

The Mighty Dragons Are Dead #Chapter 231: 0231: The Endless Zambrotta (Fourth Update, Alliance Hierarch Added Update 21/22) - Read The Mighty Dragons Are Dead Chapter 231: 0231: The Endless Zambrotta (Fourth Update, Alliance Hierarch Added Update 21/22)

Chapter 231: The Endless Zambrotta (Fourth Update, Alliance Hierarch Added Update 21/22)

Hearing the steward's complaint.

Waiting on the side, Crooked-neck Bob immediately knelt on the ground with a thump, sobbing uncontrollably, "Lord Landlord, Bob didn't mean it, it was the strong wind that night that blew open the door of my greenhouse... Please, Lord Landlord, forgive me, Bob will never let the strong wind blow the door open again!"

Looking at Bob's grief-stricken performance, Liszt had an impression of him.

Initially, the Flame Mushrooms had grown in his greenhouse and even thought to be defective, a lot were dug up. Liszt remembered that, since Bob was unable to make the Flame Mushroom cultivation ingredients, he had only rewarded him with ten silver coins, with more rewards given to Nash, who figured out the planting ingredients.

"This Crooked-neck Bob has a fate with Flame Mushrooms," he thought.

He thought about it, didn't punish him for now, but brought people into his Flame Mushroom greenhouse. Looking around, indeed, many of the Flame Mushrooms here were withering, nowhere near as good as those in other Flame Mushroom greenhouses.

The loss was neither big nor small.

Crooked-neck Bob, still kneeling on the ground, hurried in, and seeing Liszt carefully observing every patch of Flame Mushroom ingredients, he continued sobbing, "Lord Landlord, although... although many Flame Mushrooms have died, there are still some... some Flame Mushrooms that survived, sir!"

He didn't need to tell Liszt, who had already seen them.

On several patches of Flame Mushroom ingredients, scraggly and sparse, many Flame Mushrooms were indeed growing.

Liszt already had a suspicion in his heart and approached for a closer look. He found that these remaining Flame Mushrooms had a stark difference from normal ones—the

color of the Flame Mushrooms was no longer bright red, but had turned a dark red as if they had lost color.

However, after using his Eye of Magic, he discovered that the dark red Flame Mushrooms contained a much stronger trace of Magic Power than normal Flame Mushrooms, almost gleaming with a blinding red light.

In other words, although these Flame Mushrooms appeared to have been damaged by wind and cold, leading to poor appearance, their inner Fire Attribute Mana was even more vigorous.

“Cheerful Cold Flame Mushrooms, it must be these Flame Mushrooms!” Liszt was elated—the reward for the Smoke Mission was right before him, “Cheerful coldness indicates that the Flame Mushrooms do not fear the cold of wind and snow, and because of some mutation, they gather Fire Attribute Mana more abundantly.”

This was undoubtedly a Flame Mushroom of much higher quality than normal, capable of concocting higher-grade Magic Potions.

He immediately issued an order: “Give Crooked-neck Bob ten lashes as a warning; if he is negligent again in the future and causes damage to the Flame Mushrooms, it will be more than just ten lashes.”

After Crooked-neck Bob was harshly lashed ten times, his backside was blooming in welts.

Liszt then directed Thomas to hand over ten silver coins to Bob: “Fortune from misfortune, Crooked-neck Bob, although your Flame Mushrooms have suffered severe damage, you have also consequently bred a new variety of Flame Mushroom. I will name it the Ice Snow Flame Mushroom, and these ten silver coins are your reward.”

Bob, tears and snot streaming down his face, immediately forgot the pain in his behind and reached out for the silver coins: “Ah, thank you, Lord Landlord, praise the great Lord Landlord!”

Liszt then issued a new order: “Whoever figures out the proper ingredients for the Ice Snow Flame Mushrooms will receive a reward of one Gold Coin.”

Like the reward for the Flame Mushroom ingredients before, one Gold Coin was enough to stir up the ambition of all the serfs.

After he left.

Mushroom Hamlet was indeed abuzz.

Countless serfs were rubbing their hands in eagerness, ready to make big moves.

Especially Nash, who had received one Gold Coin as a reward before. This old bachelor, with that Gold Coin, not only got himself a wife but also built two new Flame Mushroom greenhouses, becoming a major cultivator in Mushroom Hamlet.

Upon hearing the Lord Landlord's reward, he loudly proclaimed to the people around him: "If I could figure out the Flame Mushroom ingredients, I can figure out the Ice Snow Flame Mushroom ingredients as well. This Nalda Gold Coin, old Nash has got it in the bag!"

"That's not necessarily true!"

"Exactly, you just got lucky to receive Lord Landlord's reward last time, this time it's my turn!"

"Old Nash, you should focus on dealing with your little wife instead of letting her put a green hat on you. When it comes to researching ingredients, you must look at me."

Crooked-neck Bob, who had been whipped, was not to be outdone: "Last time I lost to Old Nash, but this time it will definitely not happen again. The Flame Mushroom is grown in my greenhouse, the Ice Snow Flame Mushroom too, the reward from Nalda should belong to me! Damn Old Nash!"

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In the afternoon.

Inside the castle's study.

Pacing a bit uneasily, Zambrotta fidgeted with the tips of his toes.

Then he took a deep breath, trying to relax himself, "This study room is as warm as spring without any burning charcoal, Baron, Fresh Flower Town is full of surprises, and so is your castle."

Behind the desk, Liszt leisurely held a cup of milk tea and asked with a smile, "Then, Mr. Zambrotta, what do you guess is the reason for the study room's warmth?"

"I guess it's magic," Zambrotta replied solemnly.

He had learned from Goltai that Liszt valued his extensive knowledge and broad experience, knowing today's meeting was a sort of assessment.

If he couldn't exhibit enough merits to impress the other party, his trip would be in vain.

For the sake of revival, for the sake of living, he must treat it seriously: "Moreover, I suspect that this magic is also present in the public baths. Probably a type of Fire

System Magic that heats the water temperature and the temperature in the room. This method is unbelievable; I've only heard that it's possible for magicians in the court to achieve such a feat."

"Hmm."

Liszt neither confirmed nor denied, then continued to ask, "Have you been to many countries?"

"Yes, I've been to the Steel Ridge Kingdom and its seven subordinate nations. When I was young, what I loved most was traveling around the continent, but due to limited finances, I only toured around the Steel Ridge Kingdom."

"I've heard that there's an evil dragon in the Maple Leaf Duchy; do you know about it?"

"Oh, that's a Light Dragon that has been residing on Red Maple Mountain for a hundred years. Many warriors have attempted to slay it, seeking the title of Dragon Slayer to stand alongside Dragon Knights. But as you know, dragons possess boundless strength; most of the warriors ultimately... end up as dragon dung."

"Is the Light Dragon hard to deal with? Given that the Duke of Maple Leaf is a Dragon Knight, why doesn't he slay this evil dragon?"

"The Duke's dragon is just a Malleable Cast Iron Dragon, which can't even find the hiding place of the Light Dragon. There's essentially no hope of slaying the Light Dragon... In fact, there are quite a few evil dragons on the continent, but most evil dragons are Elemental Dragons, which are stronger in combat than Metal Dragons and Gemstone Dragons."

Basically, Gemstone Dragons and Metal Dragons are production units, while Elemental Dragons are combat units.

"Could you introduce me to the local customs and culture of the Steel Ridge Kingdom and its subordinate nations?" Liszt asked in a gentle tone, feeling that Zambrotta indeed possessed a wealth of knowledge.

Bowing slightly, Zambrotta got up: "As you wish, Baron."

Moments later, the study was filled with Zambrotta's relentless narrative. Having traversed these countries himself, his accounts were more convincing and clear-cut than the fabricated stories found in Knight's Novels, also more interesting.

The Mighty Dragons Are Dead #Chapter 232: 0232 Throughout His Life, Zhuge Liang Was Known for His Caution (Fifth update, Alliance Hierarch additional update 22/22) - Read The Mighty Dragons Are Dead Chapter 232: 0232 Throughout His Life, Zhuge Liang Was Known for His Caution (Fifth update, Alliance Hierarch additional update 22/22)

Chapter 232: Throughout His Life, Zhuge Liang Was Known for His Caution (Fifth update, Alliance Hierarch additional update 22/22)
Steel Ridge Kingdom, one of the three major kingdoms in the Northern Continent, is neighbored by the Blast Furnace Fortress Kingdom and the Eagle Kingdom.

Below it are seven vassal states: the Grand Duchies of Sapphire, Maple, Rose, and Brass, as well as the Duchies of Light Sapphire, Starry, and Honeysuckle. Strictly speaking, the Grand Duchies of Sapphire and Rose should be downgraded to duchies, as the nation possesses dragons but no dragon knights.

