

W. Secret 291

Chapter 291: This is Just the Beginning!

“If Fiery Collapse could be integrated into the spell...”

The more Merlin thought of it, the more feasible it began to sound. Powerful Pandora Demon Ability could normally be integrated into spells, greatly improving the power of the spells, unleashing unparalleled power with any simple gesture.

Therefore, if Fiery Collapse could really be integrated into spells, then his strength would be significantly increased. However, such a thought was very bold that it could be described as whimsical. Back then, even if Merlin thought of this, he would still never put it into action. Nevertheless, the situation was different now as he obtained the Flame Maxim, which could absolutely suppress Fiery Collapse, so there was a slight feasibility.

On the thought of that, Merlin became rather impatient. He took a deep breath and devoted his full body and mind into Pandora Demon Ability, Fiery Collapse.

“Fiery Collapse, fuse!”

With Fiery Collapse, Merlin gradually put together the flames of Furious Flame and Fireball. Originally, these flames and Fiery Collapse were completely different. The pale flames of Fiery Collapse were far more powerful than the flames released from Merlin’s spells, so there was no way both could be combined.

Therefore, Merlin forced his Mind Power on simulating the Flame Maxim into his Awareness. Suddenly, the Flame Maxim began having slight fluctuations, and a huge suppression force instantly embraced Fiery Collapse.

This was pure external pressure, which began to forcefully compress the flames of Fiery Collapse and the flames in the spell model, gradually merging them together. Merlin was also paying full attention to the process. Whenever something went wrong, he would immediately dispel Fiery Collapse.

Time passed by slowly. Merlin knew that this fusion process would surely take a long time, so he waited patiently. With the suppression of the Flame Maxim, even if the fusion failed, there would not be a big problem. All he could do now was to wait silently.

While Merlin was waiting, he closed his eyes again. With the Flame Maxim, he could take control of the huge alchemical product.

“From the look of it, this alchemy product is very much like a big ship. It was left behind by the Legend Nikola, so it shall be called the Ship of Nikola then.”

Previously, Merlin had taken only a cursory look at the Ship of Nikola and did not have an in-depth understanding about it. Now, he started scrutinizing every nook and cranny of it.

Suddenly, Merlin saw a familiar figure.

“Isn’t that Wizard Bayton? Right, he’s waiting for me outside the first obstacle... Now, I’ve passed three obstacles and I have to get familiar with the Ship of Nikola for a while, so I won’t be leaving anytime soon. Wizard Bayton shall be sent out first then.”

Merlin had already understood some of the basic functions of the Ship of Nikola. He could use the Runic Magic Circle on the Ship of Nikola to send Wizard Bayton directly to the Kurdmansla Islands.

Thinking of this, Merlin immediately controlled the Runic Magic Circle on the Ship of Nikola, and quickly encompassed Wizard Bayton.

“Swoosh!”

Wizard Bayton did not react in the slightest, turning into a white light instantly and disappearing from the ship.

...

The warm sunlight shone on the beach, and the briny sea breeze blew from time to time. On the damp ground, several black beetles were crawling briskly.

“Swoosh!”

Suddenly, a white light appeared on the beach out of thin air, and then a figure staggered onto the beach. His face was slightly pale, and he looked very unkempt.

“What happened? I was sent out?”

It was Wizard Bayton who appeared on the beach. He was still very confused, unable to wrap his mind around what had happened.

“Wizard Merlin, I hope nothing bad happened to you...”

Wizard Bayton was also oblivious about Merlin’s current situation, but that kind of underwater ancient monument, even a Great Wizard could not identify its location. Therefore, he could only silently wish Merlin the best now.

“Boom!”

Just as Wizard Bayton was about to identify where this place was, a huge sea wave rose into the sky. Within the huge wave, he could clearly make out countless sea beasts densely grouped together, riding the waves and rapidly closing in toward the island.

“Are these sea beasts? The sea beasts are attacking the Kurdmansla Islands again?”

Wizard Bayton’s expression changed slightly. He had no idea how many times he had fought against the sea beasts on the Violet Flame Island. Yet, it was his first time seeing such a great horde of terrifying sea beasts. He had an instinct that this time the Kurdmansla Islands was in grave danger.

A towering sea wave rose from the middle of the vast sea. In the wave, there were countless powerful sea beasts roaring, staring menacingly at the countless islands in front.

These islands were already filled with dense groups of Spell Casters. From their robes, it could be roughly distinguished that most of these Spell Casters were from Fort Udon, Gray Wing Alliance, and Wizard's Tower.

The rest were Wizards from smaller factions, and among them were some occasional Spell Casters who came to see if there were any goodies to be looted. However, upon seeing the countless sea beasts in the huge waves, many of the Spell Casters' expressions had changed, displaying a hint of fear in their eyes.

It was the first time that they had witnessed such a large scale of sea beast invasion, which could cause a big commotion. Everyone knew how severe the sea beast attack this time was. It was not surprising that the three factions have come out in full force, occupying the frontline of defense in face of the sea beast attack.

"Wizard Umo, as I said before, I'm only responsible for dealing with a black shark king beast! As for the remaining one, you all find a way to contain it. Otherwise, if there are two black shark king beasts attacking me, I'll flee immediately!"

Among the group of black-robed Wizards, there was an old Spell Caster in a white robe. His body glowed with a faint gold light, which looked especially eye-catching.

The white-robed Wizard had a scalp full of white hair, but there were no wrinkles on his face. The skin on his hands was fair and delicate, just like a woman's, which looked extremely weird.

Although the tone of the white-robed Wizard's voice was very cold, Wizard Umo maintained a respectful attitude and nodded silently. "Respected Master Kansu, please be rest assured, we would certainly contain the other black shark king beast. This is a key moment of life and death for the Kurdmansala Islands. We really need Master Kansu to try your best in killing that black shark king beast."

It turned out that this seemingly weird white-robed elder is the only Great Wizard on the Kurdmansala Islands, Master Kansu!

Master Kansu looked at the many sea beasts in the towering wave and nodded slightly. "I'll try my best. Since I've taken your treasure, I'll do my best. However, whether the black shark king beast can be killed, it's very hard to say!"

In this regard, Wizard Umo did not add on anything.

The huge wave was getting closer and closer, and the huge growls of the sea beasts could be heard from the huge wave. Yet, the most striking view was the two huge sea beasts which were seemingly riding on the waves.

These two sea beasts were as gigantic as two mountain peaks, their entire bodies as black as ink. Although there were no scales, their bodies looked extremely tough.

These were black shark king beasts – the overlord of the deep sea, capable of rivaling the ominous presence of Great Wizards. This huge wave was also the creation of the two king beasts.

Feeling the murderous breath of the king beasts, Master Kansu's expression became solemn. He lowered his voice and said, "I thought that it was a typical king beast, but now it seems that these two black shark king beasts have gone through countless of struggles with death that their breath turned vengeful. I don't know if I'll be able to exterminate a black shark king beast, maybe I can only manage to contain it a little. As for the remaining black shark king beast, you all have to figure it out. If all else fails, the Kurdmansla Islands will then be doomed."

Great Wizard Kansu's words also revealed a slight of uneasiness. The breath of the two black shark king beasts had exceeded his expectations. If it were regular king beasts, he would still have the confidence to fight or even kill them.

Nonetheless, if it were two extremely powerful king beasts, Great Wizard Kansu would no longer stand a chance, and he would then withdraw from the battle as quickly as possible. He had merely accepted some treasures granted to him by Fort Udon, Wizard's Tower, and Gray Wing Alliance, so he would rather not risk his life battling the black shark king beasts.

In this regard, Wizard Umo and the Spell Casters of the three major factions also felt rather helpless. Master Kansu should never be offended, and now they could only battle until their deaths.

"Haha, Umo, my Gray Wing Alliance and your Fort Udon would usually compete with one another both openly and secretly, all for the purpose of occupying more islands on the Kurdmansla Islands to get more resources. However now, even our foundations are in danger of being overturned. Let's put away our prejudice and fight with our lives!"

A Ninth-level Spell Caster of Gray Wing Alliance laughed as he said to Wizard Umo. This time, it was a matter of life and death for the Kurdmansla Islands. Whether it was Fort Udon, Gray Wing Alliance or Wizard's Tower, they had deployed all their elite Spell Casters.

Wizard Umo glanced at the several Spell Casters next to him. Fort Udon dispatched three fort leaders this time, all of them Ninth-level Spell Casters. Gray Wing Alliance did almost the same, with three Ninth-level Spell Casters.

Wizard's Tower was a little disappointing, with only two Ninth-level casters. That tallied to eight Ninth-level Spell Casters, whose responsibility was to hold back one of the black shark king beasts.

However, in the end, they had no absolute confidence whether they could hold it back, so they could only fight all the way!

“Boom!”

Finally, the waves crashed onto the beach hard, and the terrifying sea beasts rushed to the beach frenziedly, their blood-thirsty eyes gleaming as they scurried toward the numerous Spell Casters.

“Kill!”

With that cold-blooded voice, the calm beach immediately burst into unparalleled elemental fluctuations, especially the Water-type elemental fluctuations, which were extremely intense.

A large net made from seawater descended from the sky and covered the entire beach. It had strong repressive power, with mysterious runes flashing on it too.

“Black Water Magic Circle, strangle!”

There were icy sounds as mysterious runes began ascending on this giant net. These runes then dispersed abruptly, and the giant net composed of water began to shrink in an instant, presenting with it a strong strangulation force. The sea beasts which had just climbed onto the beach were easily strangled before they could even charge toward the many Spell Casters.

“The Runic Magic Circle set up by Wizard's Tower is indeed good. It seems that these sea beasts will have to exhaust greater efforts in a bid to attack here in full force.”

The Ninth-level Spell Caster of Gray Wing Alliance exclaimed while looking at “Black Water Magic Circle”.

Runic Magic Circles were mostly used for transmission, but in actual fact, the offensive powers of Runic Magic Circles were the most powerful. It could be set up in advance, gathering the powers of countless weak Spell Casters, and then flaring up an extremely devastating force.

This was the role of Runic Magic Circles, but this kind of Runic Magic Circle that was deft at attack was really scarce. Neither Gray Wing Alliance nor Fort Udon had it, and only the mysterious Wizard’s Tower would have access to it.

Watching the Runic Magic Circle set up by Wizard’s Tower slowly blocking the sea beasts, Wizard Umo took a deep breath instead and muttered, “This is just the beginning...”

The rich bloody stench still permeated the air. A briny sea breeze blew past, but before the bloody reek could be dispersed, the sea beasts charged frenziedly toward the beach again.

Sure enough, as Wizard Umo had said, the bloody brutal battle had just begun...

Chapter 292: Terminate the Contract!

“Hum... Hum... Hum...”

The battle had begun. In the towering sea wave, countless sea beasts had charged to the beach, and Wizard’s Tower had already arranged a number of “Black Water Magic Circles”.

Therefore, when these sea beasts rushed to the beach, they would be immediately strangled by Black Water Magic Circle, so despite the astonishing numbers of the sea beasts, they did not pose any substantial threat to the crowd of Spell Casters.

One after another, the sea beasts were strangled to death and all the Spell Casters who watched the scenario shuddered. They did not expect Runic Magic Circles to be so frightening when used as an offensive attack. It had now strangled countless sea beasts, and the blood even stained the seawater red, exuding a thick, bloody stench.

Suddenly, the sea beasts that seemed on an endless rage no longer appeared. Two ultimate titan-like sea beasts fiercely jumped off the towering sea wave.

With the appearance of these two sea beasts, all the sea beasts crouched on the ground, shivering and expressing their absolute surrender to the two sea beasts.

“Black shark king beast!”

Powerful Spell Casters such as Wizard Umo and Great Wizard Kansu recognized these two sea beasts at one glance as only king beasts could have such influence.

“Splash!”

The two black shark king beasts merely lifted their heads and looked at the several Black Water Magic Circles on the beach. Then they whispered, and the huge towering sea waves swept up and ferociously gushed toward the beach.

“Boom!”

The Runic Magic Circles which were still incomparably powerful moments earlier began to flicker violently. One by one, the mysterious runes shattered when they encountered the powerful impact of this towering sea wave.

