

Shota 101

Chapter 101 What Is This? (4)

"Eh?" That was Haley's response to my confession.

She looked at Nicole and Jessica on the sides and both of them nodded to confirm this.

She looked back at me with the same surprised look before suddenly bursting out in laughter. She pointed at me and said while laughing, "You're actually a baron at such a young age?"

I revealed a bitter smile before raising my hand to stop Nicole and Jessica from doing something.

It was clear by the look on their faces that they weren't happy about Haley's response, but I knew that there was a reason for this. The reason was the many different bottles of wine that were currently on the table.

We had only received our food midway through her story, but half of these bottles had been finished off before the food arrived. With all of the wine going in her stomach before she got any food in her, she must be quite affected by it.

But I also didn't blame her since she had been through a hard life and tonight had been hard for her as well.

Now that she finally felt safe, it didn't seem strange that she would want to drown the trauma that she experienced with alcohol.

After laughing for a bit and giving a few hiccups, Haley realized the mistake that she had made and she bowed her head suddenly before saying, "I'm sorry, I lost control there."

I just raised my hand to show that it was fine as I revealed a faint smile.

It didn't take long before she went back to drinking.

During this time, both Nicole and Jessica had been focused on eating the food that had been brought.

This was food that they would normally never get the chance to eat, so they wanted to eat as much of it as they could.

I just watched all of this with a smile before suddenly remembering something.

I turned to Haley and asked, "Your husband mentioned something about the count. Could it be that he is related to the count?"

That was the one worry that I had about this matter.

The count was the one person that I couldn't offend right now since this was his city. Even if it wasn't his city, the count was a much higher ranked noble than me and Baroness Rose, so if he wanted, he could destroy our town with his much larger army.

The higher the nobility rank, the larger the army was permitted by the king.

So there was a reason why we didn't have as many soldiers to deal with the monster wave.

Hearing this, Haley revealed a smile before saying, "He isn't related to the count at all. He just had one lucky deal with the count and he acts like he knows the count personally. There were many times where he tried to invite the count to our home for dinner, but he was always rejected."

Then her eyes dimmed a bit before she said, "That was the reason for what happened tonight..."

I gave a nod, but I didn't say anything since I knew that anything extra that was said here would just poke at her wounds.

I could tell that she was a woman who had many wounds in her heart and that she needed to be treated gently to slowly heal those wounds.

So I said, "Let's forget about all of that and just drink our problems away."

If it was Haley from before where she still had her senses, she might have stopped herself since she was drinking with someone that she had just met.

But not this time since she was already drunk.

She just happily lifted the glass of wine in her hand and said, "Let's drink our problems away!"

She was so loud that the other customers here couldn't help looking at us, but the waiter didn't do a thing.

Compared to them, I had the highest status in this restaurant.

What Nicole had told the waiter earlier was that I was a baron and had even shown proof of it.

That was why his attitude had suddenly changed earlier.

It didn't take long before Haley was too drunk to keep it together anymore.

Her face was completely flushed and she was slurring her words as she started singing.

There was even a time where she wanted to take some clothes off because it was too hot, but I had Nicole and Jessica stop her before she did anything. I could have stopped her myself, but in a public place like this...it would have been inappropriate.

In the end, they were able to stop her from stripping, but they had been dragged into the drinking by her.

Luckily, she didn't get the two of them too drunk before she knocked herself out from drinking.

As she laid there snoozing and holding the bottle of wine, I couldn't help shaking my head with a bitter smile.

Where did the beautiful and elegant woman that I had met in the store this afternoon go?

I couldn't see a single trace of her in Haley who was lying there drunk.

In the end, I had Nicole and Jessica take care of her.

The two of them were helping her into the carriage while I went to settle the issue of the bill.

When I received it, I was surprised to find that the prices that were listed on the receipt were lower than the actual price on the menu. Seeing this, I couldn't help looking at the waiter who was with me.

The waiter said with the same friendly smile as if he had guessed what I was thinking, "This is a special service for a VIP customer such as yourself."

I raised a brow in doubt, but in the end, since they were willing to offer this to me, I wasn't going to say no.

So I threw a gold coin over and left without even taking the change. I just simply said, "Consider it a tip."

The waiter's eyes lit up when he heard this and he gave a deep bow to me.

When we arrived at the carriage, I had the driver send us back to the inn that we were staying at.

During this time, I let Nicole and Jessica watch over Haley because there was something more important for me to pay attention to.

Chapter 102 What Is This? (5)

While they were relaxing in the carriage, I was looking at a panel that was in front of me.

This wasn't a panel that they could see, so they didn't notice what I was doing during this time.

But I couldn't help slightly knitting my brows as I stared at this panel in front of me.

On that panel was the quest window.

And currently, I was looking at the side quest tab of the quest window.

That was because without me noticing, there had been a new quest added to this tab.

[Side Quest] Save the beautiful merchant.

Prevent the disaster of the beautiful merchant Haley. Protect her from her husband and ensure that the disaster to her family doesn't pass.

Reward: ??? (Depends on performance).

I couldn't help looking at this quest window in front of me with a strange look in my eyes.

Back when I had first come to this world, this tab had been completely empty and there wasn't a single quest that was available to me. But now there were quests that filled up these empty windows and not a single one of them was simple.

Save her?

What was I supposed to save her from?

