

Chapter 4 - Long-haired Friend

"Earl Baumeister, I hear the 『Hair God (Kamikami)』 has come to your territory."

"Eh? Kamikami, you say?"

"Yes, Hair God." [efn_note]Stupid pun on Kami = hair and Kami = god[/efn_note]

Since today I've got no work at the prep school, I've been reading the reports I received from Roderich in my mansion. It's impossible for me to oversee all of the governmental affairs of the huge Baumeister Earldom, but as its lord, I must gradually grasp the whole. Given that Elise and my other wives are on maternity leave, it's just the perfect time to get accustomed to this job.

It looks like my experience from my time as salaryman wasn't all pointless either. As I read the documents, I can understand the rough outline.

The development in my territory has been proceeding at a higher pace than scheduled. Just as I'm reviewing the progress, an unexpected visitor shows up in front of me. That visitor introduces himself as Earl Ehrenfried, clad in an attire and behaving himself in a way suitable to his rank. I think he's approximately forty years old. He seems to be a high-ranking appointed noble, belonging to the circle of nobles affiliated with agricultural affairs.

As usual, I can't remember the names of nobles, but Elise and Roderich cover that part for me.

Just when I'm wondering what kind of business he might have with me — though it's gotta be related to agriculture, seeing his affiliation — he suddenly confronts me with a word I've never heard before.

"Sorry, I'm still not quite up to par since I'm a greenhorn, but what's this 『Hair God (Kamikami)』?"

"It's being referred to as a legendary life-form. I guess it's only understandable for you to not know of it..."

According to Earl Ehrenfried, the Hair God is a creature where it isn't even clear whether it counts as a monster or animal.

"You don't know?"

"I hear its movements are very quick. It got a speed the eyes can't keep up with, or something like that..."

No one knows how it looks like since it's too fast for human eyes, and its usual habitat is unknown as well since it's been sighted in monster domains as well as regular forests and plains.

"I've got a question then. How do you know that it's the Hair God despite not knowing its true appearance? Couldn't it be some other quick creature?"

"About that..."

He explains that the Hair God got a very specific trait. It looks like it scatters some weird liquid when running away from people trying to catch it.

"Liquid? Does your body melt when showered by it or something?"

"No. If you're hit by that liquid, your hair will grow out."

"Hair, huh...?"

Come to think of it, Earl Ehrenfried is bald. He really can't hide a look telling me that it's inevitable for him to be interested in a liquid that regrows hair.

"In short, it scatters a liquid when escaping, and your hair grows back when hit by that liquid, correct?"

"Yes, I hear an adventurer with thin hair got accidentally showered by it, resulting in his hair remaining bushy all the way until his death."

"It sounds like it's very effective..."

I knew many people worried about their thin hair in my previous life. I'd also noticed that one of my superiors wore a wig. It was really hard for my eyes to not be drawn to his hairline when I was talking with him. There also existed many people buying expensive hair growth agents as soon as they heard that they were effective against thin hair. Even on Earth with its almighty science, a perfectly working hair restorer didn't exist.

At least until I was transferred to this world, that is.

This world has its own shady hair restorers as well. It's questionable whether those things have any effect...

Many among the nobles and merchants buy somewhat fishy magic potions for hefty sums of money. They get cheated, get involved with fishy potions again, and get cheated again. There's quite a few such people. No matter how often they get tricked, they don't give up hope that they'll find an effective medicine one day.

Even if the world is a different one, hair remains an eternal topic for men.

"Fortunately, the sighting hasn't been in the Demon Forest. Accordingly, I have some requests for you, Sir Baumeister." Earl Ehrenfried presents me with a bundle of documents.

All the documents are filled with requests addressed towards me.

"You're certainly not going to turn them down, are you?"

What blunt pressure. The requests ask me to somehow catch the Hair God using my magic, or to

secure the liquid secreted at the time of its escape. All of the letters insist on preferentially selling the liquid to them. It's a foregone conclusion that all the requesters are people with thin hair.

