









「これは婚約指輪の代わりか？
まあ公にできぬ関係ゆえに、
こういふプレゼントの方がありがたい」

テレゼ

俺から杖をもらったテレゼは
嬉しそうだった。

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Chapter 1 – Wedding Ceremony with Katia...That's not What It Might Look like, though

"Jeeez, I'm really tired of dresses like this, you know...? Long skirts are stuffy and hot. For humans it's a major pain to wear something they are not used to." (Katia)

The instant the official tunnel opening came to an end and no one was looking any longer, Katia lifted her skirt and began to enjoy a cool breeze by flapping the hem as if having completely forgotten Elise's education up until now.

It's a behavior that's unbelievable for a noble lady, even if her house might be small, but since she didn't have many opportunities to conduct herself as a noble lady to begin with, it might be inevitable.

"What a truly lost case." (Luise)

"Luise, even I won't do something like that at an official occasion. But, there are no guests present any longer, so it's alright, no?" (Katia)

Because the invited guests have gone home, leaving only those related to the Earl Baumeister House behind, Katia acts as usual with a peace of mind.

"Even though Elise went out of her way to teach you manners and behavior befitting a noble lady."

"Katia-san, your memory is very good." (Elise)

In order for Katia to not be treated like a fool by the invitees as the Eulenberg House's daughter, she received an intensive crash course on manners and similar for several days until the official tunnel opening from Elise.

According to Elise, she was a student with a very good memory, but as soon as the necessity to act like a noble lady was gone, she immediately returned to her usual acting.

Personally I don't consider it a problem if she only acts like a noble at such times.

"Well, even I'm normally not very noble-like..." (Wendelin)

"As expected of my husband, how kind of you." (Katia)

I pay attention to proper manners and conduct myself as a noble on official occasions, but I would get exhausted if I had to do so all the time.

I mean, originally, by birth, I'm just barely a noble.

If I didn't have my magic talent, I might have lost my status as noble after becoming an adult.

"Umm...for better or worse, I'm here as well...it might be a blessing to be considered family by a remarkable adventurer as Katia-san, though." (Breithilde)

Margrave Breithilde, who also participated in the tunnel's official opening, joined the discussion

while smiling wryly.

"If I can get you to understand that this is the usual me, it will be nice as I won't have to stand on attention each and every single time I meet with you, Margrave Breithilde-sama." (Katia)

"Such way of thinking really fits a top-notch adventurer. It's very logical." (Breithilde)

I guess that means she deliberately demonstrated her usual behavior in front of Margrave Breithilde, despite conducting herself noble-like when it's necessary.

"However, since another event is still awaiting you, you must do your best, Katia-san." (Breithilde)

"There's still more to come?" (Katia)

"Katia-san, is it fine for you to not have your marriage ceremony?" (Breithilde)

Margrave Breithilde pointed out that there's still the important event of her getting married left.

"Now that you mention it, that's true! But, we can do without being so flashy about it..." (Katia)

Even if Katia might be a daughter of the Eulenberg House, it's impossible to hold a ceremony more extravagant than the one with Elise and the others.

If we did something like that, I would get complaints from Elise grandfather, Cardinal Hohenheim. Besides, it's also a bad idea to cause a stagnation in the development of Lord Eulenberg's and Veithsan's new territory through an excessive burden. If it becomes too luxurious, there will be the danger of those two collapsing.

"Let's see. As result of the dispute over the tunnel, there's no one who doesn't know about the fact that you will marry Earl Baumeister, Katia-san. As you have exhibited your dress to all those, who were invited to the previous opening, I don't think that it's necessary to go at it so flashily." (Breithilde)

Since many nobles were informed about Katia marrying me during today's opening, there's no need to hold a gaudy marriage ceremony.

"Right, Margrave Breithilde-sama?"

As it seems that Katia herself dislikes such a extravagant marriage ceremony, she approved Margrave Breithilde's thoughts.

"However, you also have to consider the fief's population of the Eulenberg territory."

The daughter of the feudal lord is getting married, and moreover the other party is their new patron who prepared a new territory for them.

There's no need to be especially flashy, but preparing a marriage ceremony at the lowest scale was the duty of a feudal lord.

"That's true. Even my family holds important family ceremonies on a reasonable scale..." (Erwin)

"It's the same in Mizuho, too." (Haruka)

Erw and Haruka agreed with Margrave Breithilde.

"As my home is in the sticks, it might be rude to say so, but there are many people looking forward to important family ceremonies among those living in rural territories." (Erwin)

"That also applies to Mizuho. It's an opportunity to celebrate and it's also possible to drink some sake." (Haruka)

There's little entertainment in rural areas. Thus there are many anticipating those few occasions to party to their heart's content.

It's a kind of amusement, and thus they usually save their money living frugally in preparation for those events.

Since Erw originally hails from a rural territory, he could sympathize with such circumstances well. As Mizuho is resembling Japan, they might cherish important family events.

"Since they followed the relocation of the territory, you have to marry while holding a proper ceremony."

"It's the duty of the lord's daughter. It will also give the Eulenberg territory's residents a peace of mind if they are shown the marriage between Wend-sama and Katia." (Wilma)

Indeed.

No matter how much effort Lord Eulenberg and Veith-san are putting into it, the fief's population should be uneasy on a new plot of land with no people living in the vicinity yet.

It's necessary to demonstrate to them, who are clearing huge fields from scratch, that they can expect the support of the Earl Baumeister House after their lord's daughter married into it.

"For nobles, marriage is a part of their job. The residents of the Waigel territory, who watched my ceremony with Wendelin-san, felt relieved, I believe." (Katharina)

As the Waigel House, Katharina's home, had just relocated to a new territory on top of it being right after the house's revival, there was no way for the residents to not feel anxious.

I suppose, with mine and Katharina's marriage ceremony in front of their eyes at that time, they felt reassured after once again confirming... 『It will be alright since the Earl Baumeister House will support us』.

"It's just as Katharina-san says. A marriage between nobles is a duty and also a job."

We agreed with Margrave Breithilde's statement.

Whatever he might say, he also had five...or was it six wives?

Anyway, he had many wives.

And yet it's amazing that it's said there's too few for a Margrave.

With even marriage being work, nobles sure don't have it easy, I ended up thinking.

"No matter what kind of reasons there might be, there are many noble couples who trust and love each other while living together happily. Katia-san, it would be great if you could reach a mutual understanding with Wendelin-sama from now on. Just like me." (Elise)

Elise makes a sound argument at the crucial moment.

Moreover, she admitted that she's currently happy as my wife since she has a very good marital relationship with me.

If such things are said unskillfully, they sound false, but Elise's way of saying so with a smile makes anyone believe that it's really the case.

As a matter of fact I also believe that it's great for me to have been able to marry Elise. I love her as my wife, but as might be expected of her authority as first wife, or rather you might say it's because she's a person of character.

...Thinking of such things, am I slightly rebellious?

"That's right, isn't it? There aren't overly many cases where romance between married couples sprouts right at the beginning. What matters is how much of a good relationship one builds after the marriage."

Haruka, who's going to marry Erw, energetically expressed her approval of Elise's words.

"Umm...if I'm not mistaken, it was a discussion about Katia-san's marriage ceremony, but...well, I have also been happy with my marriage to Wendelin-san. I haven't heard about Katia-san having any particular complaints either..." (Katharina)

Because of Katharina's readjustment of the topic, everyone's looks gathered on Katia who was still flapping the hem of her dress while saying that it's hot.

"If my husband were to be a born high-ranking noble, we wouldn't match each other since our upbringing would be much too different, but if Earl Baumeister-sama becomes my husband, I won't have any complaints. Above all, he won against me." (Katia)

"That part is the most important to you, isn't it? Katia, are you possibly a battle junkie?" (Ina)

"Ina, please don't start such rumors!" (Katia)

Katia, who had the doubt about her being a battle junkie which became apparent a little ago pointed out by Ina, denied it with all her might.

"No, that's not what I meant. I'm also fairly strong as an adventurer, right? That means I might end up going full power during small fights...even though things may appear like this, I do worry about my opponents."

"I wonder what to think about using your full power during small matrimonial quarrels..."

"A horrible tragedy."

Luise and Wilma pull the rag under Katia's feet by saying that she might one-sidedly beat a weak husband black and blue in case of a matrimonial quarrel.

"No matter how much you quarrel with Wend-sama, I don't think that he will resort to magic."
(Wilma)

"Indeed...I think that you have some misunderstandings about married life, Katia."

"Really? The married adventurer couple I know..." (Katia)

There shouldn't be that many couples whose matrimonial quarrels turn into actual battle. I believe, normally it's limited to a verbal argument, but Katia's acquaintances seem to be different. Or rather, seeing as each of their quarrels turn into battles, they are certainly a dangerous couple.

"Please feel relieved, Katia-san. Wendelin-sama isn't such a violent person." (Elise)

It's as Elise says.

Or rather, did I actually fight with Elise and the others after getting married to them?

"Wend is only really fussy about his food preferences." (Ina)

Ina, that sounds as if my gluttony is the only thing sticking out...

"Even if you start worrying about those matters now of all times, there's no point. Katia-san, it's your marriage ceremony, but I think it'll be fine if you invite a few guests to the new Eulenberg territory. After all your real debut has finished with the formal opening of the tunnel."

The Eulenberg House became a vassal of the Baumeister House, but they are still vassals of the Margrave Breithilde House, too.

I guess it'll be fine to just invite those related to those two houses from the outside.

"Earl Baumeister, aren't you forgetting a house?"

"Is that so?" (Wendelin)

"Which territory is the closest to the new Eulenberg territory?"

"Ah, my parents' home!" (Wendelin)

As a matter of fact, the noble territory closest to the new Eulenberg territory is my parents' home, the Baumeister Knightdom.

By the way, I previously asked Hermann to try help out the Eulenberg House as much as he can. If there's some big problem, then the Earl Baumeister House must deal with it, but it's more efficient and convenient to entrust the normal, miscellaneous issues to my parents' home as a fellow Knight peerage.

And, there are plans to have both houses expand together by increasing the assistance towards my parents' home as payback.

"Then we have to invite Hermann and his folks, too."

"Fellow neighboring territories inviting each other to important family ceremonies will strengthen their bonds. It will also be great if they can tie their relationship through marriage sooner or later."

That's another reason why I have to get Hermann to participate in the marriage ceremony.

"If it's that, let's visit them for greetings ahead of time."

"That's a nice idea."

Ina supported Elise's suggestion, resulting in us going to depart to the Baumeister Knightdom. Before that I decide to drop off the busy Margrave Breithilde in Baulburg with 『Teleportation』.

"Say, hubby." (Katia)

"Is there anything wrong, Katia?" (Wendelin)

"Is it okay for me to change out of this dress before going to your parents' home?" (Karia)

"Sure. My parents' home is located quite deeply in the sticks, after all." (Wendelin)

She will wear the dress again during the marriage ceremony anyway. Today we're just going to privately extend our greetings.

There are no paved roads in the Baumeister Knightdom. Thus they are always wearing clothes that are easy to move in since all traveling happens by foot.

Also, Hermann might get surprised if he suddenly sees Katia in her dress.

I'm saying this, but the people of the Baumeister Knightdom aren't really accustomed to such things.

"Hubby, you're quite the reasonable guy, aren't you?" (Katia)

"Is it something so delightful?" (Wendelin)

"I dislike this dress 'cause it's hard to move in it." (Katia)

"I see. I guess you're the same as me." (Wendelin)

I'm also bad with noble attires since I haven't been born as high-ranking noble to begin with either. I can understand Katia's feelings quite well.

"We might actually get along well." (Katia)

Katia said after swiftly changing into her usual attire, and I agree with her opinion.

* * *

"I see. I guess the number of your wives is going to grow again, Wend." (Hermann)

"Yes. Are you jealous?" (Wendelin)

"Whether I am or not...I have already plenty of difficulty with my two wives." (Hermann)

We headed to the Baumeister Knightdom with 『Teleportation』, and I introduced Katia to Hermann.

The speed of news spreading is slow, but even the Baumeister Knightdom is up to date on the details of the tunnel dispute. Although I mentioned that I will take Katia as wife, my brother wasn't surprised.

"Are you going to invite us to the ceremony as well? That's really appreciated." (Hermann)

There are many people in the Baumeister Knightdom who have never left the territory so far. It looks like even Hermann is looking forward to being able to go to the Eulenberg territory for the marriage.

"I guess we have to prepare some celebratory gifts."

"Indeed."

Hermann's wife, Marlene, and Jutta-san, the daughter of a certain Baron, who had become his new concubine, seem very happy about having been invited to a marriage ceremony by another noble. Jutta-san is the non-blood-related daughter of a certain Baron, or rather Baron Feinen, but it looks like she has lived in a city until her marriage. It doesn't appear that she's overly worried about country life, but she's glad to be able to go outside the territory.

"On that account, I wonder whether I can't have you help out in the Eulenberg territory a little bit before the ceremony."

Different from the Eulenberg House that didn't have any awareness of other nobles, the Knight Baumeister House owned a minimal amount of aristocratic thinking. Accordingly I asked Hermann whether he can assist them if there's anything lacking in order for the marriage ceremony to succeed.

"Us? I don't really mind, but...hey Marlene, Jutta." (Hermann)

"Yes...however, even we aren't in any position to tell other people to do this or that, or rather...isn't it fine if you keep it at the same scale as Amalie-san's marriage ceremony?" (Marlene)

"Helping with the marriage ceremony, it is? Understood." (Jutta)

Jutta-san doesn't know, but Hermann and Marlene are conscious of the Knight Baumeister House being situated at a very low rank as nobility. They are probably thinking that they don't have such an exaggerated social standing allowing them to teach other nobles.

"It's actually the contrary."

"Is that so, Erwin-kun?"

"Indeed... Right, Katia?" (Erwin)

"Leaving it to just the Eulenberg House will very likely end in failure...the least noble-like part would be to know that they must hold that ceremony, but whether they are aware of that..." (Katia)

If we leave it in their hands, it might end up becoming something like a farmer's marriage ceremony. There's no way for the current Eulenberg House to organize a marriage ceremony befitting nobles.

It means I'd like the to guide the Eulenberg House towards preparing a Knight Baumeister House-styled 『Minimal Noble-like』 ceremony.

"I got the circumstances. But, for there to be someone lower than us..." (Hermann)

"Dear." (Marlene)

"Truly, this is quite startling, isn't it?" (Katia)

Marlene chided Hermann who badmouthed the Eulenberg House in front of Katia. However, given that Katia knew about the un-noble-like parts of her home better than anyone else, she not only didn't mind it at all, but actually agreed with Hermann.

"You're a woman able to befriend others quickly, aren't you?" (Hermann)

"Right?" (Katia)

As my brother says, Katia's good points are her being easy to talk with and her friendliness. Come to think of it, she has many acquaintances among the adventurers, too.

"Now that it has come to this, you just have to go to the Eulenberg territory beforehand and help out. While at it, they are your neighbors, so I suppose you should take some gifts with you."

"Makes sense. Having said that, our main local products are honey, honey liquor and bears."

"Bears?"

I knew that they are in the middle of expanding their honey and honey liquor production, but I wasn't aware of bears being a local product. Certainly, I could agree with wyvern and flying dragon materials being their special local products, after taking over the dismantling of the prey that was hunted by dragon hunter parties other than Golf-san.

"The higher the number of bee hives, the more bears are lured in by those. It's just a reuse of the killed bears."

It looks like they can sell the processed bear meat and fur, as well as the bears' gall as ingredient for medicine.

"Honey liquor is just the right stuff to drink at the ceremony."

"Isn't it? Booze is indispensable on such occasions. Seeing as it's a rare invitation, we will prepare a somewhat larger share of it."

"Thank you very much, brother." (Wendelin)



The preparatory arrangements of the marriage ceremony itself finished right away. The rest is just Marlene and the others entering the the Eulenberg territory a few days before the ceremony to teach the Eulenberg House the necessary things while helping with the preparations.

"Uncle."

"Uncle Wendelin."

Since it took some time for that to finish, my nephews joined us, and played together with us by fishing at streamlets and eating with everyone. Once I tell the stories about the civil war in the Empire as I fish, especially Leon as boy listened to my stories with his eyes sparkling. The girl Klara chats with the female camp while eating the sweets prepared by Elise and the others. Even though she's still quite young, she's considerably levelheaded since she's a girl. Actually there's a third boy who was born during the civil war, but given that he's still a baby, he couldn't play around with us.

"I wonder, Leon, Klara, are you going to participate in the ceremony?"

"Yes."

"It's the first time for me to leave the territory." (Klara)

"Uncle Wendelin, me too. I'm really looking forward to it!" (Leon)

Not just those two. There's almost no child of the Baumeister Knightdom that has left the territory. That's why they are excessively looking forward to departing to the Eulenberg territory.

"Being able to look forward to something is very joyful, but as they only moved to that territory recently, my parents' home has nothing of interest, you know?" (Katia)

Katia looked apologetically at the two.

"Since we have to go shopping before the ceremony, I will take you along to Breitburg and Baulburg." (Wendelin)

"Really, uncle?" (Leon)

"Really?" (Klara)

"Yeah, I promise." (Wendelin)

""Yahoooooo!""

Learning that they will be able to go to a city for the first time, Leon and Klara were very happy.

If it finished at this point, it would be a truly great story, but an unexpected person made a bombshell announcement at this point.

"If it's like that, I will let you ride a magic car next time." (Elise)

"Magic car; what kind of vehicle is that, Aunt Elise?"

"It's a vehicle that will boost your mood if you ride it as it's very fast." (Elise)

"I'd like to ride it!" (Leon)

"Me too!" (Klara)

"In that case I will drive as well." (Haruka)

Haruka, who had stayed silent until then, announces that she will drive a magic car, resulting in a revival of the nightmare from a few days ago.

It seems those two aimed for an opportunity allowing them to legitimately drive a magic car.

"Elise, the travel to the Eulenberg territory will be fine as long as there's 『Teleportation』." (Wendelin)

"Haruka-san, that method will also keep the travel time short..." (Erwin)

Erw and I earnestly tried to stop their reckless action.

I have already grasped the location of both territories. Since I have traveled there with 『Teleportation』 many times, there's no need to unreasonably use magic cars.

Or rather, I cannot afford to let my still young, pure nephew and niece experience that tragedy. I couldn't do something so pitiful as planting a trauma into the hearts of little children.

"Uncle, I'd like to try riding a magic car." (Leon)

"Me too." (Klara)

However, without knowing anything, the two were full of happiness over being able to ride an unknown vehicle. Or rather, if I don't allow them to ride a magic car here, I will end up becoming a villain.

"Wendelin, is that magic car dangerous? Our children are still small, so something dangerous would be..." (Hermann)

"No, basically it's safe." (Wendelin)

"Basically?" (Hermann)

To the bitter end it's limited to the case of driving it normally.

Anyone should be able to do something like that, but unfortunately it was a difficult matter for two people who had been possessed by the devil called speed.

Since Leon and Klara are going to be on board, they will drive them normally while taking the

children into consideration...something like that doesn't apply, does it? ...If we limit it to those two.

"Then, Ina and Luise will drive..."

"I want to drive."

"Umm...Elise-san..."



"Dear, I want to drive." (Elise)

"...Okay..." (Wendelin)

"Ah, me too." (Haruka)

"(Haruka, too? Or rather, they want to drive so much?)"

Her tone was as usual, but I succumb to Elise's intensity that doesn't allow any objection. I would end up preparing the magic cars.

Haruka joins in as well, spelling mine and Erw's doom.

Moreover, Ina and the others ran away at once so that they wouldn't have to suffer.



And then, several days later, we became victims of Elise's and Haruka's speed contest, but...yeah, there's nothing Erw and I need to say. Certainly it's not like I couldn't accompany the young children...

"Uncle, it was really fast." (Leon)

"I want to ride again!" (Klara)

"Eh? Really?" (Wendelin)

Leon and Klara rode the magic cars as it couldn't be helped, but after arriving and getting off, the two smiled all over their faces, obviously having enjoyed it very much.

Me and Erw? We managed to learn that we won't get used to something like this. My condition is slightly...

"Are you truly alright?" (Wendelin)

"Yes, I had lots of fun." (Leon)

"It was fun." (Klara)

"(And yet even Luise is no good with this...)"

I was simply astonished by the children's sturdiness.

"Uncle, Erwin-san, let's go on a 『Drive』 together again."

"I would love to drive once more together with uncle."

"...Ahaha, sure...together with Erw as well (you think I will let you get away?)" (Wendelin)

"I'm looking forward to it. Now I will also be able to sleep much more comfortably at night..."

I remember how my body trembled after I learned that I would have to ride a magic car driven by Elise in the near future again.

* * *

"You've prepared really well, haven't you...?"

On the day of the marriage ceremony many tables were lined up in the garden of the feudal lord's mansion located within the Eulenberg territory. A great amount of dishes that had been prepared by the women were placed on top of them. And in addition plenty of alcohol has been provided, too. The great amount of alcohol is for the sake of the residents who can't drink it usually, no matter how much the Baumeister Knightdom expands its honey liquor production. That means today is a huge chance for them.

The last few days, the women of the Eulenberg territory, the women who came here from the Baumeister Kingdom in advance, Elise's group, and also Amelie, who I called as reinforcement, helped out.

"Since the Baumeister Knightdom's marriage ceremony is the criterion here, around this much should be fine? What do you think, Amelie-san?"

"As I was in the position of being congratulated back then, I had my hands full with conducting myself amiably and my memory about is vague, you know? It might be better to ask Marlene-san, who did the preparations." (Amalie)

"I think it's okay like this."

While lining up food and booze atop the tables, Marlene and Amalie chatted while recalling their own marriage ceremonies.

If it's a noble house with a history, that house has its own, unique traditions and ways of doing things, thus there's a manual being passed on, but I guess it's difficult to ask the Knight Baumeister House for something like that.

"The dessert was very extravagant. The alcohol, too."

"Since the honey production is going well, I brought plenty of honey liquor and honey-based sweets. Because it's a perfect opportunity, we will advertise it to the people of the Eulenberg territory to get them to buy these goods. After all we will be neighbors from now on." (Marlene)

Marlene placed lots of honey-based sweets and honey liquor on the table.

She wants to connect it to a future business by having the residents of the Eulenberg territory taste those during the wedding ceremony.

You might say the Knight Baumeister House has changed drastically in comparison to the past, seeing how they have become able to come up with such ideas.

"The special product of the Eulenberg territory are potatoes, right?"

"They are called maroimo. It's very delicious."

"That means the other side is going to appeal their own special product to us, too. Our residents might buy maroimo since the money they have available for free use has increased in comparison to the past."

Marlene looks at the sweets and dishes using maroimo, which have been lined up on another table. She had an expression that made it clear that she would eat them. Women like potatoes after all.

"They have also been researching cooking methods, haven't they?"

"The majority of that...is the idea of Wend-kun and his friends."

"My younger brother-in-law has many parts that don't befit a high-ranking noble, hasn't he...?"
(Marlene)

"But, he ends up doing amazing things when it counts." (Amalie)

Just as Marlene and Amalie talked about such things, Katia came out of the mansion while dressed up in preparation for the marriage ceremony. Next Elise and the others, who helped with the fitting and make-up, show up.

"Oh man, I'm hungry."

"Hey! The bride shouldn't snatch food!"

Wearing 『the most luxurious dress since the territory's founding (provided by me)』 according to Lord Eulenberg and Veith-san, Katia had make-up applied and accessories chosen by Elise and the others added to her outfit. Given that she was a beautiful girl with a doll-like appearance to begin with, the fief's population, who saw her, leaked sighs of admiration. But as soon as the person herself was scolded by Ina for trying to snatch food from the tables, those voices of admiration stopped all at once. They were probably reminded that it's the usual Katia.

"Milady, it can't be helped, since it's Katia-sama we're talking about here."

"Yeah, yeah, because she has dressed herself up like some princess today, I fell for a hallucination for a moment there."

"That's how she normally acts anyway."

"Yeah, yeah!"

That means the lord's family and the fief's population are on good terms in the Eulenberg territory, and they are all well aware that Katia is a tomboy.

"You guys, at least treat me like a princess for today!" (Katia)

"Katia-sama, we will do so during the ceremony, but otherwise..."

"I think the bride isn't allowed to snatch food then, don't you think? It's bad manners."

"Shut it!" (Katia)

Katia, who had the food snitching pointed out to her, yelled, but all the residents laughed. They speak poorly of her, but it's obvious that everyone is celebrating Katia's marriage.

"What about dad and brother?" (Katia)

"They have gone to meet the priest."

Veith-san's fiancée, Marita, informed Katia.

Since the wedding ceremony is going to start soon, they went to call for the priest who's going to run the ceremony.

"We're not going to hold the ceremony in a church?" (Luise)

"Milady, we still don't have a church."

"I see." (Luise)

One of the residents answered Luise's question.

As the Eulenberg territory had just relocated, the church is still under construction.

Even when completed, the church wouldn't be able to accommodate all participants of the wedding ceremony anyway.

Accordingly it was decided to hold the ceremony in the garden of the mansion.



"Hic! Today is a very happy day."

"Priest, you already drunken?"

"Everyone, I just checked whether 『God's Water』, which will be used for the ceremony, isn't spoiled."

"I think you checked it a bit too much."

""Ahahahaha!""

It was scheduled for the marriage ceremony to be carried out at the same scale as taught by the

Knight Baumeister House, but some parts were also traditions handed down over many generations by the Eulenberg House.
Offering alcohol as something like 『God's Water』 should be one those traditions in the Eulenberg territory.

"Erw-san, it's not necessary to sample it, right?" (Haruka)

"Isn't it because he simply wanted to drink some booze?" (Erwin)

"Eh!? He's a priest, isn't he?"

"I think there are fairly many lenient priests in such rural areas..."

Fruits and vegetables harvested in the Eulenberg territory, the resident's homemade alcohol, and maroimo as centerpiece were offered on a small altar.
Given that there are no rules for offerings in the capital's church, this might be a local rule performed in the Eulenberg territory and other rural territories.

"There's no problem with drinking alcohol after the ceremony...is nothing I can officially say, but I'd like him to at least hold back on drinking before the ceremony." (Elise)

The serious Elise gave her honest opinion about the lax priest, who drank the offering sake in the name of verifying it.

"Now, now. Today is a joyous occasion."

"Let's keep it lax at times."

"It's necessary to take a breather in life!"

At that point Margrave Breithilde, Burkhart-san, and Doushi, who were invited as part of the few outsiders, soothed Elise skillfully.

"Uncle-sama?"

"The rules of the land apply on the land! Since I also traveled to various places in my youth, I learned that!" (Armstrong)

"It's different if they were to offer sacrifices, but offering alcohol on the altar, and the priest having drunk a bit from it is nothing of significance," Doushi with his abundant experience said to Elise while laughing.

"Let's start soon then?"

"The maroimo offering is perfect, too."

"True. There's plenty of honey liquor, too."

Lord Eulenberg, Veith-san and Hermann gathered, and the marriage ceremony for Katia and me

started at last.

The priest, who wore a slightly battered priest garb, stands in front of the altar, and begins to pray to god.

"Oh God watching over us in heaven, I call upon thee to report about these lambs becoming married from now on."

Somewhat it doesn't really look like a ground-breaking ceremony, but I decide to not mind it as this is a local difference, too.

This priest belongs to the Catholic church, for better or worse. Since there's also no talk about him being trouble according to the information gathering by Cardinal Hohenheim at the time of the tunnel dispute, he must be a person who's obedient to the church's headquarter and easy to deal with.

However, since his family has held the priest role in the Eulenberg territory for many generations, he never went to the capital either.

It's because he apparently settles all the important, church-related matters at the Breitburg branch without going to the capital.

With those circumstances in mind, he probably hasn't been infected by the headquarter's strictness.

"Well then...uhum! Wendelin von Benno Baumeister, do you swear to love Katia von Eulenberg as your wife for your entire life?"

"Yes, I swear." (Wendelin)

"Katia von Eulenberg, do you swear to love Wendelin von Benno Baumeister as your husband for your entire life?"

"Yes, I swear." (Katia)

I cannot help thinking, 『How many times makes that, including the ceremonies with Elise and my other wives?』, but after we made our vow to the priest, Katia and I bring our faces close and try to kiss each other.

"(Ah——I'm nervous since I'm inexperienced.)" (Katia)

Katia whispered such an ill-fitting line, but I harbored a good impression of her.

I sympathized with the parts of her that don't suit a noble at all despite being one, just like me.

"Katia-sama, since this happens only once in your life, be quiet."

"After all she's pretty as long as she stays silent."

As the residents of the Eulenberg territory think so as well, they hurl quite the terrible jeering at her, considering that they are talking to a noble, but I understood well that they simultaneously worried whether Katia would be able to finish the wedding ceremony properly.

After the vowing kiss, I put the wedding ring, which I had prepared, on her finger, and the ceremony ended without any incident.

"The two have safely become husband and wife. All that's left is to freely drink and eat."

"What a non committal ceremony..."

"It's better than making it strangely long. I'm hungry."

"It's certainly true that I'm hungry as well, but..."

Katharina tentatively gave her frank opinion towards the priest who made the ceremony finish in a flash and then blurts out that the rest will be happy drinking and eating with everyone, which would be impossible to hear from a priest of the capital.

While harboring the view that such a privately-held marriage ceremony is fine being fairly carefree, Wilma starts eating the dishes lined up on the tables.

In preparation for this day, the ingredients had been prepared by the Knight Baumeister House and the Eulenberg House, and then cooked by the women starting early in the morning.

All the residents of the Eulenberg territory, and the volunteer attendees from the Baumeister Knightdom are participating. All of them are eating the dishes and drinking the alcohol while happily mingling with each other.

"Pheeeeww, I'm starving." (Katia)

"Katia, the greetings come first." (Luise)

Katia was trying to eat the food as one of the very first despite being the bride, but Luise prevented that by remonstrating her.

"There will be time for eating later. It's wrong to not let the other people enjoy the food properly. Your dress will get dirty, too."

"I know, Amalie-san."

Being stopped by Amalie with the argument that her dress will get stained by sauces and similar, Katia, who hasn't eaten anything since this morning in preparation for the ceremony, reveals a displeased expression for an instant, but she immediately hides that, and goes to greet Margrave Breithilde.

"Katia-dono, congratulations to your marriage." (Breithilde)

"Thank you very much. Sorry for causing you troubles the other day." (Katia)

While replying to Margrave Breithilde's congratulatory words, she apologized for the matter with the tunnel once more.

"Well, now that it has finished, I feel that it might have been fairly enjoyable." (Breithilde)

Next she tried to greet the people from outside the Eulenberg territory who had been invited to the wedding ceremony, but since the official position flagged it as a private ceremony, there was no important person except for Hermann present.

Even Hermann was probably exhausted from helping with the various preparations. He ate 『Candied Sweet Potato』 made out of maroimo all by himself.

This is a recipe I taught to Elise and the others.

In order to make the outside crunchy, I use sugar as ingredient, but by combining it with the special product of the Baumeister Knightdom, we prepared a large amount of candied sweet potatoes that used honey today.

The residents of both territories are eating the dish while looking satisfied.

"Hermann." (Wendelin)

"Ooh! Congrats, Wendelin. Having many wives is difficult, isn't it?" (Hermann)

"Yes, well..." (Wendelin)

"Be that as it may, this dish called 『Candied Sweet Potato』 is wonderful. I have trouble deciding whether it's a main dish, a side dish or a dessert. Also, the dish's name." (Hermann)

Since I didn't come up with a name suitable for this world, Elise and the other spread it around while I still called it 『Candied Sweet Potato』.

I worried whether to simply call it 『Honey Potato』, but I felt like it lacked impact.

"Oops, Veith-san and I were busy." (Hermann)

"Eh? Busy?"

"Margrave Breithilde-dono has brought along the heads of big companies in Breitburg and merchants from the surrounding territories. Since the regular service of the magic airship has just started here recently, there are talks about selling honey and honey liquor. There was a suggestion to add maroimo to this as well, but maroimo has the issue of its low production rate." (Hermann)

After he explained this, Hermann started business discussions with many merchants together with Veith-san.

They are chatting while enjoying the food and alcohol.

"Veith-sama, does it seem possible to increase the maroimo production output?"

"It will take some time, but since Earl Baumeister-dono carried the soil over, it will be fine as long as its numbers close to the produced amount so far." (Veith)

"As expected of Earl Baumeister-sama."

One of the merchants praised my magic.

"That's wonderful...is what I'd like to say, but recently I'm troubled because I can't obtain sweet maroimo."

"We're in the process of beginning cultivation while imitating the Eulenberg territory, but they aren't really all that sweet."

The merchants desire the native maroimo of the Eulenberg territory with its good quality. It looks like other nobles are trying to earn some money by imitating the Eulenberg House, but it's difficult to get the maroimo to be sweet.

Without them being fairly sweet, the merchants wouldn't buy them for much either.

"This 『Candied Sweet Potato』 dish is great."

"It's deliciousness is excellent even without the maroimo being that sweet."

"I guess honey will sell as well, if we do it like this. Even though it's the sale of ingredients, it's a good method to introduce the art of cooking together with the ingredients."

The merchants were full of praise due to the many types of desserts and dishes using maroimo and honey, which were enjoyed by the participants of the wedding ceremony. And they apparently understood that their ingredients might sell well if they advertise that they're delicious by cooking them like this during the sales time.

"It's Earl Baumeister-dono's suggestion."

"Nothing less of Earl Baumeister-sama, who's said to be fussy about food."

The merchants said in admiration while talking with Veith-san. Or rather, it looks like I'm regarded as man who's fussy about food without me being aware of it.

"Eh? Is it that surprising for you? Going by the rumors I heard, you're extremely fond of tasty, unusual food; you develop new recipes; and you're merciless towards disgusting food." (Katia)

And here I'm just aiming for the same food as when I was still in Japan...

If a high-ranking noble does something like this, it results in exaggerated assessments such as it being the birth of a new food culture, huh?

Also, it's not that I'm particularly merciless towards disgusting food.

After all I will just never eat it again, without going as far as eliminating it physically through my authority.

"Rumors are truly frightening."

Rumors like this spread about me at places I don't know of.

"Because it looks like brother is busy, I will spare myself the greetings, I think." (Katia)

"Is that fine?"

"I mean, if I go to greet him now, I will be surrounded by merchants." (Katia)

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

Katia's opinion is very reasonable and thus I obediently agreed with it. I might get girls pushed on me again.

"Hubby, maybe it's enough with the greetings for now?" (Katia)

"Certainly..." (Wendelin)

It should be Katia's and my wedding, but it feels like the participants are already doing whatever they please.

"Puhaaa——! As usual the honey liquor from the Baumeister Knightdom is really great stuff!"

"Being able to drink during daytime is the best!"

"My words. It's been a great idea to have come here today."

Burkhart-san, Doushi, and Margrave Breithilde were already fully drunk from the honey liquor. It's the same with the residents of the Eulenberg territory. And even the people from the Baumeister Knightdom happily got drunk on homemade alcohol made out of maroimo.

"What a prime example of useless adults."

"Isn't it sometimes alright as long as it's on such occasions?"

After all Margrave Breithilde appears to be normally troubled with plenty of work. Doushi is...busy in his own ways, I suppose. I mean, he is actually the royal palace's Head Magician.

"Elise-sama, another serving please." (Wilma)

"Here you go. There's still plenty left." (Elise)

The women and children enjoyed the sweets and dishes they had prepared themselves. The children of the Eulenberg territory were engrossed with the unusual food they can't eat normally.

"There's a lot, even if you don't hurry, okay?"

Ina and the others also help out in setting the table for the children.

"I wonder whether we can make those sweets, too?"

"As long as you have the ingredients. The recipe is..."

Being asked about the method how to make the sweets by the women of the Eulenberg territory, Haruka carefully taught them.

"I guess I will have the confectionery of an acquaintance try making them as well next time."

And there are also merchants who think of new business fields while watching all that. It gradually looked less and less like a wedding ceremony.



"Hey hubby, this is a wedding ceremony?" (Katia)

"Isn't it fine like this? We did what was necessary. As long as everyone has fun, it's alright."
(Wendelin)

"That makes sense." (Katia)

Since the ceremony has already ended, Katia also adopted the stance that it's fine as long as everyone enjoys themselves.

While thinking that I really like that simple way of viewing things of her, I end up feeling that Katia looks at everyone with the eyes of an outsider, thinking 『Rather than a wedding ceremony, it actually looks like a festival or an exhibition to advertise the local ingredients』.

Chapter 2 – Honeymoon and Rainbow Jewel

As I yawned long and deeply, "—I slept well."

Three days after I had my wedding ceremony with Katia, I slept together with her since we're now newly-weds, but when I woke up, she wasn't present anymore.

Once I headed over to the living room while wondering whether she was training...

"Good morning, dear master..."

"Eh? Is that some kind of punishment game?"

"Since I've been told by Luise to do it..."

Katia, who wore a black maid attire (NEW version) as waitress, stood next to me, who had his breakfast prepared for him, while looking very embarrassed.

Coupled with her good-looking face, the black maid attire suits Katia very well.

However, although our association hasn't lasted long yet, I'm slowly starting to understand her character to some extent.

Katia wouldn't wear maid clothes by her own choice.

Rather, her personality is such that she would feel ashamed of wearing such an outfit.

"It suits you very well, but Katia, you don't wear this on your own volition, right?"

"I'm happy that you do understand me...hubby." (Katia)

As her embarrassment is gradually growing stronger, Katia's face steadily turns red.

Since she never expected that she would wear maid clothes, she must feel very embarrassed.

"Huh? Have you possibly been bullied?"

Is Luise harassing the newcomer Katia?

Even though I thought that my wives have a good relationship, do I have to give a proper warning here?

"My reputation is sure bad. I wouldn't do something like that." (Luise)

At this point Luise showed up.

Next Ina and the others also enter the room in order to take their breakfast.

