

Shota 501

Chapter 501 Banquet For Nobles (1)

Two weeks later, it was time for the guests to arrive.

During this time, we had been running around preparing many different things for this banquet all so that our noble guests would enjoy themselves.

This was my first time hosting an event like this, so it was definitely hard.

It was a good thing that I had Rose and Haley by my side, helping me prepare everything.

Rose taught me everything that I needed to know about etiquette while Haley helped us prepare many of the things that we would be using for the banquet.

If it wasn't for the two of them preparing everything, I really didn't know what I would have done.

Now that the day came, the guests came in droves.

After all, this was a banquet that was hosted by the new count, so everyone was naturally very curious about him.

That was especially true for the barons and smaller lords that were in the area since they knew that they would have to be careful of me in the future. They wanted to use this banquet to gauge what kind of person I was so they knew how to deal with me in the future.

But for me, there were two main guests today.

It was Viscount Teomold and Viscount Henry who I had traveled to meet before.

I had made sure to send personal invitations to both of them.

Since they had received personal invitations, they naturally had no choice but to come to this banquet that I was hosting.

But there was the grudge that was between them, so it wasn't as if they would forget about this just because of me.

Not to mention, both of them knew that the other would be trying to get a trade deal with me, so they would go out of their way to sabotage each other.

Or at least that was what it would be on the surface.

In truth, I had already signed a trade deal with Viscount Henry and he was just acting the part.

The one that I was dealing with this time was Viscount Teomold.

When Viscount Teomold arrived, the first thing that he did was get as close as he could to me and raise his voice as he said, "Count Zwein, thank you for your personal invitation. I am honoured that you would think of inviting me to your banquet."

He had made sure that we were surrounded by other nobles as he said this.

He wanted everyone to hear this so he could raise his own status among the other nobles.

After all, a personal invitation was something that was seen as very valuable.

It was only given to guests that the host cared very much about.

So when the nobles around us heard this, they all looked at Viscount Teomold in a different light.

I didn't mind this since he was someone that I did want here no matter what.

Not to mention, it would be hard to say if he could keep that smile on his face by the end of the day.

So I said with a smile, "Of course, I couldn't think of anyone else that I would want at this banquet other than you."

It wasn't just the nobles around else, even Viscount Teomold was caught off guard by this.

After all, he never expected that I would be this friendly with him...

He had thought that I would just lightly admonish him for this, but I had gone the complete opposite.

After taking a moment to catch himself, Viscount Teomold opened his mouth to say something before closing it again.

He didn't know why, but there was a bad feeling that filled him.

It was as if there was something wrong about this place, but he just couldn't put his finger on it.

It was a feeling that made him want to leave this place as soon as possible.

But that was the last thing that he could do.

Even if he wanted to leave, leaving now would be a slap to Count Zwein's face and something that he definitely couldn't do.

So he could only suppress that bad feeling and said, "Count Zwein, thank you for your kind words."

I didn't hold back at all as I came forward to take his hand and say, "Viscount Teomold, I can say for certain that there would be no party today if it wasn't for you."

The nobles all looked at Viscount Teomold with strange looks, as they wondered why Count Zwein was treating him so well.

But Viscount Teomold couldn't help feeling that there was something strange about these words.

The way that Count Zwein had said them, it gave him another bad feeling.

But before he could ask about this, there was another carriage that pulled up.

"Announcing Viscount Henry!"

The moment that Viscount Teomold heard this, the bad feeling that he had been feeling was blown away and he looked at the carriage pulling up with a dark look.

Anyone that saw this gaze could tell that this relationship with Viscount Henry who had just arrived wasn't good.

As the carriage was stopping, Viscount Teomold came closer to me to say, "Count Zwein, I advise that you don't get too close to this Viscount Henry in the future. I've had some dealings with this man and I can say that he isn't anything of value. He is definitely someone that a noble person like yourself would want to avoid."

I gave a secret disdainful laugh, but I revealed a friendly smile on my face as I said, "I know, I know, I've heard the rumours about this man."

Viscount Teomold was about to say something, but I cut him off by saying, "Unfortunately, he and my wife are related through their family, so I had no choice but to invite him today."

Viscount Teomold revealed an understanding look before saying with a nod, "I understand, but in the future, it would be best if you have less contact with this uncouth person."

I gave a nod and wanted to say something, but it was at this time that Viscount Henry came over.

I can't do any damage unless I'm a burst mage...

Chapter 502 Banquet For Nobles (2)

When Viscount Henry came over, he revealed a wide smile and said, "Count Zwein, thank you for your invitation. It is my honour to come to your banquet!"

Viscount Teomold couldn't help knitting his brows slightly when he heard this before turning to look at me.

It was as if he was suspecting that I had lied to him.

I just revealed a helpless look and gave a small shrug when he looked at me.

He immediately understood what I meant.

Since this Viscount Henry was a relative of Count Zwein's wife, he had no choice but to send an invitation to him as well.

With this, Viscount Teomold revealed the same smile as before as he gave a nod to show that he understood.

But when Viscount Henry saw this, he slightly knitted his brows.

Still, those brows quickly relaxed as he said, "Count Zwein, it seems that you have some bad company with you today. I advise you to chase away this bad company or you might get bitten by its dog mouth."

"Huh?" Viscount Teomold said as soon as he heard this before moving in front of me and standing right in front of Viscount Henry with an ugly expression.

He looked right at him and said, "Are you talking about yourself? Or is there something else that you want to say?"

Viscount Henry didn't back down as he took a step forward and said, "I think that I've made it quite clear what I wanted to say. Is there anything that you want to disagree with?"

"You!" Viscount Teomold said before gritting his teeth.

