

## The Mighty 941

### Chapter 941: A King's Congratulations Gift

The search for natural nodes had to wait until official duties were dealt with.

Liszt first returned to Flame Castle, not planning to start handling official matters immediately. He decided to have a meal first, and later he planned to interact and bond with his dragons.

Having not seen Grey Iron Dragon Ornn, Light Green Gem Dragon Ethan, and Mountain Copper Dragon Mata for two weeks, the dragons must have missed him terribly.

However, just as he returned to Flame Castle and before he had time to bathe, Butler Carter reported, "My lord, the Moon Slayer Tribe statue parts that you had the knights search for have been retrieved—five parts in total, including a piece of the arm, all stored in the castle's warehouse. Would you like to see them?"

"The statue part of the arm? Good, I'll go right now." Liszt lifted an eyebrow and immediately headed to the warehouse.

In the warehouse, he collected five parts of the statue fragments, and directly smashed them all—all but the first four fragments contained nothing sealed within.

Only the fifth part, the arm, seemed to be holding a round box in its severed hand. Once smashed, a divine artifact sealed inside was revealed.

Wiping away the stone fragments and dust on it, there was a crown adorned with numerous gemstones.

"So, the Gemstone Crown from the reward of the Smoke Mission was here and not a crown that Sapphire Duke intended to give me as a gift," Liszt said, holding the Gemstone Crown in his hands, examining it closely. "A very interesting Gemstone Crown, comprised entirely of variously-sized gemstones bound together by some type of golden thread."

The crown in his hands was a dome-shaped structure, its entire dome inlaid with various gemstones—some as large as quail eggs, some as small as marbles.

Compared to the usual Dragon Gems, these gemstones were relatively smaller, but when Liszt employed the Eye of Magic, he didn't find their magic power to be thinner than that of larger Dragon Gems.

“Each gemstone is almost like a regular gemstone, with no grade disparity, and it seems this Gemstone Crown does not have any duplicate gemstones?” he recognized them one by one.

The sapphire sequence included—clear sapphire, pale sapphire, light sapphire, sapphire, deep sapphire, royal sapphire, cornflower gem...

The ruby sequence included—bright purple sapphire, dense purple sapphire, purple sapphire, purplish-red sapphire, deep red sapphire, bright red sapphire, dense red sapphire, ruby, pink gemstone, light pink gemstone...

The green gem sequence included—light green gem, pale green gem, golden green gem, emerald, green gem, topaz, golden shine gem...

There were also a dozen or so gemstones between the red, green, and blue categories that Liszt could not place, totaling thirty-six.

“The Gemstone Dragon's gemstones are divided into red, blue, and green sequences, somewhat similar to the principle of the three primary colors visible to the human eye. To my knowledge, there are only twenty-two known types of Gemstone Dragons, yet this Gemstone Crown astonishingly possesses thirty-six different gemstones, suggesting at least thirty-six types of Gemstone Dragons!”

Even the Dragon Rearing Families didn't know much information about dragons—they wouldn't propagate much even if they knew much.

Thus, Liszt's knowledge about dragons was still limited; he couldn't possibly know all types of Gemstone Dragons.

“This Gemstone Crown has used thirty-six gemstones. Given the force the Ancient Magicians ruled over the entire Legendary Continent, they might truly have gathered every type of Gemstone Dragon... Could it be that there are exactly thirty-six types of Gemstone Dragons?” he was eager to immediately appraise this crown.

Unfortunately, the Knowledge Ancient Book was with Ach, and he couldn't be reached at the moment.

So, he could only muse to himself: “Six divine artifacts of the Ancient Magicians—I have already acquired the Eight Dragons God Sword, Knowledge Ancient Book, Time Scepter, and this Gemstone Crown, leaving two more... which two could they be? It seems these artifacts are all related to dragons; could the final two also be related to dragons?”

The Eight Dragons God Sword was forged from the Superior Magic collected from Elemental Dragons.

The Knowledge Ancient Book was rather mystical, and its materials of manufacture are still unknown.

The Time Scepter was crafted using the Time Diamond of the Twilight Dragon and the Tree of Golden Apples.

The Gemstone Crown, on the other hand, was almost entirely made from the gemstones of the Gemstone Dragon.

“Could there be a Divine Artifact made entirely from the metal alloys of all Metal Dragons? And another artifact, could it be made from the materials of the Sacred Dragon?”

“The Immortal Dragon is in the Exiled Lands, the Smoke Dragon seems to be just a cloud of smoke, and the Twilight Dragon has already made its appearance.”

He stroked his chin, making his own guess: “That leaves the Jade Dragon and the Formless Dragon... The ability of Jade Dragon should be its Bewildering Dragon Mind Fruit, not easy to craft into equipment. So, it's likely that the remaining two pieces of equipment are a weapon made from the Metal Dragon and a spatial equipment made from the Formless Dragon Gem!”

...

As he pondered.

He had already placed the Gemstone Crown on his head and was now carefully looking in the mirror.

From the perspective of a modern person, the design of the crown was quite unsophisticated, not at all fashionable. But the sheer number of harmoniously vibrant gemstones studding the dome was enough to evoke wonder and envy—whether it was a single gemstone or even a hundred gemstones, it was insignificant.

The key was the variety of the gemstones, amounting to thirty-six types.

To have such a complete array of gemstone types, the Gemstone Crown alone, by its rarity, was already priceless enough to become a heirloom of the Dragon Rearing Family.

And a priceless heirloom worn on the head, even if it looked like a lump of poop, its nobility was still undeniable.

Moreover, it was a piece of Magic Equipment.

Liszt tried activating the thirty-six gemstones on the Gemstone Crown with his Dou Qi. In an instant, he felt a powerful force forcibly infused into his body. He felt as if he had been reborn, his vitality expanded significantly, and his strength, spirit, and Dou Qi all reached their peaks.

“I feel more powerful than I have ever been!”

“Activating all thirty-six Dragon Gems at once not only broadly enhances me but also provides an unusually abundant power... Ordinary Gemstone Weapons, due to the conflicts of magic power among different gemstones, are difficult to use many at once, but I never expected the Gemstone Crown to harmoniously stimulate the enhancement of all gemstones.”

Feeling the abundant power within him and the overflowing Dragon Dou Qi, his thoughts were clearer than ever.

He briefly reveled in the feeling before flying directly out of Flame Castle, landing in a forest, and wildly unleashing the Dou Qi Manuscript with his Ice Soul Dragon-Slaying Sword. The flame transformations of the Dou Qi moves felled the trees one by one, burning and shattering them, leaving behind trails of charred sword marks on the ground.

“Strong!”

“Truly strong!”

“My current strength is definitely more than three or four times what it was before!”

After completing a set of the Dou Qi Manuscript, he, neither flushed nor out of breath, sheathed the Ice Soul Dragon-Slaying Sword and took off the Gemstone Crown from his head, holding it in his hands.

The more he looked at it, the more he liked it, and the rustic style seemed more and more stylish.

“Wearing this crown, my personal strength has skyrocketed, probably catching up to a common Archmage. If worn while riding a dragon, it should at least enhance a Dragon Knight’s strength by thirty percent... Such enhancement should be enough to decide the outcome of a dragon-slaying battle.”

He put the Gemstone Crown back on his head, gazing at the sunset on the horizon.

Amidst the thin wisp of smoke billowing from the scorched trees around, he softly said, “This is the coronation gift offered to me by an Ancient Magician across several eras, spanning thousands of years.”

Chapter 942: Chop and Feed to the Dog

After having a meal and a bath, Liszt chose not to stay at Flame Castle for the night. Instead, he put on the Gemstone Crown, mounted the Formless Dragon Bard, and shuttled through space to spend the night at Thorn Castle on Black Horse Island.

He wanted to soothe his elves and the Grey Iron Dragon Ornn guarding Black Horse Island, riding them and trying to leave his Mind Branding. Many days had passed, and Ornn's negative feelings toward him had gradually faded, beginning to accept Liszt's care.

Positive emotions were continually warming up.

"Roar!" For the first time, Ornn expressed happiness at Liszt's arrival.

Thus, the man and dragon circled the night skies of Black Horse Island, not trying to develop too many skills but rather practicing the Dragon Dou Qi Manual created by previous generations of Grey Iron Dragon Knights. Wearing the Gemstone Crown, Liszt felt a significant enhancement in their coordination and strength.

This divine artifact was immensely valuable, truly a creation of an Ancient Magician.

Of course, perhaps the Gemstone Crown was more suitable for Archmages. He planned to let Ach try it on — after all, he and Ach did not stand on ceremony; whoever needed it could wear it.

He strolled around a few more times.

Returning to Thorn Castle, Thorn Greater Elf Jela had already been waiting early in the castle's living room, along with Pea Great Elf Ash.

"Wah, Liszt, you came back and didn't visit me!" Jela started with a fierce complaint.

"I heard you were sleeping, so I didn't disturb you." Liszt picked up Jela and placed her on the living room table, solemnly saying, "Jela, you've grown up now. It's time to take on more significant responsibilities. I'm thinking of entrusting you with the stewardship of Thorn Castle. Do you feel confident?"

Jela clenched her little fist, lifted her head proudly, and responded arrogantly, “Hmph, let’s see who dares not to listen to me. Wah, let them taste Jela’s fist of justice!”

“No violence, be gentle.” Liszt chuckled sheepishly, probably some lines he had accidentally blurted out one day and Jela had learned them well.

