

## The Mighty 961

Chapter 961: Blow it Right The following morning, after completing his morning practice, Liszt convened another high-level noble meeting.

Attendees not only included the veteran knights from the Flame Territory, but also noble knights recently captured from the Eagle Kingdom, as well as two magicians.

Once the knights and magicians were all seated at the conference table,

Butler Carter, accompanied by several servants, brought in long-spouted iron teapots and poured a cup of fragrant milk for each knight and magician present.

Liszt elegantly picked up his cup and took a sip, saying, “This milk tea is quite unique. Dimaria, since you have just arrived, you may not be aware that this is milk from the Dragon Breed Cows—Banpo Cattle. Consuming it regularly has great benefits for training... the ranch is currently expanding its scale so that all knights of the kingdom, especially the young knights, will have access to Banpo Cattle milk.”

Dimaria picked up the cup, savored a deep sip, and couldn’t help but praise, “Indeed, it is worthy of being milk from breed cows. The effects are yet to be felt, but the flavor is rich and aromatic, better than all other varieties of milk I have tried!”

“Truly delicious.”

“The texture is silky smooth, and it’s so mellow going down the throat. If we could drink Banpo Cattle milk every day, it would be more than enough.”

“A touch of the glory of Your Highness; never thought I’d get to drink milk from the Dragon Breed Cows.” The newly arrived nobles all praised, whether they liked it or not, it was right to do so.

And in fact, Banpo Cattle milk was indeed worth the praise.

Among dragon-related creatures, Dragon Breed Beasts are the lowest level but also the rarest. According to the research conducted by Liszt and Ach, the conditions for a creature

to become infected with dragon lineage are quite strict; it must be a young dragon that can infect beasts without the bloodline infection power bursting the beast.

There is virtually no possibility of adult dragons infecting Dragon Breed Beasts, for the bloodline infection power is very fierce and no creature other than a magical beast could withstand it.

Therefore, Dragon Breed Beasts have always been rare.

The Sapphire Family has been nurturing Sapphire Dragons for a couple of hundred years, and they only have a group of Blue Blood Treasure Horses, which have yet to be confirmed as being infected by Sapphire Dragons. The royal families of the three major kingdoms all have Dragon Beasts in captivity, which are those infected by adult dragons. Young dragons and Dragon Breed Beasts have rarely been heard of.

Liszt had control over three types of Dragon Breed Beasts—the Black Blood Treasured Horse, Banpo Cattle, and Estuary Pig.

He also has two young dragons, Fire Dragon Leo and Formless Dragon Bard. In the future, he intended to continue to explore their bloodline infection power and infect more Dragon Breed Beasts.

After finishing the milk tea,

The meeting moved on to the central topic.

Liszt disliked drawn-out wrangling and always went straight to the point at meetings, “The influx of a large number of knights and civilians injects fresh blood into the development of Flame Island; the population is always the driving force behind a nation’s development. However, we must also recognize the current chaos in our territory.”

He paused before continuing, “Managing work is full of difficulties, but I trust you can handle it well. Within a month, I need to see that all newcomers and veterans are living and working happily. Also, I expect the new knights to adapt to their new status within this month and coordinate their work duties.”

“As you wish, Your Highness!” his followers responded in unison.

Liszt nodded, then said, "I do not often stay at Flame Castle. My father, Marquis of Bull Tail, will reside in Flame Castle. He can fully coordinate the construction of the territory when I am away."

Li Weiliam continued the topic, "My colleagues, let us strive for the establishment of the Flame Kingdom." As the father of a Dragon Knight and future king's father, he fully coordinated the territory's construction, and the Knight Class would have no objections.

All nodded in acknowledgement.

Liszt announced the second personnel decision, "The kingdom's development area is vast, and transport is inconvenient, for better assistance in Marquis Bull Tail's management work, I will directly establish a Development Committee, to serve as the Flame Kingdom's temporary Inner Cabinet before its founding."

The royal families of various countries would establish an Inner Cabinet, with Nobles entering the palace to serve as ministers, overseeing the affairs of the kingdom.

Although the Flame Kingdom had not yet been established, this was only a matter of time, and so it was necessary to set up a temporary cabinet. With no fiefs available to enjoy at the moment, the Nobles and Knights participating in the meeting all looked at Liszt with eyes full of anticipation, hoping to be selected for the Development Committee.

His gaze swept over many Nobles and Knights eager to try.

He directly declared, "Marquis Bull Tail will serve as the Committee Chair, Dimaria Yuhua Stone as the Vice Chair, and Goltai, Marcus, Elton Golden Chrysanthemum Medal, Geoffrey Begonia, Durt Red Apricot, Emily, Paris as members; Chris and Kenley will act as Special Members to coordinate with the Magic Guild in participating in the development of the territory."

When the results were announced, some were surprised, others were disappointed, but no one raised an objection.

It was expected that Marquis Bull Tail would serve as the head of the committee.

Dimaria had just surrendered and was immediately appointed as the vice-chair, which was entirely Liszt's way of returning the favor for his performance in the persuasion work. Besides, Dimaria was a Domain Knight and a long-time Marquis, with his original fief being very prosperous, making his management work trustworthy.

Goltai and Marcus had lower titles and strength, but they were Liszt's confidants, having been his tutors during the times in Fresh Flower Town, which meant their relationship was no ordinary one.

Geoffrey had also just surrendered; he was a Domain Knight of the Completion Level, in his prime with an ambitious spirit, and Liszt looked forward to his performance.

Durt was an Earl who had surrendered during the era of Black Horse Island, and receiving favor was only to be expected.

As for Emily, it goes without saying that she was the sole candidate for the reserve Dragon Knight plan; the same goes for Paris, around whom there were many rumors claiming she was the Lord Landlord's secret lover.

Only Elton was an exception, having been strongly supported by Liszt, Li Weiliam, and Dimaria during their discussion the previous night.

Liszt did not think highly of such an inept person who liked to oppress his own brothers, for no other reason than that he was a second son himself, always feeling that Noble families were too harsh on second sons. Chinese tradition held the belief in the blessing of many sons, but here Nobles were content with just one.

Having more sons meant there weren't enough resources to raise them all, which often led to second sons being driven out to struggle for themselves.

Of course, the bigger the Nobles, the less severe this concept of mistreating second sons was, since they had substantial wealth and didn't mind raising several heirs.

Elton was born into a large Noble family but was harsh on his more talented younger brother, which reflected poorly on his character.

However, both Li Weiliam and Dimaria believed it was crucial to stabilize the Knight Class amid the current chaos in the territory. Naturally, having a high-ranking Noble used prominently would comfort the Knight Class quickly. Liszt wasn't too concerned about these issues and went along with the idea, so Elton thus entered the Development Committee.

As for Chris and Kenley, the two Grand Magicians serving as Special Members was solely for coordinating with the Magic Guild.

They were not personally involved in the development of the territory, focusing instead on letting the Magic Guild engage in research, functioning similarly to an academy of sciences.

"My lords, the important task of developing Flame Island is now in your hands."

"As you wish, Your Highness!"

...

After the meeting ended and the Development Committee was announced to the public, the temporary Inner Cabinet's significance quickly became apparent, as all official duties no longer crowded upon Liszt's desk.

Therefore, he made time to take Ach and quickly headed towards the Doomsday Volcano Crater—having already gotten Leo's agreement to guide a volcanic eruption at the Doomsday Volcano Crater through a trade involving twenty bottles of Red Dragon Water.

Chapter 962: Volcanic Eruption Ach couldn't penetrate the bottom of the volcano, so she could only wait for the birth of the phoenix before conducting her research, or study the coarse blood-red stones named "Phoenix Bloodstones."

The stones possessed a rich Fire Attribute Mana, and through Ach's preliminary studies, she found that their function was to condense Fire Attribute Mana. They could, by some special property, gather the free-floating Fire Attribute Mana in the surrounding air to form an abundant Fire Attribute environment.

A large accumulation of Phoenix Bloodstones was roughly equivalent to constructing a Magic Array, providing a hatching environment for the Phoenix Egg.

“After the phoenix is born, these Phoenix Bloodstones can be mined and used at the Knight Academy to create a Fire Attribute training ground for knights with Fire Attribute Dou Qi,” Liszt thought. “Moreover, placing Phoenix Bloodstones together with the Phoenix Perch Parasol can attract more Red Sparrow Birds and Flame Dragon Birds.”

Once these fire birds were tamed as mounts, they would definitely be a formidable force in battle.

The Elite Guards Knights from the Burning Legion could then rely on the Red Sparrow Birds and the Flame Dragon Birds as mounts, with the Sky Knights riding Flame Dragon Birds and the Elite Earth Knights riding Red Sparrow Birds.

“Ach, I’ll go down with Leo to check if there’s any problem with the eggs. If there’s no problem, we’ll induce the volcano to erupt today to help the phoenix be born!”

“Alright.”

Before long, Liszt, wrapped in Leo’s flames, effortlessly made his way to the dry passageway and ran along the corridor into the cave.

The Phoenix Egg showed no changes, and the dried branches beneath it were still burning.

Touching the egg with his finger, he again felt that yearning for freedom, a primal emotion, not a conscious soul. Nevertheless, he couldn’t help but communicate with the Phoenix Egg through this unreliable emotional exchange, continuing until he could barely breathe.

