

Chapter 3

"This contract is sealed in the eyes of God," said Cemir, receiving the coin from Lady Hadeil Penrod. The lady was not part of the main branch of the family, and he could notice, since the man to whom she had been married seemed to be most despicable.

The garbage that he had before his eyes which he had decided to forget its name, was just completely disheveled, which was enough of an offense for such an important transaction. Additionally, he had a fake smile that screamed danger, which was accompanied by rings, which, when Cemir burned tin, seemed to coordinate with the marks that Lady Hadeil was trying to disguise with makeup.

They both left, the nameless bastard was practically dragging his new wife almost without concealment. Cemir will pay special attention to her finances in search of the slightest problem, perhaps that way he will be able to help the poor woman.

Another couple came forward, they were skaa. Cemir put out his tin when he was assaulted by the bad smell of those beings, who, even if in practical terms they were worse dressed than the previous noble, given the money that an average skaa earned, it could be said that they were radiant in comparison.

Cemir reached out and read his book, searching for the couple's names. They were the last ones today.

"Jel," said Cemir, reading the name in the book, "is your will in this humble coin?".

"Yes, my grace," said the man in a horrible accent.

"Kadda, have you accepted the terms of the contract proposed by Jel?"

"Yes, my grace," Kadda said quickly, the woman was obviously nervous.

Although not common, it was not impossible for a skaa to be killed just by set foot in the wealthy part of the city. This small luxury required bravery on the part of those creatures.

"This contract is sealed before the eyes of God," said Cemir, this time with a smile. Burning zinc, Cemir slightly ignited the joy of both skaa. It was illegal for a member of the ministry to emotionally manipulate a person, but there was nothing legislated towards the skaa.

They smiled slightly, and left a little less tense than when they arrived, thus ending their day of work.

When you are born into nobility, it is common knowledge that skaa are

creatures inferior to normal people, like him. Even if he hadn't done anything to any skaa, he didn't get upset when he heard what happened to a servant or worker.

But upon entering the canton of finance... it didn't take long to discover what vital that that mass of creatures was for the functioning of the empire. Hundreds of years ago, a "tax" had been applied to the slaughter of skaa, with the excuse that they all belonged to God, because the annual deaths confirmed a constant loss of labor which did not stop creating holes in the economy.

Many of his companions had told him that "this was how God designed the world," and although Cemir agreed that God's word was absolute, he could not help but feel respect for the skaa.

Cemir started walking towards the back door. He had been standing still all day, in the main room. Even though he had gotten used to it, it was still a little tiring to work in that giant room with hardly any decoration. Sure, he made the contracts much faster than normal, and when there were no people to serve that day, he could always wait in the office, but when he had to stand for hours... he could only thank God that he had managed to learn to manipulate his pewter well enough to burn slowly and allow it to stand for hours.

He still remembered the anger his parents felt when he told them he was joining the steel ministry. Losing a mistborn in the family was tough, but Cemir was not interested in house wars or power, God could have given his Allomancy to someone else, and Cemir would have not been envious.

Once in the office, he walked to the room where the prelan was. Opening the door to the priest's office, he found that he was talking to an inquisitor.

"Wait a moment, Cemir," the prelan said, waving him away.

He obeyed, and closed the door, returning to the hallway. Cemir was tempted in burning his tin, he was interested in whatever his superior was going to discuss with an inquisitor, but decided better not to, it would be wrong to breach that privacy.

After a few seconds, another person with a book came to the door, it was one of his companions.

"Cemir, I see you're back," said Zetiell, beginning to wait at his side "did you finish your case?"

"Yes, fortunately the high prelan managed to see the usefulness of my trip, but I will still have to cover the extra time".

"You have been with the marriages, right? I couldn't stand it."

"The advantage of emotional allomancy and pewter, I suppose," Cemir replied, raising his shoulders "Skaa tend to be much faster and less ceremonious than nobles."

"...those creatures don't know manners," Zetiell answered, a little nervous. "Do you really not mind revealing your identity as a mistborn so casually?"

"No, I don't care much," Cemir replied, relieved to not have to reply to the comment about the skaa, his opinion on the matter used to be controversial "I walked away from that whole court circus years ago, I don't care if people know."

