

## The Mighty 641

Chapter 641 Dazzling Noble

"Wow!"

...

Confined to the box, Jela let out a reluctant protest but ultimately couldn't resist Liszt's discipline and obediently settled down for a deep sleep.

Only then did Liszt find time to mount the Landwalker bird Loki and head towards the seaside castle.

Ach wasn't in the castle, and neither was the Rainbow Whale Rose. Only the Giant Algae Greater Elf Pike, along with three Giant Algae Minor Elves and eight Giant Algae Elf Bugs, were freely swimming in the pool.

Upon seeing Liszt arrive, Pike opened his sharp-toothed mouth wide and laughed heartily, "Whoa, Liszt, you're back! Ach said you were at war. Did you win? Pike has never lost a battle in the sea. Do you want me to teach you?"

"Thanks, Pike," Liszt reached out and shook hands with Pike, "but I fight on land, and so far, I haven't lost there either."

"Haha, just like Pike, handsome Liszt is an expert in battle. We're both masters of war."

"Indeed."

Liszt humored the irreverent Pike with a few random responses before asking, "Where's Ach?"

"She went out with that stupid, ugly big rainbow fish to look for bugs. What a letdown. What's so great about those little bugs? Pike hates them the most. If any dare to come to Pike's territory, Pike will tear them in two!"

"Don't say that, Pike; you evolved from an Elf Bug yourself!"

"Haha, but I have evolved successfully and have risen above low-level tastes. They are still little bugs, foolish and ugly."

Making a good point, Liszt found himself at a loss for words for the moment.

He couldn't quite figure out how this Giant Algae Greater Elf had grown to have such a sharp, conceited, and narcissistic personality. He felt he should interact less with Pike in the future, lest Pike influence his own character—the magical bond was quite mysterious and was a two-way contract.

It seemed to rely on mental strength to determine who was the dominant party.

When the elf was weak, the human was the dominant party in the contract. For example, Elf Bugs couldn't refuse their master's orders, and Little Minor Elves also had difficulty going against commands. As the elf grew stronger, the dominant party in the contract also changed. Liszt found it hard to directly order the Greater Elf Pike around.

If it was a Dragon Elf stronger than the Greater Elf, the magical bond would probably be a completely equal contract.

Liszt even speculated that if there were an Elf King, the Elf King might use the magical bond to take the dominant party's place and become the master of humans.

Of course, having never seen a Dragon Elf, he had no way to confirm the situation with the Elf King.

Choosing not to engage in idle chatter with Pike any further, he directly asked, "Pike, do you know when Ach will be back?"

"Handsome Pike does not know."

"Alright, you keep playing. I'm leaving."

"Don't go, let's chat some more."

...

At night, Fresh Flower Town Nameless Castle was the scene of another grand banquet, celebrating Liszt's triumphant return. Phrases like 'the glory of knighthood shines upon us' could be heard every so often.

At the same time,

At Coral Island, in Tulip Castle,

One of Li Weiliam's Retainer Knights was reporting to Levis, with Lady Marie, Loria, and Lidun listening on the side: "...The campaign for the Pioneer Mandate unfolded like this: Lord Liszt stationed at Trapped Dragon Mountain Iron Mine for five days and then, to avoid retaliatory strikes from Dragon Knights, returned by boat. He arrived back at Fresh Flower Town this afternoon."

...

Having listened to all the details of the Pioneer Mandate,

Lady Marie couldn't help but exclaim in surprise, "Ah!"

The Retainer Knight was not a good storyteller. The thrilling images of war were described in a dry manner, but the excitement was still palpable, making everyone in the room feel as if they were there.

Levis shook his head in disbelief, "A Domain Knight? A Domain Knight even more powerful than a Completion Level Sky Knight? Liszt actually defeated a Domain Knight all by himself and even seized a mine with a million tons of iron ore?"

As he spoke, he seemed to think of something, his excitement mounting, "A mine with a million tons, had you already transported half of it when you returned?"

"Yes, Sir Levis."

Lidun screamed from beside him, "The Marquis Nuta, wielding the Dou Qi of the entire Knight Order, was actually unable to defeat Brother Liszt? And he even captured several Sky Knights, one of whom, a Sword Saint, became his follower?"

"Indeed."

A moment of silence followed, accompanied by sounds of shocked gasps.

Lady Marie recovered from her astonishment and, clutching her palms together, asked, "So in this session of the Pioneer Mandate, has the Tulip Family accrued great military achievements?"

"I followed the Lord and overheard Lord Mesiro confirming in a conversation with Lord Liszt that the military achievements have reached the standard required for promotion to Marquis. If the subsequent half a million tons of iron ore can also be successfully transported back, the promotion of Lord to Marquis could be greatly advanced, possibly occurring as soon as the conclusion of the Pioneer Mandate."

"Praise Liszt, Praise Father Lord!" Loria clasped her hands devoutly at her chest, "May the glory of knighthood always favor the Tulip Family!"

Subsequently, Loria asked, "Father Lord who remains in the Eagle Kingdom, did he mention when he would return? Also, has my father mentioned when he would come back?"

"When the transportation of the iron ore finishes, the Pioneer Mandate will basically come to an end. The Lord, Marquis Roderick, and Lord Mesiro should all return together."

Levis, unable to contain his excitement, paced back and forth in the living room, incessantly inquiring about battlefield details, and sent someone to inform Lady Penelope and Li Vera. When the old lady and Li Vera arrived at Tulip Castle, there was another round of astonishment and praise.

Lady Penelope stated on the spot, "Tomorrow, let us go to Fresh Flower Town together. Our Tulip Family's most outstanding bloodline has returned from the battlefield, and we shall rightly celebrate his bountiful joy!"

After more than an hour of commotion,

Tulip Castle finally returned to tranquility.

After completing their evening ablutions, Levis and Loria went back to their room and straight to the cradle cared for by the servants, looking at their sleeping infant with the tender expressions of parents.

Levis reached out and touched the baby's soft cheeks, saying, "We'll go to Fresh Flower Town tomorrow and take Richard along, to let Liszt see his nephew. He is now a top-ranking powerhouse, second only to the Dragon Knights, and this Pioneer Mandate with all its resources belongs to him—his harvest will surely be substantial."

Just half a month ago, a full-term pregnant Loria gave birth to a healthy baby boy, who became the Tulip Family's fourth-generation legitimate eldest son.

Named — Richard Tulip — as per the name chosen by the Earl before he left.

Loria expressed her concern, "Isn't Richard too young, the journey might be too bumpy..."

"Don't worry, just ask the servants to be extra careful, and place more quilts inside the carriage. Liszt is his close uncle, we cannot neglect such a powerful figure; the Tulip Family's rise to Marquis on Iron Hoof Island will still depend on Liszt's support to secure a foothold."

Perhaps it was the direct experience of strength that changed his perception, or becoming a parent had altered his view, but Levis had fully realized Liszt's might.

Loria agreed, "You're right, Liszt is a strong backup for our family, we need to maintain a close relationship with him."

As she spoke, she bowed her head.

Looking at Richard with maternal affection, "My son, you are indeed a fortunate little fellow. Your maternal grandfather is the Marquis of Golden Island, your grandfather will be the Marquis of Iron Hoof Island, your uncle has limitless prospects, and you are destined to become the most dazzling noble of Sapphire."

#### Chapter 642 Grow Up Quickly

Liszt didn't know that he already had a nephew; he was aware of Loria Gold Wheat Ear's due date, but didn't notice that it had come and gone.

After the banquet had ended, he once again headed to the seaside villa, finally meeting with Ach.

"Brother!"

Ach, having already learnt of Liszt's return from Pike, wasn't surprised but was very happy, however, she wasn't the type to act coy and girlish, so her smile was very reserved—since immersing herself in the world of magic and truth, she had become much quieter.

The vast knowledge as boundless as the ocean always made her linger and forget to return. Perhaps the hustle and bustle of the world seemed lively and extraordinary to ordinary people, but in her eyes, it was just superficial frivolity.

Except for Liszt.

She would often picture Liszt's smiling face in her mind, "Brother's smile is really nice."

At that moment, Liszt just so happened to open his arms, and Ach threw herself into his embrace, immediately smelling the strong scent of alcohol, but there was also a familiar, calming scent.

"Ach, how have you been this past month?"

"Everything is quite good... It's just that the magic plants grow so slowly, Druid magic can't make them grow quickly, and I've made no progress with transformation magic... Leo has also become more temperamental, he doesn't like the fish I catch for him, he wants to eat beef, but I can't get any beef for him."

"It's okay, leave Leo to me to handle." Liszt curled a strand of Ach's azure blue hair and took a sniff at the tip of his nose, noting a faint fragrance, "I heard from Pike that you and Ros have been looking for Elf Bugs recently?"

