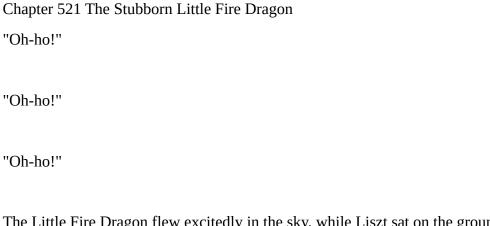
The Mighty 521



The Little Fire Dragon flew excitedly in the sky, while Liszt sat on the ground, enduring the lingering smell of Smoked Grass, and crazily devoured Magical Beast Meat to replenish his nutrients and accumulate a bit of Dou Qi.

Crunch crunch, a piece of Magical Beast Meat with bone was chewed twice, he swallowed it without even tasting the flavor. His thoughts, however, were entirely focused on the Little Fire Dragon, "This guy is so excited, I wonder if it will release any hereditary infection of Magic Power?"

He didn't delve deeper; the thought passed quickly.

Then, he began to frown, noticing a serious problem, "Now that the Little Fire Dragon is newly born and has become a creature of flesh and blood, its body is not exactly large, but it is definitely not smaller than Loki, and it's only half the size of a Formless Dragon. There's no way to hide it."

A Fire Dragon with a body as large as a bull becomes even larger when it spreads its wings.

Liszt didn't know how to hide it.

Exposure was definitely not an option; once exposed, he believed it wouldn't take three days before people started targeting the Fire Dragon. Then, the Sapphire Duke would personally arrive on Black Horse Island riding the Sapphire Dragon. By that time, he would either have to ride the Little Fire Dragon and abandon his family business to lead a wandering life,

or he would have to obediently hand over the Fire Dragon.

Even Black Horse Island would have to be surrendered, given that it was the birthplace of the Fire Dragon.

"I will choose neither of these options... However, the more critical issue is, what exactly is my relationship with the Little Fire Dragon right now?" Liszt's brows were tightly knit.

As for hiding, it was not impossible. He could declare a certain area of his domain offlimits, erect walls, and block roads, allowing only himself in. The Little Fire Dragon could happily live inside. But the problem was what their relationship was and how to make the Little Fire Dragon behave and not wander off.

He had eaten his fill of Magical Beast Meat, and the Dou Qi began to slowly emerge.

His worry did not disappear but rather accumulated deeper and deeper. Watching the Little Fire Dragon still rolling and roaring in the sky, unable to contain its excitement, his expression was troubled.

Once upon a time, becoming a Dragon Knight was his greatest dream. Now he was not far from achieving it, but the biggest difficulty laid before him—the Little Fire Dragon had a hundred-year juvenile period. Even though a young dragon has fighting power, it certainly wouldn't be very strong, at least not enough to qualify as a Dragon Knight.

He also doubted whether the Little Fire Dragon would even allow him to ride and whether it might suddenly turn hostile and fly away.

...

A quarter of an hour later.

The issue of turning hostile could be put aside; the now tired Little Fire Dragon finally landed from the sky to the ground in front of Liszt. Its body was fully displayed before Liszt's eyes. Compared to the slender Formless Dragon, the Fire Dragon had a more robust build, with lines that exuded a tough beauty.

Its muscles were knotted, yet they didn't appear abrupt.

They always seemed just right, clearly containing boundless strength at a glance.

The scales were fine and dense, black with hints of red. In some parts, black was more intense, in others, red was more intense. On the triangular head, there were five dragon horns, symmetrically distributed. The central dragon horn was straight and long, while the horns on the sides were slightly curved and the eyes had blood-red pupils.

It looked somewhat intimidating, but upon close inspection, one could see the clarity and purity in its gaze.

"Oh-ho!"

The Little Fire Dragon stood on the ground, taller than Liszt, and opened its mouth to softly call out, seemingly greeting Liszt. This action and expression always made him feel that what stood before him was not a dragon but rather a child in dragon skin. Eye contact, tone, demeanor, all carried an intelligent aura.

Liszt rubbed his face to appear more amiable, and locked eyes with the Little Fire Dragon.

Then he reached out his hand and boldly touched the Little Fire Dragon's head, which was nuzzled towards him. The touch felt a bit rough, and the scales of the Little Fire Dragon were very hot to the touch.

"Little Fire Dragon."

"Oh-ho!"

"I want to ride you," Liszt said calmly.

The Little Fire Dragon immediately bared its teeth, making a fierce face. Coupled with its inherently menacing appearance, it indeed looked quite ferocious. However, its eyes



betrayed it, only pretending to be tough, especially when it saw Liszt already walking

Having flown to a certain height, the Little Fire Dragon folded its wings and plummeted like an arrow to the ground, landing amidst the chaos of the dining table and began searching for food left by the Formless Dragons. The cows tied to the stakes hadn't awakened, and the Little Fire Dragon sniffed at one before munching away at the calf with a clatter.

By the time Liszt arrived, he saw the Little Fire Dragon eating beef while also using its wings to fan away the surrounding smoke, clearly disliking the scent of Smoked Grass.

An idea suddenly struck him, and he approached the Little Fire Dragon, saying, "Little Fire Dragon, these cows are mine, I don't permit you, you can't eat them."

The Little Fire Dragon didn't bother looking up, blood splattering from its mouth as it ate: "Oh ho!"

"If you eat my cows, you have to let me ride you!"

"Oh ho!"

"If you don't let me ride, then don't think about eating beef ever again."

"Oh ho!"

"If you let me ride, then I'll give you a cow every day!"

"Oh ho!"

No matter what Liszt said, the Little Fire Dragon was unwilling to let Liszt ride, leaving him with a pent-up frustration he couldn't release. Despite having spent all his accumulated Fire Dragon Magic Power to nourish this Little Fire Dragon, it wouldn't allow even a single ride.

He could only stand to the side, watching it rudely gnaw at the beef.

Meanwhile, he observed the Little Fire Dragon's back, where there was a flatter spot near the neck and shoulder blades underneath the scales, seemingly covering a single piece of bone.

This made him wonder, "This area seems to be a Dragon Knight's seat, its flatness seems perfect for sitting, and the narrow grooves seem just right for securing one's feet... Why does it feel like this part of the dragon's neck is specifically shaped for riding?"

Without any information on dragons, he had to guess almost everything about them.

Before long.

The Little Fire Dragon gobbled down an entire cow, burped with satisfaction, and lazily licked at the jar of liquor beside it. However, after just one lick, it shook its head vigorously and stuck out its tongue, showing no interest in the liquor.

"Little Fire Dragon, are you going to let me ride you or not!"

The Little Fire Dragon was adamant: "Oh ho!"

Liszt's face darkened, wanting to discipline the Little Fire Dragon but feeling uncertain he could actually win—despite its size, the Little Fire Dragon radiated a Dragon Might just as overpowering as that of a Formless Dragon. Moreover, there was always a sense that flames were burning beneath it.

It was like a volcano waiting to erupt.

Perhaps this was the embodiment of an Elemental Dragon's strength—expressing the nature of magic power to its extreme, bringing about an unimaginable fighting force.

"Fine, you are stubborn. We'll discuss the issue of dragon riding later," Liszt tried hard to suppress his anger, patted its head, and felt the scorching heat.

The thought "Will it burn my butt?" flickered through his mind.

But the thought was fleeting and didn't interrupt his dialogue: "Your arrival brings not only flames but danger too. We are in the Duchy of Sapphire, home to a grown Sapphire Dragon that will not allow your existence. Therefore, you need to follow my instructions and hide."

Cocking its head.

It seemed not to understand, or maybe it did.

Liszt went on to detail his plan, intending to settle the Little Fire Dragon on Seagull Island, north of Black Horse Island, to keep its existence a secret. He also planned to have the Sea Sprite Ake meet the Little Fire Dragon, to help take care of it, provide it with food, and keep it from running amok.

Out of everyone, Liszt trusted the Sea Sprite Ake the most.

However, before he finished his lengthy explanation.

The Little Fire Dragon suddenly let out a fierce roar: "Oh ho!" Then, its body quickly transformed into a blaze and lunged at the unguarded Liszt—Liszt had no time to react, and it seemed as though a tremendous roar echoed in his ears. The flame that the Little Fire Dragon had turned into rushed into his body and disappeared.

No, not disappeared.

It transformed into a ball of magic power and converged at his chest.

Taken aback, he quickly shed his coat and cuirass, undoing his inner shirt. Looking down at his chest, where there had been only snow-white clean skin and no chest hair, a pattern of flames had now solidified, forming a lifelike Fire Dragon soaring in flight.

Even more astonishing was that the Fire Dragon pattern seemed to move.

The pattern showed the Fire Dragon opening its mouth without a sound, yet resounding familiarly within his mind: "Oh ho!"

Chapter 522 Inventory of Task Gains

"A Little Fire Dragon could actually reside inside my body?" Liszt was completely stunned as the wonders of dragons refreshed his understanding yet again; dragons of flesh and blood could seemingly switch at will between flesh, blood, and magic power.

The Fire Dragon Pattern extended from the position of his collarbone down to his abdomen and the sides of his ribcage, and it remained ever-changing.

One moment it would spread its wings as if to fly, another moment it would contract them as though lying down, and then it would start walking upon his chest.

It even hung upside down over his chest at times.

Liszt could feel it, and he could continue with his previous cultivation method; the Little Fire Dragon was still able to refine his newly generated Dou Qi, then excrete the impurities of magic power, aiding the evolution of his Dou Qi towards Dragon Dou Qi—this might well be the true cultivation method of a Dragon Knight.

