

W. Secret 201

Chapter 201: Secret Passage

Merlin cast five strengthened Thunderlight Balls consecutively and was finally able to wipe out all of the patterned spiders in the room, which emitted a pervading burnt smell.

These patterned spiders were clearly no Elemental Monsters but strange creatures of flesh and blood. Even Wizard Sammir, who was widely experienced, did not know what these patterned spiders really were.

“In this ancient monument, we have to be careful. If it wasn’t for Wizard Merlin earlier, we would’ve been in trouble.”

Wizard Bren spoke in a solemn tone. Although he had two Alchemy Creatures and was able to kill patterned spiders as well, the number of patterned spiders was overwhelming. Wizard Bren and the others did not have large-scale Offensive spells. Therefore, other than painstakingly killing the spiders, their only option would be to force their way out of the crowd of spiders surrounding them.

However, either course of action would have wasted a lot of time. At that point, it would be difficult to predict what other dangers would appear in the depths of the ancient monument.

There were a few more flasks on the stone tables but Wizard Sammir and the others did not dare to open any of them. Perhaps they contained more patterned spiders, which would only cause more trouble.

“Come on, let’s continue our way down.”

Thus, Merlin and the others speedily headed downward. This ancient monument was a tower. They were currently in the middle of the sixth floor – there were five more floors below.

Having encountered those patterned spiders from before, Wizard Sammir was evidently more cautious as he headed downward. Still, they met more of those spiders on the fifth, fourth, and third floors.

Moreover, these patterned spiders were strong and capable. At the start, each spider only had a small build but after being attacked, their bodies would immediately swell and their strength subsequently became greater as well.

Fortunately, Wizard Sammir and the others had already developed a solid coordination. Their Third-level Binding spells would be used to restrict the movements of the patterned spiders, after which Merlin would cast Thunderlight Ball.

Therefore, despite running into danger a few times, they managed to get past these obstacles safely.

Now, they had finally reached the second floor of the ancient tower.

“We’re already at the second floor. Look, this room also contains the mysterious symbols and equipment for potion-making. Hmm? There are even spells here?”

Suddenly, Wizard Sammir came across a spacious room in the middle of the second floor. Delicate glassware, as well as books which seemed to be falling apart, were set out all around the room.

Someone seemed to have flipped through the books before casting them onto the ground but Wizard Sammir and Wizard Bren were still overjoyed at the sight.

“Potions, these are all potions!”

At each floor of the ancient tower, Wizard Sammir would not give up on searching for potions. Furthermore, they had gradually realized that it had not been just one Spell Caster who resided in this tower, but many Spell Casters.

Therefore, almost every floor had its own potion-making room. Only those rooms were either completely empty or were like the sixth floor, housing multitudes of patterned spiders.

It was only in this room of the second floor that Wizard Sammir had discovered actual potions. The potions were stored in transparent glassware and were visible at a glance. The abundance of potions here required Wizard Sammir's analysis, one after another.

Wizard Sammir was interested in the potions whereas Wizard Bren paying attention to the opened books lying on the ground. Some unique spells had been recorded inside those books, which made Wizard Bren very excited. His main purpose for coming to the ancient monument was to search for spells.

Looking at the numerous volumes of spell books, Merlin was just about to flip through them as well when he was called by Wizard Riesen. Wizard Riesen said in a low voice, "Wizard Merlin, this is already the second floor. In general, the obstacles in the ancient tower had been cleared, so we no longer need Sammir and Bren. Come on, the mysterious Pandora Demon Ability of the ancient tower is on the first floor, and I know its specific location!"

Merlin stopped in his tracks as a passion burned in his heart. Pandora Demon Ability – he had been able to personally experience the power of Pandora Demon Ability, so even if he already had Glacial Finger, Merlin still wanted more of Pandora Demon Ability.

"Alright, we'll think of a reason to leave Wizard Sammir and Wizard Bren for now."

Following that, Merlin turned around and went toward Wizard Sammir.

"Wizard Sammir, Wizard Riesen and I will have a look around other places."

Merlin came to where Wizard Sammir was facing and said in a soft voice.

Wizard Sammir lifted his head and glanced at Wizard Riesen, after which he nodded. "Sure, but be careful. Wizard Bren and I had each found what we wanted, so the both of you can search other areas. Later, we'll gather here again and head toward the first floor together."

Wizard Sammir and Wizard Bren who were engrossed in potions and various spells did not suspect anything. After all, both of them had already fulfilled their goals for coming here.

"Let's go, Wizard Riesen!"

Merlin turned around, and together with Wizard Riesen, they quietly left the second floor of the tower.

After walking for a distance, Merlin asked Wizard Riesen, “Throughout this journey, we’ve bumped into many patterned spiders which posed a huge danger. How did you manage to reach the first floor the last time you were here?”

Wizard Riesen had mentioned that he had been to this ancient monument and that he knew the exact location where Pandora Demon Ability was stored. This made Merlin skeptical; during Wizard Riesen’s first time entering the ancient monument, how did he reach the first floor?

“Wizard Merlin, the last time I was here, I was only able to get to the first floor because I was lucky. However, on my way back, I ran into those patterned spiders and was barely able to escape with my life. That’s why this time around I invited Wizard Sammir, Wizard Bren, and Wizard DeMarco to enter the ancient monument with me.”

Wizard Riesen did not try to cover up anything as he replied in a low voice.

Merlin nodded – Wizard Riesen had made his meaning clear. He was taking advantage of Wizard Sammir and the others to help clear the way for him, eliminating the various obstacles that led to the first floor of the ancient monument.

“What if Wizard Sammir and Wizard Bren had insisted on coming with us to the first floor?”

Merlin narrowed his eyes as he slowed down his steps, and asked softly.

Wizard Riesen stopped as well and turned around with a cold smile on his face. “If they had insisted on following us, I think that with the power of Wizard Merlin’s Demon Ability and along with my own moves, Sammir and Bren don’t stand a chance of winning at all.”

Merlin’s heart trembled slightly. Riesen was thinking of killing Wizard Sammir and Wizard Bren just to prevent the secret of Pandora Demon Ability from being divulged.

Therefore, Merlin became even more cautious when it came to Wizard Riesen.

“Wizard Merlin, this is a secret passage which will lead you straight to the first floor of the ancient tower, the place where Pandora Demon Ability is stored. However, I’m afraid that there might be trouble. If that time comes, we’ll need the help of your Pandora Demon Ability.”

Wizard Riesen suddenly pointed to a pitch-dark, narrow passage before them, and said in a grave tone.

Merlin nodded – he had heard Wizard Riesen speak about this before. In the middle of the ancient monument, at the place where Pandora Demon Ability was stored, there would be a powerful “guardian”.

However, Merlin was not clear exactly what this “guardian” was.

Wizard Riesen led the way and walked into the secret passage, with Merlin following close behind.

...

In the ancient monument, Wizard Glen had led Elena and Wizard Ken to stealthily enter the tower. As they walked, they also carefully looked for the footprints of Wizard Sammir and the others.

Wizard Glen knew very well that only by following behind Wizard Sammir and the others, they would be safe within the ancient monument. However, they did not dare to follow too closely, otherwise, they would attract the attention of Wizard Sammir’s group.

“These corpses all belong to Spell Casters!”

“And these patterned spiders, their bodies are enormous!”

Wizard Glen came to a room in the middle of the tower. They noticed the corpses of Spell Casters disfigured beyond recognition on the ground, as well as the scorched, stinking bodies of patterned spiders.

“Let’s go, let’s go. It’s too dangerous here, and it’s very likely that Wizard Sammir and the others had a great battle here.”

Looking at the floor packed densely with corpses, Wizard Glen was shocked to the core. This meant that danger lurked in the ancient monument indeed. If they did not trace the footprints of Wizard Sammir's group and rushed about aimlessly, they would be in a perilous situation.

"Watch out!"

All of a sudden, a huge patterned spider with the size of a washbasin dashed out from a corner of the room. Elena and Ken immediately cast their spells, which landed squarely on the patterned spider.

The patterned spider flew backward from the attack, but right after, it began swaying its way forward once more.

"First-level spells are of no use at all..."

Wizard Glen's face changed slightly. He attacked next, and an icicle pierced through the body of the spider. After all, Wizard Glen was a Second-level Spell Caster, and that spell was a Second-level spell, which was just enough to kill the patterned spider.

However, as he arrived at the thought that there may be more than one patterned spider hidden here, Wizard Glen's heart began palpitating, and he quickly urged the other two, "Leave this place now."

Thus, Wizard Glen swiftly headed for the lower floors of the ancient tower.

The fifth floor, the fourth floor, the third floor...

Wizard Glen meticulously traced the trail left behind by Wizard Sammir, and finally reached the second floor safely. However, here, they lost the footprints of Wizard Sammir's group.

"This is the second floor. Let's go, the first floor is right below. Wizard Sammir and the others are very likely on the first floor. Perhaps below there lies some treasure left behind by the master of the tower three thousand and six hundred years ago."

Wizard Glen could not help feeling somewhat excited as he thought of this, so he brought Elena and Ken as they quickly descended toward the first floor. However, they did not discover the secret

passage that Merlin and Wizard Riesen had used but instead entered the first floor through the normal pathway of the ancient tower.

“Hmm? There’s someone on the first floor?”

Wizard Glen, who had cautiously arrived at the first floor of the tower, suddenly discovered that there were already four or five Spell Casters there, and he could vaguely hear their conversation.

Through these noises, Wizard Glen determined that these were the Spell Casters who had entered the ancient monument long before them.

“Tsk.”

Wizard Glen, who had initially crept onto the first floor quietly, suddenly saw that in the darkness behind him was a patterned spider which had appeared unknowingly. Furthermore, this spider was rapidly spitting out its white silk.

Wizard Glen instinctively cast a Second-level spell and killed the patterned spider instantly. However, the fierce Elemental fluctuations had startled the Spell Casters on the first floor.

“Who is it? Show yourself!”

A cold, reproaching voice rang out. At the same time, four or five pairs of sharp eyes locked onto the hiding place of Wizard Glen and the others.

Chapter 202: Guardian Puppet

Deep in the passage, it was so dark that one would not even be able to see one’s own hand. However, Merlin was probing his surroundings with his Mind Power at all times, so even though it was pitch-black all around, he was still able to “see” everything.

In front of Merlin, Wizard Riesen was practically on all fours as he cautiously moved forward. His Alchemy Creature was following behind him.

Merlin knew very well that Wizard Riesen was also guarding against him. Otherwise, if Merlin had wanted to kill Wizard Riesen in such a dark, narrow passage, Wizard Riesen would have no way of defending himself without the protection of his Alchemy Creature.

“We’re here!”

Wizard Riesen gradually slowed down his steps. He turned around and said to Merlin in a low voice, “Wizard Merlin, don’t use your Mind Power to probe ahead or you might startle the guardian.”

