

Beloved Dog 281

Chapter 281

We Went To Mr. Kalis's Store

"Now, where should we go first, Mr. Takumi?"

"To Mr. Kalis's store. I have to deliver the herbs."

"Ah, very well."

We entered the town, and then Mr. Ekenhart asked where we should go first.

I answered that we should see Mr. Kalis.

Otherwise, Nick might go to the mansion before we arrived.

"Ah, brother! ...And...the duke!?"

"Nick."

"Oh, that one who was here last time."

We arrived at Mr. Kalis's store, and right before entering, Nick came out to greet us.

He noticed me immediately, but was shocked to see Mr. Ekenhart behind me.

Now that I thought about it, he had been here last time, when we were talking about how we would go to the malicious store.

"Brother...and Your Grace... What are you doing here?"

“I thought that I’d come and explore the town a little. And Mr. Ekenhart came with me.”

“Hahaha. You do not need to be so serious. So why did you come out, Nick?”

“Ah, I was going to head to the mansion...”

“Then we’re just in time. Here are today’s herbs.”

“Brother! Thank you!”

So the timing was perfect, as Nick was about to head towards the mansion now. It was good that we didn’t miss him.

“Is Mr. Kalis here?”

“Ye...yes! I will call him right now!”

When Mr. Ekenhart asked about Mr. Kalis, Nick went back into the store to call him.

“Your Grace! I’m terribly sorry to make you wait out here!”

“Hmm. Well, think nothing of it.”

“I will rebuke Nick when I see him again.”

Mr. Kalis looked rather frantic as he burst from the door and apologized to Mr. Ekenhart.

He felt that Nick making Mr. Ekenhart wait outside of the store was incredibly rude.

But Mr. Ekenhart didn’t seem to mind. Perhaps I should have said something?

It was obvious that Nick wasn’t used to this sort of thing.

“So, what has brought you here today...? Ah, I’m terribly sorry. Please come inside...”

“Oh, I’m not here on any particular business. I just came here with Mr. Takumi, who wants to look around the town. So we do not need to go inside.”

“I see... But, you have no guards with you?”

“Well, I didn’t tell Sebastian that I was coming today. And I expect you to keep this to yourself as well, Kalis. As for guards, Leo is enough to protect us.”

“Indeed, you would not need guards around if Leo is with you. Very well. I will not tell anyone about this. And I will say the same to Nick.”

“Good.”

As Mr. Kalis and Mr. Ekenhart talked, it was decided that this would be kept a secret from Sebastian.

...Which seemed rather futile. Surely Sebastian would find out in no time at all?

“Yes, yes, Mr. Takumi. I wanted to ask you about Leo...”

“What about Leo?”

“Wuff?”

And then Mr. Kalis turned to me.

“Well, uh...do you remember how Leo played with some children in front of the store?”

“Ah, yes. It was the first day that the herbs went on sale.”

“I didn’t know about that.”

“Yes. ...And ever since then, some of the children have been asking if Leo would ever return.”

“Hmm... Leo?”

“Wuff-wuff!”

Mr. Kalis was speaking very hesitantly. But according to him, some of the children that had played with Leo wanted to know when Leo would be back.

When I looked at Leo, she wagged her tail and barked happily.

It seemed that she was fine with it.

“In that case, we should gather the children here next time so that they can play with Leo. She does enjoy playing with children.”

“Thank you. Then I will be able to share the good news with the children. If you could just tell me in advance before the next time that you visit.”

“Yes, I will do that.”

“Wuff!”

After all, children might not gather around if we came all of a sudden.

But if they knew beforehand, then Mr. Kalis could call them for us.

Leo seemed to be looking forward to it, and she barked happily.

At first, they had just gathered around her, and Leo didn’t know what to do. But once I taught them and had them form a line, they were able to play just fine and without any issue.

“Well, we should be going then.”

“Yes.

“Ah, please wait one moment. If you are going around the town, then please take this...”

“What is it...?”

Now that we were finished talking, Mr. Ekenhart started to leave, but Mr. Kalis stopped us.

He then took out something like a cloth and handed it to Mr. Ekenhart.

“Some people in the town might recognise you. And so it would be best to cover your face so you don’t cause a commotion.”

“Oh, I see. Very well.”

Mr. Ekenhart wrapped the cloth around his head so that it covered his mouth and most of his face.

Indeed, I understood the logic of a disguise, but...

But...

Mr. Ekenhart was still dressed like a nobleman.

And he was very tall.

And his eyes were sharp... And with these coverings, he looked rather intimidating...

Even if people didn’t recognize him as the duke, he looked like a very suspicious person.

Maybe the guards would take him in for questioning...?

Well, this wasn't Japan, so it was probably fine.

In any case, I decided that I wouldn't worry about that now.

"Now, let's go, Mr. Takumi."

"Hah...yes. Good bye, Mr. Kalis. We'll visit you again soon."

"Wuff."

"Please be safe."

And then the suspicious-looking Mr. Ekenhart walked away cheerfully.

Mr. Kalis bowed his head, and I told him that we would be back. And then Leo and I walked away as well.

Chapter 282

We Ate At The Food Stalls

"Hmm...ggg...gulp... Delicious! It is nice to eat such things occasionally."

"Yes... Here, Leo."

"Wuff!"

After leaving Mr. Kalis's store, I walked down the main street with Mr. Ekenhart.

About half of the people that passed by were surprised when they saw Leo. Some would even run away. But the others did not seem to mind.

Though, somee looked at Leo reverently... Maybe they were the people who had touched Leo when we first came to Ractos?

As we had been here several times before, I was happy to see that some people were used to her now.

Because Leo would not attack anyone, and was not someone who should be feared.

As we walked down the street, Mr. Ekenhart became interested in the meat that was being cooked in the food stalls.

Well, it was really Leo who was the most interested.

The meat was grilled on the spot and handed to you. It appeared to be beef with a special sauce, and was incredibly delicious.

I bought three so that we could each have some... I blew on Leo's to cool it off and then removed them from the skewer before she ate it.

