

Chapter 37: Business Lessons and the Date

As Drake flew on over the city, Minerva did her best to tell him where their destination was, "I think recalled the business training center being over on Harvard Avenue. I'm not sure if the street name or layout is the same. They redesigned the whole city after the destruction." The dragon descended down a bit and flew over towards the business district. The woman looked at the buildings' names to see if any of them read business training. Soon, she found a small building that said *Cypress Business and Tech*. Pointing to it, Minerva said, "There it is, Drake. Take us there." Drake swooped down quickly and landed softly in front of the building.

The two humans got off before Ronan told his friend, "We'll be right back, Drake; just... lay low. Stay out of trouble, okay?" The dragon laid down outside but he didn't sleep, more of a guard dog position.

Minerva and Ronan went to the door and opened it to go inside. They went up to the front desk where a female receptionist saw them and said, "Good afternoon! How may I help you?"

The blonde answered, "I'm here to get Ronan registered for business class. We're planning on setting up a martial arts school and we need learn everything we can to run things right."

The receptionist took out a clipboard with a registration form and said, "Well you're just in time, because the first day of the novice classes starts tomorrow. Just fill out this form and I'll have you up in the system for teaching." She placed the clipboard on the desk to show as well a pen to accompany it.

Ronan glared and said, "Perhaps I can speak with your superior. The one who runs this facility. I'm sure he'd like to meet the one who saved the people of the AED building from the city's crime ring. Would he not?" He gave a solid stare and his hand gripping the hilt of his sword. "I have very little in the way of patience right now. If you would be *kind* enough to direct me to him or her, I will be on my way." The receptionist's eyes widened in surprise and she was scared what the assassin might do if she doesn't comply with him. Minerva was afraid of what he was going to do until she saw his wink and relaxed. Apparently, he had been bluffing to get them a business advantage.

The blonde told the woman in a tone gentle compared to the man's, "Please, we really want to set up our school soon. So if you call the director, we'll see if we can try and make this quick."

The receptionist replied, "Alright fine. I'll see if he's not busy." Then she dialed the numbers and called the director, "Mr. Yager, there's a couple of people who wish to see you about setting up a school." Quiet inaudible voice was heard from the phone and the woman responded, "Okay, I'll tell them you're on your way." The phone was hung up, the receptionist turned back to the clients. "Our director will be here shortly."

After a short while, a black-haired man with olive skin, lines around his mouth, and a black business suit

came to see the clients. "So are you the ones looking to learn from this center?" he asked.

Ronan bowed to the gentleman and said, "Yes we are. If I may, I'd prefer to talk in private. On a business matter."

"Fine then, let's go over to my office," the director told him. So the clients followed the man over to his office where he took his seat at the desk. Minerva sat on one of the two wooden chairs before the desk. Mr. Yager looked at them and said, "Okay, before we get started, I would like to know the names of the people I'm dealing with." Pointing at the woman, he said, "Let's start with you, miss."

Minerva introduced herself, "My name is Minerva, sir."

"Nice name," commented Mr. Yager. Then he looked to Ronan and asked, "And what about you, young man?"

The assassin bowed again and said in a clear and concise tone, "Ronan. My friend and I have limited time today, so I'll get to the point. I'm looking to establish a school to teach the combative skills that I am trained in. I have no business expertise, but perhaps that is where you can help us. Minerva is my partner in this endeavor and we need to understand what it'll take to operate the facility once it is built and we don't have time to waste with classes to learn this."

Mr. Yager listened to him and said, "I don't know why you are in such a hurry, my good man. But I'm pretty sure there's no harm in waiting a week to learn all the important details you need. Besides, I'm a very busy man and there are things that need to be taken care for tomorrow's first class. So I can't waste time trying to teach you everything in less than a day."

Minerva had a feeling that her friend wasn't going to take the director's decline to teach so easily, so she tried to come up with an alternative wave. "Wait," she blurted.

The director turned to her and asked, "What is it?"

The woman asked, "If you can't teach, then would you give us some kind of book for us to borrow? Like a textbook or a handbook of some sorts."

Mr. Yager paused a bit in his thoughts before saying, "Well that may work. But I still rather you learn from this center. If you can learn everything from a book and run your school right, then good for you. Otherwise, this would have been a waste of time."

Ronan smirked at the businessman's reply and said to the woman, "He's right Minerva; odds are we can't make it work with just a text book. Besides, he probably can't teach us anyway. May as well just waste a week learning this stuff."

