











アグネス

ベッティ

「優勝したらな。王室御用達のフルーツパーラーで食べ放題だ。他のクラスメイトたちにも伝えておいてくれ」

「やった——っ！
ありがとうございます」

シンディ

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Chapter 1 – The Married Couple's First Joint Work

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

The next day after Doushi has been overwhelmed in drinking capacity by Lisa.

I cast a sidelong glance at Doushi, who is suffering from a hangover, while eating my breakfast.

I thought that his drunkenness had completely vanished yesterday, but I guess even Doushi will get a hangover after drinking this much alcohol.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The way she says it is gentle, but by holding a strong will, she compels the other party to reflect.

That's why even Doushi only sips his water, unable to say anything back to her.

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

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

A conversation with a man is still impossible, but you might say that she's making steady progress.

However...she definitely doesn't look like someone who would be able to drink as much alcohol as she did yesterday.



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

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

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

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

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

Doushi might have neglected taking care of his health because of that, but this might be one of the

blessings of people who don't think too deeply about matters.

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

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

"Sure, Haruka-san." (Erwin)

Haruka is really skilled at manipulating Erw.

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

I wonder whether everyone shares my impression that she's a Mizuho nadeshiko?

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

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

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

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

There's no way that I would have the time to do something like that.

After all, I'm busy with various matters.

"That's what I thought."

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

"Roger."

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

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

* * *

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

『Well, that's because...』 (Burkhart)

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

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

『Teleport』 is simply a scary spell.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Various such issues had to be resolved, and their completion is the reason why today's marriage ceremony can be held safely.

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

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

Moreover, a young woman, who is similar to a shrine maiden, is dancing. It truly resembles a Japanese marriage ceremony.

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

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

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

"Huh?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

At times he directs his bloodthirst at Erw, but I'm sure that's something he does to make his peace with the facts.

Besides, Erw has been warding it off casually.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"..."

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

"I suppose you're right."

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

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

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

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

* * *

"The first joint work as a married couple?"

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

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

"Joint work?"

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

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

"Talismans?"

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

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

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

recognized by the gods.

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

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

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

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

"How long is it going to take?"

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

The priest replies to Katia.

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

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

"One week? So they will sleep outdoors?"

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

"What eagerness to make business."

It's a ritual, or rather, an event that seems to combine a pilgrimage and a honeymoon...

Anticipating that, there are also people running a business close to those shrines.

To include the shrine pilgrimage of the newlywed couples in the economy, the Mizuho people must be zealous about business.

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

I see.

Even the part about being lax on the religion is the same in Mizuho as in Japan.

If this had been the church, it would have become a harsh ritual not allowing for a holiday feeling or anything like that to come up.

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

"Is that fine, milord?"

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

Haruka asks apologetically, but it's impossible to ignore Mizuho's customs while at the same time trying to form friendly ties with Mizuho.

Besides, the Baumeister House is no company that exploits its employees, okay?

I will at least allow my retainers to have a normal honeymoon.

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

Therese warns Erw and Haruka to not be negligent in their preparations.

Certainly, since it's hiking, proper equipment is necessary.

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

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

"That's okay, Haruka-san?"

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

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

Takeomi-san has apparently approved of Haruka's and Erw's marriage at long last.

Since he stayed quiet during the gift exchange as well as during the marriage ceremony, I think I don't have to worry about him getting in their way anymore.

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

I really want to see them off myself, but I'm a busybody, too.

Roderich has set up a full programme for me.

Since the ceremony has ended without any problems, it's probably fine for me to go back to the Baumeister Earldom, and pick the two up once the ritual has finished after a week.

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

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



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

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

"Yes."

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

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

"Yes."

"Eh? Is that so?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

After all their marriage is an important tie connecting the Baumeister and the Mizuho Houses.

If he were to obstruct that, he would hurt the reputation of the Duke Mizuho House, not to mention the Fujibayashi House. In the worst case the blame would be fully pushed on Takeomi-san...

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

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

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

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

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

"Failing is possible?"

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

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

some trouble occurred to the two who became a married couple after the marriage ceremony?"

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

"Is that how it works?" (Therese)

Maybe.

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

Both love each other, and there are benefits to it for the Baumeister House and the Mizuho House.

And that's where Takeomi-san would secretly interfere with the pilgrimage, bringing about the need to annul their marriage since it's not being blessed by the gods.

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

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

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

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

"Yes."

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Please spare me of tha——at!"

Unintentionally I used a fake Kansai dialect.

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

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

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

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

"Me too."

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

* * *

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

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

"Who is he going to fight?"

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

"Haah..."

◆◆◆

Yesterday I had a dream.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Using this, I will prevent Haruka's marriage.

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

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

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

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

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

"As if!"

Shit!

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

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

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

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

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

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

"To the Mizuho Mountain Ring?"

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

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

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

"Really?"

It's always like this.

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

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

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

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

Just watch me.

I will definitely obstruct their marriage!

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

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

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

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

"I'm off then."

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

"..."

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

That Kaede surely plans to prevent my plan by following me!

Damn!

Suddenly a huge obstacle to my plan has shown up.

However, I will stop Haruka's and Erwin's marriage by all means!

* * *

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

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

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

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

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

"That would make Elise a heretic, though...and yet you want to take on a trial for matrimonial

happiness, huh? Wend, did you cheat?"

"As if!"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Accordingly we decided to also do a married couple pilgrimage.

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

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

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

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

As the chants and red seals, which I can't read, apparently increase in proportion, it would have been originally necessary to make the talismans much bigger, but as it would be inconvenient to carry around such big talismans, he kept them compact, even though it might appear otherwise.

That's what the priest said, but in return, the talismans cost a hefty sum of money.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"(Hubby, isn't that an evil way to phrase it?)"

Hah!

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

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

"(Takeomi-san is skilled enough as a master to have been chosen for the Battou Unit. He should excel at erasing his presence.)"

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

That makes sense.

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

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

"(True...)"

Everything would be ruined within a moment of inattentiveness.

Is this actually a quite difficult mission?

Well, whatever.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 2 – My Haruka! The Interference

"Fufufu! This is a tremendously lucky break." (Takeomi)

"Oh dear. It would have been better if Kaede hadn't come along." (Kaede)

Us two started to tail Haruka and Erwin on their pilgrimage with the goal of obstructing it.

However, I then confirmed how Earl Baumeister's party joined up with those two.

It looks like they have noticed my plans...no doubt, it must have been former Duchess Philip.

I guess it's only natural for that lady to realize it.

And yet, as an effect of my disguise, they haven't been able to find me.

There was another miscalculation by Earl Baumeister's group.

They thought that I would interfere on my own, and thus used 『Detect』 to find a loner peeking at them from deserted places.

But, right now Kaede is with me.

Disguising as married couple on a pilgrimage, we can shadow them from a rather close place while not being spotted.

At first I only lamented over Kaede accompanying me, but now I think it's a cue by the gods.

As expected, the gods don't give their blessing to Haruka's and Erwin's marriage!

Indeed, that must be it!

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

"Don't contradict me so calmly!"

"Of course Kaede will. Aren't those two enjoying themselves?"

Certainly, they are chatting happily with each other while walking along the Mizuho Mountain Ring.

They are a well-matched couple...not!

Haruka is going to walk the path of the sword with me!

"You are obstructing Haruka-sama' marriage, and at the same time you're going to marry since you're the heir. Kaede is appalled by your double standards, Takeomi-sama. You're a brute."

"Guhaa!"

That damn Kaede...as always she says whatever she wants...moreover, I can't refute her words.

"I will stay single, too." (Takeomi)

"That's impossible. In the first place, it's no good if Kaede doesn't become your concubine, Takeomi-sama."

Recently my father, mother, and relatives are noisy about me marrying as soon as possible. They've been even preparing formal marriage interviews behind my back as they please.

Since the Fujibayashi House has become higher-ranked retainers, they must usher in a legal wife from a suitable house as a new, high-ranked retainer house.

On the other hand, Kaede's father...and also my uncle, has no other children besides Kaede in his branch family.

Accordingly he's expecting the child between Kaede and me to become the next heir of the branch family. That's also the reason why my father, mother, and all my relatives pamper Kaede so much. Well, I guess it's also because Kaede seems to have a manner of always stating sound arguments...

"Anyway! I will definitely accomplish my will!" (Takeomi)

"Can you actually? Slipping through that strong guard protocol, that is."

"..."

Since it's not like I have to win through fighting, there would have been plenty of ways to go about it if it was only Erwin and Haruka, but with Earl Baumeister's group present as well...

"Let's give up already and join them normally, Takeomi-sama."

"Join them and then do what?"

"Say that Takeomi-sama and Kaede are doing the pilgrimage for the sake of informing the gods of our betrothal."

"We aren't engaged, though!"

Sure, there are some zealous believers who will go on the pilgrimage at the stage of betrothal. Afterwards those married couples would go on a pilgrimage every few years or decades in commemoration of their marriage, asking the gods to allow them to remain married until their deaths.

Among the couples on pilgrimage walking along the mountain road, there are actually quite a few elderly couples, it seems.

However, I'm no such passionate believer, and I haven't been engaged to Kaede yet either.

"It's just a matter of time anyway. Once Kaede grows and turns fifteen years old, Kaede will become Takeomi-sama's wife."

"Uuh..."

I have to take Kaede as my concubine and make a child that will succeed the branch family with her.

This is something I've been told quite a while ago by my father, mother, and relatives.

There's also the matter with me receiving a legal wife from another high-ranking retainer house...no, all that matters now is to prevent Haruka's marriage!

"They have arrived at the first wayside shrine as we've been talking about all that."

Haruka and Erwin, who are ahead of us, stand in front of the shrine, bow twice, clap their hands twice, and bow once. Then they are about to put the first talisman into a wooden box set up inside

the shrine.

I guess I will get going at once.

"You will be found out, Takeomi-sama."

"You're naive, Kaede. I'm Haruka's elder brother. I have acquired various, special techniques in correspondence to my age. 『Strategy One: A talisman about to be offered got carried away by a sudden gust of wind!』."

This is a technique which originally uses a magic katana.

You unleash a cluster of air as if causing a squall, discouraging an opponent.

However, since it would be noticed by Haruka and the others if I were to use a magic katana, I will use this technique with an ordinary katana. After all it'll be plenty as long as it has enough power to hurl the talisman into the sky.

"It succeeded."

It looked as if my feelings towards Haruka had been understood by the heavens.

The cluster of air pretending to be a small gust of wind let the talisman dance into the air without Haruka and the others suspecting anything.

This is a mountain road at an elevated altitude. There's always wind blowing in the upper air, and the talisman should be blown away into the far distance.



For me to have succeeded at the very first spot, that's certainly unexpected.

"The strategy worked out well."

"Umm...Takeomi-sama."

"What's up, Kaede? If it's preaching, I have no interest."

"Your strategy has failed. Look."

Oh damn, before the talisman flies off in the far distance, one of Earl Baumeister's wives, an impulsive and lively girl with her hair bound into twintails vigorously jumps up and grabs the talisman.

"Wha-!?"

"That person has great reflexes, hasn't she? It looks like this method won't work?"

"I will come up with the next strategy..."

There's still plenty of time left.

I will make sure to have them fail the pilgrimage, invalidating Haruka's and Erwin's marriage.

* * *

"Erwin, be more careful, okay?"

"Sorry, this place is atop the mountains, so I guess the winds are strong around here."

"That's true. We have to be careful from now on."

At the first shrine there was an accident of the talisman, which they tried to offer, being almost blown away by the wind, but Katia swiftly jumped and caught the talisman, preventing its loss. Nothing less of Katia who ranks second to Luise in regards to reflexes.

"..."

"(What's wrong, Lisa?)"

Therese asks Lisa about the reason for her brooding.

"(I see...that means the interference has already started. Since we should have noticed it if a magical method were to be used, I suppose he used a technique not relying on magic to intervene...it's painful that we can't find him with 『Detect』, but...as long as it's physical interference, it's not impossible to block it.)"

It seems that Lisa is convinced that the gust of wind that carried the talisman away was Takeomi-san's deed.

We don't know where he is, and if 『Detect』 doesn't work either, we have no choice but to thwart his sabotaging attempts each time they occur.

"(Seven more places to go.)"

"(We will manage somehow. I don't think that he can do anything too flashy either.)"

It's as Katia says. After all there's no way that he could attack us to steal the talismans.

"Wend, is something wrong?"

"No, nothing. Rather, make sure to not let the next talisman fly away."

"I know without you telling me."

We advanced along the mountain road, which became gradually steeper, aiming for the next shrine.

* * *

"They have arrived at the second shrine, huh? This time for sure..." (Takeomi)

"Just admit already that you've run out of ideas. You really don't know when to give up. You're absolute trash as a man."

"Kaede, you really dish out whatever you want, don't you..."

Haruka and Erwin have arrived at the next shrine.

The second shrine is actually split into two separate ones.

The first is a normal shrine where even elderly couples with no stamina can offer their talismans.

The second is a shrine standing atop a huge rock.

Given that young couples have enough stamina, it seems more appropriate for them to offer their talismans to the second shrine.

It's also said that they will receive the gods' graces in proportion to having climbed the huge rock.

"You're quite well-informed about this, Takeomi-sama."

"Well, I looked it up after all."

Since I never got married, I didn't know much about the shrines, but there are many married people in the Battou Unit.

It was an easy task to extract the information out of them under the pretense of gossip.

"So, are you going to use a gust of wind again?"

"Now I will go with this."

I show Kaede a small pebble.

"It's the Battou Unit's Secret Stone Throwing Art."

Throwing stones is an extremely effective tactic in battle.

It's simple to provide the stones for throwing, and you can attack from a distance. Furthermore, if you hit an enemy with a stone of a reasonable size, you can easily rob them of their ability to continue fighting.

Even among the Battou Unit, it's regarded highly. I have also been continuing to practice stone throwing techniques.

And, stealing an opponent's ability to fight isn't the only thing you can do with stone throwing techniques.

You can move distant objects by throwing stones at them, and you can attract an enemy's attention to yourself.

There are also many other uses such as triggering a trap by throwing a stone from a distant place outside the trap's range.

For me, who has achieved a high accuracy in stone throwing, it will be an easy feat to hit the talisman out of Erwin's hand as he climbs the rock to get to the shrine while pretending for it to be a falling piece of the rock.

There's a rock wall towering behind the shrine. Because rocks fall down from there every once in a while, it's unlikely that I will be exposed if I do it skilfully enough.

"And that's how the all-important talisman will be carried away by the wind and go missing. Since Earl Baumeister and his group are outwardly offering talismans as well, they will likely climb the rock together with them. In short, they shouldn't be able to block my strategy as they did before."

"..."

"What's wrong, Kaede? Do you have a problem with my strategy?"

"Well, I just thought that it's a plan full of flaws, mostly based on nothing but wishful thinking."

"Guhaa!"

Kaede, you're as merciless as ever...

"My stone throwing techniques are..."

"Somehow it looks like there's an issue even before that. Look."

Kaede points at a signboard. I read what's written on it.

"Let's see...it says 『The other day the shrine atop the rock was destroyed by a rock slide. Please offer your talismans at the shrine below until the repairs have been finished』! Doesn't that mean that I can't obstruct them!?"

What a bad luck!

If Haruka and Erwin can't climb to the shrine atop the rock, my 『Strategy Two: Suddenly a stone falls down from above, causing Erwin to drop the talisman so that it's carried away by the wind』 won't be possible to implement.

"It's certainly a boring strategy name, lacking any kind of ingenuity. Or rather, you have no choice but to give up for today."

"The third shrine is too far, yep."

Normally there are many couples finishing their first day with the second shrine. There's quite a bit of way to go to the third shrine, and there are no inns along the way. Tonight they should stay at one of the many inns close to the second shrine in preparation for tomorrow.

"Oh well. I will definitely realize my ambition tomorrow!"

"By the way, won't you book an inn?"

"Of course I will book one."

This is no training, and besides, it's necessary for me to monitor Haruka and the others who're likely going to stay in an inn.

We quickly headed to the same inn Haruka had entered, and immediately booked rooms there. However...

"Two rooms? Eh!? Why, if you're a couple on pilgrimage?"

"You're totally right. My husband is a bit of a shy person. He's planning to stick to this until the end of our pilgrimage."

"Since there are many couples, I wonder whether I could have you refrain from booking one room per person. The other inns will likely decline it as well."

"..."

No way, for such an unexpected situation to crop up here because I'm pretending to be married to Kaede!

No matter how much Kaede might be a child, having an unmarried man and woman sleep in the same room...!

Such a shameless act is unforgivable!

"Isn't it just sleeping in the same room? To begin with, even married couples on a pilgrimage wouldn't do that while staying at an inn."

Although they are newly wed, they will only be treated as a truly married couple after finishing their pilgrimage.

Haruka's body is still pure as well.

I can feel relieved until the pilgrimage ends...

"It's forbidde——n! That Erwin will surely kick that rule with his filthy feet!" (Takeomi)

"You're annoying! Shut it!"

"Ah, please excuse my husband. Takeomi-sama, you're bothering our neighbors. Let's go sleep early in preparation for tomorrow, okay?"

"..."

You think I'm a child!?

Even though I just worried a bit about my younger sister; that rude fellow from the room next to ours is much too narrow-minded!

Anyway.

I decided to go to sleep early in preparation for the next day so as to save Haruka out of Erwin's grasp as soon as possible.

"Isn't the quality of the futons in this inn way too cheap?"

"Who knows? Takeomi-sama, the last time you slept together with Kaede in a futon like this was when Kaede was three years old."

"Really?"

What a good memory she has.

At that time Kaede was as cute as Haruka in her childhood, but now she's like this...anyway, let's go sleep without thinking about anything unnecessary.

"Takeomi-sama, you're warm."

"Don't cling to me!"

"Isn't it fine? Also, Kaede will fall out of the futon if Kaede doesn't stick to you."

Gosh, because Kaede snuggled up to me right away, I couldn't get much sleep on the first day.

* * *

"Lisa, you're lacking sleep?" (Wendelin)

"It looks like she isn't used to the bedding called futon." (Therese)

"Big Sis is sensitive, after all. I was completely fine with it." (Katia)

"There's no worry about Katia in this regard." (Wilma)

"It's the same for you as well, isn't it Wilma?" (Katia)

"I'm a hunter. Even if it might be camping out, it's only natural for me to be able to sleep anywhere. Leaving that aside, the side dishes are quite lacking." (Wilma)

"It's probably inevitable, seeing as we're in the mountains. Right, Haruka?" (Wendelin)

"Given that it's a mountain inn, there's a limit to how many ingredients can be brought up here. During the pilgrimage you won't get any meat or fish." (Haruka)

"Is it something like strictly forbidding fish and meat because it's a ritual?" (Wendelin)

"That's the idea here, milord." (Haruka)

* * *

Third day of the pilgrimage. Earl Baumeister's group has been walking towards the third shrine while chatting cheerfully among each other.

As expected, during their walk, they keep their talismans in their pockets, so there's no opening to be found.

According to the strategy I thought up yesterday, I will take a big gamble here, at the third shrine.

"Do you have something like a trump card?"

"I do. I called it in early this morning."

Once I whistle lightly, a bird, which arrived from who knows where, perches down on my arm. It's a Mizuho Swallow, the third communication and messaging method next to human legs and MHCDs.

Of course every retainer house has been passionate about raising them...there are many who raise them as a hobby with races in mind, but...even before becoming a high-ranked retainer house, the Fujibayashi House has always kept excellent Mizuho Swallows for emergencies.

"For you to arbitrarily call 『Thunderclap』 to such a place; you will be later scolded by the lord and his wife."

"I don't care. As long as it accomplishes its task."

Even if I'm going to be scolded by my father and mother afterwards, it'll be fine as long as I can use this Thunderclap to make my plan succeed.

"By the way, what kind of plan is it?"

"Fufufu, I dub it 『Strategy Three: Once they try to offer the talisman at the shrine, a bird will suddenly steal it away』."

They certainly won't expect a bird to steal the talisman.
On top of that, it's forbidden to kill during the pilgrimage.
If they shoot down and kill a bird just because it stole the talisman, it will result in this pilgrimage failing.

"It's a truly magnificent plan. This time it will succeed for sure." (Takeomi)

"I wonder about that."

She's as doubting as ever.
However, Thunderclap is a fairly famous, named swallow.
She should be able to find an opening and steal the talisman from Erwin and Haruka.

"Go, Thunderclap!"

Nothing less of an excellent swallow. Once I give the order, she flies high up in the sky for the time being, and then begins to swoop down at the talisman which Erwin took out of his pocket in order to offer it to the third shrine.
With that swiftness, the plan will definitely succeed...

"Wha-!? Why did you stop in the middle!? Thunderclap!"

For some reason Thunderclap interrupts her nose dive, and flies away.

"What the hell has..."

"It's that girl with the dango head. Just now, she released an amazing air of intimidation for an instant."

I guess it's Wilma, one of Earl Baumeister's wives, and an excellent hunter according to what I have heard...
I suppose, as an animal, Thunderclap couldn't put up with her coercion as a professional hunter, who killed a lot of prey...

"It's a blessing that this happened during the pilgrimage. If Thunderclap had been taken down, you would have gotten scolded harshly by the lord and his wife later on."

"Certainly...it's not so much a matter of money, but if Thunderclap, who took a lot of time and effort to be raised up to this point, were to be taken down here..."

...It would be set in stone for me to get scolded for a long time by my father and mother.
In the worst case, I might have been forced to raise and train a new Mizuho Swallow from scratch.

"Besides, even if Wilma-dono had killed Thunderclap by mistake, Earl Baumeister-sama's pilgrimage would have failed, but it wouldn't have any impact on Haruka-sama's and Erwin-sama's pilgrimage. It was a savage strategy forcing a meaningless burden on Thunderclap."

"Guhaa!"

Once again you run your mouth as you want, huh Kaede?
I guess it was a salvation that killing during the pilgrimage is forbidden.

"Shit! Next time for sure!"

"You're still going to continue with this?"

"Of course!"

"Kaede is shocked by Takeomi-sama's inability to accept reality."

"It's none of your business!"

As if I'm going to pull back after coming this far!
I will definitely interfere with their pilgrimage, and Haruka and I will return to our lives of mastering the sword.

* * *

"Hmm? What's up all of a sudden, Wilma?" (Wendelin)

Because it felt as if Wilma was threatening something all of a sudden while Erw and Haruka were offering their third talisman, I asked her what was going on.

"Bird targeted talisman." (Wilma)

"The talisman, eh...? Did it mistake it for prey?"

"Big swallow." (Wilma)

"Takeomi-san, eh...?" (Wendelin)

It's been a series of assorted, petty interferences so far, but it's great that Wilma scared the swallow away by releasing her coercion.
Since I have heard that killing is prohibited during the pilgrimage, it would have become an issue if she had shot it down.
If the pilgrimage had failed, we would have been faulted.

"Wend-sama, I'd like to eat some meat once the pilgrimage is over." (Wilma)

"You're right there..."

"Me too. Putting aside the size of the meals, I don't replenish any strength unless I eat meat..."
(Katia)

Even though it's a pilgrimage that has turned into a sightseeing tour at some point, I feel like there was no need to introduce a rule of not being allowed to kill animals.
At least I'd like them to serve some fish.

"There's that as well, but I'd like to also eat some sweets. Lisa is saying the same." (Therese)

Sweets aren't prohibited during the pilgrimage, but because it's problematic to transport food to the inns in the mountains, they seem to prioritize normal food.

"Milord, we will lodge after offering a talisman to the the second next shrine, but the special dish of the inns over there is pounded rice cake. You can eat it with sweet roasted soy flour. As it's beyond the half-point of the pilgrimage, the inns over there apparently offer it so that one can hold out to the very end." (Haruka)

"Let's go! I want to eat rice cakes with sweet, roasted soy flour!"

"Yeeeeeah!"

Tonight we will be able to eat sweets.
We began to walk through the mountains in high spirits.

* * *

"Weird...for 『Strategy Four: Spoiling the talisman by getting it wet through the waterfall's sheet of spray』 and 『Strategy Five: Oh no! The talisman fell into the crater of a volcano because of the wind!』 to fail..."

"Basically you can't do anything too unreasonable. Kaede believes that it's only natural since the strategies had too many conditions. Earl Baumeister-sama's group is with them as well."

"..."

That damn Kaede, running her mouth again.

It's the fourth day of the pilgrimage. I have grown accustomed to staying in the same room as Kaede and sharing a futon with her...gah, that's not it!

Right now it's not a situation for me to get used to something like that!

The strategy to spoil the talisman by getting it wet through a change of the waterfall's stream through my sword's force at the nearby shrine failed because the new wife-addition of Earl Baumeister froze the waterfall with her ice magic.

And even the strategy to make the talisman fall into a volcano's crater by making it fly through my sword's force at the shrine close to the volcano was blocked by the former duchess using her own body to prevent it...

That lady has found out about my sabotage plan.

It looks like she hasn't grasped my location due to my disguise so far, but she noticed the plan to drop the talisman into the volcano, and blocked my sword's force after I had moved to the most

ideal position.

Given that it was a wind pressure capable of making the talisman fly, I couldn't do anything about it once she stepped in front of the talisman, defending it with her body.

"I'm not done yet! There's still one more shrine, the last one!"

If they can't offer all their talismans to all eight shrines, the pilgrimage will fail.
In that case, I still have a chance.

"Takeomi-sama, do you have any other strategies?"

"Of course. Just when I wondered what you'd ask, the next strategy will be...huh?"

How should I break the talisman next...seeing as Earl Baumeister's group is around, a method that failed once shouldn't work any longer...I have no other plans.

"..."

"Takeomi-sama?"

"Yep! I have a strategy."

"Really?"

Truthfully, no, but there's no way that I will tell Kaede.

Even I have a dignity to uphold...now that it has come to this, this will be my last chance.

I guess I should face the fact that I have to resolve myself for a certain level of danger...however, if I'm spotted by Haruka...once I pondered about such things...

"Oh my, Kaede?" (Haruka)

"Ah, Haruka-sama. What a coincidence." (Kaede)

"Gah! Hey!" (Takeomi)

That damn Kaede has betrayed me at the very, very end.

Removing the hat which had completely covered her face, she deliberately allowed Haruka to find her! Shit!

"Huh? Is that nii-sama next to you? Why in disguise?" (Haruka)

Because Kaede deliberately exposed herself, my disguise as I stood next to her was exposed as well. Moreover, there's the stabbing looks of Earl Baumeister's group which are observing me closely. Seeing how my scheme has been found out, interfering with the pilgrimage has become impossible now.

On the contrary, I have even been spotted by Erwin and Haruka.

I don't give a damn about someone like Erwin, but at this rate I will be hated by Haruka.

I must prevent only that by all means!

"Nii-sama, why are you here together with Kaede while even going as far as disguising yourself?" (Haruka)

"Haruka, well, you see..." (Takeomi)

As I'm wavering how to best answer this, Haruka's face suddenly blooms into a smile.

"Nii-sama, your engagement with Kaede has been finally decided, right? That means you took a vacation and went on a premarital pilgrimage with her, correct?" (Haruka)

"That's it. I have just been slightly embarrassed about it..." (Takeomi)

"So that's why the disguise, huh?"

Since Haruka has a grave misunderstanding, I manage to prevent being hated by my beloved sister. However, at the same time it has developed into a mess of Kaede and me having been misunderstood to be actually engaged with each other.

"Umm...Haruka-san? This girl is...the one who greeted us after the ceremony, right?" (Erwin)

"Yes, this girl is my cousin, and the daughter of the Fujibayashi House's branch family." (Haruka)

"Kaede is glad to meet you...ah, no. Erwin-sama, allow me to introduce myself once more. I'm called Kaede."

"Hee, she's resembling you a bit, I think Haruka-san." (Erwin)

"It's probably because we're cousins. Kaede is a very smart girl."

Gah!

Why is that Kaede boldly introducing herself to Erwin!?

Have I possibly laid the groundwork for Kaede?

"Once again, congratulations to you as well, Kaede."

"Thank you very much, Haruka-sama. Of course the official betrothal will follow after I become an adult." (Kaede)

"Even so, I'm sure uncle-sama must be delighted." (Haruka)

"Yes, the child born by me will inherit the branch family after all."

"Before that, nii-sama has to welcome a wife from a suitable house, too."

"You're right, Haruka-sama. My lord and his wife seem busy with the selection of possible marriage candidates."

Kaede is happily chatting with Haruka, but at this moment, I suddenly realize why she has come with me.

If it had looked as if my plans might succeed, she would have obstructed them. And otherwise, she would deliberately show herself to Haruka at the very end, and give Haruka the impression that I'm engaged with her.

What a smart little schemer despite being only twelve years old!

Huh?

Does that mean that I've been nothing but a simple idiot then?

"Kaede, while we have been chatting, we got to the last shrine. Let's offer our talismans."

"Of course, Haruka-sama. For me this is the eighth one as well."

Saying so, Kaede happily offers her talisman to the last shrine together with Haruka.

You...while I have been engrossed with tailing Haruka and the others, you properly offered talismans you prepared in advance to the shrines, didn't you?

I just now realized for the first time...what a blunder.

"With this, Takeomi-sama is my official fiancé."

The ritual of pilgrimage is something sacred and inviolable, even if it's before the marriage.

Seeing as the talismans had been offered with the two of us...and seeing how I went around the shrines with Kaede, despite not doing anything myself, it will be difficult to file a protest against this betrothal.

It would be something else if I abandoned everything and left Mizuho, but...

"Nii-sama, I have been told that you took an extended vacation, but I can fully understand if it was for the sake of setting out on a premarital pilgrimage with Kaede. The pilgrimage is a sacred ceremony after all."

"Yes, Haruka (Huh? It's definitely strange.)"

I made sure to apply for a week-long vacation in order to interfere with Haruka's and Erwin's pilgrimage.

I was told by the Battou Unit's officers that they will consider it for a while because of the vacation time being long. A few days later I managed to get my vacation, but...considering it now, being able to take a week of vacation in the name of training is...

Once I shift my eyes towards Kaede while believing that it's odd...

"Even before a marriage, a pilgrimage is a sacred ceremony. Isn't it, Takeomi-sama?" (Kaede)

"..."

Kaede, you!

You went as far as telling my superiors that it would actually be a premarital pilgrimage, didn't you!?

That's why my vacation was approved without a hitch!

"It will be bad if we go back without properly buying souvenirs for the members of the Battou Unit. I think it's fine to go with pilgrimage manjuu which are easy to share."

"Indeed. Aren't you happy that Kaede is such a reliable child, nii-sama? She will become a good wife."

"You're right..."

There's no way that I can deny it. If I awkwardly stir up trouble for myself by exposing that I tried to interfere with Haruka's and Erwin's pilgrimage, my dignity as an elder brother... And above all, if I were to be hated by Haruka...I won't be able to live on!

"Haruka-sama, Kaede will become a good wife for Takeomi-sama."

"You're a lucky man, aren't you nii-sama?"

"Thanks...Haruka."

It finished without my schemes being exposed because Haruka is a pure girl, but at the same time it also had a terrible outcome.

There's three years left until Kaede becomes an adult. Meanwhile I can expect my father, mother, and relatives to aggressively push marriage interviews on me.

Even though it's out of the question for me.

Haruka!

If it doesn't work out with Erwin, come back to me without caring about what society thinks about you!

Your brother will take care of you for the rest of your life!

* * *

"So that girl is Takeomi-san's fiancée..."

At the end of the pilgrimage, close to the eighth shrine, we finally managed to find Takeomi-san. Because of that, we finished the pilgrimage safely, but that's only because the girl called Kaede obviously allowed us to discover Takeomi-san by deliberately revealing herself...

She's supposed to still be a minor, but she appears to be fairly smart.

"(Apparently she pretended to be Takeomi-san's fiancée while hindering his plans and betraying him at the very end. What a scary girl.)"

"(True. Brother-kun has been completely led around by the nose by that girl. Even if they become a married couple, she will have the pants on.)"

"(My condolences.)"

He will be dominated by a girl that seems to be ten years younger than him.

Takeomi-san is a master at swordsmanship, but he's quite stupid in regards to other matters.

"(What are thou acting for as if it's someone else's affair. Wendelin, thou aren't that much better either.)"

"(Just when I was wondering what you're going to say...oops, after offering this special talisman, the pilgrimage will be over. The souvenirs for Elise and the others...)"

"(That's the part I'm talking about. Well, it's not bad, though.)" (Therese)

"(Eh? What's not bad?)"

"(It's nothing, Wendelin.)"

Erw's and Haruka's pilgrimage has finished without any issues. The remaining days should turn into a honeymoon where they can sightsee the capital together.

As we also finished offering the expensive talismans, there won't be any doubts about our matrimonial happiness.

We expressly came to the Mizuho Mountain Ring. So I will try to buy somewhat novel souvenirs before returning home.

* * *

"Yo, Takeomi. A sword idiot like you has finally gotten engaged, huh?"

"Did you make sure to offer talismans to all eight shrines?"

"Kaede-dono, huh? It looks like she will become a beauty once she grows up. Isn't that great for you?"

"That means you're going to settle down. Work properly."

"Souvenirs, eh? Isn't Kaede-dono a thoughtful one? It's something you wouldn't be able to pull off, Takeomi."

The next day after we finished the pilgrimage. As I finished the vacation ahead of time and attended the training of the Battou Unit, the rumor that I got engaged had already spread among my colleagues.

As I distributed the manjuu, which Kaede chose as souvenirs, to everyone, my colleagues all chatted about my fiancée.

Those rumors have spread to the entire Battou Unit, making it exceedingly difficult to deny it at this point.

"How nice. A young wife."

"There's the saying, wives and tatami are best when they're new."

"Hey, if you say such things, you will get scolded by your wife."

"You can say that again."

My colleagues happily chat among each other while using me as pretext.
While watching that, I still didn't grasp how it could have turned out like this.

Intermission 1 – Enigmatic Magician of the Opposite Extreme, Kimbley of the Bursting Flame

"By the way, it's something I suddenly thought of..."

"What's on your mind, Earl-sama...is it about Doushi?"

"No, not him..."

Previously, when I had a duel with that retarded Duke, Burkhart-san talked with me about famous magicians.

One is the person quietly sitting at my table, eating breakfast right now, Lisa.

And the other famous magician Burkhart-san mentioned back then is 『Kimbley of the Bursting Flame』. Once I looked at Lisa, I got somehow curious about what kind of person he might be. I haven't met him personally yet, so I asked Burkhart-san, who knows him, about Kimbley.

"Ah, that guy?"

"Is he a really scary person?"

"He's not a bad guy. Rather, he's actually nice. If you handle him appropriately."

Somehow I feel bothered by something in the way Burkhart-san phrased it, but it looks like there are also people with a very common sense among the great magicians which have many eccentrics in their group.

