

Shota 541

Chapter 541 Strange City

All of them suddenly turned to look at me with strange looks, but there were still a few that kept trying to barricade the door.

Cecilia came over and asked, "What did you find?"

I pointed at the food on the table and said, "Don't you see that the steam isn't disappearing? It doesn't seem to be cooling down even after all this time that you've spent trying to barricade the door."

Cecilia was surprised at first, but then she and her subordinates came over to take a closer look at the food on the table that I had mentioned.

When they looked closely, they found that I was right.

No matter how long they stared at it, it didn't seem like the steam from the food was disappearing.

It seemed that it was still fresh no matter how long passed.

One of them even tried to pick up a piece of bread from the table, but they found that it was stuck just like the furniture. They couldn't move it no matter how they tried to budge it.

After seeing this, they all looked at me with strange looks, as if they were asking me what's going on.

I just calmly explained, "There's some kind of preservation spell that was cast on this place. I can feel the traces of that are surrounding all the things in this place, showing that there's some kind of spell cast on it. So the only thing that should have this effect is a preservation spell."

"Preservation spell?" They repeated with confused looks.

I knew what they wanted to ask, so I just shook my head and said, "I have no idea either. I just know that there's a preservation spell on these things or else it wouldn't be this way."

I didn't stay there and started walking around the building, trying to find something that could give me a clue.

Though it didn't seem like there was anyone in this city, Cecilia didn't let her guard down as she followed closely behind me. It seemed like she was prepared to protect me if anything happened.

But there was nothing to protect me from.

I just ignored her and went around the house looking for anything that I could get information from.

However, I wasn't able to budge a single thing either.

There were books that were in this house, but I wasn't able to lift them up, let alone lift the covers and see what was inside. It seemed that all of these books had the same preservation spell cast on them that stopped anyone from interfering with them.

So if I wanted information, I would have to break the spell first.

That had been something that I had considered earlier, but that was something for a powerful ian and not someone who had just started using like me. If it wasn't for the Orb of the Dead, I wouldn't have even qualified as a third rate ian.

So of course I wasn't able to break the preservation spell that was cast on this place.

All of this knowledge in front of me and not being able to read a single page, it was almost like a starving man not being able to eat the food that was in front of him.

In the end, I had no choice but to give up with a sigh.

There was nothing that I could do here, so I wanted to see if I could get anything from the other buildings around us.

This place was a city, so there were plenty of other places to search before giving up.

When I suggested this, Cecilia led the others in saying, "Going outside..."

They all looked out the windows of this house at the dark city around us, as if they were looking for something.

But no matter how they tried looking, they couldn't find a single thing around them,

It seemed that there really was no one in this dark city.

Or else if there were, they would have already found a trace of them with how vigilant they had been.

In the end, Cecilia agreed, but she did have a condition.

"Let us go out and check the surrounding area. We'll secure the next building before we all move over."

I gave a nod of agreement to this since this was a very reasonable request.

But the way that we were going about this...it was almost like I was being treated as some kind of VIP that needed to be escorted from place to place.

I had seen VIPs in my past life moving around like this, but now that I was being treated like this...there was a mix of emotions.

It was certainly interesting being protected like a VIP like this.

It gave a feeling of being very important to be protected like this.

But at the same time, it was awkward being protected like this since I was being surrounded like I was some special exhibit and wasn't allowed to take a single step out of line.

Still, we were able to make it to the next building like this.

This building was just the same as the other building that we came from.

It wasn't the exact same, but the general layout of this house was the same.

It was a residence just like the other house and there were many daily things scattered in this house. There was even a meal that was prepared and placed on the dining table that was steaming just like in the other house.

It seemed that there was a preservation spell that was cast on this house as well.

Since there was a preservation spell cast here, then it was no use trying to find any information from this place.

As expected, we weren't able to move any of the items in the house, so I wasn't able to get any information from the books and such that were in this place.

Going on like this wasn't a way to proceed and time was running out.

It might be time to try something drastic.

Chapter 542 Come And Get Me!

"Let's go out and explore the city itself."

As soon as I suggested this, all of them looked at me like I was crazy.

I wasn't surprised since I had been expecting this reaction from them the moment that I suggested this.

After all, it was a crazy idea.

There was still no knowing what was outside, it was still possible that there was someone lurking around in this city. Yet I wanted to walk around outside which would turn us into targets.

If it wasn't me, they might have really beaten me to death for suggesting such a crazy thing.

But since it was me, they couldn't do that.

In the end, it was Cecilia who came forward on behalf of everyone to say, "That's too dangerous, we can't take that risk."

I gave a nod to show that I understood her concerns, but then I said, "Even so, we have to do this. There's nothing else that we can gain from going house to house like this, especially with this preservation spell. Unless we take some risk, we won't be able to find anything."

Cecilia slightly knitted her brows when she heard this.

The others also recognized that what I said was correct, so they had conflicted looks as well.

It would be a lie to say that they weren't curious about what this place was.

And that curiosity was slowly eating them up from the inside.

So there was a part of them that was moved when I suggested that we go out and explore.

Still, they were knights in the first place, so their instincts kept them from following this suggestion.

Cecilia was the same as she shook her head and said, "This is still too dangerous. I can't allow this to happen."

