

W. Secret 411

Chapter 411: True and False Clues

“Phew...”

Merlin let out a long sigh. He had not only set up a Runic Magic Circle in this cave but also left the cave, braved the snowstorm, and created Runic Magic Circles at a few other hidden locations.

In this manner, Merlin had placed Runic Magic Circles in Subzero Snowfield. Based on the great power of the Runic Heartprint, Merlin was able to perceive any Runic Magic Circle he had set as long as it was in Subzero Snowfield. In the future, even if he encountered any danger, he could instantly create a Runic Magic Circle and teleport here.

This was an effective method of survival!

After he had set up the Runic Magic Circles, Merlin found that the snowstorm had not ended. Thus, he could only stay in the cave, using this opportunity to review the second volume of the Neverending Book which he had just acquired.

Opening the Neverending Book, he was greeted with Fourth-level to Sixth-level spells. It was a dazzling array of spells which was far more comprehensive than the first volume of the Neverending Book that Merlin had obtained back then.

“Not bad. The Fourth to Sixth-level spells within this second volume of the Neverending Book could be used to populate the database of the Matrix.” With that, Merlin activated the Matrix and began scanning and recording the Fourth- to Sixth-level spells of the Neverending Book into the Matrix. Merlin was very strict about the spells he placed into the database of the Matrix. He would not populate the database with spells which were too simple or even full of flaws.

Only when the various spells used were of a certain quality would the derived spells be more refined and have greater power. Therefore, ensuring the quality of spells within the database was crucial.

Nevertheless, Merlin knew that the true form of the Neverending Book was not like this. Previously, the first volume of the Neverending Book which he obtained had only revealed its true form after the black cat Didimoss had deciphered the runes. Only then did Merlin learn the secret of the Neverending Book.

Thus, in order to learn the secret of the third volume of the Neverending Book, he would have to decipher the runes hidden in the Neverending Book. In the past, Merlin would be helpless when faced with this, having to rely on the black cat Didimoss to decipher the runes in the Neverending Book.

However, now that Merlin had the Runic Heartprint, the mystical Heartprint created by the Great Wizard Fidel with his blood and sweat, he was able to decipher even the most complicated, obscure runes.

“Hum.”

Following that, Merlin’s left hand tapped his forehead, and the Runic Heartprint surfaced indistinctly. As expected, after the Runic Heartprint appeared, Merlin could “view” the hidden, dense runes in the second volume of the Neverending Book.

“So, there’s a Runic Magic Circle after all. Runic Heartprint, decipher!”

Immediately, mysterious runes flew out from the Runic Heartprint and burrowed into the Neverending Book. The runes which were firmly adhered to the Neverending Book flashed slightly, following which they gradually faded under the effect of the Runic Heartprint.

The Neverending Book glowed with a soft light once more, after which its appearance changed greatly. It took on a form that was similar to the first volume of the Neverending Book. The only difference was that this was the second volume, and it held many Fourth-level to Sixth-level spells.

“It’s been deciphered as I thought! This is the true form of the second volume of the Neverending Book.”

Merlin felt a rush of glee and hurriedly focused his gaze on the cover of the Neverending Book. He carefully looked for information regarding the third volume.

Back then, the first volume of the Neverending Book had mentioned that the second volume was at the Death Sea whereas the third volume was in the Rock Cavern.

However, the second volume of the Neverending Book had now appeared in Subzero Snowfield. Merlin could not help but doubt the veracity of the information regarding the other volumes that was presented in the first volume.

On the cover of the second volume of the Neverending Book, there was also information about the third volume.

“The third volume of the Neverending Book is located in the mysterious Black Desert. Any Spell Caster who possesses the second volume of the Neverending Book will be able to detect the third volume in the Black Desert. Once all three volumes of the Neverending Book have been compiled, one will have the chance of retrieving a Maxim I had left behind!”

The cover of the second volume of the Neverending Book contained the words left by the great Wizard who had created the Neverending Book. However, this time, Merlin did not believe these words. Conversely, an odd expression had crossed his face.

The first volume of the Neverending Book mentioned that the third volume was in the Rock Cavern but now the second volume claimed that it was in fact in the mysterious Black Desert.

Merlin had heard of neither the Rock Cavern nor the Black Desert. Still, based on their names alone, he knew that both places would not be a walk in the park. Between them, one of them was surely false or maybe both were.

If Merlin had not obtained the second volume of the Neverending Book, he might have truly believed that the third volume was in the Rock Cavern. If someone had received only the second volume, they might have gone to the Black Desert in search of the third volume.

Nonetheless, the more Merlin thought about it, the more he felt that the Neverending Book was hidden in neither of these places. These two locations were likely false information that the Great Wizard had intentionally left behind back then.

As for the Great Wizard’s purpose in doing so, he could not guess at the moment. It might merely be a cruel prank played by that Wizard or a spontaneous scheme.

Still, no matter what the goal was, Merlin would no longer believe that it was in these two places. Regardless of whether it was the Rock Cavern or the Black Desert, Merlin would not go.

“It’s a shame that there are only false clues in the Neverending Book.”

Merlin shook his head helplessly. He took out the first volume of the Neverending Book, comparing both volumes. Other than the spells, there was nothing different between them.

“Swoosh.”

Suddenly, just as Merlin placed the two volumes of the Neverending Book together, they began to emit a gentle glow which quickly shrouded both volumes.

Merlin’s Mind Power could distinctly feel that the two volumes of the Neverending Book were slowly merging together. This mystical transformation somewhat stupefied Merlin.

“The three volumes of the Neverending Book must surely hold some secrets!”

Merlin thought that the three volumes of the Neverending Book were far too enigmatic. Moreover, the Wizard must have been a Great Legendary Wizard to be able to leave behind a Maxim. It was not surprising that the Neverending Book left behind by a Great Legendary Wizard would have strange features.

The merging process took only a short time. Soon enough, the light of the Neverending Book gradually dissipated, and what was before Merlin’s eyes was a volume that appeared more mysterious, filled with an alarming, terrifying force.

This force was very likely left behind by that Great Legend who created the Neverending Book.

“Since they’ve merged into one volume, what changes are there?”

With a reach of his hand, Merlin held the transformed Neverending Book in his palm. This volume was made by an unknown material which twinkled with a faint golden light. Even the words seemed to contain fantastic magic, making the words unforgettable in just a glance.

“This new volume of the Neverending Book is rather unusual and mysterious. There are First- to Sixth-level spells inside, and the Spell Models are imprinted into one’s memory in just a glance. How wondrous!”

Merlin carefully flipped through the new Neverending Book. The contents within had not changed much and were still First- to Sixth-level spells. It was appropriate for the merging of the first and second volumes.

However, there was a great transformation on the cover.

As Merlin directed his gaze on the cover of the Neverending Book, the words on the cover flew out and formed into words in mid-air.

“O’ fortunate one, you haven’t been to the Death Sea or the Rock Cavern, and likely have not gone to the Black Desert. These places are deathtraps. Once you step into them, not even a Great Wizard would be able to help you.

“Only by possessing the first and second volume of the Neverending Book can one receive the true message. I have placed the third volume of the Neverending Book on the top of Sky-Piercing Peak. Only when you’ve obtained the third volume and merge it forming the Neverending Key, will you be able to access the Maxim I’ve left on Sky-Piercing Peak.”

These words appeared on the cover of the new Neverending Book and were deeply imprinted into Merlin’s mind. Following that, the words disappeared, and there was not a word left on the cover – only a blank space as if everything had been a dream.

However, Merlin knew that it was not a dream. The Spell Caster who had left this message behind was a Great Legendary Wizard named Saitu. No matter if it was the Neverending Book or the Maxim, it was left behind by the Great Legendary Wizard Saitu.

Moreover, the initial places of the Death Sea, the Rock Cavern, and the Black Desert were all dangerous locations. Once one entered these places, one would be in a disastrous situation, unable to escape. This was a trap set by Wizard Saitu.

He did not know what Wizard Saitu’s intention was in devising such a dangerous trap. If Merlin had not obtained the second volume of the Neverending Book, he might have actually gone to the Death Sea in search of the second volume. At that point, he would be in grave danger.

“So, it’s at Sky-Piercing Peak?”

A strange glint emerged in Merlin’s eyes. He believed that no Wizard in the southern Spell Caster world would be unfamiliar with Sky-Piercing Peak because it was located within the territory of the southern Spell Caster world.

Moreover, it was very well-known, being the highest peak in the south. In addition, a rather famous Spell Caster clan had grown in the area surrounding Sky-Piercing Peak, and it was occupied by this clan.

“Since there’s much trouble in the south, I won’t go to Sky-Piercing Peak for now.”

Merlin believed that the third volume of the Neverending Book was ninety percent likely to be at Sky-Piercing Peak. Otherwise, Wizard Saitu would not have gone to such lengths, requiring two volumes of the Neverending Book to be merged before a new clue was provided.

If it was still a false clue, Merlin would admit defeat. A trip to Sky-Piercing Peak was necessary for the sake of a Maxim even if turned out to be fake. It was just that he would not go now.

The entire southern Spell Caster world was in chaos right now. Merlin had escaped all of that, waiting for time to pass before returning.

Moreover, Sky-Piercing Peak was occupied by a Spell Caster clan. The capabilities of this clan were not weak, and there were a good few Seventh-level Spell Casters. Even if Merlin reached Sky-Piercing Peak, he would not be able to acquire the third volume of the Neverending Book so easily.

Therefore, with various reasons considered together, Merlin still decided to stay in Subzero Snowfield for some time.

Chapter 412: The Mysterious Frozen Lake

The snowstorm persisted for a few days before it gradually stopped. The sky outside was finally bathed in a warm stream of sunlight. However, the sun was not fierce in the entire Subzero Snowfield, and even the frost would not melt. Under the illumination of the sunshine, one could clearly see that Subzero Snowfield was piled in a thick blanket of snow.

“It’s time to leave!”

Merlin cast a glance at Wizards Ernie and Watson in the cave. Now that they had recovered most of their strength, they could hurry on their way. It was just that Merlin did not know where to go.

He had only been in Subzero Snowfield for not too long and was not even familiar with the place. Before this, when they had left the Thousand Miles Snow Cave, he had merely flown off without a direction in mind and did not know where he should head toward.

“Ernie, where should we go now?”

Merlin directed this question at Wizard Ernie. Wizard Ernie, despite appearing relatively old, had a lively mind. He was fond of trying to figure out Merlin’s thoughts and was rather similar to Wizard Bammou in terms of personality.

“Erm... Master, if you don’t mind, let’s go to where I stay first.” Ernie spoke carefully. Naturally, he understood what Merlin meant. After the past few days of observation and learning, Ernie and Watson now knew that Merlin was an outsider who came to Subzero Snowfield and was not familiar with the situation in Subzero Snowfield.

Merlin pondered for a moment. “Alright, just as you suggested then. We’ll head to your place first.”

Therefore, this band of three took flight once more, heading toward Wizard Ernie’s residence.

In the sky, the view below was an expanse of whiteness as the ground was completely covered in snow. It was extremely astounding. Merlin had never experienced such a spectacular view.

“Hoo...”

Suddenly, a colossal gust of snowstorm appeared in mid-air, rolling toward Merlin and the other two. Most snowstorms would not be much of a threat to them but this current one appeared extremely fearsome. Even Merlin was stunned to his core.

“Keep away from it, move!”

The Runic Heartprint between Merlin's brows abruptly flickered once more. Merlin quickly set up a simple Runic Magic Circle to block the snowstorm in front.

"Crack."

It was as if the Runic Magic Circle served no purpose as it was completely crushed and swept away by the snowstorm, turning quickly into fragments. Fortunately, Merlin and the rest had evaded in time.

"What a formidable snowstorm!"

Merlin and the rest looked at the snowstorm with lingering trepidation. However, the weather was calm now, so how could there suddenly be this peculiar snowstorm?

Moreover, even though this snowstorm was powerful, its range did not cover a large area. Conversely, it only covered a very small region.

"That's not right. It's not a snowstorm!"

Merlin narrowed his eyes slightly. He sharply perceived that this snowstorm contained an extremely veiled trace of Elemental fluctuations. Such fluctuations would only appear when someone had cast a spell.

"Hoo hoo hoo..."

Before Merlin could find out the source, another wild gust of snowstorm rolled in from the distance. Wizards Ernie and Watson's expressions shifted greatly.

