

## **Chapter 4 - Lisa, the Visiting Calamity**

"A famous magician with the name Lisa? Yeah, I know her really well."

Several days after a letter for Katia had arrived, just when I was relaxing with everyone at a table in the courtyard since I had a little bit of free time available, I received a call on my MHCD from Burkhart-san.

Given that the task of fetching him with 『Teleportation』 because he wanted to deliver a letter from Margrave Breithilde finished right away, I tried asking Burkhart-san about Lisa.

Burkhart-san, who was a veteran adventurer as well, had many connections and replied that he knew Lisa well, too.

"『Lisa the Blizzard』, right? You might say she's famous in various ways. We already talked about her before, Earl-sama. Think back, at the time with the former Duke Hertha's duel uproar..." (Burkhart)

"Ah, the people mentioned as candidates for 『He was able to acquire an excellent representative?』!" (Wendelin)

But yeah, I heard the name 『Lisa the Blizzard』 back then.

It was her that crossed Burkhart-san's mind first when he was considering possible, powerful candidates that the Duke might sent out as representatives in the duel against me.

"Hee, for that girl to have reached a level to teach others." (Burkhart)

"You're well-acquainted with her?"

"I guess I know her to some extent. I have also instructed her a bit during her time as new adventurer. I thought that she's not the type to teach magic to others, but for her to take Katia-jou-chan under her wing...people will always remain a mystery." (Burkhart)

At the end of Burkhart-san's look, Katia was working hard with her solo training in the courtyard without having joined our chat.

In order to be able to handle Lisa whenever she might get here...that's not the reason, but since she was worried about the time of Lisa's appearance, she was apparently getting her mind off it through a training regiment.

Contrary to the telephone calls and mails in Japan, it was impossible to provide the accurate date and time for someone's arrival in letters.

I had lent out a MHCD to Katia as well, but since Lisa didn't have one, there was no way for them contact each other.

And even if it were possible, I felt like Katia definitely wouldn't do it after looking at her current state.

"As expected of teacher. To have the experience of having taught even that person called Lisa." (Katharina)

Katharina admired Burkhart-san's wide connections.

Those connections meant he knew the outstanding ones among the adventurers, but for him to have

taught magic to such a famous person...

"I have never heard about Big Sis having been taught magic by you, Burkhart-san." (Katia)

Katia, who had focused on her training to escape from reality until now, came over and joined the conversation with Burkhart-san.

"Well, it was just a little bit until she ran off. Even so, is she making you call her Big Sis or something?" (Burkhart)

"She told me she would hate to be called 『Teacher』 since it would give her an image of being a grandmother. I got scolded whenever I called her anything else but Big Sis." (Katia)

"That's a really messed up reasoning. I don't even think that there's much of a difference between Big Sis and Teacher." (Burkhart)

Lisa had Katia call her Big Sis at any cost, and apparently got angry whenever she called her otherwise.

I felt like the way of calling one 『Big Sis』 had a smack of grandmother, but since the person herself apparently liked it, why not. There was no point in telling others what to do anyway. I have been calling my master just like that, but he looked much younger than his true age gave away. And yet I feel like he possessed something like dignity at the same time. Though I think it was also owed to him not aging after becoming a Talking Corpse.

"For her to fuss so much about how she's called, she must be pretty old?" (Wilma)

"Wilma, as usual you really don't hold back. You won't hear Big Sis' personal information out of my mouth, okay?" (Katia)

"Is it going to become a problem afterwards, if you mention it?" (Wilma)

"I won't say anything about that either!" (Katia)

Katia didn't want to talk about Lisa the Blizzard's age, no matter what.

Wilma didn't pester her about it either, but because of her clever way of asking, she indirectly got a rough idea.

"On that subject, I wonder when she's going to come to meet with you, Katia? Going by the letter, it doesn't feel as if it's that far off, though."

"It's frustrating since I don't know the exact date and time. Even if she immediately came from the capital to Baulburg with a magic airship, I don't think she will come to meet me right away. Big Sis is an adventurer who's capable at her work." (Katia)

"So you're saying there are also the greetings with the adventurer's guild here?"

"That's how it is." (Katia)

Going by Katia's state, I guess that Lisa must be a fairly quirky person.

Even so, she was a top-notch adventurer and magician as a woman.

Although it's not like she had a nominated request, she should still show up at the adventurer guilds in the capital and Baulburg to inform them about her whereabouts since she would leave her home base in the capital for an extended period of time and move over to Baulburg.

Nominated requests for remarkable adventurers flowed in often. Hence the guild wanted to know their location as much as possible.

"As for her abilities, Big Sis is amazing." (Katia)

"Your way of phrasing it sounds as if it's not easy to imagine from her usual appearance...but she's unmarried, right?"

"That's because Big Sis is strong-willed..." (Katia)

A female adventurer who was capable at her job, and moreover could earn her own money since she was a magician.

Such women didn't approach men often.

Rather than marrying some weird guy, they would have fun living and earning money by themselves.

As a matter of fact, female adventurers, who weren't overly skilled, usually ended up marrying rather quickly.

Exactly because they understood that it would be difficult for them to make a living by themselves with their level of ability, they made some compromises towards the other party...that would be the general idea behind it.

Those kinds of circumstances could be understood by anyone.

Come to think of it, even at my previous life's trading company, the rate of singles seemed to be high among female members of the management that earned money as capable people...

One time, at a drinking party, I had a female superior, who whined about there being no decent man around despite her even having tried to participate in something called marriage hunt while gulping down her sake, pushed on me by a male superior who felt troubled by her.

Since it's not like I could have run away in the middle of it, I was forced to keep her company until dawn, ending up listening to her story in a half dead state.

I'm pretty sure there's no worse misfortune than that.

"In the case of Big Sis, her yearning for a marriage is terrific. Just as there's no partner..." (Katia)

"But, that girl had always been so damn hard-headed...isn't that a lost case?" (Burkhart)

Burkhart-san muttered a few words while recalling his past encounters with Lisa.

It might also have been her old character, but based on her job as adventurer, it was also a trait of female adventurers that many of them wouldn't allow for men to look down on them.

If they didn't do that, it would be difficult for them to survive in that profession, but on the other hand, a marriage moved into a distant future, if they acted like this.

It was an extremely hard profession for female adventurers.

"However, she's quite the beauty..." (Burkhart)

"Hee, really?"

"Earl-sama, wanna try to take her as your wife?" (Burkhart)

"No, it's fine..." (Wendelin)

I suspected that Lisa to be a somewhat inferior version of Katharina who had also worked as female adventurer and magician.

Katharina had various cute parts because of this, though.

Also, I think I harbored feelings of sympathy towards Katharina because of her loner character that's similar to mine.

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"I see. Because Katia-jou-chan feels anxious about not knowing when Lisa would rush in here, she has been escaping reality by eagerly striving in her training." (Burkhart)

"Uuh...it's because I can't think about anything else." (Katia)

"It's not that I don't understand your feelings. So..."

Suddenly Burkhart-san's expression became stern.

Once I followed his eyes, I saw Amalie and Therese happily chatting at the neighboring table.

Those two were close in age to my inner self. Since before the tunnel uproar, Therese had taken lessons in cooking from Amalie and often spent time together with her. They had become friends.

"We had this crystal ball back home as well." (Amalie)

"Every noble house in the Empire had always at least one. For the sake of finding magicians." (Therese)

"This crystal ball belongs to this mansion?" (Amalie)

"Indeed. I borrowed it for a little bit. There's something I want to test." (Therese)

The crystal ball, which I had used in my childhood to examine my aptitude as magician, was laying on top of their table. Therese held her hands out towards the ball.

The crystal ball was shining in beautiful rainbow colors.

"It becomes rainbow-colored if you hold your hands above it. I remember that the same happened in my childhood, too." (Amalie)

"And if you have talent in magic, this will vanish." (Therese)

The rainbow-colored light vanished from the crystal ball when Therese held her hands above it.

This was proof of her possessing talent for magic.

Therese had an aptitude for magic!

Not just Burkhart-san and me, but everyone else looked nervous.

Therese herself seemed very glad.

I guess, as could be expected from a former Duchess.

"My body became hot." (Therese)

"Amazing! It's just as I've heard from Wend-kun before." (Amalie)

"I also dreamed of becoming a magician in my childhood. I played around by placing my hands on the crystal ball in the mansion and reading magic books. I carefully studied a lot more books about methods of magic training than the magicians around me." (Therese)

Therese had apparently desired to become a magician in her childhood, but that didn't come to pass. That's why she was smiling full of joy after having confirmed her talent in magic now.

