

Beloved Dog 381

Chapter 381

We Decided To Visit Ms. Isabelle's Store

"...Leo. Aren't you licking a little too much?"

"Wuff?"

Leo finally stopped and then tilted her head in puzzlement.

Well, it was too late regardless.

"Ah, I knew it."

"Liza, your face is all sticky now."

"Because Leo was licking her. Hah..."

"?"

And it didn't help that we had a late lunch, so not much time had passed since Leo ate.

Though, Liza didn't seem to care, and even seemed happy.

"Well, we can't keep walking around town now."

"Indeed. If only there was some place where she could wash up..."

Because Leo was so big, it had even gotten on her fur and ears.

As we wondered what to do, I remembered the route we had taken while coming here.

“Ah, perhaps she could was up at Ms. Isabelle’s store?”

“Isabelle? Yes, she would welcome us. And we won’t have to worry about other people seeing us.”

“Indeed. Since it is close by, we should go and ask her.”

We just needed some water to wash her face and ears.

She would get clean enough with a slight rinse off and toweling.

And she can take a more thorough bath back at the mansion.

Ms. Isabelle was a very intelligent person, so she should have any prejudices against Liza.

“Leo, don’t do that too much, alright?”

“Wuff. Wuff-wuff.”

“Kyaha! Mama!”

“Hehe. They seem to be having fun.”

“Yes. It’s good to see that she isn’t too bothered by what happened earlier.”

We were then just about to head towards Ms. Isabelle’s store, but then we remembered that we had left Nicholas and Johanna behind. And so Ms. Lyra went to go and check up on them.

While we were waiting, Ms. Claire and I watched as Liza and Leo played.

Now that Leo knew that Liza was going to wash up later, she did not hesitate to lick her face... And so I had to tell her to hold back a little, or it would get on her clothes as well.

Still, it was an odd feeling, sitting here with Ms. Claire and watching Liza and Leo.

It was kind of like we were a family. It was our day off, and we took our child and dog on a nice walk...

Obviously, Liza was not my real daughter, and Leo was now a Silver Fenrir. We weren't even close to a real family.

And as someone who had nothing special, outside of my Gift, I probably shouldn't even consider the possibility of being with Ms. Claire. Still, the thought still went through my head.

"Mr. Takumi."

"What!?"

"Hmm? Is there a problem?"

"N-no. Not at all..."

"You sound weird, papa..."

"Wuff."

As I had been thinking of such things when Ms. Claire called to me, I couldn't help but be alarmed.

Calm down... You were just imagining things, and there was a specific reason for why you were here like this.

Even Liza and Leo were laughing at me. And so I had to calm down.

"You were very impressive, Mr. Takumi."

“Huh?”

Ms. Claire suddenly said to me with a smile.

That didn't help me calm down at all.

“Earlier... Even when Leo was angry, I couldn't do anything. In the end, it was only because you and Liza were able to act that...”

“Ah... It cannot be helped. It was really hard to move back then. But Leo and I are buddies, so that's probably what was different.”

“That...may be... But you were also quick to act after that. And I...”

“Well, because people were starting to gather around. I didn't want them to be afraid of Leo, and so I could only think of getting away. Though, it probably looks quite cowardly. Running away.”

Ms. Claire was impressed by my actions.

And while I was flattered, I also trained every day. So it was not really a surprise.

Besides, I felt responsible for Leo as her owner and buddy.. I didn't want her to hurt any innocent people.

Perhaps there was something else we could have done, other than running away. But I was not able to think of anything at that moment.

Running was easier than staying and trying to explain or find the cause... It did look pretty bad.

Though, I was also thinking about treating Liza's injury.

“No, I don't think so at all. You were able to give Lyra and me directions and you took Liza and Leo and fled. No one else would have been able to act in the same way.”

“Well... Perhaps...”

But it was still mostly because I was dealing with Leo.

Also...I had experienced the orc attack in Range village as well...

Though, Leo would get mad if she knew I had compared her to orcs.

Chapter 382

The Confusion Had Died Down

While Ms. Claire was looking at me with admiration, I felt that I had not done much to deserve it.

Still, it was true that a person's true personality came out during emergencies...

Now that I thought about it, she wasn't the first person to look up to me in this way.

There was also Tilura.

When we first met, she had been so impressed that I was able to interact with Leo as equals.

As they were sisters, they were alike in a lot of ways.

Regardless, I was both happy and a little embarrassed by Ms. Claire's words. And like that, we waited for Ms. Lyra to return.

“Sorry to keep you waiting.”

After some time had passed, Ms. Lyra returned with Nicholas and Johanna.

And I couldn't help but be relieved to see them again.

Even though Leo seemed like she had enjoyed how awkward I looked while talking with Ms. Claire.

“How were things over there?”

“Yes. After you left, the scene was quite chaotic for some time. Even the town guards rushed the place, but we explained everything to them and the civilians as well.”

So the guards had come... Well, I suppose it wasn't a surprise, given how many people had gathered.

Perhaps someone had called them, saying that there was a monster going wild.

“And did you also tell them about how Liza was attacked with a rock?”

“Yes. As we had witnessed it as well, we explained it to them. How someone on our side was injured, and that good Leo became angry.”

“The guards said that they will search for the person who threw the rock. After questioning the witnesses, they were satisfied that it was not Leo's fault.”

Well, I suppose I would leave it to the guards then.

I didn't want to get involved if I didn't have to. At worst, it could turn everyone in the slums against us.

