

The Mighty Dragons Are Dead

#Chapter 61: Boiled Peanuts and Hops - Read The Mighty Dragons Are Dead Chapter 61: Boiled Peanuts and Hops

Chapter 61: Boiled Peanuts and Hops

“Peanuts for the main dish tonight?” Marcus expertly shelled peanuts, wondering aloud. Wheat might be the top choice for staple food, but its yield was generally low, so peanuts and peas had to fill the gap.

“How do they taste?”

Liszt inquired, for he had no boiled peanuts before him.

He didn't fancy boiled peanuts, so as the master of the castle, Cook Abbie had specially made him porridge with oats. As for everyone else, they weren't so fortunate.

“They're tender and appropriately mushy, just a bit bland and tasteless,” he commented.

Goltai chimed in, “That's just how boiled peanuts taste. They're nice for a change, to spice up the palate once in a while, but you'll get tired of them if you eat them often. However, tonight's peanuts are larger than usual—did you notice?”

It dawned on Marcus, “Has the harvest from Peanut Hamlet come in?”

“This is the first batch, from the peanuts grown near the cordyceps. The yield is thirty percent higher than usual, and the growing cycle has been shortened by a month. The castle won't be short of peanuts this year. I think Mrs. Abbie should find time to make more peanut butter. Spread on bread, it stays fragrant all day.”

In Fresh Flower Town, none was a greater gourmet than Goltai, the Honored Knight who always had endless things to say about food and drink.

Liszt smiled faintly, “Pair it with juniper wine, and it would be perfect.”

“Oh, Liszt, you really get me, haha.”

“It’s a pity the juniper wine we brought back from Coral City last time has all been drunk up.”

“To be honest, I really didn’t want to hear that.”

“In fact, there’s even more disheartening news,” Liszt said, sipping his oatmeal porridge slowly, “The stock in the wine cellar is at rock bottom. Mr. Carter advises against drinking any more red wine, or we won’t have enough for the festivals in the second half of the year. And as for beer, the ones made with hops are almost finished. We’re left with only the sour-tasting ones.”

“Good heavens, that can’t be true, can it.”

Liszt did not respond.

Butler Carter, attending behind at the banquet, answered on his behalf: “The weather is turning hot, and beer is being consumed in large quantities. Without trading caravans coming and going, we cannot produce our own hopped beer. If it weren’t for the Earl’s recent convoy, which brought many barrels of beer, the castle would be running even lower on the sour beer by now.”

Goltai frowned deeply, “I think we should really build a dock and purchase hops directly from Viscount Trik.”

Unfortunately, the East Coast of Fresh Flower Town was all flat sandy beaches with no deep-water ports for constructing a dock.

As for Viscount Trik, he was a follower of the Coral Island’s Count, full named Trik Lycra, and he owned a separate small island—Beer Island.

There, a magnificent castle stood—Beer Castle.

The Lycra Family’s beer, renowned for its use of hops, was a best-seller on several large islands.

Beer was the most common type of alcoholic beverage in the Grand Duchy, coming in two varieties: hopped and unhopped.

Hops, a species of the Lycra genus, played a significant role in beer—they imparted a refreshing aroma, bitterness, and preservative qualities to it, promoted good foam formation which helped clarify the wort, and the strong hop flavor balanced the natural sweetness of the malt and stimulated appetite.

Beer without hops quickly turned sour and was hard to swallow.

The hopped beer on Coral Island was exclusively brewed by the Lycra Family, and it was this industry that allowed them to afford the famed Beer Castle.

“A dock is out of the question; that’s why I want to completely clear the roads through Thorn Ridge. Only then can trading caravans enter Fresh Flower Town... We don’t have the Tax Knights anymore to protect the traders coming and going,” said Liszt, then turning to Marcus, “Teacher Marcus, has the selection for the Knight Squad not finished yet?”

Setting aside the boiled peanuts he was holding, Marcus replied, “Tomorrow is the last selection date. I already have some preliminary choices, but their physical conditioning is still too poor. Only two meet the entrance standards of the Knight Academy.”

“Perhaps it’s because they’re not getting enough to eat, but now that the Knight Squad is being provided for by the Castle, I believe their physical condition will see significant improvement.”

“Then I can stop worrying about the food and focus on training.”

“Yes, make sure they master Dou Qi as soon as possible. Fresh Flower Town should not only have five knights capable of Dou Qi. Going forward, we will rely on knights for many things.”

Unexpectedly, Liszt saw the Lumberjack Team the very next day.

He had thought that Goltai would need at least two or three days to pull together healthy serfs for the work, but today brought a surprise.

Mounted on his horse, Goltai personally led the Lumberjack Team to gather on the main road outside the Castle. In total, there were thirty strong serfs, but only half of them had either a new or old axe in hand, and the team had only two saws, both brought from home by the carpenter’s son.

Iron was scarce.

The metal was controlled by nations with dragons, and it was very difficult to obtain.

This was also why the Duchy of Sapphire often organized its knight orders to wage war on the continent and plunder mineral resources—the iron mines of the Grand Duchy were mostly seized from the Eagle Kingdom and then transported bit by bit to each island by sea.

In Fresh Flower Town, many serfs had to work with wooden, stone, and bone utensils.

It was a different scene from the orderly and solemn one he had imagined.

The group of strong serfs wore thick anxiety on their faces—the Landlord demanded they fell timber in Thorn Ridge, a dangerous task. If they encountered a Magical Beast, their wives might have to remarry.

“Teacher Goltai, didn’t you tell them that I would send protection?”

“Of course, I informed them, but they are still trembling.”

Liszt nodded, understanding, “Words are pale.”

While they were speaking, a team shouting slogans ran over from the riding ground to the Castle. Four knights followed and supervised, with Marcus leading the way.

“My lord!” Marcus dismounted and saluted Liszt.

“Why thirty?”

“They will escort the lumberjacks. Based on today’s performance, I will make the final selection for my squad. Their physiques are about the same, and their minds aren’t too dull. Now, the last criterion is an examination of courage. A knight cannot be without courage,” Marcus explained.

Hearing this, Goltai said, “Liszt, won’t you say something before we set off?”

Liszt nodded, of course he needed to say a few words for the occasion.

Majestically attired in his black beast armor, he rode his Li Dragon Horse and slowly approached the front of both teams. With a solemn expression, Liszt

swept his gaze over each person in the teams and spoke out loud, "Fellow citizens, I am your Landlord, Liszt Tulip."

He paused, suddenly finding himself at a loss for words.

He still hadn't quite mastered the skill of showing off, and after a moment, he decided to omit the lengthy, provocative speech and simply said with composure, "Today, you will chop down the trees of Thorn Ridge for me, clearing the path between the town and the outside world, and I, will protect your safety!"

Words are pale, and facing the still uneasy serfs, he simply raised his riding crop lightly, and the Li Dragon Horse lifted its forelegs and let out a skyward roar.

As the horse hooves hit the ground, Liszt had already taken the lead on horseback.

"Forward!"

Chapter 62 Monkeys and Birds Start Fighting

"Puff out your chest, and muster your spirit!" Marcus's roar echoed through the forests at the edge of Thorn Ridge, his riding whip cracking sharply from time to time.

Thirty young boys, gripping wooden sticks, nervously surveyed every corner of the forest.

They could hear the calls of various birds and beasts deep within the woods; among those calls might have been the roars of magical beasts. For boys who had grown up on terrifying tales of magical beasts, every extra moment spent here felt like a chill down their spine as if a magical beast could pounce and sink its teeth into them at any moment.

Tony was one such fearful boy.

Clenching the wooden stick tightly, he leaned against a large tree, his calves trembling slightly. Last winter, a Wind Blade Wolf attacked Little Wheat Village, devouring two serfs and causing him to have nightmares for several

nights. Now, those nightmares resurfaced in his mind, and he prayed incessantly.

“Please don’t let it eat me...”

He kept glancing at the adults who were chopping wood outside, as if that would make him feel safer.

Suddenly.

There was a loud snap above his head. Without notice, Marcus had ridden his horse over to him, his whip lashed against the trunk, stripping away the bark.

“Tony, I told you to watch the forest, not the lumberjacks!”

“Yes, yes, Mr. Marcus.”

“Show your manliness, and do not disappoint me or Lord Landlord,” Marcus said coldly.

Tony quickly responded loudly, “Yes, I will not disappoint Mr. Marcus, nor will I disappoint Lord Landlord!”

Marcus then rode away.

Seeing him go, Tony breathed a sigh of relief. He feared this cold and ruthless Earth Knight; during the past few days of selection, he had received his fair share of lashings.

Real lashings, where each strike immediately left a bloody welt on his body.

If it weren’t for the chance to become a Retainer Knight and the opportunity to change his fate, he wouldn’t want to face Marcus, let alone confront magical beasts here.

What he didn’t know was that Marcus had shaken his head as he left.

