

Shota's Isekai NTR Adventure #Chapter 671 Award ceremony (1) - Read Shota's Isekai NTR Adventure Chapter 671 Award ceremony (1)

Chapter 671 Award ceremony (1)

I spent the night in the castle in the end since I had been kept here by the king, listening to all of his complaints.

When morning came, I didn't have any time to relax since I had to get ready.

The award ceremony for presenting the awards for the war was today.

Actually, it could have been held much sooner, but I found that the king had postponed it this whole time. All of the nobles had been waiting in the capital for the award ceremony to happen, but the king hadn't announced when it would be.

I found out last night that it was because they had been waiting for me.

The king had kept all of the nobles waiting just for me.

I really didn't know how to feel when I heard this, but I did know one thing.

The nobles couldn't learn of this or else...there would certainly be a riot.

Though the ceremony time was only announced yesterday after my arrival, it seemed that everything had already been prepared. All of the nobles showed up without any problems and they were all dressed immaculately.

I was the one that stuck out like a sore thumb since my clothes weren't as fancy as theirs.

But there was a different reason why the nobles were all staring at me anyway.

It was because...

"It's him...the Mad Slaughterer..."

"I heard that he killed over a million people during the war..."

"I've heard that he buried a hundred thousand prisoners of war alive in the ground."

I could hear all of the gossip that they were talking about when I came into the ceremony hall.

It was clear that they had heard rumours about me, but I was surprised to hear some of the things that they had heard. It was clear that someone had embellished these rumours about me.

As I shook my head with a bitter smile, I saw the fourth prince looking at me.

The fourth prince didn't come over since he was standing there with the other princes, but the look on his face...It seemed like he was proud about something.

Like he had something to do with these rumours that were being spread about me.

It couldn't be that...

No, that was the only explanation!

I wanted to report the fourth prince or even sue him, but then again...who would I even report the fourth prince to in the first place?

He was part of the royal family that set the laws of the kingdom, so it wasn't as if I could get him with the laws in the first place.

So the only thing that I could do was glare at the fourth prince to show that I was angry at him.

It was clear that the fourth prince misunderstood this as he gave me a look like he was saying, "Don't worry about it! I was happy to do it!"

I really felt like punching that look of his face, but I had to think about the time and place.

Since this was an award ceremony, we all took our places and waited for the king to arrive. The places that we would take were all related to our contributions during the war.

I had thought that I would be near the back since the generals who commanded the other armies would take more credit, but I was surprised to find that I was arranged near the front.

I could see some familiar faces, but they were faces that I didn't want to see.

For example, Duke Yuletide and General Gardner.

They had led the armies that had kept the enemies at bay and even if they didn't do much, they would still take credit for this accomplishment.

They both looked at me with smiles on their faces as if they were being polite, so I had no choice but to smile back at them.

But in the back of my mind, I was thinking about the things that I would do to them once this was all over.

After the nobles gathered, there was a servant of the king that came out and said, "The king has arrived, everyone bow to welcome the king!"

All of us bowed as the king walked in and it was only when he sat down and waved his hand that we stood up again.

After sitting down on the throne, the king said, "Thank you for gathering today. We have all gathered here to award those brave men who have fought for our kingdom in this war that we suddenly faced. Those that have risked their lives to defend the people of our kingdom, we are grateful to you for your sacrifice."

But then he revealed a sad look as he said, "But before that, I would like to have a moment of silence for all those souls that fell in the battle."

The nobles didn't really seem that concerned, but they at least pretended like they were sad.

From the fourth prince, I had learned all the casualties that we had suffered in this war.

The main casualties were...civilians.

Because of how some of the nobles only cared about their own interests in the war, the invading armies had turned to the villages that were undefended to ravage them.

They wanted to lure out the nobles that were hiding, but at the same time, they had pillaged for their own gains.

This had resulted in the casualties of many civilians.

These nobles didn't care about these commoners in the first place, which was why they acted this way.

It really sickened me seeing them like this, but there was nothing that I could do about it.

Maybe in the future, but right now...

After that moment of silence, the king looked back up and said, "Now, let's give out the awards for those who have achieved merits in the war."

All of the nobles revealed excited looks when they heard this, but who knew if they would be able to keep those excited looks in the end.

Chapter 672 Award ceremony (2)

The ceremony went as one would expect.

The nobles that were in charge of armies received gold and land, while the ones that had distinguished themselves in battle received titles and gold.

It was rare for those that distinguished themselves in battle to receive land since...there wasn't much land in the kingdom in the first place.

No, it wasn't that there wasn't much land, there just wasn't as much usable land to give.

Land could have been given, but it would have been a strain on the finances of these new nobles to develop. So instead, they were given titles and gold to freely develop however they wanted.

If they really wanted these barren lands, the kingdom had a system where they could buy these lands.

Though it would cost them more than if they received these lands as an award.

The only thing that I was concerned about was the fact that I was being ignored.

Though I was standing near the king at the front of this hall, everyone around me was called while I was made to wait.

Even those that were close to the back of the hall were called before it.

It was clear that the king was deliberately avoiding calling me up, but was that a good thing or a bad thing?

To others it might be a good thing since it meant that I was most likely going to receive a special award. But for me, I felt that this was a bad thing since this would just draw even more attention to me...

After the last person was called forward and received their reward, it was finally time for me.

