

W. Secret 181

Chapter 181: Spying

Merlin prepared Alkaline Earth Potion in a frenzy by immersing himself in preparing the portions. In just two short days, he had used about thirty batches of potion materials for Alkaline Earth Potion.

Through preparing dozens of batches of Alkaline Earth Potion, Merlin's mastery of fire control in preparing the potion had become progressively refined. Out of near-thirty sets of potion materials, Merlin had successfully prepared no less than twelve batches of Alkaline Earth Potion. This had already surpassed his previous thirty percent success rate.

After he had prepared Alkaline Earth Potion, Merlin headed directly toward Wizard Vladi's residence.

Upon seeing Merlin's arrival, Wizard Vladi was full of smiles. "Haha, Wizard Merlin. I've been keeping track of time and knew you would come today. How did you do? Out of thirty batches of potion materials, how much Alkaline Earth Potion have you prepared?"

"Twelve batches!"

Merlin took out twelve batches of Alkaline Earth Potion for Wizard Vladi's inspection. Wizard Vladi carefully examined the potion, then lifted his head. His eyes shimmered with fervor.

"A success rate of more than thirty percent! Good, very good. Wizard Merlin, I've good news to tell you as well. I've already helped you sell six batches of Alkaline Earth Potion that you gave me two days ago. Each batch was sold at two hundred and fifty elemental crystal stones!"

"Two hundred and fifty elemental crystal stones?"

Merlin did some quick mental calculation. Each batch of Alkaline Earth Potion materials required fifty elemental crystal stones. Eighteen batches would mean a total of nine hundred stones just for the cost of raw material. Moreover, six batches of sold potion had earned a thousand and five

hundred elemental crystal stones, leading to a net profit of six hundred stones. It was quite a large profit; no wonder so many apothecaries had wealthy backgrounds.

For instance, one could not really compare Wizard Burton and Wizard Vladi. Wizard Vladi was able to freely hand out potion materials worth hundreds of elemental crystal stones to Merlin whereas Wizard Burton would be hard-pressed to produce even a few dozen elemental crystal stones.

Nevertheless, an apothecary's success rate in preparing potions would also need to be high. Otherwise, out of several dozen sets of potion materials, they would only obtain one or two approved batches. In that case, they would be unable to earn any elemental crystal stones no matter what they did.

With those words, Wizard Vladi fished out a thousand and five hundred elemental crystal stones and handed them to Merlin.

Merlin smiled slightly and said to Wizard Vladi, "As I've said, thirty percent of the profits would belong to you, Wizard Vladi. Taking away the nine hundred elemental crystal stones for the cost of raw material, the profits of Alkaline Earth Potion would be six hundred stones. Thirty percent of that is a hundred and eighty elemental crystal stones. The next time you've sold the potion, you may collect your thirty percent of the earnings first."

Wizard Vladi made no protest and took back a hundred and eighty elemental crystal stones. Thereafter, Merlin handed all his stones to Wizard Vladi, saying, "I still owe Wizard Vladi a total of a thousand and five hundred elemental crystal stones for the previous thirty batches of potion materials. I can only pay this off gradually over time. For now, I'd like to use these elemental crystal stones to purchase more potion materials."

At that, Wizard Vladi shook his head, and a smile appeared on his face. "Wizard Merlin, how much potion materials can you buy with so few elemental crystal stones? How about this – I'll think of a way to provide the materials. In the future, I'll subtract the cost of the potion materials from the revenue of each batch of potion after it has been sold. What do you say?"

Wizard Vladi was so generous because he had witnessed Merlin's high success rate in preparing potions. Even Wizard Vladi himself could not achieve such an impressive rate of success. As long as Merlin was able to maintain this success rate, this trifling sum of a thousand or so elemental crystal stones was really nothing.

Merlin nodded and accepted the offer. At the moment, he was in desperate need of elemental crystal stones, and could not afford to be modest.

As such, once again, Merlin obtained a large amount of Alkaline Earth Potion materials from Wizard Vladi and returned to begin his fervent potion-making.

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Of late, almost every alchemist in Floating City was talking about a remarkable potion – Alkaline Earth Potion!

Initially, Alkaline Earth Potion was not considered to be extraordinary. However, it enabled Alchemy Creatures to acquire fantastic strength and speed as well as improving their various physical attributes.

This was a potion which was clearly able to enhance the strength of Alchemy Creatures. Although the boost was only temporary, it had little to no side effects. Furthermore, its ability to enhance the Alchemy Creatures' strength made it a potentially life-saving potion in times of danger.

Therefore, many alchemists were inclined to purchase Alkaline Earth Potion.

However, as the preparation of Alkaline Earth Potion was relatively complicated, the supply of Alkaline Earth Potion in Floating City was never able to meet the demand, resulting in many alchemists who were unable to obtain the potion.

Still, in the past few days, this situation had been slowly changing. Wizard Vladi, who was rather well-known in Floating City, announced that he had prepared Alkaline Earth Potion. Instantly, the alchemists responded positively to this news and sought Wizard Vladi to purchase the potion.

In the beginning, Wizard Vladi only had six batches of the potion but following that, his output increased and there were twelve, twenty, thirty batches...

This happened up until a point when, every ten days, there would be several dozen batches of Alkaline Earth Potion made available. Such a large amount of Alkaline Earth Potion naturally resulted in even more alchemists to know of Wizard Vladi's name. This reputation attracted more requests to purchase the potion.

In a few short days, the price of each batch of Alkaline Earth Potion had risen from two hundred and fifty elemental crystal stones to three hundred, yet the supply was still falling short of the demand.

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In a gloomy room, a young Spell Caster was speaking in a respectful tone to the purple-haired old man before him, “Teacher, I’ve just made some inquiries. The Alkaline Earth Potion that many people in Floating City have been scrambling to buy lately is indeed from Wizard Vladi. In addition, I believe Teacher has heard of him. Though he’s just a First-level Spell Caster, he has a certain degree of accomplishment in the research of potions.”

Suddenly, the purple-haired old man reached out his hand and said to the young Spell Caster, “Colton, let me look at the Alkaline Earth Potion that you’ve bought.”

Colton immediately handed over a few batches of the potions deferentially.

Holding the potion, the old man looked carefully and nodded his head. “Indeed, it’s Alkaline Earth Potion. However, if you say that it was Wizard Vladi who prepared it – I don’t believe that! Heh heh, Colton, go and keep an eye on Wizard Vladi’s residence. I believe that the mysterious apothecary would surely reveal himself.”

Despite the trace of doubt on his face, Colton nodded and withdrew respectfully.

The room, which was completely dim, descended once more into a death-like silence.

...

“Huff...”

Merlin exhaled a long breath. Staring at Alkaline Earth Potion placed before his eyes, his lips finally broke out into a smile.

“That should be enough. It’s been more than a full month since I’ve begun preparing Alkaline Earth Potion in a frenzy. Not only did my success rate improve significantly but I’ve also earned enough

elemental crystal stones. It's time to go to Sterling House to purchase potion materials for Phantasmal Magic Potion and Blueberry Potion."

Merlin mumbled to himself softly. In the past month or so, he had been in the house preparing Alkaline Earth Potion frantically. After accounting for the cost of the potion materials and Wizard Vladi's thirty percent of the profits, he had managed to accumulate thirty thousand elemental crystal stones.

Thirty thousand elemental crystal stones – this was a substantial fortune, considering that Merlin had only worked for slightly more than a month. Realistically speaking, out of runology, potions, and alchemy, potions was the only one which was profitable. An apothecary who was highly accomplished in potion-making would never have to worry about having enough elemental crystal stones, as they would be very well off.

Even though Merlin had no commendable attributes to speak of when it came to potion-making, he had the Matrix which increased his success rate. This allowed him to rapidly earn large sums of elemental crystal stones in a short time.

With thirty thousand elemental crystal stones, Merlin could purchase many sets of potion materials, even if it was the expensive materials for Phantasmal Magic Potion and Blueberry Potion.

Merlin stood up and opened the door. He still had to deliver the fifty or so batches of Alkaline Earth Potion which he had prepared for the past few days to Wizard Vladi.

Very soon, Merlin arrived at Wizard Vladi's residence. When Wizard Vladi spotted Merlin, he beamed with joy and affection.

In the past month, Wizard Vladi had worked together with Merlin and had earned a huge profit as well. Initially, he had never expected such a level of profit.

"Wizard Merlin, how many batches did you manage to make this time?"

"I've only prepared fifty-three batches of potions. Wizard Vladi, I've something to tell you. I'll be slowing down soon, and the rate of production for Alkaline Earth Potion might slow down as well."

Merlin spoke in a calm voice.

Wizard Vladi nodded his head lightly. “Slowing down is fine. Lately, we’ve sold a lot of Alkaline Earth Potion. Realistically speaking, most alchemists in Floating City would have already bought our Alkaline Earth Potion. If you continue preparing the potion at a frantic pace, we might not be able to sell them all.”

“Good to hear that. I’ll leave first then.”

Merlin gave Wizard Vladi a slight nod to indicate his departure and turned to leave the courtyard.

However, as he was leaving the courtyard, Merlin frowned and glanced around in suspicion. Previously, when he was entering, he had felt as if someone was spying on him.

That feeling was gone now. Merlin examined his surroundings but could not find anyone, so he did not investigate the matter further and headed toward Sterling House.

Right after Merlin had left Wizard Vladi’s residence, a faint, indistinct light appeared beside the residence – it was at the corner of the walls, like a ripple appearing on the calm surface of the water.

“Whoosh.”

A figure instantly materialized just beyond the corner of the walls; it was a young Spell Caster.

The young Spell Caster was holding a nifty casting tool in one hand. A moment ago, he had relied on this casting tool to avoid being seen.

Looking at Merlin’s disappearing back, a strange light shone in the young Spell Caster’s eyes. His face revealed his excitement as he muttered, “It was just as Teacher had predicted. The Alkaline Earth Potion was not prepared by Wizard Vladi, but by someone else!”

With that, the figure of the young Spell Caster vanished from the spot.

Chapter 182: A Surprise Attack

The air in the dim room carried a whiff of dampness. There were tall wooden chairs set out in disarray. A purple-haired old man reclined in one of those chairs.

“Creak.”

The door of the room was pushed open, and a young Spell Caster quickly squeezed in from outside.

“Teacher!”

The purple-haired old man straightened up abruptly and squinted slightly. “Colton, did you get a good look at who was it that prepared the Alkaline Earth Potion?”

The young Spell Caster raised his head to look at the purple-haired old man, and replied in a low voice, “Teacher, it’s just as you predicted. The Alkaline Earth Potion was not prepared by Wizard Vladi but by someone else!”

“Who?”

“I’ve asked around to be sure. It’s a Spell Caster who has just arrived at Floating City. He hasn’t made it as a First-level Spell Caster yet, and his name is Merlin!”

A smile appeared at the corner of the purple-haired old man’s lips. He said softly, “Not a First-level Spell Caster yet so he’s just a mere Entrance-level Spell Caster. However, he could prepare Alkaline Earth Potion, and at a faster speed than Wizard Vladi. Looks like he’s rather accomplished in terms of potions!”

After a pause, the eyes of the purple-haired old man flashed fiercely, and he said coldly to the young Spell Caster, “Colton, bring your ‘pet’ and capture that Merlin. Remember, I want him alive!”

The young Spell Caster’s heart trembled, and he respectfully took his leave. Behind him, a large, powerful Alchemy Creature, which was wearing a mask, followed him.

“He-he, mysterious apothecary, I hope you won’t let me down...”

The purple-haired old man muttered in a low voice as a faint light of anticipation shone in his eyes.

...

At Sterling House, the same charming woman from previously was showing Merlin around. They went to the large hall where large amounts of potion materials were set out. Previously Merlin had located the materials for Phantasmal Magic Potion and Blueberry Potion, so he knew that Sterling House had these potion materials in stock, only their prices were rather exorbitant.

