



Enough of This Slow Life!  
I WAS REINCARNATED AS A  
**HIGH ELF**  
AND NOW I'M  
**BORED**

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# Chapter 1 — The Damned Elf and the Damned Dwarf

Lying down on a large branch in a great tree, I took a bite of fruit. The satisfying crunch brought a light mixture of sweet and sour flavors to my mouth. This fruit, known as an apua, was said to be a key ingredient in a miraculous medicine that could reverse aging. It boasted an impressive price tag, but in this forest you could eat as many as you could stomach.

“*Spirits of the wind,*” I murmured, tossing the leftover core. A moment later, a sudden whirlwind crushed it into paste. As the fruit’s flesh became nourishment for me, so did its core become nourishment for the earth. And with a bit of luck, spitting its seeds back to the ground would result in a new tree.

As I yawned, a bird fluttered down from the sky to land on my chest, happily chirping away. I stretched a finger out toward it, and it snuggled up to my hand like a spoiled pet. It knew full well that I would never hurt it. It knew I was a member of a people that lived in harmony with the forest: an elf.

To be specific, I was a high elf, a type more in tune with the spirits. But as far as the forest-dwelling peoples went, there wasn’t much of a difference between us. Both elves and high elves rarely changed. They were largely immutable.

“Yeah. Honestly, I’m tired of this,” I muttered to myself as I lazed away alone in the woods.

If I ever grew hungry, there was always fruit around. I could refine my skill with a bow, though there was no need to hunt. And I could speak with the spirits to peek into the underlying truths of the world. For those desiring slow, peaceful days, the lifestyle of an elf was more than they could ever wish for...but after 120 years of it, I had had my fill. Technically speaking, I was probably closer to 150 years old, but I wasn’t really self-aware until about 30 years old, so I could only start counting from then.

Of course, other elves and high elves had no complaints about their way of life. They were fully satisfied to live alongside their beloved forest.

After all, they had never experienced anything different. The idea that another way of life was possible hadn't even crossed their minds. However, though I was born in the Forest Depths and had never once left its bounds, from the moment I was self-aware, I had known of another life.

Yes, I had been reincarnated. I still had my memories of my previous life in a different world. There, I was human and elves existed only in fantasy. My world, Earth, had been plagued with brutal and gruesome wars, but it had also been overflowing with entertainment, art, and culture. Knowing of a world of conflict, one that demanded each individual carve their own way, I fully appreciated the magnificence of the gentle, peaceful lives these elves led. But at the same time, coming from a world of such rich culture, I could only bear the lack of stimulation in elven society for so long. First and foremost...

"I wish I could eat meat..."

I was sick of living off of fruit. In response to my muttered complaint, the bird sitting on my chest took off in a panicked flight.

*Huh, what a smart bird.*

But I had never had any intention of catching it and eating it. If I lit a fire in the Forest Depths, I'd be drowning in complaints in no time. If I wanted to eat meat, I'd have to cook it, meaning I'd have to leave the forest. To put it another way, if I left the forest behind I'd be able to cook and eat meat, and then I'd be able to travel around and live a much more stimulating life.

"All right, I am done living as an elf. I simply am not...nah, I'm just not really cut out for it."

I had made an honest effort to assimilate into high elf society, living exactly as they did for over a hundred years, but I was at my limit. High elves were ageless and could live for over a millennium. When their bodies finally did perish, their souls would live on as spirits in nature, drifting about the natural world until the end of time. The thought of living like this for another 850 years, or even until the end of the world itself, wasn't all that appealing.

If I was going to live that long, wouldn't it be better to see the world, to experience all the foods and sights it had to offer? Once I'd had my fill of the world, maybe then I'd be interested in becoming a spirit or whatever.

I headed to a river running through the forest, then picked up some rocks and began striking them against each other, breaking chunks off until I had formed a stone knife. There were no processed metals in the forest.

While there were certainly ores in the earth, it was generally understood that processed metals were a source of fear for the trees. It was no wonder the elves held animosity toward the dwarves, a race that excelled at the art of blacksmithing. I could understand the trees fearing tools like axes that were capable of cutting them down, but it didn't seem to make much sense when it came to things like spoons, forks, and other cutlery.

