

W. Secret 61

Chapter 61: The Strange Bandits II

Bang.

The heavy armored knights led by Old Wilson began to charge!

Although there were barely two hundred of them, the momentum and power with at they charged seemed capable of toppling mountains and overturning seas, causing some degree of panic to arise in the midst of those bandits in front of them.

“In the name of the knights’ glory, charge!”

Close to two hundred heavy armored knights roared in one voice. This slogan had already become the soul of the heavy armored knights.

Amidst the great roars of the slogans, the heavy armored knights led by Old Wilson charged towards the bandits like a black mudslide. Their force was unstoppable.

Numerous bandits were immediately thrown into the air just through a light contact. The power of the heavy armored knights had long been verified in Blackwater City; the typical knights were not at all comparable to them, so what more this motley crew of bandits?

Even though there were many bandits, this rabble was immediately scattered by the assault of the heavy armored knights. It was just as Merlin had expected. Countless bandits were trampled alive under the hooves of the horses, emitting bursts of wretched screams as they died.

“Damn it. These weak and despicable aristocrats dare to come at us?”

The leader of the bandits saw how the heavy armored knights continuously charged into and attacked the groups of bandits; they were invincible. There was no resistance that could come into contact with them, and a hint of fury had appeared on their faces.

Thus, the two leaders brought the fifty knights behind them in a direct rush toward Old Wilson and the heavy armored knights.

There were only fifty knights. In addition, they were wearing merely thin and light armor on their bodies. To charge at Old Wilson and the heavy armored knights like this would be having a death wish; it caused people to feel rather unbelievable.

Although Old Wilson thought that it was strange, he did not hesitate at all. He commanded the heavy armored knights to move into their assault formation and immediately dashed toward those fifty somewhat exceptional bandits.

The two teams of knights soon collided with each other. Immediately, Old Wilson engaged one of the leaders in a fight.

“Flame Cleave!”

Old Wilson had already reached the critical point of becoming a Third-level Elemental Swordsman; just a little more, and he would be a Third-level Elemental Swordsman. Furthermore, being naturally endowed with a great strength, the power and might of his entire body was infinitely close to that of a Fourth-level Elemental Swordsman.

At the moment, Old Wilson had only used half of his strength, but even so, it was still very difficult for a typical Second-level Elemental Swordsman to block him.

However, although there was no Elemental fluctuation on the bodies of these two bandit chiefs, they could easily defend against Old Wilson’s attack just by relying on their physical strength.

Old Wilson’s attack had not been the only thing that stopped. Not only had about two hundred heavy armored knights dashing in together for the attack failed to cause a destructive blow to those bandits, they had also broken a few heavy armored knights.

“No, something’s wrong!”

Merlin’s face changed slightly after seeing those fifty bandits from afar.

Those fifty knights were exceptionally special. Although there was no Elemental fluctuation on their bodies, which meant that they were not Elemental Swordsmen, their physical attributes were such that they could rival those First-level Elemental Swordsmen.

Even if these fifty bandits who could equal First-level Elemental Swordsmen had never gone through training and were not moving in coordination, all they had to do was gather together to unleash an unimaginable result.

Even the undefeatable heavy armored knights were at a disadvantage after encountering these special bandits.

Merlin was not worried about Old Merlin; he knew Old Merlin's capabilities extremely well. If he were to strike in full force, those two bandit chiefs would be no match for him at all.

However, if time were to be dragged on, then the losses of the heavy armored knights would definitely reach a huge number. These heavy armored knights were Old Wilson's blood and sweat, produced after more than ten years. Losing any one of them would cause him unbearable heartache.

Therefore, Merlin attacked!

Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh.

Clusters of Fireball flew out. Every fireball hit a bandit accurately; due to the fact that the bandits and the heavy armored knights were all entangled together, he could not make the fireballs explode. All he could do was to fix his aim and eliminate them one by one,

However, although that was all he did, Merlin had cleared out five bandits in just a blink of the eye. His Mind Power had grown greater, whereas his power of control over the spells had become stronger; therefore, as long as it was within a hundred meters of him, which was the area enveloped by his Mind Power, Merlin was able to control his spells with excellent accuracy.

"It's a Spell Caster, run fast, we're done for..."

"Report to Big Boss quickly that there's a Spell Caster."

The two leaders amongst the bandits had already seen signs of danger flashing everywhere under the hands of Old Wilson and had merely been hanging on despite the difficulty. Now that they had seen Merlin appearing, the hopelessness in their hearts grew even more. Immediately, they wanted to flee.

For many years, they had forcibly occupied the vast buffer zones in between the Kingdom of Blackmoon and the Kingdom of Light. Therefore, they were extremely well-versed with those mysterious and powerful Spell Casters in the Kingdom of Blackmoon. They knew that, with a Spell Caster like Merlin around, they did not stand a chance to attain victory at all.

