

W. Secret 171

Chapter 171: Scarce Resources

“Conxion, come here!”

Merlin walked out of his room. The radiant sunlight shone upon him, rendering him a little uncomfortable. After making a slight estimation, he had already stayed in his room for a couple of days. Merlin, who had grown accustomed to the darkness, actually felt uncomfortable under the sun.

The maids were holding Conxion now. He played around in the wide field to his heart's content. Even if he heard Merlin's calling, he did not react to his father.

Merlin shook his head helplessly. Neither Conxion nor Celia was close to him; these two children had not called him even once until now.

Merlin was helpless in this matter.

Merlin strode toward Conxion and lifted him off the ground. The little guy was determined to resist Merlin; his small hands kept pulling and scratching Merlin. His actions had made many maids burst into laughter.

Merlin glanced at these maids and asked, “Where's Charise and Avril?”

The maid replied respectfully, “Sir Viscount, both madams are taking a bath.”

Upon hearing the reply, Merlin shook his head slightly. Since they were taking a bath during the day, they could have been applying Vitality Potion. Since Merlin handed Vitality Potion to Charise and Avril, they became crazy about it. Every day, they would pour the potion into hot bath water and soak in the water for a long time.

The Vitality Potion was indeed wonderful. After soaking in it, Charise and Avril's skin had turned extremely soft and tender. In addition, both seemed to apply it in great spirit.

Most people said that women regarded beauty as life. Merlin had finally understood what these words meant. Women loved beauty regardless of age and status. Not only was Vitality Potion popular amongst female wizards, but it was also loved by ordinary women.

Merlin glanced at the second floor of the castle. He knew that Charise and Avril were soaking in Vitality Potion, so they would not show up for a while. He directly turned around and left. He intended to visit the black-robed old man to check if Purple Stone Powder Potion could truly stabilize his Spell Models.

Thus, Merlin put Conxion down and left Wilson Castle.

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“Sir Viscount, we’re here!”

The carriage slowly came to a halt. Merlin had arrived at the residence of the black-robed old man.

Merlin knocked on the door. It was still the maid who let Merlin into the house. Merlin immediately saw the black-robed old man. He was holding a book in his hands and reading leisurely in his house.

“Wizard Hill, have your Spell Models stabilized?”

Upon seeing that the old man was relaxed, Merlin smiled as well. It seemed that Purple Stone Powder Potion which he brought from the Dark Magic Region was rather effective.

Soon, Merlin sat in front of the old man. The gray-clothed maid handed him a cup of warm water and some dried nuts. Merlin grabbed an oval-shaped nut and bit into it. The nut was fragrant and crunchy; it tasted delicious.

The black-robed old man glimpsed at Merlin and grinned. “Wizard Merlin, the Purple Powder Potion you brought back is really effective. I no longer need to suppress the Spell Models with Mind Power. I can also cast spells, but they’re still slightly unstable so I still have to consume Purple Stone Powder Potion.”

Then, the old man took a glance at Merlin and said with a low voice, “Wizard Merlin, I have used up the Purple Stone Powder, the main potion material needed in the formula to make Purple Stone Powder Potion. Do you have more with you?”

Merlin shook his head. “I’ve used up all Purple Stone Powder to make the potions. Also, it’s not just you; I also lack many potion materials. After leaving the Dark Magic Region, it’s so difficult to obtain potion materials and they’re scarce in the large Prakash City.”

Merlin was helpless in this matter as well. He needed some potion materials but he could not find any in Prakash City. Due to lack of potion materials out here, many roaming wizards wanted to join a spell casters’ organization but the scarcity of resources had also put many Spell Casters in a pinch.

Merlin, who had stayed in the Dark Magic Region for a year, had enjoyed all sorts of resources in the Resource Tower. He only needed to spend some contribution points to exchange for the resources he needed. Never did he thought that the spells, casting tools, elemental crystal stones, and all sorts of potion materials in the Resource Tower were obtained from scavenging various places.

After leaving his spell casters’ organization, Merlin had felt the obvious hurdles in improving his ability.

“Prakash City naturally doesn’t have much potion materials. Many Spell Casters who want to improve themselves won’t come to Prakash City. But if Wizard Merlin really needs some potion materials, I know of a place that may have what you need.”

The black-robed old man put down his book and said in a calm tone while squinting his eyes.

“Oh? Where’s that?”

Merlin quickly asked. He was indeed in need of a place that had potion materials now. Only with potion materials that he would be able to continue preparing Phantasmal Magic Potion or Blueberry Potion to increase his Mind Power.

Otherwise, even if he cultivated an advanced Mind Meditation Spell, it would still take him a few years to have his Mind Power at a level where he was capable of supporting the construction of six First-level spells.

By then, he would have been expelled from the Dark Magic Region.

“It’s Floating City. Many Spell Casters do all sorts of trades there regardless of whether they’re roaming wizards, wizards in the army, from spell casters’ organization or Spell Caster family. All sorts of Spell Casters can show up in Floating City.”

The black-robed old man explained about Floating City in detail. Merlin was overwhelmed with elation and kept mumbling, “Floating City. Floating City... Wait, doesn’t Wizard Elena belong to the Delman family in Floating City?”

Merlin recalled Wizard Elena in his mind. That cute-looking, lively female wizard mentioned Floating City to Merlin after the incident in the Dark Magic Region. Merlin did not think much about it at that time; he only thought of the name, “Floating City”. He thought it was commonplace in the Kingdom of Blackmoon.

However, after listening to the old man’s explanation, he realized that Floating City was the place where many Spell Casters traded amongst themselves.

“Wizard Hill, have you been to Floating City before?”

Merlin suddenly asked.

The old man nodded. “Once, a dozen years back. It’s a bustling city. Many Spell Casters trade there. If Wizard Merlin decides to go, I’ll go with you to trade for the materials needed for Purple Stone Powder Potion.”

“Alright. After I’ve made some proper arrangements, I’ll depart with Wizard Hill!”

Merlin stood up and smiled. He needed the potion materials quite urgently. He was an extremely rare Six-Elemental Spell Caster. In addition, he had complicated spells like Frigid Ice and Dark Light Realm amongst his First-level spells. These spells required a large amount of Mind Power to simulate in his Awareness.

It was simply too slow to increase his Mind Power by using advanced Mind Meditation Spell. Merlin would need to take some potions to speed up the increment of Mind Power.

Thus, after bidding farewell to the black-robed old man, Merlin returned to his carriage and headed back toward Wilson Castle.

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After returning to Wilson Castle, Merlin asked the maids about Old Wilson, then headed to the back of the castle.

Wilson Castle was much different now than a year ago after Old Wilson had introduced some changes. Behind the castle, a huge square was built in which Old Wilson trained his heavy-armored knights.

However, Old Wilson was not training his heavy-armored knights today. There were only a few people there practicing a strange posture with Old Wilson.

Merlin had noticed it from afar that the posture Old Wilson was practicing was the posture of the strange relief sculpture. Behind Old Wilson, there were Yaguez, Prat and two other men. Although Merlin did not know their names, he was familiar with their faces. They could be the heavy-armored knights who had followed Old Wilson from Blackwater City to Prakash City.

Old Wilson probably trusted these four the most or he would never teach the posture of the mysterious relief sculpture to them.

“Who’s there?”

Suddenly, Old Wilson opened his eyes. A terrifying aura cloaked his entire being and he seemed like a beast who was about to pounce on the opponents and devour them.

“Father, it’s me!”

Merlin immediately showed himself and approached them. After Old Wilson had cultivated the posture, his senses had turned much sharper, so he had noticed Merlin from afar.

After realizing that it was Merlin, Old Wilson recalled the aura around him and revealed a kind smile. He asked, “Merlin, why are you here?”

Merlin's gaze briefly scanned the people behind Old Wilson and smiled. "Father, I came looking for you to discuss some matters. These two are...?"

Merlin shot his gaze toward the two muscular men and Old Wilson explained to Merlin, "You should know Prat and Yaguez. These two are the deputy commanders of the heavy-armored knights, Emmet and Barboux. They've followed me through many life and death situations for many years. I decided to teach them the posture of that relief sculpture."

These two men slightly bowed when they looked at Merlin. "Sir Viscount."

In Wilson Castle, Merlin was a viscount while Old Wilson was a baron.

Merlin did not remember much about these two men, but since they were picked by Old Wilson, he did not worry too much about it. Old Wilson understood the significance of the strange relief sculpture clearly, so he would not be careless in choosing the people to learn the posture. He would have thought this through before teaching them.

"Merlin, what do you think of Yaguez?"

Suddenly, Old Wilson glimpsed at Yaguez and revealed a grin as he asked Merlin softly.

Chapter 172: Floating City

"Yaguez?"

Merlin shot a glance at Yaguez. That young-looking face had long grown out of naivety, revealing a hint of mature and tough look.

Merlin could still recall that the young Yaguez had vowed to protect him with determination. He also recalled that Yaguez had stood in front of him without a shade of doubt when they faced the strong bandits.

"Yaguez is honest and courageous. I don't have any objection about Father teaching the posture of relief sculpture to him."

Merlin was satisfied with Yaguez. Back then, the young knight's dream was to join Old Wilson's heavy-armored knights.

However, it was a piece of cake with Yaguez's ability to become a commander, not to mention a heavy-armored knight.

However, Old Wilson shook his head. He said with a grin, "I'm not asking you about his personality. I've taught Yaguez myself; I definitely know him very well. I'm asking you what you think of Yaguez with Macy."

"Yaguez with Macy?"

Merlin showed a strange expression. He had already been back in Prakash City for a few days, but he had not met Macy. Hearing from Old Wilson, it appeared that Macy was still in Conxion territory, helping Old Wilson to take care of the entire territory. Now, Macy had become Old Wilson's great help.

However, Merlin had never expected that Old Wilson would want to bring Yaguez and Macy together.

"Why? Do you think it's not right?"

Old Wilson inquired in a low voice with a frown on his face.

Merlin shook his head and quickly replied, "I don't think there's any problem with that. I'm just surprised."

"Haha. Tell me about it. I was shocked when I heard Yaguez expressing his feelings about Macy. There's just too much differences between Yaguez's stoic personality and Macy's lively character. But this may just be their fate. I'm fine as long as they both think it's alright."

Old Wilson laughed. He was obviously quite satisfied with Yaguez as well.

After that, Old Wilson seemed to have thought of something and said to Merlin, “Merlin, do you need me for anything today?”

Hearing Old Wilson’s question, Merlin explained the situation briefly, “Father, I may need to leave Prakash City for a while. I’m going to a place with Wizard Hill.”

“Leaving already?”

Old Wilson revealed an apparent disappointed look but he soon recovered and acted normal. He knew that Merlin had become a mysterious yet powerful Spell Caster; he lived in a different world than the rest of them.

“Alright, but Yaguez and Macy will have their wedding in about half a year’s time. As her brother, you must return by then.”

Old Wilson said to Merlin with a serious face.

Merlin considered it for a while. Floating City was not too far from here. As long as he did not spend too much time in Floating City, he would be able to get back in half a year’s time.

