

Beloved Dog 211

Chapter 211

I Asked About Using Heat To Turn It Into a Different Liquor

“Thank you. Well, what do you want to ask me about then?”

“In a few days...about five days, I think, a large quantity of wine barrels will be delivered to this mansion.”

“Wine... And why is that?”

“You know how Range village is famous for its wine?”

“Yes.”

Now that she knew that we weren't there to launch some complaints, Ms. Helena looked quite relieved as she listened to what we had to say.

Range village's wine was quite famous, which was no surprise to anyone who tasted it.

And since she was a cook, Ms. Helena knew this as well.

“But a great deal of their wine is no longer drinkable.”

“Indeed... I hope everything is alright with them?”

“As for the village, things are fine... The reason for it was removed. So any future wine will be unaffected.”

Ms. Helena was concerned about the village, but Sebastian assured her that there was no problem now.

The glass sphere was no longer there, so there was nothing to affect the wine.

Besides, I doubt Mr. Hannes would allow anything like that to happen again.

He was also busy thinking about the village's future.

If there was anything that I could do to help, I would gladly do it.

“Regardless, all of the wine that will arrive will be undrinkable.”

“Undrinkable wine... Why would you bring that here?”

“As for that...”

“I will explain. ...While this wine is undrinkable...I thought it would be a waste to throw all of it out... And so I bought it from them.”

“Mr. Takumi...”

As I was the one who bought it, I thought that I best explain my reasons.

Sebastian agreed, as he stopped talking and turned to me.

While I said that I thought it would be a waste, my real motive had been to lessen the losses for the village.

“I’m sure you know just how good their wine is, Ms. Helena.”

“Yes. There is something about that wonderful taste that sets it apart from other wines. Though, Lady Claire does not drink very much, and so we do not buy it...”

Ms. Helena knew that wine from Range village was especially delicious.

Perhaps she had looked into it to use for her cooking.

“While Sebastian said that it is undrinkable...it can be drunk safely again by adding heat.”

“Heat... You are going to boil it?”

“Yes. That way, you can remove what is making it undrinkable.”

“...But, if you boil it...”

“Of course, it will no longer be alcoholic.”

Ms. Helena scowled at this.

“Well, I suppose it will be a good enough juice...”

“Ah... Yes. Lady Tilura will be able to drink it.”

“Yes. But I was wondering if there might be another way...”

“Another way to...drink the undrinkable wine...?”

Ms. Helena also agreed that Tilura would appreciate some grape juice.

When the wine was that good, it would still be delicious after boiling it.

Still, Ms. Helena folded her arms and tried to think of a different solution.

The other cooks, who had been listening, also looked like they were deep in thought.

“So, adding heat removes the illness? ...Is there no other way to remove it?”

“Well, the circumstances are rather special. But normally, that would be the only way.”

“...I see... It will be quite difficult then...”

Even though Ms. Helena was a brilliant cook, she could not easily think of an alternative method to doing it.

“...I might have an idea?”

As we pondered on this, one of the cooks suddenly spoke up.

“Really? What idea?”

“Well... I don’t know if it will actually work... But I’ve heard that there are ways of adding heat to wine and turning it into a different kind of alcoholic drink.”

“Indeed...?”

After Sebastian’s encouragement, the cook spoke, but with little confidence.

Adding heat to create a new drink... That did sound familiar...

“I have heard about that as well. ...It was a drink that they made in a far away place. Uhh, I think that they distill it to separate the components and then cool it off to make it liquid again...”

Ms. Helena had heard of it as well, and spoke as if remembering the method.

“Hmm? I’ve heard...”

“What is it, Mr. Takumi?”

“No, it’s just that this method sounds familiar...”

While I tried to remember where I had heard about it before, Sebastian asked me what I was talking about.

I answered, while searching through my memories.

“...Uh...heat...distill...liquid... Ah!”

“Did you remember something?”

As I thought of different things, it finally came to me, and I shouted loudly.

Now, they were all looking at me with hopeful expressions.

“Ummm, yes, the method of distillation. Boiling and evaporating. Something about separating things with different boiling points... I don’t know the details...”

I remember conducting experiments as a child.

Uh...we distilled wine to make another drink...

“It was...brandy.”

“Brandy...”

“That’s what it is?”

“Yes. At least, that was what it was called where I am from. It might have a different name here...”

“...I’ve never heard of it...”

Perhaps it wasn’t called brandy in this world.

According to Ms. Helena and the others, they did distill wine, so they would at least have something similar to brandy.

Chapter 212

We Decided To Try And Make Medicinal Liquor

“Hmm... Is that something that can be done here?”

“I don’t know... It’s not something that I have a lot of knowledge about... Besides, there is so much wine...”

“Indeed. I think it would be rather difficult. If my memory serves, it requires a great facility of some sort...”

“I see... In that case, I suppose there is no choice but to use the first method.”

Sebastian asked if it could be done here, but as I did not know enough about the process, I could not say.

When experimenting, we had done it in flasks...which could be prepared easily enough. But as for the other tools for distilling, I wasn’t so sure.

Ms. Helena agreed that it would be difficult to do here... Especially since there was so much wine.

And we couldn’t just store all of it here for long periods of time...as they would take up a lot of space.

“The first method...?”

“Yes. Mr. Takumi and I decided that we would have to use that method if there is no other way. Though, we were hoping that you could think of something, since you’re such a good cook.”

“I see. And what is that method?”

“Mixing it with medicinal herbs. The herbs can heal someone who becomes ill after drinking the wine. In that case, perhaps mixing it directly into the wine can purify it...”

While I wasn't as expectant as Sebastian, I did have some hope that Ms. Helena would know something.

And well...the idea of brandy had come up.

...But it did not seem like it would be something that we could do...

“Herbs...medicinal liquor...”

“Exactly. ...While it will affect the taste a little... It seems like it would still be a better option to boiling it down. And if it turns out well, we might be able to sell it.”

“You're thinking about selling it as well?”

“We might as well... Of course, I have no idea if it will be good enough for that. However, it would help Range village. ...In case their wine stops selling.”

Boiling all of the wine would be a lot of work.

And since it was wine, most people would want to enjoy it as such... Especially people like Phillip.

And so if we could make it drinkable again with herbs, then that would be preferable.