All it said that I was supposed to save her from her husband, but did that mean what I think it meant?

Did it mean that I had to break them up and then take her for myself? Or was there a different meaning to this?

The more that I thought about it, the more confused I became and the more my head hurt.

I had already heard her story, so I had a good idea of what her situation was. But even if I knew the story, it wasn't as if I knew what the disaster of her family would be...

Now the system was telling me to save her and her family even though we had just met...

I was fine with extra quests from the system since there was the chance of getting special rewards from the system. Like the giant dildo bat, the aphrodisiac incense, and the nipple covers that I had received before.

After the system had been upgraded because the tutorial was finished, I hadn't received another reward from the system for any sexual conquests. It seemed that the reward from having sex was just the reward given during the tutorial to help new users...

So now I had to find a different way to get stuff.

I couldn't get anything from the store, so my next thought was to move onto the quests since they gave rewards.

But these quests...

Finally, Nicole looked over at me and noticed that strange look that was on my face.

She couldn't help leaning over and asking, "My lord, is there something wrong?"

I was pulled out of my thoughts when I heard these words and looking at her, I shook my head before saying, "No, nothing at all."

She looked at me with a concerned look, but since I wasn't saying anything, she couldn't say anything either. So in the end, she turned back to look after Haley.

When she looked at me, I couldn't help taking a peek downwards.

She was a bit tipsy because of what happened at the restaurant and from being forced to drink by Haley, so she hadn't noticed that when she leaned forward, the front of her shirt had drooped down more than she had intended.

Normally when she did this, she only let me see enough that I could see the top of the peaks.

But this time, since she was tipsy, she didn't notice that she had leaned forward too far and had shown the two pink tips to me. For some reason, they had been standing up a bit...was it because she was cold, or was it because of something else?

At least it was an uneventful ride to the inn since Haley was completely knocked out from being drunk.

But once we were at the inn, we faced the next problem.

The current living situation that we had was that I had a room all to myself and the two girls had a room to themselves. However, the room that they had was completely filled up since these rooms were only

meant to hold one person. After all, these rooms catered to nobles and nobles didn't like to share unless it was with family members and such, but that was only the case with lovers.

Just having two people in a single room was already pushing it.

I offered to get them a room each, but they didn't want to, so I just got a single room for them to share.

The problem was that there was no way that they would be able to fit three people in that room comfortably.

We had brought Haley back with us to the inn because we didn't want anything to happen to her while she was drunk.

So the option that was put in front of us was either to get a new room for her, or...she could share my room.

When this option was placed forward, Nicole and Jessica immediately rejected it.

It was surprising how fast their rejection had come that it even caught me off guard.

They kept insisting that it would be fine for three people to live in their room since they didn't want to waste more money.

But in the end, I had to put my foot down and rent another room for Haley to sleep in.

I also asked one of the girls to stay in the room with her so that she wouldn't freak out when she found herself in an unknown place.

As I went to rent the room though, I could have sworn that I heard something.

"I was too slow...I should have suggested that we share a room. If that happened..."

I couldn't help revealing a bitter smile when I heard this, but I tactfully chose to ignore it.

I knew that Baroness Rose and Cecilia didn't mind me getting other women, but if I started getting women without even giving them a warning...I don't think that they would like that.

Chapter 103 Making A Deal (1)

The next morning, when I woke up and came out of the room, I found that the two girls were already awake.

I had slept a bit longer than usual since I had already achieved my goal of finding a merchant.

Not to mention, I did have a bit of a headache from the drinking last night.

I thought that I hadn't been affected by the alcohol, but it didn't seem to be the case.

Still, there was no regret since it was delicious alcohol that I drank.

I even wanted to try it again tonight...but that all depended on what would happen today. After all, we would be going to the store to negotiate prices today and if we couldn't reach a price that we agreed on, we would have to extend negotiations and that would take more time.

So I hoped that everything would go well.

It also helped that we now knew the owner of the store and had a good relationship with her after saving her last night.

It seemed very likely that things would go well today.

I wasn't surprised to find the two girls awake, but I was surprised to find that Haley was gone.

She was the one who was the most drunk out of all of us last night, so I had assumed that she would have a massive hangover this morning. But that didn't seem to be the case as she had already disappeared from the inn.

When I came over to where the two girls were waiting, I asked Nicole who shared the room with Haley, "What happened? Why is she gone already?"

Nicole revealed a smile and shook her head before saying, "There really is no stopping that woman. When she puts her mind to something, she really goes all out to do it..."

I raised a brow in confusion, but I waited for Nicole to explain.

Nicole started the story from the very beginning.

"When she woke up, she was confused as you had expected. She had looked around herself in a frenzy and there were even darting looks at the window, as if she had planned on jumping out. But all that noise woke me up and I was able to explain what had happened last night."

She gave a sigh as she said, "Though, the thought that we had spent the night together when she saw me wasn't appreciated...I'm not into that kind of stuff."

Jessica and I couldn't help revealing a smile when we heard this.

But then the way that Nicole glared at us...it was clear that there was some kind of hidden grievance in this complaint.

If I had to guess, it was most likely related to her parents.

Heh, heh.

After another sigh, she continued the story, "I tried to get her to stay, but she wouldn't listen at all. She just said that she needed to get to her store to open for the day and then she stumbled out while holding her head. It was obvious that she was hungover and had a large headache, but she wouldn't listen at all."