Back to the surface.

“We can start now!”

Liszt mounted Leo, took a deep breath, and began to circle around the Doomsday Volcano Crater. Leo’s Dragon Magic Power quickly resonated with the magic power swirling around the volcano, a talent innate to their bloodline. When the resonance reached the magnitude similar to a resonance,

The once-still Doomsday Volcano Crater, which only emitted hot air, began to tremble lightly from deep beneath, and the tremors grew with Leo's continual circling.

No longer just hot air was rising from the volcano crater, but also thick, rolling black smoke.

The mountain began to collapse, and rocks cracked open, rolling down the slopes. The ground within dozens of kilometers vibrated, and the clouds in the sky were stirred, rapidly gathering into ring-shaped dark clouds, connected with the volcanic smoke to form a black canopy.

Suddenly,

A stream of dark red magma spurted out from the volcano crater, quickly coming to a halt.

But in less than a minute, another stream of dark red magma burst forth, and the magma began to erupt intermittently. From a distance, the Doomsday Volcano Crater looked like it was breathing hurriedly, expanding and contracting, building up strength for the true moment of eruption.

Time slowly passed, and before you knew it, Liszt and Leo had been resonating with the volcano for a full twenty minutes.

At this moment, the Doomsday Volcano, having accumulated power, finally arrived at that earth-shattering moment. A column of fiery red magma suddenly burst through the rolling smoke between heaven and earth, like a spear piercing the sun, shooting up into the sky three hundred meters high.

The spattered magma, like exploded fireworks, flung red lava liquid in all directions, quickly inundating the entire Doomsday Volcano.

In that moment, it seemed as if the magma column was the entire world.

Destructive and catastrophic!

...

Ach, riding Unicorn Charlie, had already hidden far, far away, but could still feel the intense heat from the volcanic eruption, “Charlie, this masterpiece was created by my brother and Leo, isn’t it beautiful?”

Huff puff.

Charlie snorted in an incomprehensible manner.

Although it was a magical unicorn, many of its habits were not much different from those of a horse.

“The phoenix is about to emerge. In legend, the phoenix is a creature as magical as you, Charlie,” Ach said as he stroked Charlie’s mane.

Charlie shook his head, seemingly expressing his disdain with an air of arrogance.

...

Around the column of magma.

Leo gasped for air as he dodged the falling magma; he was not afraid of being scorched by it, but he had to be careful of Liszt on his back. It would be a huge joke if he triggered a volcanic eruption and burned his own knight to death.

Fortunately,

when the magma column had gradually weakened and only thick smoke continued to billow out, both he and Liszt were still unharmed, though the consumption of superior magic was a bit excessive. However, with Red Dragon Water for replenishment, Leo didn’t consider it a loss. Moreover, after triggering the volcanic eruption, he felt many volcanic super magics coming to life.

He breathed deeply, drawing in these volcanic super magics.

“Let’s go, Leo. Wrap us in flames; we’re going to check out the phoenix egg!” Liszt took a deep breath from the air outside and, controlling Leo, plunged into the fiery mouth amid the dense smoke.



The magma was still slowly overflowing. Diving deeper into the magma, one could feel that many of the channels had fractures, but thankfully, the main channels were intact, and the dried-up branches had not collapsed due to the volcanic tremors. They ran swiftly and dashed into the cave.

The round cave walls were riddled with cracks, a rich concentration of volcanic super magic gathered here.

Golden light flickered intensely; that was the phoenix egg struggling to hatch, but to Liszt's surprise, the egg just couldn't break open. The phoenix inside seemed to be unable to emerge, and upon closer inspection, one could feel the phoenix's primal emotions of unwillingness and frustration.

An intense barrage to his senses.

"What's going on here?"

"According to the information obtained from the phoenix egg, it needs a volcanic eruption to hatch. Why can't it do it?" Liszt frowned.

He concentrated and summoned the Smoke Mission.

"Mission: Once every five hundred years, await the right moment for rebirth; this is the undying bird, the phoenix, of noble character beyond description, and mysterious power beyond expression. Since fate has led you to witness the phoenix in its moment of rebirth, naturally, you must lend it a helping hand. Please incubate the phoenix egg. Reward: A phoenix."

No change, and not too much information to lean on.

"The power of fate calls upon me to assist, and I've already spent twenty vials of Red Dragon Water, exchanging them for Leo's intervention. Why is it still not successful?"

Watching the phoenix egg's struggles grow weaker, Liszt started to grow anxious: "Do I need to help break the eggshell?"

It was clearly just a thought.

He reached out to touch the flickering phoenix egg, trying to get new information from the phoenix egg, but in the exchange of emotions, he could only feel the phoenix's desperation, without obtaining any useful information—the phoenix egg, not yet hatched, seemed to have an unformed soul, hence unable to convey clear information.

“Whoa!” Leo, through Liszt's senses, felt the phoenix's plight and directly sent the idea that it wanted to eat the egg for nourishment before it died.

“Eat?”

An idea suddenly struck Liszt, who quickly took out three Phoenix Feathers from his Space Ring—these were not actual phoenix feathers, but the tail feathers of a Flame Dragon Bird, from which Leo had absorbed most of the magic, leaving only three feathers for emergencies.

He swiftly placed the Phoenix Feathers on the phoenix egg.

The next moment, as if sensing something, the egg's surface flared with light, and the three Phoenix Feathers turned to ash, all their magic absorbed by the egg.

But this amount of magic was clearly insufficient for the phoenix's hatching needs.

Liszt had no choice but to turn his gaze to Leo again: “Leo, it's time for you to perform again.”

Chapter 963: “Oh!”

Unexpectedly, Leo firmly refused!

“Let's talk logic. If it weren't for you absorbing all the Volcanic Super Magic at the Doomsday Volcano Crater, the Phoenix wouldn't have possibly failed to receive enough magic power to hatch... Of course, I don't blame you. Unclaimed resources go to whoever seizes them first, and besides, Flame Island is my turf.”

He was rapidly engaging in a mental exchange and negotiation with Leo.

Talking logic was futile, and in the end, he had to use Red Dragon Water for the trade. As his stocks continued to dwindle, Liszt was left with just over fifty vials of Red Dragon Water.

Leo quickly laid out his final price—fifty vials.

He intended to squeeze Liszt of all his stock in one go.

“Fine!” During this critical moment, Liszt couldn’t afford to haggle. After all, both hands were his own dragons; giving the Red Dragon Water to Leo wasn’t a loss.

Quickly,

he placed his hand on the Phoenix Egg, and Leo’s Dragon Super Magic passed through his hand and flowed into the egg along the Dou Qi meridians. It was like parched earth receiving sweet rain; the Phoenix Egg felt the essence of Dragon Super Magic and began to absorb it frantically. A continuous influx of Dragon Super Magic entered the Phoenix Egg, making the golden light on the egg shine brightly again.

The Phoenix could hatch at any moment.

However, trouble struck suddenly.

Right at that instant, Leo, who was attached to Liszt’s chest, used lightning speed to rally his magic power. He not only withdrew all the leaked Dragon Super Magic but also quickly absorbed all the magic power within the egg into Liszt’s body.

Then, the essence of the Phoenix Egg began to flow towards its attached location—Leo was reneging on the deal, intending to directly devour the Phoenix Egg.

“Stop, Leo!”

Liszt had no time to express his anger at Leo's actions. He had overestimated the good nature of the wicked dragon, thinking that appealing to its emotions, reasoning with it, and luring it with benefits would lead to compromise.

He never expected that at such a moment, Leo, driven by desire, would go back on his word.

The Phoenix Egg lost its luster at a visible rate, turning into a dull red stone the size of a soccer ball in the blink of an eye, and all its essence, along with the magic power extracted by Leo, entered Liszt's body. Even that faint primal consciousness also entered Liszt's body, quickly linking with his own thoughts.

He could feel that pure, untainted soul, which had yet to form a complete "Phoenix personality," now faced with the brink of collapse.

Leo's thoughts were brimming with greed, wanting to consume all that was the Phoenix.

Yet, in that moment, Liszt acted decisively, quickly mobilizing his Dragon Dou Qi, forcibly cutting off Leo's magic power and quelling its avarice for the Phoenix essence.

He then attempted to reverse the flow of Dou Qi, trying to send the Phoenix essence back into the egg—being unable to incubate it for now didn't matter; he could always try again when the opportunity arose.

Alas.

With the extraction of the Phoenix essence, the nature of the Phoenix Egg had changed and could no longer receive any magic power. The Phoenix essence, in just the snap of a finger, merged into Liszt's own body, thoroughly integrating into every limb, every bone, permeating to the depths of his cells.

Moreover, the Phoenix's primal soul was pulled by the power in his mind into his own soul.

His spiritual power, already empowered by the Power of Destiny, swelled even further at this moment, filling his mind with countless pieces of information.

The most tangible manifestation was in his eyes, where flames flickered and danced.

“Inheritance... Phoenix... Have I actually merged with the Phoenix, or has my body become the vessel for the rebirth of the Phoenix?”

The stream of information was too overwhelming, all imprinted with the natural instincts from the Phoenix Bloodline.

