

W. Secret 211

Chapter 211: Going Through the Checkpoint Again!

Now, the six spells in Merlin's Awareness had all become First-level spells after he had constructed Dark Light Realm. He had also reached a balanced level.

There were great advantages of having a balanced level. At the very least, Merlin needed to maintain the Spell Models in his Awareness, which required him to expend a huge amount of Mind Power as he was afraid that the Spell Models would collapse due to imbalance.

However, Merlin no longer needed so much Mind Power to maintain the Spell Models in his Awareness.

Furthermore, as he had become a First-level Spell Caster, the maximum capacity of the Magic Power of the Spell Models in Merlin's Awareness would be upgraded again. This meant that Merlin's strength would increase by at least a few folds once he had become a First-level Spell Caster.

Merlin stood up slowly. He was feeling the changes within his Awareness. Now that he had become a First-level Spell Caster, it seemed as though there was finally a "powerful" sensation.

"Time to pass the checkpoint!"

Merlin had been stuck in the ancient tower for more than three months. The spell construction of Dark Light Realm had been successful, and his strength had greatly increased, so he could try to pass through the checkpoint once more.

Merlin had just walked out from the anechoic chamber when the flame sprite flew out from the flame-shaped statue. It sized Merlin up with one glance, before speaking with a hint of delight in its voice, "Congratulations, Wizard Merlin, for finally becoming a First-level Spell Caster! Now that your strength has greatly improved, are you going to pass through that checkpoint?"

“That’s right, I’m ready to try to get through the checkpoint once more to retrieve the treasures left behind by the master of the ancient tower. Then, I’m able to cultivate the first form of Fiery Collapse and leave the ancient tower.”

Merlin nodded as he spoke.

“Very well. I shall open the secret chamber so you may go in. It’s still the same rule. The moment you’ve no confidence in defeating Lister, leave the area of the secret chamber. Lister has absolutely no way to leave the secret chamber.”

As it had done before, the flame sprite explained to Merlin the things he needed to take caution of. Merlin nodded before taking a deep breath, and immediately stepped into the secret chamber.

Merlin had just stepped into the secret chamber when he saw the “rabbit” guardian once again, curled up in the corner with a body of snow-white fur.

“Here again, little fellow?”

The “rabbit” guardian lifted its head and glanced at Merlin coldly. Thereafter, the “rabbit” guardian slowly stood up. With some astonishment in its voice, it said, “Little fellow, looks like you’ve not wasted the past few months. You’ve actually become a First-level Spell Caster!”

Merlin did not feel surprised at all. The flame sprite had been able to sense the change in him in just one glance, so perhaps this “rabbit” guardian also possessed the same strange ability to sense that Merlin had become a First-level Spell Caster with just one look.

Merlin nodded and said, “That’s right, I’m here today to pass through the checkpoint.”

“Hehe, little fellow, don’t hold back in showing me your strongest tricks. I’ve not had a good exercise in many years. You were just too weak last time...”

The “rabbit” guardian spoke nonchalantly.

Merlin’s expression was calm. He did not continue speaking. However, gray stone tablets quickly appeared from his body and surrounded Merlin.

This was the strengthened version of Guardian Monument released by Merlin using the Enhancing casting tool. Only after his defense had been set in place did Merlin immediately activate the First-level spell that had just been successfully constructed in his Awareness – Dark Light Realm!

“Dark Light Realm!”

Merlin let out a low growl. In mere moments, a light began to distort at a fast pace within the room that had been somewhat dark and dim before. In an instant, everything turned pitch-black. Even Mind Power was unable to probe for anything.

“A Darkness-type spell?”

For the first time, there was a change in the “rabbit” guardian’s tone of voice. Immediately, Merlin could feel a violent fluctuation of Ice Elements and a thick slab of ice crystal surrounded the “rabbit” guardian’s body, protecting it.

Although Merlin’s Dark Light Realm was just a First-level spell, it was able to cause even Wizards who had the Mind Power level of a Third-level Spell Caster to fall into an illusion.

The “rabbit” guardian’s Mind Power was extremely strong as well; it probably reached the peak of a Third-level Spell Caster. The ordinary First-level spell, Dark Light Realm, that Merlin cast did not cause the “rabbit” guardian to fall into an illusion. However, the “rabbit” guardian’s tone of voice had also become solemn. It was obvious that coping with this would not be as easy as it had been a few months ago.

Three months ago, the “rabbit” guardian had dealt with Merlin in a way that had rendered him powerless to even put up a resistance.

Seeing that the ordinary Dark Light Realm did not seem to be affecting the “rabbit” guardian much, Merlin released a string of Dark Light Realms. Suddenly, he cast the strengthened version of Dark Light Realm.

Immediately, the entire room fell into pitch-black darkness. The ordinary Dark Light Realm was only able to cause Wizards with the Mind Power level of a Third-level Spell Caster to fall into an illusion, but the strengthened version of Dark Light Realm could plunge those with the peak of Third-level and even Fourth-level Spell Casters into illusions.

The “rabbit” guardian, which had still been able to control the Ice Elements earlier had already been plunged into an illusion after Merlin had released the strengthened version of Dark Light Realm. The only protection left for it was the thick slab of ice wall around it.

“Furious Flame!”

Merlin quickly released Furious Flame. With the great Mind Power that he possessed now, his control over spells was superb; not the slightest bit of the flames under his control escaped as they rumbled quickly toward the “rabbit” guardian.

Furthermore, it was not just a single Furious Flame that Merlin had released. He had let out ten of them consecutively. Half of the room was practically submerged in flames as the horrifying temperatures burnt everything in the chamber.

Merlin fixed his gaze quietly upon the fire that was spreading in the room. There was no way that the “rabbit” guardian, which had already been plunged into an illusion by Dark Light Realm, would be able to withstand this.

The strengthened version of Dark Light Realm could plunge Spell Casters at the peak of Third-level and even Fourth-level Spell Casters into illusions, including this “rabbit” guardian who was merely an Elemental Being. No matter how powerful it was, it was exposed to be slaughtered by anyone the moment it fell into an illusion.

This was also the powerful aspect of a Darkness-type spell, Dark Light Realm. Otherwise, Merlin would not have spent such a long time and so much effort to construct it.

The power of Dark Light Realm did not disappoint Merlin at all; it had defeated the powerful “rabbit” guardian the first time Merlin released it.

Soon, the flames began to gradually disappear. At the same time, the effects of Dark Light Realm started to weaken until light reappeared in the room. By then, the powerful “rabbit” guardian’s white fur had become charred black, releasing an extremely horrible burnt smell.

“Dead?”

Merlin's eyes narrowed slightly. Having been plunged into an illusion, the "rabbit" guardian had been forcefully subjected to more than ten of Merlin's Furious Flame attacks. It would not be able to withstand it even though it was an Elemental Being.

"Crack."

Just as Merlin was ready to walk further into the secret chamber, the "rabbit" guardian's body emitted a strange noise. The surface of its body began to crack, revealing snow-white fur.

"Little fellow, you've won. Go in!"

Suddenly, the "rabbit" guardian that had turned charred black spoke once more to Merlin.

"You're not dead?"

Merlin felt very astonished. He had clearly felt the power of Furious Flame earlier; there was absolutely no way for a body of flesh and blood to withstand that. It was obvious that the "rabbit" guardian had evolved from an Elemental Monster to an Elemental Being. It would not have been able to resist the attack of more than ten Furious Flames.

"How can I be dead? Elemental Beings like us evolve through special means by the previous master, but we didn't go through complete evolution and had only been able to evolve halfway. Don't think we're just bodies of flesh and blood; the insides of our bodies are still made of Ice Elements. We wouldn't die even if we're attacked by much stronger spells. As long as we're in this secret chamber, we can practically revive without limit. Unless the entire ancient tower is destroyed, in which case we would naturally disappear."

This "rabbit" guardian slowly explained everything. It turned out that the "rabbit" guardian was not a complete Elemental Being; it had merely evolved into half of an Elemental Monster. Only the surface of its body was flesh and blood; the rest of it was made of Ice Elements.

Furthermore, it could only move in the area of this secret chamber. This "rabbit" guardian would be able to revive instantly no matter how strong the attacks were.

However, the command given to it by the master of the ancient tower was just to stop Spell Casters who came to pass through the checkpoint. Once it was defeated, the checkpoint would be deemed to have been passed. Hence, it was unnecessary to kill the "rabbit" guardian.

Hence, Merlin had now successfully passed the checkpoint. Even though the “rabbit” guardian had revived, it would not attack him anymore.

Suddenly, there was a rumble.

As the “rabbit” guardian’s voice died down, the thick slab of stone door opened once more. There was yet another secret chamber inside. This was where the master of the ancient tower had left his treasures.

Quickly, Merlin gave the “rabbit” guardian a slight nod before entering the innermost secret chamber.

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The secret chamber was not very spacious. There were many gigantic pearls embedded in the four walls surrounding him. The light shining from those pearls lit up the entire secret chamber so brightly that it felt like it was daytime.

With just one glance, Merlin saw a few huge boxes covered with dust in the secret chamber.

He opened those few big boxes. Inside were some potion materials as well as elemental crystal stones. The Fire-type elemental crystal stones, in particular, were too numerous to count.

“Hellfire essence, firestones... As expected, the treasures needed to cultivate Fiery Collapse!”

Very quickly, Merlin could identify the treasures inside the boxes. Other than the Fire-type elemental crystal stones, there were some of the treasures required to cultivate Fiery Collapse. There were many of them, enough for Merlin to cultivate Fiery Collapse for a long time.

At least, there would not be much of a problem to cultivate the first form of Fiery Collapse.

Merlin examined the contents for some time. Both the elemental crystal stones and the treasures required to cultivate Fiery Collapse were extremely numerous; this could be considered a huge

fortune. Thus, Merlin stored all the treasures in those big boxes into his ring before slowly leaving the secret chamber.

Chapter 212: The First Form!

Outside the secret chamber, the flame sprite showed a smile when it saw Merlin. “Finally, you’ve come out. Congratulations on defeating Lister and obtaining the treasures left behind by Master.”

The flame sprite watched over everything that transpired in the tower. The battle between Merlin and the “rabbit” guardian in the secret chamber naturally did not escape the flame sprite’s eyes.

Merlin nodded as well. “I’m fortunate to obtain the treasures needed to cultivate Fiery Collapse. After I’ve successfully cultivated the first form of Fiery Collapse, can I leave the tower then?”

“That’s right. Once you’ve cultivated the first form of Fiery Collapse, you can leave the tower with the Runic Magic Circle left behind by Master.”

The flame sprite exclaimed cheerfully. As long as Merlin could rapidly cultivate the first form of Fiery Collapse, it would be possible for him to cultivate the second form of Fiery Collapse successfully in the future as well.

When the time came, the flame sprite would have the chance to break off its bind and attain true freedom.

“You should cultivate Fiery Collapse quickly. The Fire Element is abundant in the ancient tower, so it’s suitable for you to cultivate Fiery Collapse there.”

The flame sprite urged Merlin to cultivate Fiery Collapse quickly.

Merlin nodded, then entered the anechoic chamber directly.

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“The first form of Fiery Collapse has a white flame of extremely high temperature, capable of burning everything!”

In the anechoic chamber, Merlin carefully read some detailed notes about Fiery Collapse recorded in the Matrix.

In total, Fiery Collapse had three forms. The first form was white and could only be cultivated after the Spell Caster had constructed a First-level spell, either Furious Flame or Sea of Flames.

Its second form appeared to be in pale white. Moreover, it required the Spell Caster to possess some Fourth-level spells before cultivating it.

The third form of Fiery Collapse was almost transparent. Its cultivation method greatly differed from those of the first and second forms. Its third form had to be completely merged with the Spell Caster's self-created spell to finally form a type of strange flame.

In other words, he had to merge the third form of Fiery Collapse with his own Seventh-level spell to cultivate it. At that time, Fiery Collapse would have a terrifying strength, possessing a truly destructive power.

Merlin shook his head. It was still too far ahead for him to think about the second and third forms of Fiery Collapse. Right now, he only needed to cultivate the first form of Fiery Collapse wholeheartedly in order to leave the ancient tower as soon as possible.

Thus, Merlin took out all the treasures such as hellfire essence, firestones, and so on that he had obtained from the secret chamber. They were all objects that contained a large number of Fire Elements.

