

The Mighty Dragons Are Dead

#Chapter 51: The Eyes That Peep into Magic Power - Read The Mighty Dragons Are Dead Chapter 51: The Eyes That Peep into Magic Power

Chapter 51: The Eyes That Peep into Magic Power

After much effort, the flames were extinguished, but the knight's novel had already been scorched to a yellowish-brown exterior.

This was a knight's novel called "The Vulture Knight Stephan's Expedition," which, to be exact, resembled more of a chronicle. It narrated the experiences of Stephan Vulture, a Sky Knight who rode on the back of a Dragon Breed Magic Beast Vulture and soared through the skies, as he expanded the territory for Blast Furnace Fortress Kingdom.

The story was quite dry, but the content was detailed.

Among the many fabricated knight's novels, this one stood out as a breath of fresh air. Liszt had read it three times already and felt that eighty to ninety percent of the story was true.

Even now, the Vulture Family might still exist within the Blast Furnace Fortress Kingdom.

"What a pity, a good book ruined. Next time I go to Tulip Castle, who knows if I'll be able to get a new one," Liszt lamented as he held the charred novel.

Good books are hard to find.

Suddenly, his brows raised, noticing the burnt cover partially peeling away to reveal a glittering golden color, as though there was a hidden layer within the cover.

With a flick of his finger, the cover started to flake and fall off in pieces, revealing the golden color inside.

“Indeed, a hidden layer!” Liszt’s disappointment was replaced by surprise, “This must be one of the so-called forgotten Dou Qi secret techniques!”

Earlier that day, having completed the Little Wheat Bug mission, he received his mission rewards by nightfall; everything was so natural.

After rubbing away the cover completely, he found nestled within it a gold-leaf paper the size of the palm— not truly paper, as Liszt discovered after examining it. It was made of gold in a foil-like thinness. The paper was embossed with tiny, dense characters and an illustration of the Dou Qi circulation within the human body.

“Magic Eye Dou Qi Secret Technique – Stephan Vulture,” was written at the top of the gold leaf in larger Serpent Script.

“Indeed, a Dou Qi secret technique. Magic Eye, could it be the hereditary secret technique of the Vulture Family? Looking at it, the novel I obtained seems extraordinary, probably the only one of its kind. The weight of this gold leaf alone is equivalent to a gold coin; it’s unlikely they’d include one in every copy.”

After finishing his thought, he shifted his gaze from the gold leaf to the bookshelf in the study: “Among these books, there’s information about the Formless Dragon, there’s ‘The Eye of Magic’—could there be something else hidden within?”

To test his theory, he sliced a cut along the cover of each novel.

But no other hidden layers were found.

Clearly, this was the only Dou Qi secret technique.

“‘The Eye of Magic’ has intricate content, involving remarkably complex and intricate Dou Qi circulation, much more complicated than the ultimate mystery techniques found in Dou Qi manuscripts... It might be challenging to learn.”

Liszt was confident in his own aptitude.

He had quickly learned and was close to mastering both “Flame Wave” and “Fire Dragon Drill.” He was also preparing to learn archery from Marcus— preferring ranged attacks to close combat.

“Should I postpone learning ‘The Eye of Magic’?” As soon as the thought occurred, it was dismissed when he read the final description of “The Eye of Magic” on the gold leaf.

The description read, “The Eye of Magic allows one to see through the circulation of magical power; even the invisibility spells of Grand Magicians cannot conceal their form under The Eye of Magic.”

In that moment, he understood that this Dou Qi secret technique was still part of the chain missions, in preparation for confronting the Formless Dragon: “Is this telling me that once I master ‘The Eye of Magic,’ I will be able to see the Formless Dragon?”

Therefore, what Liszt was to do next became clear.

He first repeatedly tested the scent of the Smoked Grass, finding that the juice it exuded had a potent, piercing smell, although not as strong as when it was burned.

He had someone cut a batch of Smoked Grass to dry and built a “Beacon Tower” at the dairy farm, solely to burn the Smoked Grass and attract the Formless Dragon.

Beneath the Beacon Tower, he began the construction of an underground tunnel which would serve as a hiding place.

Meanwhile, around the Beacon Tower, cows would be tethered, and before the invasion of the Formless Dragon, their bodies would be smeared with the juice of the Smoked Grass.

On a mound of earth a short distance from the Beacon Tower, Liszt likewise commanded his men to excavate a tunnel, the entrance of which was disguised as a bunker.

In his plan, he would hide here, constantly monitoring the invasion of the Formless Dragon. Upon sighting the Formless Dragon, he would instruct his servants to ignite the Smoked Grass at the Beacon Tower, and then the servants would take shelter in the underground passage. He, on the other hand, would watch the Formless Dragon feast to its heart’s content, until it flew away, and then he would come over to search the ground, to see if the Formless Dragon would leave behind any of its gemstones.

Standing on the mound where the tunnel was being dug, Liszt's mind was still contemplating, ensuring that nothing was overlooked.

"If it really is about completing missions, and rewards start to be distributed, it means that after I place the Thorn Bugs, the Formless Dragon will come to Fresh Flower Town... Is it the Smoke Mission that controls the Formless Dragon, or is it merely a coincidental guide? Can I try placing Thorn Bugs at any time, and the Formless Dragon will invade Fresh Flower Town whenever I do?"

How mystical.

There was temporarily no answer.

What he had to do was to strive to complete every Smoke Mission and grow stronger.

"Liszt, digging from here to that Thorn Forest is no simple task, and I still do not see the significance of doing this," Goltai directed the civilians, excavating the tunnel according to Liszt's instructions.

"You do not need to know, Teacher Goltai. It is not a matter of mistrust, but rather a secret of my own. You merely need to take everyone from the dairy farms, on the day I inform you, and have them stay elsewhere for a day."

"Well then, Fresh Flower Town is your territory, and no one dares to defy your wishes, of course, I will do as told."

"That's good."

"So, you really intend to place the Thorn Bug within that Thorn Forest? That forest isn't very large, not an ideal place for placement."

"I have my reasons."

"Hmm, well, it doesn't matter, after all, the Thorn Bug is just a useless Elf Bug, it doesn't affect agricultural development."

"Every Elf Bug has its unique usefulness; it's just that we haven't discovered it yet. Perhaps, one day, you will find that Thorns can also give birth to Magic Potions."

"Haha, I hope so."

The project was advancing with great urgency, and no one understood why Liszt wanted to do this, but no one dared to resist either. In Fresh Flower Town, there was basically no one who would dare to stop Liszt from doing anything he wanted, including murder and arson.

The tunnel was dug day by day.

He began to practice “The Eye of Magic” in the Castle, a Dou Qi Secret Technique that was quite complex, but with his keen understanding, he soon fumbled his way to the trick of it.

To put it plainly, it was about using the eyes as a bridge to resonate one’s Dou Qi with the Magic Power of the outside world. Magic Power is a rather fantastic force, constantly emitting vibrations, which he preferred to call the radiation of Magic Power dispersal.

Receiving radiation, using the eyes as radar, that was the principle of “The Eye of Magic,” a secret technique of a non-combative nature.

After five days of continuous study, Liszt finally mastered the final technique for channeling Dou Qi, casting the Eye of Magic for the first time. In that moment, looking at his own eyes in the mirror, the sapphire blue pupils seemed to swirl, countless stars flowing within the rotating pupils, mysterious and profound.

Eerie and beautiful.

“These eyes of mine, could they bewitch any young girl?”

He turned his gaze toward the Window, where Marcus was teaching four Retainer Knights Dou Qi. They had passed their prime, but with diligent practice, they still had the potential to refine their Dou Qi.

At that moment, Marcus in his field of vision appeared as a cyan silhouette.

A little distance away, Douson, who was struggling with a rock, appeared as a faint yellow shadow.

“Wind Attribute Dou Qi’s Marcus, Earth-Attribute Magic Power’s Douson, this is the scene seen through the Eye of Magic... Will it truly be effective against the Formless Dragon?”

Chapter 52: The Unceasing Growth of Ambition

The “Eye of Magic” was somewhat draining on his Dou Qi, Liszt found that after straining to sustain it, he could only maintain it for five minutes at a time. Otherwise, not only would his Dou Qi fail to keep up, but his eyes would also feel sore and irritated.

However, whenever the Dou Qi inside him was completely drained, a warm breath would emanate from the Crimson Blood Sword strapped to his waist, replenishing his depleted Dou Qi.

The rubies produced by the dragon contained magical powers.

When he focused the “Eye of Magic,” he could see that the rubies shone with a blood-like light, swirling gently as if they were a vortex.

“If I can see the magic in the gemstones, I should also be able to see the magic in the dragon. During this time, I will seize every moment to practice so that I can use the ‘Eye of Magic’ at will.”

Unsheathing the Crimson Blood Sword, Liszt was filled with a spirited determination.

The time for “dragon slaying” was fast approaching.

“Goltai, what do you think the Baron means by digging an underground tunnel here?” Isaiah was counting on his fingers, figuring out how many copper coins to distribute to the serfs later.

Liszt never commandeered serfs for free, he always paid them a certain remuneration. That’s why the serfs were always eager to sign up for all kinds of production and construction.