"Back then it didn't work, right?" (Amalie)

"For my magic talent to appear after I passed the age of 20, eh? That's a pleasant miscalculation." (Therese)

"Amazing! So this way exists, too. It would be nice if I could use magic, too." (Amalie)

"A hidden talent for magic, huh...? At present it might be something thou can't draw out without Wendelin." (Therese)

"That's great, but it might be a special skill that would cause a huge uproar if it were to be found out." (Amalie)

"Indeed. It's not like it's something that thou could readily tell other people." (Therese)

Even though the topic of their conversation was quite dangerous, the two older women were noisily chatting while having fun.

At this point Therese's talent as magician had shown itself.

Burkhart-san apparently realized what that meant.

And he looked at me in astonishment.

"Earl-sama..." (Burkhart)

"Ahaha...it just means that I'm a man, just like you, Burkhart-san." (Wendelin)

"I think that's completely unrelated to me though..." (Burkhart)

It was nothing of significance.

Therese and I had simply entered such a relationship.

The other day I had visited her without reservations since Therese said that I could come over at night whenever I felt like it. Moreover, as she said that I should just stay over, I ended up staying while thinking that it would be rude if I were to decline here in a half-assed manner.

"You really didn't wait long to make a move on her, did you?" (Burkhart)

Burkhart-san pointed out quite bluntly.

And yet I couldn't deny it.

"On a first glance it might look like this, but there had been many man-woman interactions between me and Wendelin since the Friendship Visit Group. Thee should understand as much as well, Burkhart." (Therese)

"Yes, you were quite proactive, weren't you Therese-sama? Even I remember as much." (Burkhart)

"That means it's a victory of my strong tenacity and my phantasmagoric strategy that I kept passive until I abandoned my title as Duchess Philip." (Therese)

"If you say so..." (Burkhart)

Burkhart-san looked at Therese with an expression that felt as if he was saying 『Isn't it just coincidence that it turned out like this?』

"Well, if there aren't any complaints from Roderich-dono and the madams, I don't have any reason or right to object to this as employed head magician of Margrave Breithilde, the patron of Earl Baumeister-sama." (Burkhart)

While saying that he couldn't comment on this anyway, Burkhart-san asked Elise and the others, who could be considered to be the final breakwater, about the pros and cons of accepting Therese.

"In the past we had various thoughts about this. There were also quarrels and arguments between women at times, but those might be nice memories now. Therese-san is visiting this mansion almost every day. I think that it's something like a ratification of the current state." (Elise)

"Oh! Nothing less of Wendelin's first wife. Elise, thou are open-minded." (Therese)

Being praised by Therese, Elise smiled without any hard feelings.

Moreover, according to Elise, she had resolved herself for it to turn out like this at the point when I took responsibility for Therese's safety after it had become difficult for her to stay in the Empire. And, especially the part of Therese not being Duchess Philip anymore seemed to play a big role.

"Therese-san's advice has been saving us quite a few of troubles." (Elise)

Given that Elise was the daughter of an appointed noble, she had some overly optimistic views in regard to advising on how to rule the Baumeister Earldom.

It was Therese who actually compensated for her inadequacies in secret.

Although she had lost to Peter, it's not like she possessed autocratic authority in her large territory for show.

Since it would become troublesome if she were to act publicly, she limited it to private advices.

Officially she never broke her stance of being a retired noble who was being taken care of in the Baumeister Earldom.

Even Roderich had been highly valuing her behavior. She had formed a relationship of cooking and doing other stuff together with Elise's group.

"In the end, Therese's opinion was the most correct one in regards to the matter with the tunnel, wasn't it? If we had handled it that way from the very beginning, it would have finished without all

those detours." (Ina)

"Ina, I could only say this because I was an outsider. There are many situations where statesmen end up taking the long way around because they consider things too much or are swayed by the opinions of those around them. As long as they are able to take it on the right track in the end, it's no problem, though." (Therese)

"And, in the end it got settled by Wend taking the tunnel rights. For Margrave Breithilde-sama it was a failure?"

"Yep. If Margrave Breithilde had taken the rights for himself, he would have very likely been blamed with 『Just because they are your vassals; how sly of you!』. That might have become unpleasant." (Therese)

Therese explained to Luise that such jealousy could become the main reason that caused a noble house's ruin.

"The majority of the old Eulenberg territory has been transferred, and he was entrusted with the management and construction of all kinds of facilities to be built around the tunnel. Margrave Breithilde got plenty of gain from this." (Wilma)

"It's as Wilma says. Above all, it went smoothly. Besides, Burkhart." (Therese)

"Yes...what might it be, Therese-sama?" (Burkhart)

The conversation had already digressed. Due to that Burkhart-san hadn't noticed, or rather, he probably didn't feel a strong objection towards me and Therese entering into such a relationship. A long time ago, during the previous Friendship Visit Group, he might have harbored mixed feelings about a man getting close to the little girl that looked like trouble.

He likely never expected for Therese and me to develop such relationship and moreover, for Elise and the others to authorize it officially.

Well, even I wouldn't enter a sexual relationship with Therese on my own accord.

After all I would be scared of getting scolded by Elise and the others if I did something like that.

"Officially I'm not Wendelin's wife. However, there will likely be many among the nobles treating me as Wendelin's mistress as I'm being taken care of in the Baumeister Earldom after my retirement. It will be the same treatment as with Amalie." (Therese)

As the surrounding people think 『They must have that kind of relationship』, they won't loudly criticize it after it becomes publicly known.

"Since it has the effect of containing such criticism, Wendelin might as well do as he likes. I'm not worried about my livelihood. If I were to give birth to a child, I won't say anything as long as I can guarantee the child's future. Fortunately there's still a lot of room for branch families and retainer houses left in the current Earl Baumeister House." (Therese)

She said that she had no intention to set her own child up as successor of the Earl Baumeister House.

Given that Therese herself had thoroughly experienced such case with her elder brothers, she

probably didn't want her own child to find itself in a similar position.

"I will continue to act as I have done until now. There's nothing to worry since I'm getting along well with Amalie who's in the same situation as I am." (Therese)

"I see." (Burkhart)

Therese herself declared that she didn't plan to become my wife. That meant she would keep staying my unofficial lover until the bitter end. And, Margrave Breithilde wouldn't have any complaints about this either. It would be the same with the other nobles. After all there existed many nobles keeping women in such positions. If they were to imprudently criticize me, it would come backbiting them like a boomerang.

"Therefore, I request that thou train me in magic, too." (Therese)

"That's the biggest problem though... Right, since I can't leave something like that to anyone else, it's set that I will do it myself. It would be troublesome if it were to leak to the other nobles..." (Burkhart)

To Burkhart-san it didn't matter how many wives I had, but if the number of wives, who could use magic, were to suddenly increase, it would become a major hassle to hide the fact. Thus it should be something that he'd like to avoid. But, this time it couldn't be helped.

"Even if it's a secret, it will be found out sooner or later either way. Having said that, I think for now we will go with a secret, special training for the sake of 『The late-blooming magician Therese, a shocking debut!』." (Therese)

"Therese-sama, you're really easygoing..." (Burkhart)

It's certainly no magic girl anime...but even if I said that, no one besides me would understand what I meant.

"All the retired nobles are like this. After all we have no responsibilities to bear." (Therese)

While making such carefree statement, Therese was continuing her training of letting her mana circulate between the crystal ball and her body. Her being able to do as much while talking with others from the very beginning was also proof of her owning talent to become a great magician.

"Wow, your talent exceeds mine by far." (Katia)

Having gone through troubles and failures because of her foundation in magic, Katia admired Therese for her talent as magician.

"Burkhart-san, I'd like you to teach me as well since my mana has been increasing. I might have become able to use new spells." (Katia)

Following Therese, Katia also applied to become Burkhart-san's pupil. Because her mana had grown, she wanted to learn new spells.

"That's fine with me, but won't Lisa get angry?" (Burkhart)

"She might, but wouldn't it be a problem if the matter of me having increased my mana were to be exposed?" (Katia)

Since I heard that the person called Lisa was an excellent magician, I think there was the danger of her noticing that Katia's mana had grown after meeting with her.

"It's certainly not like thou can avoid meeting her forever either. Burkhart, how about teaching her a method to hide her increase in mana?" (Therese)

"It's not that there's none, but I think the probability that Katia-jou-chan won't be able to learn it is high. Though we won't know unless we try." (Burkhart)

Burkhart-san revealed a bothered expression as if saying that the annoying issues had increased once again.

"It's no problem if it can be hidden by that, but if it gets exposed, we will have no choice but to think about what do then. That Lisa person might be slow on the uptake, too." (Therese)

"No, the world isn't such a nice place. Lisa is an excellent magician."

If put like this, it would appear that she's an extremely troublesome person. I wonder what kind of person she might be?

"Teacher, I will help out as well. We won't understand Katia-san's talents unless we give it a try." (Katharina)

"That's true as well, I suppose." (Burkhart)

It was decided that Katharina would also assist in the training of those two. Because she was an orthodox magician, having her help out was very welcome.