I didn't know if it was still the case, but dogs had sensitive tongues like cats, and the skewer could be dangerous... Though, Leo was probably smart enough to eat it properly.

"While it is good to have your own cook, such casual dining has its charms..."

Mr. Ekenhart mused as he looked at the line of stalls.

"Have you eaten in such places before?"

"Well... A very long time ago. When Claire was about this high...no, maybe smaller."

"When she was a child then."

Mr. Ekenhart smiled as he seemed to be reminiscing about the past.

As the head of his house now, he had to travel with escorts. But I suppose this was before that time.

I had wondered if Ms. Claire only had escorts because she was a lady, but it seemed that it was normal for Mr. Ekenhart as well.

“By the way, Mr. Takumi. How do you feel about Anneliese?”

“Are you trying to talk about relationships again?”

“No, indeed not! Uh, mister... I’ll take three of those!”

“Certainly!”

Mr. Ekenhart suddenly started to talk about Ms. Anne.

And considering what had been on his mind while on the road, I was a little exasperated. But he insisted that this was different.

But then he stopped at a food stall and ordered more food.

“Oh, this looks good too... So, Mr. Takumi. About Anneliese... What do you think? In terms of personality and her mind?”

“Is that chicken..? Yes, it does look good. Ms. Anne is... We were able to talk once and... Does my opinion really matter?”

“Yes, I’d like to hear it... Hmm... This is delicious!”

“Thank you!”

Apparently, Mr. Ekenhart wanted to hear my opinion on Ms. Anne.

After accepting the chicken, Mr. Ekenhart paid and then ate it immediately before turning back to me.

The old man at the stall looked pleased to have his food praised so loudly as he handed me the other two.

As for what I thought about Ms. Anne... It's not like we knew each other that well... But I told Mr. Ekenhart my impression after talking to her in her room.

"Well... I don't know if it is normal for nobles to do that, but she seems to have spent too much time by herself. ...Hmm. Yes, it is quite delicious. Here, Leo."

"Wuff-wuff!"

I answered as I ate the chicken.

It was flavored with salt and was also delicious.

As Leo was looking at me and wagging her tail, I gave her some as well.

"Alone, eh? I wouldn't say it is normal as a noble..."

"Well, what I mean is...she thinks a lot about being in the privileged class. That's why she was able to make that marriage proposal out of nowhere."

"I see. Indeed, sometimes daughters of nobles will marry into other families. As noblewomen can inherit, it is not too common... But, it depends on their parents, I suppose. If the marriage is advantageous, they will likely marry into the other family, regardless if they get along or not."

"Yes, I suppose it wouldn't happen a lot... I understand that."

It had been like that in Japan.

Well, not when I was there...but a long time ago.

“Because she thinks like that, and is too used to being by herself, she gets these crazy ideas all of a sudden... Is what I thought. She does not value any interactions with other people... And does not think about what is inside of others...”

“Hmmm... Yes, I get the same impression from her. Well, it is all the fault of her father, Barsler...”

“You think so?”

“Yes. Count Barsler....decades before I became the duke...he failed in one of his businesses. Well, it is not a rare thing to happen among nobles. And as long as he didn't live extravagantly, he could live well enough off the taxes he collected. In the first place, a lot of people who are born nobles do not understand business. They think that they can sell anything because of who they are... And they usually have ridiculous prices.”

“Well...it is no surprise that he failed then.”

In general it, was a balance between supply and demand of the products.

If there was no demand, then it would not sell. And if you wanted to sell it at a high price, then you had to restrict the supply and increase the demand.

But if you ignored all of that and simply sold it at a high price, then it would not sell.

You had to sell things at the appropriate price and not fixate on high profits, or your business would not succeed.

Because consumers could be very severe.

“And he became frantic to make up for those failures, but only repeated those mistakes...”

“That's a bad environment.”

“Yes. Eventually, he started using the tax money for these failing businesses as well. That’s how desperate he was. I think that is why he liked Anneliese’s suggestion, regardless of the harm it would cause others.”

Chapter 283

I Asked About the Situation With The Count

“So he is a scoundrel that resorted to crime after drowning in debt?”

“Hahaha! You are not wrong! Well, they had been losing money for generations, and Barsler was trying to put an end to that. And so he left Anneliese to herself and focused on his businesses... Without realizing the effect it had on her.”

“I see. So that’s why she is so used to being alone.”

“It appears to be the case. Well, since they own the neighboring territory, I’ve known House Barsler for a long time... But during the last ten years, I’ve only met him once a year at most. It is likely that Claire was the only person to see Anneliese back then. Otherwise, she only met servants.”

“Were there never any gatherings where there were other nobles?”

“There were. But Barsler never took Anneliese to such events. I suppose he was too preoccupied with making connections and helping his business. But to put it bluntly, he might have had more success if he used his daughter...”

Had he taken his daughter to such parties, and she were to meet with other rich heirs... That was what he was suggesting.

If she were to marry into another family, or have someone marry into theirs...then the count might be able to get some aid that would help his business.

“Well, I’m sure he had been thinking about it in some way. After all, Anneliese had said something about how she would use herself to bring back glory to her house. But I don’t know why they didn’t consider doing that first, instead of that other plan.”

“So that’s why she proposed to me, since I had Leo, and it would help her house.”

“Wuff?”

“Mmm. It is not just our family...but the entire country sees Silver Fenrirs as special. And so just having Leo there would help them greatly.”

“I see...”

“Wuff-wuff.”

While listening to us talk, Leo heard her name and looked at me questioningly as I petted her.

So, it was because of that situation, that she had suddenly said such things in the carriage.

In order to revive the house...

Still, I had no intention of allowing someone to use Leo. And I did not want to become a nobleman either.

“Well, due to those reasons, Anneliese rarely left her father’s house, and was mostly just surrounded by her own servants. But this wasn’t because he ordered her to. She herself did not want to go outside, so it’s her own fault as well. And as you said, Mr. Takumi, she got too used to being alone with her own thoughts.”