The Little Fire Dragon residing on his chest seemed quite smug, its emotions reconnecting with Liszt; he could sense it though it was a vague connection.

It was probably mocking Liszt for making a fuss over nothing.

However, Liszt didn't pay attention to the Little Fire Dragon's temporary squall; the risk of exposure was now essentially resolved, leaving only the issue of Dragon Riding. With his experience in taming Blizzard Beasts and Landwalker Birds, dealing with a newly born juvenile dragon didn't seem like an insurmountable task.

He put on his clothes and silently communicated with the Little Fire Dragon, releasing his feelings: "Just stay quietly on my chest. When you want to come out for air, let me know in advance, and I will take you somewhere deserted to get some fresh air... Also, if you want to drain my Dou Qi again, give me a heads-up!"

Being drained twice consecutively made Liszt quite angry.

"Oh-ho!" The Little Fire Dragon reluctantly agreed. Although it was resistant to the idea of Liszt riding it, it was not an irrational wild creature but rather more like an intelligent being capable of thought.

Feeling it still faintly releasing Dragon Might, Liszt added, "Also, don't carelessly emanate Dragon Might. Keep your Dragon Might in check!"

"Oh-ho!"

The Little Fire Dragon was a bit displeased as it liked to manifest Dragon Might, a symbol of its dignity as a dragon.

But knowing that uncontrolled Dragon Might could expose it, it seriously reined it in, not letting even a trace leak out. Then, after yawning, it curled up on his chest and fell sound asleep.

He touched his warm chest.

Standing in place, Liszt took three minutes to sort through all his experiences that morning, making sure nothing was overlooked. Only then did he summon the Smoke Mission, summarizing his gains for the day.

"Complete the mission, reward: the birth of a new Fire Dragon."

"Mission: The long-awaited Fire Dragon is now yours. From this moment on, you will need to strive for dragon raising; its appetite will not be small, so work hard to cultivate and save, become a qualified Fire Dragon breeder. Please complete this year's spring plowing without leaving any fields fallow. Reward: twenty-two Dragon Breed Pigs."

Seeing the new mission content, he clenched his fist in excitement, "As expected, successful. The Formless Dragon's bloodline infection of magic power has created a new dragon lineage species for me—Dragon Breed Pigs! From now on, even the ordinary pork I eat can provide plenty of nutrition, saving consumption of Magical Beast Meat!"

Twenty-two Dragon Breed Pigs.

Considering the average litter size of about ten piglets, this meant the offspring of two pigs could all be Dragon Breed Pigs.

Pairing them with each other, it wouldn't take long to breed a large number of Dragon Breed Pigs. Then by mixing Dragon Breed Pigs with ordinary pigs, maybe even more hybrid pigs with diluted dragon bloodline could be cultivated—essentially, they are all Dragon Breed Pigs but with varying degrees of bloodline dilution and quality.

"I'll need to mark out the lineage of dragon species in the future, classify them according to the dilution and mixing of blood... might as well issue lineage certificates," Liszt thought.

On Earth, to ensure the pedigree of pet cats and dogs, specialized organizations would issue lineage certificates.

They record health conditions, training results, and more of the pet and its ancestors up to the third generation.

He prepared to imitate this method, establishing archives for the dragon species of the territory, issuing bloodline certificates, and meticulously recording every detail of the breeding, mating, and kinship of each Dragon Breed Horse, Dragon Breed Cow, Dragon Breed Pig, and possibly Dragon Breed Chickens, Ducks, and Green-headed Ducks.

Only in this way could the dragon bloodline be ensured to flow strongly for generations.

Otherwise, it would continuously be diluted by ordinary bloodlines, and the creatures of dragon lineage would ultimately degenerate into ordinary ones.

•••

Dou Qi had already accumulated quite a bit.

After carefully erasing the footprints of the Formless Dragon and the Fire Dragon, Liszt leapt into the sky, soaring a hundred meters high, and flew towards Green Tea Town in the distance. Sky Knights used Dou Qi for flying, which allowed them to travel at incredible speeds, but it couldn't last long since ascending to high altitudes consumed a great deal of Dou Qi.

However, for short distances, it was manageable.

Green Tea Town had not yet been developed; currently, it was just flat land with a few planned streets and residential areas. However, a team of serfs, along with officials and knights, were waiting there.

"My lord, have you completed your cultivation?" Goltai stepped forward to greet him.

"It's done," Liszt said with an expressionless face, though feeling a bit embarrassed inside. The so-called 'cultivation' excuse wasn't exactly a solid alibi, especially when preparing such a large quantity of food, Smoked Grass, and pregnant cows and pigs, along with chickens, ducks, and eggs.

But none of his followers dared to question him.

After a pause, he continued, "Take some people to clean up the area where I was cultivating. Remove the Smoked Grass and food, and take those cows and pigs back carefully, so they aren't injured. Also, handle those chicken, duck, and Green-headed Duck eggs with care and continue incubating them."

"As you wish, my lord!"

"Consultant Goltai, this batch of cows, pigs, and eggs has been specially improved by me using unusual methods. Each one is extremely valuable. I require that you treat them with great care, documenting the breeding of each one in archives and then choosing the finest breeds for pairing to form an industry."

"As you desire, my lord."

Thinking it over, he still felt uneasy, "How about this, build a cattle farm in Horse Ranching Town specialized in raising these three pregnant milk cows; construct a pig farm in Red River Town for the two pregnant fat pigs; and if the chicken eggs and duck eggs hatch, also establish a chicken farm, a duck farm, and a separate 'Green Caterpillar - Green-headed Duck Breeding Garden' in Red River Town."

Horse Ranching Town, adjacent to the high-quality Black Horse Ranch, was very suitable for raising cattle.

The Estuary Mangrove Forest at the mouth of the Red River in Red River Town had abundant water grass, and the mangrove forest itself bore many fruits not consumed by humans, which was perfect for pig breeding. Moreover, a large number of Green Caterpillars had already been bred, providing exceptional feed for raising chickens and ducks.

All the arrangements were made.

It was now noon.

After lunch, Liszt gathered all the officials for this year's spring cultivation meeting, "We are about to enter March, and as the weather warms up, spring cultivation will begin soon. Some crops might already have arrangements for spring cultivation... Consultant Goltai, you will preside over this meeting and arrange the spring cultivation matters."

It was said to be presided by Goltai, but everything was under Liszt's control. He arranged the core content of the spring cultivation according to the requirements of the Smoke Mission, "Ensure that no farmland lays fallow. Every piece of land must have seeds sown, especially beans and corn seeds, sown as widely as possible."

Corn could be planted carelessly without management—all that mattered was survival, and there would be some yield, however little.

Leguminous plants were for the slight chance of producing rhizobia—there weren't enough pea plants to rely on their production of rhizobia yet.

"In this year's spring cultivation, all officials must participate to gain experience. The newly constructed towns need many officials. Whether you can secure a post as a chief officer will depend on your performance this time." Liszt threw out the biggest bait at the end of the meeting, causing the officials to become restless.

For the sake of promotion and salary increase, they would fully commit to the spring cultivation.

Chapter 523 The Stigma of Lord Landlord

"What is this?"

"Corn."

"Is there an elf for corn?"

"Mickey."

On the stones used to mark boundaries in the fields, a group of serfs dressed in patched clothes gathered together, drinking water, eating bread, and dipping it in peanut butter.

Mark, a clerk without patched clothes, was holding a stick, pointing at the corn seeds on the ground, and asking the group of serfs.

This was a time for field teaching.

Since most of the new serfs were from the Eagle Kingdom and only spoke Wind Language but not Serpent Script, to increase the sense of belonging and facilitate communication, Lord Landlord decreed that the official language of the territory would be Serpent Script, and everyone must learn the Serpent Script for daily communication—only the Knight Class needed to learn both Serpent Script and Wind Language.

Mark's Wind Language was not good; he only knew a few words, and he had learned those from Mr. Grantaire.

In fact, his Serpent Script wasn't much better; he could read and speak but not write. However, his level was barely sufficient to teach the serfs the everyday language they needed to know.

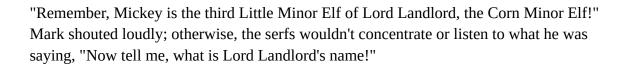
Now it was the spring plowing season.

The serfs couldn't possibly have a fixed time to learn Serpent Script, so Mr. Grantaire proposed to Lord Landlord to make use of the serfs' rest time for organized teaching. Lord Landlord agreed, and thus, the clerks responsible for teaching had to run to the fields every day, to join the serfs in working the land.

Many clerks sighed in exasperation. They had managed to get into the office work with great difficulty, but still couldn't get away from the muddy fields.

But Mark did not complain.

Because he was ambitious.



"Tulip!"

"Black Horse Island!"

"Sky Knight!"

"The great offspring of the Tulip Family, the ruler over all, Viscount Black Horse Island, the Sky Knight, Liszt Tulip!" the serfs recited the standard Serpent Script fluently.

This was the Serpent Script they had been taught since they had first arrived at Black Horse Island.

At that time, there wasn't the "Sky Knight" part, but after they learned of Liszt's promotion, the officials immediately added this title to Lord Landlord's name.

Undoubtedly, this method of teaching was brute, inferior, simplistic, and awkward propaganda. Every day, the serfs were repeatedly reminded of these slogans by the teaching clerks. At first, it might not be effective or might even cause resentment.

