

Beloved Dog 841

Chapter 841

I bought some soul food

“Hah...what a relief...”

“Are you alright?”

“Mr. Takumi. We have a long journey ahead of us. You will have to ride on horseback the whole time. Will you be fine?”

“Well... I should survive. I got used to it a little already.”

We had arrived in Ractos, and were walking down the main street in order to buy lunch.

Nicholas and Phillip were worried, but I laughed and reassured them.

While I did not feel sick from the shaking, the saddle was still difficult to get used to.

But if it got too bad, I could always take herbs to help with fatigue and muscle soreness.

“In any case, we should hurry up and eat. It seems like Mr. Takumi knows a good place.”

“Uh, wouldn’t you two know more about the food here?”

“No, we usually eat at the mansion. So...I do not know much about what is good. Besides, things change a lot, due to the amount of traffic here.”

“Ms. Helena’s food is delicious. And her food seems to have become even better after Mr. Takumi’s arrival. So I do not really think about going to Ractos to eat.”

I had heard something about that from Sebastian before. How the servants rarely went to Ractos, even during their days off...

As for me, while it was not that often... I had gone with Mr. Ekenhart, and eaten at various places. So I knew something. Perhaps more than they did. It was odd, considering that they had lived in this world for so much longer than me.

“The hamburgers. Those were quite good. And very filling. But because they are simple, you can eat them quickly, which is good for when you are in a rush.”

I had heard that everyone in the mansion had taken a liking to them.

“Well then... Maybe that thing? I think you will like it if you like hamburgers.”

“Oh, if you think so, then I will have high expectations.”

But if their expectations were too high, I would feel bad if it disappointed them... But it would probably be fine.

“Ah, there it is. Over there!”

“That... It is bread with something inside? Similar to the hamburgers?”

“Is that...pasta?”

“Well, something like that. But this one does not have as much meat inside, so it might be a little disappointing...”

The stall I found while walking down the main street... The place I pointed at was selling pasta sandwiched in bread.

Phillip and Nicholas had not seen it before, and were curious to know what it was.

I had actually seen it while walking with Ms. Delia the other day, and had marked it.

Because it looked familiar. And that smell that wafted from the stalls. And on closer inspection, I was right.

At the time, it had not been the right situation to stop and eat, and so I wanted to try it the next time I came to Ractos.

Well, that opportunity to eat it had arrived a lot earlier than I expected...

Chapter 842

We ate the pasta bread

“Uhh...how much will you eat?”

“Well, with that size, I can eat two of them.”

“I suppose that is enough for an adult man.”

“The smell is quite appetizing already. Let’s have them wrapped up, and then we can eat them while we move.”

“At, that is a good idea. You can even eat it while riding... Though, you have to be careful that you don’t drop it.”

While it was hot now, you could still eat it after it cooled down.

I had eaten the noodles before when I came here with Mr. Ekenhart. And while it was not the same, it was still delicious. As for the bread, it was actually better in this world, so the combination should be good.

“Three coppers... It is a little expensive. But I suppose it makes sense, since it is unusual..”

“A little luxury then.”

It used a mysterious sauce, and they had to cook everything here, so it made sense.

“Oh...it is quite good.”

“Indeed. There is not much meat inside, but it has a nice smell and is easy to eat.”

After buying the bread, we started to walk again. The two others took a bite and seemed to like it, much to my relief.

Personally, I wanted some seaweed flakes and ginger... But it was still good without it.

I wanted to clap and compliment the cook.

“Still, those hats with ears really seem to be popular now... Even the men are wearing them...”

“Haha. Well, I got used to wearing mine for Liza. But I suppose it is quite odd.”

“Yes, I am starting to be interested in them myself.”

“Huh?”

“What...?”

Phillip and I were astonished by Nicholas’s declaration.

He had a generally cool and calm appearance. And such a hat would not suit him at all.

However, in spite of our surprise, he looked like he did not see what the problem was.

“Well... Everyone has their own taste. Isn’t that right, Mr. Takumi?”

“Ye-yes...”

Phillip and I looked at each other and decided to not pry any further with this subject.