"Yes, Ach has made some new discoveries in her magic research and wants to thoroughly understand the birth of Elves, but I've searched many seas and haven't found any Elf Bugs in gestation... Oh, right, brother, I found a new Elf Bug on my way to Dodo Island a week ago."

"Is that so, did you make a contract with it?"

"No, I was waiting for brother to make the contract."

"It just so happens that I am going to Dodo Island tomorrow, so I'll contract this Elf Bug then." After chatting with Ach for a while, Liszt took out two magic books and handed them over, "This 'The Nature and Development of Blood Magic' records the research of my new Vampire follower, and this 'The Grand Magician's Theoretical Summary' is a collaborative work by three Grand Magicians, you can refer to them."

"Ah, vampires?"

"You'll understand after you read this book." Liszt didn't elaborate, as everything was in this Blood Magic Tome, and he took out a beautiful piece of amber, "Aren't you researching the birth of Elves? Take this Elf Bug Amber, and you can study it at your leisure."

The Elf Bug Amber had been dug out from, the Rocky Beach of Fresh Flower Town and apart from providing some inspiration for Chris Truth's ascension to Grand Magician, it hadn't revealed many other uses.

So, it was given to Ach for her research, to see if she could find any new discoveries.

Once Ach accepted the Elf Bug Amber, Liszt handed her a hand-drawn map of ruins: "This map was drawn by three Grand Magicians based on fragments of an old map, and it seems to point to an unknown race living in the sea, a civilization that has declined, leaving only some ruins."

"A race in the sea?"

"I suspect it might be the Nixie race."

"But Ach is also a Nixie, Ah, but Ach is a sea Elf, born in a shell from the start, living alone in the sea. Though I've sensed the presence of other Nixies a few times, Ach doesn't really want to interact with them. Nixies shouldn't have a civilization, right?"

"You make sense, but I can't think of any other intelligent sea-dwelling race." Liszt shook his head.

As mentioned in the Knight's Novels and Magic Books he had read,

The intelligent beings that exist in the sea, aside from Nixies, are Mermaids. Sometimes he wonders if Nixies and Mermaids are actually the same creature, just mistaken for two different ones. After all, humans seeing Nixies or Mermaids from atop the ocean would likely not be able to discern the details.

But these speculations aren't important.

Liszt smiled, "The three Grand Magicians have already determined the basic area of the ruins, when we find time to explore together, we'll know what this unknown race is and what treasures they've left behind."

"Mm-hmm."

"Then you should rest early."

"Is brother going back now?"

"Yes, I'm going back." Liszt stood up, looked at the petite Ach once more, and couldn't help but sigh, "I really wish you could grow up faster, Ach."



A glint of a blush seemed to pass across Ach's face, fleeting as she also murmured wistfully, "Ach also hopes to grow up soon."

...

The next morning, Liszt took Ach directly to Dodo Island.

On the way, they found an Elf Bug, a familiar one—the Laver Elf Bug. Ach had formed a contract with a Laver Elf Bug before. However, due to a shortage of manpower in the territory, just tending and harvesting the Giant Algae took up a large portion of the fishermen. Not even kelp was being cultivated, let alone laver.

It had to be set aside for the time being.

When the new batch of serfs arrived, a large number of fishermen would be trained to engage in cultivation work along the coastline.

Coastline cultivation and shallow water fishing were projects vigorously developed by the territory, which would eventually transition to nearshore aquaculture and deep-sea fishing industries, fully exploiting the value of the sea.

"However, why do I feel so little excitement about forming contracts with Elf Bugs now?" Riding the Rainbow Whale Rose through the depths of the sea, Liszt noticed the calmness of his emotions.

From hearing about Elf Bugs to contracting them.

His emotions had never risen with excitement, as if since seizing nine Little Minor Elves from the Pioneer Mandate, the discovery of wild Elf Bugs was no longer a significant event—waves of war plunder could yield profits equivalent to the territory's several years of farming, and indeed it would have a significant impact.

"Every year, the Pioneer Mandate from the Duchy of Sapphire can attract a large number of knights to participate, there sure is reason behind it."

Even he, blessed with the Power of Destiny, always stumbling upon Elf Bugs, had a great longing to engage in the plunder of war. Not to mention the knights from infertile lands—the plunder of one battle could feed them for years. Why wouldn't they plunder? Perhaps by a stroke of a knight's fortune, while plundering they might even become nobles.

"Plainly put, I've grown accustomed to feasting on sumptuous dishes and have lost interest in modest greens..."

By the time they reached Dodo Island, it was already afternoon.

Ach usually fed every five days, and during those fixed times, Leo would wait on the shore. Now was not the feeding time. Yet Liszt didn't care, he climbed straight to the Volcano Crater and bellowed several times towards the sulphur-rich volcano, "Leo, it's time for beef!"

After a few calls.

The rolling lava within the volcano suddenly burst open, and a stream of flame shot into mid-air, condensing into a fire dragon with red and black scales—it was the Little Fire Dragon Leo.

"Oh-ho!"

Leo circled in the sky before swooping down, landing in front of Liszt.

It was noticeably larger than before, and as it landed, it immediately squinted and regarded Liszt, shooting hot flames from its nostrils.

His expression and demeanor gave Liszt the feeling it was looking down on him.

With a darkened expression, Liszt responded in a calm voice, "What's wrong, Leo? Don't recognize me anymore? Or, do you no longer wish to eat beef?"

At the mention of beef, Leo briefly froze.

Then, reluctantly, it lowered its head and let out a pleasing cry, "Oh-ho."

## Chapter 643 The Evil of the Evil Dragon

There was beef.

Although Leo was reluctant, he still cooperated with Liszt for an invigorating training session.

After over a month of going out on campaign and consuming only some potions, his strength had increased at a very slow pace—not to say that it was slow, for compared to other Sky Knights, his training speed still seemed incredibly fast. But compared to the substantive strength growth that could be felt when training with a dragon, the strength gained from training alone was too little.

"Still, it feels more exhilarating to undergo Dragon Knight training," he mused.

However, he also had certain worries, mainly that Leo's emotional bond seemed to have hit a plateau, with even some backsliding. As a Quasi-Dragon Knight who had yet to successfully ride a dragon, he didn't have the time to soak with Leo every day, using brainwashing to erode Leo's aloofness.

This resulted in a profound rift between man and dragon.

Watching Leo's drained appearance, he took out a pile of Magic Potions and handed them to it, while taking the opportunity to thoroughly pat it down. Leo did not resist his touch, but it seemed not to enjoy it either.

The good feelings accumulated previously had fallen back to square one.

Quite a difficult dragon to please.

"No wonder most Elemental Dragons are evil dragons. This kind of temperament is indeed annoying," Liszt played with one of Leo's scales. Its scales varied in size, with the ones on its neck, head, forelimbs, and wings being fine and dense, while the ones on its back were coarse and large, the biggest being as big as a washbasin.

The scale had a warm touch. Between the gaps, leaking Magic Power could be seen, faintly transforming and forming tiny red sparks.

The magic sparks were not hot to touch.

They were between magic and matter, not real sparks.

Sometimes he really wanted to tear off a scale and take it back for detailed study, but he had not put this idea into action.

Feeling the Magic Power attached to the scale and the abundant "Dragon's Intent" inside, Liszt frowned and pondered, "How exactly did other Dragon Knights manage to succeed in dragon riding? Could it be that the temperament of Elemental Dragons is so poor that they cannot be ridden at all? Most of the dragons in the various kingdoms are Elemental Dragons and Metal Dragons, and it seems that only one or two are Elemental Dragons, none of them being Fire Dragons."

He paused.

Then he thought, "Or is it that my strength is not enough? Perhaps only when I attain Completion Level of Advanced Dou Qi will Leo accept me, mount it, and form a bond... I should write a letter to Marquis Merlin and ask him what the state of Complete Advanced Dou Qi is like, whether it's similar to the Intermediate Dou Qi of an Elite Earth Knight."

The Primary Dou Qi of an Apprentice Knight is very simple, just the extraction of a special kind of Magic Power from the body, referred to as Dou Qi.

When Dou Qi sublimates to possess its own attribute, it advances to Intermediate Dou Qi, making one an Earth Knight.

When Intermediate Dou Qi becomes saturated in the body, one becomes an Elite Earth Knight. At this point, to continue training, one must rely on the shock of Magic Potions to break the shackles of their own cells, thus accommodating more Intermediate Dou Qi. A quantitative change induces a qualitative change, ultimately transitioning to Advanced Dou Qi.

The Advanced Dou Qi of a Sky Knight is a special form of Dou Qi that's more particular than Intermediate Dou Qi, with the most significant change being its "lightness," making levitation and flying effortless.

And when Advanced Dou Qi reaches saturation, one becomes a Completion Level Sky Knight.