The king gave a nod to me and waved his hand for me to come forward.

When I did, everyone's eyes immediately fell onto me.

It seemed that everyone knew who I was and they were all curious why the king had waited to the end to summon me.

There were some that had jealous looks, there were some that had curious looks, and there were some that just looked at me with calm expressions.

It was clear that all of them had different opinions about this matter, but I didn't care so much about that.

I just cared about what the king would say.

After I came forward and kneeled down in front of him, the king suddenly said, "Rise. There's no need for you to kneel in front of me."

All of the nobles were shocked when they heard this.

They looked at the king with these shocked looks, but he just ignored them as he maintained the same look on his face. It was as if the way that they looked at him didn't affect him at all.

But for the king to regard all etiquette and allow Count Zwein to greet him without kneeling...

This was something that was very serious.

The only ones that were allowed to do that were the dukes and the princes, but even then, they still had to bow slightly. But the king didn't mention anything about bowing either...

Did Count Zwein really have that high of a position in the king's heart?

I just calmly stood up and waited to see what the king would say, but there was a secret bitter smile forming inside of me.

I already had an idea of what was going to happen, still it was hard to brace for it.

The king gave a nod when he saw me looking at him with a calm look and said, "Count Zwein, I think that it's no exaggeration to say that you have contributed the most to our war efforts."

All of the nobles revealed awkward looks when they heard this, but not a single one of them refuted it.

In fact, none of them could refute this.

Could they have done all the things that Count Zwein had done?

No, it would have been impossible for them to do the same things as him.

If they had awakened any of the things that he had awakened, it would have been more likely that they would have been destroyed rather than the enemy.

So they couldn't refute it.

But that didn't mean that they couldn't help feeling envious of everything he had accomplished and everything that he would receive.

They were nobles to their core and they were selfish like that.

The king also ignored all the looks that the nobles gave Count Zwein and continued by saying, "The reward that we have prepared for you is the title of duke."

Cold breaths rang out through the ceremony hall the moment that the nobles heard this.

Duke, that was a title that no one had received since the founding of the kingdom.

There were only four dukes that were in their kingdom and there hadn't been a single new duke added in hundreds of years.

But now the king wanted to grant someone the title of duke...

This was not something that could be given lightly...

There were many nobles that looked at the king with gazes as if they were telling him to reconsider this, but the king just ignored them all.

So in the end, Duke Yuletide couldn't take it anymore as he said, "Your majesty, this..."

Before he could say anything else though, the king suddenly raised his hand and said in a cold voice, "I'm not finished yet."

All of the nobles immediately fell silent when they heard this.

There were some of the lower ranked nobles that even lowered their heads when they heard this.

He was a king that had ruled over this kingdom for a long time, so the prestige that he had developed as a king definitely wasn't weak.

It could suppress these nobles easily.

"Other than granting him the title of duke, there is something else I want to announce."

The king gave a clap and there was someone that came out of the back door.

When I saw this person, I couldn't help being surprised.

It was Angela who had disappeared early in the morning.

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Chapter 673 Award ceremony (3)

When Angela came out, she looked at me with a smile and waved her hand at me.

There was a bitter smile that appeared on my face when I saw this, but I just waved back at her.

After all, I knew that she would be unhappy if I didn't wave back at her.

The nobles around me all looked at me with a strange look after seeing me wave at Angela like this, but I ignored them all. There was nothing that I could say to them in the first place that would allow them to understand the situation even if I wanted to.

Not to mention, I didn't want to explain it to them in the first place.

I was sure that they would find some way to complain about this, so it was better to leave it all to the king.

The king didn't say anything until Angela walked over to his side.

When she was beside him, he looked at her with a smile before turning to look at everyone.

In a serious voice, he said, "I'm sure that all of you have already heard that there was an engagement set for my daughter."

The nobles immediately knitted their brows when they heard this before looking back at me again.

All of them knew that I was the one that had been engaged to Angela previously, so they were naturally focusing on me once this topic was brought up.

The king just ignored all of this as he continued by saying, "I want to announce today that we will be holding my daughter's wedding soon."

The expressions on the faces of the nobles all filled with shock when they heard this.

This was clearly the last thing that they had expected to hear from the king.

But it didn't take long before other expressions appeared on the faces of the nobles.

It was clear that they didn't approve of this since they didn't think that they would benefit from it.

There were many nobles that had been targeting the princess since she had been single, but now that she was getting married...

They had thought that this engagement was nothing more than a sham to fool the other kingdoms. They had thought that once the war was over, the engagement would be broken and they would have their chance.

They never thought that the king would actually marry the daughter that he doted on to someone.

Even if it was someone like Count...No, it was Duke Zwein now, it shouldn't have been like this.

The nobles weren't able to react in time, but they quickly came back to their senses and looked like they wanted to complain.

Before they could, the king suddenly said, "This is a matter that I've decided after asking for both the feelings of my daughter and Duke Zwein. I hope that all of you will respect this."

The nobles that had been about to speak just stood there with their mouths wide open as looks of disbelief appeared on their faces.

It didn't take long for them to quickly turn to look at Angela, but she had looked away with a blush on her face.

It was real!

There really was something that had happened between the princess and Duke Zwein!

So it seemed that even if they wanted to complain, it didn't seem possible for them to complain about this matter. After all, this was a matter that didn't concern them at all, so they didn't have a right to complain.