However, it was already too late for them to escape now!

“Frost!”

Merlin had long fixed his eyes on those two bandits. Seeing that they had the opportunity to escape, he immediately unleashed his Frost.

Crack, crack.

The ice crystals hardened, freezing the two bandit chiefs directly. Even if they had physical attributes that rivaled those of a Second-level Elemental Swordsmen, it was completely impossible for them to break free from Merlin’s Frost.

Bang.

Old Wilson swung his blade down, chopping one of the bandit chiefs into two halves; fresh blood spurted onto the ground.

Seeing that Old Wilson was about to kill the other bandit chief, Merlin hurriedly came to his side and said in a low voice, “Father, leave this man, he can be of use.”

Old Wilson nodded before turning around and charging toward the other bandits.

There had originally been fifty bandits. After Merlin had killed five in an instant, and seeing him overcome the two leaders, some of them began to flee from the battlefield.

Then, Old Wilson, who had been pulled out from the crowd, charged and killed more of them. Only twenty or so were left of the fifty bandits whose capabilities equaled those of the First-level Elemental Swordsmen. They escaped in a pathetic manner.

Old Wilson regrouped the heavy armored knights and did a headcount, only to announce that they had lost fifteen heavy armored knights in this battle. The original sum of a hundred and eighty-five heavy armored knights had now been decreased to a hundred and seventy.

Old Wilson felt great heartache at such a heavy loss. Back when he had led the heavy armored knights into battle against the Guardian Swordsmen of the church who had disguised themselves as bandits and attacked the City Defense Troop knights of Blackwater City, there had only been a total loss of fifteen knights.

Right now, fighting against mere bandits, a motley crew had unexpectedly caused such heavy losses to the heavy armored knights.

Old Wilson's face was dark and heavy. His eyes continuously sized up the body of the bandit chief, like a wild beast selecting its victim. This caused the bandit chief to be panic-stricken.

Thus, the bandit chief turned his sights onto Merlin. In a slightly panicked manner, he said, "Great, honorable Wizard, what do you wish to ask?"

The bandit chief knew very well, in his heart, that the only person who could let him live now was the mysterious and powerful Spell Caster before his eyes.

Chapter 62: Big Boss I

Merlin fixed his eyes on the bandit chief in front of his eyes. This other person's body was not bulky, neither did he look strong and mighty. It seemed that his physical attributes would not have been considered exceptional.

However, the truth of the matter was that this bandit's physical attributes were comparable to that of a Second-level Elemental Swordsman. This was very abnormal. Furthermore, there were also fifty bandit knights whose physical quality were similar to that of First-level Elemental Swordsmen, which was even more extraordinary.

“You’re not an Elemental Swordsman, so how can you possess such great power that isn’t inferior to that of an Elemental Swordsman?”

Merlin asked him directly. Old Wilson, who was standing beside him, nodded subconsciously as well. It was evident that he was also very interested in the question.

The expression of the bandit chief changed slightly. His lips squirmed, as though he wanted to speak, but he did not make a sound for a long time.

Crack.

A cluster of ice crystals immediately appeared again on the body of the bandit chief. The ice crystals enveloped him at an extremely fast pace, practically freezing his entire body. All that was left as his bald head.

As a binding spell, the power of the Frost was not great. It was far weaker than a Fireball, but still easy enough for the purposes of handling a mere bandit chief like this.

Feeling the ice crystals on his body as though it could continue spreading on to his head, the chief bandit could no longer be silent. He could only yell out, “Great Wizard, please stop, I say! Our physical attributes are exceptional due to Big Boss!”

“Big Boss?”

Merlin did not continue to unleash the Frost. Instead, he took two steps forward and said to the bandit chief, “Talk about your Big Boss’s condition in detail.”

The face of the bandit chief was already rather pale. His body was trembling, and although his physical attributes were exceptional, Merlin’s Frost caused temperatures to plunge extremely low. Being frozen for a long period of time would still injure him.

“Big Boss came here three years ago. Back then, Second Commander, Fourth Commander and I were small-time bandits in this region, with hundreds of bandits under us. Our power was extremely small and weak. Big Boss found us and defeated all of us utterly, before becoming our Big Boss.

Then, he taught us a strange posture. We cultivated according to this strange posture daily, and the quality of our physique improved very quickly.”

“Then, Big Boss led us and annexed a few great groups of bandits successively. As his force swelled up, he formed the Hurricane Bandits with three, four thousand bandits. After that, Big Boss picked five hundred young bandits and taught them a strange posture. They practiced every day, and now, practically everyone can rival a First-level Elemental Swordsman.”

“With such power, Big Boss’s greed and ambitious heart grew as well. He was no longer satisfied with being a bandit, he even wished to take advantage of this chaotic situation in the Kingdom of Light now and conquer a few cities... But, because the numbers of our men have expanded greatly, you’ve also seen how our pieces of equipment, like weaponry and armor, are lagging behind. This time, we’ve encountered a few members of the Royal Family who only have a few hundred knights as protectors, so Big Boss has brought men to go rob those members of the Royal Family. He ordered us to come and block you, so that you wouldn’t ruin Big Boss’s plans.”