"D*mn it, what's really happening here?"

Wizard Ernie and Wizard Watson could not help but begin cursing. They felt as if after meeting Merlin in the Thousand Miles Snow Cave, they had nothing but bad luck, and now they had encountered such an odd snowstorm.

These snowstorms contained terrifying strength. Even as Seventh-level Spell Casters, they dared not resist it by force. There was a possibility that the snowstorm would tear their Defensive spells apart, crushing them into pieces.

“Come on, let’s go over for a look. There’s something wrong about these snowstorms!”

After the gusts of the snowstorms had disappeared, Merlin immediately flew into the air, his Mind Power unreservedly sweeping in all directions. With this, not even the most concealed things could escape its detection.

“Hmmm, what intense Ice Element. Those seem to be frozen Spell Casters?”

Merlin’s Mind Power suddenly came across a queer area. It was a lake of unparalleled size. However, the lake could no longer be seen for it was frozen under a thick layer of ice crystals.

On the frozen lake, there were many frozen Spell Casters in all sorts of positions and appearances. Their postures were exceedingly amusing as well. Nonetheless, upon closer look, one could see that their current postures were, in fact, a reproduction of how they normally moved.

Still, on this frozen lake, these Spell Casters were frozen in place, dead forever. The ice sculptures left behind merely preserved the postures of their final moments.

There were even shards of ice crystals which had shattered upon falling to the ground. It must be those who tried flying across the lake, not expecting to be frozen, and ended up falling.

“There’s something weird about this lake!”

Merlin’s expression turned solemn. Thereafter, he lightly waved one huge hand, and a flash of thunderbolt appeared on the lake.

“Crack.”

He was not surprised in the slightest that even the thunderbolt was frozen immediately, shattering on the ice as it fell.

Merlin drew in a deep breath, becoming even more apprehensive of this lake. It should be known that although his Thunder-type spell was not merged with Pandora Demon Ability, and he had not constructed a Fourth-level one, its might should not be underestimated. Now, it was frozen in place instantly.

As he considered this, Merlin wanted to investigate the true nature of this lake even more. Thus, his gaze landed on Wizards Ernie and Watson.

Ernie and Watson, upon seeing that Merlin was staring at them, immediately erupted into grievances deep in their hearts. This frozen lake was so terrifying. Who knew whether they could withstand its effects and avoid being turned into an ice sculpture?

However, they could only carry out this perilous task. Why did they have to be Merlin's slaves?

A slave's duty was to fulfill their master's every wish, including acting as cannon fodder.

Nevertheless, Wizards Ernie and Watson had agreed to become Merlin's slaves because they were hoping to survive. Now that they were facing such a dangerous lake, they were very unwilling to take the risk.

Therefore, Wizard Ernie cautiously suggested. "Master, it seems like there's nothing interesting to investigate about this lake. It's far too dangerous. We'd better leave quickly."

"Leave?"

Merlin's icy glare swept across Ernie and Watson, following which his tone became even more chilly, causing both of their hearts to tense up.

A slave possessed a slave's intuition. Wizards Ernie and Wizard Watson, upon receiving Merlin's frosty glare, dared not linger any longer. They hurriedly began to cast their Defensive spells, gnashed their teeth furiously, and flew toward the lake.

Nevertheless, as they reached the lakeside, they did not have the courage to fly in directly. Instead, they summoned a few alchemy puppets from their rings.

These alchemy puppets did not possess the slightest life force, and were only half-complete, and could not even be activated. However, they shared a common point, which was being made of extraordinary material. As a result, they were extremely durable and difficult to destroy, and their sturdiness was capable of withstanding the peak of a Sixth-level spell without being damaged.

With that, Ernie and Watson got ready to let the alchemy puppets to give it a try so that they could be better prepared.

“Go forth.”

They flung the alchemy puppets with all their strength. In an instant, as soon as the alchemy puppets approached the overhead vicinity of the lake, they were immediately frozen and dropped from the sky.

“Crack crack.”

The two alchemy puppets made of incomparably durable material was unable to defend against the freezing of the lake. They dropped from the air and instantly shattered into fragments.

Seeing that even the sturdy alchemy puppets could not withstand the power of this strange lake, Wizards Ernie and Watson turned green in the face. They looked toward Merlin.

However, Merlin still wore the same, cold expression, causing them to fall into supreme despair.

“D*mn it, why am I, Ernie, so unlucky? Never mind that I’ve met a Wizard who was so strong but he caused a such a mess. Although it’s a lowly state to be a slave, there’s still a day where I’ll finally win back my freedom. Why did we have to encounter such a peculiar and dangerous place on our journey?”

Ernie was foul-mouthed and appeared very unwilling. Still, since they were already Merlin’s slaves, they dared not disobey Merlin’s commands, and could only put on a bold front as they slowly walked toward the lake.

“Whoosh.”

By the time they had rushed to the center of the frozen lake, they had each cast their Defensive spells. The frigid cold conditions immediately assailed the surface of their bodies, freezing their Defensive spells in an instant.

Although their spells were not shattered for now, as the ice crystals thickened, they felt an increasing pressure as if their spells would fracture at any second.

Once their Defensive spells were shattered or they had exhausted their Magic Power, they would be not far from death, likely to end up like those ice sculptures on the frozen lake.

Merlin narrowed his eyes slightly. He was sensing the extreme chill of the lake, which only seemed to have absolute dominance over spells below the Seventh-level, freezing them instantly.

However, once it was a Seventh-level spell, the frigid cold conditions of the lake could not do much besides releasing a terrifying chill. This would freeze Wizard Ernie and Wizard Watson to death, and it was completely depleting their Magic Power.

Under the assault of the frigid chill, Wizards Ernie's and Watson's Magic Power was placed under a great strain. In a short moment, they would no longer be able to hold on, and the chill would invade their bodies, turning them into ice sculptures.

"The Seventh-level is the limit! The frigid chill of this frozen lake must be at its limit. Seventh-level spells can defeat it!"

Merlin glanced at Wizard Ernie and Watson who were casting spells in desperation, no longer calculating how much energy was being consumed. There were plenty of benefits in taking both on as slaves. At the very least, when they encountered future dangers, he could send them ahead to bear the brunt.

If they were in a perilous area, he could let them forge ahead. Merlin was able to save himself much trouble by having two slaves with such powerful abilities, and he did not have to take a risk.

Even if they were cannon fodders, Wizards Ernie and Watson were high-grade cannon fodders. They would not die so easily and could likewise bring Merlin plenty of benefits.

It was just like how they came across this mysterious lake this time around. Merlin did not need to risk himself to try it out for Ernie and Watson had already tested out the limit of the frigid chill of the frozen lake.

“Fiery Collapse!”

Since Merlin now knew the limit of the frigid chill of the frozen lake, he no longer hesitated. He raised a hand and pointed abruptly at the frozen lake. Instantly, in the air above the lake which was as spotlessly white as a mirror, dense pale white flames appeared and burned furiously.

“Boom!”

After Merlin had unleashed the flames, the entire frozen lake began to tremble violently as if a fearsome power had been residing in the frozen lake and was now gradually reviving.

Chapter 413: The Ice Goddess!

The frozen lake was melting quickly, and a burst of “cracking” sounds rang out. Merlin immediately withdrew Fiery Collapse. Ernie and Watson retreated rapidly until they were far away from the frozen lake.

“Rumble.”

The frozen lake was still swaying. The surface of the lake which was initially as glossy as a mirror began to split open as deep fissures appeared. A ferocious gust of chilly wind suddenly whistled from within, sweeping out from the cracks and gradually fading after it came out.

“There are stairs?”

Wizard Ernie suddenly pointed at the crack in the middle on the frozen lake. Indeed, a faintly discernible flight of jade stairs could be seen in the crack.

“Master, there’s something strange about this frozen lake. I’ve never heard of this in Subzero Snowfield. Who knows, it might have been left behind from a distant past. Since there are stairs, there must’ve been someone living there. Perhaps it was left behind by a powerful Spell Caster!”

As he spoke, Wizard Watson's eyes twinkled with enthusiasm. If it was left behind by some great Spell Casters, then it was an ancient monument. Although Subzero Snowfield was extremely barren, ancient monuments would occasionally appear. From these ancient monuments, they could obtain alchemy, spells or even precious Pandora Demon Abilities of the legends, greatly boosting the abilities of Spell Casters. This would happen from time to time.

Now that they were looking at such a peculiar frozen lake, with its flight of stairs, naturally, one could not help but think of an ancient monument.

"Both of you, walk ahead. Go in for a look first!"

Merlin seemed to have come to a decision and spoke to Wizards Watson and Ernie.

Wizards Ernie and Watson exchanged a glance in a powerless manner. They were being dispatched as cannon fodder once again, walking into the dangerous unknown of these stairs. No one knew what hazards they would encounter inside.

However, they were now Merlin's slaves. This was what they were supposed to do, and they were aware of this. Therefore, they began to heed Merlin's orders and slowly went down the stairs within the crack.

Merlin followed behind them both, gradually advancing toward the stairs. This flight of stairs was made of jade which looked magnificent, causing them to gasp in amazement!

Jade was enjoyed as an abundant output all over the world. Nonetheless, in terms of time period, there was no doubt that the era that cherished jade the most was the Molta Empire from three thousand and six hundred years ago.

During the era of the Molta Empire, regardless of whether it was the common folk, the aristocrats or great Spell Casters, they all had a great fondness of jade. Therefore, there were traces of jade everywhere.

However, to be as extravagant as to use jade to build stairs was rarely seen. Most Spell Casters would not have been able to accomplish this.

If this ancient monument was truly left behind from the era of the Molta Empire, it must have been an extremely powerful Spell Caster – a Great Wizard at least – who was able to be extravagant enough to use jade to build stairs.

Merlin counted – this flight of stairs consisted of around three hundred and sixty-five blocks of jade. It was a rough allusion to the number of days in a year. This was definitely not a coincidence. After descending the stairs, they found an extended passage. What astonished them was that in the passage, regardless of whether it was the floor tiles or the two walls and ceilings of the passage, everything was paved with jade.

This was basically a world of jade. It was enough to show that the previous master of this place was very fond of jade.

“Master, the end is just up ahead, and there’s only a jade door!”

Wizard Ernie had stopped in his steps. During this period, they had vigilantly observed all their surroundings. No one knew what sort of dangers lay hidden in the ancient monument.

Nonetheless, it looked like they still had not met any dangers, only a jade door. This door was blocking their path, and they could only move ahead by opening the door.

“Break down the jade door by force.”

Merlin instructed Wizards Ernie and Watson. This jade door did not appear very strong, and brute force should be enough to break it open.

Wizard Ernie drew in a deep breath, and intense Elemental fluctuations appeared around his body.

“Whiz.”

An ice spear consolidated from ice crystals appeared in an instant, after which it whistled through the air, flying viciously toward the jade door.

“Rumble.”

There was a deafening crash. Ernie's Seventh-level Ice-type spell had countless permutations and could be unleashed in various forms but with more or less the same power. Still, it was unable to shift the door.

"Master, this jade door is far too solid and durable. I can't get it open!"

Wizard Ernie was somewhat flustered. He was a majestic Seventh-level Spell Caster, yet now he was incapable of opening a jade door.

Merlin had been observing the changes in the door. From the moment Wizard Ernie had cast his spells, mysterious runes had, in fact, emerged on the surface of the jade door.

However, these runes were very obscured, and their color was not that different from jade, which was concealed on its surface. If Merlin had not scrutinized it, not even his Mind Power would detect anything out of the ordinary.

"It must mean something. So, it's runes?"

In the past, Merlin did not understand runes, and would not have been able to decipher even a crude Runic Magic Circle. Nevertheless, with the Runic Heartprint now, no runes could mystify him.

"Swoosh."

The Runic Heartprint between Merlin's brow flickered faintly, and streams of light engulfed Merlin's eyes. This was the power of the Runic Heartprint. As long as it was runes, it could not escape the screening of the Runic Heartprint.

As expected, following Merlin's use of the Runic Heartprint, the Runic Magic Circle on the jade door was discerned clearly by Merlin. This was an extremely mighty and complicated Runic Magic Circle.

If one was using brute force, never mind Seventh-level spells, not even Eight-level spells could break it open.