Merlin nodded. He followed Wizard Riesen’s gaze – there was, in fact, a glimmer of light outside the pitch-black passage. The light came from giant pearls embedded into the white spotless wall, which illuminated the expanse of the wall.

Moreover, at the large doorway of the wall, a mysterious, three-meter-tall “guardian”, covered in a pitch-black armor, stood guard. This “guardian” caused Wizard Riesen constant apprehension. Previously, he had been stopped by this “guardian”, and if he had not escaped when he had the chance, he would have long been dead.

Merlin furrowed his brow. He could not perceive any life force in this “guardian”. Although he was interested in the Pandora Demon Ability that Wizard Riesen had mentioned, he would not make any rash moves without first understanding the situation.

“Wizard Riesen, tell me about this ‘guardian’. Surely you must know something about him?”

Merlin gave Wizard Riesen a meaningful look as he asked softly.

Wizard Riesen gave a slight smile. “Of course I know something about this guardian. After all, I was almost killed by it the last time. To tell the truth, I had to abandon an Alchemy Creature as well as a few hard-earned casting tools in order to escape. This ‘guardian’ must be a puppet transfigured by alchemists three thousand and six hundred years ago during the golden age of alchemy.”

“Puppet? It’s been three thousand and six hundred years, and this puppet still has such incredible strength?”

Merlin had been in the Dark Magic Region and knew that a long time ago, ancient Spell Casters were able to transfigure these marvelous puppets. However, most of the puppets did not usually live

for long, and they required a large number of elemental crystal stones to function, causing much inconvenience.

However, if this “guardian” before them was indeed a puppet, it was a puppet that still had great strength three thousand and six hundred years later. From this, they could tell that the previous master of the ancient tower was extremely powerful.

Wizard Riesen nodded his head gravely. “That’s right, I dare say that this ‘guardian’ must be a puppet. It has no life force whatsoever. What else could it be besides a puppet? It’s wearing a black armor, which must be a superb product of alchemy as well. It has incredible defensive capabilities – my Third-level Offensive spell was only able to leave slight scratches on the armor.”

Merlin was shocked. Wizard Riesen’s Third-level spell could only leave scratches on this “guardian” puppet. What possible use could his Glacial Finger serve?

As he thought of this, Merlin’s face revealed a shadow of doubt. Even though obtaining Pandora Demon Ability was tempting, if he insisted on rushing ahead despite knowing the futility of the situation, he was basically courting death.

As if he understood Merlin’s feelings, Wizard Riesen reassured in a low voice, “Wizard Merlin, don’t worry. Although this guardian puppet has a great defense, it has been in this tower for three thousand and six hundred years after all. Even if it had a large number of elemental crystal stones, how long could it last? What’s more, I know the weaknesses of this guardian puppet – the armor it is wearing is most susceptible to Ice-type spells. Perhaps it may somewhat withstand most Third-level Ice-type spells but your Demon Ability is of maximum coldness. I believe that it would be surprisingly effective and inflict serious damage on this puppet.”

After a pause, Wizard Riesen seemed to be in brighter spirits as he said, “Wizard Merlin, once we get past this guardian puppet, we’ll be able to open the door behind it. Pandora Demon Ability is very likely hidden behind that doorway!”

“Pandora Demon Ability!”

Merlin muttered to himself for a moment, thinking that he had already constructed “Wind of Freedom” so if he was unable to defeat this puppet in the end, he could easily escape from danger.

With this in mind, Merlin nodded as he made up his mind. His eyes did not leave the motionless guardian puppet as he spoke softly, “Wizard Riesen, let’s go. The sooner we deal with this guardian, the sooner we’ll obtain Pandora Demon Ability in the ancient monument.”

Seeing that Merlin had agreed, Wizard Riesen revealed a gleeful expression. Carefully and slowly, he and Merlin moved from the dark passage and approached the guardian puppet.

“Snap!”

Suddenly, the motionless and hollow eyes of the guardian puppet flickered with a green light. Soon, the gaze of the guardian puppet turned to the pitch-black passage before it.

“We’ve been discovered. This guardian puppet is really amazing! Wizard Merlin, make your move, kill it!”

As Wizard Riesen stared at the towering guardian puppet, his face became wild. He waved a hand and a burst of flame filled the dark passage and quickly shot toward the guardian puppet. His Alchemy Creature also let out a huge roar as muscles all over its body twisted and bulged, embodying its heart-pounding strength as it sprinted ferociously toward the guardian puppet.

The guardian puppet did not pull back in the slightest even though the black armor on its body seemed exceedingly heavy. With every move, it made a scraping sound that sent chills down their spines.

“Bang!”

A dull thud rang out. The Alchemy Creature which had been roaring and rushing wildly toward the guardian puppet had been sent flying with a fist and it crashed heavily into the solid wall.

Wizard Riesen’s Alchemy Creature was a pure strength-type Alchemy Creature and had amazing strength but the difference in strength was too great compared to the guardian puppet. In terms of raw power, the Alchemy Creature was no match for the guardian puppet at all.

“What powerful strength!”

Merlin's heart gave a slight jolt. Following that, Wizard Riesen's Third-level spell had quickly surrounded the guardian puppet. The terrifying heat was emanating from the roaring flames, and even a special, heavy-duty armor would be unable to withstand such frightening power from a Fire-type spell.

However, the guardian puppet did not seem to fear the dreadful blaze at all. Furthermore, the black armor on its body did not change in the slightest under the pressure of the intense fire.

"Wizard Merlin, use an Ice-type spell quickly!"

By this point, Wizard Riesen was rather anxious and yelled at Merlin hastily.

"Frigid Ice!"

Merlin took a deep breath and immediately cast Frigid Ice, the First-level spell he had constructed not long ago.

In terms of power, Frigid Ice was considered a respectable spell amongst First-level spells. Although it was a Binding spell, it contained ice poison. Once the ice poison had penetrated one's body, it did not matter even if one had excellent physical attributes.

"Crack!"

A thick layer of ice crystals had covered the guardian puppet but before Merlin could celebrate, it was shattered in an instant. Frigid Ice was unable to restrain the guardian puppet at all.

As for the ice poison of Frigid Ice, it was completely useless against the guardian puppet which had no life force.

Then, Merlin cast Frigid Ice a few more times in succession and even cast the strengthened version of the spell but they served no purpose against the mighty guardian puppet.

Seeing that the guardian puppet possessed no weaknesses, Wizard Riesen could not help but cry out softly, "Wizard Merlin, even Third-level Ice-type spells are useless against the guardian puppet. We still need to use your Pandora Demon Ability!"

Merlin's Glacial Finger was the spell which Wizard Riesen was counting on. Although Wizard Riesen knew that the guardian puppet's weakness was that it could not withstand powerful Ice-type spells, it was obvious that even Third-level Ice-type spells were within the guardian puppet's endurance threshold, hence they would not injure the guardian puppet one bit.

With this in mind, Merlin did not continue casting Frigid Ice. Instead, he raised one hand and pointed at the guardian puppet with a finger as white as ice crystals.

“Demon Ability, Glacial Finger!”

Instantly, an icy current of maximum coldness flew directly toward the guardian puppet.

...

“Oh no, we've been found out!”

Wizard Glen, who was hidden in the dark, exclaimed in a low voice. At the moment, the Spell Casters on the first floor of the ancient tower had already discovered their hiding place.

“Come on, we'll explain after we've gone out!”

With a gloomy face, Wizard Glen led Elena and Wizard Ken out of the darkness to the first floor of the ancient tower to confront the five Spell Casters across them.

All of the five Spell Casters had an Alchemy Creature, and they seemed formidable with their great huffing breaths. Wizard Glen and the other two were facing a larger group of five Spell Casters, causing him to feel a sense of danger.

“Someone has come here? In the beginning, there were thirteen of us but we barely escaped with our lives and there are only five of us now on the first floor. Now's the chance to get our hard-earned treasure, yet here comes more Spell Casters from outside. Wizard Etland, it looks like we'll have to seize the moment and open that door. Otherwise, we might be too late!”

The Spell Casters did not seem to bother Wizard Glen and the others but instead, talked amongst themselves.

The Spell Caster who was called Wizard Etland nodded slightly. His eyes swept across Wizard Glen's group as he spoke in a calm tone, "I'll open the door in the shortest time possible so that we can enter the place where the treasure is stored. However, in the meantime, we'll need to rely on Wizard Herman to deal with the intruding Spell Casters."

"Hehe, Wizard Etland, please be at ease. No one will give you any trouble during this time, so blast away at that door as much as you like!"

As soon as he had spoken, Wizard Herman's cold gaze fixed firmly onto Wizard Glen and the others.

Chapter 203: Intruder

"We're in trouble, run!"

As Wizard Glen looked at Wizard Herman's cold stare and linked it to what the other Spell Casters had just said, he guessed their intentions, which were to kill all Spell Casters who entered the first floor.

Of course, Elena and Wizard Ken were no idiots. Before Wizard Glen had warned them, they had already quickly turned around to escape.

However, Wizard Herman and his group were even quicker. The Alchemy Creatures behind them moved almost instantly, and in a streak of blurred movements, they had already surrounded Wizard Glen and the others.

"Hehe, it's too late to think of leaving now. Kill them!"

Wizard Herman fixed his eyes on Wizard Glen with a cold smile and gave his order. The four Alchemy Creatures rushed wildly at Wizard Glen and the others.

"Scorching Flame!"

Wizard Glen took a deep breath as he saw the surrounding Alchemy Creatures pouncing at him. He narrowed his eyes and his body flickered with violent Fire Elemental fluctuations.

In an instant, the temperature on the first floor of the ancient tower was increased significantly, scorching even where near-transparent strands of fire floated in the air.

“Whoosh!”

An Alchemy Creature, with both hands equipped with sharp claws, lunged fiercely at Wizard Glen but as it came in contact with the fiery blaze in the air, its body was seized by the raging flames and began to burn violently.

“Thump!”

At the same time, lines of runes flickered all over Wizard Glen’s body. It turned out that an Alchemy Creature had appeared behind him and had extended its fist, smashing it heavily into Wizard Glen. Fortunately, Wizard Glen was wearing a robe which was able to withstand the attack.

Even so, Wizard Glen’s face had turned rather pale. Through that quick moment of combat, he knew that the Alchemy Creatures had great strength and speed, and were very likely transfigured by Second-level Spell Casters.

This meant that the five Spell Casters were all Second-level!

Thinking of this, Wizard Glen could not help but reveal an anxious face. He was a Four-Elemental, Second-level Spell Caster from Fire City, and was much more powerful than most roaming Wizards. He was even confident about handling a joint attack from two roaming Wizards who were of the same level.

However, there were no less than five Second-level Spell Casters – four of which were besieging him.

A strange look flashed across Wizard Herman’s eyes as he witnessed Wizard Glen casting Scorching Flame and a few other Second-level spells but he still kept a cold smile. “You have your ways indeed. However, you must die!”

