









カチヤ

「親父！ 兄貴！ ここは踏ん張れよ！」

上手くやれば、男爵どころか子爵にもなれるぞ！」

「ここで諦めてどうするんだよ！」

ブライヒレリーダー辺境伯に論破されてしまったカチヤは、  
今度は矛先を父親と兄に向けて二人に気合を入れようとした。

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## **Chapter 1 – There's no way for the Tunnel's Opening to be simple**

"No sooner than the sudden appearance of a cave after the mountain had collapsed, people came out from within, causing the residents to rush over in panic. That certainly surprised me."



At the moment we left the entrance of the tunnel running through the Greater League Mountain Range after collecting all the sand and earth that had piled up around there, we were greeted by a view that was clearly contrasting the modern tunnel. Nicely put, you could call it full of nature, otherwise you might as well call it the sticks.

Before our very eyes unfolds the idyllic scenery of farmers leisurely plowing their fields. Being surprised by our appearance, one of them apparently went to call someone of a higher rank.

The feudal lord-like person that showed up is around forty years old, I think.

With his attire that makes him barely identifiable as noble, he looked even thinner than my father in the past.

However, I'm surprised.

That there are noble territories which seem to be even poorer than the former Knight Baumeister territory.

A decent sort of young man, who seems to be in the first half of his twenties, is standing next to him; very likely his son and heir.

He has an appearance that's similar to his father.

In addition, the farmer, who went to inform the lord, and an old man, who seems to be around seventy years old, were behind those two.

The old man appears to be a butler or retainer.

If you ask why I know as much; it's because he has an aura about him that's similar to my home.

If it's butlers of rural nobles, there's only very few who are wearing a butler uniform like Sebastian from Elise's home.

"I'm sorry, as a matter of fact..." (Wendelin)

Once I explained the events leading to the current situation, they were quite surprised.

"No way, for such a tunnel to exist..."

"It's the accomplishment of the archaeologist acquaintance of mine over here." (Wendelin)

"I see."

The middle-aged feudal lord looks at Arnest with an expression that's full of admiration.

It was the same for his son next to him as well as the butler.

"So you are saying that the exit led to our territory?"

"Yes, therefore I'd like to ask one question; where are we?" (Wendelin)

"Let's talk about that in my mansion? We only have low-grade tea, but I will gladly offer you some."

We decided to entrust Thomas and his men with guarding the entrance to the tunnel, and accepted the offer of the feudal lord without reservation.

Leaving the fields under his guidance, we descend through fields that are located on a slope, and once again leave those fields...

Given that almost all of the area is covered with farm fields, I will omit the rest. After a while a house gradually comes in sight.

"(It's much more worn-out than the old mansion of the Knight Baumeister family, isn't it...?)" (Erwin)

"(Shhh!)" (Wendelin)

I cover Erw's mouth who muttered something rude.

Although it's just as Erw says, it would turn into a big problem if they heard it.

"Our Eulenberg territory is a quiet agricultural community, as you can see..."

Along the way towards the mansion, we hold a polite conversation.

This middle-aged noble is called Sieg Frank von Eulenberg. He's a Knight reigning over a farming area with around 300 residents.

As expected, the young man is his successor. He introduced himself as Veith Frank von Eulenberg. The old man is the butler and is called Georg.

Even if they had said that they are farmers, I wouldn't have doubted it for a second before they introduced themselves...

"I'm Earl Wendelin von Benno Baumeister."

When I introduced myself next, all three of them immediately started to kneel down on the ground for some reason.

Due to the sudden turn of events, not only I, but even Elise couldn't hide her surprise.

"Umm...Lord Eulenberg, we are nobles from the same Kingdom." (Elise)

In panic she makes them quickly stand up.

No matter how paltry the Eulenberg territory might be, they are official nobles that had been granted their territory and peerage by the Kingdom.

It's not good for them to prostrate themselves in front of me who's a noble of the same Kingdom.

"Information about the world doesn't often reach this Eulenberg territory as it's situated in the countryside, but even we know of you, Earl Baumeister-sama. How wonderful of you to have come to such a remote place..." (Sieg)

"Umm, listen..." (Wendelin)

Even though we should be nobles of the same Kingdom, Lord Eulenberg was awfully humble and menial.

As it's the same with his son and the butler, their excessive servility makes me feel uncomfortable instead.

"Even though you, the great hero Earl Baumeister-sama, came all the way to this place, we can't even offer you any decent hospitality..." (Sieg)

"As something like that hasn't been our objective to begin with, you don't have to worry about it..." (Wendelin)

"I feel terribly sorry about it." (Sieg)

"..."

The residence of the Knight Eulenberg household was smaller and more tattered than the one of the Knight Baumeister household.

I end up thinking something rude along the lines that there's always someone below you in society.

"Excuse us for this run-down, shabby house." (Sieg)

"Ahaha..." (Wendelin)

No matter what I might say, these people are going to stay menial anyway.

Giving up, we enter the house that doesn't look like anything but a big farmer's home rather than a mansion.

The inside of the house matches with the former mansion of the Knight Baumeister family.

I guess the difference has now widened since it was repaired and improved after Helmut-niisan succeeded the peerage.

Once we sat down after being led into the living room, Lord Eulenberg and a woman that was around his age put out tea.

She's a plump and healthy person.

"She's my wife Rose." (Sieg)

"As there's no maid in our home, I handle the housework myself. Everyone else is busy with farm-work." (Rose)

If pushed to say, even the former Knight Baumeister territory had maids that were close to proper maids.

Without such people existing in the Eulenberg territory, the feudal lord's wife had to pour the tea by herself.

Elise also cooks and pours tea, but that's a matter limited to the battlefield and her own preferences. Nowadays, the mansion's maids will prepare the tea if there are visitors.

"It's especially delicious since I was thirsty." (Luise)

Luise, who drained the tea down in one go, asked Rose-san for another serving.

Different from the former Knight Baumeister territory, it's not something like a fake mate tea that's

close to simple, boiled water.

The more diligently they make their guests feel welcome, the more sincere and virtuous they are compared to my hold home.

"The tea-cakes are steamed 『Maroimo』, I think?" (Ina)

It's a food I see for the first time, but Ina seems to know the real name of this vegetable.

Going by its appearance, it's a combination of sweet potatoes and normal potatoes.

The skin's color is a vivid yellow and it was steamed like a sweet potato.

I don't know whether it's suitable for a noble to serve something like that as tea-cake, but once I take a bite, it's really sweet and tasty.

I feel I incurred a loss for not having known about its existence until now.

"This potato is really delicious." (Erwin)

"Milady, I would like to have another serving." (Arnest)

Not only the female side of our group, but even Erw and Arnest were fond of it.

Or rather, being able to calmly demand another helping in this situation makes me slightly envious of Arnest.

Well, if I'm given another serving, I will also eat it, however.

"Elise, do you know this potato?" (Wendelin)

"I have heard the name of a potato called Maroimo, as Ina-san mentioned, but today is the first time for me to see it." (Elise)

"Even you haven't seen it before, Elise?" (Wendelin)

"I mean, it's a potato that only appears occasionally on the market, even in the Breithilde Margraviate." (Ina)

It might be treated as so-called 『Local Vegetable』.

Since the numbers harvested are low, it probably hasn't spread much on the market.

"Huh? That means this place is close to the Breithilde Margraviate?"

"I suppose calling it close is correct? This place is a small territory enclosed by the Breithilde Margraviate." (Sieg)

Lord Eulenberg, who finally toned down the servility, spread a map on the table.

"The Kingdom's southern region is split into the Baumeister Earldom that's south of the Greater League Mountain Range, the Breithilde Margraviate in the northwestern part, and an alliance of smaller feudal territories in the northeastern part. It's a fairly simple layout." (Sieg)

"That's true." (Wendelin)

I check the map as well.

"Because of the map, it has been recorded like this, but even in the part labeled as Breithilde Margraviate there are several small noble territories." (Sieg)

All of those territories seem to be fairly small-scale, like the Eulenberg territory. Several of such Knight territories exist, but as for their public recognition, it was just as one could guess.

"The population in those territories ranges from 200 to 500. They are really nothing but meager Knight territories. The location of our Eulenberg territory is here." (Sieg)

The location didn't differ much from the tunnel's exit point predicted by Arnest. I guess the sole difference is that this place isn't the Breithilde Margraviate, but the Knight Eulenberg territory.

"So that how it was? Then it makes things simple." (Wendelin)

"Makes things simple?" (Sieg)

Lord Eulenberg inclined his head in confusion, wondering what I'm talking about.

"Indeed. Since a tunnel running through the Greater League Mountain Range was discovered, I'd like to put it in operation. The entrance on this side is within your territory, so I would like to cooperate with you, Lord Eulenberg." (Wendelin)

"Eh? With me?" (Sieg)

"Well, I mean, the tunnel's entrance is within the Eulenberg territory, so..." (Wendelin)

In addition, around half of the tunnel's ownership belongs to Lord Eulenberg. That's because the part of the Greater League Mountain Range located above the tunnel belongs to the Eulenberg territory according to the official documents. Since it's an area inhabited by wyverns and flying dragons, the issue of them actually being able to rule that area is a different matter, though.

"Therefore I'd like you to also deploy guards, Lord Eulenberg. In exchange you will be able to make a big profit by demanding a traffic toll." (Wendelin)

The magic airship flights increased in number, but if we don't discover new airships, it won't grow any further than it is now. It also has the flaw of charging high fare rates. If you go through the tunnel, it takes time, but it will be possible to shorten the time a lot more than it took back in the days when you had to travel along the mountain roads. It will give an easy access to the market for small-scaled companies and individual merchants. If the circulation of goods accelerates, it will likely bring about huge profits for the Baumeister Earldom.

"Of course it's the same for the Eulenberg territory. That's great, isn't it?" (Wendelin)

That it hadn't been the Breithilde Margraviate might be bad luck for Margrave Breithilde, but I don't care who it is as long as they manage the entrance on the other side.

"I'm going to manage it?" (Sieg)

"Yes, is there anything wrong with it?" (Wendelin)

"Impossible! That's completely out of my league!" (Sieg)

"For me too!" (Veith)

Even though it should have been a very nice deal for them, it was frantically denied not only by Lord Eulenberg, but even by his heir. We couldn't do anything besides looking baffled.



""Margrave Breithilde-sama! Your esteemed Lordship——""

"Umm...we are nobles of the same Kingdom..." (Breithilde)

The task of managing and securing the tunnel has been refused by Lord Eulenberg. The perplexed me quickly used 『Teleportation』 to fetch Margrave Breithilde and Burkhart-san. And, after seeing Margrave Breithilde, the parents and child began to prostrate on the ground once again. With Margrave Breithilde chiding that, it has developed into a scene that I've seen somewhere before.

“(This again...?)” (Wendelin)

“(Wend, I think no matter what you tell these people, it's pointless. They probably never met high-ranking nobles in person so far...)” (Ina)

Ina whispered into my ear.

Certainly, I really doubt that this place had been visited by high-ranking nobles until now.

“Why are you so menial? We are nobles of the same kingdom...” (Breithilde)

Of course this was his official stance, but I think that even Margrave Breithilde will be troubled if he's always treated like this.

If it's misunderstood by other nobles, it might serve as material to denounce Margrave Breithilde.

“Having said that...” (Breithilde)

The Eulenberg family had finally calmed down, but Margrave Breithilde dropped his shoulders while revealing a depressed expression.

Because of a whim of fate, the entrance to the big tunnel wasn't located in his territory.

“Earl-sama, check such things in advance.” (Breithilde)

“But, this map is the official version released by the Kingdom's government. In the first place, even if he had checked it, he wouldn't have been able to avoid the problem anyway, right?” (Burkhart)

Even Burkhart-san believes that it's not my fault.

"That's correct, but...couldn't we have prepared some measures, if we knew in advance?"  
(Breithilde)

"However, it wasn't written on the map. On this map, this place here belongs to the Breithilde Margraviate. Something like the map being right or wrong isn't my responsibility." (Wendelin)

"I suppose, if you put it like that, I can't retort anything." (Breithilde)

Given that maps are military information, their production is related to the royal army. The households of high-ranking nobles aren't exactly eager to readily provide information about their territory, but even though the royal army should have secretly dispatched someone and produced a detailed map, the Eulenberg territory and several other small territories haven't been recorded on that map.

"Moreover, this map is this year's edition which has been released just recently."

"You're right. Why were these territories suddenly deleted from the map, despite having been regularly recorded until last year? Jeez! They are cutting too many corners!" (Breithilde)

There seem to be many cases with other maps where things are omitted because there's little to no necessity to record them, but not recording such details in an official edition published by the Kingdom's government can be regarded as crude.

The angry Margrave Breithilde takes out his MHCD and starts dialing the number of a certain person.

"A magic tool for communication!" (Sieg)

"Father, that's nothing we can afford. As expected of Margrave Breithilde-sama." (Veith)

"Master, I had to reach this age to see the actual thing for the first time in my life." (Georg)

"Even I only saw it once in the city where I had been staying during my childhood." (Sieg)

"Father, high-ranking nobles are amazing, aren't they?" (Veith)

Together with the butler, the petty bourgeois-like parent and child stared at the MHCD of Margrave Breithilde with looks full of envy.

Their behavior is similar to a primeval tribe that witnessed the conveniences of civilization for the very first time.

"...Somehow the mood is kind of amiss...Minister Edgar?" (Breithilde)

At the other end of Margrave Breithilde's phone call was Minister Edgar, the highest authority responsible for cartography.

Since the creation of maps falls in the jurisdiction of the royal army, it's only natural for it to be his duty.

"It's about this year's Kingdom map, but..." (Breithilde)

『What did you say——!?!』 (Edgar)

Once Margrave Breithilde explained the situation in detail, his angry voice reverberated so loudly that it was even audible to us.

With the owner of the voice obviously being Minister Edgar, it appears that he hasn't been aware of this issue either.

『Is Earl Baumeister there!?!』 (Edgar)

"Yes, next to me." (Breithilde)

『Come and pick me up!』 (Edgar)

And thus I transferred to the royal castle with 『Teleportation』 to bring Minister Edgar along at once.

As fellow traveler, taking along an appointed noble, who trembles like a small animal, is...

I saw it.

How Minister Edgar stormed into the government office called Royal Land Survey Department while yelling.

And also how he grabbed the nape of the appointed noble who's in charge of cartography.

That scene had a dreadfulness which was equal to Doushi's combat scenes.

"Viscount Meiser! Let's have you explain what this is about!" (Edgar)

The elderly noble called Viscount Meiser, who was brought along to Margrave Breithilde by me and Minister Edgar, ended up prostrating on the floor of the Eulenberg mansion.

For some reason the Eulenberg father and son as well as their butler prostrated themselves next to him...

"Say, Earl Baumeister. Did I do something bad to these three?" (Edgar)

"Well, you know..." (Wendelin)

"Father-in-law-san, those three are simply nervous after seeing a high-ranking noble with a minister post whom they considered to exist above the clouds." (Wilma)

In my stead, Wilma provided an explanation of the circumstances.

"Is that so...? But, they are also nobles of the Kingdom, so doing something like this is kind of troublesome..." (Edgar)

Due to the excessive servility of Eulenberg father and son, even Minister Edgar apparently lost some of his anger.

In a certain meaning Viscount Meiser might have been saved thanks to them.

"Well, it's not like your responsibility diminished because of that, though, Viscount Meiser." (Breithilde)

Without a moment's delay Margrave Breithilde warned Viscount Meiser who sighed in relief due to Minister Edgar's rage having faded.

"Yes...I'm well aware of that..." (Meiser)

"Then it's fine." (Breithilde)

Thanks to Viscount Meiser having cut corners in the production of the map, we ended up connecting the tunnel's exit under the wrong impression that it's the Breithilde Margraviate on the other side.

It was a case where I don't know whether it fulfilled the conditions of a crime, but it's a fact that the situation has become chaotic thanks to this.

Anyway, something like the management of a huge tunnel in a territory that has a population of 300 people is a heavy burden.

"I guess I will ask first. How did it come to this?" (Edgar)

He has drastically toned down from his previous, huge rage fit, but the eyes of Minister Edgar, who's questioning Viscount Meiser, were full of killing intent.

The frightened Viscount Meiser begins to explain the circumstances without any particular reluctance.

"In order to reduce the costs, we changed the workshop that produces the maps..." (Meiser)

Different from books, maps are difficult to print. Every year small details such as slight changes in the terrain, fluctuation of noble territories, changes in the noble families ruling those territories, and survey achievements in regions that hadn't been mapped yet took place.

Since just creating the map takes a considerable amount of time and money, Viscount Meiser apparently put great effort in thinking up ideas how to make at least the expenses decrease in some way.

"Deciding on a reduction of expenses falls into your jurisdiction, Viscount Meiser, as the one holding responsibility, so I won't say anything, but omitting details is a problem, isn't it?" (Edgar)

"However...it was a truly small mistake..." (Meiser)

Certainly, normally it's a mistake that wouldn't matter.

After all, even Minister Edgar and Margrave Breithilde hadn't noticed the error until it was pointed out to them.

Seeing as the Kingdom's government is a gathering of humans, one should be able to find as many such mistakes as they like, if they search for them.

"But you know, you were really unlucky, Viscount Meiser." (Edgar)

"No way..." (Meiser)

Yes, Viscount Meiser was unlucky.

Normally one won't be punished for a mistake at this level where it's unclear whether it might be noticed or not.

After all there are almost no people who would be troubled by not knowing the few small territories that are surrounded by the Breithilde Margraviate.

"Thanks to Viscount Meiser, a delay in the tunnel's opening has become inevitable. This will of course reach His Majesty's ears as well." (Edgar)

"His Majesty's ears?" (Meiser)

"Naturally. The development of the southern Baumeister Earldom is sponsored by His Majesty. Even though a tunnel, which will possibly promote that development, had been left behind in a perfect condition, its opening will be delayed for such a reason. Do you believe that we will be able to hide that fact?" (Edgar)

"No...I don't..." (Meiser)

"Since I also bear responsibility for not having checked it sufficiently, it would be nice if there won't be any official punishment." (Edgar)

"I also hold responsibility as I didn't check properly." (Breithilde)

Margrave Breithilde followed by saying that he's responsible as he didn't point out the mistake at the time when the map was released.

But, that still doesn't mean that Viscount Meiser's mistake will be pardoned. It will likely result in the pitiable Viscount Meiser having to withdraw from his current official position and his seat as family head.

I guess the official reason will be something along the lines of recuperating from a serious illness. Like this nobles are forced to take responsibility and will disappear without the common people knowing about it. Let's be careful in various ways since there are also occasions where it will strike oneself on the next day.

"So, what are we going to do?"

"That's nothing we can decide by ourselves."

"That's true. Earl Baumeister, let me ask for your assistance once more." (Edgar)

"Okay." (Wendelin)

Taking Minister Edgar and Viscount Meiser, who has completely lost all vigor, along, I transfer to the capital once again.

And then, after picking up the people named by Minister Edgar on the way, we returned to the Eulenberg mansion.

"A large-scaled tunnel running through the Greater League Mountain Range, huh? You sure found something nice there, Earl Baumeister."

"Above all I'm happy that you seem to be healthy, Elise, Son-in-law-dono." (Hohenheim)

"Earl Baumeister, please allow me to inspect the tunnel afterwards."

"The work of Count Ishrabak, eh? It looks like it will be of use as reference."

We returned to the living room of the Eulenberg mansion while taking along people in high positions, who were curious or were related to the tunnel, such as Finance Minister Rückner, Cardinal Hohenheim, Trade Minister Röhrich, and the research director of the Sorcery Guild, Beckenbauer-san.

"It's great that you look well too, Erw. Tell me about the civil war later on."

Even Warren-san has shown up and calls out to his disciple, Erw. It's not like he is a lust murderer, but in the end he seemed jealous of his disciple for having obtained achievements after experiencing real battle.

"...Master Warren? That means..." (Erwin)

Since he's a company commander of the Royal Knight Order, he's not such an important figure that he would be called here.

But he was needed as guard of a certain person who had decided to show up here in a hurry.

"When I told him that the whole story had become complicated, His Majesty said that things would be resolved faster with himself coming forth."

"This is also a trick for reducing the work. After all a king is indeed busy. I brought Warren along as well. Many of the elites who triumphed in the Empire's civil war are here too. Thus my safety is in good hands, right?" (Helmut)

"Even His Majesty...?" (Breithilde)

As expected, even Margrave Breithilde apparently can't hide his surprise about His Majesty himself having entered the stage.

"It's better to deal with matters like this quickly." (Helmut)

"That would be appreciated." (Breithilde)

If it's a high-ranking noble at Margrave Breithilde's level, they are used to talk with the king. Nowadays I had lost much of my nervousness as well. Growing accustomed to circumstances is necessary for humans.

However, not only His Majesty, but also high-ranking nobles with Minister posts, an important director of a guild that has influence in the capital, a Cardinal of the church; with only such big-wigs showing up in their house one after the other, there were some people who had reached the limit of their mental capabilities.

"Dear, Lord Eulenberg and his family..." (Elise)

"Wend, since a while ago they have completely stopped moving after groveling on the ground." (Ina)

Once I turned my eyes in the direction indicated by Elise and Ina, I found the figures of the

Eulenberg father and son as well as their butler stuck prostrating there without even a single twitch.

"I feel with them...because they saw a parade of important people, who form the core of the country, in this short time..." (Luise)

"The majority of the Kingdom's nobles will never be able to experience this in their entire life, or should I say...it's an honor, or rather...my condolences..." (Wilma)

Luise and Wilma watched them with looks full of sympathy.

"By the way, Earl Baumeister."

"Yes?" (Wendelin)

"Why are these people so menial?"

"Well..." (Wendelin)

"Seeing as we are in their territory, it was out of their expectation to be able to meet His Majesty at any other time than the succession ceremony, I believe?" (Katharina)

Katharina provided an explanation in my stead.

"I see...Lord Eulenberg and son, you might raise your heads and act normally now." (Helmut)

"I'm deeply sorry! Sorry for possessing a territory in this location!" (Sieg)

"As heir I shall beg your pardon as well!" (Veith)

For some reason father and son desperately apologized to His Majesty. Even His Majesty looks confused as he can't make heads or tail.

"This is a lost case..." (Wendelin)

It's impossible for these people to guard and manage the tunnel. I resolved myself that dealing with the matter in question would take unexpectedly much time.



"This is called maroimo? It's a good tea-cake." (Helmut)

"I don't think it's something that should be served to you, Your Majesty, thus I'm truly sorry for the circumstances..."

"There's no social status with food. If it's delicious, one will be happy if it's offered." (Helmut)

"It's the special product of our territory." (Rose)

"I see. This refined sweetness after just having steamed it. I definitely favor this over average sweets." (Helmut)

Since the concerned parties have gathered, we decide to continue the discussion. With the Eulenberg mansion's living room as conference venue, Warren-san, Erw, Ina, Luise, Wilma, Burkhart-san and Katharina are stationed at the walls. Even if assassins were to charge into this place, they should be sent off to the other world in no time. Elise served maroimo and tea together with Lord Eulenberg's wife. Compared to father and son who have become menial after seeing nothing but high-ranking nobility, the wife is attending to His Majesty amiably. Women having nerves of steel when push comes to shove is the same in any world.

"However, I haven't seen it appear on the market often."

"Ina, you knew it, didn't you?"

"Yes. It doesn't appear on the market usually, but just once I saw it and remembered nothing more than its name." (Ina)

"I see."

"I didn't buy it, though. A child's pocket money is limited after all." (Ina)

There are only few places that grow maroimo. Around here it's just the Eulenberg territory, so you will very occasionally find it on Baulburg's market. It looks like its market appearance frequency drops even further if it comes to the area around the capital.

"Despite it being so delicious."

"The cultivation requirements are somewhat peculiar. Right, Lord Eulenberg?"

"Indeed. If it's not a field on a slope with a big decrease in temperature in the evening and morning, you won't be able to cultivate it successfully. In addition it won't become as sweet-tasting if you make a mistake with the soil quality or the cultivation method." (Sieg)

The Eulenberg territory is adjacent to the Greater League Mountain Range. Maroimo is cultivated on fields which were prepared on slopes, but if it were the slopes of the real mountains, farm work would be impossible due to wyverns and flying dragons flying by. However, because the slopes located in the Eulenberg territory could be remains of the Ancient Magic Civilization's collapse, neither wyverns nor flying dragons come visiting.

"That's why it's possible to grow it there," Lord Eulenberg explained.

He apparently got finally accustomed to the situation and stopped being that menial when talking with Ina.

Or rather, speaking of social position, Lord Eulenberg, who is a family head, is higher in the hierarchy, but...

"I guess it's limited to the region then. It's most certainly a precious ingredient. Its refined sweetness sure is tasty."

Even Minister Rückner and the others seemed to be pleased with the maroimo's sweetness.

"Now then, let's return to the talk about the tunnel. Margrave Breithilde, what's the core of this problem?"

"Simply said, it wouldn't have caused such an uproar if the other tunnel entrance were to be in my territory." (Breithilde)

"I'm sorry!" (Sieg)

"I told you before already. It's not really your responsibility, Lord Eulenberg, you know...?"

Given that everyone around him is a big-wig, he probably ends up cowering all the more as there's also the difference in experience on top of it.

However, in the eyes of Margrave Breithilde and the others it's instead troublesome if this much servility is demonstrated towards them.

That's only natural as they are nobles of the same kingdom.

If such a story is leaked to the outside, rumors about them being arrogant will spread in society, resulting in a decline in their reputation.

And someone at the level of high-ranking noble cares about their reputation in society.

"The tunnel seems to be a huge structure." (Helmut)

"Yes."

There are five traffic lanes on each side, and there are even emergency lanes for broken vehicles. Lighting and ventilation is present as well. And a huge magic crystal has been set up in the power room to enable their operation.

The newest materials and construction methods back then had been used for the roads and tunnel walls. The tunnel should be usable for a few more thousand years if it's maintained properly.

"There's also a limit to transportation through magic airships." (Helmut)

"The roads need maintenance, but having a transportation network via land routes would be great. After all the magic airships will be requisitioned by the air force, if there's a war."

During the Empire's civil war the magic airships' requisition plan by the air force was called off due to the jamming device.

But, if there were to be yet another war in the future, there's no guarantee that it will be possible to ward off their requisitioning as the airships are overly convenient.

After all the jamming device doesn't exist anymore.

In case that were to happen, it would affect the transportation towards the Baumeister Earldom and thus it would be a relief if there was a land route, Minister Edgar explains.

"It will take some time, but in regards to time and transported volume it will be overwhelmingly better than transportation by walking along the mountain roads. The expenses being lower than with magic airships is a nice bonus, too." (Rückner)

Minister Rückner advocates for an early opening of the tunnel, too.

"In regards to the sorcery guild, it's surely possible to run an investigation after the opening. I think we should open it as fast as possible for the sake of the Kingdom's economy."

Beckenbauer-san also approves, or rather, there shouldn't be anyone present who opposes this.

"Upon the tunnel's opening there will be several issues. First, guards are indispensable with the tunnel being what it is."

There's the danger of terror acts such as blocking the entrances by destroying them.

No matter how many ceasefires and peace treaties have been closed, the Empire is still a hypothetical enemy.

Moreover, you couldn't definitely exclude the possibility of nobles, who are hostile towards the Earl Baumeister household, to interfere.

"Odd criminals and refugees coming and going as they please would be a problem, too."

"Therefore it's necessary for both sides to employ a fixed number of soldiers and keep guarding the tunnel at all times. Regular inspections and repairs will be also required."

"The money issue... No, that can be covered with traffic tolls. On the contrary, it will definitely yield a huge profit."

Minister Rückner grasps that the biggest problem isn't money.

"Since it will cause confusion if the inbound lines and the outbound lines have different traffic tolls, it should be fine if you decide after consulting with Earl Baumeister. I think around 100 cent per one-way trip will be plenty."

"That's true. If the traffic tolls are at this level, it will be possible for many tunnel users to pay it. I guess there will also be many people who will enter the market as new companies."

Those who hesitated because of the expensive airship fares and the dangerous mountain roads will enter the market and boost the variety of businesses.

That should turn into a benefit for the whole Kingdom.

"What will become a problem here is the tininess of the Eulenberg territory."

"I'm sorry! Sorry for having a small territory!" (Sieg)

Once again Lord Eulenberg apologizes while repeatedly bowing.

Since it's very unlikely for him to fix that even if we caution him, all of us decided to simply ignore it.

"Taking a traffic toll while managing and guarding the tunnel in a territory with 300 people...?"

You might as well call that physically impossible.

I think there are people who will say that it will be fine as long as he employs new people, but hiring such a big number of people and directing them skillfully all of a sudden is definitely unreasonable.

That's because Lord Eulenberg is...

...a noble who is far away from the image of a worldly noble as he lived modestly and peacefully while plowing the fields together with his fief's residents.

It's pitiful that he is about to be forced into a job that doesn't suit his own capabilities.

It's the same with his heir, too. He isn't suited for it either, or rather he's probably unable to do it.

"Minister Edgar, as that's the current state of affairs, can't you dispatch guards from the royal army or something similar?" (Wendelin)

"Earl Baumeister, it would be nice if that would be alright. The rights for the tunnel belong to the Baumeister household and the Eulenberg household. We can't cover any more than a third of the guard duty." (Edgar)

It seems it won't be desirable for the government, if people believed that the Kingdom meddles in the concessions of nobles by dispatching more soldiers than that.

"A third would be around a thousand soldiers, right?"

"Correct."

If you combine the management, maintenance, collection of traffic tolls, and in addition cracking down on smuggling and suspicious people, around that much becomes necessary. After all they will have to work in shifts, 24 hours every day in the year.

"No way...newly hiring a thousand people is impossible..." (Sieg)

Suddenly commanding such number of people will also be difficult for a feudal lord of a territory with 300 people.

And it's not just the assets to hire the people. It will also be indispensable to provide places where they and their families can live.

Stating that something like that is impossible for him, Lord Eulenburg was half in tears.

"Now that it has turned out like this, how about having Margrave Breithilde act as agent for the duties?"

"That's not a good idea."

Albeit being small, the Eulenberg household is fully-fledged nobility.

If they not only meddle in the rule of that territory, but actually enter the territory and do its work, the Margrave Breithilde household will very likely be regarded by other noble households as having selfishly preyed on the Eulenberg household to obtain profits by putting restrictions on their rule.

"It's wrong to do that no matter how small the territory of the other noble might be. Troublesome systems such as disputes have been put in place for that sake."

Destroying the other side is taboo, even if you hate them.

That's why they are carrying out those troublesome disputes to regulate the interests.

"Is switching territories not possible? As in, exchanging the Eulenberg territory with a far more

abundant territory."

"As that's in the sphere of the Kingdom's authority, I can't interfere with that. Even if I could, it would only cause my reputation to hit rock bottom." (Breithilde)

"Margrave Breithilde forced something unreasonable on the low-ranking Eulenberg household because he lusts for the tunnel rights." He says that it would be unbearable if such an ill repute about him spread through society.

"We have made a considerable gain with you, Earl Baumeister, as vassal. Even now the jealousy is going strong." (Breithilde)

"Let's have the Eulenberg territory relocated and turn this place in an area under the direct rule of the Kingdom then." (Wendelin)

"That's no good either." (Helmut)

This plan was declined by His Majesty.

"It's a charming idea, but the location is bad." (Helmut)

"The location, you say?" (Wendelin)

"Indeed. It's surrounded by the Breithilde Margraviate. If we do something so blunt, fellows, who will scoff at the relationship between the Kingdom and the Breithilde household, will appear." (Helmut)

"Yes. It will produce an imaginary, strained situation of the Kingdom aiming for my profits." (Breithilde)

Just because luck was with them for this place to have been peaceful for 200 years doesn't mean that things won't change in such way. I understood that statesmen are full of considerations that are almost neurotic.

"What are we going to do in that case?" (Wendelin)

"For a while the sorcery guild will check the tunnel, but the magic tool guild will likely come to investigate it as well. That will buy us some time. That means all of us have some homework to tackle, doesn't it?"

You might call it postponing the problem, but there's no other option at the moment. It was decided that the meeting would come to an end with this for today.

"Well then, before having Earl Baumeister bring us back, I guess I will buy some maroimo. Warren." (Helmut)

"Yes, Your Majesty!" (Warren)

Upon the king's order, Warren took out his wallet and paid Rose-san.

The butler immediately places a great amount of maroimo into a jute bag and brings it over.

All of the others bought some as well.

Of course I intend to go home after buying some as well, but I end up thinking, 『Maroimo are too popular, aren't they!?!』

Won't I be unable to buy any if they become too popular?

"I will turn them into stone-baked sweet potatoes at once and then eat them." (Wendelin)

"Son-in-law-dono, as usual you are quite enthusiastic in your research of new dishes, aren't you?" (Hohenheim)

"It's my hobby after all. By the way, how about having dinner together with us today?" (Wendelin)

"That might be a good idea, too. My turn will come after the tunnel opening went ahead. What I can do right now is at most establishing pilgrim places at both entrances, I suppose." (Hohenheim)

Since it's a tunnel, such establishments and resident priests become necessary to include prayers for safety.

One might think that it's just a tunnel, but even in Japan it might be the same with the bittersweet dissensions by bureaucrats and politicians, including various interests.

"Then, I will buy some maroimo and...Lord Eulenberg?"

"Hmmm. It looks like His Majesty's sudden visit and the tunnel talks were too heavy for him, doesn't it...?"

Having experienced various events in just one day, Lord Eulenberg and his heir fainted while prostrating on the spot.

We felt like we had done something slightly unfair to them.

## **Chapter 2 – Knight Eulenberg Territory**

"If you become as old as me, you will also consider the Mizuho cuisine as refreshingly delicious."  
(Hohenheim)



In the end we couldn't resolve the issues surrounding the future management of the excavated tunnel.

Lord Eulenberg, who possesses the territory at the northern exit of the tunnel, didn't have the ability to handle it.

The Margrave Breithilde household and the royal family feared bad rumors that might crop up if they intervened in this, and thus neither of them accepted to take over the management.

Without reaching a conclusion today and since it will take time to do maintenance work and carry out an inspection of the tunnel, all of us have returned to our respective territories or the capital.

We returned to our mansion as well after entrusting the management of the tunnel itself to Thomas and Nikolaus, after Roderich had increased the number of soldiers. Cardinal Hohenheim accompanied us.

He did so in order to have dinner with us and because there are various other matters that have to be discussed.

The menu was centered around Mizuho dishes which Elise and the mansion's cooks had recently learned. They were very popular with Cardinal Hohenheim.

While drinking Mizuho sake, he happily enjoys eating deep-fried eggplant in broth, deep-fried tofu with soup, and grilled salmon.

Salmon is a fish that can't be caught in the northern streams, even not in the Empire. It's a special product of the Earl Mizuho Country, err, Mizuho Dukedom.

Cardinal Hohenheim tastes the salted salmon with relish.

"The Earl Mizuho Country, or rather Dukedom, eh? It has rare products. The Kingdom's nobility and rich people might really band together and buy foodstuff from there. It looks like the low greasiness will be popular with the elderly and women." (Hohenheim)

Even on Earth the Westerners ate Japanese food during the healthiness boom.

The humans of this world might rate the Mizuho cuisine as such as well.

"It was correct to gain the right to directly trade with them. It's your biggest accomplishment."  
(Hohenheim)

Since I have been recognized as close friend by Duke Mizuho, I can purchase precious goods cheaply.

So to speak, at a friendship discount.

"The reward from the Empire's government has been probably enormous as well." (Hohenheim)

"They only paid us in accordance to the contract." (Wendelin)

Burkhart-san and Doushi didn't want any more than that either. It's probably because they believe that it would do us more harm if we were afflicted by ulterior motives due to having received concessions and territories in the Empire.

"I guess that's typical for you, son-in-law. By the way, Elise." (Hohenheim)

"Yes, grandfather." (Elise)

Cardinal Hohenheim calls out to Elise who's sitting next to me. For him to having visited us today was also for the sake of having a relaxed talk with his granddaughter.

"There's still no child?" (Hohenheim)

"I'm sorry. Not yet..." (Elise)

"Umm, you know..." (Wendelin)

"I'm aware of the circumstances. I just asked to make sure." (Hohenheim)

The reason why we still haven't made a child was owed to the contraception through magic potions until now.

At first we didn't want to have any children for around a year since we were newly-wed, and then it was because it would lower our combat power if she got pregnant during the civil war, in other words, very pragmatic reasons that are easy to understand.

"If no child is born by Elise, the number of idiots that will get unnecessarily worried, albeit being totally unrelated, will keep increasing." (Hohenheim)

"Nowadays we aren't using any contraceptives. It's probably just a matter of time." (Wendelin)

"That's very promising then." (Hohenheim)

"However, is it alright for you, Cardinal Hohenheim, as a clergyman, to speak about such matters?" (Wendelin)

Since he tentatively belongs to the church, I end up wondering whether that's no offense to their doctrine.

"Of course I won't say that in my public position. There are many believers who come to the church to consult about their inability to make children. It will turn into a problem if there are rumors about someone like me." (Hohenheim)

There's a priority to keep up the official stance in the church, but Cardinal Hohenheim is also a Viscount.

As noble it's only natural to worry about his successors.

"Son-in-law, you're still 17 years old. To tell you the truth, I'm not really worried. Besides..."  
(Hohenheim)

Cardinal Hohenheim turns his eyes towards Amalie-san who's sitting at the end of the table. Actually it was planned for her to officially come to the mansion in a few more days, but after it was decided that Cardinal Hohenheim would visit us, I hurriedly brought her along from Paulniisan's territory.

The plan is to introduce her to an influential person, who is also the grandfather of the first wife, and at least get his permission or toleration.

Of course this was a suggestion from Roderich as I didn't possess such aristocratic wit.

It had been arranged for Amalie-san's official position to be the Head Maid, but today she's not in a maid attire.

Once she officially enters my mansion, she will publicly be in charge of taking care of me inside the mansion, and she will essentially be treated as concubine in the Earl Baumeister family.

Even the clothes she's wearing today were no different in quality to what Elise and the others wear. It's because I have prohibited any discrimination between them.

"I am..." (Amalie)

"I don't particularly mind. It's apparently owed to Lord Mainbach understanding the commonplace truth of nobility." (Hohenheim)

"Do you know my father, Cardinal?" (Amalie)

"Once you become a cardinal of the church, you gain access to a fairly big amount of information."  
(Hohenheim)

The reason why Cardinal Hohenheim is treated as ghost geezer on the streets lies in this.

He's a cardinal and an appointed Viscount, but that doesn't mean that he possesses outstanding assets or a large group of retainers.

As appointed Viscount, he holds no territory.

However, he's holding onto an information network that uses the churches, which have spread all over the Kingdom and even into the Empire, as intermediary.

Because of this, even His Majesty had his fair share of troubles in the past.

"Six people, huh? That's still too lacking for the current you, isn't it son-in-law? Since I'm a noble as well, I won't say anything if it doesn't disturb the inner pecking order. All's fine as long as you freely give birth to children. After all there's too few family members in the Earl Baumeister household." (Hohenheim)

It seems I have to strengthen my control by making the children of concubines into family heads of branch families and dispatch them as governors all over the place.

"The Baumeister Earldom is too huge. Son-in-law, you have to do your best and make children."  
(Hohenheim)

"What do you call it again...ah, it's as if I'm a stallion." (Wendelin)

"Isn't that a perfectly fitting phrase. It's the same for all nobility and royalty. They have to control

the lineage and give birth to children. Oops, I have digressed from the topic. Our visitor from afar has nerves of steel. As might be expected of a lady that formerly was a Duchess said to be a candidate for the next Emperor." (Hohenheim)

Cardinal Hohenheim's eyes turn from Amalie-san to Therese whom I invited as guest for dinner. It sure makes sense, or rather different from Amalie-san, who isn't accustomed to such event, she revealed a smile that contained a boldness befitting a former Duchess.

"I have parted with the seat of Duchess Philip and am in a position of being indebted to Earl Baumeister-dono for being granted a retirement pension. I don't think that I'm someone worthy to be paid attention to by thee, Cardinal Hohenheim-dono, who's recognized to be the next pope..." (Therese)

"No, no. I'm just an old geezer who's worried about his granddaughter." (Hohenheim)

Cardinal Hohenheim seems to be wary of Therese scheming to become my wife, give birth to my child and raise that child to become the next Earl Baumeister.

"The higher one's social standing becomes, the more people who are suspicious of one. I have thought that I was able to escape such society by now, though." (Therese)

"Even if the person herself thinks so, there's still the worry whether the surroundings believe the same." (Hohenheim)

"If it comes to thee, Cardinal Hohenheim-dono, it must be difficult as there are many seeds of anxiety in the world." (Therese)

"What, it's all within the bounds of common sense, Therese-dono." (Hohenheim)

Therese matches her eye line with Cardinal Hohenheim.  
Our side, who merely watches, feels as if sparks are scattered between them.

"Old man." (Elise)

"It's troublesome as humans become distrustful once they grow old, you know?" (Hohenheim)

Being held back by Elise, Cardinal Hohenheim's expression fell apart.

