

# **The Mighty Dragons Are Dead #Chapter 141: The Magician of Coral City - Read The Mighty Dragons Are Dead Chapter 141: The Magician of Coral City**

## Chapter 141: The Magician of Coral City

Four hundred and seventy-six serfs, about two-thirds of whom were females, along with quite a few infants and children. The elderly also made up a considerable portion, while there were very few able-bodied men—on the serf trade market, able-bodied men were regarded as excellent laborers, and their price was much higher compared to the elderly, children, and women.

To another landlord, the quality of these serfs would be considered very poor.

Aside from skilled artisans being valuable, women and children were a burden, and the artisans were all elderly, which was very uneconomical.

But Liszt did not have any complaints in his heart—women could marry the bachelors of the territory and help mitigate the gender imbalance in Fresh Flower Town; with proper nurturing, children and infants could become future knight candidates; and old artisans possessed exquisite skills and could completely train a large number of apprentices.

Of course.

Able-bodied men were equally important to Fresh Flower Town, whether for farming or for constructing roads and docks, as they required strong labor.

Therefore, on the surface, Liszt still had to voice a complaint, “Mr. Frank, the quality of these serfs is not very good. Women were specifically requested by me, so having more is not a problem, but there are too many children, and the artisans are all older folks. Isn’t this somewhat deceiving me?”

“Oh, Baron Liszt, I wouldn’t dare deceive the blood of the Tulip Family,” Frank said with a smile. “This batch of serfs was assembled by the fleet from various serf markets, the able-bodied laborers were bought up by others early on. You know, without war, there aren’t high-quality serfs.”

“So, now, with the fleet setting sail once again, we should be able to purchase high-quality serfs, right? The Steel Ridge Kingdom has already gone to war with the Eagle Kingdom, and my father and the others have already entered the battlefield.”

Frank’s eyes flickered, “You want to continue the serf trade... Oh yes, the seafood market has brought you a large amount of gold coins.”

“You are very aware of the profits from the seafood market, aren’t you, Mr. Frank,” Liszt did not play poor, especially since the other party had always been helping Levis to collect dividends, “I will put together a sum of gold coins as soon as possible, hoping the fleet can bring me another batch of serfs.”

“There should not be a problem; the Tulip Fleet always conducts business when setting sail. Now that the war has started, the serf trade is an even better deal. So, how many serfs are you planning to buy?”

“One thousand, including two hundred skilled artisans.”

“One thousand serfs, according to the price, would need two hundred and forty gold coins.”

“The serf trade was difficult before, and I could accept the higher prices, but now during the war, if serfs are still so expensive, I cannot accept that, Mr. Frank.”

“War or not, the serf trade is always filled with risks...”

After some haggling back and forth.

They finally agreed on the price of two hundred and ten gold coins.

After taking out the gold coins he had saved by cutting expenses, and also shifting funds from the trade convoys, and handing them to Frank, Liszt’s smile was not so amiable anymore—facing another period of frugality, the feeling of an empty purse was uncomfortable, especially after getting used to spending money lavishly.

Liszt declined Frank’s invitation to have lunch together under the pretense that “Little Sherry really wants to see you.” Instead, he had his lunch at Lady Penelope’s castle.

Lady Marie from Tulip Castle had also sent servants to invite him, but he did not go as he was not well acquainted with Lady Marie. Li Vera stayed there too, and at the dining table, she kept asking Liszt, “Your Fierce Earth Dog has grown so big, how many gold coins to part with it, just say the price!”

What an international joke.

Although Douson had not unleashed any magic, and others were unaware of its abilities, one could tell by its form that it was extraordinary.

It could not be measured in gold coins!

Liszt responded coolly, “Dear sister, Douson opened its eyes to see me as the first person, it recognizes no one but me. Even if you used dragon coins, you can’t win its affection, so give up on this foolish thought.”

Hearing “foolish,” Li Vera’s face darkened, “You’re becoming more and more arrogant now, daring to disregard even your sister’s words.”

Liszt, with a knife in his left hand and a fork in his right, leisurely sliced his steak, “I’m merely stating a fact. Please remain rational.”

Lady Penelope seemed to appreciate the dominant change in Liszt and, against her usual stance, spoke in his favor, “Li Vera, please eat like a lady and stop trying to take what’s in Liszt’s hands. If you want something, you can certainly choose a suitable husband from among so many excellent nobles to fulfill all your desires.”

“Grandmother, you don’t love me at all now.”

“You’ve all grown up, my girl, and you lads as well. Your grandmother is getting senile and only hopes that you three siblings will get along harmoniously, and by the way, take care of little Lidun, letting the Tulip Family’s bloodline flourish and develop.”

The lunch was far from harmonious.

After the meal, Li Vera, fuming with anger, drew her sword and blocked Liszt’s path, “Like a warrior, fight me. I want to prove that you are still that cowardly Liszt!”

Before Liszt could respond,

Douson, who had been lying lazily to one side, suddenly broke free from Tom’s grasp and charged towards Li Vera. It moved with the momentum of a tiger descending a mountain, roaring deeply and stirring up a whirlwind.

In that moment, Li Vera’s face was instantly drenched in cold sweat.

She felt enveloped by a strong intent to kill.

It was the kind of deadly threat one feels when facing an irresistible force, a threat to one’s life—like when she was seven and whipped a fiery horse, which then charged at her, mouth open to bite—except now she was a distinguished Earth Knight, but just as helpless to resist.

“Come back, Douson!”

With a calm command from Liszt, the charging Douson abruptly halted and no longer lunged forward. However, the fierce glint in the eyes of the beast still flickered menacingly, its gaze fixed on Li Vera with a viciousness that suggested it might pounce and devour at any moment.

“It is a Magical Beast from Thorn Ridge. Even though it acknowledges me as its master, its ferocity isn’t so easily subdued. I apologize for frightening you. I have other matters

to attend to; I've made an appointment. Dear sister, we shall talk another time," he said, with a faint smile.

Then, leading Douson, he left the castle.

Li Vera's face turned ashen, and she stood rooted to the spot, no longer attempting to verbally assert herself. The attack from Douson that she had just witnessed had truly frightened her—after all, she was but a flower raised in a greenhouse.

On the balcony of the castle, Lady Penelope, watering her new Dragon Hollyhock, undoubtedly witnessed the whole scene unfold at the castle gates.

She simply muttered, "That's more like it. Girls should act like girls, boys like boys. Melissa and Marie, these two simpletons, certainly don't lack the ability to bear children."

Liszt did not deceive Li Vera.

He indeed had an appointment, or rather, needed to find someone.

He went directly to a small town near Coral City, and as he saw the dilapidated state of the town, his brow furrowed slightly, "Rom, is this the place?"

"Yes, my lord, this is the place, Moss Town. I've been to this small town before," replied Rom Barrel.

"Whose fiefdom is this town?"

"It was once the fiefdom of a baron, who later went bankrupt. It was reclaimed by the Earl and has not been assigned since."

"It is indeed here. I have found the white-tipped, two-story building that Goltai mentioned." Liszt gestured with his hand, "Let's go. It's time to meet this magician, sir."

## Chapter 142: Eye of Truth and Exploring the World

"Who are you looking for?"

The wooden door of the small building opened, and a teenager dressed in black with hair like a bird's nest and deep-set eyes poked his head out. He looked at the group of people in front of him, plus a huge dog, and asked cautiously.

"Does Mr. Grandini live here?" Thomas stepped forward, maintaining proper etiquette, and asked gently, "Our master, the son of Coral Island's Count and the Baron of Fresh

Flower Town, Liszt Tulip, wishes to meet with him to inquire about some matters of magic.”

“Ah, wait a moment.”

The youth was startled for a second, then shut the door abruptly.

After a moment, the door swung open entirely, and the emaciated, shriveled figure of the youth appeared: “The teacher invites the Baron inside; the others, please wait outside.”

Liszt nodded, “You all stay outside.”

“Sir...” Rom wanted to say something.

Liszt gestured to him, on Coral Island, even the secretive magicians had to give face to the Tulip Family.

Entering the small building, a strange smell drilled into his nostrils, not a stench of life, but more like the odor emitted from some chemical substances.

This made him frown involuntarily.

The room was quite gloomy, with various cluttered “equipment” visible, some metallic vessels, others made of jade and crystal. There were numerous bottles and jars, and even a wax candle burning in an iron kettle, within which a green liquid was boiling—the strange smell was probably emanating from there.

The room was incredibly messy, even the pathways were barely wide enough to walk.

“The teacher is upstairs, he is waiting for you.” The youth seemed somewhat dull, and while he looked at Liszt with the nervousness of meeting a stranger, he lacked the fear and reverence for nobility.

Perhaps following a magician for too long had caused him to lose his awe of nobility—a significant reason magicians were unpopular: this group of individuals who believed in “knowledge” dismissed the authority of nobility, convinced that knowledge was the only truth in the world, not the brute force revered by the nobles.

