

Chapter 5 - Wendelin Gives Flowers as a Gift

"Sensei, it's about those sunglasses. Given that we're in the middle of successively developing new products by changing the lenses' color a bit or making the frames more stylish, we will give you the prototypes as well, once they're finished." (Agnes)

"Sorry for all the troubles." (Wendelin)

"Since you have come up with the idea for the new product, it's only natural, sensei." (Agnes)

Today as well I had a light chat with Agnes after the lesson came to an end.

I managed to form a friendship with her, who's the best student in this magician class, through the sunglasses.

At present, she has the most mana in the class, enthusiastically listens to my lessons, and achieves wonderful results in the written exams.

Despite being a class president character, she's a cute girl and has become my favorite student.

I'm kind of undecided on what to think about favoring a specific student, but since teachers are humans as well, it's inevitable. Also, it's not like I'm actually cutting corners in teaching the other students.

That's how I decided to think about this matter.

I wonder, did the school teachers in my previous life have such issues as well?

"Sensei, what are you going to do after this?" (Agnes)

"I think I will return home a bit early. My wives are waiting for me."

"That's a great idea."

One of the reasons why I like Agnes is the fact that she's a really nice child.

Without saying anything like "Take me along to play after school" or similar as a girl her age would likely say, she's capable of taking into consideration that it would be better for me to go back home to my pregnant wives. I think that's amazing.

When I was her age, I wouldn't have been able to pay attention to others' needs like that.

I remember that I didn't think about anything else other than cute girls, continuing to read the popular, weekly-published manga series, and playing the latest games.

"I wonder, should I go back after buying some sweets?"

"Jeez, sensei, almost all of your souvenirs are foodstuff, aren't they?"

"Haha, it's because they like it."

That's one part of it as well, but there's also the issue of sizes, and the question whether the clothes and accessories would suit them. I can't really judge unless I go to the store together with Elise and the others.

Since I never possessed any fashion sense, even not in my previous life, that's something I can't do anything about.

"How about going with flowers from time to time, if it comes to gifts for women?" (Agnes)

"Flowers, huh...?"

As expected of a woman. Agnes suggested to me that my wives might be also pleased if I were to come back home with flowers for them.

Indeed, flowers are a present I haven't thought about yet.

"You're right. I think occasionally giving flowers as a present will be nice as well."

"Yes, women will be happy if they receive flowers." (Agnes)

Is it going to be alright to go with expensive, potted orchids...or a bouquet of many roses? There are likely many other kinds of flowers around. I might end up worrying if I try to choose something specific.

"Sensei, as a matter of fact, Cindy-chan's family are florists. They run a famous, well-established specialist store with many, many pretty flowers." (Agnes)

Cindy is the youngest girl in this class.

She's twelve years old. Come to think of it, I also enrolled at the adventurer's prep school at that age.

She's on good terms with Agnes, and actually ranks third in the mana ranking of this class.

Moreover, it's not like there's that much of a difference between her and Agnes in regards to mana, even if she's ranked third.

In other words, she's a promising, new magician.

Because she has styled her black hair into a bobbed haircut, she looks even younger than she already is, but in reality, she's a bit taller than Luise.

As expected, there aren't that many girls who look as young as Luise.

"Cindy!"

"Whaaat, Agnes?"

They are two years apart in age, but both speak with each other casually.

It's probably because they are in the same class and fairly close to each other.

"Sensei says that he wants to buy flowers over at your place." (Agnes)

"Really? Thank you very much." (Cindy)

Cindy happily thanks me who might become a customer of her parents' place.

"So, what kind of flowers are you looking for?" (Cindy)

"..."

Being asked so by Cindy, time stops for me for an instant here.

Considering it very carefully, I don't know much about flowers to begin with.

Roses, tulips, orchids, chrysanthemum...no wait, chrysanthemum aren't suited as present for women.

According to my meager knowledge, those are used as decorations for funerals and such.

In addition, there are dolls made out of chrysanthemum flowers...wait, that got nothing to do with anything.

Which reminds me, are there any chrysanthemums in this world in the first place?

If it's the Mizuho Dukedom, I might actually find dolls made out of chrysanthemum flowers there, but I don't know since I didn't have any interest in it at all.

Edible chrysanthemum...I wonder whether they have those. I will try asking Duke Mizuho about it later.

Those are really delicious when you eat them together with soy sauce after boiling and drying them.

At any rate, somehow other flower names don't come to mind readily.

