

Shota 301

Chapter 301 Returning home

Finally after a few more days of being stuck in the capital, I was finally given the chance to return.

The event that caught everyone's attention was...a monster wave.

This was a monster wave in the south, far away from my own territory, so it wouldn't bother me.

But for the other nobles, especially those that didn't have any territory at all, this was their chance.

As long as they performed some form of merit, they would have the chance to be awarded territory or other benefits.

And as for the higher rank nobles, they would be able to benefit as well since they had much stronger troops, so it wouldn't be as risky for them to send their troops to kill their monsters.

In short, it became a race to kill as many monsters as they could and reap as many benefits as they could.

So they all forgot about Zwein and the elves for now.

Another thing to note was that there was also an influx of adventurers that also headed to the south after hearing about the monster wave.

With the fervor that they demonstrated, it really reminded me of a gold rush back in my previous world.

As soon as a speck of gold was discovered, everyone would rush to the area in search of that gold.

Of course, that gold that they were rushing to get were the monsters that they would have to fight. This gold wouldn't be that easy for them to obtain, but that didn't deter them.

At the same time, I really couldn't help giving a sigh when seeing how worked up everyone was.

Back then, our town had also been attacked by a monster wave, but there wasn't a single person who came to help.

That was because that monster wave hadn't been reported to the king yet and there wasn't an official decree to wipe it out. If it had wiped out our town, then everyone would have rushed to subdue that monster wave just like now.

In fact, this monster wave had already decimated several towns in the south which opened up territory to develop which made everyone even more excited.

It seemed that without benefits, no one was willing to move...

That was a sobering thought since it made me remember that it was a dangerous job being a noble. You were surrounded by other nobles that wanted to rise above you and you always had to be careful around them, not knowing who to trust.

Living as a commoner didn't bring the same level of wealth as living as a noble, but one would be able to live a fulfilling life as long as they were willing to work hard.

As for being a noble, one received a proportional amount of danger to the amount of wealth they received.

So there was always a trade off for everything.

I was just happy that I would be able to return to my territory soon where it would be safe.

Being in the capital was like swimming in shark infested waters. Then add in the connection that I had with the elves that the nobles wanted, it was like swimming in shark infested waters with a chum bucket in hand.

It was just a good thing that I had a shark cage known as Shadow Garden protecting me or else it would have been very bad for me.

As I sat there in the carriage heading towards my territory, I couldn't help narrowing my eyes to look at the two in front of me.

Well, it wasn't really Shaka that I had a problem with since he was working for me in the first place.

It was Scar who was sitting beside Shaka that I had a problem with.

After glaring at him for a bit, I said, "Shouldn't you have stayed in the capital? Aren't there things for you to do there?"

This might have seemed rude, but at this point, it didn't matter.

We had already gotten close enough to speak that way with each other, even if we hadn't wanted to become that close.

That was just how it was being stuck together for so long in the capital.

Scar just said with a smile, "I'm going to conduct an inspection of your territory, that's why I'm coming with you."

My eyes filled with even more doubt as I narrowed them to look at Scar.

He just had that calm smile on his face without showing a single sign of cracking.

As expected of someone that worked in espionage, he really could keep a poker face on at all times.

After a bit of silence, I said, "Then does the boss know that you're doing this?"

He calmly said, "As you should know already, other than when we're on missions, Shadow Garden members are given quite a bit of freedom to act however they want. I'm not currently on a mission, so there's no reason for me to do anything specific."

He really was good at making up excuses, but I heard him mutter, "Like I would stay there and clean up that mess."

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

The mess that he was referring to was the combined assault from the nobles in regards to me. Since Shadow Garden had stated that they would protect me, they started bombarding Shadow Garden.

But at the same time, Shadow Garden wasn't a unified organization in the first place.

It was a place where nobles gathered for their own ambitions, so there were those in Shadow Garden that also wanted to use me and my connection to the elves.

As the boss, Boss Bunny had to deal with all of this.

Scar was also pulled in since he was my superior, but now he was running away from the capital and leaving this all to Boss Bunny.

It was certain that he would get his comeuppance when he returned, but he just wasn't thinking about that right now.

But as a final note, Scar added, "You'll also need a bit of protection on the way back, so that's why I'm here."

I slightly knitted my brows when I heard this.

I was a bit doubtful that they would do anything to me now, but he wouldn't have said that for no reason...so there had to be a reason why he said this.

It seemed like I couldn't let my guard down on this trip.

Chapter 302 Surprise Guest

As it turned out, Scar was right.

If one or two bandit groups attacking us was a coincidence, then five of them attacking over the course of the trip was too much of a coincidence.

It was clear that there was someone behind them who had commanded them to attack us.

It really was a good thing that Scar was here with us.

Scar had not been lying about his ability to fight. He was only a bit weaker than Shaka, but that more than allowed him to rampage among these bandits who were untrained fighters.

While Shaka fought as a warrior, attacking head on, Scar was more of a rogue.

He pulled out daggers that he used to fight with, but at the same time, he stayed in the back and threw out hidden weapons at the bandits that came close.

By the time that the bandits realized that there were hidden weapons coming at them, they had already been stabbed by them.

If Scar hadn't been with us, it definitely would have been much harder for us to take down all these bandits.

Traveling like this, we arrived back in my territory after around a week and a half.

We might have been able to reach it sooner, but we had to bring those bandits to different towns to lock them up.

We could have just left the bandits for dead, but there were Shadow Garden outposts in these towns that we could leave the bandits in. They would interrogate these bandits and see who instigated them.