Following that, Merlin began to use his Mind Power according to the cultivation method described on Fiery Collapse. He lightly etched a fire marking on his palm.

As soon as this fire marking appeared, Merlin immediately sensed that it somehow formed a connection with Furious Flame's Spell Model in his Awareness.

Thereafter, Merlin placed the treasures like firestones and hellfire essence on his palm according to the cultivation method. The fire marking on Merlin's palm began to emit a faint scorching aura and melted the firestones and hellfire essence. The treasures were all absorbed by the fire marking on his palm.

However, this was a gradual process; it would take a long time to cultivate the first form of Fiery Collapse. He would need to let the fire marking to turn from pale white to fiery red. Only then that it proved that he had successfully cultivated Fiery Collapse. With his current pace, it would take a minimum of a few months' time to cultivate Fiery Collapse.

Merlin was trapped in the ancient tower now, so he did not lack in time. Hence, as he cultivated the first form of Fiery Collapse, he continued using Ice-type elemental crystal stones to cultivate Glacial Finger.

Merlin's Glacial Finger had not been cultivated completely. During the first stage, his finger would be able to return to its initial color unlike now where his finger that was used to cultivate Glacial Finger had turned a pale white.

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In the blink of an eye, half a year had gone past. The Dark Magic ring on Merlin's finger suddenly vibrated and emitted a faint light.

Merlin opened his eyes and glanced at the ring. With a frown, he said, "Wizard Leo is calling for me. It seems that the battle between the Dark Magic Region and Ozmu has ended."

Roughly estimating the time, Merlin had left the Dark Magic Region for about a year and a half now. Wizard Leo once said that Merlin and the others could return to the Dark Magic Region after about a year's time.

It appeared that the battle between the Dark Magic Region and Ozmu was finally over. Many Spell Casters had been called to return to the Dark Magic Region. However, Merlin was now trapped in the ancient tower; he had no way of leaving this place.

"I must make the best use of my time now. I've to succeed in cultivating the first form of Fiery Collapse within three months' time!"

Merlin raised his palm to find that the fire marking was already faintly painted in red. This was the first form of Fiery Collapse, but he had to cultivate it further. He would only be successful when the fire marking on his palm had completely turned red.

In the case of Glacial Finger, Merlin's finger had resumed its initial color now. He had successfully cultivated the first stage of Glacial Finger.

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After three months, Merlin had been in the ancient tower for almost a year. Back then, he only had three years to cultivate when he joined the Dark Magic Region.

Once he had exceeded the three years' limit, Merlin would be sent out of the Dark Magic Region. That was if he had not returned to the Dark Magic Region or did not become a First-level Spell Caster. Merlin had long become a First-level Spell Caster, but he was trapped in the ancient tower. He was quickly approaching the three years' limit of the Dark Magic Region.

Merlin had joined the Dark Magic Region for more than two years now. He did not have much time left to cultivate Fiery Collapse in the ancient tower.

"Boom!"

Suddenly, a scorching presence exploded and the temperature in the anechoic chamber escalated quickly. Then, strings of flame appeared in the air.

"I finally did it!"

Merlin opened his eyes and revealed a hint of elation. Then, he reached out his palm to find that the life-like fire making on his palm showed a fiery red.

This was the first form of Fiery Collapse. The key to look for when one succeeded in cultivating it was that the fire marking would turn a fiery red. It appeared just like a true flame.

"Let's test it. Pandora Demon Ability, Glacial Finger!"

Merlin wanted to test how powerful the first form of Fiery Collapse was, and the best subject to test was Merlin's Glacial Finger.

Merlin's Pandora Demon Ability, Glacial Finger, was also a powerful ability. The ice crystals it produced were extremely tough and cold. Even a Third-level Defensive spell could not stand against its freezing temperature.

"Ka-chak."

The icy aura of Glacial Finger instantly froze a hard rock and formed a gigantic gleaming ice crystal.

"Pandora Demon Ability, Fiery Collapse!"

Merlin reached out his pale palm and the fire marking on it vibrated slightly. Instantaneously, the Magic Power stored in the Spell Model of Furious Flame rushed into the fire marking frantically.

At the same time, a strange white flame appeared rapidly and winded around the ice crystal that was formed by Glacial Finger.

"Hiss! Hiss!"

The white flame encompassed the clear ice crystal and let out a series of hissing sounds. In the end, the tough ice crystal melted and turned into a pool of water on the ground.

Merlin gawked at the pool of water on the ground, feeling incredulous. Glacial Finger was also a Pandora Demon Ability. In addition, Merlin had completed the cultivation of the first stage of Glacial Finger, largely improving its strength.

However, Glacial Finger could not stand against the first form of Fiery Collapse at all; it could not even defend against it for even a moment. There was only one unique characteristic of Fiery Collapse – its high temperature to an unimaginable extent. Even the strongest magic robe could not withstand the burning of Fiery Collapse.

This was only the first form of Fiery Collapse. How strong could the second and the third form be? Merlin could not imagine it at all.

There were still distinctions between the Pandora Demon Abilities – Fiery Collapse was obviously more superior to Glacial Finger. Moreover, Merlin could also hide Fiery Collapse within his Fire-

type spell when he encountered an enemy to bring a surprise element in his attack. As long as his opponent did not possess strong Defensive spells or Defensive casting tools, Merlin would have no issue dealing with his opponent.

“The cultivation of the first form of Fiery Collapse has completed. It’s time to leave!”

Merlin stood up and left the anechoic chamber. Although the ancient tower was quiet and was considered a great place to be, Merlin would need to leave this place.

It was almost three years since he joined the Dark Magic Region. He would need to return to the Dark Magic Region and become its official member before the three years’ limit.

Furthermore, Merlin had not forgotten about Wizard Riesen. The latter attacked Merlin by surprise and trapped him in the ancient tower. Merlin naturally would not let that pass when he left this place.

“Flame sprite, I’ve cultivated the first form of Fiery Collapse. Can I leave the ancient tower now?”

Merlin called out softly in front of the flame-shaped statue.

Soon, the flame sprite flew out of the flame-shaped statue. Its tone showed a hint of excitement. “You’ve finished cultivating the first form so soon? But if you really did, you can indeed leave the ancient tower now. I’ll let the patterned spider lead you to a secret chamber that allows you to leave.”

After saying that, the flame sprite sent out a strange mind fluctuation. Following that, the gigantic patterned spider that initially stayed in the corner stood up and glanced at Merlin and the flame sprite. Then, it turned around and entered a large secret chamber.

“Follow it. It’ll lead you to the place that allows you to leave the ancient tower. But don’t forget this – if you become a Fourth-level Spell Caster, you must come to the ancient tower again and defeat the guard of the secret chamber. Thereafter, you’ll obtain the treasures needed to cultivate the second form of Fiery Collapse.”

The flame sprite said in a tone full of expectations. After all, it really wanted to be free and Merlin was his sole hope. Only after Merlin had successfully cultivated the second form of Fiery Collapse, the flame sprite would be able to break free of its bind and obtain true freedom.

“I’ll definitely come back.”

Merlin nodded with a serious expression. Then, he trailed behind the patterned spider and quickly headed toward the place that could lead him out of the tower.

Chapter 213: Bramble Mountain

The patterned spider brought Merlin to a well-concealed secret chamber. A thick stone door was in their way, and there were many mysterious runes scattered all over the stone door.

Merlin took a glance at the patterned spider and figured that there was a Runic Magic Circle in the chamber that could bring him out of the ancient tower. Only after he had successfully cultivated the first form of Fiery Collapse, he would be able to enter the secret chamber and leave the ancient monument with the help of the Runic Magic Circle.

Upon thinking of that, Merlin finally understood what he would need to do. He reached out his palm and the fire marking on his palm rapidly let out a scorching presence.

“Pandora Demon Ability, Fiery Collapse!”

Instantly, a white flame blasted toward the thick stone door and the mysterious runes on the door suddenly shone brightly. The light surrounded the flame of Fiery Collapse. Finally, the runes merged completely with the flame.

“Rumble!”

A huge stone door slowly rose. It seemed to affirm that Merlin had satisfied the condition to enter the secret chamber; to complete the cultivation of the first form of Fiery Collapse.

Instantly, Merlin’s face lit up. When he looked back at the patterned spider, the gigantic spider was already slowly leaving him to report back to the flame sprite.

In the secret chamber, there were many complicated runes etched on the ground, forming a mysterious Runic Magic Circle. Merlin was familiar with Runic Magic Circles since he had seen many of these in the Dark Magic Region.

Thus, Merlin simply stood on the Runic Magic Circle with ease. After taking a deep breath, his Mind Power simulated the Runic Magic Circle in a sudden motion.

“Buzz...”

The mysterious Rune Magic Circle began to emit a bright light which quickly surrounded Merlin’s body. Merlin felt a familiar pull in the light, knowing that the Runic Magic Circle was beginning to transport him.

“Swish!”

The bright light flashed and Merlin’s figure disappeared from the secret chamber. Then, the entire room resumed its initial silence.

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“Young Lady, if Sir Viscount heard about us sneaking out, I’m afraid that he won’t forgive you easily.”

A maid who wore a gray maid outfit carefully told Lady Naviance who sat beside her.

Lady Naviance was wearing a white dress. Her blonde, flowing hair was loosely tied. Donning a cute hat, she looked beautiful and youthful.

“It’s alright. I wasn’t punished at all the last time I sneaked out, was I?”

Lady Naviance replied without any care. She even pulled the curtain open and enjoyed the scenery with excitement.

“How can you compare this time to the last? Sir Viscount wanted you to marry the son of Count Gion. But you sneaked out at this time. I’m afraid Sir Viscount is already sending his men to look for you...”

The gray-shirt maid knew Lady Naviance’s character well, so she knew that it was impossible to urge her to return at this point. She had no choice but to find a way to leave signs behind along their journey. This way, the men sent by Sir Viscount would be able to find them if they trailed behind the signs.

The carriage was not moving at a fast speed. However, Lady Naviance did not mind at all; she was only interested in the scenery. Hence, she wanted the carriage to slow down its speed even more for her to enjoy the scenery to the fullest.

“Quick, look at that. There’s a person in front.”

Lady Naviance saw him first. There was a man who was cloaked in a black robe; he stood by the roadside with his head lowered. They did not know what he was doing.

They were in the forest, a truly deserted place. Seeing such a weird person in such a place greatly alerted the maid.

“Young Lady, no matter who he is, we’ve to leave quickly.”

The maid’s words made Lady Naviance put on her guard as well. Although she was brave enough to sneak out from the castle a few times, she knew that she would face danger during her journey. Most of all, this strange, black-robed man gave off an aura that seemed to send a chill down people’s spine. He could be dangerous.

Hence, the speed of the carriage quickened as it dashed forward.

“Bang!”

Suddenly, the black-robed man who was still by the roadside raised his hand. Instantly, numerous fireballs appeared out of thin air and blasted off in front of the carriage. The loud impact made Lady Naviance and her maid panicked. They did not know what they need to do.

It was Lady Naviance's servant who drove the carriage. He was more knowledgeable than Lady Naviance in this aspect. After seeing the fireballs cast by the black-robed man, the servant immediately recognized the identity of the man. Hence, he respectfully bowed to the black-robed man. "O' most respectable Sir Wizard, it's the daughter of Viscount Anlese who sits in the carriage, Lady Naviance! May we know how we can help you?"

Upon seeing the fireballs, the carriage driver immediately knew that the black-robed man was a mysterious yet powerful Spell Caster. He was a powerful existence that even Viscount Anlese had to be respectful toward.

The man replied with a calm tone, "Give me a map."

The carriage driver quickly took out a map from the carriage and carefully said, "Sir Wizard, we're currently at the outer territorial area under Viscount Anlese's control."

The man nodded, then examined the map carefully.

"So far from Floating City? This area is under the influence of Fire City. It'll take a few days' time to reach the closest Runic Magic Circle of the Dark Magic Region."

The black-robed man frowned and let out a soft mutter. It was Merlin who had left the ancient monument. Although he had left the ancient monument with the help of the Runic Magic Circle, he was transported to a place he was not familiar with.

After examining the map, Merlin found that he was way too far away from Floating City. This area was already under the influence of Fire City.

Merlin originally planned to kill Wizard Riesen first, but it would take him a few months' time to reach Floating City because the place was simply too far.