Wizard Herman spread his fingers lightly, and a gust of wild wind appeared like a shapeless energy, which soon bound the movements of Wizard Glen, Elena, and Wizard Ken.

This was a Second-level, Wind-type Binding spell. Following Wizard Herman's spell, the other Spell Casters coordinated with their Alchemy Creatures and cast their own spells at Wizard Glen.

Although Wizard Glen had the protection of the robe, it could not hold off some of the attacks. He was indeed in a distress.

As for Elena and Wizard Ken, neither of them was a Second-level Spell Caster, especially Elena who was not even a First-level Spell Caster. They were no match for these Alchemy Creatures transfigured by Second-level Spell Casters. Both of them had to rely on the casting tools they had and were just barely able to survive.

Even so, they were already in an imminent danger – a situation which was worse than Wizard Glen's.

“This won't do. If we go on like this, we may never be able to escape!”

Wizard Glen's eyes were completely red. Deep in his heart, he was beginning to feel a faint regret about coming to this ancient monument. He could have been safe and sound in Fire City and become a Third-level Spell Caster the conventional way, or even become a powerful Fourth-level Spell Caster!

However, for the sake of treasures possibly stored in this ancient monument, Wizard Glen had not hesitated and set forth on this expedition. Out of his desperation, he also took a risk by coming into the monument. Furthermore, he had underestimated these roaming Wizards. How could Spell Casters, who had made it into the ancient monument, possibly be easy to deal with?

Now that he was assailed by Spell Casters who were also of Second-level, he was unable to hold on for long no matter how many tricks he had up his sleeve.

“Crack!”

Just then, a clear noise rang out. The Spell Casters who were engaged in the fierce battle were immediately distracted by this sound.

“Haha, it’s finally cracked open. Darling, keep it up, we must bash this stone door down. The treasure of the ancient monument is stored in there!”

The one who cried out was Wizard Etland. His Alchemy Creature was a hulking, strength-type Alchemy Creature, so he was tasked with using his Alchemy Creature to knock down the sturdy stone door on the first floor of the ancient tower.

This stone door was extremely solid but under the furious strength of the Alchemy Creature’s unceasing attacks, it had finally split open in a crack. The sharp cracking noise earlier was the sound of a fracture appearing on the thick stone door.

“Darling, knock the door down quickly!”

Wizard Etland was flushed red and had an ecstatic expression. His Mind Power quickly simulated his Alchemy Creature. Instantly, the strong, massive Alchemy Creature seemed to go berserk as it raised the sledgehammer in its hands and slammed it violently onto the door.

“Almost, the stone door is almost shattered...”

Wizard Etland muttered to himself without taking his eyes off the crack in the stone door.

“Boom!”

Suddenly, the entire ancient tower seemed to tremble, and everyone froze.

Wizard Etland seemed to focus slightly before fixing his gaze firmly onto the stone door. That huge thundering sound had seemed to come from behind the stone door.

“Could there be something behind the door?”

Just as Wizard Etland was feeling bewildered and unsure, another loud sound rumbled as the ancient tower undergone another tremor. This time, all the Spell Casters on the first floor could clearly tell that the sound had come from behind the stone door.

“Boom! Boom! Boom!”

Following that, the noise became more frequent, and the movements behind the door seemed to grow greater. The fierce hits widened the fracture on the stone door.

“Bang!”

Finally, the stone door was completely shattered. Behind the doorway, a black shadow flew out at such an incredible speed that it knocked Wizard Etland’s Alchemy Creature off its feet.

“What’s this?”

At this moment, everyone was staring with mouths agape at the shadow that had flown out from behind the doorway. This black shadow was gigantic, even taller than Wizard Etland’s Alchemy Creature. It was covered entirely in a layer of black armor.

However, this black shadow was currently looking rather pitiful as it crashed heavily onto the ground. They could see that it was sent flying by some powerful force.

The black shadow trembled slightly on the floor before it quickly stood up. It seemed to become aware of its surroundings as it looked down and noticed the Alchemy Creature crushed beneath its body.

Wizard Etland was gradually recovering from his initial shock. He did not know who this black shadow was but there was no doubt that it came from behind the stone door.

It was very possible that someone had already beaten them to it, and had taken away all the treasure behind the stone door.

As he thought of this, Wizard Etland’s heart boiled over with anxiety, and he immediately ordered his Alchemy Creature, “Darling, kill it!”

The target which Wizard Etland was pointing at was that mysterious black shadow that had flown out from behind the door in such a baffling manner.

“Bang!”

The Alchemy Creature’s punch landed on the black shadow but only a dull thud was heard. A dark red bloodstain appeared on the Alchemy Creature’s fist, and blood dripped onto the floor.

Wizard Etland’s Alchemy Creature was widely known for its mighty strength but now it was not even able to break the armor of the black shadow.

“Intruder – kill!”

The black shadow turned around and spoke in an odd, twisted voice. The eyes within the black armor glowed with a green light, and a quick look at it could tell anyone that the armor was empty and hollow inside. This shadow was neither a Spell Caster nor an Alchemy Creature. It did not even have any life force.

As soon as the black shadow spoke, it abruptly reached out with its thick, solid hands and grabbed the burly Alchemy Creature effortlessly.

In one swift motion, the shadow’s hands pulled the Alchemy Creature apart viciously.

“Rip!”

Immediately, the hulking Alchemy Creature was torn into two by the black shadow. Hot gushes of dark red blood splattered on the floor, reeking with the pungent smell of blood.

“Ssss...”

Staring at the Alchemy Creature lying on the ground, and torn into two, Wizard Etland could not help but draw in a quick breath. He had transfigured his Alchemy Creature himself, so naturally, he knew it the best. Although his Alchemy Creature was well known for its strength, its defensive capabilities were very frightening as well.

Even powerful Third-level spells were not necessarily able to kill his Alchemy Creature in a blow but now this black shadow, with a quick rip of its hands, had torn his Alchemy Creature into two. It was enough to demonstrate the terrifying extent of this lifeless, black shadow's strength.

“What kind of monster is this?”

Wizard Etland's expression revealed his fear and apprehension. Even though his Alchemy Creature was dead, he was also furious. However, after witnessing the shocking strength of this Shadow Monster with no life force, who was able to easily tear his Alchemy Creature apart, he knew that even a Third-level Spell Caster would be no match for this Shadow Monster. Naturally, he would not act blindly without thinking.

However, just because Wizard Etland did not dare provoke this Shadow Monster, it did not mean that the monster would not make its move. With its hollow eyes, the Shadow Monster swept its gaze across Wizard Etland and the others, after which it turned around as the heavy armor all over its body emitted scraping noises which sent chills down their spine.

Feeling the stare of the Shadow Monster's hollow eyes, Wizard Etland vividly sensed an imminent danger.

However, the Shadow Monster did not lift a hand but turned its head around again, its hollow eyes looking at the stone door with a huge hole in its middle. On the other side of the doorway, the faint silhouette of a figure wearing a black robe could be seen.

“Demon Ability, Glacial Finger!”

A cold voice rang out, and a translucent blast of freezing air quickly flew out from behind the doorway, reaching the Shadow Monster in a flash.

Chapter 204: Re-encounter

“Crackle!”

The cold breeze surrounded the Shadow Monster and it froze into a thick layer of ice crystals. Then, three figures quickly rushed out from the other side of the stone door.

“Bang!”

Amongst the three figures was an Alchemy Creature. It slammed into the Shadow Monster, making a clunky sound as it struck the Shadow Monster.

Wizard Glen and the others were still in an imminent danger but as they saw three figures emerged from the stone door, their eyes gleamed with joy.

Wizard Glen could not help but shout, “Wizard Merlin!”

The three figures who had appeared were, in fact, Wizard Merlin, Wizard Riesen, and his Alchemy Creature.

“Huh? Wizard Glen and Elena?”

Merlin heard Wizard Glen’s voice and turned around. He could clearly see the danger that Wizard Glen, Wizard Elena, and Wizard Ken were in.

Wizard Herman was astonished by the three mysterious people. Their attack had sent the terrifying Shadow Monster flying through the stone door.

Wizard Herman thought the three mysterious people could have been very powerful. When his Alchemy Creature faced the Shadow Monster, it was effortlessly torn in two. However, the Shadow Monster stood no chance against the three mysterious Spell Casters.

Wizard Herman heard Wizard Glen calling out to them and realized that Wizard Glen was familiar with the three mysterious people. Hence, he became vigilant. He did not care whether it was Wizard Glen or Merlin and the others, they were all competing for a bounty in the ancient monument and therefore, they were all enemies.

“Crackle!”

Soon, the Shadow Monster broke away from the shackles of the ice crystals. The ice crystals fell onto the floor and Shadow Monster's terrifying, hollow eyes began to glow with a green light. Its eyes swept past the Spell Casters and said coldly, "Kill the intruders!"

"This is really troublesome. My Glacial Finger could only harm this guardian puppet slightly. Even with Wizard Riesen's spells and Alchemy Creature, it would only give us a small advantage. It seems the only way to destroy this guardian puppet is to slowly allow it to waste its elemental crystal stones."

Merlin glanced over at the guardian puppet once more. It was the Pandora Demon Ability guardian puppet that protected the ancient monument.

This guardian puppet was truly powerful; common spells were useless against it. Merlin's Glacial Finger which was able to do slight damage, along with the attacks by Wizard Riesen's Alchemy Creature, they may have a slight advantage against the guardian puppet. However, even with a slight advantage, it would not be possible to defeat the guardian puppet in a short amount of time.

They just needed to deplete the guardian puppet of its elemental crystal stones. That way, they could finally destroy it.

"Kill!"

Merlin did not hesitate and immediately charged forward, the white finger on his right hand extended toward the guardian puppet. A cold breeze rapidly flew out and enveloped the guardian puppet.

Merlin's Glacial Finger was able to completely freeze the guardian puppet. However, time was running out, and soon, Wizard Riesen's Alchemy Creature rushed forward and struck the guardian puppet with all its might.

However, even though the Alchemy Creature was incredibly powerful, it was still impossible for it to break through the black armor protecting the guardian puppet.

The Alchemy Creature had thrown over ten punches but the armor on the guardian puppet did not have a single scratch. Then, Wizard Riesen noticed the sledgehammer that Wizard Herman's Alchemy Creature dropped after it was torn in two.

He immediately pointed toward it and his Alchemy Creature rushed to pick up the sledgehammer from the floor.

The sledgehammer was very heavy and as the Alchemy Creature picked it up, it affected the Alchemy Creature's speed and agility. The sledgehammer would be cumbersome whether one was a Spell Caster or an Alchemy Creature.

However, the guardian puppet was restricted by Merlin's Glacial Finger, thus, it allowed the Alchemy Creature to strike an attack. The Alchemy Creature may be slow but the guardian puppet would not be able to dodge the attack.

"Darling, go and give me a fierce strike!"

Wizard Riesen finished speaking and his Alchemy Creature grabbed hold of the sledgehammer. It ran quickly and lifted the sledgehammer up high, slamming it onto the guardian puppet's chest.

