

Shota 161

Chapter 161 Elven Village (10)

She came over with two mugs filled with wine in her hand and without a word, she offered one of them to me.

I took it with a grateful smile before taking a sip out of it.

After taking that sip, I couldn't help letting out a satisfied breath.

It had to be said about elven wine, it really was something else. It was much clearer and much sweeter than the wine that we drank back in our territory.

The two of us just sat there sipping our wine in silence as we watched the rest of the feast.

As I had expected, Cecilia and Haley were blending in well with the elves. That was the main reason why I had brought the two of them in the first place.

There was no need to mention Haley since she was a successful merchant. Being able to fit in with potential clients was a skill that all successful merchants needed and she had no problem with this here.

As for Cecilia, the elves had a fairly straightforward personality, so that worked fine with Cecilia who also had a straightforward personality.

It didn't take long for her to start a drinking contest with the elves.

As the two of us just sat there in silence for a bit, I couldn't help peeking at the green haired elf.

I hadn't had the chance to look at her properly before, but now that I did, I was certain that this green haired elf was female. Though some parts of her that showed that she was female...weren't as developed yet.

Still, there was no denying that she was beautiful.

I couldn't help falling into a bit of a daze as I just stared at her.

But I was pulled back to my senses when I saw that she was also staring at me.

I couldn't help revealing an awkward smile before asking, "Is there something wrong?"

The green haired elf just kept staring at me without saying a thing, even after hearing this question.

The two of us just sat there in awkward silence for a bit...

Then when I finally couldn't take it anymore, I stood up as I prepared to go join the feast.

But before I could, the green haired elf suddenly grabbed my hand. She pulled me back down and said, "Stay with me."

I couldn't help being taken aback by this, but I still sat down as she kept staring at me.

Once again, there was an awkward mood that filled the air.

Once again, when I finally couldn't take it, I said, "I haven't gotten your name yet. My name is Zwein, what's yours?"

The green haired elf continued looking right at me, but she still said in a soft voice, "Moon."

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

At least she was willing to respond if I talked to her, that was better than nothing.

So I didn't hesitate to ask, "Miss Moon, can you please tell me why you keep staring at me like this? Is there something wrong with me?"

Moon didn't say anything at first as she kept staring at me, but then she suddenly said, "I want to know why the high elf would be interested in someone like you."

A bitter smile crept onto my face when I heard this.

Still, I calmly asked, "Then have you seen what it is yet?"

Moon just looked at me without saying a thing before shaking her head and giving a sigh. Then she said in a voice that was filled with disappointment, "I really can't tell what's special about you. No matter how you look at it, someone like you is below average when it comes to everything. Maybe you're a bit smart, but it shouldn't be special enough to catch the attention of that 'Aisha'."

The bitter smile on my face became even wider when I heard this.

I just asked back, "Since there's nothing special, why do you keep staring at me then?"

Moon didn't say anything as she just gave a 'mmh' sound before going back to staring at me.

I didn't know what to say in response to this, so I decided to change the topic.

After all, there was something that had caught my attention.

The way that her voice changed when she mentioned Aisha's name.

So I looked at her and asked, "Do you know Aisha?"

When Moon heard this, she revealed a bitter smile for the first time as she said, "We met a long time ago, but I only ever met her once..."

Then her voice trailed off as she didn't finish her sentence.

But that was more than enough for me to tell that there was a story behind this.

After a moment of silence, Moon continued, "Anyway, it's been a long time since I've seen her and I would like to see her again. However, no one has seen her in over twenty years...that is except you who received her approval."

When I heard this, I revealed an awkward look.

However, it wasn't as if I could just tell her the truth.

So I didn't say anything in response to this.

Seeing that I didn't say anything, Moon just gave a sigh and took another sip of her wine. She turned to look at the feast in front of us and then sat there in silence.

I didn't know what to say, so I also just sat there in silence.

Just like this, the feast went on with the two of us sitting there like that.

To my surprise, no one came to bother us during this time. Though there were a few meaningful looks that were cast our way during this.

Including one that had clear hostility in them.

As well as one that had a strange feel to it that I just couldn't tell what it was.

At the end of the feast, one of the blonde elves from before showed us where we would be staying for the night.

Chapter 162 Elven Village (11)

As we were heading to the tree house that we would be staying in tonight, there were many elves that were still staring at us as we walked by.

It seemed that we were still considered a rare oddity in this village, but at the very least, the way that they stared at us wasn't as hostile as before.

Instead, these were gazes that were filled with curiosity and interest.

This meant that we had at least made a good impression and it would be easier to negotiate going forward.

This was also the reason why the elders had wanted our group to go to the feast.

Even if the elders did have sway in the village and seemed like they were in charge, it wasn't as if their position was rock solid. If the majority of the villagers disagreed with the policy that they wanted to put in place, it wasn't as if they could force it.

So unless we could ease the tension between humans and elves, it would be hard for us to convince them of anything.

With this, it seemed like the first day was quite the success.

However, this first day wasn't over yet.

Once we left the main part of the village and there weren't that many elves around, there was a group that suddenly appeared to stop us.

At the head of this group was a red haired elf.

Apollo.

It was the head warrior who had barged into the meeting with the elders earlier.

But that wasn't the worst part.

The worst part of all of this was that the elves that he came with...clearly weren't here just out of curiosity. That was because all of the elves that he had brought with him were armed and radiating hostility.

When we saw this, our own guards wanted to draw their weapons and form a defensive line, but I quickly stopped them from doing that.

They all had unwilling looks, but I shook my head as I gestured for them to lower their weapons.

After all, I had seen the look on the face of the blonde elf.

