

## **Shota 311**

### Chapter 311 Testing Blades (1)

When Haley saw that both sides were done with their forging, she said, "And that's it! It seems that both contestants are ready with their final product!"

As soon as she said this, the crowd suddenly stirred.

Blacksmithing wasn't the most intense thing that one could watch.

Other than the blacksmiths that had come out to watch this competition, there were also quite a few normal people.

So after a while, they couldn't help feeling bored of watching this.

But with Haley's words, she had woken them up and stirred the excitement in them.

With the way that she did this, she really was suited to be a host. She might even be better suited for this than running her business with her looks.

But I would never say that to her since I knew that running her own business was her dream. Not to mention, I could see the passion that she put into her business, so I would never say something that would be like an insult to her.

After letting the crowd build up excitement for a bit, Haley continued by saying, "Now, let's see the finished works of our contestants."

Haley turned to Rondo first and said, "First up is our challenger, the dwarf Rondo. Let us see what this master dwarf blacksmith has for us."

Rondo gave a snort at being called this, but he didn't say anything as he came forward with his finished sword in hand.

Once he moved to the center of the stage with Haley, he lifted the sword up so that everyone could take a closer look at it.

With the way that he held it up under the sun, it almost seemed as if this sword was sparkling.

When the crowd saw this, they all couldn't help giving a gasp.

There was no need to mention the blacksmiths, even the commoners that didn't have a single bit of knowledge towards forging could see how good this blade crafted by Rondo was.

But for the blacksmiths, they could see the sheen of the fine blade which told them just how sharp this was.

There was no doubt in their mind of how good of a blade this was.

But that just made them more worried about the lord's team...

Even Haley couldn't help slightly knitting her brows when she saw this blade.

After giving a cough to calm herself down, Haley said, "Now, let's bring in the home team. It's our lord and our local blacksmith Bruno's team."

When I heard this, I picked up the sword that had just finished cooling and brought it over to where Haley was.

I stood on the opposite side of Haley and then lifted the blade up just like Rondo had done so that everyone could see the blade.

When this blade appeared under the sun, it didn't release the same sheen that Rondo's blade had.

Instead, there was only a sheen that came from one side of the sword while the other side remained completely black.

It was almost as if there was only one side that could cut while the other side was completely dull.

This was a kind of blade that they had never seen before.

As soon as Rondo saw this, he couldn't help narrowing his eyes to look at this blade.

This blade was without a doubt different from what he imagined, but his sharp eyes told him that didn't mean that this blade was bad. At the very least, he could tell that the edge of this blade was sharp.

But the shape of the blade really was something that he was unfamiliar with.

Haley didn't know what to say at first, but then she decided that she would trust in Zwein like he had told her.

With a deep breath, Haley said, "Now, shall we move onto testing the blades?"

After she said this, I turned to look at Rondo and said, "Shall we use the traditional method then?"

Rondo looked at me with one raised brow as he said, "Do you know what the traditional method for us dwarves is?"

I just said with a smile, "Isn't it to pit the blades against each other and see which one breaks?"

Rondo couldn't help revealing a surprised look, but then he gave a slow nod in response.

That was because he was right, this was the traditional way of the dwarves.

It was a direct measure of how skilled one was since the more skilled one would have a more powerful blade.

But Rondo couldn't help looking at Zwein with a strange look as he thought to himself, "How does this human know so much about dwarven culture? He should be too young to have traveled to our Dwarven Empire and he shouldn't be some kind of sage...so how does he know so much?"

The more that Rondo thought about it, the more confused he became...

Until he finally decided that he wouldn't think about it anymore.

He just simply threw all of these thoughts out of his mind because right now, the most important thing was seeing this challenge to the end. Afterwards, he would be able to ask this human whatever questions he wanted.

So Rondo just gave a simple nod in response to this.

Seeing this, I said, "How about you go first as the guest?"

Rondo couldn't help being surprised by this offer, but he once again gave a nod to accept this offer.

He didn't want to put the human in a bad position since he had been very accommodating so far.

If it wasn't for the situation, he might have even thought that he would have been able to become good friends with this human with how much he understood dwarven culture.

Rondo walked forward until he was in front of Zwein and then he presented his sword.

When I saw this, I turned my blade around to the blunted side and presented it forward.

When Rondo saw this, he couldn't help asking, "Are you sure?"

I just gave a nod in response.

Seeing this, Rondo gave a sigh before bringing his sword down on the blunted edge.

Chapter 312 Testing Blades (2)

Rondo had a look on his face like he already knew how this would turn out...

But it was just too bad that he was disappointed by the result...or rather, he was completely surprised by the result.

It was certainly not one that he had expected.

As soon as his sword made contact with the blade in Zwein's hands, he found...that he couldn't push it down any further.

Rondo hadn't been using a lot of strength in the first place when he brought this blade down. He thought that with the difference in skill and sharpness of blade, he would be able to cut through it without any effort.

But that wasn't the case.

After recovering from his surprise, he started using a bit more strength to push his sword down.

But even then, he found that he wasn't able to cut through this blade in Zwein's hand.

He started using more and more strength until he was using all of his strength to cut down.

Even then, he still wasn't able to make a single dent in the sword in Zwein's hand.

I could see and feel that he was using more and more strength, but I just held the sword firmly in my hand until it seemed like his face was completely red and he was about to burst.

With that, I said, "I think that it should be clear that your blade won't be able to cut through."

Rondo had a look on his face that seemed like he was unwilling to accept this, but he didn't have a choice in the matter.

After all, the facts were in front of him and he wouldn't be able to change it no matter how he tried.