Besides, if it worked, then perhaps it would also be effective as a kind of medicine in itself.

When asked if he meant to sell it like my herbs, Sebastian said that he was merely thinking of a future where the wine would no longer sell.

Indeed, if this could become a wine that improved your health in some way, it might be able to undo the harm to their reputation, and become a popular product.

“Indeed... You mean...the removal of the reason that it is undrinkable, or nullifying the effect? I don’t know...it would have to be tested...”

Ms. Helena thought hard on this method as she answered.

Yes, as it wasn’t like the disease was something that you could see, it was difficult to get a clear answer.

“Yes, in that case, why don’t we try and make some then?”

“While I agree that we should test it, how will you know that the problem has been removed?”

“We will have to get Leo’s cooperation.”

“Indeed.”

Yes, it would be a good idea to test and see if it would be drinkable.

And if that didn’t work, we would have to boil it.

If this happened, I would have to think about some other way to help Range village.

In any case, once we made this new wine, we would have to have Leo inspect it.

Perhaps Ms. Isabelle could also do it with some magic tools, but considering the distance, it would be faster to have Leo do it.

“Leo?”

Ms. Helena was puzzled when she heard this, as she did not know that Leo was able to tell the wine apart.

“The reason it cannot be drunk...to be blunt, it is the source of the disease...and it is not something that humans can detect. Apparently, there is some magic energy in it, but it’s too weak for our senses.”

“Source of the disease... Yes, no one would drink that.”

According to Ms. Isabelle, there was too little energy to detect.

Ms. Helena and the cooks looked alarmed when they heard about the wine being the reason that the disease had spread. But they then nodded understandingly.

“As for this source of the disease, Leo can sense it very clearly. Isn’t that right, Mr. Takumi?”

“Yes. It was thanks to Leo that we discovered that the wine was the issue in the first place.”

“This is something we have confirmed with Isabelle...uh, a professional when it comes to magic artifacts.”

“I see... In that case, we just have to let Leo inspect the finished product?”

“Yes. Leo will be able to tell right away if the wine is drinkable or not.”

I didn’t like to have to make Leo work so much like this, but I suppose we could make it up to her with a mountain of sausages.

I would ask Leo to do it later, saying that it was a request from Ms. Helena.

“I understand. As for the herbs that will be mixed into the wine...”

“Here they are.”

Ms. Helena had agreed, and the other cooks nodded.

Upon seeing this, Sabastian took out some powdered Ramogi from his pocket and handed it to her.

“Powdered Ramogi? Well, we will know soon enough if it works.”

“Aside from that, there is something else I wish to try.”

“Something else? What is it?”

Chapter 213

Leo Enjoyed Being Able To Play

“Ramogi that isn’t powdered... Petals with beneficial effects, dried and not dried. Also...”

Sebastian went on listing various herbs and states to Ms. Helena.

As for me, I did not think that adding Ramogi powder to the wine was likely to work. But Sebastian seemed convinced.

And by testing it with Ramogi in different states, as well as other herbs, we could see how the wine would be affected, and whether or not it was viable to make some medicinal liquor.

Regardless of the disease, he thought we could make some kind of health drink.

Indeed, I had considered it myself. Ramogi isn’t for health, so we should also try and test it with other herbs...

“Well, I suppose there is no harm in testing it... We can make a little bit and see what happens.”

“Very well.”

We already knew what effect Ramogi had on the illness, but that was not the case with other herbs.

For all we knew, some herbs might just make the illness even worse.

And so Sebastian wanted to test it in small batches first.

After making this request to Ms. Helena and the cooks, Sebastian and I left the kitchen.

“And now we just have to wait for Phillip to return with the wine barrels.”

“Yes. I do hope that the herbs are effective...”

“Well, as Ms. Helena said, we will have to test it and see.”

I suppose everyone felt a sort of anxiety when thinking about making something new.

“I am sorry that this took up more of your time than expected.”

“No. I do think it was a good idea, so please don’t worry about it.”

So saying, I separated from Sebastian and went out into the back garden.

“Ah, Mr. Takumi.”

“Master!”

“Wuff-wuff.”

“Kyau.”

In the garden, Tilura, Milina, and Sherry were riding on Leo and playing.

They saw and called out to me, and then Leo came running...

While still carrying her passengers.

“All of you. I see that you were nice enough to play with Leo while I was gone.”

“Oh, but it was Leo who was nice enough to play with us, master.”

“Leo was gone for so long!”

“Kyau-kyau!”

“I see. You must be happy, Leo.”

“Wuff-wuff.”

They all looked like they were having fun while riding on Leo.

As we had stayed in Range village for quite a long time, Tilura and the others were very happy to be able to play with Leo.

While she had returned to the mansion once to deliver the glass sphere, Leo had sensed that something was wrong and so returned to Range village immediately. So there would have been no time to play.

And now that she was able to play with them, Leo nodded happily and wagged her tail.

“Will you play with us too, Mr. Takumi?”

“No. I have to make some herbs. But you should all play to your heart’s content.”

“Do you need my help, master?”

“I’m fine. There’s no rush, so I’ll do it at a leisurely pace.”

I turned down Tilura’s invitation, and moved to a corner of the garden in order to make the herbs.

On the way, Milina offered to help me, but she seemed like she was having so much fun playing with Leo and Tilura.

As I didn't want to interrupt them, I refused and told her to continue playing.

While Sebastian said that it had taken up more time than usual, it had actually been less time than I expected.

I would have more than enough time to use Weed Cultivation, and I had no plans for doing anything afterwards.

"Hmm. That should be enough for now."

Unlike when in Range village, I could make all kinds of herbs, which I would then send to Mr. Kalis's store.

While I made extra Ramogi, I had not been making much of the other herbs, and so he would probably run out of stock soon.

In what was now a field of herbs, I listened to the others playing while I started picking.

And while I was working, I tried to think of which herbs might be good to combine with the wine.

"After all, I can't just leave everything to Sebastian. And I should think of which herbs out of the ones that I can make would be promising."

We were already going to use Ramogi, so leaving that aside... I wanted something that would be healthy.

And it should taste good as well.

But since it was alcoholic, it shouldn't be drunk too much either. Also, it would have to be a herb that wouldn't lose its effect when mixed.