They could try to put pressure on the king, but what could they really do other than delay the wedding?

So there was nothing that they could gain from speaking up now.

They had already set everything and were only telling them now...it was too late for them to do anything.

As the nobles could only feel bitter about this, but there were some that had other thoughts on their mind.

Even if the wedding was set, there were still other things that needed to be discussed.

They had wanted to wait until after this award ceremony to discuss this, but with this news, it seemed that they couldn't wait. They had to do this while everyone was here, especially Duke Zwein since this was a matter that concerned him.

So one of the nobles suddenly stepped forward and said, "Your majesty, there is something that I want to ask!"

Everyone immediately turned to look at this noble with a confused look, as they were wondering what he was doing.

When I looked at him, I recognized him as one of the other dukes.

This was Duke Southland.

I only recognized him since he had been a part of the award ceremony.

Apparently, he was the general of the army that had been holding back the Darius Kingdom army the entire time.

Though he was a bit different from Duke Yuletide and General Gardner since he had actually been fighting the Darius Kingdom army. So my opinion of this noble wasn't as bad as the other two.

That was until he suddenly spoke up at this moment.

The king narrowed his eyes to look at Duke Southland before slowly saying, "Do you really have to ask your question at this time? This is a time to celebrate my daughter's wedding and you want to ask a question?"

Duke Southland lowered his head as he said, "Your majesty, I apologize for this, but this is a matter that I have to address. I had no choice but to speak up at this moment."

The king kept staring at Duke Southland for a bit before saying in a more gentle voice, "What do you have to ask?"

Duke Southland looked back up and turned to look at me to say, "It's actually a question for Duke Zwein. May I ask you something?"

I was surprised to hear this, but I slowly gave a nod since I was curious what he wanted.

Duke Southland revealed a serious look as he said, "The wyverns, what are your plans for the wyverns?"

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Chapter 674 Award ceremony (4)

As soon as the other nobles heard this, all of them revealed serious looks and turned to look in my direction as well.

This was something that was very important since they had all seen the power of the wyverns.

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that it was only because of the wyverns that the war had ended in the first place.

So they cared very much about who the control of the wyverns fell under.

Even if it was the fourth prince who had shown up with the wyverns near the end of the war, there was still plenty of information from before that gave them the identity of the one who really controlled the wyverns.

They were nobles, so their information network couldn't be looked down on.

Not to mention, they were nobles that had contributed enough in this war to be in this award ceremony.

So there was no way that there would be a single noble that would be simple in this ceremony hall.

After Duke Southland asked this, he looked at me with narrowed eyes that had a serious look in them, almost as if he was trying to put pressure on me.

But I didn't buckle at all when faced with this glare.

I just calmly looked back at Duke Southland and said, "The duke is concerned about where the wyverns are going?"

Duke Southland couldn't help being surprised by how calm I looked, but he said with a nod, "The wyverns are a matter of national security, so naturally I am concerned where they went for the safety of our country."

A faint smile appeared on my lips when I heard this.

I thought that this Duke Southland was a rash fellow because of how he had asked about the wyverns like this, but now it seemed that I had been mistaken.

The way that he had phrased this, it was as if he was putting himself on the side of righteousness by making this about the safety of the kingdom.

There were many nobles that nodded in agreement after hearing him say this, but I just calmly said, "Well, as you already know, there are many wyverns that have already fallen under the control of the fourth prince. Does the duke think that this is a risk to the kingdom?"

Duke Southland slightly knitted his brows when he heard this, but he quickly responded, "Of course not, we are all loyal to the royal family, so there's nothing to be worried about if the royal family is the one controlling them."

But he still added, "However, that doesn't tell us how many wyverns that you've kept for yourself."

All of the nobles looked right at me after hearing this.

I pretended like I didn't really mind as I calmly said, "I gave half to the fourth prince and I've kept half for myself. Is that what the duke wanted to hear?"

Duke Southland and all of the other nobles immediately knitted their brows when they heard this.

After all, this was a much bigger number than they thought it would be.

They thought that most of the wyverns would be turned over to the royal family and they wouldn't be able to touch them. But if half of the wyverns were still with Duke Zwein, then...they might be able to pressure him enough to get him to hand them over.

This was what it was all about.

Everyone wanted wyverns for themselves.

So Duke Southland was about to say something, but he didn't get a chance.

The king suddenly said, "Enough on this matter. The matter of the wyverns will not be discussed again, there is nothing for you."

All of the nobles were once again shocked when they heard the king say this.

After all, not a single one of them expected the king to suddenly come to the defense of Duke Zwein.

They were certain that the king would leave this matter alone since he wouldn't trust Duke Zwein with all of these wyverns either. But to their surprise, the king actually came to defend him...

Could it be that there was some kind of deal between them already?

After a long silence, it was Duke Yuletide who spoke up this time by saying, "Your majesty, I cannot stay silent any longer. This is a matter of national security, so we must discuss where these wyverns will go in the future. They are a valuable asset to our kingdom, not something that can be controlled by a single person."

The king narrowed his eyes to look at Duke Yuletide before saying, "You think that you have a say in this matter? I won't hear any more about this or else..."

All of the nobles were once again shocked to hear this.

After all, not a single one of them expected the king to act in such an overbearing manner.

