

## The Mighty 971

Chapter 971: Daily Patrol of the Territory Obsidian Ring, Liszt soon learned the origin of this reward—it was found on a statue of an Ancient Mage from the ancestors of the Moon Slayer people. The Obsidian Ring was discovered in a Native Tribe that had been conquered by the Holy Tribe, worn on the hand of the Listener, a symbol of tribal authority.

Commander Emily, who was then directing the Mammoth Knight Brigade in flattening the terrain, brought the Obsidian Ring back to Flame Castle.

Taking over the deep black ring that resembled a thumb ring, Liszt didn't immediately check its attributes. Instead, he said to Emily, "Let your deputy take charge of the Mammoth Knight Brigade for now. After you're done training with Ethan, come spend this year's festival at Flame Castle."

Emily's eyes lit up, and she nodded hastily, "Yes, Emily thanks Your Highness for the invitation!" Spending the festival at Flame Castle with His Highness was a significantly meaningful symbol for her.

After Emily left Flame Castle with a delighted mood, riding on the Landwalker Bird Loki to head to Jade City for training,

Liszt called out the Smoke Mission and looked at the new mission.

"Mission: In the blink of an eye, you're about to welcome your fifth festival in this world. The increase in age, improvement in strength, and change in status prompt a shift in your mindset. You're no longer the poor young Baron who hid in the countryside, amusing himself. Life still needs to move forward, please await the end of the festival. Reward: Unknown reward."

The long-interrupted unknown reward mission had once again appeared.

For Liszt, this was like a relaxation. He didn't have to worry about the Smoke Mission. He just needed to wait for the festival to end, and the reward would come automatically.

The climate of Flame Island in December is dry and cold. Although it never drops below freezing, all life stops growing.

In past years, just like the Magical Beasts, the Moon Slayer people would hide in their nests await the revival of the next spring. However, with the arrival of the Flame People in recent years, Flame Island has completely changed. The long and dry winter season is an ideal time for construction, and countless serfs toil the land.

Felling trees, leveling land, reclaiming wasteland, constructing channels, building workshops, piling up wooden houses...

After practicing Dragon Dou Qi, Liszt mounted the Formless Dragon Bard and slipped into the material border, preparing to survey his territory in the last few days of Sapphire Calendar Year 155.

First was Flame City.

As the first city of Flame Island designated as a major agricultural city, its development speed had admittedly fallen behind the other cities, but it had the largest population. Around the city, forests were no longer visible. Nearly all the trees had been felled, and the rest were transformed into plantations.

Because the outflow from Whirlpool Cave was substantial, leading to an abundance of water in Whirlpool River, the magicians from the Magic Guild who researched water conservancy had guided the serfs to build an irrigation network near Flame City.

The sprawling network of channels irrigated nearly five million acres of land. At a glance, all one could see were white water bands, enveloping green oases. To this day, this irrigation network, dubbed the “Flame Whirlpool Irrigation District,” is still being excavated.

Perhaps due to the nourishment from magic power, the physical constitution of humans in this world is much better than those of Earth—stronger, less prone to sickness, and less likely to die.

And the serfs who have lived in the forests for a long time have even better physical conditioning than the common Flame People.

Additionally, there are Apprentice Knights forming assault teams responsible for cutting through mountains and stones, as well as teams of Ancient Magicians who specialize in transforming the toughest terrains.

This has made infrastructure construction very smooth. Even without machinery like excavators or bulldozers, the efficiency is not at all weaker than the infrastructure construction speed in China on Earth—which pleases Liszt greatly. Now, under his influence, the Flame Kingdom truly has the temperament of a construction fanatic.

“There needs to be an upgrade. The roads in the Flame Whirlpool Irrigation District are not good enough, mostly just dirt roads. Dry weather in winter isn’t too much of an issue, but once the rainy season comes in summer, it will be disastrous. This isn’t good,” Liszt took out a notebook and simply recorded his thoughts, “Must quickly upgrade all these roads to concrete... It’s a pity there’s no asphalt.”

Compared to the hard concrete roads, Liszt actually preferred the kind of asphalt roads, but unfortunately, in this world, there’s no mention of resources like coal or oil, so naturally, there are no by-products like asphalt.

“However, it will be difficult to build concrete roads in a short period. The renovation of a few main roads with concrete might deplete most of the current output of the concrete workshops... A crushed stone road, on the other hand, isn’t bad. With a Shovel-Tusked Giant Elephant, several kilometers of country lane can be trampled out in a day. Put down some crushed stones, and it’s good enough.”

Having recorded the issues with the roads, he then noted the problems with the plantations.

Plantation issues were plentiful, mainly because some plants were not suited to the climate of Flame Island, and without the influence of cordyceps, they couldn’t even survive. However, overall, the soil of Flame Island was much more fertile than Black Horse Island, and with the Magic Guild developing various fertilizers, the yield per acre of crops had increased year by year.

“Rubber trees need to be planted in large quantities, potatoes need to be planted in large quantities, corn needs to be planted in large quantities...”

After inspecting Flame City, he immediately took to the skies along Dragon Cinder Road, flying towards Dragon Valley City.

Dragon Valley City was positioned as a major mining city, with five mining districts—Black Heart Iron, Bronze, Mercury, Galena, and Titanium—all offering quality, high-yielding mineral resources.

The typical mining city is seriously polluted, yet Dragon Valley City was much cleaner.

The reason is simple: all the iron smelting workshops, copper smelting workshops, mercury workshops, lead smelting workshops, and titanium smelting workshops here used the Fire Dragon Converter—powered by Leotaur’s Fire Dragon Overmagic, it required no chemical dyes, providing stable furnace temperatures and high efficiency.

However, the capital required to build a Fire Dragon Converter wasn’t cheap, and in order to secure this Fire Dragon Overmagic, Liszt had no idea how many magic potions he had stuffed into Leotaur’s hands.

“The workshops are still too crude, not refined enough... Next time, I must remind the Development Committee to promptly set up specialized factories such as rebar and wire factories. Plus, now that we’re not short on metal, the Magic Guild also needs to accelerate the development of the steam engine; I want to build aircraft carriers in the future!”

“No, that’s not right.”

Liszt fantasized in his notebook, “It should be called the Flying Dragon Mothership, serving as a landing place for my dragons when crossing Devil’s Sea... However, it seems Ach can create a large amount of packed ice, and with Ach, I can take as many dragons as I want.”

Leaving Dragon Valley City.

He continued his inspections at the next destination, Jade City, which had yet to have a clear purpose. Currently backdropped by Jade Mountain, the city was being used to exploit the Jade Vein. Plans were also in place to construct an irrigation district here and later develop new plantations—cities under the knight system primarily focused on agriculture.

With the construction of Jade City progressing slowly, Liszt wasn’t in much of a hurry. He rode the Formless Dragon Bard and headed south, eventually arriving at Estuary City.

Estuary City was intended to be a major port city, responsible for trade and exchange with Tulip Island.

However, as the development of Tulip Island had been postponed, Estuary City couldn't immediately showcase its intended purpose. The city's focus had now shifted to offshore development—searching for suitable shallow marine aquaculture waters, preparing for future breeding endeavors such as Hei Chequ, Fen Hai Luo, Golden-Lipped Clam, as well as Giant Algae and kelp.

They also had to cultivate mangrove forests in the wetlands at the river mouth, planning to further expand the breeding of Green Caterpillars, Green-headed Ducks, and Flamingos.

With the Hundred Birds Toward The Phoenix ability, Liszt could be called the king of birds. He would seek out more avian magical beasts suitable for domestication in the future—compared to hunting magical beasts to provide magical beast meat, breeding them was more cost-efficient and eco-friendly.

“It's been a long time since I've gone to the sea to search for elves and resourceful sea monsters... I'm now about the same as most of the native nobles, focusing all my attention on the endless resources of the continent, preferring to wage wars for them rather than searching the sea for food.”

He hadn't changed the world, yet the world had long since changed him.

Fortunately, Liszt had always possessed the vision to transcend his era and this world: “Conquering the sea is also part of my plan; Devil's Sea won't stop my strides!”

Having inspected Estuary City, he directly used a Space Shuttle to arrive at Reed City.

Reed City's role was to be a major trading city. As long as the new Teleportation Array had not been activated, Reed City was to be Flame Island's sole channel of communication with the outside world. Thus, the development of Reed City was rapid, constructing several large buildings almost overnight.

The city was very populous, and to avoid crowding, Liszt's directive was to build high-rises directly, six-story buildings—thanks to the emergence of concrete, the use of rebar, and the production of bricks, cheap multi-story buildings could be realized.

Just as he was about to identify some pitfalls in the development of Reed City, a thunderous roar suddenly erupted from the distant earth, like an earthquake. Turning his gaze, he saw a low mountain that blocked traffic being slowly pushed back into the ground by a tremendous force, quickly flattening the land.

“Hmm, it's Ach; she's mastered the Earth Attribute incarnation to perfection!”

Chapter 972: How Many Types of Metals Are There Dragon riding, they flew over.