But after thousands and tens of thousands of times, these contents would be deeply etched into everyone's brain, becoming indisputable.

Actually, Liszt was not very willing to use this method of propaganda; he knew that strength was the primary condition for ensuring loyalty to the territory. But since the officials were willing to flatter him and brainwash the populace in this way, he had no reason to stop it, since it would be contrary to undermine his own rule.

As a modern man, he was very aware of the significance of public opinion.

Seeing the serfs chanting in unison made Mark very satisfied; it was the result of his teaching efforts over time. He had been assigned to a farming area in Grain Town to be responsible for teaching Serpent Script to the serfs who worked the land in this field. Unlike the other clerks who slacked off and played tricks, he took every teaching moment seriously.

He didn't even let up during meal times.

At this moment, seeing that the serfs he taught clearly had better pronunciation in Serpent Script and knew more vocabulary than those taught by others.

He was filled with anticipation, "Lord Landlord will commend the officials who worked hard during the spring plowing season... I've been so diligent, I am certain to receive an award. After the plowing ends, I will surely get a promotion, from an ordinary Clerk to a Cultural Scribe... Perhaps a Manager will take notice and choose me to be an Assistant directly!"

The official hierarchy in Black Horse Island was Liszt's newly reformed system, which largely followed the previous administrative model, but had become more segmented and clear.

Compared to the past system, which had only a few Managers and a multitude of Clerks in a chaotic and crude structure.

The current hierarchy of officials was very clear.

Take the town hall for example, the lowest level was like a career position for a "Clerk," responsible for various errands and miscellaneous tasks; moving up a level were the regular "Department Clerks," who were primarily in charge of the specific affairs of each department; further up were "Manager Assistants," who were akin to candidate officials.

These three levels all belonged to the "Clerk" class.

The real "officials" were the town's "Department Managers," also known as "Affairs Officers." The number and functions of Affairs Officers varied according to the development directions of each town.

Affairs Officers generally comprised Administrative Officers, Finance Officers, Defense Officers, Legal Officers, Cultural Affairs Officers, and Diplomats, which are the standard positions in other lords' territories.

In Black Horse Island, additional Affairs Officers were established, including Worm Affairs Officers, Marine Affairs Officers, Traffic Affairs Officers, Construction Affairs Officers, and Fishery Affairs Officers.

All Affairs Officers needed to report to the town's advisors.

However, once the future harbor town is upgraded to a harbor city, a new set of city officials will be established to manage all the towns. The city's Affairs Officers, along with the town's advisors, would jointly oversee the work of the town's Affairs Officers. This was meant to avoid having a single advisor's monopoly and to balance the power of officials.

Mark dared not hope to become an Affairs Officer, as this position required one to be an Apprentice Knight, and he was just a civilian who had never practiced Dou Qi.

His greatest wish was to become an Assistant to an Affairs Officer and then marry a beautiful wife.

As he fantasized about his successful future while teaching Serpent Script, a procession suddenly approached along the field path on horseback. As they drew closer, Mark realized in astonishment that it was Mr. Grantaire, the Cultural Affairs Officer from the port town who was highly regarded by Lord Landlord and who had been leading the teaching of Serpent Script and Wind Language throughout the territory.

He hastily stepped forward to pay respects, "Clerk Mark, greets the Cultural Affairs Officer!"

"Mark, I remember you, you were quite attentive during my lectures," Grantaire said as he dismounted, scrutinizing as though he recognized Mark.

Mark trembled with excitement, "To be remembered by the Cultural Affairs Officer is an immense honor for Mark!"

Grantaire nodded, though in fact, he didn't actually remember who Mark was. Back when Black Horse Island was under construction, the administration had urgently recruited a large number of Clerks for pre-job training—it must have been several hundred people, "I'm here to inspect the teaching progress of you Clerks, Mark, have all the civilians ready."

"Yes, Cultural Affairs Officer!"

...

The spring plowing work, he delegated.

Liszt stopped paying much attention after that.

He returned to Fresh Flower Town the next day because the Magic Potion had all been consumed by the Little Fire Dragon, forcing him to resort to purchasing a new batch through Tulip Castle's channels.

This was going to cost him upward of a thousand Gold Coins.

And what was even more troubling was that the Little Fire Dragon clearly was not going to be satisfied so easily; upon waking on his chest, it started clamoring for more food and drink. To grow, it needed to consume more resources, with Magic Potions being just one of them. The cost of a few thousand Gold Coins in Magic Potions per month was likely to be insufficient.

And then there was Liszt, as a Sky Knight, who also spent no small sum daily on potions and food for himself.

"Relying solely on Black Horse Island's output is too arduous. If it weren't for the profitable trade in spirits and glass, I might not even be able to sustain my own training... I truly hope the Pioneer Mandate arrives sooner. I need to quickly earn military merits, plunder more spoils of war, and subsidize the consumption," he thought.

At this stage, he could only scrimp and scrape by.

Chapter 524 Generate Revenue and Reduce Expenditures for Dragon Upkeep

It is commonly believed that the lifespan of a dragon is one thousand years.

As for whether this is credible, Liszt has no way to discern the truth and can only tentatively believe that this information is real. Before the age of one hundred years, a dragon is considered young, from one hundred to eight hundred years old a dragon is adult, and after eight hundred years old, it becomes an elderly dragon. Elderly dragons leave their living area to fly to the Valley of Dragons.

What he can discern now is that dragons do not necessarily die in the Valley of Dragons—an Evil Dragon could be killed by a Dragon Slayer. The Fire Dragon of Black Horse Island belongs to the Evil Dragons, and its death was mysterious; it may not have died of old age but possibly was murdered.

Then again, even if a dragon dies, it seems to be capable of resurrection, its life appearing to be a cycle of rebirth.

"Raising a dragon really costs a fortune, but now I'm wondering, those Evil Dragons that no one rears, what did they eat to grow up when they were young?" Liszt was full of doubts. Asking the Little Fire Dragon was obviously not going to provide answers, as smart as it is. It only knows what to eat and what not to let people ride.

In the Maple Leaf Duchy's Red Maple Mountain, there resides a Light Dragon.

When the Light Dragon came to Red Maple Mountain and what it ate to grow into an adult, an invincible adult dragon, even the people of the Maple Leaf Duchy do not know.

There are some other places that seem to be inhabited by Evil Dragons, which occasionally invade human towns.

In the depiction of Knight's Novels, Evil Dragons snatch humans' riches, eat people, and livestock. However, no author describes where these Evil Dragons came from; they are usually the protagonist, the righteous knight who passes by somewhere, hears about people being threatened by an Evil Dragon, or a Noble being coerced by one.

Then the protagonist steps in to help, eliminating the Evil Dragon.

In the end, they win the beauty and return home.

The Dragon Rearing Manual that the Marquis of the Bull often consulted does not record anything about young dragons. It seems that young dragons are a vacuum zone—All dragons that humans have contact with are adult dragons, and the dragons raised by various countries are also adult dragons. As if the dragons ridden by Dragon Knights are all adult dragons.

"There must be Dragon Knights who have found young dragons and then established a companionship to succeed in Dragon Riding... Just I do not know why they chose to conceal the information about young dragons," Liszt looked at the clear flame pattern on his chest in the mirror, frowning, "Perhaps... they have the same idea as me?"

He dares not reveal that he has a young dragon.

Other Dragon Knights might also dare not expose themselves during the young dragon stage—But why still not disclose the situation of the young dragons after they become adults?

"Perhaps it's not that no one has disclosed it, but the information about dragons has been hidden by the dragon-rearing families?"

This thought made more sense, after all, families that own dragons certainly would not want those without dragons to get them, they would undoubtedly want to monopolize the dragons of this world.

The Little Fire Dragon in the mirror yawned and then started to cry out "oh ho," "oh ho"—it was hungry.

Liszt ignored it.

This Little Fire Dragon had too strong a digestive ability; in the few days since its return, he had already secretly fed it more than a dozen cows. But one cow only kept it full for four hours. After four hours, on time, it would cry "oh ho" out of hunger, sometimes even waking Liszt up in the middle of the night to eat a cow.

Gradually, Liszt discovered that it would cry out, but it was fine even if not fed for half a day.

So he consciously controlled the Little Fire Dragon's eating time, a pity though, he could control it from eating cows, but he couldn't stop it from consuming magic potions.

Every day it consumed five times the amount of Magic Potion that Liszt used for practice, and if not given, it could whine all day long. With such a consumption rate, Liszt simply couldn't afford it—Even after advancing to a Sky Knight, even though the loss rate of Dragon Dou Qi was slow and with the diminishment from "Breath Decay", he still needed a huge amount of Magic Potion.

He and the Little Fire Dragon combined were equivalent to the consumption of six Sky Knights taking Magic Potion together.

Even a regular Marquis Family could not easily provide for six Sky Knights to consume Magic Potion together. Not to mention that Liszt was only a Viscount, with his territory just beginning to be developed.

It was unimaginable how to meet such an enormous consumption of Magic Potion.

I don't even know what wild Little Fire Dragons eat to grow up.

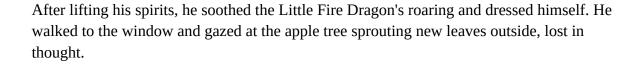
Since increasing revenue wasn't working out, the only option was to cut costs, and after much deliberation, it seemed that controlling the Little Fire Dragon's food intake was the key — providing it with more inexpensive meats and reducing its dependency on magic potions.

"The Little Fire Dragon might suffer from malnutrition..." he said with a self-mocking laugh, "but what else can be done, given that its rider is about to change his name to Liszt Jones..."

