

## Beloved Dog 91

### Chapter 91

I met with the head of the Liebert Family

Still...to be so indifferent about your own clothes... What kind of person was this...? He had been described as hearty.

In any case, Tilura. I hope you won't say such things right in front of him?

I think it was one of the top 3 things a daughter can say to her father that would shock him the most...

It was then that I swore that if I ever had a daughter in the future, I would be careful to be clean and tidy.

And so unlike breakfast time, we all entered the dining hall in a relaxed mood.

Apparently, they had come up with good strategies on how to deal with the duke.

Ms. Lyra and Ms. Gelda were in the room and serving the food.

After that, we ate until we were quite full, and then we rested and drank some of Ms. Lyra's tea as we waited for the duke's arrival.

Immediately after lunch, a maid entered the room and announced that the house had finished preparations for welcoming their master.

They must have been very busy... My hat was off to them.

"Any time now..."

"Lady Claire, as we discussed."

“I know.”

“I’m getting nervous.”

“Wuff!”

“Kyau?”

Sebastian was saying something to Ms. Claire. It was probably about what she was going to say in regards to the marriage proposals.

Tilura looked nervous about meeting her father after being away for so long. But out of everyone, I was clearly the most nervous, as I was seeing him for the first time.

Even if the others had all assured me that he was careless or unconcerned with details, this was still a nobleman.

They say that your first impression is important, and I did not want this to be a failure.

As for Leo, she was leisurely drinking her milk. Sherry was riding on top of Leo’s back and looking at everyone as if wondering what was going to happen now.

Well, Leo did not seem like the type to get nervous while meeting people.

As for Sherry, she was too young to know the significance of meeting someone who is important.

Or perhaps it didn’t matter, and they just didn’t get nervous around humans to begin with.

As I thought of such things, the door of the dining hall opened and a butler entered.

“His Grace has arrived.”

And with those words, I could sense the room growing even more tense.

It was one thing for me and the servants to be this way, but Ms. Claire and Tilura were just meeting their father...

Sebastian gestured for Ms. Claire to move forward, and Tilura and I got to our feet.

Leo and Sherry followed suit. Leo took her position next to me, and Sherry moved next to Ms. Claire.

“...Let’s go then. Mr. Takumi, Tilura, Sebastian.”

“Yes, Ms. Claire.”

“Yes, My Lady.”

“Let’s go.”

“Wuff?”

“Kyou?”

Leo and Sherry were just as oblivious as before, and did not understand what the fuss was about. But there was no time to explain, as we left the dining hall.

But really, it was just the master of the house. Why was this the atmosphere of people going to fight the final boss in a game...?

I was one to talk, since I was just as nervous. But this was just a family reunion, and not an actual fight.

Yet such thoughts were not enough to calm my nerves, and like that, we came out into the entrance hall.

Dozens of maids and butlers stood in a row here. There were so many, that I wondered if the entire household was present.

Though, I was quite sure that it actually took many more people to manage a mansion of this size, so it was likely just those who were free at this time.

Ah, Ms. Helena was here too.

And I saw Phillip and Nicholas near the door.

“His Grace, Duke Ekenhart Liebert has arrived!”

Rang a voice from just outside, and everyone in the hall straightened their backs.

I didn’t know what I was supposed to do, but I copied the servants and fixed my posture as well.

I was currently standing behind Ms. Claire and Tilura, and next Ms. Lyra and Ms. Gelda.

Still, his name was Ekenhart, huh?

I had not been told his name before this. Still, the name gave the impression of a beautiful gentleman.

Phillip and Nicholas opened the doors from both sides, and then a man walked in, followed by three armored guards.

“Welcome back, Your Grace, Duke Ekenhart!”

“Mmm.”

The servants all raised their voices in unison and greeted their master.

Ekenhart saw this and nodded. Then he turned to look at Ms. Claire.

Ms. Claire and Tilura stepped forward.

Sebastian was right behind them.

“It is good to have you back, father. I’m afraid I must have caused you much distress, and for that I am sorry.”

“Welcome back, father.”

“Claire...I am just glad that you are all right... You two...have grown even prettier than when I last saw you... It makes me very happy.”

Oh...? This man was covering his face with his large hands and crying... What happened?

In fact, he was not really the handsome gentleman I had been expecting.

His mouth was covered in stubble, and his beard and sideburns were connected. He had a rough, wild look.

Even his clothes made me realize that the others had been speaking the truth. Had he been walking around town, no one would suspect that he was a nobleman.

...In fact, had he been carrying an axe, people might mistake him for a bandit... That was what the old man looked like. Though, he was currently crying at the sight of his daughters.

Had he only trimmed his beard, he could look like a dandy older man... I mused while looking at the sobbing Ekenhart.

That being said, this crying had the effect of erasing any sense of nervousness that one might have felt from his physical appearance.

Well, he still looked strong. And you would probably go flying off into the air if he hit you. But this was Ms. Claire’s father, and he wouldn’t do anything like that... I think.

However, to think that Ms. Claire came from him... She must take after her mother.

“Father, I wish you wouldn’t cry in front of other people like this.”

“Oh...I’m sorry.”

“Your Grace, had you waited, you would have received a message that explained that Lady Claire is well.”

Upon hearing this, Mr. Ekenhart roughly wiped away the tears and stopped crying.

Yes, Sebastian did say that he had sent out a second message after Ms. Claire returned.

Chapter 92

Mr. Ekenhart appeared to be scared of Leo

“Yes, I received it on my way here. But even if I knew that Claire was safe, I had still traveled all this way. Besides, I thought it would be nice to see my daughters again. And so I rode as fast as I could!”

“Father...”

So Mr. Ekenhart knew that Ms. Claire was fine.

Still, after seeing how much of a doting parent he was, I would have thought that he’d be against sending his daughters off to be married. I wonder what the reason was?

“And I see we have someone new here?”

“Ah, this is Mr. Takumi, father.”

“Your Grace, he is the one who helped Lady Claire.”

Oh, the conversation had shifted to me.

And so I took a step forward and bowed.

I was just imitating the way I had seen others bow, and so I wasn't sure if I was doing it correctly. I was no longer nervous, but that didn't help things much right now.

As for Leo, she remained in the back and was being petted by Ms. Lyra.

"It's an honor to meet you. I am Takumi Hirooka. Please call just me Takumi."

"Ah, so you are Takumi. You have my gratitude for helping Claire. Sebastian told me all about you in his report."

Apparently, Sebastian had included information about me in his second message to Mr. Ekenhart.