"I just thought that maid clothes would suit Katia. And, I felt like wanting to see it." (Luise)

"What undisguised display of your own desires."

"Hahaha, isn't it fine sometimes?" (Luise)

Even upon Ina's sharp remark, Luise honestly stated her thoughts without being perturbed at all.

"While I also had such an objective, there's a reason why I came up with this. Wend, aren't you going to take Katia on a honeymoon soon?" (Luise)

"Now that you mention it, I completely forgot." (Wendelin)

"You're really hopeless, aren't you?" (Luise)

I was busy with the wedding ceremony, the bridal night, and the newly-married life...having said that, it's only the third or fourth day at most, but...I entirely forgot about it.
In reality I actually worked hard at public works and Roderich's requests during the day.

『Milord, since the night is free, even a newly-wed life is no problem.』 (Roderich)

I think Roderich, who assigned the next job to me while saying so with a self-satisfied look, is in a certain way amazing.

"Honeymoon? That's only done by high-ranking nobles and rich people, right? Don't mind me." (Katia)

"Just for your information, Katia you'll become the wife of Earl Baumeister who is such a high-ranking noble."

"Ah, true. It completely slipped my mind." (Katia)

"Don't forget it!"

『Even though you got married to him just three days ago...』, Ina pointed out to Katia.

"Did you guys also go on a honeymoon with hubby?" (Katia)

"The friendship visit to the Empire served as honeymoon at the same time."

That's true, isn't it?

We ended up getting dragged into a civil war in the middle of it, but that was my honeymoon with Elise and the others.

In a certain sense it turned into something we definitely won't forget, though.

"It became a quite long honeymoon, didn't it?"

"It took more than one year."

As Wilma says, if you consider it a honeymoon until you get back home, it's not wrong to say that we had a honeymoon for more than a year in the Empire.

"Therefore, it will be fine if you go out somewhere together with Wend-sama for two or three days." (Wilma)

"That's correct. And that's why maid clothes in anticipation that it would turn out like this."

In the eyes of Katharina and the others, just me and Katia going on a honeymoon should have an enviable, or rather, upsetting side. That means they had some fun by having Katia put on maid clothes instead.

"Be grateful for our broad-mindedness of being allowed to go on a honeymoon with only this much, Katia." (Luise)

"So that's why the embarrassing outfit...? Or rather, the skirt is really short." (Katia)

Given that it's the Japanese Heisei styled maid clothes designed by me, the skirt is short, forcing Katia to walk pigeon-toed out of embarrassment.

"Katia-san, is there any place you'd like to visit?" (Elise)

"Let's see..." (Katia)

Katia pondered for a bit over Elise's question.

"I have gone to quite a few different places in the Kingdom. After all there are also nominated requests." (Katia)

As excellent adventurer Katia is highly valued for being able to defeat wyverns and flying dragons by herself. There were many occasions where she received requests from all over. Hence you can say that she sporadically traveled to all kinds of places.

"There's also the option of going to the Empire, isn't there?"

Even Katia should have never been in the Empire. Believing so, Elise recommended a honeymoon in the Empire to her.

"No, I think it's fine to leave that for later, too. As a matter of fact..." (Katia)

As she finally put her thoughts in order, Katia announced her preferred honeymoon destination to everyone.



"Are you really fine with that?"

"If the person herself says that it's fine, then it should be fine."

"I also think that it's okay as long as Katia is fine with it."

"It sure is unusual."

"Let's respect it since she herself has wished for it."

Such being the case we decided to depart on the honeymoon as Katia had wished on the next day.

* * *

"It's pretty much a weird honeymoon. With me and Haruka-san at the same time." (Erwin)

"I think it suits Katia-san just fine to say that she wants to enjoy it together with everyone."

"I guess that's true as well. It's wonderful since Haruka-san and I can freely hunt, too." (Erwin)

◆◆◆◆◆

The next day we departed to the Demon Forest with Teleportation.

The honeymoon Katia had wished for was to freely spend around three days to hunt in the Demon Forest as adventurer.

Moreover, the members aren't just Katia and me, but the usual lineup of Elise, Ina, Luise, Wilma, Katharina, Erw, and Haruka.

Or rather, a honeymoon with such a big number of people...last time it was the same as well though.

"Is it okay for us to participate, too?"

"Well, look, even I think that I might still not have interacted with you guys enough. I considered about going with just hubby as married couple, but since we're going to live together for a long time to come, I think it might be better to have some fun here with everyone." (Katia)

I see, so this is what you'd call a cheerful and active character.

I could fully understand the reason why Katia has many acquaintances and work friends.

I'm not as bad as Katharina, but since I'm closer to a gloomy and plain character, I feel that Katia is amazing.

Moreover, the aspect that Katia is capable of realizing this without any sly calculative motives is probably based on her being a positive character.

"So, what's the other objective?" (Luise)

"Hahaha, I guess you have seen through me, Luise. Actually I never visited the Demon Forest." (Katia)

Katia usually only received requests to quickly subjugate wyverns and flying dragons that appeared close to human habitations.

As she didn't have the time to come to the Demon Forest so far, she apparently considered this to be a good opportunity to do so.

Her not only taking others into consideration, but also decently fulfilling her own desires is a great skill, I think.

"Somehow it's no different from usual. Though it's convenient for me." (Erwin)

"It's nice to not have to be so formal." (Haruka)

"That's true, Haruka-san." (Erwin)

Erw and Haruka started their honeymoon which they both agreed upon as being a good choice.

"We have to first get an inn."

"The greetings to the guild first."

"Ah, true."

Ina looked as if agreeing with Wilma's input.

I'm the feudal lord of this land, but it was decided that I wouldn't receive any special treatment while I'm active as adventurer. Since the guild will become flustered if we hunt as we please without greeting them, it's better to get that out of the way first.

"It looks like a new building is under construction."

"The first shack hit its limit in handling the increasing number of adventurers."

"Certainly, it's overflowing with people..."

Many people, even outside, crowded the adventurer guild's Demon Forest branch that's located in the center of the restaurant district of the inn town catered towards adventurers.

The Demon Forest, which allows one to earn money by collecting materials, has become a popular spot among adventurers. The number of adventurers staying in the Demon Forest was gradually increasing.

The adventurer guild, which manages them and buys the collected materials and monster materials, has become busy in proportion to that. At the same time it became impossible to carry out all tasks in the initial shack.

A new building was in the middle of construction in the plot right next to the current building, but since it still hasn't been finished, they created temporary reception desks outside for the staff members to deal with the adventurers.

"It sure is packed. Just as rumored."

"Rumors?"

"Hubby, you don't know? It's commonly talked about between adventurers that you can earn good

money in the Demon Forest. Since I heard that there are many unusual things and materials to collect, I got interested as well, you know?" (Katia)

"Hm——m, I see." (Wendelin)

Nevertheless, I think Katia is quite unusual for picking hunting and collecting in the Demon Forest as honeymoon, but meeting the expectations of one's wife is a husband's duty, too. After all it's not like she's asking for anything unreasonable either.

"Wend, there's someone who's really delighted."

"Eh?"

At the end of Ina's look a young man was happily talking with a guild member at one of the reception desks set up outside while being excited.

"Luckily I got a rainbow jewel."

"Congratulations. We will buy it for a large amount of money."

"Sorry, but I will take this home. I'm going to marry soon, so I will turn this into a ring and give it as present."

"I'm sure your lover will be pleased with that."

"Even among the daughters of royalty and nobility there are few who possess a rainbow jewel."

The young adventurer took the thing called rainbow jewel...well, going by its name, there's no doubt about it being a gem...back home without selling it to the guild.

"Elise, do you know anything about a gem called Rainbow Jewel?" (Wendelin)

"No, it's a name I hear for the first time." (Elise)

"So even you don't know about it, huh? ...Excuse me." (Wendelin)

I called out to the guild member who talked with the young adventurer.

"Ah, Earl Baumeister-sama!? It's been quite a long time since our last contact. Are you going to hunt and gather in the Demon Forest?"

As that staff member seemed to know my true identity, he dealt with me politely even while being surprised.

"That's correct, but can I ask you one thing? What's a Rainbow Jewel?" (Wendelin)

"It's a new gem that had been recently discovered in the Demon Forest. To be precise, it's actually not a gem..."

According to the staff member's explanation, a new kind of monster had been found in a certain area of the Demon Forest.

"Even if it's categorized as monster, it's a small squirrel with a total size of around 50 cm, thus it doesn't possess enough strength to harm humans. Instead it's not as easy to catch since it moves at a speed that difficult to track, but the Rainbow Jewel is embedded in the forehead of that squirrel. And because it's very beautiful, it has become popular."

A squirrel monster that moves very fast, but has no fighting strength, eh?
It seems that unknown monsters still exist inside the Demon Forest.

"Was it recorded in the 『Schematic Monster and Produce Encyclopedia』?"

It's not like I read it completely, but I don't have any memory of having seen it mentioned in the old picture book I lent from Margrave Breithilde.

"It wasn't recorded in there. I'm pretty sure since we're possessing an exemplar of it as well. We had Margrave Breithilde-sama give us a copy since we need it as well."

So it's not recorded in the detailed illustrated reference books of the Ancient Magic Civilization either, eh?
Maybe we will discover such unknown monsters and produce from now on, too.

"The scholars in the capital already investigated it, but the Rainbow Jewel seems to not be a jewel."

The squirrel monster originally possessed an eye at the center of its forehead.
That eye degenerated and the eye resin gradually accumulated in the remaining cavity. Once it reached a certain size, it would start shining in rainbow colors. At least that was the theory.

"Oh, so it's originally eye resin."

"It's called popular because even the eye resin is beautiful. However, it's mysterious how it manages to shine in rainbow colors. And there's one more thing."

It's the fact that you have to definitely catch the squirrel unhurt to obtain the Rainbow Jewel.
If one hurts or kills the squirrel, the Rainbow Jewel buried in its forehead turns into a light brown clump, losing any kind of value.
The Rainbow Jewel is probably weak to stress?

"Catching it unhurt, huh?"

"Yes. If you hurt or kill it, the rainbow-colored glittering disappears. You need to carefully remove the Rainbow Jewel from its forehead after catching it. Since the squirrel won't die even if you take the Rainbow Jewel, you can release it without any problems."

A squirrel that had its Rainbow Jewel removed once again amasses eye resin at its forehead over the long period of many months and years.
Once it reaches a certain size again, the whole process repeats itself.

"Many months and years, you say. How long does it take?"

Luise asked the staff member while looking very interested.

"According to the scholars, it takes around one thousand years."

"Wha——! So it's a gem that can only be obtained once every thousand years?"

"The collecting is difficult, too. With such a rare gem, all kinds of royals, nobles and rich people want to get their hands on one."

The purchase price of the guild has steeply risen. The staff member explained that this considerably high number of adventurers being here is owed to the Rainbow Jewel.

"It's not a gold rush, but a Rainbow Jewel rush, eh? The dream of making a fortune at a single stroke has come in sight for them. After all there exist no women that hate gems."

Even in this world many people gather if gold is found, and begin to collect it. That means it's not strange that Erw compares it with a gold rush.

"The majority becomes discouraged on the first day, though."

"Why?"

"It's because the squirrel is abnormally fast. Many people challenge it, probably thinking that they will be able to somehow deal with it no matter how fast it might be. The majority fails at capturing them."

The staff member begins to explain to Wilma about the quickness of the squirrel.

"If you were to describe just how fast it is; most people can't even confirm its appearance even if it's moving close-by. Even if they are capable of confirming it by sight due to a good dynamic vision, it's a different story whether they will actually be able to catch it."

"What about traps?"

"Given that the squirrel isn't just fast, but also clever, there hasn't been a single squirrel that got caught in a trap so far. Besides, it's inside the Demon Forest. It often happens that traps are broken by other monsters."

"That sounds difficult."

Wilma apparently comprehended that it was fairly difficult to capture a squirrel.

"But, it's a rare gem shining in rainbow colors, right? If I'm told something like that, it makes me want one as well."

The part that it's a rare gem desired by all royals and nobles apparently triggered Katharina's greed who obsesses over nobility.

"You know, Katharina..."

"It's easy to imagine what you are going to say, Luise-san, but seeing as you were born as woman, are you someone who hates jewels?" (Katharina)

"It stings if you put it like that. I'm not free of avarice either." (Luise)

Luise apparently wants a Rainbow Jewel as well.

"I wonder, do you have any interest in a Rainbow Jewel, Katia?"

Without putting any particularly deep thoughts into it, Ina asked Katia, whom no one has seen wearing gems so far.

"Gems, eh? Even if I could wear something like that, I never bought any, but since it's my honeymoon right now, I might want one as commemoration if we catch a squirrel." (Katia)

It's not like she's fixated on gems. Katia answered with a feeling of really wanting one as commemoration as it fits the timing.

"A commemoration for having married, huh?"

"As far as I hear, it looks like it's not that simple to catch one, but since we're going to especially enter the forest, it will be fine to give it a try, won't it? If you were to catch one, I'd like to have it as present."

"Sure."

I acknowledged Katia's request.

After the tunnel dispute came to an end, Katia hasn't said anything willful or caused any troubles to us. She also has no greedy character that desires a Rainbow Jewel by all means. Thus, when she casually asked me to give her one as present if I obtain it, I willingly confirmed.

"Let's immediately go to the Demon Forest then."

"Oo——h!"

"Erw, you're quite motivated, aren't you?"

"I will very soon get married to Haruka-san. Hence I want to get my hands on a Rainbow Jewel and give it to her as present."

As far as I've heard, there's no way for a Rainbow Jewel to not be suitable as engagement ring. I guess Erw wants to obtain it by all means.

"First we have to confirm just how fast that squirrel is."

"Having said that, there must certainly be limits to it. I wonder how many gems we're going to obtain?"

Being lured in by Erw's optimism, we entered the Demon Forest.

* * *

"Pweh!" (Erwin)

"Erw-san, are you alright? I will heal you right away." (Elise)

"Sorry, Elise." (Erwin)

We expected it to be easy to obtain at least one.

We arrived at the area indicated by the guild's staff member while harboring such thoughts, but at first we struggled as we couldn't find any squirrels.

No, there was a rustling, and I detected the existence of squirrels with magic.

However, even if I quickly looked in the direction of the detection point, I couldn't confirm the squirrel by sight.

Given that they run away after sensing our presence, I could only sense some small creature moving about, to say nothing of any afterimages.

It's the same for Erw as well, but he ends up doing the unreasonable in his attempt to obtain a Rainbow Jewel as present for Haruka. He was healed by Elise after crashing into a tree where a squirrel had been.

"You really can't see them...they're too fast." (Elise)

"That's probably the reason why they survived in this Demon Forest."

Elise stated her own opinion while casting healing magic on Erw.

The squirrels, who have no strength and small bodies for monsters, have specialized on speed. They likely survived by not being preyed upon by other monsters.

"If they were slightly fast, a lot more Rainbow Jewels should have circulated in society." (Ina)

As Ina says, it could be called rare exactly because it's not readily obtained even by a great number of remarkable adventurers.

"Wend-sama, you could just move quickly with magic." (Wilma)

"I had thought of that as well, but well..." (Wendelin)

If you move as fast or faster than the squirrels by using magic, it will be possible to capture them. Wilma's strategy would be acceptable if it was a plain with no obstacles, but the squirrels' habitat is the Demon Forest.

Many trees and shrubs are growing densely here. If one moves at high speed with magic in the forest, they will likely crash into obstacles.

"You have to quickly move in-between the trees like this."

"I wonder about that..."

As it requires quite a bit of practice to master such a combat style, it would take me years even if started training it from now on.

"If I move around while inexperienced, I will end up like Erw." (Wendelin)

In other words, crashing into a tree and receiving treatment from Elise.

"Magic is convenient. But, as it needs training to master it, it's not like you can do everything with it."

"How regrettable."

Since Wilma is a woman as well, it looks like she's looking forward to possibly receiving a Rainbow Jewel as present as well.

Even in my previous life, my girlfriend told me 『There's no woman that hates jewelry』.

"There's another problem." (Katharina)

Katharina declared that there's another difficulty in obtaining a Rainbow Jewel.

"Another one?" (Wendelin)

"Yes. This place is a prominent area with a dense monster population even on the Lingaia Continent. The reason that they shouldn't disturb us since we came here to get Rainbow Jewels won't work on monsters." (Katharina)

"I guess there was that as well..." (Wendelin)

The monsters of the Demon Forest are very aggressive to begin with.

They should consider small humans that invaded their turf as nothing but fodder.

Once I check the surroundings with Detection, many medium and large sized monsters were closing in on us.

"Get ready for battle." (Wendelin)

Erw, who got healed by Elise, and Haruka become the guards of Elise, who has the lowest fighting strength among us. Ina readies her spear, and Wilma her big ax in preparation for fighting against the monsters.

"If you consider it for a bit, it's the perfect content for the honeymoon that Katia-san had originally requested. We can hunt as many of the Demon Forest's monsters as we like."

"That might be true, but..."

Ten-odd seconds after that we started the battle against a big number of monsters who couldn't

tolerate humans to trespass into their territory.

* * *

"It's a big haul after a long time."

"They were really tenacious. But, I wonder why?"

"This area is the habitat of the squirrels. As there should be many adventurers aiming for the Rainbow Jewels, I don't think that all of them died, but maybe they thought that their regular fodder has come?"

Finishing the battle against the monsters that tried to devour us, we chatted while collecting the prey we defeated into magic bags.

"So that's how it is. Right, this is the Demon Forest after all."

The Demon Forest is a place to earn some money, but at the same time it's a place with a high adventurer fatality rate.

Even so, the stream of adventurers coming here targeting a safe future by getting rich quickly never ceases.

Katharina predicted that as result of the adventurers concentrating on this area for the Rainbow Jewels, the number of monsters targeting them might have increased.

In the eyes of the monsters, weak humans are no more than fodder.

"With this it should be alright for some time. For just a little time, though."

After having defeated this many monsters, they shouldn't appear in such numbers for a few days. However, it not lasting any more than a few days was the reason why this place is called Demon Forest.

"I wonder, did the squirrels run away?"

"No, they have taken a bit of a distance, but there are isolated responses here and there." (Katharina)

Katharina detected several squirrel responses.

The squirrels are close to being the weakest creatures in the Demon Forest. For the other monsters they are simply fodder.

Hence they didn't escape from this area as we exterminated the majority of the monsters around here.

Of course they have taken distance so that they won't be caught by us.

"They are quite smart." (Erwin)

"True, they might be 10,000 times smarter than you, Erw." (Wilma)

"As if I'm below a squirrel! By the way, I can't see Luise and Katia." (Erwin)

"Now that you mention it, you're right. They haven't participated in the previous battle either."
(Haruka)

Erw and Haruka had noticed the absence of Luise and Katia quite a while ago.

"Don't tell me, they were killed by monsters..."

"There's no way for that to be true, is there?"

Even Luise herself is already strong. Katia loses out to Luise in pure fighting strength, but she's the one among us with the longest experience as adventurer. She didn't have a reason to do something unreasonable.

"Where are those two?"

"I'm here." (Luise)

"Me too." (Katia)

I don't think it's because we gossiped about them, but suddenly both of them jumped down from above.

It looks like they silently hid themselves on top of a big tree while we were fighting against the monsters.

"Luise, Katia, did you catch one?"

"It went smoothly." (Luise)

"Me too." (Katia)

Both continued to perform ambushes atop the trees while erasing their presences, and splendidly caught some squirrels that tried to escape after being surprised by the sounds of us flashily fighting against the monsters.

Even with Luise's and Katia's level of agility and quick-wittedness, they only managed to catch the squirrels by performing careful ambushes. That sole weapon of the squirrels, their speed, is sure amazing.

"Oh my, they are cute."

The squirrels held by both were very docile, apparently having resigned themselves to their fate. Considering that they are squirrels, they are rather big, but as they are looking at us with their round and cute eyes, they are very adorable.

"Dear, it ate from my hand." (Elise)

Once Elise held out a nut, the squirrel grabbed it with both hands, and started to eat it with crunching sounds.

"They are truly cute." (Ina)

Ina has given the other squirrel a nut to eat, too. She's spellbound by its cuteness.



"Umm, what about our objective, the Rainbow Jewels?"

"Ah, right. They are just too cute."

"They really have one, a rainbow-colored gem."

The difference between normal squirrels and these squirrels is the rainbow-colored gem sparkling in the middle of the forehead.

The gems have a diameter of 3 cm. Looking at its brilliance, it's understandable that women want a Rainbow Jewel, I think.

I could understand why it's popular as material for accessories.

"We're going to take them, right? It feels slightly pitiable, though."

"It's okay. There will be no harm to the squirrels." (Wilma)



As Wilma says, these Rainbow Jewels are eye resin which accumulated in the hollow of the squirrels' degenerated third eye.

Even if we remove it, it won't have any negative influence on the squirrel. Also, it looks like a Rainbow Jewel of the same size will grow back after 1,000 years.

The basis for the 1,000 years count seems to be the result of an analysis of the Rainbow Jewels by scholars in the capital.

"A millennium...that's a long time for a human. These squirrels appear to live for a long time, though." (Erwin)

"It means that they will live for 1,000 years at least." (Haruka)

Despite being squirrels, their lifespan exceeds 1,000 years. Erw and Haruka slightly admired these squirrels for their definite proof of being monsters.

"Wend-sama, it would be best to collect the gems quickly and set them free afterwards." (Wilma)

"You're right." (Wendelin)

It's not like we have any business with the squirrels' main body.

Since they have such a size, we wouldn't be able to get much money, even if we took their pelts.

"A new Rainbow Jewel should shine on the foreheads of these squirrels after 1,000 years. Killing them is absolutely forbidden."

"That method will be beneficial, after all."

Wilma, who's a professional hunter and fisherman, and Katia, who's likewise a remarkable adventurer.

Both don't desire pointless killing. Or rather, if we kill the squirrels here, the Rainbow Jewels will lose their radiance.

Since it will become impossible to get another Rainbow Jewel after killing a squirrel that had its gem taken, it's not only meaningless, but will actually result in a loss on the long term. That's why Katia's and Wilma's opinions were correct.

"Hubby, let's quickly get the gems and release the squirrels." (Katia)

"Yeah. I wonder whether it's easy to take them? Ah, it worked." (Wendelin)

I ended up easily removing the Rainbow Jewel with my hand.

Only a hollow remained on the squirrel's forehead. But yeah, I can agree with it being a degenerated eye.

"That means this one can bless a human with a new Rainbow Jewel in another 1,000 years."

"At that time all of us won't be alive anymore, but it's no good unless you take the gems without injuring the squirrels."

"Yes, there you go. Please do your best in creating a new gem again." (Elise)

After Elise gave each of them a nut, Luise and Katia released the squirrels, and both squirrels disappeared all of a sudden.

Due to their extreme quickness, my eyes cannot catch up with the escaping squirrels.

"You did really well to catch them." (Erwin)

Erw praised the two who magnificently caught the squirrels without hurting them. Certainly, I couldn't even see them moving.

"Both of us, Katia and me, barely managed by ambushing them." (Luise)

"I think they would have been able to run away, if we had relaxed our attention even just a tiny bit." (Katia)

"We fought the monsters below. So it was good that we turned the squirrels' attention in that direction?"

"I think that played a big part."

Since the squirrels are not only fast, but also wary, they rarely come out.

As the squirrels' attention was drawn to our fight against the monsters, two careless squirrels appeared below Katia and Luise.

"It was quite troublesome. First Luise and I lurked on top of a branch close to the route which the squirrels would likely take. Next, you guys flashily fought against the monsters below. As result the squirrels worried about the battle and slackened their vigilance. Then they took the route where we

were hiding. I guess there are careless individuals among the squirrels, too." (Katia)

"I see. It looks like that bore fruit as this method was the most effective one."

"Let's try it once more right away."

That Erw, did he become greedy since we obtained two Rainbow Jewels, which are said to be difficult to obtain, at once?

...Then again, the eyes of the female camp were filled with expectations.

I guess there exist no women who hate jewelry, indeed.

Having said that, this world apparently isn't that generous.

We changed our location and tried it once again, but this time we failed splendidly.

"It looks like the success rate won't reach 100%." (Wilma)

Wilma's brief comment depicted the truth.

Certainly, if it would always work this way, no one would have any troubles, right?

Also, using this method is very exhausting.

No matter whether it succeeded or not, we had to fight a great number of monsters.

Even Luise and Katia, who did the ambushing, shouldn't have had it easy.

After all the squirrels escaped as soon as they lost focus for an instant.

"Hey...isn't it fine now that we have acquired two Rainbow Jewels?"

Obviously Erw's motivation has fallen significantly.

Since I was tired, I gradually started to feel like him, too.

If we give them to Katia, whom I married, and Haruka, who's going to marry soon...no, that's no good.

When I just looked at Haruka, she donned a very awkward expression.

Well, if she disregarded Elise and my other official wives, and received a Rainbow Jewel as wife of a retainer...I don't think Elise and the others would say anything, but for Haruka that should be quite unpleasant.

"(Erw, think about it for a moment. If Haruka received the second Rainbow Jewel, it would lead to troubles in the human relations in the distant future.)" (Wendelin)

"(...Troubles in the human relations...)" (Erwin)

I can't believe that Elise and the others would complain to Haruka, but now that it has come to this, people that properly voice out their concerns are still the ones less objectionable.

If she locks her feelings away...or even if she doesn't do so; if this is all needed to make Haruka feel something like this towards Elise and the others, she will definitely feel uneasy in various ways later on.

"(Wha-! Is Haruka-san going to feel ashamed!?)" (Erwin)

"(It will probably become tricky.)" (Wendelin)

All the more since they had a good relationship until now.

"Erw, let's do our best."

"Uoo——! The Rainbow Jewel collection has only started! Let's put some fighting spirit into it!"
(Erwin)

It's great that Erw's motivation has returned.

"However, is this really a honeymoon?"

Since Katia has said that it is, this qualifies as honeymoon.
Let's pretend for it to be so.

"I guess I will look for the next location (Still, we will probably obtain the necessary amount if we do it all day long today...)" (Wendelin)



We resumed the Rainbow Jewel collection once again, but there was no way for this world to be so convenient.

We moved to another area and used the same strategy. A large amount of monster corpses and two squirrels held by Luise and Katia later, we only obtained one Rainbow Jewel.
The squirrel caught by Luise had its Rainbow Jewel already removed.

"Luise, can't you catch a squirrel that still has its Rainbow Jewel?" (Ina)

"Ina-chan, no one can do something so superhuman-ish!" (Luise)

"After all we can't see it in advance as we ambush them from above." (Katia)

Seeing as they are catching squirrels that pass by below, they won't know whether the squirrels have Rainbow Jewels unless they catch them.

"With this we have three. If we can collect four more in accordance with the number of people, it will be great."

Since it's slowly getting taxing on mind and body, I feel like it's fine with just Katia's share, but...nope. Due to my nature as Heisei Japanese, I feel that it'll be no good if I don't secure a gem for all my wives equally.

"Let's keep at it!"

"This is definitely no honeymoon."

"The Demon Forest is truly fun."

I cannot stop having a hunch that it's harder than hunting normally, but since Katia seems to enjoy it, I decide to consider it to be fine like this, even if Erw complains.



"Soon it will be evening, huh...?"

"It's really great that we've been in time."

Even though we gathered seven Rainbow Jewels in total, including Haruka's share, in the end, it took the whole day.

There were also a few squirrels that didn't have any Rainbow Jewels anymore. Since the jewel hadn't grown back, we ended up releasing them without any loot.

Because it turned into a chain of battles to distract the squirrels, we were totally exhausted. Luise and Katia, who weren't allowed any mistakes in their ambushes while continuously concentrating, seemed to be worn out, too.

"Today I'm going to sleep early. Tomorrow we will hunt as well." (Katia)

"Katia, you're full of spirit." (Luise)

"Luise, you're younger than me, aren't you? Show some spirit." (Katia)

"How's that related to age?" (Luise)

Luise was surprised by Katia's toughness of looking forward to hunting as much as she can for the remaining two days.

I see, I guess it means Katia wants to do as much as possible as adventurer.

"Aaah! Right!" (Katia)

"What's up, Katia?"

"Tell me, don't we need another three Rainbow Jewels?"

"Three more? Why?"

"Hubby, I think it's wrong for you to ask that. We have to also get Therese's, Amalie-san's and Philine's share. Especially Philine's share...won't Margrave Breithilde-sama get angry otherwise?" (Katia)

"You did well to notice that."

That's right, isn't it?

Therese and Amalie-san aren't participating in this honeymoon, but I must properly procure

Rainbow Jewels for them.
Philine, too.
If she was the only not receiving a jewel...

"Margrave Breithilde might get angry that I'm slighting his daughter..."

It's probably not like it must definitely be a Rainbow Jewel, but the point is to treat all my wives equally.
Whether I give a Rainbow Jewel to all of them, or give them something else.
In other words, after I decided to give Katia a Rainbow Jewel as present, this had become a fixed path of tribulation.

"I will just assume that it will be easy to get three jewels in the remaining two days."

"There's also Philine's share. It will be difficult for everyone, but I guess we cannot afford to stop here."

Erw and I decided to enter the Demon Forest and look for Rainbow Jewels on the next day as well.

* * *

"Eh!?! You got ten Rainbow Jewels!? This is a brilliant achievement!"

In the end, the three-days-long honeymoon was completely devoted to securing Rainbow Jewels. The reason why we needed the remaining two days for the last three jewels was because the efficiency of the strategy went down after the number of monsters living in the areas with squirrels decreased due to our continuous killing.
The flashy monster slaughtering was something definitely needed to attract the squirrels' attention so that Luise's and Katia's ambushes had a chance to succeed.
Then the cases with squirrels not having Rainbow Jewels suddenly increased.
A captured squirrel is a specimen with a low level of wariness among the squirrels.
That means there were many cases where we caught squirrels, which already had their Rainbow Jewels removed by other adventurers.
At times we fought after pulling monsters to us by scattering monster blood. Either way, these three days were very difficult.
Thanks to that the exhaustion of our minds and bodies was at an unbelievable level when returning from the honeymoon.

"If you only were to sell..."

""""""""""We have no extras!""""""""""

While paying for the large amounts of monsters we procured as byproduct of the Rainbow Jewel collection, a young male guild staff member asked us to sell the Rainbow Jewels, but all of us denied simultaneously on reflex.

"I'm sorry, but these are required to improve the bonds between husbands and wives." (Elise)

"Haa..."

Elise declined the sale of the jewels quietly, but with a strong determination.

Because I thought that it would be unequal unless all my wives received Rainbow Jewels as present, and Elise thought that it would be unfair if people that weren't able to receive any appeared, we ended up going through this hell trip over these three days.

We might have sold them if we had any extras, but I will say, "Thanks, never again" to another Rainbow Jewel hunt.

"What a pity. As a matter of fact the Rainbow Jewel was discovered right after you left to the Empire, Earl Baumeister-sama, but anyway, collecting them is sure hard. It's common for there to be adventurers who didn't secure even one after trying everyday for more than a year. The number of people wanting a jewel merely keeps increasing..."

As the price keeps rising steeply, many adventurers attempt to collect Rainbow Jewels. The jewels seem precious enough that it's called a good harvest if two or three jewels appear on the market in one month.

"In reality around twice that has been collected, but adventurers, who can get the Rainbow Jewel from squirrels, are earning their income with their superb skills, and since they are not troubled for money even without selling the jewels off forcibly, they end up giving them to their wives as presents..."

I see.

Even in a different world, men show their affection by giving expensive gems to their beloved women.

"However, as might be expected, I think it's only you, Earl Baumeister-sama, who would make a present out of all ten jewels."

"One jewel is Haruka's share, though."

After all she's not my wife, but Erw's fiancée.
Hence it's nine jewels, to be precise.

"If it's one jewel, it's not unusual to give it as present to a fiancée or a wife, but nine...? (Earl Baumeister-sama, I honestly thought that it's enviable to have many wives, but having many wives is connected to many hardships, isn't it?)"

"(...Well, yeah...)"

Like this the three days, where it was unclear whether they are a honeymoon or a hunting spree, came to an end, and we returned to our mansion.



"It's very beautiful. But, is it really alright?" (Amalie)

"I think it's a good woman's job to receive it obediently and convey her feelings of gratitude here."
(Therese)

Having returned to the mansion, I gave the Rainbow Jewels we obtained at great pains to Amalie and Therese.

Given that they will decide by themselves what accessory to make out of the jewels, I plan to ask a jeweler in Baulburg, who had become the Earl Baumeister House's purveyor, once they made up their minds.

"Tomorrow I have to bring one to Philine, too. Be that as it may, I'm dead tired..."

"Sorry, hubby. I said that I want a Rainbow Jewel without thinking too deeply about it." (Katia)

"I have to at least give you a jewel after gotten married to you, so it's not really your fault, Katia."
(Wendelin)

Katia apologized about the three-days-long honeymoon turning into a harsh hunting spree, but it's history now anyway.

Now that it came to an end, it was more enjoyable than the daily public works.

"For thou to even get our share, Wendelin, thou sure have faithful parts to thou." (Therese)

"Wend-kun is kind. Because of that I worry as he tends to try the unreasonable..." (Amalie)

We chatted about the unusual honeymoon while drinking tea together.

Elise and Amalie are going around to pour tea for everyone. The other women are happily gazing at their Rainbow Jewels.

"Haruka-san, are you going to turn it into a ring or a necklace? If it's you, any accessory will likely suit you, though." (Erwin)

"I'm wavering. I usually don't wear any jewelry, but I'm happy that I was given one as present."
(Haruka)

"Then it's good that we went through the trouble to get you one." (Erwin)

"Indeed. It's something we obtained with the two of us." (Haruka)

Erw and Haruka created their own little world, but in Haruka's case it looks like she would be happy about anything as long as it was from Erw.

But, Mizuho is similar to Japan, thus there might be a story similar to Konjiki Yasha's 『Dazzled by Diamond〜』.1

"It was tiring, but it might have been worth it for this. Katia, you seem to have grown accustomed to

the Earl Baumeister House."

She has a few slightly reckless and thoughtless parts, but with her open-hearted character she's skillful at making new friends. The case with the Rainbow Jewels is also a result of her taking everyone into consideration.

I'm certain that she adapted well to the Earl Baumeister House.

"Hubby, the honeymoon was fun. I'm happy for having received a gem as present. Thanks." (Katia)

"You're welcome." (Wendelin)

"It's wonderful that the bond between the Earl Baumeister House and the Eulenberg House has become stronger after Katia-sama's marriage." (Roderich)

At that point, Roderich showed up as if having aimed for that moment.

"Milord, please have a peace of mind. From tomorrow onward you can work on the expansion work of the Baulburg ~ Eulenberg territory ~ Baumeister Knightdom road." (Roderich)

"Eh? Such plans existed?" (Wendelin)

Hearing that story for the first time now...isn't that a problem for a family head?

"The Eulenberg territory and the Baumeister Knightdom are currently tackling an expansion of their local product output. By reinforcing the transportation route to Baulburg, the place with the highest consumption of these products, both parties will be able to profit." (Roderich)

"Yeeeeeaaah, I'm sure you're not wrong at all." (Wendelin)

If those three days didn't exist, that is.
To be honest, I'd like to have a break of at least one day.

"If it's a holiday, you just had one for three days. Or is there anything wrong?" (Roderich)

Ah, yeah...

A honeymoon counts as break, doesn't it...?

That means I'm going to return to my daily public works from tomorrow onward.

"There's a wife who will go through this hardship together with me. I wonder how much trouble something of this degree might be?" (Wendelin)

Now that it has come to this, I have to get her involved.
I gently placed my hand on Katharina's shoulder.

"Meee!?" (Katharina)

"Katharina, we're a married couple, aren't we? A married couple must share its hard times, too."
(Wendelin)

Or rather, the only one who can cast magic that's useful for public works is Katharina.

"For the sake of lowering my burden...ah, not that...isn't it our duty as nobles to pay attention to the improvement of our fief's population's livelihood?" (Wendelin)

"You're hitting my soft spot if you tell me all that, but...Wendelin-san, at first you mentioned lowering my burden..." (Katharina)

"Suffering together will surely deepen the bonds between husband and wife!" (Wendelin)

"That's certainly true, but..." (Katharina)

"Yahoo! (How simple...)" (Wendelin)

"Wendelin-san, did you say anything else just now?" (Katharina)

"Thank you, Katharina! Nothing less of my beloved wife!" (Wendelin)

"I'm the only wife who can help you in this area. Please leave it to me." (Katharina)

It looks like it will become hectic starting with tomorrow, but now that I skillfully won over Katharina...it was decided that we would overcome all hardships with our beautiful love as married couple.

"Since it's the construction of a road connected to my home, I will at least cook some rice. Cooking outdoors is my forte. I was also taught new recipes by Elise and the others." (Katia)

* * *

"Time to eat——!" (Katia)

"Eh? Why Lord-sama's wife?"

"I'm helping out." (Katia)

"Is that so...? I heard that Elise-sama and the other wives also helped out occasionally in the past, but this is a surprise."

"It's only during the time my husband is at this location. Please don't hold back and enjoy the food." (Katia)

"Thanks."

"You can eat as much as you like. There's no store where you could buy something around here." (Katia)

"This area is uninhabited, after all."



On the next day the road expansion work started for Katharina and me, but Katia accompanied us as the one in charge of the food for the workers helping with the construction work and us. She, who is also a veteran adventurer, is quite skilled at dealing with middle-aged men. Even at the time when we were about to leave the site after Katharina and I had finished our jobs, they regretted it quite a bit.

"Katia does have an interpersonal skill that you and I lack, Katharina." (Wendelin)

"Indeed...wait! I'm adored by my fief's population!" (Katharina)

"That's not what I mean. Somehow I believe there's something people like Katia possess (something you don't possess, Katharina)." (Wendelin)

"Wendelin-san, did you say something?" (Katharina)

"No, I just talked to myself for a bit." (Wendelin)

Katharina and I, who have a generally accepted tendency towards a loner disposition, felt jealous from the bottom of our hearts about Katia's communication skill.

