

## The Mafia 851

### Chapter 851 Mission Half Done?

When they arrived at the location of the magical essence formed by the phenomena of nature in this area of the Valley of Lightning, Vicente sighed in disappointment when he came upon a pentagram that he could fully see.",

"That's not what I'm looking for," he commented to the group, summoning a special storage device for such pentagrams from his spatial ring.

The necklace he had used to store Nina's pentagram was currently with her, as he expected Nina to advance to the 4th stage during his journey north. However, for someone of Vicente's caliber, acquiring devices to store these essences was easy.

"Why not? This essence will turn cyan as soon as you become an Archmage, Vicente," Elmo said, watching the young man collect it. "It might even turn cyan before then. If we find a cyan pentagram for you later, you could advance even before you expect."

The others looked at Vicente doubtfully, thinking he was being too demanding given the circumstances.

Vicente listened silently. Would they understand his true motives if he explained them?

Surely, some of them would be curious to see an indigo essence appear on the continent. But was it really necessary?

Everyone there believed that as long as Vicente became a Beginner Archmage with six pentagrams in each of his magical forms, he would be able to fight even Demien Bloodthorne.

An indigo pentagram would be extraordinary, but they didn't see it as necessary.

"Think about it. Not only will you be able to make a breakthrough on your path, but you'll also be able to absorb two more pentagrams after that."

"Think about it. You could not only advance on your path but also absorb two more pentagrams later," Bonfi tried to persuade him. "You'd have the perfect configuration for your Throne of Darkness."

Vicente sighed. "Tell you what, if we don't find a cyan pentagram like the one I want within the next 12 months, I'll absorb this essence as my fourth pentagram."

'That should be enough to settle the matter for now... I can't tell you how difficult it is to reach the indigo grade. Even if I only absorb cyan essences from now on, it will still be difficult for me to reach that goal.'

While three new cyan pentagrams might give him enough to reach the indigo grade in the first of his essences, two cyan pentagrams and one green pentagram didn't have a good chance of doing the same.

For Vicente, reaching the indigo grade was something that could happen if he tried hard enough, not long after he ascended to the 6th stage, or that would only happen if he became a Magus.

Becoming a Magus was simply too difficult, even for someone like him, and it was also a farewell point for anyone on this continent.

Vicente's companions agreed to wait, regretting his insistence on a perfect setup.

But in a year's time, their biggest problems would have just begun, so even those who thought it was a mistake said nothing against Vicente's decision.

After storing the pentagram, Vicente heard Torne estimate the time they had with this essence. 'It will be impossible to give this essence to Nina, master. Unlike Prische's necklace, this item will store the pentagram for a maximum of three years. In that period, you must find someone to absorb it, or it will be lost.'

Vicente agreed with Torne and imagined that it was impossible for Nina to reach the 5th stage in only 3 years. Besides, he didn't know if it would be safe for him to return to the province in three years.

By his reckoning, in just over 3 years, it would be time for Demien Bloodthorne to emerge from his seclusion and bring terror to the continent once again!

'As soon as I find any newly promoted Dark Path Sovereigns or Paragons, I'll give them this pentagram.'

With the situation resolved, the group moved on through the Valley of Lightning to find the pentagrams of Jacob, Paul, and Ayden.

...

Six months flew by as Vincent's group traveled through the northern region!

After obtaining the previous green pentagram, the party traveled through the Valley of Lightning for three months, searching for essences for the Throne of Darkness, but also for the three Beginning Archmages in the party.

During this time, the group gained much, including a new ally, but also the three essences that Ayden, Paul, and Jacob were missing.

The Valley of Lightning was still an area full of beings of various paths and high levels, just as it had been during Vicente's first time there. As such, the group encountered several High-level Paragons and Beginner Archmages in the area, so it didn't take them long to achieve their goals in the area.

Ayden was the first to receive his new essence, having defeated a compatible beast with the help of his companions a week after they found the green pentagram formed by nature.

After Ayden, Paul received his pentagram just before Vicente encountered the werewolf that had temporarily allied with him when he first came to the area.

This werewolf hated vampires and quickly agreed to join the group on their journey.

Jacob's pentagram was the most difficult for the group to find, forcing them to wander the Valley of Lightning for nearly a month and a half before they found it. This essence came from a High-level Paragon beast, which was difficult to find on the continent.

After obtaining the pentagrams from the team's three weakest Archmages, the group moved on to the Majestic Treefrog Grove to continue Vicente's plans.

The great domain ruled by elves and dragons was near to the Valley of Lightning. Since it was only 7 weeks away by the shortest route, or 10 weeks by the longest route, the group had reached the border of this realm a few days ago!

However, entering Majestic Treefrog Grove would not be as easy as getting there!

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About five kilometers away from the entrance of Majestic Treefrog Grove, on the southern border of this territory of over 500,000 square kilometers northeast of Polaris Realm, Vicente's group was camped on a mountain in the area.

From this spot, Qiang looked over the border between his current location and the most sacred territory for Light Path beasts on the continent, a task he had been performing for days.

From his position, he could see not only several 6th stage monsters but also some 5th stage superior vampires!

#### Chapter 852 Army of High Level Monsters?

After arriving at their current camp a few days ago, Vicente's group ran into a problem: 5th stage vampires were positioned between their path and the interior of Majestic Treefrog Grove!",

Contrary to what everyone thought, not all the 5th stage superior vampires were in seclusion. Some of them were fully aware of the situation on the continent, and it was only because they had bigger goals that they didn't move against threats similar to Vicente's.

From what Vicente and his allies had discovered over the past few days by spying on the enemy's conversations, besides the superior vampires around the Majestic Treefrog Grove, there were also 5th stage vampires in The Ivory Desert.

The Ivory Desert was where the headquarters of the continent's oldest vampire clans were, where the strongest of the coalition that caused chaos by making the sacrifice that started the current disaster were reclusive.

How could vampires arrogantly go into seclusion without leaving men to protect them?

Using his ability, Vicente overheard dialogues that spoke of this and made his group aware of this reality they had ignored.

While The Ivory Desert was home to the vampire leaders, the Majestic Treefrog Grove was home to those who had the most potential to disrupt the vampires' plans.

They had made agreements with the elves and dragons to prevent those races from getting in their way, but even so, the vampires didn't mess around. Demien had placed powerful men around this area to prevent beings from outside the Majestic Treefrog Grove from coming into contact with the beings within!

