

Beloved Dog 151

Chapter 151

We Talked About Ramogi Sales

“You’ll be heading to Range village the day after tomorrow, yes? Then you should practice so that you can activate it quickly before you leave.”

“Yes. I’m still not used to the sensation of magic energy, so it takes a while.”

It would be fine when I had plenty of time, but at this speed, I would not be able to activate it if I was trying to run away.

And so I asked Sebastian for advice and continued to activate the magic until dinner time.

As I was so happy about being able to use magic, I didn’t feel tired at all.

“Mr. Takumi, dinner is ready. Please come to the dining hall. And you too, Lady Tilura...”

“I understand.”

“Okay!”

After practicing magic for quite a while, Ms. Lyra came to call us to eat.

Tilura had been watching me from close by, and she answered cheerfully while accepting a towel from Ms. Lyra.

“Mr. Takumi.”

“What is it, Sebastian?”

Leo, Sherry and Tilura headed towards the dining hall, and I was about to follow after them when Sebastian stopped me.

What else was there?

“It’s not related to magic, but the selling of herbs in Ractos.”

“Did something happen?”

“Currently, Mr. Kalis says that sales are going smoothly. They have been received quite well. So people who have the money won’t have much trouble acquiring medicine.”

“Have the money...you say?”

There was something in those words that made me pause and think.

The difference in wealth, which was something that also existed in Japan.

Obviously, this meant that the rich could easily buy medicine when they became ill...but the poor were already struggling just to live. So they may not be able to afford it even if it’s in stock.

“There are poor people in Ractos as well. I’m sure Nick was one of them... In any case, I think it’s very likely that they would not be able to buy the medicine even if they wanted to.”

“I see...”

“And in the worst case scenario, they might be moved to buy the ineffective medicine at that other store.”

“Because it is much cheaper?”

“Indeed. Not everyone can tell whether they are being sold something good. Imagine, a medicine that you somehow managed to buy with what little money you have...and it has no effect, and you remain ill.”

“That’s horrible...”

They could afford it, but it had no effect.

And those who were ill would not be able to work, and so they would be desperate for medicine.

That would force them to go to that store.

Such was the environment that was being made.

“Currently, it has not gone that far yet. However, we should act before it happens.”

“I see... You’re right. Because once it happens, it will be difficult to put a stop to it.”

They would start falling into debt that they could not get out of... That happened a lot in Japan.

“About your medicine that is sold in Mr. Kalis’s store... I think we should lower the price of just the Ramogi... So even a child can buy it.”

“I think that’s a good idea. ...But, how would that affect the market?”

“...Indeed... We will have to give some explanation to the other merchants... I think some confusion will still be unavoidable.”

There were some businesses that were only profitable because they sold Ramogi at the proper price.

And if the landlord’s store started selling them at cheap prices, small stores may not be able to stay in business.

While Sebastian had made the decision, he also seemed conflicted, judging by the expression on his face.

“But it’s just the Ramogi... Also, only until the disease stops spreading... This way, the effect won’t be too big.”

“Well, it will still have some effect. But as long as it’s for a short period, I think it would be good for the people.”

“And we’ll also have to offer an explanation to customers who have been buying it up until now.”

Well, if there was a price cut the day after you bought it, then you might feel like you were cheated.

“As you are making the herbs, Mr. Takumi, I thought we better get your permission first...”

“I see.”

Now that I thought about it, the price of the herbs being sold had been in the contract.

If they wanted to greatly increase or reduce the price, then they would need to consult me first.

“I don’t mind. Since there is a good reason for it. I do want the poor to be able to buy the herbs as well.”

“Thank you. I’ll have Mr. Kalis lower the prices tomorrow then. ...Also, there is one other reason for this.”

“Another reason?”

It seemed a little cowardly for him to bring this up after I gave my permission, but perhaps I shouldn’t care, as I wasn’t losing anything from it.

But what was Sebastian talking about?

“It’s about that other store. Once even the poor are able to buy Ramogi, then their sales will drop.”

“I’m sure it will.”

It was only because the disease was spreading that the malicious store was having any success.

“If we sell the Ramogi at lower prices, and stop the spread of the disease, then fewer people will buy from them. ...And then, I suspect they will be forced into action.”

“So...you want to smoke them out?”

Well, even though they were committing a crime, it was good that we were going against them with proper methods.

It might sound aggressive, but if we could push that store into self-destruction, so much the better.

Sebastian was not someone you wanted as an enemy... The thought occurred to me. Thankfully, I had no intention of doing that.

Besides, I felt very comforted knowing that he was on our side.

And now, I would do what I could to cooperate.

Surely there was something I could do to fight against this store.

Chapter 152

We Decided to Sell at a Discount

“In that case, Mr. Sebastian. I don’t mind not being paid for the Ramogi. ...Well, just think of it as me paying rent for living here.”

“But...I don’t think that’s necessary... You being here has been a great benefit to the house. I doubt they would deny you your payment...”

“I receive more than enough from the other herbs.”

By selling the Ramogi at a lower price, Mr. Kalis's store would not be making as much of a profit.

I didn't think he would object to it, but I'm sure he would feel better if the profits increased... And I didn't mind, as this would ultimately affect that other store.

So while I would be getting paid less, it would benefit me in other ways.

Besides, I was receiving quite enough already. My savings were just increasing.

It's not like I had too much of it, but the thing was, I had nothing to spend it on as of now.

"But... That really won't do. It goes against the contract... And as the butler of the Liebert house, my pride will not allow it."

"Your...pride?"

I suppose he viewed the matter in a different way then.

Sebastian stubbornly refused this idea that I would not be paid for the Ramogi.

What should I do...?

"In that case, just...lower the payment. That way, it could not be said that I was working for free."

"...Indeed... I suppose it would mean you were being rewarded, Mr. Takumi. However..."

"It's fine. This only for a short period, after all. It is not a big deal."

I stopped Sebastian before he could continue and settled the matter myself.

Otherwise, we might be here arguing all day.

“...Thank you, Mr. Takumi. And all because I consulted you about it...”