She was just as surprised by Apollo's appearance as we were and she had her brows deeply knit as if she disapproved of this.

It seemed that this wasn't an action that was sanctioned by the elven village and it was just Apollo taking action by himself. So if we were to actually engage them, then that would completely destroy the reputation that we had created for ourselves.

If we fought them now, it would just hurt us.

I just hoped that Apollo and his men didn't plan on going too far...

The blonde elf took a step forward and said, "Head warrior Apollo, do you need something? These are the guests of the elders, so..."

Before she could finish, Apollo cut her off with a sharp glare.

The moment that she felt this gaze fall onto her, her mouth closed and she swallowed the words that she had been about to say.

When that happened, Apollo turned his gaze back to our group. Or rather more specifically, he turned his gaze onto me.

With the way that he was looking at me, it was almost as if he held some kind of personal grudge against me. However, no matter how I thought about it, it didn't seem like I had done anything to offend him.

After a long period of confrontational silence, Apollo finally said, "Humans, you should watch your step. This is not a place that you belong in, so you should be careful that you don't overstep your bounds."

Though this seemed like it was advice, it also didn't seem that way.

It seemed like he wanted to give a specific warning to our group...I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

After he finished saying this, he moved forward towards me.

Seeing this, the guards of the group all moved forward as if they were going to stop him. But once again, I raised my hand to stop them.

It was definitely risky to do something like this, but I didn't believe that Apollo would actually do something right when the tribe was getting warmed up to us. If he did, he would surely be recognized as the one in the wrong and be punished. I didn't think that he was foolish enough to do something like this.

At the same time, I wanted some information about why he was doing this in the first place.

pandasnovel.com With the way that he was acting, I couldn't understand how he would benefit from this.

When he was right in front of me, he stopped and stared right into my eyes. Though there was a height difference, he was looking down at me.

Seeing the way that he looked at me, I couldn't help being even more confused.

That is until I heard what he said.

"You were quite close with Moon at the feast tonight." Though he said this in what seemed like a calm voice, I could hear the anger that was boiling underneath.

I narrowed my eyes to look at him as if I wanted to confirm something, but then I couldn't help giving a secret bitter smile.

Is this really the reason why he was doing this?

Was he really doing this because he was jealous?

After taking some time to gather my thoughts, I said, "Does it matter to you if we talked? She is her own person and she is free to do what she wants."

But Apollo then said, "She is my fiancée."

I was taken aback when I heard this and I couldn't help looking at the blonde elf to the side.

After a bit of hesitation, she gave a nod in response.

Then I turned back to look at Apollo with a calm look before saying, "We were simply having a chat and nothing more. Since she is your fiancée, don't you think that you should trust her more?"

When Apollo heard this, he deeply knitted his brows.

He took a step forward so that he was right up in front of me and he said, "I hope that it will remain that way, human." He accentuated the last word when he said this.

Then he leaned in closer and said in a low voice, "I know what you humans are like. The only thing that you know how to do is cheat other races. Don't think for a single second that I will let you get away with this."

The aggressive tone in his voice as he said this really made it clear that he wouldn't be giving up.

I felt a bit annoyed when I heard this, but I kept the same calm look on my face as I said, "I assure you that not all humans are like this. We sincerely just wish to help your village."

Apollo gave a snort when he heard this before saying, "Just know that I've got my eyes on you."

With that, he turned around and started moving back to his own men. He didn't even give me a chance to say anything.

As they left, I could see that the elves who had come with Apollo had disappointed looks.

It was as if they were prepared to start a fight tonight...

So I couldn't help letting out a sigh of relief.

At least we avoided the fight for now...but I also knew that it was impossible to avoid this fight forever.

He wasn't someone that would stop that easily.

Chapter 163 Forest Trouble (1)

When the morning came, we were woken up bright and early by the elves.

Leading them were the two blonde elves who had led us to the village yesterday.

It seemed that since they were the ones that had greeted us first, they had been assigned to take care of us while we were in the village.

The elves lived with nature, so they rose with the sunrise.

As a race that had abundant , they didn't need that much sleep unlike us humans.

So after going to bed late last night because of the party and then waking up early like this, it really was hard for us. But it wasn't as if we had a choice since the other side was already up.

It wasn't as if we could just keep sleeping all by ourselves when they were waiting, that would be disrespectful.

In the end, we all got up and enjoyed the meal that they had prepared for us.

To my surprise, I found that there was actually meat with this meal.

I had thought that since the elves lived with nature, that meant that they didn't eat meat. However, that didn't seem to be the case.

There were all kinds of meat products that were placed on the table, from bacon to ham to jerky.

I couldn't help turning to ask the blonde elf on the side and she answered, "Living with nature isn't as simple as you think. If you let your guard down for a single second, you will be swallowed by nature." Then her voice calmed a bit as she added, "Not to mention, we make sure to use every single part of the

animal that we hunt to show them respect, so we are still respecting nature. It is all part of the cycle of nature."

What she said was correct, but it really was strange hearing this from an elf that I thought was more...gentle and nature loving.

Or at least that was the preconception that I had of them.

Having it shattered like this really was a strange thing.

When breakfast was over, it was Moon who came to pick us up to see the elders again.

As we were heading to the meeting room, we passed by Apollo who was leading a group of elves out.

As we passed by them, I could feel his gaze fall onto me once again.

It was especially bad since Moon was currently walking with me.

She didn't lead the way, she had left that to the two blonde elves. Instead, she deliberately slowed down so that she was walking right beside me. Not to mention that she had been staring at me the entire time, which made it even worse.

