

W. Secret 271

Chapter 271: Fort Udon's Dominance I

“Crack.”

Wizard Vadrak and Wizard Bella had already closed their eyes in acceptance of their demise, yet the scorching flames did not reach them. Conversely, they felt a chill and they could not help but shiver.

Thus, Wizard Vadrak and Wizard Bella opened their eyes to find that an icy gust of air had appeared before them, immediately freezing Donaugh's Flaming Ray. They were saved!

“Heh heh, Gray Wing Alliance is getting bolder and bolder these days. You dare act against members of my Fort Udon?”

At this point, a Spell Caster with an aged appearance slowly walked out from the crowd. He eyed Wizard Bella and Wizard Vadrak as he spoke in a raspy voice.

“Hmm, it's a Spell Caster from Fort Udon?”

Looking at this aged Wizard, the opposing Spell Casters from Gray Wing Alliance felt that the situation had become somewhat troublesome.

On the Kurdmansla Islands, Gray Wing Alliance possessed tremendous power. However, if there was anything Gray Wing Alliance was afraid of, it would be Fort Udon.

It was tricky to handle people from Fort Udon because fighting against one of them would result in the other Spell Casters of Fort Udon to be unsparing and unrelenting in their combined retaliation.

This was Fort Udon's best characteristic. They were extremely united internally, and Gray Wing Alliance would not want to provoke them.

“They've yet to become Spell Casters of Fort Udon!”

With a gloomy face, Donaugh was unable to stop himself from protesting in a low voice.

The aged Wizard remained calm, and coldly said, “Since they’ve already decided to join Fort Udon, they are Wizards of Fort Udon! What? Those from Gray Wing Alliance now dare to openly attack us Wizards from Fort Udon on this island?”

As soon as he spoke, a few Spell Casters rushed out from behind. They were wearing black robes just like the aged Wizard, only theirs were marked with a symbol indicating their rank. They were Expert black-robed Spell Casters, on the level of Third-level Spell Casters!

“Bordeaux, all of you at Fort Udon mustn’t be unreasonable too. These two aren’t in Fort Udon. If you still want to stick your nose in, hmpf, then don’t blame me if I don’t hold back!”

From behind Donaugh, out walked a tall Spell Caster with a scraggly beard who had a dangerous air around him.

“Vlaar?”

The expression of the aged Wizard, whose name was Bordeaux, shifted slightly upon seeing the Spell Caster with the scraggly beard. He knew that this Spell Caster who looked extremely dangerous was called Vlaar, a formidable Wizard. Vlaar was a Fourth-level Spell Caster in Gray Wing Alliance.

Wizard Bordeaux knew that Vlaar was a Fourth-level Spell Caster, and that even if they all joined forces, they might be no match for him. Nonetheless, Wizard Bordeaux still gnashed his teeth and laughed coldly. “Wizard Vlaar, it’s not like you don’t know how Fort Udon is like. If we simply watched without doing anything, then in the future, what else would there be left for Fort Udon? We’ve never abandoned a fellow comrade!”

Wizard Bordeaux’s inspiring words made Merlin’s heart trembled slightly. Although he had previously heard that the Wizards of Fort Udon were extremely united, he had never seen how this unity looked like in real life.

Currently, Bordeaux and the other Spell Casters were demonstrating something authentic. Even if they were aware that they would not win, they still did not abandon their comrades. In the world of

Spell Casters, “comrades” are hard to come by. For instance, in the case of Donagh and Wizard Yalen, the latter had given Donagh so much assistance, teaching him in his cultivation.

However, Donagh killed Wizard Yalen in the end. In the world of Spell Casters, this was the common realistic and cruel occurrence. Conversely, it was the absolute unity of Fort Udon, the somewhat unquestioning defense of comrades that was rarely seen.

“Bordeaux, I wonder how you’ll save them today? Bind!”

Wizard Vlaar barked out a cold laugh, his eyes tinged with fury. Thereafter, he cast a Wind-type Binding spell, restricting the movements of Bordeaux and the other Spell Casters in a flash.

Although Wizard Vlaar was rather enraged, he was not brazen enough to kill Bordeaux and the other Wizards from Fort Udon. However, Bella and Vadrak were different as they were not officially Spell Casters of Fort Udon. Therefore, Wizard Vlaar fixed his gaze on them, his eyes filled with cold murderous intent.

“Donagh, go on!”

Seeing that Wizard Vlaar had made his move and bound Bordeaux and the other Spell Casters, Donagh gradually began to relax. When he looked toward Bella and Vadrak once more, his face broke out into a cruel smile.

“Vadrak and Bella, give it up, and die!”

Donagh attacked once again, and he cast Flaming Ray a few consecutive times. The scorching flames filled the air and thundered toward the two Wizards. Donagh had learned from his last attack and left no chance for Bella and Vadrak to survive, going straight in for the kill.

Vadrak and Bella exchanged a glowering glance at Donagh but it was of no use. They saw that even the Wizards of Fort Udon were restricted, and were unable to help them at all.

“It looks like there’s really no hope this time around. Bella, it’s all my fault, being unable to avenge Wizard Yalen, and unable to protect you...”

Vadrak shook his head and looked toward Bella with a profound expression, resolutely facing the furious flames which covered the entire sky...

...

“Earth Veil!”

Following the command of an icy voice, the wide-ranging flames crashed into Bella and Vadrak. However, their bodies had been covered in a veil of dirt-yellow light.

Under the protection of this veil of light, no matter how furious the flames raged on, they were unable to hurt Bella and Vadrak.

“Who did this?”

Seeing that he had not killed Bella and Vadrak, Donaugh’s face darkened even further as he scanned the crowd.

It was not only Donaugh but even Vadrak and Bella were full of astonishment. They exchanged a glance, each feeling a trace of elation that they were not yet dead.

“Who is it that saved us?”

Bella and Vadrak were searching for this person as well. They had closed their eyes earlier as they awaited their deaths, so they did not see who it was who had cast the spell and saved them.

“You’re such a failure as a human being that you’re starting to disgust even me...”

A figure in black strolled out from the crowd leisurely.

“Wizard Merlin? It was him who saved us!”

“So, Wizard Merlin is actually a Second-level Spell Caster. Earth Veil isn’t easy to construct. Wizard Yalen had mentioned before that Earth Veil is very complicated, and whoever who could construct it must be a confident and powerful Spell Caster!”

After seeing that it was Merlin, Bella and Vadrak were taken aback. Before this, they had thought that Merlin was just like them, merely a First-level Spell Caster.

However, it seemed now that Merlin was not as simple as they thought. He must surely possess significant capabilities to be able to construct such a complex Second-level spell like Earth Veil.

“Who are you?”

Donaugh stared at Merlin rather apprehensively as he questioned.

Merlin only shook his head lightly in response. Initially, the matters between other Spell Casters were of no concern to him. What happened to Bella and Vadrak was unable to move him.

Nonetheless, what Donaugh had done evoked a sense of loathing even in Merlin. Wizard Yalen could be considered Donaugh’s “tutor”, yet Donaugh ambushed and killed him.

An act like this caused Merlin to feel repulsed, and a desire to kill was born in him.

“Dark Light Realm!”

Merlin did not bother babbling with Donaugh and cast the First-level Darkness-type spell. Instantly, rays of light began to distort, and Donaugh’s surroundings turned into pitch-black darkness. He was thoroughly lost in the illusion of Dark Light Realm.

“Frigid Ice, freeze!”

Merlin did not plan on killing Donaugh. On the Kurdmansla Islands, Gray Wing Alliance was a colossal force, so teaching Donaugh a lesson and killing him were two entirely different matters.

Therefore, Merlin did not wish to cause further trouble and immediately used Frigid Ice to freeze one of Donaugh's arms. The ice poison of Frigid Ice quickly penetrated the flesh, and Donaugh's one arm was crippled from then on.

"My arm, you... You crippled my arm?"

Merlin dispelled Dark Light Realm, following which Donaugh recovered his senses. Immediately, he discovered that one of his arms had no feeling left in it.

One arm, to a Spell Caster, did not make much of a difference. After all, a Spell Caster used spells by relying on the simulation of Spell Models in their Awareness through Mind Power. Even without both arms, the casting of spells would not be much affected.

As such, losing an arm would be more akin to utter humiliation. From that point onward, preparing potions and researching alchemy would be rather inconvenient.

Although Donaugh was enraged, he did not act rashly. He still had not lost his wits. Merlin had cast Dark Light Realm earlier, and he knew that he was no match for Merlin at all.

Dark Light Realm was a very complicated spell among the Darkness-type spells and had the power to challenge those beyond its level. Having cast Dark Light Realm, Merlin could have easily killed Donaugh, but he did not, indicating that he had qualms about the fact that Donaugh was a Spell Caster from Gray Wing Alliance.

Therefore, Donaugh could only clench his teeth as he glared at Merlin, but did not dare attack him.

Besides Donaugh, the Fourth-level Spell Caster, Wizard Vlaar, also narrowed his eyes, sizing up Merlin.

"You're not a Spell Caster from Fort Udon. Who are you really?"

Wizard Vlaar's face was cloudy as he asked coldly.

Merlin shot a glance at Bella and Vadrak, and a smile tugged at the corner of his lips. He said serenely, "I'm like them – someone who's about to become a member of Fort Udon!"

“Which is to say, you’re not yet a member of Fort Udon?”

Wizard Vlaar turned the topic around, and a cold light shone in his eyes. He said icily, “A roaming Wizard who’s a nobody dared to attack a Wizard of my Gray Wing Alliance. Hmph, I can’t kill Bordeaux, but why can’t I kill you?”

With that, violent Fire Elemental fluctuations abruptly surged around Wizard Vlaar’s body.

“Oh no, Wizard Merlin, escape quickly! Vlaar, you dare? They’re all about to become Wizards of my Fort Udon. If you dare to kill them, even if you hide in Gray Wing Alliance, Fort Udon will surely make you pay a heavy price!”

Wizard Bordeaux was still bound. Now that he saw Vlaar was about to attack Merlin, he immediately roared out.

“Hmph, how overbearing is your Fort Udon to battle with my Gray Wing Alliance over a few mere Spell Casters who aren’t even members of Fort Udon? Haha, Bordeaux, I’ll kill them. What can you all do?”

Wizard Vlaar roared in laughter, and his body was instantly shrouded by raging flames. Following that, flames rained down from the sky like a violent storm, whistling as they swept toward Merlin!

Chapter 272: Fort Udon’s Dominance II

The raging flames filled the entire sky like a sea of fire. This was the Fourth-level spell that Vlaar had cast.

Merlin drew in a deep breath. At this point, his robe had no way of withstanding this, and even the Second-level Defensive spell Earth Veil that he had just constructed would be unable to block a Fourth-level spell without any enhancements.

Therefore, Merlin could only actively attack.

“Pandora Demon Ability, Glacial Finger!”

Merlin extended one pale finger and stabbed it toward Wizard Vlaar. In an instant, an icy gust of air flew out and formed ice crystals everywhere it passed.

“Crack! Crack!”

Countless ice crystals were formed, with some even enclosing the flames in mid-air, which then fell to the ground and shattered into smithereens. This ability was even able to freeze and seal a Fourth-level spell in ice. It must not be a spell, not one that Merlin, a Wizard who was not even a mere Second-level Spell Caster, would be able to cast.

“Pandora Demon Ability... This is Pandora Demon Ability. You actually have Pandora Demon Ability?”

Astonishment washed over Wizard Vlaar’s face. A Pandora Demon Ability possessed a strange and unfathomable power, and Wizard levels were completely irrelevant if one had Pandora Demon Ability.

In Gray Wing Alliance, Wizard Vlaar had personally witnessed a Second-level Spell Caster who had cultivated Pandora Demon Ability easily defeat a Spell Caster at the peak of the Third-level, as well as contended against a Fourth-level Spell Caster.

Thus, Wizard Vlaar knew very well the power of Pandora Demon Ability. Seeing that Merlin had utilized his Pandora Demon Ability, he was immediately on his guard.

Just as Wizard Vlaar was about to cast a Defensive spell, turbulent Darkness Elemental fluctuations abruptly surged around Merlin.

“Darkness Tide!”

Merlin softly commanded. In an instant, the surrounding light darkened, and an endless flood of Darkness Element rushed forth just like a tide, which completely surrounded Wizard Vlaar and the rest.

Darkness Tide, after the enhancement of Darkness Heart, was able to easily trap a Spell Caster like Vlaar, whose Mind Power only just reached the Fourth-level, in the illusion.

Wizard Vlaar was not even able to put up the slightest bit of resistance. His entire body went limp as he was completely caught in the illusion.

“Crack.”