Still, I was surprised that it had been so easy to convince the guards, given how Leo had such an effect on everyone there...

“Did they really believe you so quickly?”

“Not all of them... But most of them did. I think it was because some of them had met Leo before... And they had seen how you are with her in town.”

“They saw us?”

“Yes. When you were with His Grace. I think seeing you two together before helped. Because people were watching you.”

“As Nicholas says, there were a lot of people who had interacted with Leo before, and helped persuade the guards that Leo wouldn’t attack people without any reason.”

“I see... Well, that is a relief to hear. However, there were people who had played with Leo there...?”

I had visited this town several times with Leo, and people had seen how friendly she was.

As for the people who had played with Leo... I suppose it was that time in front of Mr. Kalis’s store?

But weren’t all of those people children...?

“Uhh... One person was talking about how wonderful good Leo is...like she worshipped her. She seemed to know Lady Claire as well?”

“Could it be Emerelda?”

“Ah, Ms. Emerelda...”

The name was a little nostalgic.

We had met her when Leo and I first visited Ractos.

She had petted Leo and was completely infatuated by the soft fur.

It was not difficult to imagine how she had started to adore Leo and spread the good news...

As she had helped Nicholas and Johanna in explaining to the guards and the others, I would have to thank her if I ever met her again.

Well, she would be satisfied if she could just pet Leo...

I was relieved that the problem hadn't been blown out of proportion, and so I listened to the rest of their report as we started to make our way to Ms. Isabelle's store.

We had to go soon, or it would be quite late by the time we returned to the mansion.

"Huh? This place..."

"Hmm? You know it, Liza? Well, it certainly sticks out. So it's not too surprising."

After leaving the plaza and just when Ms. Isabelle's store came into view, Liza raised her voice while riding on Leo.

As she lived in the slums, perhaps she had seen Ms. Isabelle's store before.

She still had the same strange hexagram sign and black door. The store looked so different compared to the buildings around it, which made it difficult to forget.

"Do I know it? I've been inside several times! It's where the nice grandmother lives!"

"You know Isabelle?"

"Yes. I visited with my grandfather. I like her, because she was always nice to me!"

"I see..."

So the old man who had adopted Liza had been friends with Ms. Isabelle.

I wondered what business he had here. I suppose I could just ask her.

“Well, you’ll have to stay here, Leo. Sorry, but will you be able to wait quietly?”

“Wuff!”

“We will do what we can to avoid a scene like earlier.”

“Thank you.”

As always, we had Leo wait outside.

Due to what had happened in front of Mr. Halton’s store, I was a little concerned, but Leo barked and nodded as if to say that I had nothing to worry about.

Nicholas also reassured me with a serious expression.

Besides, surely the same thing wouldn’t happen twice in a row. Besides, Liza would be inside of the building this time.

Johanna would also wait outside and was currently looking at the surrounding area.

There were fewer people here anyway, and I doubted there would be anything like a crowd this time.

Chapter 383

I Asked About The Old Man Who Rescued Liza

“Excuse me...”

“Grandmother!”

“What’s all that racket... Oh, Mr. Takumi? And Liza? That’s an odd pairing. ...And Lady Claire!?”

“It’s been a while, Isabelle. I think the last time we were here was when you checked Mr. Takumi’s magic energy?”

“That’s right. I’m glad to see that you are doing well. So, what can I do for you today?”

As I had come once with Sebastian, this was my third time here...

Liza was happy to see Ms. Isabelle, and she immediately called out to her.

Ms. Isabelle heard us entering, and came out from behind a curtain in the back.

She then moved to the counter before noticing me and Liza. And she looked quite surprised to see us.

I suppose it was because we hadn’t told her in advance that we were coming.

“I’m very sorry... But we were wondering if Liza could wash her face here?”

“Liza? Oh, my. She is quite dirty, isn’t she...”

Ms. Isabelle looked at Liza over the counter. I then explained to her what had happened.

“I see... I have heard about your Silver Fenrir. And being licked by such a huge animal... Well, it is no surprise. Of course, you may. There is a washing area in the back that you can use freely.”

“Thank you. Liza?”

“Thank you, grandmother!”

“Then I will go and help her.”

“Yes, thank you.”

After hearing my explanation, Ms. Isabelle nodded understandingly and agreed to let Liza wash up.

As Leo could not enter her store, Ms. Isabelle had not seen Leo yet... But she heard the rumors and talked with Sebastian.

I then thanked her, and sent Liza to the washing area.

Ms. Lyra would accompany her as well.

It was nice to have her around during times like these.

While they were gone, I continued to talk with Ms. Isabelle.

“Still, Liza is now with you two. What happened?”

“Before we talk about that, it seems like you know Liza quite well? And Liza said that she visited this place a few times before.”

“Yes. The old man who helped her... Reyndorf was an old friend of mine. And so he would often visit me with Liza.”

So the old man's name was Reyndorf...

Now that I thought about it, I had never asked Liza what his name was.

After that, Ms. Isabelle talked to me about him as we waited.

Apparently, this Mr. Reyndorf was a traveler without a home. And he would visit this town of Ractos quite often.

He would stop by this store to buy magic tools and things that would be useful on his travels. And that was how he had met Ms. Isabelle.

As it was decades ago, it was probably before Ms. Claire was born.

They would talk about magic and traveling... And before she knew it, he was a regular at her store.

When talking about him, Ms. Isabelle had a far away look on her face.