"Among the famous magicians, he forms a matchless pair of people having plain common sense together with me."

"Eh?"

Our eyes gathered on Burkhart-san all at once because of his unexpected remark. Even Elise seems to share our sentiment. She's pulling a face as if having heard something surprising.

"Common sense? You, Burkhart-san?"

I wonder?

I don't think that it's wrong, but I might be only thinking so because Doushi, a pure cluster of irrationality, is next to him, causing me to compare the two with each other...either way, it caused the atmosphere in the room to become a bit difficult.

"I'm a very sensible man, no!? Earl-sama, you're a lot more eccentric than I am!"

"Uuh...being told that..."

I'm at a loss for words after having Burkhart-san point out that I'm an oddball. If I take into account reasons I can't tell anyone else, I feel like it's not weird for me to be slightly treated as an eccentric...

But, I mean, since I'm doing my best as a noble in this world with its many ties of obligation, I shouldn't be that much of an eccentric.

"Earl-sama, let's drop this topic."

"Yeah..."

In the eyes of society, we are all oddballs as we handle the unusual superpower called magic. There's no real need for us fellow magicians to pointlessly belittle each other.

"Lisa is Blizzard, and Kimbley is Bursting Flames, right? Are they treated as one set with both countering each other in the magicians' society?"

It's not like both of them are forming a duo, but such an image certainly comes to mind here.

"Because it's ice and fire, huh?"

"On top of that, Kimbley is a man. Well, such rumors pop up every once in a while."

It looks like there's gossip going around that they might have a romantic relationship despite being rivals.

However, we know that those are merely unfounded rumors.

Men won't approach Lisa when she's wearing that outfit and make-up, and in her current, pretty onee-san mode, she can't talk with men.

"Those seem to be nothing but irresponsible rumors." (Katharina)

Lisa denies the rumors with Katharina as interpreter.

Her shaking her head energetically looks rather cute.

"It's because they are close in age, too. But then again, Kimbley is married. And additionally, he's renown for being a devoted husband."

"A devoted husband as Bursting Flames?"

For some reason I had imagined Kimbley to be a stuffy fellow like Doushi.

Even though Doushi looks like this, he also enters the category of devoted husbands.

"No, he's a very normal guy, basically. In the first place, I don't quite think that the magic you use is related to the character of the caster."

"Well, that's true as well...so, what's with the basically?"

It's a term that's weighing on my mind.

"It might be better for you to meet the guy himself. That would be the fastest way for you to

understand."

Having said that, Kimbley and I are busy people.

Just when I thought that there might be no opportunity for us to encounter each other, it was arranged that I'd meet him at a perfect timing.

* * *

"Earl Baumeister-han, can't you help me out here?"

I had accepted a request from Baron Rembrandt, to whom I'm indebted, as adventurer, and Kimbley himself was participating in that request as well.

"It's a request from my wife's family."

It looks like it's a request of the Baron Rottner House, the family of Baron Rembrandt's first wife.

"It concerns the liberation of a small monster domain in the Rottner Barony..."

The Rottner Barony lies in the kingdom's north. It looks like they want to develop the territory while using the acceleration of commerce triggered by the peace treaty with the Empire. However, there was one problem.

"There's a very small monster domain right in the middle of the barony."

It's small-scaled, but because of this domain, the residential area has apparently taken the shape of a donut with the monster domain in the middle.

"This monster domain is small, and as it's not very popular with adventurers, it doesn't bring much revenue either. That being the case, talks have progressed into the direction of liberating it, and building a road connecting the Kingdom's areas with the Empire's border."

It will ease the transportation within the barony, and it will become possible to expand the potential living areas and develop farm fields on a larger scale.

That means, if they manage to develop the barony successfully, the barony will have the potential to have a higher harvest – and thus tax revenue – than a poor Viscount House.

Certainly, if there's a monster domain in the center of a territory, it's inconvenient for the efficiency of the development and the traffic access.

"Has it possibly been designated a barony because of the monster domain?"

"Earl Baumeister-han, you grasped the point here. Hence, if they develop after the domain has been liberated, it'll have the territorial scale of an average Viscount territory," Baron Rembrandt explained.

"As for monster domains, there's also one in the northern part of the barony, and many adventurers gather over there. So it'll be fine to just keep that one around. I will definitely pay you a request fee in accordance with the market price. Please help me out here."

If Baron Rembrandt promises that he will pay the reward, there should be nothing to worry about. After all he's a rich man. He will probably lend the funds necessary to liberate the monster domain and develop the freed-up land to his wife's family.

"I will also be troubled if the domain isn't liberated."

Given that the Baron Rottner House will be able to increase the number of retainers if the liberation goes well, it's probably planned for Baron Rembrandt's sons to take up posts there. Okay, so it means he can't fail for the sake of his children,

"I'm indebted to you, Baron Rembrandt, so you can of course count on me."

It's only natural for me to answer Baron Rembrandt's request, seeing as he plays an important role in the development of the Baumeister Earldom which will continue for a good while.

"That's a big help. Earl Baumeister-han, thanks a lot."

Under such circumstances, Baron Rembrandt and us teleported to the Rottner Barony. Erw, Wilma, Katia, and Lisa accompanied me.

『It's regrettable, seeing how it was a good opportunity for actual combat.』

『Make sure to not neglect your training.』

『I think I will follow thine advice as thou are my senpai, Wendelin. Please don't forget the souvenirs.』

Therese stayed home under the pretext that we want to hide the fact that she has become a magician as long as possible, and as it had been Burkhart-san's opinion that she's still too inexperienced. Given that she's become able to use quite a bit of magic, she probably wants to quickly test it out in real combat, though.

"Will the party be properly balanced without Elise and the others here?"

"Erwin, normally you don't have such extravagant parties like this one, you know?"

Katia rebuts Erw's question.

But she's right, since we even got two pure magicians with us, it might be an extravagant party.

"Besides, Bursting Flames is going to join in as well, no? I think it will be alright unless we're very careless."

"But, even if it's small, it's still a monster domain. There should be quite a lot of monsters in there."

"Ah yeah, because it's untouched, you mean. Those roaches sure multiply like rats."

Katia had an understanding look towards the point Wilma made.
Since we have heard just now that it's not used much by adventurers due to its lacking popularity, it's possible that it's crowded with more monsters than expected.
Going by the fact that it hasn't been liberated so far, it might be an unexpectedly difficult request, too.
That's probably the reason why Baron Rembrandt requested us to do it.



"Huh? Aren't there somehow many people here?"

We head to the monster domain in the center of the Rottner Barony with Baron Rembrandt as guide, but many adventurers have gathered to hunt there.
Erw reports this fact to me after having noticed it.

"Don't tell me, they hired so many adventurers?"

"You see, Katia-han, that's because you don't have to pay any taxes to the Baron Rottner House in this monster domain."

Usually the tax paid to the Baron Rottner House and the fee paid to the adventurer's guild amount to 30%, but right now adventurers only have to pay the fee to the adventurer's guild for the harvested goods and game caught in this monster domain.

It's only natural for many adventurers to gather if you can increase the earnings by 20% with the usual loot.

It appears to be a strategy to have the number of monsters lowered by luring helpers with the chance to make a profit.

"As expected, the fee to be paid to the adventurer's guild hasn't been waived."

"Well that makes sense, Wilma-han. It ain't like the adventurer's guild will directly profit from the Rottner Barony's development progressing."

Even the adventurer's guild can't favor only the Rottner House.

"Are we going to join the subjugation as well?"

"No, the tax-free campaign has already been running for a month. As a result, the number of monsters has dropped significantly." (Rembrandt)

I don't really mind if we warm ourselves up by killing the few remaining monsters, but Baron Rembrandt explained to Erw that our main task will be to join up with Bursting Flames and kill the boss.

"Is the boss here a dragon?"

"Since it's such a small monster domain, there ain't anything like a dragon. 『Berserk Bird』 is the boss of this domain." (Rembrandt)

Simply put, Berserk Bird is a huge bird monster.

I think it's one of the weakest monsters among the bosses of monster domains.

However, I was taught at the adventurer's prep school that it's sometimes troublesome to subjugate it.

As for the reason: usually there's one, or at most two bosses, but only in the particular case of the Berserk Bird, you have to hunt down a big number of bird monsters because of its strong breeding over the course of a short time.

If you're unlucky, it's even possible that you will be tormented to death by a group assault of Berserk Birds.

"Several dozens of birds with a maximum span of five meters when fully grown out, huh...?"

Moreover, Berserk Birds seems to be unexpectedly clever.

A simple method such as rounding them all up after gathering them in one place won't work.

Berserk Birds are smart enough to torture their enemies to death with great numbers that would gather as necessary while at the same time not crowding together under normal circumstances to prevent their annihilation.

We only know those traits from having read about them in books, though.

"However, since its attribute is non-attribute, all kinds of offensive magic works against it."

"..."

"Eh? Ah, I see. According to Big Sis, it's certainly true that all kinds of magic work, but she says that the magic must be so powerful that it kills the bird in one blow."

It looks like Katia is going to work as an interpreter today.

Appropriate for a veteran adventurer, she provides us with information about Berserk Birds.

She might have had to subjugate them in the past.

"Moreover, she says it's not good to ignore the wounded birds."

According to Lisa's explanation...though Katia does the talking...if you leave the wounded birds alone for five seconds, they seem to go mad as its name suggests.

Once that happens, it will start attacking any living beings around it at full power without even fearing its own death.

It appears there are occasionally cases where unskilled magicians allow Berserk Birds to go berserk with half-assed attacks, resulting in them being killed.

"Because of this, it's said that it's necessary to gather several powerful magicians to definitely complete the request, which also connects to the reason why Bursting Flames is joining as well. Unfortunately, I'm bad at offensive magic..." (Rembrandt)

Given that Baron Rembrandt is a unique magician specialized in 『Relocate』 and 『Teleport』, he's

not good with offensive magic.
His arsenal of offensive spells is close to zero.

"I suppose that's an opinion that makes sense. Very well, it will be a joint operation."

"Well then, let me introduce you to Bursting Flames-han."

Because we're trying to liberate the monster domain, the Rottner House is managing the big number of gathered adventurers with a temporary dispatch of their feudal army.

Once we move to the tent serving as headquarters, we encounter a male magician, who looks to be around 30 years old.

I think his face is normal, but he gives me a strong vibe of a family-oriented father. He doesn't look like an excellent magician bearing the nickname of Bursting Flames at all.

"Bursting Flames-han, I have brought Earl Baumeister-han."

"Baron Rembrandt-dono, please allow me to thank you for granting my wish."

Kimbley of the Bursting Flames politely thanks Baron Rembrandt.

However, I can't feel anything resembling Bursting Flames from his appearance, after all.

"So you are Earl Baumeister-dono. I have heard quite a few rumors about you."

Kimbley greets me politely, too.

Him adding -dono and not -sama towards a noble is owed to the position of high-ranking magicians in society compared to nobles.

It's not like he's trying to be rude here.

"Your friends look quite reliable as well..."

I introduced Erw, Wilma, and Katia to him, and Kimbley revealed an expression showing his admiration after having assessed their abilities.

Well, such measuring of abilities between fellow adventurers often takes place.

"So, as for the young lady over there...I feel like we have met somewhere before..."

Kimbley apparently can't identify Lisa, who has been compared with him frequently, because of her excessive change.

"But, this mana..."

"Kimbley-san, this person is Lisa the Blizzard."

"Hee, just when I thought that I remembered that particular mana...eh, wait! Ha——ah!?"

Kimbley raises his voice in surprise over Lisa who has stopped with the flashy outfit and make-up, now wearing the attire of a normal magician.



"That was certainly quite the surprise..."

Kimbley is startled once more while fixedly staring at Lisa.
Lisa seems to be capable of making eye contact with Kimbley whom she met relatively often so far.
As for talking...it's still impossible if it's men, or rather, me.

"Lisa and Kimbley-san, did you go out with each other in the past, after all?"

"Wilma-san, that's an unfounded rumor."

Wilma bluntly threw that question, which was fairly hard to ask despite everyone wanting to know the truth, at Kimbley.
I think she's actually quite gutsy.

"Your ages are almost the same, your amount of mana as well, your special magic attributes are fire and ice, and you are man and woman. There's some foundation to the rumors, isn't there?"

Certainly, if I were told that they have gone out with each other, I might have actually believed it.

"I have a wife, okay?"

Kimbley is earning money as a famous magician.
It's a world where it's rare for men, who have such high income and social standing like him, to stay single beyond an age of thirty.
It's likely difficult for him to reject formal marriage interviews, too.

"Hee, what kind of person is your wife?"

"It's great of you to have asked this!"

"Eh!?"

Once Erw asked him about his wife with the intention to have a light chat, Kimbley jumped at that topic vigorously.
It looks like he had quite the strong urge to talk about it to someone else.

"Mary is my childhood friend. She's two years older than I am, though."

What started all of a sudden now was a story of bragging about the beginning of Kimbley's love towards his wife.
Come to think of it, I heard that he's a devoted husband, but it looks like he really fits that description to a tee.
Even during my time as a salaryman there was a guy who started long bragging marathons about his wife and children at drinking parties.
I remember how it caused a slightly difficult atmosphere to spread as it was definitely impossible to

tell him to stop it.

Considering your social life, there was no way that you could bluntly show them that you don't care...

Once I look in Baron Rembrandt's direction, he has 『I failed!』 written all over his face. He's probably regretting about not having warned us to not touch on that topic beforehand.

"(Earl Baumeister-han, now that Bursting Flame-han has started to brag about his wife and daughters, it's going to take a long time...)"

We ended up endlessly listening to Kimbley's bragging about his wife and his two daughters for around two hours after that.



"Let's see how it goes and kill as many monsters as possible before facing the Berserk Bird?"

After Kimbley's bragging came to an end, we finally entered the monster domain together with him. Baron Rembrandt, who would be no combat asset here, stayed outside.

"It looks like most of the monsters have been killed by the other adventurers."

Erw, who is acting as scout and advance guard, keeps walking through the monster domain which is almost emptied out of monsters.

Wilma and Katia follow behind him, searching for presences.

"Since they don't have to pay taxes to the Rottner House, the majority of the adventurers in this area have gathered here...there are a few monsters left, but..."

My 『Detect』 reacts to the presence of a medium-sized monster around a hundred meters ahead of us.

"I will kill this one." (Kimbley)

"In accordance with your nickname?"

"No, the monster materials would get burned then."

Kimbley steps forward and creates a small flame on the tip of his finger.

Once he lightly blows at that flame with a "Pheew," the small flame leaves his finger and flies toward the monster which is still a good distance away. Looking at it closely, it resembles a bear. The flame leaps into its mouth, and immediately after, the monster writhes around with smoke escaping from its mouth.

A few dozens seconds later, the monster convulses and stops moving.

"Eh? What kind of magic is that?"

Katia is surprised by Kimbley's magic and its behavior. We others are also surprised. He easily defeated a monster while using only a very small amount of mana.

"Do you know, Big Sis? ...Oh, I get it. That flame apparently burned the monster's lungs."

Kimbley is a fire magic master.

Since fire magic causes extensive damage to monsters, it's called a disadvantageous attribute for adventurers.

On the other hand, it's the most reliable attribute in a war, though.

"Given that there are only few monsters where the lungs are used as material, I make it impossible for the monsters to breathe by burning them."

Meaning, he efficiently burns only the monsters' lungs.

There's also the trick to it that the oxygen in the lungs is used up by the fire, increasing the effect even further.

The monster won't be able to avoid dying from suffocation.

If you defeat them in such a way, the majority of their raw materials will remain unharmed. If you have as much mana as Kimbley, you will be able to kill many monsters with this method.

In other words, you can make good money with it.

"That's no bursting flame." (Wilma)

"Wilma-san, the bursting flames spell is my strongest technique, and I do know when to use it."

The reason why Kimbley got the nickname Bursting Flames is apparently because he blew away a mountain with explosion magic when he was summoned to a strife between fellow nobles and watched the two armies there.

Because of its overwhelming firepower, the soldiers of both armies naturally started to call Kimbley with 『It's Bursting Flames!』.

Ever since, his nickname has apparently been Kimbley of the Bursting Flames.

"I think we should take on the Berserk Birds tomorrow."

Following Kimbley's opinion, we devoted ourselves to hunting as many monsters as possible for today.



When we returned to the headquarters since it had become evening, we were greeted by Baron Rembrandt.

"Earl Baumeister-han, everyone, are you alright?"

"Yes, did something happen?"

"Well, it looks like there were adventurers who picked a half-baked fight with a Berserk Bird..."

He said that they suffered an unforeseen accident of losing more than twenty adventurers in just one day.

"A young adventurer party apparently inflicted an injury on one Berserk Bird."

Wounding a Berserk Bird half-assedly is the worst you can do.

The wounded bird will go berserk and attack those who attacked it until its death. There were many of them.

Adding the attacks by the unwounded birds that got provoked by all this, there were many casualties outside the party which recklessly triggered it all.

"Therefore, I have no choice but to ask you, Earl Baumeister-han, Kimbley-han."

"Baron Rembrandt-sama, do we know the estimated number of Berserk Birds?"

"I've been told that they are probably exceeding fifty."

Baron Rembrandt answers Erw.

"That's a lot..."

Not all of them are adult birds, but even the young ones become a nuisance once they go berserk. That's because the Berserk Birds stop caring about their own safety unlike other animals and monsters.

Since they keep attacking as if having their limiter removed, no matter how broken their bodies become, their threat level is high.

"The majority of this monster domain consists of forest. Even if they are monsters, it'll be impossible for birds with such big bodies to launch attacks in an agitated state of mind."

"Well, they would likely crash against the trees, so yeah. But, doesn't that depend on where we fight them?"

"Wilma-han, Erwin-han, Berserk Birds are the weakest bosses, but they are still domain bosses. Something at the level of a tree will be simply mowed down during their flight."

This is yet another reason why it's so troublesome to subjugate Berserk Birds.

Even if it might be the weakest among the domain bosses, it's still overwhelmingly stronger than any normal monster.

"I guess we will go to sleep in preparation for tomorrow's battle..."

"Yes. Let's take an early rest to be ready for tomorrow."

On that day we stayed the night in an outdoor tent provided by the Rottner House. The Berserk Birds subjugation operation together with Kimbley would finally start on the next day.

* * *

"..."

"Good morning, Kimbley-san. Is anything wrong?"

I call out to Kimbley who's looking at the monster domain by himself with a strange expression.

"Earl Baumeister-dono? Good morning. No, I won't mind if you laugh at me, but... The subjugation will start any time soon, but somehow I have a bad premonition, and I can't get it out of my head," he said.

"Intuition? ...It's important to have that."

Two of the reasons for elite adventurers to be top-class are their luck and intuition.

It's difficult to explain these logically, but it was the same with my debut battle.

Going by my own perception, I feel like we have had a lot of bad luck, but in the eyes of others, we are evaluated as being very lucky as adventurers.

If the adventurers, who participated in the hunt, had stopped the subjugation for such a vague reason like having a slightly bad premonition, they wouldn't have been annihilated after being attacked by unexpectedly formidable enemies.

Adventurers, who can avoid disaster because of such vague feelings, often become elites later on, Burkhart-san told me before.

He also said that adventurers need abilities that are hard to understand like luck and intuition at times.

『Only this is something I can't teach to others either, you know? All the more at the prep school. That place is an educational institute after all. Besides, look, if they stopped their activities after feeling such things, it's no definite guarantee for their safety since there are also guys dying after being run over by a carriage.』

It's probably impossible to teach such uncertain things like luck or intuition.

During my short time at the prep school I wasn't taught about those things either.

In short, it means that top-class adventurers 『possess something』.

"Let's proceed carefully while making sure to immediately retreat if some unforeseen situation crops up."

"You're right."

On this day Kimbley and us went into two different directions, heading towards the central part of the monster domain where the Berserk Birds are considered to be.

"Monsters, few." (Wilma)

"It's because they have been killed thoroughly until now."

We were attacked by a few monsters until reaching the scheduled point of operations, but those few were finished off easily by Wilma and Katia.

"Say, Wend. Was it okay for Kimbley-san to work alone?"

"He himself said it would be okay..."

Baron Rembrandt offered to send out guards from the other participating adventurers, but Kimbley refused, saying that it'd be better for him to act independently.

"It's alright if it's someone so powerful?"

As I was feeling so since I had seen Kimbley's precise, efficient magic, someone tugged on my robe.

It looks like Lisa wants to tell me something.

"According to Big Sis, others being around Kimbley-san will be a hindrance when he gets serious."

"A show of his real ability as Bursting Flames, huh?"

Given that he has the image of using magic that will likely cause damage to the surroundings as well, I think it's easier for him to act by himself.

The magic, which burned the lungs of a monster yesterday, probably won't work against the Berserk Birds.

"Wend, found one." (Erwin)

Once we got close to the center of the domain, Erw discovered a single Berserk Bird.

It's quite big since it's a monster, but it looks like a bird you can find anywhere with its light brown wings.

"What a plain bird."

"Wend, you don't have anything else to say about it?"

"Wend-sama, plain birds are delicious."

"Ah, there was that as well...yakitori, huh?"

"Wend-sama, with salt for me."

"Sauce for me, I guess."

Despite being the boss of the domain, the raw materials of Berserk Birds don't really sell.

Their flesh and intestines are treated as high-class delicacy, but besides those and maybe the magic stone, the difficulty level of subjugating them doesn't match with the obtainable profit.

Even the feathers don't seem to have much use at present.

I feel like you could call it only natural that there are few adventurers who take up the subjugation of such a low-profit boss.

Because of that, we have decided to consider the birds as ingredients for yakitori.
Maybe the skin and cartilages of Berserk Birds are delicious?
I must try them by all means.

"I think it's okay to kill that one bird in this case?"

My robe was tugged once again.
It looks like Lisa is going to give us some advice.
Of course, since she still can't talk to me, Katia is going to work as her interpreter.

"That one bird is something like a scout. If we defeat it, its friends will come rushing at us one after the other. But, nothing will start if we don't do it, she says. Also..." (Katia)

"Also, what?"

"Big Sis says that yakitori is better with sauce."

"Wait, that's what she wanted to tell me...?"

I decide to consider it as Lisa having gotten used to us to such an extent.

"We have no choice but to kill it, do we?"

Even if we proceed while ignoring it, it will attack us sooner or later anyway, and if it gets wounded, it will go berserk.
Since its friends will swoop down on us as well, we have no other option but to kill it in one shot, it seems.
In other words, it's an annoying monster.

"Big Sis says that she'll kill it."

"Please do so."

As I ask her to go ahead, Lisa creates an 『Ice Lance』 in an instant, and brings down the Berserk Bird several dozens of meters away by skewering its head.
Her spell creation speed, control of the 『Ice Lance』, and penetration force was great. It makes me actually feel that Lisa is a magician worthy of being called top-class.

"With this a chain of birds is going to appear from deeper in, hubby."

"I see. We should prepare to fight them back then."

It will be difficult for Erw and Katia to kill the Berserk Birds, which will come at us using a high speed, in one blow.
Accordingly I will have them guard Lisa and me. Wilma plans to cut off or crush the Berserk Birds' heads with her big ax.

"I won't use my usual iron bow."

"It will be an issue if you miss with that, and there will be many targets, too."

If it's one Berserk Bird, Wilma can shoot it down with her powerful iron bow, or if she fails to kill it, she will have the time to use her big ax, but since she has heard that there will be many opponents, Wilma says that she can definitely bring down the birds with lower risk when wielding her ax.

"I wonder if it would have been better if we hadn't returned the magic guns."

"It was inevitable since we couldn't have maintained them anyway. Besides, if it's the mass-produced versions that they might have lent us, the penetrative force would be lacking."

Magic guns have enough effect against wild animals and people, but they still lack the power to be used against larger monsters.

There's also the prototype that has enough firepower, but it has great flaws on its maintenance side, costs vs. efficiency, and manageability.

That's why magic guns, which have issues on the cost side that's directly linked to income, haven't spread among adventurers yet.

"Wend-sama, they're here." (Wilma)

"They really came, eh?"

Wilma and I confirmed very quickly approaching Berserk Bird-like responses exceeding 50 birds through 『Detect』.

Since my rob was tugged at almost the same moment, Lisa seems to use 『Detect』, too.

Next I could hear a series of intense explosion sounds from a place on the other side of the monster domain's central area.

"Lisa, that's Kimbley-san, right?"

"He has started to fight, she says." (Katia)

Even in this situation Katia faithfully worked as Lisa's interpreter.

"Approximately 50 birds are incoming on this side, and Kimbley-san is in combat, too. The estimated number of Berserk Birds has been definitely wrong."

Erw says while clicking his tongue, but it's commonplace to encounter errors of this level.

Besides, today it's not just me, but Lisa is with us as well. We should be able to manage one way or the other.

"I will go with 『Wind Cutter』!"

I send a 『Wind Cutter』, which had its power raised, flying like a boomerang, following the strategy of cutting off the Berserk Birds' heads.

Lisa lets several 『Ice Lances』 float above her head, choosing to fight by stabbing the Berserk Birds' heads in order as they get closer.

"...Huh? It didn't manage to completely cut off the head?"

Going by my estimate, my 『Wind Cutter』 should have cut off the head in one go, but it stopped after cutting only half of the neck.

And yet its charging speed in our direction hasn't dropped, but instead it got more than twice as fast. The berserkification is terrifying.

A single bird isn't overly powerful. However, since they come charging while mowing down large trees, they are plenty dangerous so that one can only say that they are weaker when compared to a dragon.

Furthermore, given that they keep charging with half of their heads gone while spouting blood, it might turn into a trauma for some people.

Their name Berserk Bird appears to be not just for show.

"My training is still fairly lacking, I guess..."

If Burkhart-san had seen me failing in bringing down the Berserk Bird, he would have likely given me a good scolding.

It's good that he's not here today.

Lisa continues defeating them by piercing their heads with her ice lances without missing her aim even once. Her accurate aim makes me think that nothing less could be expected of her.

Even in regards to mana consumption efficiency, I'm not able to hold a candle to Lisa right now.

Because she has been practicing magic since before I was actually born, you might call that only natural.



"How many birds did we kill?"

"Wend-sama, 54."

Wilma, who's the first to answer, tells me the number of subjugated Berserk Birds.

Even Wilma herself should have decapitated many Berserk Birds with her big ax.

"Is it over? No..."

I sense a group of Berserk Birds heading this way with my 『Detect』.

This time it's two groups of roughly a hundred birds each with a slight delay between both.

"Hey, isn't that odd? There's way too many of them, no!?"

"They are monsters, so such things can happen."

I recall Kimbley's comment about having a bad premonition this morning.

That bad premonition was about having mistaken the number of Berserk Birds inhabiting this domain, which Baron Rottner and Baron Rembrandt told us about.

"We're still fine, but is Kimbley-san going to be okay?"

While we are being pressed to deal with 200 Berserk Birds in total, Erw worries about Kimbley. Although he had asked for it himself, he's alone. If he has to take on the same number of birds as us, he will likely be forced into a difficult battle, no matter how remarkable he might be.

"I wonder, is it wrong if we don't go to reinforce him?"

"Hubby, we don't have such spare time."

As expected, taking on more than 200 Berserk Birds is difficult. On top of that, the Berserk Birds go berserk even in case they get injured after clashing with their own. I can already see an individual that has gone berserk within the group heading towards us. For this reason, Lisa and I had to deal with them while keeping our 『Magic Barriers』 up.

"This is nothing that one or two average magicians could handle."

Either way, their big numbers are troublesome. I'm experiencing firsthand why this monster domain has been left alone for so long.

Just as I was thinking about what we should do, the sleeve of my robe was tugged again.

"Lisa, what's wrong?"

"Eh!? You're not kidding, right Big Sis!?"

Katia suddenly yelled out.

"Katia, what has Lisa said?"

"She says that it's dangerous."

"We know that it's dangerous."

Even we are still under fierce attack by more than a hundred Berserk Birds. The battle progress doesn't allow any predictions.

"That's certainly true, but it's Kimbley-san who's in danger."

"However, we can't go reinforce him yet."

I'd like to go help him if possible, but we don't have any leeway either.

Besides, he was the one who said that he would do it himself.

As an adventurer, this statement was his own responsibility. Even if something happens to him, we won't bear any responsibility for it.

"She says it's something else! Saying that it's Kimbley-san who's in danger means something else!"

Katia couldn't pass on Lisa's words any further.

That's because Lisa and I as well as Wilma and Katia, who started to learn magic, felt a presence

trying to consume a vast amount of mana at the location Kimbley is supposed to be.

"Lisa!"

"...!"

Lisa and I solidified our defenses by adding a second layer to our 『Magic Barriers』. Immediately following, I was exposed to an explosion sound so loud that I wondered whether my eardrums were going to burst, a flame so radiant that it seemed to burn my eyes, and a shock wave of tremendous power.

We were safe because of our 『Magic Barriers』, but the group of Berserk Birds, which had been attacking us, instantly went up in flames and turned into charcoal, just to be blown away in pieces by the shock wave.

Of course it was impossible for any tree or grass to remain standing in the forest.

The explosion didn't last more than ten seconds, but it was obvious to us, that the center of the monster domain and quite a large area around it were burned down and blown away as if a huge bomb had been dropped.

"This is Kimbley-san's magic?"

"It's the one Kimbley of the Bursting Flames uses at crunch time, his final spell, 『Doomsday』, hubby." (Katia) (T/N: Author used Big Bang Explosion....sorry, but no...)

"..."

It's great that she's telling us this, but I couldn't help but to reflexively retort to Lisa in my mind that she should have told us a little bit earlier, if she knew.

* * *

"Man, I'm really sorry. Just when I thought, 『Ah, I might not be able to meet my wife and daughters again』 thanks to the surprisingly large number of Berserk Birds, I invoked that spell by instinct." (Kimbley)

In the end, the flock of Berserk Birds was completely annihilated together with 80% of the monster domain due to Kimbley's 『Doomsday』.

In addition, forest fires have spread to a part of the outer areas of the monster domain. Lisa and I have somehow managed to hold back the fire from spreading further by extinguishing it determinedly.

If the fire had spread to places where people live, it would have become a serious issue, but it's good that we were able to prevent that.

"Baron Rottner-han, if you consider that you can drastically save on time and labor to cut down the forest..." (Rembrandt)

"You're right..." (Rottner)

The faces of Baron Rembrandt with his few hairs and Baron Rottner with his lacking presence are frozen in front of the monster domain that has almost completely burned down, but it's impossible for them to blame Kimbley.

Thanks to the Berserk Birds, they couldn't find any magicians that would take up the subjugation request so far. Moreover, Baron Rembrandt and Baron Rottner drastically mistook the number of Berserk Birds living in the domain.

It was immediately obvious that it was a simple tallying mistake, but since they wouldn't be able to complain even if they were suspected to have intentionally reported a wrong number, they couldn't really call Kimbley into responsibility.

It was a situation where the excuse of it having been an emergency measure to protect his own life was feasible. You could call it a case where even the adventurer's guild would officially need to defend Kimbley.

I think the monster domain, which had lost 80% to the fire, has become easy to develop now.

After all, agriculture also has farming methods where you make land arable by burning forests.

A great number of trees that could have been processed into lumber has burned down, and the raw materials of the Berserk Birds and other monsters are gone except for the magic stones, but it would take time and money to prepare the soil over such a big range.

Burning the forest or not; given that both options had their advantages, I wouldn't have been able to make a judgment here.

"It would have been great if we had secured at least one Berserk Bird..."

"Yakitori..."

"Why are you mourning over the yakitori to such an extent as a married couple?"

Erw, that's because yakitori was the most important task for us.

And don't say that other birds will do!

Wilma and I are fussy about the taste of Berserk Bird yakitori and other bird dishes.

"!! Wend-sama, eggs." (Wilma)

"Oh, there was that as well..."

I have heard that there are always eggs close to hatching if you look for the Berserk Birds' nest after their subjugation.

Even though I thought about making egg dishes and bird meat + egg on rice, the eggs had all burned down as well.

"With that explosion..."

Because we had to postpone the retrieval of the Berserk Birds we defeated, the big yakitori party came to nothing.

Seeing as nothing but cinders are left, they will likely taste bad and just bitter even if we eat them. Even my grandma out in the countryside said that eating burned stuff will just spoil your tummy.

"It's said that all things will lose their form sooner or later. Since the job's done, I will buy souvenirs

for my wife and daughters, and go back home. See you."

We felt like Kimbley had a very "practical personality."

After all he doesn't have a single regret despite having caused this much of an uproar. Once his job is done, Kimbley immediately returns to his family-oriented father mode. He bids farewell to us, and leaves in order to buy souvenirs for his family.

『Well, many magicians are eccentrics...』

The words Burkhart-san told me some time ago popped up in my mind. Simply because we didn't carefully investigate his true character and didn't take any countermeasures, Wilma and I missed out on a precious bird dish.

"But, he was an amazing guy..."

He has snatched away my pleasure, let alone reflecting on any of it, but I don't dislike him.

"In a certain sense it's appropriate to say that he forms a perfect pair with Lisa."

"Now listen, Wilma. I have a problem with Big Sis' previous speech and outfit, but she does her work precisely and seriously."

Katia backs up Lisa without a moment's delay, and I could agree with it as well. Her attacks against the Berserk Birds and her actions when the fire was created were swift and correct.

She's like this because she can't talk to men if she's not in her flashy appearance, but since she's doing her work properly, her schedule is always full.

The reason why Kimbley can't become a noble is probably because he has done something like today several times in the past.

Otherwise, it would be hard to explain.

"Lisa, at the dispute where Kimbley-san was called Bursting Flames for the first time, did it possibly..."

"She says it's just as you suspect, hubby."

The dispute dragged on, and since he wanted to see the faces of his wife and daughters as soon as possible, he apparently blew a mountain away to urge both parties into arbitration.

"Leaving aside Kimbley-san, I think I still have many things I need to learn. Lisa, can I have you teach me, seeing as you're a skilled magician?"

Once I praise Lisa, she hides her face in embarrassment. That gesture is really cute.

"In other words, it's that...Lisa who is serious with work but has an amazing outward appearance, and Kimbley-san who wings his work like this despite being a good person with a moderate outward appearance?"

"It's not like he's winging it every time. Because of his beloved wife and daughters at home, it looks like he launches that 『Doomsday』 whenever he feels the slightest feeling of impending danger that he won't be able to meet his family any longer, Big Sis says." (Katia)

What a troublesome story.

I wonder, can that magic also be used for reclamation?

If I consider the damage to the vicinity, it's necessary to be careful on how to use it, though.

"At any rate, people really don't match their appearance."

Erw, who knew that Kimbley had surprising aspects to him, seriously says while looking at Lisa. Kimbley of the Bursting Flames, and Lisa the Blizzard.