“Well, that was in the contract. You are just doing your job. While I’m happy to be paid, I don’t need much right now.”

I said, and the conversation was finished.

In the first place, the contract would not have allowed them to lower the prices without telling me.

So it’s not Sebastian’s fault that I insisted on doing the work without payment or for less.

And so I patted him on the shoulder as he bowed his head, and then we headed to the dining hall.

As we had been talking for a while, Tilura must be tired of waiting... Leo and Sherry as well.

“You’re late, Mr. Takumi!”

“Wuff!”

“Kyau!”

“Sorry, sorry. I had something to discuss with Sebastian.”

When I entered the dining hall, Tilura and the others protested just as I was expecting.

“Is something wrong, Mr. Takumi?”

“No, not exactly. Sebastian will explain it to you later.”

“...Yes, I will tell you everything, Lady Claire.”

“I see. Very well.”

Ms. Claire was curious about what we were talking about, but right now, we had to eat.

Besides, I had a feeling that if we got started, then Ms. Claire would be the next one to argue with me about payment.

And I was hungry, and the children could wait no longer.

Well, Leo wasn't a child...

"Let's eat then."

"Yes!"

"Wuff-wuff!"

"Kyau!"

Said Ms. Claire, and we all began to eat.

Tilura, Leo and Sherry fell on their food hungrily and ate rapidly.

Ms. Claire was about to scold them, but gave up and ate her own food. I too ate the food that Ms. Helena had prepared.

Tilura was starting to resemble her father when it came to eating habits. But that was too rude to say out loud...

"Mr. Takumi. I heard that Sebastian is teaching you magic now. How is it going?"

"It was a little difficult at first... But I was able to do some beginner magic."

"It's because Mr. Takumi has the right qualities to be good with magic."

“Is that so?”

It was while we were drinking tea.

Ms. Claire asked me about how my magic training was going.

While no magic had been activated the first time I chanted, I was able to do it once I learned of magic energy.

Sebastian seemed to think I had potential. I wonder if it's true?

“I think you have a good ability to detect magic energy. Normally, people cannot do it so quickly after hearing an explanation. Because a lot of it relies on feeling. In fact, when Lady Claire first began...”

“Why, Sebastian!”

“...That was some years ago... When Lady Claire was little. She did not understand what I was saying, and believed that she didn't have magic energy...”

“And?”

Detecting magic was related to potential... I'd keep that in mind.

But the conversation had now turned to Ms. Claire's past, which Sebastian related with amusement, in spite of Ms. Claire's protests.

...He was clearly in the mood to make fun of her.

But I was quite interested, and urged him to continue.

“She then went crying to His Grace. ...It was very difficult to console her when she was like that. And yet the very idea of someone not having magic energy is ridiculous.”

“...But I didn’t know such things back then...”

“You must have been a very cute child.”

Indeed, he had said that all humans needed magic energy in order to live.

But Ms. Claire didn’t know this, and had cried off to her father and caused a lot of trouble.

Ms. Claire looked quite embarrassed by this story, but we all laughed and the time continued to pass amidst a relaxed atmosphere.

While Ms. Claire did not appreciate having her past exposed like this, I was glad to have learned a little more about her.

Chapter 153

I Played Around With Leo

“It’s hard to imagine Ms. Claire like that.”

I had finished my sword swings and took a bath before returning to my room.

I then sat down on my bed in order to rest, and I thought back on the discussion in the dining hall.

Sebastian was knowledgeable and could explain nearly anything to you. But Ms. Claire also seemed very wise, and so hearing about her childhood was a little surprising.

“Oh, but there are those stories about arranged marriage...”

The founder of the house had an arranged marriage...which led to Ms. Claire wanting to have one as well. I suppose in the past, she was more impulsive and relied less on knowledge.

Thinking of it like that, I realized that Tilura was quite similar. They really were sisters.

“Wuff!”

“Oh?”

As I sat on the bed, Leo approached me while sniffing loudly.

“What is it, Leo?”

“Wuff-wuff.”

“He-hey!”

Leo brought her face close to mine and started licking.

And while I was nearly overwhelmed, I petted her back just as enthusiastically.

“What is it? Do you want to play?”

“Wuff!”

I moved my face away and asked Leo, and she nodded eagerly.

“Now that I think about it, we haven’t been able to play recently.”

“Wuff. Wuff.”

Leo barked in agreement.

These past few days I had been training with Tilura, studying with Milina, and then I had to make Ramogi for Range village. So there wasn’t much time to spend with Leo.

While Leo played a lot with Tilura and Sherry, and even trained with us by dodging our swords, it was never just the two of us playing.

And I suppose Leo missed that.

So though it was a little late...I decided to play with Leo a little.

“All right, Leo. We’ll play today!”

“Wou!”

As I saw Leo wag her tail happily, I knew that I would not be getting much sleep.

Well, I would have to go to Range village the day after tomorrow, so it had to be today.

Besides, Leo was going to be carrying me, and it was only natural to keep your buddy company.

“There, there...”

“Wuff! Wuff!”

First, I used both hands to scratch her behind the ears.

Previously, I only had to use my fingers, but she was a lot bigger now.

Leo reacted by barking happily.

Being scratched behind the ears was like getting a massage for her.

“And next...here!”

“Wuff!”

My hands brushed through the thick fur of her legs and moved as if to pull the skin upwards.

I guess this was like having your shoulders massaged.

This seemed to be especially pleasurable as she barked and began to wag her tail.

As she spent so much time on her feet and would run around or stand still, they were probably tired.

“Haha. Do you like that?”

“Wuff! Wuff!”

And so I continued to pull and massage and pet her for a while.

I suppose it wasn’t really playing. But it was difficult to play with Leo like I used to.

Previously, I was able to pick her up and raise her into the air or let her nibble gently on my fingers. But we couldn’t do that now.

Not only was she too big, but I just knew those fangs would easily tear off my entire arm...

“Leo.”

“Wuff.”

After petting and massaging her for a while, I stood in front of her and raised my hand.

Leo realized what I was doing and she got up on all fours and looked at me.

“Sit!”

“Wuff!”

“Lie down!”