The chill of Glacial Finger rapidly froze Wizard Vlaar’s arm. Merlin repeated his previous procedure in punishing Donaugh earlier, and straightaway crippled one of Wizard Vlaar’s arms.

This was because Merlin was rather apprehensive about Gray Wing Alliance, so he did not dare to kill anyone so rashly.

“Whoosh...”

Merlin dispelled Darkness Tide, and Wizard Vlaar recovered his senses. His face was deathly pale, and he had lost all sense of feeling in his right arm. Just like Donaugh, one of his arms was crippled by Merlin.

Vlaar bit his lip furiously, and his face turned dark as he coldly glared at Merlin like a venomous snake. This glare made Merlin very uncomfortable. If he was somewhere else, he would have killed Vlaar long ago. However, they were on the Kurdmansla Islands, so Merlin still had many other considerations.

“Vlaar, what’s wrong? Is it an attack by someone from Fort Udon?”

A boorish voice rang out, and a few Spell Casters came from behind in loud heavy steps. It was a Spell Caster whose face bore the mark of three shallow scars, making him look rather sinister.

This scar-faced Spell Caster, upon seeing Vlaar’s drooping arm, swept his gaze across Merlin, Bordeaux, and the rest, one by one.

“Heh heh, Captain, if you’ve come any later, I might be dead!”

Vlaar licked his lips. After seeing this scar-faced Spell Caster, a trace of glee had dawned upon his face.

“It was them who did it?”

The scar-faced Spell Caster questioned coldly in a low voice.

“Captain, it’s not like you don’t know how the people of Fort Udon are like. The damage caused to Donaugh and I were all thanks to some guy named Merlin.”

Vlaar glared at Merlin with vicious hate as he narrated everything that had happened to the scar-faced Spell Caster.

“Very well, you’re the one who harmed Vlaar? Regardless of whether or not you’re from Fort Udon, you have to pay the price of harming Vlaar. Since you’ve crippled one of his arms, I’ll cripple both your arms!”

An overbearing force suddenly emanated from the scar-faced Spell Caster. It was a force belonging to a Fifth-level Spell Caster. The scar-faced Spell Caster was actually a Fifth-level Spell Caster.

“Ugly bastard, you’re acting big in front of us Wizards from Fort Udon? Heh heh, come on then, let this old man see how much you’ve grown in these past few years.”

A sharp voice rang out from the crowd. Soon, a wizened Wizard, wearing a gray robe and a torn hat over his head, slowly walked out. Behind him were a few other gray-robed Wizards.

Merlin squinted slightly. He recognized the robes they were wearing. These were the robes worn by Spell Casters from Fort Udon. As they were gray ones, it meant that these were Spell Casters who were above the Fourth-level.

In particular, the wizened old man who spoke seemed very shriveled and scrawny as if wind might carry him off, but the force emanating from his body was more terrifying than the force of the scar-faced man.

Upon seeing the wizened old man, the scar-faced man’s face changed slightly and appeared extremely unpleasant. He asked in a low voice, “Waller, is your Fort Udon really going to cover up for these people?”

“Cover up? Hehe, they’re all about to become members of our Fort Udon. You know as well that every member of Fort Udon is our comrade. If you say that we’re covering up for our comrades, then so be it. What, you have something to say?”

Wizard Waller spoke carelessly as if he was not concerned in the slightest.

The face of the scar-faced man sank even further. This was Fort Udon, who did not fear anything in the slightest. It did not matter if they were facing Gray Wing Alliance or Wizard’s Tower. Even if it was over a mere First-level Spell Caster, for as long as it was a member of Fort Udon, the faction would hold nothing back.

This was Fort Udon. They were unlike Spell Casters and were more like a bunch of idealistic lunatics who got together. One idealist might have no way of surviving in the world of Spell Casters, but if a group of powerful idealists assembled, then their power would be immense, causing a headache for any other faction.

“Let’s go!”

The scar-faced man knew that with Waller’s arrival, they would not be able to take advantage of the situation today. The people of Fort Udon were a bunch of lunatics. If those from Gray Wing Alliance really attacked, they would immediately suffer the attacks of stronger Spell Casters from Fort Udon.

Perhaps Gray Wing Alliance would retaliate for their sake, but by that time they might be long dead.

The scar-faced man led the others from Gray Wing Alliance away with their tails between their legs. Only then did Merlin truly witness Fort Udon’s strength and dominance. It was not surprising that Fort Udon was named the number one strongest faction of the Kurdmansla Islands for they were indeed more powerful than Gray Wing Alliance.

It was not their strength which was greater than Gray Wing Alliance’s, but it was due to their characteristic of being unafraid to stir up trouble, and to say nothing of starting a war with another powerful faction in order to save a Wizard of Fort Udon. As long as it was to rescue a Wizard from Fort Udon, no matter how massive a ruckus was created, Fort Udon would support it with all their might.

Therefore, it might be that Fort Udon seemed unreasonable and tyrannical to outsiders, but members of Fort Udon felt an incomparable sense of affection and security.

The wizened old man, Waller, walked toward Merlin, Bella, and Vadrak. After taking in the measure of Merlin and the rest, he smiled and said, “All of you are about to join Fort Udon? In truth, you need not fear. With Fort Udon behind you, you don’t have to fear anyone on the Kurdmansla Islands! Although that ugly bastard earlier appeared fierce and vicious, he did not dare to really kill all of you. Hehe, he had previously suffered at the hands of Fort Udon.”

Merlin bobbed his head, and Bella and Vadrak wore expressions of gratitude.

“Alright, you all can follow me back to Fort Udon.”

Wizard Waller waved his hand lightly, and the crowd of Spell Casters from Fort Udon gradually made their way back to Fort Udon.

In a short moment, the group had hurried back to Fort Udon. Wizard Waller smiled at Merlin. “Wizard Merlin, you’re only a First-level Spell Caster – it’s really too unbelievable! That Vlaar is a shabby one but he’s still a Fourth-level Spell Caster. You might try your hand at defeating that Fourth-level Alchemy Creature, for there’s hope you might become a gray-robed Wizard.”

Wizard Waller did not know of Merlin’s situation. He was unaware that Merlin had already defeated the Fourth-level Alchemy Creature, and was now waiting for the Fifth-level Spell Caster in Fort Udon to finish preparing his potion in order to accept Merlin’s challenge.

Merlin only smiled in response to Wizard Waller. Following that, Wizard Waller sent Merlin and the rest to their residence, before saying in a meaningful tone, “On the Kurdmansla Islands, it’s tough if you don’t join any factions. It’s the same even for those powerful roaming Wizards. It’s best if you receive your evaluation early and join Fort Udon. Then, you’ll be official members of Fort Udon, and on the Kurdmansla Islands, no one would dare attack a member of Fort Udon!”

Wizard Waller’s tone revealed his absolute confidence and assurance. Besides, Merlin, Vadrak, and the rest had witnessed Fort Udon’s dominance with their own eyes today.

“Alright, you can all rest here. I’ll take my leave first.”

Wizard Waller spoke warmly, and having sent Merlin and the rest back to their residence, he turned to leave.

“Swish.”

Just then, a gray-robed Wizard ran into him from outside the residence.

“Huh? Wizard Waller, you’re here too? Why aren’t you on patrol? What are you doing here?”

This gray-robed Wizard evidently knew Wizard Waller, and without even waiting for Wizard Waller to answer his previous question, he spotted Merlin and hurried toward him. A smile broke out across his face. “Wizard Merlin, follow me quick. Wizard Sakvara has completed his potion preparation and is now waiting for you to complete your evaluation!”

Merlin nodded. He calculated the days and realized that he had waited for two days. Wizard Sakvara had indeed completed making his potion and accepted his challenge.

Others might not know of Wizard Sakvara, but Wizard Waller knew him very well. Hearing that Merlin was about to accept Wizard Sakvara’s evaluation, he immediately guessed the reason. His eyes almost popped out of his head as he said in disbelief, “What did you say? Wizard Merlin is going to challenge Wizard Sakvara?”

“Wizard Waller, if you’re interested, you can tag along and watch. Hehe, if Wizard Merlin succeeds, what a shock it’ll be to the entire Fort Udon!”

The gray-robed Wizard’s face was shining with an ecstatic glow.

Chapter 273: Gold-lined Robe

In the glorious-looking golden hall, many gray-robed Wizards had been waiting. Their leader was a Middle gray-robed Wizard who seemed friendly and kind. Even if he had to wait for a long time, he did not reveal any impatient gestures.

Soon, Merlin arrived at the hall followed by Wizard Waller, Vadrak, and Bella. They wanted to gain experience from this event.

“Dear Wizard Sakvara, sorry to have kept you waiting!”

Merlin bowed slightly to Wizard Sakvara. As a Fifth-level Spell Caster, Wizard Sakvara deserved a bow from Merlin.

However, Wizard Sakvara was an amiable person. He smiled slightly as he said, “It’s alright. I also made you wait because I was making a potion before this. Wizard Merlin, let’s start. I’d like to see what made you, a First-level Spell Caster, think you can challenge me.”

Merlin nodded, then both entered the translucent room where runes were up all over the place. In this place, attacks from Spell Casters of Seventh-level and below would not be able to cause any damage to the room.

Merlin and Wizard Sakvara exchanged glances, and the latter reminded Merlin, “Wizard Merlin, I heard that you possess a Pandora Demon Ability? However, even if you have one, you would have only cultivated it for a bit – basically to the standard of a Fourth-level spell. In addition, I also have a Pandora Demon Ability. However, this is to test if you truly have the ability of a Fifth-level Spell Caster, so be rest assured. I won’t use my Pandora Demon Ability.”

Wizard Sakvara had made it clear that Merlin’s Pandora Demon Ability would not be effective against his Fifth-level Defensive spell. Thus, it would be utterly impossible for Merlin to win against him with Pandora Demon Ability.

Moreover, Wizard Sakvara also possessed a Pandora Demon Ability, so Merlin should not seek to defeat him. Instead, it was sufficient for Merlin to present his best ability in front of Wizard Sakvara.

Merlin took a deep breath and nodded. It was his first time challenging a Fifth-level Spell Caster; Merlin knew his own condition the best.

Although Fiery Collapse and Glacial Finger were both powerful, they were simply comparable to a Fourth-level spell. Stronger Pandora Demon Abilities were able to compete with the top-class Fourth-level spell where Merlin’s Fiery Collapse and Glacial Finger were both categorized as the stronger Pandora Demon Abilities.

Of course, this was meant for the Pandora Demon Abilities that were purely offensive. Meanwhile, the supportive Pandora Demon Abilities such as Merlin’s Darkness Heart and Fuse Earth could not be considered on the same scale as the Pandora Demon Abilities were gradually merged into the spells. If the spells were powerful, the extent of enhancement would be great as well – the final strength of the spell would reach a terrifying level.

This was the reason why the Pandora Demon Abilities that could be integrated into the spells were considered the most precious Pandora Demon Abilities during the age of Molta Empire, the glorious period of Spell Casters.

Merlin also did not plan to challenge Wizard Sakvara with his Glacial Finger and Fiery Collapse. His forte was not these two. Instead, it was his Second-level Darkness-type spell, Darkness Tide, which he had constructed just recently.

Darkness Tide, with the enhancement of Darkness Heart, could easily lead a Fourth-level Spell Caster into his illusions. Until now, Merlin had not cast the strengthened version of Darkness Tide even once before.

If the strengthened version of Darkness Tide under the enhancement of Darkness Heart could make a Fifth-level Spell Caster fall under his illusion or affect a Fifth-level Spell Caster even a little, Merlin would be successful in his challenge. Otherwise, he would barely stand a chance against a Fifth-level Spell Caster.

“Wizard Sakvara, I’m about to start!”

Merlin said in a deep voice.

“Go on. Take your best shot or you won’t have the chance to do so!”

Sakvara replied in a calm manner.

Meanwhile, all Spell Casters were staring at Merlin and Sakvara closely in the hall, their gazes brimmed with anticipation.

“Darkness Tide!”

Merlin finally moved. He waved his finger and at once, the entire translucent room transformed into darkness itself. The situation in the room could not be seen from the outside.

The crowd could only sense that endless Darkness Elements were gathering toward the room frantically.

“Second-level spell? Although Darkness Tide is indeed powerful and is able to make a Third-level Spell Caster fall into an illusion, is he able to stand against Wizard Sakvara with just Darkness Tide?”

Many Spell Casters were doubtful. Even those Fourth-level gray-robed Spell Casters were full of questions. Only Wizard Waller, who was a Middle gray-robed Wizard, was looking ahead seriously.

Almost all the Spell Casters in the hall did not know that Merlin had made three casts of Darkness Tide. Then, he had cast the strengthened version of Darkness Tide following that.

