

Chapter 6 - Although it has been decided that we will stay in the Capital, Nobles really don't choose their means

"I will decide my husband, to whom I will entrust the management of the discovered tunnel, through a martial arts tournament." Thanks to that incomprehensible condition set up by Katia, it resulted in us staying in the Earl Baumeister mansion in the capital for a while.

It's because we have to look after Katia until the martial arts tournament begins.

If you ask why it has be us, the answer would be that we probably have the most neutral position in this whole matter.

Katia spent everyday happily in our mansion, even though I'm making round trips with 『Teleportation』 between the construction site and the Baumeister mansion in the capital since I'm busy with the construction for the tunnel's development on the Baumeister Earldom's side.

This mansion is my property, you know...

What's up with the owner being the one who can relax the least in the mansion?

"Dear, how about a refill of tea?" (Elise)

"I think I will have some." (Wendelin)

Today the work finished in the morning for a change, and thus I drank tea brewed by Elise in the garden after lunch.

This is the Mizuho tea Haruka had her home send over. As expected, enjoying Mizuho tea that resembles Japanese tea is the best.

"Katia-san seems to have fun." (Elise)

"Well, it might be tough on Erw who keeps her company as opponent, though..." (Wendelin)

Everyone's eyes turned in the direction of Erw and Katia who are in the middle of a mock battle. As they are both freeloaders in my mansion, Katia often challenged Erw, who excels at swordsmanship, to a match.

I guess it's owed to both being people who use swords. Additionally, because they fight with pure sword techniques as Erw can't use magic, she probably considered him to be the best opponent to challenge to a match at the beginning. I felt like Erw was treated like an opening act, but he himself looks as if he wants to have intensive training sessions with Haruka during the times he has his matches against Katia rather than thinking about something like that.

"I suppose that's what you'd expect of Earl Baumeister-sama's guard! You're stronger than expected! Tough!" (Katia)

"I have my hands full with blocking and can't really shift into offense!" (Erwin)

The mock battle turned into a potentially endless repetition of moves with Katia continuing to attack while toying with Erw through her speed, and Erw occasionally throwing precise counterattacks at her while defending against her attacks.

In regards to basic physical ability...especially speed, Katia, who reinforces hers with mana, is the superior one, but Erw endures her attacks by freely using the techniques he acquired through his experiences until now, and then counterattacks once he sees an opportunity.

"Erwin-dono, you're really good!" (Katia)

"It looks like you have almost no experience in interpersonal combat, Katia. I somehow managed to thrust into those gaps of yours, but I guess you won't be able to be so careless anymore with your next opponent..." (Erwin)

In the end their match finished with a draw.

"Erw-san, thanks for your hard work." (Haruka)

"I'm bummed out for real...she's not at the level of Warren-sensei, but swordsmen, who boost their abilities with mana, are troublesome." (Erwin)

"Certainly it's somewhat bothersome." (Haruka)

While Erw receives a towel to wipe his sweat and cool Mizuho tea to appease his thirst from Haruka, they chatted about Katia's combat abilities.

"It's just as I thought the other day. It's wonderful that there are many powerful people in the Earl Baumeister household." (Katia)

Katia made a face of shaking in excitement not only in regards to Erw, but also my wives. I see, so that's the reason why she said that she will be freeloading at our place, huh?

"Our female camp is stronger than me. Do you best." (Erwin)

"I'm definitely looking forward to it." (Katia)

That Erw; he apparently wants to excuse himself from being Katia's opponent any longer by pushing it on Luise and the others.

"(Erw, you're terrible, you know?)"

"(The other side is eager to fight against strong opponents, so it can't be helped, right?)" (Erwin)

Ina complained to Erw in a whisper, but he dodged the issue by saying that it's Katia's will. Furthermore, there's Haruka. Given that she also has a disposition of liking to hold mock battles against strong people, Erw thought that he said something very smart. Pushing the troublesome Katia on someone else is admired by his wife. It was truly killing two birds with one stone.

"Well then, who's going to be my next opponent?" (Katia)

Having finished her small break, Katia next challenges the women of the Earl Baumeister household to a match, but that resulted in her suffering a series of defeats.

"...Such a...even though I'm so fast..." (Katia)

"Being fast means that you have to simplify your movements accordingly. If someone can follow you with their eyes to some degree, the rest becomes easy to handle with foreseeing your next move and searching for your presence." (Haruka)

First she fought against Haruka, who is a master at katana techniques despite having almost the same mana as Erw. Katia lost by having the blade pressed against her nape from a blind spot in around ten minutes.