The two of them just glared at each other without saying a thing.

It was clear that the relationship between them was bad, but it seemed like it was even worse than I had thought.

I thought that they would only make subtle jabs at each other, but now it looked like they were about to fight in front of everyone like this.

I also noticed that a few of the nobles came closer when they saw Viscount Henry and Viscount Teomold approaching each other like this.

With the way that they were standing, it seemed that they were nobles that were either in Viscount Henry's faction or Viscount Teomold's faction.

If this kept going, it was very likely to end in a fight.

So I had no choice but to give a cough to remind them of where they were.

Both of them immediately realized their mistakes and took a step back, but the disdainful looks towards each other were still on their faces.

It was clear that they wouldn't let things end here, but for now, they had no choice but to back down.

After stepping away, that didn't stop them from jabbing at each other with snide comments, but I just let all of this slide.

The nobles that had moved forward also scattered after seeing both Viscount Henry and Viscount Teomold back down.

It seemed that they wouldn't do anything, but they could still be considered a barrel of gunpowder that could explode at any moment.

It was better to keep watch over them.

Still, I never expected the effect that Viscount Henry would have to be this good.

I had invited him here to distract Viscount Teomold so he wouldn't notice anything, but for him to be this distracted...

He was so angry that he completely forgot about his suspicions and only focused on cursing Viscount Henry.

It seemed like it wouldn't be a problem for my plan to succeed.

But I wouldn't let my guard down still, so I pulled out my second card.

"Everyone, please follow me. I have another special guest that I want to introduce to everyone."
Everyone's attention immediately came to me the moment that I said these words.

They looked at me with confused and curious looks, as if they were trying to figure out who I was talking about.

But I didn't give them any clues as I turned around to bring them into the hall that had been prepared for this banquet.

Once we were inside, they found that there was a group waiting for them inside.

The moment that they saw this group, they couldn't help revealing shocked looks.

After all, even a fool would be able to recognize who this group was.

It was two groups actually that made up this one group and the two groups had very different appearances.

One was made up of beautiful men and women who all had pointed ears.

The other was made up of short rough men and a single young girl.

These were the elves and dwarves that were standing in front of all these nobles.

As they all stared at these elves and dwarves in shock, I came forward to stand in front of them and turned to face the nobles to say, "I've invited some friends to this banquet today, I hope that all of you can get along with them."

The moment that the nobles heard this, all of their eyes suddenly lit up.

They never would have expected such a large benefit for them today.

This was their chance to create a relationship with both the elves and the dwarves.

This was not a chance that could be looked down on.

Just the relationship that he had built with the elves and dwarves had allowed Count Zwein to reach his current status, so that was just how important this relationship was.

If they were able to build a relationship as well...

The nobles all looked at each other with competitive looks.

After all, they knew that the other nobles all thought the same thing as they did.

So there were no allies for them to rely on in this fight.

But, they wouldn't let their grudges get between them and this chance.

This was all about the elves and dwarves, so they wouldn't bother with sabotaging each other.

Seeing that they were ready, I said, "Then let's begin this banquet. I hope that everyone enjoys socializing with each other."

Time to cleanse league from my system...

Chapter 503 Banquet For Nobles (3)

As soon as I gave them permission, the nobles didn't hold back at all as they went forward to talk to the elves and dwarves.

But they also had their image to think about, so no one ran.

Instead, all of them just walked as fast as they could.

When I saw this, it really reminded me of a certain event that I had gone to back on Earth...

It was an event where people sold doujinshis that they created, a place for people to share their ideas and creativity with one another.

It was also a place where people's desires gathered, so there were many people that came to buy these things.

But there was a rule in that convention center where people were not allowed to run, so to make up for that, they all walked as fast as they could without running.

This was just like that place where the nobles were the ones that wanted to buy the goods and the elves and dwarves were the ones selling the goods...No, it was better to say that the elves and dwarves were the goods.

The nobles surrounded them in an instant, but they didn't push each other to get to the elves and dwarves.

They knew that doing this would be a bad show of manners and would scare the elves off, so they naturally wouldn't do something like this.

They would act dignified as the nobles they were...

It was just too bad that they didn't know that this was what the elves and dwarves hated the most.

They hated this kind of stuffy and stiff kind of talking that made them feel suppressed.

So they didn't respond well to this.

The only reason that they even bothered to talk to these nobles was because of me.

I had asked them to do this for me as a form of distraction for the nobles.

Or rather, I wanted to use them to distract Viscount Teomold.

Though it seemed that even Viscount Henry who was supposed to be my other distraction was also affected by this. I could see him also among the nobles, trying his best to talk to the dwarves and elves.

Though with his personality, he seemed to be doing better than the other nobles as he hit it off with one of the dwarves.

Still, for him to be distracted like this instead of going to distract Viscount Teomold, was this shooting myself in the foot?

Well, it didn't really matter as long as Viscount Teomold was distracted.

He didn't seem to care at all as he used his position to suppress the other nobles and make his way to the front of the crowd.

His personality was the opposite of Viscount Henry's, so he was the type that the elves and dwarves hated the most.

At the same time, he didn't hide the lewd look in his eyes as he looked at the elves.

I never thought that he was that kind of person, but I guess that he didn't dare have these thoughts in front of Rose and Haley since they were with me. But with these elves, he didn't hold back his desires at all.

But the strange thing was...if he cared about this so much, why did he take that normal looking woman as his wife?

He even had two children with her...

It had to be a status or a money thing, or else it just didn't make sense at all.

Still, the fact that he did this made the elves look at him in disdain.

So he wasn't able to get close to them at all.