Hence, after thinking about it for a long moment and considering all aspects, Merlin still decided to first return to the Dark Magic Region. After he had truly become an official member of the Dark Magic Region, he could consider returning to Floating City to kill Wizard Riesen.

However, the Dark Magic Region was extremely mysterious. The only way to enter the Dark Magic Region was via the Runic Magic Circles which were set up all over. Only the Spell Casters who had

the Dark Magic ring would be able to activate the Runic Magic Circle and enter the Dark Magic Region.

Merlin briefly checked the map and found the nearest Runic Magic Circle to the Dark Magic Region was a distance away. It would take him a few days' time to reach the place.

Upon thinking about this, Merlin looked at the carriage. Although the curtain was shut loose, Merlin's Mind Power could easily identify that there were only two women in the carriage.

"Bring me to Bramble Mountain!"

Merlin said with an indisputable tone. Then, he kept the map and dived right into the carriage.

Lady Naviance and her maid were frightened in the carriage. They both kept their heads lowered as they huddled up in a corner of the carriage.

Merlin simply took a glance at them and quietly sat in the carriage.

The carriage driver did not dare to oppose Merlin's words. He had visited a count with Viscount Anlese before. There, he had witnessed the overpowering strength of a mysterious Wizard, who stood beside the count, with his own eyes. Thus, to ensure their safety, the carriage driver could only drive to Bramble Mountain as Merlin had requested.

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In the following days, Merlin did not speak a word. However, other than his cold expression, Merlin did not seem to do anything out of the ordinary, so Lady Naviance slowly gained courage and began to stare at Merlin intensely.

"Sir Wizard, will you let us go when we reach Bramble Mountain? Or will you turn us into evil monsters?"

Lady Naviance mustered up her courage and asked in a low voice.

"Hmm? You know about the Alchemy Creature as well?"

Merlin opened his eyes suddenly and stared at Lady Naviance.

Lady Naviance did not panic. Instead, she simply nodded. “I once saw an ugly Alchemy Creature trailing behind a Wizard. I heard from my father that the Wizard had turned a living person into the Alchemy Creature using an evil method.”

Lady Naviance’s father was a viscount, so he could have seen Spell Casters before. Moreover, they were mostly roaming wizards. Nowadays, many Spell Casters were, in fact, alchemists who transfigured living persons into terrifying Alchemy Creatures. Surely the Spell Casters Naviance had seen were alchemists.

Seeing the terror in Lady Naviance and her maid’s eyes, Merlin flashed a smile and shook his head. “I won’t turn you into a monster. After we reach Bramble Mountain, I’ll let you go.”

Lady Naviance noticed that Merlin did not seem as “terrifying” as before, so she became braver and began to ask Merlin about Spell Casters.

Merlin was also rather bored during the long journey, so he picked a few simple, interesting things to talk about and chatted with Naviance. Upon seeing Naviance and her maid’s cheerful laugh, Merlin slowly relaxed as well. It seemed that he had found peace which he had not felt for a long time.

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“Wizard Merlin, about the Vitality Potion you mentioned, can it really help a person to remain youthful?”

Lady Naviance expressed her interest toward the Vitality Potion Merlin had mentioned before.

“That’s right. If you continue using Vitality Potion, it can maintain your skin elasticity and youthfulness, making you appear younger as well.”

Merlin looked at Naviance with a shadow of a smile.

“Then, Wizard Merlin, do you have any Vitality Potion on you now?”

Naviance quickly asked.

“I don’t have it. But if you’ve become a Spell Caster, you can make the potion yourself.”

As soon as Merlin finished his words, he sensed that the carriage had gradually come to a halt. When Naviance wanted to further her questions, the carriage driver called out to them loudly, “Sir Wizard, we’ve arrived at Bramble Mountain.”

“Already?”

Merlin took a glance at the Dark Magic ring on his finger and nodded slightly. The ring had reacted; it had sensed the Runic Magic Circle set up by the Dark Magic Region.

“Alright, I should go.”

Merlin said to Naviance and alighted the carriage. An intense fluctuation of Wind Elements appeared around him and he rapidly disappeared into the forest.

Naviance stared idly at Merlin’s back while the maid reminded her in a low voice. “Young Lady, Wizard Merlin is gone. Where should we go now?”

“Where?”

Naviance’s face suddenly brimmed with joy as she replied in a rushed tone, “Of course we’ve to go back and see my father. I’ve decided to become a great Spell Caster. I’ll make the Vitality Potion!”

The maid shook her head slightly. Looking at the excited Lady Naviance, she knew that the lady’s action would cause Sir Viscount to have a headache once again...

Chapter 214: Return to the Dark Magic Region!

In the vast Bramble Mountain, Merlin was running about without a clue 1where he was going. He had been observing the Dark Magic ring on his finger. According to the signal given by the Dark Magic ring, he gradually found a hidden Runic Magic Circle.

By sight, it appeared that the Runic Magic Circle had not been activated in a long time.

The Dark Magic Region was extremely secretive. No one knew the exact whereabouts of the Dark Magic Region. The only way to enter the Dark Magic Region was via these Runic Magic Circles. Furthermore, the Dark Magic Region truly possessed many Runic Magic Circles; they were almost everywhere. Only the Spell Casters of the Dark Magic Region could find these Runic Magic Circles by following the signals given by the Dark Magic ring.

Merlin was long familiar with the Runic Magic Circle, so he directly stood on the circle. Following that, his Mind Power triggered the Runic Magic Circle. Instantly, mysterious runes popped out of the circle and reacted with the runes on the Dark Magic ring.

After Merlin's ring was recognized by the Runic Magic Circle, a strong pulling force appeared and its bright light surrounded Merlin.

“Swish!”

The light flashed and the forest resumed its silence once again. Meanwhile, Merlin's figure had long disappeared and was transported to the Dark Magic Region.

...

The moist air, the cooling sea breeze, and the seagulls that played on the beach. As Merlin watched the familiar scene, he finally heaved a long sigh.

“The Dark Magic Region... I'm finally back!”

Once again, Merlin had returned to the Dark Magic Region. Roughly estimating the time, he had left the Dark Magic Region for about a year. Now that he had returned, he found that nothing had changed much.

Merlin approached the huge stone tablet. Looking at the stone tablet, Merlin reminisced about the time when he first came to the Dark Magic Region. He was simply a rookie Wizard who did not understand anything then.

Now, he had improved so much that he could easily kill a Third-level Spell Caster.

“Sir Didimoss.”

Merlin came close to the stone tablet and called out to it.

Immediately, a haze flew out of the stone tablet and slowly turned into an arrogant black cat.

“Oh? It’s you, Wizard Merlin! You return quite late. Most of the Spell Casters who have left the Dark Magic Region have returned by now.”

Didimoss obviously still recognized Merlin. After it saw Merlin, it exclaimed while wearing a look of expectations.

Merlin smiled slightly and understood Didimoss’ meaning behind its words. Thus, he directly took out a few Ice-type elemental crystal stones from his ring and passed them to Didimoss.

The black cat’s face brimmed, and its figure enlarged drastically. It bit into the Ice-type elemental crystal stones which Merlin gave and crunched them into pieces.

Finally, the black cat revealed a satisfied expression and nodded. “Wizard Merlin, that’s great. The taste of the elemental crystal stones this time is extremely good. Go in quickly!”

Thereafter, the black cat reverted to a black light and dived into the stone tablet. Following that, a grayish light pierced the open space, just like ripples in the water.

Merlin raised the Dark Magic ring on his finger and entered the Dark Magic Region.

...

Merlin stood quietly in front of Wizard Leo's tower. Upon seeing the desolated situation at the tower, Merlin's mouth quirked into a smile. As compared to other towers, Wizard Leo's tower always appeared to be desolate.

Walking into the tower, Merlin saw Wizard Howl who was working on his potion. To Wizard Howl, nothing was more important than his potion-making.

"Wizard Howl!"

Merlin called out to Wizard Howl and the latter gave a rather monotonous response. However, he then quickly raised his head and stared idly at Merlin.

"Wizard Merlin, you just came back?"

Wizard Howl asked with a strange expression.

Merlin nodded. "Yeah, I did. Wizard Howl, can I help you with anything?"

Wizard Howl shook his head. "Not me, it's Teacher Leo. He was looking for you before, but you aren't back in the Dark Magic Region yet, so he just let it be. Wizard Merlin, it's very unusual. Teacher Leo rarely looks for anyone, so you're the first one!"

"Teacher Leo is looking for me?"

Merlin thought for a moment, then quickly excused himself from Wizard Howl. He entered the Runic Magic Circle and headed toward the top floor of the tower.

"Swish!"

Right after Merlin's figure disappeared, Wizard Howl raised his head again. However, he revealed a thoughtful expression as he muttered, "How strange. This feeling is just like a First-level Spell Caster! Has Merlin become a First-level Spell Caster? Six-Elemental First-level Spell Caster. How is this possible? Maybe I've sensed it wrongly..."

Wizard Howl shook his head slightly, then went back to making potions.

...

“Teacher Leo!”

Merlin came to the top floor and knocked on the door lightly. He called out softly.

“Creak.”

After a moment, the door opened and Merlin walked into the room. Wizard Leo still appeared to be terrifying; the red vertical eye on his forehead seemed to blink a light red and his eyes did not reflect any emotion.

However, there was something different with Wizard Leo. The place where his right arm would have been was empty. He had obviously lost his right arm.

“Teacher Leo, what happened?”

Merlin’s expression darkened and quickly asked.

Wizard Leo looked at Merlin and revealed a rare smile. “It’s nothing. I just lost an arm but I’ve killed the Seventh-level Spell Caster of Ozmu, Osseus! It’s worth it!”

Although Wizard Leo’s tone was calm, his words made Merlin jumped. A Seventh-level Spell Caster was extremely powerful, not to mention he was from Ozmu, known to be full of geniuses.

However, Wizard Leo had killed a Seventh-level Spell Caster of Ozmu with the price of an arm. Merlin could not imagine how fierce the battle had been.

However, since Wizard Leo had killed Osseus, he seemed to have changed as a person. Wizard Leo used to give off a depressed and terrifying aura that scared people away. Now, he no longer gave off the same aura.

“Merlin, I called for you before but you didn’t return to the Dark Magic Region in time. Is everything alright?”

Wizard Leo asked calmly.

Merlin had thought about the reason a long time ago. Of course, he would not mention Pandora Demon Ability. Merlin believed that Pandora Demon Ability existed in the Dark Magic Region as well and Wizard Leo would not go after his Pandora Demon Ability. After all, Darkness Eye was sufficiently powerful.

However, Merlin decided to keep it a secret. Hence, he briefly explained the situation using the spell-cultivation as his excuse.

“I was trapped in an ancient monument, so I stayed patient and cultivated my spells there. After I became a First-level Spell Caster, I was able to leave the ancient monument by luck and returned to the Dark Magic Region.”

After Merlin had finished his explanation, Wizard Leo’s expression changed and he quickly asked, “You said that you’ve become a First-level Spell Caster?”

At the same time, the red vertical eye on Wizard Leo’s forehead slowly opened and emitted a red light that enveloped Merlin.

Under the red light, Merlin felt as if all secrets were exposed before Wizard Leo.

“You’re truly a First-level Spell Caster. Six-Elemental Spell Caster?”

Wizard Leo’s eyes were filled with shock. He knew about Merlin’s background. When he left the Dark Magic Region, he had not constructed any First-level spells yet.

Now, not only did Merlin construct First-level spells but he had also constructed six First-level spells. He had even constructed the complicated Frigid Ice and Dark Light Realm!

Moreover, Merlin had only left the Dark Magic Region for about a year. In other words, Merlin had used a year’s time to successfully construct six First-level spells.

“Haha, Merlin. I can’t believe you brought me such a huge surprise, coming back here. What is Kleis to you? You’re the true prodigy of the Dark Magic Region!”

Wizard Leo appeared to be elated. This was the first time a Six-Elemental First-level Spell Caster had appeared in the Dark Magic Region since its establishment. Even Kleis who had betrayed the Dark Magic Region was only a Five-Elemental Spell Caster.

“Good, Merlin. You’ve two options now. Firstly, you can sign a contract with the Dark Magic Region and become an official member. You’re able to enjoy all resources available in the Dark Magic Region. Correspondingly, you’ve to shoulder some responsibilities in the Dark Magic Region. Secondly, you can return the Dark Magic ring and leave this place. You’ll become a roaming wizard with no binding or whatsoever by the Dark Magic Region. Correspondingly, you won’t be able to enjoy any cultivation resources available in the Dark Magic Region.”