This was currently Merlin’s strongest ability – the strengthened version of Darkness Tide. With the enhancement of Darkness Heart, even Merlin did not know how powerful it could get.

Thus, after he cast Darkness Tide, he watched Wizard Sakvara’s actions closely.

Wizard Sakvara’s expression remained calm, but he opened his eyes in a sudden movement when Merlin had cast the strengthened version of Darkness Tide. His immense Mind Power immediately surged.

“Not bad, Wizard Merlin. If I’m guessing correctly, you also possess a Supportive Pandora Demon Ability that’s integrated into your spell. To enhance a Darkness-type spell so greatly, I can’t think of any Pandora Demon Ability other than Darkness Heart... Darkness Heart, huh. That’s considered a stronger spectrum of the Pandora Demon Ability during the most glorious times of Spell Casters in the legends. To have Darkness Heart means that you’re the person favored by Darkness...”

At this point, Wizard Sakvara could still speak so clearly, indicating that Merlin had failed. His strengthened version of Darkness Tide, even with the enhancement of Darkness Heart, could not make a Fifth-level Spell Caster fall into an illusion.

After a pause, Wizard Sakvara placed his gaze on Merlin. With a hint of a smile, he said, “Such a pity. If you are to become a Fourth-level Spell Caster, the true effect of Darkness Heart will be expressed completely... It has been so many years. I still haven’t seen anyone who is able to cultivate Darkness Heart. You’re the first. In addition, you have a high possibility of becoming a Fourth-level Spell Caster and bringing out the true power of Darkness Heart!”

Merlin nodded, but he still felt regret that Darkness Heart had not been completely integrated into his spell as this was not the strongest form of Darkness Heart.

“Phew...”

Merlin immediately dispelled Darkness Tide and the room slowly resumed its initial condition. The Spell Casters outside could see the situation in the room again.

Following that, Merlin took a deep breath and said calmly, “I’ve lost!”

The door of the room opened wide. Merlin bowed to Wizard Sakvara and walked out of the room.

The Spell Casters in the hall stared speechlessly at each other, full of questions. Since the room was filled with Darkness Elements, they did not manage to see Merlin dueling against Wizard Sakvara at all. In the end, Merlin simply announced his loss which was perplexing to them.

“Wizard Merlin!”

Wizard Sakvara also walked out of the room. He scanned the gray-robed Spell Casters around him, then said, “I’ve confirmed Wizard Merlin’s ability. Although he has failed his challenge, his ability is infinitely close to that of a Fifth-level Spell Caster. Such ability deserves to obtain a gold-lined gray robe among the Novice gray-robed Wizards!”

“Gold-lined gray robe? Wizard Sakvara, is Wizard Merlin really that strong?”

Other gray-robed Wizards could not believe this. Even though they also wore a gray robe, their robes were not gold-lined. Everyone in Fort Udon was clear of the significance of getting a gold-lined robe.

“It’s my intention to do so. I’ll explain the situation to the Seventh-level Wizards!”

Wizard Sakvara said to Merlin again, “Wizard Merlin, please give me some time. I believe that it wouldn’t be a problem for you to get a gold-line robe.”

Thereafter, Wizard Sakvara directly left the hall, leaving behind many gray-robed Spell Casters. Without exception, all gray-robed Spell Casters shot an envious look toward Merlin.

“Gold-lined robe? It seems that Wizard Sakvara wears a gold-lined robe as well.”

Merlin tried to recall his memory. He realized that Wizard Sakvara’s gray robe was indeed gold-lined; it was very much different from Wizard Waller who was a Middle gray-robed Wizard.

This gold-lined robe seemed to hold some special meaning.

“Congratulations, Wizard Merlin. With Wizard Sakvara applying for the gold-lined robe on your behalf, I believe that you’ll get your gold-lined robe in no time.”

“Gold-lined robe, huh. We’re just envious since we have no chance of getting one in a lifetime.”

Some gray-robed Spell Casters congratulated Merlin. Only Merlin was confused about the situation since he did not know what a gold-lined robe represented at all.

Thus, Merlin could not help but ask Wizard Waller, “Wizard Waller, what’s the use of a gold-lined robe? Wizard Sakvara also wore a gold-lined gray robe earlier. You’re both Middle gray-robed Wizards; why didn’t you wear a gold-lined robe?”

Wizard Waller shook his head helplessly, “How can I compare myself to Wizard Sakvara? Without a doubt, Wizard Sakvara can obtain a gold-lined robe. Even if I have become a Sixth-level Spell Caster, I still won’t be able to get a gold-lined robe. Wizard Merlin, you may not know the significance of getting a gold-lined robe – that it represents absolute strength. No matter if it was a gold-lined black robe or gold-lined gray robe, anyone who wears a gold-lined robe is considered the most powerful Spell Casters among their level; these people are considered invincible!

“Wizard Merlin, if you obtain the gold-lined gray robe, despite being a Novice gray-robed Wizard, it means that you’re invincible among Fourth-level Spell Casters – no one can stand against you! It’s extremely difficult to obtain a gold-lined robe. It’s even better than becoming a Middle gray-robed Wizard or Expert gray-robed Wizard. Possessing a gold-lined robe brings about many benefits that you cannot begin to imagine in Fort Udon.”

After hearing Waller's explanation, Merlin only understood that the gold-lined robe symbolized a true genius, an absolute prodigy who contained endless potential. Fort Udon should emphasize fostering these people.

Meanwhile, Wizard Sakvara might have realized Merlin's potential, so he was willing to help Merlin to apply for a gold-lined robe. Although Merlin might stand out too much this way, the benefits he would receive were also immense.

After thinking about it for a moment, Merlin still decided to wait patiently for Wizard Sakvara to apply for the gold-lined robe. Then, he would see for himself what sort of benefits would be available to him.

Chapter 274: Sincerity

Three days later, Wizard Sakvara personally arrived at the place where Merlin was staying currently.

"Wizard Merlin, follow me. Wizard Umo, one of the three fort leaders, wants to confer the gold-lined robe to you personally!"

Wizard Sakvara appeared rather excited; even his tone was brimming with excitement.

However, Merlin was slightly shocked. Fort Udon had three fort leaders and they were all Ninth-level Spell Casters. Now, the superior Ninth-level Spell Caster wanted to meet Merlin personally. This had greatly unsettled Merlin.

After all, Merlin had not even met a single Ninth-level Spell Caster in the Dark Magic Region. Although there were Ninth-level Spell Casters in the Dark Magic Region, they rarely showed themselves in public. Even some of the Seventh-level Spell Casters could not meet them easily, not to mention Merlin.

Apparently, Wizard Sakvara saw through Merlin's hesitation so he said to him, "Wizard Merlin, there's no need to worry about anything. Wizard Umo is very friendly. He only wanted to meet you because I applied for a gold-lined robe on your behalf."

Merlin took a deep breath and nodded. "Wizard Sakvara, please lead the way."

Thereafter, Merlin trailed behind Wizard Sakvara and walked toward a mysterious castle.

This castle did not seem to look indifferent; it had a great environment of lush greeneries which made people feel refreshed. However, there were no Spell Casters on guard around the castle. Nor was the place protected by Runic Magic Circles.

Merlin could hardly imagine a fort leader of Fort Udon would live in such a loosely-secured place.

Wizard Sakvara smiled. “Wizard Merlin, are you surprised? Wizard Umo indeed lives here. Not only Wizard Umo, but the other two fort leaders are also the same. The places they live in don’t have any security.

“Considering the fort leaders’ ability, what use is there for every Spell Caster of Fort Udon to stand in front of them as protection should there be anyone who can threaten the fort leaders?”

Merlin nodded absent-mindedly. Indeed, the fort leaders of Fort Udon were all Ninth-level Spell Casters. Only the legendary Great Wizard could threaten them.

Should their foe, the Great Wizard, was to attack them, it was afraid that the combined forces of the entire Fort Udon would not bring any effect to the result.

“O’ respectable Wizard Umo, I’ve brought Wizard Merlin to you!”

When they arrived at the main gate of the castle, Wizard Sakvara did not push the door open right away. Instead, he respectfully called out toward the castle.

“Wizard Sakvara, good job. Come in!”

An attractive voice came from within the castle. It sounded extremely kind and friendly.

“Alright, let’s go in.”

Wizard Sakvara smiled to Merlin, then pushed the door open and brought Merlin into the castle.

A nice fragrance of ink filled the castle. The decoration was refined and elegant. There were exquisite drawings hanging on the walls that could be identified as famous painters' work by one look.

Other than drawings, there were some precious-looking pottery and a gray carpet, adding elegance to the overall place. The furniture was delicately picked, and the arrangement of the hall gave off the aura of an aristocrat's home.

"Wizard Umo, this is Wizard Merlin!"

Wizard Sakvara faced the front and said respectfully to a middle-aged man who was sitting on a chair. The man did not wear any robe. Instead, he wore a blue aristocrat's outfit and looked like a well-mannered aristocrat.

However, Merlin knew that this man was indeed one of the fort leaders of Fort Udon. He was one of the strongest Spell Casters, Wizard Umo!

Merlin bowed slightly. Wizard Umo who seemed more like an aristocrat, seemed to look no different from an aristocrat. However, his eyes were unimaginably deep.

The eyes were the windows to a person's soul. No matter what the Spell Casters tried to hide, their eyes would betray them in an instant. Wizard Umo's glance gave off an incredibly threatening sense to Merlin. Wizard Umo was more dangerous than any Spell Caster Merlin had ever met.

"Wizard Merlin, that's right. It's Fort Udon's honor to have you with us! Wizard Sakvara applied for a gold-lined robe on your behalf. Do you know what a gold-lined robe represents?"

Wizard Umo asked in a calm manner.

Merlin nodded. "I know just a little. The gold-lined robe is the highest honor in Fort Udon. Anyone who has a gold-lined robe is considered the top tier among his peers."

After Wizard Umo heard the reply, he shook his head slightly. "That's wrong. Anyone who has a gold-lined robe isn't considered the top tier among his peers. They're the invincible presences

among his peers, the one and only symbol! It's been so many years... Among the Novice gray-robed Wizard in Fort Udon, no one has ever obtained the gold-lined robe before. You're the first!"

Finally, Merlin realized the true significance of a gold-lined robe. It represented the highest honor of Fort Udon and the Spell Caster of the highest potential in Fort Udon.

Now, Merlin finally understood why he, a mere First-level Spell Caster who had only defeated a Fourth-level Alchemy Monster and obtained the identity of a Novice gray-robed Wizard, had called for Wizard Umo's attention.

The true reason lied in the gold-lined robe. The gold-lined robe was not easily conferred to others. There was only a small amount of Spell Casters who had obtained the gold-lined robe in the entire Fort Udon.

"Wizard Merlin, I, Umo, representing the entire Fort Udon, now confer you a Novice gold-lined gray robe! From today onward, you're a gray-robed Wizard in Fort Udon!"

Wizard Umo wore a serious expression, then took a gold-lined gray robe from his ring. This robe was no different from the usual gray robe. The only difference was in the neck area where a unique gold line was weaved on it; the gold line represented the absolute identity and status of the Spell Caster in Fort Udon.

Merlin took this gold-lined robe from Wizard Umo. There were some mysterious Runic Magic Circles etched on it that possessed a strong defensive ability.

However, this was almost the same as the robe that Merlin had exchanged for from the Resource Tower. It could barely block a Third-level attack.

Although the robe did not have any specialty, it brought a completely different meaning.

Wizard Sakvara said to Merlin in a low voice, "Wizard Merlin, there's one more thing that you may have not known. The Spell Casters who have obtained the gold-lined robe can instruct all Spell Casters of your level in Fort Udon at will!"

"What? The gold-lined robe offers such a right?"

Merlin looked at Wizard Umo in disbelief. To be able to order all his peers meant that Merlin could give orders to all Novice gray-robed Wizards of Fort Udon should he wear this Novice gold-lined gray robe.

They were mostly Fourth-level Spell Casters. Even in the Dark Magic Region, they were capable of building a tower for themselves and mentoring other Spell Casters.

The superior Fourth-level Spell Casters could easily be ordered by Merlin now just because he wore a gold-lined robe.

Wizard Umo nodded. “That’s right. Wizard Sakvara is right. Other than a great honor, the gold-lined robe also gives you a right to give orders to many Spell Casters unconditionally. You have the Novice gold-lined gray robe now, so you have the power to order any Novice gray-robed Wizards!”

The prestige gave Merlin a great shock. If he had such prestige in Fort Udon, he would have no issue in searching for Lava Soil.

“Wizard Merlin, sign the contract. Since you’ve been conferred the gold-lined robe, you’re considered the core of Fort Udon. That’s why you’ve to sign the highest-level contract.”

