

The Mafia 981

Chapter 981 A World Without Privacy

Vicente immediately understood why Asahel considered Ponddown small as he landed at the airport. Compared to Ravengarde—the largest city on the entire island—Ponddown was tiny.

Even so, Ponddown was still bigger than the Metal City Vicente left behind in the Seidel Kingdom, which, about a year ago for him, was the largest city on the continent, having a million inhabitants.

But even though it was roughly the same size in area and population—something visible with the movement of people in the streets—Vicente could tell that this place was superior to his city in every way!

With the special technologies of this world, where advanced information was known even by ordinary people and communications were practically instantaneous, a variety of services and products that didn't exist in Polaris Realm were dominant in the cities of Light Cay.

On his way out of the airport, Vicente took the time to observe the movement of flying and ground vehicles within the city. The buildings in the vicinity had huge advertising screens on some of their faces. Coincidentally, he saw his face and the configuration of pentagrams on one of these buildings, which was advertising a local training center.

People on the streets and sidewalks wore holographic communication items on their hands while walking or even while driving their semi-autonomous vehicles at high speeds.

This was a surreal sight for a cultivator used to nature and a more feudal level of development.

The earthly part of Vicente's mind had been making him adapt well to the place and even feel at home. But the cultivated part of him, related to the Polaris Realm, made him find this reality strange and wish for something simpler.

Having good technology for specific services was nice, but Vicente preferred a life in the countryside to the typical life in Light Cay.

He remembered his family in Polaris Realm as he felt about it. 'When we unite again in the future, I'll find an island that's more like home and we'll live in peace. Maybe I'll raise some animals in my

retirement.' This thought made him feel strangely good as he saw on his 'glasses' a red band indicating the way to the place where he was supposed to meet Alicia.

The map that Zigam had given him was really useful, in and out of cities, something that had been a gift for this mission, but which would certainly be of great use to Vicente in his future in Light Cay.

{Master, two people have been watching you since we left the airport.}

Prisiche alerted him, pointing out to Vicente the two individuals that even he hadn't noticed.

"How?" he muttered to her, not understanding how, even though he was masked, looked different from himself and had restricted cultivation, he could have been identified.

{There are two most likely options for the current situation, master. They don't know who you are, and are after you for reasons we don't know, or they know and potentially want to act against you because of who you are.}

One of the two individuals was a 3-Star Magus, and the other was a 2-Star Magus, something Vicente believed to be within his reach, but also close to his limit.

'That's not good...' He hastened his pace, still maintaining his route to the property indicated for him to meet Alicia.

"What are the chances of them acting inside the city?"

{About 25% on the streets and 40% inside private properties. There is a sect outpost in the city. Do you want to go there?}

"No. That would alert them we know about their positions. We'd better see how far it goes. For now, I'm not desperate to seek help." He showed no sign he was aware of the position of the two beings following him.

Moving on, neither of them would get closer than 100 meters to Vicente, until he arrived in front of a cultivation tower, where one of the largest training centers for magicians in the city was located.

Upon entering the Ancient Garden building in Ponddown, Vicente went straight to the administrative wing using his ID.

Luckily, the item he had with him said who he was only for the most hierarchically advanced in the force. For basic checks like the one he had to pass to gain access to the site, he was just one of many sponsored by the training center and the Manifold Family.

Thus, he soon arrived at an area where there was a large 3D map of the building, with the cultivation, trading and meeting areas of the building displayed in a special way.

The individual and collective cultivation and training rooms were close to 80% full, while the flow in the trading areas seemed intense at the moment. The meeting area, where one could barter, arrange future actions and exchange information, was the least flashy, with the least movement at the moment.

Looking at that 3D map of the building, Vicente ignored the over 30 people in the surrounding area, controlling everything in the training center, inspecting what was happening in much of the building.

'The technologies in this place are so advanced that it's possible for someone to have total control over the lives of others and influence them, even without coming into direct contact with them...' Vicente felt a chill run through his soul, noticing that not only the two men following him were keeping an eye on him.

'The Ancient Garden does this with those inside its building, so it's to be expected that Stonewall does this at headquarters and the leaders of each city use things like this to monitor their inhabitants.' This worried him. He didn't like the idea of being watched.

"It seems you're interested in the Training Tower Matrix," said a woman as she stopped next to Vicente and waved in greeting.

"I am indeed. Do you always spy on your users cultivating and training?" He asked as he looked around the many rooms in use, which he could clearly see what each user was doing.

"Certainly. But we make that clear in the terms of use of our towers, when customers pay for their rooms." She explained with a smile on her face.

"Nobody explained that to me."

"You haven't paid, so your sessions aren't observed. You have the Ancient Garden's guarantee that everything you do will be confidential," she answered him.

"I see..." Vicente didn't know if he could believe such a thing. "Anyway, I'm not here for that. I was told I could find Alicia here. Where is she? Can you tell me?"

"You're talking to her." The brown-haired woman, apparently in charge of this place, winked at him, before indicating with one of her hands. "Come with me. We'll talk in a more private place."

Chapter 982 Someone As Shocking As Vicente

Entering a room with a large glass table and a view of the city center, Vicente ignored the holographic screens here and there, keeping an eye on the brown-haired woman who sat in front of him with a smile on her face.

"You're hiding your appearance..." she said as she flashed her very white teeth at him, obviously identifying Vicente.

"You..."

"Don't worry." She gestured with her hands, seeing the hardened expression on his face. "I'll keep your secret, if you like. Zigam informed me that you were coming."

Vicente's eyebrows rose as he immediately summoned from his spatial ring the box and the message the man had sent. "In that case, he must have warned you about it, too."

"Yes, thank you for bringing them to me. I'll pass them on to my fiancé." She smiled as she received the item and the message without paying much attention to them. "Anyway, can you tell me why you're hiding your identity?"

He looked through the glass lenses on his face, focused on this woman's black eyes. For a moment, he didn't know what to answer. The answer was so obvious that her question caught him off guard.

"Because of my pentagram configuration?"

"Your pentagram configuration is really impressive." She nodded as she snuggled into her armchair. "But there are many special people on Light Cay, Mr. Fuller. Besides, on an island like ours, where we can easily afford artificial enhancements to the grade of our pentagrams, configurations close to yours aren't hard to find."

'Perhaps for a group in control of such a wealthy force, this really is easy to achieve.' He looked around and smiled.