This had been the case since the beginning of the disaster, between four and five years ago.

That's why Vicente's group was standing still, watching the enemies, at least for now.

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While Qiang was doing his observation work—his sharp eyes scanning the terrain with practiced precision—the rest of the group settled into their small camp nestled in the mountainside.

Elmo stood guard, his gaze sweeping over the shadowed forest surrounding their camp. Bonfi and the werewolf lay curled nearby, their breaths deep and even in the peculiar manner of their kind's rest.

At the edge of a small cave, Vicente, Ayden, Paul, Jakob, and Victor huddled around a modest fire, its flickering light casting long shadows against the rocky walls. They ate in silence, the tension palpable as they digested their food.

Victor, having just returned from his two-week reconnaissance mission, broke the silence.

"There are a total of 56 Archmages around the Majestic Treefrog Grove and 12 5th stage superior vampires. Of those twelve, eight are Low-level, three are Mid-level, and one is a High-level Paragon." His voice was low, the weight of his words pressing on everyone.

Vicente had used his electromagnetic abilities several times to get close and eavesdrop on enemy conversations. He wasn't sure of the enemy's numbers, but from the conversations he had overheard, the numbers Victor had given made sense.

"How many of them are Beginner Archmages?" Ayden asked.

Victor sighed, running a hand through his hair. "16. The majority are Intermediate Archmages—39 in total."

Jakob clenched his fists, his knuckles white. "Is there really an Advanced Archmage in the area?"

Advanced Archmages were extremely difficult to find, even in the north of the continent!

The 6th stage had a total of five sub-levels, but the number of creatures capable of reaching the last part of it could be counted on the fingers of one hand!

There were certainly Advanced Archmages all over the continent, but Master Archmages or Archons, there might or might not be beings with such high cultivation in those areas.

But even if there were reports of Advanced Archmages here and there, there shouldn't be over 20 such beings on the entire continent.

One of them standing in their way was something extreme, an immense danger, but also a sign of how strong the vampire group was.

Victor nodded gravely. "Yes, one among them has reached the middle of the 6th stage."

The group fell silent, the crackle of the fire the only sound in the cavernous space. An Advanced Archmage was a rare and formidable foe, a testament to the strength of the vampire faction they faced.

Vicente's voice broke the heavy silence. "Where is he?"

"He is at the weakest point of the border, about 40 kilometers south of where we are. As for the weakest of the Archmages, they are in a hard-to-pass position to the north, 210 kilometers from us." Victor informed them, already imagining the group would want to know where they had the best chance of getting through.

"The 12 superior vampires are well distributed around the area and at this point, 210 kilometers from us, the closest vampire is responsible for a 25 kilometer border strip. But, as I said, this position is the most difficult to pass through, disregarding enemy forces."

"What's there?" Elmo asked.

Although he kept an eye on the surroundings, he and Qiang listened to the conversation of the group of five humans.

Victor leaned forward, his expression grave. "This border area gives direct access to the dragons' territory. I haven't ventured deeper, but from what I can sense, there are several dragon traps."

"Dragon traps?" Paul's eyes widened.

Everyone knew about the dragons' legendary magical abilities and the near-impossible challenge of countering them.

Dragons were not only famous for their extreme power, for being one of the oldest races on the continent, for their vitality and talent, but also for their luck and greed.

Even the simplest dragon, if it survived the trials and tribulations along the way, would amass a fortune that would make even the ruling families of the continent's great states envious!

Over the millennia, dragons had learned to protect their treasures and had also become known for their hard-to-beat traps, capable of protecting any territory well.

The dragons trusted their traps so much that there was no one from the tribe to monitor the borders around their territory!

"That's a problem." Jacob commented in a pessimistic tone. "If we try to enter the area through this side, we'll probably be able to escape the coalition of vampires and monsters, but we'll face dangers that are just as deadly to us as if we were facing the Advanced Archmage."

"There's also a positive side. This way, we can easily get past the monsters and be sure that none of them will come after us," Vicente said, feeling that they should take a little risk and go this dangerous way.

All four humans sitting next to him looked at him while Elmo thought about the possibilities ahead, considering what they knew.

Qiang said to them. "I have a suggestion that might help solve the problem."

#### Chapter 853 Dividing the Group?

"We have to split up. There's no need for all of us to go to the Majestic Treefrog Grove with Vicente.",

The whole point of traveling together is to fight those damn monsters.

We will not do that by going to Majestic Treefrog Grove. We're only going there to find clues for Vicente's pentagram hunt. It doesn't have to be all of us," said the quadruped bird, his voice steady.

"But how does that help solve the dangers of dragon traps?" Paul asked, frowning.

"Dragon traps are very difficult to deal with, but not impossible. Someone talented and powerful can definitely get through the games set by the dragons who built these traps.

If Vicente, Victor, and Elmo were to go together, I think they might get into Majestic Treefrog Grove. In the meantime, we can wait for them where we are. The nearby monsters are unlikely to move to endanger us, so we'll be fine," the quadruped bird explained, his feathers ruffling slightly as he spoke.

Elmo considered Qiang's hypothesis and felt that the hippogryph was right.

"I really don't see the nearby monsters and vampires coming towards our group. As long as our men keep quiet and don't take any risks, they should be fine on their own for a few weeks. And it is better to face the dragon traps in small numbers," Elmo told his human companions.

The three human Beginner Archmages looked at Vicente and Victor with anticipation, waiting for their decision.

"This must be the best method for us. With only three of us heading into the Majestic Treefrog Grove, it will be easier to outwit the monsters on the way," Victor agreed, his eyes shining with determination, unfazed by the danger that lay ahead.

Being already an Intermediate Archmage, he was confident in his abilities and curious about the challenge of the dragons.

Dragon traps were notorious for being difficult to pass through, but also for being almost like a game, a challenge to be overcome, not just to eliminate those who entered the game.

Perhaps because they were so strong, dragons were arrogant and overconfident. Their traps were not only a way to protect their domains and wealth, but also a way for them to entertain themselves.

When someone capable came along to challenge their traps, the dragons would always watch these beings, hoping to find opponents worthy of fighting.

It sounded silly, but dragons were like warriors, thirsting for battle and using their many attributes to attract potential opponents.

So it wasn't impossible to survive the dragon challenge!

