

The Mafia 361

Chapter 361 Arriving at the Auction (1)

By late afternoon on the auction day, there was no time left for people to arrive in town to attend the special event.

With the end of the day approaching and the local temperature dropping after a sunny day, the long-awaited auction was only three hours away from starting.

But even with hours to go, the area around the Millfall Theater, where the auction would take place, was already buzzing with activity.

Rarely seen railings blocked some paths leading to the theater area's side streets. In contrast, several others separated the sidewalks and streets leading to the venue.

Several people, curious to see the arrival of the auctioneers, were already on the city's outskirts, crowding the edges of the sidewalks as they waited for the carriages of people who would soon arrive for today's event.

For the vast majority of people in this city, it wasn't easy to see powerful nobles and Mages. Therefore, even though none of these curious people had anything to gain by being there, hundreds of people arrived every minute to join the crowd that would be watching the arrival of the auction participants.

While the common people prepared to watch the auctioneers arrive, the soldiers of the royal army held their positions every ten meters, concentrating on keeping the area organized and preventing chaos.

Amidst the people's waiting and the work of many soldiers in the area, a large, well-made, and beautiful carriage would begin its journey through the area under observation, heading for the theater in the center of the city.

Seeing such a cart with the symbol of the royal family pass by, the crowd raised the noise in the area as they saw the vehicle with some of the materials that would be used in the auction arrive along with the auctioneers.

Only one person was in charge of the entire event during the auction. But behind the curtains, other professionals worked to maintain the data related to the auction, bureaucratic things that were necessary everywhere, whether on Earth or in Polaris Realm.

"This is going to be a busy night..." One of the men arriving at the local theater with the group sent by the royal family commented. "This city will suffer tonight. By dawn, we'll have a transformed Millfall."

"Will it?" A well-dressed middle-aged woman asked. "Some of the forces that will participate in this auction are not the kind that are easily suppressed. Few will have the courage to challenge them."

"Yes, but there are 20 items to be auctioned, but 13 of them are 3rd-grade ones... With over 30 Mages in Millfall tonight, things could get out of hand quickly." Another man commented in agreement with the first man's words.

"Anyway, it's none of our business." The leader of these people, an older-looking man with a beard and white hair, said in a calm tone. "Nothing will happen inside the theater. As for outside, it's nothing to do with us. It's the army's job to guarantee the royal laws in the city."

The three people with this man, a High-level Mage, immediately agreed with him.

After the arrival of this group, who would organize what remained to be organized, the minutes passed, and soon Nina and Eve would arrive at the auction site to watch the arrival of the event's participants.

Some families used events like this to keep in touch with other powers of equal or higher status, so these two would soon see the first groups of participants arrive, even though it would be dozens of minutes before the auction began.

Nina would see the Mages and several nobles from outside the Millfall region arrive in luxurious carriages, as well as members of the Awakening Temple and other forces in the kingdom.

The local blacksmith association was represented by its council elders. At the same time, similar groups from other professions would arrive well in advance.

Nina's eyes sparkled as she watched, somewhat impressed by the number of Mages present in the city that day.

'I want to reach that level one day.' She thought to herself as she looked around with a smile.

While admiring the power of people similar to the one who had taken Lauren, she saw the arrival of a famous local group, the Mazzanti family.

Nina and virtually the entire crowd, which now numbered over 4,000 people, looked in their direction as several men armed with rifles and body armor walked alongside a metal carriage.

"Tsk! The Mazzanti family is imposing! In such a short time, it has grown from nothing to the point where it can compete with the leading powers of the city."

"Cesar is a genius. What do you expect from him? Growing up is very easy for him. Don't be so surprised!"

"But will he be all right? He's getting into more and more frightening trouble. I myself still don't know why the Viscount hasn't dealt with him yet..."

Several people in the area commented to each other as Vice's carriage drove by, with only him and Layla in it.

Rory had stayed behind to protect the family headquarters. At the same time, Layla wanted to help Vicente solve his problems quickly so they could rescue Jasmine.

"Is everything going to be okay?" She asked as she looked at Vice.

"I can't guarantee anything," Vicente commented as he looked in the direction where Nina and Eve were, smiling under his mask. "It's uncertain nights like this that change fates. Let's stick to our plans and be careful.

If we do what we plan, we will have no regrets."

As they spoke, a woman cloaked in darkness and riding a strange horse came running through the area, quickly approaching Vice's carriage.

As she passed them, Vicente and Layla watched as she looked in their direction.

'Who are they?' The woman asked herself, noticing how unusual this group was but also how the crowd seemed very interested in these people.

But she didn't waste much time thinking about it and soon made her way to the theater.

Meanwhile, in the carriage behind Vicente's, a black-haired, sweet-looking woman was standing next to a man weaker than her, a Low-level Mage.

"Miss Mercer, what should we do?" This man asked the Mid-level Mage in front of him.

She kept looking toward the Mazzanti family's metal carriage, thinking about what she had heard about Cesar and that family.

She had heard everything the local powers knew about House Mazzanti, from the fact that Cesar was currently at level 5, had a Mid-level Mage basilisk, but also a special weapon model that seemed very problematic.

Her group didn't know where Casey and Layla were, two of the people they were supposed to eliminate on their current mission. But they thought these people were also somehow connected to Cesar, which meant that all their local problems could be solved through him.

But with so much power on his side, Cesar wouldn't fall so easily!

"Let's wait." She said. "Viscount Symons seems to have big problems with Cesar, and Cesar also has things to settle with him. Let's give them a chance to face each other after the auction. We'll act after that!"

Chapter 362 Arriving at the Auction (2)

As Vicente and Layla arrived at the theater, Shelby arrived in a carriage different from her family's, next to only Molly and Mira.

The orange-haired woman had a serious look, ignoring the crowds on the way to the local theater, while her blonde friend saw how anxious this woman was.

Mira asked her. "Are you and your friend acting tonight?"

Shelby didn't answer right away, but she was sincere after a moment of silence. "Yes. Today is a big day for me. If I don't achieve my goals today, then everything I aim for will be out of reach."

"Do you intend to deal with him?"

"The less you know, Mira, the better for you. The city will be in chaos after today. This will be an opportunity for us, but great dangers will be ahead. It's best not to know things that will complicate your life."

Mira understood her friend's words and sighed, imagining the support she had given Vicente, and the fact that Shelby's wedding was so close meant that some heads would roll.

'They'll probably eliminate Marcus... But what about Viscount Symons? He is now a Mid-level Mage. It won't be easy to deal with someone connected to him... Besides, the army has recently suffered a tragedy, and soldiers are already coming here from the capital.'