The only response he received to any of his words were very simple, as if they were perfunctory answers.

But to this deluded man, he thought that he was building a good relationship with the elves.

If it wasn't for me asking the elves for this favour, they wouldn't have talked to this man at all.

With these deluded thoughts of his, Viscount Teomold began imagining all the things that he would be able to do if he got close with the elves. There was even a part of him that thought about what it would be like to go to bed with an elf.

There wasn't a single part of him that suspected that this was a trap.

While they were all busy with this, Rose and Haley came over to find me.

When they came over, I asked, "Is everything prepared?"

They both nodded in response before Rose said, "It's all ready, we're just waiting for you."

I gave a nod back before turning to look at the nobles talking to the elves and dwarves.

The way that I was looking at them, it was as if I was making sure that the ones that I wanted to see were all here.

That was because other than Viscount Teomold, there were others that had colluded with him on this matter.

If I wanted to take care of all of this, I wanted to make sure that I caught them all in a single net so that none of them escaped.

As I looked at them, I couldn't help knitting my brows.

That was because there was one of Viscount Teomold's followers that was missing.

I couldn't help feeling worried when I saw this.

Could it be that he was smarter than I gave him credit for and he had sent that follower to take care of some things?

Could it be that he was also preparing just in case this was a trap?

I turned to Rose and said, "Tell everyone to wait, we might need to..."

Before I could finish, the doors opened and that last follower came in.

When he did, he came over to me with an awkward look and said, "Count Zwein, I'm sorry for being late. My carriage's wheel broke on the way here and it took a while to repair it."

As I looked at this person, my lips couldn't help twitching.

Behind me, I could hear Rose and Haley holding back their laughter... The Burger King is terrifying as a mask.

Chapter 504 Banquet for nobles (4)

After taking a moment to calm myself, I said to the noble that came late, "It's fine, it's just a good thing that you could make it."

Then I gestured to the other nobles gathered around the elves and dwarves to say, "How about you go and mingle with the others?"

When he saw everyone gathered around the elves and dwarves, his eyes immediately lit up.

Seeing the attractive elves and dwarves, he wasted no time in saying, "Thank you very much for the invitation Count Zwein. I'll be sure to properly mingle with everyone now."

Without even waiting for a response from me, he ran...no, quickly walked off to where everyone was else, leaving me alone with Rose and Haley.

As I stood there with my lips twitching, I could hear the sounds of snickering from behind me.

Even if they tried their best to hold it back, it really was hard for them after seeing me like this. My lips twitched even more and there was a small vein that popped out on my forehead, but I was able to hold myself back in the end.

Taking a deep breath, I turned around and said, "It seems that I've made a mistake. It seems that I was too tense and I was overthinking things. There's no need to make any changes to the plan and you can tell them to get ready."

Though they gave a nod in response, it was clear that they still hadn't recovered from seeing me like this.

I could still see the trembling that came from them trying to hold back their laughter.

In the end, I just chose to ignore it as I said, "Make sure that everything is ready, don't miss a single thing."

Both of them nodded before turning to leave.

That was the moment that I chose to strike.

I suddenly came forward and leaned in to say, "Be ready for your punishment tonight."

Both of them suddenly stopped and turned to look at me with surprised looks.

But seeing the calm look on my face, almost as if I didn't say a thing, they couldn't help revealing different expressions.

Both of them...seemed to have traces of excitement appear in their eyes.

I didn't respond at all as I just let them leave like this, but I could see that from time to time, they kept looking back at me.

It was as if they were expecting something.

Though all I did was nothing to keep them in suspense.

Once the two of them had gone, I checked with the other person that was here.

"Shadow Five, is everything ready on your side?"

There was a voice that seemed to come out of nowhere that said, "Everything has been prepared. All that is left is for the count to start the banquet."

I gave a nod before saying, "Then be on standby and get ready for your turn."

There was no response, but I didn't need a response to know that she heard me.

With everything prepared, all that was left was to close the net around Viscount Teomold and his people.

Of course, this was my first time doing something like this, so it would be a lie to say that I wasn't nervous at all. But this was something that had to be done since I knew someone like this Viscount Teomold would never stop at just this.

If I let him go now, he would bite me in the butt one day.

So it was better to finish him off here and now.

He could only blame himself for choosing how he wanted to live his life.

These were the consequences of his own actions.

That was what I told myself as I walked over to where the nobles were gathered.

After walking over, I said, "Everyone, let's get this banquet started. I have prepared some fine delicacies today that I hope that all of you will enjoy."

With a clap of my hands, the servers suddenly came out with food on their serving trays.

At the same time, there were some servers that pushed out a table that was filled with food placed buffet style.

There was even a bar that was suddenly opened up at one side of the room.

The moment that this bar was open, the dwarves immediately ran over to get drinks followed by the nobles that went with them.

These drinks were the price that I had paid to bribe them into coming here.

So they didn't hold back indulging in these drinks.

After all, they were also using this as a chance to get away from the humans that kept bothering them.

With the food and drinks coming out, the mood of the banquet became much less formal and everyone seemed like they were enjoying themselves.

In short, they let themselves relax now that they were eating.

That was the goal in bringing out the food and drinks at this time.

Meals were one of the times that people were the most unguarded. It was when they let their natural selves come out without any filter.

If one looked carefully, they could even see what kind of personality a person had just based on how they ate.

But my main goal was to let my targets relax so I could trap them.

A while after the food was brought out, I raised a glass and tinked it with a fork before saying, "Everyone, if I may have your attention. There's something that I want to announce."

Everyone immediately turned to look at me when they heard this.