"Miss Alicia, I don't know much about this world, but I'm afraid you've lost touch with reality. Stonewall is one of the strongest sects in Light Cay, no, the strongest, but even so, I haven't seen any disciples with a pentagram configuration close to mine. Even some of the Magus that I watched fight weren't that special."

She didn't take his comment negatively. "On the one hand, you're right. Really, for the vast majority of people, you're an unreachable monster." She showed one of her hands to Vicente, forming a small sprout, while small, glowing pentagrams appeared around this magical form.

'Green, Green, Cyan, Cyan, indigo, indigo and indigo...' Vicente narrowed his eyes as he felt Alicia's magical power and couldn't help but recognize the woman's potential.

Compared to him, she was second only to those two green pentagrams!

But even that was no big deal, since she could certainly nurture them to higher levels with the support of the Manifold Family.

'I see... Alicia is really precious to the family. It's no wonder they appointed me as her trainer.'

As a 2-Star Magus, this woman could become a monster just like him when she became an 8-pentagram Grand Magus. At that time, she could have 4 cyan and 4 indigo pentagrams, a terrifying configuration!

She continued, "But on the other hand, you're wrong. There are more people similar to you on this continent than the forces capable of killing us have the capacity to act upon."

A hundred thousand years ago, a genius greater than me, similar to you, appeared on our island and was assassinated by a group that existed at the time. A month later, a team made up of magicians with a similar magical configuration to that individual moved in, exterminating that sect.

Since then, hunting down great geniuses has become taboo. Everyone with a similar talent looks at cases like this with great sensitivity. 'If something like that happened to them, why shouldn't it happen to me?' Such thinking changed our island, causing the Violet Association to be formed and establishing rules for killing on the island."

{Master, the Violet Association transformed Light Cay and because of it, we can say today that we are an island that follows the path of light and is one of the most peaceful parts of Anicane.}

Vicente heard Alicia's words as he read Prisiche's reply.

He hadn't expected to hear about such a thing there, something he had almost neglected in his studies over the last year.

However, even hearing and reading such a thing, Vicente was skeptical of the idea propagated by this place that they lived on a peaceful island without the problems of other parts of the cultivation world.

Cultivation was something that went against external desires, a desire to achieve something that had never been achieved before. How could people following such a path be so good and righteous, as these two seemed to mean with their carefree and confident words?

"Even so, I prefer to keep my identity a secret, if possible. Anyway, I'm curious. The moment I arrived here, I swore I'd find someone more or less in my situation." He changed the subject by relaxing his expression. "Is it common for those sponsored by the Manifold Family to work inside one of their establishments?"

She relaxed too, letting the dense subject of a moment ago die down. "No, I'm a special case." She smiled. "I'm engaged to a family member, so my benefits have multiplied, haha. I'm gradually moving from being a sponsored member to becoming an actual member of the family.

But you can do that too. There are good single women who would certainly love to be with you, I'm sure of it."

"I'm not interested. Although the benefits sound great, I have other plans for the future."

She was silent before asking. "Anyway, are you ready to train me? I was told that you would eventually be my training partner. But it was expected to take another year to start. You're a bit ahead of schedule."

"Yes, I'm ready." He assured her, certain that she was underestimating him because he was one level below her.

As she wondered if he would be able to train her, he couldn't help but be excited to fight someone as strong as him for the first time in his life!

"Then accompany me to my individual training room. Oh, don't worry, no one will know who you are there, so you can use your powers and reveal your actual appearance." She laughed as she led the way.

Chapter 983 Training with Alicia

In Alicia's training room, Vicente removed the item he was using to alter his appearance. Putting his glasses aside—Prisiche—he looked at his combat partner for the day.

"How exactly will our relationship work from now on?"

His obligation to train Alicia wasn't very specific. It only said that, twice a year, he should dedicate part of his time to assisting this woman's growth. But how this would happen, for how long, was not specified.

She finished putting on her combat items, saying as she adjusted her armor, "About that, your mission with me depends on two things. One, my saturation and two, my advancement to the 8th stage."

He frowned, looking at her uncomprehendingly, but without interrupting her words.

"Regarding my advancement to the 8th stage, that obviously won't happen overnight. But the family expects you to accompany me there, helping me with training to spur me on and eventually joining the hunt for my eighth pentagram."

That was the simple but time-consuming part. He understood well what he would have to do, although he didn't like how long he would have to be involved in this mission.

'Looks like I let myself be fooled by a not-so-well-explained term. Tsk! I didn't expect them to be so cheap with their contracts.' Vicente thought to himself, recognizing his mistake but not showing much irritation.

Although he didn't like the situation, something that would force him to do this job for a long time, it wasn't so complicated that he regretted it.

"As for my saturation, well, with each session together, you'll have to stay by my side until I reach my limit. You and I are busy people and we can't be together all the time, so we'll have meetings limited to what I can absorb from each opportunity to learn from you." She finished.

There was a limit to how much a body could absorb, how much a cultivator could improve with each cultivation, study, or other method of self-improvement. That limit was saturation, the point at which she would know it was time for each of their sessions together to end.

Vicente brought one of his hands up to his face, wondering what this meant. 'I imagine Alicia is one of the most advanced in the family at her level. There probably aren't many capable of providing her with a good sparring partner without impeding individuals who are too well-placed or busy with other matters.'

He understood why he had been chosen to do this job. Apart from having the power and talent, he was not an active member of the family, but rather a sponsored one who had no role that would be disrupted when he was with her.

"All right. I understand our situation now." He murmured, before returning to his usual confident state. "Are you ready?"

She smiled at him, interested in how confident he seemed. As much as his configuration was slightly superior to hers, she had one more pentagram than Vicente. In addition, her soul cultivation was also stronger than his by one level, something that gave her a lot of confidence.

She asked. "I'm ready, but what about you? I don't doubt that you'll be a formidable training partner in a few more years, especially when you have your seventh pentagram. But right now, I still don't see you at my level."

Vicente didn't take her comment the wrong way. All this time, Alicia had been very respectful and helpful to him. Her complaining about his current cultivation and thinking she was stronger than him wasn't strange. In fact, it was fair.

In the cultivation world, strength spoke louder than anything. And now she was facing the man sent to train her, but who, at the moment, was inferior to her in many ways. How could she not doubt him?

