

## The Mighty 981

Chapter 981: Seas Change Into Mulberry Fields “Gulvig, I shall call you Gulvig,” Liszt stammered in Moon Language, his proficiency sorely lacking.

He could barely understand and be understood, yet speaking fluently was another matter, given how seldom he had the chance to use Moon Language.

Unexpectedly, the Mermaids, an ancient remnant race, also spoke Moon Language, albeit with some differences from the Moon Slayers. Even Ach, adept in many languages, had to guess and infer in conversations with Gulvig.

“You may call me Gulvig, human King,” Gulvig’s voice was raspy, reverberating due to his enormous size, “Thank you and Sir Ach for saving my life, for liberating me from the wicked curse, preventing me from sinking further into evil.”

“Could you introduce yourself?”

“I am a Mermaid. Before I sealed myself, I was the ruler of Fisher Ocean, governing all its seawater and islands, all its fish and sea birds.”

“So you are a respected sovereign. Could you tell me how you came to self-seal, and what the oceans and lands were like during your era?”

Faced with Liszt’s inquiry.

Gulvig paused briefly, seemingly recalling past events, then slowly responded, “Fisher Ocean, Great West Nation, Salty Sea Tribe, Aquamarch Deep Domain, Sea Trench Tribe, Country of Fugitives, Lost Sea—these were the last seven kingdoms of the Mermaids, and we, who self-sealed, were the last generation of Mermaids...”

Mermaid Gulvig began narrating an ancient tale.

Since the era of Moon Empire, Mermaids and Magicians had ruled over the seas and lands respectively; human magicians established a unified empire on land, while Mermaids had scattered kingdoms throughout the seas.

“It’s said that in ancient times, there were two great empires, Moon Empire and Sun Empire, ruling over the Legendary Continent and Mafa Continent. By the time I was born, however, Mermaids were already shrouded by a cursed shadow, cut off from the outside world. My mother sank eternally into the Exiled Lands shortly after my birth, and I also lost the ability to bear offspring.”

Mermaids reproduce asexually, giving birth in their most vibrant years.

Usually, Mermaid lineage is passed directly from one to another, ensuring the kingdom’s succession. Twins might occasionally be born, causing the Sea Kingdom to split into two. As Mermaids also face risks of early death, their numbers have never been robust, with some kingdoms perishing completely.

They ruled over the seas, with subordinates like Naga, Yu Chou, and other intelligent races.

Yet, when Gulvig was born, not only did his mother die early, failing to teach him much, but the Fisher Ocean Kingdom was also on the brink of extinction.

“We were engulfed by the power of the Cursed Dragon, and the seven kingdoms connected to seek help from humans. However, the land was a ruin without Moon Empire, nor was Sun Empire visible, and those great Archmages I had heard of as a child had all vanished.”

The continents turned to ruins, and the oceans were shrouded by the power of the Cursed Dragon; Mermaid kingdoms faced despair and destruction.

The Naga were the first to suffer.

“Though the Cursed Dragon is now dead, its power remains formidable, continuously infiltrating the sea. The Naga were the first to be tainted, becoming phantoms in the sea and residing within the Aquamarch Deep Domain to the east. Even we Mermaids cannot traverse this perilous sea; hence, we named it Devil’s Sea.”

Such was the origin of Devil's Sea.

Liszt finally understood, but he was even more puzzled, "What exactly is the Cursed Dragon? I've never heard of it before."

"Besides the Metal Dragon, Gemstone Dragon, Elemental Dragon, and Sacred Dragon, there are three types of Evil Dragons: the Cursed Dragon, the Shadow Dragon, and the Silent Dragon... However, in the era I lived in, Evil Dragons no longer existed, only the Cursed Dragon remained, since it died over the ocean, its curse perpetually enveloping the sea, causing the intelligent races therein to wither away."

"Evil Dragon!"

Liszt heard of an entirely new category of dragons: the Cursed Dragon, the Shadow Dragon, and the Silent Dragon.

Gulvig continued her somewhat chaotic narrative, unaware of which era she lived in, likely some time after the destruction of the Moon Empire and the Sun Empire. Because she lived in the ocean and had never communicated with land-dwelling humans, the information she knew was limited.

She only heard about the splendid civilization established by magicians from her mother and other six mermaids when she was young.

In her era, the Sea Kingdom faced the curse of the Cursed Dragon, fighting daily against demons that were once fallen Naga.

"Seeing the Naga tribe has been completely annihilated, and most of the Yu Chou tribe as well, to leave a glimmer of hope for the ocean, we seven mermaids ultimately decided to use our lives as a seal to purify the sea. Unfortunately, we could only clear away a part of the Cursed Dragon's power."

With Devil's Sea as the boundary, the coast nearby was purified by the mermaids, while this side of Devil's Sea was still contaminated by the Cursed Dragon's power.

“The oceans on the Mafa Continent side must have completely sunk, at its peak, there were over a hundred in the Sea Kingdom, unfortunately, many mermaids have fallen into demons, alas...” Gulvig sighed, her face wrinkled and uneven, a sad emotion emerging, “I don’t know if my revival is good or bad, is the power of the Cursed Dragon about to descend upon this sea area again?”

Seeing Gulvig’s worried face.

Ach comforted her, “Don’t worry, I’ve investigated the flesh of the Cursed Dragon and I feel it no longer has the capacity to continue contaminating. After all these years, the ocean has enough power to purify itself. And look, this is the Superior Magic of the Cursed Dragon that I separated from you.”

She took out the glass bottle containing the Superior Magic of the Cursed Dragon, shook it, and the magic power inside, condensed into the form of a Mutated Mermaid, immediately turned into a mist.

Gulvig’s eyes were fixed on the glass bottle: “It really does seem much weaker. In my era, the power of the Cursed Dragon was unimaginably strong. Any contaminated creature would irreversibly turn into a demon... Archmage Ach, you truly are a great magician.”

Liszt suddenly asked, “Gulvig, since the power of the Cursed Dragon has depleted, is it then possible to rescue the remaining six mermaid queens?”

“I don’t know.”

“You don’t know?”

“We used our own lives to purify the power of the Cursed Dragon, never considering the possibility of coming back to life, so I don’t know if they can be saved.” Gulvig shook her head. She still felt a bit dizzy, as if waking from a thousand-year dream, opening her eyes to a different world.

Magicians have actually lost their ruling status, Dragon Riding Dragon Knights have established many human nations, governing the continent, now beginning to expand towards the ocean.

Even the “Moon Language” has become history.

Such transformation is unprecedented.

Chapter 982: Bugs Do Not Evolve Gulvig had just been liberated from a curse and was extremely weak, needing a long time to recuperate.

Liszt talked with her for a long time, and although the information Gulvig knew was primarily limited because the Sea Kingdom established by mermaids was collapsing and secluded from the world, some historical truths were still recovered.

Firstly,

during the era of the Moon Empire on the Legendary Continent, the influence of the Archmages was recognized even by the ocean itself; secondly, on the other side of the Devil’s Sea was the Mafa Continent, which once housed a Sun Empire similar to the Moon Empire, another magic civilization established by humans; the Moon and Sun Empires collapsed around the same time.

According to the analysis of available information, a legendary war had occurred between humans and dragons on the open sea.

Taking into account the severed hind legs of the Jade Dragon, legends handed down by the Moon Slayers about killing the Moon Dragon, remains of dragons found in the Dragon Pit Great Mine on Flame Island, and the origins of the Fire Dragon and Smoke Dragon. Moreover, with the Cursed Dragon dying at sea and polluting it, it was clear that this legendary war marked the turning point of the collapse of the magic civilization.

Afterwards, the inconspicuous Knight Class rose on the Legendary Continent, while Druid Magic, designated as the Child of the Sun, propagated in the Mafa Continent.

Due to the pollution from the Cursed Dragon, mermaids, Naga, and Yu Chou were on the brink of extinction, while fallen monsters converged in the Devil’s Sea.

“The mightiest kings among the mermaids, capable of fighting alongside Archmages, are naturally what you call creatures of the Superior Magic level. We, like your human Magicians, mostly draw our Magic Power from the Magic Web. Over extensive periods, the Magic Web has provided us with less and less Magic Power.”

Gulvig was deeply touched, “The last seven of us mermaids thought it was the pollution from the Cursed Dragon that severed our link to the Magic Web, only to realize that it’s the Magic Web itself that is shrinking, making us unable to counteract the pollution from the Cursed Dragon.”

“So, Gulvig, how strong were you at your peak?”

“Far from an Archmage, but those Super Sea Monsters you described? I could easily slay them.”

“In that case, your strength is roughly equivalent to that of a Domain Knight, perhaps even stronger, but there’s still a significant gap between you and an Archmage or Dragon Knight.” Liszt struggled to properly describe Gulvig’s power; she had Superior Magic, but it originated from the Magic Web.

Mermaids were not inherently composed of Superior Magic entities.

In other words, mermaids, as a species, ranked lower than dragons, phoenixes, and unicorns. However, as an intelligent race, mermaids could also cultivate, and a highly trained mermaid was comparable to a human Archmage.

“King Liszt, I’m sorry I can’t help you much with the pollution from the Cursed Dragon and my six sisters, I leave that in His Majesty’s care.”

“King Gulvig, there’s no need for formality, this is my duty.”

