

転生先

が

少女漫画の

白豚の
令嬢

だった

2

桜あげは

イラスト：ひだかなみ

Tenseisaki ga
Shoujomanga
no Shirobuta
Reijou datta

Tensei Saki ga Shoujo Manga no Shiro Buta Reijou datta

-I Reincarnated as a White Pig Noble's Daughter from a Shoujo Manga-

**- Volume 2 -
13 Years Old**

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[RequiemTranslations]

Chapter 35

New Season and New Debts

Several months have passed since we returned from the royal capital, and it was now Spring.

Although I turned thirteen, my weight was as ever stopped at 60 kilos (132 pounds).

Nevertheless, my hair and skin are no longer glossy and shiny and no longer smell.

I was a floral-smelling, energetic, young, chubby girl.

I'm happy to see the arrival of the beautiful spring and my thirteenth birthday, but I could not say the same about the present state of affairs in the Hakusu earldom.

While Ryuze and I were at the castle, our debt once again increased.

In the absence of my cousin who was keeping a watchful eye on things, it seems his spendthrift parents began to move.

Ryuze's parents requested money from our gentle grandfather, and our grandfather who once had a decent sense for money readily agreed.

For an incident to occur just as our monetary debts were about to hit zero, I am trembling every day from seeing my displeased cousin.

What a nuisance, he exposes his true character only in front of me.

(Maa, it can't be helped that Ryuze-oniisama is displeased. I also have complex feelings about it.)

It was shocking to see the money we had worked so hard to obtain suddenly became negative.

I have also been cooperating with my cousin, and have been aiming to pay off all debts.

Fortunately, soap sales have a positive outlook, and our regular income has been increasing.

Without the same hardships as before we will be able to collect money easier.

“Britney, your horseback riding tutor came.”

While in my laboratory tampering with the herbs the crown prince Marlow gave me, my cousin called out for me.

“Thank you very much, Ryuze-oniisama. I’ll be off.”

Recently, I started learning the horseback riding I’ve been interested in for some time now.

As I’ve still a beginner, I’ve been slowly walking the horse around the garden with my tutor.

It’s a pleasant walk with the many Spring flowers that have bloomed.

The former Britney wasn’t that interested in the garden, but I like it.



After finishing horseback riding and returning to the estate, there was a somewhat different atmosphere residing over the house.

Asking a servant, it seems that Ryuze’s parents are coming.

I have a bad feeling about this.

Peeping through the crack in the door of the guest room, sure enough, Ryuze and his parents were glaring at each other.

As for grandfather, he was sitting bewildered by himself.

He was rebuked by Ryuze, so it seems he became a bit dejected.

“Therefore, I declare that I want to break off all relations with you.”

“Ryuze, what a selfish thing! Do you think I will allow it!?”

From the other side of the door I heard Ryuze’s father shout.

He was a middle-aged man with a good physique, but Ryuze does not resemble him in the least.

In response, Ryuze directed composed words towards them.

“Thanks to the extravagant spending of you two, the earldom household’s finances are in dire straits. I have warned you many times until now, no?”

“Otouto-sama! It’s not too late yet, please designate my husband as the next Earl! Ryuze is still young and has yet to learn many things! Because of that he’s decided on such an irrational choice!”

This time, I heard Ryuze’s mother raise a shrill voice. This married couple is really alike, they both have annoyingly loud voices.

(Ojii-sama, I hope you’re alright... it would be good if we could push past those two people.)

While I was anxiously watching, Grandfather suddenly turned this way and noticed me peering through the doorway.

“Ooo, Britney!”

Grandfather looked like he was at his wits end and had on a pained face like a Buddha in hell. After seeing me he called my name.

I understand he wants me to do something about this terrible air.

(But, if I added myself to this situation, wouldn’t I just make things more complicated?)

Like that, I was compelled to enter the room with a delicate atmosphere.

...This is really awkward, what an incredibly unpleasant situation.

Chapter 36

Uncle and Aunt VS Cousin

As I entered the room, the subject of Ryuze's parent's attack changed to me.

My father's older sister was my aunt in this married couple, and my uncle is her husband.

For a while now these two people have only seen me as the daughter of the eldest son and as a hindrance.

Once grandfather retires they would quickly kick me out of the residence and intend to make this mansion their own.

"I just thought of a good idea! It would be good for Britney to leave this house! She could become the second wife of an old man and tie a suitable house to ours..."

As expected of Ryuze's mother – my aunt steered the conversation towards me. My uncle quickly took advantage of the misdirection.

"T, that's right. Were the money-grubbing Britney to disappear, the earldom's expenses would decrease greatly. Rather, this way we would even receive money!"

These two only think of money don't they? I'm already weary of this.

Arranging such selfish sentences, are they even aware of where the money they use comes from?

(...Maa, they're like the past me, so I'm not in a position to call them out about it.)

Instead of me who is astonished and can not speak up, my cousin objected.

"Britney isn't a money-grubbing insect like you two. Rather, she is contributing a significant amount to the Hakusu earldom's finances."

"Such a thing-! But, Britney has squandered so much! And don't even get me started

on the engagement with the Astaru earldom's household..."

"When is that story from? The current Hakusu earldom's increase in income is largely due to Britney's successes. The matter of the engagement was bad luck, but His Highness the crown prince was greatly pleased with her. If we drive her out without a really compelling reason it would be the end of our household."

"Ryuze! Your opinion is completely unrelated. The current head of household is Ojii-sama so let us hear his thoughts!"

My uncle and aunt drew near Grandfather. He stoically gazed at them and opened his mouth to speak.

"No matter what anyone says, my cute Britney is going nowhere. Furthermore, regarding the matter of breaking off relations with you two, I will entrust the matter to Ryuze."

"Ryuze has only just turned eighteen! He's not old enough to make such a judgement!"

"No, rather, Ryuze seems to have firmly laid the groundwork among the royal family in preparation for something like this. He and His Highness the crown prince are considerably close, I'm aware... A little while ago, His Highness even secretly visited our house. That occasion was..."

"No way, Ryuze! That's a lie isn't it? We're your family you know?"

My aunt who was tearing off her long hair once again raised a shrill voice.

Although they usually leave Ryuze to his own devices, only in times like this do they insist they're connected by blood.

Seeing this, it seems the young Ryuze had to endure many hardships.

Their personality is what it is, so it probably couldn't be helped.

Both his parents have similar problems with their conduct, Grandfather is unreliable, and his younger cousin is an idiot white pig.

From a young age he was probably at war with his surroundings. He was all alone.

Once my previous life's memories returned, and I could calmly observe my cousin's actions, I was able to understand the awful situation he was in.

Ryuze desperately wanted to rebuild the Hakusu earldom, and for the longest time had been taking solitary action to do so.

He did what he had to do, all by himself.

"How, how did we raise such an ungrateful child!"

My aunt continues to blame Ryuze.

I ceased my patience, and forcibly interrupted their conversation.

"The true ungrateful person is you! Aren't you embarrassed to act this way in front of your biological son?"

"Britney, you keep out of this! You're just like Ryuze. You're still a child who doesn't know anything."

"Aunt-sama you should also be silent. You don't understand anything... Did you even know that each time you took on debt, Ryuze-oniisama had to repeatedly bow his head to the related parties? The only reason the Hakusu earldom was even able to borrow so much was due to their confidence in him."

After my memory returned, I have been properly looking at Ryuze's conduct.

My cousin interacted with other nobles on behalf of Grandfather and contested with various merchants all on his own.

"W, what are you talking about?"

"It's the same with the territory's management. After we weren't able to earn much money from rearing horses, it was almost entirely Ryuze-oniisama who reshaped the Hakusu earldom."

"But, Ryuze is still young at eighteen-years-old..."

"Aren't you ashamed of causing so much trouble for your eighteen-year-old son? Did you know that while you were living in luxury, Onii-sama did his absolute best to

increase tax revenue? Maa, until a little while ago I was also causing trouble for him, and only recently have been able to temper myself.”

Were I personally asked whether I get along with Ryuze or not, I would answer that he’s a little hard to deal with.

However, his efforts to reform the territory are the real thing.

My cousin while dealing with these difficult characters, improved the horse and wine production, and rebuilt this declining territory to trend towards improvement.

In addition, no matter how far I developed my soaps and face lotions, without Ryuze who promoted the product leading to an income, the territory would not have improved.

A twelve-year-old white pig who has yet to even enter high society wouldn’t be able to sell soap extensively at all. Nobody would trust her, and nobody would even consider they would such a product.