Why are the two known as opposing characters by society?

We experienced that firsthand together with the threat of the Berserk Birds.

Chapter 3 – Wendelin-sensei

"Hm—m, even when pressing my ear against it, I can't hear the baby's heartbeat or anything..."

"Dear, you won't hear anything until my belly becomes bigger."

"Is that so...?"

"Yes."

"How regrettable."

As usual, I went out today to do public works within my earldom while taking Lisa along, and then returned home. After taking a little break, I pressed my ear against Elise's belly.

In TV dramas there are scenes where the actor would now hear the infant kicking inside the belly, but unfortunately I couldn't hear anything.

"Even the gender will be determined after the belly becomes a lot bigger."

"That's fine after the child is born. I want to have something to look forward to."

The retainers around Roderich, Elise's home around Cardinal Hohenheim, and even many of the high-ranking nobles starting with His Majesty put pressure on Elise to give birth to a boy.

It's not that they are telling her directly, but I guess you could call it a silent pressure.

They probably believe that it will become troublesome in regards to the succession if Elise gives birth to a girl while Ina and Luise give birth to boys.

In Katharina's case it won't be a problem for her to have a boy since he would inherit the Associate Baron Waigel House.

"You can determine the gender?"

"It's a kind of Holy magic, so a person, who can use it, would be able to tell you if you ask. As magic to determine the gender of an infant enters a fairly special magic category, there's even less practitioners than healers," Elise says.

"It's not always said that an advanced Holy magic practitioner can use it either. It's the same with Baron Rembrandt-sama's 『Relocate』. I can't use it either." (Elise)

For Elise to not be able to use it means that it must be quite special.

The few practitioners seem to be very busy with determining the gender of infants.

"I hear that they are especially busy due to the requests from nobles and big merchants."

Just like the old Japan, this world attaches a lot of importance to lineage.

As it's essential for a family head to produce an heir, they will naturally make a request if it's possible to know the gender before the child is born.

"Hee, I see."

"Dear, you're not curious?"

"Not really. We will know once it's born. However, I want the child to be born healthily."

In my previous life, my mother told me that such a way of thinking still exists in the rural areas of Japan, but I will be very happy if the child is born safely, no matter whether it's a boy or a girl.

"Even if the first child were to be a girl, the next one or the one after that will be a boy, no?"

In reality it looks like there are people who give birth to only girls or boys, but if I were to worry about such things, it would take no end anyway.

Rather than that, what I have to do now is to hear the infant's heartbeat.

"That's where this 『Hearing』 spell comes in handy!"

It's a spell of the wind attribute and has a function similar to that of a stethoscope.

When I heard that I had impregnated my wives, I quickly read the book of Master and learned it. However, I wonder what Master planned to do by learning such a spell?

"If it's this spell!"

After casting 『Hearing』 on myself, I press my ear against Elise's belly once more. Once I did, I could hear a regular heartbeat.

"Alright!"

"Wend, I'm sorry to tell you, but that's Elise's heartbeat."

"Wha-!?"

"The baby hasn't grown so much yet, you know?"

Certainly, it's just as Ina says.

The four are still in the early stage of pregnancy. It's at a stage where they don't look like pregnant women at all.

"What a bummer..."

Just in case, I tried to press my ear against Ina's and then Luise's belly with 『Hearing』 active, but I couldn't hear anything besides their heartbeats.

No, I could hear a stomach growling from one of them.

It was Luise.

"I've become really hungry ever since I got pregnant...right now I'm eating five times a day."
(Luise)

"Is it alright for you to eat so much?" (Wendelin)

I look at Luise once more, but she doesn't seem chubby to me.
Although she's saying that she's pregnant, I feel like there are many people who don't believe her.

"I'm sure my child will become strong if it's a boy or attractive if it's a girl." (Luise)

Luise is dreaming, but I cannot help feeling that she will give birth to a small, cute girl resembling herself.

"However, I had expected that you'd try to learn the magic to distinguish the gender of an infant, Wend."

"I tried to do so, just in case, but..."

It seems to be the truth that it's a special magic. Just like 『Relocate』, I couldn't acquire it.
But, even if I had managed to learn it, I had planned to not use it on Elise and the others.

"Why wouldn't you use it?"

"It's because I want to have the fun of looking forward to it after it's born. Well, in the end I can't use it anyway. But, I don't plan to request a gender determination of the infants either." (Wendelin)

"Hmm, really?"

Ina looks perplexed.

It's probably because she has expected me to hope for an heir since I'm an Earl.

"As long as many children are born, there will be at least one boy among them. Let's tackle it with such an easygoing approach."

I deliberately say this in a light tone to not pile stress on the pressure by the surroundings for Elise and the others to give birth to boys.

"Wendelin-san." (Katharina)

"What is it, Katharina?"

"I still don't feel the baby moving either, but it would be fine for you to check, just for caution's sake."

"Yes..."

I tried pressing my ear against Elise's, Ina's and Luise's bellies, but I haven't done the same with Katharina yet.

She might have considered that to be unfair.

In contrast to her appearance, Katharina has such cute parts to her, too.

"Of course I will do so. Maybe I will be able to hear something."

I press my ear against Katharina's belly at the end, but as expected, I can't hear anything.

Even after using 『Hearing』, nothing but her heartbeat is audible.

"The way to use that spell is difficult..."

"I want to learn it, too."

Leaving Katharina aside, it might be a useful spell for Elise who possesses basic medical knowledge while being a healer.

Given that it will be fine for her to not move to learn the spell, she probably won't mind even if it takes some time to acquire it.

"Wendelin-san, did you hear anything?"

"It's still too early after all."

"We got pregnant around almost the same time."

I couldn't hear the baby's heartbeat, but I noticed that only Katharina was subtly different. Indeed, it was just a very small difference, but I ended up suddenly noticing when I pressed my ear against her belly.

And, seeing as I have learned of it, I couldn't keep quiet about it.

Why, you ask?

If there's a note saying 『Don't press!』 next to a button in front of you, anyone would feel the urge to press it, no?

It's something similar to that...although it's completely unrelated...

"Katharina, did you gain a bit of weight?"

"Wendelin-sa——n!"

"Eh? You had me place my ear against your belly while wanting me to point that out, no?"

"As if!"

"Saying that you'll go on a diet from now on would be the usual routine?"

"You think I can go on a diet while pregnant!? It will have a bad influence on the baby in my belly!"

"Ah, that's true."

Being told by me that she gained weight, Katharina seethed with anger. Hence I ended up having big trouble to cheer her back up.



"Hubby, asking a woman whether she gained weight is a bad idea. Big Sis says so as well." (Katia)

Next to Katia who cautions me, Lisa grunts in agreement while nodding.

"Indeed. It's no exaggeration to say that it's a commonly shared rule between all women, unrelated to their social standing and lineage." (Therese)

Therese doesn't support me on this one either.

After I had cheered up Katharina, we went out to do public works again.

The members are Katia and Therese in addition to Lisa. For Therese it's about getting some real practice. Katia is following as a guard in Wilma's stead.

Wilma remained in the mansion to take care of Elise and the others. Erw joined the wild animal hunt of the guards.

The Savage Land is great for hunting wild animals as there's many of them, but with people living there, it's indispensable to exterminate the animals.

Given that it also serves as training, the guards go out regularly to exterminate wild animals.

"Yeah well, I mean it just slipped out of my mouth after I noticed it."

"That's not good, hubby. Katharina is pregnant, so you have to look out to not say such things." (Katia)

She doesn't look like it, but since Katia is older than me, I ended up being warned by her.

She took drastic actions during the quarrel with her family, but usually she's unexpectedly straightforward.

Seemingly because she has many male aspects to her while being quite frank, she's surprisingly caring towards those of her sex.

"Katia, would you also mind it if you were to gain weight after getting pregnant?"

"I wonder? Actually I want to gain some weight... If possible, my chest..."

Katia, who's quite active and also a magician, probably had nothing to do with gaining weight so far. She says that she wants to put on some kilograms, but if you look at Katharina, it's obvious that it won't be so convenient as to just gaining weight at the chest, but I better don't point that out.

"Rather than that, how about filling the bridge's foundation quickly?"

"You were here today as well, Arnest?"

"Sorry for interrupting your family time."

"No, look, aren't there construction workers around us as well...?"

As a matter of fact, Arnest has been participating in today's construction work.

It's because we're building a new bridge today.

We could somehow manage the structure roughly by using 『Relocate』, but the bridge's construction would be extremely difficult.

『Even if you were to bring a bridge spanning over another river, it wouldn't be of much help.』

Baron Rembrandt stated that he had never relocated a bridge so far.

Since the river's width and the conditions of the foundation were completely different, it wouldn't be of any use even if we had relocated it.

It would be no laughing matter if it broke down or got washed away the moment it got relocated.

Because of such reasons, the construction of a bridge takes time and costs a lot.

It's normal for things like 『Finally the bridge is completed, the dearest wish by three generations of the ○○ House』 to make it into the news.

Even in the Baumeister Earldom, we have only constructed one bridge on the way from Baulburg to the Demon Forest.

Because there are three big rivers flowing through the Baumeister Earldom, the construction of bridges is indispensable.

However, even if we rush and build some half-baked bridge, it will just be washed away right away.

Accordingly it's time for the special concrete, which had been used for the tunnel we discovered earlier, and the Extreme Limit Steel which I managed to recreate.

That means, we will build the bridge pier using those two, creating a sturdy bridge that won't be washed away from a bit of high water.

As long as I manage to finish the foundation of the bridge pier and so on, it should be possible to adequately deal with the upper parts through normal construction.

"So, how many bridges do you plan to construct?"

"Going by Roderich's plans, more than thirty."

"Oooh! Earl Baumeister, you are a hard worker." (Arnest)

"Are you praising me, Arnest?"

If you add the bridges for small rivers, it exceeds a hundred in count.

Moreover, depending on Roderich's plans, it's possible for that number to rise even further.

"It is probably the consequence of this. Bridges are too practical and thus archaeologically uninteresting."

"You're going to live for another ten thousand years. Do you plan to excavate bridges that turned into historic ruins?"

"No, not at all. I only thought that it is pitiful for my future juniors."

The bridge pier made out of special concrete and Extreme Limit Steel rebars has a simple design, only changing its size to match the river's width running beneath it.

Since I'm the only one who's making it, I'd be troubled if someone told me to use an elaborate design.

It's not like I'm an architecture designer.

"In exchange, you can mass produce them as long as you have enough mana."

It means, I will produce a great number of bridge parts, including the bridge pier, and those will be assembled on-site.

If he wants fine ornaments, Roderich will probably request it separately.

"Is that the reason why three magicians are necessary?"

"Therese, give it your best."

"I got somewhat fed up with only training. Such real usage of my magic is more than welcome."
(Therese)

We have split up the work as follows.

First, I expose the riverbed to build the bridge pier.

Since a part of the river's water has to be held back for a long time at the upper stream, this is my task as I have the biggest capacity of mana.

"I suppose next is my turn." (Therese)

Therese creates holes to bury a part of the bridge pier's foundation in the riverbed.

At first it took some time because she wasn't accustomed to that kind of work, but gradually the time needed for her to dig holes has become shorter.

"..."

Lastly, Lisa moves the bridge pier with 『Telekinesis』, placing it into the holes dug into the riverbed.

Once the burying is finished, she also doesn't forget to harden the riverbed around the bridge pier.

It requires a precise workmanship so as to avoid the bridge sloping, but Lisa accomplished that with ease.

"All that's left is to construct bridge piers by repeating this, and place the bridges atop of the pier."

The upper bridge parts are also made out of Extreme Limit Steel and special concrete.

It's because the bridges are built with a big width while supporting a large weight so as to allow many carriages to cross them at the same time.

"I will leave the remaining, finer parts to you. Now then, I guess we will head over to the next bridge."

"Okay...the bridge has been mostly completed in one day..."

A retainer, who had been present at the construction site, feels dumbfounded after watching the foundations of the bridge being finished in no time.

If I remember correctly, he's a new retainer, and probably not used to magic yet.

"I'd say it's thanks to the advanced materials."

As expected, the Extreme Limit Steel and the special concrete are quite useful.
After all they allow us to easily build large, sturdy bridges.

"Amazing. For a bridge of this size to be built so easily..."

Previously it would have been impossible, but having obtained the creation method of Extreme Limit Steel has a big influence.

It was a big help that Arnest knew about the creation method for the special concrete.
He possessed documents specifying the amount of rare metals to be mixed into it.

"Since Roderich will request the construction of additional bridges anyway, we should hurry with the construction as much as possible."

Like this close to a hundred similar bridges of various sizes were built in the Baumeister Earldom in less than one month.

The reason for their numbers having drastically grown from the initial thirty was owed to Roderich ordering additional ones, as I had expected.

『A territory will develop if the infrastructure such as roads, bridges and ports is perfect.』

In the end that's the reason for the nobles of this world to fail in the development of new territory.
If you fail to establish the necessary infrastructure for transportation, it will remain an inaccessible area, the number of people won't grow, and the formation of cities will be impossible, too.

We still have to build more roads from now on, but I feel like we completed the first stage with the building of ports for sea and air, the construction of bridges, and the preparation of soil.
Just when I thought so...



"Milord, learning of the ease of move within the Baumeister Earldom, the number of immigration applicants has grown. Please hurry and construct the foundations at the places where we have planned to build towns and villages." (Roderich)

"Roderich, you've become skilled at putting your lord to work."

"Hubby, you're getting things done well even while complaining, aren't you?" (Katia)

"..."

Instead of Elise and the others, who can't use 『Teleport』 because of their pregnancy, Therese, Katia, and Lisa kept accompanying me on my public works jobs.
However, so far Lisa hasn't reached the point of talking with me.

"Big Sis, you're in a good mood, aren't you?" (Katia)

And yet, since she has grown to the extent that she can smile at me, I decide to consider the rest to be a matter of time.

* * *

"Wend, our activity as 『Dragon Busters』 is in a difficult situation." (Erwin)

"That's nothing new, though." (Wendelin)

It's this late in the game, but Erw is completely right.

The reason for us not functioning as 『Dragon Busters』 is the pregnancy of Elise and my other wives.

We used contraceptives while being newlywed and during the Empire's civil war, but we stopped doing so after returning.

Given that the Baumeister House is required to have many children, including an heir, the other nobles would have definitely tried to send over lovers and concubines if my wives didn't become pregnant at some point.

Therefore, it's an auspicious event for Elise, Ina, Luise, and Katharina to have safely conceived.

The retainers are overjoyed, too.

Moreover, I will become a father.

That doesn't feel bad.

Since I couldn't even marry in my previous life, you might as well call this huge progress.

"Our combat power has dropped significantly with four of our members on maternity leave. I can't join all the time either."

Having studied commanding during the civil war, Erw is currently accumulating experience as guard within the territory.

Because of that he has mostly stopped coming along on requests as an adventurer.

Well, that's inevitable, though.

"I guess you'll get angry if I ask you to lend us Haruka?"

"No, I won't be angry, but it's..."

As if doing it on the fly, Erw reports that Haruka has become pregnant, too.

"It's an auspicious event, but somehow I wonder, isn't it way too fast?"

"I have a talent at being a quick-shot."

"That's actually nothing to be proud of, in terms of an adult talk."

Burkhart-san makes a weird interjection, but rather than him, we have a problem with party members.

"I said so before, I can't come along every time either, Earl-sama. Wilma, Katia, and...Therese-sama has to practice a bit more."

Leaving aside public works, being careful about combat is Burkhart-san's policy. There's also the reason that it would develop into a huge scandal for the Baumeister House if something happened to Therese.

"Huh? Don't we have plenty of combat power then?" (Wendelin)

"Earl-sama, I'm sorry to say, but going to the Demon Forest with four or five people like before is banned."

"Eh? Banned by who?"

"My master or His Majesty. It's because of what Kimbley did when I wasn't with you. Luckily you haven't been injured, Earl-sama, but now they have adopted the cautious approach of forbidding you to enter a monster domain unless you have more combat forces with you." (Burkhart)

If I'm told something like that, it makes me completely give up hope. I guess that's the reason why I'm recently only doing only public works every day.

『Milord, you're going to become a father. Let's expand the Baumeister Earldom as much as possible for the sake of our children!』

Roderich, whose child had been just born as well, cleverly reeled me in and advanced the public works within the territory at a quick pace.

『Including the reward from the Empire, the funds of the Baumeister House have grown even further. Using those assets, it has become possible to develop the territory quickly and efficiently. Something that's impossible for other noble houses.』

Any noble house would rather get started on development than just planning it. What always turns into a problem at that point is money, or in other words, funds. As we have those, we can be a bit unreasonable. Since I finish the public works, which take the most time and money, with magic, we can start as many development projects as we want. And, given that people gather in the Baumeister Earldom where the money is circulating, Roderich accelerates the development by using those people. Reclamation, soil preparation, river shoreline stabilization, and construction of ports. Because the first construction phase finished a lot faster than planned according to Roderich, we seem to be in the middle of the second construction phase right now. Well, talks about a third construction phase are going to pop up soon anyway. The construction of the main roads extending to the east, west, north, and south from Baulburg, and branch roads stretching out like a spider web has been completely finished. Right now we're in the process of building smaller roads connecting those bigger roads. Also, because we also have the goal to stabilize the rivers flowing close to Baulburg, we have begun working on embankments at the rivers streaming east and west. Since we were put to work in order to finish the construction of the requested main bridges for the time being, I hear that only small bridges will be put up as necessary afterwards.

Once a petition by the local residents reaches us, Roderich will judge the level of necessity, and we will actually build it then.

It's possible that in the future there will appear local residents claiming that the place is covered all over with bridges, but I think Roderich will take this into consideration, too.

"Isn't it fine to work as an adventurer after the children are born?"

Erw says that it's okay to continue after the maternity leave.

"Ah, but..."

Once I look in Lisa's direction, she happily nods her head all of a sudden.
It looks like she will help as a new member of my party.

"...But, Wendelin-san, I'd like you to take proper responsibility, she says."

Katharina tells us Lisa's hope as interpreter.

Is it because I saw her naked...and since I also know that she doesn't grow any hair below?
The women of this world are troublesome in this regard.

"Such things follow after we get to know each other a little better..."

Because there were some quite messy parts in the case with Katia, I'm slightly more cautious this time around.

Or rather, if I'm not, the number of my wives will just keep growing.

What is even more problematic is the fact that my surroundings will be actually overjoyed by that.

"...At the beginning it's fine like this, she says."

However, Katharina interprets faithfully.

She precisely passes on Lisa's words.

Katharina might actually possess a very caring character.

"I guess it will work out somehow?"

"It'll be fine as long as Doushi comes."

Erw seems to expect Doushi to come over as a helper for our adventuring.

"Erwin, Doushi is no good."

"Eh? Why, Burkhart-san?"

"Doushi is busy with giving speeches."

"Eh? He's still at it?"

Even though almost three months since the end of the civil war have passed, it looks like there are still people who want to hear his stories.

There's a lot less entertainment in this world than I had expected.

"As for this, at first he went around the territories belonging directly to the royal family, and now there's requests from nobles. Rather, I hear he will be busy visiting all the noble territories from now on."

It kind of feels like he first gave speeches in the cities, and now is giving speeches in the countryside?

Since it's impossible for Burkhart-san and me in regards to our schedules and social positions, it looks like requests are flooding in on Doushi who's an appointed noble and has little to do as Royal Head Wizard.

"Doushi won't decline His Majesty's request after all."

Doushi is His Majesty's childhood friend and a faithful retainer.

Usually he's more self-centered than anyone, and he has been abusing us to his liking, too.

"It means His Majesty can also consider him as a noble who listens well to what His Majesty says."

"Wend, are Doushi's tales interesting?"

I feel like I want to make sure, but if I go to his speeches, I might get dragged in by Doushi and be forced to talk about something.

Let's give up on that since it doesn't suit me either.

"I guess you won't be going to monster domains for a while then. Besides, you seem to be gathering monster materials and harvest even without going out to hunt, Earl-sama. It means you don't have to move by yourself any longer."

Currently, several dozens villages and towns have been built around the Demon Forest. Many adventurers are going hunting with those places as their bases.

It's not necessary for us to force ourselves to keep going at it.

"Wend, what about that person? I mean, Arnest."

"No, he is..."

Right now Arnest is concentrating on writing up a report inside his room without showing up in front of us all that often.

『Considering it from the common practice of archeology, it takes more time to write up a thesis to reference on what you investigated than it takes time to excavate a historic ruin.』

Arnest, who had investigated the tunnel so minutely that he exceeded the schedule by two weeks, has locked himself up in his own room and is writing his thesis into a thick bundle of papers.

He analyzed after investigating and put it all together into one thesis.

He's a genuine archaeologist.

As he seems to be quite focused on it, he doesn't leave his room except for taking his three meals and entering the bath once a day.

『This place is nice. Duke Nürnberg was troublesome as he always told me to hurry with the excavation.』

It looks like that part of his papers has been left behind, but he has also added the details of the historic ruins in my territory.

Right now Arnest doesn't separate from his desk.

Of course his monitoring continues, but the retainer in charge apparently is totally relaxed since he has so much free time, according to Roderich's report.

"In the eyes of a scholar, it must be the ideal research environment, huh?"

Since he's a demon possessing this much mana, leaving him to his own devices would be dangerous.

Having him live in the Baumeister Earldom while baiting him with underground ruins is a lot easier.

"Sooner or later he will likely start talking about new ruins."

There are many completely untouched underground ruins within the Baumeister Earldom.

Especially the Demon Forest seems to have many of those, but to search that place, we need combat forces.

But then again, with Elise and the others on maternity leave, there's no need to try the unreasonable.

"So we have to wait for Therese to finish up her training in the end?"

"I think that would make sense, but there's actually a work request for you, Earl-sama." (Burkhart)

"Work? Some dragon? Or a mysterious, big underground ruin?"

"No, no, it's nothing so exaggerated." (Burkhart)

Burkhart-san denies, but I can't really trust him unless I hear the details.

After all I have been only plunged into such absurd situations so far.

"It's about being a temporary teacher in the capital's adventurer prep school."

"Temporary teacher, you say...? Before that, we never went to the capital's adventurer prep school, did we?"

"Now that you mention it..."

Based on the documents we have been affiliated to that place and graduated there, but we never showed up there.

After all we carried out all the necessary training outside.

"If it comes to the capital's adventurer prep school, there's quite a few magicians there."

There exists a fixed number of magicians who deliberately travel to the capital to study there since it's the place at the forefront of magic research, without enrolling at their local adventurer prep

schools.

You won't find almost any proper magic teachers in the countryside. Even in a big city like Breitburg, renown magicians are rare in reality.

They are probably thinking that they might learn magic from an excellent teacher if they are going to study it anyway.

"Well, the capital's adventurer prep school's sales point are the good teachers. It also happens that famous magicians give short-term courses and lectures as temporary teachers. It's something I have also done many times myself." (Burkhart)

It appears that Burkhart-san taught Lisa magic at one of those occasions.

"This is also one of the duties of a magician. Earl-sama, you have become famous. You will get a daily pay, but it's really insignificant. Please consider it as voluntary activity. I guess you can also call it the obligation of the chosen ones."

"Got it."

I decided to take up that request.



I decided to head to the capital with Burkhart-san via 『Teleport』 on the next day.

It's my first experience as a teacher, and thus it'd be understandable even if I failed.

After all it would just mean that I didn't have the aptitude for it.

When I was about to leave, Elise and the others accompanied me to the mansion's garden to see me off.

The option of taking them along has crossed my mind for an instant, but 『Teleport』 is still not an option during a pregnancy.

Because it's such a convenient spell, I end up becoming careless against my better judgment.

"Dear, have a good trip." (Elise)

"I will bring you some souvenirs." (Wendelin)

"Please do your best, sensei." (Elise)

"Being called sensei by you is a tad of embarrassing, Elise."

Elise doesn't seem to be worried since it's not like I'm going out to hunt as an adventurer. She speaks to me with a smile.

"Wend, are you going to be alright with the teaching job?"

"Ina, you have to think of it like this, 『Even if a single temporary teacher were to be a bad example,

it won't change much anyway, will it?』"

"Well, you're not wrong in what you're saying there, Wend. Also, I don't think that your magic can be imitated that easily..."

Since it's about fulfilling a duty, the absolute minimum of my work will finish with me just showing up there.

"It might work out if they practice it."

"Effort is needed, but you have to also have a certain level of talent."

I might encounter an amazing talent there, but I think that would strongly depend on luck.

"Considering all that, it looks like you still read books yesterday night in earnest."

"Even if I might be a lost cause, Master's teaching will still be useful. For that reason I refreshed my memory once more, just in case."

"But you know, your own teaching might unexpectedly serve as good reference, Wend." (Luise)

"What's with the sudden praise? Luise, you hope to get more souvenirs out of this?" (Wendelin)

"Hey! Wend, for some weird reason you're the kind of guy who uses magic after thinking it over, aren't you? I'm rather on the intuitive side."

Luise says that she isn't cut out for teaching.

There's that as well, but given that she can only use a few spells, she won't be invited to such a place either, Burkhart-san supplemented.

"Wendelin-san, I think I will work as a temporary teacher later as well, so please tell me about the lectures once you get back." (Katharina)

"Oh, true. The temporary lecturer job will come around to you sooner or later as well, won't it Katharina?"

"Since I'm pregnant right now, they probably won't approach me about it."

Nowadays Katharina has become a very famous magician, too.

It wouldn't be weird if she were also invited as a temporary lecturer in due time.

"Before that, there's still Katia-san's and Therese-san's teaching."

"I will do it obediently." (Therese)

"Since I have only a few spells I can use, I'm unrelated to such a responsibility. Hubby, you sure got it hard." (Katia)

Therese and Katia have also shown up to see me off.

"Wend-kun, take care. I will make sure that Elise-san and the others don't move around too much until they reach their stable period." (Amalie)

Amalie has been working on taking care of Elise's group in little steps.

『I will be of some use since I have given birth to two children already.』 (Amalie)

Due to her advantage of having already gone through childbirth, Elise and the others appear to rely on Amalie.

"Eh, Lisa?"

Having her sleeve tucked, Katharina shifts her eyes, finding Lisa behind her.

With her habitual fear of strangers, I fully understand why Lisa continued using that makeup and clothes for such a long time.

If she hadn't, she might have been even unable to approach the guild's reception desk.

Today she's also a completely different person from the one who fought against me the other day.

"...Lisa-san says that she will also help with the special training of Katia-san and Therese-san."
(Katharina)

"Thanks, Lisa." (Wendelin)

Lisa smiles happily after hearing my words of gratitude.

"She's really like a totally different person."

Burkhart-san, who knows Lisa well from the time when she was wearing that flashy makeup and outfit, feels perplexed by her current behavior.

He probably doesn't know how to handle her.

Even so, you can say that she has improved a bit since she stopped avoiding him openly.

"I will be your guard, Wend-sama."

Today as well, Erw can't leave the Baumeister Earldom due to his work with the guard unit.

That's why I will teleport to the capital with Burkhart-san as my guide and Wilma as my guard.

Since I recall its location albeit having gone there only a few times, I teleport to the backyard of the adventurer prep school.

Given that it's morning when we arrive, we can see how many aspiring adventurer boys and girls are preparing to take their lessons inside the school.

"Everyone is so innocent."

In reality, there were surprisingly many people who are older than us, though.

There are also people who aim to become adventurers to earn money for new businesses they want to start and such, even after passing an age of thirty.

Still, more than half of them are minors.

"They aren't that different in age compared to you, are they Earl-sama?" (Burkhart)

"No, the difference of a few years during your teens is big."

The capital's adventurer prep school doesn't have that much of a difference with the regional adventurer prep schools in regards to the subjects taught.

However, because it has many enrollment applicants and receives financial support directly from the Kingdom, the grounds and buildings are much bigger than those of the prep school in Breitburg, and there are many teachers and staff members.

You can enroll with 12 years, and students with good academic results will be exempted from tuition.

Since they can't enter a monster domain until they turn 15, they hunt in the nearby forests until then. It's completely the same as in Breitburg.

"Let's go greet the principal."

We head to the principal's office with Burkhart-san in the lead.

As I walk through the school while holding hands with Wilma, the passing students start to make a racket.

"Burkhart-san, you are a celebrity, aren't you?"

"I am famous. But, I think you are even more so, Earl-sama." (Burkhart)

"Everyone is surprised to see you, Wend-sama."

"Hmm, it looks like they do know my face."

"That's only natural."

"Is it...?"

There's no TV in this world, though

Once we enter the principal's office, the same principal as several years ago greets us.

He looks like he's around 60 years old. His silver-gray hair is stylish. A man who seems quite capable despite one of his arms being artificial.

"Hendrick-dono, I brought him."

"Thanks, Burkhart."

His name is Hendrick Clementz Heinkes, formerly a famous adventurer.

One of his arms being artificial stems from a monster having bitten off the real one in his younger days.

The amazing part about him is that he still continued as an adventurer, achieving even better results than before he lost his arm.

『Artificial Hendrick』 is a celebrity who's even mentioned in the adventurer biography series.

After his retirement, he was assigned to the post of the adventurer prep school's headmaster as his popularity was highly evaluated.

Burkhart-san has been apparently taken care of by him during his beginner days. That's probably why he brought up the temporary lecturer request with me.

"As a matter of fact, Johannes-jiisan has retired."

Johannes-jiisan was the regular teacher in charge of magic at this prep school, but he was more than 90 years old.

Even if this might be the capital's adventurer prep school, they still struggle to secure personnel that can teach magic. Thus there are many magicians said to not retire as long as they can teach.

There are many cases where magicians are held back by the prep school even if they actually want to stop.

"Probably because of his age, he had become very forgetful. Then he started to even forget magic at last. He had his grandchild come to deliver the resignation note, saying that impediments in his teaching have appeared."

"If it goes this far, I guess you can't really detain him."

Given that even such an old man dropped out as a regular teacher, the prep school was facing a dire situation.

"The majority of old magicians capable of teaching take on other profitable work, after all. Johannes-jiisan was a valuable staff member."

They have started looking for the next regular teacher, but that will take time.

Accordingly they are apparently holding out by having the royal palace dispatch wizards as temporary lecturers.

"Just one month...even a single week will be a great help."

"My adventurer job is on break as my wives are pregnant. So, as long as it's in the time between the breaks of my development work."

"Thank you, Earl Baumeister-dono."

With this it had been decided that I would work here as a temporary lecturer three times a week for approximately one year until Elise and the others gave birth.

Well, such experience should be useful in life one way or the other.

Besides, 『Wendelin-sensei』 doesn't sound all that bad either.

"By the way, aren't there any people who seem to have spare time in the royal palace?"

I won't drop any names here, but it's about the guy who has been busy with giving speeches most recently.

"Doushi-dono? He's no good."

"Why?"

"We cannot afford to break promising magicians. I also believe that it's better to give them strict training, but there are limits to everything."

"Umm...there's someone here who has directly received Doushi's training for two years..."

"You somehow got through it because you're strong, Earl Baumeister-dono."

I had been evaluated as the same species as Doushi even by a former, remarkable adventurer. On the surface I glossed it over by smiling, but in my heart I felt very sad.

* * *

"Are you nervous, Wend-sama?" (Wilma)

"Well, now that I think about it, I have never experienced being a teacher."

After finishing the greetings with the principal, I immediately head to a classroom where the magician students have been gathered.

Burkhart-san bid farewell from us since he had business to take care of in the capital.

As expected, he won't take part in the lesson.

Wilma comes with me while being treated as assistant temporary lecturer since she has mana.

I'm about to enter the class now, but because I have no experience as a teacher, I'm suddenly assailed by nervousness as if my stomach has been wrung.

In contrast, Wilma looks like totally calm.

To be honest, I'm quite envious of her.

"(I wasn't as nervous even during presentations in front of higher ups...)"

During my time as a salaryman, I had presented new projects in front of the executives of companies.

Even back then, I shouldn't have been as nervous as I am now.

"Ah, whatever! It's not like I will be eaten or taken apart!"

I resolve myself and enter the classroom.

Once I do, around forty boys and girls ranging from 12 to 15 years are waiting there.

Nothing less of the capital. The number of magicians is big.

Since they can make one class full of only magicians, any comparison to the prep school in Breitburg seems quite pathetic.

"Everyone, nice to meet you. I'm your temporary teacher, Wendelin von Benno Baumeister. It has been decided that I will be in charge of this class three times a week for around one year. Pleased to meet you."

I feel like my voice carries a bit of my excitement, but I somehow manage to make my greetings.

"Wilma Etol von Baumeister."

Wilma introduces herself in her usual dispassionate manner.

Not having a shred of nervousness here might be the very reason for her sniping abilities.

"Let's see..."

Once I open my mouth, the students' eyes gather on me at once, but there's one problem here.

"(Wilma, what should I do during such times?)"

It's true that my head has gone completely blank due to my tension, but in the first place, I don't really know what a teacher should do at such times.

"(Wend-sama, what about your lesson preparations last night?)"

"(You see, I can't use those as long as I don't know the level of education of the students here...)"

It's completely my blunder to not have asked Principal Hendrick.

"(I really got no clue. Well, whatever. It's the first day anyway) Since you will be confused if I start with my lessons all of a sudden, I will accept questions for starters."

"Teacher! What magic did you use to defeat the bone dragon?"



"Can I also use the magic that defeated several tens of thousand golems squirming around in the underground ruin?"

"Is it true that you blew away 100,000 soldiers of the imperial army with one spell?"

"Teacher, how credible are the rumors that you look young because of a special spell while actually being over 300 years old?"

In the end, the day finished with me answering the questions of the students who raised their hands one after the other.

The questions were all about the bone dragon subjugation, the underground labyrinth capture, and the civil war. My magic training didn't play any role.



"Everyone's eyes sparkled, didn't they? There was such a time for me as well."

"No, Wend, your eyes haven't sparkled since the time we met for the first time. You took a philosophical view towards society." (Erwin)

"Really?"

After finishing the lesson on that day, Wilma and I returned to the mansion.

I talk about today's events while spreading out the souvenirs I bought in the capital, but Erw, that asshole, shot me completely down after hearing what I said.

"My eyes sparkled as well when I was a lot younger. Like an angel."

"More like a fallen angel, I'd say." (Erwin)

"How rude. Hurry up and go back to your wife."

"Aye, aye sir."

Once I give Erw his souvenir, he goes back home.

His wife is pregnant, so it's better to have him go back as soon as possible.

"Dear, what are you going to do about the next lessons?"

"I will play it by ear while referencing to the education from Master, Elise. I will let Wilma help out as well."

"Will do my best as an assistant temporary teacher." (Wilma)



Since I have promised to work three times a week as a teacher, Wilma and I head to the classroom again three days later.