“Please stop calling me a king, there is no longer a kingdom in the sea. If you, King Liszt, can cleanse the crisis in the sea, Gulvig is willing to follow you and offer the Heart of the Mermaid to restore order to the sea.” Gulvig struggled to stand up and deeply bowed to Liszt.

“The Heart of the Mermaid?” Liszt raised an eyebrow and inquired, “What is that?”

The reward for the Smoke Mission was the Heart of the Mermaid.

“The contract of the mermaid race. During the era of the Moon Empire, many mermaids had given their hearts to human Archmages, following them and seeking the Truth.”

Ach curiously asked, “Is it like an Elf contract?”

But Gulvig was confused, “Elf contract? What is an Elf contract, do those creatures also have contracts?”

It was now Liszt and Ach’s turn to be puzzled. As the monarch of the sea, it was unbelievable that Gulvig had never heard of Elves having contracts.

“You don’t know about the Elf contracts? Although humans exploit Elves quite often, there are many Elves in the sea that enhance the growth of plants; haven’t you mermaids ever utilized Elves, or do you also turn Elves into Magic Dust?”

“We don’t need Magic Dust to aid in our cultivation; we mermaids are naturally able to communicate with the Magic Web, and I’ve heard that humans like to turn Elves into Magic Dust.”

“But isn’t it cruel to make magic dust from elves?”

“Cruel? They’re just some bugs,” Gulvig said, not understanding.

“How can you describe elves as bugs... Elves are beautiful creatures, evolving from Elf Bugs to Little Minor Elves gaining intelligence, and further evolving into Greater Elves and Dragon Elves, nearly indistinguishable from intelligent species like humans and mermaids,” Liszt was speechless.

It felt like the ancients in the era of magic civilization had distorted aesthetics; they all looked down on elves.

Gulvig became even more confused now, “King Liszt, what are you talking about? What do you mean elves evolve from Elf Bugs into Little Minor Elves and Dragon Elves? I don’t understand what you mean.”

“You don’t even know that Elf Bugs can evolve?”

“I’ve never heard that elves can evolve; they’re just small bugs to me, the most common practice material for magicians. Moreover, King Liszt, I’ve never seen any evolving elves, though I’ve only lived for 142 years, I have never seen any evolved elves in the sea.”

Hearing this,

Liszt and Ach exchanged glances, both feeling that Gulvig was lying. They had encountered Pike, the Giant Algae Greater Elf, around Black Horse Island, it was a joke that Gulvig living in the sea had never seen any Little Minor Elves or Greater Elves.

“Wait a minute, I’ll bring over a Greater Elf,” Liszt decided to expose Gulvig’s lies with facts.

Ach promptly said, “Brother, let Ach bring Nami over, she has just harvested some Magic Medicine Mangroves.”

“Um, good, bring Nami over.”

He was not surprised about Nami harvesting Magic Medicine Mangroves because there was a Smoke Mission earlier that rewarded the new species of red trees.

With Ach riding Unicorn Charlie, the round trip would take just over two hours. When Mangrove Greater Elf Nami sat on Ach’s shoulder, curiously examining the mermaid Gulvig,

Gulvig was also curiously looking at Nami, “Is this what you call a Greater Elf? A Greater Elf evolved from an Elf Bug?”

Her tone of surprise seemed genuine,

as if it was truly her first time seeing a Greater Elf.

Nami hid behind Ach’s hair, expressing fear of this ugly-looking mermaid, “Ach, what is that?”



“She is the mermaid Gulvig; He Zhunstost, Bragi, Grett, Valkyria... Gulvig.”

...

“Gulvig, have you really never seen Greater Elves or Little Minor Elves? I find it hard to believe. Among us humans, although the evolution of elves is a rare event, Little Minor Elves and Greater Elves are not uncommon and are very ordinary creatures. There are also many elves of varying sizes in the sea.”

“I truly have never seen them, in my time, the Fisher Ocean was full of Elf Bugs, yet besides serving as food for some sea monsters, they had no other uses. In my time, the Fisher Ocean even traded Elf Bugs with humans, but that trade has been nonexistent for many years since the ocean was cursed,”

said Gulvig, shaking his head.

And after thorough communication,

soon, Liszt derived a shocking fact—the Elf Bugs did not evolve during the Moon Empire era; the evolution probably happened after that great war!

Chapter 983: Impact Force Elves evolved for reasons yet to be unearthed, the historical truth behind this was a matter for exploration. Regardless, the epic war that took place across the vastness of the ocean definitely altered the course of civilization in the entire world.

But anyhow.

Li Si Te wasn't an archaeologist after all; he just wanted to speed up the development of the Flame Islands, so he set aside many of his questions for the time being.

“I will help His Majesty Li Si Te discipline these Fish Uglies; compared to the time I lived, their intelligence has deteriorated a lot, but the oppressive power inherent in their bloodlines is still effective.” With the command of Gulvig, the Fish Ugly Race, numbering in the millions, formally became slaves.

In the Mermaid Kingdom, the Fish Ugly Race was already a slave race.

Stripping away the beautiful veneer of mermaid legends, in fact, mermaids are dragon rearing families of the sea; the Naga belong to the Knight Class of the Mermaid Kingdom, while the Fish Uglies are the commoners.

Class rigidity was much more extreme than among humans.

However, to truly gain Gulvig's loyalty, Li Si Te needed to purify the power of the Cursed Dragon to prevent recurrence of sea pollution due to leakage from the seal. Now that the sea was Li Si Te's territory, both morally and logically, he had to purify the power of the Cursed Dragon.

Ach stayed in the Overmarine Laboratory, planning the purification.

With the Fish Ugly Race as the labor force, not to mention an Overmarine Laboratory, even an Overmarine City could be easily constructed—the Fish Ugly Temple, a typical structure of the Mermaid Kingdom, was a masterpiece of the Fish Uglies. Of course, in the Mermaid Kingdom, such temples were officially called Sea Sacrificial Halls.

The Sea Sacrificial Hall was a symbol of mermaid authority; at the height of the Mermaid Kingdom's power, Sea Sacrificial Halls were scattered throughout every part of the ocean.

All built by enslaving the Fish Uglies.

“Ach, do your research here, I'm heading back to Flame Island. Let me know if there's any progress.”

“Don't worry, brother, Ach will solve this curse pollution problem.”

“First clear the cursed dragon power in the trench; don't meddle with Devil's Sea just yet. Wait until we can discuss and decide together.” He was worried that Gulvig might coax Ach into dealing with the fallen mermaids, fallen Naga, and transformed devils that were previously Fish Uglies from Devil's Sea.

Even though he didn't know if there were any devils left in Devil's Sea, it was always better to be safe than sorry.

"Ach understands."

So.

Li Si Te, along with Nami, returned to the Estuary Swamp. Nami had to continue her diligent cultivation of the Mangrove Forest, while he planned to inspect the spring plowing.

After each spring plowing, it was a time of explosive outbreak for the Elf Bugs, and he would often take time out to harvest a batch. The elves in the wild were mostly of lower value; only those Elf Bugs nurtured by cultivated crops possessed high value. Even as a member of the nobility, the dragon rearing family could not do without elf farming.

He had barely returned to Flame Castle and rested for a few days when Li Si Te received a message via the Magic Platform from Yevich Water Peanut, sent from the faraway Snowstorm Mountain Duchy.

"Your Highness, I've made contact with the Second Prince of the Snowstorm Mountain Duchy. This Second Prince is currently contending with the First Prince for the title of heir, and perhaps we could exploit his ambition to secretly control Snowstorm Mountain Duchy."

"Go into detail."

"Duke Scora Cicada of Snowstorm Mountain has two sons. His eldest son, Spot Cornflower, has the right of first succession, but his mother's status is somewhat embarrassing—she was once a noble widow who had already given birth to a son, yet was desired by Duke Scora, who married her despite opposition from the duchy's ministers."

After Spot was born, the noble widow passed away soon, and so the duke took another noble-born lady as his wife and fathered a younger son, Scart Cicada.

The Second Prince, Scart, is only four years younger than the First Prince, Spot.

Legally, the First Prince Spot had the right to succession, but due to the issue with his mother's status, many ministers were quite dissatisfied and turned to support the Second Prince, Scart.

Duke Scora was indecisive regarding his two sons.

Unwilling to lose his status as the heir, the First Prince was embattled, while the Second Prince was ambitiously seeking to replace him – thus the duchy split into two factions in ongoing strife. This year, as Duke Scora's health deteriorated, the princes' struggle intensified. To gain support, the Second Prince Scart did not hesitate to hook up with Yevich.

He sought the backing of the "Eagle Kingdom forces"—to this day, Yevich was still under the banner of the Eagle Kingdom.

"Hmm, a cliché drama of brothers fighting over inheritance?" Li Si Te wasn't really scheming; he preferred open confrontation, "What's the position of the Yellowstone Kingdom on this struggle between the two?"

"They're watching the tigers fight from the mountain. It seems that the King of Yellowstone Plains doesn't really care for Snowstorm Mountain Duchy; Snowstorm Mountain is located on the plateau, and it is indeed too barren."

"Let's just wait and see, and support the weaker side in the conflict. Ideally, we could have those two brothers fight for ten or eight years. Then take advantage of the chaos to infiltrate the Snowstorm Mountain Duchy and ultimately, I want to control this country as a foothold and a buffer for the Flame Kingdom on the Legendary Continent," Liszt said offhandedly.