The current Hakusu earldom wouldn’t be here without him.

As expected Grandfather had run out of patience with my aunt and uncle, and with a stern expression stood up from his place on the couch.

“I’m disappointed in you two. From now on I request you never step foot in this estate. Furthermore never come into contact with my grandchildren again.”

The matter about breaking off relations was put on hold, but this time was a good lesson for my aunt and uncle.

They were prohibited from stepping foot on the estate’s grounds, and from now on it’s been decided that all requests for money will be rejected.

After those two left the grounds, Grandfather headed to his study to do clerical work.

There are many things Grandfather is weak at, but he is still great at reading and writing documents.

Now only Ryuze and I remained in the room.

(The delicate atmosphere is still here... I will return to the laboratory.)

As I touched the door, Ryuze who was still seated on the couch called out to me.

“Ne~, Britney. I never thought that you would defend me.”

“That’s true, I also never thought I would. However, I got angry and let all that slip.”

“Is that so... By the way...”

Ryuze gracefully stood up from the couch and stared unblinkingly at me.

“...Who the hell are you?”

Chapter 37

Keeping Secrets from Family is Difficult

In response to Ryuze's interrogation, I inclined my head with unrefined movements.

"Onii-sama, what are you talking about? Aren't I your younger cousin Britney?"

"Un, but... we've lived together for a long time, and after observing you all that while I have a sense of discomfort. Ojii-sama has always been so overprotective, so I've noticed a definite change."

Just like I've been watching Ryuze, it seems he's been watching me as well.

"U~n, wait a moment, isn't it just because I've lost weight?"

"Perhaps, but it's almost like something has taken possession of you. In the first place, I can't think of your conduct as a thirteen-year-old Reijou."

"...Puberty in young girls takes many forms."

I tried to dodge Ryuze's questioning with a vague answer, but this cousin of mine won't so easily be deceived.

"In the first place, where did you even get your knowledge? I investigated, but there are no books related to soap or hot springs in our library. You have never left the house so just where did you find the opportunity to learn all this?"

My cousin drew near me and placed both hands on the door so I couldn't escape.

"Hey, Britney. If you're hiding something honestly tell me. We're family, aren't we?"

"Gu, gufufu... It's just your average growth to adulthood. As for the hot springs, eeto, I learned of them from a trader that arrived at our estate. The soap I produced on accident."

"Your gaze isn't on me but to the upper left. I'm sad, you're still lying to me."

“Ugu-...?”

It seems the thing I had read during my previous life in a book on psychology was true.

If your partner’s line of sight gazes to the upper left they’re telling a fib, and if they gaze to the upper-right they’re telling the truth. Incidentally, gazing to the lower left means they’re trying to remember past emotions, and gazing to the lower right means they’re wondering something to themselves.

Although this shoujo manga’s world falls behind my previous world technologically, I’m troubled that psychology alone grew to this level.

“You don’t need to be so cautious.”

Rather I think it’s very reasonable to be cautious in this situation.

For the time being, I need to do something about this kabedon situation. I don’t think there’s any deep meaning, but it’s bad for my heart.



Kabedon example (except Ryuze surrounded her with both arms)

“What can I say for you to believe me?”

“Tell me the truth.”

“...What if the truth is a preposterous story?”

“Even so, I want to know about you.”

I thought for a little while.

(In order to escape from this situation, should I tell him the truth? It's an unbelievable story anyway.)

Even if he finds out whether it's true or not from my line of sight, I don't think it's likely that Ryuze will believe the contents.

Putting my face in order and directing my line of sight towards my cousin, I slowly opened my mouth.

"Onii-sama, do you believe in previous lives?"

"...Eh?"

"I have memories from my life as a different human being. Precisely on the day my engagement was broken off I remember everything."

Ryuze was silently staring at my face. I suppose he's confirming whether it's a lie or not.

"In my previous life's world, the level of civilization was much more advanced. The soap I created was abundant there... The other products too, I made all of them using my previous life's knowledge. Well, the necessary ingredients weren't all there so I could not make the exact same products."

"..."

"My previous life's age was a little older than you are no Ryuze-oniisama, so I think you felt a sense of discomfort due to that... do you believe what I'm saying?"

"Britney."

"Maa, after hearing Onii-sama's words my line of sight has been fixed to the upper-right ever since, and I told you such a tall tale."

After rapidly talking, I escaped through a gap in my cousin's arms.

(Yosh, I got away!)

Or so I thought, but he perfectly caught my wrist. I failed to escape.

“I don’t know whether your story about your previous life is true or not... but I’m very interested in you now.”

With eyes as dark blue as an ocean, Ryuze fixedly stared at me.

“It’s fine if you don’t keep any interest. I’m just a white pig after all.”

“I thought it unusual that you spoke to princess Angela so impiously... I wonder what you were thinking about?”

“Are you serious? Please absolutely refuse anything that involves that matter about heading towards the royal capital. I need to become thin and create good vibes so that I could find a connected to a marriage partner... I haven’t been able to lose weight past 60 kilos though...”

“Wouldn’t it work out if you gave up on your midnight snacks?”

“...Midnight snacks? What are you talking about?”

“Occasionally you rummage around the kitchen for foodstuffs in the middle of the night, no?”

“...Eh, no way. I don’t believe it.”

In my mind, past offenses floated across.

At the time I just started my diet, sometimes I would sleepwalk and find myself in the kitchen.

At those times I woke up, but if I ate and returned to bed without noticing it, how horrifying...

(I need to take countermeasures as soon as possible...!)

This time I was able to shake off Ryuze’s hand, and at full speed I sprinted towards my room.

I felt I heard him chuckling behind me, but I had a feeling I shouldn’t look back...

Chapter 38

To the Neighboring Territory

I only learned of it recently, but the Hakusu earldom estate's job opening-to-application ratio is staggeringly high.

The cooks make delicious staff meals, the hot springs are freely usable, their children are able to get educated, and if you're lucky you can get prototype soaps and face lotions.

These various perks and others have gathered attention.

After my cousin Ryuze replaced all of the low-quality servants, my relationship with the servants has turned relatively peaceful.

Our debts increased, but by using my friend Nora's territory's clay and minerals, I was able to develop new cosmetic products to gather income.

Recently, I have worked together with Nora's territory to develop body powder. (TLN: Also known as talcum powder or baby powder.)



Body Powder (Doesn't have to be white)

I make it by crushing a mineral called talc into powder, and mixing it together with corn starch and essential oils. It works to hold back sticky perspiration and maintain smooth dry skin.

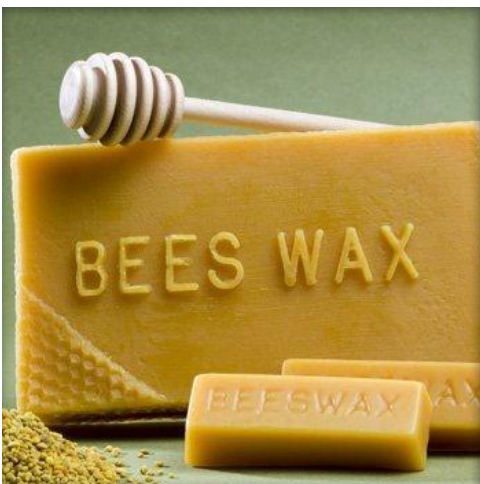


Talc crushed to powder



Corn Starch

Another thing I made was beeswax lip balm. Beeswax is a material gotten from beehives and is a component of honeybee's secretion. It can be used to make candles and floor wax, but it is also a superior moisturizing ingredient usable in cosmetic products.



Beeswax

In the past I had made some for myself, but judging by Britney's dry cracked lips I'm

sure it will sell well.

(Right now, it seems there are many that apply honey directly to their lips, but as you'd expect it's really sticky.)

In the evenings, in order to prevent myself from sleepwalking to the kitchen, I decided to sleep with my legs bound together.

Until now, there have been no signs that I've unbound myself and entered the kitchen. I will continue to wait-and-see for a while.

Ryuze's lemon fields are doing well, and have solidly taken root in the earldom's soil.

I also made the lemon yogurt I was pining for. It has such a refreshing aftertaste, and luckily sales seem to be reasonably good.

After the party, there has been no contact from the crown prince Marlow or Angela. Ryuze and the crown prince have been sending each other letters, but it seems they've discarded me from their thoughts.

(Un, that side has been peaceful.)

However, problems were arising from a different direction.

My grandfather's debt holder... I have to meet our neighbor the Earl of Astaru.