The blonde woman sighed as she thought about the number of complicated problems in Millfall lately.

'All this will only make sense if the Viscount falls... But can they bring down someone so strong?' She wondered somewhat pessimistically.

But while they arrived at the theater for the evening, Viscount Symons' party arrived in a much more positive mood.

Marcus stood beside his mother and father with a broad smile on his face, waiting for this great event to begin.

He would marry Shelby in the next few days and knew his old man would buy something at this auction to give to him and Shelby.

Considering the number of valuable items that were rumored to be in this auction, he couldn't help but feel anxious about the evening.

'With the help of my father and the wedding gifts, I might be able to raise my magical foundation to the level of a Mage within the next 12 months.' Thought the blond man as he watched the crowds on the sidewalks.

Meanwhile, the Viscount smiled as he thought about his own goals.

'After Marcus' wedding, I'll take care of that brat Cesar before he gets any further. The wretch is progressing very fast. I'd better put an end to him once and for all.

Everything will be in my favor with Cesar dying and Shelby marrying Marcus. It will only be a matter of time before I have access to the main branch of House Staples and the backing of the Marquis!'

As Vicente had thought, it was not only the Staples family that would benefit from Marcus and Shelby's marriage. The Symons family had much to gain because Shelby's family was a branch of another noble family in the kingdom, a family that held the title of Marquis in another province.

The main branch of the Staples family and the Millfall branch were not close. However, there was nothing in the magic world that couldn't change.

Today, the Staples of Millfall are not relevant to the main branch. But with the marriage to the Symons family, things could change.

With that change, Viscount Symons might be able to start talks with a Marquis, a good start for him to get closer to the title of Count.

'I could reach the title of Count in the next five years!' He smiled as he placed a hand on one of his wife's thighs and squeezed it with interest.

"Darling..." The Viscount's wife looked at him with a smile, seeing that her husband might be excited to do something more after the auction...

So, all those who would be attending the evening auction arrived at the local theater and soon followed the red carpet from the building's entrance to their respective seats.

The local theater building basically had two levels. The first was the common grandstand, where there wasn't much privacy or services.

Usually, less wealthy people stayed in this area. Still, on this night, those who were curious about the powers involved in this auction, such as children and students, would stay in such an area.

The second level was the VIP rooms, which were spread over three floors but offered very similar services, with individual bathrooms, snacks and drinks, and meeting and socializing areas.

An auction like tonight's could easily take two or three hours from start to finish. But between the start and the end of the auction, people might become more or less interested in the items being auctioned.

In these situations, it was very common for people to rest, eat, or even negotiate with other people at the auction while waiting for the items they were interested in.

Of course, admission was not free, and each group had to pay a fee based on the number of people and the area where they would be staying.

Vicente had paid a fee of 100 gold coins for a room at this event, a hefty sum, but one that couldn't compare to the total value of the items to be auctioned tonight.

So he and Layla made their way to the location designated by the event organizers, doing the same as the other attendees.

Halfway to their location, Shelby and her group encountered a group from Dryhaven that included a green-haired woman, a blond man, and a middle-aged man.

"Shelby Staples..." The green-haired woman, Livia Norris, smiled at the sight of her old colleague.

"Livia..." Shelby's eyes narrowed as she saw Livia take one of young master Grant's hands.

"I forgot your family was from Millfall... Haha, I didn't expect to see you here today, Shelby." Livia said with an exuberant smile on her face. "by the way, I heard you're engaged. Is that right?"

"Yes, that's right." Shelby smiled stiffly at Livia, imagining that this green woman had something on her mind.

Livia narrowed her eyes and said. "I'm engaged too, haha, what a coincidence. Shelby, have you met my fiancé? This is Nicolas Grant. The young master and heir of the Grant family." She gave Shelby a superior look.

"Who was your fiancé again?"

"Marcus Symons."

"Yes, that's right, little Marcus Symons." Livia smiled, showing Shelby that they were different even in terms of future partners.

Nicolas didn't know their history and formally introduced himself to Shelby.

"Miss Staples, nice to meet you. I've heard a lot about your family."

"The pleasure is mine, young master Grant." Shelby smiled graciously at him. "Anyway, I hope to see you again soon. I'm going to my office now."

"See you later." Livia left with her companions, a few levels happier for the moment.

Chapter 363 Conversations Before the Auction Begins

Upon entering her VIP room, Livia sat down on a sofa in the living area of her room, where up to six people could be comfortably accommodated in a cozy, old-looking, but very nice room.

Some snacks and drinks were lying around, but she ignored them as she smiled and caught Nicolas' eye.

"What's up with you?" He smiled as he sat across from her and picked up some grapes.

"Shelby and I went to the same Royal Academy. We have a history." Livia said as she remembered her days at the academy, remembering things from more than five years ago.

"Oh? What kind of history? Were you friends by any chance?"

Livia laughed. "Friends? No, we've never been friends. We're more like rivals."

"That's..." He stopped eating while Livia's advisor closed his eyes and shook his head negatively.

Livia hated Shelby!

"That little woman thinks she's so beautiful, so intelligent. She was always annoying, saying she didn't need a man and would make her own way... Tsk! I hate her attitude." Livia said as her green eyes sparkled.

"I'm going to do everything in my power to get in her way tonight." She muttered as she looked at her father's envoy. "Robert, pay attention to the offers she makes. I'll buy all the items she wants!"

The old man had already noticed this problem approaching him and asked. "Is that really something interesting, lady? We're here for Blister Avens. If we spend more than we should, won't His Grace see a problem?"

Nicolas saw the look on Livia's face and smiled. "Sir Marshall, don't worry, we'll do as Livia says. I'll speak to His Grace myself if necessary. I also have coins with me if necessary."

"That..." The old knight of the kingdom hesitated, not knowing what to do.

'Young master Grant... Why are you like this? Why are you supporting the lady's exaggerations?' The old man found himself in a terrible situation, unable to stop Livia from making a fool of herself.

Unfortunately for him, Livia and Nicolas were one of the rare cases of aristocrats engaged by their parents, who had fallen in love as they got to know each other better.

Nicolas loved Livia and would do anything to please her. Even things that would get him into trouble later!

Livia smiled as she listened to her fiancé, biting her lip as she stood up and sat on his lap.

"Nicolas..."

...

Meanwhile, in the Mazzanti family's VIP room...

Vicente's men had mostly stayed by his carriage, while only three people had accompanied him and Layla.

But only he and Layla were in the VIP room they had been given, a room on the third floor of the theater.

When she got there, she looked at him and saw him going up to the balcony area of that room, where there was a good view of the stage where the auction would take place.