What the state of Dou Qi is at this time, Liszt was not very clear - according to common records, Completion Level Sky Knights can begin to seek dragons to ride, perhaps the Complete Advanced Dou Qi at this stage aids in dragon riding. Or perhaps Complete Advanced Dou Qi can only continue to be cultivated with the aid of a dragon.

He speculated it was the latter, that one must rely on a dragon to break through the shackles of Complete Advanced Dou Qi.

"Oh-ho!"

After gobbling up its medicine, Leo let out an increasingly majestic roar. It glanced at Liszt, without lingering too long, and leapt directly into the air to fly towards the Volcano Crater, like a meteor descending into the magma. The magma churned and returned to normal, leaving only the steaming vapor and the scent of sulfur.

The sun was setting in the west.

Liszt stood quietly at the volcano crater, lost in his thoughts for a long while before he slowly began to descend the mountain.

Ach was by the seaside helping Rainbow Whale Rose scrub off dead skin. Seeing Liszt return, Ach immediately put down the brush, greeted Liszt with a serene smile, and Rose let out a cheerful "jiyou" sound.

The sense of loss experienced on Little Fire Dragon Leo

was quickly dispersed by this warm scene.

Compared to Little Fire Dragon Leo, Ach was much more considerate.

"Evil dragons will be evil dragons. It seems I have to employ some tougher measures, or Leo will hardly submit... But how should I be tough? It seems with my current strength, I may not necessarily be able to defeat it." Even a young dragon possesses formidable power.

Merely transforming into a magic form is not enough to truly hurt it.

Moreover, with the environment of the volcano crater, Leo is nearly invincible here.

"Unless... I create a weapon out of volcanic glass, would I be able to attack Leo's magic form? Actually, it shouldn't be called a magic form but rather a Dragon's Intent form." Dragon's Intent is the dragon's magic power with extreme properties, a name Liszt coined inspired by Sword Intent.

There's no use in overthinking.

He joined in smilingly to help with scrubbing Rose's dead skin.

...

After spending a night in a log cabin on Dodo Island, Liszt got up early to pick a batch of Hemp Rope Vine seeds and Human Skull Fruit.

Then he left and headed back to Fresh Flower Town.

Upon his arrival at the seaside villa, he saw Retainer Knights pacing in the distance. Seeing Liszt, one quickly ran over: "My lord, you've finally come back. Lady Penelope and Lady Marie, as well as Sir Levis and his spouse, and Baroness Li Vera, are all waiting for you in the Castle."

"Why have my grandmother and the others come?"

"They are here to celebrate your victory, sir. Sir Levis and his spouse also bring your nephew."

"My nephew?" Liszt finally reacted, "Loria has given birth, to a boy? What's his name?"

"A boy, named Richard."

"Richard, huh..."

Liszt placed the Laver Bugs into the Worm Room's pool, mounted the Landwalker Bird, and hurried back to the Castle. As he arrived, everyone, including Lady Penelope, came out to greet him, as enthusiastic as they ever were during his previous homecomings. The atmosphere, while simple, was fervent like never before.

Every homecoming saw an exponential surge in enthusiasm.

This was the opportunism every Noble learned since birth, but Liszt didn't bother to reproach this behavior. Preferring wealth to poverty was human nature; the strong were worshiped, the weak looked down upon—even he himself preferred to look twice at pretty girls, rather than gaze upon an ordinary woman.

"Grandmother, why have you come to Fresh Flower Town in person?"

"How could I, an old woman living off the family, not come forth to welcome my genius grandson, the Tulip Family's genius, on his triumph?" said Lady Penelope straightforwardly.

Liszt supported her arm: "I was held up here by some matters. I was planning to deal with the issues and, after that, travel to Tulip Castle personally to present the good news to you."

"Your sentiment is what counts."

At that moment, Loria, holding a baby swathed in a blanket, stood at the entrance of the Castle. Levis was waving vigorously: "Liszt, you're an uncle now! Come and see your nephew, the fourth generation's new member of our family!"

Chapter 644 Bewildering Dragon's Mind

The baby looked quite adorable.

Of course, Liszt knew that as an uncle, it was necessary to give a meeting gift, but he had not prepared anything. Although he had risen prominently over the years, his family wealth was not abundant—giving an elf as a gift was even more inappropriate, as nobles did not have the custom of gifting elves to each other.

"Perhaps I should give him a few books, my own published works?"

This thought had just emerged when he dismissed it, for while it would be acceptable to palm off an adult with books, giving books to a baby would seem somewhat perfunctory.

After a brief contemplation, he took out a sapphire and placed it in the sleeping Richard's hand.

Looking at Richard, actually speaking to The Levis Couple, he said, "This sapphire was embedded in my Sky-Cleaving Greatsword. During the grand battle with Marquis Nuta, the greatsword was severely damaged and is no longer usable, but this sapphire remains intact. Richard, I am giving it to you, hoping that you too can become a strong knight like me!"

This was a wonderful wish, the significance of the gemstone profound.

Nowadays, Liszt is considered the standard for knights, a fitting life goal for Richard, not a boast but simply a fact.

The Levis Couple were obviously very pleased with Liszt's gift, "Liszt, we thank you for your blessings for Richard, and we too hope that one day, he can become a strong knight like you!"

If it were an ordinary person's blessing, they should wish for Richard to one day ride dragons, but that would be more of a polite gesture.

The goal of dragon riding is far too incredible, becoming a top warrior like Liszt should be the lifelong pursuit of all knights.



Of course.

The Levis Couple did not yet know that Liszt was actually the "Ghost Swordsman".

The news of the Ancient Warrior heritage was only circulated among a select few Nobles, such information was not necessarily meant to be shared with everyone—In the age where knights ruled the world, the Ancient Warriors were destined to decline. Even if the heritage could be passed on, the families that mastered it would keep the secrets to themselves.

After delivering the meeting gift.

Liszt also received a gift, unsurprisingly, a potted plant brought by Lady Penelope.

Using the Eye of Magic to observe, this potted plant showed not the slightest trace of magic power, which both relieved him and caused a hint of disappointment—his appetite had long been spoiled by the elf bugs bred by the potted plants.

...

Basically, the entire afternoon was spent with Liszt telling stories.

Conquering the Snow Pear Castle guarded by Grand Magicians, swiftly seizing Little Riverheart Castle protected by four bridge arches, standing firm against Marquis Nuta, who possessed the Dou Qi Domain, attacking Egret Castle with lightning speed, opening up the Roaring River and the Three Dragons River Golden Waterway, and finally forcefully taking over the Trapped Dragon Mountain Iron Mine.

Countless ships sailed against the current and with it, carrying away those heavy iron ores on board.

Compared to the stumbling narrative of messenger knights, having the story's hero, Liszt himself, recount these tales was intoxicating in a completely different way.

Especially the battle with Marquis Nuta, which could be considered a once-in-a-lifetime grand battle second only to slaying dragons—for the Duchy of Sapphire, such events might not occur even once in decades—in fact, it had never happened before. Without the

Ancient Warrior heritage or the Dou Qi Domain Manual, they could only scramble for materials haphazardly.

Before the banquet, Liszt took the family to see his elves again.

Now, he had one Greater Elf—a Giant Algae Greater Elf.

Fourteen Minor Elves—Thorn, Corn Grass, three Giant Algae, Wheat, Agave, Broad Bean Green, Sorghum, Coptis, Apple, Flipping Grass, Pine, and Tobacco Minor Elf.

Ach's Minor Elf—the Mangrove Minor Elf.

And Yevich's minor elves—two Shui Huasheng minor elves.

Forty-three Elf Bugs—peanut, alfalfa, two thorns, two tulips, corn, two wheats, tomato, coconut, two dragon hollyhocks, corn grass, three rubbers, four serpent blood fruits, apple, barley, fig, blackberry, pea, smoked grass, green tea tree, Venus flytrap, autumn eggplant, horned melon, green yuanbao, human skull, lithops, eight giant algae, and laver elf bug.

Ach's Elf Bugs—kelp, laver, mangrove, horsetail, and inkcap elf bug.

And Yevich's Elf Bugs: erect centipeda, sweet potato, celery, needle grass, ryegrass, daisy, foxtail, wolf's-tail grass, loosestrife, forsythia, two broom seedlings, rock lotus, and pothos elf bug.

Totaling.

1 greater elf, 17 little minor elves, 62 elf bugs.

Such numbers have already surpassed the Tulip Family in the aspect of little minor elves, equaled with greater elves, but still only half in terms of elf bugs.

"I can hardly believe it, you now already have richer assets than an ordinary earl's family. Although the family has more elf bugs, you have more little minor elves!" Levis

exclaimed, The Tulip Family's elves were all contracted to him, but what the elders gave and what one earns themselves are two different kinds of achievements.

"Hehe."