Upon thinking about that, Merlin nodded. “Alright. I’ll be back by then.”

Following that, Merlin turned around and left. Old Wilson continued to teach Yaguez and others about the mysterious posture of the relief sculpture.

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The night was cool and serene. Merlin, Charise, and Avril had no intention to sleep just yet. After numerous days of soaking in Vitality Potion, Charise and Avril’s skin had turned soft and delicate – both appeared to be more beautiful now.

After a night of excitement, the three of them seemed a little exhausted, but none had fallen asleep. At this moment, they were silently enjoying the warmth of loved ones.

“Are you really leaving?”

Charise suddenly asked and broke the silence in the room.

“Yeah. Tomorrow.”

After saying that, the atmosphere turned silent once again. In fact, Merlin had slowly noticed the distant feeling he had toward the others such as Charise, Avril, and even Old Wilson, when he returned home.

This was because he was already living in a different world than Old Wilson, Charise, and the others. There were a lot of things Merlin could not explain clearly to them as well.

It felt as if there was a gigantic barrier between them!

After a long moment, Charise gradually said, “Merlin, I begin to feel that you’re so far away from me, even if you’re right beside me.”

Merlin did not reply. A dead silence hung over the entire room.

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The next day, Merlin quietly left Wilson Castle. He went straight to the black-robed old man’s residence. The old man had already prepared everything, including a hired carriage which was waiting for Merlin.

“How is it? Have you settled everything?”

A faint smile played on the black-robed old man’s face.

“All done. Let’s go.”

Merlin told him calmly and dived into the carriage.

The black-robed old man took a knowing glance at Merlin and sighed rather thoughtfully. “Wizard Merlin, you must treasure the time spent with your family. We Spell Casters are destined to be alone. The warm days spent with family won’t stay for too long...”

An ordinary First-level Spell Caster could live up to two hundred years old. Even the short-lived ones could live up to one hundred years. Meanwhile, Normies basically had a lifespan of about seventy years; even that was considered long-lived.

After all, Spell Casters and Normies were two types of people. When all their beloved family members had passed away due to old age, the Spell Casters must bear the endless days alone.

Merlin looked at the black-robed old man again. The old man could have experienced a loving yet regretful memory as well...

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The carriage was slowly moving forward on the rugged mountain road, giving it a bumpy ride.

Although the road was rough, the carriage continued its journey toward the mountains which were surrounded by clouds and mists. No one knew what sort of people were sitting in the carriage in this desolate place.

Finally, the carriage slowly came to a halt. Two black-robed men came out of the carriage. One of them, who was rather old, communicated to the carriage driver in a soft voice. Then, the carriage driver brought the carriage slowly down the mountain.

“Wizard Hill, is this Floating City?”

Merlin asked with a strange expression. These two black-robed men were Merlin and Wizard Hill who came all the way from Prakash City.

In the mountain, there was almost no road to proceed forward. If they walked toward the front, they would enter the dense forest which was covered in mist. Merlin could not imagine that this was Floating City.

The black-robed old man raised his head to take a glance at the dense forest covered in mist. A grin appeared on his face. “That’s right. It’s here. Let’s go. If you move further in, you’re able to see Floating City.”

Thereafter, the black-robed old man walked into the mist.

Merlin hesitated for a while and finally followed suit.

Merlin noticed that his sight was greatly impeded by the thick mist; he could only see a brief silhouette of the black-robed old man in front of him. Moreover, the mist would enter his wide robe; its moist sensation gave off a chilly feeling.

“Ka-chak.”

Suddenly, Merlin waved his hands and cast Frost toward a certain place in front of him. At once, thick ice crystals were formed.

Merlin frowned. When he approached the figure, he realized that it was a spider with the marking of flowers. It was about the size of a palm. By sight, Merlin knew that it was poisonous and appeared to be gruesome.

“Wizard Hill, there are a lot of poisonous insects here!”

After saying that, he raised his hands and cast Fireball. The fireball immediately exploded and killed a few thumb-sized beetles that gave off a buzzing noise.

Although Merlin and the black-robed old man had just entered the forest for a short period, they had come across a few poisonous insects. Most of these poisonous insects contained acute poison. Should they be bitten, it would not take long for them to succumb to the poison.

Only the Spell Casters could monitor all movements around them at any time with Mind Power to ensure their safety. The same as the strong Elemental Swordsmen, if they were careless here, they would most probably be bitten by the poisonous insects as well.

“Wizard Hill, is this really Floating City?”

Merlin could not help but ask.

The old man suddenly paused and grinned. He spoke softly, “Alright. We’re already here!”

“Here?”

Merlin raised his head to find that it was still misty in front of them and he could not see things clearly. However, when Merlin looked with his Mind Power, he saw that there was a blurred figure of a city within the mist as if it was floating in the clouds. He was certain that this was Floating City.

The old man shot a glance at Merlin, then explained with a smile, “Floating City is not exactly floating in the air. It’s built at the peak of a mountain surrounded by clouds and mist, thus the name, Floating City. Moreover, the mist is, in fact, created by a large Runic Magic Circle. Even if a Normie came into the mountain, he can’t find Floating City without strong Mind Power.”

Merlin nodded. Some Spell Casters stayed around Normies, while some preferred to stay away from Normies. Floating City was obviously in the group that avoided Normies. They did not want to be found by Normies, so they spent enormous energy and time to build such a strange place.

“Let’s go. To enter Floating City, we must activate these stone statues with Mind Power!”

The old man pointed at the large stone statues on the ground. The figures of some Spell Casters seemed to be carved on these statues. In addition, there were all sorts of gemstones and mysterious runes on them.

Merlin and the black-robed old man approached the statues and rapidly extended their Mind Power toward the statues. Then, it was as if the statues had come alive – the mysterious runes on them began to gleam a bright light. Even the gemstones on the statues were shining all sorts of beautiful light.

“Swish! Swish!”

Two pillars of light flashed. Merlin and the old man’s figures were covered by the runes and disappeared completely...

Chapter 173: Alchemist

“Swish! Swish!”

Two pillars of light flashed, then two figures appeared.

Merlin and the black-robed old man had arrived at an unfamiliar place. There were also a few large statues here. These statues were covered with runes that gave off extremely mysterious and ancient vibes.

“We’re finally here. This is Floating City!”

The black-robed old man looked around and smiled as he said softly to Merlin.

Merlin pulled open the robe over his head to reveal his young-looking face. He checked out his surroundings and found that it appeared to be a booming city. However, there were not many people here. In addition, there were many mysterious runes and fluctuations of Elements around them.

“Let’s go. This is only the outer area of Floating City. The inner area is more vibrant.”

The old man smiled and promptly became a guide for Merlin. He walked at the front and guided Merlin into Floating City.

As the old man had said, Floating City was indeed bustling with people. Once they were in the city, a cacophony of noise immediately reached Merlin’s ears. People were everywhere within his sight. There were men, women, the elderly, and even children – people from all walks of life were roaming the street as they pleased.

Of course, they were not Normies; they were at the very least, Entrance-level Spell Casters and above.

Moreover, these Spell Casters were strange. Some had gruesome-looking poison insects on them that snarled and terrified others, and some even took the form of a monster that was more horrifying than Wizard Leo.

The Spell Casters came in all shapes and sizes. This trip had truly opened Merlin's eyes.

With the old man's guidance, Merlin explored the street. Suddenly, Merlin looked to the front and saw a brown-haired ugly Spell Caster and there was a naked man trailing behind him.

The man only wore a leather skirt by his waist and an iron mask on his head. Silver thorns were tied around his limbs that reflected the bright sunlight, thus appearing extremely horrifying.

This masked man even wore an iron chain around his neck and was pulled by the ugly Spell Caster in front of him, moving forward one step at a time.

Merlin frowned. He could see that the masked man was obviously a living human but he was treated like a monster.

The old man's expression turned dark and told Merlin in a heavy voice, "Wizard Merlin, don't get us into trouble. Those are alchemists, mad people. Don't ever get in trouble with them."

The old man quickly pulled Merlin and walked quicker to the front. Then, they waited until that ugly Spell Caster and the masked man had left.

Merlin gazed at the masked "monster" behind him and asked, "Wizard Hill, what do you mean by alchemists?"

The old man revealed a serious expression, then laughed grimly. "Hehe. Technically speaking, alchemists are Spell Casters as well but they are known to be cruel and bad-tempered. These alchemists are not Spell Casters of a high level. They may be Entrance-level or First-level Spell Casters but they don't have much interest in constructing Spell Models. Instead, they prefer to study alchemy and to practice it on people.

"Did you see that masked 'creature' back there? That's actually a Normie. He was caught by these alchemists and had his memory erased with a special potion, turning into a walking zombie 1 that only obeys the alchemists. The alchemists tried all they could to test their alchemy on Normies that they've captured, enabling the Normies to possess power that's more terrifying than that of a beast. The alchemists call such walking zombies as their 'pet'. Hehe. The alchemist's abilities mostly manifest in their 'pet'. To attain greater strength, these alchemists are ruthless. They're no longer true Spell Casters!"

The old man's tone obviously showed disapproval of the alchemists. Indeed, Merlin was filled with disgust after hearing the actions of this group of ruthless Spell Casters.

The so-called "pet" of the alchemists were all Normies but they were cruelly turned into monsters. In fact, there was a name for such a "pet" in Merlin's previous life – biological weapon!

However, in his previous life, the law had been perfected; it strictly prohibited the study of "biological weapon" because this matter was simply too terrifying and inhumane. Unfortunately, in this world, the mad alchemists were not held down by anything, hence they could test their alchemy result on Normies at will.

"Let's go. We'll get used to such matter the more we encounter it."

The old man shook his head slightly. When he heard about the cruelty of alchemists back then, he was in disbelief. However, this was the truth. In the world of Spell Casters, cruelty and indifference were the main themes. Most Spell Casters regarded themselves a tower above the rest; they did not think much about Normies.

Merlin took a deep breath, trying to calm the boiling emotions in his heart. Then, he turned around and trailed behind the black-robed old man, heading forward.

During his trip, Merlin noticed quite a few cruel alchemists. There were always some "monsters" trailing behind them. These "monsters" were the results of the alchemists' study. Merlin even felt a strong sense of danger from some of these "monsters".

Merlin had never come across the knowledge of alchemists in the Dark Magic Region. This also showed that the Dark Magic Region was a rather orthodox spell casters' organization. They practiced the ancient cultivation method of Spell Casters with potions, alchemy, and runology as side studies to aid Spell Casters in becoming a higher-level Spell Caster. It was definitely not the other way around to have runology or alchemy to be the main studies and neglect the construction of Spell Model.

However, Merlin also knew from the black-robed old man that the number of orthodox spell casters' organizations had been decreasing in the overall Spell Casters world. Many spell casters' organizations were starting to accept alchemists.

Walking behind the old man for a long time, Merlin could not help but ask, “Wizard Hill, where are we going?”

Merlin had truly learned a lot by coming to Floating City. At least he had never come across such a cruel yet still gradually expanding group of people like the alchemists. This represented a trend of changes in the entire Spell Caster world. These alchemists might only need a short time to turn a Normie into an offensive monster by using unique alchemy methods.

