

## **R. Garden 9.1**

Vol. 3 Chapter 9.1 - Taming the stallion

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It was still great up until Kloff had to confidently visit the estate early in the morning. However, without even catching a glimpse of Aeroc's hair in the house, Kloff couldn't understand why he had to walk from one end of the study to the other, receiving a stern scolding from the butler multiple times.

"Chin up, shoulders back! Don't rush your pace."

The butler corrected Kloff's posture while waving a whip he got from somewhere. When Kloff asked what it was for, the sharp lash fell on his shoulders.

"If you want to be a match for the Count, start by practicing the proper posture."

"I see. Is this what they call aristocratic bride education?"

"Rather than that, it's more like taming a stubborn colt, but yes, that's right."

"...Taming a stallion, is it."

"Exactly."

Kloff glared at the butler with obvious ridicule, but the butler remained composed as if he had never ridiculed him. He pointed to one side again, commanding, "Walk straight." Kloff reluctantly followed suit. It hurt to get hit, but since he had set his mind on becoming an economic bureaucrat, he might gain access to the royal social circles. In that case, he thought this butler's education would come in handy.

Let's think of this positively. Despite feeling boiling anger when the butler slapped his shoulders with the whip, following him step by step behind his back, Kloff decided to think positively. The training continued for the whole morning. After it ended, when Kloff was about to go to the office, the butler handed him massive books on liberal arts.

"Tomorrow, you will be tested on the contents of these. Finish reading it all and come."

"I have to read all of these today? Don't tell me that you've read all of these?"

Kloff had read plenty of legal and economic books during his university years, he could proudly say that he had read a fair amount of books in liberal arts. It was hard to believe that the butler could check all of these, when Kloff himself only knew half of the titles in this stack of books.

"Of course, it wouldn't be me testing you. It's part of the list written by the Count."

"Then who's doing the test?"

"The Count will do it at this time tomorrow. Make sure not to disappoint him."

“Is that so?”

At those words, Kloff’s eyes lit up. He nodded his head, unconsciously licking his lips. The butler, who wiped his monocle with a handkerchief and put it back on, said, “I will also be there, so don’t get your hopes up.” and left, leaving Kloff standing there with a desolate expression, holding the books.

He definitely didn’t want to lose. He wanted to be acknowledged in some way. With his ambitious spirit, even as a poor student, he became a top graduate who gained support from the professors. He would do his best to get what he wanted.

From late morning to late afternoon, he dealt with clients and made investment plans for national funds. It was a new field that he had not encountered before, so there was a lot of research to be done, and he also had to review international law, which he had neglected until now. He was truly busy with no time to spare. When he returned home late in the evening, he was already exhausted.

“You seem very busy these days. It’s not good if you harm your health.”

Martha served a simple soup, soft bread, and juice with a worried expression. Kloff gulped them fast, and when he asked Martha to bring him tea to the study later, Martha placed her hands on her hips and began to nag in disbelief.

“It’s good to work hard when you’re young, but you should also get some rest. If you overwork yourself like this, you might die before you can even get a pretty bride.”

“I’m currently working hard to get that bride. Martha, please make the tea strong.”

Kloff lightly kissed her cheek and carried the heavy books to his study. He took off his jacket and vest, unbuttoned his cuffs, and loosened his tie. Then he looked into the four book volumes Hugo had handed him.

The first book was <Forms of Crime>. It was a fundamental book to read as part of the ruling class, but Kloff had never thought of himself as part of the ruling class, so he had only briefly skimmed through it once to gain some common understanding of it. Just the thought of reading all these troublesome things made him sigh, but he knew that if he backed down now, he would never be able to lay a finger on Aeroc, so he steeled his resolve and opened the first chapter.

He managed to read two books until dawn, but four books were too much. He had a feeling that Aeroc would delve into <Forms of Crime>, so he thoroughly read that and one other philosophical book, but only skimmed through the remaining two. Just doing all that, Kloff had to stay up almost the whole night. He fell asleep for a moment and woke up early in the morning to the sound of Martha’s movements. He had fallen asleep right there in the study. In a daze, he went back to his room and took a hot shower.