Liszt modestly said, "After all, I am the Son of Glory, the elves favor me more, and with a few more Pioneer Mandates, I'm afraid the castle's Worm Room won't even be able to fit these beautiful elves."

Levis really wanted to retort—elves aren't that easy to come by.

But as the words reached his mouth, he swallowed them back down. For others, elves are indeed rare, but it seems to be the opposite for Liszt—just from Lady Penelope's potted plants alone, one could tell. He and Li Vera often brought back potted plants, yet not a single one had ever nurtured an elf bug.

So all he could do was force a smile in agreement, "I believe that day will come."

...

The feast was lively and festive.

They enjoyed themselves until midnight before dispersing, and after arranging accommodations for his grandmother and others, Liszt, having bathed, lay back in his own bed, the excitement from being praised still not completely settled.

He reflected on the past two and a half years since his crossing into this world. Although he had not created any earth-shattering changes, he had not remained obscure either.

At least within the Duchy of Sapphire, this corner of the continent, he had repeatedly become the center of attention, becoming a household name. Once the battle over the iron mine was over, his name was destined to sweep through the various islands of the country, discussed by nobles and commoners alike.

All the young knights would, no doubt, set him as their target, whether out of jealousy or admiration.

"I really want to succeed in dragon riding quickly... My coolness won't allow me to stay low-key any longer," he thought somewhat absentmindedly. In this world, without becoming a Dragon Knight, one was ultimately an ant. Only by becoming a Dragon Knight would he have the freedom to do as he wished.

Gradually, a wisp of illusory smoke rose in front of him.

Every time he was lost in thought or focused, the Smoke Mission would naturally appear.

"Huh?"

His attention quickly returned, focusing on the change in the Smoke Mission: "Complete the mission, reward three Bewildering Dragon Mind Fruits."

"The mission is already completed, indicating that the Duchy of Sapphire's Pioneer Mandate has officially ended. Either Dragon Knight Alonso Xiankelai has hurried back, or the iron ore has been depleted... But what is this reward, three unheard-of Bewildering Dragon Mind Fruits, could it be..."

A bold idea quickly surfaced in his mind: "Could it be similar to Bloodline Fruit, but of a bewitching type? Bewildering Dragon... Mind... Is this a magical fruit for beguiling dragons?"

Chapter 645 Withered Trees Bear Fruit

Liszt was not a person with long-term plans, always acting on his whims. However, his dedication to dragon riding could not be denied; he meticulously recorded any information related to dragons and listed it in his yet-to-be-published "Liszt's Dragon Taming Manual."

Furthermore, when he gave magic books to Chris and Ach to read, he also insisted that they note down anything related to dragons and hand it over to him for compilation into the manual.

He often organized literate servants to read through knight's novels, searching for information related to dragons, training, geography, magical beasts, elves, and more, then detailed those findings in written records.

Just the books for recording information were enough to fill an entire bookshelf—naturally, because they were on thick paper, there wasn't actually much substantive content.

The White Paper Workshop had been researching and developing white paper, and although they had produced some, the quality was worse than that of the paper used for funerary rites in the countryside, let alone suitable for smooth writing. The research and improvement of white paper still had a long way to go, so for the time being, thick paper remained the mainstay.

According to his survey of all the knight's novels and magic books available for purchase, none mentioned anything about the Bewildering Dragon Mind Fruit.

Which meant.

The fruit was either monopolized by dragon rearing families or so rare that it was unknown to the world.

"So, where should I look for these three Bewildering Dragon Mind Fruits? Apart from launching a survey of the territory's farmlands, it seems I have few other methods to search... Perhaps I actually don't need to do anything, and the three Bewildering Dragon Mind Fruits will just come to me?"

Regardless.

He was now very excited.

Thrilled by the bold idea that sprang to mind upon hearing about the Bewildering Dragon Mind Fruit; all exhaustion vanished, replaced by the boiling of his blood.

"Indeed, as long as my mental interference is strong enough, I could guide the Smoke Mission, or rather, stir the threads of fate! As I think daily of how to ride dragons, the Smoke Mission automatically alters my destiny, guiding me to this magical fruit that could possibly bewitch dragons!"

After a moment of excitement, he forcefully suppressed his thoughts—he must consider that the Bewildering Dragon Mind Fruit might not have the conjectured effects, so it would be better to wait until the fruit was in hand before getting excited.

At this moment.

He called up the Smoke Mission again.

"Mission: The hand-drawn Ruins Map is inaccurate; you need to search carefully to find the lost unknown civilization. Perhaps lurking in a corner of these waters, a singing voice will guide you forward, please search for the sea chant. Reward: An aged Sea Serpent."

"Hm?"

"An aged Sea Serpent?"

Another surprise—the sea serpent, a fantastical creature, was known to Liszt as something beautiful ever since his infatuation with Ach.

It was just a pity that this one was aged.

The term 'aged' always evoked images of white hair, wrinkled faces, and hunched backs, clashing with the pure, beautiful, and innocent perception Liszt had of sea serpents from Ach's influence. However, birth, aging, sickness, and death were the natural course of life, and he was not so distressed by it.

"Encountering a sea serpent while searching for an unknown race suggests that this unknown race might indeed have been left by sea serpents," he suppressed his previous excitement and seriously considered the new mission, "An aged sea serpent should be over four hundred years old, its life must be full of vicissitudes and wisdom."

At that thought, his eyes lit up.

"This aged sea serpent is practically a living oceanic manual given to me by the Smoke Mission!"

As the saying goes, "Having an elder at home is like possessing a treasure." Wisdom is often the accumulation of experience. With over four hundred years of life, the places this sea serpent had visited, the ships it had encountered, the stories it had witnessed... It was clear that it was a thick book of knowledge in and of itself.

The following day, after bidding Lady Penelope and the others farewell.

He began to plan his search for the remains of a civilization.

Ach's help would be needed for this.

"Ach, can you sense the existence of sea serpents within a certain range?"

"Yes, brother, although Ach have never seen other sea serpents, Ach have sensed the presence of sea serpents a few times, knowing they are not far away."

"How far can you sense?"

"Not very clear, but it should be within a range of tens of kilometers."

"Hmm, Ach, you get yourself ready carefully, I'm about to explore the ruins map, and we might encounter other sea serpents. That will require you to confirm their presence and make contact with them."

Under Liszt's urging, Ach didn't prepare too much, quickly packed her personal items, and instructed Nami to take good care of the little ducks on Mangrove Island.

Liszt also took the time to write a letter, entrusting Butler Carter to keep it. If Liszt had not returned after the Earl and the others, the letter was to be handed to the Earl.

The content of the letter was not much, mainly entrusting the Earl to purchase serfs and food with the resources obtained in exchange for iron ore—if the Grand Duke sends someone to inquire whether he is willing to follow directly, please have the Earl definitely refuse, as he had not considered following the Grand Duke directly yet.

At the same time, Liszt instructed the territory officers to conduct an agricultural survey, to ensure that if any new varieties of fruit were found, they were to be well preserved and strictly prohibited from arbitrary destruction.

Everything else would wait until his return to be arranged.

And so it was.

In the morning, after exchanging resources in the Gemstone Space, Liszt, together with Ach, set off to sea riding the Rainbow Whale Rose.

Ach understood sailing charts, so she could freely navigate the seas.

Traveling from Coral Island to the Roaring River Estuary Waters by boat would take about ten days, but for riding a Rainbow Whale that could travel at eighty kilometers per hour, including rest, it would only take two and a half days to complete the journey. By day, they would travel, and at night, they would take out the sampan, using the Temperature Calming Pearl, Calming Water, and Calming Wind to rest peacefully.

In the blink of an eye, they had entered the depths of the vast sea.

Occasionally, while Rose rested, Liszt would stand on her back, leap up, soar into the sky, and then pull out a telescope for observation.

About nine hundred kilometers from the shore of the Roaring River Mouth, he spotted a small island emerging from the sea, immediately guiding Ach and Rose towards the isle. Being soaked in the sea was not comfortable, and he longed to feel the solid ground beneath his feet again on the small island.

The island was very small, even smaller than the subsidiary islands of Black Horse Island like Mangrove Island, Rocky Island, Sandy Beach Island, and Seagull Island, being just a tiny island of less than a hundred acres.

It was one of those lonely reef islands, surrounded by rock cliffs on all sides, with only a small patch of forest on top.



Upon approaching, Liszt leapt directly, landing in the small forest atop the island.

Looking around, he saw the same type of trees throughout; these trees were fairly low, and their leaves were quite interesting, resembling fern plants—like those giant trees from the era of dinosaurs on Earth, where most ferns have shrunk into small plants, with only a few trees like *Alsophila spinulosa* remaining tall.

"Could there be elves nurtured here?" Every time he came to a green environment, he habitually used the Eye of Magic to search for elves.

It was merely supposed to be a routine sweep.

But fiercely, three dazzling points of magic feedback appeared in his vision.

