

Chapter 2 Part 2

And so, we entered the forest and searched for raspberries, dividing ourselves into teams. However, when we said we were entering the forest, we only went as far as the outer edge of the forest and did not go any further, as it could be dangerous if we got lost.

If we went a little further, there would be a river flowing, but it was decided that we would not go there until we were older.

"I found raspberries!"

Marie shouted. I hurried over to where Marie was and saw many raspberries growing. Nikola and Luke also came running, their eyes shining. Nikola looked mature but seemed like a child and was cute in these situations.

"Let's pick them. Marie, I brought a hemp bag, so let's put them in here."

"Okay! Thank you, Big Brother. I'm glad there are so many."

"Yeah, let's do our best to pick them and give some to Mother and Father, too."

"Okay!"

Marie is working hard to pick the raspberries with her small hands. I also started picking with her. It seems like Nikola and Luke have also started doing the same on the opposite side. There are quite a lot of raspberries, so it is tough.

But in Leon's memories of this world, there are basically no sweets, and the only memory of eating fruits is from picking them in the forest, so these raspberries are quite valuable. Let's do our best to pick them.

After that, we silently picked raspberries and filled the hemp bag with them.

"Let's call it a day, shall we? The bag is already full."

"Yeah! It's full!"

"We've picked quite a bit over here too, so it should be enough."

"I picked a lot!"

Everyone is sparkling with delight at the amount of raspberries they have harvested.

"Shall we take a break and have some?"

"Yay~! Let's eat!"

"Then, let's all sit on that rock over there."

"Okay!"

We all sat on a rock that was just high enough to sit on and decided to eat the raspberries. The color is rich and looks delicious, but what about the taste? *Crunch...* It's sour!! What is this!? It's incredibly sour! There's definitely some sweetness too, but the overpowering sourness is so strong that I can hardly taste the sweetness.

Can everyone else eat this? I wondered and looked at Marie next to me. She was eating the raspberries with a smile and seemed to enjoy them.

"Marie? Isn't it sour?"

"Why? It's sweet and delicious!"

"Really? How about Nikola and Luke?"

"It's sweet and delicious!"

"It's so delicious! Raspberries are the best!"

Everyone seems to be enjoying it. Why? When I think of raspberries, I think of something sweeter and juicier...

Oh, right. Maybe because I have eaten a lot of sweet things in Japan, so it tastes sour to me. Come to think of it, even though my body is supposed to be Leon's, my sense of taste has not changed from when I was Ryosuke Ichigaya. The soup tasted bland, too...

If I had been born and raised with only forest fruits as my only source of sweetness, maybe this would be my definition of something sweet. But while everyone else might be content with this, I already know of so many sweet and delicious things. I want to eat sweet fruits, cakes, cookies, and chocolate... just thinking about it makes me crave them.

If I have sugar, I could easily make some simple sweets. Finding sugar is urgent now. While I was thinking about that, stopping myself from eating after only one bite of the raspberries, everyone finished their break and stood up.

"We haven't been here for that long today, so let's pick up some firewood and go home."

"Yeah. I'll pick up the most!"

"I'll be the one who picks up the most!"

The three of them had that kind of conversation and started picking up firewood. Although it was just picking up fallen branches on the ground, carrying them home was quite a heavy and laborious task.

The reason why we pick up firewood and bring it home is so that we can get pocket money for it. Since we run a restaurant, we consume a lot of firewood. We usually buy it, but it costs a lot of money, so we go to the forest to pick up branches and use them as firewood to save some money.

Many other families seem to do the same thing, picking up branches from the forest to save money. Nikola and Luke's family probably does it, too.

"Big Brother, pick some up quickly!"

"Sorry, sorry, I'll do it now."

I started picking up firewood too, but the basket on my back was getting heavier, and it was difficult to crouch down. But since Marie and Luke were doing it without complaining, I, as the oldest, could not complain.

Children in this world are strong. My body is still that of Leon's, so I should be able to do it like everyone else, but it isn't easy. The children in this world must have strong hearts. I continued picking up firewood, thinking I had to do my best.

"It's getting late, so let's go back."

Nikola said that, and we started getting ready to go back. There are no clocks in this world, so we do not know the exact time, but apparently, we can tell the approximate time by the sun's position.

"Alright, is everyone fine?"

"Yeah, I'm fine!"

"I can still walk!"

"Yeah, me too. Let's go back."

After that, we silently walked back home together. And then, taking a little more time than it took us to get there, we finally arrived at our houses.

"We're home!"

We first visited Nikola and Luke's house because Marie wanted to see Uncle.

"Welcome back."

"Marie said she wants to meet Uncle."

I said it with a wry smile.

"Is Uncle here? I miss him!"

Marie fidgeted as she could not wait.

"Just wait a moment, I'll call him now."

Auntie stood up from her chair, opened the door, and called out to the back of the shop.

"Ben~! Marie-chan and Leon are here."

As Auntie called out, the sound of footsteps could be heard from the back of the shop, and a well-built uncle appeared. He is still young though, despite being called an uncle. People get married early in this world, so even parents of children our age are in their twenties.

"So, Marie is here! You're always so cute!"

said Uncle, lifting Marie easily. Marie laughed happily. It seems that Marie was happy to be lifted high. Indeed, our father is not tall or well-built. Come on, Father. You can do it! I secretly cheered him on.

"Leon is here, too! Good, you're growing up nicely."

Uncle approached me with Marie in his arms and messed with my hair.

"Whoa~, Uncle! You're messing up my hair!"

"Don't worry about it You're a boy, you know?"

I did not understand what he meant by that. But maybe this kind of carefree attitude is what people like about him. He smiled and looked at us kindly.

I felt like I understood why Marie liked Uncle. Perhaps she had a good eye for people. But I could not relax because of it. I have to be cautious of any man who comes near Marie! With renewed determination, I pumped myself up to protect Marie, but she had already been put down and was ready to leave.

Wow, that was fast! Marie, don't leave your big brother behind. With that thought, I hurried to catch up with Marie.

"Bye, Auntie and Uncle. See you again. Bye, Nikola and Luke."

"Okay, see you again soon."

"Marie, wait a second! Don't leave your Big Brother behind!"

Saying this, Marie stopped in front of the door and stared at me.

"Because Big Brother has been absent-minded lately. You don't listen even when I talk to you."

said Marie, looking straight at me. O-Oh no, did she notice that I have been lost in thought? But she should not have realized that I am not Leon, right...?

"That's not true! I'm listening properly. I just tend to space out a lot! I'll be more careful from now on."

As I hastily made excuses, Marie looked at my face suspiciously for a while before speaking.

"If that's the case, it's fine. But listen properly to me next time, okay?"

"Yeah, I'll listen properly. Sorry about that."

"Well, it's okay. Let's go home, then."

"Yeah."

Marie seemed satisfied, so she opened the door and went inside. I breathed a sigh of relief as I watched her go in. I need to be more careful from now on.