If one needed a blade in the forest, their only options were to carve one out of stone or fashion one from the teeth or bones of a large animal. However, even without being crafted into tools, the bones and teeth of large animals were prized valuables in elven society, so only the older elves were permitted to own them. Otherwise, the younger elves ran the risk of being consumed with avarice and bringing unnecessary death to the animals of the forest.

Yes, a greedy young elf like me would never be permitted to own such a thing, but at this point I didn't care much anymore. Once I left the forest behind, I would be leaving those customs behind me as well.

Looking at my reflection in the water, I used my new stone knife to slice away my hair. Long hair was a symbol of the noble high elves, so cutting it short was forbidden. But honestly, I had always felt like it was in the way. Of course, if I messed up with this improvised knife and cut it too short, there would be no going back. So for the time being, I left it at shoulder length.

If someone saw me like this, the high elf elders would lecture me for three days straight. And it would be decades before the scolding stopped. Naturally I had no desire to deal with that, so I decided to leave the forest behind immediately.

All I had done was cut my hair, but already I was starting to feel like my heart had become lighter as well.

There was no one I felt the need to say goodbye to before I left. Though I technically had parents, high elf children were raised by the entire settlement. Our connection by blood didn't make me feel any closer to them than to anyone else in the village. It wasn't like I had no friends in the forest, but I didn't expect any of them to understand my desire to leave.

*Oh well. There's nothing I can do about that.*

This didn't have to be goodbye forever. If fate allowed it, we'd be able to meet again. They probably wouldn't even notice my absence for at least a month.

With that excuse, I began marching to the edge of the forest, my only

possessions being my bow and arrows, a bag of woven ivy filled with apuas, and this stone knife.



The forest where the elves and high elves lived was called the Great Pulha Woodlands in the outside world. Though to be precise, the elves only inhabited a small part deep inside it, which they called the Forest Depths.

The high elves lived in the center of the Woodlands, surrounded by the other elven settlements. With the power of the spirits, the elves had cast a barrier around the Forest Depths, keeping out monsters and other races. In other words, taking a single step outside of the barrier meant you were already in the outside world. That said...

“I didn’t think I’d be attacked by monsters the moment I stepped through. The outside world is a lot more stimulating than I thought...”

To my disbelief, the moment I left the barrier, I found myself surrounded by large canine monsters known as forest wolves. Was this stretch of the forest that dangerous, or was I just that unlucky? But even though I was outside the barrier, I was still deep in the forest. A single plaintive glance to the trees surrounding me was enough to earn their help. They immediately lifted their roots to keep the wolves at bay as I retreated into the treetops.

*I’m safe for now, but I’ll have to deal with those wolves somehow.*

As the wolves growled at me from the forest floor, I had to decide whether I’d kill them or not. Felling forest wolves wasn’t a particularly difficult task. I could take them down just by firing arrows from the safety of the trees. That said, the arrows I possessed were only sharpened wood, and so they might not be able to penetrate thick fur and hide. I would have to aim for their eyes. Luckily, the only form of entertainment in a high elf settlement was to practice hitting difficult targets with a bow, and I had done little else in my hundred-some-odd years there. A small or moving target wasn’t all that much of a challenge.

No, my concern was not whether I *could* kill the wolves but rather whether I *should*. Maybe there was no need to hesitate since they had attacked me first, but the idea of eating wolf wasn’t all that appetizing, and skinning them here seemed like more trouble than it was worth. And of course, carrying one of their enormous bodies with me was out of the question. I could take their teeth or claws, but with so many wolves, it

would be more than I could carry. There might have been value in killing a couple of them, but any more than that would be senseless violence.

“Hmm...well, I guess it’s fine.”

For the moment, I decided to bring one or two down. If that was enough to send the rest running, I could collect some teeth and claws, bury the bodies, and be done with it. If they didn’t run, I could figure something else out then.