As we can't only keep talking about me, I will hold a lecture in my very own way.

But, I decide to first ask the students what their previous teacher, Johannes-san, taught them.

If there are any good parts, I will expand on those for the sake of the students.

"What did Johannes-sensei teach you?"

Once I ask the students, they look at each other and sink into silence.

"Eh? Were you taught some kind of secret magic or theory?"

Is that why they can't tell others about it?

"No, that's wrong, sensei."

"Seinsei? Ah, me, eh? Umm.. you are?"

"I'm called Agnes Fürst."

A single girl raises her hand among the murmuring students.

She's a bespectacled beauty with a height of around 155 cm and light brown hair that's curling inwards.

On a first glance, she looks like the typical class president character, I guess?

"(A glasses-wearing girl!)"

I end up thinking about such pointless stuff like the possibility of her being even more of a beauty if she were to take off her glasses since she was already so beautiful with the glasses on.

"As for Johannes-sensei..."

According to Agnes, his senility had apparently started one year ago, while he had taken over from an older magician student who had graduated.

The students of this class have entered the school recently, but I guess it was an issue, starting from the class of last year.

"He said the same things many times over, and even though he taught us magic, he suddenly started in the middle to speak about episodes of his old adventurer days. As a result, most of us learned magic on our own accord..."

To begin with, magic is something you learn yourself anyway, but since they have a famous lecturer at long last, they want to hear about new magic and tricks on how to practice as reference.

Even though their hopes were completely crushed by a dim-witted teacher, the students couldn't afford to play hooky either.

After all they won't be able to graduate if they don't get the required credits.

"We have to attend two thirds of all lectures to graduate..."

In reality, there's more than 60 students in this class.

However, since all of them believe that it's no problem as long as they get the least necessary amount of attendance days, around one third of the students are always absent.

"I see."

In this case I suppose it's no problem if I start from the basics just as I planned last night. Making up my mind, I begin my own lecture at once.

"First, the basic of the basics is to train the basics every day."

This is something written in a book that has widely spread across the world.

You expand your mana paths and mana sac while imagining the flow of mana every day.

Because the mana amount and power of your magic grows through this, it's necessary to do it on a daily basis.

"How many of you are doing it every single day?"

"Half..." (Wilma)

Due to the low number of students raising their hands, Wilma looks disappointed.

She has been taught by Burkhart-san and me, and makes sure to meditate every day.

Even Doushi said that he never misses a single day of practicing that.

That's how fundamentally important training the basics is.

"It's no good if you don't do it every day."

"But teacher, my mana has already stopped growing."

A single boy objects.

Mana at an elementary level is at the lower end in this class.

By the way, the one with the biggest amount of mana in this class is the class president character, Agnes.

Just under the condition that it's for now, though.

"You can still widen your mana paths."

"Mana paths, you say? Even the power of my magic doesn't amount to much with my mana."

"If your mana paths are narrow, the amount of mana you can use and the control of your spell's power will be insufficient."

"Eh? Really?"

The boy can't hide his surprise as he apparently hears this for the first time.

"At times when you use spells that use large amounts of mana and at times when you use spells that require low amounts of mana, it's advantageous for the flow of your mana to have wide mana paths. It has an especially big influence when you invoke big spells."

If the mana paths are narrow, it will take longer for the necessary mana to flow through the paths.

"Doesn't that make only a small difference?"

Another boy asks me.

"It's small, but in actual combat it will be fatal. If your opponent fires their spell first, you'll be finished. If a monster rushes at you before you finish casting, you will probably die."

"..."

Not only that student, but all others become deadly silent upon my reply. Yep, the difference is probably in the range of milliseconds, but there are many cases where that time will be crucial.

"Sensei!"

"What is it?"

"It's about that training of the basics..."

Another beautiful girl with bobbed, black hair, who might have barely made it into this class with her young age, asks me a question.

"The image of widening the mana paths by letting mana flow through them has been described in books, but I don't really understand how to exactly shape that image... Since the books only write to imagine it, I don't understand what image to use. The books leave it at saying that you should sit down properly and close your eyes," the girl says.

There are several other students who have the same issue.

"(I guess that's also inevitable...)"

What I used for widening my mana paths was an image I had seen on TV in Japan.

It was a clip about blood flowing through the veins in an educational TV program I was shown at school, and so it was fine to use a similar image in my mind.

However, in this world you can't learn about the structure of a human body without being a doctor or going through the church.

Moreover, documentaries don't exist, and there's only books and hearsay as sources of information.

"Having expected as much, I prepared something like this."

Having said that, it's nothing overly elaborate. It's just the intestines of a boar – as they're normally sold in stores in the capital – being hung up sideways.

Since it's used as stuffing, you can buy it cheaply all over the place.

I added an inclination to the sideways-hanging intestines, released water with magic through the entrance on the right side, which was located in a high place, and kept letting it stream through the intestines.

When you increase the water volume, the intestines continue to swell. The water exited towards the ground from an exit on the left side located at a lower place.

The escaping water gathered in a tub my assistant Wilma had prepared.

"You can think of the water as mana, and your mana paths as the boar intestines. You can imagine that the intestines will always expand due to a large amount of mana.

I increase the amount of water, making the intestines bulge.

Since it'd be a waste to break the intestines, I carefully tune the amount of water used.

"I think it will be fine if you close your eyes and imagine your own mana paths widening like this in your mind once a day. Next..."

It's the mana sac, but that one is even more simple.

The bladder of boars is sold for cheap as an ingredient for sausage after all.

I fill a bladder with water to the limit, making it swell.

"Sensei, do mana paths and mana sacs look like those?"

"It's an image to the bitter end, but your sensei has been training everyday with these images every day. If it comes to an image of it expanding by letting large amounts of mana flow through it, this seems the most suitable to me. Of course, since it's just an image, I won't mind even if you use your own image to realize the same effect. As long as it shows effect, it's a suitable method for you."
(Wendelin)

"I see..."

The students diligently take notes while listening to my explanations with meek expressions.

"(They are such straightforward kids that it's almost dazzling.)"

"(Wend-sama, you stink a bit of an old geezer.)"

Wilma unleashes her vicious tongue at me who admired the students' purity.

"Are you still doing basic training even after possessing so much mana, sensei?"

"In your sensei's case, my mana is still growing." (Wendelin)

It's nothing unusual as I'm still not 20 years old.

However, my amount of mana is already the biggest on the continent, and since around the only one who can match me would be the demon Arnest, everyone stares at me in wonder.

"I'm repeating myself here, but even if your amount of mana stops rising, it's better to train imagining how your mana paths widen. Small amounts of mana can also move quickly through wide mana paths, but if you try to press a large amount of mana all of a sudden through narrow

mana paths, the mana flow will stagnate, and the activation of your spell will be delayed, or in worst case, it's possible that you won't be able to release a spell with the necessary power. That's why I recommend doing this every day."

In addition I tell the students about the basic training I have come up with myself and the one I was taught by my Master.

Especially when I taught them about including 『Meditation』 which I and those close to me practice every day, it was popular with the students as it's easy to integrate.

The first day was self-introduction, and the second day the basics of the basics.

I think those are proper lecture contents.

"Earl Baumeister-dono, I watched your lecture as well, and I must say I'm thrilled."

Once I head to the principal's office after finishing my lecture, Wilma and I receive high praises by Principal Hendrick.

"It's the basics of the basics, no?"

"That's true, but unexpectedly there are no people who will teach those. I'm no magician, so I can't teach them either." (Hendrick)

Johannes-jiisan should have taught them long ago if he hadn't gone senile...no, I can't say so for sure since I don't know Johannes-jiisan's methods as magician.

Among the really sports-oriented people, there are also some who forcibly increase their mana amount by continuously using their magic to the limit every day, even without practicing the basics. Given that there are people who get an effect out of doing it this way, I can't deny it unconditionally.

"If you ask renown magicians to work as temporary lecturers, you never know whether they will be a hit or miss."

The majority of the magicians who take the lectures only possess mana in the range from elementary to intermediate levels.

They are still valuable with that amount of mana, but the magicians, who seem to serve as temporary lecturers, definitely possess mana in the upper ranges of the intermediate level and above.

They are capable, but they are also conceited as prodigies.

Prodigies, who can use awesome magic without any particular hardships, don't know how to teach those who can't do the same.

That's because they can't understand the feelings of those who aren't as capable as them.

I hear it's not rare for people to demonstrate their flashy spells and finish by saying, "Use this as reference!"

On the other hand, many of the people, who learned magic with a drive similar to vomiting blood, have an artisan's temperament, saying things such as "I can't teach you the details, so learn it by watching."

They frequently declare stuff like "Not being able to learn it means you lack the will," or "Go at it with the intention to die." They are still better than those with a genius' temperament, but in the end they produce a certain number of drop-outs.

"It's of no use as reference as it's far too extreme."

"This mismatched method of teaching is a reason for the lack of magicians in the first place."

That means, if they can't rely on the lectures in the prep school, it results in more and more magicians depending on the master/pupil system or on self-study.

Someone like Katia is an example for that.

However, the master/pupil system has the same traps as the temporary lecturer system.

It's not like the pupil can always imitate what the master can do.

"I'm no magician, so I can't state it with confidence, but occasionally I harbor feelings of doubts wondering whether all magicians really exhibit their full abilities."

He seems to wonder whether magicians wouldn't be capable of using more magic if they received education based on a system properly founded on basics.

"Umm, I will teach them to my best abilities for the period I accepted to work as a lecturer here."

"Even this much is a great help! It's no good if I don't find the next teacher, but I think it will be really difficult to find someone more excellent than you, Earl Baumeister-dono." (Hendrick)

In the end it looks like Principal Hendrick is pleased with me.

* * *

"A systematic teaching of magic...? Certainly, depending on the teaching, your own abilities will play a big role."

Once I brought up the topic with Elise during dinner after coming home, she didn't deny my conclusion.

"How was it in your case, Elise? Luise, Wilma and I had a late start, so it turned into us having Wend and Burkhart-san as teachers." (Ina)

"It's the same with Katia as well, right? Though Katia had a certain extent of mana from start."

"But, I had my fair share of troubles to learn magic I can use...I finally reached a point of being able to do it thanks to Big Sis' coaching." (Katia)

Ina, Luise, and Katia begin to talk about their respective experiences.

"I received training at the church." (Elise)

Since her mana had been confirmed in her early childhood, Elise apparently was immediately taught at the church through Cardinal Hohenheim's connections.

"Because they immediately found out that I had the aptitude for a healing magician, the other healing magicians taught me what I needed to know." (Elise)

Even the church is adamant about securing personnel capable of using healing magic.
Besides, her grandfather is a cardinal.
It was impossible for them to cut corners in her education.

"But, magicians are precious, aren't they? I wasn't treated as all that important since there's only a few spells I can use. However, my treatment over at the adventurer's guild wasn't bad." (Katia)

Even mana holders at Katia's previous level, and all the more so if it's a person who can boost their combat abilities with it, will be valued highly by the adventurer's guild and the army.
However, strictly spoken, that's not because they're magicians.
It's merely because they're strong.

"If you have a talent for healing magic, the church will welcome you with open arms and teach you. In case of other magicians..."

Magicians are busy because there are so few of them.
Rather than teaching, doing it by themselves is more profitable.
They probably believe that they can somehow handle it themselves, as long as it concerns magic.
And yet it's a general trend for a normal magician to think that they should at least take two or three pupils, which also includes an intent to contribute to society.

"In addition, it gives them an excuse to dodge something as troublesome as being temporary teachers at prep schools. Still there are many peculiar ones who won't even do that much."

Nevertheless, the government and the various guilds don't rebuke them in any way.
It's because they will be stumped if the magician gets angry or offended, seeing how the other party possesses ability and brings in profit as well.

"I think I can clearly understand now why the group of magician teachers at the prep schools is so small...so, how are things going on Katia's and Therese's end?"

I ask about the two's level of magic education.

"Katia-san has an aptitude for wind magic and physical enhancement magic specialized on 『Acceleration』. However, since she's bad at emission magic, we have limited it to magic allowing her to achieve an effect similar to a 『Magic Barrier』 by cladding her body in wind and to raise her offensive ability by engulfing her sabers with wind. She has the same magic disposition as Ina-san. As for Therese-san, her strongest attribute actually was earth. Her aptitude for public works magic is high. Her being able to use high-ranking fire magic has been previously proven in her duel against me." (Lisa)

"Hee!?"

I can't hide my surprise.
It's not about Katia's and Therese's magic.
It's because Lisa, who's the incarnation of someone fearing men, gives me a fluent explanation.

"Katia-san, you say...big sis..." (Katia)

Katia only knows the previous Lisa.
She seems quite bewildered after being addressed with -san all of a sudden.

"Lisa spoke!"

There was an anime like that in the past, wasn't there?
I think it was about 0lara standing up...1

"No...I mean, she could talk from the very start. Right, Lisa?" (Burkhart)

"..."

Lisa has become able to talk to me, but she stays silent at Burkhart-san's question.
It looks like her fear of men hasn't been completely cured yet.

"Don't ignore me!" (Burkhart)

"Teacher, it seems that Lisa-san still can't speak to any man other than Wendelin-san." (Katharina)

"For her to become like this without that outfit and makeup..." (Burkhart)

Katharina does her best to follow up on Burkhart-san who has become sullen because he can't get Lisa to talk with him.

Before anyone noticed, the position of being something like Lisa's interpreter has completely stuck to her.

Even though she might say this or that, in the end Katharina is very caring and softhearted, seeing how she spontaneously follows up on others and faithfully takes care of interpreting.

"Katharina, you're quite the helpful person, aren't you?"

"I guess you can say that I feel a deep sympathy for her..." (Katharina)

In the eyes of Katharina, who's actually not afraid of men, but...I think it's something similar...a loner like me, Lisa appears to be someone she can't leave alone.

In reality, it's the same for me as well, which is also the reason why I allow her to freeload here as much as she likes.

"Earl Baumeister-sama, please take me along to your public work duty as well. Katharina-san is already..."

"On that subject, I guess you're right."

It's not like I can take the pregnant Katharina to the construction sites with 『Teleport』.
Lisa offers to help out instead since she's freeloading at my home.

"You did play a very active part in building the bridges. Are you strong at earth magic?"

"I'm better at it than fire magic." (Lisa)

I have already fully experienced the power and precision of Lisa's magic.

In that case, I will have her help out since it's a good opportunity.

As a noble, I shouldn't hold back for the development of the Baumeister Earldom, too.

Nobles use anything they can use, even if it's their parents...though, it's unrelated to social standing.

"I will also take care of the parts where Therese-san experiences difficulties." (Lisa)

"Sure. I have accumulated a bit of experience as well, but I'm still worried about handling it myself." (Therese)

Therese, whose history as a magician is still short, seems to be thankful of Lisa, a veteran, acting as her chaperon.

"Therese-san, you have no problem helping out with our development?"

"Elise, thou are such a serious one. Since I retired, it would be fine to leave it at saying that I'm someone who just gives advice every once in a while." (Therese)

"There won't be any order for you to come back from the Duke Philip House or something?"

What Elise is worried about is the possibility of Therese being called back home because of her utility value now that she could use magic.

"That won't happen. It's unlikely for a man of Alfons' caliber to hand out such a stupid order." (Therese)

If he were to make such a bad move as calling her back, it would trigger a succession issue for the Duke Philip House again.

Even if she might be able to use magic now, it's very unlikely for her to be called back for that reason.

"I think, even Peter-dono wouldn't wish for that." (Therese)

In the same way as before, it might very likely lead to talks about Therese becoming the next empress.

As of yet, the Empire is still in turmoil. It will take time to rearrange the parliament and enact an emperor election.

If Therese were to come back at this point, folks scheming for her to run as a candidate might show up.

"Officially, I'm Earl Baumeister's guest, but in reality I'm considered his lover and spoils of war. This position is perfect for me as it's not bothersome. Since I also managed to find a friend in Amalie, it means that I'm living in a paradise of carefreeness." (Therese)



Starting with the next day, Lisa and Therese went around to do public works, and since I sent them on-site with Teleport on the days of my lecturing, the days of me teaching at the prep school kept increasing in number.

"Hubby, take me along as well since I'm dying of boredom over here." (Katia)

Once Katia joined as my guard and showed up at the prep school, Principal Hendrick came to greet Katia at once.

"Come to think of it, you married Earl Baumeister after suffering a crushing defeat against him, didn't you?"

"Headmaster, your way of speaking is as blunt as usual, isn't it?" (Katia)

Katia is a former student of this school, and the two seem to be acquaintances.

"I will assist hubby, too." (Katia)

"Assist...you really don't know what might happen in life. 『High Speed』 becoming her husband's assistant, eh? Ah, I'm just joking. I wouldn't know what to do if Earl Baumeister wasn't here. He's a big help."

"Did Johannes, that geezer, finally kick the bucket or something?" (Katia)

"Now listen...don't just kill him off. He simply retired due to his old age."

Today we begin the lesson with the three of us, but Katia is a celebrity at the prep school, too. It's because she's known to earn quite good money as a professional killer specialized on wyverns. Moreover, I guess it also included her previous husband search announcement, the matter of her defeating the sons of nobles and royalty in a row, and her losing to me at the end. She's a person with an abundance of topics to talk about.



"We will meditate before the beginning of the lesson. With the image of widening the mana paths."

Today I have another lesson.

Having said that, since it's already my fifth lesson in total, I'm just teaching them the theories and basics I was taught by Master, adding the training I arranged in my very own way.

"Even a 『Fireball』 that uses the same amount of mana will have a completely different effective

range, if you do it like this."

The first one only left light burn traces with a diameter of around one meter behind on the target board, however, once I shrunk its size to that of a pachinko ball, I succeeded in puncturing the board.

"There are cases where the first 『Fireball』 with the wide effective range but lacking power might be recommended to be used, but you will almost never use it on monster hunts. Any of you know the reason?"

"Here!"

Agnes, the class president character, raises her hand in response to my question.

This bespectacled and diligent girl has the most mana in this class, good scholastic records, and acts as mediator for the students.

A class president system doesn't exist at prep schools, but she's actually treated like a class president by her surroundings.

"It's because the firepower is overwhelmingly insufficient. I think you can't use it for anything but a smoke screen." (Agnes)

"That's mostly correct. There's no point in firing a spell that won't be able to kill a monster even if it hits. Using it as a smoke screen when subjugating targets together with a party happens occasionally, but I think it would be better to stop that as well."

There are two reasons for that.

First, a 『Fireball』 of such a level might work as smoke screen against wild animals, but it won't be enough to distract a monster.

Unlike animals, monsters aren't afraid of fire.

The second reason is the most important one.

"If you burn the pelt, it will lower the value of the raw materials."

Laughter spread in the classroom as they thought I made a joke.

"It's actually no joke. The condition of the loot is important for adventurers."

Since the number of monsters you can defeat per day is limited, the rest depends on how you kill them.

"Because hides and pelts, which are full of holes and completely burnt black, can't be used as raw materials, you won't get much money for them."

That means, it's not fine to just defeat a target.

If the state of the killed monsters is bad, their materials won't turn into money, no matter how many you might defeat.

"In other words, you're saying fire magic is disadvantageous in subjugating monsters?"

"It would be better if you refrained from roasting a monster's whole body."

I answered Agnes who asked another question.

"But, I think there are magicians who can't use anything but fire magic..."

"I'm one of those."

"Me too."

Several students raise their hands saying that they can't use anything but fire magic. Given that only this is an affinity and ability they are born with, there are many cases where it's futile even if they practice.

"That's where spell compression comes into play."

You don't shoot a big 『Fireball』, but shoot the target's vital spot with a 『Fireball』 that had been compressed to the size of a pachinko ball.

It's the theory of raising the firepower by compressing a spell, even if you have little mana, as I showed them just now.

"You hit a monster's vital spot in such a manner."

I keep hitting the board with 『Fireballs』 that were compressed down to the size of a rice grain, to give them an example.

The board is punctured with scorched holes at more than ten places.

If I weren't able to do at least this much at one shot per second on average, I would get scolded by Burkhart-san.

"If it's this level of burn and hole size, it won't lower the sale value much either. It's a training focusing on the control to hit the vitals and a swift spell activation. Meditation, which widens your mana paths, is useful for a swift activation of such spells. Make sure to keep practicing it."

Once I stop speaking, the students start to eagerly take notes.

"By the way, this compression is..."

Next I create many small, compressed 『Wind Cutters』.

These also opened more than ten crescent-moon-shaped holes in the wooden board.

"Wow..."

"Teacher, can water and earth attributes do the same?"

Among the students raising their voices in surprise, Agnes asks a question again.

"It's not that they can't, but..."

After I break a stone quietly handed to me by Wilma on my palm with a compressed 『Wind

Cutter』, I shoot it at the board like a bullet.

Furthermore, I create a water globe, and after reinforcing it with 『Boost』, unleash it against the board as well.

Both succeeded in opening several small holes on the board.

"Because it's necessary to cast the wind spell 『Boost』 like this to upgrade their penetrative force, it consumes more mana. In case of water, turning it into an 『Ice Sphere』 is easier to add an overwhelming penetrative force, but if you do it like that, it will double the mana consumption since it combines the water and wind attributes. In case of fire, it makes a hole by burning the board without using any penetrative force."

Speaking of penetrative force, casting 『Boost』 on a metallic bullet or an arrow actually has a big effect.

"It's ideal to kill a monster with as little damage as possible, but if you only aim for that, you will end up getting killed by the monster instead. Seeing that you have the talent to use magic, it might be best to research how you can kill your prey with the very best efficiency. I think there are only a few people who work alone after becoming adventurers. You have to explore the most efficient and safest methods to hunt while also considering the strategies and special weapons of the other party members. There's also the option of earning money by collecting expensive ingredients while only repelling monsters. Please use your head."

Even at the same level of combat ability, those using their heads will earn a lot more money than those not doing so.

"The adventurer occupation isn't anything you can do for many years. Since you are magicians, I don't think that you will have trouble finding work even after you retire, but please work as adventurers while properly keeping your future in mind."

I was somehow able to finish today's lesson safely as well.



Since the class had finished on this day, we went out to eat lunch after speaking with Principal Hendrick.

Due to manpower and budget, there's no cafeteria in the prep school...it looks like the Kingdom won't supply lunch either...the students eat out or bring their own lunch.

Many restaurants targeting the prep school's students are lined up around the school, but we head for a single restaurant among all of them.

"This restaurant, eh...?"

At a glance it looks like a normal eatery, but as a matter of fact, Doushi has recommended this store to us.

"Ooh! I have waited for you!" (Armstrong)

Once we enter, Doushi calls out to us from a table deeper inside.

Given that he has been busy with speeches recently, we didn't meet often, but he had invited us to hunt together starting today afternoon.

We had arranged to meet at this restaurant beforehand to eat lunch here.

"The tripe stew is the special dish of this place." (Armstrong)

We continue to chat after ordering the menu recommended by Doushi.

"How is it going with your teaching job?" (Armstrong)

"I'm somehow handling it in my own way." (Wendelin)

"You sure? I think you're doing it quite well, hubby." (Katia)

"I think so as well. I believe you're suited to be a teacher, Wend-sama." (Wilma)

"Really?"

I got praised by Katia and Wilma, but it doesn't feel quite real to me.

Because I didn't choose the teaching courses at the university I attended in my previous life, I had no confidence about doing well.

"Johannes-jiisan's teaching was thorough, but he was the kind of man who told you to keep practicing if there was something you didn't understand." (Katia)

"Kind of like effort will bear fruit?"

"The 『effort will bear fruit』 mentioned by you, Wilma, was his favorite catchphrase."

However it seems like he didn't explain the theory behind magic, showed off his own spells, and had them determinedly practice those while copying what he did.

"I couldn't quite learn his spells." (Katia)

In the end she only increased her mana from Johannes-jiisan's lessons, and finally learned 『Acceleration』 from Lisa after becoming an adult.

"Despite appearances, Big Sis is a theorist in regards to magic."

"It certainly seems so."

I heard she expressly traveled to the mountain range located in the Kingdom's northern area during winter because she set her heart on ice magic.

It means, there's nothing better than actually observing something to raise the imagination power of magic.

"Recently she's become completely meek, though." (Katia)

"I think this way might be better than before..." (Wendelin)

No matter how strong her fear of men might be, acting arrogant with that makeup and outfit is rather questionable to me.

"Now she's obediently helping with the development of the Baumeister Earldom, too."

I teleported her and Therese to the construction site as a replacement for me who has to work as a temporary teacher.

It's for the sake of the Baumeister Earldom's development not stopping even during the times when I'm not there because of my lessons.

『Milord, at this point you should marry Lisa-dono with a gusto as well.』

『You're telling me to be irresponsible?』

『No. It's not irresponsible. I'm telling you as the Earl Baumeister House's household manager since she will become a gain for your home. She's a bit older, but don't you consider her beautiful?』

Roderich, who admired her skillfulness in public works, urged me to marry Lisa for an exceedingly pragmatic reason.

Lisa is doing public works while coaching Therese.

Once I wondered whether she only used ice magic as her nickname suggests, she was actually handling other attributes quite decently, too.

Also, she's good at teaching others, just as Katia says.

It makes me think that she lost out because of that makeup and outfit of hers until now.

However, if you say that it couldn't be helped since she wouldn't have been able to hold decent conversations with other people without that appearance, that would wrap it up.

"I think Big Sis is definitely believing it to be so. That this is the duty of a wife."

"Ugh!"

I had planned to pay her a reward later, but if she really thinks so, she might not accept it.

However, that might turn into something like a confirmation by a *fait accompli*.

"Let's leave such complicated stuff for later."

There's no use in pondering about something I can decide later.

Since the ordered food has been brought over, I decide to eat it at once.

The stew, which consisted of various, cooked monster innards that had been processed very skillfully, is very delicious.

It might have simmered for a long time. Even though it's innards meat, it's quite tender, melting inside my mouth.

"It doesn't smell either. Very tasty."

"Earl Baumeister, it's great if you dip the bread in the stew, and place the tripe on top of the bread like this." (Armstrong)

Once I adopt the eating method recommended by Doushi, a taste of supreme bliss spreads inside my mouth.

"Full with customers."

While ordering another serving, Wilma gets surprised by the many customers inside the restaurant.

"A stew set at seven cents is a bargain."

"That's why there's so many students here."

The surrounding restaurants have been established targeting the prep school's students, always researching dishes that are cheap and delicious while also having enough volume. That's why the level of cooking here is high with few bad deals, Doushi explains.

"I was also a student of the prep school in the past. I heard that this restaurant has been around since before I went to the prep school." (Armstrong)

"It was really delicious."

"I'm completely satisfied."

"I lost again..." (Armstrong)

"That's the part you focus on?"

Doushi looks mortified because he couldn't eat as much as Wilma again, but we decide to go hunting without paying any heed to that.

The location is a monster domain close to the capital where Doushi often hunts as a part-time job. The domain isn't overly big, and since it's an area with steep hills, it has been left alone as is without being developed.

"My combat power went up after increasing my mana." (Katia)

"Will let my big ax roar for the first time in a good while." (Wilma)

"Aren't they most reliable, Earl Baumeister?" (Armstrong)

Since no monsters that would give us four a hard time appeared, we worked hard at hunting monsters until evening.

Doushi and Wilma were as powerful as always, but Katia also managed to hunt many monsters thanks to her increased mana.

She cut the vital spots of monsters with her sabers while passing them at high speed, and then let them die from blood loss.

Nothing less of an adventurer with the nickname 『High Speed』.

"It's been a good hunt after a long while. Recently I'm exhausted from only holding speeches."
(Armstrong)

"What are you telling them?"

"Everyone gets bored when I talk about serious stuff. I talk about the war as well, but the stories about you, Earl Baumeister, suffering from Therese-sama's approaches are popular." (Armstrong)

The chasing Therese and the evading Wendelin.

It sounds like everyone listened to it while laughing, but I feel like that's completely unrelated to the Empire's civil war...

"Why talk about me?"

Why a person's private life...no matter how sweet someone else's misfortune might be...this is terrible.

"If I can make them laugh with stories at such a level, it means that the Kingdom is peaceful."

"I'm not sure whether that's an answer, right hubby?" (Katia)

"Wend-sama, popular."

Today's hunting safely came to an end, and another day finished peacefully.

I confirmed that my private life has been disclosed to society, so I don't feel like it was actually all that peaceful...

Chapter 4 – Sunglasses

"I just thought of it, but..." (Wendelin)

"What is it, dear?" (Elise)

All of a sudden I thought of a certain something during our usual breakfast time.
And Elise asked me what it was about.

"I have become a teacher, albeit a temporary one, haven't I?" (Wendelin)

"That's correct. What about it?"

Apparently not understanding what I want to say, Ina also joins the conversation.

"I'm afraid to say, but I feel like I'm still a bit young for being a teacher."

"Is that so? Isn't it alright as long as you can use magic?"

"Luise, you're right that you can't become a teacher unless you can use magic, but you can't be a teacher just by being able to use magic either, I'm sure."

"What? A complicated topic? Then I'm out." (Luise)

Luise turns her attention back to her breakfast.

Her appetite seems to have steadily grown, and now she's eating a lot more than before her pregnancy.

That's why she focuses on her food rather than listening to my incomprehensible talk.
Considering all that, her figure doesn't really change, no matter how much she eats.

"In other words, you mean that dignity as a teacher is indispensable?"

"Yes, that's exactly it!"

Katharina has apparently understood my thinking.

Teacher was written as living before.¹ It's normal for elderly people to teach. I always believe that something similar to dignity, which comes from living for a long time, is more important for a teacher than knowledge and experience.

"Wendelin-san, it's going to take time for you to become like Doushi-sama and Master. That won't take place in time for the period of your current temporary teacher position." (Katharina)

"Wend-sama, you can't actually acquire that unless you grow old." (Wilma)

Certainly, it's just as Katharina and Wilma say. It requires a suitable age for me to emit dignity.

"You're definitely correct there, but there's a method to resolve this issue to an extent." (Wendelin)

"Such a convenient method actually existed? Dignity is needed for a ruler as well, isn't it? Consequently, young successors must consider it difficult in various ways. There's the option of having a father, grandfather, and elderly blood relatives act as guardians, but using that method also bears the danger of being considered as a puppet." (Therese)

Therese, who has already reached the point of living in our mansion, says while implicitly asking, 『Is there really such a convenient method?』.

"Yes, there is."

"I see. So what kind of method is it?"

"Glasses!"

Right, it's glasses.

Glasses are a strange item.

By just wearing them, the wearer ends up looking as if their intelligence has gone up by a good chunk, and the glasses give one the impression of being diligent.

Doesn't it feel like a school teacher will teach you very skillfully by them just wearing glasses?

Me being a young teacher is a fact I can't hide.

However, if I do my lessons while wearing glasses, my level of dignity and seriousness will get a boost.

In my previous life and in my current one, I didn't wear glasses as my eyesight is one of the things I can be proud of.

It's an item I don't need normally, but I believe it will have a tremendous effect if I buy fake glasses and wear them during my lessons.

"With that said, I'm going to search for glasses today." (Wendelin)

"Have a good day."

"..."

I wonder what it is?

Elise's attitude feels slightly colder than usual.

Is she possibly fed up with me?

"Ina, you think so as well, don't you?" (Wendelin)

"Well, you're free to do as you like, Wend."

"..."

Huh?

Even Ina's attitude is somewhat chilly.

"Umm, Luise-san?"

"I don't quite get the evaluation that you'll be diligent by wearing glasses." (Luise)

"Won't I look serious with them?"

"Not at all. I'd think, 『Ah, a rich guy』." (Luise)

"..."

So that's it.

The assessment of glasses is completely different in this world compared to my previous one.

Poor people aren't able to wear glasses even if they have bad eyesight.

That's why glasses are labeled as something bought by rich people, and don't give the impression of being diligent or intelligent.

This was a huge miscalculation.

"Anyway, I'm going to buy glasses." (Wendelin)

"Wend, do you have bad eyesight?"

"No, not at all."

My eyes are very good, but there's no law that I mustn't wear glasses if I don't have a bad eyesight, I think.

I have plenty of money to buy a pair, too.

"Well, if you want glasses, it's fine..."

Ina pulls a doubtful face, but if I wear glasses suitable for a teacher, I'm sure that the students will regard me as a dignified, wonderful teacher.

For that reason, we went out to an optician in the capital after I finished my lesson in the afternoon.



"There's the optician's store." (Wendelin)

"It sure looks quite sophisticated, hubby." (Katia)

"Well, only rich people can buy the merchandise here. But, you see, isn't it a waste of money seeing as you don't have a bad eyesight?" (Erwin)

Today Erw is accompanying us. Joining the group consisting of me, Katia and Wilma, the usual school team, we stand in front of the capital's optician.

Glasses are so expensive that only rich people can buy them. I hear that this optician runs a well-established store.

Having been told so, I must admit that the store's design certainly got a high-class vibe.

But, as the number of people buying glasses seems to be low, just as expected, the store feels compact and cosy.

There's probably no particular need to have an overly large store.

"I suppose, there's only few customers."

It's not like the eyesight of humans as a whole is deteriorating like in my previous world. Since there are no TVs, PCs, cell phones, and smartphones, people here don't need glasses just because of a slightly bad eyesight, and even if they need them, they can't buy a pair unless they got enough money.

The market range for glasses might be rather small.

I can only wonder, 『Won't they have troubles to live normally if they can't buy glasses despite having bad eyesight?』, though.

"Well then, let's go in."

"Welcome."

Once we enter the store, a middle-aged man, who seems to be the shopkeeper, greets us.

"Is it a request for glasses?"

"That is so." (Wendelin)

I answer with an arrogant tone, but since there are many situations where the other party will instead become confused if you don't speak like that once you've become an Earl, I can't help it. Since I had been kowtowing to the clients and my superiors in my previous life, it's difficult to get used to this mannerism.

It's a frightening habit in a certain sense, seeing how I had been a salaryman for merely three years.

"Umm...you're Earl Baumeister-sama, aren't you?"

"Indeed."

"I was right after all! Agnes has been indebted to you. Hey, Agnes!"

Oh my god, this optician's store is the home of the class president character, Agnes, whom I'm currently teaching magic.

Given that she's a glass-wearing girl, I thought that it might be possible, but since I believed that there are a lot more opticians in the capital, I definitely hadn't expected to run into her here.

"What's wrong, Dad? Ah! Sensei! Hello." (Agnes)

Appearing from inside the store, Agnes is still wearing the same robe as she has worn at the prep school.

Since she has a serious character, just as her class president look suggests, she likely doesn't miss out on practicing magic at home either.

"Sensei, do you have bad eyesight as well?"

She seems to think that I have the same issue as she has.

"No, ultimately it's just for ensuring dignity." (Wendelin)

"Uhh...what do you mean?" (Agness)

Agnes tilts her head in confusion upon my explanation.

