

W. Secret 101

Chapter 101: Forward II

On the wide avenue, a horse carriage was going forward at a leisurely pace.

Two men and a girl sat in the carriage. Of the two men, one was wearing a neat, form-fitting outfit, and carried a greatsword on his back. He had a burly physique with a faint, oppressive aura surrounding his body.

In contrast, the other man had on a long, loose robe. He was slender with black hair and blue eyes and looked extremely young. This man was Merlin and he had just left Prakash City.

Merlin had departed from Prakash City alone, going toward the Kurdish Mountains according to the directions on the map. Along the way, he had met this pair of man and girl by coincidence.

The burly man was called Capace. His hair was tied up in a small ponytail. On the other hand, the girl with a tall and slender physique was Catherine. They were siblings who had met Merlin on the road, and Catherine had invited Merlin into their carriage.

“Mr. Merlin, where are you preparing to go?”

Ever since Merlin had boarded the carriage, Catherine had struck up an extremely warm and friendly conversation with Merlin. It could be seen that she was quite vivacious but lacking in experience when it came to handling matters as she did not possess the necessary vigilance toward strangers.

On the other hand, Catherine’s older brother, Capace, was extremely alert. However, he had failed at dissuading Catherine, so he could only agree to let Merlin into their carriage.

Hearing Catherine’s question, Merlin pondered deeply for a while. He did not withhold information deliberately, and said in a cold tone, “I’m going to the Kurdish Mountains.”

The Kurdish Mountains were vast. Some rare, wild beasts appeared there often, and their fur was extremely popular with the upper-level aristocrats. Hence, adventurers would enter the mountains frequently to hunt for these rare wild beasts so that they could exchange them for great amounts of gold.

Catherine looked at Merlin from top to bottom, sizing him up then said doubtfully, “You’re going to the Kurdish Mountains? By the looks of you, you don’t seem like an adventurer.”

Indeed – with an appearance like Merlin who was wearing a long, loose robe and had a body build that could not be deemed stalwart, he just did not look like an adventurer who would go through the rigors of living in the wild. In addition, he even looked frail, and had not a single weapon on him.

Merlin did not reply immediately. He smiled, giving Capace and Catherine a very meaningful look before saying in a soft voice, “You guys don’t look like adventurers either.”

Catherine’s face turned slightly red. Following which, she spoke in a low voice, “We’re not adventurers, indeed. I’ll let you in on a secret. We heard that there’s a powerful spell casters’ organization in the Kurdish Mountains, so we wish to look for them. If we’re lucky enough to find them, perhaps we can become mysterious and powerful Spell Casters!”

Seeing the excitement on Catherine’s face, Merlin’s eyes narrowed slightly. He spoke without a shift in his expression, “Oh? There are Spell Casters in the Kurdish Mountains?”

“Of course there are, we heard about them personally...”

“Cough... Catherine, it’s very stuffy inside the carriage. Let’s get down and take a break.”

Catherine had immediately answered without thinking. Nevertheless, the look on Capace’s face changed. Sitting next to her, he hurriedly nudged Catherine and deflected the topic of the conversation.

An understanding dawned upon Merlin. Capace still had a certain level of vigilance, but the words spoken by Catherine earlier had already leaked out a wealth of information.

“I feel very stifled as well. Let’s get down and rest first.”

Merlin did not continue asking questions. He took the lead by getting off the horse carriage first.

Capace pulled Catherine to a secluded area, and spoke to her in a low voice, “Catherine, we’ve secretly snuck out this time, so it’s imperative that we be very cautious in all things and not cause any new problems. It’s enough that you’ve let a stranger into the carriage. Why did you talk about us looking for the Spell Casters as well?”

Capace was evidently very upset about what Catherine had done.

Catherine stuck her tongue out and said in a soft voice, “I felt too excited earlier, so I forgot, but I’ll take note. Capace, you’ve seen Mr. Merlin, don’t you think he’s rather strange? He’s definitely not an adventurer. Who knows, he might be like us, wanting to find the spell casters’ organization in the Kurdish Mountains and become a Spell Caster.”

Capace remained in deep thought for a while then admonished Catherine, “It doesn’t matter if Mr. Merlin is an adventurer, this has nothing to do with us. We’ve run away from home quietly just because we’ve heard that there’s a spell casters’ organization in the Kurdish Mountains. Finding the organization is still a problem. So, don’t create issues where there’s none. We’ll separate from that Mr. Merlin when we reach the Kurdish Mountains.”

Catherine could only nod. However, Capace was still rather worried, and exhorted, “Catherine, don’t speak with Mr. Merlin anymore after we get back to the carriage later to prevent you from exposing our identities accidentally.”

Although Catherine was somewhat reluctant, she did not dare to argue with Capace because she had done wrong mere moments ago. She could only nod and promised him helplessly. Then, they returned to the carriage.

A few days later, the carriage slowly came to a halt. There was no more road before them, only stretches of a thick and dense forest. They had finally arrived at the Kurdish Mountains.

Merlin and the others got down from the carriage. Capace and Catherine’s excitement was very evident. After a few moments, Capace said to Merlin, “Mr. Merlin, we’ve important matters to attend to in the Kurdish Mountains, so we’ll be leaving first now.”

Merlin nodded. Following which, Capace pulled Catherine along and quickly darted into the lush and thick mountain forest.

Seeing Capace and Catherine's disappearing backs, Merlin shook his head. Earlier, he had already discerned that their Mind Powers were at very ordinary levels. This showed that they did not possess the qualities of a Spell Caster.

He did not know how these two people had gotten wind of the news that there was a spell casters' organization in the Kurdish Mountains. It was actually extremely dangerous for them to come to the Mountains so hastily.

However, judging by how Capace looked, he seemed to have achieved the level of a Third-level Elemental Swordsman where there had been a faint aura emanating from his body. Perhaps they had only dared to come looking for the spell casters' organization in the Kurdish Mountains because he wielded some power of self-protection.

Merlin did not think too much about his encounter with these two extremely interesting characters on his journey. Subsequently, he gently caressed the ink black ring on his hand and frowned. "The Kurdish Mountains are so vast, where on earth is the Dark Magic Region?"

There were no instructions on the ink black ring, keepsake of the Dark Magic Region. As a result, Merlin could only enter the mountains first and conduct his search slowly, hoping for some changes to appear on the ring in his hand.

According to the conjecture of the black-robed old man, the keepsake in Merlin's possession now was crucial if he wished to find the Dark Magic Region. Perhaps the clues were on the ink black ring.

Merlin quickly went into the thick forest. He did not linger on the peripheral of the mountains. Instead, he went directly toward the deep parts of the Kurdish Mountains. From what he could surmise, if the Dark Magic Region was truly within these Mountains, it would definitely not be built on the outside but would be deep in the mountains, where few people went.

...

"Swoosh!"

Two robust figures dashed out from behind a big tree. Astonishingly, they were Capace and Catherine, who had entered the dense forest mere moments ago.

Capace glanced behind him and gave a soft sigh of relief. “Merlin didn’t follow us. Looks like I was a little too careful.”

Capace was worried that Merlin would trail them. That was why they had taken this extra precaution.

“Alright, let’s go a little faster. Wizard Pario said that we don’t have the quality of a Spell Caster. Hmph! I think he’s just not capable enough so he’s unable to help us become Spell Casters, that’s all. Rumor has it that the spell casters’ organization is incomparably powerful. Even Wizard Pario speaks of them in an extremely envious manner. We must find this spell casters’ organization and become great and mighty Spell Casters!”

Catherine brandished her small fists, full of high fighting spirit.

A complicated look flashed through Capace’s eyes and he said in a low voice, “Wizard Pario has mentioned that there’s a powerful spell casters’ organization in the Kurdish Mountains called the Dark Magic Region! The only thing we don’t know is the actual location. However, based on the various mystical incidents we’ve heard about happened in the Kurdish Mountains, and all of them seem to happen deep in the mountains. Perhaps the Dark Magic Region is in the deeper parts of the mountains. We’ll go in and try our luck.”

Thus, the two of them, Capace and Catherine, walked deeper into the mountains.

Chapter 102: The Dark Magic Region I

“Hoo...”

In the forest of the mountain, two figures appeared. One was male and the other was female.

With her hair tied up in a ponytail, Catherine, who was tall and slender, was already exhausted that she was huffing and puffing. She stared at the dense forest in front of her, which seemed as endless as always, and complained, “Capace, how much further? We’ve been walking for half a day now...”

Capace's vision went far and deep. He fixed his eyes on the seemingly deep and quiet forest, and said in a low voice, "We should be arriving soon. Let's continue walking, just hold on for a while longer."

Catherine was somewhat helpless but when she thought about the possibility of finding the spell casters' organization that she had always dreamt of somewhere in front of her, she could only stand up and continue walking forward.

"Roar!"

Suddenly, the entire forest seemed to tremble. The roar of a gigantic wild beast rang out.

Capace and Catherine immediately perked up in an alert and looked around.

Very soon, a three-meter tall striped tiger darted out from the forest. Capace and Catherine looked like dwarves from a fairy tale before this gigantic tiger.