However, we both seemed to be in agreement that it would be for the best to not take Nicholas anywhere near those hats.

We had our hands full as it was with Mr. Ekenhart.

“...While I am not lowering my guard, it really is different without good Leo around. We do not stick out much at all.”

“Yes... Leo is so big. And not human. So she draws a lot of attention.”

The subject then shifted to Leo...

Indeed, when traveling with Leo, practically everyone's head would turn when we passed by. I was usually not sensitive to such things, but could tell that we were being stared at from nearly every direction.

Though, we had now come to Ractos enough times that people rarely looked at her with fear in their eyes, like they did the first time we came here.

Chapter 843

The guards still stuck out a little

“That being said, we still do draw some attention. After all, we are dressed differently from the town guards...”

Nicholas muttered as he looked around.

They were both armed and wearing leather armor.

When walking down the streets, it was rare to see someone carrying a sword.

“Indeed. The duke's guards could not be walking around with the same equipment as the town guards.”

“Is that so?”

“The most obvious difference is the quality. They have armor and weapons that are mass produced. And while I am not saying they are of terrible quality, they are still cheap.”

“While those of us who protect the duke or the mansion have custom equipment that fits us. It is very important, as the smallest difference could obstruct our movement.”

Now that I looked at them, I could see the difference. Also, they were cleaner.

I suppose they had to look good for nobles as well?

“Well, they might look at us as travelers that have good equipment...”

“I see. Regardless, we do not stick out as much when Leo is around.”

“Yes. Even more so when Lady Claire is with us, as well as Sebastian and the maids.”

With fewer people around, it made the job of guarding a lot easier.

Regardless, we enjoyed the different atmosphere, and talked as we returned to our horses and continued our journey to Bleiyu village.

Considering how things are now, we should not have any trouble pretending to be friends once we arrive...

On the way there, I got used to riding quite a bit, and was able to talk to Phillip while on the horse.

After all, I nearly bit my tongue right after we left the mansion... And had not been able to talk at all.

“By the way, Phillip.”

“What is it, Mr. Takumi?”

“Previously, when you fought the orcs in the fenrir forest... The way you moved. Was that from your training? The way you attacked to slow them down, a little by little.”

“Ah, that. Half is from training. Half is something I figured out on my own, I suppose.”

While riding, watching the scenery could be nice, but there was not a whole lot to see. And so I decided to talk to him.

I was interested in the way that he fought.

When we fought in pairs against the orcs, Phillip moved with precision, which was easy to understand. And instead of targeting the orc’s vitals, he hit the legs and ankles.

Mr. Ekenhart had taught me to end fights quickly, and that it was more effective to target vitals as much as possible. So Phillip’s style had been refreshing.

Now that I thought about it, fighting while thinking about how to weaken the enemy made sense as well.

...Though, I suppose it also looked like you were toying with them. So it was not always recommended. But it could be effective when fighting an enemy that was stronger than you.

Besides, it had been helpful when fighting as a pair.

“In the end, it is all about experience. As you fight with monsters and continue to train, you will think of different ways to fight. That is all.”

“I see. Yes, if you have used a sword for a long time, you will be able to use it in many different ways.

Personal style based on experience

Phillip's style was his answer to all of his experience up until now.

After thinking about how to win against opponents, and how to fight cooperatively, he decided that weakening orcs was the best way.

"Of course, that alone won't mean you will improve with everything... You have to think about how to use that experience. After all, you could not do the same thing against a fenrir."

"Indeed... It is necessary to change the way you fight depending on the opponent. Fenrirs are very fast, and humans could not keep up if they ran."

"Well, in most cases, a human could not win against fenrirs if they fought one on one... Still it is important to always think and find the answer for yourself. That is what His Grace taught us."

"Yes, Mr. Ekenhart did say that. If you fight without thinking, you will not improve much, and your styles will not expand..."

"Ah, but with you, Mr. Takumi, your potential...I think you have the qualities for success."

"You do?"

Phillip said, just as I was thinking about continuing to work hard and train.

But what did he mean, exactly?

