

Chapter 7 - Memories and Reality

"Milord, what shall we do?"

"Let's see. Eliseburg, Inaburg, Luisefurt, Wilmafurt, Katharinaberg..."

"Milord, you truly love your wives."

"(No, it's just that I couldn't come up with anything else...moreover, it's a naming limited to German-styled names...)"

"Milord, is something worrying you?"

"No, it's nothing."



The development of the Baumeister Earldom is proceeding smoothly.

With Baulburg in the middle, we have been freely constructing roads, bridges, towns, villages, farming fields, harbors, and so on. Since Roderich hasn't been stingy on handing out money either, many people have gathered.

Magic and manpower. With those two components the speed of the earldom's development has become astounding.

Seeing that I'm going to soon become a father, I must do my best so that my children won't be out in the cold.

With my salary back during my previous life I might have been in a pinch, but right now I'm a noble and a magician.

I have to strive to earn good money, and leave a Baumeister Earldom that had been developed to a certain degree behind for my children.

Given that the number of retainers and residents keeps growing as well, I can't do something as irresponsible as letting this end in one generation.

If it's Japan and other countries on Earth, nobles and royalty might have an image of arrogance, but an ordinary noble in this world has it tough as he has various responsibilities weighing on his shoulder, I'd say.

I'm fine since I have my magic, but...without it, the life of a salaryman would have definitely been the easygoing one.

"So, milord, any other?"

"Hmm...Katiaburg or such? Theresefurt, Lisadorf, Philineberg, Amalie...berg?"

"Milord, what else?"

"Baah! You think I can come up with so many all of a sudden!?"

I have run into a difficulty.

It's about the naming of the towns and villages, which are being constructed, in my territory. To begin with, my territory used to be an empty wasteland called Savage Lands, but nowadays dozens of villages and towns have been built, and it's scheduled for a huge number to join their ranks in the near future.

As the immigration is progressing, there are already a lot of towns and villages with many people inhabiting them.

There are also a lot of other things such as rivers, roads, harbors, forests, lakes, ponds, plains, etc. which have to be named.

It would be strange for people to live in nameless towns and villages, and thus it's my duty as the feudal lord to name them.

"Can't we have the residents decide with a poll or something?"

"No, that would be wrong."

Because it's a hassle to come up with many names, I suggest letting the residents living there decide by themselves, but Roderich shoots the idea down.

"Milord, you're the absolute ruler of this earldom. Allowing the residents to make decisions is something that mustn't be done by any means."

This part is a fundamental difference between a democracy and a feudal system.

"No matter how bad your naming sense might be, it's meaningless unless it is you who decides on the names, milord."

"Ugh...is that so...?"

I feel like Roderich dissed me there in passing, but no matter how uncool the names might be, it looks like I must be the one to decide the names.

"Now that it's come to this, Roderichburg..."

"Milord, it's not a good idea to use my name. I don't mind if it's your wives' names though..."

Nobles use the names of their beloved wives for the names of towns and villages.

This seems to be a common occurrence.

However, I think I should add that it's a matter of the past.

Since towns and such aren't founded as easily as in the past anymore, there are few opportunities to hand out new names.

In other words, it means the Baumeister Earldom will revive a mass-naming custom after a long time.

"Please allow me to do this as homework. I won't be able to think of this many names all of a sudden."

Given that it's been empty land until now, there aren't even any good hints to go with.

Because the naming standard is basically German names, the range of reuses is minuscule which gives me troubles.

"Very well. Please do it as soon as possible."

"I guess the towns can't wait."

"Correct."

Having said that, there's no way for me to come up with so many names on the spot. Since today is a day off for the first time in a while, I leave Roderich behind and exit the office.

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"For that reason I plan to leave the names of you and the others behind for the future. Can you accept my idea?"

Even in my own eyes this is a very hypocritical line, but if I don't get my wives to agree here, I will be at a loss since that will mean that even my first ten names will be rejected.

Yes, I have completely turned into Earl Baumeister, a refined man and high-ranking noble, who gives his beloved wives the present of leaving their names behind for eternity.

"Yes, it will be a pleasure."

Because Elise is basically a good girl, she happily accepts my present.

A rising noble uses the name of his beloved wives for the names of places in his developed territory.

In the noble society that's a present surpassing even jewelry, according to Roderich. To me, it doesn't really make much sense, though.

"I feel like it'll be slightly embarrassing..." (Ina)

"However, it might be fun to leave my name behind for future generations." (Luise)

Ina and Luise aren't all that dissatisfied about it even though they look embarrassed.

"Wend-sama, thanks." (Wilma)

"Leaving my name behind; with this it definitely feels like I've become a noble." (Katharina)

It's wonderful that Wilma and Katharina appear to be happy about it as well.

Especially Katharina is someone fixated over her nobility.

Her way of speaking is the usual one, but she's smiling all over her face.

"Thanks, hubby. That's something impossible for my family's place...though they could use my name for the name of a field or something like that..." (Katia)

"Thank you very much." (Lisa)

Katharina and Lisa are delighted as well, but the problems start from here.