When my gaze met Apollo's gaze, he looked at me like he wanted to kill me. At the same time, he mouthed with his lips, "You're dead."

There was no hiding it anymore, he had already made up his mind.

Since that was the case...

It seemed that I did have to change my plans.

Once we passed by them, Moon suddenly said, "I'm sorry about him."

I couldn't help being caught off guard when I heard this.

I looked at her and saw that she actually had an apologetic look as she said this. It seemed that she really took this matter to heart...

But it wasn't as if that would change anything.

So I changed the topic by asking, "So how did you end up being engaged to him in the first place?"

Moon didn't answer right away when she heard this. She just lowered her head and gave a sigh, as if this would be a long story.

Then all of a sudden, she said, "It's a very complicated matter, but basically it goes back to the laws of the elves. Because I am who I am and he's the head of the warriors, it was destined to happen, that's the gist of it."

I looked at her with one raised brow and asked, "Aren't you a little too young for that anyway?"

After all, based on her figure and her face...while it was beautiful, she did seem a bit young.

When she heard this, Moon puffed out her chest and said, "Young? I'm already 167 years old, how can you call me young?"

I was surprised to hear this, but then I remembered that elves had lifespans of over a thousand years. As such, they developed slower than humans did.

So if you convert this to the human standard of age, she was only around 16 years old.

16 years old and with this body, it seemed that she really was a late bloomer...

But as I thought that, Moon glared at me as if she could see that I was thinking rude thoughts.

Seeing this, I revealed an awkward smile and continued, "If you don't want this engagement, why don't you just refuse it? I'm sure that with your status, you should be able to do something about this."

Moon lowered her head and revealed a bitter smile when she heard this.

She naturally also knew this, but...there was a problem.

After a long period of silence, she said, "Apollo's father...is a problem."

I asked with a confused look, "Who is his father?"

Moon's bitter smile became wider as she said, "Donan."

She said this as if I should know who this person was, but surprisingly, I actually did know who this person was. That was because this person had played a large role in the elven storyline in the game.

Donan, the head warrior in the capital of the elves.

The elves might be a migratory race that lived with nature, but they still needed a place to gather all the important people so that they could stand together as one race against the other races. That was the capital of the elves where the Elven King and the rest of the elven royalty lived.

And Donan was the head warrior in that capital.

He was one of the most powerful elves in this entire world and he was quite the honourable man, but it wasn't strange that he would have someone like Apollo as a child.

That was because I knew the true face of Donan because of the game.

Donan was an exclusionist who only cared about elven supremacy.

In contrast, the current Elven King was a moderate ruler who wanted to get along with the other races.

So in the game, there was the quest line to stop Donan's coup and save the Elven King, which would allow the player to become the friend of all elves. That gave them access to all kinds of beautiful elven ladies.

I didn't have any plans to take this quest line, but somehow, it came back to me in the end. It was like I was cursed to attract all kinds of different quest lines from the game...

Seeing the look on my face, Moon knew that I knew who Donan was, so she didn't say anything else.

Just like this, we were led back to the tree in the center of the elven village again in silence.

But before going in, I suddenly said to Moon, "You shouldn't let yourself be bound by rules. Your life is yours for the choosing and only you can decide what you want to do."

Chapter 164 Forest Trouble (2)

Then without waiting for a response from Moon, I headed up into the tree house.

She was just left there standing in a daze.

She knew that these words weren't actually mine, but rather they came from Aisha.

These were the words that she had famously said when she had left the elven capital on her journey. These were words that almost every elf knew by heart because they perfectly embodied the concept of freedom that the elves loved.

But it had a deeper meaning here.

When Moon heard these words, she couldn't help falling into deep thought over them.

Then when she thought it through, she couldn't help feeling a ripple in her heart.

This was a ripple that she had never felt before, but she never thought that it would come because of a human...

...

Inside of the tree house, the elders were all waiting for us.

When they saw us, the green haired elder greeted us in a friendly tone just like yesterday.

There was a bit of small talk that was exchanged before they all suddenly became serious.

I also put away my smile and waited for the green haired elder to speak.

After a long silence, the green haired elder said with a sigh, "You asked us what happened to our forest yesterday...I'll tell you now."

Hearing this, I looked at Cecilia and Haley who were also here with me and they both gave nods before getting ready to stand. However, before that, the green haired elder raised her hand and said, "No, it's fine. We want to hear your opinion on this matter as well."

The way that she looked at Cecilia and Haley was different from the way that she looked at them yesterday.

There seemed to be a trace of admiration in them.

παΠdasNovel.com But after that feast, it was understandable.

There was another reason why the elders had held that feast, it was so they could secretly observe their guests.

With Haley and Cecilia's performances yesterday, the elders had clearly been impressed.

The two of them looked at me and I gave a nod in response before they sat down again.

With all three of us sitting there, the green haired elder said, "As you suspected, there is a problem with the forest. The amount of in the forest is draining, which is why we can't allow you to take more wood. If it keeps draining..."

She didn't finish her words, but it was clear what she meant by this.

All three of us knitted our brows when we heard this.

After a pause, I asked, "Do you have any ideas why the in the forest is being drained?"

The green haired elder shook her head when she heard this before saying, "We've already sent scouts deep into the forest, but we haven't noticed anything unusual." I think you should take a look at
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I knitted my brows even deeper when I heard this.

I had expected some kind of problem like wandering monsters or something like that, but I never expected something like this. After all, it wasn't as if I even knew how really worked in this world.

Even if I had played the game this world was based on, it wasn't as if was explained in that game. All that you needed to use in that game world was the help of the system. It was one simple click of the button to use .

There was no real explanation to how it worked unless one read the endless piles of lore.