“Duke Honeysuckle had no choice but to move three times a year because he simply couldn’t stand the nobles who carelessly relieved themselves in the palace, which made even walking an exercise in caution. There was even a knight who took care of his business on the stool in his study, and Duke Honeysuckle, unaware, sat right on it.”

“How did Duke Honeysuckle punish the knight in the end?”

“He chose to take a dump inside the knight’s helmet.”

“Haha, what a creative punishment!”

“Haha!”

Laughter flowed from the study where Liszt and Zambrotta chatted; unbeknownst to them, over three hours had passed. Zambrotta always had an endless supply of little bits of gossip to share, keeping Liszt’s interest fully engaged.

Especially those court secrets.

These were likely the stories of minor nobles that Zambrotta heard during his travels, equivalent to unofficial histories. When he toured the Steel Ridge Kingdom, he was merely a quasi-noble and had no chance to meet any important figures from the courts of various countries, not to mention those small nobles of landlord stature.

However, these unofficial histories were somewhat more serious compared to a knight's novel.

At least they contained substance—whether their stories were true or not, the people within them existed. In contrast, knight novels not only had stories difficult to discern as true or false, the characters were also fictional.

When Butler Carter knocked on the door to ask about the dinner arrangements, Liszt was brought back from the pleasant conversation, “Invite all the officials of the town to dinner tonight, let’s welcome Mr. Zambrotta’s arrival.” He had already decided to keep Zambrotta around for those interesting anecdotes.

Without a doubt, these anecdotes held significant reference value for Liszt in his compilation of the annals for “Dragons Fight in the Wild.”

“Thank you for your generosity,” Zambrotta said with a polite bow of thanks.

He had realized that he had won the favor of the Baron of Fresh Flower Town, whose reputation had been rising lately, achieving his goal of making a comeback in Fresh Flower Town. Ever since being stripped of his noble title by the Earl, his life had fallen into disarray; even his son and daughter had begun to disdain him, which had been hard to swallow.

Now, though still a freeman without a title, once he followed Liszt, who was destined for greatness, who could guarantee that he wouldn’t return to the noble class?

At the evening banquet that day, Liszt introduced Zambrotta with great fanfare to the town officials.

Isaiah, Blair, and Marcus were all familiar with Zambrotta, as he had been the family tutor of Lidun, often visiting Tulip Castle. His knowledge and abilities were not in question—the issue was his attitude, as he had indulged Lidun in beating a commoner, which infuriated the Earl.

But that was not a matter of principle; it was perfectly normal for a noble to beat a commoner.

Not all nobles were like Liszt, harboring a belief in equality for all deep within their hearts. To the people of this world, categorizing others into levels was the norm.

Therefore, people still welcomed Zambrotta with open arms, although whether Isaiah and Blair felt any sense of crisis was another matter.

After the banquet, Liszt continued to discuss amusing matters with Zambrotta for nearly an hour.

It was with reluctance that he finally let him go, saying clearly, “I understand your intentions. Don’t worry about your position in Fresh Flower Town for now. I have received news that my father will return before the festival, and after the festival, I will arrange your employment.”

Zambrotta nodded, understanding the subtext in Liszt’s words: “I will follow your arrangements, Baron.”

““

“You can either head back home and wait for news, or you can settle down in Fresh Flower Town for the time being. When you have free time, we can continue to exchange interesting stories about the various kingdoms, as I am very interested in such information.”

“My wife has passed away, and my children are all settled down, so there is no need for me to return home. If possible, I plan to stay in Fresh Flower Town for a while.”

“I will have Goltai arrange accommodation for you.”

...

The Earl returned faster than Liszt had expected, a few days earlier.

On December 20th, he brought the Knight Order back to Coral Island, with ships loaded with supplies piled up on the docks, all spoils of war.

Of course, while the Knight Order had set off complete, they returned with many knights missing.

They had probably been left behind forever in the Eagle Kingdom.

After a knight from the Tulip Castle came to Fresh Flower Town with the news, Liszt decided to head to Tulip Castle the next day to attend the victory celebration banquet.

“Mr. Carter, make the gifts for my father and brother sumptuous, as lavish as you can prepare. I am counting on getting a little extra share of the spoils from my father, especially iron. The lack of iron is driving me insane!”

Although the Bone Craftsman Shop had opened, and the whole family of Blaice Bone had been working day and night to make bone utensils, iron was still a critical resource.

The iron used to make the water heaters and the air conditioning covers was all melted down from other ironware.

By now, Fresh Flower Town has gradually accumulated items of worth to offer—Fresh Flower Soap is a fine gift; high-quality seafood is a precious present; refined bread, peanuts, and other foodstuffs are suitable tokens of appreciation; Liszt also intended to gift a telescope to both the Earl and Levis.

The military value of the telescope is significant, and Liszt believed that upon seeing the telescope, the Earl would surely reward him with plenty of good things.

The plan was to keep the telescope a secret for the time being, not for public knowledge.

But as he continuously integrated into the noble system and the Tulip Family, and reaped the benefits that came with it, his mindset had changed—protecting and strengthening the family was the best way to shield himself, even if it meant earning his stripes on the battlefield, leading an army, and becoming the Viscount Black Horse Island.

The Tulip Family would still be his strong support.

If the Earl should further his station with martial achievements, even being named a Marquis, then Liszt would rise with the tide, his status greatly enhanced—by that time, he would be the son and grandson of a Marquis, doubly noble by blood, and if he entered the battlefield, he would not fear the lack of opportunities to earn honors.

Thus, at this very moment, Liszt earnestly hoped for the Tulip Family to grow and thrive.

At least until he could ride dragons, family protection would allow him to develop securely, without worry that an invention might be seized by greater nobles.

Paper, glass, cement—if not for concerns he had, he would have already commenced research.

Such technology might not usher in a new era, but it would absolutely enable a family to grow rapidly. However, if a weak family came to possess it, it might not be a blessing, as it could lead to doom at the hands of pirates.

The tragedy of Little Papa Island constantly reminded Liszt that being a noble also carried risks.

For this reason, Liszt played his part modestly within his own domain.

“Zhuge Liang was cautious all his life... One day I should write this down as a calligraphy piece, hang it above my bed, and reflect on it every night before sleep.”

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Chapter 233: The Taste of Distilled Liquor is Incredibly Poor (First Update)
The night before departure.

Baron Liszt had made a special trip to the brewing workshop in the workshop district, where brewers Frank Dregs, Bording, and Huntera had been fiddling with distilling spirits for over a month.

Yet the results had never been delivered to the castle.

“So, after all this time, besides continuing to make beer, rice wine, and fruit wine, you still haven’t managed to produce spirits?”

He asked with a displeased expression.

Compared to Levis’s home tutor Frank, the Brewmaster Frank Dregs was the one in charge of the brewing workshop, and he answered uneasily, “Lord, we have figured out the method and principle of distillation, but the spirits we distilled don’t seem to have the right taste of white spirits.”

“Bring out the spirits you’ve made.”

Quickly, the spirits they had distilled were presented before Liszt.

Frank explained, “Following the method you provided, Lord Landlord, we found that in the distillation process, the alcohol from the fermented wine evaporates first, leaving behind water. Duplicating the distillation should yield white spirits, yet every time we distill it multiple times, there are always odors of stench, sourness, astringency, and saltiness.”

Liszt took a small taste of the white spirits.

Although he did not like drinking white spirits, he had tasted the juniper wine in the castle. Compared to juniper wine, the white spirits brewed in Fresh Flower Town had a very bad taste and a strange flavor. He could discern some stinky and sourness, and the aroma of the drink was also very faint, feeling as if the alcohol content was not high.

“You’ve repeatedly distilled and this is the strength of the spirits you ended up with?”

“There are stronger spirits, but, that might... might not be wine anymore.”

“Bring it out.”

Even stronger spirits were quickly brought forth, and Liszt almost choked with just a slight taste. The drink was not only spicy but also had a heavy stench and a rotten flavor.

This was definitely a problem with the fermentation or distillation process.

Seeing Liszt's reaction, all three brewers, Frank included, stood aside uncomfortably, looking ashamed. Distilling white spirits was not a highly difficult task, and yet after a month of research with guidance from Liszt's ideas, they still couldn't produce a satisfactory white spirit.

"An astonishing work efficiency!"

A surge of frustration swelled within him, yet he could not vent it.

The three before him were the only brewers in Fresh Flower Town.

If they had any real talent, they wouldn't have been sent to Fresh Flower Town. They were probably just the leftover craftsmen, so he couldn't hope for more.

After venting with one sentence, Liszt managed to contain his anger, "Forget it, continue to refine the process... First, bottle some of the low-strength spirits; I will take them with me."

In the end, he did not punish the three.