Chapter 3 – Lisa the Blizzard

"Old man, the usual please." (Lisa)

"Sure. Been quite a while since the last time, hasn't it Lisa?"

"Well, I went to a slightly remote monster domain. I earned some good dough, but it's sure great to drink in a bar after camping outside for two months. At least there's a roof above my head." (Lisa)

"Rather, our place is run-down. Sorry for that."

"Who cares. It hasn't fallen apart yet." (Lisa)

"True that. Wait a moment, okay?"



I, who had returned to the capital after finishing my commissioned long-term job, asked a friend of mine working at the guild's headquarters to report my request's completion and assess the loot, and then I burst into the bar I'm often using and ordered the usual menu from the owner. Since he puts out my preferred wine and dishes with me just saying 『the usual』, I favor this bar.

"So, how's life going?"

"Not bad. I had to suffer through two months of camping to get my hands on the missing materials, though." (Lisa)

I have gotten used to it already, but no matter how much my name is known in the trade, I'm still a woman.

Living in a tent for two months is tough.

"Thanks for waiting."

"Thanks, old man. Did anything interesting happen during the two months I was gone?" (Lisa)

The wine and the food is my main objective, but as adventurer, or rather as citizen of the Kingdom I have to at least know the latest news in the capital.

There was no one especially visiting the monster domain, where I did my job, to bring me up to date. And since a newspaper seller didn't come around either, I was out of the loop in regards to the newest happenings in the capital.

Since information accumulates in a bar, it's the best to ask the old owner of this bar at such times.

"Let's see. I guess it's about Earl Baumeister-sama again? He came back to the capital after playing an active role in the Empire's civil war."

"Typical of him." (Lisa)

I also made a name for myself as magician, but I guess I lose out to Earl Baumeister. Well, it's just natural if he dishes out one achievement after the other like that.

"There was also a quarrel over some tunnel. Ah! The daughter of the Knight Eulenberg House that caused the troubles was that Katia girl you took care of."

"Hah? You're saying, Katia was the daughter of a noble?" (Lisa)

For that lass to stay silent about something so important to me, who taught her how to somehow use magic for hunting!

"Anyway, 『quarrel over some tunnel』, what's that about?" (Lisa)

"A tunnel connecting the Baumeister Earldom with the territory of that little lady called Katia or whatever was apparently discovered, but they argued about who's going to manage it."

The management of the tunnel would be difficult for Katia's home, the Eulenberg House. Hence their patron, the Margrave Breithilde House wanted to manage it themselves after giving the Eulenberg House an alternative territory. At that point Katia, who had left the house as adventurer, objected and it was decided that the young noble to manage the tunnel together with her would be determined in a martial arts tournament, or so he said.

"What's that girl thinking?" (Lisa)

"Isn't that what you'd call pride as a noble, no matter how tiny they might be? And then..."

However, there wasn't a single young noble that could win against Katia in the tournament.

"Well, makes sense. She's strong enough to even give me a hard time." (Lisa)

"So she's at a level where you struggle as well, huh? Then I think this outcome was inevitable."

Among the booing audience because not one of the challenging nobles could win against Katia, the king suddenly showed up, and designated Earl Baumeister to take on Katia.

In accordance with that order, he easily defeated Katia.

The old man finished his explanation with the fact that the tunnel's management has been monopolized by the Earl Baumeister House as result.

"Hmmmm. It's bad luck that I couldn't watch such a fun event. So, what happened to Katia?" (Lisa)

I suppose by now she has returned to her daily life of defeating wyverns after having the tunnel rights snatched away due to the loss against Earl Baumeister.

"That girl is really as reckless as ever. That's the reason why she can't get married." (Lisa)

"Pfft, you're the one saying that?"

"...Any complaints?" (Lisa)

I'm listening to the conversation with the owner, so don't butt in just because you're sitting at the next table!

Once I look closely, he seems to be an adventurer, but he got quite the nerve to mess with me.

"Even though you're just a young greenhorn. What's it to you?" (Lisa)

I will let you speak your mind if you got something you want to say.

Depending on what you say, you might be no adventurer by tomorrow anymore, though.

"Hey, speak after looking at the other party! Lisa, this bar is already worn down. Please forgive him."

"Pfft, old man, it looks like that woman doesn't know. It looks like she stopped by the guild before coming here, but I wonder, didn't they tell her over there? They must have pitied her quite a bit, I guess."

Haaah?

What's this youngster blurting out there?

The folks at the guild have information they didn't tell me out of sympathy?

"I will tell you."

"Hey!!"

"She will hear of it soon anyway. I shall be kind and bring you up to date, Lisa the Blizzard-sama. Your little, beloved protegee, Katia married Earl Baumeister-sama. It's that, isn't it? Forming bonds between fellow nobles, right?"

"...Marriage? Katia has?" (Lisa)

"I would rather say Earl Baumeister-sama had been lenient since he let it end with only that much after she kicked up such a fuss. Isn't it great that she hasn't missed her chance to get married like a certain someone?"

"..." (Lisa)

Haaah?

That Katia got married?

Certainly, that girl had some rough parts about her, but she won't be troubled with with basic womanly modesty...I'm capable of that as well, but...her looks were very good, too.

However, she should have been worried seeing as there was no marriage partner in sight despite her becoming 20 years old very soon.

I didn't have such a guy either...that's the same even now, but...isn't that the moral code as fellow, unmarried adventurer colleagues?

"Katia, at least invite me to your wedding ceremony!" (Lisa)

"You were in a situation where a written invitation wouldn't reach you anyway, right?"

"Hya——hya hya! The guild staff member couldn't tell you that it's only you being still unmarried as he was scared, putting the bar's owner in the bind to follow up on him. If that ain't not hilarious, then I don't know what is."

"..." (Lisa)

"Oi! Stop it already..."

This newbie...come to think of it, wasn't he close to a veteran adventurer with whom I had a fight before?

I guess that's why he's making fun of me here.

Enough, I got it.

Even I have been long enough in this business to know what's going on.

I'm well aware that it's the end if I'm looked down upon.

Now then, it's time for punishment!

"You, aren't you hot?" (Lisa)

"Hah? Not really."

"I see, I see. So you feel really hot." (Lisa)

"What's it all of a sudden? I don't feel hot at all..."

"You know, there's no need to hold back. I will cool you down to your heart's content! Enjoy the chilling air as much as you like, okay!?" (Lisa)

I unleashed my prided 『Freeze』 spell, only targeting the table where him and a young male adventurer are sitting.

"My name is Lisa. Lisa the Blizzard. I don't know whether your work's going fine, but greenhorn, don't get cocky just because there's someone strong among your acquaintances! As you don't know your place...I'm going to freeze you!" (Lisa)

"Ugh, I can't move..."

"What an awfully ugly object of art. The base material really sucks." (Lisa)

The piping hot stew, the other warm dishes and of course the ale he was drinking alongside the glass, all of them got frozen on top of that guy's table.

He was enclosed by ice together with the chair he's sitting on. He should be unable to move for a few hours until the ice melts.

Not freezing him in person is owed to my very own style of mercy.

"You bitch! Remove the ice!"

"Old man, that guy is going to reserve that seat for a while." (Lisa)

Who's going to listen to something someone like you got to say?

Regret talking down on me there just as you are.

After I toss several gold coins to the owner after throwing a last glance at that guy, I leave my seat and leave the bar while ignoring the other guests who are causing an uproar due to the male adventurer suddenly having turned into an ice object.

There's the fact that it had become difficult to stay in the bar after causing such a mess, but I had also plenty of anger with unknown cause welling up within me.

"That Katia got married, you say!?! A junior who got married before me, the senior? Shit! I have to vent this rage somewhere, huh? Yep, it's really pissing me off!" (Lisa)

Once I unconsciously released 『Freeze』 into the sky, an unlucky bird got frozen and fell down.

Since it's something that happens occasionally, I just keep walking without care.

I returned to the inn, where I have booked a room on a long-term contract, after a long while, and sulked in bed.



"Wait, maybe it's a lie. Fake marriages might exist as well. First I will go check the situation!" (Lisa)



Having suddenly woken up in the dead of the night, I decided to go meet Katia and her husband Earl Baumeister, hence starting to write a letter in a hurry.

Of course I'm going to depart to the Baumeister Earldom as soon as I have finished writing this letter!



"Hng...is it already time to get up? Ah right, I got married." (Katia)

Once I woke up in the morning, hubby was sleeping next to me.

Come to think of it, yesterday night we slept with each other.

Both of us are naked, but me immediately considering that as normal for a married couple is

probably proof of me getting accustomed to a married life.

I won't say that I didn't have any interest in the nightly activities between men and women, but although I worried at first what I should do since it had nothing to do with me before, I got used to it before long.

There seems to be a custom in normal noble houses to teach daughters about such things, but I didn't receive any such education since our house is somewhat special. But, once I left the house and hung out with fellow female adventurers, such talks naturally popped up as well.

I think those were somewhat helpful here.

"Ah right. I asked him to let me use his arm as pillow." (Katia)

I had it often pointed out to me by other adventurers that my speech and conduct isn't very womanly unlike my looks, but even so, since I'm a woman as well so far as it goes, I had a little dream.

I wanted to use the arm of a man as pillow.

And when I asked hubby about it last night, he willingly agreed to my request.

Even now hubby's arm was situated below my head.

As expected, once I moved my head away since his arm had likely become numb, hubby woke up as well.

"Is it already time to get up? I see, this is what it means for an arm to fall asleep." (Wendelin)

"Hubby, sorry." (Katia)

"This much of a numbness will go away right away. As a matter of fact, it was my first as well, an arm pillow." (Wendelin)

"Really? I thought that it would be something that Elise and the other had demanded already. Also, Ina is often reading such books." (Katia)

It's because Ina loves those kind of romantic novels after all.

Accordingly, she's someone with a lot of knowledge about sex...ah, I guess it's the same for my fellow female adventurers, too.

Even though all of them are unmarried and have no fiancés either, they are rather well informed about it. Considering it like that, I'd say it was knowledge out of books.

"Maybe they just didn't think of it until now by chance?" (Wendelin)

"That might be it. Hubby, you're going to do some morning exercises, too?" (Katia)

"Yeah." (Wendelin)

My husband, an excellent magician, would likely not mind it at all even if he had to live as adventurer after losing his nobility.

Rather, there are times where I think that the adventurer's life would be better for him as it's fairly easygoing. If he has time, he goes hunting while taking Elise and the others along.

That's why he never missed his daily training.

That part of him matches well with me, who is a through-and-through adventurer at heart.



"Close your eyes and empty your mind by not thinking anything for as long as you can. Don't move your body either." (Wendelin)

"..." (Katia)

We start the early morning practice at once. I'm receiving special magic training from hubby. He makes me focus my mind with a method, which had been thought up by hubby's deceased master and experienced small improvements by hubby. It makes me aware of the mana flow by letting it stream through the mana pathways.

I perform 『Meditation』 in combination with 『Zen Meditation』, but even that person, who told me how to use my mana at the adventurer's prep school, didn't teach me such a method.

"Somehow the mana is flowing smoothly. I don't think it's possible, but I feel like my mana has increased." (Katia)

Since I'm well aware of my own mana, I know that it has reached its limit long ago. That's something that shouldn't be possible, really.

"..." (Wendelin)

"Hubby?" (Katia)

"Even if it's just your imagination; as long as you become skilled at magic, that will be the correct answer." (Wendelin)

"I guess you're right." (Katia)

Somehow hubby seems evasive?

I wonder whether there's something inconvenient about it?



Once we finished the morning practice, we headed together to the bathroom to wash off our sweat. Hubby loves bathing. It seems he's often entering it together with Elise and the others, too. As it looks like everyone got business outside today, it's only me who enters together with hubby, though.

"It sure is nice for this mansion to have a big bath." (Katia)

As appropriate for the Earl Baumeister House, the bathtub is huge, and I have gotten used to the interior being luxurious and extravagant as well.

The soap, the shampoo to wash one's hair, and the conditioner are hubby's prototypes. Those seem to have spread, and now that I think of it, they are even sold in store in the capital.

Since they are very expensive, only nobles and rich people can buy those products, though.

Once we finished bathing, breakfast was next.

I had planned to prepare at least one dish as new wife, but there's no way that I can steal the work of the servants serving in the mansion.

Since Elise and the others are occasionally cooking as hobby, I suppose I will help out at least at that time.

We cook at the times when hubby is working as adventurer, but if it's prepared by me, it's usually a simple dish focusing on efficiency.

I have to gradually fix that part by learning from Elise and the others.

After all hubby is trying to come up with delicious outdoor dishes.

"Good morning, Katia-san." (Elise)

Once we entered the dining room, Elise greeted me as representative of everyone waiting there.

"Morning, Elise." (Katia)

"Katia-san, did you get used to this lifestyle by now?" (Elise)

"It's alright since it's not that different from my normal lifestyle that I would need to get used to it." (Katia)

"Is that so?" (Elise)

As might be expected of hubby's first wife, Elise often pays attention to my needs, but my daily life isn't that hard.

Since hubby dislikes a gaudy lifestyle, it wasn't all that different from my lifestyle so far.

"Good job in training early on every morning." (Therese)

"Yo, Therese, huh? It's something like a daily habit that's necessary for an adventurer. I'm really sorry for making you wait." (Katia)

"Thou don't consider it being strange for me to be here, do thou?" (Therese)

"Eh? Just do as you like, Therese. Since hubby has given his permission, you can be here, no?" (Katia)

"Hahaha! Thou are simple in a good way." (Therese)

"I don't really get complicated stuff anyway. Ah, I'm starving." (Katia)

"I will get it ready right away." (Amalie)

"Thanks, Amalie-san." (Katia)

It's not just Elise and the others. Amalie-san is waiting on the table while voluntarily wearing maid

clothes. Since a little while ago, Therese has started to come everyday to the mansion to have a meal with us.

It seems like there are quite a lot of wives and essentially-wives, but there's no menacing atmosphere, and it's fun to be with a great number of people.

Ending up thinking something along those lines, I wonder whether I have changed in some way? My husband is also somewhat unusual. But with how it is, we might match well, I thought.

* * *

"Amalie-san, another serving." (Katia)

"Yes." (Amalie)

"You're eating well, aren't you?"

It's been around two weeks since Katia has started to live in the Earl Baumeister residence. It looks like she has adopted herself to her current lifestyle fairly well.

"Gotten used to it or not; Katia always gave me this impression since coming to this mansion."

"The wedding ceremony might have been the most nerve-wracking time in my life. I don't remember being overly nervous on other occasions." (Katia)

"That's really enviable. Even I have regularly times where I feel nervous." (Luise)

Even though she just got married at long last, I think that she might be nervous towards Elise and the others as new wife, and thus Luise and I believe that it might be fine like this.

"The bath and the food in this place is really awesome." (Katia)

Katia starts every day with a training session early in the morning, then takes a bath and finally eats breakfast.

While chatting happily with everyone during our meals, she eats well and never misses to ask for a second serving of rice.

She has started to eat rice every day after coming here. Apparently she really likes the taste in combination with miso soup and similar.

"Katia, it's not at the level of Wilma, but you sure eat a lot. Is it because of your work as adventurer?" (Ina)

"For an adventurer their body is the foundation. You have to eat when you can." (Katia)

Upon Ina's question, Katia stops her hands for a moment, and answers.

She's moving around a lot while consuming mana.

Since she's burning more calories than an ordinary person, it's only natural for her to eat a lot, I

suppose.

Considering all that, she's not only not getting fat, Katia rather keeps a small, slender figure.

"It's alright since we're not going to run out of food all of a sudden."

"That's certainly true, but I'm simply hungry." (Katia)

While saying so, Katia continues eating the rice served by Amalie.

"Because the Eulenberg territory is centered around the production of wheat in addition to maroimo, bread was the staple food when I returned home. Sometimes I ate rice at my destination, but the one here is a lot more delicious." (Katia)

Given that there are plenty of warm water sources in the Baumeister Earldom, it's cut out for rice production.

The rice production is also prospering in the Breithilde Margraviate, but in the former Eulenberg territory a lot of agricultural land was situated on slopes.

If it were a Japanese area, they might have built terraced rice-fields, but since they have maroimo, they don't grow rice.

"Since there's also plain ground in the new territory, I told pops and bro to begin rice cultivation as well this time." (Katia)

"Agriculture as *raison d'être*?" (Wilma)

"For Pops and bro, yes. However, it didn't suit me. It's not that I couldn't have done it stamina-wise, but the way of an adventurer life agreed suited me more." (Katia)

Katia replied to Wilma.

Certainly, those two might be better suited for agriculture than noble customs.

"I have such parts, too." (Wilma)

"Wilma, you're good at hunting and fishing, after all." (Katia)

"That's why it's great that I could become Wend-sama's wife." (Wilma)

"Makes sense. Even though you became the wife of a high-ranking noble, you can hunt in monster domains. That really rocks." (Katia)

"I believe there aren't that many noble ladies considering it like that." (Katharina)

"Saying something like that; don't you like it quite a bit yourself as well, Katharina?" (Katia)

"It's not that I hate it, but in my case I only worked as adventurer for the sake of amassing funds for the revival of my house." (Katharina)

Katia, who can freely talk with anyone, adapted herself to the Earl Baumeister House in the blink of an eye.

Rather, she might be better fitting in than Katharina by now.

"Wendelin-san, anything wrong?" (Katharina)

"No, nothing." (Wendelin)

Katharina apparently suspects me of starting to consider her as someone with a slight communication disorder. I deny it in a hurry.

Around one month after the tunnel opening passed in such way, but today the Baumeister house is busy once again.

Other than Katia, Amalie-san had started living in the mansion since a little while ago...somehow the black, slightly mature maid clothes, which I had designed, have become her favorite. She's serving at the table when I'm eating and making tea and hand-made sweets in her free time while often wearing these clothes.

Since she's being officially treated as Head Maid for the time being, it's not like she's doing anything strange.

Elise and the others also leave the work to Amalie-san during meal time inside the mansion.

As for the reason: Recently the number of maids hired in the mansion has grown. Apparently there are some among them who try to please me one way or another while burning with the ambition to become my lovers or concubines. The ones allowed to look after me are only those approved of by Amalie-san, the Head Maid, – namely only Dominique and Lea – or herself.

The maids have their own closed-off society. It appears to be a fairly complicated society with women of various ages who all have their own circumstances and dreams.

"Erwin-sama, how about a refill of tea?" (Lea)

"Please, Lea." (Erwin)

"As you wish." (Lea)

She's one of the maids, who can directly talk with me, Lea, but since she's Erw's concubine candidate, she only takes care of Erw for now.

Come to think of it, she needs permission to go on a date instead of a formal marriage interview with Erw alone soon.

But, I'm in charge of such things, right?

Roderich...seems busy, so I have to do it after all?

However, it's strange for me to directly ask Lea 『How about going on a date with Erw?』, isn't it?

This is a part where I'd like Haruka to do her best.

"It looks like Katia has safely adapted to the Earl Baumeister House..." (Therese)

"Umm...do you need something from me, Therese-san?" (Katharina)

"No, I feel like she is fitting in better than thou." (Therese)

"Ugh!" (Katharina)

Therese, who enjoyed an after-meal tea, tells Katharina the cruel truth I couldn't voice out myself.

"Well, Katharina is like that...even I was on the slightly slower side in getting used to a group at first, thus I can't really talk about others overly much, or rather..." (Wendelin)

"Really?" (Therese)

"Yes, it's the truth." (Wendelin)

If pushed to say, I also incline towards having a communication disorder. I just hadn't the opportunity to mention it until now.

That's why I understand well how Katharina feels.

"That's right. Wendelin-san and I are a married couple on the same wavelength." (Katharina)

"Like man, like wife, huh?"

Occasionally her presence is rather weak...but I guess it's better to not mention this.

"Therese-san, was there something you wanted to tell Katia-san?"

"Yes. It's just the words of me who retired after losing in a political strife, but thou married into the Earl Baumeister House as someone from the Eulenberg House. Make sure to properly keep your own home in mind." (Therese)

Although the tunnel has been opened, the construction works around the entrances are still not finished. Nevertheless, the passage fee has been continuing to increase slowly.

There were many merchants who said that they will start business in the Baumeister Earldom in the middle of the opening. It's because it has become possible to transport goods through the tunnel at a cheap rate.

At the same time, the development around the tunnel's entrances also advances. Rest areas, waiting spots, warehouses to store goods, and lodgings, restaurants, bars and amusement facilities catered towards the tunnel users are starting to pop up.

The tunnel entrance of the Baumeister Earldom's side has started the construction of inns and such since it's close to Paul's territory.

"The human traffic will increase. A part of them will ask about visiting that territory in order to procure maroimo that's having its production quantity increased in the Eulenberg territory. I received it from Wendelin, but that maroimo will become a fine special product." (Therese)

Maroimo itself isn't that rare anymore, but currently it's just the Eulenberg House that can cultivate such sweet maroimo.

It's a brand item that's being traded for high prices. In a little while it will bring large amounts of money to the Eulenberg territory.

"Having said that, it might be necessary to continue expanding the fields from now on and gather laborers. Considering the situation of thee home, thou will need to ask Wendelin for assistance at times. That's one of thee important tasks, Katia." (Therese)

"...Please explain it once more." (Katia)

""""""""Oh god...""""""""

It's not like Katia can be called an idiot.

An idiot won't be able to subjugate wyverns and flying dragons after all.

However, she's completely unsuited for such aristocratic matters.

I'm sure it was the right choice for Katia to leave her home and aim to become an adventurer.

On the other hand it means that her looking for a husband to manage the tunnel would have ultimately ended up in failure.

"I said that it's necessary to pay attention to thee home and request Wendelin's assistance as necessary." (Therese)

"I see. But, what would you think of a wife who immediately demands various things from her husband? If it's funds, I just have to provide them myself." (Katia)

Katia's trait of being self-reliant was quite strong.

That's probably the reason why she became an adventurer, but as it's a good thing to be favored by her husband, a high-ranking noble, that trait might contradict with being a wife that relies on her husband in one way or another.

"Support doesn't include only money. Thou would want the roads connecting cities and neighboring villages to be increasingly maintained, and since thou want temporary laborers to extend the maroimo fields while paying them daily wages, thou would want him to introduce people. Even if thou were to immigrate new residents into the territory, it would be safer to have them introduced by the Earl Baumeister House. I heard that the Knight Baumeister House will support thy home as well, but they must also be busy with expanding the production of honey and honey liquor. It's important for thou to occasionally go to thy family and ask what they need." (Therese)

"Oooh! That's an advice befitting a noble!"

"Certainly."

Those are very suitable suggestions.

I also ended up admiring Therese.

"What's the point of thou admiring it here, Wendelin?" (Therese)

"Isn't that the usual for Wend?" (Luise)

As expected of Luise.

She understands me well.

"Luise, thou are also the same as usual. In short, it's not particularly bad for a wife to demand something from her husband. Otherwise the situation won't improve. If thou just say that thou would like him to buy thou an expensive, jewel-laden dress, thou will be just called foolish woman, though." (Therese)

Is that a dis against Anita who's staying at the Margrave Breithilde House?

Once I casually look at Ina and Luise, they seem to think the same.

They look as if they want to run away.

"It's fine to ask for an opportune birthday present. There are many good noble wives who are skilled at pleading." (Therese)

I see.

Husband and wife are man and woman, so it's sometimes necessary for the wife to casually ask for things to make the man think that he should give her some present.

"No matter whether as wife or woman, it's the end once the man thinks 『I don't want to give this woman even a single handkerchief!』." (Therese)

Certainly, even if it might be a political marriage; if the relationship of the married couple gets so bad, the political marriage would seem pointless.

"I learned a lot." (Wilma)

"Right, Wilma? Returning to the topic; it would be better for thou to occasionally worry about thy home as well, Katia." (Therese)

"Got it. However, I think the growing of maroimo is pretty much the biggest worry of dad and bro right now." (Katia)

"Certainly..." (Therese)

I moved as much of the old fields' soil as possible, but likewise there are newly cleared fields. I believe that they have to properly take care of those until the soil creation has finished.

"That's slightly untypical for nobles, isn't it?"

"Ina, to say that at this point, or rather...my home is in high spirits." (Wendelin)

"Hermann-san is?" (Ina)

"Yes, Hermann." (Wendelin)

After Hermann succeeded as family head, the Knight Baumeister House struggled foremost with the development of their territory, but most recently the situation has moved towards finally showing some results.

At such a time a noble house that's less aristocratic than their old selves had been forcibly relocated to a territory neighboring them, and they were asked by the Earl Baumeister House to look after them.

Hermann's folks seem to enthusiastically help them out in various ways.

"Somehow I can really picture it"

"Right?"

While superficially saying something like 『We're busy as well, but if you insist』, I'm pretty sure

they are feeling something like 『Us being able to teach other nobles about the ways of nobility is a happy occasion』.

Moreover, the main industry of the Knight Baumeister House as well as the Eulenberg House is agriculture.

It looks like it resulted in them joining forces to produce distilled liquor using honey and maroimo while increasing the production output of those ingredients.

There also appear to exist plans to create sweets with a long life period out of honey and maroimo to sell those.

I feel like such collaborations also took place for local specialties in Japan.

"With the relocation of the territory on top of it, it looks like they will require quite a bit of money. Are they alright on that end?"

"My home possesses an unexpected amount of money." (Katia)

According to Katia, the Eulenberg House, which has a strangely long history despite being atypical for nobles, has hoarded a surprising stash of money. They seem to advance their development by making use of those funds.

"Certainly, the dowry was quite amazing."

The marriage ceremony was something like a home production, but the Eulenberg House provided a dowry that would have made the former Knight Baumeister House hesitate to even consider it.

"The sources of our cash income just keep increasing through the little sale of crops and maroimo, but if you live inside that territory, there's almost no need for money, you know?" (Katia)

The only time when they use their money is when going shopping outside the territory. Another big factor was the fact of the Eulenberg House not associating with other nobles much since its foundation.

After all the Eulenberg House didn't even really associate with the Margrave Breithilde House, their patrons.

『Lord Eulenberg, these gold coins are the old ones which were in use before the new gold coins were issued right after the armistice with the Empire, aren't they?』

『We have been storing them in our vault since the old days. I think our ancestors obtained these after selling their agricultural produce.』

Come to think of it, there are some gold coins among the dowry I'm not familiar with. Once I showed them to Margrave Breithilde, he told me that those are old gold coins which had been issued by the Helmut Kingdom long ago.

The Eulenberg House, which mostly hadn't anything to do with the central government's ways despite its long history, didn't exchange the old currency for its new counterpart.

This way of acting might resemble old people who keep Shoutoku Taishi's 10,000 yen bills in their cabinets.

『How much was the exchange rate? Since the gold coins, which stopped being produced for more than 200 years by now, have rarity value, I'd like to have some as well.』

『Here you go. We have plenty after all.』

『The Eulenberg House has been continuing for as long as our house.』

Having said that, the Margrave Breithilde House has big expenses in correspondence to the house's scale. It would have been impossible for them to decline after being told by the royal family to exchange the old gold coins for the new ones.

Margrave Breithilde was surprised and full of admiration due to the Eulenberg House not 『gathering』 this many old gold coins, but 『saving』 them.

The Kingdom and the Empire matched the gold content of their new currencies so as to not run into troubles during trading after the armistice.

The Kingdom back then was apparently quite pushy about the exchange of old gold coins into new ones because they changed the minting.

The Eulenberg House, which simply saved money for more than a thousand years without living in luxury and thus preventing any outflow of money, might actually be quite the amazing noble house. At the very least I couldn't catch sight of them struggling with the dowry, unlike my old home.

"Now that you mention it, it's soon time for the 『exchange of engagement gifts』, right? I'm fairly nervous."

"It's alright. It won't be anything that outrageous."

The marriage between Erw and Haruka is around the corner. Given that Mizuho possesses a culture similar to Japan, a ceremonial engagement gift exchange is carried out.

Naturally, since the Helmut Kingdom and the Urquhart Holy Empire have different wedding styles, Erw also seems to have various difficulties with the preparations.

This won't just be the marriage of a retainer, but the first step in the friendship between the Earl Baumeister House and the Duke Mizuho House, hence the Earl Baumeister House is naturally all fired up and supports him wherever possible.

"I'm actually leaving all of it to Rederich, though." (Wendelin)

"Wend, you could help out a bit, too!" (Erwin)

"No! I have plenty noble-like jobs pushed on me after being told that only a noble can do those! Since it's your own marriage, do at least this much yourself, Erw!" (Wendelin)

"An unusually sound argument...to tell you the truth, most of the preparations are done..." (Erwin)

"Isn't it fine then?" (Wendelin)

Since the tunnel's opening, Erw has been swayed by unfamiliar Mizuho customs.

A marriage being a chore is the same in any world.

I can't tell him anything but to do his best.

"What's wrong, Katia?"

As I'm drinking the tea poured by Amalie after everyone finished breakfast, Katia shows a slightly brooding, or rather mystified expression, and thus I call out to her.

"Hey, hubby. It might be my imagination, but I feel like my mana has increased..." (Katia)

"Ah, about that..." (Wendelin)

Katia had mana from the start.

It probably wouldn't have been exposed if her mana hadn't been at its limit before the marriage, but of course that wasn't the case.

Once a woman has sex with me, there are only two options: having no mana just as before, or increasing the amount of mana after awaking to their talent as magician.

I guess the former is Amalie and the latter would be Elise and the other girls.

"It's not like I'm that well-informed about magic, but I properly learned about it at the adventurer's prep school. That's it's impossible for the amount of mana to grow once again after stopping once." (Katia)

"Well, usually that's correct." (Wendelin)

"Isn't it? Hubby, what's this about? Since having gotten married to you, I sense my mana gradually increasing every day. Even when using mana during hunting or training, its power and upkeep is completely different from before the marriage. Until now it wasn't rare for me to run out of mana in the morning if I used 『Acceleration』 too often, but now it's normal for me to keep it up until evening. There's no way that I wouldn't notice something like that." (Katia)

Katia has a low amount of mana to begin with. Moreover, the only spells she could use were wind cushion, which she uses at the time of getting down from high up, and 『Acceleration』 which increases her speed.

I suppose it's only normal for the number of times she can use those spells to increase if her mana grows.

"As for that, Katia-san..." (Elise)

At this point it developed into Elise telling Katia instead of me. Before that, she poured hot mate tea into Katia's cup.

"Katia-san, I think you have already noticed indirectly, but if one becomes Earl Baumeister-sama's wife and spends everyday as married couple with him, it often happens that they manifest their mana or increase their amount of mana after already having reached their growth limit before." (Elise)

There exists a fixed number of women who increase their mana after having sex with me, Elise explained to Katia.

"In short, there are people whose mana increases if they do it with Wend." (Luise)

"Luise being too blunt about it is vulgar. We are wives of a noble after all." (Ina)

"Yeah, yeah." (Luise)

Luise intended to supplement Elise's explanation, but was cautioned for being vulgar by Ina.

"And, seeing that you have become Wendelin-san's wife, we'd like you to make it a rule to not tell others about this. Even if they might be your parents or siblings." (Katharina)

"Katia, sshhh——" (Wilma)

Katharina gravely warned Katia to not say a word to anyone while Wilma held up a finger in front of her mouth, adopting a pose of telling Katia to be quiet about it.

"I won't speak about it, and I can't either. It's a really heavy secret for my old man and brother. I can't tell them since they will buckle under the pressure." (Katia)

"Your father and brother certainly look like it, Katia-san..." (Katharina)

"It will be bad for their health." (Wilma)

It's the kind of secret better left unsaid to those two, who are the very picture of petty bourgeois, as they will be happier without knowing.

"But, leaving Amalie-san aside, is telling Therese fine?"

Katia knows about Amalie's current situation.

That's why she thinks that it wouldn't be a problem even if my secret were to be discovered by Amalie, but she asks whether it's okay to tell Therese, the former Duchess Philip.

"There's no problem in particular. I don't think that Therese will reveal my secret carelessly. I have faith in her on this." (Wendelin)

"Being trusted by thou, Wendelin, makes me very happy. In the first place, I'm well aware that my peaceful days, which I attained at last, would come to nothing as I would be once again used for troublesome haggling of nobles, if I were to reveal that secret." (Therese)

"Therese, simply be thankful for being trusted by me here." (Wendelin)

"Of course I'm grateful about that. While we're at it, recently I have some spare time at night." (Therese)

"Eh? Night?"

"Sure. It's a hopeful statement that it will definitely happen, if a man comes visiting the room of an unmarried woman." (Therese)

"What happens definitely!?"

Although she won't reveal my secret, Therese wants me to drop in at night from now on as well. Listening to the fairly daring demands of Therese, the face of Katia, who doesn't own overly much knowledge in that direction despite being one of the older women here, dyed bright red. Even though we're leading the normal life of a married couple by now...

"Let me emphasize it once more: don't reveal the secret."

"No matter how much of an idiot I might be, even I understand as much." (Katia)

"The Eulenberg House became relatives of the Earl Baumeister House, but since the circumstances are what they are, thou should consider it as avoiding to show any weaknesses to nobles who plan to outwit Wendelin. There's nothing better than being careful." (Therese)

"I won't tell my family. But, Therese, you're a noble after all, aren't you? When I heard about this, I thought about not revealing it to fellow adventurers by all means at first." (Katia)

Katia continued the explanation.

"Female adventurers are probably fixated on strength more than male adventurers. They can't make a living unless they do so." (Katia)

The majority of women on this world are demanded to be 『Good wives, good mothers』. It's a different story if they have talent as magicians, but if not, their parents and relatives wish for them to marry normally.

"Female adventurers have succeeded in breaking through that conception first of all. Of course they also think about marrying, giving birth to children, and being happy as normal woman in the future, though." (Katia)

Slightly different from the circumstances of male adventurers, female adventurers have many troublesome matters to take into account.

They are looked down upon by male adventurers because they are women, their share of the rewards gets decreased, and they are told to make simple equipment repairs, do the laundry and cook food without being paid for all of that.

Additionally, since they are working at places with no official public order organizations like guard units keeping watch, there are also cases where they get dragged into crimes characteristic for women.

"I mean, that's why female adventurers stick together. If this amazing information were to be leaked to even a single woman, it would circulate among all women on the continent in no time." (Katia)

And many female adventurers would approach me while saying 『Marry me!』 or 『Have sex with me!』.

Likely there exists no worse nightmare than this.

"After all they would be able to earn money before marrying if they became able to use magic." (Elise)

In Elise's case, that's probably the extent of her thoughts, but in fact there was one more aspect to consider.

"I think the majority of the women might think...that they can feel relieved even if they were to stay unmarried as magic won't decline due to age." (Katia)

As long as they have magic, they won't be troubled about their livelihood, even if they work part-time at adventurer prep schools.

"It's because they consider a future of being unable to marry. It's a tough world, after all." (Ina)

"You might say so, but Ina, there are unexpectedly many singles among female adventurers. Because of that those with the same circumstances gather." (Katia)

Different to some countries on Earth, the public attention towards single women is harsh in this world.

That's the reason for them having a tendency to band together.

"They might be able to marry one day, but in preparation for not being able to do so, they regularly gather to exchange information or to teach useful information to their juniors." (Katia)

A get-together of female adventurers, eh?

It might be a substitute for a labor union or a benefit society.

"I never participated in such a get-together." (Wilma)

"Wilma, in your case it can't be helped, I think." (Katia)

She's the adopted daughter of that Minister Edgar, and since she's my wife, you might also say that she's under the protection of the Earl Baumeister House.

That means she ended up married before being invited to such a get-together?

"But, it's odd. I haven't heard stories about a gathering of people, who returned to being commoners after their marriage as former adventurers, and people who continue adventuring even after their marriage."

"A gathering of former adventurers and married female adventurers exists as well, though. There's just no interaction with the gathering of singles." (Katia)

"As expected, for them to be on good terms would be a tall order."

"It's also because their lives are completely different. The older ones are...well, basically that." (Katia)

Katia seemed to have difficulties to state the truth.

Are the women in the higher ranks in the gathering of singles even prohibiting their juniors to interact with former adventurers and fellow female adventurers, who managed to get married or gave birth to children, as they have reservations towards such people?

In such cases everyone might sense the mood and avoid getting in touch with such women even if they aren't forbidden to directly interact with them.

In my previous life I also experienced gatherings of women, but I think those seem troublesome in various ways.

I recall a female company employee, who was always cheerful, telling me with a serious look, 『Ichinomiya-san, a woman's enemy are other women』.

"I definitely won't be able spill your secret, hubby. I've been actually told that the meetings paused after I got married." (Katia)

She might have been excluded from the get-togethers of the fellow, single female adventurers who helped her for several years after she became an adventurer. Understanding that, Katia looked a bit sad.

"Ee——h! You should be delighted about that part. After all you were able to get out of by marrying at long last." (Luise)

"Listen here, Luise, I'm thankful to hubby who accepted a stubborn tomboy like me and told me that I'm cute, and I really like my current life. But, that doesn't mean that my life until then had been bad either." (Katia)

Katia, who became a powerful adventurer while still being a half-baked youth, might have thought that she possibly won't be able to marry in worst case. In her eyes, it's certainly true that she looks warmly back on her happy times during the get-togethers of fellow, single female adventurers.

"But, it sounds like you wouldn't ever be able to get married while staying there." (Luise)

"Don't say that!" (Katia)

It's probably an indisputable fact, but Katia yelled at Luise that it's absolutely forbidden to say it out loud.

"Umm, why didn't you invite your acquaintances to the wedding ceremony?" (Elise)

"Elise, you're really asking that?" (Ina)

Ina and I comprehended why Katia didn't call the single, female adventurers.