Indeed, they saw Ach riding Unicorn Charlie, holding the Eight Dragons God Sword in one hand, casting spells. With Charlie's amplification of her high magic to the level of superior magic, she could now cast various spells at will, without needing to follow specific doctrines.

“Brother, Ach has already mastered the Earth Elemental Incarnation and can easily reshape mountains and land. If there's any terrain on Flame Island that needs remodeling, leave it to Ach.”

Ach, smiling, said this upon seeing Liszt.

She had been researching magic experiments recently, especially soul studies, which had tired her a bit, and she wanted to relax in a different way.

“Oh, is that so? I'll have the Magic Guild study the terrain of Flame Island to see how it could be remodeled. But there are two places we can start with. Flame City and Jade City are mainly plantations, so I'll leave the land leveling to you... Right, are you sure the terrain altered by magic is suitable for planting?”

Liszt pondered a problem.

Ach paused for a moment, then rode Charlie down to the low mountain she had pushed into the ground. After several spells were cast to test it, she said with some annoyance, “Brother, it seems not to be working. Earth System magic has a side effect of compacting soil, making the ground I've modified too hard.”

It wasn't just hard; it was almost petrified, basically unfarmable.

"Then let's not rush into remodeling the farmland. Your Earth Elemental Incarnation is best suited for road construction, canal building, and city construction."

"Brother, do you want Ach to build a Sky Canal from the Whirlpool Entrance that leads all the way to the Whirlpool River?" Ach hadn't forgotten her own idea. She had always wanted to restore the wonder built by the Ancient Magicians—the Sky Canal.

"Let's not do that for now. The Great Whirlpool Teleportation Formation is pretty much abandoned; there's no point in developing Whirlpool Archipelago. If you have time, I think we could close the Great Whirlpool Teleportation Formation and utilize the natural node at the Whirlpool Entrance... It's also time to open up a second teleportation array."

"Where does Brother plan to establish the second teleportation array?"

"To the Snowstorm Mountain Duchy." Liszt narrowed his eyes, remembering a new natural node he had discovered a few days ago.

He had planned to send some supplies to Yevich Water Peanut to continue his conquest of the Snowstorm Mountain Duchy. However, he stumbled upon a natural node located at the border of the Yellowstone Kingdom and the Eagle Kingdom on the Legendary Continent, less than a hundred kilometers from the Snowstorm Mountain Duchy.

It was a dense forest that looked ordinary, but Liszt suspected there were mines underneath—natural nodes were generally related to superior magic, which meant they were usually related to dragons.

"I intend to connect this new teleportation array between Jade City and the Legendary Continent and establish a city on the continent as a trade hub with the Snowstorm Mountain Duchy."

"Then we can set it up after the holiday season is over."

"Yeah."

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After learning about Ach's Earth Elemental Incarnation, Liszt handed the obsidian ring he had just acquired to Ach for identification.

He had fiddled with the ring, having the appearance of a black metal alloy, but it showed no magic reaction, and Dou Qi could not activate it.

When the Knowledge Ancient Book touched the Obsidian Ring, it quickly radiated light, revealing a passage in Moon Language—metal alloy, equivalent alchemy.

“What does that mean?” Liszt, not wanting to think too much, asked directly.

Ach carefully examined the Moon Language, saying, “Brother, if Ach isn't guessing wrong, this obsidian ring is made from the metal of all the metal dragons condensed together.”

“All the metal dragons' metal?”

Just like before he had obtained the gemstone crown, he didn't know about the thirty-six types of gemstone dragons, so naturally, he also didn't know how many types of metal dragons there were. He didn't even understand how many metals there were on Earth since he had never memorized the periodic table.

He only knew about such things as Tibetan yak leather tents and the saying, “Let the beauty go to you,” and then some common metals like gold, silver, copper, iron, aluminum, tin, lead, titanium, manganese, sodium, potassium, calcium, cobalt, nickel, and mercury.

But the types of metal dragons in this world should be more than the kinds of metals on Earth.

After all, iron dragons are divided into five varieties: black heart iron dragons, white heart iron dragons, white maw iron dragons, malleable cast iron dragons, and grey iron dragons; and copper dragons are divided into four kinds: bronze dragons, brass dragons, purple



copper dragons, and white copper dragons. No one knows whether silver dragons are divided into categories like white silver dragons, black silver dragons, and the like.

Or whether the gold dragons are divided into categories like krypton gold dragons, 24K gold dragons, and the like.

He was somewhat surprised, “How much effort must the ancient magicians have expended to collect all these metal dragons?”

“I don’t know about that, Knowledge Ancient Book also can’t identify how many types of metals are in the obsidian ring, they only have a general concept of metal alloy.” Ach shook his head, “However, I have some idea about its function; it should be related to the legendary alchemy.”

“Does alchemy really exist?” Liszt wanted to retort that turning stones into gold was unscientific, but this was a fantasy world, where the impossible became possible.

“It requires in-depth research.”

“You take it and study it when you have time. Basically, the six sealed divine artifacts of the ancient magicians are all equipment suitable for archmages and have nothing to do with me.” Liszt felt a bit regretful; he also wanted to unearth divine artifacts passed down from ancient times, but unfortunately, the ancient era was a time of magical civilization.

Divine artifacts like the Time Scepter, Eight Dragons God Sword, Knowledge Ancient Book, Gemstone Crown, and Obsidian Ring, along with the Marks of Terror, were basically all prepared for casters.

Back then, knights were just retainers for magicians and probably couldn’t afford any good equipment, which is why nowadays Liszt’s daily sword was only a Greater Elf Weapon – Ice Soul Dragon-Slaying Sword. He hadn’t obtained Dragon Tooth Soldier, let alone Dragon Elf Weapon or Dragon Soul Soldier.

These, comparable to the divine artifacts of ancient magicians, Dragon Tooth, Dragon Soul, and Dragon Elf Weapons, are mostly collected in the hands of dragon rearing families and seldom circulated to the outside world.

Like the Sapphire Duke, he only wielded a Greater Elf Weapon – Wailing Cage Sword.

“Brother, you could use the Gemstone Crown and Eight Dragons God Sword too,” Ach said.

“But I can’t maximize their power, they are after all equipment for archmages. However, you don’t need to worry about me, I have the Bone Dragon Sword and Fire Dragon Lance, which are superior to any divine weapon. Furthermore, the Mountain Copper Dragon Lance that Mountain Copper Dragon Mata condensed for me and Wrath of Thunder are also very good.”

Wrath of Thunder was the dragon lance of the Light Green Gemstone Dragon Knight, Carlo Violet; its materials were likely a mixture of alloys with magic metal.

It was somewhat inferior to the Mountain Copper Dragon Lance.

Both dragon lances didn’t have any additional properties, but their good magic conductivity was enough to unleash the powerful attack of a dragon knight, which was sufficient for Liszt. In daily dragon riding combat, he used Wrath of Thunder and Mountain Copper Dragon Lance, and in real battles, Bone Dragon Vinnie would condense armor and weapons for him.

Fire Dragon Leo could also transform into a Fire Dragon Lance to aid in battle, but Leo had a stronger fighting power in his true dragon form – Bone Dragon Vinnie purely fought in armored form due to her inability to fly.

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In the following two days, Ach followed Liszt around, transforming the terrain of Flame Island. Her Earth Elemental Incarnation was like a map editor, immersing Liszt in the joy of editing the geography of Flame Island according to his own imagination.

In a flash, the festival had arrived, the year of Sapphire Calendar 155 ended, and the year 156 began.

Chapter 973: A large sand table was constructed in the hall of Flame Castle, created by Acherloides in half a day. It was a detailed topographical map of Flame Island, representing even the smallest rivers and towns on the sand table.

However, there were some discrepancies between the sand table and the actual terrain—it contained an additional fifteen crisscross rock pathways. These were the future main traffic routes of Flame Island that Liszt envisioned while studying the sand table, alongside some reservoirs and canals connecting rivers, and so on.

On the day of the festival, knights from all over Flame Island, nobles with ranks of viscount and above, including Yevich who had returned from a voyage, as well as the chief listener from the Moon Slayer Tribe, had all gathered at Flame Castle to attend the banquet held there.

Due to the turnout, the dining hall couldn't accommodate more than a hundred people, so it was changed to an outdoor buffet.

At this moment, everyone was gathered in the hall, marveling at the sand model of Flame Island. They had all seen the maps of the Flame Archipelago released by the Magic Guild, but the maps were far less clear than the sand table.

“So we live here.”

“Here is Flame Mountain, and Jade Mountain is here, where I work in Jade City!”

“Dragon Valley City is here, haha, and you can even see the lead mines, which I'm in charge of.”

“So, we from Xia Tribe live here, but I've already led a team of experts to work in King's Castle. Why did it feel like so many days' travel, yet seem so close?”

“It's a sand table, just like a map, it looks close but is actually far.”

“This sand table is truly miraculous, only Lord Acherlroides could create such a masterful treasure.”