"I can understand Elise and thine other wives, but if thou consider our positions, I'm troubled to decide whether it's a good idea to accept." (Therese)

"True, I wonder whether it's a good idea for Therese and me." (Amalie)

Therese and Amalie-san, who aren't my official wives and aren't scheduled to become my wives, don't doubtful expressions.

Certainly, I think leaving the names of mistresses behind is a bit questionable.

However, if I can't use their names...it will lower the number of choices I have, won't it...?

After all you can't normally think up several dozens of town names all at once, right?

"(Elise, you don't particularly mind, do you?)"

"(I don't, and it's not like there aren't any precedents either.)"

Once I secretly ask Elise, she tells me that it's occasionally a pattern for high-ranking nobles to use female names, which the residents aren't overly familiar with, when opening a new town.

"(Since there are many big nobles handling it like that, there's no one who would criticize it too directly.)"

Given that they'd be troubled if the town remained nameless forever, the residents living in that town probably don't care as long as some name is attached to it.

In the eyes of the residents, the origin of the name isn't very interesting as long as it's not a name with a very bad taste.

"(Well, it's also high-ranking nobles who hold down any bad criticism in that areas. Besides, even if they were to be told that they named it by borrowing the name of another woman with the same name, any criticism would end then and there.)"

I see, in other words, it's an excuse allowing me to do as I please.

"It will be alright. I will limit it to the names of small towns and similar."

"I suppose those are the troubles thou are going to have when creating a high-ranking noble territory on a huge, empty land. Normally thou will have one new naming for villages and towns in a range from several years to several decades, at most." (Therese)

Therese says that she didn't experience any troubles with naming as she couldn't find new villages and towns in the Philip Dukedom that easily.

"It's an unforeseen circumstance even for me as a former high-ranking noble. Well, please refrain from using my name for big towns." (Therese)

"I think I will be also fine with a small village or such." (Amalie)

The remaining Philine is the daughter of that Margrave Breithilde, so it won't be a problem.

Even if I use her name for a somewhat large city, it will be interpreted as my consideration towards the Margrave Breithilde House which is our patron.
For the huge daughter-pampering Margrave Breithilde it might be a very auspicious event.

"So, what are you going to do about the several dozen other names?"

"Erwinburg?"

"Why does my name come up there!?" (Erwin)

"It's because I've run out of material now."

I mean, if he asks why...if I borrow the names of my wives, I have no choice but to use the names of my children or meritorious retainers for the rest, right?

Since my children haven't been born yet, I will use their names in the distant future. Meaning, my only option is to go with the names of meritorious retainers for the rest.

Roderich had complained about it, but he's without a doubt one of the important retainers of the Baumeister House.

Therefore, it's unimaginable for me to not use his name.

Besides, I will run out of retainer names to use anyway, so I will use their names as long as they are retainers of a certain level.

It might also be a good idea to appoint their relatives and descendants as governors of those places.

"Or rather, it's too much at once..."

Thanks to our magic, the number of villages and towns is growing at an abnormal rate.

It takes time and effort to build houses, but more than one year since the founding of the Baumeister Earldom has already passed.

Baron Rembrandt has relocated a huge amount of used houses. And seeing how the Baumeister Earldom is in a good condition, carpenters gather here, constructing new homes at a quick pace.

There are areas in the kingdom where carpenters struggle because of recession, hence many of them move here or work away from home.

The Baumeister Earldom has as much work as they desire, after all.

Those hating to work away from home build a house at home, and then Baron Rembrandt relocates that house. There exists such an option as well. The lack of housing is...it's still far from enough, isn't it...?

Because it takes time to build slightly elaborate buildings as well, we're completely short of homes as of yet.

"Whatever, I still got time until the deadline."

"Naming, huh...? If you use your wives' names as material, how about also using the names of those girls?" (Erwin)

"Who do you mean with those girls, Erw?" (Wendelin)

"Obviously the female student trio you're really favoring, Wend."

So Erw is talking about Agnes, Cindy, and Betty.

"Agnes and the other two? They are my students. I can't use their names for something like this."
(Wendelin)

I have to make a clear distinction in that area.

They are girls I'm particularly favoring among those I'm teaching magic for the first time, but those girls aren't part of the Baumeister House.

If I don't draw a clear line here, I will get scolded by Roderich.

"Eh? You won't take those girls as your wives in the future, Wend?"

"Erw, now listen..."

I end up flabbergasted by that absurdity.

Certainly, those three show promise, but that's ultimately as students.

"I have a duty. That is to turn all of my class' students, and not only those three girls, into fully-fledged magicians. There's no way that I will put shame to the name of my Master." (Wendelin)

"Eh? Love affairs have been out of the quotation from the very start?"

"Don't ask the obvious!"

Yes, as Master's sole pupil, I will properly raise my students. After all I need them to pass on the greatness and achievements of Master to future generations.

"It means that I'm not doing this for fun. So can I have you stop with the sleazy suspicions of ulterior motives, Erwin-kun!?"

"Whatever...if that's what you say, Wend, so be it..."

Erw looks like he's not completely convinced, but it's because any world has teachers who make a move on twelve to fourteen years old female students.

...Come to think of it, they were around in my previous life as well. After all I did occasionally see reports in the newspapers and TV news.

"Anyway, today is a day off."

That's the end of the talk about Agnes and the others.