All he could do was admit that this sword was stronger than he had thought.

However, that didn't mean that he was ready to acknowledge that this sword was better than his sword.

With a snort, Rondo said, "It seems like your blade is a bit better than I thought."

Then with that, he pulled his sword back and he started to look at it carefully.

It was as if he was trying to figure out why his sword hadn't been able to cut through my sword.

I just waited for a minute before giving a cough and saying, "Shouldn't it be my turn now?"

Rondo had been lost in his thoughts, but he was immediately pulled back when he heard what I said.

Even if he was a bit rough around the edges, he wasn't someone that would use underhanded tricks.

Since he hadn't been able to cut through Zwein's sword, naturally it was Zwein's turn to try cutting through his sword.

Rondo didn't feel any fear or worry about this since he knew that there was nothing to fear.

Even if this strange looking sword was tough, that didn't mean that it was sharp.

This was a sword that he had made carefully by purifying the iron as much as possible, so it wasn't a fragile sword. He didn't believe that this strange sword made by someone who didn't even know how to forge himself would be able to do anything to his sword.

So Rondo just gave a cough and said, "It's your turn, so what about it? It's not as if you can do anything even if it's your turn."

With that, he lifted the sword up in his hands and presented it in front of Zwein.

When I saw this, I didn't say a thing in response.

I just revealed a smile and turned my sword around so that the sharp side was pointed downwards now. I think you should take a look at

I brought my sword over Rondo's sword and then asked, "Are you ready?"

Rondo gave a snort and said, "Ready for what? You won't be able to do anything to my sword."

Once again, I just smiled without saying anything.

Instead, I let my actions speak instead of using words.

With one motion, I let my hand fall down, bringing my sword down over Rondo's sword.

Rondo just had a look of disdain on his face, as if he didn't believe that my sword would be able to do anything.

The sword continued to fall until it made contact with Rondo's sword...

And then...

The sword continued to fall without any resistance, cutting right through Rondo's sword.

When Rondo saw this, his chin dropped.

At first, there was a look of disbelief on his face before he looked at the blade and looked up at me.

He looked back and forth, as he couldn't understand what was happening.

But during this time, I kept bringing my hand down at a steady pace.

Then without a sound, my sword cut right through Rondo's sword, splitting it in half without any resistance.

Rondo looked down at the two pieces of his sword in his hand with eyes wide open in disbelief.

He just kept staring at these two pieces in his hand until he finally looked back up again.

However, when he looked up, his eyes didn't go to me.

Rather, they went to the sword that was in my hand.



He looked at this strange looking sword with a strange look in his eyes.

It was a look that had a mix of feelings, but the strongest was confusion.

No matter how he looked at it, he didn't feel that this sword would be able to cut through his sword.

It just didn't make sense at all.

I just calmly waited for him to say something.

During this time, the crowd had been silent since they had also been shocked by this result.

But after taking a minute to come back to their senses, they realized what the result was and they broke out in cheers.

It was this cheering that snapped Rondo out of his daze.

His face twisted before he roared, "What is this? I don't believe that this strange looking thing can cut through one of my swords! Unless you explain this to me, I won't accept this result at all!"

After he said this, a silence fell over the crowd.

Chapter 313 Testing Blades (3)

But then all of a sudden, the crowd started jeering Rondo.

"You won't accept it? It's clear that you lost and you still won't accept it!"

"I already said that this dwarf was shameless! His beard is definitely to hide his shame!"

"Ha, it's clear that his sword was weaker or else the lord's sword wouldn't have been able to cut through it! And here he's saying that he won't accept it!"

Rondo would have been embarrassed if it was a normal situation, but his curiosity and unwillingness to accept this made him ignore all these jeers.

I didn't mind this and just calmly looked at him as I asked, "What is there not to accept? Wasn't my sword better? Is there anything that I can explain?"

Rondo was about to say something, but then he realized the hidden meaning implied by my words.

To explain this would mean revealing the secrets of how to forge this sword.

This meant that what he was doing was shamelessly demanding Zwein to reveal the secrets of his forging technique.

This was considered taboo among the dwarves and punishable by death in dwarven culture.

After opening and closing his mouth a few times, all Rondo could say was, "I, I, I..."

Seeing him struggle like this, I gave a sigh before saying, "It's not as if I can't explain, but..."

I left my words hanging, but the meaning in them was clear.

Rondo's eyes lit up when he heard this.

That was right, if he paid a price, wouldn't he be able to buy this knowledge?

This was something considered acceptable in dwarven culture.

They knew that to progress one would need to accumulate knowledge and the first step in that was to share knowledge.

But they also recognized that knowledge was not cheap.

This knowledge was something that was gained from the hard work of someone else and to have them share it for free wouldn't be fair for them.

So the dwarves had a system where knowledge would be registered and then it could be accessed for a fee. A bit of that fee would be kept by the offices that managed this system and the rest would be paid to the person who registered this knowledge.

In the dwarven society, this was called a patent.

But there was nothing like this in the human's society...

So how was he supposed to pay?

I could see that Rondo was struggling over this matter and could guess what he was thinking, so I said, "I can't get a patent registered for this, so you can just pay me a small flat fee and we'll call it a consultation fee."

Rondo looked at me with a surprised look at first, but he still gave a nod in the end.

He knew that this was the best solution to this.

After thinking about it for a bit longer, Rondo suddenly thought of something.

He dug in his pockets for a bit before pulling out a small piece of white metal.

He presented this to me and asked, "Is this enough for a consultation fee?"