"If it's for the sake of keeping it confidential, even Doushi would be fine, but..."

"I think Doushi-sama isn't quite suited for coaching beginners..."

Katharina, who pretty much entered the category of being a genius, seemed to have the perception that the two wouldn't be able to keep up with Doushi's training methods.

"Yeah, it's definitely not suitable. Let alone beginners, it's something for chosen people!"

Luise, who had received Doushi's training for two years in the past, agreed with Katharina's view. I also approved of that opinion.

In the first place, there hadn't been a single person who became his pupil after Luise and me.

『I'm troubled since many of the recent, young magicians are weaklings!』 (Armstrong)

At the time when he came to eat at our place a few days ago, Doushi got mad at young magicians running away once the education became a little harsh.

His concept of 'a little harsh' diverted quite strongly from mine and Luise's, though.

"Even before that, Doushi is currently busy."

"Busy? Why?"

"Doushi also participated actively in the Empire's civil war. He has been invited to give speeches all over the Kingdom."

Because Burkhart-san was serving Margrave Breithilde, he couldn't be pulled well into the Kingdom's administration, but Doushi was the royal palace's Head Wizard.

It was also because he was usually skipping out on his work, but it seemed that he had a considerably tight schedule forced upon him.



『Today we will listen to Armstrong-sama who played a great role in the Empire's civil war!』

『...I'm...』 (Armstrong)



"Doushi can't refuse, if His Majesty asks." (Burkhart)

Upon His Majesty's request, Doushi had departed to give speeches all over the Kingdom.

"Is Uncle-sama going to be alright?" (Elise)

"Most likely. It's not bad for him to get nervous from time to time."

"No...if there are small children among those going to listen to his stories..."

"They might cry, but it's not like he will grab and eat them, so there's no problem. However, his popularity among the women and children might be bad." Burkhart-san answered Elise.

"That sounds hectic for Doushi."

"That's how it is. He should be unable to come here for a while..." (Burkhart)

It might be owed to Burkhart-san's words, but I suddenly sensed a huge mana response closing in at high speed from the northern direction. Nervousness spread among us.

"A dragon!?" (Katia)

Katia, who had become sensitive towards the presence of other magicians because of her increased mana, kept glaring towards the northern sky while putting herself on guard. But, Burkhart-san, the most sensitive to mana responses among us, drank his tea without a care.

"Earl-sama, even if you are alert about this mana response, it's pointless." (Burkhart)

"So it's an acquaintance, eh...?" (Wendelin)

I had also been taught by Burkhart-san how to specify an individual by just their mana response, but I had troubles learning it.

"No one but that person could have such a violent, huge mana response." (Burkhart)

The minute Burkhart-san finished that remark, a thunderous impact, as if a meteor had crashed into the courtyard, and a cloud of dust assailed us, but we were safe since I had cast 『Magic Barrier』 in advance.

I still hadn't finished drinking my tea, and yet dust got into the cup. What a waste.

"Everyone is rather calm about this." (Amalie)

It might be the first time for Amalie, but everyone recalled how that person had used the same manner of entry before.

"Talking about the same stuff day after day in cities all over the place is boring! Today is my day off! And since I had just been in the area anyway, I flew over!" (Armstrong)

The one who crashed into our courtyard was Doushi. Probably because his mana had increased even more since the last time, the force of his landing impact had gone up. A crater had appeared at the spot where he came down.

"Doushi, please don't produce holes in our garden."

"I'm sorry..." (Armstrong)

"Aa——h! There's a huge hole in the garden!"

We were used to it, but it apparently was a quite shocking sight to the maid Lea who came running after hearing the roaring sound.

She started shouting while pointing at the crater.

The reason why she had been the only maid that rushed here was owed to Dominique currently being on maternity leave, causing Lea to have taken over the majority of Dominique's workload.

"Master! Is it an assassin?" (Lea)

"It's nothing that exaggerated, so please calm down, Lea." (Wendelin)

"I see...I will have the hole buried right away." (Lea)

Lea called the gardener Kaspar, Dominique's husband, and asked him to fill the hole. Acknowledging that, he began burying the crater together with several of his subordinates. The mansion of the Earl Baumeister House was maintained like this with many people working here.

"What an excellent gardener!" (Armstrong)

"Uncle-sama, I wonder what I should think about you increasing the workload unnecessarily..." (Elise)

Doushi praised Kaspar's performance, but he got warned by Elise.

"Doushi, you are free today?"

"Indeed! I got tired only giving speeches each and every single day!" (Armstrong)

For Doushi who was basically sports-minded, using the brain and talking to an audience was a job he wasn't cut out for at all.

"Uncle-sama, how about tea for starters...and then a meal afterwards?" (Elise)

His way of entering was a bother, but even Elise would harbor no grudge towards Doushi, her uncle.

She asked him what she should do about the meal after this.

"I! Because I had pointlessly used my brain, I have a weird craving for sweets right now! The sugar levels in my brain are too low!" (Armstrong)

"If it's cookies and similar, I can have them prepared right away."

"Elise, I especially came to the Baumeister Earldom! Therefore a dessert made out of the fruits growing in the Demon Forest would be great!" (Armstrong)

"As it's something elaborate, it will take time to make it." (Elise)

"Then I will go eat it somewhere else! All of you, come with me! I will treat you." (Armstrong)

He was hungry. He wanted to eat sweets right away. Once he was told that it would take time to have it prepared by this mansion's cooks, he said that we should go eat out since he would treat us. It was his usual my-way-style, but that didn't mean that we had any plans. That being the case, there also existed a few restaurants where I wanted to eat. Even after becoming a high-ranking noble, I became really excited when hearing that we would eat out.

"Everyone, you don't have any errands to run, right?"

"Yes. I think it's nice to eat out from time to time. I'm looking forward to it very much."

"Ina-chan, where should we go?"

"Wait, I will go fetch my restaurant guide for Baulburg at once (Ina)

Elise, Luise and Ina seemed to be very happy about Doushi's invitation.

"There's a restaurant I want to visit! It's a sweets shop called 『Galox [ef\_note]The name used here is ギャルツネ (Gyarutsune). A character from Kaiketsu Zorori. The name is a combination of Gal (Gyaru) and Fox (Kitsune). In the manga series it's a fox that ends up eating everything due to its superhuman appetite. The manga is obviously a gag manga, so the name of the character is modeled after ギャル曾根 (Gal Sone - born Natsuko Sone), a Japanese talent and gourmet commentator[/efn\_note]』!" (Armstrong)

"Doushi, I recommend that place."

"I want to eat the 『Bucket Parfait』 from that place!" (Armstrong)

At that point Doushi and Wilma reached a mutual understanding. That Galox store...there existed a similar female, big eater talent in my previous life...? A coincidence, right? There being a dish called bucket parfait likely meant it was a restaurant with large servings, or rather extremely large servings which both of them loved so much.

"For me such a menu is a bit..." (Katharina)

"That's right. My body weight on the next day and beyond...aren't there any other restaurants?" (Haruka)

Katharina and Haruka, who were slightly worried about a weight increase, suggested that we go to a different restaurant after hearing about the bucket parfait.

"Don't worry. They also have a normal menu." (Wilma)

"In that case, let's go." (Katharina)

"Mizuho's sweets are nice as well, but the sweets made out of the fruits from the Demon Forest will be fine as well." (Haruka)

Wilma explained to the two that the restaurant's dishes were rather centered around normal dishes, and both expressed their will to participate after hearing all that.

"Erw, you will go anywhere where Haruka goes anyway."

"It's the truth, but couldn't you have taken my will a bit into consideration!" (Erwin)

"I'm fine as long as I can at least order a tea or a coffee." (Burkhart)

"I have already been to this restaurant in the past. It's a famous restaurant with good food and drinks. Amalie, thou come as well." (Therese)

"That will be quite the big party. It looks like it'll be fun."

"Well, it's Earl Baumeister-sama's party after all. It might be better with a big group, too."

There was no way for Erw to not go. Since Burkhart-san, Therese, and Amalie also agreed to accompanying us, it resulted in all of us going.

"Wend-kun, you're forgetting one person." (Amalie)

Upon Amalie mentioning it, I remembered Katia who had been silent since Doushi's arrival. She had been erasing her presence as if saying that we shouldn't mind her.

"Katia, you won't come with us?" (Wendelin)

"Hubby, won't it be a big problem if I ran into Big Sis after going outside? I'm fine with staying at home." (Katia)

To be unwilling to go out even though we were going to eat out together after a long time, just how scary is that person called Lisa...?

"She won't arrive here today, will she?" (Ina)

"Most likely. There's no direct flight from the capital today either." (Luise)

Ina and Luise made clear that Katia was worrying too much.

"She might have already arrived yesterday. And there are also flights from Breitburg..." (Katia)

Katia stubbornly refused going with us, arguing that we might meet Lisa in the worst case. Rather, that's already at the level of a serious illness.