Wizard Leo laid out two options – they were the choices all temporary members of the Dark Magic Region would need to face when they had advanced to First-level Spell Casters.

Since a long time ago, Merlin had already decided. When he was in Floating City, he had met so many roaming wizards; these people had to explore the dangerous ancient monuments in order to obtain some potion materials or spells. How could their cultivation method compare to that in the spell casters’ organizations?

Naturally, Merlin chose the first option – to become an official member of the Dark Magic Region!

“Teacher Leo, I chose to become an official member of the Dark Magic Region.”

Upon hearing Merlin’s answer, Wizard Leo was not surprised. Almost all temporary members would choose to become official members of the Dark Magic Region after becoming First-level Spell Caster. This was so that they could enjoy the vast resources available in the Dark Magic Region.

“Good! Merlin, since you’ve chosen to become an official member of the Dark Magic Region, then you must sign a contract with us. Before signing it, I want to bring you to meet those old guys. Hehe. What is yours must be given to you. I’ll try my best to fight for your benefits!”

Wizard Leo revealed a strange smile, then brought Merlin away from the tower. They flew toward the few tallest towers in the Dark Magic Region.

Merlin was taken by surprise. The tallest towers that they were heading toward signified the true core of the Dark Magic Region – the powerful Seventh-level Spell Casters!

Chapter 215: Dragging Everyone In

In the Dark Magic Region, Merlin had only met Sixth-level Spell Casters such as Wizard Leo. Many official members, including Merlin, had never seen the Seventh-level Spell Casters even though they could have stayed for over a few decades in the Dark Magic Region.

Right now, Wizard Leo brought Merlin right into the Seventh-level Spell Casters' tower.

When they entered the tower, a Spell Caster approached them and respectfully asked Wizard Leo, "Wizard Leo, what can I do for you?"

Wizard Leo took a glance at the Spell Caster, then replied in a calm tone, "Arveis, bring me to the Dark Magic Circle. I need to activate it."

"What? Wizard Leo, you want to activate the Dark Magic Circle? You can only activate it if there's something truly important. What are you...?"

Arveis inquired shockingly whilst he glanced at Merlin who was standing behind Wizard Leo.

Wizard Leo's tone turned cold. His hollowed eyes stared blankly at Arveis and the red vertical eye on his forehead blinked slightly. His expression exerted a large pressure on Arveis. Even though Arveis was a Fourth-level Spell Caster, he still had to be respectful toward Wizard Leo, especially after he had witnessed the battle against Ozmu. Others would not know about this, but Arveis, as the servant of the Seventh-level Spell Caster, Wizard Robia, knew well that Wizard Leo had killed a powerful Seventh-level Spell Caster of Ozmu while disregarding the difference in levels.

Wizard Leo chased after the powerful Spell Caster and killed him only at the price of an arm. This matter had caused a mighty uproar amongst spell casters' organizations such as the Dark Magic Region, Abyss Fort, and Fire City. It was truly phenomenal.

Hence, the higher-ups of the Dark Magic Region no longer treated Wizard Leo as a Sixth-level Spell Caster. Instead, Wizard Leo was considered a powerful Seventh-level Spell Caster, hence the true core of the Dark Magic Region!

“I naturally have important matters to discuss with them. After I activate the Dark Magic Circle, I’ll explain to the Seventh-level Spell Casters.”

Wizard Leo stated calmly. Arveis did not speak any further. Instead, he led them to the top floor of the tower. It was a large space where countless mysterious runes were densely set up all over.

This was the Dark Magic Circle that had inexhaustible uses – the Magic Circle that almost controlled the entire Dark Magic Region. Only some Spell Casters of Seventh-level and above could slightly control the Dark Magic Circle.

If any detrimental event had happened, they could activate the Dark Magic Circle. The Seventh-level Spell Casters would rush to this place once they had sensed it.

Wizard Leo looked at the Dark Magic Circle and immediately used his powerful Mind Power. Instantly, the Dark Magic Circle was activated, and the entire tower began to emit a faint light.

“Hmm? The Dark Magic Circle has been activated. What happened?”

“The Dark Magic Circle has been activated again. Did anything happen with Ozmu?”

Some Seventh-level Spell Casters were making potions whilst some were making some strange casting tools. On the other hand, some were studying their spells. However, at the same time, they set their gaze at a tall tower in the Dark Magic Region. They sensed that the Dark Magic Circle was activated once again – it was calling for all Seventh-level Spell Casters to head toward it.

“Swish!”

The first to arrive was an old man with his hair hanging down loosely, wearing a magic robe with a golden edge.

“Arveis, what’s going on? Who activated the Dark Magic Circle?”

This old man was none other than Wizard Robia, the Seventh-level Spell Caster who Arveis served. He was also the Spell Caster who chose Cecil instead of Merlin during the conference.

Arveis quickly bowed and answered respectfully, “Master Robia, Wizard Leo activated the Dark Magic Circle.”

“Leo?”

Wizard Robia placed his gaze on Wizard Leo and revealed a complicated expression. When he was about to question Wizard Leo, more Seventh-level Spell Casters flooded the place.

“What happened this time? The Dark Magic Circle has been activated again?”

The one who spoke was Wizard Heusius who wore a black robe. He was the one who led Wizard Leo and the others to deal with the people of Ozmu.

“Old fool, don’t panic. I’ll naturally tell you the reason when everyone is here.”

Wizard Leo showed a rare smile as he answered Wizard Heusius. He seemed to be close to Wizard Heusius since he would joke around with Wizard Heusius.

“Leo? What can happen to you?”

Wizard Heusius glanced at Wizard Leo from top to bottom and found nothing strange. Then, he glanced at Merlin who was standing behind Wizard Leo.

“Could it be due to this young man?”

Wizard Heusius squinted his eyes and stared at Merlin. He seemed to know what was going on.

After a moment, many unfamiliar Wizards arrived. Merlin counted the number of people and found that there were about eight of them. If he included Wizard Leo, it would be nine in total.

These Spell Casters were extraordinary; they were all strong Seventh-level Spell Casters. Normally, it was extremely difficult and rare to meet a Seventh-level Spell Caster but there were more than eight of them gathered here now.

Other than the Spell Casters who could not come or were not in the Dark Magic Region, the Seventh-level Spell Casters of the Dark Magic Region were all gathered in this space.

“Alright, everyone’s here.”

Wizard Leo’s red vertical eye scanned the crowd and found that those who could come had already arrived. Hence, he brought Merlin into the room that he had prepared a moment ago.

The Seventh-level Spell Casters found themselves a seat and Wizard Heusius took the initiative and spoke, “Wizard Leo, tell us why you’ve gathered all of us here. You should know that the Dark Magic Circle cannot be activated so easily.”

The gaze of the Spell Casters was all focused on Wizard Leo.

Wizard Leo appeared calm. He pointed at Merlin who stood behind him and revealed calmly. “I activated the Dark Magic Circle today for my student, Merlin!”

“Your student? A mere Entrance-level Spell Caster?”

“No, he should be a First-level Spell Caster. But even so, he can only become an official member of the Dark Magic Region. Is it appropriate to activate the Dark Magic Circle just for this?”

Many Seventh-level Spell Casters frowned and rather disapproved of Wizard Leo’s action.

However, these Spell Caster had always been concentrating in cultivation in their respective towers, so they did not understand Merlin’s situation. Wizard Heusius and Wizard Robia, who knew about it, both revealed a hint of shock when they heard it.

“Wizard Leo, Merlin has become a First-level Spell Caster?”

Although Wizard Heusius had his suspicion before, he was unsure of it. After seeing Wizard Leo's attitude, his thoughts were confirmed.

"That's right. Merlin has become a First-level Spell Caster. In addition, a Six-Elemental Spell Caster! I believe everyone here understands the significance of a Six-Elemental First-level Spell Caster."

As soon as Wizard Leo dropped the bomb, the entire room turned silent, so much so that even the sound of a needle dropping to the ground was audible. Merlin sensed that many Mind Powers were sizing him up in an unscrupulous way.

Sizing a person up directly with Mind Power was an extremely rude action. However, Merlin could only bear with it since these Spell Casters were all Seventh-level.

After many Seventh-level Spell Casters had checked on him, they then fell silent. Obviously, after the initial inspection, they found that Merlin was indeed a Six-Elemental First-level Spell Caster. In the long history of a thousand years in the Dark Magic Region, none of its members was a Six-Elemental Spell Caster.

"Merlin, you should go out first."

Wizard Leo glimpsed at Merlin and said in a low voice.

Merlin nodded and left the room. Although he did not know what Wizard Leo wanted to discuss with the Seventh-level Spell Casters, it was undoubtedly advantageous to Merlin. If that was not the case, Wizard Leo would not drag everyone here. Wizard Leo had called so many Seventh-level Spell Casters for him.

"It seems that it's not easy to become a Six-Elemental Spell Caster..."

Merlin mumbled to himself. He originally thought that it would be good to just sign a contract with the Dark Magic Region and become an official member of the Dark Magic Region. However, it appeared that his strength as a "Six-Elemental Spell Caster" was not something to take lightly of. It was a matter crucial enough for all Seventh-level Spell Casters to come together for a discussion.

After ensuring Merlin had left, Wizard Leo revealed a smile. The red vertical eye on his forehead was blinking slowly, appearing even stranger than usual.

“Everyone, I believe that you’ve seen enough. My student, Wizard Merlin, is indeed a Six-Elemental Spell Caster and he has shown his intention in signing a contract with the Dark Magic Region. Having such prodigy, I think we should give Merlin a reward worth of one hundred thousand contribution points.”

Wizard Leo’s words were shocking where he asked for a reward worth of one hundred thousand contribution points. It was important to know that contribution points played a major role in the Dark Magic Region. All sorts of casting tools, spells, and potions were exchanged with contribution points.

Furthermore, many Seventh-level Spell Casters did not even possess such wealth.

“Impossible. Definitely impossible! Wizard Leo, back then, Kleis only had fifty thousand contribution points. How can we reward Merlin with one hundred thousand contribution points?”

One of the Spell Casters immediately refuted. One hundred thousand contribution points were simply too frightening.

“Wizard Zoro, Kleis is only a Five-Elemental Spell Caster and the Dark Magic Region had rewarded him with fifty thousand contribution points. Is there any Six-Elemental Spell Caster in the history of the Dark Magic Region? Other than us, is there any Six-Elemental Spell Caster in Fire City, Ashes Region or Abyss Fort? Six-Elemental Spell Casters rarely appear even in large spell casters’ organizations. Why can’t we reward one hundred thousand contribution points to such a prodigy?”

Wizard Leo had expected some voices of objection, so his tone was extremely calm when he explained.

After Wizard Leo finished his words, the entire room fell into a silence again. Six-Elemental Spell Caster had never appeared in the history of the Dark Magic Region for one thousand years. It was fine if Merlin was merely an Entrance-level Spell Caster; he would never get the attention of these Seventh-level Spell Casters. However, Merlin had become a First-level Spell Caster now.

This showed that Merlin had a large potential to become a Fourth-level Spell Caster or even higher levels; the possibilities were infinite. No one could accurately predict the future of such a prodigy.

Normally, the Dark Magic Region would give a bold reward to such a prodigy and support the cultivation of these genius Spell Casters with a large number of contribution points. However, ever since the betrayal of Kleis not long ago, these Seventh-level Spell Casters were wary of Merlin.

“It’s possible to give him one hundred thousand contribution points. But, Wizard Leo, can you ensure that Wizard Merlin won’t betray the Dark Magic Region as Kleis did?”

It was Wizard Robia who pointed this out. He did not choose Merlin during the conference because he thought that Merlin could never become a First-level Spell Caster. However, Merlin had become a First-level Spell Caster in just a year; this fact made him rather embarrassed.

However, the matter he pointed out was also the worry of many Seventh-level Spell Casters. After all, Kleis had just betrayed the Dark Magic Region not long ago. He had even exchanged many spells and casting tools from the Dark Magic Region with his contribution points before turning to Ozmu. This fact had induced fury among the members of the Dark Magic Region.