Having said that, since Elise and my other wives are pregnant, we can't go out to a distant place.

Accordingly, we decide to hold something like a picnic in the courtyard of the Baumeister mansion.

At first, it was an empty courtyard, but in order to give it an appearance appropriate for an Earl, we have added suitable furnishings and employed a gardener.

Flowers and trees for the scenery have been planted. The gardener adequately takes care of those.

Employing an exclusive gardener is truly the act of a high-ranking noble.

Back at my family's home, mother, Amalie-san, and our servants were the ones planting flowers in the flower bed.

After a table and chairs have been set up in the middle of the courtyard, we spend some leisure time there while enjoying a light meal and tea.

"Somehow this isn't really for me..." (Katia)

Katia, who has more of a tendency to be frugal than me, appears to be bad with spending time leisurely like this.
She's already restless.

"If you get pregnant, you will understand, Katia-san. After all it will become more difficult to move around."

She's saying all that, but Elise is as quick as ever in pouring new maté tea in empty cups. However, her opportunities to go out have definitely gone down. There's also the issue that Roderich and the others won't be happy if something happens to her or the others since they'll be troubled.

"I've been also told by Dominique to act carefully since the child I'm expecting is going to be the heir of the Baumeister House."

Well, it's likely because it'd be a disaster if something happened to Elise's body. If I'm not mistaken, the number of maids and guards around Elise has grown in number. As it'd become a question of responsibility if something were to happen to her now, the guards don't relax their tense expressions.

"It's something similar for me and Luise as well, but this might make it difficult for us to return to being adventurers after the birth."

"We might get pregnant again while trying to get our dull bodies back in shape."

"It looks like Roderich-san is wishing for that to happen."

Since I'm the founder of the Baumeister House, it means I can have as many children as I want for the establishment of branch families and influential retainer families. Ina and Luise complain that they've become unable to move their bodies as much as they want. Well, those two are similar to Katia in being bad at staying still.

"True. I wonder whether I will be able to return right away?"

Today Haruka is participating in the tea party on the courtyard together with Erw. I feel like it's been rather fast, but since she's pregnant as well, she's likewise taking a break from her swordsmanship training.

"So five babies will be born in succession? It'll get quite busy around here. By the way, Erwin."
(Therese)

"What is it, Therese-sama?"

It looks like Therese has something she wants to ask Erw.

"Thou won't take any concubines? Thou have a fairly high position in the Baumeister House, and

thou have a good income as well. Thine surroundings won't agree with thou just having Haruka as wife." (Therese)

"Ugh..."

Erw is at a loss for words due to Therese's question. Certainly, various people around Erw might be naggy about him having one wife right now. I have also heard from Roderich that those kinds of approaches towards him are becoming persistent.

"Roderich-san has a single wife."

"At present thou mean, right? Also, won't he take in Minister Rückner's granddaughter after she has grown up? As anyone can see, it will be a completely political marriage, but that's how noble society works. Give it up."

"Is it okay for you to tell me that, Therese-sama?"

"I have left that world. However, I will at least provide advice to the Baumeister House that has been taking care of me. So, how about it?"

"Me, me! I'm here, Therese-sama!"

In response to Therese's question, the maid Lea, who has been waiting on us, raises her hand. She's Dominique's cousin, and secretly...no, boldly vying for the position as Erw's concubine. I and the other maids admire her for that bold approach, in a certain way. If Lea becomes Erw's concubine, it has the advantage that I will be able to have her keep working as Dominique's assistant in this mansion.

"(Erw, how about Lea?)"

"(She's a funny girl, for sure...)"

Erw's answer is questionable, but I actually know. Recently he has been regularly going on dates with Lea after being urged to do so by Haruka. Haruka is kind of originating from nobility, albeit low-ranking one. It's a nobility that equals samurai in rank, so she believes it to be only natural for a family head to have concubines.

"(Erw, your wife is the perfect super woman, isn't she...?)"

"(I think so as well...)"

Erw and I consider Haruka to be a high-spec wife that won't even lose out to Elise.

"I understand. I suppose I worried unnecessarily." (Therese)

"Umm...it's not like it has already been deci..." (Erwin)

"Eeehh! Am I disqualified for being Erwin-sama's wife?" (Lea)

Did he feel ashamed?

Lea asked for Erw's true intentions with tears in her eyes as he didn't immediately confirm that he would take her as wife.

"No! That's not what I was saying..." (Erwin)

As he was apparently caught totally off-guard by her crying, Erw reflexively faltered. Certainly, a woman's tears are also difficult to handle for me, as someone with lacking experience.

"Erw, you even went on dates with her, and now you're turning her down!?" (Ina)

"Yeah! Don't you feel sorry for Lea?" (Luise)

Next Erw was harshly rebuked by Ina and Luise, who have been his friends for a long time now.

"It's not that I'm not considering it, it's just that I thought how much of a hassle the various preparations are going to be when it comes to marrying."

Erw objects that he simply hesitates because he can't tell her to marry him so easily.

"I see, then it's fine."

"Those are wonderful news, right Lea?"

"Yes!"

And that settled Erw's second wife after he was cornered into making a promise to Lea with Luise and Ina apparently having been her accomplices from the very start.