Even after that they fought several times, but Katia suffered consecutive defeats, unable to compete with Haruka's techniques.

"What an amazing technique despite being younger than me." (Katia)

"I have learned handling a katana since I was three years old." (Haruka)

"I see...someone like me never even had a decent swordsmanship instructor..." (Katia)

Honestly spoken, I can't imagine the sight of Lord Eulenberg swinging a sword. Same applies to Veith-san.

As far as I heard, neither ever made an appearance in a martial arts tournament or similar.

In such environment Katia apparently got her hands on a real sword only after she became an adult.

Of course her sword techniques were close to those of an amateur, but that also means that she repeatedly piled up victories against dragons with her overwhelming physical ability.

Her helping out with the farming since her childhood probably became the foundation of her astounding physical abilities.

"Umm, milord." (Haruka)

"Yes?" (Wendelin)

Having finished her matches against Katia, Haruka talks me up.

"It's about Katia-san. She will be in this mansion until the martial arts tournament, right?" (Haruka)

"Well, since we can't leave her in the care of another family...there's around five days left."
(Wendelin)

It's not like I want to actively look after her either, but I suppose it's about showing here my duty, or rather generosity as Earl Baumeister.

I don't want to be seen as stingy noble who refused her because of the expenses she produces.

"Even so, it's bad." (Haruka)

"Eh? Why?" (Wendelin)

I didn't understand Haruka's worries.

"She didn't possess a decent sword until she became an adult, and yet she has this much strength to slash at an enemy by using her acceleration magic. Because she fought against Erw-san earlier, she became stronger to an extent that I could feel it when I fought against her." (Haruka)

Precisely because she's inexperienced at proper swordsmanship, she becomes stronger by absorbing the experience of having fought against experts like Haruka and Erw after just a few times. Haruka apparently felt an impending danger that Katia might become much stronger if she continues the mock battles in this mansion.

"Albeit it's unclear whether someone who can win against her will appear even at this point in time..."

"Katia can gain increasingly more experience, the stronger her opponent. Or rather, she did really well to get as strong as she's now by only learning all of it herself..."

Erw noticed Katia's bottomless talent, too.

"Having said that, I can't tell Ina and the others to refuse her, can I?" (Wendelin)

In the end it's nothing more than mock battles and training.
And then Haruka's bad premonition became reality.

"I lost! You're strong, Ina. Have you also done spearmanship since your childhood?" (Katia)

"Yes, I already held a spear in my hand when I finally became aware of my surroundings." (Ina)

"Wow, that's amazing. Also, you don't have to use any formal speech with me." (Katia)

She accumulates experience by fighting against those that are stronger than her, and becomes more powerful herself.

Seemingly enjoying that, Katia looked very happy even though she was dealt with by Ina's spear, toyed with by Luise exquisite skills, and overwhelmed by Wilma's herculean strength.

Or rather, she does well to not get tired out with such a series of battles.

I guess, that's what you would expect of a former farmer's girl.

It's the same with her speed, but even her astounding stamina foundation, which she fostered during the farm work at home, was a strong point of Katia.

"Luise, you started in your childhood as well, didn't you? How enviable." (Katia)

"But Katia, you being strong is because of your inborn physical abilities, and the persistence you obtained from farming, I think." (Luise)

"I suppose that's true as well. During my childhood, father and brother made me till nothing but the fields on the slopes. Back then I thought 『I will definitely leave a territory like this!』, though." (Katia)



As it seems to be a family tradition for the Eulenberg household to do farm work even as nobility, Katia mentions that she only worked on the fields in her childhood.

"Wilma, you're really strong, too. I guess that's only natural as you actively participated in that large-scaled civil war in the Empire. Had you been trained by your father-in-law, Minister Edgar?" (Katia)

"I was late since I was over ten years old when I started to train with a teacher. Though I went hunting after becoming five years old..." (Wilma)

"That's an amazing story as well. I can fully agree with you being strong." (Katia)

In regards to the aristocratic ways Katia did things that made you angry, but once we actually got in contact like this, she had a character that made it very easy to get along with.

Even when losing in a mock battle, she doesn't complain. Instead she praises her opponent and tries to do her best.

That's why she has many acquaintances among the adventurers such as Golf-san. And also has a high credibility.

Her being willful about the matter with the tunnel is because she's eagerly trying to somehow protect her weak home in her very own way.