Although the doing was cruel, their actions were welcomed by many Spell Casters. Hence, more Spell Casters were considering to becoming alchemists.

However, Merlin’s true aim in Floating City was still getting some potion materials required to prepare Phantasmal Magic Potion and Blueberry Potion.

Thus, when Merlin saw that the black-robed old man was heading toward an unknown place, he would ask for clarification.

The old man paused and replied, “Wizard Merlin, we both need some potion materials. Just follow me. I’ll bring you to an old friend of mine. With his help, we can get the potion materials we want easily.”

Merlin nodded. After all, the black-robed old man had visited Floating City in the past; he would naturally be more familiar with the city.

Soon, the old man brought Merlin through a few streets and entered an alley. Then, they turned right and walked into a courtyard.

This courtyard had a nice ambience as it appeared serene and quiet. In the yard, there was an old man who was about the age of the black-robed old man. He silently lied on his chair in a laid-back manner, enjoying the afternoon sun.

However, as soon as the black-robed old man and Merlin stepped into the yard and before they could even approach the old man, a woman in a red shirt suddenly dashed out from the old man’s side.

This woman had a well-shaped body. With her detached expression, she seemed to be an extremely beautiful person. She wore a tight leather armor and her chest stood tall and proud, enhancing her charm.

The fingers of this woman in a red shirt were actually sharp spikes that had a cold gleam while her purple hair was also needle-like. Her small figure contained a strength stronger than any fierce beast. However, her eyes were not focused, and she appeared to be lifeless and detached.

This was obviously another Alchemy Creature!

The woman moved like the wind as she arrived in front of Merlin and the black-robed old man in the blink of an eye. She raised the gleaming spikes on her hands and showed an offensive stance.

“Burton!”

The black-robed old man yelled. Instantly, the laid-back old man on the chair shivered. Following that, the woman in a red shirt also halted her movement. Just like a puppet, she stared lifelessly at Merlin and the black-robed old man.

“Burton, I can’t believe you’ve become an alchemist!”

The black-robed old man strode toward Wizard Burton and shot a glance at the woman who was obviously an Alchemist Creature. His tone concealed a hint of anger as he said coldly.

Wizard Burton slowly opened his eyes. After sparing a glimpse at the black-robed old man and Merlin, he replied in an unconcerned tone, “It’s Hill, huh. It’s been so many years, but that temper of yours never changes. You really can’t learn to change. No wonder that you’re still suffering from the agony of your unstable Spell Models all your life. Meanwhile, I’ve obtained many resources thanks to my darling, ‘Spikes’ and finally became a First-level Spell Caster!”

Wizard Burton took a glance at the woman in a red shirt and announced proudly.

“Spikes? Hehe. That’s the name of your Alchemy Creature? Your soul has fallen. Betraying the tradition of ancient Spell Casters, you’re no longer a Spell Caster. You’re an alchemist who has gone on a wrong path!”

The black-robed old man seemed to be furious that he almost howled.

“Fallen?”

Wizard Burton’s eyes flashed, then stood up in a sudden movement. With a cold stare, he said to the black-robed old man, “Hill, you’re still as stubborn as before. As long as I can be stronger, I can use whatever method to do so. How strong can your so-called orthodox Spell Casters be? Hehe, ‘darling’, send my regards to my old friend!”

As soon as Wizard Burton finished his words, the initially quiet woman in a red shirt immediately advanced forward, moving as fast as the wind. The spikes on her hands shone a cold gleam as she aimed them at the black-robed old man.

Chapter 174: Alchemy Creature

The woman in red moved extremely quick, rendering the black-robed old man almost unable to react to her attack. The spikes on her hands slashed toward the old man without the slightest hint of hesitation.

As an orthodox Spell Caster, the old man had a weak physique. He could not take even a single hit from the Alchemy Creature.

“Bang!”

The woman in red was not able to land her attack as Merlin struck instinctively. Guardian Monument instantly encompassed the black-robed old man, and the spikes on her hands stabbed into the Guardian Monument ferociously, causing friction. As a result, the impact let out a series of sharp screeching noises.

“Scram!”

At the same time, Merlin let out a low howl and numerous small fireballs flew out of his hands. The fireballs headed straight towards the woman.

“Bang! Bang! Bang!”

After a few explosions, the impact of the fireballs sent the woman in red back a few meters. Moreover, she was drowned by the enraged flame.

“Hmm? Hill, I didn’t expect you to know such a capable person! But my darling won’t be defeated that easily.”

Wizard Burton smirked, then the woman, who was covered in flames, bounced up from the ground. The tight leather armor she wore was destroyed by the flame, revealing her well-shaped naked body. They could even see her tall and plump breasts clearly.

However, even if the woman in a red was naked, she could not arouse a hint of desire from the men. Instead, they felt disgusted.

The upper body of the woman was covered with a greenish epidermal layer like scales which enveloped her entire upper body. Merlin’s small fireballs were blasted onto the layer of scales, thus were not effective at all.

The greenish scales on the woman’s body began to secrete a sort of mucus that instantly quenched the furious flame.

Merlin’s attack had exposed the woman’s’ real appearance. They felt that she was extremely disgusting where a well-shaped and sexy lady had become a terrifying Alchemy Creature.

“Swoosh!”

Suddenly, the woman howled as if she was a beast. Her figure began to expand and muscles appeared on her body. Even her veins bulged out, appearing extremely horrifying on her delicate face.

With this transformation, the people could see that the woman was powerful beyond imagination. She leaped and headed directly toward Merlin.

“Dark Mist!”

Merlin immediately cast Dark Mist and a large area of mist appeared at once. The mist enveloped the woman but she seemed to be unaffected by it and continued to dash out from the mist frantically.

“Hmm? Dark Mist? Hill, I truly didn’t expect the person you brought with you had constructed Dark Mist successfully! But, no matter how strong Dark Mist is, it won’t have any effect on my darling because she’s just a walking zombie. She’s without conscious and won’t fall into an illusion by nature. Haha!”

Amidst Wizard Burton’s laughter, the woman dashed out of the mist as expected. She released a punch at Merlin. The air let out a faint “buzzing” sound from her punch, demonstrating how powerful this punch really was.

“Guardian Monument!”

Without hesitation, Merlin immediately cast Guardian Monument. The woman’s punch fell on Guardian Monument.

“Boom!”

After a violent shake, a crack appeared on Merlin’s Guardian Monument and his expression immediately changed. Guardian Monument is a strong First-level Defensive spell. The fact that it cracked from the punch of the woman proved how strong she really was.

The Alchemy Creature was as strong as expected so he could not underestimate her!

“Furious Flame!”

Merlin squinted his eyes. At this moment, he had cast his First-level Offensive spell, Furious Flame. At once, a scorching aura manifested itself and a long line of fire directly inundated the woman.

This was the first time Merlin had cast Furious Flame. Its power was several times stronger than Fireball and its high temperature was sufficient to melt an armor. In addition to its exploding ability, the effect of Furious Flame was greatly improved.

Despite the great strength of the spell, Merlin noticed that the woman had once again walked out from the furious flame. The skin on her face was completely burnt, emitting an unbearable stench.

To those present, this scene appeared to be normal. However, the most terrifying of all was that the woman acted as if nothing had happened. The greenish scales on her body began to squirm slowly. Following that, a new layer of skin grew and her charred face had recovered her initial appearance.

Merlin frowned. The woman was, in fact, not a human anymore – she was an Alchemy Creature created by Wizard Burton after spending much energy and time. Her power was exceptional and her recovery was shocking. First-level spells seemed to do no damage to her at all.

Ordinary First-level Spell Casters or even Four-Elemental Spell Casters would be in a disadvantaged position when they faced such an Alchemy Creature. If they could not cause any effective damage to the Alchemy Creature, they had no way out of the situation.

Wizard Burton was simply a Spell Caster with an ordinary talent. However, once he had become an alchemist, he had produced such a terrifying Alchemy Creature. His ability was immediately comparable to those genius Spell Casters.

Although the alchemists were cruel, they were expected to be welcomed by many Spell Casters. This was due to their ability to produce an Alchemy Creature at an advanced speed rather than slowly constructing a spell after overcoming many hurdles like an orthodox Spell Caster. The difference between the two was obvious.

This was the advantage of alchemists!

Of course, if the Spell Caster did not level up, they could not expand their lifespan. However, such weakness was not any disadvantage for the Spell Casters who had not hoped to advance to higher levels; they were after stronger power!

“Thunderbolt Net!”

Since Furious Flame could not damage this Alchemy Creature, Merlin would not force his attacks anymore. Rather, he cast Thunderbolt Net and the thunder blasted on the Alchemy Creature ruthlessly at once.

The effect of thunder was negligible to the Alchemy Creature. The greenish scales on her body squirmed slightly and they blocked the thunder effectively.

However, Merlin did not count on Thunderbolt Net to hurt the woman. He only wished to paralyze her by relying on the paralyzing effect of Thunderbolt Net.

Soon, a large Thunderbolt Net fell directly from the sky and enveloped the woman. Dense thunder was blasted onto her frantically.

Even if she was an Alchemy Creature, she could not take this much of attack. Her body began to stiffen and her speed slowed down. Merlin was elated by this result. This meant that the paralyzing ability of Thunderbolt Net was effective toward the Alchemy Creature.

“Frost!”

Without hesitation, Merlin immediately cast Frost. Moreover, he released multiple casts at once, alternating Frost with Large Frost. After multiple casts, thick crystals had formed around the Alchemy Monster, rendering her frozen in place.

“Swish!”

Merlin set his gaze at Wizard Burton. An alchemist’s ability was mostly represented by his Alchemy Creature. Once he had bound the alchemist’s Alchemy Creature, it would be much easier to attack the alchemist.

This was the only weakness of alchemists!

“Dark Mist!”

Merlin’s figure flashed. As Wind Element fluctuated intensely around him, he cast Gale. His speed rose drastically and he approached Wizard Burton. Then, he cast the strengthened version of Dark Mist.

Thick mist encompassed Wizard Burton at once. With his Second-level Mind Power, Wizard Burton had no way of defending against Dark Mist, hence he soon got caught by the illusion.

“Ka-chak.”

Merlin waved his hands and froze Wizard Burton at the same time. Following that, he dismissed Dark Mist so that Wizard Burton could come back to his senses.

“Bang!”

Although Wizard Burton was frozen, his Alchemy Creature was still breaking away from the ice layers with her immensely powerful strength. She came directly to Wizard Burton and broke the ice crystals that had bound Wizard Burton.

However, Wizard Burton was unhappy as he had lost the match. If Merlin was an enemy, Merlin could have killed him with any spell.

Since he had created the Alchemy Creature, Wizard Burton had lost count of the times when his Alchemy Creature had helped him out of a pinch and escaped.

However, he had lost now. In addition, he lost in the hands of an Entrance-level Spell Caster!

“Furious Flame, Guardian Monument, Thunderbolt Net, Gale, Dark Mist, and Frost! Six-Elemental spells. If I’m not mistaken, you’re a Six-Elemental Spell Caster? Moreover, two of your spells are First-level spells!”