In quick succession, I nocked two arrows and let them fly. My target was a particularly large wolf in the pack. If it was the leader, taking it down had a good chance of scattering the others. The first arrow struck the wolf in the eye, causing it to yelp with pain and surprise. As it reeled backward, the second arrow found its home inside the wolf’s mouth.

“Good.” I felt a small sense of satisfaction as I watched both arrows hit their mark. It was good to have a skill you could be proud of, regardless of what it might be. Beyond what it could do for your self-confidence, under the right circumstances it could even save your life.

With their leader struck down, the other wolves were immediately put on edge. The moment I lifted my bow again, they scattered into the forest.





*I see...*

It seemed these monsters were more intelligent than I had thought. I was glad I didn't have to kill any more than that, but I would almost certainly encounter more in the future. I would need to be careful.

"Okay, that's good. Thanks." Patting the tree that had helped me and giving it a word of gratitude, I hopped off of the branch and landed back on the ground.

Pulling the stone knife out from my bag, I quickly acquired the teeth and claws from the expired wolf. A simple stone knife wasn't enough to cut through the hide of a forest wolf, but with a bit of skill, I was able to extract the fangs and claws from the softer flesh surrounding them.

*"Spirits of the wind."*

Putting the teeth and claws away in my ivy bag, I called out softly to the spirits around me, allowing me to invoke their powers. In response to my will, the spirits of the wind created two opposing vortices of air, grinding up the flesh and bones of the forest wolf.

In all honesty, it was a somewhat grotesque scene, but doing this allowed the earth to reclaim the nutrients in the wolf's body faster, providing better nourishment to the trees. This was my way of repaying the trees for their help. Of course, it was really the spirits doing the work, but with no bodies or physical desires of their own, it was harder to return that favor. The best I could do was remember to be grateful.

"Now then..."

With the cleanup finished, I returned to the task at hand. My journey to a settlement outside the Great Pulha Woodlands would likely involve many more similar encounters. After all, I was still only a single step outside the barrier. I still had a long way to go.

That being said...

"The outside world really is stimulating, isn't it?" A smile rose to my face. Even a chance encounter like this was fresh and exciting to someone like me who had spent so long living a peaceful life among the elves. Just thinking about how I'd use these fangs and claws had me feeling giddy.

The larger fangs could be carved into something like a shortsword or a long knife, and I could likely find some other crafts to make with the smaller ones. I would feel bad for the wolf if I failed and ruined the material it had provided for me, so it would probably be best to start by finding someone who could teach me to make knives and other small trinkets.

Either way, my first goal was to find another settlement. I wasn't childish enough to skip through the forest as I left, but it wasn't easy to suppress the urge as anticipation urged me onward.



Bad news: making it out of the Great Pulha Woodlands took me half a month.

I hadn't considered how long it could actually take. I had found a river and followed its flow so I would have easy access to water if I ever wanted to wash myself, but maybe that had been a mistake. I'd encountered numerous monsters who had likely come to the river for water, and I had even been attacked by fish. The water spirits alerted me to any imminent danger, but I'd still get chomped if I was too slow.

But that was in the past now. Munching on some fruit, I finally emerged out of the forest and into the outside world. Seeing a wide-open grassland, the view unobstructed by trees as the sunset cast a red glow over the scenery, I was moved to the point of trembling. The word "horizon" sprang to my mind for the first time in what seemed like forever. This was a vast world, stretching on endlessly. It had to come to an end somewhere, of course, but in that moment I couldn't help but feel otherwise.

Unfortunately, I didn't have the time to soak in the atmosphere. In the distance, I could see a settlement surrounded by stone walls: a city. I began to walk quickly, hoping to reach it before the gates shut for the night.

"Vistcourt" was written on a board beside the gate. It was probably the name of the town.

"Well, if it isn't an elf. What are you all spaced out for? Never been to a city before?" Seeing me staring in wide-eyed wonder at the majestic gate and stone walls, a man with a spear—likely a city guard—called out to me, concerned. Perhaps because of the time of day, there were no others at the city gate, making him the first human I had seen in my one hundred and fifty years in this world.

