

"Dear, we arrived at our destination ahead of time, didn't we?" (Elise)

"You're right, Elise." (Wendelin)

We arrived a lot faster at the point, where a large quantity of wyverns and flying dragons comes forth, than initially planned.

It's simple.

You could even say it's natural since we traveled while Elise and Haruka competed against each other with all their might.

It's great that we arrived early, but everyone besides the two was staggering unsteadily due to dizziness as we climbed out of the cars.

The effectiveness of the anti-travel sickness medicine we received from Arnest was a big help, but without it, everyone besides the drivers would have collapsed on the spot.

"(Well, if we had continued driving at such a speed...)"

"(So your side as well? Since Elise's eyes were glazed as she was grasping the wheel, I guess that means same happened with Haruka...)" (Wendelin)

"(The gap to her usual manner is too much!)"

"(I'm still reeling.)" (Katharina)

In a place, where Elise and Haruka couldn't listen, Erw and the others talked about their bitter experience.

"Dear, driving a car is very fun." (Elise)

"So that's what you think, Elise, I see." (Wendelin)

"You don't feel the same, dear?" (Elise)

"Look, cars are just a means for traveling. They are similar to riding a horse." (Wendelin)

"It's not like you like horse riding that much. But, that speed is irresistible." (Elise)

"Fast is sure nice, isn't it?" (Wendelin)

Elise proved the fact that she's a speed maniac, but once she came out of the car, she chatted me up with her usual smile, as if an evil spirit had finally left her.

Maybe she reduced her everyday stress by driving.

"I want to drive on the way back, too." (Elise)

"Umm..." (Wendelin)

As I was thinking how to refuse without hurting Elise, I felt several looks stabbing my back. Once I look in the direction from where they come, Erw and the others are urging me to do something.

I'm pretty sure that they want to tell me, 『You must decline by all means!』.

"(Don't worry, I share the same opinion) Since there might be developments in the Eulenberg territory while we're subjugating wyverns, we have to reduce the travel time by using 『Teleportation』 on the way back. There will be other opportunities for you to drive, okay?" (Wendelin)

"That makes sense. I of all people had completely forgotten about the matter with the tunnel." (Elise)

"What if you drove as hobby in your free time, if you like it so much?" (Wendelin)

Given that the cars are precious, excavated items, they should be appropriate as a noble's pastime. It's like horse riding. Besides, it also means that the more she drives by herself, the less she will drag others into it.

"Is that alright?" (Elise)

"That much should be fine. These are items we excavated to begin with." (Wendelin)

Parking one car in the mansion's courtyard and Countess Baumeister driving it as hobby in her free time shouldn't be a problem at all. Given that Elise might have accumulated stress since the Empire's civil war, it's a cheap price to pay if Elise can get rid of it by driving a car.

"I'm jealous, Elise-sama." (Haruka)

Having heard that, the second speed maniac, Haruka, donned an expression showing how very jealous she was.

"Won't it be fine if simply drive together, Haruka?" (Wendelin)

"Is that okay with you, milord?" (Haruka)

"I don't mind at all." (Wendelin)

As long as those two can keep the speed contests between themselves, no harm will befall us. Rather, it's very welcome.

"Elise-sama, I'm looking forward to it." (Haruka)

"Yes. I cannot help but look forward to it from now on, too." (Elise)

While saying so, the two beauties giggle happily. However, once they grab the wheel, their characters change completely. Well, there are no humans that don't have more than one face. It's no major issue if they only act like this at times of driving a car. Besides, I will definitely not get on the car with them.

"A 『Drive』 with just the two of us as couple would be dreamy. Sometime ago I had Arnest-san show me the documents he found in the tunnel." (Elise)

That shitty demon!

Don't prattle to Elise, you stupid pointy-ear!

Going on a drive means that I have to keep her company, doesn't it!?

Take your sponsor into consideration and read the mood!

"『Drive』, you say Elise-sama?" (Haruka)

"Couples and married men and women depart on a journey in a car. It seems that's a 『Drive』." (Elise)

"I also want to go on a drive together with Erw-san." (Haruka)

"That's really great. That also means we can take off somewhere together in two cars." (Elise)

A drive with Elise and Haruka behind the wheel...? Won't that definitely turn into a speed contest!?

