

Chapter 19: Invitation to a Dinner Party

For the next few days, Marie, Nicola, Luke, and I spent our time as usual, going to the forest together and enjoying our daily routines.

Currently, we are in the midst of lunchtime business.

The number of customers is gradually decreasing, so we will be closing soon.

I'm feeling hungry. I want to have lunch soon.

As I was thinking about that, a lone customer arrived.

"Welcome! Oh, it's Frederick-sama, isn't it?"

There stood Frederick-sama.

However, he was dressed plainly and had a friendly smile. If someone who didn't know Frederick-sama saw him, they would probably think he was just a slightly affluent commoner.

"Leon, I came here today because I have something to talk to you about."

"Why are you dressed like that??"

"If I wear my usual clothes, everyone will be scared of me and won't treat me normally."

It's not normal for a noble to dress like a commoner for such a reason.

Or rather, this person doesn't seem noble at all. He was smiling when we bumped into each other for the first time, and if he were any other noble, it wouldn't be surprising if he called me a rude person and had me killed.

No, maybe the social hierarchy in this world isn't so strict... Commoners can take entrance exams for the Royal Academy, and they can use banks too. Now that I think about it, it's strange, isn't it?

It's a good thing for me... but there's no denying that the social hierarchy exists, so I should be careful.

As I was lost in thought about such things, Frederick-sama was peering into my face with a puzzled expression.

"What's wrong, Leon? Could it be that this outfit doesn't suit me?"

"N-No, it's not that! I just thought that nobles sometimes dress like this..."

"Leon, remember that I'm a noble, but it's a secret publicly."

"Y-Yes!"

I quickly covered my mouth with my hand and nodded vigorously.

"By the way, you're still open for business, right? Can I have lunch?"

"Yes, please have a seat and enjoy your meal. You can choose between steak and stir-fried pork with vegetables. Which one would you prefer?"

"Alright, I'll have the steak."

"Understood. Please wait a moment."

I said that and went to the counter to order a steak set to Father and Mother.

Then, as I was about to go and clean up the table where the customers had left, Marie called out to me.

"Niichan, come here for a moment."

Marie was calling me in a whispering voice. I also lowered my voice and went over to Marie.

"What's up, Marie?"

"Do you know that Oniisan?"

"You mean the person we were talking about earlier?"

"Yes, I thought something was different about the way you were talking, so I was worried."

Marie was worried because I was speaking politely to Frederick-san. She's so kind.

While desperately trying to control my loosening face, I was at a loss as to how to convey the information about Frederick-sama to Marie.

I was told that being a noble was a secret...

"Marie, that person is my friend, so don't worry. He's just an important person, so I was trying not to be rude. So you don't have to worry."

"Is that so? I'm glad then."

"But Marie, you mustn't be rude to him either. I will handle him, so you take care of the other customers, okay?"

"Got it!"

I think Frederick-sama is a trustworthy person, but I still don't know for sure. It's probably better if I handle it as much as possible.

I don't want to be accused of being disrespectful...

While thinking about such things, it seems that the steak set has been cooked.

"Leon, please bring the steak."

"Okay! I'll bring it over."

I took the steak set to Frederick-sama's table.

"Thank you for waiting. Here's your steak set. Please enjoy."

"Thank you. Then, I'll dig in."

Frederick-sama ate the steak with only a wooden fork, exuding a certain elegance.

Perhaps it's because I know Frederick-sama's true identity, but that sense of refinement that emanates from within can't be hidden even with a change of clothes.

After a while, it seemed that Frederick-sama had finished eating his meal.

"Thank you for the meal. Leon, can I talk to you for a moment?"

"Yes, what is it?"

"When I told my family about you, they expressed a desire to meet you. Would it be alright if I invite you to dinner tonight? I also plan to give you the teaching materials after dinner."

Invited to dinner, to Frederick-sama's house? That means the Duke of Townsend, right?! Why me!?

I wonder if I'm being suspected after all... Is it because of my strange behavior? But it would be strange to act childish now...

But, in the first place, I can't refuse, can I? I have no choice but to go.

There's no other choice but to go... My stomach feels like it's going to ache...

"Um, may I ask my parents if I can go out?"

"Sure, but I'll come with you."

"Huh, but it's supposed to be a secret that you're a noble..."

"It's a secret to the general public, but not to your family. To take care of a child, you have to reveal your status."

"Thank you for that."

Frederick-sama and I walked to the counter, and I called for my father and mother. There were no other customers in the shop anymore.

"Dad, Mom, I have something to talk to you about."

"Leon? What's wrong?"