The stairs creaked and groaned, but as they ascended, the light grew brighter.

Then Liszt saw the magician, Grandini Truth—a man with a hooked nose, blue eyes, and brown hair, around forty years old, his figure shrouded in a large cloak.

He was sitting in a chair, engrossed in a book.

Upon seeing Liszt, he closed the book and placed it amidst the clutter on his desk. Liszt had a keen eye and saw that the cover read “Alchemical Speculations on Iron—Dedicated to His Excellency Grand Magician Dembaba Truth,” with a drawing beneath it.

It was a triangle with an eye inside.

“Baron Liszt, compared to your brother, Viscount Levis, you more closely resemble a graceful nobleman,” Grandini stood, taller than Liszt, his frame just as thin beneath his cloak. His voice was hoarse, as if he hadn’t spoken in a long time.

“Mr. Grandini, you have met my brother?”

“Of course, I have had a few collaborations with Viscount Levis. Please make yourself comfortable; I don’t stand on ceremony here with the pretentious niceties of nobility.”

Liszt found a relatively clean stool: “Noble etiquette isn’t pretense; it’s cultivation.”

Grandini mocked, “Cultivation—is it about learning how to cannibalize others more elegantly?”

“If that’s how you must understand it, it’s not wrong.” Liszt felt some resentment towards Grandini’s attitude, having grown accustomed to the reverence that came with nobility, but he had to admit there was some truth in the other’s words—the world was indeed dog eat dog, “Your surroundings here aren’t very pleasant.”

“Of course, it can’t be compared with a castle; I am but a humble magician, with all my energy and resources dedicated to exploring the truth of the world.”

Exploring the truth of the world, that’s the rallying cry of magicians.

All magicians discard their worldly surnames and uniformly adopt the surname “Truth.” As for that triangle and eye on the book, it’s called the Eye of Truth. The magicians discovered that the triangle is the most stable form of deconstruction and that the world is also composed of triangles—matter, spirit, and magic power.

And they are the eye within the triangle, endlessly exploring every truth.

“May I ask how to cast a spell?”

“There is no difference between magic and Dou Qi. As a knight, why care about magic or Dou Qi? They are both ways of harnessing magic power.”

“Alright, let’s change the subject. How many magicians are there on Coral Island?” Liszt asked casually. He had come to visit the magician that day out of slight purpose but more out of curiosity.

“You’d get a clearer answer from Levis than from me. I can only tell you that within Coral City, there are only three magicians that I’ve been in contact with.”

“Don’t magicians often gather for meetings and exchanges?”

“The path to exploring the world is one of solitude; magic power is the embodiment of Truth. Only by listening quietly can you understand the knowledge it wants to tell you!”

Liszt continued to ask a few more questions.

Until he annoyed Grandini, “Baron Liszt, did you visit me just to ask these ignorant questions? If so, please leave immediately. Do not waste my time; my time is dedicated to the great Truth, not to chatting with you!”

“Of course it’s not just to ask questions—I also want to find you for a collaboration.”

“Speak quickly if you have something to say.”

If it weren’t for the prior insight into Grandini’s temperament from Goltai, Liszt felt that this disrespectful fellow should be dragged out and fed to Douson—although, of course, Douson might not eat him, as it preferred cooked food, or maybe needing a roast first with a sprinkle of cumin on top.

“You’ve helped the Tulip Castle, or other nobles, craft magic equipment before, haven’t you?”

“You want me to help you craft magic equipment?” Grandini became slightly interested, calming down a bit in his tone, “My skills are definitely impeccable. Even your father has asked me to repair a few pieces of magic equipment.”

Liszt was straightforward.

He took out a fist-sized black pearl he had prepared and placed it on the table: “Do you recognize this?”

“A black pearl, you actually have one of these things?”

“Have you seen a black pearl before?”

“Of course, Levis had also brought a black pearl before. Crafting magic equipment, it must be a specialty product of your Tulip family. It is more abundant and gentle in magic power than the white pearls from Blue Dragon Island, and it’s a good path to wealth.”

“So the Black Pearl Magic Equipment in Levis’s hand was also crafted by you. Since that’s the case, I’m not going to beat around the bush. This kind of black pearl, if larger

in size and with more abundant magic power, could you craft it into magic equipment capable of suppressing storms at sea?”

“How large?”

Liszt, playing it coy, gestured the size of a basketball: “How about a black pearl this big?”

Grandini furrowed his brow in concentration, pondered for a moment, and said, “I need to see the actual object to determine whether I can craft equipment powerful enough to suppress storms. But I believe that as long as the quality meets the standard, the crafting process isn’t a problem. I am a magician, with twenty years of experience in practicing magic runes and formations!”

Within the magic practice hierarchy.

A Magic Apprentice is equivalent to an Apprentice Knight, a Magician to an Earth Knight, a Grand Magician to a Sky Knight, and an Archmage to a Dragon Knight.

Grandini Truth is a Magician.

#### Chapter 143: Strong Desire for Knowledge

“The item is in my castle; after all, it’s a valuable item. If you accept the cooperation, you can go to Fresh Flower Town,” Liszt said, still not trusting the magician.

He himself did not have enough strength, and merely relying on the prestige of the Tulip Family might not be enough to deter the other party.

If the other party ran off with the black pearl, there would be nowhere to find them.

However, Grandini shook his head, “Do you think that making a piece of magic equipment is an easy task? If your black pearl is really big enough and of high quality, it will need more materials to be forged into suitable magic equipment... In a countryside place like Fresh Flower Town, you can’t even buy the raw materials!”

“I have two caravans, whatever materials are needed, they can be delivered promptly,” Liszt said, unperturbed by others looking down on Fresh Flower Town as the countryside. He had the heart of a fierce tiger and naturally maintained a calm demeanor, “Moreover, Mr. Grandini, won’t you listen to what kind of compensation I can offer?”

“Oh, what compensation are you willing to give?”



“Viscount Levis has you make black pearl magic equipment—how much is he paying you... Give me a true figure, I can always go and ask Mr. Frank.”

“Fine then, nobles are really cunning. I can’t fool you. Viscount Levis is paying three gold coins, that’s just the artisanal fee; he provided all the raw materials himself. But his black pearl is only this big. If you have a much larger black pearl, the price won’t be so cheap.”

“In fact, I don’t have gold coins.”

“No gold coins?” Grandini glared, “Baron Liszt, are you mocking me?”

Liszt said evenly, “But I have a black pearl, don’t I?”

Grandini’s eyes quickly lit up, “Oh, so you are planning to use this black pearl to pay for the services?”

“You think too highly. Do you know how much a black pearl is worth? This black pearl is worth at least two hundred gold coins. With that amount, I could hire a grand magician to make magic equipment for me,” Liszt said, spinning the black pearl in his hand, “Of course, if you want to earn it, it’s not that hard.”

Clearly, the black pearl was attractive to Grandini; he licked his lips, “State your terms.”

“First, help me make the black pearl that suppresses storms, providing the raw materials yourself. Second, teach me magic, provide me with knowledge and books. Third, I have some crystals, you help me make them into crystal lamps. The remaining value of this black pearl can be considered my sponsorship for your pursuit of the Truth.”

To Liszt, the black pearl itself wasn’t of high value—in Coral Island, aside from Levis, nobody would likely be a fool enough to buy it.

“You want to learn magic?” Grandini was surprised, “That’s not typical for your nobility. Moreover, magic and Dou Qi are mutually exclusive. Are you willing to give up your noble status to become a magician?”

Dou Qi refines the magic power within oneself, while magic draws on the magic power around oneself.

Despite both being magic power, in cultivation, they repel each other—there have been nobles who considered practicing magic, but it is difficult to succeed. This is like how magic requires the mind to remain rational and clear at all times, yet Dou Qi demands a state of passionate fervor. Cultivating both magic and martial arts could lead to a split personality.

Liszt spoke, "I simply wish to understand the principles behind the casting of magic."

As a soul with the scientific literacy of the 21st century, it was only natural that he possessed a strong desire to learn about this Different World filled with magic power. He had already encountered and begun to practice Dou Qi; his understanding of Dou Qi was quite profound, yet he knew nothing about magic.

Getting close to a magician, understanding magic, was something he had always wanted to do.

With the territory development now on the right track and having a certain ability to protect himself, he could pursue understanding more information about the outside world at his own volition.

"It seems you are a noble with a strong curiosity. Well, I'll take this black pearl," Grandini said after a moment of thought, agreeing to the terms.

"I hope you have a pleasant time in Fresh Flower Town for the next while. Oh, by the way, in Fresh Flower Town, I have houses for you to stay in, and you can transport the necessary materials and equipment to Fresh Flower Town through the Fresh Flower Caravan."