"Cardinal Hohenheim-dono, thy feelings towards thy granddaughter are something that I can understand very well. Since mine grandfather has already passed away, I'm very envious." (Therese)

"I'm grateful for your words." (Hohenheim)

It looked as if both ceased their confrontation, but Cardinal Hohenheim's worries haven't been dispelled.

He applied pressure on Therese that he would gather information through the churches within the Baumeister Earldom, and immediately make a move if something happened.

But then again Therese herself has already assumed a stance of wanting to be excused from that

kind of power struggle.

She goes as far as telling him to freely go ahead with monitoring her if he wants to.

Therese has reached the point where she stopped making suggestive approaches as she did before and was even building friendly relations with Elise and the others, but in reverse I feel a bit lonely now that she's isn't making any moves on me anymore.

I wonder, is this actually her plan?

Either way, I truly don't get women.

"How about thee disclose some information for the sake of showing thy affections for thy grandchild here?" (Therese)

"I suppose that makes sense." (Hohenheim)

The information mentioned by Therese is probably related to Lord Eulenberg, whom we met today, and his territory.

Given that there's a church in that territory, Cardinal Hohenheim should possess some information.

"Though it's a quite pitiful story..." (Hohenheim)

According to what we were told by Cardinal Hohenheim, Lord Eulenberg seems to be a good-natured man with a very timid heart.

"Faint of heart, or rather, he's a person who was above the clouds for being able to meet His Majesty only once in his whole life during the peerage succession ceremony. He believed that nobles such as Margrave Breithilde and the ministers are people whom he would never meet." (Hohenheim)

"It's a similar rural area as my home, after all." (Wendelin)

The Eulenberg territory is mostly self-sufficient. And they can get some cash income by selling their special product, Maroimo, to the villages and cities in the neighborhood.

"The neighboring cities and villages are within the Breithilde Margraviate, but it's unlikely for their family to get in touch with the feudal lord who lives in Breitburg." (Hohenheim)

They plow the fields together with their 300 residents in a rural farm community, rejoicing or grieving dependent on the amount of harvest.

Lord Eulenberg doesn't seem to have any interest in an exchange with other nobles, and the majority of the nobles don't know of his existence either.

Although he's a noble, it's at a level of him having grown up in the family of a wealthy farmer.

Their aristocratic parts are even less than those of the past Knight Baumeister household.

They aren't prospering, but they aren't poor either.

As they are close to being farmers going by their usual appearance, they don't worry about the viewpoint of others at all.

The feudal lord doesn't demand severe taxes, and since he's gentle and virtuous, there's no dissatisfaction among the fief's population either.

"Now that you mention it, there were many kind people there." (Elise)

Elise bought Maroimo and other vegetables on our way back home, but without doing anything like overcharging the guests from afar, she paid a cheap price as if buying directly at the production site.

"But, I wonder, won't the second son and those below him be troubled in such a territory?" (Luise)

"No, they won't." (Hohenheim)

Cardinal Hohenheim answers Luise's question.

"Leaving that territory for Breitburg isn't that difficult." (Hohenheim)

If they want to lead a carefree life in the Eulenberg territory, they can simply stay there, and if they want to make a name for themselves, they can search for employment in Breitburg.

There are many people who return to their birthplace even after having left once. Only that much is proof of the Eulenberg territory's wealthiness in regards to its physical goods.

Even without having overly much money, one can live there, and there's won't be any food shortage either.

It appears as if there are many people who look well-built among the fief's residents because of that.

"They can also go shopping in the nearby villages and cities."

Once I hear those circumstances, they might have a lot more flexibility in their livelihood than the people in the former Knight Baumeister territory.

"I guess they earn some income with Maroimo."

"That potato is delicious and sweet, isn't it?"

It seems to be a potato that is very popular in the cities around the Eulenberg territory.

Thanks to its cultivation conditions, it can't be harvested anywhere in this area except for the Eulenberg territory. Thus it might also have some rarity value.

"Lord Eulenberg is really no one one who pointlessly puts on air as noble. His heir looks like he's studying how to cultivate and perform selective breeding for the potatoes."

"So it seems." (Luise)

"As we saw." (Wilma)

Luise and Wilma honestly stated their impressions.

As similar parent and child, they appear to be timid, but their knowledge in regards to Maroimo seems to be magnificent.

However, being able to obtain such information; I suppose, nothing less to be expected of the church.

"After hearing of their circumstances, it just makes them even more pitiable."

That family will be fully satisfied as long as they can cultivate Maroimo together with the fief's population.

And now they are suddenly forced to manage a tunnel, form a retainer group and employ around 1,000 soldiers.

The ones who were present at that place were only high-ranking nobles, but all of them sympathized with Lord Eulenberg.

They should have carried out crafty schemes in the past, but that's probably the exact reason why they felt like running away after seeing a person like Lord Eulenberg.

"Even though all of it would be resolved if Margrave Breithilde took the blame, but that man is too indecisive." (Hohenheim)

"I wonder why?"

"Because of you, son-in-law, that man is considered to be the sole winner by the Kingdom's nobles. He might believe that any further benefits will be poisonous instead." (Hohenheim)

I think that it would be fine for him to rush ahead as is.

"Either way, we will wait and see for a while. That man will do a scientific examination of the tunnel, won't he?" (Hohenheim)

That man is about Arnest who's not present right now.

He has secluded himself in his room to prepare for the investigation of the tunnel.

"That person is truly a seed of trouble as well, isn't he?" (Hohenheim)

Cardinal Hohenheim had realized Arnest's true identity long ago.

"Well, he will probably stay obedient while investigating the ancient ruins in the Baumeister Earldom."

"I sure hope so. Just thinking of trying to restrain someone who has more mana than you, son-in-law, is already pointless." (Hohenheim)

He will be docile as long as he can do what he likes. Because his likes also benefit the Kingdom, there's currently no policy besides leaving him in my care.

"Son-in-law, you will frequent the Eulenberg territory for a while, won't you?" (Hohenheim)

"Yes." (Wendelin)

I will monitor and transport Arnest, who will investigate the tunnel, and I should also gather information in the Eulenberg territory by myself.

I will hunt as adventurer while occasionally doing public works within my territory. As such it was planned for me to take on wyverns and flying dragons in the Greater League Mountain Range. It's because they are living right next to the Eulenberg territory.

"That territory will have it difficult for some time as well." (Hohenheim)

"With such talks coming forth, it's very likely that the pair of naive, timid parent and child will faint

again. What difficult circumstances." (Therese)

"Fufu, as expected of you, Therese-dono, you do understand." (Hohenheim)

"It's relatively easy to imagine." (Therese)

"Certainly." (Hohenheim)

Cardinal Hohenheim is wary of Therese as Elise's rival, but he seems to like the aspect that she was an excellent noble.

I guess they talk the same language.

He happily continues the conversation with her.

"We will rely on you for a while so that no uncalled-for bugs meddle in this, son-in-law."  
(Hohenheim)

"Haa..." (Wendelin)

Even though it's just the opening of a tunnel, it's obvious that Cardinal Hohenheim's prediction will come true, resulting in us being once again dragged into the bustling activity of nobles.



"He sure is an enthusiastic fellow if it comes to excavation and research."

As we had to check the state of the Eulenberg territory regularly, we transferred on-site with

『Teleportation』, but first went to see Arnest who's investigating the tunnel.

He was carrying out an enthusiastic, scientific examination under the watch of Thomas and his men, who are in charge of guarding the place.

"What magnificent structure!" (Arnest)

"How nice, you always seem to be full of joy."

"At such times this me believes from the bottom of my heart that it is great for me to have been born a commoner. Without having to mind the disputes of society, I enjoy imagining the grand history based on the underground ruins. It is an advantage of being an archaeologist." (Arnest)

"That certainly sounds great. It's a big tunnel. It looks like it will take time to investigate it."

"That is convenient for me." (Arnest)

Having been dragged into a troublesome situation, we were unhappy, but Arnest was in a good mood as he could investigate the tunnel to his heart's desire.

"Is this a place where one can investigate so much?"

"An amateur will not realize, but it has many places that ought to be examined." (Arnest)

Even though it's merely an old, big tunnel, it looks like the examination will take around one week. Given that we are bored as we have to keep him company, I decided to entrust the monitoring to Thomas and his men.

After all the possibility for Arnest to abandon his prey, the ruin, to run away is fairly low. Above all else, I have gotten fed up with the the archaeological talk which doesn't interest me at all.

"Feel free to do so." (Luise)

"You are not interested?" (Arnest)

"I will skip out on such a sophisticated topic." (Luise)

"How regretful." (Arnest)

Not just Luise; there's no one else besides Elise who properly listens to Arnest going on about his boring archaeological matters.

Of course I pass on that as well.

"I leave him to you, everyone." (Wendelin)

"Please worry not, we will take care of it." (Thomas)

"By no means did I expect that you can make a living with such kind of work."

In exchange for us, several young men among my retainers, who are curious about archeology, accompanied Arnest.

Even in the demon country it seems difficult to make a living as scholar. It's the same in the Helmut Kingdom and the Holy Urquhart Empire...it might be a lot more difficult if you consider the economic conditions of the countries.

The Kingdom's academy is difficult to enter, and high-ranking nobles as well as geniuses at an impossible level are given priority.

As for other means, there are several such as having big nobles or major merchants, who like archeology, as patron, or carrying out scientific investigations of underground ruins, which were completely explored by adventurers, upon requests by the adventurer's guild, but even these are preferentially assigned to the Kingdom's academy and are more lucrative depending on your social standing. Anyway, it doesn't change the fact that one cannot make a living with archeology, resulting in many youths giving up on it.

Accordingly we decided to recruit assistants who also watch Arnest from among the younger retainers of the Earl Baumeister household.

If it's our retainers, it will also be easy to protect Arnest's secret.

As the Earl Baumeister household is a rising noble family, it's also connected to our evaluation of appreciating cultural projects by acting as patron of an archaeologist.

"It's just because you don't want to get involved with it, right?" (Erwin)

Erw hit bull's eye with this.

"Fufufu, even if I provide the money as patron, it's the best to not meddle in it. However, tell me, are you interested in it, Erw? If you like you are free to join the tunnel investigation." (Wendelin)

How cheeky. Erw doesn't have the slightest interest either.

If he says such things, I will force him to participate in the tunnel's investigation upon my authority as his lord.

I will also request a proper report from him.

"Sorry, please spare me." (Erwin)

"Right? Well then, I'm leaving the rest to you, okay?" (Wendelin)

"I think it is wonderful that I have also gained new assistants." (Arnest)

As Thomas and his men will be present, too, it should be alright.

We left the tunnel, returning to the Eulenberg territory.



"No matter how often I see it, it sure is a magnificent rural area...even more so than my home..." (Erwin)

While watching the Maroimo fields spreading on the mountain slope outside the tunnel, Erw once again admires the rural flair of the Eulenberg territory.

I have never been at Erw's home, but I know that it's probably a match with the Knight Baumeister territory.

"The whole surface of the mountain slope is covered with Maroimo fields." (Ina)

Ina voiced out her impression while looking at the Maroimo fields that have been likely expanded with hardships.

For some reason the Maroimo have to be grown on a mountain slope, and they can't be successfully cultivated unless the temperature goes down in the morning and evening.

Moreover, as they seem to grow well with a mild climate during the day, there were many places satisfying those conditions on the mountain slopes located in the Greater League Mountain Range which lies in the southern part of the Lingaia Continent.

"It having to be warm means that it would be hard to grow Maroimo in the Mizuho Dukedom."

If I remember correctly, it's difficult to cultivate sweet potatoes in cold places as well...

Since the Maroimo seems to be in the same category as sweet potatoes, it probably grows well under the same climatic conditions.

"No, the Mizuho people accomplish the impossible if it's related to food." (Haruka)

"That's quite the bold statement, Haruka."

"I'm sure, if they knew about this Maroimo, there would be people that would try to cultivate it in Mizuho." (Haruka)

"(I can't definitely state that there wouldn't be such people...)"

Lately Haruka had been busy with the preparations for her marriage with Erw, but as she has nothing in particular scheduled today, she's accompanying Erw. She declared that the Mizuho people, who fuss over food, would surely try to make it possible to cultivate Maroimo in the Mizuho Dukedom with its cold climate. Even I cannot help but feel that they would end up trying to do so someday.

"Putting that aside, how would you cook the Maroimo, Haruka?"

"Right now I have various ideas. Milord, Erw-san, look forward to it." (Haruka)

"That's great to hear." (Wendelin)

"Haruka-san's home cooking is really the best." (Erwin)

I'm certain, if it's Haruka, she will certainly come up with delicious Mizuho-styled dishes and desserts.

Let's leave that as enjoyment for later.

"Wend, the person over there is the heir..."

"It's Veith."

"Right, that Veith-san who can't fight at all." (Luise) 1

"Luise, that's impolite, you know?" (Ina)

"I mean, Ina-chan, if you look at his aggressive prostrating, anyone would think so..." (Luise)

"You're certainly right there, still..." (Ina)

With her good eyesight Luise discovered one of the key figures.

The son and heir, Veith-san, who prostrated himself together with his father yesterday, was working on a field.

This person's name is full of gallantry just as Luise says, but going by his appearance, he's nothing more than a kindhearted young man who's completely unrelated to something like combat.

He appears to be teaching the farmers how to work the field, but even though he's a noble, he doesn't even wear a sword.

Probably he doesn't feel like he might be seen by other nobles at all.

"Well, well, what a pleasure, Earl Baumeister-sama." (Veith)

Once he discovered us, Veith-san ran in our direction like a raging billow, and greeted us with a

polite bow.

As he can easily run on this slope, it doesn't look as if he has nothing to do with martial arts. He might have more stamina and better reflexes than visible from his outward appearance.

"Veith-san, you are the successor of the Eulenberg territory, so even if you don't keep a very low profile..."

It's better than yesterday's prostrating, but it's very clear that father and son don't mingle much with other nobles. In addition they seem to misunderstand that all other nobles are more amazing than themselves.

Since we are both nobles, I'd like him to stop with such behavior, but...

"I'm sorry. As it's an unconscious habit..." (Veith)

"Wait, wait! If you get used to that..." (Wendelin)

Even if I suddenly insist on a noble-like speech and conduct, it will likely be difficult for him.

"Somehow he's the complete opposite of Katharina." (Luise)

"Indeed, it might be great if he could follow Katharina's example, at least half of it. If he follows her example completely, he will go over the top." (Wilma)

"That's quite cruel of you, isn't it...?" (Katharina)

Luise and Wilma are saying considerably awful things, aren't they?

Certainly, even when Katharina's household collapsed, she insisted on a noble speech and conduct without losing her pride as noble.

I won't say that he has to follow her example completely, but it might be better if he does so at least a bit.

"The situation has ended up like this, so I think that you will have more chances to get in contact with other nobles from now on, Veith-san. If you take an overly menial stance towards them, there's the danger that you will be used and looked down upon. That will also be of disadvantage for your residents." (Katharina)

"Ooh! There it is! Katharina's just reasoning."

"It's a sound argument, but it's slightly vague as well."

"Jeez, just leave me alone..." (Katharina)

As she ends up being treated harshly by those two again, Katharina had an expression of giving up completely.

"That's true. Haughtiness is not good, but same can be said about abasing yourself too much. From now on you will need to pay some attention to it." (Elise)

"Got it." (Veith)

In the end this area belongs in the sphere of Elise who has a natural virtue as priestess. Once he's skillfully persuaded by the gentle Elise, even the timid Veith-san readily accepted the advice.

"Even though I have said the same thing..." (Katharina)

"Katharina, your appearance is too flashy. At such times Elise-sama is the most suitable." (Wilma)

Or rather, I think that Veith-san, who is naive and doesn't know about the outside world, might have pulled back from Katharina with her extremely gaudy look.

There's probably also the reason that there's a priest like Elise in this territory, too.

However, while thinking that it will take time for Veith-san to fix his low profile attitude, I returned to the topic and touched upon another matter.

"It sure is a wide Maroimo field." (Wendelin)

"Yes. We painfully expanded it up until here for several decades since the era of my great-grandfather." (Veith)

According to Veith-san, they reclaimed the mountain slopes where wyverns and flying dragons won't visit, extending the Maroimo fields up to this place.

"I heard that it's difficult to cultivate Maroimo."

"As a matter of fact, if it's just about growing them, it will be fine as long as it's not a too cold climate. However, in order for them to taste sweet, it's necessary to pay attention to various things besides the location of the field and the climatic conditions." (Veith)

Veith-san becomes talkative once the topic shifts to Maroimo. I think he likes cultivating potatoes more than swinging swords.

"(He would be happier as a researcher than as a noble...)"

Ina whispered, but she's correct that he's likely more suited to be a researcher than a noble. He's a person that would willingly doctorate in the agricultural department at a university in Japan. I think he's the type that would be introduced as Professor Maroimo in TV variety shows.

"Even if you directly plant the Maroimo seeds, you won't be able to harvest many of them." (Veith)

The place where Veith-san led us was a facility resembling a greenhouse where sweet potatoes are allowed to sprout.

There are several greenhouses inside a hut next to the fields. Them being sheltered in a hut seems to be for the sake of the greenhouses' soil to not get too moist due to rain.

"The potato seeds are allowed to sprout in the greenhouses like this before the vine parts are planted in the fields." (Veith)

"I guess that part is similar to sweet potatoes." (Wendelin)

"Correct. Maroimo is a mutation of sweet potatoes after all." (Veith)

That's why their cultivation method overlaps with sweet potatoes.

"After planting the vines, they will be harvested in around three months." (Veith)

The continent's south is all year long warm if you exclude the mountainous districts which are cold in the morning and evening.

In other words, it's possible to harvest Maroimo three times a year.

No, if you do it skillfully, you can harvest them four times, I think?

"The sprouting in a greenhouse, the fields on the slope, and the difference in temperature; are there any other necessary conditions?" (Wendelin)

"The quality of the soil. If you look at this, you will see that we frequently add extra fertilizer." (Veith)

"Young master——!"

At that moment, one of the farmers working nearby showed up.

"I want ya ta look at the state of ma field's soil."

"Is the soil no good?" (Veith)

"Da fertilizer might be slightly lackin'."

"I will have a look right away." (Veith)

"I'm sorry, young master."

Veith-san went to the field of that farmer, picks up some soil and started to check its flavor by ingesting it.

"You can grasp its state by doing that?" (Wendelin)

"Yes. I think it requires a little bit more fertilizer. Fermented river fish is no good. You have to use compost made out of fallen leaves and grass." (Veith)

"Nothin' less of ya, young master. I'll add extra fertilizer right away."

"Good idea. It will become sweet if you deal with it quickly." (Veith)

Tasting the soil to check its quality.

I feel like there had been such people in the past.

"It's difficult, isn't it?"

"There's no problem if it's just the cultivation, but making it sweet-tasting is complicated." (Veith)

In exchange, the Maroimo, which are sweet after growing up with troubles, are sold immediately. Because of that they are probably so popular that they often don't reach Breitburg.

"Thanks to that I'm all day long on the fields." (Veith)

That's the kind of explanation we received from him, but...



"I'm feeling very guilty..."

"Wend, something like the management and guarding of a tunnel is impossible for that person."

"It's a complete miss-match."

"We should entrust it to someone else."

"I'm pretty sure he won't do it."

While baking Maroimo in stone ware as snacks in front of the tunnel, we talk with each other in a circle, but the words coming out of the mouths of Elise and the others were 『Entrusting the tunnel's management to Veith-san is almost impossible and pitiable』.

"That does make sense. As even I had my fair share of troubles, it will be unreasonable for that man, who has absolutely no experience, to suddenly lead 1,000 people." (Erwin)

I guess Erw, who commanded troops even though only a few during the civil war, wants to say that it would be a miracle if Veith-san would be able to properly command 1,000 guards to manage and guard the tunnel.

"Even before that, it's nothing he himself desires either."

"That man, he will become extremely exhausted from accumulated stress and worry, won't he?"

Erw was somehow able to manage since he's mentally tough, but Veith-san possesses such a faint heart that he immediately prostrates once he sees a high-ranking noble. As his father is much the same, we can't rely on him either. As such there's probably no other choice but to have either Margrave Breithilde or the Kingdom own the tunnel's entrance, no matter whether it's right or wrong.

"Suddenly everyone's behaving as if they are good people, aren't they? Won't it be a blessing for the Eulenberg family to have their territory relocated to a wide area that allows them to cultivate plenty of Maroimo?"

"Right...?"

There's no contact from His Majesty of Finance Minister Rückner, who went back to tackle the

open issues as homework.

Even we are at a point where anymore of this will make us give up hope.

"Milord, the Maroimo are done." (Haruka)

"Ooh! They finished baking, eh!? What a nice aroma." (Wendelin)

Haruka, who watched the fire, informs me that the Maroimo finished baking.

Once I opened the lid of my self-made baked sweet potato device, a savory, sweet aroma spread all over.

With a blueprint drawn by me with my meager artistic skill as reference, this device was created by a magic tool artisan whom we invited to the Baumeister Earldom.

Thanks to a highly efficient magic crystal, it can bake potatoes for a long period once you supply mana to it.

The stones used for the device are lava stones that emit infrared rays. I processed them with magic in a way that they have the same size.

Because of that the production cost was around 500,000 cents, but that should be in the range of a permissible expense for being able to enjoy delicious stone baked sweet potatoes.

At the very least I don't consider it to be expensive.

Besides, this is a prototype.

If we assume mass production, the costs will likely become a lot cheaper.

"Wow. Even the nectar of these Maroimo is oozing out."

Maroimo have a stronger sugary taste than the sweet potatoes I encountered in my previous life.

Once you bake them on hot stones, it goes as far as them dripping with nectar.

The trickling nectar was scorched by the heated stones, causing the sweet scent enveloping the vicinity to become irresistible.

Just as I thought, it was a very good idea to have had a baked sweet potato device made by paying money.

"I think this way it's even more delicious than steamed."

"Sweeeeeet!"

No matter which world, women love baked sweet potato.

All of them are eating their share with expressions full of happiness.

Of course I'm overjoyed as well.

"Dear, let's go back and buy them as souvenir once again." (Elise)

"You're right. If you make pudding and cake with this potato, they might be tasty."

"Once we return home, I will try making them as test."

We are in a state of escaping reality due to the deliciousness of the Maroimo, but His Majesty and the ministers should be the ones to decide what should be done about the tunnel's management.

Since there's no way to take any further steps as long as they don't make up their minds, we finished the rest of the day by hunting flying dragons nearby.

"Say, Wend." (Erwin)

"What is it, Erw?" (Wendelin)

"I suddenly thought of it just now, but isn't it fine even if we don't particularly come here every day?" (Erwin)

"...Now that you mention it..." (Wendelin)

The probability that we will be told anything by His Majesty in a day or two is low. Even if we come here, all we can do is eating Maroimo as snack, and hunt wyverns and flying dragons, I guess...

"...I don't consider that to be bad, though."

"No, no, no, wait! As Earl Baumeister that's bad, isn't it!?" (Erwin)

For a change I ended up being rebutted by Erw with the sound argument, 『There's also work only a noble can do』.

"Having said that, if I pretend that I'm indeed coordinating the concessions like a noble in such way, Roderich shouldn't increase my workload either." (Wendelin)

While pretending to work as a noble, I will calmly spend my time in the Eulenberg territory. After all it's not really bad to hunt the wyverns and flying dragons inhabiting the Greater League Mountain Range as adventurer either.

"I'm not worried at all." (Wendelin)

"It's no problem, but do you believe that such deception will work against Roderich? What do you think, Elise?" (Ina)

"Let's see, I'm sure he will immediately grasp the state of affairs..." (Elise)

Before Elise could finish speaking, there was an incoming call on my MHCD. As I pick it up right away, I can hear a familiar voice.

『Milord, as for the discovered tunnel and the circumstances of the Eulenberg territory, I grasped the details from the message by His Majesty. Given that I can't believe that the situation will change in a day or two, I'd like you to return for now and complete the same work as before...』 (Roderich)

"Okay..." (Wendelin)

Ina's prediction proved to be completely right, resulting in us returning to the mansion for the moment.

My plan of continuing to live as adventurer in the Eulenberg territory while eating Maroimo fell apart in no time.

"Uuh...Ina, because you made such prediction..." (Wendelin)

"It's my fault?" (Ina)

"Not quite, but...it makes me want to say so." (Wendelin)

"I'm sorry, Wend. Look, it's also because Amalie-san is going to come to the mansion, right?" (Ina)

That's a joyful occasion, but doesn't that make me seem like quite the lustful man?  
Moreover, it even comes from Ina with who has been keeping me company for a long time.

"Anyway, we have to go back today." (Wendelin)

"That's correct. Go on, dear." (Elise)

"Yeeees~" (Wendelin)

That how it was decided that we would return to the mansion, but the conclusion of the all-important matter with the tunnel still ended up being postponed.

### **Chapter 3 – The Dual-Wielding Dragon Killer Girl**

"Milord, how about a refill of tea?" (Amalie)

"Amalie-san, we are inside the mansion, so feel free to call me as usual." (Wendelin)

"That's no good since I'm in front of Elise-sama and the others." (Amalie)

"I'm telling you it's fine. Now, go on." (Wendelin)

"But..." (Amalie)

"What's the need in holding back? I'm Earl Baumeister, the most important person in this house. That very person is telling you to call him as usual. In other words, this is also an order. Come on now." (Wendelin)

"Then, without reservation...Wend-kun." (Amalie)

"Yes. Please give me another serving of tea." (Wendelin)



Thanks to the information provided by Arnest, we succeeded in discovering the tunnel running through the Greater League Mountain Range.

However, because the entrance on the other side is part of an insignificant territory called Eulenberg, and not the Breithilde Margraviate, we ended up returning home for now, burdened with the problem of what to do about the tunnel's management.

That's because the rest requires a decision by His Majesty and the ministers.

On the way back home I took Amalie-san with us from Paul-niisan's territory.

The reason is that she needs my 『Teleportation』 to regularly meet with her children as it has been decided that my nephews, Karl and Oskar, will be given into the custody of the Meinbach household, which is located far away, for the sake of education.

Even for me that's quite convenient. Since Elise and the others gave their permission, she has returned to the mansion together with us.

The next morning I was served upon by Amalie-san in a maid uniform.

Essentially she's treated as my concubine, but her official social position is that of our Head Maid. Because she said that she has to be at least slightly useful, her focus became taking care of me.

"The tea isn't too strong, is it?" (Amalie)

"It's fine. This isn't our old home." (Wendelin)

"That's right, isn't it? In the past we used the tea leaves until they lost their color in the hot water."  
(Amalie)

"Even when they still had color, it was tasteless tea." (Wendelin)

"How very true." (Amalie)

It sure is nice with Amalie-san here as we can wallow in old stories.  
The old Knight Baumeister household was stingy. We reused mate tea leaves to the very limit.  
Usually the leaves had barely any color and absolutely no flavor left during their last use. We nostalgically remembered those times.

"Once they finally lost all color, we scattered them on the floor during cleaning or removed the stench by throwing them into the sink." (Amalie)

"Really? You did something like that?" (Wendelin)

Cleaning with the washed-out leaves or removing the stench in the kitchen with them, I suppose that the so-called practical housework knowledge.

I think the biggest reason was economizing, but I think not being able to obtain detergent and deodorant in the former Knight Baumeister territory played a big role, too.

"Of course now I won't go as far anymore, however." (Amalie)

"Makes sense." (Wendelin)

After all even the Knight Baumeister household succeeded by Hermann-niisan and Paul-niisan's household have become normal noble households nowadays.

That means such poverty is a good memory — though I don't know whether it's truly good — of the past.

"I have to pay attention since I often end up making the tea too thinly out of habit." (Amalie)

"Really?" (Wendelin)

Once I'm told that, it might be slightly weaker than the tea prepared by Elise, but it's not like it's so thin that she has to feel anxious about it.

Since I was sweaty after the morning training, there's absolutely no problem with it being on the slightly weaker side. Rather, it's just right to down it in one go.

"As I was sweaty, the tea might be just right with this intensity." (Wendelin)

While saying so, I drained the tea which had been brewed by Amalie-san.

Just when I was thinking that I might have had enough tea by now, Elise arrived while bringing a pot.

"Dear, you have to intake plenty of water after sweating." (Elise)

I admired that such knowledge exists in the church as well, but right now I'd like to refrain since my

stomach is somewhat full.

"Thank you, Elise. But I will drink it later, okay?" (Wendelin)

But, things seldom go as one wishes.

"Dear, please don't hesitate." (Elise)

While saying that, Elise pours mate tea into my empty cup.  
It was her usual, calmly smiling expression, but the smile didn't reach her eyes.

"(Eh? Why is Elise so unhappy?)" (Wendelin)

Did I do something to make her angry?

I casually looked for help from Erw, who was eating breakfast at the same table, but at such crucial time he was happily chatting with Haruka while eating, not noticing my plead for help at all.

"(Erw——!)" (Wendelin)

And, in addition to Elise, even Ina, Luise, Wilma and Katharina turned up next to me while holding tea pots.

"Wend, it's no good if you don't drink more as you sweat a lot during your morning training." (Ina)

"Yeah, yeah, drink it down in one gulp without any reservations." (Luise)

"If it's you, Wend-sama, you can still go for a while until you're full." (Wilma)

"Certainly you're not going to say that you can't drink anymore, now are you?" (Katharina)

"No..." (Wendelin)

I succumb to their pressure. Due to me drinking plenty of mate tea in the morning, my stomach swelled up like a balloon.



"Why did something like that happen?" (Wendelin)

My stomach was still full to the limit, but since I was bothered why it had turned out like that, I decided to consult with the experienced-looking Therese.

At such times it's really convenient that her mansion is close-by.

"As usual thou are somewhat slow. Elise and the others put the conflicts in their hearts behind them for now and accepted Amalie. And yet thou can't possibly expect that it will be fine with thou only

getting happily along with Amalie." (Therese)

"But you know, I have to make sure that Amalie-san, who just came to the mansion, won't become isolated there." (Wendelin)

After all it's painful to be a loner.  
I know that as someone who experienced it.

"Thou got it backwards. Because your sister-in-law is the newcomer, thou should actually display a stance of prioritizing Elise and the others while allowing Amalie to only act as thy waitress in the beginning, right?" (Therese)

"Now that you mention it, it makes sense." (Wendelin)

She has devoted herself to being my caretaker. Come to think of it, she called me 『Milord』 while staying discrete, but it was me who made her change it to the usual 『Wend-kun』.

"Even Amalie has no choice to call thou like that if ordered by thou, has she? Listen, Wendelin. Since thou are the family head, thou can freely order the people of thy household around, but there are also times where thou will cause harm with thy orders like today morning. Make sure to remember that." (Therese)

I think that the majority of people believe it to be enviable to have multiple wives, but it's also a fact that there are many situations where you must pay attention to balance or hierarchy.

"Aren't Elise and the others good wives? It's exactly because they thought that thou would be sad if they lashed out at Amalie that they glossed it over by making thou drink plenty of tea, Wendelin." (Therese)

I suppose they gave me a warning by openly showing their jealousy.

"I wonder, do I have too many wives?" (Wendelin)

"If thou think so, pay attention from now on." (Therese)

"I will reflect on it." (Wendelin)

"Good that thou understand. An obedient Wendelin who reflects on his mistakes, huh? Isn't that cute?" (Therese)

Somehow Therese lately often behaves like an elder sister...  
Leaving aside her inner workings, she's actually older than me, so it's no problem, but isn't my mental age that of a grown-up?

"Uuh...you're older, all the same..." (Wendelin)

"There are many nobles that have several wives, but it's rare that all of them get along like at thy place, Wendelin. There are also many cases where they form factions and oppose each other. Thou better appreciate such thing not happening." (Therese)

"Got it." (Wendelin)

I'm really grateful that I immediately get an answer if I consult with Therese at such times. There were issues on the first day, but Amalie-san was accepted properly in the Earl Baumeister household, and the cases where I consulted with Therese increased, too.

\* \* \*

"So, I just have to carry out public works? Or is it the usual and boring aristocratic tasks?" (Wendelin)

"As a matter of fact an emergency task has arisen that's very suited for you, Milord, and your friends as it's quite close to adventurer work." (Roderich)

◆◆◆◆◆

The next day after we returned to the mansion, we listened to Roderich about today's schedule. Just when I thought that it would be the usual public work within the earldom, he mentions another job.

Moreover he says that it's a job with a strong component of adventuring, huh?

"An adventurer-like work? You mean monster subjugation or such?" (Luise)

"Plainly said, it's just as you say, Luise-sama. The wyverns and flying dragons inhabiting the Greater League Mountain Range have suddenly increased their activity at various places lately. It's necessary to quickly thin out their numbers to some extent." (Roderich)

"I wonder, did they maybe get provoked by the frequent flight traffic of the magic airships?" (Ina)

"Since I can't believe that dragons, even if they are lower-ranked ones, propagate so easily, it might be mostly as you say, Ina-sama." (Roderich)

Because the Baumeister Earldom has made progress with its development, it reached the point of several magic airships regularly traveling the skies over the Greater League Mountain Range. I guess the increased activity of the wyverns and flying dragons is owed to that.

"Wyverns and flying dragons don't possess such high reproduction rate. But, even if few of them are being born, there's always a considerable number of them around, given that they have no other natural enemies besides humans in contrast to animals and other monsters. Their surroundings becoming noisy seems to be the most probable reason for them being agitated." (Roderich)

"It could be that they believe their territory to be invaded." (Luise)

Is Luise's thought correct?

The monsters' mode of life isn't that different from wild animals after all.

"Let me add further to that. Plenty of humans, potential prey, are moving around." (Erwin)

"Hey." (Wendelin)

Erw, I think that you're right there, but your remark was a bit imprudent.

"Once the tunnel is opened, they might become even more active."

"Even until finding the tunnel's entrance, we took on quite the number of them."

Back then Wilma and the others fought back the wyverns and flying dragons which came flying from the mountains over and over again.

Won't people get attacked by them if we proceed with the development even further from now on?

"That's something we can't let slide. Wyverns and flying dragons are powerful monsters. There's probably few people who can deal with them, so it's our turn, just like the other day." (Katharina)

"There it is! Katharina's certain death technique of 『A noble's duty』!" (Erwin)

"Certain death...haven't you been born into a noble family as well, Erwin-san?" (Katharina)

Having been teased by Erw, Katharina rebutted with that question.

"Right now I'm a retainer of the Earl Baumeister household as I have lost my nobility when I became an adult, you know? If milord orders so, I will go." (Erwin)

"Please show a bit more motivation!" (Katharina)

These two seem to have a really questionable compatibility. I often catch sight of Katharina flaring up at Erw.

However, in most cases Erw dodges her skillfully.

Given that Erw's communication skills are high, he might be hard to deal with for Katharina who has a loner disposition instead.

"It's the same for me and Haruka-san, but it's a very pragmatic reason: It's the general rule to face wyverns and flying dragons in a group." (Erwin)

"That's right. We are swordsmen, so we mainly face opponents in interpersonal combat or monsters that live on the ground. Once it comes to facing an enemy that can fly like wyverns, the most we can do is to deliver a single blow while at the same time avoiding an incoming attack." (Haruka)

"As Haruka-san and I can't use magic, we are unable to fly, too. This is your time to shine, Katharina." (Erwin)

"If you cut the wyverns' wings, causing them to fall to the ground, we will be able to deal with them as well." (Haruka)

"I see. If it's like that, it sure is my domain as someone who's strong at wind magic." (Katharina)

Nothing less of those two who will be married soon. They cleverly matched their arguments and restored Katharina's mood.

"This time it's not a job where you will be done after hunting one or two of them. It's necessary to hunt them efficiently as a group. That means you will thin out their numbers drastically in one go. Well, it might be unreasonable, but I'd like you to hold back on making them go extinct."  
(Roderich)

"Why?"

"It's an economical issue." (Roderich)

"I suppose there are people who make a living out of circulating the raw materials of wyverns and flying dragons on the market by regularly hunting them." (Elise)

"It's as you say, Elise-sama." (Roderich)

A long time ago it was rare to hunt wyverns and flying dragon in the Greater League Mountains. But nowadays many adventurer groups specializing on dragon hunting are permanently staying in the Knight Baumeister territory.

There are also plans to establish such hunter bases along the Greater League Mountain Range outside the Knight Baumeister territory.

Accordingly goods such as the hunted dragons' dismantled meat and other materials will begin to widely spread on other markets.

In other words, if the dragons were to be annihilated just when they might turn into a source of livelihood for many people, those people would lose that very livelihood.

"We have to hunt the wyverns and flying dragons without damaging the dragon hunt as industry while thinning out their numbers enough so that they won't cause damage to the people. A sophisticated ability to judge is indispensable." (Roderich)

A bit of political judgment might be necessary as well, but different from the public work so far, it's a job that's quite close to that of an adventurer.

Grasping how many of them we can hunt in total is Roderich's domain. It's nothing we can judge while on-site.

"Please leave it to us, Roderich-san. One who is a noble has to wield their power when it comes to protecting the livelihood of the common people." (Katharina)

That's exactly the time when a noble has the duty to save their people with their power.

Something like that was called noblesse oblige, wasn't it?

It's not like Katharina will decide how many dragons are to be hunted, but she seems to regard this as a job appropriate for a noble, causing her to be in a really good mood.

"As expected of you, Katharina-sama." (Roderich)

"Oh——ho ho. Even though I might look like this, I'm still a noble after all." (Katharina)

"If we don't do at least that much, we won't be able to demand taxes either." (Wilma)

"That's certainly true, but...isn't that a bit too blunt, Wilma-san?" (Katharina)

She states that it's a noble's task to proactively carry out such work. Moreover, being praised by Roderich for her attitude, Katharina's tension was boosted, but once Wilma bluntly pointed out the simple facts, she became quiet right away.

"Wilma-san, you're a noble too, aren't you...? Since you're the adopted daughter of that Minister Edgar, giving it your all..." (Katharina)

"I'm his adopted daughter. Also, the higher ranking the nobility with a long history, the more disillusioned you become, unexpectedly. Besides..." (Wilma)

"Besides, what, Wilma-san?" (Katharina)

"This is work. We just have to carry it out efficiently and calmly." (Wilma)

I suppose that means there's a big difference in the way of perception regarding work between Katharina and Wilma.

I think it's not like either is correct, though.

"So, Roderich-san, where are we going to carry out the extermination of wyverns and flying dragons? Or, aren't we actually lacking manpower with just our group?" (Elise)

At that point Elise asked Roderich about the details.

"Of course it's not just your group. There are several places where wyverns and flying dragons appear in the Baumeister Earldom. Many veteran adventurers and dragon-hunting specialists have been deployed." (Roderich)

As expected of Roderich. He's not going to entrust this job solely to us.  
He mentioned that he already arranged the deployment of personnel besides us.

"Until the assigned number has been hunted, we will give an incentive by paying extra for the raw materials." (Roderich)

I guess he wants to make sure of quickly finishing the hunt of the scheduled number of dragons by paying extra until the norm is reached.

Once the extra payment for the raw material comes to an end, the veteran adventurers will likely discontinue hunting the dragons as it will be more efficient to return to the Demon Forest. Since returning to their home base won't result in any costs for the dragon-hunting specialists either, it will be possible to prevent over-hunting.

"That's all fine, but is it really alright with having groups of dragon-hunting specialist around?"

(Erwin)

"Yeah. What if they start a dispute again?" (Ina)

Erw and Ina not having a good impression of the dragon-hunting specialists is probably owed to the group of the Margrave Browig household — the matter with Thomas and his men — having caused a rebellion in the Knight Baumeister territory before.

They pretended to be a dragon-hunting specialist party and infiltrated the Knight Baumeister territory.

"Erwin, Ina-sama, those were fakes that called themselves dragon-hunting specialists. The real specialists won't do something that likely brings them no profit, but only risks. The dragon-hunting specialists are an assembly of strict folks." (Roderich)

They hunt dragons as efficiently as possible in a group, and share the reward in order to not squabble.

Certainly, the real dragon-hunting specialists probably won't assist in crimes.

"Roderich-san, you're quite well-informed, aren't you?" (Luise)

"Luise-sama, despite my appearance I belonged to a famous group of dragon-hunting specialists in the past, albeit only for a short time." (Roderich)

"Roderich-san, you've really gotten around quite a bit." (Luise)

Surely we didn't expect him to have experience in having worked in such field.

Luise was surprised by the abundance of Roderich's work experience.

"For that reason I asked a group of acquaintances to help with this time's job. There won't be any need for your group to move all over, milord. The area you are in charge of is here on the map." (Roderich)

Roderich spread out a map and pointed at a specific area.

"Isn't it slightly far away from human habitation?"

Location-wise it's at the halfway point between the Knight Baumeister territory and Paul-niisan's territory.

It's an uninhabited place where the development hasn't started at all yet.

"This place?"

"I don't know why, but even though this place is deserted, the wyverns' and flying dragons' activity around here has increased. I judged that it would be best to exterminate them to some extent. The reason why it has been assigned to your group is because Elise-sama will come with you."

(Roderich)

"Healing magic, huh?"

"Yes."

