

## Beloved Dog 421

Chapter 421

I shouted what I thought

“I don’t feel superior at all. And I won’t allow myself to. Besides...”

I glared at Deam and paused.

He flinched a little, but maybe it was because of Leo, who was next to me.

...I didn’t glare at people often, and it probably had little impact.

Regardless, I took in a deep breath and spoke to him sharply.

“It does not matter if we’re not a real family! Yes, we are not the same race! But we are still her parents! It doesn’t matter if there is no blood connection! You can call it what you want. She has accepted us as substitutes for her parents, and we treat her like a daughter. As long as you believe and care about each other, then it is enough! Appearances and opinions of others don’t matter! Hahh...hah...”

“Wuff. Wuff.”

I was a little out of breath after shouting. Leo pushed her cheek against mine and barked.

I think she was telling me to calm down.

But she was also happy that I had included her.

I really was grateful for Leo.

Though, I wished she wouldn’t wag her tail so strongly.

I think it was hitting the boys, and it probably hurt.

“...”

Deam was a little stunned, and became quiet.

Perhaps he now understood that nothing he said mattered?

Well, there was no way that someone who had tormented Liza could change my opinion. But I was glad that he was quiet now.

As for the boys...they looked pale... But perhaps they thought that my anger would turn towards them now, for what they had done to Lizza.

But I wouldn't do anything, as long as they were sorry...

“Over here. I heard the shouting from over here!”

“...Hmm?”

“Wuff?”

From far away, I could hear voices and footsteps.

It wasn't one person...there were several.

Thanks to the sense enhancing herbs, I could hear them through the rain.

Of course, the boys and Deam could not hear them. And so it was only Leo and me who turned to look in their direction.

“Are they your friends...?”

“Eh?”

“Wuff. Wuff-wuff.”

I wondered if they were related to Deam, but he just glared at me and did not answer.

He did not seem like he thought he would be rescued any time soon...

Unless he was just a good actor, but I doubted it.

Just then, Leo said something interesting.

She said that she could hear the sounds of scraping metal as well.

Since they seemed to be running towards us...perhaps it was the sound of armor.

In that case...

“The guards?”

“!”

At the mention of guards, the boys and Deam all shuddered.

“Wuff...? Wuff-wuff.”

“I see. But why here...?”

According to Leo, she sensed that one of them was the guard who we had met at the gate.

But we hadn't told him where we were going, so it seemed odd that he was here.

Perhaps someone who had witnessed what had happened then went to call the guards.

While Leo was wet and looked a lot smaller, she still had the body of a giant wolf.

And so when they saw Leo attacking the men, they might have thought that she was a monster who had invaded the town.

“...Well...I guess we won’t have to carry them now?”

“Wuff.”

As they were already captured, we just needed to hand them over here, and then our job would be finished.

And so we waited for them to arrive.

“Hey, what are you doing here!”

“They really are guards. Uhh... I saw these men attacking these children, and so I came to help.”

The familiar guard came running towards us.

I could see him clearly thanks to the herbs, but even with a magic torch, he could not see us well.

And so I quickly explained to them what had happened.

“These men...? Ah, the ones tied up over there... And who are you? You look suspicious.”

“Wait, wait. I’m not like that at all.”

“...”

Apparently, the guards didn't trust me.

And now the boys were looking at me silently, as if to deny my claim.

Well, maybe I did look suspicious.

"I see that you have a big monster with you... Come over here!"

"Uh... Fine... Let's go."

"Wuff..."

And so we headed to the corner of the clearing.

I suppose we would be questioned...

...but I had met this guard many times already. Was it so dark that he still didn't recognize us?

And so I walked over to the guard, who then turned his back and told us to follow him into a narrow alley that Leo could barely fit in. And then he turned to face us.

Chapter 422

The guard interrogated me

"Excuse me, Mr. Takumi. I was told to not call you by name right there. And so I had to talk to you here."

"Ah, so you knew..."

"Yes, of course. We have met several times already. And your Leo... She looks a little different, but I recognize her."

So the guard did recognize us after all, even though Leo was soaking wet.

Apparently, they had been instructed to not say our names in front of Deam...

We did not want him to know that the duke was involved in this.

Even though I had said that I had rescued Liza, it wasn't widely known that she was at the duke's house...I think.

"After you arrived in town, we received orders from Mr. Sebastian. And we were told to aid you in capturing Deam, while not saying your names in front of anyone who lives in the slums."