A good chunk of the debt my aunt and uncle created has been collected by Ryuze and paid, but there is still some way to go before it's completely paid off. My cousin says that, at least once, I should show my face to them.

(Certainly, I would like to keep a favorable relationship with the neighboring territory.)

And so, Ryuze and I decided to visit the neighboring Astaru earldom.

The Astaru earldom's second son, Ricardo, is not present in the territory because he is currently attending school in the royal capital.

Inside the carriage, Ryuze and I sat face-to-face and talked about our destination.

“Nee, Ryuze-oniisama. Was it necessary for me to go to the neighboring territory as well?”

“It was. You have been confining yourself inside the mansion, so I want you to slowly start going outside to see the world. Well, even though I say outside, our destination is only as far as the neighboring territory.”

“The Astaru earldom is an acquaintance, which I’m relieved about...”

“While we’re here, I think it would be good to introduce you to their eldest son as well. While he’s the same age as me, he’s a delicate man... and single.”

“...I disagree with this. Ryuze-oniisama has no integrity.”

I wonder if instead of the second son, he is now aiming for me to marry the eldest son.

“His name is Millard. He is often confined to his room due to illness, so after marriage Britney might be able to capture the authority of the earldom.

“...Is that your true aim, Ryuze-oniisama? Even if that happens, I might not necessarily move in a way that’s advantageous for Onii-sama.”

“Fufufu, now you’ve said it, Britney.”

“Gu, gufufu...”

...It’s free to say it at least.

(Although we said so much, as Ricardo’s older brother, his taste in women might be the same.)

Before we talk about marriage, I’m sure that even engagement would be refused.

(I’m still chubby after all.)

Since I’ve started binding my legs together while sleeping, I’ve begun to slim down a little more, but my appearance is still that of a shiro buta reijou. (TLN: Title drop. :o)

“Which reminds me, it seems Ricardo has been illegally sending his class’ contents to you.” (Ryuze)

“...I’m surprised you know. A letter arrived a few days ago, with very interesting contents.” (Britney)

“Ricardo consults with me regarding a variety of things. I know a great deal of his secrets.”

“...It’s as you say.”

About a day later, Ryuze’s and my carriage arrived safely at the Earl of Astaru’s estate.

Chapter 39

Chubby is cute

“Ryuze-sama~, I wanted to meet you! I heard you were coming... I couldn't contain myself, so here I am!”

After arriving at the Astaru earldom's estate, Ricardo's cutely dressed younger cousin – Lily – rushed out.

She seems to live close to the Earl's estate, but on this occasion she rushed over to this mansion.

Her dress this time was light blue. For the full-throttle adorable Lily however, I personally think a frilly pink dress would suit her better now.

From behind Lily, the Earl of Astaru slowly walks over.

Behind the Earl was a young man with the same shade of orange blond hair as Ricardo. He must be Ricardo's older brother.

For a man he has a small and slender build, but his dark green eyes held a sharpness.

His lower eyelids were a bit pale, and seemed in somewhat poor health.

“Ooh~, you have arrived!”

Towards the smiling cheerful greeting from the Earl of Astaru, Ryuze directed a business smile.

“Long time no so, Earl of Astaru. I am very grateful for you taking care of grandfather at that time...”

“Iya~, even if you say that, we are of equal status in this regard. Britney-jou has been sending our territory soap preferentially through Ricardo. We feel extremely blessed.”

As we have received much favor from them, I got permission from Ryuze and promised

to give soap preferentially to the Astaru earldom through Ricardo.

For a while, we had received various accommodations from the matter of the engagement cancellation, but Ricardo demanded we barter with him from now on. Most likely, he wanted the feat of handling soap trade between our territories.

The other products as well, gives him a hold of political power over the neighboring territories, but the Astaru earldom has been somewhat given precedence and is enjoying greater trade.

“Britney-jou as well, thank you for coming. Please, be at ease and enjoy yourself.”

Because of the thing with Ricardo, the Earl was excessively friendly with me.

In contrast, Ricardo’s older brother was unsociable.

“This is the first time you two have met, isn’t it? This is my son, Millard. He has been assisting me in the territory’s management recently. Millard, this is the granddaughter of the Hakusu’s Earl, Britney.” *(TLN: “Millard” is a french name that means “Strong.”)*

“N, nice to meet you. I’m Britney.”

“...I’m Millard.”

Since he’s from the Astaru earldom’s household, he of course knows who I am. I am the reijou that Ricardo broke off his engagement with.

(This is a bit awkward.)

After being guided into the mansion, we started to talk with the Earl about our prospects of paying off our debt.

Millard and Lily were also present.

The room we were guided to was pleasant and relaxing.

“Actually, I would like to develop more medical care in this area. I’m thankful for being given soap preferentially.”

“That sounds good.”

I was silently listening in on the conversation between the two.

However, Millard and Lily don't seem interested in the content.

(I thought Millard looks drowsy, but is it actually that he's ill?)

I heard he had a weak constitution. Perhaps even now he's straining himself.

Once the important matters had been taken care of, Lily chose to draw near Ryuze.

"Ryuze-sama, will you kindly stay overnight today? I want to talk with you more."

As expected of a beautiful girl. Lily's assertive behavior is full of confidence.

In contrast to me, who's sitting alone on the coach.

Minding this, the Earl of Astaru spoke to me.

"Britney-jou, there is still some time until dinner, but... would you like some afternoon sweets?"

"No, I'm good. Thank you for your concern."

Kuso-, you're greatly mistaken if you think all fat people like sweets!

"Umu, which reminds me... I heard from Ricardo that you were on a diet."

I don't want to spread such private information.

"I think girls are cute when they're a bit plump though..."

"Is that so? Gufufu."

Slightly plump girls and chubbies are different creatures altogether!

Furthermore, men who say "a bit plump" usually mean girls who are hardly plump at all!

In girls' speak people who are plumply cute have a "marshmallow body," but to guys they are just seen as chubby!

(Don't be deceived...!)

I was told I could go out in the garden, so I decided to follow my daily routine and exercise.

I was walking around the Astaru estate's garden at a quick pace. However...

(Oh no! I forgot there's no hot spring here!)

I noticed a serious fact at the end of my exercise.

(For now, lets use body powder to hide my odor... what would I do if I smelled of sweat?)

As I was in that state, there was someone staring at me from a window.

Chapter 40

I wish I were a thin person with a high metabolism

“Ano, Britney-jou. Could I have a little of your time?”

Before dinner, I was called out by the Astaru earldom’s eldest son, Millard.

“What is it?”

“There’s something I’d like to talk about regarding my younger brother.”

My eyes might be deceiving me, but Millard is a gentleman compared to Ricardo.

Although I’m younger than him, he’s using polite language.

“Ricardo... -sama, is it?”

Millard and I moved to the courtyard and continued talking.

We are standing only a short distance from each other, so I’m worried that my sweaty odor has reached him.

“You and my brother seem to be on good terms. Even though your engagement was broken, why do you continue to associate with each other?”

He hasn’t heard anything about this from Ricardo.

From the point of view of such a person, our behavior must seem strange.

Ma~, even if I’m asked “why,” it’s mostly a mercenary relationship.

(Still, I think we’re on better terms than we were in the beginning.)

How should I explain that to Millard, though? It seems difficult.

“It’s regrettable the engagement didn’t work out, but we share a mutual desire to

improve our respective territories... We have received a lot of favor from Ricardo-sama. For many reasons, we are indebted to him.”

“Is that so...”

“Ee, we are quite thankful. For that reason, I was quite worried our two territory’s relationship would be broken off at the same time the engagement was destroyed.”

“No, rather, we are mutually benefited by a positive relationship between the territories. However, Ricardo is at school right now. If it’s okay, would you be okay trading to our territory through me for now?”

“Eh-...?”

Looking his way, I saw Millard standing before my eyes. He’s close!

Although his eyes are sharp and have shadows, Millard is also beautiful.

I had complicated feelings seeing him smiling so close to me.

(This... perhaps, are you trying to seduce me?)

While admiring he would go so far for a white pig, I opened my mouth.

“I shouldn’t do things like that at my own discretion... I will consult with my cousin.”

“I will be waiting for your positive reply.”

Are the brothers of the Astaru earldom on bad terms with each other?

(He was trying to bypass Ricardo and have all contracts go through him instead, right?)

I’m an only child, so I don’t understand the relationship between the two aristocratic brothers. I’ll ask Lily about it.

After that, we ate dinner together with all members of the Astaru estate.

There are lots of lavish cuisines on the table. Aren’t they prospering a bit too much?

(I'm happy, but right now I'm on a diet.)