If it's an area close to inhabited places, it's possible to get injured people treated by carrying them there, even if there's no healing magician with the adventurers, but if it's a place in the middle of nowhere, it will be difficult to get medical treatment without a healer. It will cause a big difference in regards to the survival rate of injured people.

"No matter how specialized on dragon hunting they might be, there are few groups with healers. All the more if it's adventurers that participate temporarily. Accordingly, your group that has Elise-sama is in charge of the area that's the furthest away from human settlements." (Roderich)

"I see. As long as His Majesty and Margrave Breithilde don't say anything, the matter with the tunnel won't proceed anyway. I guess we will treat ourselves to a dragon extermination for a change of pace." (Wendelin)

"If the situation makes progress in any way, I will contact you, so please focus on this work for now." (Roderich)

"Got it. It's time to depart then, huh?" (Wendelin)

For that reason it was decided that we will participate in the thinning out of wyverns and flying dragons.

The place appointed to us by Roderich is a mountain slope.

Because the dragon-hunting specialists have headed out ahead of us, we first moved to the Knight Baumeister territory with 『Teleportation』, and then decided to move by magic car (T/N: four-wheeler, but I can't be bothered to type it out anymore) from there.

"Sorry. Today I have no time. These are the presents." (Wendelin)

"It can't be helped if you're busy. Souvenirs from the Empire, huh? Thanks." (Hermann)

On the way we made a very short visit at the Knight Baumeister territory, and I talked about our current job while passing souvenirs from the Empire to Hermann-niisan.

"Is this place doing fine?" (Wendelin)

"Yeah, since that incident, real dragon-hunting specialists are permanently staying here in turns. Because the wyverns and flying dragons are hunted regularly, it doesn't feel real to us that they've become more active." (Hermann)

Since the new family head, Hermann-niisan, is making the Knight Baumeister territory grow, the production of honey and honey liquor has increased, the reclamation of farmland is advancing, lodging is offered to the adventurers specialized in dragon hunting, and even dismantling contracts for the hunted dragons have been established. The territory has developed quite significantly compared to before the Empire's civil war.

Honestly speaking, there's a world of difference if compared to the past Knight Baumeister territory.

"However, we don't have the leeway to send people over from our side. If this place becomes short-

handed, we won't be able to cope with their attacks." (Hermann)

"That makes sense. But, you don't have to worry about that."

Since a remarkable group of dragon-hunting specialists had been sent in, it will be an easy victory if they struggle together with us, according to Roderich  
If Roderich goes that far in his praise, it should be fine.

"We're heading on-site then." (Wendelin)

"Be careful. Come for a visit when you've got spare time. The children are looking forward to it as well." (Hermann)

While receiving Hermann-niisan's farewell, we headed towards the spot where the wyverns and flying dragons increased their activity, but...



"Bah! Isn't their car pretty fast?"

It would take time to walk to the location. Thus we decided to use the magic cars, like the time in the tunnel, since I never went to the place with 『Teleportation』 so far.  
Everyone should have properly practiced driving, but the speed of the magic car with Erw's group seems to be oddly high...  
Last time everyone practiced it diligently, but did I overlook something?

"Hey, Wend." (Luise)

"What's wrong, Luise?" (Wendelin)

"Did Haruka actually practice driving? I don't remember her having done it, but what about you?" (Luise)

"..." (Wendelin)

Certainly, if I'm asked like this, Haruka didn't participate at the time when we headed to the tunnel while practicing with the magic cars as she was busy with her marriage preparations.  
That means, she's driving a magic car for the first time today, isn't she?

"Isn't she skillful for it being her first time?" (Wendelin)

"Though she's terribly fast."

I'm certain it's that.

Haruka is usually quiet, but she's probably one of those people who speed too much, or rather whose personalities change once they grab the wheel.  
Even in this world there are people whose character changes after mounting a horse, so it's not such

an odd story either.

"There's no particular harm in it, is there?" (Wendelin)

As we're driving across plains, there are hardly any obstacles.  
Something like a traffic accident shouldn't occur that easily.  
She's also skilled at driving. The most relieving element was the fact that it's not our magic car.

"You know, Wend, don't you think that it's slightly strange?"

"Strange? What is?" (Wendelin)

Isn't the other car with Elise, Ina, Luise and me inside running well, too?  
I feel like we are slightly fast as well, but at present that's nothing particularly weird either.

"Elise is really good at everything."

Today Elise volunteered to drive for a change.  
But, she's a perfect superwoman after all.  
I'm bothered about her being a bit too quiet, but that doesn't mean that it's particularly...odd, right?

"We're normally catching up with Haruka who is driving too fast, though."

"It's because it would be a hassle if we got separated and lost sight of them." (Wendelin)

This place is no mountain slope, but once we get close to our destination, it's possible that we will be attacked by wyverns and flying dragons.  
Elise is probably taking that point into consideration, too.  
Isn't she driving well while making sure to not lose Haruka?

"Nothing less of Elise. She can deal with it even without being told anything." (Wendelin)

However, the situation immediately changed after that.

"Wend, somehow Erw's face is pale as he's sitting on the passenger's seat of the magic car over there."

I can't see it well from here, but it appears as if Erw is saying something to Haruka...

"Erw, that moron, don't speak to someone who's driving. Won't it be dangerous if she gets distracted?" (Wendelin)

Even if it's a plain with no obstacles, that's a rule he has to observe at least.  
I think I have to scold him later.

"To me it looks like he's trying to stop Haruka though..." (Luise)

Immediately after Luise said that, the speed of the magic car driven by Haruka went up a notch all at once.

It's a velocity as if she's driving on a German Autobahn.

"The speed meter is completely swinging. It can get even faster! Incredible!" (Wendelin)

I couldn't hide my surprise towards the magic car that exhibited an performance that wouldn't lose out to cars on Earth.

"Wend, this is not the time for admiration. Look." (Ina)

Ahead of where Ina with her good eyesight pointed we could see Wilma, who had hardened like a Jizo statue, and Katharina, who was seeking help by turning our way, on the rear seats.

"This is truly unexpected..." (Wendelin)

For Haruka to be a speed maniac...

"Elise, you don't have to forcibly match speed with the other car, okay?" (Wendelin)

Katharina should be able to handle it somehow with magic if they have an accident in worst case...otherwise they will surely get injured heavily, but...although I spoke to Elise to drive safely, she stayed silent for some reason.

No, she's saying something to herself, isn't she?

"...I can't catch up...unless I raise the speed a lot more...I can't yield...more speed should be possible..." (Elise)

"Umm...Elise-san?"

Isn't her vocal tone different from usual?

"It's alright, we can still go for much more...I'm speeding up!" (Elise)

Once she shouts all of a sudden, Elise pressed down the accelerator to the limit in one go.

"Uwaah!" (Wendelin)

""Kyaaaaa!""

Due to the sudden acceleration, Luise, Ina and I were pressed into our seats, but the car driven by Elise has overtaken the car driven by Haruka in one go.



"What are you going to do after overtaking them!?" (Ina)

"Ahaha...Ina-san, since we must not get separated..." (Elise)

Elise answered Ina's protest, but once I looked properly, Elise's eyes were completely fixated. Even her laughter is weird and different from usual.

"Did Elise also love speeding!?" (Wendelin)

No way, for even Elise to be a speed maniac...  
An unexpected truth came to light, but changing the driver in this situation is impossible.  
Furthermore...

"Haruka's magic car passed us again!"

And when her car passed us, we could see Erw's ghastly pale face, Wilma who has turned into a Jizo statue after all, and Katharina who seems to mumble something to herself while holding her wand.

As expected of a speed maniac. Moreover, Haruka seems to be the type that hates to be overtaken by someone else.

"Tsk..." (Elise)

"Luise, clicking your tongue is vulgar." (Wendelin)

"Wend, it wasn't me. It was Elise." (Luise)

"Haa? No way." (Wendelin)

While thinking that there's no way for Elise, who was strictly raised as a lady of a high-ranking noble, to click her tongue, I look at here as she clutches the wheel once more, and...

"To overtake me...you've got guts. But..." (Elise)

"...We completely failed at our selection of drivers. I guess I will pay attention next time..."

"Wend! As if that's the issue here!"

"I will somehow manage if we have an accident." (Wendelin)

Just like Katharina, I take out my wand and prepare for the worst case.  
In my case a wand is unnecessary to cast magic, but it might spare us injuries if I can invoke my magic as quickly as possible.  
Besides...it can't be helped that I feel anxious if I don't hold onto my wand.

"Wend, you're calmer than at the time with that roller coaster, aren't you?"

"It looks like I got used to it...though it's a nasty way to get used to it..." (Wendelin)

The roller coaster in that amusement part was a really bad experience.  
But, as I can somehow cope with Elise's reckless driving thanks to that, it hasn't been such a bad thing, I think?

"I can't pass them..." (Elise)

"Elise! It's fine even if you don't pass them!"

"No. Our husband is on this magic car, thus...what are we going to do if the family head of the Earl Baumeister household is not the one in the lead?" (Elise)

I guess she thinks that it's wrong for the retainer's car to drive ahead of the car with the lord on it. So far as it goes, it follows a certain logic...

"No way...since Erw's my guard, there are many situations where he steps in front of me."  
(Wendelin)

I'm sure Elise just wants to overtake the magic car driven by Haruka.

"Say, Wend. It wasn't that difficult at the amusement park, was it?"

I'm sure it's that.  
Elise has a character where she won't rest unless she's the fastest when grabbing the wheel. Until now I didn't notice because Elise only drove during practice.

"For Elise, who usually has a gentle character, to have such a side to her, eh?"

Also, Haruka is the same, huh?  
Is it easy for normally gentle people to become like this?

"How enlightening." (Wendelin)

"This isn't the time for adoration, now is it!?" (Ina)

"Wend, should I change with her?" (Luise)

"No, if that was possible, I would have done it long ago." (Wendelin)

It's inevitable that I'm scared as well, but I keep escaping reality by thinking about various things like this.

"Tsk!" (Elise)

Since Haruka's car passed us once again at that point, Elise's mood got worse.  
Once again stepping on the accelerator with all her power, she overtakes Haruka's car.  
Once I see the faces of Erw, Wilma and Katharina just as we overtake their car, it's obvious that they have given up.

"(Elise and Haruka will be banned from driving magic cars from now on, I guess?)"

"(Wend, you have to definitely see that through!)"

"(Absolutely!)"

"Dear, if you look ahead, you will be able to see such a wonderful, blue sky." (Elise)

"Yeah...you're right..." (Wendelin)

It's because she overtook Haruka's car on this uninhabited plain.

Once Elise can see the sky with nothing in front, her mood brightens up

After that it was a back and forth between Elise and Haruka until we reached our destination. It was a repeatedly, intense dead heat like in a certain street racer manga.



"Dear, we arrived at our destination ahead of time, didn't we?" (Elise)

"You're right, Elise." (Wendelin)

We arrived a lot faster at the point, where a large quantity of wyverns and flying dragons appears, than initially planned.

It's simple.

You could even say it's natural since we traveled while Elise and Haruka competed against each other with all their might.

It's great that we arrived early, but everyone besides the two was staggering unsteadily due to dizziness as we climbed out of the cars.

The effectiveness of the anti-travel sickness medicine we received from Arnest was a big help, but without it, everyone besides the drivers would have collapsed on the spot.

"(Well, if we had continued driving at such a speed...)"

"(So your side as well? Since Elise's eyes were glazed as she was grasping the wheel, I guess that means same happened with Haruka...)" (Wendelin)

"(The gap to her usual manner is too much!)"

"(I'm still reeling.)" (Katharina)

In a place, where Elise and Haruka couldn't listen, Erw and the others talked about their bitter experience.

"Dear, driving a car is very fun." (Elise)

"So that's what you think, Elise, I see." (Wendelin)

"You don't feel the same, dear?" (Elise)

"Look, cars are just a means for traveling. They are similar to riding a horse." (Wendelin)

"It's not like you like horse riding that much. But, that speed is irresistible." (Elise)

"Fast is sure nice, isn't it?" (Wendelin)

Elise proved the fact that she's a speed maniac, but once she came out of the car, she chatted me up with her usual smile, as if an evil spirit had finally left her.  
Maybe she reduced her everyday stress by driving.

"I want to drive on the way back, too." (Elise)

"Umm..." (Wendelin)

As I was thinking how to refuse without hurting Elise, I felt several looks stabbing my back. Once I look in the direction from where they come, Erw and the others are urging me to do something.

I'm pretty sure that they want to tell me, 『You must decline by all means!』.

"(Don't worry, I share the same opinion) Since there might be developments in the Eulenberg territory while we're subjugating wyverns, we have to reduce the travel time by using 『Teleportation』 on the way back. There will be other opportunities for you to drive, okay?" (Wendelin)

"That makes sense. I of all people had completely forgotten about the matter with the tunnel." (Elise)

"What if you drove as hobby in your free time, if you like it so much?" (Wendelin)

Given that the cars are precious, excavated items, they should be appropriate as a noble's pastime. It's like horse riding.

Besides, it also means that the more she drives by herself, the less she will drag others into it.

"Is that alright?" (Elise)

"That much should be fine. These are items we excavated to begin with." (Wendelin)

Parking one car in the mansion's courtyard and Countess Baumeister driving it as hobby in her free time shouldn't be a problem at all.

Given that Elise might have accumulated stress since the Empire's civil war, it's a cheap price to pay if Elise can get rid of it by driving a car.

"I'm jealous, Elise-sama." (Haruka)

Having heard that, the second speed maniac, Haruka, donned an expression showing how very jealous she was.

"Won't it be fine if you simply drive together, Haruka?" (Wendelin)

"Is that okay with you, milord?" (Haruka)

"I don't mind at all." (Wendelin)

As long as those two can keep the speed contests between themselves, no harm will befall us. Rather, it's very welcome.

"Elise-sama, I'm looking forward to it." (Haruka)

"Yes. I cannot help but look forward to it from now on, too." (Elise)

While saying so, the two beauties giggle happily. However, once they grab the wheel, their characters change completely. Well, there are no humans that don't have more than one face. It's no major issue if they only act like this at times of driving a car. Besides, I will definitely not get on the car with them.

"A 『Drive』 with just the two of us as couple would be dreamy. Sometime ago I had Arnest-san show me the documents he found in the tunnel." (Elise)

That shitty demon!  
Don't prattle to Elise, you stupid pointy-ear!  
Going on a drive means that I have to keep her company, doesn't it!?  
Take your sponsor into consideration and read the mood!

"『Drive』, you say Elise-sama?" (Haruka)

"Couples and married men and women depart on a journey in a car. It seems that's a 『Drive』." (Elise)

"I also want to go on a drive together with Erw-san." (Haruka)

"That's really great. That also means we can take off somewhere together in two cars." (Elise)

A drive with Elise and Haruka behind the wheel...? Won't that definitely turn into a speed contest!? Moreover, I'm expected to participate!  
Once I accidentally look at Erw, his face has become pale after it was decided that he will join in, too.  
Certainly there's no way for him to refuse a wish from Haruka.

"(Everyone! Eh...? Why are you looking away?)"

Ina, Luise, Wilma and Katharina averted their eyes from Erw and me. Relief is showing on their faces as they are probably thinking that it finished without them getting involved.  
They don't want to get on a car driven by Haruka or Elise anymore.  
Their opinion seems to match on that.

"It would be great if we could quickly get some time to go on a drive, right Haruka-san?" (Elise)

"Yes, Elise-sama. I'm looking forward to it very much." (Haruka)

The two looked very happy, but because it was decided that Erw and I would be regularly dragged into their reckless driving in the near future, we felt depressed at what's awaiting us.

\* \* \*

"You guys are Earl Baumeister-sama's party, huh? I've heard about you from Roderich...you're already tired, Earl-sama? Was it such a long journey?"

"There are various reasons..." (Wendelin)

"I guess it's difficult to be a noble."

Having gotten off the cars, we walked for a bit and then arrived at the appearance point of the wyverns and flying dragons.

As Roderich said, a party of dragon hunters with several dozen members has put up their tents there. The leader of that group gave us his greetings.

His age is around 50 years. He has a sunburnt skin, a trained, slender body, and wears an eyepatch as he apparently can't see on his left eye.

"I'm Golf, the leader of 『Dragon Fighters』. I think we are fairly famous as party of dragon hunting experts." (Golf)

"I'm Wendelin, the leader of the 『Dragon Busters』." (Wendelin)

"So that's your official name, Earl Baumeister-sama? My bad, I heard the story from Roderich a long time ago." (Golf)

Since we're working as adventurers today, I introduced us with our party name, but it really feels like it's been quite a while since we last used the name 『Dragon Busters』.

"I actually had forgotten all about that name." (Erwin)

"Hey!" (Wendelin)

What's with the forgetting?

I scolded Erw.

...In reality was starting to forget it as well, though.

"I guess there's also the work as Lord-sama of this area. Since we've heard of your abilities, your help is greatly appreciated. So...you got exhausted from traveling to this remote place, right? We're taking a rest as well, so come this way." (Golf)

"Thanks." (Wendelin)

Given that we were exhausted in mind and body thanks to Elise's and Haruka's driving, it was a big

help that Golf-san and his group had put up the tents already.

He guided us to a big tent.

Since the 『Dragon Fighters』 is a large-scaled dragon hunter party, several tents had been put up at the site that became the campground.

Smoke was rising at several places as they were preparing food, but the ones cooking are working very efficiently.

"They are a big party, thus they have people specialized on cooking with them, too." (Elise)

Elise, who cooks the most among us, admired the efficiency of the big party which she sees for the first time.

"Milady, what you focus your eyes on is slightly different from other adventurers, I suppose. Since we're always traveling with these numbers, the meals are left to cooking experts. They are young, but since they are fellows who want to open a restaurant after saving some money here, I can guarantee their skills." (Golf)

"What about battle?"

"As expected, they are amateurs at fighting as they wish to become cooks. We have them keep weapons for self-defense just in case, but during the hunt they withdraw." (Golf)

With these numbers they are rather a small military force than an adventurer party.

I mean, there are even people working as logistical support who don't participate in the hunts. Once we entered the big tent, a young apprentice prepared some tea at once.

"In addition there are also guys that maintain our weapons, armors and traps, supply goods such as food, and take care of the accounting. Roderich not only did the accounting, but also joined in on the hunts, however. He's always been a skilled guy. I thought that it would be fine to make him the next leader of the 『Dragon Fighters』, but I guess now he's the household manager of the Earl Baumeister household. He really became someone completely out of our reach." (Golf)

We immediately talked about Roderich's time in the 『Dragon Fighters』, but I ended up admiring him for being able to do anything.

"It looks like Roderich-san can make a living anywhere."

"I truly think there's nothing that puts Roderich in a bind."

Accordingly it may be taken as him being somewhat a Jack of all trades and master of none.

"Wend-sama, you shouldn't have any trouble to make a living either." (Wilma)

"Guess so." (Wendelin)

As Wilma says, I should be able to live quite luxuriously if I work as adventurer as I'm a magician.

"If you say that, same also applies to Katharina, doesn't it?"

"A magician can continue to live adequately even as solo adventurer. There's no lack of means to earn income either."

In addition to this, Katharina seems tougher than me. She has a high loner resistance, too.

"Wendelin-san, did you just think something rude?" (Katharina)

"That's out of the question. Ah——, the tea is delicious." (Wendelin)

I drink the tea to dodge Katharina's questioning.

"Golf-san, it's no problem for us to take a rest?" (Haruka)

"It's fine, young lady. Young lady, you're a person from Mizuho?" (Golf)

"You're quite knowledgeable, aren't you?" (Haruka)

Haruka was surprised that Golf-san had noticed that she's from Mizuho.

That's because there are unexpectedly many people who don't know about Mizuho in the Helmut Kingdom.

"Once you become famous as party specialized on dragons, there are many occasions to make connections with nobles thanks to the requests. There are also situations where we receive actual goods such as Mizuho products as reward." (Golf)

Nobles request dragon subjugations and raw materials of dragons. I guess they will give Mizuho ware as part of the reward.

"I see, so that's how it is." (Haruka)

"I possess countless pieces of porcelain, too. I like them since they are slightly unusual." (Golf)

Once you become the leader of a famous dragon hunter party, you probably become smarter than other adventurers, or rather, earn money differently.

He maintains a party that hunts dragons, and properly moves a few dozen non-combatants in addition.

I guess it's not a job suited for an incompetent person.

"We also only arrived here a few hours ago and set up our camp. I have them prepare for tomorrow's hunting. That means today we rest to be ready for tomorrow." (Golf)

"You sure are cautious." (Ina)

"That's only natural." (Golf)

Golf-san answered Ina's question as if it's the most natural thing in the world.

"We aren't that strong after all. Thus we don't do the unreasonable." (Golf)

"Are you weak? I mean, you're a party specialized on dragon hunting..."

"Of course there are several guys, including me, that are stronger than your average veteran adventurer. But, there are also those who are weak. There are always several newcomers with us. What's necessary for a dragon hunter party is teamwork." (Golf)

"Teamwork?"

"Aye. A magician at Earl Baumeister-sama's level can defeat a wyvern by himself, right? We do the same with these numbers. There's no way that we are strong, is there?" (Golf)

That was Golf-san's explanation to Ina, but I still think that he's too modest.

They should be able to hunt other monsters a lot easier.

It's a group specialized on team combat, apparently allowing them to quite efficiently hunt the monsters called dragons, which are close to being the strongest, without having many casualties. That's why they are the 『Dragon Fighters』 .

"Just for caution's sake we have set up lookouts in shifts, but since the wyverns won't come here, it would be best to take a proper rest for now. As your party will participate this time as well, Earl Baumeister-sama, I think it will be quite easy, though." (Golf)

"Golf-san, you previously mentioned that there are people doing the preparations..."

"Milady, we have a system of assigning roles. There are members who are busy with the preparations for tomorrow, but for us, who will do the work tomorrow, it's important to rest. That's also part of the job." (Golf)

"So each member has their own fixed job? By the way, how are you actually defeating wyverns?"

"That is..." (Golf)

How are they going to defeat the wyverns and flying dragons who have gotten more active? The method seems to consist of luring the dragons by making use of their ferocity.

"Our comrades are in the process of planting traps in a forest close to the Greater League Mountain Range around one kilometer away from here." (Golf)

"They are spreading a great number of sturdy nets made out of metal between the big trees of the forest," Golf-san explained.

"The resilience of our metal nets is a secret of our party. Since you naturally can't catch them with only that much, we attract them with bait." (Golf)

They employ living wild animals and monsters as bait after having prepared them beforehand.

"It's slightly cruel, but we leave them half-dead and hang them into the nets while still alive." (Golf)

I see, if they hang there like that, the animals and monsters will cry loudly while losing a lot of blood. I suppose the wyverns and flying dragons will be lured in by the stench of blood and the

crying.

"Since I've heard that milady is a person of the church, I feel slightly bad for explaining it, though."  
(Golf)

In the church it's no sin to hunt monsters and animals as food for the sake of survival. However, it looks like they occasionally receive a sermon from priests who regard it as pitiful to deliberately wound those creatures so that they don't die, even if it's for the sake of baiting dragons.

"Certainly, I can't really welcome it, but seeing as the wyverns and flying dragons might appear in inhabited areas at this rate, it's probably unavoidable." (Elise)

"It's a big help for you to say so, milady." (Golf)

Golf-san was relieved that he didn't get scolded by Elise.

"Is scattering prepared monster blood in advance and imitating the crying no good?" (Wilma)

"Indeed, in that way you wouldn't need to gruesomely kill each and every single monster, right?"  
(Katharina)

Katharina praised the the alternative plan provided by Wilma.

"Blood is scattered in addition around the bait. However, only scattering the blood won't work. The dragons might see through that. It's the same with the crying, I think. If that method had worked, we would have used it long ago already. It's not like we are doing it like this because we like or prefer it." (Golf)

Even if they might be wild animals and monsters, they don't want to make them suffer a slow, gruesome death.

"You catch the monsters while still alive, right?" (Erwin)

"It's quite laborious."

"If we weaken the monsters too much or kill them at the time of catching them, they won't be useful as bait," Golf-san explained to Erw.

No matter how many they might be, since it needs ability to catch big monsters and animals while still alive, Golf-san and his group shouldn't be weak after all.

"The preparation of the bait will take place just before tomorrow's hunt. You can leave the trap placement to us." (Golf)

That means our job is to finish off the dragons that got caught in the nets after being lured in.

"Otherwise it will be the subjugation of targets that didn't get caught in the nets despite having been lured into the forest. Since your group has a lot of magicians, Earl Baumeister-sama, I'd like to request that you focus your efforts on those." (Golf)

Come to think of it, I sensed that there's no excellent magician in the 『Dragon Fighters』. There's just one at elementary level...no, make that two. Even with just two, that's already considerable. After all the number of magicians in our party is abnormal.

Even so, I guess what makes the 『Dragon Fighters』 famous as dragon hunting specialists is their teamwork and Golf-san's leading skills.

"Only two magicians?"

"Two? Ah! I suppose great magicians sense other magicians. Well, in fact we only have one exclusive magician." (Golf)

It seems to be a young man, but since he's still a rookie as adventurer, he's in the middle of being raised.

"Accordingly I asked an adventurer friend for help. She's young, but already accustomed to dragon hunting. If possible, I'd like her to join us, but somehow she likes to act as a lone wolf. She's well-connected and someone that doesn't turn down requests for help, but..." (Golf)

"I'm coming in." Support the translator by reading this on their blog!

Just when Golf-san was talking about the helping adventurer, a young mana holder entered the tent. And it resulted in me being surprised by the outward appearance of that person.

"A woman?"

"A female adventurer isn't particularly rare, right? Golf-san, the trap placement will be done very soon."

"Thanks for expressly coming here to inform me about it, Katia." (Golf)

"I was in the vicinity anyway. I'm in charge of the prey that got caught in the nets after all. Be that as it may, I heard the rumors, but wow. For there to exist a party that has this many magicians." (Katia)

The girl, who looks at us while saying so, seems to be called Katia.

Her wording is awfully gallant, or rather manly, but her appearance was that of a beautiful girl with good looks, just like a doll.

Her height is no more than 155 cm. She has dark brown, close to black, hair with pigtails that flow down until her knees.

Her attire and equipment is that of a typical adventurer. A white tank top, short pants that resemble denim fabric, boots that reinforce her defense, thin protective tekkou, a chest protector, and, for some reason, a headband.

I wonder, had the headband been imported from the Mizuho Dukedom?

Her main weapons seem to be the two narrow longswords on her back.

The straps with the scabbards crossed at the front of her body.

"Those are sabers, aren't they?" (Erwin)

"Sabers, eh...?" (Wendelin)

Erw, whose hobby it is to collect swords, told us that the two swords of Katia are sabers. Now that he mentions it, I feel like I've seen a saber at the martial arts tournament.

"Erw, are sabers rare?" (Wendelin)

"Since they are pretty much swords, it's no problem even if nobles use them, but for some reason they are unpopular and regarded as inferior." (Erwin)

"I see." (Wendelin)



It's apparently said that they lack the dignity of normal swords.

If you look for them, I think you will also find sabers that possess a feeling of dignity, but since they are regarded as inferior compared to normal swords, there seem to be extremely few nobles that use them.

Is that the reason why I have almost never seen them?

"There's also the estoc, a sword that's handled in a similar way, right? Given that it's a slender sword that focuses on thrusts, they are considered as weapons of cowards." (Erwin)

"It's not really cowardly, is it?" (Wendelin)

"The nobles just consider it like that on their own accord." (Erwin)

If I remember correctly, I've never seen a noble wearing a saber or an estoc at the waist in the capital. Even at the martial arts tournament the number of people using them was low.

"Those two swords put emphasis on being light weighted."

It's a sword shape that stresses slashing in a different way compared to Japanese blades. Katia's combat style was focused on speed if you look at her light weight armor. Long swords, as they are used by Erw, probably don't suit her body type.

"Also, take a look at her waist." (Erwin)

"Daggers? Knives?" (Wendelin)

Ten small throwing blades were visible at the belt coiling around her waist.

"Since she fights with a focus on speed, she will throw these while closing in."

Even if it's a small knife; it will pierce you, if you ignore it.

Given that they are especially often aimed at faces, opponents that fight against Katia will be forced to repel the knives, which come flying at their faces, with their swords.

That means she plans to draw close while using the opportunity created by that.

"I see." (Wendelin)

I grasped Erw's explanation.

Nothing less from someone whose swordsmanship talent has been recognized by Warren-san.

"Wendelin-san." (Katharina)

Next Katharina tugged my robe.

I know what she wants to say.

It's about Katia being a mana holder.

She falls slightly short of intermediate level, but she should be considerably powerful if you add that mana to her sword skills.

"I will introduce you. This is Katia, who occasionally helps us out." (Golf)

Just when we finished appraising each other, Golf-san timely introduced Katia.

"So, you're helping out in the same way..." (Wendelin)

"I know you. You are Earl Baumeister-sama and party, right?" (Katia)

Katia seems to know about us.

"You're celebrities that crop up in various talks. Your abilities are guaranteed, so I have to also be careful that my prey won't be stolen." (Katia)

"It will be fine if it's you, Katia, right? Besides, this time there's plenty of prey." (Golf)

"Looks like it. A big haul in a long time." (Katia)

To call dragon hunting a big haul, the girl called Katia is a considerably powerful person with a good appearance.

I have to make sure to not be deceived by her outward appearance.

"Umm...you're a magician as well, aren't you?" (Katharina)

For a change it was Katharina that took the initiative and called out to Katia.

"Strictly spoken, I don't consider myself a magician since the magic I can use is very limited." (Katia)

"Body strengthening...magic to increase your speed?" (Katharina)

"Hoh, nothing less of 『Storm』, I suppose." (Katia)

"You know of me?" (Katharina)

"Even though it may seem differently, my history as adventurer is longer than yours. 『Storm』, you're a famous magician." (Katia)

I thought that Katia would be my age or a little bit younger, but it seems like she's actually older than me.

Even so, our actual experience is little, but Katharina herself was quite the celebrity as magician. If she's with us, she doesn't stand out much since there are many people with distinct personalities around her.

Mostly Doushi.

"Golf-san, you seem eager to hunt a lot more than usual, don't you?" (Katia)

"I don't want to lose to the dragon hunting parties and adventurers at the other places. The purchase prices for the raw materials are lavish as well. We have to do our best while leaving the ones getting through the nets to you, Katia." (Golf)

"Then I should work hard at the gleaning, huh?" (Katia)

To treat the wyverns and flying dragons that aren't caught in the nets as gleanings...it seems Katia is definitely more powerful than expected.



Afterwards the members, who finished laying out the traps, came back except for the lookouts. It looks like they have stationed lookouts to make sure that no other animals will be caught in the nets which were laid out at great pains. They will be watching until the prey will be lured in by placing the bait on-site tomorrow morning.

As almost everyone had gathered, it became time for dinner, but Katia, who has joined them as helper just like us, started to have her meal together with us.

"Sorry, Elise-san." (Katia)

"Don't worry, eating with a large number of people makes the food more delicious." (Elise)

It seems Katia's character, or rather her disposition is the exact opposite of Katharina's. She joined us in a casual manner to eat dinner with us, but Elise and the others accepted her readily. Having an advantageous character that doesn't make others think of her as too shameless or overly familiar, she was skilled at joining circles of people in a natural way.

"There's only men over there, you know?" (Katia)

"Now that you mention it, you're right."

"I guess it's because it will spell trouble to mix men and women together. Especially with that many people."

It's not rare to have a mix of men and women if a party consists of several people, but once it comes to parties at the size of the 『Dragon Fighters』, there are only few cases that have women joining their ranks.

Since there are many situations where they stay in remote areas for an extended period of time for a dragon subjugation, it's obvious that there will be less trouble with women not being present.

"Usually I go solo. At the times when I join adventurer parties as temporary helper, I often sleep and eat together with them as there are usually women present." (Katia)

"After all there might be male adventurers that plan rude things, right?" (Luise)

While saying so, Luise looks in Erw's direction.

"Hey! That's an outrageous lie! I don't do something like that! Or rather, Wend tell them, too!" (Erwin)

"For me that misinformation is a good thing." (Wendelin)

I mean, I don't need any more wives!

Rather, before that, I never worked together with any adventurers besides Erw and the others.

So, how am I supposed to make a move on other female adventurers?

"If that happens, I lower their attack power by completely beating them up. I pay attention to setting up a distance before I temporarily join." (Katia)

"I guess that means you won't suffer an embarrassing defeat." (Luise)

"It's the same for you as well, isn't it Luise?" (Katia)

"Well, you're right there." (Luise)

Infiltrating in the dead of the night to secretly attack Luise; that's impossible for an ordinary person to begin with, no?

"But then again, I might be happy if Wend comes to make a sneak visit at night." (Luise)

"I'm here as well though..." (Ina)

Ina, who always sleeps next to Luise during camping, protested.

"Then a threesome." (Luise)

"I won't do that..." (Ina)

"As if I'd do that!" (Wendelin)

Even if it's during our resting time, there's no way I'd do something like that during work.

I will do it after returning to the mansion!

In the end I'm a Japanese who's serious about his work.

"You guys are really close to each other." (Katia)

"Erw, Luise, me and Wend have been in one party from the very beginning." (Ina)

"Then I joined them." (Elise)

"Next I joined. The end." (Wilma)

"Wilma-san, I'm here as well..." (Katharina)

"I forgot." (Wilma)

"Please don't!" (Katharina)

Katharina, who has a loner disposition despite her flashy appearance, retorted to Wilma who declared that she had forgotten about her existence.

It's not like she has really forgotten her. It's the usual vibe between these two.

"I also tried to join various parties after becoming an adventurer, but there wasn't any that fit me well enough. That caused the pattern of joining as helper to establish itself. This works out unexpectedly well for me. I'm not troubled for work to earn money either." (Katia)

We won't know her actual fighting strength until tomorrow, but as it seems that she's acquainted with many adventurers and knows Golf-san, Katia is probably one of those people who has the 『Gift of Gab』.

If she were to look for a job in Japan, she might be able to find employment at a good place right away.

On the other hand, Katharina would likely struggle a lot...

"Wendelin-san, did you think something rude just now?" (Katharina)

"No, that's out of the question." (Wendelin)

I shook my head while trembling.

"It would be great if there was some kind of dessert."

After finishing dinner, all of us continued to chat, but as expected, we are an adventurer party with a high ratio of women.

Moreover, because even the person, who joined temporarily, is a woman, they started to desire sweet things.

From Elise looking at me, I understood that she probably wants me to take something out of my magic bag.

"Given that I was treated to a meal by you, I suppose I will provide it." (Katia)

At that point Katia stated that she would prepare a dessert.

When I wondered from where she would get something like that, Katia took out a magic bag.

"A magic bag, huh? Is it possibly a general purpose one?" (Erwin)

"Of course. If I use a magic bag for magicians with my amount of mana, the capacity will be too low." (Katia)

Katia readily answered Erw's question.

The storage capacity of a magician's magic bag is decided by their maximum amount of mana.

At the least when hunting wyverns and flying dragons, the capacity of such bag should be insufficient with Katia's mana.

"It was quite expensive, but it's convenient." (Katia)

"Just the fact that you could buy one is already amazing enough."

"That's true. Even in Mizuho general purpose magic bags are very expensive." (Haruka)

As expected, even Mizuho, which lowered costs by excelling at mass production, seems to struggle with general purpose magic bags.

"It looks like we will be provided a dessert. I will prepare tea then." (Elise)

Tea is the best for sweet desserts.

And, the one most skilled at making tea among us is Elise who has a personal philosophy on teas. She started to carefully brew tea as usual.

"Sorry, Elise. Today noon the tea was made by a young guy over there. But, as it seems as if they are thinking that it becomes more delicious the stronger they make it, it was really disgusting." (Katia)

"That person was simply not used to it, I think." (Elise)

"A newcomer serving the tea, huh? That's a likely explanation." (Erwin)

Erw says, but as a matter of fact he doesn't have the experience of having made satisfactory tea either.

Though nobody asks him to make tea since it will be disgusting anyway.

"They were entrusted with the chores because they are newcomers."

It was the same in Japan, too.

When I was a new employee, I was also scolded by my boss due to my bad skill at making tea, being told 『How's a guy, who can't at least make proper tea, going to be able to do the job?』

Back then I thought that both were unrelated to each other, but this is also the sad fate of a company employee.

Although I reached a fairly good level at making tea, I'm afraid to say that I can't win against Elise at all.

"However, tea made by a woman is really delicious." (Erwin)

"Certainly, it's just as you say, Erw." (Wendelin)

In the end it's an issue of feelings...though those are actually quite important as well.

"Occasionally it might be fine for me to make the tea." (Erwin)

"I think that's not necessary." (Wendelin)

After all you're also thinking that it'll be fine as long as the tea is strong, just like that newcomer of the 『Dragon Fighters』.

"Erw-san, I will prepare some tea, too." (Haruka)

"Woohooo——I'm sure you're good at making tea, Haruka-san." (Erwin)

Haruka, nice follow-up.

If Erw prepares the tea, he will mix the mate tea's unnatural sweetness and bitterness, and the tea-cake will become unappetizing.

"So, what's the tea-cake?"

"This." (Katia)

Katia took out several lumps with the size of a fist out of her magic bag, but we remembered having seen those.

"Maroimo, eh?" (Wendelin)

"Earl Baumeister-sama, you know it well. It's the special product of my hometown." (Katia)

What! Katia is saying that she originates from that Eulenberg territory.

"Really? That territory currently goes through...ugh!" (Erwin)

Because Erw was about to yap his mouth about unnecessary matters, Wilma and Katharina quickly blocked his mouth.

"(Why?)" (Erwin)

"(The situation with the tunnel is a secret. Even a child would understand at least that much.)"  
(Wilma)

"(Even if Katia-san might be a resident of the Eulenberg territory, we will be scolded by His Majesty if we carelessly reveal the secret here.)" (Katharina)

"(Sorry...)" (Erwin)

After all we will be troubled if the information is leaked to other nobles through Katia. As she's related to dragon subjugations, she might have acquaintances among nobility.

"Is something wrong?" (Katia)

"No, it's nothing." (Wendelin)

"Katia-san, actually there was a person who offered this Maroimo to our family." (Elise)

Elise skillfully glossed it over.

In reality Elise probably dislikes lying as a priestess, but as a wife of a noble, it's inevitable this time.

"Earl Baumeister-sama is famous, so I guess it's only natural for such people to exist as well."  
(Katia)

"Those Maroimo are truly sweet and tasty."

"My home is a rural area with nothing but farming, but these Maroimo are our pride. I will prepare them at once." (Katia)

Katia took out a largish pot and some big leaves out of her magic bag.

"Oh, aren't those the leaves of trees growing in the Demon Forest?" (Katharina)

Katharina noticed it first, but it's banana leaves.

"I was born and raised in the Eulenberg territory, thus I have been taught how to steam Maroimo deliciously by my parents." (Katia)

First Katia washed the prepared Maroimo with water, then she holed them with a fork at several places.

Next she wrapped them up in banana leaves, put them into the pot which had tree branches at the bottom, and then put the lid on top.

Heating the pot over the campfire at a low fire, she occasionally pricked the Maroimo with the fork, and checked the condition of their heating.

"You're really going all out, aren't you?"

"Really? In the Eulenberg territory everyone steams Maroimo like this. They use the leaves of other trees though." (Katia)

"So it's a distinctive way how your home area steams them." (Ina)

Ina admires, but in reality it closely resembles the way of steaming sweet potatoes.

For sweet potatoes to become delicious, you have to heat them slowly. That's probably why she keeps the fire low, wrapped the Maroimo in leaves, and laid out tree branches so that the Maroimo won't touch the pot's bottom.

"Wend, as usual you have detailed knowledge in weird areas."

"Does it matter?" (Wendelin)

Since we're going out of our way to eat Maroimo, it's better for them to be tasty.

"Well then, I think they'll be done any time soon." (Katia)

At the end Katia checked the heating with the fork and confirmed that the Maroimo were ready.

"Since I took a large amount with me when I visited my home last, eat them without holding back." (Katia)

"Isn't that your precious stock?"

"For outsiders it might seem so, but the people at my home eat them often. I'm allowed to even take such a big amount from my family." (Katia)

I guess it makes sense that she can get her hands on them easily since her own family is cultivating Maroimo.

""""""""Good appetite!""""""""

At once we eat the steaming hot Maroimo, but they are more delicious than the ones we previously cooked ourselves.

Until I saw Katia's cooking method, I had forgotten about the trick behind steaming sweet potatoes skillfully.

I will make sure to steam them properly next time.

No, wait.

I suppose I have to hasten the production of the special cooking equipment...

"They are sweet and delicious, aren't they dear?" (Elise)

"Your home is not a Maroimo cultivation area for nothing."

"Anyone can learn around this much, no? Please cook them like this from now on." (Katia)

"It's quite difficult for us to get them, though." (Elise)

It's just as Elise says. Will we be able to buy them if we go to the Eulenberg territory next time?

"I'm someone from the Eulenberg territory after all." (Katia)

"Your family are Maroimo farmers?" (Luise)

"Well...you can say so." (Katia)

Did she somewhat hesitate to answer Luise question?

I wonder, was it my imagination?

"Let's go sleep in preparation for tomorrow once we finish eating."