The moment that this small piece of white metal appeared, the entire atmosphere changed. I think you should take a look at

Those that didn't know weren't affected at all, but those that knew...their expressions immediately changed.

This was most of the blacksmiths and Haley.

The moment that they saw this small piece of white metal, their eyes started to glow and they almost started to drool.

This small piece of white metal was...mithril as expected.

It was only a small piece, but this small piece was already worth a king's amount.

That was just how rare and expensive mithril was.

If it was known that there was a piece of mithril here, there might have even been a war started between two noble territories.

Even I was a bit surprised that Rondo would be able to pull out a piece of mithril like this so easily, but I wasn't that surprised since I knew that the Silvermine Family behind him owned several mithril mines.

It seemed like this was an even better deal than I had thought..

I gave a slight nod and said, "That's fine, I'll take that as a consultation fee even though it is a bit of a loss on my part."

Haley immediately turned to look at me with a shocked look, but I just ignored it.

Rondo gave a nod in response to this since he knew what I was talking about.

But that was only the case in the dwarven society where mithril didn't have value.

In the Dwarven Kingdom, there was mithril all over that they could use since they controlled mithril mines. So in truth, mithril wasn't worth anything in the Dwarven Kingdom, especially such a small piece.

Using this small piece of mithril to obtain knowledge about forging...it really was a cheap deal for him.

Rondo said in a sincere voice, "Thank you. If I have a chance, I will repay you."

The crowd couldn't help being surprised by this.

One moment, this dwarf was questioning the legitimacy of this duel and the next, he was thanking their lord.

When they saw this, they couldn't help looking at Zwein with eyes that were filled with admiration.

I could feel these gazes and I just revealed a secret bitter smile.

It wasn't that great, it was just understanding the difference between human and dwarven society.

I was about to reach out to take the piece of mithril, but before I could...

Haley had already come forward and grabbed hold of the mithril.

Rondo knitted his brows when he saw this and didn't let go until I gave a nod to him.

Only then did he let go, but he still looked at Haley with a strange look.

Haley turned to me and said, "I'll keep this safe for you, alright?"

I just shook my head with a smile before saying, "I was going to give it to you anyway. It's not like I have a use for it."

Haley immediately revealed a beaming smile when she heard this before coming forward to whisper in my ear, "I'll thank you tonight."

I gave a cough to calm myself down, but I was feeling quite happy deep down.

Chapter 314 Alloys And Forging Techniques

I turned to Rondo and said, "Shall we head somewhere else to discuss this?"

Rondo looked around before giving a nod.

I turned back to Haley and said, "Can you arrange a place for us to talk? Preferably a place with a forge."

Haley didn't seem to hear me at first since she was looking right at the small piece of mithril in her hand.

But she came back to her senses after I gave a cough to snap her out of this state.

I gave her my request again and she quickly nodded in agreement before running off.

Though by the look in her eyes...I could tell that she was going somewhere private to admire this piece of mithril.

I was right since it was Kevin who led us to this private forge.

It wasn't just Rondo and I that were here, Bruno had also come along because I needed his help for this demonstration.

This forge was also equipped with the same things that had been prepared for the forge during the competition.

Even if Haley's attention was completely taken by the piece of mithril that she received, she still did her job properly without missing a single thing.

I couldn't help being impressed by this, but that was also why I had been drawn to her in the first place.

After arriving, I turned to Rondo and said, "Just sit or stand, I'll give you a demonstration."

I waved at Bruno to follow me and we prepared two different sets of materials.

It was one portion that just had iron alone and one portion that had other materials along with iron.

Bruno recognized them as the things that I had him add into the furnace when we had been forging for the competition.

Rondo walked over and looked over this with a confused look, but he waited to see what we would do.

I had Bruno melt both sets of materials and then poured them into the same mold as before.

Once they cooled, we had two different blocks of metal.

I picked up both of them and held it up for Rondo to see.

Rondo stood there in front of me and looked over both of these pieces of metal.

As he tapped them, his expression couldn't help changing.

That was because he could tell that there was indeed something different between the two different pieces of metal. He couldn't tell exactly what it was, but he could tell that this second piece of metal was harder than the first piece of metal.

It was as if there was something inside of it that made it harder.

After looking at it for a bit, he looked back up at me with a very confused look as he asked, "Just what is this?"

I revealed a faint smile before explaining, "This is called an alloy. It is a mixture of different metals with iron, creating a metal that is much stronger than iron alone." I think you should take a look at

Rondo revealed a very confused look when he heard this before saying, "That shouldn't make sense. If you mix anything with pure iron, that should only work to weaken it with impurities. So how does mixing these things in make it stronger?"

There were many ways that I could have explained this, but I was certain that most of these ways would be too hard for Rondo to understand.

It wasn't that I doubted Rondo's intelligence, it was just that there was a certain level of technology in this world.

This was a world that was based on medieval times, so technology and science was not as advanced here.

If I used scientific terms, Rondo definitely wouldn't have understood.

So after thinking about it, I just simply said, "You should know that each metal has its own property, right?"



Rondo tilted his head before giving a slow nod.

Then I said, "These properties are unique to each type of metal, but when these properties are mixed, sometimes they can work together to make a better kind of metal. That is the case with this alloy."

Rondo had a very strange look on his face when he heard this.

He looked down at the alloy that I had made again and slowly looked at it from different angles.

There was a part of him that wanted to reject this theory, but with the alloy placed in front of him, he wasn't able to reject it.

So in the end, Rondo said with a sigh, "I guess this does merit further study..."

Though he said this, it was clear by the way that he looked at the alloy that he believed in it.

Once that was done, I took the alloy from his hand and threw it back onto the fire.

