

The Mighty 471

Chapter 471 The Lifeform of Day and Night Yearning

However, the unfortunate event that Liszt dreaded happened.

The Swift Flying Sword Saint, who had been dominating Fredo in the sword battle, didn't choose to charge and engage in a decisive death battle. Instead, he chose to break out and led the knights to flee toward Serpent Fang City.

Serpent Fang City is the central large city of Poisonous Snake Ridge, with the towering Snake Coil Fortress right next to it, standing between two mountain peaks, easy to defend but hard to attack. Clearly, Count Feijiang seemed to have communicated with Marquis Snake Fang, abandoning the strategic position of Hands Fort and retreating to defend Snake Coil Fortress.

Together with the earlier fleeing Peregrine Count.

Snake Coil Fortress had already gathered several Sky Knights, making it very difficult to attack.

"Count Feijiang has fled, and Hands Fort has fallen into our hands. Liszt, thank you for your help, my mission has been perfectly accomplished. From now on, we can be entrenched in Hands Fort, threatening the safety of the knight order of Marquis Snake Fang, with vast territories under the threat of our knight order."

Roger Golden Wheat was extremely excited.

He hastily directed the knight order to rush toward Hands Fort. The resources that could be taken away had been taken, but there were still large amounts of equipment, food, and tools left in the castle.

While the knights were busy tallying their gains.

Roger then decided in the subsequent merit distribution meeting, "Your merit will be ranked alongside Viscount Fredo's as first place, Liszt. Do you have any objections?"

"None," Liszt calmly said, acknowledging that while Douson played a huge role in the siege, without Fredo restraining the Swift Flying Sword Saint, it would have been impossible to safely attack the stronghold. Therefore, sharing the glory was acceptable.

"As for the distribution of the spoils of war, I know you don't have much need for ordinary resources, so let's convert all of it into food and transport it onto the thirty Airships I've provided for you, how about that?"

"A very good distribution plan," he said.

He wasn't nitpicky, and Roger wasn't petty or stingy. The distribution of merits and spoils of war was quickly implemented. Knights took care of receiving everything for Liszt, and after the merit distribution meeting ended, he returned to his own room to rest for a while.

To say he rested was actually not entirely accurate due to a peculiar sensation at the location of his heart.

He felt an indescribable sensation spreading from his heart, giving him an experience that was both comfortable and uncomfortable, forcing him to decline social invitations and carefully examine his body.

"It must be the Magic Fire Seed sprouting, the mission is completed," Liszt thought as he closed the door of his room.

He thus called upon the Smoke Mission.

"Complete the mission, reward: sprouting of the Magic Fire Seed."

As expected.

Then came the new Smoke Mission.

"Mission: The already sprouted Magic Fire Seed has become the brand-new life form you've been longing for. Its growth requires a large amount of resources, but it can also bring you boundless benefits. Please train in coordination with the Magic Fire Seed. Reward: a Bloodline Fruit."

"The brand-new life form that I've been longing for?"

"Train in coordination with the Magic Fire Seed?"

"Is its growth direction truly aimed towards becoming a Fire Dragon?" wondered Liszt as he felt the changes at the location of his heart, pondering the hints given in the Smoke Mission.

His blood was already boiling.

For all signs pointed to a Fire Dragon indeed residing within him, waiting to emerge in the future.

What was needed now was to make every effort to nurture the Fire Dragon--No information indicated how dragons were born, but following the hints from the Smoke Mission, step by step, the Magic Fire Seed could undoubtedly breed a Fire Dragon--It was just unknown how it would be bred.

"I hope it's not me 'birthing' a Fire Dragon, that would be incredibly awkward."

He suppressed his excitement.

His gaze lingered on the reward for the Smoke Mission, and his eyes suddenly lit up: "Another Bloodline Fruit! The last Bloodline Fruit I got nurtured Douson into an Intermediate Magical Beast, and even came with the bonus of breeding eight Blizzard Beasts! Now, who should I feed this Bloodline Fruit to?"

He wasn't quite sure where the Bloodline Fruit would grow; if it were in his own territory, it would be out of reach, and all he could do was leave it to luck to see which creature on his land would consume the Bloodline Fruit.

If it were on the battlefield.

The choices were fairly clear—Douson and the Eight Tiny Ones were good candidates; the Landwalker bird Loki was also a solid choice; the Black Blood Treasured Horse Li Dragon Horse could also be nurtured with the Bloodline Fruit.

He began to contemplate.

Who to feed it to, after all.

"If I could, I'd naturally want Douson to consume the Bloodline Fruit and further evolve. But since Douson has already consumed a Bloodline Fruit recently, eating another so soon would probably greatly increase the odds of failure... If it were to explode and die, it would be a major blow to me."

Feeding Douson posed too much risk; it was not appropriate.

The Eight Tiny Ones, on the other hand, were quite suitable. Even if one of them were to burst and die, it wouldn't affect the overall situation. However, considering that they were born from Douson before it completely digested the previous Bloodline Fruit, there must still be a "drug resistance" to the Bloodline Fruit in their bloodline, which also poses a great danger.

"Feeding the Li Dragon Horse seems pointless; turning it into a Magical Beast would just mean having another low-level Dragon Breed Magic Beast... It might actually be better to let Loki have it. Loki is basically a low-level Dragon Breed Magic Beast, and upon evolution into an Intermediate Dragon Beast, its strength would leap qualitatively."

However, just like with Douson and the Eight Tiny Ones, if Loki were to explode and die, it would also be a great pity.

Dragon Breed Magic Beasts are indeed very suitable for riding, and true dragons are hard to find—the Earl searched for many years without finding an appropriate mount to ride. The difficulty of finding a good steed is evident.

"Forget it, let's not think about this now; when the time comes, I'll decide whether to feed it to the Eight Tiny Ones or to Loki."

He turned his attention back to his heart.

He circulated his Dou Qi, trying to sense any changes in the sprouted Magic Fire Seed.

If the Magic Fire Seed before was like a seed that only absorbed without giving back, then the Magic Fire Seed he felt this time was more like a converter filter. He could still feel it constantly drawing in nutrition and magic power from his body, but at the same time, it began to emit magic power.

Very unique magic power, mixed with the Dou Qi that Liszt was circulating, causing his Dou Qi to undergo some abnormal changes.

The Dou Qi, which usually followed his commands with ease, now felt slightly disobedient, especially when circulating along the complex routes of Dou Qi techniques, causing a great sense of stagnation. The more complex the circulation route, the stronger the sense of stagnation, making it almost impossible to perform Dou Qi techniques.

Even when he used the Eye of Magic, he felt it wasn't as agreeable as before.

"This is a bit of a problem; the sprouted Magic Fire Seed inside me seems to be 'excreting' impure magic power, mingling with my pure Dou Qi and drastically reducing my control over Dou Qi... My combat ability now has probably dropped significantly, to less than half of what it was before!"

His expression was serious.

Although this condition was probably due to initially not being accustomed to it, and a proper cultivation method could eventually resolve it,

it still set off alarm bells in his head, making him aware of the severity of the issue.

"I can no longer participate in battles; with my current state, it's bound to lead to accidents on the battlefield. Hands Fort has already been taken; all I need to do now is wait patiently to meet up with the Earl and just be a bystander on the battlefield." He had decided to play dead for a while.

Or rather, for this period, he was just a bystander.

Chapter 472 Possible Dragon Dou Qi

A moment had passed.

It was already mid-November.

Since their arrival on the mainland in mid-October, the Pioneer Mandate campaign had been ongoing for a month, and the flames of war in the Sardine Bay Area had stretched for thousands of miles.

The Knight Order of the Duchy of Sapphire had been furiously plundering everything, in coordination with the local Mercenary Corps, to divide the land's resource output. They transported goods and people back to the homeland without cease. Liszt's first group of serf ships had already returned to his domain with many goods and had set sail again, with the second group of serf ships departing early.

Also returning with the fleet was Zambrotta, the diplomatic officer of the domain.

"My lord, before I departed, Consultant Goltai and Administrative Officers Isaiah and Blair were earnestly arranging the serfs' living conditions. The knight families who had been taken in were also well settled... The rate of serf attrition wasn't high; we lost fewer than four hundred people."

"A loss of four hundred cannot be considered low. With more careful care, we certainly could have reduced the losses further," Liszt sighed.

His conscience was troubled.

In the trade of serfs, his role was equally unglamorous. Even though he could conceal it by going with the flow, or compensate for it in the future, he still could not justify himself. He had always been a person with a healthy worldview, educated in modern civilization, and faced with the shock of a barbaric, primitive society, his thoughts were in constant turmoil.

He could not possibly be a saint.

When benefits lay before him, driving his instincts with desire, he could only align himself with the nobles, striving for his own share of benefit.

As for revolution, he lacked both the ability and the boldness—in a world ruled by Dragon Knights, where he was just an ordinary person, unable to even light up technical skills, how could he preach the red theories.

It would be better to proceed securely towards becoming a Dragon Knight and look forward to enjoying this spectacular life.

Moreover, the humans of this world were not fundamentally his kindred, so he had no obligation to liberate all mankind.

"Zambrotta, how are things in the domain?"

"Everything in the domain is well, oh, my lord, I almost forgot to mention a huge piece of good news!" Zambrotta suddenly remembered something and excitedly said, "Not long after you set off, the Corn Grass Elf Bug being cared for in the castle started showing some abnormalities, and after unanimous judgment by the town officials and Mr. Carter, it had entered the Fat Pupa Stage."