Jela hummed again, “If Ash misbehaves, Jela will beat it up all the same!”

“Hehe.” Ash tugged at its rope, coldly snickering on the side. It had never been scared of Jela nor approved of Jela’s temper tantrums.

Perhaps other elves feared Jela’s irascibility and helplessly accepted her dominance, but this approach didn’t work with Ash.

Liszt didn’t bother intervening in how the elves “strategized and schemed” against each other. As long as they didn’t fight, he let them be—perhaps having a fiery elf like Jela around could bring about the catfish effect, pushing the castle’s elves to evolve faster, preventing them from lazing around all day.

“Ash, how is your progress with Ornn’s evolutionary training?”

“I was just about to tell you, Liszt. I feel fantastic lately. But it’s not enough; I want one of Ornn’s scales. Can you get it for me?”

“You want one of Ornn’s scales? I’ll try.”

Liszt took Ash’s request very seriously and immediately approached Ornn: “Give me one of your scales.”

“Roar!” As expected, Ornn strongly refused.

With a swish.

Liszt quickly pulled out a bottle of Red Dragon Water and placed it beside Ornn’s mouth.

Puffing out a snorting breath, Ornn's eyes blinked a couple of times, chose to consume the Red Dragon Water, and then shook his tail, dropping the smallest scale from it. Then, he lay down on the ground and started to sleep soundly—perhaps fearing that he couldn't resist the temptation of Red Dragon Water and might betray his own scale again.

Picking up the scale, Liszt did not insist on a better one—the scales of a Grey Iron Dragon were large, and even the smallest scale was the size of a washbasin for Ash, enough to sleep with.

“Thank you, Liszt.”

“You're welcome, Ash.”

“Wah, annoying Ash, getting something from Liszt, I want one too!” Jela was quite unhappy that Ash had received a scale from Ornn.

Liszt raised an eyebrow: “If you also find a dragon you like, I will definitely get you a dragon's scale.”

“I certainly do not want that; Jela dislikes dragons!”

“Then go to sleep!”

...

While Liszt was busy appeasing the dragons and elves, the Blood Code Report from the Child of the Sun quickly appeared on his desk.

In his free time, he skimmed through the report, which was filled with dense experimental data, and just glancing at it gave him a headache.

He flipped directly to the end of the report to check the conclusion, and through the verbose and tedious records of the magicians, he barely understood the true meaning of the blood code.



“Micro-blood particle magic coating...”

According to the report, blood consists of tiny particles (about the size of cells), and the Child of the Sun’s tiny blood particles are enveloped in a layer of magic power. More precisely, it is a kind of minuscule magic array with the ability to replicate itself.

This magic coating not only replicates itself, causing all of the Child of the Sun’s blood to be coated with magic power, but it also serves as a “key.”

It is the key to unlocking Druid Transformation Magic.

To gain a clearer understanding of the report, Liszt directly called Chris Truth over to explain it to him.

Although Chris primarily handled administrative tasks, her deep understanding of the cutting-edge magical research at the Magic Guild was undeniable. “Your Highness, to put it simply, the micro-blood particle magic coating should be an alchemist’s method, based on the principle that magic power and matter can be exchanged, allowing human blood and animal blood to be interchanged.”

“Exchange human blood with animal blood?”

“Yes, Your Highness, when human blood is exchanged with animal blood, combined with Druid Magic, it allows a person to immediately transform into an animal constituted by animal blood. Perhaps because the research of the ancient Child of the Sun was limited, they only chose bears, leopards, eagles, dolphins, owl beasts, and trees as transformation subjects.”

“If it’s animal blood, how does transforming into a tree fit into this?”

“Human blood can also become the liquid inside a tree, and then Druid Magic can be activated to transform into a big tree.” Chris further explained the principles of magic, which essentially summed up to—though it seemed fantastical, it was indeed fantastically magical.

Such research was not something ordinary magicians could fully comprehend; it must have been the work of an Archmage from the Child of the Sun.

“I think I understand,” Liszt nodded—though he didn’t actually understand, but as a scholar, it was inappropriate to keep asking.

He would have Ach explain it to him later.

Of course, this did not prevent him from continuing the conversation with Chris. “So, since the Magic Guild has already cracked the blood code of the Child of the Sun, does this mean that all magicians can now learn Druid Magic?”

“Um.” Chris replied somewhat awkwardly, “Although we’ve understood the principles, how the Archmages of the Child of the Sun engraved magic into the blood is still a mystery... so, for the time being, we cannot learn Druid Magic.”

Liszt frowned. “Am I to understand that the Magic Guild has spent a vast amount of my investment only to produce results that are of no use?”

“Your Highness, as it stands, the research on Druid Magic indeed does not seem to yield any value.”

“Then reduce the budget. I recall having asked you to cut the budget for Druid Magic research before.”

“Yes, but many magicians in the guild are deeply interested in Druid Magic.”

“Convey my order, cut the funding for Druid Magic research by two-thirds; common magicians, unless they advance to Grand Magician, are forbidden from using guild resources on this project; Grand Magicians must ensure two-thirds of their efforts are dedicated to researching the guild’s assigned topics, violators will be expelled from the guild immediately.”

Liszt was a pragmatist with no interest in reviving a declining civilization, and Druid Magic was not necessarily better than the existing system of magicians.

Besides, he was planning to replace magicians with Arcanists, so there was no possibility of reviving Druids.

The agricultural magic of the Druids could be studied, but transformation spells seemed interesting but of little practical significance, the project's budget, if not entirely scrapped, must be drastically cut.

He thought for a moment.

Then added to Chris, "Officially notify all registered magicians—I did not establish the Magic Guild as a charity. Those who cannot serve me may choose to leave... and if there are magicians who neither wish to leave nor want to work for me, I wouldn't mind having them chopped up and fed to the dogs."

#### Chapter 943: Relaxed on the Inside, Tense on the Outside

On her journey leaving Flame Castle, Chris sighed helplessly. She was very clear about His Highness's attitude towards magicians, which was also the attitude of most knights toward magicians—indispensable yet disliked, revered but also guarded.

After all, in the legendary era of the Moon Empire, it was the magicians who were the rulers, with knights merely serving as their followers.

"This time His Highness was truly angry. If he really cuts the funding for the druid magic research project, I'm afraid it will cause a great shock to the Magic Guild." She raised her arm and looked at the two gemstone rings on her hand, her gaze suddenly turned piercing, "The will of His Highness is the very reason for the Magic Guild's existence!"

She had made contributions to managing the Magic Guild, and since magicians could not be granted nobility, Liszt rewarded her with two gemstones.

She had made these two gemstones into magic rings and wore them on her hand.

Lowering her arm and looking up at the star-filled sky, Chris softly murmured again, "Herein lie His Highness's grand ambitions for magicians, no, for arcanists, illuminated by the brilliant light of truth from Lord Acherloides... The times are advancing, and no one can stop it."

The Arcanist plan—how could Chris, as the executive vice president of the Magic Guild, not be aware of it?

Although she was also a magician, her own life had been saved by Liszt, so Liszt's plan was her plan; there was only support.

Moreover,

She faintly felt: "Magicians are doomed to decline, perhaps the brilliance of arcanists will shine in the hands of Prince Liszt and Lord Acherloides."

Soon, the journey from Flame Castle to the Mage Tower was complete.

The brightly lit Mage Tower, the brightest building in Flame City at night.

Hurried steps of magicians and magic apprentices coming and going, creating a noisy yet strict atmosphere, always made Chris feel uncomfortable yet comfortable. It was comfortable because truth was unveiled here; it was a meeting place for magicians every day, every day countless inspirations collided.

The discomfort came from the fact that it was utterly different from the life of a magician she experienced in her youth.

The inheritance of magicians was secretive, and many of the old magicians who spent years studying magic were somewhat psychologically distorted. They liked living in the remote wilderness, far from inhabited places, conducting magic experiments that couldn't see the light of day. Chris's mentor, although not a pervert, also preferred to live in the wilds and engaged in bizarre research.

Then later on, after she was brought by her teacher to join the Goat Assembly, she began to study souls and even spent a long time performing pathological experiments on animals.

If the Goat Assembly had not collapsed in a dragon slaying incident, and she had not been saved by Liszt, perhaps she would have become one of those reclusive and paranoid grand magicians.

“President, you’re back,” greeted a magician politely to Chris, interrupting her memories.

Chris nodded her head, putting on a serious expression, “Is it Lord Maurice? Are you on duty tonight?”

“Yes, tonight it’s my turn to be on duty for the research group.”

“Hmm,” Chris did not waste words with Maurice. The Magic Guild was now home to more than three hundred magicians from overseas.

If she talked too much, she simply wouldn’t be able to greet everyone.

Quickly, amidst continuous greetings along the way, she returned to her office, where a magician assistant immediately brought her coffee—she never acquired the taste for the green tea popular among the nobility.

“Is Vice President Kenley in her office?”

“Vice President Kenley has gone to Dragon Valley City to survey the Dragon Pit Great Mine.”

“Is that so? Send her a magic platform message, have her come to the headquarters of the Magic Guild tomorrow without fail. I have important matters to discuss with her.”

“Understood, President.”

As the assistant went to send the message, Chris took a sip of her coffee and picked up a few documents on her desk to read. Seeing another request for druid magic research funding within them, she immediately tossed the report aside. After thinking for a moment, she took out a piece of paper and began to write.

