

## The Mighty 461

### Chapter 461 War and Justice

In terms of social status, the position of mercenaries belonged to the middle tier, comparable to that of master craftsmen who possessed irreplaceable skills.

They were just below the upper nobility, and above the magical magicians, non-titled knight officers, and indispensable artists of high society. They ranked higher than the lower-mid servants, craftsmen, workers, merchants, rats, and the lowest tier of serfs, roles often filled by down-and-out knights.

There were no mercenary corps in the Duchy of Sapphire, and consequently, no mercenaries.

However, in the nations of the continent, mercenary corps were a widespread and common phenomenon, often established under the pretense of guarding trade, hunting magical beasts, or capturing elves. But in secret, mercenary corps were direct participants in the slave trade, often playing the roles of robbers and bandits.

Liszt didn't know how mercenary corps originated and developed to the extent they had today.

But after a conversation with the Earl, he started to understand clearer that mercenary corps were, in fact, similar to rats—an extension of noble influence—if rats played the part of intelligence organizations, then mercenaries acted like dynamic social organizations.

One of the disadvantages of the feudal system was that there were no overarching jurisdictional relationships between territories, but rather significant competition.

Many landlords had various private feuds and couldn't directly dispatch knight orders to plunder each other, so mercenary corps played their roles well. Mercenary corps were also a source of substantial profit. The continent was not short of population, and during every war, the slave trade was a lucrative business.

Even many local landlords were hopeful for invasions by the Duchy of Sapphire—as long as their own territories weren't the ones being raided.

During such times, they would eagerly cooperate with invading knight orders to trade, exchanging easily captured serfs for the materials the knights had plundered from other places. Every war between the Eagle Kingdom and the Steel Ridge Kingdom was the busiest time for mercenary corps.

These mercenary corps dared not invade the territories' castles, but they could come and go like the wind when plundering serfs.

"It can be said that when we invade Sardine Bay Area, apart from the landlords within the area who will resist, the landlords and mercenary corps from the surrounding regions will only be brandishing their cutlery, joining us in feasting on the wealth of the Sardine Bay Area," the Earl spoke fluently. "This is also the reason we dare to attack the Eagle Kingdom every year."

He looked at Liszt, who was listening attentively.

Finally, feeling the sentiment of a father teaching his son, he continued, "Moreover, some landlords in the Sardine Bay Area, we can sit down and talk business with them at night even as we wage war by day."

Liszt was puzzled, "Why is that?"

The Earl retorted, "What do you think nobles rely on to govern their territories, or rather, what do we depend on to live lives a thousand times more comfortable than commoners?"

"Nobles govern their territories, relying on Dou Qi cultivation."

"And where does Dou Qi cultivation come from?"

"From... the land."

"That's right, you're smart and can see the essence of the issue," the Earl complimented before continuing, "Nobles rely on land, all resources are extracted from it. Either from one's own land or someone else's, whether by making serfs farm or by knights looting."

"What does this have to do with the landlords of Sardine Bay, who wage war with us on one hand and trade on the other?"

"Since war is inevitable, some landlords will, of course, look for opportunities to mitigate their losses. Grand landlords can transfer the losses to lesser landlords through trading with us, while smaller landlords can pass it on to commoners, or to other landlords... Undoubtedly, they have lost the noble virtue of knighthood."

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Do knights possess noble virtues?

Liszt was already confused.

After talking with the Earl and learning about the background of mercenary corps, he faintly felt the similarities with history. Although this world was completely different from Earth and the kingdom he lived in had no connection to Earth, he considered the essence of the relationship between the Duchy of Sapphire and the Eagle Kingdom from a fundamental perspective.

Wasn't it just a different world's version of the Wokou Pirate turmoil during the Ming Dynasty?

In the Ming Dynasty, the Wokou Pirates originated in Japan and often raided the southeastern coastal areas of China. However, by the latter part of the turmoil, true Japanese pirates had become rare. According to historical records, true Wokou Pirates only accounted for one-third, and the rest were impostors, that is, rebels of the Ming Dynasty.

After all, the Japanese ronin who made up the early Wokou Pirates were not familiar with the southeastern coast and could not form a fighting force. Only by colluding with the locals could they land and plunder everywhere.

In the Ming Dynasty's specialized anti-pirate book, "Zhou Hai Tu Bian," fourteen Wokou Pirate leaders were listed, and they all turned out to be from the Ming Dynasty.

The root cause lay in the Ming Dynasty's sea ban policy, which prevented coastal residents from making a living from the sea. When they could no longer survive, they were forced to become pirates. Moreover, merchants would turn to piracy when the sea ban was stringent, and some powerful gentry also colluded secretly, leading to centuries of turmoil from the Wokou Pirate raids.

In this world filled with magic power.

The Pioneer Mandate of the Duchy of Sapphire had resemblances to the Wokou Pirate turmoil.

"True, we can snatch plenty of resources from the Eagle Kingdom, but the real wealth created on the land is all plunder by the landlords of the Eagle Kingdom... Perhaps we're just grabbing some mines, buying some serfs, while the rest of the materials are transferred by the local nobles."

Ultimately.

It confirmed a line from a Yuan dynasty song—when it rises, the common people suffer; when it falls, the common people suffer.

Throughout the struggle of the Pioneer Mandate, it was still those hardworking peasants and serfs who were truly plundered. Liszt even thought, "Is the annual war between the Steel Ridge Kingdom and the Eagle Kingdom somewhat like the Hundred Years' War between England and France on Earth?" In medieval times, England and France were at war for over a century.

Nobles waged wars of knights for profit.

And naturally, it was the commoners who suffered the most.

As Liszt reflected on the wars, he suddenly felt dispirited, although his soul was from Earth and had nothing to do with this world.

However, he quickly rallied.

"If I do nothing, the commoners will still be oppressed by the nobles; if I strive with all my might, and one day succeed in dragon riding, I could perhaps bring a new order to this world."

He clenched his fist.

His eyes became more determined, "As long as I maintain justice in my heart, if I can bring a better life to the commoners, then my participation in war is a just act!" This self-analysis, while somewhat of a justification for waging a war for profit, also reflected his innermost feelings.

The standard of living for the commoners under his governance was definitely far superior to those in other territories.

His goal was dragon riding and exploring this miraculous world. He did not intend to act like a saint, nor did he wish to become a cold-hearted, profit-driven noble.

Striving for the great cause of dragon riding, bringing goodness to the world along the way—why not?

His conviction was clear.

He returned to his usual calm demeanor, standing at the bow of the ship, holding a glass of juice, enjoying the blue sky, white clouds, and undulating waves. Four days passed in a flash, and the fleet had successfully arrived at Bull Hoof City on Iron Hoof Island.

Here, they would make the final supply replenishment.

In six days, they would set their sights on the continent!

Chapter 462 The Fear from the Deep Sea

Iron Hoof Island, Bull Hoof City.

Now taken over by the Sapphire Family, but the scars of war had yet to be erased, the huge castle standing by the sea still bore pockmarked and cracked traces on its walls.

Those had been left by the First Prince when he led the Knight Order to capture Bull Hoof City.