The faces of the Spell Casters who were responsible for controlling the Runic Magic Circles turned pale. These Runic Magic Circles were broken by the black shark king beasts.

“They’re black shark king beasts all right. Wizard Kansu, do it!”

Wizard Umo’s gaze locked fiercely, staring deadly at the two humongous black shark king beasts on the beach. Since they were able to rival Great Wizards, these king beasts could surely cast spells.

However, the black shark king beasts’ power of manipulating water flow was only archetypal. Their most terrifying attribute was their sturdy bodies, together with the power of manipulating water. It was almost comparable to Great Wizards, which made the black shark king beasts a real nuisance.

Moreover, among the numerous sea beasts, black shark king beasts were combat-type sea beasts. Dealing with one was considered a feat on its own, two on the other hand, would be a miracle. It was not surprising that even Wizard Kansu had a serious look on his face.

As Wizard Umo's voice fell, Wizard Kansu, who was wearing a white Wizard's robe took in a deep breath too, then gradually rose into the air, his entire body surrounded by slight Wind-type elemental fluctuations.

"Wind!"

Wizard Kansu gently pointed his fair-skinned fingers to one of the black shark king beasts. Suddenly, a whirlwind appeared out of thin air. This whirlwind seemed to be very calm, but once it touched the sea beast, it started cutting the black shark king beast frenziedly, like a sharp blade.

Even the tough body of the strong black shark king beast had been cut to reveal streaks of red markings. Although it still could not heavily wound the black shark king beast, it made the black shark king beast suffer. It could not help but growl toward the sky.

"Fire!"

The gust persisted, and Wizard Kansu pointed his finger again. Glimmers of flame started flurrying from within the whirlwind. Seemingly aided by the fanning wind, the flames began burning more vigorously.

At this moment, the wind and the fire seemed to have combined perfectly.

Wizard Umo praised in admiration, "This is a fusion of spells. It's rumored that Great Wizards are capable of blending all spells together, each result in a spell comprising multiple spells of different elements. This is the true meaning of Great Wizardry! As a Ninth-level Spell Caster, I've been trapped in this step for a long time, and I don't know when can I grasp the true meaning of spell fusion and strike a breakthrough, becoming a Great Wizard!"

Not only Wizard Umo but also the other Spell Casters were in awe. The most important part of being a Seventh-level or above Spell Caster was to derive and construct new Spell Models.

There was a big difference between the two. For some Spell Casters who were adept at the derivation of spells, the spells that they construct would be terribly powerful, even achieving cross-level kills.

Seventh to Ninth-level Spell Casters mainly deduct and built new spells, while the far superior Great Wizards were at a whole new level above them. It required all kinds of comprehension, the most important thing being able to fuse all Spell Models constructed previously, further making sure that the resultant fusion would not crumble.

If that was successful, one would then become a Great Wizard. A Great Wizard at this time would be particularly terrifying. Any casual gesture or any simple spell cast could exhibit the attributes of countless spells. Among Ice-type spells, there could be burning flames, while among Fire-type spells, there could be turbulent torrents.

Great Wizards were meant to merge spells while the spell that Great Wizard Kansu had just released was, in fact, a product of spell fusion, which could be ever-changing, unleashing immeasurable powers at any time and place.

“Chi! Chi! Chi!”

The wind blade slashed the skin of the black shark king beast mercilessly while the flames continued burning too. While the black shark king beast may be howling miserably, it did not actually sustain any damage. Instead, its body continued expanding, just like blowing a balloon, doubling in size.

“Whoosh!”

This enormous black shark king beast revealed its menacing sharp teeth while huge waves surprisingly appeared from its body, lifted upwards and moved towards Wizard Kansu.

Wizard Kansu and the black shark king beast had already engaged in a battle, and the situation did not seem to be favorable.

At the same time, the other black shark king beast seemed to charge toward Great Wizard Kansu too. Wizard Umo and the others directed a glance at each other. Based on their previous agreement with Great Wizard Kansu, they must hold back one of the black shark king beasts.

Thus, at this moment, they could not retreat. They could only take action!

“Come on, let’s hold the black shark king beast back, and hope that Wizard Kansu could settle the other one as soon as possible, so we can still stand a chance.”

Wizard Umo and the two Fort Udon leaders beside him took lead in engaging the black shark king beast, their intense elemental fluctuations covering most of the sky.

The flames were like curtains while the winds were whistling. These Ninth-level Spell Casters, who would otherwise be rarely seen at normal times, pulled off their strongest techniques at first strike. Eight Ninth-level Spell Casters formed almost a circle and entrapped the other black shark king beast, madly casting overwhelming spells like a downpour.

“Boom! Boom! Boom!”

However, these seemingly overwhelming spells were actually not as good as Great Wizard Kansu’s one spell. Nevertheless, even Great Wizard Kansu could not hurt the black shark king beast, not to mention Wizard Umo and the other seven Ninth-level Spell Casters.

These Ninth-level Wizards who were usually powerful and a class above everyone else, seemed kind of helpless when facing the black shark king beast, feeling at a loss as to what to do.

“Roar!”

The black shark king beast roared loudly with a vengeful look in its eyes. Then, its huge tail smashed toward the surroundings fiercely.

“Bam!”

With just a light sweep, even the defensive spells of two Ninth-level Spell Casters crumbled right away. Their physical bodies had it worse, getting shoved into the air, which then looked like a gory mess. One hit had already heavily wounded two Ninth-level Spell Casters.

Then, the black shark king beast charged forward ferociously, and the huge force seemed to have shaken the entire island. In the face of such a terrifying king beast, any Spell Caster would be petrified.

“Not an opponent, not an opponent at all. We cannot hinder the beast one bit, let alone contain it!”

Wizard Umo’s face had become pale. They were too optimistic before, estimating that they could hold a black shark king beast back with eight Ninth-level Spell Casters.

Now it seemed that they were a far cry from matching the black shark king beast. Even in the sky, Great Wizard Kansu was in a losing position. Facing the fierce black shark king beast, Great Wizard Kansu had run out of ideas.

They had lost and there was not even the tiniest bit of chance to defeat the king beast.

“We failed. The two black shark king beasts aren’t something we can deal with. Oh, king beasts, it turns out that for such a long time the Kurdmansla Islands have been built, we only had such a fragile strength and connotation. We can’t even contend two king beasts...”

Wizard Umo and the others could only smile helplessly. They had even dreamt of becoming a large-scale spell casters’ organization, especially since acquiring Great Wizard Kansu.

Yet, now it seemed that they were still very far away from that. One time, a large spell casters’ organization dispatched a Great Wizard, who went deep into the sea and exterminated three king beasts.

At that time, they thought that Great Wizards were all so powerful, so when Great Wizard Kansu came to the Kurdmansla Islands, the three major factions paid an unimaginable price so that Wizard Kansu could “be their stronghold” among the Kurdmansla Islands.

However, now it seemed that Great Wizard Kansu was simply not comparable to the Great Wizards in those spell casters’ organizations, and even with all of them added up, they were sadly still no match for the two black shark king beast.

“Haha, let’s go, let’s go, we’ve lost. My fellow Fort Udon members, escape as far as you can. Every contract is immediately terminated!”

Wizard Umo suddenly declared loudly. His words could be heard clearly throughout the entire beach. In that instant, the Spell Casters who were desperately fighting the sea beasts were somewhat stunned.

“Escape?”

“It can’t be stopped? Not even Great Wizard Kansu can stop it?”

Wizard Bayton, who had just returned to Fort Udon was also among these Spell Casters. He looked at the two large-sized black shark king beasts crushing countless Spell Casters with a single stroke. No spell or casting tool was capable of stopping that.

He knew that the Kurdmansla Islands couldn’t be saved!

At the same time, Wizard Umo took out pieces of contract papers from his ring. These were contracts signed by the many Spell Casters of Fort Udon. If it was intended to terminate these contracts by force, they would naturally need to pay a huge price.

However, if Fort Udon took the initiative to terminate the contracts, it would then be easy. It would only require Wizard Umo to initiate the termination of the contract, but once there was no more contract, then Fort Udon would be considered truly disbanded!

“Just terminate it, all the contracts will be terminated. Members of Fort Udon, just flee, you’ll not be bound by the contract ever again!”

As Wizard Umo’s voice fell, the numerous Fort Udon Spell Casters on the beach could feel that the binding power on their bodies had really disappeared.

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Deep in the bottom of the sea, on the Ship of Nikola, Merlin’s originally calm face became very confounded. He abruptly opened his eyes immediately after.

“This... Is the contract terminated?”

A strange expression appeared on Merlin's face.

Chapter 293: Ship of Nikola!

At this point, Merlin's entire body was covered in a layer of pale flame, but these flames had already dwindled. This was Fiery Collapse, but now it had been completely suppressed by the Flame Maxim. In addition, it was merged with the Fire-type spells in Merlin's Awareness.

"Boom!"

Finally, the pale layer of flame on the surface of Merlin's body flickered, then suddenly drew back into his body, and was no longer seen.

Meanwhile, in Merlin's Awareness, the pale flame had finally been fully integrated into the Fire-type spells too. Merlin was feeling the entire process silently although it was somewhat different from the Pandora Demon Ability, Fuse Earth which he had cultivated as this was forcibly fused into the spell.

Whether or not it would work, he would find out when he tried it.

"Furious Flame!"

Merlin swiftly released Furious Flame, and suddenly, a vigorous flame suddenly formed, burning fiercely in the void.

Originally, the flame of the original Furious Flame had been red, but now the flame was pale and emitted horrifying heat.

"Success! This is indeed the flame of Fiery Collapse!"

Merlin was delighted. Under the suppression of the Flame Maxim, Fiery Collapse was forcibly integrated into the Fire-type spell, greatly improving the power of the spell.

As for the extent to which Furious Flame could be improved, Merlin was not very clear. As for what changes that could happen if Fiery Collapse was forcibly integrated into the spell, it would require further verification in the future.

Merlin was also paying attention to the changes of Fiery Collapse all this while. Once there was something wrong, he would use the Flame Maxim to suppress it again.

Although he did not know how powerful Fiery Collapse would be after forcibly fused into Fire-type spells, Merlin could clearly feel the scorching aura of Furious Flame which was released earlier. It was much stronger than the original Fiery Collapse. It was definitely no longer just comparable to the peak power of Fourth-level spells.

“Phew...”

After merging Fiery Collapse into the spell, Merlin let out a long sigh too. Then, he began to inspect his body and the feeling of getting released from the contract earlier.

Once the contract was signed, it made the Spell Caster feel a shackle deep down in his heart. So far, Merlin had only signed two kinds of contracts – one with the Dark Magic Region and one with Fort Udon.

He could not be mistaken about the feeling of the contract termination earlier. Moreover, Merlin sensed it carefully where a contractual bond had indeed disappeared. It was the contract signed with Fort Udon which had vanished.

It was very difficult for a contract to be terminated hence Merlin never tried terminating any contracts. Even if there was such a thought, he would not be able to do that. Yet, now his contract with Fort Udon had really been terminated, so only one possibility remained – Fort Udon was the side who terminated the contract.

“What happened to Fort Udon? How could they’ve terminated the contract with me?”

Merlin frowned. Terminating the contract right now was entirely the loss of Fort Udon, and Fort Udon would never terminate the contract without any strong reason.

“It seems that I have to go to the Kurdmansla Islands to check out what really happened.”

Merlin thought for a moment and made a decision in his heart. By relying on the Flame Maxim, he could now control the Ship of Nikola. Immediately, he steered the Ship of Nikola to turn around and rushed toward the Kurdmansla Islands at the fastest speed.

He had just only learned a little about the Ship of Nikola, but it could already be controlled easily. Merlin had also gradually studied some of the functions within.

The Ship of Nikola was quite rapid in speed as it shuttled at the bottom of the sea. It was definitely much faster than flying spells used by Fourth-level Spell Casters, but it consumed a lot of energy.

The energy that was used to support the Ship of Nikola came from the vast Fire elements absorbed by the Fire-type elemental stones from the Spatial Gap.