Rondo looked like he had something to say, but seeing the way that I handled it, he closed his mouth and waited to see what happened.

With Bruno's help, I was able to bring the piece of alloy metal out of the fire and placed it onto the anvil where he started smacking it with the hammer just like before.

After smacking it for a bit, I folded the metal on itself before having him smack it a few more times.

Rondo had been carefully watching us the entire time, as if he was analyzing what we were doing.

He didn't understand it at first, but then he suddenly said, "I see! You're folding the metal on itself to create layers in the metal! That makes it harder than just normal metal on its own!"

After he said this, I gave a simple nod before having Bruno stop his hammering.

I then said, "That's about it for the consultation, do you want to give it a try now?"

Rondo looked at the piece of metal that I was offering him with a surprised look before asking, "Can I really?"

I gave a nod before handing the tongs with the piece of alloy metal over to him and then nodding to Bruno to hand over the hammer.

With that, Rondo fell into his own world as he mimicked the technique that he saw before.

Chapter 315 Settling Debts (1)

Rondo didn't stop as he kept testing the new techniques that I had shown him.

From time to time, he would look up and ask me for guidance on what he was doing and I wasn't petty with my advice. After all, he had already paid, so there was no reason for me to be that petty.

After a while, Rondo was able to create a piece of alloy that was even better than the one that I had made during the competition.

This really was the skills of the dwarves, they really were devoted to forging.

If possible, I wouldn't want another forging competition with them since I was certain that I would lose once they learned my techniques.

My knowledge was the only thing that would give me an advantage and they were sponges ready to soak up that knowledge from me.

I made a silent vow that I wouldn't challenge another dwarf to another forging competition in my mind.

But in the future...who knew I would break that vow?

However, in the present, we were still inside of the forge when Haley came to find us.

She had finally had her fill of the piece of mithril and made sure to store it safely before coming to look for us.

Seeing that we were still in the forge, she called out, "What are you guys still doing? It's already getting dark outside, why are you still here?"

Both Rondo and I were surprised when we heard this.

When we looked out the window, we found that it was indeed already dark outside.

We had completely lost ourselves in what we had been doing that we didn't even notice all of this time passing.

Rondo had been lost in the new techniques that he had learned while I had been lost in learning forging from Rondo.

It was hard for me to give him proper guidance without knowing the basics of forging, so he had been teaching me things while I had been giving him advice. I could already be considered a basic blacksmith with how much I had learned.

Bruno had been looking on with envy since I was receiving a personal blacksmithing lesson from a dwarf.

Though he did try to gain as much knowledge for himself as he could.

With this lesson, Bruno would go on to cement his position as the best blacksmith in town.

Since it was already getting dark, there was no need for us to continue.

As the lord, I took this chance to invite Rondo to a meal.

Rondo was also feeling a bit hungry, so he decided to accept.

Of course, it was only because it was me that he accepted.

If it was anyone else, he would have rejected their invitation since it was hard for a dwarf to get along with humans in the first place. There wouldn't be anything to talk about since they were from two different cultures.

With me, he could at least ask a few questions about forging while we ate.

Haley also decided to tag along because...she had some business with the two of us.

I didn't bring Rondo back to our manor and instead went to one of the bars in town.

As a dwarf, he was someone that naturally loved to drink.

So bringing a dwarf to my manor where it would be a formal meal would be a bad idea. It would be better to bring him to one of the local inns and drink him under the table.

That way, I would be able to get as much information as I could out of him.

Of course, it was no easy feat to drink a dwarf under the table, but I had a few tricks up my sleeves.

The tricks that I had learned from my college drinking parties really came in handy here.

How to pretend to drink and how to keep yourself sober, those were all skills one needed in college. That was the way to properly network.

While everyone was drunk, it would be easy to learn things...things that could be very useful.

This bar was a bar that Haley recommended, which I immediately took since I trusted her judgement.

Haley ran the most successful business in town for a reason.

She was someone that was very skilled at building relationships and knowing which restaurants were the best was one of the skills that she needed for this.

After all, people were most vulnerable when they were eating.

At the same time, it was easier to get an advantage when they were drunk...

So she would need to know good places for these negotiations.

When we arrived at the bar, we found that it was already filled with people.

Luckily, we were able to get a table.

There were others waiting, but when they saw that it was me, Haley, and Rondo, they immediately let us cut in front of them.

I felt awkward about this, but I still accepted in the end since there was business I needed to discuss with Rondo.

But as we were sitting down, Rondo couldn't help saying, "You're quite strange for a human lord. You actually thanked them for giving you their seat when most human lords would have just ordered them to leave."

I couldn't help being surprised hearing this and I turned to look at Haley who also gave me a strange look.

It is true, in this kind of society, it was normal for lords to act this way since there was the idea that nobles were above all. This was a kingdom that had a noble based society that gave nobles the rights to do what they wanted.

However, I just said, "I was a commoner in the first place, so things like this are strange for me."

Rondo narrowed his eyes to look at me before giving a nod and saying, "Oh, whatever. Your human culture really is too strange for me to understand."

I just revealed a bitter smile before ordering some food for us.

It took no time at all for this food to arrive.

Chapter 316 Settling Debts (2)

Once the food arrived, we lifted our drinks and said, "Cheers!"

With that, Rondo gave a large chug that finished off the large mug that had been brought to him.

This was a mug that was twice the size of the mug that I had and he had already finished it in one gulp.

It could be seen that dwarves really could drink...

On the other hand, I just took a small sip before putting down the mug in my hand.

Once he finished chugging, he gave a loud satisfied sound before saying, "That really is some good beer! Get me another one!"