"What's wrong?" (Armstrong)

"As a matter of fact..." (Wendelin)

I gave Doushi a summary of Katia's circumstances.

"A scary senpai, eh? Well, if you meet her outside, then so be it! It's certainly impossible to not meet her for the rest of your life. Well then, time to go!" (Armstrong)

"Ee——h! I'm fine." (Katia)

"Not participating when we are going out with everyone will be a loss! Come on!" (Armstrong)

"I don't want to go outsideee——!" (Katia)

Katia frantically resisted going outside, but there was no way for that to work with Doushi. It resulted in her leaving the mansion while being led by hand against her will.

\* \* \*

"Me! One bucket parfait!" (Armstrong)

"Three for me." (Wilma)

"Guuuh...I will take another serving later!" (Armstrong)

We left the mansion and soon arrived at the cafe 『Galox』 located in the center of Baulburg. Doushi ordered the famous bucket parfait at once.

This dish had apparently started out with the concept of dividing it among a bigger number of people, but had later gradually turned into a challenge for proud big eaters aiming to eat all of it by themselves.

Wilma ordered three at once, and Doushi once again burned with a stupid drive to compete.

We ordered the normal-sized fruit parfaits which were advertised to use plenty of the Demon Forest's fruits.

"Normally one serving would be already plenty."

"I always think so, but Wilma and Doushi sure can eat a lot..."

Even the normal-sized fruit parfaits were rather big.

Not to mention something like a bucket parfait...still, they didn't serve the parfait in a bucket, but instead used a glass container with a size close to that of a bucket.

According to the people of the cafe, it seemed to be roughly the share of 20 people.

"Ye——ah! It's the best!" (Wilma)

"It's just as the rumors I had heard from the maids. Dominique apparently came to eat here before, too. She said that it was delicious." (Elise)

"There won't be any problems if I go on a diet afterwards." (Katharina)

"Being able to eat at such a cafe without any reservations, it's great that I retired." (Therese)

"Isn't it pitiful for Alfons-sama if you say something like that?" (Amalie)

"Amalie, thou say so, but that guy often visited such stores incognito during my time as family head. It's no more than a difference between it being troublesome before and afterwards." (Therese)

"Erw-san, it's delicious, isn't it?" (Haruka)

"Normally I can eat sweet things, but that bucket parfait is a no go..."

"It sure doesn't look good for one's health..."

Everyone ate the fruit parfaits they had ordered while chatting merrily.

"This is awesome. What a supreme afternoon." (Burkhart)

"Burkhart-san, is that okay?"

"Oui! Since master said that he wouldn't come back until evening, I just gotta sober up until then."  
(Burkhart)

Burkhart-san's order was called fruit punch made out of brandy. It was mostly brandy, though. For this cafe to have prepared even a menu for drinking old men...are they betting on ambitious old men bringing little girls along?

"Delicious. Another serving, please." (Wilma)

"For me as well!" (Armstrong)

Wilma and Doushi had arbitrarily started a parfait eating contest. If you considered it calmly, our table was pure chaos. Because I'm the feudal lord, the people at the surrounding tables had disappeared.

"Katia, it's a rare opportunity." (Ina)

"Yeah..." (Katia)

Among us, only Katia, who was driven by her worry when Lisa might charge in, hadn't touched her parfait at all. Ina encouraged Katia to take a bite.

"That's right! Even if you worry, she will get here sooner or later anyway! It's the best to forget about all that for now and enjoy yourself!" (Armstrong)

It might be someone else's problem, but since Doushi was a fundamentally positive person, he recommended Katia to eat her parfait.

"Besides! You have a husband on whom you can rely if the need arises!" (Armstrong)

"I guess that's true as well." (Katia)

Katia was feeling really down since she was troubled for a change, but she recovered due to Doushi's encouragement who was similar to her, or rather, had a similar character.

"The parfait is splendid!" (Katia)

"Isn't it? So, what kind of magician is Lisa?" (Armstrong)

"Doushi, you don't know her?" Burkhart-san, who had already switched over from a brandy-based fruit punch to just brandy, asked Doushi.

"Doushi, you're an old adventurer as well, aren't you?"

"My main task right now is to work as the royal palace's head wizard! Hence, I only heard a few rumors about her!" (Armstrong)

Since he wasn't overly active as an adventurer nowadays, he happened to hear only a bit about Lisa. Doushi said that he doesn't know her well.

"She put a male adventurer, who displeased her, into ice in a bar, or a man, who planned rude stuff and attacked her on top of an unpopular mountain, is still remaining as an ice pillar at the top of that mountain. Those kinds of rumors."

Anyway, I guess she will freeze those hostile to her and those she dislikes. What a scary person.

"Uncle-sama, I think they would have died if they were turned into ice..." (Elise)

"Well, no matter how you look at it, those rumors are exaggerated. After all she would be elselabeled as a murderer by now. I occasionally heard about her freezing them so skillfully that her targets couldn't move for a few hours."

"I think that's still plenty terrible..."

I felt like it would result in injury either way, even if she wasn't unskilled at her magic handling, but this was part of the adventurer trade's contest of true strength.

There were also situations requiring the use of force so that you wouldn't be looked down upon by the adventurers who picked a fight with you. I think there was no way for the loser to complain to the authorities, even if the opponent might have been a magician and even if they were unable to move after being frozen.

"How to say it...she's kind of extreme."

"She's like Katharina. Attacking other adventurers, who picked a fight, with magic." (Ina)

"Ina-san, it looks like you have a huge misunderstanding about me. I don't do something like that." Katharina declared.

"Really? You never got dragged into a fight as a lone female adventurer?"

"Never. I'm pretty sure the other adventurers trembled in fear due to my noble aura and appearance," boasted Katharina, but it might have been thanks to her loner aura that others didn't approach her.

I mean even Lisa, who likewise has a talent for magic, gets into fights with other adventurers.

"It looks like everyone has a different opinion, but isn't that Lisa just coming to visit her junior to have a look at her newly-wed life?" (Amalie)

"Right, Amalie-san? Lisa is just worrying from the bottom of her heart about her former pupil Katia-san..." (Elise)

"I don't think so. I'm sure there must be some reason." (Wilma)

Wilma clearly refused Elise's and Amalie's opinions which were grounded on the belief in the goodness of humans.

"Katia, you might be told that you've grown weak due to your newly-married life or that she wants to see your true strength."

Wilma didn't say any further, but is she going to beat up her junior, who got married before her, in the name of training?

A woman's jealousy is really scary.

"Wilma, don't say such frightening things!"

Even while saying so, Katia must have recovered mentally quite a bit, seeing how her fruits parfait glass was already empty.

"If she has the spare time to do something like that, she should just look for a marriage partner. It would be pointless to be stubborn about the past here." (Wilma)

"Wilma, you're really merciless, aren't you...?" (Katia)

Katia was shocked by Wilma's sharp tongue.

"But you know, she has written in her letter that she will come here soon, but it's certainly troublesome that she didn't write when. That's the reason why it has turned into such a controversial discussion without any conclusion," complained Luise.

"Indeed, that's the reason for me being so troubled. Hubby, I want to eat another parfait." (Katia)

"You don't look troubled to me at all...though I guess it's better than being fretful because of someone who might arrive whenever." (Wendelin)

"I think Big Sis will get here sooner or later, but..." (Katia)

"I'm already here. Haven't you grown dull, Katia?" (Lisa)

"Eh? Ah, Big Sis!" (Katia)

Once I turned around towards the sudden voice, I saw a single woman standing several meters away from the cafe's open terrace where we were.



And then she slowly headed over here.

I think she's not 30 years old yet.

Her bondage-styled black short dress and black long boots didn't suit her age, or rather, she was exposing her thighs without minding something like that.

She wore a mantle-styled, bright red robe. A great amount of lame had been used as decoration for her robe.

Her hair had a deep green color, and it used what's commonly called a haircut of uniform length. It was a look which my mother described as 『Such outfits and hairstyles were popular before the economic bubble burst』 in my previous life.

It's an obsolete expression, but I think she's a kind of 『gorgeous beauty』.

She's a person who would have likely danced with *o*iliana in the old movie I saw. Because of that, the black short dress was looking body-conscious.

"I didn't notice..." (Katia)

She might have let her guard down because everyone was relaxing.

Moreover, it's possible that this flashy lady is quite capable.

"What about you, Burkhart-san?" (Wendelin)

Once I wondered why he didn't give any warning even though he should have noticed her with his mana detection ability...

"Drinking booze during the day is the best! A depraved afternoon rocks!" (Burkhart)

Burkhart-san, who was completely in a break mode, ordered one fruit punch without fruits after the other.