"I understand..." said Zetiell, "but even here, in the ministry, many decide to keep their secrets."

"I know, I discovered that the hard way," Cemir answered, sighing, "but since as far back as I can remember, I always hated lies, and while it's true that some people in the ministry aren't as inclined to share information, at least no one is trying to deceive or manipulate on a daily basis."

The inquisitor walked out the door. Cemir and Zetiell cremated the head as a sign of respect. He did not deign to observe them, and continued on his way.

Both obligators entered the office, and located the account books on the desk.

"Something to report?" asked the prelan as he put away the books.

"Nothing, my grace," answered Zetiell.

"Hadeil Penrod's husband beats her, my grace," Cemir said.

"May I know how you deduced that?" asked the prelate, sitting down on his seat.

"The woman had some cut marks on her cheek," Cemir explained, "and her husband wore rings that coincide in the distance of those cuts."

"It sounds like it makes sense, but don't you think that's assuming too much?" the prelate questioned.

"His attitude towards the lady left something to be desired," Cemir replied, the prelate put his hand to his chin, thoughtful.

"You usually have good intuition regarding these problems," he said, looking to the side "your work in these two weeks has turned out to be impressive, if something happens, we will take it into account, maybe we can get some money put of it."

"Thank you very much, my grace," Cemir replied with a bow. The prelan raised his hand in a gesture for them to leave, to which Cemir and Zetiell complied, both leaving the office. Zetiell just shook his head and walked to the opposite side. Cemir knew that he was not very popular with the other obligators, at first he suspected it was a consequence of being a mistborn, but he soon discovered that was not the case. His attitude toward details was quite way too meticulous, and his opinions on the skaa were often controversial, though not blasphemous.

Also, compared to his peers, he was usually terrible with numbers, but he

usually made up for that by finding scammers or tax evaders faster than anyone in the office.

Cemir headed towards the chapel to end the day. It wasn't very far from the offices, so it didn't take long to arrive. There, several of his companions were preparing the ceremony.

The chapel was beautiful, unlike the main room where contracts were made for everyone. With seats for the members of the ministry, and the walls decorated with pillars, built by an architecture different from the rest of Luthadel. And on the ceilings, stained glass, which bathed the room with bright and warm colors thanks to its location.

Cemir, along with several of his companions, sat in one of the seats. It didn't take long for the room to fill up. Obligators from different groups were in the church, all sitting in different rows. Today it was the turn of the high prelate of the canton of resources to give the ceremony, that was on his way to the altar, beginning the daily speech

It wasn't that it was boring, Cemir worshiped God in the same way as the other obligators, but having heard the same words hundreds of times, he couldn't help but let his head wander.

Fortunately, the sermon was not that long, Cemir managed to keep his concentration for forty minutes, until he was called to record his earnings for today, depositing the boxings in the urn at the center.

After that, Cemir was free to wander in his mind until the end of the ceremony, where all the present members of the ministry stood to praise God, thus ending their day of work.

Everyone present began to leave the church, walking towards the front door. Nobody spoke to each other, it was etiquette to wait until you went outside to talk to your companions.

After a minute, Cemir walked out into the street. It was getting dark, so he decided to take a walk through the downtown square. It didn't take long to get there, the place was quite large and well maintained. The clean cobblestones and the people walking back and forth.

Cemir liked to circle the whole place for hours. He had the tendency to walk a lot while thinking, and the square was large enough to not attract anyone's attention while walking.

What had the prelate and the inquisitor been talking about? The meeting has not been announced, with what seemed to be a matter of urgency, although there was also the possibility that it was a personal matter. He had no reason to be

especially suspicious of either of them... but he could remember that neither of them seemed to be in a hurry, or worried about anything.

Allegedly, tensions had begun to arise between the canton of the orthodoxy and inquisition. Cemir did not have the status to be personally informed about the general situation of both factions, but he wanted to believe that the problem would not escalate enough to have private conversations with members of other branches of the church.

Night was falling, and everyone was starting to head towards their homes. Cemir waited a little longer, walking back and forth for hours, until the mist arrived. He may not have fully enjoyed the Allomantic acrobatics of Mistborns like him, but he still felt that sense of control that walking the streets at night gave him, seeing everything that was happening around him.