"Really?"

"Yes, by the time I was about to depart, it had grown quite large and was completely motionless. However, whether it can evolve successfully is hard to say, as we cannot see its internal condition... To prevent Jela from interfering with the evolution of the Corn Grass Bug, Mr. Carter placed it alone in a Jade Box, guarded in turns by the domain's knights."

"It's a pity I'm not by its side to see its luck, but I hope the glory of the knights will look after the domain," Liszt sighed again.

In fact, even if he returned to the domain, there wasn't much he could do.

He could help the Elf Bug collect pheromones to increase the probability of evolution, but whether it succeeded in evolving was entirely up to the Elf Bug itself.

Zambrotta reported on the situation of the Corn Grass Elf Bug before also reviewing the various constructions in the domain.

He then said, "Consultant Goltai and Sir Levis discussed and decided to use the empty ships to transport a great deal of goods for trade to the mainland. The domain also transported a batch of Fresh Flower Soap, Serpent Blood Fruits, high-quality charcoal, pottery, sweets, and other specialties... Additionally, Her Excellency Chris consigned a batch of Magic Potions."

The goods were intended for trade, and every bit of profit mattered.

What pleased Liszt was this batch of Magic Potions; he now had to feed a man and a dragon, the latter of which had a voracious appetite, being a burgeoning Magic Fire Seed.

The burden was too great.

Without a vast amount of magic potions to support him, cultivation was extremely difficult. During this idling period, he had been exploring how to cultivate in conjunction with the Magic Fire Seed. He found that to improve his control over Dou Qi again, he had to first nurture the budding Magic Fire Seed and excrete a large amount of impure magic power.

This kind of impure magic power had peculiar properties that could significantly alter the form of the Dou Qi within his body.

Transforming it into a higher form of Dou Qi.

Initially, he suspected this transformation was the shift from Intermediate Dou Qi to Advanced Dou Qi, but it didn't seem quite right. Or rather, the change in form was another level of alteration, far surpassing the shift from Intermediate to Advanced Dou Qi, which made him suspect that this might be the evolution into "Dragon Dou Qi."

Unfortunately, no one could tell him what Dragon Dou Qi was.

He could only independently explore and gradually piece together some clues, gaining many insights into cultivating with the Magic Fire Seed, and he would soon be able to start a completely new form of cultivation.

"Put someone else in this situation, and they might waste a year trying to figure out the change. But alas, they've come across me. Relying on scientific induction and summary, the changes in Dou Qi cannot escape my keen observation. The taming of the brand-new Dou Qi is just around the corner." A worldview and cognition beyond this world were his greatest talents.

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After successively cooperating in the conquest of Scentcartleaf Stronghold and Hands Fort, Liszt then entered a state of idleness.

In reality, the Coral Island Knights, who had been in the limelight, also started to keep a low profile, no longer capturing castles but occasionally seizing some small mines and materials from small towns. Following behind Marquis Roderick, they recruited some knights and engaged in some material trading.

In the blink of an eye, it was almost December.

After a long half-month of exploration, Liszt finally discovered a brand-new cultivation method, completely mastering the new Dou Qi inside his body.

This Fire Attribute Dou Qi faintly possessed some properties of Fire Dragon Magic Power.

It had stronger incendiary abilities, dissipated more slowly, and when deploying Dou Qi, the power was more formidable. Moreover, with the help of medications, it was easier to break through the total amount of Dou Qi. He genuinely suspected that his Dou Qi was evolving into Dragon Dou Qi—although he didn't know if Dragon Dou Qi was indeed like this.

He circulated the new Dou Qi and unleashed a set of the much more powerful "Fire Dragon Drill".

He summoned the Smoke Mission.

"Complete the mission, reward: one Bloodline Fruit."

"Phew, finally completed the mission. Next, I need to get moving and search for the Bloodline Fruit," Liszt sighed with relief, eager to leave the unnamed castle where they were stationed.

He then checked the new Smoke Mission: "Mission: It has been a month since the first Pioneer Mandate, and with the temperature gradually decreasing, the war between the Steel Ridge Kingdom and the Eagle Kingdom is also reaching its final stages this year. You may choose to end your idleness and patiently await the end of the war. Reward: Unknown."

"Another unknown reward. It seems that New Year's and wars always bring unknown rewards."

The first New Year's unknown reward was Sea Sprite Ake.

The second unknown reward from the Iron Hoof Island campaign was the revival of Dragon Bone.

Both were important rewards, which made him look forward to this time's unknown reward. Now that he could continue to idle, he still decided to devote all his energy to the search for the Bloodline Fruit. Bloodline Fruits were rarely found in human-cultivated areas; they were mostly in forests.

Therefore.

Under the pretense of hunting, he rode the landwalker bird Loki, summoned the Eight Tiny Ones, and led a Knight Squad, heading towards the forests surrounding the Nameless Castle.

Chapter 473 Loki's Battle of Destiny

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After hunting for two consecutive days, with the Eye of Magic Power almost constantly active for 24 hours, Liszt still hadn't found the Bloodline Fruit, which left him feeling deeply frustrated.

"The reward has already been two days past, and the Bloodline Fruit must have already been bred. It can only exist for five minutes... If it was bred within my territory, it might have been eaten by some animal, transforming into a Magical Beast... If it was bred around here, I'm afraid it would have already disappeared."

The Bloodline Fruit has a time limit.

Once ripe, it falls to the ground, and after just five minutes, its magic power will completely dissipate, turning it into a normal piece of fruit.

Feeling disheartened, he continued to hunt.

Even though hope was growing dim, he persisted without giving up. After all, the life of a salted fish didn't require busyness, just counting the days until the Grand Duke announced the end of the Pioneer Mandate - the Duchy of Sapphire had already made a mess of the Sardine Bay Area, tying down a large number of Knight Orders.

Once the winter snows set in, the war wouldn't mean much, as charging through ice and snow was not a good choice.

It was while he was somewhat distracted.

In the field of vision granted by the Eye of Magic Power, a flash of magic radiance suddenly passed by. It wasn't until long after his gaze had left that area that he abruptly awoke, immediately turned Loki's head, and began searching for that pinpoint of magic radiance. Quickly, after crossing a bush, he arrived at the source of the magic radiance.

"Woof, woof!"

"Woof, woof!"

Eight Tiny Ones immediately started barking furiously.

Loki, too, began to "click-clack," "click-clack," as they all discovered the source of the magic power, something of immense value - it was a green fruit, hanging on the branch of a small bush, emitting a strong greyish-green magic radiance.

Clearly, this was the Bloodline Fruit that Liszt had been looking for all along.

Only it wasn't ripe yet.

"Be on guard!" Liszt quickly reacted. "Charles, have the Knight Squad spread out and guard this bush! Protect this bounty I've discovered!"

Charles Trap shouted, "Yes, my Lord!" and then led the Knight Squad to strictly guard the surrounding shrubbery against the possibility of Magical Beasts appearing.

He had seen that strange green fruit.

A tree that shouldn't have borne fruit was sporting such a large one, undoubtedly the Bloodline Fruit, a Bloodline Fruit worth a thousand Gold Coins. A fruit that could alter the bloodline of wild

beasts and Magical Beasts, Lord Liszt's Douson was a Magical Beast that had consumed a Bloodline Fruit.

Unfortunately, the success rate of the Bloodline Fruit wasn't high; otherwise, its value would be measured in Dragon coins.

Anyone who discovers an immature Bloodline Fruit and informs their Lord could receive a large reward. But now that the Lord himself had found one, there was no reward for them; they could only fulfill their duties loyally and protect the Bloodline Fruit from Magical Beast attacks.

"Woof, woof!"

"Click-clack!"

Eight Tiny Ones and Loki kept barking.

Liszt immediately ordered, "Blizzard Beast, silence! Loki, quiet down!"

The authority he wielded in everyday life was fully demonstrated in this moment, as Eight Tiny Ones and Loki all quieted down, but their eyes remained parchedly fixed on the Bloodline Fruit.

Taking advantage of the interval before the Bloodline Fruit ripened.

Liszt quickly pondered whom to give it to: "The last time I found a Bloodline Fruit, it was a golden one, seemingly leaning towards the Earth Attribute; this time, it's a green fruit, with greyish-green magic power, seemingly leaning towards the Wind Attribute."

The Bloodline Fruit doesn't have a strict attribute distinction, it is of a chaotic attribute, but judging from the color presentation, there is still some tendency.

Eight Tiny Ones all have the Earth Attribute, only Loki has the Wind Attribute.

Exhaling a breath of turbid air, he had made his decision on who would receive the Bloodline Fruit: "Give it to Loki, then. The Eight Tiny Ones are a united front, favoring one means slighting another,

better not to give to any... If Loki consumes the Bloodline Fruit and by chance turns into an Intermediate Dragon Beast, wouldn't that be an enormous windfall?"

So.

He directly issued an order: "Blizzard Beast, forbear from eating!"

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"Woof woof!" the Eight Tiny Ones expressed their dissatisfaction.

Liszt glared, "Shut up, or I'll let Douson teach you a lesson!"