Just when I thought that I had a *deja vu*...as it was a scene I had seen somewhere before, I recalled that something similar happened to me as well.

"I have to write a letter to Mom and Dad."

"Various preparations have to be handled before the ceremony."

"Umm...the shortest schedule is..."

"You know...even without hurrying so much..."

However, Erw really is a man who doesn't learn.

To believe that he'd have a grace period after having agreed to the marriage even though he had me as an example...

As long as nothing extraordinary happens, she will continue to push the issue on her own accord so that no other woman can steal a march on her.

If the man himself accepts it, that's the end. The rest will be handled by his surroundings without him having any say in it.

It will make you doubt whether that acceptance was actually something done out of your own

The people allowed to meet me without an appointment are Margrave Breithilde, Burkhart-san, Doushi, and the highest ranks among the Kingdom's leaders.

『Milord, while you listen for an hour to stupid nonsense, the public works through magic would rest...』

Since most of them seem to be worthless matters according to Roderich, I make sure to not meet those folks as much as possible.

"He is kicking up a fuss in front of the mansion, but he has actually introduced himself as Baron Legat-sama..."

"Even if the person is a noble, no appointment still means no-go, though..."

Having said that, it's rare for nobles to personally show up in front of the mansion without appointment.
That's probably the reason why the guard captain has come here to request me to make a decision.

"So, what kind of business does he have with me?"

"That's the problem...it looks like it's something he wants to personally discuss with you..."

"Can't be helped then, I guess."

I go to our mansion's front gate by myself.
Upon arriving there, I spot a young man who appears to truly be a noble, going by his appearance.
He looks to be around twenty years old.

"Earl Baumeister-dono?"

"Correct, but isn't this a method going against etiquette?"

Baron Legat's current action is against the rules of nobility.
I give him a warning about that part.

"I think so, but if I can have you accept my proposal, you can expect an increased development of the Earl Baumeister House."

"Let's hear that proposal or whatever of yours?"

"Gladly, future-father-in-law."

"Huh? Future-father-in-law?"

I have a bad feeling about this, but Baron Legat begins to talk about his suggestion on how to make the Baumeister House grow without any break.

"It looks like your noble wives have become pregnant, so allow me to congratulate you on that. If a daughter is born...no, if it's that number of wives, at least a single girl should definitely be born."

Would you allow me, Baron Legat, to take one of your future daughters as wife? In such a case, the relationship between the Baumeister House and the Legat House will be strengthened..."

I had expected it as a possibility, but for him to actually request to marry one of the children who are still in the bellies of my wives...

Moreover, at the time when a possible daughter reaches adulthood, this Baron here will be a middle-aged guy in the middle of his thirties.

Even on a personal level, I'd like to be spared from a son-in-law who's older than me.

At the very least, I want to refuse this Baron who seems stupid and frivolous.

"Father-in-law I will definitely bring happiness to the daughter and mother-in-law."

"Don't ever show your face here agaaaain!!"

Flipping out in an instant, I blew away Baron Legat with wind magic up to the main street of Baulburg.

He collapses in the middle of the street after fainting.

"Don't allow that moron to ever bother us again! Submit a request to Roderich to draw up a letter of breaking off all relations with his family!"

"Yes, it will happen at once, milord!!"

Normally it would be commonplace to make such a request through someone as messenger, but Baron Legat has tried to get the upper hand by negotiating personally.

Of course he just offended me with his shallow thinking.

To deal with such rule-breaking nobles, you can use the format of cutting off any relations.

It's a system where you send a letter, stating 『For this and that reason we will never associate with your house again』. It's rarely put to use, but accordingly its effect is tremendous.

"Man...in just what world would you find a guy speaking about wanting to marry a girl who's still in the womb of her mother..."

When I'm complaining while looking at the fainted Baron Legat, I see someone speaking with the gatekeeper.

On a close look, it's a beautiful girl who's slightly younger than us.

"I hear Erwin-sama is staying at this mansion..."

"That's certainly true, but it's impossible to meet with Erwin-sama without an appointment."

"But, I don't have much time left anymore."

Since she's mentioning Erwin, it's clear that she wants to meet with Erw.

I don't know what kind of business she got with him, but it appears to be quite urgent.

After all she hasn't paid any attention to the noble who has landed and fainted right next to her.

"It doesn't matter! Please get an appointment first. Erwin-sama is a busy person."

Normally that would be true, but today Erw unfortunately got plenty of free time.
While at it, I'm starting to get very curious about the relationship between her and Erw.
Is she possibly a girl he picked up in the past?

"Hey, can I ask you something?"

"Milord?"

"Do you happen to be Earl Baumeister-sama, Erwin-sama's lord?"

"Indeed, but what is the relationship between Erw and you?"

"I'm his childhood friend."

"(Erw, I will never forgive you...)"

I decide to allow this girl to enter the mansion on my authority as lord.

Why, you ask?

Because of my deep kindness urging me to allow old childhood friends to meet...

As if.

It's for the sake of thoroughly investigating when he got to know such a beautiful girl, of course.

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"Erw, I'm disappointed in you."

"What's it all of a sudden...huh!? Anna?"

