

Beloved Dog 301

Chapter 301

Leo Used Magic

Previously, when entering the Fenrir Forest, Sebastian had told me that even if you use magic to make water, you are just gathering the moisture from the air, so it was possible that there could be something toxic inside.

This could not be helped in situations where you were dying of thirst, but otherwise, it would be best to avoid drinking it.

However, Leo was insisting that this water was fine.

After hearing this, Mr. Ekenhart looked surprised and began to think.

Now that I thought about it, he had not seen Leo use magic before.

As there was no need to use it back at the mansion.

“Hmm... Perhaps she uses an advanced type of magic... Or a magic that only Silver Fenrirs can use...”

“Advanced magic?”

“?”

As Mr. Ekenhart muttered, I asked him to explain.

Liza was also looking at him questioningly.

“I suppose Sebastian has not told you about it... There is a type of magic that allows you to remove impurities from the water. A magic that allows you to make drinking water. But as it is very advanced and uses much energy, I have rarely seen anyone do it...”

“I didn’t know that such a thing existed. But it would be very convenient.”

“Indeed. You would never lack for drinking water... But as the energy depletion is so strong, the average person cannot activate it. It’s really not even worth trying for most people.”

“I see... Is that what you used, Leo?”

“Wuff? Wuff-wuff.”

Sebastian probably hadn’t told me yet, since I was still a beginner when it came to magic.

Besides, there was no point in learning something if I couldn’t even do it.

Regardless, that explained everything. And when I asked Leo she tilted her head and then started to bark.

Uh, I don’t know about that magic, but it can be drunk...

“However, I would believe it if that is what she says. Can she do it many times?”

“Wuff!

“Hmm...”

“Well, I’ll drink it first then.”

“Are you sure about this, Mr. Takumi?”

“Leo has never lied to me. And even if it’s bad, I won’t get sick right away. Alright, do it one more time, Leo.”

“Wuff! Woooou! Grau!”

Ever since we came to this world, and Leo and I were able to communicate, Leo had never lied to me.

But then again, she was always so laid back, and generally did not enter any conversations.

In any case, we had been buddies for a long time, and I trusted her.

Besides, even if there was something bad in the water, it wouldn’t mean that we’d get immediately sick.

And so I made a cup with my hands and asked Leo to do it again.

Like this, I would be able to collect enough water to drink.

Perhaps I should have brought a wooden bowl with us.

Leo barked, and then howled louder. And like that, water began to gather above my hands.

After a while, the sphere of water was about the size of my head. It then began to fall, filling my hands before going past them.

“...Glug, glug.”

“How is it?”

“...It seems fine. There is no strange smell or taste. I think that it’s normal water.”

“Wuff-wuff!”

“I see... Then I suppose it’s fine if she drinks it.”

“...I want to drink the...water...”

“Alright, Liza. Put out your hands in front of Leo...”

When I drank it, there was nothing strange. It was just normal water.

Well, I’m sure there were toxic substances that I couldn’t taste...but it was probably fine.

Leo was nodding as if this conclusion was obvious.

And Liza had looked at me with jealousy while I was drinking.

And so I took her to Leo’s face and made her put her hands out.

But since her hands were small, and would not hold much water, I put out my hands as well.

And then Mr. Ekenhart got down from his horse and extended his hands.

...I suppose he was also hungry... Or he was just interested in Leo’s magic.

“Glug...glug... It’s good!”

“Here, you can have more if it’s not enough.”

“Hmm...glug-glug. Yes, it’s normal water. It seems fine.”

“Wuff.”

Liza must have been very thirsty, as she quickly started drinking the water in her hands.

But since it didn't seem to be enough, I gave her some of mine.

Mr. Ekenhart also drank and nodded with satisfaction.

Leo looked quite smug at this.

"...I haven't drunk water...this good...in a long time..."

"Good? It is just normal water..."

"It is."

"Uh...we couldn't drink...clear water where I lived... We drank rain water off the ground..."

"..."

"..."

"Wuff..."

While it was normal water to Mr. Ekenhart and me, it was apparently quite special for Liza.

I suppose she was not in a very good environment for drinking water whenever she wanted to.

And even when they could get water, it was dirty, and only enough to wet their throats.

Perhaps she had never even drunk water that was clear enough that she could see her hands through it.

And she was still so young... Both Mr. Ekenhart and I frowned as it dawned on us.

Leo let out a sigh.

Perhaps Leo alone knew about what kind of life she had lived up until now.

It might have been one of the reasons that Leo really wanted to help her.

Chapter 302

I Had A Conversation With Liza

“I’m a nobleman...with land. And so I can’t only think of one person, but...this child must be saved. Even if it wasn’t Leo’s wish, that is the right thing to do.”

“...Indeed. Just how she was treated and lived up until now... It pains me just to think about it...”

It was just sympathy.

Even if you saved one person, there were plenty of others who were also suffering... That being said, one had to start with the person that was in front of them.

Mr. Ekenhart owned these lands and was the duke.

And so some might not look well on him if he showed preferential treatment.

But that wasn’t enough reason to do nothing.

He was too kind for that.

And even if it was hypocritical, I could not abandon her either. And so I supported Mr. Ekenhart’s decision.

“Well, we can think about all that later...”

“Delaying the decision?”

“You might say so. We have to deal with the pressing matter first. Or we will not be able to move on.”

“...That’s true.”

“?”

“Wuff.”

Mr. Ekenhart let out a deep sigh.

I nodded in agreement.

I couldn’t say anything to him.

While I knew that I could live in this world now, I hadn’t thought much about what the future held... Aside from living leisurely with Leo.

As for Ms. Claire and Ms. Lyra... No, nevermind that.