His heart stirred, he ran straight towards the direction of the three feedback points, and in less than a minute, he arrived in front of them—a circle of clearing appeared among the fern trees. In the center of the clearing, there was a withered small bush with no leaves left, and on the remaining branches hung three fruits shimmering with rainbow light.

"Bewildering Dragon Mind Fruit!"

Liszt instantly realized that this was the Bewildering Dragon Mind Fruit rewarded by the Smoke Mission!

Chapter 646 Song Under the Moonlight

Based on his inherent impressions, Liszt had always thought that the three Bewildering Dragon Mind Fruits would be discovered within his territory, or at least, appear in his vicinity.

Unexpectedly, they were found on a solitary island in the vast sea.

The withered tree was less than a meter tall, and on its dead branches hung three fist-sized fruits with a rainbow luster, resembling apples but rounder.

There was not a trace of scent emitted, nor the slightest loss of magic power.

If he closed his eyes, no matter how Liszt tried to sense the magic power floating in the air around him, he could not detect the existence of these three Bewildering Dragon Mind Fruits.

Only when he used the Eye of Magic could he feel the astonishing magic power beneath the rainbow luster.

The light reflected by the magic power showed a rich hue of chaos – a hue of chaos is akin to a gray, foggy haze, but even more peculiar. Upon closer inspection, it seemed gray, but when studied more carefully, it appeared almost transparent and illusory; yet from another angle, it could become substantial smoke.

Neither black nor white, seeming illusionary yet real, like fog and haze.

"The concentration of magic power almost reaches saturation; it far exceeds any other fruit with magic power, including the Bloodline Fruit. Such powerful magic power indeed has the potential to bewilder a dragon!" Liszt did not hurry to pick the fruits; instead, he observed the fruits and the withered tree over and over again.

He confirmed that the withered tree was indeed dead, with no signs of revival.

Yet, he couldn't bear to leave it behind, so he directly took out a bone spade from the Gemstone Space and began to carefully dig around the roots of the withered tree, planning to place the three Bewildering Dragon Mind Fruits into his Gemstone Space along with the tree— such precious items must be treated with care.

After more than an hour of digging, he finally lifted the entire clump of soil without damaging the roots of the tree and then wrapped it with Dou Qi and stuffed it into the Gemstone Space, which he had cleared out in advance.

Inside the space, the three Bewildering Dragon Mind Fruits still shone brightly.

Liszt let out a long sigh of relief, "Phew, that's settled! Next time I go to Dodo Island for training, I'll feed one to Little Fire Dragon Leo and see the effects! If Leo is bewitched, I'll ride straight to Dragon Tooth Platform, 'violently court' before signing a contract, and settle the rest later!"

Having spent so much effort to revive Leo and taken care of it for so long, he found it a volcano to train in and transported food for it.

He tended to it like a parent, yet it wouldn't even let him ride.

Facing such an evil dragon.

Liszt was filled with resentment, so employing such a dishonorable forceful method, he felt no guilt, "It's not like I killed it; would a ride kill it?"

He looked at the large hole he left behind.

Liszt dusted off his hands and surveyed the fern forest at the top of the solitary island once more, scanning back and forth with the Eye of Magic and found no plants with magic power. He also didn't see plants similar in height and shape to the withered tree with the naked eye, confirming that there was nothing more of value here.

"But I can't say it's without value. Who knows, another seedling bearing the Bewildering Dragon Mind Fruits might grow here... I'll name this island Mind Island; not only is it a landing spot on the sea, but it could also potentially nurture new Bewildering Dragon Mind Fruits. I must keep a close eye on this island in the future."

The solitary island was named Mind Island and the withered tree was named the Mind Fruit Tree.

Afterward, Liszt dove into the sea and left Mind Island, continuing his voyage towards the waters near Roaring River Mouth. The weather in September gradually turned cool. In the blink of an eye, Liszt, Ach, and Ros had been roaming this sea area for two days without finding the ruins indicated on the Ruins Map.

They didn't sense the presence of any old Sea Serpents either.

They hadn't even discovered a single deserted island; however, they encountered several sea monsters, all of which Ach easily hunted and then left for Liszt to barbeque at sea.

In the Gemstone Space, there were charcoal, hot pots, and other cooking equipment for them to enjoy barbeque freely on the sea.

...

Barbecuing was not only Liszt's favorite, but Ros also loved it very much, so he didn't feel any rush as the days went by like this.

Especially after a fulfilling meal, listening to Ach's melodious and sweet singing was absolutely a top-notch pleasure.

"It's a pity there's no piano in the scene..." Liszt felt regretful once more, as occasionally playing the piano could cultivate one's sentiments and smooth out restless emotions.

But just as he was lost in his thoughts.

Ach's singing suddenly stopped, and she exclaimed with surprise, "Ah, brother, Ach senses the presence of our kin, there's a sea serpent nearby!"

Liszt instantly rolled out of the sampan's cabin, "Really, can you pinpoint the sea serpent's location?"

"It's a bit difficult, the feeling is not very clear, it's elusive." Ach frowned, trying her best to sense her fellow sea creature.

"Remember this spot, now let's swim towards the north and see if the feeling becomes clearer!"

A moment later, Ach, who had stopped swimming, shook her head, "Brother, the feeling is gone."

"It seems the sea serpent isn't to the north, let's head back!"

After returning.

The sensation appeared again.

This time Liszt directed them to head south, but once they reached the south, the feeling broke off again. They returned to their starting point and set out westward, swimming a full ten kilometers. This time, the sensation not only persisted but also became clearer.

"This is the right direction, let's keep moving!"

While swimming, Liszt would occasionally leap up and scan the surroundings with a telescope. After such a long search, it was almost certain that the sea serpent hadn't moved, and its stillness likely meant it was hidden among some coral reefs. Discovering suspicious islands or coral reefs could very well be where the sea serpent was hiding.

In this way, they continued to explore.

Depending on the telepathic connection between Ach and the sea serpent, they finally found a coral reef that had emerged due to the low tide before dark. It was an underwater reef that hadn't surfaced, but one could see the white outline of the reef's circular island, lurking just one or two meters below the water.

Similar to the coral reef in Fresh Flower Town, this Coral Island was also circular, with a shallow lake in the center of the coral ring, completely surrounded by the taller corals.

Around this large coral reef, there were several smaller ones, also submerged.

At high tide, they were almost invisible, only their outlines faintly discernible at low tide.

"We've arrived, Ach, let's look around," Liszt said without hesitation, using his Eye of Magic to survey back and forth among the coral reefs.

After searching for a long time, even as the moon rose, they still hadn't found the sea serpent's hiding place.

Out of options, he had Ach try calling out the sea serpent with her singing. Ach's ethereal, pure, and melodious voice echoed among the coral reefs.

A moment later.

Suddenly, a distant, small coral island emitted a misty, sorrowful, and delicate song in response to Ach's. This voice was equally beautiful, but compared to the innocence and naivety in Ach's voice, it was more mature and luscious, hinting at many underlying stories.

Liszt was not in the mood for listening to singing; he directly locked onto the position of the elderly sea serpent and called Ach to rush to its location immediately.

Chapter 647 Fish Ugly Temple

Among the reefs.

A huge conch shell shimmered with magic radiance, and a female figure with light-green sashes that seemed transparent but were not, covering the important parts of her body, was seated upon it. Her body, too, radiated with a strong magic aura.

The radiance of water-attribute magic.

"Were you looking for us?"

Upon seeing Liszt and Ach, the woman asked indifferently.

She spoke the Wind Language.

She didn't seem old, appearing instead like a woman in her thirties, with long emerald hair cascading down her back. Her ears, forehead, shoulders, elbows, hips, and calves all had transparent fin-like structures, similar to Ach but with far more fins than her.

The most striking feature was the butterfly-shaped, gigantic fin-wings on her back, gently flapping and creating circles of water currents.

Overall, she was more enchanting than Ach, but less anthropomorphic; the abundance of transparent fin-like structures detracted from her beauty, and patches of her skin somewhat resembled fish scales.

Her colors leaned mainly toward green.

Ach had deep blue hair and blue pupils.

By comparison, Ach had only a few transparent fins, and her skin was snow-white, delicate, glossy, and even finer than a human baby's. Ach's higher degree of anthropomorphism made her conform more to human aesthetics, far surpassing the "elderly nixie" before them.

Nevertheless,

The nixie had a complete pair of legs, delicate and dainty.

One could imagine how delightful the scene would be if Ach also grew a pair of legs.

"Hello, I am a human knight. May I ask if you are a sea serpent/nixie?" Liszt, riding on Ros's back, greeted with an elegant smile, "The young lady with me, she is also a nixie."

Ach wasn't very enthusiastic toward the nixie before her, offering only a simple greeting: "Hello."