She took off her mask and asked. "Why don't you show me your face? We already have an agreement. I could never hurt you just by knowing your true identity."

"Why do you want to see my face, Layla? Do you want to know if I'm handsome?" Vicente teased as he watched the theater's lower level grow more crowded, still with his back to her.

"I want to talk to you and look into your eyes. I want to know if you're the real deal. I want to see if you have what it takes to do the things you promise." She said as she approached him.

Vicente turned to look at the gray-haired woman. "The real deal, huh?" He asked in an amused tone. "All right, Layla. I want to see if you have the same courage to say that looking into my eyes."

Removing his mask, Vicente showed his face to the woman, causing her eyes to narrow as she realized not only how young this guy was but also felt something familiar about him.

'This Magic Gem I've seen before...' She moved closer to Vicente, concentrating on this unique and wonderful thing.

"Layla, are you going to kiss me or something?" Vicente smiled as he held her arms, making her realize her situation, seeing herself so close to Cesar that it really looked like they were going to kiss.

She tried to take a step back, but Vicente took a step forward until he pinned her against one of the walls of the room.

"What are you doing?" She asked, feeling a bit nervous.

Vicente laughed as Layla's breathing rate increased, and this woman felt nervous.

"I did what you wanted, didn't I?" He asked, placing one of his hands on the wall as he looked into the woman's gray eyes.

Layla had a super-speed power, which affected her to a lesser extent even when she wasn't using her pentagrams. But she wasn't able to do something as simple as dodge Cesar now that he surrounded her.

"Are you... Are you really going to save Jasmine? Why haven't I heard from you in the last few days?" She asked after she had worked up the courage to do so.

Vicente answered her, still in this position. "Because I don't owe you anything, Layla. You told me to take care of my part and call you when everything was ready, didn't you? I'm doing what we agreed. I'll go in search of Jasmine once the situation is stable and our intelligence on the enemy is properly analyzed.

But we still have problems in the city, and my group is still dealing with information from The Faceless Ones faction."

"I... I'll trust you for now." She choked as she tried to move away from Vicente.

But just as she was about to move, he moved his other arm, blocking her way.

"What are you doing?" She asked him, her heart pounding loudly in her chest.

"I don't like being attacked like this, Layla." Vicente moved his face closer to hers, coming closer to her ear as he spoke more quietly. "You're either with me, or you're not. If you don't trust me, you'd better go now."

She clenched her fists and looked into his eyes as she moved her head to get a better look at him. "I understand. I won't question you like that anymore. Now, please leave me alone. Or are you one of those who force themselves on women?"

Vicente smiled at her as he moved closer, causing her to close her eyes. "I don't need this."

When she opened her eyes, Layla saw Vicente return to the balcony of their VIP room and breathed more deeply, feeling relieved when she noticed her sweaty body.

'That bastard knows how to scare. I thought he was going to attack me.' She stopped for a moment, remembering his scent and the rate of his breathing from moments ago.

But amid her thoughts, Layla saw the lights in the theater change before a female voice announced the start of the auction!

Chapter 364 Auction Rules

"Ladies and gentlemen, the 113th Scott Province Royal Auction is about to begin. Please take your seats." A melodious voice announced the moment everyone had been waiting for, and at the same time, the lights around the auction stage changed.

The audience immediately slowed their conversations as they took their seats, either in the general seating areas or on the balconies of the VIP rooms.

Vicente and Layla already had their masks on when they sat down on the balcony of their room, with him facing the darkened stage and she watching him from the side.

Then the female voice announced. "Please welcome our auctioneer for the evening, Sir Joshua Marks, representative of the Royal Chamber of Commerce, Head of the 2nd Auction Department."

The lights focused on a large red curtain above the stage, from which, moments after the previous speech, everyone saw a very well-dressed man in a black tuxedo emerge.

His eyes were clear, and he had a few wrinkles here and there that showed his age. But even though he was obviously a very experienced person, his haircut and beard made him look younger without taking away the respectful aura that age imposed on younger people.

But even if his appearance weren't so good, it wouldn't have made a difference. By not hiding his level, everyone at the auction could easily see that he was a strong, High-level Mage, someone powerful who shouldn't be ignored.

He smiled and looked at the audience when he stopped before the stage. "Welcome to the Millfall Theater. Tonight, we will hold a grand auction of items rarely found in the province or much of the kingdom.

Tonight, we have a total of 20 items to auction, all of which have been properly sorted and appraised. Our dear customers have a royal guarantee that each item is genuine and exactly what we will be presenting.

For those who wish to know more, our staff will distribute the technical evaluations of the items to be auctioned every 3 bidding rounds, starting now, before the first item is auctioned.

Please review the items carefully before bidding."

Auctions were rare in the Seidel Kingdom, as only the royal family was allowed to hold such events. But the black market did exist, and underworld groups held auctions.

At black market auctions, one would usually have to be careful with the items being auctioned, as it was not uncommon for fake items or items with inferior characteristics to those presented during the auction to be sold.

But this was obviously not the case with the royal family's auctions. The items in these royal family events had technical evaluations, and the reports for each of the items up for auction were available for anyone to check their validity.

If an item had a problem, that person could seek royal justice and even receive compensation if they were wronged.

But given the responsibility of the royal family and the quality of their service, few people distrusted the royal family's methods.

Still, most of the people at this auction were curious about the first three items to be auctioned off that evening, and soon, several VIP rooms were calling the many people attending this event.

Vicente was one of the people who activated his room's device, which sent out a call to this theater's attendees.

The auctioneer continued, going over the auction rules, while the attendees received the list of the first three items with the reports for each of them.

"Before we begin with the first item of the evening, I would like to mention the rules of this auction so that no one here loses their right to bid.

First of all, no fighting is allowed inside the building where the auction is being held. Anyone who attacks a competitor will be severely punished. Anyone using their aura or magical pressure to force themselves on their competitors will receive a warning and be banned from bidding on that item again.

Second, any threat or attempt to discourage new bids is prohibited. Any threatening comments made during the bidding process will be considered a violation of this rule, and the person making them will be banned from the event.

Third, auction items can only be purchased by bidding with COINS. We do not exchange coins for other resources of similar value. We only accept COINS. Failure to comply with this rule will result in the item being guaranteed to the second-highest bidder. The highest bidder will be fined 50% of the item's value and banned from participating in new auctions for 10 years.

Fourth, payments are made immediately after the end of bidding on a particular item.

Fifth, items will be collected in the collection area at the end of the auction..."

While Joshua was listing the rules, Layla and Vicente received the list of the first three items to be auctioned and their values.