Even if I was a completionist, that wasn't something that I did.

So I had no idea how I would even start figuring out why the was being drained.

Or at least, I knew that it would be impossible for me to figure out anything as long as I was still in this village.

After thinking for a bit, I asked the green haired elder, "Can we head into the forest and have a look? I can't promise you anything, but it would be better than sitting here and doing nothing."

Then to my surprise, the green haired elder said, "Sure, I'll arrange some people to take you there now."

I really couldn't help being surprised by this since I had completely expected this request to be denied. After all, even if I did come with the approval of a high elf and the Song of Friendship, showing me their home like this seemed like a very bad idea.

If I were to ever use what I had seen against them one day...

I couldn't tell if it was because I had the 'favour' of Aisha, the high elf, or if it was because they were desperate to solve the problems in their forest.

However, when I looked at the elders closely, I realized that it was most likely the latter.

There really did seem to be something serious happening in these woods.

The elders didn't waste any time on this matter and soon there was a group of elves who were gathered at the bottom of the tree. These were different elves from the ones that followed Apollo, but they were definitely still strong warriors.

It seemed that Apollo wasn't in charge of every warrior in this village. There were still some that reported to the elders and followed their orders.

That was good to see since it made my future much easier.

The leader of this group was, to my surprise, Moon.

She was with the two blonde elves that had been assigned to show us around at the head of this group of elves.

After we had all gathered, the green haired elder said, "We wish you luck and we hope that you will be able to find the cause."

Though she said this, there wasn't actually any real hope in her voice. She just said this for the sake of saying it.

That was a bad sign since this meant that the situation was even worse than I had expected.

This meant that the reason they were allowing us to go in the first place was...because they were grasping at straws...

Just what was happening in this forest?

Chapter 165 Forest Trouble (3)

The elves quickly led us into the forest and soon we were surrounded by trees.

Then all of a sudden, they stopped and Moon turned to look at me, as if she was waiting for instructions.

However, I didn't even know where we were, so it wasn't as if I could give any instructions.

But with the way that they were looking at me, I couldn't just remain silent. So I gave a cough before asking, "Where are we right now?"

Moon quickly said, "We're not that far from the village, perhaps ten minutes away."

Three black lines appeared on my head when she said this.

That didn't give me any information since I didn't even know where the village was in the first place.

So after thinking about it, I asked, "How about in relation to the pond that you met us at, where are we in relation to that?"

Moon shook her head and said, "That pond is at the very edge of the forest while we're currently right in the center, so it's quite far away from here and isn't considered a good landmark to use in this situation."

I had already guessed this, but it hit harder when she said it to me.

After all, we had taken a portal to the elven village, so it wasn't as if we were that close to where we had been before.

Finally, I just asked, "Can you show me a map of the forest?"

παΠdasNovel.com When the elves heard this, all of them revealed wary looks as they turned in my direction.

That also included Moon and the two blonde elves who were with her.

Seeing this, I just calmly waited for them to speak again.

After staring at me for a while, Moon gave a nod and said, "Alright, we'll get you a map."

The other elves were surprised, but since it was her who had said it, there wasn't anything that they could say.

One of the elves had an unwilling look on her face as she took out a map from her bag. Then as she handed it to me, she made it very clear that she wasn't willing to do this with the look on her face.

I still took it without a single expression and took a close look at it.

It was a very simple map, but there was no doubt that it was an effective one. It showed me all the things that I needed to know about this forest.

First there was the village which was right in the center of the forest and then there was the pond where we had been that had been at the edge. Judging by the distance between them, it seemed like it would take several days to travel that distance if we didn't use that portal.

But this still didn't give me the information that I wanted.

So I asked, "Where is the area where is disappearing. Can you show me on the map?"

Moon nodded and came to my side. She reached over my hand to point out the areas where the was disappearing on the map.

When I looked closely, I found that there was a bit of a pattern.

We didn't see it at the edge of the forest because there was nothing at the edge of the forest. At the same time, we didn't see it when we were in the elven village because there wasn't any here.

It created a certain pattern, the shape of a ring around the elven village that cut off the center of the forest.

No matter how one looked at it, this seemed like it was done intentionally...

Or if it wasn't intentional, there must be some kind of reason for this still.

It couldn't just be a coincidence.

But to get any information, I would still have to see the area itself to know what it was like.

So I turned back to Moon and asked, "Can you take us to the affected area?" I think you should take a look at pa1dasnovel.com

Moon looked a bit hesitant at first, but she nodded in agreement in the end.

When the other elves saw this, they all revealed worried looks which confused me.

It was as if they were afraid of going to that place...

But why would they be afraid of going to that place?

It wasn't as if there was anything dangerous there, it was just that the concentration of energy wasn't as high.

So there shouldn't be anything that would worry them like this.

But I soon found out the reason why they were worried.

As we headed there, Moon and the elves moved slowly, as if they were wary of something.

Then all of sudden, Moon raised her hand to stop us.

As we stopped, I asked, "What's wrong?"

Moon pointed in front of us and said, "It's right in front of us."

I looked in the direction that she was pointing in and found that there didn't seem to be anything strange. That is until I looked more closely at the plants and trees that were in front of us.

They still had a bit of green, but there was also a bit of yellow in their leaves and their stems seemed a bit bent.

It was as if they were slowly dying because of a lack of nutrition.

This must be the being drained that they had mentioned earlier.

But just watching from afar wouldn't give me any clues, so I wanted to get closer.

When I took a step forward, Moon suddenly grabbed my hand and asked, "What are you doing?"

I looked at her with a confused look and said, "I'm going to take a closer look to see if I can find any clues."