"Bang!"

The Alchemy Creature moved swiftly with the sledgehammer and attacked the guardian puppet a couple of times. Even though the guardian puppet stood over three meters tall, the Alchemy Creature was still able to strike it down using the sledgehammer.

With every strike, came a horrible cry. At times, the guardian puppet would escape from Glacial Finger, thus, Merlin cast another Glacial Finger.

With Merlin's spell, the guardian puppet could only depend on the thick black armor covering its body to defend itself.

The black armor was incredibly strong. The Alchemy Creature would pound each strike with terrifying strength, leaving an imprint on the armor. However, this was still not enough to destroy the armor of the guardian puppet.

Wizard Herman watched the Alchemy Creature lift the sledgehammer as if it was a stump and madly pounded the guardian puppet. With each strike, Wizard Herman could not help but twitch slightly. He realized that the Spell Caster of this Alchemy Creature was, in fact, the most powerful roaming Wizard in Floating City, Wizard Riesen.

Even though Wizard Riesen was a powerful Third-level Spell Caster with a terrifying Alchemy Creature, Wizard Herman knew that the main reason this guardian puppet could not fight back at the Alchemy Creature was that Merlin had cast the strange “cold breeze”.

The “cold breeze” was quite far away from Wizard Herman and yet he still felt a sense of fear. The “cold breeze” cast by Merlin was incredibly powerful.

However, neither Wizard Riesen nor Merlin was a contender for Wizard Herman. Wizard Herman watched as Merlin and Wizard Riesen battled the guardian puppet. He knew for sure that they had made this trip into the ancient monument in vain.

Wizard Riesen, who had an indifferent look in his eyes, glanced over at Wizard Herman from time to time, which made Wizard Herman slightly scared. Wizard Riesen was one of the four famous alchemists in Floating City. He would be cruel and merciless, and once the guardian puppet was defeated, they could attack them too.

Wizard Herman thought about this and gazed at the broken stone door. He whispered, “Let’s go!”

The two Spell Casters did not hesitate. They quickly followed Wizard Herman and left the first floor of the ancient tower.

After all, the horrifying battle between the guardian puppet and the cooperation of Merlin and Wizard Riesen’s Alchemy Creature had already made everyone anxious. Furthermore, it involved the infamous Wizard Riesen. Naturally, they did not dare to stay any longer.

“Glen, let’s go. It’s dangerous here.”

Elena glanced over at Merlin and Wizard Riesen, and the latter glanced back, his eyes filled with caution. If they did not leave before the guardian puppet was defeated, they would not be able to escape if they wanted to.

Wizard Glen nodded and looked at Merlin with mixed feelings. Earlier, he was in a perilous situation but when Merlin appeared, it was obvious that the Second-level Spell Casters feared Merlin and did not dare to face him.

Thus, thanks to Merlin, he was able to overcome the perilous situation he was in.

“Let’s go.”

Wizard Glen knew that if Wizard Riesen was around, they would have no chance of obtaining the treasures on the first floor of the ancient monument.

Thus, Wizard Glen, Elena, and the others quickly left. The entire floor was now empty, and it was filled with the echoes of the Alchemy Creature’s sledgehammer as it pounded the guardian puppet.

After a long moment, half of the guardian puppet’s body had been smashed into the ground along with half of the sunken black armor. Even its head had been bashed in.

However, the guardian puppet seemed unharmed. Merlin could not help but felt impressed. The Molta Empire, which was three thousand six hundred years ago, was the most brilliant era of Spell Casters. Whether it was runology, spells, alchemy, or potions, they were almost at their peak.

The guardian puppet was definitely a puppet created through alchemy by an ancient Spell Caster. Alchemy Creatures had not been around for a long time. Three thousand six hundred years ago in the Molta Empire, Spell Casters did not have Alchemy Creatures. However, with their advancements in alchemy, they were naturally strong.

Alchemy Creatures transfigured by Fourth-level or higher alchemists were still no match for this guardian puppet.

“Swoosh!”

Merlin cast Glacial Finger once more and furrowed his eyebrows. He whispered, “This is such a nuisance, Ice-type spells are not powerful enough. I can only cast two more Glacial Fingers at most.”

Merlin and Wizard Riesen had originally planned to deplete the guardian puppet of its elemental crystal stones, leaving it exhausted. This way, it would be easier to defeat the powerful guardian puppet.

However, the guardian puppet had not wasted much of its elemental crystal stones. In fact, it was Merlin who was nearly depleted of his elemental crystal stones.

“Crackle!”

He cast Glacial Finger once more and froze the guardian puppet. He noticed the elemental crystal stones in his hand and said to Wizard Riesen, “Wizard Riesen, I’m nearly out of Magic Power. If you can restrict him for now, I’ll be able to recover my Magic Power and continue to cast Glacial Finger!”

Wizard Riesen nodded. With a dignified look on his face, he prepared to cast a spell to attack the guardian puppet with his Alchemy Creature. Suddenly, he realized that the guardian puppet’s glowing green eyes had now flickered slightly, and it began to fade.

Then, the guardian puppet dropped its head. The Alchemy Creature held onto the sledgehammer in the air and stopped when the guardian puppet stopped moving.

Chapter 205: Fiery Collapse

“It isn’t moving anymore. Do you think it’s out of elemental crystal stones?”

Wizard Riesen was relieved to see that the guardian puppet had gone motionless. He too, was an alchemist, and although he was unsure of the exact alchemy methods used to transfigure this guardian puppet, he knew that elemental crystal stones were used as a source of power. Once the elemental crystal stones were depleted, the guardian puppet would no longer be a threat.

However, Wizard Riesen was still vigilant. Thus, he sent his Alchemy Creature to check if the guardian puppet had truly stopped moving.

The Alchemy Creature rushed to the guardian puppet. It grabbed both its arms and lifted the guardian puppet from the floor.

The guardian puppet still did not move. The Alchemy Creature moved in closer and inspected it. Soon, the Alchemy Creature found a raised button hiding in a secret location under the arm of the guardian puppet and slammed it in.

“Crash!”

Suddenly, the guardian puppet’s skull opened to reveal a large hole. The dark hole was filled with a pile of fine white sand. This sand was the residue of the countless elemental crystal stones that were used by the guardian puppet.

Most elemental crystal stones were created using a large amount of elemental coagulation and extrusion. They were incredibly pure but it would still leave a little residue. If it was just one elemental crystal stone, there would have been very little residue and almost impossible to see. It would require a lot of elemental crystal stones in order to distinguish the residue.

There was a lot of residues left in the guardian puppet’s body, so it was clear that an abundance of elemental crystal stones was used. The number of elemental crystal stones was unfathomable.

“Haha, we’ve finally defeated the guardian puppet! I could have been killed but we’ve survived to live another day and escape the ancient monument! Let’s go, the Pandora Demon Ability should be inside!”

Wizard Riesen stared intensely at the stone doors ahead. They had broken them down during the battle, and the Pandora Demon Ability could be there.

However, Merlin was still unsure if there really was a Pandora Demon Ability in the ancient monument. He had only heard it from Wizard Riesen.

Merlin watched Wizard Riesen walk through the stone door and followed him.

On the other side of the stone door was another much larger stone gate inlaid with many sparkling gemstones. Each gemstone was huge and reflected a white glow in the dark ancient tower.

“Click.”

Wizard Riesen walked right up to the side of the large stone gate and firmly twisted one of the bricks. Immediately, the entire stone gate began to make a strange noise.

“It has finally opened!”

Soon, the stone gate shook and slowly began to rise.

Wizard Riesen looked excited as he watched the stone gate open. However, Merlin stayed vigilant and observed his surroundings, ready to cast a spell at the first sight of any movement.

Merlin even took out a couple of elemental crystal stones from his ring and walked around as he recovered his Magic Power for the Spell Models of Frigid Ice and Frost. He had used a lot of Magic Power in his Awareness when he cast Glacial Finger, therefore, he had to use every minute he had to recover his Magic Power.

Wizard Riesen also looked anxious. He sent his Alchemy Creature in first and it rushed through the stone gate.

Behind the stone gate was an average-sized house. It seemed quite empty and its inside was arranged neatly. A thick layer of dust coated the contents of the house. It looked like no one had lived there for a long time.

In the house was a long stone table, and on the table stood a flame-shaped statue. It was huge, about half a meter tall.

The statue vividly resembled a burning flame and it was almost life-like. It was definitely the most unique and attractive object in the entire house.

Merlin and Wizard Riesen could not take their eyes off the flame-shaped statue. Both of them used their Mind Power to inspect it.

However, as their Mind Power reached the flame-shaped statue, they felt a “burning” sensation as if they were about to be set on fire. Mind Power did not take a visible form, and hence it was impossible for it to “burn”. The “burning” sensation they felt could have been from the runes inscribed on the statue itself.

Sure enough, as Merlin and Wizard Riesen’s Mind Power provoked the statue, a mysterious rune appeared in small fireballs and floated above the statue. This made the flame-shaped statue look even more realistic.

Wizard Riesen watched the flame-shaped statue transform and could not help but feel excited. He pointed his finger and cast a Fire-type spell from his Awareness. The spell rushed through his fingers and quickly entered the flame-shaped statue.

“Boom!”

Immediately, the entire statue began to vibrate and soon, it formed a huge crack down in the middle of the statue. The crack began to split open, and they could see a small, black wooden box.

“We’ve found it!”

Wizard Riesen saw the small, black wooden box and got excited once more. The Pandora Demon Ability that Merlin and Wizard Riesen had been looking for could be inside the box.

Wizard Riesen exchanged glances with Merlin. He faced Merlin and fiercely opened the black wooden box.

“Crack.”

The box broke into two halves and revealed a thin roll of animal skin.

Slowly and gently, Wizard Riesen unraveled the roll of animal skin. He began to familiarize himself with the scripture, written in ancient Molta runes.

There were not many words on the animal skin, and Merlin was able to read through them quickly. This really was the Pandora Demon Ability they were looking for!

“Fiery Collapse!”

The animal skin had recorded a very powerful Pandora Demon Ability called Fiery Collapse.

Fiery Collapse was divided into three forms. The first form required the construction of a First-level spell – Furious Flame or Sea of Flames.

In comparison to Glacial Finger, the requirements for Fiery Collapse were broader as one could choose between the two spells.

The first form of Fiery Collapse required a First-level spell. The second form of Fiery Collapse required certain Fourth-level fire-type spells.

The third form of Fiery Collapse required the construction of a Seventh-level spell. The combination of Fiery Collapse and the Seventh-level spell would work together to form the third form.

However, it would be extremely difficult to reach the third form of Fiery Collapse. On the other hand, Glacial Finger only had two forms. There were too many harsh requirements for the third form of Fiery Collapse.

However, even though Merlin was far from reaching the third form of Fiery Collapse, he had already constructed the First-level spell, Furious Flame, and could cultivate the first form of Fiery Collapse.