As expected, the first items would be the lowest quality, three 2nd-grade items, one of which was armor, another a formation, and finally, a living plant with a pentagram on it.

It was possible for people to buy pentagrams in this world. Not only were there methods of storing pentagrams in their free form, such as what the staff at Seidel's Magic College wanted to do with Vicente's yellow pentagram, but one could also collect the living being behind it.

Vicente had already done this with the 3rd-stage herb. Still, it was also possible to do this with beasts and other beings capable of forming these magical essences.

With this possibility, one could even live as a permanent pentagram hunter and sell such beings behind these essences either at auctions like this one or through special shops.

That meant that wealthy people could easily get some of their pentagrams by buying such beings collected by others.

That was a quick and easy way to increase one's power, which normally only nobles or the rich could do.

'Interesting... This plant probably has a valuable pentagram. Otherwise, it wouldn't be in this auction.' Vicente thought before reading the report of the expert who had evaluated this resource.

As he did so, he saw that he was right. Such a plant would produce an orange Magic Pentagram when it was killed. It had an affinity with the elements of light and wood. Hence, the evaluator of such a resource estimated that the powers of this essence would somehow be related to healing or, rather, medical abilities.

'Eve has an affinity with the element of wood... It would be interesting if I could get my hands on this plant.' He remembered that Eve hadn't yet absorbed her second pentagram since the recent problems had prevented him from taking care of Nina and giving the blonde woman time to hunt it.

While Vicente and all the other auction participants were reading the report of the first items, the auctioneer finished explaining the rules.

"Very well, now that the rules have been established, we'll start bidding on the first item in 5 minutes. In the meantime, I'll show you the first item." Joshua said as he motioned with one hand to the left side of the stage.

As he did so, the lighting changed, and a portion of the stage was illuminated, showing everyone in the theater a box larger than an adult human, covered in a white cloth with the crest of House Seidel.

A mechanical sound rang out, and the cloth was subtly but quickly removed, revealing a glass box containing a puppet in armor.

This set of armor has a squared helm with a face guard shaped in the face of a demon. Attached to the forehead area are snake fang shaped ornaments.

The shoulders are fairly squared, very wide and large in size. They're decorated with several snakes on each side, they're one entangled mess of snake bodies and snake heads.

The upper arms are protected by squared, fully covering rerebraces, which sit nicely under the shoulderplates. The lower arms are covered by vambraces which have a masterfully crafted upper skeleton jaw attached on the outer sides.

The breastplate is made from many layers of smaller metal pieces, mimicking the scales of a reptile. It covers only the front, the back is where the attachment straps are and they offer no real protection.

The upper legs are covered by a skirt of several layered metal sheets reaching just below the groin. The lower legs are protected by greaves, which have a large sharkfin-like spike attached to each outer side.

Joshua introduced. "This is the Second Reptilian Skin, a 2nd-grade armor found in the depths of Barktara Isle. It is said to be able to protect its wearer from a full attack by a level 5 Acolyte, regardless of the wearer's power.

According to our evaluators, it can even dissipate much of the attack power of a Mage's blow, possibly saving its wearer's life..."

The auctioneer explained as he stood in the center of the stage, sometimes looking at the armor as he gestured, sometimes looking at the audience, mostly in the common seats.

That was a 2nd-grade armor, useful for those up to 2nd stage. As such, the Mages and their companions in the VIP lounges would have little interest in such a thing, and their chances of bidding would be low.

But this item could be of tremendous value to the people in the common area.

It must be said that not every item in this world is only for people of the same class. In other words, a 2nd-grade weapon could be used by people at any magic stage, from the 1st stage to the 4th stage.

Of course, it wouldn't make sense for a Sovereign to use a weapon limited to the Acolyte stage, but if someone wanted to, using such weapons wouldn't be a problem as long as they were careful with the amount of mana they used. As for a lesser magician using a higher level item, the big problem with that would be that they wouldn't be able to use 100% of the features of that particular item.

But while this might be bad for weapons, it wasn't necessarily a problem for defensive items!

Having a defensive item rated higher than your stage was like having super-efficient life insurance!

But there were some exceptions, and it wasn't always possible for someone to use something of a higher class than what was recommended for their magical stage.

That wasn't the case with the Second Reptilian Skin, so when the auctioneer announced the starting price, the people in the common area soon became excited, and many thought about bidding.

With each round of the auction, the auctioneer would present the item and give the participants a few moments to assess how much they wanted it and think about their limits. That's why he didn't start bidding as soon as he finished speaking, giving people time.

But soon, the five minutes he had promised were up, and the bids came in one by one.

"60 gold coins!"

"61!"

"62!"

...

"78 gold coins!"

"80!"

...

"88 coins!"

In just one minute, the price of the first item of the evening had reached almost double the price of 2nd-grade armor in ordinary shops.

But this was no ordinary armor. Its market value was 105 gold coins, and outside of auctions like this, one would never find it for a lower price.

The participants continued to compete fiercely for the armor until the highest bid reached 100 coins, and new bids became less frequent.

But the armor there was still below the fair price, and even if you had the coins, it wouldn't be easy to find a 2nd-grade item with 100% efficiency like this set.

So, there were people in this theater who were willing to pay even more than the fair price for the armor!

"115 gold coins!" Someone in the common area said more excitedly, arriving at a price that few were willing to pay.

Or rather, it wasn't that there weren't people willing to pay the fair price, but some were interested in other items, and if they promised higher bids, they might run out of coins to compete. Others simply didn't have as many gold coins on hand.

Not everyone was as wealthy as Vicente, who had thousands of gold coins on him!

"Since no one will bid higher for the Second Reptilian Skin, it will be auctioned off at the price of 115 gold coins to bidder 325!" The auctioneer announced, concluding the first sale of the night!

The winning bidder celebrated with his friends in the common areas while an attendant went to collect the coins.

At the same time, conversations swirled around as the event took its first break of the evening.

Between the end of a dispute and the presentation of the next item, there was a brief pause to ensure that the highest bidder would be honored. If not, the auctioneer would pass the item on to the second-highest bidder.

But nothing would go wrong with the sale of the first item of the evening, and soon, the second item, a formation, was auctioned off for 129 coins before Joshua finally presented Vicente's plant of interest.

"Now we'll move on to the third item of the evening..." He said as he motioned for the audience to quiet down and gestured to his right, where a small box on a stand was covered with a white cloth.

Chapter 366 Filipendula Jaburan

When the cloth covering the box fell off, everyone saw a small, bright green ball inside; the shape plants usually took when they felt threatened.

Everyone knew it was a plant just by looking at it.