Even though Ryuze and Lily seemed to have been eating sweets before the meal, they are eating dinner as usual.

(Even in this world, there are types that never grow fat no matter how much they eat, huh?)

It's so unfair. I can't help what kind of body I was born with.

(Ryuze as well, despite being my cousin doesn't get fat at all. Ojii-sama is the same way.)

Among my relatives, it seems I only shared my protruding stomach with my Aunt and Uncle.

After eating, I stealthily talked with Lily.

"Ne~, Lily. Are Ricardo-sama and Millard-sama on bad terms with each other?"

"...That's right. Ricardo is strangely excellent, so Millard feels uneasy because of his sickly body. Ma~, I understand the feeling. Were I not born a woman, I think I would be a little worried."

As expected from a cousin, Lily calls the Astaru family's brothers quite intimately. (TLN: no "-sama.")

"Is that so."

"He's not a bad person, but Millard is quite delicate."

Which reminds me, Ryuze was saying the same thing.

"As Uncle-sama is wavering over who to make the present head of the family... he becomes even more worried. There are talks of bequeathing the estate to Ricardo in the future, and having Millard assist him. It's complicated."

The Astaru household seems to have it's own various circumstances.

Chapter 41

The harsh season is here

The hellish season for chubbies, Summer has arrived

“Uu~, it’s hot~... It’s so hot I don’t want to do anything~.”

Even though I haven’t been exercising, I was still sweating like a waterfall inside my room.

My summer dress was soaked through.

(If things continue like this I’ll lose weight from the heat right~? But, reality isn’t that kind is it?)

Even though I lose a little weight from sweat, drinking water sends me right back to how I was.

It’s too hot to exercise, but it’s also too hot to do nothing.

There are neither air conditioners nor fans in this world.

My saving grace is that the Hakusu earldom is halfway up a mountain, so it’s comparatively cooler.

(Maa~, it’s normally too hot for me anyway~.)

According to Ricardo’s letters, the royal capital located in a basin is even harsher.

If the chubby me went, no doubt it’d interfere with my normal life. I love the countryside~, the countryside’s the best~.

Recently, I’ve been taking lessons from Ryuze on how to use the account book.

I don’t know what he’s thinking, but it seems he’s trying to make me an assistant for the territory’s management.

And, while looking at the books yesterday with Ryuze, I discovered something.

There was something odd about the section regarding the division entrusted with distributing face lotion.

Recently, in order to produce and circulate the large quantity needed to meet demand, production and distribution have been handled at separate locations.

Be that as it may, Ryuze and I cannot personally visit each location often, so we regularly check the account book like this.

“There are several locations where the calculations do not add up. The income is too little for the amount of product produced... someone might be illegally distributing product, or embezzling money.”

“In that case, we must quickly gather evidence and find the perpetrator.”

“Aa, we should visit the scene soon. Britney, are you able to ride a horse now?”

“Yes, I can run the horse at full speed and jump over large obstacles, but I’m still somewhat nervous... I’m fine if it’s just steering the horse normally.”

“Alright. Since it’s a little far we’d normally take a carriage, but I want to hurry.”

“Understood.”

However, going out during Summer is hard.

This seems like it’ll be a severe journey for me.



“Are you alright, Britney?”

“Hi-, hu-! I-, I’m fine-!”

We got on horses and left the estate early in the morning, but I was quickly exhausted by the heat.

The sun still has yet to rise, and Ryuze, his subordinates, and our guards all have

relaxed faces.

Our destination is the distribution department in charge of selling the lotion I developed.

The location was about 3 hours one-way from our estate.

We ought to arrive by noon. Or rather, if we don't I'll surely melt.

Seeing my state of affairs, Ryuze tilted his head, approached with his horse and handed me a towel. What a gentleman.

"Onii-sama, the beautiful towel will be soaked in sweat in an instant. Is that okay?"

"It's fine, I have a second one. I'll give this one to Britney."

"Thank, you...!"

I felt genuinely thankful towards my cousin, it seems my mind was being greatly affected by the hot weather.

Wringing out the towel, wiping my face, and wringing out the towel repeatedly will gradually distort the color... lets not think too deeply about it.

We were safely able to arrive at our destination before noon.

(Since we were riding the entire time, I'm exhausted~.)

The only women who ride horses in this world are those that need transportation around the countryside.

By the way, since women wear skirt-like dresses, they often steer while riding sideways.

My horse-riding tutor taught me both forwards and sideways riding styles, but today since I'm wearing street clothes I'm riding sideways.

Immediately, a young man from the distribution facility came out and guided us to a guest room inside.

As hospitality, they served tea... and a large quantity of sweets came out.

(Even though we just came to investigate the matter of the account books.)

In front of me especially, there was a mountain of sweets piled up.

Iya iya, I know I'm chubby, but don't you think this is too much?

Chapter 42

The Shiro Buta Reijou's Achievement

A little after arriving at the distribution department, the manager in charge Gamagaeru appeared and ingratiatingly bowed his head to Ryuze. *(TLN: His name means toad in Japanese. Since it was spelled in katakana, I left it as-is without translating it to Toad. Also what poor sod gets named Toad by his parents?)*

I kept silent and watched their exchange. Of course, since I'm on a diet I refrained from touching the sweets.

(After all regarding me liking sweets so much, their information is old. If I were the old Britney I would likely be delighted, but I have completely cut out sweets for the past year now.)

While I was thinking such things, my cousin continued talking.

"...For those reasons, the stock of cosmetic lotion and income do not match. Is there something I'm unaware of?"

Looking at the gentle-mannered public face of Ryuze, Gamagaeru looked a little relieved.

"I-, is that so? Most likely, the product reached expiration date and was disposed. Then, the person in charge of the disposal forgot to fill in the account books."

"Is there really that much lotion discarded?"

"Eeto~, that's right. All expired products are disposed of after a month, so if you do not write it down it adds up to a lot..."

At Gamagaeru's words, I tilted my head.

(Face lotion will keep between three months to half a year. Isn't one month too soon to discard everything? In reality, are they truly discarding it?)

Regardless of the products that spoil early, throwing away products that will keep for half a year is doubtful.

(Suspicious...)

Ryuze has also put on a doubtful face.

As things are we'll need to force our way in.

(I would also like to hear testimonies from the other employees...)

However, there is a high probability that Gamagaeru will interfere and give excuses.

I took a deep breath and stood up. It seems like it's time for Baka Britney to make an appearance.

"Britney-sama, is something the matter?"

"I want to see inside~! This is the first time I've ever come to the distribution department~!"

"E, etto, that is..."

"Gufufu, wouldn't taking a quick look be fine~? I won't understand anything here but~... after such a rare long outing, leaving without seeing anything would be a shame."

"Eeto, well then, shall I call for a guide?"

"I don't need one! I'll just take a quick look and come back~. Most likely I'll get bored quickly~."

Saying that, I rocked my large body back and forth and rapidly advanced out of the room.

The distribution department seems to have old information about me and still think I'm a simple-minded sweet-loving chubby.

Behind me, Ryuze who realized what I was doing broke out into a smile.

I successfully infiltrated into the interior of the distribution department by myself. For the time being, let's use my maximum power as the ruling lord's daughter to look around and hear what the employees have to say.

There was something I heard I was particularly worried about.

About a month ago, my Aunt and Uncle came to inspect the distribution department.

"Nn...?"

Now that I think of it, that's about when the account books started to not add up.

Inquiring about my aunt and uncle to the employees, the person in charge Gamagaeru apparently discussed something with them.

(Those people are unrelated to the management of the territory, so isn't it strange they talked to the person in charge? Furthermore, neither of them are involved in the sales of lotion.)

I have an ominous premonition.

With quick steps, I headed back to the guest room where Ryuze was waiting.

(It might be because of my aunt and uncle that the people here had old information and thought I was infatuated with sweets.)

I opened the guest room's door and immediately rushed towards Ryuze.

"Onii-sama~, it was fun. So that's how goods get to market~... Aa-, right right. One month ago Aunt-sama and Uncle-sama visited here. It seems they talked about something with the person in charge here. What kind of things did they say~?"

"Heee~... About that, I'm also very interested. If it's all the same to you, would you tell me?"

Ryuze turned a cold gaze to the frog. With a "hii-" he cowered in place.



Although Gamagaeru had many tricks up his sleeve to hide the truth, he stood no chance with Ryuze as his opponent and in a few minutes had confessed everything. What a gutless man.

According to him, one month ago he was told by my visiting aunt and uncle to sell product on the black market to gather funds.