"It's a striped tiger but why is it so exaggeratedly huge?"

Catherine let out an astonished exclamation. The striped tiger was a wild beast that was frequently sighted. Its fur had great economic worth. However, this typical striped tiger was only half as tall as a human.

The striped tiger before their eyes now, though, could practically be labeled as a giant. Its entire body was emitting a tyrannical aura; its pair of tiger eyes were dead set on Capace and Catherine.

"Catherine, be careful. Strange things often happen in the depths of the Kurdish Mountains. Some adventurers have even encountered more overwhelming wild beasts."

Cautiously, Capace retreated step by step. To be able to encounter such a gigantic striped tiger meant that it was highly likely that they had already reached the deeper parts of the Kurdish Mountains.

"Roar!"

The striped tiger lifted its head and roared into the sky. Then, with one bounce, the gigantic body that looked like a small hill went for Capace immediately.

There was a whistling sound from the wind as it blew Capace's form-fitting outfit which made fluttering noises. It was sufficient to see how great the force of the striped tiger's leap was.

"Swoosh!"

Suddenly, a thick, Wind Elemental fluctuation burst out from Capace's body. His figure immediately flew toward the striped tiger like an arrow shooting off from its bow.

"Cleave!"

Capace let out a growl. Immediately, he pulled out the greatsword on his back. In the blink of an eye along with a dazzling, red light, he flashed through the somewhat quiet and thick, dark forest.

"Rip!"

The awe-inspiring striped tiger that had seemed powerful and matchless did not even have time to let out a whine. Fresh blood gushed out instantly from its brain.

"Thud!"

With a muffled thud, the gigantic body of the striped tiger fell heavily to the ground.

With lingering fear, Capace looked at the carcass of the striped tiger. He raised and waved the greatsword in his hand, which was as black as ink, and said in a calm voice, "Lucky that I have the Ink Iron Sword. Otherwise, it'd have been really troublesome when encountering this overwhelming striped tiger."

The Ink Iron Sword in Capace's hands was forged out from an extremely rare and precious ink iron ore, and it was sharp beyond comparison. The Ink Iron Sword could easily slash through even heavy armor with the most astonishing defense strength.

Thus, using the sharp-edged Ink Iron Sword in addition to the fact that Capace was a Third-level Wind Swordsman, his speed had become exceedingly fast. Fighting this rather overwhelmingly huge striped tiger was not an issue for him.

Catherine walked forward as well. She gave the striped tiger on the ground a look – its head had been cleaved into two halves. In an envious tone, she said, “Capace, it’s good that you secretly took father’s Ink Iron Sword out and defused this threat. However, if such an exaggeratedly huge striped tiger had appeared here, who knows what will emerge in front. Should we continue going in deeper?”

Catherine’s expression was somewhat complicated. She looked like she had the intention to withdraw due to the fear in her heart.

“We’ve already reached the deeper parts of the mountains, how can we retreat at this time? Catherine, don’t worry. With the Ink Iron Sword, we’ll be safe and sound even if we encounter greater danger. Let’s go. We’ll continue going in deeper. It wouldn’t be too late to leave later if we really can’t find the Dark Magic Region.”

Catherine hesitated for a moment before finally nodding lightly. Following Capace from behind, they continued their journey, going deeper into the forest.

...

“En? There’s movement now?”

There was a sudden hint of joy on Merlin’s face. He was currently in the forest on the mountain. The ink black ring, which had not been moving at all, had unexpectedly begun emitting a faint glow now.

Merlin immediately noticed that the glow from the ring emanated from the mysterious runes on the ring. It appeared that something had activated the runes on the ring.

Only Spell Casters could understand the profound mysteries contained within the runes. The runes could be arranged into a Magic Circle and could also be engraved onto casting tools, enduing them with mystical powers.

Moreover, this ring was the keepsake of the Dark Magic Region, and with the runes engraved upon it, this item was definitely remarkable! Now that the ring was giving off a hint of light, perhaps it was the clue to finding the Dark Magic Region.

With that thought, Merlin continued walking into the deeper parts of the mountains. As he walked, the glow from the ring became brighter as well. Merlin had a feeling that some unimaginable change would take place when the light from the ring reached a certain level of brightness.

Perhaps, he would then be able to find the mysterious Dark Magic Region.

“Forward... Left, forward, continue straight on!”

Merlin maintained his observation of the ring in his hand. He discovered that the light was becoming more radiant as it had started to shake slightly. Merlin knew that there was definitely some unknown energy from somewhere in the depths of the mountains, attracting the ring. Maybe that was where the Dark Magic Region was located.

“Bang!”

Right at this moment, a deafening noise erupted from the thick forest before him. In addition, it seemed that some kind of a wild beast was moving madly through the forest, accompanied by the rustling noises of densely packed branches and leaves.

Merlin immediately became alert as many strange things had happened in the Kurdish Mountains. Plenty of adventurers had even died in the mountains here, therefore Merlin did not dare to let his guard down.

“Swoosh!”

Suddenly, two figures flew out helter-skelter, coming straight toward Merlin.

“You guys?”

“It’s you?”

The two figures raised their heads. Merlin discovered that these were people he knew. They were Catherine and Capace.

“Go away quickly, it’s the Icelandic Wolf! Damn it, why is there such a monster in the Kurdish Mountains?”

Capace yelled at Merlin with a panicked expression. At the same time, a gigantic, silver-white wolf, emanating a chill throughout its entire body, appeared behind Capace and Catherine.

“Icelandic Wolf?”

There was a jolt in Merlin’s heart. The Icelandic Wolf was not a wild beast. It was an Elemental Monster with a body made not out of flesh and blood, but of a cluster of chilled air, formed by numerous Ice Elements gathered together.

A beginner Elemental Swordsman could not fight an Elemental Monster like the Icelandic Wolf at all. Only the strong and powerful intermediate Elemental Swordsmen, or Spell Casters, could handle Icelandic Wolves.

For example, Commander Cook of Prakash City had killed an Icelandic Wolf before. Since then, his fame had spread throughout the entire city.

Anyone who could kill Elemental Monsters such as the Icelandic Wolf would be hailed as great and mighty warriors!

However, it was very obvious that Capace and Catherine, who were in front of him now, had no way to fight this ferocious Icelandic Wolf. They could only flee in panic.

“We’re done for, it’s just too fast! I’m afraid we’re going to be in a disastrous situation...”

Capace seemed to know the Icelandic Wolf very well. Seeing that it was closing in on him from behind, a horrified look appeared on his face.

“Buzz, buzz, buzz.”

The ink black ring in Merlin's hand suddenly emitted a strong glow. The mysterious runes carved on the ring seemed to have been activated now and was beginning to vibrate violently.

Chapter 103: The Dark Magic Region II

"The Dark Magic Region is here!"

Merlin narrowed his eyes slightly. Completely ignoring Capace and Catherine, he quickly extended his Mind Power and began to search his surroundings.

He noticed that the mysterious runes carved on the ring were flashing continuously. At the same time, beams of light seemed to be appearing faintly in midair. Merlin could sense with his Mind Power that the peculiar strands of fluctuation had emerged faintly in the empty space of air, looking very similar to the runes on the ring.

"Could it be a Runic Magic Circle?"

A realization struck Merlin as he remembered the Runic Magic Circle constructed by powerful Spell Casters in the legends.

Only Mind Power was needed to drive a Magic Circle of this sort. Once it was activated, it could even transport a person up to hundreds and thousands of miles away. However, Merlin had very little understanding of runes, not to mention a Runic Magic Circle. As a result, he was unable to confirm whether there was a Runic Magic Circle here. Hence, it was necessary for him to test it by using the ring.

This ring would be the crux of finding the Dark Magic Region. Merlin had already understood vaguely that stimulating these runes with Mind Power would lead to unimaginable results.

Just as Merlin was preparing to use his Mind Power to stimulate the ring and find the Dark Magic Region, the Icelandic Wolf seemed to sense that Merlin was a great threat. Hence, it opened its jaws and spurted out a great gush of chilled air, which flew directly toward Merlin.

"Watch out!"

Capace and Catherine had been keeping their eyes on the Icelandic Wolf. Seeing how it had spurted out a breath of chilled air, they could not help but yell out to warn him.

“Get lost!”

Merlin frowned. He did not even look at the chilled air. A cluster of fireballs immediately shot out and collided brutally with the waft of chilled air.

“Sizzle...”

The chilled air and the flames intertwined unceasingly. Finally, they disappeared.

“Frost!”

A cold and detached look flashed across Merlin’s eyes. The Icelandic Wolf was getting in the way of his search for the Dark Magic Region so Merlin did not hold back. He immediately unleashed Frost.

“Crack!”

Although the Icelandic Wolf was made up of an accumulation of Ice Elements, Merlin’s Frost was extraordinary and was still able to freeze it. However, since the Elements involved were all Ice, it was very difficult for Frost to harm the Icelandic Wolf.

Immediately after, a gigantic fireball flew straight at the frozen Icelandic Wolf.

“Bang!”

