

The Mighty 951

Chapter 951: Generations to Come

The Buckwheat Dragon Elf of Atlantis, now renamed Yadi, officially settled in Flame Island, located around Flame City in the buckwheat plantation—The plantation had been constructed before Yadi's arrival since Liszt had previously acquired a few Buckwheat Elf Bugs.

However, after the contract, Yadi became somewhat silent.

His mood was consistently gloomy.

During his first meeting with the Man-Eating Tree Dragon Elf, Kali, at Flame Castle, he had been humiliated by Kali. It was all “unwanted elf,” “little one, behave,” “can't even speak Serpent Script”, “useless, trash, if you're capable, then grow Magic Potions.”

Luckily, Yadi didn't understand the Serpent Script and didn't comprehend what Kali was saying.

After being scolded by Liszt, Kali ceased to trouble Yadi. He didn't spend much time living at Flame Castle and frequently went out. Kali, who possessed soil magic, often led the Man-Eating Tree Cluster on adventures in search of new species of Man-Eating Trees, generating income for Liszt.

His combat strength wasn't strong, yet his survival skills were top-notch, and after several ineffective attempts at dissuasion, Liszt simply let him be.

“Yadi, what activities do you usually enjoy?”

“Playing the piano.”

“Hmm, is that so? I also enjoy playing the piano. If work wasn't so busy, I might have become a piano master.”

“What can you play?” Yadi asked, not very enthused.

“I can play many pieces, have you heard of ‘For Alice’?”

“I have heard it, I can play it.”

Liszt chuckled, “That piano piece was one I listened to a not so famous pianist perform when I was young. After my own modifications and refinements, the final score was set. I never expected it to spread to the Eagle Kingdom in just a few years.”

Yadi said in surprise, “You really can play the piano.”

“I’ll teach you a few new pieces when I have the time, all composed by me and yet to be released to the public,” Liszt said.

After becoming a Dragon Knight, Liszt’s memory had greatly improved; the melodies of many piano pieces he had heard in his past life emerged complete in his mind. With a bit of refinement, they became classic masterpieces, but he was ultimately too occupied with his official duties to compile his “Liszt’s Piano Collection.”

The only manuscript he still held in hand to organize was “Liszt’s Complete Dragon Knight Training Manual,” covering all experiences in dragon training.

As this was to be the great work passed down within the Flame Family, it had to be treated with the utmost seriousness.

Using the topic of playing the piano, Liszt successfully eliminated the feeling of strangeness between himself and Yadi, but he didn’t have the time to chat and bond with Yadi every day. After preparing a piano room specially for Yadi and a complete set of piano scores, he hastily left Flame Castle.

First, he went to check on Emily’s progress in dragon riding.

The progress was minimal.

But the Light Green Gem Dragon Ethan didn't show any aversion to Emily, indicating that she still had a great chance of successfully riding the dragon.

"Now that you have to manage the Mammoth Knight Brigade, take care of the Blizzard Beasts, and persist in training with the dragon, do you feel tired?"

"Your Majesty, not at all tired; spending time with Ethan is relaxing for me."

"Mm, dragon riding isn't something that can be achieved overnight. You must be prepared for a prolonged struggle," Liszt said, patting Emily's shoulder, which immediately brought a faint blush to the girl's face.

When she was just a little girl, Liszt was fond of patting her shoulder like that.

As Emily grew up, adherence to noble etiquette became stricter, and Liszt had not made such an intimate gesture as patting her shoulder for a long time.

She looked up, her bright eyes sparkling: "Please rest assured, Your Highness!"

The September sunlight had already started to weaken, and the climate of Flame Island was about to experience the dry season of autumn and winter when crops cease to grow, and food begins to become scarce.

Even with the Flame Territory and Bull Tail Domain continuously transporting food here, it still couldn't keep up with the rapidly growing number of serfs.

In the past few months, the knight orders under Liszt and those under Li Weiliam had been constantly subjugating the Moon Slayer Native Tribes. A third of the southeastern forests on Flame Island had been visited by the knight orders, with a total of one million two hundred thousand Moon Slayer serfs subjugated.

Fortunately, the number of Flame People had reached three hundred thousand, a ratio sufficient to manage the Moon Slayer serfs.

To show support for his son's nation-building, Marquis Li Weiliam did not undertake large-scale development in his fiefdom, Tulip Island. Instead, he placed most of the

family's knight orders under Liszt's management to support the development of Flame Island—he was well aware that the better Flame Island was developed, the more beneficial it would be for the neighboring islands.

A thriving large island market far outweighs a thriving small island market.

Most importantly, he and Liszt now shared the same idea—farming wasn't as profitable as plundering.

“The Eagle Kingdom launched a campaign against me known as the Dragon Slaying War, intending to drive me to my death. This grudge cannot go unavenged. Moreover, the Eagle Kingdom has not apologized to me nor compensated me for my losses... Buckwheat Dragon Sprite is a ransom, not compensation... If they don't give it, I'll take it myself.”

“Liszt, the Flame Kingdom and the Eagle Kingdom signed an agreement prohibiting dragon-level combat. Relying solely on knights, we may not accomplish much,” Marquis of Bull Tail, Li Weiliam spoke.

He was still the Marquis of Bull Tail in the Duchy of Sapphire, and Liszt also still held the title of Marquis of Flames. These titles and honors were temporarily retained until Flame Kingdom formally declared nationhood.

“Although I have signed an agreement with the Eagle Kingdom, the Sapphire Family has not. This time, let the Sapphire Duke issue a Pioneer Mandate. All the knight orders under us will fly the Sapphire banner... Additionally, let the Sapphire Dragon go out and plunder, while I secretly restrain the Eagle Kingdom's Dragon Knights.”

Li Weiliam did not object: “That would indeed be good.”

Thus, the two of them quickly proceeded to the Azure Sky Peak Palace to discuss war matters with the Sapphire Duke. In just a few months' time, the Sapphire Duke had already aged greatly, appearing like a man in his seventies or eighties, with severely weakened vitality, especially mentally, where he seemed particularly listless.

“Grand Duke Andrew, how is your health?”

“It seems I can no longer hide it, Your Majesty. My time is short, and I fear I will soon have to pass the Sapphire on to Anthony,” the Duke said, sighing. “I had hoped to endure for a few more years to pave the way for Anthony. Now I can only hope for your help, Your Highness.”

“Please say it, Grand Duke. I will help wherever I can.”

“Your Majesty should still remember the dragon slaying incident of the past. Marquis of Bull launched a rebellion and assassinated the Sapphire Dragon. He used a vile form of soul magic that tore apart the Sapphire Dragon’s soul. To preserve the life of the Sapphire Dragon, I had no choice but to overdraft my own soul to keep it alive.”

But the human soul, compared to the dragon soul, is far too weak, and the Sapphire Duke was already at his wits’ end.

“Two years have passed, and I still haven’t found a way to repair the Sapphire Dragon’s soul. Andy has been imprisoned in the dungeon, but all experiments to separate his fused dragon soul and give it back to the Sapphire Dragon have been unsuccessful... After my death, the only choice is for Anthony to continue repairing the Sapphire Dragon in my stead.”

“This probably isn’t a solution; what if Anthony can’t manage it either?” Liszt asked, frowning.

“I have a second son, Angus. If Anthony dies, then Angus will take over. If Angus also fails, Anthony’s children should be of age by then...”

Chapter 952: Coordinating Treatment

Though I die, my sons remain; my sons bear grandsons, and those grandsons bear sons again. And they have sons and grandsons in turn; endless and uninterrupted the lineage flows...

The firm response of the Sapphire Duke moved Li Si Te.

He intended to pledge the lives of all the male members of his family to ensure the life of the Sapphire Dragon and thereby maintain the status of the Dragon Rearing Family. Perhaps any noble would make the same choice; after all, it is the Dragon Rearing Families that are the players manipulating the game under the knight system, not mere pawns.

However.

Li Si Te glanced at the wrinkles on the duke's face and asked pensively, "The Lich Andy is imprisoned in the dungeon, isn't he?"

A flash of hatred in his eyes, the duke answered, "That's correct, I did not kill him."

"As for soul magic, especially involving liches and Dragon Domain Landlords, how much research have you done? How many valuable conclusions have you drawn?"

"Countless research efforts, but all without a single clue; the transformation into a lich is irreversible... Andy relied on an ancient divine artifact that has been passed down for the final transformation. As for the Dragon Domain Landlord, it has always been a myth with no possible methods to achieve it."

"I recall over a hundred years ago, a Grand Magician called Curtis Truth seemed to want to help a member of the Sapphire Family become a Dragon Domain Landlord."

"That part of the story isn't a secret, but the version that circulates outside is slightly different. That madwoman Curtis never had control of the Dragon Domain Landlord technique. She planned from the start to turn Annute into a lich. The three major kingdoms all knew this; otherwise, they would have made their move to seize it... It was her lich research that Andy got his hands on to instigate the rebellion."

The Sapphire Duke's response left Li Si Te somewhat disappointed; he had hoped to acquire the technology of the Dragon Domain Landlord from him.

After careful consideration, he still said, "Actually, you should have contacted me earlier, rather than researching ways to save the Sapphire Dragon alone. You should know that an archmage represents true magic. Even soul magic, if researched by an archmage, would not be too difficult."

The duke displayed an embarrassed smile—he dared not entrust the Sapphire Dragon to Li Si Te and Acherlroides for research; it would have been a tragedy if, like sending a meat bun to a dog, it never returned.

