Beloved Dog 191



Well, I had made a similar herb to help Sherry before, but that was probably special. "Mr. Takumi. In the future, you must be more careful." "Exactly. ... There was no reason for you to come out here with such an injury..." "Hahaha... Well, I wasn't really aware of it myself. It just seemed like a little pain...but nothing I couldn't bear. Besides, you wouldn't have been able to recognize them, right?" "Perhaps, but..." Well, they would have to be satisfied with that for now. Though, there wouldn't be many people traveling here at this hour. So they would have probably been able to catch them without me. But I suppose I wanted to see the merchants captured with my own eyes. That was how angry I had been over what they did. ... Though, it also made me feel a little pathetic for not being able to catch them with my own power... "Well, that's fine. We should return to Range village. There is a lot that must be done, isn't there?" "...Very well. But please don't do something like this again." "All right." While Sebastian nodded, it was clear that he would not stop warning me about it.

I did feel bad about causing them to worry... And I was glad that there were people who felt such

concern over me.



As I watched them, I told Sebastian that they should go ahead of me.

And then Sebastian looked at me suspiciously.

Well, perhaps I had not shown myself to have the best judgment recently, and he thought I was going to do something reckless again... Of course, I had no intention of doing any such thing.

"Some of the villagers were wounded as well. And so I'm going to make some Loe here before returning. ... After all, I don't want them to know about Weed Cultivation."

"I see. Very well. Just be carefull..."

"We'll go on ahead then, Mr. Takumi."

"Yes, see you later."

"Wuff."

And so they took the merchants and left.

As the horses were connected, they moved much slower than usual.

And so I would have no trouble catching up with them after making the Loe.

I would have to be very secretive if I used Weed Cultivation in the village, so it was easier to do it here, where I didn't have to worry about being watched.

I suppose I could have gone to Mr. Hannes's house, but that was in the far corner of the village, and it would be best if I could treat the wounded as soon as I arrived.

"...All right... I think this should be enough?"

"Wuff-wuff."

I counted the Loe that I had made.

Leo was nodding... Perhaps she had counted the number of people who were wounded and would require the Loe.

"Well, let's catch up with Sebastian and Johanna. Thank you, Leo."

"Wuff!"

After putting the Loe in my breast pocket, I climbed onto leo.

It had not taken much time, so they would not have gone too far yet.

...Though, the thorns of the Loe leaves were...prickly... But it could not be helped, as they were fresh.

"We've returned. How is the situation, Phillip?"

We reunited with Sebastian and the others and returned to Range village.

There were still some orc corpses around the entrance, but it seemed that things were going smoothly. The smell of blood was a lot more mild than before.

We dismounted and then Sebastian started to talk to Phillip, who was giving orders to the villagers near the entrance.

Chapter 192

Some People Were Badly Wounded

"Ah, Mr. Sebastian and Mr. Takumi. Welcome back. ... As for the situation in the village...it is not very good..."

"What's the problem?"

Phillip noticed us, but when asked about the village, his expression turned dark.

Indeed, I had seen that there were some who were wounded...but was it really that bad?

Perhaps I had been too relieved after hearing that there were no deaths.

"Well, it's almost miraculous that no one died, in spite of it being a monster attack on this scale...

But a few of the wounded are..."

"Yes, we were quite lucky there. ...It is all because of Mr. Takumi's efforts and good Leo's aid."

"Yes. That's true. However, some of the men are badly wounded. Though, they will likely live..."

It wasn't so much due to my own efforts, but the efforts of the villagers who worked together.

I didn't know much about monsters, but even I could see that we had been very fortunate to come out of this without any deaths.

In the end, it was mostly because of Leo... Had she arrived any later, I and some others might not have made it.

In any case, according to Phillip, there were problems with some of the wounded...

"Some cannot move their arms after being cut... While others..."

So according to Phillip, some of them had been wounded to a point where they could no longer move their limbs.

That could have grave consequences. It was no wonder they didn't feel like celebrating.

After all, some of these men may no longer be able to work.

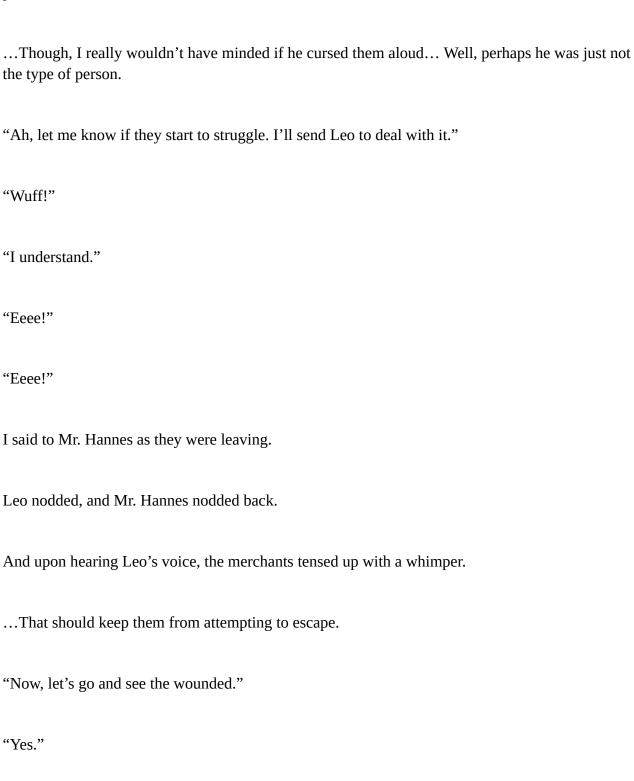
"I see. But you need not worry about them."