The only exception was a special Pandora Demon Ability such as Merlin's Darkness Eye and Kleis' Spatial Blade. The fourth form would need to be unleashed or it needed a Ninth-level Spell Caster to forcibly break the door down.

Nonetheless, it was naturally not that troublesome for Merlin. He did not need to force it open because it was a Runic Magic Circle on the jade door. Merlin could use a corresponding Runic Magic Circle to break it open in a precise manner.

"Whoosh."

A beam of light flew from Merlin's forehead. Merlin pressed down firmly with his left hand between his brows. The Runic Heartprint was throbbing faintly, and mysterious runes accompanied the light.

These mysterious runes rapidly flew to the surface of the door. Following that, the jade door quaked slightly. Merlin, using the Runic Heartprint, could clearly perceive that the runes concealed within the door were gradually dismantled.

As soon as the strength of the Runic Magic Circle had vanished completely, the jade door began to slowly swing open.

The jade door gradually opened to reveal a hall which seemed to come from a dream world. This great hall was extremely spacious, and the floor was paved with the most exquisite emerald jade. There were also a few massive pillars that were likewise carved from jade. These were made entirely from jade and were not merely inlaid with jade on the surface.

This was a genuine world of jade. It was the first time Merlin had witnessed such an opulent place!

"Tss."

As soon as they entered the great hall where everyone was stunned to their core, they could not hold back a cold shiver. This was uncommon indeed. It should be known that they had cast their Defensive spells. What sort of extreme chill was able to make them incomparably cold in these circumstances?

Their gazes roved around in all directions. In the front of the hall, they saw a wide jade bed, and on this bed lay a bare, naked woman.

This woman who was completely bare and naked was at the peak of beauty. Her face was serene, and her eyes were shut, just like a sleeping beauty. It was the first time Merlin had seen such delicate features.

Regardless of whether it was Avril or Charise, there were more or less a few flaws, spoiling their aesthetic looks. Still, this was what they possessed as real humans, and was extremely normal.

However, the naked woman lying on the bed before his eyes was perfect from head to toe, without the slightest flaw. It was impossible for a person who was so flawless to exist.

Moreover, although the woman's body was completely bare, it aroused neither lust nor longing. Conversely, there was a sense of holy purity as if one should prostrate oneself in worship.

“The Ice Goddess!”

Suddenly, a fine light shone in Wizard Ernie's eyes, and he seemed to tremble all over.

“Eh? Wizard Ernie, do you recognize this woman?” Merlin looked at Wizard Ernie in suspicion. This aged Wizard's personality was similar to Bammou's but Wizard Ernie was bolder. In order to survive, he had now thoroughly cast aside the pride of being a Seventh-level Spell Caster, obeying Merlin's every word.

Obviously moved, Wizard Ernie replied, “Exactly, Master, I know this woman. In other words, I've seen her statue before. Master must know that before the era of the Molta Empire, besides Spell Casters, there were also powerful gods. These gods were the sole, true rulers of heaven and earth. Normies and Spell Casters shared a similar position, being controlled by the gods.

“However, following the subsequent founding of the Molta Empire, Great Wizards showed up one after another among Spell Casters. Spell Casters entered their most glorious age, and there were even Legendary Wizards who were able to kill gods! Especially those Honored Legends – they were even more powerful and scary, leading Great Wizards to wipe out and suppress countless gods, then banishing many of them. In the end, they've won the glory of Spell Casters!

“As for the appearance of this woman, it's the same as one of the many gods I've seen before in an ancient book. She's called the Ice Goddess, who controls ice and frost, and she's in Thule! We're in Subzero Snowfield – is that not in Thule?”

Wizard Ernie seemed rather worked up. He had never thought that he would be able to see one of the gods who had been killed, suppressed, or sent into exile by Great Wizards in the legends!

Gods and Spell Casters were completely different. If a god was said to be innately powerful, possessing great strengths from birth, then their chances of growing stronger in the future were far too slim. The only way for these countless gods to advance was to absorb the faith of living creatures. From there, they received and relied upon the power of faith. These gods were truly immortal, and could gradually increase their strength over a thousand years, ten thousand or even longer.

However, Spell Casters were different. A genius Spell Caster could become a Great Wizard in over a decade, and there were even those who could form a Maxim and become a Great Legend in a mere twenty years!

Gods and Legends were more or less the same. The gods' greatest ability was their absolute control over Elements. This was an innate gift, so when faced with Spell Casters below the level of Legend, the gods had an overwhelming advantage.

However, once a Spell Caster had become a Legend and consolidated their own Maxim, they gained the ability to contend against a god. A Maxim controlled the Elements as well, and its command of Elements was equally matched to a god's.

The most formidable Legendary Wizards' mastery over a particular Element was even more terrifying than these natural gods', and they were able to easily kill most gods. Legendary Wizards like these were named Honored Legends!

Back when Merlin had been in the Ship of Nikola and obtained the Flame Maxim, only then did he gain a simple understanding of the relationship between gods and Spell Casters. However, even then, he had not seen a god with his own eyes.

Now, the legendary god – the Ice Goddess – was silently lying on the jade bed in a serene and tranquil manner!

Chapter 414: The Legend of Ice

The Ice Goddess laid so quietly on the jade bed as if she was in a peaceful sleep. Wizard Ernie, Wizard Watson, and Merlin were even holding their breaths but none of them dared to take a step forward.

Besides this mysterious Ice Goddess, there was an unseen pressure stemming from the mass of light as pure white as ice crystals, above the Ice Goddess.

The light emitted an intangible force as well as an incomparable chill. Boundless Ice Element seemed to be suppressed under this ball of light.

The pressure coming from the ball of light filled the entire sumptuous hall to the point where even the Ice Goddess's bare and naked body seemed to pale in comparison before this ball of light.

“What is this really?”

Wizard Ernie did not know what this ball of light was but since it appeared before the Ice Goddess, it was obviously closely linked to the Ice Goddess.

It was just that Wizard Ernie and Wizard Watson did not know what that connection really was. Conversely, it was Merlin whose eyes suddenly sharpened as a realization swelled up and stormed his thoughts.

Maxim, it was a Maxim! Only Legendary Wizards could create a Maxim. As Merlin possessed a Flame Maxim in his Awareness, he could be said to be familiar with Maxims.

The ball of light before their eyes was giving off a force that was even more fearsome than the Flame Maxim had been. It must be a very powerful Maxim. Furthermore, its purpose was clear too, which was to suppress this bare and naked Ice Goddess.

In the area where the Ice Goddess dwelled, a part of the strength of the Maxim had in fact completely isolated her from the external world, preventing contact from anyone. That mysterious ball of Maxim had confined the Ice Goddess here.

A Legend who could suppress a god must be very formidable. The Legend Nikola could only compare to the gods. It was difficult for natural gods to increase their strength, and they were often incapable of progressing one step even in a billion years. However, if they enjoyed the faith of many living beings and gathered the power of faith, their divinity was consolidated.

The stronger their divinity, the more they were immortal. A god with divinity would never die. This was the true reason they were so difficult to deal with. Therefore, when the Spell Casters seized the chance to rise, they had merely banished most of the gods instead of killing them thoroughly. This was because natural gods, especially those who possessed divinity, was near impossible to kill.

The Ice Goddess before them must also be a god with divinity. Otherwise, that Great Legendary Wizard would not have confined her here.

Naturally, Merlin was not looking at the Ice Goddess but the mysterious Maxim. He did not think that he would stumble across a Maxim by chance, and one which was far stronger than the Maxim the Legend Nikola had left behind.

Merlin had an intense desire for Maxims now. With a Maxim, even if he was not able to control it, it would still supply the Matrix with energy, following which Merlin could derive new Fourth-level and even Fifth-level spells.

However, as he looked at the white expanse of the Maxim, and the Ice Goddess suppressed beneath it, his face shifted uncertainly for he felt a vague sense of danger in his gut.

“Watson!”

Merlin flashed his gaze at Wizard Watson.

Wizard Watson slightly turned blank, following which his face took on a pained expression. Merlin had asked for him, surely for something unpleasant. Nevertheless, he was now Merlin’s slave and was completely powerless. He could only respectfully arrive at Merlin’s side.

“Master, what are your orders?”

“Go and take a look in front of the Ice Goddess, and see what danger is there?”

Merlin bluntly ordered Wizard Watson to test out for any danger. However, this blatant use of Wizard Watson as a cannon fodder resulted in the change on Wizard Watson’s expression where it darkened slightly.

Wizard Ernie was somewhat rejoicing. It was a good thing he was usually more quick-witted and had always carried out Merlin's orders in a thorough manner. Thus, now that they had encountered such danger, he dodged a bullet at last, and it was Wizard Watson who was sent ahead to scout.

Although Wizard Watson was reluctant, he could do nothing else. He could not disobey Merlin's order for Merlin, who had the slave contract in his grasp, was in control of his everything!

"Whoosh."

Watson clenched his jaw and directly transformed into a light wind. Instantly, he dashed toward the Ice Goddess. The wind whistled and blustered, appearing rather mighty.

If there were any Runic Magic Circles or anything of that sort, it would have been triggered. However, even after this enormous gale, there did not seem to be any Runic Magic Circle.

Wizard Watson felt a rush of gleeful relief. It looked like there was no danger, so he heaved a sigh of relief and prepared to stop. Just then, a figure gradually projected from the white ball of light hovering over the Ice Goddess.

This figure was dressed in a long white Wizard robe, and he looked to be full of a noble presence. The instant he appeared, the entire hall seemed to dim in comparison.

Wizard Watson was slightly shocked and hurriedly retreated, staring at the projection in alarm.

At this point, the projection began to speak slowly, "I wonder which Wizard had stumbled across the Sealed Site? This is the forbidden area where I had spent immense effort, through great difficulty, to suppress the Ice Goddess! The Ice Goddess has plenty of believers in Thule, and through the constant accumulation of hundreds and thousands of years, her divinity was unparalleled in strength. There was no way to kill her completely. Thus, I could only create a Maxim and confine her here forever. In the future, when no one believes in her anymore, her divinity will fade day by day before finally vanishing completely, and she would die naturally.

"The Ice Goddess is extremely powerful, so leave quickly!"

As soon as the projection finished speaking, it quickly dissipated as if it had never emerged.

Only Wizard Ernie and Wizard Watson were left, staring dumbly at the ball of light in mid-air. They knew nothing about Legendary Wizards, and were not even clear about what a Maxim was. After all, after Spell Casters had enjoyed their most glorious era, they had quickly deteriorated, and many inheritances were buried in the long river of time.

“Leave?”

A cold smirk tugged at the corner of Merlin’s mouth. He had come across a Maxim after much difficulty. How could he possibly let it go so easily? As for the powerful Ice Goddess, she would be terrifying if she awakened. However, it had been a few thousand years, and even Thule had been turned into the current Subzero Snowfield. There were no Normies at all, so how could there be people who believed in the Ice Goddess?

After such a long period without followers, the Ice Goddess’ divinity had vanished long ago. The current Ice Goddess did not have a single ounce of life force in her. Evidently, this was simply a corpse, and the god, who had once caused endless headaches to a Great Legend, was long dead.

Therefore, even if Merlin seized the Maxim, the Ice Goddess would not revive.

When Merlin had obtained the Legend Nikola’s Maxim, he had received some memories as well. Therefore, he had a basic understanding of natural gods and Legendary Wizards.

Although Merlin was not worried about the revival of the Ice Goddess, taking the Maxim was another problem. Back then, the Flame Maxim had been purposefully left behind by the Legend Nikola to be given to the Spell Caster who could clear the obstacles.

Thus, Merlin was able to smoothly absorb the Flame Maxim. It was not because Merlin was that special, just that the Legend Nikola had considered the matter when he left the Maxim.

However, this Maxim was different. It was used purely to suppress the Ice Goddess and was full of a frantic, powerful force. It would be exceedingly difficult for Merlin to absorb this.

Moreover, this Maxim was many times stronger than the Flame Maxim left behind by the Legend Nikola. Merlin had no absolute assurance of the outcome.

Nevertheless, no matter what, Merlin must give it a shot. After all, he had a daring vision. If he wanted to continue deriving new Fourth-level, Fifth-level, and even Sixth-level spells, he could not do without powerful Maxims to supply the Matrix with energy.

However, Maxims were incomparably precious. Now that he had come so far, it was hard to say if he would find another Maxim in the future.

