

The Mighty Dragons Are Dead #Chapter 351: 0360

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Chapter 351: Chapter 0348: I Need to Lie Down a Bit Longer (Second Update)

Not long after the birth of the Apple Bug, Liszt's eighteenth Elf Bug was also about to arrive. The yellowing leaves in the wheat field had finally recovered to lush green under the meticulous care of the serfs, and among them, a tall wheat seedling stood out with its exceptional growth.

It had condensed Magic Power, becoming a Cordyceps.

The Smoke Mission, too, had conveniently changed: "Complete the mission, reward: one Little Wheat Elf Bug."

Liszt was very pleased with the birth of the Little Wheat Bug, for wheat was among the most important of grain crops. A Little Wheat Bug, capable of increasing wheat yield, generally commanded a price of over four thousand Gold Coins on the market.

"Before the festival season, it took me nearly half a year to harvest five Elf Bugs: Peanut Bug, Dragon Hollyhock Bug, Tomato Bug, Fragrant Coconut Bug, and Corn Grass Bug; after the festival season, in less than half that time, I've already harvested nine Elf Bugs: Little Wheat Bug, Apple Bug, three Rubber Bugs, and four Serpent Blood Fruit Bugs."

Although the variety might not be rich, the quantity was certainly plenty, especially the Rubber Bugs and Serpent Blood Fruit Bugs, which came in droves.

Just a few days ago, the Rubber Bug exerted Tri-Phase Force for the second time, restoring the nearby Rubber Trees in the rubber plantation to their optimal state, greatly enhancing both the speed and amount of rubber harvested.

The Port Town had already begun using liquid rubber to construct houses and roads.

This would be the first modern town under Liszt's rule.

The Smoke in front of him slowly drifted, forming new Serpent Script content: "Mission: Perhaps in your hasty search, you have not discovered the significance of the Silver Coin Pendant, it is no mere common silver coin, it has received the blessing of Magic Power, and perhaps it can awaken a magician in a coma. Reward: A down-on-his-luck Magician."

A light brightened before his eyes.

Without hesitation, Liszt went to visit the comatose Magician in the town.

“Stay outside the door, do not disturb me while I heal the Magician.” After dismissing the manservant and Retainer Knights, he went straight to the bedside, looking at Chris, who was being meticulously cared for by several women.

When she was first pulled up, her complexion was pale without a trace of color, like a dead person.

Now, however, she was quite rosy, although her looks were still of ordinary rank, with Liszt only able to rate her a passing score of 6 out of 10.

The Silver Coin Pendant was still around her neck.

When he had previously examined it, he had noticed nothing unusual about the silver coin, other than perhaps that it was made from a particularly unusual material, possibly the feather-light Magic Metal Mithril. Now that the Smoke Mission had mentioned it, he used his Eye of Magic to scrutinize it carefully and attempted to infuse it with Dou Qi.

The moment Dou Qi was infused, a few runes of Magic Power flashed brightly on the silver coin.

Subsequently, a Magician’s chanting sound began, akin to celestial music, yet he couldn’t understand the content of the song, which was merely a repetition of a few syllables.

“Is this the Moon Language?” Liszt tried to capture the melody, “According to several Magic Books, Magicians from the Ancient Moon Empire were all able to perform blessing spells. Could this melody be one such blessing spell?”

The Moon Empire was the “source” of all civilizations in the nations.

Magicians also took pleasure in uncovering magic from the era of the Moon Empire, delighting in studying the Moon Language and advocating that all national languages were inherited from it, with many words being variants of the Moon Language.

Now, the blessing spell in Moon Language began to resonate.

It indeed sounded very pleasant.

Liszt found himself somewhat entranced, but he continued to observe the Silver Coin with the Eye of Magic, its Magic Power runes acting like the strings of a musical instrument, with each vibration producing a tone of the Moon Language. Gradually, the

Magic Power in the air seemed to respond to the blessing spell, rippling and converging like water waves.

“

Eventually, the converging magic power began to wash over the unconscious magician.

A long while later.

The blessing spell dissipated, and the luster of the silver coin also faded gradually. Despite Liszt's efforts to inject Dou Qi, he couldn't trigger a new blessing spell. At that moment, the magician, who had been unconscious for over a week, let out a light cough.

“Cough, cough.”

She hadn't woken up yet, but her eyelids were fluttering.

Liszt straightened his Flack-Abaie and displayed an appropriately noble smile, thinking to himself, “Though using the magician I already had in my possession as a reward for the Smoke Mission is a bit sly, being able to awaken Chris quickly is still quite good.”

...

The dim world had no end.

She felt her body was full of fatigue, her head as if it had been struck by a hammer, unable to concentrate, weak, uncomfortable, exhausted, and dizzy.

With no escape, she could only keep wandering in the dimness, growing more tired and helpless with each passing moment.

Just then, a faint voice reached her ears. It was like a spring of clear water pouring over her body, drenching her completely, seeping through her from head to toe. Her clouded consciousness also began to clear, and a lamp suddenly lit up in the dark world, marking the exit.

She ran with all her might toward the exit's light, using every ounce of her strength.

No longer wishing to sink into the boundless gloom, she finally reached the exit, where the light was bright enough to dazzle her, making her involuntarily close her eyes.

But still, she rushed through without a second thought.

A brand new world unfolded before her eyes – a simple wooden hut. There were no extra decorations, yet there was a handsome man with eyes as blue as gemstones,

wearing the highest form of a smile, gazing at her faintly. Their eyes met, as if seeing into each other's souls.

"Ah..." She made a sound, but her voice was terribly hoarse.

"You're awake," the handsome man said with a slightly magnetic, pleasant voice, questioning her.

Such elegant demeanor, such tender voice, and eyes that saw through to the soul, it was like a dream, making her feel as if she had escaped a nightmare and entered a spring dream: "I..." Her voice was still very raspy and unable to convey a complete thought.

In fact, her entire being was still in a daze, not fully conscious.

"I'm pleased you've woken up. You might still be unclear about what happened, but after I rescued you from the sea, you've been unconscious for almost a week now," the handsome man said with a smile that seemed to clear the gloom away. "You don't seem to be completely recovered yet. I'll have someone take care of you, and we'll talk more when you're alert."

Then, he turned and left. Shortly after, a few women dressed as commoners came in.

They roughly helped her up, one of them vigorously wiping her face with a towel and asking, "Magician miss, are you feeling better now?"

Another was braiding her hair with enough force to pull it out, while also speaking, "When the great and benevolent Lord Landlord rescued you, your hair was a mess. I'm not sure how you usually do your hair, so I just tied it into a ponytail for now."

"I..." She was truly at a loss for words from being fussed over so much but finally gritted her teeth and managed to say, "Can I lie down a bit longer? I'm feeling a bit dizzy."

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The Mighty Dragons Are Dead #Chapter 352: 349: The Bull Slaying the Dragon Plan (Third Update, Alliance Hierarch's Additional Update 12/18) - Read The Mighty Dragons Are Dead Chapter 352: 349: The Bull Slaying the Dragon Plan (Third Update, Alliance Hierarch's Additional Update 12/18)

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Chris Truth awoke.

Despite still being weak, with the peasant woman's fussing, she had successfully sat up on a stool, ready to answer Liszt's questions.

"So, Chris Truth is your name?"

"Yes, Baron," Chris nodded, then said in a slightly hoarse voice, "Thank you for rescuing me from the sea. For such a kindness, I do not know how to repay you."

Liszt said offhandedly, "How about working for Fresh Flower Town?"

"Ah?" Chris did not catch on immediately; according to customary practice, she should have been polite before discussing repayment, "I... of course, my life was saved by you, Baron. I am quite willing to work for you... However, I am somewhat concerned that it may implicate you."

The recruitment seemed to be going well, so Liszt asked, "Implicate me?"

Chris nodded, "Aren't you curious as to why I ended up in distress at sea?"

"Quite curious, you can tell me about it. I want to know about that."

"I... Since you are my lifesaver, I shouldn't hide anything from you. The matter is very serious and involves a lot. I hope, Baron, that this information remains only with you, and it's best not to let a third person know."

"Is that so? Speak then, I will judge for myself."

Chris took a deep breath; her eyes momentarily betraying confusion, then she slowly began, "I thought for certain I was going to die, frozen in permafrost by ice system magic, drifting along the sea until I arrived here... Coral Island, Fresh Flower Town, fortunately encountered you, Baron, and you gave me a second life."

She paused.

Seeming to organize her thoughts.

A moment later she continued, "Coral Island is within the Duchy of Sapphire, located in a remote area. Perhaps by the time the news reaches here, it will be too late."

"What news?" Liszt urged.

