

The Mafia 651

Chapter 651 Creating the Railway Line

After Vicente analyzed the terrain on which his group would build the railway between Vicente and Martell Village, he came to the conclusion that the ideal would be to do as one of his blacksmiths had suggested. Make the tracks have a magnetic effect on the surroundings to ward off beasts.

Vicente felt that if he used this method, in theory, magical beings weaker than 3rd stage creatures would prefer to stay away from his tracks. Not only that, even if a creature wanted to risk getting close to such an area, there would be a suppressing effect that would push it in the opposite direction of the tracks.

This magnetic effect would work 24 hours a day, so Vicente's group hoped that once the line was up and running, not even objects thrown onto the track, purposefully or otherwise, would be able to hinder the railroad's purpose.

In the meantime, Vicente intended to deploy men to patrol the most worrying points along the line as a precaution.

During the visit to the area where the structure would pass, he and his group decided that there should be two support posts in the middle of the route. The men responsible for maintaining and protecting the railway would come from these posts.

With that settled, they began building it the day after Vicente and Rory arrived in the Martell Village!

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The process of building the railway was not complex. In short, metals, construction areas, and men were needed to help assemble the structures.

However, in this experiment by Vicente and his 3rd stage blacksmiths, things would be a little different from what they would be in the future.

Vicente couldn't just build things around the province or the kingdom. He had to cultivate and deal with other matters. So, in the future, his group would develop railroad lines, as explained, that is, with many men involved.

Vice's job in the future would only be to check the magnetic properties of the railway and build the most important part of the trains.

But on this occasion, he would take part in all the phases of the projects, from mineral extraction to the creation of the metal alloys, the assembly of the rails, the construction of the railcars and important train components, and the construction of the support or loading/unloading stations.

Why commit to this now? To speed up the project and get the experiment up and running. That way, his group could find out what would be needed to raise the quality of the project before they built rail lines throughout the province.

So he would soon spend the next few days mining in the areas indicated by the group's blacksmiths before producing the rails and sheet metal that would be useful for making the railcars and important train components.

The blacksmiths would be watching him closely as he created many of these things, as they didn't understand exactly how to produce many of the train's components. With Vicente's example, they could create designs with important data that would help them eventually know how to produce such components even without Vice's help.

However, as well as being there to learn, the blacksmiths could help Vicente with some parts of the project, such as fixing the rails to the ground, among other things.

They would start their project from Martell Village, first building the basics of what would become the first train station in the Scott Province, before beginning the assembly of the tracks towards Millfall.

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Eleven days after Vicente and his blacksmiths began their project in Martell Village...

Anyone entering Martell Village today would see a few different things about it. As well as a large three-story building made entirely of metal on the village's main street, the street behind the main street now had something strange sticking out of the building and into the village.

Metal railings were on both sides of Vicente's railroad tracks to prevent people from passing through. Still, it was visible for anyone to see those metal things on the ground.

What was that? Nobody in the village, even Vicente's most direct subordinates, knew what it was.

All they knew was that this was Vicente's project, so they shouldn't ask questions, meddle or cause trouble.

In the meantime, if any curious people followed the line of tracks that led into the Crow Woods near the village, one would eventually come a long way until, an hour and a half's journey on horseback from the village, one would arrive at the point where the tracks ended.

In the middle of the Crow Woods, Vicente and his men were out there setting up the tracks.

While Vicente used the metals stacked not far from his staff, making them into rails and positioning them in the places already prepared by his blacksmiths, these men there with him were either preparing more ground ahead or fixing the rails laid by Vice.

Their work was quick. In one minute, they could assemble more than 100 meters of track together.

The problem that could make the line take longer to complete was the materials.

After two hours working there, Vicente and his men had used all the sheet metal they had to produce the rails.

"Let's stop for a rest and then head back to the mine closest to here," Vicente said as he sighed and wiped the sweat from his face.

That didn't compare to a high-level fight, but doing something simple for long periods of time was extremely tiring!

The silver lining was that he and his fellow blacksmiths had been constantly training their magical foundations by exhausting their strength and then recovering repeatedly over the last few days.

"I think we'd better mine for four days before we get back to assembling the rails again," Benson commented to Vicente as he approached his disciple. "We work better when we have more materials. If we do four days of mining, we'll be able to complete 60% of the track by the end of next week. After that, we can stop for another four days to mine and then finish the tracks to Millfall.

We can do the rest of the work in that city at the station we will build."

"Okay. I don't see any problem with proceeding with it," Vicente commented before quickly drinking a liter of water.

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A few more days passed, and Vicente was busy implementing his plan to build trains in the Polaris Realm.

His work alongside Benson and the other blacksmiths would bear fruit in those days, and soon, they would arrive with their tracks in Millfall!

Within 27 days since they started working together, they would finish laying the track between the two locations. Vicente also set up Millfall's loading and unloading station.

After that, all that remained was to create the most important component: the train and its railcars!

Chapter 652 The Train is Ready!

Five days after Vicente's return to Millfall...

In one of the city's outer areas, where several buildings stored the resources of local families were located, a group of local workers was painting a large metal building.

The Millfall train station was ready to function, but it needed to look good to attract local attention.

Vicente wanted this project to succeed and to be able to create thousands of kilometers of track in the province, but for that to happen, he would need customers willing to pay for his services.

The decoration and beauty of his stations' facades would matter!

But while workers were doing their jobs outside the station, the sound of hammers hitting metal could be heard from inside the three-story building.

On the ground level of this place was a group of men in blacksmith's outfits, very sweaty and dirty, as they worked together to finish assembling a large metal vehicle.

This vehicle was long but relatively narrow. While it was more than 12 meters long, it was only 2.5 meters wide. It was 4.3 meters high from the ground to its highest point and had several curved lines on its front, while it was fairly simple and straight at the rear.

That was no ordinary train, like those that existed as soon as trains were created during the Industrial Revolution on Earth. That was a train that would run on magnetic powers, so its structure was much more refined than that of the old earth trains.

But Vicente liked a rustic look, so the train also didn't look entirely like the more modern trains of the world he left behind before being reborn in Polaris Realm.

Anyway, while he, Benson, and the other blacksmiths were finishing assembling the main component of their train, Shelby and some of Vicente's other local contacts were hanging around.