The drive of interest plus the authority of the Lord were invariably successful.

“To be honest, I’m as clueless as you are,” Goltai said as he puffed on his pipe, looking as if he had no stake in the matter. “Liszt has come of age. He’s no longer the timid youth in Tulip Castle. Often, I cannot fathom what he’s thinking. I have no idea what Fresh Flower Town will turn into.”

“That’s not what you said in your letter. You mentioned that Fresh Flower Town is flourishing.”

“If I hadn’t said that, would you have come? Besides, isn’t Fresh Flower Town flourishing now... at least we have seafood to eat every day, don’t we?”

“I admit, the fishing for seafood was an innovative approach, and the collection of manure was also a significant measure. But what are we doing today? Digging a tunnel underneath the farm, is this meant for storing hay or what?”

Goltai removed his pipe, tapping out the ashes, “Stop complaining, Blair never gripes. That is why with every dinner, Liszt always drinks an extra glass with him.”

“That’s because he’s old now and just wants to find a noble to rely on, to live out his years without worry, no ambition left.”

“You’re not so young yourself.”

“But I hope one day to rejoin the noble ranks. I must strive for my son—he’s too dim-witted and will never marry into nobility.” Isaiah rubbed his head in distress. “I originally came here hoping to find a chance to go to battle. You said that Liszt was full of great ambitions.”

“I’m not certain, but you could talk more with Marcus. That guy used to desire nobility more than anyone, but he quickly pledged his loyalty to Liszt,”

Isaiah narrowed his eyes, “I will.”

Soon it was evening, and time to distribute the wages. Isaiah checked the list, handing out copper coins to each working serf, “Next, Alewa **it.”

“Sir, that’s me, that’s me.” The serf with the unfortunate name, Alewa, rubbed his palms in glee as he received two copper coins from the clerk.

That was enough for eight big chunks of black bread!

But he had no intention of buying bread; his wife had joined Oyster Village and went out to sea daily to catch seafood. Besides delivering their share to the castle, they could enjoy seafood at home. After having seafood

abundantly these past days, he felt a surge of strength in his body, and his stamina at night had doubled to a whole six seconds.

His wife praised his vigor, encouraging him to eat more seafood.

He was preparing for a third child, so earning more copper coins now meant sending the child to the smithy as an apprentice later—the Lord Landlord had said that a serf with a skill would be put to good use.

“Praise the Lord Landlord!” After tucking away the copper coin, Alaiwa couldn’t help but pray inwardly. He liked his current landlord for the days were getting better, no worries about going hungry, and he could even save some copper coins, “I just don’t know why Lord Landlord wants to dig holes here?”

He was a serf of the dairy farm, responsible for feeding the cows.

He used to worry and complain to his wife, fearing he might lose his job, maybe Lord Landlord no longer wished to keep cows, otherwise, why would he dig holes in the cow farm.

But his wife scolded him severely: “If you’re not raising cows, you could raise horses; if not horses, you could repair roads; if not roads, you could grow millet. Lord Landlord is a great man, who makes it easy for the elderly, women, and children to work and to eat their fill. Damn it, stop your complaining, you must believe in the Lord Landlord!”

Alaiwa obeyed his wife, so he quickly changed his mind.

He felt that Lord Landlord, no matter where he dug holes, was a great landlord, and what the holes were for didn’t matter—how could the commoners understand the thoughts of a noble lord.

Practicing the Eye of Magic, supervising the construction of the project, had become Liszt’s main task over these past few days.

Over the course of several days, all preparations for the dairy farm had been completed.

The beacon tower was ready, the bunker disguised, the passages walked through multiple times with no obstructions. The smoked grass was harvested and piled on the beacon tower, ready to be ignited at any moment. Young

cows were kept not far away for feeding, while Old Hua and Old Black, two aged dairy cows, were tied at the edge of the beacon tower.

Liszt had also made several trips from the Thorn Forest to the bunker, to ensure that after he planted the cordyceps, he could immediately hurry to the bunker.

The bunker had a U-shaped passage linking to another refuge.

If the Formless Dragon did not leave Fresh Flower Town as expected, after feasting on the cows and grass, he would immediately retreat through the U-shaped passage to the refuge, then block the passage.

The refuge had breathing holes connecting to the outside, and many food and drinks were stored.

This would at least ensure his safety.

He dared not be careless when dealing with a dragon.

Walking through the dairy farm, Liszt was inspecting the quality of the construction project for the last time. It wasn't a big project, so the progress was swift, the quality satisfactory, and everything was built according to his wishes without skimping.

"I am starting to like this world, this era."

He climbed up the beacon tower, surveying the entire dairy farm: "A word from the landlord, and everyone is busy. Before, I managed a small team of five in the company, and even faced opposition from troublemakers. Here, no one dares to question my words, not even Goltai or Marcus."

Power, for a man, is an irresistible desire.

A person who has never experienced power may not find it wonderful; but once they have tasted it, the allure becomes addictive and impossible to resist.

The identity of the Baron of Fresh Flower Town was something Liszt could no longer give up.

At the same time, the ambition in his heart was growing continuously; Fresh Flower Town was too small to satisfy his thirst for greater power. Fortunately,

it was just ambition, as reason governed his thoughts, rooted in the policy of “accumulate grain widely, build walls high, and proclaim kingship slowly,” he plotted his course.

“Princes and generals have no predestined kin.”

Chapter 53 The Invasion of the Formless Dragon

Early June, dry and tinder.

The early morning sun rose, sweeping away the coolness and replacing it with heat that would last all day.

Clad in black Magical Beast Leather Armor with the Gemstone Weapon, the Bloodsword, hanging at his waist, and sapphire-colored eyes sparkling with exuberance, the handsome face wore a solemn expression.

Awakened early to heed commands at the Castle, Goltai looked at the Landlord of Fresh Flower Town in front of him, and for a moment, he was lost in thought—even Coral Island’s Count did not possess the aristocratic charm that Liszt exuded at that moment.

When it comes to looks, out of a perfect score of one hundred, Liszt could earn ninety-nine, the one point less being a precaution against pride.

Good looks can’t be eaten, but they do bring happiness.

Every morning, when he looked at himself in the mirror, Liszt always started the day in a good mood.

His personal servant, Thomas, meticulously smoothed out the wrinkles on Liszt’s leather armor, as maintaining the appearance of nobility was a servant’s main duty.

“Teacher Goltai, according to the original plan, relocate the households of the cow farm to other settlements and enforce a full-day lockdown. No resident of the town, for whatever reason, may leave their home. The patrol team is to suspend patrolling and wait for my command in the administration building until the lockdown is lifted,” Liszt ordered.

“Understood, Liszt. I will carry out the order right away,” Goltai replied.

Goltai turned around and rode out the door.

All the townspeople were perplexed by the Landlord’s decision, but obedience was ingrained in their bones. Once the command was given, Fresh Flower Town quickly fell silent.

The silence was like the deep sleep of night, punctuated only occasionally by the barking of a dog.

Not many could afford to keep a dog, so these few sounds were inconsequential.

The sun continued to climb in the east, and Liszt personally fitted the Fire Dragon Horse with a bridle, forbidding it from making any noise: “Mr. Carter, do you remember what I said?”

“Master, you said that today we need to shut the castle gate tightly, keep Douson and the horses confined, and try to keep them as quiet as possible. If there is danger, take all the servants to hide in the cellar and do not venture out until the master returns. Only then can the castle resume its regular operations,” replied Carter.

“Good, that’s right,” said Liszt.

Worry etched Carter’s face: “Master, is there danger on this journey?”

“A little, but I have made all necessary preparations, so don’t worry about me, Mr. Carter.”

On the side, Thomas hesitated before speaking: “Master, you really should take me with you. I may not be skilled in many things, but I could buy you some time if we’re in danger.”

“I’m pleased to hear you say that, Thomas, but it’s not necessary.” Liszt raised his riding crop and gently tapped the horse’s hindquarters, and the Fire Dragon Horse dashed out like a streak of flame.

The wind whistled past his ears as the horse’s hooves kicked up clouds of dust.

On the roads of the town, not a single pedestrian could be seen, evidently having received the command to stay dutifully at home.

With a heart full of turbulent emotions, he galloped all the way to the cow farm. Wearing a mask, Liszt climbed up the Beacon Tower. He planned to have a servant light it, but to minimize the risk of leaking information, he decided to do it himself.

On the Beacon Tower, there were two jars filled with ground Smoked Grass Juice.

Shading his eyes from the sunlight, he looked around, then without further hesitation, he opened the jars and poured the liquid over two old dairy cows below.

The pungent odor spread rapidly.

The cows thrashed wildly, trying to escape, but the ropes were tied tightly, leaving them only to endure the irritation in agitated suffering.

Even with the mask, Liszt nearly vomited from the smell, but he bore the urge and quickly set the Smoked Grass hay alight on the Beacon Tower until the flames rose high.

He leaped down swiftly.

Mounting the equally restless and fleeing Fire Dragon Horse, he headed straight for the Thorn Forest.