“Both of you, stand guard outside the door, and don’t let anyone in!”

Merlin said to Ernie and Watson in an icy tone.

Ernie and Watson exchanged a doubtful glance but they did not dare disobey an order from Merlin. Even though they were now curious about the Ice Goddess and the Maxim, they had to leave the hall and retreat to the doorway, helping Merlin to guard the door.

“Maxim!”

Merlin drew in a deep breath and fixed his determined eyes upon the mysterious Maxim hovering above the Ice Goddess. Following which, in one big stride, he came before the Maxim.

By this point, he was able to clearly see the features of the Ice Goddess. She was perfect indeed without any flaw. It was just that ordinary humans could never be perfect, and even the powerful Legendary Wizards were not perfect.

Only natural gods could look so perfect because they were the darlings of heaven and earth. Therefore, they could become gods, and were perfect from birth, far above the rest. Still, it was not necessarily a good thing. For one, it was far too challenging for them to level up to the extent that they were finally surpassed by Spell Casters on all fronts.

Merlin did not pay any more attention to the Ice Goddess suppressed on the jade bed but reached out a big hand and immediately grasped that enigmatic Maxim.

“Crack.”

As he was holding the Maxim, Merlin learned that this was an Ice Maxim. Not all Legendary Wizards would have been able to use an Ice Maxim to suppress the Ice Goddess who had complete control over Ice Element.

To be able to completely transcend a natural god in terms of controlling an Element – only Great Honored Legends could do so! The Ice Maxim before him could be used to suppress the Ice Goddess, which meant that the master of the Maxim was the Great Legend of Ice!

“So, it’s a Maxim left behind by the Great Legend of Ice!”

Merlin was blown away. Honored Legends were extremely powerful. If most Legends were able to contend against gods, then Honored Legends were totally able to vanquish and suppress natural gods.

In the Spell Casters’ most glorious era – the Legend of Darkness, the Legend of Fire, the Legend of Ice, and so on – were among the greatest Spell Casters, leading countless formidable Wizards to banish numerous gods. In this manner, the Spell Casters’ most glorious era was achieved!

However, Merlin did not think too much of it in the present. The moment he grabbed the Ice Maxim, his entire body seemed to become frozen. It was a feeling that was countless times more terrifying than any attacks from Ice-type spells he had experienced in the past.

Merlin could even sense that his thoughts were freezing up in that instant!

Chapter 415: Seizing the Maxim

The power of the Ice Maxim exceeded Merlin’s expectations. The very moment his hand wrapped around the Ice Maxim, everything seemed to come to a complete stop.

If he was an ordinary person, it would be futile to even attempt to seize the Maxim as it would be a suicide mission. Even without anyone’s control, the Maxim contained insurmountable power. The fact that this Maxim was strong enough to suppress the Ice Goddess for thousands of years by itself, was a testament to its power.

Moreover, an Honored Legend’s Maxim was not the same as ordinary Maxims. In order for a Spell Caster to be known as an Honored Legend, he must first be able to produce an ultimate Maxim, namely the strongest Maxim of one of the elements!

Only after producing an ultimate Maxim, the Spell Caster was worthy to become an Honored Legend. This also meant that their ability to control the particular element had surpassed the gods.

This Ice Maxim was one of those ultimate Maxims. When Merlin took the risk to seize the Maxim, he was immediately attacked by it. His entire body became frozen, and all the power of the Maxim shifted to suppress Merlin.

The Ice Goddess' body, on the other hand, without the suppression of the Ice Maxim, swiftly decomposed and eventually turned into dust scattered across the jade bed.

Just as Merlin had predicted, the Ice Goddess had long since lost her divinity, and was nothing but an ice-cold corpse that had died a long time ago.

Once the Ice Maxim ceased its suppression, the corpse began to decompose and turned into dust.

Merlin did not pay any attention to the disappearance of the Ice Goddess as he was in a rough spot himself. He had fallen into a grave situation. The power of the Ice Maxim was too overwhelming, so all his strength and abilities were rendered useless in an instant.

“Hum hum.”

Finally, the Flame Maxim inside Merlin's body flickered to life. Sensing the suppression of the Ice Maxim, the Flame Maxim leapt up with urgency.

A blazing heat spread rapidly all over Merlin's body. Two auras – one hot and one cold – began to struggle for dominance inside his body.

Merlin regained his consciousness but his heart was filled with fear. Losing his consciousness for a split second earlier was like a nightmare. He knew that if the Flame Maxim had not been there, he would have been suppressed by the Ice Maxim forever.

This time, it had been too risky for him to rush into seizing the Ice Maxim! It was a completely different experience from receiving the Flame Maxim. Although the Fire Maxim was also uncontrollable by Merlin, it was intended by the Legend Nikola as a reward for any Spell Caster

who had successfully defeated the challenge. Therefore, despite Merlin being unable to control the Flame Maxim, it still would not cause him any harm.

On the contrary, the Ice Maxim was originally intended to suppress the Ice Goddess hence, its strongest power was suppression. Regardless of what it encountered, it would suppress it to the best of its ability.

Right now, the Ice Maxim was doing exactly that, which was using all its power to suppress the Flame Maxim. Once the Flame Maxim was completely suppressed, Merlin would be suppressed as well.

An Honored Legend's ultimate Maxim naturally had extraordinary powers that far outstripped the Flame Maxim's. Even right now, Merlin could feel that the Ice Maxim had occupied most of his body in addition to penetrating his Awareness and "suppressing" the Flame Maxim.

The Flame Maxim too, was in an unstable state as if it would disappear any time soon.

Once Merlin regained consciousness, he realized the danger he was in. Despite the fear in his heart, he held no regrets. He already had a plan in his mind so he grunted. "Matrix, derive Fourth-level Thunder-type spells!"

This was Merlin's plan all along. As long as he could introduce the Ice Maxim into his Awareness, he could activate the Matrix. After some strange transformation, the Matrix appeared to be able to absorb the power of Maxims to derive new spells.

Merlin's intention of seizing the Ice Maxim was not to control it. A powerful Maxim like this, if it was not specifically produced with the intention to be absorbed by another, even a Great Wizard would not be able to control it.

Thus, Merlin did not even consider controlling the Ice Maxim. All he wanted was to provide raw power for the Matrix to derive spells. The Flame Maxim had almost been exhausted and Merlin did not want to consume it anymore, so when he encountered the Ice Maxim, it was an opportunity he simply could not miss.

Nevertheless, whether or not this plan of Merlin's would be successful was contingent on the ability of the Matrix to absorb the power of the Ice Maxim to derive new spells.

“Beep. Derivation successful. A total of two hundred and eighty-six Fourth-level Thunder-type spells have been derived!”

Upon hearing the beep from the Matrix, Merlin was ecstatic. This meant that his plan had worked, and the Matrix was able to absorb the power of the Ice Maxim to derive new spells.

Merlin carefully inspected the Ice Maxim and sure enough, it had diminished slightly though the difference was not very noticeable. After all, the Ice Maxim was far more powerful than the Flame Maxim.

However, this was just the beginning. The Ice Maxim was still very powerful, so Merlin would need to consume larger amounts of its power.

“Matrix, derive new Fourth-level Ice-type spells!”

This was already the last of Merlin’s Fourth-level spells. Once he had derived all the spells, then he only had to wait until his Mind Power achieved the Sixth-level, construct the last two Fourth-level spells, and voila, he would become a Fourth-level Wizard!

The Ice Maxim diminished a little more but still, it was not noticeable. Merlin took a deep breath. He had to quickly exhaust the Ice Maxim in one swoop. Otherwise, it would remain in his Awareness and could not be controlled. It was a huge ticking time-bomb!

“Matrix, derive Fifth-level Darkness-type spells!”

“Matrix, derive Fifth-level Fire-type spells!”

...

Merlin activated the Matrix and began to derive Fifth-level spells one after another. The power required to derive Fifth-level spells, of course, exceeded the power required to derive Fourth-level spells. Therefore, with every successful derivation of Fifth-level spells, the size of the Ice Maxim diminished at a speed visible even to a naked eye.

“Thud.”

Finally, after deriving four types of Fifth-level spells namely Darkness-type, Fire-type, Earth-type, and Wind-type spells, Merlin stopped the Matrix.

The Ice Maxim had diminished from the size of a fist to the size of a fingernail. At this stage, the Flame Maxim was also barely able to balance out the power of the Ice Maxim.

Additionally, with the intervention of Merlin's Mind Power, the Flame Maxim also managed to suppress the now-diminished Ice Maxim.

Merlin did not fully exhaust the Ice Maxim. After all, it was still a Maxim. Moreover, it a Maxim which belonged to the Great Legend of Ice. Merlin was sure that it possessed some unique characteristics and would be of great help for his Ice-type spells.

Of course, the most important reason was because Merlin wanted to obtain the memory fragments from the Ice Maxim. Every Maxim carried some memory fragments from its Spell Caster.

The Flame Maxim from the Legend Nikola also carried some memories with it. The greater the size of the Maxims, the more complete the memory would be. Otherwise, they would just be disjointed memory fragments.

However, in Merlin's case, he merely wanted to understand some of these memories, so even the memory fragments were sufficient.

Thus, Merlin quickly extended his Mind Power into the Ice Maxim.

“Boom.”

There was tremendous aura that gave people a shudder. In the memory, Merlin “saw” an almost perfect woman standing in the midst of a snowstorm, like the holiest of all goddesses. It was none other than the Ice Goddess.

Around the Ice Goddess, there seemed to be many other gods surrounding her. They protected the Ice Goddess in the middle as she was the most powerful god in Thule and also kept a large group of gods under her command.

Whereas in front of the Ice Goddess, stood a tight pack of ordinary-looking Spell Casters. These were Great Wizards, and they stood so tightly packed that even at a single glance, there were more than a hundred of them gathered together.

Merlin felt extremely shaken to the core. If the number of Great Wizards alone were already more than a hundred, he could not imagine how impressive the Spell Casters were during the golden age of Spell Casters. This was just the tip of the iceberg. It was not surprising that the Spell Casters managed to exile even the most powerful gods.

This scene was obviously from the fateful day three thousand and six hundred years ago when the Spell Casters and the gods went to war with each other. Under the leadership of the Great Legendary Wizard, the Spell Casters had fought against countless gods.

In the end, they managed to kill, suppress, and exile most of the gods, subsequently securing the respectable leadership position for the Spell Casters.

The Ice Goddess, too, must have been suppressed by the Legend of Ice for this reason until thousands of years had passed and her divinity diminished away, then the Ice Goddess was truly dead.

The scene changed, and a gigantic palm appeared in the sky. This gigantic palm descended from the sky like a country. Inside, infinite Ice Elements transformed into several huge dragons and swallowed all the gods.

Even the Ice Goddess was unable to control the Ice Elements from this country because the ultimate Maxim was controlled by the Legend of Ice!

Although the Ice Goddess was powerful, her control over the Ice Elements was far from the Legend of Ice, who possessed the power of its ultimate Maxim. Therefore, once the Legend of Ice attacked, she could not resist and was subsequently suppressed.

However, due to the continuous worship from her numerous believers in Thule over thousands of years, the level of divinity attained by the Ice Goddess was so incomparably powerful that it was impossible for the Great Legend of Ice to kill her. All he could do was produce an ultimate Maxim to suppress her for an indefinitely long period of time to rid her of the divinity.

These memory fragments were from the Ice Maxim the size of a fingernail, so the memories were extremely scattered and disjointed. It was Merlin who organized them and arrived at the conclusion.

Nevertheless, Merlin's focus was not on the war between the Spell Casters and the gods because it was already a common mention in most ancient books where they contained information of Great Legendary Wizards who led the Spell Casters to exile the gods.

Merlin was more interested about the tiny memory fragment in the Ice Maxim that described the powerful tactics used by the Legend of Ice to suppress the Ice Goddess. Other than the power of the ultimate Maxim, there was a Glacier Country that descended from the sky and enveloped all the gods!

“Glacier Country, a special Pandora Demon Ability!”

Merlin mumbled softly, his eyes sparkling with excitement. Glacier Country was like Darkness Eye where both of them were special Pandora Demon Abilities. Since Glacial Country was invented by the Legend of Ice, its memory was deeply weaved into every strand of his Maxim.