The director frowned at being made out to be useless. "Hey, I'll have you know that many of my students have passed my courses and are doing pretty well in their business," he told him, sounding offended.

Minerva understood where the assassin was going at with this reverse psychology and told Mr. Yager, "Then maybe you can teach us now, since you're so good at it. I'm pretty sure that you can get this done."

"Alright fine, but I'll teach you really quickly," Mr. Yager gave in and said. But then he warned, "But you better hope you learn much from this." Then he started to teach them how to run a school and the things they need to do. Ronan smirked at his success and nodded at Minerva for her aid in making it work. He took a seat and listened carefully getting as much of the details down mentally as possible. He grabbed a nearby pen and paper and wrote down as much as he could. He made certain to underline things that were highly important.

After the break, Kathia resumed teaching her students magic until everybody ran out of energy again. Then two of the people who quit magic class approached the girl. She looked at them, wondering what they wanted, and asked, "Can I help you?"

The smiling man said to her, "Kathia, I think we just unlocked our inner magic. We're ready to rejoin your class." The woman next to him gave a short nod.

"Well that's good and all," the girl said to them. "But you're going to have to get one of these people here to teach you later." She was referring to her students as she pointed to them. "I don't repeat my lessons unless I want to," she said to them.

The woman inquired, "Well? When do you want to?"

Kathia put a hand on her chin and her red eyes looked off to the side for a bit. She answered, "Well... I suppose that would be after my current students have learned all they need to know." Then she looked back at the duo and continued, "But if you're lucky, it might be before then. So who knows?" Then she saw the archers coming over to the food tent with a slain sweetling dragonet they had hunted down. The girl looked at the dead body and thought of a good plan for it. Without looking at the couple, she told them, "Excuse me."

As Kathia went to the food tent, she heard the lead archer talking to the cook, "Sir, you're going to have a lot of that sweet tasty meat in the house!"

The cook heartily chuckled, "Ho ho! I know the whole camp is going to love eating this little fellow here." What he said wasn't a lie at all. Sweetling meat, without any spices, was the tastiest meat in the

whole world. Many people would take that over beef, pork, chicken, and seafood. It was even more special on Valentine's Day where they would be holiday foods based on sweetling meat.

After reaching the men, Kathia looked at the dragonet and said to Jason, "Nice catch there!"

"Thanks," the lead archer grinned and said. "Took a while to find a dragon out there. Had to chase down a dragon family, killed two and brought this one back. The other was too big to drag."

The girl said, "Could have been a lot more meat with the other one was here, huh?"

Jason replied, "Yeah, well you can't always stuff everything into a suitcase. So might as well make do with what you can take."

"Well, what if you had a big dragon to carry the other one you killed?" asked Kathia, trying to bring the conversation to the subject she wanted to talk about.

The men behind Jason looked at her as if she was crazy and one of the archers said, "What the heck are you saying? In case you've forgotten, these dragons don't want to work for us no more. You can't just walk up to them and ask for a favor."

"Not that way, nope," the girl said. "But what if we used a dead dragon instead? You know? Necromancy."

The men stared at her with interest at the idea. The other archer said, "Necromancy... where the hell did you get that idea?"

"I looked it up on the internet," the girl answered. "I don't think there was a spell book for it in the store. But I only looked it up after seeing a necromancer fight Azera, the guy who turned that man into blue stone." Then she looked to the cook and said, "Listen, after you take off all the meat you need. I need you to bury one of the animals. I need grave dirt for a spell I want to use tonight. It'll let me see ghosts at night."

Jason asked, "Trying out a new spell, huh?"

"Yep!" replied the enthusiastic girl. "That's going to be my first step in trying out that necromancy thing."

The cook said, "You look eager to do it. Okay, I'll bury the raccoon that guy over there has, when I'm done with it. I'll let you know where it is."

"Thanks sir!" Kathia replied.

"No problem," the cook said. The archers took the dragonet and the game animals into the food tent. The girl went back to her students and took up the beginner's guide to read some new spells.

Ten minutes later, there was a loud cracking sound coming from somewhere. Kathia put down her book and asked, "What was that?"

A teen girl among the students answered, "It sounded like it came from the mountain."

Kathia turned around looked up at the mountain and saw what appeared to be a broken giant diamond tower in the distance. "Huh?" she murmured to herself as she stared at it for a bit. Then she turned back to her students and said, "Never mind that, let's just rest another five minutes before we go back to our lessons."

