the direction of his destination.

Bart flapped its wings and took off quickly toward the Scarlet Syndicate headquarters.

Flying was not forbidden in towns like Millfall since only a few creatures capable of flight passed through such small places.

So, without breaking any of the royal rules, Vicente landed on the roof of the Scarlet Syndicate's estate shortly after arriving in Millfall, drawing the attention of many in the town to the skies.

As he dismounted his mount, Vicente soon saw the leader of the Scarlet Syndicate faction and several high-ranking men from that force appear on the roof, all with worried looks on their faces.

They had just felt a strong tremor in their building and a terrifying aura closing in on them.

Coming out of their places of business to see what this was all about, they all had pale faces as they stared at the hostile-looking creature behind Cesar Mazzanti.

"Cesar, what does this mean?" A level 5 redhead asked as he moved his mana, preparing himself in case Vicente betrayed him.

Vicente looked at the people in front of him, Brody Wright and five level 4 Acolytes, and smiled under his mask as he stood before Bart.

"Why fear, Brody? When you 'kindly invited' me to the Scarlet Syndicate months ago, you didn't have this tone in your voice, let alone this look on your face." Vicente said as he released his aura to the maximum and showed his pentagrams to the men.

"Cesar..." Brody clenched his fists and stared at the holes in Vicente's mask. "Have you come to break your contract with me? Aren't you afraid of being punished by the heavens?"

"Break my contract with you?" Vicente laughed, speaking loudly enough for many people on the lower floors of the building to hear him. "Brody, you're wrong. I have no intention of going against the Scarlet Syndicate. I'm here to follow the rules that you made yourself!"

Brody narrowed his eyes, not quite understanding what that meant. "What are you talking about?" He asked in a low tone.

Vicente looked at the level 4 Acolytes and said. "My friends, it's time for the faction to change leadership. As a member of the Scarlet Syndicate, I nominate myself as your new leader."

Everyone there opened their mouths in surprise, realizing Cesar intended to act against them, but within the rules of the Scarlet Syndicate.

The Scarlet Syndicate stipulated that when one of its members reached a certain level, power, or influence, they could challenge the current leader and take his position if at least half of the group's strongest members agreed.

Since this group was already producing a type of firearm and was ahead of the Mazzanti family in local business, Vicente would rather take control of this faction than destroy it!

With him in charge, he could be the head of the Scarlet Syndicate and the Mazzanti family without risking giving other local groups room to grow!

"My friends, I ask your permission to challenge Brody Wright to a duel to the death," Vicente said while Brody trembled with anger but also with fear.

Even if he killed Cesar, Vicente's mount would kill him instantly!

There was no escape for Brody.

"Damn it!" He shouted as he looked at his men, intending to threaten them.

But before he could do anything, all those men moved further away from him, knowing they couldn't choose their boss' side.

At that moment, Brody was betrayed by all his trusted men.

"We accept Cesar Mazzanti's challenge." They all said at the same time.

Chapter 284 'Duel to the Death'!

"You bloody traitors! What are you doing?" Brody looked at his men with hatred, not expecting to be so obviously betrayed by these people.

He had founded the Scarlet Syndicate with some of these men. They had been through many difficult times together and had recently reached a good position.

But after their years of history together, they suddenly abandoned him... That would make anyone angry!

One of Brody's latest companions then opened his mouth. "Boss, Cesar has a 3rd-stage beast. What should we do? I'm sorry, but your situation now depends only on you. There's nothing we can do to help you."

One of Brody's oldest companions sighed and said. "You have known about the risks since we started this journey. If your agreement with Cesar was so fragile, I'm sorry. It was your mistake, but I will not die with you."

These were common criminals. They took risks in exchange for possible returns. But no return on the horizon could make them stand up to Cesar.

Cesar was a monster in his own right. At level 3, he was probably capable of killing them all single-handedly. But with a 3rd-stage beast on his side, the leader of the Mazzanti family was an even more formidable opponent for the leaders of the Scarlet Syndicate.

"You cowards! You'll rot in the underworld for this!" Brody shouted as he glared at the men.

But his words did not frighten any of the men. They weren't afraid of what would happen to them after they died. All that mattered was now, and right now, Brody had no chance of doing anything to them.

From these men's point of view, with Cesar looking for Brody's head and the 3rd-stage basilisk on the roof, the leader of the Scarlet Syndicate was already dead, and he would soon find this out!

Vicente watched Brody's situation in silence, seeing only the normal things that happen between criminals. But he didn't see his family as superior to these men. Maybe his men were more loyal to him because he always cultivated that in his house. But Vicente believed he could lose his supporters if he were in Brody's place.

After all, such groups were never 100% reliable. If you wanted to eliminate the risk of running into situations like this, you had to be strong and indispensable to the continuity of the group.

Brody wasn't such a person and naturally broke into a cold sweat when he saw nothing to stop Vicente from acting against him.

"Cesar! You'll pay for this! Threatening your leader will cause you to lose control of your elements!" Brody swung, feeling Vicente's magical fluctuation, noting how strong this young man had become in such a short time.

