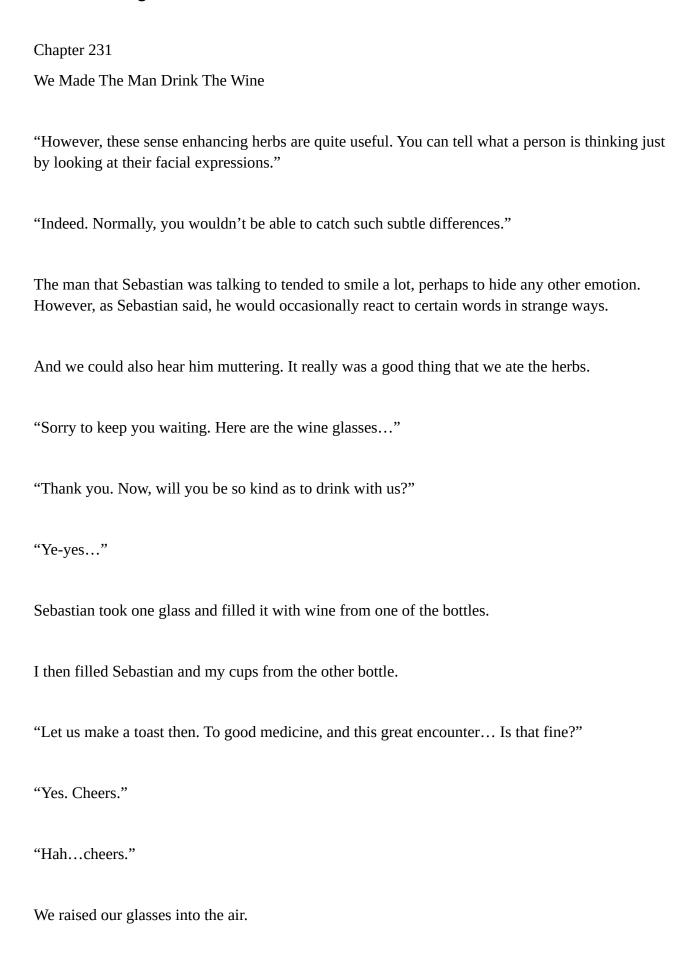
Beloved Dog 231



The man was sweating and staring at the wine in his cup. But Sebastian and I ignored him and drank our cups in one go. "Ahhh. The duke certainly knows how to choose the best wine." "Yes. He is very knowledgeable about wine, and is very particular when it comes to smell, taste and color." The wine that the two of us had drunk... We had drunk it at the mansion as well. It was sweet and fragrant. Good enough that I was once again glad that they didn't throw it away. And while Sebastian and I smiled and talked, the man continued to stare at his cup and would not drink. "Oh, is there a problem?" "N-no...uh..." "Perhaps you are not fond of wine?" "In-indeed... In fact, I am not much of a drinker at all...uh..." "I see. How very rude of me. To give wine to someone who does not drink..." While Sebastian understood the reason, he continued to talk to the man.

Sebastian was scary because he could talk like this without his face changing even a little.

...I would not want to make an enemy of such a person.

"Uh, yes...I'm sorry."

The man was trying to get away by saying that he didn't drink. His expression seemed to relax a little, once he came up with that excuse, but Sebastian would not let him go so easily. After he had chuckled happily, he suddenly looked troubled. "...Only, His Grace went out of his way to select this one... But if you hate it so much, it cannot be helped. I will make a full report of it to His Grace. ... It is unfortunate, as he so wished to have more people drink this wine..." "We-we-well... Um, I... Can you not just tell him that I drank it...?" "That would mean lying to him. And I cannot lie or deceive my master. I shall tell him what I saw and felt, exactly as it occurred." "Bu-but... What will the count say about this...!" The man was looking at the wine frantically. The pressure Sebastian was applying was making it so that he could not think properly. If the duke should know that he didn't drink the wine... He might be so offended that there will be no contract after all... And what would the count do...? Such were the thoughts that must be on his mind. I had an idea, as he would mutter to himself. "However..." "Ye-yes?"

The man was being toyed with on the palm of Sebastian's hand now.

Sebastian smirked.

...Sebastian. Do you realize how much you look like a villain now?

"Perhaps you could drink just one little sip? You really just have to lick it. And then I can truthfully tell my master, that Mr. Wood has indeed tasted the wine."

"One...sip...? Very well... I can do that..."

Without noticing Sebastian's expression, the man was led into drinking the wine.

I didn't know how much of it you needed to drink to get sick, but the man had clearly decided that one sip was fine.

And so he tilted the glass and hesitantly brought it to his lips.

"...Mmm...glug... There. I drank it... Hah..."

It was not much, but he had indeed drunk some of the wine.

He let out a sigh as if he had just finished a great task.

"Yes, I have observed it. Now my report shall be a lot more positive."

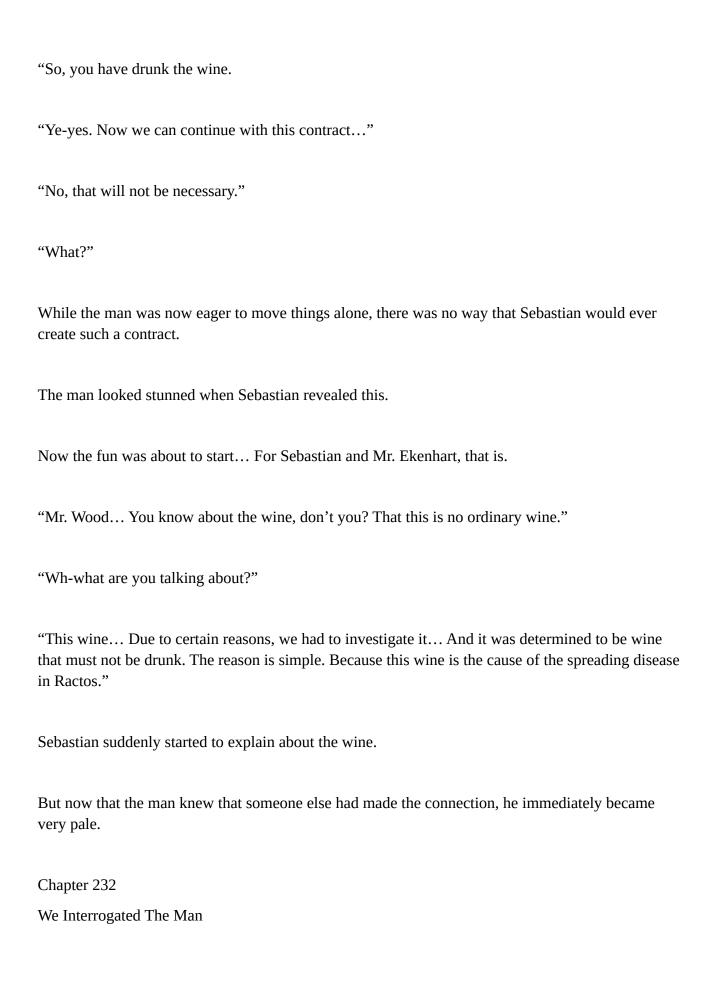
"Is-is that so? I'm glad to hear it. ...Cough-cough!"