They had thought that the king would fold under the pressure of two different dukes, but even then, he still protected Duke Zwein.

Duke Zwein might be marrying the princess, but that didn't mean that he should be this important to the king. After all, the king still needed to care about the opinions of the dukes since he needed their help to govern the kingdom.

There was a reason why there were four dukes in the first place.

It wasn't that they were just founders of the kingdom, but they were also powerful enough that the royal family wouldn't be able to take them on.

So there was nothing to gain for the king to protect a new duke like this...

Just what was his majesty thinking?

There were many nobles that thought that the king was crazy for doing something like this, but they didn't know the full story.

If Zwein had control of these wyverns, it meant that all of the wyverns would be under the control of the royal family.

After all, Zwein would be taking the throne soon.

With the wyverns that he and the fourth prince controlled, they really didn't need to fear the four dukes.

Let alone a duke that would be losing his title soon.

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Chapter 675 The net has been cast

The award ceremony was awkwardly dismissed since the nobles didn't know what to make of the ending of that award ceremony.

In the end, most of them avoided me since they didn't want to associate with me after two dukes had stepped up.

Even if the king backed me, it was two dukes who had tried to take the wyverns from me.

They didn't think that I would be able to do anything against two established ducal families as a new duke.

So they were avoiding associating with me to avoid being pulled into this matter.

But I didn't care about any of them since there was something else that I needed to do.

After the award ceremony, I was brought back to the private residences of the castle.

This was where I had stayed last night and where I would be staying while I was in the capital, so it was only natural that I would come back.

Waiting for me was the king, the fourth prince, and Angela.

Unlike me who had to take a wrap-around way to get here, they could just come directly to this place from the back entrance of the ceremony hall. They were sitting there enjoying some tea and cake when I walked in.

Seeing me come in, the fourth prince waved for me to join them while Angela was already pouring some tea and cutting some cake for me.

The maid had wanted to do it, but she had the maid back down and did it herself.

When I sat down, the fourth prince waved his hand for the servants to leave.

In no time at all, the servants had disappeared from the room.

It seemed that he had something serious to discuss with me.

Once the servants were gone, the fourth prince said, "Let's discuss what we will do next. We need to think about how to take care of the other princes."

There was a disturbed look that appeared on my face when I heard the fourth prince say it.

Especially with how calm he was when he said it...

He was basically talking about how to kill his brothers and he was saying it with a calm look on his face.

It was as if he had already come to terms with the death of his brothers a long time ago.

I saw that the king had the same look on his face, but Angela couldn't help looking a bit disturbed.

Un, she didn't know about this plan in the first place, so it wasn't strange that she was disturbed by this. After all, these were her brothers as well.

While I didn't know how good the relationship between her and her brothers was, it wasn't as if she could deny all blood relations with them. So it was only normal that she would feel disturbed by the fact that the fourth prince was planning to kill these brothers of hers.

So I took her hand and patted it on the back.

Angela looked up at me and there was only a moment of weakness before she revealed a firm look to show that she had accepted this.

But it wasn't as if I could accept this that easily.

So I turned to the fourth prince and asked, "Do we really have to kill them? Is there a way to strip them of their power and send them to remote parts of the kingdom?"

Both the king and the fourth prince revealed bitter smiles when they heard this.

However, neither of them said a thing as they looked at me with those bitter smiles on their faces.

Finally, the fourth prince broke the silence by asking, "Do you really think that they would act peaceful and remain in exile? Those people that are already used to having all this power, will they really just listen and stay in exile?"

I was caught off guard by this.

If it was anyone else, they might not be able to answer this question, but... n/ô/vel/b//in dot c//om

I was someone who had knowledge from the game, so I knew just what kind of personality they had.

It was something that had been written about in detail in the game's guide, so I knew that they wouldn't be able to accept this.

These were prideful princes who would rather die than give up their power.

So even if they were left alive, they wouldn't back down...

In the end, I had no choice but to accept that death would be the only way.

Though there was a small part of me that thought...

If there were things that had turned out differently in this world compared to the game of the world, perhaps there was a chance that the same could happen with the princes...

But I also knew that it would take a lot of effort for something like this.

It would require finding many things about the princes to be able to convince them to give up their power willingly.

That was just too much work for this.

After seeing that I had accepted this, the fourth prince continued.

The only reason he had been waiting in the first place was because he was afraid that I would get cold feet midway. So he had been stalling during this to give me the time to come to terms with my emotions.

Once I did, the fourth prince said, "The net has already been cast, the only thing that is missing is bait."

After he said this, he looked at me.

A faint smile appeared on his face as he looked at me.

I knew immediately that he meant that I was bait.

But thinking about it, I really was the best bait for this plan.

Angela wanted to reject this, but I said, "Alright, tell me what I have to do."

She looked at me with a look like she was trying to convince me otherwise, but I just said, "We should end this as soon as possible. The longer we wait, the more things can go wrong."

She still looked at me with an unwilling look, but eventually she gave a nod.

I turned back to the fourth prince and waited for him to explain his plan.

Seeing me looking at him, the fourth prince said, "The plan is..."

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Chapter 676 Wyvern Rock

Over the next few days, there was a rumour that quickly spread across the entire capital.

"Did you hear the rumours about Wyvern Rock?"

"Wyvern Rock? What is that?"