Chris carefully glanced around the room, ensuring no one was eavesdropping, before leaning forward to whisper earnestly, "The Marquis of Bull is planning to assassinate the Grand Duke's dragon!"

"What!"

Liszt exclaimed in surprise, then also lowered his voice, "Chris, are you joking with me?"

"I am not, Baron. I, too, wish this were fake news, but... I was personally involved in this matter, and it's all true!" Chris's expression turned numb, "The magicians of the Goat Assembly had always believed they were just researching topics related to dragons. It wasn't until the final day that we knew the Marquis of Bull was using us to assassinate the Grand Duke's dragon."

"Goat Assembly?"

"A congregation of magicians, mainly conducting various research projects on Iron Hoof Island, secretly funded by the Marquis of Bull."

Liszt tried not to make too many assumptions, simply continuing to inquire, "Are you talking about the Goat Assembly created by the Magic Goat Family?"

"The Baron also knows of the Goat Assembly? I thought it was a secret magician organization... Yes, the Goat Assembly originated from the Magic Goat Family more than a hundred years ago. Back then, many magicians were affiliated with the Magic Goat Family, and following a disaster that led to the family's extinction, the Goat Assembly was forced to relocate."

They moved to Iron Hoof Island.

They skulked around for decades, until one day, a magician leading the Goat Assembly established contact with the former Marquis of Bull.

Since then, magicians could stay on Iron Hoof Island with peace of mind, continue to engage in various researches, and gradually grow stronger. Chris had joined the Goat Assembly fourteen years ago when she was only ten years old, and she was a magic apprentice. It wasn't until she was seventeen that she was promoted to magician.

This year, she just turned twenty-four.

"I always thought the Goat Assembly was just an ordinary exchange organization for magicians, where they don't normally gather and only occasionally exchange magic knowledge. The grand magicians in the assembly would also assign some research topics to us young magicians—I was assigned the topic of 'whether souls can be stored'... Ah, my soul storage vessel... did it fall into the sea?"

Only then did she remember that she had a soul storage vessel amongst her magic equipment.

Liszt was not at all embarrassed, “Is it that copper kettle? It might have been taken by my servants and stored in the castle’s warehouse. Do you need it?”

“It’s a very magical piece of equipment, a collectible of the Grand Magician Rashid·Truth. After he assigned the topic to me, he handed over the soul storage vessel for my research. However, I despised him for betraying the Goat Assembly, so when I ran away, I took the soul storage vessel with me.”

She continued very obligingly, “Now I no longer plan to study souls, so let it stay in Baron’s warehouse.”

With a slight smile, Liszt signaled, “Continue with your story.”

“Okay.” Chris glanced at Liszt, a blush flickering across her face, “We young magicians were all diligently researching our topics every day. But there was one magician, Flo·Truth, who was very active, constantly communicating with every magician... He realized that all of our individual topics combined could form a larger one—how to severely damage a dragon’s soul.”

Such a topic wasn’t considered shocking.

Just as many knights dream of becoming dragon slayers, magicians often fantasize about how to kill or cripple a dragon.

But the young magician Flo, he took it upon himself to start a secret investigation and soon uncovered an earth-shattering conspiracy—Marquis of Bull was plotting dragon slaying. Of course, he didn’t blow the whistle. On the contrary, he actively collaborated because slaying a dragon was one of his dreams as well.

However, when the research on the topic was almost finished, the leading grand magicians of the Goat Assembly suddenly began to capture magicians scattered all over the place.

To silence them permanently.

“Flo warned us to flee for our lives. My teacher became the one who was chasing me. Just when I thought I was going to die, she cast the ice system magic ‘Permafrost,’ pushing me into the sea... My blessing pendant was given to me by my teacher; it could protect me from harm.”

Chris touched the silver coin pendant around her neck, her eyes dimming, “I knew then, my teacher was going to join the Marquis of Bull and the grand magicians of the Goat Assembly to assassinate the Grand Duke’s dragon... I wonder if they succeeded.”

Liszt frowned deeply.

His heart surged with turmoil as the matter of dragon slaying entered his ears, catching him off guard, “Chris, I want to know, why would the Marquis of Bull slay a dragon? He is of the Sapphire Family’s bloodline!”

The original Marquis of Bull was the youngest and most beloved son of the First Grand Duke. As a young man, he was granted the title of Baron of the Bull, and he was one of the first to be endowed with Iron Hoof Island after the nation’s founding, ascending to the Marquis of Bull.

The current Marquis of Bull, Andy-Sapphire, was said to have grown up in The Court and was childhood friends with the reigning Grand Duke, in addition to serving as the Grand Duke’s personal guard, being extremely close-knit. The Bull Family had never changed their surname and had established Bull Horn Academy to train servants for The Court.

It can be said that the Bull Family and the Sapphire Family were tied together, sharing both fortunes and misfortunes.

It would be nonsensical for the Marquis of Bull to slay a dragon, essentially destroying his own ramparts.

Chris shook her head: “It’s probably because of... the pursuit of immortality. I’ve heard my teacher say, the Magic Goat Family possesses the transformation techniques of the undead Lich, and the Goat Assembly established contact with the Marquis of Bull by relying on this technology.”

A Lich!

It was the Lich again!

Liszt’s expression darkened, his gaze sharp—this Magic Goat Family truly was a persistent specter.

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The Mighty Dragons Are Dead #Chapter 353: 0350: You Are the Person I Trust (Fourth Update, Alliance Hierarch Additional Update 13/18) - Read The Mighty Dragons Are Dead Chapter 353: 0350: You Are the Person I Trust (Fourth Update, Alliance Hierarch Additional Update 13/18)

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“Chris, I need to go back and think about the message you brought, please rest well, I’ve arranged for a farmer to take care of you outside the door. If you need anything, feel free to let them know,”

Liszt instructed her briefly before hastily leaving the room.

He then summoned his personal guard Paris.

“Baron, what can I do for you?” The strands of hair on Paris’s forehead were damp, she had clearly been training hard before. Recently, she planned to learn Dou Qi to see if she could combine it with the strength of the Black Dragon Wraith, thereby improving her own power.

“I’ve saved a magician, you know about that, right?”

“Chris Truth, I’ve visited her. She’s as frail as a commoner... To be honest, I’m quite disappointed. If I were to become a magician, I’d probably be just like her.”

Of course not the same, the differences in figure and appearance were huge.

It was just a thought that crossed Liszt’s mind before he brushed it away like a gust of wind. He was in no mood to worry about such messy matters, “She has brought a message that is hard to discern as true or false, and I need time to think it over. Therefore, during this period, I hope you can discreetly monitor her actions.”

“Hard to discern as true or false? Baron, do you need me to interrogate her? I’m still quite skilled in interrogation techniques,” Paris raised her eyebrows.

“There’s no need for that. She’s prepared to stay in Fresh Flower Town to work for me, and perhaps in the future, she will be the magician I worship. I’m a bit nervous about the message she brought and need time to digest it. Paris, after I’ve thought it through, I’ll still need your help to consider it, after all, you are someone I trust.”

He placed his hand on Paris’s shoulder and gave it a firm squeeze.

Paris’s breathing quickened slightly, but she maintained a radiant smile, “Baron, you know I can’t refuse.”

“I’m counting on you, Paris.” Liszt withdrew his hand, turned, and left, leaving behind a tall, straight figure for Paris to gaze at for a long time.

...

Back in the study of the castle, Liszt did not allow anyone to disturb him and pondered alone.

What was laid out before him now was a precarious situation that could be either big or small—if nothing happened, everything was normal; but if something did happen, it would definitely be a massive earthquake for the Duchy of Sapphire.

The words of Chris Truth were hard to identify as true or false.

Although her tone was sincere when she spoke, the logic was fairly consistent, and much of the content matched up with the information Liszt held, with no glaring holes. Moreover, she had no reason to soak herself in the sea and then remain unconscious for more than a week, just to contrive such a lie to deceive a country baron.

If what she said was true.

Then it's possible that the assassination of the Sapphire Dragon has already taken place.

"The Magic Goat Family has been exterminated for over a hundred years, why would they bother to stir things up again? The former Marquis Cohen and Curtis Truth wanted to help Annute become the Dragon Domain Landlord; now the Goat Assembly is coaxing the Marquis of Bull to become a Lich and assassinate the Sapphire Dragon."

What kind of grudge did these people have against the Sapphire Dragon?

Assuming for the moment that what Chris said was true, then there were two possible outcomes—the Marquis of Bull succeeds in slaying the dragon, or the Marquis of Bull fails in slaying the dragon.

"A failed dragon slaying would be a decent outcome. The Bull Marquis Family would definitely be annihilated, and Iron Hoof Island would become nothingness, swallowed by the wrath of the Sapphire Duke. But at least the country would still be stable, and the impact on Coral Island would not be great. Perhaps, because of the reduction in the number of Marquis positions, my father might even have the opportunity to advance further."