We had to think about the present.

Liza was looking at us with a puzzled expression.

As she was younger than Tilura, she did not quite understand what we were talking about.

She had probably never even studied... But then again, did people even study in this world if they weren’t nobles?

I wondered about this as I picked up Liza and got back onto Leo’s back. Mr. Ekenhart also returned to his horse.

...Aside from the strange cloth around his head, he looked good when astride his horse.

“Thank...you.”

“Hmm? What is it?”

While riding on Leo, Liza suddenly thanked me.

I wonder why?

“The...uh...for the delicious water...”

“Oh, that. It was nothing. Besides, you should thank Leo. It was Leo who made the water.”

“Yes...that’s...right.”

I didn’t think that it was necessary to thank me for some water, but I suppose it meant more for her.

When we returned, I would thank Leo for it as well.

Also, I would ask Ms. Helena to serve some of that grape juice.

It was sure to be even more of a surprise than some clean water.

Thinking about Liza’s smile made me feel a little better. And so I decided to talk to her more.

“Uh...Liza? You know that you don’t have to try and talk so politely?”

“Huh? ...But grandfather said that I should do that with old people...”

“Well, there is no need to with me. You can just talk the way you like. After all, wouldn’t it be tiring?”

“Yes...I under...stand...”

“...Or?”

“Uh... Yes. Uh...okay!”

“That’s good.”

“Wuff-wuff!”

It had occurred to me that she was forcing herself to talk in a polite manner.

Maybe that was why she hesitated and sometimes stuttered?

I wanted her to relax, and so I told her to talk in whatever way was easiest.

While she wasn’t used to doing it, she would get used to it soon.

And so I smiled and patted her on the head.

Leo also barked happily... It was clear that she was also worried about her.

Maybe it was like how she was with Sherry. She saw herself as an older sister.

In that case... I would try and act like an older brother.

...I was not going to be the grandfather, in any case.

“Mr. Ekenhart, are you forgetting something?”

“Hmm? What?”

Some time had now passed.

And we arrived at the mansion just before the sun had set completely.

On the way back, there had been some trouble...or something surprising, but...

Right now, after dismounting Leo, I was standing in front of the entrance.

Liza was amazed. Clearly she had not expected to be taken to such a large mansion.

And so she was looking around with curiosity.

But just before Mr. Ekenhart went through the door, I called out to him.

I suppose he had forgotten?

“Uh... I know that you wanted to cover your beard for Liza...but are you really going to go in looking like that?”

“And what would be the problem with that?”

“I wouldn’t say that it’s a problem, but...”

Mr. Ekenhart had also snuck out of the mansion in order to go to Ractos.

He had not told anyone about this... Well, he had left a note, but he didn’t say anything to Sebastian or Ms. Claire.

Now that I thought about it, it was impressive that the guards recognized him like this...

I suppose they knew him well enough to tell by his build and overall air.

“You left without saying anything, didn’t you? Perhaps going in from the front door...”

“...Ah, that is true. I forgot about that...”

“Well, I’m sure Sebastian already knows what is going on...”

“You think so, Mr. Takumi?”

“That’s just how Sebastian is... It would be strange if he didn’t notice. And he’s probably told Ms. Claire...”

“Tsk!”

If it was only Sebastian, then that wasn’t too bad... But there could be real trouble if Ms. Claire knew.

Mr. Ekenhart frowned when he heard this.

But now that we were already here...there was nothing to be done. Hell, it was possible that they could hear this conversation from the other side of the door...

There would be no point in sneaking through a back door if they already knew...

Chapter 303

The Suspicious Person Was Ignored

“...What is it?”

“Hmm, it’s nothing. He just forgot something and remembered it right now.”

“Oh...”

“Wuff...”

Liza had looked puzzled at how distressed Mr. Ekenhart had become.

Though, Leo was just sighing in exasperation...

“...It cannot be helped. We cannot just stand around here. ...I’ve made my decision! We’re going in!”

“...Very well.”

“Wuff!”

“...Okay.”

I wasn’t sure what had been going through his mind, but Mr. Ekenhart seemed determined now.

I suppose he had prepared himself to face Ms. Claire and be warned by Sebastian...

Regardless, he now faced the door as if it was a great challenge he was up against.

...Though, I couldn’t see his exact expression, due to the cloth.

“Welcome back, Mr. Takumi and Leo!”

“I’m back.”

We were greeted by some servants who must have been standing ready on the other side.

Liza was a little startled by this welcome, and could not say anything.

“Ah, stop right there, Leo. Sorry, but is there a wet towel that I can use?”

“Wuff?”

“Yes, here it is...”

“Thank you. Did you forget already, Leo? You have to wipe your feet first.”

“Wuff!? Wuff...”

I asked a nearby servant and accepted the towel.

Thankfully, they had one prepared.

And so I wiped all of the dirt off of Leo’s paws.

Leo had been surprised as if it had completely slipped her mind. And so she lowered her head apologetically.

As we had been to all sorts of places today, she was quite dirty...and so I had to wipe her paws thoroughly.

Hmm. Liza was watching us with deep interest. Did she want to wipe Leo too?

“Welcome back, Mr. Takumi.”

“Ah, Ms. Claire. We’re back.”

“Wuff-wuff.”

“...Claire.”

“?”

As I considered letting her do the work, Ms. Claire stepped out from behind the servants.

And so I stood up and greeted her.

Leo did as well.

And then Mr. Ekenhart muttered her name. What happened to all of that resolve?

Liza just looked puzzled.

“And who is this girl?”

“Uh...it’s a long story, but...”

“...Uhh, Claire?”

“Is that so. The ears and tail... Is she a beastkin?”

“Yes. Apparently. How do you feel about them?”