The waiter acknowledged this and took the mug he placed on the table away.

After taking that first drink, we started digging into the dishes that we had ordered.

I had to admit that Haley really knew what she was doing.

Every single dish that we had was delicious and went perfectly with the beer that we ordered. This place really understood what it meant to open a bar, combining both alcohol and food perfectly.

So this created a happy mood between us while we were eating.

Halfway through, when a hint of red appeared on Rondo's cheeks, that was when Haley and I made our move.

I just calmly said, "Rondo, we need to discuss something."

Rondo had been happily eating and drinking when I said this, but then seeing the serious look on my face, he calmed down. He looked back at me with a serious look and waited for me to speak.

"Do you remember before the competition, we agreed on terms for the outcome of the duel?" I slowly asked.

Rondo just gave a slight nod before revealing a bit of a confused look.

I then said, "I want to talk about how to contact your family to arrange buying the mithril."

Haley nervously waited on the side for his answer because this would determine the future of her business.

Rondo revealed a bit of a surprised look before suddenly saying with a smile, "Is that it? Is that all you had to ask about?"

This time, it was Haley and my turn to be surprised.

We thought that this would be a hard matter to approach with Rondo, but we never thought that he would be so carefree about it.

Rondo just said with a smile, "I'll tell my family about this matter and they'll send someone to take care of it."

Both of us couldn't help revealing surprised looks at how casual he was about this.

We had both thought that it would be hard for us to arrange a trade with them since the dwarves isolated themselves from the humans. As such, it would take a lot of effort for us to even set this up.

However, it was settled with just a single word from Rondo.

While we were still dazed, after thinking about it for a bit, Rondo suddenly added, "Though if you want, it would be easier if you just came back to see my family with me. If we're all there, we can discuss the terms much easier."

"Huh?" Both Haley and I reacted the same way before looking at each other.

As we looked at each other, we couldn't help wondering why the other person was as surprised as they were.

But then we both quickly turned back to Rondo and I asked, "Is it really alright for us to come back with you to the Dwarven Kingdom?"



Rondo gave a frank nod and said with a wide smile, "It's not a problem. As long as you're with me, you can go in without any problems."

Both of us once again looked at each other with looks of shock and disbelief, but in the end, I still said, "Alright, we'll settle it like this. We'll go with you to the Dwarven Kingdom and settle this matter there."

Rondo gave a simple nod before saying, "Let's order some more!"

I gave a nod before turning to Haley.

Haley didn't hesitate at all to order the best wine from the bar which immediately made Rondo's eyes light up.

Dwarves lived for forging and alcohol, that was a fact that was widespread and something that everyone knew.

So the best way to befriend a dwarf was naturally with alcohol.

While Rondo was having fun drinking, Haley and I had a secret conversation.

Haley started by asking, "Why were you so surprised? Also how do you know so much about the dwarves?"

I had a calm look on my face as I said, "What about you? Weren't you the same?"

Haley didn't bother playing games and just explained, "It's a common fact that the Dwarven Kingdom is not a place that can be easily entered. But you...you clearly looked like you knew something else."

I trembled when I heard this.

That was right, I did know something else.

I had my knowledge from when this world was a game after all, so I knew a bit more than her.

The Dwarven Kingdom was hard to enter, but it wasn't impossible to enter.

As long as one went through one of the official or unofficial passages, they would be able to enter the Dwarven Kingdom.

However, being able to enter just with the word of a dwarf was not something that I had heard before.

The reason I was surprised was that I was certain that this was some kind of special secret method that I hadn't known about.

As a gamer who had thought that he had accomplished everything that could have been achieved in the game, it hurt my pride to find out that there was something that I had missed.

But it was getting more and more common to discover these things now that this game had become a real world.

In the end, I just calmly said, "I was surprised for the same reason as you. Nothing more, nothing less."

Haley narrowed her eyes to look at me as if she didn't believe me, but I didn't let anything show on my face.

In the end, she said with a sigh, "Alright, don't tell me. But I'll be sure to punish you later."

Chapter 317 Home Affairs

After running a large tab, Rondo became dead drunk.

I had really underestimated how much he could drink.

If I wasn't a noble, then I really wouldn't be able to afford this tab.

After all, he had drunk enough to feed a commoner family for a month without problem. They would even be able to eat in luxury with this amount and have more than enough change to spare.

That was just how much a dwarf could drink if he was allowed to go all out.

Luckily, I did have the money to pay for it and even better, I had a concubine who was so rich that this was just a drop in the bucket.

Haley said with a smile on her face as she threw the gold coins on the table, "It's on me."

Once again, I couldn't help feeling lucky that I was able to meet someone like her.

At the same time, I couldn't help thinking how I was lucky enough to land someone like her.

After paying the bill and having someone take Rondo to an inn, we headed back to the manor to face my greatest challenge.

After all, waiting at my manor was Rose who I would have to explain to why I would be leaving again so soon.

I hadn't even been in town for a day and I was already preparing to leave.

If I was here, I would be angry too...

So I had to think of a way to appease her or else I wouldn't be able to go.

As I was agonizing over this, Haley just had a relaxed look on her face that almost irritated me. It was like she thought that this was someone else's problem and not hers.

So I broke this thought for her with just a few words.

"If I don't, you won't be going either, you know?"

As soon as she heard this, she couldn't help revealing a shocked look.

She looked at me with many different expressions before she slowly came to accept my words.

She realized that I was right.

It was only through my relationship with Rondo that we would be allowed into the Dwarven Kingdom in the first place. So if I didn't go, it wasn't as if she would be allowed in since Rondo wouldn't bring them if I wasn't going.