But as he traveled a lot, he could only visit her once every few months... Sometimes she would not see him for years at a time. But whenever he happened to be in Ractos, he would always pay her a visit.

However... He stopped traveling altogether a few years ago, when he found Liza.

That must have been around seven years ago... It would be too difficult to travel while caring for a beastkin baby, and it would not be good for the child. And so he decided to stay in Ractos.

That being said, as he had been traveling for years, Mr. Reyndorf had no savings. And so he had no choice but to settle down in the slums.

While Ms. Isabelle had been against him living in such a dangerous place, he had learned how to deal with such people on his travels, and so no problems had occurred.

And now that he was no longer traveling, he would slowly try and save up money so that he could eventually buy a house for Liza to live in.

“Reyndorf was very fond of Liza. He no longer had that sharp expression that he did when he was a traveler. I think she brought peace to his heart. But why is Liza now with you and Lady Claire?”

“About that...”

And so I told her about the situation when I had found Liza. And how Liza had talked of her grandfather’s death.

“I see... So he is gone... Well, at this age, it is not unusual for your friends to pass away.”

Ms. Isabelle said as she looked up at the ceiling.

I could not tell what she was thinking, but it looked like she was offering a prayer to her old friend.

“...Haah. So he died before achieving his dream... I suppose in a way, it was good that she was taken in by you and Lady Claire. Perhaps it was through his guidance. His last wish...”

“Perhaps...”

Leo had been acting like she was searching for something as she moved through the slums. And then she found Liza.

Both Mr. Ekenhart and I knew nothing...

I had thought that it was because of some connection between beastkin and beast type monsters, but perhaps there was more to it.

But there were so many people in Ractos, and it wasn't like her senses were sharpened with herbs. Finding Liza should have been even harder than finding Sherry.

When I thought about it like that, it did seem like Mr. Reyndorf had entrusted Liza into my care. Which was quite sobering.

Chapter 384

We Decided to Check Her Magic Energy

“Reyndorf could defend himself, and the people of the slums knew that. And so none of them ever attacked Liza. But if he is gone...”

“Yes... When we found her, she was surrounded by several people and being bullied...”

I then told Ms. Isabelle about how things were when we found her, as well as what had just happened earlier.

While Ms. Isabelle scowled when she heard this, she also seemed to think that it was not that surprising, considering that Liza was a beastkin...

After all, people who have not been properly educated were more likely to believe rumors and have prejudices against beastkin.

Still, Ms. Isabelle had kind eyes when she talked about Liza. It was clear that she was quite fond of her.

“Papa. I’m all clean now! Thank you, grandmother!”

“Haha. I’m glad to see it.”

“I see.”

As I was talking with Ms. Isabelle, Liza returned from the back very cheerfully.

Ms. Lyra had helped her wash and dry off.

As for Ms. Isabelle, she just glanced at Liza and replied coolly.

Perhaps she was bashful.

Considering Ms. Isabelle’s age, Liza really was like a granddaughter to her... As I thought about this, I saw the corner of her mouth lift up.

So she was happy after all.

“Ehehe. Grandmother...”

“Oh? What is it? You didn’t act like such a pampered child before.”

“Yes. Papa and mama...And sister Claire told me. That I don’t need to bear anything.”

“I see...”

Liza had gone around the counter and thrown her arms around Ms. Isabelle.

Ms. Isabelle seemed a little surprised by this, but upon hearing Liza’s words, she smiled kindly.

It seemed like she understood what we had told Liza... That children shouldn’t hold back, and receive affection where it was given.

As Liza wagged her tail, Ms. Isabelle gently patted her on the head.

It was quite clear that she was used to it, and had been like this with Liza while Mr. Reyndorf was still alive.

They really did look like a grandmother and granddaughter.

“Yes, it is not a bad thing at all. But what do you mean, ‘papa and mama’? Don’t tell me that Lady Claire...”

“No, it is not I...”

“Haha. She is talking about Leo. Liza wanted to call her that, so I let her.”

“Ah, this Silver Fenrir. Well, Liza has sure found herself under the protection of a formidable guardian.”

While Ms. Isabelle was surprised that it was Leo who was Liza’s ‘mama,’ she also understood what kind of monster a Silver Fenrir was. And so she was happy to see that Liza was well protected.

“Mr. Takumi. Why don’t you use this opportunity to have Lady Liza’s magic energy checked?”

“Ah, that’s right. That is a good idea.”

“Check her magic energy?”

As I was talking with Liza and Ms. Isabelle, Mr. Lyra suddenly made a suggestion.

Now that I thought about it, previously, when Ms. Claire was teaching me magic, we had talked about Liza’s magic energy.

And so I had been considering having her checked by Ms. Isabelle.

Well, it was the perfect time. And I knew that it would not take long.

“I’m sorry to have to ask you to do another thing. But could you?”

“I don’t mind. It’s easy to prepare. Just wait here for one moment.”

“Aye, thank you. Would you mind if we put on some tea?”

“No, help yourself. But make some for me as well.”

“Yes, certainly.”

Ms. Isabelle immediately nodded and agreed to check Liza’s magic energy.

But as she let go of Liza and made to leave, Ms. Lyra called out to her.

As we were resting, and had not drank anything since lunch, she wanted to put on some tea.

And after getting her permission, Ms. Lyra headed to the back of the shop.

“Sorry to keep you waiting. Now, I shall check your magic energy.”