The elderly nixie glanced at Ach, then turned to Liszt, "Young human knight, I am indeed a nixie. Are you here for a reason...? It has been many years since I've last seen a human, I haven't even paid attention to the passing ships of Sapphire."

"Sapphire?" Liszt's eyes lit up, "You know of the Duchy of Sapphire?"

"When I used to swim freely in these seas, Sapphire hadn't yet been established. Back then, apart from ancient sunken ships, there was not a single vessel at sea. It was Sapphire that brought a great number of ships, and since then these waters became busy," the elderly nixie recounted stories that sounded centuries old yet she looked ageless.

Upon hearing this, Liszt's tone shifted slightly, "May I presume to ask, how many years have you lived?"

"Over four hundred summers and winters, I can't remember exactly."

Over four hundred years old.

Truly a living fossil!

Based on Ach's adult age, nixies seemed to have a lifespan of about four hundred years as well.

Liszt realized that the nixie before him was the one they sought for the Smoke Mission, and his enthusiasm grew, "It is an honor to meet such a venerable nixie elder here. My name is Liszt Tulip, a viscount from the Duchy of Sapphire. May I have the privilege of knowing your name?"

...

"My name?..." The aged nixie raised her head, looking at the bright moon reflected on the water's surface, her mind wandering momentarily, "Aphrodite Hektor Sinithia Thaesis Nemotemis Parsifoni... Sidairope Briseis."

"Uh."

Liszt's mouth twitched, wondering why every nixie had to have a name longer than two hundred characters: "Your name is very long, just like my sister's, who is named..." he turned his head towards Ach, seemingly unable to recall Ach's full name.

Ach was quick to understand and promptly stated her own name: "My name is Tanaxistie Ulapapni Selaino Liukateya Forekus Buniseis... Cassandra Acherloides. But I have changed it to Acherloides Truth, and you can call me Ach."



"Truth...you're a nixie magician?" The aged nixie was surprised for a moment, but after her gaze briefly drifted over Liszt and Ach, she appeared to understand, "I, too, once learned magic, but unfortunately, I only mastered a few simple spells."

With a common interest found, the conversation became less awkward.

Liszt smiled and said, "Ach is a grand magician."

"A grand magician, such a young nixie grand magician is indeed rare," the aged nixie nodded lightly, "You may call me Iris."

"Elder Iris."

"Nixies are born and raised by the sea, we don't have complicated worldly relationships like humans, you may simply call me by my name."

Liszt, amenable as ever, replied: "Alright, Iris."

Thus, the initial pleasantries had been dealt with, and the conversation gradually turned into Liszt asking questions and Iris answering them with her four hundred plus years of life experience. Although she remained somewhat aloof throughout, Iris did not show any annoyance at Liszt's questions.

Ach quietly listened on the side.

"Iris, I'm very curious about nixies, especially since my sister Ach is also one, but she is still very young and has much to learn. I hope you can help teach her," Liszt said, taking advantage of Iris's cooperative attitude to make his request.

What he really wanted was to lure this nixie to live within his own territory.

However, Iris responded, "Nixies need no guidance; each nixie has their own growth trajectory, experiencing all joys and sorrows the ocean has to offer, which is the essence of being a nixie."

Ach also said, "Brother, Ach wants to grow up on her own."

Liszt was truly puzzled by the cold response between the two nixies. Logically, given that Ach was very kind and naive, and Iris's demeanor also quite calm, one would expect a warmer interaction between members of the same species, even if not that emotional "seeing a fellow countryman brings tears to the eyes."

Yet from the start of their search for nixies, Ach had shown no enthusiasm for the unknown nixies.

Perhaps there is some quality about nixies which makes them naturally repel each other.

He planned to inquire further with Ach once they were alone since it wasn't appropriate to bring up directly. So, he changed the subject and asked, "Iris, we came to this sea to explore an ancient ruin, could you possibly guide us to the direction of the ancient ruins?"

"Ancient ruins, you mean the Fish Ugly Temple ruins."

"Fish Ugly Temple?"

Liszt heard a new term—'Fish Ugly' in Wind Language refers to 'a creature that looks like a fish but is very ugly'.

Iris stretched out her slender arm, delicate as a green onion, and pointed to the southeast: "Swim about fifty kilometers straight from here, and you'll find a square coral reef. From Coral Island, swim thirty kilometers directly south, and you will find a sea pit a hundred meters deep. The buried Fish Ugly Temple ruins lie within that silt."

After explaining, she added: "There is a powerful Necrofish Ugly guarding the Fish Ugly Temple; I advise you not to venture there lightly."

Chapter 648 Fated But Not Destined

"Necrofish Ugly?"

Liszt heard a new term again, "Iris, could you tell me what exactly this Necrofish Ugly is?"

"Do you know about specters?"

"I know about specters and liches."

He had met two liches, Curtis Truth and the Marquis of Bull.

As for specters, Virginia Truth had been staying in the Soul Storage Vessel in his Gemstone Space, only occasionally letting her out for a chat.

"I've heard of liches, which is an evil transformation that stimulates soul power. Necrofish has similarities to liches; however, instead of stirring up soul power, it uses the remnants of a soul to control the body's material force from its previous life. I suspect that Necrofish Ugly, in its lifetime, had the level of an archmage."

"Archmage?" Liszt's eyes widened. Archmages were beings capable of fighting dragons alone, and for a Necrofish Ugly to have the level of an archmage seemed far too exaggerated.

"It's just my suspicion. And it's about the strength of the Necrofish Ugly in its previous life; it might only possess the strength of a grand magician now, but its body is very strong. I found the Fish Ugly Temple when I was younger and have always wanted to enter, but it has always blocked the entrance, and time has not weakened it."

Knowing it only had the strength of a grand magician, Liszt was relieved.

Archmages haven't appeared before the public eye for many years; he definitely wouldn't believe if someone suddenly told him that there was an archmage in ancient ruins thousands of years old — time decays everything, even dragons, the top representatives of power, die, let alone other organisms.

Afterward, Liszt continued to inquire about the specific details of the Necrofish Ugly.

According to Iris, the Necrofish Ugly was a strong member of the Fish Ugly Race, imprisoned in the Fish Ugly Temple to serve as a guardian. It was ten meters tall, like a

standing giant frog, but with a fish-like head and upper body. It wielded a strange trident and could release powerful water magic.

One of the spells, which Iris referred to as "Waterflow Shackles," an advanced magic, could control the water to bind the opponent's body and then tear it apart from the outside.

Iris herself had once been bound by it when she was younger and almost dismembered.

After hearing her explanation, Liszt turned and asked, "Ach, do you think you can defeat this Necrofish Ugly underwater?" At a depth of one hundred meters, his combat strength would be significantly reduced; it wouldn't be easy to overpower an opponent with obvious home field advantage, especially one with the strength of a grand magician.

Ach nodded seriously, "Don't worry, brother, the Necrofish Ugly that Iris speaks of doesn't seem very strong. Ach has mastered many kinds of advanced magic, and Whirlpool Convergence will definitely be able to blast the Necrofish Ugly away!"

"Still, be cautious."

Liszt touched Ach's hair. Ach in battle was not to be underestimated; her fighting method was still quite fierce, especially original magic like Whirlpool Convergence, which had immense power.

After discussing the Necrofish Ugly, the night had grown deep.

He planned to rest at the coral reef for the night and search for the Fish Ugly Temple the next day. He also intended to use the nighttime to chat with Iris as much as possible, to learn about her rich life experiences over more than four hundred years — it would be best to forge a connection and bring Iris to Black Horse Island to serve as his personal advisor.

For now, the focus was on conversation.

"Iris, why are you, like Ach, both Sea Serpents, yet Ach was nurtured in a shell while you were nurtured inside a sea snail?" He pointed at the giant sea snail Iris was sitting on, which had a white base with brown patterns and appeared larger than Ach's shell, with many spikes on it.

"A sea snail is also a kind of shell. Every Sea Serpent is born within a shell; there's no particular reason. It's just that the shells are incredibly varied, and so our nurseries are too, just as humans vary in height and weight, Sea Serpents differ in their shells and appearances."

"When did you grow your legs?"

"I reached adulthood at fifty-five, completely leaving the growth fluid of the sea snail shell and acquiring independent legs." She swung her fair legs, showing off her particularly beautiful toes.

Liszt wasn't a foot fetishist, yet he almost got lost in the moment.

Still, with his extensive experience, he showed no reaction on the surface, his gaze still bright and clear, "Fifty-five, so that means Ach is forty-two this year and still has thirteen years to reach adulthood?" Thirteen years was even later than what Liszt had estimated, which was seriously frustrating.

Ach, listening to the conversation, couldn't help but feel a bit of disappointment — though every woman naturally pursues youth, it's also natural for the underage to want to grow up quickly.