Wizard Umo took a golden contract paper out and glanced at Merlin calmly.

“Sign the contract?”

Merlin frowned and hesitated. He thought of the highest-level contract that he had signed with the Dark Magic Region where he had agreed that he would never betray the Dark Magic Region.

The contract he was about to sign with Fort Udon would probably conflict with the previous one.

Upon thinking of this, Merlin knew that he must get this point across clearly. Thus, he said, “Wizard Umo, I need to clarify something. I’m not a roaming Wizard. I came from somewhere far away and I’m a member of a spell casters’ organization called the Dark Magic Region. I’ve signed the highest-level contract with them as well and have agreed to never betray the Dark Magic Region. So, I’m afraid I can’t sign your contract now...”

Merlin initially thought that Fort Udon was a dispersed force and was not a spell casters' organization. He thought that no contract would be involved, but it seemed that he was wrong.

Since the Kurdmansla Islands had been developed for so many years, the few influences on the islands had fostered a solid foundation. They also possessed many contract papers. After a few hundred years, it was highly plausible for the influences on the Kurdmansla Islands to improve to become spell casters' organizations.

"The Dark Magic Region? I've heard about it before. I even went to Fire City before, but I didn't think that Wizard Merlin would be a member of the Dark Magic Region."

Wizard Umo seemed a little surprised, but he thought for a while and continued. "To be fair, this is no big deal since Fort Udon doesn't come into contact with the Dark Magic Region very often. Moreover, they are well separated from each other. There may never be a conflict between the two. So, the contract between Wizard Merlin and Fort Udon can be changed a little.

"How about this? The contract can be changed such that the contract will be nullified should there be a conflict between Fort Udon and the Dark Magic Region. How does this sound? Wizard Merlin, surely you won't have any hesitation now after the contract has changed?"

Wizard Umo directly changed the content of the contract. Should one day Fort Udon truly have a conflict of interest with the Dark Magic Region, Merlin could simply ignore his contract with Fort Udon. This was the highest sincerity which Wizard Umo had displayed.

Since this did not conflict with his contract with the Dark Magic Region, Merlin naturally did not worry about anything and began to sign the contract.

Merlin was already familiar with the process of signing the contract, so he quickly did it. The contract paper was then kept by Wizard Umo. With this paper, Merlin must not betray Fort Udon.

After signing the contract, Merlin was officially a member of Fort Udon. Moreover, he was considered the core of Fort Udon who possessed a gold-lined robe that represented the greatest honor and prestige!

Chapter 275: Violet Flame Island

Wizard Umo took his leave. Merlin had now become the member of Fort Udon and possessed the gold-lined robe that brought great prestige to him.

Merlin's first thought was to obtain the map of volcanoes that Wizard Gerson had mentioned, which was only provided to the member of Fort Udon.

The map of volcanoes was a piece of combined information that Fort Udon had spent many years of observations to collect, so it was highly credible. Should Merlin wanted to search for Lava Soil in the volcanoes, he would need the map.

There were many Spell Casters coming in and out of Fort Udon since it was a large castle. This was the only place that the members of Fort Udon could trade among themselves.

In addition, there was also a large marketplace in Fort Udon; the place was rich in resources.

There might be spells, alchemy, and potions. Due to the inheriting nature, Fort Udon's resources could not be compared to the Dark Magic Region's even after a few centuries. However, since they had fought sea beasts all year round and survived in the middle of the vast sea, they had collected all sorts of strange materials and treasures.

Thus, some things such as potion materials, alchemy materials, special potions, and magical casting tools were not something the Dark Magic Region was capable of possessing.

"Give me a map of volcanoes. It needs to specify the characteristics of the volcanoes."

Merlin said to a young female Spell Caster who was about the age of fifteen.

This young female Wizard was naive-looking. For some reason, she had joined Fort Udon. Even though she was young, she was already a First-level Spell Caster.

After noticing the gold-lined robe on Merlin, the young female Wizard immediately appeared nervous and anxious. She did not react to his words after a long moment as she stared blank-eyed at Merlin.

Merlin frowned, then assumed a heavier tone. "Give me a map of the volcanoes!"

Upon hearing Merlin's impatient tone, the young female Wizard came to her senses and her face flushed pale as she quickly went into her room.

Then, the female Wizard held a large map and approached Merlin. She tried hard to explain what happened. "I'm terribly sorry. It's my first time seeing a gold-lined Spell Caster, so I was nervous..."

Merlin smiled but did not say anything. He now understood a little better of the status of "gold-lined robe" in Fort Udon.

When he came here wearing his gold-lined robe, almost all Spell Casters he met along the way showed admiration and respect from the depth of their hearts.

Merlin took the map and inspected it closely. As expected, the map recorded many volcanoes with their respective characteristics. The details were quite specific such as whether the volcanoes were active, when they had exploded in the past, and the time between successive explosions.

This was the map which Merlin needed the most!

"Right, how many elemental crystal stones are needed for this map?"

Merlin asked the female Wizard. He knew that the precious resources of Fort Udon were only made available to the members of Fort Udon, and it required elemental crystal stones to buy the item.

"Wizard Merlin, you have a gold-lined robe. According to the rules of Fort Udon, you have a limit of ten thousand elemental crystal stones. Even though this map costs three thousand elemental crystal stones, it hasn't exceeded your limit, so you can just take it directly."

"Oh? I can do that?"

Merlin was surprised. Wizard Umo and Wizard Sakvara might have forgotten to tell him that. The limit of ten thousand elemental crystal stones was not a small amount to have.

An average member of Fort Udon surely did not have such prestige; it was unique to those who had the gold-lined robe.

When Merlin kept the map and was about to leave, he suddenly saw a black-robed Spell Caster beside him buying a bubble-like spherical object.

Merlin inquired curiously, “What is this?”

The young female Wizard quickly explained. “This is a precious item obtained from the body of a deep-sea beast named blue dolphin. This bubble is also known as the blue dolphin’s bubble. Since the Kurdmansla Islands is surrounded by sea, we always encounter many strong sea beasts. In addition, there are many precious materials in the vast sea. The function of a blue dolphin’s bubble is to allow us to go under the sea.

“With a blue dolphin’s bubble, you can stay in water for up to eight hours. As long as you’re not in the deeper regions of the sea, you can completely roam around under the sea easily!”

Merlin was rather astonished at the blue dolphin’s bubble. To be able to stay in the water for eight hours proved that the blue dolphin’s bubble was indeed a good item to have. After considering that he still had a few thousands of elemental crystal stones, he said to the young female Wizard, “Alright, give me a blue dolphin’s bubble!”

“Sure, please give me a minute!”

Thereafter, the young female Wizard held a fist-sized bubble and handed it to Merlin. She explained, “The blue dolphin’s bubble can be stored for a long time, up to a few years. It’s also easy to use. Just reach your hand into the bubble lightly, then the bubble will expand and enlarge, encompassing the Spell Caster. One can enter the sea after that. However, you must ensure not to damage the bubble when you cast a spell. Otherwise, the immense pressure under the sea can easily crush the Spell Caster should the bubble bursts.”

Merlin nodded. He had known since his previous life that the pressure under the sea was immensely large. Even the toughest metal alloy would be crushed easily under the deep sea, not to mention the Spell Casters who had a weak body.

The blue dolphin’s bubble cost Merlin about three thousand elemental crystal stones. Even if Merlin possessed the gold-lined robe, he only had four thousand elemental crystal stones now.

Luckily, Merlin had many elemental crystal stones in his ring, so he was not concerned about using up his limit.

After getting the map and the blue dolphin's bubble, Merlin turned around and left.

Upon returning to his room, Merlin quickly opened the map and searched carefully. There were too many volcanoes recorded on the map; most of them were active volcanoes. Only a small number of them were completely inactive or did not explode often.

Firstly, Merlin looked for the volcanoes which were completely inactive because it would be safer for him to search for Lava Soil there.

“Yeah, I’ll choose this island!”

Merlin finally picked an island called the Violet Flame Island. Merlin found that the dead volcanoes were more concentrated on this island. Hence, it was most suitable for him to search for Lava Soil there.

The only downside to this was that the island was too far from the main island. It was located at the outermost region of the Kurdmansla Islands.

Merlin was completely free now and could move around with ease in Fort Udon. This was also one of his rights as a Spell Caster with a gold-lined robe.

However, Merlin had decided. He quickly left his room and approached the Violet Flame Island according to the route written on the map.

...

“It has been so many days since sea beasts last came. We can finally relax for a little. Sadly, our third brother has died.”

A black-robed Wizard shook his head as he heaved a deep sigh.

“Yeah, it wasn’t just our third brother. Crook as well. As soon as the sea beasts attacks the island, we must guard the island with our lives. However, if we do that, someone has to die.”

A few black-robed Wizards revealed a helpless expression. Since the first day they had joined Fort Udon, they had received many benefits. From First-level to Third-level Spell Caster, they had enjoyed the rich resources available in Fort Udon.

Most of all, every Wizard in Fort Udon were like brothers to them, giving them family warmth in which they had not felt for a long time as roaming Wizards.

Thus, they were contented with their lives. When the sea beasts attacked the island, they willingly came to the most dangerous outer islands to stand against the powerful sea beasts.

However, the few months of killing had slowly tired them out. These sea beasts seemed to be endless. Every attack would end up in a massive number of deaths among the Spell Casters. They were even concerned about what might happen to the island should they fail in protecting it. They did not want to leave Fort Udon, so they had sworn to protect it.

“Hmm? Someone’s coming. Is it the Wizards who were sent here by Fort Udon?”

A black-haired Wizard with a black robe looked far ahead and, in a blur, he could see a figure that was slowly approaching the Violet Flame Island.

In the past few months, they had lost too many Spell Casters on the Violet Flame Island, so Fort Udon would usually send more Spell Casters here as replacements.

“Let me check it out. From what I see, I don’t think so. If he’s the Wizard sent by Fort Udon as a replacement, why is he alone?”

Among the black-robed Wizards, a gray-robed Wizard appeared quite flashy. He squinted his eyes. He thought that this was not a Spell Caster sent by Fort Udon, so he was immediately on guard.

It was important to note that they must be careful around the other two forces – Gray Wing Alliance and Wizard’s Tower when they fought the sea beasts on the Kurdmansla Islands.

It was slightly better with Wizard's Tower since they only took control of the largest islands with rich resources. They would not be interested in the poor and dangerous island like the Violet Flame Island.

However, the case was different with Gray Wing Alliance. They always watched Fort Udon closely. They even wanted to fight for a poor and dangerous island like the Violet Flame Island.

These three forces were in a heated competition, so the Spell Casters on the Violet Flame Island did not dare to lower their guard.

"Wizard Bayton, you're being too cautious. Do you think that the people of Gray Wing Alliance dare to make a move now? Wasn't the lesson last time enough to teach them? Hehe, if it is really them, we can directly eliminate them. I've long been annoyed at the bastards of Gray Wing Alliance!"

The black-haired Spell Caster gave off an intense killing aura when the Gray Wing Alliance was mentioned. His expression gave others a chill down their spine.

"We should still be careful. I'll check it out!"

After saying that, the gray-robed Wizard Bayton walked toward the blurred figure.

Chapter 276: Spell Casters on the Island

"Phew..."

Merlin let out a long sigh of relief. He looked at the inverted-triangular shape of the island and knew that this was the Violet Flame Island.

"I've finally reached the Violet Flame Island!"

Merlin spent a staggering few hours walking from the main island to his destination. The entire group of the Kurdmansla Island consisted up to ten thousands of islands and were spread quite extensively. Therefore, it took a long time to travel from the most centrally-located main island to the most peripheral Violet Flame Island.

If Merlin could fly, the journey would have been much faster. Yet, Flying spells were Fourth-level or higher level spells. Though Merlin's current powers were enough to compare with the extremes of a Fourth-level Spell Caster, still, he could not cast Flying spells.

On the Violet Flame Island, lush greenery could be found everywhere. There were also whiffs of fresh fragrance accompanied by the briny sea breeze, which made people feel refreshed.

"How picturesque, the scenery here on the Violet Flame Island is so beautiful!"

Even Merlin could not help but praise the scenery on the Violet Flame Island; it was indeed breathtaking. If anyone was asked to stay on this island forever, many would jump at the idea.

"Who's there?"

At that moment, a gray-robed Spell Caster descended from the sky, his razor-sharp gaze staring at Merlin.

A gray-robed Spell Caster signified Spell Casters of Fourth-level or above, who already had Flying spells. However, when the gray-robed Wizard saw the gold-lined gray robe on Merlin's body, he shuddered and faltered to the ground. A respectful expression etched on his face as he bowed to Merlin apologizingly and said, "Bayton didn't know you're here, Sir Wizard. Please forgive me!"