At least the distilled spirits had indeed been distilled, and sooner or later, a way to remove the strange taste would be found.

To brew a special product of Fresh Flower Town – the Fresh Flower Brew.

Having Thomas carry the bottled spirits, Liszt returned to the castle, still planning to take this semi-finished white spirit to Tulip Castle.

Not as a gift, but rather as a lure for Levis, painting a grand vision for the other party.

Given the business of white spirits, a venture bound to be highly profitable, his trip to Tulip Castle was sure to grant him top-tier guest treatment and gain a share of ironware and iron ore.

...

The next morning.

The servants bustled about, moving gifts from Fresh Flower Town onto the carriage.

Rondo and Lasse, along with the Retainer Knights, were warming up. They had confirmed they would follow Liszt to Coral City. The Liszt of today was extraordinary, and setting out without a proper entourage wouldn't be fitting for his status.

Servant Thomas led Douson, the Intermediate Magical Beast, which was part of Liszt's display of prestige.

Another servant, Tom, held a beautiful Jade Box in which slept Thorn Minor Elf Jela. Her birth was destined to be the center of attention, and the messenger knight had made it clear that the Earl wished for Liszt to bring Jela to Tulip Castle so he could see the newest member of the Tulip Family.

To the Nobles, Elves were akin to family members.

Goltai also arrived early, but unfortunately, he had no part in this affair, as Liszt had commanded him to stay behind in Fresh Flower Town. He felt deeply regretful being unable to join the lavish feast, but the matters he needed to worry about were far more serious than missing out on any feast—his wife and children were coming to Fresh Flower Town to celebrate the yearly festival.

If things went poorly, his affair with Freya and their illegitimate child in her belly would be exposed.

The Sun rose in the east.

Fresh Flower Town, enveloped in ice and snow, became exceptionally bright.

"Mr. Carter, I don't know how many days I will stay at Tulip Castle, so I'm entrusting the estate to you," Liszt, impeccably dressed in Flack·Abbieye, was accentuated with an almost noble aura.

"My lord, rest assured."

Carter led the remaining servants, watching as Liszt set off on his journey.

Mounting his horse, Liszt rode his Li Dragon Horse to the front of the procession. Behind him, Paris, who had donned a new set of leather armor and bore a great sword on her back and wore a face cloth, rode on horseback following him. As a guardian, she naturally had to ensure Liszt's safety on such an occasion.

The party set off with great momentum.

On the main road from Fresh Flower Town to Thorn Ridge, the journey was smooth with stone-paved roads, and the snow had been shoveled away by town residents. But beyond Fresh Flower Town, the path turned into a mire of muddy roads that contrasted sharply with the earlier route.

Fortunately, everyone either rode horses or traveled by carriage, and none were on foot, allowing them to maintain a swift pace.

Enjoying the snowy scenery along the way, outside of Fresh Flower Town, where the snow was thickest, upon leaving North Valley City and entering Elm Forest City territory, snow became hardly visible, leaving only the muddy roads.

Around ten in the morning.

The procession entered Coral City, where the faint stench already reached Liszt. Luckily, he was prepared and had fastened plentiful dried Tulip flowers to his chest.

This was the red Tulip, with a rich aromatic scent.

In Coral City, both fresh and dried Tulips were hot sellers, as even those who lived there year-round could hardly get used to the constant unpleasant odor.

Thankfully, the convoy was merely passing through, heading straight for Tulip Castle.

The majestic Tulip Castle was surrounded by a sea of flowers, with multicolored Tulips fluttering in the cold wind. On the southern slope, one could see a large area of purple-black Tulips, the expanded Magic Potion Black Tulips that now dominated the largest area of the flower sea.

The Coral of the Tulip Great Sprite Xiangxiang was among these black Tulips.

Ascending the slope, Tulip Castle's guard knights soon came to welcome the convoy. They led the team to the grand entrance of Tulip Castle and handed them over to the castle's servants for reception.

Butler Louis was now needing the aid of a walking stick to move about.

But every time the Earl's offspring returned to the castle, he personally greeted them at the gate—after all, he had watched these young Tulips grow up with his own eyes.

“Every day, as I see the rise of the Sun, I am reminded of the Earl's offspring, like the rising of red suns. But the happiest thing is to see all of you return to the castle like weary birds flying home.” The old man's words, like reciting poetry, were full of various metaphors and rhetoric.

As Liszt dismounted, he greeted with a smile, “Grandpa Louis, you've come out to meet us in person again. How have you been feeling lately?”

Chapter 234: Tulip Family's Family Dinner (Second Update)

“Young Master Levis and Young Master Lidun are at the Knight Academy, and Miss Li Vera is accompanying the elderly lady to watch a comedy in Coral City. They do not know of your arrival today and will probably not be back until noon,”

Louis led Liszt up to the upper floors of Tulip Castle.

The celebration banquet was not scheduled for today; all members of the Knight Order had returned to their territories to deal with their respective affairs, and the banquet was set to take place the day after tomorrow, on December 23. Therefore, Tulip Castle was not very lively at the moment, with only a few hundred servants busy at work within the castle.

Rondo, Lasse, Paris, and others, who were not nobles, could not ascend the floors and had to wait downstairs.

“Master Liszt.”

“Master Liszt.”

The servants in Tulip Castle greeted him with a bow as they saw him.

They quickly passed the living room and saw Lady Marie having tea. She was listening to a report from the deputy butler, Silva, probably dealing with the management of Tulip Castle’s properties.

“My lady, may I offer my greetings,” Liszt said politely, his voice revealing a hint of unfamiliarity.

Lady Marie responded warmly, “Liszt, how come you’re here today? Your brothers and sister have not yet returned. You should have informed us earlier so that I could prepare.”

“There’s no need for special preparations. I will stay at Tulip Castle for a few days. Today, I just missed my father and brothers too much, so I came early.”

“Oh, is that so? You must have a lot to say to your father. Go on; he’s in the study.”

“Yes.”

After bidding farewell to Lady Marie and arriving at the study, the doors were already open; servants had informed the Earl of Liszt’s arrival. There were not only the Earl in the study but also several strangers, who could be identified as officials from Coral Island based on their attire and the way they stood in the study.

These officials were all minor nobles.

The Earl, looking over from behind his desk, said to the group of officials, “You may leave now. I won’t keep you for lunch; I am hosting a family banquet.”

“Yes, my lord,” the officials took their leave.

They also greeted Liszt, “Master Liszt, long time no see.”

“Good to see you,” Liszt replied with a smile, not recognizing any of them. He had spent most of his time at the Knight Academy before coming of age and truly didn’t know who these officials were.

Once the officials left and the servants also departed, closing the door behind them.

Seeing the Earl again, Liszt felt differently—It was challenging to truly establish a father-son relationship when the blood connection was there, but their souls had previously been unconnected. However, that didn’t stop him from reconsidering how to position his relationship with the Earl from both a benefit and a familial perspective.

In simple terms, Liszt’s sense of identification with the Tulip Family had increased.

His predecessor was timid and liked to evade, feeling invisible and overlooked by everyone. However, through just a few encounters, Liszt noticed some previously overlooked details.

Lady Penelope, who constantly grumbled about not liking him, actually cared a lot about her grandson; his sister, who always bullied him, had never gone too far; his greedy brother mostly targeted Lady Marie and Lidun and hadn’t really gone after Liszt.

Lady Marie and Lidun might look down on Liszt, but they maintained a superficial politeness on the surface.

Just now, the brief exchange with Lady Marie gave Liszt the impression that she had become somewhat warmer—probably recognizing that Liszt would not be mediocre in the future, she had to reconsider how to handle their relationship—even if they couldn’t be close, she needed to try and be as friendly as possible.

What surprised Liszt the most was actually the Earl himself.

This powerful Sky Knight, the Sea Wave Sword Saint Li Weiliam Tulip, was not as indifferent to his second son as the predecessor’s “memory” had suggested.

He wore a smile as he measured up the increasingly dashing Liszt.

He extended his hand, motioning for him to sit down and talk.

...

The predecessor always felt that the Earl was disappointed in him, especially since at the coming-of-age ceremony, he had been made a baron of the most remote small town, and was given only four Elf Bugs.

The gap was colossal compared to Li Vera's allocation ceremony.

This once affected the transmigrator Liszt's feelings.

He felt that the Earl surely did not value his second son, but after digesting the memory imprints of his predecessor and analyzing with an adult's rationality, he thought that it might not be so simple—that if the Earl truly did not care, he could have made Liszt an almost noble with no title at all.

Many nobles' second sons ended up in such circumstances, with no fief and no title.

But the Earl had given him the title of Baron and a small town fief, just that the location was not great and material compensation was less. This was far from neglect, in fact, it showed more consideration than many other nobles' second sons received.