This woman had just entered Vicente's train station, which had a main entrance that led to the second floor instead of the ground floor loading and unloading area, and the service entrance, through which wagons could directly access the loading and unloading area, where Vice was now standing.

After following the second floor, where there were offices and observation areas where Vicente's subordinates could close deals with those interested in his train company's services in the future, she came to the flight of stairs that led to the front where the trains departed from.

From there, she saw where Vicente was working and a vehicle identical to the one the blacksmiths were finishing building, which had two railcars that looked like giant metal buckets attached to them.

Vicente's trains didn't have rear ends. Their rear depended on the direction of travel. They were like subway trains. Going to Martell Village, the rear would be the train Vicente and his men were finishing the building. But coming from the village to Millfall, the rear would be the part of the vehicle that was in the starting position now.

Seeing that structure which, when complete, would be 40 meters long in total, Shelby and Molly couldn't help but smile as they opened their mouths.

"Interesting. These things are very different from anything we've ever seen." The orange-haired woman commented to the red-haired woman next to her.

They had heard that Vicente was in the city, but they didn't know exactly what this project was about. However, it wouldn't be long before they understood.

Not long after they arrived there, Vicente and his companions finished what they were doing when he connected the last freight car to that train.

As they finished, the blacksmiths there watched their project finally completed, eager to put it to the test.

Vicente asked those men to rest, telling them that in an hour, they would be leaving for Martell Village to test what they had built after more than a month of effort.

Vicente saw Shelby and Molly standing there and went over to greet them.

"What's that?" Molly asked him.

"That's a train. Do you want to test it with us? We're going to Martell Village, and then we'll come back." Vicente smiled as he invited the two.

"We have some appointments later..." Shelby was saying when Vicente interrupted her.

"This train should be able to get to and from Martell Village in about three hours at full load," he said, describing what would differentiate his work from ordinary wagons.

If they were fully loaded, wagons would take a whole day to make this trip. On the other hand, Vicente's train could carry the equivalent of 20 wagons itself.

For the time being, it wasn't big enough to carry more things because it was just an experiment. But in the future, he intended to build something capable of carrying resources that would require 100 wagons to do the same.

The greater the capacity of his trains, the more use he could make of the men needed to drive the train and protect the resources.

Molly and Shelby were surprised, but they both believed Vicente.

"Then we can accompany you. I'm curious to know what you intend to do with it."

"Earn coins and speed up the movement of resources throughout the kingdom and province." Vicente got straight to the point.

"So these empty things are for storing resources?" Shelby asked before seeing him nod in the affirmative and ask him something else. "How much would you charge to carry resources by train?"

"I don't know that yet. That is an experiment for my group to understand what needs to be changed for this project to be replicated across the province and also for us to understand the operating costs.

But I know that for a journey between Millfall and Martell Village, a merchant like me would spend around 10 silver coins per wagon, including feeding the horses and paying the guards.

For people to be interested in my trains, they would have to be financially worthwhile for them. So just the one-way trip from my train to the village or here would have to cost less than 2 gold coins."

That didn't sound like much. But while a wagon would take a whole day to get from one of these two destinations to the other, Vicente's train could go to and from these two places 8 times in a single day. So if he charged 2 gold coins per trip, he could collect 32 gold coins daily.

That was a lot!

Vicente didn't know the costs of operating the trains, but he did know that with 32 gold coins, he could pay the daily wages of several Mages. He wouldn't need that many Mages to be on his trains, so he was sure that he could profit from this operation.

Best of all, this wasn't even his main objective. So the profit would just be a plus point that he would gain from trying to speed up the movement of resources around the kingdom!

Chapter 653 First Train Journey

After a while, Vicente, Shelby, Molly, Benson, and the blacksmiths who had been working on the experimental railway between Millfall and Martell Village for the past few weeks got on the first train.

Vicente purposely filled the two cargo railcars with mostly metal resources, thinking he would test his creation already on the first train ride.

As soon as he got on the train, he told the people there to settle into their seats while he took the driver's position.

His train had three internal areas. One was the driver's space, where one could move the train forward or stop it, communicate with stations along the track, etc. Another was the living area, where there was nothing today, but there would be refreshments and a toilet in the future. Finally, there was a small area with benches to seat up to 20 people.

The purpose of this train was not to carry people, but Vicente felt that, from time to time, the freight trains that would run through the province in the future would have some passengers, men from his group, traveling from one station to another.

The blacksmiths and the two women settled down in this area, which had 20 single seats. Side windows gave them a view out of the vehicle.

Vicente then used his powers to infuse the vehicle with mana, causing its machinery to activate.

After just 10 seconds, the vehicle began moving slowly forward while the workers painting and organizing the station looked on with a gleam.

The people inside the train laughed as they felt their creation start moving, first at 1 km/h, but after a minute reaching 10 km/h.

While making the train move, Vicente realized how energy-efficient the vehicle was. One would need to have at least Low-level Mage cultivation to activate the train. Such an individual would need to use more than 75% of their available mana to activate the vehicle, something quite significant.

However, in the next few minutes, he realized that, after activation, the driver would have to put very little of their mana into the train. When the initial mana was infused into the vehicle's special machinery, it began to act by drawing free mana in the air to the machine responsible for converting mana into motor energy.

Through this, one could spend the rest of the journey driving the train using less than 5% of their energy.

That wasn't bad at all!

Even though it would take almost all of a Low-level Mage's mana, that mana would be enough to travel from Millfall to Martell Village or from Millfall to Saltstar City!

All that would be needed for something like that to happen would be the railroad tracks!

Not only that, an uninjured magician in the early 3rd stage could recover all their mana in less than an hour of meditation. On a journey that would take longer than that, if two magicians of the same level were in charge of the vehicle, both would be at more than 95% of their energy at the end of the journey and would be ready to return as soon as they had unloaded their cargo and recharged the railcars at their destination.

Sensing this during the journey to Martell Village, Vicente was not disappointed with his project.

Meanwhile, the vehicle's passengers enjoyed feeling its speed, which, after 10 minutes of travel, reached a cruising speed of 90 km/h.

The route between Millfall and Martell Village did not have sharp bends, so the vehicle maintained its top speed for almost the entire journey.