"I don't plan to stay in the countryside for long. Once the magic equipment is made and you understand what magic is, I'll return. Moss Town is only a quarter-hour's journey from Coral City, and the city's prosperity makes it hard to leave."

He walked to the window and looked in the direction of Coral City.

In his eyes, the city piled with waste was a symbol of prosperity.

With a glance from the corner of his eye, he saw a line of people waiting outside the small building and the huge Douson, "Is that your pet? A Fierce Earth Dog magical beast? Why is it so big? I don't remember Fierce Earth Dogs ever growing that large."

"Because it eats well."

Magician Grandini Truth needed time to prepare before he could rush to Fresh Flower Town.

Liszt led his people back in advance.

Meanwhile.

In Coral City, near Tulip Castle, within a two-story small building with a garden, Frank had just finished his nap. He came downstairs to the living room and sat down on a chair.

A servant immediately brought him tea.

He was a noble, an Honored Knight, with his own fief, a small village. Compared to bankrupt and fallen nobles like Goltai, his fief was relatively prosperous, bringing him nearly ten gold coins in surplus each year, plus his salary as a tutor for the Levis family, life was quite delightful.

“Has the lady and the young miss not returned from walking in the flower fields?”

“They have returned. They are taking a cool break in the little garden.”

After a short while, his wife and daughter returned to the house.

“Frank, have you woken up?” the middle-aged woman dressed in the currently fashionable hoop skirt asked, despite the heavy makeup she couldn’t conceal the fact that she was aging, “Do you still have to work for Tulip Castle this afternoon? Sherry wants you to accompany her back to the manor; she left her clothes in the wardrobe.”

Frank looked at his daughter, “I remember you brought many outfits, and you bought some on Iron Hoof Island as well, aren’t they enough?”

“But I forgot to bring a black long dress, I really like it, daddy,” Sherry swayed her slender waist.

“Let the servant go back and fetch it. I don’t have time, my dear,” Frank spread his hands, addressing both his daughter and explaining to his wife, “Levis is still on the battlefield. I’m responsible for all his properties, and the Earl has given him partial authority to govern Coral Island, which also falls under my responsibility.”

“I understand, now is a great opportunity for you to make a name for yourself, but I hope you can make some time to pay more attention to Sherry. She is already fifteen.”

Fifteen meant the age to start socializing.

Noble girls were expected to marry around the age of sixteen or seventeen.

Frank looked at his increasingly beautiful daughter and felt very satisfied, “Of course, I know. Sherry is already a big girl. In fact, this morning, I was worrying about her future. There are not many suitable nobles for Sherry on Coral Island, and I want her to have the best happiness.”

His wife’s interest piqued immediately, “What did you worry about? Have you found someone for her?”

Sherry also gazed expectantly at her father. As a noble young lady, socializing was a skill she had to learn, discussion of marriage was never something to be shy about.

At Bull Horn Academy, how to choose a suitable noble and get married had already become a public course.

#### Chapter 144: Ivan's Numbing Journey

"Liszt."

Frank pronounced the name, "Baron of Fresh Flower Town, the third child of the Earl, Sherry, you must remember him, as a child you always used to play following him around."

"Is it Brother Liszt? Of course, I remember." Sherry blinked, and a somewhat childish but handsome face emerged hazily in her mind.

Liszt had been very handsome since he was young.

However, she had left Coral Island to study at Bull Horn Academy for several years.

Due to inconvenient shipping, she didn't even return home during festivals, and her memories of Liszt had gradually faded. At that time, she wasn't of the age to be infatuated with the opposite sex, so naturally, she didn't retain a clear memory of any particular playmate.

"What do you think of Liszt?" Frank inquired.

Sherry shook her head, "Father, I've only met Liszt when he was twelve, a mere child. Now that he's an adult, I have no idea what he's turned into."

"Indeed, we should find an opportunity for you two to meet."

At this moment, Frank's wife asked, "It seems that Liszt isn't much valued by the Earl, his fief is even the most remote Fresh Flower Town."

"Indeed, Liszt isn't highly regarded by the Earl. The Earl, relying on his own determination, established Coral Island and wishes for his children to be bold and forward-thinking," Frank said. "But regardless, he is of the Tulip Family's bloodline, and to receive his fief upon reaching adulthood is not a treatment commonly enjoyed by the secondary sons of nobility."

"It's just the Earl's kindness, and he is a diligent father, even Li Vera has been granted a baronial fief," his wife said enviously.

Li Vera had significant influence among the noble ladies of Coral Island, a Hereditary Baroness, a rarity in the entire Duchy of Sapphire.

“The reason the Earl doesn’t value Liszt much is that Liszt’s talents aren’t outstanding, and he has a soft nature. But from my recent interactions, Liszt has transformed, carrying an authority with his gentleness, and he is becoming increasingly mature. The Earl even went to Fresh Flower Town to celebrate the Outing Festival, and that is a sign.”

“A sign of what?”

“What else could it be but a sign that a son has regained his father’s trust? The Earl is still in his prime, and naturally, he hopes to attain more knightly glory with his sons.”

“Really? But he hasn’t been on the battlefield while Levis has already been there.”

“It’s just a matter of time, he carries the blood of both the Tulip and Long Taro Families.” Frank felt his wife was narrow-minded like a minor country noble, so he simply spoke directly to his daughter, “Sherry, Liszt has been preparing his own Knight Squad and has purchased a batch of armed Knight Squad equipment from the Tulip Castle.”

No praise has more convincing power than action itself.

A country lord who owns a Knight Squad is, of course, extraordinary.

Sherry’s eyes brightened, “Father, Mother, when can I meet Brother Liszt? I feel that I have my own discerning eyes.”

“Our Sherry is smart and beautiful, of course, you have your own discerning eyes. Father will soon find you an opportunity.”

Footsteps faltered.

Exhausted and hungry.

Ivan wiped the sweat from his forehead and looked with a numb gaze at the equally numb companions beside him. Their clothes were filthy and reeked, their hair tangled into knots, and the dust on their faces could not hide the pale and jaundiced skin. The group was indistinguishable by age or gender, even the cries of babies were feeble and weak.

“Hurry up, if you don’t want to be whipped, keep your spirits up and keep up with the group!” the Clerk, holding a whip, shouted loudly.

Every now and then, he snapped the whip in the air, producing a sharp crack.

Ivan shuddered, his head, slightly dizzy, suddenly cleared, and his heavy steps quickened. Just a moment ago, one of his companions had been whipped by the Clerk, tearing their clothes and leaving them crying out in pain.

“Crack!”

Another crack of the whip.

Ivan lowered his head, gritting his teeth, trying to hasten his pace. He was terrified of the whip. On the ship, a companion from the same small town who slept in a corner, had been beaten to death by the first mate with that very whip. The dying wails had caused him to have nightmares for several nights in a row.

In dreams, it was a nightmare.

In reality, it was also a nightmare.

He missed the days of toiling in the fields on the island, where although he might go hungry, and knights with whips would lash serfs who couldn't pay their taxes. But most of the time, he could move freely and chat with others. He could even go to the town, just to catch a glimpse of the beautiful baker's wife.

However, one day, everything changed.

He heard the cries of knights shouting and killing, followed by a group of bloodstained knights, who came to his village and drove them out. Some people didn't want to go and were killed; those who didn't want to be killed had no choice but to follow them. It was this day that he left his homeland, starting his endless, bumpy nightmare.

He was taken to a market where everyone sold was a serf just like him.

Locked in cages, eating a bit of spoiled black bread, dazed and confused. Serfs were taken away continuously, and new ones were constantly brought in.

Then, he was taken away too.

He followed a group of strangers onto a big ship, not understanding the language spoken there, and not daring to speak with others. To his surprise, there was someone on the ship who recognized him, from the same town.

“It's the Sapphire People!” his companion told him.

He instantly thought of the legend of the “barbarians.” Every year, barbarians from the seas would come to the Eagle Kingdom to raid and plunder; they all came from the Duchy of Sapphire across the sea.

“The people on the ship are Sapphire People, we've been sold to barbarians! The ones who captured us are mercenaries, they're even worse than rats!” his companion said bitterly, “I swear! One day, I'll come back, find these mercenaries, and kill them all!”

Ivan didn't respond.

His companion's words terrified him.

He had been farming since he was young and had never killed even a chicken—he did not have chickens—only nobles killed serfs, serfs would never dare to kill anyone.

Unfortunately, not long after his companion had sworn his oath, he was beaten to death with a whip.

With no one else to talk to, Ivan continued living the nightmare from which he could not awaken. He had never been on a ship before, and the seasickness was almost fatal. After several days like this, today, he finally set foot on land, arriving at a completely foreign place. He couldn't understand a word spoken here.

He didn't even know where he was being driven to.

He was confused about tomorrow, not knowing what he was holding on for, not even knowing what holding on meant. He just followed wherever the whip drove him, never thinking about death, nor understanding what joy in life was. His legs had gone numb for what felt like the umpteenth time.