Moreover, I'm expected to participate!

Once I accidentally look at Erw, his face has become pale after it was decided that he will join in, too.

Certainly there's no way for him to refuse a wish from Haruka.

"(Everyone! Eh...? Why are you looking away?)"

Ina, Luise, Wilma and Katharina averted their eyes from Erw and me.

Relief is showing on their faces as they are probably thinking that it finished without them getting involved.

They don't want to get on a car driven by Haruka or Elise anymore.

Their opinion seems to match on that.

"It would be great if we could quickly get some time to go on a drive, right Haruka-san?" (Elise)

"Yes, Elise-sama. I'm looking forward to it very much." (Haruka)

The two looked very happy, but because it was decided that Erw and I would be regularly dragged into their reckless driving in the near future, we felt depressed at what's awaiting us.

* * *

"You guys are Earl Baumeister-sama's party, huh? I've heard about you from Roderich...you're already tired, Earl-sama? Was it such a long journey?"

"There are various reasons..." (Wendelin)

"I guess it's difficult to be a noble."

Having gotten off the cars, we walked for a bit and then arrived at the appearance point of the wyverns and flying dragons.

As Roderich said, a party of dragon hunters with several dozen members has put up their tents there. The leader of that group gave us his greetings.

His age is around 50 years. He has a sunburnt skin, a trained, slender body, and wears an eyepatch as he apparently can see on his left eye.

"I'm Golf, the leader of 『Dragon Fighters』. I think we are fairly famous as party of dragon hunting experts." (Golf)

"I'm Wendelin, the leader of the 『Dragon Busters』." (Wendelin)

"So that's your official name, Earl Baumeister-sama? My bad, I heard the story from Roderich a long time ago." (Golf)

Since we're working as adventurers today, I introduced us with our party name, but it really feels like it's been quite a while since we last used the name 『Dragon Busters』.

"I actually had forgotten all about that name." (Erwin)

"Hey!" (Wendelin)

What's with the forgetting?

I scolded Erw.

...In reality was starting to forget it as well, though.

"I guess there's also the work as Lord-sama of this area. Since we've heard of your abilities, your help is greatly appreciated. So...you got exhausted from traveling to this remote place, right? We're taking a rest as well, so come this way." (Golf)

"Thanks." (Wendelin)

Given that we were exhausted in mind and body thanks to Elise's and Haruka's driving, it was a big help that Golf-san and his group had put up the tents already.

He guided us to a big tent.

Since the 『Dragon Fighters』 is a large-scaled dragon hunter party, several tents had been put up at the site that became the campground.

Smoke was rising at several places as they were preparing food, but the ones cooking are working very efficiently.

"They are a big party, thus they have people specialized on cooking with them, too." (Elise)

Elise, who cooks the most among us, admired the efficiency of the big party which she sees for the first time.

"Milady, what you focus your eyes on is slightly different from other adventurers, I suppose. Since we're always traveling with these numbers, the meals are left to cooking experts. They are young, but since they are fellows who want to open a restaurant after saving some money here, I can guarantee their skills." (Golf)

"What about battle?"

"As expected, they are amateurs at fighting as they wish to become cooks. We have them keep weapons for self-defense just in case, but during the hunt they withdraw." (Golf)

With these numbers they are rather a small military force than an adventurer party. I mean, there are even people working as logistical support who don't participate in the hunts. Once we entered the big tent, a young apprentice prepared some tea at once.

"In addition there are also guys that maintain our weapons, armors and traps, supply goods such as food, and take care of the accounting. Roderich not only did the accounting, but also joined in on the hunts, however. He's always been a skilled guy. I thought that it would be fine to make him the next leader of the 『Dragon Fighters』, but I guess now he's the household manager of the Earl Baumeister household. He really became someone completely out of our reach." (Golf)

We immediately talked about Roderich's time in the 『Dragon Fighters』, but I ended up admiring him for being able to do anything.

"It looks like Roderich-san can make a living anywhere."