One man's meat is another man's poison; the larger islands of the Grand Duchy of Sapphire could only accommodate seven Marquis.

One more Marquis, and they would have to use the scattered minor islands to make up the area of the fiefdom. This would be troublesome and difficult to manage, so switching birds in the cage would be the quickest way.

Most Earls probably view the downfall of the Marquis of Bull with schadenfreude.

“But Andy Sapphire grew up in the Court since he was a child, and he must have come in contact with the Sapphire Dragon. He is also a close companion of the Grand Duke and almost has no guard against him... After preparing for so long, counting the Former Marquis of Bull, he has at least thirty years of preparation. Would he fail so easily?”

More than thirty years ago, the Goat Assembly successfully connected with the Former Bull Marquis.

The Bull Marquis sheltering the remnants of the Magic Goat Family involved in the Court’s coup d’état indicated there must have been a secret transaction—the Lich transformation technology.

So it could be basically affirmed that for over thirty years, the Bull Family has been eyeing the Sapphire Dragon.

Liszt’s gaze wandered restlessly.

He was unclear about what was so magical and incredible about Dragons, but from the residual Magic Power of a Fire Dragon, the Smoke Mission infected by the Smoke Dragon, and the Space Gem of the Formless Dragon, he could barely glimpse the magic of Dragons. Certainly, the Sapphire Dragon would not be an easy prey for ordinary humans, not to mention the numerous protections of the Sapphire Family.

But still.

A Marquis, plus a magician organization, two generations, and over thirty years of preparation, could not be taken lightly.

“If the Bull Marquis really succeeds in slaying the Dragon, and the Sapphire Dragon falls, then... the Grand Duchy of Sapphire may have no possibility of existing anymore.”

A nation built because of a Dragon could also be destroyed because of a Dragon.

Without a Dragon to suppress the fate of the nation, the Sword Saints of the Sapphire Family won’t be able to guard the wealth accumulated and plundered for over a hundred years.

“If the Bull Marquis truly accomplishes the slaying of the Dragon, how should Coral Island face this situation, and how should I face it?”

The answer to this question had too many possibilities.

There were opportunities but also dangers; Liszt could not make an accurate prediction, which made him feel terrible. He preferred orderly progression and disliked having his plans disrupted by unforeseen events. Now, with Fresh Flower Town and Black Horse

Island on the rise, as long as he had time to develop, Dragon Riding was a matter of sooner or later.

“I hate this feeling of having no control over the future...” Accustomed to the positive choices that the Smoke Mission brought to fate, Liszt now felt very anxious.

He wanted to talk to someone.

Marcus? Marcus was just an Elite Earth Knight longing for nobility, without a great perspective on the wider situation; Goltai? Goltai was just a down-on-his-luck Honored Knight, and this news would probably scare him to death; Isaiah, Zambrotta, Charles, Rick and the others were all unsuitable for discussing such news.

Paris? As someone who had faced a real Dragon, she was in essence just a woman of average intelligence; Ach? The Sea Serpent was as pure as a blank sheet of paper, likely unaware of what something like politics even was.

Butler Carter?

Indisputably, the person he trusted most in Fresh Flower Town was Butler Carter.

He enjoyed ending a busy day by hiding in the study with Carter, drinking Crescent Moon Wine, discussing major and minor matters of the castle, the town, and Black Horse Island. However, while Carter was available for the small matters of the domain, national affairs were too far removed for him.

After much thought, he had no one to confide in or discuss such matters with.

“It seems that tonight... the night is already late; I need to think more carefully about how to bring this matter up with the Earl, and first thing tomorrow morning, I will head to Tulip Castle. The Dragon slaying incident concerns the family’s fate, and I have to deliberate carefully with the Earl.”

If the Dragon slaying incident had happened, it would have been a week ago already—there’s no rush on this one night.

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The Mighty Dragons Are Dead #Chapter 354: 0351: A Calm Mindset (Fifth update, Alliance Hierarch additional release 14/18) - Read The Mighty Dragons Are Dead Chapter 354: 0351: A Calm Mindset (Fifth update, Alliance Hierarch additional release 14/18)

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The dragon-slaying event was tied to the fate of the family, but whether it occurred or not, Coral Island was powerless to prevent it.

Therefore, Li Si Te couldn't afford to be too anxious. It also concerned his future, and he needed to think through how to explain and respond, in order to better negotiate with the Earl and reach an outcome favorable to himself. It wasn't rational to hastily throw out an issue without distinguishing its truth.

Having drunk a cup of milk tea, his mood still couldn't be calmed; the news brought by Chris Truth indeed came as quite a shock.

At this moment, he suddenly remembered that the Smoke Mission should have already been completed, so he called out, "Complete mission, reward: Magician Chris Truth."

Sure enough.

The just awakened and not particularly beautiful magician Ms., was the reward for the Smoke Mission. Just like the last Smoke Mission's reward was the Thief Paris, these belonged to the "character" rewards. More accurately, they were opportunities for an intersection with the corresponding characters that would prove beneficial.

To grasp the mission reward still required Li Si Te to make personal efforts.

"It's a pity, Paris was beautiful and had a good figure, Chris is just mediocre..." he shook his head, feeling that this wasn't the time to think about such things.

Before his eyes, the Serpent Script fluctuated.

A new mission quickly issued: "The news brought by Chris Truth has made you feel deep unease; this stems from the fear due to being weak. As a great Lord, please overcome the restlessness deep within, and calm your own state of mind. Reward: A melody from memory."

"It's true I'm a great Lord, but why is the reward another melody? Could it really be trying to cultivate me into the Piano King?" Li Si Te was not very satisfied with the reward.

Indeed.

Playing and composing piano music added greatly to his personal charm, attracting the favor of numerous women. But he would rather become a strong Knight through his own

efforts, become the focus of everyone's attention, and ultimately realize his dream of Dragon Riding. Piano music was meaningless to him.

However, the mission was already issued, and he had no reason to refuse—mastering a couple more piano pieces would enhance his social capabilities in the future and elevate the essence of his nobility.

Returning to the mission, how to overcome the restlessness deep inside and calm his own state of mind?

A very good way was to play the piano.

He went to the Worm Room and sat in front of the piano. In the past, he had the Sea Sprite Ake to listen to his piano playing or to accompany his singing. Now, he could only play for the Elf Bugs.

“Wuuah!”

And there was Minor Elf Jela, sitting atop the piano, yawning in boredom, completely uninterested in music. In the past, it even jumped on the keyboard to dance while Li Si Te was playing, and only after several applications of Finger-Flick Magic did it start to behave a bit.

His fingers lightly brushed the keys.

Taking a deep breath, Li Si Te began to play slowly, the recently learned “Yuri Ely by the River.” He had heard it played by Meioubao at Long Taro Castle and found it pleasing to the ear, even though he felt it was slightly lacking in rhythmic changes but still a classic piano piece.

The Piano Master Czerny Windmill and Eurie Ellie by the river exchanged glances, turning into stone.

He played slowly, unlike Meioubao's style of playing; at home, he usually improvised, playing in whatever way felt comfortable without concerning himself with too many details. After one rendition, he then played “For Alice,” and switched to “With You.”

The sound of the piano made Jela more and more sleepy until it finally collapsed at the top of the piano, falling into a deep sleep.

Liszt found himself increasingly immersed in his piano playing, his mood becoming ever brighter. He realized how much he truly enjoyed the piano, as each time he played, his spirits were instantly uplifted, as if there were no trouble that piano music couldn't resolve.

If there was, then he would simply play two pieces.

At some point, a hazy mist seemed to naturally form before his eyes, shaping itself into Serpent Script.

“Mission completed, reward: the melody of “Canon in D Major”.”

His fingers had already begun to strike a new sequence of keys, unleashing the notes of an exceedingly classic piano piece. It was a canon, where one melodic line faithfully followed another throughout eight chords, culminating in a final phrase where the notes converged.

The piece concluded.

Liszt quickly took out the pen and paper he had prepared earlier, dabbed the ink, and hastily jotted down the melody. He replayed it several times while the inspiration was still fresh to identify any errors and dissonances, and made corrections to compose a complete version of “Canon in D Major”.

He then wrote down the name ““Canon in D Major – Liszt”” and added it to his collection of piano pieces.

...

The piano music soothed his emotions, leaving him relaxed and rational.

It made it easier for him to consider how to face the potential crises ahead: “In fact, from the beginning, I’ve overlooked something, that the Earl and the Grand Duke are not one and the same. Admittedly, in the Duchy of Sapphire, with the Earl’s Coral Island fiefdom holding significant power, if something were to happen to the Grand Duke, the Earl would likely be implicated.”