"Huh? What about Doushi?" (Wendelin)

"Dear, uncle-sama..." (Elise)

"Ununu! I won't lose!" (Armstrong)

At the end of Elise's apologetic sight of line, Doushi was still in the middle of an eating contest with Wilma.

But then again he was pulling a very mortified face since he couldn't get a single win against Wilma who ate while talking with Katia.

"(What useless adults——!)"

I didn't intend to always rely on Doushi and Burkhart-san, but I cannot help thinking 『What does that say about you as magicians?』.

"I'm here to compensate for them, but I failed to mention it since I felt no malice from her in particular. Sorry." (Luise)

Luise had apparently noticed her presence quite a while ago.

"But, it's still better than Erw, I think?" (Luise)

At the end of the table, where Luise pointed at, Erw and Haruka had created their own little space of happiness.

"Yes, Erw-san, please open your mouth. Aa~h." (Haruka)

"Aa——h. Delicious, Haruka-san. I will do it as well. Aa——hn." (Erwin)

"Aa——h. It's tasty if you eat it in such a way. I can't do that in Mizuho." (Haruka)

"If it's here, we can do it as often as you like." (Erwin)

"True." (Haruka)

Or rather, that's quite brazen on the open terrace of such a cafe. Especially Haruka. In a certain way I admired her for doing something so unexpectedly bold in a place away from her hometown and family.

"Huh? You're not jealous, Wend?" (Luise)

"As if." (Wendelin)

"Ee——h, that's so untypical for you." (Luise)

I don't know how much of a narrow-minded man I am in Luise's mind, but...it looks like my past conduct and speech has lowered her opinion of me.  
But rather than that, Lisa comes first.

"Luise, it would have been nice if you could have told us early on..." (Ina)

"Now listen, Ina-chan, that person completely devoted herself to her makeup before calling out to us..." (Luise)

That means Luise took Lisa, who fixed her makeup in a place slightly away from the cafe before calling out to Katia, into consideration as a fellow woman.  
According to Katia, she was at an age where the makeup would soon take some time.

"Don't say anything unnecessary, you pipsqueak! Or rather, who the hell are you people?" (Lisa)

"Even if I'm asked that..."

It's this number of people, and there are also some peculiar individuals with us. Especially Doushi.  
Moreover, we came to this cafe to take a break.  
Rather than answering her question, I couldn't hide my surprise about Lisa suddenly insulting Luise.  
Everyone including me was lost for words.  
Except for one person.

"Big Sis, you were already here?" (Katia)

Going by Katia's way of speaking, she seems to be the person called 『Lisa the Blizzard』.

"I had to go a bit further away and my job dragged on for some time. I wasn't in time for your wedding ceremony, Katia, but somehow I managed to grab a seat on a magic airship yesterday. Be that as it may, it looks like you really got married." (Lisa)

Lisa glanced at me for an instant.

"Various things happened..." (Katia)

"Well, whatever. Congratulations to your wedding." (Lisa)

"Big Sis!" (Katia)

Until just a while ago, we trash-talked about her coming here to curse her junior's marriage out of jealousy, but Lisa honestly congratulated Katia.  
Katia, who had lost her biggest anxiety, should have sighed in relief inside her mind.  
The tension also disappeared from her face.

"On that subject, there's something I'd like to hear by all means, Katia. Can you tell me?" (Lisa)

"Of course. Ask me anything, Big Sis." (Katia)

"You know, Katia..." (Wendelin)

"Eh? What, hubby?" (Katia)

Katia, who had a burden taken off her shoulder after her biggest worry had vanished, became careless and unconditionally accepted Lisa's request. Even though I tried to stop her in a hurry, it was apparently too late.

Lisa continued, and asked Katia, "Then let me ask, Katia, your mana has increased quite a bit in comparison to the time before your marriage. What trick did you use there? Ah, don't think that you can deceive me. Your amount of mana when we last met and your current amount of mana are completely different. Thinking that I wouldn't notice as much would be weird. Right, Katia?" (Lisa)

"Of course. Big Sis is an excellent magician..." (Katia)

"It's great that you understand." (Lisa)

Karia, who ended up promising that she could ask anything, started to have cold sweat run down her face due to Lisa's question which would lead to her suddenly disclosing my secret. Even her hands that carried the second parfait, which had been brought over just minutes ago, to her mouth stopped as well.

"You're certainly not going to say that you can't tell me, are you? I patiently gave you a special training so that you can use magic for your hunting, didn't I? I should be your teacher. Or am I wrong?" (Lisa)

"Big Sis, you're my magic teacher." (Katia)

"Right? So, you can tell me, right?" (Lisa)

"...Through special training." (Katia)

"Special training, eh...?" (Lisa)

"It's a completely new, special training that hasn't existed until now!" (Katia)

"Hasn't existed until now, eh...?" (Lisa)

Lisa stared at Katia with the eyes of a raptor aiming for their prey while asking back. It's because she probably noticed that the reason for Katia's increased mana wasn't special training but some other secret. It looks like we had an outrageous woman zero in on us.



Having a problem with continuing the talk on the open terrace at this rate, we decided to return to the mansion right away while taking her along.

"Isn't your makeup thicker than the last time we met?" (Burkhart)

"As if you have the leeway to talk about others! Your white hair increased in quantity, Burkhart."  
(Lisa)

On the way back to the mansion, Burkhart-san, who was walking while sobering up from his drunkenness, asked Lisa a question that lacked any delicacy while at the same time serving as constraint.

But, the other side didn't back down either, and retorted that Burkhart-san had grown old.

"I guess it's the same for both of us, but I have passed fifty years. Come to think of it, soon you're going to..." (Burkhart)

"I'm going to freeze you!" (Lisa)

The instant Burkhart-san was about to mention Lisa's age, the temperature fell straight away, and the shrubs and lawn became frosty.

Her nickname of Blizzard is not for show, it seems.

After all she's capable of scattering such chilly air over a wide range in an instant.

"Hey...for better or worse I'm the older one here. And, although it was just for a short time, I taught you magic in the past. Pay some respect to your elderly." (Burkhart)

To address Burkhart-san, who's at least 20 years older than her, without any honorific title, even if it might be an ability-based world; in a certain meaning she's an amazing woman.

"Courtesy and all that is unnecessary for adventurers. Rather than that, you have a new pupil, Burkhart?" (Lisa)

Lisa's curiosity shifted towards Therese who was scheduled to learn magic from Burkhart-san. At this point in time, Therese's mana was quite considerable.

"Well, that's how it is." (Burkhart)

"She's a quite old pupil. How unusual." (Lisa)

Most of those, who have the qualities for being magicians, are discovered during their childhood. Those, who exceeded the age of 20 like Therese, were actually quite rare cases. Of course it's not like they didn't exist at all, but...

"It's owed to mine family's circumstances." (Therese)

"You...are 『Earl Baumeister's spoils of war』, aren't you? An environment where the former Duchess Philip couldn't learn magic? Isn't that way odd?" (Lisa)

However, this woman has a nasty tongue.

She calmly mentioned the rumors about Therese in front of the person herself.

Even so, as Lisa has properly obtained information about her, it means that a top-class adventurer won't show any negligence, as expected.

And Katia, who should be Lisa's true target, looked relieved when Lisa's interest shifted from her to Therese.

The fact that a strong person at the level of Katia abased herself to such an extent made it obvious that Lisa's strength was nothing to scoff at.

"Even if thee call it odd, I received a special education as Duchess Philip. My education as a noble had the highest priority. I have no choice but to get thee to understand that such things may happen as well." (Therese)

Nothing less of Therese, she tries to skilfully dodge the secret.

"That means, just as adventurers have their circumstances, so do nobles, too."

"How about Katia? Her mana has drastically increased compared to last time. Isn't it a similar situation in your case?" (Lisa)

"Uh!" (Katia)

Becoming once again the target, Katia's face turned pale.

"Well, that's something thee have to ask Katia. Maybe her teacher's education was unexpectedly bad? After all it resulted in this situation once she was taught by Wendelin. Once she gets taught by Burkhart, the difference might become even more prominent." (Therese)

Even while sidestepping the secret, Therese didn't forget to attack Lisa either.

No matter how famous she might be as a magician, Therese probably took offense from Lisa's way of speaking towards her on their first meeting.

As might be expected of the person who served as Duchess Philip.

"Hey, Therese..." (Katia)

"What is it, Katia? I haven't done anything besides stating an objective truth." (Therese)

And she has told Lisa that her guidance was unskilled.

It's different when Burkhart-san says as much, but if she's told so by Therese, who just became aware of her mana, it's only natural for Lisa the Blizzard to get angry.

"Now you've said it...lass..." (Lisa)

"I'm already 21 years old. Society regards that as the beginning of a mature woman. Just how old are thee?" (Therese)

"You bitch——!" (Lisa)

Therese likely pissed off Lisa on purpose.

