

Living Shadow 80

Chapter 80 Best Smith in Town

For the remainder of their journey to Anvil's workshop, Damon bombarded Carls with questions about Carmen Vale. Usually, Carls was tight-lipped when it came to giving out information for free, especially without proper compensation. But when it came to the kind hunter, Carls let his guard down, unwittingly spilling everything Damon wanted to know.

By the time they reached the workshop, Damon had pieced together every detail he could about the man. He learned about Carmen's modest residence, the whispered rumors of his backstory, and even information about his daughter.

Carls, being an experienced info broker, had dug up details about her magical attribute and upbringing, painting a vivid picture of the life the hunter had left behind.

Damon felt an uncomfortable heaviness in his chest as he processed it all. Despite his resolve to steel himself against his guilt, his heart swelled with conflicting emotions.

'So, he was her last surviving relative...!' Damon thought bitterly, his lips tightening.

The weight of the revelation pressed down on him. He had taken more than just a life—he'd ripped apart what little family the girl had left.

He bit his lip, his thoughts spiraling.

'How did he manage to stay so optimistic despite everything he'd been through? Despite all he'd lost?'

The question gnawed at Damon, but he knew it was one he'd never be able to answer. Not after what he'd done. Carmen's story, as tragic as it was, only highlighted Damon's own flaws. Compared to the hunter's quiet strength, Damon's brooding seemed almost pathetic—an overindulgence in self-pity.

He pulled his hood lower over his head, the blindfold already concealing his eyes. He couldn't see his own expression, but he wondered what kind of face he was making.

'Probably something pitiful,' he thought with a grim twist of his mouth.

They soon reached Anvil's secluded workshop. As they approached the door, a raven descended from the sky and landed gracefully on Damon's shoulder.

"Shoo! Damn bird!" Carls exclaimed, stepping closer and waving his hands to scare it off.

Before Carls could do anything else, Damon caught his hand, his tone calm but firm.

"He's with me."

The raven, Croft, let out an annoyed caw, glaring at Carls with its beady black eyes.

Carls stared at Damon, confused.

"Didn't peg you as the type to keep a pet—especially something as ominous as a crow."

Damon shook his head as they entered the workshop.

"He's a raven, not a crow."

The shop looked the same as it had the last time Damon visited, except this time the usual clanging of metal against hot ore was absent. Anvil wasn't hammering away at his forge. The quiet felt out of place.

"Where's the old man?" Damon asked, his voice echoing slightly in the empty workshop.

Carls, more intrigued by Croft than the apparent absence of their host, cupped his hands around his mouth and called out,

"Hey, Anvil! You in there, or did you finally keel over? I brought Damon to pick up his stuff!"

A door creaked open, and Anvil stepped out, wiping his hands on a soot-stained cloth. He wore his usual fireproof apron, his rugged face partially hidden behind a thick, graying beard. His sharp eyes scanned Damon, taking note of the blindfold and the raven perched on his shoulder.

"The hell happened to you?" Anvil asked, his tone a mix of curiosity and concern.

"What's with the blindfold and the bird?"

"I'm not blind, if that's what you're thinking," Damon replied.

"And as for my absence, let's just say I had a little scuffle with a classmate."

Anvil chuckled deeply.

"Looks like more than a little scuffle if you were out of commission long enough to ignore calls and messages."

Carls smirked, leaning casually against a nearby table. "At least tell me you won."

"I did," Damon replied flatly.

Anvil scratched his beard thoughtfully. "Your weapons are done. Did you bring back the ones I lent you?"

Damon froze for a moment before realizing his mistake.

"Oh... right. I forgot to bring them. I rushed here as soon as I woke up."

Anvil threw his head back and laughed heartily.

"Hah! That's a relief. For a moment, I thought you'd managed to break them. Glad to hear my craftsmanship is still as sturdy as ever."

"They were excellent weapons," Damon admitted, bowing his head slightly.

Anvil grinned.

"If you thought those were good, wait until you see what I've made for you this time. Might've gone a little overboard."

Damon nodded, watching as Anvil moved to a large chest behind the counter. The old smith hefted it with ease, gesturing for Damon and Carls to follow him to a back room.

Croft took flight, landing on a beam above as they entered the room. Damon noted with some relief that the bird remained silent.

The room itself bore the marks of countless tests and experiments. A battered training dummy stood in one corner, its charred and patched form a testament to the abuse it had endured over time.

Anvil placed the chest on the ground and opened it with a flourish, his eyes gleaming with excitement.

"You wanted a bow, daggers forged from magisite, hollow arrows made from cursed ore, and a grappling hook, right?"

Damon nodded. "That's correct."

Anvil leaned forward, his excitement palpable.

"The bow was the easiest to make. I designed a collapsible metal bow with moving parts. You can fold it into a compact form and carry it under your uniform."

He reached into the chest and pulled out a silver, cross-shaped contraption. At first glance, it seemed unimpressive—more like a complicated ornament than a weapon.

"What, not impressed?" Anvil teased, shaking the bow lightly. With a metallic snap, it expanded, transforming into a full-sized bow.

Damon's expression shifted to surprise. "Huh."

Carls blinked, equally stunned. "That thing was actually a bow?"

Anvil handed it to Damon, who took it carefully. He tested its balance, stretched the bowstring, and felt its seamless tension. A small button in the center caught his eye. Pressing it, he watched as the bow folded neatly back into its compact form.

"This is incredible," Damon said, genuinely impressed.

Carls clapped a hand on Damon's shoulder, grinning.

"Told you, Anvil's the best smith in town."

Damon turned back to the bow, feeling the faint magical energy coursing through it. "The magisite in the metal—its magic conductivity is remarkable."

Anvil laughed. "Haven't seen anything yet."

He grew more serious as he reached into the chest again.

"The hollow arrows were trickier. Ingenious design, really. The hollow tips make them fly faster and hit harder."

He paused, frowning.

"But the cursed ore is dangerous. Prolonged exposure can cause... complications. In the worst cases, even death."

Damon's grip on the bow tightened. "I'll manage."