Mr. Ekenhart now laughed as he moved next to me and patted me on the shoulder.

In fact, he was really just slapping me. And though I understood that he was happy that his daughter was safe, it actually kind of hurt.

"You must be quite a man then. You haven't even flinched while I've been hitting your shoulder."

"Um...well...uh..."

No, it was that the pain of it was keeping me in place...

Also, testing a person by hitting their shoulders and seeing their reaction... I wish he would stop. Besides, what exactly did that say about a person anyway...?

"Father. Mr. Takumi looks like he's in pain."

"Ah, forgive me. I might have gone too far."

“No, I’m fine.”

He finally stopped when Ms. Claire warned him.

...I hope that I’m not bruised... I’ll have to check it when I take a bath later.

“Wuff.”

Perhaps it was because she had witnessed this, or perhaps she just wanted Mr. Ekenhart’s attention, but Leo suddenly moved away from Ms. Lyra, and stood between the duke and I.

Mr. Ekenhart looked surprised at being pushed back, and then he realized what he was looking at and his face turned to that of surprise.

“That...is that a Silver Fenrir...?”

“It is, father.”

Ms. Claire answered his question for me.

Sebastian might not have added this bit of information to his report then. Because Mr. Ekenhart was clearly stunned.

Well, who wouldn’t be with something as big as Leo right in front of them.

Not only that, but as the head of the Liebert family, he must know more about Silver Fenrirs than most.

“Why is a Silver Fenrir here... And...does it not attack people?”

“Wuff!”



Leo barked as if in answer to his words. But this just caused the duke to jump.

His reaction reminded me of Ms. Gelda when we first came here... He was very hesitant.

“Your Grace, the great Leo is Mr. Takumi’s familiar, would never harm anyone. At least, unless something is trying to harm Mr. Takumi.”

“Wuff-wuff.”

As Sebastian explained this to Mr. Ekenhart, Leo nodded with agreement.

...Though, I saw her as a buddy, not a familiar.

It’s not as if we had a contract like Ms. Claire and Sherry.

“I-I see... Still, a Silver Fenrir that obeys a human...”

“We were also astonished by this. But perhaps that can be discussed later. It would not be good to continue to stand here...”

“Indeed... Then we must go to the drawing room. As my study is not big enough to accommodate this Silver Fenrir...er, the great Leo, is it?”

“Very well. I will have the drawing room prepared immediately.”

Answered Sebastian, and he and a few servants left the entrance hall.

Ms. Lyra and Ms. Gelda were with him. I suppose they were going to prepare the tea.

“Now then...while I will learn about the great Leo later... Claire, what is that thing at your feet...”

“Yes, this is a fenrir. And she is my familiar now. Say hello, Sherry.”

“Kyau!”

“Sherry and Leo are so cute!”

Mr. Ekenhart had noticed Sherry, who was sitting at Ms. Claire’s feet.

Well, she was about as big as a medium-sized dog, but clearly not one.

Ms. Claire scooped up the sitting fenrir and introduced her to Mr. Ekenhart.

Sherry sure was polite...I think. But she did bark once. In the meantime, Tilura was boasting about Leo and Sherry to her father.

“A familiar...when did this... Is this also related to Mr. Takumi?”

“Yes. Not only did Mr. Takumi save me, but he also saved Sherry.”

“I see... It looks like we will have a lot to discuss.”

Maybe it was because Sherry wasn’t very large, but Mr. Ekenhart didn’t look too timid around her. Perhaps the fact that she was being carried by Ms. Claire had something to do with it.

As for Leo, he still looked nervous whenever he glanced towards her. Was it her size or was it because she was a Silver Fenrir?

Leo really wasn’t scary at all... But it was his first time seeing her, and so it couldn’t be helped.

We would just have to go slowly, like we did with Ms. Gelda.

“Your Grace, the drawing room is ready for you.”

“Good. Let’s go then, as there is much to talk about. ...You three. Good work. You can go and rest now.”

“Yes, Your Grace!”

Mr. Ekenhart dismissed the three guards who had come to the mansion with him. They bowed and headed in the direction of the other maids.

They were probably going to some resting room. Mr. Ekenhart had said that he rode here as fast as he could, so it must have been very tiring.

Chapter 93

I talked about everything that had happened

Now that I think about it... When Mr. Ekenhart had said that there was a lot to talk about, Ms. Claire, Tilura, and Sebastian’s faces had tensed up a little...

I suppose it was because they thought he was talking about the marriage proposals?

“Well then, let’s go, father.”

“Mmm. Mr. Takumi...and good Leo. Please tell me about what happened in the drawing room.”

“Yes.”

“Wuff.”

But Ms. Claire’s face switched to a smile in an instant, and she led her father to the drawing room. Mr. Ekenhart then told me and Leo to follow.

I could tell by the way that he addressed Leo that he was still nervous around her.

We both answered and then followed them to the drawing room.

In the meantime, the servants also began to leave in order to get back to their work.

Good work, all of you. I hope that next time, I will be able to watch you practice your greeting.

They were all in perfect sync, and so I thought it must be interesting to see if they were so perfect when practicing.

Well, if they even did practice.

We then entered the drawing room and sat down at the table.

Mr. Ekenhart sat in the center, while Ms. Claire and Tilura sat on either side. Sebastian stood right behind him.

Ms. Claire was holding Sherry.

I sat so that I would be facing everyone, and then Leo sat to the side, where a few chairs had been removed to make space for her.

Ms. Lyra and Ms. Gelda were waiting by the wall, so that they would be ready to pour some more tea when needed.

...I suppose I was placed here as my and Leo's story was seen as the most important. But it made me a little nervous to be in this position...

Mr. Ekenhart was looking at me sternly and head on, and while Ms. Claire and Tilura were smiling, they seemed a little stiff, as if ready for a serious discussion.

It was starting to feel like an uncomfortable job interview.

"Now, since we're all here and settled, let's hear what Mr. Takumi has to say. Why is there a Silver Fenrir with you? They are monsters that do not obey humans."

"Yes..."

And so for a while after that, I told him everything that I had already told Ms. Claire and the others.

How I had come from what I thought was another world, and that it was where I had first found Leo. How I had raised her. How I had suddenly woken up in the forest, and that Leo had turned into a Silver Fenrir. And how we wandered through the forest, and then encountered Ms. Claire as she was being attacked by an orc.

Mr. Ekenhart looked very distressed when I told him about the attack, but when I explained how Leo had saved her, his eyes welled up with tears and he thanked her.