Moon had a worried look on her face that confused me when I saw it, but in the end, she said with a nod, "Alright, I'll come with you."

As soon as the other elves heard this, they all revealed worried looks as well.

There were many of them that wanted to say something to stop her, but she just raised her hand to cut them off. Seeing that determined look on her face, they all closed their mouths and swallowed their words, silently accepting her conviction.

Then at the same time, they turned to glare at me as if they were blaming me.

But I didn't know why they would do that.

Of course, on our side, Cecilia wouldn't let me go alone either.

So it was the three of us that made our way over towards the dying plants.

As we came closer, even someone who was ignorant about could feel that there was something different about this place. It was like there was something different in the air that made it smell strange.

It was like there was a freshness that was missing with the nature of this part of the forest.

In short, it was like something was missing.

Finally, when we came up to the plants, I could see clearly that they were dying.

But before I could do anything else, I suddenly heard a thumping sound.

When I turned around, I saw that Moon had fallen to the ground.

Chapter 166 Sudden Notice

After a second of being caught off guard, Cecilia and I quickly moved to her side and helped her up.

Seeing the pale look on her face, I couldn't help asking, "What's wrong? Do you feel sick?"

Moon didn't answer as she laid there in our arms taking a few deep breaths.

With these deep breaths, her expression became better and she was slowly able to sit up again.

After she sat up, she shook her head and said, "I'm fine, but what about you two? Are you not affected at all?"

Cecilia and I couldn't help looking at each other with confused looks as we had no idea what Moon was talking about. Then I looked back at her and asked with the same confused look, "Affected? What should I be affected by?"

Hearing this, it was Moon's turn to reveal a surprised and confused look.

She looked at the two of us and found that there was nothing wrong with us at all, so she couldn't help saying, "Huh? Why aren't you affected by the lack of at all?"

"Lack of ?" I repeated before saying, "Why would we be affected by the lack of ?"

Moon just looked at us with a confused and shocked look, not saying a single thing.

All three of us just froze there in a confused state before I finally remembered something.

This was lore from the game, but apparently elves were beings that were naturally in tune with spirits, which gave them an innate talent for . But that also came at a cost.

Since spirits existed almost everywhere, they were used to sensing the spirits around them.

But spirits were beings that were created from energy and they would not exist in places that were void of . So in a place like this where the energy was being drained, there were very few spirits here.

For the elves that were used to sensing the spirits, to suddenly come to a place where there wasn't a trace of spirit gave them a kind of shock. After all, the spirits also provided them with energy that they used for their spells or in general to maintain their bodies.

If there were no spirits, they would have a lack of energy in their body that would cause weakness in them, so that was why Moon had suddenly collapsed.

As for humans, we weren't dependent on energy in the first place, so we were fine in areas without any energy.

After figuring this out, I said to Cecilia, "Help me carry her back."

Cecilia gave a nod in response and then together, we lifted Moon by her arms, carrying her back to the group.

When we came back, the other elves quickly came forward to take Moon away from us.

The two blonde elves raised their hands and started injecting energy into Moon to make up for her deficiency while the rest of the elves glared at us.

I could only reveal a bitter smile when I saw this.

But I also said, "We'll go and take a look at the deficient zone ourselves."

As soon as I said this, the elves immediately spoke up.

"We can't let you do that! Who knows what you'll do to our forest!"

"That's right! Do you really think that we would let you go alone?"

"You think that we would really let our guards down in front of you humans?"

When our group heard this, they immediately moved to my side as if they were trying to protect me.

But I had already expected this when Moon insisted on coming with me earlier.

After all, it would be strange to expect the elves to suddenly trust us when we've only known each other for less than a day. It would certainly take much more time than this to build a relationship. I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

But there was no time.

I needed to have a proper look at the area where the was being drained from so that I could have an idea of what was happening.

However, that also wasn't the only reason...

There was something else that I needed to check while I was away from the elves.

The elves were still insulting us like this until Moon suddenly raised her hand.

The moment that the elves saw Moon's reaction, they all stopped talking and turned back to surround her with worried looks.

Moon just sat up without caring about them and looked over at me.

For some reason, I felt like there was something different about the way that she was looking at me. It was just that I couldn't put my finger on what it was.

After a moment of silence, she said, "You can go."

παΠδαςNovel com The elves were all shocked when they heard this, but then they were about to make their complaints.

Moon just raised her hand to stop them before saying, "We'll never be able to get anywhere if we don't trust each other. They have already shown that they want to be friends, so we should at least reciprocate."

The elves all looked like they thought differently, but in the end, they were suppressed by Moon.

But that didn't mean that they didn't glare at us when we headed over to the deficient area.

To make sure that they weren't too suspicious of us, I only took Cecilia and Haley with me over to that area to take a look. The rest of our group stayed under the watchful eyes of the elves.

As we were walking away, one of the blonde elves came forward to ask Moon in a hushed voice, "Young miss, are you sure that we should let these humans do what they want?"

Moon just gave a slight nod before saying, "If they wanted to do anything, they would have done it already. But at the same time, this gives us a chance to see just what they are actually planning."

The eyes of the blonde elf lit up when she said this and she acted like she was enlightened before withdrawing.

But even though Moon said this, the tone of her words didn't reach her eyes.

There was a different look in her eyes that had different emotions...

Perhaps even she didn't know what those emotions were.

She just knew that he had looked quite handsome when he had been helping her back.

After reaching the deficient area, I had Cecilia and Haley search on their own while I went behind a tree.

Once I was sure that I was alone, I called out the system.

Even if they couldn't see the system interface, I couldn't be too careless.