This Earth Knight had already written him off. A knight who could not face his own fears, who could not overcome the pressures of the environment, held no potential in his eyes. To Marcus, a commoner becoming a Noble was only possible through a baptism of blood and fire. If one was not prepared, it was better to go home early and farm in peace.

Otherwise, they might end up as corpses under the hooves on a battlefield.

Moving continuously through the woods, Marcus not only monitored every movement but also assessed the boys. The morning passed without incident, and he had more or less decided on the twelve members of the squad.

So, at noon.

He reported his selections to Liszt, “Lord, Philip Wool, Zavier Dung, Jacob Sole, York Baldy, Wayne Haystack, Zachary Pinky, York Cobbler, Evan Handkerchief, Sean Redface, Tracy Hunchback, Mullen Crotch, Theodore Rottensock; these twelve boys will become your Retainer Knights.”

“Zavier Dung, sounds a bit like the brother of the servant Jim Bull Dung; York Baldy, York Cobbler, with the same name, one as Big York and the other as Little York then... Well, inform their families that from this moment, these twelve boys will be excused from production, supported by the castle.”

“Yes.”

The Knight Squad’s selections had been decided, and at noon, Liszt found a moment to summon the Smoke Mission.

Indeed, the mission had been completed and updated.

“Complete the mission, reward the hatching Wind Falcon.”

“Mission: Besides drift bottles, the seaside might also bring unexpected surprises. Now, there’s a sailing ship carrying surprises drifting toward the East Coast. Please find and rescue the distressed ship. Reward: A portion of population.”

“Hmm?”

Liszt didn’t immediately pay attention to the reward of the Wind Falcon.

Because he saw “population,” which is what Fresh Flower Town is currently lacking the most. The small town has less than two thousand people, not even as many as a slightly larger village in his hometown. Without population, as a landlord, he couldn’t unfold any plans; what he desired most was population.

“A population reward related to a ship in distress, does this mean a ship carrying population is about to drift to the East Coast?” Thinking of this, Liszt eagerly called for Goltai.

“Liszt, what do you need?”

“I just realized, the fishermen of Oyster Village face the sea where there are numerous sea monsters, which is very dangerous and must be taken seriously.”

“Sea monsters... shouldn’t come to the shore, right?” Goltai was somewhat skeptical.

Sea monsters indeed posed a danger and frequently attacked ships, but they rarely came to the shore. Once the tide went out and they were stranded, it could lead to their certain demise.

His mind not really on the conversation, Liszt emphasized, “We can’t be careless about even a bit of danger. Inform the patrol team immediately; they must focus on patrolling the East Coast during this period. Report any unusual activity to me. Hold the line for a while, and if truly no sea monster comes ashore, then readjust the focus of the patrol.”

“All right, I’ll go inform them.”

Once Goltai left, Liszt finally had the mood to pay attention to the reward for the previous mission—the egg of the Wind Falcon.

He had heard about the Wind Falcon; it was a type of falcon magical beast, considered a low-level magical beast, often appearing by the sea, feeding on fish from the sea. Being a small animal, it rarely infringed on humans, and comparatively speaking, was less dangerous, but that didn’t mean it was weak. On the contrary, it had strong combat abilities.

It could release magic—Wind Blade.

This magic was the same as that of the Wind Blade Wolf, but as a falcon, it had the natural advantage of flight, allowing it to strike from almost any direction.

In other words, it could use hit-and-run tactics, wearing down its opponent without taking damage.

“So where is my Wind Falcon?” Liszt cast his gaze towards the large trees being cut down, alert in his heart, “Could it be hiding in one of the trees that is about to be chopped down?”

If there was indeed a Wind Falcon, the threat would be tremendous.

He quickly called for Marcus, “We can’t just watch out for the terrestrial beasts in the forest; we must also be vigilant of the sky, as there may be flying magical beasts here.”

Marcus took down the bow and arrows from his back, holding them firmly in his hands, “Lord, compared to ground beasts, flying magical beasts have more fragile bodies, and my arrows are always ready for them!”

His confidence infected Liszt.

“I had wanted to learn archery from you but never had the free time.”

“Lord, you can learn anytime.”

“Hmm, once I’m through this busy period, I will start learning archery,” Liszt decided. Learning archery was a must, as ranged attacks suited his nature, eliminating the enemy from afar.

Close combat was too crude and came with a high risk of injury.

As a landlord who came to this world, he was supposed to enjoy life, not suffer.

In the afternoon, Liszt kept looking up at the trees, hoping to find out which one held his reward. However, as the sun set in the west, Goltai rushed over, bringing unexpected news, “There’s a Fragrant Coconut Tree at Oyster Village that is currently the scene of a major battle between monkeys and birds.”

Chapter 63: Rich Spoils of War

The battle between monkeys and a young bird.

Goltai quickly described the scene in detail; it was actually a group of Fruit Thief Monkeys attacking an eagle: “That bird built a nest on the Fragrant Coconut Tree, and it seems there are bird eggs in the nest—the monkeys have stopped stealing fruit and have started stealing bird eggs instead.”

He took it as an amusing story.

However, Liszt mounted his horse and announced on the spot, “Logging is over for today. Everyone leave Thorn Ridge. Teacher Marcus, come with me to Oyster Village.” Without a doubt, that bird was a Wind Falcon, and what was lying in the nest were eggs awaiting hatching.

That was his mission reward.

At the Lord Landlord’s command, the Lumberjack Team immediately stopped working and started heading back to town along the half-built gravel path. Liszt, leading Marcus and four Retainer Knights, raced ahead to Oyster Village. Upon reaching the East Coast, they saw the Patrol Team surrounding a Fragrant Coconut Tree.

There was a large pile of monkey corpses under the tree.

“Lord Landlord!” The Patrol Members saluted one after another.

Liszt looked up at the crown of the Fragrant Coconut Tree, which stood dozens of meters high, with the lowest branches as high as a four-story building and the highest, as tall as twenty stories.

The tree in front of them was the tallest; it grew at a sixty-degree angle toward the sea, and looking up, the crown was almost a small point.

At that moment, the crown was bustling with activity, chickens flying and dogs jumping erratically, and occasionally the body of a monkey would fall, dead on impact. Even if they didn’t die from the fall, their bodies could be seen covered in cuts as if sliced open by blades.

“There is a Magical Beast up there; these wounds look to be caused by Magic Wind Blades,” Marcus cautioned, lifting the body of one of the Fruit Thief Monkeys.

Liszt casually pointed, “It’s the Wind Falcon. These monkeys are attacking its nest; there should be its eggs inside. The battle is fierce. Teacher Marcus, do

you have a way to retrieve the eggs? This could very well hatch into a new Wind Falcon.”

“So, it’s a Wind Falcon,” Marcus said, suddenly realizing, then frowned, “Climbing the tree would be easy, but with a group of Fruit Thief Monkeys and a Wind Falcon up there, it would be very dangerous. A Magical Beast defending its nest is the most ferocious, and the Fruit Thief Monkeys themselves are a fierce wild beast too.”

“Then let’s wait, perhaps they’ll both suffer losses,” said Liszt, somewhat uncertain.

If it was a mission reward, it should not be difficult to obtain. Otherwise, getting bird eggs from a group of combat-capable Fruit Thief Monkeys, or from a combat-capable Wind Falcon, would be an impossible task.

And so they waited for about fifteen minutes.

The number of monkey corpses grew, and the Patrol Members gleefully collected the bodies. These were choice game, and though they couldn’t eat them—since everything in the territory belonged to the Castle, and thus to Liszt—it was certain the Lord Landlord would reward them with something.

After some thought, Liszt told the Patrol Team, “Collect the dead Fruit Thief Monkeys, finish off the gravely wounded with one stroke, and tie up those with minor injuries. I want them alive.”

He hadn’t forgotten his earlier plan to train the Fruit Thief Monkeys to climb trees and pick Fragrant Coconut Fruit.

“Yes, Lord Landlord!”

Suddenly, Marcus spoke up, “Lord, be careful, the remaining monkeys are trying to flee!”

As soon as he finished speaking, Liszt saw about a dozen Fruit Thief Monkeys rapidly descending the trunk of the Fragrant Coconut Tree. And behind them, a large bird, nearly plucked bare, flapping its wings in pursuit.

“Marcus, join me in intercepting the Wind Falcon, and all Patrol Members stop the Fruit Thief Monkeys. Don’t let a single one escape. Capture them alive if possible!”

When the snipe and clam grapple, it's the fisherman who benefits.

Seizing such an opportunity, Liszt made an immediate decision.

“Yes!” Faced with the chance to kick someone while they were down, the Patrol Members were excited, each drawing their weapons and positioning themselves under the tree.

Marcus took out his bow and arrows, ready to draw and shoot at a moment's notice. Liszt himself drew the Crimson Blood Sword he carried, the Gemstone Weapon boosting his confidence immensely.

In the blink of an eye.

The remaining Fruit Thief Monkeys had already scrambled down the trees, and the Patrol Members rushed up, howling and swinging wildly. After putting up a desperate fight, the monkeys were exhausted and barely put up any resistance. They ran around aimlessly like headless flies, unable to do anything but get beaten.