"I was just admiring the gate. Human, this is my first time coming to a city. Did I make it in time? Can I enter?" Though it was no more than intuition, he didn't seem like a bad person. So I approached with a smile, showing him my hands were empty as I asked to enter the town.

"So it *is* your first time. There's a toll if you want to get in, though. Do you know anything about money? If you have identification from another town, it's twenty coppers to enter. Otherwise, it's one silver," the guard

said, scratching his head with a frown.

*I see.* Naturally, unlike other elves, I had memories of living as a human, and so I understood the meaning and significance of currency. However, understanding it didn't mean I had any, so I shook my head sadly.

"Uh, well, you need money to get into the city. Are you visiting someone who lives here? In that case, I could call them over and they could pay for you." This guard really did seem to be a nice guy.

Unfortunately, the only reason I had come to this town was because it happened to be the first one I saw after leaving the forest. My only option seemed to be selling the parts of the forest wolf I had harvested and using some of that money to pay for entry. But even so, I wasn't fond of that idea. I already had my heart set on making something to wear out of them.

"Um, excuse me. May I interrupt?" a voice called out from behind me. I turned around to find a young man and two young women.

*How long have they been there?*

From my perspective as an elf, all humans were young, but these three were young even by human standards. But on closer inspection, one of the women was actually an elf. There was a chance she was older than me.

The one who had called out to us was the elven woman, looking every bit an adventurer in her leather armor. As the guard and I stared back at her in confusion, she hurriedly pulled me away from the gate by the arm.

"Are you perhaps a high elf, sir?" she asked in a whisper. Elves could see something like a soft glow around high elves. It was a natural result of our immortal souls, so it wasn't something I could really hide. Not that it was something I would *want* to hide. I nodded in response to her question, pain written on my face from how forcefully she pulled on my arm.

An expression flitted across her face, a mix of understanding who I was and confusion as to why I was here. I found the look rather interesting, so for the moment I forgave the pain in my arm. Getting angry at a girl over something so trivial would be rather petty of me.

"Um, if it is not too much trouble to ask, may I inquire as to why a person like you would be at a human settlement?" She seemed completely baffled by my presence.

I supposed it wasn't that strange for her to feel that way. I would doubt my own eyes if I saw another high elf in a human settlement. High elves lived together with the forest, and when they died, they turned into spirits and became one with the natural world. They lived their lives to reach that

goal and considered the outside world only a petty distraction. That's just how high elves were, but I was the exception.

"Yeah, I got sick of the forest. I wanted to see the rest of the world. Oh, you can call me Acer, by the way. That's what they called me in the Forest Depths."

When I was a baby, I grabbed a maple leaf carried by the wind out of the air, so they named me Acer. That was more of a nickname than a proper name, though. The elders always called me the Child of the Maple.

Most spirits didn't take names at all, so high elves didn't often take names either. But that was rather inconvenient for daily life, so most of us had nicknames. You might think the distinction was only semantic, but if you said that to a high elf, they'd get very upset with you. And by that I mean they would immediately attempt to kill you. So if you had no intention of picking a fight with them, it'd be best to never bring it up.

The elven woman's expression in response to my words very clearly showed just how bizarre she found me. It was really interesting how much her face gave away what she was thinking. She had likely lived in the outside world for quite some time. The thought that this was how elves became from living out here made me a little happy. It was like seeing a plant that had turned into an animal. That's not to say there was anything wrong with plants or that animals were inherently better. It was just an interesting thing to see.

The elven woman took a moment to think before speaking again. "Very well, Lord Acer. My name is Airena. Perhaps it is rude for me to take such liberties with a high elf such as yourself, but as a fellow elf, I wish to assist you. Might you leave the resolution of this situation to me?"

It seemed like she wanted to help me. I couldn't help but wonder why, but I didn't sense any ill intent from her. Most importantly, the spirits had no complaints about her, so she couldn't be that bad of an elf.

"Okay, thanks. I was a bit stuck on how I was going to get into town, so that helps a lot. But you don't have to call me 'lord' or whatever." I held out my right hand, offering a handshake.