From what Brody felt, Vicente's magical fluctuation was more substantial than his own, even though the young man was only at level 3 Acolyte.

'What level is that bastard's talent?' Brody broke out in a cold sweat, seeing Vicente certainly had a talent superior to his own.

Vicente saw the fear in Brody's eyes as this man threatened him with the deal they had. "It won't reach me. I play by the rules, my dear leader. I act only for the good of the Scarlet Syndicate. The faction is limited under your leadership. With me in charge, we'll reach a truly relevant level!"

"Nonsense! You don't care about the Scarlet Syndicate!" Brody snapped, seeing that Cesar was disingenuous enough to say those words to his face.

Vicente laughed. "You made the rules of your faction, my leader. You did it to keep the power in your hands, right? You shouldn't complain now just because you failed."

The deal between Vicente and Brody was essentially based on promises of returns from the Mazzanti family group and protection from the Scarlet Syndicate group. Other than that, only three lines in the contract talked about one side acting against the other.

Since Brody wanted to have room to act against Vicente if the young man proved dangerous to him, he was forced to leave room for Vice to act against him as long as he followed the rules of the Scarlet Syndicate and didn't act for the bad of the faction.

"Time to pay for the risks you took!" Vicente changed his tune and demonstrated his powers to the six men on the roof of the Scarlet Syndicate headquarters.

Brody's eyes widened as he saw Vicente's second pentagram and realized why this young man was so much stronger and had progressed so quickly.

He didn't know anything about what could happen when a 2nd stage magician was able to absorb a yellow pentagram. He wasn't a scholar. But when he saw it before him, he thought the whole explanation of Vicente's powers was related to such a magical essence.

"Shit!"

The other men were also shocked as they jumped back, feeling the effects of Vicente's powers on their bodies, even though the target was Brody, not them.

Meanwhile, they saw Brody's body begin to levitate under the influence of Vicente, who quickly altered the electromagnetic field around the man to prevent his escape.

Using his ability to manipulate metallic particles, Vicente formed several needles around Brody as the metals in the man's body flowed through his body as if they were liquids.

In an instant, two metal gauntlets covered his hands, preventing Brody from moving his mana through that part of his body.

"Let me go, you bastard!" Brody shouted as he felt how strong Cesar already was, able to completely subdue him even though he was 2 levels stronger.

"Brody, you're responsible for all of this," Vicente said as he floated more than 50 silver needles around Brody, waiting for the right moment to strike. "You forced me to join the Scarlet Syndicate, which got me into trouble with the Defiant Tyranny. So, this is for bringing trouble to my family."

As he finished saying these words, Vicente moved all his needles simultaneously, accelerating them so much that even the man's level 5 body could not withstand it.

In a single instant, Brody felt more than 30 needles penetrate his body and lodge inside him while the other needles passed through him.

"Aaaaaaagh!" He screamed in pain as he felt several of his organs pierced while the taste of blood surged through his mouth.

At the same time, dozens of places on his body began to bleed as he rapidly lost his strength.

How could someone like him withstand so many attacks at once?

Even if those needles were very thin, the damage caused to several of his vital organs would be enough to kill him in a few minutes. But with the needles inside him and under Vicente's control, he soon felt the worst sensation of his life, having his insides destroyed by his opponent.

Vicente moved his hands and formed something like a crusher with his metal inside Brody's body. Without mercy, he destroyed his opponent's heart, causing a lot of blood to flow from the wounds in this person's body, which would soon cause him to lose consciousness.

In this way, Scarlet Syndicate leader, Brody Wright, reached his limit and died at the hands of Vicente shortly after the young man returned from his hunt in The Rocky Gorge!

News of this incident would soon spread through Millfall, along with the triumphant return of Cesar Mazzanti and a 3rd-stage beast!

Chapter 285 Local Reactions (1)

At the Staples family headquarters...

Shelby had just heard about the return of Vicente in the basilisk that was supposed to be hunted in The Rocky Gorge and was naturally shocked to hear such a thing from her trusted person, Molly.

Molly was going over what she'd just heard from Shelby's informants around town, so she was shocked, too, as she hadn't expected something so extreme to happen to one of her allies.

But how could she not be shocked? Vicente returning with a 3rd stage beast was beyond her and her miss' wildest dreams!

In the blink of an eye, Vicente had gone from a young man with potential to perhaps the strongest and most influential in Millfall!

With him on their side, it would only be a matter of time before they put their plans into action.

But as Molly finished speaking, another of Shelby's subordinates rushed into the orange-haired woman's personal area with a terrible expression on his face.

"Miss, I bring urgent news. The leader of the Scarlet Syndicate has just been confirmed dead! Brody Wright was found lifeless in his office a few minutes ago." A middle-aged man said, causing Shelby and Molly to look at him strangely.

"What?" Shelby rose from her seat as she shouted.

"How can that be? What happened?"

"I don't know for sure. The information is still being gathered." The man dressed as a butler said. "But it seems that the Scarlet Syndicate is already in the process of choosing a new leader. According to our observers, Waylon Acheron will take over the faction with the support of Cesar Mazzanti."