However, that didn't mean that the chances of death for challengers weren't immense...

"Let's do what Qiang suggested," Vicente agreed with the hippogryph's division and plan. "As soon as these two finish their cultivation, we'll present them with the plan and head north."

"In that case, we should prepare for the journey," Elmo warned Vicente and Victor, his voice filled with solemnity and a hint of admiration. "Dragons are divine creatures. With powers ranging from

their immense physical strength, high-level magical abilities, telepathy, body transformations, perfect elemental control, telepathy, among others, their traps can be of literally any nature.

We may face physical games that test our bodies, or mental games that can destroy our minds. Anything is possible when you enter dragon territory through the back door."

Victor and Vicente nodded in understanding before the two of them separated from the rest of the group to meditate and think about what they should do.

They would do this for the next seven hours, until Bonfi and the werewolf had finished sleeping and woke up a little stronger than when they had gone to sleep two days ago.

They would soon hear from Ayden and the others about Vicente's, Elmo's and Victor's plans, until the two humans from the Dark Path had finished their psychological preparations for their departure.

After some orders and advice from the three of them to the rest of the group that would stay in the area, they quietly left the area, moving along the ground at a reduced speed so as not to attract the attention of enemies a few miles away.

They would travel north for the next few hours, following Victor's trail to the place he had explored in his investigations over the past few days.

But later that day, they would arrive at their destination, where a small group of monsters and a vampire had to guard an area of tens of square kilometers.

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Arriving at their destination, Vicente, Victor, and Elmo studied the surroundings, each of them using their special abilities to sense the terrain ahead and determine where it would be best for them to proceed.

"I imagine that the places where the monsters and the vampire are close to each other should be the easiest places to set traps. But we don't want to attract attention, so I vote we go to a place where we can get past them without attracting attention," Victor said to the two of them.

"That should be the case," Elmo agreed with Victor's analysis. "But I don't think it will make much difference if we take the place where the enemies are or the place that is less guarded. Either way, we'll face several tests before we earn the right to enter the dragons' territory."

I can sense at least a dozen traps in our path. Whether the first challenge is easier or more difficult will make no difference. The last challenge is the hardest and there's no way around it."

Vicente felt the same way, looking ahead and feeling as if a gigantic creature was lying in that area, waiting for his trio.

He agreed with his companions and soon after, with his electromagnetic abilities, he became invisible together with Elmo and Victor, while the auras of the three of them disappeared.

Then they slowly made their way between their position and the dragons' traps, keeping an eye on the nearby monster, which fortunately was very concerned about where it was and not where the group was entering.

The group would be able to avoid a battle with the vampire coalition in this area, which would be devastating for them if it happened so early in their journey.

But without having to face the powerful enemies outside of Majestic Treefrog Gorge, they would enter this legendary region of the continent until they reached the first dragon trap in their path.

Feeling the last step they had taken, the three of them raised their guards as they sensed the beginning of the arduous journey into the territory of the Dragon Tribe!

#### Chapter 854 First Challenge?

The moment the three set foot in the Dragon Tribe's territory, the mana barriers condensed, forming a barrier to prevent them from going back the way they came.",

But this was no ordinary barrier. Filled with runes and spatial distortions, touching a single one of them would not be pleasant, even for the strongest of the group!

"I didn't know the dragons' methods were so incredible," said the elder Leshy, unable to help but look back in amazement.

As Vicente and Victor examined the barrier that would prevent their escape, leaving only the path in front of them, Elmo sensed something strange and shouted, "Raise your defenses!"

As soon as he said this, he raised his arms in front of his body, causing his roots to grow armor and a special shield.

In an instant, he raised his arms in front of his body, causing his roots to grow into armor and a special shield. The surrounding trees began to move, the ground trembled, and the leaves in the air shifted their trajectory, hurtling towards them like daggers.

Flowers sprouted from the ground and opened, releasing colored powder that quickly spread through the area, carried by the winds.

"Shit!" Vicente exclaimed.

Metal armor formed around Vicente as he, too, took up a defensive position, several shields appearing near them.

Victor condensed a spherical mana barrier around himself and couldn't help but frown and control his breathing.

"This powder is poisonous. Be careful when you inhale it."

Then, while they were in defensive positions, the attacks from the area hit them hard. The leaves tested their defenses, striking with such force that Vicente's artifacts were torn as if they were made of paper.

Elmo and Victor withstood the first wave of attacks, while the Leshy tried to influence the surrounding forest, leveraging his natural ability. But strangely enough, except for his own body, he could not affect anything around him.

When Vicente showed him the Throne of Darkness, the wooden fellow saw that standing still would be too risky. He said, "We have to move through this area. If we stand still, we'll suffer more and more. We can't do anything against this force! A damned earth-dragon made this trap!"

As soon as he said this, he jumped eight meters ahead and then started to run, dodging the roots that moved through the area, trying to attack him and the others. Vicente and Victor followed suit.

Shadow creatures appeared on the outskirts of this living area and attacked them, with several demons trying to stop the roots and leaves from reaching Vicente and the others.

Victor's magical form manifested, the trident-bearing ghost counterattacking as its user ran to cross the enchanted forest.

"That..." Elmo saw more barriers, like the ones behind them, forming in front of them as they advanced.

"I don't understand. What's going on?" Victor asked, his voice tight with frustration.

"I think we need to beat this place," Vicente said, defending and counterattacking, dodging attacks that could hurt him badly.

Elmo shook his head negatively. "That's not it. We need to find the trap's core."

"Trap core?" Vicente looked at the Leshy, recognizing him as the best suited for this challenge.

"A trap's core is its major strength. Normally, ordinary traps aren't meant to give chances to those who pass through them. But dragons like challenges. If someone shows potential, it's someone many dragons would like to fight to test their strength.

For beings as strong as they are, there's nothing like fighting a prodigy who's already proven themselves in their traps. So somewhere inside the trap must be the core of the trap that we can use to deactivate it."

"I see. What would that look like?" Victor asked as he looked around, feeling his mana shield gradually cracking as his mind seemed to be overwhelmed by the attacks in the area.

"That's the key point. I don't know what it could be. It could be this stone, or one of the many leaves in the area. Either way, it could be anything." Elmo said in a less than optimistic tone.

Vicente clenched his fists when he heard this, realizing that he would have to use everything he had besides just trying to defend himself and running around the area.