The purchase of a batch of Phantasmal Magic Potion materials would require about a thousand and five hundred elemental crystal stones, whereas a batch of Blueberry Potion materials was comparatively cheaper, but it still required a thousand and two hundred stones.

Merlin thought about it for a moment. He currently possessed about thirty thousand elemental crystal stones. Although this seemed like a huge amount, in truth, if he spent it all on materials for Phantasmal Magic Potion and Blueberry Potion, he would not be able to buy that many batches of potion materials.

Besides, his success rate in preparing Phantasmal Magic Potion was very low, not even reaching thirty percent. If he took this into account, the expenses would be even higher.

Merlin considered the matter for a long time, and finally decided on purchasing twelve batches of Phantasmal Magic Potion materials, and nine batches of Blueberry Potion materials. In total, he had spent twenty-eight thousand and eight hundred elemental crystal stones.

After he had purchased the potion materials, the charming woman at Sterling House was beaming all over as she showed Merlin out respectfully.

Although he had spent nearly thirty thousand elemental crystal stones, Merlin was calm. He even felt a trace of excitement. With these potion materials, he expected that his Mind Power would undergo a great enhancement once he had prepared the potions successfully. At that time, he would even consider constructing the First-level spells – Dark Light Realm and Frigid Ice.

Merlin stored the potion materials into his ring, tightened his black robe around his waist, and followed his previous path back to Wizard Burton's residence.

The streets of Floating City were bustling with people. There had been a sudden upsurge in the number of unfamiliar Spell Casters recently, but Merlin had been busy preparing potions in the house, so he had not taken notice.

Wizard Burton's residence was peaceful and quiet. Merlin had taken a few corners and was about to reach Wizard Burton's residence when he lifted his head to see a young Spell Caster in front of him. Behind the Spell Caster was a large, powerful Alchemy Creature wearing a mask.

Merlin sized up the young Spell Caster before him. Wizard Burton's residence was in a secluded area, so Merlin would not usually meet any Spell Caster. Now that there was suddenly an alchemist before him, he could not help but suspect something was amiss.

However, the alchemist seemed to have noticed Merlin's wariness. Although his eyes remained cool and collected, his pace had obviously quickened.

Merlin frowned, and the young Spell Caster suddenly raised a hand and pointed at Merlin.

"Whoosh!"

The Alchemy Creature behind the young Spell Caster was just like a ferocious beast. A remarkable armor of scales emerged rapidly all over its body like a layer of old tree bark, and it sped wildly toward Merlin.

"Oh no! Guardian Monument!"

In that instant, Merlin sensed danger and cast Guardian Monument at his quickest speed. Stone walls instantly materialized before him.

"Thump!"

The wild Alchemy Creature, in its dash, crashed heavily into Guardian Monument. The entire structure immediately trembled violently. That fierce impact threw Merlin against the thick wall.

"Rumble!"

Though the wall was tough and solid, a huge hole had been formed. The sturdy Alchemy Creature did not seem to feel anything. It clenched its fists and a silver substance that glimmered constantly like a ripple on the water emerged on it. Noticing that the wall had held its assault, the Alchemy Creature began to punch frantically against the stone structure.

“Crack!”

In less than ten punches, Merlin’s Guardian Monument was unable to withstand the blows and split open. It was a good thing that he had cast Guardian Monument immediately, for he had barely held on so far.

“What an impressive Alchemy Creature!”

Merlin’s heart was pounding in alarm. This powerful Alchemy Creature was much stronger than Wizard Burton’s. Although that young Spell Caster looked like a First-level Spell Caster, he was clearly using alchemy techniques that were superior to Wizard Burton’s when he transfigured this Alchemy Creature.

Merlin’s thoughts whirled around in panic. His Guardian Monument was shattered. The Alchemy Creature’s speed was too fast, and the silver substance on its hands was obviously a superb alchemy technique. It would be difficult to handle this Alchemy Creature.

“Humph, Large Frost!”

A hard glint flashed in Merlin’s eyes. He was disgruntled that he had been forced into such a sorry state by an Alchemy Creature. Therefore, he cast over ten Frosts and even slipped in Large Frosts between those spells. In a moment, a cold wind danced all over the sky and enveloped the Alchemy Creature.

Although this Alchemy Creature had excellent physical attributes, its movements were clearly slowed down.

“Thunderbolt Net!”

Following that, Merlin cast Thunderbolt Net and then stepped back even further, escaping the clutches of the Alchemy Creature. Under the double blow of Frost and Thunderbolt Net, this wild Alchemy Creature was at last somewhat restrained.

It was completely impossible to kill this Alchemy Creature within a short time. Merlin reckoned that even if he cast Furious Flame, it would not be of much use. The fastest way to defeat this Alchemy Creature would still be to take out the alchemist.

No matter how powerful an Alchemy Creature was, it required the control of the alchemist. Once the alchemist was dead, the Alchemy Creature would no longer be a threat.

“Furious Flame!”

Merlin pointed a finger and an immense stream of fire appeared immediately, surging out like a dragon. It shot toward the Spell Caster who was controlling the Alchemy Creature.

Then, violent Wind Elemental fluctuations rose up around Merlin, and his speed increased manifold. He dashed toward the young Spell Caster.

“A Five-Elemental Spell Caster?”

The young Spell Caster’s expression changed. Merlin had consecutively cast Guardian Monument, Frost, Thunderbolt Net, Furious Flame, and Gale. These were Five-Elemental spells, and two of those were First-level spells.

Not only the Five-Elemental spells had restrained the Alchemy Creature in one stroke but it also provided strength for Merlin’s attacks.

If one had many spells, one would have more options when facing an opponent. Otherwise, if it was an average Three-Elemental Spell Caster, they would have been caught by the Alchemy Creature immediately. Getting into a physical combat with such a wild Alchemy Creature would amount to suicide.

The scorching flames were surging toward him. The young Spell Caster dared not ease up. Although he was an alchemist, he was also a First-level Spell Caster. Thus he instantly cast a Defensive spell which was just able to hold the attack of Furious Flame and retreated decisively.

However, he had no Speed spell. So, Merlin, after casting Gale a few times in a row, cast the strengthened version of Gale. His speed rocketed and at once he was in front of the young Spell Caster.

“Dark Mist!”

This young Spell Caster did not have strong Mind Power. Though it was just average Dark Mist, it thrust him into an illusion. Generally speaking, a large part of an alchemist’s strength relied on the Alchemy Creature. Once the Alchemy Creature was restrained, they were in real danger.

“What? Six-Elemental Spell Caster – that’s impossible!”

Upon seeing that Merlin had cast Dark Mist, the young Spell Caster’s face revealed his utter shock as his eyes filled with disbelief. He had been in Floating City for so long, but he had never even heard of a Six-Elemental Spell Caster.

“Die!”

However, Merlin did not hesitate in the slightest, and a fiery flame had appeared in his hand once more. As for the young Spell Caster, his face showed a wild expression, and gathered his Mind Power to its maximum and provoked the Alchemy Creature brutally.

“Bang!”

The Alchemy Creature immediately struggled out of Frost’s hold, and the shattered ice crystals flew everywhere. At this point, its eyes had become blood-red, and the muscles over its body swelled up. Its large frame seemed to grow even bigger, and its expression was distorted with malevolence as an air of savagery gleamed all over its body.

Even though the young Spell Caster was presently trapped in an illusion under Dark Mist, that ferocious Alchemy Creature was still rushing toward Merlin in a frenzy. Both of its hands were covered in that strange silver substance, which reflected blinding rays of light under the sun.

“Going all out?”

Merlin saw the Alchemy Creature speeding with all its might behind him and understood the alchemist's plan. There was no doubt that he was going to kill the alchemist, but perhaps before that happened, Merlin would be torn to shreds by the provoked Alchemy Creature.

If he wanted to hold the Alchemy Creature back, he would have to discontinue his plan of killing the alchemist. At such a desperate moment, this young Spell Caster had displayed a quick wit that most Spell Casters were not equipped with.

"It's too bad that it's me you've encountered!"

Merlin had no intention of evading the Alchemy Creature, and instead cast the strengthened version of Guardian Monument through the Enhancing casting tool.

Thanks to the Enhancing casting tool, the defensive capability of Guardian Monument was comparable to a Third-level Defensive spell. Although his opponent's Alchemy Creature was operating at an unprecedented burst of power, it could not possibly break through Guardian Monument that had been cast through the Enhancing casting tool.

"Thump!"

As expected, the Alchemy Creature crashed heavily into Guardian Monument. It was likely that even the strengthened version of Guardian Monument, which was comparable to a Second-level spell, would not have been able to withstand such massive strength.

However, with the strengthened spell cast through the Enhancing casting tool, Guardian Monument remained steady without even the slightest tremble. Under the protection of this Guardian Monument, Merlin was under no threat.

"Die!"

Merlin's eyes became cold. Soon, Furious Flame swallowed the alchemist who was still trapped in Dark Mist...

Chapter 183: Already Arrived!

In the gloomy room, the purple-haired old man was closing his eyes lightly as if in a meditation, but his face wore a suffering expression that made him look vicious.

“Snap!”

On one of the purple-haired old man’s fingers, a ring engraved with runes suddenly cracked open with a loud snap, fell to the ground and broken into pieces.

“Colton is dead?”

Immediately, a huge wave of change washed over the purple-haired old man’s face. His body, which was initially somewhat stooped, instantly straightened up. His aged face contorted faintly as well, and a bleak air was exuded all over his body.

“Whoosh!”

An enormous gust of Wind Element rose around the purple-haired old man. He rapidly rushed out of the gloomy room, and behind him, a dim shape of a hulking Alchemy Creature, covered all over in a layer of silver armor was trailing behind...

...

“He’s dead?”

Merlin had cast Furious Flame. In the blink of an eye, the turbulent flames had swallowed the alchemist who had fallen into an illusion under Dark Mist. The alchemist did not have any robes or any such Defensive casting tools on him.

Therefore, the alchemist did not even release a scream before he was incinerated beyond recognition by the ferocious fire. He was practically turned into soot and emitted the thick stink of charred flesh.

After finishing off the alchemist, Merlin turned his gaze to the mighty Alchemy Creature behind him. This Alchemy Creature which had extraordinary strength was not too slow as well. It was nearly impossible to kill and could be considered an indomitable Alchemy Creature.

However, after the alchemist had died, green mucus was secreted from the Alchemy Creature's body which seemed to drip all over its figure.

At places where the green mucus had passed by, the Alchemy Creature's skin began to rot immediately. The same happened to its muscles and bones, which began rotting at a visible pace. Blisters bubbled up one after another as its viscous blood dripped onto the ground.

In a very short time, the mighty Alchemy Creature was reduced to a puddle of blood. In that puddle were strands of green mucus, which was a nauseating sight.

Merlin frowned as he watched the Alchemy Creature turned into a puddle of blood. He had the faint notion that this was a sort of technique alchemists used to control their Alchemy Creatures. Once the alchemist had died, the Alchemy Creature under their control would also die of some reason.

"Wizard Merlin, what happened here?"

Wizard Burton, who had been watching everything, came out of the room, dumbstruck. His residence was in complete disorder. Even the courtyard walls had collapsed from the impact, resulting in a huge breach. It was evident that the Alchemy Creature's strength was frightening indeed.

"Creak."

The door to the other room opened as well. To their surprise, it was the black-robed old man who had shut himself in his room for one or two months. He seemed to have been roused by the pandemonium going on in the courtyard earlier and had opened his door to see what was happening.

"Wizard Merlin, what happened exactly? I've heard a huge commotion, and seemed to have detected Elemental fluctuation."

The black-robed old man and Wizard Burton had come toward Merlin. Both of them were frowning as they stared at the corpse that had been burnt to a crisp, and the foul-smelling puddle of blood.

Merlin's expression changed as he spoke in a low voice in dismay, "I don't know what's going on as well. I was just coming back from a visit to Sterling House when I bumped into this mysterious alchemist. He suddenly began to attack me, and after a fierce battle, I managed to kill him."

"Wizard Merlin, how did this alchemist look like? In other words, did he have any distinctive features?"