It wasn't a particularly clever plan.

It was basically a general guideline, the details of which would naturally be discussed by the Development Committee.

Yevich replied, “Your Highness, but currently I do not have enough power to interfere with the infighting. The Second Prince is slightly weaker, and he hopes to borrow some high-end combatants from the Eagle Kingdom.”

“I will consider that, and soon I’ll be opening a teleportation array between Flame Island and the Legendary Continent. Then, supplies and knights will be continuously transported there. Tell Scart to rest assured in his struggle with Sakyth, I can even send Dragon Knights to help him!”

That’s how the bigwigs on Earth did it, supporting some in small countries and suppressing others, in any case, just making sure those countries were in turmoil.

It just so happened that Emily’s training had progressed rapidly, her Advanced Dou Qi was nearly complete, and she was close to a successful partnership with the Light Green Gem Dragon Ethan.

She could take charge of the plan for the Snowstorm Mountain Duchy when the time came.

...

The Duke of Snowstorm Mountain wasn’t dead yet, so Yevich was told to keep a low profile, and Liszt quickly handed the matter of the Snowstorm Mountain Duchy over to the Development Committee to follow up.

He leisurely toured the farmlands opened by various cities, searching for Elf Bugs that were in the process of being nurtured.

His training certainly didn’t lag behind, and he frequently visited the Endless Volcano Cluster to complete Leo’s Mind Branding as soon as possible. Naturally, the supply of Magic Potions during this period was indispensable, and he was most concerned about the Magic Potions made from the Phoenix Perch Parasol Tree.

“Your Highness, this batch here is the Phoenix Fire Potion,” Chris personally delivered the Magic Potions extracted from the Phoenix Perch Parasol Tree to Flame Castle.

“How’s the effect?”

“It’s not ideal. Your Highness can personally experience it.”

After drinking a vial of Phoenix Fire Potion and feeling the impact of the Magic Power, Liszt indeed frowned, “I thought the Fire Attribute Mana would be very powerful, but I didn’t expect the effect to be so weak, even weaker than chaos attribute magic potions.”

“Yes, the Fire Attribute Mana of the Phoenix Perch Parasol Tree is very strong, but the Magic Potions extracted always fail to meet the standard.”

“What about the production?”

“The production isn’t very high either.”

“Is it really that useless?” Liszt rubbed his temples.

The greater the expectation, the greater the disappointment. He had thought that after the Phoenix Perch Parasol Tree Greater Elf – Ani became a Dragon Elf, the Phoenix Perch Parasol Tree would achieve much. Unexpectedly, it was so subpar concerning Magic Potions. Now, the Phoenix Perch Parasol Forest’s significance seemed to be limited to attracting Fire-attribute Birds.

“How much was produced?”

“It’s all here, eight hundred vials for the first batch.”

“Hmm, just leave it here.” Although the Phoenix Fire Potion was inferior, it was still needed for training. At worst, he’d just drink more of the Phoenix Fire Potion to compensate.

He took the first batch of eight hundred Phoenix Fire Potions and soon went to the Endless Volcano Cluster to continue his training with Leo.

“Ohoo!” Leo looked at the new variety of Magic Potion that Liszt had brought, and it wasn’t very pleased. It wanted Red Dragon Water.

Liszt raised his hand, “Make do with it. Although the Phoenix Fire Potion is average, if the quality isn’t there, quantity will make up for it. Just go ahead and take your medicine.”

Leo then reluctantly swallowed the Phoenix Fire Potion.

However, once the potion was consumed, Leo’s narrow pupils suddenly dilated, and the evil glint in its eyes was quickly replaced by surprise. It clearly felt that the power of the Phoenix Fire Potion was far from the “subpar magic potion” it had been described as by Liszt.

Liszt, through their mental connection, also quickly felt the effect of the Phoenix Fire Potion on Leo.

The surging impact of the Magic Power was an intensity he had never experienced before, not even slightly inferior to the Red Dragon Water produced by the Red and White Rose Family.

It was more than a match!

Chapter 984: Gorgeous Royal Palace “Formidable!”

Liszt, holding the Phoenix Fire Potion, felt a huge surge of excitement. He hadn’t expected the seemingly low-grade magic potion to have such a tremendous effect on dragons.

Of course, this was limited to Fire Dragons.

After all, it wasn’t a Chaos-type magic potion, and its effects would be significantly reduced for other dragons. However, even so, the Phoenix Fire Potion was of immense value to Liszt, no less so than the Red Dragon Water, especially since among his dragons, Fire Dragon Leo was a major consumer of potions.

“Leo, you no longer have to worry about running out of magic potions. The Phoenix Fire Potion, refined from the Phoenix Perch Parasol Tree, will be exclusively for your use!”

“Oh ho!” Leo was overjoyed, eager to indulge heavily.

Liszt was generous, stuffing handfuls of the Phoenix Fire Potion into Leo's mouth, knowing that these potions could only have a strong effect on him: "The volcanic supermagic of the Endless Volcano Cluster was almost depleted by you, but now with the supplement of the Phoenix Fire Potion, you can cultivate in peace, without always targeting the Phoenix Eggs."

"Oh ho!"

Leo indicated that as long as there was no shortage of the Phoenix Fire Potion, he would no longer consider the sealed-off Doomsday Volcano Crater.

"The name Phoenix Fire Potion doesn't sound very classy. Since the Red and White Rose Family has Red Dragon Water exclusively for dragons, let's rename the Phoenix Fire Potion to Fire Dragon Elixir, specifically for Fire Dragons." He habitually renamed the potion and looked toward the sprawling Phoenix Perch Parasol Forest in the distance.

Phoenix Perch Parasol Dragon Greater Elf Ani, dressed in exquisite knight's leather armor, rode over on Little Yellow.

Behind her followed a large flock of birds, including the Super Dragon Beast Flame Bird, the Super Magical Beast Fire Crow, and the Advanced Magical Beast Red Sparrow, coexisting peacefully and harmoniously. These three types of fire attribute avian magical beasts didn't appear to have any food chain issues, possibly due to some bloodline connections.

Other bird species, even those of fire attribute, would face fierce attacks if they dared to approach the Phoenix Perch Parasol Forest.

"Liszt, did you bring me new varieties of Jade Powder?" Ani called out loudly.

"I didn't find any new varieties of Jade Powder, but I brought a lot of your favorite Soft Purple Jade Powder, take it," Liszt said as he pulled out a bag of finely ground Jade Powder to reward Ani. The more he looked at Ani, the more pleasing she became, capable of both cultivating the magic potion Fire Dragon Elixir and managing the flock of birds.

She was indeed very capable.



It was just a pity that Ani didn't enjoy castle life, otherwise, he could have brought her back to the castle to serve as the chief butler.

Currently, at Flame Castle, the Thorn Greater Elf Jela had always considered herself the chief elf butler, yet she couldn't win everyone's approval; the Man-Eating Tree Dragon Sprite Kali was always running around outside all year round, rarely returning to Flame Castle; the Buckwheat Dragon Sprite Yati, being a foreign elf, had an unstable foundation and had not yet integrated into the new environment.

In short, there was a lack of a chief elf butler.

"So much Soft Purple Jade Powder, I love it!" Ani took the bag and chuckled heartily.

Her influence with cordyceps extended over more than 58,000 acres, making the Phoenix Perch Parasol Forest lush and verdant. The fiery red leaves blended together, forming a sea of fire when viewed from afar.

Coupled with the surrounding volcanoes, the scenery possessed a unique charm.

To cultivate these Phoenix Perch Parasol Trees, Liszt had relocated nearly three thousand people here, establishing a small town on the mountainside—Phoenix Tree Town.

"I hope that in a few years, the Phoenix Perch Parasol Trees will have nurtured more elves to help me expand the planting scale. By then, just this forest alone will be sufficient to supply Leo's consumption, allowing Leo to continuously produce Fire Dragon Overmagic, bringing benefits to the territory and providing an infinite source of energy."

Liszt envisioned.

Brick firing, wine brewing, cement manufacturing, glass making, ore refining, and equipment casting—the energy required for all these would gradually be replaced by Fire Dragon Overmagic. Once the steam boilers are successfully improved, it might even be possible to construct trains and ships; by then, trains whistling across Flame Island and ships honking from the docks would certainly present a remarkable sight.

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With an ample supply of Fire Dragon Elixir, Leo practiced very cooperatively, and the progress of Mind Branding greatly accelerated.

After a vigorous training session, Liszt went to inspect the progress of the construction of his King's Castle. A large number of Moon Slayer serfs, driven by knights, bustled about on high platforms, digging trenches, building roads, and excavating underground passages. The entire construction site was bustling with activity.

"Your Highness, you have arrived." Coming to report was Jomaya Bangtu, who was not in charge of the King's Castle construction, but of the Royal Palace construction.

However, the Royal Palace had not yet begun construction.

"Have my Royal Palace blueprints been designed yet?" Liszt asked.

Jomaya respectfully presented a large blueprint, spread out by several knights on a table, "Your Highness, the initial draft of the Royal Palace blueprint has been discussed by the master architects and has been tentatively created. We were just planning to report to you and seek your opinion."

The data on the blueprint was rather abstract, and Liszt was not much interested; he was primarily looking at the renderings.

