

Chapter 1 - The Married Couple's First Joint Work

"Uuh...my head is killing me."

The next day after Doushi has been overwhelmed in drinking capacity by Lisa. I cast a sidelong glance at Doushi, who is suffering from a hangover, while eating my breakfast. I thought that his drunkenness had completely vanished yesterday, but I guess even Doushi will get a hangover after drinking this much alcohol.

"Uncle-sama, let's take this as a lesson to limit the amount of alcohol you drink, okay?" (Elise)

"No, I don't drink this much unless it's for a contest..." (Armstrong)

Not just with the drinking capacity, but even with his physical condition after the match, Doushi has been forced to taste defeat against Lisa.

Mostly unable to eat anything due to the hangover, he's being cautioned by Elise about too much alcohol consumption.

It looks like he can't get Elise to cast 『Detoxify』 on him as punishment.

If you take this into account, she's a person who's strict about neglecting one's health and having messed up habits.

The way she says it is gentle, but by holding a strong will, she compels the other party to reflect. That's why even Doushi only sips his water, unable to say anything back to her.

The other concerned party, Lisa, is silently eating her breakfast while looking no different from usual.

She seems to have gotten used to the environment at last. It has reached the stage where she can make eye contact with Burkhardt-san as long as other women are present.

A conversation with a man is still impossible, but you might say that she's making steady progress. However...she definitely doesn't look like someone who would be able to drink as much alcohol as she did yesterday.



"That means the match has been settled safely. Putting that aside, please don't forget." (Erwin)

"Ah, you're right. The day after tomorrow is your marriage, isn't it?"

As a matter of fact, it's planned to hold Erw's and Haruka's marriage in Mizuho on the day after tomorrow.

Originally it's not a situation to hold some drunkard contest, but telling Doushi would have been pointless, or rather, how to put it...

Fortunately we can transfer to Mizuho on the appointed day with my 『Teleport』.

Doushi might have neglected taking care of his health because of that, but this might be one of the blessings of people who don't think too deeply about matters.

"You see...Haruka-san has been doing her best with her preparations." (Erwin)

"Erw-san, I'm really looking forward to the day after tomorrow." (Haruka)

"Sure, Haruka-san." (Erwin)

Haruka is really skilled at manipulating Erw.

She has cleverly diverted her husband, who was complaining to his lord - no matter how much we might be close friends - to another topic without him realizing.

I wonder whether everyone shares my impression that she's a Mizuho nadeshiko[efn_note]Look here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yamato_nadeshiko [/efn_note]?

"Of course I haven't forgotten about it. The preparations are perfect."

Well, I just gotta transfer everyone to Mizuho with 『Teleport』 on the very day, kind of like a taxi driver.

"Wend, you handled the preparations for the Baumeister House?"

"No, Roderich, Elise and my other wives did." (Wendelin)

There's no way that I would have the time to do something like that. After all, I'm busy with various matters.

"That's what I thought."

"Shut it! You better make sure that everything's in order so that you won't kick up a fuss with 『Oh no! I forgot』 on the day of the marriage! (Wendelin)

"Roger."

Erw seems to be in high spirits, but it probably won't pose a problem since Haruka has everything under control.

And then we teleported to Mizuho on the next day without a hitch.

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"(O——kay, you'd expect nothing else from Mizuho. It really resembles a Japanese marriage.)" (Wendelin)

"Hubby, what's wrong?" (Katia)

"No well, it sure is an unusual ceremony, isn't it?" (Wendelin)

"True, one like this is a first for me." (Katia)

Finally it's the day when Erw and Haruka will be wed.

From the tunnel dispute until the matter with Lisa; many things happened, but in the meanwhile Haruka has successfully advanced the troublesome preparations as scheduled. Today will be the

public marriage ceremony.

Haruka wears a Mizuho attire resembling a white kimono...no, basically it is a kimono. Erw's clothes resemble a hakama with a family crest. The ceremony is held at a place that seems to combine a Shinto shrine and a Buddhist temple.

In the eyes of Elise, it would have been a marriage ceremony of heretics, but since it's a marriage with the purpose of deepening the ties between the Duke Mizuho House and the Earl Baumeister Hause, she wouldn't voice out any discontent about it.

Going by her character, she wouldn't act so rudely as to butt in anyway, even if she had attended it. That's right. Elise isn't participating in today's marriage ceremony. No, I guess it's more correct to say that she couldn't participate?