However, Vicente was about to show her that things weren't as simple as she thought. "No more dialogues. Let's see your flaws."

With his words, his pentagrams of magnetic magical form formed in an instant showing an aura that, although smaller, was denser and much more terrible than hers.

Alicia responded in the same way, invoking her special power, a plant-type magical form, Dark Twilight Flower, appeared differently, revealing itself with purple petals, matching her cyan and indigo pentagrams.

But amid her display of power, she sensed a change in the air around the training room, feeling a strange heaviness in her body as the surrounding mana seemed to slip from her grasp.

The armor Vicente was wearing shifted, revealing his clothes better, while several metallic creatures formed nearby.

"Show me what you're capable of," he said as he made the creatures fly at her, transforming in the air as they moved terrifyingly fast to her senses.

'Something is off.' She felt strange at the start of the fight, but tried to use her powers to neutralize her opponent.

Making her flower open to its fullest as it glowed, several copies of that small plant sprouted in the surroundings, releasing a dark powder into the air.

A purple barrier formed around him, while the black powder mixed with the air seemed to gain momentum, rushing around Vicente with an obvious interest in surrounding him.

"Biological weapon, I see. You're a killing machine." Vicente recognized her potential in combat, however, he was her weak point. "Someone with a power like yours has as their worst kind of opponent those who can influence their mind."

It went on for five seconds, as she blinked, seeing worlds alternate, for a moment seeing herself in a place surrounded by vampires and then again in the training room with him.

"Opponents who can control your body and mana." He added as he made her feel a different heartbeat, capable of taking the air out of her and making her suffocate.

"Opponents who can break through your barriers and fight you with their fists," he said, appearing a meter in front of her, having overcome her barrier without difficulty.

She overbalanced backwards as she opened her eyes wide, extremely frightened.

"In my case, I can do all three things at once. So, Miss Alicie, you have a lot to improve on," he said as he moved one of his fists slowly, hitting her abdomen, then throwing her against one wall of the room.

With a loud 'pa!' against the wall, Alicia felt her bones ache, her body resist her commands, while her mind seemed uncertain of what was reality and what was an illusion.

"Don't worry, we'll strengthen your methods. Now, please, use everything you've got. I'm looking forward to taking on someone as strong as you seriously," he said, making her see that she could go all out against him.

Chapter 984 Strong Appearance, But Unstable Strength

Getting more serious, Alicia saw she wouldn't even come close to hurting Vicente if she didn't use everything she had. Frowning, she stood up, ignoring the pain in her back and abdomen.

With a grimace drawn on her beautiful face, she used one of her skills, making a cyan pentagram glow and some sprouts in the ground develop, forming roots towards Vicente.

She continued to stimulate the poisonous pollen from her flowers, trying to knock out at least some of Vicente's concentration.

'What the hell is going on? I understand that he's fast, physically and mentally strong, as well as being able to block me without even touching me, but how is he immune to my poison pollen?'

The special power responsible for her becoming the great cultivator she was today was one of her first abilities, capable of poisoning her opponents through their airways. Even covering their airways with mana couldn't protect them from Alicia's poisonous pollen.

This had been the case at least 90% of the time she had trained or fought against opponents of the same power range!

Her special power had been effective in knocking out or even diminishing her opponents' powers to the point where her other powers became impossible to defend against or counter, guaranteeing her victories.

But Vicente apparently suffered nothing at first, and even now, being attacked by her root-shaped snakes, he seemed totally immune to such power.

Even the corrosive barrier she used as a form of defense, capable of disintegrating body parts of her opponents, seemed to have no effect on him.

Her eyes narrowed as she moved, using the green of her plants to alternate positions in this training room. With an ability that was like teleportation, Alicia could use the bodies of her plants to switch places quickly.

Vicente felt her dodge another blade attack he directed in her way, as he turned his eyes towards her new position.

'That's a good skill.' He thought as he smiled subtly. 'Too bad I can do something like that.'

A black hole appeared in front of one of his hands, which his hand then entered, passing through the space fabric and reaching her back.

Just as he was about to touch her body, he felt sprouts appear at the point of contact, with a small thorn trying to pierce his finger.

Alicia looked back in surprise at Vicente's movement, for an instant seeing the defensive thorn that was supposed to surprise Vice wither and disappear.

'That?' She moved forward, trying to dodge Vicente's hand, while she couldn't help but be filled with doubt in her mind.

Vicente's powers didn't seem right. He didn't seem to influence only the electromagnetic reality around him. Also, his 1-Star Magus mana didn't resemble that of a Magus at that level. Even though he actually had less mana than her, his mana seemed to be of a higher quality than that of a 5-Star Magus!

'Why? The difference between us shouldn't be so great!' she thought, considering that her own mana had a similar density to that of a 3-Star Magus, even though she was a 2-Star.

Unfortunately for Alicia, few knew about Vicente's second magical form and his other six pentagrams, which had an even higher-level magical configuration than his electromagnetic form.

Vicente knew that because of the Throne of Light and Darkness, Alicia's poison was ineffective against him, since everything around him could be devoured by the light or darkness in his body.

Light was more effective against certain types of elements, while darkness was better against others. But together, they produced elemental resistance to practically all types of elements.

Only someone with an elemental affinity similar to his and superior cultivation could take him by surprise and make him suffer from something like what Alicia was attempting.

"You have a good magical form and powerful abilities. You can create an area capable of being totally under your control and, in forests, you should be deadly against your opponents. The key to strengthening yourself should lie in improving your mental and defensive capabilities.

While this ability to switch positions with your plants is good for escaping physical blows, it cannot protect your organs from beings capable of influencing matter and your mind.

It might be interesting to get a compatible pentagram that gives you these two defensive capabilities. But until then, you can improve your defense by focusing on attack." n/o/vel/b//in dot c//om

When one's defense wasn't good enough to guarantee their well-being, the best course of action, in Vicente's view, was an attack so strong that the opponent would have no room to exploit weaknesses!

"Find a way to combine your seven skills and inflict negative effects on opponents with my characteristics. That will buy you time until you become a Grand Magus."

With those words, he himself combined his powers, generating a strong electromagnetic pulse that unleashed several bolts of lightning from his body, destroying the roots chasing him.

Simultaneously, an invisible barrier appeared around him, pushing Alicia's black poisonous powder away, while her sprouts around that area were blasted from the inside out.