Moreover, if I turn down their requests, they intend to have me branded as intolerant by all people lacking hair. That attitude of fussing over hair is intolerant as well...but I guess I'm not in a position to make such a statement as I don't understand the feelings of people with no hair.

What's far more frightening is the tenacious attachment towards hair.

"I'm not sure whether I will be successful..."

"We know that. But, even if it's just clinging to a faint possibility, we want to get our hair back!"

Overwhelmed by Earl Ehrenfried's intense appeal, I lose the chance to turn him down.



"Hair God, huh? It's a legendary creature as far as I know. Because of its effectiveness, many influential people desire its body fluids, I hear."

Since I had no choice but to accept the requests, I tried asking Elise about the Hair God in an attempt to gather some information. In response, she gives me a full rundown. Nothing less of Elise-sensei.

"It's an unwritten law that information about the Hair God mustn't be passed down to the commoners..."

Apparently it's a measure to avoid an increase of people trying to get their lost hair back after letting the commoners know.

Their lost hair will return back to its former state; if they knew that such a dream-like effect really existed, the competition to obtain that fluid would very likely become fierce. It's a safe bet that wealthy merchants would pay any amount of money for it.

"There are no records of the Hair God having been caught in the past. Only the people, who obtained its body fluids after being showered by it, were able to recover their lost hair."

In other words, it'd turn into an extreme competition in order to obtain the rare fluid secreted during its escape.

"Because it's moving so fast that you can't follow it with your eyes, no one has been able to confirm what it looks like as of yet. It looks like some people were able to obtain the liquid by chance, but only very small amounts of it. In addition, being able to obtain it once in ten sightings is already a great achievement..."

Given its rare acquisition rate and the small amount, I suppose there's very few people who have been able to enjoy its blessing.

"Simply put, I should give it a try since I've got nothing to lose anyway?"

"Yes. Of course magicians in ancient times have also challenged a capture of the Hair God, but not one of them has succeeded. The liquid being acquired by normal people appears to be the common case..."

In short, doesn't that mean that I won't draw any hate towards me even if I fail?

The high-ranking nobles are kicking up a fuss that it might be possible for them to get their hair back, but the probability of actually being able to obtain the liquid is low. I guess they still came to rely on me, who has a faintly higher chance for success, while clinging to that exceedingly low possibility.

"I'll do my best. But, I can't guarantee anything about the result..."

"That makes sense. Still, I think it'll be fine if you do just that." Since Elise-sensei is the one saying so, it must be true.

"So, where has that Hair God or whatever been sighted in the Baumeister Earldom?"

"Well, you see..." When I hear about the location from Ina, it's a truly unexpected place.



"Such a creature might be in our territory?"

"It's too fast, making a clear location of its whereabouts difficult, it seems, but..."

The Hair God has been seen in a forest adjoining to Paul's territory. A small stream is flowing through the middle of the forest, and this creek serves as the border between Paul's and my territories.

The sighting took place on the Earldom's side of the forest, but it might also have moved on to Paul's side. Accordingly I'm now visiting Paul to get permission to search the forest.

Considering my relationship with Paul, it wouldn't be a particular problem for me to search without asking for permission first, but you should still keep good manners, even between family.

"What to say...it really sounds like trying to catch clouds..."

"If I hadn't accepted the request, even if I did so just because I've got nothing to lose anyway, the pressure would have become too intense..."

This country is ruled by a king, royalty, and nobles. A lot of those in power are elderly men, and many of those suffer from hair loss. That's why I must devote all my power into searching for the Hair God. After all, it might have developed into a hindrance of my territory's growth if I had

refused to help.

Given that Roderich has seen me off with a smile, I think I'm not all that wrong about this assumption either. The truly terrifying part is the tenacity towards hair.

"It's just a question I've come up with on the spot, but how is it possible that a creature, which is so fast that you can't follow its movement with your eyes, has been reported to have been spotted?"

"It looks like it runs away while scattering a liquid, if it senses danger."

"But, the Hair God is abnormally fast, right? Wouldn't it be rare for its fluid to scatter when it runs away?"