“They are our neighbors. I suppose you’ve learned about them then.”

“...Uh, Claire?”

“...Yes. We visited the orphanage and I was told various things.”

“I see...”

Ms. Claire glanced at Liza while we talked.

Of course, I had merely gone to town and came back with a beastkin child, so she was curious.

And judging by what she said, Ms. Claire seemed to know the situation regarding them.

She also didn't seem to have any prejudices, and looked at Liza with a warm expression.

There were no traces of her strange drunkenness from yesterday, and she spoke in her usual way.

As for Mr. Ekenhart, he continued to try and talk to Claire in a quiet voice, but she refused to react to him.

...Perhaps she was angry...

"And the orphanage did not accept her?"

"Well...they didn't have enough room right now...and Leo insisted that we bring her here..."

"Good Leo did?"

"Hey, hey."

"Wuff! Wou. Wuff-wuff!"

"I see... Very well. If that is what Leo wants...then we will support her decision!"

"...You can understand what Leo is saying?"

"Somewhat... Not as completely as you, Mr. Takumi."

Ms. Claire said with a chuckle.

I suppose it was because she had spent so much time with Leo? Or did it have to do with her connection with Sherry, who was her familiar?

In any case, just like Mr. Ekenhart, Ms. Claire also accepted Leo's wishes.

So that was half of the problem solved.

...Now it was just a matter of what Sebastian would say.

She was a similar age to Tilura, so they could be friends. And surely the servants would also grow fond of her.

But as the butler, Sebastian might be a little harsher with his decision...

Well, I wasn't actually that worried about it.

"Who is that pretty lady?"

"Hahaha! Liza, this is Ms. Claire. She is the master of this house."

"Oh, I see."

"Hehehe..."

"Will someone notice me! Heey!"

Liza tilted her head and asked about Ms. Claire.

Ms. Claire was quite pleased. Both by the compliment and by how cute Liza looked when her ears and tail moved.

...Actually, Mr. Ekenhart was probably supposed to be the master of the house... But he surely did not look like he was at the moment...

"Now, this is no place to talk... Let us go to the drawing room."

"Indeed. So much has happened, and I'm sure that Liza is tired."

“Wuff.”

“Hey, hey... Notice me!”

“Hah... I already have. Now, who is this suspicious person?”

“Suspicious person. How rude...”

Ms. Claire then guided us to the drawing room, as it would be no good to stand here and talk. It was also then that she finally sighed and acknowledged Mr. Ekenhart’s presence.

If only he would take that cloth off of his face and stop moving around so much...

It was no wonder that some people didn’t show him much respect.

Chapter 304

We Talked In The Drawing Room

“If you act strangely while dressed like that, then you can hardly expect a different outcome, father.”

“...Hmm. Well, there are reasons for this. In any case, we’ll talk in the drawing room.”

“Yes.”

Mr. Ekenhart was relieved after she finally acknowledged him.

Well, he was probably more relieved that Ms. Claire wasn’t that angry and didn’t start lecturing him...

Though, maybe his relief was a little premature?

“...Father. There are other pressing matters right now, but we will continue this conversation later.”

“...Yes, of course.”

“Wuff...”

“?”

Ms. Claire muttered quietly to Mr. Ekenhart while we walked, much to his dismay.

So she knew everything after all, and was just pretending to be calm.

Liza was watching them with a puzzled expression.

I couldn't help but feel a little bad for Mr. Ekenhart...

“I see... So that's what happened.”

“Yes. If Leo hadn't noticed it, Liza would be...”

“Indeed, that is true... However, why is there beastkin in Ractos...”

“Claire, that is not something we can know right now. We don't know who brought her there. Perhaps they entered while hiding their identity. While I will have the matter looked into...we may never find out...”

“...That's true.”

After we arrived in the drawing room, we explained to her how we had found Liza.

At some point, Sebastian and Ms. Lyra had come to listen as well.

...Sebastian was smiling whenever he glanced at Mr. Ekenhart. Clearly he had some words for him as well.

“Excuse me.”

As Sebastian fought to suppress his delight, Ms. Helena entered the room.

Ms. Gelda was also with her.

“Helena. Thank you.”

“Here is the grape juice you asked for.”

Ms. Lyra then helped Ms. Helena and Ms. Gelda place the cups on the table.

They also left a pitcher in case anyone wanted more.

This was because on the way to the drawing room, I had asked them to bring some grape juice.

I told them that it could be during dinner, since it would take some time to boil and cool it, but it seems like they had some that was already made.

Perhaps it was because Tilura, Leo and Sherry drank it often?

After seeing that everyone had a cup, Ms. Helena left the room.

“...What is this?”

“It’s like grape juice. And it tastes even better than water. Why don’t you try it?”

“Okay...thank you.”

“Let’s drink it too.”

“Yes.”

“Wuff.”

And so we all picked up our glasses and drank.

I suppose the magic water Leo had made was not enough, as it seemed like we were all thirsty.

Even Leo was drinking it from a bucket that had been prepared for her.

She didn’t even drink milk this quickly...

But then again, Leo hadn’t drunk any water on our way back.

“Mm!”

“What is it?”

“It’s delicious!”

“Isn’t it?”

Those who had already had it before were not surprised by its taste, but after taking a sip, Liza’s eyes widened and she turned towards me.

Her expression was a mixture of surprise and delight, which was heart-warming to see.

Even her tail was wagging happily.

Her reaction reminded me of Leo... Perhaps all creatures with tails did that.

In the corner of my vision, I could see Ms. Lyra and Ms. Gelda looking at Liza's tail with amusement.

"Mm...glug-glug... It's delicious, papa!"