He clearly cared about Ms. Claire a lot.

Though, the sight of this unkempt, bandit-like man crying had quite the impact...

And then I talked about my Gift, about exploring the forest with Ms. Claire, and about meeting Sherry. Sebastian also added to the story by telling him about how I had likely fainted due to using the Gift too much. And like that, I finished telling him everything.

Mr. Ekenhart had looked very agitated when I talked about Ms. Claire's search for the fenrir, but he quickly calmed down, thanks to Ms. Claire and Sebastian's efforts.

Yes, a father would be worried about his beloved daughter going deep into a dangerous forest.

"...I see... I understand your position now, Mr. Takumi. Still, whether it's going into the forest alone to help Tilura, or taking the fenrir with you, so that it's not attacked by monsters, you really are a sweet child, Claire... And Tilura, I'm so glad that you are better..."

After everything I said...after all of Ms. Claire, Tilura, and Sebastian's supplementary information, and Leo's nodding and barking, that was the first thing Mr. Ekenhart said...

I understand that he doted on his daughters, but... Was that really the right reaction for the master of the house? I was starting to worry about the Liebert family.

Well, perhaps it was a good thing for a father to think about his daughters more than anything.

“As Leo is here as proof, I must believe everything that you’ve said, Mr. Takumi. After all, our family has strong ties with the Silver Fenrir.”

Ms. Claire had told me all about that.

How the founder had befriended a Silver Fenrir.

And so Mr. Ekenhart believed that I came from another world and that I had the Gift.

It was because Leo was here with me.

Obviously, I could easily prove that I had the Gift, but there was no way to prove that I was from another world...

I suppose I could make a show of what knowledge I had, but even that wasn’t evidence.

“Now tell me...Mr. Takumi... Can you be sure...that your Leo will not hurt anyone?”

“Yes, it should be fine. Leo is very fond of people, and will not bite without good reason. Isn’t that right, Leo?”

“Wuff.”

I said with a smile to the still suspicious duke. And then I asked Leo for confirmation.

Leo barked in agreement.

“I see...”

“Father. Leo has been very good to us. Don’t worry, she will not harm anyone.”

“Leo is so cute. She lets me ride on her when she runs.”

Ms. Claire and Tilura tried to persuade him as well.

“Tilura... So you rode on a Silver Fenrir...? And you were not hurt?”

“Yes. Leo is so gentle. She ran carefully so that I wouldn’t fall off!”

“Wuff! Wuff!”

So Tilura had noticed that Leo had adjusted her speed while running.

Again, Leo nodded her head in agreement.

“I came here because I haven’t seen you two in a while... And now there is a Silver Fenrir here, and Claire has a fenrir familiar...”

Mr. Ekenhart muttered in a troubled voice. Well, I could understand how he felt. Even if I was the one who was mostly responsible for all of it.

## Chapter 94

I asked him why he kept bringing marriage proposals

It was only natural for Mr. Ekenhart to feel troubled.

Some strange man was suddenly close to his daughter, and that man had a Silver Fenrir, a monster that wasn’t supposed to obey anyone.

Not only that, but there was even a fenrir, and they were also feared as vicious monsters. But his daughter claimed that it was now her familiar. This would give anyone a headache.

Still, he kept calm and sipped the tea that Ms. Lyra had poured, and we continued to talk.

Of course, I had said everything that was important, so it was more of a casual chat that included Ms. Claire, Tilura, and Sebastian.

Though, it also seemed that he was using this idle chatter to hide his unease with the situation.

Well, at the very least, Mr. Ekenhart seemed to like me well enough. So I was relieved.

It made me feel even more foolish for having worried so much about manners and formal clothes.

Though, I'm sure Leo's presence had a lot to do with his trust in me.

"...Now, I must change the subject..."

The time had passed peacefully for a while, but then Mr. Ekenhart suddenly changed the subject.

Immediately, Ms. Claire, Tilura, and Sebastian went rigid, and I could tell that they were bracing themselves.

"Claire, Tilura. I think it's about time to make a decision. And so I brought you some offers."

"...Father..."

"Offers..."

"Your Grace..."

To no one's surprise, Mr. Ekenhart brought up the matter of marriage.

Ms. Claire and Tilura sighed audibly.

Even Sebastian was sighing. Though, he did it subtly, so that his master wouldn't hear. But I didn't miss it.

They had told me about how he would bring so many offers, and that it was always difficult to refuse every single one. So it was understandable.



“Father...about these offers...”

“You will not be able to reject these ones. After all, I’ve brought you the best of the best this time. Besides, I need you to decide soon. For your own benefit, and for mine.”

It seemed that Mr. Ekenhart was especially confident this time.

And so even though Ms. Claire had discussed this in advance, she was overwhelmed by his fervor, and became speechless. Even Tilura had an expression of resignation.

However, I still did not understand why Mr. Ekenhart felt so strongly about it.

It looked to me that he loved his daughters deeply.

...Maybe even too much, as he became emotional quickly. But perhaps most fathers were like that. I wouldn’t know.

But would a loving father be so eager to have his daughters go out and get married?

Usually a doting father would want to keep his daughters for as long as possible...

Well, that was what people thought back in my world.

...I might as well ask him then.

Perhaps it would be a rude question, but at this point, I had learned that Mr. Ekenhart didn’t care much about manners.

He wasn’t going to change his opinion of me over one question.

“Duke Ekenhart.”

“Just call me Mr. I’m sure that’s much easier for you? Besides, since you have a Silver Wolf with you, your position could be seen as being above a duke.”

Sebastian had said something like that before.

Because I had a Silver Fenrir, I ranked higher than a duke.

Well, that wasn’t important right now.

“Uh, Mr. Ekenhart. Why are you so insistent on having Ms. Claire and Tilura get married?”

“Hmm? Have they not told you the reason?”

“I’ve only heard that you bring numerous offers, but not the reason...”

“I see... I thought that Claire would have told you.”

“No, father. In fact, you haven’t even told me why you are so insistent.”

Apparently, Ms. Claire didn’t know the reason for it either.

Mr. Ekenhart looked at his daughter with surprise and confusion.

“What are you saying, Claire? If anything, it all started because of what you said.”

“Me? I don’t remember...”

Oh? This was going in an odd direction...?

None of them had ever said anything outside of the fact that he pestered them with talk of marriage proposals.

And yet he claimed that Ms. Claire had started it all.

“...I suppose it’s not surprising that you forgot...”

“Forgot... But what did I say?”