Packing away the piano music, he returned to his study and continued to ponder: “But the first to be affected would be the Sapphire Family, and the Tulip Family, with their smaller size, could more easily change direction... No matter who attempts to swallow up the dragon-less Duchy of Sapphire, the Tulip Family could simply choose a new allegiance.”

Of course.

Switching allegiances isn’t a matter of pride, and their treatment would accordingly diminish, but the wise know to adapt to the times. There’s no need to stay blindly loyal to a potentially falling Sapphire Family.

The Earl, being a Sky Knight of the Sword Saint Level, commanded a band of Elite Earth Knights. This fighting strength was quite significant, not to be easily disregarded.

Unless faced with an overwhelming army, it was unlikely that anyone would eradicate the Tulip Family – Coral Island, an offshore isle, hardly seemed worth the major nobles on the mainland dispatching an entire Knight Order... if dragons were sent, that would be a different story. If indeed a country were to use dragons against an Earldom.

Liszt felt that his family might as well eat, drink, and then just sit and wait for death.

“So, with the towering figures of the Sapphire Family to weather the storm, I don’t need to worry too much. All I have to do is wait for the situation to unfold. The Earl would likely do the same, making early preparations to seize an opportunity, whether the dragon-slaying succeeds or fails.”

That night, he managed to sleep quite soundly.

Early the next day, before dawn had broken, Liszt was already up. He donned his leather armor, girded the Crimson Blood Sword, mounted his Li Dragon Horse, and led the Blizzard Beast Dousen, ready to set out for Tulip Castle. He also notified Paris, asking her to bring Chris Truth with her to Tulip Castle.

On the way.

There was no need for him to guide it, as the Li Dragon Horse instinctively knew the way to Tulip Castle, so atop the horse’s back, he began to examine the new Smoke Mission.

“No one can predict whether the road ahead is fraught with thorns or smooth sailing, but one must always be prepared to face difficulties. The robust finances of Fresh Flower Town are more than sufficient to support a Knight Squad. Let them become your followers, to clean your blade. Reward: a forgotten Dou Qi Secret Technique.”

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Six newly recruited Earth Knights had gone through a period of adjustment without causing too many issues that dissatisfied Liszt.

However, Liszt planned to consider their allegiance after a full three months.

Now that the Smoke Mission had issued a task in advance, with a reward as valuable as a Dou Qi Secret Technique, he had no reason not to complete it.

"After I return, I will have these six follow me."

The sunrise had yet to break the eastern sky, and the early summer morning still carried a lingering chill, while Liszt's thoughts flickered rapidly: "No one can predict whether the path ahead is full of thorns or a smooth journey... Does this mean that even the Smoke Mission cannot influence the Threads of Destiny tied to the Sapphire Dragon?"

On second thought, that seemed incorrect. If the Formless Dragon could be influenced, there was no way that the destiny thread of a Gemstone Dragon would be thicker than that of a Sacred Dragon.

"Perhaps it's a matter of distance?"

He suddenly realized, "Up to this point, I have undertaken sixty Smoke Missions, completing fifty-seven of them, with only three changing... the Old Tanner's hidden books, the Thief spying on the Landlord, and the founding of the Fire Dragon Brick Factory... Out of all the tasks, fifty-nine were related to Fresh Flower Town or Black Horse Island, with only one concerning Duniko Hyacinth."

In other words, the range within which the Smoke Mission could influence the Threads of Destiny was all within Liszt's territory.

The only exception, Duniko, who had shared a bed with him, was undeniably also influenced by that unhealthy relationship, however slight the pull on her thread might have been.

As three months had passed since Liszt gave up on going to Red Crab Island to find her, there were no more ties, and the Threads of Destiny had likely already snapped.

"So, it was because the Formless Dragon stayed near Fresh Flower Town that it was affected by the Smoke Mission, or perhaps by the Power of Destiny of the Smoke Dragon. But with the Sapphire Dragon located on the distant Blue Dragon Island, the Smoke Mission simply cannot involve it?"

These were only speculations, without any concrete conclusions.

After all, Liszt wasn't even sure whether the smoke he saw was left by the Smoke Dragon. If it was, was he some form of a Dragon Wraith, or a Dragon-Bred human? Moreover, looking at cases where Dragons infected beasts, Dragon bloodlines didn't seem to possess the magical attributes of Dragons.

Beasts infected by the Fire Dragon, Water Dragon, or Metal Dragon were just ordinary Dragon Breed Beasts—some exceptionally majestic, but that was about it.

They wouldn't turn into fire horses from Fire Dragon infection or into water horses from Water Dragon infection.

And certainly not into smoke horses from Smoke Dragon infection—by the same logic, if Liszt were infected by the Smoke Dragon, he would at most become a small dragonkin, not what he appeared like now.

As for Dragon Wraiths,

The White Dragon Wraiths were a special form of existence where ghosts were created by combining Magic Power with the Soul after death by a Dragon; Black Dragon Wraiths willingly dedicated themselves and were then corrupted by a Dragon's Magic Power.

Liszt was certainly not a ghost and had never offered himself willingly, so he was likely not a Dragon Wraith either.

"So, did the Smoke Dragon die and its power entered my body? The key question is, who could kill a Smoke Dragon that represents fate... According to some Knight's Novels and Magic Books, when a Dragon is near death, it flies to the Valley of Dragons, whose location is unknown."

Therefore, it was improbable for the Smoke Dragon to have died naturally and then had its power attach to Liszt's body—but it couldn't be ruled out either, since even the Fire Dragon had died and decayed on Black Horse Island, reduced to a pile of bones.

Regardless,

All these divergent and logical thoughts leading to speculations had been considered by Liszt more than once. Still, ultimately, there was too little evidence to prove anything.

...

His thoughts fluctuating along the way, he arrived at Tulip Castle by eight o'clock in the morning.

Levis was just about to leave the house and was surprised to see Liszt's arrival: "My brother, why have you come today, and so early at that? What time did you leave Fresh Flower Town?"

"I set off before dawn. Where is Father?"

"Father is practicing his morning exercises in the flower garden on the back hill. Do you have a matter to discuss?"

"Very serious business, brother. Please go and call father back. I will wait for you in the study," Liszt said gravely.

"What is it? Tell me first."

"More serious than anything you could guess." Liszt didn't want to talk about it outside the study and simply urged Levis to hurry and summon the others.

He then led Chris into the Earl's study first.

Butler Louis was sick. Now Tulip Castle was in the hands of Vice-Butler Silva, who personally brought in two cups of milk tea—milk tea was the only drink Liszt enjoyed at Tulip Castle.

"Please have a seat, Chris. Don't be nervous. My father is not too strict," Liszt reassured her as he could see her nervousness.

Chris nodded and sat down, "Baron, I'm just a bit worried that this might involve you and the Tulip Family behind you... You saved me, and I don't want you to suffer misfortune because of me."

"Coral Island is remote, and information doesn't flow smoothly. As long as you don't reveal your identity, nobody will recognize you, and no one will connect you with that incident. As for my father and brother, the more they know, the better they can deal with danger."

"Yes, as long as I can help the Baron."

"Have some milk tea. You seem not to have fully recovered yet."

"Thank you."

The wait wasn't long. Soon the Earl's voice could be heard from outside the door: "...I would really like to know what kind of matter would bring a son, who hunted a one-ton serpent but only gave five pounds of its meat to his father, to seek his own father."

Liszt, who was drinking milk tea, couldn't help but cough.

It wasn't that he was stingy. He simply couldn't bring himself to part with it—middle-grade sea monster meat was priceless, each piece of snake meat was a part of his future strength.

"Cough, cough."

He hadn't stopped coughing yet.

The Earl had already pushed the door open and entered the study. After glancing at Liszt and Chris, who wasn't in her magic cloak but dressed like an ordinary person, he walked straight to the desk, "Speak up, Liszt, my dear son, what do you have for me?"

Levis closed the door tightly and then asked, "Liszt, are you sure... this lady, whose name we have yet to ask, should remain in the study?"

"Her name is Chris Truth. She is a magician, and the source of the news comes from her." Liszt ignored the Earl's earlier jibe about the "five pounds of snake meat" and said

solemnly, "Brother, please check again to make sure there's no one outside or near the window eavesdropping."

"That careful?"

Finding himself being ordered about by Liszt, Levis felt a bit awkward, but still took the task seriously and checked again.

The Earl had already helped himself to a glass of red wine and took a small sip, "Put an end to your secretiveness. Speak plainly. What news does Her Excellency Chris bring?"

