Original text is here!
If you notice I mistranslated something, feel free to contact me at @amanosuzusuzuha on twitter!

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In a far corner of Magic World stood a painfully conspicuous mansion. And within the dark corners of that shadowed manse, two men discussed a certain plan...

"How's the magic absorption coming along, Damien?"

"There are no irregularities within my mechanisms. My dear servants have been hard at work, surpassing my expectations. As the plan dictates, by tomorrow, we will have all the magic we require. Now, let me turn the question on you--are your preparations going well, Terry?"

"'Course they are. Right now they're putting the final keystone in place. Soon enough we'll be able to able to properly activate the Ultimate Great Spell anytime we want, as long as you've collected all the magic we need."

"I see. Very soon, then."

"Yeah. Real soon."

"Our dearest wish shall be granted..."

"The creation of our kingdom of shadows."

The man in the red overcoat was Terry, and the man in deep blue was Damien. For the sake of their ambitions, the pair had built a machine designed to absorb magical energy in this mansion's basement, and they had already accumulated quite a large amount of it. Because of that, all the trees in the area had withered, the magical beasts were starving, and the Wizards and other magic users were struggling to make ends meet.

Of course, the two of them didn't care about any of that. The creation of their ideal paradise was the only thing that mattered to them. Something as petty as the struggles of others was below their concern..

But on that day, before these two scheming shadows, a certain calling card was delivered.

"?!"

"What's that?!"

Something shot through the window like an arrow, and stuck in the floor among the shards of glass was a rectangular card.

Terry glanced around cautiously, and then picked up the card. "What's this mark supposed to be?"

On the back of the card was a crest resembling a dragon wearing a silk hat. Terry flipped it over and read what was on the front.

Tonight, at the very moment the hands of the clock reach the top together, your magic will be ours. From, the Phantom Thief Dragos.

"The...Drago Phantom Thieves? Damien, do you know who this is from?"

"...I have heard of this band before. A group of thieves that no one knows the source of, and no one knows where they return to when their heists have concluded. They come, they steal magical artifacts, and then they vanish without a trace."

"And this group that may or may not exist sent us this calling card? That's stupid. It's probably a prank from someone trying to put us off our guard."

"Though this may be true, the moment our plan comes to fruition draws near. It would behoove us to remain cautious."

"...I guess."

"Now then, I shall go underground to improve on our defenses."

"I'll double check the outside."

Terry and Damien parted, each side being sure to go over all their protections carefully. Things had to be perfect. The veil of night drew close, the sky darkening as the sun fell and the moon rose over the horizon.

There would be a full moon tonight.

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Night fell, and the time mentioned in the calling card drew near. Terry and Damien met in the entrance hall on the first floor. They had sent their magical familiars throughout every room in the mansion and stationed them in strategic locations outside, ready to strike at any moment if anything neared the underground facility.

"Do you think they'll really show up?"

"I wouldn't claim to know. Perhaps they've already arrived to rob us, that strange lot."

"Even if they have, there's no way they're getting through all of the protections we've put up. Actually making off with all the magic we have here should be impossible." Terry snorted derisively, and checked the time. In just a few moments, it would be the specified hour.

5...

4...

3...

2...

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"...Nothing happened."

"I supposed it truly was a prank after all, then."

The pair's shoulders lowered with relief.

And then Terry's dogs began barking--something had happened underground. The two glanced at each other and then immediately ran below. But then...

"Wh...what's the meaning of this?!"

The two of them couldn't believe their eyes. Until just moments ago, they'd been sure that there were no problems with their equipment. The plan had moving ahead perfectly. And yet, despite everything, the several months' worth of magical energy was completely, entirely gone. There was nothing there.

Terry fell to his knees, holding his head in his hands. "No... How could this have happened?!"

Terry's mind filled with thoughts, each one rushing about in his head like it was alive.

I was sure the magical protections were perfect. Our familiars hadn't detected anything wrong either. And it shouldn't be possible to move that much magical energy in a single moment, either! Only an extremely powerful sorcerer would've been able to do that, and only if they had been able to prep everything in advance. And there's definitely no way one of us wouldn't have noticed that. I was the one strengthening this mansion's protections. And Damien was the one working down in the basement. The only one who would've been able to get through that kind of defense would have to be myself or--

As soon as Terry's thoughts took him that far, he realized a certain possibility. His familiars realized it through him, but even Terry himself didn't want to acknowledge this concept--but going by what was here before his eyes, he couldn't think of anything else. Slowly, so slowly, Terry stood and looked at...Damien.

"Are you...really Damien?"

Damien's hat was pulled low over his face, and Terry couldn't see what expression he was making. "...Of course I am."