"I truly think there's nothing that puts Roderich in a bind."

Accordingly it may be taken as him somewhat being a Jack of all trades and master of none.

"Wend-sama, you shouldn't have any trouble to make a living either." (Wilma)

"Guess so." (Wendelin)

As Wilma says, I should be able to live quite luxuriously if I work as adventurer as I'm a magician.

"If you say that, same also applies to Katharina, doesn't it?"

"A magician can continue to live adequately even as solo adventurer. There's no lack of means to earn income either."

In addition to this, Katharina seems tougher than me. She has a high loner resistance, too.

"Wendelin-san, did you just think something rude?" (Katharina)

"That's out of the question. Ah——, the tea is delicious." (Wendelin)

I drink the tea to dodge Katharina's questioning.

"Golf-san, it's no problem for us to take a rest?" (Haruka)

"It's fine, young lady. Young lady, you're a person from Mizuho?" (Golf)

"You're quite knowledgeable, aren't you?" (Haruka)

Haruka was surprised that Golf-san had noticed that she's from Mizuho. That's because there are unexpectedly many people who don't know about Mizuho in the Helmut Kingdom.

"Once you become famous as party specialized on dragons, there are many occasions to make connections with nobles thanks to the requests. There are also situations where we receive actual goods such as Mizuho products as reward." (Golf)

Nobles request dragon subjugations and raw materials of dragons. I guess they will give Mizuho ware as part of the reward.

"I see, so that's how it is." (Haruka)

"I possess countless pieces of porcelain, too. I like them since they are slightly unusual." (Golf)

Once you become the leader of a famous dragon hunter party, you probably become smarter than other adventurers, or rather, earn money differently.

He maintains a party that hunts dragons, and properly moves a few dozen non-combatants in addition.

I guess it's not a job suited for an incompetent person.

"We also only arrived here a few hours ago and set up our camp. I have them prepare for tomorrow's hunting. That means today we rest to be ready for tomorrow." (Golf)

"You sure are cautious." (Ina)

"That's only natural." (Golf)

Golf-san answered Ina's question as if it's the most natural thing in the world.

"We aren't that strong after all. Thus we don't do the unreasonable." (Golf)

"Are you weak? I mean, you're a party specialized on dragon hunting..."

"Of course there are several guys, including me, that are stronger than your average veteran adventurer. But, there are also those who are weak. There are always several newcomers with us. What's necessary for a dragon hunter party is teamwork." (Golf)

"Teamwork?"

"Aye. A magician at Earl Baumeister-sama's level can defeat a wyvern by himself, right? We do the same with these numbers. There's no way that we are strong, is there?" (Golf)

That was Golf-san's explanation to Ina, but I still think that he's too modest.

They should be able to hunt other monsters a lot easier.

It's a group specialized on team combat, apparently allowing them to quite efficiently hunt the monsters called dragons, which are close to being the strongest, without having many casualties. That's why they are the 『Dragon Fighters』.

"Just for caution's sake we have set up lookouts in shifts, but since the wyverns won't come here, it would be best to take a proper rest for now. As your party will participate this time as well, Earl Baumeister-sama, I think it will be quite easy, though." (Golf)

"Golf-san, you previously mentioned that there are people doing the preparations..."

"Milady, we have a system of assigning roles. There are members who are busy with the preparations for tomorrow, but for us, who will do the work tomorrow, it's important to rest. That's also part of the job." (Golf)

"So each member has their own fixed job? By the way, how are you actually defeating wyverns?"

"That is..." (Golf)

How are they going to defeat the wyverns and flying dragons who have gotten more active?
The method seems to consist of luring the dragons by making use of their ferocity.

"Our comrades are in the process of planting traps in a forest close to the Greater League Mountain Range around one kilometer away from here." (Golf)

"They are spreading a great number of sturdy nets made out of metal between the big trees of the forest," Golf-san explained.

"The resilience of our metal nets is a secret of our party. Since you naturally can't catch them with only that much, we attract them with bait." (Golf)

They employ living wild animals and monsters as bait after having prepared them beforehand.