Once that information was squeezed out of them, Boss Bunny would take care of the rest.

When we arrived on the edge of my territory, I found that there was a group waiting there for us. However, unlike the previous groups that had stopped us, this one was friendly.

It was Cecilia and her knights.

They were here to escort us back into the town.

I'm sure that this was Baroness Rose...no Viscountess Rose's idea after she had received reports about the attacks during our trip. I had made sure to tell her everything since I knew that it would be worse if she found out about it later.

This was something that was impossible to hide, so why cause trouble for myself by trying to hide it?

As soon as she saw our group, Cecilia dismounted from her horse and came over to the carriage that I was riding in.

Shaka and Scar had also been in that carriage, but seeing the way that she glared at them, they tactfully went out. As they were leaving, they looked at me with meaningful smiles.

Scar also said, "Don't have too much fun, we'll be arriving in town soon."

If there was something beside me, I definitely would have thrown it at him.

However, before I could say anything, Cecilia had already come to my side.

She grabbed my shoulders which made me jolt since she had used quite a bit of strength. Then I was trying to say, "What's wro..."

Before I could say this, I felt her strength pushing my body again.

She turned me back and forth and looked all over my body, as if she was trying to see if there was anything wrong.

All I could do was let her do what she wanted with me.

This was also how she had reacted when I had come back from Alandal City last time.

It seemed like she really did care about me quite a bit with how she was acting, so I had no choice but to play along. I think you should take a look at

Though it would be a lie to say that there wasn't a warm feeling that filled my heart.

At least that was what the case was until she pushed me down onto the seat.

She didn't push me down to do 'that', but rather to check my legs, my feet, my entire lower half.

Only when she was done checking every single bit of me did she finally let out a sigh of relief.

I wanted to say something, but she came forward to take me in her arms before I could say anything. Her arms tightly wrapped around me, hugging me close to her as if I would disappear if she let go.

I couldn't help revealing a faint smile seeing this, but I also hugged her as best I could. Though that was hard since she was in full armour and it was hard for me to wrap my arms around her.

The two of us just stayed like this for a bit before Cecilia slowly moved away. She looked at me and said, "I'm glad that you're home safe."

I nodded and said, "I'm home."

The two of us just sat there in silence in the carriage for a bit, just enjoying each other's comfort while traveling back to town.

When we arrived, I found that there was a crowd that had gathered at the gate waiting for us.

The one at the head of the crowd was naturally Rose.

She did the same thing as Cecilia and rushed into the carriage before checking every single part of my body.

I was just glad that she decided to do it in the carriage instead of doing it outside since it would have really been awkward if she did it in front of everyone.

When she was done, she also hugged me just like Cecilia had done.

We held each other for a while before she finally let go and said, "Welcome home."

"I'm home." I said in a soft voice.

It really was good to have a place to call home and people to welcome you back.

I had also expected Haley to come, but it turned out that she had been called to her store because of an emergency, so she would meet us at the manor later.

It couldn't be helped since I knew how much she cared about her business and this was what I had expected when I had taken her as one of my women.

After filling me in on everything, we walked out of the carriage.

But as soon as we came out, there was a familiar voice that said, "You really are something, keeping your guest waiting for this long. You said that you were heading back to your town right away, so I had timed it so I would arrive some time after, but then it turned out you had gone to the capital. Are you just avoiding me on purpose?"

I couldn't help knitting my brows when I heard this voice, but then they relaxed and my eyes opened wide in shock when I looked in the direction of this voice.

That was because there was a head of blue hair that I would have recognized anywhere.

It was just that I had no idea what it was doing in my town.

After all, the owner of this head of beautiful blue hair was Veronica, the daughter of Duke Beauchamp, the city lord of Bright Water City.

I never thought that we would meet again so soon after parting...

But just what was she doing here?

Why did she suddenly show up in my town?

Chapter 303 So what?

I just looked at her with a bitter smile on my face and asked, "Miss Veronica, why are you so far away from Bright Water City? What are you doing all the way here in my place?"

Veronica gave a snort and said, "Are you saying that I'm not welcome here?"

My lips twitched when I heard this, but I still said, "Miss Veronica, of course that is not what I meant. I was just saying that someone like you is far beyond a small place like mine."

Veronica gave another snort before saying, "So you're still saying that I'm not welcome here."

The bitter smile on my face became wider, but before I could say anything, she cut me off.

"Anyway, I'm here on behalf of my father to support you."

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

Veronica said, "You asked for my father's help, didn't you? That's why I'm here as his representative to show his support."

When I heard this, I couldn't help revealing an awkward look.

I had only proposed that as a cover for my actual reason for arriving in Bright Water City. I wasn't actually looking for help from Duke Beauchamp since I had no problem managing my city.

Especially since I was now a viscount.

The area that my territory was in was a remote place, so the nobles around here weren't that powerful in the first place.

With my new power as a viscount and the coat of arms that I had received, it should be easy for me to subdue all of the nobles in the surrounding area.

I was even expecting them to come and try to curry favour with me soon.

But of course, thinking about it from another perspective, there was nothing bad about getting the duke as a supporter. Having an extra powerful backer like this was always a good thing, especially since the Shadow Garden organization, my current backer, was about to collapse.

It would be better for my future if the duke supported me.

The problem was that I didn't know if the duke knew about everything that had changed during this time.

If the duke didn't know about what had happened in the capital and I hugged his leg during this, the duke certainly wouldn't be happy about being dragged into my problems like this.

