

In the Land of the Ripped:

The Weightsmith

by Xenny Diemes

Amerista is the home to three of the largest economies, each with very special reasons. They are the farmers and ranchers who supplied the food and goods for everyone, the clothing industry for obvious reasons though a trend of “bottoms-only” is going around, it is still the norm to wear clothes that come as good by cheep and easy as they would rip out of them and the third is smithing. Anything that involves the forging and shaping of metals for jewelery, weapons and common useful items. But none of them could hold a candle to the Weightsmith. Who are they? They are simply the men and women who master the art of making the biggest, and heaviest of weight sets to keep the muscles of the nation’s subjects big, hard and well fit. They don’t just take any slab of metal and make it a weight. No, its something that takes time, skill and a good knowledge of metallurgy and finding great quality in the metals they work with in order to make the best weights for the customer.

It was of the reign of Queen Quaru the first who gave the creation of the weightsmiths. It all started mostly because of a “pissing” contest with her husband King Bareaus, Quaru was the one who set the rules that Bareaus under no circumstances get to have his way with her, unless they both can pump enough iron to break free of their given metal armbands by the end of the year. If he wins, he can make love to her, if she wins, the same but harder. At the time, the two have both have their own sets of weights and pumped as much iron as they can and gained as much as they can. But it wasn’t enough and knew that Bareaus has the upper hand and she really doesn’t want him “in charge”. One night, the queen snuck herself into town and seeks the aid of a local blacksmith to help her make a special weights and money is no object. In the coming weeks, the smith found and worked with denser and better quality weights. All the while her husband worked with the same weights. It wasn’t until the half-way into the year that the smith worked on what could be his masterpiece: A ten-thousand ton barbell decorated with symbols and the house insignia on the sides. The queen is pleased and even with a hard struggle, she worked that weight to her full advantage.

In the end, Quaru won when she burst out of her armbands first and the revelation of how she got the

upper hand, though it was of little importance because as per condition of their little match, Quaru will be the one having the dominant role in their lovemaking. The “Quaru” set and the great barbell now called “The Royal Weight” still remained to this day. The Royal Weight itself has changed its role from a means to an end into the test of will for future royals down the line. That was over two-hundred years ago and in that time, the smith who made those weights, soon passed his knowledge to others and so on. It did not take long for explosion of these new weight-makers to spring up developing various kinds of weights and sets that it became an art onto itself and that was what gave rise of the Weightsmiths. From the little child getting their first set to the elder who pumps over sixty tons each day before breakfast, each one is made with the care and dedication to those hard working men and women. So why so much importance in this bit of the tale? It all started with a little incident a certain new king messing around with the Royal weight and calls upon the help of a young apprentice who has to take the helm. It started with King Lathan getting really drunk on the latest batch of ale that normally was meant for someone larger, it did not take long for the effects of the hard ale to kick in and have him stumble around.

The worst place for him to stumble himself into is the Quaru gym and he knocks over the first weights that start off chain reaction leading up to the Royal Weight. Which by no fault of his own, has a stand that's poorly maintained. The next thing that followed were the screams of panicked onlookers as the weight crashes out of the castle and down into the town below. Though with everyone being incredibly resilient the only real casualties are the many houses and shops the weight has smashed through. When it did finally stop it crashes into the bedroom of the Heeros weightsmithing shop and injuring its operator, a goat named Heeros. The following morning, after a survey of the incident and after having King Lathan's guards hold back 3,600 pounds of angry goat who wants to beat him up. The royal court will pay for the damages and rebuild the path of destruction caused by the incident. As for the Royal Weight itself, the force of crashing into the goat man was more than enough to show that the weight wasn't strong enough to hold together and broke into pieces, discs and all.

The Royal Weight cannot have its legacy destroyed because of one incident and to keep it intact, the court has commissioned that very shop to remake the weight. Which would be impossible since Heeros had his arm broken just stopping the weight, however it can be a proven challenge to a young female apprentice, a

mare named Nadine. She wanted to be a weightsmith for years though no one has taken her because of the old notion that a woman has no place in the smithing arts. But Heeros came to her aid and throwing caution to the wind, he took her in. He taught her everything he knows about the art of making a quality workout weight, finding the best metals and alloys to furnish fine dumbbells, barbells and everyday weights. Even helped him sell his goods across the land. But tonight Heeros is ready to do it again by letting Nadine take the challenge of making the royal weight. She has her doubts, Heeros knows she can do it and that gives her enough confidence to get the job done.