With the streets empty, and the fog thick, Cemir began to walk towards his house. He allowed himself to throw a clip, and push it with steel, rising into the air, even if last week he had burned steel to death, he must not lose practice, not using his powers would be insulting the gift that God had given him.

With his allomantic pushes, it took him a while to reach the complex of apartments. There, he landed in his building, a relatively humble place, but one that was still exclusive for the nobility. Cemir could afford a better place, his job as an obligator was generously paid, but he didn't like to show off too much.

Entering from the roof, Cemir went down the stairs, entering the first door on the right, there, he headed towards his apartment. On the way he observed a figure sitting in front of his door, it seemed to be Halfin, the woman who lived two floors below.

"Good afternoon, Halfin," Cemir said, as he approached his door. The woman raised her head, standing up immediately "I guess you are still worried about your debtor, right?."

"Yes, my grace," the woman said, bowing her head, "I know you said it would take two weeks, but..."

Cemir raised his hand, seeking to reassure his neighbor.

"Don't worry, Halfin, I understand your concern," said Cemir, calming her down "and I'm sorry for making you wait, if I knew you were coming I would have rushed back" Cemir approached his door, opening it, motioning for Halfin to go through first. The woman entered the apartment, with Cemir behind her.

"My grace... I don't want to take up your time," she said.

"Nonsense, and I've already told you that you don't have to call me 'my grace' outside my work as an obligator" Cemir entered, closing the door "besides, I have news, but I wanted to be sure before telling you anything.

The woman nodded, as she followed Cemir into the living room. There, she sat on the same small sofa as last time.

"Are your children okay?" Cemir asked, sitting down on the other sofa.

"Deliam had a cold a few days ago," said the Halfin, nervously, "but the doctors say he will recover."

"I will pray for it to happen," said Cemir. "Mrs. Halfin, I can assume that you have already heard rumors about my "allomantic identity."

"I... you are..." Halfin murmured nervously.

"You don't need to answer," said Cemir. "Don't worry, it's not something I care much about keeping a secret. I was telling you about it because I wanted to ask you if you would allow me to "lighten" the atmosphere for you.

Halfin nodded, worried. Cemir began to burn brass, appeasing the fear and the nerves of the woman, who relaxed with a sigh.

"Even if you are calm now, I can sense that you have been nervous all week," Cemir began to say, with a relaxed voice, "let me ask you, would you prefer that I give you the result now? Or are you willing to listen to the whole explanation?"

"I... I would prefer to know if the debt will be paid."

"In principle, that's how it will be," said Cemir. Her neighbor smiled at the news, it was good to start off on the right foot.

"Where he?" she asked, referring to the debtor. Cemir appeased the woman's hope slightly, He didn't want her to get too confused.

"As I had told you, this will require some confirmations. But I know with certainty that he is alive, he is in another city."

"Another city? What is he doing there?."

"Here lies the problem," said Cemir, settling into his seat, It had taken weeks to gather this information "Roughly speaking, Mr. Galter had a contract protected by confidentiality from the canton of the inquisition, which prohibited him from selling anything in the central domination."

»Now, I understand your look of confusion, yes, the ministry has mechanisms to prevent something like this from happening. When a merchant is prohibited from selling in a place, the normal thing is to send a letter to the different cities warning about the altercation, which has been done.

"Why didn't the obligator say anything?" asked her neighbor.

"Because the obligator who witnessed your contract was false."

"False? But we did it at the headquarters of the canton of finance!."

"Correct... look, if you remember, you had told me that the contract was signed early in the morning, right?"

Her neighbor nodded, concerned.

"This may be difficult to digest... but technically you have broken into illegally alongside criminals at a steel ministry facility.

-... what? Halfin asked, confused. Cemir released his allomantic manipulation, she deserved to have his anger "The doors were open! There were even more people that day signing contracts!"

"That is correct," said Cemir, beginning his explanation. "As you will see, the headquarters of the canton of finance are guarded by soldiers at night, who are usually easier to bribe than ministry members.

»Even so, we do not know how that happened in the middle of the morning without anyone noticing. For that reason, you have the most sincere apologies from the ministry."

"Then my money..."