Molly and Shelby narrowed their eyes as they heard this and connected the dots.

'Vicente has just returned from The Rocky Gorge...' Shelby closed her eyes momentarily. 'This is his doing! Waylon is probably just his puppet. He's really the one who will lead the Scarlet Syndicate!'

Thinking about it, Shelby smiled and said. "Very good. Arrange a meeting with Mira Burt for me. I want to meet her later today."

"Mira?" Molly looked at Shelby and imagined this could only be an excuse since it wouldn't make sense for her Miss to meet such a person right now.

Mira was one of Shelby's best friends. But she was the complete opposite of Miss Point in her intelligence and her contempt for nobility.

Mira was just someone Shelby liked to spend time with and who she knew wasn't a bad person, even if she was the daughter of a man who could soon become a nobleman.

'The Miss probably wants to find a way to meet Vicente without attracting attention.' Molly thought and immediately set off to arrange things.

...

Meanwhile, Jasmine was standing before a grey-haired woman, her friend Layla, who had arrived in town the night before.

Gulp!

"Jasmine, I'm happy for you, but..." Layla swallowed her saliva as she considered the news of Cesar's return next to a 3rd-stage basilisk. "I'll probably die soon. Cesar Mazzanti won't include me in his plans now that he's made a deal with you and has such a powerful beast."

Jasmine was startled by the information that had taken her by surprise moments ago, not expecting Cesar to be so successful in his little trip through The Rocky Gorge.

She had been trying to convince her friend to make a deal with Cesar and have herself examined by Casey later today. Still, this information had reached her before she could get any results.

'How did he manage to do it while being only a 2nd stage magician?' She wondered, not understanding what could have happened.

A scholar like Newton would devise several justifications to explain Vicente's situation. But 'ordinary' people would find it difficult to understand feats outside the norm.

Even though she was very talented and came from a good background, Jasmine was far from understanding such facts as well as Newton would.

Anyway, she had a more pressing problem on her mind.

"Layla, don't worry about it. It's actually good for us."

"Good? How?" Layla smiled bitterly at her friend. "Now he can kill me much easier."

"It's not that simple." Jasmine shook her head, making her pink hair float in the air. "Cesar getting stronger is good. It means he'll have a better chance of solving the situation Mark will try to create. That will increase our chances of survival!"

"Is that so?" Layla sighed, having already told Jasmine that Mark had no intention of not causing trouble and would soon be arriving in Millfall, bringing issues for everyone involved in the previous situation outside of Ironcrest.

"Yes. Trust me, Layla. Make a deal with Cesar and let Mister Amnesia have your memories. You'll prove your loyalty to him, and that will bring you over to our side." Jasmine said confidently. "Cesar is no fool. He won't stop at Millfall. That beast he just defeated is nothing compared to what we can offer him. He knows that and won't abandon you for it!"

"Sigh... I guess I have no choice but to trust that."

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Meanwhile, Marcus had already heard the latest news while under house arrest and was shocked to discover the 3rd-stage basilisk everyone feared had become a mount for Cesar.

At the same time, his father was already back at the Symons estate, trying to find a way to resolve his family's problems with Casa Mazzanti.

As much as he was a noble of the kingdom and the most influential in Millfall, the Viscount now felt he had to be as careful as possible with Cesar Mazzanti.

With a 3rd-stage basilisk, Cesar's strength would be comparable to the strongest in Millfall!

He didn't think his family was in danger because he had the kingdom on his side. But his influence was certainly under threat less than three weeks before his family's wedding to House Staples.

"Your Grace, shall I contact our allies?" The Viscount's bodyguard, a level 9 General, asked as he looked at his boss after seeing him finish a conversation with another local noble.

Viscount Symons looked at the Sir behind him and said. "Put our friends on alert. I don't think there's much chance of us being attacked. Cesar looks pretty reasonable and shouldn't attack us. But let's not take any chances. Prepare our friends for action."

With that order, the level 9 General disappeared from the room on the Symons estate, while the Viscount stayed behind, sighing as he thought about everything that had happened.

"Sigh..."

'The Scarlet Syndicate had to fall just now? Who will replace them?' He wondered, not knowing as much as Shelby, imagining that this faction would disappear without their leader, just like Defiant Tyranny had.

Chapter 286 Local Reactions (2)

While Shelby was on the move, Jasmine and Layla were doing something similar, and the Viscount was trying to make the best of his situation. Meanwhile, the whole town was talking about the topic of the moment.

Cesar Mazzanti's triumphant return from his journey in The Rocky Gorge!

Cesar's return to Millfall alongside a 3rd-stage basilisk had elevated his status in the minds of many of the locals, from an 'ordinary' man to an expert on the level of the local leaders.

Some had feared him before and now believed the city was lost with a mercenary gaining so much power. But some others, especially those protected by the Mazzanti family, celebrated.

As Vicente's power and influence grew, his territory would become safer and safer!

Combined with the news of the Scarlet Syndicate's leadership change, the Mazzanti family's territory looked the best in Millfall, while the rest of the city was in danger.

...