"The Marquis of Bull might be planning to assassinate the Grand Duke's Sapphire Dragon, no, he might have already done so. At least a week and a half have passed since Chris brought the message; it could be two weeks... She was pursued by Grand Magicians in the open sea and cast into its depths using Permafrost, eventually drifting to Coral Island."

Chris and others fled Iron Hoof Island by sea but did not know where they were headed. After being overtaken by the Grand Magicians, she sank into the sea.

Drifting with the current, she arrived in the waters of Fresh Flower Town five days later—enough time to assume the Marquis of Bull would strike within that period, to avoid delayed complications.

After that, Chris was unconscious for nine days. Nine days were enough time to discern the outcome of slaying a dragon.

Upon hearing this, Levis burst into a wry laugh, "Assassinate the Grand Duke's dragon? Liszt, and Miss Chris, do you realize how foolish that decision is?"

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Assassinating a dragon was indeed a very foolish decision.

However, to assassinate a dragon with meticulous planning filled people with awe and terror.

"Father, brother, I cannot guarantee that this information is true, I can only relay the news brought by Her Excellency Chris, for you to analyze... The assassination plan of the dragon originated more than thirty years ago. The remnants of the Magic Goat Family lurked within the magicians' organization, the Goat Assembly, and they probably used Lich transformation techniques to make contact with the Former Marquis of Bull."

Subsequently, Liszt relayed the news brought by Chris and his own summarization of deductions, laying it all out.

After he finished speaking, Levis still refused to believe it, "This is too preposterous, assassinating the Sapphire Duke's dragon is not something a sane person could conceive. Dragons represent the pinnacle of the world's power. Even a sub-dragon or a dragon beast is not something one could casually hunt down."

His words held a certain logic.

Just as there was an immeasurable gap between Sky Knights and Dragon Knights, there existed an immeasurable gap between magical beasts and dragons.

Sky Knights and Grand Magicians were mighty; they could hunt down Intermediate Magical Beasts and even Advanced Magical Beasts.

But between Advanced Magical Beasts and dragons, there lay Super Magical Beasts, High-Level Dragonkin Magical Beasts, and Super Dragonkin Magical Beasts—three tiers of separation. It was hard to imagine anyone being able to overcome so many levels and kill a dragon that underpinned the fate of a nation. Therefore, the Marquis of Bull's dragon assassination plan seemed like a tasteless joke.

The earl didn't laugh; he looked at Chris, "You are a magician from the Goat Assembly, then, do you know a magician named Weber Truth?"

"He is one of the lead Grand Magicians of the Goat Assembly; we call him Instructor Weber. He's responsible for guiding new members to join."

"What about Worrent Truth?"

"Another lead Grand Magician. It was he and my teacher, Olivie Truth, who were responsible for hunting down us young magicians who knew the secrets," Chris answered with some pain.

The earl nodded and said to Liszt, "Escort Her Excellency Chris to rest, and then come back so we can talk more."

"Yes, Father."

...

After Liszt had escorted Chris out.

Levis couldn't wait, saying, "Father, you can't possibly believe the news Liszt brought is real. I have never believed a word said by that magician Chris from beginning to end."

"Don't be hasty, Levis," the earl sipped his wine, his expression stern, "I've met Weber Truth and Worrent Truth on one occasion. They are the two Grand Magicians

worshipped by the Marquis of Bull... As for the Goat Assembly, I have heard of this magicians' organization; it originated from the exterminated Magic Goat Family."

"Is that so? Maybe Chris just appropriated the name 'Goat Assembly' to concoct a plot. Magicians love engaging in such things!"

"What could possibly be on Coral Island that merits a magician's scheme? Who would immerse themselves in seawater, unconscious for nine days, just to get close to a baron? Or to approach me through Liszt?" the earl said, his expression returning to calm, "The odds are nine out of ten that it's true. I understand the Marquis of Bull; he would definitely go mad in pursuit of immortality."

"Father, do you think this is true? Would the Marquis of Bull really assassinate the Grand Duke's dragon?"

"Is there a problem with that? It's just the killing of a dragon. If no one had the guts, how would the world have ever seen the rise of heroes with the title of Dragon Slayer?"

"Dragon Slayers are heroes because they kill Evil Dragons. But murdering the Grand Duke's dragon is an atrocious act," Levis countered.

"If he succeeds, who will care whether he killed a good Dragon or an evil Dragon... Levis, I hope you can calm yourself. As the heir of Coral Island, you're not as composed as your brother Liszt."

"I... I just find it hard to believe this fact."

"Belief is not important; what you need to learn is to distinguish the primary from the secondary," the Earl said. "Liszt brought this news solemnly. He cannot tell if it's true or false, and neither can I. But that doesn't prevent us from discussing the impact it would have on the Family and on Coral Island if it were true."

Levis wanted to say something, then gave up: "Yes, Father."

"Tell me your thoughts, what impact would the Marquis of Bull hunting the Sapphire Dragon have?"

"It would be a disaster. Without the Sapphire Dragon, our country could no longer exist; the Sapphire Family would be destroyed, and all the smaller families, including ours, that depend on the Sapphire Family would be doomed too," Levis grew increasingly anxious as he spoke, "Father, if it's true, we must prepare!"

"Your analysis is still not comprehensive enough. The Marquis of Bull's assassination of the Dragon could end in three outcomes—failure, success, and something in between. Each outcome will bring a different situation we need to deal with, and how should Coral Island position itself in such scenarios?"

Levis fell into deep thought; he was only a young man in his twenties who had not yet married.

...

Meanwhile.

Liszt had already handed Chris over to Paris and quickly returned to the study, finding a place to sit down.

The Earl asked, "Did you arrange everything?"

"I left her with my guard, Paris. You can rest assured, Father. Paris is trustworthy and will not make a mistake," Liszt knew what the Earl wanted to ask.

The Earl, however, seemed to recall something odd and said, "Although I don't think inheriting your mother's looks is an advantage for a male noble, it often has certain benefits... Still, young people should learn self-restraint."

Liszt didn't understand what he was getting at but nodded anyway.

The Earl changed the subject and added, "But you shouldn't be too restrained either; five pounds of snake meat is truly too little!"

"Father, the meat of an Intermediate Sea Monster is just a novelty for you, but for me, it is a huge help. It's critical for my future and reaching greater heights... Actually, I've brought gifts for you, Brother, and for Lidun as well—armors made from the skin of the Six-Headed King Serpent for each of you," Liszt said calmly.

He had to admit, five pounds of snake meat was not overly generous, but hunting the Six-Headed King Serpent had taken a lot of effort, and the meat, which was an excellent ingredient for pairing with medicines, was something he truly didn't want to share.

So, he simply compensated with the snake skin armors.

Upon hearing about the snake skin armors, and even with a share for Lidun, the Earl finally expressed satisfaction: "Learning to control your desires and understanding trade-offs is good progress. As a father, I can understand your urgent desire for improvement in strength; you wasted too much time when you were young."

"I'm glad you understand. Being born into the Tulip Family with the least talent really troubled me a lot."

"But knightly honor favors you more," Levis interjected.

A few words and three armors resolved the apparent rift between father and son. The harmonious atmosphere of the family returned as they began to discuss the myriad issues arising from the Marquis of Bull's assassination attempt on the Dragon.

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Chapter 357 : 0354: Breath Decay (Third Update, Alliance Hierarch's Additional Update 15/18)

The pressure from the assassination of the dragon incident was quickly dispelled amidst the playful banter between father and son.

Levis was no longer tense, Liszt appeared more relaxed, and the Earl even felt in the mood to pour each of his sons a glass of Crescent Moon Wine.

Then the three of them analyzed the impact of the assassination of the dragon as if they were looking down from God's perspective.

The analysis was quite straightforward.

Assuming the dragon-slaying incident was real and had already occurred, there would be three outcomes—the Sapphire Dragon killed by the Marquis of Bull, leading to the collapse of the state, with Coral Island needing to seek a new direction; the Marquis of Bull's rebellion crushed and the Sapphire Dragon unharmed, where Coral Island just needed to await orders from the Grand Duke.

There was also another compromise situation—the Marquis of Bull's assassination attempt failed but the Sapphire Dragon was injured. In such a case, the Duchy of Sapphire wouldn't collapse immediately, but it was certain that various forces from within and without would be surging; figuring out the right course of action for Coral Island within this tumult would be vexing.

Now, they discussed each scenario separately.

"If the dragon is killed, we must abandon the Sapphire Family without hesitation! Perhaps rallying around the Marquis of Bull would be the correct choice if he can become a Lich," Levis stated his thoughts regarding the first scenario. As for humans turning to Liches, that was unimportant.

Yet the Earl was shaking his head, "Liszt, what do you think?"