Haley opened and closed her mouth a few times before finally revealing a bitter smile.

She knew what kind of personality that Rose had and she really couldn't predict how she would act.

The only weakness that Rose seemed to have was...Zwein, their husband.

So the only one that had a chance of convincing her was him.

After all of this, Haley raised her hand to pat my shoulder before saying, "Good luck."

I revealed a bitter smile and shook my head, but I didn't say a thing.

When we arrived, I found that Rose was standing outside waiting for me.

Even though it was still autumn, that didn't mean that it wasn't cold at night.

I immediately came out of the carriage and took off my jacket to drape over her before saying, "What are you doing? It's cold outside and you're dressed so lightly. What if you catch a cold?"

Rose said with a smile, "I wanted to wait for you."

I didn't know what to say, so I just revealed a faint smile before walking in with her.

When we came into the hall of the manor, I found that there were also others waiting for me. I think you should take a look at

It was Cecilia, Moon, Veronica, and surprisingly Shaka and Scar.

It wasn't as strange seeing Cecilia and Moon, or even Veronica since I was sure that they lived here. Though I would have preferred that Moon and Veronica went somewhere else...

But Shaka and Scar...

Shaka normally lived with his men who lived outside of town.

They could have lived in town, but they said that it's better for them to live outside for work.

Though when I visited, it seemed like they just wanted a secret hideout...

As for Scar, shouldn't he be with Shaka and his men?

After coming in, we all went to the living room and sat down.

Once we had settled and the maids had brought us some tea, Rose didn't hold back at all as she said, "It seems that you've had an interesting day."

I couldn't help jolting the moment that I heard this.

I looked at her and opened and closed my mouth a few times as if I was trying to explain myself. But then I just revealed a bitter smile and lowered my head to say, "I'm sorry."

Rose revealed a surprised look before saying, "Why are you apologizing?"

I couldn't help being surprised too when I heard this.

I slowly looked up and found that she had a genuinely surprised look on her face, so I couldn't help asking, "What do you mean by interesting?"

Rose revealed a smile as she said, "Well it isn't every day that one meets a dwarf, I would say that that's quite interesting. At the same time, you're even preparing to head to the Dwarf Kingdom, wouldn't that be..."

Before she could finish, I bowed my head again as I said, "I'm sorry!"

Rose once again revealed a confused and surprised look when she heard this as she asked, "Why are you apologizing?"

I decided to go all out by saying, "I decided to go with Rondo to the Dwarven Kingdom on my own without even consulting you. I know that I was wrong!"

As I said this, I fell to my knees and bowed my head.

This was the traditional apologizing stance of my previous world and I was putting it to full use here.

While Rose didn't understand what this stance was, she could feel the emotions that were behind it.

So she stood up and came over to help me up before saying, "What are you apologizing for? Didn't you do this for the good of our town? Mithril is a resource that everyone wants and if our town can make a connection to the dwarves to obtain this resource, it is a good thing."

I looked up at her smile and could tell that she wasn't angry at all. She was sincere with her words which warmed my heart even more.

I looked at her and slowly gave a nod before saying, "Thank you for understanding."

Rose just looked at me with the same warm smile.

But of course, this matter wasn't over yet.

While we were like this, I could feel three other gazes that were on me.

When the word 'mithril' had been raised, there were three people that had suddenly jolted in response to this.

They had only heard about the dwarf, they had never heard anything about mithril.

Mithril was of course a valuable resource for humans, so they were naturally interested.

Not just humans, mithril was also considered a valuable resource for elves, so even the one elf in the room was interested in this matter.

So even if I had surprisingly managed to easily convince Rose, there were still others that I had to talk to.

Chapter 318 Scolded By The Boss

After appeasing Rose, it was time to appease the others.

The first one to speak was Moon.

She said, "If you're going to see the dwarves, I'm coming with you."

She didn't even ask if she could come, she just stated that she would be coming without any hesitation. It was as if she was already certain that she would be allowed to go.

I just looked at her with one brow raised and asked, "Why would you go?"

Moon calmly said, "We are friends with the dwarves, so there's nothing wrong with letting me accompany you. Not to mention, there is some business that I have with the dwarves."

I didn't say anything as I kept looking at her with one brow raised.

Moon kept calm under this gaze at first, but in the end, she said, "We have need for mithril for a certain thing. If you're going, it's easier if we go with you."

I still stared at her with one brow raised, but in the end her expression didn't change.

It seemed that she wouldn't be telling me anything more.

But I didn't mind since this was already more than enough information.

Since the elves had a friendly relationship with the dwarves, that was a good thing. If I showed that I was even friends with the elves, then it would be easier for me to negotiate with the dwarves.

After all, the friend of a friend was also a friend.



Not to mention that I was friends with both sides to begin with.

So this would all help me when it came to negotiating with the dwarves.

I gave a simple nod and said, "Alright, you can come."

Moon revealed a happy smile when she heard this before sitting back down to enjoy her tea.

To the side, Veronica's expression changed several times, but she remained silent in the end.

It was clear that there was something that she wanted to say, but I completely ignored her since I didn't want to deal with her.

But there was one group that I couldn't ignore...

I could clearly see the looks that Scar was shooting at me, so I had no choice but to say with a sigh...

"I'll be heading to my office for a bit with Scar and Shaka, we'll be back soon."

Rose just gave a calm nod before turning to entertain Veronica.

Haley had also gotten the hint and she moved over to Veronica as well.

Veronica had wanted to stand up and follow us, but she was stopped by both Rose and Haley.