"It is, isn't it. There's plenty more, so drink up."

"Papa!?"

"Papa!?"

"Papa!?"

"Papa!?"

"Huh?"

Liza had a big smile on her face as she drank the grape juice.

However, in spite of this pleasant atmosphere, everyone in the room suddenly gasped in surprise.

Well, Ms. Claire, Sebastian, Ms. Lyra and Ms. Gelda.

Mr. Ekenhart just chuckled.

"...Mr. Takumi...papa... What is the meaning of this? Is she really...yours, Mr. Takumi?"

"No, no. She is definitely not mine!"

"...Are you sure about that?"

"I am! Mr. Ekenhart knows! As I explained earlier, Leo found her in Ractos!"

“...Is that true, father?”

“Hmm...it is. Mr. Takumi is not lying.”

After the initial surprise, Ms. Claire looked a little crestfallen as she interrogated me.

There was something a little scary about her now...

In any case, I tried to dispel any strange ideas she got into her head.

Even Mr. Ekenhart agreed that I was telling the truth... Though, he was sweating for some reason.

Yes, Ms. Claire had an intensity now that I had not seen before...

“...Then why are you her papa...? I don't understand...”

“Well, uh...on our way here, she suddenly started calling me that...”

“Hmm? But you are papa?”

“...Liza... You're not really helping me in this situation...”

I was starting to feel a little frantic in front of Ms. Claire.

Was this how Mr. Ekenhart felt when he was the target of his daughter's wrath?

Even though they were initially shocked as well, now Ms. Lyra and Ms. Gelda were more intimidated by Ms. Claire. Only Sebastian seemed to be enjoying this.

Well, I suppose I could not rely on Mr. Ekenhart after all... He was not even looking at me now.

I felt a cold sweat drip down my back. And like that, I continued to explain myself until Ms. Claire was satisfied.

Chapter 305

I Was Called Papa

After drinking Leo's magic water and continuing on our journey back, Liza started calling me 'papa' after I told her that she didn't need to be so formal.

"Thank you for helping me, papa!"

"You don't need to thank... What?"

"Hmm? Grandfather said...that parents are supposed to be kind and protect children. And that's what you did..."

"I-I see..."

"HAHAHAHA! She has grown quite fond of you, Mr. Takumi!"

"It's not a laughing matter, Mr. Ekenhart. I'm not a parent..."

Mr. Ekenhart was listening as he rode next to us, and he now burst into laughter...

While I had been around children a lot, I've never had any of my own, so I wasn't sure how to react.

Liza must have felt my hesitation, and she looked at me with worry.

"Are you not...papa? I don't know much about parents..."

Hmm... Yes. Well..."

When she looked at me like that, it was hard to tell her to stop calling me that.

“Also...I don’t know your name...that other old man said it a few times...but I keep forgetting...”

“I-I see... Hmm. Indeed. ...Well, my name is Takumi. So you can just call me Takumi.”

“...Takumi... Hmm... But it’s easier to say papa!”

“Th-that might be, but... I’m not your papa. And so I don’t think...”

“I can’t? But I want...”

“Ah, uh...”

“Hahaha! Now you can’t refuse. You’ll just have to accept the name, Mr. Takumi.”

“...Mr. Ekenhart... This is your fault too...”

It wasn’t that I hated being called that.

After all, it showed how comfortable she was around me now.

However, it was awkward to be called papa when I didn’t have any children.

Besides, Mr. Ekenhart had helped her too. And he had daughters already. Surely he would be better for that role...

Perhaps it was because of the beard situation?

But I wasn’t even married. And I was too young... Well, maybe not that young, but...

While I was happy that she felt that way, still...

“...I can’t?”

“...!”

I glared at Mr. Ekenhart who continued to laugh.

And then Liza looked up at me with that worried expression and drooping tail and ears.

I could not tell her that she absolutely couldn’t.

Who could, when they saw such an expression on her face... Well, there were probably plenty of people who could, but I couldn’t.

“Fi-fine. You can call me papa...”

“Yay! Thank you, papa!”

“Hahaha!”

I pushed away any feelings of confusion for her comfort, and allowed it with a nod.

Liza smiled happily and wagged her tail and twitched her ears.

I suppose that was how beastkin expressed their happiness.

Regardless, after seeing that, I felt that I had made the right decision.

Mr. Ekenhart was just laughing, which made me less sympathetic about what Ms. Claire and Sebastian would say to him later. Really.

“Hah...so I’m a parent now...even though I’m not married...”

“Wuff...”

I muttered as Liza talked excitedly and Mr. Ekenhart laugh. Leo sighed and continued to run.

“So, that’s how it was... Liza forced me...you could say...”

“I see...very well. I’m relieved to know that. Yes, very relieved.”

“Y-yes. Of course.”

Ms. Claire sighed with relief after hearing all of this, and she then returned to her more gentle self. I would have to be careful in the future so that I don’t anger her.

“So if Mr. Takumi is the papa...then that means...”

“Claire, perhaps now is not the time?”

“... Yes, excuse me.”

Ms. Claire seemed like she was thinking about something, but Mr. Ekenhart warned her, and so she shook her head.

What had she been thinking about?

“As I said before, if Leo wants us to protect this child, then the house will not oppose her will. Silver Fenrirs are revered in this family...they are special. Besides, at this point, she is like a part of the family.”

“Wuff.”

With a look of serious determination, Ms. Claire made this declaration to everyone in the room, and then everyone nodded in agreement.

As for Leo, she bowed her head to Ms. Claire and barked as if to express her gratitude over this decision.

While Liza understood that we were talking about her, she seemed rather confused as well.

But one could not expect her to understand things about Mr. Ekenhart being the duke or about Silver Fenrirs being special.