“Wuff!”

“Sit again! Now do the gimme pose!”

“Wuff... Wuff!”

I moved my hands like a conductor and gave Leo the orders.

Leo barked in reply and obeyed. She sat, lay low, and then sat up and raised both of her front paws.

Seeing her move her front paws like this, it reminded me that in spite of her size, Leo hadn't changed much at all.

However, it was hard to look up at her like this... I was worried that her head would hit the ceiling... Thankfully, the ceilings in this mansion were higher than most.

“Good girl, Leo. Alright, lay down again.”

“Wou!”

“Good, good. Well done. You remembered.”

“Wuff!”

I smiled and patted her on the head.

Usually, I would have given her a sausage as a treat, but I didn't have any now. Besides, Ms. Helena always prepared them for Leo.

So I just praised her instead.

“Next...”

“Wuff!”

Leo was having so much fun that we continued like this late into the night.

And so I had a few hours less sleep than usual. But I was fine, since Leo had enjoyed it.

She must have been happy to spend time together, as when we slept, she lay half of her body on the bed so that I could use her as a pillow.

And so I watched her tail, which was still wagging, as I fell asleep.

“Good morning.”

“...Morning, Tilura.”

“Wuff!”

“Kyau!”

The next morning, Tilura took Sherry and visited our room.

She came to tell us that breakfast was ready, which she hadn’t done recently.

I still felt a little tired as I dragged myself out of bed and greeted her.

But Leo was perfectly fine, as if lack of sleep was not a concept she was aware of.

“Are you tired, Mr. Takumi?”

“Haha, I’m fine. I just played with Leo last night. So I went to sleep a little late.”

“So that’s why Leo is in such a good mood!”

“Wuff!”

“Kyau!”

Apparently, Tilura could tell if Leo was in a good mood or not.

But it was true that Leo had continued to wag her tail and was now greeting Sherry happily.

Sherry also looked happy to play with Leo.

“Well, I’ll get ready and go down to the dining hall. You go on ahead.”

“Very well. Let’s go, Sherry!”

“Kyau!”

“Wuff!”

“Are you coming too, Leo?”

“Wuff-wuff.”

“Haha. Can you take Leo with you then?”

“Yes, I will! Let’s go, Leo!”

“Wuff!”

“Kyau-kyau!”

I said while getting out of bed and washing up.

But just as Tilura and Sherry were about to leave, I noticed that Leo wanted to go with them.

That was unusual. Leo would usually go with me instead of Tilura.

But perhaps it was because I had spent so much time with her last night.

I chuckled as I saw them leave, and then moved my sluggish body and got ready for the day.

Chapter 154

I Grew Ramogi and Practiced Magic

“Are you tired, Mr. Takumi? I hope you are not overextending yourself...”

“Ah, I am fine. I played with Leo late last night and so I didn’t get much sleep.”

Ms. Claire looked at me worriedly as we were eating breakfast.

Tilura had said the same thing. While I didn’t mean for it to show on my face, I suppose it was still obvious.

...I would have to eat some recovery herbs later.

“You will be heading for Range village tomorrow, won’t you?”

“Yes. I have to finish preparing the herbs today, then I’ll set out with Leo tomorrow.”

“I see.”

After breakfast, she asked when I was leaving.

She also apologized about the matter regarding the discount of the Ramogi and my payment.

The discount was one thing, but I had insisted on the lack of payment myself, so she didn't need to worry about that.

“...All right. I'm going to do a little extra today.”

“You really shouldn't...”

I muttered while heading to a corner of the garden. I had eaten the recovery herbs and no longer felt sleepy, and had finished my morning training.

But Ms. Lyra heard me and seemed worried.

Milina also followed after me and had an expression of concern... She must have heard that I had once fainted from overuse of the Gift.

“I'm fine. Recently, I've gotten a better grasp of how much I am able to do it.”

“...But... You still need to be careful.”

“Yes. Thank you for worrying about me.”

I thanked Ms. Lyra and reached the usual spot where I used Weed Cultivation.

It had become a herb exclusive area now... Well, as I had permission, I would gladly take advantage of it.

After making herbs for this long, I had a much better idea of how much I could use the Gift.

That being said, it didn't mean I knew exactly what my limit was before I fainted.

Regardless, as the Ramogi was being discounted, I would make more of it than usual.

"All right, Milina. Let's do this."

"Yes!"

And so I used Weed Cultivation to grow the herbs and had Milina do the rest.

From picking the herbs to wrapping them up after they were dried...she had become accustomed to the work, and was able to do it quite quickly now.

We took a short break in between and then continued to make herbs.

"Mr. Takumi...I don't know if you should..."

"Hmm. But I want to make a little more... But we can rest a while. Thank you for your help, Milina."

"I've done nothing compared to you, master..."

As I focused on creating herbs, I was then stopped by a worried Ms. Lyra.

Of course, I still had not reached the numbers that I wanted, and so I intended on continuing after resting again.

I also had to persuade Milina, and then we drank some tea that Ms. Lyra had prepared.

"That's right, I also have to practice some magic."

"You can use magic too, master!?"

“Well, I only just started learning, so I’m still a beginner.”

“You have a Gift and Leo...and sword and magic... You have so many talents!”

But I had only rescued and raised Leo, and I had no idea why I was given the Gift.

As for sword and magic, I had just started learning them, so it wasn’t anything impressive at all.

“Phew... Thank you for the tea. It was delicious as always.”

“I’m glad that you enjoyed it.”

“You’re amazing, Ms. Lyra... I’ll do my best so that I can brew tea like this.”

Not only Ms. Lyra, but all of the tea brewed by the servants here tasted very good.

I didn’t know if it was their technique or the quality of the leaves, but drinking it really helped me to relax.

Sometimes, I felt that it was even more effective than the herbs, which was a strange feeling.

I would be glad if Milina was able to brew tea like this.

“While you are still a novice, we will be very thorough in teaching you. Don’t worry about that, Milina.”

“Yes, I’ll do my best.”

“It’s easy once you know what to do. Also, it’s about feeling.”

“Feeling?”