『By the way, 『Teleport』 isn't allowed for a pregnant woman, Earl-sama.』 (Burkhart)

『I feel like I heard something about this before. I don't understand the reason, though.』 (Wendelin)

『Well, that's because...』 (Burkhart)

This fact has been known for a long time, and it appears to be a routine occurrence for a veteran to hurriedly stop a young magician, who's about to make a mistake.

But, I think it's only natural to stop it if it increases the probability for a miscarriage or disabilities for the infant.

『Teleport』 is simply a scary spell.

Ina, Luise, and Katharina, who are pregnant as well, have likewise stayed home. Because of that, Wilma has also remained in the Baumeister Earldom to look after them.

Those accompanying me today are only Katia, Therese, and Lisa.

Given that Therese is an acquaintance of Duke Mizuho, she's accompanying me to meet him again after a long time.

Cardinal Hohenheim has also made his moves in regards to the matters of religion.

Although it's not like they will go as far as...erasing heretics for the church, there are still obstinate priests claiming that Haruka must be converted religiously, even against her will.

Cardinal Hohenheim has been active because he tied a secret gentleman's agreement with Duke Mizuho that he would stop any forcible religious conversion attempts and forcible missionary work, as well as suppressing the folks who quibble with the religious belief of the other side.

For that reason he became acquainted with those concerned with religion in the Empire and the Duke Mizuho House. It looks like all of this only emphasized him being the strongest candidate for being the next pope.

There have been various such issues to be solved, and it's the reason why today's marriage ceremony can be held safely.

Now then, Erw and Haruka are the leading actors here, but as they are standing in front of the altar that is filled with offerings, they are receiving something similar to a purification by the priest.

I can also see children playing instruments in a similar fashion as old Japanese court music on the side.

Moreover, young women, who are similar to shrine maidens, are dancing. It truly resembles a Japanese marriage ceremony.



I recall the wedding of my college friend who held a similar ceremony in my previous life. Even the ceremony run-down afterwards was quite similar to a Japanese wedding ceremony, although it also had some parts that were different, with the couple drinking from a sake cup filled with Mizuho sake in turns, the priest reporting their marriage to the gods, and both exchanging wedding gifts they had prepared for each other.

"At any rate, is he going to be alright, Wendelin?" (Therese)

Therese suddenly asks me while the solemn ceremony is in progress. I wonder whether she's uneasy about something?

"He?"

"That elder brother-kun who's obsessed with his younger sister."

"Takeomi-san? He's very calm, though."

I don't know what he's thinking about, but Takeomi-san looks at his younger sister quietly while sitting on his seat in the area for the relatives.

I can feel something like bloodthirst blended in each time he looks at Erw, but since there's no indication that he's going to interfere with the marriage ceremony, it's no problem...or at least, it shouldn't be one.

"He was very calm during yesterday's exchange of engagement gifts, wasn't he?" (Katia)

Just as Katia says, he's by now truly as quiet as a plant.

At times he directs his bloodthirst at Erw, but I'm sure that's something he does to make himself get to terms with it.

Besides, Erw has been warding it off casually.

"That's right, it's no problem."

Yesterday, the ceremonial wedding gift exchange was carried out at Haruka's home, the Fujibayashi House, which precedes the ceremony.

Erw properly greeted them as he had practiced in advance, and offered the betrothal money, which he had brought along, to the Fujibayashi House alongside dried squid, katsuobushi, kombu, sake, and rice.

However, because I couldn't walk properly as my legs had apparently become numb after sitting in seiza, Erw got stuck lending me his shoulder on the way back.

"There was no particular issue with him, was there?"

"Indeed, that brother was calm, wasn't he?"

Besides, Takeomi-san is succeeding the Fujibayashi House which has become a high-ranking retainer house due to its achievements during the civil war.

I couldn't believe that he would disturb the important marriage between the two houses just because he's doting on his little sister.

"..."

"Even Big Sis is saying that there's no way for him to do something so childish." (Katia)

"I suppose you're right."

No matter how much of a sis-con Takeomi-san might be, he shouldn't be so foolish as to hinder this marriage.

"There's, you're worrying too much."

"Really...? My intuition is often right, but I wonder whether it declined after my retirement?" (Therese)

Unrelated to Therese's worries, Erw's and Haruka's marriage ceremony came to an end without a hitch, but right after that, we personally experienced Takeomi-san's excessive attachment to his sister.

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"The first joint work as a married couple?"

"Yes. It's a ritual that's always carried out in Mizuho by a couple that just got married. If they accomplish this as a couple, the people around them will approve that the two have really become husband and wife."

