

The Mighty 681

Chapter 681: Magic Cloak

In the end, the difference among Low Magic, High Magic, and Superior Magic lies in the varying speeds at which the constituent magic particles move, a trait that is difficult to clearly understand at such a microscopic level.

Liszt had only shared the concept of particle movement with Ach, and then he no longer studied this aspect.

Ach, who had been promoted to Archmage, had already proven that her talents eclipsed those of most humans. Her intelligence on Earth would likely have won her a Nobel Prize. Therefore, entrusting Ach with the more challenging problems allowed Liszt to free himself to focus on Dragon Knight training.

However, before preparing to leave, he had another task to complete—taking Ach’s body measurements, including bust, waist, and hips, and then making her a batch of well-fitting clothes.

Pajamas, loungewear, magic cloaks, and noble gowns were all needed.

If one day Liszt were to establish a nation, Ach would be a top noble of that nation.

Although a glance was almost enough to ascertain Ach’s body measurements, Liszt personally took out the tape measure and meticulously measured her again, obtaining the most precise figures.

Recording the numbers on thick parchment, Liszt smiled and stroked Ach’s hair, “Once the clothes are ready, you’ll live in my castle. You can visit any part of the territory at your leisure, but try not to reveal your Sea Serpent identity to avoid attracting malice from others.”

“I understand, brother,” Ach nodded reservedly, having long yearned for life on dry land.

“If you like, I can arrange for you to go to the Mage Tower later on. There you’ll find the likes of Chris, the Grand Magician you know. You can assign them some simpler topics so that they can help you with your research tasks. Of course, for now, keep your Archmage identity a secret.”

Both he and Ach had just advanced to the profession of High Magic.

They needed time to grow stronger; so for the time being, it was better to keep a low profile.

Finally, kissing Ach on the forehead, Liszt stood up and left the seaside villa.

After returning to the castle, he handed Ach’s body measurements to the castle’s female butler, Mrs. Morson, instructing her to arrange the immediate tailoring of the clothes: “First make a magic cloak and an undershirt; they need to be ready to wear by tomorrow morning. Also, make a set of noble attire that must be completed within four days; the rest of the clothes can be delayed.”

Even the most professional tailors can’t immediately put together a set of clothes, and the more exquisite the clothes, the more time is needed for crafting—especially for noble attire.

“My Lord, how should I choose the fabric for the clothes?”

“The finest fabric, the same specifications as my clothes.”

...

The next morning.

The tailor Mrs. Morson had commissioned worked through the night to finish a set of a magic cloak and an undershirt. After finishing his morning exercises, Liszt presented them to Ach.

“Ach, put on these clothes; I will take you to get familiar with Fresh Flower Town and Black Horse Island right away,” he said.

“Okay.”

Liszt left the room, closing the door behind him, without any thought of peeking at Ach changing. He hadn’t even considered it, instead chatting awkwardly in the Worm Room with Giant Algae Greater Elf Pike.

“Ach suddenly has long legs now, becoming almost as handsome as you and me.”

“Is that so.”

“Of course, there’s still a difference.”

“Heh.”

“I don’t like her hair. Yellow-brown is the most beautiful color, like the handsome Pike’s color. I suggest you also switch to a yellow-brown outfit; it’s more pleasant to look at. Otherwise, your handsomeness will struggle to keep up with Pike’s pace.”

Liszt smiled, “I too think yellow-brown is a nice color, but as a noble, Flack·Abbieye is the most suitable attire for my status.” Talking with Pike was mostly nonsensical self-admiration, as this Greater Elf’s thought processes were a bit odd.

Thankfully, Ach was not a dawdling young girl, and she quickly changed into her new attire.

Black boots, a black mage robe, and a black hooded magic cloak completely concealed Ach’s body, leaving only her pure and flawless face partially hidden under the hood. Her blue eyes were still deep and clear, making it hard to ignore their sparkle.

Mage cloaks aren’t about beauty or ugliness, they look more or less the same on anyone, so there isn’t much to say about them.

Liszt gave a slight nod to acknowledge.

Pike, however, shook his head quickly, "It's not good-looking, not good-looking at all, Ach, you wearing black clothes is just too ugly, the only advantage is that it covers your blue hair. You should wear tan clothes, like the handsome Pike's color, otherwise, you're way behind."

Ach's little face didn't have any smile, instead, there was a feeling of discomfort, "Brother, Ach doesn't like wearing clothes."

"You'll get used to it."

"These fabrics are so uncomfortable against the skin, brother, don't you feel uncomfortable wearing clothes like this every day?"

"Because I'm used to it, but indeed, these clothes really don't fit well, wearing them for a few more days will make it a lot more comfortable."

"Wearing clothes is very inconvenient, they get wet when swimming, Ach once wore leather armor, and wearing it wet was even more uncomfortable." She rarely complained, clearly, clothes were causing her a chain of discomfort, "Brother, there is blood magic that can turn clothes into magic equipment, which can even be stored inside one's body, Ach wants to make such clothes for herself."

"If you can improve upon that kind of magic technique from the vampires, it would certainly be good, and make me a set of Dou Qi clothes that can be put on and taken off at will." Liszt understood Ach's thoughts, as swimming with Rainbow Whale Rose, he often had to endure the discomfort of wet clothes as well.

Ach was confident, "Mhm, there's nothing difficult about this magic, Ach will make it happen soon!"

"Let's go, we'll take a walk around Fresh Flower Town, and then head to Black Horse Island. There's a Black Dragon Childe Paris there with a body problem waiting for me to solve, and you can help provide some reference."

"I know, brother has told me about Black Dragon Childe Paris, she's the Patrol Leader of Black Horse Island, who once met a Light Dragon and was eroded by the Light Dragon's magic power. Ach has been thinking about how to save this Black Dragon Childe, and has many ideas that should be able to help my brother."

Ach, wearing boots, took several steps to get used to the heels behind the boots—because there were too many muddy streets in the city, the boots all had an inch-long heel.

Standing around the seaside villa were Liszt's Retainer Knights and personal manservants.

Seeing Liszt go in alone but come out leading a female magician made everyone somewhat puzzled, but no one showed it.

For Liszt, the Son of Glory, this was just standard procedure.

The day Liszt rides out on a dragon, none of them would show the slightest bit of shock, as they had grown too accustomed to regular amazements.

"Bring the carriage over," Liszt instructed.

The Retainer Knight immediately brought the carriage over, and Liszt personally helped Ach into the carriage, then he himself also got on, riding with Ach around Fresh Flower Town.

They enjoyed the labor of ordinary people in the town and admired the beautiful rural scenery.

Eventually, the carriage stopped at the entrance of Nameless Castle.

Liszt, playing the gentleman, helped Ach down, and with a smile said, "Ach, you have lived in this castle for quite a few days, but this might be the first time you're seeing its full picture, right?"

"Mhm."

Ach lifted her head, looking at the two-story small castle, and showed a happy smile.

It was a memory worth cherishing for a lifetime, meeting her closest brother, Liszt, and with his guidance, pushing open the gate to the world of magic. From that moment on, her

destiny completely changed; she was no longer a dazed little sea monster in the ocean, but a magician in pursuit of truth.

Then from the apple orchard, a huge black dog came over, rubbed against Liszt, and then looked up at Ach.

Sniffing Ach's scent incessantly.

"It's Douson." Ach recognized the big black dog and wanted to touch Douson's fur.

Suddenly, a familiar shout came from the castle.

"Wooah!"

Chapter 682: Don't Be Surprised

"Wuwa!"

And who should appear but the supreme ruler of the Nameless Castle, the Thorn Minor Elf, Jela.

It naturally recognized Jela, for sometimes when Liszt went to the seaside castle, it would take Jela with it, so it was not at all unfamiliar with her. This was, however, the first time it had seen Ach with long legs, but it showed no surprise whatsoever, probably because its intelligence was not sufficient to be amazed whether Ach had long legs or not.

Moreover, Ach's attire was that of a rather common magician.

Landing on Liszt's shoulder and clutching a strand of pale golden hair, Jela casually waved at Ach, considering that a greeting—the sea monster miss's shell bathtub was nice for taking a bath, but since Jela didn't bring the bathtub this time, it wasn't particularly interested in her.

Then it saw Douson snuggling up to Liszt and immediately raised its hand as if it were about to scatter seeds.

Seeing this, Douson reflexively jumped back, and then, realizing Jela wasn't actually scattering seeds, it bared its teeth and grimaced at Jela.

But soon it turned its head and continued to scrutinize Ach—unsure whether it was eager to size up Ach or too guilty to face the bully Jela.

Ach stretched out his hand, wanting to touch Douson.

With a look from Liszt, Douson stood still and allowed the over one meter fifty-five sea monster to touch its shiny, smooth fur.

“Douson is really obedient. It has always accompanied brother in war, a truly loyal Blizzard Beast,” Ach touched Douson, then looked towards the depths of the apple orchard, “The Eight Tiny Ones have grown so big too, almost as big as Douson now. Is the smallest one the Earth Matron?”