"Wend, don't get a novice lady mixed up in your weird common sense...What he means..." (Erwin)

Erw explains that I'm looking for glasses to obtain the dignity necessary for a teacher.

"I don't get the meaning behind it either, but it's something about looking intelligent and emitting dignity if you wear glasses, or such?" (Erwin)

"Ah, I see...many among the professors at the academy, and the appointed noble gentlemen, who always examine documents very carefully, wear glasses."

Probably because they are only looking at books and documents, their eyesight tends to worsen over time. Moreover, since children often take over their parent's occupation in this world, there are many noble houses and technocratic classes that wear glasses across many generations. That's why bespectacled people might naturally look intellectual, Agnes replied.



Exactly because Agnes is the daughter of an optician, she seems to have the same value system I do. In Erw's case...well, it's likely because there's few glasses-wearers in the countryside. It doesn't look like he can actually grasp the idea behind it.

"You see...that's why I will be more sensei-like by wearing glasses." (Wendelin)

"Or rather, is it going to be alright with such an impromptu measure?"

"Wilma, I don't get it at all, though." (Katia)

"Don't ask me, I don't understand it either." (Wilma)

Erw seems to feel doubtful about dignity appearing all of a sudden by something at the level of putting on glasses.

As Katia and Wilma don't seem to know how to answer either, both are puzzled.

"Sensei!" (Agnes)

"What's up, Agnes?"

"Sensei, I think it's fine for you to be more confident. Even though you're not that much older than us, you have been teaching us magic in a way that is much easier to understand than any other sensei that has come to our class so far."

"Agnes..."

"Sensei, you don't need decorative glasses! You're a wonderful sensei even without wearing glasses." (Agnes)

"Thanks!"

I'm happy.

The day before the lecture, I prepared by repeatedly reading through Master's book, matching his points with my theories as a reference, and creating class notes, while cutting around two hours of my sleeping time.

Those efforts have been properly recognized.

A cute schoolgirl did so.

I would be happy about a male student doing the same too, but it being a female student, and a cute one at that, doubles my happiness.

Even if I say so myself, I do think that I have a calculating character, though.

"You're right! Glasses are completely unnecessary to sensei!" (Wendelin)

"Haven't I been saying the same before...?" (Erwin)

Erwin says something, but I can't hear.

Currently I'm going to ignore the opinion of a dude.

"Yes! Even without wearing glasses, you're a superb sensei!" (Agnes)

"Thanks, Agnes!"

"Sensei!"

Agnes and I take each other's hands, and continue to share the joy.

"Hubby..."

But, my robe is pulled immediately, returning me to reality.
The perpetrator is Katia.

"Doesn't the father of that girl look somewhat pitiful?"

"No, I'm grateful for you taking care of Agnes. Even if I can't sell any glasses, I won't mind at all."

Even though he says so, he's obviously disappointed, so I end up feeling sorry for Agnes' father.

"...I will buy colored glasses to be used for hunting and fishing then."

"Colored glasses? I hear about such a merchandise for the first time."

As expected, not buying anything and just feeling deeply moved inside a store will affect my reputation as Earl Baumeister.

Hence I try to buy sunglasses that can be used during hunts and fishing.

Hunting beneath direct sunlight during the day is fairly tough.

It looks like there are every year adventurers that suffer embarrassing defeats against wild animals and monsters after being blinded by sunlight.

Given that it's technically difficult...to use shaded lenses blocking the sunlight, even sunglasses should be plenty useful here. ...I try to order that, but Agnes' father says that he has never heard of such an item.

"There are no colored lenses...?"

"Yes, it would be difficult to see with them."

"No, there are actually cases where it becomes easier to see by adding a color to glasses."

I devotedly explain the theory behind sunglasses and shaded lenses to Agnes' father.

Because they reduce the radiance of the sun by blocking out excess light, it becomes easier to look at things, I tell him.

"You add a color to the lenses for that reason? I think it's possible to implement, but...I have to ask the workshop first."

Her father leads us to the glasses workshop located in the neighborhood of the store.

It's wrong to look down on them as just being glasses.

Since glasses are a cluster of various high technologies, the optician's store employs a specialized workshop.

Furthermore, the workshop's owner is a relative of Agnes.

"Our family has started to run an optician's store and a glasses workshop after falling out of nobility. Our techniques are a secret. Well, there are various other opticians around as well, though."

The family manages the store and workshop. They appear to prevent the leaking of their techniques by employing employees and craftsmen from the same families for generations.

It's a feat impossible with magic tools, but it often is like that with normal handicraft.

Because of that, Agnes' family can put food on the table, but on the other hand, a newcomer won't be able to get a job in a glasses workshop all of a sudden.

Since it's difficult to aspire making glasses from scratch without finding employment in that field, it inevitably leads to a few opticians and workshops monopolizing the market.

Glasses are a merchandise with a high profit ratio, but since you can't sell that many of them in proportion to their high price, not monopolizing the market will lead to becoming unable to live from it, too.

"Adding color to the lens?"

"Umm...I mean like this."

I add a color to an already completed lens with magic.

The lens is made out of glass, meaning the lens workshop is also a glass workshop.

Borrowing the dyes that will be applied on glass, I finish a sunglasses-like lens with magic.

"Given that it's not like I have a bad eyesight, it's not necessary to add any degrees to the lens, thus a thin layer will do..."

Planing the finished lens with magic, I complete it for the time being by suitably matching the lens with a glasses frame.

Once I put it on as a test, my sight becomes sunglasses-like...well, I guess that's only natural.

"I see. That means there will also be demand by people with good eyes. Understood. Since we can't sell it as merchandise in this state, we will adjust it from our side."



Several days later — the adjusted and improved sunglasses are very easy to put on. Although they are fake glasses, the visibility has also improved substantially.

I guess, you can expect nothing less from a glasses workshop possessing the necessary techniques. My impromptu creation magic seems to have limits, after all.

"Let's go hunting with these at once."

We pay the price for the sunglasses to Agnes' father, and immediately depart to hunt on the plains around the capital.

"Oohh! It's not as dazzling!"

Not being dazzled by the bright sunlight on the plains, I succeed in boosting my hunting results. It was a suggestion I came up with on the spot, but thanks to the glasses workshop's skilled techniques, the sunglasses' practical use is outstanding.

"I see, it does have its advantages. I wonder whether I should order a pair as well?"

Erw admires the sunglasses that block the excessive, direct sunlight.

"I think I want a pair as well."

"Being able to reduce the brightness sure is nice. If my movements are delayed at the critical moment because of the sunlight, I'll be troubled. However, their uses are limited, aren't they?"

As Wilma and Katia seem to be interested as well, we buy several sunglasses to test them out, and return home. The girls decided to try putting them on as soon as possible, too.



"It doesn't suit you..."

"Luise, isn't that completely unrelated to its practical use?"

Katia expresses her dissatisfaction with Luise's frank comment.

But sure, sunglasses don't look good on women unless they are adults. Katia looks childish while being almost 20 years old, and because of her cute appearance, the sunglasses don't suit her at all.

"Shouldn't thou order a frame that fits thou?"

You might say that it's to be expected, but Therese's sunglasses fit her very nicely. It gives her the feel of a mature woman.

"Therese-san, it suits you." (Elise)

"Elise, I think they will fit thou as well once thou become a bit older." (Therese)

That's what Therese says, but is it only me who thinks that sunglasses won't fit Elise even after she becomes older?

"Ina-san, they look good on you." (Katharina)

"The same back to you, Katharina." (Ina)

Ina and Katharina feel like the sunglasses look good on them, and I must say, it's true.

"Lisa-san, for you they might be unsuitable unless you return to your former make-up and outfit. I'm a lost case in that regard, too."

Sunglasses appear to not match well with Amalie-san.
She says that Lisa shouldn't put them on in her current state.

"Haruka-san...scary ~ssu..."

"It looks like I'm not suited for them either."

Haruka, who's at the mansion by chance, ends up scaring Erw with her sunglasses look, and thus takes them off while sighing.

Everyone played around with the sunglasses like that, but...

"Wend-sama, everyone, those are for blocking the direct sunlight during hunting and fishing for everyone?"

"Come to think of it, that was the reason for getting them." (Wendelin)

Wilma calmly points out the real purpose of the sunglasses, but it can't be helped since it often happens that newly produced items are used in a way different from what the creator has intended. Well, I mean, it's fine as long as it's fun.

* * *

"Sensei, how were the colored glasses you bought the other day?" (Agnes)

Agnes asks about the sunglasses in the noon several days later after class has ended.
She has probably been asked by her father to ask about it.

"I used them during fishing, and it was nice for the sunlight's reflection off the water's surface to not be so dazzling." (Wendelin)

"Really? I'm glad to hear that." (Agnes)

I have gotten used to using the sunglasses as needed during hunting and fishing.
They aren't as cheap as the ones you can buy from Japan's mass marketers, but their feel when wearing them isn't bad, seeing how they are close to an order-made item.

"Any adjustments will be for free, so please come to the store whenever you need." (Agnes)

The adjustment of glasses is for free?
It's almost like Megane 〇uper. 2

"It's also great that they don't really slide down over time."

"My home has a good reputation for its frame production techniques."

Once I praised the frame, Agnes looked happy, probably because it's an item produced and sold at her home.

"About that...it looks like Dad actually has a request."

"Request?"

"Yes."

The request is about the sunglasses they made for me. He'd like to mass produce and sell those for adventurers.

"Since they don't need any eyesight strength unlike normal glasses, we can produce them at a lower price as the manufacturing of the lenses doesn't take much effort, he says."

In addition, he apparently wants to sell the sunglasses to hunters, fishers, and wealthy people focused around nobles, who hunt and fish as a hobby.

"I don't really mind."

"Is it really okay?"

I just told them to color the lenses, and left the practical implementation to Agnes' home. I would feel bad about collecting a patent fee for something at that level.

"I don't mind in particular."

"Thank you very much, sensei!"



Once I gave permission, the rest went fast.

Agnes' home produced and put up the sunglasses for sale, and many customers bought them for their novelty and utility values.

Adventurers, hunters, fishers, and nobles keep buying sunglasses. And the number of people ordering sunglasses with diopter strength among the nobles, who wore normal glasses so far, increased as well.

"We were able to draw an unexpected demand with the sunglasses. Thank you."

Agnes's father thanks me while delivering several sunglasses to me.

"You can also make sunglasses with eyesight strength, huh?"

"Yes, it's possible with our secret lens polishing technique. But, the polishing takes an overwhelming amount of time. ...Oh, I get it, 『sunglasses』 because the colored glasses block the sun's light, eh? It's a good name."

The time it takes to polish the lenses is also the reason for glasses to be so expensive. Incidentally, I ended up dubbing the colored glasses as sunglasses. Even though I just unconsciously called them sunglasses as I did in my previous life.

"As long as an adjustment of the strength is unnecessary, we can sell them very cheaply."

"You could sell them as a fashion item as well then, no?"

"It would involve new frame designs, but...it will be possible with our manufacturing techniques. We will try to make a few as a test."

Afterwards, Agnes' home succeeded in drastically increasing their sales thanks to the sunglasses and fashion glasses.

The other glasses workshops, which possessed similar techniques, immediately imitated them, but since the demand for glasses had gone up as a whole, Agnes' home's sales didn't go down. However, it's not like it was all sunshine either.



"Sensei, recently scary people often come to buy sunglasses." (Agnes)

"Scary people?"

"Yes, scary people with large bodies."

According to Agnes, only tall, muscular men with big bodies keep buying large amounts of sunglasses.

"(Don't tell me...something like the mafia?)"

Once I observe the optician's store front after school since I'm slightly curious, I certainly spot muscular, gigantic men there.

They weren't mafia...they are my acquaintances and people with worse characters than the mafia in a certain way.

"Yo, Earl Baumeister. We're going hunting next, but the sunglasses of this place have the reputation to block the sunlight's brightness. Ah, it was your idea, wasn't it Earl Baumeister?"

Minister Edgar has come here to shop while bringing his appointed noble followers of the military faction along.

I have heard rumors that the appointed nobles of the military camp often hunt as a pastime, but they

have likely come here to buy sunglasses every day.
Certainly, at a glance, they look scary to anyone.

"You were teaching magic at the adventurer's prep school, weren't you? Seeing as you have a lot of opportunities to come to the capital now, let's go hunting together next time."

Once he buys his sunglasses and says what he wants to say, Minister Edgar leaves us.

"Agnes, it's only natural for you to be frightened since they are people protecting the county from invasions and civil war."

"I see. That was very enlightening, sensei."

Correct, that's why you mustn't mind them even if they look like mafia.
Once you actually talk with them, they aren't such bad people either.

"However, sunglasses are surprisingly popular."

"That's true."

I felt that it was good for the optician's sales to have gone up, but the effect caused surprisingly big waves at places that were out of my hands and knowledge.

* * *

"Say, Agnes."

"What is it, Dad?"

"Are you going to marry Earl Baumeister-sama in the future?"

"Eh!? Why would you ask that? Earl Baumeister-sama is our sensei."

Due to Dad's unexpected question, I felt my face getting hot.
I'm pretty sure that it must look pretty red about now, but I object without minding it.

"I mean, he helped us with our business. And since you're cute, I thought that such an option existed as well..."

"No, not at all! Sensei's wives are all pretty, after all!"

I got worked up against my better judgment and strongly refuted, but in reality I have started to secretly think about the possibility if a chance presents itself.
Right now we have a relationship of teacher and student, but someday...I wonder whether it would be better for me to be a bit more assertive?

It's inevitable for me to be happy about being able to meet teacher at the prep school tomorrow.

* * *

"Hey, son-in-law-dono."

"Yes, what might it be?"

After today's lesson came to an end, I went to meet with Cardinal Hohenheim with whom I occasionally had lunch, but I heard an unexpected complaint from him.

"The appointed nobles of the military faction around Minister Edgar and Earl Armstrong have been bragging while wearing new glasses in the royal palace, but they were told by His Majesty that it's scary and eerie. As far as I have heard, those are glasses invented by you..."

"Eh? You're saying that's my fault?"

"Now that you mention it, I guess it's weird to complain to you about it..."

"Please ban the wearing of sunglasses in the castle."

"I suppose that would be the quickest solution."

Since then it was strictly forbidden to wear sunglasses in the royal castle.
It was a secret that couldn't be disclosed that the biggest reason for that ban was the successive appearance of people that could be mistaken as mafia despite being nobles.

Chapter 5 – Wendelin Gives Flowers as a Gift

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

"Sorry for all the troubles." (Wendelin)

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

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

I managed to get on friendly terms with her, who's the best student in this magician class, through the sunglasses.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"That's a great idea."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

anything about.

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

"Flowers, huh...?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cindy is the youngest girl in this class.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Cindy!"

"Whaaat, Agnes?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

"..."

Being asked so by Cindy, time stops for me for an instant here.
Considering it very carefully, I don't know much about flowers to begin with.
Roses, tulips, orchids, chrysanthemum...no wait, chrysanthemum aren't suited as present for women.
According to my meager knowledge, those are used as decorations for funerals and such.
In addition, there are dolls made out of chrysanthemum flowers...wait, that got nothing to do with anything.
Which reminds me, are there any chrysanthemums in this world in the first place?
If it's the Mizuho Dukedom, I might actually find dolls made out of chrysanthemum flowers there, but I don't know since I didn't have any interest in it at all.
Edible chrysanthemum...I wonder whether they have those. I will try asking Duke Mizuho about it later.
Those are really delicious when you eat them together with soy sauce after boiling and drying them.
At any rate, somehow other flower names don't come to mind readily.
Margaret, is a flower name...or a person's name? Poinsettia... Wait? Isn't that a dog name?
Because I'm troubled when asked about concrete flowers, I reflexively look for help from Erw who has been silently staying behind me. Today he has accompanied me as a replacement for Wilma.
Since Erw has occasionally picked up girls or something like that, I'm sure he has already given flowers to women without me hearing about it.

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

"...Tulips?" (Erwin)

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

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

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

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

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

Erw is at the same level as I am after all...no, it might be much worse in his case.
I think most men might actually be just like that...

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

"Eh? Me?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I see..."

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

Maroimo are lacking on the romantic side...

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

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

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

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

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

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



"Sensei, we have arrived." (Cindy)

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

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

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

"I'm home." (Cindy)

"Welcome back, ojou-sama."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Yes, indeed."

"They are really beautiful, hubby."

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

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

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

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

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

"Eh!? This flower?"

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

"Sensei, this flower is called silene. It means 『False Love』 in the flower language." 2

"..."

It looks like flower language exists in this world as well.

Moreover, I have absolutely no clue about flower symbolism, ending up choosing a flower totally unsuited as a gift for my wives.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

"Cindy, how about this?"

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

"This flower is called cyclamen. In the flower language it stands for suspicion and jealousy." 3

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cindy replies fluently to Katia's question.

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

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

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

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

The employees don't shirk on studying flowers on a daily basis so that the rich customers, who buy flowers regularly, can come to buy flowers with a good feeling next time as well. Since they also have potted plants and flower seeds, I'm sure they have to be well-informed on raising plants, too.

I feel like a flower arrangement shop is a lot of tough work.

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

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

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

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

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

There are also many male customers inside the store.

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

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

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

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

After all, Doushi came here to buy flowers.

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

"Doushi?"

"Ooohh! Earl Baumeister?"

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

"Did you come here to buy flowers?"

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

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

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

"As you wish."

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

"I have greatly increased the quantity."

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

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

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

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

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

"You mustn't say that, Katia!"

"I mean, it's the truth, isn't it!? Ervin, even you think so, don't you?"

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

It's quite rude towards Doushi, but the damage to our hearts, which we suffered due to this, is quite heavy. And then, we had to go through yet another trial.

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

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

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

We are greatly troubled in front of the poster stating 『Red roses sold out today』 that has been put up in a hurry. Even if you call them cliched or stereotypical, there's no woman who won't be happy after being given crimson flowers.

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

"What are you going to do, hubby?"

"I will entrust it to the professional."

Indeed, I'm an Earl-sama.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yeah, yeah, even I know what lilies are.

When suddenly asked about flower names I know of, I couldn't remember them so readily, but now

I have finally recalled lilies.

"Thanks for today, Cindy."

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

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

* * *

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

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

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

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

Everyone is chatting noisily while looking at all the flowers.

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

Elise appears to be very delighted, too.

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

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

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

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

"About that..."

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

"Eh? Doushi has?"

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

"It doesn't suit him."

"You can't say anything besides it doesn't fit his image..."

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

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

"Wait, is it something that weird?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Since after his marriages, it has become a habit for Doushi to bring back flowers for his wives, Elise explains to everyone.

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

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

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

* * *

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

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

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

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

"That would be quite nice."

Dad and all the employees are overjoyed.

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

Of course that's a great misunderstanding, though.

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

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

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

However, it's a talk about what-if's.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I still only got to know sensei, but maybe it's possible for it to happen within this one year.
I think it's a gain to know that my family won't oppose it if it turns out like this.
Starting tomorrow, I will be a lot more proactive about chatting up sensei.

Chapter 6 – Wendelin Helps Out at a Restaurant Again

"Now then, time to eat, finally."

"Erw, what are you going to eat today?"

"I will decide on the spot, I think."

"Well, that makes sense, in a way."

I have been continuing as a temporary teacher of the adventurer prep school's magician class at a rate of three days per week.

Once the lecture in the morning comes to an end, the students work independently in the afternoon. They are free to train magic by themselves or go out hunting as a part-time job after having had their lunch.

We always return to the mansion after eating lunch at the capital to work on our afternoon schedule. There's a lot of development work in the territory to be done since Elise and the others have become pregnant, but deliberately eating lunch outside before taking care of that is me wanting to enjoy eating out.

Once I get back to the mansion in the Baumeister Earldom, the cooks will immediately serve lunch. Those dishes are delicious as they always pay close attention to the ingredients and cooking methods.

However, it's human nature to occasionally get an urge to eat out at times when you are away from home.

So far I also hit upon a big number of restaurants that weren't overly delicious, but that also added to the surprise and doubled the happiness once I discovered little-known good restaurants.

"Hubby, let's go with a restaurant that's slightly away from the prep school." (Katia)

"Katia, do you know the area around there?" (Wendelin)

"Not at all. It's just that it's fun to go to places you've got absolutely no clue about." (Katia)

"Oh, that's a surprise. I didn't take you for such a gambler."

"Well, adventurers have unexpectedly few hobbies, so you take what you can get."

Erw, Katia, and I explore an area that's a bit further away from the prep school, looking for a restaurant that seems good for having a meal.

"It doesn't look as though there's a good one out here." (Erwin)

"You don't know that, Erw." (Wendelin)

The restaurants catering to the students close to the prep school can be divided into two categories: old restaurants with a good reputation, and relatively new restaurants with the owners changing

frequently.

The restaurant with the entrails stew, which Doushi had recommended, is a well-known, old restaurant that's always packed with customers.

Some of the new restaurants have also been doing their best, and on the other hand, there are also some that are completely no good.

The latter ones probably believe that they will make a profit as long as they set up their restaurant in the vicinity of the prep school with its huge traffic of people.

However, such restaurants have many people testing them out at first, but soon become deserted.

The management of a restaurant is a big challenge in any world.

Us going a bit further away from the prep school this time is for the sake of finding a new secret gem since we have already visited the restaurants around the prep school to some extent.

"Hubby, what about that restaurant?"

Katia finds a cozy-looking restaurant in a back alley that you enter from the main street of this area. The restaurant doesn't have the impression of being dirty as it seems to be cleaned frequently, but either way, it's a place that doesn't stand out.

"Restaurants like this might be unexpectedly delicious with their hidden-gem-like flair."

"On the other hand, no customers are heading for that hidden gem, right?"

Erw appears to be doubtful about not a single customer entering that restaurant.

He's right, customers usually make their way to hidden-gem-like restaurants with good food. Otherwise, such stores would go bankrupt before being labeled as secret gems.

"Isn't it fine to give it a chance?" (Katia)

"It's as Katia says. Nothing ventured, nothing gained." (Wendelin)

"Hubby, I don't think you have to go that far, but if it's a dud, we just gotta go to another place."

"You're right, we just need to go to another place then."

It's wrong to not search for little-known, good places by walking around yourself.

Doushi seems to still do that himself as well at times. He's sensitive to delicious restaurants in the capital.

『Despite being a noble, Doushi is only well-informed about commoner restaurants. This is also proof that he doesn't care what restaurant it is as long as it serves tasty food. In a certain way I admire him for that.』

Previously Burkhart-san told us about Doushi's idolization of good food catered towards commoners.

Doushi seems to have the hobby of searching for what's commonly called cheap, delicious food. That Doushi looking for restaurants while moving around incognito...I think it's impossible for a person, who stands out so much, to go around secretly.

Well, I think no one will deliberately get involved with him, even if they spot him.

Even if he enters back alleys with a somewhat bad public order, I doubt that there's anyone who

would try to rob or extort Doushi.
After all, no one wants to die.

"I'm hungry, so let's go inside."

"Welcome."

Once we enter the restaurant upon Erw's urging, we're immediately greeted by a person who seems to be the owner.

It's a young man with amber, close to blond, hair, who seems to be in the first half of his twenties.

"What's your order?"

"Let's see. Three portions of the specialty of this house."

"Very well. Three portions of the house's specialty, it is."

Whenever we enter a restaurant for the first time, we will order food like this.

If it's a good place, they will serve the most popular menu, and a bad place will deliberately bring out the most expensive dish.

It's a method that works very well to differentiate between restaurants.

"Thank you for waiting."

The dishes are served after around ten minutes, but it's a menu consisting of stew with big chunks of boar meat, bread, and salad – nothing overly original, in other words.

"Now then, time to dig in."

I begin eating at once. It has a normal deliciousness.

The stew is good. The meat has been processed perfectly, and is tender after having been boiled well.

The bread and salad are normal as well.

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

"I think that it tastes well enough, too." (Katia)

"..."

"What's wrong, hubby?" (Katia)

Certainly it's okay if you eat it.

It's even delicious, but...I have started to feel that something's out of place about this restaurant.

"Customers, does the food suit your taste?"

"It's good."

"I think it's delicious."

As I'm brooding, the owner comes over to ask about our impressions. Erw and Katia honestly tell him that they like the food.

Since it's truly delicious, I don't think that they are wrong to feel about it like that.

"That's good to hear...umm, dear customer?"

The young owner is happy after the good reviews by Erw and Katia, but he seems to immediately feel bothered by my behavior.

He calls out to me.

"Wend, is there something that bothers you?"

The sense of discomfort I feel is about the reason why this restaurant has no customers despite serving delicious food.

Right now it's not outside of hours.

By all rights, if it's not crowded at lunch time, it's weird.

"Hmm, I have almost grasped what's bothering me." (Wendelin)

"What might that be, dear customer?"

The owner seems to be very interested in what I want to say.

He leans his body forward in my direction.

"(Previously, in a restaurant like this...right! That's it! It's that restaurant!)"

In my previous life, when I was working as a humble salaryman, I visited a certain restaurant with a trade partner.

The owner over there was a man who had been the head chef of a famous, high-class hotel, and was now working independently, trying to hold the place by himself.

Since he was a celebrity in that business field, I was asked by the trader of another client to sell him expensive, high-quality ingredients.

He also allowed me to sample the food, and I must say, his cooking was truly superb.

Everyone believed that the restaurant would become a hit, but in the end it was closed down in no more than a year.

If you were to ask why...

"I think your cooking skill and the food's taste is good. But, I wonder if I'd become a frequent customer."

The cooking is good, but it's a common menu. It's not like it has any other peculiarity beside being simply delicious.

"Doushi's entrails stew restaurant sold stew that boiled entrails over a long period of time."

Since it uses entrails as meat, its quality is probably below the dishes of this restaurant.

And yet, the stew has a peculiar taste due to the restaurant carefully processing the entrails and

boiling them for a long time.

They save on the ingredient costs, but instead use more effort and time in preparing it, allowing them to offer something cheap while also being delicious.

That's why it's very popular among the prep school's students. I hear that the school staff and graduates come to eat there while bringing their friends and families along in the evening.

"It's a taste that makes them want to experience it again even after graduating from the school. That's why the restaurant is always full with regular customers. But, this restaurant..."

Here it will end with 『It tasted well』 after eating the food once.

"The customers will forget about this restaurant within a day after having been here, right?"

"Customer, in other words, you're saying..."

"I think your cooking style is good, but your dishes are too orthodox, lacking any impact. Since you can't create any frequent customers with it, the number of customers doesn't increase. Also, since this restaurant isn't located in a good location, it's difficult to increase the customers as there's no reason to expressly visit this place."

"Ugh..."

The owner, who listened to my argumentation, hung his head on the spot.
He's probably aware of it himself, too.

"Hubby, aren't you kind of harsh on him?" (Katia)

"That might be true, but..."

Giving an evasive answer along the lines of 『It's strange for no customers to come here, despite the food being so delicious』 would be the easy way out here.

Probably this owner has asked many customers the same question.

The number of customers not having grown despite that is probably owed to the customers having given him safe answers.

It's different when it's family or friends, but it takes courage to give painful advice to the owner of a restaurant you entered by coincidence.

"No, hubby, I do understand that part, but..." (Katia)

"What is it? You're not acting like yourself, Katia."

I feel doubtful about Katia's hesitant attitude, even though she always says what she wants to say without holding back.

At that point——

"Onii-san, I brought ingredients over today as well...eh! Sensei!?"

"Eh? Ah, if I remember correctly, you're..."

A robe exclusive to magicians, and amber, close to blond, hair...it's a beautiful girl I feel to have seen somewhere. Ah, I remember.

She's my student.

Since she has said that she brought ingredients over, she has probably come to sell the meat, which she obtained through hunting after school, to this restaurant.

"...Right! You're Betty! You're often together with Agnes and Cindy, aren't you?"

"Sensei, despite immediately remembering the names of Agnes-chan and Cindy-chan, you forgot mine?" (Betty)

"Hahaha, sorry."

Due to my nature as a former Japanese, I have difficulties remembering western-styled names.

"Though, all's fine since you were able to recall."

"Is it your part-time job, Betty?"

I change the topic in order to cover up the awkwardness.

"It's no job..."

For some reason Betty is evasive.

"(Hey, hubby.)" (Katia)

At this moment, Katia addresses me in a whisper.

"(What's up?)"

"(You see, that girl called Betty, her face resembles that of the owner here, and their hair colors are completely identical as well, aren't they?)"

In other words, those two are related by blood. Considering their age difference, I think it's correct to call them older brother and younger sister.

"Huh? That means?"

"(Returning to talk about this restaurant: you having given a painful advice means that it'll very likely develop into us having to kindly cooperate with them...that's all the more likely if it's the relative of your student...I'd say.)"

"...So I get stuck doing this once again?"

It resulted in me being once again forced into doing some fake consultant work for this restaurant which was troubled over not having any customers.

* * *

"Sensei, we don't mind even if you don't do this for us."

"Betty!"

Betty, the younger sister of the shop owner here, made a statement betraying our expectations. She basically says that it's fine for the restaurant run by her brother to go bankrupt.

"Still, isn't that a bit heartless towards your brother?" (Wendelin)

I reprimand Betty who asked her brother, who desperately puts in effort to gather guests for his restaurant, "But am I not right?"

"That's right! It's just as Earl Baumeister-sama says!"

The shop owner is angry at Betty.

"I mean, there are actually no guests coming here. Brother, being employed as a cook will be a more secure lifestyle for you. Right now I'm sharing the meat I obtained through hunting with you, but once I graduate from the prep school, you will need to procure it from somewhere else. Since you have no creativity as a cook, I'm telling you that it's better to give up as soon as possible."

"That's a sound argument that's quite hard to refute."

Overturning my previous statement, I switch sides to Betty.

It's because I have realized that she has said all that with the readiness to be hated for the sake of her brother.



"Your sister is correct, I think."

"She's a good girl. Whether I'd be able to tell my bro off in such a way is..." (Katia)

"You did tell him. During the matter with the tunnel."

"Erwin, don't bring up that story anymore. I have reflected on that whole mess in my own way..." (Katia)

Erw and Katia also join Betty's cause. With this the prevailing opinion is that it would be better to close down the restaurant.

The 『Wendelin's Second Consultation Job』 has come to an end here.

By becoming a cook hired by an independent restaurant, it will secure him a stable life without any need to live in debts.

It's a slightly boring conclusion, but it can't be helped.

"With this out of the way, go and look for a job. Since you're skilled, I will introduce you to Arterio's company. If it goes well, you will be able to get promoted and become part of the top management there."

"Brother, that's much better. Speaking of Arterio Company, it's running a big number of eateries, and I hear that it's very profitable."

Yep, yep. If I can introduce a very promising manager candidate to him, Arterio-san will be thankful, and I will get something out of it as well.

If the elder brother of my cute student drowned in debt, it would cause troubles for his sister and stand in the way of her future.

Far from killing one bird with two stones, you might as well call it an idea that kills three birds with one stone.

It's definitely not just for the sake of my own benefit.

"Then, let's go with that."

"Please wait! I won't close this restaurant! Betty! Isn't this place a valuable legacy of dad!? Shutting it down is nothing I could do!"

"Wend, what's your take?"

"The legacy of their deceased father, huh...?"

I guess if you consider that part to some extent, it brings the whole matter back to a neutral position. Most recently, there are places that have been starving for such heart-warming stories.

"Even the memories of our mother, who passed away at the time when Betty was just born, are remaining in this restaurant! I can't close up shop so easily!"

"Betty, is that true?"

"Yes..."

I try asking Betty about the details...



—In the past, there existed a young, married couple that wanted to open up their own restaurant. Husband and wife procured a store by laboring away, and in spite of the store's bad location, they earned enough money to lead a normal life. However, at some point they reached a turning point in their lives. After the wife gave birth to her second child, she immediately died from illness. The husband frantically ran the restaurant while raising the two children by himself.



"That's a touching story."

It's a drama as you will encounter on TV.

"The problems started at this point."



—Even after having lost his wife, the restaurant's management went well for the husband. Soon he declared that the elder child would succeed the restaurant once grown into an adult. Since he had helped his father from an early age, this child had enough confidence. That child was Betty's brother.



"Dad told me to come back after getting proper training at another restaurant. According to his words, he would spoil me too much when teaching me himself."

"That was a very correct assessment."

"Is that so, sensei?"

It's one of the reasons why successors suddenly run down popular restaurants. Without putting in any decent effort as they just rest on their laurels while relying on the previous generation's reputation, the taste becomes worse over time, and gradually guests stop coming in, resulting in the restaurant going bankrupt. That's a regular pattern. During my time as a salaryman I have heard those kinds of stories from many directions.

"Even though it's exceedingly easier than making a new restaurant thrive from scratch, there are some who have to close their restaurant after a short time, right?"

Since stupid rich boys making their noble houses fall into ruin regularly pop up, I can't really speak about other social classes, though...

"Fearing that, Dad sent brother to another place for training."



—However, another problem cropped up at this point. Even their father, who was the restaurant owner, ended up collapsing from sickness.



"I guess that means you hurriedly returned as the new owner?"

"In his sickbed, Dad told brother to not come back yet."



—He told him to not interrupt his training halfway, and come back after properly bringing his training to a close since the store wasn't rented but the family's possession. Despite being told so by his father who was on the verge of dying, his son willfully resigned from his training place, and started to run the restaurant. Of course the guests gradually stopped coming. Nowadays they even lack the funds to buy ingredients, and it has developed into the sorry state of him relying on the meat hunted by his younger sister.



"Uwaah...you're telling me you're completely dependent on your sister who's close to ten years younger than you...no way..."

"Don't you have any pride as an big brother, dude?"

In the past, Erw has gone through rough times thanks to his elder brothers.
Katia's brother never placed any financial burden on his sister.
That's why both openly showed their disgust towards Betty's older brother who was naively dreaming about his dead father's memories in this restaurant even though he was fully relying on his younger sister.
It's probably because they believe that something like that can only be said by someone who somehow manages things by himself without depending on others.

"I mean, this is my father's restaurant!"

"As you said yourself, your father told you to reopen the restaurant after finishing your training, didn't he? This restaurant is owned by you, so you don't need to pay any rent. As long as you don't have any turnover, you won't have to pay much taxes either. Wouldn't it have been fine to continue your training while maintaining the store so that you could reopen it at any time?"

"That's..."

Betty's brother falls silent as he can't return anything against Erw's just argument.
He's probably shocked from having his own rashness pointed out to him by someone who's younger.

"At this point, you won't be able to return to that old restaurant, right?"

"Yes, it's not possible anymore..."

Betty's brother, who's thoroughly being confronted with his own failures, has his heart shattered and looks like a completely withered leaf.
Even though it's only now, he has finally realized the extent of his own ineptitude.