Instantly, the fireball exploded and the tremendous force of impact blasted the Icelandic Wolf into smithereens. Meanwhile, the wild and violent flames caused the chilled air to evaporate and in the blink of an eye, the Icelandic Wolf was reduced into ashes.

“A Spell... Spell Caster?”

Capace and Catherine were both somewhat dumbstruck. They had never thought that Merlin, who had spent a few days with them, was a powerful Spell Caster. Furthermore, even the Icelandic Wolf who had pursued them so aggressively that they had to flee helter-skelter, had been immediately destroyed by Merlin just by lifting his hand.

Merlin had gotten rid of the Icelandic Wolf and it had been extremely easy for him. He did not give it a second thought. Rather, what he was focused on now was still the ring in his hands.

“Buzz, buzz, buzz.”

Using his Mind Power, Merlin ruthlessly simulated the mysterious runes on the ring, and they immediately unleashed a bright light. At the same time, a dazzling light began to appear in midair. It was so quick that Merlin’s entire body was enveloped in it.

“Just as I suspected, it’s a Runic Magic Circle!”

Merlin could vividly feel the presence of many mysterious runes around him, forming an incomparable abstruse Magic Circle, enveloping him in it.

“You don’t have qualities of a Spell Caster, just leave this place as quickly as you can...”

Merlin did not forget about Capace and Catherine. It was clear that these two people did not possess qualities of a Spell Caster but they had still come to the Kurdish Mountains in search of the Dark Magic Region. It was simply futile – they would not gain anything out of this.

He saw that they were not evil people, especially Catherine, who was innocent and unaffected. She reminded Merlin of Count Selin’s daughter, Shelly. It was only because of this that he had advised them.

As to if had they left or not, this was not within Merlin’s knowledge. Just as Merlin’s voice died down, he felt a great force which immediately transported him to an unknown location. He had absolutely no power to resist it.

“Swoosh!”

Light flashed past. Merlin's figure disappeared in an instant, and the thick forest returned to its calm state once more. If it were not for the fact that Capace and Catherine had seen it with their own eyes, they might have thought that the previous incidents had all been illusions.

"Mr. Merlin must be a powerful Spell Caster in the Dark Magic Region but we've missed our chance..."

Catherine lowered her head, feeling extremely vexed.

With a complicated expression, Capace looked to where Merlin had vanished. Following which, he shook his head gently and gave a long sigh and said, "Even Mr. Merlin said we don't have qualities of a Spell Caster... Catherine, we should go back and ask father for a pardon."

Capace had completely dismissed the idea of becoming a Spell Caster.

Catherine bit her lip tightly, speaking with some reluctance, "Capace, I've heard that if we can become advanced Elemental Swordsmen, we can also possess great powers that aren't inferior to that of Spell Casters! I've decided to go back and cultivate diligently. I must become the greatest Elemental Swordsman..."

Catherine, who had still been quite dispirited moments ago, was currently brandishing her fists and daydreaming about becoming an Advanced Elemental Swordsman. Her heart was filled with high fighting spirit once more...

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Somewhere along the coast, the humid sea breeze blew and whistled unceasingly. Waves continuously crashed against the callous reefs on the coast.

The seagulls in the sky flew in circles above the small island, diving downward from time to time, landing on the beach to play.

"Buzz!"

Suddenly, a whirlwind emerged on the originally quiet beach. The space seemed to twist and turn as the area flashed with white light unabatingly.

On the beach, a gaunt figure suddenly appeared in the midst of a rubble, filled with stones and rocks that seemed to have been placed there randomly.

“Is this the Dark Magic Region?”

Merlin frowned and muttered to himself within the rock rubble. He began to inspect his own condition. Other than a slight exhaustion of his spirits, there were no changes in any other aspect.

Merlin walked out from the rock rubble. Unexpectedly, he saw that there were also many runes carved on the rocks in this disorganized rubble. It was obviously a Runic Magic Circle deliberately set by a Spell Caster.

He remembered how there had been no warm sea breeze or an endless stretch of the ocean in the Kurdish Mountains. This showed that the Runic Magic Circle in the Kurdish Mountains had transported him to a distant place.

This was a humongous island that seemed vast and empty!

Not a soul was around. There were only seabirds sporting on the beach.

Merlin continued to walk up the island. Slowly, further away from the beach, he came across green grounds. An ancient stone tablet as tall as a human towered at the most conspicuous location on the green grounds.

Three huge words, in the Molta language, were carved into the stone tablet – Dark Magic Region!

“This is the Dark Magic Region?”

Merlin glanced at the surroundings. Other than the stone rubble on the ground and the glossy, green grass, everything else was just a stretch of wasteland. No matter how he looked at it, this was still a deserted island. How could this place be the Dark Magic Region?

“What kind of a joke is this? The Dark Magic Region is on this barren, deserted island?”

His voice had hardly faded away when ear-piercing laughter suddenly rang in Merlin's ears. "Hehe, someone has finally come again. Young Spell Caster, welcome to the Dark Magic Region!"

Merlin was taken aback. He hurriedly turned around, only to see that a translucent shadow had slowly drifted out from the ancient stone tablet which he had seen earlier. Then, the shadow gradually shifted its shape, finally transforming into an entirely pitch-black cat that glowed.

The black cat floated in the air. One of its eyes was red, whilst the other was white. It gazed quietly at Merlin, looking extremely strange!

Chapter 104: Newbie Wizard

The black cat strolled about in midair, waving its thick and short tail about gently. For some unknown reason, Merlin felt that this strange black cat was moving very elegantly.

'A cat? Moving very elegantly?'

Merlin was even beginning to wonder if he had gone crazy.

"Young Spell Caster, don't look at me like that, I'm the great spirit of the stone tablet, personally carved by the Great Wizard Fidel, the great guardian of the Dark Magic Region, the great Sir Didimoss!"

Merlin felt speechless at the black cat's string of "greats". This weird, lofty black cat which spoke a human language was a being that Merlin could not fathom. He would be able to ask about the Dark Magic Region as they seemed to be connected.

Therefore, Merlin gave a slight bow toward the black cat and spoke in a respectful manner, "Great Sir Didimoss, I possess a token of the Dark Magic Region. I've come here to seek Sir Didimoss' guidance into the Dark Magic Region."

The black cat was evidently very satisfied with Merlin's respectful tone of voice. It continued, "Young Spell Caster, if you wish to enter the Dark Magic Region, should you not dedicate some elemental crystal stones to the great Sir Didimoss?"

"Elemental crystal stones?"

This was Merlin's first time hearing about it. He felt rather mystified.

However, this black cat had become somewhat displeased. Its voice turned shrill. "Young Spell Caster, please take note that this is the great Sir Didimoss before you now! Elemental crystal stones might be precious but you should not be stingy. No matter what type the elemental crystal stones are – ice type, fire type, and earth type – they are all okay. Of course, the taste of ice type elemental crystal stones is the best. The great Sir Didimoss will like it very much but if you don't have ice type elemental crystal stones, then earth types are fine as well..."

Seeing how the black cat spoke about various types of elemental crystals with such familiarity, Merlin shook his head gently and said, "I'm really sorry, the great Sir Didimoss, this is my first time hearing about elemental crystal stones, I don't have any elemental crystal stones with me now!"

"Uh..."

The black cat's movements became slightly stiff. That pair of red and white eyes emitted a hint of dusky glow.

"So, you turn out to be a newbie Wizard! Damn it, the great Sir Didimoss has spoken so much in front of a newbie Wizard..."

The black cat's tone of voice changed greatly; its voice gradually became more and more shrill, causing Merlin to feel that it was very ear-piercing.

"Newbie Wizard, the great Sir Didimoss is really angry now, the consequences will be very grave..."

Watching the black cat, which was about to flip out, Merlin shook his head helplessly. To think that he had just been spurned by a cat. Although this black cat did not look like an ordinary cat, he still felt somewhat dispirited to be labeled a newbie Wizard.

The body shape of the black cat began to fade gradually. In the blink of an eye, it had turned into a cluster of shadows again. Then, an incomparably shrill and sharp voice, unbearable for anyone, erupted from the shadows.

“Foolish Little Bobo, come out quick to greet the guest...”

As the black cat’s shrill voice died down, Merlin could clearly see thin and dense ripples beginning to appear on the seemingly vast and empty space behind the stone tablet. They were spreading, circle by circle.

“Swoosh!”

A figure walked out from the midst of the ripples. It was an old man in a black robe. There was no expression on his old face; he seemed to be afflicted with facial paralysis.

After this old man appeared, the black cat turned into a cluster of shadows and darted back into the stone tablet.

“Receive the guest...”

Seeing this old man, who had slight facial paralysis, and looking back at the stone tablet in front of him, Merlin felt a strange chill.

“Young Spell Caster, follow me.”

The old man, who seemed to have facial paralysis, merely gave Merlin a cold glance. Following which, he spoke to Merlin in a calm voice.

“Oh? We don’t have to check the token? Mage, sir!”

Giving Merlin a look, the old man said, “You may call me Wizard Haribo!”