The man began to cough as Sebastian smiled back.

There is a saying about how sickness and health start with the mind... Perhaps as someone who knew, he thought it was already starting to have an effect...?

Or perhaps he was trying to get it out of him.

His body might be rejecting it, as he knew it was infected.



"Those who drink the wine become ill, and that spreads to the next person...that's what happened here... But it is very odd."

"...Wh-what is odd?"

"Well, this store started selling the herbs at just the same time as the disease started to spread. Perhap it is only a coincidence... But it's a little too convenient, don't you agree?"

"I-I would...we only started to sell the herbs in order to help those who suffered. That was the only thing on our minds..."

"I see... In that case, it must be a coincidence then. However..."

"The-there is more?"

Sebastian explained little by little.

As for the man, his eyes continued to shift back and forth as he searched for excuses to make.

...At this point, I didn't even need the sense enhancing herbs to know what he was thinking...

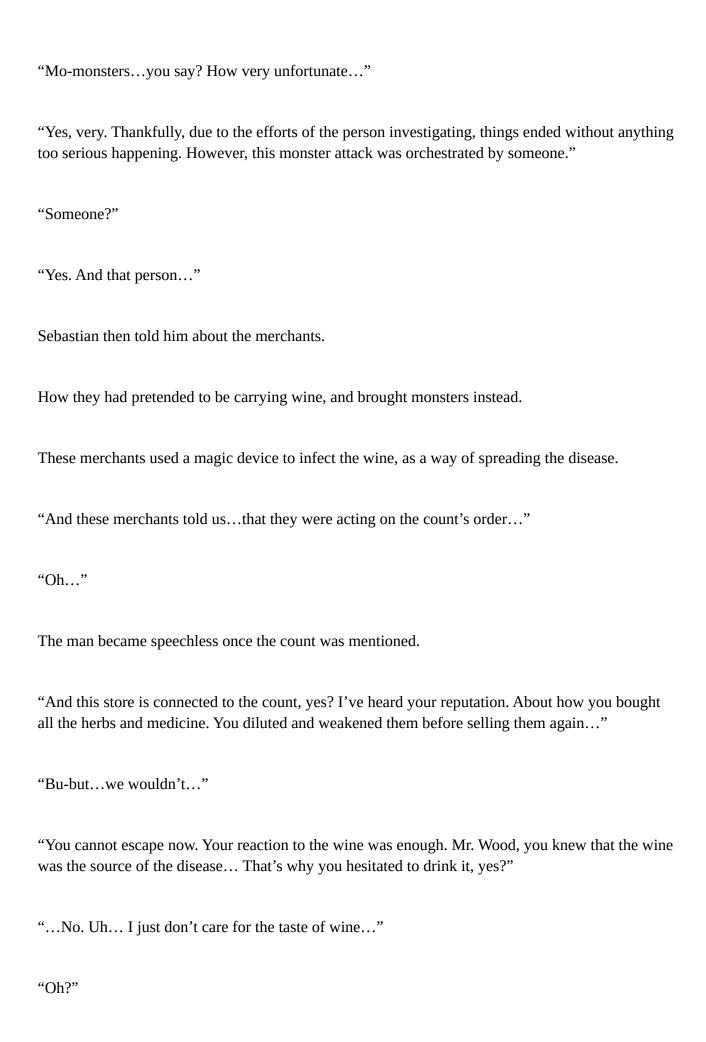
As for Sebastian, it was very evident that he was enjoying himself now. His expression was glowing.

After all, explaining and pressuring people he disliked were his two favorite things.

"There is a village that is close to Ractos. In fact, this wine was made in that village. A few days ago, that village was being investigated by someone sent from the duke. And during that time, the village was attacked by monsters."

And that person was me.

While he said it was someone from the duke, I suppose it wasn't wrong. Since I lived there and was on good terms with everyone.





Well, in any case, with Mr. Ekenhart backing us, there was no way that we would fail.

position now...

"...Indeed, I knew that the wine was spreading the disease. But do you think that's enough to catch me? I didn't do anything to the wine."

"That is true. You did not do anything to the wine."

"Exactly. You cannot blame me, just because I happened to know about the wine!"

He was suddenly getting quite angry... His face was red and he started to shout.

Perhaps this was his true nature being revealed. He no longer talked with polite words.

But he was right. He couldn't be arrested just because he knew what the wine was.

It was possible that he had just happened to hear about it from the count.

"However, you still sold medicine of poor quality on the duke's lands. That is a great crime, you know?"

"But you do not have proof of that! All of the medicine and herbs I sell here are very effective! Surely it is not strange to want to monopolize the market in case there is such an illness!"

"Indeed. If you knew that a disease would spread, making a business of it would lead to great profits. However, we know that your medicine and herbs have almost no effect."

"What are you saying? How would you know that!"

The man was now desperate to prove that he was innocent. But he seemed to be too frantic to be able to think straight.

As for the effect of the medicine...that could be confirmed easily with a pharmacist...

