

Chapter 10 - Pet Search

"Brother, what's with the rabbit in that cage?"

"Ah, today I'm working alone. I'll be done once I give him back to his owner."

"Is that adventurer work?"

"Not quite, I'd say, but if you consider work that can be handled by one person within the capital, a job like this has a good efficiency."

Today, Twilight of Dawn has a day off. It's because Candy-san had to hurry back to his home village all of a sudden.

It sounds like his grandfather passed away, and thus our activities as a party are halted so that he can attend the funeral.

As Klimt was told to show his face back home every once in a while, he's gone to the Armstrong mansion today. Boltor-san and Dalton-san said that they'd hunt in a nearby place, and headed out to the hunting grounds in the capital's outskirts.

Since I was free, I decided to accept requests I could easily accomplish myself while at the same time serving as magic training.

"Does searching for runaway pets help you with your magic training?"

"It does."

Searching for the target pet with 『Detect』 turns this into great training for magic. After all, I have to clearly distinguish the presence of a rabbit from humans and other animals such as cats or dogs.

"There's lots of humans, cats, and dogs in the capital, so it's good practice to search just for rabbits among all of them."

"I see."

"It's unexpectedly profitable, too."

"Searching for a pet earns you money?"

"This here is a noble's pet."

There's always a fixed number among the rich and nobility who dote on their pets to an abnormal degree and don't mind using any amount of money on them.

Looking for runaway pets isn't an adventurer job, but among the people wanting to look for their

cute pet as soon as possible, there's also people deliberately putting up search requests by nominating magicians who can use 『Detect』. Since those are nominated requests, the reward goes up accordingly as well, but it's not strange for rich people, who love their pets, to fork over huge amounts of money either. Those are wonderful clients for me.

"Searching for this rabbit, eh...?"

Well, this rabbit here gave me troubles as I had to search it all day, and it's not that cute either, or rather...it might have some parts justifying to call it pretty like its pure white fur for example, but it has light brown spots all over its body, and it looks like Liese doesn't consider it to be very adorable either.

"You're lucky it didn't get eaten.

"Just by chance. I think it's because it stayed in the high-ranking noble district."

"That area should be alright, yeah, but if it had gone to the slums, it'd have ended up eaten in no time, I'm sure."

I think this rabbit has been caught in the forest, and normal people would consider it to be food. The only ones that would even dream of turning it into a pet are nobles and rich people who don't experience any hardships in their livelihood.

"Brother, why haven't you taken it to its owner right away then?"

"Because it's already evening."

Even if I might be a magician, it doesn't change the fact that I'm a nameless adventurer of commoner birth. They wouldn't welcome me at the owner's mansion if I visited this late. I think it'd be best to deliver the rabbit first thing in the morning, now that I've secured it.

"So having lots of money makes you just more careful."

From their perspective, the likes of adventurers should bear an image of being suspicious people. The number of highly evaluated adventurers is truly low.

"That said, I'm going to deliver this little guy here tomorrow. You must be hungry."

"I'd love you to help me with the shopping for dinner, if you can, brother."

"That's fine with me. But, do we have to buy that much?"

"You see, this is something I've heard from Klimt-san, but it looks like you've promised to have dinner with Boltor-san and Dalton-san tonight."

"Ah! I totally forgot!"

She's right. Today we were going to have dinner with the four of us here!

"Klimt-san handed me the money for the food and some extra while apologizing for the inconvenience. You're unexpectedly hopeless in this regard. Klimt-san's consideration toward the circumstances of women are far above yours."

"Ugh, that one hurt..."

No way for me to lose to him on such an aspect.

"I'll come shopping with you."

"I've ordered plenty of meat at the butcher."

"That sounds great."

Everyone has a hearty appetite after all...especially Klimt.

"Brother, you also eat more than your appearance gives away."

"Well, it's something like an occupational disease."

If magicians don't eat a lot since they consume a lot of mana, they end up becoming thin and worn out in no time. Among magicians, I'm on the side of those not eating much, but it's still an amount that'd surprise any ordinary person.

I'm often told by women that they're jealous about me not gaining weight despite eating so much.

"Okay, let's go to the butcher to get the meat as soon as possible?"

"Please take care of carrying the bags, brother."

"Roger."

Thus we left together to pick up the great amount of meat Liese had ordered at the butcher. Before leaving, I put the caged rabbit down at home.

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"Klimt, you're living in a fairly big house, aren't you?"

"I'm living together with Bruno."

"The rent should be quite high."

"Not quite. It was originally a defective property."

"You got lucky then."

Today I went back home and had lunch with my family, but while noble dining sure is delicious, it's no fun because of its stiffness and formality. Hence I turned down dinner, saying that I had some other business to take care of.