Wizard Burton asked hurriedly. He had been in Floating City for so many years and knew many people. Perhaps he would be able to identify this alchemist.

Merlin then gave a detailed description of the alchemist's appearance. Wizard Burton frowned all the while listening to him. Once Merlin had finished speaking, he began contemplating, as if searching, in his mind, for an alchemist who was similar to the person Merlin had described.

Suddenly, Wizard Burton jerked his head up, and asked in a low voice, "Wizard Merlin, did the alchemist's Alchemy Creature possess a particularly large body?"

Merlin nodded and thought of the many peculiarities that the particular Alchemy Creature possessed. Thus he said quietly, "That's right, his Alchemy Creature had exceptional strength, and not only was its body physically powerful, but a mysterious layer of silver substance also appeared on its hands..."

Before he could finish, Wizard Burton immediately interrupted Merlin, and said anxiously, "Oh no! The alchemist you've killed might very possibly be Colton, a student of Wizard Sammir! The strange silver substance appearing on their Alchemy Creatures is an alchemy technique that's unique to Wizard Sammir. It injects mithril, which is malleable and durable, into the bodies of the Alchemy Creatures. The mithril would form into all kinds of weapons or armor over the surface of their bodies, making them difficult to fight against!"

"Wizard Merlin, you must've offended Wizard Sammir in some way. Leave this place immediately. In fact, it's best if you leave Floating City. Wizard Sammir is a powerful Third-level Spell Caster, and his alchemy techniques are even more terrifying. The Alchemy Creature he transfigured had once clashed against a Fourth-level Spell Caster without defeat. If he's out to get you, you'll be in real danger!"

Although Merlin had never heard of Wizard Sammir, his heart sank at the sight of Wizard Burton's anxious state, as well as the information about the 'Third-level Spell Caster' and 'fought against a Fourth-level Spell Caster'.

Even though Merlin was still somewhat confused about this sudden twist of misfortune, he knew that now was not the time to find out the cause of all this. Instead, he had to leave quickly.

“Wizard Hill, let’s go. We’ll talk once we’ve left Floating City!”

Merlin made the prompt decision to leave Floating City with the black-robed old man.

“Hold on, I still have to finish preparing Purple Stone Powder Potion to bring with me.”

The black-robed old man had been roused by the commotion in the courtyard, so there were still many potions in the house which he had been preparing. Just as he had turned and entered his room, Merlin’s eyes narrowed as he keenly sensed a peculiar aura.

Following that, in the narrow alleyway outside the quiet courtyard, an old, purple-haired Spell Caster gradually appeared.

“We can’t leave anymore... Wizard Sammir has already arrived!”

When Wizard Burton saw this purple-haired old man, he shook his head helplessly and smiled bitterly as he spoke.

“Wizard Sammir!”

Merlin muttered over and over to himself. His guard had gone up immediately as he locked his gaze on the purple-haired old man not far away from him. Wizard Burton had turned pale just talking about this Third-level Spell Caster, Wizard Sammir.

Merlin did not expect that Wizard Sammir would show up so quickly.

“Are you the one who killed Colton?”

Wizard Sammir’s eyes focused slightly, and with a spread of one great hand, a stream of scarlet light flew out from his five fingers. Merlin felt a scorching wave of heat on his face.

“Gale!”

Merlin’s heart gave a jolt. Wizard Sammir had begun right away, and his first attack was such a formidable Third-level spell. This firelight seemed modest but it contained a terrifying power.

Upon reaching the wall, the firelight instantly liquefied a huge hole in the solid wall. Furthermore, a violent blaze had consumed a large part of the wall in raging flames.

Merlin trembled inwardly. If he had chosen to block that attack, he would have been caught in that roaring blaze by now.

A Third-level Spell Caster was far too powerful. Merlin had no intention of staying around any longer. His only thought now was to escape, the further the better.

“Whoosh!”

An intense surge of Wind Element rose around Merlin and his speed increased exponentially. It was the strengthened version of Gale that he had cast in order to retreat as fast as possible.

Wizard Sammir frowned slightly and seemed to be talking to himself, “What I hate the most are Spell Casters with Speed spells. Water Whorl!”

Wizard Sammir stretched a hand and pointed at the sky. Immediately, threads of water vapor condensed rapidly as if the atmosphere had suddenly become humid.

A sphere of water appeared in mid-air and spread out following the ripples of the water. The range covered by this sphere became wider and wider, and in a flash, it had completely blanketed Merlin.

At that moment, Merlin felt a strong binding sensation constricting him until he was unable to move.

This was a Water-type Binding spell. After joining the Dark Magic Region, he had almost never met anyone who constructed Water-type spells. He did not think that he would encounter a Spell Caster who constructed such a spell in Floating City.

Moreover, this Water-type Binding spell, once cast, was strikingly formidable.

“Darling, go on. Capture him, but don’t hurt him!”

Wizard Sammir said gently to the enormous Alchemy Creature behind him, whose body shone all over with an intimidating air.

“Thump!”

Compared to Colton’s Alchemy Creature which Merlin had seen, who knew how much stronger was this gigantic Alchemy Creature? The force of its steps crushed the bluestone floor tiles under both its feet. Thereafter, its hulking frame leapt up into the air, and its large shadow loomed over Merlin’s head.

Staring at this unbelievably ferocious Alchemy Creature, Merlin dared not hold back any longer, and roared out, “Guardian Monument!”

He cast Guardian Monument three times in a row. Then, he cast the strengthened version of Guardian Monument through the Enhancing casting tool to act as a final defensive barrier.

“Crash! Crash! Crash!”

Three loud crashes – the ordinary Guardian Monuments which he had cast were unable to obstruct this frightening Alchemy Creature, whose entire body was covered in a mercury-like layer of silver armor. This was mithril, an especially durable mineral. It was very ductile yet resilient at the same time. However, it was highly toxic, and even those Elemental Swordsmen with exceptional physical attributes would undoubtedly die if they swallowed mithril.

He did not know what special alchemy technique Wizard Sammir had used to enable mithril to be injected into the bodies of Alchemy Creatures. Not only did the Alchemy Creatures survived, but they utilized the durability of mithril to perform countless changes, forming weapons and armors. It was indeed extremely terrifying.

Even the Spell Casters who held fast to the ancient alchemist traditions would have to admit that the current alchemists had made innovations and breakthroughs in terms of techniques in transfiguring Alchemy Creature. They had created many new alchemist techniques.

At the present, Merlin was facing one such horrifying Alchemy Creature. In one of its hands was a sledgehammer formed out of mithril, which was soon ruthlessly smashing down toward Merlin's head.

The three layers of Guardian Monument that Merlin cast previously had been destroyed by the Alchemy Creature. Now, the Alchemy Creature had formed a silver sledgehammer out of mithril in order to wreck the strengthened version of Guardian Monument cast through the Enhancing casting tool. This was Merlin's final defense.

"Boom!"

The Alchemy Creature was three meters tall, the height of a small giant. The muscles on its body bulged, containing its explosive strength. It raised the silver sledgehammer, which cut through the air and smashed into Guardian Monument.

Chapter 184: Take You Seriously

Merlin's Guardian Monument was cast via an Enhancing casting tool, hence it was comparable to a Third-level Defensive spell; this was also Merlin's current strongest Defensive spell. If he could not defend against Wizard Sammir's Alchemy Creature, Merlin had no way of getting out of this mess unscathed.

The large silver hammer slashed through the air ruthlessly; the friction between the air and hammer even caused a series of hissing sounds.

Following that, the large hammer fell upon Guardian Monument, causing the entire Guardian Monument to shake violently. It was as if Guardian Monument was about to break into pieces in the next second. Merlin's heart jumped to his throat as he stared hard at his spell.

The light of Guardian Monument kept flashing but it did not break in the end. The spell was cast via an Enhancing casting tool which was able to block against the attack of Wizard Sammir's Alchemy Creature.

Wizard Sammir squinted his eyes slightly and a hint of shock flashed in his eyes. Thereafter, he immediately raised his hand and waved. A broiling aura headed toward Merlin furiously.

This was Wizard Sammir's Third-level spell. Merlin had just witnessed the terror of this spell. He would immediately be trapped by scorching flames should he be hit by the spell.

At the same time, he was fighting the Alchemy Creature and he could not run away from his spot at this moment. Thus, he cast Guardian Monument a couple of times and also the strengthened version of Guardian Monument with the help of an Enhancing casting tool.

After making two casts of the strengthened version of Guardian Monument with Enhancing casting tool, Merlin had used up four pieces of Earth elemental crystal stones. Luckily, he had an ample number of elemental crystal stones currently that could at least support the consumption of the Enhancing casting tool for half a day.

The Fire-type spell which Wizard Sammir had cast was only a faint line of fire at the beginning. Then, it quickly collided with Merlin's Guardian Monument.

At once, a fire broke out and a large sea of flames encompassed Merlin's entire being. Albeit it was a common spell, this Third-level spell was extremely powerful. Moreover, Merlin still had to deal with the terrifying Alchemy Creature outside the ring of flame.

"Ka-chak."

Cracks began to appear on Merlin's Guardian Monument. He instantly made multiple casts of Guardian Monument, and also of the strengthened version of Guardian Monument with the Enhancing casting tool to barely defend against Wizard Sammir's spell.

"I must leave immediately. Now!"

Merlin had the protection of Guardian Monument, so he could withstand Wizard Sammir's spell and the Alchemy Creature's attack. However, he could not drag this fight further since he would meet his end if he exhausted all of his Magic Power.

Hence, he took advantage of the opportunity right before the Alchemy Creature attacked. Intense fluctuations of Wind Element appeared around Merlin as he cast the strengthened version of Gale. Like a phantom, his entire being rapidly dashed out of the encirclement of flames.

“Speed spell? I detest Speed spell the most. He also possesses a Defensive spell that’s comparable to a Third-level spell!”

Wizard Sammir frowned as he looked at Guardian Monument that kept flashing on Merlin. He did not possess any Speed spell. Once his opponent could defend against his spell and his Alchemy Creature’s attack, his opponent could immediately cast a Speed spell and escape.

Initially, Wizard Sammir thought that a mere Entrance-level Spell Caster would not amount to much, but he only realized how tough Merlin was after he fought with him.

He had no way of stopping Merlin from leaving at this moment. Even if he cast a Binding spell, Merlin could simply protect himself with Guardian Monument. Hence, a Binding spell would not have much effect on him.

“Wait. Wizard Merlin, how about we make a deal?”

Upon seeing that Merlin was getting further away, Wizard Sammir suddenly shouted.

Merlin who was running away rapidly paused a little, then came to a complete halt. He shot a questioning look at Wizard Sammir and that gigantic Alchemy Creature.

Wizard Sammir smiled and then ordered his Alchemy Creature to return to his side. He said to Merlin, “Wizard Merlin, I don’t possess Speed spell, so I can’t do anything to you as long as you can block my spell and my darling’s attack. I admit that you’ve made me take you seriously. That’s why I’m offering you a deal!”

Merlin stared at Wizard Sammir with caution. He knew Wizard Sammir was speaking the truth. From the beginning, Wizard Sammir had not given Merlin a chance as he blasted everything right at Merlin directly.

However, since Merlin had the Enhancing casting tool, he was able to cast Guardian Monument that was comparable to a Third-level spell and nullified Wizard Sammir’s attack. In addition, Merlin possessed Speed spell; Wizard Sammir could not stop him from running away.

After experiencing such a dangerous crisis, Merlin truly understood the advantage of being a Six-Elemental Spell Caster. He had an adequate number of spells to use when he faced danger. If Merlin did not possess a Speed spell, he could only hang on for a little longer with his Enhancing casting tool and Guardian Monument, and would not be able to escape. In the end, he would either be caught or killed by Wizard Sammir after he exhausted his Magic Power.

Meanwhile, Wizard Sammir was a Third-level Spell Caster. Even if Merlin had Enhancing casting tool and could block his spell temporarily, Wizard Sammir could still easily overpower Merlin should he possess a Speed Spell.