I'd want something that through a synergistic effect, improved blood flow or cleaned your organs, perhaps.

“Oh, I have to be careful that I don't accidentally make something strange.”

If I think about herbs and touch the ground, even without intending to, I might accidentally activate Weed Cultivation.

Up until now, it had mostly worked out fine for me. But I didn't want to test with herbs that I wasn't already sure about.

First, we had to find herbs that we knew could be combined with the wine.

“Hmm... The thing is, medicine has not advanced very much in this world...”

Perhaps there were types of herbs that only I could think of.

I didn't know if I would actually be able to make them, but it was not a bad idea to think about it while using knowledge from my old world.

And so I continued to listen to the others play happily as I made herbs and thought about the wine.

...And was very careful to not accidentally activate Weed Cultivation.

A few days later, just before midday. As we could not act in regards to the store yet, there was not much to do.

I trained with Tilura and studied with Milina. And then I made herbs and thought of medicinal wine and Range village.

“Mr. Takumi. You have a visitor.”

“I do?”

“Yes, it’s Mr. Nick. He is waiting in the guest room.”

“Ah, I see. I’ll go at once.”

Just as I was thinking that it would be lunch time soon, Ms. Lyra came to tell me that Nick was here.

After returning to the mansion, a different person had been delivering the herbs to Mr. Kalis’s store for a few days.

This was to tell him that I had returned, and see how things were in the town.

But that ended yesterday, and from today, Nick would come to pick them up as usual.

Chapter 214

I Gave Nick His Salary

“Oh, I better prepare that as well.”

While on my way to the drawing room, I remembered that I had something to give to Nick, and so I returned to my room.

Once I was sure that I had it right, I took it and went to the drawing room.

“Brother! Long time no see!”

“Hello, Nick.”

As I hadn’t seen Nick since going to Range village, it had indeed been awhile.

His hair seemed to have grown a little...so he wasn’t completely bald.

...It sort of made him look like those highschool students who play baseball... Well, maybe not that young.

“Here, Mr. Takumi.”

“Thank you. Here you go, Nick.”

“Aye!”

Ms. Gelda had been waiting with the bag of herbs. I took it from her and passed it to Nick.

“Also...here.”

“...Money...? What am I to do with it?”

I gave Nick the gold, silver and bronze coins that I had brought from my room.

However, Nick didn’t understand why I was giving it to him.

“Well, you’ve been working very hard. This is your salary. ...Though, I deducted the advance I gave you last time.”

“...Salary... But...it’s so much!”

It was nearly a month since Nick started working for me, so I thought I better pay him properly now.

While he seemed to be working seriously, I needed to show him that he would be paid, or he might run away.

...Well, I didn’t want to create a situation like my old company. Overworked and underpaid...

As for the amount, I had decided it after discussing it with Sebastian.

“I don’t know if it is that much, but let’s just say that I expect you to continue to work hard.”

“If I am being paid this much... Brother, thank you! I’ll stay forever!”

“No, I’d rather you didn’t go that far...”

A few gold, silver and bronze coins.

According to Sebastian, it was a little higher than the average salary in Ractos.

Leaving that for now...

“I’ve also deducted the taxes already, so you can use this amount freely. As long as it isn’t anything disreputable.”

“Even the taxes...and there is so much left... I know. I will save up what I don’t use for living expenses! Mr. Kalis has taught me the importance of saving money.”

“I see.”

It seemed like Mr. Kalis was teaching Nick to save his money.

Regardless of how much he was getting paid, you never know what might happen.

So it would not hurt to save up.

While I had said that I had deducted the taxes, I had actually paid it separately.

It was when paying my own taxes that I realized that I had to calculate it separately and...

It wasn’t that I did them together because I was lazy or anything. Yes.

In fact, Sebastian said that I didn’t have to pay taxes, but since they were letting me stay at the mansion, and as long as I was living in this world, I wanted to pay it.

Besides, I was making more than I thought by selling herbs... And my savings continued to increase, even after buying the wine barrels. It was almost a little frightening, since I had been nothing but a humble commoner before.

Speaking of this world...well, the duke's lands, you were supposed to pay a fixed percentage from your salary as taxes.

There were no other kinds of taxes, like consumption taxes or fixed property taxes, and so you only needed to pay income taxes to be recognized as a citizen... That made things a lot easier to understand.

Though, there was a toll you had to pay when entering the lands of other nobles, which was about two or three silver...

And it was only one way, so you could go back for free.

With income taxes, you could choose to calculate it yourself, or have it deducted from your salary. I suppose if you didn't trust your employer, you might want to do it yourself.

Not only that, but no matter how much you earn, the tax rate is the same... It was impressive that they were able to run things like this. I suppose it was proof of how good Mr. Ekenhard was with his business.

Perhaps other nobles had much higher tax rates.

"Now, please deliver this to Mr. Kalis's store."

"Aye. I will do that. Leave it to me! Later!"

Nick had been moved close to tears after accepting his salary, and he was in good spirits as picked up the bag and headed back to Ractos.

After seeing him go, it was time for lunch.

I enjoyed Ms. Helena's cooking, which was as good as always, and once I was full, one of the butlers entered the dining hall.

"Excuse me... Mr. Sebastian..."

"Yes... What is it? ...I see. I will go right away."

The butler had whispered something into Sebastian's ear and then left the room.

"Excuse me, something has called for my attention. ...I'm terribly sorry, but I think you should stay here for a while longer."

"...What is it, Sebastian?"

Sebastian addressed the room in this way, but Ms. Claire was curious as to what had happened.

"A messenger has arrived from His Grace. ...But considering the distance from the main house, it is too soon..."

"Father? I see."

Apparently, there would be a message from Mr. Ekenhart.

If I remember correctly, it was about a week on horseback.

So a round trip would take two weeks... While Mr. Ekenhart had been contacted about the glass sphere, it had not been that long ago, even if it was before Sebastian arrived in Range village. So it was too soon.

What could this mean?

"Why would Mr. Ekenhart contact you so early..."

“Indeed... I do not know. Father is very impulsive... Something must have happened.”

I asked Ms. Claire, but she also did not seem to know.

Leo would be able to make the trip in much less time, but he certainly did not have a comparable method of transportation... How could such distance be covered in so little time...