As a Fort Udon Spell Caster, Wizard Bayton naturally recognized what a gold-lined gray robe meant, but personally, he had seen too few Wizards with gold-lined robes. Moreover, from the back of his mind, he did not recall anyone among the beginner gray-robed Wizards who owned a gold-lined robe.

"Don't tell me you're a newly-arrived Wizard at Fort Udon?"

Countless thoughts flashed across Wizard Bayton's mind, but his expression remained respectful, not giving himself away.

"Wizard Bayton, you can call me Merlin!"

Merlin said with a smile.

“Wizard Merlin, the fort leaders sent you here?”

Wizard Bayton asked cautiously. He knew that in Fort Udon, Wizards who would hold the gold-lined gray robe held great power and influence, no matter which Wizardry level they were. Once they obtained a gold-lined gray robe, nobody except the three fort leaders had the power to deploy these Spell Casters.

That was why Wizard Bayton popped the question. After all, at that moment, the Violet Flame Island lost a large number of Spell Casters. For a long time, Fort Udon did not seem to have responded by sending Spell Casters to back them up.

Yet, Merlin shook his head and said, “The fort leaders didn’t send me here. I’m here for some personal matter.”

Upon hearing that, there was a slight disappointment on Wizard Bayton’s face, but he recovered soon enough. Wizards with gold-lined gray robe, does one know how distinguished their statuses are? Absolute freaks in Fort Udon. These Wizards were highly prioritized for training by even the fort leaders, so why would they send Merlin to the unknown dangers on a mere Violet Flame Island?

After recognizing this fact, Wizard Bayton’s emotions recovered too. Hence, he said to Merlin, “Wizard Merlin, it’s your first time here on the Violet Flame Island. Allow me to introduce you to the Spell Casters on the Violet Flame Island.”

Merlin nodded. He intended to look for Lava Soil on the Kurdmansla Islands. Some help from these Spell Casters, who had spent all their time on the Violet Flame Island, would definitely make his quest for Lava Soil easier.

Thus, Merlin followed behind Wizard Bayton, walking toward the depths of the island.

...

“Come come come, keep drinking. On a place like the Violet Flame Island, nobody knows exactly when they would die. Haha, these few years at Fort Udon can be considered the most comfortable days of my life. I wouldn’t bother dying now, it’s been worthwhile!”

An alcohol-smelling, messy-haired, plump Spell Caster roared in laughter. His laughter flowed with the breeze, drifting in all directions of the island.

“Fatso, why are you making so much noise?”

There was a chuckle, and then Wizard Bayton returned.

The plump Spell Caster stared wide-eyed and exclaimed, “Wizard Bayton, you’re back? The person following behind you...”

The plump Spell Caster was shocked to see the gold-lined gray robe on Merlin. He instantly sobered up. He stood up and yelled out with a serious look on his face, “Gold-lined gray robe... I didn’t realize you’re here, Sir Wizard, please pardon me!”

As the plump Wizard stood up, the many Spell Casters who were resting on the beach followed suit, rising to their feet, one after another, looking at Merlin curiously.

Though it had been long since the Spell Casters joined Fort Udon, a good majority of them had never seen a gold-lined-gray-robed Spell Caster with their own eyes. So the sight of Merlin’s arrival piqued their curiosity.

“This is Wizard Merlin, he’s here because of some private matters.”

Wizard Bayton introduced Merlin to the Spell Casters on the beach. At the same time, Merlin sized up those Spell Casters. He realized that the Spell Casters here were not really weak. Many of them were Third-level Spell Casters, a small proportion being Fourth-level Spell Casters.

However, some of these Spell Casters looked gloomy and dispirited as if they had just gone through a big war. Merlin looked at the endless stretch of sea and seemed to have figured why.

Recently, there had been many sea beasts attacking the Kurdmansla Islands, as frequent as once every three to five days. Thus, whether it was Fort Udon, Gray Wing Alliance or even Wizard’s Tower, they were all battling with numerous sea beasts on the islands that they control respectively. As for the Violet Flame Island, it was situated at the outermost part of the Kurdmansla Islands, so they had surely experienced multiple attacks from sea beasts.

Merlin made sure to be down-to-earth and started chatting with Wizard Bayton and the rest.

Wizard Bayton sounded reluctant when he asked, “Wizard Merlin, I seem to recall that among Fort Udon’s Novice gray-robed Wizards, no one was granted the gold-lined robe. So, have you just recently arrived at Fort Udon, Wizard Merlin?”

Merlin nodded. He found no reason to hide. Therefore, he explained briefly, “I’m indeed a newcomer at Fort Udon. I was lucky to have been spotted by the fort leaders, so I’ve been granted the gold-lined robe.”

The plump Spell Caster who was standing beside him immediately shook his head, proclaiming loudly, “Wizard Merlin, you don’t have to be humble. It’s not easy to obtain the gold-lined robe. Which Spell Caster with gold-lined robe is not a full-on freak? All are capable of challenging beyond Wizardry levels. You’re a Novice gold-lined gray robe, which means that the fort leaders acknowledge you. Among all Fourth-level Spell Casters, you have a near invincible presence. Heh heh, We’ve been in Fort Udon for so many years, how can we not know these?”

The plump Wizard gave a mysterious chuckle, then continued saying, “Hmm, Wizards who own a gold-lined robe, heh heh, I may have heard of them but I’ve never met one in person. Today, I’ve met you Wizard Merlin, and my hand is beginning to feel a little itchy. How does that sound, Wizard Merlin? Can you be my eye-opener as to how powerful gold-lined-robed Spell Casters truly are?”

“Fatso!”

Wizard Bayton quickly yelled at him. He shook his head helplessly, “Wizard Merlin, don’t mind him. Fatso’s always like that, wanting to battle everyone he meets... However, when it comes to killing sea beasts, Fatso’s really skilled at it. Even my own life was saved by him once.”

Merlin did not mind at all. He could see that this plump Spell Caster was not seeking trouble but purely wanted to battle a gold-lined-robed Wizard.

Yet, Merlin did not give in to the plump Wizards’ wish for a match. With his current powers, beating Fourth-level Spell Casters would not be a problem at all. Even if the plump Spell Caster had some truly special skills, he would definitely still not be his match.

Merlin came to the Violet Flame Island with the aim of finding Lava Soil, so he did not wish to complicate issues. Thus, he steered away from the topic and started enquiring about the whereabouts of Lava Soil.

“Wizard Bayton, do you guys know if there’s Lava Soil on the Violet Flame Island?”

“Lava Soil?”

Wizard Bayton paused for a moment. Only then did he realize that the purpose of Merlin’s arrival at the Violet Flame Island was to look for Lava Soil.

“Wizard Merlin, I believe you’ve made your research. The volcanoes here on the Violet Flame Island were basically all extinct volcanoes, so safety wouldn’t be an issue. However, whether there’s Lava Soil inside, no one can say for sure. If Wizard Merlin wants to look for Lava Soil, why don’t I be your guide and show you where on the Violet Flame Island to look for Lava Soil?”

Merlin shook his head gently. Wizard Bayton held a very high position on the Violet Flame Island, and he was a very important person. How could Merlin let him look for Lava Soil?

“Wizard Bayton, that won’t be necessary. The Violet Flame Island is not huge, I can look inside those extinct volcanoes one by one.”

As soon as he finished speaking, Merlin rose to his feet. He did not hesitate any longer, waving farewell to Wizard Bayton and the rest.

Watching Merlin’s figure slowly disappearing from sight, the plump Wizard took a few wobbly steps to the front of Wizard Bayton and muttered, “Bayton, this Wizard Merlin looked as though he wasn’t even a Fourth-level Spell Caster, how could he have obtained the Novice gold-lined gray robe?”

Novice gold-lined gray robe that signified the most invincible of all Fourth-level Spell Casters!

Wizard Bayton gently furrowed his eyebrows too. Of course, he could see that Merlin was not really a Fourth-level Spell Caster. Yet, the gold-lined robe was definitely real.

Moreover, gold-lined robes were only in the custody of the three fort leaders. Every one of those gold-lined robes was granted personally by three fort leaders. Hence, Wizard Bayton sounded reluctant when he answered, “Maybe Wizard Merlin has qualities that are truly special. Our three fort leaders’ judgments couldn’t be wrong. Alright, Fatso, you’re always drinking, don’t you stir any trouble. Keep an eye on any movements on the sea. The sea beasts haven’t appeared for almost seven days, I fear that...”

Watching the tranquil surface of the sea, Wizard Bayton felt his heart sink a little.

...

“Volcanoes, I’ve finally found them!”

In the deeper regions of the Violet Flame Island, a young man donned in a gold-lined gray robe looked at a towering volcano in front of him, and let out a long sigh of relief.

The person in the gold-lined gray robe was Merlin. It took him half a day’s search to finally locate a volcano. Thus, he took out his map hurriedly and checked. It confirmed that this was indeed one of the relatively larger extinct volcanoes that was marked on the map.

“I shall go in and have a look. Maybe I can find Lava Soil!”

Merlin’s expression sparkled with anticipation. He then swiftly climbed up to the crater of the volcano. He descended along the steep, rugged rock walls, slowly sliding into the extinct volcano.

Chapter 277: Sea Beasts Incoming

At the huge volcanic crater, sunlight gradually dwindled. Not only that, the surrounding air was extremely dry, pervaded by a pungent smell of sulfur.

Merlin gently picked on the layer of rock. He saw that there were cracks all over the parched surface. This volcano had indeed not erupted for a long time and belonged to the extinct group of volcanoes.

The lower he descend into the volcano, the dimmer the lighting. Merlin could only maintain full focus all the time, observing the conditions around him. While he was sliding down, he did not find Lava Soil either.

Lava Soil could only be possibly formed in the volcanoes after enduring extremely high temperatures and immense pressure for a long period of time. It was a slow, gradual process of several hundreds of years.

Thus, the formation of Lava Soil was not really that easy as it was not found in every volcano.

“Hmm? Footprints? Somebody was here?”

Merlin’s expressions changed. He saw some footprints in the volcano, and they were messy footprints of varying sizes. This indicated that a lot of people came to the volcano.

Momentarily, Merlin’s heart sank a little as he thought of a possibility. Since he was able to figure out that the extinct volcano was very safe, how could the other Spell Casters not think of it too?

Lava Soil may not be an especially precious treasure, yet it was still a very important alchemy material. Even when sold, it could garner a huge return of elemental crystal stones.

It was highly probable that these extinct volcanoes were already explored by the other Spell Casters. Even if there were any Lava Soil, they would have been reaped.

At the thought of that, Merlin quickly slid down the volcano.

“No, there’s nothing! People have already gone through this place, I can’t even find anything valuable...”

Merlin’s expression looked dismal. Inside these extinct volcanoes, there were not only Lava Soil but some especially hard rocks too, which were also very unique alchemy materials.

However, this extinct volcano did not even have anything valuable. By then, it was clear to him that this extinct volcano had already been fully scavenged by someone else.

“I shall continue looking in other volcanoes!”

Merlin already had a bad feeling about it. No doubt that extinct volcanoes are safe, but at the same time, the valuable items in extinct volcanoes were very likely to have been reaped by other people. Yet, Merlin was not about to give up just yet. He still wanted to go and have a good search.

Thus, according to the marked locations of the volcanoes on his map, Merlin started his search one by one...

...

The bright sunshine showered down on the beach, making people listless. Many Spell Casters narrowed their eyelids, casually picking themselves a spot on the beach, and enjoying the warmth of the sunlight.

“These kind of days are really boring, I miss those days where the sea beasts attacked instead when there was a chance at scoring riches too. Tsk tsk, everything on the sea beasts’ bodies was a treasure...”

“Hey hey, Fatso, you still miss the days where the sea beasts would attack? Last time out, you were almost devoured by a unicorn leopard seal. If it weren’t for Wizard Bayton, you would’ve died already. It’s true that the sea beasts are loaded with treasure, but would you even have a chance of getting any of those then?”

The Spell Casters were already very familiar with each other, so during their leisure, they would often make some small jokes. It had become a part of their formula of living on the boring island.

“Boom!”

The group who were still enjoying the fuzzy sunshine moments ago suddenly felt the entire island shudder. At the same time, a distance away out on the sea, a huge wave had risen.

Behind the waves was an enormous bunch of blackness, all of which were giant-sized sea beasts.

“Not good, the sea beasts are back again!”

The group of Spell Casters who were still on the beach immediately became vigilant. One after another, they focused their gaze on the sea wave far away. The huge wave of blackness contained an overwhelming number of sea beasts, striking a feeling of despair in their hearts.

“How can there be so many sea beasts?”