"What's my other name, then?"

"The Manipulator of Shadowform, of course."

"And our goals?"

"To create a kingdom of shadows."

"Hmm... Well then, after we first met, when did we first talk about achieving that goal?"

"..."

Silence stretched long and gentle after Terry's question.

"...Heh. Well, there's no point in hiding it anymore, huh?"

As he said that, Damien threw off his hat. It did not reveal Damien, but instead a draconid wearing a mask.

"Who are you?!"

Terry's shadow warped and moved like it was alive, trembling with anger, and without another moment to waste it stabbed through the draconid. But with a single elegant movement, the draconid leaped out of the way, his powerful legs launching him all the way up to the ceiling,

where he clung like a bug. Now, nothing about him resembled Damien at all--instead of Damien's heavy blue coat, he wore a lighter-looking green one, his hands and feet bare.

"That's right, I haven't introduced myself yet! I am Phantomaria Ludman, and I act as the Phantom Thieves' first strike! As you may have noticed, I'm also quite good with disguises."

Seeing how easygoing Ludman was just made Terry's anger flare even brighter. "What did you do with Damien?!"

"Oh my my my, you're so worried about your dear friend. But fear not! He is simply sleeping, snug in bed under our protection. I am sure, even now, he is building the kingdom for the two of you in his dreams... And of course, I can personally guarantee we shall return him to you safe and sound!"

"Since when-- Since when did you swap with him?!"

"Hmm, when do you think?"

"Don't answer a question with a question!"

As they spoke Terry's attacks continued, his shadow stabbing after Ludman--but Ludman simply deftly leapt from wall to wall, avoiding each and every one. His shadow simply couldn't find its mark, and his attacks were slowly gouging away at the basement's ceiling. "Oh my, you're being awfully careless here."

"Today, after we got that notice from you, the two of us split into two groups to strengthen our protections. Was it then?! Did you attack Damien then?! Dang it! Damn it!! I should've stayed with him!!!"

"Oh? Oh, no no no, please don't joke like that. I'd never do something so dangerous as exchanging our positions just before the heist. Let's see... I believe it was... Ah, yes, one month ago! Sir Damien left your mansion for a spot of magic gathering and simply never came home."

"A...month...?!"

Terry looked simply devastated--he simply couldn't believe it. For an entire month, he had not been with a fellow comrade who embraced the same ideals, but a pathetic fake.

"Well now, Sir Terry. I believe it's time to bring the grand finale right to you. Please, watch this crumbling ceiling and be amazed at what you see!" Terry's attacks had worn a hole through the ceiling all the way to the surface, and now through that hole he could see the shining moon hanging in a glittering night sky. "Now, let the show begin!"

The very moment Ludman said that, a huge cloud appeared, as if to steal away even the moon itself. The cloud slowly faded away, revealing what was inside of it--a steam engine, made of countless clicking gears and levers. With the full moon as a backdrop, a massive mechanical island appeared right before Terry's eyes.

"Now please, feast your eyes! You wonder where and how we can appear, stealing the treasures of evildoers? Allow me to present the Phantom Thief Dragos' sky fortress, Rupla Morris!!!"

As Rupla Morris's cover fell, so too did the cover of several small airships. They took to the skies, the magical energy that Terry and Damien had collected being pulled behind them, trapped in bubbles.

"Ahh... Our... Our kingdom..." Terry reached an arm out to the sky, but of course, he couldn't reach it.

"While it is of course wonderful to hold a dream in your heart, to drag others into that dream unbidden is a terrible act. Next time, please be sure to prepare a plan that is gentler on both yourselves, and others. Now, if you'll excuse me!"

Ludman leapt from the basement to the planet's surface, and a final airship appeared, as if it had been waiting for him. He leapt aboard, and Terry saw the pilot--another draconid, this time in a mask so dark it seemed to fade into the sky, wearing a black and red suit.

"I am Winz Harry! Now, allow me to display the Phantom Thief Drago's elegant heist!"

Ludman took Harry's place in the ship, and Harry stepped up onto the front. He raised his arms, his cloak fluttering in the night breeze. The ship began to move, speeding up quickly as it returned to Rupla Morris, which still hung in the sky like a second moon. As it left, the many bubbles of magical energy burst, their contents falling back to the earth where it belonged. The magic spread through the sky, bending the light of the moon, and a rainbow-colored aurora dyed the night sky beautifully.

"That's all for today! And now, goodnight!!"

The ship flew towards Rupla Morris, and then they were hidden for a moment by a cloud--and when it passed, they were gone. The great moon hung in the sky alone, and as if by a miracle, the crest of a dragon wearing a silk hat appeared on its surface.