“It was years ago... I think it was right after Tillura was born. So about ten years ago. Back then, you always wanted to hear stories about the founder of this house.”

“...Yes, I do remember asking to hear those stories back then...”

So it would be around the time that the servants were spreading rumors about Ms. Claire being the reincarnation of the founder.

Ms. Claire was always so full of curiosity, and had a fixation with Silver Fenrirs, so it was easy to imagine her being interested in such stories.

“I talked about it once back then. About how she married through an arranged marriage.”

I see.

Well, if she had become a duchess, then such strategic marriages would make sense.

But what did that have to do with Ms. Claire?

As Mr. Ekenhart talked, both Sebastian and Tilura listened with deep interest.

But Ms. Claire still looked puzzled as if she had no recollection of this.

“It was then that you started talking about how you too wanted an arranged marriage. Of course, I did not want that for you at the time, and I tried to stop you...”

“I said such a thing...”

“Lady Claire...”

“Sister...”

Ms. Claire was quite stunned by this revelation.

While she didn’t remember it, she had now learned that she was the reason all along.

Not only that, but Sebastian and Tilura were looking at her accusingly.

It was as if they were blaming her for all the hardships they had faced up until now.

However, I had also learned that Mr. Ekenhart was a typical father after all, and had not wanted to send his daughters off to be married.

I suppose fathers really were the same everywhere.

## Chapter 95

The conclusion of the matter of arranged marriage

“Even though I tried to stop you, Claire, you left the house, claiming that you were going to find someone... Realizing that you were likely to pick someone most unsuitable, with your impulsive ways, I decided that I had to find someone first. And so I’ve been selecting trustworthy candidates ever since.”

“...That...but I don’t remember that at all...”

“So Lady Claire’s actions were the reason all along...”

Ms. Claire... You can’t go out and search for someone to have an arranged marriage with. That’s not how it works...

Even I had to give her an exasperated look when I heard this.

I had actually thought that her ability to take action was commendable, but this time, it had ill consequences.

“Not only that, but then you started saying that you would arrange a marriage for your newly born sister. And since there was no way that you could choose the right person, I decided to do it instead. Once you get an idea in your head, even I cannot stop you.”

In other words, Mr. Ekenhart was choosing candidates before Ms. Claire could do something disastrous.

“...I do remember that you told me about the first duchess’s marriage... And though it was arranged, they were fond of each other and lived happily... However, I do not remember doing any of those other things....”

“...Well, I do not blame you... It was just when she died, and you spent many days weeping. Perhaps the shock of it has affected your memory.”

“...Father...are you talking about mother?”

“Mmm.”

So her ancestor had been in a happy marriage.

But more importantly, Ms. Claire’s mother had died....

Now that I thought about it, while they had talked about Mr. Ekenhart many times, I had never heard anything about their mother.

Apparently, it was when Tilura was born, so she didn’t remember. But it was a sad time for Ms. Claire, and she had tried to forget it.

That might explain why Ms. Claire could seem overprotective. Whether it was leaving the mansion because she was worried about Tilura's illness, or her attitude towards Sherry. Losing her mother so early might have made her feel like she had to take her mother's place.

"Mother...I don't remember her..."

"Because you were just born, Tilura. It can't be helped."

Mr. Ekenhart said gently to Tilura, who muttered sadly.

Ms. Claire seemed to be remembering how she felt when her mother died. And her eyes looked misty.

And then Mr. Ekenhart continued.

"She... My wife was always quite frail. She was weakened greatly after Claire's birth, but managed to get through it. But that wasn't the case with Tilura... But you know, Claire and Tilura. She was happy to have you two."

"...She was?"

Asked Tilura. Mr. Ekenhart nodded.

"Aye, she said that she was happy. And so once she had passed away, I felt that I had to raise you two so that she would be proud. Thankfully, you two took after me when it comes to physique."

Ms. Claire and Tilura took after their father?

...Well, I didn't quite agree with that... But perhaps it was more of a general toughness.

"Mother..."

A tear ran down Ms. Claire's face as she thought about her mother.

I could not have predicted that talk of marriage proposals would lead to talk of the death of their mother.

As Tilura didn't know her mother, she did not cry. But she also seemed to lack her usual cheerfulness, and was in a dark mood.

And while it had nothing to do with me, these were people I was indebted to, and I could relate to their experience as well.

My parents had also died when I was young.

It was an accident, but due to my age, I didn't really understand the circumstances.

And so I was taken in and raised by my father's older brother, and they were very fond of me.

My uncle's family were very kind, but there was a part of me that did not want to be taken care of by people who weren't my parents.

Thinking back, it was probably a combination of missing my parents, and going through a rebellious phase. Regardless, once I started highschool, I got a part time job and started living alone.

My uncle and his family were very worried about me, but I brushed off their concerns and focused on working.

Still, I must have been very lonely. After all, I had rescued Leo and brought her home.

Leo helped with that feeling of loneliness, but I had come to this world without ever being able to repay my uncle and his family for their kindness.

I had always thought that once I started a full-time job, I would be able to start giving back to them... But in the end, I was so busy with work and never had time for them.

...Well, I think that is enough talk about me.

“...Father, while I do not remember any of that, I am sorry for the trouble I caused back then.”

“Hahaha. Well, I knew you had a strong fixation with your ancestor. So don't worry.”

After some moments, Ms. Claire had collected herself and apologized to her father.

Mr. Ekenhart just laughed and forgave her with a pat on the head with his large hand.

As he was very gentle, I knew that he wasn't, but...he still had the appearance of some bandit...  
Oh, I was thinking rude thoughts again.

“Now, father. Can we agree to leave all this talk of marriage behind us? After all, I would very much like to make such decisions for myself.”

“If that's what you say, then that's what we will do. I will turn down all of the candidates myself.”

“Thank you.”

“Are you fine with that, Tilura?”

“I don't know anything about marriage yet. And so I don't want to be meeting anyone right now.”

She was too young to even understand what marriage was.

Some girls thought of marriage even at a young age, but Tilura was not one of them.

So it was completely normal for her to not understand yet.

“Very well. Now, that's enough talk of that. Sebastian, is my room ready? I haven't gotten much rest on my way here. Now that I'm relieved after seeing my daughters, I would like to get some sleep.”

“Yes, Your Grace. It has been prepared. However, there is one other matter...”



“...Oh? It is rather unusual for you to say such things. What is it then?”

Mr. Ekenhart looked at Sebastian quizzically, but Sebastian just turned to look at me.

Was this about selling the herbs?