"So it was Sebastian after all..."

He did enjoy tormenting those who deserved it.

I suppose he had sent out a messenger after we left the mansion.

"Thank you for capturing Deam and his men."

"Not at all. I just searched for someone who I had a grudge against."

"Wuff."

The guard bowed to us. The other guards stood in the back, blocking the view from Deam and the others.

"In any case, can I leave the rest to you then?"

"Yes, of course. That was our reason for coming here."

It would make things a lot easier if the guards took over from here.

We did not want to stay much longer. I wanted to return and take a bath.

We had done enough already.

Besides, I had already said what I wanted to Deam.

Oh, but there was one other thing...

“Aside from the men, there are some boys...”

“Yes, I can see that. The ones who were being attacked...?”

“Yes. They were the ones who had attacked a beastkin girl, after Deam ordered them to. But a lot happened after that, and it seems like they were being punished.”

“I see... I know about the boy who was arrested for throwing the rock. I believe he is being sent to the duke’s house.”

I had to talk to the guards about the boys now.

They had probably done bad things up until now. But I didn’t think they should be punished to the same degree as Deam and the others.

Though, they couldn’t get off with just a slap on the wrist either.

In any case, I explained what I could about them.

“Unlike Deam, they were not active in committing crimes...”

“I understand. They will have to be questioned before anything is decided. But I’m sure the punishment will not be too severe. Especially since they are not even adults yet.”

“Indeed... Thank you.”

“Wuff. Wuff.”

And so the guard promised to be merciful if it was possible.

At least there was no worry about them being executed now.

Of course, it probably wasn't something they did to people so young in the first place.

There was an orphanage in the town, and it received generous donations for its management. So they seemed to care about how children were raised to a certain degree.

And so I left the rest to the guards, and Leo and I went on our way.

As for the apology... I could take the boys to the mansion, or bring Liza to Ractos...

I had not decided yet...

Well, it was something I could discuss with Mr. Ekenhart and Sebastian later.

Chapter 423

We met Nick on the way back

"It's been a very long night..."

"Wuff."

I had not expected to solve everything in one day, so I was quite happy that things had gone so well. And so it was with a sense of ease that Leo and I walked through the rain and made our way to the gate.

Leo barked in agreement and nodded.

Though, it had mostly gone well thanks to Sebastian's map.



Without that, I wouldn't have been able to search the buildings, and would have just wandered aimlessly through the slums.

Well, since Deam just happened to be surrounding the boys outside, it was possible that I would have still found them.

And since I had been careful when talking to Deam, he likely did not know that the duke was involved this time.

I would just be a strange man with a monster who had attacked and turned him in...

I hoped that this meant the people of the slums who were loyal to him would not retaliate against the duke in some way...

"Huh, is that you? Brother?"

"That voice..."

"Wuff?"

As we walked down the street, I suddenly heard a familiar voice calling from behind.

I had not sensed anyone approaching, so the effects of the herbs had probably worn off.

After all, it had been several hours since we ate it.

Besides, we had also lowered our guard, now that we had completed our mission.

"It is you, brother. What are you doing here at a time like this...?"

"Ah, Nick. Uh...nothing. In fact, what are you doing here at this hour?"

"Wuff!"

When I turned around, it was Nick. Just as I had anticipated.

While his face was familiar, his overcoat was not.

He seemed happy to see us, but it was too dark to see clearly.

But given his appearance...he probably looked suspicious when walking out late at night.

"I always patrol the area around Mr. Kalis's store. Apparently, something has happened in the slums recently."

"People might end up suspecting you, Nick..."

"Wuff."

Apparently, he had volunteered to help keep the peace.

While that was commendable, he still had an intimidating appearance... But I decided to not mention that.

Though, I did wonder if the guards hadn't taken him in for questioning.

"Ever since you hired me, I've been trying to make up for the things that I did. It might be too late for that, but I want to help this town... And maybe that will help with your reputation as well?"

"...I don't care about my reputation... But if that's what you want to do, then that's fine. Still, don't the guards already patrol this area?"

"That's just it... Those rascals in the slums have been acting oddly recently. And so have the others."

"The rascals?"

Was he talking about those children I had just met?

Well, there could be others...

“Sometimes, they steal food from the stores around here. I suppose they have to, in order to eat. And so the shops try to be merciful about it, you know?”

“I see.”

So the boys had been stealing after all.