“I wonder if Lord Acherlroides could one day create a sand table of the Legendary Continent. I can't wait to find out how far Flame Island is from the Legendary Continent.”

“It should be as far as from here to the castle gate.”

“Are these supposed to be roads?”

“They must be roads, your highness. Are we building more roads? Don’t we already have several main roads?”

Marquis of Bull Tail quickly joined the group, greeting everyone, then on behalf of Liszt explained to the nobles: “Though the developed area of Flame Island is not extensive, His Lordship already has plans for the overall development. These fifteen crisscrossing roads will be the main traffic arteries of Flame Island in the future...”

While his father handled the nobles who came for the castle’s banquet, Liszt hid in his study, chatting with Acherloides, Chris, Emily, Dimaria, and Sasumit (Holy Tribe Listener).

“At today’s banquet, I plan to announce a plan regarding the issue of title imbalances among the ancient mages. Magicians must be strictly prohibited from obtaining noble titles, but some concessions can be made for ancient mages,” he said leisurely while savoring top-quality green tea.

The Development Committee faced a dilemma—the ancient mages were dissatisfied with the current system of nobility; they wanted to integrate into the knightly title system.

However, the knight system had excluded magicians from the start, with no country bestowing nobility on magicians.

Nobles could support magicians, granting them a good social status, but they strictly forbade magicians from touching the underlying element of governances—the nobility system.

The ancient mages among the Moon Slayers did not understand the knight system well and were unaware of the adversarial relationship between magicians and knights.

During several battles for titles, the ancient mages received only physical rewards and rewards for their children, but nothing concerning titles. This caused the group of ancient

magicians trying to integrate into the Flame Kingdom to harbor deep resentment, often leading to passive resistance.

It is better to channel than to block.

Liszt decided to differentiate magicians from ancient mages: “Ancient mages can also be granted noble titles, but their offspring must cultivate Dou Qi and become knights before they can inherit the titles. Furthermore, once ancient mages start a family, they must change their lifestyle and fully integrate into the knight system.”

Sasumit, also known as Sasumit (Holy Tribe Listener), upon hearing this, inquired, “Seki...”

“Don’t call me Seki anymore; just address me as ‘Your Highness’ like the other nobles do.”

“Yes, Your Highness,” Su quickly changed his form of address. “I don’t know what changing my lifestyle means? Most of the Ancient Mages have adapted to castle life, but the cultivation system cannot be changed.”

“It’s not about cultivation, nor simply adapting to castle life, but a full integration. For example, taking a suitable surname, embracing the glory of knighthood, abandoning tribal concepts, participating in noble social interactions, etc. Su, you must understand that the lives of the Moon Slayers in the forests are very backward; the knighthood system is the bright future.”

“I understand, Your Highness. I will try to change my lifestyle, fully integrate into the kingdom, and become a loyal follower of yours.”

Su was a qualified bootlicker. Having witnessed Seki’s and Biggleswade’s power, he obeyed Liszt unquestioningly.

Seeing this, Liszt smiled, “Three generations from now, I hope there will be no more calls for Moon Slayers, Flame People, Eagle People, or Iron People. All who live under the protection of the Flame Family will be known by one common title—the citizens of the Flame Kingdom.”

This was pure nonsense.

Skin color was an undeniable factor; the Moon Slayers were doomed to be discriminated against and relegated to the bottom stratum.

Hearing this, Dimaria chimed in with agreement, “Your Highness is ambitious. The Flame Kingdom will surely gather strong centripetal force, and everyone will dedicate their loyalty to the kingdom, to the Flame Family.”

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The noon banquet concluded amidst the cheers of the Listeners from the original tribes of the Moon Slayers.

The first batch of noble Moon Slayers was about to emerge, enjoying the same treatment as the knight nobles, except their children needed to master Dou Qi to inherit the titles.

After these knights and Ancient Mages left the Flame Castle and returned to their respective castles.

Only Liszt’s family, along with Acherlroides, Emily, Chris, Paris, and the twins, Lucy and Ruth, remained in the Flame Castle.

This slightly saddened Emily; she had thought Lord had invited her alone, not expecting Paris to be there—she cared little for Chris, the president of the Magic Guild, nor dared to care about Acherlroides, the Archmage. However, Paris, once rumored to be the Lord’s lover, she cared about deeply.

Emily’s look towards Paris carried a hint of hostility.

However, Paris treated Emily with her usual demeanor. She had spent multiple holidays by Liszt’s side and, as his power and status grew, had long buried her romantic feelings, seeing herself as a loyal follower—of course, ready to sacrifice herself if the Lord Landlord needed.

As for Chris, she might also harbor some affection for Liszt, but her thoughts were mostly immersed in Truth.

Lucy and Ruth were brought by Acherlroides. He admired the twins and considered taking them as disciples to teach seriously. Of course, for now, the twins more resembled Acherlroides's two servants, handling some mundane tasks he disliked.

Originally, Liszt had also invited Kenley, the vice president of the Magic Guild, but Kenley was unavailable. Most magicians in the Magic Guild were single and hence lacked a concept of family or holiday spirit, continuing experiments even on holidays, hence she and Chris had to remain for management.

Since Chris had gone to the Flame Castle, she stayed to cover for her.

"How enviable," Levis, closely supervised by Loria, couldn't help but admire as he watched the women in the living room chatting with Liszt.

Each of the women here, without exception, held a prestigious position in the Flame Kingdom, admired by countless knights for both their looks and capabilities, yet they were all spending New Year's Eve in Flame Castle.

They laughed heartily at Liszt's few cold jokes, savoring them as sweet.

As for him.

Outside, he had to sneak around to keep a lover, for fear Loria would discover.

Feeling embarrassed to enter the living room, he quietly left, muttering to himself as he turned around, "Does having a dragon mean you can do whatever you want?"

Chapter 974: Elf Knight The bells of the New Year chimed nine times.

It marked the passing of one year and the commencement of another. Flame Island didn't have snow, so the festive atmosphere wasn't quite like it was on Black Horse Island, but the lively ambiance nevertheless increased.

The number of elves continued to grow, causing the not-so-large Flame Castle to buzz with noise from morning till night.

Chris and Paris had already returned; the still-young Lucy and Ruth had gone to sleep in their guest rooms, and Emily was also arranged to rest in a guest room.

Liszt and Ach hid on the study's balcony, gazing at the gradually increasing number of stars in the sky.

He held Ach close, inhaling the fragrant scent from her azure hair, and the mist in front of his eyes slowly formed into Serpent Script.

“Complete the task, reward: One Dragon Elf.”

With an arched brow and a quick thrill in his heart, he soon regained his composure. The Dragon Elf would eventually be his; there was no need to rush.

He then looked at the new Smoke Mission.

“Task: The time for establishing the kingdom within three years is drawing near, yet the site for the King's Castle has just finished selection. It will take a long time before the Royal Palace is completed. Perhaps it would be wise to hasten the construction pace. Please lay a suitable foundation for the Royal Palace and the King's Castle. Reward: New Species of Red Tree.”

The content and reward of the new task seemed not too extraordinary.

“Ach, do you think the Power of Destiny can be grasped?” he suddenly felt inspired to ask Ach, the Power of Destiny represented by the smoke, visible only to him.

Ach looked a bit puzzled, “Didn't you always say that man can conquer heaven?”

“That's true, one's destiny certainly relies on personal effort, but it also must consider the historical process. My achievements have already become a legend, creating a kingdom from nothing, something that hasn't appeared in many years of the knight era on the Legendary Continent.”



Duchies merged and separated frequently, with families founding kingdoms because of dragon riding, and others perishing when their dragons died.

However, fluctuations seldom occurred in kingdoms, for instance, the northeast corner of the Legendary Continent had been dominated for over a thousand years by Eagle Kingdom, Steel Ridge Kingdom, and Blast Furnace Fortress Kingdom.

The birth of Flame Kingdom was certainly a significant event worth recording in detail in the history of the Legendary Continent over the past thousand years. It will gradually spread from the northeast corner to the far reaches of the continent through the songs of minstrels, and no one knows what tales will eventually be woven around Liszt.

But, it would undoubtedly make great material for many knight novels.

Perhaps Ach, too, as an Archmage rising in an era of the shrinking Magic Web, carried a profound legendary color.

“We both have already become part of a legend, Ach, what follows is merely making the legend more splendid... Once Flame Kingdom stabilizes, I’ll take you to explore the entire Legendary Continent, and then cross the Devil’s Sea to seek the vanished civilization of the Child of the Sun, how about that?”

“Sure!” Ach nodded.

But she quickly asked again, “Didn’t you mention before about conquering the Legendary Continent?”

“Ha, ha, I’ve said many things, but then was then, and now is now. If there’s a chance, we’ll conquer; if not, I’ll just be an adventurer. Maybe many years from now, there will be a legend of the Adventure King left by us... Anyway, the world is vast, and I want to see it.”

“Ach wants to see it too.”

As they were chatting, suddenly a Greater Elf quietly climbed up behind Liszt: “Liszt.”

“What’s the matter, Karl?”