This made Liszt instantly understand what had just happened—the Phoenix, possessing the divine ability of rebirth from flames, had been outmaneuvered by Leo and, at the brink of life’s extinction, driven by instinct, it merged its divine power with Liszt’s body, hoping to be reborn through him.

What would happen after the rebirth was unknown.

Would Liszt acquire everything the Phoenix had, or would the Phoenix replace Liszt, or perhaps coexist within the same body?

However, none of this happened. The Power of Destiny intervened, the power of the Smoke Dragon that clung to Liszt’s body directly pulled the original Phoenix soul to nurture Liszt’s own soul. Thus, the Phoenix’s rebirth power went dormant and sank deep into Liszt’s body.

“What a pity, the world has lost the Phoenix...”

He sighed.

But the next moment, his eyes flared with a dazzling light, “But now, I am the Phoenix!” Immediately after, flames rose from his body.

The next second.

Liszt’s hands as if rapidly melting into flames, out of the flames emerged a pair of wings adorned with golden-yellow feathers. He beat his wings fiercely and leaped with his legs,

elevating swiftly into the air, circling the spherical cavern in flight, the flames on his body becoming more intense, completely merging him with the fire.

The flames did not extinguish, but what they enveloped was no longer a human, but a golden-red Phoenix bathed in flames.

A magnificent, slender body, golden and red feathers gleaming like gemstones, overall similar to a Flame Dragon Bird, yet flames accompanied every part of the body at all times.

At its tail were not seven, but nine tail feathers made of flames.

Gold and red cast reflections off each other, flames and feathers merged into one, at this moment, the Phoenix that Liszt had transformed into was the flame, and the flame was the Phoenix.

“A marvelous sensation, a magical experience. Leo’s miscalculated scheme, although failing to hatch a Phoenix, gave me a power similar to Druid Shapeshifting!”

The essence of the Phoenix had merged into every limb and cell, much like the genetic codex of the Child of the Sun; it was likely a shift magic built at the genetic level. And his soul had conveniently devoured the Phoenix’s original soul, effortlessly wielding this power born of the Phoenix.

“Oh-ho!”

Leo, still attached to Liszt, now in the form of the Phoenix, lusted after the Phoenix’s power but could no longer seize it.

A thought crossed his mind.

Liszt retracted the power of the Phoenix, reverting to his human form. A Dou Qi Armament redressed him in clothes, to avoid any indecent exposure—even in a place devoid of people, one mustn’t carelessly reveal oneself.

He swiftly placed the now dim and lightless Phoenix Egg and the extinguished Tinderpile into his Space Ring.

Looking at the Phoenix Bloodstone on the cavern walls, he fell into contemplation.

Before long, Serpent Script formed from smoke fluttered before his eyes: “Mission failed, you have devoured the Phoenix.”

This was his second time failing a Smoke Mission, the first being the failed evolution of the Tulip Spirit Bug, and now the failed hatching of the Phoenix.

Regrettable indeed, but he had also gained a blessing in disguise, the ability to transform into a Phoenix.

“After returning, I must hasten the restrictions on Leo, completing the Mind Branding as soon as possible to avoid such situations in the future.” He couldn’t hold a grudge against Leo; an Evil Dragon was its nature, everything stemmed from its instincts—he could only blame himself for insufficient preparation, for not having complete control over Leo.

At that moment.

A new Smoke Mission was issued.

“Mission: The demise of extraordinary phenomena often heralds the transition of eras, and even destiny is subject to ceaseless change. You must learn to make the right choices amongst various changes, to grasp the laws governing the workings of the world, and ensure the legacy of the Phoenix endures. Reward: Hundred Birds Toward The Phoenix.”

Chapter 964: We Are Different Do we need to preserve the fire seed for the Phoenix?

Li Si Te gazed at the content of the Smoke Mission, and suddenly, a light shone before his eyes. This indicated that the Phoenix might not truly be extinct and there was still hope for its rebirth.

“But what should I do?”

He inexplicably thought of the Phoenix Egg he had stored in the Space Ring which, although it had lost its essence and become a lifeless stone, had not been thoroughly verified whether it still contained any Phoenix aura. Perhaps such a miraculous creature had other methods to preserve its fire seed.

“I’ll go back and analyze the situation with Ach, letting her research how exactly to preserve the Phoenix fire seed. I can’t figure it out just by banging my head against the wall here.”

He glanced at the Phoenix Bloodstones on the cave walls, wanting to dig them all out. However, the cave was neither too large nor too small, and the Phoenix Bloodstone could yield at least a hundred tons; it wasn’t something he could exhaustively mine in a short time.

Moreover, since no serfs could come down, only he could excavate the Phoenix Bloodstones, which was very troublesome: “I’ll leave them for now. If the Phoenix Egg really still preserves the fire seed, perhaps this place will still be the best spot for nurturing the Phoenix. As long as the Doomsday Volcano does not extinguish, one day a true Phoenix will be reborn from fire here.”

He shook his head.

He spoke mentally with Fire Dragon Leo: “Leo, don’t come to practice at the Doomsday Volcano Crater anymore. This place will be sealed by me to nurture the Phoenix.”

“Oho!” Leo was reluctant but had already understood the suppressed indignation in Liszt’s heart and dared not act rashly anymore.

Liszt had gained the ability to transform into a Phoenix from misfortune, but his heart still desired to obtain a separate, real Phoenix. After all, having acquired the ability to transform into a Phoenix, his body had undergone unknown changes, changes that he could not predict to be good or bad.

However, just as described by the Smoke Mission, even fate was constantly changing unpredictably.

A blessing in disguise.



Since a choice had been made, a poor choice should be quickly remedied to get back on the right track; a good choice should be progressed, accumulating greater benefits.

“Let’s go!”

Liszt did not call for Leo to transform and envelop him in flames.

Instead, he leaped forward and instantly transformed into a noble, beautiful, and imposing Phoenix with a wingspan and body length of three meters each. Although it was small in size, it had the majesty of a monarch among flames, its authority profound and unfathomable.

His wings flapped.

Like a fiery red arrow, he sped through the corridor. This was not flight relying on air currents, but the Phoenix’s innate fire control ability, which allowed him to fly as light as a flame.

In the blink of an eye, he reached the area with magma and without the slightest hesitation, dived straight into it.

Like a fireball, he merged swiftly into the magma. At this moment, Liszt possessed the same ability as Fire Dragon Leo. Because the Phoenix he transformed into was also composed of Fire Attribute Superior Magic, only the nature of the Fire Attribute was slightly different, adding a hint of endless vitality.

Leo’s Fire Attribute Superior Magic had the quality of “eternal” — the ultimate manifestation of Fire Attribute Mana.

The Phoenix’s Fire Attribute Superior Magic, on the other hand, possessed the quality of “reigniting after death” — the ultimate manifestation of Fire Attribute Mana.

Both types of Fire Attribute Superior Magic represented the ultimate demonstration of Fire Attribute Mana, just in different ways. Just like every type of dragon has different Superior

Magic, it seemed that once a creature reached the level of Superior Magic, it inherently gained a unique, ultimate characteristic.

Flying continuously in the magma, a multitude of information still ceaselessly impacted Liszt's soul—these were all imprinted within the Phoenix Bloodline.

Splash!

He soon shot out from the magma, soaring into the somewhat dim sky— at this moment, the sky was covered with thick volcanic clouds, conveniently obscuring the direction from which the sun shone.

He swiftly surged towards the sky, rocketing straight up for ninety thousand miles until he broke through the dark ash-gray volcanic clouds and reached the higher heavens above, where he could overview the entire landscape of mountains and lands, then he steady hovered in the air.

Golden and red feathers intertwined with flame, making his Phoenix incarnation look like a new red sun.

Riding a dragon and flying by oneself were two entirely different experiences, at that moment, he wanted to shout loudly in excitement. However, what emitted from the beak of the phoenix was a sharp, clear, majestic, and lively mixed sound full of rhythmic sense, it went “Screech!”

Similar to the call of the Flame Dragon Bird, the nobility revealed was something the Flame Dragon Bird could not possess.

The vision of the Phoenix.

Almost like that of a normal human, yet he could see many red lights scattered across the land, he could instinctively distinguish the nature of those flames— the magic power of volcanoes, magical beasts, plants, natural flames, and the Fire Attribute Mana drifting in the air.

However, beyond the magic of fire, the Phoenix could not see clearly.

He hovered in the high skies for a moment, familiarizing himself with the flying capabilities of the Phoenix before quickly locating the Phoenix Perch Parasol Forest and heading straight there.

“Speed is very fast, I feel that it might be supersonic, not slower than Ach’s Unicorn Charlie, possibly even faster... but my Phoenix incarnation is still in its ‘juvenile’ phase, it hasn’t been fully developed.”

Within a few breaths.

He arrived at the Phoenix Perch Parasol Forest, where the Flame Dragon Birds and Red Sparrow Birds seemingly sensed the aura of the Phoenix. Originally happy flocks all hid trembling within the forest.

The Phoenix did not have Dragon Might.

Yet, its very presence was something all Fire Attribute magical beasts inherently feared, even more so than how average magical beasts feared Dragon Might.

“Screech!”

Liszt saw Ach riding her Unicorn Charlie, curiously gazing at the Phoenix. He wanted to greet them but found that he still spoke in bird language.