“Did you never check it when she visited you before?”

“Reyndorf never asked me to do it. I think he was going to do it when Liza was a little older?”

“I suppose that makes sense.”

Back then, Liza would have been a lot younger.

She was still young now, and perhaps not the best age to start thinking about using magic.

But then again, if it was the level of magic that I was using, then it was simple stuff that would come in handy in day to day life.

Even Tilura seemed to have been taught magic for the first time recently, so perhaps they didn’t usually teach it to young children.

But I think it wasn’t that you couldn’t use magic at a young age, just that if you used it wrong, it could be dangerous.

Like if they misused fire magic in a house made of wood.

As for Ms. Lyra, after serving us all tea, she went outside to see Leo and the others.

Since she was carrying her bag, she was probably going to give Leo some milk.

Chapter 385

She Could Use A Different Kind Of Magic

“Liza. There is no need to think about anything. Just try placing your hand here.”

“Like this?”

Ms. Isabelle told Liza to place her hand on top of the crystal ball.

It was the same one she used when checking my Gift.

“Wow...it’s pretty...”

As Liza placed her hand on it, it began to blink red, and then a yellow light shone out from it.

It was a different color when I did it... Did it change depending on if you had the Gift or not?

Liza was quite impressed when she saw the crystal ball change color.

Indeed, it was quite pretty seeing the light emanating from the ball.

When I had done it, I was too busy thinking about the Gift, that I hadn’t taken any notice of it.

“Hmm. I see.”

“How is it, grandmother?”

“Ms. Isabelle?”

“Do not rush me. Hmm. Indeed...”

Ms. Isabelle stared into the crystal ball and nodded to herself. And so Liza and I couldn’t help but ask her about what she saw.

Liza had said that she wanted to use magic, and I was quite curious about her magic energy as well.

After thinking for a brief moment, Ms. Isabelle then raised her face towards us.

“Yes, you have magic energy, Liza.”

“Yay!”

“It’s too early to celebrate. Though, I understand how you feel.”

“But what else is there to know?”

Could it be that Liza had the Gift as well?

But it was supposed to be incredibly rare. Only one person in a million might have it.

...But what else could there be?

“She has just as much magic energy as most people. Even more than Mr. Takumi.”

“Is that so?”

“Aye. That’s why it was blinking so much. That means you have a lot of magic energy.”

Now that I thought about it, it had been blinking more than it did when I touched it.

Of course, I didn’t remember it all too clearly.

“And the yellow light after that. It might be a small problem.”

“The yellow light?”

“It was so pretty!”

The light had been green when I did it.

What did it mean if it was yellow?

“Mr. Takumi’s was green, because of his Gift... This color shows the output of magic energy.”

“Output...?”

“Even if you have a lot of magic energy, if the output is small, then you can not use powerful magic. It is the same the other way around as well. All of this affects the way you use magic... But Liza is a little special.”

“Special, you say?”

“Liza is special!”

What did that mean...

Liza herself seemed quite happy to be called that... Obviously, beastkin and humans were different. But aside from that, it was a good thing that she could be happy about any differences. At least, it wouldn’t be something that she troubles over in the future.

“It’s probably because she is beastkin. Though, I can’t say for sure. As this is the first time I’ve checked someone who isn’t human.”

“...So, what did you find out?”

“There is no problem in terms of the amount or output of magic energy... If anything, it is all quite good. However, I don’t know if she will be able to use the same magic as normal people. You can take your hand off now, Liza.”

“Is that so?”

“Hmm... Does that mean I can’t use magic?”

The difference between humans and beastkin were not just in appearance, but with the use of magic as well.

Ms. Claire furrowed her eyebrows and seemed to be thinking about it.

Liza removed her hand from the ball, but seemed to think that Ms. Isabelle was suggesting that she could not use magic, and so she looked a little disappointed.

“I’m not saying that you cannot use magic at all. However, you may not be able to use basic magic that humans often use... But I suppose there is magic that beastkin are good with. For instance, something like body strengthening magic?”

“Body strengthening magic...”

“Ah...because beastkin had superior physical ability...”

“Yes. It’s something that always comes up when discussing beastkin. They used to live in hunting tribes, and so they would strengthen their bodies to make fighting easier.”

As they used to hunt a lot, that meant they were quite active.

Unlike humans, who used tools...they probably hunted their prey by relying on their own strength.

And so they may have evolved to use magic to enhance their abilities.

While Liza was seven, she was able to do work that Milina or I found tiring, and she had done it multiple times without breaking a sweat.

There was no doubt that she had a lot of strength and stamina.

Ms. Isabelle suggested that they were specialized to use magic that enhanced their strengths even further. And it made sense.

“Well, it is merely my theory. Though, I think it is probably true. So it’s not that Liza can’t use magic, but that she is limited to what kind of magic she can use. She just needs to find it.”

“Find magic that I can use... Okay! But I don’t know how...”

“I’m sure that Lady Claire or Sebastian can help you there. Especially that old butler. He will probably do some research.”

“Ah... Haha. That’s true.”

Indeed, Sebastian was usually very interested in these sorts of subjects.

He would probably take the initiative, and then explain it to us later.

Chapter 386

She Was Happy About The Hat

“That’s right, Liza. Why don’t you try putting this on?”

“Hmm?”

After talking about the possibility of Liza using magic one day, we were about to leave Ms. Isabelle’s store when I remembered something.