With a few hits from the spears, the monkeys lay on the ground, unable to move.

Elsewhere, a molting Wind Falcon was chasing after a Fruit Thief Monkey when Liszt suddenly charged over on horseback, the Crimson Blood Sword blazing with flames. He unleashed the Ultimate Mystery Technique, Inferno Slash. A torrent of fire rained down, and although the Wind Falcon deftly dodged, it still got caught in the firestorm, igniting its few remaining feathers.

But after the attack, the Wind Falcon sensed the danger and let out a long screech, flapped its wings vigorously, and flew towards the sky.

Liszt couldn't let it escape, and roared, “Marcus!”

Marcus was already prepared, he released his grip, and the bowstring snapped forward, propelling two arrows side by side. Accompanied by a sharp, piercing whistle, they plunged into the body of the Wind Falcon, burying the arrowheads completely, blood spraying the sky.

The Wind Falcon staggered and plummeted onto the sandy beach.

When the last Fruit Thief Monkey was knocked to the ground by a spear and then swarmed by the Patrol Members, taken alive on the spot, the battle between the monkeys and the small bird ended with no victor. All were claimed by the fisherman Liszt.

After a quick count.

There were a total of forty-six Fruit Thief Monkeys, with thirty-nine dead or fatally injured by finishing blows, leaving seven with minor injuries, all of which were bound.

The body of the Wind Falcon was collected, its size not much larger than that of an earth dog.

An agile Patrol Member carefully climbed to the crown of the Fragrant Coconut Tree, found the nest, and pulled out a bird egg slightly smaller than a pineapple.

“Lord Landlord, there really is a bird egg!” The Patrol Member, excited, presented the egg to Liszt.

Liszt took the bird egg in his hands, and before he could begin to admire it, the egg suddenly made a soft cracking sound.

“Lord, the bird egg is hatching!” Marcus was astonished.

Liszt was also stunned, thinking to himself that the Smoke Mission was indeed formidable. He had only just picked up the egg, and it was already starting to hatch. As he was lost in thought, the cracking sounds continued, and after a moment, the shell was pecked open, revealing a naked, ugly bird head, its mouth open, making unpleasant “gacking” sounds.

The bird head’s huge eyes looked at Liszt, crying out as if begging for food.

Liszt coughed lightly, “Teacher Marcus, what does a young Wind Falcon eat?”

“It should... eat small fish and shrimp, I suppose?”

“Then, Patrol Members, go to the fishermen’s homes in Oyster Village and bring back some small fish and shrimp. Remember, they must be alive.” He vaguely remembered from “Man and Nature” that there were sea birds feeding

their chicks, holding squirming small fish in their beaks, evidently, these were live fish.

However, he also seemed to recall that some birds would eat the small fish and shrimp and then bring them back up to feed to their chicks.

In any case, feeding them live prey was the first thing to do.

Today's bounty was already substantial, and it wasn't as if he particularly cared about one small Magical Beast—a young bird. With the major pest of Fruit Thief Monkeys dealt with, they could freely pick the Fragrant Coconut Fruits, and even had “workers” for the harvest; the large Wind Falcon carcass was also a rich resource for Nalda, whether it was sold or eaten, it was a great supplement.

And then there was the mission soon to be completed, which would reward the town with scarce population.

“What a wonderful day!” Watching the young Wind Falcon gobble up the small fish and shrimp, Liszt felt especially content, “Teacher Marcus, let's return to the Castle together. Tonight, we continue the feast. Hmm, barbecue Fruit Thief Monkeys!”

Chapter 64: There is a Juan Fu in the Castle

“Caw! Caw!”

“Caw! Caw!”

“Caw! Caw!”

In the castle's study, an unpleasant bird call was heard from time to time. The fledgling Wind Falcons were quite ugly, covered only with fine down that was so thin it was almost invisible, and curled up tightly against the skin, making them look like plucked chickens. Compared to the streamlined bodies of adult Wind Falcons that roamed the skies, they were worlds apart.

Yet Liszt liked them very much, after all, they were flying Magical Beasts.

There was already a Fierce Earth Dog in the castle, which he occasionally took out for a walk, decking it out with a few Rock Spikes for a pleasing sight. If he could add a Wind Falcon to the mix, it would be absolutely cool to summon a Wind Blade whenever he felt like it.

Unfortunately, falcons don't imprint on their owners and Liszt hadn't figured out how to train it yet.

For now he could only feed it.

He had already had the castle's maids sew a pair of leather gloves; he had seen videos of people doing falconry before, and they all wore a pair of leather gloves for the falcon to perch on. There seemed to be some sort of toy as well, which they threw to attract the falcon and then reeled it back in. Once the toy was back, the falcon would just circle nearby and not fly away.

"When I have time, I need to research this toy, or perhaps go to Coral City to inquire if there are any hunters skilled in birdkeeping, and find out how they tame birds."

The dinner was roasted Fruit Thief Monkey meat.

It didn't have the tenderness of roasted beef and was slightly fibrous, making it tough to tear. However, perhaps due to their frequent consumption of Fragrant Coconut Fruit, the monkey meat had a faint scent of coconut milk after roasting, which was a unique taste different from ordinary roasted meat, and it proved very popular among the people at the banquet.

"If the meat of the Fruit Thief Monkey could be made a bit more tender, it would certainly become a delicacy. I suggest that the town could rear them in large quantities," Goltai said with his mouth full of grease.

Liszt was much more elegant, as he didn't choose to eat the roasted Fruit Thief Monkey meat and simply watched others enjoy their meal: "Being able to breed them in large numbers is a good thing; that's also my decision. But eating their meat is not a good idea, for monkeys have higher intelligence and should be trained to climb trees and help fruit farmers with their work."

According to the theories from his hometown, humans and monkeys had a common ancestor and both belonged to the primate family.

This world didn't have such a concept; humans were humans, with no evolution involved. Besides dragons and elves, all other creatures were considered inferior to humans—even in the eyes of many, dragons and elves were only slightly more magical creatures and couldn't compare to humans.

There had been instances of eating dragons... eating elves... and even cannibalism was not unheard of.

So he didn't eat, but he didn't stop others from eating either.

Isaiah curiously asked, "Sir, can monkeys really be trained well enough to help fruit farmers with their work?"

"Of course, it's the same as training dogs and horses," Liszt was so certain because he had seen plenty of monkey performances.

He had also read a news article saying that in Malaysia or Thailand, local people trained monkeys to climb trees and pick coconuts. A fruit farmer who had mistreated his monkey ended up dead after the monkey, in a fit of rage, pelted him with wild fruits.

Now, since the ownership of the Fruit Thief Monkeys belonged to Liszt, once trained and handed over to the fruit farmers, he was sure no one would dare to mistreat them.

It was unlikely that the same situation of monkeys killing their owner would occur.

"If the Fruit Thief Monkeys are really trained well, that will be an interesting sight. I've never thought we could make monkeys work for us," Blair said, laughing heartily as if he could already see the image of monkeys picking fruit.

Liszt said with a smile, "In that case, the task of training the Fruit Thief Monkeys will be your responsibility, Blair."

"Er, okay, I think I can handle it."

That's when Marcus suddenly asked, "Sir, how should we deal with the carcass of the Wind Falcon? Do I need to make another trip to Coral City to sell it?"

The Wind Falcon was a Low-Level Magical Beast, and it wouldn't be a problem to sell it for about a dozen Gold Coins.

If it had been before, Liszt would certainly have sold it to purchase living supplies.

But now, the town was not short on money to spend, as the income from the Black Tulip was enough to support his noble lifestyle for decades.

Feeling wealthy and powerful, Liszt said on the spot, "No need to sell it. Let the meat dry, and someday we'll host a Wind Falcon barbecue party. As for the other parts, Teacher Marcus, do you have any good suggestions for their use?"

"Bird bones are hollow, especially the Wind Falcon's bones, which contain wind attribute magic power. The joint bones can be made into signal whistles for sending messages, and they produce a very loud sound. Larger bones could be turned into tools; they're light and strong, better than iron tools. Moreover, its feathers are excellent materials for making arrows," said Marcus, quickly planning the use of every part of the Wind Falcon's body: "You are about to learn archery, so you will need a batch of arrows."

Liszt asked, "Does anyone in the town know how to make arrows?"

Marcus immediately replied, "I do. I make my own arrows."

"Thank you for your hard work, Teacher Marcus," said Liszt, lifting his cup filled with hop-flavored beer, "This drink is to honor you, and thank you for those two arrows this afternoon. They secured the Wind Falcon, otherwise, it would have been a great menace."

"It's my pleasure to serve you!"

Marcus, with a hearty gesture, raised his cup of hop-less beer and drained it in one gulp.

The bonfire had died, and the stars filled the sky.

Goltai, Marcus, and the others had already returned.

The servants busied themselves cleaning up after the feast, while Liszt was holding a cup of milk tea brought by Butler Carter—he had a habit of drinking a cup of milk tea before bed.