"Sensei, I don't mind if you abandon him. It won't do brother any good to be pampered anyway."

Having said that, it looks like Betty can't help but to be worried about her brother.
I can't see anything else but the wish for me to do something about it on her face.

"I have already started this, so I won't quit now."

I will make sure that Betty's brother will be able make a living by managing this keepsake of his parents properly.
Believing that I might as well give it a try since there's nothing to lose anyway, I decide to begin with the reformation of this restaurant.

* * *

"Earl Baumeister-sama, you say you came up with a new business?"

"New, huh? I'd say it's a combination of existing businesses."

On the next day we're in the middle of remodeling Betty's brother's restaurant. Of course I have asked Arterio-san, and as expected, he seemed to be very curious what kind of restaurant it would become.

"But, isn't the location slightly bad?"

"The bad location will be compensated by another component. We will sell alcohol."

"A tavern? If it's a tavern, I think the management will be difficult."

Yep, the management of a tavern is troublesome.

It's because they have a wide range of dishes, and that would take quite a bit of time and effort. If no guests show up, the loss of ingredients will grow, putting even more pressure on the management.

It also has the contrivance that the ones managed by a company are more profitable than those run by individuals.

Bigger companies can lower the costs by stocking up in bigger batches all at once, and have the advantage of being able to flexibly shuffle lacking resources and manpower around between the branch stores.

"Is that why you have increased the places at the counter? There's no chairs either, huh?"

"We're going for a setup where guests drink while standing."

What I have come up with is a restaurant where people dine and drink while standing. Alcohol with a high profit ratio and side dishes going well with the drinks will be served. It's a store targeted at people who want to grab a drink on their way back home after work.

"There will be one to three side dishes, and up to three cups of alcohol from a wide range of different sorts. The drinking while standing is for the sake of increasing the turnover rate. We will leave those guests, who would sit down to drink normally, to taverns."

This store is scheduled to become a standing-bar like the one in Japan's Shinbashi1.

"Since the idea here is for the guests to drink a bit and go back home afterwards, I guess it's okay to not care that much over its location."

"Actually, it's better for the location to be slightly bad instead."

The guests will have a drink for a short time after work before heading home, and come for quick drinks during their days off and after the sun goes down.

Since I'm estimating for those cases to be our targets, it's rather better for the store to be situated in a place that doesn't have many people looking at it.

"If the regular customers increase, the bad location won't be a handicap any longer. Once the regular customers come here to drink with their friends, the number of guests will increase even further."

"I see."

The remodeling results in establishing counter seats by narrowing down the cooking area. As there are no chairs despite there being tables set up, the guests will be able to drink while chatting with several peers.

The lack of chairs aims at increasing the turnover of guests.

"We will also leave the guests, who stick around for a long time, to the taverns."

"Oh, so you're narrowing down the quality of the customers. And what's my part in this?" (Arterio)

"The menu." (Wendelin)

The food will be served a la carte suiting the alcohol, and I want to increase the types of drinks and side dishes as much as possible.

We will use the seasoning and the menu of the restaurants run by Arterio-san.

"Cold tofu, green soybeans, pickled vegetables, and all kinds of salads. Various fried foods are possible as well, right? Deep-fried food will work as well, no?"

In addition, fried vegetables and meat on skewers, bird in teriyaki, yakitori...since bamboo skewers can actually only be procured through Mizuho, they are expensive...for now we have no other option but to swindle our way through by placing the fried food on tables without using skewers. I think the menu will grow, as long as we provide various small dishes with salt-taste and dipping sauces.

"Fish might be nice as well." (Wendelin)

"Earl-sama, fish is unexpectedly expensive."

"I've got a connection, right? I will try to talk it over with them."

The one I discussed it with was the owner of 『River』 whom I previously taught the method of cooking eel.

"Earl Baumeister-sama, long time no see."

"It's the eel king! The eel king is here!"

"Just as you said, that nickname got stuck to me, Earl Baumeister-sama."

Nowadays the owner of River has set up several branch stores, and is even called Eel King in the

capital.

"Eels would be a bit difficult, but if it's freshwater fish cuisine, I can provide the ingredients. Since I got connections to the river fishers, the prices will be slightly lower as well. Let's see...the menu will be..."

It might be fine to go with the standard fried and deep-fried fish and river shrimps.

Even sweetened boiled fish and deep-fried fish marinated in spicy sauce should go very well with alcohol.

There are plenty of other fish dishes that will work as well.² Given that it will take time to prepare all of it, it will be alright to buy finished dishes to some extent.

"The menu has drastically grown, hasn't it Earl Baumeister-sama?"

"With this we can reopen once the owner has familiarized himself with cooking the dishes on the menu."

"And, if it all goes well, it will allow him to open another store with the same concept at another place in the capital."

"That's how it is. I will have him open a branch in Baulburg, too."

"This will yield a hefty profit again, won't it?"

"No kidding."

Arterio-san and I laugh at each other while clapping our shoulders.

"For some reason I feel like my opinions and feelings on this are being ignored here..."

"Betty's brother, I don't know whether you do it for the memories of your deceased father or whatsoever, but there's no point in a restaurant that yields no profit. If your dead father heard that you have your sister sponsor the meat, he'd roll over in his grave while lamenting, I think. If you want to run the restaurant in your own way, you got to earn money first. Or, are you going to run a half-baked restaurant for the rest of your life while sponging off your sister after Betty becomes an excellent magician?"

Since Betty's brother is still complaining, I argue him down with logic.

Because he might become a shackle for his sister, who has a promising future ahead of her, I've told him that I would cooperate.

"That might have a charm of its own as well though, if you're going for the easy way out."

"Uuuh...even I have pride and backbone as her big brother. I mean, my skills aren't bad! I will make a restaurant again after making this place succeed!"

"There's a method to serve the dishes you've made up until now, though."

"Really?"

"Really."

Since the bar is going to be opened in the late afternoon, it's okay for him to serve a limited lunch menu.

Given that food preparation for a standing-bar will likely be quite hard, he will need to narrow down the menu to one or two daily specials.

If he uses that method, he might become busy, but it won't be impossible.

"For example, like this."

I have him run a trial run of a limited lunch, but this is no more than a reuse of his basic menu. It's an improvement of the stew we ate the other day.

"The sauce is almost perfect. I will make you complete a stew including plenty of cheap sinewy and leftover meat without relying on Betty's hunting. You will serve it on a big plate together with rice, and garnish it with pickled vegetables."

He will need to carefully dish out everything on one plate, and not several.

It's no good with bread, but as long as he uses rice, it won't be a problem since the dish will become like beef stroganoff rice or hashed meat with rice.

The vegetables are added for a good nutritional balance, and if you use pickled ones, it won't be easy to incur a loss of ingredients as they can be stored for a long time.

It might also be fine to serve the pickled vegetables as a side dish for the alcohol or as a standalone-item.

"With this the price becomes seven cents. You will serve water for free, and if people want fruit juice added to their water, add another cent to the total."

Because fruit juice water can also be used to dilute alcohol, this will also make it possible to keep the ingredient loss low.

It will also have an effect on lowering the price of the ingredients as he will procure a great amount at a wholesale price.

"Because it'll be one plate, washing won't pose any problems either. Refine your creativity as cook while thinking up such menus."

"Okay! I will show you my best!"

"Sensei, thank you very much." (Betty)

Having gone this far, the probability of this working out well should be fairly high.

We leave the rest to Arterio-san, and return to our usual lives.

And then, a little while later...



"Thanks to you, sensei, my brother's store is flourishing. We're truly and deeply thankful."

Even though she had said various harsh things, I think that Betty was worried about her brother's restaurant.

She reports to us that customers have started to flow in now.

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

"Yes!" (Betty)

I had heard about this through Arterio-san, but Betty's brother's shop seems to be a huge hit since its opening day.

Limited to day time, he serves a daily special lunch menu, and afterwards he runs it as standing-bar until night.

Thinking that it's a great idea, Arterio-san seems to plan experimental bars in other areas of the capital.

"It looks like my brother can pay back his debts early, too." (Betty)

The store's remodeling, the development of new menus, and the expenses necessary for the reopening had all turned into debts, but Betty tells me that there's a good chance for him being able to pay it all back.

After all it's been me who lent the money to her brother as the one poking my nose into it.

『If my brother can't pay you back, I will work so long until I do it.』

It's no significant amount of money, but Betty threatened her brother saying that she would become the guarantor for the debt.

You could call that levelheaded, but in reality she might be a quite scary girl.

I think she might be compelled to being dependable because her brother is somewhat a scatterbrain, though.

"Erwin, hubby, we're not going to grab lunch there?" (Katia)

"You're right, let's give it a try."

Once I head to his store while taking Erw, Katia and Betty along, the place is packed with many guests.

Since it's lunchtime, most of the guests are eating the lunch menu.

Though a part of them are elderly men enjoying alcohol with side dishes.

"Welcome!"

"It's a full house. He hired a new person?"

There's a young female employee in the store.

The shop owner, Betty's brother, is in charge of cooking, and the woman seems to be in charge of taking orders, carrying the alcohol and dishes, and handle the billing.

"Oh my, Betty-chan, hello."

"Hello, Rosa-san. Today I've come together with Earl Baumeister-sama to take a look."

It appears that this young woman is an acquaintance of Betty.
The two are chatting happily with each other.

"I'm sorry for my brother always causing you trouble."

"He's a really hopeless guy. To make his younger sister worry so much."

Rosa sighs while looking at Betty's brother who's busy in the kitchen.

"Betty, is she your friend?"

"Rosa-san is brother's childhood friend."

"I guess she came to work here through that connection?"

"Yes, we keep getting indebted to you, Earl Baumeister-sama. I wonder how to thank you for all you have done for us."

Rosa is a very pretty woman, and carries out the customer service and other jobs flawlessly. Even going by her greeting towards me, she seems to be a very capable person.

"Rosa-san, since brother is such a lost case, I won't mind you abandoning him if he blunders next time."

"It's fine. This time I will keep him properly on the leash. Earl Baumeister-sama, we will definitely repay the debt as well."

Even though Rosa-san is supposed to be the one hired here, it looks like she totally has the pants on in their work relationship.

Well, since it's something that often happens in society, I decide to not pay any attention to it. In short, the store is thriving, and all will be fine if the debt is paid back.

"I guess we can be relieved with things like this. There are people who get carried away once things turn out well a bit, but as long as Rosa-san is here, she will rein him in."

"He isn't very reliable, but he's no bad man."

"Brother has been like that even after promising to marry Rosa-san."

"What was that...?"

It's here again!

His cooking is fairly delicious, but there's still a childhood friend who promised to marry a worthless guy who would ask his younger sister to provide the ingredients after being at his wits' end.

The world is truly unfair.

For such a guy to have a childhood friend who's also his fiancée...I wonder, does God really exist?

But, even if I meaninglessly shout this injustice out here like I did before, it's not like my opinion will be approved.

I wonder whether I should punish that scoundrel in another way.

"If you fail, I will send you to the mines!"

I yell loudly, lighting the fire under Betty's brother ass.

"Hiee——h! I will do my best! I will absolutely pay back the money!"

I pretend to harshly encourage Betty's brother while actually performing a counterattack against a normalfag.

Right, this isn't me harassing him.

I'm simply striking down a normalfag as representative of the countless restrained heart voices of the people who couldn't become normalfags.

Yes, this is justice!

"If you got it, it's four portions of the daily special."

I quickly put in an order with Betty's brother, and move to an open table.

Since there are no chairs, we continue talking around the table with all of us standing.

"Brother regularly becomes a useless slacker, but as long as Rosa-san is here, it'll be alright."

"So, as long as she holds his leash, he will be peaceful?"

"Yes."

But, it's truly weird.

In this world the pattern of good women attaching themselves to such useless guys seems to be common...

I should imitate him...no, wait...let alone there being no point in even more women getting close to me, it will actually wear me down instead, I think...

"Thank you for waiting. Here's your boar stew rice."

A little while later Rosa-san brings us our servings of lunch.

I try it at once, but it's tastier than before as it looks like he has repeatedly improved on the taste.

He's called a useless brother by Betty, but he appears to be fairly serious about cooking.

Otherwise, I wouldn't have lent him any money either though.

"However, I really don't get it. There are also adventurers, right? What's the idea in a fine woman sticking to such a useless guy?" (Katia)

"I don't think you can make such a call since it's something between man and woman."

Katia seems to share my opinion.

Erw doesn't appear to consider it strange for Betty's brother to have a fiancée, saying that love isn't bound by such inflexible rules.

"Katia, you are no good with such men?"

"Absolutely! For me, a type like hubby is much better."

"But, I'm not all that dependable either."

Except for my magic, I have plenty of sloppy parts as well.

"But look, you wouldn't put your younger sister and fiancée on the spot, right? There are people who hate bringing up money when it comes to the relationship between men and women, but not allowing for your family and wife to become poor is important, too."

True, I guess you can't really praise the methods of Betty's brother overly much.

"That's definitely irrefutable."

"Right?"

Katia appears to be someone with a far stricter way of thinking than we had thought.

It might be owed to her having been a first-class adventurer as a woman, albeit not belonging to a specific party.

"Hubby and me won't get bored from being together since our homes were complicated noble houses. Being able to enjoy eating together normally in a store like this is nice, isn't it?"

She's right, such things might be important as well.

However, Elise has adapted quickly, and Therese has a tendency to like such stores as well.

I guess it means a simple secluded noble lady doesn't suit me.

"But, if you understand as much, why the matter with the tunnel then?" (Wendelin)

"Hubby, don't bring this topic up agaaaaiin...." (Katia)



Later on the management of Betty's brother's store would get on track, and he would quickly repay his debts to me.

He entered under the umbrella of the Arterio Company, and ran several branch restaurants in districts highly contested by many stores. He made a name for himself as a successful man.

Of course, it went without saying that it was owed to the existence of his scary wife who remained in the back.

Rather, it was her who became a celebrity in the business world, but...that was something everyone had imagined happening.

* * *

"Betty, sorry. I will definitely make this store a success and pay back the debts. Otherwise, it would affect you as guarantor."

At night of that day brother came to me to apologize while I was helping with the cleaning of the store.

"You do understand that it will put Betty-chan in trouble if the repayment is delayed, right?"

"I will do my best tomorrow as well."

I feel jealous when I see Rosa-san and brother getting along so well, even if she scolds brother. It makes me wonder what kind of person I'm going to marry in my future. Once I try to imagine it, sensei's face pops up in my mind. I try to push it back in a hurry.

"(Sensei has plenty of beautiful wives, so that's impossible.)"

"Good grief, something like having your own sister be the guarantor of your debt..." (Rosa)

"I'm reflecting on that part. I will definitely return the money."

"That goes without saying." (Rosa)

I reach a certain thought while observing the two being on good terms even while arguing. It's about the case of brother not being able to pay back the debt.

"(Me paying it back won't be all that difficult once I become an adult, will it?)"

A magician earns a lot.

Not to mention, I possess quite a bit of mana, and even in the prep school I'm regarded as a promising magician.

I should be able to easily pay back the debt, if I feel like it.

"(Sensei said so as well...)"

『Betty, you have a lot of mana, and you're still in the middle of your growth. If you concentrate on your studies, you can become a good magician.』

My cheeks turn red when I remember sensei praising me.

"(Ah, but, if I delay the payback as well...)"

Since sensei is a gentle man, he would probably tell me that it's fine to repay the debt after becoming an adult, but if I caused the payback to delay because I prioritized using the money for equipment necessary as magician and adventurer such as an expensive wand or robe, even he would make demands.

If he told me at that time that my body is the collateral...

"(If I couldn't repay the debt, I would become sensei's property. That might actually work.)"

When I come up with a very neat idea, I get totally happy all by myself.
And in order to realize that plan, I address my brother.

"Even if you fail to repay the debt, I won't have any problem with it."

"It's okay! I will definitely pay it back! Or rather, just how little do you guys trust in me!"

"Until now there haven't been any reasons allowing us to trust you, right!?"

While watching brother getting scolded by Rosa-san, I end up thinking that it'd be nice if brother is unable to return the debt instead.

Chapter 7 – Memories and Reality

"Milord, what shall we do?"

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

"Milord, you truly love your wives."

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

"Milord, is something worrying you?"

"No, it's nothing."



The development of the Baumeister Earldom is proceeding smoothly.

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

Magic and manpower. With those two components the speed of the earldom's development has taken on an astounding drive.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"So, milord, any other?"

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

"Milord, what else?"

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

I have run into a problem.

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

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

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

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

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

"No, that would be wrong."

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

"Milord, you're the absolute ruler of this earldom. Allowing the residents to make decisions isn't anything advisable."

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

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

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

I feel like Roderich dissed me there in passing, but even if the names are uncool, it sounds like I have to be the one making the decision.

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

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

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

This seems to be a common occurrence.

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

Since towns and such aren't founded as easily anymore, there are few opportunities to give new names.

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

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

Given that it's been empty land until now, there aren't even any good hints to go with. Because the naming standard is basically German names, the range of reuses is minuscule which gives me troubles.

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

"I guess the towns can't wait."

"Correct."

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

* * *

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

Even in my own eyes this is a very hypocritical line, but if I don't get my wives to accept here, I will be at a loss since that will mean that even my first ten names will be rejected. Yes, I have completely turned into Earl Baumeister, a refined man and high-ranking noble, who gives his beloved wives the present of leaving their names behind for eternity.

"Yes, it will be a pleasure."

Because Elise is basically a good girl, she happily accepts my present. A rising noble uses the name of his beloved wives for the names of places in his developed territory. In the noble society that's a present surpassing even jewelry, according to Roderich. To me, it doesn't really make much sense, though.

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

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

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

"Wend-sama, thanks." (Wilma)

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

It's wonderful that Wilma and Katharina appear to be happy about it as well. Especially Katharina is someone fixated on her nobility. Her way of speaking is the usual one, but she's smiling all over her face.

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

"Thank you very much." (Lisa)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"It's an unforeseen circumstance even for me as a former high-ranking noble. Well, please refrain

from using my name for big towns." (Therese)

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

The last one, Philine, is the daughter of that Margrave Breithilde, so it won't be a problem. Even if I use her name for a somewhat large city, it will be interpreted as my consideration towards the Margrave Breithilde House, our patron. For the huge daughter-pampering Margrave Breithilde it might be a very auspicious event.

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

"Erwinburg?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I have to make a clear distinction in that area.

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

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

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

"Erw, now listen..."

I end up flabbergasted by that absurdity.

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

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

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

"Don't ask the obvious!"

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

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

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

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

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

"Anyway, today is a day off."

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

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

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

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

Flowers and trees for the scenery have been planted with the gardener properly caring for them.

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

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

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

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

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

She's already restless.

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

She's saying all that, but Elise is as quick as ever in pouring new maté tea in empty cups.

However, her opportunities to go out have definitely decreased.

There's also the issue that Roderich and the others won't be happy if something happens to her or the others since they'll be troubled.

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

Well, it's likely because it'd be a disaster if something happened to Elise's body.

If I'm not mistaken, the number of maids and guards around Elise has grown in number.

As it'd become a question of responsibility if something were to happen to her now, the guards don't relax their tense expressions.

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

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

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

Since I'm the founder of the Baumeister House, it means I can have as many children as I want for the establishment of branch families and influential retainer families.

Ina and Luise complain that they've become unable to move their bodies as much as they want.

Well, those two are similar to Katia in being bad at staying still.

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

Today Haruka is participating in the tea party on the courtyard together with Erw.

I feel like it's been rather fast, but since she's pregnant as well, she's likewise taking a break from her swordsmanship training.

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

"What is it, Therese-sama?"

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

"Thou won't take any concubines? Thou have a fairly high position in the Baumeister House, and thou have a good income as well. Thine surroundings won't agree with thou just having Haruka as wife." (Therese)

"Ugh..."

Erw is at a loss for words due to Therese's question.

Certainly, various people around Erw might be naggy about him having one wife right now. I have also heard from Roderich that those kinds of approaches towards him are becoming persistent.

"Roderich-san also has just one wife."

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

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

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

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

In response to Therese's question, the maid Lea, who has been waiting on us, raises her hand.

She's Dominique's cousin, and secretly...no, boldly vying for the position as Erw's concubine.

I and the other maids admire her for that bold approach, in a certain way.

If Lea becomes Erw's concubine, it has the advantage that I will be able to have her keep working as Dominique's assistant in this mansion.

"(Erw, how about Lea?)"

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

Erw's answer is questionable, but I actually know.

Recently he has been regularly going on dates with Lea after being urged to do so by Haruka.

Haruka is kind of originating from nobility, albeit a low-ranking one.

It's a nobility that equals samurai in rank, so she believes it to be only natural for a family head to have concubines.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Did he feel ashamed?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I see, then it's fine."

"Those are wonderful news, right Lea?"

"Yes!"

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

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

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

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

"Umm...the schedule taking the least time is..."

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

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

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

As long as nothing extraordinary happens, she will continue to push the issue on her own accord so

that no other woman can steal a march on her.

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

It will make him doubt whether he had actually accepted all of this out of his free will.

"Erw, you have also reached that kind of social position." (Wendelin)

"Is that something to be happy about?" (Erwin)

That's nothing I can answer.

Would it have been better to have stayed the eighth son of a poor noble, or is it better to be Earl Baumeister?

It's not like I can experience both at the same time.

"Well then, cheers to the marriage between Erw and Lea!"

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!Cheers!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

It's just mate tea, but after clinking cups with everyone, I decide to enjoy another light meal and some tea cakes.

Erw has an indescribable expression, but although there's a difference in intensity between people, everyone suffers from marriage blues.

Once the marriage ceremony is over with, things will immediately return to normal.

It was the same for me as well.

"Dear, congratulations." (Haruka)

"Thanks..." (Erwin)

And it's Haruka who boldly congratulates Erw.

I end up admiring her for her Mizuho-style nadeshiko mannerism.

However, it might be good that she isn't my wife.

Somehow I can't put it into words well, but I experience the optical illusion that Haruka is skilfully pulling the strings attached to Erw's hands and feet.

Still, I don't say anything because Erw himself seems to be happy with that.

"Your Lordship."

"What's wrong?" (Wendelin)

As I'm pondering about such matters, the person in charge of the mansion's security suddenly calls out to me.

"Actually, there's someone saying that they have business with you, milord."

"Without an appointment it's a no-go."

Recently the number of people wanting to meet with me has been profusely growing.

Given that the reasons are mostly within the range of what one can imagine, I don't really need to

explain it at this point, but if I were to meet with all of them, my day would need to have 48 hours. Hence it has taken the shape of me leaving most of them to Roderich, only meeting a selected few myself.

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

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

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

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

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

Having said that, it's rare for nobles to personally show up in front of the mansion without appointment.

That's probably the reason why the guard captain has come here to request me to make a decision.

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

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

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

I go to our mansion's front gate by myself.

Upon arriving there, I spot a young man who appears to truly be a noble, going by his appearance. He looks to be around twenty years old.

"Earl Baumeister-dono?"

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

Baron Legat's current action is against the rules of nobility.

I give him a warning about that part.

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

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

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

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

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

"It looks like your noble wives have become pregnant, so allow me to congratulate you on that. If a daughter is born...no, if it's that number of wives, at least a single girl should definitely be born. Would you allow me, Baron Legat, to take one of your future daughters as a wife? In such a case, the relationship between the Baumeister House and the Legat House will be strengthened..."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He collapses in the middle of the street after fainting.

"Don't allow that moron to ever bother us again! Submit a request to Roderich to draw up a termination letter for his family!"

"Yes, it will happen at once, Your Lordship!!"

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

Of course he just offended me with his shallow thinking.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Hey, can I ask you something?"

"Your Lordship?"

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

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

"I'm his childhood friend."

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

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

Why, you ask?

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

As if.

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

* * *

"Erw, I'm disappointed in you."

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

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

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

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

His crime is a considerably heavy one.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Erw, unforgivable."

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

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

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

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

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

I didn't even have a male childhood friend!

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

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

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

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

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

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

The only ones treating him normally were the commoner children.

"You had surpassed me at that point." (Wendelin)

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

"Okay..." (Wendelin)

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

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

In other words, this beautiful girl here.

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

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

It's not that Erwin is just trying to show off. If it's the daughter of the local store, and even if it's the third daughter, Erw would have been forced to live in that territory after marrying her. She's in a position where she couldn't refuse her father if she were to be told by him to marry into some family.

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

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

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

Even though the marriage was decided by both parents, despite them being commoners, there are many cases where such arrangements are canceled for various reasons.

As a marriage is ultimately something between both families, the opinion of the family heads plays a big role in this.

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

However, that's how this world works.

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

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

"Didn't take place?"

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

"Why did that happen?"

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

"That Geltz died...?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

It's something that often happens in rural territories.

"So, what happened to you then?"

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

"Haah? For what reason?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Really, Therese?"

I ask Therese for a detailed explanation.

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

Therese invested great efforts to find a second wife for an old retainer well above sixty, despite her own fiancé haven't been decided yet.

Sure, I think I might have also felt bad in her shoes.

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

"He's close to sixty years old."

"He's older than I thought."

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

In other words, the previous feudal lord, Erw's grandfather, made a child elsewhere and kept providing for that child, but since the opportunity to marry into the village headman's family

presented itself, he pushed his bastard onto them.

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

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

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

"Those are some complicated family backgrounds."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If Erw was still a free adventurer, he could have chosen the option of escaping together with her.

After all, it's not like Erw's home possesses the leeway to search for an eloping couple.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Erw has reached that conclusion after earnestly considering matters in his own way.

No matter how much he wanted to shelter Anna...he can't choose that option because of the Baumeister House.

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

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

"Erwin-sama..."

"This is the only available option."

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

I think many people would regard his treatment of her as cold-hearted.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Wai-! Luise!"

Ina and Luise attack Erw's choice, calling it weird.

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

Right, Elise?"

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

"Huh? Really?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"You strained your birdbrain, you mean?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Go on, Erw."

"Tell her."

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

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

"Gladly...Erwin-sama!"

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

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

"I have heard the rumors."

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

"Yes."

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

This time Erw was pathetically controlled by my wives.

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

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

The reason for my unhappiness is simple.

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

Well, it's a date, so...

"Ugugu..."

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

"Incomprehensible..."

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

"Amalie-san..."

She's right, I had Amalie-san.

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

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

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

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

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

"Indeed."

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

"Two letters will be necessary."

"Eh? Two?"

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

"Ah, true, there was someone like that."

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

I felt completely refreshed after blowing him away with magic, and there was the matter with Anna, so I have completely forgotten about him.

He didn't leave me much of an impression except for being offending either.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Is it going to be alright with that?"

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

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

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

"No."

The trade is going on normally without any preferential treatments.

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

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

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

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

"Hmm, that makes sense." (Wendelin)

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

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

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

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

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

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

"It's just that I had more than enough opportunities to get good at this."

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

He gives high praise to Therese.

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

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

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

"Time is limited, after all."

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

"Thou are a childish man. Well, it can't be helped. Lisa, Amalie and I will follow up on thou.

Occasionally it's good to have older women around, isn't it?"

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

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

"Therese, you're evil..."

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

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

In other words, we got their tacit consent.

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

Chapter 8 – Troublesome Matters Are Increasing in Various Ways even while I Work as Teacher

"Milord, the future prospering of the Earl Baumeister House depends on how many children you make who will then form our household. Too many children becomes a source of strife in noble houses with long histories, but the Earl Baumeister House has been founded by you. Therefore, there's no need to worry about those things."

"Oh, really?"

"Milord, treating it as if it were someone else's problem...as you're still young, you must do your best as long as you can."

"Haah..."

It's been three months since I have taken up my job as a temporary teacher with summer being at its early stage.

Given that the Baumeister Earldom has a climate close to the subtropics, the temperature here is high all year long, but we're going to soon enter midsummer which is a lot hotter.

That's why, or rather, it's completely unrelated, but I have taken Roderich's words, to whom I have outsourced all decisions in regards to governmental affairs as Household Manager, as something similar to encouragement, and not so much as sermon.

To be honest, it's not like my motivation gets boosted when hearing all that, though.

"Elise and your other three wives are already in their fifth month of pregnancy, and the prospect of a long-awaited heir makes us retainers sigh in relief."

Because Elise, Ina, Luise, and Katharina got pregnant at almost the same time, there's almost no worry of the Baumeister House going extinct even if something should happen to me.

There are cases where the lack of an heir leads to unnecessary troubles over the inheritance of the peerage and territory.

In the eyes of the retainers who have been able to find work at long last, a lack of a legitimate heir could cause a downsizing of the territory, directly connecting to their dismissal as retainers. I suppose, it's only natural for them to feel relieved.

"Following, Wilma-sama and Katia-sama have..."

As a matter of fact, those two have become pregnant as well.

Wilma has turned fifteen years old, and since Katia is going to soon be twenty years old with her mana having stopped rising, there have been pressing demands for her to bear a child by her family. It's not like that was the reason, but I did put in some effort.

"Wonderful. With this the Baumeister House will be saaa...fe..."

After having told me all this, Roderich started to cry, getting all emotional by himself. At such times I'm perplexed how I should deal with the situation.

Well, it's not like I need to treat a guy kindly just because he's crying, right?

"Thanks to that, I've become unable to go hunting in monster domains, though."

"Of course. After all, we can't form a party that can guarantee your safety, milord."



Under these circumstances, almost everyone in the Dragon Buster's female camp has entered maternity leave.

Therefore, I'm stuck with occasionally hunting in the nearby forests with Erw.

In addition, Erw always brings several guards along.

"Guards and all that, this is way too formal, you know?"

"What are you saying!? Wouldn't it turn into an irreversible situation if something happened to you, milord!?"

Becoming an important person has its downsides as well.

However, Roderich will only allow me to act freely if I take Elise and the others with me.

That means, it's a necessary evil for the moment.

"Even Therese, eh...?"

In the end, after she had raised her mana capacity to a level ranging in the middle of the advanced level, she stopped using contraception on her own initiative, and got pregnant with my child.

According to herself, 『Even while pregnant, I can still practice magic, right? I'm already 21 years old, and I want to give birth to at least one child』.

"In regards to Therese-sama, there are no real problems. Given that she's a person with a good discernment, she's very easy to deal with."

Her child won't have any succession rights, but if it's a man, we will make him the head of a new chief retainer house. Roderich says that he has come to such an agreement with Therese.

I wonder just when they talked it over, but for me it's convenient as it has no troublesome aspects.

"And you finally made a move on Lisa-sama as well, didn't you?"

"Hey, Roderich! You want to destroy everything I've built up so strenuously?"

She wouldn't get accepted by anyone while wearing that flashy make-up and outfit. On the other hand, she can't talk with any man besides me, if she doesn't wear it.

Since she has reached a point where she can talk normally with the women in my house, it's not like there was no effect from her training, but yeah...

She's gallantly helping us out in the earldom's development, and since she's a person whom Amelie-

san describes with 『Even though she's older than me, I end up wanting to pamper her against my better judgment since she's so cute』- an opinion I shared as well – I decided to accept her wish. And then she became pregnant as well, although she raised her mana before that. Her mana capacity has increased to a level of being almost equal with Katharina, but since she's been a top-class magician to begin with, her room for growth seemed to be low.

"Isn't Lisa-sama happy with it?"

Certainly, nowadays she's spending her days sewing baby clothes together with Elise and the others. For her, who's soon going to be thirty years old, it must appear like a miracle took place. In Japan it's not overly strange to get pregnant at that age, but in this world it's doubtlessly considered a childbirth at old age.

"Before that I went through quite the hassle, though..."

"Is it about the matter with Lisa-sama becoming a temporary teacher?"

"Yeah, that's what I'm talking about."

I recall an incident that happened last month.



『Eh? Construction work? I have no time today.』

It was before Lisa's pregnancy was detected. On that day I would have a lecture at the prep school, but Roderich begged me to urgently construct something with magic. Since he said that it was dire, I was about to delay the lecture to the next day, but the one offering to help out was Lisa. Moreover, as a temporary teacher. Because the construction work spanned over a large scale with only me having enough mana to take care of it, Roderich told Lisa that it would be impossible for her.

『It sounds like Lisa-sama is kind enough to take over the part of the temporary teaching.』

『If you say so, I guess it'll be fine.』

Previously Katia told me that Lisa's way of teaching was theoretical, and I believed that the students would benefit from widening their horizons by being taught by various kinds of teachers. Even I learned magic from Master, Burkhart-san, and Doushi. It was very useful for me as a magician to have various approaches as reference. For my students it should also be helpful to also experienced this early on.

『I guess I will leave it to her then.』 (Wendelin)

『Okay.』 (Roderich)

This was how it was decided for Lisa to act as temporary teacher on that day.

『Lisa? You're that Lisa the Blizzard?』

In the morning of that day I escorted Lisa to the prep school and explained the situation to Headmaster Hendrick, but he stared at Lisa in amazement.

I could fully understand his feelings.

After all she had turned into a completely different person compared to before.

『Please take care of me.』 (Lisa)

『Earl Baumeister-dono, you have my deepest respect...』 (Hendrick)

Hendrick apparently believed that I had reformed Lisa.

Though I think it'd be more precise to say that I exposed or unmasked her true nature.

『If Earl Baumeister-dono has urgent business to attend to, I will gladly request your help.』
(Hendrick)

However, the current Lisa had a decisive flaw.

Until this very day, she couldn't even hold a decent conversation with a man besides me.

Even if they might be minors, half of the class consists of male students...

『Umm...』

『Sensei, we can't really hear what you're saying.』

Naturally she ended up cowering away, unable to even introduce herself properly.

The students also complained about a temporary teacher who couldn't talk normally.

To be honest, I had wondered why Lisa accepted to take that job, but the reason became apparent right away.

But then again, it was a fact Hendrick had learned after visiting the class to check the situation, since I wasn't present at that point anymore as I had headed over to the construction site.

『Excuse me for a moment...』 (Lisa)

While the students expressed their dissatisfaction about today's temporary teacher, Lisa left the classroom after quietly excusing herself, and came back after around ten minutes.

She had put on her previous make-up and flashy outfit.

『I'm Lisa the Blizzard! You little shits! You should be grateful that I'm the one teaching you today!』

The classroom instantly transformed into a picture of Hell and Pandemonium.

Well, I suppose that made sense.

There was no one among the magicians aiming to become adventurers who didn't know of Lisa's name and her usual conduct.

The classroom plunged straight into a critical situation.

『Is that the same person as before? You're a swindler!』

『Shut the fuck up! Want me to freeze you!?』

Lisa snapped due to the comment of a male student, and let cold air loose into the vicinity. The vase filled with flowers, that had been placed on the teacher's desk, froze into a sculpture, terrifying the students and resulting in them obediently listening to Lisa's lecture. The contents of her lesson seemed to be theoretical matters as could be predicted...