It was the Giant Demon Tuber Greater Elf Karl speaking softly, “Jela and Ash just had a fight, instigated behind the scenes by Carly and Yadi.”

Jela was a Thorn Greater Elf, Ash was a Pea Great Elf.

“Hmm, how did the fight turn out?”

“Karl seriously said, ‘Ash took out a rope to tie up Jela, and Jela raised her palm to slap Ash, but the old butler came over and separated them, otherwise they would have definitely wrecked the house.’”

“Hmm, well done Karl, keep watching them and report directly to me if there are any disturbances.”

“Um!” Karl, assigned with the task, flew back excitedly, wanting to supervise these unruly elves and maintain harmony in Flame Castle.”

“Karl is quite funny,” Ach said with a laugh.

Liszt nodded. “Indeed, he’s a very interesting Greater Elf. If I were to start an elf school, I would definitely recommend Karl as the class leader; he has the potential to be a prefect.”

“But Carly, Yadi, and Jela would definitely not accept Karl’s management.”

“That’s alright, prefects don’t necessarily need their classmates to obey them; as long as the teachers obey, that’s enough.” His two Dragon Elves lacked the potential to be Elf Butlers—Carly liked to run around, Yadi incited trouble, and among the active Greater Elves, although Jela always considered herself a butler.

But its role is like a catfish effect, the bully among the elves, a major antagonist.

At this point, he couldn’t help but think, “The Dragon Elf reward from the Smoke Mission—will it be a wild Dragon Elf or an evolved Dragon Elf?”

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Liszt didn't have to wait long.

The reward for the Dragon Elf was soon clear—Phoenix Perch Parasol Greater Elf Annie had finally evolved into a Phoenix Perch Parasol Dragon Elf.

“Liszt, thank you for your help, I feel amazing now,” said Annie, who had grown to one meter tall and had become more graceful.

Looking at the sleek Annie, he asked, “Um, do you need me to prepare a few sets of clothes for you?”

“Clothes? I am not very fond of wearing them, but now that I am a Knight, Liszt, please prepare a few sets of armor for me instead,” Annie considered for a moment and responded.

Now, Annie no longer liked flying on her own; she rode Little Yellow, Little Red, and Little Purple all over the place, overseeing the bird flocks in the current Phoenix Perch Parasol Forest on behalf of Liszt.

“So, are you going to continue living here, or would you like to come and live with me in Flame Castle?”

“I don't like living in a castle; I am a Sky Knight, and soaring in the sky is my way of life. You go back, Liszt, and don't forget to bring me the latest flavor of Jade Powder next time you visit. Oh right, I also don't need this Fire Dragon Scale anymore, please return it to Leo for me.”

Annie pulled out the scale from Leo's tail.

After successfully evolving, the Phoenix Perch Parasol Dragon Elf no longer had feelings for Fire Dragon Leo.

“Alright then, I'll leave the bird groups in your care, Annie.”

“Leave it to me.”

...

“Annie has also become a Dragon Elf. Now I have three Dragon Elves, nine Greater Elves, more than a hundred Minor Elves and lots of Elf Bugs. Still, it’s not enough, it doesn’t fit the status of a king... However, I have six dragons, hehe,” Liszt thought to himself, feeling pleased.

In a flash, he had already arrived at Moon Slayer Sacred Mountain; Ach was riding Unicorn Charlie, observing the terrain near the mountain, helping Liszt complete the Smoke Mission.

“How is it, have you finished surveying the terrain?” Liszt asked.

“Yes, I have a general idea. Brother, how do you want to transform the Sacred Mountain?”

The Smoke Mission tasked Liszt with laying the groundwork for the King’s Castle and Royal Palace, and by groundwork, Liszt meant the foundation. After several days of thought, he had an initial idea: “I plan to choose a ten-kilometer square area at the valley location at the foot of the Sacred Mountain and raise it, making it at least ten meters higher than the surroundings.”

A ten-kilometer side length, the area would be one hundred square kilometers, more than enough for building the King’s Castle.

He continued, “And the Royal Palace will be built atop the Sacred Mountain. Sacred Mountain consists of two mountain ranges forming an Hourglass Valley, and I hope you can help build a rock platform between the two mountains; I want to have the Royal Palace span across the peaks of the two mountains!”

Chapter 975: Building a Homestead Originally, Li Si Te wanted to create a royal capital like Minas Tirith from “The Lord of the Rings”, a castle integrated with the mountain.

It was that city integrated with the peak.

However, the Moon Slayer Sacred Mountain was not that unique mountain range; instead, it was two parallel ranges twisting through each other, forming a valley similar to an hourglass.

Right in the center of the valley was the entrance to the ruins.

If he pursued integration with the mountain city, it would be difficult to achieve symmetry, so he planned to construct a bridge-like support between the two peaks, incidentally enveloping the entrance to the ruins within the future royal palace. The royal palace could be a complex of buildings, founded on the summits of the two mountain ranges.

Ach wielded magic to reinforce the solidity of the mountains and arrange magic, ensuring the future royal palace was absolutely invulnerable.

Moreover, he had an Iron Dragon and a Mountain Copper Dragon and could spend a bit of the Dragon's Super Magic to infuse the mountains with metal, thereby reinforcing them to become a castle that would never collapse.

The design plan had already been selected.

Li Si Te, riding the Mountain Copper Dragon Mata in mid-air, looked down while Ach, riding Unicorn Charlie, holding the Eight Dragons God Sword, and wearing the Gemstone Crown, began to touch the Magic Web and perform powerful Earth System Magic.

Boom!

As she cast her spell, the earth began to roar. The ground where the Holy Tribe had resided was rising bit by bit. Under the stimulation of the Earth Element magic power, the soil rapidly condensed into rock, forming a continuous, flat, and solid foundation, with only small areas still retaining soil.

These spots were to dig wells and set up parks, and even to excavate sewers.

All day long, Ach continuously replenished magic, constantly raising the base until in the evening, finally, the foundation of the King's Castle was completely lifted, forming a massive plateau ten meters higher than the surrounding grounds. The future city would be

built upon this. The sturdy rock foundation ensured that even a major earthquake couldn't destroy the city.

“Seki!”

“Seki!”

“Seki!”

Seeing the transformation of the earth and Ach in the sky, filled with sacred aura, the distant Moon Slayers could not help but fall to the ground, loudly proclaiming the title of the ancient magician ancestor – Seki, meaning sacred.

“With Ach's current power, she could almost defeat the ancient magicians, couldn't she?” Li Si Te internally admired. The combination of unicorn and archmage directly elevated the magical abilities of the archmage to a level comparable with a Dragon Knight. Superior Magic and High Magic, in essence, are worlds apart.

High Magic is merely magic power, but Superior Magic possesses various incredible properties.

“Hoo!” Mata, seeing such changes, was also tremendously shocked.

It had always thought of itself as the most powerful dragon, the representative of paramount strength, even disregarding the Formless Dragon that could shuttle through space. However, seeing the magical power displayed by Ach had a huge impact—it learned that peak power was not solely in its possession.

“Flame King City, from today, breaks ground!”

“Brother, Ach feels more powerful than ever. Water Elemental Embodiment, Ice Elemental Embodiment, Space Elemental Embodiment, and Earth Elemental Embodiment are all perfectly controlled; next, Ach wants to learn the Wind Elemental Avatar to truly master the ability to fly.” Ach was physically tired, but her spirits were exhilarated.

Personally achieving the transformation of the land and mountains, this sense of accomplishment was no less significant than that of Liszt riding dragons.

“My Ach is getting more powerful,” Li Si Te couldn’t help but stroke Ach’s azure-blue hair, finding it hard to imagine that the little sea monster he had saved had grown into such a peerless figure.

“Brother is not bad either, the Phoenix Incarnation is very powerful. If brother were to ride a dragon, he would be even more formidable.”

“Haha, let’s not flatter each other. You are very tired now; you need to rest well and regain your energy.”

“Yes, once Ach wakes up, I’ll help brother remodel the Sacred Mountain.” Ach yawned; too much spiritual power had been drained during the day, nearly overwhelming the usually energetic archmage.

By the time morning arrived the next day, Ach still had some redness in her eyes when she woke up.

Seeing this, Li Si Te immediately stopped her from casting more spells, “No, Ach, you need to continue resting. I didn’t realize that fully employing an Elemental Incarnation would put such a severe strain on your spirit.”

“It’s alright, brother. Remodeling the Sacred Mountain doesn’t require too much effort.”

“That’s not acceptable. Let’s first focus on getting your spirit well-rested.”

After two days of rest, Ach returned to her peak condition and easily connected the peak of the Sacred Mountain with a long rock bridge, according to the original design. Now, the once Hourglass Valley truly became an hourglass, with just a narrow gap between the two mountains.

“This place is nice, the valley is very shaded, ideal for my dwelling,” Bone Dragon Vinnie also followed Li Si Te there. Seeing the remodeled Hourglass Valley, it wanted to relocate its dragon nest to this spot.