The elderly priest passes a map and several talismans to Erw and Haruka who had finished their marriage ceremony.

"Joint work?"

"Yes, Earl Baumeister-sama. These talismans are placed at the small wayside shrines dotting the 『Mizuho Mountain Ring』."

I have Erw show me one of the talismans he has received. Besides Erw's and Haruka's name, various spell-like words are written on it, and several red seals are applied to it.

"Talismans?"

"Those are talismans used to report to the gods that Erwin-dono and Haruka-dono have become spouses."

They have to offer these at eight places located in the Mizuho Mountain Ring that's enclosing the Mizuho basin.

If they offer them at all eight places, the two will apparently become a married couple, officially recognized by the gods.

"So it's a joint work of both of them offering the talismans together."

"It will be their first job as a married couple. Some of the mountain roads are steep, but since all married couples in Mizuho have gone through this ritual, it's not overly complicated either."

Hiking is somewhat tough, but I guess the ritual is at a level that even people, who can't hike, are capable of accomplishing.

Offering all eight talismans at various wayside shrines in the Mizuho Mountain Ring as a married couple seems to be something indispensable.

"How long is it going to take?"

"Four, five days. Even the slower couples need no more than a week?"

The priest replies to Katia.

Since newlywed couples always carry out his ritual in Mizuho, they apparently take a vacation of at least one week.

The 『Mizuho Mountain Ring』 is a very long, ring-shaped mountain range walling in the Mizuho basin. I guess it's only natural that it would take time to visit eight wayside shrines situated at

various places over there.

"One week? So they will sleep outdoors?"

"No. Since there's a constant stream of couples that offer amulets to the shrines in Mizuho, there are inns close to all shrines."

"What eagerness to make business."

It's a ritual, or rather, an event that seems to combine a pilgrimage and a honeymoon...
Anticipating that, there are also people running a business close to those shrines.
To include the shrine pilgrimage of the newlywed couples in the economy, the Mizuho people must be zealous about business.

"Since the couple will spend some time together with no outsiders around at long last, they won't be punished even if they enjoy themselves in the middle of the trip as long as they properly offer the talismans. The Mizuho gods are generous after all."

I see.

Even the part about being lax on the religion is the same in Mizuho as in Japan.
If this had been the church, it would have become a harsh ritual not allowing for a holiday feeling or anything like that to come up.

"Then it'll be Erw's and Haruka's holiday for a week, I suppose. How about going shopping in the royal capital, if you should have some days left?"

"Is that fine, milord?"

"Sure, why not. At least for the time of you being newlywed."

Haruka asks apologetically, but it's impossible to ignore Mizuho's customs while at the same time trying to form friendly ties with Mizuho.
Besides, the Baumeister House is no company that exploits its employees, okay?
I will at least allow my retainers to have a normal honeymoon.

"Rather than that, thou will travel on mountain roads for several days, won't thou? Don't thou need to prepare for that?"

Therese warns Erw and Haruka to not be negligent in their preparations.
Certainly, since it's hiking, proper equipment is necessary.

"That's true. It's just as Therese-sama says. I guess there's the changes of clothes and equipment necessary to walk across the mountains. Since there's inns, it shouldn't be needed to arrange for camping utilities."

"Indeed. I have to borrow the necessary things from my family." (Haruka)

"That's okay, Haruka-san?"

"It seems to be normal to lend and borrow things that aren't used frequently. Nii-sama also kindly offered me to borrow these things from our family."

"Well, it makes sense. Things like these, which you only use for this occasion, will eventually gather dust in the storage house even if you buy them. If they can be borrowed, it's better to do so."

Takeomi-san has apparently approved of Haruka's and Erw's marriage at long last. Since he stayed quiet during the gift exchange as well as during the marriage ceremony, I think I don't have to worry about him getting in their way anymore.

"Then we just have to get ready together and depart from the Fujibayashi House."

I really want to see them off myself, but I'm a busybody, too. Roderich has set up a full programme for me. Since the ceremony has ended without any problems, it's probably fine for me to go back to the Baumeister Earldom, and pick the two up once the ritual has finished after a week.

"Please contact me through the MHCD when you're done." (Wendelin)

I tell this to Erw and Haruka, and we quickly return to the Baumeister Earldom with 『Teleport』.



"Eh? It's dangerous if it's just the two of them? Why do you think so, Therese?"

"No, in my opinion it's that brother-kun who's dangerous. Lisa thinks so as well. Right?"

"Yes."

"Huh? But what about back then at the marriage ceremony?"