Even though it was loaded with a few tons of resources, Vicente's train didn't falter. It was soon in the middle of the Crow Woods, where Shelby couldn't help but look at the view outside the train with a twinkle in her eye.

'What a magnificent view!' she thought to herself as they passed an elevated area of that forest, from where she could see hundreds of square kilometers in the surrounding area.

She could see much of the view from this place, as well as from other areas, such as the farms near Martell Village, and The Rocky Gorge near Millfall.

Seeing that, she couldn't help but consider the potential of this business to carry people.

How many people wouldn't pay a lot of coins to travel comfortably in a vehicle as good and fast as this?

Although this vehicle wasn't designed to be comfortable and beautiful, nothing would stop Vicente and his people from doing something similar in the future.

Thinking about how she would use a vehicle like this to travel around the province, she got up from her seat and went to the area where only Vicente was.

"Shelby..."

"Vice, have you thought about the possibility of creating vehicles like this for passenger transportation?" She got straight to the point.

He smiled as he looked through the windows at the area he was in, understanding that she had enjoyed the view.

"Yes, but not just yet. There's a lot of demand for materials to be transported around the province, but not so much for transporting people.

Many people would like to go from Millfall to Ironcrest, Saltstar City, Dryhaven, etc. But not between Millfall and Martell Village.

So until we have a rail line connecting several of these cities, it wouldn't be profitable to create trains to transport passengers." He explained.

Shelby was a businesswoman and understood Vicente's point perfectly. "But when the time comes, you have to do it. I estimate that a train journey between Millfall and Saltstar City would only take 10 days to complete. At the same time, the dangers to travelers would be less than in carriage journeys since the entire route would be under the control of your group.

In a way, with this business, you would replace the demand for carriage beasts, carriages, coachmen, and mercenaries working as bodyguards. At the same time, you could make these travelers spend their coins on food inside your trains. The possibilities are endless!"

Vicente smiled at his orange-haired ally's animation, watching her approach him with a smile on her beautiful face.

"You're right. It will take a while to happen, but it will be in my plans." He grabbed her waist when he saw her so close.

Shelby bit her lip at being so close to him after months without any contact with this friend of hers.

"How much longer do we have until the village?" She asked as she felt her heart beating faster and her face flushing.

"Half an hour."

"That's long enough." She said as she knelt down in front of Vicente and put her hands on the young man's belt.

Vicente liked this and merely used his powers to lock the door to the area he and Shelby were in.

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About 25 minutes later...

The door to the driver's area unlocked, and soon afterward, Shelby left Vicente's seat and went to sit next to Molly.

Molly was a woman like Shelby, so unlike the blacksmiths who didn't notice anything, she readily understood the slight smile on her young lady's face.

That was the expression of a satisfied woman!

"Congratulations." She commented quietly to Shelby.

"Hm?"

"You've inaugurated Vicente's train."

Shelby laughed when she heard that, but she couldn't say anything against Molly's words since it was indeed the truth.

Chapter 654 Family Expansion Plan

654 Family Expansion Plan

When they were five minutes away from arriving in Martell Village, the group on the train commanded by Vicente felt the vehicle begin to slow down. At the same time, they could already see the outskirts of the village.

While Benson and the blacksmiths there were actively chatting about their success and already talking about things that could be improved and others that were already to their liking, they entered the village area.

The villagers passing the street where the train was arriving stopped everything they were doing to watch that grandiose vehicle arrive in their village.

Most of the residents had no idea what the Fuller family was planning, so several of them were surprised when they saw the vehicle slowly entering the village.

Children saw this and found it very interesting. Some of them soon started to run after the train alongside the railings that protected the track.

When Vicente's train finally came to a halt inside the village's loading and unloading station, dozens of villagers soon began to crowd around, curious to see what it was all about.

When Vicente switched off the machinery of the first train, he sighed and smiled in satisfaction, having completed another of his objectives.

As he returned to his group, he said. "I will show you how to drive the train on the journey back to Millfall. I managed to get a good understanding of how it works on this short trip, so I'll teach you so that you can pass it on to our men in the future.

All in all, I don't think there are many things that need to be changed in this project to make it work. Let's observe our results over the next few weeks before we start our next project."

"Where would it go?" Shelby asked.

"I plan to connect Millfall station to my future Metal City. It's not far from here, so that will be our next destination." Vicente said, imagining that this would create a regular flow of people to that place, which would promote his idea even more.

"When will we start this new project?" Benson asked his disciple.

"In two months, I want you to analyze this train and what we've done between the village and Millfall in that time and adjust the plans for this line between the Metal City and Millfall. As soon as I get to Saltstar City, I'll send men to help you choose the land we'll use to run the railroad.

In the meantime, I'll occasionally mine metals near Saltstar City for you and send them to Millfall. But I'll be joining you at certain points in the project. I won't be with you for as long as I would for this experiment, but I won't be gone for long periods."

The blacksmiths nodded in understanding, aware that Vicente couldn't give up his life to become a railway builder.

"What do we do now?" One of the blacksmiths asked. "We're going back to Millfall."

"Yes, but not right away," Vicente said. "We'll wait for some of our contacts in the village. I want them to experience the journey back to Millfall and take their findings to the noble families who have plantations on the outskirts of the village."

In theory, it was Vicente who would take all the produce produced on the outskirts of the village from this area and take it to where it would be sold. He didn't intend to earn coins straight away by making deals with noble families. He was actually going to replace the method of transporting resources between the village and Millfall.

But why did he want to present his project to noble families?

Because he did not trade around 65% of the food resources, 80% of the cultivation resources, and 70% of the basic materials produced by the province, these many resources were traded by other merchants and, as such, transported by other groups.

But if he drew the attention of the province's noble families to how he could transport his resources, he could get new deals all over the territory!

Shelby and the blacksmiths there understood what he wanted and quickly left the train to wait for the people who would surely soon be at the station door.

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As Vicente and his group had expected, in less than an hour since they had arrived in the village, everyone was talking about the train, and the subordinates of the nobles who had plantations nearby were already there talking to him.

After welcoming the men and women who had agreements with him to obey him within the village, Vicente invited them on a trip to Millfall so that they could better introduce this new alternative to their families.

Everyone was excited by the news, so no one would turn down such an offer.