Impulsive... Yes, he certainly appeared to be that way. But I doubt he could have thought of some revolutionary way to travel.

Chapter 215

Milina Did Her Best To Brew Some Tea

“Everyone, please drink.”

“Thank you, Lyra and Gelda.”

“And for you, Leo and Sherry.”

“Wuff-wuff.”

“Kyau.”

“Thank you. And you too, Milina.”

“No, I’m still learning... I just hope that I did it successfully.”

While we waited for Sebastian to return, Ms. Lyra poured tea for everyone.

Ms. Gelda prepared milk for Leo and Sherry. They both thanked her with a polite bark.

However, the tea that I was served was made by Milina, and she looked a little nervous.

Though she had been taught by Ms. Lyra, she was worried that this first cup of tea she made would not taste good.

“...Mmm. It’s delicious, Milina.”

“It is!? ...What a relief.”

I took a sip of the tea that Milina had made.

It was in no way inferior to Ms. Lyra’s offerings, and the clear smell and sweetness were just right.

I let her know this right away, in order that she could relax, and she was visibly relieved.

It must have taken some practice to get to this point...

“Milina did very well. She was very insistent that she would be able pour you tea that you would enjoy, Mr. Takumi. And so she practiced while you were in Range village.”

“Is that so? Thank you, Milina. It’s very good.”

“Oh it’s nothing... It just seems that you always like to relax with a cup of tea...”

So she really had been practicing while I was in Range village.

I thanked Milina again, but she was very modest.

Indeed, while in this mansion, my favorite way of relaxing was to sit back and rest with a cup of Ms. Lyra’s tea.

Milina must have observed this and wondered if there was anything that she could do.

“Sorry to keep you waiting.”

“Sebastian. What did my father say?”

As I drank the tea and waited, Sebastian returned before ten minutes had passed.

Ms. Claire knew that this involved her father, and she was rather anxious to learn what he had to say.

Tilura was also looking at Sebastian with an expression of concern.

“I can hardly believe it, but... His Grace will arrive at this house tomorrow.”

“Father?!”

“What happened!?”

“Wuff?”

In a quiet voice, Sebastian informed the people in the room of Mr. Ekenhart’s arrival.

Upon hearing this, Ms. Claire and Tilura raised their voices in alarm, and even Leo stopped drinking her milk and turned towards us.

...Well, she was probably just reacting to Tilura’s voice.

“Sebastian. When you say tomorrow...you mean that Mr. Ekenhart is already on his way here?”

“Yes, that would be the case. It seems that my previous report...the one before you went to Range village...he left as soon as it arrived.”

According to Sebastian’s explanation, Mr. Ekenharts would have left his house at about the time that I returned.

So what happened to the report that confirmed details of the glass sphere?

“Why is Mr. Ekenhart coming directly?”

“So he can finally deal with the store and the count. Apparently, it was the details about the suspicious sphere that made him decide on it. This was before speaking to Isabelle, and so we didn’t have much information yet...”

“Indeed...”

Thanks to Leo, we knew that there was something wrong with the sphere, and that it was the reason for the illness, but it wasn’t appraised by Ms. Isabelle yet.

We had many suspicions, but nothing had been confirmed. But Mr. Ekenhart was still going to come back and deal with the store.

“According to the messenger, it’s because Mr. Takumi and Leo discovered it... This shows how much His Grace trusts you two.”

“Leo and me...”

“Wuff?”

We had only spent a few days with Mr. Ekenhart.

While he had taught me to use a sword, I had no idea that I had earned enough trust to make a duke act.

Though, it could be...that the trust was in the Silver Fenrir...

“His Grace received the other report regarding Isabelle’s appraisal on his way here. And so he sent a messenger, which is the one who arrived today.”

“I see...”

“So father will be here tomorrow.”

Previously, when Mr. Ekenhart visited, he had also received word of Ms. Claire’s safety while he was on his way.

So something similar had happened this time as well.

But unlike that time, Mr. Ekenhart was not arriving on the same day, and so the servants at least had some time to prepare.

...Thinking this, I glanced towards Ms. Lyra and Ms. Gelda. They seemed quite nervous, when they usually seemed so calm and at ease.

Well, Ms. Gelda didn’t always look so calm, but it was rare to see Ms. Lyra like this.. I suppose preparing would be hard work regardless.

“If His Grace is coming...then you will have to tell him all about Range village, Mr. Takumi.”

“Yes. I understand.”

Interrogation... No, it wouldn’t be that. But, of course, I would have to give him a detailed account of it.

Besides, I had personally witnessed much that had happened in Range village.

“And now, we must prepare to receive His Grace.”

So saying, Sebastian and the other servants all left the dining hall.

As Milina went with them, she was probably going to help.

After seeing them leave, everyone let out a sigh and took a sip of tea.

Chapter 216

Mr. Ekenhart Was Going To Visit

“...Ha... Father is always so impulsive.”

“It would have been nice to know a little earlier.”

“Well, it is not a great emergency... But I suppose as the duke, he wanted to deal with the store as soon as possible?”

Ms. Claire and Tilura sighed with exasperation.

Mr. Ekenhart looked like he had a strong sense of justice, and so perhaps he could no longer wait, and had come to directly deal with the malicious store that harmed his people.

And considering the glass sphere that had spread the disease, and the wine...it was probably the right thing to do.

Especially since they were connected to a count.

...Of course, that was little consolation to the people who had to prepare for his arrival.

“...I will have to tell father when he arrives...”

Ms. Claire was muttering to herself with a look of resolve.

Though, Mr. Ekenhart was likely to laugh and brush it aside...

Or maybe because she was his daughter, he would listen.

In any case, if Mr. Ekenhart was coming tomorrow, we needed to be ready.

However, there wasn't actually anything for me to do. I suppose since he was the person who taught me to use a sword, I should continue to train.

"All right, I'm going to do some sword training."

"I'll go too!"

"Yes, but please don't tire yourself too much."

"Yes."

Perhaps Tilura was thinking the same thing, as she stood up enthusiastically.

I nodded at Ms. Claire's words and then we went out to the back garden.

"I want to surprise my father when he sees me!"

"Hahaha. Even an amateur like me can see how much you have improved, so I'm sure you'll have no trouble doing that."

"Wuff."

"Kyau."