At the moment, the port of Bull Hoof City was densely packed with various sailing ships, flying a variety of banners. The Red Tulip Flag of the Tulip Family was quite inconspicuous. During the stopover for supplies, Liszt found the Red Crab Island Fleet, led by his uncle, Mesiro Taro.

"Uncle, I want to rent the Red Crab Island Fleet to transport a batch of serfs for me," Liszt stated directly.

Mesiro was quite fond of Liszt, his nephew who had the fine features of the Long Taro Family: "No problem, as long as you pay the corresponding reward, the Red Crab Island Fleet can be rented at any time. How many serfs are you planning to transport to your domain?"

"I'm planning to transport at least ten thousand. If I can buy more, I hope to round up to twenty thousand."

"Black Horse Island is just an undeveloped barren island, isn't it? Are you sure you can support so many serfs based on your territory? If there is a food shortage, it may cause unrest in the territory, and the death of serfs would also be a huge loss."

"I have already stocked enough food for ten thousand people to survive the winter. Adding another ten thousand would just tighten the food supply in the domain. I believe that I can obtain food from other channels and support us safely until the next year's harvest," Liszt replied confidently.

Live off the mountains if near the mountains, live off the sea if near the sea.

If the serfs had nothing to eat, they would be sent to the sea to catch seafood, and seafood could also be purchased from the various coastal towns of Coral Island. There was absolutely no problem with filling their bellies.

It was just a matter of how many Gold Coins it would cost.

"You are prepared for this, and that's enough," Mesiro said with a hint of nostalgia in his eyes, speaking gently, "If Melissa were still alive, seeing how you are now, she would surely have a radiant smile every day."

To Liszt, Melissa was merely a symbol.

She had passed away when his former self was very young, so he had no memories or much to talk about regarding her, and thus he changed the subject: "How is grandfather doing? With Meioubao and Angela's marriage, Long Taro Castle must be filled with even more warmth."

"He's getting stronger by the day, with no need to worry about worldly affairs, but his temper lately is not good. Every day Meioubao and Angela do not bring a Long Taro Family heir into this world is another day he will not be satisfied. Even a princess must strive for the continuity of the Long Taro Family lineage."

"Yes, family succession is the most important issue," Liszt said, and then suddenly remembered the Smoke Mission from before - Meioubao and Angela did not have a harmonious marital relationship.

At that time, his first thought was the taboo scenario of "cuckoldry," so he immediately changed the mission.

But upon thinking it over later, he felt maybe he had overthought it, always viewing Angela, with her liberal lifestyle, through tinted lenses - The Smoke Mission mentioned a lack of harmony in the marital relationship, leading to an inability to continue the family line, which includes several other possibilities.

It could be that Meioubao had a problem with his virility, preventing Angela from becoming pregnant.

It could also be that Angela had fertility issues, preventing her from conceiving.

Another possibility was inactive sperm unable to reach where they were meant to go, naturally making pregnancy difficult.

If it were the first two possibilities, there would be no solution, but if it were the latter, it required regulation. If it was just an ordinary level of inactivity, eating foods rich in zinc, maintaining proper rest and relaxation could improve the activity level - oysters, also known as oysters, contained the highest amount of zinc.

The zinc content in animal livers is also quite high.

"If Meioubao and Angela cannot conceive for too long, I really should step in to help, at least by providing them with oyster food," he thought to himself.

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After anchoring at Bull Hoof City for just one night, the fleet continued its journey.

On the azure Sea of Azure Waves, a line of sailboats sailed in formation. Liszt specifically climbed to the crow's nest at the top of the mainmast, took out his telescope, and gazed at the surrounding fleet.

The telescope he held in his hand was the second generation model, both precision and clarity far surpassing the first generation. This stemmed from the Earl's continuous investment; he was very fond of the telescope, and after Liszt explained the principles behind it, the Earl pushed hard to have crystal craftsmen research and refine it.

Just then.

Through the telescope, Liszt caught sight of a whale leaping mightily from the ocean's surface to the right of the fleet, only to crash back into the water, raising a large spray of waves.

These massive creatures were a part of the scenery on the voyage; they would often accompany the fleet for a while.

As long as the ships didn't attack them, they would not attack the ships, and all was well. Liszt had even heard crew members say that when ships were attacked by sea monsters, these large whales would sometimes come to their aid, chasing away the monsters—their immense size meant average low-level sea monsters simply couldn't cope.

"This could be the whales' protective behavior towards their young. Sea monsters hunt baby whales, so the adult whales try to block any hunting behavior by the monsters, not allowing them to develop peacefully and reducing the chances of the young whales being hunted," Liszt deduced.

He had watched documentaries where humpback whales would often embark on rescue missions over thousands of miles to save prey about to fall into the jaws of an orca.

There was no evidence as to why they did this, but they seemed to enjoy it, showing gallant valor.

During this voyage.

Besides witnessing a few instances of whales escorting the fleet, there were no other memorable moments; they didn't even encounter a single sea monster. Tales of attacks by sea monsters abounded in the ocean, yet the chance to actually come across one in a lifetime as a sailor was quite rare indeed.



The vast ocean was simply too immense; sea monsters had specific prey and had no reason to attack wooden ships or to munch on humans, hardly worth a snack.

What really hindered humanity from setting their sights on the ocean were the constraints of their understanding, and the fact that acquiring resources in the ocean was far more difficult than on land.

Indeed.

If Liszt had a large fiefdom on the continent, he wouldn't think about developing the ocean to lead the era of great maritime voyages. The profound ocean always emitted a mysterious and shadowy aura. Sometimes, as he stood at the helm, gazing into its unfathomable depths, he couldn't help but feel a tinge of fear.

The merciless ocean could swallow a man whole with ease.

Cultivate.

Cultivate.

Cultivate.

The monotonous six-and-a-half-day voyage soon ended, and the fleet was already heading towards a major city of the Steel Ridge Kingdom—Comb City—where they would gather, resupply, and collect information before launching an offensive on the Sardine Bay Area.

"The Pioneer Mandate warfare is of a different style compared to the battle of Iron Hoof Island. Liszt, here, defeating opponents and plundering resources is our primary task," the Earl said spiritedly as he looked towards the approaching port, "The wars that take place on the continent are the true battleground for knights."

Chapter 463 Wild Elf Trade Market

Comb City is located at the easternmost edge of the Steel Ridge Kingdom, serving as the central metropolis of Marquis Zhilíng Benedict Gubuasú's domain, known as the Rooster Pheasant Hills, which is said to be even larger than Iron Hoof Island.

Of course.

The land is indeed so vast that the size of a territory doesn't mean much, as most of it is covered by primeval jungles, home to numerous magical beasts. Many of these jungles are no-go zones for humans, where not even Sky Knights dare to set foot lightly for fear of being attacked by advanced magical beasts.

Human societies on the continent are more likely to build large cities on flat plains and gather towns along roads between cities to ensure safety in living and communication.

Many long-distance trades require the escort of Knight Orders.

Ordinary merchants who cannot afford to hire formal Knight Orders will employ Mercenary Corps for protection. Therefore, the existence of Mercenary Corps is always legal.