"Sure. Tomorrow we have to get up early."

I was slightly curious, but there's probably no mistake that Katia is hailing from the Eulenberg territory.

Having finished eating the Maroimo, we retired early.

\* \* \*

"Whoa, how cruel."

"They are pitiable, but fresh blood is necessary. This smell of blood will lure the wyverns and flying dragons, you know." (Katia)



The next day we traveled to the forest where the members of the 『Dragon Fighters』 spread out the nets after finishing a simple breakfast.

We will bait the wyverns and flying dragons into this forest, where one can see the Greater League Mountain Range in the north.

"Are these nets going to be alright with their thin wires?" (Ina)

Ina expressed her doubt while touching the nets that were set up at points with wide spaces between the trees where the dragons will likely pass.

"Ina-san, it's better to not touch the nets carelessly. It's different if the skin is sturdy like that of a dragon, but a humans skin will be easily cut."

"Is that so?" (Ina)

Being cautioned by a young member of the 『Dragon Fighters』, Ina removed her hand from the net in a hurry.

"The metallic wires used for the nets are thin so that the dragons have trouble seeing them. Because of that the spaces in the mesh are narrow, though."

"It won't tear?"

"They do since the targets are dragons. We have several spares with us, and we will repair them after we've done our job."

They seem to be nets using a special alloy. I'm pretty sure the repair costs are high. Even so, once the dragons are caught in these nets, I guess it will become safe as it will be possible to attack from a distance with arrows and throwing spears.

And, the bait to lure the dragons was a bear that had been captured alive yesterday.

It has around the same size as the bear which got beheaded by Wilma's blow before.

Hanging it down from a tree while upside down, the arteries at its neck and paws have been cut open.

The bear was losing large amounts of blood while crying loudly.

"It sure smells."

"Yeah, it does."

Luise and Wilma were sensitive to the smell of blood.

"The wyverns and flying dragons are even more sensitive to smell. Now then, since all preparations are in order, everyone, take your assigned positions."

Upon Golf-san's order, the members of the 『Dragon Fighters』 wait at the positions that had been

decided in advance.

We also moved to our designated spot.

"How many are going to come, Wend?" (Erwin)

"Plenty, it seems." (Wendelin)

I tell Erw the information I heard from Golf-san.

"I think it's good that they won't see me as prey, once they hear that crying."

"It can't be helped since that crying is also a lure to draw the wyverns here."

The bear, who isn't allowed to die despite bleeding intensely, looks pitiful, but it's really a well thought out hunting method, I think.

"I think that it's a method with a good efficiency." (Wilma)

Wilma, who's likewise a professional at hunting, praised the strategy of the 『Dragon Fighters』.

"That's true."

An excellent leader, who can command a big number of people, is essential. Large amounts of equipment and goods are necessary. They have to also repair the nets each time, but theoretically they can kill dragons even without magicians being present.

Of course it's better if they are present, though.

"Still, there's no doubt that it's dangerous."

"That's only natural."

If they receive an unexpected counterattack once the nets end up torn, it's nice when it only ends at injuries. It looks like occasionally there are casualties as well.

However, if they split the expenses, even the newcomers will be able to earn overwhelmingly more than normal adventurers.

Wyverns and flying dragons are treated as lower-ranked, however they earn money by defeating dragons with their own lives at the stake.

"Wend, they are here." (Luise)

"Your 『Detection』 is as fast as ever." (Wendelin)

"It's my special technique after all." (Luise)

While were were chatting among ourselves, Luise confirmed the responses of dragons approaching this place.

Next I perceived them as well. Going by the response, it's three wyverns, huh?

For normal adventurers they would be a troublesome threat, but with our good lineup today they are nothing but prey.

"So they did get lured by the blood smell."

"It's best if the bait's fresh."

"Oh well."

Ina, who readies her throwing spears, said while looking at the bleeding bear.

It's a sight that would likely trigger some animal rights groups on Earth, but in this world it's a very effective method to entrap dragons.

The wyverns, which descended towards the forest after gliding through the air from the Greater League Mountain Range, close the distance to the bear while skillfully passing through the gaps in the trees that allow them to get through.

And then they got stuck in the nets that had been spread out between the trees along that path.

""Gyaaa——""

Two wyverns were stuck in the net.

In case of normal nets, they would have likely been torn apart easily, but even the dragons can't break through these nets, which had been knitted with special metal wires, with ease.

The caught wyverns release cries full of pain and anger.

"Now!" (Golf)

At this point the go sign was given by Golf-san, and the members of the 『Dragon Fighters』, who had waited in hiding, all at once attack the wyverns with throwing spears and arrows.

The wyverns, who couldn't move much, had their bodies struck by those projectiles.

"Aim for the heart!" (Golf)

Golf-san ordered in order to quickly finish off the wyverns which are still struggling.

Aiming for the head is actually the most reliable method to kill them, but even now their heads can be sold for a high price to rich people and nobles after stuffing them out.

It seems that craftsmen, who create stuffed animals, will buy undamaged wyvern heads for a lot of money, meaning, Golf-san has them aim for the heart in order to increase their earnings.

Since the plan has worked out and the wyverns can't move, I guess it's not that dangerous as long as they pierce the heart with arrows and spears quickly.

"Having said that..."

"It's quite difficult."

Erw, who's using a bow for the first time in a long while, and Haruka, who likewise shot arrows while using a Mizuho-made Yumi, had slight troubles targeting the wyverns' hearts.

They do hit the wyverns' body, but directly hitting the heart proves to be difficult.

"So you can even use archery, Haruka?" (Wendelin)

"Once you join the Battou Unit, you also practice other weapons, albeit only the basics." (Haruka)

Compared to her saying that it's only the basics, her skills were quite good, considering that she's hitting the wyverns properly.

"(The Haruka-san, who prepares her bow, is so dignified...) Ouch! Wend, what are you doing?" (Erwin)

"Hurry up and hit the wyvern's heart!" (Wendelin)

Because Erw sometimes stared at Haruka as she was setting up her bow and broke into a smile, I lowered my fist on his head from behind.

"This location is bad." (Erwin)

Certainly, I suppose it's true that it's not the best location there is. Although it's not to the extent of being in a blind spot, the wyverns don't expose their chests readily in our direction.

"Should I target them with magic?" (Wendelin)

"Wend, obey Golf-san's instructions."

"Aye, aye." (Wendelin)

Since it looks like wyverns and flying dragons will come one after the other to this place from now on according to Golf-san's prediction, Luise, Katharina and I had been prohibited from making a move on the wyverns that were caught in the nets.

We won't get involved with dragons that can be dealt with by the 『Dragon Fighters』, Erw, Ina, Haruka, and Wilma.

Us three are the ace in the hole, so-to-say.

Because Elise was in charge of healing, she naturally didn't participate in the battle.

"Now!"

At this moment Ina capitalized on a small chance and succeeded in stabbing the heart of a wyvern. As the power of her throwing has gone up in proportion to her increase in mana, she only needed one hit once she managed to target the heart.

"Alrighty!" (Ina)

Next, one of the 『Dragon Fighters』 succeeded in finishing off the other wyvern, bringing the subjugation of the first two wyverns to a successful end.

"We did it!"

"But, Wend-sama, there's one more wyvern around." (Wilma)

Now that she mentions it.

Three wyverns came down from the mountains, but only two got caught in the nets.

The remaining one apparently made its way through the trees without getting stuck in any of the

nets and escaped.

"How regrettable." (Wendelin)

"Even if it comes back, it will take you only one hit to finish it off, Wend-sama." (Wilma)

"I suppose that's true as well." (Wendelin)

We are here for the time when wyverns and fly dragons, which didn't get caught in the nets, come back or when additional dragons arrive here while everyone's busy dealing with the dragons stuck in the nets.

"But, maybe you don't have to worry about it." (Wilma)

Wilma looked in the direction where the remaining wyvern had fled to, and immediately readjusted her big ax.

There's a response on my 『Detection』, too. It looks like it came back after all.

"Hurry up and get them out of the nets!" (Golf)

Since the members of the 『Dragon Fighters』 were in the middle of removing the two killed wyverns out of the nets, it's my turn now, eh?

I prepared myself to be able to release my magic at any time.

"Wend-sama, it looks like it's unnecessary." (Wilma)

"...I got it." (Wendelin)

I haven't seen Katia since the hunt begun, but it appears she's finally starting to do her job.

The third wyvern was in the middle of approaching the members of the 『Dragon Fighters』 who are still busy with the two dead wyverns, but in the instant its shadow crossed a certain point, a shadow fell on it from above, causing it to crash to the ground while spurting blood from its neck. It slid along the ground while digging up several meters worth of soil, and then came to a stop.

Apparently Katia, who hid atop a tree, sped up, landed on the wyvern close to its neck, and cut the wyvern's neck with her specialized twin blades in an instant.

Even if it might be a dragon, it will still die after losing large quantities of blood if its neck carotid artery is cut apart.

There's no doubt that this is the fate that befell the wyvern.

"Fast."

She waited for the prey atop a tree while completely erasing her presence, and then powerfully cut the neck of the sturdy wyvern in an instant, using the sharpness of her two blades and the falling speed reinforced by magic.

That's something a normal adventurer isn't capable of.

"Even though she fell to the ground while boosting her speed with magic, she didn't crash onto the ground?" (Wendelin)

Since she had to cut the tough neck of the wyvern, she should have increased her speed considerably.

An ordinary person would have likely hit the ground, resulting in heavy injuries or death. As the tree where she hid is a fairly tall tree, she started her attack from a very high altitude.

"Wend-sama, you will understand if you look at the place where Katia landed once more." (Wilma)

"Did you see it, Wilma?" (Luise)

"You should have seen it as well, Luise" (Wilma)

I suppose both of them have a very good kinetic vision.

It's extremely unlikely that I can win against them in regards to combat sense.

"Another batch has shown up!" (Ina)

Ina, the 『Dragon Fighters』, and Katia, each killed one wyvern. Just as they finished collecting the corpses into magic bags, wyverns that were lured by the smell of blood once again...

"I think this time flying dragons are mixed in as well."

"The method to kill them is still the same. It would be nice if it would be our turn this time." (Katharina)

"If you wait a bit longer, you will become busier than you like anyway."

Right now we have nothing to do, but since everyone will probably get tired, we should get busy very soon.

It looks like many dragons inhabiting the Greater League Mountain Range in this area have noticed the smell of blood.

"That means we are the last trump card."

"It would be better if Elise-san wouldn't get a turn, though." (Katharina)

Katharina prayed that there would be no injured people requiring Elise's healing magic. Having said that, it's not like everyone gets out of this without any injuries so easily.

"Are you alright?" (Elise)

"Yeah, I was negligent, thinking that it was dead. It's pathetic to receive a bone fracture after being sent flying by its tail."

Driving the dragons into the nets spread out between the forest's trees, they finish them off with arrows, throwing spears and some magic from a distance. The 『Dragon Fighters』 earned their income by scoring one dragon after the other with this method, but occasionally there's an injured person that has to be treated by Elise.

"This time it's really relaxing since we have an excellent healer with us. Thank you."

"Please don't move your fractured arm with full power all of a sudden. It will take some time until you can move it as before." (Elise)

"I will try to hold back."

The middle-aged man, who was healed by Elise, returns to the dragon hunt after expressing his gratitude. The income of the people belonging to the 『Dragon Fighters』 is big, but it's very obvious that their risks are accordingly high as well.

After all a little carelessness might lead to death.

Even so they continue to finish off the caught dragons in succession, remove the dead prey from the nets and put them into the magic bags of the 『Dragon Fighters』.

It will become impossible for new prey to be caught in the nets, if they leave such huge bodies hanging in there, and given that the dragons are also smart enough to run away once they see the corpses of their brethren, they store the corpses in magic bags as soon as possible.

"You got used to it, haven't you?"

"Yes."

Erw and Haruka appear to have grown accustomed to using their bows. They reached a level where they hit their targets reliably.

"I heard that they had increased their activity, but there's really a lot of them."

Ina throws one spear after the other, finishing off the caught dragons.

"It's been a while for me as well."

Because she would easily tear the nets if she were to throw her big ax, Wilma also used her steel bow for the first time in a long while, sniping the dragons.

"You're quite skilled. How does it compare to the magic gun?" (Katharina)

"Both have their merits and demerits." (Wilma)

"That's a fairly ambiguous answer..." (Katharina)

Wilma had been given a magic gun from Mizuho to collect data during the Empire's civil war, but she had returned the prototype and is now using her steel bow.

"I ran out of arrows." (Wilma)

"I have some with me." (Wendelin)

I didn't expect that something like that might happen, but it's great that I made a few arrows in my spare time.

"Wend-sama, you're the best, I love you." (Wilma)

Wilma, who took my spare arrows, continued shooting with her bow. Because all the arrows are made out of steel, they penetrate a lot better than normal arrows if they hit a dragon.

"Wend-sama, over there." (Wilma)

At the place where Wilma, who had stopped shooting arrows for a moment, pointed, Katia, who had returned atop the tree, cut up the neck of a flying dragon that was trying to escape into the deep forest.

At first I didn't realize why Katia, who falls from a quite high place while accelerating with magic, doesn't get injured, but she's casting a spell faintly similar to 『Flight』 just before crashing into the ground.

"So she only prevents the landing impact and a crashing into the ground, huh...?" (Wendelin)

Since Katia said that she can't use anything beside the speed up of 『Body Reinforcement』, she probably can't use 『Flight』 to freely fly around in the sky. That means it's a cushion-like magic that creates a lifting power for just an instant to avoid a crash.

"Because her strategy is basically to ambush, she enhances her speed with magic, attacks the vital spots, and reduces the damage as well as fixes her posture with a 『Flight』 fake, huh?" (Wendelin)

"It's very efficient."

"That's for sure."

Katia has come here to help the 『Dragon Fighters』, or rather glean, but if she feels like it, she can hunt wyverns and flying dragons by herself, too.

She would probably earn a lot more cash than the members of the 『Dragon Fighters』. This is surely the reason why she's called a remarkable adventurer.

"The adventurer world is sure wide." (Wilma)

It's certainly as Wilma says.  
I didn't know that such amazing adventurers exist.

"Earl Baumeister-sama, please!" (Golf)

"Got it. Luise, Katharina." (Wendelin)

"It's finally my turn, eh?" (Luise)

"It's the entry of the main actor." (Katharina)

"That's Wend you're talking about, right?"

"Even though things may appear differently, I'm still a senpai to all of you, just like Katia-san."  
(Katharina)

In addition to the blood of the bear, the blood of the wyverns and flying dragons, who were defeated here until now, has spread as well. Being lured by the intensified smell of blood, dragons arrive here in succession from the Greater League Mountain Range.

Normally the 『Dragon Fighters』 wouldn't hold out here any longer since it's dangerous, but today they continued to hunt for an extended period of time since we are here.

However, as expected, they have apparently reached their limits. They left the rest to us.

The injuries can be healed by Elise, but healing magic can't alleviate fatigue.

That means they need to take a break.

"Now then, it would be best to keep the heads intact and as undamaged as possible, right?"

I attacked a flying dragon, which approached me while considering me as fodder, with 『Wind Cutter』.

The dragon dodged the 『Wind Cutter』 fired by me while looking fairly relaxed, but it all went according to calculations.

The 『Wind Cutter』, which it avoided once, returned like a boomerang, and hit the dragon's neck from behind.

Having lost its head, the dragon's torso drops to the ground while blood gushes out of the cut end like a waterfall.

"Well, then me as well." (Katharina)

Katharina also decapitates a wyvern with the same spell in one hit. Given the situation, the rest was a competition over who would hunt the most.

"Wendelin-san, if I win, please take 『me only』 to the coffeehouse that opened in Baulburg next time, okay? Its interior design is stylish and it seems to be fairly popular with women." (Katharina)

"Are there only women inside the shop by chance?" (Wendelin)

I might as well have a little contest with her since the punishment for losing isn't all that bad, but I'm really bad with visiting such female-only stores.

It makes me feel as if I don't belong there.

"Won't that be fine as long as you don't lose?" (Katharina)

"That's true, but..." (Wendelin)

If it comes to magic contests where technique and control is necessary, Katharina still has an advantage as experienced magician.

"In that case I will join the contest, too." (Luise)

"Do you have any chance at winning, Luise?"

Given that Luise is close-combat-only, she had to defeat passing dragons from atop a tree like Katia.

Her method of erasing her presence, landing behind the neck of a dragon like a floating feather and breaking the neck surprised everyone of the 『Dragon Fighters』, but this method has a worse

efficiency than magic.

After all it loses out in the number of hits in comparison.

"Ah, true! Then I will add to Katharina's score!" (Luise)

"That's really sly..." (Wendelin)

"It will be three of us, but...that's still fine with me." (Katharina)

Without even checking back with me, Luise and Katharina decide to join hands and declare that it's my defeat at this point.

They are slightly unreasonable.

"Earl Baumeister-sama, if you make your lovely wives angry by cheating, your neck will be snapped off, you know?" (Golf)

I ended up being teased by Golf-san who heard our conversation.

Or rather, he has pretty good ears.

"Golf-san, I'm not such a narrow-minded woman. Wend is always approached by women, thus I won't be able to keep up if I get jealous over each and every single one of them." (Luise)

"That's right. It's necessary to deal with it after making a calm judgment." (Katharina)

"Earl Baumeister-sama, you're lucky to have such fine wives. I will correct myself. You can't cheat on them, can you?" (Golf)

"..."

That's not true.

Even I, if I feel like it...no, I guess it's impossible...

"Today's hunt goes until evening. Since they will crash into the trees once it becomes dark, the wyverns and flying dragons won't approach the blood at night."

I guess, with their size they judge that it's dangerous to fly through the trees once it becomes dark.

"Do your best at defeating them."

"Luise-san, we have to make sure that we won't lose to Wendelin-san." (Katharina)

"It sure will be uncool to lose in a 2 vs. 1 contest." (Luise)

Afterwards we joined Erw's group and the 『Dragon Fighters』, who finished their break, and hunted many wyverns and flying dragons in just one day.

The numbers largely exceeded our initial estimation. We succeeded in hunting the targeted number in four days which was much shorter than planned.



"Nothing less of you, milord. You hunted the scheduled number much faster than the other teams."  
(Roderich)

Having safely finished the hunt, we are talking with Roderich at the monster dismantling station located next to the newly established adventurer's guild branch in Baulburg.  
The adventurers and parties, who were in charge of the other places, still haven't been able to hunt the designated numbers. We were the very first to bring our game to the dismantling station.

"We also hunted a number exceeding our records so far after reinforcing our strategies and party, but in the end we lose out to high-ranking magicians." (Golf)

"Golf-dono, now that you've actually seen them, they are amazing, aren't they?" (Roderich)

"I really get the reason why a man of your caliber is serving them, Roderich." (Golf)

Golf-san, who returned together with us through 『Teleportation』 joins the conversation and has a serious talk with Roderich, his former subordinate.

"I tried to calculate it roughly, but it looks like the results are slightly better than expected..."  
(Roderich)

"Roderich, you're sure perceptive. It's that girl." (Golf)

Golf-san's look was turned in the direction of Katia who's receiving the reward for the dragons she hunted herself from a guild staff member.  
Being able to hunt dragons by herself, she managed to make great accomplishments in these four days.  
She's happily checking the number of gold coins she received.

"I see. She must be fairly skilled." (Roderich)

Roderich looked at Katia as if evaluating her strength.

"Occasionally we have been hunting together, but she's indeed a powerful adventurer." (Golf)

"It's great that you finished it earlier than planned." (Roderich)

"Well, the expenses increase significantly with each passing day."

It's only natural that the expenses will be lower if you shorten the number of days to hunt the same number of game.  
If it's one or two days, there's no big difference, but the 『Dragon Fighters』 are a big group.  
It's reasonable for their calculations to be tight. After all the 『Dragon Fighters』 might go bankrupt if they don't watch the expenses.

"From your appearance you really seem like a vanguard combat specialist." (Luise)

"In the past that was true." (Golf)

Golf-san told Luise that he fought at the front while risking his life in the past.

"Being unable to see on one eye was actually a youthful indiscretion. Though, it's no good if the leader of a dragon-hunting party isn't proficient at organizational management and commanding." (Golf)

"It appears that it's also no good if you don't have any physical strength." (Luise)

"Luise-dono, you do understand." (Golf)

Hunting dragons is dangerous, but fascinated by the big rewards, people gather easily. However, this is the same for other adventurers as well. Many of those joining are sly old men, criminals and wannabes, who try to get a share for themselves while taking it easy. Such lawless folks build factions and make parties their own. Sometimes it's necessary to get rid of such pests with force.

If the leader can't do that, the party will eventually go out of business.

That means you aren't fit to be the leader unless you're powerful.

Golf-san has the qualities of both sides, management and combat. That's the reason why the 『Dragon Fighters』 have become widely-known as famous dragon hunting party in the Helmut Kingdom.

"I'm sure that you will also be successful if you become our retainer." (Roderich)

"My only flaw is that I'm bad with a formal life such as being the retainer of a noble. I earned enough money to lead a comfortable life during my retirement. I will obediently hand my job over to the next generation." (Golf)

"You're going to pass it on to your son?" (Elise)

"No, my son and the husbands of my daughters have completely different jobs." (Golf)

Upon Elise's question, Golf-san replied that he wouldn't allow his child and his son-in-laws to succeed the 『Dragon Fighters』 without any hesitation.

"You won't have your child succeed?"

"That part's different from nobles and merchants. None of my children has the talent for it. Even if I have them succeed it forcibly, it will only cause them unhappiness." (Golf)

There are many dangers for a party of dragon hunting specialists. Even if he becomes the leader just because he's Golf-san's son, there's the risk of the party being annihilated if he has no talent for it.

"This is a field of work where ability has a great impact. Wanna have a go at it, Katia?" (Golf)

"Me? For me accounting or handling many people is impossible." (Katia)

Katia, who had finished checking her reward, arrived at our location. Katia was asked by Golf-san whether she wants to succeed the leadership of the 『Dragon Fighters』, but she immediately declines that.

"I feel more at ease working by myself." (Katia)

"Well, you can hunt dragons by yourself after all." (Golf)

In Katia's case, there's no need for her to especially join a party. That's probably why she occasionally participates as helper without joining a fixed party. However, she apparently doesn't refuse requests for help overly often. Thanks to that, she seems to be quite well-connected.

"As expected, even for me a dragon with an attribute is impossible." (Katia)

"Fool! Something like that is impossible for everyone except for a small fraction of magicians like Earl Baumeister-sama." (Golf)

"I guess so. I heard of his military achievements, but at first I thought that the Earl-sama must have a wonderful social standing to go out of his way to join the hunt himself. But, after actually seeing his skill, I realized that he got admirable abilities. It looks like you won't be able to compete against Earl Baumeister-sama's party even if there are a hundred 『Dragon Fighters』." (Katia)

"Exactly."

It looks like we were very highly evaluated by Katia.

"I haven't fought at all, though." (Elise)

"Being able to hunt with a healer of your level is a true blessing for any adventurer, Elise. Going about it while feeling at ease that you won't die is a rare occurrence." (Katia)

Since Katia is usually adventuring by herself, she stated that she truly understands Elise's value.

"You can ignore any adventurer, who believes that you are not useful because you don't fight, since they will die sooner or later anyway, Elise. I don't think there's any such fool in the 『Dragon Fighters』, though."

Exactly because Katia is working as solo adventurer, she comprehends the value of logistical support such as healers.

She's a truly excellent adventurer after all. Though there's a slight gap between her appearance and her way of speaking.

"That's very true. Especially this time it was very welcome. But, Earl Baumeister-sama, you sure got it nice. Even after the hunt, in your mansion, you will be healed by such a beautiful wife. For someone like me only an old wife, whom I have seen for more than 30 years now, is waiting once I get back home." (Golf)

Once Golf-san acts as if he's jealous of me who has Elise as wife, the other members of the 『Dragon Fighters』 simultaneously nod their heads.

"But, leader, aren't you always telling us how you're looking forward to the cooking prepared by your wife once you get back home?"

"I was treated to it before. Leader's wife is really good at cooking, you know?"

"Nothing can be done about her age, but in the past she was quite the looker, wasn't she?"

At the same time several members followed-up, saying Golf-san's wife is not to be underestimated either.

"All of the older members have been taken care of by his wife."

"Leader, it's no good if you don't praise her for that."

"Shuddap!" (Golf)

Seemingly embarrassed, Golf-san shouted at the members who praised his wife, but seeing through him, they laughed.

"It seems like she's a very wonderful wife."

"I guess it's an undesirable but inseparable relationship we share? At least she won't complain to me who comes back home so rarely." (Golf)

Once his wife is praised by Elise, Golf-san isn't as annoyed as he makes others believe. Besides, for a person earning as much money as him, it's rare to have only one wife. Since he expressly said 『old wife』 and not 『old wives』, he likely has only her.

"I think I will go back home after buying nice presents for my family since we earned a lot of money this time." (Golf)

"Golf-san, you sure don't match your appearance, do you? Aren't you kind to your family?" (Katia)

Katia teased Golf-san for saying something that doesn't suit him at all.

"Things about me don't really matter. Katia, you should settle down soon." (Golf)

"Me? Or rather, are you saying that to me, a woman?" (Katia)

"You're also turning 20 soon, aren't you? For a female adventurer it's easy to miss the chance to marry. Even more so as you are a skilled adventurer." (Golf)

She doesn't look that old at all, so it's amazing since Katia is 19 years old, one year older than Katharina.

And, excellent female adventurers are often single without any plans for marriage or lovers.

"I'm still young..." (Katia)

"Even if you're saying that, your parents at home have scheduled formal marriage interviews for you, haven't they?" (Golf)

"That can't be true, I will ignore it. Anyways, I'm off with this." (Katia)

Katia bid farewell from us and the 『Dragon Fighters』, disappearing into the hustle and bustle of Baulburg.

I wonder whether she's going to return to the Eulenberg territory where her home is?

"We might meet Katia over there."

"It's possible, but..."

The matter with tunnel has the issue of the Knight Eulenberg territory.

In reality it's also a problem of all residents over there, but since there's no democracy in this world, Lord Eulenberg has no choice but to decide as feudal lord.

It shouldn't be related to Katia as a daughter of a resident, or perhaps I should say that she probably won't have any say in this.

"No matter how excellent as adventurer Katia might be, she's not allowed to talk about the tunnel's matter since that will be disrespectful towards the feudal lord." (Ina)

"Even before that, she has to be told about the detailed circumstances first, right?" (Elise)

Just as Elise and Ina say, matters about the tunnel haven't been conveyed to the fief's population at all.

The tunnel has been opened up in their territory, but it seems the residents won't get close to it since Thomas' group has been stationed there as guards.

They are submissive to the authorities, or rather they don't want to approach something dangerous, or their farm work is more important to them.

"Wend, let's return to the mansion."

"Sure. We don't know when His Majesty is going to contact us." (Wendelin)

The dragon hunt ended one day earlier than planned, but we might receive some kind of order in regards to the tunnel in due time.

Fatigue has built up as well. Thus I guess it's best to return to the mansion early.

"Well, we are off then." (Wendelin)

"You were a big help this time. As expected of the dragon-slaying hero. I will waste a little bit more time...ah, right. Roderich, it's been a while, so let's go have a drink." (Golf)

"That sounds fine." (Roderich)

"There will be great side dishes, too. I'm curious just how a mere ronin, who worked as helper for

the 『Dragon Fighters』, climbed his way up to the rank of household manager in the Earl Baumeister family." (Golf)

Roderich and Golf-san agreed to drink together for the evening.  
For the constantly busy Roderich to expressly free up some time means that he had been taken care of quite a bit by Golf-san in the past.

"Wendelin-san, let's go home as I think that it would be bad to bother those two?" (Katharina)

"Wend-sama, I'm hungry." (Wilma)

"Wilma-san, I have the image that you're always hungry, though." (Katharina)

"I have the image that you're always on a diet, Katharina." (Wilma)

"That's not true at all!" (Katharina)

Katharina insistently denied Wilma's claim.

"I want to eat a proper dinner today."

"True. I'm sure Dominique and the other will get all motivated and have the cooks show their abilities."

"That sounds nice. Also, we will be able to sleep on a bed tonight, won't we?"

Nowadays we got used to sleeping outdoors, but in the end it's a fact that you can sleep better atop a bed.

"Are you going to sleep together with Amalie-san tonight?" (Ina)

"...As if I would do that. I put priority on my wives." (Wendelin)

Damn Ina, don't ask something that's difficult to answer.  
However, indeed, Amalie-san will always be in the mansion now.

"Just kidding. Therese is probably bored, so let's invite her for dinner as well?" (Ina)

Bidding farewell from Roderich, we return to the mansion while noisily chatting along the way. Around three days later I received the message that the adventurers in charge of the other places successfully completed the dragon hunt, too. With this the danger that the residents of the Baumeister Earldom will be attacked by dragons has been drastically lowered. That means I properly accomplished my duty as feudal lord, but...



"In the end nothing about the Eulenberg territory has been settled." (Luise)

"I can't do anything about that, though." (Wendelin)

Just in case I explained to Luise that my hands are tied in this matter.

## **Chapter 4 – I Hope a Meteor Crashes Down Tomorrow and Kills all the Normalfags**

"Arnest, how's the progress?" (Wendelin)

"Proceeding smoothly. The best being that there are no unnecessary nuisances." (Arnest)

"Well, it's impossible for nuisances to get in here." (Wendelin)



The next day after we finished subjugating the wyverns and flying dragons I went to drop off food and sweets to Arnest and his assistants, who were in the middle of scientifically investigating the tunnel, but as usual he was going at his own pace.

Even as we were worrying what to do about the tunnel's management, he only perceived it as an all-you-can-investigate because of the quietness inside the tunnel.

"Here you are, please go on." (Elise)

"What an honor, for milady herself to go out of her way!"

Elise poured tea and passed it around, but all of them were nervous since they were young retainers of the Earl Baumeister House.

I guess it's unavoidable, considering that she's their lord's wife.

"Here you go."

"Oh, I feel much obliged."

"Milady, a slightly lukewarm tea fits nicely for me." (Arnest)

Because the scholar-nerd Arnest didn't even give the slightest damn about such things, he calmly made a detailed request to Elise.

"It has become lukewarm. Take it." (Elise)

"It is just right." (Arnest)

"That's great to hear." (Elise)

Elise is no one who would mind Arnest's impoliteness. After having poured tea for him many times in the past, she has grasped his preferences.

She quickly handed him his preferred lukewarm tea.

"This me, upon reflection..." (Arnest)

"Did you finally find out something new?"

"I am investigating this tunnel that had been built by ancient humans. Even as I imagine its long history, the descendants of those humans are unsightly quarreling over its ownership. This certainly must be what you call human nature." (Arnest)

"Shut it." (Wendelin)

Don't friggin' start suddenly talking about incomprehensible stuff.

"Should a demon talk about human matters?"

"Well, you have a point there." (Arnest)

It's not like I don't want the Eulenberg House to manage it.  
I don't care if it's the Margrave Breithilde House, or the Knight Eulenberg House. I just want them to quickly decide on the responsibilities so that we can open the tunnel.

"Nothing has been decided yet. Hence, until they do, you can freely investigate to your heart's content." (Wendelin)

"That is convenient. It would be great if they quarreled forever then." (Arnest)

"You..." (Wendelin)

Talking with Arnest is really tiring.  
On top of him being aloof on this matter, he occasionally blurts out stingy comments.

"Well then, Elise and I will return to the Eulenberg territory." (Wendelin)

"Understood. Milady, I would like you to provide Mizuho tea next time. Sweets from Mizuho would be great as a side dish." (Arnest)

"Okay, understood." (Elise)

Going at his own pace as usual, Arnest made a detailed request for the next delivery, but Elise just agreed to it with a smile.

"Elise, it's fine for you to refuse that guy's selfishness." (Wendelin)

"Isn't it fine if it's such a small request?" (Elise)

I suppose the cost-performance ratio isn't all that bad as long as it means that he won't escape thanks to the Mizuho tea and sweets.  
In Elise's case, I think she's just too kind, though...



"Wend, how did it go?" (Erwin)

"As usual, he's going at his own pace." (Wendelin)

"I suppose, it's not like that demon's character is going to change all of a sudden." (Erwin)

Erw showed his understanding.



After a short while we left through the exit on the Eulenberg territory's side. We found Erw and the others preparing maroimo, which they had obtained from the residents.

Erw had a look at the progress of the baked sweet potato machine, which I ordered a magic tool artisan in Baulburg to build, before going on the dragon hunt.

There was no necessity for Elise and me to be guarded since the soldiers led by Thomas had been stationed at various locations inside the tunnel.

Rather than that, right now the baking condition of the stone-baked maroimo is much more important.

"Well, what should I think of that...?" (Erwin)

"But, you know, Erw. This is mostly a demand of our female camp." (Wendelin)

It's surely no good if the stone-baked maroimo are only half-baked or burned.

Since Elise, Haruka and the others are making sweets using the maroimo, watching the baking condition has become Erw's duty.

"How about the all important response from His Majesty?" (Erwin)

"Who knows?" (Wendelin)

"『Who knows?』, he says..." (Erwin)

The adults, who seem to be the ones to decide, haven't sent any messages as they apparently haven't come to a conclusion yet.

Thus it's impossible for us to make a move. In a certain way I'm immersing myself in the cooking research of maroimo since I can't do anything about the situation anyway.

No, I mean it. My hands are really tied. It's definitely not as if it's my personal desire.

If the cooking methods for maroimo advance, the number of people that will become happy by enjoying them will increase.

This is definitely something you could call an achievement suitable for a high-ranking noble.

"I mean, it's not like I can decide everything all by myself." (Wendelin)

As I can't escape my salaryman mindset, I've become accustomed to waiting for orders from above. Surprisingly, deciding by myself makes me feel pressured. There are cases where it's better to leave the decisions to others. Besides, the tunnel on Knight Eulenberg territory's side isn't in our possession anyway.

"Erw, are you going to give your opinion to His Majesty and Margrave Breithilde?" (Wendelin)

"As if I could!" (Erwin)

"Hence we are waiting for further orders here, but we should use our time wisely, shouldn't we?" (Wendelin)

"That's quite the convenient excuse you got there." (Erwin)

"Erw-san, I made sweet jelly out of maroimo. Please have a taste." (Haruka)

"Yahooo——! That looks really delicious, Wend. Let's hurry up and eat." (Erwin)

Even though he complained at the beginning, Erw delightfully chattered about sampling sweets as soon as Haruka brought her own, handmade sweets. What a truly nice personality he has.

"Now, now, Elise and the others have also prepared test sweets made out of maroimo." (Haruka)

As should probably be expected of a person from Mizuho, Haruka prepared sweet jelly with maroimo.

Even Japan had sweet potato paste. Thus it's the maroimo version of it.

Elise and my other wives each are preparing test dishes that use maroimo.

The user-friendly outdoor cookware, which I had the craftsmen in Baulburg make for them besides the baked sweet potato machine, doesn't seem to be bad.

"Dear, we're done." (Elise)

"Then, I guess all of us will have an afternoon snack and sample the various sweets." (Wendelin)

At once I decide to have a fun snack time, taking out a table and chairs from my magic bag and lining them up.

Occasionally the residents of the Eulenberg territory looked our way, but nobles are always in the center of attention.

Even if it's outdoors, we have to enjoy the tea and snacks elegantly.

"So you made a maroimo cake, Elise?" (Wendelin)

"Yes, I made it while capitalizing on the maroimo's sweetness as much as possible." (Elise)

I guess she has kneaded maroimo into the batter and cream. It tastes like a Mont Blanc with a moderate sweetness.

"It goes well with tea and is quite delicious." (Wendelin)

"It's wonderful that it suits your taste." (Elise)

Once I praise the taste of her cake, a smile blooms all over Elise' face.

"Next is my turn, eh?" (Ina)

Ina made a pudding using maroimo.

"The vivid yellow of the maroimo's main part looks delicious." (Wendelin)

Once I had a taste, this was also very appetizing.

"Mine are cookies." (Luise)

Luise made cookies while kneading maroimo into the dough.

"I see, cookies using maroimo. They got an unusual, springy texture despite being cookies. Nice."  
(Erwin)

The pudding and cookies are very great. Erw eats them while looking completely satisfied.

"This is mine." (Wilma)

"Ooh! Sweet potato cake?" (Erwin)

There are sweet potatoes in this world, so sweet potato cake exists as well.  
Wilma prepared that with maroimo, but since she's recently taking lessons from Elise how to make sweets, the end result looks very delicious.

"Wend-sama, here." (Wilma)

"This is also quite wonderful." (Wendelin)

Since there's a fair variety of sweets today, Wilma apparently prepared the sweet potato cake without using sugar and fresh cream.  
Being able to enjoy it as light snack even after having eaten several sweets is a big boon.

"I baked a pie." (Katharina)

"You went all out, didn't you?" (Wendelin)

"It's the maroimo version of the Empire's specialty, apple pie. You might as well call it potato pie, maroimo edition, though." (Katharina)

In this world it's hard to get your hands on apples unless you import them from the Empire as they are northern fruits.

That's the reason why Katharina made a fake apple pie out of maroimo.

"(Going by her appearance, she looks as if she'd be bad at cooking, but...)" (Erwin)

Erw whispered.

Certainly, Katharina was a serious person that might give others such a first impression, but I know that she's able to do most things by herself since she's saving for the revival of her home. However, because it's not very noble-like to cook, she doesn't show it to outsiders often.

"The maroimo in the pie is really soft, fluffy and delicious. This is quite the dish, I must say."  
(Wendelin)

"Indeed, the capital's cooks might copy this." (Elise)

Elise praised Katharina's pie, too.

"It's just a simple arrangement." (Katharina)

Even while saying something like that, Katharina wasn't all that unhappy about being praised by everyone.

"Last is Haruka's sweet maroimo jelly..."

"I also made kinton1." (Haruka)

It truly feels like she's going down the path of Japanese confectionery.

In this world it's correct to call it Mizuho-styled, but since Haruka also poured Mizuho tea, I was able to enjoy a Japanese-like snack time.

"As expected of you, Haruka. Another serving, please." (Erwin)

"Yes, please." (Haruka)

Even though he had already eaten various dishes until now, Erw requested another serving of jelly and kinton.

I guess that's what you'd call him being able to eat as much as he likes as long as it's been made by Haruka?

We enjoyed many maroimo desserts like this, but...

"The cookies and pudding were delicious, but..."

"The cake made by Elise was also great, but..."

"The kinton and jelly prepared by Haruka was wonderful, however..."

"But, what surpasses all of those is..."

"The stone-baked maroimo..." (Katharina)

"In case of great ingredients, there are times where simple cooking methods capitalizing on the ingredient's own flavor are more delicious than making elaborate dishes."

"I learned a simple truth here."

After the meal we talked about which maroimo dessert was delicious, but, in the end we reached the conclusion that stone-baking the maroimo in the sweet potato baking machine was the best way to prepare them.

I also agree with that view.

Though I believe that the cookies, pudding, kinton and jelly are plenty appetizing as well.

"Then it means the championship goes to the stone-baked maroimo."

""""""""Agreed.""""""""

Thus we decided on the most delicious maroimo dessert with the majority vote of the female camp.

"Or rather, we haven't made any progress except in regards to maroimo cooking methods." (Erwin)

"That alone is pretty good, I think." (Wendelin)

Erw tried to complain, or rather express his dissatisfaction, but I consider this to be a very important step.

"No, what does that tell about you as a noble?" (Erwin)

"Humans can't live without food, right!? The tunnel's ownership will change in a few decades or at most several hundred years, but supreme cooking methods turn into culture which people will remember for many thousands or tens of thousands years!" (Wendelin)

I really nailed this one.

Maybe that sentence will be handed down as analect of Earl Baumeister in the future.

"In the first place, we don't have any influence on the political situation." (Wendelin)

Since it's not about my territory, it's something that has to be settled by those concerned.

"Well, I can't talk back if you put it like that, but is the situation making any progress?" (Erwin)

"No, not at all."

"...Huh? Burkhart-san?" (Wendelin)

"Aye." (Burkhart)

At that point, Burkhart-san suddenly showed up.

It's surprising for him to have come to the Eulenberg territory by himself without relying on my 『Teleportation』.

"Rather, the troublesome matters might have actually increased." (Burkhart)

"Troublesome matters?" (Ina)

"Yeah, have a look Ina-jou-chan." (Burkhart)

Burkhart-san held something like a big amount of pamphlets in both hands. They seem to be formal marriage interview photos.

"Burkhart-san, are you going to increase the number of wives?"

"It's not me. Those are for Veith Frank von Eulenberg." (Burkhart)

"Already, eh...?" (Wendelin)

"Indeed." (Burkhart)

"Wend, what's this about?"

"That's..." (Wendelin)

Even I could make an educated guess here.

In other words, for some reason the information about the Eulenberg territory has been leaked, and nobles, who plan to offer their daughters or sisters to Veith-san for a political marriage, appeared.

"Who leaked it?"

"Information like this just gets exposed, you know? Everyone might be the perpetrator." (Burkhart)

"I guess it doesn't matter..."

In the end, the marriage photos arrived at the Eulenberg household.