“Let’s not rush. The King’s Castle and Royal Palace both need time for repairs; your dragon nest can be moved after those are fixed.”

“As you wish, Your Highness,” giggled Bone Dragon Vinnie. Virginia, having become a bone dragon, seemed much more open and began to enjoy her life as a dragon, her spirits always high.

...

Standing on the rock bridge and looking down from a height of nearly five hundred meters, Li Si Te couldn’t help feeling exhilarated, “Building the Royal Palace here is like building it in the sky, befitting my stature and highlighting my majesty! I should visit the Royal Palaces of the three great kingdoms for some inspiration when I have time.”

As the legendary Flame King, Li Si Te had very high demands for his Royal Palace. It had to be more magnificent and imposing than those of the three great kingdoms.

“Brother, if you want to hollow out the mountain to build the castle, Ach can help too.”

“Wouldn’t that interfere with your magic studies?”

“Hehe, the future Royal Palace is also Ach’s home. Ach likes building her own home.”

“You’re right, this is our home,” Li Si Te smiled slightly; in this part of his life, Ach was the most important family member, “When the time comes, we will personally arrange the ins and outs of the Royal Palace, making it the most luxurious palace in the world, a beacon of civilization!”

In a moment of reverie.

A wispy smoke appeared before him.

“Complete the Smoke Mission, reward: New Species of Red Tree.”



What a New Species of Red Tree is, remains unknown for now, but one could inquire about it with Mangrove Greater Elf Nami. She is the hardest working Greater Elf in the castle, currently pioneering a new mangrove forest in Estuary City—it's possible that this reward is hidden somewhere within the Estuary Swamp, waiting to be discovered by Nami.

With Nami's intelligence, if she finds a valuable mangrove species, she will surely report it to Ach.

At this moment, a new Smoke Mission slowly took shape: "Mission: Perhaps it has been a long time since you paid attention to the islands outside Flame Island. At this moment, Anchor Island is undergoing an invasion by a strange creature. As the lord of the vast sea, you should go see and investigate the situation of the biological invasion. Reward: Evil Sea Spirit."

Chapter 976: Anchor Island.

Tulip Archipelago's ninth largest island group, located southeast of Flame Island in the external seas.

At this moment, Liszt and Ach were standing on the shore of Anchor Island, furrowing their brows as they looked out at the azure sea, where makeshift, ugly shacks had been erected over the surface.

A creature resembling the ancient Fish Ugly race that they had seen before dwelled within these shallow water shacks. Their upper bodies resembled grotesque fish, while their lower bodies boasted frog-like legs with webbed, split toes, and their hands—similar to a frog's—clutched bone-like weapons.

"Gu-gua!"

"Gu-gua!"

These hideous creatures, possessing yellow-green skin, uttered monotonous yet rhythmic words, suggesting some primitive language.

"Brother, these monsters are so ugly," Ach complained.

She felt somewhat disappointed. Liszt had said he was taking her to see the sea, only for them to encounter a horde of such hideous monsters.

“They are indeed ugly, but what exactly are these creatures?”

“They somewhat resemble the Fish Ugly from the Fish Ugly Temple, possibly descendants of the Fish Ugly race.”

“However, the undead Fish Ugly Virginia transformed into were several meters tall, but these creatures here are less than one meter high, the difference is too big,” Liszt shook his head, saying he had come to Anchor Island to investigate these strange creatures’ invasion, following the hints from the Smoke Mission.

The Smoke Mission’s reward was an Evil Sea Spirit, but he wasn’t quite sure what an Evil Sea Spirit was—it was possibly these hideous creatures.

However, seeing these ugly beings, he really didn’t know how this thing counted as a reward.

These Fish Ugly-like creatures not only lived in shallow seas but also continually migrated onto land. Though they lacked magic power and were slow, their Kirin Arm-strong limbs easily hurled sharp fishbone weapons, making it easy to hunt magical beasts on the shores.

“Brother, look over there, there’s a Fish Ugly magician,” Ach pointed towards the distant shoreline.

Liszt quickly steered the Formless Dragon Bard to fly over, observing from the material boundary the ugly creature magician Ach referred to. It was a rather large ugly creature and seeing this creature, Liszt had to admit, they might truly be offspring bred from Fish Ugly.

It looked almost identical to the undead Fish Ugly seen in the Fish Ugly Temple, only much smaller, standing at a height of 1.5 meters.

Its body emitted a faint light blue magic aura, and the fishbone it held in its hand also rippled with a blue magic light.

It was leading a group of Fish Ugly in hunting a low-level water attribute magical beast – Shallow Water Leopard.

Whenever the Shallow Water Leopard tried to flee, the Fish Ugly magician would release a magic spell, seemingly a Water Magic spell – Ring of Water, binding the leopard. Whenever the Leopard retaliated with magic, it managed to kill one or two Fish Ugly, but even more Fish Ugly furiously pounced on it.

Ultimately, after several dozen Fish Ugly had died, the Shallow Water Leopard was also worn down and killed, then the Fish Ugly magician triumphantly directed the ordinary Fish Ugly to carry the dead leopard to its simple shack.

Similar scenes were playing out along the entire East Coast of Anchor Island.

It was teeming with Fish Ugly.

It seemed that they also organized themselves into tribes, ranging in size from twenty to thirty thousand to as small as four to five thousand, with one or more Fish Ugly Magicians as leaders, rooted along the coastlines and continually hunting Magical Beasts in the forests inland. Liszt roughly counted, there were at least several hundred thousand Fish Ugly.

“Have these Fish Ugly always lived here?” He felt it unlikely, having previously surveyed the terrain here without encountering any Fish Ugly.

The Smoke Mission also suggested it was a biological invasion.

Regardless, these Fish Ugly needed to be carefully investigated. It seemed that the Fish Ugly had lived in the sea before and had only recently invaded the land, judging from the gills at the sides of their mouths, indicating they were originally aquatic creatures. Many nests in the shallow sea were submerged, only emerging during low tide.

“They must have been forced to invade the land from the sea, otherwise they wouldn’t dwell in the shallow sea without coming ashore.” Thus, the cause still had to be sought in the seabed.

With Ach present, diving was no different from strolling.

Both swiftly dived underwater, and indeed, beneath the surface, there were Fish Ugly nests stretching as far as the eye could see. Following these nests, Liszt soon found even larger Fish Ugly nests. These nests housed Fish Ugly that were two meters tall, with more intense Magic Power.

As they went deeper, they found even more enormous nests, inhabited by even taller Fish Ugly, those reaching three meters.

Of course, these three-meter tall Fish Ugly were very rare, with only one or two within a vast area, but it was these different types of Fish Ugly with varying heights that made Liszt realize, “It seems that these Fish Ugly truly descend from an ancient race... indeed, if Ancient Warrior Inheritors can exist, why can’t the Fish Ugly Race reproduce.”

He just didn’t know whether, apart from Fish Ugly, there were also Naga or Mermaids.

The original Fish Ugly Temple, apart from enshrining statues of Fish Ugly, had many Naga statues and a massive Mermaid statue.

While he was lost in thought, Ach suddenly alerted, “Brother, there’s a high Magic reaction ahead.”

Using the Eye of Magic, Liszt also noticed the magic feedback light deep in the sea ahead, the thick glow of Dark Magic Power, a response of Dark Attribute Magic.

“Let’s go, let’s check it out!”

As they approached, he suddenly realized it was a massive creature over ten meters long—with an upper body similar to a human and a lower body similar to a fish tail.

At first glance, it looked like a Mermaid, but its entire body was covered in tumorous growths, with skin drier and more wrinkled than a Fish Ugly’s, making it several times more repellent. The creature also noticed Liszt and Ach, one of its eyes shining with crimson light, the other eye cloudy white, evidently blind.

It opened its huge mouth and spewed a ring of black light at Liszt and Ach.

Ach casually conjured a Water Magic Water Wheel Barrier, blocking the black light, as the Unicorn also galloped in the water, still amplifying Ach's Magic Power.

Thus, even though it was just an ordinary Water Magic Water Wheel Barrier, it still exhibited the effect of Superior Magic, easily repelling the monster's attack.

"It's Dark Magic, highly corrosive, and belongs to the High Magic level, but this creature's strength is much weaker than its appearance suggests," Ach analyzed.

Liszt noticed more Fish Ugly and leftover animal bones around, tentatively guessing that the reason for the Fish Ugly's land invasion might be due to this creature.

So he directly said, "Ach, help me capture it alive, I want to study it."

"Mhmm." With a casual wave of his hand, Ach formed several Water System Superior Magic Rings of Water, quickly binding the creature, which struggled in vain to escape the magical bonds.

It could only obediently be dragged by the magic of the Ring of Water to the shore.

The Fish Ugly trailed behind the creature, apparently wanting to rescue it, but they dared not approach Liszt and Ach, only making "gu-gua, gu-gua" noises in distress.

Chapter 977: Devil's Traces "Do you think this is a mutated mermaid?" Liszt asked bizarrely as he gazed at the hideously ugly monster because he noticed the creature's outline, though marred by an ugly, disgusting body covered in tumors, had breasts and long hair typical of mermaids.