Graceful Serpent Script slowly unfolded: “Regarding several issues raised by the request from the honorary president of the Magic Guild, observer of the Arcanist Assessment Committee, Prince Liszt Flame, for the research of druid magic...”

...

Infuriated by the magicians studying Druid Magic, Liszt simply cast the issue aside; to him, it wasn't of great importance.

He was a Dragon Knight with six dragons—Fire Dragon Leo, Formless Dragon Bard, Mountain Copper Dragon Mata, Grey Iron Dragon Ornn, Light Green Gemstone Dragon Ethan, and Bone Dragon Vinnie.

No matter how frenzied the magicians became, they couldn't stir up any significant trouble.

His so-called “if you don't want to work, then leave” was not merely about sending people away. The Flame Island harbored too many secrets, and these magicians were somewhat involved. To prevent these secrets from being exposed, magicians who were to leave naturally had to encounter some “natural disasters” along the way.

Moreover, there were strict management rules for the Magic Gate of the Heart Reed Teleportation Formation—magicians were allowed in but not out.

Even for knights, commoners, and merchants, entering the Mind Island Magic Gate was easy, but leaving through the Reed Marsh Magic Gate required thorough vetting.

In short.

Liszt's management of Flame Island was lax on the inside but strict on the periphery.

There were hardly any security or defense measures internally—whether a rat or a spy, keen to probe military secrets or to fish in troubled waters, as long as they could work, they were left to their own devices. All efforts were concentrated on guarding the gates; rats and spies had almost no chance of slipping out.

Unless they left by sea...

But the Flame Archipelago lay in the vast ocean, and without a professional fleet equipped with Sextant Positioning, Water Calming Pearls, Calming Wind Pearls, and other Magic Equipment, to avoid wind and waves, long-distance navigation was impossible.

Even if rats or spies did manage to carry the secrets of Flame Island and spread them,

Liszt wouldn't be too concerned; friends would be greeted with fine wine, and foes with dragons. Now that Acherloides's combat power had skyrocketed after mounting the Unicorn, both he and Acherloides could travel through space using the Formless Dragon, unafraid of any threat—there were only Flame Kingdom aspirations against other nations, no other nation dared to harbor thoughts against the Flame Kingdom.

Anyway.

The blood code of the Child of the Sun was simply an episode. He placated dragons and Elves, plus dealing with tedious official duties, which delayed him for two days.

It wasn't until the fourth day after his return home that he had time to roam the world beyond matter with the Formless Dragon, searching for natural nodes.

He executed the Magic Return Positioning, carefully seeking out every slight anomaly in the spatial trajectories.

However, the easily found natural nodes had already been discovered, leaving only those exceptionally concealed ones that were difficult to confirm through their almost imperceptible fluctuations.

So for three consecutive days.

He and Bard entered the world beyond matter from different locations of Flame Island but still came up empty-handed, unable to find new natural nodes.

And during this time, it was the sweltering month of August.

Acherloides had already taken Unicorn Charlie to find a suitable forest for the Pegasus Herd to settle, near the Moon Slayer Sacred Mountain, right in the center of Flame Island.

“Brother, there’s a plain that’s situated perfectly between the forest and the grasslands, with a large river flowing through the middle. Charlie really likes it there; he grew up with the Pegasus Herd and is very familiar with the environment that the Pegasi prefer.”

“Located near the Moon Slayer Sacred Mountain? Mountain Copper Dragon Mata is curled up on the mountain, and the Ruins Entrance, set up by the Ancient Magicians, is also there... For now, let’s get the Pegasus Ranch set up. When you have time, we can go through the natural node of the Ruins Entrance and see if we can enter the ruins.”

Acherloides nodded, “Hmm.”

The Ruins Entrance was a shattered spatial node with two gateways. One led to the Hourglass Valley of the Sacred Mountain, and the other led to the “Eternal Paradise” spoken of by the Moon Slayers—the actual Ruins Entrance rewarded by the Smoke Mission—where the relics of the Ancient Magicians were buried.

Sadly, the gateway to Eternal Paradise was too dangerous. He had piloted the Formless Dragon Bard several times but never dared to traverse those fragmented spatial rifts, fearing they might erase him completely.

The spatial rifts should be repairable, and Acherloides was researching this aspect. Sooner or later, they would venture into Eternal Paradise for exploration.

Chapter 944: Severing the Roots

After searching for three more days, Liszt finally found a new natural node.

However, when the natural node opened, it appeared on Phoenix Tree Island, the seventh largest island of the Flame Islands—a vast expanse of swampland.

The swampland, with reasonable planning and construction of lakes and ditches to divert water, could quickly be turned into fertile land.

Yet this massive swampland was located on Phoenix Tree Island, and Liszt didn’t even have the energy to extensively develop Flame Island, let alone Phoenix Tree Island in the short term.



Besides, he planned to use the surrounding islands as fiefdoms, to be granted to his future followers for them to develop.

“This place shall be called Yunmeng Marsh.” Leaving behind something akin to a “XXX was here” marker, Liszt mounted the Formless Dragon Bard, ready to leave Phoenix Tree Island.

However, he suddenly noticed an area within Yunmeng Marsh that displayed several layers of faint but not weak colors within his Crystal White Trajectory vision. Following the principle of never leaving empty-handed, he and Bard charged straight towards the source of the light, which turned out to be a dry patch in the middle of the swamp.

The area wasn’t very large, at most the size of a soccer field.

Sparse shrubs and many half-human tall weeds grew there.

The luminous light came from six spots in total; he rushed to each one and found that they were six Bloodline Fruits, all nearing maturity. Several Magical Beasts were guarding nearby. With a display of Dragon Might, he easily scared away the Magical Beasts and casually placed the six Bloodline Fruits into his Space Ring.

After busying himself with these tasks, he had time to ponder, “Something’s not right, obtaining six Bloodline Fruits at once is definitely odd. With a natural node nearby and many Bloodline Fruits here, could it mean this place is extraordinary, possibly concealing dragon-related clues?”

According to the patterns he had established, any place with a natural node had definitely experienced a higher level of Magic Power conflict, and dragons were the prime culprits capable of causing Superior Magic-level conflicts.

With that thought.

He didn’t hesitate to turn around and leave, mounting the Formless Dragon to rapidly cross space and return to Flame Castle. Near Flame Castle, the Dragon Nest for Bone Dragon Vinnie was under construction—essentially digging a large pit in a shady spot, because

after soul fusion with the Bone Dragon, Vinnie had also grown fond of the low-lying, moist, and chilly places.

“Your Highness, did you need me?” Vinnie greeted joyously.

“There might be something I need your help with.”

“Just give your commands.”

“It’s like this, I found a swampland on Phoenix Tree Island with several Bloodline Fruits growing. I suspect there might be dragon-related clues buried underground, and I’d like to excavate them. But without serfs, and my slow digging speed, other dragons are not willing to dig.”

Dragons have their pride, deeming digging in the dirt as labor akin to a great insult.

But Vinnie was different, effectively still being a human girl at heart, so she readily agreed, “Your Highness, then leave the excavation to me. However, I do hope to cooperate with you, as my soul’s power still does not fully synergize with the Bone Dragon’s body.” As she spoke, the eerie blue flames of the Bone Dragon’s eyes flickered.

Liszt nodded, “Naturally.”

And so, Bone Dragon Vinnie directly transformed into a Magic Form and clung to Liszt’s face.

Formless Dragon Bard tore through the material boundary, rapidly crossing space, and returned to the Yunmeng Marsh natural node. After landing, Bard went off to find a place to rest, while Liszt called out Bone Dragon Vinnie and mounted her.

In an instant.

He and Vinnie became one in heart and mind.

A wonderful feeling lingered in his heart, a kind of refreshing delight. Gathering his thoughts, he quickly took control of the Bone Dragon and began to work.

The Bone Dragon's front limbs were more powerful than an excavator; plunging into the soil, with a gentle effort, tons of earth were scooped out. Then, flattened on the nearby ground, he even rolled it around, checking if there was anything similar to a Jade Dragon's Hind Leg within the dirt.

After digging for several hours, the flat land where the Bloodline Fruits grew had turned into a huge pit, six or seven meters deep.

At that moment.

He finally discovered something out of the ordinary, it seemed like some hard object was buried underground. Continuing to dig, this hard object slowly revealed its true form. It was a wood-like object, similar to a tree root, buried beneath the deep pit. The surface had started to decay, but upon scraping off the rotted layer, the inside was still as hard as fresh wood.

The diameter was about as large as three people could wrap their arms around, but it was only fourteen meters in length—a section of the root with both the front and the end broken off.

“What kind of tree has left this root behind, and is it the force behind the growth of the Bloodline Fruits?” Liszt manipulated the Bone Dragon to grip the root and weighed it in his hands.

The Bone Dragon's vision wasn't clear enough to see what this section of root was.

He personally used the Eye of Magic but still couldn't identify what it was. There was no glow from any magic power, and only from the pattern of the break could one tell it was originally the root of a tree.

“Is there any other part below?” Filled with doubt, Liszt continued to excavate for another half an hour, enlarging the pit to the size of three soccer fields, even unearthing groundwater, but sadly no other cut roots were found.

There was only this one section of root here.

“Anyway, with a thickness that three people could barely encompass, this tree must have blotted out the sky when it was alive... If it had ever spawned elves, what kind of level would they be? Dragon Elves, or perhaps the legendary Elf King?” Liszt couldn’t fathom the former glory of this tree.