The castle rendering was majestic but lacked personality, conforming to the conventional style of castles. It featured pointed towers, grand buildings, tidy battlements, and continuous stairs. Built according to the terrain, it was large-scale and clear-cut, fitting the stature of a typical royal palace.

However, Liszt was not satisfied.

He directly stated, "Too mediocre. Here, build a Mage Tower at least five hundred meters tall; here, construct a sky garden, and also a river and waterfall by taking advantage of the terrain; here, hollow it all out, connect it with bridges, perfect for enjoying the view of the waterfall..."

There was also a high-altitude plaza for docking dragons, a statue covering half a mountainside, an arena that could accommodate tens of thousands of spectators, a bell visible from hundreds of kilometers away, and a fire atop the mountain that never dies.

He listed a multitude of requirements all at once, each one of high difficulty, causing Jomaya's expression to show difficulty, "Your Highness, constructing such a royal palace, we simply do not have the capability."

"Involve the Magic Guild, when necessary, Lord Acherlroides and I will personally participate in the construction. In any case, I do not need a mediocre palace; build it as splendid as possible. It would be best to let the design team refer to the legends of ancient times, considering the grand architectures from those tales."

Despite the challenging requirements set by Liszt, Jomaya still respectfully took the order, "I will contact the Magic Guild right away and find all the legendary grand architectures for comparison before redesigning the Royal Palace blueprint."

"Go then."

He dismissed Jomaya.

Liszt stood on the mid-slope of Holy Mountain, gazing at the interconnected Holy Mountain, his mind still continuously sketching out what the Royal Palace would look like once completed.

After a while.

A knight galloped to the mid-slope, dismounting from afar and swiftly running to Liszt, kneeling on one knee to report, "Your Highness, a message was received from the Mage Platform at Thorn Fort, the envoy from the Duchy of Sapphire has delivered a message at the castle—Sapphire Duke passed away on January 18 at Azure Sky Peak Palace."

Chapter 985: Madam, Please Restrain Your Grief Grand Duke Andrew Sapphire, the fifth-generation grand duke of the Duchy of Sapphire and a Sapphire Dragon Knight, had left this world in January, during the winter of the year 156 according to the Sapphire Calendar.

Having ruled for nearly thirty years, although he didn't have many legendary tales to his name, he was nevertheless a capable and enlightened ruler.

In the last five years of his life, too many events had occurred—the Marquis of Bull Tail's rebellion, the heavy damage inflicted upon the Sapphire Dragon; the invasion by the Eagle Kingdom, leading to the draconic slaughter at sea where he almost met a tragic end; and the eruption of the Dragon War between the Eagle Kingdom and the Flame Kingdom, forcing the Sapphire Family to change leadership...

Despite these tumultuous five years, Grand Duke Andrew had endeavored to maintain the Sapphire Family's position within the prestigious Dragon Rearing Families.

"A formidable ruler has finally departed," sighed Marquis Li Weiliam Tulip upon receiving the news.

The bond formed over nearly two decades of loyalty was not something easily forgotten. Hearing of Grand Duke Andrew's demise brought a flood of emotions to him. In his youth, his father had died in a battle during a Pioneer Mandate, and he had subsequently inherited the title and followed Grand Duke Andrew, annually driving his chariot to the Azure Sky Peak Palace.

Although with the rise of his second son, Liszt, the Tulip Family had broken away from followers of the Sapphire Family and moved to develop in the Flame Islands, he and Grand Duke Andrew had still maintained a close relationship.

Unlike his current heavy heart, Liszt spoke lightly, "Father, hand over the affairs to Dimaria, and let's go together to mourn Grand Duke Andrew."

Although Liszt had once shared joyful moments with Grand Duke Andrew, he had never felt the bond of a follower and naturally did not grieve his death. Moreover, he had withheld a strand of the Dragon Soul of Sapphire with the intent to wear down Grand Duke Andrew, aiming for perfect control over the Duchy of Sapphire.

Compared to Grand Duke Andrew, Crown Prince Anthony's talents were not outstanding, and he could not escape his control.

"Are you going to take the Dragon Soul with you?" Marquis Li Weiliam suddenly asked.

“Why do you ask that, Father?”

“With Grand Duke Andrew deceased, the Sapphire Family will no longer possess sufficient means to navigate between the Flame Kingdom and the Steel Ridge Kingdom. I think there’s no need to let Anthony continue to endure the torment of soul splitting.”

Liszt intended to avoid wearing Anthony down as well, so he immediately nodded, “I’ll bring the Dragon Soul and ensure the Sapphire is fully healed. However, Father, you might talk more with Anthony, have him willingly step down to a duke, and ensure he cooperates earnestly with the military actions of the Flame Kingdom.”

“Are you still going to issue a Pioneer Mandate under the name of the Duchy of Sapphire?”

“Yes, as you know, agriculture takes too long. War is a quicker way to plunder. Moreover, with the deep-seated hatred between the Flame Kingdom and the Eagle Kingdom, I do not want to give the Eagle Kingdom a chance to recover.”

“By exerting such pressure on the Eagle Kingdom, I’m concerned it might provoke a desperate counterstrike from them, risking an all-out war with us.”

“Have you ever heard the story of boiling the frog in warm water, Father? I launch a Pioneer Mandate each year, yet never let the Eagle Kingdom suffer a crippling blow all at once. As long as I keep balancing it properly, the ups and downs will eventually cause the Eagle Kingdom to be slowly stripped of all its flesh,” Liszt said with a smile.

The Eagle Royal Family wanted to pretend weakness in the face of their enemies, sparking a unified hatred among the three great kingdoms.

It perfectly matched his strategy of boiling a frog in warm water; as long as the opposition did not resist, he would continue cutting their flesh, perhaps by the time the three great kingdoms realized what was happening, the Flame Kingdom would have already grandly transformed—maybe even the Flame Family would achieve an unshakeable top-ranking status among the three great kingdoms.

After all, Liszt was now maintaining a pace of two to three dragons a year in dragon riding—neither the Dragon Elf nor the Greater Elf could keep up with the growth rate of the dragons.

Li Weiliam looked at his spirited second son and could only lament in his heart that he was “falling behind,” his thoughts had not been so radical for a long time, “If we are to fully confront the Eagle Kingdom, should we prioritize fostering relations with the Yellowstone Kingdom, and avoid offending the royal family at all costs?”

“Father, I have no plans to engage with the Yellowstone Kingdom at the moment; I just want to remotely control the Snowstorm Mountain Duchy as a foothold on the Legendary Continent... The Grey Iron Duchy is too far away to rely on; the Duchy of Sapphire is isolated overseas and likewise can’t serve as a proxy; the best option is the Snowstorm Mountain Duchy.”

Li Weiliam said no more.

Although he was a father, the power of decision-making was entirely in Liszt’s own hands, and he did not believe his vision could surpass that of a Dragon Knight.

After chatting casually, the father and son walked out of the study and immediately saw Lady Penelope approaching.

“Mother.”

“Grandmother.”

“Li Weiliam, Liszt, is it true that Grand Duke Andrew has died?” Lady Penelope asked anxiously.

“Yes, Mother.”

“Alas.” Upon confirmation, Lady Penelope sighed deeply, “How could Grand Duke Andrew die so young, he was the pillar of the Duchy of Sapphire, and here I am, an old woman, still not yet buried, while he, a leader of a nation and a mighty Dragon Knight, has already entered the grave.”

Li Weiliam offered comfort, “After all, birth, aging, sickness, and death are inevitable, even Dragon Knights cannot reverse them.”

“When you and Liszt go to offer condolences, don’t forget to comfort Lady Sarette for me; although life is hard alone, she still has the First Prince and the Second Prince to look after her... Many years ago, I entered the palace to accompany Lady Sarette, she was such a beautiful woman then, and in the blink of an eye, we are all nearly half in the grave.”

Old age brings a fondness for reminiscing and reflecting; the death of Grand Duke Andrew had a profound impact on Lady Penelope, and she went on at length.

However, for many others, the death of Grand Duke Andrew did not stir much distress.

In the Flame Kingdom, except for a few knights who would mention the Duke during drinks at the tavern, most nobles remained indifferent—they were mostly knights who had sought refuge from the Eagle Kingdom, feeling only disdain and no affection for the Duke of Sapphire; the common folk were similarly indifferent, many might not recognize the Duke beyond their own landlord.

As for the Moon Slayers, they had only found out that there were humans outside their forests a few years ago.

In essence, the news of Grand Duke Andrew Sapphire’s passing did not stir much in the Flame Kingdom; the nation’s construction continued robustly and without pause.

In such circumstances, Liszt brought Ach back from the Overmarine Laboratory. He gathered the ‘Dragon Soul’ of the Sapphire Dragon, united with his father Li Weiliam, rode the Formless Dragon Bard, the Grey Iron Dragon Ornn, and accompanied by the Fire Dragon Leo and Bone Dragon Vinnie, they headed directly to the Azure Sky Peak Palace.

Upon receiving the news, all members of the Sapphire Family, led by Lady Sarette, solemnly welcomed Liszt’s entourage of mourners.

“Thank you for coming, Your Highness Liszt; it’s unfortunate that Andrew can no longer personally receive Your Highness,” Lady Sarette bowed deeply, followed by the First

Prince and Second Prince—without ceremonial confirmation from the sovereign state, the Steel Ridge Kingdom, the First Prince was yet unable to inherit the dukedom of Sapphire.