It seemed Li Si Te understood the Sapphire Duke's concerns.

Li Si Te said, "Speaking of which, I had a deal I was planning to propose after some time, but it might as well be brought up now... I visited the Legendary Continent a while ago and came across Andy's grandson, Andre, who was close to succeeding in subduing a Mountain Copper Dragon."

"What!" The Sapphire Duke nearly jumped up.

Anthony, who was waiting at his side, was so excited he accidentally shattered his teacup, "Your Majesty, where is that scoundrel Andre now?"

Both of them were focused on Andre, thereby overlooking the key point in Li Si Te's statement, the "Mountain Copper Dragon." After all, such a miraculous dragon as the Mountain Copper Dragon should have been the truly surprising element.

He gestured with his hand and said, "Calm yourselves. Andre dared to steal my dragon and was naturally captured by me. I have been planning to gift him to Duke Andrew as a birthday present, in exchange for some information regarding the Dragon Domain Landlord. If the duke is in a hurry, I can send him over next time."

"Please, Your Majesty, be sure to send Andre. I may not have information on the Dragon Domain Landlord, but I am willing to immediately present all the research I've done on the soul."

"Of course, but are you sure you don't need me to ask an archmage to research and repair the Sapphire Dragon's soul?"

"This..."

Duke Andrew hesitated, but Anthony, who had just managed to calm his emotions, directly said, "Father, why do you hesitate? We are all followers of Your Majesty, isn't it right to ask Your Majesty and Lord Acherloides to treat the Sapphire Dragon?"

He did not want to die young, and having just heard that Li Si Te had captured another Mountain Copper Dragon, he fully realized—his family's Sapphire Dragon might indeed be somewhat insignificant in the other's eyes.

After all, the other party possessed a Formless Dragon among the Sacred Dragons and a Mountain Copper Dragon among the Magic Metal Dragons.

The value of just one of these dragons far exceeded that of a half-crippled Sapphire Dragon.

Seeing Anthony's attitude.

The Sapphire Duke finally sighed and said, "Then I'll trouble Your Majesty and Lord Acherloides to save the Sapphire Dragon. Whatever you require, just say the word; the Sapphire Family is willing to exhaust all of our wealth to repair the soul of the Sapphire Dragon that has been damaged."

"Perhaps it isn't as difficult to heal as imagined; anyway, the treatment costs will definitely be paid by the Sapphire Family, but I can waive the service fee."

Having settled the treatment issue of the Sapphire Dragon,

Li Si Te (Liszt) began to inquire about the purpose of this visit, "Duke Andrew, are you still capable of sustaining a battle now, or can Anthony take the Sapphire Dragon into combat?"

"What do you mean, Your Majesty?"

"I am ready to issue a Pioneer Mandate in the name of Sapphire, to restrain the Dragon Knights of the Eagle Kingdom, while the Sapphire Dragon, in coordination with knights, pillages mainly for captives; the development of the Flame Islands requires an enormous amount of human resources."

"I cannot ride into battle anymore, but as long as I do not perish for the time being, the Sapphire Dragon will have its full combat strength and can engage in a Pioneer Mandate war with Anthony."

"Then let's set a date; it's September now, we should not delay—let us launch the Pioneer Mandate at the beginning of October."

“As you wish.”

...

After Liszt had sent Andre across, the Sapphire Family quickly packed up and returned the organized soul research materials to Liszt.

Then.

Duke Andrew, leaning on a cane, personally took Andre down to the depths of the dungeon for a reunion with the Marquis of Bull.

“Andy, I’ve kept my word; sooner or later I was going to make you and your grandson meet, and now is the time. Didn’t you say Andre would get you everything you want? Well, he’s here now, so where are the things you wanted?” the Sapphire Duke laughed heartily.

Although his body was deteriorating, it did not stop his current exhilaration.

Instead, it was the Marquis of Bull, who had always been calm, whose eyes flashed fiercely blue upon seeing the pale but corpulent Andre, “Andre?”

“Grandfather?” Andre, who had eaten too much junk food and had his Dou Qi greatly diminished, becoming a little chubby, was at first startled, then, ashamed, lowered his head, “I’m sorry, Grandfather. Andre has also become a captive and failed to bring about the rise of the family or achieve your dream.”

Months of imprisonment had eroded all his hope, turning the once proud and ambitious young genius into a dispirited useless person.

“How could this happen? Weren’t you... How did you end up in your current state?” the Marquis of Bull asked anxiously.

Andre suddenly fell to the ground, crying bitterly: “I don’t know, I was attacked by a Dragon Knight, and even the Mountain Copper Dragon was taken away, everything’s ruined, Grandfather.”

The Marquis of Bull, trembling, sat on a chair, repeating over and over: “How could this be? How could this be...”

Yet, Duke Andrew continued to laugh heartily: “Delightful, I’ve never felt so exhilarated in many years, Andy, it’s hilarious seeing you like this now. You wanted to take everything from the Sapphire Family, yet you have lost everything; do you feel what despair and regret are?”

“Regret? No, no, no, why would I regret!” Andy roared, “Why, from childhood to adulthood, have I served you? Why! We both descend from the original Sapphire Dragon Knight, so why am I your servant, and why can you ride dragons while I must feign smiles!”

Duke Andrew sneered coldly, “Because that’s fate; some people are simply born superior.”

“Haha, what a joke, you think you’re superior, but you’re just a maggot breeding on a dragon’s body. Your talent is nothing compared to mine, and Andre surpasses all your offspring in excellence!” The Marquis of Bull stood up, his body swelling and contracting with the trembling of his blue flame.

He glared at Duke Andrew and said in a measured tone, “Although I have failed, you have not succeeded either. The agony of a torn soul will be Accompanying You until death, and the Sapphire Dragon is doomed to die, you and your family will accompany me in death!”

“Do you really think so?”

Duke Andrew suddenly felt the other man to be very ridiculous, very pitiful, the thrill of revenge not yet dissipating: “Too bad, you’re just a delusional madman, and I, I know an Archmage, and she will help the Sapphire Family heal the soul damage of the Sapphire Dragon.”

With that, he no longer paid attention to the roaring Marquis of Bull.

He ordered the knights and magicians on either side, “Seal him up, Lord Acherloides has already urged to send the Lich over quickly to assist with the treatment.”

Chapter 953: Semi-finished Product

Lich Andy was transported to the Tower of Reeds in Reed City.

To study the Magic Teleportation Array, Ach used his Earth Elemental Incarnation, which he had not yet mastered perfectly, to conjure a tall Rock tower. Then he let the construction team simply decorate the interior, thus creating a Mage Tower that stood a hundred meters tall, and named it the Tower of Reeds.

At this moment, in a secluded laboratory within the Tower of Reeds, Liszt was watching Ach set up a Magic Array. In the center of the Magic Array stood the tall figure of Lich Andy, firmly bound by Mountain Copper Lock Chains.

He could now only be considered a humanoid creature, his shell covered in special metallic armor that had fully fused with his body and soul. According to information provided by the Sapphire Duke, it was with a set of mysterious armor known as “Marks of Terror” that Andy had managed to fuse his own soul with that of a dragon’s soul to transform into a Lich.

The Marks of Terror had completely merged into Andy’s body, profoundly altering its nature, making the original material indiscernible.

However, Liszt speculated that the original material must be dragon-related, for in this world, the most supreme materials are dragon parts. Of the four pieces of equipment he found in the statues, three were made from dragon materials. Moreover, armor crafted from dragon material would obviously be most suitable for a perfect fusion with a Dragon Soul.

“Ach, do you think that peeling the Marks of Terror from his body first would make it easier to strip the soul?”

“It’s still not very clear, but from Ach’s observations, the Marks of Terror have already become the Lich’s physical carrier. With time passing, his flesh is gradually merging into the Marks of Terror. I fear it won’t be long before he becomes a true Lich.”

“A true Lich, so you mean to say he isn’t a Lich right now?”

“He’s a half-finished product,” Ach succinctly assessed. “The workmanship is very rough, and the transformation process must have flaws. Based on what Ach has read in the Magic Books about legends, the Liches of ancient times were also known as Lich Kings, developed by research conducted by Archmages, and could not possibly be this fragile.”

She conjured a water ring that enclosed around Lich Andy’s arm, gently constricting it and immediately causing the armor to deform: “Brother, see, it really is very fragile.”

Liszt nodded: “Hmm, indeed quite fragile.”

At this moment, Lich Andy, who lay in the Magic Array unable to move, had the blue flames in his eyes tremble violently. He could no longer bear it and let out a deep, hoarse voice, “Are you the Dragon Knight and Archmage spoken of by Andrew?”

“That’s correct.”

“You’re the one who stole my grandson Andre’s Mountain Copper Dragon?” Lich Andy stared at Liszt’s face, his voice shaking as he inquired.

Liszt smiled and responded with a hint of mockery, “Dragons are proud creatures; they only acknowledge the most outstanding humans. Your grandson probably wasn’t good enough. He spent years trying to conquer the Mountain Copper Dragon and got nothing, whereas I just spent one day there and the Mountain Copper Dragon voluntarily became my mount.”

After hearing his words, Lich Andy seemed to want to say something, but in the end, he refrained and instead, abruptly changed the subject: “This Archmage, she isn’t human, is she?”

“A spirit of the sea.”

“A Sea Serpent, indeed a Sea Monster Magician... Did Andrew invite Her Excellency the Archmage to study a cure for the Sapphire Dragon?”