Chapter 96

Mr. Ekenhart seemed to like me

“Earlier, Mr. Takumi talked to you about having the Gift...”

“Ah, that Weed Cultivation thing? Having a Silver Fenrir was surprising enough, but to have the Gift as well...”

So it was about the selling contract for the herbs after all.

While I had explained to him that I had the Gift, I hadn’t really talked about how I would use it.

“Father, Mr. Takumi is able to use his gift to cultivate all kinds of herbs.”

“Oh? Such as?”

“First, he made some Ramogi, which was used to heal Tilura’s illness. And then when testing it later, he was able to make Loe.”

“Loe... Loe!? That rare and expensive Loe?”

“Yes, that is right. Mr. Takumi was able to make it very easily. I, Tilura, and Sebastian all saw him do it.”

So even Mr. Ekenhart was surprised about the Loe... Sebastian had told me that it was expensive, but still...

After that, Ms. Claire and Sebastian continued to explain to him about my Gift and the herbs I made.

“Aside from that, he’s also made many other varieties of plants.”

“Mr. Takumi is doing some research in order to find the best way to use his Gift. He’s even created plants that I have never seen before. And Lady Claire and I can confirm that they were effective.”

They were talking about the herb that I passed out in the forest.

It was known that if I used the Gift while thinking of something, I could usually create a plant that was just like what I had imagined.

Well, I might end up fainting again like I did after returning from the forest. So I needed to be careful that I don’t overuse it. And I also had to be cautious when it came to the effect.

“Hmm... I see. This Weed Cultivation is clearly a useful Gift. So, what do you want me to do, Claire and Sebastian?”

“Father, I want you sign a sales contract with Mr. Takumi.”

“Mr. Takumi has already agreed to it. I’m sure that Your Grace understands the advantages it will have for this family.”

“Indeed... Mr. Takumi, is this true? It is a great Gift, and the Liebert family will surely make a profit by selling the herbs. But I have to know that the person with the Gift is fully satisfied with the arrangement.”

While Ms. Claire and Sebastian urged Mr. Ekenhart to make the contract, he remained calm as he turned to me.

His beloved daughter and trusted butler were asking him, but he put more importance on my opinion. Perhaps he was a very sympathetic person.

And if the family businesses were going well, then it meant that Mr. Ekenhart must be talented when it comes to trade.

In my old world, I would sometimes see people persuade others forcefully, and make contracts that were only profitable for their own company. And so it was quite refreshing.

With someone like this, I had no reason to hesitate.

It wouldn't be like before, where my life was nothing but work.

"Yes. As Ms. Claire and Sebastian have said, I would very much like to make a contract with your family."

"I see. So it's not because they asked you to do it?"

"Yes. Ms. Claire merely told me of the advantages. And the disadvantages as well. However, I am not one to think only of profit. Besides, if I can be any use to the people who have helped me, then I intend to do just that."

"Hmm..."

Upon hearing this, Mr. Ekenhart was deep in thought.

He was looking at me very seriously, as if appraising me. Perhaps he was trying to determine if I really meant what I said.

And so I made a point to meet his gaze and not look away.

To be honest, it was a little intimidating, due to the fact that he still looked like a bandit.

However, I had some experience with maintaining eye contact during a presentation with a client, which came in handy here.

Well, not that I was giving a presentation now.

“...Hahahaha!”

“Father?”

“Your Grace?”

“Wuff?”

“Kyu?”

After we had stared at each other for some time, Mr. Ekenhart suddenly burst into laughter.

Ms. Claire and Sebastian were taken aback by the sudden outburst.

Even Leo and Sherry looked puzzled as they looked at him.

While Tilura hadn't said anything, she was also tilting her head and seemed confused.

“Well, I can see that you are not lying. You're all right, Mr. Takumi. In fact...I should be the one asking you.”

“Father. Does that mean...?”

“Aye. We shall sign this contract. It will be top priority. It's not often I meet a man who won't look away from me when being stared down.”

“...Most people are afraid of your appearance, father...”

Mr. Ekenhart... He was completely aware of the effect his appearance had...

In any case, the matter had been settled.

I would finally have a job and income in this world.

Now, I just needed to secure enough money to pay them back for the things I bought in the town.

“Sebastian will handle the contract and clauses etcetera and hand it to you later. This is a matter of great importance to our family.”

“Certainly.”

“Father, you must pay Mr. Takumi properly.”

“Of course. I am not here to exploit him. That is not the Liebert way. It would affect the trust people have in our business. And since Mr. Takumi is a man of importance, he will be paid enough to build his own house. Hahaha!”

“But I... I don't mind an average salary?”

It was good that Mr. Ekenhart liked me, but I didn't want to be overpaid either.

And while there were still several factors, such as being overpaid, that made me anxious, I still breathed a sigh of relief now that I would be able to make a living for myself in this world.

## Chapter 97

I checked the terms of the contract

After I had finished talking with Mr. Ekenhart and the others, I returned once to my room.

“Phew... Things somehow wrapped nicely, eh?”

“Wuff.”

The nervousness before meeting Mr. Ekenhart had disappeared immediately, but he was still the head of a great noble house.

And he had a different, unexpected impact. So I must have become tense without knowing it, since my shoulders were a little sore.

It had been a while since I had last gotten sore shoulders... Maybe I could make a remedy with Weed Cultivation... No, it was best not to waste it right now.

I doubted it would be enough to have such an effect, but I had to be careful so that I didn't faint again.

"Wuff. Wuff."

"Hmm? What is it, Leo?"

As I sat on the bed and rotated my shoulders and stretched, Leo came close and pushed her nose into me.

"Wuff. Wuff."

It looked like she wanted me to give her some attention.

I had been quite busy today, after all.

"There, there. Sorry that I couldn't play with you today."

"Wuff, wuff."

As I patted Leo on the head, she wagged her tail happily.

There was still some time until dinner, so I would play with her until then.

And so I hugged Leo, just like Tilura did, and scratched her under the jaw and between the ears, and combed her body with my fingers to her heart's content.

However, it was while doing this that I realized that Leo was pretty dirty.

Because we had been exploring the forest... While she went swimming in the river, she still was not clean enough.

“Leo...you're quite dirty, huh?”

“Wuff!?”

Leo twitched and then froze when I muttered those words.

I guess she knew what I was going to say next.

But even if Leo didn't like it, I couldn't let her stay this filthy... And as Leo stood there frozen, I continued to announce her sentence.

“After dinner, you'll have to take a bath.”

“...Wuff...”