"At first I had thought that he definitely wouldn't try to pull anything, but I've gradually become worried, and now I'm convinced of it. Don't thou think as well, Lisa?"

"Yes."

"Eh? Is that so?"

The minute we return to the Baumeister Earldom, Therese starts to speak about it being dangerous to allow Erw and Haruka do the ritual by themselves.

Lisa appears to agree with her...come to think of it, I feel like I have heard her voice while she has no makeup on for the first time...though it's only been 『Yes』...

The worries of a former duchess, and a remarkable magician/adventurer.

It might be better to ask about the details here, just for caution's sake.

I don't think that anything will happen, but...

"Hasn't Takeomi-san remained silent during the gift exchange and the wedding ceremony?"

No matter how much of a sis-con brother Takeomi-san might be, I can't believe that he will obstruct Haruka's marriage with Erw.

After all their marriage is an important tie connecting the Baumeister and the Mizuho Houses. If he were to obstruct that, he would hurt the reputation of the Duke Mizuho House, not to mention the Fujibayashi House. In the worst case the blame would be fully pushed on Takeomi-san...

"Normally one would think so, but that brother-kun is excessively fixated on his little sister. I feel like thine perception is somewhat too soft on this." (Therese)

I have never seen any other sis-com like him in this world, but I think that Therese's way of phrasing is a bit too exaggerated.

"If he were to meddle so obviously, his responsibility would be called into question, I think."

Duke Mizuho would be quite angry, wouldn't he?

"Hence it will be fine as long as he meddles in secret. It's a pilgrimage that will be done by any married couple in Mizuho. Then what if it failed?"

"Failing is possible?"

Didn't the priest say that anyone could succeed with this?

"Either way, it's weird to say that it definitely succeeds, isn't it? Losing the talismans, one of the spouses giving up due to injury or illness, it actually being an unwanted marriage, and so on. It bothers me that it will take several days. Can thou believe that they would use this ritual, in case some trouble occurred to the two who became a married couple after the marriage ceremony?"

"This marriage likely won't be blessed by the gods since they failed at the pilgrimage, or it might be better to annul this marriage because of this. That's how you could explain it?"

"Is that how it works?" (Therese)

Maybe.

Having Erw's and Haruka's marriage annulled would be inconvenient.

Both love each other, and there are benefits to it for the Baumeister House and the Mizuho House. And that's where Takeomi-san would secretly interfere with the pilgrimage, bringing about the need to annul their marriage since it's not being blessed by the gods.

I guess those around them would have the impression that they failed at the pilgrimage because of the gods.

Is he going to use the gods to sabotage his sister's marriage?

As expected, that would be a pretty hardcore sis-con.

"That's the kind of possibility you meant, Lisa?"

"Yes."

Lisa has become capable of answering me, but once it comes to a longer explanation, she uses

Therese as interpreter.

"Achieving one's own desires by using important local customs, occasionally there are such people." (Therese)

In this world there are many people who believe in such vague concepts like the blessings or curses of the gods.

If they were to fail in the ritual, many people with the opinion that this marriage shouldn't be allowed to continue since it would be ominous would appear, making it impossible for Duke Mizuho to disregard them.

Wouldn't it be fine to form a tie between both houses through another marriage? I suppose that view would prevail.

"Another marriage, namely, marrying a daughter of the Duke Mizuho House to thou, Wendelin, no?" (Therese)

"Please spare me of tha——at!"

Unintentionally I used a fake Kansai dialect.

Please stop increasing the number of my wives by using some kind of official reason.

"In that case, we have to smash Takeomi-san's ambitions!"

"There's no way around it, I guess."

"It would be pitiful for Haruka, too. I will help out as well." (Katia)

"Me too."

Because of that, we returned to the Mizuho Dukedom through 『Teleport』.

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"Takeomi-sama is full of fighting spirit, isn't he? Is it some kind of training?"

"Training, eh...? It looks like something similar to training. And also like something similar to battle."

"Who is he going to fight?"

"If I have to choose, fate, I guess?"

"Haah..."



Yesterday I had a dream.

It was a dream about the still small Haruka eagerly running after me, calling out to me with 『Nii-sama』.

Thinking back, Haruka had always followed and idolized me as her onii-san.

She studied swordsmanship while imitating me, and improved conspicuously. Her skills reached a point allowing her to enlist to the Battou Unit which is difficult to enter for a woman.

Which reminds me, a little while ago she said, 『It might be fine to lead a life of doing my best in the Battou Unit together with onii-sama without marrying anyone』.