"It would be nice if you could fight against me as well, but unfortunately I'm bad at combat." (Elise)

"Elise, your healing magic is wonderful, though. Someone like me has too little mana. The spells I can use are only 『Body Strengthening』 and 『Acceleration』. If I could heal light wounds, I would be able to become a lot more powerful." (Katia)

Katia had already become good friends with Elise and the others.

In the morning her main training was to carry out mock battles in the garden. Once that finished, Elise served tea and snacks, and all of them noisily chatted with each other while looking happy.

I guess this is the rumored 『girls-only gathering』...

Moreover, as the average age of the participants is low, this is a true 『girls-only gathering』.

In my previous life I happened to hear gossip at work that the female co-workers at the company where I worked did it occasionally as well, but I recalled that the age of the participating members wasn't really that of girls.

And I was also told by a senior female co-worker that I must not point that out.

"Katia, you won't train anymore today, right?" (Elise)

"I'm dead tired, so no." (Katia)

Well if you fight for such a long time...

Or rather, if I look at that stamina of hers, I feel like I can really well understand the saying 『Don't underestimate farming!』.

"In that case, let's go out shopping." (Elise)

"Shopping?" (Katia)

"Yes. Katia-san, you will spend a few days in this mansion. I think you should buy various necessities. You're a woman after all." (Elise)

If a woman is going to stay over, quite a few things have to be prepared.
Elise invited Katia to go buy those things with her.

"If it's just a little shopping, I can also do it myself..." (Katia)

"Umm...I think it might be difficult for you to go out alone." (Elise)

"Thanks for your considerations, but it's unnecessary. If it's buying assorted goods, I will be fine by myself." Katia tried to refuse, but Elise countered that she won't be able to do that.
Elise's usual smile doesn't fall apart, but she has an attitude that doesn't allow any objection.

"Please, make sure to always go out with several people in the time until the martial arts tournament is held." (Elise)

"Do you think that I'm going to lose against the rabble around here? I'm telling you, it'll be alright." (Katia)

Elise sighed deeply.
As if saying that Katia doesn't get it at all.

"Dear, what do you think?" (Elise)

"Let's see..." (Wendelin)

The nobles, who believe that it's very unlikely for their sons to win in the tournament, will kidnap Katia, if she's moving around by herself.

Hmm, I guess that will be followed by taking her virginity...and then Katia will be forced into a relationship and told to say 『I will stop the martial arts tournament, and make ○○ of the ○○ household my husband』.

With this method it won't be any problem even if they can't win against Katia in the tournament, I think.

"A development just as it's described in the books Ina loves so much?" (Wilma)

"I don't like such stories, though." (Ina)

Ina immediately shot down Wilma's remark.

"Yeah! Ina-chan loves stories where commoner girls marry princes..." (Luise)

"That's okay, isn't it...?" (Wendelin)

I was aware of that, too. I also think it's much better than a R-18 development where a young woman is kidnapped in broad daylight.

"It really doesn't matter what stories I like! I'm also against Katia going out by herself." (Ina)

"Indeed. It's impossible for a person to be alert at any time." (Katharina)

The nobles, who would scheme such bad things, aren't stupid either.

They wouldn't make such a difficult move as confronting her from the front, immobilizing her in battle and then abduct her.

Or rather, I don't think there's anyone who would consider to assist in such crime while possessing the combat strength allowing them to accomplish this feat.

If there was such an adventurer, they could easily live off hunting even without unreasonably getting involved in crimes.

Assuming Katia were to be kidnapped by a big shot of the underworld, there would also be the problem that she could be handed over to a noble, who's likely to bet on a rise of their household through the tunnel right, for a large sum of money.

"In such case, they would make her fall asleep through food or a drink at her destination, or she would be attacked with a blowgun that uses needles smeared with a magic potion which will paralyse her body, I guess." (Katharina)

"That would really be a full-blown crime, though." (Erwin)

Erw looked at Katharina with a doubtful look, wondering 『There are nobles who would do something like that?』.

"They won't be punished if there's no proof. As long as they succeed in such deed, it's questionable whether Katia-san would be able to indict them for those crimes after having been raped."
(Katharina)

No matter how remarkable as adventurer they might be, I guess it's difficult for noble women to prosecute a sex crime in this world.

"But, is there anyone who would go this far?"

Is there really someone who wouldn't consider my fury as the one looking after Katia?