“Yes, it's a pity that the Earth Matron can't reproduce more little blizzard beasts, or else I could have an entire legion of them, taking down cities and fortresses with ease.”

At this moment, Butler Carter came over, bowed respectfully, and asked, “My Lord, might I inquire the identity of this magician?”

“Acherloides Truth, she is my sister, Mr. Carter. From now on, Ach will reside in the castle and share the same status as I do,” Liszt introduced Ach to Carter, “Have Mrs. Morson prepare a room for Ach. Buy anything she lacks, and besides, Ach is a vegetarian, so ensure her menu includes plenty of fruits.”

“Yes, My Lord.”

Carter quickly bowed to Ach and said, “Miss Ach, good day. I am Mr. Carter Taugaun, the butler of my Lord's castle. If you have any instructions, please do not hesitate to give them to me. On behalf of all the servants of the castle, we shall follow your commands.” He was actually curious about Ach's identity and how she became the young master's sister.

He had spent his life witnessing the rise of the Tulip Family and was more than familiar with the lineage of its members. There was definitely no relative named Acherlodes.

There were no magician relatives either, as nobles rarely practiced magic.

But this did not prevent him from following Liszt's instructions, treating Ach as another master of the castle, and not speculating about her true identity or the nature of her relationship with Liszt—just treating them as real siblings.

Ach nodded without saying anything.

She did not particularly like expressing herself in front of strangers.

Liszt soon brought Ach to the castle's living room, where Butler Carter quickly summoned all the castle servants to greet another lord of the castle. But the introduction was not too grand, as Ach disliked noisy scenes. She preferred quietly reading.

Rather than socializing and interacting with people.

They had lunch in the castle at noon, with only Liszt and Ach at the dining table. In front of Ach was just a small fruit plate with a variety of fruits. In front of Liszt, however, were chicken, fish, meat, and eggs, each dish served on a large plate, with generous portions.

Compared to Ach who could feel full after eating some raspberries for a meal, he almost had to consume a poor family's food expenses for several years with each meal.

He was not only eating and drinking well, but the cost of magic potions was an even bigger expense, after all, he was not alone in his body—there was also a fire dragon.

After eating their fill,

Liszt asked, "How does it feel, living in the castle?"

“It’s a bit restrictive. Ach doesn’t really like so many people watching her eat, it feels odd.”

“I wasn’t used to it before either, but now I have adapted. Social systems are like this; these are the basic etiquettes a noble needs to maintain.”

“Hmm.”

“Let’s go and see your room then. If there’s anything unsatisfactory, have the servants change it.”

Ach’s room was next to Liszt’s. Since the castle had not housed any ladies for a long time, the furnishings were those prepared for Liszt previously, consisting of bedding, sheets, and so on. Liszt preferred plain colors and a somber style, so Ach’s room seemed a bit dated.

It lacked the lively spirit a young girl’s chamber should have.

However, Ach didn’t care about this at all. What she wanted to improve was the lack of books: “A bedroom without books is just not comfortable. There should be rows of bookshelves, basking in the ocean of knowledge. That way, even in sleep, one can dream of seeking truth.”

Liszt’s lips twitched, the little sea monster after all had been captured by Truth, just like most magicians who are constantly thinking about pursuing knowledge and exploring truth.

“Mr. Carter, take all those magic books piled up in my study, move half of them over to Ach’s bedroom... The study still needs some magic books for decoration.”

...

Afternoon.

Departing for Black Horse Island.

Liszt was preparing to ride the Rainbow Whale Rose, and incidentally take Ach along to Fresh Flower Town.

However, Ach, who had been a bit sullen in the castle, quickly became lively upon entering the sea: “Brother, there’s no need to ride on Rose. Let Ach send brother to Black Horse Island with the shell!”

“Hmm?”

Soon Liszt understood how magical Ach’s shell was, not only could it turn into a hairpin to be worn in the hair, but it could also serve as a shell airship.

Water tornadoes below propelled the shell flying at speeds of at least 200 kilometers per hour.

The shell maintained a ten-meter altitude above the sea, whistling as it raced, and arrived smoothly at Black Horse Port in just half an hour. When Liszt and Ach leaped down from the shell, landing on the wooden planks of the dock, all the workers immediately, led by the port officials, paid their respects to Liszt.

Liszt had not brought attendants, there was no pomp, but this did nothing to diminish his image of brilliance and might—at Black Horse Island Domain, he was faith personified.

Soon, an official led two horses over.

“Change to a carriage.” Liszt had not taught Ach how to ride, and besides, magicians dressed in magic robes were not suited for horseback riding; the port officials were not perceptive enough.

After switching to a carriage, they went directly to the Mage Tower.

He also sent someone to notify the captain of the patrol team, Paris, to come over quickly.

In the Magic Academy on the first floor of the Mage Tower, Dean Chris Truth, after seeing Ach at Liszt’s side, was unable to ignore Ach’s diminutive stature and flawless face. And

as a Grand Magician, Chris could feel an aura of magic power over Ach that made her heart pound.

“Viscount, who might this honored magician be?” Chris asked directly.

“Let’s find a quiet room to talk.” Liszt had no intention of keeping Chris in the dark; he still needed her support for Ach’s magic research.

Under Chris’s lead, the three of them directly went to her office located on the upper floors of the Mage Tower.

After sending away several magic apprentices who acted as assistants, Chris personally brewed tea for Liszt and Ach—tea had by now become a popular drink in the Mage Tower.

“Chris, please sit down.” Liszt got straight to the point without any preamble, “You must be very curious about the identity of Acherlodes Truth. I hope you won’t be too surprised. Not only is she my sister, but she also is an Archmage.”

Crack!

No sooner had the words left his lips,

Chris’s hand trembled, and the teacup slipped from her grasp, spilling freshly brewed tea all over the floor.

Chapter 683: Supreme Honor

“Her psychological toughness is still not strong enough,” Liszt thought regretfully as he watched Chris accidentally break the teacup.

Archmages and Dragon Knights are indeed incredible beings, but as a Sky Knight or a Grand Magician, one should belong to the well-informed and high-status elite, and their psychological toughness should not be so fragile.

However,

he still said gently, “Chris, stay calm, there’s no need to be so surprised.”

Chris looked down at the shattered teacup and the tea spilled everywhere, seemingly understanding that she had overreacted, “Viscount, are you sure you didn’t misspeak? Your sister is so young, are you sure she’s not a Grand Magician, but a legendary Archmage?”

“You should know that I’m not one to joke around, Ach has only recently touched the Magic Web and completed the Elemental Shaping to become a true Archmage. She is probably the only Archmage that the Duchy of Sapphire, as well as the Steel Ridge and Bear Eagle Kingdoms, have seen in over a century.”

“She really is an Archmage?”

Chris covered her chest with one hand, still looking at Ach with disbelief.

The accidental breaking of the teacup, although due to a shock that was too sudden, had invisibly dissipated her shock and allowed her to quickly regain her composure, making her suspect that Liszt might be joking. However, there was not a single trace of humor in Liszt’s tone.

And the petite-female magician with her clear eyes and flawless appearance did not seem to be joking at all.

What was most important was the faint aura emanating from her, which made Chris feel palpitations. If she tried to focus on it, it seemed to disappear, as if it were just an illusion. But as a Grand Magician, keenly aware and particularly sensitive to magic power, Chris absolutely did not believe she was prone to illusions.

So, all this was very likely to be true.

The petite female magician before her really was an Archmage.

Known as the incarnate Truth walking in the mortal world, Archmages had gradually become legends—as for Grand Magicians like Chris, they had never heard of a living

Archmage. They had only read more or less from the magic books passed down by Archmages, admiring the Archmage's elegance from those scant words.

Odom Truth, Vasi Truth...

These names of Archmages can be recited by many magicians, yet they were mostly Archmages from the era of the Moon Empire. Basking in the glory of a world ruled by magicians—who deemed other professions as heretical and only magicians as the orthodoxy—their legends spanned the continent to the moon.

Alas, with the change of eras, knights quickly replaced magicians as the orthodox rulers of the world. Although the Ancient Warriors and Ancient Magicians were not deemed heretical, they were also being continuously engulfed and faded away.

Liszt, harboring a mischievous interest, was about to explain to Chris in detail why Ach was an Archmage, fully enjoying the transformation of her expression from disbelief to bewilderment, to shock, and finally acceptance.

Suddenly, Ach raised her hand without a word.

Immediately, a Water Arrow Spell took shape abruptly, and the next moment, it appeared from her hand and hovered just inches away from Chris's face.

This unexpected change startled Chris once again.

But looking at the hovering Water Arrow Spell, she was stunned, "This is..."

"An Archmage's control over magic is completely different from that of a Grand Magician, Chris. You can truly feel this Water Arrow Spell, for it is condensed from the magic power of the Magic Web. It sustains its existence through the Magic Web, and if I wish, it can exist for a very, very long time," he explained.

For a stranger, it was almost the first time Ach had spoken such a long sentence.

