

## Chapter 2 Part 1

### Chapter 2 - The Forest of Another World

After having lunch and chatting idly for a while, Father and Mother stood up now that their stomachs were settled.

"Well, Marie and Leon can go play while your mother and I prepare for the evening shift."

"That's right. Be careful, you two."

As soon as they said that, Marie suddenly stood up from her chair as if she remembered something.

"I forgot! Big Brother, you promised to go to the forest with Big Brother Nikola and Luke today!"

"Really?"

"Yes! Did you forget, Big Brother?"

"N-No, I remembered. We need to get ready quickly!"

I answered Marie, feeling a bit flustered inside. Indeed, I found a memory in Leon's mind of making that promise.

It is inconvenient that I must actively search for memories like this one. But it is better than having no memories at all, so I am grateful for what I have.

According to Leon's memories, Nikola and Luke are children from the tool shop next door. They are childhood friends who play together frequently. Nikola is the same age as me, and Luke is the same age as Marie, which explains why we get along so well.

"You two are going to the forest today? Don't forget to bring the beast-repelling bell."

"Right. We won't forget. We'll pick lots of fruits!"

The beast-repelling bell is apparently something you would always bring when going to the forest. It is like a bear bell in Japan. According to Leon's memories, there are no monsters in the forest, only small animals and bears. Moreover, dangerous beasts like bears live in the deepest part of the forest, so they hardly ever encounter them in the shallower parts. If we wore the bell, we would not encounter any beasts.

In another world, it is typical for there to be monsters, but I wonder if they do not exist in this world. Maybe they only exist in stories. Well, if they do not exist, then that is a good thing. Actually, fighting monsters is impossible and too scary.

"Okay then, let's get ready, Big Brother!"

Saying that, Marie took my hand and led me up the stairs to the storage room on the second floor. When we go to the forest, we change into leather boots and bring a knife, a leather bag of water, and a basket to carry the harvest. Right now, I am wearing pants made of the same material as my slightly stiff shirt, which is tied with twine, but it seems we will go to the forest in the same clothes.

Alright, I'm ready. It is kind of nerve-racking to have a knife at my waist. It truly is another world to have even children carry knives. It would be impossible in Japan.

"Marie, are you ready?"

"Yep, I'm ready!"

"Okay, let's go after we fill up the leather bag."

We moved to the well and drew water, putting it into the leather bag. The well is the type that you pull up with a rope, not a pump, so it isn't easy. Alright, we are all set now. We went to the kitchen to say goodbye to our mother and father.

"Mother, Father, we're going!"

"Take care of yourselves."

"Make sure to come back before it gets dark."

"Okay."

"Yes!"

We replied to our parents and left the house, running to Nikola and Luke's. Although I said we ran, we arrived quickly because it was just right next door.

The neighboring house is built like ours, with the dining room serving as a tool shop. They sell various tools for daily use, such as knives, leather bags, and hemp bags.

"Hello! Are Nikola and Luke here?"

"Oh, Marie, welcome."

"Good afternoon, Auntie."

"Oh, Leon's here, too. I think Nikola and Luke will be here soon. Just wait a bit."

It was Nikola and Luke's mother. Although I called her 'Auntie', she is still young and about the same age as my mother. She is a slightly plump and kind person, sitting in a chair behind the counter where she worked as a cashier, smiling at me.

"Is Uncle not here today?"

"Ben went to buy supplies. I'm sorry. He should be back home when you guys return from the forest, so you can see him then."

"Yay~! I love Uncle!"

"Haha, Ben would be so happy to hear that."

Ben is Nikola and Luke's father, a very cheerful and lively person. Marie seemed to love the uncle and often came to see him. By the way, the aunt's name is Sarah.

"Leon, Marie, sorry to keep you waiting."

"It's okay, Nikola. We haven't been waiting that long."

Nikola opened the door and came to the shop. With green hair and green eyes, the color was quite unusual from my perspective as a Japanese person, but it is ordinary color in this world. From Leon's memories, Luke had blue hair and blue eyes, which is also an amazingly normal color. In this world, hair and eye colors seemed to be colorful.