Wizard Burton revealed a bewildered expression. He actually met a Six-Elemental Spell Caster with his own eyes!

In these years, Wizard Burton had seen quite a few Four-Elemental Spell Casters. He had also heard of Five-Elemental Spell Casters but Six-Elemental Spell Casters only existed in ancient texts.

Little did he expect to see a Six-Elemental Spell Caster in his entire life. Most shocking of all was that Merlin had already constructed two First-level spells successfully. This meant that Merlin had overcome the most difficult step, hence he had a high chance to become a Six-Elemental First-level Spell Caster!

“Hehe. It’s not bad losing to a Six-Elemental Spell Caster! Alright, Hill, we haven’t seen each other in so many years. Let’s not fight because of our difference in ideology. Why did you find me in Floating City this time?”

Wizard Burton waved his hands and the woman in a red respectfully retreated into a shadow at the corner of the walls. If one did not look carefully at that place, one could never find her. She was most probably hiding at this place when she dashed out earlier. Even Merlin was taken by surprise.

Chapter 175: Wizard Vladi

The black-robed old man’s expression gradually softened and he replied in a cold tone, “Burton, we’re here to buy some potion materials this time.”

“Potion materials?”

Wizard Burton showed a smile, then said, “Hill, what potion materials do you need? I’ll check if I have the things you need since I’ve collected quite a lot of potion materials during these few years.”

The black-robed old man gave it some thoughts and replied, “I need Purple Stone Powder.”

Merlin also said to Wizard Burton, “The potion materials I need are quite complicated. Blueberry, Floral Silver Grass...”

Wizard Burton glanced at Merlin, bewildered. Then, his expressions turned grim and looked at the black-robed old man. “Hill, who is this wizard?”

“Burton, Wizard Merlin is trustworthy. You don’t have to worry about him.”

The black-robed old man naturally understood what Wizard Burton meant, so he answered coldly.

“So, it’s Wizard Merlin. I have some Purple Stone Powder that Hill needs, but the potion materials like Blueberry that Wizard Merlin needs are too precious. I don’t have any of that, so I can only bring you to shop somewhere else. However, the price for those materials is high. Wizard Merlin should be ready for that.”

Merlin nodded. Before coming to Floating City, the black-robed old man had briefly explained the norms in Floating City. Elemental crystal stones were usually used to trade for items in Floating City. However, some precious things were traded via the barter system.

Merlin had a lot of elemental crystal stones, but he was more inclined toward the barter system. He planned to look for the potion materials first before buying them.

After seeing the nod, Wizard Burton stood up and said to the black-robed old man and Merlin, "Let's go. Follow me!"

Wizard Burton left the yard and his Alchemy Creature followed suit. The Alchemy Creature stuck close to Wizard Burton so that she could block attacks for him if any situation presented itself.

After walking past many alleys, the crowd lessened significantly. Although the surroundings became rather quiet, Merlin did not let down his guard. Instead, he approached the black-robed old man and asked in a low voice, "Wizard Hill, can we trust this Wizard Burton?"

It was Merlin's first time in Floating City, so he was unfamiliar with everything here. He did not trust Wizard Burton much.

The black-robed old man gave a thoughtful glance at Wizard Burton's back, then replied in a heavy tone, "Burton and I only have some differences in ideology. But our friendship has lasted for decades. I saved his life before, and he has resolved many pinches for me. So, Burton is trustworthy."

Merlin nodded. He could see that although the black-robed old man was unhappy with Wizard Burton on some aspects and even had serious arguments before, these matters did not affect their friendship.

Soon, Wizard Burton led Merlin and the old man into a quiet yard.

The door was shut tight, so Wizard Burton shouted, "Wizard Vladi."

After a long while, a hoarse and old voice came from within the house. "Wizard Burton, I'm preparing a potion now. Feel free to come in."

Wizard Burton revealed a helpless expression before saying to the old man and Merlin, “Let’s enter first. Wizard Vladi is just this way. He spends his whole day studying special potions. Although he’s only a First-level Spell Caster, he has exceptional talent in potions. He’s an apothecary and can prepare any potion. He should have many precious potion materials here. If Wizard Merlin wants it, you can discuss it with Wizard Vladi.”

Wizard Burton explained to Merlin as they walked into the house. He quickly pushed the door open and the group immediately entered a dark room.

As soon as they entered the room, a pungent smell hit Merlin’s nostrils. A faint light from the fire was flashing and letting out a hissing sound.

At the moment, Merlin only noticed a bearded Spell Caster with messy hair at a corner of the room. The Spell Caster was messing with many glassware on the floor.

Merlin was familiar with the glassware as they were essentials for making potions. However, on closer inspection, Merlin found that the glassware were inadequate. They seemed rather unpolished as compared with the glassware he exchanged from the Dark Magic Region’s Resource Tower.

The one preparing the potion now was Wizard Vladi whom Wizard Burton had called out earlier.

Wizard Vladi was truly passionate about potions. Even after Merlin and the others were right behind him, he did not mind them at all. Instead, he set his gaze intensely at a green mucus in the glassware.

Hot air was still spewing from this green mucus potion as if it was just being heated up.

Merlin saw a piece of white paper on the table which contained some messy notes and records. After taking a closer look, he found that this was a series of detailed steps of making a potion. This should be the potion that Wizard Vladi was making now.

The name of this potion was Alkaline Earth Potion. Merlin was not clear about the effect of this potion but he realized that the potion-making steps were clearly written in detail on the piece of paper. If one followed the steps without mistake, one could have a high chance to prepare this potion successfully.

“Bang!”

Suddenly, a light explosion occurred. Smoke came out of the green potion in the glassware. Then, the potion exploded and broke the glassware into smithereens. The green mucus flew all over the place and stained Vladi's black robe to green. He seemed ridiculous in the outfit.

"Damn it. I failed again. What's wrong with this? It's the fifth time. Why did I fail every time?"

Wizard Vladi kept pulling at his hair with both his hands and appeared extremely frustrated. He seemed to have no intention to mind Merlin and the others.

After seeing Wizard Vladi's actions, Wizard Burton could not help but revealed a bitter smile. "Hill, Wizard Merlin, let's leave first. If Wizard Vladi can't make this potion successfully, he won't talk to anyone at all."

It seemed that Wizard Burton was very familiar with Wizard Vladi's odd temperament. He was a madman who wanted to make potions until he went insane. Other than potions, he had no care about anything else at all.

After seeing Wizard Vladi, Merlin thought of Wizard Howl in the Dark Magic Region. It seemed that the Spell Casters who studied potions all acted the same way. If they could not make a potion successfully, they would never give up.

Upon thinking of this, Merlin immediately initiated the Matrix and instructed it to record the steps of preparing Alkaline Earth Potion. Then, it analyzed the steps according to the ratio of potion materials used.

Preparing the potion with the Matrix's analysis would be much easier. He only needed to take note of the time. Thus, after the Matrix had recorded all the steps and proportion of potion materials used in Alkaline Earth Potion, Merlin proceeded to stand behind Vladi. He did not listen to Wizard Burton's word to leave. Instead, he focused on watching Wizard Vladi making the potion.

Wizard Vladi was quick at preparing potions. He seemed to remember every material and every step by heart. Thus, when he began, he was familiar with everything and was quick in the process.

"Wait there. Wizard Vladi, if you continue making the potion this way, you'll be destined to fail!"

Merlin was right behind Wizard Vladi when he suddenly voiced out.

“Hmm? You know about potions?”

Wizard Vladi slowly turned his head around. His expression was dark when he replied coldly.

Wizard Burton was about to say something but he was stopped by the black-robed old man. The old man naturally knew that Merlin had learned about potions after he joined the Dark Magic Region. When he made Purple Stone Powder previously, Merlin had demonstrated the steps to prepare the potion before him. In addition, his success rate at preparing potions was also exceptionally high.

It seemed as if Merlin had noticed some problems when Vladi was making the potions.

Upon seeing Wizard Vladi’s obvious frustrated expression, Merlin smiled. He said in a calm tone, “I know a little in making potions.”

Wizard Vladi smirked. He was agitated when he declared, “Do you know how long I’ve been making this potion? Do you know how much effort I’ve put into this? I’m precise in every step and every material proportion. You just arrived here and looked at the steps I messily jotted down on the paper. You’re saying that you’ve identified the problematic issues just like that?”

Wizard Vladi appeared rather worked up. Although he studied potions to the extent of becoming mad, he was not ignorant of his surroundings. Wizard Vladi was clear of any action that Merlin had made after entering his house.

Faced with Wizard Vladi’s doubts, Merlin did not fight back. With a smile, he replied, “Wizard Vladi’s every step is accurate. Moreover, you have a good grasp of the proportions of potion materials used. However, the reason you can’t make the potion successfully is, in fact, not Wizard Vladi’s fault. It’s the error of the glassware used to make potions. It was because of the tools!”

“Hmm? You mean to say that my babies are not accurate?”

Wizard Vladi pointed to the glassware on the ground and revealed a baffled expression.

Merlin nodded. “That’s right. It’s the glassware – they’re not accurate, thus causing the failure in making the potion. If Wizard Vladi doesn’t believe in my words, feel free to make the potion with my glassware and see if it works.”

Merlin turned his palm over and took an exquisite test tube from his ring. He had exchanged for this at the Resource Tower due to its attractive design and accurate measurement. In addition, it was already inspected and approved by the Matrix. Hence, it was far better than the unpolished glassware Wizard Vladi had obtained from who-knows-where.

Wizard Vladi took the test tube from Merlin doubtfully, then began to make the potion again.

Chapter 176: Terrifying Potion

Although Wizard Vladi appeared ungroomed and rather laid-back, he was, in fact, most concentrated when he was making potions. Every step was taken with extreme caution and of utmost accuracy.

With Merlin’s accurate test tube, Wizard Vladi would not make a single mistake.

After a long time in preparing the potion, finally, Wizard Vladi added the last bit of potion material and began to heat up his potion.

“Hiss...”

The viscous potion in the glassware was initially green but it had slowly turned ink black after boiling vigorously. Moreover, there was a pungent smell to it.

Wizard Vladi stared intensely at the ink black potion in the glassware. He could not withhold the surprise on his face. After the potion in the glassware had turned completely black, Wizard Vladi smelled it.

Then, an unconcealable excitement appeared on Wizard Vladi’s face. He muttered with a shivering voice, “Haha. I did it. I really did it! The potion I’ve prepared for half a year... I’ve finally made it!”

Wizard Vladi was overwhelmed with elation, then carefully carried the potion with both his hands. He squinted his eyes as if he was intoxicated by it.

Merlin was also surprised by Vladi. He was truly skilled in potion-making. Merlin only pointed out a small issue in Wizard Vladi's potion-making process. After he had corrected the issue, he immediately made the potion successfully.

From Merlin's point of view, this was simply incredible. If he was to follow the steps as outlined by the Matrix without a single mistake, he probably could not even succeed in preparing Alkaline Earth Potion. Merlin lacked in skills when it came to potion-making.