Able to control mana at a subatomic level, few could resist Vicente with a cultivation so close to his and being so close to him physically.

Alicia's eyes widened as she found herself in this situation, suffering a total defeat for the first time in years!

She couldn't help but fall to her knees on the floor, watching Vicente as if he were a magician a few levels stronger than her and not just a newly promoted 7th stage.

He remained silent after all his words and last attack, feeling that his improvements since coming to Anicane from Polaris Realm were not as simple as they seemed.

'The appearance of one's magical configuration isn't everything. I feel that some of my pentagrams, of the same rank as Alicia's, are far superior to hers.'

'That's obvious.' The Throne's voice sounded in Vicente's mind. 'This girl used artificial methods to strengthen 3 of her 7 pentagrams. And one of her pentagrams was created artificially. I can feel it. Compared to you, who got your pentagrams right and evolved them with natural effort and promotion, she is far inferior.'

Vicente's power wasn't greater than Alicia's just because he had two magical forms. In parts, his configuration had a much more resilient essence than hers.

'Apparently, I won't have many rivals on the same level as me in this world... Even though we're in such a fantastic place, the people of Anicane seem to want to make their cultivation journeys too easy.' He thought to himself as he was watched by Prisiche and Alicia.

Chapter 985 Alicia's Advice

"Impressive! No wonder you've been assigned as my trainer!" Alicia said as she felt the weight of her body seem to lift much higher, barely able to move.

Even though she was in pain and had suffered quite a defeat to someone of her talent and level, she wasn't angry, but excited about the future. This wasn't her last fight with Vicente in this type of encounter. Many more occasions similar to this one would happen before she got her eighth pentagram.

Vicente retracted all his mana back into his body, appearing to be just an 'ordinary' 1-Star Magus again, relaxing a little as he let go of his thoughts. He smiled at Alicia, liking her personality.

Since they would have to train together for a long time, it was good to see right from the start that she wouldn't be the tough type of person to deal with.

He then asked, "I guess our training today is over, right? How will we meet again after today?"

She pulled herself together, while using a towel to dry the sweat from her face. "About that, I really can't train again today. I'm going to take some time to meditate and digest our training. We'll talk about our next sessions after that, okay?"

"Hmmm."

"For now, I have someone who should already be waiting for you outside this room. She'll guide you around the city if you want, as well as taking you to my meetings and passing on messages from me."

When she had finished drying off, she followed him out of the training room, repeating part of what she had just said.

"I don't know how many more fights we'll have to have together. You've given me a lot of tips, so I'll have to look into it after each of our meetings. But it's likely that you won't have to stay in Pongdown for more than a week. Is that a problem for you?"

He smiled at her as he shook his head in denial. "Not at all. In fact, it coincides well with some of my plans." He thought about how Larissa and some of their fellow faction members would finish what they were doing around the time he returned to Ravengarde.

"But before I go, there's something I'd like to talk to you about."

She changed her expression when she heard him, stopping in front of the exit to the training room.

He said, "There are two people following me since my exit from the local airport and the entrance to the tower. I don't know who they are, so I'd like your opinion."

Vicente already had his glasses—Prisiche—on his face again, ready to leave Alicia. But after the fight with this woman and feeling that she could become a local ally, he decided to share this information with her.

"Two people?" She brought one of her hands to her face. "Is there a possibility that they are observers of the sect? It's not uncommon for good talents like you to be observed when they leave headquarters."

Like Vicente, Alicia was also part of one of the Light Cay sects. But she didn't belong to any of Stonewall's rival forces, which allowed her good relations with one of the sect's allies, the Manifold Family.

"I don't know about that. I didn't want to get close to them. My question is, what is the possibility that they are enemies? Is it common here in Light Cay for critical information from disciples to leak to enemy forces?"

Because of the way he phrased it, Alicia couldn't help but raise one of her eyebrows when she saw its implication. "Aren't you a native of the island?"

She, like most of those who had seen Vicente's official fights, didn't know about the fact that he was a magician ascended from a lower plane.

Realizing his mistake, Vicente took a more careful approach. "Yes, that's why I'm not so familiar with the island..." He didn't make explicit the fact that he came from a lower plane, leaving open the possibility that he was from another island.

'How unusual. I wouldn't have thought it.'

Alicia thought silently, but given Vicente's strength, it made sense. Given how out of touch with reality he was, she imagined that he probably came from a stronger island.

'Light Cay is not among the most powerful islands. We're focused on technology and it's only because of our artifacts that we're on an equal footing with other islands. He probably came from one of those places focused on raw power, that's why he's so strong!'

"I see. Don't worry about your secret. I'll keep it to myself," she said as she gestured an oath to Vicente. "As for your previous question, it is possible. There have been several cases of betrayals and incidents that began with the leaking of sensitive information.

There is a nefarious force in Light Cay called the Dark Hands. This is not a group like your sect, but an association that anyone can join, do business with, and get on with their lives. This group is known for selling information, contacting assassins and individuals interested in murder, etc.

Although, for the most part, Light Cay is a fair and honorable place, don't be fooled. There are corrupt and nefarious people here. Some of them will sell other people's critical information if it benefits them.

Someone with such impressive power as you would probably have your information sold in no time."

'Dark Hands, huh?' Vicente engraved that name in his mind, seeing that he would most likely be in serious trouble soon.

He still couldn't be sure how complicated the situation with the two Magus would be, but he was sure it was only a matter of time before something hairy caught up with him.

Alicia advised him, "Be careful. And if you need help, don't hesitate to call me. I'll certainly try to move as much of the family as possible to help you."

Vicente thanked him and then left, leaving Alicia alone in that cultivation room to recover from the tough fight she had had.

Shortly afterwards, he came across a woman waiting for him, the person Alicia had already warned him about. When he met Helen, he would soon leave for a cultivation room, with the objective of meditating for a while before letting his guide help him at the start of his stay in Ponddown.

Chapter 986 Alicia's Help

On Vicente's second day in Ponddown, he was still being followed by the two Magus that Prische had noticed earlier. But he was pretending to be in the dark about it.

After his first training session with Alicia on the day of his arrival in the city, he cultivated in the tower where he had fought with her. At the end of the day, he used Helen to walk around the city center and get to know the area better.

There was nothing special going on in Ponddown, and one night was enough for him to learn the most important things about the area.