Which surprised Liszt.

What made Chris shudder even more,

was her belief that once magic is released, it cannot be stopped; it must continue to be released or collapse directly.

Yet, a Water System Basic Magic – the Water Arrow Spell – simply hovered in front of her, the magic power maintaining the water arrow clearly felt. She couldn't help but extend her finger, touching the water arrow itself, the condensed water flowed through her finger without any sign of collapse.

In a flash, she caught a glimpse of the power of high magic; she did not understand this power, but the pressure from the higher level of magic power was palpable.

“Such powerful magic power, unbelievable magic!” Chris pulled back her finger and looked at Ach with no longer surprise or doubt, but with eyes quickly filled with fervent admiration, “Lord Acherlroides Truth, grand Archmage, please allow Chris to offer you her utmost respect.”

With these words, she knelt on one knee and performed a rare and solemn gesture.

Even when facing Liszt, her lifesaver, she had never performed such a devout gesture – after all, whether knights or magicians, they all worship the strong, and clearly, Archmage Archy far surpassed Liszt, the “Sky Knight.”

Liszt did not feel jealous.

Had he arrived riding Leo, Chris surely would have shown the same devout respect.

Yet there was no need for that, as he always relied on his personal charm to win the respect and loyalty of his subordinates, and not on unfathomable strength.

Besides, at that moment, it was Ach's time to shine, and how could he steal the spotlight?

Ach had few interactions with humans, but being intelligent and backed by great power, she did not need to understand too many social tactics; direct words sufficed: “Chris, your brother has asked you to assist me in my magic research. I have many experimental ideas that I need your help with.”

Chris immediately responded with delight, “To serve a grand Archmage is my greatest honor!”

Then, she quietly added, “If I could receive one or two pointers from you, that would be even more thrilling.”

“That’s possible, you help me with my magic research, and I will find time to guide you in your practice,” Ach easily won Chris over. With her status, she only needed to snap her fingers, and Grand Magicians would scramble to work for her – the position of an Archmage in the hearts of magicians was sacred and inviolable.

Seeing this, Liszt reassured, “Chris, Ach’s identity must be kept secret, not to be mentioned to anyone.”

“Why, Viscount, isn’t Lord Acherloides the embodiment of Truth walking among us? Should she not be spreading the glow of Truth to the world? If Lord Acherloides needs a laboratory, Chris is willing to give up the Mage Tower and follow and serve by Your Lordship’s side,” she said.

“Wait a few years. Having just advanced to Archmage, she needs time to adapt and be free from worldly disturbances,” Liszt stated unequivocally, “You will still run the Mage Tower, which was, after all, built for you. Ach will stay within my castle, and her laboratory will also be built inside the castle.”

Ach remained silent, allowing Liszt to make arrangements.

Chris immediately pleaded, “Then, Viscount, may I have a room in the castle? I hope to be at Lord Acherloides’s service at all times!”

Ach indeed needed a Grand Magician to act as an assistant.

According to many Magic Books, Ancient Magicians were always surrounded by a host of magicians, much like knights following a landlord.

After thinking for a moment, Liszt said, "I can leave a room in the castle for you, but your work will still be arranged at the Mage Tower, where the team of magicians needs your leadership."

"Thank you, Viscount!"

Chapter 684: Black Dragon Childe

Chris had countless questions she wanted to ask Acherlroides.

However, now was not a good time for discussion, as Liszt had already sent someone to summon Captain Paris to the Mage Tower, and the main task for today was to address the aftermath of Paris's affliction with the Black Dragon Childe.

"My lord, Dean Chris," Paris still donned her striking mercenary attire, complete with leather armor, a greatsword, and a ponytail.

Liszt introduced, "This magician is Acherlroides Truth, she is my sister."

Paris was slightly surprised but immediately greeted politely, "A pleasure to meet you, Lord Acherlroides." Her intuition told her that the relationship between this magician and Liszt was not common, but she had already become a follower of Liszt, and the ambiguous feelings she initially had had long settled at the bottom of her heart.

The hardships of her early years made her treasure her hard-earned life, so she was able to find her own place.

Acherlroides curiously observed Paris, not speaking. It was her first encounter with a Black Dragon Wraith, and she wanted to closely examine what state a human affected by a dragon's magic power was really in. However, just from appearances, Paris seemed no different from a normal person.

The three women might have made for an interesting play, but Acherloides was not fond of talking, and the relationship between Chris and Paris was lukewarm, making the atmosphere somewhat heavy.

Liszt didn't like this atmosphere and got straight to the point, "Paris, you're here for us to address the hidden danger in your body. Today in Chris's lab, Acherloides and I will work together to free you from the Light Dragon's magic erosion. You need to cooperate closely."

"Ah, my lord, this is..." Paris was astonished.

Chris was also shocked, "Magic erosion by the Light Dragon? Paris, is your Light System Magic Affinity the result of magic erosion by the Light Dragon?"

Seeing their reactions, Liszt commanded, "Captain Paris, tell your story so that Dean Chris can understand as well and assist from the sidelines."

Paris promptly told her story, from being a mere rat transforming into a Black Dragon Wraith, how she killed a Court Grand Mage in self-defense, escaped, then followed her sister's tracks to Fresh Flower Town, and how she was captivated by Liszt's personal charm and chose to stay and live here with her sister.

"So the White Dragon Wraith mentioned in the magic books truly exists. That thief had quite the audacity to actually reverse the transformation ceremony, turning you into living Black Dragon Wraiths... It's a pity the thief has disappeared; otherwise, having another sample would significantly increase the chances of finding a cure."

Paris maintained her stance, "Actually, being cured or not isn't important. My lord, I appreciate everything you've done for me, and if it's too much trouble, I'm quite content as I am now."

"It's no trouble at all; no need to talk anymore about it. Why live fewer years when you can live more?" Liszt looked directly at Acherloides, "What do you think we should do first?"

"Let her transform into the Black Dragon Wraith first."

Transforming into the Black Dragon Wraith would shorten her life. If an ordinary magician asked, Paris would not have listened, but upon Liszt's casual instruction, she immediately stirred the High Mana of the Light Dragon within her—the magic power having characteristics of an advanced nature.

After taking off the cumbersome leather armor.

Boom!

In an instant, the clothes on Paris's body burst open, her previously fair arms bulged with veins, and one by one, gray-white scales began to grow from beneath the skin. Her arm thickened more than twice in size, and her fingers turned into sharp claws, with nails at least an inch long.

Following her arms, her legs and body also began to change, breaking through her clothes.

Muscles bulged everywhere, growing scales beneath the skin, doubling her form in size. Then, her head started to change as well, with dense gray-white scales emerging on her face and forehead, her hair gradually turning gray-white, and beyond her face, there was no longer any sign of Paris.

She completely resembled a massive half-dragon, half-human, with her clothes torn to shreds hanging off her body.

At first glance, she resembled Mystique from "X-Men," but she was gray-white and more ferocious-looking.

Having just completed the transformation, Paris didn't need to actively employ Light and Shadow Tug, her body turned into a translucent existence, almost invisible: "My lord, this is the final form of my Black Dragon Wraith, maintaining this form consumes a great deal of magic power; it feels as if my body is melting."

"Maintain the Black Dragon Wraith form, Paris, don't worry. With Ach and my current strength, it is not difficult to solve your problem, just trust me." Liszt quickly employed the Eye of Magic, observing Paris who was shrouded in black mist all over her body.

The black mist was the power left inside her by the Light Dragon, but strangely, the magic power of the Light Dragon was not a ball of sunlight but a dark gray color similar to Dark Attribute Magic Power.

“I believe in you, my lord.”

Paris’s voice was rough, like two dry sticks rubbing together.

Chris was spellbound by the sight, murmuring to herself, “It really is the Black Dragon Wraith. Is this the wonder of the Light Dragon’s magic power, distorting the light in the room and creating illusions?” Without touching the Magic Web, she couldn’t understand the peculiarities of high magic.

In front of Paris, Liszt and Ach were walking around the two-meter-tall Black Dragon Wraith, continually probing and discussing.

“Ach, do you have any clue?”

“Brother can try to extract the Light Dragon’s High Mana; with your power, you should be able to do it.”

“No, we can’t extract it forcefully. I see that the Light Dragon’s High Mana has already fused with the cells of Paris’s body. Once we extract it, her body will collapse.”

“Extract it using the resonance principle, separating the Light Dragon’s High Mana from the cells.” Ach knew what cells were; Liszt had taught her middle school biology in detail.

“That is worth a try.”

Liszt quickly took hold of Paris’s “claw”: “Paris, relax your body and don’t try to resist my Dou Qi.”

“Understood, my lord.”

The next moment.

Liszt stimulated his own Dragon Dou Qi, constantly adjusting the frequency, trying to merge with the Light Dragon's magic power inside Paris and then slowly peel it away. Such an attempt was almost impossible for ordinary knights and magicians, but Dragon Knights exist to break the impossible!