He heard the clerk waving his whip again, shouting something.

He couldn't understand, but the line slowly came to a halt. When the others stopped, so did he, finally able to give his legs a moment of rest.

He saw that others began to sit down.

He followed suit and sat down.

Nobody spoke; on the ship, all were forbidden from communicating, and he had grown accustomed to silence. He lifted his head, his gaze falling on a female serf not far ahead who was preparing to nurse her child, lifting her tattered clothing to reveal her shriveled breast and placing it in the baby's mouth.

The baby sucked vigorously, unsure if it could draw even a drop of milk.

If this had been in the past, Ivan would certainly have salivated and greedily peeked at the woman's breasts, he was still young and had never touched a woman's hand, let alone those swollen breasts.

But in this moment, there was no allure to be found in breasts, and he had not the slightest urge to think about such things—his stomach was so empty his intestines felt like they were knotting up.

The sun moved overhead, it was noon.

#### Chapter 145: Teaching of Three Serpent Script Vocabulary

Ivan sat on the ground and soon lay down like others, trying to rest as much as possible to regain a little strength. He didn't know where he was going or how much longer the journey would be.

Clatter, clatter.

The sound of carriage wheels turning came through.

Ivan didn't get up, just slowly turned his head with the least amount of effort to look in the direction of the sound. He saw a line of carriages with flags fluttering on them. The flags were blue with embroidered purple-black flowers. He recognized these banners as symbols of nobility.

Of course, he didn't know to which noble the flag belonged.

As he watched the caravan without any particular thought, the familiar sound of whips cracked again. His body sprang up as if fitted with springs, and he instinctively rose from the ground and stood up—not just him, but everyone did the same, stumbling to their feet.

The clerk was brandishing his whip and shouting something loudly.

Ivan couldn't understand.

But he quickly did, as someone shouted in the wind language of the Eagle Kingdom, "Line up everyone! Follow the clerk's commands and form a line behind each carriage! No talking, no moving around, stand properly!"

Ivan began to panic.

He didn't know how to line up and had never done so; seeing others move, he moved too. Then he got a kick on his behind from one of the clerks, who was cursing incomprehensibly at him.

It seemed that the clerk had noticed the bewilderment on his face.

The clerk dragged him over and shoved him behind a serf, all the while cursing. Then he went to pull over another serf.

The disorganized group soon formed six awkward lines under the clerk's direction.



The Sapphire person who spoke the wind language walked to the front of the lines, had a brief conversation with a few who seemed to be nobles, then addressed the many serfs, “You will be fed twice a day, traveling from afar to Coral Island, soon heading to your future home, Fresh Flower Town!”

Like the others, Ivan numbly watched the speaker, showing little reaction.

The speaker continued, “The Lord of Fresh Flower Town is the great bloodline of the Tulip Family, Baron Liszt, and he will be your master from now on! Remember your future home, Fresh Flower Town, remember your future master, Liszt Tulip, a great descendant of the Tulip Family!”

The last few sentences were shouted with vigor and authority.

However, the serfs below remained calm.

The speaker didn’t care at all; he waved his arms and his grizzled hair tousled in the wind, “Remember, from now on, you need to speak the Serpent Script of the Duchy of Sapphire. Of course, you are just a bunch of serfs, and no one cares if you can speak Serpent Script. But you need to remember these three terms: Fresh Flower Town, Tulip, and Lord Landlord!”

“Now, follow me and recite these three words!” he shouted, “Pronounce these words correctly, and you will enjoy a wonderful lunch. Understand?”

Lunch, in a flash, stirred the silent and numb line into action.

The starved serfs could not resist the temptation of lunch—they had been fed only twice a day on the ship, once in the morning and once in the afternoon, the rest of the time spent lying still.

A bold serf, trembling, responded, “Understood, my Lord.”

“Good, now start following me—Fresh Flower Town...”

“Fresh Flower Town.”

“Louder, Fresh Flower Town!”

“Fresh Flower Town!”

Ivan felt he was too hungry to speak, but for the approaching lunch, he still mustered the scant strength left in his body to shout along with the others, “Fresh Flower Town.”

The phrase wasn’t hard to pronounce.

It was easy to learn.

After shouting it a few times, he even felt a bit excited, having learned a foreign language.

“Very good, it seems you have mastered the term Fresh Flower Town, now follow me—Tulip...”

“Tulip.”

“It’s Tulip, idiot. Don’t curl your own tongue, say it again—Tulip...”

“Tulip.”

“Louder, Tulip.”

“Tulip!”

“Although it’s not standard, remember it. Here, everything on this land belongs to the Tulip Family! Your lord is the bloodline of the Tulip Family!” instructed the person who could speak the Wind Language. “Next, you need to understand how to express your loyalty when you see your lord. You must first kneel.”

A few serfs, upon hearing the instruction to kneel, immediately knelt down.

The other serfs followed suit and knelt as well.

In an instant, all six teams were kneeling.

The speaker was taken aback; he was no Liszt and didn’t dare to have the serfs kneel before him, so he quickly stepped aside, “Idiots, I didn’t tell you to kneel now. Never mind... Kneel to the Black Tulip banner on the carriage as if you were in the presence of Lord Landlord. Now, follow me and say—Lord Landlord...”

“Lord Landlord.”

Ivan knelt on the ground, joining the crowd and shouting, trying his best to straighten his tongue.

After a few repeats.

The person speaking Wind Language ran to a group that looked like nobles nearby and spoke in Serpent Script, “Mr. Goltai, is this manner of teaching acceptable?”

Wearing Flack·Abbieye’s attire, Goltai nodded, “The teaching before today’s lunch ends here. Let the serfs fill their stomachs first. Fresh Flower Town isn’t so poor that they

can't afford a meal. Old Geronte, you have worked hard. We'll still need your translation for making arrangements for the serfs."

Old Geronte smiled, "Serving Lord Landlord is Old Geronte's honor and pleasure. Then I'll tell them it's time to eat."

Then, addressing the serfs who were still kneeling on the ground, "You may rise now. Continue to stand in your teams. We will now start distributing lunch, one by one, everyone gets a share. No snatching is allowed! Otherwise, the clerk's whip won't be merciful."

Upon hearing Old Geronte's words,

The fluttering hearts of the serfs swiftly turned to surprise—they really had lunch!

And then, as the carts opened, one by one, they received types of food they had never seen before, served on bread plates, handed to them.

There were no cutlery like knives or forks, only food and bread plates.

Ivan received his portion, he recognized the bread plate; he often used bread plates and after some time, he would cook them so he could continue eating. On the bread plate, there was a half piece of dark bread and then a lot of large, small, round, flat things.

He couldn't help reaching out to touch them; they were very hard.

Yet he didn't know how to eat it.

Fortunately, he always did what others did. He saw others eat the dark bread, and some had already opened those things and eaten the soft content inside.

So, holding his bread plate, he sat on the ground, first biting fiercely into the dark bread. Then following others' lead, he also opened that thing, which was quite easy to do because it already had cracks. A simple tug with his hands and it split apart. A strange, alluring scent quickly reached his nose.

After swallowing the bread, Ivan, seeing several others eat, finally mustered the courage to take a bite.

It was very soft, almost melting in his mouth.

He didn't know what it was, but it tasted pretty good, so he stopped fussing and focused on eating his portion. Maybe it was because he had been hungry for so long that in just a short while, he had already eaten all the food. When the last shelled item went down, it was almost the first time in his life

he felt what “full” meant.

Just at that moment, Old Geronte’s shout reached Ivan’s ears once more, “It looks like you’ve all eaten your fill. You’re a bunch of lucky fellows, remember this feeling. From today on, in Fresh Flower Town, as long as you work hard for our great Lord Landlord, you will eat like this every day, eat until you’re full!”

“Ah!”

Ivan heard someone nearby gasp in astonishment.

He, too, felt shocked—To eat like this every day, to eat until full!

His mind buzzed blank, with only one thought left: “Fresh Flower Town, food.”

#### Chapter 146: Offering Loyalty to the Landlord

The second day after returning to the castle, the four hundred and seventy-six serfs who had camped out in the wilderness overnight finally made their way to Fresh Flower Town. Having had a few full meals, the serfs’ complexions were still poor, but at least there was a significant improvement in their spirits.

In the afternoon.

As the sun began to set in the west, all the serfs lined up on the main thoroughfare of Fresh Flower Town, silently waiting.

Liszt, riding on the back of a Li Dragon Horse and escorted by the Knight Squad, arrived in front of the lines. Thomas, leading Douson, followed suit, now making a point of taking Douson with him when going out—a bit of a man depending on his dog for status.

“Lord, the quality of these serfs... is very poor,” Marcus remarked with a frown after scanning them.

“True, there are very few able-bodied serfs, but there are many children who can be well trained to become potential knights in the future,” Liszt replied simply.