Jones would be penniless!

There was a twinge of guilt.

Thankfully, he knew how to comfort himself, "Since it won't let me ride it anyway, why should I worry about feeding it till it's full, hehe."



Knock knock knock.

A knocking at the door.

Butler Carter's voice came from outside, "My lord."

Liszt didn't turn around, simply responding, "Come in."

Once Carter entered, he asked, "Is Mrs. Morson feeling better now?"

"After taking the Serpent Blood Fruit Potion, her fever has subsided, and she has just gone to sleep," Carter replied.

Just a while ago, Mrs. Morson had probably caught a fever. The local folk healer's treatments were futile. In the end, Liszt had to make a decision and, according to the prescription detailed in "Aris's True Herb Classification" related to Serpent Blood Fruit, prepared the Serpent Blood Fruit Potion.

After Mrs. Morson took it, her condition quickly improved.

Not only is Serpent Blood Fruit effective in treating snake venom, but as recorded in "Aris's True Herb Classification", it also has healing effects on many common illnesses.

Now, looking back, the decision to desperately kill the Six-Headed King Serpent and use its blood to irrigate the four Serpent Blood Fruit Bugs was indeed useful. Turning them into commonly used potions could save many sick serfs' lives — in this world, the normal mortality rate of serfs was not low, with most dying of illnesses.

Once the production cost of the Serpent Blood Fruit Potion could be lowered, it would definitely form a profitable industry.

However, since commoners couldn't afford expensive medical fees, and Liszt's conscience wouldn't allow him to sell the potion at a high price, being able to make a slight profit above cost without wasting the effects of the Serpent Blood Fruit Bugs was already enough.

"Mr. Carter, tell Mrs. Morson to rest assured, take her time to recover, and no longer toil over the castle's affairs. Her most important task right now is to get well," he instructed.

Carter said with a smile, "My lord, I'm afraid the thing Mrs. Morson misses the most is not being able to brew the milk tea for you anymore."

"Indeed, Maisie's brew has a touch less finesse, it's not quite as exquisite and well-balanced as Mrs. Morson's milk tea, where the aroma of the black tea fruit and the scent of milk blend perfectly," Liszt said, slightly exaggerating. In reality, he was just accustomed to Mrs. Morson's milk tea.

Milk tea was quite simple, just a mix of milk and the fruit of black tea brewed together, but the brewing time, temperature, and proportions all influenced the final taste.

After discussing Mrs. Morson,

Carter reported the reason for his visit, "March 9th is your birthday, my lord, and now that you are illustrious as a Sky Knight, ruling over everything in Black Horse Island and Fresh Flower Town, the celebration for your birthday needs to be grander than last year's. I have come to consult with my lord on how to approach the grandeur."

"Well... Mr. Carter, I'll leave it to your discretion," Liszt said with a smile. At the moment, all his thoughts were on the Little Fire Dragon; he had no real expectations for his birthday.

Moreover,

hosting a birthday celebration would waste so much money. He wondered if it was possible to recoup half of the costs by receiving presents — currently, Liszt Jones was indeed poor!

Chapter 525 Let's Learn to Swim Together

The castle was already busy preparing for Liszt's birthday celebration.

In the past few days, apart from fretting over how to care for the Little Fire Dragon, Liszt didn't have much else to do, so he dedicated more of his energy to the glass greenhouse.

The Magic Medicine Seeds, with a one-third germination rate, had begun to grow robustly, albeit at a slow pace, but they were still healthy. The Seedship Wood was also thriving, growing slowly as well. Normally, plants grow fastest in the seedling stage, but this rapid growth was hardly noticeable in the Magic Medicine Seeds and Seedship Wood.

Watering the plants, fertilizing the soil.

He had high hopes for these Magic Medicine Seeds.

If they all could grow into Magic Medicines, that would indeed be a tremendous fortune. Currently, what Liszt lacked the most was Magic Medicine. It wasn't just that he couldn't afford to buy them, it was also that he had no way to buy them in sufficient quantities—Magic Medicines were products needed by any Noble, and not many were put on the market.

Like in his own domain, the Magic Medicines produced, including the Black Tulips, had already been retained for his own use.

He had never sold a single Magic Medicine to the outside world.

"I really wish I could sell a Space Gem and exchange it for endless wealth to support myself and the Little Fire Dragon," he thought as he touched the four Space Gems hanging on his chest.

Of these four Space Gems, three were already filled, leaving only one as a commonly used space, ready to be filled whenever necessary.

The three full ones mainly held books, Mithril, Blue Steel, Cast Aluminum, Magic Medicine Seeds, Seedship Wood, Jade, Crystals, Magical Beast Meat, Dragon Breed Milk, and so on. Previously, one Space Gem was not enough to hold everything, but now it was, so he certainly wouldn't leave his fortune exposed.

Keeping it in a warehouse always felt unsafe.

The four Space Gems, the size of fingernails, had been made into a necklace, set in the line of a Sapphire Pendant, giving off a crystal-like appearance unless one looked closely—attractively adorned with a few brightly colored Crystals, typical for a gemstone pendant's design meant for aesthetics.

This way, the pendant around his neck appeared to be just an ordinary gemstone accessory to others.

For a Sky Knight, not having gemstone equipment would be inconceivable; possession was the norm. And no one would target a Sky Knight for just one gemstone. Therefore, the exposure risk of these four Space Gems was very small, making them very secure.

Actually, the biggest risk of exposure came from their use.

Especially since he would occasionally bring out items that should not exist, which could arouse suspicion over time. Of course, he didn't need to worry too much about this. Firstly, as a Landlord and a Sky Knight, his followers would not dare question him; secondly, few people knew of the Formless Dragon legend, and even fewer knew about Space Gems.

Even if someone became suspicious, they wouldn't necessarily link it to the legendary item like a Space Gem. The concept of an "independent alternate space" didn't even exist in their minds.

Liszt soon sighed, "It's better to use them less when possible, even the smallest risk is still risk... If the Space Gems were exposed, then the Formless Dragon's secret would be impossible to hide... While the Little Fire Dragon certainly has great potential in the future, I still harbor ambitions for the Formless Dragon."

Not being naturally optimistic, he sighed more often when faced with troubling matters.

His greed was also never fulfilled; struggling to sustain the Little Fire Dragon, he still found himself longing for the time when he could also ride the Formless Dragon—wondering if he would be rendered unconscious by the stench of Smoked Grass if the Formless Dragon enjoyed soaking in it.

"Right now, I don't have the ability to keep a Dragon, but that doesn't mean I can't in the future!"

"My goal is to find a Dragon to contract with and become a Dragon Domain Landlord, then keep another Dragon specifically for riding... The best would be to contract with the Immortal Dragon that symbolizes life. Successful contracting might mean I could have eternal life!" Dragons, such captivating creatures, naturally the more the better.

Feeling the warmth of the Little Fire Dragon on his chest, a bold thought suddenly struck him, "I really want to raid Blue Dragon Island and snatch the Grand Duke's Sapphire Dragon too! And that "Dragon Knight's Dou Qi Secret Manual" must be obtained as well! The Sapphire that can amplify strength is priceless."

...

Fantasy could only temper one's Spiritual Power.

It's not beneficial to reality.

After having lunch, Liszt once again obediently left Fresh Flower Town to come to the deserted lands to the west of the small town and released the Little Fire Dragon. It freely flew around by the seaside; it could switch between its fleshly body and magic power at will, but it still yearned for the freedom of flight.

"Oh ho!"

The cry of the Little Fire Dragon drifted over the sea.

Next to Liszt, the Landwalker bird Loki shivered.

Under his command, it had stopped running away from the Little Fire Dragon. But due to the suppression from its instinctual bloodline, it still deeply feared the Little Fire Dragon's Dragon Might—actually, it's much better now. Previously, every time he released the Little Fire Dragon, it would be scared witless.

"Get a good feel of the Little Fire Dragon's Dragon Might. I hope you can become the first animal that isn't afraid of Dragon Might." Since he couldn't ride the Little Fire Dragon, Loki was still his exclusive mount.

Just at that moment.

The Little Fire Dragon suddenly folded its wings, plunged into the seawater, and then began to cry out "Oh ho," "Oh ho," in distress, struggling and flapping its wings nonstop on the surface of the sea—it couldn't swim.

"This useless dragon!"

Liszt quickly pulled out a rope and threw it towards the Little Fire Dragon, and after catching its wings, he dragged it out from the sea onto the shore.

This series of movements was very proficient, clearly not the first time he had done this.

The reason is simple: every time the Little Fire Dragon was by the seaside, it wanted to conquer the seawater, to become a Fire Dragon that could swim. However, it was really terrible at swimming. Even though Liszt had taught it many times, it panicked whenever it touched water. If Liszt wasn't there to save it, it might've been the first dragon to drown.

"Oh...ho..."

Lying on the shore and coughing up water, the Little Fire Dragon called out weakly.

It was a bit dizzy after choking on water, and partly dizzy from hunger since it hadn't eaten its fill.

Seizing the opportunity, Liszt continuously stroked it with his hand to deepen their bond: "You useless dragon, you're a Fire Dragon, you know. Why should a Fire Dragon learn to swim? You're supposed to soak in magma inside volcanoes... Hmm? Volcanoes? Magma?" A sudden burst of inspiration struck him, leading to an important question.

The might of an Elemental Dragon is clearly the ultimate display of the nature of its magic power.