Ponddown was on the coast, so the place was heavily influenced by groups of sailors and traders who brought or even took resources from other parts of the island to the area. Because of this too, it wasn't hard to find members of the island's largest sects in the area. This was a point Vicente set his sights on, on the lookout for possible enemies looking for his head.

The second day in the city, he went back to train with Alicia, this time getting the chance to see her talent in action. After just one meeting, the woman achieved a remarkable improvement in her combat skills!

After this second meeting, Vicente better understood how much he could work together with Alicia and how long he would probably stay in the city. For the time being, they had agreed to train together for a week. But already on their second fight, he sensed their plans would change when they had between their third and fourth matches.

On their second night in the city, he took the opportunity to do some shopping for resources and ate at a popular restaurant in the area. The Manifold Family was covering his expenses, so he didn't have to worry about saving.

On his way back to the place he had been told by the family, he was just entering his room when Helen suddenly received a message.

Looking at Vicente with a smile on her face, Helen passed on the invitation she had just received from him. "Senior Fuller, Miss Alicia is inviting you to the family estate the following morning. Sir Edric Manifold has just arrived in the city and she has spoken to him about the senior. They wish to have breakfast with you and talk business."

Edric Manifold, Alicia's fiancé, was no ordinary member of this powerful house. As the third in line in the main line of succession, he could eventually become the patriarch, or even someone important to the patriarch.

Prisiche had helped him understand the Manifold Family better since he began his relationship with this group, so he was perfectly aware of Edric's position.

"All right. I'll get up early tomorrow." He didn't refuse, obviously curious to know what Alicia wanted.

There was no reason for him to meet Edric and her the next morning, unless she had something for him or the man wanted to meet his fiancée's trainer. One way or another, Vicente had no problem meeting up with them.

Soon after confirming that he was going to breakfast, he secluded himself in his hotel room, where Prisiche immediately left his face and took the form of a beautiful blonde woman.

"Let's try our onslaught tomorrow night." He said to her as he saw her artificial intelligence stop next to one window of that large luxurious room, looking out over the building.

Stopping next to a golden table, Vicente filled a glass with water and drank it as she spoke. "They're standing across the street. If they're enemies, they'll certainly try to move against you as soon as you give them the chance."

"That's great. Let's see who they are tomorrow."

"I agree with your plan, master. But I must warn you that there is a possibility that, if they are enemies, there are more enemies lurking out there, perhaps enemies much stronger than you. Given your reality, even Grand Magus would move against you if they knew 10% of what I know." She looked at him seriously.

"I know. Unfortunately, ignoring potential enemies doesn't help at all. I've seen and experienced enough to know that you can't leave any matter unresolved or they'll come back later to terrorize you." He lay down, somewhat tired.

Despite his level, his biological needs were much stronger in Anicane and he needed physical and mental rest, too.

"Hopefully, those two really are envoys from the sect and, if they're not, let's hope they're alone and greedy with the things we've bought. In any case, I'll be prepared to call Alicia's attention if anything goes wrong."

After his words, he left Prische to monitor the surroundings and closed his eyes.

When he opened his eyes again, hours had passed and a new day had begun when Prische had already prepared his clothes for him.

After a quick shower, Vicente put on a set of formal clothes, following the local dress code. When he left his room, he found Helen waiting for him and soon followed her to the Manifold Families' estate.

He hadn't yet been to the family's outpost in this city, but it did not surprise him to find it much larger than the one in Ravengarde. The family's headquarters were in a coastal city, similar to Pondown, and one business they were deeply involved in was the transportation of resources across the island.

Naturally, their presence on the coast was not weak.

As he got out of his vehicle inside the family estate, he came across the staircase in front of one of the most imposing buildings in the area, where Alicia, a dozen people he didn't know and a brown-haired man, probably Edric, were waiting for him.

"Sir Edric." Vicente greeted the man after hearing Helen's confirmation.

"Disciple Vicente, it's a pleasure to meet you," said the man, who looked as human as he was, but whom Vicente wouldn't dare try to guess his race.

Not all Light Cay beings had body parts related to their race, even when they were non-human. Some only showed their origins when exposed to problematic situations.

"Please, Vicente, accompany us inside. We'll show you our residence." Alicia invited him with a smile on her face.

On the way inside the building, Edric spoke to Vicente. "I hear you're interested in Dark Hands. Lucky for you, Captain Thom's group has just returned from a trip with news of it. If you're interested, we can talk about it later."

Vicente looked at the card the man handed him, as he saw Alicia wink at him, indicating that she was helping him by raising a thumb at him.

Chapter 987 Information

Vicente looked at the group that was accompanying Edric and Alicia and understood that this Captain Thom was one of those people and the others were his important crew members.

'She wants to help me learn about Dark Hands so I know how to check how my enemies will get to me?' Vicente thought to himself as he entered a large dining room.

There, a round table, with several plates neatly divided, glasses and drinks, with various food options, was available in a candlelit and very cozy atmosphere.

As he sat down, Vicente listened to Alicia talk about their training experience. She had apparently already explained why he was wearing a disguise, so no one found it strange, nor did they broach the subject.

"So you're already well advanced in your training, huh?" Her fiancé asked as he looked at Vicente, having already heard a lot more from Alicia and being curious to hear the side of the continent's newest genius.

"Senior Alicie is quick to learn. She's progressing very quickly as we train. Maybe I'll stay in town for a few more days and then it'll be time for me to leave." Vicente said after trying the Manifold Family's drink.

The food and drink there were naturally delicious, the best quality he had ever tasted. Even as he savored the taste of the first few spoonfuls of food, Vicente could feel the mana in his body being stimulated.

For food to do this to the body of a Magus like him, the ingredients and the Magical Cook behind these dishes had to be very well-positioned in their profession.

"That's good to hear, hehe." The man looked at his fiancée, soon talking about how they had met and the wedding scheduled for a year and a half ahead.

Alicia naturally invited Vicente to join the celebrations, and he said that if he wasn't committed to the sect, he would make an effort to attend the event.

They also asked about his family and whether he was single. Alicia had already discussed a few things about Vicente with her fiancé, but Edric didn't know the truth she knew. To him, Vicente was a native of the island who had entered Stonewall after passing an entrance exam for new disciples.