At this, Nicole raised her hands and spread them in a helpless manner.

I gave a nod at the end of this story before saying, "That's fine, we'll still see her later." Then I added, "But she did remember that we were the ones that saved her, right?"

Nicole immediately caught on to what I was implying and she gave a nod with a smile in response, "I made sure that she knew that we were the ones that had saved her. Not to mention, it seemed like she had remembered quite a bit about what had happened last night even though she was hungover."

I gave a nod with a satisfied smile after hearing this.

As long as she knew that we were the ones that had saved her...then it would help us in the negotiations later.

Since everything was turning out to benefit us, there was no need to rush this matter.

So I took a look out the window in this hall at the sun above us.

The sun was in the sky, but it wasn't high enough yet for it to be noon. It wasn't low enough for it to be considered early morning though.

I had slept quite a bit.

When we went down to the main lobby of the inn, I saw on the clock on the wall that it was around 10 in the morning.

That was still early enough for breakfast, so we found a random place to grab some breakfast.

After that, we walked around the city and bought a few souvenirs before also getting an early lunch.

We did everything but go to Haley's store.

That was because we knew that it was very unlikely that Haley would be in any condition to greet customers right now. She might get better in the afternoon, so it was better to wait until then to head to the store.

After all, it was her that we had business with and not the normal clerks in the store.

After lunch, we walked around a bit more until it was around 2 in the afternoon. Only then did we head over to Haley's store.

It had few customers just like yesterday, so we walked in with no problem.

When we saw who the clerk that was taking care of us was, we couldn't help revealing a smile.

At the same time, the smile on the lip of the clerk twitched when he saw me...It was clear that he recognized me and remembered me from yesterday.

But he was a professional and he greeted us with a happy smile.

However, we weren't here to see him after all.

So I asked the clerk, "Can I talk to your boss?"

The clerk was surprised to hear this, but he still went to get Haley.

When she came out, she was surprised to see us and she asked, "What are you doing here?"

I didn't take offense to this and simply said, "I'm here to discuss some business."

Chapter 104 Making A Deal (2)

Once again, Haley revealed a surprised look.

But then she gave a nod and said, "Let's go talk in my office."

She said a few words to the clerk that had been taking care of us before gesturing for us to follow her.

This time, we were led to a part of the store that we hadn't been in before.

This was the back of the store and as we walked by, we could see the different merchandise that was being stored in this back room.

I couldn't help being impressed by a few of the items here since these were things that I could recognize as being rare. These things hadn't been shown in the storefront, so it was clear that they were being kept back here for special customers.

Normal customers wouldn't even have a chance to see these things.

At the same time though, this showed how much financial power and influence this store had.

It seemed like the title of the third largest company in the city wasn't in vain.

It seemed like there was some power that backed this claim.

When we arrived in her office, we were surprised to find how small it was and how messy it was.

Since this was the office of the boss, shouldn't it be much cleaner and much larger?

Haley saw the look on our faces and she said, "Why waste money on a larger office when you can put that money into your operations instead. There's no point in putting more money into a place that's just used once or twice."

That wasn't the image that I had of an office since in my world, offices were used for plenty of meetings with people.

So these offices had to be impressive to impress the people that were coming for the meetings. It was a sort of power play to put the owner of the office in a superior position, making it easier for them to negotiate.

But it seemed that this concept wasn't that widespread in this world.

I didn't think too much about it and just sat down in front of Haley's desk.

Both Nicole and Jessica stood to my sides while Haley sat down in front of me, behind the desk.

Once we were all settled, the smile on Haley's face disappeared. Well, it didn't completely disappear as she still had a smile on her lips, but that smile in her eyes disappeared and was replaced with a serious look.

She looked right at me with that business smile and asked, "So, what deal did you have for me?"

She didn't waste any time as she directly got to the point of this meeting.

I couldn't help being surprised since I had thought that most merchants would try to beat around the bush first before using some kind of tactic to bring up these things, making it easier for them to negotiate. I never thought that Haley would be this direct about it and ask me what I want to my face.

But even if I was surprised, that didn't mean that I was against it.

This would make it much easier for me to accomplish what I wanted to accomplish.

After all, sincerity was the best.

So I said, "I need food and supplies for the winter."

Haley couldn't help being confused when she heard this, but then she remembered something else about me from last night. She remembered the fact that I was a baron.

Since I was a baron, it made sense that I would have territory.

So what I was buying was actually food and supplies for the winter for an entire territory.

Depending on how big the territory was, there was no doubt that this would be a large deal for her company.

That was just how it was when it came to working with nobles.

So there was also a trace of excitement that flashed in Haley's eyes before she suddenly calmed down again.

She looked at me and asked in a calm voice, "How much do you need?"

This time, I didn't answer and turned to give a nod to Nicole.

She pulled out a piece of paper from the bag that she was carrying and placed it on the table before siding it over to Haley.

Haley picked up the piece of paper and looked carefully at it before saying, "We can do this, but..." After a pause she said, "That depends on the price."

Hearing this, I knew that it was time for the main part of these negotiations.

This was the part that I was dreading the most since this was the part that would be the hardest fought battle.

I just looked at her and calmly said, "What is your first price?"

Haley didn't answer right away as she took a moment to think about it. After thinking it through, she grabbed a piece of paper from the side and wrote something on it before sliding it back over to us.