After experiencing the matter with Kleis, the Seventh-level Spell Casters of the Dark Magic Region were naturally more cautious in considering this. They did not want to experience such betrayal ever again.

At this moment, everyone gathered their focus on Wizard Leo once again.

Chapter 216: Signing the Contract

“Betray?”

Wizard Leo smiled as he said calmly, “Kleis and Merlin are two different people; how can we compare them? Does the Dark Magic Region reject all prodigies after our experience with Kleis now?”

“Moreover, if Merlin truly betrays the Dark Magic Region in the future, I’ll kill him with my own hands!”

Wizard Leo’s tone, albeit calm, revealed a hint of determination that cast away all doubts.

“Hehe, Wizard Leo. You said you’ll kill him with your own hands. If Merlin truly acts the same way as Kleis and was tempted by Ozmu to betray the Dark Magic Region, can you still easily kill him when he’s under Ozmu’s protection?”

One of the Seventh-level wizards suddenly scoffed.

“Hmm? Wizard Sharman, are you doubting my words? Not long ago, the genius Spell Caster of Ozmu, Wizard Osseus, also doubted my words, and he’s dead now!”

Wizard Leo’s tone was cold and stiff. The red vertical eye on his forehead blinked a faint red light slightly; his hollowed eyes staring at Wizard Sharman. Tension immediately filled the air.

The people glanced at Wizard Leo’s empty sleeve and a hint of fear flashed in their eyes. Indeed, even the genius Spell Caster of Ozmu, Osseus, had died in the hands of Wizard Leo. Normal Seventh-level Spell Casters were completely inferior to Wizard Leo who had cultivated Darkness Eye to the ultimate level.

Wizard Leo had chased after Osseus for thousands of miles during the battle against Ozmu. The fact that he had killed the Seventh-level Spell Caster, Osseus, had shaken many spell casters’ organizations. Even Ozmu was shocked by the news.

Killing while disregarding the difference in levels was nothing; many prodigies in Ozmu could also do it. However, Wizard Leo had killed the genius Spell Caster of Ozmu while disregarding the difference of levels between them. This was not something that happened every day.

Furthermore, many capable Spell Casters of Ozmu who were sent to fight the joint group of the Dark Magic Region, Abyss Fort, Fire City, and Ashes Region, had all lost because they were affected by Wizard Leo. At last, they had no choice but to agree on a pact with other spell casters’ organizations in order to stabilize the situation.

Wizard Sharman opened his mouth and a hint of anger flashed on his face. When he was about to say something, Wizard Heusius waved his hands. “Wizard Leo, Wizard Sharman is not doubting your words. It’s just that we need to be more cautious after experiencing the incident with Kleis.”

After a slight pause, Wizard Heusius continued. “A Six-Elemental Spell Caster appears in the Dark Magic Region is something worthy of a celebration. After all, many large-scaled spell casters’ organizations don’t possess such genius Spell Casters. However, once this news gets out, I’m afraid Ozmu will have second thoughts again. Even though we’ve made a pact with Ozmu, they never

have the tendency to keep to the pact. If they wish to, they can send anyone here to tempt Merlin. So, we must be prepared for that.

“How about this? Rewarding one hundred thousand contribution points to a Six-Elemental Spell Caster is nothing, but we can’t give it in a lump sum. We’ll make it ten years and reward ten thousand contribution points to him every year. This way, he won’t be able to exchange for a large number of spells and casting tools, then betray the Dark Magic Region as Kleis did. Moreover, ten thousand contribution points are sufficient for Merlin to exchange for some spells and potions.

“In addition, the contract we sign with Wizard Merlin has to be of the highest grade; it’ll be able to bind a Seventh-level Spell Caster. With this, it’ll be impossible for Ozmu to terminate the contract with normal Earth Purified Water no matter how much they want to tempt Merlin – they must pay a great price to do it!”

Wizard Heusius raised two suggestions. They would split the one hundred thousand contribution points in ten years. In other words, they would give ten thousand contribution points to Merlin each year. Wizard Leo could accept this suggestion since ten thousand contribution points was considered a large amount.

As for the second suggestion, the contract they signed with Merlin had to be of the highest grade; Wizard Leo had no objections regarding that. When the Dark Magic Region signed a contract with ordinary official members, only the low-grade contract would be used. Its binding power was not excellent, so it could be easily terminated by using Earth Purified Water.

However, in the case of the highest-grade contract, although the Dark Magic Region had to make a little sacrifice to prepare the contract, the price that Ozmu had to pay to terminate the contract was relatively greater than that of the Dark Magic Region. After all, the highest-grade contract was not something that could be easily terminated with just Earth Purified Water.

“Alright, I agree on these two terms. I believe Merlin will agree to them as well.”

Wizard Leo nodded and was satisfied with the discussion. No matter how he saw it, these two conditions were beneficial to Merlin. As for the binding of the contract, it would not affect Merlin much as long as he did not betray the Dark Magic Region.

“Merlin, come in.”

Merlin was still waiting outside of the room when Wizard Leo's voice suddenly rang in his ears. He immediately felt refreshed, knowing that these Seventh-level Spell Casters had come to a conclusion. Hence, he strode into the room quickly.

“Wizard Leo!”

Merlin slightly bowed to Wizard Leo and the other Seventh-level Spell Casters.

Wizard Leo nodded, then said with a smile, “Merlin, after our discussion, we decided to reward you. Back then, when Kleis leveled up to become a First-level Spell Caster as a Five-Elemental Spell Caster, the Dark Magic Region had rewarded him fifty thousand contribution points. In your case, you’ve become a First-level Spell Caster as a Six-Elemental Spell Caster. You’ll receive a greater reward – one hundred thousand contribution points!”

“Boom!”

Upon hearing the “one hundred thousand contribution points” from Wizard Leo, Merlin felt his mind had gone blank.

One hundred thousand contribution points was almost an unimaginable wealth, it was more than sufficient in supporting his cultivation until the seventh-level.

Unsurprisingly, Merlin heard that Kleis, who had betrayed the Dark Magic Region had become a Third-level Spell Caster after just a few years. It turned out that he was supported by a large number of contribution points given by the Dark Magic Region.

Some First-level spells only cost up to hundreds of contribution points; a Runic Robe only cost about two hundred contribution points. It was enough to prove how large a fortune of ten thousand contribution points was.

It turned out that Wizard Leo activated the Dark Magic Circle because he wanted to negotiate for Merlin's reward. Merlin could imagine how much of a debate Wizard Leo could have gone through with the Seventh-level Spell Casters earlier to finally decide on the reward of one hundred thousand contribution points.

Merlin shot a grateful glance toward Wizard Leo.

However, Wizard Leo's tone suddenly changed and he became serious. "Merlin, I believe you're aware of the incident of Kleis, who was tempted by Ozmu to betray the Dark Magic Region. As a result, we can't reward you the one hundred thousand contribution points in a lump sum. Instead, we'll reward you ten thousand contribution points each year for ten years. You'll need to sign the highest-grade contract with the Dark Magic Region as well. Do you agree to these conditions?"

Ten thousand contribution points each year for ten years was still a huge fortune to Merlin, so naturally, he would not object to that. As for the highest-grade contract, Merlin was rather alerted, so he asked in a low voice, "Teacher Leo, how does this highest-grade contract affect me?"

Merlin was familiar with the basic contract. He just could not betray the Dark Magic Region and there were no other conditions associated with it. Meanwhile, he knew nothing about the highest-grade contract.

"The highest-grade contract is no different than a basic contract in terms of content. You can't betray Dark Magic Region in either of them. However, the highest-grade contract cannot be terminated easily. Even if Ozmu wants to terminate it, they'll have to pay a great price to do that."

Wizard Leo explained briefly to Merlin about the highest-grade contract and Merlin understood the differences. Essentially, the existence of such contract was to prevent the incident of Kleis from happening again.

Hence, Merlin did not hesitate any longer and nodded. "Teacher, I agree to sign the highest-grade contract!"

"Good!"

Wizard Leo nodded and shot his gaze at Wizard Heusius. With a low voice, he spoke, "Wizard Heusius, pass me the contract papers."

Wizard Heusius nodded and from his ring, he took a few completely black papers with a faint golden light.

Wizard Leo took the contract papers and gently threw them into mid-air. Instantly, a strange Mind fluctuation was transmitted from the contract papers as they let out a bright light. Strange runes surrounded the contract papers, giving off a mysterious vibe.

These were the contract papers, an extremely marvelous casting tool. The contract papers were not complicated but they were made of a special material. The better the quality of the material, the stronger the effect of contract papers made.

For example, these contract papers were of the highest grade where it could even bind a Seventh-level Spell Caster. In the Dark Magic Region, they were considered rare and precious.

“Merlin, before you sign the contract, I must solemnly remind you this – if you betray the Dark Magic Region in the future as Kleis did, I’ll hunt you down with my own hands no matter where you are!”

Wizard Leo looked at Merlin and the red vertical eye on his forehead continued to blink. His tone was grim.

Merlin took a deep breath and nodded with a serious expression. He extended his Mind Power onto the contract papers and began signing the contract. “In the name of Wilson Merlin, I abide by the ancient contract and will never betray the Dark Magic Region!”

Whenever Merlin said a word, a strange rune would appear on the contract papers and etched on it. After Merlin had finished his words, a strong pulling force appeared from the contract papers and sucked in a small part of his Mind Power.

This signified that the contract had been signed. If Merlin violated the contract in the future, the contract would backfire on him. In serious cases, the contract would make him go mad and caused his Spell Models to crumble apart.

After signing the contract, Merlin was no longer a temporary member. Instead, from this day onward, he was an official member of the Dark Magic Region, a true part of the organization!

Chapter 217: Fatal Flaw

After Merlin had signed the contract, most of the Seventh-level Spell Casters took their leave. Their time was precious, and like Wizard Leo, they rarely left the Wizard Tower.

“Wizard Leo.”

Wizard Heusius suddenly called out to Wizard Leo with a smile on his face.

“Merlin, wait for me outside.”

Wizard Leo allowed Merlin to leave before he turned around, the blood-red third eye on his forehead blinking slightly. He asked in a level tone, “Old fool, something you have to say?”

Wizard Heusius was obviously on good terms with Wizard Leo and did not mind Wizard Leo’s term of address. However, his face slowly grew solemn as he asked in a low voice, “Leo, are you really alright? After all, what happened with Raydore was many years ago, and what’s more, you’ve already beheaded Osseus. You’ve been preoccupied with this matter – now that it’s thoroughly settled, it’s time to let go of the past!”

Wizard Heusius understood Wizard Leo’s heartache very well. In the beginning, Wizard Leo’s younger brother, Raydore, had been a prodigious Spell Caster, but he was corrupted by people from Ozmu and betrayed Wizard Leo’s clan.

At that time, Wizard Leo had not joined the Dark Magic Region. The Spell Caster clan he belonged to was also a large one. The masters in his clan had held down the masters of Ozmu, and it was Wizard Leo himself who had put an end to his younger brother, Raydore.

This was an internal conflict that Wizard Leo had never been able to resolve. It was to the point where after he joined the Dark Magic Region and incidentally obtained the cultivation method for Darkness Eye, he had cultivated it by every possible mean. He did it with no regard for what it cost him until he was successful.

Finally, in the recent battle with Ozmu, Wizard Leo had traversed a long distance to personally behead Wizard Osseus, who had turned Raydore against his own clan, and finally resolved the anguish in his heart.

This matter was only known to a few, even among the Seventh-level Spell Casters in the Dark Magic Region. Wizard Heusius was one of those who knew what happened in detail.

“That’s right, I’ve completely let go of what happened with Raydore. Osseus is dead, and now I truly am Leo! Old fool, don’t worry, from now on, I’ll be me, the Sixth-level Spell Caster Wizard Leo of the Dark Magic Region. I’ll train Merlin well. He’s the most gifted Spell Caster I’ve ever

seen. Besides his outstanding talent, his perseverance is what I most admire. Looking at him is like looking at myself from the past...”

After he had spoken, Wizard Leo flashed a pleased smile. Following that, he left the room in big strides, and said to Merlin who was waiting outside, “Merlin, return to the tower!”

Merlin got up slightly to give Wizard Heusius a half-bow, then he turned around and left, following Wizard Leo.

...