“Curing the Sapphire Dragon is just a side task; we’re more interested in researching soul-related information. So, Lich Andy, I hope you will cooperate with us. The sooner we

obtain results, the less pain you'll endure, and perhaps when I send you to the Exiled Lands, you may even see your grandson."

"I am an undying Lich!"

"There's no such thing as undying. If there were, where have all the ancient Liches gone? Besides, you're not even a finished product." Liszt had nothing else to do today, so he had time to chat idly with Andy, to see if he could ease his mood and get him to cooperate voluntarily with the research.

A little while later.

Lich Andy again became inclined to have a conversation, "If you wish to study Liches, why not let's also make a deal?"

"Let's hear it."

"I will cooperate with the research proactively, and by relying on the Dragon Soul in my body, I will make the Sapphire Dragon yours. I'll give you the destruction of the Sapphire Family and all their wealth, while all I ask is for your assurance that Andre can leave the Duchy of Sapphire freely."

"I would very much like to agree to you cooperating with the research, but my integrity does not allow me to deceive others. The Sapphire Duke is a resolute man; he wouldn't spare Andre's life out of hatred just to torment him. In fact, he would send Andre to the Exiled Lands as soon as possible."

"That's true, I am very clear about Andrew's character... Then, all I need from you is the assurance of the destruction of the Sapphire Family, how about that?"

Liszt still wanted to talk to Lich Andy for a few more sentences.

However, Ach, who was engrossed in his research, suddenly said, "Brother, Ach has discovered the secret of the Lich. It seems that the Dragon Soul can be easily stripped, and his bodily structure is not very complicated to comprehend. Due to being incomplete, many of his design ideas are exposed."

“Hmm, is it that easy?”

“Sapphire has provided quite a lot of data, and Ach has recently collected a batch of information about souls. It’s not difficult to see the secrets of an incomplete Lich. If things go as expected, as long as we have the right materials, Ach could mass-produce these kinds of incomplete Liches.”

“Impossible!” Lich Andy exclaimed with a tremble.

Ach’s words ruthlessly shattered any last hope Andy had: “He was transformed into a Lich from a Knight; his Spiritual Power is insufficient, and there are many barriers in his fusion with the Dragon Soul. To call him incomplete is not quite accurate; he should be considered a substandard incomplete... Magicians are the best candidates for transformation into Liches.”

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Without any bargaining value, Lich Andy was doomed to be nothing more than a lab rat, and Liszt didn’t let Ach strip the Dragon Soul right away.

He wasn’t ready to heal the Sapphire Dragon so quickly.

Perhaps it was a bit hypocritical, but as the future King of the Flame Kingdom, from a political standpoint, a deceased Duke Andrew suited his interests better—his successor, Anthony, would be easier to control, and once Duke Andrew died, the identity of the Tulip Family followers would become a thing of the past.

Without the moral constraint of the identity “former follower,” he could then arrange for the Sapphire Family without any hindrance.

“I have ultimately become one of the politicians of this world, much like the majority of Nobles who only see interests...” Liszt reflected in a rare moment of self-examination under the languid afternoon sun.

But this contemplation did not last long.

He soon received a message from the Magic Platform at the Volcano Crater. In the message, Paris reported to him that the fully formed Phoenix Perch Parasol Forest had attracted a group of magical beasts with red feathers. They did not appear to be ordinary Low-Level Magical Beasts. They occupied the Phoenix Perch Parasol Forest and had even had several conflicts with the Flame Dragon Birds.

Little Yellow, Little Red, and Little Purple, the three gradually maturing Flame Dragon Birds, surprisingly did not get the upper hand against this group of red-feathered magical beasts.

There was even one instance where Little Purple fought one-on-one with a red bird only to end in a draw.

“The combat power of the three little birds is already at an Advanced Magical Beast level, does that not mean that this group of red-feathered magical beasts are all Advanced Magical Beasts?”

Liszt could not sit still, he immediately stood up and left the Castle, mounted the Formless Dragon Bard, and rapidly traversed space to arrive at the Volcano Crater.

Chapter 954: Beneath the Magma

The Phoenix Perch Parasol Forest was still just a collection of small saplings, not lush and leafy, but under the influence of the Cordyceps, each one was full of energy.

And those red-feathered birds attracted to the place were as big as calves but had a wingspan of only about five meters, bulky and bloated, resembling some oversized sparrows.

Liszt discovered through the Crystal White Trajectory of the Formless Dragon that their magic power was dense to the level of an Advanced Magical Beast, and there were over a hundred of these birds. They flew in groups through the saplings of the Phoenix Perch Parasol Tree, fortunately not harming the saplings, only occasionally snapping a few during their play.

In the “Magical Beast Encyclopedia” revised under Ach, there were no records of bird Magical Beasts like these, so Liszt provisionally named them Red Sparrow Birds.

“Your Highness, these birds have been here for a while now, and our serfs are too scared to plant trees anymore. These birds attack the serfs on sight. Little Yellow, Little Red, and Little Purple are no match for them,” Paris said.

“I will properly discipline these Red Sparrow Birds. In my territory, they are my private property, and I will not allow them to be so presumptuous!”

However, Liszt did not immediately tame the flock of Red Sparrow Birds.

The reason lay in the Smoke Mission, which had previously tasked him with planting the Phoenix Perch Parasol Forest to attract the flock, but even with the arrival of the Red Sparrow Birds, the mission status remained incomplete. This meant that the number of birds was probably still not enough.

More Fire Attribute birds were likely to come.

Liszt had already figured out the pattern of the Smoke Mission. Therefore, he was not in a hurry and let Paris restrain the knights and serfs here while he himself went to meet Leo at the distant Doomsday Volcano Crater, taking the Greater Elf Annie of the Phoenix Perch Parasol Tree with him.

Annie, who was always holding Fire Dragon Scale, was in good spirits lately, but still showed no signs of evolving into a Dragon Elf.

Of course, there was no failure either. It was still full of affection for Leo.

“Ethan’s training has graduated. Now, I must ensure Leo’s training also graduates. Otherwise, this Fire Dragon will never be fully under my command,” he treated Fire Dragon Leo as a combat partner, hoping Leo would soon get branded with a Mind Branding and then work together to develop armor form.

A handsome set of Flame Armor was a long-awaited dream for Liszt.

Bone Dragon Armor, though domineering, had a temperament that was dark and eerie, somewhat clashing with his sunny “big boy” personality.

“Oh ho!”

Leo demanded Red Dragon Water as soon as they met.

Its body had grown larger, and it had vigorously extracted Volcanic Super Magic from about a dozen active volcanoes in the Endless Volcano Cluster. Several nearly extinguished, and the rest seemed about to go dormant. For this reason, Leo had to go deeper into the magma to find more Volcanic Super Magic.

But through their mind-meld connection, Liszt found that the deeper the layer of magma, the less Volcanic Super Magic there was available.

In Leo’s memory, that magma lacked sufficient magic power, and with its current Magic Form, it couldn’t delve any deeper.

“Eat, eat, eat. You always want Red Dragon Water when we meet. It’s really hard to maintain you!” Liszt reluctantly took out a vial of Red Dragon Water and stuffed it into Leo’s gaping mouth.

Among all dragons, Leo was most dependent on and in need of Magic Potions.

Although the other dragons couldn’t do without Magic Potions either, they only required enough to maintain essential magic power supply. Their magic power was more like three meals a day, entering a dragon’s body to be digested and ultimately transformed into a special Dragon Magic Power that enriched mineral resources.

Formless Dragon Bard was even more unique. Its Space Gem production was scarce and had to be condensed through Superior Magic.

Its ordinary Dragon Magic Power couldn’t produce minerals, primarily used to travel through space, resonating with the material boundary and the realms beyond.

Only Leo would eat as much Magic Potion as you gave it without producing anything, just continually growing in size.

“I need to socialize with the Red and White Rose Family again soon and have them send me a batch of Red Dragon Water. However, this is not a long-term solution, as the Steel Ridge Royal Family and the Platinum Family would not allow the Red Dragon Water to keep flowing to me... It would be best to find a new cluster of volcanoes.”

The Flame Islands no longer have any new volcano clusters, apart from a few other islands besides Flame Island, which have volcanoes but no exposed magma.

Unless there is a volcanic eruption, even if an active volcano is found, magma might not be seen.

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This practice lasted until it got dark.

When Liszt returned to the Phoenix Perch Parasol Forest, Paris quickly reported, “Your Highness, after you left, another group of Red Sparrow Birds arrived, and among them, there were unexpectedly five Flame Dragon Birds, just like Little Yellow, Little Red, and Little Purple!”

“What?”

Liszt was shocked. The Flame Dragon Bird was a mount he had always wanted to capture and tame, but despite the myriad legends about Phoenixes everywhere, they were almost never actually found.

He had never expected that planting the parasol tree would truly draw a golden Phoenix.

He quickly used the Crystal White Trajectory, looked over the sleeping Phoenix Perch Parasol Forest, and soon noticed amongst the red magic powers, five strands of magic whose colors were more vivid, already advancing into High Magic—indeed they were Flame Dragon Birds.

“Four large Flame Dragon Birds, in pairs of two, and one smaller Flame Dragon Bird is on its own,” his eyes gleaming, “Capture them, we must capture them, let them breed with Little Yellow, Little Red, and Little Purple, providing a constant supply of Flame Dragon Bird mounts for my Royal Knight Squad!”

Of course, capturing them doesn’t necessarily mean violence. With Annie, the Greater Elf who is close to Flame Dragon Birds and understands their language, perhaps there could be a shortcut.