Vinnie had no idea about the root’s origin, either.

As the sky began to darken, he ordered Bone Dragon Vinnie back into his body and then maneuvered Bard, holding the root, to rapidly shuttle through space.

The root was somewhat oversized, and Bard struggled to hold it, having to consume Space Magic Power to merge it with a world beyond material. It took so much energy that Liszt, feeling pained, pulled out a bottle of Red Dragon Water to replenish Bard—the Dragon had become his most reliable partner.

Indeed, Bard was becoming more competent than Little Fire Dragon Leo—provided Bard wasn’t constantly chewing on Smoked Grass as if it were gum, in which case it might already have surpassed him.

Holding the root, he burst out of the Reed Marsh Magic Gate.

He found Ach, who was still collecting information about the Magic Gate in this area, and Liszt directly said, “Ach, look at what strange thing I found. This is a peculiar root, and I suspect it possesses mysterious power, potentially promoting the growth of Bloodline Fruits. See if you can identify it with the Knowledge Ancient Book.”

“Okay.” Ach took out the Knowledge Ancient Book and touched the section of the root.

Shortly, the book emitted a glow, and a sequence of Moon Language appeared—Tree of Golden Apples.

“Tree of Golden Apples!” Liszt was taken aback, then overjoyed, “This section of root actually belongs to the Tree of Golden Apples?”

Golden Apples were legendary treasures whose exact magical properties were unknown, but the value of the Tree of Golden Apples could be glimpsed through the Time Scepter.

As the support for the Time Diamond, it was no ordinary object.

“Brother, have you only found this piece of the Tree of Golden Apples? It doesn’t seem very magical.” Ach was also surprised, but after examining the wood, she seemed a bit puzzled.

This Tree of Golden Apples looked like ordinary wood—apart from being huge, it had no magical characteristics.

Liszt smiled and said, “The Knowledge Ancient Book’s identification result shouldn’t be mistaken. Remember, it last identified all the gemstones of the Gemstone Crown, not missing a single one.”

Chapter 945: Green Skin, White Skin, and Gold Skin

Sapphire, power amplification.

Topaz, toughness enhancement.

Purple Sapphire, recovery speed increase.

Ruby, magic power augmentation.

Green Gem, stamina increase.

Pink Gemstone, spiritual power amplification.

Light Green Gem, magic circulation speed increase.

...

The Knowledge Ancient Book's assessment of the Gemstone Crown produced results not as a whole but for each gemstone individually. As each gemstone was brought close to the Knowledge Ancient Book, it provided an assessment.

Otherwise, the Knowledge Ancient Book would not have been able to summarize the assessment of so many gemstones in just a page or two. It would take at least two thousand words, exactly one chapter.

It was the Knowledge Ancient Book's assessment of the thirty-six Dragon Gems that convinced Liszt of both the abundance of knowledge within this divine artifact and the accuracy of its content. Since the Knowledge Ancient Book indicated that the root was from the Tree of Golden Apples, there was little chance of error, although the root appeared quite ordinary.

"Ach, keep the Tree of Golden Apples with you for now. If you have spare time, research it. If you're busy, hand it over to someone else, or simply seal it and store it in the laboratory's warehouse."

Although Ach was an Archmage, he was only one person.

The other Grand Magicians couldn't offer much help, as many research projects were beyond the capabilities of any magician but him. Liszt didn't want Ach to be too immersed in magical research, so he often took him out to relax and dissipate his focus, wasting a lot of time.

As a result, many projects were sealed and stored in the laboratory warehouse, like the hind leg of a Jade Dragon, preserved with special sealing Magic Arrays.

This time, the Tree of Golden Apples was treated the same way.

A divine item that could foster the creation of Bloodline Fruits was something most magicians could not study and would have to wait until Ach found time to research.

"For now, Ach will focus on the Magic Teleportation Array as the primary research project. The Tree of Golden Apples might have to wait."

"Proceed as you see fit."

After chatting with Ach for a while, Liszt played the piano in the laboratory, and Ach sang. They entertained themselves for an hour, a relaxing diversion.

Then he left.

After leaving, he did not continue to search for natural nodes. He had been searching for a week, which had left both him and Bard feeling dizzy and exhausted. He wanted to rest for a few days to recuperate mentally. Besides, he had just acquired six Bloodline Fruits and had some long-anticipated work to do.

...

“Your Highness, all the Fierce Earth Dog pups collected are here. There are a total of twenty-one,” reported the steward of the dog yard.

What Liszt was constantly preoccupied with was the breeding problem of the Blizzard Beasts.

He collected Fierce Earth Dogs from various places and purchased them, continuing to breed young pups that could be raised to prepare for future cultivation of Blizzard Beasts.

“Only twenty-one pups? I remember the dog yard’s investment being significant. Why so few?”

“Many adult Fierce Earth Dogs were sent by the Knight Order, but because Fierce Earth Dogs are very wild, many starved to death or died colliding with their cages. Very few survived to mate and produce pups,” the steward of the dog yard said helplessly. “We’ve already lost several knights trying to prevent the Fierce Earth Dogs from harming themselves, but we still can’t stop it.”

Magical Beasts usually possess strong wild natures and are difficult to tame—the disposition of Dragon Beasts is somewhat more docile.

Unless subdued by the might of a dragon, Magical Beasts will not easily submit to humans, and they will take any opportunity to escape.

He frowned slightly. Although he wasn't satisfied with the result, Liszt didn't blame the Steward of the dog farm, "So, has there been any result from the breeding program that mixes the Falcon Dogs with the Fierce Earth Dogs and Blizzard Beasts?"

"Uh, Your Highness, there doesn't seem to be any result at present. Not only can the Falcon Dogs not breed with the Fierce Earth Dogs and Blizzard Beasts, but other dog breeds of Magical Beasts also cannot breed with each other."

"Hmm," Liszt wasn't surprised; he had never expected it to succeed.

He then personally selected six seemingly robust puppies from twenty-one Fierce Earth Dog young and allocated a large amount of Magical Beast Meat resources to feed them.

On the other side, the Bloodline Fruit was also planted in pots that had been treated with Magic Fertilizer.

Of the six Bloodline Fruits, two possessed golden-yellow Magic Power, well-matched with the Earth Attribute, while the other four were red, purple, blue, and white respectively—the attributes of the Bloodline Fruits weren't too important, all being unique forms of Magic Power capable of aiding any Magical Beast in evolution.

It's just that similar attributes had a higher compatibility with each other.

Three days swiftly passed by, and the Little Fierce Earth Dogs, overfed, were lively and spirited, while the Bloodline Fruits, quickened by the Magic Fertilizer, ripened one after another.

"Let's begin the cultivation. Whether the evolution succeeds actually has nothing to do with how strong the Fierce Earth Dog puppies are; it's completely up to luck." Although Liszt said so, he still made selections.

The Bloodline Fruits with golden-yellow Magic Power were allocated to the two Little Fierce Earth Dogs that appeared to have the most vigor.

The other Bloodline Fruits were given to the remaining four Little Fierce Earth Dogs.



One by one.

The first Little Fierce Earth Dog ate the red Bloodline Fruit and, within moments, died on the spot; the second Little Fierce Earth Dog ate the purple Bloodline Fruit, bled from all orifices but didn't die, merely hanging on by a thread, likely another evolution failure; the third Little Fierce Earth Dog consumed the blue Bloodline Fruit with no noticeable changes.

"No changes?" Liszt carefully examined this Little Fierce Earth Dog, "If there's no change after eating the Bloodline Fruit, that's the biggest change of all. It means the Little Fierce Earth Dog has absorbed the Magic Power of the Bloodline Fruit and is waiting to slowly activate it!"

He handed this Little Fierce Earth Dog, named "Purplehide," to the Steward of the dog farm, "Take good care of it, make arrangements according to the most favorable treatment."

"Understood, Your Highness."

Afterward, the fourth Little Fierce Earth Dog consumed the white Bloodline Fruit and immediately became violent. After a while, the fierceness waned, and it collapsed to the ground with loud snores.

"It seems this one has also succeeded?" Liszt revealed a smile. The Eye of Magic observed Purplehide and this Little Fierce Earth Dog, now named "Whitehide," with Magic Power surging within them—this indicated that the power of the Bloodline Fruit was improving the bloodline talents of the Little Fierce Earth Dogs.

Two out of four Bloodline Fruits succeeded, not a bad rate, showing that Liszt's luck was quite good, even without the assistance of the Smoke Mission.

Following that.

The fifth vigorous Little Fierce Earth Dog ate the golden-yellow Bloodline Fruit and immediately dropped dead. Liszt was profoundly disappointed; the one he had carefully

chosen turned out to be less fortunate than Purplehide and Whitehide, who were not as heavily favored.

Shaking his head, he fed the last and most spirited Little Fierce Earth Dog the final golden-yellow Bloodline Fruit.

Shortly after, the Little Fierce Earth Dog started to bleed from the nose.

Just when Liszt thought it was another failure, the Little Fierce Earth Dog's nose quickly stopped bleeding, and it entered a frenzy of maddened barking before it finally quieted down. Despite its subdued state, like the two previous successes, its Magic Power was rapidly increasing.

Without a doubt, this one, named "Goldhide," had also succeeded.