Seeing that I had their attention, I said, "I'm sure that all of you are aware that I have formed a trade relationship with our dwarven friends here." At this, I gave a nod to the dwarves and Elsa gave a nod back to me.

The nobles all revealed excited looks when they heard this.

This was one of the reasons why they had all been excited to come to this banquet.

They all wanted a piece of this pie.

After that nod, I turned to Viscount Teomold and waved my hand at him for him to come over.

Viscount Teomold was surprised, but he walked over to my side with his head held up high as if this was a natural matter.

As he walked over, he even looked at Viscount Henry with a proud look as if he was taunting him.

Viscount Henry naturally revealed an ugly expression when he saw Viscount Teomold looking at him like this, but he quickly made his face calm down and acted as if he didn't react at all.

But Viscount Teomold had already seen the change in his expression and that made his smile even wider.

Seeing him walk over like this, I really couldn't help giving a cold snort of disdain.

He was like a fool that didn't even know that he was nothing more than a pig to the slaughter.

Hmm, even his face did look a bit like a pig's...

After he came over, Viscount Teomold nodded at me with a wide smile on his face.

I gave a nod back before turning to everyone to say, "I have already signed a trade agreement with Viscount Teomold to trade the ores that I will be receiving with him."

As soon as I announced this, everyone took a cold breath and looked at me with shocked looks.

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Viscount Teomold was also surprised that I would announce this matter like this, but he quickly recovered.

After recovering, the smile on his face became even wider as he looked at everyone with a proud look on his face.

Almost as if he was looking down on them.

I gave a secret sneer when I saw him like this, but I kept my face calm as I said, "This will be the first deal of many that I will be signing for the trade of ores, but I want everyone to know that I will be officially taking trade deals for these ores."

As soon as they heard this, all of the nobles revealed sharp looks as they waited for their opportunity.

But, this also made it clear that Viscount Teomold was the first one to create a relationship with me, so there were some that went to him for help.

The ones that were Viscount Teomold's followers immediately gave him looks as if they were asking him to help them broker a deal as well

When Viscount Teomold saw this, he made sure to give them a nod to show that he was already thinking of them.

But that wasn't where his attention was.

He was looking at Viscount Henry with a look like he was saying that he was superior to him.

Viscount Henry just ignored this and kept a calm look on his face which only served to anger Viscount Teomold even more.

I had remained silent because I had been waiting for a signal and when I saw the servant on the side give a wave to me, I said, "Now, I'd like to invite a special guest that I've invited to meet you all." I turned to look at Viscount Teomold and said, "Especially the viscount here."

Viscount Teomold stopped showing off to Viscount Henry and turned to look back at me with a confused look. But eventually, his expression relaxed as if he trusted me, which he really shouldn't have.

He trusted me because he thought that I wouldn't do anything to harm him.

After all, I had already announced our cooperation like this which would give him many benefits in the future. So he was certain that whatever I would do next would be something beneficial to him as well.

That was until he saw who was being brought in.

This was a person that was being brought in with manacles on.

Behind him were two knights in full armour that were ready to cut him down at any moment.

Everyone couldn't help being surprised to see this and they couldn't help taking a few steps back when they saw the man in manacles. They could tell that this was some kind of criminal, so they were afraid of being attacked by this man.

But this man didn't do anything as he was led forward.

That was because he knew that if he did anything, he would be cut down by the knights behind him.

These knights were not ordinary knights, these were elite knights that should have only been in the capital.

So what were these knights doing here?

When Viscount Teomold saw this person, he immediately showed a look of recognition before forcing that expression away. Instead, he put on a look of shock and confusion as he asked, "Count Zwein, who is this?"

I just calmly looked at him with a smile and said, "There's no need to pretend, I know you know who this is."

Viscount Teomold revealed a genuinely shocked look this time as he couldn't understand what I was saying.

But he could tell that the tone of my voice was aggressive.

It was almost as if I was targeting him for some reason.

Viscount Teomold slowly knitted his brows and said, "Count Zwein, I really do not understand what you mean. I have never seen this man before in my life. If there's something that you want to say, perhaps we should discuss this in private?"

Viscount Teomold didn't know what was happening, but he did know that this was a dangerous situation for him.

For now, it was better for him to get out of here whether it was with Count Zwein or without him.

But I wouldn't give him this chance.

With a smile, I said, "Then how about I introduce this person to everyone?"

Viscount Teomold deeply knitted his brows when he heard this.

However, he didn't have a chance to stop me as I suddenly raised my voice to say, "Everyone, I'd like to introduce our guest here. He is someone who comes from our dear Viscount Teomold's territory."

When they heard this, everyone couldn't help turning to look at Viscount Teomold with strange looks.

Though Viscount Teomold made sure to keep his face as calm as possible to not show a single thing.

I didn't care about this as I said, "This guest here is the guild master of the Adventurer's Guild in Viscount Teomold's territory."

As soon as they heard this, everyone narrowed their eyes to look at Viscount Teomold.

The followers of Viscount Teomold had already recognized this person, but they had been acting dumb since they didn't know what was happening. However, now that this person's identity had been revealed, they all slowly moved towards where Viscount Teomold was.

Viscount Teomold deeply knitted his brows when this was revealed before looking at me with narrowed eyes, as if he was trying to figure out what I was doing.

However, now that this fact had been revealed, it was a matter of pride and benefit for him. If he didn't act now, he would destroy his relationship with the Adventurer's Guild and that would be a large blow to him.

So he had no choice but to step forward and say, "Count Zwein, what is the meaning of this? Why are you capturing citizens from my territory?"

I raised a hand and stuck one finger up to wag it before saying, "Tsk, tsk, you should let me finish before interrupting next time, Viscount Teomold."