Since this wasn't a challenge that could be solved by following a certain route, the only option left to him was to find the trap's core.

His eight pentagrams condensed in the air, causing the mana there to be slightly disturbed, and the area itself to direct more of its attacks against him. As this happened, enormous blades imbued with darkness emerged from the ground and sliced through dozens of roots at once.

Several intelligent metallic artifacts formed at Vicente's command, attacking everything in their vicinity in search of a single high that would resist or, if attacked, would deactivate this trap.

Vicente's electromagnetic senses were heightened by the appearance of so many metallic beings around him, and his vision of the electromagnetic fields became stronger and more precise.

"I see ten things around us that don't look ordinary. Let's test them and see what happens."

Vicente said as he told his companions the locations of the points that had caught their attention.

Elmo and Victor moved against their first targets while Vicente's Throne of Darkness grew, defending him from the many attacks in the area. Meanwhile, demons of darkness appeared next to three of those ten targets, a purple crystal, a seemingly ordinary stone, and a seemingly dead root.

But when Vicente attacked these three targets, all he saw were failures, nothing like what he had expected from the encounter with the trap's core.

He didn't get frustrated as he moved on to the next targets while Elmo and Victor had already tested their first targets.

While Vicente and Elmo watched their new targets being easily destroyed without deactivating the trap, Victor narrowed his eyes as he picked up a golden leaf in the center of the area.

When he touched it, everything in the area lost its power, the leaves flying through the air and falling, while the roots stopped moving.

The trees stopped attacking them at the same time as the mana in the area returned to normal, causing Vicente and Elmo to breathe a sigh of relief before noticing the various injuries on their bodies.

But all that mattered was their victory.

"Guys..."

Chapter 855 Second Challenge

"Guys, do you feel that?" Victor asked, staring at the leaf in front of him. He felt an odd sensation of being surrounded by such leaves while his mana was strangely recovering beyond his control.",

Elmo and Vicente ignored their injuries; their regeneration was excellent, so they would soon be 100% healthy again.

When they approached Victor and looked at the golden leaf, they didn't feel the same sensation as their companion, but they noticed that this was no ordinary leaf.

"It seems the legends are not unfounded. Dragons are truly generous to those who can withstand their trials," Elmo muttered, observing the golden leaf. He could tell Victor had gained something valuable from this trap.

Vicente could sense it, too. The mana in the leaf was simply too strong at that moment, forming a strange connection with Victor, as if it was feeding him with something powerful.

"The barrier ahead is gone. Let's move on," Vicente said, pointing ahead. The three of them were almost back to their best.

As much as they had been tested by a trap that could hurt them just a moment ago, they could all recover quickly. The place they were in had so much mana and various elements that all they had to do was stand there and absorb the circulating mana.

Victor put down his leaf and walked forward with a smile on his face, feeling rejuvenated.

Soon, they felt the barrier behind them follow their movement until they began to climb a mountain.

They noticed barriers forming on the sides of the area.

Realizing that they were about to face another challenge that apparently required them to climb the mountain, the three of them didn't hesitate this time. They immediately used their powers to the fullest, ready for whatever the next trial would throw at them.

With their powers working, they took step after step as bluish rays of light descended upon them from the sky, making them feel the weight of their bodies rising higher and higher as they moved.

Meanwhile, the ground suddenly became slippery as rocks uphill broke away from the earth, and the downward winds pushed them against the group.

Vicente used his Throne of Darkness to cause shadow demons to emerge from the shadows of the rocks rolling down the hill, causing the creatures to move the rocks out of the way.

Meanwhile, metal steps formed in front of him, but this time he couldn't manipulate the metallic minerals underground. He tried to do what he always did, but something prevented him from achieving his goal.

Elmo and Victor continued up the steps Vicente had created, with the human launching long-range attacks and the Leshy positioning himself to defend them.

As they did so, with initially excellent results, they passed the halfway point to the top of the mountain, all three of them feeling their body parts cracking from the pressure on them.

It was at this point that Vicente finally used Torne's mana, feeling if he didn't use this last card up his sleeve, he wouldn't be able to complete the challenge.

There must be some kind of prize at the top of the mountain. My efforts will not go to waste!

Feeling his strength improve a bit, Vicente increased the pace of his climb, forming a slightly larger metal ladder, while his moves to dodge the rocks coming down the path worked well.

Blood dripped from his nose as his bones began to crack with 20 steps to go. He kept going anyway, using his cardio control ability to regenerate as he was wounded by the pressure of the area.

Amid this, the rocks in their path disappeared, giving way to wooden birds that flew at them, trying to attack and push them back.

This time, Elmo could do something, using his special powers to make leaves and small branches sprout from the wooden birds, causing them to miss their movements before he was able to destroy them.

Victor helped Elmo deal with the birds, giving Vicente room to complete the mountain climb.

By now, blood was dripping from all of Vicente's facial orifices. His mana was nearly gone, and the Throne of Darkness was slowly disappearing.

With so little strength left, Vicente could faint at any moment!

But his heart continued to beat strongly, absorbing and consuming the surrounding mana to regenerate and have the strength to continue to the end.

Gritting his teeth so hard that his jaw felt like it might crack, Vicente took the last step without uttering a single cry of pain.

The moment he reached the top, a golden feather, the core of this challenge, flew toward him. Elmo and Victor, feeling the immense pressure lift, took their last steps and collapsed as the burden disappeared.

Elmo fell to the ground, the roots of his body broken in several places, and the once-vibrant leaves were now gray and lifeless. He gasped for breath, feeling the toll the climb had taken on his body.

Victor wasn't much better off, but a strange aura surrounded him, quickly healing his injuries. The golden leaf from earlier continued to radiate energy, enhancing his recovery.

Vicente ignored the golden leaf's effects on Victor, instead focusing on the magic feather in his hands. As he held it, he felt a surge of power, as if he could control the very wind around him.

'This is wonderful, master!' Torne shouted in Vicente's mind, even though he was at his limit, exhausted to the extreme.

But seeing a new essence appearing in Vicente's mind, the old ghost couldn't help but speak with great joy and expectation.

'You have just gained a new magical affinity! You now have an affinity with the air element!' The old ghost informed, feeling winds forming in the area where previously only earth, lightning and the elements of the Dark Path were present.

