

Cardinal Hohenheim apparently planned the assassination of Dattol Stein who has been sheltered for more than 30 years by Duke Bürger. And because of that plan, Bruno was killed.

"That's why I told you I'd take up the mission after one week. Taking on a magician of his caliber requires preparation, and I had to handle a request I accepted beforehand. I just wanted you to wait for a bit..."

But Cardinal Hohenheim was unable to wait, sending out Bruno and Edgar Tretter...

"If I had waited, the death toll would have grown by several people again. Luckily I could get in touch with two excellent magicians. Edgar Tretter was even brimming full of confidence. I thought it'd go well."

"It's a bad example for measuring a magician's strength by just adding mana pools together... Dattol Stein is an experienced and very crafty magician. Even I would likely be an even match at most. As for Edgar Tretter...if a young man, no matter in what field he works, is constantly being praised by his surroundings, he'll get carried away and believe that no one in this world can defeat him. The conceit of the young is their downfall. This turned into a fatal situation on this occasion. Cardinal Hohenheim, usually it's the duty of elderly men like you to caution the young people about such things."

"Bruno-dono was composed despite being young. I thought that he'd hold Edgar Tretter back from doing anything reckless."

Bruno, did you accept this mission because you thought it'd be dangerous for Edgar Tretter to take it on by himself?

"Either way, the first assassination attempt failed due your careless mistake, resulting in things having becoming quite tricky for us now."

That makes sense. Dattol Stein should now be aware that someone is targeting him. Of course, the same applies to Duke Bürger who covers for him.

"The unexperienced Bruno-chan and Edgar Tretter failed in the beginning where they could take him by surprise to make the assassination more likely to succeed. If Alfred-san joins up with high-ranking magicians to attempt another assassination, the other side should immediately sniff out the danger and escape. If Alfred-san goes by himself, his chances for success are questionable."

"You're right. I have used various connections to find out that Dattol Stein is repeatedly moving around a huge forest in the Basel Viscounty. He's living in huts that have been built at various places in the forest. He's randomly moving around between them in preparation for potential assassins that might come for him one day. The people of the Duke Bürger House and the Viscount Basel House are guarding Cutthroat in the forest together. That means it's necessary to kill him after specifying the hut where he's hiding on that day while finding an opening in the surveillance network. You can say it worked out smoothly because it was the first attempt. People are weak when it comes to sudden incidents."

Having said that, only the attack on Dattol Stein succeeded. The assassination itself failed with Bruno dying in the process!

"That's what I've told you. Right now Dattol Stein and Duke Bürger should be very cautious. It's not like Dattol Stein wasn't exposed to the danger of an assassination during the last 30 years. But, the attempts shouldn't have been that frequent either."

"True. Something like assassinating Dattol Stein is dangerous with its outcome being unknown, and on top of that, it won't become any kind of achievement either. I mean, in the end it's no more than murder."

Even if someone succeeded in killing Dattol Stein, it's impossible that they'd be able to show off that achievement with Duke Bürger being around. It'd become a life-threatening act of justice which would simply vanish silently within history.

"Why did Edgar Tretter accept the assassination mission then?"

He should be a very normal man who wishes for his reputation to suit his abilities. If he'd be unable to flaunt the success in the assassination as achievement, it should be meaningless for him to accept the mission in the first place.

"Officially it wouldn't turn into an achievement, but his evaluation for secret missions would go up among nobles, rich people, and the upper echelon of the adventurer's guild. He probably believed that he might be able to gain an assessment above that of Alfred Reinford if he combined this with his official achievements."

"Candy-dono?"

"I didn't tell this to Bruno-chan and you, Ron-chan, but...Edgar Tretter was worried."

"Even Edgar Tretter, who was the most famous magician at the prep school, was no more than a young, skilled magician after graduating. In addition, the one with highest fame among the current, young magicians is Alfred."

Hearing Cardinal Hohenheim's statement, Alfred-sama looks at him with a reproachful expression. It's only reasonable for him to do so since half of it sounds as if he's being told that they failed because of him.

Edgar Tretter failed because he couldn't properly grasp his own ability. He tried the impossible in an attempt to get assessed higher than Alfred-sama. That's all there is to it.