After a pause, Wizard Haribo continued, “Without the Dark Magic ring, you wouldn’t have been able to activate the Runic Magic Circle. The ring is your identity so remember not to lose it. Otherwise, you won’t be able to enter the Dark Magic Region anymore.”

Merlin nodded thoughtfully. It seemed that this ring was the key to his entry into the Dark Magic Region. Even if Spell Casters arrive in the Kurdish Mountains, they would not be able to activate those Runic Magic Circles without a ring, not to mention entering the Dark Magic Region.

Wizard Haribo lifted his finger gently. On his finger was an ink black ring, which looked the same as Merlin's.

"Use your Mind Power to stimulate the Runic Magic Circle on the ring. This is the only way to gain entrance into the Dark Magic Region!" Wizard Haribo spoke coldly.

Merlin nodded and used his Mind Power to stimulate the mysterious runes on the ring.

"Swoosh!"

Suddenly, a dazzling light appeared. Merlin immediately saw Wizard Haribo, who had been in front of him, taking a few steps forward. His figure quickly vanished.

Merlin hurriedly walked forward a couple of steps as well. Suddenly, his vision turned blurry. By the time it went back to normal, the small, empty island he had seen earlier had completely changed.

There was a gigantic tower, reaching into the clouds where a dim glow was emitting from above. Merlin lifted his head but he was unable to see the top of the tower, and neither did he know how tall this tower was.

"I'm no longer on the island? I didn't see such a magnificent tower earlier..."

Merlin could not help but question. If he were still on the island, it would have been impossible for him not to have seen such a spectacular, tall tower.

Wizard Haribo, who was in front of him, answered without turning around, "On the island, naturally. Just that a Runic Magic Circle has enveloped the entire Dark Magic Region, so outside of the small island, one wouldn't be able to see the true Dark Magic Region. Only Spell Casters wearing the Dark Magic ring can see the true Dark Magic Region after stimulating the runes on the ring."

Merlin nodded but he was still in a great shock to think that such a gigantic island had been covered by a Runic Magic Circle. Without the Dark Magic ring, he would have no way to find the Dark Magic Region.

A Spell Caster who could arrange such a mystical Runic Magic Circle must be an unimaginably powerful Spell Caster.

“Which Wizard arranged such a gigantic and mystical Magic Circle?”

As expressionless as always, Wizard Haribo replied, “The founder of the Dark Magic Region, the mighty Great Wizard Fidel. Sir Didimoss, who’s in the stone tablet outside, is the spirit of the Runic Magic Circle that the Great Wizard Fidel had inscribed back then. The inscribed Runic Magic Circle can, unexpectedly, give birth to a conscious spirit! The Great Wizard Fidel’s accomplishments in runology are absolutely incredible!”

Although Wizard Haribo was still expressionless, his admiration toward the Great Wizard Fidel was still evident from his tone of voice.

“The Great Wizard Fidel?”

The founder of the Dark Magic Region. Merlin secretly committed the name to his memory. The arrangement of the Runic Magic Circle was such that it could cover such a huge island; perhaps even the Runic Magic Circles in the Kurdish Mountains had been set by the hands of this Great Wizard Fidel.

“Alright, there’ll be people inside to arrange an identity and lodging for you as well as the tutor you shall follow in the Dark Magic Region.”

The expressionless Wizard Haribo brought Merlin to a flight of stone steps, before turning around and leaving immediately.

Looking at the two great doors in front of the stone steps, Merlin took a deep breath and slowly walked up.

Chapter 105: Assigned

Opening the great door, Merlin walked straight in.

A gigantic hall was in the building. Tiles as bright and smooth as mirrors were set on the floor. A few lively portraits were hung on the white walls all around the place. On both sides of the hall were a few huge and thick pillars, clear and fine as crystals.

Walking into the hall was like being in a dream.

However, there were not many people in the hall – only some Spell Casters dressed in gray robes. Some were sprawled lazily on the tables. It was only when they noticed Merlin's arrival that a few amongst them perked up and stared at Merlin.

Merlin walked forward, bowed slightly, and said, "I'm Wilson Merlin, I've just arrived in the Dark Magic Region. Wizard Haribo let me come here."

"Another new person? Bring your ring over for me to check."

A gray-robed Wizard with a mustache spoke coldly.

Merlin took the ring off his finger and passed it to the person.

This gray-robed Wizard gently caressed the ring. Then, his body emitted traces of Elemental fluctuation, causing the ring to shine with a faint light. The mysterious runes on it became even clearer and more visible.

Following that, the gray-robed Wizard nodded gently and returned the ring to Merlin, before speaking in a calm voice, "Not bad. This is a Dark Magic ring, indeed. Are you Merlin?"

Merlin nodded. The gray-robed Wizard continued, "Wizard Merlin, no matter what your identity was before, the moment you enter the Dark Magic Region, you become a member within this Dark Magic Region of mine. However, you're not a First-level Spell Caster yet, so you cannot be an official member of the Dark Magic Region. You can only be a temporary member."

"If you still haven't become a First-level Spell Caster after three years, your Dark Magic ring shall be confiscated by the Dark Magic Region, and you'll be sent out from the Dark Magic Region."

The gray-robed Wizard had a very strict and solemn expression while explaining some of the rules in the Dark Magic Region in detail.

Merlin listened very intently. It turned out that owning a token would only enable him to be a temporary member of the Dark Magic Region. In addition, he would have to become a First-level Spell Caster within three years or be sent out from the Dark Magic Region.

Becoming a First-level spell Caster was a rigid standard. Even old man Etha had mentioned in the Spell Manual that only by becoming a First-level Spell Caster would one be considered a real Spell Caster.

For a spell casters' organization like the Dark Magic Region, one would naturally have to be a First-level Spell Caster or higher to be an official member.

"Are you clear with all of these?"

"I'm clear."

Merlin nodded. Becoming a First-level Spell Caster within three years was not much to Merlin, who possessed the Matrix. Furthermore, he had already simulated three Spell Models in his Awareness. All he needed was enough Mind Power and he would even be able to commence the promotion to become a First-level Spell Caster.

Three years – even a beginner Meditation Spell would be sufficient for his Mind Power to expand to the standard of a First-level Spell Caster's.

"Very good."

The gray-robed Wizard nodded and continued, "How many Spell Models have you constructed?"

"Three," Merlin answered truthfully.

"Three?"

Contrary to Merlin's expectations, the gray-robed Wizard opposite him shook his head. With a pitiful expression, he seemed to feel regretful that Merlin had already constructed three Spell Models.

“Could it be that three Spell Models are still not enough?”

Merlin furrowed his eyebrows. Three Spell Models were enough to begin the promotion to a First-level Spell Caster. Although the Dark Magic Region was a powerful spell caster’s organization, Merlin’s current capability would not be considered too bad.

‘Why does this gray-robed Wizard have such a sympathetic look, then?’

He did not ask openly as these were merely thoughts that flashed through Merlin’s mind.

The gray-robed Wizard shook his head slightly before flipping his hand. A beam of white light flashed past, and a translucent crystal stone appeared on the table.

“Concentrate all of your Mind Power onto the crystal stone.”

The gray-robed Wizard pointed at the crystal stone on the table, signaling to Merlin.

Merlin nodded and quickly focused his Mind Power upon the crystal stone. Suddenly, the crystal stone emitted a faint, white light.

Seeing the light from the crystal stone, the gray-robed Wizard shook his head again, and spoke in a low voice, “Alright, your Mind Power is typical as well, and you’ve even constructed three Spell Models already...”

Following that, a few of the gray-robed Wizards had a discussion amongst themselves before a gray-robed Wizard hurriedly left the hall.

After some time, the gray-robed Wizard returned with a young girl behind him.

“Laurinka, Merlin has just arrived in the Dark Magic Region. Lead him to Wizard Leo’s tower. From then on, he’ll follow and learn from Wizard Leo.”

The gray-robed Wizard pointed at Merlin, speaking to Laurinka as an indication.

Merlin surveyed Laurinka carefully. She did not look to be very old. She had short, wavy blond hair, and a glittery necklace on her fair neck. She looked extremely refreshing and sensual.

“Follow me.”

Laurinka spoke coldly to Merlin, before turning around and left the hall.

Merlin followed her from behind closely. After they left the hall, Merlin could not help but ask, “Wizard Laurinka, how’s the assignment done in the Dark Magic Region?”

“How’s the assignment done? Very simple. The assignment is done according to quality, whether it’s good or bad. Haven’t you just gone through a test?”

Laurinka shook her head gently, speaking in a cold tone of voice.

“That was a test?”

Merlin frowned. The expressions of those gray-robed Spell Casters earlier could not be considered satisfied.

Laurinka stopped and looked at Merlin from top to bottom, sizing him up. “Are you a roaming wizard?”

Merlin nodded. There was nothing to hide about this.

“Then, how many Spell Models have you built?”

“Three.”

Hearing that, Laurinka sighed before saying, “No wonder you’ve been assigned to Wizard Leo. You’ve already constructed three Spell Models, which have already become completely set in shape. If the Spell Models are not stable, there’ll be no way for you to become a more powerful Spell Caster.”