She looked at me with a firm look, as if nothing that I could say could change what she was thinking.

I just gave a sigh and didn't bother arguing.

I knew that there was no use in arguing since it would be impossible to convince her when she was like this.

So instead of trying to convince her...

"Hey, can you come and take a look at something with me? I can't seem to see through it all on my own, so I need your help looking at it." I suddenly said.

Cecilia was surprised, but she gave a nod and followed me over to one of the tables.

When we came over, I didn't hesitate to suddenly trip her and make her fall over the table.

Cecilia was a powerful knight with strong reactions, but she couldn't react to something that she didn't expect at all. Not to mention, I was someone that she trusted, so she didn't think that she would have to be on guard when it came to anything with me.

I was probably the only person in the world that could do this to Cecilia.

The others were all shocked, so they weren't able to do a single thing to stop me.

As Cecilia fell over the table, I didn't hesitate to run outside.

Cecilia and none of the knights were able to stop me since they were completely caught off guard.

Cecilia was still trying to stand up from being tripped into the table while the knights were just staring on in shock as they couldn't believe that I would do something like this.

So I was able to run out without any of them stopping me.

When Cecilia stood up and saw that I had run out, her first reaction was to run out after me while shouting at the knights, "What are you all standing in a daze for! Follow our lord!"

The knights immediately realized what had happened after being yelled at by Cecilia and they all pulled out their weapons to run after me.

It seemed like they wanted to stop me from doing what I wanted to do, but it was already too late for that.

Before any of them could stop me, I cupped my hands in front of my mouth and shouted at the top of my voice, "Come and get me!"

Cecilia and the knights were all in shock when they heard this, but then they quickly formed a circle around me to protect me.

Cecilia looked at me with an angry and hurt look, but I didn't look at her as I kept shouting out, "Come and get me, I'm right here!"

I was shouting at the top of my voice, as if I wanted all the hidden creatures around us to come and attack us.

But there was only the echo of my voice and no other sound.

After a long silence, there was only more silence.

There was nothing that came out to attack us.

It didn't seem like there was anything here.

Seeing that nothing was coming to attack us, Cecilia grabbed me by the back of my collar and lifted me off the ground. Her hand came over my mouth to firmly cover it as she pulled me back into the house.

The knights all quickly followed behind, but they also made sure that nothing was following us.

When we were finally safe inside the house, Cecilia looked at me with an angry look and asked, "What was that? Not only did you put your own life in danger, you put all of our lives in danger! How could you do something like that?"

I just calmly looked at her and said, "You gave me no choice. You were too afraid to go out, so I just had to do what I had to do."

Cecilia responded in an angry voice, "And what you did almost killed us all!"

I shook my head as I said, "No it didn't since there's nothing out there. If you listened to me, you would have known that already. There's no danger out there, so we're going out there to explore. I am the lord and my decision is final."

Cecilia was taken aback when I suddenly stepped up like this.

Her knights looked at her as if they were asking her what they should do, which put her in a very awkward position.

But in the end, she backed down and said, "As you wish, my lord."

Though I could tell from the look in her eyes, this wasn't over yet.

Chapter 543 Strange Steele

Since I had insisted, they followed me out of the house and we started walking around in the streets of this strange city.

Though as we walked around, they firmly formed a circle around me so that I didn't have a single moment of being alone.

It was clear that they weren't planning to leave me alone for a single second, but this was still better than the alternative. At the very least, we had left the house and were now searching this city.

As we walked around, we saw that this city seemed to be a very normal city.

There wasn't much for us to see as many of the buildings were just normal buildings that one would find in a city.

From time to time, we would see a building or two that was different and would explore them. However, all that we found were a bunch of stores that didn't have anything important in them.

Not to mention, these stores all had the same preservation spell cast on them.

It seemed that this entire city had the preservation spell cast on it, so there wasn't a single place that we were able to interfere with.

Eventually, we reached a place that seemed different.

This was a square that was in the center of the town.

I had seen this place from above when we came down, but mostly it was because we had followed the trail of torches that we had arrived at this place.

We had also stopped at one of the torches to see what was so special about it.

As far as we could tell, it didn't seem like there was anything special about it.

Well, other than the fact that it was the only thing in this city that didn't have a preservation spell cast on it. It was the only thing that we were able to interact with, but there wasn't much that we could do with a giant blue flame torch.

The one thing that we could do was test the flame and we were surprised to find...just how hot this flame was.

I had used one of the dildo bats that the knights had brought to poke at the fire.

The moment that the dildo bat touched the flames, I found that it was already melting.

Seeing this melting metal, I didn't dare hold the dildo bat any longer and threw it into the fire.

With the heat of the fire, it didn't take long before the metal of the dildo bat was completely melted.

Since it was a torch, the molten metal dripped down the wooden part of the torch until it reached the ground. But the strange thing was that not a single bit of that liquid metal remained on the torch.

All of it slid off before finally turning solid again.

It seemed like there was something special about the torch itself, but...I didn't want to risk the fire to test it. This fire was strong enough to melt even the dildo bat created by the system, who knows what would happen if we tried to investigate the torch.

The knight whose dildo bat had been sacrificed looked like he wanted to break out in tears as he said, "My bat..."

I just looked at him with a bitter smile and said, "Don't worry, I'll get you another one later on."