But it was for their own survival, so I could not accuse or punish them self-righteously. Well, I didn't have the authority to begin with.

Besides, it sounded like the stores were allowing it to a degree, as they understood the circumstances.

Though, they probably did call the guards and had them arrested in cases where large quantities or money was stolen... But Nick said that such things were rare.

“It started...a few days ago. I started seeing them a lot more often.”

“Well, you live in the same town. Is that so strange?”

“Wuff.”

The slums were on the north side of Ractos.

And it wasn't like each district was walled off.

Leo nodded in agreement.

“No, but... It was not like that before... Well, maybe it’s just me. In any case, I decided to patrol the area.”

“I see. The last few days... I suppose that would be right after we rescued Liza then?”

“Liza. Do you mean that beastkin girl? Maybe...”

Nick tilted his head, and so I told him what had happened that day.

“You took the duke to the slums... How very brave of you! Merely wearing fine clothes there will get you surrounded.”

“Well, we were left alone.”

“Wuff-wuff.”

“...I suppose it was because of good Leo. A large monster will scare others away...”

If I remembered correctly, I had gone into the slums with my regular clothes.

I didn’t know how good they were considered to be, but since they were made by a tailor, they must be quite decent.

And they were always washed at the mansion and kept clean.

Mr. Ekenhart had hidden his face, but was also wearing fine clothes.

Nick was quite stunned that we had gone to the slums like that, but then he remembered that Leo was with us.

Besides, Mr. Ekenhart and I had also been armed, and were ready to defend ourselves.

Thinking of it like that, it had been incredibly reckless for Nick and his friends to attack us that time we first met...

## Chapter 424

Nick was sorry about his past deeds

"It does seem like the day you rescued the girl, matches with the day that I started to see them more often. Perhaps it was because Deam gave out an order..."

"Do you know him?"

"I should be asking you that."

"Well...sort of. Haha."

"Wuff."

I didn't if the two things were directly related, but it was possible that they were searching for Liza. It did seem that he wanted to use hatred against the beastkin as a way of controlling the people.

Regardless, I was a little surprised to hear Nick talk about Deam.

"Well, I understand why you don't want to talk about it. He seems like the kind of person to silence others so that they don't expose him."

Apparently, Nick seemed to have misunderstood me a little.

Also, it was clear that he knew him.

"So you know a lot about Deam?"

"Aye. I am from the slums, after all... And though I tried to leave and get a job... No one would hire me... There were some places that gave me work for just a day or two...but nothing like what you did, brother. I suppose it had to do with my origins, and the way I talked."

“I see...”

Apparently, Nick had originally lived in the slums.

Now that I thought about it, I didn't know much about Nick.

He called me brother, and seemed to be happy to see me. Also, he was a hard worker now.

As for the way that he talked, as Mr. Kalis said, it had improved compared to before.

Regardless, as he was from the slums, no one would give him a proper job.

Though it seemed he would sometimes get hired for a day...that would not be enough to make a living.

“And so in the end...I needed money, and just started threatening people in stores. But that didn't go well... And as I wondered what to do, I was approached by some people from a different town. You know the rest, brother. Hehe.”

Nick said with a laugh.

He had been approached by some thugs that wanted to use him, and they had attacked us when I was with Ms. Claire and the others...

He had been dragged down the path of villainy, and then ended up bumping into the duke's daughter right after. Luck was certainly not on his side...

In the end, I had helped him, and he was now sorry about what he did... So perhaps it had turned out alright for him after all.

“Now that you mention it, have you gone to apologize to the stores that you attacked?”

“Aye! Mr. Kalis and I went around and talked to them. Mr. Kalis is close with the duke, so they were all quick to forgive me. Well, because I felt bad about what I did back then, and wanted to do

something to help, I decided to patrol the area so that the people from the slums wouldn't work any mischief."

"I see... So you've been working hard then."

Patrolling the area was Nick's way of doing some volunteer work.

"I am able to live properly, thanks to the money you pay me. Besides, I now make sure to buy from the stores I stole from, as a way of making up for it."

"I see... Uh, and you really have enough money? If you don't..."

"No, no, I'm fine. You pay me more than I would make at any of these other stores! I could not ask for more!"

"Indeed..."

Apparently, he was contributing to the sales of the other stores as a way of apologizing.

As for his pay, I had discussed it with Sebastian, and decided to give him a little extra, which seemed to be a lot for Nick.

Especially since he had never been paid properly before...