The magic power of a Fire Dragon is the pinnacle of Fire Attribute Dou Qi, capable of changing the environment between heaven and earth, constantly nurturing the eruption of volcanoes.

The magic power of a Wind Dragon can continuously create storms.

"Following this line of thought in reverse, does this mean that where storms exist, there is extreme Wind Attribute Magic Power? And where volcanic eruptions occur, could there be extreme Fire Attribute Magic Power? If I throw the Little Fire Dragon into magma, could it grow quickly?"

He remembered the descriptions in Knight's Novels: Fire Dragons always live in volcanoes, Ice Dragons amidst ice and snow, Water Dragons always dwelling in the great seas, Earth Dragons living next to deserts, Wind Dragons' lairs are constantly blasted by fierce winds, and Lightning Dragons always appear during stormy, thundery nights.

The appearance of Light Dragons is accompanied by various illusions, while when Dark Dragons appear, everything goes pitch black.

These were indeed scenes fantasized by down-and-out Noble writers, but they also might not be a natural kind of common sense—it's very likely that Fire Dragons live in volcanoes.

"Volcanoes, Little Fire Dragon..." Liszt's eyes sparkled.

Chapter 526 Death of the Dragon Egg

The Duchy of Sapphire had quite a few volcanoes, with large islands like Blue Dragon Island and Iron Hoof Island dotted with active ones. Even Coral Island had a volcano, albeit an extinct one, situated between Birch City and North Valley City. Liszt had even explored there.

He even conjectured that Black Horse Island was an extinct volcano.

"Should the Little Fire Dragon be raised inside a volcano?" he frowned in contemplation. It made logical sense for a young Fire Dragon to hide within a volcano.

It was even possible that juvenile Fire Dragons didn't need to eat at all and could simply bathe in magma—a magical creature formed by magic power, it was hard to imagine in what way it needed to survive.

Liszt watched the Little Fire Dragon that had recovered and flown into the sky again, thinking, "Without a volcano to support it, perhaps the Little Fire Dragon needs to consume ordinary blood food and magic potions to provide the nutrients needed for development... But I have no means to raise it within a volcano."

The active volcanoes in the Duchy of Sapphire were all within other nobles' territories.

Other extinct or dormant volcanoes were difficult to access magma from and naturally would not foster the magic power required by Fire Dragons.

"Should I secretly take the Little Fire Dragon and place it into a volcano, let it soak in the magma?" This thought flashed through his mind and was quickly dismissed, "If the Little Fire Dragon's whereabouts were exposed, it would be troublesome. Moreover, it is not yet certain whether the volcano can indeed help the Little Fire Dragon grow... It would be best to find an island similar to Hawaii in the sea."

There is a Hawaii Volcanoes National Park on Hawaii Island.

Inside there are two active volcanoes, Mauna Loa Volcano and Kilauea Volcano, the latter being the world's most active, having not stopped erupting since 1983.

Almost every day magma spurts out from the volcano, making it the prime spot for observing a volcanic eruption.

Alas, finding this world's Hawaii Island was as difficult as finding another Fire Dragon—after all, finding an active volcano didn't guarantee the sight of magma, as most of it was hidden inside the volcano, and only constantly erupting ones like Kilauea Volcano made it easy to access the magma.

He shook his head.

He gathered up his rope, buoyed himself up and said, "No matter what, at least I have thought of a way to cultivate the Little Fire Dragon. I will slowly investigate and find an

island with a volcano in the Sea of Azure Waves. When the Pioneer Mandate is fulfilled and I am promoted in rank, I will take an island with a volcano for myself!"

Viscount promoted to Earl.

The islands would definitely need to be expanded; one could either choose a new large island to develop, or, if not averse to hassle, combine many small ones.

...

While Liszt was scrimping and saving.

Another piece of bad news was delivered into his hands by the steward in charge of the chicken farm—the steward, a veteran in chicken rearing, found that the five eggs Liszt had sent over were dead and could no longer hatch chicks.

"Are you certain they are dead?"

In the chicken farm of Fresh Flower Town, Liszt stared at the poultry farm steward with an unpleasant expression.

The steward reported with trepidation, "Lord Landlord, these eggs, the eggs are indeed, indeed dead... I examined them under the sunlight, and they are dark and red, and they have started to smell bad."

Accompanying the steward was Administrative Officer Isaiah, who added, "My lord, Old Vasi the steward is the most knowledgeable person about eggs in the chicken farm. He can tell with a glance whether an egg is dead or alive. He arranges the hatching for the mother hens in the chicken farm, and his judgment is almost never wrong."

Taking a deep breath, Liszt said indifferently, "I understand, these eggs... throw them away."

"Yes, my lord."

"Isaiah, go check the duck farm again; I need to know whether those duck eggs have also all died. Also, have someone check those ten Green-headed Duck eggs to see if they are dead." Having accepted reality, he immediately thought of the two types of duck eggs.

The duck farm's report came quickly.

Indeed, just like the chicken farm, those duck eggs had died; only the steward of the duck farm was not yet sure and was still having the ducks continue to incubate.

One day later.

News also came from Black Horse Island; of the ten Green-headed Duck eggs, no one could be certain if they were dead, but one of the eggs had turned black and seemed to have already gone bad inside.

Basically.

This batch of eggs, infected with magic power by the dragon bloodline, had all died. Liszt's efforts had been in vain, and he was in a bad mood. He had been hoping to obtain Dragon Breed Chickens, Dragon Breed Ducks, and Dragon Breed Green-headed Ducks to provide nutrition and improve the food conditions of his territory.

Now he could only hope for the Dragon Breed Cows and Dragon Breed Pigs.

"My lord, perhaps only some of those duck eggs have died; the remaining eggs might still hatch into ducklings," Butler Carter said, trying to console Liszt, seeing his poor mood.

"I am very aware that all those chicken and duck eggs are dead," Liszt said with a slight smile, as if unaffected, "Don't worry about me; this is just an unexpected setback. Scientific experiments are bound not to go smoothly all the time. This time, the breed improvement failed, but next time I'll adjust again, and I will eventually get the results I want."

He was quite certain that the chicken and duck eggs were all dead.

The reason was simple.

The reward for the latest Smoke Mission was twenty-two Dragon Breed Pigs, not Dragon Breed Chickens and Ducks. According to the incubation time, chicken eggs only needed twenty-one days, and duck eggs just twenty-eight days, much shorter than a sow's gestation period. The rewards for the Smoke Mission should have been the chicken and duck eggs first.

After all, these were dragon-related creatures, worthy of being Smoke Mission rewards.

Their absence, with Dragon Breed Pigs appearing instead, indicated that the Dragon Breed Chickens and Ducks had not been successfully infected—they might have been killed by the Dragon Might on the spot.

He now pondered another issue: "Perhaps poultry such as chickens, ducks, and geese are too weak to withstand the Dragon Might or the infection of dragon bloodlines... Greenheaded Ducks are supposed to be Magical Beasts, yet even they couldn't resist; why is that? Could it be that as life forms, eggs cannot accept dragon bloodlines?"

So he thought.

To obtain poultry dragon-related creatures, perhaps the focus of infection should not be on the eggs but rather on the hens, female ducks, and geese; it was unlikely that common poultry would be successful.

"Landwalker Bird Loki, a type of bird, exists, which shows that birds can be infected with dragon bloodlines. And it was originally just a low-level Dragon Beast, infected from a low-level Magical Beast. From this, it is apparent that Green-headed Ducks, also low-level Magical Beasts, have the potential to be infected... Next time, I should bring female Green-headed Ducks for the infection."

As a good friend of the Formless Dragon and a knight of the Little Fire Dragon, Liszt was confident that he would have many opportunities to obtain dragon-related creatures in the future.

Therefore, he was only momentarily disheartened by the death of the chicken and duck eggs and promptly recovered.

And time, unknowingly,

marched swiftly into March, quickly reaching the 9th, bringing his eighteenth birthday. In the Duchy of Sapphire, one was considered an adult at sixteen; eighteen was just an ordinary birthday, but for transmigrator Liszt, turning eighteen meant the coming of age according to his homeland's customs.

As the sun rose, he stood under the Apple Tree Cordyceps, holding a mug of milk tea personally brewed by Mrs. Morson after her recovery, admiring the new tender alfalfa on the grasslands surrounding the castle.

He was invigorated: "Becoming a Dragon Knight before turning adult, my achievement must be unprecedented and likely unsurpassed. Difficulties are only temporary; the future is destined to be bright and splendid!"

Chapter 527 Grandmother Comes to Deliver Potted Plants Again

"Happy birthday, Liszt."

"Happy birthday, Liszt."

"Thank you, Levis and Loria, for the gifts you brought."

"Happy birthday, Liszt."

"Thank you, Li Vera."

At half-past ten in the morning, a string of carriages arrived, it was all the members of the Tulip Family, including Lady Penelope, who was not in the best of health, but had come in person.

They were there to celebrate Liszt's birthday.

"My boy, you've grown another year older, and yet, you are still the youngest Sky Knight in the Duchy of Sapphire," Lady Penelope said with a smile as she embraced her grandson, Liszt, now her proudest grandson, enjoying a warmth of affection reserved just for him.

However, her attendants and servants, holding a potted plant, handed it over to Liszt's servant—even with all her pride, the gift was still a potted plant.

Liszt laughed and instructed his servant to move the potted plant to the flower garden.

At this point, he wasn't really expecting to get any more Elf Bugs from Lady Penelope, how could his small balcony spawn so many? Yet out of habit, he still swiftly applied the Eye of Magic, scanning the somewhat peculiar potted plant.