"The Eulenberg territory is far...right, Ina?" (Elise)

"There's also the issue of traveling and lodging expenses." (Ina)

"But, it would have been a good chance for Katia's friends to get to know the participating men." (Elise)

Elise is kind, so she should be thinking that it's a great chance for meetings between single men, who are attending the ceremony, and Katia's acquaintances, the single female adventurers. But I believe it wouldn't have worked out that smoothly at that product exhibition-like ceremony from the other day.

"If they were capable adventurers, there would be also some who came to the Baumeister Earldom for work? Such adventurers might have been able to participate."

"What do you think, Katia?"

"I sent out letters and written invitations. Later I heard that my senior, who took care of me the most, was just then working while secluding herself in a remote monster domain at a distant place for a nominated request. Man, that was really bad luck..." (Katia)

Katia apparently sent an invitation to her senior.
While looking very disappointed, she explained the circumstances to Elise.

"Was that so? That's regrettable, isn't it?" (Elise)

Of course it's not that Elise holds reservations, she's rather trying to be kind towards Katia and her senior.

However, in a certain way it makes matters worse as that kindness sounds like sarcasm from their point of view.

The gap between both sides is large.

At the same time as Katia feels disappointed about that senior of hers not having come to her wedding ceremony, she might actually feel relieved about it, too.

I won't be able to hear so from Katia herself, but I thought that it might probably be the case.

"Say, Katia-san, is that senior of yours called Lisa, by chance?" (Amalie)

"Eh? Why do you know about her, Amalie-san?" (Katia)

"Well, just now a letter addressed to you had been delivered through Baulburg's adventurer guild, and it looks like the sender is called Lisa. Look." (Amalie)

There was certainly Lisa written in the sender field of the letter that Amalie had been entrusted with by a servant of the mansion.

Be that as it may, to be able to send a letter to the Baumeister Earldom; she must be a female adventurer earning quite a bit of money.

"To send an expensive letter for the sake of her junior; she sure is a gentle senior." (Amalie)

"I wonder about that." (Katia)

Huh?

Amalie admired Katia's senior for sending a letter to her junior, but after hearing the sender's name, Katia's state seems to gradually become weird...

"When I was at the Baumeister Knightdom it was quite difficult to send letters home. The mailing fee is expensive after all." (Amalie)

In contrast to Japan, a mailing system hasn't been set up in this world. It takes a large amount of money to send letters to people who are far away.

Merchants can take letters along while transporting cargo to distant places with the regular magic airship services, but since there's no support by the government, they charge fairly high interest rates.

Therefore it wasn't unusual for a mail delivery to easily cost several silver coins (or several tens of thousands Japanese Yen).

Although they are in the process of increasing the exchange, sending a letter to the Empire raises the mailing fee by yet another one or two digits.

"Wend-kun provided the money so that I could send letters to my family back home." (Amalie)

"I see, thou are quite nice to Amalie." (Therese)

"Therese-san, back then I did it with good intentions as younger brother-in-law." (Wendelin)

"That part is easy to see through with the fact that thou have oddly started to use honorific speech. I don't think there's any problem in particular even if thou like your sister-in-law." (Therese)

"Don't add such weird attribute to me!" (Wendelin)

What am I going to do if my reputation becomes even more weird!?

"Wend-sama." (Wilma)

"What's up, Wilma?" (Wendelin)

"Katia is weird. She looks like a newborn fawn." (Wilma)

"Fawn?" (Wendelin)

Once I looked in Katia's direction since Wilma was saying strange things, she was trembling like a small animal while reading the letter said to be from her senior.
Just what is discomposing her so much?

"It's the first time for me to see Katia-san like this." (Katharina)

It's not just Katharina. I haven't ever seen Katia trembling like this either.
After all Katia is always full of spirit.

"It's a senior to whom you're indebted, right? Why are you trembling? Katia-san, she helped you becoming independent. I'm sure she's a gentle person..." (Elise)

"Yeah, that's true."

As expected, I think Elise might not be able to understand.
Certainly, she might be a senior who took care of her in various ways until now.
Katia possesses remarkable abilities nowadays too, but she should have had her fair share of hardships when she was still a greenhorn.
That female adventurer who helped her isn't a bad person...is what I want to believe.

"But, she ended up marrying before her senior. Her deliberately sending a letter means she will demand something outrageous...uguh!" (Luise)

Since Luise was about to say something unnecessary, Elise and Haruka quickly covered her mouth.

"I mean, I can't imagine it being anything but that." (Luise)

"Still, don't voice it out."

"It might not be the case."

"No, look, it made that Katia tremble after seeing the letter." (Luise)

I mostly agree with Luise's thoughts, but just in case we should properly ask about the story behind it.

"Katia, what's wrong for you to suddenly tremble? I've become your husband, and the wife's worries are the husband's..." (Wendelin)

"Hubbyyy—!" (Katia)

Once I called out to her, Katia hugged me with tears in her eyes.

She smells really nice...oops, not that!

Does that means something is causing her to be so scared?

"Is it about the person who sent the letter, that Lisa? Did she write something in the letter?" (Wendelin)

"It's a disaster! Big sis is saying she's going to visit to have a look at my situation!" (Katia)

"Big sis?" (Wendelin)

"I refer to Lisa-senpai as big sis. Since the adventurer industry is what it is, it's for the sake of not being looked down upon by male adventurers." (Katia)

I guess the 『Lisa-san』 or 『senior』 is owed to her having been treated with contempt by male adventurers who have many rough fellows in their ranks.

"I see. So that the reason why you're referring to yourself with 『I1』, Katia." (Wendelin)

"I have always done that since I understood what was going on around me." (Katia)

"Since your childhood!? Katia's home is really amazing in a certain way!" (Erwin)

Why does a girl who had been born into a noble house use such first person pronoun since her childhood!?

For a change Erw advocated common sense by wondering whether that's not weird.

But, right now that doesn't really matter.

Her always having been cute young woman with a slightly rough language is the highest level of gap moe2.

"Well, the fact that I actually have mana was discovered after I left home." (Katia)

"Eh? What about a crystal ball or magic books?"

Even my home possessed a crystal ball to determine the existence of mana, and books related to magic.

I suppose, nothing less of a noble territory that slipped even its patron's memory.

"As I'm saying, when I entered the capital's adventurer prep school... I wanted to hide my noble

origin, and since I was drawn to the capital, I made up my mind and left towards the capital."
(Katia)

Her classmates over there were surprised that Katia hadn't measured her mana with a crystal ball, causing her to hurriedly use the crystal ball at the prep school.
At this point it was confirmed for the first time that she possesses mana.

"I think I was fourteen years old back then." (Katia)

"The cases of confirming the possession of mana beyond the age of ten are rare. However, I didn't hear overly many rumors about you, Katia." (Katharina)

The rumors about such unusual person should have definitely spread within the school.
Even if it might be an adventurer prep school at another place.
However, neither Katharina nor we heard any rumors about Katia.

"Although it was confirmed that I possess mana, it was at the level of not reaching the intermediate level. Afterwards I couldn't learn magic at the prep school." (Katia)

Was it because the teacher's teaching methods were bad? Or was it an issue of affinity?
Katia couldn't learn any magic while she was enrolled at the school.
The increase of her mana capacity stopped immediately, too. She apparently ended up becoming an adventurer who can't use magic despite possessing mana.

"At first I struggled quite a bit as I couldn't earn money well. At that time I met Big Sis." (Katia)

The magician called Lisa seems to be a famous person.
I didn't know, but according to Burkhart-san, it can't be helped since 『Earl-sama, you truly don't have any interest in other famous magicians』.

"Since I have little mana, it's not like I could receive teaching in mana from the famous Burkhart-sama. Big Sis was a celebrity as well, but she tenderly taught me since I'm a woman." (Katia)

There are people who can't readily discover suitable magic they can use, even if they have mana.
There are also some who struggle with the invocation of magic and its skillful use, even after finding something that suits them.
It's in proportion to their individual talent, but the past Katia didn't have talent in magic anyway.
Finally, after a harsh training regimen, she acquired her current combat style. Nowadays she's become famous as adventurer specialized on wyverns and flying dragons.

"It's all thanks to Big Sis' coaching." (Katia)

"Lisa-san is a very magnificent person, isn't she? It's great that you were able to meet with such a nice person, Katia-san." (Elise)

"Ah...yeah..." (Katia)

"Just for reference; what kind of training did you receive?"

"At that time..." (Katia)

At this point Katia repeatedly trembled in short intervals once again.

Cold sweat was running down her face, too.

Undoubtedly that female magician called Lisa is excellent, but she doesn't seem to be a person allowing to easily guess her personality, or rather her pros and cons.

Since Elise believes that a person's nature is fundamentally good, she's probably thinking that Lisa, who drew out Katia's talent, is a very good-natured person.

"Katia, that painful, hard time of training is over. You can relax." (Wendelin)

"Oh, right! I'm already free!" (Katia)

Once I gently placed my hands on Katia's shoulders, she finally returned to reality.

"Or rather, I wonder just how much did you have to suffer there?" (Erwin)

Erw's face cramped up slightly due to Katia's quivering.

"However, that painful training has turned into Katia-san's strength now, thus I think it would be wrong to generally criticize the person called Lisa."

"Training is basically always harsh. Although there are limits..." (Erwin)

Erw said as if it's something like strict club activities.

Given that the adventurer trade is relentless in various ways, I guess it's correct to say that the grueling training of Lisa hadn't been pointless.

In the first place, Katia acquired the emotional strength to compete against male adventurers on equal terms. That might be owed to that grueling training.

Which reminds me, Luise and I went through a bitter experience because of Doushi, too.

"So, you're saying that Lisa-san, who's said to have strict and gentle aspects, is going to visit." (Amalie)

"It seems so." (Katia)

In short, what Amalie said becomes the conclusion.

A senior, female adventurer, who looked after her quite a bit, comes to meet with the newly wed Katia.

She deliberately spent a lot money and time to come from the capital to Baulburg.

"On a glance, it sounds like a very nice story."

"It's not?"

"If you look at Katia-san's reaction, it doesn't seem so to be honest, but..."

As Katharina said, I'm sure the female adventurer Lisa, who's still single, has various matters to discuss with Katia who's like a sister-in-law to her...I don't want to imagine the rest as it's too scary.

Ina also revealed a complicated expression.

"Hubbyyy, you're going to be with me at the meeting, right?" (Katia)

"No, that's..." (Wendelin)

"It's no good?" (Katia)

"Look, that Lisa, no matter how much of a famous magician she might be, she's someone where I don't know whether I can trust her."

I don't particularly mind, but I wonder how Roderich is going to decide.

Since excellent magicians have high positions in society, he might allow her to enter the mansion without trouble even as person who's not acquainted with me at all.

However, right now I'm the high-ranking noble Earl Baumeister.

If that magician had been instigated by a noble hostile to me, she might try to harm me the instant she meets me.

I don't think that such possibility is likely, but in Roderich's eyes, my safety must be perfectly guaranteed.

Going even further, it's right after Katia married into the Earl Baumeister House.

If this was a friend or acquaintance of Elise and the others, they might have been able to enter the mansion easily, but it was very probable that Roderich will tell Katia: 『I'm very sorry, but can I have you meet with her outside the mansion?』.

"That's true. We don't quite know what kind of person that Lisa is...and I'm not that well-informed about famous adventurers either..." (Elise)

Elise apologetically explained to Katia that she cannot afford to allow a suspicious person to get close to me.

"If we wait a bit longer, Roderich-san will be able to acquire information about that Lisa person, and I think he will tell us that he doesn't mind it even if we invite her into this mansion. However, this time..." (Elise)

"Eh——h! Me alone with Big Sis——!?" (Katia)

Hearing the final verdict from Elise, Katia yelled in despair.

"Do you hate it this much to meet alone with her despite her being your magic teacher with whom you have essentially associated for several years?" (Ina)

"Normally I wouldn't mind it, but the problem is me being a newly-wed!" (Katia)

"That's the biggest issue here?" (Ina)

It might not be understandable for Ina, but I was able to comprehend why that part was the biggest problem.

"Yeah, Big Sis is unmarried. There's no man close to her at the moment either. Plans for her to

marry in the future...at least I don't think I have heard about any..." (Katia)

According to Katia, that Lisa person is single right now, and it also seems unlikely that she will be able to marry in the future.

Meeting with such a senior of the same sex...?

"Anyone! Please come with meee!" (Katia)

""""""""Impossible!""""""""

We naturally denied Katia's request with all our power.

After all people, who plunge into minefields by choice, don't exist in this world.

"Sorry, I think it's slightly impossible for me as well." (Amalie)

"No waaay..." (Katia)

Being even refused by Amalie, her last hope, Katia became frightened of Lisa's shadow as she didn't know when she might show up.

Chapter 4 – Lisa, the Visiting Calamity

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"You're well-acquainted with her?" (Wendelin)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Katharina admired Burkhart-san's broad connections.

Those connections meant he knew the outstanding ones among the adventurers, but for him to have taught magic to such a famous person...

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

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

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

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

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

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

I felt like the way of calling one 『Big Sis』 had a smack of a grandmother, but since the person herself apparently liked it, why not. There was no point in telling others what to do anyway.

I have been calling my master just like that, but he looked much younger than his true age gave away. And yet I feel like he possessed something like dignity at the same time.

Though I think it was also owed to him not aging after becoming a Talking Corpse.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Such women didn't approach men often.

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

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

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

Those kinds of circumstances could be understood by anyone.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It was an extremely hard profession for female adventurers.

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

"Hee, really?" (Wendelin)

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

"No, thanks..." (Wendelin)

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

Katharina had various cute parts because of this, though.

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

* * *

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

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

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

Suddenly Burkhart-san's expression became stern.

Once I followed his eyes, I saw Amalie and Therese happily chatting at the neighboring table. Those two were close in age to my inner self. Since before the tunnel uproar, Therese had taken lessons in cooking from Amalie and often spent time together with her. They had become friends.

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

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

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

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

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

The crystal ball was shining in beautiful rainbow colors.

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

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

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

This was proof of her possessing talent for magic.

Therese had an aptitude for magic!

Not just Burkhart-san and me, but everyone else looked nervous.
Therese herself seemed very glad.
I guess, as could be expected from a former Duchess.

"My body became hot." (Therese)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Burkhart-san apparently realized the meaning behind it, and looked at me in astonishment.

"Earl-sama..." (Burkhart)

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

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

It was nothing of significance.

Therese and I had simply entered such a relationship.

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

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

Burkhart-san pointed out quite bluntly.
And yet I couldn't deny it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Since it would become troublesome if she were to act publicly, she limited it to private advice. Officially she never broke her stance of being a retired noble who was being taken care of in the Baumeister Earldom.

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

"In the end, Therese's opinion was the most correct one in regards to the matter with the tunnel,

wasn't it? If we had handled it that way from the very beginning, it would have finished without all those detours." (Ina)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Given that Therese herself had thoroughly experienced such case with her elder brothers, she probably didn't want her own child to find itself in a similar position.

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

"I see." (Burkhart)

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

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

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

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

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

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

This ain't no magic girl anime...but even if I said that, no one besides me would understand what I meant.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Yeah, he's definitely not suitable. Let alone beginners, that's something for chosen people!" (Luise)

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

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

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

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

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

"Even before that, Doushi is currently busy."

"Busy? Why?"

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

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

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



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

『...I'm...』 (Armstrong)



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

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

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

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

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

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

"That sounds hectic for Doushi."

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

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

"A dragon!?" (Katia)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

She started shouting while pointing at the crater.

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

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

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

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

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

"What an excellent gardener!" (Armstrong)

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

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

"Doushi, you are free today?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Ina-chan, where should we go?" (Luise)

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

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

"There's a restaurant I want to visit! It's a sweets shop called 『Galox 1』!" (Armstrong)

"Doushi, I recommend that place." (Wilma)

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

At that point Doushi and Wilma reached a mutual understanding. That Galox store...there existed a similar female, big eater talent in my previous life...? A coincidence, right?

There being a dish called bucket parfait likely meant it was a restaurant with large servings, or rather extremely large servings which both of them loved so much.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"What's wrong?" (Armstrong)

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

I gave Doushi a summary of Katia's circumstances.

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

"Ee——h! I'm fine." (Katia)

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

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

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

* * *

"Me! One bucket parfait!" (Armstrong)

"Three for me." (Wilma)

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

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

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

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

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

"Normally one serving would already be plenty."

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

Even the normal-sized fruit parfaits were rather big.

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

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

"Ye——ah! This rocks!" (Wilma)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Burkhart-san, is that okay?" (Wendelin)

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

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

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

"For me as well!" (Armstrong)

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

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

"Yeah..." (Katia)

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

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

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

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

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

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

"The parfait is splendid!" (Katia)

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

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

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

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

rumors about her!" (Armstrong)

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

"Something about her freezing a male adventurer, who displeased her, in a bar. Or a man, who planned rude stuff and attacked her on top of an unpopular mountain, is still remaining as an ice pillar on its peak. Those kinds of rumors." (Armstrong)

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

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

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

"I think that's still plenty terrible..." (Wendelin)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A woman's jealousy is really scary.

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

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

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

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

Katia was shocked by Wilma's sharp tongue.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And then she slowly headed over here.

I think she's not 30 years old yet.

Her bondage-styled black short dress and black long boots didn't suit her age, or rather, she was exposing her thighs without paying any heed to it.

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

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

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

She's a person who would have likely danced with *Ilia* in the old movie I saw. Because of that, the black short dress emphasized her body line.

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

She might have let her guard down because everyone was relaxing. Moreover, it's possible that this flashy lady is quite capable.

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

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

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

Burkhardt-san, who was in a break modus all the way, ordered one fruit punch without fruits after the other.

"Huh? What about Doushi?" (Wendelin)

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

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

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

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

"(What useless adults——!)"

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

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

Luise had apparently noticed her presence quite a while ago.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"True." (Haruka)

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

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

"As if." (Wendelin)

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

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

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

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

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

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

"How should I answer such a question..." (Wendelin)

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

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

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

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

Lisa glanced at me for an instant.

"Various things happened..." (Katia)

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

"Big Sis!" (Katia)

Until just a while ago, we trash-talked about her coming here to curse her junior's marriage out of jealousy, but Lisa honestly congratulated Katia.

Katia, who had lost her biggest anxiety, should have sighed in relief inside her mind.

The tension also disappeared from her face.

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

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

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

"Eh? What, hubby?" (Katia)

Katia, who had a burden taken off her shoulder after her biggest worry had vanished, became careless and unconditionally accepted Lisa's request.

Even though I tried to stop her in a hurry, it was apparently too late.

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

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

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

Katia, who ended up promising that she could ask anything, started to have cold sweat run down her face due to Lisa's question which would lead to her suddenly disclosing my secret.

Even her hands that carried the second parfait, which had been brought over just minutes ago, to her mouth stopped as well.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



At this rate it would be a problem to continue the talk on the open terrace, hence we decided to return to the mansion right away while taking her along.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

However, this woman has a nasty tongue.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Uh!" (Katia)

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

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

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

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

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

"Hey, Therese..." (Katia)

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

And she has told Lisa that her guidance was unskilled.

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

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

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

"You bitch——!" (Lisa)

Therese likely pissed off Lisa on purpose.

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

Just how does that work?

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

"Thou are true to thine nickname as Lisa the Blizzard." (Therese)

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

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

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

Therese wasn't perturbed in the least by Lisa's intensity.

Rather, it looked as if she was enjoying angering the other side.

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

"..."

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

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

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

"Oi! Therese!" (Katia)

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

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

Her expression changed from being enraged into an expressionless one.

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

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

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

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

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

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

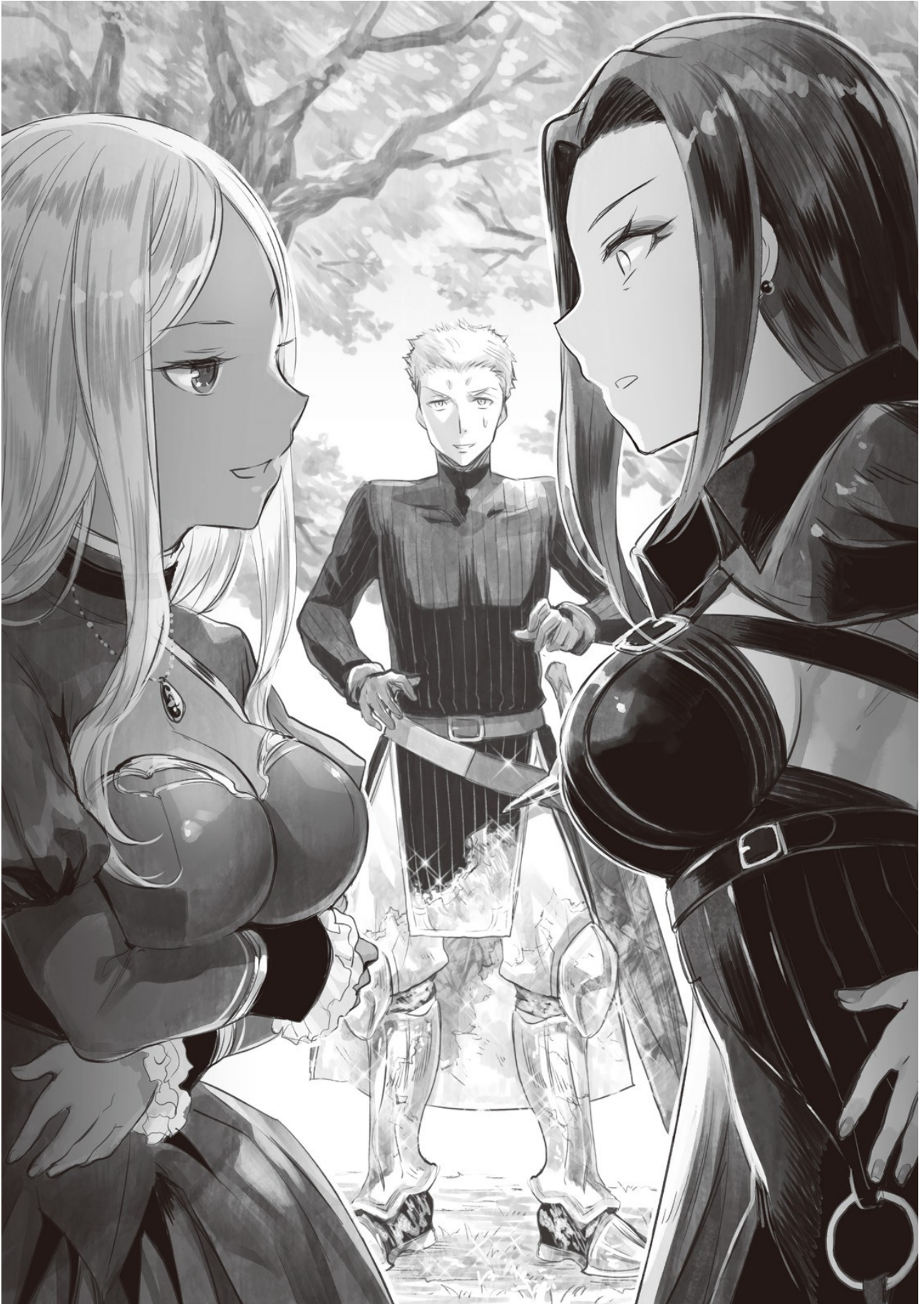
"It's the fate of a veteran to be completely beaten by a newcomer someday. Have peace of mind, I will take up that task." (Therese)

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

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

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

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



* * *

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I mean, Elise is scary at such times.

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

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

"Suspensions?" (Luise)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Yeah." (Wendelin)

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

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

"Sorry, Haruka-san." (Erwin)

Erw couldn't move about as his feet were frozen, but Haruka skillfully shaved off the ice with her kodachi, extricating him in little time.
Haruka is truly a role model for a wife.

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

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

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

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

Everyone became silent upon Luise's question.
She was a bit flashy, but still a beauty. However, she was terribly strong-willed. If angered, she would freeze the other party.

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

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

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

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

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

"Of course I will do so."

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

"Leave it to me..."

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

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

* * *

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

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

"Wendelin, is it morning?" (Therese)

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

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

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

"It's a habit from my time as Duchess Philip. High-ranking nobles organize their lives by the

schedule decided by their retainers. In reality they are unexpectedly sad beings. Nowadays it has become possible for me to carefreely enjoy going back to sleep, but I can't easily get rid of that habit." (Therese)

"I see." (Wendelin)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

slightly embarrassed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Katharina's home, the Waigel House, is an Associate Baron house now, but in the beginning it was a Knight house just like the Eulenberg House.

It doesn't seem as though the amount of mana rises in proportion to one's pedigree.

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

"Please take care of me, sensei." (There's)

"Please, sensei." (Katia)

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

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

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

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

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

"Really? Will things really work out with so easily?" (Katia)

"It's impossible for normal people, but...because you have been accelerating yourself drastically with magic, I think it should. If you keep learning the basics properly here, and with your increase in mana, you should become capable of cutting things a lot easier." (Haruka)

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

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

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

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

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

And then at night...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Therese looked happy after receiving a wand from me.

Will the magic she learned work against Lisa the Blizzard?

We mainly practiced fire magic.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But, if it came to spells working against Lisa, a training period of one month was very short.

It's not a bad strategy to focus on learning one spell that can counter Lisa's ice-based magic rather than learning various spells.

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

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

No matter how much talent Therese might have, there's no way for her to be able to win against Lisa, who has been training for more than twenty years, by practicing magic for one month.

In addition, even Lisa could be reasonably counted to the category of prodigies.

Therese knew that better than anyone else.

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

It looked like Therese really picked this fight in order to hide my ability.

She didn't have the intention to win the duel in the first place.

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

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

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

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

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

Elise, Ina, Luise and Katharina safely became pregnant.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

They should be around the same age, but Amalie had been child-faced for as long as I knew her. I

forgot because she looks younger than her actual age. Based on her appearance, Lisa is that after all...

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

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

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

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

Katia refused a match against Lisa with all her might.

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

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

"Compatibility?"

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

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

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

That means...what, Therese?

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

"Therese! You tricked me!" (Katia)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 5 – Blacklist

"I have some free time until the duel against the former Duchess Philip. Now then, what should I do?" (Lisa)

My pupil and junior, Katia, got married to Earl Baumeister.

Various complicated emotions are welling up within me, but for now it doesn't matter.

The problem I should consider above all is Katia, who should have reached the limit of her mana growth long ago, having raised her mana.

In short, there's a secret to Earl Baumeister who married Katia.

If I find it out, I might be able to increase my mana as well.

Having said that, the results at present go as far as having settled for a duel against the former Duchess Philip who is shielding Earl Baumeister, huh?

I can consider it as having deceived them skillfully, but no matter how much of a famous magician I might be, I can't meet Earl Baumeister so easily, and entering the mansion is impossible, too.

The other side should be quite vigilant, too.

I have to obediently wait until the day of the duel...no, I need information, no matter how trivial it might be.

It might turn into a hint for the reason why Katia's mana grew.

In that case, it's essential to get as close to Earl Baumeister as possible.

"How can I approach Earl Baumeister...?" (Lisa)

I won't go as far as saying...it's for the sake of obtaining a hint, but since I had nothing to do, I showed up at the adventurer guild in Baulburg once again for the time being.

Before that...I have turned up here just yesterday to let them know about my whereabouts.

It's likely for nominated requests to appear for an excellent magician.

You're free to accept or not, but notifying the guild about your whereabouts as much as possible is common sense, or rather, good manners.

"Yo." (Lisa)

"Lisa-san? What a pleasure."

The young male employee at the guild's reception looks somewhat tense the moment he sees me. Am I that scary?

"You got a job where I don't need to go far away?" (Lisa)

There's around three weeks left until the duel.

If I go to another place for a nominated request, I might not be in time for the duel in the case of an unforeseen accident.

I suppose I will kill some time by accepting a request catered towards magicians that can be done around Baulburg.

"A one-time request suitable for you, Lisa-san?"

"That's right." (Lisa)

"There is one."

I'm surprised that there's suddenly a job fitting my criteria.
After all, I might be watched by the Earl Baumeister House.
Even if there might be a shortage in manpower, I thought that there's no way for there to be a request for me because of them.

"Is it fine for me to take it?" (Lisa)

"Umm, that is, it looks like a noble personage is going to visit the Earl Baumeister House very soon, and his retainers say they would like additional guards."

I see, bodyguard for an important person, huh?
It might be the guarding of a high-ranking noble, but going by how the young employee talks about it, it feels more like increasing the guards just for caution's sake, and not so much that there's imminent danger to the target.

"It appears to be just in case, but we can't send around unskilled people. Since you're an excellent magician, we can leave it to you without having to worry, Lisa-san."

I feel like this young employee is still afraid of me, but since I'm someone who does her work properly, I seem to be trusted on that part.
After all there are many excellent adventurers and magicians who aren't suited for this kind of work.

"Understood. Let me take the job." (Lisa)

It's convenient since I will be able to get close to Earl Baumeister since the target is going to meet with him.
It's highly likely that he has something to do with the reason for Katia's increase in mana.

"Given that there's the confirmation of the terms, please follow me inside."

"Got it." (Lisa)

At such times I think that it's good for me to always finish my work reliably.
Even if the other party is a high-ranking noble, my chance to approach them will surely come around thanks to that.

* * *

"Milord, please have a look at this list." (Roderich)

"Thanks, Roderich." (Wendelin)

It might seem as if I'm always doing nothing but hunting, gathering materials, and public works, but even I do the work of a noble occasionally.

Being handed documents by Roderich, I have to check them.

The main points have been summarized, but it's necessary for me to properly read the documents to confirm the contents.

I'm trusting Roderich, but this is also one of the distinctions as family head.

"A list of people not allowed to be employed, eh...?" (Wendelin)

"No matter how much we might lack hands, employing these people will instead cause troubles."
(Roderich)

Because the Earl Baumeister House is basically short of workers, candidates for working under us will be put to use as long as they haven't done anything majorly bad.

Though, if they want to get promoted, they will need responding abilities.

However, we encounter various problems, and we have to also refuse people.

Mostly it's people who have caused big problems at the noble houses they served before, those who have been placed on the list of dangerous characters, and those who stole public funds, got violent towards their coworkers after getting drunk, or made a move on the wives of other people.

Come to think of it, when working as a trading company man, I was once told by an important person: "Humans have the potential to fall through because of money, alcohol, and women (men)."

In addition, there are also cases where the person's abilities are far too lacking, but since we also have simple jobs to offer, we take them in if they are doing things seriously.

In order to not suffer a loss by employing such problematic characters without realizing, there seem to be blacklists going around among the nobles.

Roderich has apparently been entrusted with such lists by Margrave Breithilde, Minister Edgar, Minister Rückner, and so on.

『Everyone wants to create an obligation of gratitude with us』 I was told by Roderich.

But it seems better to obtain such lists from several big nobles.

There are always updates, and there are also people that will be listed or not, depending on the houses and factions.

"Is that Lisa-san listed?" (Wendelin)

"She's not, but I have grasped her information. Therefore there's no chance for her to get close to you, milord." (Roderich)

Lisa usually walks around in a flashy outfit, and she's famous for taking quite harsh revenge against male adventurers who try giving her disadvantages or treat her like an idiot, but she appears to complete her work properly.

Because of that, her evaluation among nobles isn't bad.

Even if her appearance and tone as a free magician might be somewhat extreme, there's no problem with her in their eyes, since she finishes work in exchange for rewards.

If she was their daughter, they might have treated her differently, though.

"She might try to trespass into the mansion." (Wendelin)

"That's unlikely. I have increased the surveillance just in case, but she should obediently stay within our territory until the duel against Therese-sama. She might accept individual requests. But above

all she has to care about her reputation as an excellent magician." (Roderich)

Lisa has an extreme hate towards female magicians and adventurers being looked down upon by men.

Hence she seems to finish her work reliably as if to prove that she isn't inferior to men. Because her usual appearance is that, it's easy to misunderstand, however.

"You're saying she's a diligent person at her core?" (Wendelin)

"Maybe. If not for the matter with Katia-sama, there would be jobs I'd like to request her help, but...well, I guess I will send that share your and Katharina's way, milord." (Roderich)

"Oi..." (Wendelin)

So I'm visited by misfortune just because I'm targeted by Lisa?

"There's no way that I'm going to put you to work today, milord..." (Roderich)

"That's only natural. Earl Baumeister has plans with me today. It's a bit inelegant as present, but if it's a list of criminals, I brought one with me after the Kingdom's administration updated it."

"Oh, Your Highness the Crown Prince, excuse my discourtesy for not coming to greet you." (Wendelin)

"I don't mind. Today I'm traveling incognito."

A man suddenly enters my office as if to join our conversation.

He's the crown prince of the Helmut Kingdom.

Not going out to greet him since he's traveling incognito, or rather, because of his too lacking presence, no one had noticed his arrival...there's no way for that to be true, is there?

Even though he's traveling incognito, it's impossible for no guards to accompany the crown prince.

"I took it with me, just in case. I'd like you to use it as a reference."

"Thank you very much." (Wendelin)

"The development of the Baumeister Earldom has become the key to the growth of the Kingdom's southern region. Please don't mind it," the crown prince says amiably in a refined manner.

He's young, handsome, capable, and he's a person who gives you a good impression if you actually get in touch with him.

And yet, why doesn't this man stand out?

There's the impression that he's always hidden in the shadow of His Majesty.

It makes me wonder whether some kind of curse has been placed on him.

"Your Highness, aren't you busy with various matters?" (Wendelin)

"Somewhat. But, for the sake of today I finished my work at an accelerated rate."

It's because I previously told him that I'm inviting him to come to my territory. There's the matter with Lisa, but as it's not like I'm all that busy, he has visited me today.

As it would be pitiful to call it off this time because I'm busy dealing with a rude, female magician, seeing how he looked forward to it so much that he hurried to get his work done in advance, I didn't say anything.

It might have turned into lese majeste. Even Lisa shouldn't scheme to get closer to me with the crown prince being present.

"It looks like you're going to take me along for a hunt, today."

"Yes. It's the exclusive hunting ground of the Earl Baumeister House where people usually don't trespass." (Wendelin)

"I'm looking forward to it since it looks like there will be plenty of game."

"By the way, what about today's guards?" (Wendelin)

"Of course they are waiting outside."

As expected, the crown prince of a country won't act by himself, huh?

If I had gone to the royal palace, he might have cut down on the number of people accompanying him, but since it looks like he has also visited other nobles' territories and areas under the direct control of the Kingdom until he arrived here, a considerable number of guards should be accompanying him. I guess the guards are waiting in the room for servants. It looks like he has already unloaded his luggage at one of the inns in Baulburg which Roderich had prepared for him and his entourage.

"We are fully prepared to guard you, Your Highness." (Roderich)

Leaving aside the hunting ground, since the inside of the mansion belongs to the territory of the Baumeister House, Roderich took responsibility and arranged for the crown prince's escort.

"We have assigned only those we are deeply trusting among the retainers of the Earl Baumeister House. I guess you could call it a blessing, but since there's an abundance of game even in places that aren't overly far away from Baulburg, it's a big help that it doesn't take time to station them." (Wendelin)

Though that alone means that there's still plenty of untouched nature in my territory.

"About that matter, my close aides are prone to worrying. They apparently increased my guards on a short notice. Of course I have heard that all of them are people that can be relied on, though."

"It's inevitable, considering the importance of Your Highness' safety." (Elise)

At that point Elise shows up, carrying a tea set, and starts to talk to His Highness.

There's no way that we can entrust the role of pouring tea for His Highness to Lea. This is why my first wife, Elise, is handling that task.

It tells him that we'd like him to wait while drinking tea until we are able to prepare the hunting ground.

"The wives are going to participate as well?"

"Of course, Your Highness." (Elise)

Elise replied that it's planned for her to accompany us as the one in charge of healing in case something happens while serving the tea for His Highness.

Ina and the others will join the hunt as well.

Since it's the visit of His Highness the Crown Prince, it would be disrespectful if my wives didn't show up.

Welcoming him with the whole family is only normal.

"Earl Baumeister, your wives must be fairly skilled. There are few cases where the wives of nobles take part in hunting. I'm looking forward to it."

Well, usually that makes sense, doesn't it?

They definitely participate in banquets and dance parties, but it's rare for the wives of nobles to join hunts.

It might not be the same for low-ranking nobles, but royalty doesn't visit them in the first place.

Since I was told that the preparation of the hunting ground would take a bit longer, I checked the list of those not allowed to be employed.

I don't really understand what kind of people they are as the paper only lists the names of the people requiring special attention.

"Employing people is difficult, isn't it?"

"Indeed, Your Highness."

If there are employees supporting the Earl Baumeister House like Roderich, there are also people wrecking the houses they are working for.

No matter the organization, it's the people that are most important.

"Uh huh, I guess those guys came after all..."

His Highness discovered several names from among the names listed on our side's list of rejected people, and nodded in understanding.

"Your Highness, do you know them?" (Wendelin)

"They are basically capable. But, they aren't employed by any noble house."

"Why?" (Wendelin)

"They have zero will to cooperate, and only cause troubles around them."

That means even in this world it's not like it will be fine as long as you are just excellent.

"They can't control themselves even if employed on short term?" (Wendelin)

"Correct. If they are allowed to officially work for an administration, they become a bad influence

towards other retainers. I think Roderich's decision is correct in these cases."

Roderich's and His Highness' opinions aligned.

"It's a blacklist that anyone will agree with. For them to not be able to get hired in the current situation here means they must be quite bad fellows."

"I suppose, you're right."

Just as I handed the documents to Roderich after signing them, I was informed about the preparations of the hunting ground having been completed. We head to the stable on the mansion's grounds, and depart to the hunting ground while riding horses.

"Earl Baumeister, you appear to be familiar with handling horses."

"More or less...after all I usually use magic to get anywhere." (Wendelin)

I think I became able to ride horses normally because of the civil war. To the bitter end it didn't exceed normal levels of riding, though. On the other hand, His Highness is skilled at riding a horse. He has probably been taught how to be a good king since his birth. Elise and the others have good reflexes, thus they are riding their horses skilfully. Katharina hasn't such good motor reflexes, but because of her manners as noble, she regularly practices, improving her skill at horse-riding.

