

Chapter 9 - Search for the Mysterious Gigantic Life-Form

"Good morning!"

"Good morning, Ron-chan. You really flourished in yesterday's martial arts tournament, didn't you?"

"I only lasted up to the fourth match, didn't I?"

"Isn't it great to have gone this far? I also entered that contest ten years ago, but I lost in the third match."

"You did, Candy-dono?"

"Well, ten years ago I wasn't as strong as I'm nowadays."

Yesterday I abhorred to my family's circumstances, or rather fulfilled my duty by entering the martial arts tournament. I'm a noble, and moreover the second son of the Armstrong family, an authority among the military-oriented nobles, so not participating was no option, and thus I joined the tournament after being permitted to have a day off.

Because nobles and noble youths have to enter the sword section, I participated with a sword, which doesn't fit my usual fighting style, and somehow managed to advance to the fourth match.

"I watched the matches. Warren-kun ended up winning the sword section at the young age of twelve. What a cute and strong boy he was."

"Haah..."

The noteworthy contestant this time might have been the young Warren who defeated all the veteran participants in his tournament debut and won the championship. Since he's a noble youth, it's deemed that he'll be scouted by His Highness the Crown Prince.

I've also seen his bouts, but if you watch such a prodigy, feelings of frustrations and similar don't even well up within you.

"Ron-chan, introduce him to me next time."

"I'm not acquainted with him."

Given that there's many nobles around, it's not like I know each and every single one.

"Aww, what a bummer. Okay, let's talk about the next job then."

Once we head to 『Mistletoe of Night』 where we always gather, everyone except for Candy-dono and me is already waiting for us.

"Klimt, you made an appearance in yesterday's tournament, didn't you?"

"You watched it as well, Bruno? It was my duty as a noble."

Otherwise, I wouldn't have participated. And, I won't ever participate again either.

"Now then, about our next job. We are to catch a 『Pasto』."

"Pasto?"

It's the name of a monster I've heard for the first time.

"Do you know that monster, Bruno?"

"I've heard about it for the first time as well..."

Unfortunately, Bruno has no clue about Pasto either.

"They're called pasto because they live in the 『Pastour Lake』 located slightly south from the capital. Currently it's unknown whether they're animals or monsters. They're quite big, and have been sighted regularly, I hear."

Pasto because they live in the Pastour Lake; what an uncreative way of naming them.

"We're going to catch those unidentified life-forms? Not kill them?"

"It sounds like they want them alive if possible, but at worst, it's fine as long as there's still a corpse left? It's a request that has been put up for more than 30 years now. I wonder whether it's going to be difficult to accomplish this time around as well."

"They want us to secure the corpses?"

"The Pastour Lake isn't famous by any means, but so far as it goes, it's a tourist attraction. I'm told they want to stuff and then exhibit the corpses, if we obtain any."

Are tourists going to show up to look at a stuffed version of something like that?

"Klimt, you know this lake?"

"No, not at all."

There exist several lakes and rivers famous for their summer resorts where noble and rich people visit, but I hear about a Pastour Lake for the first time. It must be a rather tiny summer resort.

"How about not accepting such a request? Right, Dalton?"

"...*nod*"

Boltor-dono complains to Candy-dono who's accepted a request that doesn't seem achievable, no matter how you look at it. Dalton-dono nods, seemingly sharing Boltor-dono's opinion.

"Well, it's got the goal to create a debt with the adventurer's guild, and since there's a monster domain nearby, our primary objective will be to hunt over there."

"A debt?"

"It's a request no one has completed for more than 30 years, right? The client seems to hurry the adventurer guild every year. The Pastour Lake lies in the territory of a certain Viscount, and since the client is a noble, they can't turn him down completely. The idea here is to appeal that we're doing our best finishing the request by regularly accepting it."

"Now that's quite blunt."

"Also, if we take on that request, it'll be fine for us to not pay any taxes for the loot we got in the nearby monster domain. It's just going to be the fee for the adventurer's guild. Isn't that a wonderful bargain?"

"If it has such a benefit, I suppose it's alright. Right, Dalton?"

"...*nod*"

I see, accepting the request for the pasto search is a trick to evade taxes. Candy-dono is a shrewd man.

"Well, if there wasn't at least that much of a catch, I wouldn't have accepted a request like that one. Oh, right. Since the work at the Pastour Lake is kinda like playing around anyway, how about you invite your little sister, Bruno-chan? She's usually taking care of you guys, isn't she?"