"It's slightly cruel, but we leave them half-dead and hang them into the nets while still alive." (Golf)

I see, if they hang there like that, the animals and monsters will cry loudly while losing a lot of blood. I suppose the wyverns and flying dragons will be lured in by the stench of blood and the crying.

"Since I've heard that milady is a person of the church, I feel slightly bad for explaining it, though." (Golf)

In the church it's no sin to hunt monsters and animals as food for the sake of survival. However, it looks like they occasionally receive a sermon from priests who regard it as pitiful to deliberately wound those creatures so that they don't die, even if it's for the sake of baiting dragons.

"Certainly, I can't really welcome it, but seeing as the wyverns and flying dragons might appear in inhabited areas at this rate, it's probably unavoidable." (Elise)

"It's a big help for you to say so, milady." (Golf)

Golf-san was relieved that he didn't get scolded by Elise.

"Is scattering prepared monster blood in advance and imitating the crying no good?" (Wilma)

"Indeed, in that way you wouldn't need to gruesomely kill each and every single monster, right?" (Katharina)

Katharina praised the the alternative plan provided by Wilma.

"Blood is scattered in addition around the bait. However, only scattering the blood won't work. The dragons might see through that. It's the same with the crying, I think. If that method had worked, we would have used it long ago already. It's not like we are doing it like this because we like or prefer it." (Golf)

Even if they might be wild animals and monsters, they don't want to make them suffer a slow, gruesome death.

"You catch the monsters while still alive, right?"

"It's quite laborious."

"If we weaken the monsters too much or kill them at the time of catching them, they won't be useful as bait," Golf-san explained to Erw.

No matter how many they might be, since it needs ability to catch big monsters and animals while still alive, Golf-san and his group shouldn't be weak after all.

"The preparation of the bait will take place just before tomorrow's hunt. You can leave the trap placement to us." (Golf)

That means our job is to finish off the dragons that got caught in the nets after being lured in.

"Otherwise it will be the subjugation of targets that didn't get caught in the nets despite having been lured into the forest. Since your group has a lot of magicians, Earl Baumeister-sama, I'd like to request that you focus your efforts on those." (Golf)

Come to think of it, I sensed that there's no excellent magician in the 『Dragon Fighters』.

There's just one at elementary level...no, make that two.

Even with just two, that's already considerable. After all the number of magicians in our party is abnormal.

Even so, I guess what makes the 『Dragon Fighters』 famous as dragon hunting specialists is their teamwork and Golf-san's leading skills.

"Only two magicians?"

"Two? Ah! I suppose great magicians are sense other magicians. Well, in fact we only have one exclusive magician." (Golf)

It seems to be a young man, but since he's still a rookie as adventurer, he's in the middle of being raised.

"Accordingly I asked an adventurer friend for help. She's young, but already accustomed to dragon

hunting. If possible, I'd like her to join us, but somehow she likes to act as a lone wolf. She's well-connected and someone that doesn't turn down requests for help, but..." (Golf)

"I'm coming in."

Just when Golf-san was talking about the helping adventurer, a young mana possessor entered the tent.

And it resulted in me being surprised by the outward appearance of that person.

"A woman?"

"A female adventurer isn't particularly rare, right? Golf-san, the placing of traps will be done very soon."

"Thanks for expressly coming here to inform me about it, Katia." (Golf)

"I was in the vicinity anyway. I'm in charge of the prey that got caught in the nets after all. Be that as it may, I heard the rumors, but wow. For there to exist a party that has this many magicians." (Katia)

The girl, who looks at us while saying so, seems to be called Katia.

Her wording is awfully gallant, or rather manly, but her appearance was that of a beautiful girl with good looks, just like a doll.

Her height is no more than 155 cm. She has dark brown, close to black, hair with pigtails that flow down until her knees.

Her attire and equipment is that of a typical adventurer. A white tank top, short pants that resemble denim fabric, boots that reinforce her defense, thin protective tekkou, a chest protector, and, for some reason, a headband.

I wonder, had the headband been imported from the Mizuho Dukedom?

Her main weapons seem to be the two narrow longswords on her back.

The straps with the scabbards crossed at the front of her body.