Vicente replied. "I have a family... But they're distant people at the moment, ordinary, so to speak." He preferred not to go into this, although he also didn't want to appear to be a bachelor without a family. "But I'm already committed, so I'm not interested in new relationships."

In Light Cay, the idea of getting together with someone and staying with them for the rest of your life was much more common than in Polaris Realm. There were certainly people who had their harems, but the people on the island knew how to respect commitments much more than those on Vicente's plane.

Alicia didn't know this detail and was surprised, imagining that the woman who had conquered him must be really fantastic. For a moment, she felt curious to meet this person.

'Unfortunately, she lives on another island. I'd hardly have the chance to be in the same room as her.' Alicia thought as she listened to the people around the table chatting with Vicente.

They soon finished eating their breakfast and Vicente walked alongside Edric and Captain Thom, entering the office of the leader of the Manifold Family for Ponddown alone.

Alone with the two men, Vicente watched them get straight to the point.

"So you want to know about Dark Hands, young man?" A bearded middle-aged man asked, dressed totally differently from what Vicente expected from a navigator.

Vicente smiled as he answered. "Well, in a way, I am. I don't want to order any services, but the island is dangerous, and I'd like to be prepared."

Edric said. "You do well to look for information about them. Dark Hands is a shadow on our beautiful Light Cay. Unfortunately, it's an evil we can't get rid of, so preparing for its existence is a good thing."

Captain Thom then took Edric's cue and explained. "Dark Hands isn't like a force that has a headquarters, official members, rules, it's like a non-homogeneous mass that behaves according to its possibilities.

In theory, there is a group of group administrators. But they are, by all accounts, members of large forces and rarely move. One of the three of us could meet one of them and never know, or even if we did, we'd never be able to prove anything. That's because they command as if they were ordinary users of the group, those who can easily hire assassins and mercenaries.

Anyway, the group's rules, as I said, are malleable and depend a lot on where and with whom you're dealing. But in general, money and resources speak louder and set the rules. If a powerful magician wants to make use of the group, he can simply launch a mission with generous prizes and rules to follow. And then those will be the rules that apply to that service."

Vicente nodded, indicating that he understood how the group worked with Captain Thom's explanation.

Captain Thom continued. "Now that you know about the rules of the group and how difficult it is to eliminate it, because there are no fixed structures, let's talk about the location of the group.

Anyone interested in offering their services or hiring someone's services needs to follow a primer in order to connect to the group. There are several places around Light Cay where you can try your hand at natural challenges, expert heirlooms, and ruins.

Almost everywhere you'll find a mark left by the group. With it, you can use a communication device and then connect to their network.

From there, you can see service offers, launch missions or offer your skills. It's like a virtual environment that connects people with different interests. When you meet someone or someone sees your ad, you can arrange a meeting or start a virtual conversation. Through this, business happens." He finished his long explanation.

Vicente remembered Earth's dark web and understood exactly how things worked for Dark Hands.

Edric said. "Once a deal is done, a deposit amount must be made to Dark Hands, which is only passed on to the side that will do the job once there is proof of completion. Dark Hands ensures payments are made and there's no getting away from it, whether you're the one offering the prize or the service."

"I see..." Vicente didn't ask where to find one of these places, having already understood that he could get it himself.

Chapter 988 Identity of the Stalkers

Later, Vicente had left the Manifold Family estate after an informative breakfast with Edric, Alicia, and Captain Thom's group.

In the afternoon, he would meet Alicia again for another training session together, followed by another night in Pongdown.

However, at nightfall, Vicente did something he hadn't tried in the last few days. As soon as the traffic in the city had died down, he set off from where he was staying, heading for one of the exits in the area.

Pretending to be in the dark about the 2-Star and the 3-Star Magus following his tracks, Vicente soon arrived at the city's exit, a freely accessible place.

As Vicente had already realized, remote monitoring was very successful in Light Cay. Cities didn't need security guards to control people coming and going. The magical tools on the outskirts helped distant magicians monitor the flow of people through the city exits.

As Vicente moved on, entering the forest about 7 kilometers from the last building in the city, the two men realized that something was going on.

"What's he doing?" One of them asked doubtfully. "Has he noticed us, or is he up to something unrelated to us?"

"It's impossible for him to notice us. How could a newly promoted bumpkin like him realize our position?"

"Maybe it was the artificial intelligence advising him. You know how excellent the sect's devices are."

"Idiot. The sect's artificial intelligences are closely tied to their masters. They perform at a level compatible with them. If it isn't able to identify us, it could never do so," said the strongest man, the leader of Vicente's observation operation.

"I'd forgotten about that..."

"Anyway, let's keep after him. Hopefully, this fool won't get into trouble by going into an area of powerful beasts."

They moved on, keeping a shorter distance from Vicente, since in forests it was easier for someone to lose sight of their target.

The forests of Light Cay were much worse than those of Polaris Realm. The native creatures on the island were much more talented and ferocious than those on Vicente's plane.

There was a reason the beings on this continent had evolved their technology so much that they had developed methods capable of raising the level of even pentagrams formed by magical creatures. There were even entirely artificial pentagrams, something that had arisen from the need not to have to rely only on hunting the difficult-to-hunt creatures of this place.

Vicente had already learned enough of the local history to know this kind of thing. But given how much weaker the individuals from this continent with pentagram configurations close to his own were compared to what he expected from someone from his continent, Vice wasn't worried.

In fact, as he moved from branch to branch, feeling the night wind blow his hair in the air, he had a smile on his face.

The natural fragrance of the forest, full of plants and pulsating life, singing their various natural sounds in the darkness, made him feel more alive.

Between the modernity of the cities of Light Cay and the wildness of the forests, he definitely preferred the place where he was 'strolling' at the moment. He felt at home there!

In his apparently relaxed movement, however, he was attentive to his surroundings, aware of the exact position of the two men following him, as well as the creatures in the vicinity.

As in Polaris Realm, most of the beings near a forest were always weak. On his continent he would come across 2nd and 3rd stage creatures on a walk like this, no matter where he went. But in Light Cay, the average strength was higher and he could see even 5th stage creatures on his path.

None of them called his way until he heard running water. Following the sound, he came to a stream coming from a waterfall up a mountain. Where this stream led, he didn't know and wasn't interested in looking. As he moved towards the source, he climbed one mountain in the area, already dozens of kilometers away from the city.

Arriving near the waterfall that had attracted him, he blended into the night and disappeared completely.