『How did it go with the previous temporary teacher? Sensei couldn't attend because I had urgent business to take care of last time.』 (Wendelin)

『It was very useful as a reference...but also quite scary...』

『Since the flowers on sensei's desk ascended to heaven, I brought new flowers. It was a useful lecture, but I was frightened.』

『The magic theory about the water and wind attributes was magnificent. However it was frightening...』

Agnes, Cindy, Betty, and the other students were apparently terrified after experiencing Lisa in that getup.

All things considered, I strangely ended up admiring Lisa for still having kept that attire around.

『Lisa, I'd really like to see you in that getup once more.』

『Sorry. I can't show it to the person who's my husband.』

Such events took place as well...I didn't know the full story behind them, but I took Lisa as a wife. Taking women as wives after defeating them in a duel; I somehow had the feeling that it'd result in me taking many women as wives until my death, if I were to continue doing something like this.

"Still, it's a blessing that Amalie-sama is here."

Certainly, it's just as Roderich says.

The number of my wives has increased up to this point, and on top of that, all of them have become pregnant.

Thus I'm very grateful for Amelie-san taking care of Elise and the others as someone who has experienced childbirth before.

Officially Amelie-san is treated as Head Maid, but Roderich is treating her as my wife.

His words are: 『She has experience in giving birth, and she's still young, so please do your best.』

"Still, can't you somehow increase the number of wives...?" (Roderich)

"Hey..." (Wendelin)

That damn Roderich came up with the most outrageous stuff.

However, since I've also got to keep a good balance with Margrave Breithilde, my patron, any more wives will likely be impossible.

Margrave Breithilde has been keeping the number of wives in check with me, but the other day he contacted me through the MHCD, telling me to spare him from getting any more wives.

It's not like he has an excess of stamina as a person belonging to the liberal arts category, and he also doesn't possess an overflowing sex drive.

The number of my wives including Philine – albeit that has to wait after she becomes an adult – totals to eight women + two unofficial mistresses.

If you look at the plain numbers, it means nobles are obscene beings.

No, a group of lions?

At least there's enough material for an erotic novel to be found here.

But then again, there are actually many troublesome aspects when having many wives.

Especially in my case as I lack the skill to handle women smoothly.

"At the very least, I'd like you to have thirty."

However, according to Roderich, that limitation is set too low.

I wonder, just where my future is headed.

"Thirty what, Roderich?"

"Of course children."

"Give it a rest...let me deliberately say it once more, give it a damn rest..."

That big number makes me wonder whether I'm supposed to be a warring states commander or a shogun of the Edo shogunate.

"There're many inquiries for marriages, while considering that half of them will be girls, for the establishments of branch families. And there's also houses desiring boys to adopt them into their families as son-in-laws."

Houses with only daughters seem to believe that they can get a benefit out of tying a relationship with our house by accepting a son-in-law.

Normal noble houses have to wrack their brains as to where they can send their children, but since the Baumeister House has been just founded in my generation, there's absolutely no problems either way.

"What a corrupt talk." (Wendelin)

"That's nobles for you." (Roderich)

"I know, I know." (Wendelin)

"Hence, please do your best."

I have both my shoulders tightly grasped by Roderich.

He's telling me to do my best. But at what and how far?

"I know, I know!"

I break off the talk at this point, and quickly jump to the capital with 『Teleport』.
All in order to quickly forget the depraved noble society by getting in touch with my pure students.

* * *

"That's it for today's lesson. If you have any questions, feel free to ask me anytime."

Today's lesson has ended safely.

The 61 students in the classroom are still continuing to enthusiastically take notes.

Even the students, who didn't attend at first as they had no issues with keeping their attendance to a minimum thanks to the old teacher with his advanced senility, are now almost completely present after hearing about me being the new teacher.

Occasionally one or two miss a lesson due to health reasons or similar.

It's probably also owed to my established reputation, but seeing the students hanging on my lips is something that calms my mind.

I have started to believe that it might not be bad to continue being a teacher.

Seriously, noble obligations and such can go eat shit.

"Sensei!"

"Any questions, Agnes?"

"Yes!"

Most recently I have managed to memorize the names and faces of all my students.

Learning the faces and names of my pure students, who diligently listen to my lessons, is much easier than doing the same for all those corrupt nobles who only think how to get into my pocket.

Isn't that a very human reaction?

The one asking me the most questions among all my cute students is the class president character, Agnes.

Her family runs an optician store, and since she has a bad eyesight, she possesses several expensive, custom-made glasses.

At times she changes the glasses she's wearing, but when I asked her about the reason for doing so, she answered that it was an advertisement for her family.

As serious as she is, she's apparently doing it after being told so by her father.

According to her, the shady realtor Mr. Rinnenheim seems to also be a regular client of her family's store.

I can't help saying that deliberately having his shady glasses made as custom order is just what I'd expect from him.

Mr. Rinnenheim apparently ordered the sunglasses invented by me for his private time, too.

It's great that he didn't do so for his job.

After all sunglasses would totally make him look like a fishy land shark.

"There's something I'd like to ask about the angle of 『Magic Barrier』..."

"Ah, about that..."

『Magic Barrier』 is a difficult spell for those with little amounts of mana. If you engulf your whole body, the mana consumption increases accordingly. Maintaining the barrier continues sapping your mana as well. If you make the 『Magic Barrier』 too thin to save on mana, it will be penetrated by an enemy attack in no time which will in lieu defeat the meaning of having cast it in the first place. Accordingly I have hit upon a certain method. Just like adding an angle to a tank's armor plating, you just have to make sure to add an inclination to the 『Magic Barrier』 as well. This will allow the barrier to block a certain level of impact even while making it a bit thinner than usual. For the magicians with low mana capacity, that's a big help, I think. However, there are individual differences in the barrier's defensive power even when using the same angle and thickness. During the lesson I explained to only use this technique in actual combat after testing it thoroughly. Agnes probably wants to improve the 『Magic Barrier』 in her own way right away.

"Add me as well, please."

The second one is Cindy, the daughter of a flower arrangement store. While being the youngest, she possesses abilities that are at the same level as those of Agnes. Occasionally I'm buying flowers for my wives at her family's store.

"Sensei, I'd like to learn it as well."

The third one is Betty whose family runs a restaurant. She also rivals Agnes in ability. And those three are the top students of my class. At times I go to the restaurant of her older brother, but...well, I guess this is unrelated to anything.

"Sensei, please teach me as well!"

"I'd like you to teach me, too."

"Me too."

Since many other students have started to raise their hands as well, I decided to hold an extracurricular lesson outside, starting now. Once we arrive on the prep school's courtyard, I immediately demonstrate how 『Magic Barrier』 works.

"I have added colors to make it easier to see." (Wendelin)

It's not all that difficult to add colors to 『Magic Barrier』. Since it'd be a disadvantage in battle against other people if the barrier's thickness is obvious, everyone only deploys barriers that are almost transparent. It's still up to question whether monsters grasp the thickness of a 『Magic Barrier』 as the research on monster intelligence is still in progress. Also, if you're working as an adventurer, it's possible that you'll clash with other people. Because of that, there's few magicians who would deploy a colored 『Magic Barrier』.

"As it will have the disadvantage that you will need to deploy the barrier a good while ahead of time if you're going to add too much inclination, around 45° should be the limit, I think. Or you go with..."

I make my 『Magic Barrier』 take on a spherical shape.
Since it's a form that's difficult to control, it'll require training, but it also has the advantage of raising the barrier's defense strength.

"I see. Doing it like this, you can raise its defense while using the same amount of mana as before."

"It's tough...turning the 『Magic Barrier』 into a sphere..."

"That's probably because you've been skipping on magic training, Reinhart."

"I've been properly practicing it every day!" (Reinhart)

A male student gets teased by his friend, but he objects.

A part of the students also have the necessary training, but more importantly, it looks like I somehow managed to get all students to understand the underlying theory.

When I head over to the principal's office after finishing my overtime practical lesson, Headmaster Hendrick tells me that he'd like me to participate in a certain event.

"『Big Outdoor Excursion』, you say?"

"I want you to lead the magician class."

"Lead, huh...? It's a job typical for a teacher."

"Isn't it? It would be great if you could spare some of your time."

Leading an excursion would also mean that my teacher work has become genuine.

"Of course we will also help out. After all it's unreasonable to lead sixty students with one person."

"You bet. I won't be able to keep an eye on everyone."

There's no way that I, who isn't even a professional teacher, could watch sixty students by myself. As expected of Headmaster Hendrick, he's taken that part fully into account.

"My schedule is open, so it's okay with me."

"That's a big help."

"Don't mind it, I'm a teacher after all."

I agree to lead the excursion.

Once I got back to the mansion and told Elise about the big outdoor excursion, she was already aware of it.

"I know the gist of it since several priests are usually dispatched by the church."

And then she explains to me what it's about.

According to her, the big outdoor excursion is an event where everyone will go to a hunting ground in the capital's outskirts and hunt there.

It looks like it's a far more active event than the excursion I had in mind.

It kinda makes me think that it'd be fine to call it 『Big Hunting Festival』 instead.

"Given that it's only underage students and students close to graduation, it naturally won't be held in a monster domain. Everyone competes for hunting spoils in a normal hunting area."

The priests appear to be volunteers, helping out whenever there are any injured students.

Elise says that she has once participated in the event as well.

"Occasionally there will be some lightly injured students, but I hadn't a turn when I took part in it."

Well, that's only natural, seeing how it's a hunting ground in the capital's outskirts.

There won't be any adventurers, and it's such a safe place that people come to pick wild grasses there.

"What are you actually going to do, Wend?"

"Monitor them, I think. So that no danger gets close."

I explain my work of that day to Erw.

"Quite overprotective, that prep school in the royal capital."

It's an event that doesn't happen at the adventurer prep school in Breitburg.

Since we rarely went to the capital's prep school, we didn't even know of its existence.

"My schedule is open as well, so I will tag along." (Erwin)

Erw decides to come along to help out and serve as my guard.

"Hunting, eh...? Even just a guard duty sounds nice."

"We can't attend it any longer."

Since 『Teleport』 is forbidden for pregnant women, Ina and Luise are disappointed that they can't join in.

They might have accumulated a bit of stress since they can't move around overly much nowadays.

"I do understand your feelings, but please refrain. It would be dangerous for both, mother and child."

"I know."

"Becoming a mother is really lots of work."

Amelie-san gently warns the two who can't sit still.
She probably thinks that it'd be disaster if there were to be a miscarriage.

"Besides, it's not like you can't move around as much as you say, right? Though I'm sure that it's equal to staying still if compared to the amount of practice as an adventurer..."

My wives, including those two, can freely move around the mansion and its vicinity, and they still train albeit centered around magic training.
Therefore, it's not like their range of activity has been restricted to such an extent.

"Wend-sama, you will watch sixty people consisting of only magicians?"

"No, I think that's not quite right."

Of course the magicians will join parties formed with other adventurer apprentices.
I've heard that there are already parties who work together after school, and temporary parties formed for the sake of this event. For the rest, the teachers will set up parties on site after gathering soloers and parties with insufficient numbers.
My job is to watch all of them.

"No doubt..."

"Wendelin-san, why are you looking at Lisa-san and me?" (Katharina)

It's because Katharina and Lisa look like they'd participate in the excursion as loners, objecting to the party system.
Only loner apprentices would form a group made out of fellow leftovers when being told, 『Please form a group with ○』, by the teacher in charge.
Going against such a call and acting by yourself is the true essence of one called a real loner.

"Since I attended a western prep school, an event like the Big Outdoor Excursion didn't take place. There was a hunting ranking system in place, though." (Katharina)

It seems to be a system where the hunting results over the period of one year are tallied, and the top achievers get an award, while enrolled there.

"In that year I was far and away the best with a huge lead on the second place and those below." (Katharina)

"You're amazing, Katharina! In what kind of parties did you hunt?"

"...If you've reached my level as a magician, you can easily deal with everything by yourself..."

Katharina's face freezes while she apparently endured Wilma's question.
I'm pretty sure that she has always hunted by herself without ever forming a party with anyone.

"What about you, Lisa?"

"Since I graduated from the capital's adventurer prep school, I participated in the event..."

Wilma asks Lisa next, but Lisa falters to continue with the second half of her answer.
If I consider Lisa from the time when I met her for the first time, it's a safe bet that she has participated by herself.

"An excellent magician will be able to handle it, even alone. I can understand that as well."
(Therese)

An adventurer apprentice incapable of using magic will be helpless by himself, but a magician can also achieve good results alone.

That means, Katharina and Lisa are the typical loner magicians.

No, in this case it'd be better to call them isolated magicians, I think?

Though, I'm in no position to talk about others...

"However, I don't understand. Even if only at such times, it would be fine to join a random party.
Right, Katia?" (Therese)

"I was a solo adventurer, but I often joined temporary parties." (Katia)

That's because Therese and Katia belong to that side.

In case of Therese, she can form a party by becoming the leader.

Katia may look like this, but she's capable of quickly making friends with anyone.

Normally she was a solo adventurer, but it looks like she regularly hunted with temporary parties.

She also got many friends from her time at the adventurer prep school. Her communication skills are truly remarkable.

"Katia, I think you're quite amazing."

"Eh? Really, hubby?"

I'm basically in the same camp as Katharina and Lisa, which is also why I consider Katia to be enviable.

"I also took part in the Big Outdoor Excursion, but since there's little danger in those plains and forests, I think it's fine to go at it with the feeling of a picnic." (Katia)

Rabbits, deer, badgers, civets, ducks, and guinea fowls.

With that range of game that can be caught there, it's rare for people to get injured.

It looks that's the reason why it's called Big Outdoor Excursion.

"So a happy-go-lucky event?"

"To me it sounds like a half-holiday."

Erw seems to take it carefreely, but the next day we got dragged into an unexpected tumult.

* * *

"Oh my, you're Baumeister-sensei, right? I'm Josef, a lecturer."

"Usually we don't get much opportunity to speak with each other. I'm Rudolph."

My teacher at school in Japan said, an excursion lasts until you're back home.

Same could be said for the Big Outdoor Excursion, but the adventurer prep school isn't an official school.

Since the gathering and wrap-up takes place on site, there's immediately students who came in late. This state of affairs, even though it's not that far away from the capital.

However, such adventurers aren't particularly rare.

After all they can still earn their money as adventurers even if they are slightly late.

Of course, such guys are no good if it comes to working for a noble house.

As I'm waiting for the students while considering all that, many regular and temporary teachers come to greet me.

I'm dealing with them politely, but as there's so many of them, it's a pain to entertain all of them.

"Everyone is fairly desperate."

Erw whispers next to me.

"Why? To greet me, a temporary teacher?"

"Dude...have you taken a proper look at Roderich's plans?"

"I did, but what about it?"

"It's scheduled to build an adventurer prep school in Baulburg."

I saw that part as well, but the school should be scheduled to open in a year.

No matter how fast you can construct stuff with magic, it's still not like you can get everything and anything done with a swipe.

"The regular teachers probably hope for a position as headmaster or top brass of the school. And the temporary teachers likely want to become regulars."

Unlike temporary teachers who work only for a short period of time like me, there's also many people continuing to work as temporary teachers while waiting for an opening among the regular staff.

In their eyes, the establishment of a prep school in Baulburg equals the hope that the number of available regular teacher positions increases.

"I plan to leave all the stuff like recruitment etc. to the future headmaster, though."

"Still, the lord's word holds importance, right?"

"I suppose you might be right."

Since we're going to lead a big number of students, a big number of adventurers participate besides the teachers, too.

For them it might be a part-time job, but they are also staring at me as if having found a treasure chest.

"What about them?"

"They're the children of nobles and similar, aren't they?"

They became adventurers to make a living, but if possible, they want to work for some noble house. As it seems that people like this have sneaked in by accepting this part-time job, they continue to frantically show off.

"Somehow, it's tough to get used to this..."

I'm troubled since they only look at me.

"Just ignore them. If it's about serving our noble house, they just have to apply through the official channels."

I feel uncomfortable as many people keep staring at me, but at long last all students have assembled.

Since the Big Outdoor Excursion is a school event, there's an opening ceremony first.

The students line up in rows with their parties, and then Headmaster Hendrick gives his greetings and talks about points of caution at the end.

Erw and I line up together with the other teachers next to the headmaster.

"It's all very obvious and logical, but he still says it, just in case, huh?"

"Well, it's a prep school after all, so yeah."

As expected, no matter where you hear it, the speech of a school's headmaster is always boring. I guess the saving grace here is that Headmaster Hendrik, a former excellent adventurer, keeps it short.

Also, the customary collapsing of students due to anemia during the school's morning assembly didn't take place.

Though that's only natural since the students wouldn't be suited as adventurers if they collapsed from just that much.

"Signal the beginning then!"

"Okay."

Being asked by Headmaster Hendrick, I shoot a 『Fireball』 into the sky.

As a replacement for fireworks, so to say.

With this as a starting signal, the students begin to run towards the spots they investigated in advance by checking their maps.

"Everyone of the teachers and the temporarily-employed adventurers, please continue to watch the situation at the predefined points."

With those words, Headmaster Hendrick withdraws into the tent that has been designated as headquarter.

In addition, several priests in charge of healing, and teachers belonging to the top brass follow him.

"So they are telling the young folks to work hard, eh?"

Erw makes a cynical comment about Headmaster Hendrick and his peers having pulled back quickly, but I think being on standby is work as well.

Actually it'd be troublesome instead if they were all gung-ho and came on-site.

"Erw, let's go."

"Roger."

Erw and I head to the location we have agreed on before.

"Grassland with a patch of forest, huh...? Not bad."

"Yep."

The area Erw and I are in charge of is a place, where plains and forest meet. I think it's a fairly decent hunting ground.

Erw agrees with me as well.

I'll quickly confirm whether there are any stray bears, big boars or similar.

And if I find any, I'll exterminate them so that no danger would befall the students.

This is also part of a teacher's job.

"Oh, isn't that big game over there?"

"Really? Isn't it lucky that we can hunt it, even if it's just one? Let's go, Wend."

As I spot something like that with 『Detect』, the two of us immediately head over.

It wasn't a bear, but a huge boar. Erw immediately shoots an arrow with me adding 『Boost』 to it.

The boar, which had the center of its forehead pierced by the arrow, collapses on the spot and stops moving altogether.

"The capital's prep school is easy-going on the students, after all."

"It's probably owed to it being a school event. They wouldn't do something like this for after-school hunts."

I think they're handling it like this since it'd be a huge problem if students were to die during the event.

As it's pointless to worry about it anyway, I drain the boar's blood right then and there, and put it away into my magic bag.

I check for other responses, but as all of them are only small presences, I judge this to be a safe

hunting spot now.

With this the extermination is over and done with. Next comes nothing but watching the students by wandering around aimlessly.

"Agh——, I wanna hunt!"

"Wend, don't steal the students' prey."

"I will get something else then."

With those words, I have Erw continue the monitoring, while I start to gather wild grasses as I keep watching the vicinity with 『Detect』.

"If I use this grass in tempura, it'll be delicious. The shoots of this tree fit perfectly with ohitashi 1 . Let's add the roots of this grass to miso soup later."

"You're oddly well-informed about all this, aren't you?"

"Well, I had a good teacher."

"Elise-sensei, you mean?"

Since Elise has experience in gathering ingredients to be used with the rice handed out by the church, she's also well-informed about wild grasses.

I've got her to teach me some of it, allowing me to reach a point where I can spot good wild herbs to some extent.

"Those aren't poisonous or something, right?"

"It's fine, I will only pick up herbs which are okay and grow everywhere."

I can also detoxify with magic, but since there also exist unknown poisons with magic not working on them, I'm cautious about that part.

『Earl Baumeister has deceased due to wild grass poisoning』would be too ridiculous to announce publicly.

"This much should be alright. Time to cook them..."

Once I finished my gathering to some degree, I quickly began cooking next.

Because it's just monitoring anyway, it should be okay to at least cook some rice with the portable magic stove, make some miso soup, and create wild grass tempura and ohitashi.

"No, you've made way too much!"

"The main dish will be what I'm carrying with me."

It's not the boar we caught earlier, but the stew of cubed boar meat that had been prepared in a big pot beforehand and which I brought with me.

It's not pig meat, but since it's Elise's work, it tastes superbly.

I decide to heat this up as well.

"I prepared a lunch that looks great, didn't I?"

In the far distance, students are earnestly hunting.

It looks like the top-ranking achievers will get a commendation and a prize. After all is said and done, all those called famous adventurers have apparently brought in good results at this Big Outdoor Excursion.

Of course that leads to the students aiming for great results as well.

It's only reasonable for them to go at it earnestly.

"Rice, miso soup with wild roots, wild grass tempura, wild shoots ohitashi, stew of cubed boar meat. I'd say that's a well-balanced lunch."

"Wend, I'm pretty sure you'd be the only one to worry about something like this in a place like this..."

Since it doesn't look like the students are in any particular trouble, we begin to carefreely eat our lunch.

Headmaster Hendrick and the others are likely taking their lunch around now as well. And the other teachers should have brought their own bento with them as well.

The students will also eat lunch as they please, I believe.

No fixed time or anything has been set for it either.

It means, they're telling us to plan at least that much by ourselves.

"Sensei, that looks delicious."

"How nice..."

"It sure is extravagant."

As I'm having my lunch, acquaintances call out to me.

It's Agnes, Betty, and Cindy, my favorite three top students of the magician class.

It looks like they have formed a party as they are on good terms with each other.

"Sorry. Going by the rules, I can't share any of it with you."

Since procuring food and scheduling the time for eating is also part of the excursion's challenge, they'd be disqualified if I gave them any of my food.

"Those are the rules, so it's only natural."

As expected, the character of the class president type, Agnes, is the very definition of diligence.

"A party of three magicians, huh? Wend, all of them are cute girls, aren't they?"

"Erw...I'll tattle to Haruka, you know?"

"Why? Is simple praise of women treated as cheating?"

"Man, to make a pass at someone else's students."

"Those are completely unfounded accusations, though..."

Leaving the sighing Erw alone, I ask the three about their hunting results.

"We should be able to aim for fairly high rankings."

"That's great to hear."

Since all of three of them are decent magicians, that's no particular surprise.

There were some idiotic teachers kicking up a fuss over this year being a poor one since there are no high-level magicians among the students, but the mana of those girls is still growing.

I think it's wrong to one-sidedly judge them at this point in time.

Besides, there's a lot of magicians with plenty of mana around me, but in reality it's already plenty amazing to have mana at an intermediate level. After all, not being able to form parties so easily on a beck's call is normal.

"You didn't get anyone capable of using archery?"

"It's easier for us to work together as we are, and we've got bows with us as well."

All three of them have bows and arrows. It looks like they've hunted quite a bit by using the same tactic Erw and I use, namely, enhancing the arrows with magic.

It appears they have plenty of hunted game in their magician bags.

"Because of you, sensei, our efficiency at hunting has risen greatly compared to before. Thank you."

Cindy thanks me, but seeing something like this feels refreshing.

That feeling hits home all the more since I've had to always deal with ungrateful old geezers and middle-aged men full of ulterior motives up until now, instead of girls who honestly show their gratitude.

"Please do your best while making sure to not get injured."

"Sensei."

"Anything wrong, Cindy?"

"Please give us a reward if we win this."

The youngest of them, Cindy, bluntly asks me for a reward.

It's a request that could be regarded as shameless, but because of her charming appearance and voice, I don't feel anything like that from her words at all.

"Only if you win, okay? It'll be an all-you-can-eat at the teahouse of the royal family's purveyor. Please inform your other classmates of this as well."

"Ya——ay! Thank you!"

The three, who got me to promise them that I'd treat them if they win, quickly wolf down the bento they had prepared themselves, and go back hunting.

I've extended the reward to the other students as well, and not just those three, because I believe it's not okay to be partial as a teacher.

"We also had a time when we were so cute, hadn't we?"

"Wend, are you an old geezer, or what? We're still below 20."

"You say that, but considering all the hardships until now..."

All of it were issues that boys and girls shouldn't experience before becoming adults.

I think I put up with it because I'm an old man in a young body.

"It's better we stop thinking about those things. But you're right, they certainly feel young."

"Right?"

Even Erw, who has gone through various troubles after getting involved with me, seems to recall his past when looking at Agnes and the other two.

"Still, all of them have bigger breasts than Luise, y'know?"

"Erw, make sure to never say that in front of Luise..."

If she should ever hear of this, I'm pretty sure that she'll beat him black and blue.

I would hesitate to even voice out such a dreadful taboo.

"That's obvious. I mean, in Luise's case, even her going easy on someone hurts damn a lot."



After taking a healthy lunch, we kept monitoring the students in the afternoon as well, but before long fail-parties started to stand out.

People who became unable to hunt because they didn't prepare enough arrows, or people whose movement got really sluggish as they had been too enthusiastic in the morning.

All of those were mistakes happening because of lacking experience, but well, I think it'll turn into a good experience as long as it happens now.

"The trio is really going for it."

The three girls continue to hunt without having lowered their pace so far.

At this rate, they might win.

Once we returned to Headmaster Hendrick in the evening, I was asked to shoot a 『Fireball』 into the sky once again.

This spells the end of the Big Outdoor Excursion.

The gathered students let us tally the game they caught with their parties.

And one hour later, Headmaster Hendrick announces the results.

"The champions are 『Magical Triangle』!"

Just as I had anticipated, Agnes' party has won the competition.

It's an overwhelming victory with them pulling far ahead of the group in second place.

Moreover, 『Magical Triangle』 is the party name of the three girls.

Since all three of them are magicians, the name contains no pun or anything. I think that it suits them quite well.

Additionally, many of the parties, which had magicians with them, achieved great results surpassing those of last year.

My teaching might have been a little bit of use to them.

While looking at the three girls receiving the honorable certificate and prize on the winner's podium, I alone am deeply moved.

"Wend, those three won without any particular troubles, didn't they?"

"I have to treat them just as I promised. Sensei is someone who keeps his word."

"Is that how it works?"

"Yep."

"Well, do as you like then?"



And then, three days later, I take the three to the teahouse just as promised.

This place is a well-established fruit teahouse, and because they're also providing the royal family with fruits, they've put a signboard identifying them as royal purveyors.

They're also running a cake shop. The sweets using the fruits they procure have become quite popular.

Given that the Baumeister House also sells them fruits native to the Demon Forest through the adventurer guild, they're our valued clients.

"Sensei, is it really okay for us to come to such an expensive place?"

The serious Agnes seems to feel apologetic after seeing the extravagance of the store's appearance and building.

Since even the cheapest sweets cost ten cents per piece, it's a teahouse that's usually out of reach for commoners.

She's probably thinking that it's beyond her position to come here.

"It's a celebration of your victory. I think it's okay to not mind it for today. I promised you, so sensei will keep his word."

"Thank you very much."

Still, because she's a girl, she does have a soft spot for sweets after all.
Agnes looks very happy.

"I'm going to eat plenty! Yahoo——o!"

"Feel free to do so."

Cindy, who had asked to be rewarded in case of winning the competition, rejoices innocently.



"Limited edition cake. That's what I always wanted to eat."

Since Betty is full of delight as well, it's great that I chose this place.
Once all four of us enter the teahouse, a refined, elderly man awaits us.

"Earl Baumeister-sama, we have waited for you. I'm Cäsar, the owner of the teahouse 『Brunhild』. We are very pleased for you to visit us today."

"Oh, we're pleased to be greeted by the owner himself."

Since it's a popular teahouse, I made a reservation in advance, just in case, but I guess that led to us being welcomed by the owner himself.
It looks like I'm treated like a VIP.

"Most recently the Demon Forest fruits and the sweets using those are very popular. We have been expanding our business, too. I'd like to express my gratitude for that with this."

The owner of this teahouse seems to be an acquaintance of Arterio-san.
Joining up with him, the two seem to be in the process of establishing a branch network in the capital and its circumference.
The goods distribution in the northern regions took a hit during the Empire's civil war, but overall the area around the capital has been booming, seeing as there's also the southern Palkenia Grassland development, the capital's redevelopment, and a drastic decrease of slums.
Therefore the cases of commoners occasionally coming here to splurge as 『Brunhild』 has the image of being the right place for it, albeit being expensive, have been increasing.

"We have prepared the deluxe suite for you. Please come this way."

"Sorry for making you go out of your way."

"Earl Baumeister-sama, you're famous, so well..."

There're many guests in the cafe space of Brunhild, and especially the nobles pay attention to me. If I had my meal in the same area as them, it would become annoying as they would chat me up, so the owner has taken this part into consideration.

"I shall lead the way then."

The owner himself guides us to a private room exclusively reserved for VIPs.

"This is our menu."

"Go ahead and order what you like. Even if you don't manage to eat up everything, it will be fine to take it home with you." (Wendelin)

"We have our magic bags, after all."

In a lesson some time ago, I practiced with them how to create a magic bag for magicians as I was taught by my Master.

If your mana is low, you can only store the content of a single satchel in there, but these three girls can store quite a bit into their magic bags.

If it's at the level of cake souvenirs, they should be able to fit in as many as they like into their bags.

"If you put them into your magic bags, they will remain fresh. In other words..."

"Ya——ay, I'll be able to enjoy Brunhild's taste for some time."

Cindy and Betty check their magic bags with happy faces.

"Thank you for your wait."

"Wow..."

"All of it looks delicious."

"It's just like a dream."

Plenty of sweets such as cakes, puddings, bavaiois, and parfaits were lined up on the table.

It looks like they also served new products that aren't on the menu yet, and products we haven't ordered.

"These are products we plan to sell starting next week. We'd be very happy if you could tell us your impressions."

The owner has dished out new products for free, taking our needs into consideration. I think I'll also take some back home for Elise and the others.

"Then, let's enjoy these without reservations, right?" (Wendelin)

""""Yes!""""

We begin to eat the sweets in order.

Since I've skipped lunch for this, I should be able to eat quite a bit.

"It looks like I can eat as many as I like of this as it's not too sweet."

"Delicious."

"Pure bliss."

All three pull happy faces while eating the sweets.

It was worthwhile to have brought them along.

"But, I feel somewhat bad towards everyone else..."

"The condition was to win, so it's totally okay."

It's a view suiting the serious Agnes, but the worlds of adventurers and magicians are ability driven. I have accepted the condition that I'll treat them if they win. Since Agnes' party cleared it, I brought them here.

Since their classmates were given the same condition, it'd be pointless even if they complained about this.

They should have simply won if they wanted to get treated by me.

It's normal for everyone to think like this in this world.



"In other words, you mean as new wife candidates?"

"Erw, just where and how did you hear about this? I treated the three students, who won the competition, to sweets as I had promised as their teacher. That's all there is to it, don't you think?"

"I wonder, is that really all there is to it?"

"Obviously!"

In the evening of that day, I returned to the mansion and treated everyone to the sweets I had brought along as presents.

Erw had also shown up and was now eating cake, but suddenly he blurted out some outrageous stuff.

"As a teacher, I just rewarded my cute students who did their best."

"No wait, I can only think of nobles and rich men taking out girls to get beneath their skirts when we speak about a high-class teahouse like Brunhild."

"Oh my god...your mind is corrupted down to the core."

"Listen, this isn't about what you think of it, but how society interprets it. Do you understand that?"

"I won't have time for anything else if I always care about what society thinks about each and every of my actions."

It was also the same with the achievements in the Empire's civil war and the dispute over the tunnel. If I were to listen to the rumors in society for everything I do, I would probably need a counselor to take care of my mental health.

"It's okay, Erw. Society will take it as Wend having taken disciples."

According to Ina, society will very likely harbor the impression that I'm trying to win over the best three in the magician class of the prep school as disciples.

"Students, eh...? The master-disciple system for magicians, I don't really get it..."

"It's kinda unclear to me as well, but how does that work, Lisa-san?"

"It's not necessary to file an official registration. Both parties have to simply consent to it."

Lisa, who has finally reached a point where she can talk normally with us, gives us an explanation about the master-disciple-system for magicians.

"The explanation at such times was always handled by Burkhart-san. I wonder what's going on with him these days."

"Master is busy...with babysitting..." (Katharina)

As of late Burkhart-san hardly ever shows up here.

It's because he puts more emphasis on spending time with his family since his child was born during the civil war.

Therefore I don't go to meet him either unless I've got some serious business with him.

Luise and Katharina cannot help being totally amused about Burkhart-san being busy with his child nowadays, despite having been such a strong advocate of staying single before.

"I have taught Katia-san as well, but in the end I think it might be better for men to teach other men, and women to teach other women."

"The issue with the vessel matching, huh...?"

Seeing as vessel matching with anyone besides your parents, lovers, or spouses can be seen as morally objectionable by society, it's considered preferable for men to do it with other men, and women to do it with other women.

However, as long as it doesn't concern vessel matching, it seems to not be unusual for the genders

to mix in a master-disciple relationship.

"But you know, Katharina's master is Burkhart-san, no?"

"The vessel matching was done by Wend-sama." (Wilma)

"I guess it's no problem then."

Katia understands from Wilma's reply.

Katharina has solely learned magic through her own effort until she met us.

Given that Burkhart-san is taking care of all her other magic training after she did a vessel matching with me, Burkhart-san is regarded as her master.

"So that means, my master is big sis, and the one in charge of developing my mana is hubby, huh...?" (Katia)

Even though she has said it herself, Katia's cheeks blush.
She probably got embarrassed by the implications.

"Katharina, you're really amazing. Even though you're younger than me, you've learned magic by yourself to such an extent that big sis praises you for your skill." (Katia)

"I have also been taught the basics by Burkhart-san."

Even Lisa received training from Burkhart-san before becoming an adult.

Katia admires Katharina who has become a top-class magician by learning even those basics by herself.

"That's...Katharina is..."

"Wendelin-san, what is it that you want to say?"

"It's nothing."

"How suspicious..."

Since she doesn't have communication skills at the level of someone like Katia, Katharina had no choice but to somehow teach herself.

It's what you'd call driven by necessity.

Though that's nothing I could voice out in this situation.

"Elise, for you it was the church, wasn't it?"

"Yes, I was taught the basics by the healing magicians."

And, before doing a vessel matching with me, she had mostly reached the limit of her mana growth. Afterwards I increased it with a method that can't be talked about in front of others, though.

"I'm thankful to Burkhart-san since he taught me various tricks as well. It's the same for Luise-san,

Ina-san, and Wilma-san as well, isn't it?"

Doushi is regarded as Luise's master, but she has occasionally received some coaching from Burkhart-san as well.

Ina and Wilma, who became magicians after getting married to me, have been taught by Burkhart-san from scratch.

"I'm the same, and since it looks like it applies to hubby as well, we've got many of Burkhart-san's disciples here." (Katia)

Since he also taught the imperial magicians during the civil war, he might have the biggest number of disciples on the whole continent.