Even after the allocation, on the first Sea Festival, the Earl brought his family to celebrate in Fresh Flower Town.

"There was probably some disappointment because he had placed great hopes on him... The remote fief and baron title were perhaps meant to let his predecessor lead a quiet life... Having a title meant not needing to struggle on the battlefield. The town could sustain basic needs, but was insufficient for forming a knight squad, let alone fighting in a war."

These thoughts swiftly crossed Liszt's mind, but he couldn't be sure.

Familial affection was not his forte.

"Father, upon receiving news of your safe return, the weight in my heart was quickly lifted, and seeing you well fills me with joy," he said.

"I've caused you to worry," the Earl smiled. "This Pioneer Mandate expedition concluded somewhat hastily, and the gains were modest, but fortunately, your brother has matured a great deal after experiencing a war."

"Is my brother safe as well?"

"Yes, compared to his former impetuosity, he is now more polished and steady—most importantly, he has established his own prestige." There was nothing that made a father happier than seeing his heir mature, "When I returned to Coral Island, I immediately heard news about you."

Liszt smiled.

The Earl took out some high-quality red wine from the cabinet and poured a glass for himself and his second son, "A cause for celebration, indeed. So, where is your Jela?"

“My servant is looking after her,” Liszt replied.

The Earl rang a bell to call a servant, and Liszt quickly said, “Please inform my valet to bring Jela over.”

The servant took the order.

The Earl then asked, “Would you prefer to hear stories from the battlefield first, or talk about the developments in Fresh Flower Town?”

“I’d like to hear the stories from the battlefield first,” said Liszt without any hesitation.

Surprised for a moment, the Earl said with a sigh, “Indeed, the warmth of a castle can restrain one’s ambitions. A fledgling needs to keep trying to fly... As for the war stories, Levis would probably talk your ear off for a day and a night, so I won’t bother. Let us play a strategic game simulation instead.”

A strategic game simulation was an early form of war chess used to simulate military scenarios.

A thick leather map depicting the coastal region of the Eagle Kingdom was spread out, and crystal pieces symbolizing castles, knights, and Sky Knights were placed one by one.

The game could now begin.

Chapter 235: The Strong One Who Talks Strategy On Paper (Third Update, Additional for 1800 Subscriptions)
A very childish game.

No, it’s a very childish tactic.

After taking his turn, Liszt couldn’t help but sigh in contemplation. Despite fighting wars for decades, the Earl’s tactical mind still revolved solely around charging: charging from behind hills, splitting into two flanks and charging together, charging in turns. It was as if, in knight warfare, charging was the only option, with the only difference being how to charge.

“Liszt, you shouldn’t have done this. Yes, this is a forest, and you can hide people in it. But the forest will also hinder the charge. You must choose an open area for an ambush; the area behind this slope would make for an excellent spot,” the Earl said, pushing his knight piece forward, continuing the charge, and advising Liszt not to hide knights in the forest.

“Then, if I change my position to the forest across the river and ambush there, and when your knights are halfway through the crossing, I launch a charge and wipe out the part that has reached the shore, then drive the rest back, would that work?” Without dwelling too much on whether the forest could indeed hide knights, Liszt asked.

He didn’t choose to ambush behind the slope, instead, he simply moved several knight pieces from the forest and placed them into the forest by the river.

The Earl stroked his chin, “That’s also possible, but why not ambush behind the slope? The slope is the most advantageous spot for knights to launch an ambush.”

“But it’s also the easiest to be detected... so for this group of knights, I can take out the half that has crossed the river, right?” Liszt reached out and removed a few knight pieces.

“Make it fewer, eat fewer of them, and I could manage to escape with some,” the Earl took back one piece, thought about it, and then took back another.

Liszt didn’t mind and continued the deduction, “Your knights cannot cross the river, so they will definitely have to retreat, back across the Red River. Then my knights left in the forest on the opposite shore can take this opportunity to regroup and charge again, driving away your knights. I could eliminate another group, couldn’t I?”

As he spoke, he pushed forward the knight pieces he had left on purpose in the forest and took away several of the Earl’s pieces.

“This...” The Earl paused for a moment, “So the knight pieces you left behind just now were deliberate? You’ve set up another ambush here?”

“Right. So now your knights are in disarray, they will surely continue fleeing. My knights can take this opportunity to regroup and chase your fleeing knights, right?”

The Earl was somewhat uncomfortable, “Indeed, that’s the case.”

“So now you have three possible routes to choose from: one is splitting your troops to escape, another is withdrawing through this valley...”

Before he could finish speaking, the Earl interrupted, “You can’t possibly set up another ambush in this area. If you split your forces further, you wouldn’t have enough strength to launch a charge.”

“Of course, I never planned to ambush here. You have three routes to choose from, aside from splitting your forces and crossing the valley, there’s a third option: to find your main force. If it’s the first choice, I can chase you throughout the hills, catching whoever I can; if the second, then you’ll be far from the battlefield and I don’t need to worry; if it’s the third...”

"I choose the third option, my knights will begin to retreat from this plain area. How will you respond?"

"I will, of course, withdraw to the castle. Viscount Valiant is not the main battlefield for this campaign, your decisive battle with Count Figo is the key to the situation. All I need to do is secure the castle firmly, like a nail on the Red River Plains, which could not only attack the supply line between you and Marquis Roderick's Knight Order but also strengthen Count Figo's forces when needed."

Liszt went on eloquently.

He had already bested the Earl in three consecutive local knight engagements, and with his consistent theories and tactics, the Earl was almost beginning to question his life.

"Liszt, why is your mind filled with so many... odd ideas?" the Earl asked, frowning at the unfolding battle simulation, "Why don't you keep your knights around the castle to ensure its safety? Splitting your troops for an ambush is a risky move."

"Viscount Valiant's castle is indefensible, and his Knight Order lacks manpower. Your follower, Viscount Jonas, can keep him stuck in the castle, afraid to show his face. In doing so, his effectiveness is lost, and it is as if Count Figo has been severed of an arm. Therefore, abandoning the castle to take the initiative is the only way to be effective, even though the castle falls, this Knight Order can still seek refuge with Count Figo."

He had never fought in a war.

However, when it came to armchair strategizing, Liszt felt he could thrash the whole world! He had read "The Art of War by Sun Tzu" and the "Thirty-Six Stratagems," and he was a man who often frequented WWII forums. He also had "On Guerrilla Warfare" in his mind, a tactic alien to this world's mainstream strategies, which he feared would scare the Earl.

In fact, he had already frightened the Earl.

From the Earl's tactical arrangements, he had initially sent Jonas Shattered Stone to corner Viscount Valiant in his castle, thereby negating his strategic importance.

The Earl could then leisurely nibble away at Count Figo's forces, eventually forcing Count Figo to face him in an upstream battle on the Red River and defeat him in one fell swoop.

Securing the battlefield advantage on the Red Harmony Plain, he smoothly plundered a large amount of resources and mines.

If Viscount Valiant's knights, by triumphing over the many with the few, defeat Viscount Jonas, it could quickly dissolve the Earl's advantage, allowing Count Figo to delay the

decisive battle, thus trapping the Earl on the Red River Plains in a quandary of advance or retreat until he collapses.

At that time, the Earl would have no choice but to retreat.

“Hmm,” he meticulously pondered over Liszt’s tactics, feeling they were somewhat fanciful, yet unable to formulate a rebuttal, he ultimately brushed aside a pile of carvings and bluntly changed the subject, “Jela is already at the door. We’ll resume discussing military tactics another time, let me see Jela first.”

Liszt smiled, “Of course, as you wish.”

The servant brought in Jela’s Jade Box, opened it, and Jela, still drowsy, woke up with a yawn. As soon as it opened its eyes and saw a human face, it got startled and instinctively slapped.

Of course, it didn’t hit the Earl.

The reflexes of the Sky Knight were not something a Little Minor Elf could match.

The Earl even poked Jela’s belly, “Such a lively little creature, congratulations, Liszt. In Fresh Flower Town, you have exceeded my expectations.”

“I have only done a small bit of work.”

“I heard your Fierce Earth Dog, after consuming the Bloodline Fruit, evolved into an Intermediate Magical Beast?”

“Yes, would you like to see it? It’s just outside Tulip Castle, looked after by my servant,” Liszt said. “I know so little about Magical Beasts, actually, I am not quite sure about the level or state of Douson.”

“Let’s go downstairs to have a look.”

Once downstairs.

Douson was sunbathing; it wasn’t afraid of humans, nor did it attack them on sight. Seeing Liszt appear, it immediately hopped up and wagged its tail, coming over to him.

Liszt grabbed the fur on its neck to make it behave and let the Earl examine it.