However, Merlin always felt that the Ship of Nikola would not be as simple. Even the Legend Nikola needed to pay an expensive price to let the alchemists build such a ship, so it was definitely not just used to shuttle under the sea at a faster speed.

“Eh? This feeling of control is really wonderful...”

Merlin was still familiarizing himself with the mysteries of the Ship of Nikola. Soon, he discovered that unimaginable amounts of Fire elements were stored on the Ship of Nikola. These were all absorbed by the Ship of Nikola from the Spatial Gap over three thousand or more years, of which the Ship of Nikola had not consumed much.

As a result, these Fire elements had condensed into dozens of incomparably huge Pillars of Flame, which were hundreds of times more powerful than the energy of thousands of elemental crystal stones.

For the first time, Merlin felt a sense of “enormity.”

“So many Pillars of Flame? What’s the role of accumulating so much energy? Don’t tell me the Ship of Nikola has great attack power too?”

A thought suddenly flashed across Merlin's mind. He was right. The Ship of Nikola was built for the Legend Nikola as a retreat when he had returned from the strange dimension to the Glorious Land.

Since it was a retreat, it must be quite secluded, and it must be helpful to the Legend Nikola. Therefore, the Ship of Nikola likely had fearsome attack power.

Thinking of this, Merlin kept searching, but no matter how hard he looked for it, he did not seem to find the Ship of Nikola's immense attack potential.

"The Ship of Nikola... Could it be that the entire Ship of Nikola is actually a powerful casting tool itself?"

Merlin controlled the Ship of Nikola and could see every nook and cranny of the ship. He had naturally examined the overall structure of the Ship of Nikola too.

Which was why he had produced such a seemingly ridiculous idea. How frightening it would be if this huge Ship of Nikola was really a casting tool?

This theory may be ridiculous, but the more Merlin thought of it, the more likely it seemed that he was right. Thus, he quickly focused his Mind Power to fiercely simulate the Flame Maxim. Merlin also knew that he was able to control the Ship of Nikola due to this Flame Maxim which was left by the Legend Nikola.

As the Flame Maxim was simulated by Merlin's Mind Power, Merlin's control over the Ship of Nikola gradually became more and more dexterous. Finally, all the secrets on the entire Ship of Nikola were all exposed before Merlin's very eyes.

"Sure enough, the Ship of Nikola itself is a powerful casting tool, but the only thing that could steer the Ship of Nikola was the power of the maxim!"

Merlin seemed to have obtained some information from the Flame Maxim. Back at the time when the Legend Nikola got the Ship of Nikola and steered it using the maxim, the resultant power was enough to rival a true Legendary Wizard!

Merlin also felt deeply shocked in his heart. It was surprisingly comparable to the legend. If the Ship of Nikola was really activated, although the energy consumed would be infinite even up to the

point of exhausting the Pillars of Flame that were accumulated over the past thousands of years, it would be a blow that could rival a Legendary Wizard.

“It’s a pity that it could only be activated with the Flame Maxim. The Flame Maxim left by the Legend Nikola was not left with much. If it was used to activate the Ship of Nikola again, a huge amount of energy will be consumed.”

Merlin highly valued the Flame Maxim. He may not be able to refine and cultivate the maxim now, but in his Awareness, the maxim was good for him in constructing Fire-type Spell Models and to comprehend the Essence of Fire in the future.

Even if Merlin hoped to become a Seventh-level Spell Caster, he could use the Flame Maxim to derive and construct all new, immeasurably powerful Fire-type Spell Models.

As for after becoming a Great Wizard, cultivating and refining this Flame Maxim had laid a solid foundation for the promotion to become a Legendary Wizard in the future, but this was an event that was too far-fetched for Merlin. He would never consider such a distant matter.

In acquiring the Ship of Nikola, Merlin seemed to have possessed a strong reliance, but unfortunately, the Ship of Nikola could not be taken away as it could only remain at the bottom of the sea.

The shuttling speed of the Ship of Nikola was incredibly fast at the bottom of the sea, but the Ship of Nikola, which had always been stable, encountered a bumpy ride suddenly. Merlin hurriedly extended his Mind Power out there.

After controlling the Ship of Nikola, Merlin found that he was able to scour the situation around the seabed through the Ship of Nikola.

“Eh? Such violent waves...”

Merlin saw that around the Ship of Nikola, there seemed to be continuously tumbling waves that rushed out of the surface of the sea, forming a huge sea wave.

However, when Merlin examined it carefully, he inhaled sharply, because he saw that on the surface of the sea, there were dense hordes of sea beasts within the violent waves. These sea beasts exuded a ferocious atmosphere which rushed to the beach.

“The sea beasts attacked the Kurdmansla Islands?”

Merlin immediately thought of this possibility in his mind. After all, before he was drawn into the sea to the Ship of Nikola, he had single-handedly killed many sea beasts that attacked the Violet Flame Island.

These sea beasts may be strong, but Merlin did not think that the Kurdmansla Islands would not be able to cope. There were three Ninth-level Spell Casters in Fort Udon alone, and there were rumors that there was a Great Wizard settling on the island. Even though the sea beasts came in large numbers, the Spell Casters on the Kurdmansla Islands should still be able to cope easily.

However, when Merlin extended his Mind Power out of the sea and looked at the situation on the island, his facial expression suddenly changed. He whispered in a low voice, “That... Are those two king beasts? The king among the sea beasts could rival the Great Wizard among the Spell Casters!”

Merlin saw the two gigantic sea beasts which were wreaking havoc on the beach. In addition, in front of the two sea beasts, he also saw Wizard Umo and many other Spell Casters.

There was a decisive look on Wizard Umo’s face, and Merlin faintly understood why the contract on his body was terminated. It was feared that not only him but all members of the entire Fort Udon have had the contracts on their respective bodies terminated.

Merlin knew very clearly what two king beasts meant. To the entire Kurdmansla Islands, it was an almost devastating blow.

“Fort Udon shouldn’t disappear just like this... I still have the gold-lined robe!”

Merlin lowered his head slightly and glanced at the gold-lined robe on him. Shadows of Wizard Umo and Wizard Bayton kept flashing across his mind.

After a long moment, Merlin slowly raised his head, a relaxed smile etched out at the edge of his lips.

“Boom!”

That Flame Maxim inside Merlin's Awareness started experiencing a change!

Chapter 294: The Power of a Legend I

“Boom!”

There was another violent collision. Great Wizard Kansu was directly thrown to the ground and looked well-beaten. That black shark king beast was hot on his heels, its huge body once again pressed onto Great Wizard Kansu.

A hint of fury flashed across Great Wizard Kansu's face. He then lightly pressed his hands onto the ground.

“Bam!”

The entire island seemed to be shaking. Exuberant streaks of Earth elements quickly gathered, forming a giant in mid-air, which was about a dozen meters in height.

“Hmph, Earth-type spells is my forte. The great Earth Giant, go!”

Nobody knew what spell or even Pandora Demon Ability that Great Wizard Kansu had cast. This was a strong power that could only be used by a Great Wizard.

The enormous giant moved its body and started running speedily. It raised both its hands and slammed toward the black shark king beast.

“Thump! Thump! Thump!”

The two behemoths fought wildly on the island, and not one Spell Caster dared to approach wherever they passed. This small island also seemed rather incapable of supporting the battle between the Earth Giant and the black shark king beast. As a result, huge cracks started forming on the ground as if it would completely collapse instantly.

Watching the Earth Giant fighting frenziedly with the black shark king beast, they seemed evenly matched. However, the Earth elements on the Earth Giant waned lesser and lesser, while the black

shark king beast fought more and more aggressively. Based on the current projection, the Earth Giant's defeat was only a matter of time.

Great Wizard Kansu gnashed his teeth and said to Wizard Umo and the others, "I've done my best, but I still can't kill this black shark king beast. I advise all of you to leave quickly. Waiting here is almost like waiting to die! According to the previous agreement, I could step out first in case of an obvious defeat. It's a shame, the Kurdmansla Islands could've lasted a little longer..."

Great Wizard Kansu was actually leaving. The expressions of Wizard Umo and the others changed. Even if they desperately tried everything to hinder a black shark king beast, if there was no Great Wizard Kansu, they would not have the slightest chance when facing the two black shark king beasts.

"Go, go, go. We've lost, we've really lost, Gray Wing Alliance is dissolved here and now, but as long as we escape, there's still a chance to re-establish Gray Wing Alliance in other places."

"Wizard's Tower is ruined too. We can't be like those people from Fort Udon. They knew there was no chance, but they kept defending desperately. Let's flee at once. Even if we become Roaming Wizards, it's better than dying here."

Seeing that Great Wizard Kansu was preparing to leave, Spell Casters of Wizard's Tower and Gray Wing Alliance almost broke down. Countless Spell Casters were demoralized and no longer committed to their fight, fleeing wildly from the Kurdmansla Islands.

"All gone, Umo... There's already no hope that the three of us can level up to Great Wizards hence we built Fort Udon, hoping to leave something behind. Now, even Fort Udon will be gone soon..."

Wizard Dip, one of the three fort leaders of Fort Udon, said calmly.

"Yeah, Fort Udon is the hard work of us three. The Kurdmansla Islands are the foundation of Fort Udon. It's really regrettable that it'll be destroyed now. However, the three of us have already lived for a long time. Let's buy those young ones a little more time to escape."

Another fort leader of Fort Udon, Wizard Fer, whispered. He saw that many of the island's Spell Casters were chased by a large number of sea beasts, but a smile etched on the corner of his lips.

Wizard Umo also laughed, then nodded and said, “Yes, the three of us have lived for a long time, but it is a pity that Fort Udon...”

Subsequently, the three renowned Spell Casters of Fort Udon – Wizard Umo, Wizard Dip, and Wizard Fer – gradually rose into the air, mysterious runes appearing on their bodies.

These runes continuously intertwined and entangled, faintly connecting the three into one unit. This was the strongest technique of the three Fort Udon leaders. It was not known from where they obtained such a magical Runic Magic Circle. It could surprisingly combine the spells cast by the trio, unleashing unparalleled power.

This was also the real reason why Fort Udon could suppress Wizard’s Tower and Gray Wing Alliance. If these three men acted together, they may still not be comparable to a Great Wizard, but they could definitely be considered the pinnacle of Ninth-level Wizardry.

However, the trio was really too minute in front of the two gigantic black shark king beasts...

“Fort leader...”

Many of the Fort Udon Spell Casters were very touched as they watched the three figures in mid-air. In Fort Udon, they had enjoyed a kind of tranquility that was hard to savor after becoming a Spell Caster.

In Fort Udon, there was no backstabbing, no deception, and no jealousy. There was only a strong and harmonious atmosphere. All this was because the three fort leaders of Fort Udon had established an unshakable trust between themselves throughout the centuries.

This was also the unique aspect of Fort Udon. Their Spell Casters did not seem to be full of wisdom or exceptionally calm. Instead, it looked more like a faction formed by a group of idealists.

However, this faction which had made countless Spell Casters feel warm and belonged would accompany the Kurdmansla Islands to extinction.

“Kill!”

Finally, along with Wizard Umo's yell, a blazing flame immediately emerged on the three fort leaders' bodies, seemingly about to encompass the entire island. Even the sky was faintly tinted with a hue of flaming red.

Through the Runic Magic Circle, the spells that the three had cast were merged together, its powers instantly increased significantly. However, just as they were preparing to attack the black shark king beast, the flames that they had just released into the skies seemed like they were repressed by an invisible force as the countless flames begin to extinguish.

"Eh? Wait, what's going on?"

Wizard Umo immediately discovered the anomaly. He could clearly feel that the surrounding flames had obviously weakened tremendously as if there was an invisible force that subdued the flames hovering the sky.

"My Spell Model, the Fire-type Spell Model, why is it suppressed?"

"Mine too, the Fire-type spells are even suppressed to the point where they can't be released anymore. What's going on?"

Not only Wizard Umo and the rest, many Spell Casters who stayed on the island also felt the abnormality. The Spell Models in their bodies, especially Fire-type Spell Models, seemed to have been blanketed by an invisible force, which restricted them from casting Fire-type spells.