"Yes..."

"Ron-chan, you as well, okay? You've left home, but you should meet your family every once in a while."

He's right. We're certainly indebted to Liese-jou for regularly cooking, cleaning, and doing the laundry for us. It's not a bad idea to invite her to Pastour Lake for a summer trip as a little thanks. I haven't seen Nina for more than a year now either, so it's a fact that I must have made her feel lonely.

"Is that okay, Candy-san?"

"In other words, I'm telling you that it's a job where it's fine for your little sisters to show up."

"Okay, I understand."

It'd be strange for huge monsters to come out at a lake that's not a monster domain, and because they haven't been spotted in more than 30 years, it's actually odd instead. The pasto might have been mistaken for big driftwoods.

"Bruno-chan, Ron-chan, it's also fine for you to invite your girlfriends over. Even acquaintances and friends work."

"I'll keep it in mind."

"I will consider it."

I don't have any women among my acquaintances...except for Nina and Liese-jou...

This was how we left for Pastour Lake for a combination of work and summer trip.

* * *

"Master, it went well."

"You're right, Gettol. We finally succeeded in inviting that famous adventurer party 『Twilight of Dawn』 to the Pastour Lake. The son of the Armstrong house is also part of that party. This time it should work out as planned, for sure."

"Yes, this time for sure. Everything is being prepared as we speak."

"I see. We'll make it succeed at any cost. For the sake of realizing our ambition which has been passed on for two generations of our Viscount Bart House."

"Indeed. The late predecessor had been very worried about this as well, even on his deathbed."

"We'll get it done this time!"

"Yes!"

We have to finish all the preparations until the Twilight of Dawn arrives here. And then our Bart Viscount House will finally fulfill its ambition!

* * *

"Thanks for always taking care of my big brother. My name is Lieselotte."

"You have my deepest gratitude for the invitation on this fine occasion. How has...Klimt-onii-sama...been faring so far?"

"It's all fine since he's basically an excellent adventurer. It sure becomes shiny and florid if you add three women to the mix."

"Three?"

"Liese-chan, Nina-chan, and me. Boltor, do you have some problem with your eyes?"

"Sorry to say, but great eyesight is my only redeeming feature. I'm using a bow after all."



After we finished the work in the monster domain which is located in the same Bart Viscounty as the Pastour Lake, we tried to head over to the lake for the sake of having some fun under the pretext of work.

Following Candy-dono's advice, Bruno invited his sister over, and I did the same with Nina since I don't know any other women that I could invite. As for Nina, I honestly just planned to give it a try since I didn't have anything to lose anyway, but unexpectedly she accepted readily, and came to the inn near the lake for the sake of joining up with us.

Given that Nina qualifies as a noble daughter, her guard protocol was an issue, but I can currently see a man in a butler attire standing behind her. He looks to be around 30 and seems quite capable.

"Klimt, is that very-butler-like person a retainer of the Armstrong house?"

"No, I have never seen him before."

"Excuse me for the late introduction. I'm a butler of the Viscount Hohenheim House. My name is Sebastian. After hearing that Nina-sama would be heading out to a summer resort with Klimt-sama, it was hurriedly decided that I would be accompanying her on this. It is my greatest pleasure to make your acquaintance."

"You're a person from the Viscount Hohenheim house?"

"Yes. Nina-sama is scheduled to marry into the Viscount Hohenheim House in the future. Accordingly I have been selected to take care of her needs."

I guess he came here to serve as Nina's caretaker and observer. Since a noble's unmarried daughter has gone out on a summer trip, it's his task to make sure that no evil bugs cling to her.

"I am delighted to see that someone of her age is present here as well."

Sebastian seems relieved after spotting Liese-jou. Bruno's family registers as a fairly big merchant family. If she were to be a girl of too low standing, it'd have been his duty to prevent Nina from getting in contact with her...this is one of the parts I really hate about nobles, and also one of the reasons why I wanted to leave home.

"How old are you, Lieselotte-san?"

"I'm 13."

"I'm as old as you are, so let's get along."

"Gladly, Nina-san. Please call me Liese."

"Okay, Liese-san."

Nina and Liese-jou apparently became friends right away without caring about the opinion of the butler and the Hohenheim house behind him.

"Great, let's go to the lake then."

Our party, which has now grown to eight people in total, left the inn, taking the few steps to the lake.