Upon reaching the Thorn Forest, he tied up the Fire Dragon Horse, took a deep breath to suppress the feeling of nausea, and looked around to make sure everything was perfectly safe. Then, from his bosom, he took out a Jade Box containing Thorn Bugs.

“Man proposes, God disposes. Success or failure rests on this move.”
Opening the box, he said to the plump Thorn Bug inside, “Come on, little fellow, make yourself at home.”

They were in complete accord.

The Thorn Bug crawled onto his hand, opened its mouth, and spat out Cordyceps, which landed in the small shrubbery and quickly took root and sprouted.

Meanwhile, Li Si Te (Liszt) had already swiftly ducked into the tunnel, bent over and running towards the bunker. By the time he got inside the bunker, the Thorn Cordyceps should have grown sufficiently. He forced himself to calm down, focus his mind, and summon the Smoke Mission.

The smoke twisted for a moment, forming Serpent Script.

“Task completed, reward: the Formless Dragon’s invasion.”

Seeing the task completed, he didn’t wait for the new mission to be issued; he simply wiped away the smoke. He circulated his Dou Qi, employing the Eye of Magic, and looked up into the sky.

The thick smoke from the burning Smoked Grass, swaying as it rose with the gentle breeze.

Even inside the bunker, he could smell that half-year unwashed sock odor, a persistent nausea-inducing stench. Without a telescope, he could only rely on his own sight. Below the Beacon Tower, two old dairy cows seemed to be choking from the smoke, incessantly drooling white foam, which made Li Si Te extremely worried that they might be smoked to death before the Formless Dragon appeared.

Seconds and minutes passed.

Just as the Eye of Magic’s duration was nearing its limit, he still had not spotted any trace of the Formless Dragon.

“Logically, once the task is complete, the reward should appear synchronously, just a matter of timing before it comes into my possession. So why hasn’t the Formless Dragon invaded Fresh Flower Town yet?”

“Could there be a delay in the appearance of the reward?”

“If the information about the Formless Dragon is true, it should be attracted by the Smoked Grass as soon as it appears.”

His eyes grew more and more tired, and just as he felt he couldn't hold out any longer and was about to disperse the secret technique, suddenly, next to the smoke column of the Smoked Grass and facing the sunlight, a faint shadow in the sky caught Li Si Te's attention.

The shadow was initially very small and faint, but then it began to enlarge, eventually forming a light grey dragon shape.

A pair of massive wings and a streamlined body.

It circled around the smoke column as it descended.

His heart thundered: "The Formless Dragon!"

"It really is the Formless Dragon!" Li Si Te clenched the Crimson Blood Sword, attempting to keep the scarce Dou Qi remaining in his body running, continuing to support the Eye of Magic as he observed the Formless Dragon.

This was his first encounter with a dragon!

The dragon that represented the world's ultimate power!

Even though he could see only the magic power on the dragon, not the dragon itself, he was still so excited that his blood boiled: "Just like described in 'The Adventure of Ranger Griffe,' the Formless Dragon isn't large. Compared to a thatched hut, it's only about the size of a single house, with wings that would perhaps span two to three houses."

But that proud demeanor exuded an unrivaled majesty.

Despite being quite far away, Li Si Te could still feel his body tensing in response to the dragon's might—this was Dragon Might!

It was said that wherever a dragon went, all living beings would submit to it.

"It's coming down along with the smoke from the Smoked Grass..." Li Si Te's Eye of Magic had collapsed, his body couldn't sustain the Dou Qi Secret Technique any longer, and the form of the Formless Dragon disappeared without a trace.

But without a doubt, the information provided by the Smoke Mission was correct; the Formless Dragon liked the smell of Smoked Grass.

Rubbing his sore and swollen eyes, Li Si Te looked with his naked eyes towards the direction of the Beacon Tower. He couldn't see the Formless Dragon, but the commotion there indicated that the Formless Dragon was wreaking havoc—the smoke was scattered every which way, the old dairy cows were prostrate on the ground crying piteously, and in a moment, even the Beacon Tower began to collapse with flames roaring up.

“Woooooah!”

An eerie, piercing, goosebump-inducing howl rose amidst the flames—that was the voice of the Formless Dragon.

Chapter 54: A Legend Forever

“Moo...”

Old Hua let out a mournful bellow and collapsed in a pool of blood.

Clenching the Crimson Blood Sword, Liszt, peering through the fortress's window, once again activated the small amount of Dou Qi he had just recovered and cast the Eye of Magic.

His vision transformed, and beside the flame, a greyish-white Formless Dragon composed of magic power was tearing into the old dairy cow, bite by bite. It had already devoured Old Black whole and was now savoring Old Hua, occasionally lifting its head to look around alertly while eating.

Its shape was indistinguishable from the depictions of giant dragons Liszt had seen in books.

A standard Western dragon's form, just slightly more slender.

It had four limbs, but its wings did not fold up when walking on the ground. The wings were somewhat like those of a bat, with an arm-like structure inside where fingers were spread to support the spread of the wing membranes. When the fingers spread, the wings would open; when the fingers closed, the wings would contract.

However, because the wings were structured like arms, they couldn't fold tight like a bird's.

But they could fold, similar to the bending of an elbow, and in the middle of the wings at the palm bones' position, there was an extra finger that grew out, resembling a hook or a sickle.

The Formless Dragon used the hook of its wings to slice the flesh and bones of the dairy cow, then grabbed the shredded flesh with its two small forelimbs and stuffed it into its mouth.

The tail was very long, much longer than what was typically shown in dragon illustrations. There were horns on its head, not just a pair or a single one, but a whole row of varying lengths—It is said that dragon horns are a symbol of power and that scepters, which Kings carry during grand ceremonies, are often made from dragon horns.

However, in Liszt's Eye of Magic vision, the most concentrated magical power on the Formless Dragon's body wasn't in its horns or its heart.

But in its teeth—the dragon teeth.

The magic power of each dragon tooth was exceptionally clear. Counting them, there were forty-two in total. Besides the four huge fangs, the rest of the teeth were also quite sharp.

“It is said that a dragon's soul resides in its teeth; extracting the soul of a giant dragon and using the teeth to forge a divine weapon, then infusing the soul into it, can create the most powerful weapon.” For an instant, Liszt was heartfully tempted to kill the Formless Dragon on the spot and pluck out all its teeth.

Of course, it was just a thought.

“Hurry up and eat, then leave quickly,” Liszt dispelled the Eye of Magic and continued observing the dairy farm.

The Formless Dragon was not eating quickly, which allowed him to calmly replenish his magic power and call forth the Smoke Mission to check the new quests that he hadn't had the chance to view before.

“Quest: The Formless Dragon has appeared in Fresh Flower Town. Prepare its favorite Smoked Grass and the beef it loves to eat the most. For the remaining time, wait quietly until it is satiated and leaves. That’s all you can do. Please avoid the invasion of the Formless Dragon. Reward: The Form of the Formless Dragon.”

“I’ve already done what needed to be done; this mission can be completed while lying down,” he thought, focusing his attention on “The Gift of the Formless Dragon,” “What could the gift be?”

He was fairly certain in his heart.

For the next while, Liszt quietly observed the Formless Dragon, casting the Eye of Magic when his Dou Qi recovered and watching indirectly with the naked eye when it was depleted.

About half an hour later, the fire had long been extinguished, and the two cows were reduced to scattered skeletons on the ground.

Liszt noticed the alfalfa on the ground fluttering in the wind and immediately used the bit of Dou Qi he had just regained, enduring the soreness and swelling of his eyes to once again cast the Eye of Magic.

Within his field of vision, the Formless Dragon had already soared into the sky, flying in the direction of the East Coast outside Fresh Flower Town, getting farther and farther away until Liszt’s Eye of Magic dissipated.

“It’s gone...” Liszt felt a whirlwind of emotions.

There was relief after tension, a sense of loss after beautiful things had departed, anticipation of an imminent reward, and a feeling of accomplishment from completing a dragon invasion.

“Wait a bit longer to prevent the Formless Dragon from returning.”

He stayed in the bunker for nearly half an hour longer, then he cast the Eye of Magic to meticulously search the area, confirming there were no traces of the Formless Dragon.

He pushed open the camouflaged cover above the bunker and stepped out.

Facing the scorching sunshine, he stretched mightily, “My first close encounter with a dragon has ended just like that.” He still didn’t know what kind of dragon the Formless Dragon was, but as long as it was a dragon, it was an incredible being—especially since this was a Sacred Dragon capable of invisibility.

The word “sacred,” to some extent, implied the extraordinary nature of this kind of dragon.

Back in Thorn Forest, he checked on the Thorn Cordyceps, which were growing well. After releasing the Fire Dragon Horse from its reins, he suddenly realized that the mare was covered in dung and urine—she must have been scared senseless by the Dragon Might of the Formless Dragon.

Fortunately, the saddle was clean.

Riding the Fire Dragon Horse, he set off towards the dairy farm, but the horse refused to go anywhere near the Beacon Tower, even when Liszt whipped her.

“Dragon Might... no, even the scent of a dragon can scare you like this? To think you have the blood of a Low-Level Magical Beast, the Blazing Steed,” Liszt said helplessly, dismounting to walk.