Therefore, even a single strand of the Ice Maxim contained a complete memory of Glacial Country. Merlin had braved a huge risk to seize the Ice Maxim but now he was about to reap its benefits. He quickly immersed himself into the memory of Glacier Country and investigated the cultivation methods of this special Pandora Demon Ability.

Chapter 416: The Frost Lord I

“Seven forms!”

Merlin swiftly immersed himself in the cultivation methods of Glacier Country. The first message he deciphered was that Glacier Country had a total of seven forms. This was considered very powerful among special Pandora Demon Abilities.

Similar to Kleis' Spatial Blade and Wizard Leo's Darkness Eye, these were all special Pandora Demon Abilities with seven forms, so they were considered highly powerful. Naturally, the special Pandora Demon Ability Glacial Country invented by the Great Legend of Ice also had seven forms and was just as powerful as Darkness Eye and Spatial Blade.

Nevertheless, in order to complement its powerful abilities, the cultivation method of Glacier Country was also extraordinarily challenging. Furthermore, Merlin had never cultivated any special Pandora Demon Abilities. Even Darkness Eye was passed down to him by Wizard Leo, so he had no inkling of how challenging it would be to cultivate a special Pandora Demon Ability.

First and foremost, Glacier Country required Ice-type spells – that much was certain. Whether it was Darkness Eye or Spatial Blade, even if they did not require specific spells, the ability to construct spells was a must.

As a Six-Elemental Spell Caster, Merlin of course also constructed Ice-level spells but this was merely the most basic prerequisite for cultivating Glacier Country. There was an even more onerous requirement, which was a physical transformation.

This was the most important requirement of all because once Glacier Country descended, it would be nothing short of a freezing arctic, and the conditions would be frigid. If a Spell Caster's body was unable to withstand such frigid conditions, it would be impossible to wield Glacier Country.

Physical transformation was the most arduous challenge for Spell Casters because their bodies were usually their weakest trait.

Seeing that cultivating Glacier Country required physical transformation, Merlin thought about Wizard Leo. He wondered back when Wizard Leo cultivated Darkness Eye, was it the need for physical transformation that made him dig out his eyes?

What about Kleis? Did he also undergo some special physical transformation in order to cultivate Spatial Blade? Otherwise, the act of slipping through space and slashing space with his bare hands were definitely not feats achievable by the weak physiques of Spell Casters.

The more Merlin dwelled on the question, the more he became certain of his inference. Every Spell Caster who cultivated a special Pandora Demon Ability had to undergo a physical transformation or else it was impossible to cultivate a special Pandora Demon Ability.

Neither constructing spells nor cultivating ordinary fusion Pandora Demon Abilities imposed any physical requirement on the body. On the other hand, cultivating a special Pandora Demon Ability demanded great physical requirements from the body. The only reason Merlin managed to wield Darkness Eye so easily was owed to the fact that Wizard Leo had passed it to him directly.

If that was not the case, it was difficult to determine whether Merlin might have been able to cultivate Darkness Eye.

The foremost requirement of Glacier Country was a physical transformation, which involved immersing the body in frigid cold conditions so that it would be able to withstand the invasion of Ice Elements.

Moreover, the colder the environment that was being immersed, the more effective it would be toward cultivating Glacier Country. Merlin's ring did, in fact, contain a thousand years' ice bone marrow which he kept for the purpose of cultivating the second form of Glacial Finger. Since he already gave up on Glacial Finger, he no longer had any use for this thousand years' ice bone marrow.

However, the amount of this thousand years' ice bone marrow was simply too little so it would not suffice for Merlin to undergo a physical transformation.

In fact, cultivating a special Pandora Demon Ability was incredibly difficult, and the success rate was only one out of ten attempts. The first challenge, namely the physical transformation, was enough to fail countless Spell Casters. This was because only a very small handful of Spell Casters would be able to persevere through the physical transformation.

Darkness Eye, for example, perhaps did not require such drastic physical transformation but once cultivated, the Spell Caster would need to be constantly vigilant for its backlash. On the other hand, Glacier Country did not contain a large amount of backlash but imposed stringent physical requirements. Only after the physical transformation was successfully completed, the danger of cultivating Glacier Country would be reduced.

However, the transformation process would be akin to hanging a millstone against one's neck. Due to the inherently weak bodies of average Spell Casters, without the protection of spells, even the slightest chill might not be bearable for their bodies.

However, Merlin was not just an ordinary Spell Caster. He had practiced the mysterious postures of the relief structures, so his physical condition was very strong. Hence, he was relatively confident about attempting the physical transformation.

Thinking along these lines, Merlin withdrew himself from the memory fragments of the Ice Maxim and looked around. He was still in the magnificent great hall built from jade.

The only difference was that the naked body of the Ice Goddess on the huge jade bed had disappeared. This was because when Merlin seized the Ice Maxim, her corpse had decomposed and turned into dust, and was scattered by the wind.

On the jade bed, Merlin only saw an exquisite white gold pendant which was previously worn by the Ice Goddess on her chest. Initially, he thought that it was just an ordinary ornament but the Ice Goddess' body as well as all the other items had turned into dust and disappeared except for this pendant, which was still intact without blemish.

This proved that the white gold pendant was extraordinary!

Merlin stretched out his hand and grabbed the white gold pendant. The moment the pendant touched his hand, Merlin felt a cold aura gradually permeate into his body, and concentrated Ice Elements immediately gathered around the pendant.

"Hmm. Besides speeding up the formation of Ice Elements, it also gradually improves the body's condition to allow it to bond better with Ice Elements!"

Merlin's heart was filled with delight. This pendant was perfect for his current situation. In order to cultivate Glacier Country, he first had to undergo a physical transformation so that his body could endure frigid cold conditions.

Right now, this white gold pendant would help him slowly improve his physical form as well as increase his affinity to Ice Elements. While these features might not have any immediate benefits, over a long period of time, they would be extremely helpful for him to train his body to withstand frigid conditions in the future.

This pendant was called the Goddess' Blessing, and was originally made by the Ice Goddess to be given to her believers. After she was suppressed by the Legend of Ice, this pendant was all that was left.

Merlin hung the Goddess' Blessing on his neck and took a deep breath, then exited the magnificent great hall.

Outside the great hall, Wizards Ernie and Watson were waiting anxiously, eager to see what was happening inside. Neither the Ice Goddess nor the mysterious ball of light was a sight that they had ever witnessed with their eyes.

Nevertheless, they were Merlin's slaves, so they did not dare disobey his orders. They could only hold back their curiosity and stand guard outside the great hall.

“Master!”

Upon seeing Merlin, their spirits rose.

“Let’s go, this place is going to collapse soon.”

Merlin did not even turn back as he headed straight for the exit, leaving a stunned Watson and Ernie staring at his back.

“Going to collapse?”

They did not believe that this mysterious place was about to collapse but just as Merlin’s words fell, the entire passage began to shake violently. The magnificent great hall rapidly collapsed, and large chunks of rocks were about to fall on them.

Wizards Ernie and Watson were astounded. It looked like Merlin’s words were not to be taken lightly. This place was indeed about to collapse soon, so they hurriedly followed him.

“Rumble rumble.”

When Merlin, Ernie, and Watson walked out of the mysterious underground passage and returned to the frozen lake, the entire lake began to thaw.

Thick layers of ice began to rapidly break apart and melted into a large river. Previously, the river water had been frozen solid and, thus, was not flowing. At this moment, following the massive cracks in the ice layers, the frost began to melt and rapidly converged into a strong gush of water, running downstream, forming a real, flowing river.

Merlin had already anticipated this transformation. When the Legend of Ice used the Ice Maxim to suppress the Ice Goddess at the bottom of the lake, her natural affinity toward the Ice Elements as well as the powerful Ice Maxim attracted Ice Elements to the lake. Gradually, the lake surface froze and turned into the mysterious frozen lake.

Moreover, following the passage of time, the Ice Maxim at the bottom of the lake might have leaked some of its powers, therefore causing all kinds of strange and bizarre occurrences around the lake.

Now that Merlin had seized the Ice Maxim, and the Ice Goddess was irrevocably dead, the mysterious frozen lake would naturally cease to exist. Instead, in its place, was just a plain, ordinary river.

Seeing the transformation of the mysterious frozen lake take place in the blink of an eye, Wizard Ernie and Wizard Watson exchanged a look. They knew that Merlin must have done something inside the great hall to trigger this transformation.

Nonetheless, despite their envy, they did not dare to conceive any ill-intention toward Merlin. As his slaves, their lives were completely in Merlin's grasp.

"Master, are we going to continue the journey?"

Ernie asked cautiously. Previously, they were heading toward Ernie's residence but had come across this mysterious frozen lake on the way there. As a result, Merlin obtained an unexpected find.

Merlin did not answer immediately. Instead, he asked Ernie and Watson, "In Subzero Snowfield, is there some item or place that can improve a Spell Caster's physique in order to be able to withstand the invasion of frigid blasts?"

"Improve physique? Withstand the cold invasion?"

Wizard Ernie and Wizard Watson bobbed their head in unison. "There's only one place with that effect. It's the Frost Pond belonging to the Frost Lord!"

"The Frost Lord?"

Merlin's eyes frowned slightly. This moniker was quite unique, and it was the first time he heard of it. The moniker also did not sound like it belonged to a Spell Caster.

"Who's the Frost Lord? What's the Frost Pond?"

Following Merlin's inquiries, Watson and Ernie explained in detail.

The Frost Lord was indeed not a Spell Caster but had evolved from a snow sprite with thousands of years of experience. Its abilities were unfathomable. Some said it was on par with a Seventh-level Spell Caster while others said it was comparable to an Eighth- or Ninth-level Spell Caster.

Regardless, the Frost Lord was extremely mysterious and powerful. Although most Spell Casters knew that the Frost Lord was only a snow sprite, none of them dared to offend the Frost Lord.

Therefore, the Frost Lord designated an area where various types of snow sprites could inhabit freely. Some Spell Casters who were favored by the Frost Lord were also able to enter this strange area.

As for the Frost Pond, it was built by the Frost Lord over a long period of time. According to rumors, the Frost Pond could be used to nurture some of the snow sprites. Additionally, Spell Casters who were favored upon by the Frost Lord could also enter the Frost Pond. Once baptized, it would instantly improve one's physique, and increase one's affinity with Ice Elements to beyond imaginable levels.

As a result, the power level of Ice-type spells would increase many folds.

"The Frost Pond actually has such a unique effect. Very well, I'm going to visit the Frost Lord!"

Once Merlin learned the information about the Frost Lord, he could not wait to get going. If the Frost Pond truly had that rumored effect, then he had a very high chance of cultivating Glacier Country!

Naturally, Merlin did not want to miss this opportunity. Therefore, leading two thoroughly confused slaves Ernie and Watson, he flew swiftly toward the Frost Lord's designated area.

Chapter 417: The Frost Lord II

A heavy snowfall had just lifted and the sky turned azure blue. From the clear skies, warm sunlight shone on the entire Subzero Snowfield.

Nestled in the icy depths of the snow-capped mountains, stood a majestic palace complex. At this moment, several snow sprites were flying toward one of the palaces.

From a distance, a few Spell Casters gazed wistfully at the scene. “There’re so many snow sprites. Tsk tsk. Besides here, where else can you see such a spectacular view?”

“Yeah. If these snow sprites were encountered elsewhere, they would be in great danger. In this place, however, the Frost Lord reigns supreme. Especially here, the rank of snow sprites is second to none. Who would dare challenge them?”

“Today is probably the day the Lord Master opens the Frost Pond, so these snow sprites are rushing to accept the Frost Lord’s test to get an opportunity to be baptized in the Frost Pond.”

There was a fervent discussion among the crowd. These people consisted of Spell Casters who were allowed to enter the Frost Lord’s area and were given a relatively safe degree of guarantee. However, in this area, the highest status still belonged to these snow sprites.

Like sprites from the other elements, snow sprites inherently possessed a weaker status, so if they were encountered elsewhere, they would be caught by Spell Casters. In this place, however, the Frost Lord reigned supreme, so no one would even dream of harming the snow sprites.

The Frost Lord too had started as a weak little snow sprite, and slowly grew into a remarkable overlord in Subzero Snowfield.

Nevertheless, the Frost Lord was very low-key and basically only focused on nurturing the snow sprites. In Subzero Snowfield, there were many snow sprites born here, so most of them would come to the Frost Lord’s area for protection as well as to enjoy the various facilities prepared for them by the Frost Lord.