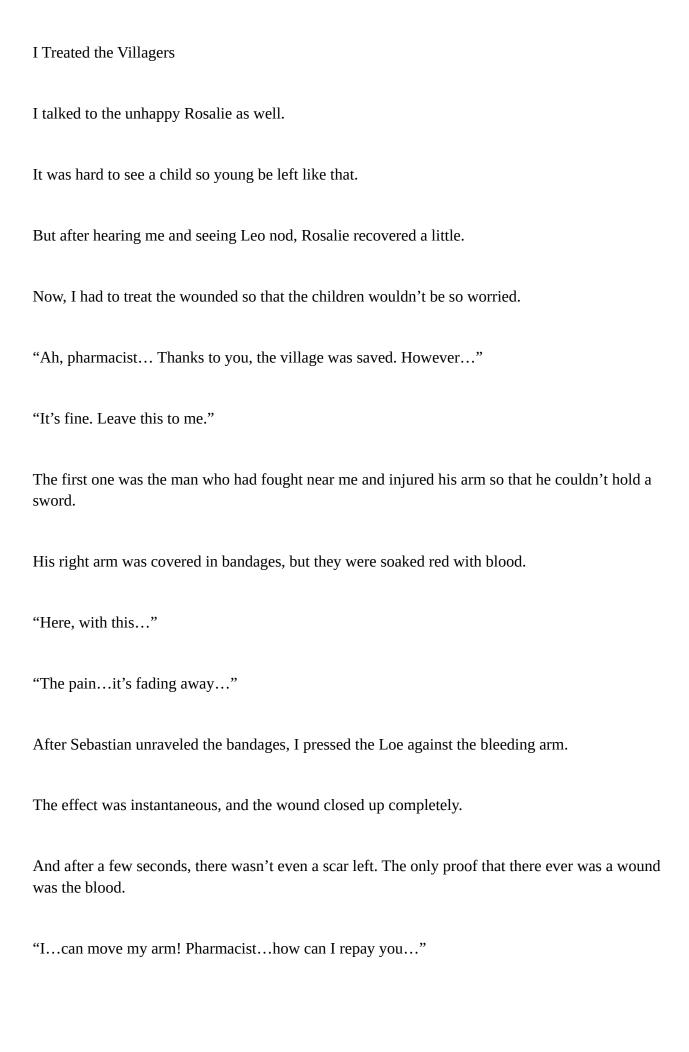
And so Mr. Hannes and Johanna left while carrying the two merchants.

Mr. Hannes had more reason than most to hate them, but I felt that he was holding back. At least they had been caught. He would keep control of himself while these visitors from the duke were present.



After seeing Mr. Hannes and the others leave, Sebastian and I took Leo and went to the village square.









And so with Sebastian and Phillip, and the help of those who were healed, we went around and treated the wounded with Loe. Upon seeing the villagers recover, Rosalie hugged Leo with tears of joy streaming down her face. She must have been incredibly worried. What a gentle child. Leo enveloped Rosalie in her fur, as if to soothe her. "Phew... There was enough Loe after all." Loe could not be used more than once. Sebastian did say that they were still somewhat potent, but they were covered in blood and grime... And I didn't want to take any risks of spreading diseases now. I thought it would be safer to just use one Loe per person. We treated nine people in all. There were others with mild injuries, and there was no need to use Loe on them. Unless they were in danger of losing limbs or being paralyzed, they should be fine. In the end, considering how many orcs we had been up against, the damage had not been great. ...Though, it didn't make me hate the merchants any less. No part of me felt merciful, like I had once with Nick...

"Mr. Takumi, thank you so much."

"I would like to thank you as well, as a representative of the duke." "No, but..." "If you weren't here, Mr. Takumi, this village would have been destroyed by the orcs. And there would not have been a single survivor." "On behalf of my master, Lord Ekenhart... Thank you for saving Range village, Mr. Takumi." After all the work was done, we had gathered in the living room of Mr. Hannes's house. Just as I was about to drink the tea that his wife poured for us, Mr. Hannes and Sebastian bowed their heads and thanked me. ... As for the tea, it was not quite as good as the tea Ms. Lyra made at the mansion. Such rude thoughts flashed in my mind, but it was only to escape reality. ...Because it was a little awkward to be thanked by people like this... "So, Sebastian. Why did you come back with Leo?" Once all the uncomfortable business of gratitude was over, and things relaxed again, I asked Sebastian why he was here. While both he and Leo had helped in arresting the merchants and dealing with matters in the village, I was still curious. After all, he was supposed to be busy with matters related to the store. And so I couldn't help but wonder.