The Earl walked around Douson twice, sensed for a while, and then said, “It is indeed an Intermediate Magical Beast. The distinction between the levels of Magical Beasts is not only about the limit of casting magic but also involves other criteria... such as the speed of magic power absorption and the degree of blood boiling.”

Chapter 236: Advanced Magical Beast Thousand-Eyed Wolf Spider (Fourth Update, 10,000 Coins Reward Celebration)

This chapter is a “Purple Dazzling Wings” bonus update for 10,000 rewards.

The magic power of Magical Beasts comes half from their body’s refinement and half from absorbing from the environment. Intermediate Magical Beasts, compared to Low-Level Magical Beasts, naturally absorb free magic power from the surroundings much faster.

This is a very subtle absorption, which Liszt could not discern with his Eye of Magic, but the Earl, as a Sky Knight, could clearly feel it.

Therefore, he asserted that Dorson had reached the standard of an Intermediate Magical Beast.

As for the degree of blood boiling, it is a criterion based on the blood differences and auxiliary characteristics of the same species. Here, the same species can be considered as a lineage of evolution, such as ordinary dogs, Fierce Earth Dogs, and Dorson. Among the same species, there is a clear difference between the bloodlines of powerful Magical Beasts and those of weaker ones.

The blood of powerful Magical Beasts is highly active, with fast flow, high temperature, and distinct property changes. For example, at the level of Dragons, the degree of blood boiling can directly infect a Dragon’s bloodline.

With extensive experience, the Earl’s judgment that Dorson was an Intermediate Magical Beast was virtually conclusive.

“Father, Dorson currently can only release Rock Spike, what do you think is limiting its understanding of magic?” Liszt felt uneasy each day Dorson did not learn a new magic spell. After all, whose Intermediate Magical Beast knows only one move, Rock Spike? Oh, and Multiple Stone Spikes.

“Don’t worry, Liszt, it’s just a pup.” The Earl reached out to touch Dorson’s sleek black fur, prompting a low growl from Dorson, “It still needs time to settle, and like humans, Magical Beasts also need to accumulate continuously to truly transform into a more noble existence.”

“Woo-woo!”

Clutching Liszt’s hair and lying on top of his head, Jela, for some reason, cried out again.

Coming to the unfamiliar place of Tulip Castle, it felt constrained. Actually, during its Elf Bug phase, it lived in Tulip Castle, but at that time it probably did not have any memories.

They were talking about Dorson and Jela.

On the main road outside the Castle, a line of Knights was already rushing over. The leader was Liszt's brother, Levis, followed by Lidun. Before the men even came close, their voices could be heard, "Liszt, why didn't you announce your arrival earlier? You kept me at the Knight Academy for half the day."

After dismounting, Levis embraced Liszt, showing a warm brotherly affection.

Once Levis opened his mouth, Liszt then said, "I missed Father and you very much, so I came early. After going to the battlefield, Brother, you have changed a lot, you have Father's air about you."

Levis was pleased, "Without the battlefield, one remains but a fledgling. Once on the battlefield and having seen carnage, looking back, I find many things I did in the past quite naive."

Then, standing on one side, Lidun dismounted and called out, "Brother Liszt."

"Lidun, you've grown taller," Liszt replied lightly with a smile. The lad was only twelve years old but already at least 1.75 meters tall. Being valued by the Earl was not solely due to Lady Marie's influence; his own talent played a big part.

The Earl was very content to see all three of his sons perform well, yet he still put on a serious expression, "Now that you're all here, have a good talk." After that, he went into the Castle by himself.

After the Earl left.

Levis and Lidun shifted their attention to Dorson and Jela. Jela was nothing special, just a Little Minor Elf — Tulip Castle had a full eleven of them. But the charm of an Intermediate Magical Beast held both men's attention firmly; the fantasies of men, horses, and Magical Beasts each occupied half.

Compared to the Low-Level Magical Beasts, the Fire Rabbits raised in Tulip Castle, the majesty of the Intermediate Magical Beast Dorson could be seen from its physique.

Unfortunately, no matter how much one might covet, Dorson belongs to Li Si Te, and couldn't be stolen.

...

The luncheon had not yet started.

As the Earl had expected, Levis began to enthusiastically recount his experiences on the battlefield, dragging Liszt into stories of charging thousands of miles to attack the enemy's castle, tirelessly guarding the supplies, boldly voicing his opinion at military meetings, and risking his life to save a female slave.

These stories inevitably contained elements of boasting and exaggeration.

But they indeed piqued Liszt's interest, especially Levis' eyewitness account of the duel between the two Sky Knights, the Earl, known as the Sea Wave Sword Saint, and Count Figo, known as the Flame Cloud Sword Saint. The two Sword Saints maneuvered swiftly through the sky, their Dou Qi surging out, darkening the sky.

The confrontation of water and fire nearly severed the Red River below.

In the end, the Earl's Sea Wave overpowered Count Figo's Flame Cloud, inflicting a severe injury on Count Figo. With a subsequent charge by the knights, they decisively defeated the opposing Knight Order.

They took control of the Red River Plains, plundered resources, and built significant achievements.

"My father's 'Great Wave Crushing the Tide' Dou Qi Manuscript is invincible below the Sword Saint level. I truly wish that one day I too could break through to become a Sky Knight and possess Advanced Dou Qi to wield such an incredible Dou Qi Manuscript!" Levis' admiration for the Earl flowed endlessly like the river's torrent.

Although his eloquence was mediocre and his narrative dry,

Liszt could still feel the terror of a Sword Saint's battle and felt equally exhilarated. If Sword Saints were as formidable as Levis described, then the current Dorson would stand no chance against them—after all, Sword Saints could soar for a short duration, while Dorson could only hop.

He weighed the gap between himself and a Sky Knight and felt it was greater than he had imagined, "Unless Dorson develops new magic, like the Flying Rock Technique which allows for aerial attacks, otherwise it could only take a beating passively."

Suddenly, he thought of Paris; he wondered if the transformed Black Dragon Childe could withstand a hundred rounds against a Sword Saint—probably manage to hold on for a while before being overwhelmed or corrupted by the Dragon Wraith's power and dying, becoming a White Dragon Wraith.

"Brother, were there any Dragon Knights in this war?"

“No, unless the war has truly become unmanageable, no nation is willing to deploy Dragon Knights or dragons due to the many uncertainties involved. In fact, I didn’t even see the Grand Duke’s Sapphire Dragon; every battle was led by Sky Knights as the main force.”

He paused, then excitedly continued, “However, I did see an Advanced Magical Beast. It was a Thousand-Eyed Wolf Spider, the mount of Marquis Glaeden from the Eagle Kingdom, able to jump higher than the Sky Knights could fly... Unfortunately, Glaeden was there to deliver a truce letter. While following Marquis Roderick, just feeling the presence of the Thousand-Eyed Wolf Spider made my whole body tremble!”

“Why did this war end so quickly?”

“Due to the intervention of the Blast Furnace Fortress Kingdom. The daughter of the King of Eagle Kingdom married the brother of the King of Blast Furnace Fortress, Duke Haisiburgh.” As Levis said this, his voice grew somber, “Duke Haisiburgh has a dragon and is said to possibly become a Dragon Knight before age forty.”

Liszt furrowed his brows, “So the Eagle Kingdom and the Blast Furnace Fortress Kingdom are forming an alliance?”

“It’s not that bad. Kings intermarrying is quite normal; wars still have to be fought. It’s just that this year we cannot continue. We only recently occupied the Red River Plains. Many materials and ore deposits haven’t been seized yet, and we were forced to retreat... The gains are less than in previous years.”

The Earl had initially made his fortune with the Pioneer Mandate, bringing back abundant materials from every attack on the Eagle Kingdom.

Liszt wanted to ask how much iron they had captured this year but held back. Anyway, he was going to stay at Tulip Castle for a few days; business matters could be discussed at leisure.

Chapter 237: Liszt’s Friends (Fifth update, bonus for 2000 subscriptions)

After Li Vera and Lady Penelope returned from watching the comic play, a long-missed family banquet began at Tulip Castle.

They chatted about interesting things, teased about war and peace, and while the atmosphere was not overwhelmingly harmonious or filled with familial warmth, it was not bad either.

Especially Lady Penelope and Lady Marie, who would occasionally throw veiled barbs at each other, livening up the ambiance.

The Earl, seated in the middle, seemed somewhat embarrassed. The age-old topic of mother-in-law and daughter-in-law discord was a headache for men in any world.

Compared to his former invisibility, Liszt had gradually adapted to his role and was no longer unnoticed.

He could participate in a range of topics and was becoming more and more adept at this sort of noble social interaction—sometimes, when a person burrows too deeply into their own narrow view, they feel as if the whole world has turned against them. But once they come out, they find that the world is still there, steadfast and loyal.