Only then did he feel a bit better, but it was clear that he still mourned the death of his bat.

In this square, there was a fountain right in the center of it that had a torch at the very top.

This place seemed like it was the center of the town, with the various different buildings and stalls that were here. There was even one fancy building that looked like it was the town hall that was on one of the four sides of this square.

But there wasn't anything that we could do about this place.

It was the same as the rest of the city, there was a preservation spell that was cast on it, so we couldn't do a single thing.

Though one cool thing that we could do as a result of this was...

walk on water.

Since even the water in the fountain had the preservation spell cast on it, it didn't even move when we walked on it.

So we were able to walk on water and check out the fountain itself.

This was a fountain that was carved in the shape of a beautiful woman and in her hand was the torch with the blue flame.

However, not a single one of us recognized this woman.

In the end, it seemed like Cecilia and the knights wanted to give up.

We had already searched the town like I wanted, so they had indulged me.

They wanted to leave this place before something bad happened and before we ran out of time. After all, we had already spent an hour here.

Even if that wasn't enough time for the others at the party to notice that we were missing, it was enough time for whoever lived in this city to realize that we were here. Even if they weren't near the area where we had arrived, they should have had enough time to come over to attack us now.

So they didn't want to be here when that happened.

They were urging me to leave as soon as possible.

Unfortunately for them, my attention had been drawn by something else.

There was one thing that was on another side of this square that attracted me.

It was on the exact opposite side of the fancy building that should have been the town hall.

This was a large stele that was just standing there right in front of a building which seemed to be a church.

The church didn't mean anything to me, but the stele did.

Though Cecilia and the knights didn't seem to find anything special about it.

The reason why I found this stele so attractive was...because of the words that were right at the top.

"Debug Log".

Chapter 544 Debug Room

Debug log.

These were words that unless one knew about how this game used to be a game world, they wouldn't understand.

But the moment that I saw these words, I finally realized what this place was and what it was used for.

The debug room, that was a room that was rumoured to exist in the game.

It was the room which the devs had used to test the aspects of the game and make the appropriate changes.

To do that, this room had to be given a certain amount of privileges to do that.

This room had one special function.

It was able to create and delete any item in the game so that the devs could test anything new that they wanted to add into the game.

But for even the debug room to carry over to this world after it was made a real world...

This was a problem.

If someone were to realize the power of this place, it was unknown what they would do with it.

However, as long as there was someone that knew about this place, it was certain that there would be the temptation to use it. Unless they were someone like me that knew the dangers of a place like this.

So once I realized what this place was, I no longer wanted to stay here any longer.

I didn't even want to figure out how this debug room worked.

"Let's go." I said before turning to leave.

Cecilia and the knights were all shocked to see me acting this way, but they quickly reacted and followed me.

But Cecilia couldn't help moving forward to my side and asking, "What's wrong? Why do you seem so spooked? Did you find something?"

I just shook my head and said, "Nothing."

It was one simple word, but the tone of my voice made it clear that this matter was settled. I made it very clear that this was final and that she should ask no more questions.

Cecilia was once again taken aback, but she closed her mouth and just followed me.

This was her first time seeing me act this way, so of course she was shocked.

But she knew that I must have a good reason for acting this way.

Our group quickly went back the same way that we came and found the stairs.

Then we went up the stairs and out the door to return to the dungeon.

We had left the zombies here and it didn't seem like anything had happened as they were still standing there where we had left them.

Though we came out of the door, it didn't close behind us which bothered me.

I had to figure out a way to close this door...

"Open sesame."

"Close."

"Shut yourself."

I said all kinds of different phrases for it to close, but it just wouldn't close.

When they saw me acting this way, Cecilia and the knights couldn't help feeling that I was crazy.

But they just watched me as I kept shouting at the door.

The only problem was that no matter what I tried, this door wouldn't close.

Even as time passed, it didn't seem like it would close automatically.

If I didn't get this door to close, then it was very likely that it would be found by someone else and there was the chance of the debug room being abused...

So I had to figure out a way to close it or at least block it off.

For now, it didn't seem like I would be able to close it...

So maybe I should try to find a way to block it off?

Or at least that was what I thought before trying one last thing.

"For the Divine."

When I said this, the same sound as before suddenly rang out and the door started to move again.

In no time at all, the door had closed once more.

When I saw this, I let out a long sigh of relief.

It seemed that the phrase to open it was also the phrase to close it.

At the very least, that was one problem taken care of.

Now for the next problem...

I pulled out Durand without any hesitation and started slashing at the walls around the door.

I didn't hesitate to cut through all of the different etchings on the wall, almost as if I was a madman.

I even ignored all of the looks that Cecilia and the others gave me as I did this.

I knew that I couldn't allow these things to exist in this world anymore.

Even if I was the only one that would be able to read them, I couldn't take the risk that someone would be able to decode it one day. If that happened and they were to access this place...

Once I was done, I turned to look at Cecilia and the others to say in a deep voice, "We did nothing here, understood?"

Cecilia and the others all revealed slightly terrified looks when they heard this.

I'm sure that I must have looked terrifying since I had never acted this way before.

For them seeing it for the first time, it was something that they couldn't help being scared by.

But that was just how important this was.