It's not like we are going to decide anyway.

I suppose, for starters we're going to head to the Eulenberg household.



As soon as we arrived, Burkhart-san greeted Lord Eulenberg, telling him that he's on an errand from Margrave Breithilde, and handed him the bundle of marriage photos.

Even at a low estimation, there's probably more than 30 photos in that bundle.

"Umm...Earl Baumeister-sama?" (Eulenberg)

"Yes." (Wendelin)

"What should I do?" (Eulenberg)

"Even if you ask me..." (Wendelin)

There's no way that I can decide for him.

Given that these are marriage photos sent to the Eulenberg family, Lord Eulenberg himself must make the decision.

Burkhart-san, who saw his timid-looking expression, averted his face in my direction and sighed.

"(Earl-sama, is this old man going to be alright?)" (Burkhart)

"(I can't guarantee that.)" (Wendelin)

"I think it's probably fine to to decide whether you accept or don't accept them after referencing to the marriages of the Eulenberg family heads so far." (Elise)

Elise gives an extremely reasonable reply, but that doesn't cause Lord Eulenberg to lose his anxious expression.

"The Eulenberg household is a vassal of the Margrave Breithilde household, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"(Considering that, it didn't seem as if Margrave Breithilde really knew about them...)" (Wendelin)

I think even the Knight Baumeister household remained in Margrave Breithilde's memory more prominently, despite likewise being located in the sticks.

Well, that's probably because he couldn't forget as he had to shoulder the debt and send merchants over thanks to his predecessor.

It's only natural that Margrave Breithilde remembered the Knight Baumeister household, which caused troubles in the past and then got inconvenienced plentifully.

This might also be called, standing out in a bad way.

"(The Eulenberg territory might not have entered master's perception if not for this time's case.)" (Burkhart)

There's no way that they would be able to cause troubles or damage to others with a small noble territory adjoining to the Greater League Mountain Range that possesses a population of 300 people.

Since they lived really quietly while doing very ordinary farm work everyday, I think the busy Margrave Breithilde didn't remember since he didn't get involved with them.

"But, they are a noble household, so there should have been marriage mediations and such, no?"

"That's...so far we never tied marriage bonds with other noble families." (Eulenberg)

"Eh——!?! Something like that is possible?" (Wendelin)

Even the former Knight Baumeister household was troubled with the coming of age because it would be the time to welcome a bride, but the Eulenberg household never did that according to its lord's words.

I was slightly surprised.

"From where did you get the brides then?"

"There are only few noble households, which know of our Eulenberg household. Since we're also busy working on the fields, we don't have the leeway to go depend on others. Mostly it's been the daughters of merchants in the neighboring cities or daughters of the village headman inside our territory."

"You felt at ease with that...?"

"There was no one blaming us for it..."

Ina and Luise can't hide their surprise due to the Eulenberg household being so disconnected from the common sense of nobility.

Normally, if the heir of the first wife doesn't take the daughter of a noble family as bride, it should turn into a problem for nobles, but since there are no nobles that know of the Eulenberg territory, there was no one to identify it as problem.

"(The very definition of stealth nobles, aren't they...)" (Wendelin)

A certain Crown Prince gives the same impression, though...

"Wend-sama, we should first ask whether Veith-sama has a fiancée." (Wilma)

"Ah, right."

"So, is there anyone?"

Being told so by Wilma, I tried asking whether there's already a fiancée for Veith-san, the party concerned here.

"There is." (Veith)

"So there is...?"

Veith-san should have already passed the age of 20, thus it's probably no wonder for him to at least have a fiancée.

"Yes! She's the daughter of this village's headman and my childhood friend..."

"Veith-sama!"

At just that timing, that fiancée plunged into the room.

Her age is probably around 16.

Her attire is like that of commoners, but she's a fairly sweet girl.

"Oh, Marita? What's wrong?" (Eulenberg)

"Umm...I heard from dad Veith-sama is going to have a formal marriage interview with a noble's daughter." (Marita)

"No, it hasn't been decided yet that he will..."

"However, it ain't as if it's that easy to refuse. I'll act sportsmanlike and step aside." (Marita) (T/N: She speaks in Aomori dialect)

The girl called Marita declared that she wouldn't become Veith-san's wife. Although I believe it depends on the noble daughter that will become the legal wife whether it's truly necessary for her to back out, considering it normally, it's impossible for Marita, who's no noble, to become Veith-san's legal wife. In order to not cause any succession order disputes for the children that will be born, I think it would be the common sense for her to enter as concubine after the legal wife's child was born.

"Marita, didn't we make that promise in our childhood? To marry and govern this meager Eulenberg territory together." (Veith)

"But..." (Marita)

"Marita, did you forget about that promise?" (Veith)

"Nay. Even now I remember how you proposed to the four years old me saying, 『I want you to become my bride』, Veith-sama." (Marita)

"Then!" (Veith)

"But..." (Marita)

"Someone like the daughter of another noble isn't needed in the Eulenberg territory! The only one I want to marry is you, Marita!" (Veith)

"Veith-sama!" (Marita)

The two, who started a conversation that could have been out of a soap opera, tightly hugged each other on the spot. Burkhart-san dons an expression asking, 『Something like that works?』, and Erw seems to share the same opinion. However, for some reason the group around Elise is deeply moved, saying 『We saw something very nice』. There might be a difference between men and women on this. Especially Ina likes such love stories.

"Veith-san, even in regards to the customs of the Eulenberg territory so far, there are no issues." (Elise)

"Eh?" (Veith)

Unexpectedly Elise, who seems like she would speak about the etiquette of nobles at the foremost at such times, expresses her support for the two here. It seems she prioritized their feelings after seeing the pure love between childhood friends from nearby.

"Yeah! You just have to decline all the formal marriage meetings!"

"Ignoring greedy nobles, who suddenly brought up the marriage topic after the matter with the tunnel was exposed, is the best option!"

"Bringing up that topic through Margrave Breithilde is cowardly. You should fight."

"Indeed! In the end it's you who decides, Veith-san. Your integrity as man has been called into question!" (Katharina)

"Even in Mizuho there are precedents where the will of the people concerned averted political marriages! Please do your best!" (Haruka)

"Everyo——ne, ple——ase consider it calmly." (Erwin)

Erw tried to hold back Elise and the others who got all psyched up on their own accord, but it didn't have much of an effect.

Since he surely didn't expect the serious Elise, Ina, and even Haruka to end up approving, he apparently couldn't come up with any words to persuade the female camp.

Unintentionally I also became open-mouthed at the female camp completely agreeing with Veith-san's and Marita's marriage.

"Wend, you have to stop them. You're their husband." (Erwin)

"True, I will make a powerful cut here." (Wendelin)

"Oohh! For a change you're going to oppose your wives!?" (Erwin)

"Erw-kun, I'm Earl Baumeister." (Wendelin)

Good grief, for even Elise, who's the young lady of a high-ranking noble, to allow herself to be swept along by her emotions.

Being Earl Baumeister, I have to guide this heir in front of me, who doesn't stick to the customs of nobility, on the right path.

That's what I decided, but I ended up receiving an unexpected counterattack here.

"Wend, you demon!" (Luise)

Luise, I'm no demon, you know? I'm an ordinary, gentle husband, am I not?

"Luise, say what you want." (Wendelin)

Usually nobles arrogantly explain the difference in reasoning and common sense of nobility to others.

Today I will preach the path of nobility to the eldest son of the Eulenberg household.

"Listen up, okay Veith-dono?" (Wendelin)

"Earl Baumeister-sama." (Veith)

Veith-san, who apparently resolved himself, confronts me while Marita hides behind him. His eyes, which showed that he has something he ought to protect, expressed his will to not pull back at all, even if the other party is me.

The other side was obviously cool, but I'm a high-ranking noble. At times I have to play the thankless role of acting as a villain.

It's definitely not as if I'm jealous of Veith-san's normalfag life.

"Listen up, okay Veith-dono?" (Wendelin)

"Let me hear it." (Veith)

"Something like free love is no more than a selfish wish for a noble." (Wendelin)

"However, that doesn't mean that it's impossible, no matter what." (Veith)

"Indeed. However, if you consider the current situation of the Eulenberg territory, it's next to impossible." (Wendelin)

Seeing as they can't handle the tunnel's management by themselves, he has no option but to obediently accept a noble's daughter, even if it's the daughter of a greedy noble, and get his wife's home to help him out.

"No, I won't choose that path." (Veith)

"What are you going to do then?" (Wendelin)

"I will be fine as long as I can get married to Marita, and continue cultivating maroimo! If you're able to provide an alternative territory, we will live there." (Veith)



"Veith-sama. You finished the field's soil on the slope at long last. You must not give up on that for my sake." (Marita)

The resolve of the onee-chan called Marita is very upright, but I think the fields they cultivated until now will disappear. If it comes to opening the tunnel, the fields must be removed for the construction work after all.

...Somehow I failed to tell them about it, I guess.

"Marita, if I have ten years, I can bring up the soil to the same level again. There might be some residents who won't follow me to the new territory. I think it will be a poorer livelihood than now, but you're going to accompany me, right?" (Veith)

"...Gladly." (Marita)

"Thanks, Marita." (Veith)

"Veith-sama, it's also my happiness." (Marita)

Veith-san and Marita embraced each other. Elise and the other girls applauded without holding back.

Once I look, I see that Burkhart-san has suddenly switched sides to to the female camp without me being aware of it. He's applauding together with them while donning an innocent look.

Betraying me after assessing the state of affairs, what a cruel old man.

"I'm deeply moved by your resolve, Veith-san. I will also persuade my lord as much as I can." (Erwin)

"Eerww——!" (Wendelin)

And then even Erw, who's dominated by Haruka, swiftly betrayed me, and instead said that he will persuade me.

Are you that scared of your wife?

What was the deal with your initial attitude then!

Doesn't that make me completely look like the bad guy here!?

Yeah, I guess I'm a villain...

It looks like it has been decided that I will be a loner in this matter, but I'm a man who experienced being alone during my childhood.

I won't twist my reasoning as Earl Baumeister.

"Dear, I think it doesn't matter even if noble customs are not upheld occasionally." (Elise)

Elise, that 『occasionally』, I have a problem with that ambiguous reason...

"Yeah! Don't you think those two are pitiable?" (Ina)

For even Ina to have become emotional...

"Wend, you insensitive boor." (Luise)

"Wend-sama, cruel!" (Wilma)

I'm being one-sidedly condemned by Luise and Wilma.

"Doesn't the reputation and authority as Earl Baumeister exist exactly for times like these!?" (Katharina)

"Indeed! Since you have authority due to your achievements in suppressing the civil war, let's push our way through with your power here, milord!" (Haruka)

Katharina and Haruka as well, huh?

"Earl-sama, I just went with the flow, okay?" (Burkhart)

"Burkhart-san, double-crossing me here is sly..." (Wendelin)

"I always stand on the side of the women." (Burkhart)

Burkhart-san averts his eyes from me while whistling.

"Milord, what makes you dissatisfied?" (Erwin)

Suddenly that Erw sharply stabbed at something located in the innermost depths of my heart. Sure, I did have the outward stance of protecting the customs of nobility. But, there was an aspect I disliked even beyond that.

"A younger childhood friend..." (Wendelin)

"Eh? What? Wend?"

"Something like promising a marriage during childhood, it's my punishment for such an enviable guy!" (Wendelin)

I expose my feelings.

Having a childhood friend of the opposite sex, and moreover promising to marry her; that's a situation befitting of stories and movies. Are you guys some normalfags or what? I lay my anger bare.

"Even someone like me!" (Wendelin)

Although I hadn't a single friend and was a loner in my childhood as Wendelin.

And even in my previous life, there didn't appear any female childhood friend, no matter how deep I dig in my memories.

What I find there are only memories with male friends.

There's not even a cute girl to be found in those memories!

"Ba——h! I guess I will just complete my childhood friend research while I'm researching maroimo! Damn it! Even I ! Even I!" (Wendelin)

I wonder what it is? This anger without outlet that wells up from deep inside me?  
I end up thinking that I have to prevent the marriage of this couple, no matter what.  
Yes, it's an 『Ordeal for Normalfags!』

"Sorry, our lord occasionally gets those weird fits."

"Please don't worry about it, okay? Usually he's normal, but sometimes he becomes strange."

The shout of my soul from the bottom of my heart was called worthless by Erw and Burkhart-san.

"Burkhart-san, you have to hand over that bundle of marriage partner photos!"

"I was just told by master to take these with me for the time being, and otherwise to respect Veith-dono's will, even if he doesn't choose anyone in particular." (Burkhart)

"Veith-dono, there might be a pretty girl among them."

"Wend, that's not something that should be said here."

But, with my use of force being obstructed by Erw and Burkhart-san, even I gradually ended up supporting the marriage of those two.

## **Chapter 5 – Just when I Thought that It Was Resolved at last, an Unforeseen Situation Has...**

"I guess, in the end we arrived at that kind of conclusion..."

It was decided to transfer the management of the discovered tunnel to another house, according to the wish of the Eulenberg House.

In that case it will fall upon the Margrave Breithilde House as they are geographically the closest. Since there would be rumors about a dispute between the royal family and the Margrave Breithilde House if it would become an area under the direct control of the Kingdom, it was agreed upon for the Kingdom, the Earl Baumeister House, and the Margrave Breithilde House to equally dispatch personnel for the management and guarding as a compromise.

The Earl Baumeister House and the Margrave Breithilde House were given the condition of sharing the expenses of the Kingdom's guard unit.

It's what you'd call a corrupt, political agreement. To such a degree that the people of the Eulenberg House should hate it.

For them, who rarely show their faces to other nobles, a political negotiation with the royal family and the Margrave Breithilde House would be impossible.

However, in exchange the Margrave Breithilde House has to prepare an alternative territory where the Eulenberg House can cultivate maroimo.

They need to prepare a big place that has better conditions, and also give financial support.

It's probably also necessary to go around and explain the circumstances to the nobles who wished to arrange a marriage with Veith-san.

No matter how much advice they might get, such a stunt is impossible for the people of the Eulenberg House.

They would have been led around by the nose by cunning old nobles, ending up troubled due to weird promises they would make in the process.

In the end there was no other choice but for Margrave Breithilde to take the initiative.

"I had a hunch that something like that would happen..." (Breithilde)

"If you get through this, you will be able to gain big profits." (Wendelin)

"You sure have it nice, don't you Earl Baumeister? After all you just have to leave it to Roderich..." (Breithilde)

My house is upstarting. My abilities as feudal lord are still unknown with me only being 17 years old as of yet.

That's why Roderich had it easy since he could proactively move around and do things on his own accord.

"I wonder, will I be turned into a puppet in the future?" (Wendelin)

"You as puppet, Earl Baumeister? That's probably impossible." (Breithilde)

"After all I'm a bad feudal lord who doesn't invest much time in his work as noble." (Wendelin)

"No, that's not correct." (Breithilde)

Margrave Breithilde flatly denies my statement.

"According to what I heard, you did paperwork as staff officer during the civil war, didn't you Earl Baumeister? Doesn't that mean that you have been a lot more intelligent than the nobles around you? However, your abilities are simply divided due to your jobs as adventurer and magician. You have achieved great deeds of arms without knowing defeat. Thus I don't think that you will be turned into a puppet unless you act quite foolishly. Roderich is an extremely capable person. He's a person who's worthy to be trusted even in regards to his character." (Breithilde)

Roderich and I seem to be evaluated awfully highly by Margrave Breithilde. It's not that I'm intelligent in particular. I think it's just helpful that I received an education in modern Japan and worked in a trading company. Considering it like that, it means that the education level in modern Japan was high.

"I guess you're right. That's why I can also take it easy." (Wendelin)

"I wonder about that easy of yours. If it was me, I would have hated to almost die in a huge underground ruin, cast magic against an army of 10,000 soldiers, liberate the Herthania Valley, or become a major battle force in a civil war..." (Breithilde)

Having it now recounted by someone else, makes me think that we've done quite a few things so far.

"In short, it's an assignment of roles. Earl Baumeister, you move in various flashy ways, gaining profit and concessions for the Earl Baumeister House. Meanwhile Roderich develops the territory while skillfully making use of your achievements. However..." (Breithilde)

"However, what?" (Wendelin)

"This kind of method works because you're the founder." (Breithilde)

It's unknown whether my children will be magicians. The existence of a household manager who possesses full authority like Roderich might also lead to a catastrophe later on. That means it's necessary to change the way things are handled in various ways by the next generation.

"It's Roderich we're talking about here, so he will probably give a strict education to your successor that might be born by Elise. Later he will designate his successor and split his work to young retainers while educating all of them. With this your successors in the next generations will manage the territory while commanding a group of retainers." (Breithilde)

"The construction of a permanent ruling system, huh?" (Wendelin)

"A feudal lord's authority is powerful, but a feudal lord is unable to accomplish anything by himself. Oops, we strayed from the original topic. It's about the transfer of the tunnel rights, but I also believe it necessary to have the promise that this was a request by the Eulenberg House." (Breithilde)

The Eulenberg House had to officially raise the white flag and state, 『It's impossible for us! That's why we will entrust the Margrave Breithilde House with this task!』

Without that, Margrave Breithilde will be barraged with a storm of criticism by the other nobles. And the bad rumor that he threatened a small noble as high-ranking noble and stole their concessions will circulate in noble society.

"What a troublesome matter." (Wendelin)

"Nobles are truly troublesome. With the Kingdom in the mix as well, we will be charged for the expenses of posts such as guard captain if their numbers increase, right? By doing that, we are paying money to the Kingdom. In case of an emergency, the Kingdom's nobles have the duty to dispatch their feudal armies, thus they don't need to pay money to the Kingdom. So we are doing it like this so that this rule won't be violated." (Breithilde)

I heard about that before.

In the past there was a system of paying money to the central government in proportion to the territory's size and military service.

However, at that time the war against the Empire has been continuing already for many years. Because of the heavy strain, a part of the nobles apparently planned to separate from the Kingdom. That movement was abated by stopping the system of paying money to the government. It would be intolerable for the Margrave Breithilde House if they were the reason for reviving that system. That's why it will be labelled as expenses for the stationed guard unit.

"At such times the church is easier to deal with. It would be settled by saying that we will construct a church and a pilgrim location here." (Breithilde)

The rest would work out peacefully by just continuously paying donations.

No matter whether it's good or evil, the church's management system has been perfected to a high degree.

Though it also had the same meaning as 『Low-brow』.

"Time to go to the Eulenberg territory then." (Wendelin)

It had turned into an unexpectedly long talk, but I had come here to fetch Margrave Breithilde.



Once I returned to the Eulenberg territory while bringing him along, the expressions of Veith-san and Lord Eulenberg brightened up as it finished without unreasonable work being forced onto them.

"Margrave Breithilde-sama." (Eulenberg)

"There's a slope suitable for maroimo cultivation where no wyverns and flying dragons come flying. It's an alternative territory where you can also grow plenty of other produce. Even my Breithilde Margraviate has many places that touch on the Greater League Mountain Range. As long

you search, you will definitely find a fitting spot." (Breithilde)

"That's wonderful." (Veith)

Veith-san beams.

In his eyes the maroimo cultivation comes before the tunnel management.

"I have to immediately start with soil creation for the new territory. We finally acquired the know-how of soil preparation, but it will take ten years for the maroimo to reach their current sweetness." (Veith)

"As for that, how about having Earl Baumeister transport the fields' soil? In that way the territory's share of field soil would be carried over as well." (Breithilde)

"Earl Baumeister-sama, your abilities are truly amazing." (Veith)

The most troublesome aspect of agriculture is the soil preparation.

In that case I will just carry the soil over at the time of the relocation.

And Veith-san looked at me, who's capable of that, with eyes full of reverence.

Since he had only been scared of me so far, I feel like being respected by him for the first time.

"Either way, the Eulenberg territory will require large-scaled construction work..." (Wendelin)

Right now it's been forbidden to trespass since we only removed the sand and stones with magic, but it's necessary to widen the tunnel's entrance and set up measures to prevent landslides from now on.

In addition we have to enlarge the roads, remove the farm fields and residential land, and build establishments such as parking lots for carriages and inns for the people that will go through the tunnel.

If we were to be negligent in preparing those, it would be possible for the tunnel users to cause huge congestion before entering the tunnel.

Not just lodging facilities and warehouses to store the cargo, but restaurant streets and pleasure quarters are necessary as well, I suppose.

Getting the fief's population to relocate in order to build those needed facilities was the real issue.

Since the same facilities are also necessary on the Baumeister Earldom's tunnel side, I have already submitted a request to Baron Rembrandt, who's also an architect, and he's in the process of drawing the blueprints.

Once those are finished, I have to work on the foundations for a while.

The shortened construction method of having buildings that had been built by many workers in the capital transported with Baron Rembrandt's 『Relocation』 had started according to Roderich's plans. As a matter of fact, various things are already in motion.

"If you add such development to the management of the tunnel, it would have been increasingly impossible for us."

"There's also the aspect that it will become difficult to cultivate maroimo once we construct such things within the territory." (Veith)

Lord Eulenberg laments that it exceeds the limits of their abilities. Veith-san is worried that the

maroimo fields will disappear once the construction work starts.

"The slope with the maroimo fields has to be reinforced in order to prevent landslides. Please take the soil, since it will be removed at some point anyway." (Breithilde)

"Thank you very much." (Veith)

Veith-san expresses his gratitude towards Margrave Breithilde's kindness.

At first there had been various issues, but with this the difficult problems were finally resolved.

Even though everyone was delighted, the Goddess of Fate seems to be quite whimsical.

We encountered a new big problem.

Suddenly the entrance door of the Eulenberg mansion was energetically slammed open, and a single person rushed inside the room.

"Father! Brother! Are you sane!? Even though it's a great chance for a major breakthrough for the Eulenberg House, why are you happily yielding a golden egg to others!?"

""Katia?""

"Dear, this person is..." (Elise)

"For real?" (Wendelin)

It's the skilled female adventurer Katia who subjugated the wyverns and flying dragons with us just the other day.

She told us that she originated from the Eulenberg territory, but for her to appear in this place...

And, her calling Lord Eulenberg and Veith-san as father and elder brother means that's she's no resident, but surprisingly the Eulenberg family's daughter.

"Katia, you have come home quite early. According to schedule it should have been next month."

"Katia, did you run out of the dried maroimo I gave you before?" (Veith)

"I still have some of those...gah! That's not it! I hurried back home since I heard rumors that my family's home is in such a situation!" (Katia)

We had concealed those news from her, but nothing less of an excellent adventurer.

She apparently learned about the latest situation at home through her connections.

Come to think of it, Katia has many acquaintances and she's also well-known.

In contrast to Katia, who rushed in with such great haste, Lord Eulenberg and Veith-san carefreely asked her about the reason of her homecoming.

Katia seems to regularly return home as she has a good relationship with her family.

When asked about her stock of dried maroimo by Veith-san, she answers honestly. She might be an unexpectedly docile girl.

However, dried maroimo, huh...?

"This was definitely a blind spot. We have to buy dried maroimo on our way home." (Wendelin)

"No, that's not the issue right now, is it...?"

"You might say that. But, no matter how this situation might develop, it doesn't change the fact that dried maroimo exist." (Wendelin)

"You, at such a time..." (Erwin)

Erw was astounded, but how much is the difference in sweetness to dried sweet potatoes? Since that bothered me, it didn't change my feelings of wanting to quickly obtain them.

"Excuse me, Lord Eulenberg. I'm sorry as I might be lacking information, but who's the young lady over there?" (Breithilde)

"She's my daughter, Katia, which makes her Veith's younger sister." (Eulenberg)

"Your daughter, you say...?" (Breithilde)

Margrave Breithilde confirmed instead of me, but Katia was a daughter of the Eulenberg House after all.

I think that it's a disgrace to not have known that there's a daughter in the Eulenberg House despite them being their patron, but if I may say one thing in his defense: since not a single noble acquaintance of hers knew about it, I think the same offense applies to all of them. After all it didn't trouble anyone until now, even without knowing about it in particular.

"Katia, you are working outside the fiefdom?" (Breithilde)

"Aye, as adventurer. Until just the other day I subjugated wyverns and flying dragons with Earl Baumeister's party over there." (Katia)

"Is that so, Earl Baumeister?" (Breithilde)

"Yes, at that time we heard that she comes from the Eulenberg territory, but certainly I didn't expect her to be a member of the feudal lord's family." (Wendelin)

"I see, that makes sense." (Breithilde)

Margrave Breithilde looked as if he could agree with that.

Because she's an adventurer? Or because of her temperament?

Katia doesn't change her tone even with Margrave Breithilde as conversation partner.

There were few capable adventurers who suddenly act ingratiatingly just because the other party is a high-ranking noble.

It's not like there are absolutely none, but that doesn't mean that they have a troubled life even if they are doubted by one or two high-ranking nobles. That's because there's a trend for other adventurers to belittle those, who take a menial attitude towards influential people in the world of adventurers where one is only judged by their abilities.

To go even further; since there were many people who work as adventurers while hiding their nobility like Katia, there was no reason for such people to abase themselves even if the other party might be a high-ranking noble.

"Oi, Katia. The person over there is..." (Eulenberg)

Lord Eulenberg's face became pale due to his own daughter boldly talking to Margrave Breithilde as if he was her equal, but, in this case Katia's side is in the right.  
Lord Eulenberg is too menial, but it can't be helped since this seems to stem from his character.

"Margrave Breithilde-sama, right? Unfortunately I'm currently an adventurer." (Katia)

"I don't really mind." (Breithilde)

Margrave Breithilde didn't have a problem with her tone either.  
Being a high-ranking noble, he has many opportunities to meet with adventurers for requests such as the subjugation of monsters in his territory.  
He's fully aware of the temperament of adventurers, or rather it's meaningless to look down on adventurers. There are nobles, who turn away and denounce adventurers for their rude behavior, but that turns into a disadvantage for them.  
It results in them being refused with 『I don't want to do requests from that noble』, when they call for help.  
The excellent Margrave Breithilde won't make such mistakes.

"Katia-san isn't my retainer, after all." (Breithilde)

"Hee, nothing less from a high-ranking noble-sama. It helps that you grasp things quickly." (Katia)

Next Katia turned her eyes in Burkhart-san's direction.  
As mana holder, she apparently comprehends Burkhart-san's true ability.  
Just that served as proof of her being a great adventurer.

"Hello." (Burkhart)

However, Burkhart-san has no particular interest in Katia, and only greets her normally.

"(Burkhart-san, you aren't interested Katia?)"

"(Not really.)" (Burkhart)

Burkhart-san answered to Erw's whisper with a curt tone.  
Burkhart-san probably prefers girls like his wife.  
Besides, if one were to speak of unexpected facts, Burkhart-san is eccentric, but he likes well-mannered women.

"You barge in all of a sudden, but what's upsetting you so much, Katia?" (Wendelin)

Given that we have a relationship of having worked together, I asked Katia about her discontent without beating around the bush.  
There's no way to deal with it unless that remains obscure.

"What, you ask...the tunnel rights belong to the Eulenberg House, no matter how you look at it, don't they!? I don't know whether it's the Kingdom or our patron, but brute forcing their way to forcibly steal it from us is terrible!" (Katia)

"Though it's no brute forcing....in the first place, Lord Eulenberg and Veith-san have refused to manage the tunnel."

No wonder that Margrave Breithilde refused at first.

Because newspapers and the Internet don't exist in this world, rumors that the tunnel rights might belong to the small noble Eulenberg House are going around, and speculations whether the Margrave Breithilde House will confiscate those rights as patron and high-ranking noble run riot. Just as Katia returned home after worrying about that, her own father and elder brother were discussing to yield the tunnel rights to the Margrave Breithilde House as the rumors stated. Her having stormed in yelling while panicking about that is likely what really happened here.

"However, it's not something where everyone will be all smiles by us just irresponsibly taking tolls." (Eulenberg)

"I do know that!" (Katia)

"Really?" (Eulenberg)

"Yeah!" (Katia)

Since the flow of people and goods will be accelerated by the tunnel, the negative issues will increase as well.

The movements of illegal goods and criminals will grow in proportion.

In addition, the tunnel will become an important infrastructure connecting the Breithilde Margraviate and the Baumeister Earldom.

Even if the Kingdom might have signed a peace treaty with the Empire, it's possible that subversive activities to obstruct this place might be carried out if a war starts again.

There's also the danger that the remnants of the deceased Duke Nürnberg could target the tunnel for terror acts in order to stage their comeback by riling the Empire and the Kingdom to fight against each other.

"That's why the Kingdom's guard unit will join as well. Even with them present, we would need to properly manage and guard half of the tunnel, except for the magic illumination control room which belongs to the Earl Baumeister House. It would take suitable time and labor."

"If the Eulenberg House prepares for that..." (Katia)

"We arrived at that conclusion because we can't do that. There are also other reasons."

There's also the establishment of roads around the tunnel's entrance and surrounding facilities for the tunnel users.

A facility that handles the checking of the tunnel users' social status and the cargo they are bringing along, like a customs, will be also needed.

"It requires a large amount of money, personnel and know-how. It will be a problem if the tunnel entrance on the Eulenberg Knightdom's side is always congested while the entrance on the Baumeister Earldom's side works smoothly. If that were to happen, the territory would be taken away by the Kingdom due to negligence in your duties as nobles." (Breithilde)

"Ugh!" (Katia)

Katia is overwhelmed by the pointed arguments of Margrave Breithilde.

"Even so, brother has...even a method to manage it through the Eulenberg House..." (Katia)

"It's not impossible."

"There is one, isn't there?" (Katia)

Once it proceeds in the direction of the tunnel not being taken away, a smile returned to Katia's face.

"It's on the condition that he accepts the talks about the formal marriage interviews." (Breithilde)

Margrave Breithilde pointed at the bundle of marriage photos Burkhart-san had brought along.

"There are many houses of Viscount rank and above who possess money, personnel and the know-how. Money and personnel will be sent in together with Veith-dono's wife from her home. They will maintain the tunnel. On the outside it will be the Eulenberg House, but in reality it will be hijacked by his wife's home." (Breithilde)

Her home will be hijacked.

Katia's expression immediately became very sullen due to that possibility.

"It would be a disagreeable situation for the Margrave Breithilde House, but we can endure. Since the royal army will be stationed here as well, there probably won't be any troubles, and his wife's home likely won't try pull anything strange either. After all the Eulenberg territory is surrounded by the Breithilde Margraviate."

They certainly want the tunnel right, but it's not like they want to thrust their fangs into the rights of the Margrave Breithilde House.

They would hope to avoid needless confrontations and conflicts.

"By the way, the idea of sending a wife to you, Veith-dono, would be advantageous for us of the Margrave Breithilde House. After all we are the patron of the Eulenberg House." (Breithilde)

If the patron introduces a wife to the heir of their vassal, the other nobles won't have any choice but to stay silent.

As result, funds and personnel from close vassals or relatives of the Margrave Breithilde House would enter the Eulenberg territory, essentially hijacking the Eulenberg House.

"It's a method I'd like to avoid since it has a bad reputation in society, but Veith-dono, if you had decided to welcome a wife from another noble house, I thought about enforcing that plan. In the end it's fine though as Lord Eulenberg and Veith-dono are properly understanding the situation and made the best choice, but..." (Breithilde)

Margrave Breithilde sent a look in Katia's direction that told her 『If only meddlers didn't butt in unnecessarily...』.

Now that I have heard about those circumstances, I increasingly feel that it would be difficult for the Eulenberg House to manage the tunnel by themselves.

"To put it in few words, I guess it's bite what you can chew..."

Lord Eulenberg muttered only those few words.

"There's that as well. Since the surrounding farming fields have to be destroyed for the tunnel's construction work...it will have a big impact on the harvest amount of maroimo..." (Veith)

On top of the farmland diminishing, he hates spending time on anything besides farm work, Veith-san said.

"Brother! The tunnel management is much more profitable than that farm work of yours!" (Katia)

"Agriculture is the foundation of people. People won't survive without food. Besides, Katia, you like maroimo, don't you? Don't you always take a huge amount of dried maroimo with you when you leave?" (Veith)

"If it's maroimo, you just have to buy agricultural land somewhere else after earning money with the tunnel management, though!" (Katia)

The grounded elder brother, who has dabbled long and minutely in agriculture and maroimo cultivation, and the younger sister who hopes for the Eulenberg House's development through the tunnel management.

The brother, who has remained at home, is conservative. The sister, who left home, is progressive. I guess she still has a slim chance to win?

"Katia-san, unfortunately that's impossible." (Breithilde)

"Is it because the entire vicinity belongs to the Breithilde Margraviate?" (Katia)

"That's a part of it, but it's forbidden by the Kingdom for nobles to trade land between each other." (Breithilde)

"Really?"

"Eh? You didn't know?"

"Ugh..."

That makes sense.

If the nobles increased or decreased their territories as they please by trading them among each other, it would be a major pain for the Kingdom's side that manages the nobles.

If a territory suddenly reached the scale of an Earldom by buying out Knightdoms, it would likely cause grave difficulties for the Kingdom's political measures to manage its nobles.

Of course there are exceptions, but to do that, one has to win in a dispute and conclude an advantageous arbitration plan.

"You will be punished by the Kingdom, if you sell land on your own accord."

"It's fine to simply exchange land, isn't it!?" (Katia)

"That has to be permitted by the Kingdom."

If the Kingdom gives its permission as foundation of the nobility laws, even acts that violate the laws will be tolerated as an exception.

I can't believe that the Kingdom will refuse Margrave Breithilde's proposal in this case.

After all they haven't presented any plans to resolve the issue themselves.

"Damn! That's unfair!" (Katia)

"Unfair, you say...this is the rational decision which Lord Eulenberg and Veith-dono made based on reality. I think it's close to the best possible solution..." (Breithilde)

"Father! Brother! You got to stand firm here! If you do it skillfully, not only Baron, but even Viscount will be in reach! What's the deal with giving up here!?" (Katia)

Katia, who ended up losing the argument against Margrave Breithilde, next turned her focus on her father and brother, trying to motivate the two.

Since she was confuted logically, it looks like she has switched over to appealing emotionally.

Having said that, saying to do something about it with fighting spirit...it's not as if they are pre-war Japanese soldier. That idealism is extreme.

"Elise, is she becoming this headstrong because of her sadness of losing her birthplace?" (Wendelin)

I thought that Katia has become so emotional because she's going to lose her home, and try asking Elise whether that's correct.

"With the tunnel's management, the Eulenberg House will make big progress. She's someone who has left her family, but she will be happy if her home can make a breakthrough. I think that's the gist of it." (Elise)

"Again something troublesome..." (Wendelin)

Even though everything would have been resolved, if Katia hadn't appeared. I end up cursing the Goddess of Fate.

"Brother, welcoming a wife doesn't work for you, right? In that case I will find a husband, have him take responsibility and leave the tunnel management to him." (Katia)

"(Why does it have to go in this direction...?)" (Wendelin)

I quietly grumbled about Katia's weird decision.

Even if she uses such irregular method, it won't change the fact that the Eulenberg House will be turned into a puppet.

After hearing Katia's absurd suggestion, even Margrave Breithilde openly frowned.

"She will return to her position as daughter of a noble house. That's not really unusual..." (Ina)

It's as Ina says.

Katia, who should have originally been married into some noble house, was able to act freely by leaving the house and becoming an adventurer due to the Eulenberg House's unique circumstances. Thus she would simply return to her original status.

"Therefore, please introduce a capable husband, who will do his best for the Eulenberg House, to me, Patron Margrave Breithilde." (Katia)

"Wha-!?! Katia-san, where did you hear about this story to begin with?" (Breithilde)

"Now that you mention it, it's slightly odd."

"Her coming here was a bit too fast."

We bid farewell from her in Baulburg. Recently the adventurer guild's size is growing at a good pace, but compared to the capital or Breitburg, the number of adventurers is low. That also means Baulburg's adventurer guild falls behind in its speed of obtaining information.

I won't go as far as saying that there are definitely no nobles who know about this, but since it's my territory, that shouldn't really be the case.

It's no wonder that Wilma and Katharina are suspicious.

"As a matter of fact, right after leaving Earl Baumeister's party, I unexpectedly ran into an adventurer who's a bit of an acquaintance. He kindly told me about it." (Katia)

Hearing about this story, Katia quickly jumped on a magic airship headed for Breitburg, and ran from Breitburg to the Eulenberg territory while boosting her speed with magic, she explains proudly.

It looks like that Katia is capable of the same feat as 『Yufa the Gale』, who visited us as messenger during the civil war.

"For the likes of messengers and spies employed by the church or adventurer guild, 1,000 km in a day is impossible. However if it's 200-300 km, it's not such a big deal for them either."

After all they would move around with that much speed during battle.

I guess it's not that complicated if you dedicate your mana solely to traveling.

"As long as I'm alive I won't allow us to get deceived so easily. I'm begging you here, Margrave Breithilde-sama." (Katia)

"...Umm, Margrave Breithilde..." (Wendelin)

"Earl Baumeister, even without everyone telling me..." (Breithilde)

Suddenly receiving an unreasonable request from Katia, Margrave Breithilde dropped his shoulders in disappointment.

And the one who leaked the information unnecessarily to Katia is without a doubt a noble.

It looks like one of the reasons why His Majesty and the ministers didn't come here is because they

got busy with quelling the information leak.

"(Is this going to be resolved, Wend?)"

"(Even if you ask me...)"

Because of Katia's misdirected scheming and the nobles maneuvering behind the scenes, the situation surrounding the tunnel has become even more chaotic.



"I'm home." (Wendelin)

"Milord, I obtained information about that girl." (Roderich)

"Thanks for your hard work." (Wendelin)



In the end the tunnel matter returned to the drawing board due to Katia's intrusion. I wonder whether it wouldn't have been fine if I had Lord Eulenberg reign in Katia with his authority as the feudal lord, but since it's that reckless lass we're talking about here, it's possible that she will start searching for a husband on her own, if I do that.

There are many nobles that will consider taking advantage of this chaotic situation, trying to get some profit out of it, thus it's necessary for that girl to be cautious as well. That's what Margrave Breithilde said.

In the worst case it's quite possible for Katia and her allied nobles to create a counter-movement against the family head.

As Veith-san seems to be soft on his younger sister, it's possible that she would be able to push her arguments through.

『We have to make Katia agree.』 (Veith)

Having said that, Veith-san continues to persuade her together with Lord Eulenberg. Meanwhile Margrave Breithilde ordered Burkhart-san to gather information about Katia.

The other day we got a little insight on her combat abilities, but there are still a lot of things we don't know.

I pondered whether to ask Golf-san as leader of the 『Dragon Fighters』 who worked together with Katia on dragon subjugations, but he actually didn't know that she's Lord Eulenberg's daughter either, it seems.

As we don't know where he might be right now, we asked Burkhart-san, who has a lot of influence

at the adventurer's guild headquarter, to gather some information.

『It's somewhat in the gray zone, so I'd be grateful if I could have you pretend to not know about it, okay Earl-sama?』 (Burkhart)

In order to avoid troubles, the adventurer's guild has the tendency to not leak personal information about adventurers.

All the more for adventurers that earn a lot. If they stop earning money because the adventurers suffer damage from ridiculous extortions and crimes, it will be a considerable loss for the guild.

『Yo, is Eurariel-dono in?』 (Burkhart)

Once I brought Burkhart-san to the adventurer's guild headquarter with 『Teleportation』, he entered through the back door, told the name of a certain person to a young office lady and then started to have a secret talk with the elderly man who appeared.

I think he belongs to the guild's top brass.

Him not being surprised in particular after seeing me means that he's accustomed to dealing with people in high positions.

In other words, he holds a high position within the guild.

『I can't go too much into the details here, Burkhart.』 (Eurariel)

『Well, look...』 (Burkhart)

Burkhart-san explained the situation to elderly man.

『So that's how it is, huh? Such work where you have to use your head is impossible for that girl. It can't be helped...if you can get her to return as an adventurer...also...』

『Don't worry, Eurariel-dono. I won't reveal my source.』 (Burkhart)

『Well, I'd like to avoid a disciplinary inquiry. Treat me to a good drink later.』 (Eurariel)

『Trust me, I will.』 (Burkhart)

After that old man chat, Burkhart-san received one sheet of paper.

Holding onto that, we returned to the Eulenberg territory.



"How is it going with her?"

"Bad."

Once Burkhart-san showed the document he obtained to Margrave Breithilde, his looks

immediately became grim.

"She's earning quite a lot..."

"I guess she got the funds..."

We learned the reason for Katia's confidence.

From her job as excellent adventurer she earned quite the hefty sum of money.

"She graduated from the capital's adventurer prep school, and then earned more than 10,000,000 cents in the four years after becoming 15 years old...?"

If you ask why such outstanding talent didn't catch the attention of Margrave Breithilde, despite her being the daughter of his vassal...

"Her registered name is just Katia, eh...?"

Katia herself only talked about originating from the Eulenberg territory, she never mentioned to her surroundings that she's the daughter of a noble.

There are many such people among the adventurers who only assess others by their strength.

There's also the moral code among adventurers to not ask too much, if the other party doesn't talk about it on their own accord.