Back in the Wizard Tower, Merlin was brought by Wizard Leo into his room. Wizard Leo broke out in a grin and seemed to be very pleased as he spoke calmly, “Merlin, you’ve just signed a contract of the highest level with the Dark Magic Region. As you’re the prodigy that I shall be nurturing in the Dark Magic Region, who is as much a priority as Kleis was before, there are a few things that I should tell you.”

After a pause, Wizard Leo continued. “It’s about the outcome of the battle with Ozmu. No one knew what else to do this time. Ozmu had antagonized too many people, and they couldn’t utilize too many masters, so they signed a pact with the Dark Magic Region, Abyss Fort, and other spell casters’ organizations. Both sides agreed that the people of Ozmu would no longer come to the Dark Magic Region or other organizations to turn Spell Casters against their own groups, and the Dark Magic Region, Abyss Fort, and other spell casters’ organizations wouldn’t send Spell Casters who were Fourth-level or above to hunt the gifted Spell Casters who had betrayed us.”

“Ozmu was being crafty, for who among those disloyal Spell Casters isn’t the cream of the crop? Among those on the same level, who could possibly be their match? Nevertheless, the pact has been signed, and we cannot openly violate it. Therefore, the Dark Magic Region had already issued the matter of Kleis as a mission in the Mission Hall. Any Spell Caster below Fourth-level from the Dark Magic Region who’s able to kill Kleis will be awarded fifty thousand contribution points!

“Merlin, if you level up to a Third-level Spell Caster someday, there’s a high chance you’ll get to kill Kleis and obtain those fifty thousand contribution points. However, don’t take the risk when you’re still uncertain of winning. In the past, Kleis was the number-one prodigy that I favored, and his powers must surely have improved substantially after he joined Ozmu.”

Merlin nodded his head pensively. This time around, the Dark Magic Region and other spell casters’ organizations who had signed a pact with Ozmu were, in fact, at a disadvantage. Even if the Dark Magic Region and other organizations seemed to have the upper hand on the battlefield, it was only

because Ozmu had merely dispatched a small part of their forces. If they had waited for Ozmu to recover its strength, the Dark Magic Region and other spell casters' organizations would be no match for Ozmu at all.

Therefore, the people of Ozmu had obtained an advantage by signing the pact and were indirectly protecting their prodigies as well.

After he had finished explaining about Ozmu, Wizard Leo's expression gradually turned solemn as he said to Merlin in a serious tone, "Merlin, you should already have ten thousand contribution points in your Dark Magic ring. With those points, the spells, casting tools, potions, and other things that you need shouldn't be an issue. You can head to the Resource Tower and exchange for them by yourself. I won't be able to help you with much..."

Merlin opened his mouth to say something, but he was stopped by Wizard Leo who waved his hand and continued speaking, "I know that I don't excel in instructing students. Your achievements today aren't due to my efforts. However, you're ultimately a student of mine, of Leo, so I'm still proud of your present achievements! I can't help you with much now. There're only two things in which I may still be able to assist you, which are my Darkness Eye and the Darkness-type spell that's above Second-level which you need!"

Merlin's attention was roused immediately upon hearing Wizard Leo mention "Darkness Eye". In truth, he was already vaguely aware that Wizard Leo's "Darkness Eye" was a Pandora Demon Ability as well, and a very powerful one!

As for the Darkness-type spell that was above Second-level, Merlin had been unable to find such a spell in the Resource Tower. There were not many Spell Casters who constructed Darkness-type spells in the Dark Magic Region, and of course, the one who was most accomplished in this area was Wizard Leo. Thus, if Merlin wanted to obtain a Darkness-type spell that was above Second-level, he would still need Wizard Leo's assistance.

Noticing the anticipating look in Merlin's eyes, Wizard Leo bobbed his head with satisfaction and gave him a smile. He said serenely, "My Darkness Eye is a type of Pandora Demon Ability, which is a mystical power, more marvelous than spells, that's passed on from ancient times. With Darkness Eye, I was able to break through my own level to kill a Seventh-level Spell Caster from Ozmu. With Darkness Eye, I was even able to influence the outcome of the battle with Ozmu!"

"There're countless people who want to obtain my Darkness Eye. In fact, there're records of Darkness Eye in Abyss Fort as well. As they specialize in Darkness-type spells, it was natural that they would've long collected this Darkness-type Pandora Demon Ability. However, for such a long

time, no one in Abyss Fort was able to cultivate it successfully. Conversely, it was I, someone from the Dark Magic Region, who successfully cultivated Darkness Eye. Do you know why?”

Merlin shook his head. He did not know much about Darkness Eye. All he knew was that it was an extremely powerful type of Pandora Demon Ability, which was very difficult to cultivate. Otherwise, Wizard Leo would not have gouged out both his eyes just to cultivate Darkness Eye.

Darkness Eye in Wizard Leo’s forehead began to open completely. In a flash, Merlin was bathed in a blood-red light and felt like he had been transported to a completely foreign place.

“Illusion?”

Merlin himself had constructed the spells Dark Mist and Dark Light Realm, so naturally, he was no stranger to illusions. However, despite his strong Mind Power which was at the standard of a Third-level Spell Caster’s, he had been drawn into an illusion, without any resistance, by Wizard Leo’s Darkness Eye. This was enough to show how powerful Wizard Leo’s Darkness Eye was.

Moreover, causing illusions was only one of the unremarkable powers of Darkness Eye.

Wizard Leo’s expression suddenly turned complicated as he began to speak in a halting manner, “Even after so many years, none of the Spell Casters in Abyss Fort were able to cultivate Darkness Eye because its cultivation method was flawed and incomplete. Of course, no one was able to cultivate Darkness Eye then.”

“Flawed? In that case, Wizard Leo, how did you manage to cultivate Darkness Eye successfully? Do you actually have the complete cultivation method?”

Merlin’s heart jumped. He did not think that the cultivation method of Darkness Eye would be flawed and incomplete. It was unsurprising that no one had been able to cultivate it in Abyss Fort even though they possessed the cultivation method.

However, Wizard Leo had managed to cultivate Darkness Eye by now, so it was very likely that he had the complete cultivation method.

Nonetheless, Wizard Leo shook his head. “The cultivation method of Darkness Eye is flawed, and I didn’t get the complete method either. However, I’ve devised a cultivation method by which Darkness Eye can be forcibly cultivated until completion. This method has a fatal flaw. For that

reason, I've paid a huge price. Besides not being able to see with both eyes, I'll also never become a Seventh-level Spell Caster. The Darkness-type Spell Model in me has thoroughly lost its balance because I cultivated Darkness Eye by force. Now, I'm only able to maintain my current condition. If I construct a new Seventh-level spell, the Spell Model in my Awareness would collapse instantly..."

From the tone of Wizard Leo's voice, Merlin was able to sense his profound helplessness and regret.

This was Wizard Leo's biggest secret. He went as far as to devise a cultivation method for Darkness Eye. Although this method had a fatal flaw, it was enough to demonstrate that Wizard Leo's accomplishments in the area of Darkness-type spells had surpassed those of the Seventh-level Spell Casters in Abyss Fort.

Even though he had the powerful capability to behead Seventh-level Spell Casters, it was still an enormous regret of Wizard Leo that he would never be able to become a Seventh-level Spell Caster. In order to avenge Raydore and to resolve his anguish, Wizard Leo had sure paid a price that was unimaginable to most Spell Casters!

"Merlin, there's a major defect in my Darkness Eye so I can't pass it to you, but I can let you learn another Darkness-type Pandora Demon Ability. You would even be able to obtain the Darkness-type spell that's above Second-level that you need!"

Wizard Leo suddenly spoke in a low voice, and a strange smile appeared from the corner of his lips, which made Merlin feel skeptical.

Chapter 218: Robe

"Don't tell me that the Dark Magic Region possesses Darkness-type Pandora Demon Ability?"

Merlin questioned doubtfully. The Dark Magic Region did not even have Darkness-type spells that were above Second-level, let alone Darkness-type Pandora Demon Ability which was more precious.

Wizard Leo shook his head slightly. "The Dark Magic Region doesn't have Pandora Demon Ability, of course... Forget it, get yourself ready first. I'll bring you to a place tomorrow and you'll understand then."

Wizard Leo did not tell Merlin right away but instead let Merlin head down to get ready. Merlin would naturally be clear about everything tomorrow when they would go to the said mysterious place.

Seeing that Wizard Leo was unwilling to go on, Merlin did not pursue the matter, and respectfully left Wizard Leo's room.

Merlin did not return to his own room but headed straight for the Resource Tower after he had left the Wizard Tower. He wanted to receive the robe that he would get after becoming an official member of the Dark Magic Region.

The robe of the official members of the Dark Magic Region was no ordinary robe. It could be considered a Defensive casting tool, and one would need more than a hundred contribution points to exchange for it at the Resource Tower.

When Merlin reached the Resource Tower, he saw that the tower was bustling with movement as people passed back and forth. There were many Spell Casters who were exchanging spells or potions and so on in the Resource Tower.

At the entrance of the Resource Tower, a few gray-robed Wizards were lazing around with their eyes shut.

"I'm here to get the robe for official members."

Merlin approached the gray-robed Wizards and spoke softly.

"The robe for official members? Hand over your Dark Magic ring."

One of the gray-robed Wizards opened his eyes and gave Merlin a serene look as he asked for Merlin's Dark Magic ring.

Merlin nodded and immediately handed his Dark Magic ring to this Wizard.

All information concerning a Spell Caster was recorded within the Dark Magic ring. Only the gray-robed Wizards who had mastered the designated casting tools of the Dark Magic Region were able to examine the information within the Dark Magic ring.

At first, this gray-robed Wizard seemed to be rather absent-minded but when Merlin's Dark Magic ring shone its brilliant light and he saw the information contained within the ring, his face underwent a great change. When he lifted his head to look at Merlin again, his eyes revealed his incredulity.

"Wizard Merlin, you want to receive your official member's robe?"

The gray-robed Wizard's tone of voice had evidently become respectful. After seeing the information in Merlin's Dark Magic ring, he still seemed to be in some sort of a disbelieving dream.

"That's right, give me one of those robes for official members."

Merlin nodded. Following that, the gray-robed Wizard woke up the other Wizards and briefed them in a low, urgent voice. Their expressions became dignified and they immediately went into the Resource Tower and took out a robe.

"Wizard Merlin, this is the robe for the official members of the Dark Magic Region. The powerful Runic Magic Circle inscribed on the robe will be able to defend against the attacks of First-level spells."

The robe that the gray-robed Wizard took out was ink-black. The cuffs and collar were lined with a decorative golden design, and on the left breast was a unique runic imprint. This was the distinct imprint of the Dark Magic Region that represented the official members of the organization.

Any official member of the Dark Magic Region would wear this robe if they were completing a mission outside. Other spell casters' organizations or knowledgeable Wizards would then recognize them as an official member of the Dark Magic Region.

If an official member was killed, the Dark Magic Region had an obligation to hunt and annihilate the killers until their very last breath! This was also a duty that official members would need to fulfill after signing the contract with the Dark Magic Region.

Therefore, even though one simply needed to wear the Dark Magic ring to enter the Dark Magic Region, no one was foolish enough to kill an official member of the Dark Magic Region and rob their rings, because not only would the killer be unable to enter the Dark Magic Region, they would also be constantly hunted by the Dark Magic Region.

One would only receive the Dark Magic Region's protection by becoming its official member. Temporary members did not receive such protection and would be in danger after they left the Dark Magic Region.

Merlin had some understanding of this robe for official members of the Dark Magic Region. In the past, he had admired this robe, but now, a robe that could only defend against First-level spells was not of much use to Merlin.

"There's only this type of robe? I recall that in the Resource Tower, there seems to be a robe with more exceptional defensive capabilities."

Merlin frowned as he commented in a low voice.

The gray-robed Wizard hastened to explain, "Wizard Merlin, the free robe that official members get is just this one which can defend against First-level spells. Of course, in the Resource Tower, there are robes with better defensive capabilities, but they're not given for free. If Wizard Merlin wanted to exchange for one of those, you could convert this robe into a hundred contribution points to be discounted from the robe you want, and you would have to pay the additional contribution points yourself."

Hearing this, Merlin broke out into a smile. "I'll exchange for that then. As for the required contribution points, naturally, I'll compensate for them."

From Merlin's point of view, he wasn't lacking in contribution points. Every year, the Dark Magic Region would award ten thousand contribution points, and he had just this amount in his Dark Magic ring. There were many Fourth-level Spell Casters who were able to build their own individual tower, but they were not even as prosperous as Merlin.