Great Wizard Kansu, who had not managed to leave the island yet, also stopped in his tracks. A strange glimmer flashed across his eyes too. After all, he was a Great Wizard, standing almost at the peak of the Spell Caster world.

Now, Great Wizard Kansu had surprisingly felt the suppression of the Fire-type spells in his body. This kind of suppression was very immense. Even if he wanted to release Fire-type spells, he may be able to release them forcibly, but the power would be much weaker than usual.

"What's really happening? How could there be a force that can suppress my Spell Model? This is impossible!"

Great Wizard Kansu knew very clearly that he had never encountered this kind of power which can suppress the spells in a Great Wizard's body.

When all the Spell Casters were panicking, a glint of flame appeared in the middle of the vast sea. This flame looked extremely odd – it was spread from the bottom of the sea.

The vast sea was entirely filled with seawater, but now, these flames seem to be burning the ocean. They appeared on the surface of the sea, gradually spreading into the air, and the scorching atmosphere instantly pervaded the entire island.

It could even be seen that the high temperature had evaporated the seawater as thick mist appeared to be lingering over the sea.

The flames became more vigorous as it burned. Many Spell Casters could feel that their Spell Models could no longer absorb a single trace of Fire element because all the Fire elements were gathered over the sea, forming a violent Sea of Flames.

This was an actual Sea of Flames. Even the ocean was burning. There were flames everywhere. The sea beasts which were extremely fierce moments ago seemed to have sensed the dangerous atmosphere as they began to feel a little uneasy.

“Look, what’s that?”

Everyone did not know what these sudden flames were, but soon, a figure seemed to be condensing rapidly at the seemingly endless stretch of flames.

It was an incredibly stalwart body, up to several kilometers in height. Even the two gigantic black shark king beasts appeared miniature in front of this newly condensed flame figure.

With the formation of this Flame Giant, everyone felt an unimaginable oppressive force as if in front of this stalwart Flame Giant, they were as tiny as the countless sand on the beach.

The Flame Giant had not fully formed yet as it was still morphing a face intensely. The clouds in the sky had long been dispelled by the flames. Everything within dozens of miles in the vast sea was all covered in flames. The entire sky turned fiery-red, and even the sun seemed to have been replaced, becoming a fiery-red glimmer of flame.

Soon, the huge face of the Flame Giant was formed. It was an unfamiliar and fearsome face. Its eyes were still closed, but it had already made many Spell Casters afraid of looking at it directly.

In the eyes of a Spell Caster, god did not exist. In their view, they themselves were the most powerful beings. As for the god propagated by the Church of Light, even the lowest-level Spell Casters would disregard.

However, looking at this enormous body of flame, they all simultaneously thought of “god” in their minds.

When the Flame Giant formed a face, a puzzled look flashed across Wizard Umo’s face, but then he shook his head. The thought that emerged in his mind seemed to be absurd but it was right in front of him now.

However, among the crowd, there was still one person who, upon seeing the face of the Flame Giant, revealed an astonished expression.

“Is this Wizard Merlin? How could he have such great powers to become a Flame Giant?”

Wizard Bayton took a deep breath, unable to suppress the shock in his heart!

Chapter 295: The Power of a Legend II

“Swoosh!”

Suddenly, the huge Flame Giant in the sky opened his eyes. At this moment, everyone seemed to be drawn in by those eyes.

The flames in the sky became more turbulent, making the body of the Flame Giant even bigger.

“What a strong feeling. Is this the power of a Legend?”

No one noticed that in the Flame Giant’s indifferent eyes, there was a hint of empathy instead.

At this time, Merlin had already controlled the flames in the sky. He could also observe everything around him through the Flame Giant where he was equivalent to transforming into the Flame Giant in the sky.

The strange phenomenon in the sea was also orchestrated by Merlin through the Ship of Nikola, almost consuming an unimaginable amount of Pillars of Flame. These Pillars of Flame had been accumulated over thousands of years by the Ship of Nikola.

Now, Merlin used the Flame Maxim to engage the ship of Nikola, instantly acquiring powers equivalent to a Legendary Wizard. Although the time was short, the consumption speed of the energy pillars was frightening. If there were no such energy pillars, regardless of how many elemental crystal stones there were, there would not be enough to start the ship of Nikola.

Moreover, not only the Pillars of Flame but the Flame Maxim in Merlin's Awareness was also consumed vigorously. In order to initiate the Ship of Nikola, besides needing huge and unimaginable amounts of energy, the most fundamental element was this Flame Maxim left by the Legend Nikola.

If there was no Flame Maxim or if the Flame Maxim was completely exhausted, Merlin would no longer be able to operate the Ship of Nikola.

"The battle must be made a swift one. Otherwise, be it the Pillars of Flame or the Flame Maxim, I can't afford to exhaust them!"

Merlin silently made a decision in his heart. Therefore, through the eyes of the Flame Giant, he once again looked at the distant beach and the numerous sea beasts in the vast sea.

The two gigantic black shark king beasts were the particular focus of Merlin.

Seemingly feeling the cold stare of the Flame Giant in the sky, the two black shark king beasts on the beach had also become rather furious. They roared at the Flame Giant in the sky, but they did not look like they dared to step forward, obviously in fear of the Flame Giant.

"Control!"

The Flame Giant in the sky made a sound like a rumble of thunder. Suddenly, countless fire elements wildly gathered over the sea, seemingly forming firestorms.

Although Merlin only temporarily controlled this power, he could feel its great power. To be able to control elements – this was an ability that could only be attained after condensing a Maxim.

As for now, what Merlin had showcased was the ability to control Fire elements. He could only possess the power of a Legendary Wizard through the Ship of Nikola by initiating it with the Flame Maxim. Although the process was very short, he had experienced the enormity of this power in real time and in physical form. It was also an opportunity that could not be replicated.

“Boom!”

Along with the formation of the firestorm, the Flame Giant forcefully extended a huge palm and directly slammed it downward. This palm, which was entirely composed of flames, instantly became incredibly huge, fully encasing the sea near the beach. Even the many sea beasts on the beach, including the two gigantic black shark king beasts, were also shrouded by it.

The flames were howling, and the sea water was boiling. Moreover, as the palm of the Flame Giant approached, the seawater began to evaporate quickly, turning into a thick mist, lingering in mid-air.

Even the seawater had evaporated instantaneously. The power of the flame palm was far beyond the understanding of an ordinary Spell Caster.

“Roar!”

The two black shark king beasts also seemed to sense a strong threat, and immediately howled toward the sky. The inky skin of their bodies seemed to be shiny black, and stripes began appearing on the surface, glinting with peculiar energy.

Besides the black shark king beasts, countless other sea beasts started to panic as well and wanted to escape. However, even if they plunged into the bottom of the sea, they immediately shrieked in pain when their bodies reduced into a pool of blood.

Wherever the flames go, that area became a restricted zone. These sea monsters had absolutely no means of escape.

The sky became more and more reddish, just like a group of fiery clouds falling directly from the sky, showering with unimaginable power.

“Quick, retreat! Retreat as far as possible!”

The three Fort Udon leaders had also noticed the danger. Although the flames seemed to have a conscience and did not affect them, the invisible momentum alone had made these Ninth-level Spell Casters feel very incomparably repressed, so they naturally dared not approach it.

“Bang!”

The palm of flame descended from the sky and slapped onto the beach. Suddenly, the entire island crumbled, and numerous huge cracks appeared on the ground. Then, several small islands began to form.

The surface of the island, which was slapped by the palm of flame, was charred black. It was filled with horrible burning flames. Numerous sea beasts were enclosed in it as the flames burned them into ashes mercilessly.

The two black shark king beasts could not resist the palm of flame. After all, it was the power of a Legendary Wizard. It was not the same level as a Great Wizard. Mastering the Maxim and achieving the Legendary status could almost make one as good as a “god”.

The ancient gods were created by heaven and earth. A weaker dimension was likely to give birth to one god. If the dimension was strong, many gods could be born. These gods could control the elements, almost equivalent to Legendary Spell Casters who condensed the Maxim and controlled the elements.

Moreover, the ability to control Fire elements was extremely powerful. The island which had been divided had begun to sink, just like they had melted, gradually sinking to the bottom of the sea.

Not only were the small islands sinking but also a part of the sea’s surface which was covered by flames. It could clearly be seen that the water level on that particular sea surface was much lower than the sea surface outside the flames.

This meant that in the short period of time of being covered by flames, the seawater had been continuously evaporated by the flames. If it persisted any longer, would the entire sea be evaporated into the air?

The surviving Spell Casters were extremely shocked when they saw this scene, indelibly etching that sight into the back of their minds. It was already beyond their perception of a Spell Caster.

A Great Wizard may not be afraid of volcanic eruptions and violent sea waves, but they would not be capable of creating a lasting impact like this. Now that there was a Flame Giant in the sky which could destroy the islands and evaporate the sea, this type of power had already been at almost on par with the “god” propagated by the Church of Light.

With the destruction of the many sea beasts, the Flame Giant in the sky began to slowly dissipate too, turning into twinkles of flames, gradually disappearing from the sky.

Although the Flame Giant disappeared, the crowd of Spell Casters on the Kurdmansla Islands were still very quiet, seemingly reminiscing about the shocking scene earlier.

“A Legend... A higher level than Great Wizard, one who condenses Maxims, controls elements, and rivals the gods! This is a Legend, must be a Legend. I can’t believe that I can see a great Legendary Wizard with my very own eyes!”

Great Wizard Kansu, who was donned in a body-length white robe, looked extremely emotional. As a Great Wizard, Great Wizard Kansu naturally had more understanding than an average Spell Caster about the Legendary Wizard.

What the Flame Giant in the sky had demonstrated moments ago had lifted a part of Great Wizard Kansu’s memory which was locked away. It reminded him of a class of powerful Spell Casters during the most glorious era of Spell Casters. They were Wizards of a commanding presence, capable of exiling gods, namely Legendary Wizards!

Great Wizard Kansu inhaled deeply, a hopeful look appeared on his face. Then, his figure shuttered as he flew to the part of the sky where the Flame Giant was at earlier.

...

“Phew...”

In the ship of Nikola, Merlin heaved a long sigh of relief.

“It’s really strong. The power of Legendary Wizards is completely different from the power of typical Spell Casters. The ability of commanding elements at will – it’s truly incredible!”

Merlin mumbled softly. He was still carefully reminiscing the feeling of controlling elements earlier. It was a different feeling compared to casting spells. A spell could only convert a small part of the elements into Magic Power, so no matter how strong the spell was, the power was still limited.

Yet, controlling elements were different. The infinite elements could be manipulated, turning them into a horrifying force which could move mountains and drain seas. 1

However, when Merlin inspected the accumulated Pillars of Flame in the Ship of Nikola, his face changed slightly. It turned out that on the ship of Nikola, a third of the seemingly numerous Pillars of Flame had actually been consumed. Those were thousands of years’ worth of storage.

As for the Flame Maxim in Merlin’s Awareness, the consumption was equally not small. It had obviously reduced by a circle in size, its volume reduced by a third too.

Earlier, Merlin controlled the Ship of Nikola. Under the consumption of huge amounts of energy in addition to the usage of Flame Maxim, Merlin instantly activated the Ship of Nikola, and briefly possessed the power of a Legendary Wizard.

Moreover, from the moment of his initiation to kill all the sea beasts, the actual time spent was very short. Even so, such a huge amount of energy had been drained, exhausting one-third of the Flame Maxim. It made Merlin feel a faint pang of loss in his heart.

The energy was really nothing though. Although it would take a long time to accumulate, the Flame Maxim was of utmost importance to Merlin, and now with one third less, it could be considered a huge loss.

Just as Merlin was still grieving over the loss sustained by the Flame Maxim, he saw the figure that appeared in the sky through the Ship of Nikola.

The white-robed figure seemed to be searching for something, occasionally releasing intense elemental fluctuations from his body.

“Great Wizard?”

Merlin frowned. Him possessing the Ship of Nikola must be kept a secret. This was a treasure that would drive even a Great Wizard crazy. Therefore, Merlin directly controlled the Ship of Nikola and began to dive slowly.