Viscount Teomold deeply knitted his brows again when he heard this, but he didn't have a chance to say anything.

"This person was just caught attacking one of my trade caravans containing the ores from the Dwarven Kingdom, so I think that I should be the one asking you what the meaning of this is." I said in a slow and deliberate voice.

As soon as he heard this, Viscount Teomold's face twisted in an ugly manner when he heard this before he turned to glare at the guild master.

But the guild master had his head down the entire time as if he was scared to look up.

Viscount Teomold took a deep breath to calm himself, but once again, he didn't get a chance to speak as I spoke before him.

"Oh, I almost forgot to mention, the caravan that he attacked was filled with the ores that I had prepared to sell to his majesty." Though this was said in a casual and almost careless manner, it was like a bomb had been dropped.

The chin of every noble fell to the ground when they heard this before they looked at Viscount Teomold with looks of pity.

Viscount Teomold looked like he really wanted to smash his head into the ground and kill himself.

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After this bomb was dropped, Viscount Teomold immediately glared at the guild master who still had his head lowered.

The look in his eyes was as if he was saying, "Why did you do something so crazy and stupid?"

But the guild master kept his head down the entire time as if he was afraid to look up.

Seeing this, Viscount Teomold had no choice but to think quickly on his feet.

After a few seconds, he said, "Count Zwein, I had no idea that such a thing was happening in my territory. As long as you give me a chance, I promise that I will give you and his majesty a satisfactory explanation for this matter."

In short, he was throwing the Adventurer Guild under the bus.

At this point, he only cared about keeping his own head since attacking the business of the king was a death sentence.

He would do anything to live, even if he had to throw away everything else.

When I heard this, I couldn't help revealing a disappointed look before shaking my head and saying with a sigh, "Is that really all that you have to say?"

Viscount Teomold deeply knitted his brows when he heard this.

He thought that with the deal between them, Count Zwein would at least reconsider this matter.

That was why there was almost a pleading tone in his voice when he said this, as if he was asking Count Zwein to show mercy.

But based on what he said, it didn't seem like he was planning on showing any mercy...

Seeing that Viscount Teomold didn't say anything, I just calmly said, "So you're claiming that you had nothing to do with this and it was all the Adventurer Guild that attacked the caravan, right?"

Viscount Teomold was confused why he was being asked this, but he slowly gave a nod.

If he admitted it, wouldn't it be signing his own death warrant?

So why would he ever admit this?

I shook my head again and gave another sigh before saying, "But your men were found attacking the caravan as well. I know since I met them during the time that I was in your territory and they even admitted to this fact."

Viscount Teomold's chin dropped the moment that he heard this.

The look on his face was almost as if he didn't understand what I was saying, even if he understood the individual words.

He just stared at me with this look of disbelief the entire time.

Then after a few seconds of silence, he opened and closed his mouth as if he didn't know what to say.

Finally, he said, "There must be some kind of mistake!"

I shook my head and said, "No, your men have already been captured and there is already a report that is being sent to the capital with a list of all the crimes that you've committed."

"Crimes?" Viscount Teomold repeated in a very confused voice.

I said with a nod, "That's right. After they were captured, they already confessed to everything that you've done and we've already gotten all the evidence. In just a few days, a decree from his majesty should come that will strip you of your title and territory."

Viscount Teomold's jaw dropped once more when he heard this.

This time, he couldn't keep calm anymore as he shouted, "How could this happen?"

Then without any hesitation, he ran forward at the guild master with his hands raised and he wanted to attack him, but the knights stepped forward to push him back.

So Viscount Teomold could only shout at the man, "How could you be so stupid to do something like this? How could you be so stupid to even attack a caravan that belongs to the king?"

The guild master finally couldn't help looking up to say, "How was I supposed to know? It looked like a normal carriage, so we thought that it was just a normal merchant."

"What?" Viscount Teomold said in a shocked voice.

The guild master gave a nod before continuing, "Before we realized what happened, there were these knights that suddenly surrounded us. Half of us were cut down before we even had a chance to surrender. If only we didn't listen to you and fall for your lies, we never would have been in this situation."

Viscount Teomold couldn't hear anything after the first part.

He had fallen into deep thought as if everything was clicking together inside of his head.

No matter how he thought about it, there was only one possible answer to the questions that he had.

He had been set up.

There was no other possible answer.

"You set me up." Viscount Teomold slowly said as he turned to look at me.

I didn't show any expressions as I calmly looked back at him.

"That's right! You set me up!" Viscount Teomold seemed like he had woken up from a deep sleep as he suddenly pointed at me and said, "How else would the royal caravan have looked like a normal caravan? There's no other explanation!"

Once again, I didn't say anything as I looked back at him with a calm look.

Viscount Teomold looked like he wanted to charge at me at this point, but before he could do anything, there were two guards that suddenly came forward to stand on his left and right sides respectively.

They didn't grab him, but it was clear that they could immobilize him at any moment.

Viscount Teomold wasn't a fighter, so he wouldn't be able to do anything against these two.

Seeing that he couldn't do anything, Viscount Teomold could only look at me and say, "Why? Why would you do something like this when we've already reached an agreement? What do you have to benefit from this?"

He was genuinely confused by all of this.

After all, if he was stripped of his title and territory like this, wouldn't Count Zwein suffer a loss?

Not only that, it would be unlikely that he would find someone else to trade with him after what happened.

So there was absolutely nothing for him to gain from this.

Or at least that was what Viscount Teomold thought with his shallow thoughts.

Should I play Honkai instead?

Chapter 507 Banquet for nobles (7)

I didn't bother answering this as I turned to look at Viscount Teomold's followers.