Wizard Sammir did not have the ability to construct more spells in the past, so he was also out of idea whilst fighting with the odd Merlin.

“Deal? You sent Colton to offer a deal to me as well?”

Merlin kept his eyes on Wizard Sammir as he did not dare to relax for even a moment.

Wizard Sammir nodded. “That’s right. I send Colton to offer you a deal.”

“Heh. Is this how you offer a deal?”

Merlin sneered. Both Colton and Wizard Sammir directly proceeded to take him by force – in what way were they offering a deal?

Wizard Sammir squinted his eyes and stared deeply at Merlin. Then, he laughed. “Wizard Merlin, do you think I have the need to talk to a mere Entrance-level Spell Caster? I can catch him directly! But the abilities that you’ve shown have made me take you seriously. At least I can’t do anything to you now, so let’s make a fair deal. If you can make a potion for me, I can give you anything precious you wish for!”

“Anything? Wizard Sammir, don’t you think you’re being overconfident?”

Merlin had no intention to make any deal with a dangerous person like Sammir; he only wanted to leave. However, Wizard Sammir had discreetly ordered his Alchemy Creature to stand near the black-robed old man and Wizard Burton. His intention was obvious and posed a threat to Merlin.

Merlin did not care whether Wizard Burton lived or died, but he owed the black-robed old man too much. If he could save the old man, he would have to do so.

Upon seeing that Merlin did not go, a smile appeared on Wizard Sammir's face. He continued his words. "That's right. What do you need? Elemental crystal stones? Spells? Casting tools? Or even my Mithril Alchemy Technique? I can give them all to you!"

Wizard Sammir seemed rather earnest; Merlin could see how agitated he was at this moment.

Merlin frowned. He realized that this potion might be extremely important to Wizard Sammir for him to become as agitated as he was now.

However, Merlin really did not want to be friendly with dangerous people like Wizard Sammir. Hence, he sneered. "I don't want any elemental crystal stones, spells or casting tools! Although your Mithril Alchemy Technique is quite incredible, I'm not an alchemist, so I won't need it. If you really want to offer me a deal, give me hundred years' ice bone marrow!"

Merlin had asked about it in Floating City but even Sterling House did not have it. Many Spell Casters had never heard about it before, so Merlin had completely given up on cultivating Pandora Demon Ability, Glacial Finger.

He only mentioned hundred years' ice bone marrow now to make Wizard Sammir give up on offering him a deal.

"Hundred years' ice bone marrow?"

Wizard Sammir frowned slightly. Unexpectedly, Wizard Sammir seemed to know about this item.

After giving it a long thought, Wizard Sammir raised his head suddenly. He said through gritted teeth, "Hundred years' ice bone marrow is indeed very precious. Ordinary Spell Casters may have not heard of it but I know an old guy who's in possession of this item! But this old guy has coveted my Mithril Alchemy Technique for a long time. At most, I'll simply exchange my Mithril Alchemy Technique for this item. I'll make sure to give you what you ask for!"

In turn, Merlin had to make a difficult decision now. He initially mentioned the hundred years' ice bone marrow to make Wizard Sammir give up on his intention. Little did he expect that Wizard Sammir could indeed offer hundred years' ice bone marrow to him.

The hundred years' ice bone marrow could help Merlin in cultivating Pandora Demon Ability, Glacial Finger; this was indeed an item he would be attracted to. However, Merlin hesitated out of his distrust toward Wizard Sammir.

After seemingly noticing Merlin's hesitation, Wizard Sammir immediately took a potion formula from his ring and ordered his Alchemy Creature to hand it to Merlin.

Merlin did not let down his guard and relaxed Guardian Monument at all. As soon as the Alchemy Creature made a move, he could immediately run away with Gale.

The Alchemy Creature did not do anything strange. Merlin heaved a sigh of relief and took the mysterious potion formula.

Wizard Sammir appeared to be helpless when he lowered his voice and spoke, "Wizard Merlin, I'm sure you'll understand that I'm speaking the truth after reading the potion formula. How am I going to put you in a disadvantaged situation under my current predicament?"

Merlin frowned. He did not understand Wizard Sammir's words, so he placed his gaze on the potion formula in his hands. Everything Wizard Sammir said would be explained in this potion formula.

Chapter 185: Complicated Potion

"Edro Potion. Stabilize Spell Models below Fourth-level. Materials needed are Larch Fruit, Heliotrope Leaf..."

Merlin carefully read through the long potion formula.

This potion is called Edro Potion. Edro could be the name of a Spell Caster. According to the ancient tradition of Spell Casters, some unique potions could be named after the Spell Caster who synthesized them.

This could be the case for Edro Potion as it was named after Spell Caster Edro.

The effect of Edro Potion was to stabilize Spell Models. Purple Stone Powder Potion was only effective toward stabilizing Zero-level spells while Edro Potion could stabilize Spell Models that were below Fourth-level.

“Could it be that Wizard Sammir’s Spell Models are unstable?”

Merlin looked at Wizard Sammir suspiciously. Instability of Spell Models was a serious matter especially when the Spell Model constructed in the Awareness was of high level; it was more difficult to control the unstable Spell Models. If the Spell Model crumbled, the immense Magic Power contained in the Spell Model could blast any Spell Caster into pieces.

The black-robed old man was simply an Entrance-level Spell Caster and his Spell Models were of Zero-level. However, he was also greatly tortured by the instability of his Spell Models. If Merlin had not brought Purple Stone Powder Potion from the Dark Magic Region for him, it was only a matter of time before the old man had perished.

Now, Wizard Sammir was bothered by the instability of Spell Models as well. The Spell Models in his Awareness were all Third-level spells. If they crumbled, the consequences would be unimaginable. Unsurprising that he was gripped by a sense of urgency.

After Merlin looked through the potion formula, Wizard Sammir spoke, “Now does Wizard Merlin understand why I have no reason to disadvantage you in any way? Before this, I ordered Colton to grab hold of you. However, since you’re quite skilled and strong, we can make a fair deal. If you successfully prepare Edro Potion for me, I’ll give you the hundred years’ ice bone marrow!”

Merlin put the potion formula down and thought for a moment. He asked, “Wizard Sammir, doesn’t Floating City have other apothecaries? Also, how sure are you that I’m able to make the potion?”

Wizard Sammir shook his head slightly and answered, “There are some infamous apothecaries in Floating City. I’ve looked for them a long time ago, but none is able to make this potion. As for Wizard Merlin, I must let you try before deciding whether you can make the potion. I believe that Wizard Merlin must be knowledgeable in Potions since you’re able to make a large number of Alkaline Earth Potions in such a short time. If Wizard Merlin truly can’t make it, I won’t force you as well!”

Merlin gazed at Wizard Sammir. It turned out Wizard Sammir had found him after noticing some hints in his Alkaline Earth Potions.

Following that, Merlin's eyes fell on the black-robed old man. Wizard Sammir was definitely not an amiable person. If Merlin did not agree to his deal, Wizard Sammir would definitely make a move at the old man and Wizard Burton even if he could not kill Merlin.

However, the hundred years' ice bone marrow Wizard Sammir had promised had indeed attracted Merlin's attention. If Merlin had that item, he could begin cultivating Pandora Demon Ability, Glacial Finger, right after he constructed Frigid Ice.

After considering his options, Merlin finally came to a decision. He raised his head and said to Wizard Sammir, "Alright. I'll try to make Edro Potion, but I don't make any promise that I'll succeed."

"Haha. Be rest assured. Regardless of the result, I won't mind about what happened to Colton."

The atmosphere between Wizard Sammir and Merlin finally calmed a little. Wizard Burton and the black-robed old man who were beside the two heaved a sigh of relief as well. When Wizard Sammir's Alchemy Creature was watching them closely, they did not even dare to breathe.

However, at the same time, Wizard Burton and the black-robed old man were gripped with shock. Upon Wizard Sammir's arrival, he directly cast his spells and instructed his Alchemy Creature to fight against Merlin. Although Merlin could not counterattack, he was able to withstand Wizard Sammir's attack and escaped when he grabbed the chance.

If Wizard Sammir did not mention the reward of the deal that attracted Merlin's attention, the latter would have escaped by now. Wizard Sammir who was a Third-level Spell Caster and an extremely powerful Alchemy Creature could not threaten Merlin at all.

Merlin's capability had far exceeded their imagination, especially that of Wizard Burton. He had even fought Merlin with his Alchemy Creature before. This matter made Wizard Burton feel more awkward.

"Wizard Merlin, it seems that you've grown to an extent beyond my imagination during the one year in the Dark Magic Region!"

The black-robed old man shook his head slightly and exclaimed with mixed emotions.

Wizard Burton took a glance at Wizard Sammir, then said seriously with a lower voice, “Wizard Merlin, Wizard Sammir doesn’t really have a good reputation in Floating City, especially due to the way he treats Spell Casters of lower levels. Wizard Sammir also seems rather carefree about this deal. Are you sure about making a deal with him?”

A smile played at the corners of Merlin’s lips. He replied monotonously, “Wizard Sammir won’t joke about his own life. Please be rest assured. I’m sure he won’t do anything reckless.”

Wizard Sammir was full of smiles now as he asked Merlin, “I can provide one set of materials needed for Edro Potion to Wizard Merlin. You can try making the potion first. Do you want to make it here or at my laboratory? Not only do I have all sorts of alchemy glassware in my laboratory but I also possess a whole set of glassware used specifically for making potions...”

Before Wizard Sammir could complete his sentence, he was interrupted by Merlin. Merlin replied coldly, “That’s quite alright. I can make it here. After ten days, you can visit me and I’ll tell you if I’m successful in preparing the Edro Potion.”

Wizard Sammir naturally would not mind Merlin’s stiff tone. Instead, he dug out a large pile of potion materials from his ring and placed them on the ground. He pointed to the potion materials. “These are the materials needed to make one Edro Potion. I’ll return after ten days!”

Thereafter, Wizard Sammir turned around and left with his Alchemy Creature.

After Wizard Sammir had left, the black-robed old man approached Merlin and said, “Wizard Merlin, Wizard Sammir is too dangerous. Should we leave Floating City right away?”

“Leave?”

Wizard Burton shook his head with a bitter smile. “In fact, Floating City is a city full of chaos. Many Spell Casters had died every day in this city. Only large Spell Caster families and influential forces like Sterling House can ensure their safety here. Wizard Sammir has been in Floating City for many years. He has a lot of ways to watch you. Wizard Merlin may be able to leave, but it’ll be difficult for you, Hill!”

Wizard Burton was clear about the rules of Floating City; it was the paradise for adventurers. On the surface, it appeared to be calm and peaceful but Spell Casters fought amongst themselves almost every day in this city. No one dared to cause any trouble only within the area of certain influential forces, while other places remained chaotic.

Hence, Wizard Sammir would have seemed to leave in a rather carefree attitude and have left expensive potion materials with them, but he was actually monitoring their actions at all times.

The black-robed old man became depressed and shook his head. Rather helplessly, he said, “It seems I’ve troubled Wizard Merlin...”

Merlin kept the potion materials in his ring and flashed a smile. “I’ve also benefited from the deal with Wizard Sammir. Hundred years’ ice bone marrow is the precious material I’ve not found even in Sterling House. My stay here is completely unrelated to Wizard Hill. Alright, I should study this Edro Potion. If I can make it, then everything will proceed smoothly.”

Thereafter, Merlin returned to his room, leaving the black-robed old man and Wizard Burton outside. Their gazes were filled with worry.

...

For a couple of days, Merlin had stayed in his room. Since he had not come out from his room, the black-robed old man and Wizard Burton had no way of knowing the progress of the potion-making.

However, Merlin had spent his time in his room almost without sleep and rest these days. They could imagine that the potion Wizard Sammir wanted was definitely not easy to make.

Merlin was rushing to prepare the potion materials in his room. After reading all the steps and proportion of materials needed to prepare Edro Potion, he finally understood the reason why no apothecary in Floating City could prepare this potion.