Slowly all of them gave nods of agreement to what I said.

But I wouldn't let it end there as I said, "Raise your hand and make a vow."

All of them were taken aback that I would take it this far, but they still agreed and did it.

Once we were done, we immediately left that place and returned to the camp.

The debug room...

How could such a terrifying thing appear in this world?

I knew that this world was based on the game, but why did even this come along with it?

Doesn't the person who built this world know how dangerous this room was?

No matter what, no one could know about this ever.

Or else...it might be the end of this world.

Chapter 545 Grab Him

We were able to come back before the party ended and were able to reintegrate ourselves in the celebration without any problems.

When it was all over, I pulled Haley aside to tell her a few things.

"Develop this place, but don't develop too deep. Make sure to never come close to the door, or else it'll be the end of the world."

Haley was very confused when she heard this and she looked at Cecilia for an explanation, but Cecilia just shook her head to show that she didn't understand.

Even though she had been with him this entire time, she hadn't understood a single thing about what he did.

Still, since these were his orders, she chose to follow them to the end.

Afterwards, we stayed for another two weeks to start building up the town.

Since it was already decided that this place would be developed as a dungeon town, it took no time at all to start building up a few things.

There were several more people that were called here by Haley and it was resembling a town by the time that we left.

There was an inn, a branch of Haley's store, and even an Adventurer Guild that had been built.

In time, there would be more people that immigrated to this place, but for now, it would just be an outpost for exchanging items for the adventurers and mercenaries who would stay to explore the dungeon.

Though if possible, I really wanted to seal this dungeon off forever...

Still, I knew that this was impossible, so I just accepted the current situation.

For now, it didn't seem like anyone would reach the door in the back of the dungeon.

When I arrived back in my territory, the first thing that happened was...

Rose suddenly greeted me with a bunch of butlers and maids as soon as I arrived at our manor.

I couldn't help being caught off guard by this, but then she pointed at me and said, "Grab him!"

I didn't struggle as the butlers came forward to grab me, but I looked at her with a confused look as I asked, "What's happening?"

Rose didn't explain at all as she gave the butlers and maids instructions, "Make sure that he's completely cleaned up in an hour. I'll need him to come to the meeting with me and to look his best, so do all that you can."

"Yes, madam!" The maids and butlers said before dragging me away.

I just looked at Rose with a shocked look, but she didn't look in my direction at all.

She was surrounded by many different people that were asking her about different things.

So I could only let myself be dragged off with a bitter smile on my face.

Over the next hour, I was bathed and forced to wear different clothes until they finally picked out an outfit for me.

It seemed like there was more, but luckily Rose had sent someone to call me over.

So the butlers and maids had no choice but to do a rush job and finish off my dress up session.

By the end of it, when I looked at myself in the mirror, it really was hard to recognize who was looking back. After all, it looked like a completely different person was looking back at me.

I was dressed in completely formal clothes, clothes that I had seen other nobles wear, but I would never wear myself. At the same time, my hair was completely slicked back and gave me a refreshing look.

Though I looked like I was just forced into a fancy outfit, it would be a lie to say that I looked bad.

With the appearance that I had in this body, it really made anything look good.

But I didn't get long to admire my new appearance as I was dragged to a meeting.

This was a meeting in the center of the town, where the town hall was.

When I came in, I found that this room was filled with people.

There wasn't a single person that I recognized, or at least that was what I thought at first glance. When I looked closely, I found that there was someone that I recognized.

It was Viscount Henry's wife.

She was standing behind Rose who stood at the very front of this meeting.

It seemed that she had adapted well to her role as Rose's assistant since the two of them were standing together like it was natural.

When Rose saw me, she waved her hand for me to come over.

As she did this, I could feel the various gazes that were turned in my direction.

Sensing this, I raised my back to stand up straight and walked forward towards Rose.

The gazes that were on me had different intentions, but it didn't seem like any of them had ill intentions. There were many gazes that were filled with curiosity and respect.

At the same time, it seemed like there were a few gazes that seemed to be sizing me up.

I just hoped that I was making a good impression.

After walking over to Rose, she just gestured to the podium at the front of the meeting for me.

I was surprised, but with everyone staring at me like this, I had no choice but to go up.

When I came over to the podium, I was surprised to find that there were already notes waiting for me on it. It seemed that Rose had already prepared everything for me and had just been waiting for me to arrive.

I took a quick look over these notes and immediately figured out what was happening.

This was a meeting about the plan that we had put in place for this area.

This was a plan that was about to unveil what kind of business we wanted the lords of each area to engage in.

The ones that were at this meeting were the representatives who had been sent by these lords, so it was no wonder they were sizing me up.

So now, I would have to address them and introduce everything to build prestige for myself.

I couldn't help giving a secret bitter laugh.

It seemed that Rose had prepared quite the role for me.

Chapter 546 Economic Zone

After clearing my throat, I said, "Guests that have come from far and wide, I thank you for coming and welcome you to my territory."

The way that I said this was filled with the majesty that a powerful noble should have, it really made me look like a proper count like this, even if I didn't feel like one.

After a dramatic pause, I said, "We are all gathered here to discuss the issue that I have sent to your various lords, but I'm sure that all of you have your questions about what the plan is. I just ask that you hold all of these questions until you've heard everything that we have to say."