"You know how our kingdom was able to defeat the other kingdoms because of the sudden appearance of the wyverns? I've heard that this was because of something called Wyvern Rock."

"Really? What does this Wyvern Rock do?"

"I don't really know since there are many rumours about it, but it seems like it's some kind of special rock that allows the user to control the wyverns. I've heard that this was how the wyverns were tamed by Count...no, by Duke Zwein."

"There's actually such a magical thing? Then if we were to obtain this, wouldn't we be able to do the same? Ha, ha, ha!"

"In your dreams, ha, ha, ha! Do you think that you're some kind of hero from a story that would be lucky enough to find something like this? People like us should just live normal lives."

"You're right about that, but you could at least let me dream."

"I wouldn't waste my time with that. Aren't you still in the dog house after what happened at the bar the other night?"

"Don't remind me...I still have to think of a way to make it up to her..."

Conversations like this were happening all over the capital as rumours about this Wyvern Stone spread.

Then this came to a peak when rumours of Duke Zwein leaving the city on his wyvern came.

No, it wasn't a rumour since they had seen it happen.

Wyverns leaving wasn't something that could be hidden since wyverns were so big in the first place. Even if he were to leave in the middle of the night, it would be impossible to hide it with how much noise a wyvern leaving the city made.

So there were many people that had seen Duke Zwein leaving the capital on his wyvern.

When this was confirmed, there were many people that started to move.

They all sent people to watch the wyvern as it left the capital and try to follow it as best as they could.

It was as best as they could since the wyvern was flying and they were following from the ground.

This was a hard way to chase a wyvern no matter how one looked at it. It didn't seem likely that they would be able to follow the wyvern and see where it was going.

But to the surprise of the ones following Duke Zwein, they found that the wyvern was flying slowly.

It went at a speed that they were able to follow quite easily.

This raised the suspicions of the ones that were following Duke Zwein.

They reported all of this back to the ones above them.

After three days of traveling, they arrived at a mountain that Duke Zwein landed on.

After Duke Zwein arrived, there were other wyverns that had also landed on this mountain and even went into the same cave as Duke Zwein.

When this was all reported back, there was a frenzy that was raised.

After all, everyone had already heard the rumours about the Wyvern Stone.

When all of these things came together, that was the first thing that they thought about.

Once this was reported back, the people above the ones that were sent to follow Duke Zwein immediately started moving their people. Even if it was reported that Duke Zwein's behaviour was strange, they didn't care at all as they brought their people to come to this mountain.

That included the princes that were desperate at this point.

They had heard about the fourth prince and the wyverns that he had been given.

They had also seen the reports of the fourth prince's wyverns during the war.

They knew that at this point, it seemed very likely that the fourth prince would be made the crown prince.

At this point, they were desperate to do anything that would give them a fighting choice.

That desperation made them irrational to the point where they even ignored the clear signs that were in front of them.

Once they had all gathered at that mountain, the princes met with each other.

There was some hostility that was shown between the princes at first, but it was quickly quelled by a person who stepped up.

"Enough, this isn't the time for this."

It was the first prince who said this as he stepped up to stand in front of all of them.

He swept his eyes across them before saying, "We don't have the luxury to do something like this. You should all know what kind of situation we are in and how dangerous it is for us. We need to take care of Duke Zwein first and make him hand over the Wyvern Stone first. After that, we'll discuss it among ourselves."

The other princes had complicated looks when they heard this, but they all slowly nodded in agreement to this.

After all, they knew that the first prince was right.

Right now, it wasn't even guaranteed that they would be able to obtain the Wyvern Stone since wyverns weren't weak in the first place. That was why they had been able to put pressure on them and the other kingdoms.

If they wanted to take the Wyvern Stone, there was no doubt that they would have to face the wyvern of Duke Zwein and the other wyverns that had arrived in this place afterwards.

So they didn't have the time to be fighting amongst themselves.

After a long silence, they agreed to work together and gathered their men to follow them into the cave.

What they didn't notice was that someone was watching them from a distance.

As they watched over the princes, they suddenly pulled out something and said, "The targets are heading into the net. Be prepared to kill them all."

After they said this, they put that thing away and disappeared into the trees.

Chapter 677 Boom

When they came up to the cave, they were surprised to find...

Narrow.

This cave was very narrow.

Though it was still big enough for a wyvern to fit, there was no doubt that it would be a very tight fit.

So when the princes saw this, they all immediately questioned the ones that they had sent to follow Duke Zwein.

"It's this cave."

That was what all of them said.

They had all seen Duke Zwein enter this cave with the wyvern that he was riding, so they couldn't be mistaken about this. Though they had also felt suspicious of this when they saw this for the first time.

This was something that they tried to convey to the princes, but the princes just ignored them and insisted on continuing into the cave.

Since the cave was so narrow, that meant that not everyone was able to go in at the same time. So they had to only allow their most elite followers to go in first.

Even if they were desperate to find this Wyvern Stone, that didn't mean that they would lose all sense of self preservation just yet. Until they could see it, they wouldn't lose all of their rationality.

With these elite soldiers leading the way, the princes made their way into the cave.

This cave was very straight, so it wasn't hard for them to make their way through it.

After walking forward for a while, they finally arrived at what seemed to be an opening.

Once they saw this, the subordinates of the princes immediately had them step back while they went forward to investigate.