So for 4 hours, Mr. Yager taught Ronan everything he needed to run his school. "And that's how you run your school," said the director. Then he looked at the clock on the wall and sighed to himself, "Boy, this took a lot longer than I thought." Then looking back at the clients, he asked, "So now that we've reached the end of this 'class', do you have any questions you want to ask me?" Minerva didn't have anything on her mind, so she looked to Ronan to see if he had something to say.

Ronan read through his notes before he shook his head. "I think we got everything. Thank you for your time and teaching. Should you find yourself curious about our school, feel free to come by after we've opened," he said, bowing before he and Minerva headed to the door.

Mr. Yager replied, "I will keep that in mind. Have a good day, you two."

The assassin looked to the woman and chuckled, whispering to her, "Excellent work back there. You have some skill with psychology. I just know how to trick people without them seeing it."

The woman felt flattered and said, "Oh gee, that was nothing. I just wanted to try and convince him; that's all." Then they went out the door.

Drake got up, looking to the two as they came out the building. "Well you two certainly took a long time. I had to spook a few kids waiting out here," the dragon said with a smirk. "Find what you were looking for?"

Ronan smiled hopping once again onto his friend's back and helping Minerva up as well. "Yep. Let's go home. Minerva and I have one last thing to do today," he said, grinning. Drake took off back towards home.

Once there, they hopped off and opened the front door. As they went inside, Minerva looked at the man

and asked, "So what else do we need to do?"

With a smirk, he answered, "We'll deal with the rest tomorrow. I recommend finding something else to do until this evening." He nudged her playfully before he went upstairs.

The woman thought about the things she could do in the meantime. She said to herself, "Well I suppose I should go and display the flyers around the neighborhood." She went upstairs to her room and took the flyers she had printed. Then she back downstairs and went out the front door. Looking at Drake, Minerva told him, "Drake, I'm going out to put flyers. I'm going to be back soon." The dragon nodded in response before she went to the nearest light post and taped one of the flyers on it. Then she went around the street to look for another good to put the second flyer. After a while of going around the neighborhood, Minerva came to a park where she put another flyer on the light pole for visitors to see. She looked at the remaining flyers she had in her hand and saw that she was down to 6 left. *'I'm almost done. I just have to keep going on my last assignment will be done,'* she thought. But first, she decided to sit on the bench to rest her tired legs for a bit. Then after half an hour later, Minerva got off the bench and resumed her job. She left the park and went to the small business section. After placing a flyer on another light pole, she saw an interesting man who stood out from the crowd as he was riding a horse. He had long brown hair tied at the end of his ponytail wore samurai-like grayish-blue robes with white trim. He was very muscular and has a single scar running from the right side of his forehead to his left cheek. The woman looked at him for a bit, thinking that he might have been wearing some kind of costume or it was his actual attire. Probably most likely the latter.

The man came to a stop outside a stable and left the horse there. He grabbed his naginata and started to walk the streets using it as if it were nothing more than a walking staff, minus the obvious. Noticing his weapon, Minerva thought that he must be another foreign warrior, just like Ronan. He was probably from the continent of Haniyas or from somewhere else. The woman stopped looking at him and went back to her job at hand. Seeing an empty space on the side wall of a post office, she thought about putting a flyer there. But first, she needed to ask for the owner's permission to do so, since this was private property. She went inside the post office and went up to the front desk. Minerva spoke to the receptionist, "Excuse me, I saw a perfectly good spot on the building to put a flyer there. May I place one there?"

The receptionist shook his head and said, "No, you may not, ma'am."

She knew that was the answer she was going to get, but she had been hoping it would be the opposite. "Okay then, thanks!" the woman replied. Then she left the post office and went somewhere else. After she posted the remaining flyers in other places, Minerva decided it was time to go back home. So she walked on her way home. Minerva returned back to the house and sat on the couch to rest. She turned on the TV to see what was on the news. The news talked about a few things like a new species of animal and a new store opening in the city. But the biggest one that caught her attention the most was an anti-dragon organization called the Equalists. Apparently, there had been a skirmish that ended with the daydream dragons calming the crowd down. The woman felt a bit dismayed at what she

just saw, but also wasn't surprised at all. Then news then cut to a more disheartening report about dragons in various parts of the world attacking humans, who were fighting for their lives. Minerva was horrified to see this happening to her race. Sure her race had done many bad things to the dragons, but two wrongs didn't make a right. It was terrible what these creatures were doing. She wondered and hoped that some humans had been spared on purpose like she had been.