I picked it up and then looked at it with Nicole.

When the two of us saw the number that was written on, both of us couldn't help revealing surprised looks. We both looked at Haley as if we were trying to figure out if she was serious and then we looked back at the paper, trying to find if there were any extra commas or dots.

But in the end, everything seemed in order.

So I couldn't help asking, "Is this really your first price?"

Haley just nodded with a smile on her face.

Seeing the serious look in her eyes, I couldn't help asking, "Are you kidding me? This price...won't you be suffering a loss if you sell at this price?"

When she heard this, Haley couldn't help breaking out in laughter.

We just looked at her with confused looks when we heard this.

After laughing for a bit, Haley finally said, "This is my first time hearing this. There are actually people who are worried about the merchant suffering a loss from a deal."

I couldn't help revealing an awkward smile when I heard this.

But then Haley said, "You don't have to worry, I'll still be making a profit from this. This is the advantage of being a big business, you have lower costs than others."

I still couldn't help hesitating when I heard this.

Seeing the doubt in my eyes, Haley then said, "Just consider this the friends and family discount. While we aren't family, I think that we would still qualify as friends, especially after everything that you've heard about me last night."

After saying this, she looked at me with a friendly smile.

This wasn't her business smile, but rather an actual friendly smile that she would show to a friend.

It seemed like she really did believe in these words and she wanted to be friends with me.

Since that was the case, I didn't have a reason to refuse.

Although I couldn't read people as well as Baroness Rose, I could still see a thing or two about people.

I could tell that she was being sincere and this was her way of making up for last night.

In that case, there was no need to refuse.

Chapter 105 He's My Lover (1)

So I gave a nod and said, "Thank you."

Haley looked right back at me and said, "You don't need to thank me. It should be me thanking you. If it wasn't for what you did last night, it'd be hard to imagine where I would be now..."

Her voice trailed off as she said this as a look of sadness filled her eyes.

I could guess what she was thinking because of these eyes, so I gave a cough and reached my hand out to her.

Seeing this hand, she reached out with a smile and shook it.

With this, the deal had been made.

But of course, a deal couldn't be set with just a handshake alone.

We still had to sign a contract and pay a down payment before any of this would start.

So I stood up and left the seat open for Nicole who sat down in my place.

She was here to help me take care of these small things and signing the contract was one of those small things. Not to mention, that it was her speciality, spotting things that weren't right about contracts.

She was a very literate girl and could read at a very fast rate, it would take her no time to find the problems with this contract if there were any.

In the end, there were no problems with this contract.

This wasn't strange since Haley had already said that she considered us friends, so there was no way that she would try to rip us off with this contract.

It took Nicole no time to finish reading this contract and she gave a nod to confirm that I could sign it.

I had faith in Nicole's abilities, so I didn't hesitate to sign the contract.

The only thing left now was leaving a deposit so that they wouldn't be working without any guarantees.

This wasn't a problem since we had already prepared money for this since we had expected to sign a contract today. The only problem was that we had brought too much money since we had expected the down payment to be much higher.

I took out two gold coins from my money pouch and handed it over to Haley.

When she took this and the contract, she said, "I have confirmed that we have received everything. I will go talk to my people and we'll see when we can start moving the food and supplies over to your territory."

I gave a nod in response to this.

Then Haley added, "Can you come back tomorrow? I'll have finished contacting them and then we'll be able to discuss the issue of transport."

I once again gave a nod in response to this.

She reached her hand out towards me with a smile before saying, "I'm looking forward to working with you."

I took this hand without hesitation and shook it with a smile on my face as I said, "I'm looking forward to it too."

Just like this, everything had been set, so there was no reason for us to stay in the store anymore.

I offered to buy Haley dinner, but she rejected this since she had plenty of work to do contacting all the people. I didn't insist since I knew that it would be a lot of work for her, so I just wished her luck and headed out.

The rest of the day was very nice and relaxed for us.

We had settled the matter of finding food and supplies for the town for winter and it was at a price that was much lower than we had expected. So of course we had to celebrate.

But instead of going to the fancy restaurant, we just picked a random restaurant near the inn.

Since this inn catered to nobles, the restaurants that were nearby definitely weren't cheap or low grade either. These were also restaurants that catered to nobles, though they weren't as expensive as the one that we went to yesterday.

Though judging by the looks on the faces of the two girls, they still found this place expensive.

Still, it was a celebration, so I didn't hold back at all as I ordered several dishes for the table.

But even if it was a celebration, we ended it early so we could go to bed early.

We still had to talk to Haley tomorrow to ensure that everything could be transported properly to the town, so I wanted to go to the store nice and early to make sure that there weren't any problems with the people she was talking to tonight.

The night passed and the morning came.

When we woke up in the morning, we just had some quick breakfast before heading off to the store.

It was much earlier than yesterday when we set out, but we also made sure that we didn't go too early. After all, it wouldn't be good to show up before the store opened.

When we arrived, we found that the store was open, so we headed in.

However, the moment that we went in...

"You ungrateful daughter! Do you know what kind of things you've put Alex through with all the things that you've done? How does that make me, your father look?!"

This was the voice that rang out when we walked into the store.

Looking in the direction that this loud voice came from, we saw three figures standing there in the center of the store.