The auctioneer then described what it looked like. "The Filipendula Jaburan is an extremely rare, tiny plant and can be found mostly in savannas. It blooms once a year for 1 week.

It has thick, toothed leaves, which are usually light green. It also grows small flowers, which can be red, light silver, light pink, and dark purple.

These plants grow in large groups, but controlling and maintaining their growth is challenging.

They can be cooked and eaten.

As a defense mechanism, the Filipendula Jaburan relies mostly on its surroundings to survive.

They rely on cloning themselves by growing a new specimen to reproduce.

The most interesting thing about it, however, is its affinity to the elements of light and wood, as well as the orange pentagram inside of it.

Whoever buys it will easily get a pentagram and will be able to use the rest of the plant's body to make a dish rich in mana and nutrients.

Filipendula Jaburan Soup is not only delicious but also has healing properties that can not only repair physical wounds but also restore magic foundations and raise the mana quality of those below the 3rd stage."

Everyone around heard the presentation words for the third item of the evening, while Vicente was determined to buy this item.

'Not only could this plant help Eve become stronger and gain a healing type ability, but Nina could drink its soup and improve her situation a little.' He imagined.

According to magic theory, a person's talents and magical form were usually determined at birth, more than 97% of the time. However, mutations were possible, and external events influenced the improvement or deterioration of talents and magical forms.

Little was known about how to influence such mutations, and any opinion on the subject was somewhat idiosyncratic and not widely accepted by scholars across the continent.

But even without knowing how positive it could be for his sister, whether it would change her situation zero or 100%, Vicente thought it was worth trying to obtain such a resource.

Even if it didn't change anything for her, he thought it would still be worth it because at least he would be trying something.

And there was no risk of it going wrong. Filipendula Jaburan's report said that even people without Magic Gems could consume it as food and that it would affect each person in proportion to their characteristics and powers.

The limit was people at the 2nd stage, the same magic realm as the plant.

"Very well, the starting price for bids on the Filipendula Jaburan is 90 gold coins, with a minimum increase of 1 coin per bid." The auctioneer said, letting those interested in the plant do their math. "You have 47 seconds to decide."

The conversation spread through the theater again as Layla saw Vicente pick up the bidding board, an item used at this event to organize the auction.

"Is anyone in your family compatible with this?" She asked him.

"Hmm, more or less."

"You know that anything we buy will draw the attention of the people at the auction to us, right?" She asked him. "Are you really going to raise our stakes for something like that?"

"Of course I will. If you're afraid, you can return to your hiding place while there's still time. I'm not afraid to attract people who are interested in something of this quality." Vicente commented in a serious tone. "If someone wants to die for this plant, I'll help them get what they want."

"Your arrogance will get you killed one day." She said as she turned her face to the stage and gave up arguing with Cesar.

Meanwhile, the signal for the bidding was given, and soon people started to bid.

"91 gold coins!"

"95 coins!"

"97!"

Then Vicente joined the auction, drawing the attention of many people to his VIP balcony.

"140 gold coins." He said calmly while his bidding board indicated he was ahead in the bidding for such a plant.

Immediately after his bid, the auctioneer looked over to where Vicente was standing and saw a level 5 masked person.

At the same time, the Viscount looked at Cesar and other local nobles in the vicinity and noticed that this mercenary was not there without his purchasing objectives.

Some of the people who attended such auctions went to see who would win each bid for the disputes that might take place after the auction.

When they saw that Cesar was there earlier, many local nobles thought he wouldn't bid on anything and would join the post-auction evening adventure.

But with his first bid, everyone saw that he wasn't just a profiteer waiting for an opportunity but that he intended to buy things.

'Vicente...' Shelby looked in his direction from where she stood.

Meanwhile, those who didn't know Vicente or Cesar, people from outside Millfall, noticed the first one from the VIP area bidding.

Livia looked at the two masked people and then at Shelby. "It seems the local powers are quite interested in these people." She commented to her two traveling companions.

"How strange. Why does even the Viscount seem to be interested in these people?" Livia's old advisor muttered, seeing that Viscount Symons looked a bit annoyed as he looked at Vicente.

Nicolas then gestured to one of the men who had come with his group and ordered. "Find out who these people are."

"Yes, young master Grant."

At the same time, Sarah gave Cesar a sharp look, seeing that he intended to spend his coins on this event.

"If any 3rd-grade defense items are up for auction later, we should join the auction if Cesar does. We can't let him take any 3rd-grade defense items." She commented to her companion at the auction.

"Yes, Miss Mercer."

While several Mages talked about Vicente, most of his competitors for the Filipendula Jaburan dropped out after the ridiculous increase in bids.

The fair value of the plant was 139 gold coins. But since he had already bid more than that so early in the auction, many interested parties thought it would be hard to surpass him.

But not everyone gave up!

"145 gold coins!" Someone in the general audience said, drawing the attention of the people of Millfall, who knew who Cesar was and how foolish it would be to bid against him.

Cesar was trying to take over that plant by the book. If anyone stood in his way, what would happen?

Cesar was a tyrant who could walk over the bodies of his enemies, according to many of the local nobles!

Vicente said. "150 coins."

"151!"

"What a fool..."

"Doesn't he know who he's bidding against?"

Murmurs spread through the theater as the value of the 2nd-stage plant increased.

Chapter 367 Another Classification of Items

"160 gold coins!" Vicente raised his bid even higher, speaking in a louder, more insistent tone.

The man arguing with Vicente, someone from outside Millfall, clenched his fists when he heard this and looked towards the third floor of the theater, where the young man's room was.

'Wretch!' This person cursed the masked man but couldn't continue bidding since he only had 158 gold coins for this auction.

Many other people there, including members of the Millfall Awakening Temple, were interested in the plant in question. But since Cesar was so interested in this item, no one from this city wanted to get involved in the dispute with him.

'That wretch is already at the end of the 2nd-stage! I don't know how he's doing it, but his mana is growing really fast!' A local nobleman who wanted such a plant also cursed Cesar, unhappy with the rapid growth of such a local mercenary.

The auctioneer didn't care about the local disputes and why so many people stopped bidding after Vicente joined the dispute. When he saw that no one else was raising their bids, he counted to three, ending the dispute over the Filipendula Jaburan.

"The winning bid in this contest belongs to Mister and Miss from room 33. For 160 gold coins, I close the sale of lot 3!" He banged his gavel on a small table in front of him.

With that, a few comments were made as the auction staff made their way back to the VIP rooms, carrying the reports for the next 3 items to be auctioned.

When a woman dressed very nicely in a black and white dress entered his VIP room, Vicente soon heard her demand the coins promised for the previous item.