"I'm not optimistic about the Marquis of Bull becoming a Lich. Immortality without power is just courting death. Those kings and grand dukes certainly won't mind riding dragons to capture him, treating him as an excellent experimental material... If he really becomes a Lich, he would definitely hide and barely cling to life."

From the moment the Marquis of Bull staked everything on assassinating the dragon, he was out of the game in the Duchy of Sapphire.

Liszt continued, "The eventual fragmentation of the Duchy of Sapphire is inevitable; the question is who will take over these islands—Steel Ridge Kingdom, Eagle Kingdom, or perhaps both sides will have concerns and leave this place in chaos. Without the dragon's protection, pirates will certainly run rampant."

The dragon represented the pinnacle of power and order as well.

Without the dragon, people's ambitions would probably swell far beyond expectations.

Levis asked, "Are you suggesting that we choose a Kingdom to pledge allegiance to?"

"Yes, I'm leaning towards the Steel Ridge Kingdom, since it is our suzerain Kingdom after all."

"The marquises will be more popular. We are just an earl's family; if we switch sides, we might be demoted to viscounts. Even if we retain our earldom, it will cost a great deal of wealth."

"The islands need us to maintain them; the Kingdom won't be too excessive. Perhaps we will have to pay ten to twenty percent of taxes as protection money, but overall, it's worth it to avert a crisis, especially since we've lost the dragon's protection."

The Earl nodded, "Your analysis makes some sense, but you've overlooked one point—even without the Sapphire Dragon, the Sapphire Family still holds immense wealth. They can use this wealth to trade with any country for protection. In the future, the Sapphire Family might well become a marquis family for some Kingdom."

He looked at his two sons, "And we can continue to follow the Grand Duke. Support in difficult times often means loyalty, and a loyal noble will be appreciated by most landlords; that would be the time to choose a better liege."

Levis and Liszt were eager to change allegiances at the earliest opportunity.

The Earl, however, hoped to spruce up appearances first, then hold out for a better offer.

"We need to unite. If the nobility of the Duchy of Sapphire are scattered, they will be easily manipulated," Liszt added. "Red Crab Island would be the best ally, and Golden Island can also be brought into the fold. We may be somewhat poor as island nobles, but governing the islands necessitates our involvement."

...

The discussion lasted the entire day.

By evening, they had settled on a basic framework—to pretend ignorance on the surface while secretly sharpening their weapons, preparing to send out troops, protect themselves, or escape at a moment's notice.

Meanwhile, the Earl sent out his men to closely gather intelligence.

Logically, by this time, news would be in transit and they would soon know how to choose their response.

"After returning, quickly integrate your Knight Squad; this crisis is also an opportunity. Since you've chosen to strive for glory, the battlefield is the most suitable way," the Earl said with deep meaning. "I've neglected you before, but now I hope that we, father and son, can fight side by side."

Liszt bowed solemnly, "I await the moment at all times."

The Earl didn't know what to say next, only patting Liszt's shoulder heavily, "If your mother saw you today, she would be proud of you."

"Thank you."

"Go and rest well, there's nothing to be nervous about. Nobles have their own ways of survival and won't be greatly disturbed by the life or death of a single dragon. The strength we hold in our own hands is the foundation for standing in this world. Grip your spear tightly and fear no difficulty!"

"I will heed your teachings."

...

Returning from Tulip Castle to Fresh Flower Town.

Although Liszt had temporarily put aside the dragon slaying affair, he did not relax his efforts.

Despite his limited strength, he still needed to prepare for emergencies, so he immediately informed the six Earth Knights, "I hope to complete the Knight

Squad's integration as soon as possible, and you six can start making your own choices now."

"We are ready to charge for you, my Lord!"

Without any hesitation, the six immediately chose to follow him.

Thus, the Knight Squad of Fresh Flower Town was officially formed.

Liszt had a private conversation with Marcus, "Teacher Marcus, please start the actual combat training as soon as possible. Perhaps very soon, we will be heading to the battlefield."

"Is the Pioneer Mandate going to be issued earlier this year, my Lord?"

"Perhaps."

Marcus's eyes lit up, "I understand!"

After completing the Knight following phase, the Smoke Mission was also deemed complete. When he returned to the study, which was recently stocked with a new batch of Knight novels, he summoned the Smoke Mission.

"Mission complete, reward Dou Qi Secret Technique 'Breath Decay'."

"Breath Decay?" Liszt harbored a doubt, leaning towards it being an effect similar to the concealment of one's own aura. He felt that this Dou Qi Secret Technique was hidden amidst the batch of Knight novels he had recently acquired.

However, he wasn't in a hurry to search for it, preferring to wait for the release of a new mission.

"Mission: The serf girl Emily, who follows the training of the girls' group, is always clumsy and never learns the embroidery lessons well, often receiving punishment from the embroidery teacher. Therefore, she prefers Knight classes that help her gain confidence. She is even able to cultivate Dou Qi

faster than the boys. Please arrange her training reasonably. Reward: Douson's new magic."

"I'm about to learn Douson's third kind of magic?" Liszt received the good news, and with the impending battle, Douson would become his greatest helper.

With the acquisition of new magic, Douson's combat power was set to increase further.

The only pity was that the Eight Tiny Ones were still young and slow at learning magic, hardly resembling Intermediate Magical Beasts. Douson at the same stage had already learned Rock Spike through explosive mouth skills under Liszt's guidance—It seemed the Eight Tiny Ones needed more intensive coaching.

His thoughts fleeting, he called for Servant Thomas, "Go to the administration and get a file on a girl from the female training group named Emily. Also, inquire about her life and study situation and report back to me in detail."

"Yes, master."

Thomas went on his way.

Only then did Liszt take a new book from the shelf, opening the covers one by one, beginning his search for his new Dou Qi Secret Technique "Breath Decay".

Chapter 358 : 0355: Air Capture Record (Fourth Update, Alliance Hierarch's Additional Update 16/18)

One hour.

Two hours.

Three hours.

When Liszt had sliced open the covers of all the knight's novels on the shelves, he found that none were like "The Vulture Knight Stephan's Expedition" of years past, with golden parchment hidden inside the cover, upon which the Dou Qi Secret Technique "The Eye of Magic" was recorded.

"Why is this happening? Could it be that 'Breath Decay' isn't hidden within knight novels? If not, then how did it come into my hands?"

He pondered hard but couldn't come up with an answer.

Suddenly, a thought struck him, "The locals of Fresh Flower Town definitely wouldn't know any Dou Qi Secret Techniques, not even the Tulip Family possesses such techniques; the serfs that were bought surely don't know any Dou Qi Secret Techniques either—they are just a group of commoners... But Chris is not a local, she might know!"

His follower, Charles Trap, wasn't a local either, but if he truly knew Dou Qi Secret Techniques, he wouldn't be in such a sorry state.

Paris wasn't a local either, but since she had never practiced Dou Qi before, she most likely wouldn't possess any secret techniques. Otherwise, given the relationship Liszt felt he had with Paris, she would have presented them to him with both hands.

Therefore.

He went straight to Chris's living quarters, which were arranged next to Paris's, both in the noble living area.

"How are you resting?" Liszt asked gently.

"Much better, thank you for your concern, Baron," Chris replied, having donned her magic cloak and currently holding a magic book for reading—a book that Liszt had lent to her. He had already signed a contract with Chris, officially hiring her as his magical consultant.

Liszt had originally planned to pay her.

But Chris refused and decided to work for Liszt without compensation as a way to repay the debt of saving her life.

Of course, all her basic needs such as food, clothing, lodging, and traveling expenses had to be funded by Liszt, as well as supporting magic books, experimental materials, and so on from the castle—this situation left Liszt quite perplexed, wondering whether he had acquired a free magician, or she had acquired a free patron?

Luckily, the talent of Chris Truth was promising. She had advanced to magician at the age of seventeen, and there was hope for her to aim for the rank of Grand Magician in the future.

She was proficient in the Water, Fire, and Wind Systems of magic and had a slight understanding of the Earth and Lightning Systems. Since she had long been engaged in theoretical research, she wasn't very skilled in making magic equipment, but her potion making was very adept, having relied on her potion making for income at the Goat Assembly.

"I should have let you rest for a few more days, considering that your body hasn't fully recovered, but as you know, the situation I am facing is somewhat tense."

"I understand, Baron. Please command me for any work you have," she responded.

"Currently, Fresh Flower Town is cooperating with two magicians, Elkerson and Granney; Granney is responsible for making magic equipment for me, occasionally visiting... Elkerson makes magic potions for me, and I plan to transfer his duties to you," said Liszt.

He had already planned to have Elkerson focus solely on collecting magic books and acquiring magic through various channels, so there was no longer a need for him to stay in Fresh Flower Town making magic potions.

He believed that second-hand books and magic trade would be enough to fill his coffers abundantly.