“Only servants around her... I don’t know much about nobles, but I suppose there are not many who can detect what their servants are feeling and act on it. And so they only see them as servants, and do not think about others...”

When looking at Ms. Claire, Tilura, and Mr Ekenhart, one might assume that most nobles were like them, but it was likely not the case.

I’m sure there were other nobles like Mr. Ekenhart, but the class system made you think that you were special.

In fact, there were people like that in Japan as well.

Like certain bosses at certain companies...

“And that was why...she could come up with such plans as she did. Without realizing the kind of suffering it would cause. And Barsler listened to her, and acted on her advice while thinking only of his own profit.”

“Well...I’m still not sure I can be sympathetic.”

“Oh, you don’t have to be sympathetic towards Barsler. He has what it takes to make such a decision. He knew what he was doing was wrong. As for Anneliese... I will not say that she is guiltless, even if she only thought of things...”

“I suppose it was because of her environment...”

“Mmm. In any normal family, he would have corrected her after making such suggestions. And so that is why I asked the royal family to entrust me with educating her.”

“...Hmm?”

“What is it?”

Huh?

Did he just say that he asked the royal family?

“Well...uh, previously, didn’t you say that they asked you to take in Ms. Anne?”

“Mmm...well, in fact, I was the one to ask them. I just thought it would be a pity for her to be punished along with her father. Of course, if she does not change her ways, then she will meet the same fate as him... Their entire house will be crushed into nothing. ...Well, I suppose that as a father of a daughter that is the same age, I took pity on her...”

“I see... So you think by putting her in the right environment, she will become a decent person?”

“Exactly. However, it all depends on Anneliese. Ah, do not tell Claire or Sebastian about this, you understand? It will make matters more complicated...”

“Hahaha. Because Ms. Claire will get mad at you again?”

“... Yes.”

“Wuff.”

To Mr. Ekenhart and I, the two looked like they got along very well, even if Ms. Claire often acted harshly.

But if Ms. Claire found out that Mr. Ekenhart himself had wanted to take Ms. Anne in, she might get angry.

But why did Ms. Claire treat Ms. Anne so harshly...?

I admit, it was amusing to watch them like that, but... One would think you would be a little more pleasant to a friend that was your own age.

Chapter 284

A Happy Food Stall Discovery

“But that’s enough talk, Mr. Takumi. We should focus on eating right now. See, there are more food stalls over there!”

“... Yes.”

“Wuff!”

As the conversation was a little heavy, Mr. Ekenhart wanted to change the subject. And then he cheerfully walked towards the next stall.

In the end, it all depended on Ms. Anne herself. So there was no point in us talking about it.

Though...it did make me think about how I would interact with her.

But for now, I will try to enjoy my time in the town of Ractos.

Besides, Leo had not eaten enough yet, and she was wagging her tail as she looked at the meat.

“Oh, this one is good. Ractos really does have all kinds of food. Here, try this one, Mr. Takumi.”

“Yes, yes. ...Hmm, yes it is quite good. Here, Leo.”

“Wuff! Wuff-wuff.”

Mr. Ekenhart went around to different stalls until his hands were full with food, and then he began to bite into it.

I suppose since Ms. Claire wasn't around today, he could enjoy his food without worrying about manners.

And so I followed his advice and bought some food and ate it, while also giving some to Leo.

Indeed, they were all delicious, but... I was getting bored of it, since it was all meat...

But it seemed like that was all that Leo and Mr. Ekenhart liked.

“It would be nice if they had something less heavy... Something that isn't meat.”

“Hmm. Yes, I suppose one might get bored of it... Not that I would.”

“Wuff!”

And so we moved away from the meat stalls and looked around for something else.

Mr. Ekenhart did not mind only eating meat, and Leo barked in agreement. But I wanted something different.

Though, I suppose I didn't really have to worry about nutritional balance, since we would have a proper meal when we returned to the mansion anyway.

So it was more of a matter of variety.

"Oh, what about that one..."

"Hmm? Yes, that one seems a little different. Should we go and see it?"

"Yes. Let's go."

After looking around, most of the other stalls were also just cooking meat. But then I saw one that was a little different.

And so I walked over to it with Mr. Ekenhart and Leo, and realized that there was something familiar about the smell.

"Welcome!"

"Is this...pasta? Though, it is quite dark...but, it does smell good..."

"...Yakisoba? But why in a place like this..."

I could smell the scent of burning sauce.

It reminded me of festivals and the food they sold at the beach.

But isn't it...a Japanese dish?

Well, I suppose it could be made anywhere. So maybe it wasn't all that strange...

"Mister. What are you making? I have never seen it before..."

"Aye! This is called yakisoba. It's just fried noodles and vegetables with a special sauce! As there is not much meat, I wouldn't recommend it if you're craving meat, but it's still very delicious!"

"Hmm... Yakisoba... I have never heard that name before..."

"Wuff-wuff."

Well, that was no surprise.

But it was familiar to me.

It was something that anyone in Japan would recognize.

Leo seemed to remember it as well, as she was wagging her tail and drooling as she looked up at the yakisoba.

"Mister, I'll take three."

"Aye, coming right up!"

"You're going to eat it, Mr. Takumi? It looks burnt..."

"Yes, of course. It's actually really good!"

"It is? And you have eaten it before?"

“Yes. It was very common in the place that I’m from.”

“...I see.”

“Wuff!”

And so I bought three from the old man and paid him.

I had already told Mr. Ekenhart that I had come from another world.

After learning that I had eaten this there, he went from being hesitant to being interested in it.

As Leo knew about it already, she barked happily as she waited.

I know that you’re happy, but don’t bark so loudly, okay? You’re going to scare the old man.

“Here you go!”

“Thank you. Here, Mr. Ekenhart. Leo. Be careful, since it’s quite hot.”

“Hmm... Let us taste it then.”

“Wuff!”

The yakisoba was put in containers made of layered paper. I accepted them and then passed them to Mr. Ekenhart and Leo.

Then we were given small wooden forks.

Chopsticks would have been nice...but I would not complain.