"Those are sabers, aren't they?" (Erwin)

"Sabers, eh...?" (Wendelin)

Erw, whose hobby it is to collect swords, told us that the two swords of Katia are sabers.

Now that he mentions it, I feel like I've seen a saber at the martial arts tournament.

"Erw, are sabers rare?" (Wendelin)

"Since they are pretty much swords, it's no problem even if nobles use them, but for some reason they are unpopular and regarded as inferior." (Erwin)

"I see." (Wendelin)



It's apparently said that they lack the dignity of normal swords.

If you look for them, I think you will also find sabers that possess a feeling of dignity, but since they are regarded as inferior compared to normal swords, there seem to be extremely few nobles that use them.

Is that the reason why I have almost never seen them?

"There's also the estoc, a sword that's handled in a similar way, right? Given that it's a slender sword that focuses on thrusts, they are considered as weapons of cowards." (Erwin)

"It's not cowardly in particular, right?"

"The nobles just consider it like that on their own accord."

If I remember correctly, I've never seen a noble wearing a saber or an estoc at the waist in the capital. Even at the martial arts tournament the number of people using them was low.

"Those two swords put emphasis on being light weighted."

It's a sword shape that stresses slashing in a different way compared to Japanese blades. Katia's combat style was focused on speed if you look at her light weight armor. Long swords, as they are used by Erw, probably don't suit her body type.

"Also, take a look at her waist." (Erwin)

"Daggers? Knives?" (Wendelin)

Ten small throwing swords were visible at the belt coiling around her waist.

"Since she fights with a focus on speed, she will throw these while closing in."

Even if it's a small knife; it will pierce you, if you ignore it.

Given that they are especially often aimed at faces, opponents that fight against Katia will be forced to repel the knives, which come flying at their faces, with their swords.

That means she plans to draw close while using the opportunity created by that.

"I see." (Wendelin)

I grasped Erw's explanation.

Nothing less from someone whose swordsmanship talent has been recognized by Warren-san.

"Wendelin-san." (Katharina)

Next Katharina tugged my robe.

I know what she wants to say.

It's about Katia being a mana possessor.

She falls slightly short of intermediate level, but she should be considerably powerful if you add that mana to her sword skills.

"I will introduce you. This is Katia, who occasionally helps us out." (Golf)

Just when we finished appraising each other, Golf-san timely introduced the helper Katia.

"So, you're helping out in the same way..."

"I know you. You are Earl Baumeister-sama and party, right?" (Katia)

Katia seems to know about us.

"You're celebrities that crop up in various talks. Your abilities are guaranteed, so I have to also be careful that my prey won't be stolen." (Katia)

"It will be fine if it's you, Katia, right? Besides, this time there's plenty of prey."

"Looks like it. A big haul in a long time." (Katia)

To call dragon hunting a big haul, the girl called Katia is a considerably powerful person with a good appearance.

I have to make sure to not be deceived by her outward appearance.

"Umm...you're a magician as well, aren't you?" (Katharina)

For a change it was Katharina that took the initiative and called out to Katia.

"Strictly spoken, I don't consider myself a magician since the magic I can use is very limited." (Katia)

"Body strengthening...magic to increase your speed?" (Katharina)

"Hoh, nothing less of 『Storm』, I suppose." (Katia)

"You know of me?" (Katharina)

"Even though it may seem differently, my history as adventurer is longer than yours. 『Storm』, you're a famous magician." (Katia)

I thought that Katia would be my age or a little bit younger, but it seems like she's actually older than me.

Even so, our actual experience is little, but Katharina herself was quite the celebrity as magician. If she's with us, she doesn't stand out much since there are many people with distinct personalities around her.

Mostly Doushi.

"Golf-san, you seem eager to hunt a lot more than usual, don't you?" (Katia)

"I don't want to lose to the dragon hunting parties and adventurers at the other places. The purchase prices for the raw materials are lavish as well. We have to do our best while leaving the ones getting through the nets to you, Katia." (Golf)

"Then I should work hard at the gleaning, huh?" (Katia)

To treat the wyverns and flying dragons that aren't caught in the nets as gleaning...it seems Katia is more powerful than expected.