Lady Penelope had introduced it earlier as a Green Yuanbao, a leguminous plant.

As for why it was called Green Yuanbao, looking at the roots on the surface of the pot, there were two seeds the size of chicken eggs, shaped like yuanbao and green, hence the name was clear. These were the seeds of Green Yuanbao, which, after sprouting, stretch downward to form the roots and upward to become the trunk.

This tree is a type of tall hardwood that can grow up to four meters high.

Its young saplings, because of the large seed lobes, unlike typical sprouted seeds that get absorbed, instead become leaf-like and continue to photosynthesize, are very ornamental, making them a popular choice for potted plants. Its fruit is a pod known as the Green Yuanbao, which can be roasted and eaten, though it tastes average, similar to a low-quality potato.

And yet, with just one glance.

Immediately, a faint trace of magical feedback shined, caught by Liszt on the left seed lobe.

"Wait a moment!" he exclaimed at once, stopping the servant from moving the Green Yuanbao and instead examined it closely, confirming the presence of light within the seed lobe, a sign of an Elf Bug in gestation.

"What's wrong, Liszt?" Lady Penelope seemed to realize something and leaned in, "Is there something wrong with my potted plant?"

Liszt smiled and opted not to hide it, expressing his joy, "Granny, my dear granny, if I'm not mistaken, this Green Yuanbao might be nurturing an Elf Bug. I don't know how to thank you, this is the third Elf Bug you've given me!"

"What!" Lady Penelope exclaimed in surprise, "Does it really have an Elf Bug?"

From her tone, it was clear she hadn't thought her potted plant would continue to bear Elf Bugs—she probably never considered this when giving the plant, her years of life experience had long taught her to be frugal, leveraging the previous two Elf Bugs to save some money on gifts.

But at that moment, no one cared about her tone.

Standing by, the Earl and his wife, The Levis Couple, Li Vera, Lidun, and the rest of the nobles all crowded closer, eager to see for themselves.

The Earl spoke directly, "Liszt, are you sure you're not mistaken? Is this truly a Cordyceps that nurtures an Elf Bug?"

"Father, my perception of magic power is very sensitive. I have felt the magic power of the Elf Bug on the Green Yuanbao, and I definitely am not mistaken. The issue is whether it can be cultivated or not, but I have some insights into breeding Elf Bugs. So far, I have never lost an Elf Bug from any Cordyceps I've discovered."

"Good heavens!" Lady Marie covered her mouth, in disbelief.

She was not surprised by an Elf Bug; she was surprised that the Elf Bug belonged to Liszt and that it was nurtured by a potted plant belonging to Lady Penelope.

"Viscount Liszt truly is the Son of Glory!" A noble started to flatter immediately.

"My dear brother, why does the knightly honor always favor you? Grandmother's potted plants have already birthed three Elf Bugs, all given to you," Li Vera said enviously.

Liszt smiled again, "You should wonder why Grandmother's potted plants always give birth to Elf Bugs. The knightly honor favors Grandmother just the same."

Lady Penelope laughed heartily, without her usual restraint, "Even though I am just an old lady, the knightly honor has not forsaken me. You always thought I was fooling you with my potted plants, little did you know every one of my potted plants is a treasure!"

The Green Yuanbao was solemnly moved to the flower garden.

However, the compliments did not stop, as the nobles tirelessly discussed how knightly honor favored Liszt, and family members continuously congratulated him.

The unborn Green Yuanbao Bug became the catalyst that further lifted the spirits of the birthday celebration.

Listening to everyone's flattery, Liszt felt an indescribable sense of superiority in his heart —a mere Elf Bug caused such envy among the other nobles; if they knew there was a Little Fire Dragon sleeping on his chest, would they not be green with envy?

Although it could not be ridden and would take a hundred years to mature.

Nonetheless, the Little Fire Dragon continued to help him enhance the level of his Dragon Dou Qi, and his power kept increasing. He now dared to assert that, with the refinement and output of the Little Fire Dragon over this period, his Dragon Dou Qi had surpassed that of a Completion Level Sky Knight. In the Duchy of Sapphire, he was only second to the Grand Duke.

Dragon Knight.

Incomparable to Sky Knights.

It seemed like beyond the Completion Level Sky Knights was the Dragon Knight, but in reality, the gap between them was a chasm as deep as the abyss. Only by obtaining a dragon could one build a bridge over the divide. Liszt was very fortunate to encounter his dragon at the age of eighteen.

The only downside was that the Fire Dragon only consumed without producing.

With a mentality of "I have a dragon, but I keep it low-key," Liszt cordially entertained the guests, enjoying a lavish lunch in the dining hall.

Although he didn't have enough money for potions, the castle never lacked for regular food.

Mrs. Abbie and her team of chefs had long since mastered new dishes such as stir-fries and roasts. Seafood was plentiful, desserts were numerous, and even the staple foods came in several varieties—dumplings, noodles, bread, buns, cornmeal rice, and more.

Regrettably, Chef Bawel still could not make tofu, which infuriated Liszt so much he wanted to kill him. The man was a charlatan who had scammed him out of ten Gold Coins in sponsorship funds. Otherwise, with tofu alone, countless variations could be created to add even more richness to the castle's dishes.

Even so.

After the luncheon, the nobles still could not stop praising the castle's sumptuous fare and inquired whether they could send chefs to learn from Mrs. Abbie.

Liszt cleared his throat and said, "Aside from some secret recipes, Mrs. Abbie will surely be willing to teach the other dishes. However, the most authentic dishes can only be tasted in Fresh Flower Town. I welcome you all to visit Fresh Flower Town on regular days to enjoy these delicacies."

Fresh Flower Town will take trade as the future direction of development, and culinary delights are a great idea to attract merchants.

Chapter 528 Black Pearl Pendant and Estuary Pig

After his birthday, Liszt carefully checked the gifts brought by the guests, which, aside from the Unexpected Green Yuanbao Elf Bug that his grandmother had given, were mostly various resources. For instance, the gift from the Earl and his wife was a batch of valuable jade, while the Levis couple sent ten pounds of lead metal.

The function of lead metal is Magic Resistance—by mixing it into equipment, it can increase resistance to Magic Power.

Therefore, the value of lead metal is high, and it serves as an excellent auxiliary material for casting armor and weapons.

In fact, every metal possesses properties related to Magic Power, which are detailed in a magic book called "Metal and Magic Observation Notes".

Iron has good Magic Power conductivity, copper has good Magic Power adhesiveness, silver has good Magic Power coagulation properties, and gold has good Magic Power amplification properties...

Of course, compared to their minor magical properties, the greater value of gold, silver, and copper is as currency in circulation.

"The total value of these gifts only reached two-thirds of the birthday banquet's expenses, as expected, I knew celebrating a birthday would be a loss," Liszt muttered, tossing aside the ledger, too lazy to look any further. He directly left the Castle, mounted Loki, and flew towards the Sea View Villa in the sunset.

The Sea Sprite Ake did not go out and was busy producing Magic Equipment according to the experiments recorded in the magic books.

Having reached the stage of Grand Magician, her research on Magic Power had fully shifted to Magic Arrays. The strength of a Grand Magician lies in the understanding of Magic Arrays. In this aspect, Ake's talent was outstanding, with progress that was astonishingly swift.

She had already mastered the two Advanced Magic spells, Water Wave Shield and Waterfall.

Although she still couldn't cast them instantaneously like Common Magic, she had managed to reduce the casting time to within three seconds. Another Water System Advanced Magic spell, Strong Water Column, that Elkerson had recently brought, she also learned quickly. It was only a pity that she could only learn Water Magic, so her improvement was limited.

If Ake's talents were transferred to a human, who could resonate with all types of Magic Power, her improvement would be terrifying.

Compared to her, another Grand Magician, Chris Truth, who was overseeing the construction of the Mage Tower, was far behind in learning Advanced Magic. She hadn't even mastered Water Wave Shield, and her training progress was full of hitches—in fact, among human magicians, Chris was already exceptionally talented, but her comparison was with Ake.

"Brother."

Ake greeted Liszt with a smile.

This Little Sea Monster, now forty-two years old, had gradually matured through her interaction with Liszt and magic books. However, what remained unchanged was her innocence and her growing dependence on Liszt.

"What Magic Equipment are you making?"

"It's a Black Pearl Pendant. Ake is almost finished with it. Brother, those small black pearls of yours can be used by Ake to make pendants and then sell them. Selling the finished Magic Power pendants will definitely be more profitable than selling the raw black pearls," said Ake cheerily.

She had gradually come to understand economic principles, knowing that processed products were more profitable than raw materials.

In fact, this has always been Liszt's approach. As a modern person with an advanced civilizational soul, he was very aware that the income from selling raw materials was far less than the profits from selling processed goods. His vision for the development of his territory was also against selling raw materials, preferring to sell them after fine processing.

Be it the same millet, once distilled into liquor, the price could increase a hundred times, a thousand times.

So, he would never consider selling millet as soon as it was harvested. Besides consumption, all the millet and grains were to be used for brewing. To the extent that he

would import basic agricultural products such as grains and, after processing, produce alcohol, pastries, and then sell them.

"Ake is very capable," praised Liszt, and then he took out a few books, "These are the Magic Array notes organized by Grand Magician Chris. Take them for reference, and if you have any insights, you can write some notes, which I will then pass on to Chris for her consideration. The exchange of ideas is the best way to explore Truth."

Ake took the notes and nodded vigorously.