“It really is the Pandora Demon Ability! Hehe, Wizard Merlin, you can make a copy of this Pandora Demon Ability.”

Wizard Riesen’s eyes gleamed with excitement but his expression changed as he handed the roll of animal skin to Merlin.

Merlin nodded. According to the agreement between him and Wizard Riesen, they were to share the Pandora Demon Ability once it was found.

In addition to the introduction of Fiery Collapse, the roll of animal skin also contained cultivation methods, which was even more important.

Hence, Merlin took out a quill and white paper from his ring and began to secretly give orders to the Matrix. “Matrix, start scanning the roll of animal skin and record the contents in it.”

“Beep! Recording now.”

The Matrix scanned the roll of animal skin and Fiery Collapse was instantly recorded. At the same time, Merlin did not want to cause any suspicion from Wizard Riesen and began taking notes on his quill and paper.

One could hear the quill moved upon the sheet of paper clearly as it made scratching sounds upon its surface.

Wizard Riesen had been calm but a strange smile began to show on his face. He glanced at Merlin from time to time and suddenly, a small and delicate Spell Scroll appeared in his hand.

After a moment, Merlin had completed making a copy of the roll of animal skin. He stood up and handed it back to Wizard Riesen.

“I’ve finished, Wizard Riesen, thank you very much. A Pandora Demon Ability like this would require much more elemental crystal stones and I wouldn’t be able to buy it,” Merlin said gratefully.

Pandora Demon Abilities were extremely rare. Sterling House would not sell them and spell casters’ organizations such as the Dark Magic Region, would have very few. Merlin had never even seen a contribution point that could exchange Pandora Demon Abilities in the Resource Tower.

“You don’t have to thank me! However, if you really wanted to, you could hand something over to me. How about that?”

Suddenly, Wizard Riesen’s tone turned cold.

“Huh? What do you want?”

Merlin raised his head sharply. His eyes shifted as he extended his gaze, glaring right at Wizard Riesen!

Chapter 206: Fall Out

“I want your Pandora Demon Ability!”

Wizard Riesen declared as he took out the Spell Scroll in his hand.

“Boom!”

The Spell Scroll glowed a khaki color. Immediately, rich Earth Element rapidly condensed together and formed a long spear.

“Earth Spear!”

The spear swayed madly. The air around it even shook and in the blink of an eye, the spear flew toward Merlin.

It seemed as if the spear did not have much power but Merlin still felt a strong sense of danger.

“Guardian Monument!”

Merlin roared as a large stone monument appeared before him, glowing a slight gray light. Merlin’s spell was cast immediately, and he continued to cast Guardian Monument three more times.

However, as Earth Spear reached Guardian Monument, it did not even stop for a second. It passed through each stone monument and tore it down like a piece of bamboo. The sharp breath of the spear made Merlin feel suffocated.

“No! This strong spell isn’t a Third-level spell, but is, in fact, a Fourth-level spell!”

Merlin’s thoughts raced in his head. He cast Guardian Monument once more but this time he cast it using an Enhancing casting tool.

The Enhancing casting tool cast a strengthened form of Guardian Monument; its strength could instantly rival that of a Third-level spell. This was Merlin’s strongest Defensive spell.

“Crash!”

Suddenly, a dense crack appeared on Merlin’s Guardian Monument. It had only slightly withstood Earth Spear and soon, Earth Spear had completely broken Merlin defense.

“Thump!”

Suddenly, Merlin felt pain on the left side of his chest. A large force had sent Merlin stumbling backward and eventually, he fell to the ground.

“Hiss!”

Merlin could not help but take a breath. He had now realized the true strength of a Fourth-level spell.

This time, Earth Spear blasted most of its power onto Merlin. Merlin had been hurt, and although it had not struck him at his vital points, a blow like that could easily kill a Spell Caster.

However, Merlin’s physique was far from that of an average Spell Caster. It had almost reached the peak of a Third-level Elemental Swordsman. Even with such a strong physique, Merlin could not resist the strength of Earth Spear.

Merlin did not die but he had been hit extremely hard. He felt as if his entire body was about to fall apart as signs of weakness began to show. Merlin looked down and saw raw flesh on his left chest as blood continued to flow. The Fourth-level spell, Earth Spear, was far from being comparable to a Third-level spell. At this point, Merlin could barely move a finger.

“Riesen!”

Merlin huffed as his face became twisted! He had been hit extremely hard and could barely move a finger but the grave injury on his body did not affect his Mind Power. Hence, Merlin instantly focused his Mind Power on Wizard Riesen.

“Demon Ability, Glacial Finger!”

Merlin had almost exhausted all his strength as he violently raised his right hand. His pale-white finger immediately unleashed a cold breeze that flew toward Wizard Riesen.

This could have been Merlin's final attack. After he unleashed Glacial Finger, his right hand fell heavily to the ground. Only his chest kept rising and falling as he took deep breaths.

"Not dead yet!"

There was a hint of fear on Wizard Riesen's face. He knew how terrible Merlin's Glacial Finger was. Even Wizard DeMarco could not withstand it. Thus, Wizard Riesen immediately called out his Alchemy Creature.

"Crackle!"

The Alchemy Creature instantly blocked Wizard Riesen from the attack. The cold breeze enveloped the Alchemy Creature and a thick layer of ice crystals quickly froze over its body.

At the same time, a slight cold breeze had reached Wizard Riesen's arm and began to spread. Suddenly, almost half of Wizard Riesen's arm was frozen with a thick layer of ice crystals.

Wizard Riesen's expression changed quickly but he gritted his teeth and took out a greatsword from his ring to slice straight through his arm.

"Whoosh!"

The greatsword had cut off half of the arm and blood rushed out as Wizard Riesen's face began to turn pale.

The cut half of the arm fell onto the ground with a crash. Wizard Riesen watched as it smashed into thousands of pieces.

Wizard Riesen looked at the smashed arm and could not help but reveal a sense of uneasiness. He knew that Merlin's Glacial Finger was extremely powerful as every Pandora Demon Ability had a strange power.

However, knowing one thing was different to actually facing a Pandora Demon Ability. Merlin raised his head as he watched the frozen Alchemy Creature. It was completely lifeless and eventually began to crack. Soon, it broke into tiny pieces of crystals and scattered all over the place.

Wizard Riesen face was ghastly pale. He thought he had planned and prepared everything. Once he retrieved the Pandora Demon Ability, he would wait for Merlin to get distracted and instantly unleash the Fourth-level spell in his Spell Scroll to kill Merlin.

Everything had gone smoothly but Merlin did not die. In fact, he was able to cast his Pandora Demon Ability. Wizard Riesen was fearful of this. He watched Merlin's body lay on the ground, almost motionless, but he still dared not get any closer.

"Unfortunately, I'm not able to kill you after all. Otherwise, I would've taken your Pandora Demon Ability, and then I would have two!"

Wizard Riesen muttered in a low voice. He nodded slightly as he felt regretful that he was unable to kill Merlin and retrieve his Glacial Finger.

He gritted his teeth and walked over to the tower wall beside the stone gate as he desperately groped for something.

"It's over..."

Wizard Riesen was clearly familiar with the ancient tower. He found the secret spot and pressed firmly. Immediately, the stone gate let out a "trembling" sound as it began to descend.

Then, the ancient tower was silent once more...

Chapter 207: A Blessing in Disguise

Merlin laid on the ground of the quiet ancient tower as his chest heaved with every breath. His injury was extremely serious. Although he did not die, he was struck very hard. He wanted to take some time to recover but did not know how much time he had.

"This is serious. I was originally wary of Wizard Riesen but I didn't expect him to attack so suddenly, let alone using a Fourth-level spell from his Spell Scroll."

Merlin felt helpless. He had been cautious of Wizard Riesen, especially with his Alchemy Creature.

In fact, Merlin had not been vigilant with Wizard Riesen himself, neither was he worried that he would cast a Third-level spell. However, this time, Wizard Riesen used a Spell Scroll containing a Fourth-level spell, and it had injured Merlin greatly. It was a good time that Merlin's physique was far beyond that of an average Spell Caster. Otherwise, he would have been killed.

Fortunately, Merlin exhausted all his strength to cast Glacial Finger and scared off Wizard Riesen. He had also used the Matrix to record the cultivation methods of Fiery Collapse.

Merlin decided he would wait patiently for his wound to heal and eventually leave the ancient tower. Merlin felt that he had not run out of luck and instead, gained a great deal.

Merlin's chaotic thoughts were slowly calmed down.

"Crash!"

Just as Merlin's mood was calmed, a hole suddenly appeared on the ground of the stone gate and a huge patterned spider began to crawl out.

This patterned spider was about the height of a person and was the largest patterned spider that Merlin ever saw. The patterned spider gradually crawled toward Merlin as it began to hiss.

Merlin's face turned pale. He had originally planned to slowly recover and eventually break through the stone doors to escape the ancient monument.

However, he was still weak, and this enormous patterned spider was definitely stronger than any other patterned spider he had faced before.

Merlin could not cast Glacial Finger anymore but his Mind Power was not affected by the injury, so he quickly cast Guardian Monument.

Merlin cast Guardian Monument three more times. The gray slabs of walls formed around him and covered his body.

The huge patterned spider advanced toward Merlin but stopped in his tracks as it noticed Guardian Monument.

“Swoosh!”

Suddenly, the patterned spider moved swiftly. It appeared behind Merlin in the blink of an eye and struck Guardian Monument.

“Boom!”

The collision broke three Guardian Monuments and left only the last defense, which Merlin had cast using his Enhancing casting tool. Merlin knew that Guardian Monument sustained great damage from the patterned spider. This meant that it was much stronger than Wizard Riesen’s Alchemy Creature.

The impact from the patterned spider did not seem to impact the strengthened form of Guardian Monument. The patterned spider retreated slightly and then exposed its abdomen. White silk flew out and wrapped around Merlin.

The white silk was tenacious and strong, and it began to grow longer and longer. The enhanced version of Guardian Monument that Merlin had cast started to give in to the strong binding of the white silk.

If it were only a few strands of the white silk or if Merlin could move freely, he would be able to break himself free. If he could not break himself free, he could cast Wind of Freedom and escape quickly.

However, Merlin had been struck by Wizard Riesen’s Spell Scroll and could barely move a finger. He was almost a living target and his only option was to passively defend himself.

Occasionally, Merlin would cast Furious Flame but the white silk was resistant to flames and remained strong. Merlin’s body was enveloped and tangled in it like a Zongzi 1 .

“Crack!”

Finally, the enhanced form of Guardian Monument which Merlin had cast could not withstand the entanglement of the white silk and gradually began to break.

Merlin felt helpless as he had no options left and just like the fragments of stone in front of him, the patterned spider spat its white silk and bound Merlin tightly.

Merlin was entangled in the white silk of the patterned spider. It slowly dragged him into the hole in the ground.

The hole was pitch-black and as Merlin was dragged into it, he could only feel the steep incline of the slope that seemed to stretch further into the ground.

