

Marian waits nervously for the masked man to limp to her counter. The tophat and cane mark him as... an oddity. Distinguished. Someone to take note of, in a room full of much more rough and rugged looking men. Considering the wealth on display, it is quite obvious the man has a high rank within the guild.

She glances around at the other [Mercenaries]. They give the man a few curious looks, but remain at ease, returning to their conversations. Only the older regulars, the experienced ones, make a deliberate effort to shy away their gazes. They have a better idea of who the man might be, and the subtle but assured danger that follows.

The man reaches the counter. She can feel his eyes on her from behind the mask.

“Good afternoon, sir. It has been some time since a member of your most esteemed family has visited the Mercenary Guild.” She says with a forced smile. She slightly bows her head to him. “If there is something that we can assist you with, please feel free to ask.”

The masked woman beside the man audibly sighs, turning to look at him.

The man raises his hands “I was in prison! Prison! I didn’t do anything!”

The masked woman folds her arms.

“Oh, don’t give me that look! Not everything’s my-- I’m not crazy! I swear, sometimes I just...”

Marian watches with growing confusion as the two argue, mostly the man, who is trying to explain... something.

“Fine! Whatever. Think what you want.” He turns back to the [Secretary] and produces his guild card.

Marian gasps at the color.

“The [Guildmistress] from Raizment’s Mercenary Guild has requested me to assist a team called *Bladed Thorns* with a quest. I need to know where to find them so I can, you know, do the helping.”

Several seconds pass before Marian realizes that the man is talking to her. A black card; it’s the first time that she has actually seen someone with one. This means he has a dangerous class, but also means that he is not part of that group...

“Yes, sir. Please put your mana into the card, or if you are unable, a [Mage] can assist you,” she says with her usual smile.

The masked man taps the card, sending in a spike of mana which reveals his information. After glancing at the information, Marian gulps

"[Gentleman]," she whispers in fear.

"Yes, that's my class, don- Are you okay?" the masked man asks the [Secretary] as her expression pales.

"I'm t-terribly sorry, sir. I'll have your request filled out!"

The masked man audibly sighs. "Seriously! I've been here less than half a day and I'm suddenly somehow a leader of the Thieves guild; a guild I don't even know the location of! And somehow, everyone else knows it and won't tell why!" Quasi gripes.

Marian takes a step back from the yelling man, unsure what exactly is happening anymore.

The masked man points at her. "You, why? How do you know? Just end my fucking misery and tell me already!"

"I-I don't--" She takes another step back.

The masked man across the counter. "Then why the hell are you acting like that?" he asks.

She takes another step back. Several younger mercenaries grab their weapons, ready to stop the man if he gets violent.

"[Calming],"

A skill activates behind Marian as a woman strolls to the desk. Her presence relaxes everyone present, even the masked man.

The [Peerless Secretary] frowns at Quasi. "Marian, he's not one of the gents."

"He's not?" Marian asks.

"The what now?" Bone asks.

"The Gentleman's Guild wouldn't allow such a low level to wander around without a higher level guide," she says to Marian.

"Wait, there's a Gentleman's Guild? That's a thing? Shit, I need to join them."

The [Peerless Secretary] shakes her head.

“Many have tried, most have failed. I suggest you don’t waste your time,” she says. She leans down under the counter and grabs a binder. She places it on top of the counter and turns the page.

“The Silver, five ranked team *Bladed Thorns* is currently guarding a [Woodcutter] party farther north. They should return in a week or two. Do you want me to give you their location or will you wait for them?”

Quasi sighs at both the clearly forced change in subject as well as the new [Secretary]’s uncanny knowledge of what had happened. She probably has a skill that lets her know what’s going on at the front desk at any given time.

“I can wait. Maybe I’ll do a quest while I’m here.”

She closes the book and then points at a board.

“Requests are posted up there. Pick one and bring it to me. You can accept any requests at or below your station, which is currently Mithril rank.”