And moreover, there is a Fire Dragon here, representing the ultimate power of the Flame.

Taming the Flame Dragon Birds would absolutely be more efficient.

With this in mind, he summoned the Smoke Mission, and this time, the mission changed: “Complete the mission, reward a group of Red Sparrow Birds.”

In a moment, new Serpent Script condensed.

“Mission: The appearance of the Red Sparrow Birds indicates the attractiveness of the Phoenix Perch Parasol Forest to Fire Attribute birds, and yet, the group of birds unexpectedly includes Flame Dragon Birds, the relationship within the flock is worth investigating. However, it seems Leo has made some discovery, why not take a look? Reward: Mysterious Creature.”

“Hm?”

After reading the mission content, Liszt unconsciously furrowed his brows—the mission’s introduction and conclusion were clearly disjointed, two unrelated segments.

The first half was still discussing the relationship between the Flame Dragon Birds and Red Sparrow Birds.

The latter half jumps directly to Leo.

He quickly contacted Leo using the Dragon Heart Electrical Signal and waited a while before receiving a response. A vague thought surfaced, as it seemed that it had discovered

a strange place deep in the Volcano Crater, where there was a passage without magma, and something deeply alluring to it seemed to be calling from deep within the passage.

Approximately the “Unknown Creature” that the Smoke Mission intended to reward.

Even though Leo struggled to enter the passage, the Magic Form couldn’t leave the magma, and if it transformed into a body of flesh, the magma passage was too narrow.

This left it in a dilemma.

Liszt quickly realized this was a good opportunity to facilitate Leo in synchronizing with the practice of its Armor Form: “You can’t get in, but that doesn’t mean I can’t, Leo. I have a way to infiltrate the passage, but I’ll need your cooperation, understand?”

Chapter 955: Fire Dragon Lance

To attract the substance beneath the magma, Leo eventually agreed to train with Liszt in armored form, so by late September, Liszt was stationed long-term at the Endless Volcano Cluster.

After harmonizing well with Bone Dragon Vinnie, he had gained profound insights into the training of the Elemental Dragon Armor form. As long as Leo was willing to cooperate, training should be very straightforward. Moreover, Leo’s control over himself far exceeded Vinnie’s over the Bone Dragon, which could make it easier.

However, even with it being easier, it would still take time to train.

Meanwhile, the Knight Order on Flame Island began to assemble; Earth Knights who passed political scrutiny were gathering at Iron Hoof Island through the Heart Reed Teleportation Formation.

They were about to cooperate with the Sapphire Dragon to issue the Pioneer Mandate against the Eagle Kingdom.

In the Phoenix Perch Parasol Forest here, Greater Elf Annie was busy riding Little Yellow, Little Red, and Little Purple, slowly approaching those five Flame Dragon Birds. Unlike

their hostility toward the Red Sparrow Bird, upon seeing their own kind, the Flame Dragon Birds displayed many intimate behaviors and did not show any antagonistic stance.

Annie also used this opportunity to establish a preliminary friendly relationship with the five new Flame Dragon Birds.

The Flame Dragon Bird, being the king of the Red Sparrow Bird flock, about two to three hundred Red Sparrows needed to hunt wild beasts from various places to feed to the Flame Dragon Birds.

This relationship was like the class disparity between Storm Dragon Horses and Pegasus.

However, as precious and rare as the Flame Dragon Birds were, Liszt had no time to pay attention to them, for he and Leo encountered severe obstacles in their training. No matter how much Leo cooperated, the armor form it condensed always failed to meet Liszt's expectations, only encasing Liszt in a mass of flames.

Gazing at himself engulfed in gluey flames that made moving inconvenient, he sighed silently.

What he thought would be simple training had become a massive problem.

“Oh ho!”

Leo also appeared very impatient.

It simply could not transform into a beautiful set of armor according to Liszt's idea. Moreover, it suspected that Liszt was deceiving it; this method was utterly unfeasible, merely a waste of its Dragon Magic Power.

“It's not that it's unfeasible; it's that you can't master your own Magic Form,” Liszt shook his head, “I seriously suspect you've rapidly grown in strength, yet you have yet to fully master your own body. You're only four years old at most, yet you've grown as big as a forty-year-old.”

“Oh ho!” Leo felt that its unique talents could not be measured by age.

“I think you should just transform into a Dragon Lance,” thought Liszt, guiding his actions accordingly, “With your current control, you can probably only transform into a Lance.”

Leo cooperated reluctantly.

Yet to Liszt’s surprise, under the Magic Form, Leo quickly condensed into a ten-meter-long Fire Dragon Lance.

The lance, dark red and shiny like a red-hot iron bar, was slightly distorted, faintly adorning a pair of abstract dragon wings on top; the tip of the lance was formed by the tail of the Fire Dragon, covered in dragon scales; the end of the lance was designed as Leo’s dragon head, with several sharp dragon horns.

Grasping the lance, he felt like the Dragon Lance was an extension of his own body—size, length, weight—everything so naturally handy.

“Mmm!”

“This feeling, it’s power!”

“Leo, although you failed to transform into armor, you succeeded brilliantly in transforming into a Dragon Lance. I can feel that the Dragon Lance you have become is definitely the most powerful in the world!”

“Oh ho!”

Leo’s roar of desire for battle echoed in his mind.

“Very well, as you wish!” Liszt called out, an image of a skull dragon head spreading across his body, forming a set of Bone Dragon Armor.

Vinnie’s voice arose in his mind: “Your Highness, do I no longer need to transform into the Bone Dragon Sword?”

“I already have the Fire Dragon Lance,” said Liszt, clutching the Fire Dragon Lance, clad in Bone Dragon Armor. He leaped, and the bone dragon wings on his back spread open. Although they couldn’t flap to create airflow, they added to his momentum. When he rose high in the air, Formless Dragon Bard suddenly came flying, catching him just right.

He landed on the Dragon Tooth Platform, entering Dragon Rider Mode.

As his thoughts shifted, Bard folded its wings and dived towards the valley; with the Fire Dragon Lance, unleashing the Dragon Dou Qi Manual, a meteor-like stream of fire burst from the tip of the lance, instantly raging towards the valley floor.

A loud boom resonated.

The valley floor erupted in a massive explosion, shaking the entire valley and the surrounding mountains intensely. Amidst the flames and dust, Bard quickly twisted his body and flapped his wings to escape the area of the explosion. After circling in the air for a few rounds, when the smoke and dust had dispersed, Liszt could see the effect of his powerful strike.

The ground was blasted open, forming a crater twenty meters in diameter.

“Strong!”

“This is power!”

He couldn’t help but laugh out loud, “Ha ha!”

Influenced by his mood, three voices simultaneously arose in his mind, “Oh ho!”

“Your Highness is truly powerful!”

“Woo yi ya!”

...

Strong as it was, there were still problems to be solved.

Leo had always been unable to properly complete the armor form; therefore, Liszt had to change his approach and no longer insisted on having it transform into armor.

Instead, he let Leo wrap around him perfectly and then drove forward through the magma.

After nearly ten days of repeated practice, they finally coordinated perfectly, and tried to dive into the magma in the state now called “Flame Wrap.” To ensure safety, he cautiously tested bit by bit, making sure the magma didn’t seep through the flame wrap and scorch him.

Only then did he truly enter the Doomsday Volcano Crater.

Guided by Leo, they plunged into the rolling magma, moving swiftly downward along the passage. Thanks to Leo’s senses, he could feel the presence of fire attribute magic power all around him; navigating through it was as effortless as a fish swimming in water. However, as they dove deeper, the resistance grew stronger.

Just when he felt he could hardly hold on, finally, Leo took a sharp turn, steering Liszt into a U-shaped fork in the magma passage and gradually spiraled upwards.

Moments later.

They had reached the end of the magma.

Shoosh, the Flame Wrap burst out of the magma, jumping into a bright red, dried-up passageway. The wrap quickly receded, and Leo reverted to his Totem Form (Magic Form) and attached himself to Liszt’s chest.

“Is this the place?” Liszt held his breath, examining the passage carefully.

With glowing red magma serving as a light source, the passageway wasn’t dark, but after several twists and turns, as it moved away from the magma, the light gradually dimmed.

He pulled out the Hand Magic Tube and used the light from the Crystal Lamp to carefully move forward along the passageway, looking for something that attracted Leo.

The hint from the Smoke Mission indicated the presence of an unknown creature.

Creatures that could live here were definitely extraordinary, so Liszt had to be extremely cautious to avoid being attacked by an unknown creature.

He walked for a solid five minutes.

There was finally an end to the passageway, and ahead, flickering red lights twinkled, “It looks like there’s a cave there, probably the den of the unknown creature. Vinnie, Armor Mode!”

“Understood, Your Highness.”

Bone Dragon Vinnie quickly transformed into a set of Bone Dragon Armor, and a Bone Dragon Sword extended in Liszt’s hand. With the armor protecting him, he felt much safer and, after hesitating briefly, he finally reached the glowing entrance of the cave. Peering inside, he was instantly stunned.

The cave was like a giant spherical space, its walls flickering with what looked like countless rubies embedded in them.

The most astonishing was at the bottom of the cave—a nest made of a burning pile of tinder, quietly housing a glowing reddish-golden bird egg.

The light illuminating the cave came from this bird egg.

In fact, rather than calling it a bird egg, it seemed more like a glowing semi-transparent gemstone, surrounded by a dense aura of fire attribute magic power, making the egg appear supremely noble.

One could tell at a glance that this was the egg of an extraordinary creature.

