

Living Shadow 50

Chapter 50 Tools

Damon emerged from the forge minutes later, his expression darker than before. During this time, Carls had been chatting with the blacksmith, Anvil, convincing the standoffish man to assist Damon. While Anvil wasn't the friendliest, Carls knew him well enough to push past his prickly demeanor.

When Damon stepped into the main shop, Anvil glanced at him. His sharp eyes immediately caught the shift in Damon's demeanor. The coldness in the boy's gaze had been replaced by something deeper—a painful, hollow look, as if he'd just endured a significant loss.

Anvil smirked knowingly.

"Looks like you suffered quite the blow. And here I thought you were walking out with some rare treasures."

Carls, ever the optimist, tried to cheer Damon up.

"No worries, Damon. Life's full of wins and losses. You'll bounce back."

Damon didn't respond. He silently slung the bag off his shoulder, set it on the counter, and pulled out the ores he had collected.

Anvil's smirk turned to a mocking grin, but it quickly froze when his eyes landed on the materials Damon produced. His hands trembled slightly as he picked them up to inspect them.

"This... this is magisite..." Anvil stammered, his voice barely above a whisper. He turned to another piece, his face growing pale.

"And this... it can't be cursed ore, can it?"

Carls' eyes widened as he leaned in for a closer look.

"I never doubted you, Damon. I knew you had a sharp eye!"

Damon remained silent, his mind still spiraling.

'Two million. That mana crystal was worth at least two million zeni,' Damon thought, his lips twitching in frustration.

'No, wait. I didn't even test it. If I'd found the right buyer, it could've been ten million. TEN MILLION! And that damn shadow devoured it...'

While Damon quietly lamented his loss, Anvil was too busy marveling at the ores, practically salivating over the rare finds. Carls stood awkwardly between them, unsure of how to join the conversation. In an effort to break the silence, he spoke up.

"Anvil, didn't you say you'd make something on the house if the ore turned out to be good?"

The blacksmith cleared his throat, snapping out of his trance.

"Ah, yes. Of course. So, what do you have in mind, kid?"

Damon's lips pressed into a thin line as he considered his options. He finally nodded and spoke.

"I need arrows. They should have hollow tips that can carry poison. I also want twin daggers forged from the magisite."

As Damon explained, Anvil grabbed a notepad and began sketching out designs.

"The arrows..." Damon continued, "...should have heads made from the cursed ore."

Anvil raised an eyebrow but didn't interrupt, letting Damon elaborate.

"Cursed ore," Damon said, "kills magic on contact and slows the flow of mana. It's toxic and attracts monsters. Perfect for arrowheads."

He hesitated before adding, Experience new stories on empire

"I don't want them handled directly for too long. The effects aren't safe."

Anvil nodded, jotting down notes.

"What about the dagger?"

"Use the magisite," Damon instructed. "Its ability to absorb magic makes it perfect for close combat. I want a compartment in the hilt for storing and releasing poison when needed."

Anvil hummed thoughtfully, his hand gliding over the notepad as he worked.

"Anything else?"

Damon's eyes gleamed with determination.

"A collapsible bow. Make it lightweight, compact, and durable. It needs to be easy to assemble and disassemble. Same with the arrows. Everything has to fit under my academy uniform."

Anvil looked up, impressed despite himself. "You've thought this through."

Damon ignored the compliment and added one final request.

"And a hook. Something strong but small enough to carry discreetly."

Anvil leaned back, reviewing his sketches. "This'll cost you."

Damon smirked faintly. "Ten thousand zeni for the extras. Take it or leave it."

The blacksmith grumbled under his breath but eventually nodded.

"Fine. Ten thousand. But you're getting high-quality work, so don't come back complaining."

Damon didn't reply. Instead, he watched as Anvil finalized the designs, the blacksmith's hands moving with practiced precision.

Carls broke the silence again, his voice tinged with excitement.

"This is going to be incredible, Damon. You're going to have some serious gear."