The rich nutrition of the milk was urgently needed by his body, being sixteen, an age for growth.

“Master, your bath water is ready,” announced the servant.

“How is the young Wind Falcon doing?”

“It’s still squawking a lot, but we have fed it plenty of little fish and shrimp. It’s certainly not hungry. However, Master, that little bird...is quite ugly.”

“I agree with you. Let’s go and see this little fellow. If it’s going to squawk all night long then take it outside; I don’t want to be woken up in the middle of the night,” said Liszt, handing his empty cup back to Carter, and walking inside the castle. Whenever he encountered servants working, they would stop and bow to him respectfully.

This sensation was very pleasant.

He was becoming more and more accustomed to his noble identity, aligning his mindset and loyalty with the noble class—if anyone dared to shake the foundation of the nobles’ power, it would mean crossing Liszt!

“Good night, gentlemen, ladies,” he said with an impeccable, standard noble smile, “I hope you all have sweet dreams until the morning.”

“Thank you, Master.”

Soon, Liszt had ascended to the second floor, which was his private area.

Carter pushed open the door to the study. The previously quiet room immediately filled with an unpleasant squawking—“caw caw,” “caw caw,” “caw caw.”

“No matter how many times I hear it, it still sounds unpleasant,” remarked Liszt, looking at the unsightly, curly-feathered little bird in a nest padded with some straw. “Mr. Carter, what do you think we should call it?”

“There is a ‘Douson’ outside the castle, found in the forest and shivering all over. Maybe this little bird found on the Fragrant Coconut Tree, shaking all over, could be called ‘Shivery Coconut?’”

Even though Carter misunderstood the meaning of “Douson,” Liszt still laughed: “Mr. Carter, you are becoming more humorous. However, I don’t like the name Shivery Coconut. It looks like it has curly, fine feathers, and I hope it will be lucky enough to live to the day it soars... Let’s call it ‘Juan Fu’.”

“Hmm, Juan Fu... Master, I think that name sounds nice.”

Chapter 65: A Leaky Sailing Ship

The next morning, Liszt took Juan Fu’s bird’s nest and hung it on the windowsill of the castle. On one hand, he wanted to let it bask in the sun, and on the other, he had had enough of the bird’s squawking.

Something odd happened last night, as the bird unexpectedly started calling in the middle of the night.

At this moment, Juan Fu, having just consumed some small fish and shrimp, was full of energy, crawling around in the nest and continuously emitting “gah gee” sounds.

Outside the castle, in the doghouse, Douson poked his head out, drooling as he stared at Juan Fu on the windowsill.

“Woof woof!” Seeing Liszt come out, it immediately started wagging its tail happily, pulling on its chain collar with a clanging sound—Liszt was truly raising a dog, having always used a dog chain from its puppyhood.

He unfastened the chain and held it in his hand.

Douson instantly spread his legs and ran wildly, with the time Liszt took him for a walk every day being perhaps the happiest moment of his day.

Leading Douson to the horse field, Liszt began training.

When Douson was smaller, he generally trained once a day, now the frequency had been reduced to once every three days. He had successfully taught Douson not to harm people or cast magic without a command, as well as not to eat things at random and not to chase the horses in the field.

Of course, except for the Li Dragon horses, the other horses would avoid Douson.

“Sit down, Douson!”

The previously lively Douson immediately squatted down, tongue out, looking at Liszt, barely distinguishable from a regular mutt.

Liszt threw a small ball made of leather: “Fetch it, Douson.”

Douson instantly dashed out like an arrow, then jumped and twisted 180 degrees in midair, successfully catching the leather ball and dashing back to place it in Liszt’s hand.

“Very good.” He rewarded Douson with a small piece of dried meat.

Next, they repeated several training exercises, including casting the magic Rock Spike, until Douson was so tired he was panting. Then, Liszt reattached the chain and handed it to Thomas, “Take him back.”

“Yes, m’lord.”

Considering the sun’s position, Liszt thought that the lumberjack team should be arriving soon. However, it wasn’t the lumberjack team that arrived, but a patrol member.

“Lord Landlord, urgent report!”

“Speak.”

“An askew sailboat has drifted to the East Coast, with people onboard waving flags. Sir Goltai believes it to be a distressed ship. He is organizing a rescue party and asked me to report to you immediately.”

Upon hearing the news.

Liszt's spirit was lifted. He immediately said to the patrol member, "I'll head over now. Tell Goltai to make sure to rescue the ship, especially the people on board."

By the time Liszt, dressed in his Flack-Abbieye and accompanied by four Retainer Knights and Earth Knight Marcus, arrived at the East Coast, he saw a group of people on the beach pulling on ropes, dragging a sailboat, not too big yet not too small, towards the shore.

Among those pulling the ropes, there were also several unfamiliar faces.

"Lord Landlord." Isaiah, who was in charge of orchestrating the boat-dragging work, bowed in respect.

Goltai also rushed over from the seaside, "Liszt, these are refugees from Little Papa Island. They fled by boat from Little Papa Island, intending to seek asylum on Da Pa Pa Island, but encountered a storm that damaged the ship, forcing them to drift along the sea breeze to Coral Island and run aground on the East Coast."

Liszt nodded. He had heard of Little Papa Island and Da Pa Pa Island.

At that moment, an elderly man with a somewhat hunched back approached him and, while still at a distance, initiated a prostrate salute, "Respected Baron of Fresh Flower Town, a person in distress, Bunier Zhen Dan, presents his sincere greetings and expresses his deepest apologies for disturbing your nobility."

"Zhen Dan?" Liszt had heard many unusual surnames, but still found the name Zhen Dan to be peculiar.

"My Lord, my family has been collecting sea swallow eggs for the Lord of Little Papa for generations."

The assurance of agricultural yields was difficult, and in many places, food was scarce. Fear and ignorance of the ocean meant that the fishing industry was almost undeveloped. Meanwhile, serfs, driven by the need to survive, had to find ways to provide food to ensure the luxuries of the nobility in the castle.

Among these, sea swallow eggs became one source of food.

The sea swallow is a type of sea bird related to gulls, and it usually builds its nest on seaside cliffs. Collecting sea swallow eggs is a life-threatening task that requires climbing cliffs hundreds of meters high and fighting against the protective sea swallows safeguarding their eggs. It is indeed no small feat for these serfs to have survived and left descendants.

“Understood,” Liszt extended his hand, signaling Bunier to get up, “Why did you flee from Little Papa Island?”

“Little Papa Island was attacked by a group of pirates; the castle fell, and the fate of the Lord of Little Papa is unknown. We had no choice but to seize the pirates’ ship to escape from Little Papa Island. We originally planned to take refuge on Da Pa Pa Island but encountered a severe storm. The ship nearly capsized, and we finally ended up on your Lordship’s territory.”

Liszt frowned involuntarily, “Little Papa Island was attacked by pirates?”

Little Papa Island is the family territory of the Little Papa Viscount. If he remembered correctly, the current lord was named Vincent Xiao Pa Pa. That family, along with the Viscount Gena Da Pa Pa from Da Pa Pa Island, were part of the same family a hundred years ago—the Pa Pa Family—known for their finely sewn handkerchiefs.

Later, one branch inherited the family title, and the other gained recognition on the battlefield—both becoming viscounts—so one changed its surname to Da Pa Pa, and the other to Xiao Pa Pa.

“The pirates looted the castle and committed slaughter on the island. We had to flee.”

“What have you decided to do now?” Liszt looked toward the damaged sailing ship, its sails torn, the ship’s body battered with several holes. The ship had already been pulled to the shore, and a group of bent figures were helping each other disembark, “Will you continue to seek refuge on Da Pa Pa Island or stay in Fresh Flower Town?”

In Bunier’s cloudy eyes, a glint of hope suddenly flickered: “My Lord, might we... may we reside in Fresh Flower Town?”

This was a population reward for a task, and of course, Liszt wouldn’t miss the opportunity: “Stay, and I can grant you the status of serfs. In Fresh Flower Town, there’s a lot of uncultivated land I can assign for you to farm. A serf

skilled in a craft can be highly valued. Whether you stay or go, report to Sir Goltai.”

The ship was damaged and stranded; they had no way to leave. Besides, what difference does it make between going to Da Pa Pa Island and staying in Fresh Flower Town?

Therefore, after a brief discussion with the other refugees, Bunier reported to Goltai, and they all decided to stay, becoming true serfs of Fresh Flower Town and pledging loyalty to Liszt.

Since they had become serfs, it meant that these people, including the broken ship, were Liszt’s assets.

“Teacher Goltai, take a census of the newly joined serfs’ identities, then allocate them to various settlements. Also, clean the sailboat thoroughly; I want to know what’s in it. A ship seized from pirates is bound to have some weapons on it, right?”

Goltai was eager, “Rest assured, Liszt, not even a loaf of bread can be hidden by these serfs, and I’ll present before you a clear account of everything they’ve brought along with every detail about them... all in half a day’s time.”