Chapter 194

Sebastian Told Me Why He Had Come

"Last night, Leo and Phillip arrived at the mansion." In Mr. Hannes's house, Sebastian began to explain the reason that he was here. "At first, Lady Claire and I were surprised that Leo would return without you. But then Phillip told us what had happened." "And the glass sphere?" "He passed it on to us. ... And I dropped it off with Isabelle on my way here..." "Ms. Isabelle?" She was an elderly woman in Ractos who had a store that sold magic tools. That was where I had my magic energy and Gift looked into. "Because we sensed magic energy in the glass sphere. I thought that it was necessary to study it after hearing your theories from Philip. ... And that is not something we can do at the mansion." "I see..." As she had a store that sold magic goods, she would be very knowledgeable about them. And I suppose it was comforting knowing that it was in the hands of an expert now. "But are you sure she will be alright? I hope she won't become ill..." "I have thought of that as well. And so it was placed in a box that seals any magic effects that it might have." "I didn't know that such things existed."

"Yes. As long as it is inside, it should have no effect and be of no danger to anyone. Besides, even if she did take it out, she would do so with the proper safety measures." Sebastian clearly had a lot of trust in Ms. Isabelle. When I had visited, the two had talked as if they were good friends. Perhaps they had known each other for a long time. Regardless, it seemed that she would be capable of learning what the glass sphere was without spreading the disease everywhere. "But we're getting side-tracked... After hearing everything from Phillip, I accepted the sphere and listened to your theories." "Yes." "And I quite agreed with them... And since both Leo and Phillip were tired, I had them rest." Leo had done her best, running all of the way back to the mansion. And Phillip would have been tired from just riding on her. It would be exhausting just trying to stay on while Leo was running that fast. "The next day, we were to send Leo and Phillip back to this village, but..." "What happened?" Sebastian hesitated for a moment. Did something happen before they left? "Something seemed to come over Leo suddenly. She was restless in a way that I have never seen her before."





According to Sebastian, Leo somehow knew that something bad was going to happen here.

As this was before they left the mansion, it would have been around midday...which was before the merchants arrived in the village. Before even Mr. Hannes and I knew that there was an approaching danger.

Sebastian could not explain it, and neither could I. But I couldn't help but hope that it was because of our strong bond.

Though, it could just be an innate ability of Silver Fenrirs...

While far away, she might have sensed the approach of many monsters... That seemed the most likely explanation.

Chapter 195

It Was Ms. Claire Who Sent Sebastian

"Apparently, Leo had detected the presence of monsters. First, we decided to send Johanna back as well. Because it would be best to have someone who could fight."

"That's true."

"We wanted to send Nicholas as well, but... Lady Claire was against it."

"She was?"

Johanna and Nicholas were guards at the mansion, just like Phillip.

Of course, if they were going to fight monsters, it seemed like the right choice... So why did Ms. Claire stop it...?

"According to Lady Claire, he wouldn't be assisting much, if Leo was already there. And it would be better for me to go in order to help settle things and gain information..."

"...Hmm... It's true that once Leo is fighting without holding back, the orcs won't stand a chance."

In fact, once Leo arrived, she had dealt with everything on her own. She wasn't there to cooperate with us. She did as she pleased and defeated them all. Considering this, I could understand why Sebastian had been sent instead. He had more authority and could give directions. "Besides, it would be best if I could talk to you directly." "Yes, but aren't you also busy with other matters? What about that store..." "Lady Claire is more than capable of handling them for now. After all, she was the one who was adamant about me coming here." Sebastian said with a smile. Perhaps he wanted Ms. Claire to do some of his work as part of her education. As the daughter of a duke, there was much that she needed to learn... Of course, she was already a very capable person. "And that explains my presence here." "I see. ... Ah, but how come I only saw Leo at first? The rest of you didn't seem to arrive till later...?"

It was when I was about to be killed. Leo jumped in and defeated the orc for me.

He would not have been able to hold on.

While I hadn' gotten a good look, I very much doubted that Sebastian was on her back at the time.



"I see. That explains everything." "Leo really is amazing... She knew you were in danger and was able to help... If only I could be so useful as a butler..." And this wasn't the first time that Leo had surprised me with her ability to sense danger... In fact, she was always helping me. Not just her, but Mr. Ekenhart, Ms. Claire, Tilura and Sebastian helped me as well. "I think you are doing enough to fulfill your role as a butler, Sebastian. ... If anything, you are doing more than that for everyone, including me." Sebastian had also helped me a lot. That was why Mr. Ekenhart and everyone at the mansion put so much trust in him. "I do hope that you are right." "You really have no need to worry about that." I wasn't sure why I was now in the position of encouraging him... Ah, we were talking about how wonderful Leo was for following and saving her master... Except Leo wasn't a servant, but a friend. So she wasn't even comparable to someone like Sebastian. Not that I wasn't grateful for everything. In any case, I should change the subject... Was there something that I needed to ask him?

...Ah, that's right.

"There is something else I want to ask you, Sebastian."



After that, we stopped Mr. Hannes, who seemed to want to hold a feast, and then we had a late dinner and got ready to sleep Leo had played with the children and eaten some sausages that were prepared, and so she went off to the horse stables with a satisfied expression. Thanks for everything today, Leo. You really saved us. "Wuff." I had only thanked her in my heart, but Leo barked once in reply as she left. It really did feel like we had a connection. That made me happy. "Excuse me. Oh, are you going to bed already?" "Sebastian?" Just as I had returned to my room and lay on the bed, Sebastian entered. As for Sebastian, he would stay in another empty room in Mr. Hannes's house. Since there was only one room left, Sebastian, Phillip, and Johanna would share it. Though, not all at once, as Phillip and Johanna took turns keeping watch on the merchants. It seemed that they didn't really mind having men and women in the same room. "What do you want at this hour?"