Once she got enraged while completely losing control of herself, cold air once again spread into the

vicinity.

Just how does that work?

It can't be felt as anything but coldness by other people, but the plants, tables, and chairs in the courtyard started to gradually freeze.

"Thee are true to thy nickname as Lisa the Blizzard." (Therese)

Even while watching that spectacle, there wasn't a single change in Therese's expression. She completely saw through this being Lisa's threat and that there would be no harm to us.

"Lass, if you're going to apologize, now's the time." (Lisa)

"Why would I need to apologize? I just spoke the truth." (Therese)

Therese wasn't perturbed in the least by Lisa's intensity. Rather, it looked as if she was enjoying angering the other side.

"Thee came to visit thy pupil, and now thee pick a fight with me; what's the idea? Besides, the garden's plants, the tables and the chairs are property of the Earl Baumeister House. What should they think about freezing all of these after giving free reign to thy emotions? Cool down your head a bit...it's cold enough for doing so, right?" (Therese)

"..."

In contrast to the magic she uses, Lisa the Blizzard seems to be a person who gets fired up easily. Being able to take such a haughty attitude towards nobles might be proof that she's this famous as an adventurer.

However, her not going all the way even if she gets enraged is evidence of her being a veteran.

"If thee don't calm down a bit, thee won't be able to get married no matter how much time passes." (Therese)

"Oi! Therese!" (Katia)

Katia tried to stop her in panic, but she was too late.

Anyone could imagine it easily, but for Lisa that ought to be the biggest taboo that mustn't be mentioned.

Her expression changed from being enraged into an expressionless one.

"Uwaa...once Big Sis becomes like this..." (Katia)

She likely had experienced it in the past. After seeing Lisa's expression, Katia looked as if it was the end of the world.

"You seem to be quite pretentious just because you awoke to a slightly bigger mana. There are no nobles or commoners in the world of magic. Do you understand that, lass?" (Lisa)

"Just because thee trained for a little bit of a long period of time, thee have become pointlessly arrogant? This is the reason why 『women well past her prime』 are such a hassle." (Therese)

Therese retaliated against Lisa's provocation in the same way.

"Very well. I will crush you." (Lisa)

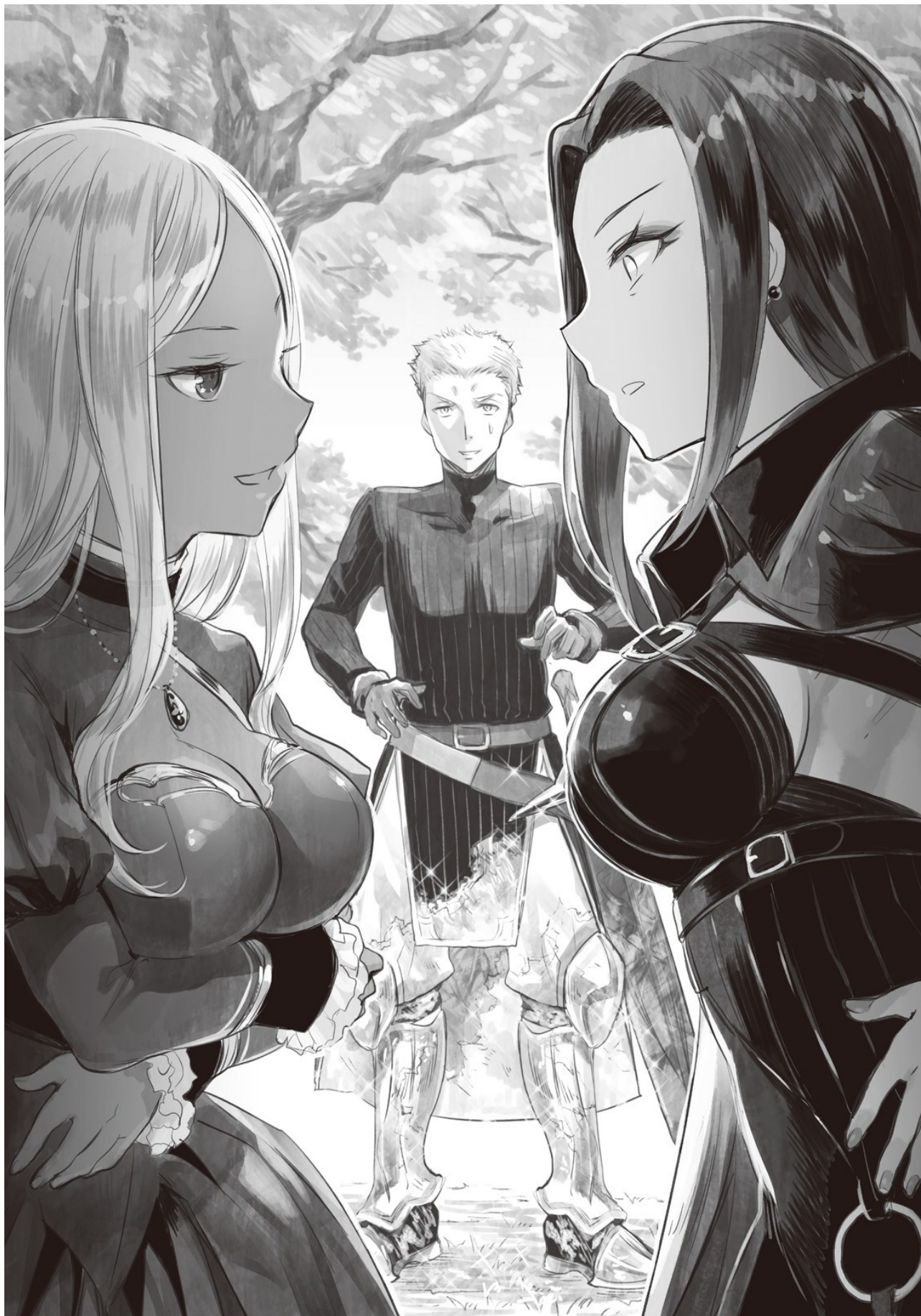
"It's the fate of a veteran to be completely beaten by a newcomer someday. Have peace of mind, I will take up that task." (Therese)

"Cocky beginners regularly appear. However they immediately become obedient after experiencing the proper adjustments." (Lisa)

For some reason Lisa's visit of her pupil had changed into a duel against Therese. All of us couldn't say why it had turned out like this. We simply watched the quarrel of these two.

"Umm...if you're done talking...I'd like you to help me here a bit..."

And, Erw, who had the bad luck of getting his feet frozen by the aftermath of Lisa's magic, acted miserably by requesting our help.



\* \* \*

"Therese-san, wasn't that a bit too reckless?"

"It won't be a problem if I somehow reach a level, where I won't get killed, in the remaining time."  
(Therese)

Sure enough, isn't that because they are incompatible like oil and water?

It was decided that Therese and Lisa, who had a full-blown, verbal fight, were going to have a magic duel.

Given that Therese was a novice, the duel date was set to be in one month.

Lisa said that she would stay in the Baumeister Earldom during that time, and left my mansion without even having a proper chat with Katia which was her original objective.

The gentle Elise was worried that Therese, whose talent was still unknown, couldn't win against a famous magician whatever the circumstances might be, but Therese herself maintained a composed expression.

"Mine mana is still in the middle of growth. Wendelin, make it grow well with good efficiency."  
(Therese)

"That was the goal here...? I shouldn't have worried about you." (Wendelin)

"I just have to get strong enough to not be killed. For this sake I must spend sweet time with thou for this month, Wendelin." (Therese)

"We aren't as generous as letting you hog him to yourself, though." (Elise)

Making her mana grow means she's telling me to have frequently sex with her.

Elise apparently thought that she had been splendidly cheated by Therese's plan.

Yet, she accepted it to some extent with the limitation that Therese wasn't allowed to monopolize me.

Since it would turn into a real mess if I said something like my opinion in this situation...I decided to stay silent.

I mean, Elise is scary at such times.

"That's the aim? How sly." (Luise)

"Luise, I won't say that thou are completely wrong, but for the time being I succeeded in scattering that spinster's suspicions. Be at least a bit grateful for that." (Therese)

"Suspicious?" (Luise)

"Did you forget? That spinster is an excellent magician. Hence she would have likely continued paying undue attention to the fact of Katia's increased mana." (Therese)

"Come to think of it, there was that as well." (Luise)

Why did the married Katia's mana increase? If one considers it a bit, the brunt of the doubts will be pointed at me.

Therese deliberately picked a fight with Lisa, preventing that from happening.

"But, it's a temporary measure, isn't it?"

To be precise, for one month until the duel, I guess.

"Thou won't be able to conceal it from here on out anyway. First comes thinking what to do about that spinster. Wendelin, are thou going to take that spinster as a wife?" (Therese)

"Sorry, but that's asking too much." (Wendelin)

I wonder what to think of her appearance, but even more so I can't understand why she's acting so belligerent.