"Bruno, who noticed that, tried to stop him at first. However, in the end Edgar Tretter accepted the assassination mission. Unable to abandon him, Bruno decided to participate as the one to restrain him a bit, you are saying?"

"That's how it is. Even though it had been fine for Bruno-chan to just ignore someone like Edgar Tretter and turn down the mission..."

Bruno, you were a truly kind man. However, that kindness cost you your life.

"If he had refused, Edgar Tretter would have also...no, that's unlikely, I guess."

Indeed. Even without Bruno's participation, Edgar Tretter would have attempted the assassination by himself in all likelihood. Knowing that Edfar would have no chance to win in a one-on-one, Bruno accepted the mission as well.

Bruno, you are an utter fool!

"I've understood the circumstances. So, what are you going to do about Dattol Stein? Are you going to give up on him this time as well?"

"Candy-dono, what do you mean by this time as well?"

"It's not really like the upper ranks of the Helmut Kingdom, the church, and adventurer guild are all brutes. So far they've planned Dattol Stein's assassination three times, failing each time. Last time it was a coalition of high-ranking nobles affiliated to the army who attempted it in secrecy. Ron-chan, your father participated as well. He also provided the funds."

"My father did?"

I'm hearing about this for the first time!

"You're rather well-informed, aren't you? Where did you get your hands on that information, leader of Twilight of Dawn?"

"That's a secret. Girls have many of those."

It seems like Candy-dono isn't just the leader of a famous adventurer party. Cardinal Hohenheim appears to be surprised, but Candy-dono cleverly covers for his source of information.

"Still, why haven't Dattol Stein, who is hated this much, and Duke Bürger, who is backing him, been punished yet? The problem should be solved by His Majesty punishing them."

"His Majesty is actually the problem here. He harbors complicated feelings about Duke Bürger."

"Complicated feelings?"

"No one knows the truth about the matter with the previous king. But, the number of nobles circulating speculations behind closed doors isn't low by any means. His Majesty is being doubted as well. They're asking whether Duke Bürger might be the proper heir to the crown."

I guess the king is thinking that he might trigger a state crisis as a result of cornering Dike Bürger on the matter of Dattol Stein.

"I feel like that's somewhat exaggerated, though."

"His Majesty is human as well, and thus he has things that trouble him at times. Anyway, even if he were summoned by His Majesty at this point in time, Duke Bürger wouldn't be judged. That's why His Majesty's retainers have been trying to kill Dattol Stein in secrecy."

I guess the idea is to cut off Duke Bürger's personal connection and source of funds by assassinating Dattol Stein.

"It's not much of a help if they keep failing, though. The three past assassination attempts all ended with terrible results. At those times, remarkable, famous magicians died, allowing Dattol Stein to accumulate more and more experience and thus making him now very tough to deal with."

"It's problematic if you talk about this as if it's someone else's problem. Thanks to your failure, my first strategy has come to nothing."

"Come to nothing?"

"I was trying to somehow get other high-ranking magicians to join me in order to raise the probability of success. And now that I finally found a willing candidate, we have this situation on our hands. Dattol Stein and Duke Bürger should be on high alert now. It'll be very hard to attack them with two high-ranking magicians. Having said that, the chance for me to succeed alone has been cut down by 40%. Moreover, if I also fail..."

No other skilled magician, who could take on the assassination of Dattol Stein, would appear in the next ten years.

"You're right. Even without explicitly going on such a mission, you can happily live on while earning your money. The victims are all people of the slums, so it's not like there's any direct harm to us."

"Many nobles hate the slums, too. Some among them are covering Duke Bürger secretly, even if they're not going as far as supporting him personally."

"Even if they might be living in the slums, they are people just like us! Are you saying that it's okay for slum residents to be murdered in great numbers by a mass murderer?"

"It's certainly a terrible story, but that's what you call adult circumstances. What do you think, Cardinal Hohenheim?"

"Dattol Stein is a crazy mass murderer. I believe that it's proper to eliminate him. I don't plan to brandish some idealistic sense of justice at this point, but think about what's going to happen if this case is exposed to the public in the future. The citizen's distrust towards the Kingdom would skyrocket. I don't think that's desirable for the Kingdom."

"What do you think about the achievements of Dattol Stein then?"