Margaret, is a flower name...or a person's name?[efn_note]Margaret is a name stemming from the flower marguerite[/efn_note]

Poinsettia... Wait? Isn't that a dog name?

Because I'm troubled when asked about concrete flowers, I reflexively look for help from Erw who has been silently staying behind me. Today he has accompanied me as a replacement for Wilma.

Since Erw has occasionally picked up girls or something like that, I'm sure he has already given flowers to women without me hearing about it.

"Erw, what kind of flowers would you use as a present?" (Wendelin)

"...Tulips?" (Erwin)

"That means you're at the same level as I am, huh?" (Wendelin)

Erw not knowing any decent flower names means he isn't all that different from me.

"Isn't that the reason why you've been dumped by Karla?" (Wendelin)

"How's that related to flowers!? Ah yeah, roses! Roses!" (Erwin)

"As if there are any people not knowing roses!" (Wendelin)

Erw is at the same level as I am after all...no, it might be much worse in his case.

I think most men might actually be just like that...

"I guess I will ask Katia here, seeing as she's a woman...Katia."

"Eh? Me?"

Once I bring up the topic with Katia as she's a woman as well, she also ends up brooding in the same way as Erw for some reason.

"Were you given flowers by male adventurers or your family, for example?"

"...Umm, I don't think so." (Katia)

Katia says that no one has given her flowers so far.

Since her expression has obviously turned gloomy, Erw and I sense that we mustn't probe any further.

I think I have to ask Katharina or Lisa once I get back home.

"Well, I can't really imagine getting flowers from my old man or brother. If we're speaking of things I received...it'd be maroimo or such?"

"I see..."

Maroimo are delicious, so they are quite popular with women, but even Katia should want to receive flowers from time to time, right?

Maroimo are lacking on the romantic side...

"As you can see, the three of us have reached our limits as we don't even know flower names."

It might disqualify me as sensei, but botany isn't my field of expertise, after all.
Let's not mind it.

"Sensei, it's not particularly unusual for people to not know. That's why flower professionals like us exist." (Cindy)

"That's right, isn't it? Then I suppose I will have you choose something nice, Cindy." (Wendelin)

"Yes, with pleasure. Let me guide you to my home."

And thus Cindy led us to her home, a flower shop.



"Sensei, we have arrived." (Cindy)

"This is a professional..." (Wendelin)

Cindy's home is a big flower shop located close to the lower-ranking noble district, at a corner of the shopping street.

They have set it up on a fairly large scale, not only dealing in flowers, but also garden shrubs and gardening-related tools.

"I'm home." (Cindy)

"Welcome back, ojou-sama."

Entering the store, Cindy is greeted by a young man who seems to be an employee.
Considering that he has called her ojou-sama, it appears to be a fairly big, mercantile house.

"Renbruck, I have brought customers with me today, so I will guide them around." (Cindy)

"Hee, customers that have been personally brought here by you, ojou-sama... Wait! Earl Baumeister-sama!?"

The young employee seems to know me.
He raises such a loud voice that he surprises us.

"Right now he's our magic teacher. Sensei apparently wants to give his wives flowers as a present, so he wants me to choose some for him." (Cindy)

"Understood. It's best to leave this side to you then, ojou-sama."

Being guided by Cindy, we head to a segment with cut flowers.
Many beautiful flowers have been put on display there.
Roses...or tulips are there as well.
I guess there are no dandelions...but yeah, those are wild plants after all.
But, you can make coffee with their roots, can't you? ...I think I will give it a try soon.
The rest are all flowers I don't know.

"They are beautiful, aren't they Erw?"

"Yes, indeed."

"They are really beautiful, hubby."

And sadly, Erw and Katia are at my level, as expected.
We, who haven't lived lives where we would give flowers to others as a gift, could only say that all of the flowers are beautiful.
We have such a poor vocabulary that it's saddening.
We're truly useless, aren't we?

"Sensei, what kind of flower do you like? Even if you don't know the flowers' names, it's not a bad idea to use flowers as a present which you consider pretty yourself." (Cindy)

Nothing less of the daughter of a florist.
Cindy guides me skilfully while making sure to not make me lose face.
Or rather, she's so level headed that I can't really believe that she's twelve years old.
She gives me a slightly more childish impression when learning magic from me, though.

"Let's see...this one is?"

I point at a certain flower.
Somehow I feel like I might have seen this flower or maybe not...the flower is small, but I wonder whether this one might not be unexpectedly nice.