The Pastour Lake has an extremely high level of transparency and lies in the crater of a slightly elevated mountain. I hear that many, many years have passed since the volcano stopped erupting.

Plants are thickly overgrowing the crater around the lake.

"It is a very beautiful lake, Klimt-onii-sama."

"It is very transparent, yes."

"But, there's rather few people around, right brother?"

"It's because of its low popularity-"

"Why do visitors stay away if it's such a great lake? Is it because of the pasto?"

"Certainly not."

Candy-dono denies Boltor-dono's theory with a laugh.

"I mean, we didn't even know about the Pastour Lake and the pasto until we were told about them by the guild. It's not that people don't come here because the mysterious life-forms are scary, but rather, they don't visit because the area here is unknown to begin with."

"Since no guests come around, they can not proceed with the maintenance of the surrounding streets and lodging facilities, which makes it impossible to advertise the area. As far as I have heard, the pasto seem to stay inside the lake. If such huge creatures truly existed, nobles who like unusual things would group up and visit."

"It's just as Sebastian says. The request to catch them has been around for more than 30 years now, so you can't clearly declare that they don't exist, but not one of the parties looking for them was ever able to find anything, and there must have been many of them over all this time."

The probability of us not finding anything even if we start searching is high, and therefore it was no problem to bring Nina and Liese-jou along, I guess.

"We'll at least pretend to stand watch."

"In other words, it's truly nothing more than a vacation."

"Isn't that fine every once in a while? We've earned quite a bit of cash earlier."

The nearby monster domain is actually crowded with prey, allowing us to hunt a lot. It's great that we don't have to pay any taxes for hunted and collected materials as thanks for having accepted the lake request.

"We'll stand watch for around three days. It's an easy job, but this will also bring some money in."

"Umm...Candy-san."

"What is it, Liese-chan?"

"Is it okay for us to play around despite this being work for you?"

"Don't worry. It's just standing watch anyway. Feel free to swim and play in the meanwhile, okay? Everyone, put on your swim-wear so that you can deal with the pasto if they should actually show up. I've prepared a set for everyone."

Being told so by Candy-dono, we all changed into the swimsuits prepared by him.



"Whoaa, this swimsuit sure has nice colors."

"Since the design is set anyway, I thought I should at least pretty up the colors a bit. It suits you superbly, Nina-chan."

"It's a wonderful swimsuit. Did you buy it somewhere?"

"I sewed it myself. Liese-chan, it's cute, isn't it?"

"Candy-san, you're amazing. It just looks like something you'd buy at a store."

Nina and Liese-jou have put on their swimsuits. Swimsuits have basically the same design, whether worn by women or men, and it's a standard to keep the colors and patterns plain, but the swimsuits worn by those two have flashy colors with red and orange.

Just when I thought that Candy-dono must have bought them somewhere, I learn that he's made them himself. That's quite laudable. It looks to me like he could survive with cooking and sewing

even if he were to quit being an adventurer.

"Sebastian, you're not going to put on a swimsuit?"

"Candy-dono, I feel honored by your consideration. But, I am currently working."

"How regrettable."

Mr. Sebastian, who's accompanied us as Nina's caretaker, is the only one still wearing his previous clothes. I feel like he's quite devoted to his job.

"It's not hot?"

"No, this place is situated in a slightly higher altitude, so it is cool. Besides, I am a butler."

Do you become resistant against heat if you become a butler?

He answers Boltor-dono's question with a refreshed look, lacking even a single drop of sweat.

"Then it's fine. Even so, they're completely focused on playing around."

Nina and Liese-jou are playing around in the shallow part of the lake, where only their feet get wet. Bruno and Dalton-dono are keeping them company. As always, Dalton-dono is taciturn, but it's strange that he can, for some reason, communicate with the two girls properly even after meeting them today for the first time.

"What about your family, Dalton-san? Do you have a wife?"

"...*nod*"

"Do you have children? A son?"

"...*nod*"

"One or two?"

"...*nod*"

"Eehh!? You were married, Dalton-san!?"

It's only reasonable for Bruno to be shocked. Bruno and I are hearing about this for the first time now.

I wonder, just how is he talking with his wife and children?

"Boltor-sama, I have heard that this will be treated as work at the waterside, so I have prepared some cold mate tea. Would you like to have some?"

"Ah, thanks, Sebastian-dono."

"No, do not mind it. I am a butler after all."