Only then did the Eight Tiny Ones whine softly, not daring to voice their complaints again. They had grown up under Liszt's "carrot and stick" dog training policy and had long since learned not to challenge Liszt's authority—especially since their most feared father, Douson, always stood by Liszt's side.

Stepping off Loki's back, Liszt patted its head as it seemed anxious, "Once it's ripe, you can eat it."

Loki seemed to understand and crowed loudly, "Gada!"

Five minutes later.

A rich fragrance emanated from the Bloodline Fruit, signaling that it was close to maturation. Through the Eye of Magic, one could also see that the magic power inside it was becoming increasingly concentrated, almost to the point of dripping.

Just at that moment.

The knights on perimeter alert suddenly sent out a warning signal, "Magical Beasts! A large pack of Wind Blade Wolves, at least twenty!"

Liszt raised an eyebrow, "Eight Tiny Ones, get ready for battle. Hunt down all the Wind Blade Wolves!" He had been running short on Magical Beast Meat lately and was actually hoping for some beasts to deliver themselves as a feast. Indeed, a group of low-level Magical Beasts known as Wind Blade Wolves, common throughout the forests of the continent, started a benevolent act.

Instantly, the fur of the Eight Tiny Ones bristled in readiness to attack the Wind Blade Wolves—directing the fury of being unable to eat the Bloodline Fruit towards the wolves.

In the blink of an eye.

The battle commenced, with the Wind Blade Wolves attracted by the Bloodline Fruit and charging ferociously. Fueled by rage, the Eight Tiny Ones pounced to kill. The Intermediate Magical Beasts bullying the low-level beasts was almost like child's play. In just a brief encounter, seven Wind Blade Wolves had their throats locked in the jaws of the Blizzard Beasts, with only one agile enough to escape, but it couldn't evade the Rock Spikes bursting from the ground.

In such a scene.

With the Eight Tiny Ones leading the charge and the Earth Knights providing support, there was no need for Liszt to pay attention.

He was waiting for the Bloodline Fruit to mature.

Loki also circled around the bush anxiously, knowing that the Bloodline Fruit was about to ripen and understanding this was an opportunity to change its destiny.

Suddenly.

Fluttering sounds came from the sky.

Liszt looked up to see a group of bats shimmering with Magic Radiance approaching, "Damn, Black Bats! A group of Dark Attribute low-level Magical Beasts capable of casting the Dark magic 'Decay'!" This kind of Dark magic seemed to work by draining the moisture from objects, accelerating their decomposition.

The Magic Books had records of commoners encountering Black Bat attacks, quickly withering away into desiccated corpses.

He quickly drew the Swift Shadow Bow and aimed his arrows, launching fierce strikes at the Black Bats. However, the Black Bats were agile, seemingly equipped with ultrasonic positioning, enabling them to dodge arrows quickly. It often took Liszt three volleys of nine arrows to bring down a single Black Bat.

It was nowhere near enough to clean up the group of more than twenty or thirty Black Bats in a short time.

During the battle, the enticing scent of the Bloodline Fruit intensified to its peak, having ripened. The Black Bats dived madly at the Bloodline Fruit, vying for the precious treasure.

Liszt had reached his maximum firing speed, but still, he could not stop them.

"We're doomed!"

"The Bloodline Fruit is going to be snatched by these beasts!" As a Black Bat closed in on the Bloodline Fruit, Liszt couldn't help but grind his teeth in anger.

However.

Loki, guarding nearby, suddenly flapped its wings, charging at the Black Bat swarm like a brave warrior. Tendrils of blue magic power swirled around it, scattering the Black Bats. With the speed of lightning, it caught the Bloodline Fruit mid-air, after which a leap avoided the Black Bats' retaliatory Decay spell.

"Gada!"

Loki, victorious in the battle for destiny, raced towards Liszt. Liszt swiftly mounted Loki and drew the Sky-Cleaving Greatsword, executing an Inferno Slash.

A fiery rain of attacks descended upon the Black Bat swarm, dispersing them. In combination with Loki's perfect airborne leap, they began to clear out these Black Bats.

"They're all mine, none of you are getting away!"

Chapter 474 Only I Can Rob You

The strength of low-level magical beasts was not weak, especially the flying low-level magical beasts; they could easily take on an Earth Knight in single combat. Unfortunately for this group of Black Bats, they encountered Li Si Te, who was one of the elite Earth Knights even among those who relied heavily on drugs.

He was even a knight whose Dou Qi was transforming towards "Dragon Dou Qi."

Furthermore, the Landwalker Bird he rode, when executing the Light Body Skill, could leap to astonishing heights, scattering the group of Black Bats completely. One after another, they were cleaved by the Sky-Cleaving Greatsword and fell to the ground; in a moment, twelve Black Bats lay dead. By then, the remaining Black Bats had already fled far away, beyond reach.

"Damn, the prey that was in my mouth slipped away!"

Out of the group of twenty or thirty Black Bats, not even half were left behind.

He quickly switched to the Swift Shadow Bow, attempting to shoot down one or two more, but the Black Bats, equipped with ultrasonic location, were least afraid of arrows; not a single one was hit.

Counting the three Black Bats he had shot before the Bloodline Fruit matured, he picked up a total of fifteen Black Bat corpses—as large as piglets, they could provide quite a bit of Magical Beast Meat, and many scraps suitable for Magicians to create Magic Arrays. A single one was worth at least ten Gold Coins.

Fifteen amounted to one hundred and fifty Gold Coins, a considerable profit akin to the ransom of five Earth Knights.

The combat in the jungle was also over; eight juvenile Blizzard Beasts, with the strong bloodline and bodies of Intermediate Magical Beasts, had nearly annihilated the twenty-odd Wind Blade Wolves that had invaded. Only three Wind Blade Wolves managed to escape, with the remaining eighteen left behind.

This was close to two hundred Gold Coins in earnings.

"Gather all the Black Bats and Wind Blade Wolves' corpses, and allocate one Black Bat and two Wind Blade Wolves for tonight's extra meal for the Knight Squad."

"Thank you, my lord!" Charles and the other knights replied with great excitement.

Having not exerted much effort, they were indeed happy to enjoy delicious Magical Beast Meat. The group quickly returned, laden with spoils, busying themselves in sorting out the non-edible materials and the edible Magical Beast Meat, preparing for the evening feast.

Li Si Te did not participate.

He was observing Loki, who had eaten the Bloodline Fruit.

This Landwalker Bird was extremely excited, and unlike Douson, who had fallen straight to sleep after ingesting the Bloodline Fruit, it had no intention of sleeping but kept hopping excitedly. Using the Eye of Magic, he could see that the Magic Power within it was boiling.

Like water awaiting the boil.

"Loki needs to release some energy, so I might as well make the effort and go a little wild with it to help process the powerful effect of the Bloodline Fruit," Liszt decided. He mounted the Landwalker Bird and began to race and leap across the wilderness.

Loki was too excited to stop its feet.

Liszt just gripped its neck, but his thoughts drifted elsewhere, "The five-minute maturation time of the Bloodline Fruit is indeed too brief. Once contested by magical beasts, there's no time to organize a hunting operation properly. I should have stayed by the Bloodline Fruit myself, ready to pick it as soon as it matured."

Then he could distribute it to his own pets and mounts, which would be safer than letting Loki eat the Bloodline Fruit on its own.

"Right, although the Bloodline Fruit starts to lose Magic Power once it matures, there's still a five-minute window. If I can store it in the Gemstone Space the moment it's ripe, could I preserve its medicinal effect? Then I can calmly allocate it to the one I most want to give it to," he thought.

The one he most wanted to give it to had an excellent candidate—Earth Matron.

Once Earth Matron broke through the restrictions of her bloodline and became a Blizzard Beast, he would have a complete Blizzard Beast Legion. Douson and Earth Matron could continuously produce offspring, and even if the offspring weren't as exceptional as them, they would definitely be stronger than the low-level magical beasts, the Fierce Earth Dogs, from before.

Thinking of this, he immediately felt regret so strong it was like a toothache, "I thought I was so cunning, why did I forget about my Space Gem at such a critical moment?"

A single, small Bloodline Fruit could potentially represent the loss of an entire Blizzard Beast Legion.

"Next time I get a Bloodline Fruit, I must store it in the Gemstone Space to see if it continues to lose Magic Power... Logically, it shouldn't, as the Gemstone Space is formed by the Magic Power of the Formless Dragon, definitely the most miraculous and incredible gemstone."

What was done was done, and regrets were useless now.

He could only hope that the next Smoke Mission would continue to reward Bloodline Fruits or that he could obtain them through other channels—the price of one thousand Gold Coins was still acceptable compared to the Blizzard Beast Legion.

His thoughts were still soaring.

Loki was still excitedly hopping around.

After more than an hour of continuous bouncing that almost made Liszt vomit, Loki finally exhausted all its strength and returned to its nest in Nameless Castle to rest.

Feet on the ground.

Liszt steadied his still wobbling body and used the Eye of Magic to observe the Magic Power within Loki's body once more. The blue Magic Power was a bit thicker, no longer boiling, but slowly seeping into its body. This was the medicinal effect of the Bloodline Fruit settling, which would continuously improve its bloodline over the coming period.

"I hope you can become an Intermediate Dragon Beast soon."

After personally feeding it grains and fruits, Liszt then left.

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The banquet.

The Magical Beast Meat from Black Bats and Wind Blade Wolves made the Knights eat with passionate exuberance.