Legends say mermaids are female, possessing perfect breasts and waterfall-like long hair.

Moreover, the Fish Ugly and Naga statues guarding the mermaid statue within the Fish Ugly Temple indicate that mermaids hold a regal status among the oceanic races.

The ugly creature before them evidently controlled this group of Fish Uglies, suggesting a hierarchical relationship with the Fish Ugly race. This implies it was a mermaid, possibly mutated into its current form, with its magic power also transitioning to a dark attribute.

Ach, too, examined the ten-meter-long monster, “Brother, since you mention it, Ach also thinks it might be a mutated mermaid. Dark attribute high magic, tumors, decaying appearance, and the aura of death enveloping it — it is highly likely to be a soul mutation.”

“Soul mutation?”

“Yes, this is a new topic Ach discovered while researching Lich Andy. There is a strong connection between the soul and the shell. A mutation in the soul will likely cause a mutation in the body, but bodily mutations hardly ever lead to soul mutations.”

“So, how should we deal with this mutated mermaid?”

“We should seal it, confine it by the seaside, and then Ach will build a laboratory here to research the mutated mermaid and investigate its origins... As for these Fish Uglies, as long as we control the mutated mermaid, we should be able to command them. Brother, what do you think of using them as slaves?”

“As slaves.”

Liszt carefully observed the Fish Uglies, who were not adept at moving on land and possessed limited intelligence, but they were strong and had a good organizational structure. Once controlled, they could serve as inexpensive labor for coarse work.

Thus, he said, “I think it’s feasible, and once tamed, we could use them for marine farming, which would be much more efficient than traditional fishermen.”

Thus.

The mission to Anchor Island was virtually complete, with the mutated mermaid sealed for future study and the Fish Ugly race added to the taming sequence. Most crucially, the emergence of the Fish Uglies and the mutated mermaid revealed much information that Liszt anticipated — ancient races had not perished.

Thus, the splendid magical civilization of the Moon Empire era might still be lingering in the corners of the world...

...

“Mission completed, reward: Evil Sea Spirit.”

After capturing the mutated mermaid, the Smoke Mission was deemed complete, as it was evident that the Fish Uglies’ invasion of the land was orchestrated by this mutated mermaid.

And this mutated mermaid was the so-called Evil Sea Spirit.

Mermaids, much higher in status than sea serpents in legends, rightfully earned the title “Sea Spirit.” A dark attribute mutated mermaid naturally became the Evil Sea Spirit.

Liszt was very curious about mermaids, but he was not a research scholar. The research on the mutated mermaid would be conducted by Ach, leading the magicians of the Magic Guild.

Fortunately, the news of an Archmage born over the sea had spread far and wide through the songs of minstrels, so many magicians from unknown countries were slowly making their pilgrimage to Flame Island. They would stay on Black Horse Island for a while, perusing less critical documents and regulations of the Magic Guild.

If they were keen and willing to serve the Magic Guild, they might be granted passage to Flame Island.

Those unwilling to comply with the management and serve the guild would be sent back, never getting the chance to cross the Mind Island Magic Gate.

And they would certainly not have the chance to meet Ach for a pilgrimage.

Even under such stringent conditions, large numbers of magicians continued to join.

According to Chris's report from years ago, the registered members of the Magic Guild had exceeded 3,600 people, most of whom were Magic Apprentices, with a significant portion being trained by the Flame Kingdom itself. There were about 1,000 magicians and over fifty Grand Magicians.

If the Ancient Mages, whose research capability was almost zero, were also accounted for, there were more than 10,000 of them, among which nearly 300 were at the level of Grand Magicians.

Although Ancient Mages were far behind modern magicians in terms of spell-casting methods and efficiency, their strength steadily increased as they integrated into the modern magic system. Undeniably, the Magic Dust made from Elves had a powerful auxiliary effect on magic practice.

Therefore, despite Liszt's harsh laws prohibiting the harming of Elves to produce Magic Dust, some magicians still took risks and bought Elf Bugs from some unincorporated Moon Slayer tribes to make Magic Dust to aid their magic practice.

Such magicians, once caught, were executed directly, and their bodies were used for research without any chance of reprieve.

In any case, the discovery of the Mutated Mermaids and the Fish Ugly Race would inevitably attract a large number of magicians to actively go to Anchor Island to conduct research, which Ach would manage the distribution of research tasks, sparing Liszt the concern.

He was now worried about the new Smoke Mission.

"Mission: The discovery of the Mutated Mermaid is disturbing, especially the terrible outcome caused by the mutation of the soul, which seems to hint at some evil source of power in the sea, corrupting the once noble Mermaid species. As the master of the sea, it is necessary to investigate the evil source. Reward: Devil's Traces."

"Evil source, Devil's Traces, sounds a bit frightening." Liszt thought as Ach prepared to establish an Overmarine Laboratory, while he tamed Fish Ugly and waited for a chance to dive.



He himself definitely could not dive into the sea to investigate the evil source and had to rely on Ach's capability.

"What does the mission reward, Devil's Traces, mean? Or what does the devil represent—is it referring to the Devil's Sea, or some unknown creature?"

Whether it was the Sea of Azure Waves or the Shell Sea, they were just off the continental shelf, but the real deep sea was on the other side of the continental slope in the Devil's Sea. In the past, when trying to locate Dragon Turtle Island, Liszt and Ach had approached the Devil's Sea, where the weather was capricious and the winds and waves were violently frightening, making it difficult to navigate.

After that, he focused all his energy on developing Flame Island and plundering the Continental Kingdom and had not surveyed the Devil's Sea again, nor tried to cross it in search of the Child of the Sun civilization.

While he pondered, the Fish Ugly being tamed seemed to sense an opportunity and lunged directly at Liszt.

Smack!

Liszt casually unleashed a Dragon Dou Qi, shattering the attacking Fish Ugly and deterring the other restless Fish Ugly. These ugly, useless Fish Ugly, not very intelligent—probably slightly more than a chimpanzee—barely qualified as a wise species but unfortunately were not obedient.

Perhaps the magicians among them, referred to by Liszt as "Fish Ugly Priests," had strong control over them, making them care not even for their own lives.

But when Liszt subdued them with Dragon Might, they were still reluctant to obey.

Over the past few days of taming, he had killed about a hundred Fish Ugly, yet they still resisted with bloodshot eyes, showing no sign of the submissiveness typical of a slave species. The Fish Ugly Priests were the same, single-minded with no awareness of their inferiority.

Even faced with a Dragon Knight, they dared to swing their bone clubs.

Smack, Liszt feared for his life as another Fish Ugly attacked him, sighing, “To tame the Fish Ugly race, it seems strength alone isn’t enough; we’ll have to find a way from the Mutated Mermaids.”

Chapter 978: Scales Unicorns couldn’t space shuttle, but their speed combined with Ach’s water control ability allowed them to surpass the speed of sound, whether crossing the sea or the land.

Although the Flame Islands were vast, they seemed quite small when one sped across them at the speed of sound.

Estuary City, Mangrove Forest.

As Ach passed by with six Space Rings filled with materials to construct the Overmarine Laboratory, he took the opportunity to visit Nami. The industrious Mangrove Greater Elf Nami was cooperating with a group of serfs to cultivate the mangrove forest in the Whirlpool River Mouth Swamp. After more than half a year of tilling, the area had become lush with greenery.

“Ach, Ach, you’ve arrived,” Nami waved her little hands.

“Nami, look what Ach has brought you, peanut nougat candy from the old workshop,” Ach handed over a small paper-wrapped package of candy.

“Thank you, Ach. It’s so nice, I like this kind of packaged peanut nougat candy.”

“Are you doing well here?” Ach asked with concern, though Nami was his contracted Greater Elf; due to his busyness, he seldom paid her attention.

Nami replied with a beaming smile, “I love it here. I’m building a huge mangrove forest. We already have Green-headed Ducks and Flamingos breeding here... Oh, right, Ach, I’ve found some good things that Liszt will definitely like.”

“What is it?”

Nami led the way with Unicorn Charlie following behind and soon arrived at a new patch of mangrove forest. Nami pointed directly at some slightly different-looking mangroves and said, “Look Ach, these mangroves are a new species, they are native to the swamp and grow fast and possess magic power!”

“Magic power?” Ach immediately used Super Magic – Eye of Mana, and quickly discovered that this small patch of mangroves emitted a chaotic light, belonging to a new species of Magic Potion trees, “Nami, you’ve found Magic Medicine Mangroves, that’s great! Now the mangrove forest can also produce Magic Potions.”

Magic Potions weren’t of obvious value to magicians but were a symbol of wealth and strength to Knights, especially when cultivated by Elves.

The birth of Magic Potion-producing plants by a Greater Elf species was definitely an event worth celebrating.