"Three failures, three successes, I'm quite satisfied with this outcome," Liszt shook his sleeve and instructed the Steward of the dog farm, "Take good care of Purplehide, Whitehide, and Goldhide. When their evolution stabilizes, I'll have Emily, the Captain of the guards, come over to take charge."

He himself had no more energy to tame these Low-Level Magical Beasts; he had to let Emily take over.

The Steward of the dog farm acknowledged and then asked, "Your Highness, what about this failed but not dead Little Fierce Earth Dog?" He was referring to the second one called "Purplehide," which bled from all orifices after eating the Bloodline Fruit but managed to cling to life.

"Just keep it. If it can hang on, then treat it the same as Purplehide and the others."

"As you wish, Your Highness!"

Chapter 946: A Serving of Smoked Grass

Fierce Earth Dogs evolved into Blizzard Beasts, but Li Si Te couldn't be certain whether this one male and two female trio of entirely new Little Fierce Earth Dogs would be able to evolve into a lineage interconnected with Douson and the other Blizzard Beasts.

He could only give it a try for now.

He hoped that Green Skin, White Skin, and Golden Skin could become the cornerstone of the Blizzard Beast Legion.

After spending three days on this work, just when Li Si Te decided to search for natural nodes again, he unexpectedly welcomed the visit of the steward from White Paper Workshop reporting on their work.

"Your Highness, blessed by the Knight's Glory, and by your glorious favor, the White Paper Workshop has recently created a very valuable new product. After testing, the results are excellent, and as such, I have come to report to you," the steward's face beamed with a smile he couldn't contain, his expression extremely proud.

"Is that so? What's the new product?" Li Si Te was rather surprised.

He had found only one new nature node, unable to form a transportation network, so the Smoke Mission remained incomplete. He hadn't expected that the White Paper Workshop would have already discovered a new variety of white paper.

The steward smiled and gestured for his assistant to bring over a box, then took out a tightly bundled stack of white paper: "Your Highness, this is the paper towel you've always requested. We completed its production about half a month ago, and after subsequent improvements in craftsmanship, it now meets Your Highness's standards."

The paper towels weren't cut into individual small pieces, but rather one large sheet.

The surface was very soft, not yet reaching the quality of the Earth's Qingfeng brand paper towels, but as a hand-wiping paper towel, it was already a qualified product.

"So this is the new product from the White Paper Workshop?" Li Si Te wiped his hands with the paper towel, feeling it was just so-so, not as good as the feeling of wiping his hands with a silk handkerchief.

“This paper towel is something you requested, Your Highness, not the new product our workshop has developed. Our new product is right here.” The steward took out another piece of white paper from the box and presented it respectfully to Li Si Te, “Your Highness, this white paper is made from Hemp Rope Vine.”

Taking the white paper, Li Si Te saw no difference from ordinary white paper.

The steward explained: “Fire cannot burn this white paper; water cannot dampen it; insects can’t infest it; even vigorously tearing it won’t cause it to fray; and it’s very troublesome to cut with a knife. When we need to trim the rough edges, we have to ask an Earth Knight to cut it one sheet at a time, otherwise it’s impossible to cut through.”

“That magical?” Li Si Te was quite surprised, having never imagined such a white paper could exist.

He tore at it with effort and found the paper, as the steward had said, to appear like a thin sheet of white paper, one that could be freely crumpled, but was very difficult to tear apart. Even with the robust physique he had acquired from the nourishment of Dragon Dou Qi, he had to expend thirty percent of his strength to barely manage to tear it.

Without using Dou Qi, his thirty percent of strength was already greater than what an Apprentice Knight could muster with all their might.

In other words, this type of white paper was practically indestructible by ordinary people without utilizing Dou Qi.

In an instant, Li Si Te thought of many possible benefits—if paper alone was this strong, if used to make armor, wouldn’t it be defiant of the heavens? Moreover, its properties of being unfazed by fire, water, and insects made it scarcely inferior to metal armor when it came to preservation.

It seemed that Hemp Rope Vine could not only be crafted into rope but also into paper and paper armor, all of great use.

Li Si Te suddenly thought of something else and inquired: “Since it cannot be soaked by water, how can one write on it with ink?”

The steward replied: “Your Highness, its inconvenience for writing is indeed a downside. However, by using a printing method to apply ink and then exposing it to the sun for several days, the ink can fully penetrate and become indelible, not even scrapeable with a knife. The Magician tasked with technical support, after testing, estimated that words written on this kind of white paper can be preserved for thousands of years without change.”

Then he added, “There’s another disadvantage, the pulp extraction from Hemp Rope Vine consumes a lot, and only the upper layer of the original pulp can refine the material for making white paper. With the Hemp Rope Vine yield from our land, it’s unlikely we can produce paper on a large scale... The manual labor involved is also substantial, the production cycle complex and time-consuming, and the costs are high.”

Nevertheless, the white paper made from Hemp Rope Vine still held valuable worth.

Li Si Te promptly named this white paper “Vine Paper” and designated it as tribute-grade paper for his exclusive use. He intended to use Vine Paper to transcribe books and compile a “Flame Encyclopedia” to encompass all content from the myriad worlds, combining the format of the “Yongle Encyclopedia” and “Complete Library in Four Sections.”

He also passed the task to the Iron Knights and Magicians to use the original Vine Paper pulp for armor research, attempting to create “Vine Armor” that could rival Magic Metal armors.

Meanwhile, he noticed there had been a change to the Smoke Mission, “The mission has changed.” He hadn’t completed the mission, yet the reward had already been obtained in advance, indicating that the quest to find natural nodes was no longer necessary.

“Now is just right since Bard and I are not yet strong enough, and we also don’t have enough materials gathered in the territory to build more Magic Teleportation Arrays. There’s no rush to search for new natural nodes; we can do so leisurely later on.”

He turned to the new mission,

“Mission: The Greater Elf Annie of Phoenix Perch Parasol Tree is in an odd state, lacking the spirit for anything, not interested in further nurturing the Flame Dragon Birds, nor in

touching the scales of Fire Dragon Leo. As the master of the Elf, you should help it out of its predicament. Reward: Breeding rights for the Phoenix Perch Parasol Tree.”

“Hmm!”

Li Si Te almost immediately thought that perhaps Annie was about to evolve, from a Greater Elf to a Dragon Elf.

However, considering the mission reward, he felt that the evolution hadn’t reached completion yet: “It’s very likely a part of the evolutionary process, and I need to rush over to help Annie immediately.”

Mounting the Formless Dragon Bard, Liszt directly shuttled through space to arrive at the Volcano Crater.

He quickly located Annie, who was sitting on a branch of the Phoenix Perch Parasol Tree, staring blankly at the sky with its hands supporting its cheeks. Little Yellow, Little Red, and Little Purple perched on different branches, appearing listless and disheartened, seemingly affected by Annie’s lack of vigor.

“Annie.”

“Li Si Te.”

“What’s wrong?” Liszt empathized with Annie’s inner feelings; the Greater Elf’s emotions were like the blandness after a shiver, losing interest in everything and looking listless, “How about trying a new flavor of Jade Powder? I’ve recently mined some fresh Jade from Jade Mountain, and the Jade Powder grinded from it is well-received by many Elves.”

“I can’t bring myself to eat.” Annie sighed.

“How about some Smoked Grass then?” Li Si Te put on a mask and took out a batch of fresh Smoked Grass from his Space Ring, specially grown for Formless Dragon Bard.

As soon as the unique scent was released, Little Yellow, Little Red, and Little Purple flitted away without a trace.

The dispirited Annie, covering its nose, began to jump: “Enough, enough, Li Si Te, I don’t want Smoked Grass!”

“Then cheer up, Annie, I’ve already called Leo over, and I asked it to give you a Fire Dragon Scale. You can hold onto the scale while you sleep.” Liszt used his own fiery enthusiasm to continually influence Annie, helping the Elf through the power of their bond.

The effect was quite positive, and Annie slowly revealed a long-missed smile, “Yes, I will buck up!”

#### Chapter 947: Planting the Phoenix Tree

Annie felt better, especially when, under Leo’s malicious gaze, she received a Fire Dragon Scale.

Everything was delightful.

Therefore, under Liszt’s astonished gaze, the cordyceps plant, the Phoenix Perch Parasol Tree, surprisingly bloomed one by one with flowers resembling flames. These flowers, thick with Fire Attribute Mana, transformed into clusters of flames under the sunlight.

From afar, the entire Phoenix Perch Parasol Tree seemed to be burning.

Little Yellow, Little Red, and Little Purple, three Flame Dragon Birds whose bodies had grown and were now adorned with vivid, fiery red feathers, joyfully circled around the Phoenix Perch Parasol Tree. Even Leo, who usually disliked Annie, approached and sniffed the Phoenix Perch Parasol Tree, taking a liking to the fiery giant tree.

“Liszt, look!” Annie carried the Fire Dragon Scale on her back, then plucked a flame flower from the cordyceps, which immediately wilted, extinguished its flame, and turned into a pile of ash.

The ash dispersed with the breeze, leaving behind seven purple-red seeds.

“What are these?”

“These are the seeds of the Phoenix Perch Parasol Tree, Liszt, I can bloom and produce seeds now!” she placed the seeds in Liszt’s hand and giggled, “Annie can cultivate more Phoenix Perch Parasol Trees, Annie wants to evolve, and the Phoenix Perch Parasol Trees will cover the entire volcano!”

In the Eye of Magic’s view, the seeds flickered with a fiery red magic radiance.