She could learn about all of that little by little.

Chapter 306

Ms. Claire Was Concerned About Yesterday

“...What you really want to say, is that it’s because Mr. Takumi is requesting it...not Leo...”

“...Father?”

“Mm...nevermind. In any case, it is official now. Liza will be a guest in this house. Liza, you may move around freely while you are here, understand?”

“...Yes...I understand...”

“...”

Mr. Ekenhart had muttered this observation, and had received a cold look from Ms. Claire in return.

He grimaced and then turned his attention to Liza.

I hadn’t really heard what he was saying, but he should know better than to poke the bear by now...

As for Liza, she also seemed a little confused, but nodded her head as if she understood.

Every time she tilted her head or looked puzzled, her ears and tail would move. When she did this, I saw that Ms. Claire, Ms. Lyra and Ms. Gelda all averted their eyes.

Perhaps they were restraining an urge to touch the tail.

I had a feeling that they would be doting on Liza pretty soon. I just hoped that Tilura wouldn't get jealous.

"Now that I think about it... Why is Ms. Claire making the declaration? I thought that Mr. Ekenhart is the master here..."

"Heh. To ask that so bluntly. You are a strange one, Mr. Takumi. It's quite simple. Because I have left all matters concerning this house to Claire."

"I am the one responsible for this mansion. And that is not going to change easily, just because father has decided to pay us a little visit."

"...While the servants here all work for the duke, they do so under Lady Claire. And so it is ultimately her decision."

"I see."

"I have already made the decision, and do not wish to confuse the servants."

Is that right?

Since he was the head of the family, I had assumed that he was the main authority in this mansion as well.

I suppose he technically was, just that Ms. Claire was the one responsible for making decisions.

So it was a good thing that I had introduced Ms. Claire to Liza in the way that I had.

Mr. Ekenhart just did not look very impressive right now...that had been my main reason.

In any case, I was not surprised that Sebastian had forced his way into the conversation. He must have seen the opportunity to explain something.

After all, when I glanced towards him, he was smiling with satisfaction.

...Perhaps he would go easy on Mr. Ekenhart now.

“How are Tilura and Ms. Anne?”

After we had sat there and enjoyed our drinks for some time, I suddenly remembered something.

Well, it's not that I had forgotten.

But usually, if Tilura knew that Leo was here, she and Sherry would come to meet her.

As for Ms. Anne... I had been thinking about what Mr. Ekenhart told me in Ractos.

Perhaps I felt a little sympathy towards her.

“Tilura and Sherry should be in the back garden now. She will be training until dinner time. As for Anne...she is still in her room. She hasn't recovered from last night's drinking yet.”

“...I see.”

Tilura sure worked hard.

She diligently trains even when Leo and I are not there... I suppose that was how much she liked to move her body.

As for Ms. Anne... Well, I hope she gets well soon...

I could not really say anything about that, as it would be awkward since Ms. Claire was here.

“Um...Mr. Takumi...”

“Yes, what is it?”

“I am very sorry...that you had to see that yesterday. I shall be more careful in the future.”

“Hahahaha! I’m sure you have reason to want to drink and relax once in a while. You really do not have to worry about me.”

“Still, I apologize. And thank you.”

Ms. Claire looked a little embarrassed as she bowed her head and apologized.

I suppose it wasn’t her most lady-like moment.

But somehow, I felt that such things were necessary for her.

You would get tired if you remained so tense all of the time.

“Well, I suppose we can introduce Liza to Tilura during dinner.”

“Yes. Tilura should be happy, since they are similar in age. And Anne...will probably be happy, since she is already fond of Sherry.”

“Hahah. Maybe.”

Tilura was not easily scared, and was a very curious child. So she shouldn’t have any trouble becoming friends with Liza.

I hoped that they would be able to play together.

And since Ms. Anne liked Sherry, it seemed likely that she would take to Liza as well.

Because of the ears and tail... Even Ms. Lyra and Ms. Gelda was staring at them...

...Though, Sherry was always more interested in Ms. Anne's hair rolls.

"Everyone, dinner is prepared. It will be served in the dining hall now."

"Yes, thank you. ...Uh, can you add another person?"

"Yes. Helena saw that we have a guest earlier, and has seen to it."

"Good. Well, let's go to the dining hall then."

"Thank you, Ms. Claire."

"Not at all. This child...Liza. Is now our guest."

"Thank you. Did you hear that, Liza? They have prepared something for you to eat."

Chapter 307

I Had A Feeling That Liza Would Be Popular In The Mansion

"...Thank...you...?"

"No, don't mention it. I hope you enjoy being here."

A servant had entered and announced that dinner was ready.

Apparently, Ms. Helena had prepared food for Liza as well.

I would have to thank her about that later. Especially since she had also brought the grape juice.

I told Liza to thank Ms. Claire as well. And though she seemed so overwhelmed by everything that was happening, she managed to do it.

And then she bowed her head and looked up while shaking her tail.

I could see that Ms. Lyra and Ms. Gelda were clenching their fists as if trying to hold them back.

Even Ms. Claire was holding one hand with the other.

...It was like they were trying to not pet someone's dog.

Thinking this, I turned to see that Mr. Ekenhart was chuckling, and Sebastian was smiling.

Yes, Liza should fit in here just fine.

"So, your name is Liza!?"

"Yes. This is Liza. While she may be a beastkin, you must treat her like anyone else, understand?"

"I understand! Nice to meet you. I'm Tilura!"

"Tilura... Older sister?"

"Older sister... I've never been called that before!"

After going to the dining hall and waiting for the food to be served, Tilura returned from her training. And so I introduced Liza to her.