"Where is he? What happened?"

The two men following Vicente to this point were startled to stop suddenly, the stronger of them realizing that his target was no longer in his range.

The weaker one looked from one side of the area he had reached to the other, where a 19-meter-high waterfall made the surroundings glow in the dark, with the silvery waters reflecting the moonlight, while the noise of the waterfall hid more subtle sounds.

Standing there for a minute without knowing what to do, the two were already breaking out in a cold sweat when something happened and one of them felt an icy item against his neck.

"Who are you?" Vicente broke the silence of the two men, making the weaker one shiver, while the stronger one turned his eyes towards his companion.

"Shit!" 3-Star Magus said when he realized it was Vicente. "You almost scared me to death, brat." He said as he looked down at the ground and took a deep breath.

Vicente frowned as he heard it. 'Aren't they enemies after me?'

"Let go of Bert, brat. We're from the same sect. We're on a mission to keep you out of trouble." Explained the stronger man as he moved slowly to summon his identification.

{That looks real, master. This 3-Star Magus really is registered with the sect.} Prische confirmed.

Vicente frowned, still carefully, but retracting his dagger from the neck of the 2-Star Magus. These two could be members of the sect selling his information. There would be no way for Prische to know whether they could be trusted.

But for now, Vicente backed off from this approach.

"Why are you following me? If you're on a mission to protect me, wouldn't it have been better to talk to me first?" he asked as he released Bert.

"Our mission made it explicit not to do that. Diplomacy Center rules, our superiors say," Bert said as he ran his hand over his neck. "That's supposed to increase the..."

"Quiet, Bert." Garin interrupted his colleague, before saying to Vicente, "Brat, you shouldn't have brought us here just to check who we are. Now we're in the middle of a bloody enchanted forest. Do you know the risks we run every minute we're here?"

Before Vicente could answer him, Garin sensed something and shifted his gaze, quickly turning his back on Vice.

Then a powerful roar came from 300 meters north of where they were standing.

"Shit!"

Chapter 989 Beasts of Light Cay

When he heard the roar of a lion in the direction Garin turned his gaze, Vicente frowned, quickly spotting a majestic creature with beautiful golden fur and a voluminous mane.

The creature was as imposing as the memory of the lions he had of Earth, but even more fantastic, with colored mist escaping from its claws, while the tip of its tail burned like hot coals.

The creature's head was so large that Vicente had no doubt that it could bite the head off an ox easily.

Its piercing eyes evoked a surreal sensation, as if the creature could make its targets fall into spiraling illusions, totally suppressing them at will.

Garin and Bert shivered as they felt the creature's gaze hover over their group, both of them sensing the creature's powerful 4-Star Magus cultivation while it walked cautiously around them.

"Shit! I knew this would end badly." Garin said, focused on the creature, but obviously directing his unease at Vicente.

Vicente was serious about the situation. He could see that it, unlike the magicians he had met so far, had a power corresponding to its level, with no obvious flaws. If it were a magician, this lion would certainly be powerful according to its pentagrams, Vice sensed.

"Let's not lose our cool. We haven't fought yet." Vicente tried to calm Garin and Bert down while he had a bitter smile on his face because of the consequences of his night's adventure.

Raising one of his hands in the air, Vicente tried to communicate with the creature. "Brother Lion, this one talking is Vicente Fuller. We didn't want to get in your way, but just because we're face to face, we don't have to..."

"What are you doing?" Bert asked with a shocked look on his face.

'What a bumpkin...' Garin shook his head, almost dying of embarrassment.

"What's the problem? I'm trying to negotiate." Vicente didn't understand the reaction of these two.

"Negotiate with a beast? I don't know what things were like where you come from, Brother Vicente, but here creatures like it don't speak our language and even if they did, they wouldn't answer us. Magicians and beasts are enemies from birth.

The beasts have always made it very clear and have never made any room for dialog." The 2-Star Magus explained, looking at the creature with fear, but also a sense of anger that was impossible to ignore.

"Beasts attack cities more often than bandits and pirates act around the island. Even our biggest rivals aren't as bad as the beasts."

'What a curious reality... But I'm beginning to understand this continent better.' Vicente glanced at Bert out of the corner of his eye, before turning his gaze to the creature that had stopped 20 meters away from them.

The creature no longer wanted to wait and moved against the three of them, lunging with its claws towards the strongest in cultivation, Garin.

In this situation, a peculiar smile formed on Vicente's lips and he stepped back a little, giving Bert and Garin the chance to show what they could do.

The two paid no attention to Vicente. They didn't know much about Vice beyond what they had already seen of the young man's fights at the Combat Center. As impressive as Vicente's performance was, they didn't think much of it, since he had only fought Archmages and there was a big difference between the 6th and 7th stages.

With no prospect of him actively helping them in the fight against the creature, the two of them moved forward, with Garin trying to dodge, while Bert activated his powers to attack.

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Vicente saw the two magical forms of the two.

Garin had a magical power of the body transformation type and gained bear traits around his body when he activated his powers. He had 7 pentagrams: 2 yellows, 2 greens, 2 cyans and 1 indigo.

In Bert's case, his magical power took the form of a tool, a hammer with a sharp diamond head. His pentagrams followed a similar configuration to Garin's: 2 yellows, 2 greens, and 3 cyans.

When it moved, Bert amplified his hammer, aiming for the left side of the fascinating creature's ribs.

The lion looked away with a funny look on its face, as if asking Bert if that was all he could do. With one movement, it touched its paws to the ground and jumped vertically, deflecting its opponent's attack, while making room to teach that magical fool the rules of the jungle.

Seeing that his companion would be hurt after helping him, Garin was the one to move this time, attacking with his open hands, with the aim of piercing the lion's body.

However, even though he managed to hit the creature, Garin barely managed to get more than an inch inside the creature's right hind thigh.

The creature once again swapped the target of the moment for the one attacking it, turning its face towards Garin, while its eyes went wide, red with fury at the magician's audacity.

The flames from its tail grew stronger, while flames shot out from its body, scorching everything near it.

Garin and Bert paled at the sight of the creature's flames rushing towards them, certain that they wouldn't get away without deep wounds.

At that moment, Vicente sighed at the poor performance of his two 'protectors.' 'The sect sent these guys to look after me? Were all the other Magi busy?'