"Yes! It's been a while, Erwin-sama." (Anna)

I led the girl to the courtyard, and it looks like she's really Erw's childhood friend.

They immediately start to speak like old, close friends. At this point in time, Erw is as guilty as charged in my mind.

His crime is a considerably heavy one.

"How did you get you all the way here all of a sudden?" (Erwin)

"I used long-distance carriages with the money I owned." (Anna)

"It must have been hard on you." (Erwin)

Erw's home lies in the western part of the Kingdom. To come to the Baumeister Earldom, she had to pass through Breitburg.

If one boards a magic airship, it won't take even a week, but if it's a long-distance carriage, which isn't as expensive, it'll take more than a month.

Seeing how Anna took all that upon herself for the sake of meeting with Erw, she's an amazing girl.

In my mind Erw has been flagged as a criminal deserving a life imprisonment.

I mean, a beautiful girl going this far to meet with me...probably doesn't exist, I think.

"Erw, unforgivable."

"Wend, since I'm busy with listening to Anna about her circumstances, I'd like you to wait a bit longer with your usual spasms."

My verbal attack is easily avoided by Erw. Within my mind Erw has just qualified for lifelong slave labor as a criminal.

"Whaaaaaat!! How cheeky for the likes of you! I didn't hear anything about you having a childhood friend!" (Wendelin)

"Because you'd have become pitiable if I had told you about her?" (Erwin)

"Now listen, even though you're not that much different from me as the fifth son of a poor noble, why do you have a beautiful girl as a childhood friend!? I didn't have one, you know!?"

I didn't even have a male childhood friend!

While thinking back on my long life as a loner, I realize that I'm simply cursed by the God of Fate.

"Well, let me tell you about my circumstances then..."

Sure, I will set aside this sadness and anger for later.

I'm Earl Baumeister. I must at least show as much generosity as listening to a situation calmly.

"It's not such a complicated story, though."

Because he was the fifth son, Erw had gone through a series of hardships by being exploited and harassed by his elder brothers at home.

The only ones treating him normally were the commoner children.

"You were surpassing me on that point." (Wendelin)

"Wendelin, be quiet and listen to his story."

"Okay..." (Wendelin)

For some reason I ended up getting scolded by Therese. I focus on listening to Erw's story.

The one closest to him among those commoner children was Anna, the third daughter of the owner of the only shop existing in the territory.

In other words, this beautiful girl here.

"It's a story you hear often. But, you never told us until now."

"I'm a man who cast away his past."

It's not that Erwin is just trying to show off. If it's the daughter of the local store, and even if it's the third daughter, Erw would have been forced to live in that territory after marrying her.

She's in a position where she couldn't refuse her father if she were to be told by him to marry into some family.

"I was someone who would leave the territory. It was impossible for me to take Anna with me. It'd likely just piss off my old man and Anna's father. What could I have done back then when I was only twelve years old? I had my hands full with surviving by myself. Rather than that, Anna, didn't you marry Becker, the second son of the village headman?" (Erwin)

Erw has already attained the social standing of being a retainer of the Earl Baumeister House. He sternly questioned Anna who had apparently run away from her birthplace on her own accord.

"That marriage didn't take place..."

Even though the marriage was decided by both parents, despite them being commoners, there are many cases where such arrangements are canceled for various reasons. As a marriage is ultimately something between both families, the opinion of the family heads plays a big role in this.

If a modern Japanese learned of the current situation in this world, they might laugh at it for being too formal and classical.

However, that's how this world works.

It's impossible to have the freedom to not marry or not give birth to children, as it exists in modern Japan, readily accepted over here.

The fear of a family line dying out doesn't exist in this world.

"Didn't take place?"

"Yes, it looks like Lila-onee-sama will marry him instead."

"Why did that happen?"

"That's...Geltz-sama, the successor of the village headman, has died from illness..."

"That Geltz died...?"

Hearing that an acquaintance has died, Erw's expression becomes slightly gloomy.

However, it's not a face that you'd call sad.

Because he was the heir of the village headman, he had probably stuck close to Erw's elder brothers. He might have been a nasty guy for Erw.

"I'm not really all that sad about it. So, Becker has become the new heir in a hurry, huh...?"

"Yes, as such it turned into a talk about my social standing as the third daughter..."

Her elder sister, who's higher in the ranking, will become the wife of the successor of the village headman's family.

It's something that often happens in rural territories.

"So, what happened to you then?"

"That's...it's been decided for me to become the village headman's second wife..."

"Haah? For what reason?"

"His wife has passed away from the same illness as Geltz-sama. She died and was buried at almost the same time."

Since the village headman's wife died, it turned into a talk about her supporting him as wife afterwards.

It's not like a normal farmer's daughter is allowed to marry him, even if it's just as a second wife, and seeing how Anna had her engagement called off on short notice, she was selected as the new wife of the village headman.

"That shitty old man, he should be a bit more considerate..." (Erwin)

"It looks like the village headman cannot afford to remain single..."

"It's normal to have a rather old widow take over this task in such cases..." (Therese)

"Really, Therese?"

I ask Therese for a detailed explanation.