The princes didn't seem like they were willing, but they still listened in the end and waited.

"This is..."

After the subordinates went through the opening, this was the first thing that was said.

Once they heard this, the princes looked at each other and couldn't hold back anymore as they all went forward.

Their soldiers looked at each other with helpless looks before following the princes into the opening.

When they went through, all of them were shocked by what they saw.

This was a large open space that only had a single thing in it.

In the center of this large open space, there was a large glowing stone that was placed on the ground. This large glowing stone didn't seem that special as it was just a glowing white stone.

If one had to mention something special about it, it was how smooth this thing was.

It was like this stone had been polished until it was so smooth that one might even be able to see their reflection if they looked at this stone carefully.

As soon as they saw this stone, the princes all lost their rationality.

They looked at each other with hostile looks, as if they were planning on attacking each other.

That was because in their minds, they could only think, "This has to be it! This is the Wyvern Stone!"

So in their desperation, all thoughts of rationality disappeared and they all wanted to take this stone for themselves.

"Keep them back!"

The princes gave the same order to their subordinates.

Once the object that they were looking for appeared in front of them, they betrayed the people that they had been working with all this time. The moment that they saw what they thought was the Wyvern Stone, all they thought about was how to obtain it.

The soldiers were caught off guard by this sudden change, but they quickly started attacking each other.

In a matter of seconds, it became a battle royale where everyone was trying to push each other back.

The princes also didn't remain idle as they tried to push forward to the white stone in the center, but it seemed like none of them were able to reach it. There was always someone who blocked them from reaching it.

This fight seemed like it wouldn't end at this rate, until...

One of the princes was about to make it through the blockade around the white stone.

This prince was one of the minor ones that no one thought was a threat, so no one really bothered stopping them.

Taking advantage of this, they were able to make it through the others and reach the white stone in the center.

As soon as this prince did, the others finally took notice of this prince and orders were given.

"Shoot him down!"

"Stop him from taking it!"

There were many orders given to target this prince, so the soldiers of various princes stopped fighting with each other and started to focus on this prince.

The few followers of this prince did their best to stop the others from getting to the prince, but there were just too few of them in the end.

Still, they were able to stall them long enough that the prince was able to grab the white stone.

Before anyone could reach him, he was able to pull the white stone out of the ground.

The only problem now was that he had nowhere to go.

Even if he had obtained the white stone, it wasn't as if he could use it to break through the lines of the soldiers around him. Even if he wanted to go anywhere, there was nowhere for him to go as he was completely surrounded.

Seeing all of them around him, the prince held the white stone tightly as he said, "Brothers, how about we talk this through?"

The first prince was the one that stepped forward and said, "There's nothing to talk about. Either hand over the Wyvern Stone or else."

The prince revealed an ugly look when he heard this, but then...

He played his final card.

Without any hesitation, he brought the white stone in his hand up and said, "If I can't have it, I won't let any of you take it!"

All of the princes knitted their brows, but the first prince said, "Don't do anything rash, we can talk about this."

This was completely different from his stance from before.

But before anyone else could say anything, there was a strong glow that came from the white stone.

And then...

Boom!

Chapter 678 Old fourth, is that you?

678 Old fourth, is that you?

When they came to their senses and the white light faded, the first thing that hit the ones that survived was the smell of blood.

When their vision cleared, they saw the red that was all around them.

There was blood and pieces of humans that were scattered all around them,

The ones that didn't have stomachs that were as strong couldn't take this and threw up when they saw this.

The ones that had stronger stomachs just looked around them at the scene of carnage that was there.

The explosion definitely wasn't weak based on the scene in front of them.

The first prince was the one that reacted first as he looked around and said, "What happened? Where's the Wyvern Stone?"

Even though he had almost lost his life as a result of this explosion, he was still thinking about the Wyvern Stone.

The other princes looked around as well, but not a single one of them were able to find a thing.

That pure white stone had completely disappeared.

"Did you really think that there's such a thing in this world?"

A voice suddenly rang out which shocked all of the princes that were still alive.

That was because this was a voice that they would recognize no matter what.

This was the voice of the person who had been putting pressure on them the entire time.

If it wasn't for this person, they wouldn't have had such a hard time in their path to the throne.

But for some reason, they couldn't seem to pinpoint where this voice was coming from.

After a moment of silence, the first prince knitted his brows and said, "Old fourth, is that you?"

All of the princes remained silent as they waited for the answer.

There was a chuckle that seemed to come from all around them before the voice said, "Does it matter?"

The first prince couldn't help knitting his brows even more when he heard this, but he still said, "Old fourth, why are you doing this? Don't you know how sad our royal father will be when he hears of this?"

"Ha, ha, ha." Laughter rang out after he said this before the fourth prince's voice suddenly turned cold as he said, "You're talking about how sad our royal father will be? Have you ever thought of your own actions and how they hurt our royal father?"

The first prince revealed a confused look when he heard this.

Not only him, all of the other princes revealed confused looks.

After all, in their minds, they thought that they had acted as perfect princes that gave their father no reason to hate them.

Yet now, the fourth prince was saying that they had done things to shame their royal father?

After a moment of silence, the first prince shouted, "Nonsense! We've done everything that we could to bring honour to our royal father's name!"

There was a sigh that answered the first prince after he said this.