He couldn’t smell the scent left by the Formless Dragon because his nose was full of the lingering Smoked Grass odor.

The other eight dairy cows on the farm had vanished; he hoped they hadn’t run deep into Thorn Ridge, for if they had, they would certainly have become a feast for the Magical Beasts.

At the ruins of the Beacon Tower, Liszt searched carefully, not overlooking any patch of ground. He even took a hoe and turned over the soil—partly to look for the Formless Dragon’s gift and partly to destroy any footprints of the Formless Dragon, eradicating all traces of it.

An innocent man harbors no guilt; possessing a gemstone invites trouble.

He had to be cautious.

“Found it!” Moments later, under a piece of cow bone, Liszt found what he wanted—a transparent gemstone.

It wasn't big, about the size of a fingernail cover, much smaller than the baby fist-sized Ruby inlaid in the Crimson Blood Sword. It also lacked dazzling color, somewhat similar to a diamond, clear and translucent, with an irregular flattened multi-faceted shape, capable of refracting sunlight into tiny sparkles.

Somewhat inexplicably, a slogan came to Liszt's mind.

"A diamond is forever, a gem to be passed down for generations."

Indeed, it was good material to make a ring with, but he did not verify right away whether the space was real or fake. He carefully packed it away and continued to search the ground, hoping to find a second one. Unfortunately, after turning over every area within fifty meters where Formless Dragon footprints could be found, he couldn't find a second one.

He didn't give up and activated the Eye of Magic to search again but still had no luck.

"It seems the so-called reward really is just this one gemstone." Wiping the sweat from his forehead, his leather armor dirtied and his noble demeanor somewhat diminished, Liszt's face was nevertheless radiant with a brilliant smile, "Regardless, the chapter with the Formless Dragon has ended, Fresh Flower Town is safe."

He entered a thatched cottage of a villager's home to cool off and check his new mission.

"Mission completed, reward: gemstone of the Formless Dragon."

"Mission: The tomatoes planted by John Bian Dan, a grower in Tomato Hamlet, are of better quality, yield more, and grow faster than those of the surrounding growers. As a landlord, how could you not find out the reason? Reward: one Elf Bug."

Chapter 55: Exploring the Gemstone Space

"The reason why John Bian Dan's tomatoes are both large and good is very simple, because in his tomatoes, a Tomato Worm is being nurtured!"

Upon reading the task and the reward given, Liszt made the judgment above.

Tomatoes are the main vegetable here, and without the Elf Bug, the tomato production in Fresh Flower Town isn't high. Now that a Tomato Worm is finally about to be born, it's truly a cause for celebration, "After returning, I'll investigate the Tomato Worm right away, we must ensure nothing goes wrong with its nurturing process."

He stretched out his left hand, holding the Formless Dragon gemstone in his palm.

The light was flickering.

Liszt took a deep look, clenched his hand shut, and tucked the gemstone close to his body. Then, he left the farmer's house, mounted his Fire Dragon Horse, and departed from the dairy farm—the matter had concluded, and all traces of the Formless Dragon had vanished.

A moment later.

Butler Carter came out with the servants to greet him at the Castle gates, "My lord, knowing you have returned safely puts my mind at ease," he said, exhaling a long breath of relief.

"No need to worry, what could happen to me?" Liszt nodded, "Thomas, go to the town and inform Teacher Goltai that the confinement is lifted, and let Fresh Flower Town return to its original order. Mrs. Morson, prepare the bathwater, I'm covered in sweat and in need of a good bath."

"As you wish, my lord!"

The oppressive atmosphere was swept away, and the Castle suddenly bustled with activity.

Thomas rode to town with the news, Tom had the new manservant busy feeding horses and tending to Douson, the maids needed to do laundry, and the kitchen was busy preparing lunch. Just for Noble Liszt, fifteen servants had to work nonstop to ensure Liszt could enjoy everything.

He bathed frequently, but never for more than five minutes at a time, that was Liszt's principle.

He changed into his home clothes and went to his study, locking the door behind him.

He took out the Formless Dragon gemstone and began to study it.

Just by appearance, it was impossible to divine any mysteries about the gemstone. Even with the Eye of Magic activated, he could only see countless specks wandering in the gemstone's magic vortex; aside from the different colors, the Formless Dragon Gem under the Eye of Magic didn't differ much from the Ruby on the Crimson Blood Sword.

“So, how is it connected to the Space Ring?”

“Or rather, how do I open the space inside the gemstone? Do I need to perform a blood oath, or should I infuse it with magic power?”

Performing a blood oath required self-harm, which Liszt was somewhat apprehensive about, so he first tried to channel his Dou Qi into the gemstone—when his Dou Qi made contact with the gemstone, he immediately felt a subtle connection akin to forming a contract with an Elf Bug being rapidly established, and then the gemstone began to vigorously absorb his Dou Qi.

After absorbing about one-tenth of the Dou Qi from his body, the gemstone stopped absorbing, and the subtle connection had expanded into an invisible portal.

Following the sensation connected by Dou Qi, Liszt suddenly discovered he could sense a space that was neither large nor small.

The space was irregularly spherical, with no clear distinction of top, bottom, left, right, nor the cardinal directions, surrounded by “walls,”—the unknown sturdy structures like walls had no gaps and were indestructible.

“Overall, it's like a sphere, about five meters in diameter, which is roughly the size of a studio apartment,” Liszt's eyes looked intently at the shining gemstone in his hand.

Yet, his mind was simultaneously able to feel this space.

A very wondrous sensation.

He found that this state could continue as long as he had Dou Qi to replenish, keeping the magic power to maintain the open portal constantly present, with consumption that was not significant, roughly equivalent to the speed at which his body naturally recovered Dou Qi.

He tried cutting off the supply of Dou Qi.

Soon, the gateway to the space dissipated, the marvelous feeling in his mind vanished, and the spherical space disappeared without a trace, “Relying on Dou Qi, or magic power to open the space, it consumes magic power to maintain the space opened, and once the magic power is cut off, the space immediately closes. The gemstone of the Formless Dragon is indeed a Space Ring.”

It’s the right size to be made into a ring.

More importantly, it requires a constant supply of magic power, and the hand is the best position for supplying Dou Qi.

“However, I don’t plan to set it in a ring; it’s too ostentatious, and I don’t need to use it all the time for now. For safety, I should make it into a pendant and hang it in front of my chest.”

The Space Ring is a priceless treasure, especially for the Nobles, as it’s too important for hiding secrets.

But for Liszt, there wasn’t much of value to store in the Space Ring at the moment, and it wasn’t an urgent need for him. Honestly, if he could get a Greater Elf, he would definitely trade the Space Ring without hesitation—the Space Ring is good, but not as important as increasing productivity.

In any case, research must continue.

He reopened the Space Ring and began trying to store things inside, which wasn’t difficult for him. After some simple exploration, he understood the method of storing things—wrapping them with magic power.

Left hand holding the Space Ring, right hand releasing Dou Qi to envelop the object he wanted to store, a book.

In an instant, the book disappeared from the table and appeared inside the Space Ring. It seemed to move according to his will; he could make the book

appear anywhere he wanted in the space, and so he joyously stored all the books in his study into the Space Ring, floating and stacking them as if there was a bookshelf there.

The books remained motionless in the space, not moving in the slightest.

“Is this like a vacuum environment?” He lit a candle, then stored the candle inside, and what he saw was incredible—the candle remained lit and motionless.

He distributed a bit of Dou Qi to maintain the gateway, moving the candle and bringing the flame close to a book. Though the flame was tilted by the cover, it neither went out nor ignited the book’s cover. It was as if everything that entered the space became completely and utterly still.

“Is it that even the movement between atoms has been halted?” Liszt tried to explain it scientifically but soon gave up. Although this world seemed to have a scientific foundation, anything related to magic power had already gone beyond the scope of science—there was nothing scientific about the Space Ring.

Enveloped in Dou Qi, with a thought, he retrieved the candle.

Only then did the flame continue burning.

After several experiments, Liszt could confirm that the interior of the Space Ring was relatively still.

“I wonder what would happen if live creatures were placed inside?” He wanted to try, but his Dou Qi had already been depleted.

Opening the space consumes magic power, storing things consumes magic power, retrieving things also consumes magic power. With his Earth Knight’s level of Dou Qi, it was still a bit stretched.

For lunch, Goltai, Marcus, and others came over.

“Teacher Goltai, has the order in the town been restored?” Liszt sat in the main seat, cutting a piece of roast meat with a knife; he had already adapted to the style of Western dining.

Goltai took a sip of beer, “Just a morning’s confinement had no impact on the town. But Liszt, two cows are missing from the dairy farm.”

“So, the eight cows have come back?”

“Yes, they actually ran out from Thorn Ridge, which is crazy. Instead, we just found the carcasses of two old cows.” Goltai was obviously curious about the situation but didn’t dare to ask since Liszt had previously said not to ask or think about what happened at the dairy farm.

Liszt still had no intention of explaining, “Well, let the farmers take the bones of the old cows back for stew. Fill in the tunnel there, and restore the dairy farm to its original state.”

Goltai shrugged, “As you wish.”