This period of leisure was nothing like being on the battlefield—only the Knights of Coral Island, relying on the supplies captured from Scentcartleaf Stronghold, could enjoy such a delightful life. Other Knight Orders were still constantly plundering, trying to obtain more wartime merit and supplies through the Pioneer Mandate.

"The Grand Duke has ridden the Sapphire Dragon to the war front to discuss a retreat with the Dragon Knights of the Steel Ridge Kingdom," Viscount Jonas mentioned in passing when he stopped by Nameless Castle after raiding a small city.

Among the Knights of Coral Island, only Viscount Jonas and his Knight Order were still fervently on the move—having suffered heavy losses in the battle of Iron Hoof Island, he took this opportunity to make up for the loss.

"The Grand Duke riding a dragon? Has he really become a Dragon Knight?"

"I don't know, that's what I heard from others."

Jonas wasn't sure.

Liszt left Nameless Castle and went to ask his father.

Li Weiliam's answer was also somewhat vague, "There is a very good chance, yes, but the Grand Duke has not revealed his current status to us. His Sapphire Dragon is also somewhat different; the broken parts of its body have not healed and still look... quite ferocious."

Half rotten, half intact.

This was the deep impression left on Liszt when he first saw the Sapphire Dragon; he didn't expect that after so long, the Sapphire was still in such dire straits.

It seemed the surprise attack from the Goat Assembly had left the Sapphire Dragon with irreparable injuries.

Li Weiliam quickly added another conjecture, "Now that the Grand Duke dares to ride the Sapphire Dragon out, it indicates the dragon should be alright. Those Continental Landlords who want to take advantage of the turmoil within our Kingdom probably need to extinguish their thoughts... We can rob them, but they can't rob us."

A Grand Duchy protected by Dragon Knights was indeed difficult to conquer. The Dragon Knights of all countries, as the ultimate deterrent force, were monitored by enemy forces, making it hard to go on an expedition easily.

Moreover, mainland countries generally did not manufacture large sailing ships, leaving Knight Orders without the capability to sail the high seas.

Still, Liszt was a bit speechless—was it really okay to bluntly state, "I can rob you, but you cannot rob me" like this?

Regardless.

Three days later, on December 6th, the Grand Duke returned from the front line meeting and officially announced the end of this year's Pioneer Mandate; it was time to go home.

Chapter 475 The Rebirth of Dou Qi

Arriving with nearly a thousand knights, and leaving with one thousand five hundred, the scale of the Coral Island Knights had grown like this for the first time during the Pioneer Mandate war.

Liszt himself had incorporated nearly sixty Earth Knights, including ten Elite Earth Knights.

The total number of Earth Knights in the territory had increased to seventy-nine, enough to form six knight squads with some to spare. Supporting so many knights was a significant burden for Black Horse Island, which was still in its development phase, but the construction of the territory also inevitably depended on the knights, since they were the class that held knowledge.

Although Liszt was vigorously training knights from within his own territory, he still relied on the help of knights who had come over during the transition period.

The development and construction were never things that could be achieved with just a snap of the fingers.

When the last batch of supplies and serfs were loaded onto the ships, and the knights began to lead their horses on board in succession, Liszt, after guiding Douson and the Eight Tiny Ones into the ship's cabin, also led the Landwalker bird Loki aboard, its breathing unsteady and its expression listless—the effects of the Bloodline Fruit were showing, transforming its bloodline.

Half an hour later.

The last sailboat left the harbor and headed towards the azure sea.

The Pioneer Mandate of the year 152 officially ended.

Standing at the bow and watching the coastline gradually fade away, Liszt was full of anticipation, waiting to return to his territory to flex his muscles and build a new outlook.

At this moment.

He summoned the Smoke Mission.

With the war over, the Serpent Script changed, "Complete the mission, reward: the rebirth of Dou Qi."

"Hmm?" Liszt's gaze sharpened, surprised by the content of the reward, "The rebirth of Dou Qi, what does that mean? I remember that the rewards about Dou Qi included the sublimation of Dou Qi, which helped me advance to Earth Knight; and the bottleneck of Dou Qi, which helped me reach Elite Earth Knight."

Now, the rebirth of Dou Qi was also awarded.

"Is it saying that my Dou Qi, because of the germination of the Magic Fire Seed, is gradually transitioning to 'Dragon Dou Qi'; or does it mean that in the process of cultivating with the Magic Fire Seed, I've undergone a quantitative change leading to a qualitative leap, advancing towards Advanced Dou Qi?" He pondered, sensing the abundant Dou Qi within him.

No matter which result it was.

This was a significant breakthrough in his personal strength.

As a noble scion, he had gained considerable cultivation experience, whether from his father Li Weiliam or his maternal grandfather Marquis Merlin.

He had a deep understanding of the process of ascending from Intermediate Dou Qi to Advanced Dou Qi.

Dou Qi, as a form of Magic Power, is referred to as "Qi" precisely because of its nature at the stage of Advanced Dou Qi.

Low-Level Dou Qi is an aggregation of nutrients within the body, chaotic with no attribute, and after cultivation, one only becomes an Apprentice Knight with no significant breakthrough in strength; Intermediate Dou Qi is Dou Qi that displays a change in properties, and with it, one can traverse the Earth, hence the title of Earth Knight.

Similarly, the reason why a Sky Knight is called a Sky Knight is that they can soar into the sky.

What they rely on is the nature of Advanced Dou Qi—light as air, which can support the body, almost as if merging with the sky. At the stage of Advanced Dou Qi, it truly demonstrates the properties of "Qi", distinctly set apart from Magic Power and showing even more significant changes in properties.

High-level Water Attributed Dou Qi is like a stream of water flowing through the meridians; High-level Wind Attribute Dou Qi is like a mass of wind constantly cleansing the meridians.

Similarly.

High-level Fire Attribute Dou Qi should be like a flame that continuously spreads throughout the meridians.

Paired with an Advanced Dou Qi Manual, one can fully unleash the entire power of Advanced Dou Qi, and even cause changes in the weather during battles.

A battle between a Water Attribute Sky Knight and a Thunder Attribute Sky Knight would definitely bring thunder, lightning, and pouring rain in that area.

"No matter whether this rebirth of Dou Qi turns out to be Dragon Dou Qi or becomes Advanced Dou Qi, I am filled with anticipation!"

"Let's get started quickly!"

Amid anticipation, the smoke before his eyes transformed.

New Serpent Script emerged: "Mission: 17,000 new serfs have arrived, your territory now has 22,300 citizens. The existing Fresh Flower Town and Harbor Town can no longer accommodate them, please plan new towns for the resettlement of your citizens. Reward: Peas that produce rhizobia."

The number of serfs had soared.

Setting up new towns was a necessary step.

Li Si Te would have planned this way even without the Smoke Mission's reminder, and he was delighted at the reward—the peas that produce rhizobia.

Rhizobia, undoubtedly, were important agricultural auxiliary microorganisms. After forming nodules with leguminous plants, they could symbiotically fix nitrogen, greatly enhancing the nitrogen fertilizer required by plants and aiding in increased crop yields. Li Si Te had planted many soybeans and peas on Black Horse Island, hoping to use them to produce rhizobia to improve soil fertility.

However, the results seemed to be underwhelming. Many of the sprouting soybeans and peas grew weakly. When pulled out, their roots had few nodules.

Clearly, most leguminous plants had not been infected with rhizobia.

Li Si Te remembered that on Earth, the cultivation of leguminous crops required artificial inoculation with rhizobia. What he could do was collect a small amount of rhizobia and mix it with the bean seeds. It was hard to guarantee that inoculation would occur—and the outcome proved they had hardly been inoculated.

The rhizobia in the natural ecosystem were still too scarce.

"With peas capable of producing rhizobia, I believe we can gather enough rhizobia strains, and then promote artificial inoculation throughout the territory!"

...

Returning to Coral Island from the mainland required about ten days of sailing.

During this time, Li Si Te kept taking potions and eating meat, tirelessly training. Finally, on the third day of the voyage, he sensed a brand-new change in his Dou Qi.

Previously, because it had been contaminated by the impure Magic Power excreted by the Magic Fire Seed, his Dou Qi had already undergone one evolution, becoming a new Intermediate Fire Attribute Dou Qi—more powerful, less dissipative, with deeper qualities, allowing for faster breakthroughs. He thought he had already attained Dragon Dou Qi.

But he felt that was unlikely. The power of Dragon Dou Qi should not be limited to this. Moreover, since the Magic Fire Seed had not yet nurtured a Fire Dragon, how could he have Dragon Dou Qi already?

It could only be considered special Intermediate Dou Qi.

And now, the special Intermediate Dou Qi was undergoing another change, as if it was a liquid sublimating into gas. Yet, the Dou Qi didn't expand; instead, it became lighter and more agile. As it circulated through his meridians, it gave him the sensation that he was beginning to ride the clouds and mist.

It was as if the Dou Qi had become a flame.

Burning along his meridians, there was no sensation of scorching pain, only relief and comfort.

"This is... the process of Intermediate Dou Qi gradually evolving into Advanced Dou Qi. It looks like I'm beginning to break away from the constraints of an Earth Knight, advancing towards becoming a Sky Knight!"

It should have been a moment to tremble with excitement, but he had anticipated this.

So at this moment, his mind was incredibly calm.