Less than an hour after they arrived there, Vicente's train was full of people, with more than 20 individuals in the front vehicle and 15 people in the back vehicle, which Vice and his staff had driven here from Millfall.

Shelby and Molly were going to split between these two vehicles to explain to Vicente's guests a little more about the wonder called the train while he and his blacksmiths were going to travel around the machinery area.

Vicente was going to make Benson the driver on this trip. He would stand next to his master while the other blacksmiths would watch the man as Vice gave him advice on how to drive the vehicle.

It wasn't difficult to drive a train, so the vehicle would soon be on the move towards Millfall.

The passengers invited by Vicente would take advantage of the trip to observe the beautiful views they could have traveling in a vehicle like that.

For the next few tens of minutes, the group would marvel at the experience but also at the speed of this transportation.

When they arrived in Millfall later, they would all be convinced that this was the future of transportation!

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"Incredible!"

"Magnificent! I never thought I'd travel so fast between the village and Millfall!"

"Yes, we also could see some beautiful sights, and all very safely. Not a single magical creature dared approach the vehicle during the entire journey!"

"Haha, those wild beasts watched us from afar as if they were pets!"

The passengers on Vicente's train commented to each other as they got out of the vehicle after arriving at Millfall station.

Meanwhile, Vicente left the train's machinery area next to his blacksmiths.

"Well, driving a train is as simple as that. You just need to have the necessary mana and know when to accelerate and when to brake. We will make signs along the railroad track to make our men's work easier. That will prevent accidents." He said to the group of 3rd stage blacksmiths.

"That's a good idea..." They continued talking until Vicente went to exchange a few words with the people who had come from Martell Village with them.

He promised that they would return to the village by train. They only had to wait a few minutes. Benson would follow the blacksmiths back to the village, as it would give another of his companions a chance to learn how to drive the train in practice.

They intended to do this for the rest of the day, so Vicente, Shelby, and Molly would soon be left behind at Millfall station.

He had no intention of staying in the city. After saying goodbye to these two women, he would set off alone from this place with the intention of finally returning to Saltstar City!

Chapter 655 Back Home

Days later...

Vicente was finally back in Saltstar City after almost four months since Lina Seidel's departure.

After a long trip in which he had completed some of his goals, he was back home to continue watching Nina grow up.

Arriving in the city early in the morning, he would soon see all of his most regular contacts locally, from Jasmine and Layla to Nova, Eva, and Newton.

Some of his weaker men had strengthened when he was away, but none among his stronger subordinates had improved in level.

They were certainly stronger with each passing day. However, they still needed to make progress to significantly change their current capabilities.

Onyx had finished his dormant period after devouring the 'ordinary' flesh of the superior vampire's body. He was already at the end of the 4th stage, but that wasn't enough for him to become a Paragon.

However, when Vicente saw Onyx on his estate that day, he noticed that this creature was very close to advancing to the 5th stage.

If he gave Onyx any 5th-grade resources in the future, this beast would likely evolve stages quickly!

In addition to the improvements in the strength of the men and beasts in the group, the Fuller family was more influential than ever. With the local nobles aware of how strong he was and with the recent agreement with King Seidel, he was now practically a celebrity to whom everyone wanted to be connected.

The result? In those four months or so out of the city, his family made new deals with provincial nobles while the family's part in the provincial underworld advanced, conquering more men and cities under their control.

Even Nova had greatly improved her influence over the soldiers of the royal army in the province. She had created her faction earlier, and now this group already had 200 Captains and 5 Commanders.

She also had 4 of the 10 soldiers in charge of Saltstar City's Martial Court on her side, a significant amount of support for Vicente.

With all this local support, few things could stand in the way of Vicente's group now!

This was his best moment when he had to grow up before new challenges hit him.

And so, soon, he would experience a few months of peace to do his business and cultivate without too much stress or sudden commitments!

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11 months later...

In the blink of an eye, Nina had grown up a lot and left almost all her childish traits behind, reaching 12, just a few months shy of her 13th birthday.

When she arrived at the Saltstar City Royal Academy this morning, this beautiful young woman, 1.55 meters tall, with body curves that were increasingly remarkable for young people of her age and a beautiful smile similar to her mother's, all the students in the surrounding area couldn't help but stare at her.

Nina was not only one of the most beautiful girls at the academy, who was in her penultimate year there. She was one of the best students, with one of the top five grades in the entire institution.

She was already guaranteed a place at the Seidel Magical College, but even if she hadn't, her good grades would have ensured her success in entering it.

Many boys looked at Nina with thoughts of how incredible she was and how lucky one would be to be by her side. At the same time, the girls were thinking about how she was a great competitor or even an inspiration to more ordinary girls.

Nina was still deaf, and she always would be. Her condition was irreversible. But her physical fitness had improved a lot in recent months thanks to the resources Vicente had obtained from the two secret Cataclysm Order outposts and the things he had bought.

Previously, she had problems getting around, but now that problem no longer existed. Her physical condition had reached an excellent level, and she was now even stronger, faster, and more resilient than almost all the young people her age in Saltstar City.

Nina had not yet awakened her magical powers, of course. But her physical strength was already similar to that of a Junior Apprentice.

Newton and the other doctors in the Fuller family now believed her physical strength was already similar to that of a Junior Apprentice.

that her chances of awakening her powers were not bad, although there was still a greater chance of her failing than succeeding in getting her Magic Gem.

However, before she left Millfall to come and live in Saltstar City, her chances of successfully awakening her magical powers were less than 2%; now, she had more than a 25% chance of succeeding in her Magic Awakening.

Even so, Vicente continued to invest in his sister, with Newton and the family doctors working together to keep looking for better chances for her.

Finally, on arriving at the academy at the time she always did, Nina was soon next to Killian, her best friend there.

Seeing Nina, Killian couldn't help but feel differently about her. Previously, he hadn't understood the comments made by his sister and Nina's brother. But now that he was nearing his 13th birthday and already looked more like a grown man than a child, he couldn't help but see the interesting 'attributes' of his friend's body.

He tried not to think too much about these parts of Nina, but he found himself looking at her waist or bust every now and then.

It was something stronger than him, something beyond his control!

But he was no fool. He didn't stare at Nina for too long to attract attention. He always found something to distract his mind from her body and avoid embarrassment...