"Luke will be here soon, too."

"Big Brother Nikola! Let's pick some fruits today!"

"Marie, that's a good idea. Let's pick a lot."

"Yeah!"

Nikola seemed to treat Marie like his own little sister. He was still gently stroking her head with a gentle expression. Nikola is quite reliable and can be counted on.

"Sorry! Did I keep you waiting? I couldn't put on my shoes properly."

"It's okay, Luke. Did you manage to put them on?"

"It's perfect now!"

Luke put his hands on his hips and puffed out his chest, looking proud of himself. Although Luke was a bit mischievous, he seemed like a good kid with a kind side.

"Luke, you're late! We must go quickly, or we won't have enough time to pick fruits."

"Sorry, sorry. I'll help pick Marie's share, too."

"Really!? Yay! Thank you, Luke!"

Marie was initially angry, with furrowed brows, but as soon as Luke offered to help pick her share, she smiled wide. According to Leon's memories, the only sweet thing Leon had ever tasted was forest fruit. It seems that fruits are a precious source of sweetness here.

"Shall we go then? You have the bell to ward off beasts, right?"

"I have it!"

After Nikola's final check, we set off.

In Leon's memories, the royal capital was not surrounded by walls. After passing through the densely populated areas, such as the residential areas, there are vast fields and ranches, with

houses scattered here and there. I thought that cities are surrounded by walls and such in another world, but it is different here. Are the cities facing the border all like that?

As we walked along the beaten path in front of the houses, we saw fields and ranches in the distance. Then, there was a road that veered to the right, and after walking for about ten minutes, we arrived at the forest.

We walked silently and briskly without chattering and arrived at the forest at a pretty fast pace for children.

"Okay, shall we rest briefly and then look for fruits?"

"I'm still fine, Big Brother Nikola. Let's find fruit quickly!"

"Get some rest first. We have to walk back home even if we get tired."

"Okay~"

It would be terrible if we could not walk back home. We had no means of communication, and there were no cars here. As Nikola said, we decided to take a break and sit down. Although it was only a thirty-minute walk to the forest, it was quite tiring for children.

"Big Brother! Can we pick lots of fruits?"

"It's not really the season yet, so there might not be a lot to pick."

"What? Geez~"

"Big Brother Nikola, we won't be able to pick many fruits?"

Marie became teary-eyed upon hearing that there were a few fruits to pick. Marie and Luke do not seem to remember which fruits can be picked at what time. Certainly, Marie and Luke have only been going to the forest since last year or so in Leon's memories.

"No, there are still some fruits that can be picked at this time of year! Right, Leon?"

Nikola!? Marie looked up at me with tears in her eyes. Let's see, according to Leon's memories, what can be harvested at this time of year was..... raspberries! Raspberries exist in this world, too. Come to think of it, when I had lunch earlier, I thought that this world has the same kind of plants as Japan. The steak was made of beef, so I wonder if the animals are similar, too? I do not know the reason, but it is easy to understand for now, and I am grateful.

"Marie, we can pick raspberries at this time of year. Shall we look for them?"

"Really!? I love raspberries. They're sweet and delicious!"

"We can pick raspberries!? Yay! I love those."

"Then, shall we go look for raspberries today?"

"Sure!"

Marie nodded with a smile on her face, seemingly to have cheered up. I let out a sigh of relief and gave Nikola a stern look. *Nikola, how dare you sacrifice me like that!* As I stared at him, his eyes met mine, and he apologized to me with an apologetic look on his face. Seeing him like that, I felt a little pathetic as a 20-year-old mentally and decided to stop blaming Nikola.

Since I became Leon, my actions and thoughts seem to have regressed to that of a child. Maybe some parts of me are being influenced by this young and growing body of mine. Well, for now, since I'm a child, being influenced by my body might be just normal.

"Shall we go look for raspberries, then?"

"Yeah."