Of course, in the beginning the man in charge declined their request and tried to contact Ryuze, so it seems my aunt offered “I will give you half of the money from the sales.”

Drunk on the imagined riches, Gamagaeru swallowed my uncle and aunt’s proposal. He then pretended to discard the face lotion, and started embezzling the profit.

Of course, the lotion he pretended to dispose of was something that my aunt and uncle sold through another route and profited on... Really, those two aren’t decent at all.

(Ryuze is going to be angry, and will probably bring up talks again to sever all relations with them... huh?)

On a second glance, my cousin seems to be pondering something.

“Ryuze-oniisama, is something the matter?”

“Aa-, it’s nothing special. While it’s true they’re family, I can’t leave criminals as they are. Unable to give them special treatment, they have to be arrested and confined, huh?”

There are no police in this world, but there are organizations doing similar things.

The most common is the vigilante organization, wherein residents voluntarily collect members and deal with crime themselves.

In some regions, the feudal lord hired soldiers to do the same thing.

The Hakusu earldom employs the latter, the same as the royal capital and the neighboring Astaru territory.

My aunt and uncle will be arrested by them.

As for the person in charge of the distribution department, after a short time he was taken away by one of Ryuze's subordinates.

On the way back, we will once again be travelling on horseback.

It was hot inside the distribution department's guest room, but travelling by horse was much hotter.

It was already evening, but such a thing doesn't matter for a chubby.

"Hii-, Haa-..."

"Do you best, Britney."

While struggling with the heat on the return trip, Ryuze faced me and offered reasonable support.

Despite an embezzlement case coming to light, for some reason he looked to be in a good mood.

Chapter 43

Shiro Buta Reijou and the Mysterious Group

After the embezzlement case at the distribution department, my aunt and uncle were quickly captured and placed under house arrest.

There are no prisons in our territory, but at the foot of the mountain there is a large tower to imprison prisoners so they'll be transferred there soon.

Until the incident cools off, we decided to pass on attending any parties.

Since participating would gain me almost nothing, I did not particularly care.

Although boys near my age would be participating, they were all honest and apathetic to this shiro buta reijou. I drew a line at their easy-to-understand attitude.

It seems nothing would change until I lose weight.

In the neighboring Astaru earldom, my former fiancé and current business partner returned home.

The academy started its summer vacation, so for one month he is passing time at home in the Astaru earldom.

In order to see Ryuze, he will be visiting the Hakusu earldom during his vacation as well.

(I don't understand why, but these two are quite good friends aren't they?)

Ricardo is fond of Ryuze, and Ryuze sees Ricardo like a true younger brother. Frankly, he favors him more than me...

Well, I'm of the same opinion. Both his looks and contents are more charming than mine.

While thinking that, I headed for horse riding practice during this hot morning.

The practice location is the estate's garden and the surrounding grasslands. Just in case, I have an escort.

"Hii-, hi-..."

"Britney-sama, just a bit more!"

My middle-aged male riding tutor encouraged me, but exercising in hot weather really is harsh.

Now, it's time to practice galloping my horse through the meadow.

After a while, I saw a group of horses riding towards me.

On the back of one of them I saw a boy with orangeish blond hair.

"Ricardo!"

It seems my former fiancé and his escort came to visit the Hakusu territory.

"Long time no see, Britney."

Ricardo said that as he descended from his horse. He's grown taller and more mature since I last saw him.

Previously his appearance was somewhat child-like, but now his appearance is more mature... it's a little nice.

At parties, I'm sure he'll be pretty popular among the reijous.

"You, did you lose weight again?"

"I've lost about 2 kilos (4 lb) since we last saw each other." *(TLN: So slow! Now 58 kg, was 60 kg at the start of Spring. But keep it up Britney!)*

"Regarding the soap matter, you saved me. Thank you for not transferring distribution rights to my brother."

"Ee-, I can't afford to silently change the business partner on my own without consulting you. Rather, I should thank you for sharing the academy's classwork with

me. It's truly educational... besides, your father-sama, Astaru's Earl, has taken care of me in various ways."

I descended from my horse and faced Ricardo, but his line of sight was fixed on my horse.

"...Britney, since when could you ride a horse?"

"Before, I was talking to you about wanting to practice riding right? I've practiced since then, and can now perform the basic movements."

"I see, you're also doing your best, huh?"

"Maa ne~. By the way, you're heading to see Ryuze-oniisama right? I'll escort you to the mansion."

Although I'm in the middle of practice, I cannot afford to leave our guests.

There's only a little distance from here to the mansion.

I got approval from my tutor, mounted my horse, and faced towards the mansion however...

At the same time, from the opposite direction of the mansion, the sound of a large number of hooves was heard.

"...What? This sound...?"

Ricardo also turned towards the suspicious sound.

Tension ran among the escorts.

"Ricardo-sama, Britney-sama, please escape to the mansion! An armed group is approaching!"

At that guard's cry, we flusteredly turned our horses and galloped towards the mansion.

However, there was a problem. I hardly have a history riding horses, and as such my handling skill was problematic.

Despite being able to produce some speed, as expected I was falling behind Ricardo and my horse-riding tutor.

“Oi-, Britney. Gallop faster!”

“I’m already galloping at my horse’s limit!”

I’m kicking my horse’s belly to raise it’s speed, but I still can’t gallop as fast as those two.

(Which reminds me, this horse before heading out here was eating an absurd amount of feed and drinking a lot of water. I was also practicing running through the field... Due to that, this horse probably can’t reach it’s top speed.)

The escort started to split off, and I saw a few horses galloping towards here.

I’m impatiently trying to run my horse faster, but no matter what I do the speed doesn’t increase.

“Ricardo, go ahead of me! Contact Ojii-sama and Ryuze!”

“I refuse! Running away leaving a woman behind, there’s no way I’d do that!”

Ricardo rejected my proposal. He has an unexpectedly chivalrous nature.

Rather than going himself, he instructed my tutor to run ahead and get help from the mansion.

...My former fiancé really is a good guy.

In this situation, I wouldn’t have blamed him for running away though.

Chapter 44

The Shiro Buta Reijou's Snap Judgement

What's their purpose? The pursuing horses are rapidly approaching.

Thanks to the escorts, the number pursuing us decreased, and only two horsemen are approaching us.

However, the escort assigned to repel them was not following. I suppose he or his horse must have been wounded or killed.

On his horse, Ricardo drew his sword from the scabbard on his waist and turned to face our pursuers.

"Chotto-, Ricardo! It's dangerous!"

"Britney, quickly run away! I'll meet up with you later!"

"Even if you say that, I can't ignore the situation! It's two against one!"

"It's fine. Now go!"

Shouting that, Ricardo raised his sword and thrust towards the two horsemen... It was an instadeath.

No, on second glance Ricardo didn't die. His opponent's sword was swung with such power that blocking it knocked him unconscious.

A fourteen year old bocchan (*TLN: young master*) whose trained since birth in martial arts, versus two professionals.

No matter how excellent Ricardo was, success is unreasonable.

The second pursuer caught Ricardo who was about to fall, and dragged him onto his own horse.

“How dare they- Ricardo!”

Even if I ran away now, I wouldn't be able to escape.

In that case, I should buy time even if just a little!

Wielding the whip I use for horseback riding, I charged towards our enemies.

“UWAAAAAAAAAAAAA! Release Ricardo-!”

With a heroic cry I cracked my whip, hitting the enemy's face with a nice feeling.

“Ita-! Shit-, this little brat!”

He raised his sword to strike back, but his ally stopped him.

“Oi-, we were told not to injure them!”

“Ku-...”

It seems these two were requested to capture me unharmed.

Although I struggled for a while, like Ricardo, I received a strong blow to my stomach and lost consciousness.



When I regained consciousness, we had been moved to a dim room.

Our wrists and ankles were bound with rope, and we were laid on a dusty floor.

There were no windows, but light shone through a crack in the floor. I could hear someone speaking.

Apparently, this place was the upper floor of a building somewhere.



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Light shining through worn dusty floorboards

Ricardo who also lost consciousness was similarly laid against the wall, but he seems to be waking up and is slowly getting up. Of course, our weapons had been taken by our captors.

Somehow making use of my abdominal muscles, I succeeded in raising my upper body to a sitting posture.

(That was close. I'm glad I trained my abdominal muscles...)

A little while ago, I probably wouldn't have been able to sit up.

I sensed there was someone downstairs and strained my ears to hear. I think it was the kidnappers talking to each other.

I heard a man with an awfully throaty voice.