Besides, I doubted Mr. Ekenhart would be able to use them.

“Let’s eat it then. ...Zuru-zuru-zuru! Yes, it’s good!”

“Mr. Takumi... I don’t mean to sound like my daughter, but perhaps you should stop slurping like that when you eat?”

“Ahaha. Yes, I suppose you’re right.”

“...Well, maybe it’s not too bad. And since Claire isn’t around... Zuru-zuru-zur! Hmm!”

“It’s good, isn’t it?”

“Yes! It’s tasty!”

“Wuff-wuff!”

I used the fork to eat the noodles along with the meat and vegetables.

As it wasn’t soup, there was no need to slurp it, but I got carried away, since it had been a while since I last ate it.

As the noodles were pasta, the texture was a little different, but it was still good.

Even the sauce was a little distinct, while also being recognizable.

In any case, I did not expect to see it here, and I was more than satisfied.

Mr. Ekenhart then copied the way I ate it, and his eyes widened with delight.

Leo allowed hers to cool off a little and then gobbled it up quickly. So she must have liked it as well.

Though, it would have been nice to have some seaweed flakes with it...

“Ah, that was very tasty. I suppose it was because the sauce was so dark? And the vegetables and meat gave it a good balance.”

“You can adjust it to your liking.”

“Hmm... Maybe I will ask Helena to make some... Of course, we will have to eat it differently in front of Claire.”

“That’s true. It’s not good manners here... Alright, Leo. I wiped most of it off.”

“Wuff!”

Once she was finished eating, I wiped the sauce from around Leo’s mouth, and talked with Mr. Ekenhart.

I was glad that Mr. Ekenhart also enjoyed it so much.

And while I had wiped Leo with a wet cloth...there was still some sauce left on her... I suppose she would have to take a bath when we returned.

Chapter 285

Various Familiar Food

“But Mr. Ekenhart, if you do want Ms. Helena to be able to make it, then she will have to recreate that sauce.”

“Hmm. Really?”

“Yes. It’s the defining part... It’s all because of the sauce that it tastes like that.”

“Then perhaps I better ask that man how to make it...”

“Surely he will not want to give up such a secret so easily...”

“Indeed... One might use their authority in such cases, but I do not want to do that.”

“Yes.”

If Mr. Ekenhart was serious, then he could use his position as a duke and make them tell him how to make the sauce.

However, like Ms. Claire had said before, their family preferred to avoid using their authority in such ways.

There was no need to find out by force.

“Still, I underestimated these people... Now, let us look around and see if we can find anything else.”

“Yes. There may be other great things to discover.”

“Wuff!”

While it wasn't exactly the same, I had found something similar to Japanese food. So who knows what else we might find?

It seemed like he had forgotten his reason for coming here, and was only interested in eating now... But I suppose it was fine.

Both Leo and I were enjoying it anyway.

And more than that, I doubted I could even stop Mr. Ekenhart once he started to have fun like this.

“Phew... We walked quite a lot.”

“Indeed.”

“However, I learned a great deal about what this town has to offer.”

“Yes. It really is a busy place, and there are many shops.”

After eating the yakisoba, we walked around the streets with Mr. Ekenhart as he looked around the town.

We were quite full now, and so we stopped by a cafe that was not too crowded and that was away from the main street.

As it was an open cafe, we were able to sit outside near Leo.

Apparently, it was run by the parents of one of the children who had played with Leo, and so they were very glad to see us.

Thanks to this, they also understood that Leo wasn't dangerous.

“Wuff-guff-guff...”

“Leo. Calm down when you drink, okay?”

“Guff-guff...”

I wasn't sure if she heard me or was ignoring me... But she was now eagerly drinking milk from a bucket that had been prepared for her.

I was grateful that they had been so kind to prepare it while Mr. Ekenhart and I enjoyed our tea and relaxed.

It had been the case when eating as well, but the cloth that was supposed to be covering Mr. Ekenhart's face was mostly just around his forehead and chin, so I wasn't sure it was very effective.

Well, it did cover his unkempt beard, and since what was visible was actually quite handsome, it would probably be fine.

After all, the most striking thing about his appearance had always been his beard.

“There really were a lot of interesting things...”

“Yes.”

As we drank our tea, I thought about the last thing that I had eaten.

There were grilled dumplings and salted fish.

Mr. Ekenhart had been muttering about wanting wine with his fish...

There were also some thick noodles that reminded me of udon, especially since it was in a broth made from kelp.

Ah, and there was also fried chicken.

I was rather pleased to discover that there was a lot of familiar food in this place.

Well, sort of familiar...but not a total match.

But since they were things I thought that I would never eat again... I was more than satisfied.

Now, if only I could find some rice somewhere...

As I had been raised on it, I couldn't help but look for it.

While I didn't find any this time, I would look for it the next time I visited.

My Weed Cultivation was not able to make any farm produce, so I wouldn't be able to make rice...

"Thank you, Takumi. It's because of you that I was able to get a good look at the town."

"Not at all. I had fun as well, so it was nothing. Even though it was mostly just eating."

"Now that you mention it..."

Aside from visiting Mr. Kalis's store, we had spent most of the time at different food stalls.

Well, since there was the most traffic on the main street, it was the best place to have people see Leo... That was a good enough reason.

But perhaps we should have looked around more?

Well, that could be done on another day.

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

"Yes?"

As I watched Leo and sipped my tea, Mr. Ekenhart turned to me again.

What now... I wondered.

"I intend to go to Range village soon. There is the matter of the wine, after all. Besides, I would like to assure the villagers that they are not to blame, and commend them for the way they dealt with the monsters."

"I see. I think it would be a very good thing if they were able to make wine there again."

"Mmm. I will have to talk to the chief about the wine, and about the acquisition of grapes as well."

“Indeed... But, uh, perhaps don’t make it too much about work?”

“Huh? What do you mean?”

“Well, the thing is...”

I recalled what I had discussed with Mr. Haines before leaving Range village, and I relayed it to Mr. Ekenhart.