Rather than the potion itself, the steps to make the potion was simply too complicated. Merlin recorded the process with the Matrix and found that it took about three hundred sixty-nine steps to prepare it.

Basically, an ordinary potion only took about a dozen steps. The slightly complicated ones would take less than a hundred steps. Phantasmal Magic Potion itself only took up to a hundred steps.

Merlin had never come across a potion that required up to about three hundred steps to prepare it. It would only take a small mistake to make his effort go in vain. Even for an experienced apothecary, it was impossible to totally grasp so many complicated steps in such a short amount of time.

Hence, although Wizard Sammir had looked for so many apothecaries, none was able to make Edro Potion successfully.

However, complicated steps did not pose a problem to Merlin at all since he had the Matrix. With the help of the Matrix, Merlin could perfect every step without a single mistake even in this case where it involved hundreds of steps.

The only aspect Merlin was concerned about was the fire-handling when he made the potion. Along with the increase in steps, there were many steps that required good fire-handling. Thus, although Merlin had the confidence to make Edro Potion, his success rate of making it was really low.

Merlin spent a few days to prepare all his potion materials. After making sure that he did not miss anything, he began to make the potion.

“The Matrix, begin the making of Edro Potion!”

Merlin initiated the Matrix. Then, according to the instructions of the Matrix, he began to prepare the potion step by step.

...

Ten days later, Wizard Sammir appeared in Wizard Burton’s courtyard right on time. The terrifying Alchemy Creature still trailed behind him.

Although Wizard Sammir appeared calm, he did not take his eyes off Merlin’s room which also showed how unrest he was.

Wizard Burton and the black-robed old man glanced at Merlin’s room in worry. If he failed in making the potion, they would not know if Wizard Sammir would attack them out of anger, even though Wizard Sammir had mentioned that he would not blame them for Colton’s death.

“Creak.”

Finally, the door to Merlin's room opened. Merlin came out from his room. He looked rather exhausted.

"Wizard Merlin, how's the potion-making?"

Wizard Sammir headed straight toward Merlin. A look of anticipation flashed in his eyes as he asked urgently.

Chapter 186: Promise?

Merlin appeared rather exhausted. He raised his head and took a glance at Wizard Sammir. In a calm tone, he said, "Wizard Sammir, I failed to make Edro Potion!"

"Failed?"

Wizard Sammir was stunned but quickly regained his senses. He showed a disappointed look as he mumbled, "So you still failed, huh..."

"Failed?"

Wizard Burton and the black-robed old man immediately stiffened. They glanced at Wizard Sammir in an alert. The Alchemy Creature behind Wizard Burton also came close to him. As soon as Wizard Sammir did anything, Wizard Burton and the black-robed old man would give their all to fight back even if they were no match for him.

Wizard Sammir reached out his wizened hands. He, of course, noticed Wizard Burton and the black-robed old man's actions. His expression dimmed and sneered. "Heh. I said that I won't attack you regardless of the result!"

After saying that, Wizard Sammir sent a cold stare at Wizard Burton and the old man, then immediately turned around. He was about to leave with his Alchemy Creature.

“Wizard Sammir, even though I failed this time, I’m getting a grasp of making the potion. Do you really expect me to succeed from just the first try?”

Suddenly, Merlin’s voice rang and Wizard Sammir instantly turned around. His expression was rather unsure.

After a long moment, Wizard Sammir spoke with a shivering voice, “Wizard Merlin, are you saying that you’re confident in making Edro Potion?”

“A little, yes. But I’ll need a lot of potion materials. After all, Edro Potion is really difficult to make; the success rate is too low.”

Merlin replied in a certain tone. Wizard Sammir could no longer hide the elation in his face. He quickly asked, “Wizard Merlin, how many sets of potion materials do you need to make Edro Potion?”

Merlin gave it a thought and said, “The process to make Edro Potion is too complicated. There are also many steps that required well fire-handling. I’m certain of the success rate by thirty percent for normal potions, but I’m not even ten percent certain that I can make Edro Potion. Give me ten sets of potion materials first. I may be able to make it. If I still fail in the end, prepare a few more sets for me and I’ll probably succeed at that time.”

“Ten sets...”

Wizard Sammir’s mouth twitched and said with a bitter smile, “Wizard Merlin, do you really think that I can buy the materials for Edro Potion anywhere? After so many years, I’ve only able to collect a dozen sets of potion materials by many means. In the end, I wasted a few after giving to many apothecaries. I only have eight sets left now.”

Wizard Sammir was helpless as well. These potion materials were extremely precious. Initially, he had obtained an Edro Potion from a certain ancient relics by an incident and found that it was able to stabilize Spell Models that were below Fourth-level. He then began to search everywhere for the materials needed to make Edro Potion.

He had spent a large amount of effort to collect each set of materials. Some materials could not even be bought by using elemental crystal stones. Wizard Sammir was truly speechless after listening to Merlin’s request to have a dozen sets of materials.

“Only eight sets are left? Then, I can only do my best now. After all, the success rate of potion-making can’t be increased that easily. During the time when I’m preparing the potion, I hope that Wizard Sammir can actively search for the potion materials as well. If you can get your hands on a few more sets, the possibility of making the potion will greatly increase!”

After Merlin said that, Wizard Sammir nodded and instantaneously handed eight sets of potion materials to Merlin. He then said to Merlin, “Wizard Merlin, please be rest assured. If you succeed, I’ll immediately pass the hundred years’ ice bone marrow to you. I shouldn’t bother you any longer now.”

Wizard Sammir’s tone was brimming with delight after he finally saw a slight hope of having the potion.

After Wizard Sammir left, Wizard Burton and the black-robed old man quickly asked Merlin, “Wizard Merlin, are you really certain that you can make the potion Wizard Sammir wants?”

They were worried that Merlin’s words were simply a means to drag the matter. If he could not make it in the end, Wizard Sammir would definitely fly into a rage and none of them would be saved from his fury.

Merlin nodded with a serious expression. “Please be rest assured. I’m certain that I can make the potion.”

“It’s all good then. We shall wait for your good news, Wizard Merlin!”

Wizard Burton and the black-robed old man left respectively. They knew that no one would bother Merlin during the next few days as that time would be the most crucial moment for him.

In the following days, Merlin was indeed trying to prepare Edro Potion. Even with the help of the Matrix, Merlin did not dare to relax. He tried his very best every time he prepared the potion.

However, as Merlin had predicted previously, Merlin could complete all three hundred steps without a single mistake with the help of the Matrix. However, he could not handle the fire well. Thus, he had failed in making the potion these few days and wasted three sets of potion materials.

Luckily, Wizard Sammir had given him an adequate number of potion materials. Even if he had wasted three sets, he was still left with five sets. Meanwhile, Merlin had accumulated more experiences after failing in the potion-making, helping him to achieve a higher accuracy while handling the fire in his subsequent attempts.

Therefore, Merlin actually benefited from the failure as well. The fire-handling experience was Merlin's largest gain.

...

"Hiss! Hiss!"

Green smoke began to appear from Merlin's glassware. This was the final step – he had handled the fire really well. Only with a little more heating and an extreme caution in the fire-handling, he would succeed in making Edro Potion.

Merlin stared at the potion in the glassware. Half a month had gone past since he failed in making the potion thrice. In the meantime, he had only four attempts to prepare it.

...

This was his seventh time in preparing Edro Potion. Merlin had handled the fire quite well. If he failed this time, only the last set of materials would be left.

The potion in the glassware had turned into a viscous dark green liquid. Heating it with high temperature, the liquid kept boiling and small gas bubbles popped from it.

After a moment, Merlin gradually stopped the heating and the potion in the glassware began to cool down. However, during the cooling process, the color of the potion changed. From dark green, it slowly turned into a strange green potion.

Merlin was slightly elated by this progress. According to the hint written in the formula for Edro Potion, the true Edro Potion was in the form of green powder.

The initially viscous potion had started to dry after cooling and finally became a pile of green powder.

“I finally did it!”

Merlin was relieved. According to his judgment, he had succeeded in making the potion, but he could only be sure after the potion was tested by the Matrix.

“The Matrix, test if Edro Potion is qualified.”

There were a few identifications meant to test a true Edro Potion in the Edro Potion formula and Merlin had long recorded them in the Matrix. There would be no mistake with the test.

“Beep. Test completed. More than ninety-nine percent probability that this is Edro Potion!”

The result was finally out. Merlin heaved a long sigh. Since the probability was over ninety-nine percent, it could almost confirm that he had made the true Edro Potion in his seventh try.

“Almost a month’s time. I believe that Wizard Sammir has waited long enough. It’s time to go out!”

Merlin was truly relieved. He kept the final set of potion materials for Edro Potion. As it was extremely precious, Merlin would not return them to Wizard Sammir like an idiot. Moreover, he was sure that Wizard Sammir would not care about these potion materials.

“Creak.”

Merlin pushed the door open. At once, Wizard Burton and the black-robed old man heard the sound and quickly came to Merlin’s room.

Wizard Burton was feeling impatient as he quickly asked, “Wizard Merlin, how’s the potion-making?”

Merlin smiled as he nodded. “Although it took me quite a while, I finally succeeded.”

“Succeeded?”

A hint of elation flashed on the black-robed old man's face.

"That's right. I indeed succeeded!"

Merlin reaffirmed his statement. Immediately, Wizard Burton and the old man could not help but heaved a long sigh. Although Merlin was the one who made the potion, this matter was, in fact, also related to their own lives so they were more anxious than Merlin.

"Oh right. Let's inform Wizard Sammir quickly."

The old man said in a low voice.

Meanwhile, Merlin and Wizard Burton exchanged a glance. Merlin shook his head. "Do we need to? I'm sure that Wizard Sammir is already on his way here!"

After saying that, Merlin took a knowing glance outside of the courtyard. Wizard Sammir could have arranged for someone to monitor their actions. When Merlin came out of his room, that spy could have informed Wizard Sammir.

The old man fell silent. Following that, Merlin and others simply waited in silence.

After a short moment, Wizard Sammir rushed to their residence urgently. Just when he arrived in Wizard Burton's courtyard, he yelled even before seeing Merlin, "Wizard Merlin, how's the progress of potion-making?"

Merlin did not speak. Instead, he took out a transparent glassware from his ring. In the glassware was a pile of green powder.

Upon seeing the potion in Merlin's hands, Wizard Sammir's wizened face could not help but brimmed with surprise. In addition, both his hands were shaking slightly and were about to take the potion from Merlin.

However, Merlin kept the potion back into his ring. With a calm tone, he said, "Wizard Sammir, do you still remember your promise?"

Chapter 187: Triple Construction

“Promise?”

Wizard Sammir went blank for a moment, then slapped his forehead as if he just remembered something. “I was too excited when I heard that you succeeded in making Edro Potion, so I forgot all about it. I’ve bothered that old man for almost half a month and even gave him my Mithril Alchemy Technique in exchange for this hundred years’ ice bone marrow.”

“Swish!”

Wizard Sammir said as he took a large sealed glass container from his ring. The thick glass container was the size of a washing basin and was completely sealed off. In it was a crystal clear, pale-white ice.

Merlin squinted his eyes. He had seen many glass containers such as this in the Resource Tower. Having such a delicate design, the thick glass containers were rare alchemy products. It would take at least hundreds of contribution points to exchange for them. The glass containers cost about the price of a normal casting tool.

At this moment, the glass container was only used to contain a single piece of crystal. Without a doubt, that was the hundred years’ ice bone marrow which Merlin had yearned to have.

Wizard Sammir laughed. “This is the hundred years’ ice bone marrow. That old man has hidden this away for many decades like a precious treasure. If the old man hasn’t long for my Mithril Alchemy Technique for quite some time, I’m afraid that he won’t give this item to me easily.”

“Wizard Sammir, you can check if this is Edro Potion.”

After seeing the hundred years’ ice bone marrow in Wizard Sammir’s hands, Merlin directly handed the freshly-made Edro Potion to Wizard Sammir. Thereafter, Wizard Sammir also handed the ice bone marrow to Merlin.