"You know...those fatigue healing herbs? You have those. It raises the efficiency of your training. Even Lady Tilura trains more than some soldiers now. And that will help you gain power."

"Ah, that's true. We do train quite a lot, now that I think about it. But I just got used to it."

"Well, being able to continue to train like that is a gift too. Others might wonder if it is necessary. But that kind of repetition is quite effective."

He was probably just being polite, but even I could boast a little about how much I trained.

Early on, I would get tired, even when using the herbs. But I have gotten used to it now...

But without the herbs, I would likely not have been able to finish my training every day.

“Well, if you want to confide in someone about that, you are better off talking to Nicholas.”

“Is that so?”

“Yes. To put it simply, a lot of the training that you and Lady Tilura do, was thought of by him.”

“What? Really?”

“If we left it to His Grace, well...he does not know restraint... But he understood that. And so he left it to Nicholas at first. He likes to think of his own ways to train. Of course, due to the effects of the herbs, your training ended up growing to a ridiculous degree.”

“Ridiculous... It’s true that I wouldn’t be able to do it without the herbs, but... I see...”

I had always thought that it was Mr. Ekenhart who chose what we did for our training.

Well, Mr. Ekenhart had traumatized some of his soldiers in the past...so it made sense.

Though, I assumed he was holding back because of Tilura.

“But when it comes to experience, it is not easy to just go out and fight monsters. So you have no choice but to train. So if you have questions, you should ask Nicholas. ...Oh, he just gave the signal now. It means it’s time to set up camp.”

“I understand. Thank you. I will try talking with him then. Yes, it has become quite dark now.”

The time had passed quite a bit while we talked. As the sun had fallen, and the sky was dark, Nicholas suggested that we stop for the day.

Perhaps he had found a good spot... There were some trees, but you still had a clear view of the road and surrounding area.

I thanked Phillip and felt relieved as the horse slowed to a trot.

While I had been distracted by our conversation, my butt still hurt from all the shaking while the horse was running...

Chapter 845

I helped while learning how to set up camp

"I see. The ground is hard aside from this part. And the soft ground here makes it easier to camp."

We stopped at the place that Nicholas found. The horses were tied to a tree and we prepared our camp site.

The ground was softer around trees, and it was also easier to find branches to burn.

We left the horses and the branch gathering to Phillip. Nicholas and I pitched the tents.

That was when I understood how hard it could be if the soil was different. Obviously, it could not be too soft either.

"Well, now that the tents are pitched, do we make the fire next?"

"Yes. The fire is very important."

Not just for warmth, but to let others know that we are here.

Of course, it could also attract monsters. But as gathering with other travelers was quite common, it was best to make a fire.

People probably tend to get lonely when traveling alone...

“So, let’s light it then... Would you do the honors, Mr. Takumi?”

“Me?”

“Well, it can be anyone.”

Phillip must have realized that I would want to do it, as I had been watching them lay down the branches and dead leaves.

Usually, it was Leo who started the fires, and so I had wanted to try it.

And so Phillip stood and allowed me to do it. I squatted down and then focused on gathering the magic energy.

Now that I think about it, I had not been using magic very often... I suppose it was because there was no need for it at the mansion.

“Fire Elemental Candle...”

I made a flame on my finger first and brought it to one of the branches.

After a few seconds, smoke rose and it started to burn. And so I moved my finger away and deactivated the magic... However, the first soon disappeared.

“Huh...?”

“Ah, Mr. Takumi. That method won’t work, you know? The fire is too weak. Well, it might work if the wood was all dried.”

“Is that so? Well, I guess it was quite weak...”

Phillip saw that I was struggling and gave me some advice.

Now that I thought about it, I had once seen somewhere that a mere lighter was often not enough to start a fire like this...

At the very least, I should have kept my finger burning for a little longer.

“In such cases, one should use Fire Elemental Strong Flame Burn Up.”

“Oh.”

To demonstrate, Phillip squatted down and changed while holding his hand over the branches.

In the next instant, flames spread out and enveloped the wood... Indeed, this was strong enough to light it all up at once.