"If a child is born by accident after the village headman marries a young woman, there will be a dispute over the succession with the first wife's children. Hence, thou push a woman, who lost her husband and is unlikely to give birth to children any longer because of her age, on him as second wife for form's sake. In the past I had to decide, or rather, mediate in such a situation as well. That guy was an elderly chief retainer, though. I remember endlessly worrying back then why I had to concern myself with such a matter as an unmarried woman."

Therese put in great efforts to find a second wife for an old retainer with an age above sixty, despite the fact that her own fiancé hadn't been decided yet.
Sure, I think I might have felt bad in her situation as well.

"Usually, such a young, second wife isn't chosen...how old is that village headman?" (Therese)

"He's close to sixty years old."

"He's older than I thought."

"The village headman is the illegitimate elder brother of my old man. It was a late marriage since he married after entering the village headman family as son-in-law."

In other words, the previous feudal lord, Erw's grandfather, made a child elsewhere and kept providing for that child, but since the opportunity to marry into the village headman presented itself, he pushed his bastard into it.

Two sons were born, but the eldest son died from illness, resulting in the second son succeeding the family. The old village headman, who had become all alone after his wife and eldest son died of the same illness, wanted a young second wife. That seems to be the situation here.

Since the village headman family has family ties with Erw's home, Anna's home couldn't reject the request either.

Still, Anna hated the prospect of marrying the old geezer, and ran away to this place to rely on her childhood friend.

"Those are some complicated family backgrounds."

"You sure? It's actually the same for everyone in rural noble territories."

It's a story that would be harshly criticized as anachronistic in my previous life.

"So, what are you going to do?" Luise asks Erw in a straightforward manner.

Now that the circumstances have become clear, it's a question what Erw is going to do next.

"What do you expect me to do? I can't tell her anything but to go back to her territory and get married." (Erwin)

"No way...Erwin-sama..." (Anna)

"Anna, both of us are no children anymore. You're aware of that, aren't you?" (Erwin)

The second wife candidate of the village headman family, relatives of the feudal lord, has selfishly run away to rely on her old childhood friend.

If Erw was still a willful adventurer, he could have chosen the option of escaping together with her. After all, it's not like Erw's home possesses the leeway to search for an eloping couple.

However, right now Erw is a retainer of the Baumeister House.

If Erw sheltered Anna, it would have the potential to develop into a feud between the Knight Armin House and the Earl Baumeister House.

It would be great if it only ended between our two houses, but it's troublesome because it's easy to imagine that the leading house of the west, the Margrave Holmer House would get involved as well.

"Anna, you and I were close in the past."

"Yes, me and you, Erwin-sama, had been treated as outcasts after all."

"Anna, you were still better off since you were considered as someone to be married off...or not...?"

A fifth son whose future departure was set in stone with his home being poor nobility, and a girl who was considered a tool for marriage as third daughter while unable to leave because she didn't have the makings of an adventurer even if she tried to leave the countryside.

It was probably only natural for both of them becoming close friends.

Their contact broke off after Erw left the Armin Knightdom, but even now Anna hasn't forgotten about him.

Otherwise she wouldn't have come all the way to the Baumeister Earldom by herself to rely on him.

"In the past I asked whether you'd marry me in the future as a joke, didn't I?" (Erwin)

"I took it seriously, Erwin-sama." (Anna)

"But you see, Anna, in my current position I can't protect you any longer. It would cause troubles to the Earl Baumeister House."

Erw has reached that conclusion after earnestly considering matters in his own way. No matter how much he wanted to shelter Anna...he can't choose that option because of the Baumeister House.

If this matter caused a dispute between the Armin and Baumeister Houses, it's possible that it will become a hindrance to the Baumeister Earldom's growth.

"Anna, I will pay the travel expenses, so go back to the Armin territory." (Erwin)

"Erwin-sama..."

"This is the only way left."

Erw frees himself from his lingering affections through a bitter choice.

I think many people would regard this treatment as cold-hearted.

And yet, Erw hardened his heart and told her to go back home since he can't hide her in his position as retainer of the Baumeister House.

"(I can understand his view, but...)"

No, it wouldn't be weird for my jealousy over him having a childhood, whom he promised to marry in the future, to burst forth here, but Erw calmly cut off Anna before that could happen.

Anna looks down with tears in her eyes, but what does our female camp think about this after watching the whole scene?

Since I knew that they would definitely kick up a fuss, I have been staying silent so far.

If a man doesn't learn from his past mistakes, it would develop into a disastrous situation again, after all.

"Just a sec, Erw. Isn't that way too cruel towards Anna?" (Ina)

"Ina, I made this decision with a heavy heart as well..." (Erwin)

"How's that a heavy-hearted decision!? You should show some effort by sheltering your only childhood friend in this situation."

"That's right! In the first place, Erw, you aren't even Earl Baumeister-sama or anything, so you acting all self-important over social positions and all is weird!"

"Wai-! Luise!"

Ins and Luise jump at Erw's choice, calling it weird.

"No, listen, it's because I have to consider my current position, you know...? I'm in the right here. Right, Elise?"

"No, I don't think that you need to mind it in particular..."

"Huh? Really?"

Erw is flustered over having lost the foundation of his argumentation due to Elise's unexpected reply.

It's the moment when his cool attitude up until now has come to nothing.