During this conversation, Goltai had already come forward: “Lord, the serfs have finally made it to Fresh Flower Town, and not a single one is missing.”

“Well done. The losses at sea are unavoidable, but on Coral Island, I do not wish to see any further loss.”

“So, Lord, shall we now start arranging for them to kneel before you and pledge their loyalty?”

“Yes, that’s fine.”

When serfs meet their landlord, they need to pledge loyalty, which is a form of servitude.

Old Geronte, having received instructions from Goltai, turned towards the serfs and shouted in Wind Language: “Lowly serfs, before you stands the great bloodline of the Tulip Family, the Landlord of Fresh Flower Town. Now, kneel before Lord Landlord, and pledge your loyalty!”

In an instant.

The serfs knelt to the ground, and in the newly learned, awkward Serpent Script, they called out: “Lord Landlord!”

It was not very orderly, but their voices were loud.

The cries of nearly five hundred people, even if they were just a group of ragged, varying heights, malnourished, and weak serfs, still carried a kind of overwhelming momentum.

Such scenes had become routine for Liszt. In Fresh Flower Town, kneeling and shouting to him happened every day. So, he merely looked over this group of serfs with a smile on his face, all of whom buried their heads deeply in the ground, not daring to look directly at their future master.

A moment later.

Liszt, having prepared his lines, spoke up: “I accept your loyalty. From now on, you are part of Fresh Flower Town. Work hard for me, and you will receive my protection and a stable life.” He then glanced at Old Geronte, the interpreter.

Old Geronte got the message and translated: “Lord Landlord has accepted your loyalty. Lord Landlord tells you that from now on you are part of Fresh Flower Town. Work hard for Lord Landlord, and you will receive his protection and can live a stable life in Fresh Flower Town. Do you all understand?”

“Understood.”

“Yes.”

“Thank you, Lord Landlord.”

“I will work hard.”

The serfs responded sporadically. Many people still did not know what to say and were just kneeling.

Seeing this, Liszt said, “Old Geronte, let them stand up.”

And so.

The brief serf reception ceremony came to an end.

Liszt did not linger and returned directly to the castle. Marcus continued to lead the Knight Squad back to Thorn Forest to guard the Lumberjack Team. Goltai and other officials began to get busy, as they had to arrange the living and working conditions of these four hundred and seventy-six serfs in a short time.

Fortunately, the town and the various settlements already had many wooden houses built.

The commercial district, workshop area, and residential area, not yet completed, also have many wooden houses that can provide temporary shelter.

There is certainly no shortage of food, with bread and vegetables perhaps in short supply, but seafood is abundant. If that’s not enough, a few more trips out to sea by fishermen from Oyster Village will be sufficient.

“We need to complete the distribution of serfs as quickly as possible; the autumn harvest is fast approaching,” Goltai said loudly.

“The resource survey is not yet complete. There are too many women, children, and elderly among the serfs. The original arrangement plan is no longer appropriate; we need to make adjustments,” Isaiah replied.

Blair looked at the serfs squeezing into the wooden houses to prepare for the night and said with a chuckle, “Let’s set aside the small children and nursing women for now. The other able-bodied serfs could all be sent to Thorn Ridge. Let them transport timber or stones and be responsible for road repair.”

Goltai interjected, “That’s an irresponsible distribution plan.”

“I mean, let’s not make arrangements for now until the resource survey is complete. Then we can make comprehensive plans,” Blair clarified.

“Hmm, that is a solution. It is indeed difficult to make arrangements in a short period, and we can’t just feed them for nothing. It’s better to send them to the lumberjack team,” Goltai conceded.

During dinner, Goltai relayed Blair's suggestion to Liszt.

In response, Liszt agreed and added, "Try to arrange easy tasks for the artisans. Among the serfs who are physically weak or sick, do not assign any work to them. Let them rest and recover." He valued the artisans the most among this batch of serfs.

The skills of artisans are the technology of this world and an indispensable part of a prosperous domain.

Suddenly thinking of something, he said, "Stay up a bit late tonight and compile a list of the artisans, especially what skills they possess. I will have the castle's servants assist with recording. I want to see it first thing tomorrow morning."

In today's Fresh Flower Town, Liszt's word was law.

By the next morning, after he had walked the dog and got up, a thick list on parchment paper was already laid out on the dining table. After a bath and changing into comfortable clothes, he then sat down at the table to enjoy breakfast.

It was time for Carter to instruct the male servant to bring breakfast.

A cup of creamy fresh milk, a pineapple bun and a milk-flavored bread, a fried egg, a large piece of fried Magical Beast meat, a vegetable salad, and several pieces of fruit.

This was his standard breakfast.

Worth at least a dozen or more silver coins, especially the Magical Beast meat, which was quite valuable.

But after all, he had recently come into money. As a hidden rich man on Coral Island, he was not willing to skimp on himself. He had never been one for frugality; if he could enjoy life, he would make sure to do so.

He took a big gulp from the glass of milk.

"The milk produced by the castle itself tastes better. I think the climate and environment in Fresh Flower Town are definitely suitable for raising dairy cows." He licked the milk froth from the corner of his lips and made his judgment.

"Sherlock has already bought three calves. Currently, the pasture is occupied by horses, and there is no room to raise more dairy cows, my lord," a servant informed him.

Liszt affirmed with conviction, "Once Thorn Ridge is developed, the dairy cattle farm will definitely be expanded, at least doubled. I want to raise more dairy cows!"

Because of the increasingly delicious milk tea, he had specifically looked into the dairy cattle farm and found no reason that could account for the improved milk production quality of the cows—it certainly wasn't the earlier speculation that the cows had entered gestation. Compared to the milk from other cows outside, one could clearly taste the difference in quality.

The milk from the dairy cattle farm in Fresh Flower Town was not only creamy but also more refreshing.

Liszt later surmised that it could be due to the new variety of forage, Corn Grass. But after feeding them separately, it turned out to be unrelated to Corn Grass. Therefore, he concluded that the climate of Fresh Flower Town was suitable for breeding dairy cows.

He bit into a pineapple bun.

Liszt then turned his attention to the thick parchment on the table, casually flipping it open to examine the information about the artisans.

#### Chapter 147: A Major Work in Sociology

Anyone engaged in technical civilian work other than farming was called a craftsman.

Craftsmen, relying on their own skills, ran their own shops and could be called artisans. Therefore, most artisans were freemen while most craftsmen were serfs.

In Liszt's understanding, these people, if given time to develop and manage their businesses independently, would become the bourgeoisie. However, based on his knowledge of Different World's society, craftsmen evolving into capitalists was temporarily impossible, as Nobles wouldn't allow it.

If one were to refer to medieval Europe on Earth,

With the progression of the industrial revolution, artisans who mastered the means of production either accumulated these means and evolved into capitalists or lost them and became workers.

Here, craftsmen had existed for a very long time, and they were still craftsmen.

No capitalists had emerged, nor had there been a large workforce. No matter how they developed, they were vassals of the Nobility—the absolute difference in individual strength provided by Dou Qi Cultivation allowed Noble Knights to firmly hold all the power without fear of being overthrown by a new class.



Of course, between different kingdoms and cities, the development of the class of craftsmen varied to some extent.

There was no fixed hierarchy.

Liszt summarized it simply.

Craftsmen could roughly be divided into four grades: “Family,” “Master,” “Craftsman,” and “Worker.”

Master Technician, Master.

The craftsmen at this level generally lived in big cities. They were high-status freemen and had reached the level of minor nobility.

Examples include Architects, Shipbuilders, Carriage Makers, Goldsmiths, Jewelry Masters, Casting Masters, and Drillers, who were top craftsmen in their respective trades.

Architects were responsible for building Castles, large buildings, and Mage Towers; Shipbuilders specialized in designing and building ships; Carriage Makers produced carriages, mine carts, and chariots; Goldsmiths crafted Gold Coins, silver coins, copper coins, and even Dragon coins; Jewelry Masters designed precious jewelry and carved Crystals, Jade, and even gemstones.

Casting Masters could manufacture various fine equipment, and Drillers were able to dig mines.

In Coral Island, only Architects, Shipbuilders, Carriage Makers, and Casting Masters existed—there were no Goldsmiths, Jewelry Masters, or Drillers.

Craftsman Craftsman.

This level of craftsman constituted the backbone of the craftsperson community. They were the most basic layer in big cities, permeating various industries, and formed the foundation of a city or territory’s prosperity. Most of them were freemen, free to either run shops or sell their skills.

Stonemasons, Carpenters, Blacksmiths, Tanners, and Tailors were the most basic five occupations of craftsmen, as well as the most numerous.

Stonemasons built structures, Carpenters made furniture, Blacksmiths forged tools, Tanners tanned hides, and Tailors made clothes.