"Obtaining the Astaru earl's young lord was a stroke of luck. We can get a ransom from his family over there. Our pay will skyrocket."

"Well said. By now, both Earls should have been contacted."

Thinking I might be able to see something from the gap, I laid myself down on the floor once again.

I put my face on the floorboards and tried to peer downstairs.

“Oi-, Britney.”

Despite being restrained, Ricardo dexterously approached me and spoke in a low voice.

“Ricardo... I’m sorry for getting you involved in this. It seems, this was a kidnapping incident aimed at me.”

“It seems the culprits are below. I’ll search for a tool to cut our ropes. You continue to listen in on their conversation.”

“Understood.”

We’re two children. Our enemy isn’t wary of us at all.

Little by little, in loud arrogant voices they expose everything. *(TLN: This is definitely a comic-book world. We’ve even got villains happily exposing their entire plots. Now just who’ll be Superman? My bet’s on Ryuze.)*

“The place we’re receiving the ransom is the small cabin nearby. If it’s the grandchild of that stupid Earl, he’ll definitely pay the ransom.”

“He really is a stupid man. He doesn’t even realize he’s being played by his own daughter.”

“That woman as well, really isn’t showing any mercy with her own father as her opponent. Despite being under house arrest, she’s really pulled off something huge.”

“She’s a greedy bastard. Ma~, we’re the same way.”

Hearing the laughter from the men, I twitched my eyebrow and moved a little.

(The mastermind behind this incident... was you Aunt-sama?)

Because the people themselves couldn’t move, in their place they must have employed these people and plotted the abduction.

They’re my own relatives, but they really are pathetic.

However, knowing this I cannot keep still.

My clueless grandfather will almost certainly pay the ransom.

No, since it's my grandfather, it's actually likely that in a panic he'll pay even more than what the criminals demand.

(Ryuze-oniisama, please somehow contain Ojii-sama!)

While thinking of how to escape, I directed a prayer towards my stingy cousin.

Chapter 45

The Shiro Buta's Tackle was Strong

While lying down on the floor, I heard a worrisome mishi mishi (creaking) sound.

This is definitely not because I'm chubby! It's because it's an old building, surely!

I've cut my weight to 60 kilos, which while heavier than a petite thirteen year old girl, is lighter than an adult man.

There's only one final push until I hit my target weight... I've finally hit a weight where I can say that.

"Britney, come over here."

Before I knew it, Ricardo had freed himself and was standing nearby.

"Ricardo, just how did you unbind yourself?"

"There was a tapered point on that pillar over there. I frayed the rope against it until it was cut."

Looking over, in the corner of the room I saw an old pillar with what looked like countless nails poking out of it.

The words *tenuki construction* came to mind. (*TLN: shoddy construction, cutting corners, intentional negligence.*)

"Yosh, I'll go over to cut my bindings."

As I unstably stood up and started to move, we suddenly heard footsteps drawing near.

"Mazui, the kidnappers are coming up."

Ricardo said in a flustered low voice.

“Ricardo, hide behind me!”

With my current condition where both my arms and legs aren't usable, I thrust Ricardo towards the corner of the room and sat myself down in front of him.

At the same time I sit down, a part of the floor lifts up and one of our kidnappers shows his face.

The hole in the floor is large enough for three, no, four, people to climb through, but it seems only one came here.

“Please behave yourselves. Right now, the other guys are leaving to collect the money... if there's no trouble, you'll be released soon.”

Thanks to my body's surface area, Ricardo was splendidly hidden from his gaze.

Our opponent doesn't know that he's freed himself.

As for me, I'll play the part of a frail Earl's daughter.

“There were so many unfamiliar men, I was scared. Right now, are you the only one left here?”

“You're a slow oujo-chan, aren'tcha? Like I said, all the other guys went to go collect the ransom money...”

“Huh?”

Grinning and smiling I stood up and slowly approached the man.

I came up with a good idea.

My opponent became bewildered why this still-bound shiro buta reijou started making thudding sounds and jumping around the place.

...Floor, why won't you break?

“Oi-, Britney? What are you doing?”

Behind me, Ricardo was confused and quickly got up.

“Ricardo, it’s dangerous so wait there. In a moment, I’ll have escaped from here.”

“Oi-, you, your rope...?”

The man seems to have noticed that Ricardo’s restraints are gone.

But, I won’t let you tell the others!

I’ll only get one chance...!

“Oriya-!”

I tackled our enemy and fell downstairs through the hole with him.

Along with a tremendous sound, I threw my body down the stairs to the floor below...
the man was trapped under me.

“Gua-”

The man let out a cry of pain. It seems he received more damage than I imagined.

Among our kidnappers, he probably wasn’t the best fighter.

After getting crashed into, and taking the force from my weight falling from the second floor, he seems to be in pain and can’t move.

I thought about letting Ricardo escape alone during the moment I jumped at the man...
It was lucky my opponent can’t move.

(I’m so happy I’m fat-! No, I’m not happy, but...!)

Were I frail like a normal reijou, the flying me wouldn’t have enough weight.

For the first time in my life, I felt thankful for my weight.

“Britney!”

Ricardo came down in a panic.

Grabbing the fruit knife on the table, he quickly cut my ropes.

Afterwards, we bound the arms and legs of our kidnapper.

“Thank you, Ricardo.”

“No, rather, I’m grateful to have been saved. But still...”

He placed both hands on my cheeks, and with his clear emerald-like eyes stared into mine.

“It’s too rash to jump downstairs like you did. With both hands and legs tied, a single misstep would have caused grave injury.”

“...right, I’m sorry. I saw a chance, and thought the timing was right.”

What Ricardo said was very true.

Was my timing to be slightly off, or the man resisted and his posture crumbled, I would have hit the floor and broken a few bones.

Beyond that, if I was unlucky and the man came out uninjured, he would have definitely flown into a rage. My Aunt and Uncle had ordered to capture me “without injury” but...

“That was bad for my heart... also even if it had only partially worked, I wouldn’t have tried to escape. There’s no way I’d escape leaving you behind.”

He looks straight at my face with an expression full of worry from the bottom of his heart.

To the bitter end, he’s an earnest and honest man.

(...I think our current position is quite bad for my heart, though.)

Were it a young lady about my age, with this they’d definitely fall in love with him.

Since he’s grown up a little, I’m somewhat flustered being like this with such an honest good man.

Chapter 46

Grandfather's Heroism

I clumsily separated from Ricardo, and after pulling myself together I continued speaking.

"I'm really sorry, I did something unreasonable. For now let's leave this cabin."

"The man lying there said the hand off would be at a nearby hut. As this guy's allies may be nearby, let's move with caution."

I searched the man and confiscated his weapons. I found a dagger...

From the shelves near the entrance, we also found Ricardo's seized weapons.

"...Oi-, Britney. You, how proficient are you with a dagger?"

Ricardo looked at me holding the borrowed dagger with a dubious expression.

"I've never used one before. For now, I'll try swinging it."

This body of mine is unsuited for covert actions, but, for the unlikely case where I need to use it, I carried it using the ribbon on my dress as a makeshift scabbard.

After that, we escaped from our temporary prison.

In the surroundings were several old cabins like the one we were kept in.

Some distance away I saw a horse-drawn carriage from the Hakusu estate. I spontaneously increased my walking pace.

(This is bad, Ojii-sama might already be here.)

The current Hakusu estate's finances can't afford to pay a large ransom.

Even at the best of times we still have debt. I cannot let our expenses increase just

because of me.

“Britney, do you think the Earl’s in the building over there? I see lots of people inside it.”

Ricardo said that and indicated a building where he thought Grandfather might be. It was slightly larger than the other cabins.

Together with him we walked over to the building and stealthily peered through a window.

“Ah, Ojii-sama... or not, that’s Ryuze-oniisama. Did he come as as Grandfather’s representative?”

“Since it’s Ryuze, he probably won’t hand over the money so easily. I’m sure he came personally because he was worried about you.”

“Is that so~? That man, since he’s a schemer, he must have thought of something.”

While we talked about such a thing, Ryuze abruptly turned to face us.

(We’re outside the window, so there’s no way he heard us right?)

After confirming Ricardo and I were safe, the corner of his mouth slanted upwards into a fearless smirk.

Breaking up his conversation with the enemy halfway through the conversation, Ryuze abruptly left the cabin. As for us, we hid ourselves in a location where the enemy couldn’t see us.

Ryuze guided our enemies towards the carriage. Likely, he had told them “the gold is in the carriage” or something similar.

While anxiously watching, someone other than Ricardo strongly grabbed my shoulder.