The expected words came from my mouth, and Leo's head drooped weakly.

I tried to console the depressed Leo by petting her. Then there was a knock on the door.

What was it...? It was too early for it to be dinner.

“Yes?”

“Mr. Takumi. Do you have a moment?”

It was Sebastian's voice that came from the other side of the door.

Has something happened?

"Of course."

"Excuse me. Oh, I see you are playing with Leo."

"Yes. I haven't been able to give her much attention lately. And she seemed a little lonely."

"Wuff."

"I see. That is a good thing. However, she does not appear to be in high spirits now?"

"Ah. Well, Leo's coat has become quite dirty. And so I said that she'd need to take a bath. That's why she is like this."

"Hohoho. That cannot be helped then. After all, it's important to stay clean. Especially when one's fur is as beautiful as Leo's."

"That's true. Did you hear that, Leo? Even Sebastian agrees, so don't be so moapy about taking a bath."

"...Wuff..."

Leo nodded as if forced to agree.

Still, she had already bathed once since becoming so big, so I expected it would be easier this time.

Huh? We had gotten distracted by talk of Leo. But why was Sebastian here again?

"Mr. Sebastian. I believe you wanted to say something to me?"



“Oh, that is right. Here, Mr. Takumi.”

“What’s this?”

Sebastian handed me several sheets of paper.

They were close to A4 size and bound like a booklet. And each page was filled with letters.

A quick glance at them showed that they were written in some language that was not Japanese. And yet I could still read it just fine.

I wonder why... But then again, we were able to speak to each other...perhaps I had received a bonus, aside from getting the Gift when coming to this world.

I didn’t know what the answer was, but I pushed it away for now, as there was no point in thinking about it.

“This is the contract with His Grace. In your case, Mr. Takumi, you are entrusting the selling of your herbs to the company. There are clauses related to that and payment. While His Grace and you have already agreed to it, such things need to be properly confirmed. And so you must read this carefully. And if you still agree, the contract can be signed.”

“I see.”

I had assumed that the matter was settled in the drawing room.

But I suppose it had to be checked first. If it was all just verbal promises, then that could lead to trouble in the future.

And so I stopped petting Leo and then sat down on the bed in order to read the contract carefully.

“Please read through the contents carefully. And let me know if you have any questions or if there is anything you want to change. Now, please excuse me.”

“I understand. I should be finished reading it by dinner, so I’ll let you know if I have any questions then.”

“Yes, very good, sir.”

And then Sebastian left the room, and I began to read through the contents of the contract.

Now that it was decided that Leo would take a bath, she rolled up into a sulky ball on the floor.

I was sure she would be better by dinner time.

“Hmm...I see...”

I had seen contracts like these many times at my old job.

However, compared to those ones, the contract with the duke seemed to lean highly in my favor.

But there was still a lot that I didn’t know about this world, and so I would have to ask Sebastian about them later.

...Like this stuff about dealing with monster and bandit attacks...

It was probably about compensation when products were lost, but then again, I could be wrong.

But the duke was doing his best to treat me fairly, and so it would be rude if I didn’t even understand the contents.

And so I would make a check mark on the parts I didn’t understand or had questions regarding.

Ah, I needed something to write with... Now that I think about it, I did buy a pen last time I went shopping.

I got up from the bed and grabbed the pen that was on my desk.

This wasn't like the fountain pens from my old world, but was a quill pen. And so it was part of a set that contained an inkpot.

And while it looked luxurious, I was not used to writing with it, and so it was with shaky hands that I marked the contract.

And so for a while, I read the contents until Ms. Lyra came to tell us that dinner was ready.

By then, I had most of the contract in my head.

And so Ms. Lyra and I woke up the sulking Leo, and then I took the contract and headed to the dining hall.

## Chapter 98

Mr. Ekenhart did not care about manners

When I arrived at the dining hall, Mr. Ekenhart, Ms. Claire, and Tilura were already gathered there.

And so I went over to my usual seat at the table after Ms. Lyra gestured for me to go.

While Ms. Claire said it didn't matter, I did wonder if I was just allowed to sit anywhere when Mr. Ekenhart was here... There was likely a formal seating arrangement that I wasn't aware of...

"Be at ease, Mr. Takumi. I don't care about little details regarding manners, anyway."

"...Okay."

As I had looked a little restless after sitting down, Mr. Ekenhart was able to tell that I was self-conscious.

Ms. Claire had said the same thing, and so if both felt that way, it must be fine.

Now that I think of it, it was probably because she had been raised by such a father that she wasn't so surprised or disturbed when looking at me.

Once everyone was settled, the food was brought out and placed on the table.

Ms. Helena, the head cook, served the food herself as she explained it to Mr. Ekenhart.

The main dish was meat. Thick steaks covered in a savory sauce were placed in front of everyone.

Of course, Leo had her sausages as usual.

Perhaps the food was especially good today in order welcome Mr. Ekenhart.

It was served with some york pudding.

Maybe for dessert, they would bring out some with sweet butter cream as well.

...At Ms. Claire's request.

"Well, let's eat then."

Said Mr. Ekenhart, and everyone started to eat.

First, I got to work on the thick steak that was in front of me.

It was eaten with a knife and fork, and was more delicious than any meat dish I had ever eaten.

No meat had ever been so tender...and the sauce was incredible...

Was it the quality of the meat, or the skill of the cook... In any case, I'm sure that Ms. Helena had done her best.

“...Father... Can you not eat with better manners?”

“Hmm? ...Gulp. ...Hahaha. Well, meat tastes better when you eat it boldly!”

As Ms. Claire had drawn attention to it, I looked over to Mr. Ekenhart and saw that he had abandoned his knife and skewered his steak with his fork, and then carried it directly to his mouth where he bit a chunk out of it.

And then he just laughed at his daughter’s disapproval.

...I had been prepared for this, but it really was a sight to behold.

Leo also had her head in her bowl and was eating her meat and sausages ravenously. The two were rather alike.

On the other hand, Sherry was sitting on a small platform next to Tilura’s chair, and it was from there that she ate her food that was set out on the table.

It was the same steak we were all eating, only she nibbled daintily on hers from the edges.

...If only Leo would do the same. Then the area around her mouth wouldn’t get so dirty...

“Ha... You would think I would be used to it by now. But when eating with you, father, I start to wonder why I bother to have good manners at all.”

“Hahaha. Good food must be eaten quickly! However, do not mistake me, I do eat properly when out in public!”

“I sincerely hope so...”

Ms. Claire muttered with a sigh. But her father just laughed and continued to tear through his meat.