Ach could imagine how delighted Liszt would be upon hearing this news, so he immediately transmitted a message through the Magic Platform to the Reed City Office to inform the Development Committee—At the Whirlpool River Mouth Swamp’s mangrove forest, Mangrove Greater Elf Nami discovered Magic Medicine Mangroves, send people to promote cultivation as soon as possible.

The Reed City Office was the Development Committee’s workplace.

Without needing Liszt’s personal command, once the Development Committee received the news, they contacted the officials in Estuary City to manage the cultivation of the Magic Potion mangroves.

Meanwhile, Ach also bade farewell to Nami and headed to the port of Estuary City.

Several three-masted ships were already loaded with goods; seeing Ach arrive riding the sacred Unicorn, all the sailors prostrated themselves and respectfully saluted.

“President Ach, the cargo ships are all ready,” Kenley Truth walked over after saluting, one of those sent to assist in establishing the Overmarine Laboratory.

“Then let’s go.”

Ach rode Unicorn Charlie to the front of the fleet and casually waved his hand, immediately creating a massive water current that propelled the three-masted ships out like rockets. The speed kept increasing, eventually reaching a super-high speed of 800 kilometers per hour, sailing towards Anchor Island.

Before long, Anchor Island was reached.

The location chosen for the construction of the Overmarine Laboratory was devoid of Fish Ugly Race members; they had been completely eradicated by Liszt, who, having idle time, tried to tame the stubborn creatures.

But after multiple failures.

He could only pin his hopes on the Overmarine Laboratory's research on Mutated Mermaids.

Ach commanded the magicians as they essentially finished constructing the Overmarine Laboratory. Only then did he pull Ach back into the depths of the sea to investigate the source of evil and to find the real reason behind the appearance of the Mutated Mermaids.

...

The underwater world was vibrant and colorful.

All around, Fish Uglies of various sizes could be seen in groups, hunting fish and occasionally chasing Sea Monsters around. Descendants of these ancient beings, they were full of vitality and showed no sign of decline—it was a mystery why humans had not discovered them over the years.

Or rather, why the Fish Ugly Race that once spread along the coastlines of the Legendary Continent had migrated to the Flame Islands.

Of course, now was not the right time to ponder this question, as Liszt followed Ach and the Unicorn—he couldn't gain the Unicorn's approval, and thus, could not ride with Ach.

“Brother, this is where Ach captured the Mutated Mermaid.”

“Mm.”

It was a lair on the ocean floor, littered with a mess of various bones, many of which were clearly the skeletons of land animals. This meant that the Fish Uglies captured Magical Beasts from the shore to feed to the Mutated Mermaids here.

“Ach, can you sense the origin of the Mutated Mermaids’ aura?”

“No, the water currents are too strong, many of the scents have already been dispersed, and the Mutated Mermaid has likely lived here for some time, so any trace of its migration would no longer exist,” Ach shook her head.

This made Liszt quite regretful.

He wanted to search further into the deep sea, but the underwater world was too vast, and finding any valuable clues here seemed incredibly difficult.

Just as Liszt was about to give up, Ach suddenly summoned a current, which unearthed a scale from the pile of bones.

After sensing it briefly, she handed the scale to Liszt: “Brother, look, this is a scale from a Mutated Mermaid; it’s imbued with a rich Dark Attribute Magic Power. Remember the Mermaid’s Protection Earrings, brother? They were made from this kind of scale, only the aura of magic and its grade were much stronger.”

She then pulled out a pair of azure earrings from her Space Ring.

The Mermaid’s Protection was a gift from Marilyn Rose of Red and White, which Liszt passed on to Ach, but Ach didn’t favor jewelry and had kept them in her Space Ring the whole time.

The gray-black Mutated Mermaid scale was the size of a palm, heart-shaped.

The azure scales of the Mermaid's Protection were only as large as a fingernail, and also heart-shaped.

"The Mermaid's Protection is a condensed version of a mermaid's scale, harboring Superior Magic of the Water Attribute; this gray-black one is a polluted mermaid scale, only having High Magic of the Dark Attribute... Ach plans to sense the Mutated Mermaid scale to see if it's possible to find its migration route."

Ach had this notion because most of the scales on the lower fish tail of the Mutated Mermaid were nearly all gone.

She applied a simple technique, and the gray-black scale immediately emitted a dim black Light, which then pointed in a direction: "There, there are similar scales over there."

Without hesitation, Liszt decided, "Let's go!"

A few minutes later, they indeed found another palm-sized, gray-black, heart-shaped mermaid scale buried in a patch of seabed silt. Ach cast her magic again, receiving another hint, leading Liszt toward a new location. After several repetitions, they had found five scales in total.

"Brother, have you noticed that the color of these scales is becoming duller?"

"That's right, the previous scales were gray-black, but now they've turned gray... Let's continue to the next location, and see what exactly has happened!"

Chapter 979: Mermaid Statue They found a total of thirty-two shed scales.

The color of the scales shifted from gray-black, and by the time they picked up the thirty-second scale, its color had become light blue. The location where the scales had fallen extended to a sea trench, whose edge was at least five thousand meters deep, with immense pressure.

Luckily, Ach's control over water, enhanced by the Unicorn, was near perfect, and he hardly felt the deep sea's crushing pressure.

However, Li Si Te was a bit scared. The ocean here was devoid of any sunlight, forcing them to rely on the light from the Hand Magic Tube to explore the seabed. In the pitch-black depths, strange Sea Monsters would occasionally flash by and launch stealth attacks. Although their offensive power was negligible in front of Ach, they were still frightening.

“Mutated Mermaids must have crawled up from this trench, clearly corrupted by some evil force that transformed them into what they are now. Yu Chou should live in shallower waters; it’s controlled by the Mutated Mermaid to invade the land, indicating that the Mutated Mermaids haven’t been around for that long.”

He said.

Ach nodded, “Then, brother, let’s dive into the trench to search.”

“Be careful.”

“Mm-hm.”

The trench was shallower than they had imagined. About a kilometer down into the trench—around six thousand meters from the surface—they already reached the bottom. The light from the Hand Magic Tube illuminated the seabed, revealing towering cliffs and crevasses, with bizarre little creatures swimming around.

The atmosphere was eerie, with unsettling sounds coming from the distance.

“Huff!”

Unicorn Charlie didn’t like this place, and snorted impatiently.

Li Si Te held a bunch of Hand Magic Tubes to cast light further and get a clear view of the trench’s bottom. Ach, holding a Mermaid scale, released magic to search for the direction of the magic on the scale. Soon, the light from the scale indicated a direction, leading to a fissure on a cliffside.

“Brother, this way.”

“Let’s go.”

Entering the crevice in the cliff and swimming a short distance, Li Si Te was astounded by the sight before him. At the end of the fissure was an underwater cavern filled with statues—Yu Chou statues five to six meters tall and Naga statues ten meters tall.

Two-armed Naga, four-armed Naga, fierce-looking Naga, humanoid Naga.

Some of these statues were half-buried in the seabed’s silt, others had already shattered and broken, and yet others were almost ground into powder. However, Li Si Te quickly looked beyond these statues, his gaze settling on the center of the cave where something like an altar stood, topped with six statues.

All of them were Mermaid statues, each nearly ten to twenty meters tall—roughly the same size as the Mermaid statues in the Fish Ugly Temple.

“Brother, do you notice that there aren’t six statues, but there should be seven!” Ach scanned the scene and immediately noticed something was amiss.

The altar was designed to accommodate seven Mermaid statues, yet there were only six here.

As the two approached, they saw the spot meant for the seventh statue. Although the statue was absent, many palm-sized deep blue scales had fallen there.

“These are Mermaid scales, the color is deep, the magic is abundant, and it’s Superior Magic level magic power... Ach, do you think the Mutated Mermaid could have escaped from here?”

“Very likely.”

Activating the Eye of Magic Power, Ach continuously scanned the surroundings, suddenly discovering at the center of the altar surrounded by statues, a spring with slowly flowing water, and this water was emitting a faint Dark Attribute Magic Power.



After Li Si Te used the Eye of Magic, he also noticed the spring water.

Seeing the dark attribute magic power, he had an epiphany and understood what the Smoke Mission was seeking to investigate as the evil source, “The power polluting the mutated mermaids must originate from this spring. Moreover, Ach, I have a bold idea.”

“What kind of bold idea?” Ach inquired.

“The seven mermaid statues, missing one must be caused by the malicious force emanating from this spring. And the original mutated mermaid probably also represented a statue... Even these remaining six statues could very well be real mermaids sealed into form!”

“Real mermaids sealed into form?” Ach was surprised, then had a realization, “That’s indeed possible. The legendary Medusa, with her serpent hair, possessed the magic to turn people into stone. Maybe these mermaid statues really are mermaids that have been sealed.”

Suddenly, the mermaid statues, originally thought to be quite ordinary, became treasures in their eyes.

In legend, mermaids are far more magical than any sea serpent or nixie, which are merely sailor’s tales with little circulation on land. But mermaids have been a great species renowned since the era of the Moon Empire, sovereigns of the ocean.