As expected, Tilura's eyes were filled with curiosity, and she seemed quite happy as she stared at Liza's ears and tail.

Not only that, but she seemed strangely pleased to be seen as an older sister.

As she was the youngest child, she had never been called that before.

“Be nice to her, alright?”

“Yes! I will! We’ll be friends!”

“...Friends...sister Tilura.”

“Yes!”

Tilura had the biggest smile.

I had not been that worried about it, but it was still a relief.

It was Liza’s adorable ears and tail that made everyone accept her quickly.

Well...there was still Ms. Anne...

Before arriving at the dining hall, Mr. Ekenhart and Sebastian had gone off somewhere. But they returned shortly after.

And when he did, he had shaved his beard and combed his hair.

Upon seeing this, Ms. Claire was both alarmed and suspicious. But she calmed down after he explained that it was so that Liza wouldn’t be scared of him.

....Still, Mr. Ekenhart sure did look a lot more attractive after shaving and fixing his hair... It complimented the lines and angles of his face. It almost made me wish that I looked older as well.

“Excuse me.”

Just as I started to think about Ms. Anne, she entered the dining hall.

It seemed that she was still hung over, as her face looked a little ill.

I'm sure that it had improved since the morning...but I guess she really had drunk too much last night.

After all, that wine was supposed to be quite strong.

“...Oh? Who is this? Is it a beastkin?”

“Yes, that's right. She was being bullied, and then Mr. Takumi and Leo rescued her.”

Ms. Anne had been sluggishly making her way to the table when she suddenly noticed the newcomer.

As Liza was still small, only her head was immediately visible when she sat at the table.

So it could not be helped.

As for the seating arrangement, Mr. Ekenhart sat at the head of the table.

And I sat on his right, Liza was next to me, and then Leo after her.

This was because Liza wanted to sit between us.

On the other side was Ms. Claire, Tilura, Sherry, and Ms. Anne.

Aside from Liza, we always sat like this.

“Beastkin...”

“...Papa...”

“What is it, Liza?”

She must have not seen many beastkin, as she stared hard at Liza, which seemed to frighten her.

Was it because Ms. Anne was scary? Or she just didn't like being stared at?

"That person...is scary..."

"WHAT!?"

"Now, now. Don't worry about her. She's not scary."

"Anne... What have you done now?"

"What are you talking about? I was only looking... I have not done anything!"

But Liza continued to clutch onto me and insist that Ms. Anne was horrifying.

She was even shaking... Was just being looked at by Ms. Anne so bad?

What was it about Ms. Anne that caused such a reaction?

"What is it? Why do you think she is scary?"

I asked her slowly.

It would probably make things worse to scold and tell children to bear it during such times.

I didn't want to do that.

Leo also looked at us with concern.

"Her hair is...spiky..."

“Hair...?”

“Are you talking about my wonderful hair?”

Liza’s quiet voice rang in the air as she looked Ms. Anne’s golden hair, which were shaped like vertical rolls.

While they looked a little droopy today, I suppose they did taper into sharp edges.

But it was still hair, and wouldn’t pierce anything. They looked soft enough...

I suppose the very ends could look like the tip of a rapier or other weapon...even if they were a golden color.

Chapter 308

Ms. Anne Was In Shambles

“Hehehe...hahaha! Anneliese’s hair is going to poke people! What an amusing thought!”

“Hehehe...yes, it is, father. Ahahaha!”

“Does your hair pierce people...Ms. Anne? It does look very sharp!”

“Wuff-wuff.”

“Wha...what are you saying...!”

After a moment of silence, Mr. Ekenhart had burst into laughter.

Ms. Claire was also laughing...eventually, even I could not hold back the laughter.

Tilura looked like she didn’t understand what was so funny...which made things even funnier.

Leo even looked like she was amused, and Sebastian turned his head away to cover his face.

As for Ms. Anne...she was shaking angrily.

“So in other words, you think that my hair would stab people... That is ridiculous! Ms. Claire, Your Grace! You should not laugh so much!”

“You may say that, Anneliese, but...hehehe...”

“Hehehe. Yes, Anne. It’s your fault for having such dangerous-looking hair. Hehehe.”

“Tsk! Hey, you little beast! Do you realize what you’ve done!”

“So-sorry...”

“...!?”

“Hey, Anne? You should not shout at children... Anne?”

After having her pride and joy ridiculed, Ms. Anne had become red with fury.

...And she seemed to have forgotten about her hangover.

In any case, she then took it out on Liza, who started it all.

Liza became very stiff and apologized to her.

However, she did not understand what she did wrong, and tilted her head to the side... And her tail and ears as well.

From her perspective, she had merely been honest, which caused others to laugh. And so she had no idea what she was supposed to do.

Perhaps she had only apologized as a form of self-defense, since she used to live in the slums...

However, upon seeing Liza like this, Ms. Anne froze as if she had been struck by lightning.

This reaction... I had seen it earlier today as well.

“Tho-tho-those...”

“Those?”

“Those ears and tail! What is wrong with them!?”

“Uh, she is a beastkin... So it would be strange if she didn’t have them?”

“Th-th-that’s right. Beastkin...beastkin...uhh...”

“Hmm?”

“...Papa...”

Ms. Anne was suddenly acting strangely.

We had already told her that Liza was a beastkin, and it was obvious just by looking at her.

Why was she acting surprised all of a sudden?

“Beast...kin...”

“I’m Liza.”

“So you are Liza. Uhh... May I...touch your ears and tail?”

“...NO!”

“!!”

“Ms. Anne... No one would want to be touched by you after you glared at them with bloodshot eyes.”

After hearing Liza’s name, Ms. Anne had stretched out her hand across from the table.

Her eyes made her look like a mad woman.