"Damn it! The fucking Cesar is immortal, he must be! He beats everyone in his path!" Dax Peters said to his younger brother as they drank in Zander and River's tavern, both upset by the news circulating locally.

He had been Cesar Mazzanti's first victim in this city. But even though he had made a deal with Vicente, paying the young mercenary weekly fees, Dax wasn't happy.

He secretly prayed for Cesar's demise!

But as much as Cesar's problems worsened as time passed, he always seemed to find a way around everything that got in his way.

For Dax, this was annoying!

River heard the customer's comment and laughed. "Hahaha, it looks like young Cesar is causing much trouble around here!"

"Let him. He knows what he's doing. We're doing very well because of him!" Zander commented with a smile, dressed much better than when he first met Vicente, having made significant profits in recent weeks due to the peace in his tavern.

...

Meanwhile, at the former headquarters of the Defiant Tyranny, now occupied by another group of local underworld associates, the people there were even more agitated than the ordinary people of Millfall.

"What are we going to do, boss? We're doing well after the fall of Defiant Tyranny. But what will happen now? The Mazzanti family will support the Scarlet Syndicate. With the two of them acting together, they'll keep all their businesses and expand against us." A level 3 man asked his leader, a level 5 Acolyte.

When one faction of the underworld moved against another, there were only two possible outcomes. The first, the weaker side would flee to another city to escape annihilation. The second, a war for supremacy would break out, and the weaker side would eventually be wiped out.

These men, who had taken advantage of the power vacuum left by the fall of the Defiant Tyranny, knew that they had no chance against a group that possessed even a 3rd-stage beast.

The leader of this newly formed faction was pale, but he didn't hold back when faced with a critical question from one of his men. "We're leaving Millfall! There's no room for us in this town!"

Until that day, there had been plenty of room in Millfall for a group like theirs. But now that Vicente had returned with new support for his family, House Mazzanti, and the Scarlet Syndicate would grow with no one to stop them from taking up all the space in Millfall.

It would only be a matter of days before trouble knocked on the doors of such groups!

Everyone there felt strange about having to do this so soon after arriving in the city. But the danger ahead justified their leader's fear.

...

Meanwhile, at one of the entrances to Millfall, a blond man had just arrived in town when he heard the local rumors about Cesar, someone he was there to meet.

'Did Cesar get a 3rd-stage mount?' This blond man, Kohen, narrowed his eyes, finding such information strange.

He had come to this city earlier to investigate Cesar. After discovering several things, he returned to Ironcrest to update his partners at the local Awakening Temple.

But when he had finally returned to Millfall to deal with Cesar, something like this had happened.

'If this is true, our plan won't work.' He thought with an ugly expression on his face.

Still, he was willing to try!

'I'll see what I can do. If I have to improvise, so be it!' He decided and made his way through the streets in front of him.

...

At the same time, a few dozen kilometers from Millfall, a group of 8 people, 6 level 5 Acolytes, and 2 Low-level Mages were camped in a well-wooded area next to a small stream.

There, a young man Jasmine and Layla knew well, stood beside the companions he had managed to gather over the past few weeks.

After many conversations, promises, and risks, Mark had managed to put together a group he thought would be strong enough to deal with Cesar!

Knowing they would be in Millfall in less than a day, he stopped the group in this area to discuss their plans again before putting them into action.

"... So I urge you to be as careful as possible. Jasmine's life will be in danger if you show yourselves. But if something happens to her, I'm afraid even we will be hunted down by her terrible father." Mark finished speaking and reminded some of the men who were more difficult for him to control who Jasmine's father was and how they could end up very badly if her life were lost.

"Don't worry, Mark. We know Jasmine's value." A bald man with closed eyes and a strange smile said as his fellow faction members smiled at Mark.

"We'll take care of everything, Mark. Don't worry." An old acquaintance of Mark's stood and said this to his friend while touching one of the man's shoulders.

"I hope so. But don't underestimate that damned Cesar. I don't know where he gets his powers from, but he's a monster. Be as careful as possible with him." He pointed that out again.

"Let's see what that young man can do." A man with a completely tattooed face and no hair on his head commented.

"But it doesn't matter how strong he is. Will he be able to withstand the power of a faction with Mages? Don't worry, Mark, your rival is already finished. He just doesn't know it yet. We'll save your little friend from him.

I just hope you can keep your promises."

"Of course."

Chapter 287 Were You Sleeping?

On Casey's property, in a simple apartment in Millfall...

Two very well-dressed women with veils over their faces stood at Casey's front door and called out to him.

After a moment, the door opened after several security mechanisms were moved.

When they saw the door open, the two level 5 women saw a man with tanned skin, shirtless, looking at them as if he had just woken up.

"Mister Amnesia, I'm here with my friend to solve our problem."

Hearing Jasmine's voice, Casey recognized who these women with the dark veils on their heads were and understood why they were there.

"Is this one of the people who was with you the day you attacked Cesar?" He asked as he led the way for them to enter his property.

Jasmine nodded affirmatively. "Yes, this is Layla, my friend. She's here to prove she hasn't given anyone any information about Cesar and that day."