And while it immediately died down, unlike the first time, the flames spread to the other leaves and branches, and the fire did not disappear completely.

Chapter 846

I learned about magic

“...Like this, you can light it easily.”

“I see...”

“Phillip, you always use stronger magic. Was that really necessary?”

“It’s best to do it quickly. Well, perhaps I did get a little carried away. As I was doing it as a demonstration.”

“Mr. Takumi. I do not think you should copy him. After all, you might end up burning something else.”

“Oh... Well, I don't think I could do it even if I wanted to...”

Sebastian and Claire had only taught me the basics, and that was it.

“I'm sure you know that magic is defined with the chant and then the conversion of energy.”

“Yes. It was explained to me.”

And so Nicholas started to talk to me about magic while unpacking our things and preparing for dinner.

Of course, I helped them as well. We would have some of the leftover pasta bread and hot soup.

The soup ingredients had been prepared by Ms. Helena in advance, and so we only had to add water and heat it up in a pot.

“First, you decide the attribute to convert the energy into... Fire, water, etcetera.”

I listened to him and thought about how Sebastian would have looked more happy and excited as he explained.

As for Phillip, he had no interest in this, and so he adjusted the fire so that it did not disappear.

“After the conversion comes the gesture. But once you know how to move the energy, the gesture can be changed freely. Well, there are limitations. And if you say ‘strong’ at the end, the fire's power will increase.”

While there were rules, you had some freedom with combining words... Regardless, that was why more powerful spells tended to be quite long.

But in battle, one moment of hesitation could be fatal. That was why it was not very effective to use magic like that.

“But there are times where merely combining words will not activate it. For instance, if the words happen to contradict each other. So if you want altar magic after it was unleashed, then you must add different words.”

“So you have to think about the meaning of the words so that they do not cancel each other out.”

When changing the gesture from one to another as well, it was necessary to add different words...

And the more complicated it was, the more words you would need, and it would also require more power. And raising the power would also mean using more words...

Furthermore, it also depended on the amount of magic energy that was needed while activating.

And there was some magic that humans could not even handle.

Magic was a lot more complex and difficult than I had realized...

Chapter 847

We talked about portable food

The more I knew about the difficulties of magic, the more impressed I was with Mr. Euto's abilities.

There was no magic he could use, and the Gift meant he had infinite magic energy.

My Weed Cultivation certainly felt inferior in comparison... But it also seemed like it was more than I could handle, so I was not jealous.

My ability was very useful. And I had to think of more ways to put it to use.

“Nicholas. You sounded like you were having fun. King of like Mr. Sebastian.”

Phillip said jokingly as we sat around the fire and ate our dinner.

“Well, it is easy with Mr. Takumi. I do think I understand Mr. Sebastian a little now...even though I don't have nearly as much knowledge as him.”

“Ah, speaking of which... I heard that in most households, they use the candle spell... But it did not work at all when I used it.”

After all, it was a simple spell that nearly anyone could use.

At least, that is what Sebastian told me when he first taught me how to use it.

“Well, people only used it with properly dried out firewood, not branches picked off of the ground. Besides, they generally use a little cloth soaked in oil as well. At least, in less poor houses.”

As the job was always done by Leo or servants whenever we camped out like this... You could say this was a rare opportunity to learn about such things.

“Still, this soup really is good. And probably healthy, as there are so many things inside.”

“Yes. It is one of the first things I noticed while working at the mansion. Though, we will only be able to eat it on the first day. At least this bread that Mr. Takumi found is good too.”

“I'm glad that you liked it. I had eaten the pasta before, so thought it might be good.”

The soup was filled with all kinds of vegetables and had been boiled for a long time so that there was almost nothing solid remaining. But it warmed the body and seemed healthy.

“Before working at the mansion...well, while I was training. Most of the food was quite bad...”

“Don't make me remember that... But what can you expect from portable food? It's all about preservation and portability. So it's rarely delicious.”

Phillip answered with a look of distaste. He must be remembering his harsh training with Mr. Ekenhart.

When speaking of it to me and Tilura, he had looked like he was on the verge of tears. While I was interested, I did not want to experience it for myself.