"I think it might be impolite of me to phrase it like this, but a meager Knight House is by leaps and bounds inferior to a chief retainer of the Kingdom's prominent, high-ranking Earl Baumeister House."

Well, it's a very natural argument, if you consider which is more important: Erw, who's equivalent to a chief vassal of the Earl Baumeister House, or someone from the Armin House, and moreover the likes of a village headman.

As a matter of fact, I also thought that it would become troublesome if the Magrave Holmer House or the Armin House, who are behind the village headman, came into play, but...

"In short, it only depends on your decision, Erwin-san. Aren't you overthinking this a bit too much?"

"This is the moment where you confidently say that you will accept her as your wife."

With him being also rebuked by Katharina and Wilma, Erw's position increasingly falls apart.

"Ugh...even though I thought about it in various ways..." (Erw)

"You strained your birdbrain, you mean?"

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

That Erw is going on about Earl Baumeister Hose this and Earl Baumeister House that, and yet he treats me so lightly?

"Erwin is an idiot just like me, so his brain will stop working if he uses it too much." (Katia)

"Anna-san isn't a noble daughter. I don't think that they will expressly invest the time and pay the travel costs to come to the Baumeister Earldom to get her back..."

In the end Katia and Lisa deliver the finishing blow, causing Erw's front of having made a calm decision to break apart like a card house.

As expected, a person mustn't do what they aren't used to.

"Go on, Erw."

"Tell her."

"...Anna, if you're fine with it, you can stay by my side."

Erw tells Anna while looking slightly embarrassed after being urged by Ina and Luise.

"Gladly...Erwin-sama!"

Having been proposed to by Erw, Anna leaps into Erw's chest while crying.

"To be honest, I was worried about you...but, I had my own circumstances to consider..."

"I have heard the rumors."

"From now on we will always be together, so we can take our time to talk it over."

"Yes."

Because of the female camp's support, it was decided for Erw to take Anna as wife.

This time Erw was pathetically controlled by my wives.

It wasn't an impressive performance of him, for sure.

"However, for some reason I feel like I'm not really happy about this..."

The reason for my unhappiness is simple.

It's because there had been a childhood friend, who proposed to him in the past, even though Erw should have been in an environment similar to mine.



"Erw, how about going on a date with her for today?"

"Good idea. Take Lea with you as well."

"Me too? Anna-san, I'm Lea, Erwin-sama's future second or third wife."

Following Luise's and Ina's suggestion, Erw took Anna and Lea on a date in Baulburg. Because of the matter with Anna, Erw has apparently become completely unable to talk back to Ina and the others.



"It's a big city, isn't it Erwin-sama?" (Anna)

"Well, comparing it to the Armin territory has no merit at all." (Erwin)

"Yeah, my home runs the only store over there, after all."

"I hear there hasn't been a store at Earl Baumeister-sama's home in the past."



Given that Haruka has declined accompanying them because of her pregnancy, Erw left my mansion happily while being flanked by two beauties. I suppose you could call it a chance for them to get to know each other better until the ceremony is held. Well, it's a date, so...

"Ugugu..."

Once again my mind is occupied with feelings of jealousy towards the existence of a childhood friend who proposed to Erw. Even though such a person didn't exist for me, even after I examined my memories over and over again... Moreover, even though the girl called Anna was at first treated quite coldly by Erw, she's now heads over heels about him.

"Incomprehensible..."

"Wend-kun, I was there for you during your time in the Baumeister Knightdom, wasn't I?" (Amalie)

"Amalie-san..."

She's right, I had Amalie-san.

During my time at home, whenever I left or came back, she always greeted me properly.

My mother was quite fickle in that regard, but Amalie-san was different.

We never had any frivolous conversations or such, but back then Amalie-san was the only healing for my heart.

"Being delighted over Erwin-san's happiness as he's your close friend and retainer would suit you more, Wend-kun, and I think it would be nice as well."

"You're right, I guess. I also have you and the others at my side."

"Indeed."

Such an incident took place during our day off, and it resulted in the decision for Erw to have three wives which is appropriate for a chief retainer of the Baumeister House.

Though it would be wrong to inquire in detail just how much of this decision accords with his own will.



"And that's why I must write a formal letter."

Anna was scheduled to become the second wife of the Armin territory's village headman. Seeing how she's going to become Erw's wife now, I have to tentatively contact them.

It would be fine to go ahead just like this as well, but because I'm a high-ranking noble, it's necessary to send a skillful, formal letter so that the other party won't take any advantage of this. I decided to ask Roderich about the etiquette and rules in regards to such letters.

"I don't mind telling you, but you also have the option to ask Therese-sama who has practical experience with this."

"Oh, true. Therese should be accustomed to such things."

Following Roderich's advice, I decided to have Therese teach me how to write such a letter.

"Two letters will be necessary."

"Eh? Two?"

"Wasn't there that retarded Baron who made a fuss over wanting to take one of the children, who are still in the bellies of Elise and the others, as his wife before the matter with the girl called Anna?"

"Ah, yeah, there was such a guy as well."

"What's the point in thou forgetting about it?" (Therese)

I felt completely refreshed after blowing him away with magic, and there was the matter with Anna, so I have completely forgotten about him.
He didn't leave me much of an impression except for being offending either.