“Is this a specialty from Fresh Flower Town?” asked the Earl as he munched on crispy peanuts paired with Juniper Wine, enjoying the combination more and more. “Peanuts prepared this way are quite delicious.”

“These are crispy peanuts,” Liszt explained while eating, “I’ve brought many flavored peanut snacks, though most are more suitable as a light snack.”

“I didn’t think there were other ways to eat peanuts besides boiling them. Does Tulip Castle purchase this kind of food?” the Earl asked Lady Marie.

“If you like them, we can buy some. It seems that Liszt’s Fresh Flower Caravan sells these peanut snacks in Coral City?”

“Yes, basically wherever there’s a Fresh Flower Caravan, these products are available.”

The Earl nodded, “Then let’s buy more. I find the taste agreeable, especially after drinking. Having a few peanuts feels very comforting.”

The peanuts had caught the Earl’s attention.

The exquisite new-style bread from Fresh Flower Town was also presented on the table, winning everyone’s favor. Coupled with the egg soup and scrambled eggs that the chefs at Tulip Castle had learned to make under Mrs. Abbie’s guidance, as well as seafood which had become a luxury the nobility of Coral Island couldn’t acquire, the food supplied by Fresh Flower Town covered one-third of the banquet.

Levis, nibbling on a hamburger with chunks of meat—a Fresh Flower Town innovation—commented, “Liszt, you have a great chef. I never knew that bread and eggs could be turned into such distinctively flavored delicacies.”

“It’s a pity these foods don’t have much commercial value, otherwise, I could be richer than Viscount Trik.”

Commoners do not pursue the variety of food, and nobles prefer their own chefs to learn cooking rather than buying ready-made food—the main point being that the

ingredients for these foods are not monopolized and are very common, within the capacity of everyone to gather.

Viscount Trik of Beer Island owns the Lycra Minor Elves, monopolizing the hops (lycra), which are essential for brewing beer, making him the sole supplier of premium beer.

Egg soup, scrambled eggs, seafood, peanuts—all they lack is a creative twist.

These foods are more about Liszt satisfying his own palate, inspiring Mrs. Abbie to invent them and, incidentally, making a bit of profit before others learn the methods.

The real business potential lies in industries that have a monopolistic nature.

For example, businesses monopolizing raw materials like beer, techniques like soap and spirits, and future developments like cement, ceramics, glass, and white paper—these are where Liszt's hopes lie.

...

After afternoon tea, Liszt took a stroll around Coral City.

First, he had visited the Knight Academy to meet with familiar students and reconnect with feelings that had gradually drifted apart. He also took the opportunity to display his ambition, hoping these future Earth Knights would consider him when choosing a lord to follow.

Then, he stopped by the Frank household and chatted with little Sherry for an hour. The friendships of youth still mattered and couldn't be treated too heartlessly.

After that, he visited a few friends in Coral City.

They were all young nobles, mostly younger sons—before reaching adulthood, those boys destined to inherit earldoms were fond of following Levis. Thus, most of Liszt's friends, like him, were also younger sons—nowadays, the nobles set to inherit were still following Levis, while the younger sons who couldn't inherit looked up to Liszt.

"Sir Liszt, are you planning to form your own knight squad?"

In a small noble estate, a young man named Rick asked Liszt, who sat in the seat of honor, "I saw Rondo, has he become your retainer?"

"Not finalized yet, but it's close. After the festival season is over, I will seriously consider forming a knight squad. Fresh Flower Town already has the capacity to arm a knight squad. It's likely that both Lasse and Rondo will formally pledge their loyalty to me once I form the squad," replied Liszt.

“Then, may I follow you? I’d like to join your knight squad; I want to go into battle!” Rick asked eagerly.

“Have you already become an Earth Knight?”

Rick’s tone was a mix of pride and modesty, “Yes, just a month ago, though it’s a bit late, I am already nineteen this year.”

“Of course, I’d be happy to have you consider following me. However, I hope that after the festival season, you can live in Fresh Flower Town for a while, like Rondo. Then, once I form my knight squad, you can make a decision.” Liszt didn’t immediately agree, still adhering to the principle that knights choose their lords as much as lords choose their knights.

Another young man, not fully grown, followed with a question: “What about me, can I follow you? I haven’t yet broken through to become an Earth Knight.”

His name was Nemo, the son of an Elite Earth Knight who had not been granted a title.

Liszt smiled, “You certainly can’t join the knight squad, but if you are willing to come to Fresh Flower Town as an officer, I’d welcome you. Everyone present is welcome to come to Fresh Flower Town; you are among my few friends.” A few months ago, he would not have bothered with these friends.

After all, they were the friends of his former self, not his own.

“But, isn’t Fresh Flower Town already staffed with people like Goltai and Isaiah? Are there still officer positions we could hold?” asked Nemo.

“Do you really think I’ll spend my entire life in Fresh Flower Town?”

“Oh, sorry, Sir Liszt, I didn’t mean that. Of course, you will become a Viscount Lord, it’s inevitable, everyone is so sure of it,” Nemo said apologetically.

“No need to apologize, Nemo. Becoming a Viscount is my goal, as is having my own island or city estate. To achieve this goal, I need a group of loyal followers, and if you are inclined, I’d be happy to welcome you to Fresh Flower Town.”

Glancing at the dusk-darkened skies, he stood up, “I need to return now. There is a banquet at Tulip Castle that I must attend. Tomorrow evening, I will host a banquet at Tulip Castle, inviting everyone here and friends from the Knight Academy to join.”

Rick said loudly, “I will be there on time, Sir.”

“I will too,” said Nemo and the others in turn.

Liszt nodded, put on the cloak handed to him by Servant Thomas, left the noble estate, and under the escort of Retainer Knights, headed back to Tulip Castle against the cold wind.

Chapter 238: Extravagant Performance (First Update)

The banquet was not grand; it consisted of the Earl summoning the officials of Coral Island while Levis invited his subordinates to gather and chat.

After the banquet, Liszt found an opportunity and went with Levis into his study.

“Brother, how are your skills at tasting spirits?” Liszt took a bottle filled with Primeval Floral Brew from the servant’s hand, unscrewed the cap, poured a glass and pushed it in front of Levis, “Try this spirit and give me an evaluation.”

“I’m quite good at evaluating liquor, hmm, what kind of spirits is this, and where did you get it?” He picked up the glass, sniffed it, “It tastes awful, there’s a rancid smell, it looks like inferior spirits. The diluted spirits I drank during the war in Eagle Kingdom were better than this!”

Having said that, he put the glass to his lips and sipped just a bit, “It’s sour, lacks strength, this liquor is really poor quality.”

He put down the glass and said no more; his meaning was clear without words.

Liszt’s expression remained unchanged as he continued to ask, “Brother, how much do you think a bottle of this spirit could sell for?”

“How much per bottle?” Levis squinted, “Liszt, don’t tell me, is this spirit brewed in Fresh Flower Town?”

“As you said, this is exactly the self-brewed spirits, Fresh Flower Brew, that I am studying. Although it’s not yet successfully brewed and the quality of the obtained spirits is very low, but anyway, I have already researched the technology for distilling spirits, haven’t I.”

Upon hearing this.

Levis’s eyes lit up, and he couldn’t wait to speak, “What? You’ve already researched the technology for distilling spirits? Oh my God, Liszt, don’t lie to me, okay, do you know how valuable the technology for distilling spirits is? In the Grand Duchy, there are only five kinds of spirits, with three in the hands of a Marquis and two in the hands of the Grand Duke.”

The Earl considered Levis mature for having been on the battlefield.

But at this moment, Levis was still the same Levis, his impatient eyes reddening, “Even our grandfather hasn’t mastered the technology for distilling spirits!”

“Don’t be too surprised, brother. It’s just the business of spirits. Compared to magic potions, the business of spirits is nothing,” Liszt responded nonchalantly.

“It’s nothing!” Levis breathed heavily, “Of course, magic potions are valuable, but they are barely enough for our own use. Tulip Castle’s magic potions are needed by our father, by me, and perhaps Lidun will take a part in the future, and Li Vera, she will definitely have the nerve to take some away!”

With the magical powers of the Tulip Great Elf, the Black Tulip can produce a large amount of magic potions, but there are many who rely on these potions.

Indeed, the business of the Black Tulip was signed by the three siblings.

But once the power of the Greater Elf is used, the share that must be handed over to the Earl can’t be lessened by a bit, leaving Levis at most to consume all the increased revenue.

As he spoke, he said with some envy, “I’m not as lucky as you, with intermediate magical beasts, the Black Tulip, Flame Mushroom, and Magic Medicine Thorns all for your own personal benefit!”

“It seems you don’t make much money from magic potions, brother.”