"I just remembered what we were talking about earlier. About Weed Cultivation."

"Ah, I see."

Sebastian was here to talk about Weed Cultivation, as we were unable to discuss it in front of Mr. Hannes.

I could tell by his expression that he was clearly very interested. He could not wait to hear what I had to say.

Sebastian seemed to really enjoy the acquiring of new knowledge.

"So, what is it that you wanted to ask me? I do not know a lot about the Gift...but I will tell you what I do know."

"Well, you know a lot more than anyone else... Uh, I have a question with regards to Weed Cultivation..."

"Yes, what is it?"

"As the name implies, it's a Gift that makes weeds grow. You put your hand on the ground...and the plant will grow from that spot."

"...Indeed."

Up until now, I had always placed my hand on the ground in the back garden when using Weed Cultivation.

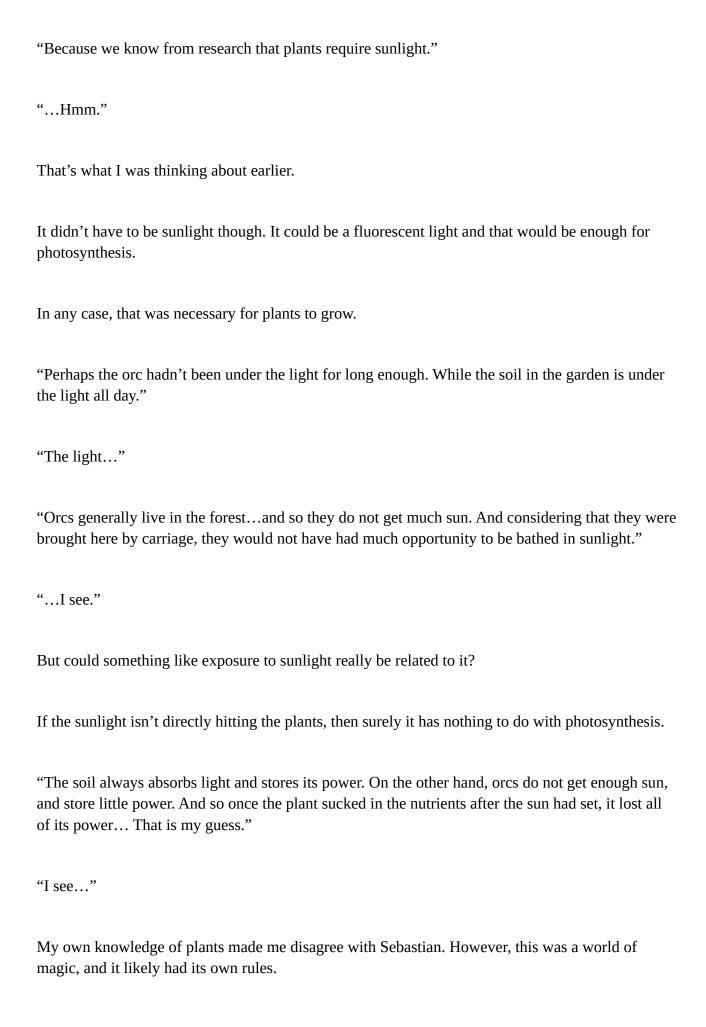
Weeds...well, plants. So I had thought that it made sense that they should grow from the ground.

And yet something very unexpected had happened while fighting the orcs.

I was so desperate, and so I didn't remember everything clearly. But I did my best to explain what had happened to Sebastian.







So perhaps in this world, plants didn't get light directly from the sun, but sucked in the sun's power that was stored in the ground, and that was how they grew...

Chapter 197

We Discussed the Transportation of the Wine

"Well, it is mostly speculation. It could be different. We can find out more after returning to the mansion and studying the soil."

"Indeed. I wouldn't want to be ruining the soil without knowing it. And so I will be careful."

"I'm sure it will be fine. We haven't noticed any change yet, and the soil gets plenty of sun."

"I see. Well, I will still be careful."

We just needed to see if there is any change to it or not.

And if there is any change to the surrounding soil or plants...I would just have to work someplace else.

"I guess, I just want to know why it was activated on an orc..."