Merlin was already able to sense the meaning behind Laurinka's words. It turned out that not only was it not beneficial for him to have successfully built three Spell Models but it was also a great disadvantage.

In other words, Merlin's capability was too small. He was not being looked upon highly by those gray-robed Wizards. Basically, he was part of a dispensable category of people.

It was a great taboo for any Spell Caster to have unstable Spell Models. Naturally, the Wizards in the Dark Magic Region would not believe that a roaming Spell Caster would be able to construct Spell Models that were substantially stable.

However, only Merlin was clear in his heart that he had the help of the Matrix. Not only were the Spell Models he had constructed not the least bit inferior to the Spell Models within a spell casters' organization like the Dark Magic Region but they were also even better by leaps and bounds.

Therefore, Merlin did not have to worry at all that his Spell Models would not be stable. However, the gray-robed Wizards did not know about this, and it was impossible for Merlin to tell them about the Matrix.

"Wizard Laurinka, what does the white light emitted from the crystal stone I was tested with mean?" Merlin asked.

"White light? That means your Mind Power is very ordinary."

Merlin seemed to have evoked memories in Laurinka, who then continued, "My family is a family of Spell Casters. There are some elders in the family who have entered the Dark Magic Region, which is why I've been familiar with the rules of the Dark Magic Region since the early days. Until I entered the Dark Magic Region, I've not constructed any Spell Models on purpose, even.

"However, my Mind Power was weak during the test. It was so weak that it was incomparable even to yours as it only shone with an extremely weak, white light and I was assigned to Wizard Leo's tower. It's almost three years already but I've yet to construct a single First-level spell Model. Maybe I'll be sent out from the Dark Magic Region before long..."

There was a hint of dejection on Laurinka's face, as her tone of voice betrayed a deep sense of helplessness.

Chapter 106: Wizard Leo I

Merlin had also just understood the rules in the Dark Magic Region from the words of the gray-robed Wizard. Spell Casters who had entered the Dark Magic Region would have their Dark Magic rings confiscated and sent out the Dark Magic Region if they did not become a First-level spell Caster within three years.

The sensuous and beautiful Laurinka before him had yet to become a First-level spell Caster although it seemed that three years were almost up. She would soon face the risk of being sent out the Dark Magic Region.

“Your Mind Power should have reached a high enough level to construct a First-level spell, right? How can it be that you’ve not yet become a First-level spell Caster?”

Merlin was somewhat curious. Laurinka, who was in front of him, might have a worse quality of Mind Power than Merlin, but in three years, her Mind Power had already grown to a level comparable to that of a First-level spell Caster. The only thing left was to construct a First-level spell.

There was a strange expression on Laurinka’s face. She turned her head to look at Merlin weirdly before saying in a low voice, “My Mind Power is enough of course, but could it be that you don’t know the most difficult part of being a Spell Caster is the construction of Spell Models?”

“Construction of Spell Models? How difficult is it? There are many Spell Models in the Dark Magic Region, and most of them have been created by powerful Spell Casters so their stability must be pretty good. So it should be rather easy to construct a Spell Model.”

Merlin was in deep thought for a moment before speaking in a cold tone of voice.

“It’s rather easy to construct a Spell Model?”

Laurinka glanced at Merlin with a deep look. Then, as though she had understood something, she shook her head helplessly, smiled bitterly and said, “Turns out you don’t know, but yes, of course, you’re a roaming Wizard, so naturally, you don’t know the difficulties here. In fact, spell building is the most difficult because the Mind Power of every Spell Caster is different so the type of spell

created is also different. Therefore, the Spell Model to be constructed has to be the one most suitable for oneself.”

“Even the Spell Models created by the powerful Spell Casters aren’t necessarily the most suitable. After obtaining the Spell Model, one would still need to take practical action and construct it in reality once more, according to one’s own situation. Otherwise, at best, the construction fails. At worst, the Spell Model collapses and completely destroys the foundation.”

Pausing, Laurinka gave Merlin a weird look before speaking in a low voice, “Don’t tell me that you’ve never reconstructed the three Spell Models you’ve created, and have immediately simulated them in your Awareness?”

Merlin felt slightly startled. This was simply some general knowledge for many of the Spell Casters in the Spell Casters organization, but before Merlin had entered the Dark Magic Region, neither old man Etha’s Spell Manual and the black-robed old man had mentioned this. They had thought that a Spell Model could be directly simulated in the Awareness as long as it was stable.

It was not surprising, then, that the Spell Models in the black-robed old man were unstable. Meanwhile, nothing had happened to some of the other Spell Casters who were using the same Spell Models.

It turned out that Spell Models could not be directly used. One still had to reconstruct them so that they would be suitable for the Spell Caster’s actual condition.

Merlin thought about the Spell Models in his own Awareness. They had been constructed completely by the Matrix, so he did not know whether there were any hidden risks. Merlin immediately spoke to the Matrix in his heart, “Matrix, check the situation of how the Spell Models in my body are operating now.”

“Beep, test begins... Test completed. The current Spell Models in your body are in stable operation.”

“Check the data from the Spell Models constructed in the past.”

“Beep, displaying data...”

Right away, large amounts of data appeared in Merlin's mind. There were the various kinds of data gathered from the construction of Fireball, Frost, and Earth Guard.

Merlin quickly searched and checked. Very soon, amongst the data, he discovered a segment of various data based on the "Master" that had been used to construct the Spell Models.

"Phew..."

Merlin gave a long sigh of relief. It turned out that, unbeknownst to him, his actual condition had already been inserted into the data of the Spell Models analyzed by the Matrix. This was also one of the advantages of having an "intelligent" quantum calculator.

Therefore, Merlin did not need to worry about whether there was anything wrong with the three Spell Models created by the Matrix.

Laurinka, who was standing on the side, saw Merlin's expression shifted and changed. She thought that Merlin was vexed about the three Spell Models he had constructed. Therefore, shaking her head slightly, she said, "Actually, you don't have to be so worried. You've already created three Spell Models, and although it's very likely that there are hidden risks, you can still slowly rectify them with great amounts of potions."

"Potion?"

Merlin gave a start in his heart, remembering the black-robed old man's exhortation. He was suffering from the torture of having unstable Spell Models and desired the Spell Model-stabilizing Potion greatly.

However, Laurinka did not explain more about the potion. She merely answered in general terms, "All of these are general knowledge. You'll slowly know more in the Dark Magic Region in the future. Let's go, I'm bringing you to see Wizard Leo."

Merlin nodded. He was still going to stay in the Dark Magic Region for at least three years, and there was no need for him to hurry. He could slowly understand more in the later days. Thus, following Laurinka from behind, he continued to walk forward.

On the way, all that Merlin could see were some towers. These towers were emanating strange fluctuations. In addition, some of the towers were very tall, so much so that the top of the towers

could not be seen. Some of the towers were evidently very short, and he could see their pointy turret tops.

“Do all these towers have Runic Magic Circles arranged on them?”

With a sudden realization, Merlin noticed that the strange fluctuations from the towers were rather similar to those from the mysterious runes on the Dark Magic ring.

A strange look flashed across Laurinka’s eyes. After that, she nodded and said, “It looks like you have quite keen senses to be able to notice the Runic Magic Circles on the towers. Back then, when I first came here, I hadn’t discovered this. You’re right, there are Runic Magic Circles arranged on these towers, indeed. Otherwise, how can ordinary buildings be constructed to be so high?”

“Only by arranging the mystical Runic Magic Circles, the towers can be kept from collapsing, and they can be built to be higher and higher. In relation to the towers in the Dark Magic Region, only intermediate Spell Casters, Fourth-level and above, are allowed to construct their own tower. The stronger the Spell Caster, the higher the tower he constructs.”

Merlin looked around briefly. There were approximately fifty over towers that were standing tall and aloft in the entire Dark Magic Region. This meant that there were at least fifty over powerful Spell Casters who were Fourth-level and above.

Fifty-over Spell Casters, Fourth-level and above. This was a great power that Merlin was unable to imagine. The capabilities of the Spell Caster organization was, as he had expected, the greatest. Amongst some of the roaming Wizards outside, even a First-level spell Caster was extremely rare, let alone a Spell Caster who was Fourth-level or above.

Suddenly, Laurinka stopped in her tracks. She turned her head and gave Merlin a smile and said, “We’ve arrived. This is Wizard Leo’s tower, and also where you shall be staying for the next three years.”

Merlin lifted his head to see a grayish white tower before him.

Chapter 107: Wizard Leo II

Laurinka guided Merlin to the Wizard Tower.

Before this, Merlin only thought that these Wizard Towers were sky-scraping tall when he looked at them from afar. Right now, inspecting them from a close distance, he realized that not only these towers were tall but they were also grand and magnificent.

The exterior of this particular Wizard Tower was painted in grayish-white. It gave an impression that it had been established for a very long time. On the grayish-white wall, there were traces of faint white light, which could be easily missed if one did not look carefully.

The white light was emitted from the mysterious runes on the wall. These densely-packed runes shrouded the entire Wizard Tower. Furthermore, there was a distinct fluctuation that was radiating from the tower.