Boltor-dono watches Pastour Lake while sitting on a chair. It's just for caution's sake, so that he's ready even if the pasto might show up.

Sebastian serves cold mate tea to Boltor-dono. That man really never forgets his heart as a butler. He's the role model of a perfect butler.

"Ron-chan, you're not going to play in the water?" Candy-dono steps up to me as I'm watching Nina and the others.

"I will join them soon."

"I see. It's fine for you to not stand watching so seriously."

"Is that so?"

Even so, I feel like it's necessary to at least pretend that we're looking for the pasto.

"Somehow it's kinda weird, you see...?"

"What is?"

What does Candy-dono consider as weird?

"Look, the client is the Viscount Bart house, but we were only greeted by a retainer person at the beginning, and he left us alone after telling us to take care of it. They aren't even watching us to make sure that we aren't playing hooky."

"Isn't that because nothing has been found in more than 30 years?"

Maybe the people of the Bart house might have unexpectedly given up on the capture of pasto as well.

"Then they wouldn't put up a request anymore, I think. The money paid to adventurers doesn't grow on trees either."

"You mean they are following another objective with this?"

"Maybe, but...for now, we'll focus on our current situation."

"Is something wrong with our current situation?"

"The sun is shining too strongly in the current season, damaging the skin, so please apply this special cream on me."

"Me?"

Just when I thought that Candy-dono had come to have a serious talk with me; for him to have checked for someone to apply sunscreen on his skin... Even if his swimsuit might hide everything except for his face, arms, legs, I can't stand the idea of smearing cream on his skin.

"Huuurry."

There must be a means to get away...oh, right!

"Bruno!"

"What's up?"

I call out to Bruno who's playing in the water with the girls. Not knowing anything about the circumstances, he comes over in a carefree manner. I feel sorry for him, but this is for the sake of my own mind's sanity.

With that decided, I retrieve a coin from my magic bag.

"Bruno, head or tails?"

"What's it all of a sudden? Are we playing some game?"

"I'll let you choose first."

"Head then."

"That means I get tails!"

With our sides set, I toss the coin into the air. And then the coin lands on the back of my hand. Once I remove the hand covering the coin, the coin shows tails.

"It is my win."

"Aww, shucks. So, what kind of contest was it?"

"A chore for Candy-dono."

"A chore, huh? Can't be helped now that I've lost. Candy-san, what am I supposed to do?"

Bruno, I'm truly sorry, but I can't smear cream on Candy-dono's skin. Besides, a job like that is better suited to the sensitive Bruno than a rough and clumsy person like me.

Well then, I'm going to play at the beach as well.

"Klimt-onii-sama, what about Bruno-san?"

"He needs to take care of an important job."

"He was called over by Candy-san, right?"

"Correct. I am going to play with you in his stead."

In the end, we didn't feel the slightest presence of pasto today, and thus we enjoyed playing in the water until evening.



"Aww, how nice. You putting your hands into my swimsuit and smearing my body with cream is so wonderfull—— Gosh, just what embarrassing things are you making me say."

"I'd be happy if you could tone it down a bit...(Klimt, I'll get you for this)."

"What's wrong, Bruno-chan?"

"Nothing..."

Having the task of applying cream on Candy-dono's body pushed on him, Bruno carried out his work while mumbling curses under his breath, I heard from Sebastian later on.



"The first day we're going to wait and see what they do. Are the preparations in order?"

"Yes, everything is in perfect order."

It sure looks like the folks from the Twilight of Dawn are taking the job of catching the pasto more seriously than the other parties before them. At least, one of them is always watching the lake.

The other parties only played around, prattling stuff like, 『We won't find the pasto anyway』.

For this reason, it's about time to introduce our new weapon. With this the folks from Twilight of Dawn should get all panicky too.

"It's ready, right?"

"Yes. Right now it's hidden in the thicket on the opposite shore, but upon your signal, the 『pasto』 can sortie at any time, milord."

"Okay, then we'll wrap this up tomorrow."

Ladies and gentlemen of Twilight of Dawn, tomorrow your jaws will probably drop from getting extremely surprised. And I'll pass that miserable state of yours on to everyone in the capital. That will add fame to the name of the Pastour Lake, resulting in many visitors visiting this place as a summer resort.

* * *

On the next day we're playing around at the waterside again, but just when we're about to go back to the inn as it had become evening, we spot some huge object approaching us from the other side of the lake. A torso looking like a hill as it floats across the water, a long neck, and a head similar to that of a dragon. I suppose that's the rumored *pasto*.