It was the hat that Mr. Halton had made, so that Liza would allow her to cover her ears.

I had completely forgotten about it, due to the whole incident with Leo getting angry.

With this, she wouldn’t be recognized as a beatkin as quickly, and would attract less attention.

“See... How is it?”

“Hmm... My ears are a little itchy. But it’s cute!”

“Haha. I see. We’ll have to thank Mr. Halton.”

“It looks good on you, little Liza.”

“Yes, it is quite cute.”

I had put the hat on Liza’s head and buttoned the strap under her chin.

It seemed like the parts that covered her ears pressed them down a little, causing her to scowl a little. But she looked at her reflection in the crystal ball and smiled.

As she hadn’t changed her clothes yet, you could still see her tail. But once she changed, she would probably look like an ordinary girl.

Ms. Claire and Ms. Isabelle were also smiling and complimenting her.

“Ehehehe...”

Liza chuckled, a little bashful, but it was clear that she liked it. So it was a good thing we had bought it.

“Well, Ms. Isabelle. We will see you next time.”

“Goodbye, Isabelle.”

“Aye. Bring Liza with you, when you can stay longer.”

“Haha. Of course.”

“See you again, grandmother!”

“Aye, see you again.”

And then we left the store.

She was fond of Liza like she was a granddaughter, and so I was glad that we had come here.

Even with the previous incident, it was nice to see that there were people who did not have prejudices against her.

Also, I was glad that we had been able to hear more about Liza's grandfather.

This grandfather... Reyndorf. Even though there was still a lot I didn't know, I knew that he cared for her a great deal.

Liza hadn't been able to tell me enough to get a good picture of him.

I just knew that he wasn't a bad person.

"Mama! Look at this!"

"Wuff?"

After going outside, Liza immediately rushed up to Leo and showed off her new hat.

She had probably done the same with her clothes after leaving Mr. Halton's store.

"Wuff. Wuff-wuff."

"Yes, it's cute, isn't? Papa bought it for me. Because it allows me to cover my ears."

"Wuff! Wou?"

"Well, Mr. Halton is the one who prepared it."

Leo nodded and agreed with Liza as she told her about the new hat.

Leo then barked to me as if saying, ‘well, that was quite perceptive of you.’

It sounded like she was saying that I usually was not so perceptive...

Though, perhaps she was right about that...

“Hehe... Hehe...”

Liza seemed very pleased as she rode on top of Leo, and we made our way to the west gate of Ractos.

The sun was starting to set, and it was getting dark, so we had to return to the mansion.

“Like this, you really cannot tell that she is a beastkin.”

“Indeed. And Liza’s tail is covered when she rides on Leo.”

I smiled and talked with Ms. Claire as we watched Liza.

Leo had such pretty and long fur, so Liza’s tail got buried in it and was concealed.

Besides, Leo was so big that I had to look up to see her face, so unless Liza raised her tail, it should be fine.

She just looked like an ordinary girl.

“Aside from the whole incident where she had a rock thrown at her face, it was a good thing you brought her.”

“Yes. We were able to talk about various things...and we found out that she is friends with Ms. Isabelle. I feel like I have grown closer to her.”

“Yes. Even at the mansion, she always seems a little reserved.”

“I don’t think she is used to having a lot of people be kind to her. She was even quite reserved with me, after all.”

I was able to see that at Mr. Halton and Mr. Haines’s stores.

It seemed like she had only really lowered her guard around Ms. Isabelle.

I did think that she was warming up to the people in the mansion, but the events in this town had probably helped.

When I thought about it like that, the whole incident and being hugged by Ms. Claire could be seen as a positive thing.

...Though, I still couldn’t forgive the person who had hurt Liza.

“Mr. Takumi. What will you do when the person who hurt Liza is arrested?”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, while I do think that such things happen because people don’t know about beastkin... I want to know how you would act, Mr. Takumi...”

“I see...”

Obviously, I couldn’t forgive someone who had thrown a rock at Liza and hurt her.

Even if I hadn’t witnessed the moment myself, just imagining it filled me with rage.

That being said, I didn’t think that merely dealing out a harsh punishment would solve everything.

The culprit was probably one of the people I had seen in the slums with Mr. Ekenhart.

The primary reason that people acted like that was because they had no knowledge about beastkin.

Living in the slums probably meant that their lives were probably miserable as well. And so she was an easy target.

In any case, I felt like it might be wrong to just punish people who are ignorant.

Well, not harshly punished. But they should still be punished to some degree.

I suppose it was also because the culprit was quite young...

I didn't know his exact age, but he seemed like junior highschool age... Definitely a teenager.

You could say he was still a child.

Someone that age would still not have left the orphanage yet if they lived there.

Chapter 387

Liza Had a Strange Idea

"Indeed... The first thing to do is to catch them and make them repent. After that, they must apologize to Liza and be properly educated about beastkin. And they will do volunteer work and have their progress monitored... I suppose."

"That is all?"

"It might be rather lax, but I feel it may be more effective..."

Well, I was sure that plenty of people would say that I was being naive...

However, if none of that worked, and he continued to be prejudiced against beastkin, then he could just be punished in some other way.

But it seemed fine to be merciful on the condition that he repent and try to reform.

Obviously, this didn't apply to murder or other more serious crimes.

Speaking of which, I had no sympathy or desire to show mercy to the merchants who had set the orcs on Range village.

As for them, I was sure that Sebastian and Mr. Ekenhart had ensured that they were punished severely.