Two of these figures were people that we were familiar with.

They were Haley and her husband.

The other one was a middle aged man that we didn't know at all, but he was currently shouting at Haley. When one looked closely, they could see that there were some similarities between his facial features and Haley's.

So one could guess that he was her father based on what he had said previously.

But this scene really made it seem like he was her husband's father rather than her father with the way that he was treating her.

I couldn't help feeling a bit displeased as I saw this.

Chapter 106 He's My Lover (2)

Haley's father wasn't satisfied with just that, so he kept shouting, "Do you need to keep embarrassing me like this? There's so many things that you could have done and you came here to the middle of nowhere to open this store."

At this point, it was no longer about her husband, but rather about her life choices.

It seemed like the disagreement between them wasn't just because of her husband. It seemed like there were some previous grievances that her father had with her that were coming out now...

In the end though, I couldn't keep watching, so I went forward.

I walked over to them and when I came up in front of Haley, her husband and her father couldn't help being surprised by my sudden appearance.

I ignored them and turned to Haley to say, "Miss Haley, I'm here to follow up on the deal that we made yesterday."

But even though I said this, Haley was also looking at me in a daze.

She didn't know what I was doing, cutting into the middle of this, but there was a trace of gratitude that was in her eyes. She had been overwhelmed by her father and there was nothing that she could say.

She knew that it would have developed into something much more serious if it hadn't been stopped like this.

After all, she had lived with her father for many years, so she knew what kind of temper that man had.

After coming back to his senses, Haley's father narrowed his eyes to look at me as he asked, "Who are you?"

I looked right back at him and said, "I'm a customer here to do business with this store. If there's nothing that you want, can you please leave us be?"

Haley's father couldn't help being taken aback when he heard this.

He had thought that he would be able to intimidate this young boy with his pressure, but he found that this young boy wasn't scared of him at all. Rather, this young boy faced his pressure and talked back to him.

Though he should be angry because of this, there was a small part that respected him.

For him to have this kind of mental fortitude at his age...he definitely wasn't simple.

There was even the small desire to hire this young man since he knew that his company needed more people like him.

But right now, there were more important things to do.

Such as taking care of his daughter.

In the end though, it wasn't Haley's father who spoke, but rather her husband.

When I appeared, as soon as the husband recovered from his surprise, he looked at me with narrowed eyes. It was as if he had recognized me, but at the same time, he was trying to remember where he had met me before.

After this conversation between me and Haley's father, he suddenly pointed at me and said, "It's you! From the night before last!"

Haley's father turned to look at her husband with a confused look as he asked, "Alex, what do you mean? Who is he?"

The husband's face twisted as he remembered what had happened between us and he pointed his finger at me before saying, "He's the one that she's running around with! He was the one that got in between our couple's conversation and then forcefully took Haley away!"

When Haley's father heard this, he narrowed his eyes to look at me before saying, "Is this true? Are you the one who forced my daughter to follow you?"

There were two different forms of anger that I could see in his eyes.

There was anger for Haley's husband, which was normal. But there was also a stronger anger that was different. This anger was from the fact that I was the man who supposedly forced his daughter to follow him.

Even if he was angry with his daughter and disappointed with her choices, she was his daughter after all and he did want to protect her.

He had thought that she would be safe with her friend's son, but now there was the chance that she was being tricked by some gigolo?

He couldn't accept this!

I just calmly faced this glare and said, "I didn't force your daughter to follow me. Do you really know what kind of things your son in law has been doing?"

Haley's father narrowed his eyes to look at me even more before turning slightly to look at Haley's husband. But then he said, "Stop speaking nonsense. I know that these two are a fine couple since I was the one that had set them up in the first place. Don't think that anything that you say can convince me otherwise."

I gave a sigh and shook my head when I heard this.

It seemed like it really would be hard to convince Haley's father with words. That was just the bond that he had with Haley's husband who he had introduced to her, whereas I was just some random person that had appeared out of nowhere.

After taking a breath to calm down, Haley's father came closer and said in a low and threatening voice, "I don't know what you've done to trick my daughter, but I advise you to stop approaching her. You should know what kind of powerful man I am if you've had your eyes on my daughter, so know that I can use that power to crush you and your entire family. If you know what's good for you, you will stop talking to her."

Hearing this, Haley's husband couldn't help revealing a secret sly smile.

At the same time, the look on his face made it clear that he was looking for some way to utilize this to get his revenge on me.

I couldn't help shaking my head with another sigh after hearing this.

But in the end, I wasn't able to say a thing as Haley suddenly came forward. She grabbed my arm and said, "Dad, you can't say things like that to him."

Haley's father slightly knitted his brows as he asked, "Why?"

"Because he's my lover."

Chapter 107 He's My Lover (3)

"What?"

There were three voices that gave this exclamation.

It was Haley's father, Haley's husband, and...me.

All three of us looked at her with shocked looks as if we couldn't understand what she was saying.

But then in front of us, she moved over to my side and took my arm with both her hands, holding it in the way that a lover would.

As soon as she did this, both Haley's father and husband glared at me.

I just revealed a bitter smile when I saw this, but I decided to play along.

It wasn't just because it was a nice feeling having her hold me like this...it definitely wasn't because of that. It was because of the side quest that I had received.

If I played along with this, I would have a chance to get more information and find out what I needed to do to finish the side quest. The allure of the mysterious reward from the side quest was just too big for me to resist.