Now that I thought about it, perhaps it wasn't a good idea to ask a duke's butler about average salaries...

He probably got paid a lot... I should have talked to Mr. Kalis instead.

Well, it wasn't like I had financial troubles, and if Nick was working hard, then it was fine.

Money wasn't everything, but you should be paid well for your work.

...I knew from experience that working overtime for minimum wages, with no hope of a raise no matter how hard you worked...was bound to make you lose motivation.

And since I would have to hire personnel to help with the medicinal herb fields, this was something that I would have to continue to keep in mind.

Chapter 425

A misunderstanding

“...Well, I used to know Deam when we were younger. He never trusted anyone, and only thought of using others... Though, I never imagined that he would become a boss of the slums.”

“I see... So you were friends?”

“No. I never did like the way that he did things, so we did not get along. We even fought sometimes. ...And I always lost... Haha!”

Indeed, Nick had attacked me with a knife, which compared to Deam and his longsword... It was not surprising who was stronger.

And I had beaten Nick so easily... And then Sebastian and Leo threatened him.

“Well...what do you think will happen if Deam is arrested?”

“Deam. Arrested? That suspicious coward... It is difficult to imagine, since he sleeps in different buildings or changes towns when things get heated... But if it did happen, they might start looking for a traitor, or find out if information has been leaked.”

“Really? Will they try to get revenge? Will they attack the prison and try to rescue him?”

“Well, he does not trust others. So he will not be caught... But that also means his men do not trust him. At least, that was how it was when I was in the slums. Likely, someone else will just take his place.”

“I see.”



Deam had threatened me after I tied him up. Saying that there were others.

But if what Nick said was true, his men did not trust him either. And so they would likely not bother to rescue him.

He might just be bluffing...

“So...if... The duke was to arrest him, the others would...”

“The duke? Then the others would just run away. There may be a lot of them, but they are no match for real soldiers. There is no point in rebelling. Perhaps Deam could persuade them to...but he wouldn't have the courage.”

“I see...”

“Wuff...”

Well, it looked like Mr. Ekenhart and Sebastian had been quite wrong about that.

If they had arrested Deam, then the others would have just run away.

There would be no insurrections...

I suppose making arrests would cause others to run away, which would be troublesome. But there was no worry of innocents getting hurt.

So there was no point of me...

Well, it wasn't a total waste, but I suddenly felt quite tired.

And the weight of the raincoat suddenly felt much heavier.

Leo also let out a sigh.

I would probably complain to Mr. Ekenhart when I got back.

“What is it, brother? Did Deam do something?”

“Well, sort of. And I captured him a short while ago...”

“What!? Deam? You found... Oh, because of Leo...”

“Yes, it was with Leo’s help. In any case, I moved secretly, because I was told that there might be uprisings in the other slums. I wanted it to seem like I did it alone.”

“...So that’s why you are out here?”

“Well, yes.”

“While I’m surprised that Deam is caught, I suppose it makes sense, if it was done by you two. ... Well, things should be rather frantic here for some time.”

“It seems that way. I guess they will suspect a traitor.”

“Indeed. And then they will start fighting each other in order to take his place. I will have to continue patrolling.. Maybe I should ask Mr. Kalis if someone could help me.”

“Yes, I will discuss it with Sebastian as well. Though, I’m sure things will settle down once the duke and the guards make a move.”

“These people only work in the shadows, so they will hide if the duke comes out. No one wants to antagonize him.”

“Indeed.”

“Wuff-wuff.”

Once I was finished talking to Nick, I headed to the western gate.

While my feet felt heavier than before, I continued to tell myself that this hadn't been a waste.

Before leaving, Nick had said, 'If there is anything else you want to know about the slums, just ask me! I will tell you what I know!' Which made me wish I had just talked to him before searching for Deam.

I should know more about the person who I had hired.

All I had cared about was that he was doing his job...

If I had spoken with Nick first, I would not have taken on Deam with just Leo...

It was with such thoughts that I greeted the guards at the gate, and then climbed up on Leo and headed back to the mansion.

...Of course, I also thought about how I would protest to Mr. Ekenhart about how he had been wrong...

Chapter 426

I received a big welcome

"It stopped raining...?"

"Wuff?"

Just when we had almost arrived at the mansion, the rain started to die down, and then stopped completely.

I looked up at the sky while taking off my coat. I felt a little lighter then.

But I was still wet.