“Of course, I don’t, not a single Gold Coin. All the money from my other business is thrown into magic potions. Do you know I wince every time I take a bottle of magic potion... and you are not an Elite Earth Knight, you can’t understand the pain and pleasure of an Elite Earth Knight.” His expression was almost contorted.

“So, you’re really short of money, brother.”

“Asking knowingly.”

“What if I am willing to share the spirits business with you, brother?” Liszt cast the bait he had prepared, simply tossing it out—truly tired of continuing the charade.

Levis’s exaggerated expressions and tone were all an overblown act, unconvincing at heart. He probably guessed something about the situation as soon as Liszt asked him to taste the spirits—Levis was never a fool, advancing to Earth Knight status as a youth, hailed as a genius.

If it were an outsider, Liszt might have had to feign politeness.

But since it was his own brother, he decided to be upfront.

Indeed, upon hearing Liszt's words, Levis immediately dropped his exaggerated act and adopted an eager tone, "What, Liszt, are you saying you want to share the white liquor brewing technology with your brother?"

"The value of the white liquor brewing technology has been made clear to me by my brother. Before I split from the family, it doesn't matter who holds it, but if the day comes when I do, I'll be sure to hand over the white liquor brewing technology to you first. My idea is that I'll handle the brewing, you take care of the sales, and we split the profits fifty-fifty..."

After some haggling.

The brothers had essentially settled on their method of cooperation.

Levis would provide protection for the white liquor business, supply the necessary raw materials for brewing, and handle external sales, taking sixty percent of the profits; Liszt was responsible for brewing the white liquor, taking forty percent of the profits—a 60/40 split, which Liszt was quite satisfied with. It was normal for the distributor to take the larger share, especially since they also provided protection.

If one day, the two brothers truly parted ways.

The cooperation would cease, and the technology would be shared.

"As of now, the white liquor brewing technology is still being improved. There's some time before we can truly brew a qualified white liquor. Most importantly, we urgently need a batch of iron tools for the brewing equipment, but Fresh Flower Town is extremely short on iron. I hope you can help me solve this problem."

"So, you're eyeing the spoils of this battle?" Levis stroked his chin, knowing that if he wanted a part of the white liquor business, he would have to cough up a big favor. "Iron has always been one of the most coveted spoils of war, and we didn't bring back much ore this time. I don't have much to allocate... Three thousand catties of iron ingots is all I can spare."

"Three thousand catties, that should be close enough."

"Don't complain about it being too little, this three thousand catties will be enough to make Viscount Trick and Viscount Jonas green with envy. Oh right, I forgot to ask you—why has the production of Fresh Flower Town's Magic Flame Mushroom stopped?"

Liszt pondered for a moment before replying, "I want to stock up on magic potions."

"Ah?"

“Don’t be surprised, brother. Although I’m not as gifted as you, with Jela, I yearn to reach further. Even if I might fail, I still want to try my hand at it, then I’ll be content.” Liszt said, half in earnest, half in jest, but no one knew he was already an Elite Earth Knight.

“What about the Black Tulip and Magic Medicine Thorns?”

“The Black Tulip will continue as usual, I’ll supply it to you; I plan on stockpiling the Magic Medicine Thorns.”

“That’s a real shame... I find it difficult to dissuade you from trying, just as with Li Vera; I can’t stop her willfulness. However, I still hope you’ll consider it more. If you change your mind, come back to me for a partnership. As your brother, you must trust that I may take advantage of anyone else but not of you.”

“Of course, I have unwavering faith in this.”

Then, the two turned to the topic of serf trading. With the white liquor business as a foundation, neither was too nitpicky, and they quickly struck a deal to purchase two thousand five hundred serfs for five hundred Gold Coins.

“I’ll give you the Gold Coins later.”

“Just make sure to deliver them before the fleet departs,” Levis didn’t ask where Liszt had got so many Gold Coins from. He was finding his own brother more and more incomprehensible.

Gone were the naivety and timidity, replaced by shrewdness and generosity.

As Liszt took leave, Levis couldn’t help but think, “Liszt has come of age, and Fresh Flower Town can no longer contain his ambition. From the way he speaks, he’s even considered splitting from the family... Is he confident he can reach our father’s stature?”

Chapter 239: The Earl’s New Toy (Second Update) Gold Coins.

Liszt didn’t have many of these, his current liquid assets amounted to just about a hundred or so gold coins. Indeed, Fresh Flower Town had been making a decent profit from the Fresh Flower Caravan trade and the taxes were increasing day by day. However, the expenditures for the domain were also growing daily.

Just Liszt’s own food and drink expenses were such that a month would hardly pass without spending several tens of gold coins.

The various exotic foods were cheap, the cost of ingredients and labor were very affordable. What was expensive was the magical beast meat, he had become a carnivore who could not do without magical beast meat at every meal—if it weren't for the domain being able to produce magic potions on its own, his personal consumption would be even more terrifying.

Domain development was even more expensive.

If Black Horse Island were to be fully developed, it would inevitably become a huge money sink, and it would be difficult to see any returns within at least a year or two; the development of Fresh Flower Town was basically on the right track, but the investment in it was by no means small.

It might seem bustling with nearly nine months of development, but Liszt had poured at least a thousand gold coins in it before and after.

If it weren't for the Smoke Mission, he didn't dare to imagine how little he could achieve.

Therefore.

This time, Liszt would have to rely on the rewards from the Smoke Mission again to cover the shortfall of five hundred gold coins. After thinking it over, he decided to visit the earl tomorrow and exchange some mithril for a batch of gold coins.

...

The next day dawned.

The sun failed to rise promptly, so it seemed a bit gloomy.

The earl was already up, feverishly writing at his desk in his study—these past few days he had been very busy, needing to sort out the distribution of the spoils of war.

"Liszt, you're up early," the earl indicated for Liszt to find a chair to sit, "Levis didn't keep you up, talking about war stories all night?"

"Actually, brother's eloquence still needs work, he's far from being able to talk nonstop for a whole day and night."

"Alright, he indeed doesn't have the talent of a diplomatic. Would you like something to drink? Wine or coffee?" Speaking with his son felt stiff without something to drink.

A father-son relationship could never reach the level of heartfelt communication that existed between mother and daughter.

“Do you have milk? I don’t want to drink wine or coffee this early in the morning.” Liszt could not do without milk, with Dragon Breed Cow’s milk temporarily unavailable, he could only drink regular milk.

When a servant brought over freshly brewed milk, Liszt could clearly sense that the quality of the milk from Tulip Castle’s cows was far inferior to that from the cows in Fresh Flower Town.

Even if the cows from the dairy farm weren’t turned into Dragon Breed Cows, they had definitely undergone some mutation.

“These last few days, I’ve been bathing with Fresh Flower Soap, and it truly is very nice to use. This industry should bring you quite a profit,” the earl said.

“One or two gold coins a day, about the same as the initial seafood business, but now the seafood trade is almost halted, the profits are not as good as before. Fresh Flower Soap, hindered by limited production, can’t expand to other islands for the time being, which keeps my funds in a very tight state.”

“The development of Fresh Flower Town has surprised many, including me, so don’t put too much pressure on yourself.”

Pressure.

There was no such thing as pressure.

Liszt felt that his daily life really did not have any pressure, indulging in eating and drinking, practicing martial arts and writing, horseback riding, walking dogs, playing with Little Minor Elves, and overseeing the domain. Occasionally, if he had an inspiration, he would have the serfs implement it, otherwise, he would follow up on the Smoke Mission.

Apart from enjoying himself, he was still enjoying himself.

Of course, a life of such decadence needed to be kept low-key. So he joked, “There’s still pressure. To achieve my desire to ride a dragon before the age of thirty, I need to work tirelessly at all times.”

“Hmm.”

The Earl momentarily failed to adjust to the humor, “Don’t aim too high and miss.”

Liszt nodded, “Actually, I wish to become a Sky Knight soon. Hearing from my brother about your battle with Count Figo, I am greatly yearning for it.”

This ambition was much more realistic, and the Earl easily accepted it, “I hope that all four of you siblings can aim to become Sky Knights. The Tulip Family strives for

progress in every generation. The knight's spirit of enterprise can never come to a halt; use pressure as a driving force for effort."

"I understand. Now that I am of age, things that were once unclear to me are now fully understood," said Liszt, suddenly remembering something. "That's right, Father Lord, apart from bringing some specialties and delicacies from Fresh Flower Town to Tulip Castle, I also prepared a special gift for you and my brother."

"Oh, what gift?"

"A telescope."

Liszt took out a beautifully crafted retractable monocular telescope from his pocket and handed it to the Earl, showing him how to use it, "This is a retractable monocular telescope. Place this small eyepiece before your eye, yes, just like that, then point the larger objective lens towards the window."

After the Earl did as instructed, he was startled at the first glance, "Oh my, the tulip flower sea appears to be right before my eyes!"