"Eeehh!? It came out all of a sudden?" Bruno is very surprised about the abrupt appearance of the *pasto*.

"Klimt-onii-sama, is this a *pasto*?"

"It sure is big."



On the other hand, Nina and Liese-jou are merely looking at the *pasto* with interest. Women are more gutsy at times like these, huh?

"It's gradually heading towards the central part of the lake."

We won't be able to make a move on it over there. The Pastour Lake hasn't been decently maintained as a tourist attraction, and thus they don't have even a single boat on the lake as it stands.

"I do have a boat for just myself."

"Such a small boat won't be of any help."

I've put a small boat for crossing rivers and some such into my magic bag, but Candy-dono prohibits its use.

"The *pasto* can swim, so you can consider the lake to be a field completely suited for it. Approaching it in a boat with one or two people under such circumstances is a bad idea. The boat would be toppled over with a single blow."

"Do you want me to fly over with 『Flight』 and attack it with magic?"

"So far as it goes, it's our duty to catch it...it might die if your magic is too strong, and if it's too weak, you might actually only anger it instead."

"It's not like there would be no meaning in angering it though."

"What do you mean by that, Bruno-chan?"

"Wouldn't the *pasto* come this way if it's pissed off? If we can get it to come to a shallow area, we'll be able to fight it without feet on the ground."

Bruno suggests the plan of fighting the *pasto* after drawing it towards this place.

"Wouldn't Ron-chan's magic be more suited for that?"

"Me, you say?"

I still cannot use any emission-based magic...

"Although little-by-little, your mana has been increasing. In short, you could just launch some spell at it. It'd actually be better if it doesn't have any firepower."

Hm——mm. I suppose it's just for the sake of provoking the *pasto*. I can understand the idea here, but I feel somewhat conflicted, mentally.

"What if you give it a try since you don't have to lose anything anyway?"

"Okay, I will give it a shot."

If it doesn't work, then so be it. As a test, I knead a lot of mana in my own way, and imagine the fire arrow 『Flame Arrow』 inside my head.

"N——ngh!"

"Sure looks like he's struggling there."

"It won't work unless he puts in a bit more mana, I think."

Candy-dono and Bruno comment. Though I'd prefer them to not talk about this right next to me.

This time for sure...as soon as I think so, a very small and narrow 『Flame Arrow』 flies towards the pasto from the tip of my finger.

"It succeeded!"

"This little shouldn't hurt the pasto, I'm sure."

"Indeed."

"But, it's fine to hurt me?"

Even I want to become good at using emission-based magic with reasonable power.

"Klimt-onii-sama, it looks like the fire arrow is going to hit it squarely." Nina, who's closely watching the fate of my 『Flame Arrow』, informs me.

Well, I won't point out the fact that its speed was at a level that allowed even an ordinary person like Nina to follow its flight path with her eyes...

"Now then, I wonder what it's going to do?"

Everyone is watching how the arrow is homing in on the pasto, but it's slightly weird.

"It hasn't taken any evasive actions, has it?"

"Maybe the pasto thinks that there's no need to do so?"

While I'm thinking that Candy-dono has to be wrong about this, the arrow impacts on the pasto. Thereupon, the pasto suddenly goes up in flames. The flames flare up in the blink of an eye, and the pasto immediately turns into a ball of fire.

"No way!"

Although I'm not proud to say so myself, the power of my 『Flame Arrow』 didn't go this far...

"Are pasto weak to fire or something?"

"Liese, the opponent is a living being, so it won't go up in such a huge blaze all of a sudden. In other words, this is..."

"This is?"

"I'd say it must be man-made. If you use light materials to place them on a small boat, they're going to catch fire easily."

"So it was a cheap construction."

Boltor-dono answers Liese-jou's question in Bruno's stead. Afterwards, the burning pasto quickly sinks into the lake. The pasto's true identity was a fake that was built by someone.



"I am sorry."

"This is also for the sake of increasing the number of tourists at the lake."



In the end, the pasto was a fake placed on a boat. Because it was made out of wood and paper, it easily went up in flames from my 『Flame Arrow』. Bruno rescued the Bart house's retainers, who had jumped off the boat with the burning paper mache, and questioned them why they had done something like that.

"Beforehand, we tried to just get it done with rumors, but those had absolutely no effect."

"I can guess."