"Eh!? This flower?"

"Is it odd? I think it's beautiful, though..." (Wendelin)

"Sensei, this flower is called silene. It means 『False Love』 in the flower language."

[efn_note]Look here:https://garden-vision.net/flower/sagyo/silene_n06.jpg[/efn_note]

"..."

It looks like flower language exists in this world as well.
Moreover, I have absolutely no clue about flower symbolism, ending up choosing a flower totally unsuited as a gift for my wives.

"Wend, good job on choosing the worst possible one among this many flowers." (Erwin)

"Shut it. Try choosing one then, Erw." (Wendelin)



"I think I will also bring home a bouquet that would please Haruka-san."

Erw apparently plans to give Haruka some flowers as well.
Since there are many kinds, he begins choosing flowers he believes to be suitable for a woman.

"That's so not like you..." (Wendelin)

"I don't wanna be told that by you, Wend!"

Even while being angry at me, Erw selects the flower he likes from among the many different flowers.

"If it's something like this, it might be unusual and interesting. Maybe I will make it into a bouquet by adding roses to it?"

"Cindy, how about this?"

I try asking her about the flowers in the bouquet chosen by Erw.

"This flower is called cyclamen. In the flower language it stands for suspicion and jealousy."
[efn_note]Look here: https://lovegreen.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/IMG_3769.jpg [/efn_note]

"You're a lost case as well, huh?"

Jealousy and suspicion sounds like the totally wrong flower symbol for a flower to be gifted to a woman.

Cyclamen is a flower name that sounds familiar to me as well.
To be honest, I didn't know what kind of flower it was, though.

"Say, Cindy. Isn't it impossible to use those flowers as a gift if people worry about such things?"

Katia apparently feels doubt about why they are selling flowers with such flower symbols as merchandise, and thus throws that question at Cindy.

"The flowers with the least danger to do anything wrong, making women the happiest when given as a gift, are roses in the end, but isn't it tiring to always give a woman roses? Such women, who are used to receiving flowers, don't mind flower symbols overly much, but since there are also cases where the giver falls in disgrace after taking the risk with a flower they give as present for the first time, that aspect relies on the ability of the florist making a recommendation."

Cindy replies fluently to Katia's question.

"I see. I think I would be happier over receiving a beautiful flower than caring about its meaning in the flower language." (Katia)

Cindy's family's flower arrangement store has been thriving.

The young employees, with several being on shift, accompany each and every single customer, giving them various advice.

The customers are wealthy people who have the financial leeway to buy flowers. Since flowers are more expensive than in modern Japan, a friendly service is likely indispensable.

The employees don't shirk on studying flowers on a daily basis so that the rich customers, who buy flowers regularly, can come to buy flowers with a good feeling next time as well.

Since they also have potted plants and flower seeds, I'm sure they have to be well-informed on

raising plants, too.

I believe a flower arrangement shop is a lot of tough work.

"Remembering the preferences of frequent customers is yet another job of the employees."

"I see...it looks like they have their work cut out for them. Cindy, it seems that you're quite well-informed as well, though."

"Yes. I won't inherit this store since I have an older and younger brother, but I have been helping out around here since my childhood." (Cindy)

So it's something similar to 『You learn, without realizing it, from what is around you』.
Cindy also knows so well about flowers that she isn't inferior to the employees in any way.

"The merits of service, huh...? Certainly there are many customers here."

There are also many male customers inside the store.

Nobles who will give flowers to women they go out with, people that seem to be wealthy merchants who will likely give flowers to women at restaurants.

Considering it like that, it might have actually been better to have brought Burkhart-san instead of Erw along?

"Big bouquets of red roses and baby's-breath! I'd like you to make four of them!"

At this point, an unexpected scene takes place in front of my eyes.

After all, Doushi came here to buy flowers.

As we thought that Doushi buying flowers and Doushi enthusiastically attending a church would be a matchless pair of two very unlikely events, we doubted our own eyes with the spectacle in front of us happening in reality.

"Doushi?"

"Ooohh! Earl Baumeister?"

Once he spots out, Doushi happily calls out to us.

"Did you come here to buy flowers?"

"Since I'm making my wives sad as I'm often away from home, I have to at least buy them some flowers from time to time! Well, given that I'm not all that knowledgeable on flowers, it's the usual roses and baby's-breath, though."

"Doushi-sama, will it be fine with this?"