Especially since the enemies were the powerful figures in the capital.

These were people that even the duke would hesitate to face.

So I took a deep breath and said, "Miss Veronica, I wonder, do you know about the matters that have happened in the capital recently?"

Veronica slightly knitted her brows when she heard this, but then she said with a nod, "I've received a few reports about that."

I wasn't surprised seeing this since the duke had already known that we were from Shadow Garden before.

It could be seen that the duke's information network was quite widespread and powerful.

Seeing this, I continued, "Then I'm sure that you're aware of everything that has happened in the capital during this time. I don't want to deceive you, but you should be aware of the dangers of allying yourself with someone like me right now. I'm sure that the duke would want to know about this situation before..."

Veronica suddenly looked at me with narrowed eyes that made me swallow the rest of my words.

She then said in a calm voice, "Are you saying that you're chasing me out?"

I quickly shook my head and said, "I would never do that, it's just that..."

Once again, before I could say anything else, she suddenly raised her hand and said, "So what?"

I couldn't help looking at her with a shocked look when I heard this before repeating under my breath, "So what?"

Then I said in an anxious voice, "I think that someone as smart as you should understand the dangers of such a decision. I'm just saying that..."

Once again, Veronica cut me off by saying, "And I'm telling you so what? Does it matter?"

I just didn't know what to say to this...

I had thought that this young miss of the ducal family was a smart person since she had been able to immediately follow up on the plan that I had given.

In fact, in the fight against the undead, she was the one that came up with most of the plan to lure them into the valley.

So it showed that she was quite the smart person.

Such a smart person should have been able to recognize the danger of associating with someone like me, but now she was acting willfully like this...

I really didn't know what to say in response.

While I looked at her in a daze, Veronica suddenly said, "I should mention that my father has already given me full rights to decide in this matter and I've already decided to support you. You wouldn't drive me away now, would you?"

My expression filled with even more shock when I heard this.

I opened and closed my mouth as if I wanted to say something, but I found that I wasn't able to say a single thing.

All the things that I wanted to say got mixed up together and I wasn't able to think of a single coherent thought.

In the end, I could only give a sigh and turn to look at Rose for help.

However, all that I received was a glare that seemed to be blaming me for something.

I really didn't understand what this glare was, but I knew that it was impossible to ask for her help when she was like this.

So with a heavy sigh, I said, "Then do whatever you want. I can't stop you anyway, so I won't take responsibility."

Veronica just said with a bright smile, "Then I'll be looking forward to making your pleasure. I'll be staying here for a bit, so please take care of me."

I just gave a nod after giving another sigh.

Under her breath, Veronica said, "Want to get rid of me that easily? Not a chance."

Chapter 304 Surprise Customer

Since she was here to stay, I had no choice but to entertain her.

So all of us went back to our manor together.

Baroness...no, it was Viscountess Rose now, prepared everything and we all sat down to have our afternoon tea.

But before we could do that, there was someone that suddenly burst in.

When I looked at them closely, I found that it was Kevin from Haley's store.

He looked around the room until his gaze fell onto me.

Without hesitation, he came over and said, "Boss, we need your help down at the store. The mistress is doing her best, but this customer really is one that we can't handle."

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

Compared to Haley, I really couldn't be considered any expert in business. She outclassed me in every single aspect, so anything that she couldn't do, I naturally wouldn't be able to do.

So why did she send Kevin to ask for my help?

But since she did ask for my help, that must mean that I would be able to do something for them.

Before standing up, I turned to Veronica and said, "I have some business that I have to take care of. Please excuse me for a bit, I'll be back soon."

Veronica looked like she was about to follow, but she sat back down in the end and just gave a nod.

I turned to Rose and said, "Please take care of our guest while I'm gone."

She just gave a simple nod before sitting down beside me. She put her hand on my leg and looked at me with a longing look before saying, "Don't take too long."

I couldn't help being surprised by her actions since she normally wouldn't act this way in front of guests.

In her own way, she was shy, so she couldn't bring herself to do something like this.

However, now she was taking the initiative to do it in front of Veronica...

It was almost as if she was provoking her.

Veronica just watched all of this with a calm expression on her face, but it also seemed like there was a dark glow in her eyes that I couldn't understand.

But before I could figure any of this out, Kevin said, "Boss, we really should go."

I gave a nod and then placed a kiss on Rose's cheek before standing up.

She was completely caught off guard by this and she wasn't able to react as I said, "I'll be back."

I didn't know why she was acting this way, but since she was my wife, I figured that I should go along with it.

Veronica also wasn't able to react at all when she saw this, so I was able to leave without much of a fuss.

But after I was gone and the two of them came back to their senses, she looked at Rose and said, "It seems like we have a lot to discuss."

Rose just gave a simple nod in response.

...

Following Kevin, we quickly came to Haley's store. I think you should take a look at

This store had been built a long time ago with the wood that we had gotten from the elven forest, so it had been in business for quite some time.

With how big it was, it had become the biggest store in the town in no time. At the same time, with Haley's natural people skill, she was able to easily win the trust of the people and it became the most popular store.

This was the store that every single merchant had to work with now if they wanted to do any business in this town.

And because there was the link to her other store, it had slowly drawn people from the surrounding villages to move to the town.

With this one store, she had allowed the town to grow even bigger.

It hadn't grown to the level of being called a city, but it was definitely one of the larger towns in the kingdom.

Of course, the other driving factor to this were the elves.

It was only in this town that one would be able to see elves walking around frequently.

