

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 have made 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.
Moreover, it's probably because male adventurers end up drawing back from adventurers as remarkable as Katia.
That's why Katia wasn't accustomed to being picked up.

"It's a fact that he bumped into you deliberately." (Katharina)

Just as Katharina imagines, he must have created an opportunity to make contact by bumping into her.

"Right? He had you allow him to reimburse you for the broken goods, and since he wasn't able to settle down with just that, he invited you to his mansion. If you were to be invited once, you would have been invited on the next day, and the day after as well until you would fall in love with that

handsome man, Katia."

If Katia ended up losing her heart to that man, the martial arts tournament would lose its meaning. After all Katia would let him win intentionally.

"Katia-san, if you were interested in that man, it cannot be helped."

"He was quite handsome."

Certainly his handsomeness might become an effective weapon. If there are nobles trying to stir the interest of a high-ranking noble with beautiful daughters, the reverse must exist as well.

"A reverse honey trap." (Wilma)

"You sure know questionable words, don't you Wilma...?"

A trap to lure in women with a handsome man, huh...?

"Did he interest you, Katia?"

"That man? Me? No, not at all." (Katia)

And Katia, the main cast here, was at first bewildered by the sudden events, but it looks like she didn't fall in love with that man.

"Why?" (Wilma)

"Wilma, you have hunted outside as well, so you understand, don't you? That those kinds of men only have their looks. They get close to women to steal their money. Well, I think he's similar to a pimp." (Katia)

People with the only redeeming feature being their looks naturally exist in the ability-based worlds of adventurers, hunters and fishermen, too. Many of them make a living by sponging off women who earn the money.

That might also be one of their merits, but Katia mentioned that she doesn't like such men.

"Looks don't matter. As long as they have the ability to defeat me, that's all I need." (Katia)

Katia really wants to marry a man who's stronger than her. She seems to believe that it will be possible to restrain the people that will be sent from her husband's home for the tunnel's management as long as the married couple is strong enough. Since she has the funds, this might unexpectedly work out.

"That guy has absolutely no physical strength, right?"

"Indeed. Going by his posture and the way he walks, he has never learned martial arts properly." (Haruka)

To know the combat abilities of that handsome man with just that; as expected of Haruka.
Posture and way of walking...I wouldn't know even if I looked at those.

"Come to think of it, Elise, you called him 『Young Baron Bänker-dono』, didn't you? Since it's probably not possible to know on a glance whether he's the family head or one of the children, you must have known him from before." (Wendelin)

I mean it's not like a family head wears a name plate stating 『I'm the family head』.
Even in my case people, who don't know me, won't think that I'm the family head of an Earl house if I don't wear my mantle.
I expect that there are also many who think that I'm an heir.

"Yes. The Bänker House is an appointed noble family which has produced many civil officials, but..." (Elise)

"Since something happened, they are targeting Katia, right?" (Erwin)

"Yes." (Elise)

Just as Erw thought, the Baron Bänker House lost its inherited position two generations ago due to ineptitude, according to Elise.
After that they have apparently fallen into the miserable situation of procuring small, temporary compensations for occasionally helping out at governmental offices through the connections of their relatives.
Given that they have their annuity, they shouldn't have succumbed to poverty, but now that they can't regain their formerly inherited position, they want to turn the tables by being allowed to manage the tunnel.
I guess that's the reason why they made their son act like this.

"I see. The home of that handsome man has it difficult, I suppose." (Wendelin)

"Wend, is it alright to say such carefree things?"

"Carefree? Me?" (Wendelin)

Since that man didn't use force, it's not like he's been that much of a threat, I think...

"Rather, isn't Elise worried about people that use those kinds of tricks?"

"Indeed. After all you, Wendelin-san, and us should be able to remove people that would use force against Katia." (Katharina)

"Eh? Are such actors going to appear one after the other?" (Wendelin)

"Aren't there actually more of those kind of people instead?"

Ina's and Katharina's worries were right on the money.
Once we were walking on the street in order to go to the next store, someone suddenly jumped out of a building's shadow to bump into Katia...but before that came to pass, Erw made his move and

prevented it.
The person repelled by Erw collapsed on the street

"Are you okay? ...Elise?" (Katia)

Katia tried to reflexively get close to that person, but Elise silently held her back with a hand. Once I look at the fallen guy, he's also quite a hunk...but he looks like a delicate, very fragile man. It seems he would have absolutely no chance to win, even if he fought against Katia.

"Uuh...it hurts..."

"That's too bad."

Was he irritated because Katia didn't run up to him?
The slender hunk pretended to have been hurt at the instant his body hit the ground.

"(Eww, how fake...)"