{These two probably don't know much about you beyond what any disciple of the sect knows from the recordings of your fights, master.} Prische explained.

{For them, you're just a talented newcomer who's come to steal their chances, even though you're so crude.}

Vicente understood the situation and saw that he had to move if he didn't want to let those two be burned by the majestic golden lion.

As he looked at the creature, he recognized its power compared to the two magicians using devices to protect themselves after barely trying to attack it.

'It's no wonder the island's magicians are so weak. These magicians hide behind their super-advanced equipment and grow stronger without tempering their powers with direct and deadly battles. In Polaris Realm, we are weaker, but from the lowest levels, we are used to fighting monsters using weapons that do nothing to increase our powers or defenses.'

The magical artifacts from Polaris Realm marginally increased the characteristics of their users. For example, armor for an Acolyte didn't serve to make its wearer indestructible, but to prevent injuries that wouldn't be serious and turn mortal injuries into only serious ones. They were useful items, but they didn't replace the powers of their users.

'Maybe that's why people from lower planes are so valued in Anicane...'

With that thought, he fully activated his powers, cutting through space by moving his two hands to Bert's and Garin's necks.

Before the two were engulfed in flames, they appeared behind Vicente, while Vice's six magnetic pentagrams were condensed around him, glowing brightly.

"Majestic King of the Forest, you're the first of your kind I've had the chance to speak to." Vicente took a step forward, while the enemy flames could not reach him. "I'll give you one more chance. Calm your flames and let's talk. Otherwise, I'll turn you into a house cat!"

Chapter 990 Prische and Rex

After Vicente's threat, the lion with the golden mane looked at him for just a second in silence and then decided how to act.

How could he give up dealing with this group of magicians just because of the threat of an individual newly promoted to the 7th stage? Vicente's magical configuration was impressive, but this creature was stronger than him by 4 stars and was a powerful member of a renowned tribe. Its future prospects were too great for it to bow its head to a single human.

Moving against Vicente, it decided its fate, furiously attacking the black-haired magician standing in front of the two individuals it wanted to kill first.

The lion was planning to deal with Vicente last, but since the boy was rash and didn't know how to wait, it moved its powerful paw against the young man's face, aiming to split open the human head with its long, sharp claws.

"Wrong choice." Vicente muttered as he shook his head in disappointment.

Raising one of his hands in the air, he lifted the corners of his lips in a strange smile, while the ground around them shook strongly. "Since you're not wise, I'll teach you your place through pain."

With Vicente's words, four metallic warriors appeared around him, while the glasses, until a few moments ago on his face, glided to possess one of those creatures.

The moment Prische took control of one of Vicente's metallic soldiers, who already had more developed intelligences than the armors he left behind in Polaris Realm, but were not yet at her level, she felt the sensation of being in control of a body with properties similar to Vicente's.

"Master, let me fight him on your behalf," she said as she shaped a smile on her metallic lips, using Vicente's creation as a physical means to attack their opponent.

She moved even before Vicente gave his order, using the powerful Seventh Class structure to attack the creature's ribcage with one punch.

Wrapping her fist with a strong magnetic force, Prische did almost the same as her three less intelligent companions. When she hit the body of the lion attacking Vice, she messed with the electromagnetic field around it and made it feel the internal cells in its body explode.

The four metallic creatures acted quickly and moved away after attacking, leaving the lion shocked at the forces still at work inside its body.

Vicente raised one of his fingers and pressed the creature against his own position, seeing that it would explode with hatred and make a dangerous move against his metallic creations.

Prische saw that her master wouldn't give her much of a chance and raised one of her fists in the air, attracting a bolt of lightning that crossed the sky over the forest and flew in the direction she had ordered.

The lion's eyes twitched as it was hit hard by the lightning aimed at its weak spot, and it couldn't help but let out a roar of pain as it weakened.

But it was powerful physically and stood its ground even with a blow that could cause severe damage to magicians of the same level as it.

"Damn it!"

At that instant, for the first time in their lives, Garin and Bert heard the voice of a beast, both of them taking steps backwards as they trembled.

"That..."

"What a thunderous voice!"

Vicente liked what he heard, finally seeing the creature's willingness to show its rational capacity.

"I'm afraid it's too late now, Rex. Now you're coming with me!" he said, making the creature naturally hate him a few grades more.

"Rex? What's Rex?" The majestic lion spat in his direction, moving as its body seemed to get bigger and more muscular.

"That's what I'm going to call you from now on, Rex. But first of all, I'll teach you why I'll be your master," he said before looking at his creation possessed by the artificial intelligence that Stonewall had given him. "No more games, Prische, protect these two while I fight."

With his voice, the four metal beings retreated to stand around the two frightened men, while Vicente moved forward, controlling ordinary metal weapons to attack Rex's body.

"Magician!" shouted the golden creature, its flames not even reaching Vicente, losing out to the electromagnetic barrier around the black-haired young man.

Without fully invoking the throne, Vicente made light and darkness concentrate at the tip of one of his index fingers, firing such a mixture as if his fingers were a weapon.

Rex felt a sudden horror rise inside its body as its muscles froze. Faced with just a fraction of the Throne of Darkness and Light, it found itself facing death and life, poison and antidote, totally destabilized.

Time seemed to stop for it and it didn't even care about the heart control Vicente used against it to make it lose its breath.

Vicente didn't want to kill the lion. Making it feel like shitting itself with fear, the human used his most common skills to knock out the wounded beast.

Slowly closing his eyes, the lion saw flashes of Vicente crossing the remaining space between them, until the human was standing right in front of it.

When Vicente touched the top of its head, the entire world around it went black. The strength in its legs disappeared and its body of over 2 tons plummeted to the ground in one fell swoop.

Without hesitation, Vicente performed the same ritual he had done repeatedly in Polaris Realm, marking the golden creature in front of him with his pentagrams.

However, his current magical knowledge and powers were far superior to those of when he was in Polaris Realm. By marking Rex, he transformed the enormous creature into a lion the size of a house cat.

Grabbing the creature by the hide, Vicente held it in front of him and took a good look at the little guy who had a cultivation four stars higher than his own.

'You'll be my first companion in this world.' He smiled as he looked at the creature, understanding a little better how to classify his own power in Light Cay. 'It seems that if I use everything I have, only a Grand Magus could really kill me. Below that I should be able to manage problems just fine!'