The people that were sitting around me revealed surprised looks after hearing this, but they nodded in agreement since this was a fair request.

After that, I turned to the board behind me and there was already someone that was putting up a map.

It was one of Rose's subordinates.

It seemed that they really had been well trained that they could even act without me giving them the cue.

Of course, I wouldn't know since I had been away this whole time.

After the map was placed, I took out the pointer that had been provided and started making areas on the map while reading off the script.

The script gave information about these places and the things that they had as their specialty.

The details given were so precise that even those who represented those areas didn't seem to know about them as seen by the surprised looks on the faces of the ones sitting around this room.

They really seemed like they had no idea about anything that I was saying.

Of course, I had no idea about any of this either since I never did any of this work.

Once I finished reading the script, I went on to say, "I hope that all of you will consider what I have said today and will look favourably on the proposal that we have for you all."

The people around the room had looks of deep thought on their faces.

There were even some of them that were looking at me with wary looks, as if they were afraid of me.

I could understand this since I had given them information about their territory that they didn't even know about. If I had information like this, there was no knowing what other kind of information I would have.

Take for example...information about the structures on their territory or information about their armies.

If this information was known, it would be easy for them to invade and take their territory. It was even easier since they knew that I had a count title that would allow me to do whatever I wanted with these smaller nobles.

So it wasn't strange that they were wary of me.

However, since I didn't have any script left, that meant that my role was over.

I was about to go sit down, but Rose came up beside me and held my arm to keep me there.

I just revealed a faint bitter smile that the others didn't see as I remained standing there by her side. But after that faint bitter smile disappeared, I tried to reveal as stern of a look as I could to help her.

Rose couldn't help revealing a faint smile seeing me with this stern look on my face.

She turned back to the others and said, "The proposal that we are making is that we want you to work with us to create an economic zone as we are calling it."

Everyone in the room looked at her with a confused look when they heard this.

Economic zone?

They had really never heard of this term before.

Rose could see this, but she wasn't in a rush to explain.

Instead, after keeping them in suspense for a bit, she said, "The economic zone as we call it is an area where we all work together to improve the economy of each other's territory. For this, we will want everyone to work together to produce the goods that we specify for them."

Rose turned to the map and pointed at Viscount Henry's territory to say, "For example, take this territory as an example. This place is rich in fertile lands and is ideal for planting various types of food plants and plants for materials. So we would designate this place as a farming territory."

She pointed at another territory and said, "This territory has a rich copper mine, so we are hoping that the lord there will focus on developing said copper mine and provide copper not just for the region, but also to sell to other regions."

She went on to point out many different territories and their specialties before going into detail how they would help these territories distribute the products that they produced.

With Haley's distribution network that now spread all over the country with the help of the royal family and the duke, they had no problems helping all of these territories distribute everything for a fee.

Plus, she showed just how much they would make from all of this which was a major enticement to the representatives.

But in the end, one of them couldn't help asking, "So you're saying that you want us to stop producing food all together and just rely on buying it to support our territory?"

As soon as this was said, all of the representatives narrowed their eyes.

This was something that was very concerning for them because...if they couldn't secure the food supply of their territory, then it was impossible for them to be truly safe.

If they relied on buying food, there was no knowing if that food would stop because of some kind of accident.

Though it could also stop if some disaster happened, at least it would be safer to produce one's own food.

So this was a major problem in them accepting this proposal.

Chapter 547 Surprise Visitor

However, this was something that Rose had already considered.

She didn't hesitate at all as she pointed out some areas that were marked out on the map.

"To relieve your worries about this, we have relegated a certain amount of land in each of your territories for this. As long as there's no disaster that strikes, then there won't be a problem in terms of food for all of your territories."

The representatives all looked carefully at the map at the areas marked before slowly nodding in agreement.

The areas that had been marked were more than enough for them to relieve their worries about food, but...that was only if they could grow food in those areas. If something unexpected happened or if they weren't able to grow anything, then they would be screwed.

So there were still some worries about food security.

Luckily, Rose and Viscountess Henry had already considered all of this.

Rose just continued by saying, "In addition to the large amounts of wealth that you will be gaining from participating in this economic zone plan, we will also be sending technical support to all of you to help you learn how to grow food more efficiently."

This time, it was Viscountess Henry's turn to step forward to say, "My husband has already agreed to send our people out to teach you all how to grow proper crops when the time comes."

All of the representatives were shocked when they heard this.

It was well known that Viscount Henry's territory was a rich territory because of all the farms that they had. They had plenty of food and could even export that food to other places because of their rich farms.

If a territory with this kind of agricultural techniques were to provide support, then there was no doubt that they would be able to plant proper farms.

But...humans were greedy in the end.

They always wanted more.

Rose was well aware of this, so she played her final card, "In addition to all of this, we will be setting up multiple granaries in these locations." She pointed at several places on the map that were at the center of multiple territories.

With the spots that she had pointed out, it was enough to cover all of the territories of those who had been invited to this meeting.

She then turned back to them and said, "All those that agree to this plan of ours will be required to contribute to the granary closest to them. The amount that will be required is..."

All of the representatives were shocked when they heard this.

It wasn't that they were shocked by how much the amount was, but rather they were shocked by how little it was.