The Mangrove Minor Elf flew over from a shell, holding a peanut candy in its hand and offered it to Liszt: "Chirp." It was treating him.

Liszt had no particular interest in peanut candy but instead took out the latest chocolate-covered peanut candy produced by the peanut processing workshop and handed it to Nami, "Here, try the tastier chocolate-covered peanut candy."

"Squeak?"

Nami tilted her head, took the new candy wrapped in dry leaves, and then revealed a sweet smile. After peeling off the leaves, she held the chocolate-covered peanut candy and crunched off a corner. She only chewed twice before making a sour face and handing the chocolate-covered peanut candy back to Liszt, shaking her head and going back to hugging her peanut nougat candy.

"Don't you like chocolate?" Liszt rewrapped the chocolate-covered peanut candy, "Then I'll take it back and give it to Mickey to eat; he loves eating chocolate-covered peanut candy."

Nami quickly said, "Squeak, squeak,"

Liszt was puzzled, "Hmm?"

Ach raised his head and translated for Liszt, "Brother, Nami wants to play with Mickey but doesn't want to play with Jela."

Clearly, no elf liked to play with the temperamental Jela—actually, most elves didn't enjoy playing with other elves. They possessed the independent spirit of plants and didn't like communal living.

"Alright, next time I come, I'll bring Mickey along."

"Squeak!"

Nami was very happy, being a Little Minor Elf that enjoyed playing with other elves. But the truth was, Mickey didn't like playing with Nami. He too was an elf with an independent nature and only liked to play by himself.

After chatting with Ach for a while.

Liszt teased Nami, then pet the Kelp Bugs, Laver Bugs, Redstone Flower Bugs, Horsetail Bugs, and Inkangle Bugs swimming in the seashells, and then left the Sea View Villa, not wanting to disturb Ach, who was diligently studying—magicians could easily become engrossed in experiments, and his visits to chat with Ach were more about helping Ach relax.

Constantly experimenting, he was worried that Ach might develop the bad habits of magicians and become psychologically disturbed.

In truth, he treated Chris the same way, not wishing her to turn into a crazed Grand Magician like those at the Goat Assembly—this relaxation was what Liszt called mental therapy, and he considered himself a mental health specialist solving magicians' psychological issues.

•••

Such days continued until early April.

The Territory Officers, striving day and night for promotions and raises, had finally seeded the nearly three million acres of Black Horse Island—regardless of whether the seeds would sprout or whether there was enough manpower for the next steps of cultivation, they at least completed the task of seeding.

"Complete the task and receive a reward of twenty-two Dragon Breed Pigs."

At the newly established Estuary Pig Farm next to the Red River Mouth in Red River Town, two old sows being fed a large amount of high-quality pig feed, finally began to give birth one after another.

The pig farm Steward who was responsible for delivering the babies, successively carried out twenty-two small piglets.

The good news spread, and Liszt personally went to the Estuary Pig Farm. After confirming that all twenty-two Dragon Breed Pigs were healthy, he immediately rewarded the farm's feeders with one silver coin each as a benefit.

Then.

He categorized the new Dragon Breed Pigs separately, naming them—Estuary Pigs.

This would be another special produce of Black Horse Island.

Chapter 529 One Thousand Acres of Mushroom Greenhouses

The birth of the Estuary Pig means that Dragon Breed pork is not far from arrival.

According to the information Liszt exchanged with the pig farm steward, the original breed of the Estuary Pig is the Longstrip Pig, which is a fast-maturing breed that can become sexually mature and mate in about 6 months. This means that by this October, the Estuary Pigs should be able to mate, and by next January or February, there could be a litter of piglets.

The breeding pigs reserved for mating definitely can't be eaten, but the piglets from crossing them with ordinary Longstrip Pigs, of course, can be eaten.

"By next February, there should be piglet meat to eat, very good, Dragon Breed pork, I wonder what it will taste like!" he secretly anticipated.

At the same time, he thought of the Dragon Breed Cows.

"In Horse Ranching Town, they have already set aside half of the slope of Needle Grass Hill to relocate Alfalfa Cordyceps, cultivate the alfalfa that milk cows love to eat, and build the 'Banpo Cattle Farm.' Once the pasture is abundant, we can relocate the Dragon Breed Cows there, the cows can get pregnant at the age of 2 next year, produce milk after giving birth the year after, and then the true Dragon Breed Milk will arrive!"

With the construction of the Banpo Cattle Farm, the Dragon Breed Cows also got a new name—Banpo Cattle.

Estuary Pigs, Banpo Cattle, all are to conceal the dragon bloodlines within them; together with Black Horse Ranch's Black Blood Treasured Horses, these are the Dragon Breed livestock that Liszt owns.

After inspecting the Estuary Piglets, he mounted Loki and took a round trip around Black Horse Island to inspect the construction progress of all the new towns.

Currently, on Black Horse Island, New Harbor Town has already started to take shape, becoming increasingly prosperous with the migration of a large number of industries, now almost on par with Fresh Flower Town.

Especially the ever-growing glass workshop, housing over eight hundred workers; the other side, now renamed as "Black Horse Kiln Factory," the Fire Dragon Brick Factory, has absorbed more than thirteen hundred workers, with subordinated workshops for pottery, bricks, charcoal, and new materials (continuing research and development of porcelain, cement, lime, etc.).

If it weren't for Fire Dragon Magic Power as fuel, by now New Harbor Town would have been shrouded in thick smoke.

So as an Elemental Dragon, the only output of a Fire Dragon, it seems, is to fire up the boilers.

Beyond New Harbor Town, New Harbor Town is also taking shape. The new port has been completed, and the shipyard has begun renovations of old ships, reassembling the three-masted large sailing ship Sunset. And transferred some of the carpenters and woodworkers from Fresh Flower Town's woodworking workshop to build a new Sampan Workshop here, focusing on producing sampans for fishermen's use.

Additionally, Red River Town and Horse Ranching Town are taking shape, Grain Town has just started construction, Thorn Town is barely breaking ground, and Green Tea Town is still on paper.

Overall, things are looking up.

After making the round of inspections,

Liszt returned to New Harbor Town, first to check the progress of the Mage Tower under construction—two out of the five planned stories were already completed. Then he met with Chris Truth, who had moved the entire Magic Workshop here, for a conversation. He also picked up this month's Magic Potions, mainly the Ice Flame Potions.

Feeling the whole box of Ice Flame Potions in the Gemstone Space, Liszt was very excited.

"This year, after expanding the scale of the Ice Snow Flame Mushrooms, despite the lack of manpower, the yield was still bountiful, finally allowing me to enjoy myself... These should be enough to sustain me and the Little Fire Dragon for ten days," he silently calculated. Now the Ice Snow Flame Mushroom greenhouse has been expanded to five hundred acres.

Apart from the one hundred and fifty acres of greenhouse in Fresh Flower Town's Mushroom Hamlet, the rest are here on the south side of Needle Grass Hill on Black Horse Island—the north slope is where Banpo Cattle Farm is.

"Five hundred acres, the scale is still not enough; we need to expand by another five hundred acres, to quickly reach a thousand acres of greenhouse and complete the new task!"

With the Dragon Breed Pig task completed, a new Smoke Mission was already issued.

"Mission: The bountiful harvest of Ice Snow Flame Mushrooms has slightly eased your need for Magic Potions, showing the importance of Magic Potions not cultivated by Elves. Please continue to expand the scale of the mushroom greenhouses to reach a thousand acres. Reward: Giant Algae Forest."

Liszt didn't know what a Giant Algae Forest was.

It sounded like the algae had formed a forest under the sea, possibly containing a wealth of fishery resources. He had already asked Ach to pay attention to any patches of giant seaweed—Giant Algae Forests would definitely be in the sea, and only Ach could discover it during his swims.

Cultivating crops on a thousand acres of farmland is easy, but growing mushrooms in a thousand acres of greenhouses is much more difficult.

Mushrooms, including the mutated Flame Mushrooms and Ice Snow Flame Mushrooms, require a high level of skill to cultivate, which not just any ordinary serf can do well.

Nowadays, the number of people in the territories who can cultivate these three types of mushrooms doesn't exceed three hundred.

Of course, Flame Mushrooms were the only magic potions Liszt could obtain and mass-produce quickly, so he devoted a considerable amount of energy to it. He arranged for these three hundred mushroom farmers, each to take ten apprentices, and after training them, to go on to teach even more apprentices.

Moreover, with division of labor and cooperation, the mushroom farmers were responsible for the raw materials, temperature, and greenhouse management, while the apprentices were responsible for the heavy labor.

Only by continuously opening up new greenhouses could they plant more Flame Mushrooms—because the Ice Snow Flame Mushrooms could no longer be cultivated as the weather got warmer.

"Consultant Gao Ertai, the mushroom greenhouses must be expanded to a thousand acres within half a month. The number of mushroom farmers also needs to be constantly increased. I've decided to build a new town here, called Mushroom Town. It will be dedicated to serving these mushroom farmers and become the main production base for the potions I need."

Gao Ertai, who had become immune to Liszt's impulsive actions, nodded without hesitation and said, "Rest assured, my lord, I will transfer a group of officials to come and build Mushroom Town."

"This is a crucial task; Flame Mushrooms are very important to me."

"Your cultivation is critical to the future of all your followers, and we certainly cannot afford to be negligent. You should know that, as your follower, I am excited every day and filled with boundless fighting spirit. Even though I do not have your talent, to follow you, who has such a grand future, is already more than what many other knights of the territories could hope for," said Gao Ertai.