Not to mention, the system should be created with , so there might be a chance that the elves that were sensitive to would sense or see something. That was why I had to get away from them.

I looked down at the notification that the system had given me earlier.

This notification had appeared when I had walked over with Moon, but I had been distracted by her suddenly falling down to look at it properly.

But now that I did, I couldn't help being shocked by it.

Chapter 167 New Quest

"New Main Quest released: Save the elves from the demons."

"Demons?" I couldn't help repeating to myself.

It was a good thing that there was no one else here with me, or else it definitely would have been hard to explain why I just said that.

But I really was confused why the system was telling me to save the elves from the demons.

Could it be that the demons were the reason why was being drained from this forest?

If that was the case, it would explain the shape of the area where was being drained...

But how did demons sneak all the way here?

The border between the human territory and the demon territory was very far from this place, so it was hard for demons to get this far into the human territory. That is unless they had help from the humans themselves, like with the demon order.

So if there were demons in this forest, where did they come from?

Or...could it be that they were remnants from the demon order that he destroyed?

If that was the case, it would really seem like I was related to this matter since I was the one that destroyed the demon order and sent the demons here.

After thinking about it, I decided to look closely at the quest tab.

[Main Quest] Save the elves from the demons.

The demons have set up special spell arrays that drain away the energy of the Spirit Forest and this has put the lives of the elves in danger. Save the elves by stopping these spell arrays and restoring the of the Spirit Forest.

Reward: System upgrade.

The moment that I saw what the reward was, I couldn't help being shocked.

The system was already capable of doing many things, but I really couldn't help wondering what it would be capable of if it was upgraded...

It seemed like I really had to take this quest seriously...

But the problem now was how I was supposed to find these special spell arrays that the demons were using to drain the energy from the Spirit Forest.

It wasn't as if I had some kind of special ability to do that.

So in the end, I really didn't know what to do...

That is until I heard someone calling out.

"I've found something!"

When I heard this, I immediately followed that voice to where it was coming from.

I saw that it was Haley and she was standing in the middle of some trees. It didn't seem like there was anything special about where she was currently standing.

But for her to say this, she must have found something.

When we gathered together, she waved her hand for us to come over to where she was standing and she pointed down at the ground as she said, "Do you see this?"

When we looked down, all we saw were a few branches and leaves that were there, so we were very confused about what she was pointing at. I think you should take a look at pafdasnovel.com

Haley could see this, so she said, "Look closely and you can see the marks on the ground."

We were still confused about what she was talking about, but since she was insistent, we looked closely at where she was pointing.

παΠdasNovel.com As we looked closely, we were able to find the marks that she was talking about.

There were some small straight marks in the dirt that seemed to be leading in a direction, but there didn't seem to be anything special about them. These could have been marks that were made from anything scratching the ground.

Still seeing the confused looks on our faces, Haley shook her head and said, "These are tracks from a special creature called the Sprinting Bird. It's a rare creature used for transport because of how fast it can run."

While I felt that she was smart, I couldn't help being doubtful when I heard this since this really didn't seem like the tracks of some kind of creature.

No matter how I looked at it, these were just simple marks on the ground.

Still, I decided to trust her in the end.

I just had one thing to ask Haley, "How do you know about all of this?"

She revealed a confident and sly smile, "I'm a merchant and a great one at that. If I didn't know this, then I wouldn't have been able to build up my business, would I?"

As I looked at her, a gentle and pampering look appeared in my eyes.

While others would have been moved by the way that she looked, I couldn't help thinking that she was...cute.

Cecilia on the other hand didn't think too much about it.

Once she heard that these were tracks, she started looking on the ground for the trail. She was looking around the area for marks that were similar to the one that Haley had found.

It didn't take her long to find what she was looking for and she quickly turned back to tell us.

"Over here! There are more tracks over here!"

We quickly went over to where she was calling from.

When we came over, we saw the marks on the ground that she had found.

These marks were like the ones that she had found before and they were leading off into the forest. If we followed them, we should be able to find the ones that made them.

Both of the girls revealed excited looks when they saw this. They both turned back to me with looks that seemed like they wanted to follow these tracks.

However, I shook my head to deny this.

I had two different reasons for this.

One was that this was the territory of the elves, so if we went around it as we wanted, looking for these things, it would certainly offend them. If we wanted to do this, we had to go talk to the elves first.

Second...I knew what was waiting for us at the end of this search.

The demons were anything but weak, so I wouldn't put our lives in danger without some kind of plan first.

So the first thing to do was to regroup and tell everyone what we found.

Chapter 168 Forest Trouble (4)

When we came back, the elves immediately looked at us with curious looks as if they wanted to know what we found.

Seeing this, I started explaining what we had found.

When I was done, all of them were looking at me with looks of doubt.

It was a good thing that I hadn't mentioned anything about the demons, or else they would have looked at me with even stranger looks.

After a moment of silence, the elves didn't hold back anymore.

"What kind of nonsense is this? What bird?"

"Do you really think that our elite elven scouts wouldn't have picked up on the tracks that you talked about?"

"That's right! Are you looking down on us elves?"

I just revealed a bitter smile when I heard this and I didn't say anything in response.

Before they got too rowdy though, Moon raised her hand to stop them again.

She had been looking at Haley the entire time as if she was sizing her up. Now that she had raised her hand, it should mean that she had made her decision.

Moon calmly and slowly said, "We'll take a look at these tracks. If they are indeed as you say, then it should lead to the culprit."

When the other elves heard this, they revealed looks of disbelief. However, they kept their opinions to themselves since they were all told to follow Moon's orders on this trip.