He continued to focus on his training, constantly circulating his Dou Qi to accelerate this transformation—for many Elite Earth Knights, evolving from Intermediate Dou Qi to Advanced Dou Qi required a high unity of body, energy, and spirit, constantly striking, breaking through for a glimmer of a chance to touch the sky.

However, as he calmly trained, the transformation of his Dou Qi naturally took its course, encountering no resistance whatsoever.

"Is my talent so exceptional that no barriers to advancement exist? It's a bit too self-congratulatory. A more likely possibility is that my Dou Qi was changed by the Magic Fire Seed, resulting in the disappearance of barriers to advancement... After all, I can now be considered a reserve Dragon Knight!"

He opened his eyes abruptly, his body slightly undulating with the rocking of the ship.

He felt that by merely circulating the Dou Qi that was changing, his body could take flight, a wondrous sensation.

"Once the voyage ends, this change will also be complete. By then, I will have truly become a Sky Knight! A seventeen-year-old Sky Knight, everyone will be astonished! Although there is still a gap from the sixteen-year-old Sky Knight candidate for Dragon Knight, it's not far off!"

With that thought, he could no longer contain himself.

All his joy and pride were released with his laughter: "Hahahaha!"

Chapter 476 The Sword Challenge Between Father and Son

The joyful laughter startled the Earl.

He walked over and knocked on Liszt's door, "What are you laughing at?"

"I'll be flying soon, Father," Liszt did not intend to hide anything, as a Sky Knight, he need not be too cautious.

Even if envied by others, he had enough strength to protect himself.

In the Duchy of Sapphire, unless the Grand Duke himself took action against him riding a dragon, being a Sky Knight as well, if he couldn't win, couldn't he still escape—fleeing into the sea and letting the Sea Sprite Ake provide cover, no one could catch him.

"Flying?" The Earl was momentarily at a loss.

"Yes, aerial flying!"

"You mean a Sky Knight?"

"Hmm."

Then.

There was a long silence.

Eventually, the Earl spoke first, "Liszt, are you sure you have already started advancing to Sky Knight? You became an Earth Knight only after coming of age, an Elite Earth Knight six months later, and now, not even a year has passed, you want to advance to Sky Knight? I hope you're not joking."

"Father, although I am not serious, I am not one to joke," Liszt smiled slightly, "I have the Sky Knight training experience from you and Grandpa, always carrying Grandpa's 'Sword Saint's Chronicles,' I know my current state."

"What does it feel like, tell me."

"My Dou Qi is changing, as if it sublimates from liquid to gas, as if the calm Dou Qi suddenly began to burn, enveloping me with strength, and greatly enhancing the power of my combat skills!"

"Come with me, to the deck, I will personally test your fighting ability!" The Earl was still somewhat incredulous, preparing to personally probe, "I haven't felt the pressure that a Sky Knight should have from you, and the rate at which your Dou Qi dissipates is far from the Sky Knight standard."

Of course, it did not reach that standard.

One reason was that Liszt had made some progress practicing 'Breath Decay,' at least halving the Dou Qi depletion rate.

Another reason was that his Dou Qi had been changed by the Magic Fire Seed, further slowing down the rate of dissipation, even the speed at which the released Dou Qi techniques dissipated was greatly reduced—of course, it was still too far from the nearly permanent etching of Fire Dragon Magic Power, at this point it could at best be called "Primary Dragon Dou Qi."

Perhaps with the continuous nurturing of the Magic Fire Seed, it could evolve into Low-Level, Intermediate, Advanced, Super, and Ultimate Dragon Dou Qi, and so on.

Therefore.

In terms of aura, Liszt gave off a harmless impression, but he harbored a ferocious Dou Qi within his body that only he knew about.

The Primary Dragon Dou Qi that imbued the Fire Attribute Dou Qi was restrained like magma waiting to erupt.

...

Standing on the deck.

Liszt held his sword in both hands, gazing straight ahead with a serious expression, "Father, don't underestimate me. When I unleash my strength, even I cannot measure it." Facing a Sky Knight of the Sword Saint Level, he didn't plan on holding back any strength and was ready to unleash it all.

"I should be admonishing you not to be too arrogant, but without absolute pressure, you probably can't comprehend, so let's fight it out!"

Li Weiliam drew his longsword.

The battle was on the verge of erupting.

On the Tulip, the nobles who heard the commotion came out of their cabins one after another, watching the fight. They were somewhat confused and didn't understand why the Earl and Liszt were about to fight.

"What's going on?"

"It seems that Viscount Liszt has challenged the Earl."

"Is the Earl probably intending to teach Viscount Liszt about training?"

Viscount Jonas raised his eyebrows and whispered to Viscount Trik who had arrived, "My hunch wasn't wrong, Viscount Liszt's strength has improved rapidly, and he dares to challenge the Earl now."

"The gap between an Elite Earth Knight and a Sky Knight seems hard to bridge."

"I heard that in the battle at Hands Fort, Viscount Liszt once crossed swords with Viscount Fredo, known as the Sprinting Sword Saint. It seems that the fight ended in a draw; the Sprinting Sword Saint simply couldn't keep up with Viscount Liszt riding a Landwalker Bird."

"But this time it's a sword fight."

...

Li Si Te paid no attention to the whispers of the crowd around him.

His body was extremely excited, as this was his first time engaging in a sword fight with a Sky Knight—knights preferred to use longswords in close combat, hence such encounters were known as sword fights. He had crossed swords with various Earth Knights and with the Sky-Cleaving Greatsword had killed several Elite Earth Knights.

But when it came to Sky Knights, he had only ever engaged in archery sneak attacks and long-range kiting, never daring to face them head-on.

Now.

A breakthrough was imminent.

Finally, he could face a Sky Knight head-on.

Flame-like Dou Qi thrummed through his body, circulating through his meridians. By now, his Dou Qi should be referred to as "Intermediate Fire Attribute Primary Dragon Dou Qi."

Suddenly, he raised the Sky-Cleaving Greatsword and executed a Fire Dragon Assault out of nowhere.

The attack targeted Li Weiliam.

Li Weiliam looked relaxed as he raised his sword to meet the attack, his longsword, imbued with Advanced Water Attribute Dou Qi, effortlessly blocked Liszt's sword move.

And with ease, he counterthrust, the Dou Qi exploding forth, setting off a cascade of water vapor.

Facing Li Weiliam's formidable counterattack, Liszt, who had taken the initiative to strike, had to quickly switch to defensive mode. His longsword danced swiftly, furious Dou Qi continuously pouring in, dissipating the Water Attribute Dou Qi that was assailing him.

His actions were slightly frantic, and it took several strokes before he managed to barely neutralize Li Weiliam's casual counterattack.

Just this one round of testing made him realize the vast gap between himself and a Sky Knight—and it wasn't surprising since Li Weiliam was one of the strongest Sky Knights at the Sword Saint Level.

He composed his flustered emotions.

His mind rapidly cooled, casting aside all extraneous thoughts, and he attacked the Earl with all his might. His Dou Qi, which seemed to cost him nothing, gushed forth, aligning with sword techniques from the Dou Qi Manuscript and launching a frenzied attack. Such aggressive offensive maneuvers practically abandon his own defense, which was unnecessary against Li Weiliam.

After all, this was a trial of strength, not a true combat exercise.

Li Weiliam remained on the defensive, not taking the offensive.

Liszt became more unleashed as the battle progressed, his Dou Qi beginning to weave together cohesively, making rapid progress in his sword fighting skills. Moreover, his attacking stamina far exceeded that of your average Elite Earth Knight, and the speed at which his Dou Qi dissipated was very slow. The aura he created was gradually matching the Earl's surging Water Attribute Dou Qi.

"Heart of the Fire Dragon Drill!"

With a sudden inspiration, he transformed into a fire dragon and surged forward. His Dou Qi erupted all around him, forming a whirlwind-like flame drill head, bombarding Li Weiliam.

The Earl, who had been as stable as Mount Tai, couldn't help but flash a look of surprise at such a move and then retreated to dodge. But before he could clear the path, the fiercely attacking Liszt made a swift turn, charging at him again. The Dou Qi transformed into roaring flames, not falling behind at all.

This spurred amazement in him yet again—Intermediate Dou Qi was actually clashing with Advanced Dou Qi!

And as the fight went on, he noticed that Liszt's condition hardly diminished, a level of endurance that was difficult to find among Earth Knights.

"Is he really about to advance to Sky Knight?"

Caught off guard for a split second, when he snapped back to attention, Liszt was unleashing another Ultimate Mystery Strike, turning his sword into a sky full of fire rain, assailing him. With such a wide area of attack, there was virtually no space to dodge, and likewise, this rain of fire, created from his Dou Qi, was not dispersed by his Water Attribute Dou Qi.

It was a confrontation befitting Advanced Dou Qi.

Forced to fight back with full force, he unleashed a fierce Advanced Dou Qi secret technique, his Dou Qi transforming into a devastating tidal wave to meet the sky of fire rain.

Pffft!

Whoosh!

In a matter of moments, flame and mist created a dynamic balance, a clear delineation of red and blue between the two of them.

At this moment.

Liszt, the Elite Earth Knight fueled by potions, stood up against Li Weiliam, a Sky Knight of the Sword Saint Level.

Chapter 477 The Journey is the Stars and the Sea

Red and blue Dou Qi.

Continuously striking.