"So that's it..." Casey drank a glass of water when he heard that, understanding why they had knocked on his door instead of Vicente's men coming to call him.

"Mister Amnesia, be careful going through her memories. Cesar promised me he wouldn't do anything bad to my friend if she proved her innocence and was willing to work with him." Jasmine said, trying to make sure this man wouldn't do anything dangerous to Layla.

"I know. You don't have to worry." Casey declared, motioning for Layla to take off her veil and sit in an armchair in the middle of the small apartment's living room.

"If there's nothing wrong, you can wait for Cesar to return from The Rocky Gorge to sign an agreement with him. In the meantime, you should..." He was saying when Jasmine took off her veil and looked at Casey strangely.

"When he gets back? Haven't you heard the latest news?" Jasmine exclaimed.

"What latest news?"

"Cesar returned almost an hour ago, Mister Amnesia! What have you been doing? Sleeping?" Jasmine asked, surprised that someone so important didn't know that.

"I was meditating. What happened?" He opened his eyes wider, much more attentive now that Jasmine had caught his eye.

"Cesar came back from The Rocky Gorge with the 3rd stage basilisk. Somehow, he tamed the beast!" Layla was the one who shocked Vicente's associate.

"What?"

...

While Casey was getting the latest news from Jasmine and Layla, the first groups of the royal army returning from The Rocky Gorge because of the basilisk finally arrived in Millfall!

Traveling by land was much slower than traveling by air. Even though the groups of soldiers hunting in the forest had been recalled to Millfall almost simultaneously with the basilisk's departure, they took much longer to return to the city than the creature did.

As a result, when the first groups arrived in Millfall, they were filled with fear and anxiety, fearing that something worse had happened.

But when they realized there were no signs of destruction in the city, the groups of soldiers would soon discover what had happened.

Among them, Commander Christopher Hogan's group, to which Nova belonged, would learn of Cesar's incredible feat with much more surprise than the others.

As shocking as it was for everyone to discover that a 2nd-stage magician had mastered a 3rd-stage beast, it was even more shocking for those who had known Cesar the longest.

That's because they knew that he was just an Apprentice weeks ago!

For those who saw Cesar now, there was no way to know his age or how talented he was just by looking at his current achievements. But his accomplishments were much more extreme for those who had followed his story longer and knew how young he was.

Nova was particularly startled to discover that Cesar had mastered the powerful basilisk that had forced her and him to flee from The Rocky Gorge weeks ago.

When she discovered his growth, she was naturally annoyed, feeling that she had to raise her own magic level as soon as possible, or this outlaw would overtake her.

...

At the royal army post in Millfall...

Nova was with some of the Captains from that post, talking about what had happened and how they had been forced to give up the hunt for the basilisk halfway through. It was frustrating for them all.

But as some of the strongest Acolytes from the outpost were doing so, news of Brody Wright's demise reached them.

"People, the bloody Brody has been found dead! The Scarlet Syndicate is under new command!" A level 5 blonde woman said as she sat on one of the benches around the table in the headquarters cafeteria where Nova's group was chatting.

"What?" A black-haired man listened in amazement. "Right now? Isn't that too much of a coincidence for you?" He asked.

Nova said nothing, but she agreed wholeheartedly. Brody dying after Cesar returned to the city with the basilisk was very strange.

Considering how the two were connected, it wasn't hard for Nova to connect Brody's death to Cesar!

But even though Cesar killing Brody could cause problems for the leader of the Mazzanti family due to the prohibition on assassinations in the cities of the kingdom, who would demand justice?

The Scarlet Syndicate had used the excuse that they had found their leader dead and were effectively under new management.

With no one to denounce Cesar's crime and Brody's body likely already destroyed, there was no evidence of the Mazzanti family leader's possible crime!

'Damn it, Cesar!' Nova clenched her fists as she stood.

"Nova, where are you going?" The blonde woman wearing the same uniform as Nova asked as she looked at the blue-haired woman walking away.

"I'm going to the Mazzanti family. I want to see what Cesar is up to."

"Are you crazy? He's got the basilisk on his side. It'll be dangerous." One of the soldiers said.

"So what? I'm a Captain of the Seidel Kingdom! Will he dare to do anything against me?" She said confidently, eager to discover what that man had in mind.

As her great rival in this city, Nova didn't want to stay away from Cesar. To best prepare against him, she needed to be close to find him.

That's what she thought, so she left the barracks soon, taking advantage of the free time she would have on her post-mission leave.

In part, she was curious to see the basilisk, but what interested her most was the ascending Cesar Mazzanti!

Chapter 288 A Win-Win Situation

While Nova went to the Mazzanti family headquarters, Vicente was still at the Scarlet Syndicate headquarters.

As he stood before the key members of this local underworld faction, he saw a dozen men kneeling before him, swearing their eternal allegiance to him.

After killing Brody dozens of minutes ago, Vicente had remained at this post, ordering the faction members to spread the news of the former leader's death and call for the rise of a new boss for the group.

This public figure was Brody's former right-hand man, who would now act on his behalf.