Ms. Lyra then started to lecture her on how to brew tea.

Something about thinking about who will drink it, etcetera.

I ignored most of it while I watched Tilura train, and Leo run around the garden while carrying Sherry.

“Hmm. I think I will practice my magic first.”

Now that Ms. Lyra’s lecture was finished, I ended my break and got back to my feet.

“What about the herbs?”

“Well, it’s supposed to be dangerous to use it too much at once. So, I guess you’ll have some free time...”

“But I’m sure watching you use magic will be quite entertaining.”

I talked with Milina as I went over what Sebastian had taught me yesterday.

I directed my consciousness towards the magic energy, and searched for the warmth.

And then I moved the energy so that it gathered in my palm.

“Light Elemental Shine.”

And then just like yesterday, a bright light appeared in my hand.

“Yes, I can do it just fine.”

“That is so bright. What brilliant magic.”

“Hahaha. Yes, but this is all that I can do now.”

After that, I repeated the process of detecting, chanting and activating several times.

What I noticed while doing it, was that I could activate it with very little magic energy. I suppose it was because it was such a simple spell.

And so I continued to practice until Ms. Gelda called us for lunch.

In fact, any ‘Shine’ magic could be activated with little energy.

And by not having to move much energy, I would be able to activate it swiftly.

Magic that required a lot of energy was difficult, but Shine didn’t even take much concentration.

And while it might still leave me open momentarily if used during battle, I could still take the enemy by surprise once I got used to it.

It was simple magic that could be very effective. That’s why Sebastian had taught it to me.

As I headed towards the dining hall, I thought about the magic that I was practicing.

Apparently, Milina had rarely seen magic, and she never looked bored as she had watched me activating it.

And in spite of knowing that it was beginner magic, I couldn’t help but feel pleased at how impressed she was.

Chapter 155

I Leisurely Drank Tea with Ms. Lyra

“Mr. Takumi. What will you do after lunch?”

“I’ll focus on growing herbs again. I still don’t have as much as I want.”

“...Please be careful.”

Ms. Claire sounded worried as we ate lunch.

“I’m pretty sure that I’m fine. I mean, it’s not completely clear to me, but... I used Weed Cultivation early in the morning, and then switched to magic training. So I haven’t been doing it for long stretches.”

It wasn’t quite known what power the Gift actually used, but if it recovered naturally over time, then those breaks should have helped a little.

With tea breaks and magic training, as well as lunch, it should be safe for me to start using it again.

...Unless it turned out that I actually had to sleep in order for it to recover. My theory could be completely off.

Well, I still doubted that I was near the limit. It was probably fine... At least, that was what I hoped.

“As for that, it is something that will have to be studied further.”

Sebastian was standing by as we ate lunch. I hadn’t seen him here for a while.

He was usually so busy with regards to that store. But I suppose he had more time now... Though, that probably meant there was little progress.

Regardless, that was his reaction when I told him what I was thinking.

Basically, he had no reason to doubt me, but he had no reason to agree either.

“Don’t worry about me. I won’t be fainting anymore.”

“Yes... I do not need to see something like that again. And so you must continue to be careful.”

After eating, I chuckled and assured her that I was fine, and then I went out into the garden.

Milina was busy with her servant training now... I hope she learned how to brew tea well, just as she wanted.

“I’ll have to gather the herbs myself now.”

“Oh, I can help you.”

“Are you sure, Ms. Lyra?”

When I reached the garden, I realized that since Milina wasn’t there, I would have to gather and wrap up the herbs myself.

However, Ms. Lyra then followed after me and offered to help.

I did feel bad, since she was also keeping an eye on Tilura and would prepare tea for us...

“You really don’t need to hesitate to ask us for help, Mr. Takumi.”

“...But I can’t help but feel bad about it.”

However, Ms. Lyra clearly didn’t agree.

I suppose it was that I wasn’t used to living with butlers and maids surrounding me. And so I preferred to do things on my own.

But if she insisted, maybe I would rely on them a little more in the future.

I suppose she would feel better to be of service, as long as it wasn’t anything ridiculous.

“In that case, I’ll gladly accept your help.”

And so I left the gathering and separating of the different types of herbs to Ms. Lyra, and I used Weed Cultivation.

As Tilura had to study after lunch, she was not here.

But I could see Sherry and Leo sleeping under the sun.

And so the garden was quiet, with only the sounds of Ms. Lyra and I moving around.

“Mr. Takumi... Surely this is enough?”

“...I want a little more... For Ractos... And more Ramogi for Range village as well...”

As the sun was starting to set, Ms. Lyra became concerned again.

In fact, I had actually made more than I had initially planned.

As I would be gone for a few days, I wanted to make extra herbs to send to Ractos...

“But...you look tired. I think you better rest at the very least.”

“I’m sorry to worry you... Very well, I’ll rest.”

I could not argue with Ms. Lyra as she peered into my face, and so I decided to rest.

However, she seemed pleased as she started to pour the tea.

But as she had been helping since lunch...she was probably tired as well... I then noticed that my back hurt a little.

While using the Gift didn't make me tired, crouching with my hands on the ground while growing herbs, as well as picking them, was quite like working in the fields.

"Here. I hope it helps you to relax a little."

"Mmm... Thank you. You rest too, Ms. Lyra."

"No, I don't..."

"I was able to do a lot more than I expected, thanks to your help. And you must be tired as well? Here, don't hesitate."

"...Very well... Phew..."

I stretched my sore limbs and then thanked Ms. Lyra for the tea as I sat down.

As she had been helping me the whole time, I knew that she was tired as well.

And so I had to get up once and steer Ms. Lyra over to the chair so she would sit down.

She did so reluctantly, but then let out a pleased sigh as she tasted the tea that she had poured.

So she really was tired... I felt bad all over again for allowing her to help me.

"Now that I think about it...this is the first time we've sat together at a table, isn't it?"

"Yes. I am a maid of this house, after all... It is not proper for me to sit with Lady Claire and the others."

I suppose that was the typical way to think if you were a servant.

I wasn't used to such things, and so I was always worried about Ms. Lyra and the others when they stood in the same place for so long.