In the vast sea, wishing to locate the Ship of Nikola in the depths of the sea was absolutely impossible, what more the Ship of Nikola, which was highly valued by the Legend Nikola. Even a Great Wizard would not be able to locate it.

Thus, the Ship of Nikola carried Merlin, slowly diving into the depths of the sea, disappearing without a trace.

Chapter 296: Leveling Up and Gaining Loot!

In the pitch-black depths of the ocean, a large ship which was enclosed in a bubble was slowly moving forward.

“Right, this place is fine!”

Merlin immediately stopped the Ship of Nikola. He was now thousands of meters below the surface of the sea, far away from the Kurdmansla Islands. Not even a Great Wizard would be able to find him.

After solving the crisis of the Kurdmansla Islands, Merlin did not choose to leave but instead stayed in the Ship of Nikola in order to obtain a detailed understanding of the ship.

“Mmm, my Mind Power is at the peak of the Third-level. I can construct two more Second-level spells.”

Through the Mind Power duplicate in the Bell Space, Merlin’s Mind Power had grown at a great pace. He was now able to construct two more Second-level spells. However, he was in no rush to do that. He wanted to understand the Ship of Nikola thoroughly and would need a period of time for

that. During this time, he would also try to increase his Mind Power in order to break through to the Fourth-level.

At that point, he would be able to construct the four Second-level spells that remained, and level up to a Second-level Spell Caster in one swoop!

As such, Merlin silently closed his eyes and began familiarizing himself with the Ship of Nikola.

...

“Buzz! Buzz! Buzz!”

Merlin gradually opened his eyes. He glanced at the Bell Space at his chest. There was a tremor, along with scorching energy coming once again from the Bell Space. This was already the third time.

“Hopefully, this time my Mind Power will break through to the Fourth-level!”

Merlin drew in a deep breath as his eyes shone with a light of anticipation. He had been on the Ship of Nikola for more than three months. This was the third time the Mind Power duplicate in the Bell Space had reached its limit.

Despite having merged with the Mind Power duplicate twice already, Merlin’s Mind Power had still not broken through. It was as though the limit did not even exist.

“Mind Power duplicate, combine!”

Merlin quickly fused the Mind Power duplicate of the Bell Space into his Mind Power. He was familiar with the fusion process, so in no time at all, he was slowly beginning to fuse with the Mind Power duplicate.

It was a hurdle to go from Third-level to Fourth-level Mind Power and a very difficult hurdle at that. Therefore, Merlin was not anxious. With the Bell Space, his Mind Power could expand continuously by fusing with the Mind Power duplicate. This was much faster than the ordinary Meditation Method.

Thus, Merlin only had to wait patiently. Once the right conditions were fulfilled, his Mind Power would quite naturally break through to the next level.

“Boom!”

At last, after Merlin combined with the Mind Power duplicate for the third time, his Mind Power became like a tide of water bursting out from the floodgates. An entirely new sensation emerged in Merlin’s senses.

Everything before his eyes seemed much clearer than before. He could distinctly feel the movement of various Elements in the air, which seemed to shimmer with life in a vivid manner.

“Have I broken through?”

Merlin felt a rush of glee. The breakthrough of his Mind Power had occurred as the conditions were right. Since the accumulation of his Mind Power had reached a sufficient level, it had naturally broken through.

This significant boost of his Mind Power also seemed to make it easier for him to control the Ship of Nikola.

“My Mind Power finally underwent a breakthrough. Following this, it’s time to construct the four remaining Second-level spells!”

By now, Merlin had constructed two Second-level spells – Darkness Tide and Earth Veil. However, if he wanted to become a Second-level Spell Caster, he needed to construct the four remaining Second-level spells.

Merlin had already prepared for these Second-level spells back when he was in the Dark Magic Region and could construct them at any time.

“The Matrix, analyze the Spell Model of the Second-level spell, Sea of Purgatory Fire!”

Merlin first began to construct the Second-level Fire-type spell, Sea of Purgatory Fire.

With the help of the Matrix, alongside the fact that he had abundant Mind Power, Merlin had almost no chance of failure. As a result, the construction of the Spell Model went very smoothly.

The Second-level Fire-type spell “Sea of Purgatory Fire” was successfully constructed!

The Second-level Wind-type spell “Light Breeze” was successfully constructed!

The Second-level Thunder-type spell “Lightning Flash” was successfully constructed!

The Second-level Ice-type spell “Ice Seal Zone” was successfully constructed!

...

Other Spell Casters might need to spend a long time deriving their Spell Models even if they had sufficient Mind Power. Moreover, they would need to keep an eye on the stability, the compatibility, and other aspects, so it was time-consuming. They would require a few months’ time or even a few years.

It was this challenging and complicated process of derivation that hindered the majority of Spell Casters, resulting in them being unable to construct new Spell Models no matter what.

However, Merlin did not need to concern himself with these matters. His only concern was to have sufficient Mind Power. With that, he could rely on the Matrix to construct Spell Models freely and consistently. Therefore, in a mere ten days, Merlin successfully constructed the four remaining Second-level spells.

The instant he completed constructing all the Second-level spells, Merlin clearly felt some indescribable change occurring in his Awareness. It was a subtle change, and Merlin would not have been able to perceive it in the past.

Nonetheless, after his Mind Power had reached the Fourth-level, it had become much keener, so he detected the change in his Awareness right away.

Beneath the numerous Spell Models, his Awareness seemed to be broadening slowly.

Initially, his Awareness seemed to have no boundaries, but in fact, most of it was a blank space. On the other hand, the construction of the Spell Models seemed to have further illuminated an area. The more Spell Models he constructed, and the stronger the Spell Models were, then the wider the illuminated area became.

Merlin did not know what this change in his Awareness actually meant, but it seemed that there was nothing abnormal about his Spell Models, so he did not worry about it.

After having constructed many spells consecutively, who knew how long it would take to transform Magic Power through the Spell Models alone? Thus, in general, many advanced Spell Casters, after constructing their spells, would use elemental crystal stones to build up Magic Power at first.

Merlin was no exception. He still had plenty of elemental crystal stones after using them the last time. However, having constructed four Second-level spells all at once, he had used up a large number of his elemental crystal stones.

“I don’t have many elemental crystal stones left... I didn’t expect that I would use so many elemental crystal stones just for Second-level spells.”

Merlin felt somewhat helpless. His Second-level spells were the best among their level and were able to build up a lot of Magic Power. However, at the same time, they used up a great number of elemental crystal stones as well.

Merlin, being in the pitch-black depths of the ocean, had no way of obtaining elemental crystal stones. Nevertheless, he had a plan. During these three months, he had already achieved a thorough mastery of the Ship of Nikola.

Merlin discovered that before the three obstacles of the Ship of Nikola, particularly in front of the first and second obstacles, there were piles of dry bones. They used to be Spell Casters who had been roped in to complete the obstacles of the Ship of Nikola but who died instead.

“Whoosh!”

With the Ship of Nikola under his control, a mysterious Runic Magic Circle rapidly surfaced on Merlin’s body. In a flash, he appeared before the first obstacle.

There were many skeletons that had crumbled into white dust at the lightest touch. It was evident that a long time had passed. Nonetheless, even so, the rings did not deteriorate with the passage of time. The space within these rings was extremely stable and would not suffer any damage unless it came under the attack of a powerful force.

Merlin's target was these rings. He picked up a few at random and quickly searched them with this Mind Power.

"Mmm, not bad. There are many elemental crystal stones as well as Spell Models and potion materials."

"Eh? This one has some robes along with some rare treasures."

Merlin looked through all the rings. They were mainly filled with elemental crystal stones, some potion materials, and alchemy materials. Still, this was only the first obstacle. Spell Casters who could not even clear the first obstacle had weaker capabilities, so it was natural that they did not have much good stuff.

Very soon, Merlin came to the second obstacle. There were fewer bones yet Merlin had higher expectations for the rings here.

Those who were able to reach the second obstacle would have had greater powers, so of course, they would have more valuable items. Therefore, Merlin quickly began to pick up the rings on the ground and looked through them carefully.

"There is quite a number of elemental crystal stones here, and some stronger spells too."

"Robes, and more than one at that. Hold on, what casting tool is this?"

Merlin looked through many rings in a row. In one of the rings were many casting tools, many of which Merlin had never seen before.

The owner of this ring must have been wealthy when they were alive in order to possess so many casting tools. However, when one was trapped in the Ship of Nikola, it did not matter how many casting tools one had. The second obstacle did not allow the use of casting tools.

In this ring, the most eye-catching item was a belt which appeared to be glowing with a very faint green light. At a glance, Merlin was able to recognize that this was a casting tool as it was emitting obvious Elemental fluctuations.

As soon as he thought of that, Merlin immediately retrieved this green patterned belt from the ring and lightly fastened it around his waist. It appeared to fit him but did not seem to have any special features.

Since it was a casting tool, he would need to use Mind Power or Magic Power to activate it. Therefore, Merlin enveloped the belt with his Mind Power, but nothing changed even after a long time.

As Mind Power was unable to activate this casting tool, Merlin decided to use Magic Power. First, he used Fire-type Magic Power. He mobilized the Fire-type Magic Power within his body, and it quickly surged into the belt.

However, it did not serve any function, so Merlin proceeded to use Earth-type Magic Power. Still, nothing changed.

At this, Merlin gradually began to furrow his brow. It was a good thing he had more than two types of Magic Power. Thus, he mobilized his Ice-type Magic Power and Wind-type Magic Power next.

“Hum...”

At last, when Merlin channeled his Wind-type Magic Power into the belt, it began to tremble slightly. At the same time, Merlin felt a fierce gust of Wind Elemental fluctuations. His body seemed to be carried by a breeze and he abruptly rose into the air.

“This... This is a Flying casting tool?”

Merlin stared down at his gradually ascending body and irrepressible expression of glee appeared on his face.

Chapter 297: The Flame Prison

Merlin was currently floating in mid-air. Wisps of Wind Element were wrapped around him, supporting him. This proved that the belt was indeed a Flying casting tool.

The belt must contain a mystical power which could cast a Wind-type spell. In that manner, it lifted the Spell Caster into the air, achieving the effect of a Fourth-level spell.

A Flying casting tool like this was very precious. It should be known that Flying spells could only be achieved by a Spell Caster who had reached the Fourth-level and constructed a Wind-type spell.

For Spell Casters below the Fourth-level or for Spell Casters who were Fourth-level or above but did not construct Wind-type spells, a Flying casting tool like this made things more convenient, and might even indirectly improve their battle prowess.

Merlin further explored the powers of the belt. Its flying speed in mid-air was nothing to shout about, but it was much faster than Wind of Freedom that he used. It was around the speed of a typical Fourth-level Flying spell.

Moreover, although the belt required the supplement of some Wind-type elemental crystal stones, this amount was nothing much to Merlin, who now had many rings and a large sum of elemental crystal stones.

This Flying casting tool was the best item that Merlin had obtained at the second obstacle. Some of the other rings might have some precious materials, but they could not compare to this Flying casting tool.

Ever since the era of the Molta Empire, the most glorious age of Spell Casters had passed, much of alchemy's legacy had been lost. Casting tools were a part of alchemy as well, and it was rather difficult to transfigure a Flying casting tool.

Therefore, when Merlin was in the Dark Magic Region, Sterling House, and Fort Udon, he had never seen anyone with a Flying casting tool. Therefore, this belt was considered quite a treasure.

After plundering the rings at the second obstacle until nothing was left, Merlin felt a vague feeling of even greater anticipation. In a flash of his figure, he headed toward the third obstacle straightaway.

Merlin had previously heard the Flame Being mention that in over three thousand years, only three individuals had made it to the third obstacle. Merlin was the fourth one, but besides him, no one else had ever completed the third obstacle.

Spell Casters who were able to reach the third obstacle must surely be extraordinary Spell Casters!

“Whoosh!”

Merlin’s figure appeared before the third obstacle. He swept his gaze across the ground but frowned because he did not see any bones or rings before this third obstacle.