About how they were too preoccupied with making wine, that they were not able to spend time with the children.

“Hmm...indeed... Children out the treasures of the kingdom. It is not good to neglect them. Very well. I promise that I will not make them work to the point that it will affect the children.”

“Thank you.”

While I may have made the request to Mr. Ekenhart on the children’s behalf, it was probably related to my past as well.

Though it is important to make money, the situation where you are only working and have no time for anything else...it is not good for humans.

I didn’t want the villagers to experience the same thing, where they become exhausted both mentally and physically.

Well, I doubted Mr. Ekenhart would have allowed that, and neither would the villagers.

Chapter 286

We Talked About Weed Cultivation

“The thing is, Mr. Takumi. I want you to accompany me to Range village.”

“You do?”

I knew that due to the wine, I would have to make Ramogi, but... I had assumed that someone could be sent to deliver it, just like with Mr. Kalis's store.

However... I suppose for Mr. Hannes and the others, it would be best if it was someone that they knew.

Besides, there was the wine that used the medicine that Milina had worked hard to make. If it was a success, then I might have to ask them to make that as well.

...Of course, that was after Mr. Ekenhart drank it and gave his permission.

"Well, I am acquainted with the people of the village, so it might be best for me to go there. The chief and the others might be worried if I don't."

"Aye, that was part of the reason I'm asking..."

"Oh, that wasn't the main reason then?"

I had assumed that Mr. Ekenhart was worried, since they had been so recently fooled by a merchant. But I suppose it was not the case.

"I was thinking that I wanted you to focus on using Weed Cultivation in Range village..."

"Weed Cultivation?"

"Mmm. There are limits to your ability, yes? Claire said that you will faint if you use it too much."

"...That's true. Well, it's still speculation, but that's what we think."

"And so if you agree to it, I thought it would be good to make a herb garden in Range village. That way, we will be able to have enough herbs for the territory without relying on your ability too much. And it can be used for the wine..."

“A herb garden... Yes, if we had something like that, we could have a lot of herbs, even if I weren’t making them every day...”

There was a limit to how many herbs I could make with Weed Cultivation.

And while I hadn’t fainted since that time with Sherry, I had avoided overworking myself and making a lot of herbs.

Because if Sebastian’s theory was true, then working too much would cause me to faint.

And I didn’t want Ms. Claire and Leo to worry about me.

“Indeed? Well, unlike your ability...it will not be incredibly fast. But being able to make great quantities has its advantages. The only question is...whether your herbs can be planted...”

“Yes... Are there any other places where herbs are being raised?”

“No. ...Well, perhaps it is done somewhere. But not in this country. It is only herbs that are grown in nature that are picked. And so they are not distributed evenly.”

“I see... But if you want to test this, wouldn’t the mansion be a better location?”

“I did consider that as well. As Claire and the servants are there, it would be easier to manage. But the space...”

“Ahh...yes. Especially since Leo runs around a lot.”

While some could be grown in the back garden, Leo liked to run around, and it wasn’t that large to begin with.

I could ask Leo to be careful and not step on the flowers, but that could lead to stress.

Besides, Silver Fenrirs were special to the duke’s house, so they might not want to restrict her freedom like that.

“Aside from the matter of Leo, even if it does go well, there will not be much room for expansion.”

“That’s true. If it does go well... It will be inconvenient to move or to expand at the mansion.”

“Mmm. But it must be tested before we can say anything. And if it is done over there, you can hire people to tend to it.”

“Hire people?”

“Aye. If all goes well, that is... After all, you cannot manage a large garden all by yourself. But in Range village you could hire people and have them live there.”

“I see...”

I would have to hire people to manage it.

This was exactly the kind of thing I had talked about with Ms. Lyra.

Hiring people... I had never had to interview someone before. Will it be alright?

Well, first, I had to test different herbs and see if they would take root.

And who knew if that would succeed...

It would take a few days to find out, so I’ll have to think of something to do in the meantime.

“Well, that being said, since we won’t be going right away, you’ll have time to experiment a little at the mansion.”

“... Yes. Once I get back, I’ll use what free time that I have to see if I can raise plants that I made with Weed Cultivation.”

“Aye, that is good. I will discuss the matter with Sebastian as soon as I get back, so that things can be arranged.”

“Well, I think you’ll have to endure a lecture first.”

“Oh, do you think so?”

“Yes.”

I agreed that I would experiment a little at the mansion.

Aside from that, I did think that when Mr. Ekenhart returned to the mansion, he would be scolded.

Even Sebastian would be mad, as he would have probably noticed very quickly...

“I did leave a note in my room...”

“Ah... At least they won’t be worried or assemble a search party...”

“Hah... He will be mad that I left without saying anything or taking a guard.”

“Yes. And Ms. Claire won’t be happy either.”

“Claire... I’ll manage. I can change the subject if I talk about what happened yesterday.”

Apparently, Mr. Ekenhart wasn’t worried about Ms. Claire.

Though...I suppose with her, it was possible to change the subject. But there would be no getting away if she teamed up with Sebastian.

...I would have to be prepared as well.

Even though he asked us, Leo and I were still the ones who brought him here.

Chapter 287

We Continued To Sightsee In Ractos

“Speaking of Ms. Claire, is she alright? She drank quite a lot of wine yesterday...”

“Ah, she will be fine. While she is quick to get drunk, she always acts like nothing happened the next day.”

“She doesn’t get hangovers?”

“Not that I have seen. However...she does remember everything she did while drunk. But she is a deep sleeper, and will usually sleep for most of the next day. And then when she wakes up...”

“She thinks about what she does and regrets...?”

“Yes. And so she will try not to drink so much next time... But I suppose yesterday was special. The wine was so delicious and easy to drink. And it was the first time she had it, so she ended up drinking a little too much.”

So Ms. Claire didn’t get hangovers, and also remembered everything. Much to her own dismay.

Perhaps getting a hangover and forgetting was the better between the two.

Well, sometimes it could be very bad, with the headaches and feeling sick.