This was the ultimate paradise for snow sprites!

“Whoosh...”

Suddenly, three silhouettes flew swiftly toward the huge palace with mighty winds swirling around their bodies. From afar, they looked considerably impressive.

“Who’s that?”

“Is someone trying to provoke the Frost Lord?”

Many of the Spell Casters were astonished. After all, the Frost Lord had lived in Subzero Snowfield for many years and was yet to be provoked by anyone. According to rumors, there had been Spell Casters who attempted to catch some of the snow sprites but ultimately their fates were unbeknownst to anyone.

In short, the Frost Lord was extremely low-key, to the extent that no one knew its true abilities. However, that also did not mean that it was not powerful.

However, it was still unheard of for someone to provoke the Frost Lord so brazenly.

The three silhouettes in the sky landed in front of the palace with a mighty swoop.

“Ernie, Watson, you two go ahead and negotiate with the Frost Lord on what are the conditions that will allow me to be baptized in the Frost Lake.”

These three people were of course Merlin accompanied by Wizards Ernie and Watson. They arrived directly in front of the Frost Lord’s palace. Merlin must first use the Frost Lord’s Frost Pond to improve his body and his physique in order to cultivate Glacier Country.

“Us again...”

Wizards Ernie’s and Watson’s expression paled. Initially, they thought that after signing a slave contract with Merlin, they would just find a peaceful place to construct their own spells where a hundred years would pass by quickly enough.

However, beyond their wildest expectations, in just a short period of time, they had already faced one dangerous situation after another. Moreover, in every single instance, Merlin had sent them to carry out the most dangerous missions.

The Frost Lord was definitely not someone to be provoked. Although both Ernie and Watson were Seventh-level Spell Casters, they knew that they amounted to nothing in the eyes of the Frost Lord.

In this case, the Frost Pond was the most precious treasure which belonged to the Frost Lord and was only ever allowed to be used by the snow sprites. Never before in history had the Frost Pond been opened to be used by a Spell Caster. Thus, they were quite certain that this impending negotiation with the Frost Lord would not allow them to escape unscathed.

However, since it was Merlin's orders, they had no choice but to obey. They flew directly into the palace.

The moment they crossed the palace doors, a few snow sprites flew out. Upon spotting Ernie and Watson, they shrieked loudly. "Stop, who are you? How dare you enter the forbidden area? The Great Lord Master will surely punish you severely for this. Leave now!"

The snow sprites were fearless in this place.

Wizards Ernie and Watson looked at each other and decided to release their formidable Elemental fluctuations as Seventh-level Spell Casters. For a split second, these intimidating Seventh-level Spell Caster auras stunned the snow sprites into silence.

"Seventh-level Spell Casters. These are Seventh-level Spell Casters!"

"I've seen these two before. Are they not Wizard Watson and Wizard Ernie?"

"Turns out it's those two cunning Spell Casters. Hmph, they were never good news in Subzero Snowfield to begin with. Nothing but a bunch of wicked, abominable Spell Casters. Let's quickly report to the Lord Master!"

Once they recovered from the shock, the snow sprites swiftly flew back inside the palace and reported to the Frost Lord.

Ernie and Watson stepped backward and spoke with a trace of embarrassment, "Master, let's just wait here. I'm sure the Frost Lord will be coming out soon."

Merlin looked at Wizards Ernie and Watson coldly. As for the thoughts that were running through their heads, Merlin knew it as clear as day. While the two of them dared not defy his orders, they

also would not execute his orders uncompromisingly. Unlike Wizard Bammou, Wizards Ernie and Watson were unwilling to put themselves in unnecessary danger.

Waiting outside was obviously much safer compared to entering the palace because no one knew what the Frost Lord had prepared inside the palace. They did not dare enter the palace but also dared not defy Merlin's orders. Thus, they came up with such a ruse to attract the Frost Lord outside.

"Creak."

Soon enough, the main door of the palace slowly creaked open and a flock of snow sprites flew out. The surrounding temperature dropped radically, causing everyone to shudder.

Right in the center of these snow sprites, like the moon cradled by the stars, was a lady covered in a long, snowy white robe, similar to a Wizard's robes. This delicate-looking yet stone-faced lady was the Frost Lord!

Merlin was not that much surprised because snow sprites had no gender to begin with. Even if they became as powerful as the Frost Lord, this fact would still be unchanged. All the Frost Lord did was transform itself according to its own preferences. Therefore, even if it turned into a man right this instant, Merlin would not be surprised.

"Wizard Ernie, Wizard Watson, why have you trespassed into my forbidden expanse?"

The Frost Lord's gaze was locked on Wizard Ernie and Wizard Watson. After all, they were not unknown entities but Seventh-level Spell Casters in Subzero Snowfield. Despite being far from comparable to the Frost Lord's abilities, it would not regard them lightly.

"Hehe, Frost Lord, this time it's not us who are looking for you but our Master, Wizard Merlin!"

There was a smile on Wizard Ernie's face. At this juncture, he no longer had anything to worry about. Since it was an unchangeable fact that he had become Merlin's slave, and the news would soon spread throughout Subzero Snowfield in a matter of time anyway, he might as well acknowledge it now. Perhaps, it would even help him gain some favor with Merlin.

"Your Master?"

The Frost Lord paused slightly but seemed to recall something in its head and glanced at Merlin with a half-smile. “There were rumors that Wizard Ernie and Wizard Watson signed a slave contract with a mysterious Spell Caster to be his slaves! Seems that the rumors were true...”

The looks on Wizards Ernie and Watson’s faces turned sour. Although it was a fact that they had become Merlin’s slaves, the Frost Lord’s words uttered before them were laced with ridicule.

“Hmph. Frost Lord, the reason our Master came today is to ask for your permission to use the Frost Pond. Tell us, what are the conditions that you may grant our Master to use the Frost Pond?”

Wizard Ernie asked quietly.

Just as he ended the question, and the Frost Lord was yet to answer, a few snow sprites began to shriek in a shrill voice. “No, no, you wicked, abominable Spell Caster, how dare you try to suggest to the Frost Lord to use the Frost Pond. That’s solely for the use of the snow sprites. We’ll never allow despicable Spell Casters like you to use it! Get out from the Lord Master’s land!”

Wizard Ernie’s face glowered. “I’m talking to the Frost Lord. Wo are you to speak up, you little cretin?”

Following that, Wizard Ernie’s gestured with his hand, and a large icy palm appeared to grab the snow sprite. Although Wizard Ernie was not particularly powerful, he was still a Seventh-level Spell Caster. So, even a simple gesture from his hand was not a blow that could be endured by an average Spell Caster, not to mention a snow sprite.

Furthermore, despite the Frost Lord’s nurturing of the many snow sprites, none of the snow sprite besides itself had been able to achieve the level of a Seventh-level Spell Caster. There were, however, a number of them that were comparable with a Sixth-level Spell Caster.

Between Sixth- and Seventh-level laid a huge hurdle, not only for snow sprites but also Spell Casters. Merlin had once found a flame sprite whom he had trailed after in the ancient monuments. It had lived in the ancient moment for countless years and yet remained at the level of a Sixth-level Spell Caster, unable to move forward.

This was enough to show the massive gap to achieve the Seventh-level. Especially for these elemental sprites, it was even more arduous to achieve.

“Crack.”

The large icy palm cast by Wizard Ernie was shattered into smithereens with just gentle touch from the Frost Lord. In terms of control over the Ice Elements, a Seventh-level Spell Caster like Wizard Ernie was still far beneath the Frost Lord.

After all, the Frost Lord was inherently a snow sprite. Once a sprite was able to break through its shackles, its control over its own element would increase many folds, and the power of its spells would become incredible beyond imagination.

This was also the reason why the extent of the Frost Lord’s abilities was so unfathomable!

After shattering Wizard Ernie’s spell, the Frost Lord’s tone was frosty. “Wizard Ernie, Wizard Watson, and this Wizard Merlin, the Frost Pond belongs to the snow sprites. It’s impossible to allow you to use it. Please leave!”

The Frost Lord immediately rejected Merlin’s request as it was impossible for him to use the Frost Pond.

“Swoosh.”

Merlin lifted his gaze and stared directly at the Frost Lord.

Chapter 418: The Frost Lord III

With a wave of Merlin’s hand, Wizard Ernie and Wizard Watson understood immediately and retreated behind Merlin.

“All of you step back. Let me find out just how formidable is this Dark Fire Incarnate who recently appeared in Subzero Snowfield.”

The Frost Lord also gestured the snow sprites to retreat to safety. At this moment, its voice changed faintly and became more androgynous-sounding.

“Boom!”

Merlin slowly rose into the air, and blazing flames began to rage all over his body. Then, a huge fire burst forth and transformed into a pack of flaming dragons, making it appear as if the entire sky was lit with fire.

Under the scorching hot temperatures, the palace complex, which was situated on a snow-capped mountain, began to quiver dangerously. Large quantities of snow and ice melted into streams of water that gushed down the mountains.

Merlin’s flame was Fiery Collapse, which was already inherently powerful but here, it was the natural opposing force to the snow sprites. Therefore, once his flames were released, the countless number of snow sprites were unable to withstand and scattered into the palace.

Inside the vicinity of the palace, there seemed to be specific Runic Magic Circles that protected them. Therefore, once the snow sprites were inside the palace, the flames were no longer a threat to them.

Merlin was now standing in the midst of the flames like a holy statue of fire, regarding the Frost Lord with an unnerving stare.

The Frost Lord took a deep breath, and the originally slender body began to transform rapidly. Its body expanded swiftly like a balloon that was being inflated.

“Thud.”

The Frost Lord’s expanded body was about four to five meters high, almost the size of a small giant. Two pairs of wings sprouted on its back, and well-toned muscles covered its entire body. Even its face was frightful, a far cry from the delicate beauty it displayed earlier.

“This is Frost Lord’s true form!”

Merlin’s eyes narrowed into slits as he flicked a finger.

“Flick.”

An animated fire tongue spewed out in an instant and split into thousands of tiny little fire tongues that soared through the air toward the Frost Lord. These flames did not contain a single trace of black smoke so it looked unusually clean. However, the power they contained would make any person shudder in fear.

Every tiny little fire tongue was capable of exploding with unparalleled force, sufficient to severely injure a Seventh-level Spell Caster. Once Merlin's Fiery Collapse had been fully merged with his Incinerating Fire – a derived spell plus a Pandora Demon Ability – its resulting power was almost equivalent to the ultimate limit of a Seventh-level spell.

“Ice Freeze!”

A low growl sounded. In an instant, the Frost Lord's voice became a very powerful and intimidating male-sounding voice. Compared to the matchless beauty it had displayed earlier, even Merlin could not help the slight upturn in his lips. It seemed that the genderless Frost Lord did not comprehend that such a drastic change in demeanor would be stomach-churning for most people.

The Frost Lord's current form was that of a giant with wings. With a slight motion of its finger, the surrounding air temperature began to plunge immediately. At the same time, a watery mist began to appear and turned into ice crystals, subsequently multiplying in the direction of the thousands of tiny little fire tongues.

“Crackle crackle.”

The sound of fire and ice crackled against one another as their forces continued to intertwine with one another. Merlin's Fiery Collapse and the Frost Lord's Icy Chill turned out to be surprisingly equally matched, and neither one was able to subdue the other.

This was far beyond Merlin's expectations as well as the expectations of the Frost Lord's.

Originally, the power of Merlin's flames had already achieved the ultimate limit of a Seventh-level spell. Anyone below the level of an Eighth-level Spell Caster was no longer an opponent to him. However, right now, the Frost Lord was able to compete with him as an equal.

Once a snow sprite broke through its Seventh-level shackles, its abilities would be greatly improved. Furthermore, its control over Ice Elements would be frightening, so it would simply be a

walk in the park to achieve the ultimate limit of the Seventh-level. Similarly, if the fire sprite managed to break through to the Seventh-level, its control over Fire Elements would also be fearsome.

This was the advantage held by the sprites. At this moment, the two competing forces were wrangling over one another, and the Fire-type Spell Model in Merlin's body was providing massive amounts of Magic Power to sustain Fiery Collapse. Colossal columns of fire blazed powerfully, tinting the entire sky a fiery hue of orange and red.