"Legally, that transaction has not occurred. I'm sorry."

The woman was defeated, even though Cemir had initially told her said his money was safe. He sigh, and calmed the lady's uncertainty.

"This is where I come in," said Cemir, getting up from his seat, "You see, right now, even after he have gotten his way, when a high-ranking member of the ministry asks you the origin of your money, you must hand over the papers belonging to it."

"Did you ask Galter the origin of his money?."

"Unfortunately, no," Camier said, he couldn't help but walk to the door "I am a simple obligator, I do not have the power to make those demands, for that, a prelan is needed, or someone of a higher rank. That's where Galter made his mistake."

»To clear his money, Galter organized another contract, this time official, in where he gave you the money that you had lent to someone else, pretending to be you, giving him the money for no apparent reason, other than the goodness of your heart.

"Where were you coming in?" asked her neighbor, worried.

"Excuse me, I like to ramble on the details." Cemir stopped, even though he was used to dealing with larger amounts of money on a daily basis, the sum that had been swindled from Halfin was significant for someone of her economic level "if I must sum it up... I solved the case and notified the highest-ranking obligors of the problem before Galter managed to spend the currency."

»To raise the suspicions of my ministry colleagues, I pointed out that Galter was traveling too much to be a merchant who was forbidden to sell. Of course, the prelate in my charge was willing to stop the fiscal movement, only if I managed to collect evidence of the false transaction.

"But if there were no witnesses..."

"I caught the woman who was impersonating you," Cemir said, with a

proud smile "it was difficult at first, she seemed to be a professional con artist. But fortunately, in exchange for a pardon, I managed to get one of her skaa henchmen to point me to the next city she was heading to, so I arrived three days before her in Arguois, where we got a confession."

"Then you have a confession!" exclaimed the lady, happily.

"Not so fast," Cemir said, raising his hand with his finger extended "it turns out that, after getting the woman's confession, as I had said before, Galter was trying to escape the problem by revealing that the transaction was illicit from the beginning, "confessing" to his crime in Fadrex, where the headquarters of the canton of resources. That would "Clean" the money, nullifying the fraud charges."

"Fadrex... That's in the opposite direction from Arguois! "Halfin shouted, overwhelmed "It would take you at least a month to travel on the canal to any of those cities!."

"That is correct, it is normal that this type of information and confirmations take weeks to get communicated. The couriers, although fast, take days or weeks to get from one place to another, and preparing a trip for an investigation of this caliber is not easy, especially considering the small amount of stolen money.

»For a normal person to follow this thread would be a job of months, giving enough time for them to get their way.

"For a normal person..." Halfin whispered, disappointed. She opened her eyes in surprise when she realized what she was telling her "Oh!."

"I arrived from Fadrex three days ago," said Cemir. "I'll be honest, it was a interesting chase, I even arrived late, but the inquisitor in charge of the city heard the problem and agreed to retain Galter, who continues to defend his case.

"You shouldn't have bothered so much..."

"Nonsense, besides, the ministry needs to know when someone tries take advantage of the blessed system that the Lord Ruler created. So, in practical terms, yes, he has gotten away with it," said Cemir, soothing the anguish of his neighbor, "but, as your request has informed us of that small failure in security at the headquarters, the high prelate agreed to return the money as payment for your service.

"Thank you," said the woman, who had begun to cry, "my grace, you have saved life. If I were to lose that money forever... I wouldn't know what to do."

"You shouldn't thank me," Cemir said, placing his hand on her shoulder. "Now, I should tell you to be more careful with your investments, but the reality is that the fault has been on the part of the guard for allowing something of that caliber."

"I must thank you in some way," said Halfin, rising from his seat "I owe you

everything."

"Just don't invest with money you need," Cemir said, guiding her towards the door "as I had told you, some confirmations are still needed, so an obligator will knock on his door next week.

The woman nodded, leaving Cemir's apartment.

"Rest well, Miss Halfin, I will pray for your son."

"I will too, my grace," the woman said, bowing to him one last time.

Cemir closed the door, the truth was that the forgiveness of the debt had cost him a promotion, the ministry was not very happy about returning money that they had not given, but he would find another way to promote, it was not his immediate priority after all.