That being said, it might be uncomfortable for them to be forced to sit at the table as well...

“Well, from now on, I hope that you’ll drink tea with me like this, when you have time.”

“...I suppose that as a maid, I should refuse... But if you truly mean it, Mr. Takumi...”

Ms. Claire and the others weren’t around, and it was only a short rest.

Besides, I was a guest here, and not a nobleman.

I was a commoner, and so I was sure that Ms. Lyra would get used to it quickly.

And so after that, the two of us enjoyed our tea and talked as we rested.

Chapter 156

We Gathered Together On the Night Before Departure

“Mr. Takumi. Dinner is ready. Please come to the dining hall.”

“I see. Thank you.”

I answered Ms. Gelda, who had come to call me, and I stopped my herb growing.

As I had been able to make about ninety percent of the Ramogi for Range village, this probably was enough for today.

I thanked Ms. Lyra for helping me, and then headed to the dining hall and ate dinner.

“So both Mr. Takumi and Leo will be gone from tomorrow on...”

“Yes. Well, it’s just for several days.”

After dinner, while we were training our swings, Tilura muttered this sadly.

“I will miss you two. ...Because I’ve been spending time with both of you so much recently.”

“That’s true.”

It was just an estimate, but I believed that it would take me a full day to reach Range village on Leo’s back.

So that was two days for a round trip. And I would likely spend a day there as I give them the Ramogi. So the whole thing would be close to three days.

But it would be best to assume that it could be four or five... Besides, I didn’t want to make Leo run for a whole day nonstop.

“Still, Tilura. Just because Leo and I won’t be here, it doesn’t mean that you can skip your training and studies, all right?”

“I wouldn’t do that! You’ll be so surprised once you come back!”

“Yes, that’s the spirit. You should be good enough that I’ll be the one taking tips from you.”

“Yes!”

Well, she was not likely to improve that much in just a few days, but she did grow very fast. So perhaps she would be able to do things when I returned that she couldn’t do now.

There was a saying about how boys change after not seeing them for three days...

...Of course, Tilura was a girl... But at that age, girls sometimes grew even faster, so I shouldn’t underestimate her.

“...Can I sleep with Leo in your room tonight?”

“Wuff?”

“Hmm... I don’t know... If your sister gives her permission?”

“Okay! I’ll go and ask her!”

It seemed like she was really going to miss us. After we finished training, Tilura asked if she could sleep with Leo tonight.

But it seemed likely that the daughter of a duke should not be sleeping in a man’s room... It was definitely not up to me.

At least Ms. Claire would be able to persuade Tilura of this. That was my hope, anyway.

And so Tilura ran off immediately to her sister’s room. Leo looked at her with a puzzled expression.

“Well...this wasn’t what I was expecting to happen...?”

“Did you say something, Mr. Takumi?”

“No, nevermind...”

I had gone to take a bath and then returned to my room, thinking that I was about to get a good night’s sleep. But then I saw that Ms. Claire, Tilura, Ms. Lyra and even Milina were there.

They were all dressed in their nightgowns, instead of their regular clothes. I suddenly did not know where to look.

I suppose those were comfortable to wear...but I wasn’t used to seeing such things...

“Wuff.”

“Leo, it’s not my fault, all right...?”

“What did Leo say?”

“...No, it’s nothing... Hehe.”

Milina seemed to hear Leo say something with a sigh. But I just laughed it off.

“Ah, Mr. Takumi. This is from Sebastian. What does it say?”

“...Uh...”

I took the Sebastian’s letter from Ms. Claire and read it.

As Ms. Claire hadn’t read it, she didn’t know what it said.

Uh... ‘The most beautiful ladies of the mansion. Please enjoy their company. PS... You really enjoy being surrounded by women, don’t you?...

What is that old man saying...!

“Mr. Takumi?”

“...No, nevermind... It’s just about the herbs... Haha...”

I said as Ms. Claire looked at me with a puzzled expression. Then I crumpled up the paper and threw it away.

Sebastian... I won’t deny that they were pretty, but... I wished that he didn’t think that I was some kind of womanizer...

In fact, he probably knew...and was just laughing at how awkward I was feeling right now...

Still, even the master who he served as a butler was here...

It might be his idea of a joke, but... It really wasn't funny...

“Well, since you will be leaving this mansion tomorrow, Mr. Takumi... I think they are just going to miss you two.”

“Ms. Lyra... That being said...”

As I wondered what to do, Ms. Lyra noticed and approached me.

I understood that they might miss us, but... These women had invaded a man's room... And did they mean to stay...?

“Of course, I feel the same... Think of it as a farewell party.”

“Well, uh, if that's what you want...”

In any case, I just decided to accept that they had gathered here to see me off before my departure... I guess.

“So, where are you all going to sleep?”

“I will sleep here.”

“I'm going to sleep with Leo!”

“...While it might be rude, I could sleep here...”

“Master, I want to sleep with Leo too...”

“Kyau!”

“Wuff. Wuff.”

While I was fine with them sleeping in the room, the problem was where they would sleep.

And when I asked them...Tilura and Milina wanted to sleep with Leo. They were already being enveloped by Leo's long fur.

I was glad that they liked Leo so much, and it was sure to be warm even during the night...and Sherry was there too... Hmm, that was fine... Leo didn't seem to mind...but...

Chapter 157

We Slept Together

"...Why are you two going to sleep on the bed?"

"...Well, we can't all sleep with Good Leo...that won't be very comfortable for her..."

"Ah...I can sleep in the corner..."

The problem is Ms. Claire and Ms. Lyra.

The two said they wanted to sleep in the bed that I slept in.

It was a big room, and so the bed was also quite large. It would be easy enough for three people to sleep on it without being that close to each other...

However, in terms of my mental well-being, I did not think it a good idea to share a bed with two women.

Both of them were speaking hesitantly, but also didn't look like they were going to back down...

"You're going to sleep with Mr. Takumi?"

"Yes. It seems like there is nowhere else that I can sleep, after all."

Tilura asked innocently as she held onto Leo. And Ms. Claire answered as if it was nothing notable.