Nina had already noticed a few moments when her friend looked at her differently than he used to in the past, but she still thought it was something innocent. She knew other boys looked at her, but she didn't think that of Killian yet.

After greeting him, she smiled and said, "Killian, do you know what I heard from my brother today? The train line between Saltstar City and Metal City will be ready in six months. How about you accompany me on the first train trip linking these two cities? We can get to know the city my brother is building."

Killian opened his eyes with interest. Vicente's trains had become famous in the province, and even powers from distant parts of the kingdom were talking about them. So it was only natural that he was very interested in it.

"This will be on our vacation... All right, it'll be a good opportunity."

Chapter 656 Growing Influence and Power

After almost a year since the creation of the experimental train line between Martell Village and Millfall, Vicente's group of blacksmiths had learned everything they could from that railway and made the necessary adjustments to their plans for the line between Millfall and the Metal City.

Nine months ago, the construction of the line between Millfall and the future Metal City began. Given the greater distance between the destination and starting point and Vicente's lesser participation, it took five months to complete it.

Even so, Vicente had participated in producing practically all the metal components of that line, having made almost everything from Saltstar City. He occasionally went to the sites where his men had worked and helped out for a day or so.

Four months ago, the train line between Millfall and the future Metal City was completed and put into operation. This had boosted the growth and speed of development of the land in the west of the province, with more people and resources going to that area.

At the same time, two new rail lines began to be built from that line, one towards Ironcrest and the other, more recently, to Saltstar City.

The rail line to Ironcrest, connected to the rail line from Millfall to the Metal City, was 80% complete and would soon be ready to run trains back and forth between these three places and Martell Village. However, the line to Saltstar City was still in its beginning, as the distance between the province's largest city and that area was quite large.

However, with the increasing demand from the powers in the province to send their resources by freight train, Vicente invested heavily in this project, and several men from his family and even mercenaries took part in the construction of the rail lines.

What made this method of transportation interesting was the machinery inside the trains. Only Vicente could do this or knew all the details necessary for trains to work. So even though many had

already tried to copy him, no one had managed to come even close to what he had done. That's why he was able to get even men from outside his family to participate in his project's development.

Finally, with the development of the trains in Scott Province accelerating, Vicente hoped to reach all the cities in the province and also the largest city in the province neighboring his territory within the next 15 months.

By the time Nina awakened her powers, he wanted to have a major train line linking Grandis to Saltstar City!

It was an ambitious project, but if it worked, he could cut in half the time taken to transport resources between these cities!

...

While Nina was looking forward to her first train ride, Vicente was with Eve and Sarah at his estate.

Rory was no longer there, having left the city 8 months ago when the group he was forming to go to the Diamond Province had been ready and left with him for the family's secret outpost near Grandis.

Rory had already settled in that area near the capital, and his group had recently begun operations to secure groups from the Diamond Province underworld who were coming under the wing of the Fuller family.

The results hadn't started to take effect yet, but based on the letters Rory was constantly sending Vicente, they should start to come in the next three months.

Meanwhile, Casey had advanced to the start of the 4th stage. With his advancement, Vicente sent this man to the future Metal City and made Sarah come to Saltstar City.

Many important people in the Fuller family had advanced in level over the last 11 months. Casey had been the only one to reach the 4th stage, but several family members had left the Mid-level of the 3rd stage to reach the High-level.

The number of High-level Mages who could advance to the 4th stage at any time had reached 11 individuals, counting family members and Vice's allies, such as Layla, Nova, and Jasmine.

Anyway, he was next to those two women in his estate office in Saltstar City, taking care of his usual business as patriarch of the Fuller family.

Eve was in charge of the family's 'daytime' business, which was related to the family's dealings with noble powers in the province. On the other hand, Sarah was in charge of the group's 'dark' business, which was related to the black market and the underworld.

The two brought him weekly problems, news, and opportunities related to the family's businesses.

Sometimes, Vicente would leave this place to resolve these matters, but most of the time, he was just giving orders to his family members.

As his influence and power grew, he no longer had much need to move around.

But even when he did move, he occasionally did so by using his powers on some of his men. With his third pentagram, he could control people and see through their eyes, so he didn't always need to be present to experience certain things.

But today, Eve and Sarah weren't with him to bring him trouble; they just wanted to update him on the group's projects.

The family's expansion continued and was already close to reaching saturation point within the province. Soon, it would be time for the group to focus on maintaining what they had achieved in the province and look to the other provinces of the kingdom.

Diamond Province was already with Rory's group, but there were four other provinces in the kingdom for them to explore before they reached the kingdom's maximum size!

The same was true for the family's legal business. With the idea of expanding the railroad to other provinces, the family would soon have the opportunity to strike deals with families outside their home territory.

Meanwhile, the Fuller family's profits were at an all-time high. The family's underworld business was bringing in 12,000 gold coins a month, and Eve's business was bringing in 5,000 gold coins a month.

With these amounts, Vicente was able to expand his projects in the Metal City and the railroad lines throughout the province and sustain his group, which now had more than 500 internal members.

After hearing all these figures, Eve said. "You should get ready to present Metal City to the nobles of the province. The basic structure of the city and the primordial village are ready and functional. With our current preparations, we can triple the size of that place in less than 10 months."

"Let's schedule it for next month," Vicente said, feeling it was time for him to show what his group had done alone on that ground so far.

Chapter 657 The Metal City

The Metal City, or rather the project being developed by the Fuller family, had grown considerably in recent months.

In just a few months, the land now under Casey's supervision had grown from a population of just over 100 people to 1,800.

It now had a central square, a train station, three administrative buildings, 10 commercial buildings, and 50 residential buildings.

With six blocks built up, the place already looked more like a small town than the camp Vicente had passed over a year ago.

Many of the original workers had moved their families to Vicente's Metal City. But with the arrival of the trains in the area, the place had grown even faster as the men of the Fuller family realized the opportunities they would have there.

Even without Vicente's request or order, several of his subordinates sent people from their families to this place. Not only was it a place they knew would be safe, but the opportunities for the first arrivals would be great.

The first to start their business there would have a great chance of financial success!

So the city had gained a significant population, even considering the short time since it had been built.

This place was capable of supporting a city larger than Millfall, but it would need many workers and new residents.

Vicente was aware that he would need support from outside his family to continue progressing in the area at the rate he needed to have his site ready for Nina's awakening.