Dragon Knight Resonance could make one person and one dragon resonate, and now it was just resonating with the Light Dragon's High Mana. After a few attempts, Liszt's mouth showed a subtle smile: "It's no big issue."

Soon, the Dragon Dou Qi vibrated intensely.

It drove the Light Dragon's High Mana inside Paris to vibrate in unison, quickly matching the frequency, starting to resonate and merge, boiling and extracting outwards—similar in principle to Dragon Knight Resonance, but simpler in operation, barely a cut-down, low-tier version of Dragon Knight Resonance.

"My... body... so hot..." Paris managed to say.

The Dragon Dou Qi was burning her body. Liszt's Dragon Dou Qi was, after all, Fire Attribute, inherently hot and combustible. Even contained, it still severely affected Paris's body.

"Hang in there!"

Liszt, expressionless: "Control your body, relax, don't struggle. The Light Dragon's High Mana is separating from the cells, this is the moment to solve your problem once and for all."

Chapter 685: Light Magic Swordsman

Grasping Paris' hand and initiating a simple Dragon Knight Resonance, Liszt began extracting the High Mana of the Light Dragon. With his other hand, he pulled a Dragonfire Syringe from the Gemstone Space.

The Dragonfire Syringe, crafted from volcanic glass, is a storage device capable of containing the Dragon's Intent of a Fire Dragon Overmagic.

However, Liszt had never used the Dragonfire Syringe to store High Magic, and this time he planned to experiment. After extracting the High Mana of the Light Dragon from Paris, he wondered whether it could be infused into the Dragonfire Syringe for gradual study—after all, it was the High Mana of another Elemental Dragon, an immensely valuable research material for magicians like Ach.

“It's so hot...”

Paris struggled to endure the unruly rampage of Dragon Dou Qi within her, knowing that to achieve the effect of Dragon Knight Resonance, the process would inevitably demand her body as the main stage for a precise yet ferocious manipulation.

Fortunately, this did not last long.

Familiar with true Dragon Knight Resonance, Liszt successfully fused his own Dragon Dou Qi with Paris' High Mana of the Light Dragon. He then began to draw it out slowly from her body using Dou Qi release techniques, guiding it through a sharp fingertip into the Dragonfire Syringe.

Regrettably, the Dragonfire Syringe could block the Fire Dragon Overmagic but was unable to contain the High Mana of the Light Dragon.

The ball of High Mana, merged with Dragon Dou Qi, passed directly through the syringe and dissipated into the air. Since it couldn't be stored, Liszt did not insist; he continued guiding and releasing it, and after about a quarter of an hour, all the High Mana of the Light Dragon inside Paris was extracted.

Gradually, the transformation into Paris' Black Dragon Childe form also began to recede.

The scales withered, her form shrank, and the once slightly plump and spirited female mercenary returned. However, her clothes were torn apart, and mere shreds of fabric could not hide her fair skin. The key parts of her chest were exposed clearly before Liszt.

However, before Liszt could shift his focus from extracting the High Mana of the Light Dragon and take a good look at Paris' body, Chris, who stood guard nearby, had already removed her Magic Cloak and wrapped it around Paris.

Seeing this, Liszt glanced lightly at Chris—what a careless fellow!

Regardless, the issue with Paris' Black Dragon Childe strength was completely resolved. As her strength was drawn out and she reverted to human form, she slowly collapsed into Chris' arms.

“Viscount, with Captain Paris' body strength depleted, could there be any problems?”

“There shouldn't be any problems,” Liszt let go of her hand and calmed the Dragon Dou Qi within himself, “However, her body has been eroded by the High Mana of the Light Dragon for too long, so there will be a period of weakness after the separation. She will need a generous supply of nutrients to replenish her body's needs.”

At that moment, Ach, who had been observing for a while, gently grasped Paris' hand to sense her condition.

After a moment, he said, “Brother, although Paris' body is weak and I can't feel the High Mana of the Light Dragon, I can still sense that Light Attribute Magic Power is compatible with her body. Moreover, her body seems to be refining Light Attribute Magic Power on its own... resembling both Dou Qi and Magic.”

“You mean to say she can now practice both Dou Qi and Magic?” Liszt was quite astonished.

Ach nodded: “Fundamentally, Magic and Dou Qi are conflicting; Magic requires outward spiritual release, while Dou Qi necessitates inward spiritual concentration—they are two different cultivation systems. But Paris' body has been specially transformed by the Light Dragon and become similar to a Magical Beast's body, naturally gifted in magic.”

“So it can be like that too, let me ponder for a moment.”

Liszt sat down on a chair and, though claiming to reflect, in truth, he summoned the Smoke Mission: “Complete the mission, reward Paris with the path of the Light Magic Swordsman.”

“The path of the Light Magic Swordsman?” He understood Ach’s speculation was correct; the path of cultivation rewarded by the Smoke Mission for Paris was indeed a system that combined both Magic and Dou Qi.

It seemed that only humans whose bodies were thoroughly transformed by Dragonkind’s High Magic could, like Magical Beasts, draw upon the magic power in the air while refining their body’s own magic power.

Light Magic Swordsman, it sounded quite impressive.

“I wonder if I could have Leo mass-produce some Fire Paladins in the future? Or maybe I could just take up the job of a Fire Paladin myself... When it doesn’t interfere with my Dragon Knight training, picking up some Fire System Magic on the side would be quite an enjoyable experience, too.”

“^

Fantasy between.

The Smoke Serpent Script has changed, “Mission: The formula for a potion to enhance the vitality of a person has been sent to Cousin Mei Oubo, it might be effective for the continuation of the Long Taro Family’s lineage. However, as Marquis Merlin is an elder who commands your respect, perhaps you should seek an opportunity to listen to his teachings. Reward: Clues to the Sub-dragon Phoenix.”

“Sub-dragon Phoenix?”

“Do Super Dragonkin Magical Beasts truly exist?”

“It seems I need to make a trip to Red Crab Island as soon as possible to meet Marquis Merlin.” Liszt had long planned to meet Marquis Merlin, but he had been too busy to find the time.

Now that the Smoke Mission had urged him, he needed to make time to go to Red Crab Island no matter what.

He blinked, dispersing the smoke before his eyes, and Liszt returned to his senses. Looking at Ach and Chris, who were studying the unconscious Paris, he immediately said, “Let Paris rest until she wakes up before asking for her cooperation. Now, Chris, you arrange for someone to take care of Paris and let her recover as soon as possible.”

Chris replied, “Yes, Viscount.”

Ach then said, “Brother, Ach wants to meet Mary Dawn Break and study the magic of storage with her.” She was always thinking about the matter of wearing clothes.

Liszt naturally would not refuse.

Shortly after, Mary arrived. Now a Pureblood Vampire, her strength had increased significantly. Freed from the shackles of the Black Knight Family, without too much work to do, her life was quite comfortable. She was now mainly focused on developing her subordinates.

The population of Black Horse Island had already exceeded one hundred thousand, and there would surely be many talented youths tempted by blood, wishing to become Vampires.

Mary and her Blood Servants were searching for suitable youths—of course, Liszt had set rules that forbade forcibly developing Vampires; they must obtain his approval before transformation.

Up until now,

Mary had found three youths with the talent for Blood Magic, and Liszt had rejected them all—two were new serfs whose loyalty was not sufficient; one was a Magic Apprentice valued by Chris, so development into a Vampire was not allowed either.

“Lord, do you have any orders?”

“Come to meet my sister, Acherloides Truth.”

“Your sister, Lord? Respected Lord Acherloides, Mary Dawn Break greets you.” Mary immediately performed the noble’s courtesy.

Acherloides nodded, no nonsense, “I wish to study magic that can merge objects into the body; I need your help.”

Mary responded, “As you wish, Lord Acherloides.”

“Then let us begin the study at once.”

Liszt interrupted, “Enjoy a good tour of Black Horse Island today, Ach. It won’t be too late to study tomorrow.”

Acherloides was somewhat torn but found it hard to refuse Liszt’s suggestion, “Alright then.”

Liszt didn’t want Acherloides to become too immersed in the world of magic, as after all, she was still an underage Little Sea Monster who should have a happy “childhood.”

However, he was not so lenient with others, “Mary, you will carefully organize this magic for storing objects today. Tomorrow, when Acherloides needs it, you must provide the most detailed data.”

“Yes, Lord.”

Chapter 686: Space Ring

From east to west, from south to north.

Liszt, with Ach on the back of the landwalker bird Loki, swiftly toured Black Horse Island in its entirety, admiring all the thriving towns that were bustling with activity, as well as the increasingly orderly plantations and workshops.

“This is paper. Its quality has just reached the standards for writing, but the process still needs further improvement. Once the process is truly perfected, it will be the era of paper replacing parchment, and this technology will be a crucial pillar of industry after the founding of my nation,” he said.

Ach rubbed the whitened sheets of paper, “It’s quite magical how just some tree bark and straw can be turned into paper that seems even better than parchment.”

“Of course,” Liszt replied. “Magic is indeed wondrous, but the power of technology is an equally formidable force not to be overlooked.”