"Earl Baumeister-dono, do thou wish that I teach thee later?" (Therese)

"Ah yeah, we have a person who studied how to become a good empress on our side as well." (Wendelin)

This time Therese accompanies us as well. At first Therese declined, but His Highness invited her to come along by all means. It seems he prefers hunting with a big number of people. Even so, His Highness is someone with plenty of tolerance, isn't he? He's normally talking with Therese, who should be troublesome for him to deal with in various ways. For some reason he isn't conspicuous, though.

"However, I'm more skilful at hunting." (Wendelin)

"I'm sure. I only experienced hunting as aristocratic socializing. I can't win in this regard against thee, Wendelin...oops, Earl Baumeister-dono who has been active as an adventurer." (Therese)

Because His Highness is present, Therese doesn't call me Wendelin, but Earl Baumeister-dono.

"Milady, I don't think it would be a problem if you called him as usual."

"It's because there are other people besides Thy Highness with us...let's take that as the sensible reply here." (Therese)

"The ones next to me are only my close aides. Above all, Wendelin and I are friends. Even if they know about the relationship between Wendelin and milady, there's no one here that would mention it to others. And even before that, if you consider the relationship between me and Wendelin, there's no need to worry."

"I see..." (Therese)

Therese nods in understanding.

His Highness had started calling me by my first name without me noticing, but no one pointed that out.

Everyone guessed that it would spoil His Highness' mood, if he were denied to do so.

For His Highness it appears to be of utmost importance to be my friend.

"Katia, you're also good at riding a horse, aren't you?"

"Since I can't travel with magic, I have properly learned horse-riding as a means of travel." (Katia)

Given that Katia also owns good reflexes, she handles her horse a lot more skilfully than I do.

"By the way, Your Highness. There's one thing I'd like to ask, if I may." (Katia)

"What is it, Katia-dono?"

Just what does that Katia want to ask His Highness?

"I heard that you employed new, temporary guards for the hunt, but were they introduced through Baulburg's adventurer guild?" (Katia)

"That's what I've heard. After all, the guild can provide capable, reliable adventurers."

Given that the adventurer guild would lose trust if they were to refer unskilled fellows, I'm sure they have introduced proper adventurers.

"Through the guild...?" (Katia)

Since the other party is His Highness, Katia uses honorific language for a change, but probably because of that, her voice gradually loses in strength.

She can't come up with any proper polite terms as she isn't used to it?

No, is there anything else worrying her?

"Katia, what's wrong?"

"You know...hubby..." (Katia)

"I'm pleased that you have come. I have been hired as bodyguard of His Highness on short notice, but the reconnaissance of the vicinity has already been finished. Of course I haven't done anything as foolish as frightening the game and letting it get away." (Lisa)

"Big Sis!" (Katia)

"Eh?"

There was someone who called out to us as soon as we arrived at the hunting ground. It's someone we remember quite well...especially Katia.

I see, I guess this is the reason for Katia asking His Highness whether the new guards had been hired from the adventurer guild.

"You're the new guard, huh? You seem to be a famous magician. I didn't hear anything about you besides that, though."

"I'm called 『Lisa the Blizzard』."

"I have heard that name before. Take care of us today."

"Please leave it to me." (Lisa)

Once Lisa's appearance that would startle any normal person was seen by someone as good-natured by birth as the crown prince, they would probably feel, 『How unusual with her slightly eccentric get-up』.

However, since Lisa is a famous magician and adventurer who has been nominated for requests often by nobles even though she might look like this, she apparently has enough leeway to feign friendliness in front of His Highness.

Since even Katia is able to do it, it's no wonder that her senior, Lisa, can do the same, I suppose.

"Big Sis?" (Katia)

"Long time no see, Katia-dono. What a fine coincidence to meet you today." (Lisa)

..... ..

As expected, even Therese feels flabbergasted by Lisa, who greets us with a barefaced lie. I certainly didn't expect her to use such a method to get close to us.

"Katia-dono, is she an acquaintance of yours?"

"Umm...she has been my teacher in magic and adventuring..." (Katia)

"I see. The teacher of Katia-dono who plastered the streets of the capital with a written challenge against the nobles and us. That means I can ask for your protection with peace of mind. By the way, Lisa-dono, what about your bow?"

"Unfortunately archery isn't my forte, but I can use an interesting spell instead." (Lisa)

"I'm looking forward to that. Come and hunt with us as well, Lisa-dono."

"It's an honor, Your Highness." (Lisa)

"How could that be!" (Wendelin)

"Wendelin, is something wrong?"

"No, it's nothing." (Wendelin)

The magician called Lisa hasn't survived this long for show, huh?
For her to even outwit Therese and being able to legally join at our side went beyond my expectations.
This will be hard to handle for Katia, won't it?

"Katia-dono, it's great that you will be together with your teacher today, isn't it?"

"Hahaha...I don't feel anything but thanks towards Your Highness' kindness." (Katia)

There's no way that His Highness noticed Lisa's true feelings. He seems to be a person who acts while normally believing in the good of people, just like Elise.
He thinks that he did something very nice for Katia, albeit it being coincidence.
As noble of the Kingdom I'd like to be spared from directly telling him otherwise, though.

"(That spinster...she splendidly took her revenge for the last time...as long as we don't reveal any faults while hunting normally...)" (Therese)

"(I guess you're right...)"

"Wendelin, is something wrong?"

"No, since Therese came hunting here the other day, I just listened a bit to her story from back then." (Wendelin)

"Thy Highness, I just said that this is a good hunting ground with a lot of game." (Therese)

"That's reassuring."

His Highness seems to have fun since he doesn't know the circumstances at all, but once I casually look in Lisa's direction, she shows me a smile telling me "gotcha."

"(Hubbyyy...)" (Katia)

"(It will be fine as long you don't say anything unnecessary. Just focus on hunting.)" (Wendelin)

It's impossible that my secret trait would get exposed if we hunt normally.
Since Elise and the other should know as much without me explicitly telling them, it was no issue, but I still ended up feeling bothered by Lisa's tenacity.

* * *

"To the last it's just for caution's sake, but it will also give your attendants a peace of mind, I think, Your Highness."

Once we arrived at the hunting ground, the retainers dispatched by Roderich did a final safety check, and headed to their assigned position afterwards.

At last the hunting began. Beaters, who were chosen by Roderich from among the retainers, herded the game in our direction.

Because it's the hunt of a high-ranking noble and royalty, we don't move around on our horses while looking for prey.

I guess that part is different from hunting as an adventurer.

"Your Highness, it's a deer. Please shoot the first arrow."

"It's been a while. It would be nice if I hit it."

Even though he says something like that, His Highness' archery skills are great.

The arrow, which he aimed quickly, stabs the head of the deer, succeeding in killing it with one shot.

"Nothing less of you, Your Highness."

"It's wonderful that it was on target. I'm rarely invited on hunts after all."

"I see..."

Is he unable to go on hunts often since he's busy, or does no one invite him?

We make sure through eye signals to definitely not ask that.

"Erw! There's one!" (Wendelin)

"Please leave it to me!" (Erwin)

Next it's Erw's turn, but he doesn't bring it down in one go since the prey is a wild boar.

Without delay I shoot a second arrow, and the wild boar collapses to the ground.

"Wendelin, aren't you quite adept at this as well?"

"I have done it since my childhood, after all. In the past I couldn't eat any meat unless I managed to catch game." (Wendelin)

"I see."

The hunt continues, and everyone else also targets game one after the other.

"Since I don't use the bow usually, I can't really hit anything." (Ina)

"Me neither." (Luise)

Ina and Luise, who normally didn't practice archery, have poor results.

"Katharina, you're more skillful than I thought." (Wilma)

"Wilma-san, hunting as a hobby is good manners for a noble." (Katharina)

It looks like Katharina has trained her archery in secret.
Even though she misses several times, she succeeds in bringing down one rabbit.

"Though I can't hold a candle to you, Wilma-san." (Katharina)

"Hunting is my life." (Wilma)

"Those are rather philosophical words..." (Katharina)

Doubtlessly, the one most skilled at hunting among us is Wilma.
Nocking two arrows at the same time, she shoots them together, simultaneously bringing down two rabbits.

"Wow! Magnificent!"

As even His Highness can't pull off such a feat, he praises Wilma from the bottom of his heart.

"It's no surprise that Minister Edgar adopted you as his daughter."

"What an amazing skill." (Therese)

While praising Wilma, Therese casually kills a rabbit, exhibiting her own skill.
Her being able to handle everything flawlessly is likely thanks to her education.

"This hunting ground has a dense population of game."

"Since it's close to Baulburg, we turned it into an exclusive hunting ground of the Earl Baumeister House in a hurry."

"Wendelin, thou did that?"

"Roderich handled it."

"That's what I thought. As the lord, thou can simply hunt prey by using 『Detection』 and flying over with thine magic. Choosing the hunting ground makes no sense." (Therese)

"I suppose that's true. After all there's plenty of untouched nature in the Baumeister Earldom."

There are plenty of places with such a dense quantity of game in the Savage Lands, and I could actually go hunting at many locations even without using the Baumeister House's exclusive hunting ground.

We chose this place today since it's easy to protect guests here. Provided that we would turn into targets for packs of wolves and bears if we were negligent, it was indispensable for the retainers to accompany us, though.

"However, thou are really bad at this, Katia." (Therese)

"I'm an expert at close combat, but suck at archery." (Katia)

Only Katia doesn't manage to catch a single prey. Her posture isn't all that strange, but she likely can't aim well while worrying about Lisa.

"However, if the target is this close, it's my strong point..." (Katia)

In exchange, she brings down a deer that's several meters away from us with one blow, using one of the throwing knives she wears at her waist.

"Magnificent, Katia-dono. All that's left...is for Lisa-dono to use her interesting spell?"

Lisa has skillfully buttered up to His Highness, but even if she's next to us, it's impossible for her to learn the reason for Katia's increase in mana.

She observes us while looking slightly bored as guard of His Highness, but being ordered to demonstrate her unusual magic that can be used for hunting, she shows a little bit of motivation.

"She doesn't carry a bow with her." (Elise)

Elise, who had nothing to do as the one in charge of healing, stares at Lisa, who confirmed her targeted deer without having anything at hand, with a great curiosity, wondering what magic she would use.

"Katia, do you know what kind of magic she's going to use?"

"I have seen it several times, but since His Highness is present as well, enjoy watching it." (Katia)

"You're just saying that because it's a bother to explain it, aren't you?" (Luise)

"Just how much of an idiot am I in your mind, Luise!? It's not such a complicated spell!" Katia complains to Luise.

Lisa holds no bow in her hands, but she performs an action as if nocking an arrow with her empty hands.

As she does, an ice arrow is created at the same time as her mana rose.

"It's really amazing, but still a cliché."

"As conceivable."

"That's true, isn't it Wilma?"

I see, I suppose she will fire an 『Ice Arrow』 while using the motions of firing an arrow with a bow.

Once the deer was hit by the ice arrow which was released right away, its body was covered by a several centimeters thick ice layer, and it stopped moving on the spot.

"Wend-sama, it's rock hard." (Wilma)

"Incredible."

"It's a convenient spell for people that don't have a magic bag."

Since the deer's meat and intestines won't degrade until the ice melts, it's probably handy for the majority of the people not possessing a magic bag.

"Because it will be preserved for around half a day, it can be transported in the meanwhile, and then just has to be dismantled after the ice melted."

"I see. You came up with a well thought out spell there."

His Highness praises Lisa's magic.

Rather than showing off a flashy attack magic and stressing her weird appearance, she appeals to a noble man with the convenience and cleverness of her magic.

His Highness himself is excellent as well since he's able to give the correct assessment of the magic used by Lisa just now. I guess she was also able to ascertain the person she should appeal to.

"(Even though she wears such a crazy getup, it's still proof of her being called Lisa the Blizzard.)"

Katharina mutters to me with an expression showing that she can somewhat understand, but there's no way for an old lady...no, young lady, who only uses flashy magic in a gaudy outfit, to be evaluated as an excellent magician.

If it's Lisa, it's only natural for her to have noticed the matter with Katia's mana.

"That's really something. My retainers were able to employ a good guard. I will rely on you for the time until I return to the capital."

"Please leave it to me." (Lisa)

His Highness is likely happy that an excellent guard had been hired, but we are forced into the unpleasant situation of constantly being observed by Lisa until His Highness goes back.

"(Therese-san, for a change you have been outwitted, haven't you?)"

"(It will be fine as long as we don't reveal anything. Or rather, even His Highness understands thine situation, Wendelin. There's no way anything will be revealed if thou spend thine time normally.)"
(Therese)

The reason for Katia's increase in mana is the sex with me, but even Lisa wouldn't do something like peeking into the bedrooms of other people.

If her doing so were to be exposed to His Highness, she would lose all the trust and reputation she had built up until now in one go.

"Today was a large catch, wasn't it Wendelin?"

"It's because of Your Highness' skillful archery." (Wendelin)

This person can really do anything.

Maybe his basic abilities are even higher than those of His Majesty.

"Let's go back for now since it will lower the next amusement if we obtain too much today?"

"You're right, let's do so."

We finished the hunting after a few hours, and returned to Baulburg.

As His Highness was pleased with Lisa, it was decided that she would stay at his side as guard until he would return to the capital.

"(His Highness is a fairly generous man, isn't he? Even after seeing that get-up of Lisa-san, he seems to think nothing of it...)" Ina brought her horse close to mine, and whispered.

The close aides and other guards of His Highness whispered among each other while looking at Lisa with her outfit that made a big impact, but His Highness himself apparently didn't mind it.

"(He's certainly tolerant. It's because he's properly assessing the abilities of others.)"

"(Saying it nicely, you're right...)"

Saying it badly, he's quite the dense man...or it's also possible that his fashion sense is quite bad?

"(There's no way that can be true, though)"

"(Right...?)"

After we safely return to the mansion, we will have dinner together. It was scheduled for His Highness' group to stay at the mansion today.

"We will prepare dishes using the Baumeister Earldom's local specialties and today's catch."

"I'm looking forward to that."

Once His Highness and I arrived in front of the mansion while talking with our horses lining up next to each other, we noticed a single, middle-aged woman waiting for us there.

"Are you Earl Baumeister-sama?"

"Yes, that's correct, but...Your Highness?" (Wendelin)

"She's none of my attendants."

That middle-aged woman made an impression on me in a certain sense.

She had a plump figure, wore thick make-up and her clothes revealed the bad taste of a nouveau

riche. She was apparently fighting against her age with all her might, but unfortunately it didn't seem as though she was very successful at that.

She wore glasses with gold chains and gem inlays. If you were to describe her in a few words, she had the typical appearance of a 『snobbish old bat』. 1 It was the first time that I learned about such a person actually existing in real life, and not just novels.

If compared to her, Lisa was still far more acceptable...but that's only if you were to compare them.

"I'm called Helga von Stiel. I'm the wife of Viscount Stiel."

"(What!?)"

Another thing I'm hearing for the first time.

No way, for a woman, who adds 『zamasu』 at the end of her sentences, to actually exist...

"(Viscount Stiel?)"

It's yet another noble name I don't know.

Or rather, as there are too many nobles, I can't remember all of them.

I don't have any intention to remember them either though.

"(Elise, do you know a Viscount Stiel?)" (Wendelin)

"(Yes, he's the vassal of Earl Belz. A famous noble of the financial affairs faction, and a very rich person.)" (Elise)

As expected of Elise, she knows the true identity of this old zamasu lady.

"It's been a while, Elise-san. You look just like I did in my younger days. Same as me, you have been turning increasingly beautiful." (Helga)

""""""""(You're kidding!)""""""""

Without a doubt the thoughts of everyone except for that old bat overlapped.

Even if she could be rejuvenated again, and assuming she would lose weight and remove her thick make-up, she definitely won't look like Elise.

Elise glossed it over with a strained smile, seemingly not knowing how to answer best.

"Oops, it's not like I came here today for an idle chat. In fact, I came here in regards to Leopold-chan's matter." (Helga)

"Leopold-san, you say?"

"He's my adorable son." (Helga)

I wonder what's the matter with her son?

"If it's Leopold-dono, then I rejected his application..." (Roderich)

At this point Roderich raised his voice, and everyone understood everything with that short

comment.

The son of that old zamasu lady tried to work for our house, but since he was a problem child listed on the blacklist, he was turned down, and she came here to complain about that. It looks like over-demanding parents exist in this world as well.

"The gallery should stay out of this. I'm talking with Earl Baumeister-sama." (Helga)

"Umm...Roderich is the house manager of the Earl Baumeister House, and he's also the one in charge of employment..." (Wendelin)

He's our important house manager and not some outsider.

"Oh my, that's no good. Roderich-san or whatever might be an excellent person, but it's necessary for you to look at people personally, Earl Baumeister-sama." (Helga)

"Haah..." (Wendelin)

What this old lady is saying isn't wrong.

Originally I as the family head of the Baumeister House should scrutinize the retainers to be employed.

Certainly, it's an important job of a family head.

Therefore it was my big mistake that I tried to listen to her story normally.

"Leopold-chan was rejected due to some kind of mistake. I came to correct that. Listen, okay? Our Leopold-chan is..." (Helga)

"Is?"

For more than two hours after that, we got stuck listening to her bragging about her son in front of the mansion even though we were hungry after the hunt.



"Milord, I'm very sorry." (Roderich)

"No, there was no immediate danger." (Wendelin)

Listening to the old bat's long boasting about her son, everyone became mentally worn-out. Roderich kept apologizing to us for not being able to prevent her endless bragging.

"Big Sis?" (Katia)

"..."

Lisa looked at us next to His Highness as his guard after buttering up to him with her old man's

wisdom, but even she hadn't anticipated the appearance of that zamasu lady.
Being forced to listen to her for two hours together with us, she looked completely exhausted.

"It would have been a problem if you couldn't prevent that old lady even though she was a danger to Wend, but it's not like that was the case." (Ina)

"But, Ina-sama." (Roderich)

"She was surely mentally exhausting. Although I'm a woman as well, I wonder why she can talk for such a long period of time?"

Ina cannot help but be mystified how she could have spoken for such a long period of time.

"That was amazing, wasn't it? For more than two hours, it was all about bragging about Leopold-chan."

Luise, who was relatively lively, mentioned the greatness of that old bat.
It was a perfectly passionate story.
A grand, epic tale about Leopold-chan, from his birth until today.
I ended up wondering whether it wouldn't fit into a two hours drama slot on television.
Of course, only if it's the truth, but well, I guess it's only natural to dramatize a bit in a story.
Though I don't have any motivation to investigate...what parts had been dramatized...

"Thanks to her, we learned quite a lot about Leopold-chan. We have become Leopold-chan experts." (Wilma)

""""""""Pfft!""""""""

Everyone burst into laughter due to Wilma's comment which had just the right timing.
Certainly, if a Leopold-chan certificate existed, we might now be able to aim for elementary level with ease, or even intermediate level.
If we did our best and aimed for an advanced level, we would become splendid Leopold-chan-ists.

"It's pointless to even memorize such useless knowledge. For some reason it's stuck in my head, though..."

"Katharina, it's because of that zamasu lady."

Even though we didn't even want to listen to her story, the ability to launch a preemptive strike of that zamasu lady was nothing to scoff at.
And, once we started listening to the story, we weren't permitted to withdraw from there easily.
I think that's a kind of talent.
Her way of talking that imprints the content into one's memory against one's will is also terrifying.
It makes me think that she would be a fine school teacher.

"The story of how Leopold-chan rescued his cousin from a stray dog at the tender age of three was deeply moving." (Therese)

"Even though you were present as well, you are amazing in a certain sense, Therese-san."

As she was a former Duchess of the Empire, Therese had been involved with long, fervent meetings.

You could also say that she had nerves of steel.

Though, it's probably true that she hasn't read the mood at all.

"I was present as well..."

"That's true...to His Highness, that lady..." (Katharina)

And, the zamasu lady made His Highness listen to her speech as well.

Did she maybe not notice His Highness?

As a matter of fact, Katharina apparently forgot about His Highness for a moment as well, and glossed it over with an unnatural way of speaking.

Well, it was the same for me too, but this is nothing I could admit.

"The impact of that old lady was too strong..."

The presence of that zamasu lady was too big. I'm sure His Highness presence was painted over by hers.

"It looks like something serious happened. Dinner has been prepared, so please come inside."

Amalie encouraged us to eat dinner after coming back.

Originally we had planned to cook the game we caught at our hunt, but thanks to that old lady, we had no time to hand over the game to the mansion's cooks. I had them cook and serve hunted game that had been caught by my retainers beforehand.

"Thy Highness, it looks like thee know that lady?" (Therese)

"I guess it's obvious to you, milady...well, she's famous. That wife of Viscount Stiel is..."

I thought there might be many among the thousands of noble houses in the Kingdom that His Highness didn't know, but he knew about the wife of Viscount Stiel.

"It's because she stands out."

"Makes sense."

I guess you wouldn't be able to forget such a person after meeting them once.

In contrast to His Highness, she totally stands out.

The wife of Viscount Stiel seems to be quite a remarkable character.

"A long time ago, the Viscount Stiel House's financial situation had been deteriorating. In order to somehow deal with that, they welcomed her as the wife of the present family head."

The objective was assistance and a big dowry from the wife's family, but Viscount Stiel's wife herself is apparently someone with great resourcefulness.

"His wife is a professional moneylender."

"I have heard rumors about that, too."

"Well, I guess if it comes to Cardinal Hohenheim, it's only natural for him to have been aware of this..."

There are times when nobles urgently need a large amount of money at any costs.

Viscount Stiel's wife is skilled at finding such nobles. She has a talent in gaining interests by lending them that money quietly.

This secrecy of hers is her selling point. Viscount Stiel's wife never reveals the information of her customers.

Since nobles possess a high pride, they don't want others to know about their money borrowing. Even if the interest is somewhat high, they will feel at ease as it won't be leaked to others if they lend money from Viscount Stiel's wife.

For that reason there are few nobles who criticize her or make an enemy out of her.

After all they would be troubled if they couldn't have her lend them money in case something urgent came up.

"Because of that, the Viscount Stiel House was able to reorganize their financial situation. But..."

The people of the Viscount Stiel House have become unable to speak up against the wife, even including the family head.

It seems to be a noble house where the wife stands at the top to the extreme, which is rare in this world.

"It's because Viscount Stiel is a mediocre, inconspicuous man..." (Elise)

"That's true. He's a very obedient person."

Elise had encountered Viscount Stiel, but she doesn't know what kind of person he is since he doesn't stand out.

"If I remember correctly, that lady is his only wife." (Elise)

According to Elise's information, he only pays attention to his wife and there isn't even a single concubine.

"Rather than him not standing out, it's just that this old lady stands out too much..."

No one will forget her, if they have seen her once.

That is how much of an extreme impact she gave us.

"You could say so."

"Your Highness, why is that old lady so insistent about her son entering government service? They have money, don't they?" (Wilma)

Now that she mentions it, that's certainly true.

I feel like she could somehow provide her son a job at a noble house with the connections she created through her money-lending.

"It's like this, Wilma-dono, Leopold-dono is the sixth man."

That stuck-up lady seems to be really the mother of six young men.

"The inheriting eldest son, the second son who entered a branch family as husband, the third son who entered the noble house of relatives as husband, and the fourth as well fifth sons whose governmental posts have been decided."

"So just the sixth man is no good?"

"Since he's the youngest, it looks like she's favoring him to an abnormal degree. I heard she was zealously looking for a good governmental post for him."

Even though she possesses a wonderful resourcefulness as moneylender, she can't render a normal judgment about the son she loves so dearly.

That's why she's trying to somehow secure a safe future for him, and as a result of her being too adamant about it, parent and child were put on the blacklist.

For not only the son, but even the mother to be recorded on the blacklist...

"Is it the mother's fault...?" (Wendelin)

"That's something I don't really know." (Roderich)

"Huh? You did at least an interview with him, didn't you Roderich?" (Wendelin)

"I'm sorry. Since he's on the list, I rejected his application as soon as it was delivered." (Roderich)

It's not like there aren't any other people. I suppose Roderich doesn't have the spare time to pay attention to personnel recorded on the blacklist...

"We will probably know once we actually meet him..." (Roderich)

"Eh? We're going to meet him, Roderich?" (Wendelin)

"Didn't you nod your head when you were entreated by Viscount Stiel's wife, milord?" (Roderich)

"Huh? I did? Then I will meet him in person?" (Wendelin)

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

Since I ignored the end as the talk of the old stuck-up bat was too long, I had apparently approved her petition of giving her son another employment examination without being conscious of it.

If she made such a long speech while aiming for that, she's an old bat I have to be careful about.

"Well, I suppose it's fine..."

I glossed it over by acknowledging the new interview while pretending to be large-hearted, but in reality I had just gotten worn-out by the story of that stuck-up lady. I decided to keep it a secret that I had unconsciously nodded my head in agreement.

"Bah! Even though I finally managed to get close to Earl Baumeister by buttering up to His Highness; that old hag!" (Lisa)

As even Lisa lost in presence to Viscount Stiel's wife, she couldn't do anything even while being close to me, not being able to achieve any kind of results at the present time.

* * *

The next day I had the interview with the son of that old bat. Even though it would have been fine after His Highness returned to the capital...but since I apparently ended up saying that it would be fine to hold it today, I guess I reap what I sowed. His Highness said that he would observe the interview while seemingly having fun, and Lisa looked coldly at it all while standing behind him. In her mind she should be hurling masses of insults at Viscount Stiel's wife right now. Even so, I felt slight sympathy towards the son as he might suffer from all the extreme meddling of that old bat. That empathy vanished within a few minutes, though.

"I'm Leopold von Stiel. To see through the talents hidden within me, you're unexpectedly sharp-sighted, Earl Baumeister-dono."

The youngest child of the Viscount Stiel House, who seems to be in the latter half of his teens, had a condescending attitude from the first greeting. Even though he's the one looking for employment, he seems very prideful for some reason.

"I think Roderich-dono is a relatively apt person, but if you allow me to comment, I think he has many naive aspects. If you leave things to me, I will speed up the development project by around 20%." (Leopold)

I recalled a self-proclaimed management consultant I got to know in my previous life. He declared that he was full of ideas, would drastically cut labor costs, and would definitely boost the sales and profit ratio, if it was entrusted to him, but he never mentioned how exactly he intended to do all that. Let alone wasting the consultation fee after being deceived, there were even some who had their stores closed down because of him. I remember that he was treated as a person requiring special attention in the industry.

"Even though I may appear like this, I strove in my studies since childhood, and did everything I could to acquire various knowledge. How about you, Earl Baumeister-dono?" (Leopold)

I read books in the study, but afterwards I went out to the Savag—— oops, concentrated on studying magic.

"That won't do. Earl Baumeister-dono, you will become a leading noble in the Kingdom from now on. You have to acquire education and mingle with many nobles." (Leopold)

The things this Leopold youngster is saying aren't wrong, but still, he's annoying.
Before I was sent into this world, such people were described as 『overly conscious types』. 2 But 『overly conscious types』 is no praise by any means.
If it's a 『person with a high awareness』, that might be a praise, though.
During the interview, Leopold continued to one-sidedly talk about himself.
The face of Roderich, who stood next to me, turned into a noh mask.

"The future Baumeister Earldom has to seriously consider its relationship with the Empire. Young talents like me will create something new with people of the same position in the Empire."
(Leopold)

That 『something』, just what is that supposed to be?
It's far too abstract...I'd like someone to tell me.

"The Earl Baumeister House's association with the western lords is weak. I will change that by talking with them since I have many acquaintances there." (Leopold)

Do you really have such connections...?
Or rather, why aren't you working for a western lord then?

"It's what I think, but..." (Leopold)

Even after that Leopold's insubstantial yapping continued.
We ignored it and killed some time.
I think the sole salvation is that Lisa, who got closer to me in order to spy around, was led around by the nose by Leopold, too.
When I incidentally peeked at Katia, she looked relieved since Lisa was staying quiet.
That means, compared to Lisa's use of force, it was still better to just ignore Leopold's abstract arguments.

"Thank you very much for your efforts today. You will be informed about the results of the interview in the near future."

"Earl Baumeister-dono, by employing me and assigning me to a responsible post, this Baumeister Earldom will change. Dramatically." (Leopold)

Leopold showed a smile that felt like 『Twinkle』 while winking, bringing our irritation to a peak.

"(Somehow, I really wanna wallop him once...)"

"(Hold back on that.)"

I can immediately relate to Erw's feelings, but it would cause an uproar if a retainer of the Baumeister House beat up the son of another noble.

"(Like parent, like child, right?)" (Roderich)

Roderich has no mercy with him either.
The way of talking being annoying is certainly the same for both, parent and child.

"(Let me ask just in case...)"

"(Any further talks with those two are pointless by now.)"

I might have endured it if I were a humble salaryman, but right now I'm Earl Baumeister. I'd like them to let me at least exercise my right to not meet those two anymore.

"(In other words, he's rejected.)"

I promised to hold another interview, but I haven't mentioned with a single word that I would hire him.

I decided to reject Leopold, but even though he should have just gone back home obediently after having had his fill of saying whatever he liked, he had to notice her presence of all things. Right, Lisa in her flashy outfit standing behind the inconspicuous crown prince.

"Your Highness?" (Leopold)

"What is it, Leopold-dono?"

Even such an annoying fellow interacted with His Highness, using a polite tone. Because he's such a man of character, His Highness didn't blame Leopold for not greeting him at the time when he entered the room, which he probably missed because His Highness doesn't stand out, or because Leopold was a far more rude fellow than expected.

"Is the person behind you your guard?" (Leopold)

"I have been told by my close aides that my protection is weak this time, and thus they requested an excellent magician as guard from the adventurer guild. I'm satisfied since she's a considerably skilled person."

Given that Lisa is a woman as well, it's impossible for her to not feel happy after being praised by His Highness. She turned a triumphant expression mostly towards Katia.

"Ugh..." (Katia)

Katia felt dejected by it, though. However, in the next instant, the stupid, overly conscious Leopold not only incurred the anger of Lisa, who had been silent, but began to thoughtlessly trample all over her pride.

"Excellent magician, you say?" (Leopold)

"That's right."

"That's no good, Your Highness. Your Highness' reputation will take a big hit if you allow such a night moth to stay at your side." (Leopold)

"Night moth..."

Considering it's Leopold, it's an unusually correct expression, or rather, a very specific term, but exactly for this reason, it provoked Lisa's wrath in reverse.

I think it spoiled all her feigned ignorance until now, but she looked at Leopold with the expression of the devil.

"Your Highness, you're a great man who will become the next king. If you place an unrefined old hag with bad fashion sense at your side – no matter how much skill she might possess – those around you will say, 『His Highness is a strange one; to make a move on such an old witch』, 『He has been desiring a peculiar woman from time to time?』, and 『Even so, his taste are far too bad』." (Leopold)

Leopold's words aren't wrong, but they will become an explosive trigger for a huge counterattack by Lisa that might swoop down on Leopold next.

"(To make the kind of statement which is the most taboo for Big Sis...I have nothing to do with this.)" (Katia)

What a coincidence, Katia. I have nothing to do with this either.

After all the room temperature had fallen already and it had become unpleasantly cold. His Highness' retainers looked at Lisa's face and became pale.

Since she had skillfully feigned friendliness until now, her speech and conduct seemed normal, if you leave her appearance out of the quotation, but now that behavior of her had come off.

""Hiii!"" His Highness' retainers screamed.

The vase placed on top of the table broke alongside a cracking sound.

It's probably because the water within froze and expanded all of a sudden.

Even the flowers put into the vase were frozen. They fell on the table and broke apart like glass work.

"I...don't have such a relationship with her. I employed her as guard purely for her excellent skills as a magician..."

His Highness tried to somehow soothe Lisa's anger.

"Even if you say so, the lower masses always pay attention to Your Highness' conduct. If you walk around while talking such vulgar old hag along, Your Highness' popularity will suffer. Having said that...wearing such an outfit in spite of knowing better since she's old enough; she must be unmarried. It's impossible that her husband or children wouldn't say anything, if she was actually married!" (Leopold)

But, His Highness' effort was in vain. Of all things, Leopold, the party concerned here, didn't understand anything at all and continued speaking as if to add even more oil to the fire.

In the end, Leopold stays true to his own nature.

Leopold talks arrogantly as if to say 『I see through everything』, but he doesn't seem to see through Lisa's anger.

"Before protecting His Highness, it would be better if you properly followed your own life plan. What a clever thing I said there." (Leopold)

In the next moment we felt as though we had heard the sound of something snapping which should normally be impossible.

"Are you done?" (Lisa)

Lisa quietly asked Leopold.

"With my sharp observations about you? Yeah, doesn't the sharpness stem from 『Good Advice is harsh to the ear』. A great person of my caliber will end up saying quite the harsh things. Don't mind it since I don't have any evil intent." (Leopold)

"HmMMM, you have no evil intent, eh?" (Lisa)

"Yes, after all I'm a kind person who gives proper advice to an old hag who doesn't matter to me at all. Even such an aspect of me is fated to guarantee my future success..." (Leopold)

"No fucking way, you little, shitty mother-con!" (Lisa)

Apparently having finally reached her limit, Lisa shouted at Leopold.

As everyone considered Lisa to be correct on this observation, we all nodded in agreement.

"Don't fuckin' say whatever you like. I don't give a flying shit whether you some noble's brat or whatever, but I absolutely can't stand looking at such insincere piece of shit like you! I'm gonna freeze your sorry ass right now and here!" (Lisa)

Once Lisa, who had completely snapped, took a step forward, cold air assailed Leopold. Probably because of her excessive anger, her control of the cold has become insufficient.

"Hii! If you do something to me, mama won't forgive you!" (Leopold)

"What a fuckin' pathetic piece of shit..." (Lisa)

"(Relying on his mother when push comes to shove?)"

Erw whispered.

"If you offend my mama, you will be out of work!" (Leopold)

"Viscount Stiel's wife, huh...? She seems quite influential and has many noble acquaintances, aight?" (Lisa)

"That's right. Thus, if something happens to me, you won't be able to get any work from many nobles! It's only smart to not harm me!" (Leopold)

It's great that he pissed off Lisa...finally ripping off her sheep's clothing, but he relied on his mother and her network of noble acquaintances because he can't cope with it himself, and moreover got cold feet due to the chilly air. When his body and voice started to tremble, we couldn't hold back our laughter.

"(That guy is talking trash, isn't he hubby?)" (Katia)

"(Well he's no adventurer nor an excellent magician.)" (Wendelin)

Katia and I both confirm that it's nonsense even if he threatens Lisa.

"So? Are you scared?" (Leopold)

"Hah? Just what are you yapping about, you mother-con chicken?" (Lisa)

"Such insults against me! If I tell mama..." (Leopold)

"Do as you like! There are countless noble houses in the Kingdom! Even if I'm hated by Viscount Stiel's wife and her little clique, I can get as much work from other nobles as I like since I possess the necessary skills! I'm already tired of seeing your retarded face." (Lisa)

Once she went this far, Lisa pondered for a few seconds and then revealed a nasty smile, revealing her inner feelings.

"I really wanna hear that hag when you're screaming like a strangled chicken...I will hang you up in the place that stands out the most. Have a peace of mind. I've no interest in becoming a murderer either. Now then, I guess I will start with freezing you." (Lisa)

"Hii!" (Leopold)

Afterwards it developed almost like everyone had expected.

Leopold tried to get away on the spot, but there was no way for Lisa to allow that.

His feet were frozen right away and he was used as a seedy-looking object of art to decorate the front gate of the Earl Baumeister House's mansion.

Leopold, who came to an interview with us, has been exposed to public disgrace in front of my mansion.

I thought that I might get scolded by Viscount Stiel's wife for this as well, but for or better or worse, Lisa took that part into consideration.

"In front of the front gate of the Earl Baumeister House's estate is outside the grounds of Earl Baumeister's estate, so it has nothing to do with the Earl. Take this!"

Next she stuck a paper to the forehead of Leopold then and there:

『This is the punishment for the foolish son of Viscount Stiel for insulting remarks handed out by Lisa Klement Ulrike Extral!』

Lisa wrote that on the paper patch to explicitly declare that it had been her personal punishment.

"What's going on?"

"Looks like some stupid noble son did something."

"So he was punished by a famous magician, huh?"

The people who discovered Leopold who couldn't move as his lower body half and both arms were covered by ice, read the paper patch written by Lisa and chatted about it among each other.

"Big Sis..." (Katia)

"Humph! Even if Viscount Stiel's wife keeps an eye on me, I just got to increase the work of other nobles! He's a fool for not being able to understand as much!" (Lisa)

Lisa said while glancing at Leopold.

Certainly, if it was an adventurer without significant skills, they might be in trouble if they are on the bad side of a noble, but if it's someone as remarkable as Lisa, they won't be troubled at all. No matter how much influence Viscount Stiel's wife might have, it's not like she has a connection to all several thousand noble houses of the Kingdom.

Rather, those nobles that are hostile towards Viscount Stiel might be delighted that it will be easy for them to request Lisa's help.

That's why the threats of Leopold were pointless, but I guess that's nothing that matters to him right now.

After all he has been turned into an exposition object for Baulburg's residents.

"Leopold-chan has——!" (Helga)

And as expected, she felt anxious about her beloved son.

Viscount Stiel's wife, who just showed up at the expected time of the interview's end, screamed after seeing Leopold frozen in front of my mansion.

"Aaaahahaha! She screams just like a toad!" (Lisa)

"Katia, your teacher has a really bad character, doesn't she?" (Ina)

"Only to those hostile towards her, though." (Katia)

Lisa burst into laughter after seeing Helga screaming due to her son's pitiful state.

Watching that, Ina withdrew, but Katia eagerly covered up for Lisa by saying she wouldn't do something like that to someone who hasn't done anything wrong.