Vicente was the one who would be the real boss of the Scarlet Syndicate, the one who would actually control the largest group of local "entrepreneurs"!

Yes, the Scarlet Syndicate was a group officially seen as a faction of businessmen and mercenaries acting for the good of Millfall.

They were the controllers of official business in Millfall, providers of necessary services, and taxpayers of the realm who paid their tariffs on time.

From the point of view of the law, they were merely a society of people with similar interests who profited from providing local services.

Because they were a non-military group, a society, they could act together without exceeding the limits of warriors in their strength so as not to attract the army's attention.

Because of this, they could operate and were too valuable for Vicente to just throw them away!

Vicente had previously considered destroying the Scarlet Syndicate. But when he thought about creating a power vacuum in Millfall with opportunities for many people, he realized he wouldn't have the people to support a fast-growing family for these businesses to come to him. As a result, he would likely have future disputes with powers that would take some of that faction's business along with him.

To avoid that and to keep almost everything he could absorb locally, he decided to spare the Scarlet Syndicate and turn his relationship with them 180 degrees.

From being a subordinate, he would become the boss of that faction!

After making his decision and giving his first orders, he finally had the chance to meet his new men, a group that had over 100 people.

When he saw the few levels 3 and 4 Acolytes of the faction, he said. "Perhaps some of you are afraid of the changes that will occur from now on. But do not fear. My main interest is to improve your operations, so don't think I'm going to purge your group.

Not all of you will have access to me or my main interests, but your operations will continue or even develop to new levels.

My interest is to multiply what you are capable of. I hope you're ready for that."

"Yes, boss!"

The group of men said, knowing there was nothing more for them to say.

Vicente continued. "For now, continue your operations as usual. The upper echelon of your group will hand over your operations to my people in the next few days. Only after that will we make any changes to our business."

Vicente tapped a man beside him on the shoulder and said. "Waylon will be acting as a leader on my behalf. So make sure you treat him as your leader."

Everyone there looked at Waylon and saw no problem in doing what Vicente ordered.

Vicente prepared to leave, heading for his basilisk on the estate's roof. But before he left, he looked back and said in a low tone. "Oh, right, don't fuck with me. At my side, you'll have plenty of opportunities. But if you make stupid mistakes, be prepared to pay with your lives."

With that threat, Vicente left, leaving several frightened men in a cold sweat from what had happened.

"What are we going to do?" One of them asked.

"We're going to take advantage. Next to Cesar, we'll be great like never before!" Said a level 3 Acolyte, considering the individual power of their new leader, the weapons of the Mazzanti family, and the basilisk.

With Cesar Mazzanti at their side, they could grow beyond Millfall and become as big as some of the biggest underworld groups in the province!

...

Meanwhile, Rory was meeting with the Mazzanti family's new professionals, using his real identity as he didn't want to alert these young people's relationship with Cesar.

Their meetings would now take place at Zander's tavern, so they were currently in a more secluded area of that establishment, eating and drinking like all the other patrons.

However, no matter how neutral their expressions were, they were all more or less excited inside.

Everyone there already knew about the latest news.

Rory was anxious to return to the Mazzanti estate to talk to Vice about what had happened at The Rocky Gorge. Meanwhile, the four next to him felt good about making a deal and then discovering that their new business would be much better than they had imagined.

"When can we see Vicente?" Lukas asked.

"I don't know. You can always approach him if he acts in public with his real identity." Rory replied.

"What about our missions? I imagine he's got good resources there, right? He'll certainly need us to produce items with his new resources." The group's engineer commented, in the dark about the Mazzanti family's wealth from the robbery of Casa Irwin.

They knew that Vicente was in The Rocky Gorge. Since he had managed to subdue the basilisk, they hoped he had also collected valuables that might be in the beast's nest.

With more resources, from this woman's point of view, Vicente would use their skills!

"I think so. I still need to talk to him to understand our real situation, but you'd better get ready. We'll be sending you ingredients and resources to work with soon." Rory replied according to what they had imagined.

The four didn't know that the resources from the basilisk's nest would include those from the Irwin family.

Until the night before, Vicente's group hadn't been able to show too much buying power, as that would alert the local powers to coins that Cesar Mazzanti wasn't supposed to have.

But now that he's back, everything would be different!

Vicente had collected the equivalent of a few thousand gold coins in that nest. But no one outside his family would have any way of knowing exactly how much had been collected in the basilisk's nest.

That was the Mazzanti family's chance to openly use some of the resources generated by the Irwin family's theft without provoking suspicion!

Chapter 289 The Stones in the Way

As the leader of the army post in Millfall gathered with the other soldiers from the Commander's rank, he held a dented silver arrow in his hands as he looked at his colleagues.

"I picked this up at the spot where the basilisk faced a powerful opponent a few days ago," Christopher commented as he looked at Peter, Arthur, and Alex, the Mages sent by the army to help with the basilisk problem.

Of these men, Peter, the emissary from the kingdom's capital, the strongest there, a Mid-level Mage, looked over and saw that Christopher had something on his mind. "Where do you want to reach with this?"