It's such a bad acting that not only Luise but even I realize it right away. Just like Young Baron Bänker before, he's probably trying to somehow get acquainted with Katia to bring their relationship to the level of a love affair.

"(A standardized handsome, slender man...this guy seems submissive towards older women...)"

Since he seems to be younger than Katia, going by his appearance, he probably worked out a plan to bet on the possibility of her liking men who are younger than her.

"I healed you. Please pay attention next time." (Elise)

However, he couldn't approach as Elise simply cast healing magic at him.

"As I almost bumped into Katia-dono..."

"You didn't, so it's no problem. Are you still injured somewhere?" (Elise)

Having his plan fall apart since he didn't run into Katia on top of not getting injured from the start, he's thwarted by Elise and thus has to withdraw without being even able to talk with Katia.

"What's going on here?"

"They are eagerly trying to get acquainted with you, Katia."

How to phrase it...it's just as if Katia were to be the main character of a love simulation game. The problem is that there are no male characters who had been able to properly get acquainted with her yet.

"Katia, you have the choice to pick whoever you like." (Wilma)

"Wilma, I've got no use for such weaklings." (Katia)

I suppose Katia isn't fond of fickle good-looking guys.

"But, from now on only such guys should turn up."

If they were confident in their skills, they would likely consider to get it done by winning against Katia in the martial arts tournament.

Since they believe that they aren't capable of that, those two men decided to deal with it from another angle.

"Bumping into you as you're about to leave a store, and reimbursing the broken items. And then the love that starts from there."

"Bumping into you in passing as you walk along the street."

""What a cliched development.""

Ina and Luise were fed up with the overly corny, petty drama which lacked any acting talent and was exposed as lie right away.

"It also happens in the books Ina often reads." (Wilma)

"Wilma, those are no problem since they are stories." (Ina)

Honestly, for such unnatural drama to be performed, although it's a real story in this case... For Ina it's fine if she reads it in a book, but she will likely feel stumped when she's shown such ham actor drama.

It makes me understand the sentence, 『It would have been better if they hadn't made a real story out of it...』.

"Those two didn't aim for Katia, but for the tunnel rights. It's a dishonesty that's different from stories, you know?" (Ina)

"Certainly, it's detestable if such ulterior motives shine through." (Haruka)

Ina and Haruka made their disgust towards the two, overly blunt guys apparent.

"But, their looks are nice, no? I'm sure they're popular with women."

If you're born as such a hunk, you can profit in life in various ways, I think. Erw's and my looks are close to average after all.

"I wonder whether it'll be the end with this?"

"No, until the tournament Katia-san will probably encounter many such men once she goes outside." (Elise)

Elise declares that it's not just those two houses scheming such things.

I guess that means she will be targeted by only good-looking, young nobles, who are going to try to

forcibly raise a flag with her.

"Isn't that great? You will be surrounded by handsome men."

"I told you that I hate such weaklings!" (Katia)

Men will be happy if they meet one beautiful woman after the other. Thus Erw apparently thought that Katia will also be happy about having the opportunity to meet with handsome guys. Katia denied that right away, though.

"Then you just have to avoid leaving the mansion until the tournament."

"E——eh! I don't want that!" (Katia)

"However, those are the seeds you have sown yourself. You have to take responsibility for it."

"Uuh...as long as I can have mock battles in the garden..." (Katia)

It would be painful to watch the young nobles performing petty plays every day in order to get married with Katia for the next several days. I think, she won't lack any exercise if Ina and the others keep her company as combat practice partners everyday.

"Let's buy everything you will need today then. However..." (Elise)

"However, what?"

"I think it's going to happen again." (Elise)

We continue shopping as it's inevitable today, but Elise's prediction was on the spot. We got involved with a strange bunch again.

"Hey! You! You bumped into my arm."

"That must have hurt, ya know? Isn't his arm broken?"

"Pay the costs for the medical treatment! Come on!"

The stereotypical trio obviously invented a pretext to pick a fight while targeting Katia. Or rather, the arm being injured even though she hasn't even run into it; what a predictable lot.

"You guys, at least pick a fight after she bumps into you for real."

"What? Who are ya?"

Erw begins to talk to the ill-charactered trio while donning a fed-up expression, obviously believing that they should at least try to act a bit more skilfully, but although these guys look scary, it doesn't seem that they are overly accustomed to fighting scenes. I don't sense the peculiar dreadfulness of outlaws from them.

"(Elise, they are fake, aren't they?)" (Wendelin)

"(That's right. They might be members of a theater.)" (Elise)

According to Elise they very likely belong to a theater that's performing in the capital and its surroundings.