Going by Katia's behavior, I think Lisa isn't normally such a bad person.

Once things develop like this, no one can apparently stop her anymore, though.

"You bitch! What have you done to our Leopold-chan?" (Helga)

"What a pesky toad hag! It would be better if you cooled your anger down a bit...his head hasn't cooled down yet." (Lisa)

Lisa instantly created an ice hat with magic in the air and put it on Leopold's head.

"Now it's alright." (Lisa)

"Mamaaaaa! It's coold——!" (Leopold)

"What have you done! I will arrange it so that you won't be able to work as an adventurer

anymore!" (Helga)

"Just try if you wanna!" (Lisa)

"Kiii——! You crazy bitch!" (Helga)

"I don't wanna be told that by a toad." (Lisa)

Lisa and Helga continued the low-leveled bickering while ignoring us.

They kept going for around half a day until the ice restraining Leopold melted.

And His Highness had returned to the capital before that, but I think he has deeply memorized to never employ Lisa again.

I'm sure that's because he became aware of how difficult it is to deal with Lisa's eccentric behavior, but that didn't have any influence on Lisa either.

Chapter 6 – Dojo Challenger

My name is Johann Jolande Aurelia Overweg.

I'm participating in the management of the Magic Combat Style's main dojo in Baulburg, the stronghold of the Baumeister Earldom together with my elder brother, Zenos.

As I'm still fifteen years old, I think my salary and responsibilities are way excessive for a young man who just became an adult, but this is also one of the effects of sis becoming the wife of Earl Baumeister-sama. Well, no matter how anyone would look at it, it's fully connections that are at work here.

There are people saying 『Damn, good job!』 around me, but since it's not like I really did anything, it can't be helped that I pay undue attention to it either.

Upon my sis', Luise's...I can't see her as anything but a younger sister...nomination, I established the Earl Baumeister House's Magic Combat Style instructor house together with Zenos, and have been engaging in the dojo's management.

Given that it will be no good if sis doesn't give birth to a successor, she always stays next to Earl Baumeister-sama.

That's why Zenos and I are taking care of the practical business instead of sis.

Because we are siblings from the same mother, Zenos and I have been selected from among many others.

There are some of the siblings of the legal wife who are looking at us enviously, but it couldn't be helped since we were isolated, or rather, designated in accordance with the adults' convenience.

But, it's quite a chore.

Sis provides us with money, but never deals with the various administrative tasks or routine duties. She's not dumb, but she doesn't want to do it because it's troublesome according to her.

Going by Ina-san, sis' childhood friend, 『It's inevitable because that's her character』.

For a very long time, that person has been the one who understands sis the best, hasn't she?

Apart from the main dojo in Baulburg, which was completed during the civil war, branch dojos were established in various places, where guards have been stationed, because of the Baumeister Earldom's big size.

Well, the branches were buildings with sizes at the level of slightly bigger huts, though.

The instructors assigned to those places were mostly outsider disciples who were close to us. After all it would be difficult to control the guys close to the siblings of the legal wife.

No matter the martial arts, it's not enough for the instructors to be merely strong.

There's the ability to teach others well, and since there's also administrative work once they are entrusted with a dojo, even if it's small, they have to possess a reasonable level of education. At least, if they want to go beyond being simple instructors.

By the way, sis is a lost case if it comes to teaching others.

She's a frightening genius, but her teaching others will be a bad influence instead.

For this reason she's the chief instructor, but we're actually in charge of the practical business.

At times she shows up at least, but since we will be out in the cold if she can't give birth to children as soon as possible, it's fine like that.

However, there are occasionally situations where sis has to be present as well.

"Sis! Ah, wrong, Chief instructor...it's a disaster!" (Johann)

"What's wrong, Johann? Do you have some business with me?" (Luise)

"Chief instructor! A dojo challenger popped up! ...Ah, no, has made an appearance!" (Johann)

Yeah, sometimes such people appear in martial arts dojos, don't they...? The people called dojo challengers.

They probably believe that they can smoothly sneak in if it's the current Baumeister Earldom. Although they might be called dojo challengers, there's almost no one among them who really takes the dojo's signboard with them after winning. Most of them promote themselves with 『I'm this strong, so I'd like you to hire me!』.

They come out cocksure after winning with 『I'm stronger than you guys! So hire me!』.

However, it depends on the dojo whether they will be hired, I think?

If there are vacant instructor slots, they might get hired. And even if they are hired at long last, they will be immediately fired if it's judged that they suck at teaching or don't have any administrative abilities.

There are many people who are misunderstanding it, but it's meaningless to just be strong.

If it's a very popular and overwhelmingly strong person, they will be warmly received as advertisement for the school and dojo, though. As for the teaching or dojo administration, you just have to give them subordinates who are good at that.

Just try considering it. When amateurs or normal people try to learn martial arts, do you think they will go to a place where many different sign boards, which they had secured as dojo challengers, are put up for show?

Leaving aside people aiming for the top and reckless, dreaming youngsters, most will go to a proper dojo first, right?

I mean, since our childhood we have been training while following the correct steps.

"Ha——aah." (Luise)

Sis, don't 『Ha——aah』 here. Or rather, there's some cream of the cake you are eating stuck at your mouth.

We got a really serious issue here, and sis is the highest authority in the dojo. Let's deal with it seriously since the dojo is in danger.

"Johann, Zenos and you can't handle the challenger either?" (Luise)

"A troublesome fellow has shown up...has made his appearance." (Johann)

If we limit it to just the Magic Combat Style, Zenos and I are the second and third strongest in the Baumeister Earldom. Of course the strongest one is sis by a wide margin.

However, if it comes to the whole Kingdom, there are plenty of people stronger than us.

Today's dojo challenger is one of those strong people.

Since it's very unlikely that Zenos and I will be able to win, we'd like sis to handle it.

"It would be a waste of the sign board." (Luise)

"That's right. Sign boards are expensive." (Johann)

It's not like it becomes impossible to run a dojo just because its signboard was stolen, but if it comes to the signboard having been taken after losing, it's disgraceful, and official sign boards are expensive.

The signboard payment is a precious source of income of the head dojo of the entire school after all.

I mean, if you don't hang up a genuine signboard, it also looks bad in the eyes of society.

"We had it made just the other day after paying the money. If we reissue it so early on, we will definitely be regarded as doormat, and the price will go up." (Luise)

"Since the Baumeister Earldom is considered to have money, the geezers at the head dojo will drastically raise the sign board price, I'm pretty sure!" (Johann)

"That's certainly not good. Alright, I will go and beat them up." (Luise)

Sis accepted to repel the dojo challenger.

"Luise, you have cream at your mouth." (Ina)

"Oops, that's improper for a lady like me." (Luise)

She immediately left her seat, but got cautioned by Ina-san for a stupid reason. Also, it's quite questionable for sis to be lady-like, I think.

"We have to hurry."

"Yeah."

For some reason Earl Baumeister-sama tries to come along at the same time as sis leaves her seat. Though I don't really think that the lord has to confirm something like the handling of a dojo challenger...

"Umm...milord, it's not a matter that would require your attendance..." (Johann)

"Eh? But it's a dojo challenger! A real dojo challenger!" (Wendelin)

Huh?

Somehow milord looks very happy.

"No, as long as we can have the chief instructor deal with it..." (Johann)

I don't believe it to be so important that milord, the lord of the Baumeister Earldom, would need to come personally. After all he has probably other, more important tasks to handle.

"Well, it's my first chance to encounter a dojo challenger. Wouldn't it be a loss to miss this?" (Wendelin)

"If I defeat him magnificently, you will be delighted as well, right Wend?" (Luise)

"I'm really looking forward to such a situation." (Wendelin)

"I'm sure. I think you will fall in love with me all over again after seeing my strength." (Luise)

"..."

Earl Baumeister-sama makes a statement on the level of being a curious onlooker, but I thought from the bottom of my heart that this person really gets along with sis.



"Uhahaha! This me! Banba Bababa——n-sama will take the dojo's sign board!"

Sis and Earl Baumeister-sama's group...quite a few people have actually come along...I wonder, are they all pretty bored at the moment?

Once we returned to the dojo, the challenger with a height of close to two meters and his body covered in steel-like muscles had already raised his spirit by defeating several of our pupils. He's announcing his name in a loud voice, but can't he somehow keep it down a bit more? That name unnecessarily lowers the tension of our side who got defeated.

"Are you alright?" (Elise)

"Sorry, Elise-sama."

Our pupils, who were defeated by that giant, have been injured, and thus are receiving healing from Elise-sama.

It looks like it was a good thing that Earl Baumeister-sama and his group have come here. And the dojo challenger roared while hitting the walls and floor of the dojo as if to show off his own strength.

"Hey! It's our long-awaited, new dojo. Who do you think has to pay the repairs later on?" (Luise)

Right, tell him, sis!

No matter how strong he might be, since he doesn't have such common knowledge, he ended up falling to the level of being a dojo challenger.

"You're going to pay for the destroyed floor and walls, right?"

The management of a dojo is quite difficult.

The amount of incoming money is low while the amount of outgoing money is high...bah, even though I'm serious here, Earl Baumeister-sama, who tagged along for some reason, seems to be very interested in the dojo challenger.

He floods the dojo challenger with questions with sparkling eyes.

"Hey, how many dojos have you defeated so far?" (Wendelin)

"Listen and be surprised! I have already defeated five dojos!" (Banba)

A——ah, those five dojos must be deep in the reds because of the reissuing of new sign boards. The geezers at the head dojo should be overjoyed as the sign board craftsmen, who are on good terms with them, should be ripping them off by leaps and bounds.

"Wow! A real dojo challenger! Awesome!" (Wendelin)

"See! I'm great, am I not!?" (Banba)

Why does Earl Baumeister-sama look so happy?
Even though the one who is about to be defeated is the dojo managed by his own wife...

"Wend, that dojo challenger is the enemy." (Erwin)

"Indeed. If the sign board were to be stolen, it would be a huge embarrassment for the current Earl Baumeister House that garners a lot of attention by society." (Ina)

"Wend-sama, too high-spirited." (Wilma)

"Wendelin-san, you have to cheer for Luise-san." (Katharina)

Earl Baumeister-sama was scolded by those four like a child. He doesn't look like a dragon slayer at all.

"In the first place, why such a stage name?" (Luise)

Is it because Earl Baumeister-sama is only paying attention to the dojo challenger?
My jealous sis started to retort about the challenger's name.

"It ain't no stage name!" (Banba)

No, that name doesn't sound like anything but a stage name.
It's impossible for it to be your real name...

"It's the name of my soul!" (Banba)

"What's that!? That name of your soul? Is it another way to describe a stage name?"

"Nay! In order to set my mind on the Magic Combat Style, I abandoned my past name, severed my relationships until then, and lived with the Magic Combat Style as a friend since the time I became aware of what was going on around me as a child!" (Banba)

"What a sad life..."

"Don't criticize it without hesitation! On the contrary, I managed to put up with it!" (Banba)

No, it's not just sis, even I can't consider it in any other way...
I'm sure everyone else also...

"I understand. I fully understand you, dojo challenger." (Wendelin)

Umm...Earl Baumeister-sama? Why are you pitying the dojo challenger?

"I also had only magic as a friend in the past..." (Wendelin)

"See! To become like Earl Baumeister-sama, it's necessary to deliberately abandon the things that can be obtained normally, and strive without rest!" (Banba)

For some reason Earl Baumeister-sama helped the dojo challenger to recover from his depression. I think even sis will be angry...

"I understand you, but because of your dojo challenging, the pupils got injured and the equipment of the dojo was damaged. Luise, beat him up." (Wendelin)

"Ye——s." (Luise)

Being ordered so by Earl Baumeister-sama, sis acknowledged with a carefree voice. Sis, are you going to be alright?

"Oi, Earl Baumeister-sama, you're saying that I will lose against such a pipsqueak?" (Banba)

"Let me ask in reverse, why do you think that someone like you could win against Luise?" (Wendelin)

Earl Baumeister-sama evaluates sis quite highly. Well, it's true that sis is strong, though.

"Wha-!? Don't regret it even when your cute wife gets heavily wounded!" (Banba)

"You too. It would be good if it doesn't end with you becoming unable to recover." (Wendelin)

"Nonsense!" (Banba)

The dojo challenger, who got provoked by Earl Baumeister-sama, charged at sis like a wild boar. And without a moment's delay, he unleashed a wide swing with his fist.

"Eat this!" (Banba)

However, the challenger's full-power blow cut through air. Sis wasn't at that spot anymore.

"Where is she?" (Banba)

"Here." (Luise)

Sis had circled into the back of the challenger with a frightening speed.

Once she lightly delivered a swift hand chop against the challenger's nape, he fainted with just that and collapsed. In the instant he fell to the ground, a loud thump reverberated from the dojo's floor.

"His strength was so-so for a dojo challenger." (Luise)

Certainly he was a fairly powerful dojo challenger, but if I had to say, sis' power that had a touch of being monstrous stood out way too much.

I guess Earl Baumeister-sama had the leeway to praise the challenger at the beginning since he knew that.

"Like in stories, powerful enemies mostly lose at the beginning, don't they?"

"He's one of those that look strong but actually have no chance of winning?"

Sis, you're going a bit too far there.

"Dear, I will heal him." (Elise)

"Please, Elise." (Wendelin)

Elise-sama heals the fainted dojo challenger with magic.

But, man, no matter how often I watch it, her healing magic is really amazing...and those boobs as well.

"Did I lose...?" (Banba)

Just when I thought that he might go on a rampage again, the challenger, who woke up, had become very obedient, seemingly having accepted the outcome.

"Why did you call yourself with such a weird name like Banba Bababa——n?" (Luise)

"That is..." (Banba)

The challenger begins to explain the circumstance to sis.

"My real name is Telma..."

"Ah..." (Luise)

"Yeah, it's a female name." (Telma)

Telma's parents lost five boys that had just been born in a row. At that point Telma was born as the sixth.

"With just the reason that I might not die with a female name, they gave me this name." (Telma)

"Occasionally there are such people as well."

Since girls are strong, there are people who give their boys female names so that they grow up healthily.

There also seem to be areas where boys are given female names before becoming adults and are given male names afterwards.

"I look like this. With a female name..." (Banba)

Because Telma was ridiculed and harassed for having a female name as a boy in his childhood, he decided to get back at them through the Magic Combat Style, and became strong. However, since he was a farmer by birth, he couldn't become an instructor at the dojo he belonged to.

"As there were fellows who became instructors just because their homes were rich or because they were young nobles, I was steadily beaten to the punch by my juniors..." (Telma)

Telme explained that he became a dojo challenger half in despair.

"Okaaaaay, but teacher qualities and administrative abilities are required of an instructor."

"I have learned those as well!" (Telma)

After having heard his circumstances, he had become slightly pitiable to me.
I guess he had the same circumstances as us a little while ago.

"Now do with me as you like and roast or boil me!" (Telma)

"Then, I think I will have you work for us." (Luise)

"Really?" (Telma)

"We are basically short of hands. You were quite strong." (Luise)

It's just sis who's as strong as a monster. Telma is stronger than Zenos and me...

"Thank you, really thank you." (Telma)

Being told by sis that he will be hired, Telma expressed his gratitude while shedding tears of joy. One might consider that to be an unmerited measure of kindness towards a dojo challenger. Normally it likely ends with them being chased away.

"Turn over a new leaf and do your best. Ah, also..." (Luise)

"Also, what?" (Telma)

Sis held out a piece of paper towards Telma who wonders what else there might be.

"This is?" (Telma)

"The bill. The repair costs for the walls and floor you broke. Since we will put it up as a monthly payment, do your best in paying it back, okay?" (Luise)

"Yes...I will." (Telma)

"Go for it."

Sis, you're levelheaded, aren't you?

Well, I guess it's fine to consider it as having obtained a strong instructor cadet who looks like he will do as told.

"It's in the sticks, but if you can accept that, we will entrust a branch dojo to you. If you keep at it for several years, you will be able to return to Baulburg." (Luise)

"Luise-sama, I will do my utmost!" (Telma)

"I will help, too."

It means he's to gain experience in a countryside dojo at first so that he can become good at managing a dojo as staff.

"And, Luise-sama." (Telma)

"Is there anything else?" (Luise)

"It's not about this dojo or the Magic Combat Style, but who might be the woman peeking inside through the window over there?" (Telma)

Zenos and I had been curious about that part as well, but it's an old lady with a very flashy get-up and make-up...ah no, is it rude if I don't call her young lady? Anyway, that person stared at Earl Baumeister-sama with an intense concentration.

I think that she's obviously suspicious, but it's strange that no one around milord seems to mind her.

"Sis...ah, no, chief instructor, who's that woman?" (Johann)

"Johann, it's better to not pay her any attention. She will leave right away anyway." (Luise)

"Haah..." (Johann)

Is that what you'd call, as long as it doesn't hurt anyone?

No matter how I look at her, that person doesn't look like a dojo applicant...

"Maybe she wants to take lessons in self-defense?"

"There's no way for that to be true, is there...? Right, Katia?" (Luise)

"Haah...can't the day of the duel come quickly...?"

Katia-san, who had become milord's new wife, feels down after seeing that flashy woman. Are they possibly acquaintances?

The incident was resolved safely and it was decided that we would employ the dojo challenger in our dojo. Telma happily moved to a branch dojo near the Demon Forest as a new instructor.

While considering that a good thing, even Zenos and I couldn't help being bothered by that flashy woman.

* * *

"Keh! It's really a misfortune for instructor-sama to take on rough fellows like us!"

"Yeah! I will take her on as a practice partner and beat her up!"

"If she doesn't like that, she should offer the entire course fee as a greeting payment!"

"Telma, a female instructor, eh!?"

In a village close to the Demon Forest, where the branch dojo had just been set up, I ended up hearing two rowdy adventurers discussing something evil.

This was also a result of my training, but it didn't work against Luise-sama.

Because they weren't able to earn as much money as they wanted in the Demon Forest, they apparently planned to threaten the instructor in the new Magic Combat Style branch dojo in order to extort some money.

It's probably because they thought that the Magic Combat Style instructor, who was dispatched to such a remote place, is weaker than the monsters in the Demon Forest.

Moreover, going by the name, the instructor is a woman.

The two were overjoyed that they would be able to easily extort money in such a case.

I can hear their laughter already, but I think it's a bit too early for that.

"Hehe, pardon me!"

"Is the instructor in!? Heeey!"

Once the two energetically opened the dojo's door, I told the pupils that I will stop the teaching for a moment, and glared at them.

Seeing my body with a height of 198 cm and a weight of 125 kg, they gasped.

To falter from just the opponent's body size...they are folks not worth any mention.

"Loook! You can't win against me, and you're a thousand years too early to win against Luise-sama!" (Telma)

Even though they had been cheerful at the start, they got the jitters by just seeing me.

The pupils, who would come to this Demon Forest, almost all desire to become adventurers. If I show even the slightest opportunity, they might go on a rampage like those two petrified guys.

I guess I will have you become my sacrifices so that I can safely teach for a while.

"Okay? A short term training?"

""No...""

The two tried to run away, but their bodies apparently didn't move as they wanted out of fear. Besides, I'm not that nice to stay silent and let them leave.

"Haah? Are you lookin' down on the monsters in the Demon Forest? Take my training! You

certainly won't say that you don't want to, right?" (Telma)

I glared at the two while deliberately threatening them.

These guys are also dojo challengers, more or less. If I get them to train here after making them surrender, the other pupils will increasingly acknowledge my superiority as well.

I have the ambition of wanting to work under Luise-sama in the future, after all.

""No! That's out of the question!""

"You guys are really lucky! I will forge you with a special course!" (Telma)

"Hahaha...how wonderful."

"What a benefit..."

"Right?" (Telma)

The two had their characters thoroughly trained over a short period of time.

The training was hard, but I skillfully reformed even pupils with slightly bad backgrounds, and became a highly evaluated, caring instructor.

By the way, who was that flashy woman who had peeked at milord's group at the dojo in Baulburg?

Chapter 7 – Beginning of the Duel – Blizzard vs. Former Duchess

"Therese, how do you feel?" (Amalie)

"This last month I improved my magic greatly thanks to Wendelin's attentive teaching. I won't lose one-sidedly." (Therese)

"Therese-sama, didn't I teach you occasionally as well?" (Burkhart)

"Of course I haven't forgotten thine assistance, Burkhart." (Therese)

"By the way, why did you focus on learning fire magic?"

"The other side is called Blizzard. I just took its antipode, fire. After all, I couldn't see myself winning with the same attribute." (Therese)

"Well, the other side trained in magic for more years than you are old, Therese-sama." (Burkhart)

"Thee see?" (Therese)

For the sake of raising Therese's mana as much as possible, I kept her company in her training in the morning and at night (I know, old man's joke) in this last month.

So far her mana qualities had been hidden, or rather, couldn't be pulled out by anyone but me at present, but Therese's talent is considerable. It might be comparable to that of Katharina or even above hers.

However, there were limits with just one month available.

Besides, although it was for the sake of increasing her mana, I spent everyday with Therese as my partner which caused dissatisfaction to accumulate among Elise and the others.

No matter how short on time we might have been, since it would be troublesome if Therese were to harm her health by overdoing it, we kept it moderate, I guess.

Even so, she should have become unbelievably strong in a short time compared to other magicians.

"Well, I intend to go at it moderately so that I won't die." (Therese)

"I will come to cheer you on." (Elise)

"Me too." (Luise)

"Me too." (Ina)

"I will come as well." (Katharina)

"That's very appreciated, but is it going to be alright with thine physical condition?" (Therese)

Therese worried about my pregnant wives.

It was difficult to judge whether it was not good for the body or the prenatal care to observe a duel

at the early stages of a pregnancy.

"I will watch them properly." (Katia)

"It will be fine since Katia and I will be present. Amalie-san will be with us as well."

"I can't defend in the unlikely event of a spell being hurled at them, but as long as it's taking care of pregnant women, I got it covered. It's Wend-kun's children, so watching a magic duel might actually not be bad as prenatal care." (Amalie)

Katia, Wilma, and even Amalie were brimming with the intention to come watch Therese's duel.

"I see. Thank thou for thine great support. It's not that I don't have any sympathy for that spinster since she likely won't have anyone cheering for her, but..." (Therese)

"Lass! I'm already here, you know!?" (Lisa)

As a matter of fact, Lisa had shown up at the mansion early on as it's the appointed day of the duel, but Therese knew that she was present and thus had been provoking her.

"Damn it! You're saying they are pregnant after marrying in their teens!? That really pisses me off!" (Lisa)

"Big Sis, calm down a bit...eh, you're more worried about that part than Therese?" (Katia)

"Katia! I don't want to be told that by you!" (Lisa)

"What are you telling me to do about it, Big Sis!?" (Katia)

Hearing about Elise's and the others' pregnancy, Lisa seemed to feel angry with no chance to vent it. Katia tried to intervene somehow to settle it peacefully, but even if she, as newly wed, tried to intervene here, it just added unnecessarily fuel to the fire, let alone being meaningless. Though it's not like I particularly impregnated Elise and the other three just to spite Lisa.

"I will beat the shit out of you just as I announced in advance!" (Lisa)

Lisa begins her duel against Therese with a smoldering anger in her chest over being unable to marry.

I think they should be able to avoid going at it for real since they are fellow magicians, but it was decided that Katharina, Burkhart-san, Doushi and I would go in-between at such a point. Some injuries would be inevitable, but it was for the sake of avoiding the worst case.

"Therese-sama, kept going at it after all..." (Burkhart)

"Normally one wouldn't become so strong in such a short time." (Armstrong)

Without missing her daily magic training, she increased her mana by also doing her best at night with me. Nowadays her mana has risen to around the lower levels of the advanced rank. Even in regards to magic, I believe that she progressed at a terrifying rate if one considers only the

spells she can use.

"But, well..."

Even so it's unlikely for her to be able to win against Lisa who has a little less mana than the current Katharina.

And even before that, the difference in experience has been overwhelming.

It's impossible for a person at Burkhart-san's level to not notice that.

"You have once again raised your mana in a short time, haven't you...? I will beat you up, lass, and investigate the secret behind that!" (Lisa)

"Damn, so she didn't forget." (Wendelin)

"Wendelin, things don't proceed so conveniently. Me winning and making her submissive is..." (Therese)

Therese falters.

Well, it's probably impossible anyway.

"I will destroy you long before that." (Lisa)

Lisa also appears to think that she won't lose against Therese.

She provokes Therese to fire her spell first as if telling her, "Show me what you've got."

At first glance it looks as if she's careless, but since an expert at Lisa's level can gather a lot of information in the instant her opponent fired her spell first, there are also cases where starting first becomes a drawback.

"That's convenient. I will show thee the sole, big technique I learned." (Therese)

Therese readies her wand, and creates a huge fireball in the air, making it gradually grow.

Once it reached a diameter of around two meters, the flames became bluish white, and the temperature went up next.

In other words a 『Fireball』 that emphasized temperature and fire power before size.



"Lass, you seem to be better than I thought, but why are you putting so much mana into it?" (Lisa)

As if betting everything on this one blow, Therese charges most of her mana into the blue fireball in the air.

Even the fireball's size has finally grown to a diameter of around ten meters.

"It's because I won't be able to put up a fight if I were to fire small and neatly arranged spells. Just eat this!" (Therese)

Therese unleashes the completed, huge fireball at Lisa.

"Gosh! This is why you're an amateur!" (Lisa)

A considerable amount of mana should be necessary to invalidate this fireball, but Lisa deploys her blizzard spell in an instant, and throws it at the fireball.

At the moment both clash, a great amount of steam spreads into the vicinity.

Since the duel's location is a place intended to have a residential area constructed, nothing but grass grew here, but all of it started to wilt after being hit by the steam.

We deploy our 『Magic Barriers』, blocking the water vapor.

"Hubby, sorry." (Katia)

"Well, that was amazing."

It's a clash of Therese, who earnestly learned a fire spell with a high output, and Lisa, the ice magic master.

The firepower of both's spells were outrageous, but the conclusion of the match was already clear.

"I give up as I'm out of mana." (Therese)

Therese, who had invested almost all her mana into the fireball, raised both her hands and gave up. Seeing as she has no other trump card to play while also being out of mana, you can call Therese's decision to be correct.

"Give up?" (Lisa)

"I have no intention to continue with a match that I can't win. Well then, please excuse me with this. I believed they would offset each other, but it's slightly cold. I think I will have Amalie pour me some tea. No, I suppose this is the time to have Wendelin warm me up?" (Therese)

Therese, who had given up all too quickly and easily, tried to return to the mansion just like that.

"Hey! Wait!" (Lisa)

"What do thee want, Lisa or whatever thee were called?" (Therese)

"Since I won, be obedient and tell me how you increased your mana!" (Lisa)

"Thee are saying some strange things there." (Therese)

Therese dons an expression, clearly stating, 『Why do I have to tell thee something like that?』.

"I won, didn't I?" (Lisa)

"Thee challenged me to a match, but thee haven't mentioned any terms after winning, right? Both of us strove in our studies of magic. It was a very worthwhile time." (Therese)

"Pupupu! Certainly, that's true." (Armstrong)

"Certainly...kukuku! Lisa didn't mention any conditions." (Burkhart)

Having it pointed out by Therese, Doushi and Burkhart-san seemed to have trouble not bursting into laughter.

"What was that one month for!" (Lisa)

Come to think of it, in this one month she tried to investigate as much information about me as possible, going even as far as becoming the crown prince's guard.

Being treated like an old hag by a certain person at that time, she turned him into ice so that he couldn't move any longer after giving her rage free reign. As a result she was pulled off His Majesty's guard duty, but even after that she looked for opportunities to hang around me without doing any proper work for this month.

"I don't know anything about that. Isn't it thine own matter what thee have done in this one month?" (Therese)

It was obvious that she had her difficulties, but Therese bluntly declared that those were Lisa's own circumstances.

"If thee had so much spare time, it would have been better if thee had gone hunting in the Demon Forest." (Therese)

For the current Lisa it's almost impossible to get through our firm vigilance and investigate the secret by being close to me.

Hence Therese mercilessly criticized Lisa that she could have earned money by hunting.

"Certainly, I could have earned money if I had done that, but...since you lost, tell me the secret of your mana!" (Lisa)

Lisa tried to lunge at Therese, but Doushi and Burkhart-san intervened.

"Lisa, Therese-sama is an important guest who was entrusted to us by the Empire. If something happened to her, it would become a diplomatic issue." (Burkhart)

"In that case you wouldn't be able to avoid taking responsibility for it!" (Armstrong)

"Uuh..." (Lisa)

As Lisa is no idiot, she backs off after being warned by Doushi and Burkhart-san.

"In that case, Katia!" (Lisa)

"Eh? Me?" (Katia)

"To begin with, it was all about me being bothered by your mana having increased! And your damn mana has grown in this month again!" (Lisa)

"It's been exposed!" (Katia)

"Don't look down on me! I was the one who taught you magic! Why has your mana increased? Tell me!" (Lisa)

"..."

It's the result of me treating everyone equally, including my pregnant wives, and not just favoring Therese.

Katia had her mana raised to the upper levels of intermediate rank, but I think she really won't be able to talk about that secret if you also combine it with the embarrassment of voicing it out.

"Speak!" (Lisa)

"Even if it's you, Big Sis, I can't tell you." (Katia)

"Whaaat? You say you can't tell me!?! In other words, there's some really amazing secret!" (Lisa)

"Argh, damn!" (Katia)

Because Lisa tried to press on Katia, who let a little bit slip, I forced my way between the two at once.

"Katia is my wife, the wife of Earl Baumeister. I think going any further is rude." (Wendelin)

"Hubby..." (Katia)

"Are you alright, Katia?" (Wendelin)

"Yeah." (Katia)

As I apparently managed to skillfully cover for her by getting between the two, there was no harm done to Katia.

Good, good.

"Kuuu! I didn't see that coming! However, I won't consent!" (Lisa)

Lisa declared that she would continue observing me until she found the reason for the increase in mana.

Even though I impregnated Elise and the others at long last, it might be a bit bad for their prenatal care if she stalked us all the time. Hence I decided to use my final means.

"In the case, have a duel against me. If I win, you will obediently congratulate your pupil's marriage and leave. If I lose, I will tell you about the secret." (Wendelin)

"I accept! I am a fairly experienced magician, too. You better don't think you will be able to win that easily just because you're Earl Baumeister." (Lisa)

I don't know about the ups and downs, but in the end I would have a duel against Lisa.



"Earl-sama, I don't think that you can't win, but how are you going to fight against her?" (Burkhart)

"I will play it by ear." (Wendelin)

For the sake of fair-play, the duel between Lisa and me was held on the next day after she recovered her mana and energy.

The location is the same as the one where Lisa and Therese had their duel yesterday.

The grass has started to wither away due to the large amount of steam created after the collision of the big fire and ice spells, but since it's going to be completely mowed down at the time of the residential area construction anyway, there's no need to worry about it.

Before the start of the battle, the witness Burkhart-san came to ask me how I'm going to deal with Lisa.

"Seeing as the opponent is called Blizzard, I will also throw a big fire spell at her, I guess."
(Wendelin)

"You better hold back on that." (Burkhart)

"Why?" (Wendelin)

"Those watching will have their view blocked by the steam." (Burkhart)

"For such a reason?" (Wendelin)

Burkhart-san didn't say that it wouldn't have any effect or such, but that it would become a hindrance to his spectating.

"Since there's also the aspect that one will get burned by the steam if it's not blocked with a 『Magic Barrier』, it's a quite important point." (Burkhart)

"It's just as Burkhart-dono says. I would hate to not see the match because of bad visibility!"
(Armstrong)

Being warned so by Doushi as well, I decide to fight Lisa in another way.

Now that it has turned out like this, I guess it will be for the sake of my magic training.

It's a quite nasty handicap, but the two probably think that I won't lose despite this.

"I've been a magician for a long time as well. I don't believe that I will lose to someone younger than me." (Lisa)

"You're not saying that you won't lose to a brat that's half as old as you, or to be precise, twelve years younger?" (Wendelin)

"Earl Baumeister, I will freeze you!" (Lisa)

It looks like the matter with her age is something to be avoided after all, but I haven't lied. Since I'm currently 17 years old and Lisa is 29 years old, it's correct that I am twelve years younger. I suppose, the only thing that went amiss was that I couldn't find an opening even after pissing Lisa off by provoking her.

Even while angry she remains cool-headed.

I guess, nothing less to be expected of her who's called Lisa the Blizzard.

"Well then, start the match."

After Burkhart-san announced so and Doushi fired a fireball into the sky as a signal, the match began.

Following the signal, both fell back to Elise and the others who have come to watch.

They probably thought that they would get dragged into our battle.

"It will become an issue if I kill you. So I will stop you from moving around by freezing you!" (Lisa)

It was Lisa who started a preemptive attack.

At once the temperature around me dropped.

Once I look at my feet, a thin layer of ice has started to stick to my robe with the ground and grasses being covered by frost.

At this rate I should become unable to move within a few seconds.

"As one would expect with that nickname." (Wendelin)

I immediately use fire-based magic, and raise the temperature around me, melting the ice sticking to my robe.

The vicinity gradually became warm, and the chilliness vanished at once.

"(Time for a counterattack.)"

Next I counterattack Lisa with a similar ice spell.

It's a strategy of agitating the opponent by attacking with the same magic which Master had mentioned before.

The temperature around Lisa fell gradually, and a thin layer of ice and frost began to cover her clothes and accessories.

"To attack me, who has the nickname of Blizzard, with ice, you're taking me too lightly!" (Lisa)

"Though it won't be an issue as long as I win the match. In such situations, looking down on others or such bull doesn't exist." (Wendelin)

"Shit! It has more power than I thought..." (Lisa)

Contrary to the duel against Therese, the duel against me looked plain.

Going by appearance, both of us are standing still while facing off. After all, we're just trying to freeze the other by lowering the temperature.

While trying to stop the opponent's movements with ice, we remove the ice clinging to ourselves by melting it.

In the eyes of a person who can't use magic, it should look very plain.

"In the eyes of those who can use magic, it's a quite sophisticated match, but..."

"As someone who just learned magic, it looks very plain..." (Therese)

"Therese-san, on a glance there's not much change between the two, but at this moment both sides are using quite a bit of mana."

"I see." (Therese)

Both sides use a lot of mana to freeze the other and at the same time use mana to not be frozen themselves.

"Because they use two spells of contrary attributes, it's an extremely high-level magic battle," Katharina explains to the peanut gallery.

"That means it's a potentially endless repetition of the same moves."

"It won't take that much time. Mana has its limits."

"At this rate it will be Wend-sama's victory." (Wilma)

"I think so as well." (Luise)

Wilma's and Luise's forecast was correct.

If both of us continue the exchange of plain magic like this, Lisa will run out of mana first since she has less than me.

The conclusion will be plain too, but if both sides were to unleash heavy spells at each other, it might lead to an accident. It would also cause troubles to the vicinity.

Because I had such concerns, it was necessary to have such a plain duel.

"Damn!" (Lisa)

And Lisa got flustered due to this development.

Even if she were to forcibly fire a big spell here, she would only speed up her mana consumption, not to mention that it would be pointless. She probably understood that she's going to lose due to running out of mana at this rate.

"Just when I thought you might be a brat who can fire a slightly big spell..." (Lisa)

Certainly, as a magician I have less experience than Lisa, but I've had my fair share of hardships by being dragged into a civil war and being close to death in the battle against master. I wanted her to accept the match after taking those parts into account as well.

"You're welcome to go ahead with your prided blizzard spell." (Wendelin)

"..." (Lisa)

All that's left is to maintain this state as is. Even without getting impatient and firing offensive magic, it will be my victory by just waiting. No matter how she struggles, the one running out of mana first will be Lisa.

"You bastard...in spite of being a brat, you're not getting hotblooded..." (Lisa)

"I have the experience of having survived a civil war, after all." (Wendelin)

There's that as well, but as a matter of fact, my inner self is already in the latter half of its thirties. I'm more experienced than Lisa...am I not?

"However, I suppose it will be boring with just this much..."

The opponent is a magician with ability and fame. She might not agree with such a method of winning. No, it might be necessary to break the other side's hostility...through an overwhelming difference in power so that she won't probe into the secrets of others. In that case, it got to be her signature move, ice magic. In reality it's a composite magic of the water and wind attribute, but she has apparently turned it into her own weapon by researching it properly while using natural phenomenons as reference. I won't have any chance by imitating her, but there exists one factor allowing me to win against her.

"(That's the concept of absolute zero...)"

It defines the temperature when the oscillation of the atoms, which is decided by the temperature, reaches its lowest level, stopping their movements.

Saying so myself, it's incomprehensible, but I feel like my science teacher explained it during my time as a senior high school student...Huh, wait? Or was it the physics teacher?

Either way. I will limit it to just Lisa's surroundings, and enclose her with an absolute zero temperature.

I will be careful to not make a mistake and freeze her over.

After all, I don't know what I will be told by the Kingdom later, if I kill a magician of Lisa's class. It would be unbearable if I were told to work for free in order to compensate for her loss.

"I still have leeway with my mana." (Wendelin)

"Brat, you're a monster, aren't you?" (Lisa)

"I have increased my mana in proportion to various hardships and certain fetters." (Wendelin)

My mana has been growing through my daily training and various troublesome matters.

"I'm not really all that jealous...however, just the aspect of having a lot of mana is enviable." (Lisa)

I ended up being pitied even by Lisa, my duel opponent.

In the meanwhile, I gradually push away Lisa's 『Heating』 spell with my 『Absolute Zero』 spell. An area of ten meters around her transforms into an absolute zero environment.

"Kuh!" (Lisa)

"If you move the slightest bit, you will die." (Wendelin)

"What!?" (Lisa)

Once I tossed a fallen tree branch into the absolute zero area as a test, it hardened like a banana cooled with liquid nitrogen. When I hit the frozen branch with a magic pebble, it shattered in an instant.