Rather than accepting the handshake, however, Airena dropped to one knee, took my hand in both of hers, and pressed it to her forehead.

*Okay, that wasn't what I meant at all. Looks like getting along with elves is going to be a problem after all.*

I was thankful she was willing to help, but once I got inside the city, I'd have to part ways with her quickly.



“The six-star team White Lake attests to the identity of Lord Acer and will be paying the toll for his entry,” Airena said to the guard before the two stepped away to do some paperwork. As I stared blankly at them, the humans traveling with her stepped up to my side and explained what that meant.

Apparently, a new adventurer was given a single star, and seven stars was the highest rank possible. That made this group one position away from the highest rank. There weren't many seven-star adventurers in the country, so their group held the highest rank within the city of Vistcourt. They were quite proud to point that out. It did seem impressive in some way, so for now I applauded them. But I had no idea how many adventurers were in this town, so being the best of them didn't tell me much. The woman gave a bitter smile, but the man seemed satisfied, so I supposed my reaction was fine. Personally I was more curious about the name “White Lake” than about any number of stars they might have, but it didn't seem like the appropriate time to ask about that.

Once the paperwork was finally complete, the guard called me over.

“Hey, good news. You're allowed into the city, just like you asked. But you better be careful. This girl is vouching for you, so if you cause any problems inside, she'll be in trouble too.”

He gave me some information about the city. Most of it was obvious stuff, like “no stealing” and “no drawing weapons in public except in self-defense.” The most important thing seemed to be that anyone staying in the city for more than a week without citizenship had to pay a tax at the town hall.

By the way, though drawing weapons was prohibited in public, certain places like weapon shops and the adventurer's guild allowed it, and of course you could do so in your private room. You couldn't even do routine maintenance on them if that weren't the case, so I guess that was a given.

“Okay, please write your name here. Acer, huh? I'm a city guard, name's Rodna. If you need anything, give me a shout. And with that, welcome to Vistcourt, Acer.” After I signed my name on the paper he provided, Rodna smiled and patted me on the shoulder.

Looking around, I noticed it had become quite dark. He must have left the gate open so that I wouldn't be locked out. As I walked into the town with Airena and her companions, they shut the gate behind us.

I had finally made it into a human city, but unfortunately it was already night, so there weren't that many people around.

"So, Lord Acer, do you have any plans on what to do next?" Airena said as I looked at the town around me. "If not, I highly recommend you register as an adventurer so that you might obtain some personal identification."

Ah, that's right. I still needed to decide what I was going to do from now on. But there was something I was more interested in than becoming an adventurer.

"I don't think I want to be an adventurer quite yet. First I want to visit a blacksmith. Where's the best blacksmith here?" The first thing I wanted to do was learn to craft the fangs and claws of the forest wolf I had harvested into a knife and other trinkets. I figured the best place to do that would be a blacksmith, and if I was going to learn from them, I wanted to learn from the best. But...

"Um...the most skilled blacksmith in this city is a dwarf, so it is unlikely he would be willing to offer his services to elves like us," Airena answered with a bitter expression.

*I see...*

Elves and dwarves typically hated each other, so a dwarf probably wouldn't want to sell anything to Airena or me. That wouldn't be too much of a problem, though. I didn't have any money in the first place, so it wasn't like I would be able to buy anything. *But a dwarf, huh?*

"That's fine. I want to meet a dwarf too, so that's even better. Oh, if you don't like dwarves though, you can just tell me where it is and I'll go myself."

This was actually perfect. The chance he would be willing to teach me anything was rather low, but it would be a good opportunity to see what dwarves were like with my own eyes.

"Um...do you not dislike dwarves yourself, Lord Acer?" Airena looked at me like she couldn't believe what she was hearing. I had expected to see looks like that from elves the moment I decided to put my life as a high elf behind me, so in the face of her disbelief, I just smiled.

"It would be weird to hate someone I'd never met, wouldn't it?"

Airena averted her gaze.