After that, The Purification would take place, and all the defenses of those preparing for such a calamity would have to be ready.

Although it would take some time for the worst of the disaster to reach the south of the continent, it would be interesting to be prepared for its consequences from the beginning of the crisis.

To do this, Vicente would need the support of the province's wealthy men, which he could only achieve by proving the value of his Metal City and how he could complete it in time.

A presentation would be necessary!

...

As soon as Vicente gave his order to Eve, she left his office to start preparing the invitations for the presentation event in the Metal City.

Meanwhile, Vicente remained in his office with Sarah.

"How's the monster situation in the province?" He asked the black-haired woman in front of him.

"They are appearing more and more in our area," she said solemnly. "Last month, we had to deal with groups of goblins, ogres, and cyclops. But if the situation continues to deteriorate, it's likely that we'll soon encounter more special creatures.

Lamias and other creatures may appear here soon."

Prisiche heard this from the chain around Vicente's neck, and of course, she liked what she heard. That was what she needed.

Vicente didn't want to help Lamia in the short term to have a body compatible with her. But having a body for her to use in the future might make things a little easier for him.

"Keep an eye on it for me. If any particularly notable monsters appear, I'll take action against them myself. Let's not risk our men against creatures that defy common sense." He ordered.

...

Later that day, Vicente met Nova in a local restaurant, something they did several times a week.

Seeing his wife again after a day's work, Vicente was soon eating with her and chatting about the day's events.

She told him what she had done that day. Her routine was constantly changing, so Vicente was always learning new things.

Recently, the army began a major reshuffling throughout the kingdom, with promising soldiers being called to the capital and experienced individuals with less potential being sent to less prominent cities like Saltstar City, Ironcrest, and so on.

Although Nova was very talented and strong for her age, she had been ordered to stay in Saltstar City for the time being.

Vicente wasn't surprised to hear her words. The king obviously knew about their relationship, so he helped Vice by letting Nova stay close to him.

Noticing this, he said to her. "I think you can proceed to the 4th stage without any further reservations. The king is unlikely to call you to the capital now."

"That's good. I'd rather be with my family if the worst comes to the worst." She smiled at him.

"Hmm, but I think you'll be called to the capital after Nina's awakening. So I want you to hunt your fourth pentagram as soon as you advance one level."

She narrowed her eyes. "Why?"

"You will stay in the kingdom while my group goes hunting for pentagrams. I need someone strong and influential to help Nina and Eve."

Vicente intended to leave Bart with the most names in his family. But he intended to take Casey, Sarah, Rory, and Onyx with him. He also had Lina and Layla in mind.

So Nina could only count Eve and Bart among those Vicente trusted the most, which made him wish there was someone else.

Nova was that person!

"I see... You want me to stay." She muttered, a little annoyed.

"It will be dangerous. I don't want you to risk it. Besides, the king might make things difficult for us. So I'd rather you get a nice green pentagram in the kingdom and stay here to help the family.

I intend to return in time to join the state's defense against the enemies that might come from the north. So it'll be quick. We won't be away for long."

He smiled as he took one of her hands. "When we resolve everything here, we'll get married and have a child."

A smile broke out on Nova's pretty face as her heart began to beat faster.

She bit her lip and nodded affirmatively, liking these plans very much.

...

Vicente's next few days in Saltstar City would be uneventful until it was finally time to present the Metal City to the nobles and rich men of the province!

He would leave the city with a group of local nobles nine days before the scheduled event, to which Eve had sent invitations to all the nobles and rich men in the province.

Some of them would have to travel the traditional way, by carriages and beasts, but several individuals would leave their cities in the last few days, as they already had train lines at their disposal.

Though Vicente had not yet begun to offer passenger service, his trains could carry a little over 40 people per trip, considering the seats in the two cars that housed the train engines.

Anyone could use Vicente's trains as they pleased as long as they paid for it.

Thus, several people from Millfall would leave the city one day before the event, knowing they wouldn't be late.

Finally, the day would come for the presentation of Vicente's most important project!

Chapter 658 Introducing the City

In the blink of an eye, the group led by Vicente arrived in the vicinity of the Metal City, passing by the peaks near that place and following the flat terrain of that area.

Since they were only 2 kilometers away from that place at that moment, the nobles who had come from Saltstar City with Vicente could already see the outlines of the tiny Metal City there.

The place had no large buildings. The tallest of them was only four stories high, while most of the residential buildings were two to three stories high.

From a distance, you couldn't tell they were made of metal. But practically all of the structures around this built-up area were made of metal.

The streets were lined with a special type of sheet metal with reliefs that helped increase the road's grip, while the sidewalks had similar patterns but were painted different colors.

If you touched one of these surfaces with your hand, you would notice that almost everything there was made of metal. But if you didn't pay attention, you wouldn't be able to tell the difference between that place and an ordinary city just by looking at it.

There was a difference in terms of organization because this place was planned from the ground up, it was well signposted, and everything that was made of metal was well painted.

You wouldn't find that in ordinary cities in the province. But apart from being very well organized, maintained, and designed, the place didn't look as strange as one would expect from a city made of metal.

Vicente looked at the place in silence as his group's carriages entered one after the other. He was delighted with his men's progress in this area.

But as he looked at the area with a smile, the nobles and rich men in the 15 carriages that had come with his group couldn't help but look at the train that was arriving in the city at that very moment.

"So this is the magnificent train I've been hearing about..." The Duke of the Province watched as the vehicle slowed to a stop at the large station in the Metal City.

Vicente expected this place to grow very soon, so he had ordered his men to build a station capable of receiving up to 6 trains simultaneously. In addition, the station had two special areas that his group would convert to be used exclusively for passenger transportation.

Of the six spaces for trains to park in the station, three were currently occupied.

Vicente's trains had mainly gone to this place, so the vehicles from Millfall, Martell Village, and this place were all there at the moment, two of them unloading resources and the last one arriving with passengers who had left from Millfall.

Another train was ready to go. Vicente had already produced a five-car train that would soon be traveling between Millfall and Ironcrest.

In short, these nobles and rich men were amazed by Vicente's trains, and practically all of them were eager for these vehicles to arrive in their cities.