There were even elves that were working in Haley's store.

Haley had tried to start trading with the elves, but she had completely underestimated the elves' sense for business.

Simply put, they didn't have any.

These elves had never done business with humans before, so they didn't know what kind of prices to ask for.

So some elves chose to work in Haley's store and learn business from her.

While this would be like raising her own enemies in the future, Haley didn't mind and actually had a good relationship with the elves.

At the same time, the elves weren't the kind of people that would use what they learned from Haley against her.

So there was no problem with them working in her store and learning from her.

Since this store was so popular, it was always filled with people.

Even today, there was a large crowd that was gathered both in and out of the store.

There were some people that were going to complain when they saw Kevin leading me in, but the others stopped them.

They thought that it was fine for Kevin to go in since he was wearing a store uniform, but they were going to complain about me going in...that was until some of the local residents explained just who I am to these outsiders.

That's right, there wasn't a single local resident that complained since they all recognized me.

Once we were in the store, I immediately heard a voice shouting, "I don't want to deal with any of this! I just want to meet the person that made that weapon!"

This was a very loud voice that rang out this far even though the owner of the voice was at the back of the store.

I knitted my brows when I heard this, but I still covered my ears and went closer.

When I arrived, I couldn't help being surprised by who was shouting out like this.

With a short stature that came as a surprise based on his voice, a large beard, and fierce muscles, this was a race that I would recognize no matter what.

It was a dwarf.

Chapter 305 Passion

This dwarf kept shouting about how he didn't want anything and just wanted to meet the person who crafted that weapon.

At the same time, there seemed to be a bit of a challenging tone to his voice, as if he wanted to go against that person.

While I was confused, I still walked over to Haley who was dealing with the dwarf.

Her eyes lit up when she saw me come over, but before she could say anything, the dwarf already came up right in front of me.

Though he came up right in front of me, he was a dwarf in the end.

So even if this body was young and short, I was still taller than the dwarf.

He looked up at me with an aggressive look and pointed his finger in my face as he said, "Who is this brat? I don't want to see some kid who doesn't even have hair on his chest yet! I want to see that weapon and the one that created it!"

Haley gave a sigh before coming forward and saying, "If you'll excuse us for a minute, I have something I need to discuss with our boss here."

This time, the dwarf couldn't help being surprised.

He narrowed his eyes to look at me before asking, "This kid here is your boss? You humans really are weird, you even let kids take important positions like this."

Haley narrowed her eyes for a bit before saying, "It would do you well to watch your tone. This person is not only the boss of this store, he is also the lord of this town. If you don't want to be thrown out, you'd best show him respect."

The dwarf was even more shocked when he heard this, but then he shouted, "I don't care about any of that! I just want to see the famous weapon and the person who created it!"

Haley just gave a sigh before looking over at Kevin.

When he saw this, there was a clear unwilling look on his face...but there was nothing that he could do since Haley was his boss.

He could only suck it up, take a deep breath, and walk over to talk to the dwarf.

We walked to the side to go into the corner, but even then we could still hear the loud shouts of the dwarf.

Haley leaned in and said, "He's here for you."

"Huh?" I said with a confused look on my face, clearly not expecting her to open up with this.

Haley raised a brow as she said, "You didn't hear what he said? Famous weapon? What other famous weapon could there be?"

I had to knit my brows to think for a bit before suddenly realizing what she was talking about.

She was talking about The Penetrator...

But this thing shouldn't be that famous...the only thing that it had was its strong penetration power and its strange shape...

No, I could see how it would become famous just with these.

But how did it spread so far that even dwarves knew about this?

It had to be known that dwarves were just like elves in that they isolated themselves. They were different from elves in the way that they wandered around since most dwarves only had one thing on mind.

Blacksmithing. I think you should take a look at

The dwarves lived in a society where one's craftsmanship skills were everything, so they dedicated everything to their art.

They could even give their lives to their art if they needed to.

So the reason why this dwarf came here in the first place...

Haley could see the look of recognition on his face, so she knew that he was starting to understand what she meant.

After thinking for a bit, I finally said, "Then is there a way to make him leave without any problems?"

Haley revealed a bitter smile before saying, "There is one, but you won't like it."

Looking at that smile on her face, I slowly recognized what she wanted to say and she was right, I didn't like it...

But I also couldn't think of another way to deal with this dwarf other than the method that she was thinking of...

So I guess that it was the way that it would be.

With a sigh, I said, "Alright, I guess we'll go with that."

After saying this, I turned to head back to the dwarf, but Haley's hand grabbed my arm before I could.

She pulled me back and said, "You should know that if we do this, it's very likely that he will challenge you. Are you going to be alright?"

When I heard this, I couldn't help revealing a smile.

After all, I had knowledge that no one else had in my brain.

If the dwarf really wanted to do something, I had my ways of dealing with him.

So I wasn't worried at all.

I just calmly said, "It's fine if he does, I have my ways of dealing with him."

After I said this, Haley couldn't help looking at me with a strange look. I could see the trace of doubt that was in her eyes.

However, I didn't let that affect me as I started walking towards the dwarf.

The dwarf was still shouting at Kevin when I walked back over and he didn't show any signs of stopping.

Kevin just looked at me like he was asking for help and I gave a nod to him to show that it was fine. With that, he moved aside to let me talk to the dwarf...though in reality, it could be said that he ran away.

The dwarf also saw this and he turned to look at me with narrowed eyes.