Vicente felt his mana suddenly rise as he held the feather, instantly recovering from the previous challenge and achieving a 5% improvement in mana reserves!

Considering that it would take him months to achieve a 5% improvement, Vicente was obviously pleased with this progress as he turned his attention to his surroundings.

Looking at Victor and sensing something compatible in the man, he ignored Elmo and the man cultivating to recover as he noticed something interesting.

'It seems that Victor's leaf and my feather complement each other somehow... I think if they combine, something powerful will emerge!' He thought as he imagined where this would lead them.

#### Chapter 856 Final Challenges

After realizing the potential of combining the feather and the leaf into something stronger, Vicente waited for his companions to recover before sharing his thoughts with Victor and Elmo.",

They agreed that there seemed to be a connection between the leaf and the feather, and that perhaps the next challenge prize on its way would also be compatible with these magical artifacts.

They decided to test it later when they completed the following challenges, which didn't give them much time to talk or prepare.

After 10 minutes on top of the mountain, the barrier moved again behind them and came very close to them, forcing them to move on.

They continued down the mountain until they reached a rocky area that resembled a labyrinth.

A barrier appeared on the "roof" of the area, at the level of the rocks in the area, showing to the group that their next challenge was to pass through this area.

They moved on, trying to gather their strength to find their way to the end of the maze, but right at the beginning of their journey, they would face walls spewing fire, flames rising from the ground, and hidden traps.

The dead ends would be the group's worst challenge, with extremely agile and fast fire golems waiting to terrorize them.

In the first moment of the challenge, the party would suffer, being surprised by many traps and encountering several dead ends. But after an hour of working their way through it, Minos and Elmo combined their powers to better understand the area and the right way to follow.

They would go through yet another of the challenges left by the dragons in this border area, and would come even closer to death in this challenge than in the previous trials.

At the end of the maze, Elmo would find a magical jewel that would help him recover and become stronger, in his case by giving him resistance to fire, similar to what had happened with Vicente and Victor.

After completing the third challenge, they had 20 minutes to rest when the area's special barrier moved again, forcing them to move on, this time to a large river that ran through the area.

But this was no ordinary river. Aside from the dangerous water creatures that each of them sensed when they encountered it, this was no ordinary water. As the creation of an ice dragon, this point on their journey would test their resistance to the ice.

With ice creatures that would attack anyone who attempted to cross this river, this journey, though seemingly simple, was perhaps the cruelest and most difficult of their journey so far.

Forced by the approaching barrier to cross the 200 yards of river before them, the group improvised a boat of wood and metal before taking on the challenge.

They were all stronger than when they began their journey through the Dragon Tribe's territory, so the many problems on this river didn't frighten them at first.

But as they progressed through it, they would feel the terror of the low temperatures, and Elmo would lose one of his arms—completely frozen by the enemies' attacks—and Vicente would have all of his metals frozen, greatly hindering him in this journey .

Even by fusing his strength with Torne's and using potions to increase his power during the battle, Vicente could only protect himself all the way.

Fortunately, although Elmo and Victor suffered during the crossing, the two of them could join forces and withstand the ice enemies together.

Even so, they experienced the worst pain they had ever felt in their lives, with Elmo and Victor nearly freezing to death at the end of the journey.

The shadows of Vicente's darkness helped him a bit by repelling the elements associated with the characteristics of this Ice Dragon River.

On the other side of the river, a crystallized dragon's claw was waiting for them to collect, something capable of freezing any liquid.

Getting his hands on this artifact, the young Fuller helped his two companions, giving them a chance to regenerate quickly, with their body temperatures returning to normal.

Using his subatomic manipulation skills with cardiological control, Vicente helped them to rebuild their lost limbs and restore the mana in their bodies.

Even though they didn't get the precious dragon claw for themselves, they both felt their strength improve after being pushed to the limit in the Ice Dragon River, and both of them gained some cold resistance.

Vicente benefited the most of the three, something Victor and Elmo wanted since he was the weakest and also the one with the most potential for growth.

If they became stronger, little would change on the continent. Opportunities would hardly bring them to the level of Advanced Archmage. But Vicente, being only a Mid-level Paragon, could easily rise to the level of a Beginner Archmage with such excellent opportunities coming his way!

Neither of them had expected Vicente to achieve this in the Dragon Tribe, but they had hoped that he would be able to do so at the end of their pentagram hunt and a few victories against the vampires.

Once again, Vicente felt his powers improve a little more, gaining a new elemental affinity, something he would not fully understand until he had completed the challenges on their path.

As soon as he recovered, he joined the dragon's claw to the three artifacts his group had collected and assembled so far.

They seemed to be putting together something quite powerful and with many possibilities, but without having much chance to test it or even improve it, they were forced to continue with the challenges.

By their reckoning, they had already gone through more than half of the trials they would have to go through when they were forced into a huge tunnel that seemed to lead to the end point of this journey.

In this challenge, they would once again have to find the heart of the trap, find the crystal of darkness, and use it to gain access to the other side of the tunnel.

Meanwhile, they would be assaulted by mental attacks designed to lead them to illusions, hidden traps, and creatures of darkness.

But since Vicente was the lord of darkness, this would be less of a challenge for him, although it was certainly very dangerous for Elmo and Victor.

At the end of half an hour in this dark area, he would reach the special crystal that would complete the amulet of five magical fragments!

Chapter 857 Final Challenge: Guardian Dragon

After passing through the great tunnel of the fifth challenge, Vicente, Elmo and Victor left the area with expectant looks on their faces, imagining that they were already at the end of the trap area.",

Gathering the five items they had collected so far, they could see that the amulet was already complete in terms of fragments, with only something left to activate the dormant power within it.

The Dragon Amulet formed a necklace with a pendant made up of all the fragments, which fit together in an intricate pattern and radiated a powerful, multicolored aura.

But while there seemed to be no room to add more components, its aura seemed to be contained, dormant.

The group couldn't help but smile at the thought that they were on their last test before entering the dragon's territory.

Having already recovered from the challenge of the darkness, they made their way to the valley in front of the tunnel's exit and walked for a few minutes until they came to a hill where they heard a strange voice.

"This is quite a strange group, I see. What do you want by entering my tribe's territory like this?" The voice suddenly came from the direction of the hill in front of the group.

The three of them stopped as they looked at the hill and saw it suddenly change, realizing it wasn't a piece of nature, but a gigantic dragon's body.