According to Vicente, the line connecting the rail network to Ironcrest would be in operation in a few weeks, and Saltstar City would be connected to the rail network in no more than five months.

Anyway, while many in the group were thinking about how they could experience the train after finishing their business in this place, their carriages stopped in front of the central square of this place.

The Metal City was under construction, so they saw many men working on the construction of new streets and buildings. The sound of metal hitting metal was constant in this place, but the noise didn't detract from the charm of this city.

Although it was built quickly and had a defensive purpose, the city was beautiful. Its buildings had different designs and very bright colors.

Vicente didn't bother to explain why he hadn't stopped building to welcome these people and soon began to lead them to the local government building.

When he arrived at the front of the building, Casey was waiting for him with the group of leaders of the workers behind the construction.

He greeted the men and asked them with a smile on his face. "How is my city?"

"Very well, I'd say. Everything's working, and we're growing according to plan," said the builders' leader. "But I admit we have housing problems. The rate at which new homes are being built isn't keeping pace with the arrival of new residents in the city."

Vicente looked at the group of nobles standing there and said. "Let's try to fix this."

He looked at Casey and asked. "Have you had any problems here?"

"No, the place is quite quiet. Except for a few travelers who pass through from time to time, we haven't met anyone, not even beasts, in the last few weeks." Said this tanned man.

"Good, but watch out for magical creatures and monsters coming from the north. Try to work with the beasts on the outskirts of our land to prevent any groups of monsters from building settlements nearby."

After he said this, Vicente saw the groups of nobles and wealthy men from the province who had arrived in the Metal City before his group gathered in front of the administration building, along with the people who had just arrived on the train.

He had been a day late for Eve's invitations, so as soon as he noticed all the nobles were in front of the building, he began his introduction immediately.

"Well, you're all here to get to know my Metal City and understand how it differs from others. To begin with, I invite you to stay here for a day or two to test our infrastructure.

My city functions better than any other in the kingdom in terms of the functioning of the sewage system, the water system, the drainage system, the lighting system, etc. There are few opportunities here, but that's because of the city's size.

When this place has more than 60,000 inhabitants, we could even compete with Saltstar City regarding quality of services, among other things.

So let's clarify that anyone who comes here won't be deterred by the fact that it's a newly built place."

He presented the basics first.

One of the nobles who had been there for two days commented. "My group has already experienced your city, and I can see that what you've just said is true. I believe this will be a good place when it gets bigger. However, I want to know exactly how this place will be able to offer us more protection than other cities in the province during the crisis after The Purification."

Vicente smiled and began to float in the air, taking the bodies of all the men and women with him.

"This is what I will show you now." He said as he made his pentagrams appear, startling some of those individuals who had never seen his pentagram configuration before.

Chapter 659 Impenetrable Defense

While everyone was shocked by Vicente's ability to make them all float in the air and show how strong he could be against them, Vicente used his powers to change the electromagnetic properties of the part of his city that had already been built.

As it was, the city was just an ordinary place made of a lot of metal. But as Vicente brought this amount of metal under his control, part of his powers began to appear in the city's surroundings.

He controlled it masterfully and felt no difficulty in controlling such a large amount of metal. Since he was close to the peak of the 4th stage, Vicente could control a ridiculous amount of metal simultaneously.

Because of this, he was able to levitate all the men and women representing the wealthy families in the province while using only a fraction of his power on them.

'Impressive!' The Duke of the Province thought to himself, imagining that if Vicente wanted to, he could crush all those people with a single thought.

Meanwhile, other people were interested in this and other aspects of Vicente's power.

Some couldn't help but imagine how strong he would be when he added his fourth pentagram, while others noted the monster that lived in the province and that many people still underestimated, comparing him to ordinary Sovereigns.

'He must be as strong as a Paragon by now.' Thought one of Millfall's nobles, quickly realizing that Vicente was Cesar and that this young man could certainly fight above his level.

Vicente was probably already as strong as a Low-level Paragon!

As people watched Vicente's powers and the way he made special phenomena appear around the built-up area of the Metal City, the place changed significantly.

A powerful electromagnetic force appeared on the outskirts of the place while stormy clouds rose above the city.

The wind intensified, and lightning appeared from the sky, striking the outskirts of the Metal City but not the inside of the city.

The mana around the city became denser while the temperature dropped, and a terrifying aura emanated from the metallic place.

It didn't take Vicente long to do what he wanted. In just 8 minutes, he had completed the whole process, giving the city its first defenses.

When he was done, he looked at his guests and said. "Come, attack my city. Try out the defenses that will protect the area's inhabitants from monsters."

"That's..." The people obviously hesitated.

But Vicente insisted. "If you don't test it yourself, you won't believe it. So just attack the city as you wish. Don't worry, nothing will happen."

The people there hesitated a bit after he repeated his request. But after a moment of silence, someone moved, activated their powers, and showed their pentagrams.

That person tried to launch a long-range attack on the main square of that small town, launching something capable of destroying 3rd-grade buildings.

However, just as their strike was flying toward the city, an opposing force arose with great intensity, causing the attack to quickly lose much of its speed and gradually stop in mid-air.

Meanwhile, the mana from that move strangely dispersed.

Vicente explained as the people around were surprised: "his attack is based on the element of lightning. Since I also have an affinity for lightning, the mana used in that attack fell under the control of the Metal City, causing it to lose its power.

But even if the attack were based on another element, it wouldn't hit the city because of the electromagnetic barrier around it.

Mana itself has electromagnetism. Don't ask me why. I'm not a scholar. But it's a fact that everything in our world has electromagnetic properties. So, if you keep attacking, you'll see something similar happen again and again."

With these words, other nobles felt brave enough to do what he had encouraged them to, and soon, several of them began to attack the Metal City.

They didn't just attack the place with some of their power. Some of them put all their mana into their strongest attacks to test what Vicente had built there.

But the result was the same. Their attacks would stop before they even threatened any of the city's buildings.

Even if their attacks contained elements that Vicente had no affinity for, the mana from their attacks would eventually dissipate. The mana of an attack did not remain unchanged throughout its path.

If we were to analyze the mana in a revolver bullet like the ones Vicente's family had, the mana in the bullet would continuously decrease with each passing moment. If it took too long for the bullet to hit its target, it would lose all its power and become an ordinary bullet.

