

Chapter 13 - Assassination Mission

"Burkhart shows no movements, or rather, he doesn't seem to have anything to do with us."

"So he's drinking wine after having returned to his inn?"

"Another team is watching him. They say they couldn't confirm Alfred, but at least he seems to not have joined up with Burkhart."

"Then it's fine. There are multiple high-ranking magicians, but it'll be alright as long as they don't target Dattol Stein."

Today is yet another day of us watching famous magicians, who are staying in the capital, under our lord's, Duke Bürger's, order. It's because there was an assassination attempt on Dattol Stein, who's a source of personal connections and money for the duke, just the day before yesterday.

The number of assassins trying to kill isn't that big, but every year at least seven or eight try their luck. Given that he's an excellent magician, it's necessary for the hitmen to have considerable abilities as well, making it difficult to prepare the personnel easily.

He's usually staying inside the big forest within the Basel Viscounty with guards watching over him. At present, you can describe any assassination attempt as extremely challenging. We just need to be careful in the case of several high-ranking magicians being dispatched in a group.

It's troublesome for us as watchers as well, but since this is a part of our job, it can't be helped.

"You think Alfred Reinford is going to attempt it by himself?"

"Who knows. There's many other famous magicians. The other teams are watching them, but so far there have been no reports about more than two high-ranking magicians having gathered. If it's just one assassin, they'll definitely have the tables turned on them."

"Dattol Stein will gleefully cut them up, yep."

"Even though he's got that issue, it looks like he's still beneficial to have around on the whole. He's also the reason for our wages, so we've got to protect him."

Something like monitoring people for the sake of protecting a mass murderer is nothing I can tell my family about, but if the Duke Bürger House is gone, we'll be unemployed.

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Alfred-sama and I depart to the entrance of the forest in the Basel Viscounty at the night of the planned assassination.

"As expected, they didn't use a strict surveillance for a single, high-ranking magician."

From now on we're going to move deep into the forest, and kill Dattol Stein in one of the huts where he's hiding out.

"It's not like the operation is overly complicated. We just need to kill him. Though it's also possible that we'll be finished off instead."

"I will make sure that does not happen!"

"You're absolutely right. I want to enjoy my life for a bit longer as well."

Even though Alfred-sama is only around five years older than me, he's hailed as a young genius. That's really amazing.

No, right now I should only think about killing Dattol Stein with him.

"Which hut is Dattol Stein using tonight?"

"My master investigated that part. As long as he moved alone, they weren't overly cautious of him. Moreover, famous magicians do enter quite troublesome monster domains at times. It's just, the people of the Duke Bürger House couldn't directly monitor him there."

So he found out Dattol Stein's location while pretending to be out on a job there, huh? Alfred-sama's master is a truly remarkable magician as well!

"Right now he's probably grumbling over a few cups of wine, but well, that's how we split the work, so whatever. I'm quite strict about each step of this mission."

"Let us go then."

After finishing our chat, we began to walk deeper into the forest. However, soon after proceeding for a short time, we sense the presence of someone ahead.

"Weird... Even though I should have completely hidden our presence."

Moreover, Alfred-sama has led us in a way that avoided all the soldiers positioned at various places in this forest. When we brace ourselves wondering who it might be, it's actually a person I know well.

"Hi——i, Alfred-san, Ron-chan, are you guys doing fine?"

""Candy-dono!""

"Since I was late in seeing you off, I did my best to catch up with you."

Catch up with us, he says... Candy-dono, who's no magician, hasn't been noticed by us and the soldiers around here?

"As expected, you're quite the crafty one, aren't you?"

"Oh my, I was praised by a good man. I won't be able to accompany you, but I thought I'd pass you this here."

Candy-dono brought with him a set of underwear and a great amount of magic potions.

"Wear this under your robe, Ron-chan. It'll be able to completely block powerful spells several times."

"That is very convenient!"

However, it's underwear that makes my figure stand out quite a bit. That won't be much of a problem as long as I wear under my robe, though.

"Where did you obtain this?"

"Hm——m, that's a girl's secret."