But Iris just smiled, "Who knows about the future, when I had no legs, I longed for them, and yet, once I grew a pair, I couldn't help but miss the times when I was without."

"Your words are always very philosophical."

"Perhaps it's because I've seen so much."

"You must have come into contact with many humans in your life," Liszt asked.

There was a momentary unfocused look in Iris's eyes.

Then, shaking her head, she said, "I once stepped onto land, and I sought love, but in the end, the sea suited me better... However, I still recommend that young humans and young little sea monsters seek love. Only by loving can one know the depth of affection, and only by being hurt can one appreciate the value of innocence."

In an instant.

Liszt felt a literary youth's aura surrounding Iris.

Perhaps she was not just a singer of the great sea but should also be a minstrel upon it.

"Then, can you tell me the story of your life on land? Although I am a knight, I am also a historian, compiling a monumental chronicle on the history of the continent's transformations, titled "Dragons Fight in the Wild". I hope to gather some forgotten history from you."

To add credibility, he took out the beginning chapters of "Dragons Fight in the Wild" from the Gemstone Space. The book, which had been long abandoned, was handed to Iris for her perusal.

Taking the thick leather-bound book, Iris briefly flipped through a couple of pages and then handed it back, "I don't recognize Serpent Script, all my interactions with humans occurred in the Eagle Kingdom."

It was just as well she didn't look further.

Beyond those beginning chapters, the rest was blank.

Liszt put away the leather-bound book and said, "Then tell me your story."

...

Like most naïve and daydreaming young girls.

After Iris grew her legs, she inevitably became keenly interested in humans, sneaking up to the coast at night to eavesdrop on their lives.

Eventually, during one eavesdropping session, she was discovered by a villager.

The villager was surprisingly shrewd, not exposing her on the spot or chasing her away, but instead, lured her to stay at his home and then informed his landlord.

He was a handsome young noble who fell instantly in love with Iris's stunning beauty. Iris too quickly indulged in the young noble's sweet nothings, experiencing a blissful mermaid romance. But in the end, the noble abandoned her to marry a noble girl.

After crying, she returned to the sea.

Decades later, when she heard of the noble's death, she quietly returned to the land to attend his funeral in secret. The scenes at the funeral allowed her to let go of the hurts from the past, and she started to learn human magic, attempting to travel across the continent to experience more of its customs and people.

"But that only lasted half a year, the inland environment was too harsh, and my skin became drier day by day. So I gave up traveling and returned to live in the sea," Iris said with a sigh, "After that, I would occasionally live in other sea areas, but with frequent stops, I still stay in the waters that gave birth to me."

That was Iris's life.

There were no rugged hardships or life-and-death separations. Even her sole heartache was just being abandoned by a noble—the noble knight actually still loved her, but his noble status compelled him to marry a human wife and sire heirs to continue the family line. Thus, he abandoned the sea monster.

The sea monster's distinctive appearance and the inability to give birth.

It was fated that mermaids could have kismet without destiny.

Chapter 649 Medusa

The tale of the sea monster Yisi isn't earth-shattering, and her experiences across the continent aren't particularly remarkable—at least not enough to be included in "Dragons Fight in the Wild".

Most crucially, she had never set foot in the noble circles of the Eagle Kingdom, so what she knew was quite limited.

However, her experiences weren't completely without value.

For instance, she had once studied piano with the master pianist Czerny Windmill—Czerny was a renowned piano master from the Steel Ridge Kingdom, who had traveled through the Eagle Kingdom and met Yisi, telling her how he created his famous piece "Yuri Ely by the River".

It was an autumn twilight when Czerny, globe-trotting to find inspiration, arrived at the border of the Steel Ridge Kingdom and the Blast Furnace Fortress Kingdom, stopping at a remote town's countryside. He unloaded his piano from the carriage, intending to tune it and practice a piece.

Suddenly, an elk burst out of the woods,

heading straight for him—but since this was by the river, the elk found itself cornered, about to leap into the water and swim across.

A steel fork then flew from afar, swiftly smashing the elk's head and killing it. Afterward, Czerny saw a nymph with pale green hair dancing like snakes emerge from the forest. Droopy eyelids, a slender figure, pale skin, and vivid red lips.

She swiftly made Czerny fall in love.

However, as the nymph dragged away the dead elk, she just lifted her eyelids to glance at him, and at that moment, he became as stiff as stone, unable to move, not even his eyeballs. He could only watch the nymph disappear into the woods, oblivious to how much time had passed.

When he awoke, he had been rescued by servants and locals, lying in a bed.



Only after hearing from the locals did he learn that this nymph was named Eurie Ellie, and was said to be a snake-haired nymph living in the forest with her two sisters.

The eldest sister was named Stheno, with dark green hair, having the strength to kill a mighty magical beast with one punch; Eurie Ellie was the second, with pale green hair, able to leap as though flying like a Sky Knight; the youngest was Modusa, with bright red hair, and she could command snakes.

The eyes of the three sisters possessed potent power, turning anyone who looked into them to stone. If the stone were shattered, the person would die; if not, after a few days, they could revert to flesh and blood.

Normally the snake-haired nymph sisters would not trouble the local residents.

Nobles had attempted to enter that vast wilderness of a forest to capture the three stunning snake-haired nymphs, but they either disappeared within the forest or returned empty-handed, without ever catching sight of the sisters. Czerny, too, coveted the beauty of Eurie Ellie and settled down in this place.

He longed to see Eurie Ellie again, but despite waiting many days, she did not appear, so he transformed his yearning into notes, composing the renowned piece "Elly by the Water".

"Do snake-haired nymphs really exist?" Liszt was skeptical.

Indeed vampires and liches existed, but snake-haired nymphs that could petrify with a glance seemed somewhat unreal, their powers too formidable. And since they were so beautiful, even with somewhat eerie hair, he believed many curious knights would still eagerly seek them out.

Yisi shook her head and said, "I've also asked Master Czerny, and he told me that the world is far more vast than what we see, and no one can freely take everything as they wish."

"So, no one has seen the snake-haired nymph sisters since then?"

"I don't know; I haven't paid attention to them. Perhaps, like sea serpents, after experiencing the complexities of human life, they returned to the home that nurtured them and led simple lives."

In any case.

Yisi has many other stories like that of the snake-haired nymph sisters.

Such as the Minotaurs in the Blast Furnace Fortress Kingdom and the Rocky Plains, bellowing angrily with bull-like horns atop their heads, driving away invaders; in the primeval forests to the west of the Rose Duchy, there lived huge ogres wielding clubs, leading violent and bloody lives.

Some have seen harpies with eagle wings flying like eagles in the mountains of the Eagle Kingdom; and a Duke's daughter of a certain duchy, having encountered a unicorn in the forest, fled her wedding with the unicorn's assistance, vanishing without a trace.

During full moon nights at a certain Nameless Castle, wolf howls are often heard, and it's said that the lord of the castle is a werewolf, capable of transforming into a silver wolf.

Iris had also seen a knight who appeared to be riding in midair, with nothing underneath his bottom. It was only after inquiring that she learned the knight was mounted on a Night Qi, which could only be seen by those who had died once.

...

Elderly people always enjoy telling stories.

The aged Sea Monster Yisi was no exception. Initially, it had been Li Si Te who asked her questions, but by the latter half of the night, it was mostly her incessantly telling stories.

Some of the stories were interesting, others were boring, but Ach listened attentively.

Li Si Te, however, had begun to lose focus.

Smoke slowly materialized in front of his eyes, "Complete the mission, reward Sea Monster Yisi."

The smoke then transformed, forming new Serpent Script, "Mission: The Sea Monster can guide you in the direction to proceed, but she no longer has the energy to roam the seas extensively. The dangers hidden in the sea require you to overcome them yourself. Please defeat the remaining Necrofish Ugly, uncover the Fish Ugly Temple. Reward: Mysterious Jewel."

"Hmm, a reward of mysterious gemstones?" Li Si Te thought to himself, "Could it be pearls from some kind of oyster again?"

In this world, gemstone, crystal, and jade are proper nouns, referring to three types of special stones.

Gemstones and crystals are derived from dragons, whereas jade is formed by the earth condensing magic power.

Jewelry, however, specifically refers to ornaments—gemstones and crystals can be made into ornaments, intact jade can be turned into ornaments, and pearl, coral, amber, and the like can also be used to make ornaments. Gold, silver, mithril, and mountain copper can also be crafted into jewelry, and only these are called jewels.

He had already obtained the Hei Chequ that produced Black Pearls, the Fen Hai Luo that produced Pink Pearls, and the Golden-Lipped Clam that produced Golden Pearls; he wondered what kind of shell and pearls he would receive this time.

"I hope it's not the Pearl Oyster that produces White Pearls; the Grand Duke's Blue Dragon Lake farms many pearl oysters, and they're not very valuable."