“Hmm, my brother has said a lot, the power of steam, once harnessed, will change the entire world.”

Liszt had mentioned the industrial revolution; Watt’s invention of the steam engine sparked the eighteenth-century industrial revolution. Of course, he spoke of it in terms of conjecture and foresight, “Leo is an Elemental Dragon and cannot produce gemstones and metals, so using its Superior Magic to develop industry is the quickest way to monetize its value.”

In fact, it was not the quickest way—the quickest way would be to plunder, to issue a Pioneer Mandate, just like what the Sapphire Duke did.

If the industrial vibe of paper production was still rather weak, seeming more like a cottage industry,

Then the shock Ach felt was immense when they visited the glass workshop and saw how stones, under the fierce heat of the Fire Dragon Overmagic, became fiery liquid masses, which the workers would then retrieve, stretch, and shape into different glassware, slowly cooling down. It was his first encounter with the formidable potential of industry.

“This is called an assembly line. If it were just one person’s efforts, the production of glass would be very limited. But when each worker masters a specific process, not only can production efficiency be accelerated, but the risk of technical leakage can also be

effectively reduced... I've been promoting the use of assembly line magic operations at the Magic Academy, based on the same principle," Liszt explained.

"Brother's ideas are really... astonishing!" Ach said with awe.

Liszt casually responded, "Just basic operations."

Apart from the glass workshop that bore a slight hint of industrialization, the other workshops hadn't yet shed the appearance of primitive handcrafting; at most, Liszt had imposed stricter standards for hygiene and environment, making them look cleaner and more orderly, but essentially there wasn't much change—the greater changes were in infrastructure.

The roads were paved with bricks mixed with rubber water, creating smooth and broad "rubber roads." Residential and workshop areas featured tall water towers accessible everywhere, which were used for firefighting and flushing effluents, regularly washing out the underground pipes—every house had sewage pipes connected to the city's underground network.

There were toilets everywhere, strictly in accordance with Liszt's requirements to prohibit public urination and defecation, with violators not only facing fines but also correctional labor.

Liszt was also preparing to promote the use of waterwheels and aqueducts—that is, using waterwheels to lift water from rivers and lakes and transport it through elevated pipes to the water towers in towns. However, as the construction of the town was currently busy, this planning stage had not been reached yet. As long as the castle's needs were met, he didn't mind the slower pace.

Just as those Noble Landlords didn't care about urban sanitation because they lived in castles, which the stench couldn't reach.

Liszt also lived in a castle where he could enjoy complete health and convenience services, so he didn't mind if the city was a bit behind. In fact, the towns under his rule were already considered exemplars of civilization in this world, and their livability was comparable to the castles of the Nobles.

Many merchants chose to buy houses in Fresh Flower Town—only in Fresh Flower Town, as Black Horse Island had not yet opened for settlements.

Living in such a clean and sanitary environment, it really becomes difficult to return to those filthy cities filled with excrement after one gets used to it. Even many small nobles from rural estates have bought houses in Fresh Flower Town to enjoy the convenient life of a “modernized” town—along with delicious food and rich theater life.

The port town, which was gradually developing into a city, was a highlight of the visit.

Near Green Tea Town lay a desolate piece of land, also a highlight of the visit. Pointing at this barren land, Li Si Te said to Ach, “It was right here that Leo and I encountered the Formless Dragon, a type of Sacred Dragon. It ate my beef and Smoked Grass and gifted me these Space Gems.”

He took out a Space Gem and handed it to Ach, “This Space Gem is for you, Ach, as a gift for your advancement to Archmage. Let me personally put it on for you.”

The Space Gem was already set into a Mithril Ring crafted by the Iron Knight Alvin Eagle Sword, which could be called a Space Ring, dazzling and eye-catching.

Li Si Te took Ach’s delicate hand and, amidst her expressions of astonishment and joy, slipped the shimmering ring onto her left middle finger, “You can study it well... Perhaps one day I will ride the Formless Dragon myself, and then, if I want more Space Gems, I’ll have as many as I desire.”

There was a time when a single Space Gem was treasured as a priceless gem, carefully guarded by him, not daring to show it off in front of others.

And he was reluctant to give it to anyone.

However, after becoming a Dragon Knight, he no longer worried about the Space Gems being discovered. Moreover, he had two Bewildering Dragon Mind Fruits, and sooner or later, he was going to ride the Formless Dragon—with that time coming, Space Gems would become an important gemstone resource for his newly-founded nation to trade with other countries.

Compared to Sapphires, Rubies, and Green Gems, the value of Space Gems was evidently greater.

“I have Leo and the Formless Dragon, two dragons whose combat power will protect my nation, and I believe that even if I don’t have a Kingdom to rely on, no one would dare provoke me then!”

A Kingdom with six or seven Dragon Knights is considered normal, but Dragon Knights often have entanglements with each other, and truly free Dragon Knights are very few. The fall of just one Dragon Knight could cause great turmoil for a nation, and naturally, they would not casually send out Dragon Knights to wage wars for slaying dragons.

Before the Duchy of Sapphire was established, the Eagle Kingdom only sent out one Dragon Knight to initiate a dragon-slaying war, which speaks volumes.

If two Dragon Knights had been dispatched, perhaps there would have been no matter of the Duchy of Sapphire at all.

“So this is a Space Gem, it requires magic power to activate it... It’s incredibly magical, having its own independent space, as if it doesn’t exist in this world yet is connected to it! Truly incredible, big brother is not only a Fire Dragon’s Dragon Knight but also has friendly interactions with the Formless Dragon.”

Ach was extremely shocked, not just at the Gemstone Space but also at Li Si Te.

Conquering a Fire Dragon was already an incredulous feat, and now Li Si Te was clearly beginning to conquer a second dragon, a Formless Dragon from among the Sacred Dragons.

This nearly made her lose herself in admiration for Li Si Te.

In the face of such worshipful eyes from the Little Sea Monster.

Li Si Te still maintained an expression as light as the clouds and as gentle as the breeze, “The Formless Dragon, although an old friend of mine, comes at most once a year. When it comes next time, I’ll introduce you... Now let’s go to Thorn Castle to see the future new home and get familiar with the surroundings.”

Chapter 687: Surname of the Light Sword

Thorn Castle had already begun constructing its second floor and was bound to be entirely completed within the year.

After visiting Thorn Castle with Ach, night had already fallen, and the chefs of the port town prepared a lavish banquet. The main officials of Black Horse Island and the Elite Earth Knights had almost all attended tonight's banquet.

The reason was simple.

Tonight was a banquet where Liszt introduced Ach to everyone, making it clear to the people of the territory who Ach was to prevent misunderstandings later on.

No matter how the officials and knights speculated, the fact that Lord Landlord had gained a sister was established.

Over the next three days, Ach spent time researching clothing storage magic with vampires like Mary and organizing a batch of magic experiments for Chris to study. When it came to anything related to magic, Liszt essentially entrusted it all to Ach and Chris and no longer worried about it.

He also stopped fussing over magic books — really, he was too scared from being pressured to update — the Earl almost sent a messenger knight every day to inquire if “The Sky Chronicle of Liszt” was finished.

Nobody used to rush him, and writing was a form of relaxation, a pleasure, a sophisticated sentiment.

However, once pressured, writing became a burden and lost all its fun.

He preferred practicing the Dragon Knight Resonance with Leo, soaring through the sky observing everything in the world from a dragon's perspective, the myriad colors, the trajectories. Both the man and the dragon were rapidly growing, feeling their strength

improving at all moments — even Leo could now cross the sea between Coral Island and Black Horse Island.

In the past, Leo was too young and exhausted after flying just over a hundred kilometers.

But now it could effortlessly traverse the sea, although it still couldn't cross distances of more than five hundred kilometers without finding a place to rest and recuperate — dragons were indeed miraculous and powerful, but their consumption was also huge, especially since the young dragon was constantly condensing high mana into superior magic, often getting hungry.

When it became an adult dragon and had completely condensed its superior magic, its stamina would likely increase significantly.

Besides flying, most of Liszt's practice with Leo was dedicated to studying "Dragon Dou Qi Secret Manual", preparing to develop a set of Dou Qi secrets exclusive to Dragon Knights.

Currently, "Dragon Dou Qi Secret Manual" was still without a clear path; they were only repeatedly practicing Dou Qi secrets like "Rising Sun Blaze". The aim was to understand the flow of magic power within Leo's body in the process of continuously releasing Dou Qi secrets, and then use this knowledge to rationally design new moves.

Busy every day, having just acquired Dragon Knight's power, Liszt didn't want to waste a single second.

Just like Ach was constantly adapting to the power of an Archmage.

Even Paris had started to control her new body, which lacked the High Mana of the Light Dragon, attempting to re-practice magic, and Liszt directly suggested she try to practice both Dou Qi and magic, taking the path of a Light Magic Swordsman.