“The energy level is very high, it’s a fire attribute Superior Magic; what kind of creature could have left this egg?” Assured that there were no adult unknown creatures guarding it, he slid down the wall and approached the egg—though it still couldn’t be confirmed as definitely a bird egg, it was certainly an egg with a life force.

It was about the size of a soccer ball, oval-shaped, not only glowing and shining but also searing hot.

Chapter 956: Grand and Intense

Leo communicated telepathically with Liszt, expressing its desire to eat the egg.

However, Liszt ignored it, since the space was too small for Leo to come out; it was easy to disregard its opinion. He, instead, circled the egg meticulously, examining this magical and incredible egg.

The egg radiated a bright golden light, twinkling steadily like breathing.

Yet the light wasn’t blinding at all; it was exceptionally soft, giving him a warm and comfortable experience, as if enveloped in spring. Below the egg, dry wood emitted blazing flames, although the wood itself did not burn but remained in its original, dried form. The flames were an illusion created by Fire Attribute Mana.

Thus, it appeared as if the egg was being roasted by the fire, but despite the lengthy roasting, it wasn’t cooked yet.

“Such intense Fire Attribute Mana, and the egg itself is also of Fire Attribute Superior Magic; its extraordinariness is evident. In this world, aside from Fire Dragons, the only thing that could possess such exceptional Fire Attribute Superior Magic is the legendary Phoenix,” thought Liszt, his eyes gleaming, his mind whirring.

After the fall of the Moon Empire, knights ruled the world, and many civilizations created by past magicians had been lost, causing today’s people to mistake Flame Dragon Birds for Phoenixes.

However, the relationship between unicorns and Storm Dragon Horses made Liszt realize that the real Phoenix was probably an existence far beyond Flame Dragon Birds. Yet, he

wasn't sure if phoenixes truly existed until now, seeing this egg-shaped magical giant egg—he recognized that he might have really discovered a Phoenix Egg.

“I need to take it with me!”

“No!”

“The phoenix chose this place to nest for a reason, likely this very volcano is crucial for the egg's hatching!”

If the phoenix was real, then it would definitely be on the same level as unicorns, as mystical and incredible as dragons, and its hatching conditions naturally stringent. According to legends, a phoenix could resurrect from its ashes and rekindle its life; perhaps this location was the rebirth site the phoenix had chosen for itself.

“Oh ho!” Leo clamored to eat.

“Stay calm, Leo, this egg cannot be eaten, understand? It's a Phoenix Egg! Phoenix, a creature as mystical as you!”

“Oh ho!” Whether it's a phoenix or a turkey, Leo just wanted to eat the egg.

But how could Liszt allow a future phoenix to be eaten by Leo as food, when he couldn't even bear to let Leo eat a Flame Dragon Bird.

Ignoring Leo's roar.

He kept observing, etching into his memory all features of the Phoenix Egg and the fiery nest. He also chipped away a shiny red stone from the wall and stuffed it into his Space Ring as a sample for future analysis.

“I can't hold my breath any longer; the limit is nearly reached, I must leave soon.” There was no breathable air inside the cave, and Liszt had been observing for an hour and a half, unable to hold his breath any longer.

Yet, he felt a bit reluctant.

“Let me touch the Phoenix Egg one last time before I go!”

Thinking this.

He reached out slowly, touching the soccer ball-sized, golden, mysterious stone-like egg. When his fingertips met the egg, instead of the scalding or burning he had imagined, he unexpectedly felt an emotion similar to a newborn chick’s desire for freedom.

It was an exhilarating and uplifting sensation.

As if an eagle should soar above the ninth heaven, and a whale should roam the vast ocean.

It was a Phoenix, meant to live unbridled in the world, its life and death as intense as a blazing fire.

“Phoenix, we are destined,” Liszt instantly responded with his emotions, connecting his fingertips with the life within the egg for a special exchange, “You desire an intense life, follow me then. My life, like my last name, Fire, is the burning flame destined to sweep across the world.”

It was unclear if the life inside the egg understood, but no new emotions could be felt.

There was only a vague concept, the egg needed an intense volcanic eruption to hatch. Perhaps the Phoenix chose to be reborn here in anticipation of a staggering eruption from the Domsday Volcano Crater in the future to be reborn from the flames.

Unfortunately, due to Leo’s actions of constantly drawing Volcanic Super Magic, the Domsday Volcano Crater was nearly dormant.

“Don’t worry, I will help you hatch!” declaring his promise, Liszt no longer hesitated, quickly left the cave, and returned to the magma through the passage.

Leo transformed into a flaming wrap, quickly bringing him back to the outer side of the volcano crater.

Breathing fresh air, Liszt sat on a scorching rock, recovering his strength, while also summoning the Smoke Mission.

“Complete the mission, reward: Phoenix Egg.”

“It really is a Phoenix Egg.” He showed a knowing smile, after obtaining Unicorn Charlie from Ach, he was about to acquire another legendary creature—Phoenix.

Suddenly, a new mission was issued, “Mission: A five-hundred-year cycle, await the opportunity to be reborn, such is the undying Phoenix, noble and indescribable in nature, a mysterious power beyond words. Since you have the destiny to witness the Phoenix awaiting rebirth, naturally, you must assist it. Please hatch the Phoenix Egg. Reward: A Phoenix.”

Liszt would help the Phoenix hatch even without the prompt from the Smoke Mission.

Now, what Liszt needed to do was to persuade Leo to initiate a volcanic eruption to meet the hatching requirements of the Phoenix Egg, but currently Leo, feeling disgruntled for being stopped from consuming the Phoenix Egg, was not likely to spend Super Magic to induce an eruption.

“Then wait for now.”

“The Pioneer Mandate is soon upon us, and I need to take the Dragons to the Eagle Kingdom to counter their Dragon Knights. I likely won’t have time to tend to a newly hatched Phoenix... After the Pioneer Mandate is over, I will come to hatch the Phoenix Egg.”

The Phoenix Egg was not yet suitable for hatching, but that didn’t stop him from studying the blood-red stones in the Phoenix nest.

These stones, rich in Fire Attribute Mana, were rough on surface and impure, neither crystal clear like gemstones and crystals, nor as smooth and delicate as jade.

“The Magic Power is a bit difficult to extract and activate, and it feels troublesome to study. Forget it, just send it to the Magic Guild for research.”

His time was too precious to spend on research.

Back in Phoenix Perch Parasol Forest.

Greater Elf Annie had done an excellent job, already blending in well with five new Flame Dragon Birds and had them constrain the short-tempered Red Sparrow Birds.

“Liszt, the Red Sparrow Birds won’t dare attack humans again or else Annie will have the Flame Dragon Birds pluck their feathers!”

“Well done!” Liszt did not hesitate to praise.

Paris then smiled and said, “With Annie managing the birds here, the safety of the Knights and Serfs is assured. There is no longer any need for my intervention, Your Highness. Please transfer me back to Reed City to contribute to its construction.”

“You are now a Great Light Magic Swordsman, your strength belonging to the top tier of knights. Leading the Knight Order is what you are meant to do. However, don’t get involved in estate construction for now. I am arranging the Knight Order to march to the Eagle Kingdom, you join the expedition as well, achieve more military merits and advance in nobility quickly.”

“As you wish, Your Highness.” Paris was not interested in advancement in nobility, but that did not prevent her from following Liszt’s will, heading towards the battlefield to charge.

Chapter 957 Laughing Like a 200-Pound Fatty

The grand Pioneer Mandate war finally kicked off in early October. The vast majority of the Duchy of Sapphire's fleet had assembled, carrying a large number of knights from Iron Hoof City on Iron Hoof Island, charging towards the coastal hinterland of the Eagle Kingdom.

There had been no deliberate selection of the timing or location for battle.

Liszt simply felt that the coastal hinterland of the Eagle Kingdom was a well-populated and wealthy area, and so he directed his battles there.

With the Sapphire Dragon leading the charge, there was simply no chance of resistance; any castles that dared to resist would be destroyed, and the knights of the Eagle Kingdom would still be captured. Many noble landlords seemed to have understood their fate, especially the smaller ones, choosing to open their gates and surrender without a fight.

Li Weiliam was the general commander of the Knight Orders from the Flame Territory and Bull Tail Territory. At his birthday party last month, Liszt formally presented him with the "Dou Qi Domain Manual" as a birthday gift.

Although half a month's time was not enough to immediately make him a Domain Knight, his mount, the Super Magical Beast - Pitch-Black Albatross, allowed his combat power to barely reach the level of a Domain Knight. Behind him were Great Light Magic Swordsman Paris, Sword Saint Durt Red Apricot, and Cross Thorn.

Even Emily, who was still in a period of adjustment with Ethan, joined this war.

She too was a Sword Saint and, having surpassed the likes of Durt and Cross, became the strongest member of the Knight Order in this war, second only to Li Weiliam.

In addition, Liszt dispatched seven Sky Knights: Fox, Garcia, Derec Iron Armor, Joyce Dandelion, Spark, Fernal Ink, and Tevis Clover Alfalfa.

These powerful beings of Sky Knight caliber formed a luxurious offensive line where no enemy could stand against them for even a single round.

To prevent the Eagle Kingdom from being driven to desperation and deploying Dragon Knights to face what was a "routine invasion" by the Duchy of Sapphire, Liszt personally led a lavish Dragon Corps to oversee the battle in secret. The Formless Dragon Bard, Grey Iron Dragon Ornn, Fire Dragon Leo, Bone Dragon Vinnie, and Light Green Gem Dragon Ethan.