In addition, Bone Craftsmen, Paper Craftsmen (thick paper), Locksmiths, Shoemakers, Coopers, Crystal Craftsmen, Jewel Craftsmen, Gem Craftsmen, Jade Craftsmen, Soap

Makers, Brewers, Bakers, Barbers, Chefs, Confectioners, Spice Makers, and Salt Makers were all at the craftsman level.

Worker—Worker.

These craftsmen also formed the backbone of the craftsperson community but were predominantly found in large numbers within a Landlord's estate. Most of them were serfs and virtually indistinguishable from farming peasants, only engaged in slightly technical work.

Embroiderers, Weavers, Dyers, Salt Workers, Confectioners, Millers, Miners, Sailors, Ship Workers, and Laborers, among others, were all workers.

Additionally, individuals like innkeepers, small merchants, grocery shop owners, Horse Merchants didn't possess craftsmanship skills, but they were in charge of the distribution of craftsmanship with a status generally equivalent to that of a craftsman, which is to say, ordinary freemen.

At last,

Family, Grand Master.

This level is basically not considered a craftsman, but should be called an artist.

Novelists, Minstrels, Pianists, Painters, Court Musicians, Sculptors, Singers, and so on, most of them belong to the noble class. Without inheritable titles, they develop their own artistic cells and move among the nobility, enjoying a high-quality lifestyle.

If one has to further define it, magicians who make magic equipment and "Iron Knights" who forge various weapons would also be considered craftsmen.

But they are either outside the system or are nobles themselves.

"Not a single technician, few craftsmen, mostly just workers, I feel like the money spent is somewhat lacking,"

Looking at the list on thick parchment in his hand, Li Si Te couldn't help but feel a tinge of regret. He had wanted craftsmen, but among the serfs he bought, there were mostly workers.

Clearly, these craftsmen were leftovers picked by others, or rather, Levis's subordinates were only willing to buy cheap craftsmen—among the serf trades, a craftsman's price was clearly a bit higher than that of a worker, not to mention a technician. No one would sell technicians, craftsmen, workers, and peasants for the same price.

“In any case, having a group of skilled workers can barely add a few industries to Fresh Flower Town... I can make my own sugar, soap, textiles, even sun-dry salt from seawater, or make paper using traditional methods, or develop other industries,” Li Si Te comforted himself. It’s not just consolation; skilled workers are still valuable.

He asked Thomas to bring a quill, ink, and blank thick parchment, and he began to write and draw.

He planned to consider which industries these craftsmen could develop, how many workshops could be added to the town’s workshop district. However, while writing, he moved from the development of handicraft industry to the study of social systems.

“If I wanted to, I could become a sociologist!”

He categorized the entire social system of the Different World.

Social upper layer—Noble Landlords.

Upper middle layer—Magicians pursuing truth, officials and knights without titles, and indispensable artists.

Middle layer—Technicians with irreplaceable skills, knights turned mercenaries in their downfall.

Lower middle layer—Servants in castles, craftsmen with productive technologies, merchants handling the circulation of goods, workers serving as laborers, rats scurrying in the shadows.

Social lower layer Serfs who plant fields, beggars who can’t even become serfs.

“Very clear, crystal clear.” He bit into a big chunk of Magical Beast Meat, chewed, and swallowed, “If I could elaborate further, the responsibilities that each social layer bears in society, and the mobility between layers, I could probably write a magnum opus on sociology, and get it published.”

This was just an idea; he hadn’t fallen so low as to need to write books for a living—that was something for destitute noble offspring.

Moreover, works of sociology would not sell well.

You have to write Knight’s Novels.

To slay dragons, to make a pact with the Elf King.

The best start would be a down-and-out Prince, accompanied by a Little Minor Elf, casting adrift at sea for a romantic night with a Siren, followed by a few days of

dalliances in a Marquis Manor with a noblewoman, before single-handedly defeating an evil Dragon, or riding a Dragon, with the Little Minor Elf breaking through to become the Elf King.

Ultimately, the hero saves the beauty and marries the beautiful Princess recognized by the Unicorn.

With these elements in place, it would essentially be a best-selling Knight's Novel, which those fond of fantasies would be very willing to pay for.

After finishing breakfast.

Li Si Te collected the thick parchment he had written on, and glanced out the window at the now high Sun, "When Granney arrives, maybe I can discuss sociology with him."

#### Chapter 148: Fresh Flower Town Resource Survey

Granney Truth's letter was delivered to the castle by the Fresh Flower Caravan.

He postponed his arrival time. There was a shortage of materials for making the Black Pearl Magic Equipment, which required some time to prepare. Approximately in mid-October, he would head to Fresh Flower Town.

"Wasting my time, I should have chosen another magician to visit!" Liszt wasn't very pleased when he saw the letter. He felt that the magician wasn't giving him due respect. Preparing the materials took over a week, which implied a low efficiency and lack of dedication, bordering on perfunctory.

However, the magicians he had access to were few.

Such creatures always lived reclusively, leading a semi-hermitic life, seldom making contact with ordinary people. If Liszt weren't a member of the Tulip Family, perhaps Granney wouldn't have agreed to meet him—the nobles probably wouldn't let a magician settle in their city anyway, for they were prone to causing explosions every now and then, which was frightening.

He threw away the letter.

Liszt no longer cared when Granney would arrive.

Now in Fresh Flower Town, the resource survey and the logging campaign were underway simultaneously. Even though Goltai devoted himself as an advisor, there was still an overwhelming amount of work causing trouble for Liszt.

He had his own troubles too.

Standing in front of the castle window, he frowned at Juan Fu, who was shackled by the legs.

“Garrulous!”

“Garrulous!”

Juan Fu kept making noise, continuously flapping his fully-feathered wings.

With eyes turning into vortexes, Liszt unleashed the Eye of Magic. To him, Juan Fu appeared as a fat bird made of green magic power.

“Juan Fu has reached the stage where it needs to release magic power. In a few days, it might not need my guidance to cast magic... Eating too well is also a burden. Should I reduce its food? This bird eats as much in one meal as a servant does in three.”

Juan Fu wasn't large; curled up, it was about the size of a dog.

But being a Magical Beast, its appetite far exceeded that of ordinary birds: “To keep feeding it like this is just not cost-effective.”

Without finding a falconer, Juan Fu will always be a wild Magical Beast, whose main use is to be killed for meat or selling materials for Gold Coins.

Shaking his head, Liszt decided not to kill it for the time being. Having taken care of it for so long, they had grown familiar with each other. No matter how he teased it, Juan Fu wouldn't bite him, only dodge. It didn't like to be touched by anyone.

“There's still some friendship between us.”

The life in Fresh Flower Town was busy and orderly.

The resource survey presided over by Goltai was soon completed. The data was summarized and sent to the castle, sparking spirited discussions at the dinner party.

“According to the lord's instructions, a portion of the serfs in the town who work in agriculture will be transformed into specialized workers. The farming serfs will get interest-free loans from the castle. The loans will not pass through the serfs' hands but will be delivered to them in the form of farming tools, along with guidance for scientific farming,” Goltai read passionately from his lengthy dissertation. The resource survey was his performance project, naturally filled with enthusiasm.

“The current resource survey results for Fresh Flower Town are as follows, Peanut Hamlet...”

Peanut Hamlet? Peanut Fields covering 100 acres, including one Peanut Elf Bug; Corn Grass Fields covering 20 acres; about 500 acres of uncultivated wasteland, mostly overgrown with weeds; a residential area covering 20 acres.

Mushroom Hamlet Mushroom sheds covering 80 acres; a mixture of Mushroom and Flame Mushroom sheds covering 30 acres; about 800 acres of uncultivated wasteland, mostly overgrown with shrubs; a residential area covering 30 acres.

Barley Hamlet Barley Fields covering 50 acres; Oat Fields covering 50 acres; Rye Fields covering 150 acres; Corn Grass Fields covering 30 acres; Millet Fields covering 50 acres, including one Millet Elf Bug; about 500 acres of uncultivated wasteland, mostly overgrown with weeds; a seaside beach covering 1800 acres, with some Fragrant Coconut Trees; a residential area covering 50 acres.

Little Wheat Village Little Wheat Fields covering 500 acres, including one Little Wheat Elf Bug; a pig farm with 12 large fat pigs; about 300 acres of uncultivated wasteland, mostly overgrown with weeds; a residential area covering 50 acres.

Tomato Hamlet? Tomato Fields covering 80 acres, including one Tomato Elf Bug; Vegetable Fields covering 20 acres; about 40 acres of uncultivated wasteland, mostly overgrown with weeds; a residential area covering 60 acres.

Oyster Village A seaside beach covering 4600 acres, with some Fragrant Coconut Trees and one Fragrant Coconut Tree Elf Bug; a Fruit Thief Monkey Training Ground, housing 7 Fruit Thief Monkeys, of which 3 females are pregnant; a residential area covering 30 acres.