The small giant which had been transformed from the Frost Lord flapped its wings almost imperceptibly, and many long icicles began to form in mid-air. Following that, the Frost Lord lifted a gigantic icicle in his hands and slammed it violently in Merlin's direction.

"Whoosh."

Merlin transformed into a light breeze and instantly retreated to safety. With Flash Wind under his belt, his speed was impressive enough that very few were able to keep up with him.

Nevertheless, looking at the Frost Lord before him, Merlin felt a slight pang of worry in his chest. His face, too, revealed a peculiar expression. He had not expected that the Frost Lord's transformation would end up in this manner.

The current Frost Lord was quite violent and barbaric, and his abilities were not the least bit dismissible. All the surrounding Ice Elements seemed to be under his control, and Merlin struggled to even cast Ice-type spells. It was as if he was being suppressed.

"Hehe. Dark Fire Incarnate, is this all you can do? You're supposedly the Dark Fire Incarnate but you've yet to wield any Darkness-type spells. Come on, give me your best shot!"

The Frost Lord rumbled in a thunderous voice. The two pairs of wings supported the Frost Lord as it rose slowly into the air. Around him, ice-cold air swirled continuously, and numerous ice crystals formed in the air.

Merlin narrowed his eyes. The Frost Lord was truly difficult to defeat. This opponent was probably on par with him at the ultimate limit of the Seventh-level or perhaps even slightly more powerful than him. Since they were in Subzero Snowfield, and Ice Elements were aplenty, if it was a real battle, the Frost Lord would have the upper hand.

However, Merlin was bent on entering the Frost Pond. He took a deep breath and began to activate the Spell Model of Darkness Illusory Death.

Suddenly, the entire sky dimmed as darkness shrouded the entire palace. Pitch-black darkness descended except for the top of the palace where mysterious runes began to glow brightly, apparently resisting the darkness.

As Merlin released his Darkness Illusory Death, his indifferent eyes stared right ahead at the Frost Lord. As long as his opponent was distracted for a split second, it would immediately face Merlin's thunder-like attack.

In the dark, the Frost Lord howled loudly. Around him, layers upon layers of ice had formed a thick wall yet it failed to stop the darkness from descending.

The Frost Lord had had a very long lifespan. From the day of its birth until it achieved its current powerful Frost Lord form, more than a thousand years had passed. Elemental sprites had a very long lifespan so although their innate Mind Powers were not strong, over a long period of time, they would eventually strengthen to an impressive level.

Therefore, Merlin's Darkness Illusory Death did not pose any threat to the Frost Lord. Instead, it utterly infuriated him because the snow sprites which did not manage to go inside the palace were killed by Darkness Illusory Death without any resistance.

In Frost Lord's eyes, these snow sprites were like its own children.

"You've killed my children so you must die!"

The Frost Lord's deadly growl was even more terrifying than before, accompanied by its thickening chilling aura as if it was preparing to launch an earth-shattering blow.

The entire mountain-top seemed to be vibrating, and even the fluffy clouds in the air seemed to be frozen solid, forming a huge cage that surrounded Merlin and the others.

Wizards Ernie and Watson's faces paled greatly. Although they knew that the Frost Lord was powerful, they did not expect it to be so strong to the extent that they were completely helpless to resist.

Merlin knew that the Frost Lord was livid, so he had to fight for his life! The fact was, this entire area had been occupied by the Frost Lord for thousands of years, so it had long since been prepared as its personal battlefield. In this place, the Frost Lord's powers could be increased several folds.

Once the power of the entire area was activated, the Frost Lord's power would undoubtedly surpass the Seventh-level and reach the Eighth-level as well as the peak power of the Eighth-level!

"Frost Lord, you might want to reconsider. If we truly start engaging in a big battle, will the snow sprites in the palace be able to survive? If push comes to shove, I'll just break open the seal on the fourth form of Darkness Eye. For an accursed power like this, I'm sure you're well aware of the strength of its fourth form!"

Merlin saw that the Frost Lord was beginning to prepare for a large battle with an unpleasant expression on his face. He did not expect that his opponent would be so terrifying when it went berserk, so Merlin had to take a step backward and revealed Darkness Eye in his palm.

The blood-red, demonic-looking eye was constantly glowing crimson as if there was a strange power lurking within it.

"Darkness Eye..."

Although the Frost Lord only snarled softly, due to its gigantic size, its snarl was like a peal of thunder reverberating across the sky.

As for Darkness Eye, there were a few higher-order Spell Casters who did not know about it. Even in the remote Subzero Snowfield, many of the Spell Casters have heard of the legend of Darkness Eye.

It was an accursed power that contained unparalleled power as well as the embodiment of darkness.

The blood-red eye in Merlin's palm appeared to be very spirited. Even Merlin himself could sense the "excited" mood of Darkness Eye. Darkness Eye was longing for a battle, longing for a bloodbath, and longing for the flood of negative emotions.

Only negative emotions would be able to help it to grow stronger. More than anything, it longed for Merlin to uncover its seal and release the fourth form of Darkness Eye once again.

However, as long as it was not the last resort, Merlin would not do it.

“Crackle crackle.”

A sinister-sounding laugh became faintly audible, and behind Merlin, a huge fuzzy ghostly face filled the sky, staring coldly at the Frost Lord.

Darkness Eye seemed to have arrived at its Armageddon’s call. If the Frost Lord activated the power of the entire area, Merlin would have no choice but to break open the seal of the fourth form of Darkness Eye.

Following the loosening of the seal on Darkness Eye, the huge ghostly face behind Merlin began to become clearer. The ghostly faces continued to distort and change, and the darkness aura thickened discernibly!

The real battle was a mere hair’s breadth away!

Chapter 419: The Frost Lord IV

Merlin regarded the Frost Lord coldly. Unless he had no other choice, he would not break the seal on the fourth form of Darkness Eye. He knew that once the seal was opened, he would have to use the power of the Maxims to constantly suppress the fourth form of Darkness Eye. Once the power of the Maxims was exhausted, Merlin would no longer be able to suppress Darkness Eye.

Nevertheless, improving his body was also an important quest because if he succeeded in cultivating Glacier Country, Merlin would possess two types of special Pandora Demon Abilities. By then, even if Merlin was only able to wield its third form, Glacier Country would suppress everything in its surrounding when it descended. Should the opponent be too strong to be suppressed, his abilities would still be considerably weakened.

Thereafter, Merlin would wield Darkness Eye. With this combination, even Kleis who possessed Spatial Blade would no longer be his opponent. Therefore, the Frost Lord’s Frost Pond was

quintessential to him. There was no price that Merlin was unwilling to pay in order to enter the Frost Pond and improve his physique.

“Hoo...”

The giant ghostly face belonging to Darkness Eye seemed to be getting clearer and clearer. The Frost Lord’s face fell slightly. It could vaguely sense a vicious power lurking as if once the ghostly face fully appeared, the Frost Lord would be in grave danger.

“The fourth form of Darkness Eye...”

After a long, tense silence, the Frost Lord exhaled heavily, and its humongous body began to gradually change back into the delicate-looking beautiful lady it displayed earlier.

However, after witnessing the Frost Lord’s terrifying true form, Merlin could no longer gaze fondly at the current form.

“Well, if your desire is to enter the Frost Pond, it’s not completely impossible!” The Frost Lord said pointedly, finally relaxing its tone. It appeared that the Frost Lord too, did not want to engage Merlin, the Dark Fire Incarnate, in a life-and-death battle.

“What are your conditions?”

Merlin’s eyes narrowed in concentration as he curled his fists into a tight grip, and the huge ghostly face behind him disappeared without a trace. Darkness Eye seemed to resent Merlin for reining it in, so waves of “angry” emotions were ebbing out. However, they did not affect Merlin as he was still able to easily suppress Darkness Eye.

“Why don’t you come in with me first?”

The Frost Lord regarded Merlin with indifference and turned to fly back into the palace.

Merlin did not hesitate and led both Wizards Ernie and Watson to follow behind the Frost Lord, and they flew into the mysterious palace.

This palace was only accessible to the snow sprites since it was specifically built for them by the Frost Lord. In other words, it was built for the sole purpose of training the snow sprites in the Frost Pond.

Upon entering the palace, Merlin felt even colder than before. Even with his physical fitness, he felt quite chilly and had no choice but to cast a spell.

Whereas Wizards Ernie and Watson, upon entering the palace, immediately cast spells on themselves in order to walk around freely.

“Crack.”

Around Merlin and the others, occasional ice crystals would appear and freeze rapidly as well as a thin layer of ice which slowly spread on the ground toward Merlin.

Merlin stepped on it gently, and the ice layer instantly shattered into pieces in all directions.

“Interesting!”

The corners of Merlin’s mouth curved into a smile. It was not an attack but a snow sprite which was practicing its innate abilities. These snow sprites were mostly equivalent to a Fourth-level Spell Caster.

It was unknown how many snow sprites the Frost Lord had gathered in the palace. In Subzero Snowfield, the Frost Lord was like a banner that attracted a countless number of snow sprites.

“We’re here!”

Quickly, the Frost Lord came to a stop. Merlin and the others looked ahead and saw a huge pond with a few snow sprites inside, appearing to be enduring great suffering.

These snow sprites were either completely unaware that strangers had arrived by the pond or were aware but too preoccupied in their own predicaments to care.

The surface of the Frost Pond looked extremely calm but the icy aura emitting from it caused Merlin to feel a sense of astonishment. It was a level of extreme chill that he had never encountered before, almost like there was a special kind of power hidden in the Frost Pool.

“Gulp gulp.”

The snow sprites in the Frost Pool suddenly started to struggle frantically, and their auras became more and more chaotic as they struggled for help. However, the Frost Lord who stood beside the Frost Pool stayed very still and did not show any intention of extending a helping hand.

Soon enough, the snow sprites were completely submerged by the cerulean blue pond and lost their life forces. Just like that, two snow sprites were swallowed by the Frost Pond.

It seemed like the Frost Pond was not as simple as it was rumored to be.

“Frost Lord, are those snow sprites not under your protection?”

Merlin pointed at the Frost Pond but his meaning was clear. Why did the Frost Lord not react when the two snow sprites fell into danger?

Throughout Subzero Snowfield, it was a well-known fact that the Frost Lord protected all the snow sprites. As long as they made it into the Frost Lord’s territory, they would be safe from harm.

Now, on the other hand, those two snow sprites could have been easily rescued by the Frost Lord yet the Frost Lord had chosen to stay aloof to their cry for help. This appeared to be completely different from the rumors.

“This is their destiny! I can protect them for a moment but I cannot protect them forever! If they want to be strong, then they have to pay the price of becoming stronger!”

At this moment, the Frost Lord seemed to be particularly cruel. The Frost Lord looked at Merlin and said, “The Frost Pond is here but it was built with my own blood, sweat, and tears for the sake of the snow sprites. If you want to enter the Frost Pond, you must agree to one condition.”

“Tell me, what is it?”

Merlin was already prepared to pay a steep price. If the Frost Pond was truly as magical as its legend and could improve Merlin's physique to the point that he would be able to cultivate Glacier Country, then no price was too high to pay.

"It's very simple. I need you, after the baptism in the Frost Pond, to help me defeat another snow sprite!"

The Frost Lord's words surprised Merlin. Was there another snow sprite in Subzero Snowfield that could attract Frost Lord's wrath?

The Frost Lord's infallible reputation was known throughout Subzero Snowfield yet he had never heard of a snow sprite that could compete against the Frost Lord.

In fact, there was not even a snow sprite that could compare to a Seventh-level Spell Caster.

"What's the real problem?"

Naturally, Merlin had to ask. Although he was eager to enter the Frost Pool as soon as possible, these details had to be discussed properly first.

"Wizard Merlin, that snow sprite is probably about as strong or perhaps just slightly stronger than me. It's not that much stronger compared to me. This is a matter between the other snow sprite and I. If Wizard Merlin agrees to defeat the snow sprite with me, then you can use the Frost Pond whenever you want."

The Frost Lord did not elaborate further but even from the simple explanation, Merlin could surmise that the snow sprite being targeted by the Frost Lord would not be easily defeated. In fact, it was even stronger than the Frost Lord, albeit not by much.

Nevertheless, it was still an extremely tricky mission. The Frost Lord was already stronger than him so to defeat a snow sprite slightly stronger than the Frost Lord was definitely going to be a tough row to hoe.