There's no way that people would expressly come to this unknown lake just because of some rumors.

"Accordingly we were told to have you actually witness a pasto this time."

"Fortunately, people of the Armstrong house had come here."

If I had reported to my family about the existence of a pasto in the Pastour Lake, it'd turn into a big rumor in noble society, possibly drawing more tourists to this area. The retainers explained to us that they used this plan for the sake of achieving that goal.

"I wouldn't be of any use towards that end!"

Recently I haven't gone back home at all, and I haven't even seen Nina for more than a year.

"Umm...would it really become popular as a summer resort if some mysterious, huge creature were to appear in the lake?"

"True, if it was possible for an outrageous monster to attack and eat people, I doubt that many rich people would come here for some relaxation and fun."

Candy-dono agrees with Liese-jou's objection while adding some more to it.

Although they're nobles, it's not like they can readily bring excellent adventurers and magicians with them to a summer resort.

"What should we do then?"

"No idea. We're no merchants, you see."

"...*nod*"

Dalton-dono nods his agreement with Boltor-dono's merciless reply.

But yes, that would be a request outside our field of expertise.

"N-No way!"

"That's not the job of adventurers, after all."

I pity them, but we don't have any skills that would summon tourists to the Pastour Lake. If Candy-dono couldn't do anything about it either, we didn't have any means to help them.



On the next day we spent another day at the waterside of the lake since our contract told us to watch the lake for another day. Even if there's no pasto, properly carrying out the watch for three days as contracted is the proper conduct as adventurer, no, for any person with common sense.

"It sure is a nice place to play around normally?"

"The water is clear and refreshing in this hot season since we're on high ground here. Also, since it's a little known spot, there are no people here."

While dipping their feet in the water, Candy-dono and Nina talk about the good parts of this lake.

"Though it's a chore to come all the way out here."

"There's just one inn, too."

Boltor-dono and Bruno join their conversation.

Rather than the lake itself, the mountain road and the lodging facilities require a lot more development first.

"Mumumu..."

"What's wrong, Liese-jou?"

"I've been thinking so since the day before yesterday, but...I think it's odd for Nina and I to be the same age."

Just as she suddenly brings this up, Liese-jou's eyes home in on Nina's chest.

I've heard that women worry about the size of their breasts, but I don't think that she's at an age yet where she'd need to worry about something like that.

"Yours is going to grow soon."

"Klimt-san! When is it going to happen? For how long?"

"Until you become an adult..."

For a change I end up overwhelmed by Liese-jou's force as she draws closer to me.

"Aren't you just worrying too much, Liese?"

"I mean, onii-san, what's with this difference in volume!? Is it hereditary? Mum has no chest, so even I have more than her."

"Liese, you're not allowed to say that at home, okay?"

So their mother has no chest, huh? I've heard from my elder brother that women become scary if you mention something like this openly. He told me to not touch onto that topic since my stepsister doesn't have much of a chest either.

"I do have a chest."

"What you have is a bulky chest!"

"No——oo, you're a meanie, Boltor!"

"I'm not mean, I'm just stating the truth."

Candy-dono has been maintaining a fairly decently trained body, and even if it doesn't quite reach my level, his chest is still quite muscular and bulging.

"You've completely lost any motivation, haven't you?"

"It can't be helped. We need to stay here until today, but since there's no pasto to be found...ehh!"

Suddenly Bruno points towards the lake while crying out.

Once I follow his finger, wondering what's going on, I can see a mysterious, big life-form right in the middle of the lake, just like yesterday.

"Did it really exist?"

"No, isn't that yet another trick by the Viscount Bart house?"

Right after the matter yesterday? No matter how you look at it...no, wait, are they trying to lure us into believing in the existence of the pasto by making pasto paper mache appear in sequence?

"Sheesh, if they insist on it."

"Bruno-chan, scare them a bit, will you?"

Candy-dono orders Bruno to lightly burn the paper mache with fire magic. If we burn it down once more, even the Bart house likely won't ever again scheme to advertise the Pastour Lake by tricking adventurers.

"Okay, here I go then."

Unlike yesterday, Bruno shoots the fake pasto in the distance with a small 『Fireball』.

"It hit."

"Nothing less of you, onii-san."

"Huh? It's not going up in flames though."

"Did they switch to using nonburnable materials?"

Because the paper mache went up in flames yesterday, they used nonburnable materials to build the paper mache today? But, changing the means within just one day...