If something like that happened, even the Earl Baumeister household would be slandered for being inapt.

"Therefore Katia-san will be safe in this mansion. As long as she doesn't go out by herself, that is."
(Elise)

Elise says so while smiling, but her smile didn't reach her eyes at all.

"There's also another possibility. That of having one's daughter marry Veith-san once Katia-san dies all of a sudden."

"Well, Katia, who did something unnecessary, is hated by the nobles, I'm sure."

Well, to be honest, it's probably just as Luise says.

The nobles, who don't have any sons that could win against Katia, likely can't forgive Katia who openly declared her defiance of the rules in front of the commoners, saying 『Don't do something

that's uncalled for!』.

"Exactly because she declared it so boldly, even the nobles can't meddle with her directly. That's why they will poison her in secret or similar?"

"I guess that's how it is."

"Even in Mizuho there are stories of aiming for a target with poisoned blowpipes." (Haruka)

Wilma, Haruka, don't say such scary things.

But in such case, will they be able to treat it as death from illness, if they have to also persuade the nobles who will do the autopsy?

"Eh? It has become such a big deal?" (Katia)

"Well, yeah, I 'm sure."

Even though she dragged even the king into this, that Katia indeed moved in the heat of the moment, didn't she?

"Will I always be targeted by nobles from now on?" (Katia)

"At least until this uproar settles down."

"Until it settles down?"

"In other words, until you decide on a husband. Nobles also have various things they need to consider, but since it will be a waste of time and effort to make a move on you once everything is finished..."

Scheming to assassinate Katia out of personal bitterness after everything got settled, will be a waste of money and time.

If they have such spare time, it will be more efficient to make plans how to receive the leftovers from Katia's husband's family.

It's not like Elise wanted to simply threaten Katia either. I think she wanted to tell her to be careful for now.

"Katia, you made the choice yourself, thus we will make sure to not complain about it, but I really don't want you to bring Elise's kindness of telling you to pay attention to your own actions for the sake of safety to naught." (Wendelin)

"Understood...Elise, sorry for making you worry." (Katia)

"It's fine as long as you understand what I want to tell you." (Elise)

Be that as it may, you can sure count on the daughter of a high-ranking noble.

She knows how nobles think quite well. Since she's going out of her way to teach Katia about that, I think she's a truly kind girl.

"Dear, how about you go with us as well? If possible, I would like you to accompany us." (Elise)

"Sure." (Wendelin)

Roderich decided that I will only do public works in the mornings for the few days left until the tournament.

Thus I have time to spare in the afternoon.

I'm only responsible for the tunnel's entrance area on our side.

I don't care about the Eulenberg's side!

"(Will it be a lingerie store this time, too? If possible, I'd like you to spare me from that.)" (Wendelin)

"(On this occasion we will really limit it to livingware. Besides, although it's not dangerous, it's possible that there will be troubles with Katia-san, so...)" (Elise)

The reason why Elise asked me to accompany them is simple.

Even if there are nobles trying to harm Katia, it will be likely possible to deter an attack if I'm nearby.

However, as for the troubles mentioned by Elise that might visit Katia...

Just what might those actually be?

While thinking about that, I went shopping together with Elise and the others.



"Women love shopping, don't they?" (Erwin)

"Erw, you love checking out and buying swords, too. I have a weakness for new foodstuff and restaurants. Everyone has something they can get engrossed with." (Wendelin)

"Aren't you awfully open-minded?" (Erwin)

We went shopping with everyone in the capital's urban area for the period until dinner.

The female camp, including Katia and Haruka, evaluated the goods in a certain general store while chattering about their impressions.

Accessories and sundries were the same in my previous life, but I suppose women like such things.

"Wouldn't it have been fine if we had left the buying of such things to Dominique and Lea?" (Erwin)

"Don't say that, Erw." (Wendelin)

During their life in the main mansion in Baulburg, Elise and the other girls have less chances to do things such as cooking.

There are many servants and maids in the mansion, and they don't want to steal their work too much.

Accordingly we quickly decided to stay in the capital's mansion.

Given that it was quite sudden and moreover for the period of a week, there are no servants taking care of the capital's mansion besides Dominique and Lea, whom we brought along. That means Elise and the others can freely cook and do other miscellaneous tasks.

"Dominique is Elise's childhood friend. Thus she pays attention to such small things."