Of course.

Realizing this, he transformed back into his human form, put his clothes on, and summoned Fire Dragon. Riding Leo, he approached by her side with Ach’s surprised gaze on him, “What, don’t recognize your brother anymore?”

Ach’s mouth dropped in surprise, “Brother, how did you turn into a Phoenix?”

“That’s a long story.”

At this moment, having lost the oppressive aura of the Phoenix, the Flame Dragon Birds and Red Sparrow Birds in the Phoenix Perch Parasol Forest hadn't recovered yet and were again shocked by the Dragon Might of the Fire Dragon, scattering clumsily and trying to escape. Only the Greater Elf Annie, riding Little Yellow, came over, curiously looking at Liszt.

It seemed not to recognize Liszt, until Leo disdainfully glanced at it and Little Yellow, and then it confirmed it hadn't mistaken the person, "Liszt, you've turned into a Flame Dragon Bird!"

"Annie, I became a Phoenix, not a Flame Dragon Bird."

"Screech screech, they look so alike though."

"Not the slightest bit, how can the sparrow-like Flame Dragon Bird be compared to my noble and majestic Phoenix incarnation!"

"It really looks similar though, screech screech, but more beautiful."

"Come here." He held Annie in his arms, then continued conversing with Ach, "Because of Leo's interruption, the Phoenix couldn't hatch, instead merging with me, giving me abilities similar to Druid Shapeshifting... Ach, you need to help me research this Phoenix incarnation thoroughly these next few days."

Ach nodded, "Of course! Ach will definitely help brother dig out all the pros and cons of the Phoenix incarnation!"

Chapter 965: The Immortal Body Ach's research assignment was heavy.

Li Si Te (Liszt) felt sympathetic, yet there was no way to pull her away from her research. The Phoenix Egg, Tinderpile, and Phoenix Bloodstone had already been entrusted to Ach, who was researching how to preserve the Phoenix's fire seed.

Of course, the main focus was still on researching the Phoenix Incarnation in conjunction with the Phoenix Egg to retain the fire seed of the Phoenix.

“Brother, the abilities of the Phoenix Incarnation are just these for now. There might be some hidden abilities, like rebirth from flames or something, but they are difficult to study. For the sake of brother’s safety, it’s best not to try them lightly.” Ach handed the research materials to Liszt, “As for magic, Ach will try her best to help brother improve it.”

Based on Ach’s research and the imprinted information from the Phoenix Bloodline that Liszt organized, they basically hammered out the abilities of the Phoenix Incarnation.

There were approximately six incredible, unbelievable abilities.

The first, Flame Ascension—The Phoenix has the ability to fly with fire attributes, and it can slip through any crevice. Its speed could surpass the speed of sound, and even if there was a wall ahead, as long as there was a slightly larger gap in the wall, it could directly charge through it.

The second, Physical Immunity—The Phoenix Incarnation is a form condensed from Superior Magic, and any physical attack would be unable to harm the Phoenix Incarnation, equating to an immortal body.

The third, Magic Overwhelming—Many Fire System magics are imprinted in the Phoenix Incarnation’s bloodline instincts. However, Liszt, for now, could only perform magic similar to Flame Slash. After all, his Phoenix Incarnation was still in its juvenile stages, but his Flame Slash was based on High Magic to cast, with power equal to an ordinary Archmage.

It fell short of the combat power of a Dragon, clearly not reaching the magical level of Ach riding a Unicorn.

Liszt hoped that Ach could help him design a few simple magics that fit the Phoenix Incarnation; utilizing Innate Magic would be too costly.

The fourth, Semi-Elementalization—This meant he could partially transform his body into the Phoenix Incarnation, and his body was gradually moving towards an Archmage’s Elemental Incarnation due to the subtle changes in the Phoenix Incarnation, although he hadn’t touched the Magic Web, ultimately only capable of semi-elementalization.

The fifth, Dou Qi Sublimation—His Dragon Dou Qi, through long-term cultivation with the Dragon, reached the level of High Magic. However, at this moment, after devouring

the essence of the Phoenix and further cultivating with the Dragon, what was extracted from the cells was not High Magic level Dragon Dou Qi, but Superior Magic level Dragon Dou Qi.

When he and Leo entered Dragon Rider Mode, the combat power they exerted would skyrocket by several times. Once the Dragon Dou Qi fully transformed into Superior Magic Dou Qi, his strength would probably surpass all other Dragon Knights.

Last.

There was also the sixth ability, Hundred Birds Toward The Phoenix—This was the reward from the Smoke Mission, and as Ach speculated, once Liszt completely merged with the Phoenix Incarnation, he would possess the ability to command birds.

The reason was simple.

Liszt gradually discovered that he seemed to understand the calls of birds. When he flew in the form of the Phoenix Incarnation, those Flame Dragon Birds and Red Sparrow Birds would quiver with fear upon seeing him, and the occasional chirp seemed to express submission and reverence towards him.

Even birds that weren't of the Fire Attribute seemed to vaguely convey the meaning behind their calls.

“Charley can sense a special malice coming from brother, this is probably due to the Phoenix's resentment from being devoured. This malice is obstructing brother's communication with birds. Perhaps, if we guide this malice out, we can preserve the fire seed of the Phoenix and let it be reborn.”

“Why would I want to communicate with birds!”

Liszt always felt that the ability of Hundred Birds Toward The Phoenix was awkward; he wasn't a birdman and didn't need to communicate with beasts!

“Hehe,” Ach said, giggling, “If brother really can develop the ability of Hundred Birds Toward The Phoenix, couldn't he establish a flying Knight Order? The Royal Knight

Squad of the Burning Legion could be quickly dealt with too. Those Flame Dragon Birds and Red Sparrow Birds would all make excellent mounts.”

Liszt promptly changed the subject: “What do I need to do to guide out the residual malice of the Phoenix?”

“This involves the stripping of the soul. Ach has recently made great advances in the research of Lich Andy, and he is fully prepared and can initiate the separation of him from the Marks of Terror and the Dragon Soul at any time. Once Ach completes the separation experiment, he will be able to strip away the malice of the Phoenix from my brother and inject it into the Phoenix Egg.”

“Please do it as soon as possible. I can also feel a barrier between myself and the Phoenix Incarnation, we are never completely in harmony, perhaps due to the repulsion of this malign influence.”

...

December arrived suddenly.

Liszt hadn’t returned to Flame Castle in the past half month, staying in the Endless Volcano Cluster instead, studying the Phoenix Incarnation. At the same time, he also intensified his training with Leo, repeatedly slashing away Leo’s malicious thoughts, polishing his own Mind Branding to become clearer and clearer, and his suppressive influence over Leo grew stronger.

“Following this pace, in another two or three months, I should be able to complete the Mind Branding, allowing the training between me and Leo to reach a perfect Dragon Knight stage.”

By that time, even without his personal suppression, the Mind Branding would automatically twist Leo’s evil thoughts.

Thus, he and Ach returned to Reed City together, where Ach began to set up the experiment for the soul separation of Lich Andy, while he went to Flame Castle to inspect the progress of the estate’s construction—proving that the Development Committee had done well, and the estate didn’t falter without him.

As long as he could ensure the high-end combat power at the Dragon tier, enough to suppress the Flame Kingdom, the Knight Class would naturally maintain the internal operations of the Kingdom.

After all, he neither revolutionized new systems nor advanced technological trees.

Except for creating some paper, glass products; strengthening hygiene and civilization concepts; developing some infrastructure, magic engineering; formulating some reliable and unreliable strategies.

He didn't bring about too many changes, everything was built upon the foundation of the knight system, nothing out of place.

In this magical fantasy world, even some extraordinary improvements aren't surprising. After all, people here grow up seeing dragons, elves, unicorns, archmages, and listening to all kinds of incredible mysterious legends every day, each person has a strong capacity for acceptance.

However, faced with this scene, Liszt unexpectedly felt a bit of loss, as if he had become an unimportant person.

In the past, he often complained about being plagued with official duties, busy with no time to breathe; but when there was no official business at all, he felt even more empty and lost instead.

But he quickly adjusted his mentality: "This is quite good, my ideal has never been to become a king. Traveling around the world, experiencing countless mysterious sceneries, exploring the origins of mysteries, this is what I should do. Once the nation is on the right track, I will set out on an adventure!"

Many people were residing in Flame Castle.

All members of the Tulip Family had already moved here—Li Weiliam, Lady Penelope, Lady Marie, Loria, and Little Richard.



His elder brother Levis was presiding over the development in Dragon Valley City, and his half-brother Lidun from another mother had entered Knight Order training and did not reside in Flame Castle. His sister Li Vera, who married into the Basil Family, had also moved to Flame Island, settling in Jade City and getting involved in construction.

As the center of the territory had shifted to Reed City, for the convenience of work, the new Tulip Castle was being built there. Once completed, Marquis Li Weiliam would move the Tulip Family members into the new Castle.

There were many castles also being built, all by Nobles for themselves, to facilitate living—they couldn't possibly squeeze into wooden houses like ordinary knights.

In fact, Liszt's King's Castle had already found its site. Flame City, Jade City, Reed City, Dragon Valley City, Estuary City were all rejected, and he had officially decided to establish the King's Castle near Moon Slayer Sacred Mountain—Emily, while practicing, was always directing the Mammoth Knight Brigade, paving roads toward the location of the Moon Slayer Sacred Mountain.