Well, what he said about the food was no surprise.

They did not have canned food here. So I wonder how they preserved it?

We had never eaten anything like that when traveling.

“What is this portable food like?”

“Indeed... There are different kinds. The most common is dried meat. Salted orc meat.”

It sounded like beef jerky. But surely something like that would not be seen as so bad.

But then again, the beef jerky they sold in stores was covered in various spices.

So perhaps it would taste quite different.

Chapter 848

The dried meat here did not sound very good

“It is very hard and salty...that is all.”

“Yes, that doesn’t sound appetizing...”

The hardness could not be helped. But it would need more flavor...

With the beef jerky I ate, the more you chewed it, the more you could taste it. So it was quite different.

“And so we usually turn it into soup. Though, that does not taste great either...”

“Ah, you boil it to make it softer. But salt alone is so simple.”

“If we have other ingredients, we combine them as well. But the results are never that good.”

Apparently, it was almost all they ate if they had to travel long distances where there were no towns or villages nearby.

When I hear such things, I am reminded of the post horses. And how if that goes well, they will have less opportunities to eat the dried meat.

They would be good as checkpoints, but if there were also inns and places for people to rest, then they would be able to store and sell food as well.

“Mr. Takumi is thinking about something. Well, I’m sure Mr. Sebastian would be glad to hear about it.”

“Yes. Let’s leave him alone then.”

“Ah...it’s nothing, really. Nothing he would care about. I just got distracted. I better drink the soup before it gets cold.”

I would think about that later, once I returned to the mansion...

After dinner, we cleaned up and then I practiced my swings with Nicholas.

Our voices and the sounds of the fire echoed. But as it was a much larger space than the gardens, I found it easier to concentrate.

Phillip wasn’t with us, as he already went to the tent to sleep.

Nicholas and Philip would take turns. As Leo was not here, I did not have to take a shift.

“Hah...hah... Yes, your swings are a lot sharper, Nicholas.”

“Well...I’ve been doing it longer. Just stay focused with each swing.”

After doing it for some time, I took a break in order to catch my breath.

Nicholas answered after his final swing. He was hardly out of breath at all... It really was different for him.

It had been so fast that I could barely see it in this darkness.

“While I used this sword...I also use a katana when I get permission. It is good for swinging.”

“That’s true. It was really just meant for cutting, after all.”

If you used it in the wrong way, the blade would get chipped. That was why the training focused on swinging so much, so you wouldn’t have to block.

Even though they were both guards, he was quite different from Phillip. His style was more aggressive.

“By the way, you showed me an example with Mr. Ekenhart, before I started using it. Though, the movements were so fast that I don’t think it was that helpful for me.”

“Well, I am still no match for His Grace. But I constantly strive to improve. And I am sure you will be able to do the same one day, Mr. Takumi.”

“Oh...I very much doubt I will be able to fight like that...”

Chapter 849

I asked Nicholas about training

Well, there was a part of me that did want to improve to that level. Even though it hardly looked possible.

I was capable of defeating orcs now. But the way that Nicholas and Mr. Ekenhart moved looked like something only special people could do.

“Not at all. I saw just now that you have already grown tremendously. It shows how much you have trained.”

“As I don’t have a talent for it, I have to train desperately to make up for that...”

“Even so. That is not something that just anyone can do. That is a talent in itself.”

Really? In general, I was just following Mr. Ekenhart’s instruction. I had very little opinions of my own on that front.

I just repeated it diligently... But I suppose they found that commendable.

It was something that could only be done with the help of herbs...so it was taxing on my body.

“That amount... Even with your herbs, it would be difficult to continue it.”

“Well, Tilura does the same training?”

“Lady Tilura’s is slightly less harsh. But she also sees you as an example.”

“By the way, Phillip told me that you were the one who decided what we did for training?”

“Oh, you heard that? Yes, I did. His Grace gave me that honor.”

“When I first started learning, it seemed like Mr. Ekenhart was deciding on the spot. So I didn’t realize that it was you...”