"It looks like my affinity with ice magic is good." (Wendelin)

In the end my science knowledge from my previous life, which was a 3 (of 5 levels) according to the school results, had been useful.

While at it, I came up with one more spell.

"(I will name it 『Liquid Nitrogen』 spell.)"

I will compress air and turn it into liquid nitrogen...no, since I can't separate the atoms, it should be 『Liquid Air』, huh?

I drop the 『Liquid Air』, which I created in the air, to the ground, freezing over a rock that had been bathed in it.

Once I hit that with a magic pebble as well, it was shattered to pieces just like the branch.

"I would appreciate it if I could have you give up, but how about it?" (Wendelin)

"Fuck! Even though I'm Lisa the Blizzard..." (Lisa)

Since she threw up her hands in the air, I canceled the absolute zero zone stretching out around her, winning the duel.

Given that Lisa was competent, it was a big help that she didn't try the impossible against an opponent that was out of her league like a beginner.

However, I ended up making an outrageous mistake here.

Because both of us did our best, I acted out of character, and went to Lisa with the idea of shaking her hand, but in reality she had received serious damage.

No matter how much I had excluded her body from the direct effect, Lisa, who had been surrounded by an absolute zero temperature, had to continue heating her own body with magic in order to protect herself.

Back then she probably decided to put off protecting her clothes and equipment. Because the items abruptly got warm after I removed the absolute zero area...

Her clothes and items, which got exposed to a sudden, extreme difference in temperature, became

brittle and crumbled away.

Lisa, who tried to shake hands with me even after showing a childish behavior, had all things she wore suddenly fall apart, resulting in her showing me her naked body.

"Kyaaa——!" (Lisa)

A Lisa, who crouched down in panic on the spot, and a Lisa who screamed like a woman which I couldn't have imagined at all.

Moreover, I learned about her unexpected secret.

"Nothing's growing....below..." (Wendelin)

"Waa——n!" (Lisa)

Having her secret revealed to me, Lisa starts to bawl like a child.

The duel ended up reaching a somewhat slovenly conclusion thanks to me.



* * *

"Today I was shown various, amazing things." (Armstrong)

"Doushi, various?"

"Indeed. First off, Earl Baumeister's ice magic overpowering Blizzard." (Armstrong)

That's owed to my questionable science knowledge about the production of liquid air and absolute zero.

Given that minus 50° Celsius was the limit, no matter how harsh the winter, Lisa, who was referring to those temperatures, had naturally no chance in winning against me.

"Next, I guess Lisa the Blizzard's very womanly scream." (Armstrong)

Luckily, Lisa was quite a bit away from the gallery when becoming naked...

『Burkhart-san, looking is not allowed.』 (Wilma)

『Uncle-sama, please excuse me.』 (Elise)

『Erw, you probably wanna have a look, but it's not allowed.』 (Ina)

They apparently couldn't have a look at it because the men had their eyes covered by Wilma, Elise, and Ina right away.

"(That means, I better don't mention that matter...)" (Wendelin)

That matter refers to the fact of Lisa having no hair below.

"Even so, she's strangely modest after that..."

The situation being what it was, Lisa was immediately led into the mansion by the female camp, and after she was able to take a bath, she put on a set of clothes prepared by our side, and drank some hot mate tea.

The gorgeous robe and the rest of her outfit, which she had worn until now, had crumbled away, and even her make-up, which represented her characteristic, highly spirited expression, was gone after taking a bath.

I thought that it might be alright age-wise after seeing her face au naturel, but in reality she has quite a childish face without make-up.

She looks as if she's slightly older than Therese.

And, for some reason she has become oddly obedient.

I couldn't feel any of the eccentric air she had shown so far.

While taking little sips of the tea prepared by Amalie, she occasionally peeked this way in an apologetic manner.

"Did I frighten her so much?" (Wendelin)

"No, I don't think that she's someone who would get frightened by something of this level..."
(Burkhart)

Even Burkhart-san, who should know Lisa better than me, was puzzled by her current behavior. I wonder, just what the hell happened to her?

"Katia, what do you think?" (Wendelin)

"Well, I see Big Sis acting like this for the first time, too. I have absolutely no clue." (Katia)

"Look here, I made some cookies." (Amalie)

Amalie brought the cookies she made to the docile Lisa.

"Today they contain chocolate chips and dried fruits." (Amalie)

Both were cookies made while using ingredients from the Demon Forest. Recently the confectioneries in the capital had been selling something similar and they were quite popular.

"It's delicious." (Lisa)

Lisa said that short comment with a quiet voice, and ate the cookies like a small squirrel.

"She has become mysteriously cute." (Luise)

"Indeed. It's said that a woman transforms through make-up, but..." (Ina)

Luise and Ina looked with curious eyes at Lisa who had such an unusual change. Even though she was a gaudy beauty when the make-up was perfectly applied, she felt like a cute beauty now. For some reason she's still scared, but although she's older than us, she strangely stirs everyone's wish to protect her.

"What is this about?" (Amalie)

It was completely incomprehensible, but Amalie skillfully got the information out of her. Did Lisa open her heart to just her who has been gallantly taking care of her in various ways? She explained the situation while whispering into Amalie's ear.

"I see...is that so? ...Understood." (Amalie)

Having heard about the circumstances from Lisa, Amalie begins to explain it to us.

"Lisa-san seems to be frightened of strangers if she doesn't wear such an outfit." (Amalie)

Amalie's explanation continues.

She was born as a girl in a certain village a long time ago, but she had an extreme shyness of strangers.

Especially towards men. She couldn't normally talk to any men besides her father and her younger

brother.

All things considered, Amalie, you did well to make her tell you.

"Even after learning that she has a gift in magic, she couldn't cure her fear of strangers..." (Amalie)

Lisa worried that she wouldn't be able to work normally at this rate even after becoming an adventurer and departing into the world.

Moreover, she was anxious that it might be impossible for her to get married.

"Accordingly, she has apparently been acting as a confident woman by wearing flashy make-up and attire." (Amalie)

"She really mastered that acting, didn't she?" (Burkhart)

Burkhart-san hadn't realized it until now.

Certainly, I think her acting ability is amazing, or rather her auto-suggestion ability.

"So you're saying she returned to normal since she lost her outfit and had her make-up removed?"

"That seems to be the case. Right, Lisa-san?" (Amalie)

When asked by Amalie, she nodded her head repeatedly.
That gesture was quite adorable.

"How cute." (Luise)

"Certainly." (Therese)

Even Therese approved of Luise's impression.

Especially Therese might believe that it's a cuteness she doesn't have.

"She looks so young that one wouldn't consider her being close to 30. I think it would be better for her to not use such make-up." (Therese)

"...Indeed. But Therese, Lisa-san seems to be unable to talk with men without that make-up." (Amalie)

"So she has that character as soon as he puts on make-up? What difficult circumstances..." (Wendelin)

Both are too biased, and neither produces a good result.
Certainly, you could call that difficult.

"...You got it, Wend-kun." (Amalie)

"Yes, did I maybe overdo it?" (Wendelin)

Next Lisa whispered something into Amalie's ear.

I thought that I might get complaints from Lisa about the duel.

"That's not it. The duel was a duel, so it can't be helped. Right?" (Amalie)

Upon Amalie's question, Lisa once more shook her head adorably.
However, I wonder, why can't this person talk normally to men if she doesn't wear flashy clothes and make-up?
I cannot help being very mystified by that part.

"Rather than that, she says that you should take responsibility because you saw her naked after the duel." (Amalie)

Amalie, who listened to Lisa's whispers, dropped an outrageous bomb.

"Ah, there was someone who said something like that before, wasn't there...?" (Wendelin)

"Something like that sure happened, didn't it...?" (Katharina)

Katharina, who had experienced being seen nude by me in the bathroom, muttered, obviously recalling that scene.

It was great that I won the duel against Lisa the Blizzard, but it resulted in me being burdened with a new hardship.



The strong-willed, female magician Lisa who tried to find out the reason why the mana of Therese, who didn't seem to be a magician so far, and Katia, who was her pupil, had grown. Although she possessed abilities that didn't put any shame to her name, she lost in the duel against me. Once her gorgeous outfit and make-up was gone, she suddenly became submissive. After her make-up was removed, she didn't ask about the matter of the mana increase anymore. Lisa explained that she couldn't normally talk to men without a flashy outfit and make-up due to her extreme fear of strangers. In the end Lisa has been freeloading at the mansion while still diligently doing her special magic training in the mornings. Her accuracy in magic was so good that she got praised by Katharina. Different from her first impression, she appears to seriously train her magic. However, there was one problem.

"Aren't we acquaintances from 15 years ago!?" (Burkhart)

Lisa, who had suddenly become the timid type of beauty, seems to be bad with Burkhart-san, who's an older and fashionable man.

It has reached the point of her hiding behind someone as soon as she sees him.

"Weren't you a lot more arrogant back when I had been teaching you magic!?" (Burkhart)

Once Burkhart-san got angry at her, Lisa got frightened and hid behind Katharina. Days passed in such a tune, but conversely, the criticism from the female camp vanished completely because of that.

It might be because that state of her is a lot better than her previous, haughty character.

"You can put your previous clothes and make-up back on." (Burkhart)

"...I see...Lisa-san apparently wants to become able to speak with men even when looking like this." (Katharina)

Lisa got Katharina to reply to the demand of Burkhart-san as her representative after whispering to her.

It looks like she can't tell him personally.

"Is that actually possible?" (Burkhart)

"Burkhart-san, such things need time, don't you think?" (Katharina)

"Well, seeing how Earl-sama has approved of you staying here, it's not really my place to say anything anyway..." (Burkhart)

"...She appears to be grateful to Wendelin-san." (Katharina)

"Why yes, thank you..." (Wendelin)

As sarcastic as it is, I was the one Lisa was the most fond of among the men in the mansion. She still can't speak directly to me and needs one of the women as an interpreter, but even when we meet, she doesn't become scared or averts her eyes.

Erw and Doushi were no good as she got scared of them from the very start.

"Ye——ah, what a difficult person..." (Erwin)

Given that he was being avoided as well, Erw adopted the stance of not being able to do anything about it.

"At this rate, it looks like there will be many issues..."

"Doesn't she have any choice but to get gradually used to it?" (Erwin)

Erw's opinion was rather normal, but it was the most reasonable as well.

"How about going out for a bit in order to get her accustomed to it?" (Erwin)



Following Erw's recommendation, we decided to go for a stroll in the capital.

If you consider it normally, it would be a date, but there was no way that the current Lisa could endure being alone with me.

As there were various other circumstances as well, it was Lisa, Katia, Therese, Amalie, and me who went to the capital.

"This isn't a date anymore, is it?"

"I'm the interpreter? I'm happy to be able to go to the capital, though." (Amalie)

Lisa didn't leave Amalie's side.

I wonder whether Lisa and me going on a date with just the two of us will actually take place until my death?

That's a very interesting study case.

"Well it's rare for the sons and daughters of nobles to go on dates alone. I don't know about lower-ranking nobles, though." (Therese)

Listening to Therese, I remembered.

Even at the time when I had my first date with Elise, not only Sebastian, but several guards were with us as well.

The guards made sure to not be seen by us, but I'm pretty sure Cardinal Hohenheim had instigated it.

"Elise and the other three are pregnant, so it's dangerous for them to use 『Teleportation』, and since Wilma stayed behind to take care of them, I guess it's only the relatively new wife of Wendelin or women who have that kind of relationship with him." (Therese)

Only Lisa is the exception here, but the residents of the capital, who don't really know about me, looked at us with the implicit meaning of 『A magician-sama is going on a date with several women』.

Therese, Katia, and Amalie didn't mind it. For Lisa it was out of the question, hence she stayed obedient.

"No matter what kind of circumstances it might be, today is a holiday. Wendelin, escort me. Katia and Amalie, too." (Therese)

"Therese, you sure decide quickly."

"It's a habit from my time as Duchess Philip. No matter how many good ideas one might have, it's meaningless if thou don't decide and put them into practice." (Therese)

"That certainly sounds correct. But, I make mistakes when deciding on the spur." (Katia)

"Today it will be fine since we're just going to sightsee the capital." (Amalie)

The three seem to chat happily, and even while I think that it's probably not good for me to take a day off, I escorted the three and Lisa, who hid behind Amalie, or rather, guided them through the capital.

Having said that, since there were four women here, the main attraction was shopping and going around stores.

"The stores in Baulburg have increased the number of articles for sale greatly, but in the end they lose out to the country's capital." (Therese)

At a store handling Western-styled clothes and accessories located in the shopping street, Therese continues to talk while measuring up various clothes.

"Therese, I'm fine." (Katia)

"Isn't that an excuse? I wonder what to think of using the easiness to move in as the only criterion for plain clothes." (Therese)

"I think so, too. Since it's a rare opportunity, just buy it." (Amalie)

"Okay, okay..." (Katia)

Katia accepts it reluctantly.

Just as Therese has pointed out, Katia doesn't possess overly many clothes.

Only her equipment as adventurer, and clothes for going out suitable to the wife of a noble which had been prepared by her home when she got married to me.

If you exclude those, she has only plain clothes that are easy to move in.

I think she has been strongly influenced by her life in the Eulenberg House.

"No one will be bothered by it, right?" (Katia)

"Thou idiot. Thou are Wendelin's wife, so it's only natural for thou to wear suitable clothes even in thine private time." (Therese)

Therese begins to preach to Katia to get clothes appropriate of her social position, saying that I will be criticized and looked down upon because of her clothes, even if she's fine with it.

"Seeing as thou became the wife of a noble, resign thineself and accept dressing up to a certain extent." (Therese)

"I got it..." (Katia)

Katia acknowledged somewhat unwillingly, but contrary to her tone, many attires suited her nicely because of her pretty face.

"Also, if we don't consume to some degree, money won't reach the lower classes, right? It's out of the question to ruin the house by wasting money, but a certain level of consumption benefits the commoners." (Therese)

As expected, Therese's knowledge about such aristocratic common sense is overwhelmingly deep.

It's probably because she was born as noble.

"I understand, but I'm still better than Big Sis. After all Big Sis doesn't own any clothes besides those flashy attires." (Katia)

Because she couldn't maintain her speech and conduct without that getup, Lisa always wore it, even in her private time.

As a matter of fact, what she was wearing right now were clothes she had borrowed from Katharina who had a similar physique.

"Isn't that the reason why I have been choosing clothes for her together with Amalie?" (Therese)

Certainly the two had chosen plenty of clothes while making her try them on.

"Wend-kun, what do you think of this for Lisa-san?" (Amalie)

"It suits her well." (Wendelin)

Amalie's fashion sense seems to be great. Lisa is wearing clothes that make her look like a calm, beautiful onee-san, and not those extremely gaudy clothes from before.

Amalie appears to be skilled at coordinating outfits.

"Lisa-san, he says it suits you." (Amalie)

Being told so by Amalie, Lisa cast her face down, looking slightly embarrassed.

It seems like she still can't speak with me without using Amalie as an interpreter.

Nowadays she's mostly getting Amalie to interpret for her during normal life, and Katharina during magic training.

"Let's choose various others in addition."

The three women follow Amalie's opinion, and begin to check and buy clothes as if it's their last chance to do so.

In these situations, the one with the most free time is the man, namely me.

I'm indifferent in regards to clothes, but even so, when I became an Earl, I made sure to prepare clothes to wear on my own accord.

As this is a store catered towards women, I only watch over the four, and comment whether the clothes they are trying on suit them or not.

"I think it suits you." (Wendelin)

"Wendelin, polish thine vocabulary on how to praise a woman a bit more." (Therese)

When I started saying nothing but it suits or it doesn't suit, I was cautioned by Therese that my vocabulary was lacking.

However, even if I'm requested to use such advanced technique, it's troublesome.

"Ah, you're as lovely as a rose." (Wendelin)

"That gives me the chills..." (Therese)

Even though I went out of my way and mustered my courage, Therese's evaluation was cruel.

"It's because you said I'm lacking vocabulary, Therese!" (Wendelin)

"It's nothing thou do once told." (Therese)

"Uuh...I will ask Erich next time, I think." (Wendelin)

"He seems to be a considerably refined older brother." (Therese)

My efforts ended in vain, but the buying of clothes apparently ended without problems.

Everyone said that they would pay by themselves, but as a celebrity, I have to pay attention to the eyes around me.

I paid the full amount with gold coins.

The shopkeeper of the store, who received it, looks so happy that it's obvious to anyone watching. It appears that we had been quite the lavish customers.

"Thank you very much."

Once we left the store, it was already close to noon.

As expected, I had become hungry.

"Well then, it's soon time for lunch..." (Wendelin)

"Wendelin, we aren't done yet." (Therese)

""What did you saaay——!""

"Even Katia..."

Even though we spent more than two hours in just the first store, Therese says that the shopping still hasn't come to an end.

Katia and I raised our voices at the same time, but leaving me aside, it's probably hopeless for Katia.

"Wend-kun, underwear, accessories, and shoes are necessary as well, aren't they?" (Amalie)

Amalie shared Therese's opinion, basically saying that the shopping isn't over yet.

"Hubby, I want to eat lunch as well..." (Katia)

"Katia, thou aren't allowed to be absent since there's thine share of clothes as well." (Therese)

"No way——!" (Katia)

Katia's and my wish were in vain. Afterwards we went to several shops, and spent more than four hours on shopping.



"It's already this late, huh...? I demand lunch and an afternoon refreshment!" (Wendelin)

"Me too!" (Katia)

Because we were forced to keep Therese's and Amalie's shopping company for a long time, noon had passed a good while ago.

As it was already time for an afternoon snack, Katia and I complained to let us eat something.

"It's great that thou two get along so nicely." (Therese)

We also have the common point of having been born into noble houses that aren't very aristocratic. Katia and I had many behavioral patterns and preferences that overlapped.

We had common traits like not cutting corners with the equipment as adventurers, but not caring about plain clothes, or liking to eat delicious food.

"It looks like Lisa-san wants to eat something as well." (Amalie)

Lisa quietly agreed with Katia's and my opinion.

With this we have the majority on our side, and the opinion of going to eat something became predominant.

"I haven't said that we won't go eat anything, have I?" (Therese)

Therese seemed to be hungry as well.

She didn't oppose my opinion of getting some food.

"Now then, what are we going to eat?"

"Meat!" (Katia)

"Katia, I can't believe that thou are a woman at a marriageable age..." (Therese)

Therese was astounded by Katia who said she wants to eat meat without being afraid of what others or society might think of her.

I don't really consider it to be weird, but...yeah, I guess that's the feeling I always get from Doushi. However, it's not like Katia eats as much as Doushi. I think it's better to eat what you like without caring about the thoughts of others.

"Amalie, Lisa-san, what would you like to eat?" (Wendelin)

Since I'm the man here, I will yield to the women's wishes here and try asking whether there's anything they want to eat.

"Let me see...since there isn't that much time left until dinner, something light. It looks like Lisa-san would like to eat something sweet." (Amalie)

Something sweet, eh...?
I suppose that's a normal, womanly response.

"Well then..." (Wendelin)

I decided to make a safe choice by going to a slightly, high-class restaurant.
After all they have quite a bit on the menu, and also many kinds of desserts.
I am more or less a famous person, and since there are few guests as lunchtime is over, the restaurant has us enter the open deluxe suit deeper inside.
Once we gave the waiter our orders, dishes were served in succession after around 30 minutes.

"That's a really delicious-looking steak."

"Katia, are thou going to be alright eating this much?" (Therese)

"Therese, aren't you hungry yourself? Most recently the amount of food you're eating has gone up, hasn't it? Considering all that, you're somewhat thin." (Katia)

"That's because her mana went up." (Wendelin)

Magicians are gluttons because they consume more calories the more mana they use.
That means, Katia's calorie consumption by using mana went up in proportion to her increase of mana.

"No, that's something I know as well. Certainly, the amount I'm eating has grown in comparison to before." (Therese)

Therese had ordered a fish dish, salad, and bread.
It was a normal sized meal, but since Therese was a light eater before becoming a magician, her food consumption has definitely gone up.

"Recently the clothes I'm wearing feel a bit loose, but doesn't that mean that I got slimmer?" (Therese)

"How nice...so being a magician has such an advantage, too." (Amalie)

"Did thou gain weight, Amalie?" (Therese)

"I'm keeping the status quo by paying attention to my food. After entering the Earl Baumeister household, the meals improved, but the amount of me moving my body has decreased." (Amalie)

Amalie looked enviously at Katia and Therese who lost weight.
Diets seem to be an eternal topic for many women, but the old her might have had no need to think about this issue.
After all the old Knight Baumeister House had been in the leading group within the Kingdom if we were to speak about a simple diet and moving one's body.

"That means, Lisa-san, you will also be alright even if you eat all that, won't you...?" (Amalie)

Lisa had ordered a parfait, a cake set, and crepes, and was now happily eating those while drinking black tea.

As expected, even for me that looked like an amount that would give me a slightly sour stomach.

"Big Sis, you're sure downing those sweets." (Katia)

"Eh? I told you that I like them." (Lisa)

Amalie was serving in the role of Lisa's interpreter, but when no men were around, she chatted about this and that.

Because of that, I got to hear various things about her.

"Huh? But each time you took me out for a meal..." (Katia)

According to Katia, they went to bars non-stop, only drinking high-proof alcohol and side dishes with a strong flavor whenever she went out to eat together with Lisa.

"She says that was a necessary acting to maintain her speech and conduct in that outfit." (Amalie)

Lisa seems to confide in Amalie quite a bit. It went so far that she could immediately answer Katia's question in Lisa's stead.

"Emptying more than twenty large beer mugs as an act...?"



"It looks like I don't get drunk easily, despite not liking to drink alcohol much." (Lisa)

A heavy drinker who doesn't like alcohol is amazing in its own way, I think.
Certainly, she's been eating the sweets while looking very happy.

"Somehow you're completely different from my image of you. It's like you're someone I met for the first time." (Katia)

Same as Burkhart-san, even Katia, who was close to Lisa, felt bewildered by her transformation.

"Well, I guess it doesn't change the fact that you're my Big Sis either way. Another steak, please!" (Katia)

Katia didn't mind the minor details overly much.
She immediately switched her thinking and ordered another steak.

"Thou eat well, don't thou?" (Therese)

"Meat is delicious, no?" (Katia)

"I agree with it being delicious, but I can't eat this much." (Therese)

After the meal we chose some souvenirs for Elise and the others, who didn't come with us, and returned home.

I still couldn't speak with Lisa directly, but I was able to go out with Amalie, Katia, Therese, and her. I think it was a worthwhile holiday.



"What? Being a heavy drinker was an act?" (Burkhart)

Several days after the group date, Burkhart-san, who visited the mansion on business, widened his eyes in wonder after hearing Lisa's story.

He probably didn't expect her to actually not like drinking alcohol while at the same time simply having a strong constitution towards drinking.

"It seems she thought a heavy drinker wouldn't be made fun of as an adventurer." (Amalie)

Amalie once again worked as faithful interpreter.

"Well, that's not wrong per se. Regardless of gender, there are ill-mannered adventurers who will strangely blame adventurers for eating sweets with 『That's food for women and children』 and such." (Burkhart)

"Only looking at such things means they have low ability. Adventurers are free to do whatever they

like." (Wilma)

"You're absolutely right there, Wilma-jou-chan. Truly powerful people won't care about such things, but an impressively wild image is still necessary."

Because appearance matters.

Heartily gulping down high-proof alcohol is an attempt to show that one's a strong adventurer.

I suppose, there's also the coercion towards newbies and juniors?

I think it's a behavior similar to that of a countryside delinquent.

"But you know, if female adventurers do something like that, male adventurers draw back from them."

"That's unfair, isn't it?"

"You might say so, but isn't a heavily drinking female adventurer rather questionable as a marriage partner?"

"But it works for men?"

"There are also some that get old as simple drunkards, harming their health and wasting away their lives in the slums after being kicked out by their wives."

"Burkhart-san, you have to be careful as well, okay?"

"Yeah, yeah, it's just as you say Luise-jou-chan...which reminds me, I went only once eating with Lisa, but she drank quite a lot."

It looks like a long time ago...I'm sure more than ten years...Lisa and the magicians, who were taught by Burkhart like her, only once had a dinner party which also served as get-together.

Back then Lisa drank more than twenty large beer mugs all by herself, shocking Burkhart-san.

"And now she's not drinking a single drop, huh...?"

Right now Lisa looked forward to the sweets being served as desserts after the meals and as snacks without drinking any alcohol.

The beverage she's drinking normally changed to black tea as well.

"It seems she has no need to put on airs in this place."

"I see. Keeping a scary image as a female magician is hard work." (Burkhart)

"In your case, it's fine to do what you like and drink, Burkhart-san." (Luise)

"It's not like I'm not going to drink alcohol because of the looks of others." (Burkhart)

"I simply like alcohol," Burkhart-san said to Luise.

"Well, isn't that great then? Drinking alcohol while not even liking it is a sacrilege towards alcohol."

(Burkhart)

In the eyes of an alcohol-lover like Burkhart-san, people not liking alcohol shouldn't drink it.

"After all, it will decrease my share." (Burkhart)

"I thought that you'd say that." (Ina)

Ina was astounded by his reason being totally self-centered.

"Seeing that it's you, I thought you might have said 『I can drink more! It's a match!』, Burkhart-san." (Wendelin)

"Wait a minute, Earl-sama, I'm not Doushi!" (Burkhart)

Immediately after saying that, Burkhart-san apparently recalled something important. It's the fact that Doushi has come to the Baumeister Earldom as well. And, speaking of the devil, Doushi stormed into the room.

"Interesting! I have heard that Lisa the Blizzard is a bigger drinker than me!?" (Armstrong)

"Burkhart-san..." (Wendelin)

"It slipped my tongue..." (Burkhart)

Doushi often gets worked up over totally pointless things. He always starts food matches with Wilma, and then he feels vexed after losing something he started himself. This time the fact of Lisa being able to drink a lot of alcohol had likely stirred his competitive spirit.

"Lisa the Blizzard! Let's have a contest!" (Armstrong)

Lisa was suddenly told by Doushi to have a drinking bout, but just as usual, Lisa was not very good with Doushi, or rather she was especially bad with men like Doushi. She immediately hid behind Amalie.

"Uncle-sama, a drinking bout is dangerous. Please stop it." (Elise)

Hearing Doushi, the one with straightforward common sense, Elise, tried to stop him in a hurry. Even in this world there are people who lose their lives through acute alcohol addiction and excessive alcohol consumption. In the eyes of Elise, who's well versed in medical knowledge as a healing magician, a heavy drinker bout was out of the question.

"No, this is a matter of pride!" (Armstrong)

I don't know how the amount of alcohol drinking relates to pride, but for Doushi it seems to be important. He didn't pay any heed to Elise's remonstrations.

"Does this mean he won't withdraw unless he gets his drinking bout?"

"All because Burkhart-san said something strange..."

"No, I mean, sorry, but is it really my fault?" (Burkhart)

In the end a drinking contest between Doushi and Lisa started as there was no other way out.



"Lisa, I'm truly sorry."

For some reason I ended up apologizing to Lisa for it having developed into this situation. Since we were forcing a person, who doesn't like alcohol, into a drinking bout, I had no choice but obediently apologize to her.

When Burkhart-san tried to apologize, Lisa went into hiding. In Doushi's case...I guess it's impossible until the bout comes to an end...Erw was no good as well. That meant it all came down on me.

"It looks like she doesn't mind." (Amalie)

"Eh? Why?" (Wendelin)

Without getting angry in particular, Lisa accepted Doushi's challenge. Once I asked for the reason, she gave me an explanation through Amalie.

"She says it's for the sake of her future husband." (Amalie)

"(Ugahh!)"

It looks like she accepted because I, who will become her husband, asked her to do it. I feel like my paths of escape are gradually being cut off thanks to Doushi. Maybe Doushi challenged her to a bout on purpose...no, that's unlikely.

"Just don't push yourself, okay?" (Wendelin)

"She says it's fine and that she will win." (Amalie)

Lisa seems to brim with quite a bit of confidence, declaring through Amalie that she won't lose against Doushi.

"Hah! That confidence of yours will come to an end today!" (Armstrong)

Because he proposed the bout from his side, it was clear that Doushi was a very good drinker. Even Burkhart-san can't win against him. It was also his pride, seeing as he was losing against

Wilma in gluttony.

"Wend-sama, the alcohol smell..." (Wilma)

A large number of high-proof alcohol had been prepared for the drinking bout, but the smell of alcohol drifted into the vicinity from the jars that had their corks removed.

Wilma, who has a sensitive nose, quickly covered her nose with both hands.

"Wilma, you're not very good with alcohol?" (Wendelin)

"I hate it because it doesn't taste good." (Wilma)

Her aversion towards alcohol went so far that she wouldn't even taste a sip of a drink during a toasting.

"That's quite the number of bottles there...Therese, you provided them right?" (Ina)

It's aquavit, the specialty of my home, the Philip Dukedom. Ina, thou are going to drink as well?" (Therese)

"I'm going to pass since I'm pregnant." (Ina)

"Ah true, sorry, sorry." (Therese)

Aquavit was a distilled liquor using potatoes as base. It was the specialty product of Philip Dukedom which was harvesting large amounts of potatoes.

As it's also because of a cold climate, its alcohol percentage exceeds 40%.

"The victory is decided by who can drink more of these, right? I'm not really good with the smell either..." (Luise)

Luise doesn't drink alcohol just like Wilma.

Ina should be able to drink it normally, but usually she doesn't do it.

Since I don't drink much either, my other wives adjusted to me.

"Please, make sure to not overdo it. If you start feeling bad, I will cast 『Detoxification』 as soon as you tell me." (Elise)

Elise, who had her resistance overcome by Doushi, took over the relief duty.

Given that it had turned into a huge uproar when Elise went into a drunken frenzy before, she usually stayed away from alcohol.

To her alcohol registered as an ingredient for cooking and sweets.

"The smell is quite something..." (Katharina)

"Katharina, are you fine with alcohol?" (Katia)

"I can drink it normally. Though I don't drink much. What about you, Katia?" (Katharina)

"It's the same for me as well. I guess I don't drink it other than during dinner parties or celebrations." (Katia)

Since the gallery consisted of the usual members, there wasn't a shred of tension, but the preparations for the drinking bout were done.

"You're free to water it down, but only the amount of undiluted aquavit counts."

"Burkhart-dono, what are you saying! If you're a man, you drink it just like that!" (Armstrong)

"No...I feel like diluting alcohol has nothing to do with gender..." (Burkhart)

There are only a few people who drink such strong alcohol undiluted, but it seems to be normal in Doushi's world.

Without even preparing a glass, he's apparently going to have a match by drinking it directly from the bottle.

On the other hand, Lisa would pour it into a glass made out of ice she cast herself. She's apparently going to contest by drinking it on the rocks.

"Therese-sama, please give me some of this aquavit if you have any left."

"Thou have been helping me with my magic training, Burkhart. Even if nothing was left, I will order some later and give it to thee." (Therese)

"Hahaha! It's 50 bottles of undiluted aquavit. That's not an amount you can drink with two people." (Burkhart)

Burkhart-san, who had quickly become the referee, gives the signal for the match to begin while laughing.

"Mmh, it's refreshing and easy to drink. It's a good drink!" (Armstrong)

Doushi began to heartily drink a large bottle of aquavit as soon as the start was signaled.

I feel like taste doesn't matter at all with such a high-proof drink, but Doushi downed his first bottle with a huge verve while looking very happy.

Lisa poured the aquavit into the glass after putting some ice into it, and drank it quietly.

Her drinking speed wasn't all that high. However, she constantly kept up a fixed drinking rate.

"I can go on!" (Armstrong)

"Going on and all is nice, but what a waste of precious booze..." (Burkhart)

Burkhart-san quibbled with Doushi's way of drinking.

He was one of the people who drank their booze slowly while enjoying it, after all.

Around ten minutes after the beginning of the bout, Doushi had already emptied five bottles.

It was a high pace of one bottle every two minutes. If this were to be aired on TV, the TV station would likely display a teleop of 『Dear viewers, please don't imitate this by all means』.

Doushi's face was slightly red, but he didn't look as though he was that drunk. His drinking pace hasn't fallen either.

"Lisa's side..."

Lisa had continued drinking at a fixed pace.
She pours the aquavit from the bottle into the glass, and drinks it slowly.
Once the ice runs out, she adds more into the glass by creating it herself.
Suitable to her nickname as Blizzard, she always seems to take care of ice herself.
What's amazing above all is the fact that Lisa's complexion hasn't changed at all.
So far she is losing in the amount of drunken aquavit, but she has an astounding pace of having completely emptied two bottles.

"Both are bottomless." (Therese)

"An ordinary person won't be able to imitate this." (Amalie)

Therese and Amalie were amazed by the quantity the two were drinking.
And then, one hour after the bout started...

"I can still go on." (Armstrong)

His willpower is great, but in any case, or rather, as one would expect Doushi's vigorous drinking had stopped.
Emptying one bottle per two minutes only lasted throughout the first ten minutes. At this point in time he's at twenty bottles.
The red hue of his face had increased as well.

"That's only natural, no...?"

Since he had drunk twenty bottles of undiluted aquavit all by himself, he might be quite a monster at this point.
However, Doushi wasn't about to stop drinking.
That's because...

"Lisa-san, are you okay?" (Amalie)

Lisa replied Amalie's question with a light nod.
Without disturbing her pace of one bottle every five minutes, she was at eleven bottles as of now.
Different from Doushi, her face color hasn't changed at all. To be honest, she doesn't look as if she has been drinking alcohol to me.
Doushi was still winning, but he seemed to sense an impending danger since Lisa continued to drink at a constant pace.
But, even if he might be Doushi, there's no way that he can drink any more.
His hands had stopped without him even being stopped by Elise.
And then, two hours later...

"Ah... all the booze will be gone!" (Burkhart)

"Burkhart, I will give thee some later, so don't cry. Are thou a child?" (Therese)

"I mean, isn't it beyond expectations for everything to be gone!?" (Burkhart)

"Even I hadn't foreseen this. I had prepared as many as 50 bottles." (Therese)

Lisa seemed to have faintly raised her drinking pace.

At present she was at 24 and a half. Doushi was struggling, but he could drink only two more in the following hour.

As all 50 bottles were in the process of being emptied, Burkhart-san whined that he couldn't get any, and Therese was astonished.

"Nuoooh——! At this rate!" (Armstrong)

At the moment when Lisa finished her 26th bottle, Doushi's defeat was set in stone.

Doushi started to drink his 23rd bottle in a hurry with a fighting spirit, but even after having drunk more than him, Lisa appeared to drink at the same rate as until now.

Everyone believed that she wouldn't have a chance to win against Doushi in the first place.

"Her case is completely different, no? That's far beyond the level of being able to drink a bit of alcohol."

Did he hear Luise's statement? Doushi somehow managed to motivate himself and drained down his 23rd bottle, but this seems to have been his limit.

He didn't extend his hand for the 24th bottle and his face was as red as a lobster, too.

If such a lobster were to be sold on the morning market, I might reflexively grab it as it would look delicious.

Since it would deliver a hard blow to Doushi if I were to voice that out, I kept it tightly to myself. And meanwhile Lisa finished her 26th bottle.

"That's it. You won, Lisa." (Wendelin)

Once I called out to her, she didn't take up the 27th bottle, and quietly offered it to Burkhart-san after wavering a bit.

"Thanks, Lisaaaa——!" (Burkhart)

By just receiving merely one bottle, Burkhart-san thanked Lisa while crying in joy.

"Burkhart-san..."

"It's great that some were left."

"Thou look really happy." (Therese)

"Yeah, after all it would take time if you were to order some, wouldn't it Therese-sama?" (Burkhart)

"Thou can wait at least that long. Thou aren't a little child..." (Therese)

"Being able to drink right now is the best!" (Burkhart)

What we learned from this bout was that Lisa was a lot stronger with alcohol than we had expected, and that Burkhart-san was a lot more greedy in regards to booze than we had imagined.



For around 30 minutes after the drinking bout, Doushi sobered up from his drunkenness while drinking water.

"Having lost cannot be helped!" (Armstrong)

His complexion had already lost some of its redness.
I have no doubt that Doushi's liver has a sturdiness comparable to that of a large dragon.
As for Lisa, her alcohol endurance was at a level which was impossible to understand.

"Now that the bout came to an end, I got hungry." (Wendelin)

Quite a bit of time has passed since we ate lunch.
As I apparently used energy when watching the bout, I felt like wanting to eat a light afternoon snack.

"I have expected that you'd say so, and thus prepared a meal in advance, dear." (Elise)

Elise brought a banana pie she had baked for eating between meals.
It uses plenty of the Demon Forest's special banana, and was extremely popular in the Baumeister Earldom across all age groups, ranging from children to elderly.

"That looks really delicious. How much are you going to eat, Doushi?"

"No, I have no need for the moment..." (Armstrong)

Well, even for Doushi sweets were beyond his grasp after drinking this much alcohol.

"I guess that's only natural if you drank this much. Lisa, are you going to eat some banana pie? We can also set some aside so that you can eat it later, though..."

Once I tried asking Lisa just for caution's sake, she startled us with an unexpected answer.

"She's saying that she'd like a big piece since she loves sweets." (Amalie)

Amalie passed on, but it looks like Lisa has a different stomach for sweets.

"I lost..." (Armstrong)

Hearing that, Doushi dropped his shoulders while being crestfallen for a change.

Chapter 8 – An Unusual Job

Today a highly anticipated, new novel would be sold at the biggest bookstore in Baulburg. In reality the author of this novel lives in the capital, but me not having to expressly go to a bookstore in the capital is likely owed to the growth of the Baumeister Earldom. I, Ina Susanne Hildebrandt, had adjusted my day off, and lined up in front of the bookstore early in the morning.