The onlookers were left agape; this was clearly a duel between two Sky Knights, rather than the expected situation between an Earth Knight and a Sky Knight.

"Am I seeing things?"

"The sword combat strength of Viscount Liszt is terrifying to this extent!"

"With such fierce attacking power, can an Earth Knight achieve this?"

"Such surging Fire Attribute Dou Qi, inconceivable."

"Formidable!"

Everyone exclaimed at that moment, all knights seasoned with broad experience, having fought countless battles on the battlefield, they were well aware of the gap between the sky and the earth.

It was an absolutely insurmountable ravine.

But Liszt forged a bridge across it with sheer force, transforming the impassable gulf into a thoroughfare, achieving an unexpected stance of equal confrontation.

Unfortunately.

No sooner had the cries of astonishment fallen silent.

Than the scene drastically changed in an instant; the balance that had been maintained for less than ten seconds collapsed as Liszt's Dou Qi could no longer hold up and was engulfed by a blue and white mist of vapor.

There was a clang of metal against metal.

An overwhelming force struck, involuntarily making him release his longsword, stepping back six paces, nearly tumbling over the ship's railing into the sea. By grasping the railing just in time, he stabilized his body.

"Huff!"

After exhaling a breath of turbid air and wiping the sweat from his forehead, he deeply understood the gap between himself and the Sword Saint—if Li Weiliang got serious, his burst of combat power was something he couldn't even withstand a single move against.

But for the Sword Saint to kill him in one move was almost impossible.

He could still hold out for two or three more moves before being slain.

If it were an average-level Sky Knight, he might be able to resist head-on, sustaining about a dozen or twenty rounds: "Without ascending to a Sky Knight and the ability of Soaring Flash, it's very difficult to contend with a Sky Knight... Intermediate Fire Attribute Primary Dragon Dou Qi, no matter how resounding the name, is still just Intermediate Dou Qi.

He felt some disappointment in his current strength; the "Dragon Dou Qi" offered only a limited boost to his power.

However.

Unbeknownst to him, his performance had already astonished the onlookers.

Even Li Weiliam, who was retracting his longsword, looked at him with a highly complex expression. As an almost two-decade-old veteran Sky Knight, he was undoubtedly clear about his own strength. Yet today, an Earth Knight had given him a feeling of "meeting an equal."

And it was his own seventeen-year-old son!

Even if it was just a temporary moment of equal footing, it was enough to astonish him, almost to the point of disbelief.

He turned and addressed the surrounding onlookers, "Alright, disperse now, everyone go back. Don't crowd the deck, let the workers repair the damaged planking." The battle wasn't heart-stopping, but it had still caused extensive damage to the deck. The deck, crafted from rockwood, couldn't withstand the aftermath of their exchange.

He dismissed the crowd.

Li Weiliam turned to Liszt, who seemed a bit disheartened, and said, "Come with me to the cabin."

In the cabin, the Retainer Knights brought two cups of coffee. Li Weiliam took a sip and then scrutinized Liszt, "You're right, your strength truly cannot be underestimated. If it had been me twenty years ago, just after being promoted to a Sky Knight, a moment of carelessness might even have resulted in my defeat by you."

"I thought I was strong, but I didn't expect there to be such a big difference between me and the Sky Knight," Liszt shook his head.

What he meant was actually his dissatisfaction with the "Dragon Dou Qi."

However, to Li Weiliam's ears, it sounded different, "You shouldn't think that way. You are in the process of being promoted, but you haven't succeeded yet; you are still just an Elite Earth Knight. Being able to wield such powerful combat ability is already an impressive feat."

"I understand," Liszt replied, "I just thought I would be a bit more of a genius."

The Earl was taken aback.

There was an illusion of being blindsided, "How much more of a genius do you want to be? Being promoted to a Sky Knight at the age of sixteen and becoming a candidate for the Dragon Knight of the Continental Kingdom? In fact, your performance doesn't fall short of those candidates at all. The leap from an Earth Knight to a Sky Knight has taken you less than two years!"

He seemed indignant, "Do you know that in over forty years of my life, I have never heard of such a feat!"

Liszt wanted to say something.

But the Earl gave him no chance to interject, "Even a seventeen-year-old Sky Knight, I have not heard of such a case in the history of the Duchy of Sapphire!"

"Actually, geniuses do exist. The grandson of Marquis of the Bull is one such genius."

"Oh?"

"The grandson of Marquis of the Bull, Andre Sapphire, could forge Mithril Armor at the age of twelve, which shows his cultivation in Dou Qi is very strong. If his talent continues, becoming a Sky Knight by sixteen will not be difficult, and he might even become a candidate for Dragon Knight."

Praised so highly by the Earl, Liszt felt somewhat embarrassed and shifted the topic to the Marquis of Bull.

The Marquis of Bull had been taken by the Grand Duke, and his fate was unknown. His son had died in battle, but his grandson and his close confidants had left Iron Hoof Island early and disappeared without a trace. Even the Grand Magicians of the Goat Assembly were now clueless about their whereabouts.

The assassination incident involving the Sapphire Dragon came suddenly, escalated quickly, but its conclusion remained a mystery.

"How do you know this?"

"I once took a set of Mithril Armor from the study of Marquis of the Bull at Juniper Castle. It was engraved with the phrase—'Iron Knight Andre Sapphire, in the autumn of the year 149, completed the creation of the first set of Mithril Armor, a gift to my grandfather.'"

The Earl paused to ponder, "I know about Andre; indeed he was twelve in the year 149. A twelve-year-old Iron Knight is indeed a genius, nearly equal in performance to you... Perhaps one day he will pose a threat to the Sapphire Family, but with the Grand Duke riding the dragon to protect us, there is no need for us to worry."

"I am not worried. No matter what happens in the Duchy of Sapphire, the strength I cultivate on my own is the foundation for standing in this world," Liszt responded.

"The fact that you can think this way proves you have indeed matured," the Earl commented.

The subject did not linger on the Marquis of Bull for long, and soon the attention returned to Liszt, with the Earl making a detailed inquiry into the state of Liszt's Dou Qi. They reached the same conclusion that Liszt indeed was in the process of being promoted to a Sky Knight, and there were indeed no barriers in his way.

"Such a smooth promotion process, Liszt, even I'm starting to be envious. When I was promoted to Sky Knight, it took a whole month, and I don't know how many magic potions and much effort it took to break through the barriers between Intermediate and Advanced Dou Qi to achieve success," said the Earl.

"Perhaps I'm standing on the shoulders of giants, with your cultivation experiences making it more comfortable for me," Liszt stated.

"I prefer to believe it's the favor of Knight's Glory. Indeed, you are the Son of Glory, the pride of the Tulip Family," the Earl patted his shoulder with an increasingly gentle tone, "Your future is destined to be more splendid than I imagined, and I hope to see the day you surpass me."

Such an emotional, warm moment.

Made Liszt somewhat uncomfortable as he found it hard to immerse himself in father-son affection. So after struggling for a while, he simply uttered, "It won't be long, after all, 'my quest lies in the stars and the sea.'"

Chapter 478 Soaring into the Blue Sky and White Clouds

After his battle with the Earl, the news that Liszt was soon to be promoted to a Sky Knight quickly spread among the Tulip Fleet. Jonas, Trick, and others also directly inquired with Liszt and received an affirmative response.

"It's incredible, Viscount Liszt, you are ahead of all of us,"

"I am merely one step ahead," replied Liszt.

"Viscount Liszt, I am destined never to become a Sky Knight in this lifetime, perhaps this is the difference in our bloodlines. You have inherited the noble lineage of both the Earl and Marquis Merlin,"

"I believe so too, the family has provided me with the foundation, and I have utilized all my talents," he said.

The flattery was dealt with in such a manner.

Putting aside his pride, Liszt continued to immerse himself in his training. The reserves of Magic Potions were running low, but fortunately, the Earl understood his predicament and sent him a batch of Magic Potions made from the Black Tulip—of course, this was not for free; they were not given as gifts.

Now, he was not one to refuse anything. Possessing the burgeoning Magic Fire Seed, any amount of Magic Potion could be drained by the Magic Fire Seed located at his heart.

The meat of the hunted Wind Blade Wolves and the Black Bat Beasts was also consumed in large quantities. Together with the milk powder brewed and the not-so-abundant food left in the Gemstone Space, it was just enough to keep up with his nutritional needs. The amount of food he consumed now was more than what two Dousons would eat.

In terms of quality, he ate better than the entire Blizzard Beast Squad.

"Maintaining a Sky Knight isn't difficult, but to sustain a Dragon... I cannot even imagine how much nutrition will be needed once the Magic Fire Seed further germinates!"

Fortunately, those were problems to be considered later. For now, he could still afford to sustain himself.

As his Dou Qi continued to change, and while sailing to Iron Hoof Island to resupply, he was on the verge of completing the transformation, with his Intermediate Dou Qi about to become Advanced Dou Qi. Every time he trained on the deck, he felt as if he were about to take flight, ready to soar into the high skies at any moment.

But he was still one step shy.

"What exactly does being a Sky Knight feel like?" his Personal Guard, the Black Dragon Wraith, and the Light System Mage Paris, were very curious.

"I haven't reached it yet, so I cannot fully elucidate the realm of a Sky Knight. But the feeling of being able to fly as a Sky Knight is very wonderful," Liszt said as he stepped onto the ground of the Port of Bull Hoof City, feeling a sense of homecoming.