Dairy Farm Alfalfa Grassland covering 150 acres, housing 11 dairy cows, of which 3 females are pregnant; Thorn Forest covering 180 acres, including one Thorn Elf Bug; about 300 acres of uncultivated wasteland, mostly overgrown with shrubs; a seaside beach covering 1700 acres, with some Fragrant Coconut Trees; a residential area covering 15 acres.

Fresh Flower Farm Tulip Fields covering 200 acres, including 15 acres of St. Dence Tulips, 10 acres of William I Tulips, 20 acres of Black Tulips, the rest being wasteland; about 500 acres of uncultivated wasteland, mostly overgrown with shrubs and weeds; a residential area covering 20 acres.

The town A commercial district covering 40 acres; a workshop district covering 80 acres; a serf residential area covering 150 acres; a freeman residential area covering 120 acres; a noble residential area covering 80 acres; a government building covering 10 acres. Most are planned areas, with the current housing footprint being very small.

The Castle? Alfalfa Grassland covering 120 acres, including one Alfalfa Elf Bug, housing 22 horses, of which 7 mares are pregnant; Dragon Kui Field covering 5 acres,

including one Dragon Kui Elf Bug; the castle itself covering 20 acres; about 400 acres of uncultivated wasteland, mostly overgrown with shrubs and weeds.

The entire town's cultivable land is roughly 5165 acres, with about 8100 acres of seaside beach, and approximately 775 acres occupied by buildings, including small rivers, ponds, roads, totaling about 15,000 acres of land? as for the standard of this "acre," Liszt was also unclear, lacking a comparison.

If his body had traveled through time, with himself as a reference, it would have been easy to understand the local system of measurements.

Unfortunately, he traveled through souls, unclear whether now, compared to his past self, he was a giant or a dwarf? but it no longer mattered, as he had gotten used to the units of measurement here.

"Fresh Flower Town roughly covers 15,000 acres and Thorn Ridge about 13,000 acres, total that's 28,000 acres, which is the size of my territory... hmm, I also need to count the nearly 5000 acres of beach revealed at low tide. Then, I have 33,000 acres of land."

A small town of 33,000 acres was already one of the larger towns on Coral Island.

He had even taken the time to draw a detailed topographical map of Fresh Flower Town, the map might not be completely accurate, but the basic framework should be correct.

There were mountains, and water, with clear roads.

His gaze traveled across the map, quickly moving to the north side of Thorn Ridge: "From here on out, it's all low shrubs, and further out, large tracts of uncultivated land that nobody has developed. Should I include this piece of land as well?"

After some thought, he decided against it.

Swallowing Thorn Ridge was greedy enough; it was better to make a fortune quietly. Being too greedy and grabbing more land might backfire, possibly displeasing the Earl and Levis.

"Right now, the wasteland of Fresh Flower Town hasn't been fully cultivated. I should develop low-key and steadily. I have the Smoke Mission; there's no need to take risks. The old saying still applies: amass provisions, build high walls, and proclaim kingship at a slow pace. I'm sixteen this year; I'll set a small goal for myself — by the age of twenty, I want to own an island of my own!"

In his mind surfaced the information about Black Horse Island.

This nurturing ground for the Li Dragon Horse Herd hadn't yet been uncovered, but its allure had already left Liszt enchanted.

#### Chapter 149: Silently Approaching the Dou Qi Bottleneck

“Task completed, reward: Mutated Quick-Growing Thorn Species.”

The slowly shifting smoke before Liszt's eyes brought him a sense of satisfaction. Starting with the extermination of Magical Beasts to the middle of October, after nearly a month of cutting, the Lumberjack Team had finally chopped down every tree on Thorn Ridge.

The once lush but not overly dense woods had turned into bare, undulating slopes of soil.

If there were environmental organizations here, they would undoubtedly lodge a serious protest against Liszt—accusing him of destroying vegetation and causing soil erosion, crimes against humanity—but unfortunately, this was Liszt's territory, and he could do whatever he wanted. Besides, with Coral Island lush and thriving, what did a few trees matter!

In a world with Elves, there was no fear of land desertification.

Moreover, there was no industrial development here; whether on the islands or the continent, no matter how poor the soil, at least 70% of the land was covered by forests. At least 95% was covered by vegetation, whether it be farmland or weeds, there was never a shortage of plants.

Therefore, Liszt never paid attention to environmental protection.

“Mutated wood? What does that mean?” It was the reward for the Thorn Bug chain quest; previous rewards had been for thorn mutations with spikes or poison—both spikes and poison were easy to understand. But now the wood aspect was a bit baffling, “Does wood... could it be about the quality of the timber?”

His sharp mind quickly rotated: “Trees differ from each other; some are suited for making furniture and are exorbitantly priced, while some are not even good enough for paper production... Does Mutated Quick-Growing Thorn Species mean that the wood properties of the thorns have changed?”

Ordinary thorns were useful for nothing more than hedges.

They could neither bloom nor bear fruit, and were not particularly hard, quite a useless feature.



“I can’t figure it out by thinking alone, I need to see the actual item and research this ‘Rapid Growth Wood Thorns’ to determine its value,” Liszt named the new thorn variety in the blink of an eye.

At that moment.

The smoke before him also transformed into a new chapter.

“Task: The commercial district of Fresh Flower Town is gradually prospering, but the workshop area has been idle for a long time and lacks enough workshops to support it. Craftsmen should not waste their talents on cutting trees and farming. Please build three new workshops to increase town prosperity. Reward: Bottleneck of Dou Qi.”

“Hmm?”

Liszt’s eyes widened; he saw the odd reward of “Bottleneck of Dou Qi.”

But in his heart, there was no surprise, only excitement, “My first task’s reward was the sublimation of Dou Qi, which enabled me to break through from Apprentice Knight to Earth Knight smoothly. This time, it’s the Bottleneck of Dou Qi, does this mean I am about to become an Elite Earth Knight? It must be!”

Knights are categorized as Apprentice Knights, Earth Knights, Sky Knights, and Dragon Knights, according to the levels of Dou Qi: beginner, intermediate, advanced, and Dragon Dou Qi.

Within Earth Knights, one can roughly divide them into two stages—Common Earth Knights and Elite Earth Knights.

Those who’ve just broken through to Earth Knight are Common Earth Knights; during this time, if you continue to train, the total amount of Dou Qi in your body will slowly increase.

Liszt was in this stage, feeling the growth of his Dou Qi every day.

When the total amount of Dou Qi reaches its peak and stops increasing, it signifies reaching the level of an Elite Earth Knight. At this stage, it is very difficult to increase the total amount of Dou Qi through mere cultivation alone.

Many knights are confined to this stage, unable to advance further, only continuously developing their technical use of Dou Qi. As they age, around their fifties, their physical functions will start to decline, the total amount of Dou Qi will gradually decrease, and they will regress from Elite Earth Knights back to Common Earth Knights.

Now in his forties, Marcus was still at the peak of his physical abilities. In another decade or so, he would likely begin to decline, and his strength would greatly reduce.

This was the urgent reason he yearned for distinction on the battlefield—honors needed to be gained early so that he could enjoy them when old.

Half of the Elite Earth Knights shared Marcus' mindset.

Honors.

Yet, there were some Elite Earth Knights who were not in a rush to achieve distinction. Instead, they preferred to continue enhancing their own strength, such as Levis and Li Vera.

However, relying solely on cultivation was no longer very effective.

At this time, a copious amount of magic potions was needed to stimulate the body's functions and continue to increase the amount of Dou Qi until the quantitative change led to a qualitative leap, breaking through to become a Sky Knight.

One Sky Knight could easily handle a hundred Earth Knights.

If they had good mounts to cooperate with them, they became killing machines on the battlefield, constantly collecting honors.

"After completing this task, will I officially step into the phase of an Elite Earth Knight?" Liszt still found it hard to believe, "Originally, I thought it would take at least three to five years of cultivation to enter the ranks of the Elite Earth Knights. Unexpectedly, in just over half a year, I've completed this process."

The more he thought about it, the more excited he became.

It was as if he could see himself radiating with the light of a genius from top to bottom.

"To construct three new workshops in the workshop district is too simple. Currently, there are six workshops in the district: a smithy, tanners' shop, mill, carpenter's shop, tailor shop, and locksmith store... According to the current number of craftsman serfs, I can build a soap-making workshop, a brewing workshop, and a cooperage."

The soap-making workshop had a soap maker, Bunier, who had drifted from Little Papa Island. He could not only make scented soaps but also undertook the task of making lye soap arranged by Liszt. Though he hadn't finalized the ultimate lye soap formula, he had produced a barely usable lye soap.

A soap-making workshop would be his reward, and after all, it would earn money for Liszt.

The brewing workshop had among the artisans who had drifted from Little Papa Island a brewer named Frank Dregs who could make fruit wines; there were also two purchased serfs who knew how to brew rice wine and beer, respectively.