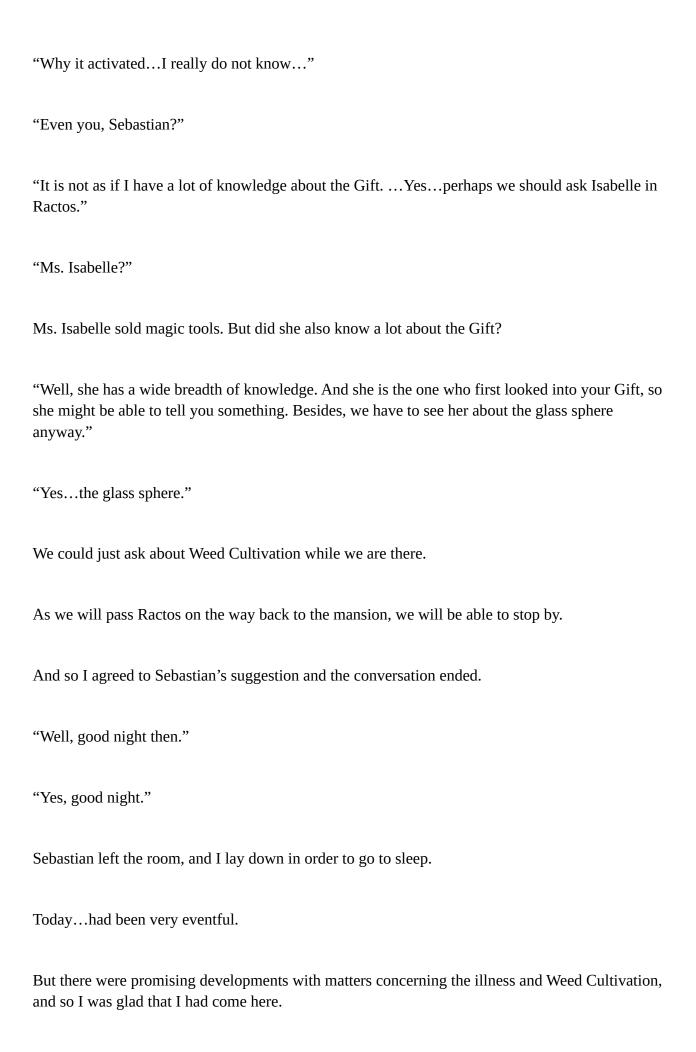
"Indeed. Up until now, it was thought that it would only work on the ground."

The problem wasn't so much that the orc had died, but why Weed Activation could be activated with an orc's body in the first place.

As I was making plants, I thought that it was only obvious that it would require soil.

...But it activated with living creatures and took their life... That made the ability a lot more powerful.

However, if I didn't fully understand what had happened, I wouldn't be able to touch other people without worrying about it...



And even if it weren't the case, I had helped save the people from the orcs. That was the biggest thing.

...Of course, I wouldn't have been able to do much on my own. And while I felt a little regret about that, I felt thankful towards Leo and Sebastian as I drifted off to sleep.

The next day, I spoke with Sebastian while eating breakfast.

I had forgotten about it yesterday, due to the matter of the orcs and merchants, but there was also the transportation of the wine.

"I didn't expect you to do such a thing, Mr. Takumi..."

"I just thought it would be a waste...it was an impulse buy, I suppose. I thought that I might be able to use it."

Sebastian was at a loss for words after I explained to him that I had purchased the barrels of wine.

Well, I suppose it was a pretty bold move...but I just wanted to help them.

By the way, I had asked Mr. Hannes to prepare some sausages for Leo's breakfast.

While it was her favorite, it wouldn't do for her to eat only that all of the time, and so there was also a vegetable soup.

"I see... Transporting the wine barrels...that will be a little difficult..."

"Too difficult?"

"No...you could always send people and wagons. However...it will have to be after we go to Ractos."

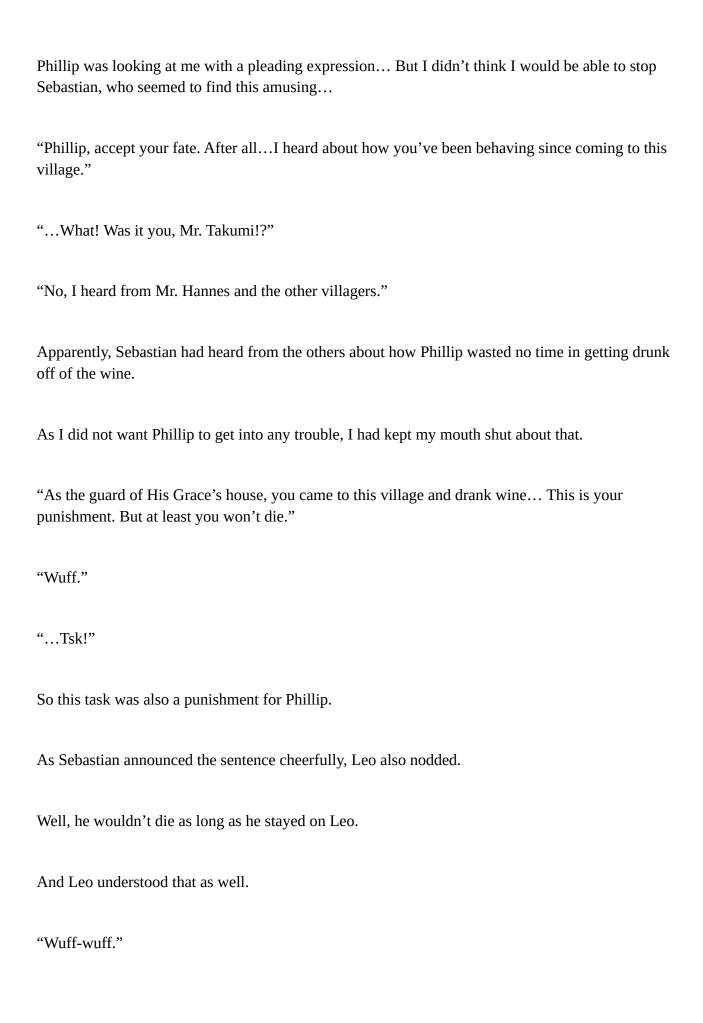
According to Sebastian, it was not likely that I'd be able to move the wine barrels anytime soon. It was no wonder...they were too heavy for people to carry, and it wouldn't be realistic to roll them all of the way back. "I suppose it will take time to prepare the wagons and personnel?" "Yes...several days at the least..." "It might go bad..." "Indeed." The wine I had bought was currently kept in a place separate from the storage house. It was a wooden building that no one lived in, which meant they were out of the sun. However, it wasn't nearly as cool as a cellar, which was not good for long-term storage. Perhaps if they were in sealed glass bottles...but they were in barrels. And there was too much to change containers... What should we do... "Even if you could remove the cause of the sickness from it...the taste will likely suffer..." "And transporting it will also take several days..."