"(So this is a part-time job, eh?)"

I see, they must be also very happy to get some income during their free time as members of a theater troupe that had been hired by the third hunk.

Seeing that they are no real outlaws, there are many ways to deal with them.

"Why are you picking a fight with us who are superior in numbers?" (Wendelin)

"Shuddap!"

"Even though it's just women!"

"You wanna have a go? Come if you dare."

How pathetic.

It looks like they don't know much about us.

They hadn't been supplied with information by their employer...no, they didn't have any intention to fight to begin with.

That's because...

"Stop it, you guys!"

According to the scenario, the third hunk shows up here to put an end to the troubles caused by the rough fellows to Katia.

"What? You are?"

"To threaten a young woman with three men, don't you know any shame!?"

It's the appearance of the third hunk, but since it looks like he won't be able to win in the tournament either, I guess he makes use of such a trick.

Or rather, it's not like we're in a bind in the first place...

"What's with ya to butt in all of a sudden?"

"We're going to beat ya blue n' green!"

"We don't know who you are, though!"

"Wow, so you don't know my name? Then let me tell you. I'm Abel Johann von Plates, known for my fame in the capital." (Abel)

The third hunk introduced himself while striking a pose in front of the three rowdy guys.

"(Eww, how fake...)"

Can't the people of this world play out dramas that are a bit closer to reality?
I guess it's not weird as there's no reason for the acting of young nobles to become skillful all of a sudden.

"(Erw, that guy is famous in the capital?)" (Wendelin)

"(Don't ask me...)" (Erwin)

"(Maybe he became famous while we were in the Empire or something like that?)"

"(As if that's possible.)"

In that case he's a self-proclaimed celebrity in the capital.

"You guys, please withdraw from here." (Abel)

"You an idiot? Why would we have to pull back?"

"If you keep spouting incomprehensible shit, we will beat you up first!"

"You think you can win in a 3 vs. 1 fight?"

"I guess it can't be helped. I will take you on then."

After the exceedingly unnatural conversation, the third hunk started brawling with the trio. But, on the one hand we have a noble who doesn't seem to be good at martial arts, and on the other hand we have members of a theater troupe who pretended to be rough fellows. It completely developed into something like a sword battle performed by bad actors. Just as planned, the third hunk won.

"Remember my words!"

The outlaws, who had been expected to lose, run away from the scene.

..... ..

Being clearly shown something that looks like a faked situation to anyone, we stood stock still while unable to say anything.

"Are you alright, Katia-san?" (Abel)

"Nothing has been done to me, but..." (Katia)

That bunch didn't manage to bump into Katia to begin with.

It's not even a damn question about her being alright.

"You experienced something terrible, didn't you?" (Abel)

"No, not really..." (Katia)

Since she didn't actually suffer, it was impossible for Katia to answer anything but that.

"Ah, true! My mansion is just around the corner. How about going there to get some rest?" (Abel)

This was his true motive.

"(Wend, I'm already tired of it.)"

"(Yeah...)" (Wendelin)

If they would at least try to act a little bit more naturally.

I'd like them to be in our shoes, who had to watch these cliched, petty, bad plays.

"No, we already finished our shopping, thus she's going back with us." (Elise)

Elise seems to be quite fed up with it by now, too.

Quite unusual for her, she forcibly interrupted the the third hunk and we returned to the Baumeister mansion.



"The ones who experienced something terrible are us."

"Every last one of them; I really wished they had at least practiced some basic acting skills."

We still hadn't finished buying everything that's necessary, but if it's like this, we would get tired out everyday as soon as we step outside.

Elise passed a memo to Dominique, leaving the remaining shopping to her.

Being worn-out from the group of good-looking men trying to make Katia fall for them no matter what, we deeply sank into the sofas placed in the mansion's living room.

Rather than a physical, it feels like a mental exhaustion.

"Katia, it's just trouble by now, so how about marrying one from them?" (Luise)

"As if!" (Katia)

As Katia apparently didn't like that group of hunks at all, she raised her voice at Luise's joke.

"Either way, what a terrible acting it was."

They probably tried to somehow to push it into a romantic development after a coincidental

encounter, but unfortunately their acting abilities were too lacking.
I guess it's inevitable since young nobles don't perform acts usually.

"It's still not over."

Once Wilma points with her eyes outside the window, we could see a bunch of people besides the previous three kicking up a fuss in order to get Katia's attention somehow.

"That's definitely because they know they won't be able to win against Katia-san in combat, right...?"

"Nobles aren't that strong."

Wilma begins to explain to Katharina why they are so desperate.

"Even nobles working in the army and noble families in the military field have many people that are no good at martial arts. Commoners and adventurers, who aspire to become martial artists, are a lot stronger."