Just as I think about something like that, the pasto raises a shrill scream after being hit by the fireball while heading this way.

"It's as if it's angry."

"At any rate, isn't it swimming quite fast?"

"The people on the boat beneath the paper mache are doing their best? It must be quite a chore."

Boltor-dono and Candy-dono feel sympathy for the retainers who are forced to do something so silly on the order of their stupid family head. Even if the retainers were to quit their service to the house right now, they'd be just troubled without finding a new lord, so they'll probably not quit as long as their current lord isn't too unbearable. It's what you call the pain of those working for others.

"They have it hard as well."

"No kidding. They must be very displeased."

"The monster domain is fine, but they can't reclaim this mountain as its crater is filled with the Pastour Lake. I'm sure they must feel a dire wish to change it into a tourist attraction, no matter what."

Just as we're gossiping about the retainers of the Bart house, who operated the paper mache yesterday, they suddenly show up. Speaking of the devil, huh?

"Klimt-onii-sama, who is operating that pasto paper mache then?"

"Other retainers..."

"Since the Bart house isn't that affluent, we don't have any spare paper mache. Also, we only got a few retainers."

"So, who is moving that pasto which is heading this way while roaring in anger?"

Everyone falls silent upon Nina's question. It's not about who is moving that pasto fake...a certain possibility crosses everyone's mind.

"Does that mean it's the real thing?"

"*****That's it!*****"

Everyone simultaneously agrees with Liese-jou's suggestion.

"What are we going to do? We haven't prepared any weapons."

"True, today we planned to spend the day playing around, didn't we?"

Today everyone is wearing swimsuits. As we didn't expect in our wildest dreams that we'd need weapons or armor, we left them at the inn.

"Bruno, take it down with magic!"

"That's a good idea!"

If Bruno uses his magic at full power, the likes of a huge creature with a silly name such as pasto...

"Ee——h! We were told to catch it alive."

"True. That's a valuable tourist attraction."

The retainers of the Bart house start to yap about something ridiculous at that point. Do they really understand our current situation to propose catching it alive?

"Catch it alive, if possible. But if it dies, it cannot be helped. That's what the contract states."

"Can't you somehow work it out?"

"We're going to get scolded by our lord."

I guess it's simply bad luck that they're serving a weird noble. Come to think of it, I've never seen Viscount Bart. He sure is a stupid, incorrigible noble.

In that case...

"I will handle it!"

"Really?"

"If I hit the head of that pasto or whatever it is with my full power, it's going to faint."

"Please take care of it."

While we were having such conversation, the pasto quickly swam up right in front of our noses.

It's twice as tall as I am. It's length is probably around ten meters? It's bigger than a wyvern, but still smaller than a flying dragon.

"On it!"

"Are you going to be alright, Klimt-san?"

"Klimt-onii-sama, please be careful."

"Leave it to me! Bruno!"

"Roger!"

Just as we've promised the retainers of the Bart house, Bruno's magic doesn't hit the pasto directly. I float up high into the sky for a moment thanks to Bruno's improved 『Flight』 spell, and drop down right on the top of the pasto's head, delivering a powerful knee strike.

Because I've also added my own mana to the attack, the pasto embarks to the netherworld from my blow. After delivering that knee strike, I skillfully plunge into the river before the pasto collapses, and return to the beach by swimming.

"Bruno, you were a great help."

"Because you added your mana, strength, and body weight, the pasto was completely helpless, huh? But, it's not a monster, is it?"

"You're right. A monster of that size wouldn't die from a single hit by me."

Of course, it's no dragon either. It's also different from the serpent inhabiting the ocean I heard about in the past. I wonder, what kind of creature is it?

"A——ah! Even though we told you to not ki——ill it!"

"Our lord is going to be angry——!"

The retainers kick up a fuss after seeing the dead pasto, but in that case, they should have taken it down by themselves.

"When I thought that it'd be a monster, it was more fragile than expected."

"Even if that had been a monster, it'd have likely suffered quite substantial damage from your blow, Klimt."

"Isn't it just fine if you use it for stuffing? Also, if you exhibit that stuffing close to the lake, it might draw some tourists."

Unable to humor them any longer, we wrap up things over here, and go back to our inn.

Sometime in the future I heard that the Bart house stuffed out the pasto and exhibited it on the first floor of the inn where we stayed, but as no tourists would come to look at that, the Pastour Lake still remained a little-known summer resort afterwards.