He was about to open his mouth to say something, but before he could, I pulled The Penetrator out from behind me. The moment that his eyes fell onto the Penetrator, he suddenly closed his mouth and stared at it like it was the only thing in the world.

This was the passion of a true craftsman.

Chapter 306 Challenge

The dwarf slowly moved towards me while having one hand raised.

That hand slowly came towards me, or rather it was moving towards The Penetrator as if he wanted to take it from my hand.

However, before he could reach it, I suddenly pulled my hand back and The Penetrator moved out of his way.

When the dwarf saw this, he narrowed his eyes and looked back up at me.

After a moment of silence, he said, "I challenge you!"

I wasn't surprised when I heard this, but the people around me were definitely surprised.

However, to my surprise, I found that there were several people that came forward to stand between me and the dwarf.

I recognized them as the people who had lived in this town back when I had first taken over.

These people could be considered some of the oldest residents in this town.

One of them suddenly said, "Who do you think you are to challenge our lord?"

Another one said, "Do you know where you are? Do you think that we're scared of you?"

"Don't forget that you're in human society! You can't do whatever you want just because you're a dwarf!"

The dwarf had acted tough earlier because he was only facing one or two people at a time, but when this crowd confronted him, the dwarf couldn't help taking a step back. After all, it was true, he was a single dwarf alone in human society.

There was a reason why dwarves left human society alone for so long.

There were just too many humans for them to fight!

But before anyone could do anything, I came forward and calmed the crowd down before saying, "Everyone, please don't worry. I'm sure that this dwarven friend here is not here with any ill intentions." I turned to look at the dwarf with narrowed eyes before saying, "Isn't that right?"

When the dwarf felt my gaze on him, he couldn't help giving a tremble before slowly nodding.

Seeing the dwarf backing down like this, everyone was more assured than before and they slowly started to walk away.

Once the crowd had dispersed, I looked at the dwarf and asked, "So, what kind of challenge are you proposing?"

The dwarf cautiously looked around first at the people that were still looking this way before saying, "I want to challenge you to a forging challenge. Someone with an amazing weapon like this must have amazing forging skills."

I looked at the dwarf with narrowed eyes before saying, "So what do you want if you win?"

When the dwarf heard this, he couldn't help looking at me with a strange look.

I just said with a smile, "In dwarven society, you wouldn't challenge someone to a forging duel unless there was something that you wanted. So I'm sure that there's something that you want from me."

The dwarf trembled when he heard this as if he had suddenly been exposed.

When the crowd heard this, they once again became agitated.

"What a shameless dwarf, trying to take advantage of the lord!"

"This dwarf's shame knows no bounds! It's no wonder his beard is so thick, it's to hide his shame!" I think you should take a look at

"And he was acting so tough earlier, now look at him..."

The dwarf's face turned completely red when he heard this.

Even though he had been shouting earlier without a care, it wasn't as if he didn't feel any shame at all. He just sucked up his shame to achieve his goal because otherwise this would have been a wasted trip.

But now that he had been exposed, he could only feel shame.

I let this continue for a bit before waving my hand to calm the crowd down. I turned to the dwarf and asked, "So, what do you want from me?"

The dwarf's face was still red, but he took a deep breath and said, "I want your weapon. That kind of amazing weapon deserves to be in the hand of someone who understands it and can study it."

I gave a nod before saying, "Then what are you prepared to give me if I win?"

The dwarf couldn't help being taken aback when he heard this.

A human actually thought that he had a chance to beat a dwarf in a forging challenge?

The dwarf had thought that since his plan had been revealed, he would have to take a step back and offer the human something in exchange for the weapon.

But now it seemed like this human wanted to take him up on this challenge?

If that was the case...

The dwarf narrowed his eyes to look at me as he said, "What do you want?"

Instead of answering this question, I raised another question, "What is your name?"

The dwarf was confused when he heard this, but he still said, "Rondo Silvermine."

The moment that I heard this, my eyes suddenly lit up.

I said with a smile, "Ah, a traveler from the Silvermine Family."

The dwarf was even more surprised when he heard this. He looked at me with a strange look and slowly said, "You know my family?"

I just revealed a mysterious smile without saying a thing.

The dwarf's expression fluctuated a few times before he said with a sigh, "Just what do you want?"

"It's very simple, I want the right to buy mithril from your Silvermine Family." I calmly said.

The dwarf once again revealed a strange look as he said, "You want to buy mithril from my family? Is that really all you want?"

He couldn't help being confused since this was not equal to The Penetrator in his mind. After all, this was an amazing weapon and he was risking it just to have a chance to buy some mithril...

Mithril was a good ore, but it was by no means worth as much as this weapon.

So the dwarf couldn't help thinking, "This human...is he trying to help me?"

But I just looked at the dwarf with the same smile on my face.

Chapter 307 Forging (1)

After hesitating for a bit, Rondo finally said, "Alright, I accept your condition."

I gave a nod before turning to Haley and saying, "Can you prepare a place for our competition?"

Haley gave a slow nod before suddenly pulling me away.

Rondo was surprised by this, but he could see the relationship between the two through their interaction. He wasn't that rude of a person that would interrupt a private matter between lovers.

After she pulled me to the side, she suddenly pushed me against the wall and reverse kabedoned me.

I just revealed a bitter smile and teased, "Isn't this too open of a place to do something like this?"

But Haley wasn't in a mood to joke around as she said, "Why did you do that? You should know what kind of craftsmen the dwarves are and you're challenging one to a forging duel? Are you crazy?"

I just said with a calm smile on my face, "I know what I'm doing."