The previously sleeping guardian opened its large eyes and moved its body, quickly becoming five times larger by stretching out its wings, back and front legs, and large neck.

A shadow that could cover an entire small human city completely covered the area where Vicente, Victor, and Elmo stood, while the aura of the powerful early 6th stage dragon appeared.

Vicente and Victor swallowed their saliva as they witnessed one of the strongest beings on the continent, a being that could certainly compete with vampires of the same stage as him!

Elmo looked respectfully at this creature, one of the three strongest races in the Polaris Realm, as well as a representative of an ancient tribe in these lands.

"Senior Dragon, we are not here to insult your tribe. Vampires and powerful monsters are stationed around the entire Majestic Treefrog Grove, preventing their enemies from entering this special region.

We have plans for the area, so we were forced to pass through the area of your challenges, the place least guarded by the vampires. But we have no evil intentions. We're just passing through." Elmo said as he bowed his head and spoke solemnly.

"Vampires, huh? Is it true that they've carried out their foolish plan to take over the continent?" The creature asked. "Have you come here for help?"

The beings of Majestic Treefrog Grove were in the dark about most things that had happened on the continent in recent years. They knew what might be happening, since they knew they were under siege, but because of the agreements their two rulers had made earlier, they didn't know most of the current news from the continent.

"Yes, the vampires have carried out The Purification. Demien Bloodthorne has reached the 6th stage and has begun his march against human civilization. Currently, the entire north of the continent, except for special areas such as Majestic Treefrog Grove, is under the control of the vampires and their allies.

As for our motives, we are truly looking for help. Any kind of help, be it alliances, warriors to fight alongside us, or even advice. All we want is a chance, Senior." Elmo explained.

The enormous dragon looked at Vicente and Victor, especially at the black-haired young man wearing the dragon amulet.

With a single glance, he recognized the full potential of Vicente, the two magical forms of the boy, and the allied ghost of the human.

"I see... You don't seem evil. In that case, since the vampires tricked us into this passive situation, I'll give you a chance.

The right thing would be for you to fight me and only be allowed to pass if you defeat me. But I'll give you a choice.

If you want, I'll let you pass without a fight. However, if you accept the challenge and defeat me, I will activate the powers of the Dragon Amulet.' He pointed one of his claws in Vicente's direction.

"Once activated, the Dragon Amulet can grant its wearer five special powers.

Elemental Resistance, protection against fire, ice, earth, wind and darkness.

Supreme Healer, able to instantly cure injuries and illnesses.

Elemental Control, the ability to manipulate the elements of fire, ice, earth, wind, and darkness.

Vision of Wisdom, which gives you the ability to see through darkness and illusions, as well as glimpses of the future.

Dragon Aura, which can explode the user's strength, speed, and endurance."

The great dragon at the beginning of the 6th stage pointed out exactly what would happen if they passed the challenge, which piqued the interest of the three allies.

The three of them looked at each other, obviously interested, but also doubtful.

'Do we have a chance to beat him? Fighting him would be more or less the same as fighting a vampire at the peak of 5th or early 6th stage cultivation.' Victor shared his thoughts with Vicente and Elmo.

'That must be the case.' Elmo agreed with Victor's assessment.

'It seems impossible to survive in a fight against him. But the rewards would be great. Someone with the abilities he mentioned would be much stronger, more resilient, and able to make better use of their own abilities.

Imagine not being limited by the need to protect yourself from elemental attacks, and still being able to see glimpses of the future? Even if you could only see 2 seconds ahead, that would be enough for someone with our strengths to change their performance.' Vicente pointed out the advantages.

'But only if we beat him.' Victor knew about the advantages, but they were almost nothing if they didn't beat the dragon in front of them.

The large brown-scaled dragon already knew what was on their minds.

"The challenge is not a fight to the death or until you defeat me. If you can prove that at least one of you can stand up at the end of one minute of fighting time, you will win this challenge. Since you are fighting the vampire scoundrels, I will let you into the tribe even if you lose," the creature said.

Elmo and the two humans opened their eyes wide and thanked the dragon for his kindness.

#### Chapter 858 The Powers of the Guardian Dragon?

With the favorable conditions offered by the dragon, Vicente and the others accepted the challenge and get into position for battle.",

The dragon used an hourglass the size of a house to mark the time, tossing it into the air before signaling the start of the battle.

"Prepare, here I come." He said as a smile formed on his large mouth, showing his large, sharp teeth.

Vicente and Victor already had all their pentagrams out, while Elmo manipulated the surrounding nature to defend himself and escape the dragon's attacks.

A challenge in which one had to withstand the pressure or attacks of a stronger opponent basically depended on one's ability to hold on and stay in one's position.

Wrapping his body in roots and foliage, Elmo prepared to defend himself while focusing on his mental resilience to withstand what was about to begin.

The dragon allowed 10 seconds to pass before moving, smiling as he watched the three prepare with everything they had, metal forming in front of Vicente, darkness protecting him and his allies.

Victor used his magical form to position himself in his defense, forming with Vicente and Elmo to split whatever came at them.

'This human boy is very interesting. A monster in a human body, I'd say, haha,' the dragon thought as he narrowed his eyes.

'Let's see if you have what it takes to carry the honor of the dragons.'

With the narrowing of his eyes, the mana in the area changed, and then suddenly, the gravity in the area changed, with even the light passing through changing under the effects of the dragon's power.

Victor and Elmo felt their knees weaken, and they lowered their bodies as it felt like they had huge dragon claws pressing them into the ground.

Vicente also flinched at the dragon's first move, feeling his entire body shake as he almost touched his knees to the ground.

'Isn't that enough? You're really strong. I'll give you that,' the big dragon thought with interest and then made his second move, lifting his body and opening his mouth.

Looking up, Vicente shivered as he saw flames forming in the dragon's mouth. Then, the creature blew at them, spewing flames and scalding steam at their bodies.

Amid this attack, the gravitational pull on their bodies tried to force them to the ground, the rocks and the ground beneath them cracking and sinking under the dragon's power.

Elmo withstood his opponent's flames well, maintaining his position, while Vicente ducked a little more, suffering despite all the advantages he had. However, it was Victor who suffered the most, advancing quickly and falling to his knees on the ground.

"That's not all. Watch my next move!" The large dragon said as he attacked the air in front of him with his large front claws.