Without experience, Merlin's success rate in potion-making could not be improved even with the Matrix's help. Meanwhile, Wizard Vladi was obviously more skilled in potion-making than Merlin.

"Good stuff. It's so rare to have such accurate glassware!"

Wizard Vladi held the test tube which Merlin lent him and was reluctant to let go of it. Merlin gave a small smile. "Since Wizard Vladi likes it, I'll give this glassware to Wizard Vladi."

There were many glassware like these in the Resource Tower. With some contribution points, he could easily exchange for it. Moreover, before Merlin had left the Dark Magic Region, he had prepared many glassware needed to make potions. It was nothing for him to give away a test tube.

"Wizard Vladi, what's the effect of this Alkaline Earth Potion?"

Merlin glanced at the black potion in Wizard Vladi's hands with an odd expression. The name of this potion was strange enough, so Merlin asked this question.

"Hehe, the effect of Alkaline Earth Potion, huh?"

Wizard Vladi raised his head and looked at the Alchemy Creature beside Wizard Burton. Then, he handed the potion to Wizard Burton and said calmly, "Wizard Burton, let your 'pet' swallow this Alkaline Earth Potion."

"This is a potion for Alchemy Creature?"

Wizard Burton was doubtful, but he still allowed his Alchemy Creature to take this potion.

After a moment, the woman's face blushed red and her entire body inflated like a balloon. Her large veins could be seen vaguely under her skin and were expanding frantically. Blood rushed throughout her body and an immense pressure was building up around her. She gave the impression as if she was about to go berserk.

“Howl!”

Suddenly, the woman howled toward the sky in a sharp voice. At the same time, the greenish scales on her body seemed to have stained with a layer of a mysterious black substance which made her seemed more intimidating.

Wizard Vladi nodded in satisfaction and said to Wizard Burton, “Wizard Burton, you can test your ‘pet’ now.”

Wizard Burton nodded, then pointed to a large tree in the yard.

“Swish!”

The woman's figure flashed and reappeared in front of the tree. Then, she released a punch.

“Bang!”

The enormous force caused the tree to split into two. If there was even the slightest of wind, the tree would have toppled over.

Meanwhile, everyone stared wide-eyed at the woman's punch. Even Wizard Burton was bewildered by the scene. The speed and force presented by the woman in a red shirt had almost increased by two to three times.

Improving by about three times in an instant was terrifying. How dominating was this potion? At once, Wizard Burton let out an agitated gaze at Wizard Vladi.

“Hehe. You see that? That’s the effect of Alkaline Earth Potion, specially made for Alchemy Creature. Once it’s taken, attributes like speed, force, and more will be improved by two to four times. In addition, the effect can last for about two to three hours!”

Wizard Vladi briefly explained the effect of Alkaline Earth Potion. This potion was made specifically for Alchemy Creature. Normies could not take it because this potion came with the risk of death. Many Normies would die immediately from taking this potion.

Meanwhile, Alchemy Creature had a strong physique and possessed all sorts of abilities. Since they did not have conscious, they could take the strong effects of this potion. Moreover, the potion had no side-effects and did not require the consumption of life force. After taking the potion, the Alchemy Creature had to rest for a while before resuming to a normal state.

“Alright, alright. Wizard Vladi, do you have more Alkaline Earth Potions? Give me a few. Just name the number of elemental crystal stones you need!”

Wizard Burton immediately realized the importance of Alkaline Earth Potion. Once he had this potion in hand, his Alchemy Creature could release enormous strength at crucial moments. She could surely turn the tables around and even kill his enemy.

As soon as Alkaline Earth Potion appeared in the market, it would definitely be welcomed by countless alchemists. After all, many alchemists only focused on studying Alchemy Creature and would not spend their time studying other things.

Thus, many apothecaries were studying some sorts of strange potions which could not be used on Normies. However, they could have an unexpected effect on the strong Alchemy Creatures.

Therefore, the Alchemy Creatures of many alchemists would utilize the potions made by apothecaries. For example, the potion used to erase Normies’ memories was made by these apothecaries. They had provided a convenient option for alchemists in controlling their Alchemy Creatures.

Upon hearing that Wizard Burton wanted more Alkaline Earth potion, Wizard Vladi shook his head slightly. “The materials needed to make Alkaline Earth Potion are too precious. It’s not something that can be used by any normal alchemists. Moreover, I just succeeded in making it. If I want to continue making it, it will take me a long time to do so.”

Wizard Vladi's words were clear. If Wizard Burton wanted more Alkaline Earth Potion, he would have to wait.

Wizard Burton showed an expectant look, but he soon recovered. After looking at Merlin and the black-robed old man, he slapped his forehead hard and said regretfully, "I almost forgot what I came here for. Wizard Vladi, let me introduce you. These are Wizard Merlin and Wizard Hill. They just came to Floating City to buy some precious potion materials to make potions."

Wizard Vladi just accepted the exquisite test tube Merlin gave, so he laughed generously. "So Wizard Merlin wanted some potion materials. Seeing that Wizard Merlin can point out the mistakes in my potion-making process, I figured that you must be knowledgeable in potions as well. We can surely discuss it in the future."

After a pause, Wizard Vladi asked, "What sort of potion materials does Wizard Merlin want? Feel free to name them."

Wizard Vladi was rather confident. He had been studying potions all his life and had also earned a fortune from selling potions. Most of his money was used to buy potion materials, so he was confident that he would have the potion materials that Merlin needed.

Merlin nodded, then told Wizard Vladi about the potion materials he needed to make Phantasmal Magic Potion and Blueberry Potion. The latter appeared relaxed at first, but his expression gradually turned awkward as the potion materials Merlin said became more and more precious.

At last, Merlin had mentioned all the potion materials he needed but Wizard Vladi had lost all his confidence. He was left with a bitter expression.

"Wizard Merlin, the potion materials you mentioned, especially Blueberry. I'm sure you want to make Blueberry Potion from that, right? Blueberry Potion is only used to increase Mind Power. Could it be that your Mind Power is insufficient at this point?"

Wizard Vladi wore a questioning look. After all, most Spell Casters encountered issues in constructing spells, especially complicated spells that were difficult to construct. Thus, most Spell Casters would not lack in Mind Power. Rather, they lacked the Spell Models that suited them.

Merlin did not explain further. He knew that he was troubled and limited by his Mind Power rather than lacking suitable Spell Models because of the Matrix.

Wizard Vladi thought for a moment, then took some potion materials out from his ring. He pointed at these potion materials. “I only have this number of materials for Blueberry Potion. I figured you can make a few Blueberry Potions from this. For the other potion materials that Wizard Merlin needed, I don’t have them. Some large-scale stores in Floating City may have them, but the price... Tsk, they’ll be expensive.”

Merlin looked at the materials of Blueberry Potion with satisfaction. After all, Phantasmal Magic Potion was an ancient potion formula; it was a potion used by ancient Shamans. It was expected that Wizard Vladi did not have the materials for Phantasmal Magic Potion.

With these materials for Blueberry Potion, Merlin could also increase his Mind Power rapidly. He would be able to improve his Mind Power to an extent where it could support another construction of a First-level spell.

Wizard Vladi gave these materials to Merlin for free. He could have done it because he wanted to return the favor to Merlin who had helped him in preparing Alkaline Earth Potion and for gifting him the accurate glassware.

“Wizard Merlin, I can see that you’re talented in making potions. If you have time, you’re welcomed to look for me here so we can exchange our experiences in potion-making.”

Wizard Vladi invited Merlin sincerely to exchange knowledge and experience in potion-making if he had time.

Merlin also nodded. “If I have time, I’ll surely visit Wizard Vladi again!”

After saying that, Merlin, the black-robed old man, and Wizard Burton bade Wizard Vladi goodbye and quickly left Wizard Vladi’s residence.

Chapter 177: Transformation of the Bell Pendant

Once again, Merlin and the black-robed old man returned to Wizard Burton’s quarters. The black-robed old man rushed off to prepare the Purple Stone Powder Potion while Merlin, who had just gotten the ingredients for Blueberry Potion, went to his room without further discussion.

Merlin was familiar with the steps needed to make the Blueberry Potion and he had nearly perfected his fire handling skill. Thus, the success rate of the Blueberry Potion would have increased significantly.

Merlin quickly grabbed some of the Blueberry Potion ingredients and began preparing the potion, following the instructions according to the Matrix.

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Three days had passed and finally, Merlin had completed preparing the last portion of the ingredients for Blueberry Potion. The potion he prepared had rapidly increased in success rate. Using nine portions of Blueberry Potion ingredients, he was able to successfully prepare four portions of the potion.

With this success rate, it was clear that Merlin had improved drastically from the first time he prepared the potion.

Upon consuming the four Blueberry Potions, Merlin's Mind Power increased to a higher level. He sensed a subtle feeling that he could soon try to construct his third First-level spell.

However, this was only true for some First-level spells. If Merlin was to construct Frigid Ice or Dark Light Realm, even with his present Mind Power, he would still find it challenging.

After some thoughts, Merlin decided it was best that he waited until his Mind Power grew stronger before attempting to construct either Frigid Ice or Dark Light Realm. Merlin was in no rush to construct another First-level spell, as long as he had a First-level Defensive spell and a First-level Offensive spell.

Merlin got up and opened the door. As he stepped outside, he realized how nice the weather was. The warm sun peeked through the clouds, and yet, it was not too hot.

"Wizard Merlin!"

Wizard Burton, who had been lying in the courtyard, saw Merlin walked out from his room and gave him a grin.

“Wizard Burton, has Wizard Hill not come out from his room yet?”

Merlin looked toward Wizard Hill’s room and saw that the door was still shut. It appeared that the black-robed old man had not come out yet.

Wizard Burton stared intently at the black-robed old man’s room. He shook his head and said, “Hill has been tormented by the unstable Spell Model in his Awareness for many years. Even though the potion can aid him in stabilizing his Spell Model, he still regrets that he can’t prepare more potions as quickly. With the amount of Purple Stone Powder Potion that I’ve prepared for him, it would take at least half a month before he comes out.”

Merlin nodded his head and smiled. “I think I’ll go for a short walk and take a look around Floating City.”

“Oh! I’m quite familiar with Floating City. Why don’t I keep you company and show you around?”

Wizard Burton smiled as he spoke. It was clear to Merlin that Wizard Burton’s attitude had gotten better.

“That would be very kind of you, Wizard Burton!”

Merlin did not object to having Wizard Burton’s company as he would not need to wander around aimlessly. He would also get to familiarize himself with the city quickly.

With that, Merlin and Wizard Burton left the courtyard and speedily made their way toward Floating City.

...

Merlin, who was dressed in a black robe strolled down the streets of Floating City with Wizard Burton.

The day was still early. The entire Floating City was enveloped in a haze of cloud and mist. Luckily, it held residence to many Spell Casters, whom with their Mind Power, did not have to worry about visibility.

As the sun got warmer, the fog slowly dispersed. Many Spell Casters were out and about, displaying and trading different items on the ground. Amongst some were potion ingredients, casting tools, and even spells, all ready for eager customers.