Liszt helped Lady Sarette up and said solemnly, “My lady, please take comfort...”

Chapter 986: Two Happy Events “Cousin, it’s been a long time.”

In the Azure Sky Peak Palace, Liszt met his cousin Meioubao Taro. As the son-in-law of Duke Andrew, he had certainly come to help at the funeral.

Meioubao bowed respectfully, “Your Majesty the King.”

“Do we still need to be formal? Just call me Liszt in private.” Liszt had a great fondness for Taro’s family, and his brotherly relationship with Meioubao was far stronger than with Levis. “And Angela, didn’t you have a daughter? Her name is Melens, right?”

“Yes, Melens Taro.” Meioubao called a servant, instructing him to summon Angela and bring over their daughter. “It’s a pity she wasn’t a boy... But thanks to the tiny humanoid potion you sent us back then, Angela and I have been trying hard, and she’s pregnant again.”

Noble families naturally needed a male heir; otherwise, the family line would eventually end—there were female heirs, but they were rare.

Before long, Angela arrived, holding their daughter, not yet a year old.

Little Melens looked chubby in her mother’s arms, and it was still too early to tell which parent’s features she might inherit. Her birth had quickly matured her parents; Meioubao had shed his immaturity, while Angela had become solemn.

Liszt could see the love in their eyes when they looked at each other.

That was good—he had always worried his cousin might end up wearing a cuckold’s cap, but now he could rest easy.



“Liszt, during this visit to offer condolences, how many days will you stay in the Azure Sky Peak Palace?” Angela took a teapot handed over by a Royal Palace servant and personally brewed a cup of green tea for Liszt.

“I need to discuss some matters with Anthony and then I must hurry back; there are too many issues waiting for me in the Flame Islands. However, my father will stay in the Azure Sky Peak Palace until the envoys from the three great kingdoms have all arrived, then I will return to attend Duke Andrew’s funeral.”

Meioubao asked, “When are the Flame Islands planning to open to outsiders?” Currently, the Flame Islands were in a state of lockdown, with stringent processes for entry and exit.

“As soon as the kingdom is established, we will open the teleportation arrays, allowing merchants and envoys from various countries to freely enter and leave the Flame Islands. Cousin, if you wish to visit, I can arrange for Levis to accompany you... Actually, there’s nothing particularly secretive in the Flame Islands, but to minimize infiltration from the three great kingdoms, external connections have been closed.”

“I understand. The Kingdom of Flames is still in its infancy, indeed we must guard against infiltration from the three great kingdoms. I’m particularly curious to see the magic teleportation array, a legendary and magnificent magic that can only be revitalized by an Archmage’s hands,” Meioubao said admiringly.

In fact, he was not alone.

Anyone aware of the Heart Reed Teleportation Formation’s existence wanted to witness it.

Many knights and magicians, for the sake of traveling through the teleportation array just once, had unhesitatingly chosen to defect to the Kingdom of Flames.

Liszt casually said, “After Duke Andrew’s funeral, you and Angela can bring little Melens and visit Flame Castle for a few days.”

“Just traveling through the teleportation array once will be enough; we shouldn’t break the Kingdom of Flames’ rules just because we’re relatives,” Meioubao didn’t want Liszt to make an exception. “After the Kingdom of Flames is established, Angela and I will come and properly explore the Flame Islands.”

...

After the luncheon, Anthony finally found an opportunity to invite Liszt into a private study to discuss matters: “Your Majesty, my father left a letter before he passed away, instructing me to personally hand it to you.”

Liszt quickly read through the letter, which wasn’t long.

Duke Andrew mainly addressed two matters in his letter: one was that Anthony would inherit the title of Grand Duke and continue to uphold the agreements between the Sapphire Family and the followers of the Flame Family, immediately announcing this externally upon the establishment of the Kingdom of Flames; the other was concerning the Sapphire Dragon.

Following Duke Andrew’s passing, the soul of the Sapphire Dragon would be missing again, soon deteriorating, and he hoped Liszt would act quickly to save the Sapphire Dragon.

For this, the Sapphire Family was willing to demonstrate utmost sincerity to help the development of the Flame Kingdom.

After reading the letter, Liszt feigned deep thought for a moment and then slowly spoke, “Anthony, the Sapphire Family follows me, and I will not let them decline. The Sapphire Dragon will certainly be saved... This time I came here with Acherloides to stabilize the Sapphire Dragon.”

“Thank you for Your Majesty’s help, Anthony will follow Your Majesty without wavering!” Anthony knelt on one knee, showing his determination.

“Please rise.” Helping Anthony up, he continued, “In fact, we have already extracted the Dragon Soul that was stolen from the Sapphire Dragon. However, the soul needs some time to purify as it has been fused with Lich Andy for too long. It should be purified in half a month and just stabilize the Sapphire Dragon for a month.”

Anthony was overjoyed at his words, then eagerly asked, “Your Majesty, do you think I could become a Sapphire Dragon Knight while the Soul of the Sapphire Dragon is impaired and then heal the Sapphire Dragon afterward?”

He played a good game.

Wanting to become a Dragon Knight.

Liszt just smiled, “Duke Andrew sacrificed his own soul to barely become a Dragon Knight, and you will certainly have to sacrifice your own soul as well. Once I heal the Sapphire Dragon, you won’t be able to retrieve your soul back. Without a dragon to sustain it, you might just die soon due to the loss of your soul.”

Anthony awkwardly smiled, no longer bringing up Dragon Knights.

He himself deemed it a folly and a vain hope, and if becoming a Dragon Knight were so easy, the three great kingdoms would not have so few.

Perhaps seeing Liszt riding dragons so casually in front of him also inflated his expectations, making him think that riding dragons is an easily achievable task.

...

Acherlroides made his move.

With a few simple magic arrays involving the soul, he halted the deterioration of the Sapphire Dragon’s injuries. In fact, the Dragon Soul was on him, ready for healing the Sapphire Dragon at any time.

But Liszt did not want to seem too eager—which might make people think he waited for Duke Andrew’s death before taking action—so he decided to delay. He also wanted to assess the loyalty of the Sapphire family, whether they devotedly follow him or wavered between the Steel Ridge Kingdom and Flame Kingdom, trying to play both sides.

From what he could see, Anthony corrected his stance without harboring other intentions.

Shortly thereafter.

Leaving the Marquis of Bull Tail to represent him, Liszt and Acherloides left Azure Sky Peak Palace and quickly returned to the Flame Islands. Acherloides continued to work on the purification methods for the Cursed Dragon in the Overmarine Laboratory and attempted to reverse the remaining six mermaids' self-imposed seals.

Liszt, taking advantage of the momentum, trained intensely with Leo with the aid of Fire Dragon Elixir, hoping to complete the Mind Branding soon.

Time flashed by.

The page of Sapphire Calendar Year 156 turned; February arrived, and two joyful events occurred in succession.

Leo's Mind Branding was completed amidst Liszt's intensive training, becoming a fully-developed Flame Dragon Knight, only waiting for his adulthood to reach peak fighting capabilities.

At the same time, Emily's Advanced Dou Qi finally perfected, officially gaining recognition from the Light Green Gemstone Dragon, initiating and winning a Mind Battle.

She became the second Dragon Knight of the Flame Kingdom and the first female Dragon Knight in the history of the Legendary Continent!

Moreover, she was a Dragon Knight at the rare age of fifteen!

Chapter 987: Female Dragon Knight The sky was vast and the clouds stretched far and wide.

Emily stood on the huge light green gemstone, gazing admiringly and lovingly at Liszt in his silver-white knight armor, holding a sword in one hand.

However, Liszt's eyes seemed to gaze into the void, his indifference revealing boundless penetrating power, as if he could see right through to one's heart. He uttered no word, only lifted the Ice Soul Dragon-Slaying Sword with both hands and slowly handed it to Emily, then nodded slightly.

His figure then started to coalesce into light green gemstone, growing larger and quickly turning into a towering statue, erect in the center of this world.

The Light Green Gem Dragon Ethan glanced at the statue that Liszt had become, flapped its wings, and approached Emily.

Taking a deep breath, Emily leaped onto Ethan's back, at the Dragon Tooth Platform, and together, they thunderously soared into the sky, disappearing into the brightest part of the heavens under the indifferent gaze of the statue.

“Roar!”

In the midst of earthshaking dragon's roar, Emily suddenly opened her eyes to find the entire world had changed colors, and she could now experience the dragon's vision, observing this familiar yet unfamiliar world. Dou Qi mixed with Dragon Magic Power, refining and exponentially increasing her strength, allowing her to feel the power of being a Dragon Knight.

“I've succeeded!”

“I've become the Light Green Sapphire Dragon Knight!”

“I have not let down Your Highness's expectations; now I am a Dragon Knight, the first female Dragon Knight of the Legendary Continent!” Emily wanted to burst into song, but years of habit suppressed her from making a sound, her emotions soaring as she rode the dragon through the skies.

She would be the one to ascend the highest peak and look down upon all other mountains.

As a Dragon Knight, Emily finally saw Liszt's silhouette, not left behind on the path she silently followed.

“Your Highness!”

Back at Flame Castle, she reported in detail to Liszt about her dragon riding experience and feelings. “Bone Burning Wine suppressed Ethan’s strength, Your Highness’s Mind Branding guided me in battle, and I was able to excel in the Mind Battle, shattering Ethan’s mental projection.”