“Let’s not worry about the mermaid statues for now. Ach, can you determine the source of the spring’s power?” Li Si Te suppressed his excitement for the mermaids and focused his attention on the spring.

Before his eyes, smoke began to appear.

“Complete the mission, reward: Devil’s Traces.”

While Ach was pondering.

The smoke twisted and transformed, forming new Serpent Script, “Mission: Now that you have discovered the mystery of the mermaid statues, why not reverse the stone seal magic and restore the mermaids from their statues back to their true forms? Maybe they hold the secrets to lost history. Reward: Heart of the Mermaid.”

“Huh!”

Seeing this new mission, Li Si Te could not remain calm.

Even the Smoke Mission confirmed that these mermaid statues definitely were real mermaids sealed in stone, once the seal is broken, there would be six magical mermaids!

No, seven, there was also one polluted, mutated mermaid.

As he shifted his attention back to the mermaid statues, imagining himself with seven mermaid followers, conquering the vast oceans.

Ach suddenly raised her hand, cast a spell, and turned the water in the spring into ice.

The ice still had streaks of gray mist flowing through it.

She did not stop there; one arm shifted into an Earth Elemental Incarnation and promptly unleashed Earth System Magic to split the altar into four pieces, slowly moving them outward. After moving, the altar slowly revealed the dark abyss connected to the spring below. It seemed that the altar was originally built to suppress this black abyss and seal the seven mermaids.

“Be careful, touching something evil wouldn’t be good.”

“Brother, don’t worry, Charlie can sense the power inside this abyss. It’s just a pure special force, with no evil creatures present.”

“Charlie has that ability?” Li Si Te turned to look at the Unicorn Charlie, whose horn was gleaming.

“Of course! Charlie is amazingly powerful,” Ach said proudly. Unicorn Charlie truly was a magical creature that could make others envious.

She smiled.

Li Si Te didn't respond. He was still dissatisfied with Charlie, who forbade him to ride, so he simply picked up the Magic Tube and shone it into the pitch-black abyss.

Chapter 980: Gulvig The light from the Hand Magic Tube illuminated the depths of the black hole, revealing a small altar. In the center of the altar, there were chains composed of Dark Attribute Magic Power, binding a strange and nauseating mass that resembled a heap of rotting flesh, which continued to wriggle incessantly.

“What is this disgusting thing?”

“The Dark Attribute Magic Power is so dense, and it clearly carries the scent of death, similar to the aura on the Mutated Mermaids, brother.”

“I sense it too, it must be this thing that has contaminated the mermaids. There's a sealing type Magic Array around it, perhaps the mermaid race had sealed this rotten flesh here. But then the rotten flesh broke through the seal and infected a mermaid, turning it into a Mutated Mermaid.”

Li Si Te (Liszt) analyzed.

He looked at the wriggling flesh, and although he felt disgusted, he still wanted to go down and investigate. However, before he could do so, the rotting flesh within the seal quickly coalesced into the shape of a beast's paw and suddenly grasped towards the hole's entrance, emitting strong Dragon Might from the paw in an attempt to lock onto Liszt.

“Dragon Might?”

Liszt's reaction was swift as he promptly summoned his Dragon Dou Qi, placing it at the entrance of the black hole, trying to block the sudden burst of Dragon Might and the rotting flesh that had taken the shape of a dragon claw.

But as soon as the rotting dragon claw made contact with the Dragon Dou Qi, it quickly corroded the high-level Dragon Dou Qi to nothingness and then continued its relentless grasp towards Liszt.

“Brother, be careful!” Ach hurriedly condensed magic.

Yet, the quickest to react was Unicorn Charlie, whose golden spiral horn on its forehead shone brilliantly, instantly striking the rotting dragon claw.

Crack!

“Roar!”

A distant dragon’s roar resounded, and the rotting dragon claw was shattered by the light from Charlie’s horn. As it attempted to coalesce again, it was dragged back to the center of the altar by chains of sealing Magic Array, transformed into the Dark Attribute, and turned into a mass of rotting flesh, slowly wriggling.

It was a close call.

Liszt exhaled turbid breath, feeling a lingering fear, and began to reassess the interior of the black hole, “What is this thing that has Dragon Might, and even the sound of a dragon’s roar?”

“This must be part of a dragon, brother,” Ach said, forming a transparent water shield to block the entrance, preventing the rotting flesh from lashing out and injuring someone. “The Dark Attribute Superior Magic is very evident, and it’s accompanied by the aura of death, making it hard to determine its type, but it might be a Dark Dragon.”

“No, that’s not right. I have read records related to the Dark Dragon. Although the Dark Dragon is a Dark Attribute Elemental Dragon, its nature is corrosion and should not carry the scent of death. Ach, you often use the Eight Dragons God Sword and should have a profound understanding of the Superior Magic with Dark Attribute on it,” Liszt analyzed.

In fact, the reason he could deduce such a conclusion was that the prize from the Smoke Mission, “Devil’s Traces,” made him feel that the Dark Dragon, being an Elemental Dragon, had no connection to the devil.

However, the rotten flesh beneath was somewhat reminiscent of the Devil's Traces.

Upon hearing this, Ach nodded and agreed, "Brother makes sense. It seems that this is indeed not part of a Dark Dragon. Then what dragon could it be part of?"

"I don't know, and it's even hard to say whether it's part of a dragon at all."

But regardless, the rotting flesh, sealed in the black hole altar, was undoubtedly the source of the evil force, and its danger level was very high. He then asked Ach to add an extra layer of sealing at the entrance, hoping it would block for a while, allowing them to find a way to dispel the evil force and thoroughly investigate the true secrets of the rotting flesh.

"Brother, Ach's sealing magic is somewhat rudimentary and can only block for half a month. And the sealing Magic Array down there also looks like it's about to be corroded by the rotting flesh, and this substance could break free at any moment."

"We'll take it one step at a time," Liszt's eyebrows raised slightly, "Perhaps we should first bring the mermaids back to life, and then from their accounts, inquire about the origins of the rotting flesh."

"The petrified mermaid statues, Ach has no clue how to revive them yet," said Liszt. "However, the mutated mermaid might be purified of its evil force by stripping its soul, to see if it can be restored to its mermaid identity."

"Then let's restore this place to its original state and head back the way we came."

...

The soul-stripping experiment progressed smoothly, extracting a twisted black-gray magic power from the ten-meter-long mutated mermaid and sealing it into a glass bottle designed to contain souls.

This superior magic would sometimes morph into the shape of an ugly dragon, and at other times, into the shape of an ugly mutated mermaid, which was quite peculiar.

“The mutated mermaid shape must be due to the deprivation of the original superior magic from the mermaid, infected by some strange, malignant force; as for the dragon shape, that must be the biological form of the power itself, a special kind of dragon,” Liszt, the research worker who couldn’t get hands-on, had a strong analytical ability.

“What kind of dragon might it be?”

“We may get some information once the mermaid wakes up.”

As the evil power was stripped from the mutated mermaid, the tumors on its body quickly vanished, the gray-black of its scales began to fade, and spots of blue started to appear. However, it remained unconscious for several days, its condition gradually improving, slowly regaining a hint of the mermaid’s grace.

The upper half of its body had a human form with scaly blue patterns; the lower half was that of a fish tail, growing new palm-sized scales.

Perhaps because of the extended period of corruption by the evil force, the mermaid’s body was extremely weak, overall not fitting the descriptions of mermaids from legends.

There was none of that imperious nobility.

“Its current state is probably similar to Lich Andy’s after the Dragon Soul was stripped away; its body has been hollowed out by the evil force.”

Lich Andy was dead, having been used as a lab rat for a while, he eventually expired due to organ failure.

The Sapphire Dragon’s Dragon Soul had also been fully purified. It’s still declared to be undergoing treatment because the Sapphire Duke is still struggling not to die. Liszt had no intention of returning the Dragon Soul until the Duke was dead—the Sapphire Family didn’t dare to demand it either.

“So might the mermaid also follow in Lich Andy’s footsteps?” Liszt inquired.

“It shouldn’t, the physical constitution of mermaids is much more robust than humans’, and their healing powers are strong; it may wake up soon.”

“I have too much to do, I’ll be back in a few days. As soon as the mermaid wakes up, notify me immediately.”

“Understood.”

...

Liszt didn’t have to wait long; three days later, the mermaid finally awoke.

When Liszt rushed to the Overmarine Laboratory, he found the mermaid lying bare-breasted on the shore soaking up the sun, while Ach communicated with her riding a unicorn.

The mermaid was female; in the statues, the upper half was always clothed.

This mermaid’s clothes had long since vanished, but even though she was naked, there was nothing “indecent” about it—the tumors were gone, but her body was left pitted and without any aesthetic appeal, her face disfigured, and her hair so sparse it was nearly bald.

“Brother, let me introduce you,” Ach began, “this lady is a descendant of the mermaid lineage, her name is He Zhunstost Bragi Grett Valkyria... Gulvig.”

Her name, roughly three hundred characters long, was over a hundred characters longer than the two hundred or so characters in a Sea Serpent’s name.