It's characteristic of this society that even the nobles, who requested her help, didn't consider investigating her in detail since they would be unable to turn her into a retainer given that she's a woman.

Even if they welcome Katia as a bride, the other side would get turned off due to her manly way of speaking and her strength.

If the other side negotiated with a condescending attitude without knowing that she's the daughter of a noble, Katia would likely refuse and escape.

"Why didn't she mention that she's nobility?"

"『Bloodline is totally unrelated to adventurers! You will be famous if you earn a lot!』 is her favorite phrase."

"It's a sound argument, but that makes her a troublesome person."

After all of us nodded in confirmation of Wilma's impression, we next all looked at Katharina.

"Why are you looking at me?" (Katharina)

Katharina feels uncomfortable being in the center of attention.

It looks like she forgot the troubles she caused when she met us for the first time.

"Katia was no trouble at the first meeting, but now she has ranked up to being even more troublesome than Katharina." (Wilma)

"Nothing less of you, Wilma-san...as usual you don't go easy on others..." (Katharina)

Today as well Wilma's sharp tongue was at peak condition.  
Katharina's face cramps up.

"Is she planning to manage the tunnel by herself with that character of hers after accepting an excellent husband?"

"She has more than 10,000,000 cents at hand, right? That boosts her confidence."

What's more important than anything in any society and epoch are sponsors.  
Breithilde understood that better than anyone.

"I suppose she will cover the necessary expenses with her own funds."

"If she continues to earn money as adventurer, she will be able to even procure additional funds...however, even if that turned out well..."

Even if she got an excellent husband, who's no pimp and has no strings attached, it's likely that it'll create a conflict between brother and sister.

The longer Katia leaves the Eulenberg territory to earn funds, the more likely will the husband and the newly-hired personnel run into hostilities with Veith-san and the older fief residents.

"Even though the people in the Eulenberg territory would want to farm, their agricultural land would be taken away for development."

In the end orders would be handed down with condescending attitudes by the next feudal lord's sister, her husband and furthermore outsiders, forcing the residents to help with the tunnel's management against their wills.

With uproars being a foregone conclusion, Elise's face froze.

The Eulenberg territory is different from the former Knight Baumeister territory.

Seeing as the people can immediately choose to leave the territory and look for other work if they like, it would spell the Eulenberg territory's end, if it lost its old population after having stolen the farming from them.

"That Katia has earned this much? That's amazing."

"Excluding you, Earl Baumeister, and your group, she's regarded as young hopeful star, according to the information. It looks like she's called 『Swift Katia』."

"I have heard that previously when we hunted together. I was told so by Golf-san."

"Adventurers are extremely self-conscious. They are weird show-offs that give themselves nicknames even though they don't have any real abilities. But, in Katia's case, she was called like this after people gave her that nickname on their own accord. That means her strength is the real deal."

After all we have directly witnessed Katia's abilities.

She's weak at magic, but raising her speed with mana is one of her strengths that allowed her to ambush the dragons.

There's no way that average adventurers would be capable of such a feat.

"Since the state of the raw materials she procures is good, her reputation is great as well. Especially ambushing special monsters such as wyverns and flying dragons and cutting their napes apart in one go...she did that in front of your eyes, didn't she?"

"Yes."

That strategy won't work against dragons with attributes, but even without recklessly challenging such dragons, it's no problem for Katia as she earns plenty. Even her equipment and her sabers were order-made items of considerably high quality. That means she can spend as much money as she likes since she's earning enough anyway.

"Having said that, how's Katia-san going to search for a husband?"

"It's not like Margrave Breithilde-sama can introduce someone convenient to Katia."

Katharina and Luise seem to be full of doubt about Katia's impulsive, haphazardly behavior. If I remember correctly, Margrave Breithilde didn't accept Katia's request back then. Even if he introduces someone, she might refuse that person, saying that they are under the control of the Margrave Breithilde House.

"Through her connections as adventurer?"

"Looking for someone as adventurer, and looking for someone to develop a territory and improve the infrastructure are two different cups of tea."

If it was the same anyway, she would have found a husband long ago. Hence, Katia has to choose a capable person from nobility.

"Is she going to look for a person like Roderich-san?"

"Luise-san, it's not that easy to find a person of Roderich-san's caliber." (Katharina)

"I guess so."

I somehow managed to employ him at the start, but it's not that simple to find such an outstanding talent.

That means I was quite lucky.

"Does she have any other connections?"

Even Margrave Breithilde cocked his head to the side in doubt, but in the end Katia seems to be someone with excessive energy who acts arbitrarily without any consultation. Later she declared to search for a husband with a method that struck us speechless.

\* \* \*

"Dear nobles! Do you know of the situation surrounding the Eulenberg territory? Then I will come straight to the point! I only want someone, who can fight against me and win, to become my husband!" (Katia)

Katia loudly announces the conditions of her husband search in front of a big audience right in the middle of a plaza located in the center of the royal capital.

Her bold way of speaking, her cute appearance that counters her mannerism, and her attitude that seems to provoke the nobles earned her a big applause from the commoners who listened to her. The commoners, who are basically starving for entertainment, probably thought that something interesting is going to start.

"The matter with the tunnel, which made progress behind the scenes in absolute secrecy..."

On the other hand, Margrave Breithilde's face has become pale.

Even though they proceeded with the talks behind closed doors because it's a complicated matter of politics and rights, Katia exposed all of it on a public plaza.

"That Katia-san looks like an idiot on a first glance, but is she actually moving after calculating various options?"

Because Katia announced the matter with the tunnel to the public, it resulted in the commoners paying attention to who's going to manage the tunnel.

This is equal to sealing all the underhanded tricks and backstabbing often used by nobility.

If she has calculated all that, she must be really skilled, but...

Katharina seems to believe that all of this might possibly be impulsive and intuitively.

"I think she's just going at it by instinct. Like an animal." (Wilma)

"That must be it..."

Margrave Breithilde shows his agreement to Wilma's merciless, wicked tongue.

"Even though it's about managing a tunnel, it's no good unless they can't win against Katia-san? Isn't that weird?"

"It's not strange, Ina-san."

That's because this serves as objective to lower the number of applicants.

It seems her aim is to remove all the idiots who plot to hijack the Eulenberg House with the power of their family, and those who only boast of a good pedigree.

"If you look for people meeting those requirements on a wide range, you will find quite a big number."

"There's that too, but I'm fairly strong-willed. Wouldn't I want a husband who can at least reign me

in?" (Katia)

Katia, who came back after finishing her announcement, explains to us the reason why she's choosing a husband by their fighting strength.

They must also possess connections to both, the literary and military arts.

I wonder, does such a normalfag really exist?

As someone only possessing magic, I couldn't sympathize with such genius-like existence.

"The ability to manage the tunnel and a strength surpassing your own, eh...? Aren't you asking for a bit much there?"

"This country is big. There should be at least one man like this, right?" (Katia)

With her saying that he must be able to suppress the strong-willed her, I feel like Katia is mixing in her preferred man-type there.

"(What to say...with strength as criterion...)"

She might be a person who takes combat strength as criterion to compare herself with others.

"(Is she actually a battle junkie?)"

"I think with that condition only 『muscle-brains』 who are proud of their own strength will show up, though."

Luise says something to Katia that has a tinge of a warning to it, albeit it's probably not meant as a threat.

"That's the reason why I addressed the nobles." (Katia)

With the condition that they must possess connections allowing them to prepare personnel to manage the tunnel, she has casually excluded adventurers.

No matter how much stronger than Katia they might be, it bears no meaning if they can't manage the tunnel.

"What about young merchants?"

"Luise-san, Katia-san is of noble origin. It's different when a common woman marries into nobility, but a man being adopted by a noble family to marry their daughter doesn't work."

Margrave Breithilde explained to Luise why young merchants won't be an option.

"Those are quite harsh conditions..."

Katia apparently had the goal of seizing the initiative by confidently announcing severe conditions to the nobles.

"It's because of what's at stake. With this they won't be able to continue getting the better of us, who are tiny nobles." (Katia)

Even though she puts on air, her cocksure attitude doesn't fall apart.  
For small nobles this might be the sole method to oppose high-ranking nobles.

"Katia, it's great that you have a plan and all, but the reservation of the Colosseum to carry out the matches won't come to pass unless I do it..."

The tunnel, which we opened up at great pains, won't be usable as long as that's not decided, no matter who's going to manage the tunnel.  
In the end I got stuck with going to the royal castle and booking the Colosseum for the battles.  
I think it's also necessary to explain the details to His Majesty and the ministers while at it.



"Earl Baumeister-sama, thanks for putting up with me for a little while." (Katia)

She requested it quite carefreely, but it resulted in us going to look after Katia at my mansion until the martial arts tournament to decide her husband starts.

That's because she declared that she won't stay at her family's home after creating a clash of opinions with her father and brother over her arbitrary decision to hold a tournament to decide her husband.

Even Margrave Breithilde has no obligation of taking care of her at this point in time.

Assuming she readily entrusted her safety to him, it would easily fan suspicions that he's scheming to use a man of his family.

I don't think that Margrave Breithilde would make use of such a plan, but even Katia is cautious, just in case.

"After all I would be troubled if the Margrave Breithilde House's men crept into my bedroom at night while I'm asleep, and established facts then and there." (Katia)

"Hm——m, you're sure wary."

"Naturally. Luise, you're a female adventurer as well, so you know what I mean." (Katia)

"I think I can understand." (Luise)

She has become first-class as female adventurer and is earning quite a lot of money.  
It might be natural for her to doubt anyone.

"You don't suspect Wend, do you?"

Ina, are you saying I'm going to make a move on Katia?  
Why such troublesome woman...just Katia is a no go.

"If the Earl Baumeister House forcibly stole even the tunnel rights of the Eulenberg's side, the criticism by the surroundings would be brutal. Besides, I feel safe as there are many women here."

(Katia)

"(Wend, isn't Katia surprisingly bright?)"

"(I think it's just her wariness that's strong.)"

Is Elise's thinking correct?

Katia is a female adventurer acting by herself after all.

"Earl Baumeister, Elise, I will be in your care for a little while." (Katia)

I decided to definitely complain to the surprisingly smart Katia later on.



"I will go to the royal castle." (Wendelin)

"You have it hard, don't you Earl-sama?" (Burkhart)

"Really, why did it have to turn out like this?" (Wendelin)

While tilting my head to the side in confusion, I head to the castle together with my guard Erw, Margrave Breithilde, and Burkhart-san.

Once we requested an audience with the king, we were guided to the audience hall right away.

Katia's daring statement has apparently become a hot topic in the royal castle.

All the important people such as Doushi, Cardinal Hohenheim, Minister Rückner, Minister Edgar were assembled next to His Majesty.

"Earl Baumeister, an unmanageable tomboy showed up." (Helmut)

The 『unmanageable tomboy』 mentioned by His Majesty is Katia.

Going against the opinion of her father and brother, meddling with the tunnel management without knowing whether she will be able to handle it, and boldly recruiting her husband in front of the public.

All of those actions can be regarded as reckless on a first glance, and daring on a second, but as way to struggle for an insignificant noble house, whose name hasn't been even known until now, it's not a wrong approach.

Katia turned the 『public eyes』 into her allies.

"Thanks to that, all the backstabbing has been sealed off." (Helmut)

"Your Majesty, did you consider sending a royal member as husband?"

"It's not that I hadn't thought of that move, but it's important that we're able to keep the Kingdom's costs for the tunnel's guards at zero. If I had sent a husband, that would have strengthened the

Eulenberg House, resulting in us being suspected of antagonizing the Margrave Breithilde House, which would be bad for the Kingdom." (Helmut)

"Being suspected without cause is certainly undesirable." (Breithilde)

Margrave Breithilde agrees with His Majesty's opinion.

If the Eulenberg House would gain in authority due to a royal becoming its family head, it would trigger new tensions with the Margrave Breithilde House, I guess... In that case they will choose to increase the posts through the deployment of the royal army's guard unit.

I don't know whether that's the real intention here, but I was able to confirm that both are aware of that.

"Just when I pondered whether it should be managed by us because of that, that tomboy showed up." (Helmut)

"However, that tomboy has put up harsh conditions."

Even I was speechless due to those perfect superman recruitment terms.

"There is no one meeting those conditions in the royal family." (Helmut)

"Among the family members of Margrave Breithilde, who has been no good at martial arts for generations, there's also no one that could win against that tomboy."

"The objective is probably to decrease the riffraff, but it's a list of troublesome conditions."

Katia declared that she also forbids to send out a skilled proxy. The populace, who heard that, cheered in joy.

『After all it would be a killjoy, if someone did the same as that retarded Duke.』

『Earl Baumeister-sama's magic back then was amazing, though.』

Katia saying that they have to fight by themselves and not allowing them to send representatives just because they are important nobles was approved by the populace.

There's also the case with Duke Hertha who previously acted very disgraceful in the battle against me. That also created a bad atmosphere for sending out representatives.

From the standpoint of His Majesty, that also seems to be headache inducing.

He probably doesn't remember anyone who could put her under their control nor any younger nobles who could win against Katia.

"Being able to win against that tomboy while not tolerating the control of their home might also be troublesome to handle."

By nature it's unlikely that an heir will challenge Katia to a match.

Since only spare second sons and the unneeded later sons will make an appearance, it's easy to imagine that they will rebel against being used by their home after winning against Katia and marrying her.

"In that case it's also possible that there will be troubles with the family, resulting in unnecessary troubles around the tunnel. That means someone without any elements of instability would be preferable, but..."

"From our standpoint, dealing with the Margrave Breithilde House or any other noble house that can be controlled would be much more comfortable."

Once you reach Minister Rückner's level, the ups and downs of such small noble houses likely don't matter.

It's fine as long as the tunnel can be used safely and thus becomes a plus for the Kingdom's economy.

In his eyes Katia is a rebel who appeared at the last moment.

"If the person himself says that they want to do it, we just have to leave it to them."

"And what are we going to do if it ends in failure?"

"Minister Rückner, even before that, is there anyone who can win against the tomboy among the noble bean sprouts? That's what I am worried about." (Armstrong)

Doushi's opinion is, in a certain sense, the most acrimonious.

He's saying that there might be no one among the young nobles, who can win against Katia, without even being evasive about it.

"There should be at least one. Doushi, if you're going this far, how about taking the stage yourself?"

"I don't meet the requirements to begin with, but I'm also bad with such tomboys!" (Armstrong)

If it's Doushi, he should be able to easily win against Katia, but there's no way that he can leave His Majesty's side to become a countryside noble.

I think even Minister Rückner knows as much, but he probably said it partially out of spite.

"I like graceful women!" (Armstrong)

Even though it's surprising, all of Doushi's wives fit that criterion.

Elise is his favorite niece, and as a matter of fact, Doushi seems to be popular among such women. People might look for qualities that are exactly opposite of their own in the opposite sex.

"It sure causes uneasiness. I guess I will try to have several members of the royal family take part for the time being. If they win, it won't become a problem."

"Your Majesty, can they win?"

"So far as it goes, several of them are soldiers and quite skilled at swordsmanship. This will be a gamble." (Helmut)

I guess even those royals are in a position where they won't have any place to belong to if they don't serve as soldiers. Even so, if they win against Katia, they can expect backing from the Kingdom.

"Even if they don't say anything, the nobles will probably gather participants of their own. By the way, Earl Baumeister, are you going to be able to finish the preparations for opening the tunnel on your side?" (Helmut)

"Yes, as planned." (Wendelin)

There's no reason for there to be problems with that.

Roderich has made the plans, and I will be pushed around to build the foundations starting with tomorrow.

The only worrying part is the other side.

The tunnel can't be used if it won't be opened on both sides.

"Seeing as it had been made public, we have to inform the people about a conclusion they can understand to some extent. In one week the matches deciding the tomboy's husband will be carried out in the Colosseum. I will prepare things in advance." (Helmut)

Now that it has come to this, there's no other choice but to hope for a strong noble that can defeat Katia.

His Majesty and the other important nobles will run about to prepare the tunnel's opening after having been dragged into the difficulties surrounding that.

## **Chapter 6 – Although It Has Been Decided that We Will Stay in the Capital, Nobles Really Don't Choose Their Means**

"I will determine my husband, to whom I will entrust the management of the discovered tunnel, through a martial arts tournament." Thanks to that incomprehensible condition set up by Katia, it resulted in us staying in the Earl Baumeister mansion in the capital for a while.

It's because we have to look after Katia until the tournament begins.

If you ask why it has to be us, the answer would be that we probably have the most neutral position in this whole matter.

Katia spent everyday happily in our mansion, even though I'm making round trips with 『Teleportation』 between the construction site and the Baumeister mansion in the capital since I'm busy with the construction for the tunnel's development on the Baumeister Earldom's side.

This mansion is my property, you know...

What's up with the owner being the one who can relax the least in the mansion?

"Dear, how about a refill of tea?" (Elise)

"I think I will have some." (Wendelin)

Today the work finished in the morning for a change, and thus I drank tea brewed by Elise in the garden after lunch.

This is the Mizuho tea Haruka had her home send over. As expected, enjoying Mizuho tea that resembles Japanese tea is the best.

"Katia-san seems to have fun." (Elise)

"Well, it might be tough on Erw who keeps her company as opponent, though..." (Wendelin)

Everyone's eyes turned in the direction of Erw and Katia who are in the middle of a mock battle. As they are both freeloaders in my mansion, Katia often challenged Erw, who excels at swordsmanship, to a match.

I guess it's owed to both of them using swords. Additionally, because they fight with pure sword techniques as Erw can't use magic, she probably considered him to be the best opponent to challenge at the beginning. I felt like Erw was treated like an opening act, but he himself looks as if he wants to have intensive training sessions with Haruka during the times he has his matches against Katia rather than thinking about something like that.

"I suppose that's what you'd expect of Earl Baumeister-sama's guard! You're stronger than expected! Tough!" (Katia)

"I have my hands full with blocking and can't really shift into offense!" (Erwin)

The mock battle turned into a potentially endless repetition of moves with Katia continuing to attack while toying with Erw through her speed, and Erw occasionally throwing precise counterattacks at her while defending against her attacks.

In regards to basic physical ability...especially speed, Katia, who reinforces hers with mana, is the

superior one, but Erw endures her attacks by freely using the techniques he acquired through his experiences until now, and then counterattacks once he sees an opportunity.

"Erwin-dono, you're really good!" (Katia)

"It looks like you have almost no experience in interpersonal combat, Katia. I somehow managed to thrust into those gaps of yours, but I guess you won't be able to be so careless anymore with your next opponent..." (Erwin)

In the end their match finished in a draw.

"Erw-san, thanks for your hard work." (Haruka)

"I'm bummed out for real...she's not at the level of Warren-sensei, but swordsmen, who boost their abilities with mana, are troublesome." (Erwin)

"Certainly, it's somewhat bothersome." (Haruka)

While Erw receives a towel to wipe his sweat and cool Mizuho tea to appease his thirst from Haruka, they chatted about Katia's combat abilities.

"It's just as I thought the other day. It's wonderful that there are many powerful people in the Earl Baumeister household." (Katia)

Katia's face trembles in excitement in lieu of the sparring matches against Erw, and also my wives. I see, so that's the reason why she said that she will be freeloading at our place, huh?

"Our female camp is stronger than me. Do you best." (Erwin)

"I'm definitely looking forward to it." (Katia)

That Erw; he apparently wants to excuse himself from being Katia's opponent any longer by pushing it on Luise and the others.

"(Erw, you're terrible, you know?)" (Ina)

"(The other side is eager to fight against strong opponents, so it can't be helped, right?)" (Erwin)

Ina complained to Erw in a whisper, but he dodged the issue by saying that it's Katia's will. Furthermore, there's Haruka. Given that she also has a disposition of liking mock battles against strong people, Erw thought that he said something very smart.

Pushing the troublesome Katia on someone else was admirable in his wife's eyes.

It was truly killing two birds with one stone.

"Well then, who's going to be my next opponent?" (Katia)

Having finished her small break, Katia next challenges the women of the Earl Baumeister House to a match, but that resulted in her suffering a series of defeats.

"...Such a...even though I'm so fast..." (Katia)

"Being fast means that you have to simplify your movements accordingly. If someone can follow you with their eyes to some degree, the rest becomes easy to handle by foreseeing your next move and searching for your presence." (Haruka)

First she fought against Haruka, who is a master at katana techniques despite having almost the same mana as Erw. Katia lost by having the blade pressed against her nape from a blind spot in around ten minutes.

Even after that they fought several times, but Katia suffered consecutive defeats, unable to compete with Haruka's techniques.

"What an amazing technique despite being younger than me." (Katia)

"I have learned handling a katana since I was three years old." (Haruka)

"I see...someone like me never even had a decent swordsmanship instructor..." (Katia)

Honestly spoken, I can't imagine the sight of Lord Eulenberg swinging a sword. Same applies to Veith-san.

As far as I have heard, neither ever made an appearance in a martial arts tournament or similar. In such environment Katia apparently got her hands on a real sword only after she became an adult. Of course her sword techniques were close to those of an amateur, but that also means that she repeatedly piled up victories against dragons with her overwhelming physical ability. Her helping out with the farming since her childhood probably became the foundation of her astounding physical prowess.

"Umm, milord." (Haruka)

"Yes?" (Wendelin)

Having finished her matches against Katia, Haruka talks me up.

"It's about Katia-san. She will be in this mansion until the martial arts tournament, right?" (Haruka)

"Well, since we can't leave her in the care of another family...there's around five days left."  
(Wendelin)

It's not like I want to actively look after her either, but I suppose it's about showing my duteousness here, or rather generosity as Earl Baumeister.

I don't want to be seen as stingy noble who refused her because of the expenses she produces.

"Even so, it's bad." (Haruka)

"Eh? Why?" (Wendelin)

I didn't understand Haruka's worries.

"She didn't possess a decent sword until she became an adult, and yet she has this much strength to

slash at an enemy by using her acceleration magic. Because she fought against Erw-san earlier, she became stronger to an extent that I could actually sense it when I fought against her." (Haruka)

Precisely because she's inexperienced at proper swordsmanship, she becomes stronger by absorbing the experience of having fought against experts like Haruka and Erw after just a few times. Haruka apparently felt an impending danger that Katia might become much stronger if she continues the mock battles in this mansion.

"Albeit it's unclear whether someone who can win against her will appear at this point in time..."

"Katia can gain increasingly more experience, the stronger her opponent. Or rather, she did really well to get as strong as she's now by learning all of it herself..."

Erw noticed Katia's bottomless talent, too.

"Having said that, I can't tell Ina and the others to decline, can I?" (Wendelin)

In the end it's nothing more than mock battles and training.  
And then Haruka's bad premonition became reality.

"I lost! You're strong, Ina. Have you also done spearmanship since your childhood?" (Katia)

"Yes, I already held a spear in my hand when I finally became aware of my surroundings." (Ina)

"Wow, that's amazing. Also, you don't have to use any formal speech with me." (Katia)

She accumulates experience by fighting against those that are stronger than her, and becomes more powerful herself.

Seemingly enjoying that, Katia looked very happy even though she was dealt with by Ina's spear, toyed with by Luise exquisite skills, and overwhelmed by Wilma's herculean strength.

Or rather, she does well to not get tired out with such a series of battles.

I guess, that's what you would expect of a former farmer's girl.

It's the same with her speed, but even her astounding stamina foundation, which she fostered during the farm work at home, was Katia's strong point.

"Luise, you started in your childhood as well, didn't you? How enviable." (Katia)

"But Katia, you being strong is because of your inborn physical abilities, and the persistence you obtained from farming, I think." (Luise)

"I suppose that's true as well. During my childhood, father and brother made me plow nothing but the fields on the slopes. Back then I thought 『I will definitely leave a territory like this!』, though." (Katia)



As it seems to be a family tradition for the Eulenberg House to do farm work even as nobility, Katia only worked on the fields in her childhood.

"Wilma, you're really strong, too. I guess that's only natural as you actively participated in that large-scaled civil war in the Empire. Had you been trained by your father-in-law, Minister Edgar?" (Katia)

"I was late since I was over ten years old when I started to train with a teacher. Though I went hunting after becoming five years old..." (Wilma)

"That's an amazing story. I can fully agree with you being strong." (Katia)

In regards to the aristocratic ways Katia did things that made you angry, but once we actually got in contact like this, she had a character that made it very easy to get along with.

Even when losing in a mock battle, she doesn't complain. Instead she praises her opponent and tries to do her best.

That's why she has many acquaintances among the adventurers such as Golf-san. And also a high credibility.

Her being willful about the matter with the tunnel is because she's eagerly trying to somehow protect her weak home in her very own way.

"It would be nice if you could fight against me as well, but unfortunately I'm bad at combat." (Elise)

"Elise, your healing magic is wonderful, though. Someone like me has too little mana. The spells I can use are only 『Body Strengthening』 and 『Acceleration』. If I could heal light wounds, I would be able to become a lot more powerful." (Katia)

Katia had already become good friends with Elise and the others.

In the morning her main training was to carry out mock battles in the garden. Once that finished, Elise served tea and snacks, and all of them noisily chatted with each other while looking happy.

I guess this is the rumored 『girls-only gathering』...

Moreover, as the average age of the participants is low, this is a true 『girls-only gathering』.

In my previous life I happened to hear gossip at work that the female co-workers at my company did it occasionally as well, but I recalled that the age of the participating members wasn't really that of girls.

And I was also told by a senior female co-worker that I must not point that out.

"Katia, you won't train anymore today, right?" (Elise)

"I'm dead tired, so no." (Katia)

Well if you fight for such a long time...

Or rather, if I look at that stamina of hers, I feel like I can fully understand the saying 『Don' underestimate farmin'!』.

"In that case, let's go out shopping." (Elise)

"Shopping?" (Katia)

"Yes. Katia-san, you will spend a few days in this mansion. I think you should buy various necessities. You're a woman after all." (Elise)

If a woman is going to stay over, quite a few things have to be prepared.  
Elise invited Katia to go buy those things with her.

"If it's just a little shopping, I can also do so myself..." (Katia)

"Umm...I think it might be difficult for you to go out alone." (Elise)

"Thanks for your considerations, but it's unnecessary. If it's buying assorted goods, I will be fine by myself." Katia tried to refuse, but Elise countered that she won't be able to do that.  
Elise's usual smile doesn't fall apart, but she doesn't allow any objection.

"Please, make sure to always go out with several people in the time until the tournament is held."  
(Elise)

"Do you think that I'm going to lose against the rabble around here? I'm telling you, it'll be alright."  
(Katia)

Elise sighed deeply.  
As if saying that Katia doesn't get it at all.

"Dear, what do you think?" (Elise)

"Let's see..." (Wendelin)

The nobles, who believe that it's very unlikely for their sons to win in the tournament, will kidnap Katia, if she's moving around by herself.

Hmm, I guess that will be followed by taking her virginity...and then Katia will be forced into a relationship and told to say 『I will stop the martial arts tournament, and make ○○ of the ○○ House my husband』.

With this method it won't be any problem even if they can't win against Katia in the tournament, I think.

"A development just as it's described in the books Ina loves so much?" (Wilma)

"I don't like such stories, though." (Ina)

Ina immediately shot down Wilma's remark.

"Yeah! Ina-chan loves stories where commoner girls marry princes..." (Luise)

"That's okay, isn't it...?" (Wendelin)

I was aware of that, too. I also think it's much better than a R-18 development where a young woman is kidnapped in broad daylight.

"It really doesn't matter what stories I like! I'm also against Katia going out by herself." (Ina)

"Indeed. It's impossible for a person to be alert at all times." (Katharina)

The nobles, who would scheme such bad things, aren't stupid either.

They wouldn't made such a difficult move as confronting her from the front, immobilizing her in battle and then abducting her.

Or rather, I don't think there's anyone who would consider to assist in such crime while possessing the combat strength allowing them to accomplish this feat.

If there was such an adventurer, they could easily live off hunting even without unreasonably getting involved in crimes.

Assuming Katia were to be kidnapped by a big shot of the underworld, there would also be the problem that she could be handed over to a noble, who's likely to bet on a rise of their house through the tunnel right, for a large sum of money.

"In such case, they would make her fall asleep through food or a drink at her destination, or she would be attacked with a blowgun that uses needles smeared with a magic potion which will paralyze her body, I guess." (Katharina)

"That would really be a full-blown crime, though." (Erwin)

Erw looked at Katharina with a doubtful look, wondering 『There are nobles who would do something like that?』.

"They won't be punished if there's no proof. As long as they succeed in such a deed, it's questionable whether Katia-san would be able to indict them for those crimes after having been raped." (Katharina)

No matter how remarkable as adventurer they might be, I guess it's difficult for noble women to prosecute a sex crime in this world.

"But, is there anyone who would go this far?"

Is there really someone who wouldn't consider my fury as the one looking after Katia? If something like that happened, even the Earl Baumeister House would be slandered for being inapt.

"Therefore Katia-san will be safe in this mansion. As long as she doesn't go out by herself, that is." (Elise)

Elise says so while smiling, but her smile didn't reach her eyes at all.

"There's also another possibility. That of having one's daughter marry Veith-san once Katia-san dies all of a sudden."

"Well, Katia, who did something unnecessary, is hated by the nobles, I'm sure."

Well, to be honest, it's probably just as Luise says.

The nobles, who don't have any sons that could win against Katia, likely can't forgive Katia who openly declared her defiance of the rules in front of the commoners, saying 『Don't do something that's uncalled for!』.

"Exactly because she declared it so boldly, even the nobles can't meddle with her directly. That's why they will poison her in secret or similar?"

"I guess that's how it is."

"Even in Mizuho there are stories of aiming for a target with poisoned blowpipes." (Haruka)

Wilma, Haruka, don't say such scary things.

But in such case, will they be able to treat it as death from illness, if they have to also persuade the nobles who will do the autopsy?

"Eh? It has become such a big deal?" (Katia)

"Well, yeah, of course."

Even though she dragged even the king into this, that Katia indeed moved in the heat of the moment, didn't she?

"Will I always be targeted by nobles from now on?" (Katia)

"At least until this uproar settles down."

"Until it settles down?"

"In other words, until you decide on a husband. Nobles also have various things they need to consider, but since it will be a waste of time and effort to make a move on you once everything is finished..."

Scheming to assassinate Katia out of personal bitterness after everything got settled, will be a waste of money and time.

If they have such spare time, it will be more efficient to make plans how to receive the leftovers from Katia's husband's family.

It's not like Elise wanted to simply threaten Katia either. I think she wanted to tell her to be careful for now.

"Katia, you made the choice yourself, thus we will make sure to not complain about it, but I really don't want you to bring Elise's kindness of telling you to pay attention to your own actions for the sake of safety to naught." (Wendelin)

"Understood...Elise, sorry for making you worry." (Katia)

"It's fine as long as you understand what I want to tell you." (Elise)

Be that as it may, you can sure count on the daughter of a high-ranking noble.

She knows how nobles think quite well. Since she's going out of her way to teach Katia about that, I think she's a truly kind girl.

"Dear, how about you go with us as well? If possible, I would like you to accompany us." (Elise)

"Sure." (Wendelin)

Roderich decided that I will only do public works in the mornings for the few days left until the tournament.

Thus I have time to spare in the afternoon.

I'm only responsible for the tunnel's entrance area on our side.

I don't care about the Eulenberg's side!

"(Will it be a lingerie store this time, too? If possible, I'd like you to spare me from that.)"  
(Wendelin)

"(On this occasion we will really limit it to livingware. Besides, although it's not dangerous, it's possible that there will be troubles with Katia-san, so...)" (Elise)

The reason why Elise asked me to accompany them is simple.

Even if there are nobles trying to harm Katia, it will be likely possible to deter an attack if I'm nearby.

However, as for the troubles mentioned by Elise that might visit Katia...

Just what might those actually be?

While thinking about that, I went shopping together with Elise and the others.



"Women love shopping, don't they?" (Erwin)

"Erw, you love checking out and buying swords, too. I have a weakness for new foodstuff and restaurants. Everyone has something they can get engrossed with." (Wendelin)

"Aren't you awfully open-minded?" (Erwin)

We went shopping with everyone in the capital's urban area for the time until dinner.

The female camp, including Katia and Haruka, evaluated the goods in a certain general store while chattering about their impressions.

Accessories and sundries were the same in my previous life, but I suppose women like such things.

"Wouldn't it have been fine if we had left the buying of such things to Dominique and Lea?"  
(Erwin)

"Don't say that, Erw." (Wendelin)

During their life in the main mansion in Baulburg, Elise and the other girls have less chances to do things such as cooking.

There are many servants and maids in the mansion, and they don't want to steal their work too much.

Accordingly we quickly decided to stay in the capital's mansion.

Given that it was quite sudden and moreover for the period of a week, there are no servants taking care of the capital's mansion besides Dominique and Lea, whom we brought along. That means

Elise and the others can freely cook and do other miscellaneous tasks.

"Dominique is Elise's childhood friend. Thus she pays attention to such small things."

Elise is conducting herself as daughter of a high-ranking noble without going over the top, but I'm well aware that she actually likes to brew tea and cook like a normal girl. Therefore the stay in the capital allows her to do whatever she likes and also serves as stress relief. Even Dominique, who has been Elise's friend for a long time, should be fully aware of that.

"I see. Now that you mention it, Elise has it difficult as well, doesn't she?" (Erwin)

While Erw and I were having such a conversation, the girls apparently finished their shopping.

"The next store is..."

"(As expected...)"

However, there's no way for the shopping to finish at just one store with this many girls present. It looks like Erw and I have to keep them company in their shopping for a while.

"We bought plenty. Isn't it time to go back?" (Katia)

"There are still other things you will need."

Katia appears to be bad with the womanly way of shopping where they visit many stores for a very long time.

She mentioned that she wants to return to the mansion by now, but this is no more than a minority opinion in this place.

Her suggestion was rejected by Ina, and the shopping continued.

"I understand..." (Katia)

While looking resigned, Katia tried to leave the store while holding the bags with the purchased items, but at this point she got dragged into unexpected trouble.

She ended up bumping into someone, resulting in her dropping the bags in her hands.

There were also items that are easy to break inside the bags. Having fallen to the ground, sounds of 『clashing』 were audible from the bags.

"I am deeply sorry for having caused this."

The one who bumped into Katia is a young man...moreover, a quite handsome one at that.

Going by his attire, there's no doubt that he's a young noble.

Among nobility and royalty there are many patterns where they make children by marrying handsome men or beautiful women. There were many people with good appearances among them...leaving rural and tiny nobles out of the quotation... but even among those, this man was outstandingly handsome.

"Of course I will have you allow me to reimburse you for the items that fell down."

"Yeah..." (Katia)

Suddenly receiving an apology from a handsome man, Katia gave a vague answer, apparently not knowing how to deal with this.

Because she's working as adventurer, she got used to dealing with male adventurers, but she might not know how to handle men outside that trade.

The man returned to the store and bought the broken items again. He gave the new paper bags to Katia, but she was silent during the whole time.

"I am truly sorry."

"You bought new ones, so I don't mind." (Katia)

"I cannot let that stand. My mansion is just around the corner. Excuse me for not mentioning it before. My name is Manfred Wiffram von Bänker."

The good-looking noble ignores me completely and only addresses Katia.

Still, he's the very definition of a hunk.

Why is there so much difference in our appearances despite both of us having been born as men? God is really unfair.

"(Handsome men should just die...)"

"(Unexpectedly the other side might also think that magicians should just die. Or rather, he's too obvious...)"

Certainly, that's an act anyone can see through.

Elise and the other girls look at him expressionlessly.

"By all means, allow me to invite you for tea at my home. I will also provide a cake from the store of the royal family's purveyor." (Manfred)

"Umm..." (Katia)

Did that Katia never experience being picked up by a male adventurer?

It feels like she's quite unversed.

Once I thought that, Elise, who should have stuck to being an onlooker, wedged herself between the two.

"Young Baron Bänker-dono, we are greatly obliged for your overly courteous apology. However, Katia-san is an unmarried woman. I wonder what to think of you suddenly inviting her to your mansion. We will have someone of the Earl Baumeister household deliver a return gift later, thus I'm very sorry for having to decline you here." (Elise)

"I see..." (Manfred)

I understand. As noble who suddenly tries to make a pass at Katia which goes against noble etiquette, he can't act obstinately once he was dealt with in accordance to etiquette by Elise.

"Well then, another arrangement is waiting for us." (Elise)

After Elise elegantly bows towards the handsome noble, she grabs Katia's hand and hurries to a place where the store can't be seen any longer.  
We follow them as well.

"So it happened just as I had expected." (Elise)

"Did you predict that, Elise?" (Wendelin)

Trouble that might occur even if they are accompanied by Erw and me.  
As it actually took place, it means they are targeting Katia from the back door.

"I see. It will be their win if Katia falls in love with a handsome man before the tournament, huh?"

"Yes. Such clever tricks exist as well." (Elise)

As expected of Elise.  
She's well accustomed to the methods of the nobles living in the capital.

"Eh? What do you mean?" (Katia)

This one is a lost case.  
Katia apparently doesn't understand why that hunk got in contact with her.

"As we told you, all of it is an act." (Ina)

"Is that so, Ina?" (Katia)

"I wonder why you don't realize that yourself..."

"It's because male adventurers don't use such indirect approaches." (Luise)

Luise answered Ina instead. Moreover, it's probably because male adventurers end up drawing back from adventurers as remarkable as Katia.  
That's why Katia wasn't accustomed to being hit on.

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

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

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

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

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

"He was quite handsome."

Certainly his handsomeness might become an effective weapon.

If there are nobles trying to stir the interest of a high-ranking noble with beautiful daughters, the reverse must exist as well.

"A reverse honey trap." (Wilma)

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

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

"Did he interest you, Katia?"

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

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

"Why?" (Wilma)

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

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

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

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

Katia really wants to marry a man who's stronger than her.

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

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

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

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

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

must have known him from before." (Wendelin)

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

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

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

"Yes." (Elise)

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

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

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

"Carefree? Me?" (Wendelin)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Uuh...it hurts..."

"That's too bad."

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

"(Eww, how fake...)"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"What's going on here?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

""What a cliched development.""

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

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

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

Honestly, for such unnatural drama to be performed, although it's a real story in this case...

For Ina it's fine if she reads it in a book, but she will likely feel stumped when she's actually shown such ham actor drama.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I guess that means she will be targeted by only good-looking, young nobles, who are going to try to forcibly raise a flag with her.

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

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

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

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

"E——eh! I don't want that!" (Katia)

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

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

It would be painful to watch the young nobles performing petty plays every day in order to get married with Katia for the next several days.

I think, she won't lack any exercise if Ina and the others keep her company as combat practice partners everyday.

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

"However, what?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"What? Who are ya?"

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

I don't sense the peculiar dreadfulness of outlaws from them.

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

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

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

surroundings.

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

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

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

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

"Shuddap!"

"Even though it's just women!"

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

How pathetic.

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

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

That's because...

"Stop it, you guys!"

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

"What? You are?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"(Eww, how fake...)"

Can't the people of this world play out dramas that are a bit closer to reality?

I guess it's not weird as there's no reason for the acting of young nobles to become skillful all of a sudden.

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

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

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

"(As if that's possible.)"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Remember my words!"

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

..... ..

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

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

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

That bunch didn't manage to bump into Katia to begin with. It's not even a damn question about her being alright.

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

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

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

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

This was his true motive.

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

"(Yeah...)" (Wendelin)

If they would at least try to act a little bit more naturally.  
I'd like them to be in our shoes, who had to watch these cliched, petty, bad plays.

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

Elise seems to be quite fed up with it by now, too.  
Quite unusual for her, she forcibly interrupted the the third hunk and we returned to the Baumeister mansion.



"The ones who experienced something terrible are us."

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

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

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

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

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

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

"As if!" (Katia)

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

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

They probably tried to somehow to push it into a romantic development after a coincidental encounter, but unfortunately their acting abilities were too lacking.

I guess it's inevitable since young nobles usually don't perform acts.

"It's still not over."

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

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

"Nobles aren't that strong."

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

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

"That makes sense." (Katharina)

Katharina could agree with that, but the young nobles gathered outside the mansion gradually started to cause an uproar.

I decide to believe that they don't enter the grounds because they are well-mannered as trueborn nobles.

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

Suddenly a young man sings an original song while pulling the strings of an instrument that resembles a guitar in front of someone else's house.

There might have been such guys in the old Japan, but I couldn't hide my shock that such people exist in reality.

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

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

I shared Luise's opinion.

"Katiaaa——! I love youuu——!"

"He says."

"Don't care!" (Katia)

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

Moreover, this noble lad is slightly off-key.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I got it!"

"Yes."

I guess these guys are appealing to Katia after having obtained the information about the tunnel

management through their salon.