As for me, I tended to get hangovers even if I didn’t drink all that much, so I related to Ms. Anne...

Well, I had often been forced to drink with coworkers. And then the next day I would have to work from early in the morning.

...So perhaps it was a good thing that I no longer felt drunk or got hangovers in this world.

Though, it did feel good to get a little drunk, so that was a minus.

“...I see. Do you think she’ll be alright? I wanted to have another taste test tomorrow...”

I had told Milina about it in the morning. Tomorrow, we would taste the wine that Ms. Helena made, that contained the medicine.

If Ms. Claire was wallowing in regret, maybe she wouldn’t want to drink it?

“Hmm, that’s true. There is still more that is being made. Sebastian told me about it. However... Claire might not drink it this time... It depends on just how much she regrets yesterday... Especially since you saw her.”

“Me? What about you and Ms. Anne?”

“I don’t know about Anneliese, but I’ve seen her like that many times. So it should be fine. However, she prides herself as being a lady, so when it comes to being seen by people who are not family or servants...”

“Ah... I see. Well, if she does not want to drink it, then perhaps we could prepare some juice for her instead.”

“Yes, that might be good.”

Ms. Claire was hard on herself...and quite hard on her younger sister as well...

So she might be regretting that she had allowed herself to be seen in such a way.

And if she avoided drinking...that would be too bad, as I had wanted her to drink it.

But we would just have to give her something else.

“Now, what will we do next?”

“Indeed... As Leo is with us, we cannot go inside any of the stores... And there is no one who can watch Leo for us.”

Leo was much too big to go inside any buildings.

It would be fine if there was a place that was as large as the mansion, but there weren't any here.

And I didn't want to ask Mr. Ekenhart to wait outside and watch her.

Next time, I would have to consider bringing someone else with me, so that I could go into the stores.

“Well, we do not need to enter any shops then. We can just go around and see the town.”

“Yes, that's fine. Don't you agree, Leo?”

“Wuff.”

After leaving the cafe, we decided to walk around and see the town.

We had eaten enough at the stalls for lunch. Maybe a little too much even. So we didn't need to worry about that.

But I thought it would be a good idea to get an idea of where everything was in the town while we were here.

“By the way, Mr. Ekenhart.”

“Hmm. What is it?”

“What is on the northern side of this town?”

“Ah, the north...”

I asked Mr. Ekenhart about this just as we reached the east side.

On the west side was Mr. Kalis’s store, as well as the gate we always went through.

As for the east side, that’s where the malicious store used to be, as well as the gate I went through when going to Range village.

Also, the orphanage was slightly south of the east gate.

But I had yet to venture towards the north side of this town.

In this town, there was a large street that went through the center, and it connected the east and west gates.

Most people traveled through this town when traveling in those directions.

And from there, they branched off to the south and north... But what was there to the north?

But when I asked Mr. Ekenhart about it, his expression became serious.

Was there a problem?

“It is not something I like to say out loud... But do you know about slums, Mr. Takumi?”

“Slums... A place where the poor classes live, and there is a high crime rate?”

“Something of that sort. Well, we do what we can to deal with crime. So it is not actually very high. It’s just a little less safe than other places.”

Slums, huh... I had heard stories. There were definitely places like that outside of Japan.

Though, I heard that there were places that were similar enough in Japan as well. Some places could be quite dangerous.

But it was not something that I knew a lot about, and so it was hard to imagine it.

“And this slum is on the north side?”

“Yes... We are trying to reduce such places on these lands. There are none around the towns near our main house. But here...far away, where there are so many people... It is much more difficult.”

“I see...”

As it was far away from where he lived, he could not act quickly, and things had not progressed enough.

Unlike Japan, you could not travel quickly over long distances in this world.

Besides, since there was so much traffic in and out of the town, it was hard to keep track of who was in it... If so much happened out of sight, then it was harder to do something about it.

And perhaps this work was a little too dangerous for someone like Ms. Claire.

Chapter 288

Leo Led Us To The North Side

“And so while going a little to the north side might be fine... I would not advise you to go too deep, even if you are with Leo.”

“I see. Very well. I will be careful to not go anywhere that is dangerous.”

“Mmm. That is good. You do not want to get into any unnecessary trouble.”

Better safe than sorry, I suppose.

And so I would avoid going close to places that I already knew weren't safe.

"But still...Mr Takumi. Uh...it seems like Leo is leading the way?"

"Yes... I wonder what's the matter?"

"...You do realize that she is going to the north side that we were just talking about?"

"Indeed... Leo, what is it? Is there something over there that you're interested in?"

"Wuff? Wuff!"

"So there is..."

"What is Leo saying?"

"Apparently, there is a presence that interests her. ...What should we do?"

"Hmm... Normally, I would not like to go in there without some guards... But since it's Leo...I do not want to get in her way."

Mr. Ekenhart seemed troubled as he watched Leo walking.

Indeed, ever since we got close to the east gate, Leo had moved to the front and started walking as if she knew where she was going.

And while Mr. Ekenhart followed after her, we soon realized that she was headed to the north.

According to Leo, there was something up ahead that she wanted to see...

And for now, Mr. Ekenhart didn't want to bother Leo.

I suppose it was because he and his family had so much respect for Silver Fenrirs.

But Leo didn't care about such things, so it should be fine...

However, Leo had never acted like this before... I didn't know what she was thinking, but it might be best to let her do what she wanted for now.

"I am also curious about it. So I will go... You should stay here, Mr. Ekenhart."

"No, I will go with you. After all, I can fight if something happens. Besides, the slums here are not as bad as some other places. It should be fine... Mostly likely..."

"Very well. Then let's stay prepared as we go."

"Yes."

And so we followed after Leo while staying on our guard.

Both of us had our hands on our sword hilts as we looked at our surroundings.

I didn't like the idea of unsheathing my sword on the streets, but we might not have a choice.

As for Leo, she too was looking around and sniffing, like she was searching for something.

There must really be something that interested her.

But what could it be?

If it turned out to be something like the smell of a delicious sausage... I would have to lecture Leo once we returned to the mansion...