Elise is conducting herself as daughter of a high-ranking noble without going over the top, but I'm well aware that she actually likes to brew tea and cook like a normal girl. Therefore the stay in the capital allows her to do whatever she likes and also serves as stress relief. Even Dominique, who has been Elise's friend for a long time, should be fully aware of that.

"I see. Now that you mention it, Elise has it difficult as well, doesn't she?" (Erwin)

While Erw and I were having such a conversation, the girls apparently finished their shopping.

"The next store is..."

"(As expected...)"

However, there's no way for the shopping to finish at just one store with this many girls present. It looks like Erw and I have to keep them company in their shopping for a while.

"We bought plenty. Isn't it time to go back?" (Katia)

"There are still other things you need."

Katia appears to be bad with the womanly way of shopping where they visit many stores for a very long time.

She mentioned that she wants to return to the mansion by now, but this is no more than a minority opinion in this place.

Her suggestion was rejected by Ina, and the shopping continued.

"I understand..." (Katia)

While looking resigned, Katia tried to leave the store while holding the bags with the purchased items, but at this point she got dragged into unexpected troubles.

She ended up bumping into someone, resulting in her dropping the bags in her hands.

There were also items that are easy to break inside the bags. Having fallen to the ground, sounds of 『clashing』 were audible from the bags.

"I am deeply sorry for having caused this."

The one who bumped into Katia is a young man...moreover, a quite handsome one at that. Going by his attire, there's no doubt that he's a young noble.

Among nobility and royalty there are many patterns where they make children by marrying handsome men or beautiful women. There were many people with good appearances among them...leaving rural and tiny nobles out of the quotation... but even among those, this man was outstandingly handsome.

"Of course I will have you allow me to reimburse you for the items that fell down."

"Yeah..." (Katia)

Suddenly receiving an apology from a handsome man, Katia gave a vague answer, apparently not knowing how to deal with this.

Because she's working as adventurer, she got used to dealing with male adventurers, but she might not know how to handle men outside that trade.

The man returned to the store and bought the broken items again. He gave the new paper bags to Katia, but she was silent during the whole time.

"I am truly sorry."

"You bought new ones, so I don't mind." (Katia)

"I cannot let that stand. My mansion is just around the corner. Excuse me for not mentioning it before. My name is Manfred Wiffram von Bänker."

The good-looking nobles ignores me completely and only addresses Katia.

Still, he's the very definition of a hunk.

Why is there so much difference in our appearances despite both of us having been born as men? God is really unfair.

"(Handsome men should just die...)"

"(Unexpectedly the other side might also think that magicians should just die. Or rather, he's too obvious...)"

Certainly, that's an act anyone can see through.

Elise and the other girls look at him expressionlessly.

"By all means, allow me to invite you for tea at my home. I will also provide a cake from the store of the royal family's purveyor." (Manfred)

"Umm..." (Katia)

Did that Katia never experience being picked up by a male adventurer?

It feels like she's quite unversed.

Once I thought that, Elise, who should have stuck to being an onlooker, wedged herself between the two.

"Young Baron Bänker-dono, we are greatly obliged for your overly courteous apology. However, Katia-san is an unmarried woman. I wonder what to think of you suddenly inviting her to your mansion. We will have someone of the Earl Baumeister household deliver a return gift later, thus I'm very sorry for having to decline you here." (Elise)

"I see..." (Manfred)

I understand. As noble who suddenly tries to make a pass at Katia which goes against noble

etiquette, he can't act obstinately once he was dealt with in accordance to etiquette by Elise.

"Well then, another arrangement is waiting for us." (Elise)

After Elise elegantly bows towards the handsome noble, she grabs Katia's hand and hurries to a place where the store can't be seen any longer.
We follow them as well.

"So it happened just as I had expected." (Elise)

"Did you predict that, Elise?" (Wendelin)

Trouble that might occur even if they are accompanied by Erw and me.
As it actually took place, it means they are targeting Katia from the back door.

"I see. It will be their win if Katia falls in love with that handsome man before the tournament, huh?"

"Yes. Such clever tricks exist as well." (Elise)

As expected of Elise.
She's well accustomed to the methods of the nobles living in the capital.

"Eh? What do you mean?" (Katia)

This one is a lost case.
Katia apparently doesn't understand why that hunk got in contact with her.

"As we told you, all of it is an act." (Ina)

"Is that so, Ina?" (Katia)

"I wonder why you don't realize that yourself..."

"It's because male adventurers don't use such roundabout approaches." (Luise)

Luise answered Ina instead.