That was the question in every Spell Caster’s mind. It was the first time that there was such a massive invasion of sea beasts on the Violet Flame Island. Upon seeing the highly organized sea beasts that were approaching them along with the sea wave, everyone felt their hearts sink.

Perhaps this time, none of them would survive. From the moment they stepped onto the Violet Flame Island, they had in fact already readied themselves for this. Yet, when it came to facing reality, most of them still felt heavy-hearted, even beginning to feel a little scared.

Then, Wizard Bayton lifted his head. There was a glitter of grit in his eyes.

“Send a notification to Fort Udon. It’s possible that the Violet Flame Island won’t make it through this, but every single Wizard of Fort Udon on the Violet Flame Island will fight until the very end!”

Upon finishing his statement, Wizard Bayton’s body glowed with intense elemental waves.

...

“No, I can’t believe there’s no Lava Soil!”

Inside an extinct volcano, Merlin, whose face was layered with ash, shook his head in disdain. Once again, disappointment was written all over his face. This volcano was already the eighteenth one that he had searched in, yet he still could not find Lava Soil. It was a known fact that there were only twenty-four volcanoes on the Violet Flame Island in total, and all of them were extinct volcanoes.

“There are six volcanoes left. The hopes may not be high, but since I’m here on the Violet Flame Island, I’ll still search through them!”

Merlin mumbled softly. He knew the chances were not great, but he refused to give in. Only six more extinct volcanoes to go. No matter what, he would only settle after he had gone in for a search.

“Boom!”

Just when Merlin was about to leave the extinct volcano, the entire volcano seemed to have shaken violently. Shortly after, a huge amount of soil and dust fell from above.

“What’s going on? Is the volcano about to erupt?”

Merlin’s expression changed. If it was to be a volcanic eruption, it would have already been too late for him. He would be flooded by the sweltering hot lava.

However, it took only a moment for Merlin to realize that it was not a volcanic eruption because he was inside the volcano and he did not even feel a single breath of heat. In addition, that shudder seemed to have originated from afar.

Deep in his heart, Merlin slowly loosened up. He did not dare to stay in the depths of the volcano so he quickly made his way to the crater.

Standing on the crater high up, Merlin finally saw that far away in the middle of the sea, a huge wave was sweeping toward his direction. Within the waves was a dense group of sea beasts, which looked like ominous dark clouds.

“Sea beast invasion?”

Merlin guessed it instantly that was indeed a sea beast invasion. The Violet Flame Island belonged to the outermost stretches of the Kurdmansla Islands and was often hit by sea beast attacks.

Only this time, the sea beasts’ attack scale was way too large. With the combined powers of Wizard Bayton and the rest, he feared that even they could not hold them off.

“I shall go and have a look.”

Merlin could not pretend like he had seen nothing. He was part of Fort Udon now, so he was obliged to contribute to Fort Udon. Not to mention, he kind of liked the camaraderie in Fort Udon too.

“Swoosh!”

Thus, Wind elements emerged on Merlin’s body, encasing his figure as he dashed toward the beach in a haste.

...

“Kill!”

Wizard Bayton waved one arm with force, officially giving out the order. He already saw some sea beasts that had crept up the beach.

“Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!”

One after another, Wind Blades of the most rapid of speeds rained down onto the pitch-black body of a sea beast, with skin that looked like old tree bark.

However, these sharp Wind Blades simply could not slice open the old-tree-bark-like skin of these sea beasts. All it could do was inflict sharp pain onto the beast, causing them to become enraged.

It was simply not enough to kill the sea beasts.

“Oh no, these sea beasts are at least Third-level and above. There are still many Fourth-level sea beasts. We don’t stand a chance at killing them all!”

Even the usually open-minded plump Wizard’s expression changed too. Conversely, he cast Flame spells, enveloping an entire sea beast, the high-temperature blaze sent the sea beast into torturous howls of pain.

Still, if he intended to end this sea beast's life, it would still take a long time, and the plump Wizard was given no time to care for the others too. Yet, this particular beast was only one of the numerous sea beasts, there was still a multitude of countless sea beasts behind.

Furthermore, there was still a bigger threat, a four-legged, enormous sea beast with two ugly lumps on its head and a huge mouth which was filled with rows of sharp teeth. When it opened its mouth, it spat a type of gooey, acidic liquid. If that touched the body of a Spell Caster, the victim would corrode and die almost in an instant.

Even Third-level Defensive spells would not be able to shield that and would succumb to corrosion. Only Fourth-level Defensive spells were capable of blocking it for a short while.

“Wizard Bayton, we can't hold off all these. We're not able to defend against these sea beasts. How long until the reinforcements from Fort Udon arrive?”

One of the Fourth-level Wizards raised his voice as he threw the question at Wizard Bayton, but not before he killed a sea beast with great difficulty.

“How much longer?”

A bitter smile etched on Wizard Bayton's face. He shook his head helplessly and said, “From Fort Udon's main island, even with the quickest speed, it would still require half a day's time to reach here.”

“Half a day?”

The remaining Spell Casters went silent. Currently, there were so many sea beasts, much less half a day, even if help was scheduled to arrive in half an hour, they could not hold on until then either.

“Bayton, are we about to die?”

The plump Wizard cracked a slight smile. His body had been stained with fresh blood, emitting a pungent bloody smell. It was hard to tell apart which were from the sea beasts, and which were from his own body.

“Fatso, you're afraid of death?”

Wizard Bayton did not answer his question but threw back another question instead.

“Haha, when I was a fugitive back then and had sought refuge in the Kurdmansla Islands, if not for Fort Udon’s adoption, I would have died a long time ago. Me, afraid of death? I’m just a little unsatisfied, that’s all. Unsatisfied that my archenemy is still out there, and that I haven’t exacted revenge!”

When mentioning his “archenemy”, the plump Wizard’s facial expression was incredibly wicked, one that would make people shudder.

Wizard Bayton did not speak but lifted his head and took a glance at the other surviving Spell Casters. They had lost several more men and were left with less than twenty people.

“Hmm? There’s still somebody?”

Suddenly, from the edge of Wizard Bayton’s eyes, he saw a figure dashing from afar.

Chapter 278: A Show of Strength on the Island!

“Quick, hurry up, the people on the Violet Flame Island can’t hold any longer!”

In the vast blue sky, ten or more Spell Casters’ bodies were flashing with intense Wind elements. They were using their quick pace possible to fly toward the Violet Flame Island.

Spell Casters who could fly were at least Fourth-level Wizards. From the color of the robes that they were wearing, one could tell that they were gray-robed Wizards from Fort Udon. Additionally, they were not any gray-robed Wizards – they were Middle gray-robed Wizards, Fifth-level Spell Casters!

More than ten Fifth-level Spell Casters hurriedly rushed toward the Violet Flame Island. This alone was enough to tell how precarious the situation on the Violet Flame Island was.

Leading the way was a slightly stout-looking brown-haired Spell Caster. His facial expression was rather serious, and his eyes looked worried sick.

Some of the other Fifth-level Spell Casters saw how anxious the brown-haired Spell Caster looked and gently shook their heads. The brown-haired Spell Caster was Wizard Bosetta. Wizard Bayton on the Violet Flame Island was Wizard Bosetta's younger brother. Hence, when he received Wizard Bayton's message, in an instant, Wizard Bosetta requested Fort Udon's high-ranked officials to let him lead some ten other Middle gray-robed Wizards to the island.

The only thing was, everybody knew the Violet Flame Island was very far away. Even if they tried their best to rush the journey, it would still require half a day's time to reach there. It was feared that by the time they arrived, the Spell Casters on the Violet Flame Island would have already been completely wiped out by the sea beasts.

"Bayton, you got to hold on!"

Wizard Bosetta's eyes gazed at the direction of Violet Flame Island as he mumbled softly.

...

"Swoosh!"

The figure in the distance started becoming clearer in view. Wizard Bayton's expression changed slightly as he immediately recalled that a few days ago, there was a Spell Caster who had just arrived on the Violet Flame Island, who then left to search for Lava Soil.

"Wizard Merlin, leave now, it's very dangerous here!"

Merlin abruptly halted his steps, and gently scanned his surroundings. He saw the barbaric scene on the beach. There were dead bodies of Spell Casters and carcasses of sea beasts everywhere. A foul bloody stench permeated the air.

Wizard Bayton saw Merlin freeze in place, so he sounded more pressing as he exclaimed, "Wizard Merlin, you own the gold-lined robe. You're a Spell Caster who's highly valued by even the fort leaders. You can't die here!"

Wizard Bayton did not realize at all that right behind him, was a gigantic sea beast with six eyes on its head, creeping toward him.

“Bayton, watch out!”

“Wizard Bayton, move away fast! That’s a ruthless six-eyed venomous beast!”

Some of the Spell Casters anxiously shouted upon noticing the six-eyed venomous beast behind Wizard Bayton. This six-eyed venomous beast could match the powers of a Fourth-level Spell Caster. All of its six eyes could expel black venom, and when touched by those, one’s death would be inevitable. It was one of the most terrifying sea beasts among the wave of invading sea beasts this time around.

“Hooo…”

The six eyes on the venomous beast’s head immediately started emitting odd illuminations. Shortly after, it forcefully ejected puffs of poisonous mist, which began shrouding toward Wizard Bayton in an instant.

The poisonous black mist moved with great speed. By the time Wizard Bayton realized it, it was already too late. He did not have any time to even cast a Defensive spell.

Tranquility was expressed on Wizard Bayton’s face. He gently closed his eyes, accepting that the mist was about to consume him, the venomous mist-shrouded him and was ready to devour Wizard Bayton at any moment.

“Ka-chak!”

Yet, at that moment, a sense of coldness made Wizard Bayton feel chilly all over his body. Then, the poisonous mist that he braced himself for did not latch onto his body.

Wizard Bayton immediately opened his eyes, but all he could see was the puff of pitch-black venomous mist frozen into pieces of ice crystals. These ice crystals encased the poisonous mist, falling onto the ground in succession.

“Wizard Merlin?”

Wizard Bayton looked at Merlin in surprise, albeit knowing that Merlin was a Spell Caster with the gold-lined robe. He was acknowledged by the fort leaders themselves and was an invincible presence among Fourth-level Spell Casters.

Nonetheless, one had to witness Merlin in action with their own eyes to really feel the astonishing experience!

“Wizard Bayton, leave these sea beasts to me. The fort leaders have given me the gold-lined robe, it can’t just be a decoration right?”

Merlin flashed a confident smile on his face. He was not someone who could be easily touched, but in Fort Udon, observing Wizard Bayton, the plump Wizard, and the resolve of the others had really warmed his heart.

The camaraderie in Fort Udon made even Merlin feel very comfortable. Though he had only just met Wizard Bayton and the rest and had only chatted briefly, it still left a huge impression on Merlin.

If he had not encountered them, he could have just walked away. However, since he was there, Merlin simply could not be a bystander, especially after viewing the situation moments ago. This wave of sea beasts may have come in large numbers, but none of them could equal a Fifth-level Spell Caster’s power.

As long as there were no sea beasts who could match a Fifth-level Spell Caster, Merlin was confident that even him alone was enough to take care of all those sea beasts.

“Darkness Tide!”

Merlin’s confidence stemmed from Darkness Tide. With the enhancement from Darkness Heart complemented by Darkness Tide’s very own illusion effects, Merlin’s Darkness Tide was capable of plunging even Fourth-level Spell Casters into a realm of illusion.

These sea beasts were not like the Two-headed Infant that Merlin had encountered before either because none of them had especially strong Mind Power. Therefore, Merlin’s Darkness Tide could cast these evil beasts into illusions pretty easily.

The lights started twisting, and darkness fell instantaneously. It was just like strong continuous water currents, almost completely engulfing a huge half of the beach. The affected zone was entirely pitch-dark. Besides Merlin, no one else could see what was happening clearly.

“It’s Wizard Merlin who has acted!”

Spell Casters who were left on the Violet Flame Island was about sixteen people, and these sixteen were among the strongest Spell Casters. Except for a few black-robed Spell Casters, there were a good thirteen gray-robed Spell Casters.

It also meant that a majority of them were Fourth-level Spell Casters, and only these mighty Fourth-level Spell Casters were capable of holding on until the end. After seeing Merlin in action, they slowly gathered, their eyes gleaming with expectation.

The plump Wizard wiped off the fresh blood on his cheeks, a weird expression flashing in his eyes as he muttered, “A Spell Caster with gold-lined robe, the strongest of all Fort Udon Fourth-level Spell Casters. Let’s see if he can hold off these sea beasts solo?”

“Solo? Even a Fifth-level Wizard won’t be able to accomplish that... However, a holder of the gold-lined robe can’t exactly be conjectured with common sense.”