"He's an excellent magician, no doubt. But, the demerit is simply too big. In the first place, the magician society is talking about prodigies as they come every few years or geniuses as they appear once in a decade every year. Even if Stein were to be gone, a new, superb magician is going to pop up soon anyway."

He's right. Counting precisely, I feel like geniuses, who are hailed to come around once in a decade, appear every two or three years.

"Alfred, who's the other high-ranking magician?"

"As a matter of fact, it's my master, but now it's impossible for him."

"Burkhart!? Duke Bürger is already cautious of him."

"The same applies to me, but it won't be an issue as long as I act by myself. It'll be impossible for me to join up with others, though. However, although I'm a high-ranking magician, the risk is too big that I'll be defeated by Dattol Stein if I attack by myself. Therefore, I've given up on that idea. Either way, what's your take on this? It's very likely that I'll fail, but should I go anyway? Since I'm a carefree, unmarried man, I don't particularly mind dying, but please consider that no one capable of following up is going to appear for the next ten years."

Certainly, I don't believe that I or another magician will be able to kill a magician who defeated Alfred-sama.

"...This time..."

"Wait!"

"Klimt-kun?"

"I will do it together with you!"

Surely, I am still inexperienced as a magician. But, I'll act together with Alfred-sama!

"Klimt-dono, I'm sorry to be rude, but your abilities are..."

"True, it might be slightly reckless."

"Cardinal Hohenheim, Candy-dono, I would like you to let me do this!"

If Alfred-sama is with me, there should be a way to succeed with this! Besides, Dattol Stein is the murderer of my best friend!

"But, putting aside if it was Burkhart, with you who's merely an elementary magician..."

"It will be impossible to pull it off by myself, but if I group up with Alfred-sama, it can work depending on how we do this! My body is quite sturdy! I am alright going with a somewhat dangerous strategy!"

You won't know whether an assassination is going to succeed or fail by just adding the amount of mana of the participating magicians together. Alfred-sama said so himself! I'm willing to do this!

"Ron-chan, you... What do you think, Alfred-san?" Candy-dono asks Alfred-sama who's been silent

on this matter so far.

He seems to be pondering about something.

"Klimt-kun, it's going to be quite dangerous. I don't know whether I'll be able to survive myself."

"Alfred-sama, your chance for survival should increase if I am with you!"

If I become a burden, I won't mind being used as a shield!

"Why do you want to participate? Revenge for your best friend?"

"Do I need any other reason? Can I call myself his friend if I cannot avenge Bruno here? That is all there is to it!"

I just want to avenge Bruno! Nothing else!

"You're saying you don't care about the victims so far or the political implications?"

"I will not say that I do not care, but right now avenging Bruno takes the highest priority for me!"

I've volunteered, following that very wish alone.

"Very well. Let me ask you for your assistance then."

"Alfred! Leaving you aside, if something happens to Klimt-dono..."

"Are you worrying about the Earl Armstrong House at this point in time? But, currently Klimt-kun has left home. Besides, the head of that family has also attempted to assassinate Dattol Stein in the past. Don't you think he'd approve of this as well?"

"..."

"What are your thoughts on this, Candy-dono?"

"I also think that it's dangerous, but I also feel like wanting to respect your will, Ron-chan. Besides..."

"Hmm?"

"I'll be troubled if you ask me for my reason, but I feel like it'll go smoothly. I guess it's what you call my intuition as an adventurer?"

"I see, intuition, huh?"

"Don't look down on a girl's intuition, okay?"

"That lowers the value of your opinion, doesn't it? Well then Klimt-kun and I will carry out the assassination tomorrow. The preparations..."

"I'll help out as well. As long as Cardinal Hohenheim resolved himself?"

"Got it, I shall get everything ready in advance."

It's decided. Alfred-sama and I will assassinate Dattol Stein.

"Seeing how it's been decided, I'll also see it to the end, Alfred, Klimt-dono."

"Pardon?"

"What?"

"If you feel like it's impossible, get away as quickly as possible. I'll handle the aftermath then."

"That's appreciated. You heard him, Klimt-kun."

"Humph! No need! We are going to kill Dattol Stein without fail!"

"How nice it is to be young. I suppose that's no line you say to someone going to assassinate a person soon, though."

This is how it was decided that Alfred-sama and I would undertake the assassination of Cutthroat Dattol Stein.