The wind blew against them, making the flames even more powerful as blades of air swooped down on the three of them.

Vicente's metal defenses had no chance against them. Already cracked and scorched, they were easily sliced through by the claw-like blades of air.

Elmo's roots sprang into action, trying to put up some resistance to this attack in defense of the trio. But they, too, were cut down until nothing stood in their way.

"Aaaaagh!"

The three screamed in unison, Elmo and Victor losing their footing to the enemy as they fell to their knees on the ground, unable to withstand this attack and all the pressure beneath them.

They still tried to stop their falls, but as they lost their feet to the enemy, the pain, the split second, was enough for them to lose the confrontation against the burning flames and the pressure that threw them to the ground.

They fell, their hair or leaves burned, while their roots or bones broke under the dragon's pressure.

Vicente held on, expressing immense pain on his face, screaming in agony with his mouth closed, his veins trembling as if they were about to explode.

His feet were cut off, but as quickly as they were cut off, they regenerated, lowering his body just a little more, but still leaving 12 centimeters between his knee and the ground.

The dragon liked what he saw. 33 seconds had passed since the start of the challenge, but Vicente was still on his feet, showing great resilience to withstand the pain and stand firm to get through the challenge.

Vicente's physical strength and ability to regenerate were impressive, even more so considering that his cultivation was two levels below that of his companions, who had fallen beside him.

But Vicente had acted to help his companions while protecting himself until that point, showing just how capable he was in the face of today's adversity.

'Let's see if you can hold out any longer! I'm very pleased so far. Don't let me down, Vicente Fuller,' the giant dragon thought as he used one of his special powers to form a ball of brown mana in one of his claws.

Vicente's eyes widened as he felt the earth beneath his feet swallow him up, the ground becoming an area of quicksand; the earth, trying to crush his legs and form hands to pull his body down.

Vicente didn't try to counter with a similar elemental attack, knowing he couldn't defeat an Archmage of the dragon race.

He used his electromagnetic powers, forcing an electromagnetic pulse to explode, temporarily gaining some resistance against this new form of attack.

'How many elemental affinities does this dragon have?' Vicente asked in horror, wondering how much time had passed and how much longer he could hold out.

"This is my last move, Vicente Fuller. If you can withstand it, this victory is yours." Said the great dragon as his surroundings froze, leaving behind an icy white mist.

The ice traveled over the ground, removing almost all the heat from the environment, while the enemy's fiery flames became freezing flames, completely alien to Vicente, who had never seen anything like it.

If being burned by fire was bad, being burned by ice was ten times worse!

Vicente felt his heart beat faster as he endured the freezing effect of his opponent, his knee dropping another 8 centimeters to the ground.

## Chapter 859 Myndentan

As Vicente weakened, he couldn't help but think of Annie's face and how the complete amulet could help him and his family.",

One of the significant advantages of a powerful magical artifact was that it could be easily transferred to others. Unlike a power that could only belong to one person and then be lost upon their death, an artifact could keep the power within a family.

'I have to hold on! I'm very close to achieving my goals here,' he thought as he struggled, his knees only an inch from touching the ground.

The last grain of sand found its way into the lower compartment of the hourglass.

Along with the last grain of sand, all the dragon's powers against Vicente ceased, as the beast was still in the same position he had been when he had started to deal with the group.

Elmo and Victor felt the pressure on them ease, and even though they were extremely injured, they couldn't help but look ahead and see the dragon's hind legs hadn't even left their position during the entire challenge.

Vicente had won the challenge, but the dragon had barely moved against them!

'That's the difference between our powers...' Elmo sighed softly, feeling a bit of what it would be like to face the superior vampires.

According to the Leshy, Demien Bloodthorne should be even stronger than the dragon in front of them.

If they faced that creature today, they'd be wiped out without a chance to fight back!

Victor thought something similar when he thought about this challenge. He thought he was already at a high level of cultivation, but today he felt a shock of reality.

'The only way I'll be able to travel this land peacefully is to become Advanced Archmages... But that's completely impossible for me in this millennium.'

The man sighed as he realized that, at least in the current crisis, he would have to deal with the threats at the level of an Intermediate Archmage, which was inferior to the strongest on the continent.

Vicente fell to the ground after all the pressure from the dragon and felt his necklace with the dragon amulet leave his neck and go to the dragon in front of him.

"Well done. You truly are an impressive prodigy. Withstanding my powers like this is enough for me to give you my inheritance."

After saying these words, the dragon's body became transparent, causing the three individuals to open their mouths in shock as they realized who they were dealing with.

"A soul fragment?" Elmo opened his mouth in deep shock.

Who on the continent could form a soul fragment as powerful as the dragon that had defeated them without even trying?

As the dragon disappeared, the dragon amulet's restrictions were completely erased, and it radiated with power as it returned to Vicente's neck.

'Remember my name, Vicente Fuller. Myndentan. One day we will meet in person. Until then, stand firm. Your journey will not be easy.'

Vicente heard the dragon's voice in his mind as he felt his aura and injuries improving rapidly.

Torne didn't hear Myndentan's message to Vicente, but after the dragon soul fragment disappeared, he couldn't help but call out to his master.

'Master, hurry and start cultivating! You can break through to the last level of the 5th stage now!' The ghost's voice echoed in Vicente's mind while he was still thinking about the dragon's words.

The most important thing for him now was to become stronger. After a second of thinking about what Myndentan might have in mind, the young Fuller sat down in a lotus position and began to meditate.

By channeling the mana from his surroundings into his soul while the Dragon Amulet worked on his body, Vicente reached the absolute peak of his level.

By also attaining the understanding required for level progression, his cultivation broke through the Mid-level and High-level barriers, ballooning his powers to the ultimate level of the 5th stage!

Elmo and Victor turned their shocked gazes in the direction where the dragon had disappeared, turning their attention to their ally, who was rapidly solidifying his powers at a higher level than before.

"He advanced?" Victor asked in surprise.

"What luck. He reached the peak while passing the test, and Senior Dragon probably helped him take the last step to move up a level."

"Is that really possible?" The human asked the Leshy beside him.

"For someone who can leave a soul fragment like the one we're facing, anything is possible." Elmo sighed in admiration.

"Impressive! Who could this Dragon Elder be? Can you imagine his level?"