This blatant flattery didn't cause any displeasure for Liszt,—

nor did it give him much of a thrill, because Gao Ertai frequently offered flattery, and Liszt was similarly immune to it. He smiled and said, "You are my family tutor, and you have taught me much of my knowledge. As long as you follow me wholeheartedly, I will certainly promise you a bright future."

Gao Ertai immediately kneeled on one knee, offering the grand gesture of a knight: "I thank you, my lord, Gao Ertai swears fealty to you unto death!"

"Rise, the territory needs you. Complete the construction of the mushroom greenhouses as soon as possible."

"Understood!"

Leaving Black Horse Island, Liszt did enjoy a full ten days of indulging in potions with the Little Fire Dragon, who was so delighted it kept calling out "oh ho," "oh ho" every day. Liszt also acquired a large amount of impure magic power, upgrading his own Dragon Dou Qi. His strength steadily increased, getting stronger with each passing day.

While indulging in potions, he often rode Loki, rushing to Birch City.

His destination was the dead volcano located between Birch City and North Valley City. This volcano had no official name, similar to Thorn Ridge, it was just a desolate mountain.

The serfs in the area called it Broken Tooth Mountain—because the crater had a big gap, which from a distance looked like a half-missing front tooth.

Upon reaching his destination, he landed in the center of the volcano crater and released the Little Fire Dragon to circle freely.

He then rode Loki, constantly exploring around the rim of the volcano crater.

"Although it's very likely a futile effort, and there's no chance of finding the so-called lava channels that lead to the underground magma river... I won't be satisfied without thoroughly searching several times."

Chapter 530 Underwater Giant Algae Forest

The lava passage was, of course, not found.

He used the Eye of Magic to try and pick up some stragglers, to find a couple of Elf Bugs, but similarly came up empty. Broken Tooth Mountain, as a dead volcano, probably had died a long time ago and had completely weathered into a normal mountain range, with no trace of magma and not even any geothermal heat.

There were no hot springs, no steam, no caverns, just a regular mountain range.

"Loki, let's go back!" Liszt called out. The Little Fire Dragon that was circling in the sky chasing small birds immediately dived down, and just less than three meters from Liszt, it suddenly turned into a ball of flames. With a loud bang, it rushed into Liszt's body, almost knocking him over.

Steadying his body with two steps back on his hind legs, he immediately scolded the Little Fire Dragon in his mind: "Keep it steady, how many times have I told you, be gentle when coming home!"

"Oh-ho!"

The Little Fire Dragon let out a response, but without any emotion; it didn't listen to a word Liszt was saying.

Training it like one would train a Blizzard Beast was not easy – perhaps because dragons have such long growth cycles, they are undoubtedly smart, but their adaptation is measured in years... In any case, the most significant change in the Little Fire Dragon over this past month of training was that it had accepted its new name.

Leo!

As to why Liszt wanted to name the Little Fire Dragon that, probably only Liszt himself knew.

Leaving Broken Tooth Mountain.

Riding on Loki, Liszt flew to the southern beach of Coral Island to visit an Intermediate Magical Beast – the Purple Sand Crocodile. This crocodile was leisurely sunbathing on the beach; upon Liszt's arrival, it immediately became alert, raising its head in a posture ready to attack.

"I really want to slaughter it, skin it, and eat its meat, but it's a bit embarrassing. I somewhat understand that the Earl probably deliberately left the Purple Sand Crocodile to maintain the diversity of magical beasts on Coral Island."

The relationship between humans and Magical Beasts on the continent is one of mutually hunting each other.

But in the Duchy of Sapphire, isolated overseas, Magical Beasts are considered rare species. Often they are domesticated and raised or protected in their habitats to allow the beasts to continue breeding, ensuring a continuous supply of Magical Beast Meat. Like Liszt's previous approach of killing off all the beasts in Thorn Ridge, it is very ill-advised.

The Purple Sand Crocodile in front of him wasn't aware of what the human was thinking.

But sensing the danger that had descended upon it, it opened its mouth and spewed out Magic – the Water Wave Shield, instantly a pale blue halo completely enveloping it.

Seeing this.

Liszt slowly drew the Sky-Cleaving Greatsword, as powerful Dragon Dou Qi surged within him, ready to burst forth.

Boom!

The one to attack first wasn't him, but rather the Purple Sand Crocodile, as the large crocodile crazily unleashed Magic – Water Arrow Barrage, countless water arrows piercing like sharp arrows toward Liszt.

With his legs pushing off the ground, Liszt leaped high, deftly avoiding the crocodile's magic.

The Sky-Cleaving Greatsword swung violently in midair, sending forth a "Crimson Dawn Burn" which struck the Purple Sand Crocodile's Water Wave Shield as a line of fire.

With a thunderous blast!

The Purple Sand Crocodile's Water Wave Shield didn't hold up and shattered in a second.

The not yet fully dissipated high-level Fire Attribute Dragon Dou Qi then splashed onto the crocodile, casting a purple sheen over its scales, instantly scorching the scales of the Purple Sand Crocodile.

"Wu gugu!"

The Purple Sand Crocodile let out a scream of agony; it couldn't block Liszt's sword strike at all, but of course, this could only be considered a superficial wound. Seeing its state, Liszt gently landed, put away the Sky-Cleaving Greatsword, and with a whistle, called over Loki. He hopped on without a backward glance and left the sandy beach.

He could feel his own strength had explosively increased; an ordinary Intermediate Magical Beast had great difficulty resisting his charged sword strike.

It was just a test of attack power; there was no need to kill the Purple Sand Crocodile.

"I wonder how many sword strikes can the Earl now withstand? If the Sapphire Duke were to come, without relying on the Sapphire Dragon, just by matching Dragon Dou Qi and Dou Qi Secret Techniques, could I withstand his two or three strikes? Surely the Sapphire Family must possess Dou Qi Secret Techniques centered on lethality, although I have two Dou Qi Secret Techniques, both are auxiliary in nature..."

When measuring against the Earl, Liszt's strength had already surpassed all Sky Knights. But for the Grand Duke who might become a Dragon Knight, he had no way to gauge.

"My current strength is quite far from that of the Marquis of Bull."

Originally, the Marquis of Bull was capable of fighting dozens of Sky Knights by himself. Although he was ultimately forced to flee, his strength after transforming into a Lich was unquestionably formidable.

Liszt now felt confident he could strongly overpower two or three Sky Knights, but if there were more, he could only beat a hasty retreat, a far cry from the Marquis.

Of course.

His strength was in a rapid growth phase, improving every day.

After all, he was a Dragon Knight about to ride a dragon.

...

This self-assured Dragon Knight, who had not yet ridden a dragon.

After returning to Fresh Flower Town, his mood was no longer so cheerful. The reason was simple: he was out of magic potions again. The Little Fire Dragon began to howl for its medicine, and his own cultivation slowed without the aid of magic potions. The interruption to his rising momentum was uncomfortable.

"It's mid-April now, about five or six months away from the Pioneer Mandate... I really want to charge straight into the Eagle Kingdom and plunder a batch of resources,

preferably capturing a Marquis or Earl or two. The ransom money alone would probably be enough to satisfy me!" When there were no magic potions to consume. Liszt would always unconsciously have thoughts of plundering. While suppressing this greed, he couldn't help but ponder, "No wonder wars happen every year. The resources consumed in knight cultivation always drive the nobles to compete with each other. Even someone like me, who grew up in a peaceful era, can't help but get involved." Enduring. Night fell. When he went to the Sea View Villa to chat with Ach. Ach suddenly mentioned something interesting, "Brother, Ach discovered a colorful big fish near Black Horse Island. It looked like a beautiful Rainbow Dolphin, definitely a sea monster. Ach wanted to catch up with it to catch it for brother, but it swam very fast and disappeared into a large mass of seaweed, nowhere to be seen." Rainbow Dolphin? What kind of sea monster was that? Liszt's surprise about the Rainbow Dolphin was fleeting, and his attention quickly focused on another point: "A large mass of seaweed?" "Yes, there's a very large forest of seaweed under the sea there, like an undersea forest. Ach almost got dizzy trying to navigate it. It's very strange seaweed, the first time Ach has

ever discovered so much seaweed gathered together at the bottom of the sea. There are

many fish living among it."

A vast expanse of seaweed, an undersea forest.

These two pieces of information quickly flashed through Liszt's mind, making him think of the Smoke Mission. Without much thought, he immediately summoned the Smoke Mission.

Indeed.

The content of the mission had changed.

"Complete the mission, reward: Giant Algae Forest."

About a thousand acres of mushroom greenhouse had already been built, so the new mission was also promptly released: "Mission: The keen perception of the Sea Serpent detected something unusual about the Giant Algae Forest, but she lacks the cultivation of the Eye of Magic and cannot peer into its essence. Perhaps you need to dive into the water and explore it yourself to uncover the secrets of the Giant Algae Forest. Reward: An Elf Bug."

Hidden within the Giant Algae Forest was an Elf Bug.

It was likely a Giant Algae Bug, and although Liszt was currently unable to afford to develop underwater cultivation, he still looked forward to each Elf Bug. "Ach, where did you find this Giant Algae Forest?"

After thinking for a moment, Ach replied, "It's about five hundred meters from the southeast corner of Black Horse Island, with a depth of around thirty meters. There are many rocks on the seabed, and those giant algae are growing on the rocks. It's like ropes extending towards the surface, dense and seemingly endless."

"Guide me there, Ach. I want to explore it myself!"