Rather than marrying into a weird family and being troubled by a husband who would be jealous of Haruka just because he sucks at swordsmanship, I thought that it would be better for her to follow the path of the sword for the rest of her life.

Since I would become the next family head of the Fujibayashi House anyway, I would take care of Haruka all life long while taking responsibility for her, if she said that she would stay at home.

However, when my thoughts had proceeded this far, that man showed up.

Erwin who became Haruka's fiancé in the blink of an eye as retainer and close friend of Earl Baumeister.

Sure, he has talent in swordsmanship, and he's not a man sparing effort, but...not allowed! The frivolous parts of that fellow don't suit the diligent Haruka.

In the end, things went as far as them having a wedding ceremony, but there's still hope.

The talisman offering pilgrimage which is the first joint work of a married couple.

If you fail this in Mizuho, a marriage will be annulled - even if you're a relative of the lord.

Using this, I will prevent Haruka's marriage.

"Takeomi-sama, you don't know when to give up, is what Kaede believes."

"N-Not knowing when to give up, training is unrelated to such things, isn't it?"

"Since Kaede has closely watched Takeomi-sama since her childhood, she also understands your plans. If you allow Kaede to tell you as a fellow woman, Haruka-sama is happy about being married. If you were to get in the way of that, Kaede thinks you would be treated like trash by Haruka-sama until your death, Takeomi-sama."

"Trea-!? Treated as trash...that's...kuuh! She won't do something like that! In the first place, what's with the “watched since childhood”!? Kaede, aren't you still a child!?"

"Is that so? Kaede is more mature than other girls at her age. Do you wish to confirm? Kaede's chest has grown splendidly..."

"As if!"

Shit!

That Kaede...why is she always so perceptive!?

Even though she's still a 12-years-old brat!

Or rather, even though the Fujibayashi House has finally become a higher-ranked retainer because of its achievements in the civil war, the likes of this branch family daughter speaks so harshly to me - although it's only once in a while - and each time my parents, Haruka, and the other relatives support Kaede.

Do they believe that I'm such an unreliable, useless man who can't do anything besides

swordsmanship?

"Let me be frank with you. The only one opposing the marriage between Haruka-sama and Erwin-sama is you, Takeomi-sama. You should obediently give them your blessing here. Talking about interfering is absurd."

"I won't interfere. I just planned to leave on a training trip this time."

"To the Mizuho Mountain Ring?"

"It's just a coincidence! I merely want to train on the steep mountain roads!"

"And you're going to depart on the day when Haruka-sama and Erwin-sama leave on their important pilgrimage?"

"Coincidence! My urge to train merely welled up on the same day by chance!"

"Really?"

It's always like this.

Kaede, who's close to ten years younger than me, leads me around by the nose.

Kaede is a completely lost case in regards to swordsmanship, but because she's quick-witted, I never won against her in an argument.

"Anyway! I have properly obtained permission for a vacation from the Battou Unit. There's no one who's going to stop me."

I was told to wait several days, but in the end I received permission. My workload will become intense in the future, but this is also for my cute Haruka.

Just watch me.

I will definitely obstruct their marriage!

"With that said, my preparations for the training are all in order. Since I'm going to leave right away, I don't have any time to concern myself with you, Kaede."

Fufufu, there's no way for Kaede to be ready for a journey.

After all I advanced my preparations while hiding it from everyone in the family.

...If it had been exposed, father, mother, and all my relatives would have kicked up a fuss.

"I'm off then."

"What a coincidence. Actually Kaede also decided to go train. Kaede's sword skills are lacking. Kaede thinks that it might be necessary for her to practice them. Ah, my preparations are completely in order. Kaede's destination is the Mizuho Mountain Ring...oh, what a coincidence! Takeomi-sama, let's go together."

"..."

You're saying my waterproof plan had been leaked to her!?

That Kaede surely plans to prevent my plan by following me!
Damn!
Suddenly a huge obstacle to my plan has shown up.
However, I will stop Haruka's and Erwin's marriage by all means!

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"Wow, those are quite big talismans. You had them prepare something like that?"

"Well, Elise and the others told me to absolutely take them along."

"Wend, you guys are going on a pilgrimage as well?"

"I mean, we just wanna offer some talismans."

"As Elise-sama and the others are in the middle of pregnancy, it would be difficult for them to wander along the Mizuho Mountain Ring. However, one can hope for a blessing from the talismans offered on a pilgrimage."

"That would make Elise a heretic, though...and yet you want to take on a trial for matrimonial happiness, huh? Wend, did you cheat?"