Ms. Claire... Should a noblewoman really be sharing a bed with a man?

“Don’t you agree, Lyra?”

“...Oh, I will sleep in the corner.”

“So neither of you are going to back down...”

While Ms. Lyra was fine with sleeping near the corner, she still intended on sleeping in the bed.

“...Ha... Then you two can sleep in the bed. I’ll find some random place to sleep. Sherry, come here.”

“Kyau!”

I called over Sherry and carried her to a corner of the room.

I should be warm enough if I slept with Sherry.

And it would not do to make the women sleep on the floor, so they can use the bed then.

“But that goes against our purpose!”

“If Mr. Takumi is going to sleep on the floor, then I will sleep on the floor too!”

The two were quite astonished when I sat down on the floor.

“Huh? No, I just don’t think grown men and women should be sleeping in the same bed...”

“But this is a special occasion!”

“Really, Mr. Takumi, you must sleep in your bed!”

So saying, the two grabbed my arms as I carried Sherry, and escorted me back to the bed.

Uhh... Why was I being forced to sleep in the same bed as them...?

“Mr. Takumi can be in the center, I will be on the right side and Lyra can be on the left. Agreed?”

“Yes, it sounds correct.”

“Uh, what about my opinion...?”

“Wuff.”

Ms. Claire and Ms. Lyra settled the sleeping arrangements without me.

While Leo was sighing at me, I was too distracted to reply.

Indeed, it wasn't that I completely hated the idea of being surrounded by two beautiful women.

As for whether it would help get a good night's sleep...that was an entirely different matter...

“Are you comfortable, Leo?”

“Wuff-wuff.”

“She seems fine, Lady Tilura.”

Tilura and Milina were already falling asleep on either side of Leo.

Seeing them use that fluffy fur as a pillow...I was sure that they would have no trouble sleeping well tonight.

...It would not be the same for me, I thought despondently.

“Mr. Takumi, I’m sure Leo will take good care of them.”

“As for you, Mr. Takumi, I’ll make sure that you sleep comfortably as well.”

As Ms. Claire said, I could leave those two to Leo... But I was more concerned about myself right now... I had to travel to Range village tomorrow, and so I wanted to be able to sleep... What to do...

Also, while Ms. Lyra was supposed to take care of me, surely she was going too far?

“Uhh, you two should calm down... And uh, I need a minute to prepare...”

“Prepare what?”

“Prepare before going to sleep?”

They looked at me strangely as I moved away.

I went to the desk in the corner of my room and picked up a small bag with herbs inside.

“All right, there are still some sleeping herbs left...I just need to...glug.”

I chewed and swallowed it quietly so that no one noticed.

It had served me well in the forest while we were exploring. With this sleep aiding herb, I should be able to fall into a deep sleep, even in a crowded bed.

Tomorrow was an important day, so I couldn’t afford to stay up late.

“Mr. Takumi?”

“What is the matter?”

“Haha. It’s nothing. Don’t worry about it.”

The two were curious about what I was doing.

But I didn’t feel like telling them that I had taken sleeping herbs to calm my nerves, so I just laughed it off.

I was already starting to feel the effects and became drowsy, and so I fell into bed.

Of course, Ms. Claire and Ms. Lyra were true to their word, and camped on both sides of the bed.

Now that I thought about it, hadn’t Ms. Lyra said she would sleep in the corner…?

...Seeing them so close on either side, my heart started to beat a little faster... But I managed to calm myself again.

“Mr. Takumi. I hope that you have sweet dreams. Hehehe.”

“Good night, Mr. Takumi.”

“...Yes.”

As lying on either side was not going to help things, I lay on my back and kept my hands close to my body as I closed my eyes.

They whispered on either side of me. I thought that I was in danger of becoming excited again, but the herbs did their work, and I drifted off to sleep.

...Still, would I really feel rested and refreshed in the morning...?

“Mr. Takumi seems to have enjoyed himself.”

“Indeed? But weren’t they arguing over where to sleep...”

“It was a fun sleepover!”

“Wuff! Wuff!”

I could hear voices...

It sounded like Milina and Tilura? And Leo... Was she hungry?

Also, there was a man’s voice.

...Now that I think about it, some of the women had pushed their way into my room last night...
But not any men...

“Hmm...”

“Oh, are you awake?”

“Good morning, master.”

“Good morning, Mr. Takumi.”

“Wuff.”

Once my mind was clear, I opened my eyes and muttered.

In reaction, the man peered into my face and talked to me.

It was...Sebastian?

Sebastian's face appeared in my vision... So that's who was talking with the others.

Chapter 158

Sebastian Was Very Amused

“Good morning. Tilura, Milina and...Leo.”

For some reason, I couldn't move my body, but I greeted Sebastian and the others anyway.

And because I couldn't move, I couldn't see the others. But given how cheerful they sounded, they must have had a good night's sleep.

...Still, why won't my body move...?

“Mr. Takumi... It seems like you enjoyed that even more than I anticipated.”

“Sebastian... I don't know what you're talking about...”

He was starting to talk nonsense, and I was about to object, but stopped.

I suddenly noticed the pleasant scent...

It certainly wasn't coming from me...so I turned my head to the right and left.

“...Ms. Claire!? And Ms. Lyra!?”

“Mmm...”

“...Haa...”

“...Yes...you must have had quite a night...”

I saw that Ms. Claire was to my right, and Ms. Lyra to my left.

Both of them were clutching onto me tightly.

...So that's why I couldn't move... And that also explained the smell... Wait, there were more important matters to consider!

Like the fact that their soft bodies were pressed against me in the most dangerous ways!

“Sebastian! It's not what you're thinking!”

“Oh, it's not?”

“Well, it's true that we shared a bed... But we didn't sleep so tightly together. And I assure you, nothing happened!”

“...Nothing... What are you talking about?”

“Uh, well...”

As I tried to make my excuses to Sebastian, I realized something.

...Sebastian was grinning. He was clearly highly amused by the whole situation.

“...Sebastian... You're mocking me, aren't you?”

“I don't know what you are talking about... I am completely ignorant.”