It was so little that it didn't hurt them at all to contribute this little.

But that didn't make sense since this was far from being enough to fill the granary.

Rose also knew this, but she wasn't in a rush to say anything as she kept everyone in suspense.

When she saw that they were completely confused and filled with curiosity, she said, "The rest of the granary will be filled up by our Count Zwein. Everyone that contributes will have the right to receive supplies from the granary when they face troubles and they will receive a dividend from it each year."

All of the representatives were shocked when they heard this.

After all, not a single one of them was confused on what this meant...

Basically, they were being paid in food to join this plan and they would be getting free support from it. The fee that they were paying was nothing more than a formality.

So this really was an enticing offer.

It really didn't seem like they would be losing anything from agreeing to this plan.

Rose's trump card had pushed the rest of them over the line and now it seemed like they were very agreeable to these terms.

Seeing this, I couldn't help shaking my head and thinking...

"They're all just dancing in Rose's hands."

She had already guessed all of their reactions and what they would think, so there was no way they would be able to outsmart her.

After letting them talk amongst themselves in an excited manner, Rose said, "Since everyone has a favourable impression, shall we sign the agreement then?"

That was when everyone hesitated.

There were some that were hesitating to see what the others would do, there were some that were hesitating because those were the orders they had been given, and there were some that just didn't want to commit to this right away.

They all were all clearly hoping for even better terms after hearing all of this.

Rose once again clearly expected this based on the look that she had on her face.

I couldn't help wondering what plan she had this time.

But even I wasn't prepared for the move that she made next.

"Well, it seems that some of you are still on the fence about this." Rose suddenly said in a casual voice. After a pause, she suddenly said, "Then how about we forget about this?"

All of the representatives were shocked when they heard this.

None of them knew how to react as they all just looked at Rose as if they were wondering if she was joking or not.

But Rose had a calm look on her face after saying this.

One of the representatives finally couldn't take it anymore and said, "Countess Rose, let's not joke around. We are very interested in this, but if you would just give us a bit of time..."

Rose suddenly cut him off by saying, "Who said that I was joking?"

All of them suddenly felt a chill run down their spine when they saw the sudden change with Rose.

The way that she suddenly became very domineering like this had completely caught them off guard.

But before any of them could even say a thing...there was a clapping sound that rang out.

"Very good, very good, I like this plan very much."

This voice came from the entrance of this room.

Chapter 548 I Want You For Myself

When this voice rang out, everyone suddenly turned to look in the direction that it came from.

The moment that they saw this person, they couldn't help being shocked.

That included me since I had no idea what this person was doing here.

Standing at the entrance of this room was a beautiful girl with blonde hair wearing a gorgeous dress.

This was a person that everyone recognized since she was famous in the kingdom.

Ever since her father sent her portrait to every part of the kingdom for her sixteenth birthday.

It was the princess, Angela.

She just ignored everyone that was staring at her and moved into the room.

As they watched her come in, they couldn't help standing up as if they were about to bow to her.

The princess just calmly waved her hand before saying to Rose, "This plan of yours, it really is something that I've never seen before. How did you come up with it?"

Rose shook her head before saying, "I can't take all the credit for coming up with it. If it wasn't for my husband giving me this idea, I wouldn't have been able to even begin coming up with this plan."

The princess' eyes seemed to twitch a bit when she heard this, but she still said with the same smile, "It seems like there are still quite a few unknown talented people in our kingdom."

After saying that, she walked over to Rose and said, "How about you come and work for me?"

When they heard this, all of the representatives couldn't help panicking.

While the princess was someone that they couldn't mess with, the fact of the matter was that the princess was now stealing this opportunity from them.

They had already been moved by Rose's proposal, but they had wanted to stall for more benefits.

But if Rose was actually moved by the princess' offer and really cancelled this, then it would be terrible for them.

So they were panicking as they were thinking of a way to try and seal this deal before that happened. But there was also one major problem that was standing in their way to do this.

It was the princess.

The princess had made an offer and if they were to try to cut in on that, there was no doubt that they would offend the princess.

So they were trying to think of the best way for them to backtrack on what they had said before.

Rose further lit a fire under their butts when she said, "Your highness, that is a very enticing offer. May I ask what other benefits you are offering?"

The princess revealed a wide smile as she said, "Whatever benefits you can think of. That's how much I want you for myself."

All of the representatives once again trembled in fear, but also a bit of shock when they heard this. It was as if they could hear something strange in the way that the princess had said this.

After all these years, the princess still hadn't found anyone yet...

Could it be that the princess was into...?

But they quickly shook that disrespectful thought out of their minds and focused on what they needed to focus on. Right now, the most important thing was figuring out how to get Rose back on track.

Finally, one of the representatives couldn't take it anymore and said, "Countess Rose, may we talk to you for a bit in private?" He turned to the princess and said, "Your highness, if you would excuse us for a minute. We have something to discuss about our business prior to you coming."

The princess narrowed her eyes to look at the representative who looked afraid, but she gave a nod in the end and turned to leave.

The representatives were all shocked to see how easily the princess was leaving, but then they felt the urgency of their situation again.

The representative who had spoken turned to Rose to say, "Countess Rose, if possible, can we sign the agreement from before? I have thought about it and have decided that I wish to sign it now."