"As if!"

"What makes thou think that he's cheating? I mean, it would be difficult for Wendelin to do so right now." (Therese)

Having approved of Therese's and Lisa's concerns, I joined Erw's and Haruka's married couple pilgrimage together with Therese, Lisa, Katia, and Wilma.

Once I explained the circumstances to Roderich, he immediately gave me a holiday as it would be a serious affair if their marriage were to be annulled.

It was hard to judge whether this is vacation or work, but once the pilgrimage ends, it's scheduled for me to become busy for a while.

For that reason we will go around the Mizuho Mountain Ring as pilgrims, but the main purpose is to prevent Takeomi-san's interference.

In reality it would be better if we could act while not being discovered by Erw and Haruka, but keeping watch on Takeomi-san's interference while moving and always keeping a fixed distance so as to not be found out would be exceedingly difficult.

Besides, if we carried out covert op with such high hurdles, we would be very likely unable to stay at inns.

Accordingly we decided to also do a married couple pilgrimage.

Us deliberately showing ourselves also has the objective to restrain Takeomi-san, who's probably watching Erw and Haruka from somewhere by now.

The sole miscalculation were the big talismans we requested from the Mizuho priest in a hurry.

They are close to four times as big as the normal talismans.

The names of the husband and wife are written on them, but in my case it's only natural for the talismans to become big since I have many wives.

As the chants and red seals, which I can't read, apparently increase in proportion, it would have been originally necessary to make the talismans much bigger, but as it would be inconvenient to carry around such big talismans, he kept them compact, even though it might appear otherwise. That's what the priest said, but in return, the talismans cost a hefty sum of money.

The pay of a priest is probably something that's adjusted, depending on the fortune of the other party.

Normally the talismans cost nothing, but as it's similar to the ceremonial fee for a seal stamp given to worshippers and visitors of temples and shrines, there is some kind of market price.

"(Although they might be called interference, Takeomi-san's hands are tied quite a bit.)"

"(The interference mustn't be found out by Haruka, after all.)"

It's just as Wilma says. If Haruka would discover Takeomi-san interfering with the pilgrimage, he would lose his sister's evaluation as a respectable brother.

That means, he has to obstruct the pilgrimage while making sure that Haruka, and in addition Erw, don't find out.

"(In that case, we have some leeway, I think?)"

"(Don't be so naive, is what Lisa says.)"

Takeomi-san, who's likely watching us right now, cannot allow for his presence to be found by Haruka.

However, it's not really necessary for him to attack the two of them.

Simply put, as long as he can make them miss offering one among the eight talismans, he will achieve his objective.

"(It's crucial to stay vigilant.)" (Therese)

"(I can't sense his presence...)"

Lisa, Therese, and I try to search for his presence with 『Detect』, but he's no magician to begin with.

There are more couples walking on the mountain road towards the first shrine than I had expected. Looking for Takeomi-san among them would be tough.

"(In this situation, where there are almost only couples on pilgrimage here, it's easier to look for a sad fellow who's all by himself.)"

"(Hubby, isn't that a eбил way to phrase it?)"

Hah!

Treating a guy, who's trying to obstruct the first joint work of a married couple that finally managed to hold a marriage ceremony, as a sad loner is what he deserves.

"(At any rate...even after searching a considerably big range, there's not one person who's alone.)"

"(Takeomi-san is skilled enough as a master to have been chosen for the Battou Unit. He should

excel at erasing his presence.)"

"(Since he should be wary about the 『Detect』 of magicians, he might be observing us from quite far away.)"

That makes sense.

Knowing about us, he won't incautiously try to get close, will he?

"(It will be fine for him as long as he destroys a single talisman in an instant. We have to stay on guard...is what Lisa says.)"

"(True...)"

Everything would be ruined within a moment of inattentiveness.

Is this actually a quite difficult mission?

Well, whatever.

Anyway, we will intentionally show off our presence. It will be okay as long as we prevent Takeomi-san's ambitions.

"Wend, what are you whispering about over there?" (Erwin)

"Well, we've just been talking about Elise and the others getting angry if we don't offer the talismans properly."

"Since Elise-sama and the others are pregnant, they entrusted all of them with the talismans. They are probably worried whether the pilgrimage will safely come to an end."

"Yeah, that's the gist of it."

While skilfully deceiving Haruka about the fact that it might actually be her own brother who's going to interfere with the pilgrimage, we begin to walk along the mountain road towards the first shrine while watching out of Takeomi-san.