"I hear, because of that there were also talks about headhunting him, though."

"Elise, is that information you've obtained through Cardinal Hohenheim?"

"Yes."

It sounds like there existed plans for the Kingdom to make Burkhart-san into an appointed noble and entrust him with the post of headmaster for the capital's adventurer prep school. It's something Elise has heard from Cardinal Hohenheim.

"However, Margrave Breithilde-sama wasn't happy with that, and Burkhart-san himself also hated it."

He's someone who considers nobility to be bothersome, and his treatment by the Margrave Breithilde House isn't bad either.

Even the matter of him becoming the headmaster of the capital's prep school was apparently a plot by nobles trying to place a noble on the seat of headmaster by turning Burkhart-san into a noble and pushing the job onto him.

As always, there's people scheming troublesome things.

"Burkhart-san apparently didn't want to push Headmaster Hendrick, to whom he was indebted, aside, turning it into a question whether they really wanted to have someone, who did his job well and was capable on top of it, retire for such a reason."

Because Burkhart-san turned them down, that matter was shelved.

"What an annoying story."

"But, what are you going to do about those three magicians?"

"Eh? What, you ask..."

What's there to ask? I'll teach them until the end of my year-long curriculum, praise them for a job well done alongside the other students, and then simply have a deeply emotional farewell like some teacher in a TV drama.

Once that finishes, it'll spell the end of my period as temporary teacher. I might take care of some as

their master even after their graduation, but this will be a case-by-case decision, I think.

"I'm pretty sure that the other nobles are eager to sink their fangs into them."

Since they're talented, young magicians, they will try to somehow win them over for their own houses, but if I gave them special treatment, it would be seen as me planning to secure them for the Baumeister House, wouldn't it? Elise predicts that the nobles' thoughts might head in that direction.

"Even without them, we have too many magicians for an Earl House."

Since all my wives are magicians, on top of me the family head, we can't really complain. However, if I were to run around securing other magicians left and right, nobles considering it unforgivable would appear, Elise warns.

"I will teach them for the designated period of time, but afterwards I'd like them to decide their future path by themselves. Of course I will give them consultation and guidance anytime they want, though."

That's what I'm thinking, but I guess it's the fate of excellent magicians to be bothered by their surroundings in various ways.

And yet, I'd like Agnes and the others to freely do whatever they want.

I end up thinking so all the more since I'm currently leaps and bounds away from being free myself.

"They should be able to decide on their own career. Sensei won't spare any effort for that sake."

"You really got used to acting like a teacher in this short span of time, didn't you?"

"Don't call it acting!"

I reflexively bark back at Erw, but several days later, there was a change at the prep school.



"Agnes-san, won't you join our party?"

As a result of the outdoor excursion, Agnes and the other two were often invited into parties by other students.

"Sorry, but we work together as a team of three."

However, believing that their current party is plenty for them, the three have been turning down each and every invitation.

A party consisting of three magicians is rare, but since they produce results and if all three are happy with it, there's no reason for third parties to butt in.

But, there's also some weird folks around.

"Putting three people possessing the valuable talent of a magician together has a very bad efficiency. I'll split them up and reorganize the parties."

For some reason such condescending idiots regularly pop out, but once Agnes' group asked why they have to entrust their party setup to someone, whom they only met just now, while having to take on life-threatening jobs, that guy got angry at them instead.

"It's obviously because it's more efficient to have three parties with one magician than one party with three! You can believe me since I excel at such knowledge!"

"Okay, okay, leave it at that."

I restrain the idiot who's shouting at Agnes.

It looks like he's several years older than me, but for some reason he acts very arrogant with his age being the only thing he has above me.

"Who are you supposed to be?"

"Adventurer parties are something decided upon freely, and not something you force on others. You don't even know something like that?"

"I'm talking about the most efficient method here. After all I'm someone from the Baron Bayer House."

I'm gradually starting to see where this is heading.

It looks like these idiots have been sent into the prep school in order to get hold of Agnes and the others.

Since he has just arrived here, it seems like he doesn't know my face yet.

"You talk about efficiency, but if there are casualties in the parties that lost their combat power because you split them up, the overall efficiency will take a nosedive."

No matter what he might say, as adventuring is a job where you risk your life, a fair distribution of combat assets or shit like that doesn't matter at all.

After all you decide on your party members based on your own will.

"Are you a magician? Magicians have amazing magic, but if you're going to form parties as adventurers, you ought to leave it to me, a noble who received an advanced education since his childhood."

It looks like he wants to say that he excels in commanding and coordination abilities, although his combat power isn't overly high.

That'd be no problem in the army, but low combat power in an adventurer party with a limited number of people is a fatal flaw, I think...

"You're still young, aren't you?"

This rich, spoiled noble brat gets very likely treated as an extra back home.

After all, the heir and the capable people must be busy with official business.

"I have understood your point. But, in the end adventurer parties are something decided by the individuals. Besides, these girls are still minors."

"You may have a peace of mind in regards to that. They will be able to enter as many monster domains as they want upon the order of my Baron Bayer House."

"You're an idiot, aren't you...?"

I headed out to subjugate Grade Grand upon the campaign order of the Kingdom's government at an age of twelve.

Noble houses can hand out orders similar to that to their family and residents, but no decent noble would do something like that in the first place.

If a noble house intends to liberate a monster domain within their territory, it's common sense for them to entrust it to excellent, adult adventurers. Even for things like the suppressions of rebellions, disputes between fellow nobles, and the exterminations of bandits, the feudal lords and their retainers would only send out magicians when their successors and children departed to the front. A noble surrounding himself with magicians just for the sake of their own benefit and to make profit through the materials of monsters would be rebuked by society for exploitation.

"In the first place, the precondition is weird. These girls aren't residents of the Bayer Barony. Even if there were to be an order for them to sortie on a campaign, it'd be limited to a territory owned by the Kingdom's government."

"That's also no issue as long as they become residents of my Baron Bayer House."

"Oi..."

Does this retard in front of me have quite the confidence in his own territory or something?

No, I don't think so.

It's obvious if I look at my family.

Any resident living normally in an area under the direct control of the Kingdom would wonder why they had to move to some unknown barony.

There are hits and misses among noble territories. If it comes to territories above Viscount, there aren't many misses, and if it's a territory at the level of the Breithilde Margraviate, there's not that much difference in living standard compared to a territory under the Kingdom's control.

However, baronies and below are gambles.

There are places where it's wonderfully comfortable to live thanks to the family head or the governmental system, but there are also places where you can say the opposite.

It's pretty obvious as to how to categorize the Bayer Barony if you look at this idiot.

It's probably not wrong to count it as a miss.

Their intention to attempt earning money with Agnes and the other two is as plain as day.

"In the first place, just who are you supposed to be? It looks like you're a student, but if you annoy me any further, I will tell my father to punish you."

"Punish, eh...?"

I'm kinda curious as to what kind of punishment he's thinking of.

"Indeed! Even if you might be a magician, the likes of a commoner should remain silent..."

"Excuse me, but are your eyes broken or something? It's clear that I'm a teacher. A temporary one, though."

It looks like idiots exceeding any expectations do exist in this world.
Just looking at my attire, it should be clear that I'm not some poor commoner wishing to become a magician.

"Teacher? While so young? Don't lie!"

"No, it's no lie. By the way, my name is Wendelin von Benno Baumeister. I don't think that we will ever meet again, but I thought I should introduce myself just in case."

"Wha-...the dragon-slaying hero..."

Hearing my name, the young man of the Bayer House and his cronies quickly scurry away.



"I encountered a really amazing idiot today."

Once I report the details to Headmaster Hendrick after driving the idiots away, he doesn't even try to hide his fed-up expression.

"Any decent noble would have chosen a much smarter approach to invite them. They would also properly tell them about the conditions."

If it comes to greedy nobles or those needing money, they will apparently try such canvassing methods.

After adding them to their group, they would force them to become lovers of young nobles, and then have them support the noble's home by making them earn money.

It looks like female magicians sometimes fall prey to such parasites.

"The Baron Bayer House, huh...? I guess I will inform the guild about this."

"What's going to happen if you report it?"

"They will be recorded on the black list, of course."

Once they are on the black list, they won't be able to put up almost any designated requests. Since adventurers will stop getting close to them, it'll result in them losing the ability to gather riches as they will be forced to hunt by themselves, even if they possess monster domains in their territory.

"Why would they do something so stupid...?"

"It's probably because they don't have a monster domain in their territory."

Since they are a simple, poor barony, their home allows their unneeded sons to deceive female magicians.

All for the sake of improving the territory's financial situation.

Considering all that, that man sure wasn't handsome.

I think it's difficult to aim for acting like a pimp when the man isn't handsome at the very least.

"Such nobles only possess an abundance of high pride. For example, although it's obvious if they have a legal wife or concubines with a certain social standing, they will go on about commoner girls being unable to enter their high-class family and similar."

They will take the female magicians as unofficial lovers and exploit only money from them. In the eyes of female magicians, you could call them a bunch of people they better don't get involved with.

"Aa——h, I think I should give you a warning. As a matter of fact, one of the reasons why the invitations have increased for those three is their relationship with you and your retinue, Earl Baumeister."

"With me?"

"It's an indirect approach, I'd say. You played a very active part in the Empire's civil war, didn't you?"

Doushi, Burkhart-san, Katharina, Elise, and I have achieved great merits in the Empire's civil war. Anyone expects magicians to take an active role in a war, but once they hear about their actual accomplishments, it makes them want to have a magician for their own house as well.

Accordingly the invitations towards the students learning at the prep school are getting increasingly insistent.

"Considering the numbers of magicians, there are overwhelmingly many noble houses that don't employ any magicians. Earl Baumeister, you're blessed with too many magicians. Leaving aside the war, if the others watch the rapid development of your territory, it wakes the urge in them to have magicians as well."

Even the existence of a magician at elementary level makes a big difference.

Though, depending on the magic they are good at, there's actually magicians who don't really suit the demand well.

I guess Katia might be a prime example for that.

Her magic has absolutely no merit in the development of a territory or farmwork.

She herself will be capable of doing as much farmwork as she wants by accelerating her bodily functions, but even if she energetically plows the fields all by herself, she won't be able to produce much results.

"I suppose this means you have to accelerate your plans."

"Accelerate, you say...don't tell me..."

"Aye, it's the establishment of an adventurer prep school in Baulburg."



Once I return to my mansion after the talk with Headmaster Hendrick ended, I immediately call Roderich, and inform him about the prep school's request.

"An acceleration of the prep school establishment, is it? That's certainly quite possible."

"According to our schedule, it was planned to happen in around a year, but is that okay?"

"Yes. As a matter of fact, the grounds and school building are mostly done by now. The dormitories are still under construction, but that can be bypassed by us providing temporary lodging elsewhere. It's not like we will be able to take in that many students in the beginning, anyway."

"You sure work fast, as usual."

As expected of Roderich. It makes me wonder whether he might not be the better choice as a feudal lord by now.

"The biggest obstacle in the establishment of a prep school is the extensive time needed for the inspections, and the troublesome formalities. Seeing as we're told to hurry up by the other side, we should consider that this part will speed up. By the way, milord, did you just consider something very improper?"

"Isn't that just your imagination?"

Nothing less of Roderich, he displays his strangely perceptive insight. For him to have realized my wish to push the position of feudal lord on him...

"I will keep advancing the preparations."



In like no time, one week after that conversation, the adventurer prep school in Baulburg was opened.

"What happened to the formalities and inspections you mentioned?"

"In reality, most of the inspections are carried out by the Kingdom's government. But, since the number of new adventurer prep schools has been low these days, the inspection period can be reduced, if they feel like it."

"I wasn't aware of that."

"That's inevitable since it's something they can't announce openly in a grand manner."

Erich gives me an explanation of the circumstances on the courtyard of the newly-opened adventurer prep school.

Those in charge tend to stretch the work if there's little work to do.

No matter the world, government officials appear to come up with the same ideas anywhere.

However, this time they finished the inspections quickly as they got pestered by the adventurer's guild.

Since the school dormitories haven't been finished yet, there's a limit to how many students the prep school can accept. Also, since it's not the time for enrollment yet, it'll only be transfer students for now, but with this the Baulburg prep school has started its activity.

The headmaster is an acquaintance of Headmaster Hendrick, a former adventurer. The teaching staff has been handled by promoting the temporary teachers, who have been employed at the capital prep school, to full-time teachers. Even the students mostly consist of transfer students coming from the capital's prep school.

While starting like this for the time being, I hear they will get everything ready to accept new students as soon as spring next year.

"Since one week is naturally unreasonable, the formalities and inspections are still continuing right now, but as there were no special issues, they gave their formal approval. Even if they were to prolong it, it looks like they will be forced to finish until the enrollment of new students."

"That's a big help, Erich."

"I haven't done anything. Today I'm just acting as messenger."

Once an adventurer prep school is opened, it'll receive subsidiary aid from the Kingdom.

Erich, who came to Baulburg in regards to that, gives me an insight on the situation behind the scenes.

"It's to protect the magician hatchlings from weird nobles. I understand that part, but I wonder what to think about me being suspected of amassing those magicians in my territory..."

Once people hear about the younglings of the capital's prep school having transferred to the Baulburg branch, there will be a flood of applications.

In particular, all the magicians have made requests to change schools.

I kinda feel like the numbers gathering over here are big.

"Wend, your wives are on maternity leave, but they can work as teachers if it's the prep school in Baulburg, can't they? With their addition to the teaching staff, this branch might not even lose out to the capital's branch. It will be fine as long as you don't keep the students here against their will."

As a matter of fact, a request about the matter with the teachers has come in from the adventurer's

guild's side as well.

Accordingly, it's planned for Elise, Katharina, and Lisa to deal with it while making sure that they won't do anything unreasonable.

"If it's Baulburg, they can receive teaching in a safe environment, and it's better in regards to part-time work as well."

It's just as Erich says.

There's plenty of game in the vicinity of Baulburg which has still lots of untouched nature as it's in the middle of developing.

That will make it easier for the prep school's younglings to earn money through part-time work, too.

"Still, all of the magicians, huh...?"

The number of students at Baulburg's prep school is around two hundred, but close to a third of them are magicians.

It's a number of magicians unbelievable for other prep schools.

"It's because it will be possible to invite them anytime once they stand on their own after graduation. As a location for hunting, the Demon Forest is top notch. Even the graduates of other prep schools will eventually head over to the Demon Forest."

Given that there's a shortage of native Demon Forest materials and produce, their sale prices are high.

It's only natural to pick a place where you can make money, if you're going to put your life on the line anyway.

"They will be looked after during their time as minors, but after becoming adults, they will be free to accept the invitation of any noble they like, huh...?"

What turned the invitation by the Baron Bayer House into a problem was that they tried to solicit Agnes and the other two girls, who are still fledglings at the prep school.

Legally it's not an issue, but it's being prohibited by an unspoken rule.

The adventurer's guild won't hesitate to enforce that rule through punishment if it comes to a poor baron house.

"Wend, you've still got lots of work ahead of you until spring, don't you?"

"It looks like it."

There's the teaching of the magicians who transferred to Baulburg's prep school, and also my job as teacher at the capital's prep school.

Since the number of magicians attached to the capital's prep school has become zero, it has created the necessity for me to teach magicians in the range of ten to eleven years who are still too young to enroll.

Headmaster Hendrick has gathered magicians from somewhere with the idea of strengthening their basics before they enroll at his prep school.

It looks like he doesn't intend to let me go until Elise and the others give birth to their children.

"This will also last until Elise and the others give birth."

"You really think that it will come to an end then? Wend, your teaching receives high evaluations from the prep school, doesn't it? Besides...you're being idolized, aren't you?"

As I'm talking with Erich in front of the new prep school, Agnes and the other two girls run up to us.

"Sensei, it's about time for our lesson."

"The aroma of wood in the new school building is wonderful."

"Sensei, your big brother looks dependable unlike my big brother. He's pretty cool. I'm kinda jealous..." (Cindy)

"Brother, see you in the evening."

"Sure. I'll be there, see how you're going to treat me to dinner."

Bidding farewell from Erich, I head to the new school building while the three pull me by the hands.

In the end, it's been decided that I'll continue to work as a temporary teacher in Baulburg's adventurer prep school from now on as well.

Extra – Short Training Course by Maid-san

"I see! That means I've finally reached the point of being able to teach the newcomers. Those are the fruits of my effort and talent." (Lea)

"It looks like you're misinterpreting things as you please. It's not about training the maids entering the mansion. The construction of the dormitory of Baulburg's adventurer prep school is close to finishing, but the Baumeister Earldom is fundamentally short on hands. It looks like no one is applying to run the dormitory, and thus, even after the official opening of the dormitory, the students must prepare things like meals etc. while managing the dormitory by themselves for a while." (Dominique)

"In short, you're saying we're going to teach those children, who don't know how this world works, basic housework?"

"That's quite the condescending attitude you've got there, but I guess you're principally correct... Originally it's not necessary for us to do something like that, but this is also an expression of our master's deep compassion."

"Got it! I'll give them a strict training regimen!"

"Did you listen to a word I told you, Lea? It's okay to just stick to the basics."



Even though the belly of Dominique-neesan is already quite conspicuous, she's as conscientious as ever, or maybe I should call it diligent.

For her to deliberately show up here to give me an explanation...I'm pretty sure it's because she's Elise-sama's childhood friend.

Now that the prep school in Baulburg has been completed, master and his wives have started to teach magic there as temporary teachers.

Probably because of the quick opening of the school, the dormitory hasn't been built yet, so the students are staying at inns all over Baulburg.

It looks like all of them will move into the dormitory once it's done, but if that happens, there will be yet another problem.

Since the Baumeister Earldom lacks manpower, there's no dorm mother available who would do stuff like preparing the food, clean, and do the laundry.

To be honest, one could wonder whether it's really necessary to go so far for the students, but master is a gentle man.

I think he's trying to properly take care of the students he has been entrusted with.

As long as there's no dorm mother, the students, who will live in the dormitory later, have to prepare the meals and similar in alternation.

There are many restaurants in Baulburg, but since they are expensive, it'd be difficult on the wallets of the prep school's students to live only by eating out. I think this is a golden chance to teach them cooking, cleaning, and doing the laundry, and I'm the one who has been ordered to take over that temporary teacher role.



I shall do my best with my first important duty in order to meet master's expectations!

"Although I came here while thinking that..."

Once I head over to the almost completed dormitory, there's only three students waiting for me there.

I thought that I would teach the basics of housework to a lot more people, but am I actually being evaluated lowly by master?

"Huh? That's weird."

"No waaay——!"

It looks like it's unexpected for master as well. He continues to scream all by himself. So there are things that surprise even master who quickly rose to a high-ranking noble by achieving many meritorious deeds.

"Even though cleaning, doing the laundry, and cooking is a basic necessity for any independent adult, and not just adventurers!"

"Especially new adventurers have it hard unless they can't do everything by themselves. But you know, Wend, the majority of those aspiring to become adventurers are like this. There aren't that many fellows who would attend a special training course that's not required for graduating."

Erwin-sama points out the naivety of his anticipation to master who continues to clamor around in front of me.

It looks like the good intentions of master haven't gotten through to the students...

"Isn't that odd? I mean, to not realize that it will be useful for camping after they've become adventurers, if they can cook for themselves. It's the same with doing the laundry. Not all of them are fellows with a family background that would allow them to let servants handle it, right?"

"Well, it's not all that unusual. I took care of it myself as well. But, once I started to live in the capital, I left all of it to the mansion's maids."

"What're they going to do if they've got to camp out in the process of their job!?"

"Don't they intend to eat what they've bought in advance?"

"It's kinda doubtful whether a weakly city kid could actually start a fire and boil some water. There's no loss in learning it early on, is there!?"

If he puts it like that, he's surely right. There should occasionally be times when adventurers would hunt for several days in monster domains and savage no-man lands.

Whether they're capable of preparing a warm meal, even if it's a simple one, in such situations should have a big influence on their morale over the next few days.

If it's a kid from the countryside, they should be able to at least start a fire, cut the ingredients, and cook something simple, thanks to helping out at home.

My colleagues at the mansion, who originate from the countryside, have said something along those lines.

However, there's also quite a few children, who can't even start a fire, as they've been living in a big city like the capital.

Once master gathered people planning to somehow change that while at the same time getting them to learn simple cooking until a dormitory mother is found...this outcome.

"Baaaahh——! Replenishing your energy when you're not fighting during wars and hunts is crucial!"

"You're exaggerating too much. They're children, so it's inevitable that they're engrossed with cool ways how to swing a sword, or practicing magic. After understanding how difficult it is when they're unable to do it well, if their turn of being on duty comes around in the opened dormitory, they'll come to learn it."

"Even though it'd be fine for them to learn it before running into troubles..."

"That's exactly why they're still children. Still, it's not too late as long as they realize it while at the prep school."

Erwin-sama comforts master by saying that it'll be fine for the students to make mistakes while they are still students.

Nothing less of my future husband. He's truly broad-minded.

"Isn't it okay, seeing how your pupils are seriously participating, Wend?"

Although it's a short-term training course that's not required nor part of the curriculum, there are three girls who are participating.

If I remember correctly, I've heard about children being treated as pupils by master for their talents in magic. I'm pretty sure it's about the girls standing in front of me.

"See, Wend? Your pupils fully understand you."

"Yes, sensei. I've heard that there'll be times when I'll work for long periods of time at places in the middle of nowhere once I become an adventurer. It's necessary for me to learn at least the minimum of knowledge about cooking for myself."

"It's the same with doing the laundry and simple repairs of the equipment. It should make a big difference if you can patch up equipment with an emergency repair if it breaks at a place where you can't simply take it to a shop."

"No matter which job it might be, cleaning is the basics. Rosa-san is properly cleaning my brother's restaurant everyday."

"Uuuhh...it's great that there are students who are understanding it."

Master is moved to tears in admiration towards his pupils who completely understood his thinking. He's probably very happy.

"Even though I've been helping out at home, I haven't really done anything like cooking or such since my help is mostly focused on our family's business. However, if I learn how to cook, I will make something for you, sensei."

"Me too. Although my brother is a cook, I put my highest priority on securing ingredients, so I don't have that much experience with cooking, you know? Once I improve on that, I will make something for you, sensei."

"Me three. I wonder, should I bring along flowers that can be eaten next time?"

Master's pupils, eh...?

Allow me to spell it out as a fellow woman, but they seem to aim for something else down the road than being genuine pupils...

They might rather believe that it's convenient for the other students to not be present.

"Well then, Lea, please teach them starting with the basics."

"As you wish, master."

I shall precisely teach master's pupils...although it's very likely that the number of wives is going to grow again in the future...how to cook.

"We leave it to you, Lea."

"Please leave it in my hands, Erwin-sama."

Even Erwin-sama, who's soon going to become my husband, has asked me to do it.

I will do my utmost to teach them the skills I learned while suffering from Dominique-neesan's iron fist.



"So...why the maid clothes?"

"It's because it'd be a bit problematic for you to do housework while still wearing your robes. They might get dirty."

"She's right. Lea's thinking is correct."

Since there's only three students, I've decided to do the training course in the kitchen of the almost finished dormitory.

Today we'll start with the simple basics of cooking, but first comes the form.

Since they'd likely be in trouble if their robes were to get dirty, I immediately got them to change into outfits, which can get dirty without any problems.

It seems like master is considering that to be strange, but it's the basics to wear maid clothes when doing such work. I mean, I'm a maid after all.

"Just consider them as working clothes. We have none of master's newly invented maid clothes left, but there's still plenty of the old maid clothes we're keeping as spares. Since we have improved them a bit while using master's design of the new maid clothes as reference, they should be easier to move in than before."

Having shortened the skirts is the biggest change, I think.

It's that. The idea that short skirts might be highly popular with men.

Since it's at the level of the hem reaching down to below the knees, it's not like we've shortened them that much either.

If it's a skirt reaching down to the ankles as it's been usual in the past, the hem will easily become dirty. Once they become dirty, the clothes must be washed, resulting in this taking a lot of time and effort.

"Agnes-san, Betty-san, Cindy-san, they suit you."

"Really, Lea-san?"

"Yes."

"Sensei, what do you think?"

"Yep, a maid uniform looks really good on you, Agnes."

Even master, who at first asked about the reason for the maid uniforms, looks not all that unhappy once he actually sees the appearances of Agnes-san and the other two in maid uniforms.



Well, maid uniforms suit women more than robes.

"Sensei, how do I look?"

"Please look at me as well, sensei."

"It looks good on you two as well, Betty, Cindy. Yep, you're cute."

""Thank you.""

Since master only praised Agnes-san, Betty-san and Cindy-san immediately ask master as well, obviously competing with Agnes-san.

They want to be praised by the man they love.

This is definitely no simple relationship of master and pupils.

Master doesn't seem to harbor the slightest intention in that direction, but it's plain as day that the girls are seriously aiming to become master's wives.

"Sensei, I'm not cute?"

"You're mistaken. Agnes, you're cute as well."

"Thank you."

Master soothes Agnes-san who's pouting as she hasn't been called cute by him.

As always, master isn't accustomed to handling women, despite having a big number of wives.

"Lea, wouldn't it be better to start soon?"

At this point, Erwin-sama skilfully changes the flow of the conversation.

We'll first start from how to handle a kitchen knife.

This 『kitchen knife』 has been produced in Mizuho, but since it's handier and sharper than the kitchen knives we used before, a great number of those knives have been bought for the mansion of the Earl Baumeister House.

Because it looks like Agnes-san and the other two possess magic bags, I think it's better for them to carry and learn how to use that kitchen knife rather than the small knives for cooking often used by adventurers.

"The ingredients are these potatoes here."

We've brought them over from the mansion.

Given that a large amount was sent to Therese-sama from the Philip Dukedom, her home, she has shared some with us as well.

"We will peel them and then slice them as thinly as possible."

First I show them how to do it while including the tricks behind the motions, then I will have the three follow my example.

"I've peeled them too roughly."

"I've cut the skin into small pieces."

"Brother is truly amazing..."

I kinda feel like the three are rather on the skilled side for being beginners?
After practicing it several times, they somehow manage to peel off the potatoes' skin.
There are still many potatoes with skin left on them, but I'll have them practice it independently later on.

"Next we're going to slice these potatoes thinly."

"Thinly..."

"I wonder whether I will be able to do that."

"I can't pull back here as the sister of a cook!"

Once I show them how, the three start to slice the potatoes thinly.
At first they cut them quite crudely, but they gradually became able to slice them thinly.

"We will wash the thinly-cut potatoes with water, and after taking them out of the water, we'll dry them properly with a clean, dry cloth. Got it? Do it well."

""""Yes.""""

The three proceed with the work as I tell them.

"And then we'll fry these in heated oil. The oil's temperature mustn't be too hot. Else the potatoes will get immediately burned."

Once burned, they'll become bitter and stop tasting good.

"When they've been fried to a nice, brown color, you place them on a paper like this, allowing the excess oil to drain."

Since this part of the cooking is easy, there's not much I've got to tell them about it.
Moreover, the paper for draining the oil is also a special product from Mizuho called 『washi』. 1
Since it's always used for various kinds of dishes, the Baumeister House has stocked up on them by import from Mizuho.

"At the end, you sprinkle salt and cut, dried parsley from above, and it's done."

""""I'm done.""""

"It looks good. Let's have a taste."

Since four people's shares of potato chips are done, we'll give the outcome a sampling which will also serve as an afternoon snack.
We line up the chips on the table, and I teach the three how to make tea.

"It's a good idea to warm the cups with warm water in advance. The temperature of the hot water used for brewing tea shouldn't be close to boiling. It'd kill the aroma. You pour the slightly cooled hot water into the pot, adding it to the tea leaves little-by-little while mixing the water like this. If you pour all of it in one go, you'll get a difference in the tea's density."

""""Okay.""""

My skill doesn't go as far as Elise-sama's or Dominique-neesan's, but I have been told that I rank third among the Baumeister House's maids in brewing tea.
But everyone has their personal preferences about brewing tea.

"We're all ready with this. Now then, let us start the sampling."

""""Yes.""""

First are the chips made by me, but it's impossible for me to make an error since master taught me several times how to do it.

They have a crunchy feel, superb seasoning, and with the accent of the dry parsley flavoring, they taste absolutely delicious.

In addition, it's a bliss to eat them with the curry powder invented by master, melted cheese, or melted chocolate. The combination of sweetness and sourness is surprisingly addictive.

It might be a good idea to teach them those as well, if we have some time on another day.

"The crooked shapes of your chips are a problem, but since it doesn't change the fact that they taste good, you get a passing mark. However, they can't be served like that at the Baumeister House."

After all, it must be something that's suited for Earl Baumeister-sama's palate.

Us maids and the cooks make sweets and dishes, and brew tea while paying meticulous attention everyday.

"In other words, there are high hurdles for us to get sensei to eat our homemade cooking."

"That's correct."

I'm sorry for them, but weird things aren't allowed to enter master's mouth.

"I got it. I will do my best!"

"Maybe I should get my brother to teach me?"

I said something slightly harsh there, but it looks like Agnes-san and the other two got motivated sufficiently.

Since the chips are good for their first attempt, I think they'll be able to make something suitable for master to eat as long as they keep training.

I'm as old as Agnes-san, but I feel like wanting to tell them, 『Go for it, juniors!』.

"I'm sure you'll be rewarded for your efforts."

"Umm, Lea."

"Yes, what is it, Erwin-sama?"

I think I've taught them well, considering it's my first time, but maybe Erwin-sama has some issue with it?

"You see, we talked about teaching them the basics so that they can cook outdoors once they've become adventurers, and cook for themselves until a dorm mother starts to work here, right? Why not make cooked rice instead of potato chips? Aren't those snacks? I feel like it'd have been better if you taught them dishes that used potatoes...right, Wend?"

"Certainly, you won't be able to fill your stomach with just those. Adventurers depend on their bodies, so I feel like recipes for substantial food would be better..."

"Ugh!"

Oh damn!

I unconsciously ended up teaching them my favorite potato dish since we had potatoes at hand. It was bad luck that I was somewhat hungry, and that the time for snacking was close at hand. However, being able to cope with this by adapting is my strong point.

"Even if you don't peel the potatoes next time, it'll be okay. You cut them into long, narrow sticks, and fry those in oil."

How about that!

This will turn them into French fries, and anyone can make those easily.

"No, you see...it might be no problem in the dormitory's kitchen, but can you actually use lots of oil for cooking in the wild?"

Damn! It's certainly just like master says!

As I'm pondering with my maid brain what to use as...next dish...

"Humph!"

"It hurts, Dominique-neesan."

The fist of Dominique-neesan, who entered the kitchen with an astounding speed despite her pregnancy, homes in on the crown of my head.

She's merciless, despite the baby in her belly.

Aren't master and Erwin-sama also pulling pained expressions?

"There's no need to think so deeply about it. Since it's supposed to be outdoor food, being able to make it quickly while getting all the necessary nutrients matters the most."

With those words, Dominique-neesan begins to cook.

After cutting peeled potatoes into suitable chunks, she fries them on a thin layer of oil. Once they get heated up to a certain degree, she also adds thinly sliced meat.

Then she adds water, soy sauce, and sugar, letting all of it cook together until the potatoes become soft.

"In reality, you'd also want to add carrots and onions like the Mizuho meat and potato stew, but this would be outdoor cooking that can be prepared easily."

"Oohh! As expected of you, Dominique."

"I'm deeply flattered to hear your praise."

I guess there's a difference in experience, after all...master admires Dominique-neesan's cooking.

"If it's this, it seems like even I could make it."

"It tastes great albeit being simple."

"It's a good dish since you can arrange it in various ways."

Agnes-san and the other two are also all over Dominique-neesan.
It makes me wonder what has happened to my position here...but!
I'll be a failure as a maid if I pull back here.
I've just come up with a good dish now!

"You shred the potatoes into small pieces. This time you don't wash them with water. Instead, you place the shredded potatoes at the bottom of a heated frying pan after spreading oil in it. Then you roast it while pressing it down with a spatula like this. After covering the frying pan, you let it roast on a weak flame for a short while, and once the shredded potatoes start to stick together, you flip the whole chunk over, and add oil. After increasing the heat intensity, you grill it until it's crispy, and it's done."

Great. When I received the potatoes from Therese-sama, I got her to teach me a dish from the Philip Dukedom...

Therese-sama said that it's a countryside dish of her home.
It doesn't look like the dish has a particular name, though. If forced to give it one, I'd say 『Potato Pancake』?

"Hee, this has a simple taste, but it's nice as it's easy to make."

"It'll be fine to increase its substantial quantity by adding cheese and meat, I guess."

My dish has received good evaluations by master and Erwin-sama.

"Although there wouldn't have been any problems if you made this one from the very start..."

Dominique-neesan, that's what you call the star performer entering the stage last.
Besides, I've come up with other dishes as well.

"Well then, I'm going to start the next dish."

That's how the cooking course by me, an excellent maid of the Baumeister House and Erwin-sama's lovely fiancée, started on a good note.

* * *

"Say, Wend."

"What's up, Erw?"

"You, did you get slightly...no, quite a bit...fat?"

"You think so?"

"It's weird, okay! For a magician to gain in weight in such a short time!"



Around one month after I've started to teach Agnes-san and the other two how to cook.

Since a dorm mother was found in a hurry right before the dormitory's opening, the course of teaching the students cooking has come to an end after such a short time.

However, it looks like the three girls want master to eat their homemade cooking, no matter what. Accordingly I've pitched in to help out, and taught them all kinds of dishes during my free time. They are very serious and learn quickly. Although the variation of dishes they can make is still limited, they've reached a level of being able to make sweets and dishes that would be fine for master to eat.

They've started to bring the sweets and dishes they made to master...I wonder whether it's a bit much in quantity considering it's basically snacks...well, it's difficult to only make an appropriate amount of sweets and dishes, after all.

If amateurs do it, the quantity always turns out to be somewhat large.

I think there's slightly many dishes with a lot of oil and sugar...well, for an amateur it's difficult to make delicate dishes that'd capitalize on the essential deliciousness of the ingredients.

If they make the slightest mistake, it'll immediately influence the taste...

"In short, Agnes-san and the others take turns in bringing their own homemade food to master during the breaks, and master eats everything since he's kind. But, please don't fret. I'll teach them step by step how to lower the amount of food they make, and how to stop making too oily and sugary dishes."

"Teach them those methods right away! What are you going to do if master falls ill!?"

"It huuurtz...Dominique-neesan. It looks like I've forgotten the events which took place during the date with Erwin-sama the other day. Even though he treated me to the most expensive course at a new restaurant..."

"You're remembering it, aren't you!?"

As always, Dominique-neesan doesn't go easy on me.



But, I think a slightly fat master is fine as it's very typical of nobles.

Disclaimer

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