“Are these Magic Potions?” Liszt immediately had Annie try sowing some Phoenix Perch Parasol Trees.

Annie complied and, with a wave of her hand, the flame flowers on the tree wilted and turned into seeds that flew into the soil. Soon, around her cordyceps, small Phoenix Perch Parasol saplings sprouted from the ground, growing swiftly in the wind to become little tree saplings.

The saplings, not selectively bred, varied in quality, but each shone with a fiery red magic feedback, undoubtedly categorizing them as Magic Potions.

“Task completed, reward: breeding of Phoenix Perch Parasol Trees.”

Fleeting Serpent Script flashed by unnoticed by Liszt, who was still studying the varieties of these Magic Potion Phoenix Perch Parasol Trees. Among all his elves, aside from the three Rubber Minor Elves born of the same origin, which was very magical, the Phoenix Perch Parasol Greater Elf was most unusual. It was the only cordyceps that didn’t need sibling plants to provide nutrients and could grow freely.

Unfortunately, when Liszt met Annie, she was already a Greater Elf, and he didn’t know how she evolved from a Little Minor Elf to a Greater Elf.

Now, Annie was evolving towards a Dragon Elf, yet unexpectedly started to flower and produce seeds, generating sibling plants, which was truly strange.



Strange as it was, after failing to figure out the reasons, Liszt assigned Annie a task to plant a plethora of Phoenix Perch Parasol Trees within the influence range of the cordyceps. When these trees matured, it would be time to harvest and refine the Magic Potions, though the effects of the potions derived from the Phoenix Perch Parasol Trees were yet unknown.

Now, the domain could produce an increasing variety of Magic Potions.

Man-Eating Tree Dragon Sprite Karli alone, with her scale of Magic Potion cultivation, could match the output of all other elves combined; Giant Algae Greater Elf Pike, Thorn Greater Elf Jela, and the newest Phoenix Perch Parasol Greater Elf Annie, were all main producers of Magic Potions.

Especially Jela, whose cultivation of Auxiliary Medicine Thorn was immensely valuable, producing several times more than the average Greater Elf cultivating Magic Potions.

Without these Auxiliary Medicines, there simply wouldn't be enough Magic Potions in the territory.

...

“Task: As the saying goes, ‘Plant the parasol tree to attract the golden phoenix.’ The Flame Dragon Birds love the Phoenix Perch Parasol Trees and enjoy nesting in them. Why not plant a forest of these trees to attract Fire-attribute Birds? Reward: Unknown number of Fire-attribute Birds.”

An unexpected surprise.

The Smoke Mission and the task Liszt had assigned to Annie surprisingly aligned.

“Attract Fire Attribute Magical Beast birds, huh? On Black Horse Island, there are specially raised Flamingos, low-level Fire Attribute beasts... I wonder what kind of Fire Attribute birds the Phoenix Perch Parasol Forest could attract. I hope they aren't too shabby, ideally tamable as mounts or able to provide Magical Beast Meat.”

Originally, he had planned to let Annie plant the trees herself.

But since the Smoke Mission required it, Liszt thought it worthwhile to put effort into personally completing the tree planting task—of course, “personally” meant transporting a group of serfs and knights over to help Annie plant the trees and share the burden.

“Leo, lend a hand.”

“Oh, ho!”

“Unwilling?” Liszt’s eyes bulged, “Then let’s communicate properly!”

He prepared to ride on Leo and execute a Mind Purification Plan to eliminate the vile thoughts that had emerged within Leo lately. It must be said, as the number of training sessions increased, although Leo still developed evil thoughts, they were no longer as frequent as before. The reason was simple: a faint knightly shadow had appeared in his mind.

This was Liszt’s Mind Branding, beginning to suppress Leo’s evil thoughts.

At this moment, Leo had grown to a wingspan and body length of forty meters. The various Volcanic Super Magic of the Endless Volcano had greatly propelled his training. Coupled with Liszt providing food, Magic Potions, and proper training guidance, he grew stronger every day.

His combat power had exploded in growth, and in a one-on-one fight, the Light Green Gem Dragon Ethan might no longer be a match for him, starting to directly threaten the battle rank position of the Grey Iron Dragon Ornn.

He mounted the Dragon Tooth Platform.

In the mental world, Liszt did not hesitate to cut off the sinister Dragon thoughts that had sprouted, letting Leo be reborn once more, and this time he agreed to help readily.

On the way back, Liszt called on Ethan—As for the Mountain Copper Dragon Mata, due to insufficient synergy, he was temporarily undirectable.

Three dragons, Bard, Leo, and Ethan.

Catching a hot-air-balloon-like basket, he pulled along no fewer than eight hundred knights and serfs, soaring through the sky of Flame Island, returning to the Endless Volcano Cluster.

“Your task is to follow Captain Pàlīsī’s commands, and in cooperation with Phoenix Perch Parasol Tree Greater Elf Annie, plant seeds in approximately 6000 acres of land centered around this volcano crater,” Liszt ordered while riding on Ethan’s back, assigning the knights and serfs and arranging for Paris to lead this project.

Paris was his trusted follower; assigning her here underlined his prioritization of the Phoenix Perch Parasol Forest.

“Your Highness, rest assured, I’ll handle everything here,” Paris said solemnly.

“I’m reassured by leaving this to you, but be aware that these Phoenix Perch Parasol trees are extraordinary, they are valuable Auxiliary Medicine, and we will need a group of plantation workers to stay here long-term. Take advantage of the times when Annie is tired and have the serfs build a camp nearby, preferably by digging into the mountain.”

“Dig into the mountain?” Paris asked, puzzled.

“I worry that these Phoenix Perch Parasol trees might attract Magical Beasts, and living inside a mountain cave would be safer,” Liszt did not know exactly what kind of Magical Beasts it might attract.

But Magical Beasts are aggressive, and he didn’t want his followers and serfs to suffer losses.

Paris nodded, “I understand.”

“Life here might be somewhat monotonous; if there are any needs, you can ask me, I’ll come over about once a week,” Liszt said.

He would come each time to train with Leo.

Though it seemed, for now, that the Dragon Knight's training had reached an impasse hard to break through, habitual training must not stop—Knight Dou Qi Cultivation was such that if you stop, you regress, thus it is live till old, train till old, even Dragon Dou Qi is the same.

## Chapter 948: You've Grown Up

August passed leisurely by.

The most noteworthy events were perhaps two matters.

One was that Greenhide, Whitehide, and Goldhide, the three Little Fierce Earth Dogs, had all grown robustly and learned the most basic innate magic, Rock Spike, through the nourishment of the Bloodline Fruit.

Without a doubt, as the residual power of the Bloodline Fruit continued to foster their growth, these three Little Fierce Earth Dogs would eventually evolve into higher-level Blizzard Beasts.

The pleasant surprise was the failed evolution of Purplehide. It didn't experience the explosive growth in size like Greenhide, Whitehide, and Goldhide, but it learned two kinds of magic. One was the Earth Element Common Magic – Rock Spike, which the Fierce Earth Dog inherently knew, and the other was a new kind of magic, not belonging to the Blizzard Beast.

Earth System Advanced Magic – Rock Cluster Burst.

This magic rolled up the earth from the ground, crushing enemies like rocks.

Purplehide's magic power reserves were still insufficient, and it struggled to cast this magic, often collapsing halfway through, but there was no doubt that it was advanced magic.

Only Intermediate Magical Beasts could learn advanced magic.

Perhaps Purplehide was not a failed evolution; it simply manifested the power of the Bloodline Fruit in another way – its magical talent.

It might become a caster among the Fierce Earth Dogs.

It was precisely because of this gift that it was treated no worse than Greenhide, Whitehide, and Goldhide, becoming momentarily unparalleled in the dog yard.

This was one event in August that Liszt deemed worthy of inclusion in his autobiography.

The other event was related to dragons.

He finally imprinted the indelible mark of the First Dragon Knight in the mind of the Light Green Gemstone Dragon Ethan, which meant, barring extraordinary circumstances like the Smoke Mission, this mental bond could not be broken. Ethan would be forever branded with Liszt's mark.

After the Mind Branding was complete.

In the great hall of Flame Castle, Liszt formally summoned his talented female follower.

"Emily, you have now become a Sword Saint. Though the name Thunderous Sword Saint may be a bit unrefined, it proves that your abilities are recognized by everyone. Within the Dragon Knight candidacy plan, you are currently the only knight who meets the dragon riding requirements, and you are also my most trusted follower."

The girl already knew the fate that awaited her, so she knelt on one knee, solemnly performing the knight's loyalty ritual, "Your Highness, Emily will always be the sharp sword in Your Highness's hand; where Your Highness points, there Emily shall go!"

"Lift your head." Liszt rose from his seat and walked toward Emily.

The girl immediately lifted her head.

Her skin was still the healthy color of wheat, but coupled with her exotic features, there was a different kind of beauty. Unconsciously, the skinny little girl from before had taken on her own feminine charm.

Her gaze toward Liszt held respect, determination, and a special kind of love.

And this love was undisguised.

From their first meeting several years ago, it had already begun to grow and blossom, and now it had grown into an unshakeable towering tree, “Your Highness!”

Arriving by the girl’s side, Liszt bowed his head to look at the soldierly Emily and said reflectively, “You have grown up... It’s time to take on more important responsibilities. Rise and come with me, Ethan is waiting for you at the Dragon Nest in Jade Mountain. From now on, you will spend half of your time bonding with Ethan.”