At first, they had been moving over as if they wanted to help him if anything went wrong.

However, once they heard that it was the king's caravan that he had attacked, they immediately blended back into the crowd. They tried their best to hide in the crowd so that they didn't attract any attention at all.

But what they didn't notice was that there were guards that had blended into the crowd.

They were ready to capture these nobles at any moment.

It was time to take care of them as well so we didn't leave any unsolved problems for the future.

With a cough, I said, "There were others who had been discovered to have colluded with Viscount Teomold on this matter."

Everyone immediately took a cold breath when they heard this and they started looking at each other.

In no time at all, everyone started moving away from each other as if they didn't trust each other.

The expressions of Viscount Teomold's followers turned ugly when they heard this.

They wanted to move towards the door, but it was too conspicuous with everyone spreading out like this. So the only thing that they could do was hope that they hadn't been discovered.

But with everyone spread out like this, it was very easy to see the guards that were placed there.

So it didn't take long for them to realize what was happening.

I just calmly looked at Viscount Teomold's followers and said, "Is there anything that you want to say?"

All of them looked at each other with uncertain looks as if they didn't know what to do.

But the expressions on their faces became more and more unstable as if they were already considering something.

Finally, one of them spoke.

It was the one who had arrived late.

"It wasn't my fault! He was the one that forced me! He said that I would be next if I didn't cooperate with him!" As he said this, he pointed at Viscount Teomold who was being restrained by the two guards.

Viscount Teomold revealed an ugly look before glaring at this noble who was framing him and saying, "You, you, you! You're the one that offered your troops in the first place, I didn't even want to include a fence sitter like you!"

"Please don't listen to his nonsense! I was forced to participate by him or else he said that he would raid my territory as well!"

Seeing the two of them fight like this, the other nobles started to join in.

They gave many different reasons for why they did all of this, but there was one thing in common between them.

They all stated that everything was Viscount Teomold's fault.

It was him who forced them to join him.

The more that Viscount Teomold heard this, the more his face turned red.

It was as if he was able to burst from how much blood was gathering in his face.

But I stopped them by saying, "We've already found records of your involvement, so there's no excuses that you can make."

As soon as I said this, all of them fell silent.

They had thought that they would be able to blame Viscount Teomold to avoid taking the fall, or even offering information about all of this as a plea deal.

But it turned out that they had been played.

Count Zwein already had all the information that he needed, so he was just baiting them to see what else he could get from them.

In short, they had been played as the fool.

After a long silence, the nobles started coming back to their senses and looked like they wanted to say something. But they didn't get that chance as the guards that had been gathered already came forward to restrain them.

There were some that wanted to fight against the guards, but they found that they were completely outmatched.

Some of these nobles were ones that had fought as knights on the frontline before receiving their titles for their achievements, so they couldn't believe that they were being overpowered by guards like this.

But they found that they weren't able to do a single thing against these guards.

They were completely outclassed.

How could guards for a countryside noble be this strong?

It would make sense if he was some kind of hidden royal, but he was nothing more than a noble that had been lucky enough to earn a title.

This just didn't make any sense at all.

While the nobles had been restrained, Viscount Henry had been walking forward with a few of his followers as if they were prepared to help if anything happened.

When they saw how easily Viscount Teomold's followers were caught, they couldn't help being surprised.

After all, Viscount Henry was someone who had served as a knight as well, so he was someone with some military prowess.

At the same time, the nobles that chose to follow him were also those that had served on the frontline, which was why they chose to follow him in the first place.

All of them had skills that allowed them to see how powerful these guards were.

It was clear that they might not even be able to do anything to these guards if they were the ones being restrained.

Viscount Henry couldn't help looking at Count Zwein with a strange look, but he saw that he was also looking at him which caught him off guard.

Seeing Viscount Henry look at me like this, I gave a secret bitter laugh before waving my hand at him to come over.

Viscount Henry hesitated for a second as he revealed a confused look, but he still came over in the end.

After he came over, I looked at everyone and said, "The actions of these wicked nobles have harmed others, so now they will be given compensation for this matter."

Just one more day of AGDQ left.

Chapter 508 Banquet for nobles (8)

This time, it was Viscount Henry and his followers that were surprised.

They didn't know what I had been planning to do, but they never expected to hear something like compensation.

I looked over at Shaka who came over with a scroll.

I took it and opened it in front of everyone to read it, "Though not everything has been investigated, the current situation has determined that the nobles led by Viscount Teomold have cooperated with the Adventurer Guild to rob other nobles. As such, they will receive compensation from these nobles."

The guests that hadn't been caught up in this were surprised to hear this, but they were more confused as to what the scroll I was reading from was.

The way that I was reading this, it was almost as if I was reading some kind of message.

But I ignored them and continued, "The compensation will be given in either money or land depending on what is available. If the items stolen can be recovered, they will be returned to their original owners. If they cannot be recovered, the value of these items will be added to the compensation amount."

Then once I finished reading this, I turned the scroll so everyone could see it.

The moment that they did, they all let out a gasp.

That was because they recognized the seal that was on this scroll.

It was the seal of the royal family.

No one could believe that the seal of the royal family was being used in this situation, but there it was in front of them.

There were a few of them that wondered if this seal was faked, but they quickly threw away those thoughts since they knew that this was impossible.

A fake royal seal...that was a crime worse than anything that Viscount Teomold and his followers had done.

They didn't believe that Count Zwein would try anything that crazy.

So this seal was most likely real...

They knew he had a connection with the royals since he had stated that he was trading with the royals.

But it was amazing that the royal family would get involved in a small matter like this.