Chapter 56: The Bright Prospects of Tomato Hamlet

After lunch, Liszt said to Goltai, “There’s a farmer in Tomato Hamlet named John Bian Dan whose tomatoes are especially large and fine. Let’s go take a look together and see what interesting factors there might be.”

Goltai was puzzled, “Liszt, how did you know about that?”

“By paying attention and listening to what others say, Teacher Goltai, a qualified landlord can’t be ignorant about his territory; one must be mindful of all aspects.”

“Okay then.”

Goltai still couldn’t figure out why he didn’t know what was going on in town, yet Liszt did—perhaps Liszt had arranged for surveillance personnel in town?

Considering the secretive actions from that morning, as well as the tunnel excavation matters,

he felt that he had to work earnestly since every move of his surely fell under Liszt’s scrutiny.

This was not a good sign, as it meant he could lose the landlord's trust at any time.

"Lord Landlord, this is John Bian Dan," the clerk introduced, pointing to a simple-minded serf.

John Bian Dan hastily brought his wife and two children to kneel before Liszt, "Lord Landlord." At the same time, he was extremely nervous; he had no idea why the landlord was seeking him out.

If it had been the previous tax-collecting knight who had sought him, he might have wet himself out of fear, for no good ever came from a visit by a noble. However, since Liszt arrived in Fresh Flower Town, he had a very good reputation, so John was just nervous.

Indeed.

The landlord of Fresh Flower Town gave him a gentle smile and said, "Don't be nervous, John. I've heard that your tomatoes are the best, is that right?"

"Yes, yes, Lord Landlord," he replied.

"Why are they the best, do you know the reason?"

"I don't know, Lord Landlord, but this season, my tomatoes have been getting better and better. The freemen in town, they all like to buy tomatoes from my farm. Even Mrs. Abbie from your castle has praised my tomatoes as the best," said John with considerable pride.

For serfs, no praise could be more gratifying than an acknowledgment from the castle.

Liszt dispensed with further questioning and went straight to the point, "In that case, take me to your tomato field."

Following John Bian Dan, they quickly arrived at the vast tomato fields of Tomato Hamlet. Unlike wheat which is sown over large areas, tomatoes were planted in small, segmented plots. John's allocated tomato plot was situated right in the center of Tomato Hamlet, and it was noticeably better than the others.

Of course, no matter whose plot it was, it all belonged to Liszt.

“Lord Landlord, these are my tomatoes,” John said, his face lighting up with enthusiasm, “The town officials taught us how to farm, and every day I go to dig pond silt and collect manure to fertilize them, and they’ve been growing better and better.”

The tomato seedlings in the field were all robust, and it was impossible to tell which one might be nurturing an Elf Bug.

However, today’s Liszt had his own way of discerning.

He swiftly activated his Eye of Magic and focused on the tomato field. Very quickly, he found one seedling where a faint, greenish magic power was circulating—surely a Cordyceps.

“I think I’ve figured it out,” Liszt dismissed the Eye of Magic and turned to Goltai, “This is a sign of an Elf Bug being nurtured, Teacher Goltai. You have work to do again. Protect John’s tomato seedlings, especially this one; it will be a Cordyceps.”

“Oh, my goodness, is this true? Another Elf Bug is to be born in our little town?” Goltai exclaimed, “The glory of knighthood lingers on you, Baron. Fresh Flower Town is on the rise! Rest assured, I will protect this lovely little fellow and let it breed in peace.”

Following along, Marcus also expressed his amazement and praise, “To nurture two Elf Bugs in such a short time, my lord, you truly are beloved by the glory of knighthood!”

He felt his loyalty to his following was worthwhile.

Every sign indicated that Liszt was no ordinary minor Noble. His temperament, his ideas, and especially his fortune, all pointed to something greater.

And as for fortune—sometimes, fortune is more important than strength.

Liszt smiled faintly. With the Smoke Mission around, surprises were never far off. He remained calm and announced in a gentle tone, “The Tomato Elf Bug is about to breed and bring forth life; its existence will bring a brighter future to Tomato Hamlet. To reward John Bian Dan for his consistent attentive care, I’ve decided to gift him a Gold Coin.”

“Lucky Serf.”

Goltai couldn't hide his envy. His salary was ten copper coins a day, and it took over three months to save up one Gold Coin—provided he abstained from wine and meat.

“Elf Bug?”

“A Gold Coin?”

“Lord Landlord rewarded me with a Gold Coin?”

Long after Liszt had left with his entourage, John still felt dizzy, as if in a dream. He had merely been growing tomatoes, and now, as if by magic, he had produced a Gold Coin? To know that a Serf, after a year of toiling in the fields, might save less than a silver coin, in a lifetime might never see a Gold Coin, yet now he owned one.

“Daddy, Daddy, let me see the Gold Coin, wow, I've never seen a Gold Coin!” his eight-year-old son clamored, trying to snatch the coin from his hands.

John finally snapped to his senses, holding onto it tightly and giving his son a stern look, “Get lost, a Gold Coin isn't for you to touch!”

He turned to his wife, shaking as he handed it over, “Annie, look, a Gold Coin, given to me by the Lord, we're rich! We have a Gold Coin!”

Annie was equally trembling, out of excitement, “Oh my, John, is this real? Am I dreaming?”

“You're not dreaming, I'm not dreaming either, this is real, handed to me by Lord Landlord himself! Annie, we're wealthy now!”

“Oh ha ha, oh ha ha, our family is rich now!” their four-year-old daughter cheered, clapping her little hands.

“Dad, let me see the Gold Coin quick!” his son continued to reach for the coin.

John paid his son no heed, focusing instead on discussing excited future prospects with his wife, “Thank heavens, thanks to the glory of the Knight's favor upon Lord Landlord, our Fresh Flower Town will only get richer.”

Annie took the Gold Coin and rolled it in her palm, a soft expression spreading across her plain face, “John, we could use this Gold Coin to buy our freedom as Freemen!”

“Buy our freedom as Freemen?” John shook his head. “I don’t want to.”

“Why not? Didn’t you always want to become a Freeman and leave Fresh Flower Town to live in another village?”

“That was because we could never get enough food in Fresh Flower Town, but Annie, what about now? We have seafood, incredibly cheap seafood, one copper coin buys a pile of clams. Look at Karl and Lucy, they’ve put on weight! That we can fill our bellies in Fresh Flower Town is all thanks to Lord Landlord, and so is this Gold Coin!”

With the fervor of a zealot, he spoke, “I believe Lord Landlord will make Fresh Flower Town even better, I want to farm for Lord Landlord all my life! Annie, will you support me?”

“You’re the head of the family, John; you decide, and I’m used to life in Fresh Flower Town as well,” Annie responded with a smile, “I’ll go prepare dinner; how about we have white bread tonight?”

“Ha ha, of course, I miss the soft and sweet white bread from our wedding anniversary.”

Their little daughter laughed and clapped, “Oh oh oh, we’re having white bread tonight!”

The oldest son started to whine, “Mom, let me see the Gold Coin, Mom...”

Chapter 57: Selection of the Young Knight

“Complete the mission, and be rewarded with a Tomato Elf Bug.”

“Mission: The territory lacks the protection of knights and is always on the brink of danger. The four Retainer Knights are useless, but more seeds await discovery. Seafood has brought nutrition, please select suitable youths for knight training. Reward: an unhatched Magical Beast Egg.”

The serpent script formed by smoke slowly dispersed.

Liszt came back to his senses, the mission in Tomato Hamlet was easily completed. In fact, all the Smoke Missions were not difficult, it was just a process of taking advantage of the situation.

“An unhatched Magical Beast Egg, huh? That would mean they’re giving me another flying magical beast,” Liszt glanced at Douson, who lay sprawled at his feet panting like a dog to cool off, and suddenly envisioned a grand scene.

Leading Dahuang with the left hand, brandishing the skies with the right.

The old me indulges in the wild ways of youth.

Without a big yellow dog or an eagle, he had even more ferocious magical beasts. Douson, the Fierce Earth Dog, had been trained to react on command, launching into attacks, biting, sitting, lying down, jumping, and climbing at a mere gesture from Liszt. Training Douson was easier than a dog, for it was smarter.

But Douson, the Fierce Earth Dog, had yet to successfully cast the magic it could master—Rock Spike.

“I know how to train dogs but not eagles. I wonder if this soon-to-be pet magical beast bird will be smart and easy to train. If it can’t be tamed, I’ll have no choice but to roast it.” As he mused, Liszt couldn’t help but stretch out his tongue and lick his lips involuntarily.

Chicken rearing in Fresh Flower Town was rare, mostly for laying eggs, and even getting a chicken to eat was not easy, let alone more elusive ducks and geese.

Now, he truly “yearned deeply for a taste of bird”.

In Thorn Ridge, game was plentiful, and Marcus was an excellent archer, easily shooting down a few birds. However, he, too proud and aspiring to be a noble, wouldn’t degrade himself to a hunter’s level with ease.

For nobles, hunting was a pastime; for him, it was demeaning his status.

For Liszt, this was a bizarre concept, but for someone like Marcus, it was his life's pursuit. So, Liszt felt it was inappropriate to casually command Marcus to hunt birds just to appease his own cravings.