Along with that sigh, the fourth prince said, "You fools really believe what you're saying, which just makes it worse."

"Fools?" The princes muttered under their breaths before losing it.

The fourth prince just ignored all of this as he said, "Get it all out of your system since none of you will be making it back alive after today."

The princes suddenly fell silent when they heard this.

They looked at each other with blank dismay before looking at the corpses around them. As they looked at these corpses, they could feel a chill running down their spines.

The reality of their situation started to sink in and they started to feel the fear of the situation.

They could tell that the fourth prince was serious about killing them.

So they immediately cast down their pride and started begging for their lives.

At the same time, they gave silent orders to their soldiers to find a way out for them.

The first prince had the biggest change as he no longer acted as prideful as he did before. Instead, he said, "Fourth brother, is this for the throne? Just spare me, I promise I will never contend against you for the throne again."

The other princes started promising the same thing, though not a single one of them really meant it.

All they cared about was their own lives.

The fourth prince didn't say a thing as they begged for their lives.

During this time, the soldiers found that the entrance that they came from had been completely blocked off. At the same time, it seemed that there wasn't a single other exit to this room at all.

They could try to unblock the entrance that they came from, but it was clear that it would take a long time to unblock it.

The fourth prince wouldn't give them this time to escape.

Since the fourth prince didn't say a single thing, the pressure on them became greater and greater.

It was a feeling of helplessness that they couldn't shake, a helplessness that they had never felt before.

They were princes, so they had been privileged since they had been born.

They had never felt this kind of helplessness where they couldn't even control their own lives...

So there were some that broke under the pressure.

There were some princes that picked up their swords and started slashing at the rocks that blocked the entrance, but they couldn't do a single thing to them. They were spoiled princes, they weren't warriors, so it wasn't as if they could cut through the rocks.

The first prince had been begging for his life the whole time, but he eventually also said, "Fourth prince, just what do you want?!"

He no longer addressed him as 'brother' and just called him out as 'prince'.

It was only then that the fourth prince spoke, "Just giving you a taste of the pain that you've caused the people of this kingdom with your incompetence. But let's end this now."

As soon as his voice fell, there were slits that opened in the walls around them.

Out of those slits were shiny arrowheads that poked out.

"No..."

The princes said, but there wasn't a single thing they could do.

Chapter 679 Where is this?

When it was over, there were only corpses that were lying on the ground.

The sharp arrows had filled the princes with holes and there was no way that they would survive with their bodies filled with holes like this.

A door opened up in the stone wall and there was someone that walked through this opening.

It was the fourth prince who was followed by two people holding staves in their hands.

These were magicians employed by the fourth prince and the one that had manipulated this cave. They were earth magicians that had sealed this place off and had created those openings for the arrows to come through.

As he stood over the corpses of his brothers, the fourth prince gave a sigh as he said, "If only you were willing to listen to our royal father instead of cozying up to those who flatter you to go against your own family, it wouldn't have ended like this."

To the fourth prince's surprise, there was a hand that suddenly reached out to grab at his foot.

It was just that this hand could barely move, so it took no effort from the fourth prince to move out of the way.

He looked down at the owner of the hand and slightly knitted his brows.

That was because it was the first prince who was still alive.

Even with four holes in his chest from the arrows that had stabbed into him, he was still somehow alive.

The first prince looked up at the fourth prince and said while coughing out blood, "What choice did you give us? From the very beginning, we were never destined for the throne. You think that we didn't see the way that our royal father looked at you? You're the one that drove us to this."

The two magicians who had been behind the fourth prince knitted their brows when they heard this, but the fourth prince raised his hand to stop them from doing anything.

Looking down at the first prince who was lying there heavily injured, the fourth prince said, "It was your own fault for trying to be something more than you were meant to be. From the very beginning, it was clear that you didn't have the talent for it. If you just accepted that and lived a simple life, then you would have been able to live."

"Who wants a simple life?" Those were the first prince's final words.

The fourth prince looked down at the first prince with a sad look before giving a sigh.

Without a word, he kneeled down and put his hand over the first prince's eyes before closing them.

As he did, he said, "A simple life is best. As long as you and the people you care about are safe, nothing else matters."

With that, the fourth prince stood up and turned around to leave.

As he was leaving, he gave a nod to the men who had been waiting behind the stone door.

When they received this now, they tossed the bucket of liquid beside them into the cave.

After that, they tossed the torches that they had been holding to the liquid that had been splashed all over the cave.

Before the torches touched the liquid, the magicians immediately closed the stone door.

The moment that the flames of the torches touched the liquid, it instantly caught on fire and spread all over the cave. In a matter of seconds, the cave turned into a hellscape of flames.

But there wasn't any opening in the cave in the first place, so it didn't take long for the flames to die from a lack of oxygen.

When the flames were gone, there were only ashes left in the cave.

However, the fourth prince had long departed from that place.

He wasn't interested in seeing the results, he looked forward to the next things that he had to do.

"I'll show you the mistakes that you should have corrected in this life." The fourth prince muttered to himself as he walked out of the cave.

...

"Where am I?"

The moment that I woke up, I didn't recognize the room that I was in.

This was a room that was luxuriously decorated, so there was no mistake that this was the room of a noble.

However, this was a room that I had never seen before.