“Yes, Your Highness!” Emily was so excited she could nearly tremble.

She stood up and followed closely behind Li Si Te, walking towards the castle gates where the Formless Dragon Bard idly chewed Smoked Grass, bored.

The smell was somewhat unpleasant, but luckily the wind was strong today and not so evident.

Actually, even if the smell were stronger, Emily probably wouldn’t notice; her heart had already flown to the distant Jade Mountain, towards that gracefully poised, robust Light Green Gemstone Dragon. Many times, in her dreams, she had seen herself riding Ethan, soaring through the skies.

Her desire to succeed in riding Ethan was unparalleled.

Although Your Highness had said that even if she couldn’t ride Ethan, she could choose Ornn or Mata, she firmly believed that Ethan was the dragon meant for her, a strong gut feeling.

Inside the castle.

Butler Carter, leaning on a cane, came to the castle's entrance to see off the young master and Emily. Watching the little girl who used to dine at the small castle in Fresh Flower Town, about to become a Dragon Knight, Butler Carter felt truly happy: "Praise the young master, Emily will be the young master's effective follower."

Then, he quietly added in his heart, "Perhaps sooner or later, she will join the Flame Family."

...

Ethan's Dragon Nest was atop Jade Mountain.

A city was already taking shape in the valley near this mountain, known as Jade City.

About half of the city's inhabitants were Moon Slayer serfs, clad in the most common linen, doing the most physically demanding labor; a smaller portion consisted of Flame People civilians. Although they too wore linen clothes, their jobs were easier, and their clothes thus cleaner and more tidy, adorned with simple shell jewelry on their hands and necks.

Additionally, some were Knights and even Nobles—in the Flame Island, virtually anyone who was an Earth Knight was considered a Noble, and working for a certain period here might result in ennoblement.

These Noble Knights often had several Apprentice Knights as retainers following them, enjoying a drink or two in the city's taverns, before hurrying off. Nearly every Knight held multiple roles, taking on various managerial tasks in city construction, or venturing out to cultivate new lands.

Occasionally, one or two Magicians would appear on the streets to buy something, then quickly hop into a carriage and leave.

The Magicians primarily worked in the Jade Mountain Mines, responsible for mapping the Jade Veins, instructing the serfs on how to mine Jade, and overseeing the sealing and transportation of it to other places.

Tony was one such Magician, having worked for three months at the Jade Mountain Mines.

He hailed from the Steel Ridge Kingdom, and had come along with his Grand Magician teacher who initially planned to complete his pilgrimage and return. However, he was so captivated by the Druid Magic research project that it kept getting delayed and he had no real desire to go back.

“Sigh, although the Magic Holy Land has an incarnation of Truth walking in the world, it isn’t free soil. I don’t know if my teacher can survive this funding crisis,” Tony worried about his teacher as he sketched with paper and pen, “With my teacher’s knowledge, that Highness shouldn’t be too harsh, right?”

Not long ago, Chris Truth, the executive vice president of the Magic Guild, suddenly called an Arcanist Council meeting. During the meeting, she announced that funding for druid research was being cut by two-thirds, and that Common Magicians were prohibited from participating in Druid research.

Several Grand Magicians angrily slammed the table and walked out on the spot.

And then... actually, there was no real “then.”

As they stepped out of the meeting room, that incarnate being of Truth came riding on a Unicorn and cast a wide charm. A giant wall of water slashed down, killing two of the leading rebellious Grand Magicians on the spot. She left after giving a few instructions to Chris, essentially to report the names of all the troublemakers.

All the Grand Magicians who had banged on tables obediently lowered their heads and admitted their fault.

No Magician dared to question an Archmage, and besides, this one rode a Unicorn, a creature of legend said to only befriend the pure at heart. Unicorns were imbued with so much meaning, symbolizing righteousness and nobility; anyone opposing a Unicorn rider was instantly seen as the villain, incapable of garnering any public sympathy.

Labeled as a villain, Tony was quite worried for his teacher.



He was so distracted that he couldn't even focus on his job, and right then, a serf suddenly looked up into the sky, cheering loudly: "Seki!"

"Biggleswade!"

#### Chapter 949: Rejecting the Bootlicker

The great Biggleswade, carrying the great Seki, flew through the sky and headed straight for the backside of Jade Mountain, where the Light Green Gem Dragon Ethan's Dragon Nest was located.

The Dragon Nest wasn't much decorated, only filled with the Crystal Alsophila spinulosa that Ethan dearly loved.

The cultivation of Crystal Alsophila spinulosa had already succeeded, but its growth was restricted by its need to draw Magic Power to grow, and ordinary Magic Fertilizer simply couldn't meet the demands of the Crystal Alsophila spinulosa. However, planting them on Jade Mountain killed two birds with one stone, since there were abundant jade fragments here.

These fragments, lying somewhere between jade and rock, were difficult to use, so they were simply all used to cultivate the Crystal Alsophila spinulosa.

The roots of the Crystal Alsophila spinulosa could powerfully absorb the Magic Power from the jade fragments, thus it grew very vigorously. In less than half a year, it had already become a forest carved out of crystal.

Ethan lived surrounded by the encircling Crystal Alsophila spinulosa, being very careful not to damage any of them—he always felt that these beautiful little trees were like extensions of his own body, and so he cherished them greatly. He usually slept on a small, flattened hilltop.

At this moment, he was basking in the sunlight, half-squinting his eyes, watching the beautiful Crystal Alsophila spinulosa sparkling with various colorful glows under the sunlight.

Next to his neck was a pool of wine, inside which was brewing the latest formula of Bone Burning Wine.

Among foods, it favored Bone Burning Wine most.

Delicious and not intoxicating.

Suddenly sensing something, Ethan lifted his head and saw a familiar silhouette flying towards him from the distant horizon—it was the Formless Dragon Bard. He didn't like this grass-eating dragon because it smelled bad, but he knew Bard wouldn't approach his Dragon Nest casually unless Liszt was coming.

A new Knight?

He didn't move and waited until cries of tiny ants came from the other side of Jade Mountain. Then Ethan lifted his head and stood up, lazily welcoming Liszt's arrival—with a dragon's pride, without the suppressive effect of Mind Branding, he would never do something so demeaning as to greet a human.

"Ethan, long time no see," a clear voice came from the sky.

Following that, a silvery-white figure jumped down from Bard's back, followed closely by a gray figure. This was undoubtedly Liszt in his Wrath of Thunder armor, accompanied by Emily in grey Magical Beast Leather Armor.

"Roar!"

Ethan greeted, allowing Liszt to mount his back and quickly move up to the Dragon Tooth Platform to enter Dragon Rider Mode. With hearts and minds connected, all intentions became clear.

"Roar!"

Ethan nodded, turning his dragon eyes to look at Emily standing aside, her figure straight. In his hundreds of years of dragon life, he had never encountered a Female Dragon Knight—in fact, he had hardly seen any Female Sky Knights.

“Emily, say hello to Ethan,” Liszt jumped down from the dragon’s back.

Emily instantly stepped forward, took a deep breath, and looked straight into Ethan’s eyes, “Hello, Ethan, I am Emily, and I will be training with you for the coming period. I hope we can recognize each other.”

Hmph.

Ethan snorted through his nostrils, noncommittal.

Although he had heard from Liszt that he was to get a new Knight, and years of Dragon Riding had accustomed him to changing Knights, he was somewhat eager for a new Knight—he and Liszt were not compatibly aligned; it was entirely by coincidence that they had become Partners.

However, until Emily gained his approval, he was not going to show her any favor.

Liszt, sensing Ethan’s disdain for Emily, stepped forward, patting Emily on the shoulder, saying, “Ethan’s nobility and pride require you to gradually impress him. Remember the qualities I told you about—bravery, fearlessness, strength, loyalty, boldly demonstrate these qualities!”

“Yes, Your Highness!”

“Then you shall stay here for the time being, and I will personally come to check the results of your coordination with Ethan in three days,” Liszt said with a slight smile.

His warm smile filled Emily with boundless confidence.

Only after Liszt had left with the Formless Dragon Bard did Emily truly face the Light Green Gem Dragon Ethan, who had resumed his dozing.

She recalled the truth Liszt had once told her—those who overly flatter others end up with nothing.

So she openly said, “Ethan, perhaps you do not understand me yet. I come from a serf background, and only started practicing Dou Qi at the age of eleven. By twelve, I became an Earth Knight...”

Ethan remained lazily unresponsive.

Emily continued, “A few months later, I killed two knights on the battlefield and became an Elite Earth Knight. Just as I turned fourteen, my Dou Qi surged wildly one day, and I rose into the sky, becoming a Sky Knight...”

It seemed that Ethan still had no reaction.

But Emily kept talking, “Within two months, I defeated a veteran Sword Saint and earned the title of Thunderous Sword Saint. I am still fourteen, but my training progresses quickly, becoming a Completion Level Sky Knight is within reach, perhaps next year, or even by the end of this year!”

Ethan slightly lifted his eyelid and let out two snorts of air, as if to say, “So what, I’ve seen all sorts of freaks in my life.”

Seeing this, Emily spoke aloud, “I may not be the first person on Legendary Continent to become an Earth Knight or a Sky Knight, but I am definitely the earliest to do so as a woman, and I am destined to be the first female Knight on Legendary Continent to become a Dragon Knight! Ethan, the legend is right before you, let us create it together!”