Damon gave a faint nod, his mind still partially distracted by the loss of the mana crystal. Even so, he knew the weapons would be worth it. He couldn't afford to be unprepared for whatever challenges lay ahead.

Anvil leaned back, a sly smile spreading across his face.

"These aren't the weapons of someone planning to fight honorably. Looks like you're preparing to spill blood... my instincts were spot on."

Damon shook his head, his tone cold but calm.

"I'm not planning to kill anyone. I'm just hunting."

Anvil chuckled, a deep, knowing sound.

"Doesn't matter to me. I'm just the craftsman. As long as the weapons serve their purpose—to fight and kill—I'm satisfied. Just don't let them waste away without tasting blood."

Damon nodded curtly. "Fine by me."

He turned his gaze to the blacksmith. "When can I have them?"

Anvil picked up the ores and examined Damon's sketches carefully.

"If I work like a slave? Four days."

Damon's eyes narrowed, frustration flickering across his face.

'Four days is too long. Looks like I'll need substitute weapons in the meantime.'

Carls noticed Damon's expression and opened his mouth to speak, but Damon beat him to it. He reached into his bag and pulled out a worn dagger, placing it on the counter.

"I need this sharpened. And I'll need a bow and some arrows. How much will it cost me?"

Anvil waved his hand dismissively.

"No charge. I'll lend you some gear. Just bring them back in four days when you pick up your custom weapons."

Damon's eyes narrowed again. "And if I break them?"

Anvil stroked his beard, laughing heartily. "Then it means I'm not a good enough craftsman."

Damon frowned, biting his lip. "I meant no insult."

The blacksmith chuckled again. "None taken."

Damon nodded. "Alright then. I'll see you in four days."

Anvil disappeared into the back of the shop, returning moments later with a simple bow and a quiver of arrows. He handed them to Damon, then took the dagger to sharpen it. It took only a few minutes before Anvil held the blade up, inspecting his work.

"Here you go." He handed it back to Damon, his sharp gaze fixed on him. "So, you're part of Quick Hand, eh?"

Damon's jaw tightened as he took the dagger. Memories of the smuggling ring in Valerion flickered in his mind. He shook his head.

"Not anymore."

Without another word, Damon shouldered his bag, his expression unreadable. Carls exchanged farewells with Anvil before following Damon out of the shop.

The pair made their way through the bustling streets, ticking off the remaining items on Damon's list. Their first stop was a glassmaker, where Damon purchased vials and beakers of various sizes. From there, they visited a potion shop, filling the containers with a variety of potent chemicals and solutions.

Their final stop was the adventurers' guild—or rather, the back alley behind it. Damon procured monster glands from shady merchants, carefully squeezing the volatile contents into empty glass beakers.

By the time they were done, the sun had set, and the streets were bathed in the faint glow of twilight. Damon's steps were heavier now, exhaustion creeping into his limbs.

"That's everything," Carls said, breaking the silence.

Damon nodded, his mind already focused on his next task.

"Thanks for the help, Carls. I'll take it from here."

With a quick farewell, Damon left his companion and headed back to the academy under the cover of darkness. Instead of returning to his dormitory, he made his way toward the forest at the academy's edge—his usual training ground.

Under the shadow of the trees, Damon stashed his loot in the hollow of a large tree, carefully concealing it. He donned his academy uniform and began reorganizing his equipment, testing the feel of the bow and the balance of the freshly sharpened dagger.

Once his preparations were complete, Damon began his training. He focused on honing his control over his newly expanded mana pool, now at a staggering 90. Testing his [5x] skill, he felt the surge of power ripple through his body, far beyond what he'd experienced before.

A rare smile crossed Damon's face as he marveled at the results. Despite the heavy loss of the mana crystal, a spark of satisfaction burned in his chest.

'This is just the beginning,' he thought, his resolve hardening.

Every step, every ounce of effort was part of his grand preparation—for revenge.