If I remembered correctly, I had come snuck back to the castle after luring the princes away and had been hiding in the castle for the fourth prince to return.

There was no one guarding me since they were all participating in the operation to take down the princes, but then again, there should have been no reason for them to guard me since no one should have known that I was in the castle.

So why did I wake up in this unfamiliar place?

After staring around me for a bit, I tried to sit up, but I found that I couldn't.

When I looked down, I found that there were bindings that were holding me to the bed.

As soon as I saw this, I realized what had happened.

I had been kidnapped!

But who would want to kidnap me at a time like this?

No, it was better to ask who wouldn't want to kidnap me at a time like this...

After all, there were plenty of people that wanted things from me during this time.

Namely, they wanted me to hand over control of the wyverns that were under me.

So it wasn't strange that I had been kidnapped.

I just couldn't help wondering who was able to kidnap me when I was in the palace and bring me out like this. This didn't seem likely at all since the palace should have been heavily guarded.

No, once again, this wasn't the case.

Most of the personnel of the castle had been directed to the fourth prince's plan.

It was the one time that the castle was lightly guarded, making it easier for people to sneak in.

Not to mention that most of the guards had been sent to protect the king instead of me.

This was just me letting my guard down...

"Creak."

While I was lost in thought, the door suddenly opened.

Chapter 680 Sir, please be gentle

My eyes immediately went to the door when it opened and I saw that there was a figure standing there.

This room was just too dark and the light was coming from behind that person, so I wasn't able to see their appearance.

But judging by their figure, it seemed like it was a female.

After opening that door and staring in for a bit, that figure went over to the side and picked up something.

Judging by the outline of it, it seemed like some kind of lamp.

I knew what was about to come next, so I immediately closed my eyes.

Not long after I closed my eyes, there was a bit of light that appeared through my eyelids.

I could tell that whoever this person was had lit the lamp that they had picked up.

However, I couldn't open my eyes now.

I had no idea what they would do to me once they figured out that I was awake, so I just had to pretend that I was still asleep. Once they left, I would open my eyes again and try to figure out a way to escape.

But that light that came through my eyelids didn't disappear.

Rather, it became even stronger.

It was almost as if that person who had come into the room was getting closer to me.

No, I was certain that they were doing that since I could even feel something coming near me. This was the heat that came from a person, the presence of someone approaching me.

This presence came close to me and then suddenly stopped, as if they were looking over me.

No matter how long I waited, it didn't seem like that presence was about to leave, but it wasn't as if I could open my eyes at this moment.

I had no choice but to suffer in agony and wait for this person to go away.

However, that person took it even further in the end.

I could feel it, they were right up in front of me. It was almost as if they had their face right in front of mine, looking down at me.

When I felt them like this, I couldn't help trembling.

It was a strange fear that I had never felt before...

And this trembling...wasn't missed by the person who was above me.

"Did he just move?"

A soft voice rang out.

This was clearly the voice of a woman, but it was a voice that I didn't recognize at all.

I tried my best to remain still, but it really was hard since I could even feel the breath of this person on my face. It was as if they were putting their face right up against mine, being only a few inches away.

At this point, I was just waiting for the knife to stab into me...but it never came.

Before I could understand what was happening, there was a soft feeling that came from my lips.

This was a feeling similar to ones that I had received before, but it was definitely a different feeling from any other that I experienced.

It was a kiss.

The main difference for this kiss was that it was sloppy and clumsy. It was clear that the person pressing their lips up against mine was not used to doing something like this.

Eventually, I had no choice but to open my eyes since it was getting hard for me to even breathe like this.

When my eyes opened, I saw a face that I didn't recognize.

It was a beautiful face, there was no denying it, but she wasn't as beautiful as my wives. She was just a pretty face that would enjoy the favour of some, but wouldn't be able to bring down nations.

Her eyes were closed as she pressed her face up against me, doing all she could to kiss me.

I had no choice but to struggle to break free, even though I couldn't actually move my arms.

When she felt this, the girl suddenly opened her eyes and was surprised to see me looking right at her.

There was a momentary daze where she froze before she quickly moved back, taking her lips away from mine.

Though there was still a blush that came over her face after she moved away.

The only thing that I did after she moved away was gasp for breath since I had been choking just now. Only when I caught my breath did I ask, "Who are you and where is this place?"

The girl had a look of panic on her face as she heard this, but then she slowly said, "Sir Zwein, this is my father's manor. I brought you here because I knew that you were the one that I was destined to be with."

Her eyes slowly changed when she said this.

The look that she gave me...

Dangerous.

That was the only word that could be used to describe this look.

I even felt a chill run down my spine when she looked at me like this.

But I forced myself to stay calm as I said, "Release me and I won't pursue this matter."

To my surprise, the girl immediately gave a firm shake of the head before saying, "I can't let you leave yet. Before you give me your seed, you can't leave. I will take your seed and make you take responsibility for me, that is our destiny."

Another chill ran down my spine when I heard this.

This time, I could tell that she was very serious about this...

I had to admit that I was a man that thought with my lower half sometimes, but this was one of those times where I couldn't.

A girl that kidnapped me and then tied me up...there was no way that I could get excited about that.

But she didn't give me a chance to say anything as she climbed onto the bed that I was bound to.

She slowly started taking off her clothes as she said, "Sir, this is my first time. Please be gentle."