Ractos was about three days from here on horseback... And so a wagon would probably be four or five days.

Furthermore, given how heavy the wine barrels were, it would probably take over five days to reach the mansion.

So that was nine to ten days at best. "Well, there is no guarantee that it will be drinkable again in the first place. So I suppose it's too early to be worrying about the taste." "But it's wine." "Yes, but my main purpose was to prevent Range village from suffering a great financial loss. And I was able to do that." "I see. Well, there is no problem then. Let's hire a wagon to go to Ractos." Sebastian said with a grin, and then he left the house. I suppose he had an idea. But why did he look so entertained just now...? "...Phillip?" "Mr. Takumi... Please help..." "What happened?" After finishing breakfast, I thanked Mr. Hannes's wife and went outside to chase after Sebastian. That's when I saw a tied up Phillip lying next to Leo. Chapter 198 Phillip Was Punished "I thought that we should send Phillip to the town of Ractos." "That seems like a good idea. But why is he tied up?" "So that Leo can carry him. You were attacked by monsters, Mr. Takumi, while Leo was away... Well, the village was attacked..."













It was decided that they'd take the merchants to Ractos after lunch.

Leo would return during the evening or night at the latest. If that's the case, then I would be fine even on my own... I doubted we'd be attacked by monsters again.

Sebastian intended to cast the same tracking magic on the merchants that he cast on Nick.

And so we would be able to capture them easily even if they managed to escape.

Also, since I still had some time, I would make some herbs with Weed Cultivation.

"All right. I'm going to the back of Mr. Hannes's house so I can make some herbs."

"Is there something you need?"

"Well, I've been away from the mansion for quite a long time. And so I thought I'd make some herbs for Ractos."

"...Indeed. Phillip brought some with him, along with the glass sphere...but if you stay in this village for a few more days, then they will likely run out."

"Yes. And so I'll make as much as I can."

"Very well. But don't tire yourself."

After telling Sebastian what I would do, we parted ways.

And so I headed to the house that was quite familiar to me now, so I could focus on growing herbs.

"Sebastian, here are the herbs. Please send my regards to Mr. Kalis."

"Yes, of course. ... This seems like a lot... How do you feel?"

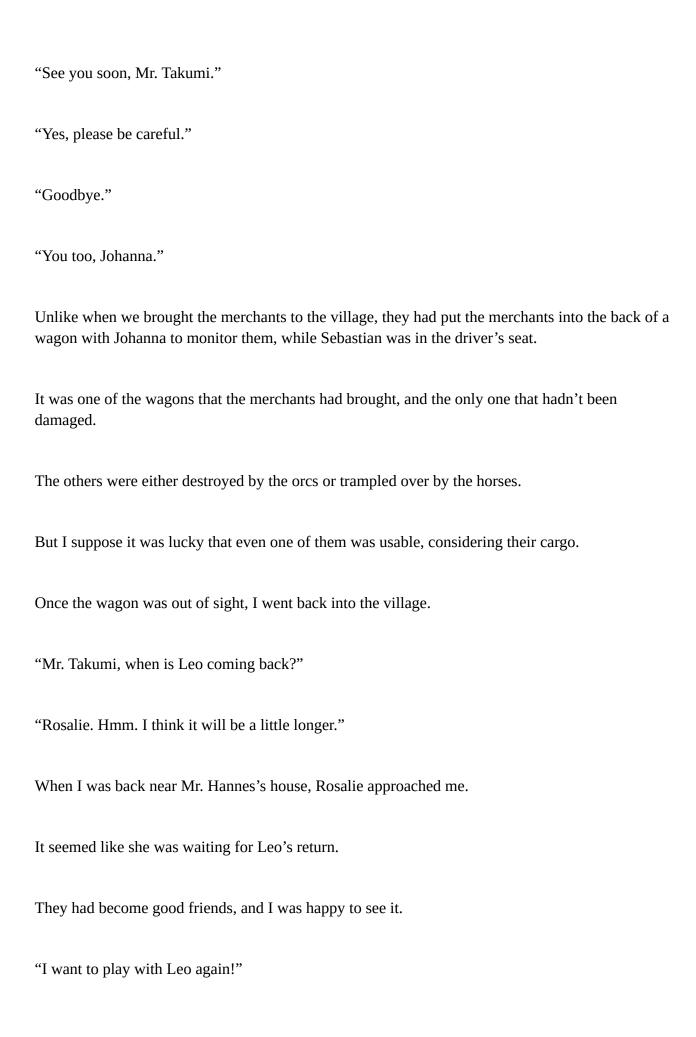
"I'm fine. But I'll avoid using Weed Cultivation for the rest of the day." I had worked for a few hours, and had made so much that I wondered if I had gone a little too far. After eating lunch, I watched as Sebastian and Johanna took the merchants and set off for Ractos. Sebastian had been surprised when I handed him the herbs at the village entrance, but I promised him that I wouldn't make anymore that day. The last thing I wanted to do was faint while I was staying in this village... Of course, I didn't want to faint anywhere. "Well, just be careful." "Yes." "And... Ah, that's right. When we arrive in Ractos, the merchants will be questioned...and so I'll have to stay there for a while." "I see... Well, I'll leave for Ractos as soon as Phillip arrives with the wagons." "Yes. We will meet in Ractos." If everything went smoothly, Phillip would return in four to five days.