Only Mountain Copper Dragon Mata remained on Flame Island to suppress the territory and prevent the Moon Slayers from rebelling—though most Moon Slayers were serfs, their living conditions had greatly improved compared to those in the forests.

Most importantly, Liszt employed a strategy of division. Although the ancient mage class had to serve in significant construction projects, their children were educated in schools and promised a future among the noble class, which quelled any desire for rebellion.

Moreover,

the territory also had Archmage Ach, whose strength was akin to that of a Dragon Knight when mounted on Unicorn Charlie; he alone was more than enough to suppress any dissent.

In summary, this Pioneer Mandate war was destined from the start.

After a full month, the Sapphire Dragon swept through over a thousand kilometers of the Eagle Kingdom's hinterland, conquering numerous castles. Captured knights were sent en masse toward Sapphire, while throngs of serfs were driven off without even a piece of clothing to cover their shame, destined for Flame Island. Only a small portion remained as spoils for the Sapphire Family and other minor nobles as a mark of their military achievements.

Liszt, with his six dragons, did not mind biting off more than he could chew.

Having multiple dragons was sound logic. No matter how many captured knights came to the Flame Kingdom, they all had to earnestly toil here and become vassals of the Flame Family.

...

"This is outrageous!"

In the Iron Dragon Chain Palace of Moonlight City's King's Castle, King Adonis Moonlight Silver of the Eagle Kingdom furiously threw his wine glass to the floor after receiving the latest reports from a dispatch rider, his beard-bristle standing on end with rage.

"How dare he do such a thing!"

"That little beast Liszt, a petty scion raised by a lowly family, how dare he repeatedly provoke the Eagle Kingdom!"

"The Sapphire, a brood nurtured by flies, are all no better than disgusting, lowly maggots. Liszt has stolen the kingdom's Grey Iron Dragon, the Light Green Gemstone Dragon, and that scoundrel Andre also betrayed me, fleeing on the back of Mountain Copper Dragon!" His anger escalating, he smashed the table with his fist.

...

He gritted his teeth and cursed, "Unforgivable, all of them unforgivable!"

"Adonis, you need to calm down, anger is of no use," said the queen as she watched the broken pieces scattered on the floor, and anxiously helped Adonis to his feet.

But Adonis pushed the queen away, "Don't bother me, woman, what do you know!"

The queen frowned but said nothing.

Adonis continued to roar, "Someone come, relay my order, immediately deploy the kingdom's Dragon Knights, and exterminate the whole pack of Sapphire flies, as well as that crippled Sapphire Dragon, kill it too!"

The knights guarding the palace looked at each other, puzzled and unsure of what to do.

It was the queen who stepped forward, "Adonis, you must come to your senses!" Then she waved her hand, signaling the knights to leave, as she wanted to speak to the king alone.

Once the knights had left, the queen finally spoke, "Do you want to provoke another Dragon Slaying War?"

"Who could do anything to my Eagle Kingdom if we kill the Sapphire Dragon!"

"Can't you see the intention behind the Sapphire Family's continued deployment of the Pioneer Mandate? It's Liszt supporting them in secret! Think of his Formless Dragon, as well as the Light Green Gemstone Dragon, Grey Iron Dragon, and that Fire Dragon, which used to belong to us, not to mention the Bone Dragon and the Archmage riding a unicorn!"

With each mention of a dragon's name, Adonis became weaker, and by the time she reached the part about the unicorn, he had collapsed weakly into his chair, "Then... Tiffany, my wife, tell me what should we do now?"

"The kingdom is at a precarious moment, what you need to do is maintain the current situation, cultivate new Dragon Knights, conquer new dragons, and get the kingdom through this tough time."

"Do you know how difficult that is? First, Carlo died in battle, the Light Green Gemstone Dragon was lost, followed by Loyle's death in battle, and the loss of the Grey Iron Dragon... Blast Furnace Fortress and Steel Ridge have long since lost their ambition, facing the aggressive Flame Kingdom, they only seek to please, hoping to coexist peacefully."

Adonis felt like laughing at himself, "They're too naive. From Liszt's attitude towards my Eagle Kingdom, you can tell he's an ambitious man, a true schemer. He has the Formless Dragon and fears nothing. Now he's attacking the Eagle Kingdom and would certainly bite to death Blast Furnace Fortress and Steel Ridge when he gets the chance!"

"Then we shall make concessions, show them the gesture, and let them understand Liszt's ambition," Queen Tiffany said calmly.

"Make concessions?"

"Yes, we can abandon the forces that are not core interests of the Moonlight Silver and White Maw Iron Families. Those nobles have always been under the protection of the royal family without contributing anything, better to let the Flame Kingdom take them. Lesser knights aren't important, what matters are the dragons!"

"Do you really think this is feasible?"

"Whether it's feasible or not, we can try. Otherwise, what else can we do? Blast Furnace Fortress and Steel Ridge refuse to unite against the Flame Kingdom, and we can't hope to win a Dragon Slaying War alone, we can only protect ourselves... Sooner or later, these two kingdoms will see through Liszt's ambitious facade."

Adonis was silent for a long time, "If that's the case, I will have the kingdom's ministers come to the palace to discuss this in more detail."

...

Liszt had no idea about the reaction of the Eagle Royal Family.

Riding on the Formless Dragon Bard, he surveyed the war scenes, laughing like a 200-pound fat man as he watched knights, serfs, elves, food, minerals, and other resources being packed up and carried away continuously.

"I originally thought that trade smuggling was the most profitable."

"Then I thought receiving gifts from friends was the most profitable."

"But neither is as profitable as waging war!"

Chapter 958 Abundant War Booty

After more than a month of war, it ended just as winter was about to arrive.

Watching the Knight Order leave Eagle Kingdom with a rich bounty, Liszt could finally relax and take his Dragon Corps away.

All spoils of war were distributed on Iron Hoof Island.

According to distribution principles, mineral resources were directly handed over to the Sapphire Family for allocation, which Liszt did not concern himself with—he already owned the Dragon Pit Great Mine and Jade Mountain Vein and did not care about the resources seized.

Meanwhile, the serfs and confiscated food were all exclusively enjoyed by the Flame Family, so each batch was swiftly sent through the Magic Gate on Mind Island, then transported to Flame Island. Local officials would quickly arrange housing and employment for the serfs, generally mixing them with the Flame People and Moon Slayer Tribe.

The two groups did not understand each other's language, which avoided many unnecessary troubles; they simply focused on their work.

As for the knights captured on the battlefield, they were distributed according to their own desires. Those who wanted to pay a ransom for their freedom were temporarily detained on Iron Hoof Island; those who did not wish to pay a ransom simply surrendered and were sent to Flame Island for resettlement, along with their families and elves.

Liszt, through officials, promised these knights that they did not need to give up their wealth, but only needed to work for the Flame Kingdom.

Before the kingdom was established, their elves had to serve Flame Island.

Based on their service contributions, they could exchange military merits to obtain titles, and after the establishment of the kingdom, land would be allocated according to these merits.

He informed all knights that the kingdom would inevitably be established within three years.

The knights, who were reluctant to pay a ransom in the first place, were now not only able to keep their elves but could also continue to be noble knights, so why wouldn't they agree?

"Knights who refuse to surrender," Liszt had already instructed, "their ransoms are to be handed over to the Sapphire Family for recovery and distribution. Of course, this involves Nobles of the rank of Earl and above, which I must personally arrange." Common knights and Honored Knights, Barons, and Viscounts could not provide much ransom.

However, Nobles such as Earls and Marquises could be squeezed for Little Minor Elves and Greater Elves.

Liszt no longer valued Elf Bugs, but he was still unable to part with the Little Minor Elves and Greater Elves. Notably, this time alone, he captured two Marquises and as many as eleven Earls; under the attack of the Sapphire Dragon, these major Nobles were no different from the common knights.

"Have the knight numbers been tallied yet?" After returning to Bull Hoof City via dragon riding, Liszt asked while enjoying a maid's massage in the castle's study.

He inquired about the distribution of spoils from Goltai who came to report.

"Your Highness, blessed by the glory, this time, it's truly a great harvest, with as many as four thousand six hundred seventy-two Elite Earth Knights and over seven thousand six hundred Apprentice Knights," Goltai said with a glowing face, his abilities were modest, and his title was low, but he was now one of the earliest members of the Flame Kingdom.

He and Marcus lacked the qualifications to become grand Nobles, their highest possible title being Viscount, as the title of Earl required one to be a Sky Knight.

But even currently wearing only a Baron's title, he still enjoyed tremendous power and often represented Liszt in managing his territory.

"Just over seven thousand six hundred Apprentice Knights?" Liszt frowned slightly.

"Uh, Your Highness, as you know, not many Earth Knights can afford to keep Apprentice Knights as retainers; most retainers are counted among the serfs," Goltai explained.

It was just like Liszt's own beginnings.

He himself had been only an Apprentice Knight, although titled as a Baron, but his retainers were just four ordinary people.

Indeed, many Elite Earth Knights did not even recruit retainers; after all, recruiting retainers meant providing them with food and drink, and many Earth Knights could hardly sustain themselves, let alone a retainer—Marcus used to be a typical example, as an Elite Earth Knight without any retainer.

They had to take care of their own horses, carry their own spears, and polish their own armor.

Liszt gave a slight nod and then asked, "Have all these Earth Knights and Apprentice Knights been sent to Flame Island?"