Now, Liszt had a good relationship with the heir of the hops family, Aubrey Lycra, whom he contacted frequently through letters and could obtain hops at a relatively low price for his own beer brewing.

Not aiming to make a profit, a brewing workshop could barely sustain itself if it produced for its own consumption.

As for the cooperage, among the purchased artisan serfs, there were several coopers—a common skill combining woodworking and blacksmithing. Barrels were indispensable in daily life, so there would be no problem with sales once the cooperage was built. Even without the task, he had plans to construct a cooperage.

“The only question is, does a cooperage count as a workshop? It should be considered a handicraft workshop, right?” Liszt pondered in uncertainty, not clear on whether establishments like cooperages and tailor shops should be classified as shops or workshops.

“If it doesn’t count, I’ll just build an additional workshop, which will need to be built sooner or later... maybe a peanut processing workshop. Boiled peanuts, five-spiced peanuts, fried peanuts, salt-and-pepper peanuts, sauce-flavored peanuts, peanut butter—I’ll produce whatever can be produced. Fresh Flower Town shouldn’t be directly selling raw agricultural products.”

The value of raw agricultural products was too low.

At the very least, they needed to undergo initial processing before being sold.

Thinking of this, he immediately summoned Goltai, who was growing visibly busier day by day, “Consultant Goltai, I need to see results in the development of the workshop district. Arrange to start construction on the soap-making workshop, brewing workshop, cooperage, and peanut processing workshop immediately, with direct investment from the castle.”

## Chapter 150: The Thorn of Ironwood Quality

As for the current stage,

the workshops and stores in Fresh Flower Town, aside from the few primitive ones opened by freemen, essentially all had to be established by Liszt himself—he didn’t

mind monopolizing all the industries in Fresh Flower Town since this was his own territory.

When he said to build a workshop, a workshop could be built.

However, Goltai had doubts, “Lord, the soap making workshop can be handed over to Bunier, the brewing workshop has Frank, Bording, and Huntera, and there are many coopers for the cooperage... But what about the peanut processing workshop, what is it for, and who should it be handed to?”

“It’s about taking the harvested peanuts and processing them simply. They can be sold cooked with the shells, roasted, or as shelled peanuts, can be made into peanut butter, and perhaps new and unique peanut recipes can be developed. The goal is to turn ordinary peanuts into delicious peanuts, just like turning ordinary bread into pineapple buns,” Liszt explained.

“Who will make these delicious peanuts?”

“Among the serfs we bought, aren’t there some who have served as chefs in other castles? My castle doesn’t need that many chefs for now, so let these people research how to make tasty peanuts... Remember this, Consultant Goltai.”

“Please go on,” Goltai said.

“The agricultural products from Fresh Flower Town are priced very low and don’t have much trading value. But after our initial processing, they can be sold at a good price, and we can even purchase agricultural products from outside to process. I hope Fresh Flower Town can become a center for processing agricultural products,” Liszt said.

There was no word in Serpent Script equivalent to “initial processing.”

Liszt could use Serpent Script to create a word with a similar meaning, then provide a brief explanation.

Goltai understood, “So, it’s like Tulip Castle rarely sells whole Magic Tulips, but instead processes them into finished magic potions for sale, right?”

“You have understood correctly.”

“Then I will go and arrange this now.”

After Goltai left, Liszt soon departed from the castle as well.

He hurried to the Thorn Cordyceps Shrubbery to look for the Rapid Growth Wood Thorns. Standing amidst the shrubbery and looking around, apart from this patch of shrubs, only bare slopes could be seen in the distance. In the shrubbery, Rapid Growth

Poison Thorns and Rapid Growth Spiky Thorns were artificially separated, each occupying a large area.

“Lord Landlord!”

The two Bug Guard Members guarding the Thorn Cordyceps hurriedly came forward to greet him; they were serfs from the dairy farm selected by Rom due to their robust physique to be Bug Guard Members and received a decent part-time salary.

Liszt asked, “Since you’ve been stationed at this shrubbery, have you noticed any unusual thorns?”

He had specifically instructed Rom to tell the Bug Guard Members here to pay close attention to the growth of the thorns and to immediately report any special ones they found.

The members hesitated, “Lord Landlord, I’m not sure if they are unusual thorns or not.”

“Oh, what’s the situation?”

“There is a patch of thorns... they have become... very thick,” one member said.

“Very thick? Show me,” Liszt instructed.

The Bug Guard Member quickly led Liszt to a patch of thick thorns.

The thorns here, with their color and spikes, were just ordinary, but each one was about twice as thick as a regular thorn. This was a distinct difference, yet the Bug Guard Member didn’t realize it was worth reporting—simply a pig-brained oversight.

Of course.

Liszt understood that the intelligence of common people was indeed limited. He said, “Cut down this thorn.”

The Bug Guards were not equipped with iron tools, only relatively cheap bone weapons.

They hastily pulled out their bone knives and swung them ferociously at the thorns. These small shrubs weren’t difficult to cut down, especially since they were still in their juvenile phase. The Bug Guard Members, full of confidence, believed they could sever the thorns with a single strike, showing their bravery in front of Lord Landlord.

However, to their embarrassment, when the bone knives struck the trunk of the thorn shrub, they produced a crisp “clang” and were repelled, leaving behind only a shallow mark.

“Uh.”

The two Bug Guard Members grew a bit panicked, swinging their bone knives again with great force. But each chop only left shallow marks on the trunk of the thorn shrub, and after a dozen or so strikes, they hadn't managed to create a split as wide as a thumb. Instead, the edges of their bone knives were already chipping away.

On the verge of breaking.

“Stop, Thomas, hand them my Knight's Sword to cut with,” Liszt's eyes shone with understanding. He had probably figured out the nature of the mutation that the Rapid Growth Wood Thorns had undergone.

Receiving the Knight's Sword.

The Bug Guard Members continued chopping, still unable to sever the thorns quickly, but thankfully the Knight's Sword was crafted from fine steel and was extremely sturdy. Relying on constant chopping and grinding, they finally managed to sever a thorn as thick as a wrist. They then chopped off its smaller branches, turning it into a bare thorn rod.

Panting heavily, they handed it over to Liszt.

Holding the thorn rod in his hands, Liszt could feel its weight.

“It's heavy, very solid, and the texture is extremely hard. If I'm not mistaken, its wood has likely mutated in the direction of 'ironwood'.”

Ironwood, as the name implies, is wood as hard as steel. On Earth, many kinds of wood are called ironwood, such as ironbirch, mangrove, and phoebe, which are harder than steel, sink in water, aren't affected by insects, and can't even be pierced by nails. Many ships, vehicles, special buildings, and even aerospace parts are made from ironwood.

The current Rapid Growth Wood Thorns hadn't reached the standard of ironwood yet.

But their “rapid growth” characteristic determined their value. Even if they didn't meet the ironwood standard, they were still far superior to regular wood and better than steel.

“Given this quality, Rapid Growth Wood Thorns are practically steel that grows on its own!”

There were trees with ironwood qualities in Thorn Ridge, such as rockwood, stonewood, and others, but they were rare and grew slowly. It took hundreds of years for them to mature, and cutting one meant one less left.

Rapid Growth Wood Thorns could mature in a short time, their value was so great that even Liszt found it hard to imagine.

“Compared to the previous poison and spiky mutations, these are nothing! This is the true treasure among thorns. My Thorn Bug, well done, you’ll get an extra treat tonight. Feast on the Jade Powder!” The chained tasks reward from the Thorn Bug’s influence had led to such a mutation.

He felt increasingly certain that there was a chance for the Thorn Bug to evolve into a Thorn Minor Elf.

“I’ve decided!”

Emotions stirred, he could no longer contain his thoughts: “I’ll plant all 180 acres of shrubbery directly affected by the Thorn Cordyceps with Rapid Growth Wood Thorns!”

The ordinary Rapid Growth Thorns, Rapid Growth Poison Thorns, and Rapid Growth Spiky Thorns should either be relocated or cut down directly.

They shouldn’t take up the influence of the Thorn Cordyceps.

The Li Dragon Horse raced.

Returning to the castle like the wind.

He planned to immediately call Isaiah, the newly appointed Administrative Officer, to replan the Thorn Cordyceps Shrubbery. However, as the wind cooled his mind, he immediately realized a key problem: “The Thorn Bug is still accumulating power for its evolution, and the chain tasks aren’t over yet. The Rapid Growth Thorns could still mutate.”

Now, if he cut down the ordinary Rapid Growth Thorns, it would be hard to generate new mutations.

“No, I can’t cut down all the ordinary Rapid Growth Thorns. Ironwood can wait. There’s no rush. Right now, the most important thing is to let the Thorn Bug continue to develop, to let the Rapid Growth Thorns continue to mutate... However, the name ‘Rapid Growth Wood Thorns’ needs to be changed. Let’s call them ‘Rapid Growth Iron Thorns’ instead!”