"Hm——m, increase the number of roses a bit more, and make the bouquets big! For such things it's better if they look luxurious!"

"As you wish."

It might be rude to call it surprising, but Doushi seems to be a regular customer of this store. At least that's the feeling I get from his exchange with the employee. But, it's better for the bouquet to be luxurious, eh? I think that's Doushi's character shining through there.

"I have greatly increased the quantity."

"Oohh! This is what I call a bouquet! Well then, I'm off with this! To give flowers as present to Elise and the others, not bad, Earl Baumeister!"

I'm praised by Doushi, but for some reason I somehow can't agree with it on an emotional level. Then Doushi puts the purchased bouquets into his magic bag, and quickly returns to his mansion. Due his familiar way of handling this, Erw, Katia, and I end up feeling a tremendous sense of defeat.

If it had been Burkhart-san or Margrave Breithilde, we possibly wouldn't have felt the same. Exactly because it's that Doushi who seems to be the one most disconnected from flowers, we suffer such a devastating blow.

"Wend, for some reason I feel a terrifying sense of defeat welling up within me..." (Erwin)

"We're below Doushi-sama..." (Katia)

"You mustn't say that, Katia!"

"I mean, it's the truth, isn't it!? Ervin, even you think so, no?"

"That's certainly true, but..."

It's quite rude towards Doushi, but the damage to our hearts, which we suffered due to this, is quite heavy.

And then, we had to go through yet another trial.

"Ojou-sama, since Doushi-sama has bought up all of the red roses, we're out of stock now."

Due to the crisis of the red roses, which are the safest choice, being out of stock, we, who don't know much about flowers, have been cornered even further.

"For there to be no crimson roses sure is troublesome..."

We are greatly troubled in front of the poster stating 『Red roses sold out today』 that has been put up in a hurry.

Even if you call them cliched or stereotypical, there's no woman who won't be happy after being given crimson flowers.

"Now that it has come to this..."

"What are you going to do, hubby?"

"I will entrust it to the professional."

Indeed, I'm an Earl-sama.

It's not wrong to borrow the power of others when I can't accomplish something myself.

Rather, that's the correct way to handle it for a noble.

It's definitely not because I have reached the end of my line just because red roses are out of stock.

"Okay, please leave it to me. But, sensei, please properly consider what flowers you want to give as a present next time, okay?"

I guess you should expect this from someone used to it. Cindy skilfully arranges flowers, creating bouquets for Elise and the others.

"...Sensei, you have many wives, don't you...?"

That's probably because I have also included a share of flowers for Amalie-san, Therese, and Lisa. However, if you're an Earl, it isn't all that rare either.

Just giving flowers as a gift to my wives turns into a big expense. I strangely end up admiring how nobles generate costs by just existing.



"I'm going to come back to buy new flowers again." (Wendelin)

"Okay, if you give your wives flowers regularly, they will be happy. Women love flowers, after all." (Cindy)

That's something I have somehow understood myself as well.

Women love flowers. If you ask what's so great about flowers, there are apparently people who would say it's because they wither away over time.

They aren't as serious as accessories, and there might also be a feeling of expectation that you might be able to receive flowers again.

"Since you took good care of us, Cindy, sensei will give you flowers as a present here." (Wendelin)

If it had been just us, we probably wouldn't have been able to even choose flowers. I decided to give Cindy some flowers as well, as thanks and tip.

As it will also serve as training for choosing flowers for giving as present to women, it's killing two birds with one stone.

"Let's see...how about something like this?"

The one I chose...is a flower resembling lilies.

Yeah, yeah, even I know what lilies are.

When suddenly asked about flower names I know of, I couldn't remember them so readily, but now I have finally recalled lilies.

"Thanks for today, Cindy."

"Gladly. Please extend my best regards to your wives."

I buy the bouquets for Elise and my other wives, and quickly go back home.

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"For that reason, I have bought flowers for everyone." (Wendelin)

"Even though it would have been fine to just hand them over. It's very typical of you to explain the situation, Wend."

"Well, you know, I kind of suck at using tasteful words."

When I hand over the bouquets, I'm told by Luise that it would have been nice to hand over in a slightly cooler way, but she seems happy about having received flowers. Everyone is chatting noisily while looking at all the flowers.

"There are no red roses, but other flowers have been arranged skilfully, making it all look beautiful."

Elise appears to be very delighted, too.

In the end it looks like it's true that women will be happy if they receive flowers.