Well, he was still a duke, so I’m sure he did act differently during formal appearances.

After having her food praised by the duke, Ms. Helena bowed her head and said, ‘I’m honored.’

She had clearly put a lot of effort into it, so she must be happy.

And so I watched them enjoy their meal, and ate until I was full.

Of course, just as I anticipated, a sweet york pudding was brought out as well.

...If I stayed in this house for too long, I would start to get fat. That’s how good the food was...

“Mr. Takumi. Did you have time to look through the documents?”

“Ah, yes. I read all of it.”

After dinner, as I drank Ms. Lyra’s tea and rested, Sebastian came up to me.

I had been rather distracted by Mr. Ekenhart’s eating habits, and the delicious food, that I had forgotten about the important contract.

“Mr. Takumi, were you satisfied with the contents of the contract that Sebastian gave you?”

“About that, I do have a few questions, if it is all right?”

“Yes, of course. If you have questions or if there is anything you want altered, please say it.”

“Uh, let’s see...”

For some time after that, I went over the details with mainly Sebastian, and also Mr. Ekenhart.

There were a lot of questions I wanted to ask.

And while there weren’t any changes for me to demand, there was one point I was unsure of.

“Um...there’s one last thing.”

“Yes, what is it?”

“Well...about this contract. I just feel like it’s terribly advantageous for me.”

“So that’s what it is...hmm. Your Grace?”

“Aye. I can see that you’ve read through it carefully. That’s good.”

Mr. Ekenhart was oddly impressed by this, but surely reading through a contract properly was normal, if not vital.

After all, who knows what kind of trouble would come in the future.

“Mr. Takumi. The conditions of that contract were decided on through serious discussion between my father, Sebastian, and I.”

“Yes. And if there is a reason why it appears to be so favorable towards you, it is because you are worth that much to this house.”

“This field of selling herbs will be new for the family business. But with your Gift, Weed Cultivation, we will still be able to guarantee a certain quality and quantity. In other words, even with conditions that are favorable towards you, we still want to work with you.”

“I see...”

As for me, these were people who I felt that I owed a debt to, and so I didn’t really need such conditions to convince me... But if they insisted, then I suppose it was fine.

Ah, but there was one addition I wanted to make.

I signed the contract with the duke

“Once word about you spreads, Mr. Takumi, it won’t just be just the nobles who will react, but the merchants as well.”

“And so we want to give you the best conditions possible, so that you will do business with us.”

“Mr. Takumi. What do you say?”

“...Indeed... To be honest, it’s more than I could have hoped for. ...That being said, if I could make just one addition to it?”

It was clear that it wasn’t just Mr. Ekenhart, but Ms. Claire was also making the request.

They were both quite passionate about the matter.

However, I wanted to make another adjustment that would be in my favor.

While it wasn’t written in the contract, it was very important for me.

“What is it? We can be flexible within reason.”

“...Umm, just for a little while longer... Would I be able to stay in this mansion?”

“...”

As Sebastian said they could be flexible, I was quite hopeful when I told them of the condition I wanted to add.

However, they all looked at me with dumbfounded expressions.

Well, Leo was still preoccupied with her milk, and Tilura was preoccupied with watching Sherry, who was also drinking milk.



But the others were dead silent.

After a few seconds, Mr. Ekenhart burst into laughter as if highly amused.

“Hahaha!”

“...Ha... And to think that I was bracing myself for a ridiculous demand...”

“...But it’s also the exact kind of thing I’d expect from Mr. Takumi.”

As Mr. Ekenhart’s laugh echoed through the room, Ms. Claire and Sebastian looked at me with exasperation.

Huh? Was it really that strange?

As someone who had no one else to rely on in this world, it was very important...

I didn’t have any money yet, which meant I could not get a room at an inn. I would not even be able to buy food.

I suppose I could have Leo hunt orcs, and I did have some experience living in the forest now, but I would still prefer a proper room and meals.

As I thought of such things, Mr. Ekenhart laughed as he said,

“Hahaha! You are a funny one, Mr. Takumi. Your wish is granted. You can stay in this house for as long as you want. I’ll make sure that the maids tend to your needs. ...In fact, you could come and stay at the main house, if you want?”

“Mr. Takumi, you can stay with us for good, if you want. After all, there is Sherry... I think I would be more at ease if you were here.”

“...The contract aside, we servants had all but assumed that you would be staying here with us... Still, should this be added to the contract, Your Grace?”

“No, that won’t be necessary. Mr. Takumi is a friend now. So he can stay for as long as he wants, contract or no contract.”

“Certainly.”

“Uh...are you sure?”

In short, they were welcoming me into the mansion.

According to Sebastian, they had meant for me to stay here, even if I never asked about it.

But I would not have thought they’d allow me to stay here without the contract.

After all, there was the matter of food, especially for Leo. And so it would not have been strange for them to eventually ask that I take my leave.

It seemed that I had completely underestimated the Liebert family.

“Now, Mr. Takumi. Will you agree to sign the contract for the selling of herbs?”

“Yes. Please.”

I nodded at Sebastian’s words.

And then Ms. Lyra produced the sheet where I signed my name, and the contract was concluded.

They didn’t have signature stamps in this world.

Well, even if they did, I didn’t have one, which would be a hassle.

Speaking of which, I had signed my name in Japanese, but when I looked at it, the name on the paper was written in the language of this world. And everyone was able to read it.

...I wonder if this mystery will ever be answered... Perhaps I should ask Sebastian about it later.

He seemed to enjoy finding explanations for mysteries like this.

Once our business was done, and we had enjoyed our tea amidst a relaxed atmosphere, we bade each other good night, and retired to our rooms.

Mr. Ekenhart had rode long, and was tired, and meant to get an early rest.

Ms. Claire and Tilura were going to play with Sherry for a little while. But I hoped they wouldn't stay up too late so that they couldn't get up tomorrow...especially Tilura.

As Leo and I walked back to our room, I suddenly remembered something.

I had been quite distracted by the contract that Sebastian brought to me, but I had planned to bathe Leo tonight.

Leo had eaten to her full, and was so satisfied that she had also forgotten about it. She was currently walking ahead of me towards the room.

"Leo... Aren't you forgetting something? We need to take a bath."

"Wuff!? Wuff-wuff."

Leo jumped and then she turned to look at me and shake her head in protest.

"Sorry, that's not going to work. You need to be clean and set a good example for Sherry, all right? Now, let's go."

"Wuff...wuff..."