Sebastian said. He continued to grin mischievously.

He was clearly enjoying this... What a vulgar butler!

“Hmm... Sebastian?”

“...Haa... What happened?”

As Sebastian and I talked, Ms. Claire and Ms. Lyra woke up.

They both sounded very sleepy. I had never heard them talk like that before.

Especially Ms. Lyra. Her words were quite slurred.

“...Now!”

“Oh, what swift movement. I see that your training hasn’t been for nothing.”

Now that the two were awake, I took the opportunity to release myself from their grasp.

Then I moved swiftly and escaped to the corner of the bed.

Sebastian sounded impressed...but I knew he was still joking.

I suppose he didn’t even care that his own master, Ms. Claire, was here with us... That seemed rather questionable for a butler.

“...It’s morning? Good morning, Mr. Takumi.”

“...Good morning... Huh? That’s not where you were when going to sleep.”

“...Good morning.”

The two sat up in the bed.

Ms. Lyra immediately noticed that I was in a different place, but I ignored her.

“I suppose he moves around a lot in his sleep?”

“It appears to be the case. I’m just glad that he didn’t fall off of the bed.”

“Hohoho.”

“...Yes, that’s what happened.”

I had moved in order to escape them... But they didn’t realize this, and assumed I had moved in my sleep.

And after hearing Sebastian laugh, I didn’t even feel like responding...

“Well, I must prepare for the day. I’ll see in the dining hall.”

“Yes. I’ll go as soon as I’m ready.”

As the sunlight shone into the room, Ms. Claire looked a little bashful as she left the room.

Ms. Lyra followed after her, and so only Milina and Tilura remained.

After toying with me to his heart’s content, Sebastian made some excuse and left... He didn’t have to come in the first place if he was so busy... But perhaps this was the only way he could take his mind off of work.

...Though, he could find a better hobby.

“...Don’t you have to get ready too, Milina?”

“I do, but... It’s hard to move away once you are here...”

“Leo is especially soft. So I understand how you feel!”

From the moment before going to sleep until now, Milina and Tilura had not let go of Leo.

Holding Leo was like being enveloped in the softest blanket...

It was no wonder that they couldn't get away from it even after waking up.

“Now, to prepare for the day... I'm going to Range village...I have to get ready for that.”

“Wuff.”

After some time passed, Milina and Tilura parted from Leo with regretful expressions and left the room.

As I would be gone for a few days, I needed to bring some extra clothing.

I wouldn't want to wear the same clothes the whole time...

Leo yawned in the corner as I packed everything that I would need.

“Wuff. Wuff.”

“You didn't sleep well?”

Leo continued to yawn, even after I was finished.

Perhaps she hadn't slept well because Milina and Tilura were clutching to her the whole time.

As for me, the herbs ensured that I slept just fine, so I felt refreshed... Maybe I should have given some to Leo as well.

“Wuff-wuff. Wuff!”

“...What?”

You couldn’t sleep well because you were wondering what was going to happen on the bed...?

Apparently, Leo had been more concerned with how I was being sandwiched between Ms. Claire and Ms. Lyra.

So it wasn’t because of Milina and Tilura after all. But why was Leo so concerned about that...?

Chapter 159

I Departed for Range Village

“Wuff. Wuff... Wuff.”

“I should hurry up and settle down?”

Leo was telling me to tie the knot already...as if that would happen...

I didn’t even have that relationship with anyone?

“With Ms. Claire or Ms. Lyra. What a rude thought.”

“Wuff.”

I replied, and Leo shook her head and sighed with exasperation.

...Ms. Claire was high-born and the daughter of a duke, while Ms. Lyra was a servant that worked in this mansion.

And I wouldn’t presume to be worthy of either of them...

“...So I won’t be able to eat Ms. Helena’s cooking for a while...”

“Mr. Takumi, I prepared some food for you to take on your travels.”

I had hurried to the dining hall in order to escape Leo’s interrogation. There, I ate breakfast with everyone... Well, except Milina.

After eating, we drank tea, and I thought regretfully about how I wouldn’t be able to eat Ms. Helena’s delicious cooking while I was away.

While Sebastian had packed some food for me, I knew that it wouldn’t be on the same level.

It was with such thoughts that I grabbed my belongings from my room, along with the food, and went to the entrance hall.

“Please be safe, Mr. Takumi.”

“Come back soon, Mr. Takumi!”

“Please help those poor people, master.”

“Kyau, kyau!”

Several of the servants, Ms. Claire, Tilura, Milina, and Sherry came to see me off.

I listened to their final words as I strapped everything onto Leo’s back.

Surprisingly, a large cloth had been prepared, and everything was put inside and tied up, making it easier to strap to Leo.

It was strange...the pattern reminded me of Japanese style cloth...

And so I looked a little like an old-style Japanese thief as I climbed onto Leo.

...It was a little awkward, since I had to place my arms around it, but the clothes inside acted as a cushion, so it wouldn't be too uncomfortable.

"Well, let us depart, Mr. Takumi."

"Yes... Huh? You're coming too, Mr. Sebastian?"

Sebastian had climbed onto Leo and sat behind me.

I hadn't heard anything about him going to Range village. Besides, wasn't there still work to do regarding that store...?

"No, just to Ractos. Since I need to go today, I thought I would hitch a ride."

"Ah, of course. Leo, it will be a little heavier than usual... Is that all right?"

"Wuff!"

"Good Leo told me yesterday that she could handle a little extra weight."

Apparently, Sebastian had already asked Leo about it.

Leo nodded reassuringly.

"Well, let's go then."

I turned around and waved to the others who stood by the door.

"Have a safe journey!"

The servants said with a bow. And then we were off.

...I thought I had heard the voices of Ms. Claire and the others as well...

Milina was a servant in training, but it seemed off for Ms. Claire to be in sync with them.

It was with such thoughts that we left the mansion.

As we were on Leo, it was much faster than riding a carriage.

“Good Leo is so fast. At this rate, we’ll reach Ractos in half the amount of time.”

“Indeed. She usually adjusts her speed to match the horses. Besides, she’s also careful so that the rider doesn’t fall off. Leo would be even faster if she was alone.”