The three of us left the living room and came to a small office. I think you should take a look at

This was technically my office, but I rarely used this since most of the paperwork and ruling of this territory was taken care of by Rose. Not to mention, most of the time, I was either traveling or doing something else.

In the end, I wasn't someone that was suited for paperwork, so this office really was a waste for me.

But it made a good place to have private conversations, which was what I was using it for now.

As soon as we were seated in the office, Scar slapped down on the table and said, "Dwarves now? First it was elves and now you're bringing in dwarves?"

I gave a shrug before saying, "It wasn't me that went looking for them, you should at least know that. You can't blame me if they come looking for me."

Scar narrowed his eyes to look at me, but he sat back in his seat and gave a sigh in the end before saying, "Fine, you're right about that."

But then he narrowed his eyes to look at me again as he said, "But you do understand what kind of a stir this will cause right? After all, we're talking about mithril! Mithril!"

It was so important that he had to repeat it twice.

I had already received a lecture from Haley about the importance of mithril and I had seen how she had acted when she received that small piece of mithril, so it was impossible for me not to know this.

In the game, the situation with mithril wasn't that bad since there were still methods of getting it.

However, it seemed that this was only in the game.

Those were most likely special loopholes that had been made just so that players could have access to mithril items.

But in reality, the lore of the game stated that mithril was very rare in human countries.

Still, I couldn't help being surprised by how shocked everyone was.

After all, in the game, mithril was still only mid tier.

It wasn't as if it was anything that special, so I didn't feel that emotional about it.

Seeing the look on my face, Scar said, "This monster, he has no common sense at all."

I really couldn't help taking offense at that. I really felt that my common sense had improved since last time, but now he was saying that I had no common sense.

I had no choice but to complain, but Scar didn't give me that chance.

He suddenly looked at me with a serious look and said, "What are you planning to do about this? You should know that this is much more serious than a relationship with the elves. If you really are able to create a trade route with the dwarves for mithril, this will be much more earth shattering than you can imagine. When the time comes, the nobles won't stop their plots against you to get to this mithril."

I was about to ask something, but he shut me down right away by saying, "Shadow Garden won't be able to protect you at that time. There might even be people from Shadow Garden that will move against you."

"Eh?" That was all I could say in response to this.

It seemed...that I had really underestimated the situation.

Scar just looked at me and said, "So what are you planning on doing?"

Chapter 319 Various Deals

I didn't know what to say at first since this was out of my field of expertise.

Even in my past life, I was nothing but a commoner.

I didn't know how to navigate the fields of politics like a proper politician, so I was sure that I would be eaten up by these nobles eventually.

I was aware that if it wasn't for the king's grace and Shadow Garden's protection, I would have already fallen into the hands of those other nobles.

So I was very grateful for that.

I had also assumed that this would be the same this time, but it seemed that it wasn't.

If that was the case, should I just stop this mithril trade?

But there were many people that were very excited about this and there were many things that I could use mithril for...so I really didn't want to give it up...

Seeing the look on my face, Scar revealed a look like he had already expected this.

With the look on his face, it was as if he had already expected me to say this.

So Scar said, "Well, there is a way to handle all of this."

I couldn't help looking at him with one brow raised.

When I saw that look on his face, I knew that I had already fallen into his trap...

But since he had an idea, it was better to listen to it than to not. After all, he was a seasoned noble and knew how to handle things in this situation.

Not to mention, he had covered for me when we were back in the capital, so I'm sure that he wouldn't throw me under the bus too hard.

Scar didn't say anything at first as he kept me in suspense, but then he suddenly said, "If you offer the king a portion of the mithril, then you'll be able to gain his support. As long as the kingdom receives its share, this trade will be protected by the kingdom if you know what I mean."

I just revealed a bitter smile when I heard this.

In the end, it was all about money.

And I could guess why he wanted to help me offer this to the king.

It was most likely being offered through Shadow Garden, so once this deal went through, Shadow Garden would receive benefits for facilitating this deal.

It was a deal involving mithril, so there wouldn't be a lack of benefits for them.

But what he said was indeed a good deal.

This would be the most effective way to solve my problem.

The only thing that I was worried about was that in cases like this...it would take a large slice of the pie to satisfy the higher ranked noble.

While I was fine with sharing, that didn't mean that I wanted to give everything to the king...

So I would have to talk to Haley and the others to see how much we should offer if we get anything.

After thinking for a bit, I said, "For now, I can't promise anything since we don't even know if we can trade with them yet." I think you should take a look at

Scar gave a nod to show that he understood.

Then I said, "Once we get a number, I'll give you an estimate. Is that good enough?"

Scar once again gave a nod to show that he approved of this.

After all, he knew that what he had said was true and he knew how hard it was to convince the dwarves to sell their mithril in the first place.

While they hadn't decided anything yet, they shouldn't be in a rush to promise anything or else they would be the ones to suffer in the end.

But Scar still said, "For now, I'll cancel all missions and prevent them from assigning you any other missions. I'll also send a letter to the boss to let them know about this situation. Is that alright with you?"

I gave a nod since even if I didn't agree, it would have happened anyway.

Shadow Garden was the best information organization in the kingdom, so there wasn't much that could be hidden from them.

If I reported this later, I would be punished for not reporting it sooner.

Scar then said, "I'll also send Shaka along to help you."

I was surprised to hear this, but thinking about it, I gave a nod of agreement.

This mithril deal was an important deal for our kingdom, so it wasn't strange that he would be sending Shaka along to supervise.

Since this matter had been settled, we headed back to the living room where the rest of them were waiting.