Merlin looked around the merchants. All the potion ingredients seemed common and the casting tools looked very simple as well. As for the spells, they were just average Zero-level spells. Sometimes, he would come across a First-level spell, but even those were the common ones.

As he saw the disappointed look on Merlin's face, Wizard Burton chuckled. "Wizard Merlin, these items are aimed at Entrance-level Spell Casters or even First-level Spell Casters. They're all roaming Wizards, how good can these items be? They just want to earn a few elemental crystal stones. Sure, sometimes you may find some good items here but the chances are very slim. If you really want to see some great items, I can take you there."

Merlin nodded his head. The items these Spell Casters were selling really disappointed him. Surely in a city as large as this, there were more than just these few items to buy. How else could they attract Spell Casters from spell casters' organizations?

Merlin followed Wizard Burton and they soon arrived at a small building. The building had three floors, and from outside it looked like a small castle.

"Wizard Merlin, this is Sterling House. Whether it be potion ingredients, casting tools, spells or more, you can find them all in here. This should please you!"

As Wizard Burton finished speaking, he brought Merlin swiftly into the building.

Merlin walked in and saw that most people here were First-level Spell Casters, all of whom were dressed in Runic Robes. The robes had patterns of mysterious runes that signified that the robe possessed Defensive powers.

They may not be as great as the Runic Robes given to the official members of the Dark Magic Region but they were very similar. However, it was very fortunate for Roaming Wizards to even own a casting tool.

Even Merlin had not acquired a casting tool since he had joined the Dark Magic Realm.

Merlin and Wizard Burton entered the great hall. Immediately, a lady with brown hair came to greet the two men. The lady was charming and wore a low-cut, open-collar top that almost showed the skin beneath.

“How may I assist you both?”

The lady spoke with a soft voice that would make one feel completely comfortable.

Wizard Burton did not budge and replied calmly, “Please take us on a short tour.”

The charming lady enthusiastically agreed. “Very well, I shall take you two Spell Casters to see our casting tools.”

As she finished speaking, the lady walked on with Merlin and Wizard Burton following behind.

“Wizard Burton, is she a Spell Caster?” Merlin asked with a hushed voice.

Wizard Burton nodded his head. “Yes, there’s no way for Normies to enter, so she must be a Spell Caster. Do you think that any noble Spell Caster could do this? Haha, you shouldn’t underestimate them. Many roaming Wizards can only dream of entering this place. Once you become a member of Sterling House, you can enjoy all the resources available, whether it be spells, casting tools, potions and more – you could even have an unlimited supply! A Sterling House membership is no less than any other spell casters’ organization membership!”

Upon listening to Wizard Burton’s thorough explanation on the membership of Sterling House, Merlin felt shocked. It was truly unbelievable that being a member of this establishment had the same benefits as a spell casters’ organization member!

It was important to note that Merlin had only joined as a temporary member of the Dark Magic Region. To become an official member, you would have to be promoted to a First-level Spell Caster within three years.

The Dark Magic Region was as so and other spell casters’ organizations were similar. It was not easy to become an official member of such organizations. So, it was unexpected that such a humble establishment offered such good treatment to their members that it was almost comparable to that of other spell casters’ organizations.

All these thoughts occupied Merlin's mind and before long, the charming lady had led Merlin and Wizard Burton into a great hall on the second floor, filled with a variety of casting tools.

There were a few other guests and stood by them were Spell Casters, like the charming lady, who was also there to introduce their various casting tools.

"Wizards, why don't you take a look at this magic staff? This staff can increase the range of your spell. You can even use the magic staff on single spells and it'll be able to attack targets within the small range."

Merlin and Wizard Burton seemed unimpressed, so the charming lady carried on and introduced another casting tool.

"How about this Runic Robe? Once worn, the three runes inscribed on it allow the robe to withstand any Second-level spell. It's rumored that this robe is an imitation from a mysterious Spell Caster who was a member of the Dark Magic Region. So, once you wear this Runic Robe, you'll look no different to a member of the Dark Magic Region."

Merlin was surprised. He did not expect this robe to be an imitation of the Runic Robe from the Dark Magic Region. When he was in the Dark Magic Region, he saw many of these robes and although they looked very similar, the Runic Magic Circle was what differentiated them.

However, if it could withstand common Second-level spells, it could indeed pass off as a genuine Runic Robe of the official members of the Dark Magic Region.

Merlin pondered for a moment and finally asked the charming lady, "How many elemental crystal stones does this cost?"

The charming lady smiled encouragingly and replied quietly, "This Runic Robe is not expensive, it only costs a thousand elemental crystal stones!"

"A thousand elemental crystal stones?"

Once Merlin heard this, he could not help but smile as he shook his head. Merlin was under the belief that he owned a lot of elemental crystal stones. He had gotten some from the silver-haired old

man, and more from the cloaked man, Vyksa, and Wizard Neil. Adding them all, he was still about seven or eight hundred elemental crystal stones short. He could not make up a thousand elemental crystal stones.

“Forget it, let’s look at other items,” Merlin said quietly as he continued to shake his head.

The charming lady tried to read his expression. She could tell that Merlin did not have a thousand elemental crystal stones to spend and so, she took him to a section displaying some cheaper casting tools.

As they arrived at the section, a large variety of casting tools laid in a mess on display. However, before Merlin could take a closer look at them, the Bell Pendant he wore around his neck began to give off a sizzling scent. Merlin immediately became intrigued.

Since Merlin had used up the Bell Pendant for Large Fireball, it had become a useless casting tool.

However, it seemed that the Bell Pendant was giving off a reaction. Merlin was stunned and turned his full attention to the wide range of casting tools laid before him.

Chapter 178: Sterling House

The shelves were brimming with various casting tools. If one did not inspect this dazzling assortment carefully, one would not be able to make sense of it.

Merlin remained collected as he stood in front of the shelves. He did not inspect the items but focused on the warmth emitting from the Bell Pendant at his chest. If this warmth turned scorching, it would mean that he was nearby a casting tool that was linked to the Bell Pendant.

With this in mind, Merlin gradually approached a shelf next to the wall. As expected, the bell pendant at his chest emitted waves of burning energy.

The charming woman immediately explained to Merlin, “There are various casting tools here. Even our Seventh-level Wizards couldn’t discern a use for some of them. Some of these might be antiques handed down from ancient times. If fate permits, you two Wizards may obtain a few peculiar and powerful casting tools.”

This charming woman was skillful in her pitch. It was possible that Seventh-level Wizards had surveyed the many casting tools here, but if those Wizards could not even discern a use for them, how could they be powerful casting tools?

After all, the chances of finding a treasure overlooked by others were extremely low. However, when the charming woman put it in that manner, some Spell Casters would become excited. Perhaps a few transactions would be made then.

Merlin's mind lit up. Who knew how many promoters like this one he had seen in his previous life? However, regardless if there were overlooked treasures, there would be something here which related to the Bell Pendant that was inducing the change in the pendant. He would consider purchasing it as long as the price was reasonable.

Seeing that Merlin remained indifferent, the charming woman stopped talking. She knew that customers like Merlin had their own purpose and opinions and would not change their minds because of her words. Thus, whenever she encountered folks like him, all she could do was to accompany them while silently waiting for Merlin's final choice.

From a pile of casting tools on the shelf, Merlin picked out a dust-covered pendant. From its appearance, it seemed similar to Merlin's Bell Pendant.

However, there was no name inscribed at the back of the pendant.

Merlin examined the pendant carefully. From his chest, the waves of heat coming from the Bell Pendant were scorching. It was clear that this dust-covered pendant was linked to the Bell Pendant.

The thing was, no matter how Merlin examined it, the pendant was not special in the slightest. He was unable to infuse it with his Mind Power – it seemed as if it was just an ordinary pendant. Perhaps because the pendant was obviously from an ancient era, it was regarded as a casting tool and was placed on the shelf.

“How many elemental crystal stones for this pendant?”

Merlin asked the charming woman in a straightforward manner.

The charming woman smiled slightly, and her eyes shone craftily. She gently said, “This pendant was found, after much difficulty, at an ancient monument by a Seventh-level Spell Caster from

Sterling House. Although at present, we don't know what type of casting tool it is, it must be really extraordinary. How's this – we'll take just five hundred stones for it. What do you say?"

"Five hundred elemental crystal stones?"

A smile broke out across Merlin's face. Perhaps Sterling House did have a Seventh-level Spell Caster, but in that case, they would occupy a revered position. Why would they casually peddle something that had been found in an ancient monument?

It was likely that Sterling House had spent only a handful, or dozens of elemental crystal stones to obtain this pendant from a Spell Caster. Now that Merlin was here, they wanted to provide such an exaggerated boast.

Merlin immediately placed the pendant back, and said to Wizard Burton, "Wizard Burton, let's go."

Wizard Burton smiled half-heartedly at the charming woman. "Sterling House had really made a mistake this time. Wizard Merlin is no ordinary roaming Wizard but a Wizard from a spell casters' organization! How could his judgment be lacking? Therefore, you should quote a more realistic price."

Wizard Burton had heard about Merlin's identity long ago from the black-robed old man. A Spell Caster from the Dark Magic Region was unlike any common roaming Wizard.

It was because of Merlin's position that Wizard Burton had adopted such a humble stance and accompanied Merlin to Floating City.

"Oh? So, it's a Wizard from a spell casters' organization!"

The charming woman's eyes revealed her amazement, and she said softly with a smile, "Since you're a knowledgeable Wizard, I'll quote you a realistic price. Fifty elemental crystal stones! What do you think, Wizard Merlin?"

The charming woman instantly lowered the price by ten-fold, from five hundred elemental crystal stones to only fifty.

Merlin hesitated and thought that this was an acceptable price, so he nodded. “Alright, fifty elemental crystal stones!”

With that, Merlin fished out some elemental crystal stones from his ring and handed them to the charming woman. Thereafter, he grasped the pendant in his hand. Instantly, the Bell Pendant at his chest turned scorching once again.

However, it was inconvenient for Merlin to be examining it closely here, so he placed the pendant into the ring. Once he was back, he would inspect the pendant in detail and find out what exactly was its link to the Bell Pendant.

Having completed a transaction, the charming woman was overjoyed, especially now that she knew Merlin was a Wizard from a spell casters’ organization. These Wizards were much wealthier than the average roaming Wizard.

Therefore, the charming woman asked, “Is there anything else that Wizard Merlin would like to purchase? Here, we have casting tools, potion formulas, potion materials, and even alchemy materials.”

After muttering to himself for a while, Merlin said, “Take me to look at your potion materials.”

The charming woman brought Merlin and Wizard Burton to a large, quiet hall. In this hall, potion materials were laid out everywhere in vast quantities.

Merlin quickly spotted the Blueberries. This was the potion material that he needed the most.

However, after inquiring about the Blueberries’ price, Merlin shook his head. It was too expensive. Gathering the material for one batch of Blueberry Potion would require at least five hundred elemental crystal stones. A price like this was much too high. Even if he wanted to make the purchase, he would only be able to buy enough for one batch of Blueberry Potion.