“Oh, that is when it was decided. Don’t you remember that I was talking to him before your training?”

“Ah...perhaps...”

“Yes. And while he was teaching you, I was sending him signals.”

I had no idea...

Indeed, I remember going out into the garden, feeling quite nervous, and seeing Nicholas drinking tea at the table.

“I see... So that is what Phillip was talking about. Well, I now know how harsh Mr. Ekenhart’s training is. And so I am glad that it was you instead.”

“Hmm. Not necessarily. While Phillip and the others always say that they do not want to remember their training, I thought it was quite satisfying. In any case, I don’t think there is as big a difference as you might think. I did wonder if it was too harsh, but then I saw you making the herbs, and decided that it would be fine. And it looks like I was right.”

“Oh...is that so...”

Apparently, it was not that different from their early training.

Even though the actual contents would be quite different, as they were training to guard people.

As for the fact that it was not Mr. Ekenhart who decided...

I probably should not tell Tilura. Especially when you consider the fact that my herbs were part of the reason it was so hard.

And in the end, Nicholas had seen that I was able to do it, and how the herbs made it efficient. He assured me now that as long as I continued, I would be able to move like him.

Would I really be able to? I could not help but wonder as I continued my swings once again.

When I was finished, I wiped off the sweat and was about to go to the tent, when Nicholas said something to me...

Chapter 850

We packed up and departed

“I think that in simple skill with the sword, you are already above Phillip. I’m sure the experience fighting monsters and being in danger had something to do with it. Though, if you both went all out, I think that Phillip would still win.”

“Surely you exaggerate... I am still not able to move like him at all.”

“There is no need to be able to move in the same way. You just need to do what suits you best. Though, Phillip is dexterous and can use other kinds of weapons as well. So, who knows where you will both be in the future...”

Though I felt like he was going too far, it did feel like he was acknowledging that I had improved. And so I had to try not to smile too broadly as I entered the tent.

Phillip had rolled out of his sleeping bag and was laying in the middle with his arms spread out. And so I had to roll him over to the corner so I could get in my own sleeping bag...

The next morning, I woke up quietly, so as not to wake up Nicholas, and slipped out of the tent.

“Good morning, Mr. Takumi.”

“Good morning, Phillip.”

He greeted me as he sat in front of the fire.

“There really is nothing to do when you are on watch duty here. Even though I’m used to that...”

“Well, it’s best if nothing happens. Still, it must be boring...”

“One does not get used to boredom. Ah, please use this hot water. I thought you would be up soon, and so I prepared it. It should not be too hot.”

“Thank you.”

I thanked him and quickly washed up... Which was just shaving and washing my face. I did wish I could take a bath, though.

“Well, I will go and wake up Nicholas, and then we can sleep.”

“Haha. He was up until you were able to trade places. So please be gentle with him.”

“That depends on his willingness to get up. Speaking of which...I feel like I woke up in a different spot this morning...”

“Are you sure? Well, maybe you rolled over in your sleep?”

“Hmm. I suppose.”

After that, we had breakfast together, and I helped them clean up.

We ate some of Ms. Helena’s soup that was left over.

The taste was a little thin, as we had to dilute it with water. But that is what happens when you travel.

“Well, shall we go then?”

“Yes, thank you.”

Like yesterday, I rode behind Phillip on his horse.

We were scheduled to arrive tomorrow, so that meant we could camp out one more night. But I had gotten a little used to riding, and should be fine.

Just like with Range village, the road stopped halfway there.

We traveled to the east from Ractos and then went down south towards the forest.

“Hmm....”

“Is something the matter, Phillip?”

We occasionally took breaks while traveling to Bleiyu village. It was then that Phillip murmured while thinking about something.

“I was just wondering why there are so few monsters.”

“Well, isn’t that a good thing? Besides, this isn’t like the path to Range village...”

“That is true. But there should be some monsters. Either ones that strayed from the forest, or ones that live in the fields.”

Now that I thought about it, the monsters I encountered were always from the forest.

But it would not be strange if there were monsters hiding in the grass here as well. Even though there were supposed to be soldiers patrolling these parts occasionally...