But then they remembered where they would have to go to do this, so they once again glared at us.

The way that they looked at us was almost like we were predators that were trying to lure them to a bad place with candy. Of course, that could be understood since the place that had the power in the air drained was like that for them since it caused them to go into shock.

It would be the perfect place to do something to them.

Moon also knew this and she said, "We'll move slowly and adjust to the change. We've already done this before."

Hearing this, the other elves nodded slowly.

They had indeed done this before because these were the elite scouts that they had mentioned earlier. They had been so angry because Zwein was implying that their casual search was better than the work of these elite scouts, so it was stepping on their pride.

παΠdasNovel.com After deciding this, they started moving forward into the parts of the forest with the drained.

They moved slowly and there were looks of difficulty on the faces of these elves, but not a single one fell like Moon had done earlier.

They were able to endure and slowly move forward like they weren't affected by the lack of power.

Finally, we arrived at the place that we had searched earlier.

I brought them over to the tracks that Haley had found and when we showed it to them, all of them had doubtful looks on their faces. There were even a few of them that looked at us like they thought that we were crazy. I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

I ignored all of this and just led them along the tracks that we had found.

After following these tracks for a bit, they had no choice but to admit that this was real.

After all, it was impossible for such uniform tracks to appear in the ground. There had to be something that had caused all of this.

These elite scouts were also hunters that had experience tracking animals, so they could tell what were actual animal tracks and what weren't.

The ones in front of them indeed seemed like animal tracks.

They were just upset that they didn't notice this earlier...

They had thought that these were simple marks that had formed naturally and they had never connected it to some kind of animal until they saw that it led somewhere.

But, not a single one of them gave Haley the admiration that she deserved. Not a single one of them was willing to admit that a human like Haley was better than them.

One of the blonde elves came to Moon's side and asked, "Should we follow them?"

As she asked this, there was a look of expectation on her face.

It was to be expected since this was the first clue that they had found after all this time, so they wanted to follow this as soon as possible.

But Moon just shook her head to deny this.

The other elves were surprised to see this and they looked at her like they were wondering why she had rejected this.

Moon looked at the marks on the ground for a bit before saying, "There's no knowing what else is there. We need to go back and report to the elders first before we follow these tracks. We also need to bring the other warriors with us."

The other elves had a slightly disappointed look when they heard this, but they also had looks of agreement. They knew that Moon was right, there was no knowing what was there waiting for them at the end of the tracks.

If they went after them now, especially with the weakened state that they were in because of the lack of power here, it would be dangerous for them.

Their best move was to go back and report to the elders. That way, they could come up with a plan on how to deal with this.

Not to mention...there were the humans that were here with them now.

If they went after these tracks with the humans here...it would be like having to watch their backs at the same time.

After this, Moon turned to head back to the elven village with the rest.

As we were heading back, I came over and said in a soft voice, "We want to help you when you go after those people."

Moon turned to look at me with a calm look in her eyes.

After a moment of silence, she gave a nod in response.

Chapter 169 Forest Trouble (5)

It didn't take long to get back to the elven village, but the elders were surprised to see them back so soon.

After all, they had expected them to be out all day looking for clues.

When they heard Moon's report, they looked at us with strange looks, but they still brought us back to the same place as before to discuss it.

Since it was Haley who had found these tracks, she was the one that they questioned.

But to everyone's surprise, instead of asking her how she found these tracks, they started asking her things about the Sprinting Bird. They asked all kinds of different questions, such as the behaviour of the Sprinting Bird, their natural habitat, and many other different things.

Haley was surprised as well to be asked these things, but she didn't have any problems answering the questions that had been asked of her.

With how easily she answered the questions, one might even think that she was an expert on the Sprinting Birds.

However, she was just a merchant that knew a bit more than normal people did.

Once they had run out of questions to ask, the elders fell silent as if they were considering something.

In the end, the green haired elder suddenly looked at one of the elves on the side and said with a sigh, "Go and call Apollo."

There was a bit of heaviness in her voice as if she didn't want to involve him in this matter, but she had no choice in the end. It was as if she knew that she had to bring him into this matter or else they wouldn't be able to solve it.

So the elf that was given this order quickly went off.

Luckily, Apollo's group had come back from their patrol and it took him no time to come to the elder's hall.

When he arrived, his eyes swept across the room until they fell onto our group.

He narrowed his eyes to look at us as if he was looking at something dirty, but then he turned away and looked at the elders.

Without any hesitation, he walked up in front of them and asked the green haired elder, "Is there a reason you called me here?"

The voice that he spoke in didn't have any respect at all. It was as if he wasn't talking to an elder, but rather someone that was under him.

The green haired elder slightly knitted her brows when she heard this, but she didn't say anything to admonish him. Instead, she just calmly said, "There's been a new development in the situation."

When Apollo heard this, he turned to look at me with narrowed eyes again.

He stared at me for a few seconds before turning back to the green haired elder to ask, "Should we be talking about this in front of the humans?" I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

The green haired elder looked right back at him and said, "They already know. They're the ones who found the new developments in the first place."

The moment that Apollo heard this, he immediately deeply knitted his brows. The disapproval on his face could be seen from a mile away.

He glared at the green haired elder and said, "How could you do this? You've told the secrets of our elven village to outsiders like these humans? Do you know what kind of danger you've put us in?"

The green haired elder didn't flinch at all under Apollo's accusations and instead just calmly said, "They are guests and they have proven that they are trustworthy. Not to mention, this is a matter of life and death for our elven village, so we will take all the help that we can get."

pandasNovel.com Apollo's face twisted with rage when he heard this.