"I guess it can't be helped then."

Alfred-sama, are you really okay with that answer?

"Also, here you have some instantly-working healing potions. You just need to sprinkle them over your body."

"Those must have been quite expensive as well."

"It's for the sake of raising your chance of success. I'll bill Cardinal Hohenheim with the expenses anyway."

"That's a great idea."

Alfred-sama flashes a smile at Candy-dono's explanation. I also want to see how Cardinal Hohenheim plops down on his butt after seeing the outrageously high bill. Therefore I must survive.

"I tried to investigate a bit as well. Dattol Stein's strong magic encompasses all attributes. It looks like he often cuts up his victims after immobilizing them with 『Wind Cutter』."

"A spell for his own amusement, huh? He's got really nasty preferences."

It's certainly as Alfred-sama says.

"Somehow he appears to use a spell I've never seen before...but I couldn't find out any more than that. Sorry."

"As long as we know that we need to be cautious of an unknown spell, it might boost our chance to win a bit. Still, I must say you have a good information network."

"A girl has various secrets. Both of you, come back safely, okay?"

After receiving Candy-dono's gifts and being seen off by him, we head deeper into the forest again.

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We proceed through the forest based on the information Alfred-sama procured. When we arrive at the hut where Dattol Stein is hiding out, he's already waiting for us outside.

"Yo, I've been waiting for you."

"This is an unexpected development."

"This guy is Dattol Stein, huh...?"

"Indeed, that I am."

He's a slender, middle-aged man with his silver-gray hair swept back, giving off the aura of a smart man.

Even Alfred-sama apparently couldn't hide his surprise at this.

"What about your guards then?"

"Ah, if it's them."

It looks like the soldiers supposed to watch and protect him are lying on the ground a good way away from here.

"Did you kill them?"

"Most definitely not. I just made them faint for a bit. It's not like I'm on edge right now."

I see. I guess that means he's usually idle and won't kill people indiscriminately.

"It's because I cut up a lively boy two days ago. The other managed to get away before dying, though."

"Are you talking about Bruno?"

"I don't know his name, but the flesh of boys and girls around that age is wonderful. Many people misunderstand that there's no sensation from cutting up someone with 『Wind Cutter』, but such people are inexperienced as magicians. When you reach my level... Ah! Finally the desire to cut flesh has kicked in! I'll sate it by chopping up your bodies."

"You've completely strayed off the proper path, haven't you?"

"Deviant!"

"True. I understand as much about myself as well. But, I don't have the courage to kill myself, and I want to cut flesh as long as I'm alive. If you want to stop me, you've got no other choice than killing me!"

"Klimt-kun!"

At the same time as Alfred-sama yells out to me, I jump to the side, partially on instinct. A 『Rock Spike』 has protruded out of the ground where I stood moments ago! If I hadn't moved away, I'd have been skewered by now!

"Looks like you've got good reflexes."

Next, a huge firebird is created by Dattol Stein, just to immediately swoop down on us like a living falcon.

"Running away is pointless, huh?"

"Even when evading it, it comes right back!"

"Let's do this then!"

Alfred-sama creates smallish birds made out of water, and makes them clash with the firebird. Thereupon, both parties vanish, leaving only steam behind.

"Not bad. The other one...boy, why are you here?" Dattol Stein suddenly calls out to me while looking curious.

"To defeat you, obviously."

"With that amount of mana, second son of the Armstrong House?"

"So you knew?"

"My owner is Duke Bürger, after all. He can immediately find out such kind of information. Besides, previously your father sent some assassins my way as well. If I remember correctly, Duke Bürger should have warned him back then...and this time it's the son, huh? With a laughably small amount of mana, at that."

"That does not matter to you at all!"

Even if he tries to shake me up with such words, it's pointless...

"Klimt-kun!"

"Oh damn!"

It's not like this man just wanted to enjoy a chat! Faster than I can do anything, I'm surrounded by fire pillars!

"Ahaha, burn nicely, okay? But, I must make sure to not overdo it to not damage your body as much as possible. I mean, otherwise I won't have any fun cutting you up, will I?"