“You’ve done very well, Emily. Ever since I started training you, I’ve been anticipating this day,” Liszt praised generously. “You’ve now also become a part of the Legendary Continent’s legend. I don’t know if you’re the youngest record holder at fifteen, but as a Female Dragon Knight, you’re certainly unique.”

Emily replied with a demure smile, and for the first time today, she felt confident enough to look directly into Liszt’s eyes, expressing herself without restraint: “All of Emily belongs to Your Highness!”

Her bold and passionate gaze even took Liszt by surprise, but he had faced many challenges and calmly handled the girl’s fervor, continuing to say, “You are not yet of age... As the Flame Kingdom’s second Dragon Knight, you need to take on more important responsibilities but also enjoy better treatment.”

“I am at Your Highness’s command.”

“Then today, I bestow upon you the title of Marquis, and you and Ethan will still be stationed in Jade City. A Magic Teleportation Array to the Legendary Continent will be constructed there, and it will be your duty to guard it. Of course, the Flame Kingdom has not yet been established, so your current task is to assist in the construction of the territory.”

“I understand!” Emily’s gaze was fiery, but having become a Dragon Knight didn’t make her haughty—the more she understood the Dragon Knight’s power, the more she realized Liszt’s unfathomable depth.

A knight who rode six dragons was undoubtedly an incredible existence unparalleled throughout history.

...

In Flame Castle, Liszt gathered a large number of nobles to celebrate Emily’s successful dragon riding.

At the banquet, flattery washed over the attendees like a tide; everyone knew that a new great Noble had risen, one whose brilliance in the Flame Kingdom was second only to Liszt and Ach.

Dragon Knights were humans at the pinnacle of power, and though Emily stood solitary, she was far too young and had ample time to establish a new great Noble family—a Dragon Rearing Family was not enough, after all, the dragons were owned by Liszt, and she was merely a Dragon Rider, not the owner of the dragons.

Of course.

Most Nobles didn't think Emily would establish a family; they all already considered Emily to be a part of the Flame Family. No one dared to speculate about the selection of the Queen, nor did anyone dare to pursue Emily. This world practiced monogamy, but the strong were inherently above the rules.

In the Flame Kingdom, no rules could restrain Liszt; he was not a king by heritage but a founder of a kingdom, a Dragon Knight of six dragons.

He was one who alone had challenged five Dragon Knights and emerged triumphant.

“Marquis Emily's Dragon Knight glory is inseparable from her diligent struggle. And the esteemed individuals here are the foundation of the Flame Kingdom, and you must devote yourselves to nurturing your offspring, discovering talents, actively participating, and supporting the Dragon Knight training program,” Liszt raised his goblet, “I hope that one day in the future, our Kingdom will see the birth of more Dragon Knights! My Lords, I invite you to drink with me!”

The Nobles all raised their goblets: “May Your Majesty's glory be upon us, we shall wholeheartedly support the Dragon Knight training program!”

“Come, let us raise our glasses together once more to celebrate Marquis Emily's successful Dragon Riding!”

“To Princess Emily, congratulations!”

“To Princess Emily, congratulations!”

Pontlesi joined all the Nobles in raising his goblet, loudly congratulating the young, beautiful Flame Person and Dragon Rider, with eyes full of envy.

He was a Moon Slayer Native, once the Listener of the Luo Tribe, and had been suppressed for leading his tribe in resistance against the Knight’s conquest. However, his daughter Hippolyta had earned His Majesty the King’s favor by protecting several Elves, which allowed him to be released without charges and join the ranks of the Nobility.

Now having distinguished himself and been knighted as a Viscount, he was fortunate to be invited to the celebration feast.

“West, to be a Dragon Knight, it’s so majestic!” his Noble friend excitedly whispered in his ear, “Magicians, no, no, it’s the Dragon Knights who are truly majestic!”

Pontlesi replied, “Larmote, you could train your son to become a powerful Knight and join the Dragon Knight training program; perhaps one day he, too, could become a Dragon Knight esteemed above all.” The other man was also a Moon Slayer Native, a Listener of a medium-sized tribe, and now also a Viscount.

Larmote shook his head with a sigh: “My son won’t do, his talent isn’t excellent enough, and he’s still far from becoming an Earth Knight after a year at school.”

But he then spoke with renewed excitement: “However, your daughter, Hippolyta, she’s very talented. Nurture her well, and she might become a Dragon Knight, bringing pride to the Moon Slayers!”

“Larmote, her name is Hippolyta, don’t use the nickname ‘T’ anymore. His Majesty wishes for us to integrate into the Flame Kingdom as quickly as possible. Although we haven’t chosen a suitable surname yet, we must gradually get used to the names; only in this way can we become Nobles who continue to pass down their lineage.”

“Sorry, it just slipped out, I will correct it,” Larmote took a sip of Fresh Flower Brew, “Pontlesi, raise Hippolyta well!”

“She’s just a girl.”



“Dragon Rider, is a girl too, I have high hopes for Hippolyta, she’s outstanding!”

Talking about his daughter, pride involuntarily surfaced on Pontalesi’s face; after only a year of training in Dou Qi at the Knight School, she had already become an Earth Knight. He didn’t dare to hope that Hippolyta would become the next Dragon Knight—that was too miraculous—but as long as his daughter became a Sky Knight, he would be completely satisfied.

After all.

He only had Hippolyta as a daughter—the Moon Slayers did not favor sons over daughters, as women were just as likely, if not more so, to become Magicians.

Chapter 988: “Hi, Hippolyta, did you know? The genius girl, Princess Emily, has already been promoted to Dragon Knight!”

Just after the knight training class ended, Hippolyta received astonishing news from her little friend: the second most popular female idol among all women in the Flame Islands, who was also the Thunderous Sword Saint, had become the second Dragon Knight in the Flame Kingdom, and the world’s first female Dragon Knight.

“Really?” Hippolyta, with her wheat-colored skin, widened her eyes.

She had two idols; the first was the great Archmage who rode the Holy Unicorn, Seki, unmatched in the hearts of the Moon Slayers!

The second was naturally Emily, the genius girl, only two years older than herself, yet already a renowned Sword Saint.

Who could have thought that just after the New Year had passed, this incredibly young Thunderous Sword Saint had already become a great Dragon Knight, and could also be addressed as a Seki.

“Of course, it’s true. I learned it from the substitute teacher. Originally, the vice-principal was supposed to give us a lesson on ideology, but he took a leave of absence. The teacher told us that the vice-principal went to attend a banquet held by His Majesty at the Flame Castle, celebrating Lady Emily becoming a Dragon Knight.”

As if just remembering something, the little friend hurriedly added: “Now, we cannot just say Lady Emily, we should say Princess Emily.”

“That’s amazing, I really wish I could be as outstanding as Princess Emily!” Hippolyta said enviously.

“You are quite remarkable yourself, among all the Earth Knights in our school, you are the youngest. It took you only one year to become an Earth Knight, and many people are envious of you. Oh, right, I heard that Princess Emily also became an Earth Knight in one year.”

“Oh, I’m not the same as Princess Emily, since I had practiced Magic from a young age and my body was responsive to Magic Power. After switching to practicing Dou Qi, I started as an Apprentice Knight. Princess Emily, however, was originally a common serf and had nothing, yet she became an Earth Knight within a year!”

Emily’s story was legendary and suitable for spreading.

Of course, much of it was promoted by Liszt to establish a role model to attract young people to train vigorously. The effect was very good, as almost all the girls idolized Emily, second only to their admiration for Archmage Archy.

Hippolyta was very humble in her speech, not daring to compare herself with Emily.

But in her heart, she deeply aspired to become the next Emily.

After the afternoon’s cultural classes were over, she packed up and hurriedly left the Royal Academy—this was a new school formed after the New Year, training talented students sent from various places. Most were of noble birth, but there were also a few from common backgrounds, and Liszt had stipulated that students of common birth should not be less than 30% of the total.

She returned home.

Her father, Viscount Pontlesi, had already come back. As a Grand Magician among the Ancient Mages, specializing in Earth System Magic, his job involved water conservation projects.

“Hippolyta, you’re back.”

“Father, has Princess Emily really become a Dragon Knight?” Hippolyta couldn’t help but ask again, still feeling slightly skeptical about the news—a fifteen-year-old Dragon Knight, three years younger than the great King when he was promoted to Dragon Knight.

How could it be possible!

“You already knew? Yes, Princess Emily has indeed become a Dragon Knight. I just returned from attending the Dragon Knight’s celebration banquet at the Flame Castle.”

Assured, Hippolyta had no more doubts, leaving only astonishment: “That’s incredible, a Dragon Knight, father, what does Princess Emily look like? Is she very tall and strong?”

“Princess Emily looks like an ordinary person, but she is very tall and beautiful, and her radiance is only slightly less than that of His Majesty the King,” Pontlesi tried his best to describe—in the eyes of ordinary people, Dragon Knights are all radiant, with a demeanor and aura that is sacred and inviolable.

Listening to the greatness of Dragon Knights, Hippolyta felt an infinite desire. “Father, do you think I could become a Dragon Knight?”