Chris nodded, "I am very skilled at making magic potions. There will be no problem."

"By the way, do you happen to know what auxiliary magic medicine means?" Liszt asked, thinking of his auxiliary magic medicine Dragon Hollyhock, whose seedlings had yet to sprout, so research had not yet begun.

"Sorry, Baron, I haven't heard any knowledge about such magic potions."

"It doesn't matter. Someone told me that my Dragon Hollyhock has mutated and it has become a variety of auxiliary magic medicine, but it hasn't grown up yet. When they mature, I hope you can help me research what the effects of auxiliary magic medicine are."

"Of course."

...

"The town currently has Black Tulips, Rapid Growth Magic Thorns, Common Flame Mushrooms, and the auxiliary magic medicine Dragon Hollyhock. In winter, we can also grow Ice Snow Flame Mushrooms, totaling five types of magic potions. Your job is not an easy one. Have you considered selecting some children from the town to be your magic apprentices?"

"If I need to, I will choose magic apprentices. Baron, the inheritance of truth requires a lot of energy to complete, and I may not be suitable for it yet... I haven't recovered from the shock of my last magic apprentice's death; she was killed in an explosion during an experiment."

It seems being a magic apprentice is indeed a high-risk occupation.

He decided not to beat around the bush anymore, "Chris, you work at the Goat Assembly, have you ever come across any knightly Dou Qi secret techniques?"

"Dou Qi secret techniques?" Chris thought carefully, then shook her head, "No, I rarely have contact with knights. The closest I ever got was probably being chased by one."

"Really none?"

"None."

Liszt pressed down the disappointment in his heart and continued with a smile, "Then, can you tell me the casting scheme of the Spring of Water from the six Water System spells that you know? I have always had a great interest in studying magic."

He actually had no interest in it.

But Sea Sprite Ake was very interested. She had already learned the Water Arrow Spell, Water Arrow Barrage, Water Wheel Wall, Water Bullet, and Water Whirlpool, and started studying the Water Wave Shield—a spell only a Grand Magician could master. However, due to her insufficient proficiency in magic arrays and magic runes, her progress in learning the Water Wave Shield was slow.

Another spell like Spring of Water could enhance Ake's foundation.

In fact, Liszt was also preparing to have Ake write down all the difficulties she encountered while studying magic and have them solved through him by Chris.

Effectively finding Ake a teacher.

"Baron, you don't need to be so polite. You are my lifesaver; just command me if you need anything. I will organize the casting scheme for the Spring of Water right away and hand it over to you."

"Mmm, I might ask you for some knowledge related to Water System magic in the future."

"I am willing to provide answers for you."

"For any needs in life, just let me know. If possible, I will try my best to satisfy them. Consider Fresh Flower Town your home and start a new life here."

Chris's eyes shone brightly, "Yes, Baron."

...

Returning to the study, Liszt continued to ponder where he might obtain the Dou Qi secret techniques.

Logically speaking, if he didn't seek them out, the Dou Qi secret techniques would probably appear on their own soon, but he had grown accustomed to collaborating with the Smoke Mission to proactively obtain his rewards—knowing that the Dou Qi secret techniques were within reach yet unable to obtain them was quite distressing.

He annoyedly downed a cup of milk tea to calm his mood.

He casually flipped open a magic book on the desk, titled "Cavendish's Air Capture Records," which were the research notes of a great magician named Cavendish Truth. The book documented Cavendish's research on air, which he believed differentiated magic by its combination with substances in the air.

This book was valuable, not because of the experimental content—actually, the content was dull and tedious, with no research results, as Cavendish thought that air was composed only of fine dust and free magic power, without even considering the vital elements required for breathing.

The real value lay in Cavendish's detailed record of the entire process of preparing his Mage Tower, including the necessary materials, their prices, the manufacturing of experimental equipment, and the efficiency of potion production.

This gave Liszt a very clear reference for the experimental costs of magicians, potentially reducing the likelihood of being swindled by unscrupulous magicians in the future.

Of course.

Now when he opened this book, it wasn't to read it, but to consider a possibility, "Why couldn't the Dou Qi secret techniques be hidden inside the covers of magic books?"

...

Chapter 359 : 0356: Secret Technique for Diligent and Frugal Household Management (Fifth update, Alliance Hierarch additional release 17/18)

Seriously, Liszt had considered the possible locations of the Dou Qi secret technique within the book—on the cover and the pages.

Although the thick paper was substantial, hiding another sheet that recorded the Dou Qi secret technique would still be difficult. Moreover, a page hiding another sheet would be obviously different from the other pages, making it easily detectable, which rendered the hiding pointless. Therefore, he searched only within the covers.

He flipped through each book, and by the halfway point, he still hadn't found the Dou Qi secret technique.

But he was not discouraged, as the castle's magic books collection was only two-thirds complete. The remaining third was partly in the Sea View Villa, and the rest in Chris's home.

As they say, opportunity is reserved for those who are prepared.

When he flipped open the cover of a magic book tucked away in the corner of the shelf, a silver page was revealed from the slit of the cover. He quickly pulled out the entire sheet. The silver paper was covered in densely written Serpent Script, with a diagram of human Dou Qi circulation on the back.

"Is it a favorite method among families with Dou Qi secret techniques to store them in this way?" Liszt caressed the silver paper, deducing it was made of silver, "But obviously, compared to Steve Vulture's golden paper, this was a grade lower."

The Dou Qi secret technique was acquired, but he did not immediately look into it; instead, he flipped through the magic book.

The title "Searching for the Magical Beast Beetle King among the Pincered Beetles" was something he vaguely remembered having read a bit of; the content was not engaging or rather was quite specialized, recording several forms of pincered beetles, but in the end, the book did not document any magical beast beetles.

"So, there's no connection between this magic book and 'The Vulture Knight Stephan's Expedition'?"

Two different kinds of books, one a knight's novel, the other a magic book, both concealed Dou Qi secret techniques in the same manner, and both eventually ended up in Fresh Flower Town.

Liszt was unable to guess what the underlying driving force was.

For example, what caused the leakage of the Dou Qi secret techniques, or why they were placed inside books, and then how they traveled thousands of miles away to Coral Island.

Unknown.

It could only be chalked up to luck.

He shifted his gaze to the silver paper, where at the top there was a line of slightly larger Serpent Script: "Breath Depletion Dou Qi Secret Technique - Steve Vulture."

"Hmm?"

Liszt stared at the title, making sure he had not misread it. The author of this paper documenting the Dou Qi secret technique was none other than Steve Vulture, a Sky Knight from the Blast Furnace Fortress Kingdom, who rode a Dragon Breed Magic Beast Vulture. The Dou Qi Secret Technique "The Eye of Magic" also came from Steve.

He took out the golden paper that recorded "The Eye of Magic" from the Gemstone Space.

Comparing the two.

The name was identical, the crafting of the paper, the engraved Serpent Script—all eerily consistent: "So that means, both of these Dou Qi secret techniques originate from Steve, not necessarily his creation, but he must have obtained them... There's no way he was a common Sky Knight!"

An earl is a Sky Knight, and even a Sky Knight of the Sword Saint Level, yet the Earl's family had no Dou Qi secret technique.

The Long Taro Family must have a Dou Qi Secret Technique, but as a grandson-in-law, Liszt was not clear about what the Dou Qi Secret Technique was, as each noble family kept their family's Dou Qi Secret Techniques a strict secret. It was a treasure that could be passed down from generation to generation like an elf, and was extremely valuable.

It could be basically confirmed that the technique was passed on to male heirs and not to females.

"What exactly is the reason that allowed Steve Vulture to disseminate the Dou Qi Secret Technique in a covert manner?" Liszt shook his head and decisively stopped delving into it.

He began to study "Breath Decay".

The content was complex, and the way the Dou Qi was manipulated was also quite tricky and peculiar, but it was slightly easier than "The Eye of Magic".

Its effect was as its name suggests, to deplete one's own aura, that is, to greatly reduce the Dou Qi that was constantly steaming out of oneself—its purpose was twofold. One was to disguise one's strength, making it difficult for others to accurately gauge one's level of Dou Qi; the other was to reduce the consumption of Dou Qi.

The relationship between a knight's body and Dou Qi was like a bucket and water.

However, it was not a perfect bucket, but rather one that continuously leaked, so knights had to persist in training and sustaining nutrition. Otherwise, the Dou Qi refined by the body would not keep up with the loss, and the total amount of Dou Qi would continually deplete.

The same was even more true when taking magic potions. The constant clash of magic power would not only break constraints but also turn the body sieve-like.

Only by continually replenishing with new magic potions and absorbing more nutrition could they continue to refine Dou Qi, maintain the total amount of Dou Qi, and continue their Dou Qi cultivation.