With this one taking the lead, the other representatives quickly started saying that they wanted to sign as well.

But Rose didn't say a single thing while they were saying this.

Only when they realized that something was off and stopped did she finally say, "Hmm, but it seems like the princess' offer is more enticing. I wonder what I should do?"

All of them started to tremble when they heard this.

They looked at each other with worried looks before the first representative who had spoken before said, "Un, we're willing to donate a bit more to the granary."

Rose just put her finger on her chin and acted like she was thinking about it.

The representatives couldn't help gritting their teeth when they saw this.

They could tell that now, they were the ones that were being pressured. They were the ones that held the cards before, but now it was them that were being pressured by Rose.

After grinding their teeth over this situation for a bit, the representative then said, "We're willing to increase the fees for selling our goods across the kingdom."

The others gave slow nods of agreement, but the pained look on their faces made it clear that they weren't happy about this.

Rose just stood there in silence for a bit before turning to Viscountess Henry beside her.

Viscountess Henry took out a piece of paper that she took and placed on the table in front of these representatives without saying a word.

The smile on her face made it clear what this was.

They all crowded forward to see what the terms were, but the moment that they did...

"This is..."

All of them had shocked looks on their faces when they saw this, but their expressions also looked ugly.

The representative from before couldn't help asking, "Is this serious?"

Rose just looked at him and nodded with a smile on her face.

Chapter 549 Why Are You Here?

The representative had a very ugly look on his face when he saw Rose nodding at him like this.

The piece of paper that she had brought out was the contract that she wanted them to sign. It had all of the new terms that she was proposing.

These terms were far less favourable than the one that she had given them earlier. And the fact that she already had this contract prepared meant that she had already expected all of this to happen.

She had been planning to gouge them like this all along.

That was why they felt a chill earlier...

But what could they say?

Even if these terms were worse for them, it was still quite good in terms of what they would receive from this.

So could they reject this in hopes of getting better terms?

No, it was too late...

So with heavy looks on their faces, the representatives agreed to sign this contract.

At this point, the only thing that they could do was think of a way to explain all of this to the lords they served. They wanted to think of a way to spin it so that it was believable that this was the best deal that they could make.

Rose didn't care about this, all she cared about was that they signed it in the end.

Once everyone signed the contract, there was nothing else that she needed to do here, so she left this place to Viscountess Henry.

She knew exactly what to do with these representatives.

Rose came over to grab my hand and then we left this room to head to another smaller room.

Sitting in this room was the princess who had already been served tea and cake.

No, judging by how it was laid out and the crumbs that were scattered, it seemed that she had been in here for a while.

She should have been sitting here since before the meeting had even begun.

When the princess saw the two of us come in, she looked at Rose with a smile and asked, "Did it work?"

Rose looked back at her with a smile and said with a nod, "It worked perfectly."

I wasn't surprised to see this since I had already figured that it was like this.

The moment that I saw Rose take out the contract, I had already figured out that this had to be intentional.

There was no way that this wasn't intentional when she acted like this.

So I figured that she already knew about the princess being here and even cooperated with her to put pressure on those representatives.

But why was the princess here and why was she working with Rose?

It raised even more questions that it answered.

After waiting for them to finish talking, I came forward and gave a slight bow to say, "Your highness, it's an honour to host you in my territory. But if you do not mind, may I ask you something?"

The princess looked at me with a displeased look for some reason, but she still gave a nod of agreement.

Seeing this, I asked, "Why are you here?"

I didn't hold back at all and just bluntly asked this.

I know that this might seem rude, but at this point, it didn't seem like there was any point in beating around the bush.

The princess also didn't seem to mind that I was so forward about this, though she did seem a bit unhappy that I was asking her this question.

Still, she quickly revealed a smile and said, "Didn't my brother tell you that I was to be sent here as my royal father's representative for the ore trade? So here I am."

I was surprised to hear this, but I did remember that the fourth prince had mentioned this before.

Though I really never expected her to come this soon.

I had only been away for two weeks and the princess had suddenly dropped in.

During this, I also couldn't help looking at Rose with an apologetic look.

I'm sure that she had suffered quite a bit having to deal with this while I was gone.

But to my surprise, I found that she didn't seem bothered by it at all.

She just looked at me with a smile as if she was happy to see the princess here.

I couldn't help feeling confused when I saw this, but I turned my attention back to the princess to say, "Then your highness, are you going to talk to Haley about the ore trade? Unfortunately, she's currently busy with another project, so she most likely won't have the free time to discuss this with you. So in her place, I could help show you around first so you can get an idea of how trade goes."

The princess shook her head before saying, "There's no need for that. I don't really need to do anything since everything has been going well. My visit is nothing more than a formality."

I was surprised to see that the king trusted me this much, but I still felt strange.

After all, if she wasn't here for this...then what was she here for?

As if she could understand what I was thinking, the princess suddenly said, "What I'm actually here for has something to do with you, your lordship?"

"Me?" I couldn't help saying in a confused voice.

The princess said with a nod, "There's something that I want your help with, so I need you to do something for me."

I raised a brow and said, "I'll do what I can, but I'm sure that your highness can find someone better to help with this, right?"

It wasn't that I was chasing her away, but...

It was never a good thing to get too close to the royals.