He had set off at the beginning of October and was returning home in mid-December. The war that lasted over two months brought about many sentiments of missed times and changed people.

"I truly wish I could cultivate Dou Qi. I also aspire to the sky," Paris said, echoing Liszt's sentiment with many feelings of her own.

"Find a Magical Beast that can fly, tame it, and then you can experience the thrill of soaring through the sky," he suggested.

"Will your mount, the Landwalker bird Loki, evolve to the point where it can fly?" Paris suddenly asked. "It's getting bigger and bigger, and its wings are getting longer, almost as if it were about to fly."

"I am also looking forward to the moment it can fly," he replied.

As they continued to chat, Paris said somewhat wistfully,

"Your cultivation speed is so fast, I fear that not even in my Black Dragon Wraith form would I be a match for you. My role as a personal guard seems to have lost much of its significance."

"It's still significant. You can use the Invisibility Technique to steal a lot of information on the battlefield. However, as a woman, residing on the battlefield with us knights really isn't convenient." Liszt turned to look at Paris and said seriously, "From now on, stay in the territory, patiently study Light System Magic, and by the way, serve as the guardian of Black Horse Island, ensuring the safety of our land."

"Are you asking me to guard Black Horse Island?"

"Yes, I intend to establish a Patrol Knights stationed on Black Horse Island, and I want you to serve as the leader. In the future, you could pursue a career as an official, both for your sake and for your sister's. You should strive to rise within the Nobility."

"Nobility..."

Paris fell silent for a moment but finally nodded, "Do I need to pledge my loyalty to you?"

Liszt nodded. "If you wish to integrate into Black Horse Island, pledging allegiance to me is the most appropriate way."

"Alright," she decided after serious contemplation, "I never thought that one day I would become not only a magician, which I once loathed, but am now preparing to strive towards becoming a noble... Viscount, I shall pledge my allegiance to you once I return to Fresh Flower Town."

"We have known each other for so long, there is no need for such courtesy between us. You pledge allegiance to me whenever you are ready."

Making such a decision signified a transformation of identity.

What was once a relationship of employer and employee, now would become that of a follower and a landlord, signifying that she, who once resisted the will of the world, eventually succumbed to the world's rigid knight system.

...

Having replenished their supplies, they set sail once again.

On the third day of sailing, Liszt, who was sitting in meditation, suddenly opened his eyes. Just a second before, the Dou Qi within his body had finally undergone a complete transformation. In that instant, he sensed all his Dou Qi ignite and burn along his meridians, spreading from his pores to the nuclei of his cells.

The flames connected as one, and the Dou Qi became one with it.

With just a minor circulation, he felt as light as a feather. He abruptly stepped out of the cabin and under the watchful eyes of Douson and the Eight Tiny Ones, he forcefully stamped on the deck.

The next second.

His body shot up into the sky like a rocket, the Dou Qi bursting from within him, allowing his body to overcome the pull of gravity and continue climbing higher. The wind screamed by his ears, and he slightly lowered his head only to see the Tulip, which before was grand, now seemed tiny, and so did many other ships in its vicinity.

"Good thing I'm not afraid of heights...if there was a Sky Knight with acrophobia, he would probably be incapacitated," Liszt mused as he flew, still circulating his Dou Qi.

He had read the Advanced Dou Qi Manual "Ascension of the Red Sun Fire Burning" and could recite it backwards and forwards.

This kind of Advanced Dou Qi Manual not only instructed one on how to circulate Dou Qi, but also how to use Advanced Dou Qi to ascend to the skies and release sword techniques while airborne. He simply needed to follow the manual's special circulation paths for Dou Qi and he could glide steadily through the air.

When the continuous circulation of Dou Qi reached its limit, he immediately ceased the circulation and entered freefall, then began to circulate a new path of Dou Qi.

His body halted the descent and drifted towards another sail, landing.

Boom!

Upon touching down, his Dou Qi converged in his feet, allowing him to firmly stand on the deck. However, he did not manage the immense impact force well, resulting in the deck being crushed underfoot and the sailboat rocking violently.

"Viscount!" The knights on the ship rushed to the deck at the bow, exclaiming in alarm.

"There's no need for panic, I was merely practicing. Carry on with your duties," he said with a light smile, calmly leaping and soaring into the sky again.

He left a group of knights gaping in awe.

"My God, Viscount Liszt has truly advanced to a Sky Knight!"

"A seventeen-year-old Sky Knight, the bloodline of the Tulip Family shines brightly!"

"Powerful, handsome, blessed with the glory of knighthood, no one is more noble than Viscount Liszt, the Son of Glory I witness with my own eyes."

"The second Sky Knight of Coral Island."

"Who would have thought this would happen two years ago?"

"This is a true noble, a true genius!"

Chapter 479 Name Shakes Coral Island

Once again soaring, Liszt gently landed on the deck of the Tulip, having mastered the control of his descent's impact force, and did not damage the newly repaired deck.

The Earl had already been waiting at the bow.

Upon seeing Liszt land, he took a deep breath and exclaimed, "I am proud of you, my son!" After saying this, he suddenly realized that he had told Liszt something similar several times during this period—the pride Liszt brought was one event after another.

"Thank you, Father."

"When we return to Tulip Castle, I will hold a grand banquet for you to announce this good news to all the nobles and commoners of Coral Island."

"As you wish."

Liszt readily agreed.

Afterward, he received congratulations from all the nobles on board, and everyone was aware that a new noble star was rising within the Duchy of Sapphire. At this moment, no one doubted Liszt's future or whether he could achieve what Earl William Lee had now; he was always on the verge of establishing a new family.

Establishing a family, to carry on and glorify the bloodline, was an extraordinarily proud matter for the nobles of this world.

Liszt did not understand this at first, but after communicating with the Earl, he came to realize that the Earl was very much looking forward to such an event. It meant that the Tulip Family was growing stronger and achieving new accomplishments—just as the Earl had changed the family name to Tulip in the past, it was a moment of glory.

And then.

The sailboat carrying his followers quickly approached, and Marcus and the others filed onto the Tulip and offered Liszt a song of loyalty.

The noise continued for half a day.

Despite the ship's simplicity, a feast was held, the cups clinked as everybody drank themselves into a stupor. Liszt was no exception; he was already exhilarated, and with the nobles constantly urging him to drink, he kept downing one glass after another. In the end, he simply collapsed on the table and fell into a deep sleep.

A night passed.

Still, he woke up early in the morning, fresh as dawn. As an ordinary Sky Knight, his robust recovery allowed him no hint of a hangover.

He was in high spirits, watching the sailboat head towards the port of Coral City.

He was eager to fly there directly and flaunt his new status, but he controlled the impulse. A noble's image needed to be maintained; he couldn't afford to get carried away. After disembarking, he immediately mounted the Landwalker bird Loki, which had grown considerably larger, and followed behind Earl William Lee.

All along the way, without a doubt, he received more saluting glances than the Earl.

Not only was he handsome with an outstanding demeanor, it was more because of how majestic Loki looked beneath him. The creature had grown considerably, almost reaching four meters in height with legs nearly one point seven meters long, a neck of one point five meters, and a body length of less than one meter—slimmer than before, its body was closer to an oval streamlined shape.

The biggest change was its wings, which had grown longer and longer, with a wingspan that could stretch to six or seven meters.

Since these changes had all occurred during the voyage, he hadn't yet been able to measure Loki's current physical condition, but from the outside, it captivated everyone's attention.

In the past, Loki, when walking beside Douson, seemed somewhat less imposing.

But now, walking side by side with Douson, the average person would be hard-pressed to discern which of the two was the Intermediate Magical Beast. Douson had a larger tonnage and area, while Loki boasted greater height and length.

They were both impressive in their own right, and it was hard to declare a winner.

However, Loki's bloodline evolution was clearly not yet complete; there was still room for growth, and surpassing Douson in terms of aura was only a matter of time. After all, its future would be as

an Intermediate Dragon Beast—and fortunately, two Bloodline Fruits in succession had successfully evolved the magical beasts that consumed them without exploding from within.

"Perhaps it was the Smoke Mission stirring the threads of fate, altering the destinies of Douson and Loki," Liszt could only understand it this way.

Encircled by civilians on both sides of the road, the triumphant knights rode their tall horses, heads held high and chests puffed out as they slowly galloped towards Tulip Castle. Every triumph was a perfect opportunity to proclaim the prestige of the knight, and in such traditions, the stratification between nobles and commoners was continuously reinforced.

Despite his inner denial,

Liszt still greatly enjoyed the feeling of parading through the streets on horseback. What people pursue in life is nothing more than fame, wealth, and beauty, and wasn't this moment the best accolade to "fame"? Everyone wants to be the center of attention; the difference lies in whether one can become it.

Now he had the chance to become the center, and indeed, he had become it.

The whispers of the commoners always revolved around him and his mount, Loki, and many children, whose envious gazes followed him everywhere.

"When I grow up, I want to be as impressive as that knight and ride a big bird!" a child loudly declared.

This led to laughter from the older children in the group: "Haha, you might as well ride the chickens you raise at home."

"Maybe you can ride a big bird in your dreams! That's a magical beast, a magical beast bird that could eat you in one bite!"