When Haley saw this, she couldn't help calming down a bit.

She didn't know where he got this kind of confidence from, but whenever he showed this confident look, he would always give her some kind of surprise.

Perhaps this time it would be the same.

After a moment of silence, she finally said, "So...mithril..."

I gave a slow nod as I could already guess where this was going.

Her eyes slowly started to light up as she said, "If you get the rights to buy mithril, you'll need someone to help you transport it and everything, right?"

I revealed another bitter smile as I said, "Who else would I rely on if not you?"

Haley revealed a bright smile after hearing this before moving back and letting me up.

Mithril...

It was something that was abundant among the dwarves since they had the ability to find and develop these mines.

Humans on the other hand didn't have the same abilities and it had already been centuries since humans had been able to find a mithril mine.

As such, mithril had become a legendary ore in human society and anything made of mithril would sell for a high price. Even the ore itself would be sold for a very high price among humans.

So mithril was something that all merchants dreamed about.

It was the product of legends for merchants.

If Haley was able to get some, there was no doubt that it would be like opening a new world for her and her company.

But humans didn't have a chance to obtain mithril.

Mithril was hoarded by the dwarves who didn't think that humans were worthy of such treasures and only a few pieces would come from the dwarves each year.

So the right to buy mithril was a very big deal.

After settling this, we went back and Haley quickly brought us to separate waiting rooms.

Rondo complained about this the entire time, but when he saw the forge that was being prepared for him, he fell silent.

At the very least, he had to respect the humans for setting up a proper arena for them to duel in.

But before the duel could happen, I had another matter to address. I think you should take a look at

I said to Rondo, "I can't forge myself, so I will be directing someone to forge for me. Is that alright with you?"

Rondo looked at me with a shocked gaze when he heard this.

Then he looked at me as if he was trying to figure out if I was telling the truth or not.

When he saw that my expression didn't change, he couldn't help saying in an angry voice, "You don't even know how to forge and you're telling me that you're the one that created that weapon?"

I just gave a shrug and said, "Not for a single second did I say that I crafted this weapon. I merely found it in a special place and brought it out with me."

It wasn't just Rondo who knitted his brows when he heard this.

Even Haley couldn't help knitting her brows.

After all, there were things about Zwein that she didn't understand, especially those surprising things that he brought out.

She had asked Rose and Cecilia about this, but both of them had said, "I don't know."

They too were unaware of where Zwein was keeping all of these things.

It almost seemed like he pulled them out of thin air sometimes.

Rondo deeply knitted his brows when he heard this.

It wasn't that he didn't believe him since he could see Zwein's hands for himself.

Those hands were clearly not the hands of a blacksmith, so it should have been unlikely that he was the one that had crafted this weapon.

But then how did this human plan on beating him in a forging duel?

The more that he thought about this, the less that it made sense.

Finally Rondo said with a sigh, "Just do whatever you want."

He just gave up thinking about it since he couldn't understand what this human was thinking.

His father was right, humans really were strange beings that didn't make any sense at all.

I just gave a nod and then turned to Haley to say, "Can you get me your best blacksmith?"

Haley looked at me with a doubtful gaze, but she still gave a nod in the end.

Half an hour later, we were all gathered in the town square where the stage for the forging duel was placed.

There were two furnaces that were placed opposite each other with anvils in front of them. To the side, there were two identical sets of various blacksmithing tools that had been prepared.

With all of this, there was no excuse if either side lost.

Everything had been prepared, so the only thing that one could blame was their own lack of skill.

Beside one of the furnaces was Rondo.

Beside the other furnace was me and a large man with a fierce beard.

This was the blacksmith that Haley had found for me.

Chapter 308 Forging (2)

The blacksmith that Haley found for me was called Bruno.

This man wasn't the best blacksmith from Haley's company, but the best blacksmith in the town.

When Rose heard about this duel, she had immediately sent Bruno over to support me.

Of course, Bruno didn't mind this since I was technically the lord, so it was an honour to be of service to the lord.

The only thing that he was worried about was who he was facing.

After all, standing opposite him was a real living dwarf.

Dwarves were famous among blacksmiths as those with the best skills.

Even if Bruno was confident in himself, he didn't feel like he would be able to win against a dwarf.

So Bruno suddenly said, "My lord, this..."

Before he could finish, I suddenly raised my hand to stop him and said, "Just listen to my instructions and you'll be fine."

Bruno looked like he wanted to say more, but he swallowed his words in the end.

However, it was clear by the look on his face that he wasn't feeling confident.

But that didn't matter since he was a subject and Zwein was the lord.

If Zwein wanted him to do something, Bruno had no choice but to go along with it.

Since they had all gathered and even the crowd was here, there was no need to wait any longer.

Haley came up to the stage and said, "Is everyone ready?"

There was a cheer that came from the crowd before she continued, "Today we are gathered here for the competition between our lord Viscount Zwein." She paused here and cheers rang out after this.

When I heard this, I couldn't help being surprised by how popular I was even though I hadn't done anything for the town.

But thinking about it, I realized that it should be Rose's coattails that I was riding off of.

It should have been her good merits that had won all this goodwill from the people and I was just benefitting from it.

After that pause, Haley said, "The challenger is this dwarf friend who comes from afar, Rondo Silvermine."

As soon as she said this, there was a wave of booing that followed.

Rondo might have a thick face and a large beard to hide behind, but when the crowd made it very clear which side they supported, it was hard for him not to feel anything.

There was a frown that appeared on his face, but it only lasted for a second.