"Gubuasú is a kind of fruit magic potion that tastes like a mix of chocolate and pineapple, an expensive specialty of the Gubuasú family. It's said to be a variant of the cocoa fruit, which is used to make chocolate, and all the chocolate in our country is imported from Comb City."

The one introducing this to Liszt was Captain Layden, who was once again assigned to the Knight Order under Liszt's command.

The Earl had already gone to Rooster Pheasant Castle to attend the welcome feast hosted by Marquis Zhilíng and to hold a war council on the side. He decided to take a tour around Comb City and buy some local specialties, "Chocolate has a high sales volume; why isn't there a landlord in our country growing cocoa trees?"

"Probably because the climate isn't suitable, or maybe there are no Elf Bugs for cocoa."

Comb City is much larger than Coral City, with seven-story wooden buildings on both sides of the street and residents ranging from superbly dressed nobles to ragged serfs, all mixed together. There are also many knights dressed like them, probably those participating in the Pioneer Mandate.

"Hey, Viscount Liszt." Soon someone took the initiative to greet Liszt; he was a young viscount from Golden Island who had attended a wedding on Coral Island.

Liszt recognized the man, having personally received him before, "Viscount Cyril, are you also visiting Comb City?"

"Haha, I'm not really interested in Comb City; I'm planning to go to the Elf Market to see if there are any suitable Elf Bugs. I intend to buy a few."

"Elf Market?" Liszt became interested, "I plan to take a look there too."

"Then let's go together."

Following Viscount Cyril, the group soon arrived at the Elf Market located in a corner of Comb City. It's a small wild Elf Market, selling not many Elf Bugs. Liszt owns a magic book called "Wild Elf Bug Market Sale Prices," which includes information about the Elf Market.

In the capital City of Steel of the Steel Ridge Kingdom, there is a large-scale wild Elf Market, where the trading prices of elves are clearly recorded in the book.

For example, a Venus Flytrap Spirit Worm sells for three thousand six hundred Gold Coins—it had cost him only seven hundred Gold Coins to purchase from Viscount Jonas.

However, in the City of Steel, mosquitoes are rampant, and every household likes to buy and breed Venus Flytraps at home, even though Venus Flytraps have very limited insect-catching abilities. As long as the cultivation scale is increased, they still have a decent effect on catching mosquitoes and flies.

On Coral Island, Venus Flytrap has almost no use; there are not many mosquitoes, and the commoners can't afford them while nobles have other means to repel them.

Walking through, Liszt gradually gained a clear understanding of the prices in this small Elf Market.

They were similar to those in the City of Steel, generally around one to two thousand Gold Coins; Elf Bugs of little use were priced at several hundred Gold Coins; those linked to magic potions had prices starting from two thousand Gold Coins; the most expensive Elf Bug Liszt saw was priced at three thousand eight hundred Gold Coins, a Mysterious Fruit Elf Bug.

The Mysterious Fruit is not a magic potion, but it can enhance the human sense of taste, making it an excellent accompaniment to meals.

"Too expensive. Buying it would not cover the cost," he shook his head, devoid of any intention to purchase. "There's a sparse population on Coral Island and not many nobles, with little demand for Mysterious Fruit."

However, he was interested in buying some grain-related Elf Bugs.

Unfortunately, the prices for grain-related Elf Bugs were not cheap either, none below two thousand Gold Coins. Considering the value of the increased grain production over ten years, it just wasn't enough to offset the cost of the bugs themselves. The main hope in purchasing them was that they would evolve into Little Minor Elves, at which point, the profits would be substantial.

After all, grain is a crucial component of human food, and the increased production brought by a single Little Minor Elf could save countless lives.

Liszt was in dire need of grain-related Elf Bugs. He only had one Barley Bug, one Millet Bug, and two Little Wheat Bugs. Perhaps the Corn Grass Bug could also be considered a grain-related Elf, especially now that there was Stick Corn and Grain Corn.

"The Little Wheat Bug is priced at 2,300 Gold Coins, which isn't worth it. I don't have that much money right now. Forget it, I'll just wait for my territory to breed its own. I have the Smoke Mission; obtaining Elf Bugs isn't a problem," Liszt quietly calculated before giving up on the idea of making a purchase.

He planned to continue looking around for Dragon Kui Bugs, Rubber Bugs, and Thorn Bugs. If the prices for these three types of Elf Bugs weren't outrageous, he would undoubtedly snatch them up without hesitation.

Unfortunately.

After making a round, he couldn't find any.

The Elf Market had less than a hundred Elf Bugs for trade, most of which were useless. Elf Bug trading was not very prosperous to begin with, with many being provided by smaller nobles unable to manage them. Nobles would buy but never sell—Elves were always scarce for nobility.

If Viscount Jonas hadn't encountered financial issues, he wouldn't have sold his Dragon Kui Bug and Venus Flytrap Worm in the first place.

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Leaving the Elf Market, Liszt asked Captain Layden, "When does the serf trade take place?"

"It's not happening right now, but once the war starts, it won't be long before Mercenary Corps come forward to make contact... All we need to do is prepare ships by the seaside, and the Mercenary Corps will bring a large number of serfs for trade. The entire transaction might be completed within an hour, and then everyone leaves," replied Captain Layden, who had participated in several Pioneer Mandates and was very familiar with serf trading.

In fact, some serf trades were conducted on the same day they plundered villages, bringing the serfs for immediate exchange.

Captain Layden added further, "We could also contact serf traders who will buy slaves for us, they always have ways to acquire a large number of slaves. We would just wait for their ramshackle wooden boats by the seaside, and we could complete the trade without even going ashore."

This kind of indirect serf trading was obviously to prevent detection by Knight Orders during the transaction.

While this increased security significantly, it would incur a fee from the serf traders, making it less profitable than dealing directly with Mercenary Corps.

"On Coral Island, do we usually trade directly, or do we contact serf traders?" Liszt inquired.

Captain Layden smiled mysteriously.

Looking around to ensure no one was near, he spoke in a low voice, "Lord Commander, do you know how those small landlords frequently invaded by the coast survive? Their territories might not produce much, but the Mercenary Corps they foster are often larger than those fostered by some larger landlords... They are all secretly involved in the slave trade."

He added another sentence: "Rat will help us make contact with the Mercenary Corps, and we might even acquire a small port without having to fight."

#### Chapter 465 Noble's Plundering Game

Apart from Elite Earth Knight Veddry Woodkindle, Liszt had also selected four other Earth Knights. Including the three chosen by the Earl and the fifteen selected by the Viscount, that left eight other old and weak Earth Knights for the Barons to choose from.

Thus,

his first recruitment of Knights was complete.

The loyalty of these Knights could not yet be guaranteed; it had to be determined by their performance. As for the Knights who chose to pay a ransom, they were simply bound. But there was no need to worry, for Knights are a rather trustworthy group on the battlefield.

Being captive wasn't a big deal.

One could still eat, drink, sleep, and even attend banquets—just pay the sufficient ransom when the time came.

In this era, nationalism hadn't taken root, and the feudal system meant that national identities were not very strong, so the most fervent ideologies of nationalism and patriotism had not emerged. The wars of the Knights were for mutual benefit, a struggle among Nobles.