After all, the items that I had received from the system before had saved me many times and I was certain that the items that I would receive in the future would also save me even more times.

So with this thought, I reached out with my other hand and put it around Haley, pulling her even closer in.

When this happened, Haley also couldn't help being surprised by my action and looked up at me with a blush on her face.

Ignoring this, I looked at Haley's father and said, "Father, please accept my relationship with your daughter. You should know that these two aren't right for each other, so please don't make her suffer anymore."

Haley's father's face twisted when he heard this.

To the side, Haley's husband glared at me with a glare that would have killed me if glares could kill.

After a long period of silence, Haley's father exploded as expected.

"You son of a b*tch, who said that you could call me father! You come out of nowhere and you ruin our family like this! Do you really think that I'll let you go?"

He had taken a few steps forward and was right up in my face. With the way that he was panting, it almost looked like he was a rabid dog that was about to bite my face off.

But before he could do anything, there was the sound of a sword being drawn.

When they turned to look in the direction that this sound came from, they saw Jessica standing there with her sword slightly drawn.

Seeing this, both the father and the husband couldn't help taking a step back.

But then Haley's father's face became serious again as he said, "Do you really think that you can threaten me? I am a very powerful person and I have many connections! To make someone like you disappear is as simple as waving my hand!"

I couldn't help slightly knitting my brows when I heard this.

I had heard that the company that Haley's father ran was a powerful company that did business all over the kingdom, though I didn't know how powerful it was.

Merchants relied on connections to do business and a powerful company would certainly have powerful connections. It was very likely that they would have connections to nobles that were higher rank than me.

In that case, it might even bring danger to my territory and my family...

But Haley said in a serious voice, "Father, you shouldn't make these kinds of claims. Zwein here is a baron from the surrounding land, so you should be careful."

When Haley's father heard this, he couldn't help looking at me with a wary look.

He had assumed that this young boy in front of him was just a simple commoner, but it turned out that he was actually a baron...

If it was in the territories where his company held power, he wouldn't fear any barons since he had his connections. But in this place where his company didn't have their roots buried, he would be at a disadvantage when it came to nobility.

After all, he didn't know the count of this city.

He could ask another count for help if it was a commoner since no nobles would care about what happened to a commoner. But it was a different story if it was a baron in the territory of a count.

No count would be willing to risk offending another count for a merchant since this count would surely protect the baron in his territory.

So even if he asked the counts that he knew for a favour, they wouldn't accept this.

After a long period of silence, Haley's father took a deep breath and took a step back before glaring at the two of us again.

Then he said in a low voice, "It seems like you've found quite the backer, but did you forget who owns this store?"

When this was said, the husband's eyes lit up before he revealed a devious smile.

He had thought that he had been pushed into a corner because the other side was a noble, but then he remembered who he had on his side. It seemed like what his father had left behind had really paid off.

Haley's eyes couldn't help trembling when she heard this.

This was the one thing that she was afraid of the most and the one handle that her family still had on her.

After all, there was nothing that she could do about this.

Unless she could somehow convince them to give her back the shares in her store, it was unlikely that she would ever be able to escape their grasp.

Well, the other way was to give up the store, but she was even less willing to do that since it was the result of her hard work.

But before she could crumple, I said, "Are you looking to sell this business? If so, I would be interested in buying it."

Chapter 108 He's My Lover (4)

"Huh?" Both Haley and her father said this as they looked at me with strange looks.

But then both of them reacted to what I had just said.

As soon as they reacted, they revealed different expressions in response to this.

Haley's father's face twisted when he heard this and he glared even more at me.

But Haley had a touched look when she heard this.

As for me, I couldn't help giving a bitter laugh deep down.

I had said this, but as for meaning it...I didn't really mean it. After all, I didn't know how much it would cost to buy this store, but it definitely wouldn't be a small amount and this was an amount that I didn't have right now.

But in this situation, it was best to make this show of support.

If there was a side that I wanted to support, it was her side.

There was another long moment of silence before Haley's father suddenly gave a snort.

He looked at me and said, "Who said that the store is for sale? This is the best performing branch of our company, so how could we ever sell something like this?"

In the end, he backed down when he had been threatened and made a compromise.

With this, he was basically declaring that he wouldn't do anything to Haley's store. Instead, he would be finding another way to convince her of his point of view.

After hearing this, Haley couldn't help being surprised.

In all her years of knowing her father, this was her first time seeing him make a compromise like this. After all, he had the power and influence of their family's company behind them, so they normally wouldn't need to do something like this.

But for the first time, he was in an unfamiliar place and facing a noble, so he had no choice but to compromise.

Because this kingdom was still run by the nobles and he wasn't one of them.

Offending a noble was a one way ticket to hell.

Unless one was a fool, they would never do something like that.

After saying this, Haley's father gave another snort before turning around and waving his hand at Haley's husband.

Haley's husband had an unwilling look on his face, but he still followed Haley's father out.

As they left, Haley's father couldn't help turning to look at Haley one last time before saying, "This isn't over yet."

Haley revealed a bitter smile when she heard this, but she didn't say anything else.

When they were gone, the two of us just remained like that for a bit until Haley realized what was happening. With a blush on her face, she moved back and pulled away from me.

I couldn't help feeling a bit of regret when this happened.