“Originally, I hadn't planned on forming a Knight Squad so soon; there are too few freemen, hardly enough superior seedlings. But since the mission is issued, let's do it. Boys aged between ten and sixteen in the town, there should be a few hundred of them. Select twelve, and form a small team for now.”

A Knight Squad comprises twelve members: one Captain, one Deputy, and ten knights.

Large nobles establish their own Knight Academies, selecting children from a young age to train, eliminating batches until the qualified remain to become their landlords' Retainer Knights and join the Knight Order. Marcus was such a knight, sent to the Knight Academy at a very young age by his father.

Sons of barons and Honored Knights also train at the Knight Academy, including Liszt, who had attended it.

Without such foundations, Fresh Flower Town could only pick a few healthy youths and awkwardly form a not-quite-right Knight Squad for training. A skilled woman cannot cook without rice, and Liszt had no other choice but to make do and complete the Smoke Mission for now.

“My Lord, you wish to select new Retainer Knights and form a Knight Squad?” Thomas, having learned of Liszt's intent at the evening banquet, became immediately excited.

“With the abundance of food in Fresh Flower Town, we don't need to be cautious. The Patrol Team is unreliable; they are but ordinary people. Karl and the others have yet to produce any Dou Qi, so I need new strength to secure Fresh Flower Town's safety... Winter is only half a year away.”

As Liszt spoke, he blinked, “Actually, I will inevitably make a move on Thorn Ridge; they are an obstacle to the development of Fresh Flower Town. Teacher Marcus, I need you to oversee the selection and training of the Knight Squad.” The Earl had not set boundaries for the town, so he naturally had the option to annex Thorn Ridge.

Thomas immediately performed a knightly salute, saying earnestly, “Please rest assured, Lord Landlord, Marcus will surely select suitable Knight Cadets and properly train them!”

“I will have Teacher Goltai fully cooperate with you to train them excellently, Teacher Marcus.”

“As you wish, my lord!”

As Marcus left the castle with his head held high and chest out, his manner was that of a seasoned Earth Knight, without reservation. Since arriving in Fresh Flower Town, he had always been sulking, as the only things he could do every day, aside from protecting Liszt, were drilling the four Retainer Knights, including Karl.

He had witnessed Liszt’s wisdom and luck and understood Liszt’s spirit and ambition. He decided to serve and lay in wait for the opportunity to establish merits and make achievements.

Having also seen the “wealth of the sea” that Liszt spoke of, his belief grew even stronger.

Nevertheless, he had always been somewhat awkward, unsure of the role he could play in the little town. At the very least, for a few years, Liszt would not enter the battlefield— without knights, what use was there to go to battle? He was eager to clear Thorn Ridge, but as a single Earth Knight, he knew it was impossible.

It was quite a regret, akin to “having no way to serve one’s country.”

Now, the opportunity had finally arrived. Liszt had decided to form a Knight Squad, taking the first step towards establishing merits and making his mark. Marcus could hardly wait to pick out the most suitable Retainer Knights, train them into a fighting force, and clear out Thorn Ridge. He wanted to be ready for battle when the Grand Duchy started the next war.

That night, he obtained the census list of Fresh Flower Town’s inhabitants from Goltai.

He picked out all the boys between the ages of ten and sixteen and the next day sent the four Retainer Knights to bring these boys from their homes.

The sun scorched the earth as two hundred and thirty-three boys of varying heights and builds stood tall, seriously and earnestly.

Their eyes were filled with longing, nervousness, worry, fear, and aspiration, for they all had been informed that the Lord Landlord was preparing to select Retainer Knights.

They all understood the meaning of being a Retainer Knight, and even if they didn't, their parents and neighbors would tell them what it entailed.

There were two types of Retainer Knights.

One kind, like Karl Ironhammer and Rom Barrel, primarily served as "Retainers," with a serf's status, sold to the nobles, whose main tasks were to accompany the nobles on travels and, when on the battlefield, to carry the equipment, do laundry, cook, and so on.

The other kind was like Marcus, whose main role was to "fight" as a Retainer Knight. They were usually freemen and their main task was combat.

Many sons of minor nobles also went to other nobles' lands to serve as Retainer Knights, learning the combat skills of a knight and the etiquette of the nobility. After completing their training, they would either return home to inherit their titles or go to the battlefield to establish merits and achievements.

Essentially,

Retainer Knights were the nobility's reserves, a preliminary qualification.

Even serfs, once chosen as Retainer Knights and having made meritorious deeds, would have their freeman status restored, and if they earned further merits, they could even be granted noble titles.

Even without many merits to their name, following the nobles meant not worrying about food and drink, and they could save money to help support their families.

Therefore,

All the youths stood straight, each trying to present themselves in the best light, hoping to be chosen as a Retainer Knight—they all understood that this

was an opportunity to change their fate, perhaps the only one they would get in their lifetime.

Mounted on a dun horse, Marcus looked at each young boy and could vaguely see his own past self. Many years ago, hadn't he too gone through such a selection, picked by the Knight Captain of an Earl. Of course, at that time, he had already studied for two years at the Knight Academy.

The foundation of these boys before him was zero.

Chapter 58: Learning Magic by Force

Liszt did not disturb Marcus's selection process, and he did have the intention of performing some basic drill training like marching in step and keeping soldiers aligned. However, the existence of Magic Power and Dou Qi magnified individual strength so tremendously that discipline could not compensate.

Elite Earth Knights like Marcus could fight a hundred ordinary Retainer Knights with ease.

Even as a novice Earth Knight, Liszt could take on twenty or thirty ordinary Retainer Knights as long as his Dou Qi was sufficient. Regular Retainer Knights wouldn't be able to get close to him and would only be able to deplete his Dou Qi first.

As a former instructor at the Knight Academy, Marcus had his own methods of training novice Knights.

So.

It was too hot, and Liszt stayed inside the castle, training Douson.

"Sit, Douson!"

Now as big as a large dog, upon hearing the command, Douson immediately sat down on the ground, panting and looking up at Liszt. Liszt threw him a piece of jerked meat and then rubbed Douson's head.

He used the Eye of Magic Power.

He could see that Douson's Magic Power was already abundant.

"Theoretically, Douson has a large amount of Magic Power. Having been well-fed and taken care of in the castle, his development has been rapid, and he's reached the level where he can cast spells. Unfortunately, without the guidance of a mature Fierce Earth Dog, he probably doesn't know how to control the Magic Power within his body. Should I guide him a little?"

With the Eye of Magic Power to observe, Liszt was confident that he could guide the release of Douson's Magic Power.

But there was the risk of danger, and the possibility of accidentally killing Douson was hard to predict.

Hesitation lasted but a moment before he quickly made a decision, "I won't do the guiding. If the accumulation of Magic Power becomes too much and Douson cannot vent it, he could suffocate just the same. Rather than that, it's better to teach him magic earlier. Even if he dies, not much food would have been wasted... and most importantly, our emotional bond isn't deep yet."

Before the transmigration, Liszt had kept dogs, and when they died of old age and sickness, it pained him for a long time.

Now he didn't easily form emotional attachments to pets anymore.

Half of a person's suffering stems from emotional investment. An adult's soul and mind act with the knowledge to cut losses in a timely manner.

"Come here, Douson."

He waved his hand and Douson immediately came trotting over, tail wagging.

"Woof woof, bark bark!"

Truth be told, the Fierce Earth Dog was simply a larger version of an Earth dog, with behaviors and a temperament close to that of dogs. Perhaps this was also why they were named Fierce Earth Dogs—essentially Earth dogs, just a bit more temperamental.

“I will now teach you magic!” Liszt soothed the Fierce Earth Dog, calming it down, and used the Eye of Magic Power to continuously observe the flow of Magic Power within its body.

Magic and Dou Qi are both forms of Magic Power.

The distinction lies in the fact that Magic is Magic Power refined by Magicians from outside elements, while Dou Qi is Magic Power refined by Knights themselves. This is why Magicians can control a variety of Magic attributes, one moment conjuring a fireball, the next compressing a water arrow; whereas Knights can only control the Dou Qi of their own attribute.

As for the Magic Power of Magical Beasts.

Half is refined from within and half absorbed from the environment, the recovery rate surpassing that of human Magicians and Knights.

In terms of releasing Magic Power, Magicians simply need to guide the elements in the air to combine and form various spells. Knights, on the other hand, require weapons to infuse the Dou Qi and prevent it from dissipating into the air.

“Magical Beasts certainly can’t learn the complex casting techniques and esoteric magical knowledge of Magicians, so their spellcasting is more akin to an instinctual bodily response... If I guide its Magic Power to vent, it should naturally release Rock Spike... Shouldn’t it?”

Just like Knights releasing Dou Qi.

Knights typically channel their Dou Qi through their hands, and Liszt thought, “Which part of his body should Douson use to cast spells? His paws?”

Both paws shouldn’t work, since it needs to walk on them— I’ve never heard of a knight releasing Dou Qi with both feet.

Suddenly, he remembered when he had first arrived at Fresh Flower Town and encountered the Wind Blade Wolf at Thorn Ridge, which released magic—Wind Blade—from its mouth.