The reason that Tilura was so excited was because she wanted to surprise Mr. Ekenhart.

It was a rather childish motive, but that aside, I thought she had improved enough to do just that.

As I laughed and replied, Leo and Sherry agreed with me.

"But I still can't land a blow on Leo..."

“Well... Leo is...”

Mr. Ekenhart had talked about it the last time he was here. How we would be a full-fledged fighter if we could hit Leo...

However, neither Tilura or I had ever been able to land a single blow.

She dodged as if she were playing with us.

...Which made me think... If someone was able to land a blow on Leo when she was as serious as she was against actual monsters, then that person wouldn't just be full-fledged, but a master swordsman...

“Well, if Mr. Ekenhart has any complaints, we'll ask him to demonstrate it first.”

“Demonstrate?”

“To see if Mr. Ekenhart can hit Leo... And if he can, how he does it...”

“Wuff-wuff.”

“That's a good idea!”

I felt bad towards Mr. Ekenhart, but...neither I or Tilura could imagine him hitting Leo with his sword.

Though, that had as much to do with me still being a beginner, as it did with Leo being too fast.

But Mr. Ekenhart was a master, so if we could see how he approached it, perhaps it would be easier to visualize.

Leo was nodding as if to say that facing off against Mr. Ekenhart was of no concern to her, and Tilura looked amused.

After that, I focused more than usual on my training.

The servants were very busy with preparing the house for their master, and since Milina was helping them, there was no studying of medicine today.

I had already given the herbs for Ractos to Nick today, and since I made extra, there would be enough for tomorrow as well.

So I really had nothing to do now but train with Tilura.

“Phew. So, Mr. Ekenhart is coming tomorrow...”

“Wuff?”

In fact, I was so focused that Ms. Lyra had to come to stop me. But when it was over, and after dinner and my nightly sword swinging, I retired to my room to rest and think about tomorrow.

Due to my diligent training, I had been able to deal with Nick and was able to move well enough during the orc attack.

I would have to thank Mr. Ekenhart for teaching me... Without him, I would could have been killed.

But even as I felt that I had become stronger, I also knew that I would never reach his level.

I knew that already, but the more I trained, the more obvious it became.

“I hope he won’t be angry...”

I had been injured because I froze during the fight with the orcs.

And Mr. Ekenhart had taught me that I must never stop moving during a battle.

Well, I did know that he would mostly be pleased that I was safe now, but I was still curious as to how he would react as a swordsman.

“Well, there’s no point in thinking about that now. We’ll find out tomorrow. Right, Leo?”

“Wuff-wuff.

I petted Leo, who sat next to me, in order to stop thinking about it.

“Hmm, Leo... You’re quite dirty...”

“...Wuff. Wuffu?”

I realized it while petting her and looking more closely.

Her fur was usually so pretty and glistened in a silvery color. But it looked dull now, and my hands got tangled and stuck in them easily.

Leo barked a little hesitantly in reply. As if to say, ‘Surely this isn’t that bad?’

“...It’s because you’ve been running around... It’s no wonder you’re dirty. All right, it’s time to take a bath so you can be clean!”

“Wuff... Wuff-wuff!”

She had gone to Range village, fought monsters...and slept outside. And so it could not be helped.

I thought of this as I declared that she would need to take a bath. But Leo then moved away from me with incredible speed and shook her head violently.

...That was a stronger reaction than usual...

“Leo. Do you hate baths that much?”

“Wuff! Wuff!”

Leo nodded affirmatively and barked.

Hmm. I suppose it was about time that I asked her about this.

After all, I was lucky enough to be able to have something similar to a conversation with her. Perhaps if I learned why she hated baths, there would be something I could do to improve things. And then she might not hate them so much anymore.

Chapter 217

I Asked Leo Why She Hated Baths

“Why do you hate baths? You like to swim in rivers, don’t you? Is it the hot water? Or are you scared of getting soap in your eyes?”

“Wuff...wuff-wuff. Wuff. Wuff-wou.”

When I asked Leo what the reason was, she began to bark repeatedly, as if becoming very talkative. And like this, she explained it to me.

Uhh... You don’t like the hot water, which is unnatural. And you don’t like other people putting hot water on you, as it gets in your face. And you don’t like how it erases your smell... I see...

“While it can’t be helped that it gets in your eyes, it’s still my fault. Sorry. But is hot water really that bad?”

“Wuff! Wuff!”

It’s not natural water? Well, it is heated, so I suppose it’s different from the water that flows in nature...but what about hot springs?

That water is heated without human interference...

Well, at least this way, there was something that I could do.

“All right... I’ll only use cool water then. As for preventing it from getting in your eyes... I’ll have a large bucket prepared... And then you can wash your face by yourself?”

“Wuff... Wuff-wuff.”

She said that she might be able to bear it this way...

It would be unrealistic to think everything would be solved immediately, but at least I didn’t have to force her to do something she hated.

“Wuff...wuff...wuff...”

“Your smell will change? ...That’s one thing you’ll just have to get used to.”

“Wuff...”

I had to use soap and wash her thoroughly, otherwise I wouldn’t be able to remove all the dirt...

I didn’t know if the soap in this world was good for Leo’s fur, but it was surely better than leaving any grime that water couldn’t wash away.

...Dogs generally do not like the smell of soap... And since Leo had a sharp sense of smell, she would feel the difference much more strongly than me. But this was one thing that could not be helped.

Leo accepted this, but she still sighed as we left the room and headed to the bathing area.

“All right, Leo. I’m going to wash you with water!”

“Wuff.”

As per her request, I washed her with cool water instead of hot water.

The water flowed down Leo's fur, washing away the light dirt on the surface.

"...Yes, you really are quite filthy..."

It was more obvious when looking at the water that flowed down.

There was dust and sand in it, and it became quite dark.

...Some of it might have even been blood from monsters that she killed.

"I'll finish this quickly..."

Normally, it would be fine, as we used hot water.

But since it was cold, I couldn't stay like this long, since I was naked.

While the bathing area was kept warmer than other rooms, the water I was pouring on Leo would splash onto me as well.

At least, the mansion wasn't in a place with a colder climate.

Had it been cold enough for it to be snowing, then I wouldn't have been able to wash Leo with water.

"Now that I think about it, I wonder if they have seasons in this world?"