"Now that you mention it...maybe it's the wind pressure or something?"

I don't understand the details about this part either. If it moves quickly, it might create an intense whirlwind or something, like a kamaitachi.

"Brother, is the usual share necessary?"

"I'll think about it if it's caught in my territory."

Even if we might share a patron/vassal relationship, we must be clear about these kinds of things. But, I think Paul estimates the probability of obtaining the Hair God's fluid as fairly low. He puts off a talk about the details for the time afterwards.

"Milord, I'd like to participate in the search as well, if possible." Ottmar-san, a former guard colleague of Paul and his current Junior Commander, expresses his wish to join the search.

"Ottmar, you've got a day off today, so I don't really mind, but..."

"Thank you very much! Yahoooooo! I'll go at it with full power!!" Ottmar-san heads towards the forest in high spirits.

"Umm...brother?"

"That guy has recently been worrying about his declining hair..."

No matter the era or world, worrying about hair loss remains the same everywhere.



"Anyway, does such a creature really exist in the first place?" Erw brings up a doubt as I, the members I rounded up, and several men under Ottmar-san begin to look for Hair God.

"It doesn't matter either way. We have to establish the fact that we searched for it."

"In other words, an alibi?"

"Something like that, I suppose."

It'd cause various problems if I piss off the other nobles without searching. That's why I need to do my best, even if we don't find it in the end.

"That's going to be expensive...?"

"Not as much as you think."

Since we're looking for a being that might exist or not, I've hired students from the prep school for a part-time job. I have them split up the forest and watch their respective sections by paying them an allowance.

"Just call them necessary expenses."

"Though, what wonders me is the question why Arterio-san is with us."

The chief purveyor of the Baumeister house, Arterio-san, is participating in the search as well. Erw is baffled that such a big shot would show up here.

"It's a measure for the unlikely event of us obtaining the liquid. Erwin, a bloody dispute is going to start, if royalty and nobility try to appropriate the liquid for themselves. I have investigated various things as well, and found records of bloodshed in the past."

"Over hair?"

"Erwin, that's something you can say because of your rich hair. In the eyes of people with little to no hair, they'll consider the liquid as something they want to get their hands on, even if they have to get rid of contenders."

Learning of such circumstances, I feel like I accepted an outrageous request. Given that it's requests from people who can apply pressure on us, it wasn't really refusable though...

"Erwin, can you still say the same even after seeing that?"

"All of you! Raise your spirits and search as if your life depends on it!"

""""""Yeaahh!""""""

Arterio-san jerks in the direction where Ottmar-san and his men are about to search for Hair God with bloodshot eyes. Somehow, the people participating under him seem to lack hair...

They probably put a maximum priority on recovering their own hair as long as they can get some of the liquid. But certainly, compared to before, I feel like Ottmar-san's hair has thinned out quite a bit. That makes him probably all the more frantic.

"Just looking at them is already scary..."

"Well, there are various magic potions related to men's hair and women's beauty care...that's why I'm here as well. After all, a merchant might be necessary, seeing how it's something difficult to put a price on."

Given that it'll doubtlessly cost quite a lot of money, Arterio-san is with us in preparation for that.

"Arterio-san, do you want the Hair God's liquid, too?"

"No, I don't have thin hair. Though, Burkhart-san, who wants to look good for his newborn daughter, might need it."

Now that he mentions it, Arterio-san sure has full hair. There's some white hair because of his age, but that's solvable with hair dye.

"I don't have any problems with my hair either."

Actually, Burkhart-san is participating in the search together with Arterio-san. The reason being...

"Does Margrave Breithilde need it?"

"That's not it, Earl-sama. The Margrave Breithilde House's family members mostly don't suffer from hair loss. I've been sent here since it looks like trouble might brew if you obtain the Hair God's liquid by chance."

"Just because of that?"

It's also possible that there'd be various maneuvering going on within the Margrave Breithilde House to obtain the liquid, so Margrave Breithilde himself doesn't seem to be all that eager to obtain it.