“Within three years, the King's Castle must be built, and most crucially, my Royal Palace!”

Chapter 966: Dedicate Body and Soul “Emily, after the Mammoth Knight Brigade paves the road to the Moon Slayer Sacred Mountain, immediately collaborate with the local Knights and Magicians. They are the ones I sent to manage the Holy Tribe, let the Moon Slayer Natives assist the Mammoth Knight Brigade in building the King's Castle,” Liszt received the early-returning Emily Earl in the Flame Castle to report on her duties. “I have already appointed Jomaya Bangtu as the overall commander of the construction of the King's Castle. He will lead the construction team to select suitable sites near the Sacred Mountain for the Castle and Royal Palace and get the preliminary work done.”

“As you wish, Your Highness.”

“How has your recent coordination with Ethan been?”

“There has been significant progress; Ethan really likes Flame Wine, so I started from there, exchanging drinks to win his favor. Moreover, I found a type of fruit wine brewed by the Moon Slayer Natives, which after blending improved the flavor of the Flame Wine, successfully replacing the original.”

“So, Ethan no longer resists you, then when do you think you will have the opportunity for a Mind Battle?” Liszt asked.

Emily shook her head, “Not yet, but Ethan has loosened up, I believe the Mind Battle will come soon.”

“There’s nothing special about Ethan’s Mind Battle, just face it and conquer its heart. I have nothing to teach you in this matter because I took the opportunity of Ethan’s deep unconsciousness to extinguish its original First Dragon Knight’s Mind Branding and vanquished it,” Liszt said.

The girl, full of confidence, responded, “Please rest assured, Your Highness, Emily will definitely overcome Ethan’s mind!”

“I look forward to that moment.”

Liszt said with a smile, his handsome face paired with a charming smile, instantly striking Emily’s heart, causing waves of emotion, and involuntarily a blush appeared on her face, “Your Highness, you seem different since your return.”

“How so?”

“Um...” Emily tried to find the right adjective, “You seem more dominating, more aggressive, your gaze daring not to be met directly, as if you could see through one’s secrets.”

This was the change brought about by the Phoenix Incarnation. A Phoenix, not a gentle and pure creature like a Unicorn, born from bathing in fire, is naturally synonymous with dominance and imperiousness. This is a stark contrast to the Phoenix that symbolizes good fortune on Earth.

Calling the Phoenix a ‘Phoenix’ seems more appropriate.

Liszt approached the girl, his eyes bright and meaningful as he gazed into her eyes, a hint of a smile on his lips: “Then what secrets do you think I’ve seen through about you?”

“I...” Emily wanted to avoid the intense gaze but quickly overcame her shyness and looked directly into Liszt’s eyes. “Emily has no secrets, only a willingness to dedicate her entire being to you, Your Highness.”

Said very frankly.

But here, the customs are quite liberal; Knights can boldly pursue girls, and girls can also boldly pursue Knights. Even married Knights and noble ladies can’t avoid having affairs outside, even publicly, as long as both parties accept it, it’s commonplace.

Of course, this doesn’t mean that having affairs is moral, but human nature is complex, and there are always people who adhere to morals and those who break them.

Emily’s frankness somewhat robbed Liszt of the pleasure of ‘teasing’ the girl, and he smiled awkwardly, “You are still too young, Emily.”

The girl puffed out her already slightly curved chest, speaking a bit hurriedly, “Your Highness, I am already fourteen, and I’ll be fifteen after the New Year’s festival.”

“Let’s wait until you’re an adult. For now, focus on riding dragons. I hope that when the Flame Kingdom is established, this kingdom will have more than just one Dragon Knight.” Feeling Emily’s breath, he awkwardly changed the subject.

This year is Sapphire Calendar Year 155, and three years later, in Sapphire Calendar Year 158, the Flame Kingdom will inevitably be founded. By then he will be twenty-three, Emily seventeen and of age, and Ach forty-seven, calculating the age of maturity for a Sea Serpent... was challenging.

Once, he met an old Sea Serpent named Iris, over four hundred years old, born from a seashell, she reached adulthood at fifty-five when she grew legs.

While Ach was bred from a scallop shell, whether he would reach adulthood at fifty-five like Iris was uncertain. Moreover, since becoming an Archmage and acquiring an Elemental Incarnation, Ach had already grown legs – it wasn’t incorrect to say he had already come of age.

Facing Liszt's change of topic, a hint of disappointment surfaced in the young Emily's eyes, but she quickly adjusted, "I will grow up soon, Your Highness!"

That hint of disappointment was still captured by Liszt.

Suddenly, he extended his hand and lifted Emily's chin, speaking gently, "Grow up quickly."

In an instant.

Emily felt a current strike her body, generating tremendous excitement. Her chin involuntarily rubbed against Liszt's fingertips as she nodded vigorously, "Yes!"

...

The Phoenix Incarnation was Liszt's trump card, never revealed to anyone other than Ach.

He still chose to ride the Formless Dragon Bard everywhere, and after sending away the emotionally stirred Emily, he went to the Tower of Reeds in Reed City to check on Ach's experimental progress.

"Your Highness, you've arrived." Lucy and Ruth, the twin sisters, effectively acted as the little housekeepers of the Tower of Reeds, learning by the side of the Archmage. They made rapid progress.

No longer Magic Apprentices.

Just two months ago, Ruth released a common Water Magic – Water Arrow Barrage, becoming a true Magician; a month before, Lucy successfully released a common Fire System Magic – Great Fireball, becoming a qualified Magician. They were only thirteen years old.

Three years ago, around the same time as Emily, they were sent by Liszt to the Magic Academy and recommended to Chris as apprentices.

Three years later, both had become Magicians, worthy of the title of prodigious Magicians—according to the Magician’s cultivation system, normally Magic Apprentices start from the age of ten to fifteen, and the twin sisters were chosen by Liszt when they were ten.

Magic Apprentices, after five or even more years of learning, become Magicians before the age of twenty, are all geniuses, with a chance to make their way to the realm of Grand Magicians.

For the twin sisters to advance to Magicians in just three years, becoming Grand Magicians was almost certain.

“Hello, Lucy, Ruth.” Liszt greeted the twins amiably, yet he thought to himself, wondering if many years later, these twins would have a chance to challenge for an Archmage—after all, they are magic prodigies named in the Smoke Mission, perhaps there really was a chance.

Liszt watched as he entered the laboratory.

Ruth suddenly made a silly smitten face, “His Highness is so handsome, like a blazing flame; standing before him makes me so nervous I can hardly breathe.”

Lucy looked helplessly at her sister, “His Highness is the future King, you shouldn’t always indulge in fanciful thoughts.”

“What’s wrong with fanciful thoughts? You don’t control what I think, hmph!”

“Devoting oneself to the Truth is what a Magician ought to do.”

“Sister, you’re so naive. His Highness doesn’t like Magicians; His Highness likes Arcanists, and we will become Arcanists one day—no, I will become an Arcane Instructor, as powerful as Teacher Ach!” Ruth held her head high, with a few proud freckles matching her expression.

Lucy said nothing and picked up a book of Magic Books to read seriously. The cover displayed —”The Great Arcanist”, Issue Thirteen, published by the Arcanist Assessment Committee.

The cover showed an old Grand Magician wearing a Magic Cloak, drawn but almost resembling a real photograph.

Beside it was a line in bold Serpent Script: “Inventor of the Magic Two-Wheeled Bicycle—Leader of the Dynamism Research Group, Gandalf Truth.”

Chapter 967: Exiled Mist “The Great Arcanist” was undoubtedly the brainchild of Li Si Te (Liszt). He felt that the lack of magazines and newspapers in the world was indeed a bit dull for entertainment.

However, he found the idea of running a newspaper uninteresting, because he didn’t need to read them to know everything that was happening in his domain. With the Magic Guild’s multiple improvements to the Magic Platform, they had now entered the era of Magic Platform 5.0—miniaturized, standardized, confidential, and simplified.

He could receive messages from throughout his domain at any time and any place. Then, dedicated retainers sorted these messages and delivered them to his desk.

Therefore, while there were no newspapers, there were internal briefings, primarily circulated within the officials and noble class.

As white paper became more commonly available, the publishing industry in the territory began to thrive. By consciously revolutionizing the magician system, he indicated to the Magic Guild to publish “The Great Arcanist,” a journal focusing on academia, encouraging local magicians to strive toward honor and engage in inventions and creations.

Lucy never missed an issue of “The Great Arcanist.” She hoped that one day she could be featured in the journal and become its cover figure.

She was reading an article about Gandalf Truth.

This grand magician, Gandalf, hailed from the Emerald Duchy, a vassal state of the Kingdom of Eagle. He had not come alone but brought along eleven magician apprentices and a large group of magic apprentices. Unlike the typical reclusive magicians who treasured their “broomsticks,” Gandalf loved to teach magic.

Upon learning that an archmage had emerged in the Duchy of Sapphire, Gandalf traveled thousands of miles with his disciples to make a pilgrimage to the Sapphire.

After visiting the Magic Guild, he immediately decided to join and stay here.