Some time has now passed since I came to this world.

And it had yet to become cold or very hot. It was a comfortable climate. But if there were seasons, I suppose the next was either summer or winter...

It is currently a lot like spring in Japan. So maybe it will be summer? But this was another world.

Maybe winter could be after spring.

“Well, I don’t have to worry about that right now. I’ll ask Ms. Claire or Sebastian about it later. All right, Leo. You can wash your face now!”

“...”

While I was thinking, I managed to cover Leo’s entire body with soap.

As Leo’s face was now covered in bubbles, she kept her mouth and eyes closed and would not make a sound... I understood that she didn’t want to get it in her mouth or eyes...but was she even breathing?

She then lifted her head and dunk it in the large bucket that Ms. Lyra had prepared.

Apparently, it was usually used to wash small children who couldn’t use the bathtub yet.

But right now, it would be very useful for washing Leo’s face.

...Besides, there were no children who were that young in this mansion right now.

“And then change the water... There. Once more, Leo.”

“Wuff.”

After most of the soap was washed away, I changed the water and had Leo rinse her face once again.

As Leo was able to wash up at her own pace and avoid getting water in her eyes, she was a lot more cheerful than she usually was when bathing.

Well, most times, she looked like she was walking through the lands of the dead... So in comparison, she was doing very well.

...It was a good thing that I had asked for Leo's opinion.

I would not have been able to do such things back in Japan.

"Now, I just have to rinse off your body...and we're done."

"Wuff!"

After washing Leo's body carefully, I used a brush to make sure all of the dirt came out, and it was finished.

Leo, who was in a good mood, suddenly began to shake all of the water from her fur.

"Hey, Leo... I told you to not do that when I'm close by... And it's cold water... Achoo!"

"Wuff..."

As Leo was so big, I would have to be pretty far away in order to avoid having the water rain over me.

Well, it usually happens anyway. But this time it was like having a lot of water poured over your head.

I was so cold that I sneezed, and then Leo rubbed against me apologetically.

...Perhaps she was trying to help warm me up, but she was still wet and cold to touch...

"I better warm up then... Leo, you're done, so you can get out now."

“Wuff... Wuff.”

If I didn’t warm myself up with hot water soon, I might catch a cold.

I was the one who went around and healed people with my herbs, and so I would be embarrassing to get sick.

Mr. Ekenhart would be arriving tomorrow, so I wanted to be in the best condition health-wise.

And so I picked up a bucket for the hot water and went over to the bathtub.

Leo walked obediently out of the bathing room.

She was able to dexterously use her paw to push open the door when leaving.

“Wuff!”

“Oh, it’s just you, good Leo? Mr. Takumi is still inside?”

“Wuff-wuff.”

I could hear Ms. Lyra and Leo in the changing room.

Ms. Lyra would wait outside with a towel in order to dry Leo after her bath.

As I heard Leo bark in reply, I poured the hot water over my body and cleaned myself before soaking in the tub.

Chapter 218

Mr. Ekenhart Arrived With A Stranger

“...Phew... It’s so relaxing...”

Having the cold water splash over me had lowered my body temperature, and so the feeling of being warmed up again by the hot water was quite pleasurable.

Now I wouldn't have to worry about catching a cold.

It was with such thoughts that I got out of the bathtub.

"Your fur really does look nicer now, Leo."

"Wuff. Wuff."

Thoroughly warmed up, I returned to my room and petted Leo. Not only had she been dried, but her coat had been brushed as well.

Unlike when she was dirty, my hands didn't get tangled, and her fur was smooth to the touch.

The silvery color gleamed beautifully. She was just as you would expect a Silver Fenrir to look.

"You look so much cooler with clean fur."

"Wuff!"

Leo looked proud when I said that she looked cool.

It might not be the best compliment to give a girl, but Leo seemed to like it, so it was fine.

Tonight, I had been able to find out why Leo didn't like baths, and was able to make some changes, so it was a productive night overall.

Bathing with Leo would be a lot easier from now on. It was with this sense of satisfaction that I got into bed before I could cool off again. And then I fell asleep.

“His Grace, Duke Ekenhart Liebert has arrived!”

The next day, after we had finished eating lunch, Mr. Ekenhart arrived at the mansion.

The servants, Ms. Claire, Tilura, Sherry, Leo and I all gathered at the entrance and stood in line.

I stood with Ms. Claire and the others, and not with the servants.

Last time, it was because I was a stranger...

Nicholas made the announcement and then opened the doors.

I could tell that all of the servants were nervous, now that their master was about to enter.

I had been too nervous to notice such things last time. But I suppose servants were usually more nervous when their master returned.

But thanks to their hard work yesterday, the entrance hall, as well as the rest of the mansion, was incredibly clean from corner to corner.

In fact, the sunlight from the windows reflected on the floor to a near blinding degree.

“Welcome home, Duke Ekenhart!”

“Mmm.”

Mr. Ekenhart stepped in through the doors.

At the same time, the servants greeted him in unison.

...It seemed to be a tradition here.

Mr. Ekenhart watched the servants bow and he nodded once.

At the same time, a few armored soldiers, who seemed to be his guards, entered.

And then a woman who I had never seen before entered after him.

Who was she? She looked to be the same age as Ms. Claire.

“Welcome back, father.”

“Claire. It’s been awhile...well, not really. I hope you’re well, Tilura?”

“I am, father!”

“Nothing has changed with us since you left.”

Ms. Claire took a step forward and greeted her father.

Mr. Ekenhart greeted his daughters with a smile.

As a parent, he was happy to see that they were doing well.

And then he turned his attention to me.

“Mr. Takumi, I heard about your exploits. Sebastian was very happy.”

“No, I haven’t done much at all. Most of it was Leo’s doing.”

“Hahaha, you are too modest. Of course, we have much to thank Leo for, but I doubt we would have been able to solve this case without you, Mr. Takumi.”

Mr. Ekenhart laughed and slapped me on the shoulder.

That was a habit he had not stopped... And though it hurt, it was a sign of affection, which meant I couldn't move away...

"So this is Mr. Takumi?"

"Aye, it is."

"Father. Is this..."

The woman had been watching me be hit by Mr. Ekenhart with a curious expression.