After speaking, she looked earnestly at Ethan.

And Ethan opened his dragon mouth.

With Emily full of anticipation, he yawned seriously, then completely closed his eyes and started napping, soon emitting slight snores.

This was a profound humiliation.

However, Emily felt only slightly disappointed before quickly adjusting her mindset, practicing her Dou Qi beside him, “His Highness said that Dragon Riding requires strategy; mere flattery doesn’t increase the success rate. One must show the dragon valuable qualities in the knight.”

She held her great sword, thinking of Liszt’s shining qualities—handsome, extraordinary talent, outstanding temperament, bravely fearless, an embodiment of justice, and so many more.

But the decisive quality was what Liszt had personally told her—“overtaking forcefully.”

“I can’t match His Highness’s dominance, but I have my own shining quality—diligence. I will make Ethan see my determination, and ultimately become my mount, fighting alongside me!”

...

Liszt departed gracefully.

He wasn’t worried about Emily’s chances of successfully riding the dragon; even he envied the young girl’s talents, but what was even more terrifying was her near-lethal determination to become stronger. As long as Ethan wasn’t blind, there was no way he could overlook Emily.

He now turned his attention to a message that he had just received.

The message came from Black Horse Island. The ship fleet of the Eagle Royal Family had already reached the port, bringing a Dragon Elf as ransom to redeem Duke Grey Iron Piero Grey Mouth Iron—originally, they had demanded the Grey Iron Family change their surname, but Piero cleverly offered information about the Mountain Copper Dragon instead.

Liszt then abandoned the demand.

After all, Duke Piero had already secretly pledged his allegiance to him.

## Chapter 950: Atlantis

Duke Pierrot had been living in luxury on Black Horse Island, he was no fool, and had early on guessed the outcome regarding the Mountain Copper Dragon from Liszt's composed expression.

To be able to snatch away the Grey Iron Dragon Ornn so swiftly, was enough to prove how powerful this young Dragon Knight, who caused him such conflicting feelings, truly was. That's why he had originally used the information about the Mountain Copper Dragon in exchange for Liszt's help in stabilizing his ducal position, hoping to maintain his power and wealth.

Once someone has tasted prosperity, how could they willingly let it go? At least Pierrot couldn't.

"Your Majesty, the envoy group from the Eagle Royal Family has already reached out to me, and after the Dragon Sprite exchange, I will be able to return to the Grey Iron Duchy," Pierrot said frankly to Liszt after meeting him, "Relying on Your Majesty's power, I remain the Duke of the Grey Iron Duchy, though I still have to pay tribute to the Eagle Kingdom and dare not sever the vassal relationship lightly."

Switching sides in secret was one thing, but publicly he had to consider the face of the Eagle Royal Family. After all, the Grey Iron Duchy was a distant 108,000 miles from the Flame Kingdom but lay on the border of the Eagle Kingdom.

"No matter, I will naturally protect you. Both the Eagle Royal Family and the Grey Iron Duchy wouldn't dare to openly turn against me, so your position as Duke is very secure for at least the next six months. However, after half a year, I cannot guarantee whether the Eagle Royal Family will act against you in private, nor can I assure you of the Grey Iron Family from within, which may join forces with the Eagle Royal Family."

Pierrot could use Liszt's name to return to his country and continue as Duke.

However, this could not change his culpability for losing the dragon; he was still a criminal in the eyes of the Grey Iron Family and his own Duchy.

Moreover, his secret defection and Liszt's verbal protection—both the Eagle Royal Family and the Grey Iron Family would surely guess how many favors Pierrot had promised Liszt.

For such acts of betrayal against the Duchy and the suzerain state, even his own son might wish to devour his flesh and blood.

Therefore, Liszt doubted whether Pierrot could survive the next six months.

The previously mentioned twenty years of protection were simply a consolation, more so to retain an excuse to provoke war.

Pierrot nevertheless smiled confidently: “Your Highness, I lack your greatness and dominance; even my son hopes that I die in a foreign land. But I am not a lone individual; the Dragon Rearing Families within the Eagle Kingdom’s vassal states who have good relations with me will help me get through the tough times.”

“Confidence is good.”

“Twenty years, I hope to live to see Your Highness conquer the three great Kingdoms, unifying the Northeastern Corner of the Legendary Continent... Perhaps I won’t live that long, but my grandson will surely witness it.”

Grandson?

Liszt’s eyebrows raised but he said nothing else—he guessed that after Pierrot returned, he would kill his own son, as having grandchildren meant it didn’t matter whether he had a son or not.

After meeting with Duke Pierrot, he quickly announced the summoning of the Eagle Kingdom’s envoy group.

The head of the envoy group was still a familiar face, Alexander White Iron, and after a series of courtesies, the ransom was directly transacted in the great hall of Thorn Castle.

Liszt left the details to his father, Li Weiliam, focusing solely on the transaction involving the Dragon Sprite.

The Dragon Sprite brought as ransom by the Eagle Royal Family, according to the rules, had to be of the grain or Magic Potion type, and could not be over two hundred years old.

Dragon Sprites only have a lifespan of five hundred years; if the Eagle Royal Family brought a Dragon Sprite that was over four hundred years old, Liszt would definitely turn hostile.

“Its name is Atlantis, which evolved into a Dragon Sprite one hundred and twenty years ago, and has since diligently ploughed buckwheat for the Eagle Royal Family. His Majesty the King of the Eagle Kingdom, bearing great pain, allowed it to be cut away and sent to Your Majesty the Flame King,” said Alexander in a low tone, emanating a sense of enduring humiliation and reluctance.

By his side stood a delicately dressed, slender little figure wearing the garb of a noble – Little Flack Abieye.

The tiny figure’s head was crystal clear and white, crowned with a cluster of light pink blossoms, the Buckwheat Dragon Sprite itself.

At this moment, the Buckwheat Dragon Sprite Atlantis gazed at Liszt with its sparkling large eyes, its expression filled with a humanlike sorrow and nervousness. It had already dissolved the spirit contract with the Eagle Kingdom’s King, but the memories from over a hundred years of life in the Eagle Kingdom were indelibly etched in its mind.

It took several days of persuasion by the Eagle Kingdom’s King before it agreed to serve as a ransom, to depart for a new life in the Flame Kingdom.

However, during the voyage, its spirits were consistently low, and even the light pink flowers atop its head seemed a bit wilted. It had no expectations for its new life, only a desire to return to the carefree days spent among the Eagle Royal Family, amidst familiar faces and houses.

But.

It had to muster some spirit to take stock of the human in front of it, who would soon become its new contract partner.

By the aesthetic standards of the Elves, the human before it seemed rather easy on the eyes, certainly not an odd or disfigured looking one. His facial features were well-proportioned and symmetrical, with a straight stature, and a pair of bright eyes like the stars gave off a benevolent gaze.



All in all, the first impression wasn't bad, but neither was it particularly good—the changes it faced were still met with considerable resistance in its heart.

Simultaneously, Liszt was also taking measure of Atlantis. He had surmised that the Eagle Royal Family would send this Buckwheat Dragon Sprite. Piero, the “traitor,” had submitted reports about the Eagle Royal Family to him long ago, including information about their Dragon Sprites, and the one most fitting was the Buckwheat Dragon Sprite.

First of all, buckwheat was classified as a type of grain, which met the prerequisite of being a grain-related Dragon Sprite; secondly, the Buckwheat Dragon Sprite was less than two hundred years old, aligning with Liszt's age requirement; lastly, among all grains, buckwheat was of lesser value.

The name buckwheat contains “wheat,” but in fact, it has no relation to wheat.

Wheat belongs to the Poaceae family, part of the monocots, whereas buckwheat is a dicot, related to the Chinese knotweed, producing triangular seeds. In this world, buckwheat's yield and nutritional value couldn't compete with barley and wheat.

However, there was one good thing about buckwheat—it was unpretentious and easy to care for, capable of growing once scattered in the field, and sometimes, even without the influence of Cordyceps, it could still produce a respectable harvest.

“Atlantis, welcome to the Flame Kingdom. I am Liszt Flame, the king of these lands, the master of the seas, and the Knight of many dragons. From now on, we will be partners. The Flame Family welcomes you, and I believe you will grow to love it here.”

He extended his hand, not to stuff it into Atlantis's mouth, but to offer it a handshake.

Dragon Sprites had the intelligence of a grown human, understanding many things and deserving to be treated as equals. Atlantis hesitated for a moment before it extended its little hand and shook hands simply with Liszt.

“So, shall we contract now?” Liszt then raised his hand, extending a single index finger.

Atlantis was conflicted—it could feel Liszt’s friendliness and remembered the Eagle Kingdom’s King’s request, but still, it did not want to change.

At that moment, Liszt glanced over at Alexander.

Alexander immediately felt an almost palpable weight of serious pressure upon him and promptly spoke up: “Atlantis, please contract with His Majesty the Flame King, don’t hesitate any longer. Hasn’t His Majesty the King of the Eagle Kingdom already spoken to you? You need to accept this new life.”

Atlantis hung its head low, silent for a moment. Then it grasped Liszt’s outstretched hand with both hands, reluctantly opened its mouth, and bit down on Liszt’s fingertip.

Blood oozed from the fingertip, and in an instant, a wondrous reaction occurred with Atlantis’s teeth, bringing forth a mysterious and profound feeling in the hearts of both Atlantis and Liszt.

They were now of one mind and one spirit.