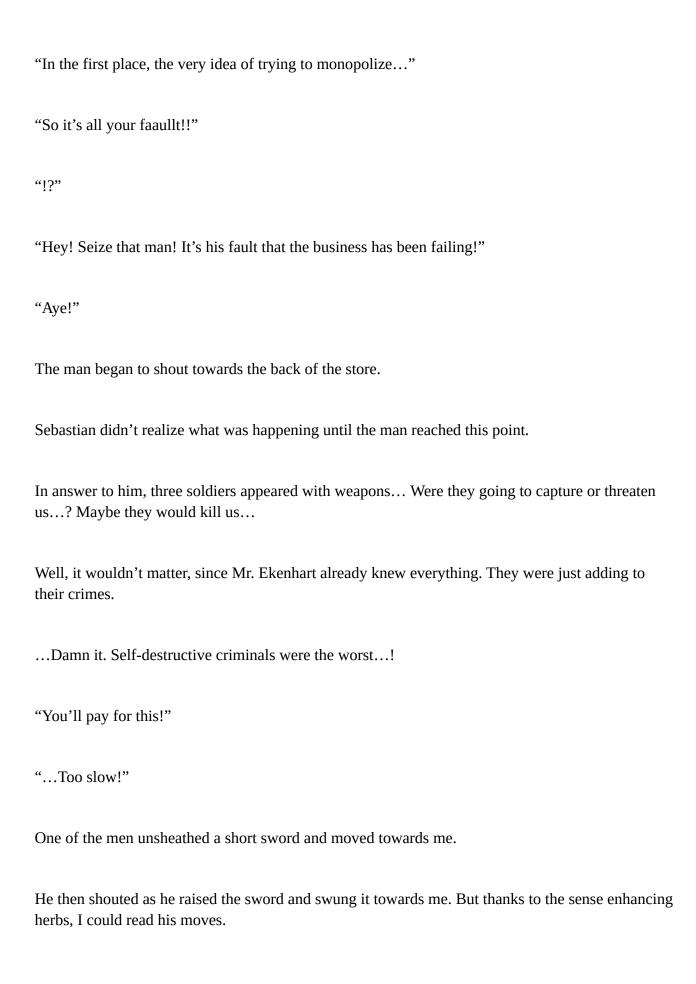
"...Earlier, you showed me this, saying it was the medicine that would heal the illness spreading in Ractos, yes?"



"The illness is healed by just drinking this. ... Unlike this medicine over here. And I tested it... If you dissolve a little Ramogi in water and leave it...it becomes like this, yes?" He said, pointing to the bottle with the light purple liquid. ...So it turns into that color. I didn't know that. Would it have been a darker purple if it contained an effective amount of Ramogi? But then again, I didn't understand how dissolving it in water and leaving it was supposed to work. "And yet you still insist that you were selling proper medicine? You bought all the herbs and medicine from other stores, and then watered them down until they were too weak to have an effect. And you think that selling such medicine is not a crime...?" "…" As Sebastian continued to accuse him, the man had no words for a reply. He just looked down and listened to Sebastian. "Not only that, but while this time the medicine was made of Ramogi...to others, you sold medicine that was completely unrelated... Yes, it's all been investigated. ... Though, thanks to the herbs that we provided, you've had very few customers here recently..." "...You..." "Once the Ramogi was discounted so that anyone could buy it, well, our store was filled with customers day after day..." Sebastian was getting carried away now... He continued to talk without even looking at the man.

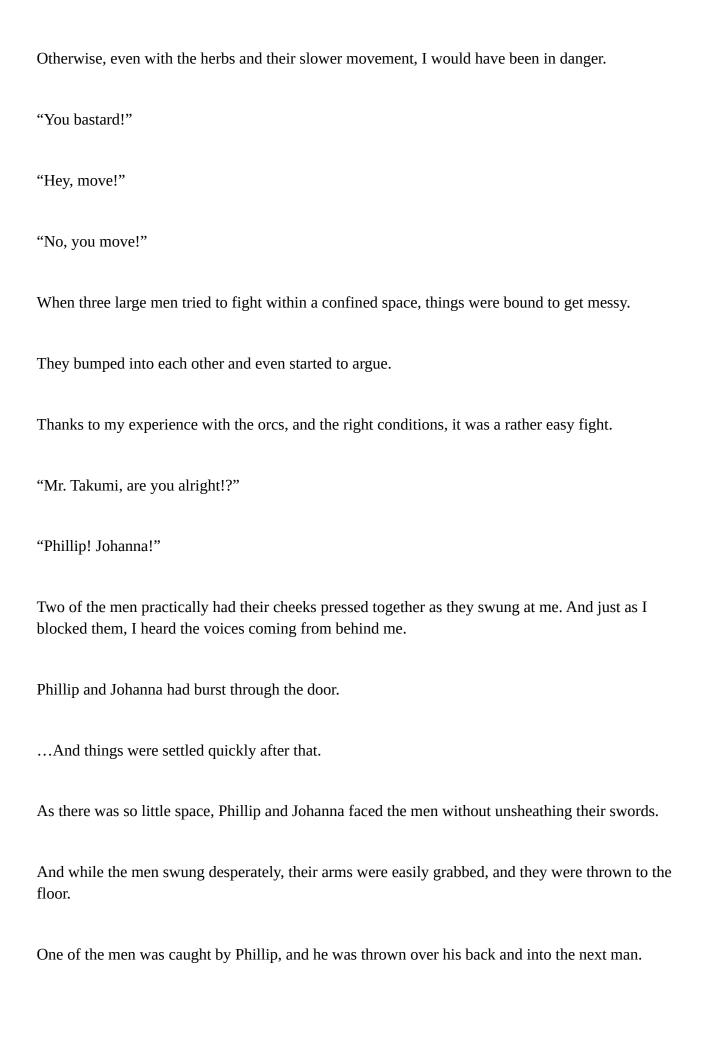
...This was strange. He had taken the sense enhancing herbs, but didn't even notice the difference

that had come over the man.









After being bashed together, their swords were taken away and they were swiftly tied up.

The third man took a punch to the throat from Johanna... She was wearing a metal hand protector, so it must have hurt.

He could not even scream as he fell to the ground... It looked like even breathing was painful.