Evening had finally come; Minerva was inside her room getting ready for the dinner date tonight. She looked for the dresses in her closet and tried to decide which one was the best. Would she look good to Ronan in pink? What about light blue? Would the man be okay with seeing something sparkle? How would she look in a rainbow-colored dress? There were many choices for her to pick out. After a quick pondering of her decisions, Minerva decided to go with the sparkling-chested light blue dress. She took it out of the closet and changed into that dress. Then she went to the jewelry box and took out a pearl necklace, diamond earrings, and pearl bracelets. After putting them on, the woman went to the bathroom and put make-up on her face and perfume on her. Now that she was done, Minerva went downstairs to meet Ronan who was already waiting for her. He was dressed in black outfit with matching top and pants. Admiring his clothing, she said, "Ronan, you look cool in that outfit!"

The man was stunned speechless by her dress. "Minerva..... you look....." he said, unable to finish his sentence. "Just... wow," he smiled as he continued. The woman could tell that Ronan really liked her outfit; she had made the perfect choice. He held out his arm to her like a gentleman and asked, "Shall we?"

The woman put her arm around his and simply smiled in response. Then they went out the door and saw Drake, who had just risen and was ready for flight. "We're ready, Drake," said Minerva. Drake lowered himself, so they could get on his back. Once aboard, he took off to one of the fancy restaurants in Windfall. Once they landed, Ronan helped Minerva off of Drake and 'tied' the dragon down. The man then turned back to the woman and held out his arm to her again. Minerva took Ronan's arm and walked with him to the double doors. The woman smiled and commented, "Ronan, you're such a gentleman. You know that?"

The man smiled and complimented her in return, "With a woman like you, it's hard not to be." Then they went inside the building to the waiting lobby. Another couple, who was leaving, went past them out the door.

The host took the small family who was waiting early to their tables. Another host arrived to greet Minerva and Ronan, "Hi there, are you a party of two?"

The man answered, "Yes, table for two please; and if you wouldn't mind asking the chef to get something tasty for the large brown dragon outside? He's with me. Very tame."

The host happily replied, "Sure, I'll go tell the cooks to whip something up after I get you seated. Follow me!" Taking up the two menus, the host led the couple to one of the empty tables. After he placed the menus down on the table, the host asked them, "So what does your dragon eat?"

Minerva answered, "He eats meat. I fed him some ham today."

"Oh okay, then pork it is! I'll go get him some," said the host. Then he left for the kitchen to tell the cooks what to make.

They took their seats and started looking through the menu at the various meals, drinks, and desserts. Minerva thought about their first course of dinner and asked, "Hey Ronan, should we order an appetizer?"

Her date 'hmmmed' before nodding, "Yes, some appetizers would be a good start. You can pick."

The woman gave a quick look at the appetizer section of the menu again and decided what she would have. Minerva suggested, "Let's take the asiago shrimp for now. Does that sound good?"

Ronan nodded and said, "Sounds good to me. Let's also get something good to drink besides water. Any good ideas for that?"

Minerva, having memorized from the drinks section on what she wanted, said, "The sparkling white grape juice sounds nice. Have you ever tried one?" The fizzy spark plus the sweet taste was very nice to the tongue. She wondered if the restaurant's version will be just like the one from the grocery store or even better.

The man smiled and replied, "Sounds interesting, let's try it." They waited for their waiter/waitress to arrive.

Pretty soon, the waitress arrived at their table and said, "Hi, my name is Betty and I'll be your server for tonight. May I get you something to drink?"

Minerva said to her, "We would like some muscadine grape juice, please."

Betty wrote the order for two glasses of the juice and said, "Okay, muscadine grape juice coming up. I'll get you all that as well as some water to go." Then she left for the kitchen to get them their drinks.

With them alone again, the blonde had quickly realized something. "Uh oh, we forgot to tell her to get us the shrimp," she said with a flat hand over her mouth.

Ronan replied, "Don't worry, I'll mention it when she returns." He looked over the menu for a while before the waitress returned.

Betty came back with a plate of the juice they ordered as well as two glasses of water to accompany them. With a smile, she said, "Hey you go! Muscadine juice and some water to go with them." She set them down on the table, giving one of each drink to each person. She also gave them straws to drink from the glasses, too. "Now may I start you off with some appetizers?" she asked.

Then Ronan told her the order, "We'd like the asiago shrimp appetizers to start with please."

"Alright then, I'll be back!" The waitress went back to the kitchen and told the cooks what to make.