Seeing that Merlin was hesitant, the Frost Lord continued. "Wizard Merlin, it won't be just you and I. I've also invited some powerful Great Wizards among the Seventh-level Spell Casters!"

Surely, to be labeled “powerful” by the Frost Lord was no average Joe! He did not expect the Frost Lord’s plan to be so comprehensive and well-prepared, and even invited along some powerful Spell Casters.

Merlin deliberated internally for a moment and finally nodded his head. As long as he was able to cultivate Glacier Country, no price was too great to pay. Moreover, it was only to defeat a snow sprite that was comparable to the Frost Lord.

“Very well, let’s sign a contract.”

The Frost Lord was very thorough as it took out a contract which flew toward Merlin.

Merlin quickly glanced through the contents of the contract. It was according to what the Frost Lord had said earlier and did not contain any traps. So, it was safe for him to sign it.

“Hum hum.”

Merlin imprinted his Mind Power onto the contract, and the Frost Lord kept it. Satisfied, the Frost Lord nodded at Merlin. “Wizard Merlin, please go ahead. The Frost Pond is now open for you to use! Though I must remind you, the Frost Pond is very dangerous, and its frigid blast is unparalleled. Although it can help improve a Spell Caster’s physique, the effects are not as good as the Spell Casters’ original bodies are too weak to begin with.”

Merlin clearly understood the Frost Lord’s heavily-laden words. Entering the Frost Pond came with a certain degree of risk. Even the snow sprites were completely submerged by the Frost Pond and would remain in the Frost Pond forever.

What more the Spell Casters’ weak bodies.

Merlin stripped off his black Wizard robes, revealing a very well-proportioned figure. From the outside, Merlin did not look strong at all. In fact, he looked even a little on the thinner side.

After taking off his clothes, however, the curves on Merlin’s body would be envied even by powerful Elemental Swordsmen. Within those tout rippling muscles, packed a formidable mass of power waiting to explode.

“Frost Lord, please be rest assured. Since I’m the one who came to you, I’m prepared for any eventuality. Moreover, how would a mere Frost Pond be my downfall?”

Merlin took a deep breath and jumped into the chilly Frost Pond.

“Crack.”

The moment Merlin jumped into the Frost Pond, the entire surface of the Frost Pond froze instantly. Especially the spot where Merlin had jumped in, it was condensed into a thick layer of ice, effectively trapping the tip of Merlin’s forehead which was just emerging onto the surface.

Chapter 420: Level Up, Fourth-Level Spell Caster!

The Frost Pond was frozen in an instant, and Merlin’s movements also seemed to stop momentarily. Wizard Ernie and Wizard Watson gazed at the Frost Pond unblinkingly. As Merlin’s slaves who had signed a slave contract with him, their instincts were most finely attuned to him.

Based on their instincts, Merlin’s mind imprint had not disappeared from their slave contracts, which meant that he was not dead.

“Crack.”

Suddenly, the ice crystals on the Frost Pond shattered into pieces, and Merlin’s figure reappeared in the Frost Pond. His body was enveloped with a layer of icy aura, which continuously pervaded into his body. A look of agony appeared on his face.

Of course, it was impossible for the Frost Pond to freeze Merlin inside but once his body entered the pond, endless icy aura began to help Merlin transform his body.

With the icy aura pervading the body, an average Spell Caster would not have been able to withstand the extreme cold and would die. Merlin, however, had practiced the postures of the mysterious relief sculptures, so his body was extremely durable.

Therefore, despite the invasion of the icy aura destroying his body beyond recognition, the regenerating ability of Merlin's body kicked in and mended the destruction. Every time the icy aura destroyed a part, his body would quickly regenerate and subsequently be destroyed by the icy aura once again.

It was in this endless cycle of repeated destruction and regeneration that without realizing it, Merlin's physical transformation had been more than halfway completed. His body was now able to withstand the invasion of frigid blasts, and his affinity with Ice Elements achieved a formidable level only second to the snow sprites.

Snow sprites were, in essence, snow spirits. Where there was an extremely high concentration of Ice Elements that produced a spark of awareness, a sprite was formed. Naturally, they had unimaginable levels of affinity with the Ice Elements, whereas Merlin was merely a Spell Caster. At this moment, nonetheless, he possessed a level of affinity to Ice Elements that was only second to these snow sprites.

This also implied that Merlin's immersion in the Frost Pond to undergo a physical transformation was a huge success!

However, it was also a very painful process. The continuous cycle of destruction and regeneration was beyond anything that anyone could imagine. It was only through sheer determination that Merlin had managed to endure it.

"Splash."

Merlin abruptly opened his eyes and stood in the middle of the Frost Pond. His body was still swirling with dense icy aura but there was no trace of discomfort. Instead, there was a sense of fondness in him.

"The transformation is a success!"

A thought struck in Merlin's heart, and he extended a finger to cast an Ice-type spell. Despite it being only a Third-level spell, the entire Frost Pond was frozen solid in an instant. The power level was terrifying, clearly exceeding the level of an average Third-level spell.

For the first time, Merlin could also distinctly feel his level of affinity toward the Ice Elements. It was truly incredible, only second to the snow sprites.

“Whoosh.”

Merlin rose from the Frost Pond and stood before the Frost Lord. Smiling, he said, “Thank you so much, Frost Lord. This Frost Pond is no longer of use to me. You can allow the other snow sprites to use it now.”

“Oh? Wizard Merlin, you’re apparently able to withstand the icy aura of the Frost Pond, and managed to undergo the physical transformation so quickly. The speed you took was even faster than the snow sprites...”

Deep inside, the Frost Lord was very astonished. The Frost Pond was created by its own two hands, so no one knew the Frost Pond better than the Frost Lord. Even some of the snow sprites could not withstand the process and had to stay in the Frost Pond forever, becoming a part of the Frost Pond.

However, Merlin as a weak-bodied Spell Caster was surprisingly able to undergo a physical transformation in the Frost Pond. It was truly incredible. Additionally, the Frost Lord could clearly sense that Merlin did not cast a single protective spell in the Frost Pond. He had endured the entire physical transformation with his own flesh and blood.

The Frost Lord was puzzled and full of unanswered questions because it would not have known that Merlin possessed the mysterious relief sculpture, and thus was able to possess extraordinary regenerative powers even as a mere Spell Caster.

It was for that reason that the transformation had gone so smoothly, and within such a short period, he managed to undergo a physical transformation with the help of the Frost Pond.

“Frost Lord, please arrange a quiet place for me.”

Since Merlin had succeeded in his physical transformation, he could finally attempt to cultivate Glacier Country, hence he needed a quiet environment where he would not be disturbed by anyone.

Obviously, the Frost Lord’s territory was not the best choice, but since Merlin had signed a contract with the Frost Lord to defeat the other snow sprite, it was understood that he could not leave.

The Frost Lord nodded. “Of course, no problem. I’ll personally show you the way.”

Thus, the Frost Lord led Merlin to an isolated courtyard where he would not be disturbed, which perfectly fitted Merlin's request.

"Wizard Merlin, you may meditate here. When the time comes, I'll come and look for you."

Merlin knew that the Frost Lord was talking about the matter of the contract, it appeared that the Frost Lord still needed to make some preparations. Therefore, he nodded. "Just inform me when the time comes!"

Merlin waited until the Frost Lord left before using his Mind Power to carefully examine his vicinity. After he had made sure there was no particular discovery, he said to Ernie and Watson, "You stand guard outside the door. Don't allow anyone to disturb me!"

Sensing the seriousness in Merlin's tone, Wizards Ernie and Watson both nodded. As Merlin's slaves, they could only obey his orders.

With two Seventh-level Spell Casters standing guard, Merlin felt a little relieved as he stepped into the house.

The furnishing in the house was very simple but it exuded a feeling of serenity. Merlin did not care one way or the other, and began to closely examine the condition of his body.

After the transformation in the Frost Pond, his body's regenerative ability was still as resilient as before. This was the benefit he derived from the mysterious relief sculpture. Although the posture did not provide much help to Merlin in terms of battle strength, it benefitted him greatly in many other aspects.

The physical transformation this time, for one, would not have been successful without those strong regenerative powers.

Merlin's body right now had indeed vastly improved its affinity to Ice Elements that even the Ice-type spells he released were more powerful than before. All the requirements to begin cultivating Glacier Country had been fulfilled.

However, Merlin did not immediately start cultivating Glacier Country. A special Pandora Demon Ability like this would consume an incredible amount of Magic Power, and the Magic Power contained in the few Spell Models in his Awareness was definitely not enough to support more than a few tries of Glacier Country.

Therefore, he had to first construct Fourth-level spells!

At present, Merlin was yet to construct Ice-type and Thunder-type Fourth-level spells. Once these two Fourth-level spells were successfully constructed, Merlin would become a Fourth-level Spell Caster.

The Ice-type and Thunder-type Fourth-level spells had already been derived by Merlin using the Matrix back when he forcibly seized the Ice Maxim. In order to diminish the power of the Ice Maxim, he used the Matrix to derive many new spells.

He even derived four types of Fifth-level spells, so Merlin was in no shortage of spells. What he lacked right now was Mind Power because although he had reached the Mind Power of the peak of the Fifth-level, it was still insufficient.

Fortunately, Merlin still had the ingredients for Mokra Potion, so he could brew a large amount of Mokra Potion here. Although the Frost Lord's area was not completely secure, Merlin was more reassured by the protection of Wizard Ernie and Wizard Watson.

Therefore, in the subsequent period, Merlin began to frantically prepare the Mokra Potion. During the process of brewing, he also took occasional doses of Mokra Potion.

Even though the effect of the Mokra Potion had weakened significantly as a result of Merlin's long-term use, it was ultimately unable to beat the large amount of Mokra Potions brewed by Merlin. Back in the Imperial City, the eighth prince had given Merlin a thousand servings of potion ingredients, so even with a one third success rate, he was able to brew more than three hundred servings of Mokra Potion. This was a huge number.

Naturally, with such a huge number of Mokra Potions, Merlin's Mind Power grew rapidly. Nevertheless, to advance from the Fifth- to the Sixth-level, he still needed to accumulate the requisite Mind Power. Therefore, despite consuming countless servings of Mokra Potion and rapidly growing his Mind Power, there were no signs of breaking through.

“Boom!”

Finally, after three months of consuming unknown portions of Mokra Potions, Merlin's Mind Power had broken through. Like boiling water, his Mind Power began to surge wildly.

"Sixth-level Mind Power!"

Merlin slowly opened his eyes and smiled. Since he held more spells than an average Spell Caster, and the level of complexity of his spells exceeded that of an average Spell Caster, the amount of Mind Power required was also beyond imaginable levels. Until now, the only obstacle keeping Merlin from becoming more powerful was his Mind Power.

It was fortunate that Merlin's Mind Power had finally broken through to the Sixth-level, so now he was able to easily construct Fourth-level Ice-type and Thunder-type spells.

The Fourth-level Ice-type spell, Arctic Realm, was also a new spell derived by the Matrix. It was still a Binding spell but it became a territorial binding and its binding powers were greatly enhanced.

The derivation of Ice-type spells continued in the same vein, in which all of them constituted Binding spells, so along the way, their binding powers would become stronger!

With Arctic Realm, Merlin became more confident to cultivate Glacier Country. Furthermore, the Spell Model of Arctic Realm was very stable and had accumulated a large amount of Magic Power, enough to power Glacier Country many times over. Therefore, it would be completely sufficient to be used in a battle.

Besides Arctic Realm, Merlin's Fourth-level Thunder-type spell, Thunder Realm, was also successfully constructed. This was a large-area Offensive spell. When a spell reached Fourth-level spell, its range of attack was key.

Even Incinerating Fire was a large-area Offensive spell as a result of the gradual evolution of spells. Spells that attacked a single target was becoming rarer and rarer.

During the Spell Casters' most glorious era, a single gesture from the Great Spell Casters was enough to destroy countless mountains and valleys. This was made possible because all the spells they constructed were large-area spells.

“Boom!”

When the final two Fourth-level spells were successfully constructed, all the Spell Models in Merlin’s Awareness vibrated gently, followed by a subtle feeling flooding in his Awareness. All the Spell Models began to rotate frenziedly, and countless elements gathered chaotically on Merlin’s body as if a black hole was engulfing all the elements.

From this moment on, Merlin had finally leveled up to a Fourth-level Spell Caster!