"...N-nooo!"

"It's too bad that the charges have doubled... There is no need to justify your actions now."

Chapter 234

Mr. Ekenhart Appeared

After tying up all three men, Wood looked on in despair. Sebastian then entered the room and declared boldly.

Though...I couldn't help but feel that this wouldn't have happened had he dealt with things more calmly...

"Mr. Takumi, can I ask you to go and call the duke and leave this to us?"

"Very we-"

"That won't be necessary!"

I was just about to answer that I would go to Mr. Kalis's store, where Mr. Ekenhart was waiting, when the familiar voice rang, and a large man stepped into the building.

"Mr. Ekenhart!"

"Mr. Takumi, the time that we agreed on has already passed, you know?"

"Ah, now that you mention it..."

When we had discussed the plan at Mr. Kalis's store, we agree that once two hours had passed after we left, Mr. Ekenhart would charge into this store.

This was because there was a risk that we would be captured.

Well, while they did attack us, thanks to the body strengthening herbs, I was able to buy some time.

Though, I would not have been able to capture them like Phillip and Johanna.

Still, I hadn't realized that so much time had passed already.

Perhaps we had spent too much time looking at the herbs and medicine.

"Your Grace, allow me to introduce to you Mr. Wood. He is the one responsible for this place."

"I see. So you are Wood... I suppose you have an idea of what is going to happen now?"

"...Wh-what! Who are you! I...I..."

"Oh? You take orders from Barsler, but do not recognize my face... Well, Barsler has never been good at playing games, so it cannot be helped."

"Father only thinks about profit."

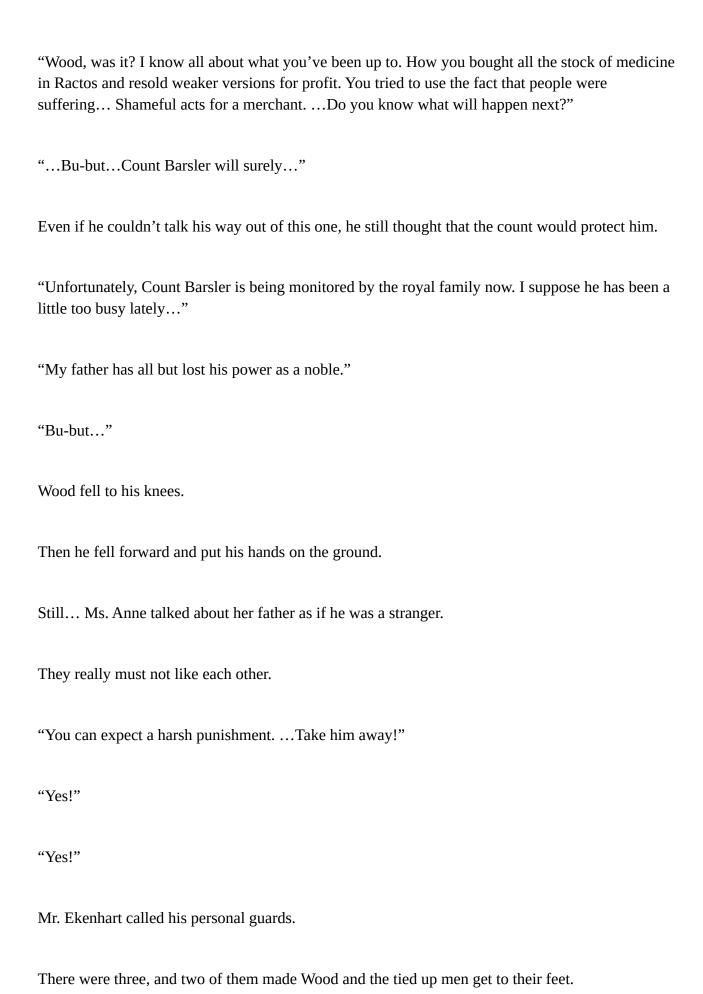
"What! Lady Anneliese!? Why are you here!?"

After Sebastian introduced him, Mr. Ekenhart took a step forward and nodded.

Apparently, Mr. Wood didn't recognize Mr. Ekenhart, but he was clearly intimidated by the large man who had suddenly appeared.



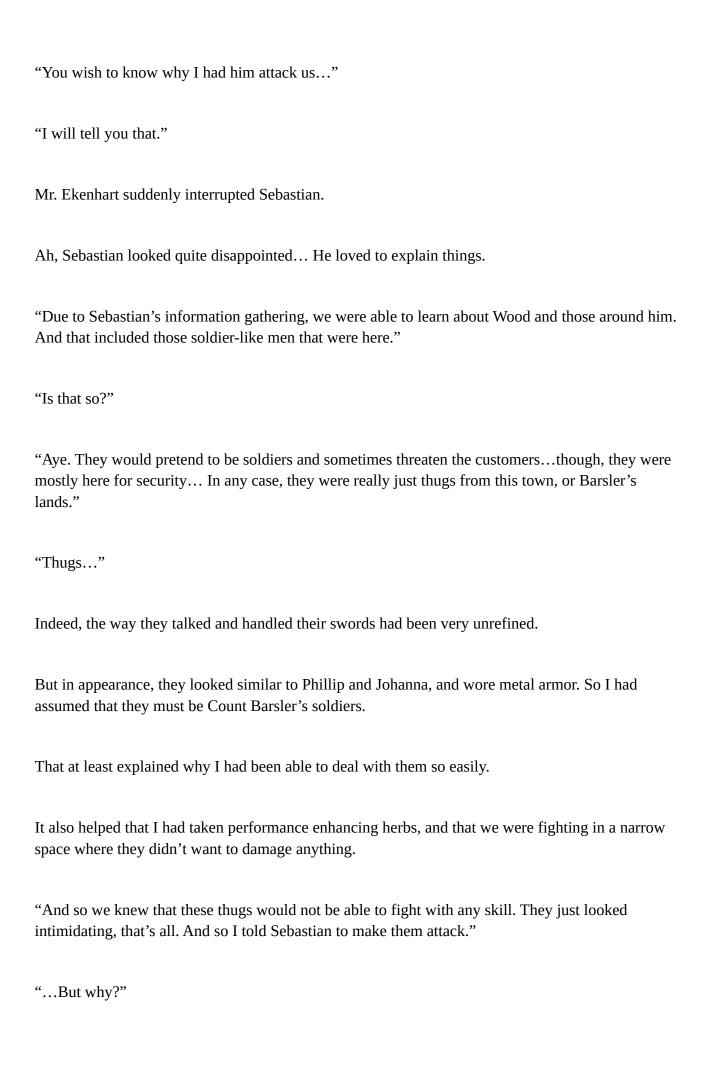
There were no more excuses to make.