An older boy, clearly more informed, boasted, "You might as well give up. He is the great lord of the Tulip Family bloodline, the ruler of Black Horse Island! He is the Son of Glory from Coral Island, none are more favored by the glory of the knights."

The child let out an "ah" and fell silent.

During the ignorance of youth, everyone has dreams too grand for their reach, yet growing up means compromising. With constant compromising, one gradually strays from their dreams and can no longer become the person they wished to be. Fate doesn't need to strike a blow, just slowly erode the fighting spirit.

In the end, the lowered head will declare that not everyone can grasp the throat of fate.

Of course, as long as one doesn't give up, hope will not fade, and this world ultimately leaves a sliver of hope for progress even for the commoners. This hope drives countless commoner knights to march towards the battlefield, one after the other. Some remain forever on the battlefield, wrapped in hide, while others return home draped in glory.

Liszt was undoubtedly one of those draped in glory.

When they arrived at the crossroads between Tulip Castle and Coral City, the welcoming party was already assembled at the junction. Just like the triumphant return from the Iron Hoof Island campaign, Lady Penelope, Lady Marie, Li Vera, Levis, and The Loria Couple all stood at the front of the group.

"Mother, I've caused you concern," said Earl William Lee as he dismounted and bowed to Lady Penelope. Every time he saw his mother come to welcome him, he would bow like this.

Nobility is full of exchanges of interest.

But there is also affection.

Lady Penelope smiled and said, "I'm not worried about you. You always stand on the side of victory, and you've never disappointed me, from past to present."

Following closely behind the Earl, Liszt dismounted from the bird and quickly approached:
"Grandmother."

"Strong boy, Liszt, you've grown taller and more handsome!" Lady Penelope was very pleased, took Liszt's hand, and prattled on, "When William would go to battle alone, I wasn't worried about his

safety, but I worried about his loneliness. Now that he has his sons with him, battling side by side with his father, he will no longer be lonely."

Earl William Lee smiled gently, "Mother, Liszt can truly fight alongside me now. You can't imagine the surprise he brought to us!"

"Stop beating around the bush and just say it," Lady Penelope chided impatiently.

The others watched closely, waiting for the Earl to finish his statement.

The Earl, long used to Lady Penelope's attitude, maintained his smile, unchanging: "Liszt has been promoted to a Sky Knight!"

Boom!

The ranks of those gathered for the triumphant return suddenly stirred.

Liszt, on the other hand, stood quietly to the side, his expression as if untouched by clouds or wind, as if the person the Earl was speaking about wasn't himself.

Chapter 480 Status Brought by Strength

"Sky Knight?" Levis's mouth fell open in disbelief, "Father, are you saying that Liszt has been promoted to a Sky Knight?"

Loria clutched his arm, equally agape with astonishment.

As the future lady of Tulip Castle, she had always believed that Levis was the most talented member of the Tulip family, and that the promotion to Sky Knight would be led by him. Unexpectedly, it was Liszt, who had once been entangled with her sister, who suddenly erupted.

Lady Marie's eyes widened, and though she made no sound, her eyes were filled with distrust.

Her son Lidun could hardly hide his own terror, despite Lady Marie's teachings that he must respect his second brother. His talent, which had earned the Earl's favor, had always made him believe he was the true genius.

Without a doubt, in his eyes, Levis was merely mediocre, and Liszt was once considered a good-for-nothing.

Yet at this moment, he heard the terrifying news: the once useless second son of the Tulip family had become an exalted Sky Knight.

This was a lofty height many knights dreamt of but could never reach.

Even those with talent struggled to attempt this level without ample resources.

"Why is this happening?"

"Why is this happening?"

"Why is this happening?"

Lidun's head felt dizzy, echoing the question.

He felt as if all his strength had dissipated, barely able to stand still, anxious and choked, deeply uncomfortable. However, no one cared about how he felt at that moment, not even his mother, Lady Marie, who was tensely watching Liszt, eager to hear him say "Sky Knight" himself.

Lady Penelope held onto Liszt's hand tightly: "My boy, is what your father said true?"

Li Vera rushed over as well, seizing Liszt's other hand: "My dear brother, are you truly a Sky Knight now, a mighty knight who can soar through the skies?"

Faced with everyone's concern and anticipation.

Liszt wanted to wipe the nonexistent sweat from his forehead; he was a bit overwhelmed by his family's enthusiasm—he preferred quiet adulation to warm inquiries.

Nevertheless, he maintained his usual demeanor, showing just the right amount of standard noble smile: "Yes, Grandmother, I have been promoted to Sky Knight, having completed it during my

recent voyage. Now I am a common-tier Sky Knight who can ascend to the heavens and wield Advanced Dou Qi."

His answer.

Relieved those who were expectant, hit those who were jealous like a hammer, but regardless, the scene instantly erupted into ecstatic cheers. His family, no matter who they were, kept sending blessings, with Lady Penelope particularly embracing him and vigorously patting his shoulders.

He was tall and had to bend down so Lady Penelope could embrace him.

It was a while before Lady Penelope let go, her eyes shimmering with tears: "Knightly glory has looked upon us; our Tulip family has finally given birth to a new Sky Knight. Our family's brilliance will not fade but will flourish even more!"

"Yes, Mother, the Tulip family will grow stronger and larger." The Earl, supporting Lady Penelope, announced loudly to those around, "The ceremony of the triumphal return is now concluded. Knights, disband on the spot and return to your own lands, to be reunited with your families. Everyone else, back to Tulip Castle!"

Liszt straightened up, just about to mount Loki.

But he was stopped by Levis: "Liszt, I simply don't know how to address you. Sky Knight, you've achieved the height I've always dreamed of! Tonight, you must discuss with me until late, I have so much about cultivation that I need your opinion on."

Clearly.

He wouldn't be able to return to Fresh Flower Town today, so he could only reply: "Brother, if Loria doesn't mind, I would be happy to share my insights on cultivation with you."

Loria came over with a smile, "I don't mind, Liszt; I hope you and your brother can have a pleasant chat."

Li Vera also came over, "I want to join in too."

Liszt smiled, "No problem." Whether it was one person or two, it was still an exchange; he didn't mind sharing his successful experiences with his relatives—although he thought his successes were not worth emulating, at most he could tell them some cultivation tips he had summarized.

He was adept at taking notes and used scientific methods to summarize and deduce problems that arose from cultivation.

A thought crossed his mind, "Perhaps I could write a 'The Earth Chronicle of Liszt' as an heirloom to provide a scientific reference for future generations' cultivation."

At that time, urged by Lady Marie, a somewhat pale-faced Lidun approached, forcing a smile, "Brother Liszt, I would like to join you too, even though I am not an Earth Knight yet, but I am eager to receive your guidance."

"No problem." The Earl was not far off, and Liszt couldn't bring himself to refuse, no matter how much he disliked the boy, Lidun.

He had to consider the Earl's feelings and maintain a superficial brotherly affection.

And so.

He was escorted back to Tulip Castle.

Using the excuse of needing to instruct his followers about some matters, he managed to extricate himself from Levis, Li Vera, and Lidun's entanglement and called for Marcus, "Teacher Marcus, the planning for the territory's development, especially the planning for the new town on Black Horse Island—I mentioned it to you on the boat; you remember it all, right?"

Now before Liszt, Marcus had become increasingly cautious and careful.

Back when they were both Earth Knights, Marcus hadn't felt it, but once Liszt became a Sky Knight, he experienced tremendous pressure and boundless motivation, "Yes, my Lord!"

"I might not be able to return to Fresh Flower Town immediately these next few days, pass my thoughts on to Officer Blair, and have him send someone to survey a suitable location for the new town. Additionally, have Captain Abagon from the Fresh Flower Caravan come here immediately; I have some questions for him."

Abagon's Fresh Flower Caravan was not only engaged in trade but also involved in information exchange.

It essentially acted as "Fresh Flower Town's office in Coral City," and if there was anything that needed to be understood, he was the fastest way. Moments later, Abagon rushed to Tulip Castle to report the latest situations in Fresh Flower Town and Black Horse Island to Liszt.

First and foremost was the issue Liszt was most concerned about—had the Corn Minor Elf been born?

Abagon answered, "Lord Landlord, I am unaware of the Corn Grass Bug situation, as such information is confidential within the Castle, and I dare not inquire carelessly. However, I have not heard of the Castle recently having any new Minor Elves born; perhaps you need to ask Mr. Carter or Consultant Goltai."

Indeed, that was the case.

Elves were important assets to a Lord and could not simply have their information revealed carelessly.

Therefore, Liszt could only wait for Consultant Goltai, who was to be notified, to hurry to Tulip Castle and bring him news of the Corn Minor Elf.

After listening to most of the construction status of Fresh Flower Town and Black Horse Island, he sent Abagon away.

He became the focus of everyone in Tulip Castle once again.

It was apparent that with each visit to Tulip Castle, his treatment changed slightly. In the beginning, after he had first crossed over, he was practically invisible; after that, his significance grew once he obtained the Intermediate Magical Beast and the Thorn Minor Elf; and then he became a pivotal figure in the Castle having been successfully ennobled as the Lord of Black Horse Island.

Now.

The treatment he enjoyed was almost on par with that of the Earl—his family vied to show closeness, and the servants expressed endless respect.

Holding a cup of fresh milk, he relaxed and leaned back in his chair, thinking, with a pleased mood: "This is the status that comes with power."