He was now a member of the Arcanist Assessment Committee. With the invention of the magic two-wheeled bicycle, he advanced from a regular arcanist to a grand arcanist, becoming the sixth grand arcanist in the Magic Guild.

“I have a profound interest in dynamics,” Gandalf said during an interview with “The Great Arcanist” editor, “I have been engaged in this field of research for many years. Upon arriving at Your Highness’s domain, I discovered the unicycle and was astounded by this invention. Compared to horse-drawn carriages, the unicycle can truly benefit the nation and the people...”

Since then, he had a particular fondness for the unicycle and decided to improve it into a more convenient vehicle.

One day, while sketching in a plantation, he saw a serf speeding by with a decrepit unicycle, which had practically only one wheel left.

Thus, the serf could lift the vehicle and place his body on the handle, letting the unicycle run by itself.

This quickly inspired Gandalf, and he thought, “Since a unicycle can be pushed by hand, why not make one that can be pushed by foot?”

However, it wasn’t easy to propel a unicycle with feet.

But, Liszt’s glory shone upon every arcanist willing to contemplate. Gandalf then witnessed a serf drawing water from a well, which sparked a burst of inspiration. He invented a foot-propelled unicycle, but quickly found that the unicycle was hard to balance.

So, he added another wheel.

It became a two-wheeled vehicle, also known as a bicycle—unlike Earth’s bicycles, this type had a large front wheel directly connected to the pedals, with a small rear wheel that only served to stabilize.

Gandalf then continued his efforts and equipped the bicycle with a magic array, allowing the bicycle to activate the magic array and propel itself.

Thus, the magic two-wheeled bicycle was born.

“What a great invention. I hope I can also invent something like the magic two-wheeled bicycle,” Lucy said admiringly after finishing the article.

Rose, who was mopping the floor, didn’t even look up as she said scornfully, “What’s so great about that? Wait until the day I invent a bicycle that can fly in the sky, now that would be great!”

...

“Brother, you’re here.”

“Mm.”

“Ach has just completed an experiment on extracting the soul from Lich Andy, and several Grand Magicians are dealing with Lich Andy’s affairs,” Ach pointed towards a few Grand Magicians gathered inside the laboratory’s glass compartment, busily collecting data, including the vice president of the Magic Guild, Kenley.

Unlike Chris, who focused on administrative duties, Kenley was deeply fascinated by magic experiments, often visiting Ach’s lab to help and gain experience.

The affairs were settled quickly, and Lich Andy was wheeled out of the glass compartment, the Grand Magicians also paid their respects to Liszt, “Your Highness.”

“No need for formalities,” Liszt walked up to the stretcher, looked at the withered, dried-up figure lying there, which resembled Gollum from “The Lord of the Rings,” and asked, “Is this Lich Andy?”



“Having been stripped of the Marks of Terror and the Dragon Soul, Lich Andy has reverted to human form. However, his body, eroded by the power of the soul, is nearing collapse and won’t last more than a few days,” Ach explained, then pointed to another Grand Magician holding a transparent container, “The Dragon Soul of the Sapphire Dragon is severely contaminated and will need some time to be purified.”

The container, crafted by Ach, was a type of soul vessel filled with a special liquid, within which a dim, translucent blue figure in the shape of a Sapphire Dragon swam.

“Is this the Dragon Soul?”

“Yes, and over there are the Marks of Terror.”

The Marks of Terror were a set of armor, remarkable for its uniqueness compared to ordinary armor, being silver-white on the outside but ink-black inside, its material similar to that of the Sapphire Dragon Ship Figurehead initially dismantled from the Ghost Ship.

A Grand Magician recognized the material, “Obsidian, a gemstone-associated mineral formed by ancient dragons, is quite rare, but its purpose is unknown.”

Dragons over eight hundred years old are considered ancient. At this stage, they leave their dwelling places and fly towards the mythical Valley of Dragons. No one can track these ancient dragons to locate the Valley of Dragons, leading some to speculate it doesn’t exist, suggesting ancient dragons simply prefer not to die in front of humans.

“Obsidian...” Liszt picked up the Marks of Terror, the touch was chilling, not physically but in a way that penetrated the soul, “It seems not to be just any stone, but rather like metal?”

“Obsidian is like metal and like crystal, quite peculiar.”

“So, other than transforming a lich, what use does this set of armor have?”

“Let’s identify it with the Knowledge Ancient Book,” Ach hadn’t had the chance to study the Marks of Terror after removing them. She took out the Knowledge Ancient Book, and

soon, along with a flash of light, several words in the Moon Language appeared—Obsidian, Mithril, Elf Blood, Exiled Mist.

The materials were clear, but the last functionality described as “Exiled Mist” was somewhat vague.

Ach quickly guessed, “Could it be a sort of mist used by the lich to isolate the Exiled Lands? Based on the available data about the Exiled Lands, where reality blends with fantasy, once a soul enters, it could be lost, and likely the Marks of Terror could keep the soul lucid by repelling the Exiled Mist.”

“Possibly, it’s a remarkable artifact. We should keep it safe.”

Thus, Lich Andy’s soul extraction experiment was concluded, and Andy, resembling Gollum, was taken by the Grand Magicians for further soul studies. Meanwhile, the contaminated Dragon Soul of the Sapphire Dragon, also an exceptional research material, remained in Ach’s lab—they weren’t in a hurry to heal the Sapphire Dragon since Duke Andrew was still alive.

At that moment, Ach had accumulated enough experience to potentially extract any residual malice from the Phoenix for Liszt.

Chapter 968: With a tremble of his soul, Liszt, with the help of Ach, had already successfully stripped away the residual malice of the Phoenix from his soul and infused it into the petrified Phoenix Egg through a Magic Array.

At the same time, a sliver of Liszt’s consciousness, similar to a Mind Branding, was mixed into the Phoenix Egg, serving as a guiding force for the future evolution of the Phoenix—the intention of this Mind Branding was simple, to continually hint at the Flame Family.

To lay the groundwork for his descendants to tame the Phoenix—he felt it unlikely that he would witness the hatching of a new Phoenix.

“Brother, the Phoenix Egg already pulses with life. If returned to its original place to re-hatch, perhaps many years from now a new Phoenix will be reborn from flames.”

Ach said, “Also, based on brother’s description, Ach has designed a simple Magic Array for the nesting of the hatching Phoenix, which can help the Phoenix Bloodstone gather Fire Attribute Mana more effectively; this may assist the nurturing of the Phoenix.”

“That’s excellent.”

Stripping away a piece of soul containing consciousness did not cause much adverse reaction to Liszt, nor did it leave him feeling excessively fatigued.

Here, the soul is the aggregation of Spiritual Power, but it seems that the soul is a nonrenewable resource unless it comes from the birth of new life.

For example, a bird egg goes from a lifeless liquid to eventually developing a soul and becoming a living being.

Human pregnancy is similar, two cells merge, and then a clump of flesh slowly fosters a soul.

The so-called rebirth of the Phoenix from its ashes doesn’t seem to be true immortality, but rather a revival of the body after the soul has withered—it feels like asexual reproduction. From Liszt’s perspective, a soul carrying memories is the true personality of a person; the body is just a shell.

Of course.

It’s hard to tell if the Phoenix, once truly hatched, would be able to recall its past life, since this Phoenix hadn’t had the chance to be reborn before being consumed by Liszt.

After a day of recovery, assuring there were no negative reactions, he swiftly rode the Formless Dragon Bard, crossing two natural nodes, to arrive at the Doomsday Volcano Crater. Transforming into a Phoenix, he plunged into the volcano, which was half-dormant with its magma fallen but still red and churning, allowing him to maneuver in Magic Form.

Thus, he quickly entered the original cave, placed both the Tinderpile and the Phoenix Egg back in their original spot, and began to repair the cracks in the cave, setting up the Magic Array prepared by Ach.

“I wonder if doing this will allow the Phoenix’s fire seed to remain.” Concentrating, he summoned the Smoke Mission and found that the task remained unchanged, still in an uncompleted state.

“This?”

Dispersing the smoke, he began to frown, having done everything he could and having discussed many plans with Ach, with only this soul-stripping method holding a glimmer of hope. Despite this effort, the task remained uncompleted, and the Phoenix seemed permanently deceased.

“No, that’s not right!”

“If the Phoenix truly died, the Smoke Mission would definitely fail, but now it’s merely uncompleted, so there must be a way!” With this in mind, he again scrutinized the entire cave and the Phoenix Egg, “So what else can be done to preserve the fire seed of the Phoenix?”

Fire seed...

Fire seed...

He turned his gaze to the Tinderpile beneath the Phoenix Egg, which, through the identification of the Knowledge Ancient Book, were branches of the Parasol Tree. While its appearance slightly differed from that of the Phoenix Perch Parasol Tree, the characteristics were almost the same, both fire-resistant and of the Fire Attribute.

“Previously, the Parasol branches were in a burning state, even though it was just an illusion of Fire Attribute Mana... Could it mean that there weren’t enough Parasol branches?”

Legends say that the phoenix only perches on parasol trees and would not land on anything else.

Thinking of this, he didn't hesitate and left the Doomsday Volcano Crater to head to the Phoenix Perch Parasol Forest, where he chopped down a batch of robust Phoenix Perch Parasol trees. Then, dragging the branches rapidly back to the cave, he piled them all beneath the Phoenix Egg, feeling the fire attribute presence in the cave becoming significantly stronger.