Without her noticing, I had been secretly enjoying the feeling of being able to hold her.

After all, that body of hers...was definitely top grade.

That soft feeling that came from her, it wasn't inferior to the feeling that I felt when I was holding Cecilia or Baroness Rose.

She was definitely a beauty that was at the same level as the two of them.

After another period of silence, Haley suddenly gave a slight bow to me as she said, "Thank you for your help."

I just raised my hand to wave them in front of me before saying, "It was nothing. I just came at the right time to help."

Haley stood back up and shook her head before saying, "No, it isn't nothing. If it wasn't for you...I really don't know what would have happened to me."

I didn't say anything in response to this because I knew...that she was right.

If I hadn't come when I did, who knows what would have happened with her father and husband.

I knew that those two hadn't just come to abuse her verbally, but they definitely had plans to get physical if they needed to...

But I also knew that it would be bad for her heart if I continued with this topic, so I changed the topic by saying, "Is everything prepared already?"

Haley took a moment to react before understanding what I was asking.

She said, "Un, I've already contacted my suppliers and they will be able to gather everything in a few days. Then we'll have our people send the goods over to your territory."

After a pause, she suddenly said, "Since it's you, I'll have my best people send the goods. That way it'll arrive as soon as possible."

I couldn't help revealing a grateful look when I heard this.

As soon as possible was the best for our town since the people there were worried about our dwindling supplies. At the same time, if there was a sudden accident or natural disaster, that would mean that the town would be trapped without any supplies.

This was certain to cause many deaths in the town.

So getting the supplies as soon as possible was for the best.

I gave a nod before saying, "Thank you."

Haley revealed a smile as she said, "This is nothing compared to what you have done for me. I'm just happy that I can do a little something to repay you."

She had seen the serious way he took this order, so she knew that he must have his own worries.

If she could help just a little, then that would be good enough for her.

Then as if she suddenly decided on something, she said, "As for the price..."

She paused for a few seconds before saying, "I'll sell you the goods at a discounted price."

I couldn't help being surprised when I heard this before asking, "Are you sure about that?"

Haley gave a nod before saying, "This is the least that I can repay you with after you've helped me. Not to mention, I can consider this as building a relationship with an important customer in the future."

I nodded in response to this.

But there was a small part of me that felt that taking this deal was a loss...

It wasn't a loss in terms of business, but there was a sense of personal loss.

Like our relationship would change because of this.

But I just couldn't resist since it was a very enticing deal...

Chapter 109 A Bit Of Disappointment

Since that was settled, I didn't plan on staying any longer.

There were things that I wanted to do now because of what had happened here today, so I had to go and take care of them.

But before I could go, Haley suddenly stopped me.

I was confused why she stopped me, but I waited for her to speak.

She seemed to be hesitating over something as she didn't say anything at first, but then she suddenly asked me, "About buying the store, were you serious?"

This question caught me off guard and I looked at her with one brow raised, not understanding why she would suddenly ask this question.

All I saw in her eyes was a serious look as if she was expecting a serious answer to this question.

So while I was still confused by why she would ask this question, I replied, "Well, it was half serious and half not."

This time, it was Haley's turn to be confused as she asked, "Half serious? What do you mean?"

I explained, "I'm interested in this business since it is the third largest company in the city. This is definitely a business that is worth investing in. The problem is that I have to talk to others first before making this decision."

Haley revealed a teasing smile as she said, "I thought that a baron like yourself would be able to make any decision that he wanted. It turns out that you still have to confer with your subordinates first."

This was just teasing since she knew that this was just good business sense.

If one rushed into making a purchase like this, they would suffer in the end since there were many different things that had to be considered.

If they didn't think it through and bought this business without any thought, both the buyer and the business would suffer.

However, that wasn't what I meant when I said that I needed to talk to someone.

In response to this teasing, I revealed a bitter smile and said, "It's not like that. I have to talk to my wife first before I do something as big as this."

When Haley heard this, she couldn't help revealing a strange look as she immediately said, "Wife? You have a wife?"

I didn't understand the strange look that she had, but I said with a nod, "That's right."

The strange look on Haley's face continued to evolve before she finally revealed a smile and said, "As a baron, I'm sure that you don't just have a single wife, right? You must also have many different concubines, right?"

When I heard this, I couldn't help revealing a bitter smile again before shaking my head. Then I said, "I wouldn't dare do something like that, she's the one with the noble title. I'm the husband that she took in, so I wouldn't dare do something like that to her or else she would surely divorce me."

While I didn't know if this was true, it was true that Baroness Rose was the one with the title and I just married her.

I knew that I wouldn't keep the title if she ever divorced me, so I didn't dare act too cocky with it. After all, this wasn't something that was mine in the first place, so I wouldn't use it to brag.

As for using it to scare off a few people...I wasn't above that.

Haley fell silent when she heard this and the look on her face completely disappeared.

There was this strange calm look that appeared on her face that seemed like she was hiding the emotions that she was feeling.

But when I looked closely, I could see...a trace of what seemed to be disappointment in her eyes.

Why would she feel disappointment over this?

I just couldn't understand at all.

Still, seeing that she wasn't saying anything, I decided to change the topic back to what we were talking about before.

"As for buying the store, I'm sure that my wife would see the benefit in that. But right now, our territory is suffering a bit, so before that, we wouldn't think of buying anything." I just explained in a calm voice.