Phillip also helped them. "Mr. Ekenhart, it seems like there are others in the back...?" "I doubt they are customers. So they must be related to this store. Take them away as well." "Yes!" One of the guards who had been searching the back of the store consulted with Mr. Ekenhart. And he was told to bring everyone related to the store with them. After some time, about ten of Ractos's guards arrived. Perhaps Phillip or the other guards had sent word. And together, they rounded up the people and escorted them out of the store. "Fine work, Mr. Takumi and Sebastian." Once the store had been emptied out, it was just me, Sebastian and Ms. Johanna left. And there was Mr. Ekenhart, one guard, Ms. Claire and Ms. Anne. Mr. Ekenhart, Ms. Claire, Ms. Anne and I were sitting at the table. For some reason, we had decided to stay here and talk. Well, I suppose it was too much trouble to move? Apparently, Leo was waiting outside. "I really didn't do much. It was Sebastian that talked and moved things along."







Without the fight, things would have been cleaned up so much sooner and simpler. "...I'm sorry, Mr. Takumi. I wanted to test you. To be precise, I saw it as part of your training... After seeing how far you have come in your training yesterday, I was sure that you would not lose." "Uh... Is that why the training was so hard yesterday...?" "Of course. So I could determine if you would be fine here." So he wanted me to fight the unskilled thugs so that I could gain some experience... It was just part of my training then? "You fought monsters...orcs in order to save Range village, yes?" "Yes." "And that was the result of my training and Sebastian's teaching. However, humans and monsters are different." "Different..." "In general, monsters do not think much. They just attack. Though, there are exceptions. However, humans think and then act. And they often attack in large groups. And so I wanted you to have experience with fighting multiple humans." "...I see. But it would have been nice if you told me..." "That would have defeated the purpose. Humans always look for an opening so they can attack you when your guard is down. Sometimes monsters do that too... But I wanted to see if you could stop humans that attacked you suddenly." "...I see..."

It did not seem necessary for our purpose.

I was in the palm of Mr. Ekenhart's hand then?

Had I known in advance, I might have become too defensive. And he wanted to see if I could react to a sudden burst of violence.

Hmm. As humans and monsters were different, I had to gain experience... I understood that, but I still wasn't satisfied.

"In the future, Mr. Takumi, if you are ever targeted by those who mean no good, you will be able to defend yourself. That is what I wanted!"

"But father, it is much too soon! Mr. Takumi has not been training for very long! And yet, you put him in such danger..."

"...Well, that is true... But he has shown much growth. Especially with that orc battle... And I think those recovery herbs he takes must also help..."

Ms. Claire had been listening quietly with a look of displeasure up until now, but her anger towards her father suddenly exploded.

Mr. Ekenhart was already at a disadvantage, especially after the matter with Ms. Anne the other day, but he still tried to make excuses.

But he was right about the herbs. Every time I felt that my muscles were sore, I would take the herbs and recover immediately.

Thanks to that, I was able to train a lot.

And grow that much faster... Well, perhaps. I didn't actually feel like I had grown that much.

Chapter 236

Ms. Claire's Anger Was Directed At Mr. Ekenhart

"But still! What if there was a mistake, and Mr. Takumi was badly injured!? If fighting humans and monsters is so different, then you could have just taught him yourself! Or even Phillip or Johanna or any of the house guards! And...you made him do...this!"

"Yes, that is all true... However, I want him to face an actual, relentless enemy..."

"But you could have allowed him to continue his training carefully and watch just a little longer! It didn't have to be now! Father! And you too, Sebastian! I only just heard about it at Mr. Kalis's store, you know? If you had any idea how worried I was...!"

As Ms. Claire raged on, Mr. Ekenhart seemed to shrink smaller and smaller.

And now her anger was spreading to Sebastian as well.

But since he was an accomplice, it wasn't really a surprise.

While I hadn't been satisfied, I did feel a little better now that Ms. Claire had become angry for me.

All I could do was gulp as I watched the duke being berated by his daughter.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Takumi..."

"Forgive me, Mr. Takumi..."

"Ahahaha. It's fine now. Ms. Claire said everything that I had wanted to say."

"...I've been so angry recently..."

One hour later, Mr. Ekenhart and Sebastian were apologizing to me again.

If anyone saw us, they would be wondering who I was to have a duke apologize to me like this.

...I suppose even if he was the duke...he was still weak when it came to his daughter... And since Sebastian saw her grow up, maybe he also saw her as something like a daughter as well. I had seen it yesterday with Ms. Anne... It was true that Ms. Claire seemed to be angry a lot lately. But none of it was because of her own selfishness. That was very much like her. This wasn't like the time she went to the forest. But after shouting so much, I was a little worried about Ms. Claire's throat... Perhaps I should try making a herb for that? Something good for the throat... Like quince... Oh, wait. That's a fruit, and so I can't make it... "Well, we should be leaving now. We cannot stay here forever." "Yes." "Certainly." "...I still have much more to say to you when we return, father." "...Oh, uh..." "This was a very entertaining display." Mr. Ekenhart was sweating from his forehead as we left the store. The rest would be left to the guards. Well, I suppose Mr. Ekenhart and Sebastian would give orders later, as to what will happen to this place.