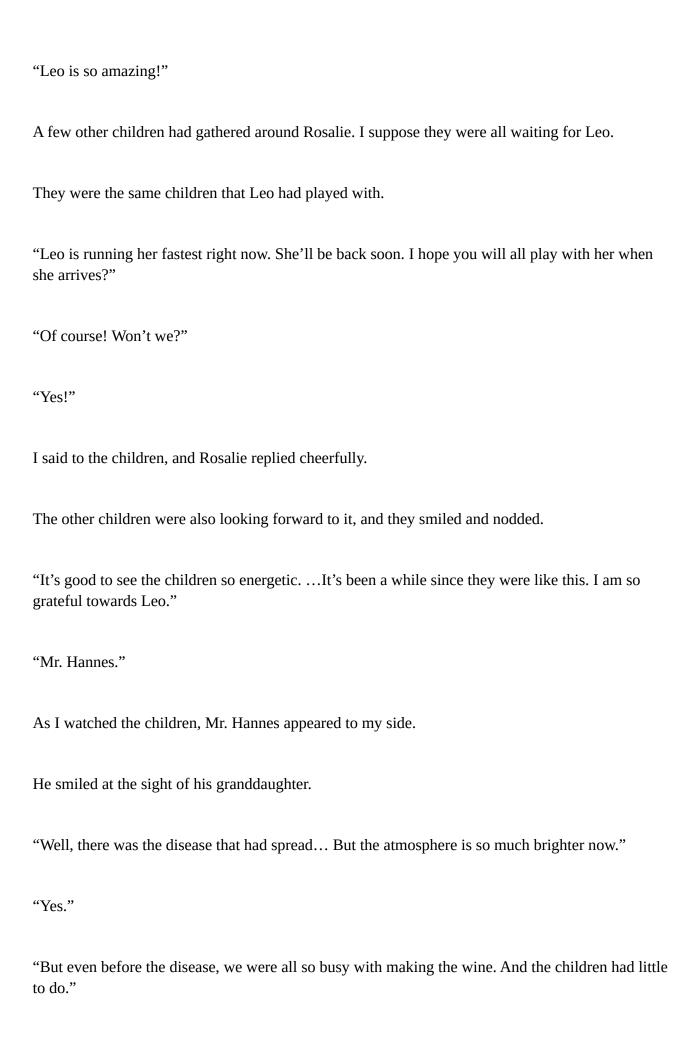
And since Sebastian would be carrying the merchants, the horses would not be able to run very fast.

And so once Phillip returns and I ride on Leo after loading all of the barrels onto the wagons, then I should arrive in Ractos just as all the questioning was finished.

Close enough, anyway.

And once I met up with Sebastian, we could go and see Isabelle.





"You couldn't play with them?" "I am not proud of it... But everyone who could work had to cut down trees and make barrels. And the wine... The village was very different once we started making the wine." I understood why the village would seem like a dark place when everyone was sick. I had seen it in person. But what about before that? According to Mr. Hannes, the adults were so busy with work, and the children were often neglected. Right now, perhaps due to there being less wine, and having to rest after the battle with the orcs, there were adults resting all over the village. And they watched the running children with gentle expressions. Some of them were even playing with them. It didn't look like a village where the adults were too busy to spend time with the children. "Even if the village was doing well... I feel it wasn't the happiest place for our young. The only sounds you heard were of people working, not the laughter of children." "...I see." I thought back to the company I used to work at. If asked whether or not it was successful, I would say that it was. However, all one would hear was the angry shouts of my boss, and people shifting blame to the new people.

We didn't even have time to have friendly chats with coworkers.

And while things were likely not that bad here, they still had to put their work before anything else.

...It was in order to live, and so I couldn't blame them.

Chapter 200

I Spent My Time Relaxing in Range Village

"A place where the children are happy... That is probably really important. No matter how much work there is, the village will not survive if the next generation doesn't bear the load."

"Indeed. Even if things are good now, it will mean nothing if the children all leave."

They may make more money, but the time will come when they will have to let the next generation take over.

And if the children are gone, then it will all be over.

And so it was important to ensure that the children did not leave.

Of course, they couldn't spend all their time with the children as well, so the balance was difficult to achieve.

"After this incident with the illness, I am unsure of our future when it comes to making wine. However, thanks to you, Mr. Takumi, the village is not in as much of a desperate situation as we would have been. Perhaps this will be a good opportunity to reconsider things."