These Wizards may find it hard to believe that Merlin could hold off the endless wave of sea beasts alone, but they were quite convinced with Fort Udon’s gold-lined robe. In Fort Udon, Spell Casters with gold-lined robes were a rare sight, but all of them were unimaginable geniuses, often capable of creating all sorts of wonders.

Therefore, they held a degree of anticipation for Merlin.

“He’s using Darkness-type spells? Turns out that Wizard Merlin is also a Spell Caster skilled at Darkness-type spells. If that’s so, then no matter how large a troop the sea beasts were, I’m afraid they would still not cause Wizard Merlin any harm.”

Wizard Bayton could be considered a knowledgeable person, who had seen many things. He knew the specialty of Darkness-type Wizards. With the engulfment of a single Darkness-type spell, if it succeeded in casting the enemies into a realm of illusion, there would be nothing left but to await their eventual slaughter.

Thus, once these sea beasts were hurled into the realm of illusion, a larger number would not have that much of an impact.

As for Merlin's confidence, it had indeed stemmed from Darkness Tide. The overwhelming Darkness Tide concentrated countless Darkness elements, enveloping a big half of the beach. The sea beasts which were still brutal just moments ago fell silent, and one after another, their eyes expressed a kind of sluggishness.

Success! The sea beasts were all plunged into an illusion, with only Merlin unaffected. He could also see in the dark, observing the state of the sea beasts.

Darkness-type spells were especially devastating when used by Darkness-type Wizards who had Darkness Heart. Unless one's Mind Power was super strong and was unaffected by the illusion realm, otherwise, encountering a Darkness-type Wizard would only mean a dead end.

Every type of spell had their own uniqueness. Merlin also happened to have cultivated Darkness Heart, so now, his Darkness-type spells were incredibly powerful. Nonetheless, to exterminate these sea beasts, merely plunging them into illusions alone was not even close to enough.

These sea beasts were not like those Spell Casters. Their bodies were very strong and resilient. Merlin's First or even Second-level spells would, sadly, only eliminate a small proportion of sea beasts with bodies that were not as tough.

Still, there was a large proportion of sea beasts which had extremely tough bodies and were able to withstand Merlin's First-level and Second-level spells. By that time, it would require spells with greater damaging power.

Merlin's Wizardry level was quite low but he possessed the hugely destructive Pandora Demon Abilities!

"Pandora Demon Ability, Fiery Collapse!"

Merlin did not hesitate for a second as Fireball from within his body and the Magic Power from Furious Flame's Spell Model were almost drained to half. Then, a blaze of white flames spiraled upward fiercely within the pitch-dark space.

It burned ferociously and looked as though the entire dark space had now turned into an ocean of flames in the blink of an eye. Within the white flames, there was the occasional smell of burning flesh. The remaining ten or more Spell Casters watched with their eyes wide-open, mouths agape.

They could clearly feel the dangerously high temperature transmitted within those streaks of white flames. Even if they cast Fourth-level Defensive spells, it would still be difficult to shield these flames.

After about half an hour, the Magic Power in Merlin's body was completely exhausted. Fiery Collapse consumed way too much Fire-type Magic Power. Based on the current Fireball and Furious Flame's Spell Models in Merlin's body, the two mere Spell Models, of which one was a Zero-level spell, the other a First-level spell, it was logical that he could not hold on much longer.

Therefore, Merlin had no choice but to gradually cease his casting of Fiery Collapse. Luckily it came at a time when the sea beasts were mostly incinerated into ashes by his Fiery Collapse.

“Hooo...”

Merlin reached out a hand and waved, dispersing Darkness Tide. Thus, the Darkness-type elements dissipated swiftly. The actual conditions on the half of the beach that was initially covered by darkness too slowly came into everybody's view.

Chapter 279: Idea

On the beach, a foul stench of burnt flesh emanated in the air. When the Dark-elements dissipated, what unfolded in front of everyone was an atrocious, hell-like scene.

On the open beach laid charred-black torn limbs. The sea beasts which invaded like torrents earlier were already nowhere to be seen.

Nevertheless, the carcasses which were left on the beach only belonged to those especially giant-sized sea beasts. Slightly weaker sea beasts had been disintegrated into ashes by Merlin's Fiery Collapse.

“Powerful, that's really powerful. Gold-lined robe holders are powerful like this, huh?”

The plump Wizard stared at the scene before him in awe. Back then, he even asked for a “friendly battle” with Merlin. Now, it seemed he was lucky that Merlin chose not to accept his request.

Any Fort Udon Wizard would know of the strength of individuals with gold-lined robes, but they did not imagine them to be so powerful. Those sea beasts earlier may not match the powers of a Fifth-level Spell Caster, but still, they came in large numbers up to several hundreds of them.

Now, these overwhelming amount of sea beasts which almost tipped the Violet Flame Island to extinction had shockingly succumbed to Merlin’s own hands. There and then, the Spell Casters had an actual feeling of how powerful a “gold-lined robe” was. Spell Casters who could own a gold-lined robe possessed unimaginably powerful strength.

Merlin gently shook his head instead, smiling at Wizard Bayton as he said, “Shame, the carcasses of all these sea beasts are incomplete. Now, we’re not able to use the sea beast carcasses to trade for elemental crystal stones.”

“It’s already a great fortune that we get to survive this, what more can we ask for? Wizard Merlin, this time, we really owe you our gratitude. If it wasn’t for you, I’m sure that we would’ve all perished... It’s just, the other Spell Casters on the Violet Flame Island are dead...”

Wizard Bayton looked at the surviving ten plus Spell Casters whose expressions were rather gloomy. There was a total of a hundred or more Spell Casters on the entire Violet Flame Island. However, after the first wave of sea beast attack, a great half of them had perished.

After a moment’s silence, the look on Wizard Bayton’s face quickly recovered. Soon after, he told the remaining ten plus Spell Casters, “Let’s clean up the island first.”

Currently, it was a horrible mess on the Violet Flame Island. They would first need to provide the Spell Casters who were sacrificed a proper burial. Thus, under Wizard Bayton’s lead, everyone started cleaning up swiftly.

...

“Wizard Bosetta, that’s the Violet Flame Island upfront.”

High up in the skies, a group of Spell Casters harnessed Wind-type spells, flying toward the Violet Flame Island hastily.

Wizard Bosetta's eyes froze into a narrow gaze, but soon after, there was an indescribable expression in his eyes. He muttered, "Why isn't there any movement on the Violet Flame Island? Didn't Wizard Bayton return a message saying that there was a huge invasion of sea beasts? How can it be so quiet?"

Indeed, it was too quiet on the Violet Flame Island at this point in time. Gazing from afar, the place looked rather peaceful, not as though it was under a large scale attack from the sea beasts'.

"Could it be that all the Spell Casters on the Violet Flame Island are dead?"

This possibility crossed many of the Spell Casters' minds at the same time. For that reason, their expressions looked rather downcast.

Wizard Bosetta became more nervous, and the Wind elements on his body became more intense too. His speed increased as he hovered out of the group, taking an extra initiative to fly toward the Violet Flame Island.

"Swoosh!"

Wizard Bosetta landed on the beach. He saw that there were remnants of torn limbs on the beach and burn traces on the surrounding trees.

A thick bloody stench was still emanating in the air, which all pointed to a recent, intense battle on this stretch of beach.

"No, Bayton, you can't be dead!"

Wizard Bosetta's facial expressions were somber. He looked at all four directions around him, as though imagining Wizard Bayton's figure, but the surroundings were silent with only the occasional wind howls.

"Whoosh!"

After a moment, the other Spell Casters had landed in succession too. They also saw the terrible mess on the beach. One of the Wizards shook his head helplessly, advising Wizard Bosetta, “Wizard Bosetta, it seems that every Spell Caster on the Violet Flame Island had perished. Even their dead bodies were consumed by the sea beasts.”

Upon witnessing the scene, any Spell Caster would have had the same kind of thought. On the beach, there were only a bunch sea beast carcasses, with not a single Spell Caster corpse. This alone made it difficult to explain the situation as those wicked sea beasts would devour any Spell Casters’ corpse given the chance.

“Die, those sea beasts will all have to die!”

Intense Fire-elemental waves surged ragingly on Wizard Bosetta’s body. The surrounding temperature seemed to hike up in an instant, his body emitting a strong vengeful aura.

“Let’s move, those sea beasts couldn’t have gone far. I want to kill them all, and avenge Bayton!”

Just when Wizard Bosetta was about to take flight toward the vast sea, a few figures emerged from his back.

“Who?”

These Spell Casters were at least Fourth-level Spell Casters, so their senses were rather sharp. When they detected people around them, their Mind Powers immediately locked at the few Spell Casters behind them.

“Bosetta!”

“Bayton, you’re not dead?”

When Wizard Bayton and Wizard Bosetta saw each other, joy washed over their faces. Both of them were blood brothers and had joined Fort Udon at the same time, so their brotherhood was a deeply-bonded one.

However, Wizard Bosetta’s talents were much better than Wizard Bayton’s, so he was already a Fifth-level Spell Caster while Wizard Bayton was still a Fourth-level Spell Caster.

Seeing that Wizard Bayton was not dead, Wizard Bosetta was delighted. He smiled as he asked, “Bayton, the message that you sent us earlier informing that there were huge quantities of sea beasts attacking the Violet Flame Island is the reason why I led this group of people and rushed here. I didn’t expect that you’ve taken care of the sea beasts.”

Wizard Bosetta’s sights turned to the massive amount of sea beast carcasses on the beach, and could not help but feel puzzled too. The few sea beast carcasses that he saw were strong sea beasts that were capable of taking on a Fourth-level Spell Caster.

Wizard Bayton shook his head instead. “These sea beasts were not handled by us. In fact, the sea beasts that attacked the Violet Flame Island today had never-seen-before strengths, and overwhelming numbers – almost several hundreds of them, all strong sea beasts. Among them were several Fourth-level sea beasts, and there was even a peak Fourth-level sea beast like the six-eyed venomous beast. With the defensive strength on the Violet Flame Island, how can we be capable of taking down such enormous sea beasts?”

“Oh? Besides you guys, who else is on the island?”

Wizard Bosetta was well aware of the defensive strength on the Violet Flame Island. Hearing that there were several hundred strong sea beasts attacking the Violet Flame Island, he knew that with the Violet Flame Island’s defense alone, it was difficult to hold off those sea beasts.

“It’s Wizard Merlin!”

Wizard Bayton gave a slight smile as he introduced Wizard Bosetta to Merlin, “Wizard Merlin, this is my elder brother, Middle gray-robed Wizard Bosetta!”

“Wizard Bosetta!”

Merlin bowed gently while Wizard Bosetta’s eyes narrowed. Soon after, he noticed the gold-lined robe on Merlin, and his expressions changed slightly, which became serious.

“Wizard Merlin, these sea beasts were all killed by you?”

Even though he knew that gold-lined robe holders were very powerful, Wizard Bosetta was still skeptical. He cannot imagine that someone who was not a Fifth-level Spell Caster alone could possibly be capable of killing off so many sea beasts.

In addition, even for a Fifth-level Spell Caster, it would still be arduous to defend against so many sea beasts. At least Bosetta admitted that he definitely could not do it himself.

Merlin did not give an answer, and it was Wizard Bayton who replied instead, “Bosetta, Wizard Merlin is a Spell Caster who’s proficient in Darkness-type spells!”

“Darkness-type spells!”

Wizard Bosetta was immediately hit with a realization. Nonetheless, Darkness-type spells were usually very difficult. Roaming Wizards or Wizard clans would normally not construct Darkness-type spells.

However, once the construction was successful, Darkness-type spells would indeed be a nightmarish spell for those who had weak Mind Powers. For Darkness-type spells, a huge number would basically mean nothing at all.

Yet, Wizard Bosetta still exclaimed, “Gold-lined robes... As I remember, the gold-lined robe for Novice gray-robed Spell Casters has been vacant for about ten years, and there was never any Novice gray-robed Wizard who was granted the gold-lined robe. Wizard Merlin must’ve just joined Fort Udon. Tsk tsk, a newcomer to Fort Udon can also be granted the gold-lined robe, seems that it’s well deserved!”

Wizard Bosetta may be a Fifth-level Spell Caster but he was still very impressed and respectful toward gold-lined robe holders.

“Alright, Bayton, since there are no longer any issues on the Violet Flame Island, I shall return to await further orders.”

This time, Wizard Bosetta had led so many gray-robed Wizards forth to this place with the main purpose of providing backup to the Violet Flame Island. Now that there are no more problems on the Violet Flame Island, he would naturally return to report to the higher-ups in Fort Udon.

“Hold up.”