At this rate, she was bound to climb over the table and knock things over.

This only made Liza even more scared, and she rejected Ms. Anne strongly.

Once again, Ms. Anne suffered a terrible shock.

First Leo and then Mr. Ekenhart... Liza was shocking a lot of people.

“Anne, just calm down. She is just a child. Of course, she is scared.”

“Ms. Anne is scary.”

“...What! Fine. Very well. I have behaved a little wildly... Excuse me.”

After hearing that from Ms. Claire and Tilura, Ms. Anne returned to herself and became calm.

However, she was still looking at Liza and her hands were twitching.

“Liza. Don’t worry about her. Just sit in your seat, alright?”

“...Okay.”

“It’s fine. Leo will protect you.”

“Wuff!”

“...Yes.”

I said to her gently and made her sit down.

Leo also nodded reassuringly, which helped.

...I would have like to say that I would protect her as well, but I was not confident that I would have been able to defeat Ms. Anne when her eyes looked like that.

It wasn’t about sword training. She just had an intimidating power...I suppose.

Perhaps it was because she was a noble. No, that was ridiculous.

“Hehehehe... Thank you for that...”

“Father.”

“Hmph! Fine. Let’s settle down. Since we are all here, we should eat.”

In spite of the scene, the servants had quietly finished serving the food.

“Yes, let’s eat.”

“Yes.”

“Kyau!”

“Wuff!”

“...Let’s...eat?”

At Mr. Ekenhart’s signal, everyone started to eat.

Liza had been looking at me strangely as I put my hands together, but she copied me.

While we ate, we then explained to Tilura and Ms. Anne about how Liza came to be with us.

“I see. Indeed, I hear a lot about how the beastkin are treated badly. It is the same in my father’s lands. While no battles were fought there, the older generation still feel negatively towards them.”

“Mmm. They know about the war. And many people believe the rumors or exaggerate and spread them. And with no one to tell them otherwise, it is treated as the truth.”

“Well, father. Perhaps you should try and ensure that your people are properly educated?”

“Hmm... That is true, but.. Many people cannot afford to be educated... It is not a simple matter...”

We were finished explaining about Liza, and now, Mr. Ekenhart, Ms. Claire, and Ms. Anne, the nobles...the administrators, were talking as if in a meeting.

Chapter 309

Ms. Anne Did Not Give Up Easily

As the dining hall seemed to turn into a meeting room, I listened to the others talk while eating my food.

Mr. Ekenhart was the duke, and Ms. Claire had a lot of responsibilities, so it was understandable.

...But I was surprised to hear Ms. Anne also talk so earnestly... Well, I already knew that she was prone to making suggestions about such things... But recently, she and Ms. Claire talked like some kind of comedic duo, that I had forgotten about what she really was like...

“Papa...it’s delicious!”

“Indeed. It really is.”

“Wuff!”

Liza smiled as she ate the food that had been served.

Me and Leo watched and smiled.

Though, there was one thing that I wanted her to be careful with... Of course, I couldn’t blame her considering what she had been through...

“Liza. You should hold the fork like this.”

“...But that’s hard.”

Liza didn’t know how to hold a fork properly, and held it as if making a fist.

And it was difficult to eat some dishes like that.

And so she would start picking up things with her hands.

I didn’t know if that had anything to do with being beastkin or her upbringing... And it might be difficult to teach her here.

One of the maids was now busy wiping the table and her mouth. I felt bad for her.

However, the maid seemed to be smiling at Liza... Maybe she just liked taking care of children? Or she was just interested in Liza’s ears and tail...

She had all but forgotten the ordeal with Ms. Anne, and so her ears and tell were moving happily again.

Ms. Gelda, who was waiting near the door, was looking at the other maid a little jealously.

Yes, Liza would probably be spoiled by the people here...

“Still...papa...is it...”

“Hmm? What?”

As I was trying to teach Liza and listen to the conversation around us at the same time, Ms. Anne suddenly turned to me.

She too seemed to feel strangely about the fact that I was called papa...

“If Mr. Takumi is called papa...then I can be called mama...”

“Anne!?”

“Hmm...”

“?”

While she seemed to be thinking aloud, it was rather shocking.

Ms. Claire raised her voice in astonishment, though Mr. Ekenhart was calm.

Liza looked puzzled.

“Uhh, Ms. Anne? I don’t think that would be...”

After all, Liza was scared of her.

Even though she didn't look scared now, she still avoided looking in Ms. Anne's direction...

"No, Mr. Takumi. While you may have rejected me...you are still not promised to anyone! So if I were to be named this child's mother... Well, it would be as if we were married..."

"...So you still haven't given up..."

"Of course, not! You have a Silver Fenrir! That would be very useful for my family!"

"Wuff?"

"...Tsk... I shall not give up!"

"Hah... So that's what you were thinking about, Anne."

I had turned her down quite directly... But it didn't seem to matter to her.

If I was called papa and she was called mama, then we would look like a family, and eventually... That seemed to be what she was thinking.

Leo looked at Ms. Anne when she heard mention of Silver Fenrir, which caused Ms. Anne to recoil. But then she moved forward as if to show her resolve.

Ms. Claire sighed with exasperation.

"What do you think, Liza?"

Mr. Ekenhart was just amused by the whole scene, and then asked Liza what she thought about it.

Since he had laughed at her reaction before, he was expecting Liza to say something humorous again.

Speaking of Mr. Ekenhart, Liza now had no problem looking at his face.

And so that was one of the reasons that he looked so satisfied.

“Hmm?”

“Uh, that lady wants you to call her ‘mama.’”

“...No...that’s wrong. I already...have a mama!”

“Oh...?”

“...But...what about my plans...”