According to elvish myth, dwarves stole a fragment of flame from nature, trapping it in a forge and ruining nature's perfection, but there was no way that was actually true. The story implied that dwarves had a perfect

mastery over nature, but if that were the case, they would have wiped out the elves they detested a long time ago. The story was only a metaphor at most. I couldn't see any elf that took it literally as anything more than a fool.

That said, such a deeply ingrained hatred wouldn't be wiped away by a few cheap words. I had no intention of trying to change the way Airena thought. As long as I could live the way I wanted to, I'd be happy.

"Oh, but it's already night. If I went now, I'd just be bothering him. I should probably start by finding a place to stay for the night. Oh, right. Airena, would you be interested in buying any of these?" I pulled out an apua from my bag and put it in her hand. I hadn't considered selling one of these at the gate because a human likely wouldn't know what it was just by seeing it. But as an elf, Airena likely would. The abundant life force hidden within each fruit kept it from rotting. Even half a month after being harvested, the apuas I had were still fresh and juicy.

"Huh? Is this...?" Looking at the fruit in her hand, Airena's face grew pale.

I had been a little worried that the stories passed between elves of apuas being highly valued in the outside world was all a misunderstanding or exaggeration. But judging by her expression, those stories seemed to be true. I couldn't help but feel a little relieved. I was only able to get into the town because of Airena, and I only knew about the blacksmith because she had told me. After all she had done for me, I needed to thank her somehow.

"That one is a gift for you. Thanks, you really helped me a lot." I then pulled out a second and put it in her hand. Apuas were a favorite food among elves. I had grown rather sick of them after so long, but I was sure I'd start longing for them again once I stopped eating them for a while.

Her companions watched the exchange between us in confusion, while Airena herself took some time to recover from the shock. When she did, she made me promise not to show these fruits to anyone so easily ever again and to put off visiting the blacksmith so she could teach me about living in human society. Between her serious expression and the way she suddenly abandoned the reverence she had been showing to me for being a high elf, she was actually rather terrifying. So for now, I decided to take her up on the offer.



“Excuse me!”

Two days after arriving in the city of Vistcourt for the first time, I finally reached the blacksmith shop. I realized there was a very high chance my request to learn craftsmanship would be declined, so my primary objective was to meet a dwarf for the first time. As such, it was important to present myself as assertive and energetic. To be honest, I had been totally exhausted when I reached the city, so Airena’s demand that I spend a day learning from her had been a blessing in disguise.

I understood the currency used here perfectly. A hundred copper coins was equal to one silver coin. Ten silvers was a small gold coin. Ten small gold coins was a large gold coin. In exchange for the apua I sold to Airena, she had given me fifty of those large gold coins.

A basic meal might cost a few copper coins. The room I stayed in the night before was quite luxurious and even had its own private bathtub, but the price of a night there, including all the fantastic food I ate, only amounted to five silvers.

Though it was very much just a rough impression, one copper seemed to have a value of around one hundred yen, making a silver worth about ten thousand yen. For the past two days, and likely for tonight as well, Airena had insisted on paying for my room. But when I thought about how much that would cost in terms of yen, I felt really bad. But I *had* asked her for a cheap place to stay, and she was the one who had vehemently refused and picked this particular inn, so for the time being I supposed it was fine to indulge in her generosity. The inn served fantastic foods like stew filled with plenty of meat, bread that was a little stiff but rich in flavor, and generously seasoned steaks, so I had no desire to cheap out on my lodgings now.

Putting all of that aside, the more pressing issue was the dwarf. The storefront displayed various kinds of weapons and armor, with the actual smithy located in the back. There was no way he hadn’t heard me, but the sound of metal striking metal from the back of the store continued unabated, so I contented myself with looking around the shop for now. If it was something he couldn’t put down, I had no intention of getting in the way of his work.

The front of the store was crowded with all sorts of wares, from brutally practical looking swords, to resplendently decorated armor, to tools I couldn’t even imagine how to use. Among them, my eye was drawn in particular to a large kukri, an almost boomerang-shaped knife with the



cutting edge on the inside of the curve. Though it was large for its kind, it was still in the realm of knives and shortswords, so it didn't compare to other weapons like axes and greatswords. But this kukri had a quiet aura about it, one that said it wouldn't lose to any such large weapons.