"You can only practice light system magic for magic, and for Dou Qi, you can only practice light attribute Dou Qi. Although the power of the Light Dragon has been driven out, your body has transformed, allowing you to refine only light attribute Dou Qi and absorb light attribute magic power. However, this isn't necessarily a bad thing, it might even be a good thing."

“Lord, can I regain my previous strength?” she asked.

“Yes,” Liszt replied affirmatively, “the upper limit of your power has clearly increased, and your future could be even more dazzling. Perhaps you could become the first person who is both a Grand Magician and a Sky Knight, the Light Magic Swordsman—once you surpass yourself, I will bestow upon you a new surname.”

Paris asked curiously, “What surname?”

“Sword, Paris Sword.”

It was not uncommon to take swords as surnames. For example, Alvin Eagle Sword, the only Iron Knight of Black Horse Island, was named after a sword. However, Paris’s “Sword” seemed to be named after a sword when in fact it referenced a profession—her profession was the entirely new Light Magic Swordsman.

“Paris Sword...” The former mercenary girl gripped her greatsword tightly, her fighting spirit rekindling, “Lord, I will definitely earn the ‘Sword’ surname!”

“I believe in you.”

Liszt smiled, a smile that felt like a warm spring breeze.

Paris couldn’t help but momentarily lose herself in obsession, perhaps it was such smiles that had originally pulled her darkened heart back into the light.

...

Time flew by.

Only one day remained until the Earl’s promotion to Marquis celebration banquet.

The Tulip Castle's messenger knight had arrived at Fresh Flower Town early to inform Liszt, "Viscount, Lord Landlord hopes that you can head to Fresh Flower Town today. Many guests, including your uncle's family, have already arrived at the Tulip Castle."

"I understand."

If it had been any other guests, Liszt wouldn't have bothered, no matter whether they were great nobles or minor nobles. In a few years, they would belong to two different nations, with no value in communication—he was someone who naturally avoided social interactions, preferring the silence and solitude of his heart even when he could out-noble any noble.

However, it would be improper not to go when the Mesiro Taro family had arrived.

He soon set off for Fresh Flower Town, ready to have a good chat with his uncle's family. By the time he reached Tulip Castle, the already bustling castle boiled with excitement as all the nobles stood to welcome him, waiting at the grand entrance to meet the second strongest person in the Grand Duchy.

"Father."

Liszt, accustomed to grand occasions, didn't feel the slightest bit uneasy.

He first paid his respects to the Marquis of Bull Tail, then upon seeing his uncle Mesiro Taro, he bowed again and greeted, "Uncle, Aunt, Cousin Mei Oubo, Princess Angela, welcome to Tulip Castle." He still carried out the noble etiquette as a member of the Tulip family, implying that he had not separated from the family.

It may be strange to some, that a minor noble, upon obtaining a Little Minor Elf, would sever ties from the family, yet Liszt, now a renowned figure of the Sapphire, had not done so.

Yet no one raised any objections.

"Liszt, your elegance surpasses even that of your time in the Eagle Kingdom," laughed Mesiro heartily, firmly clapping Liszt's shoulder, his expression filled with pride—his

nephew truly brought honor to him. Having such a relative boosted the confidence of the Taro family.

Cousin Mei Oubo was especially excited, “It hasn’t been long since we last met, yet you’ve become the Son of Glory of the Sapphire, truly enviable.”

Princess Angela also commented, “Having such a powerful knight like you is the glory of our nation.”

Liszt responded with a smile.

Afterward, with the introduction of the Marquis of Bull Tail, he greeted other nobles, both familiar and unfamiliar. He was neither too arrogant nor too humble, maintaining a gentlemanly demeanor with a sense of aloof superiority—even as a Dragon Knight who stood above others, he still upheld a worldview of equal treatment for all.

He did not see any difference between nobles and commoners.

He did not believe that noble blood was inherently noble, or that commoner blood was inherently base. Give commoners more meat, and they too could produce talented knights; his youngest follower, Emily, was a super genius born from commoners. If it came down to it, these nobles were no different from lowly ants in the presence of his Dragon Knight status.

After making a round of greetings.

Receiving countless flatteries, everyone at last returned to the castle’s drawing room, ushered by the Marquis of Bull Tail. Liszt, disliking crowded gatherings, directly took Cousin Mei Oubo to the Marquis’s study for a chat.

“Cousin, have you received the formula I sent you?”

“I have received it and have asked the Grand Magician to prepare it according to the formula. By the time I return, the potion should be ready,” said Mei Oubo, then with a mix of trust and skepticism, he asked, “This... potion can really stimulate the vitality of the minors in the body?”

“It shouldn’t be false. Cyrille wouldn’t dare to deceive me. Since he offered the potion formula to me, it means that it is indeed effective.”

“I really hope so, sigh, I’ve been under too much pressure lately.”

“Don’t be nervous, relax. The more anxious you are about having children, the more likely things will go against your wishes. Take the potion, persist in consuming the medicinal herbs and food I’ve sent you, and conceiving a child won’t be too far off,” advised Liszt, before asking, “How’s grandfather’s health?”

“So-so, sometimes good, sometimes bad. But grandfather’s in high spirits, believing that living one more day is like earning an extra day. He misses you a lot, and also Levis and Li Vera.”

“I miss grandfather too, and have always intended to find time to visit him, but have been delayed by various matters. After my father’s celebration, I will head to Red Crab Island with you all.”

“Hmm, grandfather will be very happy to see you.”

Chapter 688: Final Appearance

Evening.

Having declined Levis’s invitation to attend some gathering in Coral City, Liszt and Meioubao, besides chatting, also discussed piano techniques in the piano room of Tulip Castle.

Meioubao truly enjoyed playing the piano, with proficient skill and a fluid rhythm.

Liszt’s technique was far from reaching Meioubao’s level, but he took a different approach, primarily playing his own “original” piano compositions.

During a sudden burst of enthusiasm, the Smoke Mission had also joined the excitement, reminding him of two familiar melodies—"With You" and "The Swan of Saint-Saens"—and along with the previously falsely claimed "For Alice", "Liszt's Piano Collection" thus included these three classic piano pieces.

However, perhaps due to his increased strength and spiritual power, he later remembered several piano melodies and "composed" a few more classic piano pieces.

So.

It didn't matter whether he played the piano or not; once he did, it was bound to be a sensational scene that astounded the crowd and brought countless young girls to ecstasy — although he seldom played the piano in public anymore, having passed the stage where he wanted everyone's worship and obsession, preferring instead to quietly enjoy life.

"Liszt, you are a true genius, astonishing not only in cultivation but also terrifyingly adept at playing the piano. If you aspired to piano performance, you would likely become the first great pianist of the Duchy of Sapphire, and your talent for composing could stand shoulder to shoulder with masters like Czerny."

"Playing the piano is just a minor skill for nurturing one's sentiments, Meioubao; there's no need to be so engrossed in it," Liszt lightly tapped a few piano keys, then turned away and stopped playing, "You should learn from me and spend more time on cultivation. Strength is the standard that determines a noble's status."

"Alas, I'm already twenty-five this year, and I've only just barely managed to challenge the constraints of the Earth Knight. Breaking through, I fear, might have to wait until next year."

Meioubao's talent was not bad, certainly stronger than that of Mesiro, who had been forcibly piled up to the ordinary level of the Sky Knight.

But he was just a qualified Marquis heir at best, with Sword Saint probably being the limit of his future.

Compared to the genius Marquis Merlin, the descendants of the Long Taro Family all seemed a bit inept; not only were they mediocre in cultivation talent, but even their fertility seemed lacking. The Mesiro couple had toiled for years to only have Meioubao as

a single son, and Meioubao himself had been trying for over a year to have a child but to no avail.

Unlike the Tulip Family, where the Earl had three sons, and now the first son Levis also had a son of his own, no longer needing to worry about heirs.

“If talent is insufficient, then diligence must compensate. I fear your efforts are not on par with Levis’s. Even though the Long Taro Family provides you with more resources, you might still fall behind Levis in advancing to be a Sky Knight,” Liszt said somewhat patronizingly; he had the right to offer advice.

Meioubao was quite good at consoling himself: “Anyway, I’m already used to falling behind you, falling behind Levis doesn’t matter.”

“I have a very young follower who spends all her time on cultivation, except for eating, drinking, and sleeping. I highly doubt she will become a Sky Knight earlier than you.”

“Impressive... You already have a Sword Saint follower, and now you’re going to have another Sky Knight follower.”

“I also have two Sky Knight captives. If Alonso Xiankelai does not pay the ransom soon, I’m afraid these two will also choose to pledge loyalty to me.”

“Sky Knight captives, and Alonso is actually not choosing to pay the ransom?”

“I find it quite strange too,” Liszt did not know what Alonso was up to—whether he was so luxurious as to not care about Sky Knight followers, or was delayed by something, or perhaps brewing some conspiracy.

“^

Even if Alonso was brewing some plot, there was no need to worry—with the Grand Duke in front to shield him.

...