“Hah... That was tiring. I want to take a bath...and go straight to bed. I wonder if Liza is asleep?”

“Wuff. Wuff-wuff. Wou!”

“Haha. I know. We’ll get you some sausages as well.”

I raised my sword for light and gazed at the cloud while talking to Leo.

Leo did not forget what I had said about sausages.

Well, they were her favorite food.

I just wanted to soak in a hot bath. I could leave Leo to someone else... There would likely still be servants who were awake.

Even with a raincoat, my body became very cold.

While I wasn’t freezing, I still had to warm up so I wouldn’t get sick...

“Uh...I’m back...?”

“Wuff.”

“...”

I arrived at the gate and greeted the three guards.

Nicholas was with them, and they just bowed silently before opening the gate.

While I thought it was strange that they didn’t reply, I passed the guards and went through the gate.

“Ah, Leo. You should shake some of the water off first.”

“Wuff!”

“Ah, hey! Ah...!”

“Wuff?”

“Leo! You just covered me in water...”

“Wuff...”

“No, you don’t need to lick it off...”

I was already wet anyway...but it was like having another bucket of water poured over me.

Huh? You were standing so close? Leo seemed to say as she looked at me. But when I protested, she apologized with a lick.

I did not want to get wet like that either.

Only when we were playing.

I tried to wring out some of the water from my clothes, and then I moved to the door.

That way, I wouldn’t make a mess in the mansion.

And once I was inside, I could change clothes and take a bath.

It was with such thoughts that I opened the door and stepped inside.

The entrance hall was usually dimly lit in the middle of the night, but it was fully bright now. And so it took a while for my eyes to adjust.

I rubbed my eyes and scanned the room. There was a whole line of servants waiting there.

...This was like when they greeted Mr. Ekenhart.

“Welcome back, Mr. Takumi and Leo! Thank you for your work!”

“Wuff?”

The servants all bowed and greeted us with words of gratitude.

Did Sebastian make them do this?

...Or it could be Mr. Ekenhart.

Next to me, Leo was tilting her head with a puzzled expression.

“...Umm...”

“Hohoho. You seem very surprised?”

“Wuff-wuff.”

As I wondered how to respond, Sebastian stepped forward with an amused smile.

I knew that he would look like that.

“Well, of course, I’m surprised... All of the servants are out here in the middle of the night. I thought everyone would be asleep...”

“You and Leo did something very dangerous for Liza’s sake, when the duke could not act. And so we are very grateful...”

“Uh... I see...”

Indeed, part of the reason was that the duke couldn’t act...

If he could not catch Deam, then Leo and I would.

Though, my main motivation was my anger about Liza being targeted. So it felt a little weird to be thanked for it...

Well, I suppose this was just how Sebastian did things. And I should just accept it.

“Oh, there is no point in standing around like this...”

“I will bring a change of clothing.”

“Thank you.”

“Wuff... Wuff...”

Sebastian said, and then the soldiers started to move around busily.

As it was raining, they knew that I would return wet. And so one of the maids brought me a change of clothing.

Since Leo had been running over mud, a few maids wiped her feet clean.

Furthermore, aside from the maid who brought me a towel, other servants brought an extra large towel and wiped Leo carefully with it.

Leo seemed to really enjoy being carefully wiped like that.

## Chapter 427

Ms. Claire was very worried

“The sausages were prepared, like you requested. Will you go and take a bath now, Mr. Takumi?”

“Wuff! Wuff!”

“Yes. I would like to take a bath and warm myself. Can I leave Leo to you?”

“Certainly.”

“Mr. Takumi, here.”

“Yes, thank you.”

Leo started to drool, once she heard mention of the sausages.

It was nice that you’re happy, but you should calm down a little, Leo.

The butlers were finding it hard to wipe her, because her tail was wagging so excitedly.

Regardless, I would leave her to their care and go take a bath.

And so I took the towel from the maid and left the entrance hall.

“Hah... I’m all warmed up now.”

“Chomp-chomp... Wuff!”

After I had taken a bath, a maid told me that Leo was in the dining hall, and so I made my way there.



When I entered, I saw that an especially large mountain of sausages had been placed in the center of the table, and Leo had shoved her face inside as she ate them.

She barked when she saw me come in, but quickly moved her attention back to the meal.

The area around her mouth had become sticky with oil... And even though she had been dried off from the rain...she would still have to take a bath tomorrow.

It was too late to do it tonight...