Perhaps it was a dirty tactic, but using Sherry was an effective way of getting Leo to listen.

Was it as an older sister? Or a mother? Not only was Leo fond of Sherry, but she had also taken the role of mentor. And so I knew she would not do anything that could be a bad influence.

...Now that I think about it, did Sherry hate baths as well...?

I would ask Ms. Claire about it tomorrow. If she didn't hate them, perhaps she could bathe with Tilua.

She had wanted to bathe with Leo, so she would likely feel the same about Sherry.

It was with such thoughts that I headed to the bathing area, along with Leo, who was mournful but obedient.

It took a little over an hour, but I was able to wash away the dirt and clean Leo thoroughly.

And before I got in the tub, I asked Ms. Lyra to bring some towels so that she could dry Leo.

In the meantime, I soaked in the hot water and warmed my body.

While I had wiped myself in the forest, I had avoided bathing in the river, as it was too cold.

And as someone raised in Japan, soaking in hot water eased both my mind and body.

After I was warmed up, I got out of the water and then took the clean and dried Leo and returned to my room.

Leo seemed rather exhausted after braving the bath she hated so much. I patted her on the back and then climbed into bed.

Today, I met the duke for the first time and signed a contract. It had been a nervous day for me, and so I was mentally exhausted.

As soon as I lay on my side, the drowsiness I hadn't felt a moment ago suddenly washed over me. And without resisting it, I quickly fell into a deep sleep.

## Chapter 100

I showed him Weed Cultivation

The next day, Tilura came to our room just as I had finished getting ready, and so we headed to the dining hall together.

“Wuff. Wuff.”

“Kyau. Kyau.”

“Leo is clean now!”

Leo was carrying Tilura on her back, and seemed to be in a good mood.

Sherry also looked happy, as she was carried in Tilura's arms.

Tilura was feeling the texture of Leo's washed fur with relish.

It really was a good thing that I had gotten Leo to bathe, even if she hated it.

Now that I think about it, while fenrirs were smaller than Silver Fenrirs, if Sherry eventually grew large enough to carry people, would Tilura be happy?

Right now, she seemed happy that she was able to carry and hold the fenrir, but I could also imagine her being happy once Sherry grew up.

Well, I didn't know how long it would take for her to grow to that size. Or if she even would get that big.

“Come in.”

We arrived at the dining hall, and then Tilura knocked on the door while still riding on Leo's back.

Ms. Claire answered from the other side, and then Ms. Lyra, who had arrived first, opened the door.

But she had been waiting in front of my room just a moment ago... And while she had gone ahead of us, she had already finished preparing the tea and was standing by for us...

Really, how did the servants in this mansion move so quickly?

I thought of such things as I entered the room and greeted the others.

"Good morning, Ms. Claire. Sebastian."

"Good morning, Mr. Takumi."

"Good morning, sir."

I sat down at the usual seat and then breakfast was brought in.

"Huh? Where is Mr. Ekenhart?"

"...Father is still asleep. He is very tired from yesterday."

"His Grace is not good with waking up early... He rarely even eats breakfast."

"I see."

"Father is a sleepyhead."

When I asked about Mr. Ekenhart's absence, Ms. Claire and Sebastian told me with a little exasperation.

While it might be a little rude to say, it was true that it was harder to recover once you grew older... Though, I didn't know how old Mr. Ekenhart was.

He looked to be in his thirties, but considering Ms. Claire's age, he was probably in his forties.

Still, Tilura... Sleepyhead was rather harsh...

"Nevermind father. Let's eat breakfast."

"Yes. ...Thank you."

"Yes!"

"Wuff!"

"Kyau."

I felt a little bad about eating before their father, the head of the house, had arrived, but if he wasn't awake yet then it could not be helped.

Ms. Claire also seemed a little severe towards him, but perhaps daughters generally felt like this towards fathers at that age.

And so as if to follow Tilura, Leo and Sherry's eager replies, I also started to eat.

Ms. Helena's cooking was as delicious as always.

I thanked her in my heart as I enjoyed eating until I was full.

There was also a dessert, which was the same york pudding with buttercream that we had last night.

I suppose Ms. Claire had requested it again... She would start to get fat if she wasn't careful.

After we ate dessert, and were about to have our tea in the drawing room, the door suddenly flung open loudly.

“Wuff!?”

“Kyau?”

Leo and Sherry were startled by the sound, and they quickly turned their heads to look.

Even I was surprised.

It was Mr. Ekenhart, who came walking in.

“Morning! Claire and Tilura. And I see you’re here too, Mr. Takumi!”

“Good morning, father.”

“Father! Good morning!”

“Good morning, Your Grace.”

“...Good morning, Mr. Ekenhart.”

“...Wuff!”

“Kyau.”

He was so energetic, that it was hard to believe he would have trouble getting up in the morning.

Ms. Claire and Sebastian sighed visibly, but Tilura seemed happy to see her father.



Sherry looked happy as well, but Leo's answer had been more of a 'Oh, it's you...'

...Leo. He's the most important person here. So you should greet him properly, all right?

"Your Grace. Will you have your breakfast now?"

"No, I won't eat. More importantly, Mr. Takumi."

"Yes?"

Mr. Ekenhart refused his breakfast and addressed me.

I put down my cup of tea, which I had been sipping in order to calm myself after the startling appearance. And then I turned to face Mr. Ekenhart.

"About your Weed Cultivation. Can you show it to me? While we signed the contract, I haven't actually seen you use it yet."

"Father..."

"Your Grace..."

Ms. Claire and Sebastian looked at him with exasperation.

To sign a contract without even seeing the actual ability in action. It did seem rather careless for someone of his position...

But then again, Ms. Claire and Sebastian had vouched for me, and he also seemed to like me for some reason.

"Very well. I can show you in the back garden."

"Ah, I see! So you will!"

Mr. Ekenhart's eyes were shining with excitement. And so there was no way that I could refuse.

Not that I had any intention of refusing.

After I agreed to it, Mr. Ekenhart smiled broadly.

I ignored Ms. Claire and Sebastian's less enthusiastic reactions.

In spite of what I had heard about him, he now reminded me of a young boy who didn't really care about anything other than what interested him.

Perhaps Ms. Claire had inherited that trait.

She too was filled with curiosity... And even Sebastian became very engrossed in anything that caught his interest... What was it... Was this house going to be alright...?

Well, it was not my place to be worried about such things. But I couldn't help it, when they were so close by.

And so thirty minutes later, after we all finished drinking our tea, we went out into the back garden.