Elmo shook his head in denial as he felt Vicente's powers stabilizing and causing his and Victor's bodies to self-

regenerate.

Vicente was already so strong that even without trying, he made everything around him increase in vitality. The plants on the ground grew and blossomed, and Elmo and Victor recovered from their injuries.

"Someone like him is probably at the end of the 6th stage. Maybe he's not even in our world anymore!"

Victor clenched his fists and thought about the legendary figure they had met today.

Meanwhile, Vicente was finishing his progress, with his cultivation at the beginning of the High-level of the 5th stage, a level he honestly hadn't expected to reach so quickly.

At around 30, Vicente was about to reach the peak of cultivation on the continent, about to become an Archmage!

As he stood up from where he was and thought about how far he had come, he couldn't help but smile and clench his fists in satisfaction, feeling fulfilled after all his hard work.

It had only been about 15 years of mana cultivation, but he had faced many enemies, challenges, overwhelming emotions, and almost died several times.

'With my current strength, my chances of surviving the first vampires to hunt me have increased by 20%! If I can get my next pentagrams in the remaining months of peace, I may solve this crisis!'

He was excited by the possibilities before him, seeing a clear path ahead of him to become an Archmage and fight the strongest of the vampires.

As he thought this, he and his companions, now recovered, heard the voice of another being nearby.

"Challengers, please follow me to the tribe." Near to them, a 5th stage purple dragon appeared there.

#### Chapter 860 Unexpected Reception?

As they followed the 5th stage dragon into the tribe's interior, the group walked in silence for most of the way, observing the surroundings of the beautiful area they were flying over.",

The Dragon Tribe's territory is protected by rugged mountains and dense forests. The mountains, with their snow-capped peaks and caves filled with magical minerals, are home to the loneliest dragons.

Descending from the heights, the forests form a dense canopy and are inhabited by magical creatures, with paths known only to dragons.

At the heart of this region is a valley where crystal-clear rivers feed tranquil lakes and the vegetation is lush. This valley is the center of dragon society.

The atmosphere, charged with magical energy, with pure air fragrant with pine and wild herbs, caught the attention of the three travelers.

After seeing many beautiful sights, smaller and larger dragons, beings resting or going about their daily business, the group spotted the valley where most of the dragons in this area were.

A dragon city was not like a human city. There were no buildings or special structures. In some corners, the dragons simply lay down and called those places their homes. In others, like a hillside within sight of the group, the elders stood at the highest point while the young dragons stayed at lower levels to watch them talk.

But most of the dragons' activities took place outside their city. There they simply lived, slept, and guarded their treasures.

But there was everything in this dragon city. For example, in a busy corner of the city, some dragons were lying in front of all kinds of things, like the products of a fair. Anyone interested in these resources could stop by and make an offer. If accepted, a deal would be made.

Trade, exchange of services, and other things common in human realms also existed in the Dragon Tribe!

And just as it would be in a human city when strange specialists arrived in the area, when the group landed there, the three who accompanied the 5th stage dragon soon attracted the attention of the dragons in the area.

The 5th stage dragon continued to lead them, passing through the center of the city to the northern outskirts, where the main dragons of the tribe rested.

Considering the size of each dragon and the fact that there were a few hundred of them in this city, it wasn't such a quick trip at the speed the four of them were moving.

After nearly ten minutes of traveling within this city, they would discover the richest area, where several mountains of scales stood motionless here and there, separated by a few kilometers.

'Nine Archmages!' Victor thought as he realized the number of high-level dragons in this area, more than half of them sleeping.

But they weren't just early 6th stage dragons!

One of these creatures was a terrifying dragon with Advanced Archmage cultivation!

'We didn't stand a chance against a dragon soul fragment with Beginner Archmage strength... Imagine against such a creature?' Vicente clenched his fists at the sight of the moving mountain, his eyes wide in its direction.

Aside from that creature, which was even bigger than the projection they had been challenged against, there were two Intermediate Archmages dragons and the rest were Beginner Archmages.

One of the Intermediate Archmages stood next to the presumed leader or elder of the tribe, whom the 5th stage dragon led them to.

"First Elder, this group passed through the challenge south of our border. I brought them here as soon as they recovered." The creature was just as quick as before, saying what he had to say and then leaving.

Left behind, Vicente and the others didn't know what to do or what their situation was.

But whatever the significance of this encounter, they couldn't stand against these powerful beings.

Elmo used one of his hands to push Vicente forward, letting the boy speak for him this time. 'You have their amulet. You must represent us.'

Vicente made a common greeting gesture from the continent, joined his two hands, and bowed his head. "Elders of the Dragon Tribe, those to my right and left are Elmo and Victor, and I am Vicente Fuller.

We came to your tribe because the vampires were blocking the paths to the Majestic Treefrog Grove. The side they were guarding the least was the side of your tribe, so we took our chances with their traps and their challenge."

The Intermediate Archmage looked into the little human's eyes and said. "We know that. We've been waiting for you."

"That..." Vicente hesitated as he looked at Elmo and Victor.

But neither of them could understand what was going on, so they just shook their heads in denial.

"Vicente Fuller, have you talked to Ancestor Myndentan?"

Vicente looked down at his Dragon Amulet necklace and nodded. "Yes, he activated the powers of the amulet and said that one day we'll meet again."

The two dragons looked at each other while Vicente asked, "Is the elder in the tribe? I'd like to pay him my respects. He left so quickly that I didn't have a chance."

The Great Dragon of Advanced Archmage cultivation closed his eyes and sighed. "He is no longer in the tribe or anywhere on the continent."

"Don't tell me that..."

"Ancestor Myndentan has long since left the Polaris Realm by advancing to the 7th stage," the Intermediate Archmage in front of them said as he thought of the ancestor who had left when he was still a junior in the tribe.

The First Elder opened his eyes and got right to the point. "Vicente Fuller, as someone predestined to leave the continent and join our ancestor on the Upper Continent, you are welcome in my tribe to live and enjoy our territory as you wish.

You are searching for your final pentagrams for your second magical form. We will help you find them. In the meantime, don't worry about your current mission. Just concentrate on learning what we have to teach you."

Elmo and Victor, as well as Vicente, heard the words of the strongest dragon of the tribe without understanding what was going on, not expecting the dragons to be so cooperative with them after invading this territory!

"What is going on here?" All three of them asked the same question.