After making sure that everyone had seen the seal, I turned the scroll back so that I was reading it again as I said, "At the same time, all contracts that the involved parties were in has been officially cancelled and they will be offered compensation on this matter."

Only when I finished this did I put the scroll down to look at Viscount Teomold.

When Viscount Teomold saw me looking at him, he couldn't help feeling a chill run down his spine. It was as if something bad was about to happen to him.

I walked over to Viscount Teomold and said, "Viscount Teomold, I think that in our contract, we had written a clause about compensation."

Viscount Teomold couldn't help revealing a confused look at first since he never remembered anything about this, but then he realized that it must have been in there since the beginning...

That meant that from the beginning, this Count Zwein had been planning for his downfall!

Just why did he do something like this?

He had never met him before meeting him at the auction in the capital, so there shouldn't be a reason for him to do all of this.

Seeing that he wasn't saying anything, I continued by saying, "As the contract has written, the compensation will be ten times the amount that would have been traded."

Viscount Teomold was immediately pulled out of his thoughts and looked at me with a look of shock and disbelief.

Then he suddenly said, "Where in the contract does it say that!?"

I shook my head and said, "You really should have read the fine print of the contract. It was stated clearly that the compensation would be ten times that of the price that we agreed on. Not to mention, this was set both ways so that I would be the one paying if I broke the contract."

Viscount Teomold's expression couldn't help changing as he looked at me.

That was because...this was me cutting off any paths for him and his family.

Even if he was executed, it didn't mean that everyone in his family would be executed.

Even if they lost their title, they would still have their wealth since it wasn't involved in this.

But now, I was also taking away their wealth and making it impossible for his family to survive.

So of course he couldn't accept this.

Even if he died, he at least wanted to leave behind some descendants of his family which had been a great noble family that had lasted many generations.

Now, even that didn't seem possible.

Taking a deep breath, he looked at me and said, "Please leave a path of life for my family. That is all that I can ask of you."

I shook my head and simply said, "No."

Viscount Teomold's face twisted as he said, "Why? Why would you do all of this?"

I narrowed my eyes to look at him before saying, "Ask yourself that in your next life. You should really think about all the things that you've done in this life."

Viscount Teomold revealed a confused look, as if he didn't even know what he had done wrong.

But that wasn't his fault since this was the behaviour that many nobles had in this world.

It could be said that it was just his bad luck to run into Count Zwein.

Seeing that he didn't understand, I nodded at the two guards by his side to take him away.

I also nodded at the other guards restraining the nobles to take those other nobles away as well.

Since they had already received their punishment, they were no longer needed.

Instead, it was time for me to move onto the next part of my plan.

Though the main part of the plan was to condemn Viscount Teomold and these nobles, there was follow up that was needed for this matter.

I couldn't just leave things as they were.

I did like nothing today because I was watching AGDQ.

Chapter 509 Banquet For Nobles (9)

After Viscount Teomold and his followers were taken away, I turned to the other guests that remained.

Many of them had cautious looks on their faces as if they were afraid that I would do something else that would be bad for them.

I knew that if I left the situation as it was, it would be hard for me to achieve my goal of uniting the nobles in the surrounding area.

So I had to do something to turn the tide of the situation.

As for what I would do, it was something that I had already prepared.

Viscount Henry was still beside me and he would be the one that would turn the tides.

"Everyone, I would like to apologize for that mess. It seems that some people just can't be trusted."

Everyone couldn't help trembling when they heard this.

Even an idiot would be able to hear that this was a warning for them.

But then I changed my tone and said, "But let's move on to some more positive news."

I turned to Viscount Henry and said, "Earlier, I announced that I had signed a contract with Viscount Teomold to trade the ores that came from the Dwarven Kingdom. However, you all saw how that turned out already."

Everyone gave a slow nod when they heard this.

I didn't mind this as I continued, "From the beginning, that deal was doomed to fail, so I had already prepared a back up plan. I have already signed another contract to trade ores with Viscount Henry here and will be looking for other partners to trade with in the future."

Viscount Henry wasn't surprised, but his followers were surprised to hear this along with the rest of the nobles in this room.

I was honestly a bit surprised to see that Viscount Henry's followers were surprised.

I had told him not to tell them, but I didn't actually expect him to follow this. After all, things that were good should be shared with one's people and this was definitely something that was good not just for him, but also his followers.

But I wasn't disappointed with the fact that Viscount Henry didn't tell his followers.

It just meant that he was every bit the person that I thought he was and that he would be someone good to work with in the future.

After saying this, I waited for the reactions of these nobles.

After all, it would depend on them to see what would happen next.

There was a long silence that hung in the air until one of the nobles suddenly took a chance by asking, "Are there any conditions that we need to fulfill to trade with you?"

As soon as he asked this, everyone immediately turned to look at me with serious looks as if they were waiting for my answer.

I shook my head and said, "As long as you're willing to trade and don't have any ill intentions, I welcome your business."

All of the nobles immediately perked up when they heard this, but I quickly added something.

"But if you do things that are harmful to our kingdom, then I have no choice but to take action. I hope that you will all understand that." My voice turned cold when I said this.

All of the nobles felt a chill run down their spine when they heard this, but they remembered what had happened with Viscount Teomold and immediately revealed honest looks.

They recognized that this Count Zwein was a dangerous person to offend, but he was also someone that brought them great benefits as long as they stayed on his good side.

So they would do all that they could to remain on his good side.

Seeing all of them reveal honest looks, I said with a smile, "If there's anyone that is willing to trade with us, feel free to talk to the one that I've placed in charge of this matter, my third wife Haley."

All of them looked at her with focused gazes as soon as they heard this.