Similar to an arm wrestling match.

The victorious side would not mistreat the captives, who thus did not need to plot escapes but could eat, drink, and wait for their families or Landlords to deliver the ransom so they could return home happily.

Just as long as they didn't die in battle.

The battlefield was as leisurely as a vacation—of course, once defeated and captured, one had to bleed a great deal of money for their ransom.

Watching in the Castle, as the five Earth Knights who had just sworn loyalty quickly mingled with the Knights of the Fresh Flower Squad, raising their cups together, Liszt still found it absurd how the serious matter of war seemed like mere play to these Knights.

"Perhaps it really is just a game, a game of plundering... Attacking the Sardine Bay Area is inherently to plunder resources, not to occupy the land," he thought as he lifted his cup and took a sip, responding to a newly loyal Earth Knight who had toasted him.

Suddenly, he felt this was also good. Should he ever be defeated, he could also pay a ransom to release himself; survival was the best outcome.

"My lord, Veddry has a request, and I wonder whether you would permit it," Veddry Woodkindle suddenly said formally, speaking in Serpent Script.

The Sardine Bay Area was near the Steel Ridge Kingdom and bordered the Rooster Pheasant Hills, so many Knights were fluent in both Wind Language and Serpent Script.

"Speak, Knight Veddry."

"On the eve of war, my family had just moved. I had them hide in the village of a nearby small town. I ask for your permission, my lord, to bring them here and, after the war, to return with you to the Duchy of Sapphire."

The families of loyal Knights.

Of course, he had to permit it; with family ties, their loyalty would not be too low.

At least when Knights were defeated, they were very likely to choose to pay a ransom—provided they had enough money for it. It was precisely because the local Viscounts had died in battle, and there were no Landlords to pay their ransom, that these landless commoner Earth Knights readily chose loyalty over stubbornly awaiting death.

"Teacher Marcus, I need you to take a trip. Have Veddry write a letter to fetch them, then have them leave this place by ship with the serfs, returning to the domain," Liszt decided, not trusting Veddry enough to let him fetch his family himself.

He planned to take their families to Black Horse Island first.

This way, Veddry, free from worries, could quickly integrate into the Knight Squad.

Then he turned to the four Earth Knights: "What about your families? Do you need them taken as well?"

Three Earth Knights disclosed their families' hiding places, but one hesitated: "My lord, I am a bastard and not held in high regard within my family; they're just strangers to me. My mother was a serf and has passed away."

"In my domain, being a bastard does not serve as an obstacle," Liszt raised an eyebrow, "You're still young. Following me, you will see plenty of opportunities to change your fate."

The Earth Knight immediately knelt on one knee: "I will serve you, my lord!"

His expression was extremely excited.

Once, as a second son of a noble, he was not valued, even suppressed, and the landlord he followed also did not take him seriously; changing his fate seemed almost hopeless. After losing the battle, he couldn't even afford the ransom and thought he would be sent to work in the mines or workshops until death.

Unexpectedly, he could now choose to pledge his allegiance anew—this was practically great news. The former Duchy of Sapphire did not allow the recruitment of captives; either ransom was paid, or captives were sent to toil as laborers.

What was even more important was,

the landlord did not care about his illegitimate status.

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Weapons, armor, equipment, food...the collected resources were immediately apportioned to each knight according to their military achievements after being tallied.



Of course, these resources wouldn't be distributed right away but were all transported to a small port city by the sea. There, numerous Mercenary Corps and second-hand dealers would come to trade—gemstones, crystals, jade, metals were all part of the trade, and of course, serf trading was also included.

"Father, I don't need other materials, I only want serfs," Liszt stated his intention clearly.

"I will have Captain Mickey convert your portion of the spoils entirely into serfs. The merchant ships brought along will also be reallocated to transport the serfs for you,"

"Thank you, father."

"Don't forget to pay the rental fee."

"You have to give me a discount, at least 20 percent cheaper than if I were to rent my uncle's merchant ships."

"Ten percent, and not a penny more. If you were not my son, I would charge a premium of three times the fee,"

"All right then." Negotiating business deals between father and son was also a common practice among the nobility, after all, Liszt had been enfeoffed and was an independent entity.

He tasked Marcus to handle the serf trading separately from his Knight Squad.

"Teacher Marcus, accept all serfs delivered by the Mercenary Corps, as long as they are not ill. Even if a serf is disabled, as long as they have some skill, they can be sent to Black Horse Island,"

"My Lord, I understand!"

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The serf trade had already begun.

And the pace of the war advanced rapidly as well, maintaining contact with other Knight Orders. After resting for a night at River Bay Fort, the Coral Island Knights set off again, attacking a broader territory, plundering every wealth from the Earth. The knights' forces of the small landlords could not stop their offensive.

Especially Liszt, who always led nine Blizzard Beasts into the charge and with a barrage of Rock Spikes, always managed to disrupt the enemy knights' formations and achieve a rout.

He reaped one glorious victory after another.

Even if those Knight Orders took refuge in castles, they could hardly resist the Earth System Magic of the Blizzard Beasts. For a time, they were unstoppable, with him as the arrowhead, the Coral Island Knights took down four small cities in succession, directly pressing towards the first major city—Falconseen City, the territory of Peregrine Count.

The name of Falconseen City stems from being witnessed by the peregrine, naturally referring to Peregrine Count—Tasker Scentcartleaf.

At this moment, within Scentcartleaf Stronghold on the eastern hillside of Falconseen City,

Peregrine Count's face was somber as he convened a meeting with his followers, "We have received a warning from Rattlesnake Marquis; the disgusting flies of Sapphire are here again, this time choosing the Sardine Bay Area. And the Wildfowl Marquis has come as well, so all of us landlords in Sardine Bay must unite!"

His followers howled in response, "We'll heed your command, my Lord!"

Tasker's eagle-like gaze swept over all the knights, revealing a satisfied smile, "Very well, then, what follows is... we defend Scentcartleaf Stronghold to the death!"

#### Chapter 466 Proficient Siege Rhythm

Scentcartleaf Stronghold was not very tall, at least not when compared to Tulip Castle, it fell short by quite a length. However, the scale of Falconseen City at the foot of the mountain far surpassed that of Coral City.

The population of Coral City was around thirty thousand, while Falconseen City had at least a population of forty to fifty thousand.

"My lord, if we are to plunder Falconseen City, our charge formation will inevitably be disrupted and the knights of Scentcartleaf Stronghold will be ready to charge and defeat us at any time," Viscount Trik, leading the Knight Order, returned from a patrol around Falconseen City to report.

Although the city was not as fortified as a castle,

it still had basic walls, as well as many apprentice knights guarding it, making it no easy task to breach under a rain of arrows. Not to mention the elite knights of Scentcartleaf Stronghold, lying in wait hungrily.

Had it been in the past,

The Coral Island Knights would've directly bypassed the major cities, looting small towns and rural villages instead, and stumbling upon a mine was like striking it rich. That's when the knight order hiding inside the strongholds would need to consider whether to charge out for a decisive battle, or to remain holed up and resolutely not emerge, allowing the Coral Island Knights to loot and leave afterwards.