Quasi nods and walks away from the counter. The many mercenaries who overheard watch him. Mithril is not an easy rank to obtain, after all.

He steps up to the board, Jessica right beside him.

“So, they’re afraid of this Gentleman’s Guild. Any idea why?” Jessica asks.

Quasi nods. “Kinda. The [Gentleman] class is arguably one of the strongest classes out there.”

Jessica looks at him dubiously.

“It’s true,” he adds, “The class, for whatever reason, is a bit busted.”

“How so?”

Quasi reaches the board and begins looking at the requests. “Well, as you know, not all classes are created equal. Some classes have a high chance to obtain skills from leveling, while others have a high chance of giving attributes bonus. Some classes even have a higher chance of giving better skills. The [Gentleman] class has both an extremely high rate of skill acquisition, averaging a skill every three levels, and the skills obtained are often highly ranked. For example, I’m level seventeen in the class, but I already have five skills from it. Most classes will get a fifth skill at level forty or fifty.”

“So that’s why you took the class.” She says in understanding.

The [Hero] nods, "Yeah, but I also messed up. The class doesn't level much from combat. It levels more from interacting with people and doing things that Gentleman would do. Apparently, Mimir's notes didn't go that deep into the class."

She frowns. "And you can't change?"

He shakes his head. "Nope. The class is too high ranked to upgrade into something else. I'm kinda stuck with it."

The conversation ends. Quasi continues to look through the different quests. Like gravity, one draws in his gaze.

### **Undead Spotted in the Cerulean Forest.**

The Village of Elmherst has reported undead hordes shambling through the Cerulean Forest. Multiple witnesses have spotted over a hundred undead. There is a high chance a [Necromancer] or a powerful undead monster has made the forest their home.

Primary Objective: Identify and report on the source of the undead.

Secondary Objective: Repel the incursion and apprehend any [Necromancer] responsible.

Due to the possibility of violence and the use of swarm tactics, only silver ranked teams or above may accept this contract. Transportation and food will be reimbursed for up to ten members.

**Payment on nonviolent completion: 1 gold Drachme**

**Payment on Violent Completion: 5 gold Drachme**

Team 1: Flame Spitters - 6 members.

Team 2: ----

Team 3: ----

Team 4: ----

"Jess, what do you think about this contract?"

She looks at it and snorts.

"Really? You want to hunt a [Necromancer] of all things?"

Quasi chuckles. "Why not? I'll have you know I'm one of the most qualified to do so."

Jessica rolls her eyes but stays silent. He plucks the paper and takes it to the [Peerless Secretary].

"This contract looks fun. Where do I join?"

The [Secretary] reads the contract and then lifts an eyebrow at the [Necromancer].

“You wish to hunt a [Necromancer]... as a [Necromancer],”

Quasi grins.

She shakes her head. “I’m going to guess that I don’t need to warn you about how dangerous a [Necromancer] can be.”

“Well, you could if you really want to.”

She grunts and reaches under her desk. She grabs an ink and quill.

“Will you be accepting the contract as an individual or as a team?”

“Does it matter?” he asks.

“Yes. Individuals are less sought after than teams. More often than not, the jobs the [Mercenary] guild gets involves several people.”

“Huh.” Quasi scratches his neck. “We’d like to join as a team.” He points at his companion. “Jess, here, will be joining me.”

The secretary looks at the masked woman.

Jessica nods slowly.

“Alright then, may I please see your card, miss?”

Jessica reaches into her robes and produces her card. In a similar move to Quasi, she directs her own mana into it, revealing her class.

The [Peerless Secretary] is dumbfounded.

“Why is a [Archpriestess] traveling with a [Necromancer]?”

Jessica slowly chuckles.

“To keep him out of trouble of course.”

The secretary looks at the masked man for a long moment.

She then returns her gaze to the [Archpriestess].

“Good luck with that,” she says while putting the quill to the paper. “I’m going to need a team name.”