With such thoughts,

he soon fell asleep on the sampan amidst Yisi's endless narrations. When he woke up, it was already dawn the next day.

He rubbed his eyes.

He saw Yisi in the distance by the rocks, feeding fruit to Rainbow Whale Rose, a whale that was friendly to everyone. Sometimes, Li Si Te worried if someone might entice it away. On another side of the rocks, Ach was sitting on a shell, flipping through a book.

Noticing Li Si Te awake, Ach immediately swam over, "Brother, you're awake."

"Didn't you sleep?" He vaguely remembered falling asleep while Yisi was still telling stories and Ach listening intently, only to wake up and find both sea monsters as lively as ever.

"Ach did sleep, brother. Sea monsters sleep for a very short time," she replied.

Li Si Te, of course, knew this; he was just a bit muddled from just waking up. Soon thereafter, he washed up by the rocks and had a hearty meal.

Then he went to say farewell to Yisi, "Yisi, your stories were fascinating. I hope after Ach and I explore the Fish Ugly Temple, we could have another delightful chat."

"Falling asleep while chatting hardly counts as a delightful conversation."

"Haha."

Li Si Te waved his hand awkwardly, realizing Yisi hadn't rejected the idea. Then he set off with Ach in the direction she had indicated to explore the Fish Ugly Temple, planning to complete the mission first and talk about the rewards later.

#### Chapter 650 Gigantic Statue

Fifty kilometers to find a small island, forty kilometers to find a hundred-meter deep pit on the seabed—it did not take much time for Liszt to locate the Fish Ugly Temple.

This was an ancient ruin overgrown with seaweed and largely covered in silt.

The site was vast, with hundreds of stone pillars supporting the palace's domed ceiling, sealing off the interior. No fish or shrimp swam around the palace, only seaweeds and corals swaying with the currents.

"Brother, leave dealing with the Necrofish Ugly to Ach."

Ach "stood" on a seashell in front of Liszt, asking to fight. She had a natural ability to control water, and now that she was proficient in water magic, her combat power underwater far exceeded Liszt's—mainly because once Liszt activated his Dou Qi, it would break through the magic of the Rainbow Whale Rose's Rainbow Breathing Membrane.

If the Rainbow Breathing Membrane was broken, he'd have to hold his breath and stop breathing, which would make it very difficult to circulate Dou Qi.

Moreover, his Dou Qi was of the fire attribute, which had its power almost entirely diminished underwater, barely able to be released externally, at most clinging to the longsword for direct strikes against the opponent's body.

"Be careful, I'll provide support for you!" Liszt said gravely, holding the Ice Soul Dragon-Slaying Sword in his hand.

He had yet to master the "Ice Rotation" technique of the Ice Soul Dragon-Slaying Sword, and the "Ice Seal" technique was not activated, which did not add much combat power underwater.

His primary role was to provide moral support to Ach as she hunted the Necrofish Ugly.

According to Iris's hints, as soon as one set foot within the boundary of the Fish Ugly Temple, the Necrofish Ugly would burst out from inside the temple to drive away and hunt down the intruders.

So when Ach stepped into the range of a corner of the temple, she suddenly stirred up a powerful current.

Then, like a puff of smoke, a specter-like creature spewed out from within the currents, just as Iris described. This creature, standing ten meters tall, resembled a large upright frog with the head and body of a fish for its upper half and fin-like legs arranged in a webbed manner.

"Squawk squaw!"

As soon as the Necrofish Ugly made its entrance, it emitted a sharp, strange cry, then raised the steel fork in its hand high with a ring of magic radiance waving across the fork.

Without any extra effort, it directly threw the magic at Ach.

However, Ach was no stranger to hunting sea monsters in the deep sea; she readily raised a Water Wave Shield and instantly cast powerful magic like Whirlpool Convergence, tossing it recklessly at the Necrofish Ugly like the spells cost her nothing. Her combat style leaned towards brute force output, probably influenced by Liszt.

Liszt would always share his combat experiences—don't waste words, strike first; if you can use a powerful spell, don't just stick to basic attacks; if you can overpower your enemy in one flow, don't hold back.

Ach took these experiences to heart.

So, she began with various advanced magics. After all, the Necrofish Ugly wouldn't chase out of the Fish Ugly Temple by far, and if she were to be drained of magic power, she'd simply run without a hint of hesitation.

However, contrary to expectations, as Ach unleashed a barrage of advanced magic, the seawater instantly turned murky with the seabed silt churning, as if a black tornado rose above the temple. The Necrofish Ugly's defensive magic was completely extinguished under Ach's onslaught of magic.

It couldn't even counterattack.

Ten minutes later, Ach was panting heavily, her magic power running out.

She followed Liszt's instructions and began to swim away from the Fish Ugly Temple, wary of the Necrofish Ugly's possible counterattack. However, after she retreated, the Necrofish Ugly did not pursue, and as the magic release ended and the murky water cleared with the currents, the sea returned to its clarity.

Liszt and Ach exchanged glances, finding it unbelievable.

The Necrofish Ugly had vanished, and a corner of the Fish Ugly Temple crumbled, revealing a deep cavern. What was more surprising was that a steel fork was found diagonally stuck in the battlefield, half-buried in the mud.

"Brother, this is the Necrofish Ugly's steel fork."

"I know."

Liszt looked at the silently collapsed corner of the Fish Ugly Temple and took a long while to react, "Ach, could it be that you annihilated the Necrofish Ugly with a burst of magic? Logically speaking, even if it had retreated back into the temple, it would have taken its weapon back, instead of leaving it outside."

"Ah, did Ach kill it?"

"Go and take a look!"

As the two approached the vicinity of the Fish Ugly Temple, there was no movement; picking up the steel fork dropped by the Necrofish Ugly, there was still no movement; touching the collapsed gap, there was still no movement; and even as they entered the interior of the temple through the collapsed entrance, there was still no movement.

Clearly, the Necrofish Ugly had indeed perished in the midst of Ach's seamless magic.

The so-called Grand Magician level of Iris now seemed like a joke— it was probably because Iris herself lacked combat ability, which led her to overestimate the strength of the Necrofish Ugly.

After entering the Fish Ugly Temple and ensuring there was no danger,

Liszt then began to inspect the interior of the temple, which was simple yet majestic and revealed luxury amidst its rusticity. Although half of it was covered by silt, one could still feel the vastness of the interior. Thick stone columns supported the simple dome, and guarding both sides of the walkway were enormous statues.

Illuminated by crystal lamps, the details of the statues were vividly revealed.

"Brother, what kind of monster are these statues?"

"I don't know, but I guess they might be from a sea race stronger than the Fish Ugly. Ach, look. The first four statues closest to the entrance are clearly of the same race as the Necrofish Ugly. The statues further inside seem to be different from the Fish Ugly, resembling a more humanoid monster."

The humanoid monsters numbered four, all depicted with two arms.

Further inside were another four humanoid monsters, but with four arms.

Next were another four humanoid monsters, each with six arms.

In appearance, these twelve humanoid monsters, except for the number of arms and the robustness of their bodies, were all very similar. They had fish scales and fins, and three thick fingers clutching different weapons. Their heads, resembling both a snake's and a fish's, bore a striking resemblance to that of the Fish Ugly.

Further in,

different statues appeared, still four in number, but now of strong female figures. However, these women had some similarities to the Sirens but were more rugged-looking and had patches of fish scales and fins. Interestingly, four more statues followed, this time of four-armed female figures, and then four six-armed female figures.

Since half of the temple was buried in silt, only the upper bodies of these statues were visible.

Riding on the back of Rainbow Whale Rose, Liszt felt each statue was immense, and they all seemed to be one-to-one replicas—the four Fish Ugly statues at the entrance were the same size as the Necrofish Ugly, and all the subsequent statues were even larger.



As he was examining these statues, trying to deduce some information,

Ach suddenly tugged on his sleeve and whispered, "Brother, quick, look at the main seat of the temple, is that a mermaid? Such a huge mermaid!"

Only then did Liszt notice that at the end of the palace, in a dim area, there was a huge stone throne, which was not covered by silt due to the high steps.

Above the throne, there was a lifelike statue.

The figure carved possessed a human upper body and a gigantic fish tail, perfectly fitting the classic mermaid image recorded in knight's novels, folktales, and magic books. Her fish tail curled upon the throne, her belly button downward densely covered with fish scales, while above the belly button, she was as clean as a human.

Or rather,

The greatest difference was that the mermaid statue was at least twenty meters long, truly gigantic.

However, at that moment, Liszt's Eye of Magic fell on the colossal chest of the mermaid statue, where there was a teardrop-shaped jewel flashing with azure brilliance, shining radiantly. Inside it seemed to flow magic power of the water attribute, more potent than any magic power he had seen.

With a flash of inspiration, he knew the answer: "Mysterious Jewel!"