Thereafter, Merlin followed the gray-robed Wizard to the third floor of the Resource Tower. The place was filled with casting tools, among which the number of robes was the highest – all the robes that one could ever need were here.

The gray-robed Wizard explained to Merlin, "There are many types of robes in the Resource Tower. One of the common ones is the robe for official members, which is usually just able to defend against First-level spells. There are also robes which can withstand Second and Third-level spells. However, these robes may only be obtained by an official member. As for temporary members, they

may exchange for robes with powerful defensive capabilities, but those robes won't bear the Dark Magic Region's unique runic imprint, so they won't be recognized as an official member."

Merlin nodded his head. In truth, Wizard Holmes from before had exchanged for a robe from the Resource Tower, and its defensive powers were not that much different from those worn by official members of the Dark Magic Region. However, it lacked the unique runic imprint of the Dark Magic Region, so even when he had worn the robe outside, he would not be identified as an official member.

"Is there no robe that could withstand Fourth-level spells?"

Merlin had only heard the gray-robed Wizard mention robes that could defend against Third-level spells, so he asked this doubtfully.

The gray-robed Wizard explained with a smile, "Of course there is. There are even robes which may defend against Fifth and Sixth-level spells, but these Runic Robes require a mastery of runology to activate the powerful Runic Magic Circles on the robes. Among the robes that would activate the Runic Magic Circle without the necessary expertise in runology, the strongest one could merely defend against Third-level spells.

"Furthermore, this is only because the Dark Magic Region specializes in runology. If it was some other spell casters' organization whose expertise in runology isn't as impressive as ours, it would be good enough for them to manufacture robes which may withstand Second-level spells without any prerequisites – to say nothing of robes which could easily block Third-level spells without any qualifications."

Merlin nodded his head. The Dark Magic Region's expertise was in runology, so they were easily able to manufacture robes which required no prerequisites, which could be worn by any Spell Caster and defend against Third-level spells. In other places, such a robe would be extremely precious.

At least, Merlin had not even seen a robe, capable of withstanding Third-level spells, that could be used by any Spell Caster when he was in Sterling House of Floating City.

Only in the Dark Magic Region would he be able to find such a powerful robe.

"Alright, I'll take the robe that can defend against Third-level spells."

Merlin was not an expert in runology, so naturally, he would not select the more powerful robes. Moreover, this robe that would block attacks from Third-level spells was rather handy as well. Whenever he was in danger, he would no longer need to constantly use the Enhancing casting tool to cast the strengthened version of Guardian Monument, which would greatly exhaust his Magic Power.

“Wizard Merlin, this robe costs one thousand and one hundred contribution points. After deducting the one hundred contribution points that the free robe would be converted into, you would still need to pay a thousand contribution points.”

The gray-robed Wizard beamed in joy as he spoke. A thousand contribution points – he had been in the Resource Tower for so long but had never seen such an amount. However, as he thought of the tremendous number of contribution points in Merlin’s Dark Magic ring, he was overcome by a powerless feeling.

The gray-robed Wizard was also an official member of the Dark Magic Region and earned contribution points from accepting missions in the Mission Hall. Looking at the fortune of contribution points in Merlin’s Dark Magic ring, he was naturally very astonished. However, he recalled that Merlin was a Six-Elemental Spell Caster, someone who was even more gifted than Kleis, so it was only natural that the Dark Magic Region would value him so.

“A thousand contribution points? It’s expensive indeed!”

Merlin was slightly taken aback. He inquired carefully to find out that the robe which could defend against First-level spells only cost a hundred contribution points whereas the price of the robe capable of withstanding Second-level spells was much higher – five hundred contribution points.

As for the robe that would defend against Third-level spells, one would need a costly sum of one thousand and one hundred contribution points. Only Spell Casters who were above Fourth-level could possess such an amount. However, a robe like this seemed to be of little value to Spell Casters of that level, thus, in the Resource Tower, a few years could go by without this expensive robe being exchanged for.

“I’ll exchange for this robe then!”

Even though this robe was costly, it would serve such a great purpose for Merlin. Merlin did not have any hesitation and quickly made up his mind to get this robe.

“Wizard Merlin, what else do you need? Spells? Potions?”

The gray-robed Wizard inquired warmly.

Merlin shook his head lightly. “I’ve no need for those, just this robe for now.”

He had just become a First-level Spell Caster not long ago, so there was no rush to construct Second-level spells. As for potions, he would select them at his leisure when he had time in the future. Although he had many contribution points, he would not squander them recklessly.

Merlin put on the robe he had just obtained and sensed that, in the event of an attack, the dense lines of runes on the robe would immediately emerge and absorb the attack.

With that, Merlin left the Resource Tower right away and returned once more to Wizard Leo’s tower.

“I wonder where Wizard Leo will bring me to tomorrow?”

Merlin returned to his room and was in deep thought on where would Wizard Leo be taking him the next day.

Chapter 219: Abyss Fort

At first light the next day, Merlin went to the highest floor of the tower and quietly waited outside Wizard Leo’s door.

“Creak.”

Very soon, Wizard Leo pushed open the large door and walked out. Seeing that Merlin was already waiting for him, he smiled and nodded with a serene expression. “Let’s go, I’ll bring you to a place today.”

Merlin nodded and did not ask any questions. He followed behind Wizard Leo.

Wizard Leo brought Merlin out of the tower and came to a place with Runic Magic Circles packed densely together. Merlin knew that this was the Runic Magic Circle for leaving the Dark Magic Region. It seemed that Wizard Leo was bringing him outside.

“Buzz.”

Wizard Leo’s tremendous Mind Power activated one of the Runic Magic Circles. The figures of Merlin and Wizard Leo were enveloped in the dense lines of runes and they disappeared in a flash.

...

In a peaceful valley, two figures appeared in mid-air, their bodies circled by mysterious runes that had not dissipated.

Merlin, dressed in a long, black Wizard robe, surveyed the valley curiously. In the Runic Magic Circle earlier, he had experienced a pressure that was greater than the previous time. This meant that the distance that they had traveled through the Runic Magic Circle was extremely far.

“Come on, we need to hurry!”

Wizard Leo said with a straight face. With a wave of his hand, a fierce burst of Wind Element surrounded his body, after which it quickly wrapped around Merlin as well. Thereafter, both rose up in the air and began to fly into the distance.

Only spells that were above Fourth-level could enable flight. Moreover, it was even more difficult to be able to pull it off like Wizard Leo, who had easily supported another person’s flight. This demonstrated the enormous amount of Magic Power in Wizard Leo’s body.

They were flying at a high speed. Merlin glanced down and took in view of countless rivers, mountains, and jungles, which evoked a peculiar sensation in him. Perhaps a Spell Caster could only be considered a truly powerful Wizard if they were able to soar so freely.

Merlin had already become a First-level Spell Caster but this was only the beginning. He would be able to defeat some Third-level Spell Casters by relying on Pandora Demon Ability, but he was still weak and puny compared to a Fourth-level Spell Caster.

At the very least, a Fourth-level Spell Caster with a Flying spell would render Merlin completely helpless! This huge disparity could not be bridged by any spells or Pandora Demon Ability!

As countless thoughts flashed across Merlin's mind, Wizard Leo was already leading Merlin into a slow descend, and they finally landed in a valley that was surrounded by mountains.

This stretch of the valley was covered in dense jungles. There was also a winding brook which was flowing quietly. However, the strange thing was there were no signs of any wild beasts.

Merlin looked toward Wizard Leo in puzzlement. What did Wizard Leo bring him here for?

Wizard Leo asked suddenly, "Merlin, didn't you notice anything?"

Merlin furrowed his brow. Upon listening to what Wizard Leo said, he quickly extended his Mind Power to his surroundings but was unable to sense anything amiss.

Thus, Merlin shook his head slightly. "Wizard Leo, I didn't discover anything wrong with this place."

A smile tugged at the corner of Wizard Leo's lips, and he said in a somewhat rueful voice, "To be able to portray such a life-like illusion – even without meticulous runic techniques – it's possible to accomplish through spells!"

With that, Wizard Leo waved his hand abruptly, and his tremendous Mind Power became like a wild gale that tore through the vast valley.

It was hard to imagine the immensity of Wizard Leo's Mind Power. Although Mind Power was something intangible and phantasmal, Merlin was scared out of his wits under this powerful surge of Mind Power which was unable to even muster up a shred of resistance.

This was the embodiment of Mind Power that had reached its pinnacle. Wizard Leo's Mind Power had far surpassed the limits of what Sixth-level Spell Casters could contain, where it approached the standard of Seventh-level, or even higher.

However, the thing that really stunned Merlin was after Wizard Leo's Mind Power swept over everything, the entire valley seemed to be wiped away bit by bit and then vanished without a trace. Before Merlin was a massive, barren hillside that was even larger than the valley earlier.

Below the hillside stood a gigantic stone tablet with two large words inscribed in Molta language –"Abyss Fort".

"Abyss Fort? This place is Abyss Fort?"

Merlin was astonished. He did not expect the previous scenery of green hills and clear rivers to turn into Abyss Fort which looked rather gloomy, frightening, and desolate.

"Which Wizard is it who has graced us with their presence?"

Very soon, a few Spell Casters quickly came out from a huge hole behind the stone tablet. They did not possess a powerful force, so they could have been First- and Second-level Spell Casters.

These Spell Casters were just like the ones in the Dark Magic Region who were guarding the entry passage in order to earn a few contribution points. They had just felt an alarming surge of Mind Power, which had forcibly dispelled the mighty Illusion spell maintained by Abyss Fort, so they came out in bewilderment to greet whoever it was.

Only a Spell Caster with terrifying power would be able to forcibly dispel the Illusion spell of Abyss Fort with their Mind Power. Thus, although these Spell Casters were at the doorway of Abyss Fort, they did not feel particularly bold.

The blood-red third eye on Wizard Leo's forehead opened slowly, shining with beams of crimson light. Wizard Leo said in a level tone, "Report to Wizard Hobbes that Leo from the Dark Magic Region is here to pay a visit!"

"Wizard Leo? You're Wizard Leo from the Dark Magic Region who had cultivated Darkness Eye and hunted the Seventh-level Spell Caster Osseus from Ozmu?"

Upon hearing Wizard Leo's name, the Spell Casters from Abyss Fort turned pale with shock.

Wizard Leo's beheading of a Seventh-level Spell Caster from Ozmu had astonished many spell casters' organizations. However, the ones which were most taken aback were from Abyss Fort as their expertise was Darkness-type spells. Even though they possessed the cultivation method of Wizard Leo's Darkness Eye, none of them was able to cultivate it successfully.

Wizard Leo had relied on Darkness Eye to bypass his own level and behead a Seventh-level Spell Caster from Ozmu. This, to Abyss Fort, was a momentous breakthrough, allowing them to truly comprehend how powerful Darkness Eye was.

"Wizard Leo, please wait for a moment. We'll report immediately to Wizard Hobbes!"

These First- and Second-level Spell Casters did not dare to dawdle after seeing that it was Wizard Leo and instantly disappeared into the large hole as they reported the visit to the higher levels of Abyss Fort.

Merlin eyed the gigantic stone tablet and nodded his head thoughtfully. He would have expected this since Wizard Leo had said that he wanted to help him obtain a Darkness-type Spell that was above Second-level and even a Darkness-type Pandora Demon Ability.

Where else could Merlin's need be fulfilled other than Abyss Fort, the experts of Darkness-type spells? Even Sterling House, which was overseen by the Great Wizard Sterling, could not possibly have the complete collection of various Darkness-type spells and Darkness-type Pandora Demon Abilities.

"Merlin, although the Darkness-type spell I'm constructing within my body is suitable for you, I can't pass it to you because this spell was obtained from Abyss Fort. What's more, I've signed a contract with Abyss Fort that I'm not allowed to pass on Darkness-type spells to others. Therefore, if you want a Darkness-type spell above Second-level, you can only get it from Abyss Fort."

Wizard Leo explained the simple reason he could not pass the Darkness-type spell to Merlin. It turned out that Wizard Leo's spell was also acquired from Abyss Fort, and that he had signed a contract with them.

Even so, Wizard Leo could have paid a rather hefty price to acquire Darkness-type spells from Abyss Fort. This time around, in order to let Merlin pick up a Darkness-type spell that was above Second-level as well as a Pandora Demon Ability, Wizard Leo could have to pay an even greater price.