...Perhaps it would go to some other merchant. Or maybe it will be turned into a civilian residence? Still, Ms. Anne, this was not some kind of entertaining show. It was about punishing and arresting criminals... I suppose it was because she had this personality that Mr. Ekenhart had to take her under his wing. "Wuff!" "Leo. Were you waiting here quietly?" "Wuff-wuff. ... Wuu..." "...Is-is Good Leo mad at me too...?" "Of course, she is. And it's your fault for putting Mr. Takumi in danger, father!" When we stepped outside, Leo ran to me immediately. Apparently, just like Ms. Claire, she had heard about how Wood was provoked into attacking. And she was now growling at Mr. Ekenhart. So she had been worried about me... Thanks, Leo. "...Good Leo. I am very sorry. This will not happen again..." "Wuff? Wuff... Wuff!" Mr. Ekenhart fearfully stood in front of Leo and bowed. Really? Oh, well. I shall forgive you! Leo seemed to say with a nod.

Leo was acting a little self-important, but given that Mr. Ekenhart was in the wrong, I didn't say anything.

While Mr. Ekenhart had become much more used to Leo recently, he was still not completely over this fear of Silver Fenrirs, and he was shaking quite a lot.

"I'm sorry to make you worry, Leo. But thank you."

"Wuff! Wuff!"

"Hey, stop that! You can do it when we return to the mansion!"

"Wuff-wuff... Hah-hah...."

I thanked Leo and patted her on the head. Then she wagged her tail joyfully and started to lick my face.

I told her to wait until we returned, and pulled away from Leo. But Leo continued to pant excitedly.

Or was it just that it was very hot?

She had made that face often in our previous world. But I had never seen it here.

... Were Silver Fenrirs like dogs? Did they use their tongues to adjust their body temperature?

"She really does like him..."

"Leo and Mr. Takumi had such a delightful relationship... It almost makes one jealous."

"Ms. Claire?"

"It's nothing. Now, let us hurry home. I'm sure that Tilura is getting quite impatient."

"Haha. That's right."

Ms. Claire said something rather curious when talking to Ms. Anne, but when I asked about it, she brushed it aside...

In any case, Tilura was indeed likely to be waiting for use with excitement. I chuckled at the thought as we headed home.

"Ah, that's right. Mr. Takumi."

"What is it?"

"Wuff..."

On the way back, Mr. Ekenhart suddenly called to me as if remembering something.

I turned to him a little cautiously. And Leo looked at him as well. He flinched but continued.

"...! Uh, it's about the wine... How did he react?"

"Ah... Yes... He was quite flustered and sweated an awful lot."

"I see, I see. Hahaha! While they were the ones responsible for it, they would never have thought they would be drinking it themselves!"

Chapter 237

There Wine Had Been Tampered With

Mr. Ekenhart laughed happily, as if he was imagining the scene with Wood.

While he was not the person who attacked Range village, or the one who used the wine to spread the disease, he still knew about it. He had followed Barsler's orders for his own profit.



Of course, the stuff we gavet to Wood was the wine from Range village that hadn't been processed yet.

That's why Sebastian had taken out two bottles. He checked which is which when pouring them into the glasses.

"Are you used to doing such things, Mr. Takumi?"

"No, not at all. But I did experience something similar, I suppose. When you want someone to do something, you will be more convincing if you try it yourself."

In sales, when introducing a product, it's easier if you tell them of the merits you experienced yourself.

...Of course, there were people who didn't need to do such things to get contracts.

"Wood only drank a few drops of it... But his reaction was enough. He didn't even want to drink the wine at first, in spite of being a known drinker... Anyone would think it was odd."

"Indeed. I don't really care about such things... But most nobles would be offended if a gift of theirs was rejected."

I didn't know much about the rules and manners of nobles, but it was like that whenever I went drinking with my company.

If my boss or clients told me to drink, it was difficult to refuse, even if I didn't want to drink it.

There were probably plenty of people who wouldn't even be offended...but it was hard to tell. And the pressure always weighed down during such moments.

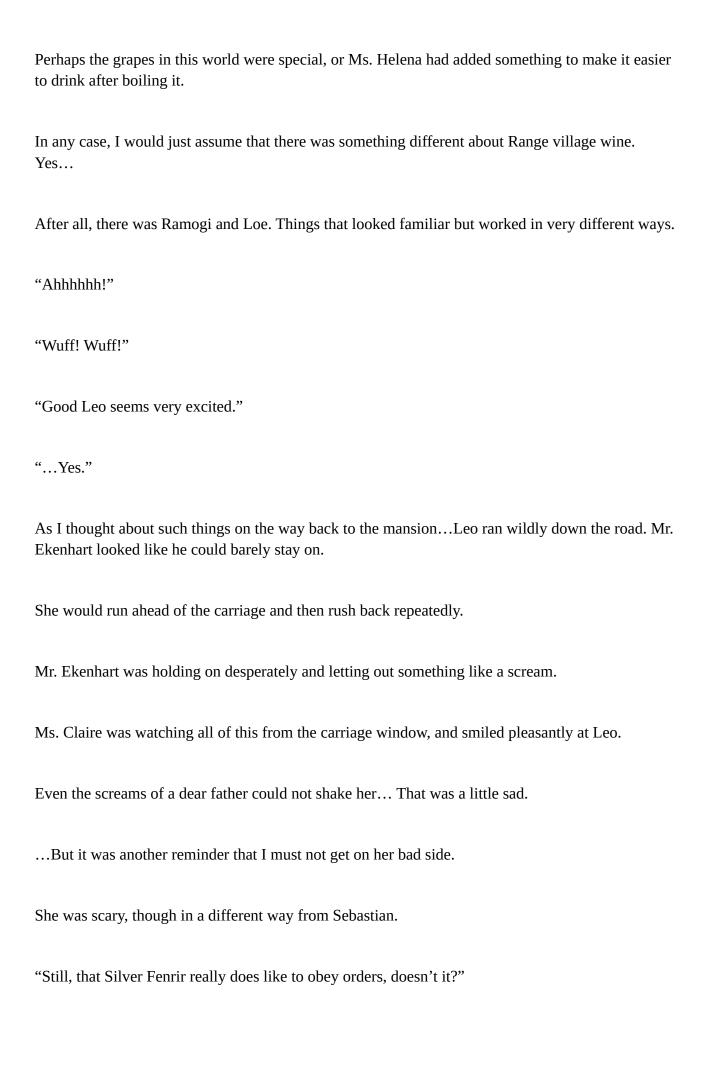
"What is it, Mr. Takumi?"