Of course, not a single one of them dared to look at her with any other kind of gaze after what I had said.

Haley revealed a wide smile when she saw this.

It was as if she could already smell the money that was about to come in.

Since I had deflected all the attention onto Haley, there was no need for me to do anything else.

There was still one more thing that I wanted to take care of before ending all of this.

So I said, "I hope that everyone will enjoy the rest of this banquet and make the most of the opportunities that you have been given."

Everyone had sparkling eyes when they heard this.

With that, I let everyone get back to it.

I went over to Rose and together, the two of us went to a separate room that had been prepared.

We sat down and just waited without saying anything.

Rose prepared a few things, but other than that, we just silently waited for our guests.

A few minutes later, there was a couple that suddenly opened the door and came in.

It was Viscount Henry and his wife.

Since this was a banquet, naturally Viscount Henry had also brought his wife and daughter with him.

They had surprised looks when they came in, but they quickly sat down in front of us and waited to see what we would have to say.

I looked at Rose and she said, "We have a proposal for you two."

The two of them looked at each other with surprised and confused looks before turning back. Viscount Henry spoke for the two of them as he said, "Uh, what kind of proposal do you have? If it's that kind of proposal, we are flattered, but...we don't do that kind of stuff."

I couldn't help revealing a bitter smile when I heard this, but I wasn't surprised that he would say this.

After all, it really did seem like we might be asking them that.

However, I just explained by calmly saying, "I want you to work for me."

Chapter 510 Banquet For Nobles (10)

Viscount Henry couldn't help revealing a surprised look when he heard this.

He turned to look at his wife and saw that she had the same surprised look before turning back to look at Count Zwein.

In his mind, he really didn't know what to make of this.

After all, he never expected Count Zwein to suddenly say something like this.

After a long period of hesitation, Viscount Henry suddenly asked, "Can I ask why you're asking me this?"

When I heard this, I revealed a faint smile as if I had already expected this.

Though this wasn't really that surprising since most people would ask this question if someone suddenly wanted them to work for them.

I looked at Viscount Henry and said, "I like you and I think you're capable, so I want you to work for me. Nothing more, nothing less."

These words might have seemed very simple, but that was more than enough for someone like Viscount Henry.

After all, he wasn't someone that would be convinced with fancy words.

He was someone that was more easily convinced with words that were simple and straightforward.

Viscount Henry couldn't help revealing an embarrassed look when he heard this, but then he quickly revealed a serious look and turned to his wife. When she saw him look over at her, she revealed a smile and a look that seemed to be saying, "Do what you think is right."

It seemed that there was quite a bit of trust in their relationship.

Viscount Henry turned back to look at me and he said, "What kind of things are you looking to have me do?"

Even if there was a part of him that wanted to take this deal, he still had to think about the people in his territory. This was not a decision that could be made that rashly.

This time, I didn't say anything and instead I passed the reign to Rose.

This was what we had agreed on.

For convincing Viscount Henry, I would take the lead.

But when it came to explaining the details of the plan, it was Rose that would take the lead.

She pulled out a piece of paper that she placed on the table.

When it was spread out, the viscount couple found that it was a map of the surrounding area.

On this map, all of their territories had been marked, but there was a different marker that was on each of their territories. There were some that had the same marker and there were also some that didn't have a marker at all.

They couldn't see through what these markers meant at all, so they just waited for Rose to explain.

"As you can see, this is a map of the surrounding area and the surrounding noble territory." Rose slowly started by saying this.

The viscount couple nodded to show that they understood.

Then Rose continued by saying, "The different markers represent the different goods that are traded by these different territories."

This time, they looked more closely at these markers and they could understand a bit of what this was about. The marks that were on these markers seemed to represent the goods that each territory traded, or at least as far as they knew they traded.

But they still couldn't figure out why they would be shown this map.

Rose then pointed at different territories and said, "You can see that these territories vary in goods even though they had similar resources, but why is that? It's because these nobles are just trying to follow the trends of whatever will sell at the time and never specialize in one product, that is why they never truly become rich."

Viscount Henry was a bit confused by this, but his wife nodded in agreement to this before pointing at one of the territories and saying, "It really is a waste of resources that they would plant cotton instead of food products here. If they were smart, they would be able to sell the food that they harvest to the frontlines and earn double the profits, just as much as the cotton that's hard to sell right now."

Rose revealed a look of praise when she heard this.

She never thought that Viscount Henry's wife would be so well informed about all of this.

Viscount Henry just revealed an awkward look and moved back to let his wife take the lead.

When I saw this, I couldn't help revealing a smile like I was seeing an ally.

It seemed that even if he did help with managing the territory, he was still only a bit better than me. It seemed that both of us relied heavily on our wives to manage our territories for us.

The two of them went into a technical discussion about the specialty of the surrounding territories which became quite detailed.

Both Viscount Henry and I just sat there with smiles on our faces as we could only understand bits of what they were discussing.

After a long discussion, Rose finally said, "I knew that I wasn't wrong about you. You really are just as I thought you were and now I want you working for me even more."

Viscount Henry's wife revealed a modest smile, but it was clear by the look in her eyes that she was also impressed by Rose.

Since they were finished discussing this, I turned to Viscount Henry and said, "What I want to do is organize the surrounding nobles so that we can compliment each other with products produced on our territory. It's similar to the planning of your town with its different districts."

Viscount Henry knitted his brows when he heard this before saying, "But nobles aren't as easy to convince. It won't be easy to get them to listen to you."

I revealed a faint smile before saying, "Isn't that why I put on that play today? As long as I control the ores, it will be easy."

Viscount Henry slowly revealed a look of understanding on his face.