After resting for a night in Tulip Castle, Liszt rode the Landwalker bird Loki back to Fresh Flower Town early the next morning. Today was the celebration banquet for the promotion of Coral Island's Count to Marquis of Bull Tail, which required dressing up in grand attire. He needed to bring his followers, Retainer Knights, and servants.

From among his followers, he selected Clear Water Sword Saint Yevich·Water Peanut, Iron Knight Alvin·Eagle Sword, the advisor from Port Town, Gao Ertai·Mast, and Marcus Wheel, the leader of the Black Horse Island Knights Order, to accompany him to Tulip Castle for the banquet.

To bolster the Tulip Family's presence—a Sword Saint and Iron Knight made excellent figureheads to “dress up the storefront.”

He also brought along the youngest follower, Emily, allowing her to see the world as a Retainer Knight and to unwind—constantly being tense in training wasn't reasonable, and since Emily herself was unwilling to rest, he would have to take her out himself, considering it a form of relaxation.

In addition, Liszt was accompanied by Ach, dressed in noble ladies' finery.

Since he had already announced that Ach was his sister, it was also time to introduce her to the family and to give Marquis of Bull Tail a shock in the process. Somehow, Liszt had developed this mischievous pleasure, always keen on creating big news and taking delight in the Marquis's astonishment whenever there was an opportunity.

That expression of utter disbelief, while trying to hide it, was quite amusing.

Perhaps it was his way of getting back at the Marquis for always pestering for updates on “The Sky Chronicle of Liszt,” robbing him of the joy in his writing.

“Brother, Ach doesn't want to go to the banquet. This dress is so uncomfortable to wear,” Ach complained, looking more charming in formal attire than any other noble young lady.

Her innocent face, paired with the fancy gown, her smooth skin, plus her petite figure, and her youthful and unripe demeanor, would certainly make all the noble young ladies feel

ashamed of themselves—taking Ach to the banquet would likely shield Liszt from the predatory gazes of the female nobility.

Liszt could imagine just how many noble young ladies would set their sights on him like hunters at this banquet.

After all, he was such an exceptional person.

“This is human life, Ach. Learn to bear it first, and then you’ll understand how to enjoy it,” Liszt straightened his own ruffled Ruff collar, “I used to dislike Flack·Abbieye as well, thinking it was some fool’s idea of a garment to torment oneself with, but after getting used to it... it still feels very uncomfortable!”

The Flack·Abbieye style of noble attire was complicated, strange, and uncomfortable to wear.

Perhaps it was precisely this oddity that made it a symbol of the nobility—the more intricate, the more it represented order, the stranger it was, the more it stood out from the crowd, symbolizing noble etiquette and aristocracy—as opposed to the common clothing of the commoners, it was the distinction that marked its greatest feature.

But Liszt didn’t like it, not at all.

“When I establish my own kingdom, the first thing to reform will be the attire... Clothing must be simple and convenient as a principle, and only then can it possibly reflect the dignity of the nobility.”

He mounted the bird.

At Liszt’s command, the lengthy procession set off toward Tulip Castle. The journey was neither hurried nor slow, planning to arrive at Tulip Castle just before the start of the midday banquet to avoid the needless effort of social interaction—besides, important figures always made their entrance at the last moment, and he planned to make his appearance after the First Prince and others had arrived.

Chapter 689: Spotlight of the Banquet

The caravan arrived just in time, right before the start of the luncheon.

“Loria, this is my sister, Acherloides Truth; please take good care of her. She’s not very fond of socializing, so there’s no need for her to talk much with those noble ladies. Just make sure she doesn’t feel too constrained. After I’ve greeted everyone, I’ll come over,” he said.

The former sentence was directed at Loria Gold Wheat Ear, and the latter was addressed to Acherloides.

Loria reached out amicably and took Acherloides by the arm, “You must be Acherloides. I heard about you from Liszt yesterday, describing you as a great Grand Magician. You really do look very young. Let’s go speak with grandmother and Li Vera.”

Acherloides glanced at Liszt and, encouraged by his smile, followed Loria to the other side, where the ladies and misses of nobility gathered.

Liszt had told his family the night before that he would be bringing over the sister he had acknowledged today.

He only revealed that Acherloides was a young Grand Magician and they had met during a sea voyage, eventually becoming siblings by a twist of fate.

The Marquis and others were surprised by the presence of Acherloides but did not say much; after all, Liszt had his fief, and he was only responsible for his own actions.

Loria was very astute and would take good care of Acherloides, which is why Liszt was not worried. Accompanying Levis, he went to greet the nobility who had come for the day. With a standard smile, he exchanged the conventional pleasantries typical of nobility, accepting a few words of high praise, and thus completed his duty.

The First Prince was ostensibly the most distinguished guest at Tulip Castle today.

“Thank you for coming, Your Highness the First Prince,” Liszt naturally went to greet him.

This Ice Seal Saint could be described as a rightful heir to Sapphire, having shown bravery in several battles and having filled in for the Grand Princess in issuing Pioneer Mandates multiple times, with Trapped Dragon Mountain Iron Mine also swiftly transporting its yield back to the nation under his supervision.

“It hasn’t been long since I last saw you, yet you have reached such heights, which is truly astonishing. It’s a pity I don’t have a third sister; otherwise, I would definitely seek a marriage alliance with you,” said the First Prince with great enthusiasm. After all, Marquis Bull Tail had already hinted that once Liszt separated from his family, he would follow him.

Such a powerful figure’s allegiance was a matter of great prestige for the First Prince.

Moreover, as a future heir to Sapphire, he needed strong followers to aid in establishing achievements and even preside over wars of expansion with the Pioneer Mandate.

If he truly had another sister, he would have definitely facilitated that union.

Liszt, however, remained indifferent.

He was not clear about the Grand Princess’s character, but considering the former behavior of the Little Princess, he kept a cautious distance from these “princesses.” Even if it meant being a bachelor all his life, he was not willing to tolerate a string of “green hats.”

After a brief conversation, Marquis Bull Tail approached to invite the First Prince to the table.

As the First Prince took his seat at the head of the long oval dining table, Marquis Deep Throat Wallace Pineapple Green followed closely, and Marquis of Leather Island Ramirez White Glutinous Rice, Marquis of Golden Island Roderick Gold Wheat sequentially were seated—nobility of the Blue Blood Alliance rarely attended the feasts of feudal nobles, and Marquis Merlin could not make it due to poor health.

So only three Marquises were present.

However, Red Maple City Marquis Glendon Red Maple Leaf and Quicksand City Marquis Nesta Big Flower Hydrangea sent their progeny to attend the banquet.

Red Crab Island Marquis Merlin Taro naturally sent the Mesiro Couple and the Meioubao Couple as well.

Add to these the numerous Earls and nobility who independently followed the Grand Duke, and the long table was filled with the upper echelon of Sapphire's nobility, among whom Liszt took his place.

As for the lesser nobility and their families, Levis and Lady Marie were there to host them.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, please join me in a toast," the First Prince said, raising his glass after the drinks were poured—holding a Crystal Bottle of the finest Fresh Flower Brew to make a toast.

Once everyone had raised their wine glasses,

the First Prince continued, "This year's Pioneer Mandate has concluded, and the results have been bountiful. They rank among the top five since the founding of the Sapphire Nation one hundred and fifty-three years ago. Naturally, Earl William Lee of Coral Island, who has rendered great service during this Pioneer Mandate..."

He looked toward Marquis Bull Tail, his tone gentle yet tinged with a hint of excitement and stirring emotion, "After being personally ennobled by my father, the Sapphire Duke, has been promoted to Marquis of Bull Tail, ruling all the lands of the Bull Tail Domain on Iron Hoof Island. Let us toast together to the seventh Marquis of the Sapphire Nation!"

"Congratulations to Marquis Bull Tail!" The crowd responded to the First Prince's call and raised their glasses once again.

"Thank you all for your congratulations!" Though it had been some days since his promotion to Marquis Bull Tail, Li Weiliam was still filled with pride and spirit, draining his glass of Fresh Flower Brew in one gulp.

Thereupon, the First Prince and others also emptied their glasses of Fresh Flower Brew.

Liszt, too, drained his Fresh Flower Brew in one go. The spirits burned down his throat, rich and full-bodied, greatly surpassing the first batch of Fresh Flower Brew that had gone on sale. Nowadays, the craft of making Fresh Flower Brew was increasingly complex, and both the quality and varieties were constantly improving, able to defeat any other white spirit on the market.

However, Sapphire Family and two or three other major Nobles were also in the business of spirits, so apart from the sales in Golden Island and Red Crab Island, the volume sold on the other major islands was not high.

It could only win over some of the true spirit-loving Nobles with its smooth and soft taste.

After downing one glass,

Liszt intended to blend into the background, unconcerned with the conversations of others while he ate and drank. However, he underestimated the influence of his reputation as the inheritor of the “Ghost Swordsman” and the second-strongest person in the nation.

The First Prince raised his glass again and said, “Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in another toast... This year, with the Pioneer Mandate, Li Weiliang’s promotion to Marquis Bull Tail is a joyous occasion. Moreover, during the war, our nation has seen the emergence of a powerful knight who defeated a mighty Domain Knight single-handedly!”