Now that I had a closer look, I saw that she was astonishingly beautiful, with delicate features and a slender build.

Her long...was it called ash blonde? hair had curls that reached her waist.

I had never seen someone with this hairstyle in real life... No one looked like that in Japan. It was the kind of hair you only saw in fiction.

"Yes, I will have to introduce you. While you've met her, Claire, Tilura has not."

"...Yes."

What was going on? Ms. Claire suddenly seemed disinterested.

I hope it wasn't because I was looking at the stranger...

I suppose it was because these two had a history?

"Wuff-wuff."

“Kyau!”

“Ah, good Leo. And you look well, Sherry!”

As if to say hello as well, Leo and Sherry moved in front of Mr. Ekenhart.

Mr. Ekenhart chuckled and then petted them.

Apparently, the treatment he underwent before leaving the mansion had worked, and he was used to being around Leo now.

While there was still some awkwardness, there was no longer any fear.

“Ahhh!”

“Wuff? ...Sniff-sniff... Wou!”

“...Aggga...”

Due to Leo moving closer, the woman raised her voice in fear. Upon noticing this, Leo moved her face even closer in order to smell her.

This happened pretty much every time that Leo met someone new. But in spite of her noble appearance, she let out a very strange kind of sound, which was not the most ladylike.

“Leo. Don’t do that. It will scare her.”

“Wou? Wuff-wuff.”

I said, and then Leo returned to me.

The woman took in several deep breaths and tried to regain her calm.

“Haa...haa... What... What is that thing!?”

Once she was calm again, she began to mutter. Though, the last few words were more of a scream...

“Well, calm down. I told you about her. This is Leo. Don’t worry, she will not harm anyone.”

“Don’t worry? When something of that size is approaching you... How can I possibly be calm...”

She continued to breathe heavily as she put a hand to her chest and answered Mr. Ekenhart.

If only she understood how cute and harmless Leo was...

Chapter 219

It Was The Count’s Daughter

“Master, will the drawing room suffice?”

“Sebastian. Indeed, there is much to discuss. Let us go there.”

“Certainly.”

Sebastian suggested that we go to the drawing room in order to talk.

At the same time, all of the servants in the entrance hall dispersed.

And the guards also went off to rest.

However...Ms. Claire looked annoyed, and the visitor was still frightened of Leo... Who was she?

Tilura also did not know who this was, and she looked at her with a curious expression, which was a little comforting to me.

“Now, where should I begin...”

In the drawing room, I, Leo, Ms. Claire, Tilura, Mr. Ekenhart, and the woman sat down at the table. Sebastian and Ms. Lyra waited by the door.

The woman was still scared of Leo, and sat as far away as she could.

Instead, Tilura sat next to Leo, and enjoyed stroking her fur, which was now very clean and fluffy.

...It was a good thing she had bathed yesterday.

“...You should start with introductions. Mr. Takumi and Tilura have not met her before.”

“Yes, indeed.”

Ms. Claire continued to talk in an icy voice.

She knew this woman, but she had not even spoken her name once yet.

And there was something severe in her tone... Like she had very strong feelings towards her.

However, the woman was too scared of Leo to notice Ms. Claire’s attitude.

“Well, introduce yourself, Anneliese.”

“...Yes. I am Anneliese Barsler. But you can just call me Anne.”

“...Barsler...”

After Mr. Ekenhart urged her, the woman introduced herself.

Her bow was just as pretty as Ms. Claire's, and she spoke in a refined, ladylike manner.

However, her name... To be precise, the family name, Barsler, was familiar.

"Could you be Count Barsler's..."

"Yes. His daughter."

"Count Barsler, Halbrecht Barsler, is my father."

Count Barsler... The person behind the malicious store. The person who placed the glass sphere in Range village and sent the monsters.

Enemies... Well, I didn't quite know the relationship between the two sides, but they clearly did not think well of each other.

So why was his daughter with Mr. Ekenhart...?

"I understand your confusion. But there is a reason for this. And so Anneliese will be staying with us for a while."

"You cannot be serious, father?!"

Obviously, anyone who knows of Count Barsler's deeds would find it odd that his daughter was here...

But now Mr. Ekenhart was saying that Anneliese...Anne, was going to stay here.

Ms. Claire reacted sharply.

“Well, we’ll talk about that later. It involves the incident. Speaking of which, in the reports...there was something about a glass sphere?”

“Yes, Your Grace. Mr. Takumi can explain...”

“Will you tell me, Mr. Takumi?”

“If you wish.”

And so we set aside talk of Ms. Anne for now, as I told him about Range village.

Apparently, it was related to what was happening, but I didn’t know how... Ms. Claire had entered a sulky silence... She must really hate Ms. Anne.

“Mmm. You explained it very well. And it fits with everything else that I’ve heard.”

Mr. Ekenhart nodded after hearing my story.

Back at my old job, I often had to explain things in an orderly way.

I still remember carefully reading documents and practicing so that I could explain things during meetings without getting stuck...

Because if I failed with presentations, my boss would become furious with me. Especially if it wasn’t my project, but theirs... Damn it, things really were... Well, it didn’t matter now.

“Mr. Takumi. You spoke of being injured earlier... Is everything fine now?”

“Yes. I had some Loe, which I used to treat the wound.”

“I see... That’s good to hear. ...Loe really is a valuable herb.”

During my explanation to Mr. Ekenhart, I left out the stuff about Weed Cultivation.

This was because of the presence of an outsider, Ms. Anne.

I had glanced towards Sebastian when trying to decide on this, and he had shaken his head.

Mr. Ekenhart seemed to understand, and he did not bring up Weed Cultivation either.

“Still, to set orcs on the village... Damned Barsler...”

Mr. Ekenhart was particularly angry about the monsters.

While it was not the largest village on his land, it was natural for him to react like this.

“I had not thought of something like this happening.”

“...Indeed... Anneliese...while you are cunning, you wouldn't have been able to...think of this.”

“Of course, not. Father must have wanted the magic tool very badly. It is because of this kind of foolishness that he hasn't risen up in the world.”

Mr. Ekenhart and Ms. Anne were talking. And it kind of sounded like Ms. Anne had thought of using the glass sphere...?

Not only that, but she was quite harsh on her father, Count Barsler.

“Your Grace, do you mean...Lady Anneliese...”