"Here are the 160 gold coins." He gave them to her when he received a piece of paper that he had to sign indicating his responsibilities and rights regarding this purchase.

That would remain with the auction organization as proof, and if anything went wrong, it could be used against him in the future.

But this was all bureaucracy, and as soon as the woman confirmed the 160 gold coins, she closed the deal with Vicente and left, leaving the document with the reports on the next three items to be auctioned.

Upon reading the report, Vicente and Layla saw that the following 3 items were still 2nd-grade ones, this time with a green rating spell, a sword, and a pill.

What was a green rating? Well, some resources could be classified in two ways. In fact, all artificial items could be classified in two ways.

The first was the one that told you what kind of magician it was best suited for. For example, something of the 3rd grade would always be more suitable for a 3rd-stage magician. Some items of this classification might be useful for those who are weaker or stronger, but in general, their use by people other than those indicated would be a waste.

That was the usual classification of artificial items.

However, there was a second tier related to the item's quality within the first classification. This rank was the same as the talent class, from the lowest, red, to the highest, purple.

This ranking served to indicate what type of item was appropriate for each talent range. For example, a red spell was more appropriate for someone with a red talent. Green spells were more appropriate for people with green talents.

The higher the level, the more complex and powerful the tools, spells, and resources were.

But this complexity also meant that they were more difficult to learn. As amazing as it was to have something of a high level, it wasn't realistic for most people to have, let's say, a spell of a higher level than their talent because they wouldn't be able to understand it.

On the other hand, it was usually difficult to find good spells for sale or for free. As a result, more talented magicians often had several spells of lower quality than their talent.

However, some items didn't follow this classification because it didn't make sense in all cases. That was the case with items made by blacksmiths and resources made by alchemists.

In these two cases, the item with the highest EFFICIENCY or PURITY was almost always the best choice.

In the case of pills and potions, this was even more extreme. Highly talented people usually didn't need very challenging resources, while low-talent people needed the best resources to advance.

Because of exceptions like this, this second artificial item classification was not used for every type of resource or item.

But this classification served its purpose well in the case of spells.

Anyway, looking at the next items, Layla asked Vicente. "Are you going to keep buying things? This spell looks very nice. Since you've already bought something of value, it makes no difference whether you continue or stop."

"You're really annoying, Layla," Vicente muttered. "But I'm not participating in the next three disputes. As interesting as these items are, I have no urgent need."

And some of them will end up in our possession later..."

"Really?" She looked at him sideways as the auctioneer returned with the third item.

The auctioneer spoke again. "All right, now..."

...

After another 20 minutes, the next three 2nd-grade items would be auctioned off for between 150 and 190 gold coins each until the auction staff once again handed out the reports for the following 3 items.

This time, the first two 3rd-grade items to be auctioned that night appeared on the auctioneers' reports, including the Colored Tuna Brain that Nova's brothers had told Vicente about.

The last auction of the 2nd-grade item went relatively quickly, and hardly any of the VIP areas bothered to pay attention to the item being auctioned off for 195 gold coins. Several groups stopped to focus on the first 3rd-grade items, and some individuals even began to negotiate with each other in case the bids for these items got too high.

There were resources that could be shared among several people. That was the case with plants, beast parts, minerals, and so on.

Even though it was an auction where everyone had to bid and only one person could take the item, it was still possible for groups to get together and take something together.

When the bidding for the last 2nd-grade item ended, auctioneer Joshua soon presented everyone in the theater with a huge box containing a pink gelatinous brain, the item of interest to the Bain family.

"This is the Brain of the Colored Tuna, a beast at its 3rd stage when it was hunted 50 kilometers off the coast of Ironcrest.

The brain of this beast can be considered a 3rd-grade resource, useful for producing pills, potions, special dishes, and bait for high-level aquatic beasts." Joshua made the initial presentation of the item up for auction.

Chapter 368 The 10th Item of the Night?

"The starting bid for the Colored Tuna Brain is 450 gold coins, with a minimum increase of 10 gold coins."

When Joshua announced the starting bid, Myra and Max looked at each other while the two Mages who had come to the city to accompany them took up their positions at the edge of the room.

"450 gold coins... The real value of the Colored Tuna Brain is at least 650 gold coins." Max commented to his sister.

"Our father gave us 800 gold coins to bring the brain to Dryhaven. So let's try to get it." She clenched her fists as she smelled the fishy smell of the piece of tuna.

"But isn't that too little?" Max worried, remembering the previous bids for the 2nd-grade items. "The previously auctioned items have been sold for up to 150% of their fair market value. That means the Colored Tuna Brain could be sold for about a thousand gold coins. That would put us 200 coins in the negative, sister."

"Let's not get ahead of ourselves. As nutritious and tasty as the Colored Tuna Brain is, few people would pay a thousand gold coins for an ingredient in a dish.

Only fishermen like us will find it valuable. But most fishermen can't afford to pay that much for it, and perhaps we don't have much competition here today." Myra tried to be optimistic.

"I hope so. I didn't think the brain up for auction would be so big. If we'd known, Father would have given us more coins." Max said as he started to sweat.

While he and his sister were worrying about this, the mood in Viscount Symons' VIP room was different.

"Marcus, what do you think about us eating Colored Tuna Brain at your wedding?" He asked his son with a broad smile on his face. "I hear young master Grant is in town. If I take this brain, we might be able to invite a representative of the Grant family to your wedding."

A broad smile appeared on Marcus' face at the Viscount's words.

The Colored Tuna Brain was delicious. It also had great properties that could increase the mana density of even Mages and improve the comprehension ability of all magicians below the 4th stage.

Someone like the Viscount would have to eat a few servings of a meal made from that big brain with over 500 kilograms of mass. But someone like Marcus could get a much more significant improvement with small amounts of that brain!

Therefore, having something like that as the main dish at his and Shelby's wedding ceremony could considerably raise the level of that event and even attract some higher-level powers.

Contacts were all that people like them needed to improve their positions and become more pleasing in the eyes of the king. That could be one more thing for House Symons to achieve the title of Count!

"Really? That would be incredible!"

As soon as the auctioneer signaled the bidding to begin, several people interested in this item made their bids.

"500 gold coins!"

"550 coins!"

...

"630 gold coins!"

"800!"

Within the first few bids, the price of the brain rose sharply, approaching the fair price of the item, until Myra and Max made the last bid, trying to scare off the other bidders.

'Shit! Where did those people come from?' Max looked in the direction of two booths where Low-level and Mid-level Mages had placed half of the bids so far.

Looking at these VIP rooms, he saw how wrong he and his sister had been.