According to the structure of animal limbs, their most appropriate place for releasing magic should be the mouth.

“So, I need to channel Douson’s magic power into its mouth and then break the bonds, which shouldn’t be difficult... I remember my predecessor was rather dumb, but he encountered no difficulty when releasing Dou Qi for the first time.” As he thought this, his hands were already in motion, pressing down on Douson, and his Dou Qi burst forth, guiding Douson’s internal magic power.

“Whimper!”

Douson, feeling as if it were on fire, struggled wildly, but as it was still just a pup of a few months old, it couldn’t break free from the restraints of the Earth Knight.

It could only be baptized with Liszt’s Dou Qi. His fire attribute Dou Qi, with its searing and explosive nature, was equivalent to giving it a sauna bath at several hundred degrees.

The dog’s eyes turned red instantly.

Its body temperature also rose rapidly, steaming hot.

“I seem to have forgotten that my Dou Qi is of the fire attribute, which seems unsuitable for guiding... But what’s done is done, success or failure hinges on this attempt.” With a sharp effort and coordinating with a shout, he exclaimed, “Douson, release your magic power!”

Bang-dong!

The Eye of Magic saw Douson’s internal magic power concentrate at the location of its mouth under his guidance and push of his Dou Qi. Then, with an explosive-like sound, the magic power suddenly burst open somewhere in Douson’s mouth, like piercing a water-filled balloon.

What followed was a moment of witnessing a miracle.

Out of the grass nearby, three giant, bamboo shoot-shaped rock spikes emerged, each as thick as an adult’s thigh, sharp at the tip like a needle, measuring at least one meter in length.

“Beautiful!”

Liszt laughed loudly: “Well done, Douson, you’ve learned a magic spell!” Looking at the rock spikes, he felt extremely proud. This magic move was perfect for sneak attacks and ambushes. Just thinking about it, all he needed to do was shout, “Douson, release your magic power,” and rock spikes would instantly invade the enemy’s defenses.

The scene was simply too beautiful for words.

Suddenly, the voice of his personal servant, Thomas, came from behind: “Master, Douson seems to be injured.”

“Hmm?” It was only then that Liszt noticed Douson, now languishing on the ground with a large amount of blood flowing from its mouth—its mouth had practically exploded.

Fortunately, upon closer inspection, Douson had only suffered superficial injuries from the discharge of magic power, without damage to its bones and muscles. Its languishing was more a result of the excessive release of magic power, causing depletion within its body.

Once he understood the situation, Liszt was able to relax.

He said to Thomas, “This is the danger that comes with magic... Why do you think those mysterious magicians are so rare and not liked by everyone? It’s because their magic experiments are always fraught with danger; explosions can happen at any time. They don’t understand the scientific essence and yet they foolishly try to control the rules.”

These words sounded more like he was talking to himself.

Thomas didn’t understand and asked curiously, “Master, have you seen a magician before?”

“No.”

“Then you are truly great, Master. You have never seen a magician, yet you taught Douson magic. Praise the Master!” Thomas exclaimed with the awe of a zealot.

Liszt smiled faintly.

This trifle was hardly worth mentioning.

He took out a handkerchief and wiped his hands, “Thomas, take good care of Douson, bandage its wounds, and make sure to mash up its food before feeding.”

“Yes, Master.”

Chapter 59 Ultimate Mystery Technique Inferno Slash

Force had taught Douson how to release magic, leaving Liszt with a great sense of accomplishment.

“After all, I am someone who understands science.”

Experimenting, conducting more experiments, that was the foundation of science, just as he had simply figured out the state of the Space Ring—motionless, able to store ordinary items, but not living creatures; the Space Ring would immediately annihilate the soul—Liszt believed the soul was a kind of material motion that, once halted, ceased to exist.

He also repeatedly put things in and took them out, experimenting with the consumption of magic power.

For now, using the Space Ring consumed a bit too much power.

Busy and fulfilled, life was very fulfilling.

But over the next two days, he began to feel bored.

The Elf Bugs were all well settled and didn’t need his attention; agriculture and fisheries were thriving, needing no concern; road construction was slow but orderly, houses in Ganhai Tun were starting to dig foundations; the candidates for the Knight Squad were undergoing Marcus’s trials, not requiring his attention.

He had completely fallen into the lifestyle of most nobles—boredom had set in, leaving him to invent tasks for himself.

If he were near a city, he could host balls or banquets, or go hunting to expand his noble connections. But Fresh Flower Town was quite isolated, and there were only four people qualified to dine with him; he couldn’t possibly prepare banquets for them every day.

So, Liszt decided to find himself something else to do.

He planned to conquer Thorn Ridge ahead of schedule.

“Thorn Ridge is the biggest obstacle for Fresh Flower Town; it must be opened up, otherwise communication with Coral City is difficult, and I’m almost blind here.”

Understanding the importance of information exchange as someone with a modern mindset, Liszt was acutely aware.

He had discussed human trafficking with Levis but couldn’t be sure that Levis was really taking it seriously. Counting the days, the Tulip Fleet should be almost ready to return, and if Levis forgot to make arrangements by the next trade voyage, it would be at least three months before another opportunity arose.

For the fleet to trade at sea, it had to pass through quite a few islands, taking at least three months for one trip.

Missing this opportunity would delay the development of Fresh Flower Town for another three months, and although time wasn’t pressing for him, Liszt still didn’t want to waste it.

“Magical Beasts, difficult to deal with for now, because they can launch surprise attacks in the forest at any moment. But if I clear all the trees in Thorn Ridge, can the Magical Beasts still defeat Marcus on an open field? Besides, I’m not a vegetarian, and even if I were, my Crimson Blood Sword still thirsts for blood!”

A gemstone weapon, against low-level Magical Beasts, is definitely a great advantage.

Perhaps it couldn’t cut through hair as if it were butter, but the embedded ruby, resonating with the power of magic and Dou Qi, could at least double Liszt’s combat ability.

Clang!

He drew the Crimson Blood Sword, gripping it tightly with both hands, a two-handed sword suitable for slashing while on horseback.

The silver-white blade gleamed with cold light.

“Heart of the Fire Dragon Drill!”

Liszt uttered softly, swinging the sword forward with both hands. The Ultimate Mystery Technique of “Fire Dragon Drill” activated, with flames rising on the Crimson Blood Sword and surging forward; the air itself was scorched, making explosive crackling sounds. It was originally a move designed for unison between rider and horse, but Liszt, through recent study, could now perform it solo.

And he could channel the attack in one direction, without harming himself.

Sheathing the sword, he stood tall.

The flames in the air dissipated and everything returned to calm, only the still scorching temperature indicating that someone had just used a powerful move. He exhaled lightly, “With that strike, if there had been a Wind Blade Wolf in front of me, it would already be dead.”

The “Fire Dragon Drill” was now thoroughly mastered.

He was no longer just a novice Earth Knight; he already possessed the power to fight, only lacking real battle experience. He planned to continue studying “Flaming Wave”, a Dou Qi Manuscript suitable for a Knight’s charge in group combat, requiring coordination with a mount.

Three out of four Retainer Knights were assisting Marcus in selecting the Knight Squad.

Only Gray Scythe remained standing by his side.

“Gray, carry my Knight Spear, I want to practice spearmanship on horseback.”

“Yes, my lord!”

He went to the stables.

The lush alfalfa stretched endlessly, its growth most vigorous near the Alfalfa Cordyceps. This meadow was occupied by the Li Dragon Horses, and other horses dared not graze here. Occasionally, Fire Dragon Horses would stealthily come to take a few bites but would get bitten and chased away if the Li Dragon Horses discovered them.

The Li Dragon Horses that were not in heat paid no attention to whether the others were male or female.

“Master, are you planning to ride a horse? Do you need me to bring the horse gear?” Tom, returning with water, saw that Liszt had no manservant following him and hurried over to ask.

“No need, you go about your business.”

“Yes, Master.”

Liszt whistled sharply, and in a flash, a pure black stallion came galloping as if riding the wind—it was the dragon-blooded Li Dragon Horse.

Its shoulder height was at least 1.9 meters, even taller than Liszt’s stature.

Therefore, mounting it required a leap onto its back.

Such a tall and majestic horse truly warranted a magnificent rider. Without reins, saddle, or stirrups, the temperament of the Li Dragon Horse simply would not allow itself to be bound by such gear. Liszt didn’t insist either, as he now possessed the physical attributes of an Earth Knight, and his equestrian skills were becoming increasingly exquisite.

With his exquisite horsemanship, he could achieve a perfect unity with the horse without relying on any gear.

“Li Dragon, cooperate with me well,” Liszt said as he patted the neck of the Li Dragon Horse and took the Knight’s Spear handed to him by Gray. The spear, nearly three meters long, required immense strength to wield.

Forged from fine steel, the Retainer Knights polished and maintained it daily, so it gleamed with a silver shine.

“Hmph!”

The Li Dragon Horse, as if showcasing its strength, reared up, lifting its front hooves off the ground and trumpeting towards the sunlight. It then carried Liszt around the paddock, his control seamless whether at a sprint, sudden halt, jump, or pivot. Meanwhile, Liszt, on horseback, took the opportunity to perform the “Flaming Wave”.