『Ina-chan, you really like books, don't you...?』

Luise treats me as some kind of rare animal, but I think she's exaggerating as people reading books as a hobby aren't all that rare. She is saying that she always falls asleep once she reads a printed text for more than three minutes, but I wonder whether such people actually even exist in stories? Say what you like, I think three minutes are kind of short.

"It's great that I made it in time." (Ina)

Just as I had expected, many people were lining up at the bookstore's entrance despite there still being some time until opening hours.

That's a popular author for you.

I think that many copies of the book have been delivered, but if they were to be sold out, it would become impossible to read the book until the next delivery date.

Even if it takes some time, properly lining up has a high probability that I won't regret anything.

"We're now opening. Those wishing to buy the new novel, please do so in turns."

After waiting for around one hour, the bookstore opened.

Following the guidance of the bookstore employee, we lined up and bought the book in order.

"Huh? The number of delivered copies is lower than expected."

I might not be able to buy one.

That worry crossed my mind, but...

"Okay, that's it. The delivered copies cover up to the lady over there."

Phew, I got one.

It looks like I was just able to buy the last copy. I paid the money and safely secured a copy of the new novel for myself.

"No way...for me to not be able to buy it... why is my luck so bad...?"

"There were too few copies delivered. Do the bookstores in the capital get priority after all?"

"The other bookstores...I guess I will try to have a look since I got nothing to lose anyway..."

The people lining up behind me felt disappointed.
There were also some who quickly ran off towards the other bookstores, but if they don't have plenty of luck, it will be impossible to obtain a copy at this point in time, won't it?
However, I can't concede my copy to someone else.
I mean I lined up in front of the bookstore after adjusting my day off quite a while ago.
As Earl Baumeister's wife, I'm busier with helping Wend than some people might think, even after getting pregnant.

"I'm going back home at once and read it." (Ina)

"Excuse me."

When I was about to return to the mansion after buying the book, someone suddenly called out to me from behind.

"How can I help you?" (Ina)

Once I turned around, I found a handsome, young man standing there.
He had a height of around 185 cm, looked like a young noble, and possessed a refreshing, dazzling smile.
Even the trimming of his silky, light brown hair was perfect. Looking closely at him, he must be a noble.
The clothes he was wearing looked plain at a first glance, but the fabric and sewing techniques used were magnificent.
He wasn't one of those vulgar nobles dressing up with clothes that were plastered all over with strangely glittering ornaments.
The man with that good fashion sense seemed to be a 『noble in the truest sense』 if I were to go with Margrave Breithilde-sama's words.
But, what kind of business would such a person have with me?
Is he possibly trying to pick me up?

"Oh lovely lady, I just just saw your pretty face and became unable to contain myself."

Eew!

He's really trying to pick me up?
But, there's Wend for me...or rather, I'm a pregnant, married woman...since my belly doesn't stand out yet, I guess it's not obvious, though.
No matter how attractive this guy might be, it's impossible for me to go along with his seduction.

"Umm...what business do you have with me?" (Ina)

If he's hitting on me, I will definitely turn him down...or rather, even though this guy is a noble, he's picking up girls in Wend's territory?
Hitting on girls in another noble's territory; is he actually a weirdo lacking common sense?
I put myself on guard, becoming overly alert.

"Actually I have an earnest request."

"Request?" (Ina)

Because he's a noble, he might use his position and demand something unreasonable from me. I have to be cautious, but he shouldn't do anything strange if I bring up Wend's name here. Going by his looks, he seems like an agreeable youth with a proper common sense. Given that we're in front of a bookstore, he might have reading as a hobby, just like Margrave Breithilde-sama.
Maybe he wants me to yield the book I bought to him?

"However, I don't know whether I will be able to help you." (Ina)

I won't give you my book!
Definitely not.
I mean, it's a new book I bought after especially lining up.

"That makes sense. However, I'd like you to accept it if possible."

"What kind of request is it?" (Ina)

I waited for an explanation of the young man standing in front of me.
My heart was throbbing in anticipation of his next words.

"To be honest, I'd like you to insult me."

"Wut?" (Ina)

For a moment I couldn't process what this noble was talking about.

"As I said, I'd like you to verbally abuse me. Something along the lines of 『Aren't you old enough to know that you shouldn't hit on girls? Isn't it normal to have a lover or wife at your age, you gross noble pig!?!』."

"..."

"I'd like to get harshly insulted by someone like you. Please do me that favor by all means."

"Haa——h!?" (Ina)

Without caring about the trouble I was causing to my surroundings on the street, I yelled loudly at the young noble who was spouting outrageous nonsense, contrary to his good looks.



"That's what happened..." (Ina)

Once I shook off that weird noble and returned to the mansion, I immediately informed Wend about this.

If that guy had been calling out to other women in the same way, he might be a case for the guards. When I reported that it was a handsome, young noble who begged me to insult him, Wend revealed an indescribable expression.

"What a strange way of hitting on girls..." (Wendelin)

I think even Wend had no other way to describe this. After all, even I didn't know how to deal with it.

"That's quite the odd story. He was a very handsome man, wasn't he?"

Luise asked about the noble's appearance, looking very interested. Certainly, there aren't that many men who are as handsome as him, if he only hadn't opened his mouth. However, I believe any woman would lose all her romantic feelings when she heard what he was talking about.

"Suddenly asking to be insulted...even if everything else about him was perfect, that would be an insta-fail as a pick-up line."

"What a weirdo. Even though he should stick with a straightforward seduction, seeing as he was born with such a beautiful face." (Erwin)

"Erw-san, it's improper to call out to unknown women throughout the city." (Haruka)

I thought that Erw would say something like that, but as sad as it is for him, he can't go pick up girls anymore. Haruka, who seemed to hate such behavior, was always at his side.

"That man was a noble?"

"Going by his outfit, I don't think that I made a mistake. But, why did he come to Baulburg?" (Ina)

If he's a noble who has business with Wend, he should visit the mansion without hitting on women in the city.

"Actually he came with me. Given that he had apparently accumulated a bit of stress, he went for, well, a change of pace."

With a timing as if to answer my question, Margrave Breithilde-sama and Burkhart-san showed up. Wend not knowing about him means the three of them boarded a magic airship and came here?

"We made an air trip to get a little break. Since Baron Garland recently looked exhausted in body and mind..."

The three used an airship together with their guards, but after arriving in Baulburg, they went their own ways for a little while before planning to join up at this mansion.

It looks like he chatted me up during that time.

Baron Garland is 23 years old. It looks like he's a countryside noble who inherited the Barony in a

hurry due to the sudden death of his father last year.
His territory appears to be wealthy for a Barony.

"Just like me, he lacks physical strength, but he's quite capable in ruling a territory despite his young age. As he's the same type of person as I am, and since he's a friend visiting the same salon, I give him advice from time to time." (Breithilde)

In case of countryside nobles, there are many nobles who keep close relations to the nobles in their neighborhood as relatives, vassals or patrons.

However, there are also some who fight over territory and concessions like cats and dogs because their territories are next to each other.

And, there's one more category. It looks like there's also a division between military and administrative nobles.

Margrave Breithilde-sama isn't an appointed noble who has inherited a post in the central government, but his house is known to have an orientation towards internal administration instead of military arts.

I heard from dad that the Breithilde House itself hasn't produced a family head strong at military arts for many generations.

That's the reason why my and Luise's homes are regarded so highly.

The present Margrave Breithilde-sama isn't any good at military arts and doesn't possess any interest in that direction either.

He has naturally become familiar with reading and writing poems, resulting in him getting along with Baron Garland who shares the same hobbies.

It's a relationship you'd call hobby buddies.

Because such hobby buddies associate with each other, surpassing the walls of blood relationships, vassals, patrons or factions, it sometimes turns into a connection that shouldn't be taken lightly.

That means a noble's hobby isn't just all play either.

"I understood that Baron Garland-sama is a noble who loves literature, but that has absolutely nothing to do with him asking others to insult him, does it?"

"His wish to be insulted and his literary hobby don't have any point of contact. If I had to say, then it would be an issue of his masochistic streak."

"It sounds as if it's better if I don't ask any further..."

For that noble to be a guy who gets his joy out of being insulted by women...
There are obviously ways to become happy in this world I know nothing of.

"Ina-san, please wait a moment and listen. He has been struggling through hardships since his early days."

He's still quite young, though.

"Struggling through hardships?"

"Indeed. His deceased father had a weak constitution for a long time..."

The real power over the Garland Barony had apparently been switched to the young heir and son

before he became an adult.

"He had talent, but since around the time before or after he became ten years old, he had actually managed the Barony all by himself."

When I was ten years old... Considering that, it must have been a rather heavy pressure.

"I gave him advice before he became an adult in the book review salon. After all, I also had my fair share of troubles when I inherited the territory and peerage twenty years ago. I couldn't leave him to his own devices, seeing how our situations resembled each other so much." (Breithilde)

They met under such circumstances. They are slightly apart in age, but Margrave Breithilde-sama and Baron Garland became close friends thereafter.

"He had to shoulder the lives of his retainers and 20,000 residents in his teens. This does pressure one."

"20,000, you say...?"

If I were told to do something like that, I might have run away.
People, who aren't nobles, are jealous of nobles, but such hardships exist as well.

"In his case the population and his assets increased as he succeeded in developing his Barony. He gets tremendous support from his residents, but if you put in strenuous efforts to answer their feelings, stress will accumulate on a daily basis. Even among nobles, there are some arrogant ones, who don't care an ounce about the feelings of other people, once in a while, right?"

I heard about nobles occasionally losing their peerage or getting demoted after inviting a rebellion or an exodus from their territory because they treated their residents as cattle.

"The education by the parents and the person's own qualities play into this as well, but please try imagining that you were suddenly told to be the leader of a few thousands or ten thousands of people. There are young heirs who go crazy after losing sight of their own standing."

It sounds like Margrave Breithilde-sama is complaining, but in short, it means he has the same stress as Baron Garland.

"Wend is also doing it for several years now..."

There might come a time when he will be exhausted by the stress of being burdened with ruling over many people.

"Earl Baumeister's case is probably grave because he's going to continue for his whole life to be put to work like a cart-horse thanks to his magic."

Roderich-san does push Wend around mercilessly.

As a result of that, the earldom is growing just like the support of the residents which triggers him to develop it even further for their sake. And because of that the support grows again...

If it reduces his stress to occasionally fuss over food, I think it's less objectionable than what Baron

Garland does.

"Ugh...that's something I can't deny at all..."

"I would do the very same if I were Roderich-san." (Breithilde)

Being told about the harsh truth by Margrave Breithilde-sama, Wend's face cramped up. Wend has it difficult in another sense.

"Let's leave Earl Baumeister's situation aside for now. Right now we're talking about Baron Garland. In the process of earnestly ruling his territory, he feared that many residents would obey him without questioning what he's doing."

Certainly, even if their social position is a different one, the residents are still human. Why do they obey my orders without any hesitation? They can't voice even a single complaint. Maybe they are harboring unexpected dissatisfaction. The more he thought about such things, the more scared did he become, but he couldn't afford to make his retainers worry by talking about it. As leader of the Garland Barony, he was occasionally insulted by women to not go crazy and to reaffirm his own standing. This seemed to be a method for him to vent quite a bit of his stress.

"Is it something similar to a king keeping a clown at his side?" (Ina)

I feel like there was such a depiction in a story I read before...
The one with the highest authority, the king, allowed a clown to criticize him so as to not lose sight of his own position.
I wonder whether the case here is something similar to that?

"It's something similar. There's a clown serving His Majesty as well. However, he never shows himself in front of us..."

I guess the king can't allow his retainers and family watch him being criticized by a clown...or maybe it's because the clown has been executed since 『Good advice is harsh to the ear』?

"Such an idiot won't become a clown. Clowns are the top elites within the Kingdom."

They criticize the king.
Moreover they have to be logically correct and clever enough to not offend the king.
Let alone there being no point in their presence if they get executed because they pissed off the king, they will also be evaluated as unable to do their work properly.
A clown has to be highly educated, including politics, as they will criticize a king while not angering him.
That's not possible with insufficient ability.

"Given that it's difficult for nobles to have their own clowns, they have to look for other methods, and Baron Garland chose the method of getting insulted by women."

"Why women?"

"Simply put, because he's a man. Even I would only get angry if a man was to shout at me. But

that's a bit hard with a young, beautiful woman, isn't it?"

Even if he asks me here with 『isn't it?』, it puts me on the spot to be honest.
I have heard about insulting someone as a job for the first time in my life.

"Given that I'm Wend's wife, it's only possible if Wend gives his permission." (Ina)

I'm a married woman, so I can't do something like insulting another...completely unrelated...noble without the permission of my husband since it might develop into an issue afterwards.

"So she says. How about it, Earl Baumeister?" (Breithilde)

"There are all kinds of people in this world, aren't there? Maybe being insulted by Ina will work as stress relief for me as well. How about testing it out?" (Wendelin)

"Eh? You have that kind of preference, Wend?" (Ina)

"No, but I just felt like saying it." (Wendelin)

Wend, who had listened silently so far, accepted Margrave Breithilde-sama all too easily, and eventually started to think up insults.

"You wheedling pervert Baron who loves being verbally abused despite acting like a good young man! A noble, who possesses a sick disposition like you, is... Erw, did you come up with some stabbing words that would pierce the other party's heart?" (Wendelin)

"No, you know, it's disrespectful for me to think about something like that." (Erwin)

Being asked about ideas for insults by Wend, Erw looked like he hated it from the bottom of his heart.

I think he's reluctant about being blamed by Baron Garland if it's exposed that some insults were his ideas.

"You can think up something since it will be treated as my idea." (Wendelin)

"This country has really many weird nobles, doesn't it?" (Erwin)

"The Empire isn't all that different in this regard either." (Therese)

Therese immediately retorted at Erw's statement.

I don't think that there's any benefit in knowing about something like that, though.

"Let's come up with something quickly since Baron Garland is also going to arrive at this mansion sooner or later."

I don't think it was in response to the words of Wend, who seemed all enthusiastic about it for some reason, but Baron Garland, who had acted independently, conveniently showed up at this point. As expected, it's the young man I encountered earlier.

"You're the one from before...I'm terribly sorry. I didn't expect for you to have been Earl Baumeister's wife." (Garland)

"No, don't mind it." (Ina)

Baron Garland exchanged such a greeting with me, but he immediately shifted his attention to another person.

His expression looked as if he had just found a treasure. The one he was intently staring at was Lisa. I see. For him to zero in on Lisa means that Baron Garland must be a hardcore masochist. Even without her wearing her flashy attire, he must have noticed her peculiarity.

"You are perfect!"

"..."

Having said that, Lisa with her flashy make-up and rough way of talking was no more than an extension of her acting.

However, for him to see through her being skillful at such acting...as might be expected of Baron Garland...

Currently Lisa had no make-up on and wore a normal dress. Moreover, being scared by Baron Garland's intensity, she hid behind Amalie-san.

"I'd like to request it from you as well, by all means!" (Garland)

"(I know how he feels, but I wonder whether Lisa is going to take him up on this?)" (Ina)

Baron Garland, who eagerly requested Lisa to insult him, and Lisa who was hiding behind Amalie-san in fear, unable to say anything.

Thanks to Baron Garland it has developed into a quite strange situation.



"There's one thing I'd like to ask, why me?" (Ina)

"Why, you ask. I felt the jitters when I spotted you in the city. The kind of "Yeah, I want to be insulted while being coldly looked down at by this person."" (Garland)



Baron Garland answered my question without hesitation, but with his answer being what it is, I didn't know how I should react to it.

As for me insulting him, I got Wend's permission with the words, 『Consider it as service for our future relationship with him』.

At such times, Wend chooses the safest approaches to deal with such situations, doesn't he?

"Good gracious, first I will be insulted by Ina-san, and the real deal will be Lisa, huh? What a supreme bliss." (Garland)

"Yeah..."

Even though he's such a handsome, fine man, Baron Garland had an ecstatic expression as he was looking forward to being insulted by Lisa and me.

What a waste, but everyone has their own preferences, I suppose.

It's meaningless to warn him about it anyway. If the Garland House and the Baumeister House form friendly ties with this as a trigger, it will become a benefit for Wend.

As his wife, I have no hesitation to cooperate on this.

I guess that's how people become adults.

Lisa has left the room for the moment together with Amalie-san to put on her previous, flashy outfit and make-up.

Lisa isn't Wend's wife, but right now she's a freeloader here.

The debt of gratitude for a night's lodging and a meal...what a disagreeable debt of gratitude...

Elise and the others looked relieved that they hadn't been nominated.

"I think being scolded by Saint-dono will be wonderful as well, but since she's usually a gentle person, it will lack thrill when getting insulted by her. As for Luise-san, I guess it wouldn't result in any more than a heartwarming feeling as it would be like getting scolded by a cute, younger sister." (Garland)

Leaving aside Baron Garland's queer commentary, he began explaining the ideal situation for being insulted.

His expression was very serious, emphasizing his handsomeness, but the feeling of disappointment was remarkable, given the contents he was talking about.

Even though it would be much better if he were to use that passion for something else...

However, he's a good feudal lord, right...?

"Please go ahead then."

It looks like the insulting time starts right away.

Since the one directing it is Wend, I just have to do as I'm told.

"Ina, did you remember what to say?" (Wendelin)

"Yes..." (Ina)

"Since I have a bad short-term memory, you're much more suited anyway, Ina-chan." (Luise)

What cheeky thing to say just because you haven't been nominated, Luise...

I completely memorized the insults Wend had come up a little while ago.

It looks like it would be a kill-joy if I were to read them from cue cards or similar.

Baron Garland himself hadn't said anything like that, but when he learned about Wend's instruction,

he praised him with 『Earl Baumeister-dono, you do understand well』.
I wonder whether Wend was happy about being praised like that?

"Well then..."

"Eh!? Why dogeza?"

"I'm going to be insulted. Wouldn't it be odd for me to act arrogantly and self-important?"

Baron Garland insisted with a serious look. He's not wrong about it, but the feeling of disappointment in me has grown even stronger.

"I'm starting."

I tossed the insults I had memorized at Baron Garland who was prostrating in front of me.

"Even though you're always pretending to be a baron who's loved by his people, you're no more than a fuo'in' male botch who indulges in his lowly, sleazy desires of wanting to be insulted! Being happy about getting insulted by a lass like me while miserably prostrating in front of me suits scum like you well!" (Ina)

I feel like it was slightly short, but according to Wend, it's not good for it to be too long either. Also, it wasn't limited to just insults, I got some training in acting how to look coldly and how to stand, too.

In addition, Margrave Breithilde-sama apparently acted as supervising director as there existed some taboo insults as well.

It really doesn't matter at all, but did he actually supervise anything?

"How was it, Baron Garland-sama?" (Ina)

When I suddenly felt curious and looked at him, he repeatedly trembled while casting his face downwards.

"Was it maybe a failure?"

Did I possibly mention a word I wasn't supposed to use?
As I was worrying, he stood up and grasped both my hands.

"It's been a long time since I last felt such shudder at the core of my body. Ina-san, thank you very much!" (Garland)

Baron Garland thanked me while looking overjoyed, but for some reason I couldn't feel delighted about it.

"I must say, this was magnificent as an opener! The next one will be the main act, Lisa-san, at last, right!?" (Garland)

It's scheduled for Lisa to insult him in her acting outfit and make-up, but Baron Garland was looking forward to that from the bottom of his heart.

For him to consider me to be an opener was quite rude, but it didn't upset me in particular. Rather than that, Lisa would have it difficult as she was treated as the main act. I wonder whether she can return to her previous acting since she has spent her time here exposing her true nature of being meek and fearful of strangers after taking off her make-up and her outfit. It looks like she has accepted the call for the sake of returning the favor of being taken care of in the mansion, but Lisa might become a bit pitiful if she were to fail here... Those were my thoughts, but it looks like it was unnecessary for me to worry about her. After all, Lisa, who had finished putting on her outfit and make-up, entered the room with the same impact as when I met her for the first time.

"Are you there, you perverted noble bastard?" (Lisa)

"I'm hereee——!" (Garland)

As soon as she entered, Baron Garland answered her question in delight. For him to be happy about being called a perverted noble bastard...people really do have various kinds of tastes. Moreover, Lisa has placed her foot on the back of the prostrating Baron Garland and was drilling in the end of her heel, but is that truly okay? Since Margrave Breithilde-sama isn't saying anything, it must be fine...

"The folks over in the Garland Barony have quite the bad luck to be ruled by a pervert like you! Right? What do you think? You perverted piece of shit." (Lisa)

"Yes! The residents are very pitiable. I'm sure they are crying about it." (Garland)

"There ain't no point in you crying about it, is there!? Repent, you low-life!" (Lisa)

"Yes! I shall repent from the bottom of my heartt——!" (Garland)

Baron Garland looked very joyful as he was insulted by Lisa. If it's like this, it's inevitable for someone like me to be treated as opener and impromptu skit. I'm totally not vexed about it, though... Baron Garland was continuously abused by Lisa for ten minutes after this, but he looked happy over the whole period.



"Truly, thank you very much." (Garland)

Seemingly relieved of his stress through being insulted by Lisa and me, Baron Garland returned to being an agreeable young man, and left the mansion at once. The stress-free Baron Garland was truly a noble amongst nobles.

"Even if it doesn't go as far as Baron Garland or Lisa-san, humans possess two sides. Isn't it

important to have a heart that accepts this fact?"

Margrave Breithilde-sama skillfully summed it up with in an agreeable way, but having been shown two very extreme examples, I couldn't quite approve of his words.

And, a little while after that, Lisa, who played a major role in the insulting, ended up being dragged into unforeseen troubles.



"As a matter of fact, we have heard about it from Baron Garland-dono."

"That we will be able to hear insults here which will make us tremble at the core of our hearts."

"Please insult me with 『Gluttonous pig bastard!』."

"『Weak-looking bean-sprout』 for me, please."

"..." (Lisa)



It seems like quite a number of kindred souls with the same tastes as Baron Garland exist. They visited the mansion uninvited, and begged Lisa to be insulted in the same way as Baron Garland. Lisa, who didn't want to do something like that anymore, hid herself behind Amalie-san while being frightened.

"To the bitter end we only accepted this upon request by Margrave Breithilde-sama, but we have no plans to treat it as normal routine. However, it's not like I don't have any connections to young women who verbally abuse gentlemen with such preferences behind the scenes in absolute secrecy..."

""""Please introduce us by all means.""""

The one who rescued Lise in this predicament was Roderich-san.

"When I worked at the nightlife entertainment industry, which also included being a bouncer, I have encountered several such men..." (Roderich)

It appears that he worked at stores catering towards men who enjoyed being teased and insulted by women during his time as ronin. He saved Lisa by introducing the men to women through connections from there.

"Such stores exist as well, huh...?"

"There are many types of humans."

Roderich-san brought the topic to a close in a curt manner, but Lisa, who had been urged by the nobles to insult them, was still hiding behind Amalie-san.

End of the Book Extra – Maid vs. Blizzard

"Dominique-neesan, how about this?" (Lea)

"I think that fits. It's not too flashy nor too plain. It should leave an impression on Erwin-sama. It's crucial to highlight your innocence as peg." (Dominique)



Today is the day of my first date with Erwin-sama.

I had Dominique-neesan, who's currently in the middle of her maternity leave, check the outfit I would wear today.

I don't think that it's really necessary, but Dominique-neesan has said that it's just for caution's sake. Somehow it's as if I'm still being treated like a child by Dominique-neesan...

"It will be fine even without you worrying so much. Haven't I chosen the clothes that got your okay, Dominique-neesan?"

"Certainly...but, just to be sure, in the worst case. It's because there are times when you get carried away, Lea. It will be troublesome if you go on a weird rampage at the critical moment."
(Dominique)

"Eh——h, you really don't trust me at all, do you?" (Lea)

Quite a bit of time has passed since I started working in the mansion of Earl Baumeister-sama. Even though things may appear this way, I belong to the group of oldtimers by now. I'm still a minor, though.

"Trust? I won't say that I have none, but it's just to make sure. It would be embarrassing if you were to tempt Erwin-sama with flashy, exposing clothes just because you were following some weird misunderstanding."

"I won't do something like that." (Lea)

Such things follow after we get to know each other better.

Of course I won't do so on our first date. Since I haven't interacted with Erwin-sama much yet, I'm well aware that I will be treated as pervert if I were to suddenly show up in such a getup.

"Isn't it obviously better to wear a prim and innocent outfit for your first date? Even I know at least that much." (Lea)

"As long as you are aware of it..." (Dominique)

I'm still not being really trusted, am I...?
And yet I'm one of the higher ranks among the maids.

"However, seeing me in such clothes, Erwin-sama might get aroused instead. If that happens, I will resist with 『You mustn't! We still have to watch our conduct...!』, but ultimately it will proceed into that kind of relationship. Possibly Erwin-sama will end up loving me too much. Even more so than Haruka-sama...uguh!" (Lea)

"Getting carried away like that is wrong!" (Dominique)

Dominique-neesan dropped her fist on my head with all her might, despite her belly being already big.

That's bad for the child in her belly, or rather, the baby might grow up into a child that easily hits others, influenced by her mother.

"That hurtsss...the memory of Dad being scolded by Mum for spending a big amount of money at a casino when I was still ten years old..." (Lea)

"You might as well forget that. Also, it's nothing you tell others either." (Dominique)

For the sake of a harmonious family?

Because of that I didn't get any pocket money from Dad until just recently, though.

"As for that case, even my father..." (Dominique)

"So that's the reason!" (Lea)

"Since it's a disgrace for your family, make sure to not mention it anymore. Anyway, today you just have to enjoy a simple date in Baulburg. Do you understand? Today is just a date for you two to meet. Nothing more, okay?" (Dominique)

"Understood. I will make sure to not go to the 『Rendezvous Inns』 that recently opened in the city's west." (Lea)

"Humph! That's only natural!" (Dominique)

"It hurts, you knowww...? It was just a joke..." (Lea)

A——ah, how nice would it be if Dominique-neesan would understand jokes...

"In your case, there are times where it doesn't sound like a joke." (Dominique)

"Ugh! You've been reading my mind!" (Lea)

"To some extent it's quite simple to understand what you're thinking. We have associated for a long time as relatives, after all. Either way, today it's fine to enjoy your time with Erwin-sama moderately." (Dominique)

"Okay. See you later then." (Lea)

Having received a dressing check by Dominique-neesan, I headed to the meeting place in order to have a fun first date with Erwin-sama.

* * *

"Have I kept you waiting?" (Lea)

"No, not at all. Today you're wearing something innocent and nice, completely different from your usual maid uniform, aren't you? Though, the maid uniform has its good points, too." (Erwin)

"I'm honored to be praised by you. Ahaha, if I really had made you waiting, Dominique-neesan's fist would await me back in the mansion." (Lea)

"Dominique, huh? As might be expected of Elise's childhood friend, she really looks like a serious person." (Erwin)

"You're not wrong." (Lea)

To produce the feeling of a real date, I had made an appointment in the center of Baulburg with Erwin-sama.

Erwin-sama arrived first, and as soon as I arrived, he praised my clothes, and understood the character of Dominique-neesan. We might become a really well-matched married couple. No, I'm sure it will happen.

"Where should we go first then?" (Erwin)

"Let's see...ah!" (Lea)

"Is something wrong, Lea?" (Erwin)

"Erwin-sama, that..." (Lea)

I noticed something unthinkable.

There's a shady person peeping on us just when we were about to start our fun date.

How should I describe her? She's wearing amazingly flashy clothes, looking like a night moth, or rather, as if you will be kicked if you get close to her.

That woman with her overly flashy outfit has been stalking us.

"Erwin-sama, who's that person?" (Lea)

"Geh! That woman was still in Baulburg...or rather, why is she monitoring you and me? We can't even use any magic." (Erwin)

"Erwin-sama, what kind of person is that gaudy woman?" (Lea)

"Ah, I see. We encountered Lisa outside the mansion, so you naturally don't know of her, do you...? That person is Katia's senior and a magician..." (Erwin)

Erwin gave me an explanation about her.

So she's Katia-sama's senior and an excellent magician as well as adventurer, eh?

But she harbors some grudge against Katia-sama, who got married to master just recently, as single, and thus has been investigating the people of the Baumeister House like this.

"...What's her objective? You're not saying that this person is an evil magician, are you!?" (Lea)

"No, it's not going as far as her being evil, I think." (Erwin)

"I mean, she's wearing a clearly suspicious outfit." (Lea)

Such a peculiar, gaudy getup.

It's an outfit that would definitely tick off Dominique-neesan if she worked in our mansion.

"It's not like she's working for the Baumeister House. Since she won't do much more than peeping on us, it's fine. Let's quickly get going." (Erwin)

"That's true as well. Okay, I understand." (Lea)

I don't know what that woman wants to investigate, but if she gets in the way of my fun date with Erwin-sama from now on, I will take her on.

Now then, time to enjoy my date with him.



"How about this cafe?" (Lea)

"Sure, why not." (Erwin)

"It's a cafe mostly serving sweets, but are you going to be fine with that?" (Lea)

"It's okay. I have often come to such cafes when accompanying Wend and his wives." (Erwin)

We started our date at once, and first entered a new cafe that opened very recently.

This is also a place that mostly serves desserts that use the fruits of the Demon Forest.

The number of such cafes has been growing lately, but this one has started to become popular because of the fruit sandwiches that used the Demon Forest fruits as filling.

When I wondered whether Erwin-sama might be bad with such stores, he unexpectedly told me that he doesn't hate sweets.

"If you eat sweets after having moved your body, it alleviates one's fatigue. Besides, when I still lived at home, it was difficult for me to get my hands on sweets." (Erwin)

"Was that so?" (Lea)

I have to quickly learn a lot more about Erwin-sama so that we understand each other.
In the end, Erwin-sama and I will be married, after all.

"I thought that adventurers rather like alcohol." (Lea)

"It's not like I won't drink any. Or rather, you have that impression because of Burkhardt-san, don't you?" (Erwin)

That might be the case.

I mean, every time Dominique-neesan hears about Burkhardt-sama visiting the mansion, she always makes me check our stock on wine.

"I think there are many drinkers among the middle-aged adventurers. I might become like that sooner or later, too." (Erwin)

"E——eh, you're fine as you're now." (Lea)

If possible, I'd like Erwin-sama to stay like this.

There are many men who like to drink alcohol, but I don't get what's so great about it.

As I was pondering about such things, a fruit sandwich was served on a plate. The sandwich, which was bread with slices of fruits and an abundant amount of fresh cream stuffed in-between, looks very delicious and brightly colored.

"Erwin-sama, it seems to be very delicious." (Lea)

"Indeed...also, she's here, isn't she...?" (Erwin)

True.

That evil female magician acts as if she's totally peeping on us!

I'm sure you're jealous of such a close couple like us!

You're all by yourself, after all!

"No...you can't go as far as calling her an evil magician, I believe..." (Erwin)

"But, Erwin-sama, she's an evil magician obstructing our date." (Lea)

That evil magician is looking this way while wearing that kind of outfit, and moreover stuffing her cheeks with a fruit sandwich by herself.

I'm sure there's no man who would enter such a cafe with her because she's evil.

"It might be dangerous to provoke her too much. It's better to not pay her any attention." (Erwin)

Erwin-sama is a kind man.

However, there's no guarantee that his kindness will work on that evil magician.

Ah, right! This is the moment for Erwin-sama and me to show our lovey-dovey relationship. Let's implement that operation to make her understand that following us around any longer will be meaningless.

"Erwin-sama. Okay, please open your mouth with an a——ah." (Lea)

"Isn't that dangerous?" (Erwin)

"Erwin-sama, we aren't magicians. Being followed by that evil witch is weird. It's a slightly pushy move, but let's drive her quickly away and then enjoy our date." (Lea)

While using such outward reason, I became lovey-dovey with Erwin-sama, aiming to become his beloved wife as fast as possible.

I won't lose to Haruka-sama.

"Is it fine like this?"

"No doubt. Okay, please open your mouth, a——ah." (Lea)



"A——ah." (Erwin)

That's nice.

With this everyone can see that we're a pair of lovers who are head-over-heels in love with each other. It won't be weird for us to marry at any time.

Or rather, since we're showing off like that to other people too, the residents living in Baulburg will certainly root for our happy marriage.

And the evil magician got irritated after watching us.

Because she can't easily get close to master, no matter what she does, she has to suffer like this by meaninglessly monitoring us.

"Where are we going next?" (Erwin)

"There's a store I'd like to visit." (Lea)

I lead Erwin-sama by the hand, and head towards a popular accessory shop.

"Hee, what a nice shop." (Erwin)

"Because we can enter here without reserve, it's also popular among the mansion's maids." (Lea)

Given that today's our first date, it would be wrong to ask him to buy me expensive accessories all of a sudden.

I don't want him to think that I'm a greedy, nasty woman. I would be scolded by Dominique-neesan, too.

"Erwin-sama, please choose something that suits me. I think I'm going to buy something which I can wear during my days off." (Lea)

"Okay. Since it's our first date at long last, I will buy it as a present for you." (Erwin)

"That's not a good idea." (Lea)

"It won't be anything overly expensive, so it's fine. How about something like this?" (Erwin)

I have Erwin-sama put the necklace he chose around my neck, and then we looked at the mirror, talking about whether it would suit me, while nestling close together.

"What do you think, Erwin-sama?" (Lea)

"It's not bad, but how about this one?" (Erwin)

Erwin-sama brought me a necklace with a gem that had a different color, and once again put it around my neck. Then we checked together whether it suited me in front of the mirror.

Doing something like that, we totally look like lovers.

Does Erwin-sama have experience in choosing accessories for girls?

He's unexpectedly used to it, isn't he?

Also, with that evil magician, it went just as I had planned.

She faked choosing accessories while being irritated... Ah! The necklace she held...tore off!

I suppose she lost control of herself out of anger, and has now to reimburse the shop for having broken it.

With this she should give up stalking us any longer...

"That evil magician is persistent!" (Lea)

"No...evil magician is a bit..." (Erwin)

Since a new play has started, we entered a theatre to watch it together, but the evil magician sat down behind us, and was observing us.

"In my opinion, it looks like she's trying to get some advantageous information by observing us as a concerned party since it's difficult for her to stalk and monitor Wend and Katia." (Erwin)

Jeez, there's no point in watching us!

Eeyy!

Now that it has come to this!

"Erwin-samaaa." (Lea)

"Whoa, wait a minute!" (Erwin)

With things having gone this far, I use the strategy of showing off our intimacy so that even the evil magician would get it by leaning my head against Erwin-sama's shoulder while watching the play. This strategy has yet another merit. It will establish the fact that Erwin and I are intimate enough that it won't be considered an issue even if I make out with Erwin-sama in such a way. If I can get this far on my first date, it will be perfect.

"(Ah, it's working, it's working.)" (Lea)

Once I glance behind us, the body of the evil magician is trembling violently.

I'm sure she must be crushed by despair watching us flirting while being mortified and thinking that she has no luck herself.

Now, even the evil magician shouldn't get in the way of our date anymore.

"Lea, it was a nice play, right? The true feelings towards the protagonist's lover were depicted well." (Erwin)

"...You're right." (Lea)

Damn!

Because I concentrated on the evil magician behind us, I didn't watch the play at all!

This is a huge blunder.

Moreover...

"Lea, you're underage, but I think one glass of alcohol for toasting should be fine." (Erwin)

"Yes, I will just taste a bit." (Lea)

After watching the play, we had dinner at a restaurant Erwin-sama had booked. As this restaurant is famous for being very expensive, this already serves as proof that he's cherishing me.

"Let's see...one bottle of sweet wine for us." (Erwin)

"Dear guest, we are terribly sorry, but..."

"Is it out of stock? I suppose such things happen as well, huh?"

"Excuse us, but all of the sweet wine that agrees with your companion has been ordered by another guest a little while ago... Right now we have only dry wine left..."

That evil magician.

Just when I thought she had finally disappeared, she left in the middle of the play, entered this restaurant, ordered all the sweet wine that I can drink, and drained it down. How nasty. To predict our next destination ahead of time, what an ill-natured pestering! That's why she can't get married!

"Lea, let's go with juice?" (Erwin)

"As long as it's just one glass, I will be alright with dry wine as well." (Lea)

"You sure?" (Erwin)

"Erwin-sama, I'm no child." (Lea)

"If you say so." (Erwin)

Evil magician, it won't go as you have hoped. There's no way that my and Erwin-sama's love will lose to a mean deed such as ordering all the sweet wine while looking down on me as a small child.



"Lea, I really enjoyed today."

"Me too. Please invite me out again, okay?" (Lea)

"Of course." (Erwin)

My first date with Erwin-sama turned into a full day of fun without us losing against the disturbances of the evil magician.

* * *

"That's how it went down. Dominique-neesan, I did well." (Lea)

"Haah...well, if Erwin-sama was satisfied with it, it's fine, but how should I say it...I guess both are to blame..." (Dominique)

"Eh? Both are to blame? Like who and who?" (Lea)

"No, if you don't understand, then please don't mind it as it's no problem in particular." (Dominique)

Recently 『Lisa the Blizzard』 is said to stay in Baulburg and carry out various schemes to investigate the secret of master and Katia-sama.

I guess, in the end she had even shadowed the date of Erwin-sama and Lea, trying to obtain any information she can get her hands on.

However, in some ways, Lea is an idiot and her positive approach on thwarting Lisa's obstructions resulted in Lisa failing.

It looks like she had to pointlessly pay for the wine, but such expenses shouldn't pose any burden to her.

It's necessary to be cautious from now on.

However, it might be the best solution to throw Lea, who seems to be her natural enemy, at that 『evil magician』.

After all, it's not wrong to say that Lea is a big-shot in a certain sense.

◆◆◆

"Wah! Hiccs! You had a twin, Dominique-neesan?" (Lea)

"As if! You have known me for years now, haven't you!?"

◆◆◆

Being pleased with the dry wine she drank for the first time, she got totally drunk on her first date. Between her and Blizzard...it's difficult to say which of the two is actually worse.

Disclaimer

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