Nina looked sad, but since I want to avoid coming back home as much as possible until I become able to stand on my own feet, this is inevitable. Besides, it's not like I've lied since I made a promise with Boltor-dono and Dalton-dono. Together with Bruno, the four of us made plans to meet for some carefree drinking and dining.

"No one's here."

"...*nod*"

"Maybe they have gone out shopping. Given that I have informed Liese-jou about today, she should be making plenty of food for us."

"Then it must be shopping, yep."

"It looks like we finished first."

As an adult, I've become able to drink alcohol as well, and today I bought plenty of wine together with the other two. Placing down the bottles on the table where we're always eating our meals, I put some into our cups and we start having some drinks.

"You've got no side dishes or anything?"

"Well, we do have some, but..."

I feel like it'd be rude to start eating on our own, despite Liese-jou being in the middle of preparing the food.

"Don't you have anything we could snack on right away?"

"Boltor-dono, what about today's loot? If you got meat, we just need to sprinkle some salt on it and roast it."

"Sorry. Today, I sold everything at the adventurer's guild. What about you, Dalton?"

Being asked by Boltor-dono, Dalton-dono takes out a single box that has been wrapped up neatly.

"Dalton, what's that? Ehh!? A present for Liese-chan? Sweets? You're surprisingly tactful, man."

Oh! For him to have brought sweets as a present for Liese-jou who's going to cook for us today... Dalton-dono is taciturn, but his considerations of women are perfect.

"There's no way that we could eat the sweets you bought as a present for Liese-chan. Saying stuff like using the ingredients which are going to be used for dinner later would be troublesome as well."

I guess we'll stick with wine-only for now... Oh, what's that?"

Boltor-dono had discovered something that was inside a cage. Once I peek into the cage which has been placed on a chair, I spot a rabbit with light brown spots spread all over its body.

"A rabbit? Moreover, a living specimen."

"Why is a living rabbit here?"

Adventurers and hunters would drain the blood of the rabbits they killed on the spot, and then take them to the adventurer's guild. Since it's common sense to take off the fur and sell the rest to a butcher, I don't understand why a living rabbit would be here.

"Is Liese-chan going to prepare the rabbit?"

"That is impossible."

She'd cut the meat at most. Around that much is the limit for women in the capital.

"Does Bruno plan to use it in some magic experiments?"

"I have never heard about rabbits being used in magic experiments.

In the first place, it wouldn't be necessary to do that at home.

"..."

"What's wrong, Dalton? Are you possibly asking whether it's not here for our sake?"

I guess that'd make the rabbit an ingredient for today's dinner. Though it's a bit weird that it's still alive.

"Oh well, whatever. I think it'll be fine if we pay them back if they're going to say something afterwards. We're going to quickly drain it, cut it up, and roast it."

"That is a great idea!"

A cup of watered wine and salted, grilled rabbit meat as a side dish - that really rocks.

"Okay, Dalton, please prepare the meat for grilling."

"...*nod*"

After deciding that we'd just need to catch another one if Bruno were to complain, we drained the blood and dismantled the rabbit, and then turned it into a side dish for our drinking.

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"Eh? You ate the rabbit?"

"It was delicious."

"Really? Klimt, you're of good birth, but your taste is still quite lacking, isn't it? The meat was soft, and it was too oily."

"Now listen, Boltor-dono, such soft, oily meat is valued highly among nobles. With tough meat, you can only enjoy its consistency when chewing on it."

"You think so? I feel like tough meat is better since the meat itself has a better taste. The meat of that rabbit was merely greasy."

"Most of the oil came off when you grilled it. The meat itself had proper deliciousness."

"Umm...do you guys have no awareness of having done something wrong?"

""Did something wrong? Like how?""

As we were having our little drinking party with the grilled rabbit meat as a side dish, Bruno and Liese-jou came back while carrying some bags, but Bruno got very flustered once he noticed that the rabbit in the cage was gone. When we informed him about the rabbit having turned into food for us, he got even more upset.

"That rabbit was the beloved pet of Earl Dork."

"Oh shit, that's going to become a pain in the ass."

"...*nod*"

"Boltor-san, Dalton-san, before worrying about the earl, you should care about having lost my trust..."

He's quite pissed off since it wasn't just some random pet search, but it'd also affect his reputation and the evaluation of his abilities as a magician. But he's right, it's usually unthinkable for an intermediate magician to fail on something like a rabbit search.

"That's it!"

"Kilmt, do you have some good idea?"

"It is going to be alright if you say that nothing but bones was left when you found it."

Only nobles, who are ignorant of how the world works, would use rabbits as pets. If such a pet ran away into the slums or downtown, it'd be immediately caught and eaten. In other words, Bruno just needs to insist that this happened here.

"Fortunately, we also have the proof here - the bones."