However, now, Li Weiliam glanced at his increasingly steadfast second son and the black behemoth beside him, confidently saying, "Then let's crush Scentcartleaf Stronghold first, and after that plunder Falconseen City!"

His gaze turned to Liszt, "Is Douson ready?"

"Douson is always ready for siege, my lord!" Liszt patted Douson's huge head. The almost two-year-old Douson had matured in every aspect of his body, and his mastery of the four types of magic was particularly adept, essentially reaching the pinnacle that his bloodline could attain.

"Then, let's begin the siege! I'll take care of the Scorching Sword Saint Tasker; you guys focus on suppressing the counterattacks from Scentcartleaf Stronghold's archers. Douson, along with the eight Blizzard Beasts, will lead the main assault on the city!"

The order was given.

Combat was imminent.

The divine archers of the Coral Island Knights exchanged fire with the knights on the walls of Scentcartleaf Stronghold, while Liszt, mounted on the Landwalker bird Loki, holding the Swift Shadow Bow, began directing the Blizzard Beasts in the siege—one of the eight tiny ones was responsible for prying at the base of the wall with Rock Spikes, while Douson handled bombarding it with Rock Grenades.

The mixed Dou Qi of the knights, capable of shredding the magic cast by magicians who gathered the free-floating magic power in the air, was unable to shred the magic released by the inherent magic power within magical beasts.

However,

during the siege, Liszt noticed that there were a few spells cast from within Scentcartleaf Stronghold, which had injured several of the knights from the Coral Island Knights.

"There are also magical beasts in Scentcartleaf Stronghold, but fortunately, they seem to be low-level, only capable of casting Wind Blade Spell and Fireball Technique," his Eye of Magic gazed, quickly zeroing in on the firing openings of the castle.

He distinguished the non-human forms of Magic Radiance.

He soon found the magical beasts that were constantly changing positions, as the Swift Shadow Bow was drawn to full moon, a poisoned arrow was being readied. He had mastered "Multi-Arrow" to a proficient level, and as soon as a magical beast stuck its head out to cast a spell, he released the bowstring, sending an arrow angrily whistling through the air.

Whoosh!

The arrow spun through the air, following a path hard to discern with the naked eye, accurately flying into the firing hole and piercing the mouth of the magical beast.

It was as if the scream of the magical beast could be heard from his ear, as the one peeking from the firing hole had already withdrawn into the fortress, not showing itself again.

Liszt's lips slightly curled upwards, his archery skills must have reached an incredibly profound level.

Overseeing nearly a thousand Earth Knights from the Coral Island, he should be the strongest archer among them, justifying his daily archery practice, coupled with his exceptional talent.

In combination with the Eye of Magic, the effect was even better.

The bowstring was drawn to full moon again, as he aimed at a second magical beast, awaiting for it to peek out and prepare to cast a spell before he fired another arrow, spinning it into the mouth of the magical beast.

Another scream rang out.

The magical beasts retreated back into the castle.

It was unclear whether the two magical beasts had perished, but the arrows were dipped in a high-concentration poison from Rapid Growth Poison Thorn. Even if they didn't die, the beasts would certainly shed a layer of skin.

When shooting at people, he adhered to the knight's code and did not use poisoned arrows.

But when it came to magical beasts, there weren't so many scruples.

Suddenly.

He bellowed, "Rock, come back!"

Turned out, Rock, the Blizzard Beast, got carried away in the heat of the battle and charged towards the area bombarded with a hail of arrows. If Liszt could take down a beast from Scentcartleaf Stronghold, then the stronghold's Divine Archer would certainly dare to strike down his beast. Thus, he immediately called Rock back to ensure all eight tiny ones remained outside of the arrow's range.

The discipline of the eight tiny ones still needed to be strengthened.

Only Douson required less of Liszt's worry.

It simply donned a suit of Firmstone Armor and charged headlong, deploying Rock Grenades at close range to bombard the wall, smashing it until cracks followed one after another.

After depleting its Magic Power.

The attack would pause, and the knights, like the tide, fell back, waiting for Douson to replenish its Magic Power before continuing the siege. Following the previous battle at Iron Hoof Island, the knights of Coral Island had long since learned to coordinate with Douson's rhythm, attack wave after wave successively.

"Father, do you think we can capture the Scorching Sword Saint?" Liszt asked during a brief respite.

Li Weiliam shook his head, "It's difficult, a Sky Knight who has reached the Sword Saint Level, even if their offensive power may be lacking, possesses unparalleled abilities to escape. Moreover, I'm not adept at tracking an opponent, and my Dou Qi and Dou Qi Manuscript aren't particularly outstanding in terms of speed."

He practiced the Water Attribute Advanced Dou Qi from "Giant Wave Breaks the Tide", excelling in endurance, stout attacks, and solid defense, but it lacked a bit in explosive power, and the speed was quite ordinary.

"I wonder what kind of Advanced Dou Qi Manuscript Tasker has. It would be great if we could capture his Dou Qi Manuscript," Liszt added expectantly.

Scorching Sword Saint Tasker Scentcartleaf, from the title of Sword Saint alone, it was evident that he utilized Fire Attribute Dou Qi. Liszt had already obtained an Advanced Fire Attribute Dou Qi Manuscript, "Rising Sun Blaze", but he wouldn't mind having another Advanced Dou Qi Manuscript to compare and contrast for greater mastery.

Although it was not the case that the more Dou Qi Manuscripts one studied, the better—it could even cause problems with training due to conflicting techniques.

But Liszt believed in his own ability to overcome such obstacles.

The Earl spoke, "There's a good chance he carries his Dou Qi Manuscript with him. Unless we capture him, we can't obtain the manuscript."

Father and son discussed the post-battle issues.

They didn't regard the desperate defense of Scentcartleaf Stronghold to be of any concern.

However, before they had rested sufficiently, the alarm horn suddenly sounded—the knights from Scentcartleaf Stronghold were pouring out of the castle, boldly charging toward the camp of the Coral Island Knights.

With a telescope, the movements of Scentcartleaf Stronghold were discovered in real-time.

"I thought he was a turtle hiding in his shell, but I didn't expect Tasker Scentcartleaf to still have some valor. Well then, let me snuff out his valor!" Li Weiliam suddenly rose, his Advanced Dou Qi surging around him, giving off the pressure of a vast ocean about to unleash massive surges.

Liszt also quickly stood, rejoining his own Knight Order, arraying themselves to meet the enemy.

He had charged many times and, with the assistance of the Blizzard Beast, had emerged victorious every time. Facing the charge of other knights, he felt no pressure, only a blazing fighting spirit—these were all feats of valor delivered right to his doorstep!

Chapter 467 A Glorious Victory

Charge!

On the battlefield, two streams of ironclad torrents collided. It should have been an evenly matched scene, yet there emerged an unexpected turn of events. The Knight Order led by Liszt, like a sharp dagger, swiftly pierced through the knights whose formation had been destroyed by the Blizzard Beasts, defeating the opponent in one battle.

Then, turning direction, he charged towards another Knight Order.

Surrounded by Blizzard Beasts himself, with Douson clad in Firmstone Armor sweeping the front, no Earth Knight could stand in his way.