“Ah, there you are, Mr. Takumi. Good work tonight.”

“Mr. Takumi. I’m so glad that you’re alright...”

“Mr. Ekenhart. Ms. Claire. You’re awake.”

Aside from Leo, Sebastian, and some maids, Mr. Ekenhart and Ms. Claire was there and watching over Leo as she ate.

It seemed that they had waited for me without sleep.

“I could not sleep when you were out there, Mr. Takumi. And neither could Claire.”

“Father, nevermind that! Mr. Takumi, are you hurt?”

“Haha, I’m fine. Leo was with me, after all. ...Though, to be honest, it got dangerous at one point, but we managed.”

“I see... That is a relief.”

Ms. Claire was very relieved to know that I wasn’t hurt.

While it could not be helped, I did feel bad about making her worry...

“That’s what I’ve been telling you, Claire. Mr. Takumi has been training, and he has Leo. There was no need to worry about him facing some people in the slums.”

“Still, I could not help but be worried. After all, he was hurt during the orc attack on Range village... So it was possible...”

“But Mr. Takumi has the Gift. So he could just grow some Loe for his wounds.”

“Father! You do not understand me! Even if it can be treated, it is better to not be hurt at all!”

“Hahaha! Well, I am fine in the end. So enough about that...”

While it was nice seeing them argue like this, as it showed that they got along, I really didn’t think there was much point in it continuing.

Besides, it felt awkward to have people worry about me. And Mr. Ekenhart was just enjoying teasing his daughter.

“Mr. Takumi. While you were taking a bath, we received a message from a Ractos guard.”

Sebastian said, taking a step forward.

The guards sure moved quickly. Apparently, they had sent a messenger after arresting Deam.

I had stopped to talk with Nick, and also took a bath, so they had enough time to reach the mansion.

“I see.”

“It seems that you declared you were family with Leo and Liza, for everyone to hear.”

“Huh?”

“Oh?”

I thought it was going to be a report regarding Deam.

Besides, the guards hadn't been close by when I said that.

They only came later, after hearing the noise.

As Sebastian explained all of this with a smile, Mr. Ekenhart listened to him with an expression of deep interest.

And Ms. Claire was...

She was blushing with a smile... But why?

Deam had mocked me and said that I was just playing at being a family. I had been so angry that I shouted back at him. But having everyone know about it now was a little...embarrassing.

I had meant every word, of course. But some of those lines...were definitely embarrassing when I thought back on them...

I would have to be more careful about the things I say.

Chapter 428

I told them about the misunderstanding

“Hohoho. Liza will be very happy when she hears about it.”

“Um...don't do that. It's embarrassing.”

“Hmm, but embarrassing Mr. Takumi is also good. Don't you agree, Claire?”

“Indeed... Oh! Um! No... That would be rude to him, father.”

“You should just admit it already...”

Mr. Ekenhart let out a sigh... What were they talking about now?

“Ah, by the way... Mr. Ekenhart. Sebastian.”

“Hmm, what?”

“What is it?”

“It’s about Deam... I talked with Nick before coming back, you see.”

“Oh, that man who you hired?”

“And what did you talk about?”

“Well...”

And so I told them what Nick had told me.

How if the duke got involved, the cowardly Deam would just run away. And that there was no need to worry about an uprising or retaliation of any kind.

I told them that Nick had come from the slums, and knew Deam.

Deam was cowardly, trusted no one, and was trusted by no one... A sad person.

I didn’t know what had happened in his past to make him like that, but I was still not going to be sympathetic, because he had targeted Liza.

While he didn’t trust people, he used them to gain power...

...I would soon be in a position of power over the people I had to hire. But I would like to build a relationship of trust with them.

“Hmm, I see. ...Sebastian. It seems like we misjudged the situation?”

“Indeed. This was the man who evaded the guards and ruled the slums of several towns as a boss. We thought him very cunning. Someone who would strike back with force if something happened...”

“But according to what Mr. Takumi heard from Nick, that was not the case.”

“Yes. He sounds like your average thug.”

“We were fooled then... Well, it was merely our own assumptions. I don’t mean to boast, but I have a very high opinion of the investigative abilities of the guards in this town. And since he was able to escape them, I ended up overestimating him.”

“Indeed...”

There was still a lot about this world that I did not know, but I thought that the duke would hold enormous power.

After all, in terms of nobility, he was the closest to the royal family.

And he had many soldiers working for him, who kept the peace on his lands.