"Yes, after obtaining the knights' willingness to surrender with each batch, they were dispatched to Flame Island for restructuring. According to the messages from the Magic Platform, there were some difficulties, but since Lord Acherloides is personally stationed in Reed City, those knights wouldn't dare stir any trouble."

Although Acherloides was a little sea monster who could gain the favor of unicorns.

However, her values differed greatly from those of humans and, influenced by Liszt's misguided teachings, she had little aversion to killing.

Perhaps for her, killing was like residing in the sea and eliminating those sea monsters harmful to herself. Hence when Liszt entrusted her with guarding the Reed Marsh Magic Gate and instructed her to execute anyone who rebelled, she did so without hesitation, and kindness was not a trait she possessed.

Purity had no connection with killing itself.

But it was a reflection of inner desires—killing out of desire or for gain was definitely not pure, but killing chickens and slaughtering dogs for food was just a part of everyday life, and doing so didn't imply impurity.

Thus, Acherloides could ride a unicorn and casually execute knights who caused disturbances.

Under the powerful symbolic meaning of the unicorn, her killing naturally placed her on a moral high ground—humans favored by unicorns must surely be paragons of virtue!

"Prince Archmage riding a unicorn, the knights killed by her must indeed be villains!"

Moreover.

In a world under the knight system, power was respected; Dragon Knights and Archmages killing a person wasn't a big deal. Even annihilating a few Nobles, nobody dared to gossip behind their backs.

Ultimately, playing major roles was left to the Dragon Rearing Families.

After inquiring about the Earth Knights and Apprentice Knights, Liszt asked about new matters, "Consultant Goltai, how many Sky Knights are there?"

"There are fifty-seven Viscounts who chose to surrender, of which two are at the Sword Saint Level, and twenty-one are regular Sky Knights, the rest being Elite Earth Knights. As for the forty-five Viscounts who refused the title and chose to pay the ransom, they have already been handed over to the Sapphire Family for allocation."

"And what about the eleven Earls, how did they choose?"

"Your Highness, without having had your summons yet, they haven't responded, and currently only three Earls have opted to pay the ransom."

"So, there are eight Earls who might still surrender. What are their capabilities?"

"There are four regular Level Sky Knights, three Sword Saint Level Sky Knights, and one Completion Level Sky Knight."

"Hmm, a Completion Level Sky Knight, now that's interesting." Liszt was very interested in this Earl as there had been numerous battles in colonizing Flame Island.

Fighting against the resistant Moon Slayer Tribe and the ferocious Magical Beasts required powerful knights for security—it couldn't always be Liszt's responsibility to handle troubles since he was the future King and couldn't be expected to manage everything personally.

Suppressing his immediate desire to summon this Earl, he continued, "There are also two Marquises; what attitudes have they shown? Let's start with Marquis Nuta."

Marquis Dimaria Yuhua Stone, tragically captured by Liszt for a second time.

His domain was strategically located in a wealthy inland area of the Eagle Kingdom's coastline, with a major river facilitating the transportation of materials, making it a prime target for invasion. The formidable walls of Great Riverheart Fortress could not withstand a single dive from the Sapphire Dragon, collapsing half of the walls on impact.

Subsequently, a white flag was raised atop the fortress, and Marquis Nuta wisely chose to surrender.

Goltai chuckled, "Your Highness, Marquis Nuta wasn't imprisoned, and he has begun acting in every way as a follower of yours. Among the captured nobles, he is spreading your glory, helping you to recruit these Viscounts and Earls... The other Marquis initially refused to surrender, but in recent days even he has been persuaded by Marquis Nuta to loosen his stance."

Chapter 959:

Splitting the Family Apart from Marquis Nuta, another Marquis was captured—Marquis of Chongshan, Elton Golden Chrysanthemum Medal.

The Golden Chrysanthemum Medal Family belonged to the established Marquis Families. Their lands were adjacent to Marquis Nuta's fief, but compared to Marquis Nuta, who had the strength of a Domain Knight, the forty-year-old Marquis of Chongshan only possessed the power of a Sword Saint.

The surname Golden Chrysanthemum Medal originated from a magic potion flower—the Chrysanthemum Medal; the family's badge was a circular badge in the shape of a chrysanthemum.

Marquis Elton was not only captured himself; nearly the entire Knight Class of his territory was caught in the same net.

At that time, he had summoned all his followers to his Golden Chrysanthemum Fortress, intending to hold the castle until the Pioneer Mandate ended. As a result, when Sapphire breached the castle, none of the noble knights escaped. From his domain alone, he contributed four Earls, twelve Viscounts, and a large number of Knights.

“Your Highness, Elton didn’t have much choice. Most of his family’s wealth has already been plundered by the Knight Order, and he simply can’t pay the ransom for himself and his followers.”

The speaker was Marquis Dimaria Yuhua Stone.

In the study of Bull Hoof Fortress, Liszt had his first audience with Marquis Nuta. As an old acquaintance and someone who had already made it clear he considered himself a follower, the Marquis enjoyed the freedom to act as he pleased.

The two were sitting across from each other at a desk, each savoring tea, in a very friendly atmosphere.

Originally, Marquis Nuta had stayed on Black Horse Island for quite some time and had developed a fondness for green tea. Since then, he had secretly smuggled goods like sea salt, glass, and white paper with the Flame Territory. The Yu Huashi Family had long been disillusioned with the Eagle Kingdom, and it was completely normal for them to lean towards the Flame Kingdom.

“Marquis Dimaria, if I successfully persuade you to surrender, what treatment do you think I should give to the Golden Chrysanthemum Medal Family?” Liszt asked casually.

Dimaria laughed and said, “Your Highness, actually there is a very good method to quickly subdue the Golden Chrysanthemum Medal Family.”

“Oh, let’s hear it.”

“Elton has a younger brother named Elroy who is only thirty years old and just a Viscount; however, he is already an old Sword Saint, not far from Completion. It is only because Elton has suppressed him that he has been unable to advance to Earl. Additionally, Elton acts recklessly while Elroy is steady in his conduct.”

At this point, Dimaria’s implication was clear.

Both Elton and Elroy were Sword Saints, but Elroy obviously had more outstanding talents and a more stable character, making him more suitable to be the family head, inheriting the title of Marquis.

Liszt could use the pretext of incorporating the family to elevate Elroy to the Marquis's position. Elroy would surely be grateful to Liszt and control the Golden Chrysanthemum Medal Family well.

However, Liszt did not intend to do so.

He smiled faintly, "The Yu Huashi Family can be preserved, but the Golden Chrysanthemum Medal Family cannot. If Elton is willing to surrender, I can maintain his Marquis's position after the establishment of the Kingdom. But as for his followers, they will form new families on their own, and Elroy is no exception."

"Your Highness, what do you mean?" Dimaria did not understand Liszt's intentions immediately.

"The Flame Kingdom is a new nation, and the old powers need to be broken, not to guard against the strengthening of a single family, but to create more families, to assist me in ruling the vast lands of the Flame Islands."

"I understand now, Your Highness."

Dimaria caught on immediately, "Indeed, a new Kingdom needs many Nobles and Knights... Actually, coming to this land, even if Your Highness did not divide the families, those powerful Noble Knights would also take the initiative to leave. Your Highness, the Yu Huashi Family is also willing to divide."

"Hmm?"

"I will disperse those followers who are Knights, including my nephew Deborah Yuhua Stone. Since we have come to a new Kingdom, I hope the Yu Huashi Family can also be reborn on this land and fully integrate into the Flame Kingdom."

Liszt smiled and nodded, "You are a Noble who understands the situation. Be assured, as followers of mine, the Yu Huashi Family will only continue to grow and will not decline. The population in the territory is not large, but there will be endless wars in the future, capturing enough people to replenish the losses of the great families."

...

When Elton Golden Chrysanthemum Medal was summoned, the second of the marquises, Dimaria did not leave. He had already obtained Liszt's approval and became an assistant in the recruitment of knights.

"Elton, we have known each other for a long time," Dimaria said. "I have made His Highness's intentions clear to you, even without splitting your followers, you have no ransom to redeem them. Moreover, you have seen for yourself the growth of the Flame Kingdom and the decline of the Eagle Kingdom. I hope you will think carefully about your choice."

After listening to Dimaria.

Elton glanced at Liszt, whose face was expressionless, merely allowing Dimaria to persuade surrender without offering any signs of friendship.

With Liszt's status, it was unnecessary for him to show a smile to any noble.

All prisoners of war were at his disposal—either pay a ransom to leave or surrender and pledge loyalty—there was no other path to choose. If it were not for their status as nobles, they might not even have had the chance to meet Liszt.

"But if my family's followers are split up, how is the Golden Chrysanthemum Medal Family supposed to develop?"

"Serve the kingdom for three years, cultivate the land for His Highness, and after three years, you will be granted a fief. The Golden Chrysanthemum Medal Family can naturally rise again with the land received."

"Without knights, how can we rise?"

"After three years, there will definitely be a large number of knights who cannot be ennobled," Dimaria explained. "You can naturally recruit these knights to serve your family."

“What about my elves?”

“The elves are still yours, they just need to serve for three years... Otherwise, you could return to your territory in the Eagle Kingdom at the cost of a few Greater Elves, and continue to be free; of course, if your territory’s wealth allows, you could also pay the ransom for those followers who wish to return. His Highness is always lenient with nobles and respects your wishes.”

Elton may have been mediocre in talent and ludicrous in his actions, but he was born into a great noble family after all, and calculating benefits was instinctual for him.