Besides, how old is that person? Because the other party is a woman, it's difficult to ask her about her age.

"Burkhart-san, she's closer in age to you than me, isn't she? How about it?" (Wendelin)

"I don't want to deal with such a headstrong woman, okay? She won't be interested either, don't you think?" (Burkhart)

"That's not what I was talking about. I mean her age." (Wendelin)

Even I understand as much. I just wanted to ask about her age.

"If I remember correctly, she's something around thirty? Isn't that right, Katia?" (Burkhart)

"Umm, Big Sis' birthday is in spring, so she should be still barely in her twenties as of now, I think." (Katia)

Lisa, who was treated as spinster by Therese, would turn thirty in another few months. In addition, due to her confident, or rather, belligerent behavior, she had a gaudiness that didn't suit her age. At this rate I think it's very unlikely for her to be able to get married until thirty.

"I was taught by Big Sis when I was 15 years old. At that time Big Sis was around 25 years old." (Katia)

Since it was an age where people had started to tell Lisa various things about her age, Katia made sure to not touch on that topic since that time.

"Normally she's a candid and nice person, but..." (Katia)

When Katia had been ridiculed about being unmarried by a male adventurer at the next table during her meal, Lisa apparently took care of him by freezing him alongside his chair and table.

"I suppose you can say her nickname really suits her..."

"Big Sis isn't an idiot either. She only froze him on the surface." (Katia)

Being frozen only on the surface, or rather, it looks like the moisture in the air clung to random places.

"Be that as it may, she's a bother!" Erw complained after suffering the bad luck to have parts of his armor and boots frozen by her.

The ground and plants touching Erw's boots were frozen as well. Right now he couldn't move around freely.

"I think her using Erw as target was because it would turn into an issue if she had done that to Wend?" (Ina)

It might look like she lost control after snapping, but in reality she also has a calm part, according to Ina.

"Rather, she thought that it would be pointless as it would get resisted anyway, even if she tried to freeze Wend's feet, didn't she? It can be blocked with fire-based magic, can't it Wend?"

"Yeah." (Wendelin)

Especially against Burkhart-san, Katharina, and me that magic should have no effect.

"She really only froze the surface." (Haruka)

"Sorry, Haruka-san." (Erwin)

Erw couldn't move about as his feet were frozen, but Haruka skilfully shaved off the ice with her kodachi, extricating him in little time.

Haruka is truly a role model for a wife.

"But, wasn't Erwin-san turned into the target here exactly because she saw the lovey-dovey state of those two?"

""""""""Now that you mention it...""""""""

Lisa must have actually minded those two happily creating their own world while feeding each other with fruit parfait. It was Katharina's opinion that she had frozen Erw for that reason, and I could really agree with that.

"But you know, is there any male who would marry that person?" (Luise)

Everyone became silent upon Luise's question.

She was a bit flashy, but still a beauty. However, she was terribly strong-willed. If angered, she would freeze the other party.

"No way. I'm out." (Erwin)

"Impossible. I already knew that fifteen years ago." (Burkhart)

In Erw's eyes, Lisa was apparently the complete opposite of Haruka. And, if Burkhart-san had been interested, he would have married her long ago.

"The attack of that spinster will take place in one month. Until then I have to train intensively." (Therese)

"I will help you as much as possible, but I can't take care of it everyday. Earl-sama, please handle the majority of it." (Burkhart)

"Of course I will do so."

"Even though it was for the sake of protecting Wendelin's secret, I recklessly challenged her to a duel. I would be grateful if thou could teach me properly." (Therese)

"Leave it to me..."

"As expected of the former Duchess Philip. She knows how to make others feel grateful." (Katharina)

It's really just as Katharina says.  
For that reason Therese's special training began.

\* \* \*

"...Uuhn...morning already?" (Wendelin)

It was still dim when I woke up, but it was already time to get up. Since I would oversleep if I went back to sleep now, I tried to raise my body, but then noticed that I couldn't get up and that my right arm had become numb.

"Wendelin, is it morning?" (Therese)

There was one month left until the duel against Lisa. I recalled that it had been decided for Therese to stay at my mansion since she would train everyday from now on, and she had slept together with me.

Our relationship had developed into this direction a little while ago, but in order to increase her mana in this one month, we planned to increase the frequency of sleeping with each other. It wasn't everyday since we would get scolded by Elise and the others, but this one month was treated as Therese's mana increase campaign.

"You wake up early, don't you?" (Wendelin)

"It's a habit from my time as Duchess Philip. High-ranking nobles organize their lives by the schedule decided by their retainers. In reality they are unexpectedly sad beings. Nowadays it has

become possible for me to carefreely enjoy going back to sleep, but I can't easily get rid of that habit." (Therese)

"I see." (Wendelin)

Rather than for the sake of a schedule, I got up at the same time because I trained every morning. Being able to wake up at roughly the same time as habit of my time as a salaryman is just like Therese.

"Shall we do your special training then?" (Wendelin)

"Don't be too hard on me, Wendelin-sensei." (Therese)

Once the two of us went to the courtyard to have our early morning special training, Katia was already training there with her two swords.

"You know, I'm newly-wed...I feel like I'm being beaten to the punch by Therese." (Katia)

Feeling like her privilege to sleep with me has been snatched away by Therese, Katia called out to us, saying that she couldn't agree with it.

"I know how thou feel, but with mine current ability I will be instantly killed by Lisa. I need at least the mana and magic to survive the duel. In the first place, it's also true that we could gloss over Wendelin's secret exactly because I picked a fight with Lisa at that place." (Therese)

"If I'm told that, I can't say anything..." (Katia)

Therese and Katia were actually only one year apart, but Therese, the former Duchess Philip was many more times skillful with her words than Katia.

"But, as expected, you're not saying that you can win." (Katia)

"That's only natural, no? The other party is several years older than me, and a very experienced veteran who has been doing intensive training in magic. There's no way I can win even if I have special training for one month." (Therese)

"If you understand that part, you won't hear anything else from me." (Katia)

It's not like Katia isn't unhappy about the number of times she can sleep with me decreasing because of Therese, but she's still worried about Therese's safety due to the duel with Lisa.

"Katia is a nice person, isn't she?" (Therese)

"Indeed, Katia is truly a good girl." (Wendelin)

"Therese! Hubby! I'm not a child!" (Katia)

Katia got angry, telling us to not treat her like a child, but since her face was red, she might be slightly embarrassed.

"Well, I'm about to hit the limit of my mana soon anyway. It went up quite a bit thanks to hubby, though." (Katia)

Given that the amount of Katia's mana has risen from not reaching intermediate level to being at the average range for intermediate level, it was expectable for Lisa to consider that as odd.

"There, aren't you way too amazing? At this point in time you have more mana than me, and you haven't reached your limit yet. Even though we are both nobles, is it a difference in pedigree?" (Katia)

They both have bodies possessing mana, but Katia won't go beyond average intermediate level, whereas Therese's was already close to advanced level while still in the process of increasing. Katia looked slightly disappointed, wondering whether this difference stemmed from her parentage.

"That's unrelated. There are trends for people descending from nobility and royalty to be more likely to manifest mana, but I feel like the amount of mana and the pedigree are unrelated. Katharina's home is originally a Knight house just like yours, isn't it Katia?" (Wendelin)

"That's true as well." (Katia)

Katharina's home, the Waigel House, is an Associate Baron house now, but in the beginning it was a Knight house just like the Eulenberg House. It doesn't seem as though the amount of mana rises in proportion to one's pedigree.

"Well then, let's start the special training?" (Wendelin)

"Please take care of me, sensei." (Therese)

"Please, sensei." (Katia)

Having said that, it's no good if we don't actually start from the basics for Therese. Katia, who received proper training from Lisa, will get a different training menu.

"In the end, I haven't been taught anything by you, hubby..." (Katia)

"Well, you already learned the basics from Lisa, didn't you?" (Wendelin)

Her impression on our first meeting was the worst, but Lisa is an excellent magician. There was almost nothing I could teach Katia who had been properly trained by her. At most there was the training to refine one's mana by doing Zen meditation, huh?

"Rather than that, your two swords cutting in the same way as katana will be the main focus, Katia-san. I will teach you the basic katana techniques. By putting your efforts into this you will be able to cut the neck of a wyvern with ease." (Haruka)

"Really? Will things work out with such a force?" (Katia)

"It's impossible for normal people, but...since you're accelerating yourself drastically with magic, I

think it should. If you learn the basics properly here, your mana will increase, and you should become capable of cutting things a lot easier." (Haruka)

"That's amazing. Please teach me by all means." (Katia)

With Haruka teaching her basic sword techniques instead of my magic training, Katia's mood brightened up.

Since she's not unhappy even without being taught by me, it's probably no problem.