This time, Veronica had settled down and was waiting for me to come back.

When I did walk into the room, Veronica suddenly stood up and said, "Your lordship, I think that it's not fair that you are leaving my father, your greatest supporter out of this deal."

I couldn't help being taken aback when I heard this.

I just looked at Veronica for a bit and she stared right at me without turning away.

There was no doubting the firmness in her eyes, so I knew that she wouldn't back down on this matter.

So all I could say was, "Young miss Veronica, of course I would never leave the duke out of this. As my supporter, naturally there will be a share of mithril for him, but that is dependent on if we can strike this deal. Before doing so, I cannot promise anything."

Veronica gave an understanding nod, but she really drove the dagger in by saying, "Very good. To make sure that you don't go back on your word, I will be going with you."

I couldn't help being caught off guard when I heard this, but after a moment of being dazed, I said, "Young miss Veronica, is there really a need? It will be a dangerous journey, so it would be better for you to stay here and wait."

Veronica just glared at him after hearing this before saying, "I said that I'm going, so I'm going."

Even if I was a viscount now, it wasn't as if I could go against a duke's family head on...

So I had no choice but to say, "Alright, then if you insist, we'll be heading out tomorrow."

Veronica just revealed a smile as she said, "It's a deal then."

I just gave a sigh without saying anything after seeing this.

Chapter 320 Punishment (1)

After settling this matter, there wasn't anything left to discuss.

Since they would be heading out tomorrow morning, then it was better to get an early night's sleep.

But it was anything but an early night's sleep for me.

I was trapped in the bedroom by these three girls...

After we dispersed, I followed Rose to our bedroom.

We just sat there in silence for a bit before the doors opened and two figures came in.

It was Cecilia and Haley.

When the two of them came in, they sat down on the bed with Rose. The three of them just sat there staring at me, making me uncomfortable since I had no idea what was happening.

In the end, I couldn't help saying, "Did I do something wrong?"

Both Rose and Cecilia just sat there without doing anything since both of them didn't know what was happening either.



They had just been told to gather by Haley and while Zwein had been talking with Scar and Shaka.

So they honestly had no idea what to do.

But Haley took charge by asking, "Do you really not know what you've done?"

The moment that I heard this, I couldn't help jolting.

What had I done?

I had no idea at all, but Haley said this in such a firm voice that it seemed like she was certain that I had done something wrong.

So just what did I do wrong?

After taking a moment to think about it, I decided on what to do...

Not to worry about it and just apologize first!

If I apologized late, it would just hurt me instead of helping me. So I would apologize even if I didn't know what I did wrong to avoid suffering more later.

I quickly bowed my head and said, "I'm sorry."

However, Rose and Cecilia just revealed even more confused looks. Haley on the other hand just looked at me with a calm look on her face, as if she wasn't moved by this display at all.

Haley just crossed her arms and calmly said, "It's fine, there's no need to apologize since you already did it earlier."

I couldn't help being surprised when I heard this.

If I had apologized, then why did she still bring this matter up?

Unless...?

Haley then just continued by saying, "I've already said that I would punish you, so it's time for that now."

But before she could do anything, Rose and Cecilia suddenly stopped her by asking, "What did he do this time?"

Haley stopped herself from standing up and turned to say, "He's been keeping secrets from us again."

The moment that the two of them heard this, they narrowed their eyes to look at me like they were blaming me as well.

But I also realized what she was talking about when she mentioned this. I think you should take a look at

She was talking about the fact that I had kept why I knew so much about dwarves a secret.

However, it wasn't as if I could talk about this!

After all, it was related to one of my greatest secrets!

But in the first place, it was very unlikely that anyone would believe me even if I were to tell them this secret.

Reincarnated from another world?

Who would believe that?

Well, there were plenty of people in my old world that would believe this, but not in this world...

So I really couldn't say anything...

I just bowed my head and resigned myself to my fate.

Seeing this, the three of them suddenly got off the bed and started making their way closer to me.

But before they could reach me, I suddenly thought of something that I had to say.

So I looked up and said, "Wait, before you punish me, let me say one thing."

All three of them were confused by this, but they did stop moving towards me and looked at me as if they were waiting for me to speak.

Since they gave me this chance, I explained to them what I had talked to Scar and Shaka about.

After they were done listening, Haley suddenly gave a nod and said, "Not bad, you already took care of this."

I looked up at her and saw that she had a happy look on her face which made me let out a secret sigh of relief.

Haley then continued by saying, "I had already considered this matter, but I was planning on dealing with this after we had secured the mithril. However, since you've already taken care of it, that's even better."

Haley gave a nod and then said, "The king and a duke, there can't be a better group to rely on when it comes to this matter."

I let out a sigh of relief again when I heard her say this.

It seemed like she really was happy about this matter.

But then I couldn't help asking, "Then would it be better if we got the other dukes to join us as well?"

This could technically be done with the power of Shadow Garden, though it would take a bit of work. But if it could distract her, what was a bit of work?

However, Haley shook her head as she said, "No, too many cooks in the kitchen is not effective. If we add another duke in, we'll have to balance the benefits of the two dukes and that will hurt us. Just the duke and the king are enough since they are far enough in rank that their benefits won't conflict."

I gave an understanding nod to this.

It was as she said, if there were too many people, we would have too many things to worry about.

It was better to have just a few backers that were powerful instead of many different powerful backers.

What I was most relieved about was that Haley seemed distracted because of this...

But then she suddenly said, "Of course, that's a matter for tomorrow. Tonight, you're still going to be punished."

I couldn't help giving a gulp when I heard this.