"Still, what do you think good Leo wants in a place like this...?"

“I don’t know... It seems like she is searching for something, but...”

We had gone quite far to the north now, but Leo was still sniffing and walking around.

This place was different from the great street, and had a dreary atmosphere.

Most of the houses were in disrepair, and the shops looked quite empty.

And not just of customers, but of products as well...

Regardless of how Mr. Ekenhart and I felt, Leo continued her journey up north.

What could she possibly find here...

“Have you noticed, Mr. Takumi?”

“Yes. When it’s this obvious...”

Now that we were deep in the north side, I could see people on the roads and in the spaces between houses.

They all wore dirty clothes and blankets, and they stared at Mr. Ekenhart, me and Leo.

Most looked surprised or scared... I suppose it was just because of Leo.

“Wearing clean clothes really makes you stick out here.”

“...Indeed.”

Our clothes had been washed thoroughly at the mansion.

And so it was no wonder that we would draw attention here.

But even still, it seemed to be Leo's beautiful, silver coat that they could not take their eyes off of...

"Wuff...? Wuff-wuff-wuff!"

"What is it, Leo? Did you find it?"

"...I don't think we should stay for too long. What is it, good Leo?"

There was nothing we could do about the stares, and so we just continued to walk past the dreary houses.

Suddenly, Leo stopped in her tracks and turned around as if she was trying to say something to me.

Upon hearing her bark, some of the spectators shuddered with fear, but I ignored them for now.

"Wuff..."

"It's over there?"

"Hmm?"

Leo pointed with her nose and from paw to a gap between two houses.

And so Mr. Ekenhart and I moved towards it to see what was there.

"...!"

"...!!"

"It sounds like a fight... Is someone being attacked?"

“It does sound like that... But if it was dangerous, Leo would have jumped in herself.”

I could hear someone’s voice from the gap.

And it did sound like people were fighting.

“Wuff-wuff. Wuff!”

“Huh? A child? We should help it?”

“Is that true, good Leo?”

“Wuff.”

According to Leo, a child was being attacked up ahead.

And she wanted us to save it.

Indeed, if that was the case, we should go... But it was odd that Leo hadn’t gone herself.

She liked children, so I would have thought she would have rushed towards it. That’s when I noticed it.

The gap was too narrow for Leo to go through...

It was barely wide enough for a single human to fit.

So if Leo tried to go through, she would just get stuck.

That was why she was urging us to go instead...

Chapter 289

A Girl Was Being Bullied

“Very well. ...Mr. Ekenhart.”

“Mmm. While I didn’t want to get involved in any fights here... If that’s what good Leo wants, then we must go.”

“Yes. ...I will go first, so you can follow after me. ...Leo, you go around from the other side. It’s happening on the street on the other side, right?”

“Very well. But be careful, Mr. Takumi.”

“Wuff.”

“Yes.”

After lightly planning a course of action, Mr. Ekenhart and Leo agreed, and so I went into the gap.

Mr. Ekenhart unsheathed his sword and followed me cautiously.

As for Leo, after nodding to me, she ran off in order to go around the building.

So, what was happening up ahead then...

“Hey, get out of here! Hey!”

“You man-eater! This is no place for the likes of you!”

“Get out! Get out!”

“...! ...!”

Once I came out on the other side, I saw that it was a square of empty land. Perhaps there had once been a building there.

And I could hear the voices clearly now... It wasn't so much a fight, as one side shouting angrily.

And in the center of the ground, a single child was kneeling, while three other children...perhaps they were about the age of junior highschool students...were kicking and punching.

As for the child in the center, it was trying its best not to make any noise.

"Hey, what are you kids doing!"

"Huh? Be quiet, old man."

"Shut up and go away."

"We're defeating the evil man eating beast."

"Man eating beast...?"

I couldn't help but shout as I stepped forward.

But regardless of what their reasoning was, there was no excuse to surround a child and hurt them like this.

As for the children who were doing it, they immediately turned to me angrily.

...It did not feel good to be called an old man...but that was not important right now.

I wondered why they called the child a man eater. After all, the child just seemed like a little girl.

Though, I could not see her face... But she was probably younger than Tilura.

“I don’t care what your reason is. You should not be bullying such a small child like this!”

“What are you talking about, old man?”

“This thing eats people! And so we have to defeat it while we can!”

“It doesn’t matter if it is small! It is a monster!”

“Even if that was true, it is not your job. If it really does eat people, then you should leave it to the town guards.”

But to me, the child looked like an ordinary human.

Perhaps there were monsters who looked like humans... But I didn’t know enough about monsters.

As for humanoid monsters... Orcs did walk on two legs, but their faces were closer to pigs. And this child did not look like them.

Regardless, even if this child was a monster, they did not need to deal with it. They should just ask the guards.

Even if this was the slums, surely they would do something about a monster that had entered.

“Hmph! You’re just trying to steal our prey, aren’t you, old man?”

“No, I’m not.”

“Just shut up and go away! And leave this monster to us!”

“If you don’t listen, you’ll be next, old man!”

“...Mr. Ekenhart...”

“Hmm... Mr. Takumi, while it is not a very mature thing to do against children...you may have to use force. Though, I would prefer to avoid it...”

“Yes, it could stir up the others...”

“Mmm. We do not want to have to fight them.”

“But we can’t just leave her...”

“Indeed. I agree with that. Very well. But you must go easy on them.”

“... Yes. It’s not like I’m going to kill them.”

Even as we were talking, some of the people who had been staring at us before had gathered to watch.

As we were outsiders, we would probably be seen as enemies...

I could use the narrow gaps between the houses. So that even if it was difficult to move, I would not have to fight with multiple people at once.

Mr. Ekenhart was here too, so it was unlikely that we’d lose. And if people made enough noise, then maybe the guards would notice and come to our aid.

Though, I felt bad for putting Mr. Ekenhart in this situation...

Sebastian and Ms. Claire would be furious when they heard about what happened.

“Grau!”

“Wh-what!?”

“Ah!”