And though she hadn't done anything directly, and was not involved in the plot, I still felt that Ms. Anne owed the people of Range village an apology.

That was something I would have to discuss with Mr. Ekenhart, but those people had suffered from the damage to their wine, as well as the illness.

Even if Ms. Anne was not charged with any crime, she had been part of the reason it happened, and that needed to be resolved.

"Very well. Once the culprit is arrested, I will consider what you have said just now."

"Though, maybe I am being too soft..."

Perhaps I had no right to be acting so magnanimously like this... I thought with an awkward chuckle.

But then again, Ms. Claire would probably not do everything as I said, but just use it as a starting point.

"Mama! Faster!"

"Wuff! Wuff!"

“Hey, Liza. We don’t want to leave the carriage behind, so we can’t go any faster, okay? Leo. Make sure that you don’t lose sight of the carriage.”

After leaving Ractos, we started on our way back to the mansion. It was then that Liza got excited and started to tell Leo to run faster.

Leo was ready to run faster if it would make Liza happy, so I had to warn her to maintain her current speed.

Ms. Claire and the others would worry if we moved too far from them.

Well, maybe they were more likely to sulk about it...

Regardless, I understood why they wanted to return quickly.

It was getting quite dark, and Tilura was probably waiting for us.

Now that I thought about it, Mr. Ekenhart and Sebastian had something they wanted to discuss with me... I wonder what it could be...?

I also had to check up on the herbs and then there was my sword training.

“But it’s funner when you go fast!”

“While going fast is easy for Leo, it’s a lot harder for the horses who have to pull a carriage.”

“Then why doesn’t mama pull the carriage?”

“Uh, I don’t know about that...”

Liza turned to look at the horses and then had the idea that Leo should pull it.

Indeed, you wouldn't have to worry about falling off of her back, and it would still be faster than a carriage... But I wasn't sure how Leo would feel about it.

A dog-drawn carriage... Or wolf-drawn?

Well, there were sleds that were pulled by dogs...in countries with a lot of snow.

In any case, Liza clearly had no reserve with Leo, since she treated her like a horse in spite of calling her mother.

Well, she is a beastkin, and children are more carefree about such things, I suppose.

...Even though she wouldn't be able to run as fast, we would still be able to travel in larger numbers, so perhaps it was worth considering?

But then again, Leo seemed to like carrying people on her back.

As I thought of such things, we arrived at the mansion.

"Welcome back, everyone."

The servants greeted us at the door, just as they always did.

Liza still looked a little startled whenever they did this. But she would get used to it eventually...

"Well, see you at dinner time, Mr. Takumi."

"Yes. I'll drop off everything in my room then."

We separated from Ms. Claire and Ms. Lyra at the entrance hall and returned once to my room.

As for Leo's feet, Liza enjoyed wiping them.

Leo was used to it now, and it didn't seem to tickle as much as before.

"Liza. I'll put your clothes here, okay?"

"Yes. Thank you, papa! I'll put this in too!"

I put Liza's newly bought clothes into a drawer that was in the room.

While some of my clothes were inside, there was still plenty of room left.

Eventually, it may become filled with Liza's clothes... But first, I had to think about the herb fields in Range village.

"Now, let's go to the dining hall. I'm sure you're hungry now?"

"Yes!"

"Wuff!"

We put the clothes away, and headed towards the dining hall.

While we had a late lunch, Liza and Leo were quite hungry, and looking forward to dinner.

"Mr. Ekenhart, we have returned."

"Mmm, Mr. Takumi. Welcome back... What an ordeal, eh?"

"Ah, so you heard about what happened?"

"Aye. Nicholas sent a message ahead. And so I've heard about the incident."

"I was just explaining the rest to him now."

We entered the dining hall and I greeted Mr. Ekenhart before taking my usual seat.

Tilura and Ms. Anne were already seated, and Sebastian and Ms. Claire had told them about what happened.

I didn't know that Nicholas had sent a message...

Well, the town was quite close, and since it was related to Ms. Claire, it made sense for him to report it.

Chapter 388

Real Battle Training

"In any case, Mr. Takumi and the others are here. We can talk about the rest while we eat."

"Yes. Let's eat."

Delicious looking food had already been served on the table.

And since we were all here now, Mr. Ekenhart suggested that we start eating.

Tilura and Liza were talking about what had happened in the town.

I suppose it was about the fun things.

Because Liza looked happy. I felt grateful to Tilura.

"I see... So that is what happened. And this person that you saw?"

"The guards are currently searching for him. As they know he is from the slums, it should not take too long for him to be caught."

The guards had told us about this before we left the town.

Based on our information, and that of witnesses, they would attempt to find the culprit.

“And you believe you know who it is?”

“Yes. I think it is one of the people who had been bullying Liza when we found her.”

“I see... So they really do not like the beastkin. Well, I did know that...”

“Father. I think it will be necessary to do something, regarding that.”

“Mmm. I will not ignore the problem. But it is a difficult problem, as it is not as if everyone there is bad.”

There were surely other orphans like Liza. Perhaps the person who had thrown the rock was also one.

Perhaps there were people who could not find work, and had no proper way to live...

But as Ms. Claire and Mr. Ekenhart talked, I noticed that Ms. Anne looked rather furious as she ate.

She was probably angry that Liza had been hurt by a thrown rock.

While it was good that she had become so fond of Liza, she was likely to splash sauce all over her hair and clothes if she wasn't careful.