Merlin remembered very clearly that the Flame Being had mentioned that other than Merlin, there were three others altogether who had reached the third obstacle.

However, those three did not manage to complete the third obstacle.

Merlin recalled what the Flame Being had said in detail. The Flame Being had mentioned that one was a real freak who had five types of Pandora Demon Abilities but that person used up all three chances to complete the obstacle and was cast into the Flame Prison.

As he thought of this, Merlin’s eyes shone, and he muttered in a low voice, “That’s right, the Flame Prison. How could Spell Casters who managed to reach the third obstacle die so easily? There was even a Seventh-level Spell Caster among them. They must’ve been thrown into the Flame Prison because they failed to clear the obstacle.”

The Flame Prison – this had been repeatedly brought up by the Flame Being. Furthermore, according to Merlin’s conjecture, this Flame Prison was surely on the Ship of Nikola.

However, Merlin might have complete control over the Ship of Nikola now, but he had not discovered any such Flame Prison.

“The Flame Prison should be a ‘prison’ set up by the Legend Nikola. Since it’s a ‘prison’, it must be well-hidden and sturdy in order to prevent people from easily escaping.”

Countless thoughts flashed across Merlin's mind, following which he searched every corner of the Ship of Nikola once more. Moreover, he looked out especially for spots which were dense with Fire Element.

However, after a period of searching, he still did not discover any Flame Prison.

Nevertheless, Merlin did not give up but switched to another way of thinking. He searched for the place with the highest concentration of Fire Element on the Ship of Nikola.

"The place where Fire Element is the most concentrated at is where those Pillars of Flame are!"

The first thing Merlin thought of was those Pillars of Flame which were made by condensed Fire Element. The place with the highest concentration of Fire Element on the Ship of Nikola was surely where those Pillars of Flame were.

However, Merlin had never been to that area. Still, in order to locate the Flame Prison, Merlin decided to pay the place with the Pillars of Flame a visit.

...

"As I expected, what intense Fire Element!"

Merlin appeared in a room that was fiery-red. He looked all around. The place was filled with gigantic Pillars of Flame which were emanating an astounding scorching heat.

Merlin walked all around and discovered, by chance, that there was a thick, heavy metal door in this room filled with flames.

If Merlin had not come here himself, he would have no way of discovering this metal door.

Although Merlin controlled the Ship of Nikola, he could only see the numerous Pillars of Flame from a cursory look without gaining a clear understanding of these pillars' details.

As he looked at the large metal door now, Merlin's spirits began to lift.

“What’s behind these great doors? Could it be the Flame Prison?”

Merlin approached the large, metal doors and looked around, but there were no mechanisms or anything of that sort. He began to consider the possibilities. On the entirety of the Ship of Nikola, Merlin, who possessed the Flame Maxim, was, in fact, the master of the Ship of Nikola. He was completely able to enter any place on this ship.

As he thought of this, Merlin fiercely simulated the Flame Maxim in his Awareness. The Flame Maxim emitted strands of its force, and Merlin cried out hoarsely, “Open!”

“Rumble!”

After the force of the Flame Maxim was released around Merlin, the thick solid metal doors began to gradually open.

The metal doors opened, and in a flash of his figure, Merlin had stepped inside.

It was a spacious and empty hall. In the middle of the hall, there was a circular area which was surrounded by sixteen enormous pillars. Dense lines of runes covered the pillars.

There was even a trace of the Flame Maxim’s force which Merlin was familiar with.

The sixteen enormous pillars practically formed a massive Runic Magic Circle, enclosing the circular area. Inside the area were flames which danced and surged furiously.

“The Flame Prison. This must be the Flame Prison!”

Merlin felt a rush of glee. The flames, within the circular area surrounded by the sixteen runic pillars, evoked a sense of familiarity in Merlin. This force was similar to the Flame Maxim’s. This demonstrated how terrifying the flames within the area were. The moment one stepped in, one would be turned to ashes.

As for why this parched heat was not felt in the hall, it was most likely thanks to these mysterious runes which trapped the flames firmly in the circle. This formed the terrifying Flame Prison. Any Spell Casters who were unable to complete the third obstacle, and were not killed by the Flame Image, would be thrown into the Flame Prison.

“Such frightening flames – I’m afraid that no one would be able to withstand them. If the three Spell Casters who made it to the third obstacle were cast into the Flame Prison, they must be long dead. The question is whether those rings are still here or not?”

Seeing how petrifying the flames of the Flame Prison were, Merlin felt rather uncertain. Although rings were not easily damaged, in the face of such flames that had a similar force as the Flame Maxim and were surely created by the Legend Nikola himself, it was unlikely that a Spatial Ring would remain intact and undamaged.

Nevertheless, Merlin thought he might as well try. He headed toward the Flame Prison in order to get a clearer look.

As soon as he neared the Flame Prison, the runes on the sixteen pillars transformed into a large runic net which obstructed Merlin’s path. Based on the strength of these runes, Merlin guessed that even Great Wizards would find it hard to blast their way through.

However, the Flame Maxim in his Awareness was the foundation of the entire Ship of Nikola’s control, so he released the force of the Flame Maxim once again. Instantly, the runes which were blocking Merlin vanished.

“Swish!”

Merlin did not hesitate at all. Even though he felt a burning gust of energy after the Runic Magic Circle had disappeared, he still stepped into the Flame Prison.

The flames in the Flame Prison were extremely terrifying. Merlin did not dare to be careless in the slightest and constantly simulated the Flame Maxim. He discovered that the mere wisp of force from the Flame Maxim was completely able to suppress these raging, surging flames. It was because of this that Merlin dared to step into the Flame Prison.

Merlin walked into the Flame Prison casually. Under the Flame Maxim’s suppression, the flames of the prison were unable to touch him at all.

“Someone is thrown into the Flame Prison again?”

Suddenly, an old voice came from the middle of the Flame Prison. Merlin's footsteps paused instinctively, and his Mind Power flared up.

"Is someone actually still alive?"

Merlin immediately became very cautious and began to head toward the voice. Finally, at the bottom of the thirteenth pillar, Merlin saw a Spell Caster who was tenaciously hiding beneath the pillar, his body curled up into a ball. The flames of the Flame Prison were burning on his body, yet they were blocked by a layer of similar flames.

Merlin narrowed his eyes slightly. He surmised almost instantly that this Spell Caster was one of those who were cast into the Flame Prison. As for the thin layer of flames, they moved with obvious Elemental fluctuations. This indicated that the Spell Caster was casting a spell, perpetually counteracting the flames of the Flame Prison.

However, this astounded Merlin. It was almost an impossible task to be constantly fighting against the flames of the Flame Prison and surviving until now. Not even a Great Wizard would have such a tremendous amount of Magic Power to sustain this.

Just as Merlin was sizing up this mysterious Spell Caster, this person lifted his head, revealing an unkempt beard and an aged countenance.

When he saw that the flames around Merlin seemed to be suppressed, the expression of this aged Spell Caster shifted greatly. In a trembling voice, he said, "That's not right, you're not a Spell Caster who's been thrown into the Flame Prison. Speak, who are you really?"

The aged Spell Caster's eyes were initially weary, but they sharpened in an instant and fixed firmly onto Merlin.

Chapter 298: A Slave Contract!

Before this, the old Spell Caster appeared to be on his last legs in the Flame Prison, but now a tremendous force shimmered around his body. In particular, the layer of flames covering him flared up violently, faintly repelling the flames of the Flame Prison.

This tremendous presence immediately froze Merlin where he stood. Nonetheless, Merlin did not bat an eyelid. On the Ship of Nikola, he was unafraid of anyone. Furthermore, they were in the

Flame Prison. Not just anyone would be able to withstand the endless flames. The old Spell Caster was no more than someone who appeared stronger than he really was by forcibly radiating his presence.

Seeing that Merlin remained cool and collected with an unperturbed expression, the old Spell Caster, who seemed to have such vigorous force a moment ago, immediately turned dispirited. The surrounding flames wildly wrapped around him and a pained expression appeared on his face.

It appeared that the old Spell Caster's previous outburst of force was not as simple as it seemed. Who knew how much pain he had suffered?

The old Spell Caster gave Merlin a deep look, following which he said in a dejected and faint voice, "Only those who had obtained the Legend Nikola's Flame Maxim would be able to move freely in the Flame Prison. It looks like you're the Spell Caster who had completed the three obstacles and finally won the Legend Nikola's Flame Maxim!"

The old Spell Caster raised his head, wearing an inscrutable expression. It turned out that his previous burst of energy was merely a show of bravado.

"Oh? You actually know about the Legend Nikola, and even about the Flame Maxim?"

Merlin raised an eyebrow, his interest aroused by the old Spell Caster's words. After all, the Ship of Nikola was hidden in the ocean depths, and the Flame Being had said that all those who entered the Ship of Nikola were forcibly dragged in by the Flame Being. If one did not clear the third obstacle, one would not know what the treasure on the Ship of Nikola was.

"Heh, of course I know about it because that year, I came here especially for the Flame Maxim that the Legend Nikola had left behind! Before that, I came across a message that the Legend Nikola had left in a mysterious way, and learned that he had left a Flame Maxim at the bottom of the sea. I didn't know the exact location, but I had a rough idea of where it was.

"Therefore, I waited unabatingly for decades at that region of the sea... In the end, my efforts were not wasted. I was dragged in here, only it was a shame that I was unable to defeat the Flame Image of the third obstacle in the end."

It turned out that the old Spell Caster had come here intentionally for the sake of the Flame Maxim that the Legend Nikola had left behind. Perhaps the Legend Nikola was worried and left behind other messages.

Every century or so, the Flame Being would seize a new batch of Spell Casters and bring them to the Ship of Nikola. Thus, the old Spell Caster had waited vigilantly around the area. Naturally, he would be taken by the Flame Being and brought to the Ship of Nikola.

As soon as the old Spell Caster finished speaking, silence descended over the Flame Prison. At last, the old Spell Caster spoke again, “You’ve gotten the Flame Maxim. Go on, what are you going to do to me?”

“Do to you?”

Hearing this, Merlin carefully looked the old Spell Caster over. Although he appeared rather downcast, he must surely have powerful abilities to persevere within this terrifying Flame Prison and held on for so many years without dying.

In particular, the burst of force that he had displayed far surpassed the average Seventh-level Spell Caster.

Seeing that Merlin seemed to be hesitating, the old Spell Caster said in a low voice, “Let me out. I, Bammou, am willing to grant you three promises! If you don’t trust me, we can sign a contract!”

“Three promises? Wizard Bammou, I’m afraid you don’t understand your situation here. I’m in control of the Ship of Nikola, and your life is also in my hands. You think I would care about three small promises?”

Merlin laughed coldly. This guy really had a bright idea, using only three promises in exchange for Merlin to set him free. If he turned on Merlin after he was out of danger, what use would the three promises be?

Therefore, Merlin would not fall for this so foolishly.

Wizard Bammou, upon seeing Merlin’s expression, clenched his jaw. “Although you’ve obtained the Flame Maxim, you’re still unable to refine it. Even though you cleared the third obstacle, you must surely have relied on some trick, who knows what, for your abilities aren’t that powerful. If you agree to set me free, we can sign a contract and I’ll accompany you, protecting you for ten years!”

Wizard Bammou suggested another arrangement, only this one was much better. Merlin could see that Wizard Bammou must be the Seventh-level Spell Caster that the Flame Being had mentioned.

So many years had passed and yet Wizard Bammou was still alive. He was able to resist the flames of the Flame Prison and was certainly more than just a simple Seventh-level Spell Caster. The protection of such a powerful Wizard for ten years would be a decent choice.

After a moment of pondering, Merlin still shook his head.

Wizard Bammou's face turned cold and he said hoarsely, "You've turned down both of these conditions. What do you really want in exchange for setting me free?"

In the Flame Prison, one had to endure torment and suffering every day. Even though Wizard Bammou could force himself to stay alive, he had no chance of escaping the Flame Prison. As such, of course he would want to seize the only chance he had of leaving the Flame Prison.

"It's simple. Sign a slave contract of the highest grade with me, and I'll let you out!"