Following that, Merlin cautiously inquired about the materials for Phantasmal Magic Potion. He was surprised to find out that Sterling House had these materials, but the price was exorbitantly high.

After having a long look, Merlin was clear – Sterling House had all the materials for Blueberry Potion and Phantasmal Magic Potion. The potions materials here were much more abundant

compared to the Dark Magic Region. Merlin recalled that when he was in the Resource Tower, he could not find the materials required for Phantasmal Magic Potion.

Very soon, Merlin and Wizard Burton left Sterling House. Merlin posed a question to Wizard Burton. “Wizard Burton, this Sterling House seems rather remarkable. It contains so many casting tools, potion materials, and many items that even the Dark Magic Region lacks. Isn’t it comparable to a spell casters’ organization?”

“Comparable to a spell casters’ organization? Heh, Wizard Merlin, if you knew who founded Sterling House, you wouldn’t ask this question.”

Wizard Burton shook his head slightly, his face wearing a strange look.

“Oh? Who was it?”

Merlin asked hastily.

“It’s the Great Wizard Sterling!”

Wizard Burton’s expression suddenly became dignified.

“The Great Wizard Sterling? Great Wizard?”

Merlin’s face shifted slightly as he was stunned. He was not a roaming Wizard who knew nothing, but a Spell Caster from the Dark Magic Region.

After entering the Dark Magic Region, Merlin picked up some general knowledge on Spell Casters. Among this was the fact that the term Great Wizard was not an honorific, but a symbol of real strength!

Great Wizards were Spell Casters who were of Ninth-level and above, possessing an inconceivable realm of power. The Great Wizard Fidel who established the Dark Magic Region was one such Spell Caster above the Ninth-level, only that he went missing. Perhaps he died or he went to another place. In short, the Great Wizard Fidel never appeared again.

As for the Great Wizard Sterling, founder of Sterling House, was one of the exceedingly rare Great Wizards in the entire Spell Caster's world. He was still around, which was how Sterling House was able to expand so rapidly. His strength was comparable to some medium-sized spell casters' organizations, let alone smaller-sized spell casters' organization such as the Dark Magic Region.

"There are wonderful items in Sterling House indeed, but most of them are too expensive. Normally, a roaming Wizard like me will not even consider going to Sterling House."

Wizard Burton glanced behind at Sterling House, shaking his head hopelessly. It was difficult for roaming Wizards to become powerful Spell Casters as it was hard to cultivate resources.

In comparison, it was relatively easy to obtain contribution points in the Dark Magic Region. Unsurprisingly, many roaming Wizards were crazy about entering a spell casters' organization.

Merlin did not wander around anymore and headed back to the residence with Wizard Burton.

Upon returning to his room, Merlin took off the Bell Pendant hanging at his chest and took out the pendant he had bought at Sterling House. Immediately, the Bell Pendant emitted waves of burning energy.

These two pendants appeared to be extremely similar. However, the Bell Pendant had space within to store spells whereas the pendant purchased from Sterling House contained no such space at all. It did not even appear to be a casting tool.

Ever since Merlin had cast all Large Fireballs stored inside the Bell Pendant, it had practically turned into a useless casting tool with no further use.

However, the Bell Pendant was undergoing a sudden change now. This made Merlin wait expectantly as he wanted to see what changes the Bell Pendant would bring.

Merlin carefully compared the two pendants and he gradually saw a way forward. These two pendants appeared to be two sides of a whole that had been torn apart for some unknown reason.

Having arrived at this conclusion, Merlin instantly joined the two pendants together. A dazzling beam of light flickered from the Bell Pendant, immediately swallowing the other pendant.

The two pendants were shrouded in blinding white light and subtle changes began to happen. Merlin was full of expectation as he observed the Bell Pendant closely.

Chapter 179: Enhancing Casting Tool

“Snap!”

A clear sound suddenly rang from the white light. Immediately, the light began to slowly dissipate. The two pendants were now completely merged as one. The two halves mirrored each other and looked just like a bowknot.

“This... What’s this?”

Merlin reached out and grasped the bowknot formed by the two pendants. His Mind Power quickly extended into the bowknot.

There was a simple Concept contained within the bowknot. With a simple inspection, Merlin instantly understood the function of this brand-new bowknot casting tool.

The brand-new bowknot casting tool was a rarely seen Enhancing casting tool. By themselves, the two pendants were casting tools of a simpler type.

For instance, the Bell Pendant that Merlin possessed was only capable of storing and casting spells. On the other hand, the merging of the two pendants had formed a brand-new casting tool, and it was a valuable Enhancing casting tool.

Merlin was shocked to the core. He instantly thought of the Assembled casting tool of the legends. This was during the era of the Molta Empire 3600 years ago, when some powerful alchemists had fabricated a new type of casting tool. They would assemble a few individual casting tools to produce new formidable casting tools.

However, present-day alchemists had strayed from this path. There were not many alchemists who would follow this tradition and fabricate extraordinary casting tools. Instead, they would rather spend more energy creating mighty Alchemy Creatures.

Therefore, most of the current alchemists were unable to fabricate this sort of Assembled casting tool.

The two pendants that Merlin had obtained were, in fact, an Assembled casting tool, which was even rarer! Based on the simple Concept contained in the bowknot casting tool, Merlin found that this casting tool, formed by the two pendants, was a relatively simple one. Once the true Assembled casting tool that Wizard Bell had fabricated was completely assembled, it would be a powerful item which would become the envy of even Great Wizards.

Merlin was only able to calm down after a long time. He flipped the bowknot-shaped casting tool over and found that the name “Bell” was inscribed at the back in the Molta language.

Merlin had never heard of this Wizard Bell, but Bell was able to fabricate an Assembled casting tool like this one. Moreover, once the individual casting tools were gathered to form a new casting tool, it would be something that even powerful Great Wizards would fight over for. Wizard Bell was undoubtedly a Great Wizard as well as a highly accomplished Great Alchemist in the field of alchemy.

Merlin closely examined the Enhancing casting tool but was unsure about its capacity. He only knew that this casting tool would only enhance one spell, so the first thing to do was to pick a good spell.

Merlin currently possessed Zero- and First-level spells. Naturally, there was no need to consider the Zero-level spells. As for the First-level spells, there were only Defensive spell, Guardian Monument and Offensive spell, Furious Flame in Merlin’s Awareness.

For Offensive spells, Merlin would construct the First-level spell, Thunderlight Ball sometime in the future, so it seemed a waste to use the Enhancing casting tool on Furious Flame.

If he used it on Defensive spell, Guardian Monument, it would have become immensely useful in the face of danger. Having considered this point, Merlin’s mind was almost made up.

However, Merlin soon thought of another point. He had the strengthened version of Guardian Monument. The strengthened Guardian Monument was already at the pinnacle of First-level spells and approached the standard of Second-level spells. If this Enhancing casting tool could enhance the spell, would it not magnify the strengthened version of Guardian Monument?

Having thought of this point, Merlin could not wait to test this out.

“Guardian Monument!”

Merlin consecutively cast a few Guardian Monuments, and then cast the strengthened version.

The strengthened Guardian Monument left its unique imprint in the Enhancing casting tool. With a flip of his hand, an Earth-type elemental crystal stone appeared.

The Enhancing casting tool would not function without a cost. It would use up a great number of elemental crystal stones. Merlin was using the casting tool to enhance an Earth-type spell, so it would need Earth-type elemental crystal stones.

“Guardian Monument!”

Merlin immediately cast the strengthened version of Guardian Monument through the Enhancing casting tool. In a flash, a murky radiance appeared and enveloped Merlin. Giant stone tablets emerged before him.

Even Merlin could distinctly sense that these stone tablets contained a frightening strength. This had far surpassed the category of Second-level spells and had even reached the Third-level.

With the Enhancing casting tool, Merlin’s strengthened Guardian Monument was comparable to even Third-level Defensive spells. This casting tool had, in fact, increased the spell’s power by more than a full level, which was now at the standard of Third-level Defensive spells.

“Good, good! This is a truly powerful casting tool!”

Merlin’s face revealed his glee. He had previously looked at a few casting tools in the Resource Tower. Although he liked them, they cost too many contribution points.

In Floating City, Sterling House had an imitation robe like those worn by members of the Dark Magic Region, but it cost a thousand elemental crystal stones and was also inordinately expensive.

However, now he possessed such a powerful Enhancing casting tool. In terms of value, it was more precious than the robes or other casting tools, such as the magic staffs.

Moreover, this Enhancing casting tool was an Assembled one. If he could one day recover the other individual casting tools, he would be able to assemble them into a casting tool that was brand-new and even more powerful.

An ancient Spell Caster like Wizard Bell was able to fabricate such a marvelous casting tool. He was a true alchemist, largely different from the present-day alchemists who had wandered off track.

Of course, perhaps the current alchemists would not think that they had strayed from the path, but instead, regard it as a new path they had forged in their journey of studying alchemy.

Merlin put away the strengthened version of Guardian Monument. After that, he cast a few ordinary Guardian Monuments but found that if the Enhancing casting tool remained inert, the might of the spell was a First-level as usual.

Merlin knew that if he wanted to utilize this Enhancing casting tool in the future, he could only cast the strengthened Guardian Monument. In an instant, the spell's power would be increased to that of a Third-level spell. This would be his trump card, and would never have to use it unless as a last resort.

Furthermore, using this casting tool would use up many Earth-type elemental crystal stones. In the short moment that Merlin had cast the strengthened Guardian Monument, he had depleted two such stones.

Even if the average roaming Wizard had obtained this Enhancing casting tool, they would not be able to use it. If Merlin had not acquired the wealth of the silver-haired old man, the cloaked man Wizard Vyksa, and Wizard Neil, he would be coming up short at this moment. He would have found it hard to take out even just one or two elemental crystal stones.

"Elemental crystal stones... Looks like I'll have to think of a way to earn some of those!"

Merlin muttered as he kept the casting tool. He was no longer in the Dark Magic Region. In that organization, what was most valuable were contribution points. With contribution points, one might exchange them for various potions, spells, or casting tools at the Resource Tower.

On the other hand, elemental crystal stones were crucial in the outside world. Without them, one could not even obtain the basic potion materials one wanted.

For instance, when Merlin wanted to acquire the materials for Blueberry Potion and Phantasmal Magic Potion, he needed a tremendous amount of elemental crystal stones. Without the stones, it was a challenge to get enough potion materials.

Merlin mulled things over, thinking of obtaining more elemental crystal stones. Based on his circumstances, it was certain that the only thing to do was to prepare potions in bulk to be sold to earn some stones.

This plan was also very feasible. Since he had the Matrix, the success rate of his potion preparation was higher compared to average apothecaries.

In addition, once Merlin had mastered the skills of preparing a particular potion, his success rate would be even higher.

Therefore, preparing potions for sale was currently the only way for Merlin to quickly earn a great number of elemental crystal stones.

Nevertheless, there were many factors involved in preparing potions for sale such as what were the best-selling potions in Floating City, which potion materials were cheaper, his channel of distribution, and so on. These were issues Merlin would need to consider. If he was just relying on himself, he would never be able to comprehend all of these in a short time.