The Knight's Spear was too long to wield like a one-handed sword, but following the rhythm of the Li Dragon Horse, each movement was forceful and powerful.

“Inferno Slash!”

Liszt bellowed, rallying all his Dou Qi into the Knight's Spear, which shone with intense energy as if fueled by the Li Dragon Horse's will in a mad leap.

The Dou Qi ignited the air, and the entire Knight's Spear seemed ablaze.

With a horizontal sweep from the soaring horse's back, crimson and golden flames rained down, scorching the alfalfa to cinders in an instant upon touching the ground.

Hum!

The Li Dragon Horse landed and steadied itself as Liszt drove the Knight Spear into the ground at an angle to stabilize the chaotic Dou Qi within his body. The Inferno Slash was the ultimate mystery technique of the “Flaming Wave”, consuming a tremendous amount of energy but capable of wiping out dozens of enemies in one strike during a charge.

Especially with the Li Dragon Horse's immense strength, lightning speed, and ferocious nature, this technique could be performed to its fullest effect.

This was something he could not achieve in cooperation with the Fire Dragon Horses.

“It's a pity that you are to become a prime stud horse, and I cannot ride you into battle... Of course, it's also unlikely that I would personally go into battle.”

Dismounting, Liszt patted the Li Dragon Horse's flank, signaling it to graze freely as he changed his whistle to call forth the Fire Dragon Horse.

Riding the Fire Dragon Horse, he headed back towards the castle.

“Gray, go call Teacher Goltai over.”

“Yes, my lord!”

A moment later, Goltai arrived at the castle: “Liszt, what is it?”

“I plan to cut down the trees in Thorn Ridge, shrink the habitat of the Magical Beasts, and clear the path obstructing Fresh Flower Town’s development,” Liszt declared with an air of confidence.

Goltai frowned: “Cutting down trees could lead to encounters with Magical Beasts; isn’t that too risky?”

“With Teacher Marcus and me personally providing protection, as long as we don’t encounter large numbers of Magical Beasts, there’s basically no danger since we’ll be fighting in an open area. Besides, Magical Beasts in Thorn Ridge are rare. I’m not planning to cut down all the trees, just the ones along the sides of the road.”

First, to cut down a part, gradually compressing the living space of the Magical Beasts, and then, when everything was ready, to finish the job in one fell swoop.

That was Liszt’s plan.

Chapter 60: Gao Ertai’s Psychological Struggle

“Li Si Te’s actions are becoming more and more frequent, and there isn’t a moment of rest throughout the day, Isaiah, I haven’t had a good night’s sleep for a week now.”

Goltai, in the town’s administrative housing, fanned himself vigorously with thick parchment to cool himself down: “I originally thought that coming to Fresh Flower Town would be an easy job, but it has nearly exhausted me.”

“Clearly, officials without ambition are not what Li Si Te expects,” Isaiah, busy with his fingers calculating this quarter’s taxes and without looking up, said, “Goltai, you should make yourself more diligent, a comfortable life will erode a knight’s fighting spirit.”

“It seems that you’ve grown to like life in Fresh Flower Town just like Blair, I remember when you first arrived, you had endless complaints.”

“I was indeed very disappointed when I first arrived, it was dilapidated, crude, and there were hardly any people,” Isaiah moved his fingers, which had gone somewhat numb from doing arithmetic, “But after getting used to it, I find that

Fresh Flower Town has an unprecedented vitality. I've talked to Marcus about it; he says that Li Si Te is a noble unlike any other."

"Indeed, he is unlike any other," Goltai spread his hands.

"So I think, Marcus's aspiration to become a noble lies with Li Si Te, and perhaps here is also where I can revive my family's hopes."

"It looks like you're serious."

"I can't keep being mediocre. For the sake of my foolish son, I must pull myself together."

"Well, it's about time to pull yourself together. I'm going to check on the construction progress of the houses in Oyster Village. The entire town is short-staffed now, I need to rack my brains on how to organize a Lumberjack Team."

Despite his words, Goltai did not head to Oyster Village after leaving the administration; instead, he returned to his residence in the town.

It was a two-story building, formerly the residence of the Tax Knight—the Castle could only be inhabited by the landlord, and even if it was vacant, ordinary people could not move in.

"My Lord, you're back. Is work over for the day?" A young girl dressed in a coarse linen dress hurried over to help Goltai take off his coat.

Goltai's hands inappropriately touched the girl's buttocks: "Work is never done, but life goes on."

The girl's face flushed red: "If you don't go to work, won't Lord Landlord blame you?"

"I was Li Si Te's teacher, the town's administrative officer, I have the right to give myself a half-day off... Freya, I've missed you, I can't focus on my work." Saying so, Goltai embraced Freya, kissing her cheek, and then pushed the girl toward the bedroom.

Freya quickly wrestled free, panicking, "My, my Lord, it's still daytime."

“What’s wrong with daytime? Recently, there’s been too much oyster-eating, not enough time at night,” Goltai selectively forgot that every evening, he could still only last once, and not more than thirty seconds at a time.

Freya looked somewhat panicked, seemingly searching for a topic to divert the conversation: “You seem to be in a bad mood, is it because of the advisor issue?”

“Of course I’m not in a good mood, he’s the landlord, he has the right to command me to work for him, even if it’s from morning to night, non-stop. But I’ve been in Fresh Flower Town for three months now, and I still haven’t been given the position of advisor. Damn it, who else here is qualified to be an advisor besides me?”

Goltai hit the wall of the house hard, his tone filled with indignation: “I’m starting to regret coming to Fresh Flower Town!”

Freya’s expression changed: “My Lord, do you, do you intend to leave here?”

“Not for now, Freya, it is you who make me linger, unwilling to leave.” Goltai embraced Freya again, kissing her.

Freya pushed him away forcefully.

Goltai’s face suddenly darkened: “Freya, what do you mean by that!”

Freya took a deep breath, allowing herself to smile again: “I know you’re unhappy, you’ve been preoccupied these past few days, I guess you want to return to Coral City, a much larger city than Fresh Flower Town, countless times more prosperous... I want to tell you, my Lord, that Freya will stay in Fresh Flower Town, to raise your child. Please don’t worry.”

“What do you mean?” Goltai’s face changed and changed again.

“I’m pregnant.”

With a soft utterance, all of Goltai’s expressions froze on his face. It took him a long while to come to his senses, “You’re pregnant?”

“Mhm.” Freya touched her own stomach, and even though it was still flat, she could feel a strong little heartbeat throbbing within.

During the conversation, she suddenly started to retch.

No longer doubting, Goltai knew that Freya was indeed pregnant, but he didn't know whether to be thrilled or shocked—he had a wife and children in Coral City, his children were grown and married, and he even had a grandson who was born the year before last—he was only here seeking an affair to fill his loneliness.

He had never thought such a day would come.

“Oh heavens, Freya, I mean, I'm very confused right now, sorry, I don't know how to face this news.” Goltai stammered.

Freya just smiled, “It's alright, my Lord, I know that as a serf like me, there is no better tomorrow. I am very grateful to you for giving me some fairly happy memories, and I will raise him on my own, he will grow up healthy and strong... I just hope, when you leave, can you grant him freeman status?”

“Freeman?”

Goltai fell into hesitation and conflict, while Freya just smiled at him.

After a moment, he took a deep breath and finally made a decision, “I'm sorry, Freya, I have let you down...”

Freya's smile quickly faded.

But the next thing Goltai said brought a brighter smile to her face.

“I hesitated just now, which I shouldn't have—I promise you, I will not, at least not now, leave Fresh Flower Town. I want to see him born, to tell him his father's name, Goltai Mast... I think I know what to do now, I've never really immersed myself in Fresh Flower Town.”

Goltai drew Freya into his arms, with warmth and not lust, “Because I've been a noble, accustomed to comfort rather than struggle, I complained about Liszt not offering me a consultant position, yet I never worked hard. But now, I must work hard and earn back some noble glory, for our child!”

“Is this true, my Lord?” Freya's eyes widened.

“Of course, I promise it, by my knight's honor!”

A moment of tenderness.

Goltai broke free from the tender trap and donned his own Flack Abaie, striding out of the house—this time he was truly inspecting the housing construction in Oyster Village.

At night, another small feast was being held in the castle.

Before the feast started, Marcus, Blair, and Isaiah were idly chatting, while in the study, Goltai was reporting his work progress to Liszt.

“The main road from Thorn Ridge to the town is now half-built, we have plenty of sand, but we’re running short on stones. I’ve started drafting robust serfs to form a Lumberjack Team and will also break up the stones from Thorn Ridge to transport for road construction. If the stone supply from Thorn Ridge is ample, the sandy roads between the villages could also be paved with gravel.”

“That’s an excellent plan, carry it out just like that, Teacher Goltai,” Liszt nodded in approval.

It wasn’t just the plan that was appealing but also Goltai’s attitude. In the past, Goltai would attend each feast only in body to eat and drink and to crack witty remarks, never taking the initiative to talk about work.

Today was a bit unexpected, as he proactively reported on his work.

As the landlord, of course, he favored subordinates who were keen on their jobs, rather than those who only mooched food and drink.