A smile tugged at the corner of Merlin's lips as he said calmly.

"What? A slave contract? Impossible, this is absolutely impossible – even if I die in this Flame Prison, I'll never sign a slave contract with you!"

Upon hearing Merlin's request, Wizard Bammou did not seem to give it any thought before rejecting it straightaway. Moreover, he sounded quite resentful.

Among all different types of contracts, the slave contract was the most demanding. For Spell Casters who signed the slave contract – everything they owned, including their lives, was in the hands of their masters. Their masters could kill them off on a whim.

Not even Entrance-level Spell Caster would sign such a harsh contract, what more a proud Seventh-level Spell Caster like Wizard Bammou.

After signing a contract of the highest grade in the Dark Magic Region, Merlin had gained some understanding of the different types of contracts. Incidentally, he learned some details regarding the slave contract, and in this way, he gained knowledge of the existence of such a harsh contract.

Wizard Bammou was a bona fide Seventh-level Spell Caster and not an average one at that. If Merlin set him free, Merlin must have absolute control over him. Thus, signing a slave contract was the only way.

“Wizard Bammou, don’t be so quick to turn this down. I’ll wait here for three days. If until then you’re still unwilling to sign a slave contract, then you can stay here forever and enjoy yourself.”

With that, Merlin turned to leave the Flame Prison, but he did not go too far. Instead, beneath the sixteen runic pillars, he sat in the lotus position. He would wait here for three days.

From this spot, Merlin could still see Wizard Bammou’s every movement. There seemed to be a layer of faint firelight around the Spell Caster’s body, which must be Wizard Bammou’s spell. Still, that Fire-type spell appeared to be somewhat similar to the flames of the Flame Prison.

It was these flames, which rather resembled the Flame Prison’s, that allowed Wizard Bammou to withstand the scorching heat of the Flame Prison and in that manner, he had survived until now.

Merlin closed his eyes lightly. Through the Flame Maxim in his Awareness, he had immediate control over the Ship of Nikola. Every corner of the entire ship appeared in Merlin’s mind.

Before this, Merlin had not found the Flame Prison, so he had no way of controlling it. However, now that he had located it, Merlin had the ability to control the Flame Prison through the Flame Maxim’s command of the Ship of Nikola.

Therefore, with a single thought from Merlin, the sixteen runic pillars which enclosed the Flame Prison began to shudder slightly. Following that, the characters of the mysterious rune flew into the Flame Prison.

“Boom!”

As soon as these runes entered the Flame Prison, the flames of the entire prison surged ferociously as if someone had poured gasoline over them. They burned even more frantically than before.

Merlin laughed softly. “Wizard Bammou, enjoy these for three days. Of course, if you can endure these three days, I might consider letting you out.”

Wizard Bammou's face turned a deep red and the fluctuations of Fire Element all over his body became abnormally intense. The layer of flames over his body seemed unable to withstand this, and he seemed to be in a situation that was getting dangerous.

This was Merlin's little trick. Wizard Bammou was a complicated individual. The terrifying presence that Merlin had previously felt from him was full of a ruthless spirit. Only someone who had slaughtered many others would emit such a force.

Wizard Bammou bore this bitterly. Merlin was in no hurry as well as he had plenty of time. However, after seeing the frightening power of the Flame Prison, something occurred to Merlin. If he encountered a powerful enemy, he could drag them into the Ship of Nikola and cast them into the Flame Prison, and everything would be taken care of.

Nonetheless, it was a shame that the Ship of Nikola could not be moved and could only stay in the depths of the ocean. Otherwise, what a solid backing Merlin would have!

"Heh, to make me surrender through such despicable means – I'm afraid that you'll be disappointed!"

Wizard Bammou fixed his glare on Merlin and gnashed his teeth as he spoke.

Merlin paid him no mind and checked upon the spells in his body instead. He had just constructed four Second-level spells in a row. In addition, he had used up a large number of elemental crystal stones in order to build up a certain amount of Magic Power in these Spell Models and equipped himself with fighting power.

Merlin did not spend too much time on the other spells but instead focused particularly on the Second-level Fire-type spell, Sea of Purgatory Fire.

Before this, Merlin had relied on the Flame Maxim's suppression to forcibly combine Fiery Collapse with his Fire-type spells. Now that he had constructed a new Second-level Fire-type spell, he wanted to see if Fiery Collapse could also be merged with Sea of Purgatory Fire.

"Sea of Purgatory Fire!"

Merlin cast the Second-level Fire-type spell, Sea of Purgatory Fire for the first time. A sweep of flames instantly appeared in mid-air before him.

The raging flames roared with might which was obviously much stronger than the First-level spell, Furious Flame. However, as he stared at the flames of Sea of Purgatory Fire, Merlin's brow gradually began to furrow.

Chapter 299: A Hundred Years' Time Limit

Merlin looked at Sea of Purgatory Fire which he had recently constructed. It was not burning with white flames, indicating that Fiery Collapse was not fused with the spell.

For Pandora Demon Ability, Fuse Earth and Darkness Heart, they would merge with the spells right away. When the spells were cast, the power of the Pandora Demon Abilities would be automatically activated.

After ruminating about this for a moment, Merlin called upon Fiery Collapse as before.

“Boom!”

The flames of Sea of Purgatory Fire, which were initially raging fiercely, now turned white. Merlin was slightly taken aback when he saw this transformation, which meant that Fiery Collapse had combined with Sea of Purgatory Fire.

“Does this mean that when I used the Flame Maxim's suppression to force Fiery Collapse to fuse with the Fire-type spells it's different from the other Pandora Demon Abilities which are combined with spells, and still requires the activation of the Pandora Demon Ability in order for the fusion to occur?”

Merlin felt very puzzled, but thereafter, he observed closely for a moment. He discovered that the power of Sea of Purgatory Fire was now far beyond the average Second-level spell, and it was even difficult to judge how strong it really was.

Most Pandora Demon Abilities which could be combined with spells would instantly lend its power automatically once the spell was cast. However, Merlin's Fiery Collapse was different from other Pandora Demon Abilities which he had combined with spells.

After all, Merlin's Fiery Collapse was forcibly combined with the spells through the Flame Maxim. Merlin himself was unsure what sort of changes would occur.

It was fortunate that Fiery Collapse only induced this small change and combined well with Sea of Purgatory Fire. The raging fiery white flames mirrored the flames of the Flame Prison.

From time to time, Merlin would feel the heat from the Flame Prison. It was designed by the Legend Nikola himself and drew upon the power of the Maxim, so the might of the flames was almost inconceivable. At Merlin's current level, he was unable to understand it, but the parallel to his own flames made Merlin gain a deeper understanding of fire.

Time passed quickly, and in the blink of an eye, a day had gone by. Merlin opened his eyes once more. He had spent the entirety of the day before familiarizing himself with how Fiery Collapse combined with Sea of Purgatory Fire.

Thus, he now had a more profound understanding of the flames, which might not seem very useful now, but if Merlin began creating spells that he could call his own in the future, this knowledge would serve a crucial function.

"Hmm? Still not speaking? Regardless, you won't be able to hold on for long."

Merlin stared at Wizard Bammou, who was in the Flame Prison – his face drained and pale. He was also trembling slightly all over, biting down on his lips as if he was still holding on tenaciously.

However, such perseverance would ultimately have a limit. Once that limit was reached and Wizard Bammou could not withstand any longer, he would be burnt to ashes by the Flame Prison.

This was merely the first day. Merlin had decided upon three days, he was certain of his estimation of Wizard Bammou's limit.

...

"I agree to sign the slave contract!"

At an unknown time, a faint voice came from the Flame Prison. Merlin, who was right outside, opened his eyes quickly and turned his gaze toward Wizard Bammou in the Flame Prison.

At the moment, Wizard Bammou was surrounded completely by the blaze of the Flame Prison. The layer of flames over his body was turning faint and weak as if it would vanish soon.

Once the layer of flames dissipated, Wizard Bammou would no longer be able to withstand the flames of the Flame Prison.

A smile appeared on Merlin's face. It was only the second day, and merely half of the three days' time he set had gone by, yet Wizard Bammou could not stand it any longer.

"Very good, Wizard Bammou. Signing a slave contract is your only choice!"

Merlin controlled the Ship of Nikola and immediately lowered the intensity of the Flame Prison's flames. Thereafter, he stood up and came before Wizard Bammou.

Wizard Bammou sensed that the flames of the Flame Prison were much weaker, and got up, panting heavily. His expression gradually relaxed. It was clear that he had suffered a terrifying ordeal throughout the past day and a half, to the point where he did not hesitate in agreeing to sign a demanding slave contract with Merlin.

Wizard Bammou had somewhat recovered, and said heavily, "I'm willing to sign a slave contract with you, but a time limit must be set – a hundred years at most! After a hundred years, you must let me go. This is my only condition!"

Merlin fixed his gaze upon Wizard Bammou, and countless thoughts spun in his head.

The slave contract was initially the harshest contract of all. Once one signed a slave contract, their life would be in the hands of their master. There was no sense of hope at all in being a slave.

However, for a Seventh-level Spell Caster like Wizard Bammou, not having any hope was something unbearable. Although Wizard Bammou now agreed to sign a slave contract under the pressure of current circumstances, he had to retain a sense of hope. Moreover, a hundred years' time was considered a long period for Merlin.

It might be that after a hundred years, Merlin's powers would have far surpassed Wizard Bammou's and he would no longer need him. By giving Wizard Bammou a sense of hope, Merlin could obtain a very powerful slave.

As he thought about this, Merlin could only accept, and so he nodded with a smile. "We'll sign a slave contract according to your request then, with a time limit of a hundred years!"

Hearing Merlin's agreement, Wizard Bammou could not help but sigh in relief. No one would want to die, especially if they had been persevering bitterly in the Flame Prison for a few hundred years – of course, their desire to survive would be even stronger.

In the beginning, there were two other Spell Casters who were thrown into the Flame Prison, but they were dead by now. Wizard Bammou had survived up until today, so he would not let even the slightest bit of opportunity slip past him.

Although signing a slave contract would allow his life to be in someone else's hands, he ultimately still had some hope with the hundred years' time limit. This was, in fact, his only option.

"Let's sign the contract quickly. I've no wish to stay in the Flame Prison for a moment longer!"

Since he had made the decision, Wizard Bammou was itching to leave the Flame Prison. Nevertheless, Merlin seemed to have thought of something and shook his head powerlessly. "Signing a contract requires contract paper, but I'm sorry to say that I don't have contract paper with me. If you have any, bring it out. Otherwise, I can only leave you here in the Flame Prison for a while longer until I obtain the contract paper to sign the contract."

Wizard Bammou's face shifted. He was already boiling with rage inside – not only did he have to sign such a harsh slave contract but he was also expected to provide the contract paper.

Still, if he did not hand over the contract paper, he did not know when Merlin would be able to get it. It might be a year, or ten. Wizard Bammou had no desire to stay any longer in the Flame Prison.

Therefore, with an ashen face, he extracted a sheet of paper that was shimmering with golden light from a stack of contract paper. In a low voice, he said, "Here's your contract paper!"

Merlin glanced at the paper glowing with golden light. Its force was similar to the contract paper of the highest grade which the Dark Magic Region had brought out. This indicated that this contract paper was unlike the average contract paper.

Nevertheless, Merlin did not immediately let Wizard Bammou sign the contract but detached a small piece of the Flame Maxim in his Awareness and channeled it into the contract paper.

Wizard Bammou's face darkened when he sensed the presence of the Flame Maxim. In truth, he was still harboring a slim hope of lucking out before this. A contract was not impossible to terminate. It was just that a great price had to be paid. If one managed to obtain treasures which would terminate a contract, then, even the highest grade contract could be terminated at a certain price.

However, Merlin had fused a part of the Flame Maxim into the contract paper. This made it a contract that was almost impossible to terminate. Even if Wizard Bammou became a Legendary Wizard one day, he would still have no way of terminating the contract.

"Wizard Bammou, sign the contract!"