"850 gold coins!" Viscount Symons raised his voice as he raised his bidding board, making his number the first in the race for the sea beast's body part.

'Damn it!' Myra clenched her fists in anger but could do nothing but watch the competition continue.

Vicente watched from his cabin but did nothing, knowing he couldn't help the Bain family at the moment.

'Damn you, Viscount, always in my way! But I'll let you get that brain for me.' Vicente clenched his fists in anticipation of the end of the auction.

"870!"

"900 gold coins!" The Viscount raised his voice, causing his last competitor to finally give up the item.

This auction wasn't just about getting items that are hard to buy in the province or kingdom. It was about having coins, but it was also about having the strength to keep the items you bought.

Stronger people were more confident about spending more of their coins because few would dare to attack them, and their chances of keeping their purchases after the auction would be high.

But weaker people were more reluctant to spend too much of their coins, and at certain prices, they preferred to give up and wait for later opportunities.

Some were interested in other items in this auction. In contrast, others knew that there would be nightly fights outside the theater and that getting some items for 'free' was possible.

Joshua would soon announce the winner of the battle for the Colored Tuna Brain, Viscount Symons, who promised 900 gold coins!

...

Fifteen minutes later, the second 3rd-grade item was auctioned off until the next 3 items of the same grade were announced with the release of the following reports.

This time, some of the resources expected by many of the strongest players in this auction would be on stage to be fought over by the event participants!

That was the case with Fear Anise, Seal of Spirits, and Divine Goblet, which caused the entire audience to discuss them and their high value.

From Viscount Symons to Livia's group, Shelby, Miss Death's representative, and Vicente began to act more excited, all interested in some of these three items.

"These next three items are quite valuable. It looks like a lot of people in the VIP auction rooms are going to join the fight now." Layla commented to Vicente.

"That's only natural. The next item is an important ingredient for making artificial resources compatible with Dark Path magicians, but Light Path followers can also use it to fight their Dark Path opponents.

Next, there will be a fight over an item that can even seal the soul of a 3rd-stage being. It's a valuable weapon for everyone!" Vicente commented, interested in who would take each of these items.

While others around the auction were talking about the same thing as them, the tenth item of the evening appeared on the stage, causing even Torne to feel a little excited in Vicente's space of consciousness.

'Master, this must be the resource the woman is looking for. It really is very strong in terms of negativity!' Torne said as everyone at the auction saw a plant with purple and black leaves appear on the stage.

Chapter 369 The Value of Fear Anise

'Oh? So that's it?' Vicente narrowed his eyes as he focused on the plant with its particularly unusual purple and black leaves.

'This is Fear Anise. It's a medicinal plant with solid negativity and its pure negative elements. Any Dark Path magician who consumes it or its derivatives will experience various benefits, from mana purification to an increase in power.

When a magician absorbs a resource of the same elemental affinity as their own, they would naturally experience some enhancements. For example, if the master bought this plant, you could increase the quality of your first pentagram or your second Magic Gem, improve your reflexes and senses, and also your resistance to this second magical form.

Today, your body is not ready to use the full power of the Throne of Darkness, master. You can prepare it by strengthening yourself by cultivating your first magical form or using resources directly related to your second magical form.

The second option would definitely be faster for you to be able to use this supreme power without being severely exhausted after use.'

In short, magical powers were associated with elements, and the more a magician worked on their elemental affinity or resistance, the better their overall abilities would improve.

In Vicente's case, if he consumed something related to the elements Lightning and Earth right now, his first two pentagrams of his first magical form would improve in quality and approach their following grades. For example, his ability to affect the metallic parts of living bodies would develop, and he would be able to do so more clearly. His range would increase, and even his mana would develop a bit, bringing him closer to the 3rd stage.

These were just the basics, but everything would change with a magician who improved their quality, which could even increase their life expectancy.

That's why such resources were so valuable, capable of moving a Dark Path magician to a city dominated by Light Path magicians!

'Oh? The way you're talking, it sounds like you want me to compete with that person, old Torne.' Vicente commented.

'Not at all. I'm just pointing out the value of this item to the master. Finding such resources could help you a lot.

But that's not the case with Fear Anise. Unfortunately, this woman is here, and it's best if the master doesn't get involved with her. Just remember what I've said, and if you can get your hands on similar items in the future, fine.' Torne replied.

'Okay.'

'But as long as the master follows through with the Cataclysm Order locations I have in mind, you'll already have several resources similar to or better than this one up for auction.' Torne added.

'We will see it in the future.'

While the two were chatting, the auctioneer announced the starting price for Fear Anise as 500 gold coins, with a minimum bid increase of 10 coins.

As soon as the bidding started, a few ignorant people bid for this rare medicinal plant in this part of the continent. Still, as soon as Miss Death's representative made her bid, practically all the bidders gave up on the item.

"700 gold coins." She said.

Several people in the VIP lounges and the common area of the theater felt a shiver run down their spines.

Even without using her mana to overwhelm her opponents, her natural aura was enough to scare almost everyone there.

'That woman...' Joshua looked at the VIP room where this person was, realizing the auction participants were being oppressed by her, but she had done nothing but talk.

Her voice alone was enough to scare almost everyone at the event!

'So it was for this.' Livia thought to herself as she watched this person, feeling this woman was even worse than she looked.

'I hope she doesn't enter the competition for my resources of interest.' Viscount Symons also looked at this woman, aware he would have problems with such a person if she had the motivation to compete against him.

Fortunately, he had no interest in Fear Anise!

But that wasn't the case for the members of the local Awakening Temple.

'That damned Dark Path magician!' Assistant Temple Master Sim clenched his fists but didn't give up on Fear Anise.

"730 coins!" He raised his voice, drawing the attention of everyone at the auction.

But when they saw who he was, they understood why he dared to compete with this woman.

He was a member of the Congregation of Revelation. Who would have the courage to do anything with him?

That woman was frightening. But could she bother the biggest organization on the continent? If someone took action against the members of the local temple after they bought an item with an affinity to negative elements, it would be evident where the attacker came from.

At that time, would that person, or even Miss Death, be able to escape persecution from the continent's largest organization?

It must be said that the Congregation of Revelation was not a group that forgot things. They even avenged the deaths of low-level members and were feared as a vengeful organization that punished mercilessly, always using the maximum penalties.

Because he was a member of the continent's most respected religion, Sim was willing to take any risks. He was practically guaranteed possession of such a resource as long as he won the auction with his bids!

The woman shrouded in darkness looked at Sim and squeezed her hands tightly, understanding the man's origin and why he dared to stand against her.