Merlin even suspected that he would make a delicious meal for the patterned spider to enjoy in its nest.

Soon, there was finally a glimmer of light in the dark hole. The patterned spider had brought Merlin into a hidden hall where Merlin noticed a huge flame-shaped statue.

However, this flame-shaped statue was much larger than the one he had seen before.

The patterned spider returned to Merlin's side once more and cut through the bounds of its white silk.

Thereafter, the patterned spider crawled into a corner of the hall and laid down motionless.

Merlin furrowed his eyebrows. This place did not seem like the patterned spider's nest and it did not intend to "eat" Merlin.

The hall was surrounded by beautiful murals. They were each one of a kind as they depicted different forms of flames.

There were wild fiery-red flames and peculiar crimson flames. There was even an icy-white flame. They were all painted along the walls of the hall.

"What's this place?"

Merlin whispered. He still could not move, and even though the patterned spider had retreated into a corner, he could not escape.

After a moment, the huge flame-shaped statue began to vibrate aggressively as it became “alive”. Merlin could feel the flames burn as the temperature in the air began to rise.

The flame-shaped statue gradually turned into a real flame. It burned fiercely as small clumps of flames began to form a small sprite about the size of a palm.

The sprite was created entirely from flames, so its features were blurred. However, although it was only about the size of a palm, it was terribly hot. Merlin stood quite far away but he could still feel the unbearable heat.

The flame sprite floated over Merlin’s body and watched him condescendingly. “Congratulations, lucky Spell Caster, you’ve defeated Master’s guardian puppet. It seems you also have the First-level spell, Furious Flame. You’ve passed Master’s test.”

“Test?”

Merlin watched the flame sprite with a doubtful look on his face. The flame sprite seemed intelligent, and it reminded him of the black cat he met in the Dark Magic Region, Didimoss, so he was not surprised that it could speak.

“Yes, Master had left these tests. If one has defeated the guardian puppet and can cast either Furious Flame or Sea of Flames, they’ve passed the test and are able to receive the treasures required to cultivate Fiery Collapse.”

The flame sprite explained calmly.

Merlin was confused. He had many thoughts running through his mind and could not make sense of any of them. This ancient monument was left by a powerful Spell Caster over three thousand six hundred years ago.

However, even after all those years, the flame sprite and patterned spiders had still survived – this seemed impossible to Merlin.

“What the hell are you?”

Merlin was very curious about the flame sprite. It was a non-living thing but it possessed intelligence and was not as rigid as the guardian puppet.

“I’m a flame sprite that Master once caught. I’ve been trapped here and can’t go any further than a hundred meter past this statue. However, Master said that as long as I help him find a suitable Spell Caster who can cultivate the second form of Fiery Collapse, then I’ll have my freedom once more.

“Many people have discovered Master’s ancient monument and entered the first floor. However, very few were able to defeat the guardian puppet but you two did and have therefore met the set requirements. It’s just a shame that one of you have already left the ancient monument and will not be able to receive the Master’s treasures to cultivate Fiery Collapse. Hence, it’s only you here who has met all the necessary requirements. That’s why I sent the patterned spider to drag you down here.”

Merlin listened to the explanation of the flame sprite. The flame sprite had paid attention to all the Spell Caster who entered the ancient monument and looked for a suitable Spell Caster to cultivate Fiery Collapse. It had done its utmost duty to help its master so that it would one day be free again.

The flame sprite mentioned a Spell Caster who had left the ancient monument – it would be Wizard Riesen. His plan had failed when his attack against Merlin did not work, so, he decided to leave Merlin trapped in the ancient monument to die.

Wizard Riesen did not expect that someone or something had observed him this entire time, and although he met the requirements, he had left the ancient monument.

Without the treasures left by the master of the ancient monument, the cultivation methods he claimed for Fiery Collapse would be useless. He would never be able to cultivate the first form of Fiery Collapse.

Merlin saw this as a blessing in disguise. Wizard Riesen had trapped him in the ancient monument and left without the treasure, but he was able to retrieve it. This was extremely useful for cultivating Fiery Collapse!

Chapter 208: Reward

Merlin could not move so he just lay silently on the ground. The flame sprite watched Merlin and quietly said, “You’re gravely injured. I’m not sure how long I can wait for you to recover.”

Merlin’s heart was pounding. His wound was extremely serious, and it would take a long time for his strong physique to recover even slightly.

So, Merlin said to the flame sprite, “If there’s any way you could help me recover quicker, I could start cultivating Fiery Collapse sooner. Once that’s done, I could reach the second form of Fiery Collapse and you’ll finally be able to leave this flame-shaped statue and be free.”

Merlin knew that this flame sprite was wise but it was no more intelligent than an average person. It had been trapped in this ancient tower for over three thousand years and would want to leave. However, no one has ever met the requirements of the master of the ancient monument, let alone cultivate the second form of Fiery Collapse.

The flame sprite listened to Merlin’s request but hesitated before it said, “Your injury is truly grave but I’m afraid I can’t help you. I don’t have the healing potions you require for your wound.”

“You don’t have healing potions?”

Merlin shook his head slightly and he seemed helpless. Without the healing potions, it would require a couple of months for him to fully recover his strong physique.

“No, I don’t. However, over the years, many Spell Casters have entered the ancient monument but a large portion of them was killed by the patterned spiders that protect the entire ancient tower. Why don’t I send out the patterned spider to search for the Spell Casters’ rings and bring them here? You can look through them to see if there’re any healing potions?”

The flame sprite finished speaking and Merlin immediately felt a strange fluctuation in his Mind.

The fluctuation was, in fact, emitted by the flame sprite. The flame sprite was composed entirely of flames but still possessed the same Mind Power as a Spell Caster. This surprised Merlin.

The Mind Power of the flame sprite spread and the huge patterned spider that sat in the corner had gotten up and began to crawl through the black hole.

Merlin laid still on the ground but he had expanded his Mind Power to investigate his surroundings.

The large hall was very quiet but it felt cold and the air was dry. This could have been below the first floor of the ancient tower.

Inside the large hall were a few strange tools. Merlin was unsure what they were but guessed they were alchemy tools. Merlin and the others had battled against the powerful guardian puppet and had not truly defeated it. They just depended on the guardian puppet to deplete its elemental crystal stones – that was how they won.

This proved that the master of the ancient tower was, indeed, an exceptional strong alchemist and this was the secret place he kept his alchemy tools.

Moreover, a place as spacious and secretive as this would ensure that no one from the outside would be able to hear a single sound. The master of the ancient tower could have used this place to test out a couple of puppets.

Merlin held his thoughts silently and suddenly, a rattling sound came from the black hole and out came the huge patterned spider.

Soon, more patterned spiders followed one by one. These patterned spiders were not as big as the first patterned spider and were more similar to the one's Merlin and the others had encountered in the ancient tower.

The patterned spiders came before Merlin and each opened their mouth to spit out one or two rings. Each ring was different. It was clear that they were once owned by Spell Casters who had entered the ancient monument and were eventually killed by the patterned spiders.

A dozen patterned spiders each brought one or two rings, and eventually, there was a pile of twenty rings next to Merlin. The patterned spiders began to retreat into the black hole and left only the larger patterned spider as it returned to its spot in the corner of the hall.

Merlin slowly began to inspect each ring. It seemed that the flame sprite, who had truly controlled the patterned spider, was able to control the entire ancient monument. No one could enter it without being noticed by the flame sprite.

This was not done by the flame sprite all by itself. In fact, it was the dense runes upon the flame-shaped statue. The flame sprite could read the runes to fully understand the situation in the ancient tower.

“Well, there’re many rings you can search through. Do you think you’ll find a healing potion?”

The flame sprite gestured at the rings as it asked Merlin.

Merlin nodded. He used his Mind Power to search through one ring. The ring contained a couple of potion ingredients but they were quite common ingredients. It also contained a few dozen elemental crystal stones.

One by one, he searched through the rings...

Merlin had searched a few rings but still had not found any healing potions. However, the potion ingredients and elemental crystal stones he found could be added up to amount a great value.

Finally, as he searched the tenth ring, he finally found a healing potion, and there was plenty of it. Merlin was shocked by Wizard Riesen’s Fourth-level spell that he kept in his Spell Scroll. It had wounded Merlin’s body horribly and required a healing potion like this to restore his flesh and blood.

After taking the potion, Merlin immediately felt its effects. Warmth filled his body but at the same time, it also felt crisp and numb.

The potion was extremely effective as Merlin felt his flesh and blood recover. What could have been months of recovery could be reduced to a dozen days to fully recover.

“Are there more rings, flame sprite? Send more patterned spiders out to look for more rings. If I find more healing potions, I could recover even sooner.”

Merlin smiled as he asked the flame sprite.

The flame sprite nodded and ordered the huge patterned spider to search for more Spell Caster rings.

...

Fifteen days passed in the blink of an eye and more than half of Merlin's body had recovered. He started to tidy up the rings that the patterned spiders had brought him.

For the duration of half a month, Merlin was "surprised" with a ring from the patterned spiders. Each ring was from a Spell Caster who died in the ancient monument.

After all, the ancient monument had existed for over three thousand six hundred years. An unfathomable number of Spell Casters could have entered the ancient monument, only to be killed by either the patterned spiders or the guardian puppet.

Hence, Merlin had accumulated a vast wealth from the rings; it was almost immeasurable. He had a large number of elemental crystal stones and potion ingredients, both rare and common. Merlin had even found enough rare ingredients needed to prepare at least ten portions of Phantasmal Magic Potion.

In addition to the elemental crystal stones and potion ingredients, there were also a large number of spells. Most of the spells were Zero-level spells, but occasionally he would find a First or Second-level spell.

However, there were very few Second-level spells. Amongst the pile of rings, he only found two Second-level spells within on ring.

Unfortunately, Merlin did not even need these two spells. Merlin had before him a large number of spells, so he used the Matrix to record them.

Merlin's ring was now filled with different types of spells, potion ingredients, elemental crystal stones, and more. He never would have thought that being trapped in the ancient tower would bring him such rewards.

Merlin was very wealthy now. Even a Fourth-level Spell Caster who established the Wizard Tower in the Dark Magic Region could not match his wealth.

"I shall leave now."

Merlin whispered. He had been trapped in the ancient tower for half a month where he consumed a potion every day to recover his body.

Now, the wound on his body was almost healed, and Merlin decided it was time to receive the treasure from the master of the ancient tower and leave the tower.

“Flame sprite!”

Merlin shouted at the enormous flame-shaped statue.

Immediately, a ball of flame floated from the flame-shaped statue and quickly transformed into the flame sprite.

“Flame sprite, did you not say that I met all the requirements to cultivate Fiery Collapse? My body has healed quite a bit and I can now leave the ancient tower. Please give me your master’s treasure and allow me to cultivate the second-form of Fiery Collapse. Then, I’ll return to set you free from the ancient tower!”