“Don’t forget about this ship. If it can be repaired, fix it.”

“Of course.”

Chapter 66: Brainstorming at the Dinner Party

Banquet.

It seemed that banquets were held every day in the castle—for the nobility, eating and drinking were simply part of daily life.

“Little Papa Island has encountered pirates, Teacher Marcus, are pirates prevalent in the Duchy of Sapphire?” Liszt asked while eating roasted meat.

Marcus pondered before answering, “If speaking solely of reports about pirates, nearly many small islands have experienced the scourge of pirates, but there might be another reason at play.”

“What reason?”

“These pirates, they are very likely to be in disguise. Not every noble family can manage to run a prosperous industry. When they face the brink of bankruptcy, risking danger becomes a shortcut to their self-salvation. Particularly among those nobles with grievances, some might even assume the identity of pirates to plunder their adversary’s wealth.”

Hearing this brutal information.

If it were the sixteen-year-old of the past, he might feel too upset to accept it—the notion that nobles, who pride themselves on their noble lineage and possess countless virtues, could stoop to moonlighting as pirates was inconceivable.

But the current Liszt only furrowed his brows slightly, and soon relaxed them, “Fortunately, Coral Island has a strong Knight Order, and Fresh Flower Town has not faced the danger of pirates for the time being. However, we must be prepared for potential threats. Teacher Marcus, the Knight Squad must be well trained.”

“Rest assured, Baron, I will devote all my efforts to training the Knight Squad, turning each one into a qualified battle knight,” Marcus assured.

Liszt then turned to inquire of Goltai, “Teacher Goltai, report the information about the new serfs now, during the meal. I find it the most suitable time to talk about official matters.”

“If you wish, let’s discuss it now.” Goltai signaled a servant to fetch his coat, and pulling out a thick piece of parchment from the pocket, he unfolded it, “There are a total of fifty serfs. In fact, they were originally freemen, so they smartly chose to escape when the pirates attacked.”

Little Papa City on Little Papa Island had fifty residents who owned their own properties.

The relationship between a freeman and a landlord was more like that of a tenant and a landowner, while serfs were considered slaves. For the nobility, serfs were “one of their own,” whereas freemen were “outsiders.” Whenever wars broke out between landlords, they would choose to protect their serfs, as they are their assets.

Freemen lack such protection; if they die, they have it coming, and it also serves as a chance for landlords to make some extra profit.

So, being a freeman had its advantages and disadvantages, and not everyone wanted to become one.

Some freemen from Little Papa City, upon seeing the defeat of Little Papa Viscount, knew they could be killed and robbed by the “pirates” at any moment, and hurried to flee. They smartly chose to seize ships, taking advantage of the pirates still fighting in the castle, capturing a sailing boat.

Unfortunately, having only a captain skilled in steering but no experienced sailors, they eventually lost control during a storm.

“So, none of them knows how to farm; they are all freemen with crafts,” Liszt was very satisfied with this, as craftsmen were more important than mere farmers to the development of his territory.

Peasants could be bought as slaves at any time in the future, but craftsmen were hard to come by.

“Blacksmiths, coopers, embroiderers, tailors, bakers, brewers, shoeshiners, carpenters, dyers, soap makers, tanners, confectioners, salt workers, locksmiths, chefs, and their families, oh, and an innkeeper and a horse merchant, as well as a few small merchants who sell on the streets.”

“What is Bunier’s profession?” Liszt recalled the old man who had spoken to him during the day.

“He is a soap maker, proficient in creating various kinds of soaps with floral fragrances.”

“Excellent, I have had enough of using soapwort powder for bathing; it’s best to have him quickly make soap from it.” As someone who insisted on bathing daily, Liszt had a great demand for soap, lamenting that there was not an abundance of it in the castle, only some soapwort powder—the powdered fruit of the soapwort plant.

Soapwort powder indeed could clean, but it was also troublesome to use and did not feel pleasant during the washing process.

In fact, Liszt knew of a more straightforward cleaning item—soap.

This is a type of soap made from a mixture of pig pancreas and wood ash, which is quite simple to produce. Just crush the pig's pancreas and mix it with the wood ash to create the most basic pancreas soap. Unfortunately, no one in Fresh Flower Town raises pigs...

He sliced off a piece of roast meat, forked it, and dipped it into some ketchup.

The roast meat paired with ketchup tasted good.

After swallowing, he took a sip of seafood soup and then contentedly wiped his mouth with a napkin, "The work arrangements for the new serfs should be discussed between Mr. Carter and Teacher Goltai. Suitable individuals can be assigned to the town to help establish shops specifically for manufacturing what the castle needs."

With too few residents in the town, there obviously wasn't much demand. As the Landlord, he had to unabashedly enjoy all this.

Only in this way could these craftsmen be of use in a short time.

Carter bowed and said, "Yes, my lord, I will consult with Mr. Goltai."

Having finished discussing the new serfs,

Liszt moved on to another official matter, "The efficiency of the Lumberjack Team still needs to be improved, but now there's a new problem. There are often other matters that distract Teacher Marcus and me, and during those times, the protective force of the Lumberjack Team is virtually non-existent, which is very dangerous."

"But indeed, we can't find more forces to defend against the Magical Beasts of Thorn Ridge."

"Therefore, I think we need a way for the Lumberjack Team to be able to protect themselves even if they encounter Magical Beasts," Liszt said calmly.

No one immediately answered, they were all pondering.

Liszt wasn't in a hurry and continued to eat his dinner.

In fact, he was testing those present; he already had an idea, one that had a strong possibility of dealing with the Magical Beasts.

This idea originated from the Smoke Mission.

After the morning's sea rescue, he had completed the mission.

“Mission complete, reward: fifty new people.”

“Mission: The danger in the depths of Thorn Ridge could occur at any moment, putting the Lumberjack Team in a precarious situation. As the Landlord who possesses a patch of Smoked Grass, you ought to use your resources wisely to ensure the safety of your people. Please defend against one attack from Magical Beasts. Reward: Miniature Ore Deposit.”

The mission had made it quite clear that Smoked Grass could be used to defend against Magical Beasts.

The odor of Smoked Grass was something Liszt found quite striking; not all Magical Beasts might be able to tolerate it, especially those with particularly sensitive noses.

Therefore, he planned to make simple “Magical Beast Repellent Incense” from Smoked Grass, to be lit in case of an encounter with a Magical Beast.

He was determined to secure the “Miniature Ore Deposit.”

But he didn't directly share his plan, hoping instead that someone would come up with the idea themselves; otherwise, there was always this nagging feeling of nurturing a group of freeloaders.

After a moment, nobody had come up with a good solution.

This left Liszt quite disappointed. Just as he was about to reveal his own plan, Isaiah suddenly said, “Baron, perhaps we could use fire! Beasts are afraid of fire. Among the trees we fell are pines, which burn very easily. We could keep burning the cut branches and leaves continuously. This way, the Magical Beasts would be scared away!”

Chapter 67: Flame, Trap, and Smoked Grass

Are beasts afraid of fire?

This was quite an interesting question.

Goltai shook his head, offering a different opinion, “Not all beasts are afraid of fire; some are even curious about it, to say nothing of fire attribute magical beasts that are naturally drawn to flames.”

Marcus contemplated, “I think this method might be workable. Small torches, of course, won’t scare beasts, but the big fire from burning pine branches, I believe, would deter even fire attribute magical beasts. The value of the pine branches cut by the lumberjack team is not great; we only want the trunks.”

The discussion on making fires lasted for a full quarter of an hour.

Then Blair added another point, “We could involve the town’s hunters in cutting the trees and have them set traps around the area. It might not work against magical beasts, but at least it will serve as an early warning system. Combined with bonfires, I believe it should be enough to ensure the safety of the lumberjack team’s serfs.”

Eventually, Liszt made the final decision, “Bonfires, traps, these are measures worth trying, but you must not overlook one of Fresh Flower Town’s crops.”

“What crop?” Everyone was curious.

“Smoked Grass.”

“Smoked Grass? Oh, my God, how could I forget such a dreadful plant,” Goltai immediately began to gesticulate wildly, “I am utterly convinced that just lighting a bit of smoked grass would even chase away a dragon with its smell... That scent... I still remember vividly the time you burned it at the dairy farm, Liszt!”

Dragons would not be chased away by the smoke; on the contrary, they would be drawn to it.

Liszt narrowed his eyes slightly, watching Goltai’s expression, sure that the other man had brought up the matter unconsciously, not fishing for details.

The day the Formless Dragon invaded, the burning of smoked grass, the dairy cows that died at the milk farm, the destroyed beacon tower, and that high, piercing dragon roar were all mysteries to others.

But Liszt had said not to ask.

So they had to suppress their doubts until they faded.

“I’m convinced of it too. When I was studying smoked grass, I smeared a bit of smoked grass juice on the nose of a green rabbit, and it was miserable for two days, almost coming down with an illness,” Isaiah agreed, nodding definitively. The green rabbit was his mount, a green horse.