"Normally thou would notify thine friendly nobles about the retarded Baron's deeds through letters before throwing a letter of breaking off all relations at him."

It's a preliminary move to not allow the other party any chance to counterattack by informing the nobles of Baron Legat's misdeeds.

Seeing as the other party will be driven to the corner, it's possible that they will attack the Baumeister House by lining up various lies.

I should probably send the severance letter while he's in our new jail as a suspicious person.

"I have heard stories about engagements between fellow babies that were just born, but it's the first time for me to hear about an engagement with an unborn infant. I think it will be the first and last time we will hear of such a stupid noble."

"So, how do you write a severance letter?"

"It isn't such a complicated document. It's okay to recount the unadorned facts and mention at the end that you will never again have anything to do with those of the Baron Legat House for those reasons. Afterwards, give strict order to thine retainers to enforce it. Tell them to kick anyone of the Baron Legat House out of the Baumeister Earldom."

"I see. You sure know your way around this." (Wendelin)

"All high-ranking nobles do this. In extreme cases, half of the nobles are thine allies, and the other half thine enemies. Well, not all of the opposing half is going to regard thou as hostile. After all, there are situations where thou associate with someone even while being on bad terms with them, right? Among them there will be some noble houses which are hopeless cases. Breaking off relations is necessary for them."

Therese mentions that she has sent severance letters in her time as Duchess Philip as well.

"There is a plethora of noble houses in the Kingdom and the Empire. Even if thou break off relations with one or two of them, it won't have much of an impact."

Therese laughs, but she's right, to me, who can't quite remember the names of the nobles yet, it won't make much of a difference even if I cut relations to a single Baron house.

"That's all about the severance letter. Next, how would you write the letter to the Armin house?" (Wendelin)

"This is also something thou write with a condescending attitude at full display! Don't make any promises to the other party! That's all!" (Therese)

"Is it going to be alright with that?"

"Yep, it will be. Don't ask for their opinion or anything. The other side will only use that as a

chance to attack. Erwin's home is a Knight House, isn't it? Also, it's only about snatching away the second wife candidate of a lowly village headman. If the other side starts to complain, thou will just need to cut down the trade with the west a bit. Since the other party will likely think so as well, I don't expect them to answer in the first place."

"You think their patron won't take the stage here?" (Wendelin)

"There's no way that he could, is there? Wendelin, have thou restricted the business with the west?"

"No."

The trade is going on normally without any preferential treatments.

"Thou call them patron, but the direct patron of Erwin's home is a Viscount house, right?"

"If I remember correctly, he mentioned something like that."

I recall having heard something along those lines from Erw a while back.

"The patron of that Viscount house is the Margrave Holmer House, so it's a talk about the marriage of a vassal's vassal, not to mention that it's a marriage of the vassal's vassal's village headman, correct? They won't say anything. The Margrave Holmer House hasn't too much time on their hands either, and it would affect their reputation. Also, the village headman is the feudal lord's half-brother, so their family relation is weak. Don't worry about it." (Therese)

"Hmm, that makes sense." (Wendelin)

Listening to Therese's opinion as reference, I wrote up a formal letter to the Armin House. Given that there are many bothersome rules about letters to nobles, I decided to jot it down here while summarizing those points:

『I've heard that there's a fine spring weather in the west around now. I hope you're doing fine over there. You know, my retainer has actually decided to take a girl from your territory as a wife. I don't really have any duty to tell you about this, but I'll humor you out of courtesy. I don't expect that you're going to have any complaints, but if you do, feel free to get back to me, okay? Given that she's not a girl directly descending from your family, we'll kick up a big fuss if you tattle to your patron or something like that. Ah, you don't need to send congratulatory gifts or attend the ceremony. Bye.』

Of course I didn't send it out just like that. I gaudily decorated the sentences in accordance with the rules, but this is the content if you summarize it.

"I think it's a through and through rude letter."

"Going by what I heard of thine previous exchanges with the Armin House, it's very likely that they will become impudent if our side handles them modestly. Being hated by a Knight House is a normal occurrence for an Earl House. Don't mind it." (Therese)

"As expected of you, Therese-sama, it's a magnificent letter." (Roderich)

"It's just that I had the opportunity to get fairly experienced at this."

Roderich checks the letter's contents, but it looks like he's happy.

He gives high praise to Therese.

It's because I simply wrote down what I was told without thinking too much about the contents.

Still, since I don't have the habit to write letters, it has tired me out.

"Wendelin, thou have low motivation for anything besides magic and thine own interests."

"Time is limited, after all."

Because I'm not that skilled, I just narrow down the things where I invest my full effort.

"Thou are a childish man. Well, it can't be helped. Lisa, Amalie and I will follow up on thou. Occasionally it's good to have older women around, isn't it?"

"Therese, you know, I'm older than him as well." (Katia)

"Thou don't look like it...that's why." (Therese)

"Therese, you're evil..."

"Katia, you have to become a little bit more of an adult woman."

The letter supervised by Therese was delivered to the Armin House, but in the end, they didn't send a reply.

In other words, we got their tacit consent.

Thus it was decided for Erw to marry Lea and Anna.