Perhaps Deam being able to evade them was just a coincidence. But it did seem quite impressive...

So that was why Mr. Ekenhart and the others made assumptions about Deam, and thought that he must be plotting something.

If you are a leader, then you sometimes have to consider the worst outcome... That was something I had once heard.

There were all kinds of people gathered together in the slums. And he had made himself their boss. That would have affected how they saw him as well.

“Father... In other words, if you and Sebastian had a proper grasp on this Deam, then Mr. Takumi would not have been put in danger... Is that what this means?”

“Well... I suppose...”

She glared. Perhaps it was revenge for all the teasing he had been doing to her.

“As for that matter. It was my investigation that was lacking. I am sorry.”

While Mr. Ekenhart recoiled, Sebastian honestly admitted that he was at fault, and he apologized with a bow.

Well, even though he had a mysterious information network, he could not know everything. So it could not be helped.

Still, he somehow knew about what I had shouted... But I decided to not ask about it, as it would only be embarrassing for me.

“While Sebastian is responsible for gathering information, it is father who makes decisions. He even told me that it was dangerous, and that we should only wait and learn more... But the reality was...”

“We-well, it was definitely possible that there would be consequences if you got involved, Claire. Besides, you cannot even fight. What good would it do for you to go to the slums?”

Said Mr. Ekenhart, as sweat dripped down his face.

I understood what he was saying.

It was still dangerous to go to the slums. And so this was not a matter for Ms. Claire to get involved in...

Also, he probably just didn't want to risk putting his daughter in harm's way.

Chapter 429

Ms. Claire and the others would be very busy

And so I agreed with Mr. Ekenhart that I did not want her to be put in danger.

Though, from her perspective, it probably looked like I was doing something dangerous. And it probably caused her to worry.

I would have to be careful.

"I understand that. It is not as if I can fight, and there would be little that I could do there. But to determine that you cannot act and let Mr. Takumi work on his own..."

"And I do feel bad about that. Mr. Takumi, I am sorry for relying on you and making the wrong decision."

"I also needed to check my information more thoroughly. And I will do my best to avoid such a thing happening again."

"Hahaha. Well, everyone makes mistakes. I don't mind. Besides, considering that Liza was targeted, it hardly mattered. Leo and I would have gone out on our own anyway. Isn't that right, Leo?"

"Wuff? Wuff-wuff!"

After being berated by his daughter, Mr. Ekenhart stopped making excuses and then turned to me and bowed his head.

Sebastian also bowed.

I had only brought up my conversation with Nick to stop Mr. Ekenhart's teasing of Ms. Claire, and had not expected him to apologize like this....

In any case, I chuckled and insisted that it was nothing to me.

Even if finding and rescuing Liza was something I had done with Mr. Ekenhart's help, our motive was not directly related to him.

So even if Mr. Ekenhart had decided to send his men out for Deam, right after speaking with Mark, we would have likely still gone out tonight.

And when I questioned Leo about it, she raised her head from the sausages she was eating and nodded.

Sorry for disturbing your meal Leo... But you should maybe eat a little slower.

There had been a mountain of sausages, but most were gone by now...

"Hah... You can be a little more upset about it, you know? Mr. Takumi."

"Ah, I could not do that... As I said before, it doesn't really matter. We would have gone as soon as we heard about Deam. I want Ractos to be safe for Liza to visit."

"But you really should be careful, Mr. Takumi."

"Uh, well... I shall be careful. Sorry."

Perhaps Ms. Claire was still holding a grudge against her father. But I didn't intend on discussing the matter any further.

As long as my goal of making the town safe for Liza was accomplished, then that was fine.

Especially since it seemed like none of the people related to Deam would try to get revenge.

Still, Ms. Claire had a rather pleading look as she asked me to be careful.

She really had been worried. And I was weak to such expressions... And so all I could do was nod and promise. Any man would have done the same in my position.



I could act foolishly sometimes, and so I would try to avoid danger, so she would not worry about me. I told her as much and apologized.

“In any case, Sebastian and I will deal with the matter before we go off to the forest tomorrow. There may be others aside from Deam who would target Liza. It will be a good opportunity to investigate the slums and town in general.”

“Indeed. We will be quite busy...”

Mr. Ekenhart had a serious expression as he talked about what must be done.

Sebastian nodded in agreement, only, he appeared to be looking forward to it.

I suppose he enjoyed investigating and finding bad people...