None of them were in a good mood. As much as their mission wasn't to get the basilisk's body but to protect Millfall from the threats of the nearby beasts, they didn't like how the problem had been solved.

After starting their mission, these men wanted to collect the basilisk's body and the items in the creature's nest, thus getting a better return on their mission.

But Cesar's deed had ended all that, and now they felt the frustration of having to return home without having fought or earned the bonuses they had expected.

Christopher said. "The place where I found this arrow was where Cesar had his first fight with the basilisk. I don't know how he defeated it, but it definitely wasn't in that first fight."

"What does that mean?" Arthur asked his younger brother.

The local post-Commander said. "Before they fought in that area, I think Cesar collected a wild 3rd-stage herb in that place. As soon as I arrived, I felt its medicinal aura in the area, and I can vouch for its value.

I believe that herb provoked his fight with the basilisk, but since Cesar managed to tame the creature, I believe he still has such a resource with him..."

"Oh?" The three Mages looked at each other, understanding what Christopher was getting at with the arrow.

"If we act together, we can take the herb from him without fighting." Peter got right to the point.

Even though Cesar was strong enough to defeat the basilisk, and he and Bart were probably as strong as 2 or 3 of them, with 4 Mages there, they were confident of defeating those two!

"Little brother, I didn't expect you to surprise me like this," Arthur said with a smile, remembering how terrible he had felt being unable to stop Cesar earlier.

But now he had an excellent motivation to act against Cesar!

He would never do anything against such a guy without a good reason, even outside the law. After all, there was no reason for him to act against someone who followed the rules of the kingdom and who would not bring him any benefit.

But since Cesar had something so valuable in his hands, it was worth considering something darker...

Peter was a Mid-level Mage, someone who could benefit greatly from something like a 3rd-stage herb. He then clenched his fists and prepared to commit a 'minor' crime against Cesar.

"I think everyone here agrees that we must act against him. If we do that, we'll possibly have the body of a basilisk and a valuable herb to share."

"Hmm, how would we deal with them?"

They began to talk about it.

...

Meanwhile, outside the Mazzanti estate, Vicente had just landed on the roof of his property when he felt a powerful aura coming from inside the building.

Leaving Bart behind and telling it to wait for him on the roof, Vicente ran to the inside of his property, where a Low-level Mage was waiting for him as orange flames covered his surroundings.

Entering with his mask on, Vicente felt the high temperature of the area where the man was sitting in a lotus position on the ground, quietly meditating at the entrance to his property.

'What the hell is this?' Vicente wondered as he looked at the man who clearly had fire-based powers.

On the area's outskirts, several of the family's soldiers were watching this Mage, but they didn't point their weapons at him or even act dangerously.

"Boss!" One of the level 2 Acolytes in the group finally saw Vicente's back and sighed, as neither he nor the others there knew how to deal with a Mage.

"Boss, this man came here a few minutes ago looking for you. He said he wouldn't leave until he talked to you, and he's been meditating here ever since." One man said, sweating profusely, considering the temperature of the room.

Even the paint on the walls closest to the Mage was melting, something strange to see.

However, Vicente didn't find the situation strange after hearing that this person was behind him.

Meditation made you vulnerable. But there was a way to protect oneself and meditate literally anywhere.

It would be enough for the magician to use some of their powers to influence the free elements in the environment and thus provoke a reaction like the one on the magician's body in Vicente's residence.

Those flames couldn't hurt the Mage's body, but anyone weaker than him who tried to get close to him would end up very badly if those flames touched them!

Having decided to wait for Vicente while he meditated, the man's action was not to threaten the Mazzanti family group but to keep him out of danger while he waited.

It was a strange attitude, but it wasn't necessarily a threat to the group.

Vicente sighed when he realized this and said to the man in a low voice. "I am here. Come to my office when you're done."

With that, Vicente made his way to his office while the Mage from Ironcrest gradually left his meditative state.

After only a minute, the flames around his body faded, and he smiled as he opened his eyes.

'Cesar Mazzanti, huh? It looks like you've grown up a lot since you were at Ironcrest.' Kohen Reeves thought to himself as he ignored Vicente's men watching him.

'It seems that your talent is truly unparalleled... But how is that possible? I don't remember any great talents emerging from this province in recent years. Where did you come from? Who are you?' He asked himself, aware of the data from the Awakening Temple for the entire Scott Province but also aware that Cesar was very young.

Since there was no record of someone like Cesar coming to light, this Congregation of Revelation member was naturally curious.

When he entered Vicente's office, he had a smile on his face, wondering how to deal with this young man whom he and his companions wanted to bring into their faction, regardless of the methods.

"Cesar Mazzanti, my name is Kohen Reeves. I come from the Awakening Temple in Ironcrest."

Chapter 290 Tempting Proposal

"Ironcrest?" When Vicente heard the last words, he felt sweat form on his body as a drop dripped down his forehead.

His main thought was not about his passage through Ironcrest and how the people there knew about his yellow pentagram. Instead, his mind immediately turned to his situation with Jasmine and the man, Mark, who had yet to show up after their encounter weeks ago.