Having already picked what entree she wanted to eat, Minerva said, "Ronan, have you decided what you wanted to eat?"

The man spotted a good option that got his interest. "Yes; the black seasoned steak. Sounds delicious," he with a smile.

"I think so too; I would like to try one, too," said Minerva. She pictured the steak in her mind and imagined the taste of meat juice plus the spices giving flavor to it.

Ronan took a sip from the glass of the sparkling juice. "Wow that's actually really good," he commented.

The woman asked, "Really? Let me try it." She took a sip, too, and felt the sweet taste of the juice and the sparkles of the carbonate substance in it. "Wow! It is good," she said, enjoying the juice.

The man smiled at his date with a chuckle and said, "I'm glad we could do this. I've never had fun like this and... I'm glad it's with you."

"Oh you're very welcome, Ronan," said the flattered woman. She appreciated having to give joy to the man's lonely life.

The man raised his glass towards hers. "A toast, to our school..... and to us." Minerva picked up her glass and touched it with his. She smiled gleefully before they put down the wine glasses.

The waitress came back with the appetizers and two small plates and set them on the table. She said, "Hey you go, enjoy!" Minerva picked up a few shrimps to put on her plate and ate one. Betty left to go serve another customer.

Ronan tried some of the shrimp and commented in a satisfied tone, "Not bad. Don't think I've ever had shrimp before. Interesting taste." He ate a few, savoring the flavor.

"Well it is pretty good," said Minerva. "That's why it's one of the most favorite kinds of seafood." She ate the rest of her shrimp on the plate.

A little while later, Betty came back to take another order from them. With a pretty smile, she asked, "Hey, how was the shrimp?"

"Very good," answered the blonde.

Ronan smiled and replied, "Very well made." He wiped his mouth with a napkin before he made his order, "I'd like the black seasoned steaks please and could I get two as well as the side of potatoes? Mashed of course," he spoke as politely as possible.

Minerva was pleased with the man's generosity at getting her a steak. Betty wrote down the order and said, "Two steaks and a side of mashed potatoes." Then she looked at the blonde and asked, "What about you, miss? Which side would you like?"

The blonde answered, "I'd like some green beans, please."

"Okie-dokie, coming right up!" said the waitress. Then she went back to the kitchen. After the food was cooked, she returned with the meals and set them on the table. "Here you go, eat up!"

Ronan thanked the waitress before he and Minerva grabbed the forks and knives and started to eat. The taste of the meat itself was absolutely blissful and the seasoning was divine. "Oh wow that's incredible... that is soo good. How do they cook it so well like that?" the assassin asked. He was without a doubt impressed by the chefs' capability.

Minerva giggled and joked, "We'll have to ask the cooks about this. They're the experts!" Ronan looked at her with a jokingly questioning look.

After they finished eating the steaks, Betty returned and asked, "How was your meal?"

"It was pretty delicious," said Minerva with a satisfied smile.

"Great!" exclaimed the delighted waitress. "I'm glad you enjoyed it. Think you all have room for dessert?"

Ronan replied, "I think so. Two slices of your finest dessert." He sounded like he was in a good mood and wanting kick it up a notch. He finished off his sparkling drink and poured a little more from the bottle.

"Okay then, I will be right back," said Betty. When went into the kitchen to tell the chefs to make the final order.

Minerva pictured some kind of fancy dessert in her mind and asked, "Finest dessert? I wonder what that will be?"

After a little while, the waitress returned with two plates of white chocolate pecan pie, both of which had vanilla ice cream. She set them down on the table and said, "Here you go! Enjoy and I will return with the bill." Then she left again.

Minerva took up the spoon and scooped a piece of the pie. She ate it and nodded her head. "Mmm, tasty," she commented.

Ronan had a taste of his slice and he liked it. "Not bad at all. All in all, very delicious meal," he commented, satisfied with the result.

The woman replied, "They make some delicious food. I'll probably have to come back again next time." She smiled and looked back at him. He was handsome, generous, and heroic; just a few words to describe a man like him her mind.

When dessert was over, Betty returned with a black leather booklet in hand. She placed it on the table and said, "Here's your bill for all the meals you've eaten. Be sure to put your payment in the booklet and turn it in to the cashier." Then she left to go serve her new customers.

Ronan took the bill and put some of his remaining money inside it. "Shall we go for a walk?" He asked as he got up from his seat.

"Sure!" said Minerva. Then they took the bill to the cashier and went with outside the door.