At least he had other hobbies than just explaining things.

“Those are things that I cannot do, so I will leave it to you.”

“Yes.”

“Father, I will help as well. ...So you don’t make wrong decisions again.”

“...I don’t intend to, but it would be better to have multiple opinions. Very well.”

I didn’t know anything about policy, and was in no position to say or do anything.

Ms. Claire also wanted to get involved. But since Mr. Ekenhart was taking this very seriously, I doubted he would be making any mistakes. But maybe I was overestimating him...

In any case, Mr. Ekenhart welcomed her help.

Besides, he probably wanted to train her as much as possible, for the sake of her future...

## Chapter 430

Leo finished her sausages

Once we were finished talking, Ms. Claire and Mr. Ekenhart left the dining hall. They decided to sleep early, as they had a busy day tomorrow.

But before leaving, they asked for some herbs to help them sleep, and so I had a maid bring me my bag from my room, and I handed the herbs to them.

Since they had stayed up late because of me, this was the least that I could do.

...Though, I was starting to run out of them, and so I would have to grow more and restock tomorrow.

“Chomp...chomp... Wuff. Wou?”

“You finished eating then? Everyone has already left, you know?”

Leo had now finished eating all of the sausages on her plate, and she let out a sigh of satisfaction.

She then finally noticed that Ms. Claire and the others were gone, and she tilted her head with a puzzled expression.

Just how absorbed were you in your food, Leo... Even if it was her favorite food, it was hard to imagine that she was detecting every little sound in the slums a short while ago.

“Well, aren’t you thirsty? You have to drink some water too.”

“Wuff! Glug-glug...”

Sebastian had left a bowl of water when leaving, and so I put it on the floor for Leo to drink.

Milk would have been fine as well, but after all the work and eating so much sausages, water would be better for quenching her thirst.

“Mr. Takumi... About Lady Liza...”

“What about her?”

As I watched Leo eagerly drinking the water, one of the maids who had stayed approached me.

I had left Liza in Ms. Lyra’s care. Had something happened?

“According to Lyra, she became lonely shortly after you and Leo left.... She is currently resting in your room.”

“I see... Perhaps it was still too early to separate?”

“While Lyra was with her, she started to miss you and Leo when she became sleepy. I am very sorry that we failed to keep her satisfied.”

“No, not at all. She is still young. Thank you for taking care of her. We could ask for nothing more.”

This maid was older than Ms. Lyra, and might have been the head maid.

After all, I had seen her close to Ms. Claire several times.

Regardless, I was surprised that Liza was still like that, since she seemed quite fond of Ms. Lyra...

She was starting to act more relaxed and less reserved in the mansion.

I suppose it was when she started to sleep, that she suddenly started to miss us again.

“Wuff...”

“Oh, you finished drinking. Are you satisfied?”

“Wuff!”

“Well, let’s return to the room then. Apparently, Liza is waiting for us.”

“Wou!”

Leo sighed with satisfaction after drinking all of the water.

And so I told her that we were returning to our room.

Leo nodded, and we left the dining hall.

“Mr. Takumi. Leo. Welcome back.”

“Ms. Lyra.”

“Wu...wuff...”

When we entered the room, Ms. Lyra was sitting on the side of the bed, but she rose to greet us.

After greeting her, I looked to the back and saw that Liza was sleeping peacefully.

Leo entered the room after me, and was about to bark loudly, but then saw that Liza was sleeping, and so she greeted Ms. Lyra quietly.

“I see that Liza is sleeping. I was told that she became lonely.”

“Yes. After you left, we spent some time in the room that was prepared for her, but... She seemed to become anxious shortly after. And she wanted to return to this room...”

“I see... I guess it will take more time then.”

“Yes.”

“Wuff? Wuff-wuff.”

“Leo, don’t wake her up, okay?”

“Wou.”

After returning to the mansion, a maid had taken our things back to the room.

And so my swords were here, and they were probably washing the wet clothes and coat.

But now that I thought of it, there actually was a room just for Liza.

They had been waiting there at first, but then Liza wanted to return to this room to sleep.

I suppose it was because this was where she had slept after she first came here.

And she sometimes had bad dreams, and liked to hold onto Leo...

She was still young, after all. So it was not much of a surprise.

Leo had moved towards the bed, and was peering into Liza’s face, so I had to warn her to not wake her up.

But Leo understood, and barked quietly.

I suppose she had become worried after hearing that Liza was lonely without us.