Once we finished the morning training, all of us couldn't help but be concerned about the matter with Lisa.

Later we all did our usual jobs, and Therese continued to train by using up almost all her mana until evening.

And then at night...

"Wendelin, my mana will rise by thou sleeping with me every day. I'm sorry towards Elise and the others, who approved of me hogging thou to myself, so thou can go all out on me." (Therese)

"I'm just one person, okay...?" (Wendelin)

"Most men in this world would be envious of thou. Things really don't work out as everyone wants in this world." (Therese)

"Those words out of your mouth, Therese?" (Wendelin)

For some reason I ended up totally worn-out, but Therese continued to gradually increase her mana as a result of that.

Her magic learning speed was frighteningly fast, too. Honestly, she has a talent that makes me envious.

"At any rate, you're learning magic quickly, and the amount of your mana is considerable as well. For an acquaintance to be such a prodigy..." (Burkhart)

Several days later Burkhart-san visited to teach her magic, but he couldn't hide his surprise about Therese's talent and her manner of growth.

"Even so, you still won't be able to win against Lisa-san. You have talent, but there's not enough time," declared Katharina.

At the present time Therese's mana was in the upper areas of the intermediate level.

She was still using a wand since the power of her spells was low, but it was my spare that I had given her as a present.

『Is this a substitute for an engagement ring? Well, as we can't make our relationship public, I'm grateful about such presents』 (Therese)

Therese looked happy after receiving a wand from me.



Will the magic she learned work against Lisa the Blizzard?  
We mainly practiced fire magic.

"Therese-sama, what's the reason for you having turned towards fire-based magic? The level of your training is still not at the stage where we know what attribute you excel at..." Burkhart-san, who was teaching her magic, asked Therese.

"Me using fire magic is owed to my will to oppose Lisa the Blizzard. The other side will realize that and become enraged. That means I will use it in the match to make her lose control of herself."  
(Therese)

"What a competitive spirit..." (Katharina)

It was also possible that Lisa's spells would become even more severe as result of her being provoked too much.

Katharina admired and was amazed by Therese who showed a strong will despite that.

"Katharina, because of this nature of mine, I was suited to serve as Duchess Philip." (Therese)

"So one can say you are able to compete with Lisa-san exactly because she's a person that gives one such impression...? At any rate, acquiring a high-power spell that would work against Lisa-san will be likely limited to one..." (Katharina)

If it's just about learning magic, Therese had already reached a point where she could use quite a few spells.

But, if it came to spells working against Lisa, a training period of one month was very short. It's not a bad strategy to focus on learning one spell that can counter Lisa's ice-based magic rather than learning various spells.

"Besides, I'm going to lose anyway." (Therese)

"Certainly, winning will be difficult." (Katharina)

No matter how much talent Therese might have, there's no way for her to be able to win against Lisa, who has been training for more than twenty years, by practicing magic for one month. In addition, even Lisa could be reasonably counted to the category of prodigies. Therese knew that better than anyone else.

"Therefore, Wendelin will stop the duel at a suitable time. I really don't want to be frozen for eternity at such a young age." (Therese)

It looked like Therese really picked this fight in order to hide my ability. She didn't have the intention to win the duel in the first place.

"I bought some time, but I wonder how thou are going to win over that woman. That's the real challenge here. So, Wendelin, do thy best. The combat forces of the adventurer party Dragon Busters have reduced by half, after all." Therese laughed while saying so, but since I'm doing something bad to Elise and the others by only occupying myself with Therese, I naturally have to take their side into consideration as well...

"For morning sickness to be this painful..." (Elise)

"I'm out, too. I give up." (Ina)

"Well then, we will take a rest for a while at this point." (Luise)

"I also feel nauseous when teaching magic to Therese-san..." (Katharina)

Elise, Ina, Luise and Katharina safely became pregnant.

Even though it's an auspicious event, there are still some parts that don't feel real to me.

It's probably because I'm a man, right?

Since it's not visible from their appearance yet, the actual feeling that I will become a father might not well up within me unless their bellies become a lot bigger.

"At my age, I think it's fine to wait with that for a bit longer." (Wilma)

"Even though things may appear this way, I'm still newly-wed. There's also the special training."

(Katia)

"You don't really need to do that special training now, do you? Apart from that, if Elise and the others can't move due to morning sickness, the adventurer activities will be temporarily suspended as well, no?"

In addition to Erw and Haruka as well as Wilma and Katia, who haven't become pregnant, we are only five.

That would have been plenty if it was before I became a noble, but in this situation Roderich likely wouldn't approve of Demon Forest explorations either.

"I won't be of any help as a combat asset. I also have to take care of Elise and the others. After all I'm experienced as I have already given birth to two children." (Amalie)

No, even I haven't considered turning Amalie into an adventurer.

Since she has the experience of having given birth, I'd like her to stay next to Elise and the other three and take care of them.

"Amalie, thou surely won't be recruited as a combat asset. Leaving that aside, thou aren't pregnant?" (Therese)

"That would be bad in various ways." (Amalie)

Amalie explained to Therese that it's owed to her position.

"Thou are a precious field to be plowed. Isn't it fine if thou do your best and give birth? After Elise and the others, that is." (Therese)

"Won't that turn into childbirth at an advanced age?" (Amalie)

"Amalie, if thou say something like that in front of that spinster, thou will get killed." (Therese)

Come to think of it, Amalie was older than Lisa...not.

They should be around the same age, but Amalie had been child-faced for as long as I knew her. I forgot because she looks younger than her actual age. Based on her appearance, Lisa is 'that' after all...

"That spinster will soon turn thirty years old. Even I was previously ridiculed by foulmouthed imperial nobles about being at the beginning of maturity, but with 'that' existing, I feel at ease." (Therese)

"Therese, you're quite nasty yourself!" Katia protested against Therese's way of speaking, probably because she's Lisa's pupil and as she's going to turn twenty herself soon, too.

"I'm fully aware that I'm nasty, but if I consider that woman's ability, I won't receive any punishment even if I complain about her a bit during my training. If thou like, thou could challenge Lisa to a duel after I was defeated, Katia? Fortunately thy mana has gone up as well." (Therese)

"I don't want to! As I can't use emission-type magic, I will be done in before I get close to Big Sis."

(Katia)

Katia refused a match against Lisa with all her might.

"Wouldn't it work out somehow if thou came up with a clever strategy?" (Therese)

"No, the compatibility between Big Sis and me is too bad. It's impossible." (Katia)

"Compatibility?"

"Look, if it's fire or wind magic, I can use evasion as an option. But in Big Sis' case, she can cool down the entire area around here with a blizzard. With me being unable to use 『Magic Barrier』, it will be difficult for me to even get close." (Katia)

"Certainly, that makes sense." Listening to Katia's explanation, Burkhart-san could apparently agree from the bottom of his heart, adding, "In that case there's no other option but Therese-sama retaliating with one attack, or Earl-sama defeating her."

"I think it would be the best if Wendelin didn't get a turn. That means..." (Therese)

That means...what, Therese?

"Do thy best in strengthening me in the time until my duel with Lisa." (Therese)

Even if she calls it strengthening, Therese's "do your best" mostly refers to our activities at night, I think...

"That's really cunning..." (Ina)

"Even if thou say that, thou can't be Wendelin's partner anymore as thou are already pregnant, Ina." (Therese)

"You're really quick to notice such things." (Ina)



The strengthening of Therese as a magician proceeded in such tune, but once I headed to my bedroom on a certain night, Katia waited for me while wearing a negligee for a change, although it was odd if talking about unexpected things. After all, Katia didn't usually wear such clothes.

"After thinking it over very carefully, I came to the conclusion that there's no need for hubby to spend each night with Therese, is there? Her mana will raise plenty if you limit it to once in every three days! I'm newly-wed, too. Pops and bro said that they would like to see me give birth to some children soon as well." (Katia)

"How regrettable. Me being able to coax thou ends at this point, huh?" (Therese)

At that point Therese, who had entered the bedroom, made a bombshell announcement to Katia.

"Therese! You tricked me!" (Katia)

"Don't be angry, Katia. It's a fact that raising my mana was necessary, but until Elise and the others give birth, the nights are free. It's nothing we have to compete over." (Therese)

"Certainly...today I will have the priority. I also want a child as soon as possible." (Katia)

"What coincidence. I'd like to give birth to at least one child, too." (Therese)

It's great that the two reached an agreement without quarreling...but that means it will again become harsh on me.

"We have to do our best for Elise's and the others' share, too." (Therese)

"Please have a peace of mind, hubby." (Katia)

"(Aah...I wonder whether the duel between Therese and Lisa won't come to an end soon...huh? The situation won't really change even if it comes to an end, will it?)" (Wendelin)

Completely unrelated to Lisa the Blizzard and such, I thought that high-ranking nobles with many wives have it really tough.