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

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

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

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

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

"Is that so, Ina?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I also hate those people!" (Katia)

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

## **Chapter 7 – Finally, the Martial Arts Tournament**

"At last a week has passed, eh? That weird lot has also stopped those incomprehensible performances, skits or whatever. Katia, the perpetrator of this uproar, happily trained in the garden every day, though." (Wendelin)

"Wend, it's a good thing that you hadn't to be bored by those stupid appeals and artistic performances since you were busy with the tunnel construction until evening, don't you think? You should've taken me as guard along, too." (Erwin)

"Since I would be troubled if something happened to Katia, I couldn't afford to lower the protection of the mansion here. Roderich prepared retainers who guarded me on-site, so it was fine for me to go by myself." (Wendelin)

"There are no men in this mansion except for the middle-aged servants. Elise, Haruka and the other seemed to have fun even with the things going on outside as long as they gathered together, but I was bored as I didn't have much to do. I can't just guard Katia all the time." (Erwin)



Tomorrow's the tournament, but these last six days had been difficult in various ways. Many young nobles...a bunch with no confidence in their physical strength...assembled outside the mansion, and eagerly advertised themselves in order to somehow get in contact with Katia. Well, they did go away once it became dark, but continuing for all those days with words of love, poetry, singing, or appealing their own good looks, caused me to think that I had ended up in some kind of performer audition.

But then again, I didn't have to watch them all that much since I did magic construction work around the tunnel on our side during the day.

For Roderich, who got wind of this piece of information, it was convenient. He pushed me around like a demon for the sake of realizing the development project.

At least he allowed me to come back here at evening.

A household manager that can work his master to the bone like this; in a certain sense he's amazing. I guess, at the same time, it's also my fault since I can't get rid of the habit of being used by others.

"Did the construction work advance so much?" (Erwin)

"Thanks to Roderich..." (Wendelin)

First I completely removed the tunnel's sand and debris. Then I prepared the area allowing for a checkpoint, rest area and church to be built next to the entrance.

It was decided to establish the inns for the tunnel-using guests in Paul's territory as it's relatively close to the tunnel.

There was also the matter of establishing a road from the tunnel and preparing the soil at the scheduled construction site...since that road connects various places in the Baumeister Earldom with the tunnel as starting point, it covered quite a distance.

Moreover, there were small construction jobs I had to do during my free time. All in all I was fairly busy over those six days.

And yet I was fortunate that I hadn't to watch the unskilled singing and dancing of the strange nobles at the mansion.

"Wend, you...you sure avoided coming back here by all means..." (Erwin)

"Don't spout such lies!" (Wendelin)

It's not that I have an aversion of coming home.

I just didn't want to get involved with Katia and those troublesome nobles sticking to her. Therefore I simply used the opportunity and focused on my work.

I feel like I worked a bit too much, but this seems to be my nature as former Japanese.

On the other hand, Erw seemed to have had a lot of spare time as Katia's guard in these six days.

"I had plenty of free time, but it's not like I wished for it. It was you who told me to not leave her side, right?" (Erwin)

"Being told that, stings." (Wendelin)

"Tomorrow that troublesome matter will come to an end. Today's the last dinner with her." (Erwin)

Tomorrow the tournament will be held, and the winner will enter the Eulenberg House as Katia's husband. Once he starts to manage the tunnel with the power of his parents, the problems related to the tunnel will be finally resolved as well.

When Erw and I moved to the kitchen, we found Elise and the others merrily preparing dinner.

There were still some of the appealing guys left outside the grounds, but women are strong-willed.

In a short time they learned to completely ignore or not mind them.

"Elise, you're really good at cooking. I can't prepare anything but my family's countryside dishes and crude outdoor cooking." (Katia)

"How about properly studying it from the basics then?"

"I think that's what I will do. Once I get married, it might be better for me to be able to prepare a little bit more dishes. The cooking in this mansion is truly delicious." (Katia)

It looks like she fancies the food here.

While helping Elise and the others right now, she might try to increase her repertoire.

"Are thee going to tempt thy future husband with cooking? It's a cliched means, but effective. I guess I will try my very best in preparation for the future, too." (Therese)

In the eyes of those unconcerned, this time's uproar is an entertaining event and no more than amusement.

Many nobles and their retainers, as well as commoners, who hope to watch the duels, have gathered

in the capital after hearing the rumors. Even though it's not the appointed date yet, a great number of carts and stalls targeting those spectators have appeared.

Since the number of guests from the capital's suburbs has increased, the shopkeepers gleefully celebrated the increased sales.

Therese, whom I brought over from Baulburg, is also one of those tourists.

Given that she had been constantly secluded in Baulburg until now, she came to watch the tournament while using the chance to sightsee the capital.

Therese said that she would look for a place to stay, but considering her position, it's only natural for her to be sheltered by us, and thus she's staying in the capital's Baumeister mansion.

"Huh? Your cooking is more decent than I thought..." (Katia)

Of course Katia is well aware of Therese's identity.

She apparently believed that Therese can't cook because of her noble descent. However, learning that Therese's cooking is more elaborate than her own, she couldn't hide her surprise.

"Recently I have had plenty of time to learn cooking to my heart's content. I would venture to say that thou might as well call me teacher." (Therese)

"Well, it was a big help that you were a student with a good memory." (Amalie)

Same as with Therese, I had brought Amalie over, too.

As a matter of fact, I promised her yesterday to let her meet her children and at the same time make it possible for them to watch the tournament, thus I brought her here today.

I knew that she was teaching Therese how to cook, but it looks like they became quite close during my absence.

Are they getting along because both of them are in their twenties?

Since I would likely get scolded if I actually asked something like that, let's stay quiet.

"Earl Baumeister-sama, are all those your wives? There's quite a few of them, don't you think?" (Katia)

"Really? I think this number is normal for an Earl." (Therese)

Therese answered Katia while donning an expression asking 『Is it such a surprise?』.

In the eyes of Therese, a former Duchess and someone with many noble acquaintances in the Empire, the number of wives I possess is just average.

In reality Therese and Amalie officially aren't my wives, or rather, if it comes to Therese, she's not even my lover, but Therese doesn't seem to have any intention to expressly correct that part.

"I understand it logically. There had been many such people among my noble clients, but it feels strange to me because at home Father has only Mother." (Katia)

Her father, Lord Eulenberg, has only one wife, and her elder brother plans to not marry anyone besides his childhood friend. Katia might feel out of place if she's in the presence of a noble with several wives.

Yet, having several wives is proof of being a genuine noble.

"...So my old man was the odd one out, huh...?" (Katia)

"That's right. Thou have to consider the possibility of the legal wife not giving birth to a child. Since there's also the relations between fellow noble houses, I suppose it's normal for even a Knight House to have two wives, with one being the daughter of a village headman or merchant to establish a ranking order." (Therese)

"So that the excess children are thrown out? I became an adventurer upon my own wish, but there were plenty of kids of poor nobles who are adventurers because they got no other choice." (Katia)

"That's because it's difficult to create just as many children as thou need." (Therese)

It's better to have too many than being in need.

Seeing that there are children who die from illness and such, it's a safety measure for noble houses.

"I suppose a former Duchess-sama sees things differently. So that's the reason why you are Earl Baumeister-sama's lover?" (Katia)

"Eh?" (Wendelin)

"Hoh, such a rumor has spread already?" (Therese)

In contrast to me, who's surprised by Katia's statement, Therese seems delightful.

"It has. It's said that Earl Baumeister-sama, who played a big role during the Empire's civil war, received the former Duchess Philip-sama, a rival of the new emperor, as spoils of war and is sheltering her." (Katia)

"No, I just have been entrusted with her due to various political reasons..." (Wendelin)

I end up on tenterhooks due to society's gossip that's recounted by Katia.  
Or rather, I haven't made a move on her yet.

"To the public it might seem so, but in reality... is the rumor going around. At times rumors are close to the truth, too." (Katia)

Katia turned her eyes in the direction of Amelie.

"You mean me...? It appears various things are being said about me, but I don't really care." (Amalie)

『She has offered herself as atonement for her husband, who tried to assassinate his younger brother』 is what society appears to be saying about Amalie.

It looks like various rumors are circulating about me, as if I am a big celebrity.

It's great that variety shows don't exist in this world.

"I have fun right now, thus it's alright. I also managed to make a new friend." (Amalie)

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

There have been many occasions where we have been out until evening.

It looks like Therese, who frequented our mansion to take lessons in cooking, got along well with Amelie in the meanwhile.

I guess they have the same circumstances in some way, which made it easy for them to become friends.

"Currently I'm just a freeloader. I don't know about the future, however." (Therese)

"If you allow me to voice my opinion: it's probably no problem since Earl Baumeister-sama is earning enough money. Even among adventurers there are some who have several wives. There are also some female adventurers who surround themselves with several, young, handsome men."  
(Katia)

It's not as if any laws are actually broken by woman having several husbands, just that it doesn't happen as often as the other way around.

There is a fixed number of such people among skilled, female adventurers and merchants. Though I never actually met one myself.

"Even my brother...I'm not saying that he has to go as far as Earl Baumeister-sama, but it would be fine if he acted like a noble and took several wives." (Katia)

Katia probably thinks that the Eulenberg House will be made fun of by the other nobles for Veith limiting his wives to just a single daughter of a village headman, even if she might be his childhood friend.

"Katia-san, do you dislike Marita-san?" (Katharina)

Since she's a magician, she hasn't had any mock battles with Katia, but Katharina, who had talked with her quite a bit, asks her such question.

"I don't dislike her. She's my childhood friend, too. We did farm work together every day in the past. She's a very nice person, but she's still the village headman's daughter. I had wanted him to consider a noble's daughter as legal wife, and Marita as concubine in order to give birth to an heir for the village headman family." (Katia)

"So that's how it is. But, I think you can say that Veith-san doesn't appear to be that lustful...he seems like the type who will be satisfied with one wife..." (Katharina)

I think so as well.

Besides, I find it questionable whether the Eulenberg House will be able to act like nobility all of a sudden.

"So he appears like that to you as well, Katharina? Jeez, even though he's the heir of a noble house, that brother of mine is..." (Katia)

Katia made a move because she considers her brother to be unreliable.

That definitely doesn't mean that she hates him, but she probably cannot help but feel worried.

"That's why a martial arts tournament to decide thy husband? However, are there any young nobles who can win against thou?" (Therese)

"I'm pretty sure there's at least one." (Katia)

There are more than 3,000 noble families in the Kingdom.  
At least one should suit Katia's conditions...or that's what Katia herself seems to believe.

"I have no clue." (Therese)

"Ina, Luise, Haruka and Wilma are no good. They are women after all."

Even if he were drawn to Katia, Erw can't win with his abilities. I don't plan to let go of him in the first place, though.

He himself probably doesn't want to manage something like a tunnel either.

Ina, Haruka, Wilma, and Luise, who can win against Katia, are women, thus they are out of the race.

"I know at least that much. I think Wendelin, who's the closest, can win if he fights against thee, Katia." (Therese)

"I don't have the qualifications to enter as a noble family head." (Wendelin)

"That might be true, but I think it would be the best move to skillfully settle the matter." (Therese)

"Skillfully settle the matter, eh...?" (Wendelin)

Recently that Therese has start to speak outrageous stuff.  
The dishes she made are delicious, but her way of thinking is too spicy.

"If I were in Wendelin's and Margrave Breithilde's position, I would set up a meeting and worry together how to share the concessions and balance the political power, but fortunately I have a social standing with no responsibilities. Since it had been thou, Wendelin, who discovered the tunnel, I can easily tell thou that it's fine to take all the concessions for thyself and prepare an alternative land for the Eulenberg House on the southern side of the Greater League Mountain Range." (Therese)

Certainly, I think that would be the easiest option, but there's also the standpoint of Margrave Breithilde and the other nobles.

I also wonder what's going to happen if I take too much.

"Thou think thou will be a nail that gets hammered back in? For thou to believe that at this point in time... The nail Wendelin is far too tall to be hammered back in." (Therese)

Unintentionally I ended up thinking that Therese's way to phrase this has been rather skillful.

"In a while there won't be any nobles who will publicly oppose thee, Wendelin. After all they might get killed by thee and thy group if they did." (Therese)

Thanks to our overwhelming achievements, nobles trying to openly pick a fight with us won't appear for the time being, according to Therese.

"Wasn't there the matter with the Herthania Valley? It's the same here. If thou take over the expenses while equally splitting the guarding with the royal family, the royal family would become a nice shield, thou know?" (Therese)

"There's also Margrave Breithilde to consider..." (Wendelin)

The area around the Eulenberg Knightdom completely belongs to the Breithilde Margraviate. I think it's necessary to take him properly into consideration, too.

"Thou are on good terms, aren't thou? Just discuss it with him in advance. Good grief, for Burkhart to not have come up with this...if thou reduce the development of the tunnel's entrance and allocate essential facilities to the neighboring Breithilde Margraviate, he would most certainly agree." (Therese)

"Ugh...I guess there was such a possibility as well..." (Wendelin)

She lost to Peter, however, as might be expected of a former emperor candidate. While we have reached an impasse, she has come up with a wonderful idea.

"But then again, thou can say that I came up with this after looking at the situation from a position without responsibility." (Therese)

I see, that might be the reason why kings of the past kept clowns. It's said it's difficult to objectively grasp one's own position and decide in the most ideal way.

"It would be nice if we were spared of the nightmare of no one being able to win against Katia in the tournament."

"No way."

"Now. now, the complicated talks end at this point. Since we made various dishes, let's enjoy eating them." (Amalie)

"That's a very good idea, Amalie-sister-in-law." (Wendelin)

"Thou are truly her younger brother-in-law, aren't thou?" (Therese)

It's a relationship where such things occasionally happen, since we aren't older sister and younger brother in reality.

"That's a truly enviable relationship thou share. I am free every night as well. Once thou resolve this dispute, take it into consideration, Wendelin." (Therese)

"Hahaha..." (Wendelin)

You know, Elise and the others are next to us...is what I thought, but they don't seem to pay any attention to Therese's remark, and calmly line up the dishes they prepared.

"Ooh! No doubt about you being a high-ranking noble-sama!" (Katia)

"How about joining in as well, if thou like, Katia? I think that would be fine..." (Therese)

"Eh? Me? No, I will search for a husband by myself..." (Katia)

Katia answered Therese's bold proposal with a red face and a voice that faded gradually. It seems, in proportion to her active nature and abilities as adventurer, she doesn't have much familiarity with relations between the sexes. I'm pretty sure Katia's reckless character has been forged by keeping such matters at distance.

"It's a real feast after a long time." (Erwin)

"Erw-san, I will also prepare a bento for tomorrow. Together with Elise-sama and the others, we agreed to prepare them after dinner." (Haruka)

"I'm looking forward to that!" (Erwin)

"I will stuff it with plenty of your favorite dishes, Erw-san." (Haruka)

"Yahooo——!" (Erwin)

And then Erw and Haruka enjoy the dinner while secluding themselves in their own little world. In the end, we enjoyed a great dinner.



On the next morning the martial arts tournament finally started in the capital's Colosseum. Many younger nobles and royals have gathered at the venue. All of them were motivated to defeat Katia, become her husband and get their hands on the tunnel rights. At least they are better than the guys that crowded my mansion since they are trying to defeat Katia with their own combat prowess, I guess?

"Erw, what do you think?" (Wendelin)

"Hm——m, it looks like it'll be in vain." (Erwin)

"Eh? In vain?" (Wendelin)

"It's best if you don't place much expectations on them." (Erwin)

"A failure all of a sudden, huh...?" (Wendelin)

At once I begin to check the abilities of the participants together with Erw. That doesn't mean that I'm looking down on them or anything. If there isn't at least one guy that can defeat Katia, I will be in a bind.

If it's not decided here, I will have to take care of Katia until the next group of candidates gathers again in the worst case.

In that case, strange folks will start to appeal in front of my mansion again, and I, who don't want to see them, will be worked to the bone by Roderich.

Full of hope that I won't have to enter such a bad loop, I tried asking Erw whether there's a participant that might win against Katia, but his answer was negative.

"Their determination is really amazing. It feels like that's all they've got going for them, though."  
(Erwin)

Everyone seems restless and wants to procure the tunnel rights.

Because it also affects the level of livelihood of their other relatives, they want to be adopted into the family of the bride by all means.

All of them frantically practiced in preparation of the real battle inside the Colosseum.

His Majesty gave his permission to open the Colosseum for training until the tournament's start.

Since representatives aren't allowed according to the rules, the participants have to wield a sword by themselves, but after watching them, Erw's expression becomes dispirited.

"Won't members of the knight order, who might be able to win against Katia, appear?"

"If it's them, they won't be able to provide personnel for the tunnel management, even if they were to win. I think if it's master Warren, he would win, but that man likely won't participate." (Erwin)

Those who might win can't provide any personnel, and the young nobles, who have that personnel at hand, don't seem likely to win.

Comprehending the situation, Erw sighed deeply.

"That stubborn tomboy is strong, you know?" (Erwin)

"You can't really expect a remarkable adventurer to be weak anyway." (Wendelin)

"Since the number of participants is big, she would deserve it if there was at least one man capable of winning against her." (Erwin)

"It's not like having many participants equals to being something good, right? It's not a lottery."

Erw looked at the participants as they were doing their last training runs, and sighed once more.

No matter how favorably he might assess them, he apparently can't find anyone capable of winning.

"Erw-san, there's no point in worrying about it." (Haruka)

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

However, once he talked with Haruka, he became full of life in an instant.

"Here, have your bento." (Haruka)

"Thanks, what a pleasure." (Erwin)

While eating the handmade bento of his fiancée, Erw has completely turned into a normalfag that watches a match or similar.

In the end...

"Erwin, what do think of the high-classed participants?" (Warren)

"Master, you're off today?" (Erwin)

"Yeah. Recently I haven't gone out anywhere with the children. Thus I came here to watch the matches while at the same time having a good time with them." (Warren)

Warren came to watch the tournament together with his wife and children. A beautiful wife, and two children, a boy and girl. It's a dazzling normalfag family. I'm sure, a person like him is a winner in life.

"I am Erwin-sama's fiancée, Haruka Fujibayashi." (Haruka)

"I see...you look quite capable yourself." (Warren)

Warren-san apparently saw through Haruka's strength by just looking at her posture. At any rate, a pupil who introduces his fiancée, and a master who visits for some entertainment with his family; I wonder, if you don't call this a normalfag gathering, then what else?

"As usual you're depressed over weird things, aren't you?" (Burkhart)

Burkhart-san, who's sitting next to me, stares at me curiously.

"Earl Baumeister, you have my gratitude for allowing me to enter a box seat today."

This time we also reserved a big box seat in the name of the Earl Baumeister House. Margrave Breithilde brought Philine along with Burkhart-san acting as guard. In addition, Erich and Helmut have come together with their families. Doushi is greedily devouring the sandwiches prepared by Elise.

"It's increasingly becoming a mere leisure activity..." (Ina)

Ina appears to be slightly astonished, but in the end there's no other option but to enjoy the rare holiday while praying that Katia's husband will be decided here.

"Warren-san, you're not going to participate?" (Wendelin)

"Me? I won't. Well, if I did, I would win though." (Warren)

That's definitely no boasting. If Katia actually fought against Warren-san, she shouldn't be able to win, no matter what she does.

"So you're not going to appear albeit being able to win? It's a good opportunity, don't you think?" (Wendelin)

"I became the commander of the Royal Knight Order through my swordsmanship. Securing the personnel to maintain the tunnel, and managing it all is outside my expertise. Above all, it's not like I can leave His Majesty's side." (Warren)

This is the difficulty of this time's martial arts tournament.

It's not like there are no young nobles stronger than Katia, or rather, if you look for them, it should be possible to find quite a few.

But, even if they apply just because of that, they will be rejected.

On the other hand, the guys who have the connections and ability allowing them to manage the tunnel, can't win against Katia by themselves.

Sure enough I became worried whether anyone is going to come out as winner here.

Are strange folks going to crowd my mansion again, starting with tomorrow?

"It looks like she has become considerably stronger in this one week." (Warren)

"Eh!? You can tell?" (Wendelin)

"I'm acquainted with Katia-dono, after all." (Warren)

According to Warren-san, there was an occasion where they investigated the abilities of remarkable adventurers for a mission of the Royal Knight Order.

"If such strong person acts violently in the capital, it's going to be difficult for the normal guards to arrest them, thus the knights of the order will be dispatched. By knowing about the strong ones in advance, you also raise the probability of succeeding in such missions. Such things happen rarely, though." (Warren)

It seems Warren-san has grasped the abilities of almost all famous adventurers for his job.

"Rather than having become stronger, it's more precise to say that she became more skillful, I think?"

Katia is also warming up in a place separated from the other participants, but seeing that, Warren-san perceived differences in her movements in comparison to before.

"Umm, she was training through mock battles against Erw and the others for around a week." (Wendelin)

"That must be it then." (Warren)

"Was that a bad idea?" (Wendelin)

Since it would be troublesome had she said she wants to go outside in this situation, I gave her the permission to train in the garden, but that might have been wrong.

I thought that I would be scolded by Warren-san with 『What's the idea behind making her stronger so that there's no one who can win against her!?』.

"No, I don't think there's any problem in particular. I mean, it doesn't look like anyone would have been able to win against her, even if she were to be at her previous skill level. Or rather, that lot

probably won't even realize or grasp that Katia-dono has become stronger during the last week."  
(Warren)

Warren-san, who doesn't make any compromises in regards to swordsmanship, evaluated the participants' skills as worthless.  
Certainly, I can't believe that Katia would have suffered defeat against those guys a week ago. And the bunch appealing in front of my mansion had given up on winning in the tournament from the start. It made me seriously worried about the Kingdom's ability to defend itself.

"The guys who are training properly aren't participating in this tournament. It's only folks that are spurred on by their greed. It would be great, if a miracle occurs."

"Miracle; that's nothing happening readily though..." (Erwin)

Everyone looked as if they agreed with Erw's sound objection.

"Miracles are miracles because they don't happen often, right?" (Warren)

It appeared...Warren-san's catchphrase.  
And moreover, at the worst situation.

"Erw, how about making an appearance?" (Wendelin)

"As if!" (Erwin)

Refused as expected, huh?

I suppose tomorrow will sound the start of another round of appeals by those weirdos...what should I do?

While we were talking about this and that, the tournament began, but as expected, Katia would become exhausted if they went with a round-robin. Thus qualifiers were held in order to prune down the number of challengers first.

In the end only eight can fight against Katia. The tournament qualifiers are carried out after an impartial lot-drawing, but...

"Master, it's terrible to watch, isn't it?" (Erwin)

"It's only people who normally don't need any sword skills, so what did you expect?" (Warren)

The matches develop into some kind of awkward dancing.

There's no way that they would be able to become masters in a week after not having decently practiced swordsmanship before.

The matches continue without even a shred of tension.

No, the contenders are probably extremely serious about this, but it doesn't look like it at all.

"That person is so-so, I suppose." (Haruka)

"Haruka-san, can he also win against 『Swift Katia』?" (Warren)

"Impossible..." (Haruka)

"If they don't reach a level where they can win against Katia-dono, it's meaningless." (Warren)

Warren-san is really merciless if it comes to swordsmanship.

"Ah!" (Wendelin)

"What's wrong, Earl Baumeister?"

"The sword held by that person over there." (Wendelin)

"It's a nice magic sword, isn't it?"

I can't judge the quality of swords, but I felt mana from the sword of a participant. It resembles the Empire's magic swords and the magic katana owned by Haruka, but because of its old design, it seems to be an item originating from the era of the Ancient Magic Civilization. Given that they are nobles, it's natural for them to possess such weapons.

"However, just because the sword is good, it doesn't automatically mean that he's going to win." (Warren)

"Indeed, you have to properly master the usage of a magic sword." (Erwin)

"After all there's no meaning in an amateur holding onto one." (Haruka)

Warren-san, Haruka, and Erw bash the participant who's swinging the magic sword with a prone posture.

In Japan, there's the proverb: 『The cunning mason works with any stone』.

It means, between an amateur holding a magic sword and a master holding a wooden sword, the master will naturally come out victorious.

And, just as the three predicted, the magic sword user lost against a competitor with slightly better combat skills.

"There was no point in the magic sword!"

Even afterwards there were several participants with magic swords, but none of them got through the qualifiers.

"Well, it's a strategy of relying on the weapons exactly because they are unskilled. As a matter of fact, those who use magic swords tend to be weak."

"It's at least profitable for weapon shops, isn't it?" (Erwin)

"I guess so." (Warren)

Warren-san casually answered Erw.

The boring preliminaries continued.

Erw, Haruka, and Warren-san are diligently watching the matches, but there are also people who gave up on that.

"Puhaaa——! The capital's temperature is mild compared to the Empire. It might actually be better to not warm up the Mizuho sake." (Burkhart)

"All the troubles in the civil war had been worth it. It was a great blessing to find a good connection for obtaining good sake!" (Armstrong)

Burkhart-san has a drinking bout together with Doushi inside the exclusive box seat of the Earl Baumeister House.

Even the side dishes such as edamame, cold tofu, chilled tomato, salted squid, and dried mackerel are all imported goods from the Mizuho Dukedom.

The reward from the Empire has been split into installments over twenty years, but this means that we can freely buy goods from the Mizuho Dukedom.

The bill will be covered by the Empire's government, once we procure the estimate, order, and consent.

Taking advantage of this, Burkhart-san and Doushi privately import many products from the Mizuho Dukedom, just as they please.

We are waved through since we're well known, thus we can freely buy things as long as it's not considerably precious goods.

But, if I ask Duke Mizuho, he would finance even precious goods.

In other words, a war buddy is a good thing to have.

"Philine, it's wrong to become an adult like those two." (Breithilde)

"Father, it's proper quantities of alcohol at evening, once I become an adult, correct?" (Philine)

"That's right. Today I bought a cake at a new store, so let's eat it together." (Breithilde)

"Yes." (Philine)

Margrave Breithilde dotes on his first daughter next to him while setting aside his son and heir. Today he's watching the matches while eating cake together with her.

"Doushi-sama, those are really unusual snacks." (Philine)

"Uh huh. It's produce from the far northern regions. You want some, Philine?" (Armstrong)

"Yes." (Philine)

And yet Philine still favored Doushi.

She starts a conversation with him, and receives dishes such as boiled edamame.

"There are many delicious things among the native products of the Mizuho Dukedom, but it's not good that they are so pricey because of the low amount of goods flowing in."

"As for that, it seems they are planning to increase the production since their territory has grown."

"Sooner or later I must go and greet Duke Mizuho, too."

For some reason, a Mizuho food hype was about to start around the capital and in some of the high-

ranking nobles' territories under the pretext that those products are our favorites.

They are also famous among the women for being healthy.

However, since the amount on the market is extremely low, the prices have shot up to a frightening degree.

Being able to procure them directly, we can enjoy the Mizuho food at overwhelmingly cheap prices.

"It was great that we struggled through the civil war." (Armstrong)

Another group in the exclusive box seats of the Earl Baumeister House isn't watching the matches at all. They enjoy snacks and tea while playing around.

"Karl, you have to take it carefully with a snap!"

"Brother, your fingers are trembling. You have to calm down." (Oskar)

"I really don't want you to take any more. Isn't it my turn next? Anymore is impossible! It will fall apart!" (Luise)

They were concentrating on a game while likewise not watching the matches.

Karl and Oskar, whom I brought here with 『Teleportation』 to let them meet Amalie, as well as Erich, Helmut and their families surrounded a certain table game. It's a game where you build a tower out of same-sized, rectangular building blocks, and then extract those building blocks in turns so that the tower doesn't collapse while stacking those extracted blocks at the very top of the tower. It's a game that didn't exist in this world, but I ordered the carpenters in my territory to make it. Elise and Amalie watch the progress of the game while taking care of the tea and snacks.

"Phew...I did it!" (Karl)

"Great job, brother." (Oskar)

"Next it's my turn, eh...?" (Luise)

"Luise, it might be better to give up."

"That's out of the question. According to my calculations, I have a chance of 30% to succeed. Next will be Wend, hence I have to concentrate here..." (Luise)

Luise begins to focus her mind in front of the mountain of building blocks that are tilting to the side while having stacked up to an unusual height. And then she pulled out a block with a speed that I couldn't follow with my eyes.

"Yay, it's a success." (Luise)

The mountain of building blocks slanted slightly, but as it didn't collapse, Luise has won her bet. And unfortunately it's now my turn.

"According to my calculation...you haven't even a chance of one percent!"

"Wend, freezing the blocks with magic is against the rules."

"If you do something like that, it kills all the fun!"

I carefully try to extract the block with my fingers trembling slightly, but before I manage to do it, the tower reached its limit and collapsed.

"As expected, it was no good, huh——!?"

"With this it's your fifth loss in a row."

"Erich, it's not that I'm weak. I'm just unlucky." (Wendelin)

"Either way, you don't seem overly happy..."

Even Erich, who should be definitely at disadvantage as a man, participates in the game with his eldest son Jörn sitting on his lap, but he hasn't lost once yet. As expected, my luck might be somewhat special.

"As for me, I simply don't lose because I'm after you, Wend." (Helmut)

Even Helmut let his eldest son Alexis, who has been born not long ago, sit on his lap and hadn't destroyed the tower once so far since his turn always came after mine. It's a very simple game, but since it's something that gets exciting by playing it with a large number of people, the workshop of the woodcrafter, who made it for me, has apparently started mass production. I recall him being enthusiastic about selling a big amount before it's copied.

"Holidays like this are sure nice. It's easy for us to take a break since my father-in-law is still active, though."

"Given that I'm a governmental official and an appointed noble, it's easy for me to take a break as well, I think? It would have been great if Paul and Hermann had come as well..."

Since his territory is close to the tunnel entrance, Paul is busy with constructing an inn town. Hermann has genuinely started to sell the honey liquor that's being produced in his territory as local specialty. Because he was currently running around for the expansion of the production facilities, he was absent today.

"I'm sure we will all be able to meet up sooner or later."

"That's true as well."

"Umm...milord?"

Amalie, who's officially treated as Head Maid of my mansion, calls out to me. Inside the mansion she calls me 『Wend-kun』, but since others are watching us out here, she referred to me as milord.

"What is it, Amalie?" (Wendelin)

"Is it fine for you to not watch the matches?" (Amalie)

Amalie seems to believe that it's bad for me to not watch the matches of the high-classed nobles who are earnestly duking it out.

"There's no merit in doing so."

That's why I only watched it at the beginning.

"Amalie, it's not like someone, who can win against Katia-san, will suddenly appear just because I'm focusing on the matches." (Wendelin)

"It's really not all that amusing if you actually spell it out."

Erich, Helmut and I thought that it would be preferable to play games with our children and nephews.

"Won't it serve as reference for Karl's and Oskar's swordsmanship?" (Amalie)

She's probably thinking that it would be best for them to watch the matches for such reason, as their mother.

"If it's Karl's and Oskar's swordsmanship..."

Once I turned my look in Warren-san's direction, he noticed it and spoke up.

"It will be for a short time, but I will check them out for a bit." (Warren)

"You're going to, Warren-sama?" (Amalie)

There aren't that many people who can receive Warren-san's teaching in swordsmanship, considering his schedule. Knowing that, Amalie was surprised.

"I will somehow make it work by being flexible. It's Earl Baumeister-dono's request after all." (Warren)

Warren-san is really good at teaching.

After watching a training for around an hour, he can put together the optimal training and homework menu for a person to improve.

He earns a considerable amount of money as private tutor on the days where he's off work. Since his regular customers are only high-ranking nobles, this turns into quite a nice sum. This might truly be what's called Art brings bread.

"One hour of training with Warren-san is overwhelmingly more beneficial than watching bad matches for many hours." (Wendelin)

It's the same with magic.

Coaching from master, Burkhart-san, and Doushi has been useful, but watching the magic of other

magicians hasn't been much of a reference.

Hence it might have been a lot more educational to have read the books of past magicians.

"Thank you for doing this for Karl and Oskar." (Amalie)

"Don't worry about it." (Warren)

Aspects like this make it clear that she's a mother.

Amalie deeply bowed towards Warren-san.

"Warren-san, how's the situation at the qualifiers? Did a formidable dark horse unexpectedly appear as it happens in stories?" (Wendelin)

"Unfortunately no. Won't the opening of the tunnel remain impossible for a while? Even His Majesty sighed after seeing the list of participants. Ah, there were some imposters as well."  
(Warren)

Several people were apparently disqualified after trying to have representatives, who seemed likely to win, appear as doubles after having them disguise themselves.

Their methods went from using magic tools to having theater make-up artists put on careful make-ups.

Of course all of it was found out, resulting in them being disqualified.

"Quite a number of renown nobles seemingly believed that they wouldn't be discovered. Even the officials were puzzled."

"There were also people that used magic tools, right?"

"If you use magic disguise tools, the magicians in the royal palace will see through it in one go. The cases where they requested make-up artists were surprisingly difficult to fathom out."

No matter how perfect the disguise with a magic tool, they will be in a state of continuously circulating mana in a surrounding with people that can't use magic.

Even if the circulating mana is minuscule, a magician with a certain level of skill will easily see through it.

"Come to think of it, you're right."

"Even if they had slipped through our inspection, it might be meaningless due to the issue of skill."

After around one hour, the eight winners of the qualifiers were decided.

Those eight contestants are going to challenge Katia in turns.

However, Warren-san declares that there's none among them who's likely to win against Katia.

"What will happen if they can't win?"

"Well, I wonder what kind of plan His Majesty has..."

Once the story gets this complicated, His Majesty's decision becomes important for the rest.

Since the king possesses a certain authority, there are many cases where everyone says 『Well, if His Majesty says so...』.

"My nephew is also among the eight people. I'd like him to win if possible, but..."

"Your Majesty!"

Once I wondered whether nobles traveling incognito had come to give their greetings, seeing how three hooded people entered our box seat, it was His Majesty and two guarding knights. I heard that he wouldn't come to the Colosseum today, but I didn't expect him to disguise and sneak into our booth.

"Your Majesty." (Warren)

"Warren, today's your day off, so rest. If those above don't take a break, those below won't be able to either." (Helmut)

As the two knights are Warren-san's subordinates, they quietly greet him with a nod, and then secure His Majesty from both sides.

"Your Majesty, you're traveling incognito?"

"I said so just now, but my nephew is making an appearance. It would be nice if he won, but if I officially visited to cheer for him, it would cause strange suspicions and people would take unneeded actions." (Helmut)

It's likely about the high possibility of nobles pressuring the Eulenberg House and Katia to lose on purpose after misunderstanding that His Majesty wished for his nephew to become Katia's husband.

"Probably predicting this, that stubborn tomboy announced the martial arts tournament in presence of the general public." (Helmut)

If there are rumors going around that His Majesty pushed through his own wish against a low-ranking noble in a peaceful society like this, his reputation might deteriorate more than expected. For a king in times of peace this would be quite terrible.

"Now then, I think I will have a look at the matches." (Helmut)

His Majesty sits down next to me and begins to snack on the native dishes of the Mizuho Dukedom which Elise had prepared.

"Elise's cooking skill might be good, but these are delicious, aren't they? The nobles in the royal palace are spreading rumors about them." (Helmut)

"Your Majesty, you have to drink this Mizuho sake." (Armstrong)

"Klimt, huh? Then please pass me some dry sake." (Helmut)

"Hoh...Your Majesty, you have already tasted Mizuho sake?" (Armstrong)

"If you're in my position, it's a trifle to obtain sake." (Helmut)

His Majesty drinks the sake offered by Doushi. Meanwhile Doushi moves to the seat on my other side, and starts watching the current match.

"First was someone of the Viscount Dindorf House?" (Helmut)

"If I remember correctly, that is so." (Armstrong)

Doushi answers His Majesty while looking at a paper that listed the profiles of the eight people that advanced to the next round.

"How is he?"

"He should be reasonably strong, but..."

Before Doushi can finish speaking, the first challenger loses after being hit by a sword slash of Katia, who accelerated herself with magic.

"It would be best to say...it's because he was the first?" (Wendelin)

"Let's pretend that to be the case, Earl Baumeister."

Next were young men with a reasonably good reputation considering their origin from high-ranking noble houses, such as the third son of the Earl Täufer House, the third son of the Earl Lisfeld House, and the fourth son of the Marquis Griebel House, but all of them didn't last even five minutes against Katia.

"Weak!"

"Nobles! Usually they are always bragging around, so they could at least do their best at times like these!"

The jeering and booing of the audience could be heard due to the matches being much more boring than the real martial arts tournament matches.

I feel like I also heard some lese majeste in-between there, but if they arrested and punished commoners for that, the reputation of the royal army would plummet, and thus they don't do it in the first place.

Though another reason is very likely that there would be no end if they arrested each and every single of them.

"I can't rebut it at all."

"Your Majesty, were there any applicants which were a lot stronger than them?"

"None..." (Helmut)

If it's such people, they won't enter the matches since many of them are already married.

"Considering the concessions owned by that tomboy's family, it's only natural to accept that woman as first wife. Hence it would be necessary to divorce the current first wife and drop her status to concubine for those who seem likely to win against that tomboy..."

If they did something like that, the first wife's family would naturally complain. In most cases even the first wife's home is a reasonably high-classed noble houses.

"So they would be blocked in all directions, huh...?"

"Therefore things would be settled in the smoothest manner, if thou defeat Katia, Wendelin."  
(Therese)

"The retired lady, right...? But, that's correct, it's certainly a proper suggestion." (Helmut)

His Majesty praises the monologue muttered by Therese.  
The reason for His Majesty to call Therese as 『Retired Lady』 is because it's known to the surroundings that she has already resigned from active duty.

"Nothing less of the former Duchess Philip, I should say?" (Helmut)

"Your Majesty, now I'm only spending my time as carefree, retired person who was defeated in a political strife." (Therese)

Considering all that, you seem to still offer your opinion to His Majesty by pretending to talk to yourself.

"In the case of the concerned parties, I have mixed feelings about it, no matter what. I wonder if a clear, simple and good plan will become apparent, if we look at it from an outside perspective. Exactly because you have already retired, this might be such a view."

"Your Majesty, it's not a good idea at this point in time." (Wendelin)

In such case, doing it like that from the start would have finished the whole matter with a lot less problems.

"Having said that, what if there's no victor? That's right, Guido is the last one remaining. Let's decide after watching my nephew's match." (Helmut)

The last contestant was a young man called Guido, His Majesty's nephew.

"He's the son of my younger brother." (Helmut)

"I see. You're saying he has excellent sword skills as leader of the army?"

"No, he has been sparing time for sword training since he has some leeway, but it's not like he's as talented as Warren. I've been worrying what I should do about his future." (Helmut)

"Eh? Is that so?"

"Earl Baumeister, you might have had a fair share of trouble as eighth son of a Knight House in a remote area, but even royalty doesn't have it easy." (Helmut)

The number of royals gradually keeps growing. Meanwhile the number of Duke Houses is fixed. If a Duke House is founded once, the right of inheritance will stay inside that Duke House. The sole exception are the cases where there are no successors, just like with the Duke Hertha House.

"My foolish uncle had the luck to enter the Duke Hertha House as son-in-law by chance. Afterwards that house was discontinued due to that person, though..." (Helmut)

If the number of Duke Houses kept growing in proportion to the increasing number of royals, the Kingdom's budget would never last.

"Since there's the method of marrying a daughter to a subject, that side is rather easy to handle."

For a high-ranking noble it's an honor since they will be able to receive a bride from the royal family.

There are as many families for a woman to marry into as she likes...but for some reason there are also some left over...

"However, as for young men..." (Helmut)

There seem to be many noble houses that really hate adopting a male royal into their family as son-in-law because the interference of the royal family would increase.

In Erich's and Helmut's cases both sides were low-ranking noble houses, therefore they came to an agreement without any such disputes.

I should add that it finished without any disagreement from the royal family, though

"For the time being I have assigned him to a harmless post in the army. Well, that means he has nothing to do." (Helmut)

It seems he simply practiced swordsmanship without doing anything in particular because he felt fretful just by getting in contact with his superiors and subordinates.

"Your Majesty...that..."

"He's being called sponger or good-for-nothing by various people behind his back." (Helmut)

His Majesty's answer is quite blunt.

"I think it's pitiful, but if I show sympathy here and increase the number of Duke houses, it will negatively affect the public finance's order. There are times when I have to harden my heart and drop excess royalty to commoner status. However, Guido is a diligent, obedient, young man. As his uncle, I want him to somehow pull through." (Helmut)



"You're quite good for a royal!" (Katia)

"I can't give up here!" (Guido)

Warren-san gave up on him as hopeless, but Guido-san's sword skills are considerable. He's lasting the longest against Katia.

"I think that you're not bad, but I have my own plans for the future, too!" (Katia)

At the same time of saying that, Katia raises her own speed even further. She apparently boosted the power output of 『Acceleration』. Guido-san couldn't deal with this. Just as they pass each other, his sword is being flicked away, spelling the defeat of all eight challengers.

"Can't even a single one win!?"

"Much too weak!"

"Not even the last guy!? Fight properly!"

"Worthless!"

The audience boos at the overly disappointing performance of the nobles. Since no one was able to win against Katia in the end, the matter with the tunnel is in a deadlock again.

"Is that lot going to appeal tomorrow again?"

"I would really hate that."

As Erw and I were talking about the upcoming suffering tomorrow, His Majesty suddenly entered the arena together with his two guarding knights, and removed his hood.

"Certainly, even I, Helmut the 37th, consider it to have been disappointing!"

Due to the sudden entry of the king, the spectators, who had booed until now, start cheering. I see, this is a clever move.

"The matter in question had been subject to heated disputes up to this point. Thus, let me present a solution here!" (Helmut)

"Ooh!"