Since graduating from college, it was the first time he had stayed up all night to work on an assignment, but he didn’t feel as tired as he expected after the short rest. He was confident of his stamina. As hot water poured over him, he felt a little excited at the thought of meeting Aeroc in a while. Even though he hadn’t slept for much, the thought of Aeroc sent a rush of blood to his lower body. He had to endure the moans that escaped him while he had his natural morning phenomenon, all while suppressing his curses. But it still left him with a sense of emptiness.

Why am I doing this when I have a perfectly fine omega partner?

He felt slightly depressed and miserable, but quickly shook off those feelings. The more effort he put in, the greater the reward. Kloff finished showering and prepared to go out.

As he entered the estate, the butler came to greet him again. He went into the study, but to his disappointment, Aeroc was not there. Before Kloff could even ask, the butler responded.

“Stand up straight! If you can’t pass the first round, you won’t be able to meet the Count.”

It wasn’t like this was an exam, and he wanted to ask what with the rounds, but it would just add more headaches, so Kloff walked as he learned from yesterday. Kloff was not inherently stupid, and he had a strong ability to quickly apply what he had learned. The butler had been watching closely to catch any fault and nodded expressionlessly, but Kloff was convinced that the butler was disappointed.

“Please wait for a moment.”

The butler left the study and soon returned. He brought Aeroc along with him. Kloff immediately stood up from his seat. Dressed in unadorned finery, his dark blond hair neatly combed back, he strode into the study with a thin smile on his face, a fake smile that faltered slightly when he spotted Kloff.

With his hands outstretched in front of him and an innocent expression on his face, Aeroc was about to make his move when the butler coughed loudly. He got startled and quickly straightened up, smiled a fake smile of politeness, and bowed his head. Kloff, who had just opened his arms in anticipation of Aeroc’s rush, let out a huff of air and bowed politely. This damned old man.

Approaching gracefully, Aeroc held out his hand for a shake, but Kloff grabbed it and pulled him into a quick embrace. Then he kissed his lips as if to show off. At first, Aeroc was surprised and stunned, but when the kiss ended, he opened his closed eyes, a little disappointed.

“How have you been?”

“I want to ask the same for you.”

As they exchanged greetings, Kloff lightly embraced Aeroc and kissed his golden hair again. The butler, who had been watching the scene from behind, had an astonished expression. Kloff smiled with a victorious smile and deliberately ran his hand down the smooth curve of Aeroc’s back. It had been a long time since he had seen Aeroc, so he didn’t want to let him go. He whispered to Aeroc if there was anywhere that hurt or if Aeroc had missed him, and Aeroc laughed softly.

The butler, watching the two men, coughed repeatedly as if he were a patient with a lung disease. At that, Aeroc lightly pushed Kloff away and distanced himself. Aeroc sat down, wary of the butler. Kloff glared at the butler like he was going to kill him, and tried to sit down next to Aeroc, only to have the butler rush in and swing his whip at him. Kloff ended up sitting across from Aeroc. Sparks flew between Kloff and the butler. Aeroc smiled awkwardly and picked up the book on the table.

When the test began, Aeroc was even worse than the butler. Even Kloff, who had never been outperformed in oral exams all his life, was at a loss.

“Why do you think that way?”

This was the worst question of all. It was the question that came back when he answered that there was no reason other than the ethical obligation commonly mentioned for the ruling class to consider the lower class. Asking such questions was a common tactic used by some professors to intentionally put people on the spot and see how they reacted.

Normally, he would have gathered all sorts of philosophical topics to turn the conversation around and gain the upper hand, but there was no point in defeating Aeroc like that and it didn't seem like he could win either. So, while pretending to waste time, Kloff stretched his leg under the table and touched Aeroc's leg with his. Slowly stroking it, he said, "Well, let's see." A blush spread on Aeroc's fair and unblemished face as he bit his lip and began to glare at him. Kloff feigned ignorance and rubbed his leg more boldly.

"Wha... what?"

"Hm, I wonder why?"

As Kloff smiled smugly, Aeroc was about to open his mouth, but he realized the butler behind him and closed his mouth. He stammered, "...Let's move on to another question," and opened another book. Fortunately, Aeroc's attention was too distracted to ask difficult questions, so Kloff could answer them easily.

"It seems like you've read everything."

"I don't lie. Unlike someone."

"I... I guess we'll stop here today."