“Oh, that's right. Mr. Takumi. And Tilura.”

“What is it?”

“What, father?”

After finishing his conversation with Ms. Claire, Mr. Ekenhart suddenly appeared to be in a good mood as he turned to us.

Seeing Mr. Ekenhart like this...always made me feel a little anxious.

Tilura stopped talking with Liza and turned to face her father.

“Sebastian has finally given his permission. While it will be a few days later, I am taking you two away from the mansion.”

“Sebastian’s permission... But where are we going?”

“Will we go to Ractos?”

Mr. Ekenhart happily told us that he was taking us somewhere.

But if he needed Sebastian’s permission, it must be a pretty big deal...

Ms. Claire seemed to know the answer, as she was holding her forehead and sighing.

“No, not the town. The Fenrir Forest.”

“Fenrir... Are you going to search for the Silver Fenrir again?”

We had been there previously when we rescued Sherry. However, we had not been able to actually find any Silver Fenrirs.

Obviously, Sherry was proof that there were still fenrirs there, so perhaps he wanted to search through the forest again?

“No, we are not there to search for anything. It is for your training.”

“Training...”

“Mmm. While you continue to train with your swords, I think it best that you experience some real combat. Well, you already have, Mr. Takumi. But it will still be good for your training.”

“And it has to be done in the forest?”

“Aye. Because there are orcs there. Our purpose will be to hunt them down. I had been wanting to do this for some time, and Sebastian finally agreed to it today.”

“...Hah... But there is a requirement. They must have guards with them, and good Leo as well.”

“Exactly. As you can see, he is not very enthusiastic about it. But you are all but guaranteed to be safe with Leo there. So, will you come with me?”

So it wasn't to search through the forest, but to fight orcs.

Indeed, we had encountered orcs quite often during our exploration. And so it was a good way to gain some real combat experience.

And Leo could help if we ever ended up in trouble...

Sebastian was sighing with an unusually tired expression. Mr. Ekenhart must have worn him while trying to persuade him.

Perhaps the reason he had smiled before, when Tilura was talking about wanting a familiar, was because he had thought of this plan.

“Still, why so suddenly? Surely they can continue to train like this for a little longer?”

“I did consider that. However, I will not be here forever, where I can oversee their training. I need to return to the main house soon.”

“That is true...”

Mr. Ekenhart was a duke.

He would have a lot of work to do, and could not do all of it in this mansion.

“And so, while it won’t necessarily be the last training session, I want to do what I can while there is still time. They will make more progress in one real fight, than many days of slow training.”

“Indeed.”

I could understand his reasoning there.

Because I had felt it myself after experiencing it.

“When Mr. Takumi goes to Range village, Leo will obviously go with him. And so I want to advance with Tilura’s training while Leo is still here.”

“Me?”

“Mmm. While Mr. Takumi has already experienced a real battle, you have not yet. And I rather you not do that where I cannot see you... And preferably where Leo and the guards are close by...”

Chapter 389

The Way Liza Referred To Herself

Mr. Ekenhart wanted Tilura to get some training.

Even though he included me as well. But it could just be a way to have Leo come with them.

Perhaps he was worried that once Leo and I were gone, the defenses at the mansion would be weakened.

Well, the guards would surely do their best, and I doubt we were in any danger. Mr. Ekenhart just worried too much...

As a father who was teaching his daughter how to fight, he wanted to make sure that she reached a certain level.

Also, Tilura would have to train by herself once I was gone.

The guards might be able to help with her training, but they also had their own duties...

It was difficult to tell if you were improving if you had to train alone.

“What do you think, Tilura? While this won’t get you a familiar... You will be able to fight some real monsters. You might even get hurt. But we don’t have to go if you don’t want to...”

“...I will go! And I will show you that I can fight well like Mr. Takumi! Besides, I will have to fight against monsters in order to acquire a familiar!”

“I see. Very well. Then, Mr. Takumi... Will you ask Leo for me?”

“Haha...”

Fighting against orcs was a dangerous thing.

But after thinking about it for a moment, Tilura made her decision and nodded.

Mr. Ekenhart looked quite happy. He then turned to me a little awkwardly and asked about Leo.

Leo had not been listening at all, and was only interested in eating the food on her plate...

“Hey, Leo. Do you have a minute?”

“Guff-guff-guff...Wuff?”

“Your mouth is dirty again... In any case, Leo. We’re going back to that forest where we found Sherry and...will you come too? This time, it won’t be about exploration, so you will be more of a guard.”

When I called to Leo, she raised her head from her plate and looked at me with a puzzled expression.

I felt bad for disturbing her meal but also noticed she had made a mess again... And she had become dirty after lunch as well. I would have to bathe her later...

I thought of such things as I asked her to accompany us.

“Wou? Wou. Wuff!”

“The forest again? Very well, leave it to me! That’s what she said, papa!”

“Haha. I do understand her, Liza. Thank you, Leo. Well, that’s what she said, Mr. Ekenhart.”

“Mm. Thank you. Now we will be able to go to the forest.”

Orcs were no threat to someone like Leo.

It had been the case the last time we were there, and even when the orcs had attacked Range village, Leo had defeated them all in no time.

Mr. Ekenhart nodded with relief. And the matter was settled.

“Isn’t this hat nice? Papa bought it for me! Liza really likes it!”

“Ohh. Yes, that is quite nice!”

Once we were done talking about the forest training, we rested and drank some tea. Liza and Tilura were talking cheerfully.