Moreover, Merlin could vaguely guess what Wizard Leo had used to exchange for the spells in Abyss Fort, and he could not help wear a complicated expression.

Before long, a Wizard with a wizened frame and an aged face walked out of the hole.

“Wizard Leo! It’s really you who came!”

The old Wizard’s voice was low and raspy, and he spoke in a calm tone.

“Wizard Hobbes, it’s been decades since I’ve seen you, but you still look the same!”

The blood-red third eye in Wizard Leo’s forehead widened slightly and a smile appeared at the corner of his lips.

“Is he your student?”

Wizard Hobbes was reserved and unsmiling, revealing a perpetually stiff expression. His gaze landed briefly on Merlin before fixing onto Wizard Leo as he questioned.

“Merlin, come quickly and meet Wizard Hobbes. He’s a Seventh-level Spell Caster from the Dark Magic Region! 1 ”

It turned out that Wizard Hobbes was, in fact, a Seventh-level Spell Caster. Merlin hurriedly came forward and bowed respectfully, before standing on the side.

Wizard Hobbes gave Merlin a deep look, and a stiff semblance of a smile appeared on his face. With his throaty voice, he said, “Wizard Leo, the last time you came to Abyss Fort was to construct your Darkness-type spell. It’s been sixty years, and now you’re here again for this young fellow?”

Wizard Hobbes had a shrewd, piercing gaze, and was able to make out Wizard Leo’s intentions in one glance.

However, Wizard Leo did not reply immediately but instead looked around. “Wizard Hobbes, is Abyss Fort going to let me stand outside here to discuss the matters of ‘Darkness Eye’ with you?”

“Darkness Eye?”

Wizard Hobbes’ eyes focused abruptly, and a powerful pressure sensation flashed across their bodies. It felt like when Wizard Leo had released his massive Mind Power earlier, making one unable to summon a single shred of resistance.

“Wizard Leo, welcome once again to Abyss Fort. In all these years, you’re the only Wizard from outside who has been allowed into Abyss Fort twice!”

Wizard Hobbes stepped to one side and invited Wizard Leo and Merlin into Abyss Fort. It was evident that Wizard Leo’s mention of “Darkness Eye” had attracted Wizard Hobbes’ significant interest. Otherwise, as Spell Casters from the Dark Magic Region, Wizard Leo and Merlin would not have been able to enter Abyss Fort.

Therefore, Merlin followed behind Wizard Leo and entered the huge, pitch-black hole.

Chapter 220: Darkness Heart

In the large, pitch-black hole, Merlin followed Wizard Leo, and his Mind Power keeping track of his surroundings at all times.

The dark passage was long. Merlin was able to sense that they were going deeper into the ground. Abyss Fort did not have a castle-like building. Conversely, they built their structure underground with huge passages extending into all directions.

Very soon, a glimmer of light gradually appeared in the dark passage, and a faint golden glow appeared on the bumpy, uneven wall.

“We’re here. Wizard Leo, it’s not your first time coming to Abyss Fort, but it’s the first time for this young fellow. He’s so curious!”

Wizard Hobbes revealed a smile on his aged face upon seeing Merlin peering around all over the place.

Merlin was curious indeed. This great hall was buried deep underground but it did not feel stifling at all. Moreover, four pure white glassware which looked like lampshades were hung in the corners

of the hall. A giant gleaming pearl was placed in each one, and a soft white light shone from these pearls, illuminating the great hall until it was like daylight.

The design of the facilities in Abyss Fort was mind-boggling to Merlin.

“Right, let’s get down to business! Wizard Leo, what did you mean when you mentioned Darkness Eye?”

Wizard Hobbes’ expression turned solemn and he asked in his gravelly voice.

The blood-red third eye on Wizard Leo’s forehead blinked slightly. Although he was blind in both eyes, this “Darkness Eye” was able to replace those eyes, perceiving everything in his surroundings. Furthermore, it seemed to be able to see things which people normally would not. For instance, things like illusions were unable to confound Wizard Leo with his Darkness Eye.

“The cultivation method for Darkness Eye that you have here in Abyss Fort is flawed. Throughout so many years, did anyone in Abyss Fort manage to cultivate Darkness Eye successfully?”

Wizard Leo spoke suddenly but he did not reply to Wizard Hobbes’ previous question right away. Instead, he brought up the cultivation method for Darkness Eye.

Of course, Wizard Hobbes understood the matter very well and laughed coldly. “Hehe, Wizard Leo, the cultivation method for Darkness Eye is flawed indeed. This is not a big secret. Moreover, the cultivation method of your own Darkness Eye is actually flawed as well. However, it’s indeed impressive how you’ve devised your own method for cultivating Darkness Eye and was successful at that.”

Wizard Hobbes’ eyes shone with an obvious curiosity about the cultivation method for Darkness Eye that Wizard Leo had devised.

A smile tugged at the corner of Wizard Leo’s lips. “Sixty years ago, I came to Abyss Fort to exchange something precious for your Darkness-type spells. This time is no different, I come bearing a gift. I’ll be giving you the cultivation method that I’ve devised for Darkness Eye!”

“The cultivation method for Darkness Eye that you’ve devised?”

A passionate gleam flashed across Wizard Hobbes' eyes. If it was someone else who had claimed that they devised a cultivation method for Darkness Eye, Wizard Hobbes would surely be dismissive and scornful.

However, the one who made this claim was Wizard Leo. This was a significant factor for Wizard Leo, who was widely acknowledged to be highly accomplished in his cultivation of Darkness Eye. He had even relied on Darkness Eye to transcend his rank and beheaded a Seventh-level Spell Caster from Ozmu.

With solid results like these, no one was skeptical about Wizard Leo's Darkness Eye. Naturally, Wizard Leo would value the cultivation method he had devised more than any other treasure.

As he thought about this, Wizard Hobbes could not help but ask, "Wizard Leo, what do you want in exchange for the cultivation method of Darkness Eye?"

A slight smile emerged on Wizard Leo's lips. As he expected, since his Darkness Eye had demonstrated its powerful abilities, the cultivation method for Darkness Eye that he had devised was the most appealing thing he could offer Abyss Fort.

Therefore, Wizard Leo placed his fingers lightly on the table, and said in a deep voice, "You must allow my student, Wizard Merlin, to enter your library and pick any Darkness-type spell above Second-level that he likes. This is the first condition."

"Secondly, the cultivation method of Darkness Heart, the Pandora Demon Ability that Abyss Fort possesses, must also be passed along to Merlin. Moreover, Merlin would need to use your Darkness Void to help in his cultivation for a few days. It'll be best if he's able to successfully cultivate Darkness Heart during this time. These are my two conditions, and if you agree to them, I'll give you the cultivation method for Darkness Eye that I've devised!"

Wizard Leo had finished speaking and waited silently for Wizard Hobbes' reply.

Wizard Hobbes had a gloomy look on his face, and his gaze constantly turned toward Merlin. He did not think that this time, Wizard Leo would use his precious cultivation method for Darkness Eye purely just to obtain a spell and the Pandora Demon Ability, Darkness Heart, for Merlin. Thus, Wizard Hobbes wanted to find out what was so special about Merlin that made Wizard Leo go to such lengths and was willing to pay such a great price just to help him.

After a long time, Wizard Hobbes finally opened his mouth to speak. “On the first condition, the Darkness-type spell that’s above Second-level – Merlin is completely free to choose but he must sign a contract to never divulge this spell to anyone.”

“No problem!”

Wizard Leo nodded. Back when he had obtained the spells from Abyss Fort, he had signed a contract to never divulge these spells. However, among his two conditions, it was the second one that was crucial.

“As for the second condition, Wizard Leo, you should know very clearly that Darkness Heart is owned exclusively by Abyss Fort, and we have never shared it with outsiders.”

Wizard Hobbes spoke in a slow, heavy voice as his eyes fixed firmly on Wizard Leo.

“Hehe. Wizard Hobbes, it’s true that Darkness Heart has never been divulged to outsiders, but how does it compare to Darkness Eye? Whether something is important or not, I believe you’ll think it through for yourself.

“Darkness Heart is admittedly very important but you may choose to sign a contract with Merlin to prevent him from divulging it to anyone. Not even I would be able to cultivate it. In that case, Merlin would be the only one who would cultivate it, and yet all of you shall obtain the cultivation method of Darkness Eye. There’s always the chance that there’s a Spell Caster in Abyss Fort who is gifted and determined, who would be able to cultivate Darkness Eye successfully after learning my cultivation method.”

The blood-red third eye on Wizard Leo’s forehead shone with a strange, crimson light. After he spoke, he said nothing else and waited silently for Wizard Hobbes’ final decision.

After a moment, Wizard Hobbes stood up and said to Wizard Leo, “This is a very significant matter. I’ll need to discuss this with the rest.”

“No problem. We can wait.”

Wizard Leo’s expression was calm as he spoke lightly.

Wizard Hobbes nodded and walked into the depths of the large hall, leaving through a passage on the other side. With the underground passages on all sides, one would not know where these passages led to if one had not stayed here for a long time. If Abyss Fort was ever in danger, the Spell Casters could quickly leave the place through the labyrinth of passages.

The Dark Magic Region was a mysterious place. One would need to be transported by Runic Magic Circles just to enter or exit the Dark Magic Region, and it was extremely difficult for outsiders to find the Dark Magic Region. On the other hand, Abyss Fort had constructed a large and complicated web of underground passages, causing confusion to outsiders.

As such, it was difficult for these places, which housed spell casters' organizations, to be overthrown with a single attack. This was the main reason the spell casters' organizations were able to survive for over a thousand years without suffering any devastating attacks or destruction.

“Wizard Leo, what's Darkness Heart?”

Merlin saw that Wizard Hobbes had left and could not help but ask Wizard Leo this question. From the previous discussion between Wizard Hobbes and Wizard Leo, Merlin only knew that Darkness Heart was a Pandora Demon Ability possessed only by Abyss Fort. However, Merlin was still baffled as to what it was exactly.

In a calm voice, Wizard Leo explained, “Darkness Heart is a Darkness-type Pandora Demon Ability but it's different from Darkness Eye. Darkness Heart is merely a Supportive Pandora Demon Ability. If you've cultivated it successfully, the powers of any Darkness-type spell you cast would be greatly increased, and its effect would be stronger than most Enhancing casting tools. Moreover, if you encounter any attack from Darkness-type spells, Darkness Heart would automatically neutralize it. As long as it isn't a Darkness-type spell of unusually excessive strength, it would be of no threat to you.”

After a pause, Wizard Leo turned grave, and his voice deepened. “Still, if it were just these benefits, I wouldn't let you cultivate Darkness Heart. The biggest benefit of cultivating Darkness Heart comes when you're constructing Fourth-level spells. At that time, the Fourth-level Darkness-type spells you've constructed can be combined with Darkness Heart, and the spell's power will become incomparably mighty.

“I've occasionally come across the golden age of Spell Casters three thousand and six hundred years ago in ancient records. These ancient, powerful Spell Casters were able to fuse every spell with Pandora Demon Ability, and these spells would've terrifying power even if it was a First-level spell. However, as time passed and things changed, the peak era of Spell Casters had passed. Most

Pandora Demon Abilities were lost in distant history, to say nothing of the methods for combining Pandora Demon Ability with spells. Currently, Darkness Heart is the only Pandora Demon Ability that I could find which may be combined with spells.”

Wizard Leo released a long sigh, his voice thick with regret.

During the golden era of Spell Casters three thousand and six hundred years ago, it was possible for Pandora Demon Ability to be fused with spells, and even First-level spells had contained frightening power once it was fused with Pandora Demon Ability.

Merlin thought of his Pandora Demon Ability, Fiery Collapse. Altogether, this Fiery Collapse had three forms, and it seemed that these forms could be combined with Seventh-level spells. This was an indirect confirmation that what Wizard Leo had just said could have very well been the truth.

Just as Merlin was about to inquire more on this matter, Wizard Hobbes had returned to the great hall. Moreover, two Spell Casters with powerful forces trailed behind him. These Spell Casters did not say anything once they came into the great hall but only narrowed their eyes slightly, sizing up Merlin and Wizard Leo without once looking away.

All of a sudden, the atmosphere in the great hall became rather oppressive.