"You can pull the telescope's objective lens tube further out, yes, like that, it can extend even longer."

"They're getting closer. Do they move, or is this magic?" The Earl, holding the telescope, excitedly watched the distant scenes, "I can see Silva, he's got a cigarette in his hand, and is looking for a place to smoke – a hand-rolled cigarette using fire grass, not a flame striker."

With the telescope in hand, the Earl began spying, while outside the castle, deputy butler Silva had no idea that his minor act of smoking had been caught by the Earl.

The excited Earl couldn't stop for quite some time.

Liszt was very satisfied with the effect of the telescope, but Silva's smoking habit suddenly sparked a thought – should he invent matches?

The fire-making tools in this world consisted of "fire grass," which could be rubbed together to create fire, and "flame strikers," made from fire grass material—neither as convenient as matches.

Lighters are more advanced, more convenient.

But Liszt didn't think he could invent a lighter, it was too technologically advanced.

As for matches, there was no technical challenge, the only problem being that match heads are made with phosphorus as the igniter. If he remembered correctly, they used

red phosphorus, coating it on both the match head and the striking surface of the matchbox separately.

Strike them together when needed, keep them apart when not, dubbed safety matches.

“Phosphorus... I do have quite an understanding of it,” Liszt thought silently.

Firstly, in rural farming, a fertilizer called phosphate fertilizer is indispensable; secondly, it's said that the discovery of the phosphorus element came from alchemy, when a guy dreaming of alchemy accidentally produced phosphorus from urine; thirdly, he had learned in his middle school geography class about a country named Nauru, where bird droppings accumulated, creating phosphate mines.

Lastly, the legendary will-o'-the-wisp is said to be bone phosphorus burning in the air.

“So, to get phosphorus, I have to deal with excrement?” Liszt was rather helpless. He did not want to be like TFBOYS, “It'd be best to find bird droppings, perhaps on an island with many sea birds, there might be a phosphate mine... Even if I can't extract phosphorus, I can use it as fertilizer, phosphate fertilizer.”

After carefully recalling his knowledge about phosphorus twice, the Earl finally put down the telescope, still in awe, and said, “Liszt, where did you get such a telescope?”

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Chapter 240: Yet the Earl had seen through it all (Third update, bonus for 2200 subscriptions)

“This was my invention,” Liszt declared.

“Your invention?”

“Yes, after a shipwreck was discovered off the coast of Fresh Flower Town, some treasure was salvaged, including a few crystals. I invited a crystal craftsman and a magician to carve crystal lamps for me. Then I discovered, when crystal is ground into lenses and two are stacked together, they can actually magnify the view.”

Of course, Liszt had fabricated the story, but the Earl didn't probe into the veracity of his tale.

For him, how the telescope was invented wasn't important; what mattered was why it could see at a distance and what else it could do.

"No wonder many say that you have been favored by knighthood's glory this past year," the Earl commented as he caressed the wooden tube of the telescope, "Do you recognize its value?"

"I believe it can be used in warfare. If we can observe the enemy's movements from afar, it should be of great assistance."

"With the charge of the knights, if coordinated with a telescope, we could capture the movements of enemy knight orders more swiftly, seizing the most opportune moment to strike. Its value can be trivial, even negligible—a head-on charge of a large-scale knight order is straightforward. But it can also be immense."

As someone with years of experience in leading charges, the Earl had his own insights: "For small knight squads engaging in combat, maneuverability is crucial. With a telescope, whether for ambushes or counter-ambushes, we could gain the upper hand... In yesterday's battle simulation game, if I had had a telescope, your various ambush tactics would have been completely ineffective."

Liszt nodded and then added, "If I had used a telescope, I could have achieved even more brilliant tactical results."

"Hmm, that's also not wrong to say."

"Therefore, the value of the telescope can be substantial. I believe it's most fitting to present it to you as a gift."

"You've grown up," the Earl remarked wistfully, his eyes filled with satisfaction, which he quickly concealed, "The significance of the telescope is immense; we must keep its secret safe from outsiders!"

"As of now, I'm probably the only one who knows the secret of the telescope's interior," Liszt recalled something suddenly. "Oh yes, the crystal craftsman, Brad, if he were so inclined, could likely understand the principle of the telescope since he ground the lenses himself."

"In that case, we cannot leave this crystal craftsman to his own devices."

"How about you give him and his family to me? As for the principle of the telescope, I can present it immediately to Tulip Castle," Liszt proposed, struck by an idea. The fact that Brad and his family were freemen didn't matter; no one could defy the Earl's wish to arrange who would be sent to Fresh Flower Town.

Not one to fuss over such trifles, the Earl said, "I'll have Jacob take care of it later."

Jacob was the Earl's land advisor.

Pleased with the telescope, the Earl offered more favorable terms before Liszt could even speak: "I heard that you obtained three thousand pounds of iron ingots from Levis's hands?" The Earl was well aware of the sons' maneuvers, and his openness was not without the intent to admonish.

This was because Levis and Liszt would not include Lidun in their play, a clear alienation that the Earl was unwilling to see among his sons.

"Yes, I improved the brewing process for ordinary fermented wine and made semi-finished white spirits. I hoped to collaborate with my brother for sales, and the three thousand pounds of iron ingots was a token of my brother's goodwill."

"That you're willing to share the technology for white spirits shows that you are not only favored by knighthood's glory but also have a big-picture perspective and long-term plans. I am filled with expectations for your future. I will also allocate an additional ten thousand pounds of iron ingots from the spoils of war as compensation for the telescope technology."

The Earl's generosity was indeed vast!

Liszt was thrilled. "Thank you, Father!"

As a rare resource, ten thousand catties of iron could craft many iron implements, of great worth. While most iron uses might be for armor and weapons, for Liszt, iron was one of the fundamental materials of industry, irreplaceable by wood.

Even though Liszt had Rapid Growth Iron Thorns that possessed the quality of ironwood.

After expressing his gratitude, Liszt called a servant and brought out five ores of mithril he had specially prepared, taking them into the study. "Father, this is one of the treasures I found in the sunken ship. I wish to exchange them for some Gold Coins. The financial situation in the territory is quite strained," he said.

"Mithril?" The Earl, of course, was familiar with this ore and immediately identified it. He in fact armored an elite Knight Squad with Mithril Armor. "These five pieces of mithril, mixed into Iron Ingots, can nearly forge ten suits of Mithril Armor, with considerable value."

He gave Liszt a meaningful look.

Liszt met his gaze openly—he understood the Earl's implication. Fresh Flower Town had many fine goods to offer; the benefits retrieved from the sunken ship were likely not

limited to these pieces of mithril and some crystals he had mentioned earlier—but he knew the Earl would hardly rob his own son of his little private property.

“One piece of mithril for a hundred Gold Coins, how about that?”

“Of course, I am grateful for your generosity, Father.”

“Five hundred Gold Coins could buy two thousand five hundred serfs. That’s almost more than the population of Fresh Flower Town. Are you sure Fresh Flower Town can support them?” asked the Earl with a smile.

A chill went down Liszt’s spine.

He had a feeling that this smile bore a deeper meaning than the look before, almost as if the “Earl had already seen through everything.” Under that smile, Liszt felt as though all his secrets were exposed—he had reason to guess so, with the Earl’s grasp over Coral Island, wanting to know something wasn’t difficult.

“Could he already know about the existence of Black Horse Island?”

The thought crossed his mind, then Liszt suppressed it; whether he knew or not, he would play ignorant. Developing a deserted island was not a heinous act, and as long as the Earl was unaware of the Black Blood Treasured Horse’s existence, even if Black Horse Island was discovered, it wouldn’t matter.

At least for now, the Earl seemed oblivious to the Black Blood Treasured Horse; otherwise, no matter that Liszt was his son, he would unceremoniously seize them.

In the face of immense profit, noble ties were inconsequential.

Moreover, how could seizing the herd and then compensating Liszt with some Gold Coins possibly shake the father-son relationship, especially when the Earl wouldn’t even need to seize them himself? If he deployed a bit of family propaganda, the spit from Lady Penelope, Lady Marie, Li Vera, and Levis alone could drown Liszt.

In fact, considering benefits, contributing the Black Blood Treasured Horse to the Earl might not be such a bad idea.

But Liszt was reluctant—once the herd reached the hands of the Tulip Family, who knew how many years it would take before he could get a share to arm his Knight Squad.

As a future Dragon Knight with grand aspirations, what was his was his; he didn’t want to give it to anyone, nor let anyone take it. And the family resources should rightfully support him in achieving his grand ideals and revitalizing the family.

Pushing aside his wild thoughts, Liszt acted as if he hadn't noticed the Earl's hidden meaning. "The development route for Fresh Flower Town is slightly different from the traditional agricultural route; I need a large population."