With unrestrained dominance, he inflicted a massive blow on the Scentcartleaf Stronghold's Knights, a blow that rippled throughout, causing a domino effect. The Knight Order he defeated was swiftly taken over by other Coral Island Knights, who madly sprinted in for the attack, preventing any new formation from being established.

From the beginning, the trend of the battle had been set.

Unless they were outnumbered by the Coral Island Knights, or had the aid of several Sky Knights, the Coral Island Knights with Blizzard Beasts were invincible among the Knight Orders of an Earl's territory.

Watching the battle from one side, Tasker Scentcartleaf trembled with rage as he saw his knights swept away: "Damn Intermediate Magical Beast! Destroying my walls, disrupting my formation, damn it!" He fiercely stimulated his Dou Qi, transforming into a flame that shot towards the sky.

Falling back down, he prepared to strike at the Blizzard Beast.

However, before he could land, a loud shout rang in his ears, "Tasker, have you asked my longsword?" accompanied by a flash of silvery sword light.

It was Li Weiliam launching a bold attack. The natural opponent for a Sky Knight was another Sky Knight—disengaging from the Earth Knights, they began their sword battle in the sky.

"Get out of my way!" Tasker swung his sword to block.

Boom!

Two bursts of Advanced Dou Qi exploded in mid-air, half flame and half steam. Li Weiliam burst forth from the steam, his momentum undiminished: "Big words, but your strength is too feeble!"

"Hmph!"

Tasker could not afford to speak further, focusing on his sword battle with Li Weiliam. But just as he was on guard, he caught sight of three arrows aiming at him from the corner of his eye. The



trajectories of the arrows were erratic, their speed as fast as lightning, forcing him to retract his sword moves and twist his body to dodge.

Clang!

However, just before the arrows could graze past, they unexpectedly collided with each other, then changed direction, heading straight for his body.

The longsword returned, swiftly knocking away the strange arrows. Before Tasker could take a breath of relief, Li Weiliam's attack had already descended upon him. A sword strike blasted him forcibly from mid-air, causing him to plummet to the ground, tumbling several times before coming to a stop. Then, he had to face Li Weiliam's attacks, which came like relentless waves.

Not far away.

Liszt, who was commanding the Knight Order's charge, withdrew his Swift Shadow Bow, very satisfied with the power of his "Chain of Three Arrows" technique. Although he did not harm Tasker in the slightest, he successfully disrupted his momentum, putting him in a defensive position, proving that he had qualified to intervene in the Sky Knights' sword battle.

Long-term use of drugs, both the Auxiliary Medicine and Magic Potion, his Dou Qi grew at an astoundingly fast rate.

Moreover, with the "Breath Decay" slowing down the loss, he was progressing every moment, his cultivation in the Elite Earth Knight phase far surpassing anyone's.

If it weren't for a Magic Fire Seed in his heart competing for nutrients, he even doubted if, in this half a month of cultivation, he would be reaching the limits of an Elite Earth Knight, preparing to burst through the barrier to the next level of Dou Qi, to transform quantitatively and qualitatively, and advance to a Sky Knight.

"Soon! Chris, before I set out, extracted all the harvested Auxiliary Medicine Dragon Mallow into Dragon Kui Auxiliary Medicine, and, in combination with the Flame Magic Potion and Thorn Magic Potion, it's enough for me to last a month on the battlefield... A month's time, let's see if I can make a breakthrough. If I fail, I'll wait until I get back to try again."

His thoughts converged back.

He had to focus on commanding the Knight Order's charge.

...

Twenty minutes later.

The battle ended, and the Knight Order of Scentcartleaf Stronghold crumbled in defeat. The Scorching Sword Saint Tasker could not best the Sea Wave Sword Saint Li Weiliam and, leading the few hundred knights that remained, fled back to Scentcartleaf Stronghold. Without hesitation, they then abandoned the stronghold and fled into the distance without looking back.

A glorious victory.

The casualties of the Coral Island Knights were less than one-tenth, but they captured a whole three hundred Earth Knights. Without a doubt, at least half of these Earth Knights would accept allegiance reformation and replenish the losses of the Coral Island Knights.

The reformation process that followed indeed went as such.

The Peregrine Count had already fled, and although assets including elves and other valuables had been taken from the stronghold, a considerable amount of supplies remained within the castle. This meant the Peregrine Count suffered heavy losses and might be unable to pay the ransom for the captured Earth Knights. Those knights without funds could only accept reformation.

One hundred and sixteen Earth Knights chose to pay ransom.

Two hundred and forty-two Earth Knights chose to accept reformation.

Liszt added seven Elite Earth Knights and twenty-seven Earth Knights to his ranks. Along with the three Elite Earth Knights and sixteen Earth Knights he had previously recruited. Not long after receiving the Pioneer Mandate, he had already replenished ten Elite Earth Knights and forty-three Common Earth Knights under his command.

The Knight Squad of Fresh Flower Town currently had no losses in battle, with twelve fully staffed members, and his territory also had seven Earth Knights who had pledged allegiance.

Thus.

He now had a total of twelve Elite Earth Knights and sixty Common Earth Knights under him, enough to form six Knight Squads, and was not far from forming a full Knight Order. However, he did not plan to recruit any further, for the expense of a Knight Order was too great for his territory to support at the moment.

"You may immediately write letters to your families, and I will dispatch knights to bring them over to settle in my Territory Black Horse Island. You shall stay to assist me and continue the campaign of the Pioneer Mandate," said Liszt solemnly to the newly reformed knights.

The best way to control them was to bring over their families as well.

It was difficult to leave their homeland, but having been defeated and sworn new allegiance to their landlord, the knights could only write letters to fetch their families.

Fetching people, reformation, and tallying the spoils took time.

The Coral Island Knights were temporarily stationed in Scentcartleaf Stronghold and did not plan to continue attacking other nobles' territories in the short term. For there was still a great city—Falconseen City—to plunder.

"This is a tremendous gain. In past Pioneer Mandates, we might have gone thousands of kilometers in depth, or even further, to plunder all manner of materials from the land. But conquering large strongholds and cities rarely happened... Liszt, your Blizzard Beast played the biggest role." The Earl raised his glass towards Liszt at the banquet with satisfaction.

Liszt smiled, "Father, I merely did what I needed to do."

"I'm proud of you, my son," Li Weiliam declared, draining the glass of fine wine in one go. The food and beverages were all supplies from the castle's stockpile.

Liszt likewise drained his glass in one go.

The battlefield victory was splendid, and his military achievements were undoubtedly second only to the Earl's, a tremendous feat indeed. Unfortunately, no metal ores were plundered—metal ores were the largest indicator of military achievements in the Pioneer Mandate.

The Earl put down his glass.

Looking around the circle, he raised his glass again, "The war is far from over, and danger could strike at any moment. Everyone is limited to this last glass only. Let us raise our glasses together to celebrate this splendid victory."

Everyone raised their glasses together, "Knight's glory favors us, honor belongs to the lord!"

The Earl nodded with satisfaction, "The honor belongs to me, and I stand with you all!"

#### Chapter 468 Shipping Serfs on Two Trips

In the days that followed, it was a time of reaping rewards.