Merlin had thought about what he intended to say and spoke calmly.

“You want to leave the ancient tower now?”

The flame sprite asked with a hint of surprise in its voice.

Chapter 209: Going Through A Checkpoint

“What? I can’t leave?”

Hearing the astonishment in the flame sprite’s voice, Merlin asked in a hurry.

The flame sprite fell into a deep thought for a moment before saying, “You could go and give it a try. See if you can leave.”

Merlin gave the flame sprite a suspicious look but he still turned around and darted into the hole, coming out on the first floor of the ancient tower.

There was not a single soul on the entire first floor. It was extremely quiet.

Immediately, Merlin came before that thick slab of stone door. Previously, Wizard Riesen had set down this stone door to trap Merlin in the ancient tower.

“Furious Flame!”

Merlin immediately cast Furious Flame. For a few moments, scorching high temperatures rose and even caused some explosions. Nevertheless, there was not the slightest bit of effect where the stone door was struck.

Hence, Merlin raised his hand and pointed at the stone door forcefully with his white finger.

“Swoosh!”

A chill suddenly flew toward the stone door, freezing it. After some strange cracking noises, the entire stone door was completely frozen solid.

“Bang!”

Merlin cast several Fireballs as well, blasting them violently upon the stone door. How horrifying was the chill of Glacial Finger? Even Third-level spells could not block it. However, the chill of Glacial Finger was absolutely helpless against this stone door now.

“Just as I’d expected, it won’t break open.”

Merlin furrowed his eyebrows tightly. He did not continue his attempts at blowing this stone door open because he knew that no matter what, he would not be able to blast it open.

Thus, Merlin returned to the underground and came before the flame-shaped statue.

“Flame sprite, is there a way to blow that stone door open?”

Merlin lowered his voice and asked. He had a sort of a vague and bad feeling about this.

“Blow the stone door open? Wizard Merlin, forget about ever blowing that stone door open. This ancient tower was built because Master had wanted to defend against a great enemy. Nobody knows how many Runic Magic Circles have been arranged in the entire ancient tower. That huge door has also been inlaid with countless Runic Magic Circles. Unless they’re powerful Great Wizards, no one should even think about blowing this stone door open.”

The flame sprite spoke slowly. Meanwhile, a change washed over Merlin’s face immediately. He seemed to be very gloomy.

Only Great Wizards could blow the stone door open. Merlin had only seen Sixth-level Spell Casters so far even in the Dark Magic Region. He had never seen Seventh-level Spell Casters or above, what more the legendary Great Wizards.

Only a Great Wizard could blow that stone door open, so Merlin no longer had much hope in doing so.

The flame sprite saw Merlin’s gloomy expression. Suddenly, it opened its mouth and said, “Wizard Merlin, if you wish to leave the ancient tower, you don’t necessarily have to blow that stone door open!”

“Eh? Could it be that there are other passages leading out of the ancient tower?”

Merlin could sense the implied meaning of the flame sprite’s words; thus, he made his inquiry hurriedly.

“Of course there are other ways to leave the ancient tower. Back then, while building this tower, Master had already considered sealing up all exits if powerful enemies were to come. Then, Master would leave the ancient tower by using the Runic Magic Circle that had been set in place beforehand.”

“Then where’s the Runic Magic Circle?”

Merlin's face lit up with delight. There was finally hope for him to leave.

However, the flame sprite shook its head and said, "For safety purposes, this Runic Magic Circle had been set by Master in a secret chamber. Only the successful cultivation of the first form of Fiery Collapse could grant entry into the secret chamber."

"The first form of Fiery Collapse? I can cultivate that right away!"

Hurriedly, Merlin commanded the Matrix. "Matrix, export all information about Fiery Collapse."

Very quickly, the requirements to cultivate Fiery Collapse appeared in Merlin's mind. What he needed first was a First-level spell like Furious Flame or Sea of Flames. As long as he possessed any one of these two spells, he would be able to cultivate Fiery Collapse smoothly.

Of course, other than the most basic requirement of a First-level spell, it also required some extremely precious treasures, like how it had been for Glacial Finger.

During the first stage of Glacial Finger, only one type of treasure – the hundred years' ice bone marrow, was required. This Fiery Collapse was much more complicated and needed a lot of treasures such as the hellfire essence and firestone. Merlin had never even heard of most of the treasures.

However, to a certain extent, the more treasures that were required for a Pandora Demon Ability, the greater its power would be if the cultivation was successful. It was clear which of them was stronger; Glacial Finger had only two stages but Fiery Collapse possessed three forms. Glacial Finger was merely a Pandora Demon Ability with an average power amongst the Pandora Demon Abilities and could not be compared to Fiery Collapse – not by a long shot.

"So much treasure... Flame sprite, didn't you say that the master of the ancient tower has left some treasure for cultivating Fiery Collapse in the ancient tower?"

The flame sprite nodded and said, "That's right. Back then, Master had left behind many treasures indeed. Only by staying in the ancient tower can one obtain these treasures. However, the treasures aren't so easy to get. Master had placed the treasures inside a secret chamber with a guardian keeping watch outside. You can only enter the secret chamber and acquire the treasures left behind by Master if you defeat the guardian."

“So, I’d still need to defeat the guardian before I can get the treasure?”

Merlin frowned. The master of this ancient tower was truly cautious.

“That’s right. You must defeat the guardian to get the treasures! Back then, Master had left suddenly, as though he had a premonition about something. That’s why he’d set a few secret chambers carefully. After all, Fiery Collapse was the result of Master’s lifelong blood, sweat, and tears. One would have to be more powerful than the average Spell Caster to be Master’s successor!”

The flame sprite spoke slowly.

Merlin nodded. It seemed that the master of this ancient tower used to be a mighty Spell Caster. He had suddenly left for unknown reasons, but Fiery Collapse was the fruit of his lifelong labor; he would not pass it on easily.

Therefore, he had only left the cultivation method for Fiery Collapse but some of the treasures for cultivating Fiery Collapse had been placed in a secret chamber in the ancient tower. If he could not obtain the treasures in the secret chamber, getting the cultivation method for Fiery Collapse would still be useless.

For example, Wizard Riesen had done all that he could think of but he had not expected that he would not be able to cultivate Fiery Collapse after obtaining it. It was like receiving a piece of blank paper which was completely useless.

“Alright, flame sprite, bring me to the secret chamber!”

Merlin took a deep breath and spoke to the flame sprite. He was confident of himself. Merlin had already constructed five First-level spells other than Dark Light Realm, which was enough for him to fight some Second-level Spell Casters. In addition, he also had Enhancing casting tools, and his Defensive spells were not weaker than those of some Third-level Spell Casters.

He also had Glacial Finger, which was completely capable of defeating Third-level Spell Casters. That was why, when it came to facing the guardian set by the master of the ancient tower, Merlin was very confident that he could defeat the guardian and obtain the treasures left behind by the master of the ancient tower.

The flame sprite nodded. Thereafter, slivers of peculiar mind fluctuation appeared on its body.

Then, there was a rumble.

In the vast hall, a thick stone door was slowly rising from behind the flame-shaped statue, revealing a spacious room inside.

The flame sprite opened its mouth and spoke slowly, “Wizard Merlin, the secret chamber is inside. However, if you’re no match for the guardian, all you have to do is leave the secret chamber, and the guardian will stop attacking you. Remember, if you can’t defeat it the first time, you can try a second time or a third. If you’re killed by the guardian, you’d never have another chance.”

Merlin nodded, making a mental note of the flame sprite’s words. Following which, he immediately entered the secret chamber.

In the secret chamber, Merlin could see that the inside of the room was empty and extremely spacious. In a corner of the secret chamber was a strange creature with a completely white body. It looked like a beautiful rabbit.

“Finally, someone has come... Young Spell Caster, I’m a follower of the great Wizard Dowland. You may call me Lister.”

This strange creature that looked suspiciously like a “rabbit” could even speak a human language. It was extremely mystical.

Merlin knew that Wizard Dowland was the name of the master of the ancient tower, and this strange creature that looked suspiciously like a “rabbit” was rather complicated. It could look non-frightening at all, but Merlin could sense strong Ice-type Elemental fluctuation from its body.

A realization flashed through Merlin’s mind instantly. Immediately, he knew the identity of this being who looked suspiciously like a “rabbit”. It was an Elemental Monster that had evolved into an Elemental Being!

Only Elemental Beings could control Elements with such ease. Even the Spell Models for Frigid Ice and Frost in Merlin’s body had been unable to absorb any Ice Elements when he entered this room. All of them had been forcefully “robbed” by this “rabbit” Elemental Being.

This was also the frightening thing about Elemental Beings. Back then, the silver-haired old man had wanted to evolve the Dark Vampire Bats into Elemental Beings. If the evolution had succeeded, the powers of those Elemental Beings would immediately increase by two-fold and would be on par with at least Third-level Spell Casters.

In fact, this “rabbit” Elemental Being’s powers could have already surpassed those of a typical Third-level Spell Caster. Merlin could even feel a strong threat emanating off its body.

“Guardian Monument!”

Carelessness was something Merlin did not dare to risk. Instantly, he used the Enhancing casting tools to release the strengthened version of Guardian Monument. Merlin was extremely cautious in facing this “rabbit” Elemental Being.

Seeing the dusky light glowing from the stone monument on Merlin’s body, this “rabbit” Elemental Being suddenly stood up. For a moment, its body began to grow; both its legs started to straighten up and became incomparably robust and strong.

Meanwhile, its white fur also began to transform; half of it turned black. A pair of sharp claws appeared, emanating a chill light. All the Ice Elements in the room had completely converged around the body of this “rabbit” Elemental Being.

“Pandora Demon Ability, Glacial Finger!”

Merlin did not hesitate; he immediately displayed his most powerful ability. Elemental Beings were not easy to cope with as they were on par with at least Third-level Spell Casters. The other spells Merlin possessed were no match at all for this “rabbit” guardian.

“Swoosh!”

Instantly, a burst of chill shot toward the “rabbit” guardian. At first, this big and tall “rabbit” had a rather callous attitude. However, its expression changed completely after it felt the chill, which it dodged with great agility.

“Crack.”

The chill of Glacial Finger caused all the walls of the secret chamber to be completely frozen solid.

“Pandora Demon Ability, you’ve actually cultivated a type of Pandora Demon Ability! Hehe, but it’s no use, you’re too slow!”

The “rabbit” guardian could recognize immediately that Glacial Finger displayed by Merlin was a Pandora Demon Ability. Nevertheless, it did not look frightened at all. Instead, it could hardly sit still from eagerness and had a sheer excitement on its face.

“Bang!”

With both legs, the “rabbit” guardian gave a vicious kick. Instantly, its body became a blur; in the blink of an eye, it disappeared on the spot. All of that happened at a speed which even Merlin’s strengthened version of Wind of Freedom would not be able to compete with.