This must be the Runic Magic Circle that Laurinka mentioned. It was exactly because of this Runic Magic Circle that the Wizard Towers in the Dark Magic Region were all built with such majesty.

In fact, apart from Wizard Leo's tower, there were several other Wizard Towers around. In comparison, those towers paled significantly, like a small sorcerer in the presence of a great one.

Wizard Leo's tall tower pricked toward the sky. At first glance, it seemed to have strike into the clouds. The top of the tower was hidden from sight amongst the thick clouds.

This eye-catching tower outshined other towers that surrounded it.

"Wizard Laurinka, if Wizard Leo's tower soars above the level of the sky, does it mean that his capability was also extraordinary?"

Merlin asked in confusion. He clearly remembered Laurinka mentioned that in the Dark Magic Region, the height of the Wizard Tower reflected the might of the Wizard who owned it.

Obviously, Merlin and Laurinka were not the people these gray-robed old men favored as they belonged to the less qualified Spell Casters. In Merlin's view, the Spell Casters who were poorly qualified would not be assigned to powerful tutors. However, this magnificent tower of Wizard Leo stood in front of his eyes had given Merlin doubt.

Laurinka smiled mysteriously as if she could read Merlin's mind. "Every Spell Caster assigned to Wizard Leo's tower asked the same question. In fact, the strength of Wizard Leo is exceptional in the Dark Magic Region. Not only he's a Sixth-level Spell Caster who reached its peak but he's also a Four-Elemental Wizard. His capability comes under the handful of Spell Casters of Seventh-level or greater."

"If Wizard Leo is so powerful, then why are we assigned to him?"

Merlin was surprised at Wizard Leo's powerful strength that was beyond his initial expectation.

Laurinka did not answer directly but replied in a calm tone, "Let's go, you'll find out when you meet Wizard Leo."

Then, Laurinka led Merlin into the tower.

Upon entering the Wizard Tower, a pungent smell attacked Merlin's nostrils. He looked up at the first floor of the tower. There was only one black-robed man wearing a stubble of untrimmed beard and a haggard look hung on his face.

Laurinka came straight to the black-robed man and asked respectfully, "Wizard Howl, how's the formulation of your Magic Ink Potion?"

The black-robed man glanced at Laurinka without much interest and finally replied faintly, "The Magic Ink Potion is not simple to formulate. I've wasted eighteen ingredients up until now. Laurinka, if you're willing to give me some ingredients –"

Before the black-robed man could finish his sentence, Laurinka shook her head hurriedly and interrupted, "Wizard Howl, I don't want to bother you any longer. I'm bringing Merlin to meet Tutor Leo!"

Quickly, Laurinka grabbed Merlin and fled as if they were on a run. Soon, they came to a corner that had runes densely engraved on the ground.

"Activate the runes on your Dark Magic ring using Mind Power. Remember, the Dark Magic ring is required to activate each Runic Magic Circle in the Dark Magic Region."

Laurinka lifted her finger as soon as she finished speaking. The ring on her finger quickly released a radiance that later merged with the white light emitted from the magic runes on the ground.

Merlin did what he was told. Later, both of their figures were enveloped by the radiance given off from the mysterious runes on the ground, and they disappeared instantly.

“Swoosh!”

Merlin felt a slight tremble, and soon, he arrived at a strange, unfamiliar place. He glanced to his side and noticed outside was surrounded by clouds. He was already at the top of Wizard Tower.

Earlier, the thing that had transported Merlin and Laurinka to the top of the tower within seconds was the Runic Magic Circle. Otherwise, god knows how long it would take to reach the top of the tower on foot.

“This is amazing!”

Merlin developed a strong interest in this mysterious runology. Since his arrival at the Dark Magic Region, he discovered numerous mysterious runes everywhere, and each of these runes possessed strange and peculiar functions.

“Oh, who’s that Wizard Howl back at the first floor of the tower?” Merlin asked curiously.

“Wizard Howl lives on the first floor of the tower. He’s also a student under Tutor Leo but he has already turned into an official member of the Dark Magic Region a long time ago. Wizard Howl is the craziest apothecary in this entire Wizard Tower. He dedicated almost all his energy in formulating potions. This is naturally a good thing as some potions come in handy occasionally after all, and Wizard Howl’s potions are much cheaper than the ones they sell in the Dark Magic Region,” Laurinka replied helplessly.

She paused for a moment before continuing, “Wizard Howl formulates potions into distraction. He often ‘borrows’ some temporary members’ potion ingredients at the promise of returning their favor in potions once it’s successfully made. However, as you can imagine, most of his attempts failed miserably...” Laurinka said pitifully.

She had evidently made that this Wizard Howl was quite difficult to deal with. Most people were afraid to come into contact with him.

Merlin nodded thoughtfully as he obtained a lot of information from Laurinka's replies. Potion ingredients were precious items that should not be arbitrarily given to Wizard Howl at the risk of his failed attempts.

However, Wizard Howl was proficient in potions. Perhaps Merlin could ask him about some potions that were able to stabilize Spell Models.

"Alright, go in now. Tutor Leo is right inside."

Laurinka pointed to the front door as she said to Merlin.

Merlin nodded, took a deep breath, then pushed open the door and walked in slowly.

"Wizard Leo, I'm Wilson Merlin, and I've just arrived at the Dark Magic Region..."

Before he could finish his sentence, Merlin was too taken aback at what he saw so he took in a deep breath. His pupils fixated on the man in front as a chill ran down his spine.

In the room sat a tall built man with a ruddy complexion. His back was slightly stooped, and he looked somewhat aged. This would be Wizard Leo.

However, Wizard Leo's eyes sockets were replaced with a daunting, grayish emptiness. Besides, there was a small bulge of flesh which swelled on his forehead. A blood-red eye like a viper grew right in the middle of this mass of flesh, which was currently staring deadly at Merlin. He felt a chill surged throughout his body, which had already trembling uncontrollably.

Chapter 108: Choice I

"Hehe, here comes another young fellow."

Wizard Leo's voice was quite unpleasant to the ears. The eye on his forehead with the color of fresh blood blinked from time to time as it continuously stared hard at Merlin.

On the other hand, Merlin felt as if his whole body had been solidified. An unparalleled, tremendous force engulfed him and pierced through every part of his body, leaving no secrets behind.

“A rather nice young man. Your name is Merlin?”

The blood-red eye on Wizard Leo’s forehead shut gradually. At the same time, Merlin felt the tense feeling around him dissipated gradually. Wizard Leo who was right in front of him also appeared less intimidating as before.

Therefore, he gave a quick nod and replied respectfully, “Yes, Tutor Leo, my name is Wilson Merlin.”

“Alright, young fellow, I’m in a hurry to finish my experiment. So, being the new temporary member of the Dark Magic Region, you’re granted a chance to obtain three Zero-level Spell Models for free. Tell me, which three Spell Models do you need?”

Wizard Leo suddenly asked in a hoarse voice, his tone appeared to be impatient.

“Free selections of Zero-level spells?”

Merlin thought for a moment. Perhaps this was a little reward for the newcomers of the Dark Magic Region but he could not think of so many Zero-level spells out of the blue. Hence, he whispered in a low voice, “Tutor Leo, I need some time to think about it before giving you an answer.”

Wizard Leo waved his hand, obviously annoyed. “Too troublesome. Alright, come to me when you’ve made up your mind.”

As soon as he finished, Wizard Leo helped Merlin out of the house. He waved his hand swiftly and the main door was shut instantly.

Merlin was still in a daze when he saw an inexplicable smile washed over Laurinka’s face. “Wizard Merlin, now you know why the gray-robed Wizard assigned us to Wizard Leo?”

Merlin nodded although he was still deep in his own thoughts. Maybe Wizard Leo was indeed very capable in strength but patience was more important in guiding students.

It seemed impossible for Wizard Leo to educate students properly with his impatience.

Laurinka heaved a long sigh. She stared aimlessly at Wizard Leo's room and whispered, "It's been three years since I arrived at Tutor Leo's tower, and never have I seen him leave this place once, not to mention teaching us any knowledge about Spell Models..."

Laurinka was also very helpless. Those assigned to Wizard Leo's tower were mainly the ones with poor qualifications. Their future seemed even bleaker when paired with a tutor who stayed in his tower all day long.

"Oh right, Wizard Leo asked me to select three Zero-level spells earlier, and I told him I need more time to think about it. Is there any place in the Dark Magic Region where I can check on some spells?"

Laurinka nodded in response. "Naturally, there are numerous spells, casting tools, and potions around the Dark Magic Region but there are some rules you need to follow. Come on, I'll bring you to the Resource Tower which is equipped with everything you want to know."

Then, Merlin followed closely behind Laurinka and left Wizard Leo's tower.

...

Laurinka took to her heels after bringing Merlin to the Resource Tower.

The Resource Tower looked very different from the normal towers. It was not too tall but it occupied a large surface area, and there were many people shuttling back and forth outside the tower.

Merlin entered the Resource Tower right away. Soon, he whispered to one of the gray-robed Wizards inside the tower, "Where are spells recorded?"

The gray-robed Wizard replied nonchalantly without even looking up, "On the second floor."