The value of "Breath Decay" lay in its ability to coordinate the operation of Dou Qi to reduce its loss, indirectly saving on resource consumption and enhancing the foundation of cultivation.

In other words,

whereas before Liszt would have to eat a large chunk of Magical Beast Meat every day to sustain the loss of Dou Qi from his body, now perhaps only a small piece would be necessary. Before, when consuming magic potions, a great deal of magic power would dissipate; with "Breath Decay", he could greatly save on magic potions and improve their utilization rate.

In the final introduction, there was a record by Steve Vulture on the effects of the Dou Qi Secret Technique.

"Breath Decay" can slow down the dissipation of Dou Qi in the body, but as Dou Qi grows, the effect diminishes."

"An Elite Earth Knight can slow Dou Qi loss by about three-quarters; a Common Level Sky Knight can slow the loss by about two-thirds; a Sword Saint Level Sky Knight can slow the loss by about half; a Completion Level Sky Knight can slow the loss by about two-fifths; the stage for Dragon Knights is unknown."

"At the same time, because the dissipation of Dou Qi is slowed, it will confuse other knights about one's own strength, allowing a Sky Knight to appear as an Earth Knight."

It could be confirmed that when Steve Vulture wrote this Dou Qi Secret Technique, he was a Completion Level Sky Knight.

"The stronger the strength, the less the reduction... At the Elite Earth Knight stage, to be able to slow the loss by three-quarters, the effect is indeed astonishing!" Liszt was very satisfied with the effect of "Breath Decay". Saving resources was an important aspect, and the ability to disguise his power level was not bad either.

Sometimes his strength improved in an unusually fast manner, which was indeed a bit inconceivable.

Without "Breath Decay", he could pretend to be a Common Earth Knight in front of an earl, but in front of Marquis Merlin, his cover would be blown straight away.

With this Dou Qi Secret Technique in hand, he no longer had to worry about his power advancing leaps and bounds, making himself too high-profile:

"Genius can sometimes also be a pressure, but now I can finally continue to be a normal landlord and enjoy a peaceful noble life. I don't have to bear the dazzling halo that I shouldn't have at my age."

Chapter 360 : 0357: Female Follower (First Update)

Having obtained "Breath Decay", Liszt immediately decided to practice it.

Now that he had completely mastered "Flaming Wave" and "Fire Dragon Drill", and had basically mastered "Multi-Arrow", and his "The Eye of Magic" had become even more transcendent, pondering over these Dou Qi manuscripts and Dou Qi secret techniques would not significantly improve his strength. It was better to practice "Breath Decay" to conserve his resources.

At the same time.

Thomas had returned with the organized documents to report, "My lord, this is the dossier on the serf girl Emily from the commissioner's office."

Emily, from the Eagle Kingdom, was an orphan with both parents deceased, and her brother had also died. She was eleven years old this year and was the first girl in the girls' group to cultivate Dou Qi, even quicker than most of the boys in the qualifying group. She performed excellently in knight training, but she still needed to attend embroidery classes.

Moreover, she performed poorly in her embroidery classes—she couldn't even thread a needle properly.

"Emily isn't getting along well with her foster family, mainly because she does not do household chores and thinks all day about becoming a female knight, which leads to frequent scolding. After knight training classes, she'd rather stay in the Knight's Square than go home early," said Thomas.

After reviewing the dossier.

Liszt basically understood that this girl named Emily yearned for the life of a knight, "Call Rom over, and have Emily brought along as well."

"Yes, my lord."

Before long, Rom and Emily both rushed over, with Rom standing to the side after paying his respects. Liszt's gaze was entirely on Emily, the eleven-year-old girl who was around one and a half meters tall, and although her face was immature and her body frail, her eyes were bright and full of life.

Her deep eye sockets and high nose bridge gave her a somewhat exotic appeal—relative to the people of the Duchy of Sapphire and the Eagle Kingdom.

Perhaps she would be quite beautiful when she grew up.

However, her large bone structure contrasted with her skinny frame, making her appear somewhat disproportionate, likely due to the lack of flesh on her body.

"Your name is Emily, I heard you don't like being an embroiderer?"

Emily wasn't meeting Liszt for the first time, but it was her first time speaking so closely with Lord Landlord, which made her a bit nervous. Still, she mustered her courage and replied in a tender yet firm voice, "Yes, Lord Landlord, Emily does not like to be an embroiderer. Emily hopes to become a knight!"

"Ambitious, but do you know that for a woman, becoming a knight requires far more effort than it does for all others?"

"Emily knows, but Emily is not afraid!"

Seeing Emily's determination, Liszt couldn't help but smile, "Then do you know that the resources spent to train a female knight exceed those required to train a male knight? If I spend a lot of resources to train you as a knight, do you know what you should do?"

"I..." Emily was somewhat at a loss, being just an eleven-year-old child, but she quickly regained her resolve, "If Lord Landlord trains Emily, Emily is willing to serve Lord Landlord for life, and will not retreat a step even if it costs her life!"

"Hmm."

This precocious response somewhat astonished Liszt.

Indeed, she was a child capable of attracting the Smoke Mission and pulling on the Threads of Destiny, a bit extraordinary; he nodded in approval, "I am satisfied with your answer, Emily. Since you have chosen a difficult path, as your Landlord, I will give you a chance to change your fate, hoping you will keep your promise."

"Yes, Lord Landlord, Emily is willing to follow the lord and charge forth for the lord!" Emily, with her young frame, mimicked the adult knights and performed the grand salute of a follower—kneeling on one knee, right hand on her chest, leaning forward ninety degrees while bowing, head lowered, gazing at the ground.

Liszt walked over and lifted her up, "I accept your allegiance, Emily."

By the time Emily climbed up, she excitedly stood straight, and he smiled, saying, "You are my youngest follower and also my first female follower. I wish

that in the future, you may become a glorious knight, chasing honor shoulder to shoulder with me... For now, you will train with Maggie."

Maggie, the object of envy among all the serf children because her sister was the personal guard of Lord Landlord.

She received specialized knight training every day and was making rapid progress.

Emily nodded excitedly, "Yes, sir!"

Liszt then turned to Rom, "Rom, please arrange for Emily's training personally. Also, tell her foster parents to treat Emily better. From now on, she does not need to attend any more embroidery classes; she should focus entirely on knight training."

"Yes, sir!"

"All right, you may go now," Liszt indicated for everyone to leave, then he said to his personal servant, "Go and call Paris over."

Calling over Paris was simply to inform her that her sister Maggie was going to have a companion for her training. It was somewhat wasteful for Maggie to enjoy the knight training alone, and training with a companion was often better than alone, if nothing else, for having a good point of reference.

Paris replied, "I have no objections. In fact, I am happy to see that Maggie will have a companion. She has been getting increasingly lazy with her knightly drills... But I am surprised, Baron, that you would accept an eleven-year-old girl as a follower."

"It was her longing look filled with desire for knighthood that moved me. I believe that someone with such a gaze will not lead an ordinary life in the future. Perhaps, among my followers, there will emerge a female Sky Knight,"

Liszt said with a smile. In actuality, it was the Smoke Mission he believed in, not Emily herself.

Paris smiled, "I wish her luck."

"How is your Dou Qi cultivation progressing?"

"I have not found a clue yet. The power of the Black Dragon Childe always manages to assimilate the little Dou Qi that I have painstakingly refined."

"Perhaps you are taking the wrong approach. Dou Qi originates within a knight, but you already have the power of the Black Dragon Childe within you, which is a conflict in itself... You could consult with Chris, learn magic, use the Black Dragon Childe's power to harness Light System Magic. Maybe that's more reasonable."

Invisibility Technique is one of the Light System Magic disciplines; many Grand Magicians study Invisibility Technique. And Paris, after acquiring the power of the Black Dragon Childe, soon developed her own Invisibility Technique.

"Hmm, when my cultivation of Dou Qi is declared a failure, I'll turn to magic," she said.

...

After Paris left,

Liszt concentrated for a moment, and smoke slowly emerged.

"Mission completed, reward Douson with new magic - Rock Wall."

"Rock Wall?" He stood in front of the window, just in time to see Douson playing with the Eight Tiny Ones in the sunset. Suddenly, Douson opened his mouth, and a rock wall burst forth frantically from the apple tree grove of the estate, obstructing the path of the Eight Tiny Ones.

Facing a rock wall that was three meters high, ten meters wide, and twenty centimeters thick, irregular and twisted.

The Eight Tiny Ones barked excitedly, nonstop.

And Douson, as if he had found a new toy, continued raising rock walls, turning the originally beautiful apple garden into chaos with walls everywhere.

"Quiet, Douson!" Liszt couldn't help but shout out loud.