“You?...” Pontlesi couldn’t help but recall the words of his good friend Larmote as he looked at his daughter who had grown up. He replied with relief, “As long as you try hard, father believes you also have a chance to become a Dragon Knight, the glory of the Moon Slayers.”

“Yes, I must try hard!” Hippolyta clenched her fist to motivate herself, but soon added, “Father, my teacher said that we are all citizens of the Flame Kingdom, there is no distinction between Moon Slayers and Flame People, we are all children of His Majesty the King.”

Pontlesi smiled and said, “Ha ha, father misspoke.”

Yet in his heart, he sighed silently. Although the Moon Slayers had long resided in the primeval forest and were far behind in civilization, it didn't mean they lacked intelligent people. He was well aware of the Flame Kingdom's policy to completely erase the Moon Slayer's culture and integrate them into the Knight system, so that in a few generations, no one would likely remember the Moon Slayers anymore.

Nevertheless,

he didn't oppose this policy, as he had become a noble within the Knight system. As long as his own family prospered, who cared whether those serf Moon Slayers lived or died.

...

When Emily became a Dragon Knight, Liszt felt his burdens lighten considerably.

The young girl could represent him in suppressing the Flame Islands, and she could also handle some diplomatic occasions on his behalf. This allowed Liszt more free time, to go wherever he wanted.

"Internal affairs will be managed by the Development Committee, and external affairs by Emily, how delightful!"

He rode on Fire Dragon Leo and the Formless Dragon Bard, and hurriedly headed to the Overmarine Laboratory on Anchor Island to meet with Archy.

Since Leo had taken the Fire Dragon Elixir, it no longer needed to stay at the Endless Volcano Cluster and train all the time, just occasionally returning to harvest some Volcanic Super Magic. Now its main responsibility was combat, and developing various battle techniques with Liszt to enhance their strength.

"With Leo's wingspan reaching fifty meters, his strength was almost on par with the Mountain Copper Dragon Mata. It's hard to imagine how potent his strength will become once he reaches a hundred-meter wingspan upon adulthood."

Liszt often marveled at Leo's growth.

Elemental Dragons, usually evil dragons, were hard to slaughter due to their great strength. But so far, aside from Leo, the three major kingdoms' regions had not spawned another Fire Dragon. However, Light Dragons, Earth Dragons, Water Dragons, and other evil dragons had clear distribution records, mostly within the Wild Forest.

As long as evil dragons didn't attack humans, the three major kingdoms were too lazy to form dragon-slaying squads to kill these dragons—simply because evil dragons were not of great value.

Firstly, they were untamable; second, they produced no resources; and third, the dissipation of their Super Magic could cause vast geographical disasters.

For example, a Magician who once fought a Wind Dragon left behind Windhowl Valley, where the winds shrieked endlessly. Except for magicians who went there to admire the Magician's historical trace, no one could live nearby.

Riding on the Fire Dragon, Liszt made countless people across the three major kingdoms envious—they wondered how someone could conquer an Elemental Dragon from a young age. Although Elemental Dragons produced no resources, their formidable combat power was enough to make people envious. Unfortunately, their envy was useless, as Liszt continued to ride dragons, deterring everyone.

The wind howled.

He soon reached Anchor Island, and from afar saw the Overmarine Laboratory erected above the ocean—constructed day and night by the Fish Ugly Race, this laboratory was like a palace on the sea.

The palace's base was a rock platform condensed by Archy using Earth Elemental Incarnation, while the Fish Uglys were responsible for carving and decorating. Using bone tools, their arms were as strong as Kirin arms, and they carved rocks much faster than human serfs. It had to be admitted, these ugly and slovenly low-intelligence creatures possessed incredible architectural talent.

"I must acquire the Heart of the Mermaid; these Fish Uglys are naturally the most suitable laborers, millions of free laborers must be controlled!"

Chapter 989: Heart of the Mermaid "Your Majesty Liszt."

“Gulvig, how has your recovery been?”

“Thank you for your concern, Your Majesty. I cannot fight yet, but deep-sea swimming is no problem now.” The immense mermaid, Gulvig, whose body’s pits and indentations were healing at a visible rate, looked much more pleasant to the eye and slightly resembled the true elegance of a mermaid.

Liszt smiled and nodded, “That’s good to hear, having a healthy body is essential to enjoying this beautiful life.”

“A beautiful life... I just hope to purify the ocean soon, so that countless souls, fallen under the pollution of the Cursed Dragon, can be freed from their agony.”

“Don’t worry, everything will get better.”

After chatting briefly with Gulvig, Liszt entered the palace-like Overmarine Laboratory. This magnificently grand building looked rougher on the inside. Yu Chou’s artistic sense wasn’t rich enough; the traces of chiseling were too pronounced, and it lacked symmetrical beauty.

This made Liszt instantly think that in future constructions, Yu Chou would handle the construction and serfs the decoration.

“Your Highness, you’ve arrived,” greeted Kenley, the vice president of the Magic Guild—The Flame Kingdom had not yet been established, so the way people addressed Liszt was somewhat chaotic; most people still addressed him as “Your Highness,” while a few had started calling him “Your Majesty,” without any uniform standard.

He didn’t mind, though; whether “Your Highness” or “Your Majesty” was all the same to him.

“Where’s Ach?” he asked.

“Lord Acherloides is in the lab conducting experiments, please follow me,” said Kenley as she led the way and reported on their experimental progress. “During the days you were gone, Your Highness, the laboratory has preliminarily completed the purification experiment of the curse’s power. Lord Acherloides is now refining the processes.”

“So, the complete purification of the curse’s power will be achieved soon?”

“Yes, it isn’t very difficult.”

“Is it not? The ancient mermaids tried all they could but failed to achieve this.”

“Their technological concepts were too outdated. Though the Magic Web is declining, magic technology continues to innovate, and our era’s understanding of Truth far exceeds that of the ancient times. Moreover, Lord Acherlroides always brings continuous streams of ideas that help expand our horizons.”

Ach was indeed great, significantly advancing magic technology.

However, Liszt was also proud because many of these new ideas had come from him. Without the knowledge he taught Ach, the magicians here might still be stuck in an outdated understanding, unaware of what the universe, planets, or gravity were.

He inquired, “So, has the experiment to reverse the sealing been completed?”

“The experimental plan has been designed by Lord Acherlroides. It mainly draws on the method that used the curse’s power to contaminate Gulvig, forming a concept of reverse petrification. However, some steps in the experiment still need practical verification; it might take a few more days.”

“Understood.”

Upon reaching the largest laboratory, Liszt saw Ach leading a group of magicians, tinkering with a huge Magic Array. In the center of the Magic Array, a mass of black mist continuously changed shape, the power of the Cursed Dragon stripped from Gulvig.

When the experiment concluded, Ach personally briefed Liszt on the theoretical aspects of the experiment—a complex string of ideas which, in the end, Liszt admitted he hadn’t grasped fully.

However, that didn't prevent him from nodding seriously, "If the solution works, then let's use your design to purify the cursed power."

...

Three days later.

Everything was ready.

Ach rode Unicorn Charlie, and Gulvig carried Liszt, diving toward the altar discovered in the sea trench. Although Gulvig had not yet recovered her combat abilities, as a ruler of the seas, the mermaid's ability to control water was no weaker than that of a Sea Serpent, allowing Liszt to breathe steadily underwater.

And fearlessly withstand the deep sea's pressure.

The trio quickly dived into the trench and found an opening to enter the sealed altar. Six mermaid statues still towered around the altar, each twenty meters tall. Upon a close look, these statues bore significant differences from real stone statues—they possessed a certain "liveliness," vividly lifelike.

Gulvig swam up to one statue, gently caressing its face, her eyes expressing complex emotions. It was as if she was reminiscing about her past life and lamenting the changes that had occurred.

She murmured the other's name, "Krusteka Tedyo Yufuski Winnika... Eternia, we shall truly be reunited soon."

More than three hundred Moon Language words formed her name, which she painstakingly recited for quite a while.

Then she moved to the second statue, muttering similarly, "Komminis Podolski Aktaiwon Dieyoni... Bluposi."

"... Tibidais."



“... Sharivara.”

“... Viswinti.”

“... Cocolix.”

Each of the six mermaids’ names comprised over three hundred words from the Moon Language, and it was impressive that the orphan Wendy could still remember them without forgetting.

However, Liszt only remembered the last name of each mermaid—Eternia, Bluposi, Tibidais, Sharivara, Viswinti, Cocolix. He planned to force these mermaids to change their names after obtaining the Heart of the Mermaid, forbidding the use of their original lengthy names.

At that moment.

Acherloides had already split open the altar, revealing a pitch-black abyss below, then set up a Magic Array to channel the Cursed Dragon’s power and bind it with the Magic Array.

“Roar!”

The dragon’s roar echoed in Liszt’s mind and around his ears, the rotting flesh-like power of the Cursed Dragon burst out and collided within the confines of the Magic Array. It then transformed into dragon claws, wildly clawing at its surroundings, but under the strong restraint of the Magic Array, it was continuously dispersed and purified, the accompanying black mist becoming thinner and thinner.

Ultimately.

The mass of rotting flesh was purified of all its mist and could no longer coalesce into rampaging dragon claws. It slowly formed into the image of a dragon, moving slowly within the Magic Array.