“So…”

Liszt set down his knife and fork and wiped his mouth, pausing his meal, “Flames, traps, and smoked grass—three measures to protect the lumberjack team, ensuring that no magical beasts can harm anyone. This task, Teacher Goltai, Teacher Marcus, you should cooperate with each other to ensure nothing goes wrong.”

“Yes, my lord!” Marcus accepted the command.

Goltai also nodded quickly, “Leave it to me, Liszt.”

Liszt brought up another point in passing, “Additionally, we finally found a value for the smoked grass, so I’ve decided to cultivate the smoked grass field on the north side of Fresh Flower Farm properly and expand the planting scale of smoked grass. Teacher Goltai, you will need to come up with a plan and enforce it as soon as possible.”

“The wasteland we’re reclaiming might not be enough,” Goltai hesitated, “There is a serious shortage of serfs. We didn’t have many serfs to begin with, and Oyster Village took away some, along with the lumberjack team, the roadwork team, and the apprentices from town stores, even the knight squad and castle servants have taken away many serfs.”

He stretched out his hand, bending his fingers one by one as he counted, “Corn Grass, millet fields, tulips… and the large number of seeds you traded for, sweetheart cabbage, turnips, onions, coriander, and such; they all need serfs to plant them. I think we need at least one thousand more serfs.”

Without agricultural tools, the method of reclaiming wasteland was slash-and-burn.

Farming was an energy-intensive task that required many serfs to maintain the normal growth of crops and vegetables. Without enough serfs, the fields could not be planted.

“With mechanized planting, a dozen people could plant all the fields of Fresh Flower Town,”

Liszt often dreamed of leading Fresh Flower Town into the farming mode of the American farm owner, with large machinery moving through the endless fields.

Unfortunately, it was all just a fantasy, as Fresh Flower Town didn't even have a few shovels or hoes.

So he didn't insist that Goltai expand the cultivation hastily, “Then let's just come up with a plan, divide up the fields, and when we have enough hands, we can start planting.”

“As you wish.”

At the lumbering site.

The thirty-plus lumberjacks, working in pairs, were chopping down big trees with their axes. It has to be said, the serfs who had been doing heavy labor all year round had a lot of strength, and their efficiency at felling trees was pretty good.

Liszt was riding on a Li Dragon Horse, slowly inspecting the area.

Elsewhere, Marcus was leading the Knight Squad, continuously picking up the cut-off pine branches and dragging them to three fire sites in the woods. The fires were burning brightly, forming a triangle to protect the lumbering site.

There were hunters setting up traps outside the fire.

Occasionally, bird calls could be heard from the depths of the woods, with no sense of danger—only a scene bustling with activity. But Liszt was not the least bit relaxed. The Smoke Mission's prompts were clear—magical beasts would raid the lumbering site. He just didn't know when the attack would happen.

“Magical beasts, huh. Since I’ve come to Fresh Flower Town, I’ve already killed two.”

One was a Fierce Earth Dog that had just given birth and hadn’t recovered its strength, the other a Wind Falcon that fought to exhaustion against a Fruit Thief Monkey. But neither encounter had really been a fierce battle; they were more like taking advantage of the situation.

The only direct conflict with a Wind Blade Wolf was a feint; it fled into Thorn Ridge after just one jab.

Now, he was somewhat looking forward to the imminent magical beast attack. This time, he didn’t know which kind of beast he would encounter, whether there would be a battle, and if he could kill another beast — the taste of magical beast meat was far superior to that of ordinary wild beasts, and it was also enriched with magic power, which Liszt loved.

The sun blazed down fiercely, with hardly a breath of wind. Even under the shade of the trees, it didn’t feel much cooler.

The Fire Attribute Dou Qi flowed through his veins as he rested his hand on the hilt of the Crimson Blood Sword. His gaze traveled across the dappled shadows on the ground, feeling his desire for battle rising.

Given his personal style, it was unlikely that he’d be able to charge into battle as a knight would want to show off a noble’s bravery. It seemed that he would have to find his chance with magical beasts — in such a crowded environment, fully prepared, with Marcus assisting on the side, what better opportunity could there be to showcase himself?

“Come on, magical beasts, my sword is already dying for a fight!”

Schwing!

He abruptly pulled out half of the Crimson Blood Sword, wanting to flourish it a bit, but then he thought it wasn’t very serious, so he decided to sheath it again. However, just at that moment, through the “crackle and pop” sound of the pine branches burning, an unusual “clang” sound rang out from a distance, quickly capturing his attention.

Marcus, who was also inspecting the area, clearly noticed the noise as well, calling out sharply, “Be alert!”

He drew his short gun and moved closer to the direction from which the sound had come.

Liszt tightly gripped the hilt of the Crimson Blood Sword, with the gemstone blue color of his pupils swirling like whirlpools—his Eye of Magic was already in use.

Soon, he spotted faint traces of magic power in several patches of grass.

With just a quick discernment, he recognized there were three magical beasts!

“Marcus, come back!” Liszt drew his Crimson Blood Sword with a clang, calling out loudly, “Fifty meters ahead, there are three magical beasts!”

Chapter 68: The Routine from Three Wolves

A low-level Magical Beast, Marcus could contend with one and find an opportunity to kill it.

But three, if he charged blindly, he would only be dismembered.

Marcus didn't have time to ponder how Liszt knew there were three Magical Beasts, he immediately reined in his horse to return. At the same time, with fast dexterity, he returned the Spear to its place on the horseback, and with a reverse hand, took down the bow and arrow, and bent the bow to load the arrow, firing four arrows in quick succession toward the bush fifty meters away.

Although the arrows all missed, their effect was clear.

Suddenly, a Wind Blade Wolf leapt out from one of the bushes, its gaze coldly fixed on Marcus. It didn't attack rashly, merely looking on coldly, watching as the serfs of the Lumberjack Team gathered toward a pile of fire.

Karl and the other Retainer Knights pulled out the dried Smoked Grass leaves distributed to them, ready to throw into the fire at any moment, to create a pungent smoke from the burning leaves, designed to scare away the Magical Beast.

Liszt rode the Li Dragon Horse, joined Marcus, and confronted the grey Wind Blade Wolf.

“Sir, are you sure there are three Magical Beasts?”

“Quite sure,” Liszt held the Crimson Blood Sword, still not dissipating the Eye of Magic, “There is one in that clump of bushes to the left of this Wind Blade Wolf, and another one in the bushes to the right rear side. It obviously wants to attract our attention, allowing the other two to sneak attack.”

Marcus bent the bow to load another arrow, “Wolves are cunning and cautious by nature, I’ll flush them out!”

Two arrows were shot, but there was no movement in the bushes.

In a situation that should have been tense, Liszt suddenly felt like laughing. These three Wind Blade Wolves thought they could play tricks on him, believing that by hiding in the bushes they would go unnoticed, but under the watch of the Eye of Magic, they had nowhere to hide.

“That one on the left, move a meter to the left below the bush. The one on the right rear side, move one and a half meters to the right.”

Upon hearing this, Marcus.

Immediately drew another arrow, this time not two with one bow, but a single arrow, aiming for the bush on the left.

Thwack!

Awooo!

A sound of flesh splitting open, followed by the pained howl of the Wind Blade Wolf, and the shaking of the bush. The Wind Blade Wolf, with an arrow in its shoulder blade, fled, tucking its tail and quickly disappearing into the depths of the forest.

The Wind Blade Wolf that served as a distraction also turned and ran.

Only the Wind Blade Wolf hidden in the right rear bush remained, perhaps still hoping to launch a sneak attack.

But the next moment.

An arrow grazed its back and flew past, startling it, and no longer daring to hide, it bolted out of the bush, silently turning to flee.

After just a few exchanges of arrows, without even needing to use the Smoked Grass, the three Wind Blade Wolves vanished without a trace.

The Eye of Magic could no longer see the traces of magic power, Liszt called up the Smoke Mission to see the updated content, and with slight regret waved his hand, “The Wind Blade Wolves have completely fled, stand down the alert, continue with the lumber work.” They hadn’t managed to leave a single Magical Beast behind, nor had they a chance to show off.

But it was good that the mission was complete.

“Mission completed, reward: Miniature Saltpeter Mine.”

“A Saltpeter Mine?”

Metal and gemstones came from Dragons, as for other mineral substances, they all originated from the land itself. Some time ago, Liszt was still complaining about the lack of saltpeter for making ice, unable to enjoy even a chilled beer in the height of summer. It was unexpected that he’d now be rewarded with a Saltpeter Mine, quite considerate indeed.

“However, isn’t it too wasteful to use saltpeter to make ice? I remember saltpeter is one of the components of black gunpowder,” he reflected briefly and recalled the formula of black gunpowder he had learned in high school physics—charcoal, sulfur, and potassium nitrate (saltpeter).

Now that a use had been found for the saltpeter, it was a pity sulfur hadn’t been accounted for.