All eyes turned toward Liszt.

Liszt, with his glass in hand, showed no change in expression, as if what was being said was of no relation to him.

“Liszt Tulip, second son of Marquis Bull Tail, Viscount of Black Horse Island, eighteen years old this year, personally led the Knight Order to capture the iron mines of Trapped Dragon Mountain. Such outstanding military achievements deserve a toast!”

“A mere trifle, hardly worth mentioning.” Liszt replied calmly, finishing the Fresh Flower Brew in his glass.

The First Prince set down his empty glass and laughed heartily, “Well said, Liszt! I look forward to you achieving even more for the Sapphire Nation!”

The other major Nobles echoed in agreement, “Truly worthy of being the second strongest person in the Sapphire Nation, possessing a composure far superior to ours.”

“Marquis Bull Tail has fathered an excellent son, the rise of the Tulip Family is imminent.”

“Liszt has a promising future!”

“I would love to witness firsthand how you fought against Marquis Nuta.”

“I have a grand-daughter, as beautiful as a flower, gentle and virtuous. I shall introduce her to you. I believe you young people will have much in common.”

Liszt maintained his smile but engaged little in conversation, focusing more on eating and drinking.

After responding to a round of flattery, these major Nobles finally stopped focusing on the “aloof and distant” Liszt and turned their compliments to Marquis Bull Tail.

Marquis Bull Tail, whose smile had been slightly stiff due to being upstaged by Liszt, finally showed a genuinely joyful expression.

Chapter 690: Big News

After the banquet, there were usually some entertainment arrangements.

On Coral Island, other forms of entertainment besides hunting were to enjoy songs, dances, and theatrical plays—ever since Liszt had created theatrical plays, and with the promotion of new dramatic performers like Avril Mask, stage plays had evolved into operas, dance dramas, and theatrical plays.

Together with the long-standing slapstick plays, theatrical performances were becoming increasingly diverse and beloved by both the nobles and commoners on Coral Island.

These stage plays had already reached beyond Coral Island, beginning to spread to outer islands, though the scale was still relatively small for the time being.

Without a doubt, Marquis of Bull Tail had arranged several stage plays in the castle's hall, attracting the attention of many nobles. Ach, sitting with Liszt, watched with great interest—the dramatic conflicts, coincidental developments, and exaggerated performances were all deeply impressive.

During the intermission, Liszt asked Ach, “How was the luncheon?”

“The Lorial were nice, Lady Penelope was also nice, but Ach didn't like those noble ladies. Ach ignored them, they seemed somewhat insincere.”

“That's how nobles are, living with a mask of pretense.”

“Brother, when are we going back?”

“Don't you like Tulip Castle?”

“Ach wants to go back to Fresh Flower Town, or even to the Black Horse Island Mage Tower is fine. Staying here doesn't feel very comfortable. Besides, Ach is in a critical phase of researching magic for organizing clothes.”

Liszt knew that trying to make Ach immediately adapt to the life of human nobility was indeed difficult, and he was not willing to force a sea serpent to live like a human, so he nodded and said, “Well, after we meet with my father and chat for a bit, I'll send you back to Fresh Flower Town.”

“Mm.”

After the stage play concluded, during the brief interval when nobles were resting and having tea, Liszt found the Marquis of Bull Tail and said, “Father, if you're not too busy, let's have a chat.”

Marquis of Bull Tail instructed Butler Louis to take good care of the guests and followed Liszt to a corner of the living room. First, he looked over Ach, who bore a nobility greater than that of the noble girls, with a teasing glint in his eyes.

He asked, “Liszt, is this the sister you mentioned?”

Clearly, like most people, he too was guessing the relationship between Ach and Liszt.

Liszt wasn’t particularly moved by such gazes; it was natural for Ach to belong to him “personally,” albeit with some different thoughts. But more than that, Ach, like Little Fire Dragon Leo and Greater Elf Pike, belonged to the category of magical creatures.

The difference was—Leo displayed intelligence close to that of humans but showed more of his animal instincts; Elves were attuned to human nature, but needed a bit more refinement, at least those below the level of Greater Elf were lacking; only Ach, as a sea spirit, exhibited behaviors and an intelligence akin to humans.

“Father, let’s talk in the study,” said Liszt, pulling Ach along in response.

As soon as he heard these words, Marquis of Bull Tail subconsciously felt uncomfortable, always sensing that some big news was about to be disclosed.

He took a deep breath and said tentatively, “Shall we just talk here in the corner?”

“It needs to be kept secret.”

Phew!

The marquis glanced at the calm Liszt and the expressionless Ach, feeling an increasing premonition that big news was on the horizon. Suppressing his discomfort, he said, “I’ll go greet the First Prince. You two go to the study and wait for me.”

...

A moment later.

In the study, Liszt, Ach, and the marquis each took a seat.

The marquis, holding a cup of tea, asked somewhat uncomfortably, “Is there something you wanted to say to me?”

“Father must be very curious about Ach’s identity. I’m prepared to reveal a bit to you, to facilitate your arrangements henceforth,” said Liszt.

The marquis looked at Ach, who was attentively flipping through a book with no intention of joining the conversation, and patiently waited for Liszt to continue.

“Ach’s identity is very special, and I must keep it a secret for now, but I can tell you, Father, that Ach and I are indeed as close as siblings,” Liszt said.

“I have no intention of meddling in the matters of you young people,” the Marquis sighed in relief, thinking Liszt was going to discuss something related to marriage.

He relaxed and sank comfortably into his chair, picking up a cup of tea and taking a satisfying sip.

He had grown increasingly fond of green tea, with its bitterness followed by sweetness—much like life itself—a flavor unmatched by any other beverage.

Seeing his reaction, Liszt smiled slightly and went straight to the point, “What I want to say is, Ach is not an ordinary Grand Magician; she is an Archmage.”

“Hmm?”

The Marquis failed to react for a moment.

Liszt emphasized, “Yes, Ach is an Archmage, a pinnacle of power on par with a Dragon Knight,” and he awaited the Marquis’s response.

The Marquis, however, merely frowned.

After staring at Ach for a few seconds, he nodded slowly, “Are you certain that this young lady is the legendary Archmage, the sort that hasn’t appeared for many years and has fallen into myth?” His gaze held doubt and mistrust, but he seemed not too shocked, remaining very calm.

This was not the reaction Liszt had anticipated.

He patted Ach’s shoulder, “Let my father witness the might of an Archmage.”

“Yes.”

Ach closed the Knight’s Novel that Liszt had taken off the shelf for her, and without any grand gesture, simply lifted her arm. Instantly, countless water arrows lined up densely around the study, then with coordinated movements, they circled around. Finally, the arrows converged to form a giant water sword.

The water sword hovered silently, blade pointing down, in front of the Marquis.

Its tangible light emitted a heartbeat-provoking aura of magic.

The Marquis’s mouth fell open as he finally showed the shocked expression that Liszt had been expecting.

However, this look of astonishment didn’t last long before he recovered, looking at Ach in amazement, “Such powerful magic control, such lifelike magic effects. Although I don’t know exactly what an Archmage is, it certainly isn’t something a Grand Magician could achieve.”

“Naturally... Father, I am a Dragon Knight, and Ach is an Archmage. You can proceed confidently in your dealings with the Grand Duke, and patiently await the moment I establish the nation.”

“I understand. Don’t worry; I know what to do,” the Marquis nodded seriously, “As for you in overall command, you’re clearer on what to do than I am. I shall no longer worry unnecessarily. Go ahead and act, the glory of the Tulip Family rests on your shoulders!”

“Alright then, I’ll take Ach home for now; she doesn’t enjoy these noble social occasions.”

The Marquis nodded indifferently, “Go ahead.”

Leaving the study, Liszt frowned slightly. The Marquis’s reaction indeed had shock, but it was far from the impact he had imagined.

“It shouldn’t be like this. The reaction to having an Archmage standing before him should not be this,” he was somewhat puzzled. From Chris’s reaction alone, it was evident that the shock of an Archmage was even greater than that of a Dragon Knight—powerful as they may be, Dragon Knights were known entities, with everyone aware that the Continental Kingdom had them.

Yet, an Archmage had become a legend, and the shock of a legend turning into reality was imaginable.

“Forget it, no use thinking about it anymore.”

Putting aside his unease, Liszt called for the servants to bring over the Landwalker bird Loki, preparing to take Ach back to Fresh Flower Town.

What he didn’t know was that as he left the study and began descending the stairs, the Marquis of Bull Tail spilled his tea on his clothes once again.

“Archmage!”

“He’s conjured up an Archmage for me again!”

“This can’t be real, this can’t be real, it’s definitely not true! An illusion, an illusion!” He paid no mind to the spilled tea, just kept taking deep breaths, trying to calm himself, yet his heart rate refused to slow, “I knew it! I knew he’d drop a bombshell when he asked me to talk in the study!”

“I knew it!”

“Good thing I held back!”