Vicente still didn't know about Layla's return to Millfall and his current situation with Jasmine and Casey. So when he heard the words of that Mage, he felt every fiber of his body tense.

That was a member of the Congregation of Revelations!

If that was why this blond man was standing before him, then the comfortable situation he had just reached in this city was about to get worse.

'Shit! Don't tell me that...'

While he was thinking the worst, Kohen said. "Cesar, you're impressive. Your accomplishments are extraordinary. With such unusual talents, I doubt that your future lies in this town.

I would like to invite you to join my group at the Congregation of Revelation. In our group, you will have countless opportunities and an open path to positions outside the kingdom where you can truly develop your full potential."

"Huh?" Vicente opened his mouth, immediately changing his expression as his mask protected him from revealing too much of his feelings to that man.

'Isn't he here for Jasmine? Or is this some kind of strange strategy to lure me into a trap?' He thought the worst, still slightly uncomfortable with Kohen's presence before him but less tense than a moment ago.

"That... I don't know what to say. I never thought I'd get a visit like this." Vicente said in a sincere, noticeable tone even though his voice was distorted by mana.

Kohen smiled when he heard it, but considering Cesar's talents, he wasn't the least bit shocked. "You're being modest, Cesar. Someone capable of absorbing a yellow pentagram after becoming an Acolyte would have a place in the greatest forces on the continent.

Of course, you would be studied by others and would have to prove yourself in order to receive opportunities. But someone like you can do very well anywhere.

Vicente took a few breaths to calm his heart. "Senior Reeves, I thought the Congregation of Revelation only accepted new members of the 1st stage, newly awakened people without much history and free of compromising relationships. But I'm already a level 3 Acolyte, and I'm involved with a dozen local powers.

Would you accept me even if I don't fit your expectations?"

The Congregation of Revelation only accepted 1st stage members.

As the monopolist of the Awakening in Polaris Realm, the Congregation of Revelation used its temples to monitor the emergence of talents throughout the continent.

Whenever someone with aptitudes and abilities desired by the faith appeared on the continent, the organization would try everything possible and impossible to bring them over to their side.

Often, these young people didn't even have a chance to leave the temple that awakened their powers before they were invited to join the organization.

Since one could rarely escape the norm and was bound by the limits of one's talents, the organization could usually attract the vast majority of the talents it wanted to its side. However, it was possible for some talents to go unnoticed or even to develop more than the temple thought possible.

Chance could affect the magical path, even though most of one's destiny was determined at the Awakening.

Kohen and his associates at the Ironcrest temple thought Cesar was one of those rare flukes!

When events like Vicente occurred, there were basically three alternatives for members of this faith. The first was to try to bring him over to their side, which would not be an easy process, as the temple did not normally accept new people above the 1st stage, as their indoctrination was less effective on stronger or more experienced people.

The second was to eliminate such individuals if their powers threatened the continuity of the temple. And the third was to ignore such cases since the existence of one person or another would not necessarily jeopardize the temple's future.

If someone's power wasn't too celestial, there was little chance it would reach its peak and become a threat.

Was it worth chasing someone who would probably die before becoming relevant? Was it worth the risk of attracting the attention of the entire continent for someone who, even if successful, would pose no threat to the temple's operations?

Thus, given the alternatives, there were no known cases among people outside this faith of members joining the organization outside the known rules.

Cases like Vicente's were either eliminated or ignored.

Kohen then said. "It's really not ideal for someone of your level and so compromised to join us. But there are cases of people similar to you who have been accepted into the temple in the past.

Of course, you won't be accepted right away. But if you join my faction, you can gradually gain the temple's trust. One day, when you become a Mage Sovereign, you can pass a test and be fully accepted, with all the rights of ordinary members who joined our faith after their Awakening.

Vicente was surprised to hear that there were cases of such people joining such a select group. But he wasn't so enthusiastic about this invitation and asked. "What kind of responsibilities and rights would I have until then, Senior Reeves? I don't want to seem like I'm refusing your invitation. Still, I have things to do that I wouldn't want to give up unless the benefits were really advantageous."

Kohen nodded, liking Cesar's style. As much as this young man questioned him, he was cautious with his words and seemed responsible.

Kohen had an adventurous personality and liked to fight. However, when it came to serious matters, he was cautious and liked to deal with more or less cautious people like himself.

"In the short term, you would only be a guest of our faith. As a guest, you would have some basic rights, such as assistance in the temples, asylum, access to information and spells, and missions and opportunities commensurate with your level.

In return, you would have some responsibilities, such as helping solve problems in designated temples, protecting towns, and completing missions. But you can choose for yourself. There are many options, and the temple doesn't tell its guests what to do.

That would be your responsibility to the temple. Until you become a full member, you will be a guest, especially a guest of my group. Then you would have responsibilities and rights with us, too.

For now, we offer you our support. And all you have to do for us is become stronger and fulfill your missions for the temple. Eventually, we'll charge you for the support when you become stronger."

Vicente listened to Kohen's entire offer and realized becoming a guest of this faith wasn't so bad.