“Let’s just use it to make ice first. The days are getting hotter and hotter. Without ice blocks to cool down, without chilled beer, life simply isn’t worth living.”

As his thoughts churned, the Smoke Serpent Script began to transform.

“Mission: The crisis of the magical beast invasion has been resolved. It is time to go all out in logging, widen the roads of Thorn Ridge, and re-integrate Fresh Flower Town into the trade of Coral Island, winning development opportunities. Reward: a new species of mushrooms.”

“A new species of mushrooms?”

Liszt immediately thought of Mushroom Hamlet: “Could it be that magic potions are going to grow in the mushroom sheds of Mushroom Hamlet, just like the Black Tulips?”

Mushrooms are a very important ingredient in noble cuisine.

In terms of classification, they are categorized as mushrooms, which people of this world call Abandoned Cordyceps—meaning plants abandoned by Elf Bugs.

Because they can’t produce a single Elf Bug.

In this world, even a weed could potentially give birth to Elf Bugs, the only exception being mushrooms which can’t produce them, leading some to question whether they are plants at all. However, they do contain many varieties of magic potions, and only plants can grow into magic potions, which again places them in the plant category.

In the end, no definite conclusion had been formed.

The knowledge Liszt possessed told him that mushrooms are fungi—but in this world, whether they’re fungi or plants doesn’t really matter; this isn’t a world that speaks of science.

“Although they can’t produce Elf Bugs and hence supernaturally increase yield, as mushrooms, they grow very fast under appropriate conditions. If we indeed come across a new variety of magic potion mushrooms, that would be enormously good news. It would mean that Fresh Flower Town had gained a new local specialty.”

The Black Tulip could have become a specialty, but he had only one Tulip Bug and couldn’t scale up. Therefore, it would be best to cooperate with Tulip Castle.

But it’s different with magic potion mushrooms. Without the need for help from Elf Bugs, they could expand their planting scale on their own, making them an excellent choice for a local specialty.

Just the addition of one type of magic potion mushroom might draw an endless stream of merchant caravans.

At least, Levis and Li Vera would certainly not miss out on a new magic potion—for the dream of becoming a Sky Knight, they both aspired to be filled with potions.

“Logging! I will supervise the logging every day during this period. We must open up the roads of Thorn Ridge as soon as possible!” Liszt decided, excited.

In the scorching heat of summer, as it became unbearable, he had been preparing to return to the castle earlier.

Now revitalized, he immediately had Thomas pack food from the castle so they could enjoy a picnic right at the logging site—a precaution in case the Wind Blade Wolves decided to return.

They had just finished their picnic.

On the nearby road, there suddenly came the clip-clop of horse hooves, and several knights galloping with a whoosh. It seemed that they had spotted the Lumberjack Team, and headed straight to the logging site.

Karl and four Retainer Knights immediately went to greet them and then brought the knights over to Liszt.

“Baron,” said the knight leading them, a familiar face to Liszt, Lord Layden, a Knight Captain of Tulip Castle, who gave a Knight’s salute, “Lord Layden sends his regards.”

Lord Layden had been the one to escort Levis and the others for the assimilation trade last time.

Liszt returned the Knight’s salute: “Sir Layden, we meet again. What brings you here this time?”

“In five days, on June 26, it is the Festival of Sailing. The Earl has sent me to convey a message that all members of the Tulip Family will come to Fresh Flower Town to celebrate the Festival of Sailing with you.”

Chapter 69: The Mysterious Disappearance of the Saltpeter Mine

Sea Festival.

Li Si Te had almost forgotten about it.

In the Duchy of Sapphire, the two most important festivals were the New Year Festival and the Sea Festival.

The New Year Festival is a customary celebration of the entire continent, marking the end of one year and the beginning of another. Almost every country's nobles and commoners alike would celebrate the New Year.

The Sea Festival, however, is unique to the Duchy of Sapphire, celebrating the first sea voyage of the Sapphire Family—after the failure of the Dragon Slaying Battle, the Sapphire Family was forced to migrate to the archipelago to establish their own nation. To gloss over the background of failure, the day of sailing was proclaimed as a day of great embarkation in pursuit of dreams.

Commoners might prefer the New Year, a festival passed down through countless generations. But the Sea Festival was an annual celebration that the nobles of the island nations had to partake in.

“Thank you, Sir Layden, for the effort in delivering the message.”

“It's my duty, Baron.”

“How are my grandmother, my father, as well as my brother, sister, lady, and Lidun doing?”

“All is well.”

“That's good to hear.”

After chatting with Layden about the recent circumstances of Tulip Castle, Liszt inquired about the return of the Tulip Fleet and, without realizing it, had already returned to the castle.

Layden and his party had not yet had lunch, so he immediately instructed the kitchen to prepare a meal and entertain them.

“Baron, is Fresh Flower Town planning to clear all the trees of Thorn Ridge?” Layden asked, puzzled by the extensive logging he had witnessed these past two days.

“The plan is to clear them all, to eliminate the Magical Beasts’ habitats. However, we currently lack sufficient manpower. For now, we can only clear the trees on both sides of the road, creating open areas to reduce the risk of Magical Beast attacks.”

“That’s indeed a good strategy. The Magical Beasts in the forest are terrible, but those in the open fields are just slightly stronger wild animals.”

For knights with horses, open areas prevent surprise attacks by Magical Beasts, and even magic can be avoided. Moreover, horses can run so fast that Magical Beasts may not be able to catch up. Knights could launch a charge in open fields, merging with their horses to employ various Dou Qi Manuscripts.

Maintaining the etiquette and courtesies between nobles.

After lunch, Layden and his party took their leave.

Liszt then needed to make arrangements: “Mr. Carter, in three days, the Tulip Family will come to the castle to celebrate the Sea Festival with me. I’m not very fond of such noisy occasions, so I’ll leave the arrangements to you.”

“Rest assured, sir. I attended many Sea Festivals at Tulip Castle in my youth. The scenes of Butler Louis hosting the festival banquets are deeply etched in my memory. Now, with an abundance of seafood and Magical Beast Meat in the castle, we can hold a perfect banquet, despite slightly lacking in beverages.”

“I remember among the new serfs, there is a brewer?”

“Yes, his name is Frank Dregs. However, he can only brew fruit wines and doesn’t know how to make white wine, red wine, or beer. Moreover, we don’t have any hops.”

Liszt frowned, “We don’t have any beer with hops at all?”

“There’s half a barrel in the cellar. It’s your lordship’s only little indulgence, and I’m somewhat reluctant to take it out,” Carter said regretfully, as Liszt had become the most important figure in his heart.

“Then don’t take it out,” Liszt blinked.

Carter responded with a knowing smile, “I thought so too.”

“It’s a pity I forgot to have Layden convey a few messages to Levis when he left, asking Levis to help me purchase some wines and ingredients... In the end, the root cause is still the obstructed roads. Otherwise, the castle’s Gold Coins should be spent, not left to mold.”

“Perhaps you could instruct Mr. Marcus to deliver the message?”

“No, Teacher Marcus has more important matters at hand; the Lumberjack Team needs his supervision, and the Knight Squad needs his training. If the Sea Festival is modest, then let it be modest. It wouldn’t be a bad thing for Father Lord to see Fresh Flower Town’s poverty.” A crying baby gets the milk.

If the Earl sees that Fresh Flower Town doesn’t even have hops beer, would his conscience not ache?

Carter laughed, “My lord, you’re becoming more open-minded.”

Liszt smiled faintly, “I’ve recently read a knight’s novel, which contains a little poem—When life deceives you, do not feel sad, do not be in a hurry! In gloomy days, one needs to be calm; believe, joyful days will come! The heart forever longs for the future; yet now is often melancholic...”

Everything is but a moment, everything will pass.

And what has passed will become fond memories.

The Earl did not place much importance on his third son, Liszt; it was hardly a significant issue. Thus, although life could sometimes be modest and strained, the current Liszt remained optimistic. Compared to most commoners and minor nobles, Fresh Flower Town’s living conditions were already quite perfect.

Being able to eat white bread every day was a dream beyond reach for many.

In the following days, the town was still buzzing with construction—building roads, cutting wood, and building houses in Oyster Village. The serfs, with the copper coins paid by Liszt, worked enthusiastically even in the hot weather, which couldn’t dampen their spirits.

The castle was just as bustling, with Butler Carter busy directing the servants to clean inside and out and to decorate the castle. Cook Abbie Spoon, with her mighty voice, had Eileen and Little Lily, the two kitchen maids, spinning around, bustling between various ingredients.

Marcus led the Knight Squad in protecting the Lumberjack Team and practicing the basics of Dou Qi.

Goltai, Isaiah, and Blair were also working diligently.

Only Liszt was somewhat troubled—he couldn't find where the tiny Saltpeter Mine was!

The mission was already completed, but the reward of the Saltpeter Mine had yet to be discovered. No one reported to him the finding of any unusual stones, nor was there any abnormal situation that warranted his attention. For three consecutive days with no clues, Liszt was quite vexed.