Merlin bowed slightly and then headed to the second floor.

He felt as if he had returned to his past life when he stepped foot into the second floor. Rows after rows of scarlet bookshelves were packed with numerous books which were arranged neatly.

Merlin came to the outermost bookshelf and took out a volume of thread-bound books at random.

There were some mysterious runes on the covers. Merlin found himself unable to open the books.

“Maybe I need the Dark Magic ring for this, too?”

He suddenly remembered Laurinka’s advice earlier where she said that the Dark Magic ring was an essential item in the Dark Magic Region. It was required in almost all the dealings here.

Hence, Merlin utilized Mind Power to stimulate the runes on the Dark Magic ring. Almost immediately, the ring released a ray of light that wrapped around the books in Merlin’s hand. Gradually, several Molta words surfaced on the books.

“Crimson Flame, Zero-level Fire-type spell. Can attack any enemy within 100 meters at the same time! Two contribution points!”

This was a Zero-level spell for a group attack. However, Merlin was not able to get his head around the meaning of two contribution points.

He looked up and glanced around. He noticed a slightly chubby female Wizard not far from him. She had two pigtail plaits and looked very much like a woman of quiet disposition.

Merlin went forward and asked politely, “Excuse me, can I ask you something?”

The plump female Wizard glanced at Merlin from top to bottom. Then, a kind smile washed over her face. “What would you like to know?”

Merlin hurriedly revealed the books in his hand. “What’s the meaning of two contribution points marked on the back of this Crimson Flames volume?”

The stout female Wizard gave a faint smile and two dimples appeared on her chubby cheeks. Then, she explained to Merlin in a gentle voice.

“Contribution points are redeemable. Ten thousand gold coins can be exchanged for one contribution point. You can seek the gray-robed Wizard in the Mission Hall for an exchange of contribution points. As long as you have sufficient contribution points, you can use them in exchange for this set of spells with the gray-robed Wizard downstairs.”

Merlin was stunned after listening to the female Wizard’s explanation. Ten thousand gold coins were only equivalent to one contribution point. This set of Crimson Flame was one of the few spells that required lesser contribution points among the others. If following this logic, then First-level spells and Second-level spells would easily require dozens of contribution points, which meant that an equivalent to hundreds of thousands of gold coins?

Even with the entire Wilson family’s wealth, he was not able to exchange for one First-level spell.

As if understanding Merlin’s concern, the female Wizard whispered softly, “In addition to exchanging gold coins for contribution points, they can be gained through the completion of tasks. A selection of tasks is available for grab in the Mission Hall where you can acquire some contribution points when the task is completed. You must be new to the Dark Magic Region, I assume, not knowing about these contribution points? You can check the total of your accumulated contribution points in the ring. Every new Spell Caster to the Dark Magic Region automatically obtains a minimum amount of ten contribution points upon their arrival. Feel free to take a look.”

The female Wizard left as soon as she finished speaking, leaving Merlin alone behind to digest the information he had just received.

“Ten contribution points?”

Without much patience, Merlin inspected the ring worn on his finger. Sure enough, it showed “ten” in Molta language, indicating that he now had accumulated ten contribution points.

Therefore, Merlin continued his search on the bookshelf. In general, common Zero-level spells required two or three contribution points. Of course, there were also some Zero-level spells that required five contribution points. Most of these Zero-level spells were powerful or possessed quite unique qualities, hence the contribution points needed naturally increased slightly.

Merlin also found Fireball, which required only two contribution points which indicated that Fireball was only a very common Zero-level spell.

Although there were a variety of spells in here, and Zero-level spells could even be exchanged with only a few contribution points at random, they were only allowed for members of the spell casters' organization.

The black-robed old man, for instance, joined the army and experienced the Slaughterhouse all for the sole purpose of obtaining several Zero-level spells. Eventually, he only managed to acquire a handful of beginner level Spell Models.

On the other hand, Merilung who joined the Abyss Fort had become a Four-Elemental Wizard in the span of five years, and each of his spells was almost stronger than the black-robed old man's. This was the benefit of joining a spell casters' organization, and it was inevitable that countless roaming Wizards in the outside world dreamed of joining the spell casters' organization.

However, Merlin did not choose from these dazzling collections of Zero-level spells. He shifted his attention to other bookshelves equipped with Mind Meditation Spells.

In comparison to spells, Merlin was now more eager to acquire a powerful Mind Meditation Spell!

Chapter 109: Choice II

Mind Meditation Spell was exactly what Merlin needed to greatly enhance his Mind Power. Mind Power and Spell Models were essential in becoming a greater Spell Caster.

The act of obtaining powerful Mind Power alone but unable to construct a Spell Model was not enough. Laurinka, for instance, achieved the required Mind Power but she was not upgraded to a First-level Spell Caster because she was unable to construct a Spell Model.

On the other hand, it was impossible to become a powerful Spell Caster if one's Mind Power did not reach the required level. Merlin had assistance from the Matrix, hence he did not have to worry about the construction of Spell Models. However, the growth of his Mind Power was not optimal. As a result, Merlin's strength enhancement was negatively affected.

The beginner level Meditation Spell in old man Etha's Spell Manual did not show very effective results. Merlin had long yearned for other Meditation Spells but he was not really been given the chance.

Now, there was more than a hundred different variations of Mind Meditation Spells arranged on the bookshelves.

Merlin pondered for a moment. He completely ignored the beginner level Meditation Spells and turned his attention toward the intermediate level and advanced level Meditation Spells located on the higher shelves.

However, advanced level Mind Meditation Spells required an unbelievable amount of contribution points, which was almost near to a thousand. That was an astronomical figure. Besides, there were only less than ten advanced level Mind Meditation Spells on the entire second floor. It showed that the spell was extremely precious, even in the Dark Magic Region.

Therefore, Merlin landed his gaze on intermediate level Mind Meditation Spells. These spells were not inexpensive, calling at the amount of a minimum of thirty contribution points.

The variation of intermediate level Mind Mediation Spells ranged from thirty to a hundred contribution points. Naturally, Merlin could not afford it with his mere total of ten contribution points.

“Only ten contribution points, that's completely out of the picture...”

Merlin furrowed his eyebrows. Thirty contribution points were not too much but it certainly was not a small amount either. Perhaps Merlin was able to collect this much of contribution points after spending some time in the Dark Magic Region, but this would certainly require a long period of time. His natural Mind Power was not great to begin with, so one step backward would make him fall behind to a great extent. That was why he was desperate to obtain a set of intermediate level Mind Meditation Spell.

Merlin's focused gaze swept back and forth on the shelf. Without sufficient contribution points, he could not read the contents of these books.

Suddenly, an inspiration flashed across his mind. Merlin was reminded of the opportunity to select three Zero-level spells for free that was mentioned by Wizard Leo earlier.

Those Zero-level spells in the Resource Tower required only five contribution points at most. However, three of those spells would make a total amount of fifteen contribution points.

Including the ten contribution points that the Dark Magic Region awarded their newly-joined Spell Casters, he would have a total of twenty-five contribution points.

“Twenty-five contribution points are definitely closer to thirty... Maybe I can try to convince Tutor Leo to swap three Zero-level spells with one intermediate level Mind Mediation Spell.

The more he pondered on it, the more he was convinced that it was plausible. He had to retrieve one intermediate level Mind Mediation Spell as quickly as possible.

Therefore, Merlin did not linger long in the Resource Tower but took his heels to the direction of Wizard Leo’s tower.

...

Merlin noticed Laurinka who was also in Wizard Leo’s tower when he returned. The girl gave him a faint smile. “Wizard Merlin, have you chosen your spells?”

Merlin did not answer directly but replied with another question, “Is Wizard Leo still up there?”

“Wizard Leo stays in there all the time unless something special happens. You can head up directly whenever you need him.”

Merlin gave a quick nod, walked to the Runic Magic Circle and activated the runes on the ring. Within seconds, he was transferred to the top of the tower.

“Tutor Leo?”

Merlin called out gently from outside the door.

“Come in.”

Wizard Leo's voice rang in the air while the door opened slowly. Merlin walked in without hesitation and noticed that Wizard Leo was looking slightly tired.

"Tell me, which spells have you decided?"

Wizard Leo questioned rather impatiently.

Merlin asked with extreme caution, "Tutor Leo, I surrender the opportunity to choose three Zero-level spells for free. With my ten contribution points, can I exchange them for an intermediate level Mind Meditation Spell?"

"Hmm? Mind Meditation Spell?"

Wizard Leo frowned. The blood-red eye which looked like a viper's, located on his forehead twitched slightly, glistering a hint of red light.

Although Merlin had seen this horrifying side of Wizard Leo before, at this moment, fear rose in his heart.

Wizard Leo finally replied after a long pause, "Ah, you've already constructed three Spell Models... Well, I'll give you an intermediate level Mind Meditation Spell. However, the Spell Models you constructed are likely to be unstable. Even if your Mind Power is able to support a First-level Spell Model, you must still exercise caution while constructing them."

Wizard Leo reminded Merlin. It seemed that he was not optimistic about Merlin's potential. After all, how could roaming Wizards, without systematic learning, able to build good Spell Models?