'You damned dog from the Congregation of Revelation! Do you think you're going to stay with Fear Anise? Dream on!'

"800 gold coins!" She raised the offer, imagining that these members of the local temple couldn't compete with her.

As much as they were members of the largest organization on the continent, they weren't there to represent the Congregation of Revelation but to obtain resources for themselves with their own coins. Their boundaries were not the same as their religion's!

"810!" Assistant Temple Master Sim shouted, looking in the direction of this woman.

'Slut! If you want Fear Anise, you'll have to pay dearly for it.' He thought to himself.

Why would magicians from a Light Path organization want a medicinal plant suitable for Dark Path practitioners?

Resources with affinities opposite to those of magicians would never benefit those who consumed them. However, that didn't mean this type of resource didn't have its uses or value for people like Assistant Temple Master Sim.

With Fear Anise, he could go from taking a resource useful to Dark Path magicians off the market, which in itself would weaken practitioners of that path, to even creating weapons and resources that could attack Dark Path magicians.

Resources such as Fear Anise were natural poisons for Light magicians. But with the work of the right professionals, they could become poisonous weapons against even Dark Path magicians!

That was the main interest of someone like Sim!

Chapter 370 Great Dispute Over the Seal of Spirits

"900 gold coins!" Miss Death's emissary said in a louder tone, making Sim tremble with anger.

"910!"

"1,000 gold coins!" She shouted as she stopped herself from standing up.

"1,010!"

"1,100!" She yelled.

"Since you want Fear Anise so much, keep it. It's not that important to us." Assistant Temple Master Sim said after receiving the night's highest bid so far, forcing the woman to pay 40% more than Fear Anise's fair value.

There was silence after his words as the auctioneer finally banged his gavel, securing Fear Anise to Miss Death's representative for the trifling sum of 1,100 gold coins.

What were 1,100 gold coins? It was 1.1 million bronze coins, enough for an ordinary 1st-stage human to pay their basic bills for a thousand years!

Even with special resources, such a person could live for 200 years at most. That would be enough for a weak family to pay their bills for at least 5 different generations!

But even ordinary Mages could take 2-3 years to collect that amount of gold coins, which is impressive to spend in one night.

The weaker ones in that theater started talking about it after the fight over Fear Anise ended, appreciating the ability to spend coins that some of them had.

Meanwhile, the woman shrouded in darkness made the payment, guaranteeing her possession of such a resource.

And so the next item, the Seal of Spirits, was soon presented by auctioneer Joshua.

When he showed this item, the bidders fell silent again, as they saw a special device that would be very useful in 3rd-stage battles.

Sir Joshua showed the item to his left, a metal plate with various inscriptions and magic circles embedded in it.

"This is the Seal of Spirits, a highly complex magical device created by engineers and enchanters.

Its name is very descriptive of its properties. Its primary use is to seal spirits. However, this doesn't only apply to ghosts and other types of spirits that have separated from their physical bodies. This item can be used in battle to destroy the soul of an opponent weaker than the item or even to hinder someone of a similar or slightly higher level.

For example, a Mid-level Mage could use this tool to weaken his powers by more than 35% and not be able to use their third pentagram.

"As you can see, this is a very valuable item that has the potential to imbalance a heated battle or even take away an opponent's advantage and give it to the Seal of Spirits user.

Therefore, the starting price for this item is 600 gold coins, with a minimum increase of 20 coins!"

Shelby heard this and clenched her fists when she saw the item she wanted to buy that night.

She was originally there to determine how the city would fare after the auction. Her mission was to know who had what, who was going after whom, and from there, to move with her allies as efficiently as possible at the end of the night.

But when she saw an item that could give its owner a huge advantage, she couldn't help but get interested.

Whoever had it at the end of the auction would have an advantage that would be difficult to overcome. All the competitors in the auction would find it harder to compete against the owner of such an item or even harder to keep their possessions against the owner of such an item.

As soon as the bids were released, she joined more than 15 competitors for the Seal of Spirits to bid on this artifact.

"600 gold coins!"

"620 coins!"

"640!"

...

"890 gold coins!"

Not only Shelby joined the dispute, but also Livia, Vicente, Viscount Symons, and Assistant Temple Master Sim.

But the moment he saw that Shelby wanted the item, Vicente decided to give up and let his ally fight for it alone.

'If she buys this artifact, I can borrow it and trick our competitors into thinking it's with her.' He thought to himself.

The bidding continued.

"990 gold coins!" Shelby said as several of the interested parties remained in the competition.

That was especially true of Livia, who said with a smile. "1,020 gold pieces!"

Viscount Symons shouted. "1,100 coins!"

"1,120!" Another competitor raised the price again.

...

"1320 gold coins!" Shelby shouted, seeing that she would have to spend a large part of her reserves if she wanted to secure this magical artifact.

Marcus looked at his fiancée intently, not understanding why she wanted to spend so much on this tool.

Meanwhile, Shelby's father watched wide-eyed as his daughter made an absurd promise that not even he could make so casually.

'Where did she get those coins?' He wondered.

Shelby had her allowance as Baron Staples' daughter. She also worked at a local academy and occasionally went on missions as a mercenary. But she was only an Acolyte, and her wages were not high.

If it took a Mage two or three years to collect a thousand gold coins, it could take an Acolyte three times as long to collect the same amount.

But Shelby had less time since her Awakening than it would have taken for her to collect that many coins!

'I'll talk to that girl tomorrow.' He thought, as the highest bid for the Seal of Spirits reached 1,500 gold coins.

At this point, only Livia and Shelby were competing, and even Viscount Symons had dropped out because the cost of the item had already become too high.

'I'll have Shelby buy it for us. Marcus will use this artifact in the future.' The Viscount thought to himself while Livia's advisor broke into a cold sweat.

"Miss... Please stop. We can't risk so much! What if the Staples girl doesn't make a bid that beats yours? What will we do then? Don't forget the auction rules!" The man next to Livia and Nicolas said.

Nicolas was very supportive of his fiancée, but at this point, he had to stop her. "Livia, don't bid anymore. If Shelby doesn't raise the last bid, I'll cover the rest of the coins. But if she does, you have to forfeit."

"Okay." She said, not quite satisfied but imagining that Shelby would bleed enough from what she had done.

"1,600 gold coins!" Shelby shouted as Molly and Mira watched her shake with rage at the green woman.

If it hadn't been for Livia, she could have taken the artifact for less than 1,400 gold coins!

But nothing could be done about it, and soon, the auctioneer banged his gavel, ending the dispute over the Seal of Spirits and guaranteeing it to Shelby for 1,600 coins!