After pondering for a moment, he nodded and said, “In that case, I am willing to follow behind His Highness. The Golden Chrysanthemum Medal Family was originally established to serve His Highness.”

...

Following the two marquises, Liszt individually summoned two other nobles.

One was Geoffrey Begonia, a Completion Level Sky Knight with the rank of earl, who was promised at least a viscountcy when the kingdom was established, promptly chose to follow; the other was Elroy Golden Chrysanthemum Medal, a thirty-year-old with promising Sword Saint talent nearly at Completion Level, who without needing Liszt to say much, immediately expressed his willingness to follow.

Later, during the evening banquet.

Liszt invited all seven earls who had not yet chosen to pay their ransoms to sit at the table, personally convincing and recruiting them. Among the hesitant, six earls finally announced their allegiance, leaving only one earl—a Common Level Sky Knight—who after much thought, decided to pay the ransom.

With that,

Discounting their noble ranks,

With this Pioneer Mandate, Liszt directly subjugated one Domain Knight, one Completion Level Sky Knight, six Sword Saint Level Sky Knights, and twenty-five Common Level Sky Knights. In addition, more than eight hundred Elite Earth Knights and over three

thousand eight hundred Common Earth Knights, along with more than seven thousand six hundred Apprentice Knights.

Liszt did not confiscate the knights' elves, only requiring three years of service.

The number of elves he truly obtained came from the four earls who paid the ransom, totaling seven Little Minor Elves. As per requirement, at least three of them had to be of the Magic Potion or grain type.

However, compared to the high-level human and material resources of knights and elves, his greatest gain was the lower-class serfs. Over five hundred thousand serfs, civilians, and craftsmen were frantically transported to Flame Island.

The newly born Flame Kingdom needed population replenishment the most.

Cultivating the land, everything would eventually be obtained in time.

As night fell, and in his study reviewing the gains of this war spoils, Liszt said to himself with some regret, "The only thing that is a bit discordant is that these knights and serfs all come from the Eagle Kingdom. It would be better if I could plunder the Steel Ridge Kingdom a few times to balance it out..."

Chapter 960: Celebration Banquet and New Noble After completing the knight incorporation in Bull Hoof City, Liszt didn't linger and quickly left Bull Hoof Fortress. First, he went to Black Horse Island and left Grey Iron Dragon Ornn there to continue suppressing the Flame Territory, and he allowed Pea Great Elf Ash to touch its scales to evolve.

Then he returned to Flame Island.

At this time, Reed City was extremely crowded and foul-smelling, with over half a million serfs and knights transferring through here. Even though the Reed Cinder Road was already repaired, it was still difficult to hastily transport all the serfs away.

However, they just had to get through this period of chaos.

Aside from Reed City, Flame City, Jade City, Dragon Valley City, and Estuary City, the five major cities on Flame Island, there were also hundreds of settlements developed along the Whirlpool Great River Basin and the vicinity of several major roads. Nearly one and a half million Moon Slayer serfs, aside from cutting down forests, were either turning over the soil or building log houses.

A large number of settlements with log houses were standing empty, and they continued to be constructed.

Cement and brick structures were still considered high-end buildings temporarily unaffordable for serfs to live in; log houses were the best choice and easy to build. Because Liszt's ambitions were great, no matter if there were people or not, he'd build the houses first, resulting in a bunch of Ghost Cities.

As there weren't enough seeds, many Moon Slayers couldn't farm anyway; they might as well focus solely on building houses, striving to cultivate construction workers and accumulate strength for the infrastructure projects of the Flame Kingdom in the future.

However, amidst the chaos in Reed City,

A lively open-air celebration banquet was about to be held, unrelated to the knights taken captive, but for the followers of Liszt who had bravely won honors in the massive conferring of nobility during the war.

In this one issuance of the Pioneer Mandate alone, he knighted over three hundred Honored Knights, these newly advanced nobles left teary-eyed without even having a bite of the banquet's food. To this day, on Flame Island, every eight Earth Knights included one Honored Knight, a promotion ratio that could be described as cheap.

In other noble's territories, it was extremely difficult for an Earth Knight to be promoted to Honored Knight. Here, simply by hunting magical beasts, one could be promoted.

Moreover, more than fifty baron titles were conferred, and knights from Original Fresh Flower Town and Black Horse Island had mostly already been granted the title of baron.

"Baron Alvin of Eagle Sword, you've forged magic equipment day and night for your territory. Although you've not stepped onto the battlefield, your contributions are substantial; today, I decide to promote you to viscount," Liszt solemnly announced, reading from a list he had prepared before the banquet.

The Iron Knight who had once fallen into disgrace to the point that his family's heirloom weapon—the Ice Soul Dragon-Slaying Sword—was stolen, and he himself was imprisoned, couldn't help but shed tears, "Your Highness's grace shines upon me; Alvin pledges his loyalty to Your Highness for generations!"

Liszt held the Knight's Longsword and tapped Alvin's shoulders once on each side. Afterward, a servant brought forward noble garments, badges, cultural sticks, and other symbolic items.

After the ceremony, Alvin stepped down.

Liszt continued, reading from the list: "Marcus Wheel, step forward."

Marcus immediately trembled and walked in front of Liszt, kneeling on one knee, "Your Highness!"

"Baron Marcus Wheel, since the era of Fresh Flower Town, you have overseen the training of the territory's Knight Order. Working tirelessly, critically, and without laxity, and with a heavy contribution. In the Pioneer Mandate, you charged ahead and beheaded multiple enemy knights, establishing illustrious military achievements; today, I decide to promote you to viscount."

"Your Highness's grace shines upon me; Marcus pledges to charge into battle and serve the Flame Family for generations!" said Marcus as he took a deep breath, swearing with the fervor of a zealot.

This early follower of Liszt, who was an Elite Earth Knight, was living his dream, and every step forward now was a massive, dream-like development for him.

Although he understood that the viscount title basically marked the peak of his rank—he couldn't be granted the title of earl without becoming a Sky Knight, as per the rules of the knight system—

He had a son, whom he'd train with all his might. As long as he steadfastly followed His Highness, the earl title wasn't an unpassable chasm!

Handing over the garments, badges, and cultural stick to Marcus, Liszt smiled slightly, “Teacher Marcus, it’s time for your family to choose a new surname.”

“Yes, Your Highness!”

Marcus bowed and took his leave.

At that moment, Liszt continued to announce, “Baron Goltai·Wang Gan...”

Following this, Goltai, Charles, and several officials, along with several elder Elite Earth Knights, were successively ennobled as viscounts, each expressing copious gratitude in their declarations after the ennoblement.

Yet all this was not the end.

At the climax of the ennoblement ceremony, Liszt was still proclaiming, “Paris, step forward.”

“Your Highness!” The Great Light Magic Swordsman, Paris, knelt on one knee.

“Baroness Paris, who has been my guard since the days of Fresh Flower Town, served as the leader of the patrol team during the Black Horse Island era, and participated in the development of the Flame Island territory. In this war of the Pioneer Mandate, you charged fearlessly into battle, reaped rich rewards, and personally captured a Sky Knight. Your military achievements are illustrious, and today I have decided to confer upon you the title of earl.”

She was an elder from the Fresh Flower Town era, the first to be conferred the title of earl, her prowess as a Great Light Magic Swordsman comparable to that of a Sword Saint, fully capable of bearing the title of earl.

Paris solemnly responded, “Your Highness’s grace shines upon me, Paris is willing to charge into battle for Your Highness and serve the Flame Family for generations to come!”

The Knight's Longsword touched Paris's shoulders, Liszt nodded and said, "You are the first female earl of the territory, and should serve as a model for all female knights of the land. I hope you can take on even greater responsibilities in the future."

"Yes, Your Highness!"

After Paris took her leave, the ennoblement ceremony still had not ended.

At this time, all the nobles' gazes turned toward another feminine figure slowly walking forward—Emily. This incredibly young-looking girl possessed strength that made everyone envious, astonished, and in awe, gaining the ultimate dream opportunity for the knights.

Dragon Riding!

Many nobles in the territory already knew that Emily, the most terrifyingly talented individual close to His Highness, had already started interacting with a Light Green Gemstone Dragon, preparing to become a dragon rider.

The Flame Kingdom could at any moment produce its second Dragon Knight, and once successful, she would be the sole female Dragon Knight in the entire history of the Legendary Continent.

"Your Highness!" Emily knelt on one knee.

"I am gratified, Emily. I have seen every bit of your growth, from the days when a frail little girl with a childish voice pledged allegiance to me—who could have imagined that one day you would reach such heights, and all of this within just three or four years." Liszt didn't speak the official words as before.

He expressed his admiration for Emily unreservedly, the young girl who had never failed his expectations: "Baroness Emily, during your management of the Mammoth Knight Brigade, your efforts were tremendously valuable, and in the war of the Pioneer Mandate, your military achievements continued to grow. Today, I have decided to confer upon you the title of earl."

“Your Highness’s grace shines upon me, Emily is willing to be Your Highness’s spear and sword!”

After the procedure was completed, Liszt spoke once more, “You are still young, earl is not your endpoint, continue to strive.”

“As you wish, Your Highness!”

Looking at his followers, both ennobled and not, Liszt cheerfully said, “Those who haven’t been ennobled, continue to strive; those who have, strive even more. Within three years, the Flame Kingdom must be established. When the kingdom is founded, lands will be distributed according to your titles, and I hope by then, numerous great nobles will emerge from among you!”

“Your Highness’s grace shines upon us!”

Thus, the ennoblement ceremony concluded, and the banquet immediately commenced.