Before I could scream in fright, Ricardo next to me quickly covered my mouth.

“Britney, it’s alright. It seems reinforcements have arrived.”

Calming down I turned to look over my shoulder. There I saw two guards from the

mansion standing there.

“We received an order from Ryuze-sama to rendezvous with the two of you.”

“From Onii-sama...?”

“It’s alright. We have surrounded this entire area. It’s only a matter of time until we catch all of your captors.”

As expected, my cousin took precautions before coming here.

“We have already located most of the enemies, so all that was left was locating the two of you. However, there are a lot of cabins... since you two were able to escape on your own that saves us a lot of trouble. We have prepared another carriage over there, so please board it and rest.”

“Did Ojii-sama remain at the mansion?”

“Not at all, this time it’s the Hakusu Earl himself who took command.”

“Ehh~-?”

After hearing that I reflexively exchanged a glance with Ricardo.

(I was so certain Ryuze-oniisama was the one giving instructions though.)

Likewise, knowing my grandfather’s disposition, Ricardo was surprised as well.

“We as well were surprised by the gentle Earl’s ability to take action. However, despite being old now he has a long history of service in this country, and in his youth the Earl was known as a hero (*TLN: Eiyuu*) who protected this country from abroad... I hear he was exceedingly skilled at warfare.”

“I had heard that from my father too. A long time ago, while my father was still very young and the Earl was still in the latter half of his teens... a foreign country was invading this country from the North, and the ones to hold them back was the Hakusu earldom. Thanks to him, the Astaru earldom was able to avoid the horrors of war. Although this is the first time I’ve seen him being active myself, I think that’s the reason my father always admired and idolized your Grandfather the Earl.”

“I... this whole time I thought it strange that the Astaru Earl thought so highly of my gentle Ojii-sama. After all he’s incredibly poor at territory management and really weak with debt.”

I had heard about my grandfather’s past from some of the older servants, but I thought that he was only ever the representative of the Hakusu earldom and someone else led the troops. Not in my wildest dreams did I imagine he played an active role himself.

(To be honest, I thought Grandfather forced the servant to tell the story so I would raise my evaluation of him.)

Grandfather never told his grandchild, me, stories about himself directly.

I never had the chance to hear about him from Mother or Father, and Aunt and Uncle were apathetic to Grandfather’s past.

(Those two probably didn’t hear anything about Grandfather’s past in detail. That’s probably why they used this type of strategy.)

It’s disgraceful, but I also didn’t know anything about Grandfather.

“The older guards are in high spirits since it’s been so long since the Earl last took command. They’re so enthusiastic, I feel a little pity for their enemy.”

The eyes of the guards talked about were sparkling with respect for Grandfather.

I was certainly surprised by Grandfather’s history as a wartime commander, but for now standing here I imagined I was a nuisance, so I cheerfully boarded the prepared carriage.

By the way, when I showed the dagger I borrowed from an enemy to a guard, I learned it was a splendidly made and valuable thing.

Most likely, all of the enemy’s possessions would be seized, so I think I’ll hand it over to Ryuze later.

I hope it will be at least a little helpful to repay our debts and pay the guards their wages.

Chapter 47

I'm Also Sorry I Snore Loudly

Brought to the carriage, I finally released the tension in my shoulders. There are guards outside so I could now relax.

From the way they were speaking, it seems that all the kidnappers will be caught soon.

"Britney, are you alright?"

"Ehh-, I fell down from the second floor, but I truly am uninjured. I suppose all this blubber was useful for something."

"I-, is that so... truly, I'm glad."

He sounded a little embarrassed giving his response. Ricardo's somewhat suspicious behavior is amusing.

"I was scared getting kidnapped, but I felt reassured because Ricardo was there with me."

"No, I wasn't in any way helpful. During the escape from the small hut all I could do was watch while Britney did everything."

After giving that reply, he looked visibly depressed.

As he's thirteen years old, I couldn't expect him to act like a knight from a storybook. Ricardo, however, seems to have believed he could.

"The pathetic me couldn't do anything... yet, both of us were able to escape safely. For that I'm truly happy."

"Although Ricardo seems to be feeling down, I think I was saved because you were there. Were I alone, I would have been helpless. I might have never thought of a way to cut our ropes. Because of that, thank you for being there."

“The one who should be thankful is me. I think I’m only safe and sound like this because you were there... Were I caught at that time, in the worst case I may have been a hostage.”

Ricardo who saw me smiled a little after saying that.

For a guy who is much too serious and yet shy, it was a very gentle smile.

Incidentally, I had been practicing horseback riding in the morning, and we were trapped in a dusty room together, but he never gave any complaints about my sweaty odor in the carriage.

A short time later, it seems that all of the perpetrators were caught, and Grandfather with a flushed face poked his head into the carriage.

“Britney, Ricardo! Are you both alright!?”

Briefly looking outside the carriage, I saw our kidnappers laid out over the ground with Grandfather’s subordinates watching over them.

Those who retained their consciousness looked deathly pale and were obediently obeying the soldiers.

The appearance of the men who have completely lost their fighting spirit is similar to a corpse. It seems they’ve gone through something utterly horrific.

“Ojii-sama, we’re both alright. Both of us are safe.”

Climbing into the carriage, he walked over to me and hugged me as hard as he could.

“Ahh, Britney! Are you truly uninjured?”

“Ehh-, I’m truly uninjured. Thank you very much for coming to save us.”

“Because of the worthless me, my granddaughter went through a truly hard time. Truly, I’m so sorry.”

“No, it’s not Ojii-sama’s fault. Because the masterminds behind this were Uncle-sama and Aunt-sama.”

“...So it was them after all, huh?”

Grandfather, now knowing what the aim of the kidnappers was, once again formed his usual and kind face.

He then told the soldiers who had gathered in front of the carriage before I knew it.

“Britney, since a long time ago has been an honest, direct child... I’m useless at anything besides war, and because of that my cute granddaughter has been caught in a major incident due to their two-facedness. Those who would injure my cute granddaughter, even if they are relatives, shall not be forgiven! I will deal the perpetrators their appropriate punishment.”

To Grandfather’s words, the soldiers nodded heavily.

“As well, this kidnapping incident is entirely my fault. I will take responsibility, and soon I think I will hand the seat of the Hakusu Earldom over to my grandchild Ryuze...”

Despite the unrest among the soldiers, Grandfather continued speaking.

“After becoming Earl at a young age, I had quite a hard time maintaining the territory. Because of that, as much as possible I wanted to avoid pushing this heavy burden onto my cute grandchildren. However, on the way here I talked with Ryuze, and I thought I could leave it to him. Ryuze will easily surpass me, and is a truly excellent grandchild.”

Ryuze had been dissatisfied that Grandfather refused to vacate the seat of the Hakusu Earldom, but Grandfather, in his own peculiar way, seems to have deeply considered his grandchildren in his judgement.

“From now on, I want you to serve him in substitute for me. I will serve as an adviser to him.”

The soldiers bowed their heads in silence.

My Aunt and Uncle were to be immediately transferred to the tower that houses criminals. Their monitoring will be more severe, and a harsh life is awaiting them.

Relaxing his grim face, Grandfather turned back towards me, and returned to his normal face with a smile.

“And Britney, because Ryuze and I still have business to take care of, please return home before us.”

“Yes, Ojii-sama.”

There is nothing I can do now, so I decided to leave it to the professionals.

Also, I’m concerned about the stamina of Ricardo who was suddenly abducted after a long trip from the Astaru Earldom.

I’m almost certain he’s more tired than he looks.

“Ricardo, if you’re tired it’s okay to lie down. I as well am going to relax on the carriage-ride back.”

“Ahh...”

“I’m sorry in advance if my snoring is annoying.”

“You snore, huh...?”

I’m overweight after all, so I think my snoring is loud.

Whenever I inadvertently fell asleep in the laboratory, Ryuze pointed it out and teased me. Moreover, he said it was quite loud.

“If it’s at a volume that interferes with sleep, please don’t hesitate to wake me up.”

The cause of snoring is that when lying down, the airway is sometimes constricted and it becomes difficult for air to pass. When the airway narrows, it requires more force to move the required amount of air. That shakes the throat causing an unpleasant sound.

Overweight people naturally have more fat on their necks, so it’s inevitable that the airway will get constricted more easily.

Ricardo floated a stiff smile, and saying nothing, prudently nodded his head.

Chapter 48

Troubles of a Boy Going Through Puberty (Ricardo's PoV)

Inside the rattling and shaking carriage, snoring like the roar of a large beast reverberated.