We knew for a fact that the wine had spread the illness.

Even if this knowledge wasn't made public, rumors would spread eventually.

And so no matter how delicious the wine was, fewer people would want to buy from this village.

And so their income would be reduced greatly.

"Will you be fine?"

"Well, we did not even buy any grapes this time. So we have some money left from that. In the meantime, we'll have to think about what must be done for this village."

They could use the money for the grapes and find a different way of supporting themselves.

I didn't know if they would stop making wine completely, but as long as their income was guaranteed to decrease, it would make little sense to have everyone in the village focus on that.

As the orcs had been brought in by the merchants, there would be a lot of anxiety about where they would get grapes from now. Could they even buy them from another territory?

In fact, now that the connection between that store and the merchants was revealed, and the Count's misdeeds uncovered, it would greatly affect his relationship with the duke...

"Thankfully, our wood can still be sold in the town. If we aren't using the barrels for wine, we can sell them to other towns and villages."

They could probably make a decent amount by just selling the wood materials.

That would help them survive until they found a long-term solution.

"Before the wine stops selling?"

"Yes. I need to think of the village and move quickly... Well, think quickly. It is important."

"That is true..."

As Mr. Hannes was the chief of the village, he needed to be ahead of the others when thinking about things.

However, I couldn't help but feel a little sad about that delicious wine being gone forever.

Even though it had spread the disease, the real reason was the glass sphere that the merchant had brought.

But people didn't care about such details when spreading rumors... Once rumors about the wine being the cause started to spread, it would just be a matter of time before its reputation was ruined.

"Well, perhaps these are just the ramblings of an old man."

Still, I was worried.

Was it my personality or... I suppose it was due to my past experiences.

I knew what it was like to be so consumed by work, and I felt like the situation in the village was similar to the situation that I was in.

Things were different now, and while I didn't have all the answers, I couldn't help but think about it.

...The wine was good... That was another reason.

"Wuff-wuff!"

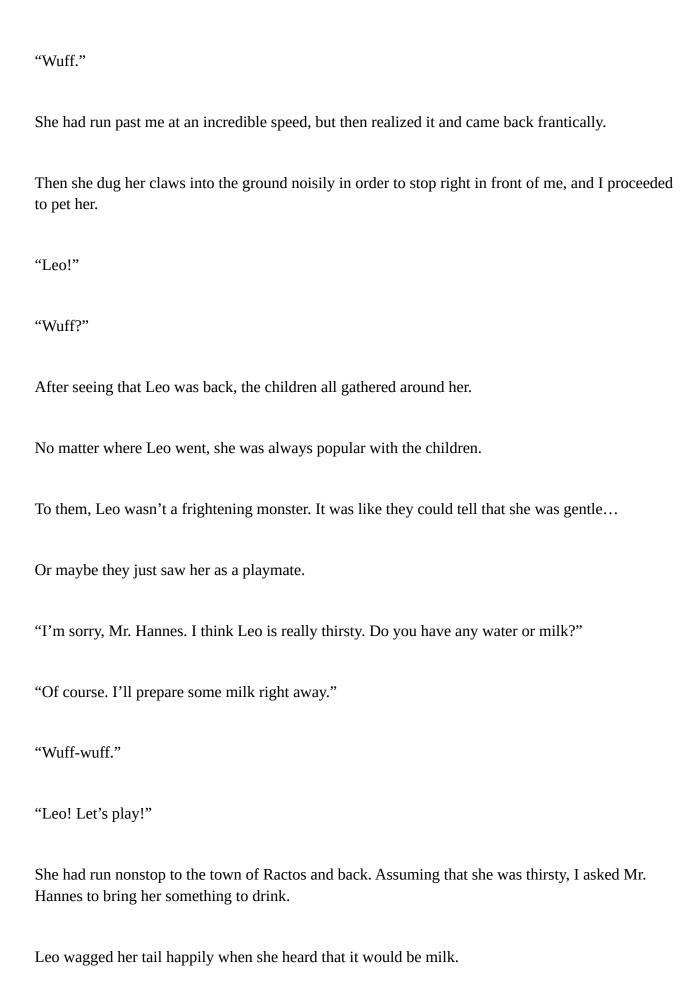
"Ah, it's Leo!"

As I was talking with Mr. Hannes, and thinking about the future of the village, more time had passed than I thought.

I heard Leo's voice from far away, and the children began to shout excitedly.

"Wuff... Wuff."

"Welcome back, Leo. That's a good girl."





There was nothing really to do. I did feel a little bad, but Mr. Hannes insisted that I could stay for as long as I'd like, since I had saved them.

Still, I had no intention of accepting their hospitality for too long.

And while I did spend time lazily watching Leo play, I also didn't forget to run and train, so that my body wouldn't grow weak.

Also, I made some herbs behind Mr. Hannes's house, so I could give them to Mr. Kalis later.

I had given some to Sebastian, but he would need more soon.

However, even as I relaxed during the days, there was always something on my mind.

It was about the village's wine.

I didn't know what Mr. Hannes and the others would do, but it would be a waste to abandon the wine business entirely. Also, what work could the adults do...that would still afford them enough time to spend with the children...?

While it seemed like there was nothing I could do, it still bothered me.