Of course, I couldn't touch it without permission. No matter how much it entranced me, it was still a weapon. If I picked it up without approval from the store's owner and hurt myself, it would be a huge problem for them. Well, an elf like me visiting a shop owned by a dwarf may have been trouble enough, but that was a different matter entirely.

"Yo, thanks for waiting. You've got a good eye. That's no ordinary steel you're looking at... Hey, you're an elf, aren't you?! What do you want in my shop?! I've got nothing to sell to no damned elf!" As I stared endlessly at the kukri, a voice called out behind me, gentle at first but quickly turning to angry shouting.

Turning around, I found a short, muscular man glaring at me. His long hair had been tied up to keep out of his way. His appearance shouted "dwarf" so loudly that I couldn't help but smile at seeing him.

"Hello! This is a fantastic kukri. I'd love it, but I'm not here for shopping, you damned dwarf. I do want it though! I really do! But I've already decided on the material I want to use for a knife! Oh, sorry. Here, I brought this gift as a peace offering."

This was every bit a battle. I answered with a boisterous shout loud enough to match the dwarf's angry rant. But of course, I couldn't forget that the bottle I had brought for him was glass, so I made sure to hand it over carefully. One's first greeting and gift were an important part of etiquette.

"You're being awfully polite. Wait, who'd you call a damned dwarf?! You damned elf! How dare you bring such good alcohol! Damn, this really is good stuff..." Perhaps taken aback by my politeness, the dwarf's demeanor also softened. "If you're not here to buy something, what do you want? I appreciate the drink, but if it's for something stupid, I'm still kicking you out."

*Yeah, it seems like he's a good person after all.*

You really couldn't judge someone before you met them. I was extremely grateful he was willing to hear my request at all. Though that may have just been because of the bottle, which had set me back an entire large gold coin all on its own.

I took out the forest wolf fangs from my bag and put them on the counter. “On my way out of the forest, I killed a forest wolf and took these fangs. I want to make them into a knife, and I was hoping you could teach me how.”

The dwarf raised an eyebrow, then took one of the fangs in his hand to get a closer look. He was careful with the fangs and studied them with a serious eye. After a few minutes of careful inspection, he set the fang back on the counter.

“I thought you were weird, but it looks like you’re an idiot too. This is no forest wolf fang. It came from a much larger grand wolf. You’d need a lot more than a few pointers from me to learn how to work with something like this.”

Well that was a shock. How did I make that mistake? I’d assumed all of the wolves in the forest would be...forest wolves. Apparently that wasn’t the case.

“Yeah, I definitely didn’t want to mess it up, so that’s why I came here. I heard you were the best blacksmith in the city. I don’t have any of its fur or meat, so I wanted to make sure I didn’t waste the fangs and claws I do have.” I carefully put the fangs, which I now knew to belong to a grand wolf, back into my bag. As I did, the dwarf spoke again.

“If you don’t want to fail, it’d be better to ask me to make it. If you’re tough enough to hunt grand wolves, you’d make plenty of money as an adventurer without learning a skill like this.”

He really was a kind person, wasn’t he? He was all but saying he’d be willing to make a weapon for me. But that wasn’t what I wanted, so I shook my head with a smile.

“I’m not that interested in being an adventurer yet. I want to do more than make a single knife, and I’m interested in blacksmithing itself. You’re as interesting as I’d hoped you’d be, and I’d like to see the forge as well. I’d rather spend a decade or two learning blacksmithing than going adventuring.”

The dwarf looked at me like he was seeing some sort of bizarre animal for the first time. Well, that’s about the reaction I expected. I was aware that what I was saying was bizarre for an elf. But compared to my time as a human, this life span was so much longer. In the end, I needed to live true to myself more than anything else, even if nobody else understood. That’s what I had decided when I gave up my life as a high elf.