If there was a table in front of him, he would have slammed his hands down and cracked it in half. But since there wasn't, all he could do was stomp his foot on the ground and make a crack on the floor.

Then he said in a loud voice filled with rage, "And in exchange, you've put us at the mercy of the humans! What if they want to destroy our village as well? Since they already know all about our weaknesses, it should be easy for them!"

The green haired elder said in a calm voice, "They have shown that they are trustworthy and have no intentions of doing such a thing. We should not judge people by their race and judge them by their actions instead."

Apollo wanted to say something else, but he could see the way that everyone in the room was staring at him.

He didn't care what the humans thought, but it was different for Moon and the other elves.

He had his ambitions after all and if he came on too strongly, all he would be doing is hurting himself and his future chances.

So Apollo took a deep breath and asked, "What new developments are there?"

The green haired elder didn't bring up what he had said earlier and instead told him what our group had found during our time in the forest.

Apollo's expression was calm when he listened to the story, but then once he finished listening, he suddenly narrowed his eyes to look in our direction.

But this time, his eyes didn't fall onto me. This time, his gaze fell onto Haley.

As he looked at her, he made the doubt that he felt clear.

After glaring at her for a bit, Apollo suddenly said, "We're just supposed to trust the words of a human? What if this is all a big lie that they're feeding us to lure us into some trap? Do you really think that we should take this kind of risk?"

To his surprise though, he found that no one here actually supported his words.

Haley was about to say something to defend herself, but before she could, Moon suddenly stood up and moved in front of her.

Chapter 170 Forest Trouble (6)

After moving in front of Haley, Moon raised her hand as if she was protecting Haley.

Apollo couldn't help revealing a surprised and confused look, but then he opened his mouth as if he was about to say something.

However, before he could say anything, Moon said, "We were there as well and we saw the whole thing."

Apollo's mouth froze and then closed as if he was swallowing his words.

Perhaps he could be cold and uncaring to others, but he couldn't treat Moon the same...

So after taking some time to gather his thoughts, Apollo said, "Even if you saw those marks, they could have been left there by the humans,"

Moon raised a brow and said in a voice filled with doubt, "The humans left them?" Then in a colder voice, she said, "How did you expect them to make it into our forest without us noticing and leaving these marks?"

Apollo opened his mouth, but he wasn't able to say anything.

After all, there wasn't anything that he could say in response to this.

If he said that they snuck in, then that would be like admitting that his group was incompetent in their jobs. They were the ones that were in charge of patrolling the forest to make sure that no one snuck in them after all.

But if he were to admit that he was wrong...especially in front of these humans...

He would rather die than do something like that.

So he was stuck in a hard position.

But in the end, he just gave a snort and said, "I don't know how they did it, but it must be a trick that the humans are playing on us."

It was a clever trick to get himself out of this situation, but he was still avoiding the problem which hurt his reputation.

But Moon didn't rub this in and instead said, "We need your help following these tracks. Will you help?"

Apollo once again knitted his brows when he heard this.

This was a request from Moon, so he was inclined to accept.

But at the same time, by accepting and going along with this, it meant that he would have to cooperate with the humans.

This was something that was very hard for him to do...

So instead of simply accepting, Apollo suddenly said, "Even if we do go, we should make sure that the humans are detained during this time." He turned back to look at our group as he said, "There's no knowing what these despicable humans will do while we're gone."

But once again, Moon shook her head and said, "They'll be coming with us."

Apollo's chin couldn't help dropping when he heard this.

He looked at Moon like he couldn't believe what he just heard and seeing that she was looking back at him with that serious look, his expression changed.

He revealed a serious look as well as he said, "That is out of the question. How can we possibly be expected to do what we need to do when we need to guard our backs as well? If we let these humans come along, there is no doubt that they will stab us in the back."

Moon just calmly looked at him and said, "They were the ones that found the tracks in the first place. If they weren't there, we wouldn't have even known what a Sprinting Bird is. We'll need them to come along for that knowledge and just in case something else happens that we don't know about."

Apollo shook his head the moment that he heard this before reiterating, "Does any of that matter when we have enemies right behind us? If we can't even search in peace, how will we be able to accomplish anything?"

He still firmly insisted on his point of view.

But this did make one thing clear...

Even though there were no indications that it was true, he had already taken us as the enemy.

Without even getting to know us, he was already declaring that we had bad intentions towards this elven village.

There was no doubt that he would be planning on taking care of us in the future...

But that was for the future.

Seeing that he wouldn't be convinced with just these words, Moon chose to use her final trump card.

"If we leave the village with all of the warriors and hunters to take down the culprits, then who will be left to watch over them if we detain them here?" Moon said in a very calm voice, almost as if she wasn't affected by this at all.

But it was different for Apollo.

The moment that he heard this, his chin couldn't help dropping as he realized that she was correct.

If they did take everyone with them, then there wouldn't be anyone left in the village that would be able to stop them if the humans did want to do something.

There were a few changes that happened with Apollo's expression until he finally revealed a complicated look.

He took a deep breath and gave a sigh before opening his mouth.

But even then, he wasn't able to say what he wanted to say.

He opened and closed his mouth a few more times before finally saying, "They can come with us, but I'll have my men watching them carefully."

Moon shook her head and said, "I'll watch them personally. That way, you can focus on leading the way."

Apollo was surprised to hear this, but he gave a nod in the end.

After all, she was even saying that he should be the leader of their group, so there was no reason why he shouldn't accept this.

As for watching over the humans, he was fine with leaving this job to Moon.

He might not trust other elves with this kind of job, but it was different for Moon.

After all, there were his personal emotions that were clouding his judgement when it came to this decision.