“*Merry Marrow*,” Jessica immediately answers.

“What?” Quasi asks in surprise as he turns to glare at Jessica.

She glares back.

“Were not calling the team *Chaotic Boner*.”

“But-”

“**No**,” she says more forcefully.

Quasi just folds his arms and grumbles. Behind his mask, his face is twisted into a grimace.

Jessica can see his expression thanks to the enchantments on her own mask, but she doesn't care. Some people have a good sense for names; Quasi does not.

“*Merry Marrow* it is,” the secretary says and writes their team name on the paper.

“The contract will remain on the board for the next two days, after which time, recruitment will end and the signed on groups should meet for travel. Transportation and food will be provided for the journey. At least one other team will be joining you on the trip. Do you have any questions?”

“No.” Quasi says.

“Where do we meet in two days?” Jessica asks.

The secretary smiles at the young lady. Too many times, a new team has forgotten to ask.

“You will meet here. Two carriage drivers will be waiting outside the guild in the early morning. They will depart at noon regardless of whether you arrive or not, so I suggest coming early.”

Jessica nods “Thank you, uh...?”

“Zebella,” the secretary answers. Her lips twitch upward. Even fewer [Mercenaries] ask for her name. She appreciates finding someone with proper manners..

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A short bit of time later, Quasi and Jessica exit the Mercenary Guild. The [Hero] takes a moment to glare at the heavily enchanted entrance door.

“Alright, where are we going next?” she asks.

“We're gonna find the thieves guild,” he exclaims.

“Do you even know where it is?”

“Nope, but I have a surefire way to figure that out.”

She sighs.

“We're going to some back alley, aren't we?”

He smiles in her direction.

“You're learning fast.”

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She can't help but find it funny as Quasi wanders about asking for directions to dangerous back alleys. One [Guard] queried looks at him as though he were crazy. He finally got information by bribing a different [Guard], just to learn where the most dangerous area in the city is.

Jessica can't help but laugh when the directions lead him to a curious demesne..

She reads the name above the gate with mocking glee.

*“Gentleman's Guild”*

Quasi shakes his head in annoyance. He looks around. They stand on the outskirts of the nobles district, close enough that the properties are large and the buildings well made. This particular establishment is large, surrounded by a well manicured garden in which stand statues of men wearing suits in a variety of poses. Flower beds fill in the surrounds, creating a beautiful sea of colors and filling the air with a sweet aroma.

“I guess the thieves guild can wait. Let's go see if anyone is home.”

Jessica and Quasi walk through the garden, meandering along a trail of stones laid on the ground. Instead of a direct line to the mansion, the stones wend their way through the statues and flower beds for the visitors' maximum appreciation.

Eventually, the two arrive at the mansion's front. Quasi's eyes glow as he takes the full measure of the edifice. The entire building is exceptionally enchanted. The door, the frame, the doorknob, the knocker, the front mat, everything is enchanted, and not one enchantment is below the grade of Rare. Which is nuts; most of his own enchants are at that level. Granted, he has legendary items too, but he can only really create those in an enchanting forge. The mana cost to enchant such items is astronomical.

"Should we knock?" Jessica asks.

Quasi nods. He raises his foot.

Jessica's hand grabs his raised leg and gives him the stink eye.

"Do you have to test every door?" she asks.

He rolls his eyes. "Fine. Fine! We'll do it the normal way."

He lifts the knocker, crafted in the outline of a tophat, and lets it go. The metal strikes the wooden door, making a soft ding sound.

Not even a second after the ding, the door opens. A man, wearing a fully enchanted suit alongside an exceptionally crafted tophat, greets them..

Clark Newman

Level 89 [Combat Doorman]

Level 171 [Cavalier Gentleman]

The man smiles at the two. He looks at Jessica. He doffs his hat and sketches a small bow..

"Thank you, mademoiselle, for keeping your servant's violent nature in check. I do hate cleaning blood. It stains much too easily."