The Peregrine Count did not come for revenge, to reclaim his territory and castle, allowing the Coral Island Knights to plunder Falconseen City to the bone.

"We haven't found a single Elf Bug, nor have any Knights willing to pay ransom offered up their Elf Bugs... Before the war began, the Peregrine Count and his followers were already prepared, transferring important Elf Bugs and other materials away," Viscount Jonas complained.

Viscount Trik reflected, "At least, the supplies we've gained far exceed those of the past."

He reminisced, "In my memory, following the Lord nearly twenty years on Pioneer Mandates, only thrice have we had a bounty surpassing this one. Once was during a thousand-mile raid where we plundered a large iron mine, attracting the pursuit of Dragon Knights; another was when we captured a Sky Knight and received two Little Minor Elves as ransom; and yet another was when we looted a vast quantity of gemstones."

"Indeed, this time not only did we plunder a large amount of supplies, but we also managed to engage the surrounding territories, and our military achievements will not be few. Moreover, we can incorporate the captives, which would significantly benefit the replenishment of our Knights under our command," he said.

"Speaking of which, if not for Viscount Liszt's unexpected rise, achieving such a splendid victory would not have been easy," Trik said, "Without Douson's siege deterrent, forcing the Scorching Sword Saint to charge, we would never have had the chance to breach Scentcartleaf Stronghold."

"He has not just one Douson, but also eight Blizzard Beasts, no wonder everyone calls him the Son of Glory... This time his gains are second only to the Earl's, and he has chosen to purchase serfs. With his spoils, he can probably buy more than ten thousand serfs; his territory will quickly surpass ours," he added.

Trik suddenly asked, "Jonas, where do you see the future of Viscount Liszt lying?"

Jonas frowned in thought before shaking his head, "I don't know, but I believe that if Earl William Lee advances further to become the new Marquis of the Grand Duchy, then Viscount Liszt would deserve an Earl's title in the future."

"I feel the same... Who would have known that the once inconspicuous second son of the Tulip Family would become such a dazzling figure, with all the glories of knighthood showering upon him."

"It's not just the favor of knightly glory; his strength is equally outstanding. I feel that the power he has shown this time has already surpassed mine, especially his archery. He's now able to interfere in battles between Sky Knights, and if he and Douson work together, I wouldn't doubt his ability to defeat a Sky Knight."

"Really, he's become that powerful? Wasn't he just an Apprentice Knight before he came of age?"

"I don't know how he's been training, but it won't be long before he becomes a Sky Knight," Jonas said as he recalled his interactions with Liszt, making such a prediction.

Trik was somewhat skeptical, "I haven't felt that his aura has grown stronger than it was during the Iron Hoof Island campaign."

"I've noticed this as well, but his strength has indeed become greater," Jonas shrugged, "As for whether this is the case or not, perhaps it won't take long for us to understand."

"Perhaps."

...

Others were discussing Liszt's strength.

Over the past one or two years, his prominence was too overwhelming on Coral Island, with no equal. The birth of a Little Minor Elf, rearing of an Intermediate Magical Beast, promotion to a Viscount, acquisition of a fiefdom island – coupled with a strength that even surpassed the veteran potion-consuming Elite Earth Knights, the change was drastic.

On the monotonous Coral Island, calling Liszt the Son of Glory went unquestioned.

In the past, Liszt was very much against such high-profile labels.

However, after a conversation with Marquis Merlin, he came to understand that being unassuming was not always the best choice. As the son of an Earl with Marquis lineage, he was born to stand above others. Displaying his talent, as long as it wasn't extraordinarily shocking, was all to his benefit, and not at all harmful.

If he had hidden his abilities during the Iron Hoof Island campaign, how could he have been ennobled with Black Horse Island?

...

If he played dumb on this Pioneer Mandate, how could he grab a ton of military merits and spoils of war, buy a large number of serfs, and snatch away a large number of craftsmen from Falconseen City?

"My lord, after negotiations, we have 'convinced' one hundred and ten craftsmen, along with their families, to settle on Black Horse Island," Marcus excitedly said.

"Very good. After these craftsmen board the ship, make sure to instruct the accompanying Retainer Knights to take good care of them and not let them die needlessly."

"Understood, my lord!"

"By the way, Teacher Marcus, how did the negotiations with the Mercenary Corps for the serf trade go?"

"We have submitted sufficient spoils of war, and the Mercenary Corps is gradually driving the serfs to the port to trade with us. The fleet from Red Crab Island has also rented twenty merchant ships to us for transporting the serfs. Combined with the merchant ships from Coral Island, we have thirty ships at our disposal for the transport."

A two-masted merchant ship, ensuring that the serfs could ride in health, could carry three hundred people.

Thirty ships would be nine thousand people.

"The spoils of war we have should be enough to transport two batches of serfs, right?" Liszt asked again. He was primarily responsible for the military campaigns, while Marcus had become an indispensable assistant in the serf trade.

Marcus shook his head, "The Mercenary Corps is driving a hard bargain. The goods here are on average a third to a fifth cheaper than those on Coral Island. After saving the expenses of renting the merchant ships, we can probably buy thirteen thousand serfs."

Thirteen thousand serfs.

This number far exceeded Liszt's bottom line.

But he was still not satisfied, "I'm going to try and borrow some money, aiming to fill another ship!"

"My lord, if we buy so many serfs, our territory's food stores might not be sufficient," Marcus advised. "Before you left, storage was prepared for winter based on ten thousand people. If we ferry eighteen thousand serfs, the food will definitely not meet the demand."

"Then we'll borrow money, rent other nobles' idle merchant ships, and transport food back."

The bolder the people, the greater the yield of the land.

He was no longer satisfied with minor developments; what he wanted was a breakthrough.

"Renting merchant ships at this time will definitely require a hefty fee. Every great landlord comes to the Eagle Kingdom to loot resources to transport back to their territories."

"That's not necessarily the case; not all landlords can lead a Knight Order, conquer castles, and loot such large amounts of resources. I remember the last Pioneer Mandate, the family fleet didn't fill the ships with goods, and some merchant ships returned empty." Liszt signaled Marcus to go ahead and rent anyway.

As long as you are willing to spend money, you can definitely rent empty ships, and you can definitely buy food.

Borrowing money once is borrowing, borrowing again is still borrowing; he believed he could get enough gold coins from Earl William Lee and his uncle Mesiro to purchase empty ships for transporting food.

He would also write to Goltai, asking him to increase the effort in buying grain, to store more food for winter.

"But speaking of which, Goltai's actions are too slow. The Smoke Mission has not yet been completed to this day. I wonder if it's because he hasn't stored enough food yet... Without the Smoke Mission, I always feel that the rewards from this Pioneer Mandate might not exceed the Iron Hoof Island campaign."

The rewards from the Smoke Mission had already whetted his appetite.

Chapter 469 Corn Minor Elf

On the grasslands, if a gazelle is caught and killed.

Then the lion that made the kill would first enjoy the delicious parts, followed by the hyenas waiting to partake in the leftovers, then the vultures hovering ready to pick scraps from the bones, and finally the flies buzzing around the bones and remaining rotting flesh, laying maggots to partake in the final revelry.