As he noticed Wizard Bammou's perpetually shifting expression, Merlin knew clearly that Wizard Bammou understood what the fusing of the Flame Maxim into the contract paper signified. Now that Wizard Bammou no longer had the possibility of terminating the contract, he could focus on being Merlin's slave from now on.

Wizard Bammou eyed Merlin and drew in a deep breath. A colossal burst of Mind Power suddenly erupted. This Mind Power was really powerful, far stronger than the Mind Power of the Ninth-level Spell Caster, Wizard Umo from Fort Udon. Even the quality of the Mind Power was elevated.

It might be that Wizard Bammou's Mind Power could compare to a Great Wizard's!

"I, Tarion Bammou, agree to serve as Wizard Merlin's slave, with a time limit of a hundred years!"

"Hum..."

As soon as Wizard Bammou spoke, the golden contract paper began to shine with a blinding light. Following that, Wizard Bammou's Mind Power was fused into the contract paper as well.

“Swish!”

With a wave of his hand, the contract paper landed in Merlin’s hand. A peculiar sensation instantly grew in his chest as if he could now perceive some of Wizard Bammou’s thoughts.

The slave contract was the most demanding contract of all. Once signed, one’s life would be in the hands of someone else. Merlin now had such a feeling. Through this contract paper, he could learn of Wizard Bammou’s thoughts and intentions. If he went in deeper, Merlin could even feel Wizard Bammou’s tremendous Mind Power.

“Hmm? What powerful Mind Power. Only Great Wizards can have such Mind Power! Wizard Bammou’s Mind Power has broken through to the level of a Great Wizard while he was in the Flame Prison?”

Through the slave contract, Merlin could perceive the strength of Wizard Bammou’s Mind Power. It was very much comparable to a Great Wizard’s, and it was the first time Merlin had felt such formidable Mind Power.

However, although Wizard Bammou’s Mind Power was strong, he was just a Seventh-level Spell Caster and a Four-Elemental one at that. Still, there was a Fire-type spell which he had constructed which stood out as it was abnormal. It must be an Eighth-level spell, and this was the only Eighth-level spell in Wizard Bammou’s Awareness.

After all, in the Flame Prison, there was only the turbulent Fire Element. There were no other Elements at all, so even if Wizard Bammou wanted to derive and construct other spells, it was impossible.

“Wizard Bammou, tell me, how long have you been in the Flame Prison?”

Merlin’s eyes were calm as they fixed onto Wizard Bammou. With the slave contract, there were not many secrets which Wizard Bammou would be able to conceal from Merlin.

Chapter 300: A Special Pandora Demon Ability

“My Master, I’ve been in the Flame Prison for more than four hundred years.”

Wizard Bammou answered deferentially. He was conscious that he was now a slave and kept his tone respectful.

“Oh? More than four hundred years? You were able to survive in the Flame Prison for over four hundred years?”

Merlin was rather curious as to the true extent of Wizard Bammou’s current power. It was surely a difficult feat to stay in the Flame Prison for more than four hundred years and survive the terrifying flames.

Wizard Bammou looked at Merlin with a complicated expression, following which he said softly, “Wizard Merlin, although I had no way of absorbing any other Elements during the four hundred years or so that I’ve been in the Flame Prison, and couldn’t construct Spell Models of other Elements, I gradually came to understand the Essence of Fire within the Flame Prison, and gained a deeper comprehension of the flames. Thus, by myself, I created a unique Eight-level Flame Spell Model. It was by relying on this new Eighth-level Flame spell that I could temporarily withstand the terrifying blaze of the Flame Prison for so many years.”

Wizard Bammou glanced at the Flame Prison behind him, feeling a lingering sense of fear.

Merlin nodded. It turned out that Wizard Bammou had relied upon constructing a brand-new Eighth-level Flame spell to survive. It might be that his profound understanding of the flames in the Flame Prison allowed the layer of flames over Wizard Bammou’s body to withstand the cruel scorching heat of the Flame Prison.

Merlin gave Wizard Bammou a deep look. Based on the power of just this one Eighth-level Flame spell, Wizard Bammou might have far surpassed most Eighth-level Spell Casters. After all, the flames in the Flame Prison were created by the Legend Nikola himself. They contained a trace of the Maxim’s strength, and the mere feat of persevering in the Flame Prison for so many years was not an easy one.

Of course, Wizard Bammou could only resist the flames of the Flame Prison. It was completely impossible for him to break out of the Flame Prison. The Flame Being had said before that if anyone was able to escape from the Flame Prison, they would likewise obtain the Flame Maxim.

However, breaking out of the Flame Prison was much more difficult than completing the third obstacle, so naturally, Wizard Bammou was unable to do it.

“Bammou, besides you, how many others had been thrown into the Flame Prison?”

Merlin eyed the Flame Prison and remembered his purpose for coming here. Mainly, he wanted to obtain the ring which belonged to the prodigious freak who possessed five Pandora Demon Abilities as mentioned by the Flame Being, and see if there were any Pandora Demon Abilities inside the ring.

After all, this prodigious freak might have Pandora Demon Abilities which could be combined with spells. Even now, Merlin himself did not even have five such Pandora Demon Abilities.

Currently, Merlin only had Darkness Heart and the Pandora Demon Ability, Fuse Earth. In addition to Fiery Collapse which he had recently combined forcibly with spells using the Flame Maxim, it totaled to three. Even if he counted Glacial Finger, which could not be combined with spells, he merely had four types of Pandora Demon Abilities.

He was far inferior compared to the genius freak the Flame Being had spoken about who had five types of Pandora Demon Ability. If Merlin did not have the bracelet sealed with a portion of Darkness Eye's strength and given to him by Wizard Leo, he would have no way of clearing the third obstacle and obtaining the Flame Maxim as well.

Hearing Merlin's question, Wizard Bammou replied respectfully, “Master, other than myself, there were two other Spell Casters who were cast into the Flame Prison.”

“Oh, where are they?”

Merlin asked impatiently.

Wizard Bammou shook his head helplessly in response. “Master, they could not withstand the burning of the Prison's flames and died a long time ago.”

“What? Both of them are dead?”

Merlin frowned. In fact, he had somewhat expected to hear this, since he did not discover any traces of any other Spell Caster when he was in the Flame Prison.

Furthermore, after he had gained control over the Flame Prison, no movement in there could be concealed from Merlin. Other than the lack of any traces of other Spell Casters, the rings which Merlin so desperately wanted were also absent.

Spatial Rings might be marvelous enough to withstand the majority of spells, but under the flames which contained a trace of the Maxim's powers, Spatial Rings could not be kept intact without the protection of some energy.

Upon seeing Merlin's pensive look, Wizard Bammou grumbled silently beside him. He felt Merlin entering his thoughts directly. Through the slave contract paper, Merlin could even know Wizard Bammou's thoughts.

At this point, Wizard Bammou had no way of hiding things from Merlin, and could only smile bitterly. "Master, it's true that there were two Spell Casters who were thrown into the Flame Prison before me, but one of them had long been turned to ashes. The other Fifth-level Spell Caster had five types of Pandora Demon Abilities. After he died, I took his Spatial Ring and kept it with me. Now, I present it to Master!"

With that, Wizard Bammou deferentially handed a ring to Merlin.

Merlin bobbed his head in satisfaction and took the ring from Wizard Bammou. What he had signed with Wizard Bammou was the most one-sided slave contract. Wizard Bammou had no way of hiding anything from Merlin, so even if he had gotten the Spatial Ring, he had to hand it over to Merlin.

Nevertheless, Merlin did not check the ring immediately but instead noticed Wizard Bammou's state of being. Wizard Bammou's face was currently white. Evidently, he was enduring a great pressure in the Flame Prison.

Therefore, Merlin said to Wizard Bammou, "Wizard Bammou, let's go, we'll leave this Flame Prison first!"

Wizard Bammou was overjoyed. He had finally reached this day. For over four hundred years, he had painstakingly suffered who knew how much hardship, and at last, he had arrived at the day when he would leave the Flame Prison.

"Open!"

With a quick point at the sixteen runic pillars of the Flame Prison, Merlin gained control over all of them instantly. The numerous runes were retracted immediately, allowing Wizard Bammou to exit the Flame Prison safe and sound.

“Gasp...”

After Wizard Bammou had walked out of the Flame Prison, he drew in a deep breath. He seemed delirious with joy and a smile spread across his face as he mumbled, “I’m finally free. It’s been four hundred years, I, Bammou, am finally free, haha!”

Wizard Bammou appeared to be quite excited. It was likely that any Spell Caster, after being locked up in such a stifling Flame Prison for four hundred years, would be as excited as Wizard Bammou.

Merlin paid no mind to Wizard Bammou’s excitement but immediately looked through the Fifth-level freak’s Spatial Ring, hoping to find some Pandora Demon Ability left behind that could be merged with spells.

“Whoosh!”

Merlin searched through the Spatial Ring with his Mind Power but found that there were no elemental crystals stones left as they had been used up. Now that he thought about it, they must have been taken by Wizard Bammou. Since he was suffering bitterly in the Flame Prison, he surely would have needed some Magic Power to bolster himself. The elemental crystal stones were naturally the best resource for Wizard Bammou to replenish the Magic Power in the Spell Models of his Awareness.

Other than the absent elemental crystal stones, there were some potion materials and alchemy materials. There were even some spells, some of which were exceptional, being spells that were derived by that prodigious freak, the Fifth-level Wizard.

Nonetheless, Merlin was not interested in any of these. He had the Matrix, and no matter how good that Fifth-level prodigious freak was at deriving Spell Models, it certainly could not compare to the Spell Models which were analyzed from scratch by the Matrix.

Merlin's priority was any Pandora Demon Ability that the Fifth-level genius freak might have likely left behind, yet after searching through the ring, he only found a thick book, and no Pandora Demon Ability that was left behind.

Merlin furrowed his brow, and could only retrieve the thick book. He discovered that although the book did not contain Pandora Demon Ability, it was somewhat connected to Pandora Demon Ability as it consisted of some introductions about Pandora Demon Ability.

The introductions regarding Pandora Demon Ability in the book were comprehensive and excellent. Merlin realized that there were many details and general information which he was reading for the first time, so he became interested and began to read it carefully.

“For Pandora Demon Ability, one can usually only construct one spell for each type because every type of Pandora Demon Ability would need to occupy a spell! Some spells of Pandora Demon Ability with only one stage would only occupy some First-level spell. As for Pandora Demon Abilities with two stages, they would need to occupy some Fourth-level Spell Model.”

Merlin gave the matter careful thought. It seemed like that was the case, and it was the same with his Pandora Demon Abilities which would occupy some Spell Models. Each spell could only cultivate one Pandora Demon Ability, and once it was occupied, it could not be used to cultivate another Pandora Demon Ability.

Of course, it might be possible to remove some Pandora Demon Abilities, but a huge price must be required to do so. At least, for now, Merlin did not know how to remove a Pandora Demon Ability that had been cultivated.

Many Pandora Demon Abilities had only two stages, and some others had a third form or third stage. Those would need to be combined with a Seventh-level spell in order for their terrifying powers to be unleashed.

Other than this sort of Pandora Demon Ability which needed to occupy a spell, there was, in truth, a more special type of Pandora Demon Ability. These were outlined in eye-catching, red words in the book that belonged to that freak Wizard.

One of those special Pandora Demon Abilities was something that Merlin was very familiar with.

“Darkness Eye... It's actually a special Pandora Demon Ability, and has seven forms!”

Merlin was astounded to see that the Darkness Eye recorded in this book was a Pandora Demon Ability created by the Great Legend of Darkness, Oflas of the legends. Once the seven forms of this Pandora Demon Ability were cultivated, one would reach the peak of one's powers.

It was likely that only Oflas was able to cultivate the seventh form of Darkness Eye. The Pandora Demon Abilities that were marked out in striking red words by that freak Wizard were all very complex.

“Darkness Eye, seven forms... It appears that Darkness Eye obtained by Wizard Leo wasn't perfected by Wizard Leo himself as he claimed...”

Merlin quickly guessed that Darkness Eye that Wizard Leo had obtained was truly the genuine, complete Darkness Eye passed down by the Legend of Darkness, Wizard Oflas!