The dragon was grayish-brown in color, its slender body resembling a snake, and its wings like a skeletal frame. The entire body was just scales covering bones, virtually devoid of any flesh, somewhat similar to the Nergigante from “Monster Hunter,” most notably at the connection of its neck and body, which also featured a Dragon Tooth Platform.

“This dragon can also be ridden!” Liszt’s pupils dilated slightly, his thoughts unknown, but his heart filled with desire—he still craved dragons despite already having six.

“Your Majesty Liszt, Lord Acherlroides is about to reverse the petrification of the mermaid statues. We should move further back to avoid affecting Lord Acherlroides’s spellcasting.”

“Okay.”

He rode on Gulvig’s shoulder, moving farther away. Mermaids lacked something like a Dragon Tooth Platform, so he could only grab onto her hair to stabilize himself. Fortunately, as Gulvig was trying to integrate into human life, she had made a skin-tight suit of fish scales with the scales returned to her to avoid exposure.

With the Eye of Magic employed, Liszt closely observed how Acherlroides reversed the petrification of the statues.

The Magic Array divided the small dragon, transformed from the Cursed Dragon’s power, into six parts, then swiftly channeled these six parts into the mermaid statues. Moments later, these forces seeped out from the statues and recombined into an even smaller Cursed Dragon—clearly a lot of power was consumed in the reversal process.

Acherlroides then took out a carefully crafted glass bottle, collected the Cursed Dragon into the bottle, and then dismantled the Magic Array, retrieving some of the still usable materials.

“Is it done, Acherlroides?” Liszt asked as he moved back near the statues with Gulvig.

Acherlroides nodded with a smile, “All done, brother. Now we just wait for the stone seals of the statues to be melted by the power of the Cursed Dragon, and they will regain their flesh.”

“How long will it take?”

“It might take a few days.”

Immediately, Gulvig spoke up, “Your Majesty Liszt, Lord Acherlroides, I will stay to protect them. Once they are restored, I will bring them back to Anchor Island and offer you the Heart of the Mermaid... As for now, please accept Gulvig’s Heart of the Mermaid.”

Saying this.

She held her chest with both hands, and soon, a pulsing, translucent crystal-blue heart leaped out, landing in her hands before she presented it to Liszt.

Liszt, looking at the Heart of the Mermaid, which was much larger than his own, was somewhat at a loss, “So, Gulvig, what should I do next?”

Chapter 990: Commanding the Seas “Your Majesty just needs to touch it,” Gulvig said with a smile.

“Ah, like this?” Liszt reached out and gently touched the Heart of the Mermaid. Instantly, the Heart of the Mermaid popped like a bubble with a cracking sound, and then burst into nothingness.

A feeling of kinship rose in his heart, as if an intangible connection had been established between him and the mermaid Gulvig. At the same time, he immediately understood the significance of the Heart of the Mermaid. It was a follower’s pact, not very binding, and could be severed at any time.

Its primary function was communication, allowing the contracting parties to contact each other from great distances.

Moreover, the leading party of the Heart of the Mermaid’s contract, which was Liszt’s side, could use the power of the contract to command the Naga Species and the Fish Ugly Race.

It also allowed him to receive the protection of the sea, to breathe freely and move freely in the water without the pressure of the seawater affecting him. In other words, he no longer needed Ach or the mermaids’ assistance to live underwater.

“A very practical contract.” After understanding the capabilities of the contract, Liszt smiled, “But it seems there isn’t much point in accepting so many Hearts of the Mermaid. It appears that just one Heart of the Mermaid is enough to gain the sea’s protection and command the Naga and the Fish Ugly.”

Gulvig explained softly, “Your Majesty, the power of a single contract is weak; the more contracts you have, the greater the benefits you’ll receive. In the era of the Moon Empire, a great Archmage once had the following of a hundred mermaids, and with the power he gained from the contracts, he could part the sea to reveal the dry seabed.”

“That powerful?”

“Yes, it’s just a pity that in this era there are only about seven of us mermaids left, and we cannot provide you with much power from the contracts.”

“If that’s the case,” Liszt looked at Ach and made a decision, “I will contract only with you, Gulvig, and let Ach contract the remaining six mermaids to enhance her abilities.”

Seven contracts would not create a qualitative change, and the simple protection of the sea and command over the Fish Ugly were already his, so there was no need to contract so many Hearts of the Mermaid. After all, he was human and preferred living on land; he did not enjoy soaking in the great seas, as riding dragons and soaring through the skies was his true path.

Ach shook her head, “Brother, Ach does not need the assistance of the Heart of the Mermaid either. Contracting with a single mermaid to command the Fish Ugly and incidentally study the secrets of contract magic will suffice. Brother, you are the King of the Flame Kingdom; let the mermaids follow you instead.”

Seeing the two of them pushing the responsibility back and forth, Gulvig suddenly felt very disheartened.

“Has the era really changed...” Mermaids were the sovereigns of the sea, and when she was young, she heard that human Archmages would go to great lengths just to contract with a single mermaid. Yet now that the contract was before them, there were those who were pushing it away as if reluctant.

She deeply felt that the times had indeed changed.

...

Four days of waiting.

The six mermaid statues gradually melted from their petrified state into flesh and blood.

On the fourth day, Viswinti was the first to awaken, her gaze bewildered as she looked around her. Informed by Gulvig of the events of the past few days, Viswinti, recognizing the purified altar, solemnly presented her Heart of the Mermaid to Ach.

Afterward, Eternia, Bluposi, Tibidais, Sharivara, and Cocolix all awakened one after another and offered their Hearts of the Mermaid to Liszt.

The power from the six contracts made Liszt feel even closer to the sea, allowing him to move freely without any pressure from the seawater. He breathed easily and even had a keen sense of the currents, enabling him to detect disturbances far away while underwater. His Dou Qi operated smoothly without hindrance.

Regrettably, his Dou Qi was of the Fire Attribute, and even after becoming Superior Magic Dragon Dou Qi, it was still suppressed by seawater, rendering his strength far inferior on land.

He had also tried manifesting as a Phoenix Incarnation in the sea.

The flames on his body did not extinguish, and he breathed quite normally, but the magic of the Phoenix Incarnation was also severely oppressed, making his flight speed slow as a dog. It was even worse than his swimming speed when he returned to human form.

“Respected human ruler, Your Majesty Liszt, thank you for purifying the ocean and reviving us. We, the last seven mermaids, are willing to follow you and fight and build for your nation,” the seven mermaids, after consultation, formally joined the ranks of the Flame Kingdom.

Unlike sea serpents, the carefree sprites of the ocean, mermaids behaved more like humans. During the era of the Moon Empire, the Sea Kingdom that mermaids established also waged wars against one another.

“I am delighted with your joining. Humans have already entered an era of nobility with the knight’s feudal system. I will first ennoble you as Marquis, and when the time is right, you can re-establish duchies on the seas, becoming vassal states to the Flame Kingdom.” The strength of the mermaids was slightly greater than that of Domain Knights, making them worthy of being ennobled as Marquises.

In the future, Liszt planned to promote them to Dukes, allowing them to establish duchies in the seas surrounding the Legendary Continent to help the Flame Family cultivate the oceans.

...

“Your Majesty, we wish to take a look at the Devil’s Sea and see if the devils that fell from grace still exist,” the mermaids requested, after clarifying the current state of affairs.

Liszt also wanted to witness it and thus agreed, “Then let’s go together.”

So, a group of people moved majestically toward the Devil’s Sea. Since he had no chance to ride a Unicorn, he had to stand on the back of the most powerful mermaid, Eternia—Eternia was once the ruler of the Great West Nation, which had long since perished in the ocean, becoming part of the Devil’s Sea.

“Ach, Super Magic – Eye of Mana requires High Magic to cast. You can teach it to the seven mermaids to allow them to search for Elves under the sea and learn to develop the ocean’s sprites,” Liszt suddenly thought of this during the sea voyage.

He considered the Eye of Magic a prized treasure and was reluctant to let its secrets spread.

But teaching the Eye of Mana to the mermaids was no issue, after all, the age of the mermaids had passed, and they wouldn’t come ashore to compete for resources. They could only honestly develop sprites in the sea for him.

“Hmm.”

Ach was more than willing to teach magic to the mermaids. In her view, mermaids with Superior Magic were exceptionally good magic experiment assistants, far more reliable than human magicians who could only perform Low Magic.

They taught as they traveled.

Although the seven mermaids had all experienced varying degrees of power degradation, their swimming speed could still reach eight hundred kilometers per hour in the sea.

When the mermaids barely understood the casting principles of the Eye of Mana, they had already arrived at the continental slope.

The seabed of shallow waters is called the continental shelf, and the seabed of the deep sea is known as the abyssal plain. The steep slope that transitions between the continental shelf and the abyssal plain is called the continental slope. The continental slope is named steep, but it's hard to discern the slope with the naked eye; one can only faintly sense that the seabed gradually deepens this stretch.

When passing over a sea trench on the continental slope, Gulvig, the ruler of the Sea Trench Tribe, said in a somber tone, “I remember this place now. This is the ‘Eyelid Pattern’ trench. My mother fell here, becoming a devil, and went toward the Devil’s Sea, never to return.”

Standing on the edge of the sea trench cliff, she looked down into the abyss of the dark sea, sighed deeply, and said, “So many years have gone by, the Eyelid Pattern hasn’t changed much, only the seawater is much cleaner, without the pollution of the Cursed Dragon.”