Undoubtedly.

With the conquest of Scentcartleaf Stronghold and the plunder of Falconseen City, the Coral Island Knights were the predators, savoring the most delicious portions. Then came the mercenary corps and second-hand traders flocking in to share the remaining resources, and rats, thieves, and the like would come to divide whatever leaked out.

So much so that when Li Si Te witnessed such a scene, he felt that the fruits of their hard-fought battle, in reality, amounted to less than one-third of what they had to their mouths.

The rest was snatched away by mercenaries, traders, rats, and others.

This was the ecological environment of the hinterlands along the Eagle Kingdom's coastline—how many of these mercenary corps were fostered by the local landlords of Sardine Bay was hard to say clearly. One could say that these landlords themselves were also gnawing at each other's carcasses, becoming an important part of the entire ecological chain.

Without their channels, resources would be difficult to digest quickly.

Only by satisfying the demands of most "creatures" in the ecological chain could it continue to sustain itself and not collapse easily. Without mercenary corps to pass on losses, what the Pioneer Mandate would face annually would probably be fiercely resisting knight orders.

Although a large part of the resources were shared out.

Liszt was still satisfied with this Pioneer Mandate—he came for the serfs, and now thirty merchant ships were carrying nearly eight thousand five hundred serfs and more than five hundred knights' relatives back to Black Horse Island. Just this trip alone met his expectations before the war, the rest was all profit.

At the same time.

He received a verbal message.

It was from a knight of the Golden Wheat Sheaf Family who had participated in the Pioneer Mandate: "Viscount Liszt, I bring a message from Sir Roger. Hearing that you are renting merchant

ships at a high price to transport food, Sir Roger is prepared to offer you thirty idle merchant ships, and you can defer payment of the rent."

Just as he was drowsy, someone brought a pillow.

Although Liszt knew that the two families had already formed an alliance, interests still had to be clarified in advance, "Sir Roger is offering such a huge favor, what does he need me to do?"

"Sir Roger hopes that you could bring your Intermediate Magical Beast Douson and help him conquer the castle of Count Feijiang—Hands Fort. He will calculate your battle reward based on the standard merits, and ensure the safety of both you and Douson," the knight conveyed.

"Wait, I need to consult with the Earl."

Liszt quickly relayed the message to his father.

Roger Golden Wheat was seeking help just to utilize Dorson's siege capabilities, along with protection, which seemed like an easy battle honor to pick up.

After hearing this, Li Weiliam said, "Just right, I don't plan on plundering any further. The Coral Island Knights' performance in conquering Scentcartleaf Stronghold was outstanding enough. If we make another big move, it will attract the attention of Marquis Snake Fang. According to exchanged intelligence, Marquis Roderick is facing off against Marquis Snake Fang, who is the lord of Peregrine Count. It's better for Roger to draw their attention instead."

Count Feijiang, Russell Finger Citron, was also one of Marquis Snake Fang's followers.

Marquis Snake Fang was one of the major landlords of the Sardine Bay Area, and his territory was a principal attack direction of the Duchy of Sapphire. The original battle plan was for Coral Island to restrain Peregrine Count, cutting off one of Marquis Snake Fang's arms. It's just that now the cut was a bit too severe, with Scentcartleaf Stronghold falling directly.

"Then I shall go and support Roger."

"Be careful, Russell Finger Citron is known as the Swift Flying Sword Saint; he possesses Wind Attribute Dou Qi and is as fast as Lightning," Li Weiliam warned.

However, he might as well not have mentioned it, because as soon he did, Liszt's eyes suddenly sparkled, "A Wind Attribute Sword Saint?"

In order to increase the safety of sailing, he had brought a Calming Wind Pearl this time. Imagine, once he took out the Calming Wind Pearl, all Wind Attribute Magic Power within a few hundred meters would be dispersed. Even if a Sword Saint's Dou Qi originated from within and could not be dispersed, the power of their Dou Qi moves would definitely be greatly reduced.

In that case,

Wouldn't that mean he could even catch the Swift Flying Sword Saint by surprise and, in cooperation with others, manage to detain him?

Li Weiliam seemed to have guessed Liszt's thoughts and couldn't help but warn, "I know you have the Black Pearl that can disperse Wind Attribute Magic Power, but I've experimented with it, and the reduction of a knight's burst of Dou Qi is limited. The Dou Qi of the Sky Knights is of a special nature, and the reduction will definitely be smaller than you imagine."

"I will proceed with caution, and if it's not feasible, I won't rashly act."

"Good... Once we've cleaned up the battlefield over by Scentcartleaf Stronghold, I will lead the Coral Island Knights to meet up with Marquis Roderick, and we'll see each other there."

"Yes, Father."

With all matters clearly explained, Liszt rode the landwalker bird Loki, and took Dorson along with nine Blizzard Beasts. He also led his own knight squad, which had expanded to over fifty men, and a fully staffed knight order, following the knights of the Golden Wheat Sheaf Family towards Hands Fort.

While galloping on the road, he occasionally took out his telescope to survey the surroundings.

This was to ensure that he wouldn't fall into an ambush, combined with the Eye of Magic's sensitivity to magic power, it wouldn't be easy for an enemy to ambush him.

During the journey, he still called upon the Smoke Mission from time to time to check on the progress of the mission.

It was at this moment that he noticed a sudden change in the Smoke Mission: "Complete the mission, reward with one Corn Minor Elf."

"Hm!"

His mood was immediately filled with surprise, "Getting a Minor Elf, and it's the expected Corn Minor Elf, such a Minor Elf is very valuable, representing a bountiful grain harvest! The food crisis of the land can finally take a breath, and the corn can feed more serfs!"

One could imagine, at this very moment, miles away, the Corn Grass Bug is probably entering its Fat Pupa Stage.

Unable to care for it from afar, and even the connection through the contract's bond becoming blurred and invisible due to the distance, he could only hope that under the influence of the Smoke Mission's Threads of Destiny, the Corn Grass Bug could smoothly evolve into a Corn Minor Elf.

Worrying is useless.

He wisely chose not to worry and began to look at the new mission.

"Mission: Count Feijiang is hiding in Hands Fort, constantly threatening the safety of the flanks of the Golden Island Knight Order and preventing Marquis Roderick from attacking Marquis Snake Fang's territory with full strength. His son Roger thus requests your help; please assist in capturing Hands Fort. Reward: A sprout of a Magic Fire Seed."

"Hmm?"

Liszt's gaze sharpened, the content of the mission was not surprising, but the promised reward set his mind racing.

The Magic Fire Seed had been residing in his heart for a long time, always competing with him for nutrients, yet not giving him any possibility to harness it. It was like growing a tumor, giving him

both anticipation and a knot in his heart. He always felt that there was something uncontrolled inside his body, which was quite uncomfortable.

"The Magic Fire Seed is about to sprout, is it really going to grow into a tree, or will it suck my body dry?" After pondering for a long time, he finally shook his head in silence, not entangling himself with this issue.

He trusted that the Smoke Mission would not harm him.

Perhaps after the Magic Fire Seed sprouted, new discoveries would be made.