"Nothing...I was just reminded of something... But it's not important."

"...I see." I had been scowling, as the bitter memories of running to the bathroom, only to come back and see my cup full again...returned. Ms. Claire looked worried, but I smiled and assured her that I was fine. ...Such things would not happen now... I was living here happily, and need not think about the past like this. "So, what will happen to Wood now? Since he drank the wine?" "As it wasn't much, he probably will not become ill. And even if he does..." "He deserves it." "Yes. ... And we can always give him Ramogi." Wood really had just licked it. It was hard to imagine that he could get sick from just that, but even if he did, he could be healed easily. The only thing to worry about is that he could infect the nearby guards... If that happened, Sebastian and I would have to apologize to them and give them some Ramogi. We talked about such things and headed to the west gate. "Your Grace, thank you for everything." "Mmm. Well, I doubt it was something that you could have handled."







"Good Leo is very gentle." From within the carriage, Ms. Anne was looking at Leo with great curiosity as she muttered. ...Well, Leo was a very smart little Maltese... She had always been smart and listened to what I "And he is the human that the Silver Fenrir obeys." "Yes. And you know all about it, don't you Anne? How my family is especially attached to Silver Fenrirs." "Yes, I know about that. They even appear in the history books. All nobles in this country know about them. ... You are Mr. Takumi, aren't you?" "Yes." Ms. Anne was talking about Silver Fenrirs. She now stopped looking out of the window and turned to me. Now that I thought about it, this was probably the first time we talked directly... Yesterday, Ms. Claire had been so furious, that she set Leo on Ms. Anne right away. So there was no time to talk. Besides, it seemed like Ms. Anne just thought I was a servant. Well, I wasn't a nobleman. So I was still no one of any consequence to a count's heir. I would have all the significance of a pebble on the side of the road... Or maybe that was going too far? "So, you are that Silver Fenrir's master?" "...Master...we are more like partners. I don't think of myself as her superior. I think we are equal."

"Indeed... Equal with a Silver Fenrir... Interesting..."

"Anne?"

After hearing my answer, Ms. Anne looked down as if she was deep in thought.

She started to mutter something, but the effect of the herbs had already worn off, and so I couldn't hear her.

By the way, the carriage was very spacious, and so even with the three of us inside, no one touched anyone else, and it was very comfortable.

There were two seats, and Ms. Claire sat with Ms. Anne, while I sat on the opposite side.

On both sides, there were doors between the seats, which you could go out from, and there were four small windows as well.

This provided a good view of the outside. You could even open the windows to let in some fresh air.

"Yes... With a Silver Fenrir tagging along, it may be a good idea. As for the face... Well, a passing grade at best?"

"...What is it, Anne? Are you thinking of something strange again..."

Ms. Anne continued to look down and mutter quietly under her breath.

Upon seeing this, Ms. Claire questioned her suspiciously, but got no reaction.

It had been Ms. Anne who came up with the whole plan used by her father... And so I had a bad feeling about this.

"Mr. Takumi. Are you... I suppose you are not already married, are you?"

"Huh? Oh, no..."



"No, I wouldn't..." "Yes, it is a little surprising... But you wouldn't even think about refusing, would you? After all, it's not every day that Count Barsler's heir makes such offers." "Uhh..." This Ms. Anne was very straightforward... Indeed, she was was pretty and supposedly not the most stupid. But when compared to Ms. Claire... who may have her defects, when it comes to the bust, but... even with that considered, she was overflowing with appeal... Even I would not have thought like that. Yes, pretty was pretty... But there was also an unfortunate air about her... And did it matter if she was so beautiful that if she were to walk through the town, that other men would turn to look at her? But this was the first time we spoke... Such things should not be decided so suddenly... ...Oh, the confusion was clearly getting to me. Chapter 239 We Returned To The Mansion In The Carriage "...Do I have to decide now?" "Hmm, indeed... I do understand that this is rather sudden for you. Very well, tomorrow. As long as you can give me an answer by tomorrow."

"Tomorrow!? You are surely in a great rush, Anne!"

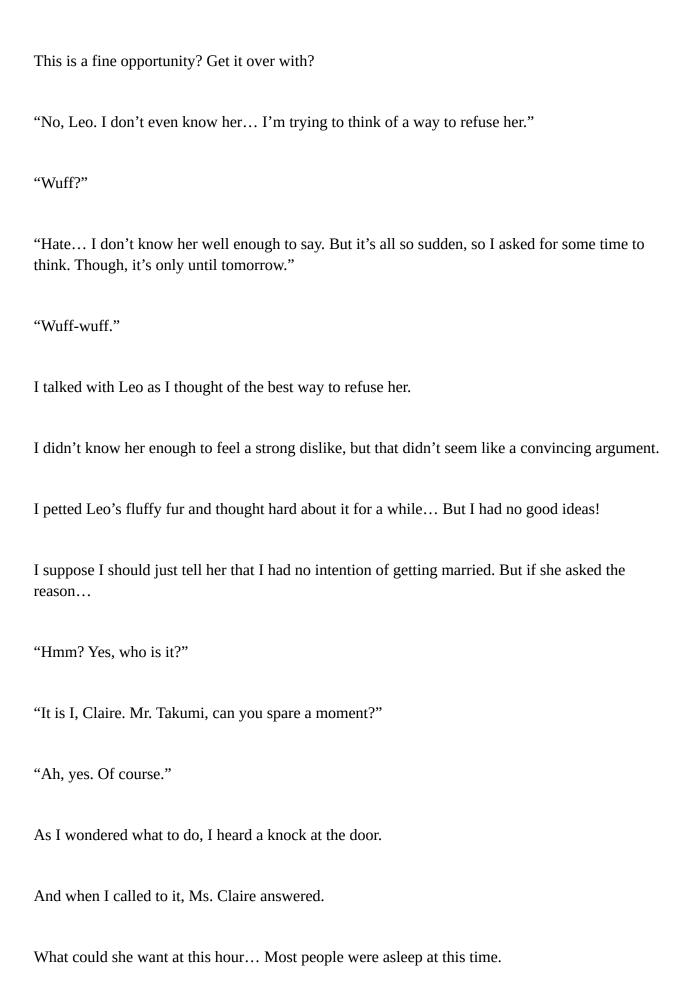
"What do you mean, Ms. Claire? These matters are more about feeling and one should rely on their intuition. But perhaps you have experienced one too many proposals and attempts at arranged marriage, that it has dimmed your senses?" "You only saw the advantage in it once you learned of the Silver Fenrir's attachment. I don't think you have any right to talk about feelings!" "And why is that? A man who orders a Silver Fenrir... Such a man would be incredibly appealing to someone in my position... Can you really not see it?" "Well... That is true, but... Mr. Takumi wouldn't do..." "Go-Good Leo! Arrghhh!" "Wuff! Wuff!" Ms. Claire was in a terribly bad mood again. Well, I suppose my appeal really did start and end there... Though, I also had Weed Cultivation... But I suppose that didn't really add to my appeal as a man. And so I confusedly watched Ms. Claire and Anne argue as I thought of the right way to refuse her. ... Was this how Ms. Claire felt every time her father tried to matchmake her? Regardless, the carriage continued to move along. Outside, I could occasionally hear Mr. Ekenhart's screams. "Welcome back!" "...Hmm." "Finally... Hah... The journey was very tiring."