Although the item was contained in a thick glass container, it still gave off a chilly aura.

“Haha. This is indeed Edro Potion!”

Suddenly, Wizard Sammir laughed. He carefully checked the potion made by Merlin. The potion was no different than the description written in the potion formula – this was indeed Edro Potion.

However, the true effect of the potion could only be known until he had taken the potion. Wizard Sammir seemed to get extremely impatient by now, so he kept the potion and said to Merlin, “Wizard Merlin, I shall excuse myself to take this potion. After my Spell Models have stabilized, I’ll visit you to deliver my thanks again!”

After saying that, Wizard Sammir brought the Alchemy Creature with him and left rapidly.

“Hu...”

Wizard Burton and the black-robed old man both heaved a long sigh of relief. They congratulated Merlin. “Congratulations, Wizard Merlin!”

Even though they did not know what was the purpose of Merlin having the hundred years’ ice bone marrow, they realized that the item was extremely precious just by the looks of that exquisite glass container.

Merlin glanced at the hundred years’ ice bone marrow in the container, stirred with excitement. Wizard Sammir’s matter was considered to be solved at this moment. He could finally begin to make Phantasmal Magic Potion and Blueberry Potion to improve his Mind Power.

Hence, Merlin explained briefly to the black-robed old man and Wizard Burton, then returned to his room to continue the potion-making for his Mind Power.

...

After a month, a smile surfaced on Merlin’s face as he gazed upon the seven potions which he successfully prepared.

During this period, Merlin had been making potions non-stop. He had a total of twelve sets of potion materials for Phantasmal Magic Potion which resulted in four successful potions. On the other hand, he had a total of nine sets of potion materials for Blueberry Potion which resulted in three successful potions with a success rate of thirty percent!

The effect of Blueberry Potion was slightly weaker than that of Phantasmal Magic Potion, so he took the three Blueberry Potions beforehand. At once, his Mind Power surged.

However, along with the continuous usage of the same potion, the effect of increasing Mind Power also gradually weakened. However, Merlin's Mind Power still rose by a large margin.

Following that, Merlin planned his consumption of Phantasmal Magic Potions. He believed that the effect would be much stronger than Blueberry Potions.

Thus, in four days' time, Merlin took a bottle of Phantasmal Magic Potion each day and his Mind Power rose at a rapid speed. His Mind Power had almost increased by two-fold.

There was an increase in quality as well. Merlin's current Mind Power had finally reached the maximum of a Second-level. There would not be any problem for Merlin to construct Frigid Ice or Dark Light Realm.

However, if he wanted to construct Frigid Ice and Dark Light Realm at the same time, Merlin's Mind Power was still insufficient. The Mind Power needed for Dark Light Realm was simply too much. With Merlin's current Mind Power, it would be fine for him to construct the spell, but it would be difficult for him to continue constructing Frigid Ice thereafter.

Although Frigid Ice's Spell Model was complicated, the consumption of Mind Power was relatively lesser than that of Dark Light Realm. If he constructed Frigid Ice, Merlin's Mind Power could even support two more First-level spells which were relatively simple to construct.

Moreover, Merlin now possessed the hundred years' ice bone marrow. Only after he constructed Frigid Ice, he could cultivate Pandora Demon Ability with the hundred years' ice bone marrow.

Therefore, without hesitating any longer, Merlin had come to a decision. He would construct Frigid Ice first; if he had Mind Power left, he would continue to construct the Spell Models of Wind of Freedom and Thunderlight Ball.

When his Mind Power had reached the Third-level in the future, Merlin would once again consider constructing Dark Light Realm. After all, Merlin was a Six-Elemental Spell Caster. Each of his Spell Model consumed a large amount of Mind Power. Besides, Merlin's spells were all First-level

spells; the slightly complicated and stronger ones would take up a horrendous amount of Mind Power.

The case was true for Dark Light Realm since the Mind Power it consumes would be enormous. Of course, Merlin's overall ability would rise significantly if he constructed Dark Light Realm.

Merlin decided to construct Frigid Ice first, so he calmed himself and cleared his mind of chaotic thoughts. Thereafter, he immediately initiated the Matrix.

"The Matrix, begin analyzing First-level spell, Frigid Ice!"

"Beep. Mission created. Analysis begins!"

Merlin was long familiar with the process of reconstructing a brand new Spell Model by using the Matrix. Thus, with a series of instructions, Merlin finally chose the best Spell Model in terms of compatibility, stability, and power.

Hence, an extremely complicated Spell Model quickly appeared in Merlin's head.

Frigid Ice was a complicated spell to begin with. Other than Dark Light Realm, it was the most complicated spell Merlin had ever constructed amongst all other spells. Naturally, it contained immense power as well.

To construct such a complicated spell, it would be an impossible task if he did not have strong Mind Power or the compatibility was not high. Even simulating the Spell Model in his Awareness would bring him endless trouble.

Luckily, Merlin had a strong Mind Power now and could completely support the construction of such a complicated spell, Frigid Ice. Moreover, he also possessed the Spell Model with the highest compatibility as analyzed by the Matrix. The most difficult part in constructing Spell Models to ordinary Spell Casters was now a piece of cake to Merlin.

Now, he only needed to keep calm, be patient, and slowly simulate Frigid Ice's Spell Model in his Awareness.

The simulation process had gone on for a long period. Almost two days had passed when Merlin's Awareness suddenly quivered. At once, a brand new Spell Model appeared in his Awareness.

He had succeeded in constructing Frigid Ice's Spell Model!

At the same time, Merlin felt a chill down his spine. He could clearly sense that Frigid Ice's Spell Model was frantically absorbing Ice Elements externally.

Once the Spell Model had been constructed, it would automatically absorb the Elements externally and turned the Elements into Magic Power, which was stored in the Spell Model. However, the process took a long time, so Merlin used some Ice elemental crystal stones to speed up the rate of Magic Power accumulation in the Spell Model.

Following that, Merlin continued to construct the spell, Wind of Freedom.

The Mind Power needed to construct Wind of Freedom was much lesser than that of Frigid Ice. Hence, Merlin simply took less than a day to construct it. In addition, his Mind Power appeared to be able to support more spell constructions.

Finally, Merlin decided to construct Thunderlight Ball.

Thunderlight Ball's Spell Model was about the same as Wind of Freedom. The Mind Power it required was far less than that of Frigid Ice, so Merlin still took less than a day to construct Thunderlight Ball's Spell Model.

Merlin had continuously constructed three First-level spells. In his Awareness, he now possessed the First-level spells – Furious Flame, Wind of Freedom, Frigid Ice, Guardian Monument, and Thunderlight Ball!

Amongst his Six-Elemental spells, Merlin had already constructed five of them except for the last First-level spell, Dark Light Realm.

Once he successfully constructed Dark Light Realm, Merlin would become a First-level Spell Caster. He did not need to worry about getting expelled from the Dark Magic Region as he could reach the conditions of the Dark Magic Region.

However, Dark Light Realm was simply too complex and required immense Mind Power. With Merlin's little Mind Power left, he had no way of constructing Dark Light Realm, so he continued improving his Mind Power.

Merlin did a slight estimation of this matter. When his Mind Power had reached the Third-level, he could construct Dark Light Realm confidently.

For the time being, Merlin began to speed up the rate to increase Magic Power of his Spell Models with elemental crystal stones. After the Magic Power of the Spell Models could support a dozen casts at once, Merlin finally stopped utilizing the elemental crystal stones.

After all, the consumption was too much to handle if he kept increasing his Magic Power with elemental crystal stones. Meanwhile, he could release a dozen casts at once for each spell – this was sufficient to support Merlin in facing ordinary battles.

“Swoosh!”

A giant glass container suddenly appeared in Merlin's hands. In it was the hundred years' ice bone marrow he had yearned for.

“Frigid Ice is quite stable now. It's time to cultivate the Demon Ability, Glacial Finger!”

At this point in time when he was about to cultivate Glacial Finger, Merlin was overwhelmed with excitement. He was nowhere this worked up when he constructed Frigid Ice and other spells.

After a moment, Merlin took a deep breath to resume his calmness. Then, he opened the sealed lid on the glass container in a sudden motion. At once, a chilling aura leaked from the thick glass container like wisps of white smoke.

Chapter 188: Fearsome Demon Ability!

“Ka-chak.”

A chilly aura leaked from the thick glass container and created a layer of frost on the surface of the container. Even Merlin's fingers were frozen by it.

“Guardian Monument!”

Merlin was taken by surprise. He suddenly recalled that the hundred years’ ice bone marrow was a strange item; it could freeze anything once it was released.

Merlin’s finger was just slightly frozen by the chilly aura but it had already gone numb and unable to move.

After Guardian Monument had shrouded Merlin’s entire body, the chilly aura continued to spread and rapidly froze Guardian Monument as well. It was more powerful than Merlin’s Large Frost as common spells such as Guardian Monument could not stop the freezing ability of the hundred year’s ice bone marrow.

Once he realized that, Merlin quickly sealed the glass container, finally stopping the spread of the aura. For his finger, he cast Furious Flame to heat it for a long while to melt the ice crystals.

However, Merlin’s finger on his left hand was injured by the aura and he had to rest for quite some time to recover.

“Such incredible aura – hundred years’ ice bone marrow. This is the real deal!”

Merlin mumbled in a low voice. Just a wisp of its aura was already fearsome; Merlin could not imagine cultivating Glacial Finger with it.

However, before cultivating Glacial Finger, he would need to make some preparations.

Merlin first used a sharp thorn to etch some strange signs on his right-hand finger. It seemed to be an irregular hexagonal symbol. Since it was etched using a thorn, it appeared to be an obvious tattoo.

After etching this strange symbol, he had to place his Mind Power on this strange symbol according to the requirement of cultivating Glacial Finger. Merlin was skilled at using Mind Power, so he immediately placed his Mind Power on the odd symbol.

After Merlin had done it, he began to experience a strange yet indescribable sensation. He was sure that some changes had occurred to his finger due to this action.

Thereafter, Merlin cast Frigid Ice.

“Ka-chak.”

Frigid Ice rapidly froze Merlin’s finger. Different from Large Frost, Frigid Ice contained ice poison. After Merlin’s finger was frozen by Frigid Ice, the ice poison immediately spread into Merlin’s body.

However, a strange thing happened – Merlin clearly felt that the ice poison was blocked by a strange power in his finger. He inspected it carefully to find that it originated from the strange symbol that he had etched on his finger.

“This symbol... Does it have a special power like the mysterious runes?”

Merlin had studied runology in the Dark Magic Region but it was too broad and complex. Even if the Dark Magic Region was most specialized in runology, Merlin did not spend much time on the subject. At most, he knew a little of the common knowledge in runology.

This mysterious rune was slightly similar to runology but Merlin knew that this was no rune at all. It contained a special power and was an indispensable aspect in cultivating Pandora Demon Ability, Glacial Finger.

Although the ice poison of Frigid Ice could not invade Merlin’s body, the ice poison of hundred years’ ice bone marrow was more deadly than that of Frigid Ice. Thus, it was essential to use Frigid Ice for Glacial Finger to slightly counter the ice poison of the hundred years’ ice bone marrow.

After his finger was frozen by Frigid Ice, Merlin immediately opened the lid to the glass container. At once, a chilly aura leaked from it.

Merlin rapidly guided the aura to freeze his finger. The aura of the hundred years’ ice bone marrow was comparable to that of Frigid Ice, so both had to reach equilibrium and allowed the ice bone marrow to be completely absorbed into his body.

This was the cultivation process of Glacial Finger. The entire process was extremely lengthy since Merlin would have to release the chilly aura bit by bit. Every time he released the aura, he had to cast Frigid Ice a few times.

Under the effect of the special symbol, Merlin's finger gradually turned into the color of a white ice crystal. Thereafter, he had to continue his cultivation until his finger had resumed its initial color, showing that he had successfully cultivated Glacial Finger.

Of course, he would have only succeeded in the first stage of Glacial Finger. There was a succeeding second stage but that required the help of some Fourth-level spells. Merlin could not cultivate that stage in his current position.