“Your plan was terrible to begin with, Anne. So, who is this mama? Could it be...me?”

“Well, it can’t be me, because I’m her older sister!”

Liza looked a little puzzled by Mr. Ekenhart’s question.

And then she looked at Ms. Anne and shook her head.

Not only that, but she insisted that she already had a mama.

I didn’t know how she came to such decisions, but who could it be?

...Even I was interested.

Ms. Claire was looking at Liza with great expectation.

As for Ms. Anne... I'm not sure why she was blurting out her plans in front of me in the first place...

I thought she wasn't that stupid...but maybe I was wrong...

"Liza, who is your mama? You don't have to worry about these people. Just say what you think."

Said Mr. Ekenhart with a big grin.

And Ms. Claire nodded in agreement.

Chapter 310

The Beastkin's Mother Was Not Human

"Uhh... Mama!"

"Wuff!?"

"Oh...so that's who it is... Ahahaha!"

"...I can't believe that it's good Leo... I am defeated...but it cannot be helped."

"Tsk! Yes, one cannot compete against a Silver Fenrir..."

"That makes sense. Leo is so nice!"

"Leo..."

After thinking about it for a moment, Liza got off of her chair and grabbed onto Leo, who was eating her food.

As she was not one to ever enter our conversations, Leo was quite startled by this.

Mr. Ekenhart just burst into laughter, and Ms. Claire and Ms. Anne seemed disappointed.

But Tilura was nodding understandingly.

Well, Leo was big, female and protective over Liza on top of being very kind.

And perhaps being beastkin meant that she didn't see Leo as being so different.

Leo saw Sherry as a younger sister, and was also good with children, so it might be appropriate.

But then again, I think Leo is younger than Liza...

Liza was probably around seven years old, and I rescued Leo about five years ago.

And she was close to being a newborn, so she must be younger than Liza.

Well, I suppose in dog years, or Silver Fenrir years, she was an adult...

"Do you like Leo?"

"Yes! She is kind and warm!"

"I see. Well, I guess Leo is your mama then."

"Wuff? ...Wuff."

It was true that Leo was kind, and she was definitely warm when you were enveloped by that fur.

Liza likely didn't have anyone she could cling onto like that before, and she had the biggest smile now.

But Leo didn't seem too convinced. However, after seeing Liza's smile, she barked as if to say it could not be helped then.

"So Mr. Takumi is the papa and Leo is the mama. What an amusing result."

"Father... I do not find it very amusing."

"...How can I break this apart..."

"...Kyau? Kyau!"

"Wuff-wuff."

"Kyau."

"Ahahaha!"

Mr. Ekenhart and the others were talking about something.

Aside from that, Sherry, who had been eating quietly up until now, suddenly got down from her seat and approached Leo.

I suppose she wanted to see what was happening.

After barking questioningly, Leo seemed to explain the situation to her.

Sherry looked happy, and then licked Liza's face as if welcoming her to the family.

Liza looked surprised at first, but then started to laugh.

They would have no trouble becoming friends.

The servants in the dining hall were also watching them and smiling.

“Excuse me. Mr. Takumi, the medicinal wine is ready.”

After some time had passed, we finished eating, and then Ms. Helena entered the room.

The medicinal wine... Yes, we were supposed to taste it today.

“Thank you. Mr. Ekenhart?”

“Mmm. Yes, let us all taste it here then. ...Of course, Claire might want to be careful...”

“I know, father. I will not repeat what happened yesterday.”

“...I would certainly hope so...”

When I turned to Mr. Ekenhart, he decided that we should all drink it here.

Ms. Claire looked a little embarrassed, and so Ms. Anne took the opportunity to glare at her accusingly.

Ms. Claire was usually the one accusing Anne, so this was a rare occasion where the tables were turned.

Well, she had drunk so much yesterday...

“Then I shall serve it right away.”

“Yes.”

Sebastian and Ms. Lyra then helped her serve the wine in front of everyone.

A small amount was poured in each glass. It was a dark color that was almost brown. It was not clear like the previous wine.

I suppose mixing in the medicine would change it this much.

“It is a lot less than yesterday. And it is not clear...”

“As we did not have a lot of medicine, we could only serve a little right now.”

“Yes, it depends on how hard Milina and I can work.”

“Indeed. And it also lost its clarity when mixing in the medicine. The color was also changed, which is one of the medicine’s effects, I believe.”

“I see... And what about the taste?”

“As Mr. Takumi was absent, we cooks tasted a small amount of it. ...And while the taste is a little distinct, it should not be a problem.”

So they had tasted the wine while I was gone.

I felt a little bad, as it was probably my responsibility.

That being said, since they had made the other wine first and tasted it, I trusted their judgment.

And now I was curious to try it for myself.

I also wanted to know if it was effective.

Of course, when it came to Tilura, Liza, Leo and Sherry, they were given some grape juice as usual.

Liza had drunk it before, and knew it was delicious. So she smiled broadly when she saw the glass placed in front of her.

“Now, let us drink.”

“Yes.”

“Very well.”

“Indeed.”

At Mr. Ekenhart’s command, everyone picked up their glass and tipped it into their mouths.

...The smell...was very faint... Less so than the previous wine.

Surely there was no need to brace myself then. And so I took a sip of it.

“...I see.”

“I understand what you are saying, Helena. It does taste a little odd.”

“I do not care for this one at all. The wine we had yesterday was much more delicious.”

“...It isn’t bad at first...but the after taste...”

Everyone put the glasses back on the table.

I understood what they all meant and nodded in agreement.

Ms. Anne liked it the least, and she was scowling.

I didn’t think it was quite that bad, but it was hard to not notice the taste when compared to the other wine.