"What a good welcome. I suppose that's what should be expected from a duke's house." It did not take long to return to the mansion. We got out of the carriage, and with Mr. Ekenhart in the lead, we faced the servants who came out to greet us. Mr. Ekenhart looked very exhausted after being carried around by Leo... But he had held up. As for Ms. Claire, she had been arguing with Ms. Anne the whole time, and was tired as well. Surely Ms. Anne must be the same, I thought as I turned to look at her. But she seemed rather cheerful as the servants greeted her. ...Perhaps she was tougher than she looked. "Your Grace, will you have dinner immediately?" "...Indeed. I am quite tired... I shall eat and rest right after." "Certainly. It will be prepared right away." Ms. Helena stepped forward and addressed Mr. Ekenhart. Of course, the reason that he was so tired, was because of Ms. Claire and Leo. As for Leo, running around seemed to have relieved her of stress, and she looked quite pleased as she wagged her tail. "Welcome back, father, sister, Mr. Takumi and Leo!"

"Kyau-kyau! Kyau!"



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"Hah... I can relax now..."
"Wuff."
After we returned, we enjoyed the meal that Ms. Helena prepared for us, and told Tilura about what
had happened in town.
And since everyone was tired, we retired to our rooms right after.
Considering the state they were in, I was a little worried about Mr. Ekenhart and Ms. Claire...
As I was tired as well, I warmed my body in the bathtub, and then went to my room to pet Leo and
relax.
"Still...do you think Ms. Anne is serious?"
"Wuff?"
Leo tilted her head to the side.
now that I thought about it, Leo was outside giving Mr. Ekenhart the ride of his life, so she didn't
know about what had happened.
"Uh...Leo. This may surprise you, but..."
"Wuff? Wuff-wuff... Wuff?"
I explained the situation to Leo, and she raised her voice in alarm.
So even Leo was surprised after all...
"Wuff-wuff... Wuff!"
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"Wuff?" In spite of the thoughts that drifted through my mind, Ms. Claire suddenly lowered her head and apologized. Ah, that's right. That again... So she had just come here to talk about her father and Sebastian, and how they wanted me to fight as part of my training... Well, I should have expected that. "Uh, well, no harm was done, and I have forgotten it already. Besides, there is no reason for you to apologize, is there?" "Still, even if it doesn't bother you, it bothers me. He is my father, after all..." "Hmm, I see. Very well, I accept your apology." "...Thank you." I suppose as nobles, she took such things very seriously. That was very much like Ms. Claire. Even if she hadn't done anything, she wanted to apologize on his behalf. And so I looked at her straight on and nodded. Besides, Ms. Claire had been very angry with both of them, and that pretty much drained me of any anger as well.

"Thank you, for scolding them for me."

"No, I... Well, they were very clearly in the wrong..."

"Still, I was happy. I don't think anyone has been angry on my behalf before."

"...Is that so?"

I had been scolded a lot at work. And there were times when things were so unfair that I wanted to be angry.

But there was no one around who would defend me. Because they only cared about saving their own skin.

Now that Leo was much bigger, I was sure that she would get angry for me... But then again, that could lead to quite a disaster.

Upon hearing my words, Ms. Claire looked a little embarrassed.

"Besides, you saved me the trouble of having to give Mr. Ekenhart a piece of my mind, which would have been very improper, given his position."

"His position...? Oh, but you are a favorite of his, and like a friend. I do not think his position is of much consequence?"

"Still. He is a duke and lord of this house. I could never do what you did. Especially in town, where other people might be watching..."

"...Indeed... I suppose you are right."

Mr. Ekenhart was a duke, and I had no position in society. I was just a commoner who was their guest.

I would have looked like a great fool if I got angry. Well, we would have both looked like fools.

Besides, there were guards around, and there were people watching from outside.

With this whole business with the count, we did not need rumors spreading about the duke as well.
"So you were right to do it, because no one else could."
"Yes. I wasn't really thinking straight, but I am glad that you feel that wayThough I am a little embarrassed."
I suppose for Ms. Claire, being so angry like that in public was embarrassing.
A noble lady would not be seen doing that very often.
Not that it made her any less of a lady in my eyes.
"Haha. Well, it did remind me to never get on your bad side, Ms. Claire."
"Oh, Mr. Takumi As if I would ever have reason to be angry with you?"
I don't know about that?
It was true that Ms. Claire had never been angry with me, but you never knew what the future would hold
In any case, it was best to be careful.
"Wuff-wuff."
"Oh, Leo. Thank you as well. You were mad at Mr. Ekenhart, right?"
"Wuff."
"Good Leo really likes you, Mr. Takumi"

"Wuff!"

I was angry too! Leo seemed to say as she rubbed her face against me.

Ms. Claire looked impressed as she petted Leo.

Leo nodded in agreement... I felt a little bashful.