"Your Majesty!"

His Majesty declared to the audience that he would announce his decision. Due to this theatrical way of politics, the audience's excitement and cheering became even more fervent.

With this method it's also difficult for the ministers and high-ranking nobles to oppose him. So that's the reason why His Majesty came here incognito.

"Now that it has come to this, won't we entrust this to that man!?! To that unbeatable man who obtained many achievements, be it for subjugating dragons or fighting for the royal army! Earl Baumeister!" (Helmut)

Being summoned by His Majesty, I reflexively jump down to the arena. My body moving on its own accord in response to being ordered by a person in a high position is probably an habit from my time as salaryman that I cannot get rid of.

"The tunnel is something that had been discovered by Earl Baumeister. In that case it's only logical for the discoverer to manage it! And, Katia!" (Helmut)

"Yes." (Katia)

She was surprised by the king's sudden appearance, but Katia managed to somehow give a reply.

"For the sake of the Eulenberg House's development, you say? I understand your feelings, but this world isn't that easygoing. If you exclude exceptions like Earl Baumeister, noble houses grow big by steadily obtaining achievements over many years. You appear to be strong, but it's best for you to understand your own strength by being defeated by a genius." (Helmut)

"Earl Baumeister-sama?" (Katia)

"Everybody! You will be able to enjoy Earl Baumeister's magic!" (Helmut)

Once His Majesty finished persuading Katia, he returned to his seat after making such declaration at the end.

""Your Majesty! Your Majesty! Your Majesty!""

"Earl Baumeister-sama! Win this!"

As many cheers as for His Majesty are raised for me who was left behind.

"I guess there's no other option but to have a match..." (Wendelin)

"The recent dragon slayer as opponent, huh? Not bad. I might not be able to win, but I sure wanted to try fighting you once." (Katia)

Katia, whom I suspect to be a battle junkie, seems happy about the prospect of fighting me. While looking as if she had found a suitable prey, she faces off against me.

"You're not tired after a series of eight battles?" (Wendelin)

"Except for the last, Guido-sama, all of them were easy peasy, so it's no problem." (Katia)

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

"Earl Baumeister-sama, make sure to not be careless while certain of your victory, okay?" (Katia)

"That's an unnecessary worry." (Wendelin)

Even as I wonder how it came to this, we take distance from each other, and the last battle starts at the same time as both of us nod.

"Victory goes to the one who makes the first move!" (Katia)

Katia suddenly begins to rush towards me after casting the highest level of 『Acceleration』. If it were the me from before, I would have immediately deployed a thick 『Magic Barrier』 out of nervousness, but after going through the battle against master in the civil war, I have become able to deal with such things very calmly.

After likewise casting 『Acceleration』, I deploy a minimal 『Magic Barrier』 only at the side where I'm passing the saber held aloft by Katia, and dodge the attack with the least amount of mana.

"Hee, so you were able to follow my movements, eh?" (Katia)

"You're fast, but your dependence on nothing but speed is still strong." (Wendelin)

It's the same for me as well, but Katia relies on her speed more than I do. She might have raised her ability substantially during the training last week, but she's still worse than me.

If it's like this, I can surpass her with ability.

"But, offensive magic won't hit." (Katia)

Katia likely thinks that she can dodge my spells because of her speed. Previously I would have sealed off her escape routes with AoE spells, but that contradicts master's teachings who chided it as a waste of mana. Let's demonstrate my new spell here.

"Katia, your sabers look expensive, so I'm sorry, okay?" (Wendelin)

"Eh?" (Katia)

After creating two small 『Blue Fire Snakes』 on my fingertips, I make them fly towards Katia. Katia, who's confident in her speed, avoided them, but the 『Blue Fire Snakes』 moved while matching her movements, and finally coiled themselves around her sabers. Although small, the super-hot 『Blue Fire Snakes』 melt Katia's sabers into syrup in an instant.

"Ah, crap! My sabers!" (Katia)

"That's why I apologized in advance, you know?" (Wendelin)

"So you're saying that you will defeat me with magic to the bitter end, huh!?" (Katia)

"Of course. Do you see me holding a sword?" (Wendelin)

After all I'm a magician.  
It's only natural for me to defeat an enemy with magic.

"You think an adventurer like me has no spares?" (Katia)

Katia swiftly retrieved another set of sabers from the magic bag at her waist.

"It can't carry as much as yours, Earl Baumeister-sama. Even so, I have plenty of sabers with me."  
(Katia)

"Your stock might vanish in today's battle. Let me apologize while I still can." (Wendelin)

"Don't be so sure!" (Katia)

I try to melt her new sabers with 『Blue Fire Snakes』 once more, but this time Katia manages to dodge it skillfully with 『Chain Acceleration』.  
I guess she raises her speed to the next level by casting 『Acceleration』 a second time after the initial 『Acceleration』.

"The same move won't work a second time!" (Katia)

Since 『Blue Fire Snake』 doesn't work, I let a softball-sized 『Fireball』 rise into the sky and hurl it in front of Katia.

"Something at the level of a 『Fireball』..." (Katia)

Immediately after Katia let her guard down, the 『Fireball』 burst open like a buckshot.  
I thought that she might have been fully hit by the buckshot, but Katia avoids it by repelling the shrapnel with a boisterous dance of her sabers and 『Acceleration』.

"You're really fast." (Wendelin)

If it's only speed, she might even rival Luise.  
But, if you consider her mana pool, you can easily imagine how long she can use 『Acceleration』.  
I cast a chain of attacks with 『Rock Lance』, 『Ice Ball』, and 『Wind Cutter』 in succession, not permitting Katia to get close.

"Tsk! I guess you're a first-class magician for a reason. There ain't no gap!" (Katia)

Trying to somehow create an opportunity, Katia threw several of the knives hanging at her waist at me one after the other.

It seems she aimed for my face, abdomen and limbs, but by immediately forming a high-temperature 『Fire Wall』, all the knives melt and fall to the ground.



"My custom-made knives..." (Katia)

"But, they didn't hit, did they...?" (Wendelin)

I unleash several spells as if starting a counterattack, but Katia evades them successfully. Thanks to various spells fired by me, and Katia splendidly dodging those, great cheers reverberated from the audience.

At present it looks like a close match. It was popular because of its showiness.

"Uo——h! Are we today here for this?"

"Teacher, you're drunk, aren't you?" (Katharina)

Since it had originally been a swordsmanship tournament, there were no magicians present to deploy a 『Magic Barrier』 to protect the audience.

As replacements, Burkhart-san, who's already very drunk from wine, and Katharina, who rebukes him, deploy a barrier.

"However, nothing has flown over to the audience." (Katharina)

"I'm sure even Earl-sama considers that part. That's why it ain't no problem even if I'm drunken."  
(Burkhart)

"I think it is..." (Katharina)

It would result in a terrible disaster if the audience was hit by magic. Fortunately Katia can't move in all three dimensions.

There's no tall tree she can climb either.

As long as I control my magic skillfully, it's very unlikely for something to fly towards the audience.

"Are you taking it easy on me?" (Katia)

"Yes, I do." (Wendelin)

"Whaaaat!" (Katia)

Since Katia is a renown adventurer, she should understand as much.

But she might actually gotten mad after being told that I'm taking it easy on her.

She became enraged with her face bright red.

"If it's just swordsmanship, I won't be able to win against you. But, when it comes to the combined battle strength, it's impossible for you to win against me." (Wendelin)

"Ugh..." (Katia)

Once I calmly pointed out the reality, Katia held her tongue, obviously being mortified.

"Would you be happy if I told you here that you're strong?" (Wendelin)

"I don't think so...rather, it would piss me off, but...it irritates me to no end!" (Katia)

While dodging my chain of 『Fireballs』, she once again readies her two sabers after slowly fixing her stance, and charges at me.

"As long as I can get close!" (Katia)

Believing this to be her sole chance at winning, Katia musters all her mana and sallies forth with an 『Acceleration』 that's unlike all the ones before.

"This is my trump card!" (Katia)

As Katia seems close to running out of mana, several of my spells graze her body and injure her. For just an instant she grimaced when injured, but Katia approached right in front of me without lowering her speed.

"It'll work!" (Katia)

Katia probably thought that she won her bet.

She smiles while certain of her victory, but I have a pile of countermeasures at hand.

Since I have already deployed a 『Magic Barrier』 atop my body long ago, the blow aimed at my torso was completely blocked.

Katia, who had her full-power slash repelled, backs off.

"Hard!" (Katia)

"Don't be unreasonable. It would have hurt if I had received that normally." (Wendelin)

"Isn't that robe sturdier than any low-quality armor?" (Katia)

"What, so you knew?" (Wendelin)

This time I take out the magic sword, which I rarely use, during the time when Katia stopped moving.

The magic I pour into the sword is naturally fire magic.

Without any feints, I swing down the blue-flamed blade with its high temperature at Katia from an overhead position.

She tries to block that slash by crossing her two sabers.

But, those sabers are only composed of steel with a bit of mithril mixed in.

Her two sabers once again were melted by the hot flames.

"Once again, sorry about your sabers." (Wendelin)

"There's still much more!" (Katia)

Katia, who's bad at giving up, tries to take out spares from her magic bag, but even I'm not as generous as to allow her to do that.

At once I unleash a small 『Wind Cutter』, cutting off the magic bag affixed to her waist.

Knowing that she will fall prey to my magic if she tries to pick it up by crouching, Katia can't

move. With this she has completely lost her weapons.

"I'd really like you to surrender. You don't have any mana left either, right?" (Wendelin)

For me it was simple to know that Katia's mana has been almost used up. Seeing that she can't use 『Acceleration』 any longer, there's nothing left she can do. Several 『Fireballs』 were still hovering above her head. They have been set to attack Katia if she moves an inch.

"Shit...if it was only swordsmanship..." (Katia)

"You can't specify only swordsmanship in a real battle either, can you? I'm sorry, but that's how it is." (Wendelin)

"I give up..." (Katia)

At the same time as Katia raises both hand, my victory is set. Many cheers are raised by the audience.

"He melted her swords with magic."

"Various spells were exhibited!"

"Even after being cut by the sabers, he came out without a single injury."

All the spectators seem satisfied as they were allowed to watch an interesting entertainment. For the residents of the capital this kind of martial arts tournament is merely amusement and a means to kill some time. Even the prize frantically desired by the nobles and royals has no relation to them.

"It's not like I never lost, but I feel an overwhelming difference between us. I guess your military achievements so far are not for show." (Katia)

"The majority of them were me getting dragged into it or being asked to do it, though. Ah, right." (Wendelin)

I approached Katia and cast healing magic after checking for places where my spells had grazed her.

"Scars will be left behind if you ignore these. You were born as a beauty, so you should treasure it." (Wendelin)

"Me? A beauty?" (Katia)

"It's no flattery, just my objective opinion. If you were labeled as ugly woman, the majority of the women on the world would be ugly as well." (Wendelin)

"I am...beauty..." (Katia)

Since Katia casts her eyes down for some reason, I approach His Majesty, who had watched the match, and speak to him.

"Your Majesty, I won." (Wendelin)

"I saw something interesting for the first time in a while. Since that stubborn tomboy was defeated by you, you should take responsibility and marry her." (Helmut)

"So it comes down to this after all..." (Wendelin)

Arriving at this point, there's no way that I can refuse any longer.  
I guess that means it's safer for me to manage all the tunnel rights rather than complicating the situation by handing half of it to another noble.  
Looking at it now, you can say that Therese's comment was right.  
I suppose that means her prediction came true.

"Wendelin, I am no prophet. I just thought that it would be the most fitting solution." (Therese)

It was Therese, who had also watched the match, but as might expected of the former Duchess Philip. She reached the same conclusion as His Majesty.

"The organization of the tunnel's guard unit, and the financial responsibility. Since only the royal family and the Earl Baumeister House are concerned in this, we will split the military personnel half-half. That's a gain for the Kingdom." (Helmut)

The Margrave Breithilde House dropped out. Instead the number of soldiers provided by the Kingdom increased accordingly. Since the Earl Baumeister House will bear the expenses, it's a benefit for the kingdom just as much since the number of posts increased. There's only one commanding officer, but since they can increase the posts of platoon, company leaders and below, they can assign work to the young royals and nobles.  
I have no choice but to hope that the Kingdom will act as a shield against jealous nobles, who didn't get any benefit out of it this time.

"Earl Baumeister you have to open the tunnel as quickly as possible." (Helmut)

"Yes." (Wendelin)

My assets increased, but the number of my wives grew accordingly. That result was unforeseen, or rather this was also a destiny I couldn't avoid, I decided to believe.

## Chapter 8 – Tunnel Opening

"The official opening of the large tunnel through the Greater League Mountain Range is going to start anytime soon!"



One week after I won the battle against Katia, the preparations advanced at top speed, resulting in the tunnel being opened safely.

As a matter of fact the construction work on the Baumeister Earldom's side finished at the bare minimum before the martial arts tournament as I had been exploited to the bones due to Roderich's discerning prediction.

All that was left was paving the ground with concrete and stones so that the entrances on both sides wouldn't be buried by a natural disaster and the roads which I had finished beforehand.

The relocation and construction of carriage parking areas and lodging facilities matching with the structures in Paul's territory followed after that.

The preparations in the lodging facilities and such will continue for the next while, but that's inevitable.

I entrusted the following to Roderich and Paul, seeing as a problem I had to urgently resolve cropped up at this point.

『Say, the tunnel on the Eulenberg Knightdom's side will be completely managed by the Earl Baumeister House, right?』

『Well, I've been the one who defeated Katia after all.』 (Wendelin)

In the end it was decided that the Eulenberg Knightdom would be merged into the Baumeister Earldom. As for the new Eulenberg territory, the Earl Baumeister House had to bear responsibility and search for a new place.

Just as Veith-san had hoped, it has to be a place suitable for maroimo cultivation at the slopes on the southern side of the Greater League Mountain Range.

Moreover, we have to prepare a territory that's bigger than their old fief.

Given that the Savage Lands are barren, it's also necessary to help them with the relocation.

That's only natural seeing how they yielded such a profitable concession to us. Otherwise the nobles, who became a laughingstock for the commoners in the tournament, might voice complaints.

『Paul-san requires assistance, too. You also must take Margrave Breithilde-sama into consideration.』

『I guess you're right.』

He wasn't in time for the tunnel opening, but Paul is currently advancing the construction of inns for

the people who are going to use the tunnel. However, his place still lacks residents, which means they can only spare a few people to work on the construction.

We helped out by sending people over from our side.

As for the Margrave Breithilde House; they failed to obtain the tunnel rights this time.

Margrave Breithilde himself seems to believe that it's a blessing as it will allow him to evade the jealousy of the other nobles, but there are many among his relatives and retainers who are unhappy about it.

Accordingly we considered the Breithilde Margraviate and didn't build too many inns and shops in the old Eulenberg Knightdom.

At present the construction of an inn town is proceeding in the area of the Breithilde Margraviate adjacent to the former Eulenberg Knightdom.

If it's the old Eulenberg Knightdom, it will become too small once we build the housing for the stationed royal army, the Earl Baumeister House's guard unit, and their families anyway.

It's a lot more efficient to entrust the business catered towards the tunnel users to the Margrave Breithilde House.

Since both sides will be able to become happy, it will likely avoid unnecessary disputes.

『I see. So that's why you had to hurriedly construct various facilities at the entrance on the former Eulenberg Knightdom's side with the goal of opening it after merely one week.』

『That Roderich is truly a demon.』 (Wendelin)

Yes, for the whole week until the tunnel opening, I continuously removed earth and stones in the tunnel's vicinity, reinforced the ground so that the tunnel wouldn't get buried by landslides, and prepared the soil for the sake of being able to build temporary checkpoints, a parking area for carriages, and houses for the stationed guards on the former Eulenberg Knightdom's side. ...Anyway, I worked my ass off.

『Ahahaha! For even this side to become part of the Baumeister Earldom!』

『It's not funny, really!』 (Wendelin)

Once I put off the former Eulenberg Knightdom's side as irrelevant since other nobles would scramble for it anyway, it became ours upon His Majesty's ruling.

Seeing how it turned out like this, the maintenance of the tunnel entrance and its vicinity has become the Earl Baumeister House's duty.

And since I'm the one leading the house, there might have been sentences like — 『Isn't it plenty if you have one week until the opening?』, 『That's right!』, and 『Earl Baumeister has magic after all』 —

I don't know whether such a conversation really took place, but I'm pretty sure that the tunnel's opening was sped up because of my presence.

『If it's milord, I'm confident that finishing the bare minimum of construction works and opening the tunnel is possible if you have a week.』 (Roderich)

I guess Roderich put the boot into it.

He wanted the tunnel to be opened as fast as possible.

Magic airships are fast, but their fare is expensive.

Even if the airships arrive at the port, it takes further expenses to distribute the cargo to various

places by sending out carriages since the Baumeister Earldom is vast. Crossing the mountains takes time, no matter what. If you move too many people and carriages along the mountain paths, the danger of being targeted by wild animals, wyverns, and flying dragons increases. In this aspect the tunnel was the most suitable for smaller merchants to do new business.

Since even Roderich has been struggling until he began serving us, he probably wants to support tiny merchants who would start new businesses.



"At any rate, there's more guests than expected."

"Certainly, these numbers are amazing..."

The toll for a one-way trip was decided to be 100 cents, but many merchants with their carriages full of cargo came on the opening day.

In addition there were also many travelers.

I'm sure they are tourists who came to have a look at the tunnel.

I sure didn't expect for tourists to show up, though.

"It's time for the official opening!"

Opening events exist in this world, too.

Margrave Breithilde, Lord Eulenberg, and I cut a ribbon spanning across the tunnel entrance with decorative knives.

Given that I only saw such scenes in the news, I was slightly excited about being able to participate myself.

I guess it was the effect of having done my best with the construction works.

"I will be the first to arrive in the Baumeister Earldom!"

"I wonder, what should I procure in Baulburg on the way back?"

"What a cause for great celebration that even us small merchants have now the chance to earn some money!"

"Since we can also sightsee the tunnel, this might be a gain, even if we have to pay a toll."

"It should be safe with the guards patrolling the area."

At the same time as the ribbon was cut, many carriages began to travel towards the Baumeister Earldom.

Once I listen to the conversations between the people entering the tunnel, I could make out that it's apparently quite popular.

"That makes sense. It takes more time than a magic airship, but you can keep the expenses down. Of course there's no point in comparing this to crossing the mountains. It has become possible to do business with the Baumeister Earldom for everyone and not just the major merchants. The amount of transactions will go up noticeably."

Margrave Breithilde explained the advantages of the tunnel opening. The economy of the Baumeister Earldom will be stimulated by the tunnel, enabling us to pay the maintenance of the tunnel and the costs of the 『Royal Army's Greater League Mountain Range Tunnel Guard Force』.

"Because it'll speed up the development of my territories near the former Eulenberg Knightdom, we have also benefits from it." (Breithilde)

The Breithilde Margraviate adjoining to the former Eulenberg Knightdom hadn't been developed by any standard.

It's an area dotted with farm villages, but thanks to it being close to the tunnel, large-scale development, including the construction of inn towns, has started.

As the trade with those using the tunnel will blossom, the population will grow, and the tax revenue of the Margrave Breithilde House should grow as well.

Once that happens, it should resolve the opposition of his relatives and retainers who are very unhappy due to the tunnel rights being taken away by the Earl Baumeister House.

As eighth son of the former 『Poor Knight House across the mountains』, I should prevent pointless strife with the prestigious Margrave Breithilde House.

"It looks like you found a new place for the Eulenberg House?"

"That part worked out relatively fast." (Wendelin)

I found the new Eulenberg territory right away.

I think one will immediately understand that land, which includes untouched slopes on the southern side of the Greater League Mountain Range and meets the conditions, exists plentifully, if you look at the progress of our development.

Among the proposed sites, it's a new territory that's relatively close to inhabited places, where it's easy to exterminate the wyverns and flying dragons.

Because Veith-san also gave his stamp of approval that it's a mountainous district suited for mass production of maroimo, we immediately began the relocation.

Given that the number of houses is still lacking, Veith-san and the residents prepare the fields while gradually changing residence, and the maroimo production has already started.

"That's quite fast, isn't it?"

"I mean, it's Veith-san's aspiration." (Wendelin)

『The houses can wait for later! First we have to build maroimo fields as soon as possible!』 (Veith)

Veith-san said that he wants to prepare new fields as he doesn't mind living in tents for a while.

Accordingly I moved all the soil in the fields of the former Eulenberg territory to the new territory as I did for the Knight Baumeister House in the past.

Since it's soil that will be removed during the construction of all kinds of facilities and the setting

up of landslide prevention around the tunnel's entrance anyway, I transported all of it to the new Eulenberg territory.

『It's very appreciated since soil is the lifeline of farming!』 (Veith)

Veith-san was delighted because he can immediately expect a certain degree of harvest if it's like this.

He feels more grateful for the soil than any riches.

He's a genuine farmer.

"For him farming maroimo is more important than the tunnel management, huh? But, if you look at the long-term, this might allow the Eulenberg House to survive."

"With the unfamiliar tunnel management, they would soon go bankrupt after failing at it, I suppose."

"If the Eulenberg House had at least been a Baron House, there would have been the option of them getting our help..." (Breithilde)

If they failed in the tunnel management as result of taking up something they are unable to accomplish, there would be the danger of the Eulenberg House being demoted by the Kingdom in worst case.

Lord Eulenberg and Veith-san, who managed to actually avoid that, are maybe not just the menial nobles they seem to be.

Well...it might be simply owed to them being completely frightened by His Majesty and the high-ranking nobles, whom they had never seen before.



"Various things happened, but it's great that the opening succeeded safely. It really was a hassle, after all." (Breithilde)

"Uuh...sorry..." (Katia)

There's a person who apologizes while hanging her head in shame in response to Margrave Breithilde's remark.

It was Katia, who made the tunnel rights issue more complicated than necessary in the end.

Since she's accompanying Lord Eulenberg today, she's wearing a dress.

It suits her since it had been coordinated by Elise and the others when she stayed in my mansion before the tournament.

Since Katia is a beautiful girl with a nice figure to begin with, she caught the attention of many people attending the tunnel's official opening.

However, being unaccustomed to such clothes, she herself seemed to be quite embarrassed.

"Is she Lord Eulenberg's daughter, who took that gallant action?"

"It appears she crushed all the sons of royalty and nobility?"

"I watched the matches. Only her last opponent was too difficult for her."

"Earl Baumeister-dono, right? As expected, even a remarkable adventurer can't win against the dragon slayer, huh?"

"I guess that means she became the next booty of Earl Baumeister-sama after the former Duchess Philip-dono."



It sounds like a quite rude way of speaking about women, but that's how the recognition of this world's people works.

Katia became mine after losing to me.

Everyone should be saying the same within the Kingdom.

"Do you understand now, Katia-san? If you had behaved obediently at that time, there wouldn't have been any need for you to be married and treated like spoils of war after losing to Earl Baumeister. You could have continued to freely act as adventurer, right?"

Margrave Breithilde admonished Katia, saying that there had been a suitable risk if she failed, even though she could have lived in her own way.

She caused him various troubles, but Margrave Breithilde had the kindness to give Katia his advice as the older one.

"I'm also reflecting about being too straight forward. But, well, me marrying Earl Baumeister after losing in the match might be fine in the end." (Katia)

"Hoh, why do you think so?" (Breithilde)

Margrave Breithilde seems curious about Katia saying that she's not against marrying me.

"Even though I might look like this, I have been working as reasonably famous adventurer so far. I believe that I'm an especially decent adventurer in regards to the subjugation of wyverns and flying dragons. As such I had been worried whether I would actually be able to get married at all..." (Katia)

I hear that female adventurers have difficulties to get married, especially if they are excellent at their job.

The method of them marrying male adventurers who are just as excellent doesn't work out in reality.

In their eyes there's no reason to expressly choose someone in the same trade.

Since they are earning money, they can simply choose as many beautiful, graceful women as they like.

"It would turn into a disaster if there was a matrimonial quarrel."

"There is a married couple among my acquaintances where both are adventurers with similar accomplishments, but once they fight, their neighbors run away as far as they can. After all they might get dragged into it." (Katia)

However, that's a rare case.

There are many unmarried, excellent female adventurers. It's not like all of them surround themselves with younger lovers.

"Earl Baumeister-sama won against me. He told me that I'm beautiful..." (Katia)

While saying that, Katia casts her eyes down with a beet red face.

It wasn't flattery, but she really has no immunity towards men, or rather she can deal with friends and fellow adventurers normally, but once she's conscious of them, she's a lost case.

"I guess you became skilled at flattering women, Earl Baumeister. That's good." (Breithilde)

As I'm wondering what Margrave Breithilde is on about seeing as even I'm capable of at least this much, Lord Eulenberg and Veith-san came over to greet us.

"Please excuse Katia for causing you trouble in this time's matter."

Both bowed their heads and apologized for their foolish daughter/sister, but since they were able to cultivate maroimo in their new territory now, both had very calm expressions.

"That very kind of you. I do understand the feeling of the young lady, but..."

In fact it's a logical move for the Eulenberg House to manage the tunnel... Margrave Breithilde answered with this as the gist of his words.

"I think for me and Veith the tunnel management would have been a bit too much. After all we like farm work..." (Eulenberg)

People suffer if they work on things which don't fit them or are unfamiliar to them. That's why both consented to yielding the tunnel rights.

"I knew that Katia was seriously considering the Eulenberg House. It's not like Veith hates Katia either. It's just a problem of how we live." (Eulenberg)

"Father..." (Veith)

"Besides, our Eulenberg House can definitely slowly prosper through agriculture. After all people can't survive without food. Luckily Earl Baumeister-dono is also helping out." (Eulenberg)

"Earl Baumeister-sama, you will do agriculture?"

"Of course not professionally."

At present the popularity of maroimo is low, but since they have a monopoly on the cultivation techniques, they just have to advance the territory's development while capitalizing on that.

"Maroimo can be sold more expensively than sweet potatoes. In other words, it's possible to make good money with it."

There are many territories in the relatively mild Kingdom which cultivate sweet potatoes and make special products out of them.

Accordingly it would be difficult for the Eulenberg House to enter that market at this point, but if it comes to maroimo, which has special cultivation conditions and methods, it will turn into a decent business since there are no competitors.

"I will have Veith-dono increase the maroimo cultivation quantity while maintaining the quality. And, by handling the sales of the processed goods using those maroimo, the income will increase as well."

It might also be a great idea to make dried sweet potato, fried dough cookies, chips, candied sweet potatoes, and sake.

There are several regions that create those goods with sweet potatoes, but their taste is no match for maroimo.

Above all, the sweetness is completely different.

"You may as well sell maroimo as ingredient to confectioneries in the capital. If they become a fad in the capital, the price will go up due to being in great demand."

"Oh, I guess that method exists, too."

"I also happen to have advice how to bring up new industries and develop your new territory by using the earnings of the tunnel rights. Please don't worry as I will also introduce some merchants to you." (Wendelin)

Since the Earl Baumeister House will gain overwhelming profits under these conditions, I would feel guilty about not helping them at least that much.

"Veith got all fired up. It's quite difficult to maintain the quality, but since our territory became bigger, he harbors expectations towards the growth of the Eulenberg territory." (Eulenberg)

"So even brother had proper pride befitting a noble, eh?" (Katia)

"It's slightly different from other nobles, though. That's why you don't have to worry and can become a bride without any problems, Katia." (Eulenberg)

"Come to think of it, you're right."

"Let me say something aristocratic for the first time in my life. If you don't marry Earl Baumeister, we will run into various troubles, Katia." (Veith)

Marry him properly since his assistance will decrease otherwise.

This might be his revenge for Katia prattling about his pride as noble earlier.

He's telling her: You certainly aren't going to turn it down, are you?

"I know." (Katia)

"Even though you always became sulky once we talked about formal marriage interviews when you came back home before, what changed your mind now?" (Eulenberg)

As expected, Lord Eulenberg repeatedly kept proposing marriage interviews to Katia.

But, in case of this family, she would have to live in the Eulenberg territory after the marriage.

Katia apparently declined the marriage interviews since she hated that fact.

"Father, finding a man who can defeat me with overwhelming strength ain't that easy." (Katia)

"I see." (Eulenberg)

So Katia apparently frequently measures others by their combat strength.

That means she doesn't mind becoming my wife since she lost against me.

"Except for a few, most of the male adventurers are just useless guys. On that part Earl Baumeister-sama is a gentleman, even if adventuring is a side job for him." (Katia)

"Me a gentleman, eh...?" (Wendelin)

I really don't get her basis for a gentleman, but I guess there's no problems since Katia believes me to be one.

"I think that you could have gotten married a lot faster if you had stayed obedient, since you're beautiful, Katia, but...being docile is not you, is it?" (Veith)

"Brother, that would be a no go." (Katia)

"Martha said so as well." (Veith)

"Bringing up your spouse here is unfair, you know?" (Katia)

I think it's great that Veith-san and Katia mended their relationship to the extent that they can banter with each other.



"I ended up showing you a crude swordsmanship in the Colosseum the other day..." (Guido)

The one who came greeting us next was His Majesty's nephew, Guido-sama, who caused His Majesty to be worried about his future.

Since he's royalty, I wouldn't mind him talking casually with me, but he addressed me in a very polite manner.

That's probably an aspect His Majesty likes about him.

"I have taken over the duty as guard unit commander since yesterday, but it hasn't caused any major issues. I'm standing in close contact with Thomas-dono." (Guido)

In the end it was decided for Guido-sama to be in charge of the royal army that guards the tunnel. He has been appointed to Viscount by His Majesty, and the commander post has become inheritable.

Because their post is far away from the capital, the tunnel guards have to live here together with their families.

Therefore the position of commander had apparently been turned into a hereditary post and assigned to Guido-sama and his family.

There hadn't been overly much opposition against that.

That's owed to Guido-sama having been the only one who could persist in the battle against Katia for a long time. Thanks to this he could barely keep his dignity.

As result he hadn't been trash-talked by the commoners as much as the other young nobles.

"Well, I guess I agree with that." (Katia)

Katia highly evaluated Guido-sama, who diligently piled up swordsmanship training albeit having not that much of a talent for it.

Even if he isn't stronger than herself, she doesn't think badly of such an earnest man.

"Having said that, I still have a long way to go, thus I need to devote my efforts into swordsmanship from now on." (Guido)

I have heard that Guido-sama is the child of the king's younger brother, but his mother's social standing is low, and on top of it, he seems to be the fourth son.

For that reason he was in a situation of being given a stipend after dumping him into the royal army as there was no other place for him, but he himself didn't feel discouraged at all and made an effort in his sword training.

The results of that have shown themselves now.

"Since the lodging houses haven't been built yet, I will live in a tent for a while, but in another year we will likely be able to send for the troops' families." (Guido)

Given that the tunnel opening took priority, the guard soldiers still stayed at hurriedly built huts and tents.

However, as the lodging houses should be done soon, they should be able to live together with their families if they endure for a little bit longer.

"We are hurrying the construction of the lodging houses, but it takes time no matter what we do. Once they are completed, it will probably become difficult for you, Guido-sama."

The tunnel rights were snatched away by the Earl Baumeister House, but Guido-sama became a noble who can pass on his post of guarding the tunnel.

Naturally nobles will consider marrying their daughters to Guido-sama.

It's always the same in this world, really.

"Have there been many talks about formal marriage interviews?"

"I won't say that there haven't been any, but I refused all of them." (Guido)

Guido casually replied to Margrave Breithilde, but is that really possible?

"Do you have a fiancée?"

No matter how much he might have been treated as unneeded royalty, he's still royalty. I guess it's only natural for him to have a fiancée.

"It's my childhood friend, but she's a woman that accepts even someone like me..." (Guido)

He's slightly embarrassed, but Guido-sama started to happily talk about his fiancée.

Even though he's His Majesty's nephew, he had been treated badly since his early days because of

his mother's social standing.

Even so he diligently led his daily life without giving in at all.

The only one who got normally into contact with him during those days was the second daughter of the Viscount Peuss House.

She was the only one who understood him who had been mostly ignored by the other royals.

"I told her that we will get married if I manage to become independent. Kaya has been waiting for me..." (Guido)

"Congratulations." (Breithilde)

"That's great, congratulations." (Wendelin)

On the surface I extended my congratulations after Margrave Breithilde, but...

It appeared. Yet another appeared.

One that promised marrying his childhood friend, and will actually realize that.

It's the appearance of an enemy who once again stimulates my trauma after Veith-san did so before.

Or rather, I don't think that Guido-sama had bad luck at all.

After all he has become the commander of the guard unit and is engaged with his childhood friend who promised to marry him.

"Hee, pure love, you say? That makes even me jealous." (Katia)

"Since His Majesty has given his permission as well, I plan to make Kaya happy by doing my best from now on. I won't be able to meet her for a while, but it looks like she's running about for the marriage preparations." (Guido)

It seems His Majesty is too easy-going on his nephew.

No, he considered approving of the marriage between two that love each other, exactly because his nephew has been in such a position?

However, for some reason it irritates me quite a bit.

I consider Elise and the others to be great wives, but I feel like that's unrelated to this. I guess I can't explain this unreasonable anger within me.

"(Why are there only people, who accomplish such enviable things like marrying their childhood friends, around me?)"

There's surely no way for me to complain about His Majesty's decision, but the flames of jealousy were gradually flaring up within my heart.

"(Shit! I don't even have a childhood friend, you know!)" (Wendelin)

During my time at the Knight Baumeister House, something like a female childhood friend...or rather, I didn't even have a male friend until I met Erw.

As the child Wendelin apparently didn't talk with anyone besides Erich, I haven't taken over any coeval friends from him.

No, in my childhood the only friend I had was the nature of the Savage Lands.

Yeah, looking at it objectively, I've been quite the loner.

My previous life is...no good either.

No matter how much I think back, something like a female childhood friend didn't exist...  
It's been only men, hasn't it!?

"The tunnel has been opened safely, and the guards will be fully organized soon, too. The construction of lodging houses and towns is progressing, which will result in both entrance areas to become lively soon. Well, it's really wonderful." (Breithilde)

With Margrave Breithilde's final comment, the uproar over the tunnel came to an end at last. The double childhood friend combo pierced my heart a bit, but I think I will quickly return to the mansion and get Amalie to comfort me.

That's how the tunnel opened and I got one more wife.

## **End of the Book Extra – The Maids' Afternoon: Staying in the Capital's Mansion Version**

"Dominique-neesan and me have been nominated?" (Lea)

"Yes, get ready right away." (Dominique)



It was hurriedly decided that Dominique-neesan and I would move to the Earl Baumeister mansion in the capital.

I'm told additional help is urgently needed as it seems that we're going to look after the young noble lady related to that tunnel case.

Dominique-neesan is Elise-sama's childhood friend, and I'm Erwin-sama's concubine candidate. Considering our positions, it's not strange for us to be called upon.

"Are we going to move to the capital from now on? That will take quite some time." (Lea)

"Don't worry. We will be able to move there instantly with master's magic." (Dominique)

Ah, I see.

Because we wouldn't be in time if we were to move by magic airship, seeing as we have been urgently summoned, it means that we will be transferred by master's prided magic.

"The transfer is instantaneous, but we have to gather our necessities before that." (Dominique)

"Understood." (Lea)

However, as we can simply buy the majority of our necessities in the capital, our preparations finished right away.

"Well, are you ready?" (Wendelin)

We were addressed by master who came to receive us, but he's a very friendly person. I think him not having being born as high-ranking noble plays a big role in that.

"We're off then." (Wendelin)

""Please take care of us."" (Dominique & Lea)

Without even a second passing after our reply, we transferred from the courtyard of the mansion in Baulburg to the garden of the capital's mansion.

"That's amazing, isn't it Dominique-neesan?" (Lea)

『Teleportation』 was its name? After actually experiencing it myself, I'm completely astonished by its greatness.



"It would be convenient if we could have master transfer us with that magic when it's time to go back home." (Lea)

"Humph!" (Dominique)

Once I said this after bidding farewell to master and while we store away our luggage in the room for maids, a fist from Dominique-neesan once again...no matter how often she hits me, it's still as painful as the first time...

"There's no way that he's going to use his valuable magic, which can only be used by a few dozen magicians in the entire Kingdom, for your homecoming, is there!?" (Dominique)

"I'm just joking." (Lea)

"In your case I'm troubled since you look like you'd truly ask master to do it." (Dominique)

"Ugh...even I wouldn't do something like that." (Lea)

I can't promise anything if a chance presents itself though.

"Ah, right! Due to the first fist after a long while, the face of my first love whom I met at an age of 10 has..." (Lea)

"Did you really forget about him?" (Dominique)

Dominique-neesan looks at me with a worried expression.  
Did she feel sorry as fellow women once it was related to my first love?

"Now that I think about it, I hadn't my first love with an age of 10." (Lea)

I mean, I was only surrounded by old men and brats at that age.  
I don't like men that are younger or around my age, after all.

"Humph!" (Dominique)

"It huuurts...my happy memory of going out for an all-you-can-cake at the confectionery 『Brabnar』 which was held for a limited time during my day off last week is..." (Lea)

"You haven't forgotten it anyway, have you!? Or rather, why did you keep such information to yourself?" (Dominique)

"Isn't that because it didn't match with your day off and because your husband doesn't like sweets? You have a child, too." (Lea)

Despite her looking like this, Dominique-neesan is married and has a baby who has been born just recently.

Normally she has the other maids look after the baby, but that doesn't work on holidays. I think spending happy time with your family is indispensable.

"I'm busy, but if I had known about it in advance, I would have freed up some time. Please make sure to tell me next time. Got it?" (Dominique)

"Yes." (Lea)

The story got derailed quite a bit, but Dominique-neesan and I took care of master and his friends as well as his guest at the capital's mansion.

\* \* \*

"They sure don't get tired from coming here everyday." (Lea)

"They are desperate in their own way." (Dominique)

◆◆◆

Dominique-neesan and I are airing the laundry in the garden, but many nobles have gathered outside the mansion.

I suppose it's for the sake of showing off to Katia-sama who is taken care of by master.

There are people singing while playing instruments, dancing, reading poems, and painting pictures. Are those pictures of Katia-sama?

I can't help wondering what might be the point of doing something like that, but as it's not like they have caused any harm at present, it seems they are being left alone due to master's order.

"Having said that, master and his party can't go out until the martial arts tournament thanks to them." (Lea)

Which reminds, since a few days ago, we're in charge of shopping.

It apparently has turned out like this because it gets troublesome for Elise-sama and the others as

those people get involved with them once they go outside.  
In our case, we get completely ignored since we're unrelated to all of this.

"Even so, those are sure unskilled songs and dances." (Lea)

"Lea, the other party are nobles so far as it goes. You mustn't insult them where they can hear you."  
(Dominique)

"Got it." (Lea)

"After all they might file a protest towards master with that as a reason. There's the danger that they will say, 『Since your maid has been rude to me, let me meet with Katia-dono as apology.』"  
(Dominique)

I see, it's because the people outside are at the end of their wits'.

"We should silently do our work until the tournament ends. You mustn't do anything unnecessary."  
(Dominique)

"Understood." (Lea)

Even though I'm finally at a place close to Erwin-sama, we can't even go on a date in the capital thanks to the group outside.  
I'd like him to invite me to something like that very soon, but even Haruka-sama doesn't go on a date with him since they can't go out.

"How regrettable. Even though I'm expressly wearing the new maid uniform..." (Lea)

"How's any of that related to your maid uniform?" (Dominique)

"These are the new maid uniforms provided by master. They haven't been given to you as you're married and a parent, but since they are suiting this young me quite well, Erwin-sama should get fairly aroused by me. 『Lea, today you're beautiful.』, 『Thank you very much, Erwin-sama.』, 『You're truly beautiful, Lea.』, 『Aah, you mustn't, Erwin-sama! We aren't officially engaged yet!』, 『I can't resist your charm, Lea.』, 『You mustn't!』. Even I will pretend to resist more or less, but if things turn out like this, I will have him take responsibility. Huh? What's wrong, Dominique-neesan?" (Lea)

Dominique-neesan, why are you looking at me with eyes full of pity?

"Lea, look over there." (Dominique)

"Pardon?" (Lea)

Once I look at the nobles as told by Dominique-neesan, they are also looking at me as if seeing someone pitiful.

"(Eeehh! Why? Despite the awfulness of their singing and dancing!)" (Lea)

"(In their eyes it's probably you who's terrible.)" (Dominique)

Such a...

Even though they are much worse than me!

Besides, I'm a pure girl who quickly wants to go out with Erwin-sama on the premise of a marriage.

"Anyway, Erwin-sama is busy, too. Make sure to not bother him unnecessarily." (Dominique)

"Okay." (Lea)



Even though it was my precious stay in the capital, I ended up returning to Baulburg without even a chance to go on a date with Erwin-sama.



Ah, just when will I be able to officially become Erwin-sama's fiancée?



**カチャ**

## **Disclaimer**

*This is an unofficial translation of Hachinan tte, sore wa nai deshou written by Y.A., illustrated by Fuzichoco and published by MF Books. If you wish to support the author and/or the publisher, please purchase the Japanese Light Novel.*

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