The cultivation process of Pandora Demon Ability, Glacial Finger, took too much effort. Merlin's Mind Power was highly concentrated every day in fear that he could have overcast Frigid Ice and broke his finger. On the other hand, the aura of hundred years' ice bone marrow was too much to handle and even the ice poison of Frigid Ice could not withstand it. Hence, he had to be focused at all times and maintained the balance between the two.

One month had gone past but Merlin's finger was still in a pale white color. Neither it had not turned into the color of ice crystals, nor had it resumed its initial color. If he wanted to cultivate Glacial Finger, he would need another one or two months.

However, Merlin had already stopped his cultivation. There was still a large chunk of hundred years' ice bone marrow left. If he released only a little of its aura every day, the volume of the item in the glass container would not decrease so drastically.

Instead, the consumption of Magic Power in Merlin's Frigid Ice had taken a toll on him. It was not adequate to simply rely on the recovery rate of the Spell Model, so Merlin used elemental crystal stones to replenish his Magic Power.

Hence, the Ice elemental crystal stones in Merlin's ring had depleted after this month. Merlin could no longer replenish his Magic Power by using the elemental crystal stones, so he had no choice but to stop.

"It's been two months. The Alkaline Earth Potions at Wizard Vladi's place should be sold out by now. I may receive an abundance of elemental crystal stones from the sale."

Merlin kept the hundred years' ice bone marrow in his ring and glanced at his stiffened finger. Merlin then reached out his hand and pointed his finger at a decayed pinewood on the ground.

“Pandora Demon Ability, Glacial Finger!”

Soon after he finished his words, a wisp of translucent chilly aura appeared from the pinewood on the ground. The wood was directly frozen.

“Ka-chak.”

Merlin lightly touched it and the frozen pinewood broke into smithereens along with the ice crystal.

Merlin took a deep breath; he was overwhelmed with shock. If that was a person, the person would suffer the same fate as the pinewood.

“Such fearsome ability, Glacial Finger. Who knows how much stronger this is than Frigid Ice? In addition, I haven't finished cultivating it. Should I finish the cultivation, how terrifying can this ability be?”

Merlin muttered and stared unbelievably at his finger that had changed its color completely. Although he had expected that Glacial Finger would be extremely powerful, he was surprised at the strength shown by the unperfected ability.

“Let's test it more. Earth Guard!”

Merlin directly cast Earth Guard and an earth wall immediately appeared out of thin air. Merlin pointed his finger at the earth wall again.

“Ka-chak.”

Without surprise, the earth wall was frozen by the aura and was blasted into pieces.

“Guardian Monument!”

Merlin once again cast his First-level spell, Guardian Monument. When he used Glacial Finger once more, it was effective; Guardian Monument was frozen completely and directly broken into pieces.

“Glacial Finger actually uses the Magic Power in Frost and in Frigid Ice?”

Merlin soon realized that he appeared to consume a large amount of Magic Power every time he cast Glacial finger. Moreover, only the Magic Power in the Spell Models of Frost and Frigid Ice would decrease, showing that Glacial Finger only consumed the Magic Power accumulated from Ice Elements.

An ordinary Guardian Monument could not stand against the freezing effect of Glacial Finger at all. Merlin tried to increase the strength of his Defensive spell, so he cast the strengthened version of Guardian Monument.

At once, six gigantic monuments showed up in mid-air, brimming with bright light. This was the strengthened version of Guardian Monument and was infinitely similar to a Second-level spell.

“Pandora Demon Ability, Glacial Finger!”

Merlin only pointed at the monuments. Instantaneously, Guardian Monument was frozen and blasted into pieces, turning into spots of light.

Even the strengthened version of Guardian Monument could not block the freezing effect of Glacial Finger. Upon realizing this, Merlin’s expression gradually turned grim.

“Guardian Monument!”

This time, Merlin cast the strengthened version of Guardian Monument via his Enhancing casting tool. This was currently Merlin’s strongest Defensive spell.

With the enhanced effect of his Enhancing casting tool, the defensive ability of Guardian Monument came close to that of a Third-level Defensive spell.

“Pandora Demon Ability, Glacial Finger!”

Merlin cast Glacial Finger again. Merlin put his entire effort into this cast – he clearly sensed that the Magic Power in Frigid Ice and Frost was immediately cut down by half.

However, Merlin could still take the impact after spending so much Magic Power.

“Ka-chak.”

It took a slightly longer time to freeze Guardian Monument that came close to Third-level spell. In the end, it was still frozen and blasted into pieces.

“Not even Third-level Defensive spell can block it?”

Merlin’s expression turned dark this time. He was taken aback by extreme shock. He had cast Guardian Monument with Enhancing casting tool. Even Wizard Sammir was unable to break through it but Merlin’s Glacial Finger could directly break it.

Moreover, this was the unperfected Glacial Finger. To have such fearsome effect at this point, how terrifying would it be once it was perfected?

“Pandora Demon Ability... It’s indeed similar to a demon’s ability where it doesn’t belong to a human. Most of the Spell Casters don’t even have such powerful ability.”

Merlin mumbled. He understood it clearly now; the Glacial Finger he obtained by chance was a fearsome ability. That was the reason it was called Pandora Demon Ability, a strong power that induced fear even in the heart of Spell Casters!

Chapter 189: An Ancient Monument

Merlin lowered his head and watched his finger turned into a faint white. His mind rushed with many thoughts.

Glacial Finger was truly powerful but it was not easy to cultivate. One had to meet many conditions beforehand. Wizard Heghar had reached Glacial Finger for a long time now but he was still unable to fully cultivate the spell. The main reason was that he was already a First-level Spell Caster when he first cultivated Glacial Finger.

However, Wizard Heghar had not even constructed Frigid Ice. Furthermore, he was not as fortunate as Merlin, who was able to retrieve the hundred years' ice bone marrow.

In order to cultivate Glacial Finger, he would first have to construct the very complicated First-level spell, Frigid Ice. Then, he would have to obtain the precious hundred years' bone marrow. Only then, he was able to meet the conditions to cultivate Glacial Finger.

Due to a string of lucky coincidences, Merlin was able to cultivate Glacial Finger.

Soon, Merlin walked out of the house. Cultivating Glacial Finger would require an extreme amount of Magic Power and furthermore, he had very few Ice-type elemental crystal stones left. His only option was to visit Wizard Vladi.

...

"Wizard Vladi!"

Merlin, who was dressed in a loose black robe, shouted as he reached Wizard Vladi's house.

"Oh."

The large doors burst open. Wizard Vladi popped his head outside and upon seeing Merlin, gave a wide grin. He warmly invited Merlin in and whispered, "Wizard Merlin, who would have thought that even Wizard Sammir couldn't help you..."

Merlin realized from Wizard Vladi's shocked expression that Wizard Vladi surely knew Wizard Sammir had looked for him. As he wanted to play it safe, Wizard Vladi did not intervene.

Even if he did intervene, it would not have helped Merlin very much.

Merlin did not think much about the incident and instead said to Wizard Vladi, "I haven't been back in two months. How's Alkaline Earth Potion selling?"

Wizard Vladi nodded. “Even though not many were sold in the past two months, the Alkaline Earth Potion you’ve prepared has sold out. Deducting the material costs, we’ve made a profit of six thousand eight hundred and fifty elemental crystal stones.”

Once he finished speaking, Wizard Vladi took out over six thousand elemental crystal stones from his ring.

Merlin nodded lightly. Most of the elemental crystals stones were Earth-type, and what Merlin needed were Ice-type elemental crystal stones.

Hence, Merlin asked Wizard Vladi, “Is it possible to exchange these elemental crystal stones to Ice-type elemental crystal stones?”

“Ice-type elemental crystal stones? Wait here a minute, let me see how many of those I have.”

After searching for a moment, Wizard Vladi looked up and said, “I only have five thousand Ice-type elemental crystal stones, is that enough? If it isn’t enough, I can exchange them at Sterling House. It would only take out a small percentage of interest, and you could exchange all of it to Ice-type elemental crystal stones.”

There were many types of elemental crystal stones. Excluding the Dark Light-type elemental crystal stones, which were worth a little less, the other types were worth more or less the same hence they could be exchanged easily.

“Five thousand Ice-type elemental crystal stones should be enough, there’s no need to exchange the others.”

Merlin asked Wizard Vladi to take out the five thousand Ice-type elemental crystal stones and placed them in his ring.

Wizard Vladi then asked Merlin, “Wizard Merlin, there’s still a demand for Alkaline Earth Potion, just not as much as before. If you have the time, perhaps you can prepare more of it.”

Merlin hesitated for a moment. He had recently tried his best to cultivate Pandora Demon Ability, Glacial Finger and did not have enough Mind Power to prepare more Alkaline Earth Potion. So, he shook his head and said, “I’ve been very busy lately, but let me see if I can prepare more Alkaline Earth Potion.”

Wizard Vladi's expression showed a hint of regret but did not continue to ask.

So, Merlin turned to leave Wizard Vladi's courtyard.

Merlin had not walked very far. He had only reached Wizard Burton's courtyard when he noticed a familiar figure.

"Wizard Sammir?"

Merlin furrowed his eyebrows as he called out to the figure.

Immediately, the Alchemy Creature on Wizard Sammir's back turned around and stared intensely at Merlin. Wizard Sammir looked delighted as he saw Merlin.

"Wizard Merlin, how wonderful. I was just looking for you."

Wizard Sammir's face had a rosy complexion and looked much younger than before. However, Merlin knew this was his illusion. In fact, it seemed that Wizard Sammir had very powerful Mind Power. It was clear that the Edro Potion he had prepared had the ability to stabilize Wizard Sammir's Spell Models.

"Wizard Sammir, how's the effect of Edro Potion?"

Merlin, too, had consumed Edro Potion but he was still unsure what the effects were.

As soon as he mentioned Edro Potion, Wizard Sammir's face lit up. "Edro Potion has had great effects. All my Spell Models have been stabilized. However, I do have doubts. I accidentally found this portion of Edro Potion in an ancient monument, and even though it has truly helped to stabilize the unstable Spell Models in my Awareness, it doesn't completely eradicate the hidden dangers of the Spell Models."

Merlin shook his head. In order to completely eradicate the hidden dangers of the Spell Models, one would have to carefully reconstruct the Spell Models anew. Otherwise, even the best potions would not work.

It was just like the black-robed old man, who used Purple Stone Powder Potion to temporarily stabilize his Spell Models. Without completely reconstructing the Spell Models, he would never be able to become a First-level Spell Caster.

In the case of the black-robed old man's Purple Stone Powder Potion, he would always have to consume many portions of the potion before his Spell Models were stabilized. However, Wizard Sammir only required one portion of Edro Potion before he felt its effects.

Hence, in Merlin's opinion, it was good news that the potion could stabilize the Spell Models in his Awareness. However, he could not believe that there was not a single potion in the world that could completely eradicate unstable Spell Models, and if that was true, how cautious could other Spell Casters construct their Spell Models?

However, it seemed that Wizard Sammir was not always glad to be a Third-level Spell Caster. His eyes had an abnormal stare as he deepened his voice and said mysteriously, "Wizard Merlin, you have the strength of a Third-level Spell Caster, not to mention you're also very good at preparing potions. If I ever need to find any potions in the future, I'll look no further than you. So, I would like to offer you a brilliant opportunity. If you accept, you could receive rewards beyond your imagination."

"What opportunity?"

Merlin saw how mysterious Wizard Sammir was and felt intrigued.

"An extremely ancient monument – if I'm not wrong, it was left behind from the Molta Empire over three thousand six hundred years ago."

"An ancient monument from the Molta Empire?"

Merlin's expression changed slightly. The Molta Empire was recognized as the era where Spell Casters were at their peak. During that period, there were many powerful Spell Casters, be it potions, runology, or alchemy. A new level of excellence was developed in this era.

However, as the Molta Empire collapsed overnight, the powerful Spell Casters seemed to have disappeared, leaving only a few mentions in ancient books. It was truly a historical mystery.