Sitting in the four-seater carriage, I – Ricardo – could not sleep. I couldn't take my eyes off of Britney who was comfortably lying down across from me.

She was in the middle of her nap, seemingly unconscious of me as someone of the opposite sex... a strand of drool hung down.

It's not as severe as the first time we met, but as always Britney is quite disappointing for a reijou. *(TLN: She's doesn't act like a typical noble's daughter)*

The carriage, lit by the setting sun, traveled through the bluish-green grasslands heading for the Hakusu Earldom's estate.

(It's shameful. In the end, I was unable to do anything during this ordeal.)

The fact the situation was resolved only a day later was pure luck.

This time the culprit was Ryuze's parents. Because they were in a hurry to obtain money, the place we were caught was near the mansion.

Thanks to that, discovery and arrest was quick, but under different circumstances we might have been captured for several days.

I'd been taught swordsmanship since a young age, and after polishing my fencing at the royal capital I felt confident. Yet despite that...

(Against the kidnapers, my skills were pitiable.)

The lessons I've had until now were completely worthless in a real fight.

As for Britney, she's clearly not the unpleasant reijou I thought she was at first.

Certainly, her outward appearance isn't beautiful, and her behavior is a little coarse. I can hardly see her as someone of the opposite sex.

However, in contrast to her young appearance, her speech and conduct is that of a grown-up and I highly value her proactive attitude towards territory management.

Above all, her personality is not bad.

Her figure which I had not been able to withstand before has also improved visibly these days.

In that way, I can say with confidence she's a hardworking girl that doesn't shirk her goals.

Well, given her hardworking nature, it's a mystery why she had that figure in the first place.

(I heard from Ryuze she had been bullied by their servants and that there were issues with both her parents. Then with the excessive dotting from the Earl... the cause may have been stress. The more I learn, the more unfortunate her childhood seems.)

I have completely abandoned the unpleasant feelings I used to hold towards her. Now, I see her as a like-minded soul in territory management and a close friend who I've had for a year.

I think I was quite lucky to have been given an engagement to her at that time.

In the royal capital I'm surrounded by reijous with barely hidden ulterior motive. Despite Britney being an oddball girl that snores loudly, I greatly prefer her sincere, honest nature.

However, I myself crushed that opportunity. At this late hour, how could I announce I want to retract my decision to break off the engagement.

Regarding a future with Britney, it would be better to give up.

The royal capital academy's vacation is only until the end of summer. I still have some time before I must return.

During this time, I think I will put more effort into learning military arts. I don't want to feel helpless like I did ever again.

In substitute for my brother with a weak constitution, my father has involved me in the territory's management since a young age.

Under normal circumstances, as the second son, I am expected to leave home and find my own success in life.

I thought that meant I would be involved in government affairs in the royal capital, or I would have become a knight for the kingdom.

However, since about a year ago, the clouds have looked menacing.

Once my brother's weak constitution looked like it would interfere with his work, my father began to behave like he would bequeath the territory to me instead.

Thanks to that, the relationship between us brothers has become the worst.

To be honest, I do not want to be an assistant to my older brother once he becomes Count. He is a dainty, hot-tempered person, and remarkably finds fault with everybody he meets throughout the day.

(To me, that kind of thing holds no draw.)

But, I was also worried about entrusting the Astaru earldom to my brother by himself.

Ryuze and the others who say it would be good were I to become the next Earl are kindling my desire.

I thought I would be able to decide were I to go to the same academy that Ryuze went to, but to this day I still have yet to decide.

However slowly, eventually I will need to seriously decide my future.

Ryuze says I should succeed my father the Earl.

As Ryuze is a close partner who lives in the same area I do, I have compared myself to him for a long time.

After thinking for a while, we arrived safely at the Hakusu earldom's estate. Later that night the Earl and his party returned safely as well.

After that, Britney guided me to her laboratory where she develops new products, and introduced new special products of the Hakusu earldom to me. She seems to be quite active as an assistant to Ryuze.

(Compared to that, it feels like everything I do is only half-baked.)

If I seriously want to succeed the Astaru earldom, I must put in at least as much effort as she does.)

Endlessly plagued by my troubles, my summer vacation came to an end.

Chapter 49

Boot Camp with Grandfather and Others

While looking outside the window up at the gray cloudy sky, I sat on a couch in Grandfather's study.

The season is still summer, but cloudy rainy days like this are relatively cool and friendly to chubby people.

Due to the kidnapping incident caused by Aunt and Uncle, a good change has occurred in the Hakusu earldom household.

(Vaguely, it feels like our family's relationships have improved from before.)

Because of unreliable Grandfather's actions as head of the family, Ryuze and I, and the relatively new servants as well, began to review with him. The once-strained atmosphere in this poor Earl's household began to soften.

As his worries had decreased by a small number, my cousin Ryuze's expression seems to have become a little calmer.

"By the way, Britney. A letter arrived from the Astaru earldom that Ricardo's state upon his safe arrival was strange, but..."

Grandfather was sitting across from me on the table and began to chat. He and the Earl of Astaru were good friends, and often exchanged letters with each other.

His rage at Ricardo for breaking off the engagement had lessened nowadays, and this topic naturally emerged.

"Uhm, Ricardo was acting strange...?"

Listening to Grandfather, the Earl of Astaru's letter had read "My son has become possessed by something. He has been doing nothing but sword practice to the point it's scary."

Ricardo seems to be a perfectionist, and to this day seems to regret his insta-death in the fight against the kidnappers.

However, he is such a hard worker so I hold a favorable impression. Through that incident, I as well became keenly aware of the importance of defending myself.

“Ojii-sama, related to that matter, I have a favor to ask.”

“What’s this? If it’s a request from Britney, I want to hear it by all means!”

As usual, Grandfather is sweet to me. It’s a good thing, so I gave a proposition to him.

“Actually, I want to learn fencing like Ricardo. I say that, but unlike him, I want to learn the minimum needed for self-defense.”

“Oh? But, Britney is a girl.”

“I thought a little about the recent incident. Were I to have taken lessons in self-defense, I would have been able to escape from the enemy. Once Ojii-sama has handed over the mantle of Earl to Ryuze-oniisama, won’t Ojii-sama have relatively more free time than before? If at all possible, could Ojii-sama please teach me the basics of self-defense during that extra time?”

No matter how old he is, Grandfather is still the hero who defended this land. Even now he is still much stronger than me.

He was worried upon hearing this from me initially, but given a sincere request from his granddaughter, he acquiesced all too soon.



In that way, I began to learn self-defense techniques from Grandfather.

From the start, Ryuze had been taking care of the lions share of the work, but as the remaining amount began getting handed over to my cousin, little by little Grandfather began to have more and more free time.

Right now as well, he is teaching me the basics of self-defense in the garden.

...I have some doubts about its contents.

(These are ordinary self-defense techniques, right?)

Glad to be spending time with his granddaughter, Grandfather is in high spirits and teaches me various self-defense techniques one after another.

For some reason, the old subordinates who idolize Grandfather joined in. In high spirits, they taught me techniques that are clearly beyond the area of ordinary self-defense. *(TLN: Calling it now. She's with the Prince when he gets attacked by an assassin and ends up using these techniques to prevent his death.)*

(Ne~, these techniques... are they really for self-defense? Isn't this in the realm of excessive self-defense, or even crossing the threshold to be attacks?)

I'm uneasy memorizing these, but as I'm an amateur in martial arts, I can't say anything to these veterans.

(By any chance, is this really the fundamentals of self-defense?)

Everyone is about the same age as Grandfather, but as expected from active-duty soldiers who have yet to retire, they are quite muscular.

The average life expectancy of this world is sixty- to seventy-years-old.

Although everyone belongs to Grandfather's generation, given that people can have children at a younger age in this world, most of them are fifty- to sixty-years old. It's a different feeling from modern-day Japan, so I shouldn't make light of them for being old.

(Even though I'm just learning self-defense techniques, I'm absurdly tired...! Why is everyone so quick and nimble?)

It seems my hard training with them bore fruit, and as my life as a thirteen-year-old ended, my weight had been cut to 50 kilos (110 lbs). Somehow, it seems I have gained a considerable amount of muscles.

In my heart, I called this training with the elderly soldiers "boot camp."

My skill with poetry and music was the same as ever, but it seems the boot camp's muscle training, self-defense training, and fencing instruction were more suitable for me.

Somehow, with my remarkable ability, I am slowly becoming a close-quarters battle reijou.

(Well, my diet has succeeded, so that's fine with me...)



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