"Red roses, that's the standard after all, huh?"

"Yes, they are the most popular with a meaning that is very easy to understand."

Even in this world, red roses seem to be the best.

"About that..."

Once I talk about Doushi having bought up all red roses, everyone except for Erw and Katia, who have actually seen it, and Elise dons shocked expressions.

"Eh? Doushi has?"

"You must be kidding. Someone else resembling Doushi...there's no way to mistake that man for someone else, I suppose."

"It doesn't suit him."

"You can't say anything besides it not suiting him..."

The reactions of Ina, Luise, Wilma, and Katharina are within the range of my expectations. I'm sure, everyone who knows Doushi would think so.

"But, I actually saw it as well, and even talked with him." (Katia)

"No, is it something that weird?"

"Rather than being weird, the side of it not fitting him dominates strongly."

"That might be so, but even if he looks like that, Doushi is gentle to women and children."
(Therese)

Therese tells us about her childhood when she had been selfish towards Doushi, who visited with the Friendship Visit Group, having him take her along to all kinds of places to play.

"Even though it was an act that might have been severely punished if things had gone wrong, Doushi listened to my selfishness. Burkhart, who got dragged into it, had a cramped expression at first, though."

As it was pitiful, I reflexively feel sympathy for Burkhart-san.

"You're right. I occasionally talk with him as well, and I believe he's a gentle person." (Amalie)

Amalie-san agrees with Therese. Women, who have reached a certain age, seem to consider Doushi to be a man who's kind to women.

It may be what you call training to have a discerning eye about men by accumulating experience?

"Elise, you aren't really surprised, are you?"

"No, uncle-sama has been that kind of person for a long time." (Elise)

Since the time of marriage, it has become a habit for Doushi to bring back flowers for his wives, Elise explains to everyone.

"Well, in the end it all boils down to us being no good unless we become at least as attentive to women as Doushi, huh?" (Erwin)

"You might have a point there." (Wendelin)

I spontaneously agree with Erw's overly precise assessment.
And around that time, in the flower arrangement shop which is Cindy's home...

* * *

"Cindy, it looks like you have been given tiger flowers by Earl Baumeister-sama."

I think it's a coincidence since sensei doesn't really know about flower symbols, but Dad, who doesn't know about those circumstances, is surprised after hearing that I received tiger flowers from sensei.

"Owner, that's wonderful, isn't it? Cindy-ojou-sama as Earl Baumeister-sama's wife, eh?"

"After all he has given tiger flowers to Cindy. If Cindy becomes Earl Baumeister-sama's wife, we will open a branch in Baulburg as well, I suppose."

"That would be quite nice."

Dad and all the employees are overjoyed.

The flower symbol for tiger flowers is 『I love you』. Exactly because everyone is a flower professional, they believe that sensei is courting me.

Of course that's a great misunderstanding, though.

"We are commoners. The child between Earl Baumeister-sama and Cindy will become the owner of Baulburg's flower arrangement store. Managing the stores in other cities, which will be built in the Baumeister Earldom, would be ideal. Ah true, we will leave the main store over here to Karchs' son, and you will be in charge of building a branch store network and actually manage it under Cindy."

"You're full of dreams, aren't you?"

If they do so, the business of this store, which is only one store in the capital right now, will drastically expand.

It's a talk about what-if's though

"It looks like there are many unusual flowers in the Baumeister Earldom. If we can deal with those as well, our business will grow even further."

"Karchs, you noticed something nice there. Indeed, this is a big opportunity!"

Dad, and our veteran employee Karchs, who has been working for us for a long time, indulge in dreams and hopes towards the future, but I know that sensei hasn't thought that deeply about it when he gave me the tiger flowers.

But, seeing the two getting all excited, I feel like it would be bad to get in their way.

"(Dad! Karchs-san! You're wrong! Sensei hasn't given me the tiger flowers with such an intention!)"

I couldn't tell Dad, who was rejoicing so much, that he was wrong.

It's because I know that he would be very disappointed.

However, on the other hand, it's a great relief to know that my family would be happy and far from against it, even if I were to marry sensei.

"(I will become very close to sensei in this one year, and then he might propose to me. Sensei's bride, huh...? That might be really nice...)"

I still only got to know sensei, but maybe it's possible for it to happen within this one year.

I think it's a gain to know that my family won't oppose it if it turns out like this.

Starting tomorrow, I will be a lot more proactive about chatting up sensei.