Some of these ancient monuments were established in the Molta Empire by powerful Spell Casters. You would often find ancient potion formulas, alchemy methods, peculiar spells, casting tools, and more.

As soon as an ancient monument was discovered, it would immediately attract the attention of many Spell Casters.

Wizard Sammir saw Merlin's change in expression and smiled. "I knew you wouldn't object to an ancient monument from the Molta Empire. I shall bring you to meet a couple of my old friends, and we'll all go to the ancient monument together. I just need to mention a personal condition. I'm only looking for potions to stabilize Spell Models and potion formulas. You can have everything else we find."

"Why would you want me to come with you?"

Merlin was unsure and hesitated before he asked.

Wizard Sammir was not secretive, and instead openly replied, "It's simple. I want a knowledgeable apothecary and a powerful Spell Caster. In Floating City, there's only you who fits the criteria."

Many thoughts ran through Merlin's mind as he carefully analyzed Wizard Sammir's words.

From what Wizard Sammir had said, it seemed that he still had not given up the idea of completely eradicating the dangers of an unstable Spell Model and wanted to search for the solution in the ancient monument. After all, Edro Potion was accidentally found in an ancient monument hence Wizard Sammir was not ready to give up the opportunity to search the ancient monument.

It was because Merlin was a skilled apothecary and had the strength of a Third-level Spell Caster that he was chosen by Wizard Sammir to come along and enter the ancient monument.

Finally, Merlin asked, "Wizard Sammir, is there any danger entering this ancient monument?"

"Hehe, the ancient monuments were built thousands of years ago by the ancient powerful Spell Casters. No one truly knows the dangers that lie within but the rewards are greater than the risks. If you're too worried, you may pass on this opportunity. However, it would be such a shame."

Wizard Sammir stopped talking and waited for Merlin's final decision.

"The Molta Empire is the golden age for Spell Casters. Since it's an ancient monument that has been discovered, why wouldn't I go?"

Merlin looked up with a smile.

The ancient monument could be very dangerous but Glacial Finger which Merlin had constructed was already very powerful. Merlin was entirely comparable to a Third-level Spell Caster. If the ancient monument really was dangerous, he knew he could protect himself.

Hence, this was the real reason Merlin agreed to go to the ancient monument with Wizard Sammir. Otherwise, it would be a pity to pass on the chance to enter a Molta Empire ancient monument.

"Haha, relax, Wizard Merlin. I've entered many ancient monuments before, I don't think this one will be too dangerous. I'll introduce you to a couple of my friends and then we shall enter the ancient monument together."

Wizard Sammir finished speaking and led the way as Merlin nodded his head and followed behind.

Chapter 190: One Strike

After a few corners and turns, Merlin had followed Wizard Sammir into a small alley. On the right side was a small door – this was Wizard Sammir's residence.

Merlin looked around the small courtyard. It would take quite a long time for anyone to find this hidden place, which was enough to show that Wizard Sammir was, in fact, a very cautious person.

They walked through the courtyard and came to a long bluestone corridor, which led to the living room. Although Wizard Sammir's home was hidden, it was very spacious.

"Wizard Merlin, please, come and meet my old friends in the living room."

Wizard Sammir said with a smile as he ushered Merlin in.

Merlin nodded and as he walked into the living room, he noticed three Spell Casters sitting on the left side of the room.

The three Spell Casters wore black robes. One of them, in particular, had only one eye and a big bald head. He had a husky build and looked more like a fierce thug than a powerful Spell Caster.

“Hey, Sammir, is this the one you made us wait for?” The bald, one-eyed Spell Caster sneered.

Merlin felt fierce Mind Power from the three Spell Casters directed at him as soon as he walked into the room. He frowned slightly as it was extremely rude to be immediately judged and examined through Mind Power.

Oftentimes, actions like these could lead to a battle between two Spell Casters. However, the three Spell Casters, all Third-level, knew Merlin was no more than an Entrance-level Spell Caster. Even if Wizard Sammir had mentioned that Merlin could resist his attacks, the three Spell Casters were still very suspicious.

Wizard Sammir nodded and said, “Yes, this is Wizard Merlin. Wizard Merlin, allow me to introduce Wizard DeMarco, a Third-level Spell Caster!”

Wizard DeMarco was the name of the bald, one-eyed Spell Caster. When he saw Merlin, he gave a disapproving look and sat back down in a huff.

Merlin nodded lightly in acknowledgment as Wizard Sammir gestured to another Spell Caster, who had fair skin and looked like he was in his mid-thirties. “This is Wizard Bren. Wizard Merlin, you have very high attainments in potions, however, Wizard Bren has high attainments in alchemy. He even owns two Alchemy Creatures!”

Wizard Sammir said as he kept a strange look in his eyes. Merlin followed his gaze and noticed two Alchemy Creatures next to Wizard Bren.

However, these Alchemy Creatures were both extremely beautiful and sexy women. One of which even laid in the arms of Wizard Bren.

Merlin shook his head in his heart. These alchemists were always so strange.

It would be true that Wizard Bren held high attainments in alchemy as most alchemists only had one Alchemy Creature, but Wizard Bren had two. Some questionable handling would have gone into play as even Wizard Sammir only had one Alchemy Creature.

Unsurprisingly Wizard Sammir gave a strange look when he introduced Wizard Bren.

Merlin nodded his head and Wizard Sammir introduced the final Spell Caster. “This is Wizard Riesen.”

Wizard Riesen looked like a Third-level Spell Caster and seemed the most ordinary amongst the Spell Casters. He smiled and nodded lightly at Merlin.

The three Spell Casters that Wizard Sammir had introduced were all Third-level Spell Casters. They had all formed a temporary coalition in the interest of preparing and entering an ancient monument with Wizard Sammir.

“Hehe, Sammir says that you’re a Third-level Spell Caster, but I don’t believe it! However, little guy, if you can resist just one of my attacks and show us your strength, I’ll agree to let you join us. Otherwise, it would be useless to just take Sammir’s word for it and let you join.”

The bald, one-eyed Spell Caster, Wizard DeMarco, suddenly declared as he gave Merlin a sinister stare.

Merlin glanced at Wizard Sammir, who was expressionless as he stood aside. It seemed that this had already been discussed between them. Otherwise, they would not have even agreed to let Merlin join.

“Fine!”

Merlin’s expression was calm and his voice full of confidence.

“Haha, Sammir, would you look at that! You’ve left this poor Entrance-level Spell Caster helpless, it’s ridiculous! Eye of the Storm!”

Wizard DeMarco mocked him and as his eyebrow twitched, a dramatic gust of Wind Element floated out from his body. Suddenly, a strong gust of wind appeared out of thin air.

The wind was whirling non-stop and a faint but visible eye was forming in the middle of it. The gust of wind whirled with incredible speed. It would be horrific to be strangled to death by it.

This was a Third-level spell but it was not Third-level spells that Merlin valued recently. Wizard DeMarco's Eye of the Storm was only restricted to a small area and had not destroyed the rest of the living room yet. This meant that Wizard DeMarco had terrific control of his spell; this was something that even Merlin could not do.

DeMarco, who looked more like a thug than a Spell Caster, had left Merlin in an awkward position. His incredible control would also mean that he had strong Mind Power as well. Otherwise, he would not have been able to control such a powerful spell.

"Guardian Monument!"

Merlin cast his spell in succession and placed three layers of the protective net in front of him. Finally, he used an Enhancing casting tool to cast a strengthened version of Guardian Monument, which could match that of a Defensive Third-level spell.

"Crackle! Crackle! Crackle!"

The three common versions of Guardian Monument stood no chance against Eye of the Storm and were instantly struck down, leaving only Merlin's final line of defense.

However, his last spell, the strengthened version of Guardian Monument was comparable to that of a Defensive Third-level spell, and although Eye of the Storm was powerful, it could not destroy Merlin's final spell.

Hence, Merlin was safe from Eye of the Storm.

"Sure enough, it's an Enhancing casting tool!"

Merlin was able to cast the First-level spell, Guardian Monument and even released the strength of a Third-level spell. DeMarco and the other Spell Casters revealed some intrigue.

Wizard DeMarco shouted loudly, his face hid no greed.

He exchanged glances with Wizard Sammir, with slight fear in his eyes before finally breaking off Eye of the Storm. “Not bad but you’re relying on an Enhancing casting tool. You’ve barely qualified to join us in entering the ancient monument.”

Wizard DeMarco was a greedy Spell Caster. His eyes could not hide his interest in Merlin’s Enhancing casting tool. Perhaps Wizard Sammir had warned him before, and hence DeMarco ceased fire.

“Well, why don’t we discuss how we plan on entering the ancient monument?”

Wizard DeMarco asked the others without even looking at Merlin.

Everyone directed their attention to Wizard Sammir. It was clear that they thought it was best that he oversaw this crusade and allowed him to make any suggestions on how to enter the ancient monument.

“Wizard DeMarco, I just blocked one of your attacks and you don’t even dare to take one of mine?”

Suddenly, Merlin raised his head fiercely and asked in a deep voice.

“Huh? Are you challenging me, little guy?”

Wizard DeMarco squinted slightly, and although his tone was calm, everyone could tell that he was now angry.

“Wizard Merlin, even I’m afraid of Wizard DeMarco’s strength. You shouldn’t take what just happened to heart. Wizard DeMarco was just testing your strength. He did not mean to be malicious.”

Wizard Sammir’s expression changed slightly as he explained hurriedly to Merlin.

“Wizard DeMarco, do you not dare to take on my attack?”

Merlin's tone was still calm and did not heed the persuasion of Wizard Sammir.

"Take on your attack? Hehe, do you really think you stand a chance against a Third-level Spell Caster, little guy? Unlike Wizard Sammir, my darling is too fast, and you won't be able to escape even if you tried."

Wizard DeMarco said with a menacing tone. Immediately, the weak-bodied Alchemy Creature on his back transformed and suddenly appeared before Merlin. It waved its sharp fists as it advanced toward Merlin.

"Stop, Wizard DeMarco!"

Wizard Sammir saw DeMarco's Alchemy Creature advanced and allowed his own Alchemy Creature to come forward and defended Merlin from its attack.

However, DeMarco's Alchemy Creature was too quick. Wizard Sammir's Alchemy Creature could not react in time and he could only watch as Merlin drowned in its quick attacks.

"Hehe, he asked for it, Wizard Sammir. If he wanted to provoke me, he should've been prepared for the consequences."

Fire Element began to seep through DeMarco's body. He was getting ready to cast his most powerful Offensive spell, one that would surely kill Merlin.

DeMarco's intention was to kill and this was clear from the start. Unlike Wizard Sammir, who needed Merlin to help him prepare potions, DeMarco was only interested in the powerful Enhancing casting tool that Merlin possessed.

Merlin was trapped by the Alchemy Creatures' ceaseless blows, not to mention DeMarco's preparation for his powerful attack. Although Merlin's Guardian Monument could resist, it would not be enough. Merlin would unquestionably be killed.

Wizard DeMarco had absolute self-confidence. Sammir would not be fast enough to escape if he resisted the attack and allowed Merlin to flee. Once DeMarco cast his attack, it would be like a violent storm – the formidable attack would never give Merlin enough time to escape.

“Demon Ability, Glacial Finger!”

Just like that, the shadow beneath the Alchemy Creature let out a cold yet calm voice.

“Crackle!”

The once fierce Alchemy Creature was now covered in ice crystals, which were already slowly beginning to crack. Instantly, the Alchemy Creature shattered into a million pieces as it fell to the ground.

“Is this...?”

The fierce Alchemy Creature had completely disappeared without even a trace of blood. Besides the pieces of ice on the floor, everything was still very clean. However, the looks on the three Spell Caster’s faces had completely changed.

Especially Wizard DeMarco, who stared at Merlin with a terrified look in his eyes.

“Wizard DeMarco, I said just one strike!”

Merlin let out a slight smile as he slowly extended his finger and gently pointed at Wizard DeMarco.