Wizard Bayton's expressions looked serious as he held Wizard Bosetta back and spoke in a low tone, "Bosetta, when you go back this time, you must clarify and emphasize to the higher-ups in Fort Udon about the severity of the situation. The sea beast invasion this time is definitely not a one-time occurrence. With the mere defenses on the Violet Flame Island currently, there's no way we can hold them off. They need to send at least Middle gray-robed Wizards here!"

"Middle gray-robed Wizards?"

Bosetta's expression looked solemn too. He had understood from Wizard Bayton's descriptions how terrifying the sea beast attack earlier was. Without Fifth-level Spell Casters, they could not possibly hold them off.

At recent times, the sea beast attacks experienced by the entire Kurdmansla Islands were becoming more and more frequent. Defenses must be reinforced, otherwise, there could be a second or a third-time attack of sea beasts.

"Alright, when I'm back this time, I'll explain to the higher-ups in Fort Udon in detail about the situation. Bayton, if it can't be helped, you should follow me back to the main island. There's not much danger there..."

Before he could finish talking, Bayton started shaking his head in disapproval, letting out a long sigh. "Bosetta, when I came to the Violet Flame Island at the start, I had the intention of striving in such a harsh environment to increase my potential so that I could advance into a Fifth-level Spell Caster. I'll not leave the Violet Flame Island as long as I haven't become a Fifth-level Spell Caster."

Bosetta was well aware of Wizard Bayton's demeanor, so he could only respond with a nod. Soon after, he led the group of people off the island.

At that moment, Merlin also came forth and said to Wizard Bayton, "I'm going to leave too. Initially, I intended to scavenge Lava Soil from the extinct volcanoes on the Violet Flame Island, but it seems now that things are not so easy anymore."

"Lava Soil? Wizard Merlin, there's definitely no Lava Soil on the Violet Flame Island. However, if you really need Lava Soil, I do have an idea!"

Wizard Bayton looked at Merlin calmly, a mysterious smile etched on the edge of his lips.

Chapter 280: Nameless Island

“Oh? Don’t tell me you have Lava Soil, Wizard Bayton?”

Merlin’s eyes lit up instantly. If Wizard Bayton really had Lava Soil, then things would be much easier.

Yet, Wizard Bayton shook his head and said, “How would I have Lava Soil? Still, you can try the idea I mentioned, Wizard Merlin. The volcanoes on the Violet Flame Island are all extinct. Who knows how many Spell Casters have already visited them, so anything valuable would’ve already been reaped cleanly.

“If Wizard Merlin wishes to find Lava Soil, I’m afraid searching in extinct volcanoes alone won’t land you what you want! Wizard Merlin, you can try entering volcanoes that are not very active. A certain amount of danger is there, but it gives you a better shot at obtaining Lava Soil.”

Merlin frowned. Dormant volcanoes may indeed provide higher chances of getting Lava Soil, but at the same time, it meant a certain danger too. Unlike extinct volcanoes where the danger was close to none.

As if noticing Merlin’s hesitation, Wizard Bayton chuckled. He said, “You don’t have to worry, Wizard Merlin. Although those dormant volcanoes do pose a certain danger, I happen to know a few dormant volcanoes that were rarely ever visited by Spell Casters. In addition, they haven’t erupted for several decades. If Wizard Merlin doesn’t spend too much time inside of them, there shouldn’t be any danger.”

After hearing Wizard Bayton’s words, a smile slowly etched on Merlin’s face. “Wizard Bayton, where are the specific locations of these few dormant volcanoes?”

“Wizard Merlin, those volcanoes are at a comparably secluded area; they’re not on the Violet Flame Island. Otherwise, they would have been scavenged by Spell Casters too. If Wizard Merlin really needs to, let me lead you there.”

“I shall trouble you then, Wizard Bayton!”

Merlin did not hold back on courtesy either. Lava Soil was extremely important for him so he would not let go of any chances of obtaining it.

“It’s better to act swiftly on this matter. Let’s go now!”

Soon after, Wizard Bayton exchanged a few words with the plump Wizard. Then, he brought Merlin along and quickly left the Violet Flame Island.

...

The sea was vast. All Merlin could do was sit on a small boat, traveling through the sea waters between the islands. Although Wizard Bayton was a Fourth-level Spell Caster and also had Wind-type Flying spells, he did not waste his Magic Power. Instead, he sat on the small boat with Merlin, rowing it toward an island a distance away.

They were rowing the boat slowly. However, Merlin did not dare to lower his guard. His Mind Power was covering the surroundings all the time, checking for any movements in the nearby waters.

After all, they were now at the outer reaches of the Kurdmansla Islands. There were many sea beasts, which could attack them at any moment so Merlin had to be prepared.

“Wizard Bayton, since you discovered these few volcanoes, why have you not looked inside?”

Merlin enquired Wizard Bayton in a calm voice. Throughout the journey, Merlin had learned that these few volcanoes that Wizard Bayton found were not even recorded in Fort Udon’s map, so very few people knew about its location.

Wizard Bayton took a glance at Merlin and did not hide the fact either. Instead, he smiled and said, “Originally, I happened to come across that nameless island by chance, and the discovery of this small island was accidental. This nameless island was not even included in the range of the Kurdmansla Islands, so it can be considered alone out at sea. At that time I had an emergency, so I did not stop for long. In addition, I was worried because those few volcanoes were quite active, and that if I had simply entered them, there would be a danger.

“Thereafter, I returned to Fort Udon and unknowingly, several decades had already passed. When I went back to that nameless island, I still did not find those few volcanoes showing any signs of

eruption. Only at that time, I was already a Fourth-level Spell Caster and had already built a reputation in Fort Udon. Whichever type of resources that I needed was provided to me in an endless supply, so why would I risk going into the volcanoes again?”

Merlin nodded. Venturing into the volcanoes was dangerous but the precious herbs or alchemy materials in them was considered an immense wealth for Wizards who were Fourth-level or lower. For Spell Casters above the Fourth-level, the items within the volcano were really nothing and were not worth the risk of entering the volcanoes.

Even Lava Soil was not considered precious, but it was rare. In the eyes of the other Spell Casters, Lava Soil was merely a scarce alchemy material.

However, Lava Soil was of utmost importance to Merlin. It was required for the cultivation of Fuse Earth, so even if there was a danger, he still had to get his hands on it.

After Wizard Bayton finished explaining, he did not utter another word. He also did not enquire Merlin as to why he needed Lava Soil for. This, on the other hand, subtly made Merlin relaxed.

“Hooo...”

A sea breeze blew past, and the small boat sped up immediately. Soon, they floated to a small desolate island.

“We’re here. This is the nameless island!”

Wizard Bayton stepped on the shore. He examined the surroundings and could feel a sort of familiarity.

Merlin was checking the surroundings too. This nameless island was already over the outermost borders of the Kurdmansla Islands hence it no longer belonged as a part of the Kurdmansla Islands.

On the vast sea, there were really too many islands that were similar to this particular nameless island. Nevertheless, some nameless islands were often old nests of sea beasts, so extra caution had to be taken.

“Wizard Merlin, you didn’t find anything out of the ordinary right?”

Wizard Bayton had extended his Mind Power too, examining the surroundings thoroughly. He did not find any sea beasts hiding there, hence he reaffirmed this with Merlin.

Merlin nodded and said, “Nothing out of the ordinary. It seems that there are no sea beasts on this small island.”

“Still, we better be careful.”

Wizard Bayton’s Mind Power covered the surroundings time after time. There was a wary look on his face.

“Swoosh!”

Suddenly, Darkness Ray projected toward Wizard Bayton, who was walking in front. It also emitted a foul smell.

“Frost!”

Merlin, who had been observing the happenings around them from the beginning cast his Glacial Ice Finger in response, the traces of chill encompassed Darkness Ray and froze it in place without difficulty.

Darkness Ray dropped into the thick bush. After giving it a close look, to Merlin’s shock, he found that it was a small insect that looked like a cricket. Its entire body was pitch-black like ink, its wings were tiny but fine, and underneath its mouth were two long fangs.

Though it was small-sized, it looked very menacing.

Bayton did not know what it was either. After all, out in the vast sea, there could be a variety of strange creatures. A never-before-seen insect appearing on this nameless island was not really breaking news.

“Be wary, Wizard Merlin, I think you should use Defensive spells.”

Wizard Bayton had already cast Defensive spells earlier.

Merlin only shrugged it off with a smile. He did not cast any Defensive spells. Without enhancement from Pandora Demon Ability Fuse Earth, his Defensive spell, Earth Veil was only a Second-level Defensive spell which was marginally stronger. Perhaps casting the enhanced version could render it closer to a Third-level spell.

Nonetheless, whether it was the black robe from Dark Magic Region or the gold-lined robe from Fort Udon that was on him, both were able to block Third-level spells. The robes' defensive effects were much better than Merlin's Earth Veil.

Therefore, for a person like Merlin who had two robes, he only needed to pay extra attention. Casting spells would not be necessary.

The two walked pass a thick bush. During that period, they were again met with some unique but weird insects. These insects looked small-sized but their exoskeletons were very tough. Any typical First or Second-level spells would not do any damage to these odd insects.

Only Third-level or higher spells could harm these insects. Luckily, Merlin had Pandora Demon Abilities while Wizard Bayton was a Fourth-level Spell Caster himself. Therefore, their journey was nothing short of surprises but was overall, a rather safe one.

“Wizard Merlin, there will be three volcanoes up in front. They are at a distance not far away.”

Wizard Bayton pointed at the three volcanoes some distance away. They were almost completely covered by lush greenery. If it were not for Wizard Bayton's confirmation, a typical person would not have noticed that there were three volcanoes there.

Nevertheless, such secluded volcanoes were in fact, good news for Merlin. It was precisely for their secluded locations that not many discovered their existence after so many years. This meant that when Merlin entered the volcanoes, his chances of finding Lava Soil would be greatly increased.

“Wizard Bayton, just wait outside for a moment. Let me go down there and have a look first, to see if there's any Lava Soil.”

Merlin's eyes glimmered with expectation.

Wizard Bayton nodded in response and said, “Alright, I’ll wait outside. Wizard Merlin, don’t you linger too long either. If there’s no Lava Soil, leave at once. After all, nobody could tell when these three volcanoes would erupt.”

Noting Wizard Bayton’s serious expression, Merlin gave a nod. Thereafter, he inhaled deeply, then dashed toward the first volcano.

...

“Hooo...”

Merlin breathed a sigh of relief inside the dark volcano. He slid down to the base of the volcano effortlessly.

The air inside the volcano was inexplicably dry and hot. This made Merlin a little more alarmed. Usually, extreme hotness and dryness in volcanoes indicated that they could very easily erupt. It also indirectly proved that this volcano was not a fully extinct volcano.

Merlin did not spend much time observing what was down there at the base of the volcano either. Instead, he directly used his Mind Power to search at the base of the volcano.

This particular type of volcano, which had erupted previously but had then become dormant for several centuries or even up to thousands of years were the most likely to form Lava Soil.

“It’s so hot!”

Merlin gently touched the rock wall at the base of the volcano, feeling the waves of pulsating heat.

“Eh? This isn’t right. Why is only this part of the rock wall hot?”

Merlin immediately realized something was amiss. Thus, he turned around and carefully checked that area of the rock wall which was boiling hot. Under his scrutiny, he instantly found the difference of that part of the rock wall.

The rest of the rock walls were very dry and hard, and only this part appeared rather soft. Moreover, when he wiped off the dust on that rock wall, he could vaguely make out a kind of fiery-red hue on it, which looked just like burning flames.

Merlin experienced heartfelt happiness. He immediately recalled some of the characteristics of Lava Soil, and it looked similar to this part of the rock wall.

“Haha, I’ve finally found it, and looks like there’s quite a lot of Lava Soil here!”

Merlin’s face beamed with joy. He then unsheathed his sharp dagger in haste, and slowly started slicing the hard rock wall, cutting off Lava Soil from it.

Not long after, the rock wall surrounding Lava Soil was dislodged while Lava Soil was as though imprinted onto the hard rock wall. All that was left was to carve out Lava Soil from within.

When the sharp dagger in Merlin’s hand had only just sunk into the rock wall, Merlin felt a gentle vibration. At first, it was not obvious, but soon, the vibration became more and more prominent, even accompanied by sounds which were likened to “growls”.

“What’s going on?”

Merlin frowned. By that time, even the entire rock wall was trembling slightly. Pieces of gravel started falling from above too.

The entire volcano was wrapped in a hot and unbearable atmosphere. The temperature seemed to have risen significantly in a short period of time.

“Could it be...”

Merlin abruptly looked at the base of the volcano. In the darkness, he could vaguely see flares glimmering. Suddenly, Merlin’s face turned pale.