Transforming into a phoenix, he fanned the flames fiercely a few times, raising the level of fire attribute mana in the cave to an extremely high concentration.

At that moment,

the tinderpile, which had shown no change, finally ignited, beginning to "roast" the Phoenix Egg.

"Did it work?" Liszt thought to himself, summoning the Smoke Mission. This time, the illusory smoke finally changed, showing the positive change he hoped to see.

"Mission completed, reward: Hundred Birds Toward The Phoenix."

"Not bad, the phoenix's flame has finally been preserved," he breathed a sigh of relief, and at that moment, a new Smoke Mission was issued.

"Mission: A huge number of schools have been quickly constructed across the territory, most in a state of chaos, but the foundations of education are gradually unfolding. With snowflakes soon to arrive on Black Horse Island, it is time to recap the schools' efforts and why not select the first batch of excellent students for better education. Reward: Obsidian Ring."

"Selecting excellent students, that's easy, just hold exams. The students focusing on civil roles take written exams, those training as knights participate in contests... It would be best to establish a standard examination system, I'll have the Development Committee prepare it once I return... Indeed, it's essential to cultivate exceptional talent to lay the foundation for my future Burning Legion."

He didn't pay attention to the reward of the Obsidian Ring.

The reward didn't seem to offer any useful clues.

Glancing around the Phoenix Nest, which was now on the right track, he didn't delay any further and transformed into a phoenix, leaving the Doomsday Volcano Crater. Standing on the solidified lava rocks of the volcano crater, he drew the Ice Soul Dragon-Slaying Sword, and with Dragon Dou Qi that had gradually become Superior Magic, he struck a few times.

Cracks appeared immediately on the surface of the volcano crater.

Without pausing, Liszt continued to hack away randomly, and these cracks gradually formed a few rough Serpent Script characters: "This mountain is sealed, strangers keep out—Liszt Flame."

The Doomsday Volcano Crater was officially sealed.

Admiring his calligraphy masterpiece, he felt that these Serpent Script characters were strong and vigorous, emanating a majestic aura, indeed quite remarkable.

He thought to himself, "Another day, I'll have Ach come here and set up a Magic Array to completely seal the volcano crater, preventing anything from accidentally entering and disturbing the incubation of the Phoenix Egg."

In reality, there was no need for such flamboyant actions.

Aside from himself and Leo, almost no person or animal could penetrate thousands of kilometers into the magma to find the Phoenix Nest—this was merely an insignificant self-comfort.

"Let's go!"

Without causing any further trouble, he transformed into a phoenix ablaze with flames and soared towards the heavens. Never before had he felt so unburdened since he had stripped away the residual malice of the phoenix and resolved the incubation of the phoenix's flame. He thoroughly relaxed.

A surge of information from the Phoenix Bloodline swiftly merged into his soul; it was about the phoenix's command over all birds.

“Hundred Birds Toward The Phoenix...”

Receiving this information, he turned his gaze towards the nearby Phoenix Perch Parasol Forest, where Flame Dragon Birds and Red Sparrow Birds lived.

Chapter 969: Hundred Birds Toward The Phoenix “Screech!”

The Phoenix Incarnation let out a cry, and the Flame Dragon Birds and Red Sparrows living in the Phoenix Perch Parasol Forest all gathered around Liszt, surrounding him as if guarding their king.

Compared to the size of the flock before, it had grown even more, as another group of Fire Attribute birds were attracted by the Phoenix Perch Parasol Tree and came to settle here.

Among them were fifteen new species of birds, also with fiery red feathers, but with a huge build, sturdier than the Flame Dragon Birds, and more slender than the Red Sparrows. And with a strong aura of Fire Attribute, they had reached the standard of Super Magical Beasts, it's just they didn't have Dragon Might and did not belong to Dragon Beasts.

“Quack!”

“Quack!”

These new species of Super Magical Beasts sounded somewhat like crows and also resembled crows in form, so Liszt directly named them “Fire Crows.”

Whether it was the Super Dragon Beast Flame Dragon Birds, the Super Magical Beasts Fire Crows, or the Advanced Magical Beast Red Sparrows, their calls all had specific meanings, which before Liszt could not understand, but now he gradually comprehended them through the Phoenix Bloodline.

They were worshipping Liszt's Phoenix Incarnation.

“Screech!”

Liszt let out another strange, domineering cry. The Phoenix seemed to have no language, and he didn't know what he was calling out. Nevertheless, as the flock of birds continued to swirl around him, he gradually felt a strange connection forming between him and the birds.

It was like a simplified version of an Elf Contract, where a mere thought could convey his wishes to the birds worshipping him—this was the true meaning of the Hundred Birds Toward The Phoenix Ability.

After familiarizing himself with this ability, he quickly organized the chaotic flock according to his own thoughts.

Five Flame Dragon Birds took the lead, followed closely by fifteen Fire Crows, and three hundred forty-one Red Sparrows lined up in a row, following behind the Phoenix Incarnation, circling the Phoenix Perch Parasol Forest. Soon, Little Yellow, Little Red, and Little Purple—the three Flame Dragon Birds—also joined the formation.

Among them, Little Yellow was even carrying Greater Elf Ani.

“Liszt, Phoenix!” Ani sat on Little Yellow's back, pointing at Liszt's Phoenix Incarnation and laughed heartily, finding it very amusing.

“Screech!”

“Screech, screech!”

Little Yellow, Little Red, and Little Purple continuously worshipped the Phoenix Incarnation, and Liszt also obtained the simple Hundred Birds Toward The Phoenix contract that allowed him to command them. In other words, Liszt had directly tamed so many Super Dragon Beasts, Super Magical Beasts, and Advanced Magical Beasts without any effort.

His mind stirred, and he quickly reverted to his human form, the Superior Magic that belonged to the Phoenix Incarnation swiftly receding deep into his cells.



However, a part of the Phoenix Superior Magic still lingered in his meridians, continually refining his Dragon Dou Qi, enabling him to achieve the strength of an Archmage on his own without Dragon Riding—Archmages tap into the Magic Web to unleash great power, but his strength came directly from within.

Of course, the consumption was immense; the amount of Magic Potion he needed daily was five times more than before, and once his Dragon Dou Qi was fully refined into Superior Magic, he would probably need ten times more.

There's no gain without loss; Superior Magic couldn't just appear out of nowhere.

Just after he had returned to his human form, the neatly arranged flock of birds quickly came to a stop, their eyes filled with countless queries as they looked at Liszt—because once Liszt had reverted to his human body, the “Hundred Birds Toward The Phoenix” contract dissipated swiftly, losing the ability to control the flock.

Very soon,

the flock disbursed with a flutter, each finding a spot to wander off to, no longer paying attention to Liszt. Yet, they showed no hostility towards him, even when Liszt approached a Red Sparrow that was foraging on the ground. This Red Sparrow, larger than a calf, showed no reaction whatsoever.

Even when Liszt reached out to touch its feathers, it merely sidestepped twice.

Then, as Liszt continued to pet it, after dodging twice, it stopped trying to evade him altogether. It was only when Liszt climbed onto its back that it showed a bit of temper, trying to shake Liszt off. After several unsuccessful attempts, it resigned itself, and as Liszt continued to ride it, it seemed to understand the intention and took flight into the sky.

After a lap around, under Liszt's guidance, the Red Sparrow bird landed again.

“Not bad, although the ‘Hundred Birds Toward The Phoenix’ ability was severed due to the retraction of the Phoenix Incarnation, I've gained the ability to merge with the flock of birds... Feels strange, but the practicality of the ability is strong, the conditions for establishing a Flying Knight Squad have been fulfilled. I recall there are a few Fire Attribute Sky Knights in my domain who could be rewarded with Red Sparrow Birds.”

The Flame Dragon Bird and Fire Crow belonged to the future Royal Knight Squad and couldn't be distributed at will, but the Red Sparrow Birds didn't matter much—there were a full three hundred and forty-one of them.

“Moreover, my ‘Hundred Birds Toward The Phoenix’ ability from my Phoenix Incarnation might not only be for Fire Attribute bird species. Let me also find some non-Fire Attribute bird Magical Beasts and conduct some experiments!”

Thinking thus, he acted.

Liszt bid Annie farewell, signaling to Formless Dragon Bard to roam about on his own, then he transformed into a Phoenix and flew into the distance. Soon, in a forest, he discovered several bird Magical Beasts—all of them Low-Level. The Low-Level bird Magical Beasts shuddered with fear at the sight of the Phoenix.

It took them a good while to adapt and then they started to circle around the Phoenix, establishing a “Hundred Birds Toward The Phoenix” contract.

“Wind Attribute White-necked Geese, Earth Attribute Rock Sparrows, Thunder Attribute Purple Lightning Birds, hmm, just as I suspected, ‘Hundred Birds Toward The Phoenix’ is not limited to Fire Attribute birds, I can form the ‘Hundred Birds Toward The Phoenix’ contract with all bird Magical Beasts and Dragon Beasts, I am now the king of all birds!”

The king of a hundred birds—Bird King.