It was not that the Saltpeter Mine was of great value.

Apart from using it for making ice, he didn't know what else saltpeter could be used for at the moment.

It was the situation that was not optimistic, making him worry whether there was a problem with the Smoke Mission. The rewards for previous missions nearly always reached him on the same day.

“Could it be that my ‘golden finger’ is about to leave me?” At night, lying in bed looking at the Mushroom Hamlet mission still pending, he was truly worried.

Thankfully.

The worry only lasted until the fourth day.

That day, after Goltai led the Lumberjack Team into Thorn Ridge to work, another team followed them—the rubble transport team, responsible for breaking down the stones of Thorn Ridge and moving them to the sides of the road for paving.

While constantly searching for stones to smash, they suddenly discovered a pile of stones embedded on the earth's surface, accompanied by a large amount of white crystalline substance. At first, they thought it was salt, which

is very important in daily life, so the serfs were very happy finding something good meant the Lord Landlord would reward them.

However, after a simple taste test, they realized the white substance had not the slightest saltiness, but instead, a bitterness.

Despite this, they still scraped off a lot of the white material and presented it to Goltai for verification. Unable to identify it, Goltai reported the situation to Liszt.

Looking at the white crystalline powder in his hand, Liszt honestly couldn't tell whether it was saltpeter, but he knew an experiment would reveal the truth.

Chapter 70: Cheers for Ice Cold Beer

Potassium nitrate dissolved in water absorbs a great amount of heat, which is the principle behind ice-making with saltpeter. Thanks to his past experience of reading novels, Liszt knew quite a bit of such common knowledge.

Moreover, he was aware that potassium nitrate could be reused.

"Saltpeter is a magical substance that dissolves in water and then chills the water until it freezes," Liszt directed the servants to pour the white powder into a basin of water.

Then, they watched the powder gradually dissolve.

Tom dipped his fingers into the water and cried out in amazement, "My lord, my lord, the water, the water has really cooled down, it's so cold!"

Goltai pushed Tom aside, curious yet hesitant, but eventually dipped his fingers into the water too, "It is indeed much cooler than before, Liszt. Is this a magician's doing? I once saw a magician proficient in ice magic who would make a fortune by creating large quantities of ice blocks during summer."

However, after a brief wait, the water had only cooled and had not frozen.

"Liszt, why hasn't it turned to ice?"

“Teacher Goltai, making ice with saltpeter isn’t as simple as throwing in a bit of powder; what we’ve done now is just to prove that it is indeed saltpeter,” Liszt said with a light smile. “Now, gather all these pieces of saltpeter while breaking the rocks, and bring them all into the castle, without missing a single one.”

“Alright, I look forward to the moment you produce ice blocks. Having ice during the summer is the true mark of noble luxury.”

Tomorrow is the Sea Festival, and the castle will host a banquet.

Night fell.

Looking at the amount of saltpeter powder collected in a day, enough to fill a wooden barrel, an excited Liszt instructed the servants to begin the real process of making ice with saltpeter.

Saltpeter dissolved in water absorbs heat and turns the water to ice.

But the brine directly resulting from melting saltpeter is toxic, so it was necessary to prepare a large tub and a copper basin with good thermal conductivity. Water was put into both the tub and the basin, then the copper basin was placed inside the tub. They poured the saltpeter into the water of the tub, waiting for it to dissolve and absorb heat, turning the water into ice.

As there was a substantial amount of saltpeter powder prepared, the cooling effect of the dissolution was exceptionally strong.

In no time at all, the water in the tub slowly began to solidify, and eventually, even the water in the copper basin began to freeze.

“It’s frozen!”

“It really has frozen!”

“A miraculous scene; this is the method of legendary alchemists!”

Marcus, Goltai, Isaiah, and Blair, who were watching from the side, all marveled. In their minds, ice belonged only to winter, and nobles who built ice cellars could enjoy the refreshing effect of ice in the summer. But an ice cellar was a luxury, and only wealthy landlords could organize large teams to harvest ice blocks from rivers and lakes in the winter.

For fallen nobles like Goltai, they could only scrape a few ice blocks each year at Tulip Castle to get a taste.

Marcus, Blair, and Isaiah did not even have the privilege of tasting summer ice.

Liszt was just as thrilled, he had heard of ice-making with saltpeter before, but this was his first time undertaking the task. Seeing water turn to ice with his own eyes was indeed a stunning experience.

“My lord, it’s turned to ice,” Thomas said as he circled the large tub, his eyes sparkling.

“Cut the ice,” Liszt nodded with a reserved noble smile on his face, calm and composed as he commanded, “Cut the ice blocks into small pieces. Tonight, every gentleman and lady will be able to have a small piece of ice.”

Carter said softly, “My lord, ice is too precious, perhaps the servants don’t need any?”

“Not to worry, Mr. Carter, do as I say,” Liszt replied.

“Yes, my lord. Your generosity is deeply appreciated on behalf of all the servants,” Carter bowed deeply, recognizing the fortune of serving a generous noble master.

Having said that, he directed Thomas to bring the ice blocks in the copper basin to the kitchen to begin cutting them.

Liszt then called for Tom, “Preserve this tub of ice water well. Tomorrow, when the sun comes up, take it out to evaporate, not a single drop should go to waste.”

Goltai was puzzled, “Liszt, what’s the rationale here, these ice blocks should just be used as they are, why do we need to let them melt?”

“The saltpeter directly melts the condensed ice; of course, it can be used, but it cannot be eaten. After drying out the water content, it becomes saltpeter again, and then it is repeatedly used to make ice.”

“Is saltpeter really that magical?”

“It’s much more magical than you think,” Liszt thought to himself—if he found sulfur, he would now dare to mix black gunpowder.

Perhaps compared to yellow gunpowder, black gunpowder strictly speaking isn’t even considered an explosive, but it’s still a flammable and explosive high-explosive material. Suitable for making some homemade bombs, its power wouldn’t be weaker than the magic released by low-level magical beasts. When used in low-level battles, it can still achieve an element of surprise.

Of course, in a world where dragons, elves, and magic power exist, black gunpowder doesn’t have any decisive advantage.

The dishes at the banquet weren’t very rich; Liszt couldn’t afford to treat Goltai and the others to a lavish meal every day, as the castle’s supplies ensured his own extravagant lifestyle.

Even the alcoholic drinks were poor, all of them sour beers without hops.

But the party atmosphere was buoyant because everyone’s cup contained a few pieces of ice. As the ice melted, it turned the beer in their cups ice cold. A gulp refreshing the drinker instantly, cooling the heart, an absolute delight in this increasingly hot weather.

“Liszt, I propose, for the sake of the iced beer, let’s toast!” Goltai happily raised his cup.

Liszt picked up his cup in response, “Then to the iced beer, cheers.”

“Cheers!”

Gulp gulp, the sound of gulping down beer resonated at the dining table.

The kitchen.

Above the dining table.

Eileen stirred the ice cubes in her plate with her spoon, making clattering noises.

Mrs. Abbie Spoon couldn’t help scolding, “Eileen, stop making that unpleasant noise, eat the ice cubes gifted to you by the master quickly!”

“Rather than eating the ice cubes, I prefer watching them melt. Mrs. Abbie, don’t you feel the temperature has dropped in the kitchen today?” Eileen Four Fingers continued to stir the ice, then looked towards the seat beside her at Lily Bath Touch, “Little Lily, do you feel it?”

“Of course, everyone’s plate has ice cubes.” As she spoke, Little Lily stuck out her tongue and licked the ice cube on her spoon; she didn’t want to eat it all at once.

The ice cubes didn’t have much taste, but they were cool and felt comfortable, making all the heatiness in the body fade away.

Abbie said angrily, “Little Lily, I won’t allow you to speak to Eileen during meals. Your clumsy hands and rude way of eating will only bring shame to our kitchen!”

“Cough cough.”

Butler Carter bit the ice cube in his mouth forcefully, even though he was already in his fifties, his teeth were still strong, “Mrs. Abbie, they are still children; let them have some slight indiscretions during meals.”

“Mr. Carter, it’s not that I don’t listen to you, but you shouldn’t indulge them, or they will become unruly. Being clumsy is disappointing enough, and if they can’t even learn a bit of etiquette, they will stay in the kitchen for a lifetime, unable to become maids upstairs,” Abbie said earnestly.

Carter and Morson exchanged glances; they both knew that Abbie was a kind-hearted person who was tough on the outside but soft on the inside.

But obviously, Eileen was not convinced, “Mrs. Abbie, I don’t even want to go upstairs. It’s not comfortable at all, you have to be so careful you can’t even leave a footprint. I want to be a cook in the future; I like working in the kitchen.”

“You can forget about it!” Abbie flared up immediately, “As long as I’m in the kitchen, you’ll never become a cook, little girl, remember not to offend me!”

“But you will get old one day.”

“Even if one day I’m so old that I can’t do my job, the cook is still me, and you have to listen to what I say!”