It was no surprise that the “rabbit” guardian was not afraid of Merlin’s Glacial Finger because it moved at such a high speed. It made it as if it was a joke for Merlin if he possessed a stronger Pandora Demon Ability if he was unable to bind the “rabbit” guardian.

The “rabbit” guardian moved extremely fast. In the blink of an eye, it had come before Merlin. Following which, its body seemed to inflate at an explosive rate once again, growing to a height of more than three feet, turning into a horrifying monster.

Gigantic, sharp claws struck down viciously toward Merlin’s head.

Chapter 210: First-level Spell Caster!

“Bang!”

The “rabbit” guardian’s sharp claws were like razor blades. With one swipe, it brought a gigantic force that shook Guardian Monument in front of Merlin. It was shaken so hard that it split open; densely packed crack lines appeared on it.

“An immense power, and at such a high speed, my Glacial Finger is absolutely useless!”

A stunned expression washed over Merlin's face. This was such a great power, and at a speed that was just too quick. It was difficult to lock down even with Merlin's Mind Power. Even though he had released Glacial Finger, it was not of much use.

"Thunderbolt Net!"

Merlin released Thunderbolt Net once more. Although it was merely a Zero-level spell, Merlin still wanted to try and see if it could paralyze this "rabbit" guardian.

Lightning flashed all around them. However, just as Merlin had expected, Thunderbolt Net was rather useless. Immediately, Merlin released the strengthened version of Dark Mist once more. Nevertheless, it produced no effect on this "rabbit" guardian; it could not cause the "rabbit" guardian to fall into an illusion.

Perhaps Merlin would be able to cause this powerful Elemental Being to fall into an illusion if he had constructed Dark Light Realm, but it was clearly impossible to do that now.

At such a thought, Merlin's body flashed. He withdrew from the secret chamber before the "rabbit" guardian could launch its second attack.

"How weak. Are you really going to retreat and leave just like that?"

The "rabbit" guardian looked as though it wanted to continue the fight. However, it could only move within this secret chamber as it would become powerless once it left the area. Therefore, it could only huddle up in a corner of the secret chamber and eventually fell asleep soundly with loud snores.

Seeing the "rabbit" guardian turn back into its snowy white self once again, Merlin shook his head helplessly. Who would have thought that such a harmless-looking "rabbit" could be such a horrifying Elemental Being?

Furthermore, the "rabbit" guardian had not shown its ability to control the Ice Element earlier. The most powerful ability of all Elemental Beings was to control the Elements.

The "rabbit" guardian had not exerted its full strength but Merlin was unable to ward off its attacks. It seemed that it was going to be extremely difficult to defeat the "rabbit" guardian.

Very soon, Merlin came before the flame-shaped statue once more. Immediately, the flame sprite flew out from the statue.

The flame sprite spoke in a calm voice, “Were you defeated? Lister is not a weak opponent. I’m afraid it won’t be that easy for you if you wish to break through the checkpoint guarded by Lister.”

Merlin nodded his head as well, and said, “Very strong, indeed. I was able to hold out against the previous guardian puppet and forced a slow death upon it, but now, I don’t have the slightest chance against this “rabbit” guardian, a great and powerful Elemental Being.”

Merlin raised the slightly parched finger. He knew that it would be very difficult to fight the “rabbit” guardian by relying on just Glacial Finger. Some method to restrict the “rabbit” guardian’s speed was necessary.

“Since you’ve already lost, undergo a proper cultivation. If I’m not mistaken, you’re not even a First-level Spell Caster. Construct the last Spell and become a First-level Spell Caster before you go and challenge Lister again!”

Unexpectedly, the flame sprite could see Merlin’s true condition in just one glance. Indeed, Merlin was not a First-level Spell Caster yet. So far, he was just one spell – Dark Light Realm – away from becoming a First-level Spell Caster.”

“Alright then. Prepare an anechoic chamber for me. Once I’ve successfully constructed Dark Light Realm and become a First-level Spell Caster, I’ll come and challenge Lister once more!”

Having said that, Merlin walked straight into the anechoic chamber prepared by the flame sprite.

In the anechoic chamber, Merlin carefully recalled the process of the fight he had with the “rabbit” guardian earlier. It was obvious that the “rabbit” guardian was just too fast; Merlin’s Glacial Finger was completely unable to lock it down. No matter how great its power was, it was not of much use.

Furthermore, Merlin’s Dark Mist was too weak. Although it was already clear that the “rabbit” guardian possessed intelligence and was equivalent to an ordinary person who could be plunged into an illusion, Dark Mist was useless against it. Perhaps Dark Light Realm would be able to plunge the “rabbit” guardian into an illusion.

If he really was to succeed, then there would not be a problem for him to defeat the “rabbit” guardian and break through the secret chamber.

When those thoughts came to him, Merlin became somewhat excited. Dark Light Realm was definitely something he had to construct. The only thing was, at the very least, he would require the Mind Power of a Third-level Spell Caster. Merlin could only use his Mind Power to simulate such a complicated spell as Dark Light Realm if he removed the many Spell Models maintained in his body.

Now, Merlin’s Mind Power had almost reached the peak of a Second-level Spell Caster. Hence, he still needed to increase a huge amount of Mind Power before he could successfully construct Dark Light Realm.

If Merlin was to rely only on Mind Meditation Spell, he would need half a year to achieve a breakthrough with his Mind Power and to reach the level of a Third-level Spell Caster.

This could already be considered extremely fast. After all, Merlin was cultivating an advanced Mind Meditation Spell gifted by Wizard Leo. However, Merlin was still unsatisfied with such speed. Other than cultivating the advanced Mind Meditation Spell, he was also preparing Phantasmal Magic Potion.

The original stock of Phantasmal Magic Potion that Merlin possessed had almost been depleted. However, after arriving at the ancient tower and obtaining the rings of the many Spell Casters who had been killed by the patterned spider, Merlin had discovered an abundance of potion materials within those rings.

Amongst them were many of the potion materials necessary for preparing Phantasmal Magic Potion. With these potion materials, Merlin was able to prepare many portions of the potion with a success rate of almost 30 percent.

Thus, with the help of the Matrix, Merlin began to prepare the potion quietly.

...

Three months passed in a flash. Merlin had just awakened from meditation; his Mind Power had already reached the peak and was capable of breaking through at any moment.

“This is the final Phantasmal Magic Potion. Hopefully, it can enable my Mind Power to break through to the level of a Third-level Spell Caster!”

Merlin quickly downed the Phantasmal Magic Potion in the glassware. In mere moments, the Mind Power in his mind increased rapidly at a speed that was almost visible to the naked eye.

Due to having taken so much Phantasmal Magic Potion, the effects of the potion were no longer as obvious as when he had taken Phantasmal Magic Potion for the first time. However, it still showed a fast increment of Mind Power.

“Boom!”

Instantly, Merlin’s mind turned blank. Thereafter, a cool sensation appeared in Merlin’s mind; he felt that his Mind Power had doubled.

“Have I gotten through?”

Delight sprang in Merlin’s heart. He had been on a retreat for three months within the anechoic chamber of the ancient tower, and consuming Phantasmal Magic Potion that he had prepared. However, it was only now that his Mind Power could be considered to have a substantial breakthrough, reaching the level of a Third-level Spell Caster.

The moment his Mind Power broke through, Merlin could clearly feel his Mind Power becoming even more active. It could even pass through thick walls, enabling him to “see” the other side.

This was something that Merlin’s Mind Power had been unable to achieve before this. Merlin’s previous Mind Power couldn’t pass through walls that were slightly thicker. However, now that he had obtained a level of Mind Power on par with that of a Third-level Spell Caster, it could go through walls easily.

Of course, there were many advantages that came with an increase of Mind Power. The greatest advantage was that he could now construct Dark Light Realm. Merlin would become a First-level Spell Caster if he could only construct Dark Light Realm successfully, and officially become a Wizard!

“It’s been three months, and with more than two months spent in Floating City, it’d be almost half a year. I’m afraid I won’t be able to hurry back in time for Macy and Yaguez’s wedding.”

Merlin murmured quietly. He still remembered back when he had left Prakash City; Old Wilson had specifically mentioned Macy and Yaguez's wedding to Merlin. However, Merlin was now stuck in the ancient tower. There was absolutely no way for him to hurry back to Prakash City and attend Macy and Yaguez's wedding.

Although Merlin had become a Spell Caster and was growing stronger and stronger, there was still a very important place in his heart for his family. Merlin regretted very much for not being able to attend Macy and Yaguez's wedding.

In just a few moments, Merlin got rid of the messy thoughts in his mind. He settled down slowly and began to activate the Matrix."

"Matrix, analyze the Spell Model for Dark Light Realm!"

"Beep, the analysis on the Spell Model for Dark Light Realm had been done before. Do you wish to begin a new analysis?"

Merlin was somewhat confused. However, after thinking carefully for a few moments, he remembered that he had, indeed, used the Matrix to analyze the Spell Model for Dark Light Realm. Nevertheless, in the end, the construction had not been successful due to insufficient Mind Power.

Back then, the Matrix had reconstructed one hundred and eleven thousand, three hundred and sixty-eight Spell Models for Dark Light Realm, and amongst them, Merlin had chosen an extremely suitable Spell Model. This Spell Model was the best option no matter from the aspect of stability, power or the compatibility with the Spell Model for Dark Mist.

Merlin had failed the construction previously due to insufficient Mind Power. This time, Merlin's Mind Power was already comparable to that of a Third-level Spell Caster. He was also very confident that he would be able to simulate the Spell Model for Dark Light Realm in his Awareness on the first try and become a First-level Spell Caster.

However, the construction of such a complicated Spell Model for Dark Light Realm would take a very long time. Merlin calmed his emotions. Immediately, a Spell Model which looked like a three-dimensional image appeared in his mind. It was a few times more complex than the Spell Model Merlin had constructed for Frigid Ice previously.

Thankfully, Merlin had made preparations earlier. Therefore, he did not dread having to construct such a complicated Spell Model. Immediately, a huge amount of Mind Power began to move and started to simulate the Spell Model for Dark Light Realm in his Awareness.

...

The days passed by one at a time. Merlin sat still in the anechoic chamber with a very solemn facial expression.

Suddenly, Merlin's entire body shook. Endless amounts of Darkness Elements around him converged toward his body madly, practically covering the entire vast anechoic chamber and turning everything pitch-black.

Merlin's body was like a black hole, crazily swallowing up Darkness Elements in his surroundings.

After who knew how long, Merlin finally opened his eyes. A smile appeared at the corners of his lips.

"I've finally succeeded!"

Merlin's Dark Light Realm had finally been constructed successfully. Today, Merlin had become a genuine First-level Spell Caster. That was not all; he was a Six-Elemental First-level Spell Caster. It was extremely rare to find a Six-Elemental First-level Spell Caster even in the huge spell casters' organizations.

Only by becoming a First-level Spell Caster could one be deemed as a true Spell Caster. It was only now that Merlin could be considered to have really stepped upon the path of a Spell Caster!