In reality the rabbit was eaten by us, but even after seeing the bones, it'd be impossible to tell who ate the rabbit anyway.

"No, in the case my job would fail and my evaluation would drop. Rather, it was you guys who ate it on your own device. Even though it's not like you didn't have the choice to eat something else."

"Since all of us have been looking forward to Liese-jou's cooking, we didn't want to mess with it by using the wrong ingredients. But, we needed a side dish."

Eating that rabbit was a last resort. Boltor-dono and Dalton-dono seem to agree as well, seeing how they are nodding their heads.

"Now you're just making shit up."

"Right! I remembered!"

"What exactly, Klimt?"

"About Earl Dork!"

He's a famous noble for loving his pets, but it's not like he's actually taking care of them himself. It's said he quickly tires of pets and wants new ones...to be honest, he isn't a decent guy.

In other words, he might have soon given up on the rabbit we ate anyway.

"Okay, so what about him?"

"It'll be fine as long as we catch a rabbit with a similar color scheme tomorrow."

"That's a good idea."

"...*nod*"

"Is handling it so irresponsibly going to be alright?"

"He won't find out anyway. Liese-jou, we're hungry."

"You aren't reflecting on it at all, to the extent of being brazen about it, are you? But okay, I'm going to prepare the food then."

Because of all this, we decided to head out tomorrow to catch another rabbit with the four of us. Also, Liese-jou's cooking was superb.



On the next day, we were capturing rabbits alive in the outskirts of the capital.

"How about this one?"

"Boltor-san, the pattern of the spots is completely different."

"How about this one here?"

"That one's no good either."

Searching for a rabbit with the same pattern as Earl Dork's pet has proven to be difficult. It's noon in no time.

"I am hungry."

"Lunch is off! Since it won't be possible to deliver it in the evening, we won't be on time if we don't catch one soon."

Adventurers can't enter noble mansions in the evening because of the potential dangers. Of course he's free to do as he pleases, but I don't think that's the attitude of a guy who asks others to search for his runaway pet.

"In that case, this one should be okay."

I grab the ears of a rabbit with relatively similar patterns to the rabbit from yesterday, and show it to Bruno.

"It's not that it doesn't resemble the pet, but it has some parts where the spots density is too low."

"Then, this one here."

At this point, Boltor-dono shows us a small bottle with something in it.

"What's that?"

"It's the pain Candy often uses. Since he uses it for painting cloth, it's hard to wash off with water. I borrowed a bit of it from his home."

"Boltor-san, Candy-san is not at home right now. Taking it out from there on your own devices..."

"I'll buy a new one later, and give it back. Either way, if we add light brown spot patterns to the rabbit using this...it's perfect!"

Within a few minutes, the rabbit has turned into one resembling yesterday's pet quite well.

"As expected of you, Boltor-dono."

"No need to praise me. Okay, let's finish this by delivering the rabbit to Earl Dork's place."

"I wonder if it's going to be alright..."

"Don't worry. If the size and patterns of the rabbits are similar, they won't notice any difference."

We hurry over to Earl Dork's mansion with the worried Bruno in tow. And just as I had expected, the earl didn't deal with us in person.

Once a middle-aged man, apparently a retainer, sees the rabbit, he checks it briefly, and after thanking us for our good work, he hands Bruno the reward. Since we've got no particular business left here, we depart from Earl Dork's mansion.

"It actually worked out without a hitch."

"Right?"

"Boltor-san, you were confident in it?"

"Yeah. Klimt, you know about the rumors that Earl Dork is irresponsible as a pet lover, don't you?"

"He's relatively famous for it."

There are rumors about it, but if he truly loved the rabbit in the first place, the earl would have received us himself.

"I'm sure his interest has shifted to a new pet."

"It's got to be something like that. That retainer should have noticed that this rabbit wasn't the real deal. And yet, he didn't question us about it, right?"

"Come to think of it, you're right."

"In short, Earl Dork won't say anything as long as he gets back a rabbit that roughly fits the description. And that's because he isn't close enough to the rabbit to even notice that it's a fake."

Well, most of the nobles' hobbies are like that. Those obsessed with something will fuss over it, but many are fickle just like Earl Dork. He made Bruno look for the runaway rabbit, but he's okay with the result as long as the rabbit resembles the real one.

"That sure sounds heartless."

"Doesn't it? That's how Earl Dork is."

"No, you guys are just as heartless. After all, you selfishly dismantled, prepared, and cooked the rabbit. Moreover, for such a bullshit reason that you didn't have enough side dishes to go with your wine."

"Hahaha, next time we will only eat something after making sure ahead of time."

Occasionally, such things happen as well. It finished without Bruno's evaluation taking a hit, so I

don't think we need to mind all the small details.