As they were close in age, they got along well.

Liza was still wearing her hat and showing it proudly to Tilura.

She must really like it... I had told her that she could take it off after we were out of Ractos, but she wanted to keep it on.

“But Liza, why do you refer to yourself like that now? You didn’t do that yesterday?”

“Yes. I thought it was weird to say Liza, Liza... People make fun of me... But then papa and ms. Claire said that I should do what I want!”

“Oh. Well, that’s true!”

Tilura had noticed that Liza was talking differently.

Now that I think about it...she did seem to have changed it at some point today.

I hadn’t even noticed it... I suppose Tilura was just sharper when it came to such things.

Perhaps I needed to pay more attention when it came to.

“Hehe. Yes, that’s when Liza stopped being so reserved.”

“You noticed, Ms. Claire?”

“Yes. After she cried so much in the plaza.”

“I see... I didn’t notice.”

“Well, women are more observant when it comes to such things. So you shouldn’t worry about it too much.”

“Is that so?”

I wasn't sure about such things.

Besides, Ms. Anne was biting her handkerchief and looked upset.

It was kind of scary.

“Even Tilura noticed...but I didn't... Damn it...”

“Uh, it looks like Ms. Anne didn't notice?”

“Perhaps Anne is not much of a woman then.”

Uh, that seemed a little harsh, Ms. Claire?

But in spite of such insults, the rest of the tea time went by in a friendly atmosphere as Tilura and Liza talked... Well, except for Ms. Anne.

Chapter 390

I Talked To Sebastian About The Herbs

After tea time was finished, and everyone dispersed, Mr. Ekenhart, Tilura, and I went to the garden in order to train... Or rather, I was about to, but was intercepted by Sebastian.

What could it be?

“Mr. Takumi. There is something I wish to tell you regarding the herbs.”

“About the herbs? Did something happen to them?”

He looked a little serious, so perhaps something had happened.

Mr. Ekenhart seemed to have heard already, as he continued to walk to the garden with Tilura.

And so I had Leo and Liza follow them.

Liza would be bored if she listened to us anyway.

But if it was about the garden, wouldn't it be better to go out and take a look?

"Well, it is quite dark now, so it would not be easy to see. Regardless, I wanted to talk to you about it first."

"I see. Very well."

We had decided to not use any magic light near them, so it might be difficult to see them well at this hour.

"In any case, the newly increased herbs have withered. It happened shortly after midday."

"I see."

I expected something like this to happen.

While they grew more slowly compared to the herbs made directly by me, they were still fast compared to ordinary herbs.

Considering all of that...it seemed about time that they withered away.

"The new herbs...we will call them the second herbs. The speed varied...but they started to wither at around midday, and then it only took an hour after that."

"So then...what happened to the third herbs?"

“The third herbs have now grown to a point where they can be picked. As for the fourth herbs, they have just started to sprout.”

“There are fourth ones now...”

As it seemed that the effects of Weed Cultivation were weakening, I thought that it would end after the third herbs.

“The fourth herbs are growing particularly quickly since sprouting. I think they may be close to ordinary herbs. Of course, they will still need to be observed...”

“Indeed. If the effect lessens, then we should get unaffected herbs soon. Uh, how about the numbers?”

“Yes. And so it is important to keep an eye on them. As for how many...there are slightly less than the third herbs.”

So it’s just a little less... Since they seemed to be decreasing by half every time, I thought it would be the case again. But I was wrong.

I suppose that showed that it really wasn’t being affected by Weed Cultivation.

“Now, it is from here that things become serious...”

“Yes.”

So, that wasn’t what he had actually wanted to tell me.

But what could it be?

“It is about the soil being used in the herb gardens... Apparently, it is definitely being depleted of nutrients.

“I see...”

“The plants that grow nearby are being affected as well. They are starting to wilt.”

“Because the soil has grown poor.”

Obviously, plants needed more than water and sunlight to grow. They received nutrients from the ground as well.

I didn't know how much they were absorbing, but I had made a few herbs on an orc once, and it had died. So considering that, they must require quite a lot of nutrients in order to grow at such a speed.

If anything, it was a surprise that we didn't notice the change in the garden's soil sooner.

Well, I didn't always grow them in the same spot, and the herbs were small. And I also didn't make that much at once.

Also, they required water, which would have also been absorbed from the orcs body. So the circumstances were different in various ways.

These were all things that I intended to research little by little.

Obviously, I would not be performing experiments on living creatures.

“Fortunately, the herbs do not increase without limit, so I doubt we have to worry about it getting any worse. But we will have to be careful when making fields in the future.”

“Yes. I will not be able to do it over and over in the same location.”

“Exactly. Because they increase in such a short amount of time... You should decide on different locations and alternate between them.”

Have one garden where you grow the first herbs, and when they increase, move onto the next garden. That way, you could avoid impoverishing the soil.

As for the size and number of these plots of land, I would have to decide on that later. However, adding fertilizer might be another way to maintain the state of the soil.

After all, the state of the soil was very important when making a garden.

Regardless, thanks to Weed Cultivation I could quickly be able to tell if the soil or climate was right for it.

“And so you may have to hire more people than initially expected. People to manage the fields and tend to the soil... Otherwise, there will be a lot of work for you, Mr. Takumi...”

“...Indeed. There does seem to be a lot more to do than I thought. And I’m not very confident...”

Apparently, I would have to hire even more people now...