"What's the matter?"

"Well, you see, I've been invited to Frederick-sama's house today. Can I go?"

When I said that, the two of them looked at Frederick-sama with a slightly wary expression.

"Is this person someone you know, Leon?"

"Who are you?"

"I apologize for the late introduction. I am Frederick Townsend. I belong to the Royal Palace's Royal Guard. I met Leon the other day, and I would like to invite him to dinner today. Is that all right?"

Upon hearing those words from Frederick-sama, the two of them turned pale in an instant and both

of them kneeled down on the spot.

"W-We deeply apologize."

"We're sorry."

After saying that, my mother and father kept bowing their heads.

"Please raise your heads. There's no need to be so frightened. There is no disrespect involved. So, may I invite Leon? It's a dinner invitation, so he will stay at the estate tonight and we will definitely escort him back here tomorrow."

My father and mother were looking at me and Frederick-sama with anxious expressions, but they couldn't defy the nobility, so they consented to my invitation.

"Sure, please take care of Leon."

"Thank you very much. Please rest assured. Leon, is it okay if we continue like this?"

"Yes, it's fine. Mom, Dad, I'm going now. Don't worry, everything will be fine."

"Be careful."

"Yeah, see you later."

And so, accompanied by Frederick-sama, I stepped outside the store.

I said it's fine, but I'm worried... Why would the Duke's family want to meet someone like me?

Frederick-sama seems like a good person, but I still don't know much about him... And the members of the Duke's family are too intimidating...

"Leon, we'll be going in that carriage."

A carriage was parked a little away from our cafeteria. It was a modest-looking box carriage, solidly built.

"What kind of carriage is that?"

"It's the Duke's carriage. We use it when we want to go incognito."

"There's even a carriage like that?"

As we approached the carriage, the coachman opened the door.

"Well then, please get in first."

"I-Is that alright?"

"Yes, please."

"Thank you very much."

Apprehensively, I got into the carriage, and unlike its exterior, the interior was very luxurious.

The floor was covered with plush carpets, and the seats were cushioned and high-class. The inside was very bright.

"Amazing...!"

"Haha, it's still a modest one for a Duke's carriage. But it's not that extravagant."

"I-I'm sorry!"

"It's fine. Please have a seat."

"Yes, thank you for your hospitality."

The Duke's family is truly amazing! The cushioned chairs are comfortable, and I don't feel the swaying of the carriage directly, so it's enjoyable.

But more importantly, I'm going to the Duke's family now... What are they going to say to me? As a commoner's child, am I being suspected because it's too strange?

I'm becoming more and more anxious...

"You don't have to worry so much, it'll be fine."

"Really? Why am I being called?"

"It's just that your parents want to meet you."

"But, aren't Frederick-sama's parents the Duke and Duchess...?"

"No, my older brother has already succeeded as the Duke, so my father is the former Duke. In this country, it's customary for the title to be passed down and for the son to work at the royal palace when he turns 15."

I see. However, whether he's the current duke or the former duke, it doesn't make a difference to me... Either way, they're nobles.

"But why do you want to meet with me? Why are you concerned about me, Lord Frederick?"

"Well, that's..."

What's with this atmosphere? It's so awkward! Is there something difficult to say...?

"To gain Leon's trust, it's better to be honest. At first, I had my doubts, thinking you might be a spy from another country. But after talking to you, it seems different, and I had you investigated, but there was nothing suspicious. So, my doubts were cleared. But if you're not a spy, you're exceptionally talented for a commoner. You're intelligent and quick-witted in conversation, smoothly adapting your attitude depending on who you're talking to, and your manners are impeccable. As the Duke's family, we want to have you as an ally. Are you satisfied with this explanation?"

So, I was indeed suspected...! I had no idea I was being investigated...

But now, although it's not a complete clearance of doubt, they appreciate my talent.

I should actively build a friendly relationship, after all. If I'm going to enter the world of nobility from

now on, having a high-ranking backer is essential.

If I can have the Duke's family as my supporter, things might become considerably easier in the future.

I should also actively showcase my talent.

"I'm glad that the doubt has been cleared, and I'm grateful to be recognized for my abilities. Thank you."

After that, I had trivial conversations with Lord Frederick and spent time in the carriage.

I found out that Lord Frederick also approached me with some calculations, which allowed me to relax a bit. The most unsettling time is when you don't understand why someone is getting closer to you.

As the carriage swayed, I pondered that it would be nice if the members of the Duke's family, like Lord Frederick, were approachable and friendly.

Внимание! Этот перевод, возможно, ещё не готов.

Его статус: идёт перевод

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