“Aye, Sebastian. Exactly. This incident...this plan against our house...was thought of by Anneliese.”

“Yes, that is correct.”

Sebastian was thinking the same thing as me, and he questioned Mr. Ekenhart about it.

Mr. Ekenhart replied casually.

Ms. Anne also nodded with an indifferent expression.

Not just me, but Ms. Claire, Ms. Lyra, and Sebastian looked at them, dumb-founded.

Why had Mr. Ekenhart brought the person who could be called the ring leader to this house...

Chapter 220

Ms. Claire Was Furious On Our Behalf

“Well, it was all put into action by Count Barsler. Anneliese was definitely not involved.”

“Of course. I have merely offered my wisdom to him. As for what he decides to do with it, that is solely up to him.”

“...Father! Anne!”

The moment Ms. Anne said this with a smile, Ms. Claire stood up and shouted.

This atmosphere... It reminded me of when she berated Sebastian and the others... Ms. Claire was clearly having no more of this.

I myself had seen people suffer in person, and did not like the way that Ms. Anne was speaking.

“How can you talk so casually!? People have suffered from this illness! You may claim that she is blameless, but no one will be satisfied by such an answer! Anne! I see that you do not even feel a morsel of guilt!”

“Uh...mmm...”

“While I did think of ways for him to make a profit with the magic tool, it was father who actually did it.”

I had never seen Ms. Claire look so angry as she shouted.

She was definitely more passionate than she was with Sebastian.

Mr. Ekenhart looked overwhelmed by this, but Ms. Anne continued to look calm and unbothered.

...Perhaps women were strong against the rage of other women... Or Ms. Anne was just special.

In any case, I agreed with Ms. Claire.

I had seen the sick children at the Ractos orphanage and suffering residents of Range village.

They had coughed in pain while others watched with dread. So it was no wonder that Ms. Claire was angry.

Even Sebastian and Ms. Lyra were scowling a little.

“It is true that Count Barsler was the one who acted! However, you had the power to stop him! In the first place, the disease never would have spread had you not suggested it! Surely you understand that!?”

“...Well...perhaps...”

“Go and look at the people who are suffering! I will not hear you say that they are not like us! There would be no nobles without common folk! They do not exist because of you! It is thanks to them that we have this position! And yet your plan has hurt them... You cannot be forgiven for that!”

“Mmm...mmm...”

While Ms. Anne was indifferent at first, Ms. Claire’s words started to overwhelm her.

Ms. Claire was right that nobles only existed because of the common folk...

Without them, you could shout as much as you want that you're a noble, but there would be no one to hear you.

Mr. Ekenhart also seemed to agree with Ms. Claire, as he was nodding his head.

...However, did he forget that he was one of the causes for her anger?

“Wuff...”

“...Don't worry. She's not angry at you, Leo.”

As Ms. Claire shouted angrily, Leo curled her tail and pushed her face towards me.

When she was still a maltese, she hated angry shouts and loud voices... Most small dogs were like that. I suppose she was remembering those times then.

And so I petted Leo to calm her down.

But now that I think about it, Silver Fenrirs were the most powerful of all monsters... And yet Ms. Claire was able to intimidate one... Well, Leo was likely just an exception.

“But...I really haven't done...”

“So you still don't understand! Regardless of what your purpose was, I am saying that merely suggesting a plan that hurts people is a crime!”

“...But you see, things weren't going very well financially and...”

“You think that gives you an excuse to hurt people!? You are not fit to be a noble!”

“But we haven't hurt our own people!”

“Oh, so it’s perfectly fine to hurt the duke’s people!? What monstrous logic! People are people. It should not matter on which lord’s lands they live on! And yet you...”

“...Well...but...you see...”

Anne continued to be overwhelmed, but seemed to be trying to shift the blame by thinking of excuses.

However, this just made Ms. Claire even more angry, and she continued her remonstrations.

...Perhaps it would end if Ms. Anne was remorseful and apologized.

Thanks to Ms. Claire’s fiery rage, everyone else who was watching gulped.

While it was wrong for her to make such suggestions, it was indeed Count Barsler who acted on them.

And while Ms. Anne was not guiltless, it may not be possible to have her punished.

Though, I still thought it was necessary for her to admit that she had done wrong.

“You still don’t see it... In that case... Good Leo!”

“Wuff?!”

Suddenly, Ms. Claire changed tactics.

Leo had been so calm a moment ago as I petted her, but she now barked in alarm.

“Please go closer to Anne so that you two can play thoroughly!”

“What! Ms. Claire! You!”

“Wuff.... Wuff?”

“Sorry, Leo... There is nothing that I can do.”

“Wuff!? ...Wouu...”

Leo looked at me as if asking for help, but I doubted there was anything that I could do to stop Ms. Claire at this point.

As I apologized and looked away, Leo barked like an abandoned puppy.

Sorry, Leo... I am powerless now... You don't have to forgive me... I cannot do anything, and will not be able to save you...

“Now, good Leo!”

“Hey, wait one moment! Ms. Claire!”

“Wuff...”

Leo herself did not have any negative feelings towards Ms. Anne, but she seemed to feel that Ms. Claire was angry at her, and she was not enthusiastic about it.

However, Ms. Claire was not about to back down.

Ms. Anne screamed and looked like she was ready to run away, but Ms. Claire went around and pushed her back so that she moved towards Leo.

It cannot be helped then... Leo seemed to sigh as she stood up and lumbered towards Ms. Anne.

“Now, good Leo!”

“Wuff... Wuff-wuff.”

“Hey! Don’t lick my face...stop...!”

“Do you still refuse to see the error of your ways?”

After Ms. Claire demanded it, Leo hesitantly started to Lick Ms. Anne’s face.

As Ms. Anne was terrified of Leo, this had a great effect, and she became very rigid.

“...Well, as you can see, Claire and Anneliese have always gotten along very well...”

“Father. Have your eyes rotted in their sockets!?”

“...Very badly, I meant to say.”

Mr. Ekenhart had just started to talk again after seeing that all of Ms. Claire’s anger was now directed towards Ms. Anne.

However, upon hearing his words, Ms. Claire shouted angrily, and he revised his statement.

Mr. Ekenhart. You really have no authority in spite of being a father and the lord of the house...