In terms of Earth's aesthetic judgment, this title didn't sound very refined. But in this world ruled by a Knight system, the ability to dominate all bird Magical Beasts was an absolute symbol of enviable and respected power. After all, many Noble surnames were named after bird Magical Beasts.

Precious Dou Qi Secret Techniques like “Eye of Magic Power” and “Breath Decay” were originally possessed by Steve Vulture, his surname being that of a bird.

Only Nobles could use Magical Beasts, flora, gemstones, metals, and other such words as surnames because these words represented strength, represented resources, and represented nobility.

Commoners either had no surnames or had to pick one from amongst the trash.

“Most bird species are not suitable for riding and cannot be developed into mounts, but there are still quite a few bird species that can be ridden, and there might even be some bird Magical Beasts used for transporting goods, letters, and such.” Liszt returned to his human body, standing on a branch of a towering tree.

Next to him was a Purple Lightning Bird that allowed him to touch its feathers. This Thunder Attribute Low-Level Magical Beast was only as big as a piglet, but it was incredibly fast.

“I wonder if Ach can discover some information from the ‘Hundred Birds Toward The Phoenix’ contract and develop a contract that allows knights to sign with bird species?”

In his mind, he thought of the owls from “Harry Potter,” where wizards used owls to send letters.

In this wondrous fantasy world, why couldn’t he develop similar Magical Beasts to serve as the Knight Class’s pets, for sending letters or delivering goods?

Chapter 970: Giant Demon Tuber Snow had fallen on Black Horse Island, and winter arrived. Unlike the competitive atmosphere of previous winters, the island was gradually becoming deserted.

Many plantations were abandoned, and a few small towns were almost uninhabited.

Many workshops had disappeared as well, with only a few places still bustling. One such place was Giant Algae Town near the coast, a significant spot for Magic Potion production, where many Knights and Serfs lived by the Giant Algae Forest. Another was Giant Algae City, the island’s seaport open to international trade.

Near Giant Algae City was Thorn Castle. Thomas, as usual, held keys to all the rooms and inspected every room in the castle from top to bottom.

He continued his rounds to the castle’s study.

Several young Servants were cleaning the study; upon seeing Thomas, they greeted him, “Mr. Thomas.”

Thomas, with his meticulous hair and a stern expression to match, just nodded slightly, then joined in arranging the books himself, “The master values the books on the ancient shelf the most. Be careful when cleaning—knowledge is the most precious wealth,” the master had said.

After instructing the young Servants, he finished arranging the books on the ancient shelf.

Then he pushed open the study’s balcony doors and stepped onto the snow-covered balcony, which overlooked the Needle Grass Hill behind the castle.

His gaze turned towards the hillside, missing the familiar massive figure that had disappeared which made him feel a deep loss, “The Grey Iron Dragon Ornn had been ridden to Flame Island by the master, and the Elves had all been sent to Flame Castle. Now Black Horse Island and Thorn Castle have become very quiet.”

What he had once most hoped for was to become the Butler of Thorn Castle, and now that he had achieved this, it did not feel as glorious as he had imagined.

Being the Butler of Thorn Castle, he now just governed a few Servants.

The servants he knew, Butler Carter, Mrs. Morson, Mrs. Abbie, the attractive Little Lily, kitchen-loving Eileen, and fools like Tom and Jessie, had all gone to Flame Castle to continue serving the master. He, once the master’s personal manservant, remained at Thorn Castle.

However, Thomas no longer harbored much envy, for from the start, he was not favored by Liszt; the young master did not like having manservants closely attend to him.

Moreover, as Liszt’s time spent away from the castle significantly exceeded his time living there, the position of personal manservant was practically in name only.

Now that he had become the Butler of Thorn Castle, he was fully content — for a manservant, the greatest goal in life was to rise to the position of Butler.

As long as Old Carter lived, he would not glimpse the opportunity to become the Chief Butler of Flame Castle or even the future Royal Palace.

“It’s winter again, snow is falling, and the holiday season is nearly here. I wonder how the master will celebrate the festive season at Flame Castle.” He shook his head, returned to the study, carefully closed the door, and, holding the keys, continued on to inspect the next room.

...

In contrast to the tranquility of Thorn Castle, Flame Castle was bustling with activity.

Servants were busily at work, and Elves were frolicking and arguing all over the castle, their quarrels reaching a peak these days — because the Thorn Plantation had been established near Flame City, Jela and its Cordyceps had been relocated here, settling in Flame Castle.

At this moment, Jela, hands on hips, was scolding a naughty minor elf, “Ooh, you damned little elf, still daring to throw Jade Powder around, you’re asking for it!”

“Don’t be afraid of it, Gourd Minor Elf; if it dares to hit you, I’ll hit it!” said the Man-Eating Tree Dragon Elf Kali, dressed as Flack Abbie and tasting a fruit salad with a fork and knife.

“Go ahead and discipline the Gourd Minor Elf, Jela; I support you,” said the Buckwheat Dragon Elf Yati, sitting at the same table, seemingly inciting more strife between Jela and Kali.

Due to Jela’s nasty temper, it disliked the Greater Elf, and as for Kali, the Dragon Elf who disregarded other elves, it liked even less.

Jela, however, turned its guns on the two Dragon Elves and burst out, “Shut up! It’s none of your business how I discipline the minor elf. Ooh!”

“Hehe,” Kali chuckled coldly.

“Heh heh,” Yati smiled gently.

“Liszt, they’re arguing again.” A Greater Elf with a peculiar flower on its head quietly climbed onto Liszt’s shoulder as he was reading, to report to him.

Liszt put down the book he was holding and smiled at the Greater Elf, “I know, Karl.”

Karl, the Troll Taro Greater Elf, was one of the elves presented to Liszt by Su, the Listener of the Holy Tribe, when Liszt was passing by the Holy Tribe after becoming familiar with the King of Birds’ abilities. With the help of knights and magicians sent by Liszt, Su had subdued many Moon Slayer Tribes and gathered quite a few elves.

This only Greater Elf was the one he named “Karl,” the Troll Taro Greater Elf.

Troll Taro is a plant unique to Flame Island, called “Corpse Flower” by the native Moon Slayers. Liszt disliked the name Corpse Flower, forcibly changed it to Troll Taro—he even wanted to change the name of the Man-Eating Tree, but Kali, liking the name, didn’t want to change it.

There are Magic Potion varieties in Troll Taro, so Karl’s value is significant, and its personality is quite amusing; it enjoys tattling a lot.

Of course, from another perspective, this is called loyalty.

Thus, Liszt liked Karl very much, always feeling that Karl was an extraordinarily unusual elf—essentially, he liked elves with quirky personalities, finding them full of vitality, those with duller personalities, he always felt lacked vigor—but in the research at the Magic Guild, there was no clear correlation between personality and elf evolution.

“Aren’t you going to stop them?” Karl asked, curious.

“No worries, they’re still in the adjustment phase, I believe they’ll soon grow to like each other.”

“I don’t think so.”

While they were chatting, Butler Carter knocked and came in, “Master, the Marquis is back.”

“Um, I’ll go talk to Father,” Liszt signaled Karl to go play, then walked over and knocked on Kali and Yati’s table, “You two, don’t stir up trouble, remember to stay united!”

“Don’t worry, Liszt, with me here, there won’t be chaos!” Kali said, lifting her head.

Yati pursed her lips and said nothing.

When he arrived in the living room, the Marquis of Bull Tail had just changed into his home clothes.

Father and son then began discussing politics in the living room; Liszt was particularly concerned about a recently concluded advanced-level exam in their domain. The Marquis of Bull Tail pulled out a document, “The data has just been compiled, each town’s school has completed their assessments, and here is the list of outstanding students nominated by the schools.”

Liszt took it and casually flipped through a few pages, not seeing too many impressive young students.

He had asked each school to specify students’ ages and training duration, considering any student who could become an Earth Knight within three years a genius worth cultivating.

“Not a single talented student in sight.”

“There are quite a few, look at the schools in Flame City, they already have a fourteen-year-old Earth Knight, and not just one, these two students are definitely geniuses.” Li Weiliam pulled out a list, pointing to two students, one named Dulontan Red Apricot and the other named Curster Windmill.

“Still not genius enough. I remember these two students, Dulontan is the son of Count Durt, and Curster is the son of Viscount Rayleigh.”

Durt Red Apricot, a seasoned Sword Saint, Count; Rayleigh Windmill, a Sky Knight, Viscount.

Their sons had been trained from a young age; advancing to Earth Knight at fourteen, their talent is about the same as Liszt's brothers, Levis and Lidun.

Sky Knight has potential, but Dragon Knight is almost impossible.

"They are already excellent, Liszt, you can't expect everyone to have talents like you and Emily," Li Weiliam said speechlessly, "Even Yevich, who was once selected for the Eagle Kingdom's Dragon Knight backup program, was only an Earth Knight at thirteen."

"Then let Father manage their arrangements, expedite the establishment of the Royal Academy to train them... when there's a candidate suitable for the Dragon Knight backup program, I'll pay attention then."

For Liszt, only Dragon Knights could catch his eye, capable of being the cornerstone for the Flame Kingdom; Sky Knights at that level were merely a bunch of slightly more advanced productive materials.

However, with the arrival of this list, the Smoke Mission was completed: "Mission accomplished, reward: Obsidian Ring."