He wouldn't let something like this affect him or his forging.

After she had finished introducing the contestants, Haley said, "The challenge that they will be given is to forge a sword. Both contestants will forge a sword of their choosing and then we will be comparing the two swords that they forge."

After that, she went into the details of the competition.

Since it was a forging competition, the most important thing was time.

Since it was around noon now, they would be given until the sun set to forge their entries. I think you should take a look at

If they took longer than that, it would be considered an automatic forfeit for not finishing in time.

But of course, the timespan that they gave was quite generous in the first place.

From noon to sunset, that was more than enough time for a common sword like this.

If it was a masterwork, then it could take up to a month to forge it, but there was no need to waste that much time on a common sword.

This was all about a match of skill, so this common sword was the perfect way to test this.

When there was nothing special, the only thing that would stand out is one's forging abilities.

After she had finished explaining the rules, she turned to both sides and asked, "Are you ready?"

Rondo gave a simple nod before walking over to his forge.

Bruno couldn't help looking at me with a nervous look, but I just gave a nod with a confident smile on my face.

With that, Haley declared, "Then let the competition begin!"

As soon as she started the competition, Rondo picked up a piece of iron that he tossed into the furnace.

These furnaces had already been lit since it would take a long time to build a fire from scratch. That would take too long for a competition like this, so they had made sure that the fire was built before they even brought the contestants over.

With how quickly Rondo started his forging, Bruno couldn't help feeling even more nervous.

He was a blacksmith himself, so he could see the skill that came from every move that Gondo made.

This was the skill of a dwarven blacksmith.

It was not one that he could match.

But when I saw this, I couldn't help revealing a smile of pity.

That was because I had confirmed that my information was correct.

This Rondo, he was still using the most basic method of forging from the game

This was the level of forging that was available at the beginning of the game, but as the game progressed, better and better forging skills became available. The game explained it as the world progressing itself and forging techniques becoming more refined.

But that was just an excuse for natural progression in a game.

However, now that the game had become a real world, that lore had become real as well.

As for me who had lived through that game world, I naturally remembered all the information about forging that had been in the game world.

While it would be hard since I no longer could use a system to automatically forge, I still remembered enough.

At the same time, I came from a world where technology was much more advanced than this place.

I had studied quite a bit about sword crafting during the phase where I had been really into swords.

All of that knowledge combined with my knowledge from the game...there was no chance for Rondo to win.

Chapter 309 Forging (3)

For the first part of the competition, there wasn't that much that was to be seen.

All that they were doing was melting the iron that they would be forging, so there wasn't much that could be done.

This was the most fundamental part of forging and there were no shortcuts.

Rather, rushing would actually make it worse.

So they just watched as the two sides stoked the fire and watched the iron melt.

It was like the calm before the storm.

Once they were done, the real fight would begin.

But as they were doing this, Bruno couldn't help looking over at Rondo from time to time. It was clear that he was filled with admiration with the way that he kept looking over.

Even from time to time, I could hear him say under his breath, "Look at his steady hands, his calm breathing, that is the experience that he has."

I couldn't help shaking my head and finally when I couldn't take it, I slapped the back of his head and said, "Focus on your work or are you trying to lose."

Bruno revealed an awkward look after his and he quickly apologized before turning back to the forge.

This time, he slipped into a state of complete focus as he started heating the iron evenly to reduce the amount of impurities that were left inside.

As I watched him, I had to admit that Bruno was worthy of the title of best blacksmith in the city.

He really was skilled.

After the iron was all melted and it was time to shape it, that was when I started giving him advice.

When Bruno heard what I told him to do, he couldn't help revealing a shocked look.

That was because what I was teaching him went against everything that he had already been taught.

Bruno put the iron back into the furnace and started adding more things in.

On the other side, Rondo had already finished pouring his iron into the mold and was waiting for it to cool. So he took this time to look over at us to see what we were up to.

When he saw the different things that Bruno was adding into the furnace, he almost dropped the mold in his hand.

After a moment of being dazed, he suddenly roared out, "What are you doing?! Are you just making fun of me or are you just playing around? Do you really think that you can make anything good by adding all these random metals in? All it'll do is corrupt the iron!"

Bruno had a bitter smile on his face which showed that he agreed with this, but I just calmly said, "This is our method, please stop peeking and focus on your own work."

Rondo's face couldn't help twisting when he heard this.

It changed expressions several times until he finally roared out, "Fine! Do whatever you want! Don't blame me when you lose!"

Then he angrily stomped back over to his own forging area, but even then...his skills didn't fail him.

Even if he was lost in anger, the skills that had been trained over the years weren't lost. He was able to easily finish the rest of his molding and reach the hammering step. I think you should take a look at

The iron was still red from being heated, but it wasn't so hot that it was too soft to shape.

So Rondo picked up his hammer and placed his molten sword on the anvil before starting to swing down at it.

The first few swings that he made were very simple, but it also seemed like he was just testing the sword with these few first swings.

Once it came to his tenth swing, that was when things started to pick up.

He started hammering the iron sword at different angles, at different timings. There wasn't a single thing about the way he was hammering down that seemed uniform.

It seemed like a child swinging a hammer down at a toy instead of a blacksmith forging.

But there was also something strange about the way that he kept hammering this iron sword.

With each hit of the hammer, there was a part of the iron sword that bent in response to it.

However, before that bend could even take form, there was another swing already coming down at it. This swing hit the jut that came out and forced it back into place before it could form.

So while it seemed like random hammering, it was actually all very calculated.