But the princess just shook her head and said, "No, it's something that only you can do. So I definitely need your help on this matter."

I was even more confused when I heard this, but I slowly said with a nod, "Alright, I'll do what I can to help your highness."

Chapter 550 Marry Me

The princess gave a happy nod when she heard this before saying, "It's a very simple matter that I need your help with. All you have to do is say yes or no to the question I'm about to ask."

I was very surprised to hear this and I couldn't help looking at the princess with a strange look.

But in the end, I gave a slow nod to show that I understood.

After seeing this nod, the princess said, "I want you to marry me. Do you accept this?"

"Huh?" That was the only thing that I could say when I heard this.

I looked at the princess with a very strange look after I slowly came back to my senses.

This princess was completely different from before...she was no longer so shy that she wouldn't even look at me anymore. Instead, she was directly asking me if I wanted to marry her.

But I also couldn't help looking at Rose with a cautious look.

Someone was proposing to me right in front of her, who was my wife. It would be strange if I didn't end up in the dog house tonight because of this.

However, to my surprise, I found that Rose didn't have an angry look on her face.

She just had a calm look that almost seemed like there was a faint smile on her face.

It seemed like she was accepting this instead of being against it.

But why?

Seeing that I was still stunned and not saying anything, the princess couldn't help saying, "Well, how about it? Will you marry me?"

I slowly came back to my senses and asked, "Your highness, why are you asking this of me? I just don't understand."

The princess said with a smile, "Well, you're the one that I've chosen and my royal father agrees to this. So there's nothing else that needs to be said...Well, other than you agreeing to it."

I was still very confused, but there was something shocking that had been said by the princess that caught me off guard again.

She said that the king already agreed to this...

Why would the king agree to this?

There shouldn't be anything to gain from this...unless there was something that I didn't know about.

I looked at her with narrowed eyes and then asked, "You're saying that the king agreed to this? Why?"

For the first time, the princess revealed an awkward look.

It seemed like I had struck at the heart of the matter, there seemed to be something that she was hiding from me.

After an awkward silence, the princess suddenly said, "There have been aggressive marriage offers from the surrounding countries for me. It's hard for my royal father to keep rejecting them, so he wants to set another engagement for me during this time."

As expected, there really was another reason for all of this.

They wanted to turn me into a scapegoat to help them solve this problem.

But there was something that also bugged me.

Why would the surrounding countries suddenly send all of these aggressive offers of marriage?

If they wanted to do this, why would they wait until now to do it?

So I asked, "Why are they suddenly sending all of these offers now?"

The princess revealed an awkward look at first, as if she didn't want to tell me. But in the end, she said with a sigh, "It's because of the ore trade with the Dwarven Kingdom. They want to build relations with our country to get a piece of it."

My chin dropped the moment that I heard this, but that expression on my face eventually turned into a bitter smile.

That was because...I was related to this in the end.

It wasn't that they were turning me into a scapegoat, they were combining our problems together.

After all, there was no doubt that the surrounding countries would also come looking for me on this matter since I was the one that initiated the trade with the Dwarven Kingdom.

By tying me with the princess now, it would be like saying that they stood with me and that if they wanted ores through us, they would have to go through the kingdom.

This was indirectly a way to protect me as well.

But I couldn't just use a young girl's future in exchange for this.

Making the princess marry me...it didn't sound like a good thing.

So I looked at the princess who was just waiting for me to say something and I said, "Your highness, I understand the predicament that this puts you in, but..."

Before I could finish, Rose suddenly said, "Before you say anything, let's talk in private."

I looked at her with a surprised look, but seeing the look that she was giving me, I slowly gave a nod.

We excused ourselves from that room and went to a different room.

Once we came into this room, Rose turned to me and said, "Why are you rejecting the princess?"

I was caught off guard by her suddenly asking me this, but I still said, "It's just a marriage of convenience, I don't feel like there's a need for this."

Rose shook her head and said with a sigh, "Do you really think that it's like this? I can tell you that it's not, so is there any other reason that you can't accept this?"

I was even more surprised when I heard this.

She was my wife and now she was asking me why I wouldn't marry another woman...

This was a very strange feeling for me, so I couldn't help asking, "Why do you want me to marry her? Isn't it good if I say no?"

Rose just said with a smile, "I already told you that I don't mind you having multiple wives. In fact, it just means that there are more women who recognize how excellent my husband is."

A very strange look appeared on my face when I heard this.

I really couldn't understand what she was thinking when she said this and I don't think that I would ever understand.

But Rose just said all of this with a smile on her face like it was something natural.

She then asked me, "What else is wrong?"

I gave a sigh and slowly said, "This is nothing more than a marriage of convenience without any feelings. A good marriage requires both sides to have feelings for each other or else it will end up with one side leaving the other. I don't want to force her into this kind of marriage."

Rose gave a nod before saying, "That's very easy to solve."

A surprised and confused look appeared on my face when I heard her say this. Slowly, I asked, "How are you going to solve this?"

Rose revealed a smile as she said, "It's plain and simple, we just have to ask her how she feels about this." Then without waiting for a response from me, she grabbed my hand again and left this room.

In no time at all, we appeared back in the room that the princess was waiting in.

After coming in, Rose looked at the princess and asked, "How do you feel about my husband?"