The dwarf sighed. “So you’re not an idiot; you’re just insane. Fine. I’ll

take a madman over those arrogant elves any day. If you're willing to work, you can learn blacksmithing from me 'til your head's on straight. I would feel bad for the grand wolf if you wasted its fangs, after all!"

No matter what path I took, even if no one understood me, I would eventually cross paths with others. I held out a hand to the dwarf, who spent more time staring at it than he had at the materials I showed him earlier. But after realizing I wasn't going to give up, he finally broke and shook it.



"Wh-Wh-What are you doing manning a shop for a *dwarf*, Lord Acer?!"

A couple days after I had bullied the dwarven blacksmith into making me his apprentice, Airena came by to check up on me. That was the first thing she said after seeing me sitting at the front counter, playing with a ring puzzle.

This puzzle in particular was one that the blacksmith, or rather Master Damned Dwarf, made at my request. Ring puzzles like these needed to be made with utmost precision, so the fact he was able to put one together so easily demonstrated his incredible skill in craftsmanship. Never mind if he was good enough to be a teacher, I doubted I'd be able to find someone better.

As far as why I called him Master Damned Dwarf: as long as he referred to me as "that damned elf," I had no intention of referring to him in any other way.

In the meantime, I looked forward to mass-producing these ring puzzles and spreading their frustration throughout the world once I had mastered the art of blacksmithing.

"He said if I worked for him, he'd teach me. And he's paying me too, so why not?"

But even a full day's pay wasn't enough to afford a night at the inn I was currently staying at, so I'd need to find another place to live before Airena's generosity came to an end. I couldn't imagine anywhere else having food as good, though, so once I had my own place I'd have to either start cooking for myself or find a nice restaurant.

The rings in my hand clattered together as I toyed with them, and as I found just the right angle, they smoothly slid apart. Yes, these ring puzzles were an endless source of frustration, but the satisfaction of that moment

was unmatched. My mood having been brightened by this success, I turned to the next one.

“That is not the issue! You must know that the scent of iron on your body will frighten the trees and earn the enmity of the spirits! What will you do if the spirits abandon you?!” Airena’s angry tirade was enough to make Master Damned Dwarf step away from his work and peek into the storefront. Surprisingly, he didn’t have anything to say. Instead, he just nodded to himself, realizing that she was an ordinary elf. It almost seemed like he sympathized with her for a moment, for some reason.

Aside from him, I had Airena’s misconceptions to deal with. Despite being strange for an elf, I was still a close friend of the spirits, so I couldn’t let her misunderstanding go.

“Yeah, I’m aware, but I think you’re wrong about that. The spirits don’t mind if someone smells like metal. Oh, it does make food taste a little different though, so I have the wind spirits erase the smell from me every day.”

I didn’t really want my body odor to be noticeable to others, so I’d made sure to bathe every day since arriving in the city. Maybe I was a bit delicate like that, but I was sure anyone would get hurt if told they smelled. And besides, I had already confirmed with the spirits that they didn’t mind the metals. There were spirits of fire in the forge itself, and the wind spirits continued to hover around me as soon as I stepped outside. My guess was that the story of spirits hating metal came from their anger toward pollution caused by mining. The elves who noticed that probably assumed the spirits hated metal in general, and so the story spread.

“As for the trees, if they were really afraid of metal, adventurers wouldn’t be allowed into the Great Pulha Woodlands, would they? Sure, they’d be scared of things like axes cutting them down, but they aren’t so weak and sensitive that you need to worry about the smell of metal.”

If the trees were concerned about metal in general, it would probably be from the pollution caused by mining as well. What she said wasn’t completely wrong, but it wasn’t really a reason for me to give up my job.

“I bet if we put a potted plant in here, it would still get along fine with me. Hey, Master Damned Dwarf! This shop needs more green in it. Do you mind if I get a potted plant?” I turned to ask as soon as the thought occurred to me, but the dwarf just gave a snort and returned to his work. I was pretty sure that was his way of saying “do whatever you want.”

When I looked back to Airena, she was staring at me in shock. She was