"That makes sense." (Katharina)

Katharina could agree with that, but the young nobles gathered outside the mansion gradually started to cause an uproar.
I decide to believe that they don't enter the grounds because they are well-mannered as trueborn nobles.

"Lalala~~~~ A song of love sung by the messenger of love, Ignug von Altobrein~~~~ The throbbing when I met you for the first time~~~~ I guess you wonder just what it might be~~~~ Yes, it's love~~~~!"

Suddenly a young man sings an original song while pulling the strings of an instrument that resembles a guitar in front of someone else's house.
There might have been such guys in the old Japan, but I couldn't hide my shock that such people exist in reality.

"Using the word 'love' three times is really too much." (Ina)

"Ina-chan, don't you think that's not what you should retort at...?" (Luise)

I shared Luise's opinion.

"Katiaaaa——! I love youuu——!"

"He says."

"Don't care!" (Katia)

Even for us, who hear the song as third party, it's unendurably embarrassing, but for Katia, the target of the loud song, it's likely too much.

Moreover, this noble lad is slightly off-key.

"But, it's your own fault." (Wilma)

"That's the truth, so you have to endure this." (Haruka)

For a change even Haruka approved of Wilma's merciless comment.

She probably wanted to have a date with Erw after taking a break for a day since they have the rare opportunity of being in the capital, but knowing that it will be difficult in this situation, she seems to hold reservations towards Katia.

Even for those connected to me it's probably dangerous to go outside during this uproar. That applies the most to Katia herself.

"This Butt Ojzend von Lutonia, who has always achieved excellent results in poetry competitions, shall deliver a poem of love to you. When I first saw your face, I received a direct hit as if being swallowed up by a huge 『Fireball』..."

"If a normal person were to be hit by something like that, not even bones would remain."
(Katharina)

Katharina, I think it's better to ignore that part since it's a poetic expression.
I agree that the poem's contents are terrible, though.

"For a regular high achiever in contests he doesn't have much sense, does he?"

"Ina-chan, you're really heartless."

"It's poetry competitions held in the salon of a noble, right?"

Since I have never seen him, he probably belongs to a different salon than the one attached to Margrave Breithilde which I visited in the past, but in the end he's a hobby poet. As people, who make a living off it as professionals, are rarely to be found at such salons, I wonder whether one can reach the top with competitions in such salons.

"That's right, isn't it Elise?"

"You can't enter the poetry salon belonging to Margrave Breithilde-sama as member unless you are the family head or heir of a peerage, territory or official post above a certain rank." (Elise)

"Really? I didn't know." (Wendelin)

I didn't join since it didn't suit my preferences, but I'm sure there should be people who can't join despite wanting to do so...I'm quite certain of it after watching the young man loudly reading his own poem which makes me think that it's actually worse than the ones of Margrave Breithilde.

"Since there are salons you can join as long as you're a noble..."

Hearing Elise's voice become more quiet towards the end, I suppose there are questionable salons where those, who can barely be called nobles, gather.

"I got it!"

"Yes."

I guess these guys are appealing to Katia after having obtained the information about the tunnel management through their salon.

"Katia-dono, I'd like you to watch the original dance created by me. It's a boisterous dance full of passionate love!"

"Katiaaaa——! I want to be enveloped by your loveee——!"

Gradually young nobles, who want to turn around their own situation since their backs are already to the wall, assembled and earnestly showed off to Katia.

Or rather, you guys really like the word 『Love』, don't you?

"How nostalgic. It's similar to the time of the Grade Grande subjugation." (Ina)

"Is that so, Ina?"

"At that time many people gathered, including Roderich-san." (Ina)

Back then I was busy preparing for the subjugation at the royal army's garrison in the capital's outskirts.

I knew that many young nobles had gathered to participate in my feudal army which we decided to form at that time.

"This time it's only good-looking guys and liberal arts folks, though."

Since they won't be able to win against Katia with martial arts, they are competing here with their own special skills.

It's not that I don't understand their feelings, but...

"Katia, that's really wonderful, isn't it? You're quite popular."

"Luise! You don't consider this to be enviable at all, are you!?" (Katia)

"Of course. I mean the bunch outside looks too embarrassing to spend any time with. I have Wend and that's enough." (Luise)

"I also hate those people!" (Katia)

Katia cursed the misfortune that had befallen her, but even in the following days many young nobles, such as artists or hunks who won't be able to win against Katia in martial arts, or those who have nothing to lose anyway, continued to appeal in front of the mansion. Except for the combat practice with Ina and the others in the garden, Katia didn't take a single step outside the mansion.