She stared by taking the remains of the Royal weight and carefully determining what kind of metal it was made from. She concludes it came from the mines of Mount Aio in the Vaal Mountains and set out on the long journey to get the rare heavy iron ore. Being worth the trek through wind, rain and heavy snow, she makes it to the mines and gets the ore. If you think that her first load was enough, think again! Nadine had to make 398 complete trips over the next year to get enough ore to make the metal for the weight. More time just to make sure the ore is of good quality to even take back to refine. What followed next was the processing of the ore into molten metal a task thankfully the court spared no expense to provide for a project of this magnitude. Nadine worked day and night, lifting the hot metal, shaping the discs, to the right size and diameter and carefully eye the cooling rates to make sure it doesn't compromise the overall mass. Perfection is the target for this particular item and nothing is left to chance.

Heero's grows more proud of her work over the years leading up to this moment and he didn't want to bother her with a little detail of what also resulted in her work, but couldn't keep it to himself any longer. He tells Nadine to take a break and get a look at herself in the mirror and became surprised of what happened. Her body blew up with so much muscle that it could even rival her teacher, but not that much. She posed herself in ways that she nearly popped herself out of her apron. But personal love for strength isn't going to get her work done any sooner. Also, a quality Heeros admires in her. Seventeen months and several hundred pounds gained more later, Heeros is back up and ready to put the finishing touches to the new Royal Weight by inscribing the old words into the surface of the metal rings that still rang true: Who so shall lift this weight, shall lift the weight of the nation as whole. Heeros calls for the horses to carry the weight but Nadine insists that she will carry it herself, to show to King Lathan and the court of what making the weight has blessed her

with.

Through the streets and up the hills to the castle the people were amazed to see a weightsmith's apprentice pull her own cart up to the palace so she can personally give it to the king. In the throne room, Nadine's muscles were bulging like crazy from pulling the cart and her thin pelt glistens with sweat from that work out, she apologizes for her appearance, but she needs to show it. Walking over to the weight, she grabs the bar and pulls it up with all her might, grunting and breathing with such furor the weight comes off the cart and in her hands. Walking with each ground-shaking footstep towards Lathan, Nadine breathes calmly and kneels to present the weight to the king, all ten thousand tons of it. In Lathan's mind, if that dumb royal blood rule didn't stand, she would have easily become queen. Lathan then picks the weight off of her hands easily. In Nadine's eyes, in her own view, it was true, he is such a skinny person but holds the weight in his hands like it was nothing to him, and that makes her worry if she even did a good job, he would have expected to feel some resistance, a struggle, grunting, anything. But all she got were these words:

"Wow, feels a bit heavier than the last one, you really did great work on this one. Thank you."

Hearing those words cut through her creative soul like a knife because it didn't felt heavier to her, it was monstrously heavy and that statement came from the mouth of a literal twig in a world full of titans. Making that weight took years and has turned her into hulking beast of a woman and the only thing he could say is that it feels a *bit heavier* than the last one?! It's twice as heavy as the old one and now Nadine is swimming with the idea of either she's a terrible weightsmith or she is in the presence of a god! Maintaining her composure, she thanks the king for acknowledging her work and walks out of the throne room, trying really hard not to cry. Night falls at the shop and Heero's finishes his situps he was so overdue to do and he hears the sounds of crying around the back. It is Nadine sobbing over what King Lathan has said about her work. She really did work hard to make it the best weight the court has ever seen and it was all for nothing. Heeros calms her down and barely manages to get his bulky arms around her to hug the giant horse. Heeros understands that Lathan can sometimes say things that he doesn't mean; Especially from someone who is still learning of their culture.

He nearly forgets this himself, sure he was angry when his shop was destroyed, but he was too angry to realize that his guards are not there to protect Lathan from him, but to protect him from Lathan and his strength, despite not having the gigantic muscles he and everyone else has and could have really put him in traction by accident. Despite that, he has been known as a good and humble king that's still adjusting. They then hear a knock on the door and Heeros walks up, and tries to tell whoever's out there the shops closed but then opens the door after hearing a very familiar voice, it is King Lathan himself in robes and without his guards. He wanted a more personal meeting with the woman who did his weight, but after overhearing the conversation, he really came to give the woman an apology. He came to Nadine, much of her surprise, quickly kneeled down even if she is still bigger than him standing before her. He then asks her to stand back up and have a seat, for they have much to talk about. Lathan did not mean anything when he said it felt a bit heavier, honestly, he has never lifted that weight again since that day he proved himself to be that strong, that was years ago. Nadine is surprised to learn this and asks why, the answer simple, it is because the law forbids him to. After the rule of his late father, he decreed the Royal Weight is only to be used to prove the worthiness of the new king or queen, not to be used as an everyday weight, till this day he has no idea why.