Merlin did not plan to quickly earn elemental crystal stones just by working hard all by himself. He thought of Wizard Vladi from before.

Wizard Vladi had immersed himself in potion research. He had lived in Floating City for many years, so he would have known a lot about potions. Seeking his assistance would surely save Merlin much trouble.

With this in mind, Merlin immediately left the room and headed to Wizard Vladi's residence.

Merlin recalled the route that Wizard Burton had led him through previously. Gradually, Merlin arrived at where Wizard Vladi was staying – it was still the same quiet courtyard.

As Merlin entered the courtyard, he saw that the door was shut tight as before. However, his Mind Power perceived that there were waves of burning energy inside the house.

It seemed that Wizard Vladi was preparing his potions once again. Merlin knocked on the door, gently calling out, “Wizard Vladi, it’s Merlin here. I have something to ask you!”

“It’s Wizard Merlin? Please, come in quick!”

From inside the house, Wizard Vladi’s elderly voice rang out. His tone seemed to be filled with excitement.

Chapter 180: Working Together

“Creak...”

Merlin opened the door and entered. Wizard Vladi had already stood up and said with a smile, “Wizard Merlin, you’ve come at last. Come in, come in, let’s share our potion-making experiences.”

Wizard Vladi was obsessed with potions, just like Wizard Howl whom Merlin had met in the Dark Magic Region. These two wizards were so passionate about potions that they were almost crazy about it.

Wizard Vladi insisted that Merlin delved into his experiences, but Merlin shook his head reluctantly. He was not very educated in potions and only knew the common basics. His high success rate in preparing potions was mainly due to the precise control of the Matrix.

“Wizard Vladi, we’ll discuss potions some other day. I’ve come today because I’ve something to ask you!”

“Oh? Whatever the matter is, Wizard Merlin, speak your mind!”

Wizard Vladi saw that Merlin was unwilling to share his potion-making experiences and did not press on any further. Instead, he squinted slightly and fixed his gaze on Merlin.

Merlin nodded, and briefly explained his plan to sell potions. Wizard Vladi caught on quickly and gave a slight nod. “So, Wizard Merlin is planning to prepare potions for sale. It’s actually very simple. The best-selling potion now is Alkaline Earth Potion, which was prepared previously under your guidance. In Floating City, there are many roaming Wizards, and most of these Wizards have become alchemists. Thus, the supply of Alkaline Earth Potion is unable to keep up with demand. If you could make that potion, it would surely sell out quickly.”

“Alkaline Earth Potion?”

Merlin mumbled irresolutely to himself. Even though he did not consider himself a saint and had never spared anyone bold enough to threaten him, certain ideals of his past life still influenced him. Alchemists went all out to transfigure human beings into Alchemy Creatures through ruthless methods, which made Merlin uncomfortable.

“What’s wrong? Do you have any reservations?”

Wizard Vladi was a keen observer, and his bright eyes fixed on Merlin.

After a long moment, Merlin took a deep breath and shoved these tumultuous thoughts to the back of his mind. He was no longer Lin Fei of his previous life, but the Spell Caster, Wilson Merlin!

“Right, I’ll prepare Alkaline Earth Potion. I’ll have to trouble Wizard Vladi to help me sell the potion. Thirty percent of the profits shall belong to you!”

Merlin spoke in a low voice. He knew that the Alkaline Earth Potion he prepared would surely be in a large amount. If he wished for Wizard Vladi to help him sell the potion wholeheartedly without stirring up trouble, the best plan, naturally, was to rope Wizard Vladi in as well so that the both of them were running the business together. Only the sharing of a common interest would bind them together.

A smile appeared on Wizard Vladi’s face. Although he was fanatical about potion research, he was not ignorant about the ways of the world. Conversely, as a roaming Wizard, which ploy had he not witness himself? Merlin’s intentions could not be clearer – he wanted to bind them together. However, this was a hugely profitable matter, so of course, Wizard Vladi would not object.

“Okay, this is what we’ll do! I presume that currently, Wizard Merlin doesn’t have the materials for Alkaline Earth Potion? I have some materials here, which I’ll gift to you with no exchange for a

single elemental crystal stone. However, you'll have to purchase the potion materials with elemental crystal stones in the future."

With that, Wizard Vladi immediately took out more than ten batches of potion materials of Alkaline Earth Potion from his ring and handed them to Merlin. It was a show of good faith.

Merlin did not decline the offer and accepted the materials. After that, he said to Wizard Vladi, "In a few days, I'll deliver a few batches of Alkaline Earth Potion."

"Very well. As long as Alkaline Earth Potion is successfully made, I'll certainly sell them in the shortest time possible."

Merlin nodded and was about to turn and leave when he seemed to have thought of something. He said to Wizard Vladi, "Oh, right, Wizard Vladi, please don't mention to anyone else that this Alkaline Earth Potion was prepared by me."

Merlin did not want to attract attention due to potion-making. He only wanted to earn a few elemental crystal stones so that he could purchase materials for Phantasmal Magic Potion and Blueberry Potion. He would not like to stir up any trouble if he could help it.

Wizard Vladi gave a nod of affirmation with a smile at the corner of his mouth. "This is a simple request. For the sake of appearances, I shall say that this Alkaline Earth Potion was prepared by me. I believe that, with my reputation, no one would doubt that."

"That's good!"

Merlin nodded in satisfaction and turned to leave.

...

Upon returning to Wizard Burton's residence, Merlin did not see Wizard Burton. Perhaps he had gone off to conduct an experiment or transfigure his Alchemy Creature. The door of the black-robed old man's room was still shut tight; it seemed like he would not be coming out for a while.

Merlin returned to his room and set out the materials for Alkaline Earth Potion that Wizard Vladi had given to him on the table. Then, he retrieved a complete set of glassware for potion preparation from his ring.

Merlin had exchanged his contribution points for the glassware in the Resource Tower. He did not need to worry about their precision – they were more superior than the glassware which Wizard Vladi used.

With this precise equipment, Merlin would prevent unnecessary mistakes while preparing Alkaline Earth Potion, thus effectively increasing his success rate. Wizard Vladi had previously prepared Alkaline Earth Potion for quite some time – controlling the process well, whether it was in terms of fire handling or the measurement of potion materials. Even so, he was unsuccessful in making the potion, simply because the glassware that he had used for potion preparation was not precise.

Therefore, the glassware was a crucial factor in ensuring the success of the potion.

“The Matrix, begin Alkaline Earth Potion preparation!”

Merlin started up the Matrix right away. The last time he was in Wizard Vladi’s room, he had commanded the Matrix to record the steps and measurements of materials for preparing Alkaline Earth Potion. Thus, he just had to follow the Matrix’s steps accurately and control the fire well, and he would surely be able to prepare Alkaline Earth Potion successfully.

As it was his first time preparing Alkaline Earth Potion on his own, it was unavoidable that he failed. It was probably due to Merlin’s failure in fire handling as he already had the Matrix’s help in giving accurate steps and measurements.

Nevertheless, Merlin was already used to situations like this, so he did not dawdle but proceeded with his second attempt. This time he was fortunate – in a spurt of energy, Merlin succeeded in preparing the first batch of Alkaline Earth Potion.

Following that, he continued preparing the potion without rest. It was only a full day later that Merlin had used up all the potion materials given by Wizard Vladi and had made six batches of potions. His success rate could not be considered very high but it was still satisfactory. Out of eighteen sets of materials for Alkaline Earth Potion, he had made six batches in total.

This was equivalent to a thirty percent success rate, which was considered rather high. Even Wizard Vladi, who had mastered fire handling to the point of perfection, could not boast of achieving a similar success rate.

Merlin rested for a while before heading toward Wizard Vladi's residence with the six batches of Alkaline Earth Potion which he had prepared.

...

"Wizard Vladi!"

Merlin walked into Wizard Vladi's room and saw that he was resting with his eyes closed.

Hearing Merlin's voice, Wizard Vladi instantly opened both eyes. He rocked his head slightly with a tired face. "I was studying potions the whole of last night, so I was resting for a moment. Oh right, Wizard Merlin, are you here for something? Was there a problem in preparing Alkaline Earth Potion?"

Merlin shook his head and took out six batches of Alkaline Earth Potion that he had prepared from his ring. He said to Wizard Vladi, "Wizard Vladi, these are the six batches of Alkaline Earth Potion I had just prepared. I've brought them for you to verify them."

"Alkaline Earth Potion? You've managed to prepare six batches of the potion so soon?"

Wizard Vladi's expressed his disbelief, and hastily accepted the potions from Merlin's hand. He placed them gently on the table and sniffed it lightly before putting it into a transparent glassware for closer observation.

After several observations, Wizard Vladi could not help but exclaimed in admiration, "It's Alkaline Earth Potion indeed, alright, it really is Alkaline Earth Potion! I think that Wizard Merlin's accomplishments in potion-making are more impressive than I had initially thought. You've successfully prepared six batches of potion in just a day's time!"

The most time-consuming part of preparing potions was the complicated steps that must be carried out flawlessly. An average Spell Caster would have to perform each procedure carefully with vigor and vitality, even if they were full of energy.

However, Merlin did not have to concern about these matters. With the assistance of the Matrix, he was able to maintain rigorous control over the potion-making steps and only needed to worry about handling the fire.

The mastery of fire handling could be obtained over a long period of preparing potions. Once he practiced well, he would naturally be able to control the fire well and subsequently increased the success rate of his potion preparation.

“Good, very good, I shall deal with these six batches of Alkaline Earth Potion as soon as I can. I’ll let Wizard Merlin know the exact price when the time comes. Oh right, do you still have any potion materials for Alkaline Earth Potion?”

Wizard Vladi suddenly posed this question.

Merlin shook his head and answered, “The eighteen batches of materials have all been used up.”

Wizard Vladi mumbled to himself for a moment, then took out a large heap of potion materials from his ring. He said with a smile, “From the start, Wizard Merlin was able to achieve a thirty percent success rate in preparing Alkaline Earth Potion. It’s too amazing! There are enough materials for thirty batches of Alkaline Earth Potion here. I’ll charge each batch of potion materials for fifty elemental crystal stones, so thirty batches would cost a thousand and five hundred stones. When the Alkaline Earth Potion has been sold, I’ll deduct what you owe me bit by bit from the elemental crystal stones we earned. What do you think?”

Of course, Merlin nodded assent. This was an obvious gesture of goodwill on Wizard Vladi’s part. Merlin’s thirty percent success rate during his first time preparing Alkaline Earth Potion had astounded Wizard Vladi.

Even Wizard Vladi was secretly guessing if Merlin was some Potion Master who had come to Floating City for some special reason.

Nonetheless, no matter what Merlin’s identity was, such a high success rate in preparing Alkaline Earth Potion had already deserved Wizard Vladi’s complete goodwill and interest.

Merlin and Wizard Vladi exchanged a few simple words, after which Merlin left Wizard Vladi's residence and returned to Wizard Burton's residence. Once more, he began focusing all his energy into preparing Alkaline Earth Potion.