The same thing happened with all the elemental attacks. The attacks would be potent in the first few moments of the attack, and then they would quickly lose their power as time passed.

When these attacks launched against the city were stopped in mid-air by the electromagnetic barrier defending the place, they gradually lost their mana until they disappeared.

Vicente then said. "If any of you tried to enter the city where you shouldn't, you would suffer something similar. But the city would throw you away instead of repelling you until your energy dissipates."

He sensed a 3rd-stage beast on the outskirts of the nearby forests and used his power to enter the creature's mind and make it attack the city.

The men and women floating on the city's outskirts saw this and soon watched as the creature jumped toward the city, only to be repelled as if it had crashed into an invisible elastic surface.

The creatures flew in the opposite direction at great speed in a few moments.

"What if a 4th stage creature appears here..." Vicente was about to say when the lightning bolts formed from the surrounding clouds and hit the places he had indicated.

"Those rays will appear and attack the enemies. The problem with this city's defense capacity is that there will always be stormy weather around here." He finished explaining how his city's defenses would work.

"Incredible!" Several people murmured at the same time, understanding why Vicente's city would be so different from any other city in the province or even the kingdom.

To create all these phenomena, one would need Vicente's skills and a large amount of metal. The more intelligent of those nobles and wealthy individuals there could see that every metal part of the Metal City stored mana and elements and served as a battery for the phenomena presented.

Without this large amount of metal, it would be difficult to maintain all these defenses.

Their cities couldn't function like this, so they couldn't help but imagine how valuable this place could be in the coming era of disaster.

Chapter 660 Founding Members

One of these people asked, "How would this city behave if attacked by a horde of monsters?"

Having already noted the value of the Metal City, he needed more realistic information about its safety.

It was obvious that there would be resistance to the infiltration of monsters there. However, the results could be very different if 100, 1,000, or 10,000 monsters attacked the area.

Vicente answered this pertinent question. "The way the city is now, it would only be able to stop a few hundred 3rd stage monsters. But we currently have 4% of the land we want to build on.

When the city has a few tens of thousands of inhabitants in the near future, these defenses will be able to withstand tens of thousands of 3rd stage monsters attacking it."

This was no small feat. It would give the locals a lot of security, a place to sleep soundly, and confidence that their defenses would hardly fall. They would not have to worry about being killed while they rested!

If their defenses did eventually fall, they could fight weakened, fewer, and possibly wounded monsters. That alone would give them a huge advantage!

"How does getting in and out of the city work? I imagine that for these defenses to work, it might be difficult to leave the city." Said the Duke of the Province.

Vicente had already solved that problem. "There will be points of entry and exit into the city. For example, the railroad is one of them. But we won't be using it all the time, which means this crossing doesn't have to be accessible all the time... At the same time, the railroad itself has defenses similar to those of the city.

In any case, we can have entry portals at certain points in the city, where our men can control the phenomena at those portals. By activating and deactivating the phenomena at these points, the city's inhabitants will be able to come and go from the area."

"So, we will be unprotected during the deactivation of the defenses at these points?" a woman asked.

"Only at that point, but yes." Vicente was sincere. "It can't be otherwise. That will be the only way in and out of the area.

In any case, as long as we have powerful magicians guarding these passages, it would be difficult for infiltration or something worse to develop."

Everyone understood the main points as Vicente led them back into the city.

They didn't have to go through a portal like the one Vicente had described. With this young magician at their side, they could get in and out of this place with ease.

"So what methods can we use to join you in this endeavor?" asked a low-ranking nobleman.

Vicente smiled and invited them into his administration building.

After they arrived in a meeting room with a beautiful view of the city's central square, Vicente began to explain. "We are going to offer you two ways to join us. One is as a founding member, and the other is as a resident.

You can come here as a resident and just worry about buying your property in the city. That alone will entitle you to live here and enjoy your rights.

But suppose you want something more, like participating in the local government and getting a financial return from this place. In that case, you can join me as founding members.

Of course, by becoming a founding member, you will have to help me build the city. In return, you will be entitled to free property here, participate in the local government, and receive part of the city's future profits.

The Metal City will have an incredible defense, but to live here, you will have to pay dearly for its land and taxes on its consumption.

We, the founding members, will use these taxes to support the city's expenses, and whatever profit is left over at the end of each month, we will divide up as we decide."

The eyes of some of the wealthier nobles there lit up at this possibility.

In such a world, it would be very difficult to collect income tax as it would be very easy to evade this tax. But if it were collected directly when the movable and immovable property was sold, the government could make most people pay the tax.

The tax made the great royal families of states like this so powerful, and all the rich guys there with Vicente knew it was a big deal.

They were worried about their safety, but when they saw the opportunity to protect themselves and earn coins, they couldn't help but think about joining Vicente in this endeavor.

"How much exactly are we talking about? How much would I need to become a founding member?" One wealthy man asked.

"A few tens of thousands of gold coins would do it." Vicente estimated.

Gulp!

Several people swallowed their saliva. Many people there could not commit to handing over a few tens of thousands of gold coins to Vicente!

"What about buying property in town?" One of the less wealthy asked.

"An ordinary plot of land with a building on it, like most of you are used to in a good city, costs an average of 600 gold coins.

But as the Metal City becomes known throughout the kingdom, everyone will seek it out. So the price of an ordinary property here will be around 8,000 gold coins, excluding taxes."

Some of that would go to the royal family since the land officially belonged to the royal family. However, most of the value would go to the founding members of the city since they were the ones who would build the place and make it valuable.

The Duke of the Province realized this and immediately made his position in the city clear. "I will be a founding member."

"I'm interested too. I think this place has a lot of potential."

The Duke, the Marquises, and the Counts quickly positioned themselves in their majors in the same way, intending to become founding members of this place.

Most of the Barons and Viscounts didn't have enough money, so they would just be residents. But all of them had already thought about sacrificing their financial reserves to buy a place in such a city.

Some were even willing to live more simply in such a place in order to spend less.

As for the rich men without noble titles, half of them would join Vicente as founding members, and the others would just become ordinary residents of this place.

At the end of that day, Vicente would sign contracts with those who were willing to become founding members.

Starting tomorrow, each of them would have to hand over 5,000 gold coins so that the Fuller family could hire more men to speed up the construction of the Metal City!