Lathan then humbly apologizes to the great horse and assures her that she did incredible work to get everything right and the weight will last for generations to come. It did makes Nadine feel better and he hugs the lion, much to him nearly getting buried in her giant muscles and cavernous cleavage. Since that day, Nadine for her work on the royal weight gave her and the shop a lot of business and it was a matter of time before Heeros gave his apprentice her own tool set, goggles and apron. Nadine has finally become a full-fledged weightsmith and he couldn't have been more proud of her progress and will one day pass her skills to the next generation onward. It's her tale and more that makes the weightsmiths Amerista's most valued producers.

The end

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What happened that made it law that the weight can never be lifted for anything other than that ceremony. Was it pride? Symbolism? Being too delicate? No. It was purely an excuse to coverup an accident caused by Lathan's father, the late King Rathus' love of showing off to the ladies at a time before meeting his future queen and mother. Rathus was with his harem of enormously brawny and busty females and they all took time to gaze in awe of his powerful visage and... sizable member as it bounces and sways. One of the women requests to see him work out in the gym with the Quaru set. Rathus does one better and asks if they want to see his body really blow up with the Royal Weight. Going wild with excitement as they all race to the gym and watch him pump with the great weight. He did a hundred curls with one arm and a hundred more with the other. The king even loves to show off by placing the bar of the giant barbell and lets it dance with the hardest flexing of his mountainous pecs. The ladies swoon over his showing off and how well his body bulges and dances with great effort. One of the lionesses couldn't take it anymore and pounces on the king while he was still posing with the weight and he falls over. With a crash that shook the entire castle, the weight rolls and crashes through several thick walls until it stops at the stables where it crashes into a pile of hay and salt cubes. Rathus and the harem ran through the holes to see if everyone's alright until they made it to the stables, Much to their relief the weight is fine until Rathus touches it and it quickly breaks apart under its own weight.

Scared that the very symbol of the nation is trashed, he asks the ladies to carry the pieces of the barbell back to the gym and one of them to call for any weightsmiths that have good wielding equipment. As the pieces of the weight were carefully put back together, one of the great cranes saw this and talks with Rathus. He explains nervously that the weight had a bit of damage and they were just making minor repairs until the ground shakes again and they both rush in to see the weight broke apart again. The crane looks harshly at the King and it was easy to see him put two and two together of what led to this. Rathus grabs him by the arms and begs him not to tell anyone about this. As much as he hates it, he kept it between them, With the weight fully restored, King Rathus paid the weightsmiths a hefty sum, far more than the work was worth but it was also hush money to prevent them from talking of what they did. As with the court, he made an emergency decree in light of what happened, the weight shall only be used to test the strength of the successor to the throne and nothing more and he made it quite clear with an explosive flex of his muscles, that speak louder than his roaring voice.

The crane catches up to him and asks if it was wise to do this at all, the great lion assures him that with the decree in place, no one will know that the weight is busted and if it can hold it will be his successor's problem. In the village below one of the weightsmiths comes home to his wife and two kids just called back after playing catch with a 650-pound ball. He tells her about the great job that they had but had to lie a little into knowing who it was. But the pay is well enough to finally get his shop up and running. The younger of the two boys came in and wanted to show his developing six-pack to him and with pride he picks the young boy up and held him in his bulky arm, telling him how glad that he is developing nicely, much to the teasing of his brother who shows off his bulging biceps and brags about how he reached 15 inches. But he is proud of both of them no matter who got bigger first.

He then wanted to show both of them the portion of the backyard that he's going to by next to the house. The younger child asks of what he will do with it, he replies that it will become the future site of his weight-making shop and will make equipment of the best quality for everyone to use, even his own family. He even hopes one day that his sons will continue running the shop when they get older. The older son doesn't see himself as a weightsmith but the younger one did and hopes one day make great weights like his dad. Then the wife calls on their names: Otan, her husband, Faltar the older brother and Heeros, the younger brother, telling them that dinner's hot and ready. Feeling both peckish and worried that tonight is heavy chicken night, Otan sometimes wishes his wife's cooking is just as good as his skills with iron. But hey, a half ton of roasted chicken isn't going to eat itself.