"Tutor Leo, does that mean you agree to my request?"

Merlin was surprised. He did not expect that it went so smooth.

"Take this, I've written an intermediate level Mind Meditation Spell on it."

Earlier, Wizard Leo picked up a pen and paper and scribbled away. It turned out to be a set of intermediate level Mind Meditation Spell. Merlin hurriedly took that piece of paper on the table and scanned it. It was indeed a set of Mind Meditation Spell.

The Mind Meditation Spell which Merlin had dreamed of all day and night had come too easily. Wizard Leo did not even ask for Merlin's remaining ten contribution points. When Merlin looked up at Wizard Leo's ferocious face again, he no longer noticed the intimidation that was there before.

"Okay, take your leave now. I have to conduct an important experiment these few days so don't come in and bother me, unless necessary."

Wizard Leo was eager to drive Merlin out.

Merlin looked at the door shut tightly after Wizard Leo and shook his head helplessly. It seemed that he was not going to see Wizard Leo for a very long time.

Fortunately, he acquired a set of intermediate level Mind Meditation Spell, which was the biggest gain after he arrived in the Dark Magic Region.

"Wizard Merlin, are you done choosing your spells?"

Laurinka suddenly appeared on the top floor without him noticing.

Merlin nodded. "Zero-level spells are not useful for me at the time being, so I asked Tutor Leo to give me an intermediate level Mind Meditation Spell."

"Oh? Intermediate level Mind Meditation Spell? That required at least thirty contribution points."

An envious look came to Laurinka's face, and then she whispered, "Wizard Leo is actually very nice, but he has no patience to explain the knowledge of spells construction to us."

Merlin also nodded in silence. Although he only had two encounters with Wizard Leo, he had already understood the man's temper. He was very straightforward but at the same time, he was obsessed in the realm of cultivation. It was safe to call him a complete cultivation fanatic.

“Oh right, what happened to Wizard Leo’s eyes?” Merlin whispered.

The blood-red eye on Wizard Leo’s forehead was too strange that it sent chills down anyone who shifted their gaze on it.

Chapter 110: Peaceful Life I

“Tutor Leo’s eyes?”

Laurinka stopped walking, and finally answered after moments of hesitation, “Tutor Leo’s eyes were already like this when I first arrived in the Dark Magic Region. I’ve heard that his eyes were caused by the cultivation of a Darkness-type spell. It seems that Tutor Leo did an experiment on himself and ruined his eyes with his own hands. Then, using some really strange potions produced with a Darkness-type spell, he created the Darkness Eye on his forehead. I heard that the Darkness Eye possesses a very peculiar power... I’m not too sure about the specifics.”

“Ruining both eyes to cultivate a Darkness-type spell?”

An indecipherable expression washed over Merlin’s face. He trembled slightly at the thought of Wizard Leo’s vacant, dead eyes. Even if that so-called Darkness Eye had many advantages, Merlin would not inflict such harm upon himself to become a ghost of horror.

“Well, you’re staying on the third floor of the tower.”

Without Merlin’s realization, Laurinka had already brought him to the third floor of the Wizard Tower. She pointed to several rooms, indicating that these rooms were Merlin’s home in the future.

Merlin glanced around roughly and was satisfied at what he saw. The rooms were large and spacious, sufficient for him who lived alone.

“I’m truly grateful to you, Wizard Laurinka, for helping me to settle down. I’m afraid I took too much of your time.”

Merlin expressed gratitude to Laurinka with a slight bow. He knew that time was very precious for Spell Casters, and he had taken almost half a day of Laurinka’s time.

Laurinka puckered her face in a smile. “I’m not helping you to adapt to the Dark Magic Region for nothing. This is the task I took in the Mission Hall. In other words, I acquire two contribution points every time I receive and welcome a new Spell Caster. Alright, I’m going to check if there’s any new Spell Caster coming in. If you have any doubts or questions in the future, don’t be afraid to come to me. I live on the sixth floor of the tower!”

She turned around and left the tower the moment she finished speaking.

Merlin walked into his room and hurriedly took out the intermediate level Mind Meditation Spell gifted by Wizard Leo.

This intermediate level Mind Meditation Spell was not too difficult to understand. Merlin could hardly wait to begin his meditation according to the methods shown, so gradually, he immersed himself in the realm of meditation.

In a short while, Merlin opened his eyes again with his face revealing a hint of joy. He whispered to himself in a low voice, “It works really well, at least three to five times more efficient than the beginner level Mind Meditation Spell that I practiced before.”

In less than an hour into meditation, Merlin clearly felt his Mind Power had increased, and the effect was so much better than beginner level Mind Meditation Spell he retrieved from old man Etha’s Spell Manual.

Hence, Merlin continued his meditation quietly in the room.

...

A month later, Merlin finally walked out of the Wizard Tower, and coincidentally bumped into Wizard Laurinka.

As the weather gradually warmed up, the female Wizards in the Dark Magic Region began to remove their thick layers of clothing. Laurinka was wearing a pair of tight shorts that showed off her slender, fair legs. Her upper body was covered with only a short silk gown that was made from a material as thin as gauze, vaguely revealing the splendor of spring hidden underneath.

Originally, Merlin thought all Spell Casters were serious, mysterious, and reserved. However, after arriving at the Dark Magic Region, he realized those kinds of Spell Casters only made up a tiny part of the population. Cultivation fanatics like Wizard Leo were even rare.

Female Wizards liked to dress in pretty clothes like other young women. To help them appear younger and more beautiful, they were also willing to spend precious contribution points in exchange for some active potions.

Although these active potions could only enhance skin elasticity and had no other effect, they were well-sought after among young female Wizards.

“Wizard Merlin, you’ve finally stepped out of the tower.”

Laurinka greeted Merlin with a smile. It seemed like she had also noticed that Merlin had hidden in the Wizard Tower since he arrived in the Dark Magic Region a month ago.

Merlin replied casually, “I’ve been meditating, that’s why I didn’t go out as often. I heard that Wizard Nasha is offering a free Wind-type spell course, so I decided to drop by and check it out.”

Laurinka frowned and asked in a low whisper, “Wizard Nasha’s free courses are mostly about some Zero-level spells. You’ve already constructed three Zero-level spells. Are you planning on constructing another one?”

Merlin’s replied the question with empty silence.

Out of kindness, Laurinka reminded him, “Wizard Merlin, indeed, constructing more spells is useful for building your strength in the future. However, it does not only exhaust your Mind Power but you’ll also need to spend lots of time reconstructing your Spell Models. When the time is matured for you to advance into a First-level Spell Caster, you’ll require more time to construct a First-level Spell Model compared to the others.

“A slight mistake and all your previous efforts are wasted! Moreover, all three of your existing Spell Models constructed outside might get unstable, hence, I don’t recommend you to construct more Spell Models. Instead, focus on the First-level Spell Model that corresponds to the three spells you’ve built earlier. It’ll assist your journey to become a First-level Spell Caster. After all, you only have three years.”

Merlin knew that Laurinka said those things out of concern. Indeed, if Merlin was just a normal Spell Caster, he would be satisfied with the three Spell Models he had constructed. To continue constructing more would break the hope of him becoming a First-level Spell Caster in the future.

However, he had the Matrix, and that was why he was not worried about the construction of Spell Models. As long as he reached a sufficient level of Mind Power, he was able to construct more Spell Models.

At the bottom line, Four-Elemental Wizards, Five-Elemental Wizards, and so on, were beyond the ability of common Three-Elemental Wizards, leaving a tremendous gap in between. Merilung, who had spent five years in the Abyss Fort, for instance, was able to become a Four-Elemental Wizard. However, perhaps the cultivation systems in the Abyss Fort was different from the Dark Magic Region where after five years, Merilung, who did not manage to upgrade to a First-level Spell Caster, was still allowed to stay in the Abyss Fort.

On the other hand, in the Dark Magic Region, if one failed to become a First-level Spell Caster within three years, they would be expelled from the organization.

“Thank you so much for your kind reminders, Wizard Laurinka. I’ll handle with attention.”

Merlin returned the smile.

Laurinka did not comment any further. She had already done her part of giving him sincere advice but it was completely up to Merlin to make his own decision.

Hence, she left hurriedly after a brief small talk.

Merlin walked around before he finally arrived in front of a tower. This Wizard’s tower did not soar into the sky but it looked brand new. This was Wizard Nasha’s tower. Wizard Nasha was recently promoted to a Fourth-level Spell Caster, so this tower was newly built.

Due to her delivery of free course, numerous people crowded in front of Wizard Nasha’s tower. The large crowd consisted mostly of beginner level Spell Casters.

“Buzz, buzz.”

Suddenly, the runes on the Wizard Tower began to glisten brightly. A young female Wizard appeared from the tower and shouted at the crowd of Spell Casters without much interest, “Wizard Nasha is ready now. Please enter the tower in a respected order. Anyone who fails to do so will be dismissed without prejudice.”

Everyone nodded obediently at the rule.

Following closely behind the crowd of Spell Casters, Merlin also took to his heels and headed into the tower.