“It-it’s a monster! A wolf monster!”

Just as Mr. Ekenhart and I had decided on our course of action, Leo came running from the opposite side.

That was quick, Leo.

The children saw Leo and were afraid. And the people who had been watching began to run away.

“GRRRRR... Grau!”

“Ahhh! Help me!”

“It’s a monster!”

“It’s going to attack!”

“...They ran away.”

“Indeed. Thanks to Leo, we were able to avoid an unnecessary battle.”

“It looks like it.”

“Wuff!”

“Good, good. Well done, Leo!”

Leo had growled and then roared at the children. And then after shaking her body, the children ran away.

Now, it was only me, Mr. Ekenhart, Leo, and the crouching girl that remained.

As I was relieved that everyone had run away, Leo looked at me with a smug expression, so I praised her and tousled her fur.

I was relieved that I hadn't gotten Mr. Ekenhart involved in a fight after all.

"Now, what should we do about this child..."

"...If we leave her here, the other children might come back..."

Mr. Ekenhart sheathed his sword and muttered as he looked at the girl.

She continued to crouch as she trembled with fear.

Perhaps she was even more scared than before, after hearing Leo's bark.

Chapter 290

Leo Was Shocked That The Girl Was Scared Of Her

"Wuff? Wuff-wuff!"

"...Eeee!"

"Wuff! Wuff-wuff. Wuff! Wuff!"

Just as I was wondering what to do, Leo slowly approached the girl and looked into her face and barked.

The girl raised her head, and the moment that she saw Leo, she immediately hid again and started to tremble with fear.

...Well, that big face was in front of her suddenly, so it was no wonder.

Leo looked like she was trying to tell her that she didn't need to be afraid, but it was no use.

"It-it's going to eat me!"

"Wuff!? Wuff-wuff! Wuff! Wuff!"

"Hah... Leo, you're just scaring her even more. You should move away for now."

"Wuff..."

Leo was shocked by the words of the girl, who misunderstood and believed that she was about to be eaten.

I won't eat you. She seemed to say as she pressed her nose against the girl, and tried patting her with her paws, but it had no effect.

And while I felt bad for Leo, I asked her to move away from the girl.

Ah, Leo walked over to the corner sulkily... Her back was turned to me, and she seemed so crestfallen.

Upon seeing this, Mr. Ekenhart went to console her.

Thank you, Mr. Ekenhart.

I then squatted down next to the girl and talked to her gently.

She was shaking like a leaf. If anything, it seemed like Leo had frightened her much more than the children did earlier...

In any case, I needed to make her calm down and tell her that there was no need to be afraid now.

From the corner of my eye, I saw Mr. Ekenhart patting Leo's back.

"No one will insult you or hurt you now. Don't worry, don't worry..."

"..."

I gently repeated the words to her.

In times like this, it would have been nice to have experience with comforting frightened children.

Well, this was not a usual situation. And anyway, it was best if there weren't any frightened children to begin with.

Regardless, after repeatedly reassuring her, she finally spoke in a quiet voice.

Almost there...

"Don't worry. Nothing scary will happen..."

"...Really?"

"...Really. Because there is nothing here that you have to be afraid of."

She stopped shaking and seemed to have believed my words. And so she removed her hands from her head and slowly looked up.

Her face... Well, the part of her head that she had been holding down was a surprise, but I ignored it and smiled gently and told her that it was fine.

I hoped that the surprise hadn't shown on my face...and that I was smiling normally... While I was worried, she was looking straight at my face.

And so I was careful to not let anything show.

“See? None of those children are here now. So it’s fine.”

“...What about that big wolf?”

“Uh, well...”

She was talking about Leo.

I could still see the fear in her eyes as she looked around as if searching for this wolf.

Was it okay to show her now...? As for Leo she was still being consoled by Mr. Ekenhart, but was looking in our direction.

She made sure that her back was still turned to us, but... She must have been very shocked that a child thought that she was going to eat them.

It would be one thing if it was an adult, but Leo had always been popular with children...

“Is the wolf...gone now?”

“No, uh... That wolf won’t eat you or hurt you or anything.”

“...But it’s so big...”

“Even if it’s big, it wont. She may be big and have scary eyes, but she is actually very gentle.”

“...Really?”

As I squatted next to her, I met her eyes and explained in hopes of making her feel safe.

Though, I think Leo heard the part about her having scary eyes, as she had flinched... I’ll have to apologize to her later.

...Still, wolves were pretty scary when seen up close...

Not that I thought Leo was scary in the least... But this was no time to be thinking about that.

“Yes. She really is a kind wolf. She will not eat or attack anyone. Otherwise, they wouldn’t have let her in the town, would they? The guards would have captured her.”

“...They would? I don’t know...”

“Well, I suppose. But if you trust me, then try looking behind you. Don’t worry. There is nothing to be afraid of, remember?”

“Yes...okay...”

I didn’t know if she would still be scared after seeing a sad-looking Leo, but we couldn’t do anything until she got over it.

We could not leave without her seeing Leo, and it would be dangerous to send Leo away.

Perhaps she wouldn’t trust someone she had just met, but thanks to my repeated reassurances, she seemed to believe in me.

And so she nodded and hesitantly turned around.

“...Uh... Good wolf?”

“Kyunnn...”

“...! See? It’s fine. This is a gentle wolf that would never attack you.”

“Yes. I think so. ...I’m sorry, good wolf.”

“Kyuun. Kyuun.”

While the girl tensed momentarily after seeing how big Leo was, she was brave enough to speak to her.

In answer, Leo let out a pitiful moan.

It was like she was desperate to not be scary...

But as I was thinking about such things, I turned to look at the girl... And there was something on her backside that should not have been on a human.

Still, I coughed so that my surprise would not show, and then I called to her gently.

She then apologized to Leo for being scared.

Leo told her that it was fine, and then she turned to her slowly and pushed her nose close to the girl.

Leo still sounded rather pitiful... Besides, she looked rather amusing, as she had remained in a sitting pose while turning just her head to look around.