Sebastian was very impressed by Leo’s speed while riding.

But if Leo was running her fastest, she could probably reach Ractos in a matter of minutes... I would have no hope of staying on if she ran that fast now.

“By the way, Sebastian...”

“Yes, what is it?”

“What are you going to do in Ractos?”

It was unusual for Sebastian to leave the mansion alone.

In fact, I don’t think he had done it once since my arrival.

So surely there must be a good reason for him to leave and visit the town now.

“It concerns that store. I want to see it in person... There is information one can’t acquire if they just stay in the house.”

“There is...?”

“Yes. If I stay in the mansion, all the information that comes in is just hearsay. And it’s important to actually go and see and hear things for yourself. Besides, it’s best to get information while it’s still fresh.”

“Fresh...”

Yes, there definitely is a difference when it comes to information you got on your own. Seeing is better than hearing, after all... Well, sometimes...

In any case...communication technology was not advanced at all in this world. So it could take a while for you to acquire the latest information.

Perhaps gaining information on sight was more important than I thought.

Well, even information on the internet wasn’t always correct. And so it was best to find out for yourself when possible.

“Also, I have to go to Kalis’s store.”

“Why is that?”

“To tell him to lower the prices. Kalis is a good merchant, but...I do not think he will agree to lowering the price of something that is already selling so well.”

“I can understand why.”

As the illness was still spreading in Ractos, the Ramogi would continue to fly off shelves without any price adjustments.

However, in order to ensure that the poor had access to it, we had decided to lower the prices for a limited time.

But for a merchant, it was just decreasing your profits, and so he was not likely to take it well.

“A mere letter may not be enough to satisfy him. Though, he would hardly refuse, especially since it is to help the poor.”

“I see.”

“He also understands how His Grace likes to conduct things. The people of this land should be able to live as comfortably as possible... That is the principle of his businesses.”

Chapter 160

We Told Mr. Kalis About the Ramogi Price Cut

As the store was under the duke's direct control, it was true that they had to understand which direction it was going in.

If Mr. Kalis did care about the poor, like Sebastian suggested...then he should be satisfied by the explanation.

But as it was important, it was probably best to talk to him in person, instead of notifying him of it through a letter.

There were things that couldn't be conveyed unless you were face to face.

“Now, I must get off here...”

“Ah, I'll go with you then. After all, I am quite involved in the matter.”

After arriving in Ractos, Sebastian was about to get off near the plaza in order to visit the store, but I stopped him.

“...But, surely you do not have enough time?”

“I’m sure Leo can make up for it.”

“Wuff.”

I didn’t want to leave everything to Sebastian either.

He already handled most matters related to sales, so I should do what I could.

I would just have to hold on tight and have Leo run a little faster to Range village, and then we could make up for any lost time.

Sebastian saw that Leo was nodding, and so he agreed to allow us to accompany him.

“Ah, Mr. Takumi. Thank you for visiting. And you, Sebastian... So, what brings you here today?”

“Kalis. We have an important matter to discuss today.”

We took Leo and went to Mr. Kalis’s store.

As it was still early, they hadn’t opened yet, and so it was just Mr. Kalis and the employees who were inside.

...Except for Nick... I suppose he came later.

“Discuss...? What could it be?”

“It’s about the sales of the Ramogi. We want to lower the prices a little.”

“The Ramogi prices? But they’ve been selling very well, along with the other herbs. I really don’t think it’s necessary...”

Mr. Kalis immediately looked at Sebastian disapprovingly.

Indeed, it sounded like a very pointless move.

It was bad business to lower prices of popular products without a special reason...

Besides, there was only so much Ramogi that could be sold a day, and so they were always low on stock. So a price cut was even more strange.

“This town... No, it’s to deal with the illness that is spreading through all of the duke’s lands. And also to keep that other store in check.”

“I see...”

And so Sebastian began to explain the meaning and effect he hoped it would have.

As always, Sebastian’s expression brightened, and he became very animated as he talked.

Even his eyes seemed to shine like the sun...

“Hmm... Indeed. Considering how the duke has always run things, it would seem like an effective move. However...has Mr. Takumi agreed to this?”

“Yes. As Sebastian says, it is my hope that more poor people are able to buy the Ramogi.”

“Mr. Takumi even agreed to lower his payment in order to make this happen.”

“Indeed! Most physicians would ask for more... I see. If that is what the duke and Mr. Takumi wants, then I have no objection. ...But our customers won’t be too happy when the prices return to normal later on...”

“Ah, that is true...”

Mr. Kalis was thinking about what would happen after the prices went back up again.

If prices were raised after they had been lowered once, then customers tended to not buy them as much.

So it could be quite difficult to recover from that... Especially if it is a great discount.

“I don’t think there is much reason to worry about the effect it can have on the market. After all, there isn’t much out there to begin with.”

“Because the other store bought them all?”

“Yes. And other herbs as well. And so cutting down the prices won’t affect other stores much. ...As for when the time comes to raise the prices again, I will handle that.”

“Sorry for the trouble.”

“No, not at all. I had not even thought about selling to the poor before. However, a merchant won’t last long if he thinks only of making a profit. If we can contribute to the duke and to the people, then this is nothing.”

“Thank you.”

Mr. Kalis said that he would handle the customers after raising the prices again.

Besides, the Ramogi was something that the average person normally bought, so it was unlikely that they would stop buying it completely.

In any case, we could just leave it to Mr. Kalis.

“So, while that matter is settled, there is still...”

“You’re wondering how the other store will respond...?”

“Yes. It is well known that this is His Grace’s store. And so they may be prompted to react in some way.”

“They may try to interfere, or try to buy all of the stock.”

Yes. Such things had to be considered as well.

They apparently had enough money to buy all the herbs around town, so they might try and come to this store after the discount.

Besides, while we didn’t have to worry about Nick now, there might be others who come to the store and try to obstruct the business.

I had no idea what we could really expect from these people, or how far they would go... But it would be a good thing to consider various possibilities and put countermeasures in place.

And so I waited to hear what Sebastian would suggest.