Haley didn't react at first as if she hadn't heard me, but then she gave an understanding nod before saying, "You have your circumstances, I understand that. I was just hoping that I could get an understanding partner like you instead of the one that I have right now." After saying this, she revealed a bitter smile.

I also revealed a smile when I heard this as I thought back to her father.

Since we had finished talking about this, there was nothing else for us to talk about.

So I bid her farewell and headed off.

...

After he was gone, Haley revealed a look that had a trace of disappointment again.

She looked out the window, watching as his carriage disappeared before muttering to herself, "So he already has a wife...and she's the one who has the noble title..."

She didn't know why she was so hung up over this, but there was a tiny feeling of sadness that was inside of her heart whenever she thought of this.

She also couldn't help thinking of the way that he looked when he had appeared to save her. She thought of both the time in the street and when he had saved her earlier from her father.

As she thought about this, she couldn't help losing herself in a bit of a daze as a faint blush appeared on her cheeks.

But then she suddenly shook her head and pulled herself out of her daze.

Haley said to herself, "No, no, I have to focus, I still have more work to do. I still have to go talk to our workers and set up a transport to bring the food and supplies to his territory."

As she thought of how she would be able to help her saviour, there was a bit of happiness that filled her heart.

But at the same time, there was another feeling that she didn't understand that dug its way into her heart.

Chapter 110 Meeting The Count Again

After leaving the store, I immediately went to find Nicole to talk about something.

When she heard the request that I had, she couldn't help knitting her brows and revealing an ugly expression.

After she finished hearing my request, she looked at me and asked, "My lord, are you serious about this?"

I just responded with a simple nod.

Nicole knitted her brows even more when she heard this. Then she said, "My lord, do you know what the consequences of doing something like this is?"

I gave another nod without saying anything.

The two of us just stared at each other after this.

Nicole tried to stare me down with her glare, but it didn't work in the end.

So without a choice, she gave a sigh and said, "Do what you want then."

The look on her face made it clear that she had resigned to accepting this as fate. She would just let me do what I wanted and see how it turned out.

But it was also clear that she thought that this would end in failure.

To be honest, I didn't have much confidence in this plan either since the other side was that pig of a count. The way that he had treated me had made it clear that he didn't give a flying shit about me.

So it was very likely that he would completely ignore my request in the first place.

But there was nothing else that I could do in this situation.

I needed the support of the count since I didn't have any forces of my own in this city.

I was just hoping that my perception of the count was correct and I would be able to convince him.

After she made her decision, Nicole left the carriage to take care of this matter.

In no time, I was summoned to the count's manor again.

This time, the treatment was completely different.

Instead of being made to wait and being kept out by the guards, I was shown right inside and led to a room where the count was waiting for me.

When I came into the room, the count narrowed his eyes to look at me before gesturing for me to sit down.

I sat down in front of him where he gestured before waiting for the count to speak.

As the lower ranked noble, my position was lower than that of the count, so the one that should wait is me. But the count didn't say a thing as he sat there staring at me, as if he was sizing me up.

Finally, after a long period of silence, the count said, "So, you wanted to see me?"

The way that he said this sounded like he was asking a question, but in truth, he already knew what the answer to this question was. He was the one that had invited me here, so of course he knew what I wanted.

But I still played along as I nodded and said, "I have something that I wanted to discuss with you."

The count nodded before gesturing for me to continue.

I said, "I want to borrow a few men from you to take care of some business that I have in the city. It will only take a few days and I promise to return those men to you without harm. If you would be so kind as to accept this request, then I promise that I will repay you tenfold in the future."

The count narrowed his eyes to look at me after hearing this before saying, "The only reason that I agreed to meet with you was because of your "generosity" and now you're asking something of this from me. Do you really think that I would agree to something like this?"

The "generosity" that he was referring to was the bag of money that I had Nicole pass to the count.

This was the main reason why he was even willing to see me in the first place.

After all, if I was willing to give him money the first time, then it was possible that I would give him money a second time.

But I wasn't worried when I heard the count's words.

That was because I could see from his eyes just what he was after.

He might not be willing to agree to this, but if there was enough money, then he could be persuaded.

What he was doing now was requesting more money be brought out.

So I reached into my pocket and pulled out another small bag that I put on the table.

Without a word, the count reached out to take the small bag and put it in front of his face as he opened it. When the sparkle of gold came from the bag, there was a smile that appeared on that fat face.

With the face twisting from the smile, it really was an ugly sight.

But I kept my comments to myself as I waited for the count to finish counting the money inside this small bag. When he gave a satisfied nod and tied up the bag, I continued, "I trust that should be enough. So can I count on your assistance?"

The count turned back to look at me before suddenly revealing a smile and saying, "What assistance?"

I couldn't help being taken aback when I heard this before saying, "Your grace, the request that I made earlier..."

The count said with the same smile, "Of course I won't be accepting that."

My face twisted a bit when I heard this as I said, "But the money..."

The count cut me off by saying, "This is considered a consultation fee that I will be keeping. You can leave now."

I didn't know what to say when I heard this.

I had already known that this pig count was shameless, but I never thought that he would be this shameless.

But since he had already spoken, there was nothing that I could do...

Especially since the guards at the door already put their hands on their weapons.

So I had no choice but to leave the room.