Every swing was aimed at where a reaction would come from the iron sword.

Bruno couldn't help looking at this with a dazed look as he said, "The 36 Wild Hammers, I never thought that I would be able to see it in real life."

I also couldn't help narrowing my eyes to look at Rondo as he wildly hammered down on the iron sword.

I also recognized this technique since this was one that was from the game.

However...the 36 Wild Hammers was only a first tier technique that was only used to craft tier one items...

And there had been a total of five different tiers in the game.

So in my eyes, what he was doing was the most basic of all things.

There really wasn't a need for me to be cautious of this.

So I slapped Bruno on the shoulder and said, "Focus on what you're doing."

Bruno snapped out of his daze and quickly turned back to his furnace.

However, it was clear by the look of doubt on his face that he didn't feel like we would be able to win...

Still, it didn't matter if he thought we would win or not.

All that mattered was that I knew that we were going to win.

Once he had finished melting all of the things that I had him add into the iron, we finally took our mixture out of the furnace and prepared a mold for it.

When Bruno saw the mold, he couldn't help being shocked.

Chapter 310 Forging (4)

After staring at it in silence for a bit, Bruno turned to ask me, "My lord, this mold...this isn't like anything that I've seen before. Are you sure that this will even work as a blade?"

I just said with a smile, "There's no problem. As long as you follow my orders, it will all be fine."

Bruno had a look on his face that made it seem like he didn't seem to believe me, but he had no choice in the end.

After all, I was the lord of this territory and the one that ruled over him.

If I gave an order, he had to follow it.

So Bruno poured the molten mixture into the mold that I had prepared.

He had thought that it would even break out of the mold, but to his surprise, the mold worked perfectly.

After waiting a bit, he opened up the mold to reveal...a block of iron.

This wasn't iron that was in a specific shape, but rather iron that was in the shape of a square. There was no way that something like this could be used to make a blade.

Or at least that was what Bruno thought.

Seeing it take form like this, I gave a satisfied nod before saying, "Come, it's time to hammer it."

"Eh?" Bruno said in a confused voice.

But in the end, he still followed me after seeing the way I looked at him.

I held the tongs that held the piece of metal in place while he slammed his hammer down on it.

After he hit the piece of metal a few times, I raised my hand for him to stop before using the tongs to fold it on itself. After folding it, I gave him the signal to slam the hammer down again.

Seeing this, Bruno revealed an even more confused look and he started to hesitate.

So I had no choice but to say, "Stop stalling and do it already."

"Oh..." Bruno said before bringing the hammer down again on the piece of metal.

He slammed it a few more times before I folded it again.

We repeated this a few times before I gave a satisfied nod.

Bruno couldn't help looking at me with a very strange look as he couldn't see how this piece of iron would become a blade.

But I said, "We're putting it back into the furnace."

"Huh?" Bruno said, but I was already moving over to the furnace.

Using the same tools that he used before, I tossed this piece of iron in and waited for it to heat up again.

This time, I didn't let it heat up completely, just enough that it was malleable enough for us to hammer again.

When it was at this level, I turned to Bruno to say, "Get ready, we're going to be hitting it again."

Using the tongs, I pulled the piece of metal out again and put it on the anvil before saying, "Start hammering." I think you should take a look at

Bruno snapped out of his daze and started hammering the piece of metal again.

Like this, we folded the iron a few more times before putting it back into the furnace.

This time, Bruno wasn't as dazed as before and stood beside me as I heated it. He looked at the piece of metal heating up as he asked, "How many times are we going to be doing this?"

I said with a smile, "Normally, traditional blacksmiths would do this around ten times to make sure that the metal is properly folded in on itself."

Bruno looked at me in shock when he heard this.

Ten times?

Even if he was a blacksmith, he could feel that the strength of this metal wasn't normal. It was much stronger than anything he worked with before, so it was hard for him to hammer it.

He could already feel his hands going numb at the thought of doing this eight more times.

Seeing the look on his face, I said with a teasing smile, "But of course, people have found that the process is basically done after around two times. So there's no need for us to do that any longer. We just need to shape the metal into the shape of the blade and apply the lacquer and we'll be done. It's not like we're professionals trying to make a Masamune or a Kotetsu after all."

Hearing this, Bruno couldn't help letting out a sigh of relief.

However, he also couldn't help muttering, "Masamune? Kotetsu? What are those things?"

I just revealed a mysterious smile without saying anything.

Once the metal was heated I took out the piece of metal and then showed Bruno a drawing of the shape that I wanted it to be.

Bruno could tell that this drawing was of a sword, but it was a shape that he had never seen before.

There was only a blade on one side and there was a blunted edge on the other.

This weapon didn't seem that efficient...but since it was what the lord wanted...he had no choice but to go along with him.

This time, I held the metal with the tongs as Bruno started hammering it into the shape that I wanted.

He was a bit clumsy since this was his first time doing this, but we were able to get the shape of it in the end since he was a skilled blacksmith.

When he looked at the blade, Bruno couldn't help feeling a strange feeling.

It wasn't that he didn't think this blade was good, he just felt that this blade seemed very sturdy...

Much more sturdy than any blade that he had seen before.

I ignored this and just put the blade into the water to cool it.

Once it was cooled, I took out the lacquer and started applying it onto the blunt edge of the sword before heating it up to let it fuse with the sword.

When that was all done, all that was left was to polish the sword's edge and I left that to Bruno since that was something he was familiar with.

With that, our sword was done.

At the same time, Rondo had finished his sword.