By the time the bandit chief had finished speaking, his entire body was already shaking. His enunciation had become somewhat poor.

There were no changes to Merlin’s expression, but there was a great shock in his heart. A strange posture that was able to strengthen the physical attributes of a Normie quickly, to the point where one could rival an Elemental Swordsman...

Everything about all of this was so similar to the mysterious relief sculpture he had obtained before. Merlin only had one piece of the relief sculpture, but after practicing the posture on the relief sculpture, his physical attributes were now already comparable to that of a First-level Elemental Swordsman.

“The physical attributes of these bandits can already rival those of a Second-level Elemental Swordsman. That bandit chief, how strong can he be? As strong as a Third-level, or even a Fourth-level Elemental Swordsman?”

Numerous ideas turned in Merlin’s head. If that ‘Big Boss’ had really obtained a relief sculpture, then he should have at least three of them with him.

The postures on those relief sculptures were really frightening indeed. Merlin had never given them much thought before this, but now, he had seen the mysterious ‘Big Boss’ passing out knowledge on the postures on the relief sculpture.

All he had to do was to pass on one posture, and within a few months, he would be able to quickly create large numbers of powerful fighters who could rival First-level Elemental Swordsmen.

The battle just now had said it all. A lot of Old Wilson's heart and effort had been spent on his heavy armored knights; practically half of the taxes collected within the territory had been used on those heavy armored knights.

Furthermore, they had needed to undergo training often before achieving the fighting capabilities they had now.

However, although the combat power of those heavy armored knights now could be deemed terrifying, they had unexpectedly been caught at a disadvantage after encountering those bandits who had been without the slightest bit of cooperation amongst each other. If Merlin and Old Wilson had not been so overwhelmingly strong and valiant, he was afraid that those heavy armored knights would have been defeated by a mere band of fifty bandits.

The terrible aspect of the mysterious relief sculpture was manifested therein. Moreover, that mysterious Big Boss had five hundred of such bandits heeding his commands.

Many thoughts passed through Merlin's mind in the blink of an eye. Old Wilson beside him, however, did not think so much. All he heard from the bandit's mouth was the news of the Big Boss going up against the members of the Royal Family.

"Merlin, Princess Charise and the others might be in danger, I want to bring the heavy armored knights and go rescue them."

This time, Merlin did not stop him. He knew that Old Wilson had a lot of gratitude in his heart towards Prince Frederick; although Princess Charise had rejected Old Wilson's allegiance before, Old Wilson would not leave them to die now that the Princess and the others were in danger

Nevertheless, this was a good thing as well. Old Wilson would not have any ties with the Royal Family anymore if he could rescue them once!

"Father, you go first, I'll catch up after you!"

Light flashed through Merlin's eyes. The mysterious Big Boss was his target.

A look of despair could already be seen in Commander Mance's eyes. His entire body had been shaken so much that he was numb; despite the fact that he was a Third-level Earth Swordsman, this man before him, with the strange patterns drawn on his face and a name called Big Boss, was just too powerful.

Every time the other person brought his greatsword crashing down, it had contained terrible power. That body which did not look burly at all seemed to be filled with the strength of a ferocious beast, causing Commander Mance to feel like he could not withstand it.

An Elemental Swordsman at the peak of the Third-level! Commander Mance was aghast; this other person was able to rival a Third-level Elemental Swordsman at his peak, just by relying on the strength of his body. He had never even heard of such a thing, what more seen it.

Moreover, this mighty commander was not the only thing that was horrifying; there were also the densely packed bandits around them. Every single one of them seemed to be on par with First-level Elemental Swordsmen, and judging by their numbers, there were about four, five hundred of them.

Four, five hundred First-level Elemental Swordsmen. Such a terrifying number was difficult for Commander Mance to imagine. Even the Firebird Legion, one of the four great armies of the Kingdom of Light, had only been able to gather a thousand First-level Elemental Swordsmen during their peak.

Just like that, this bunch of bandits with broken weapons, who did not even have armor... This motley crew was able to rival half of the Firebird Legion?

Bang.

With another heavy blow, Commander Mance was shaken and thrown off by a powerful force. He fell heavily to the ground, before struggling to stand up, but his internal organs were in such pain that he felt as though they were on fire. Serious injuries had already been inflicted upon him.

As for the six hundred Firebird knights, they had long been swallowed up in the sea of people. Surrounded and attacked by the bandits, half of them had been injured and killed. Now, less than three hundred of them were left.

“We’re finished...”

Commander Mance closed his eyes in pain. He had never thought that he would die in the hands of a gang of bandits.

Princess Charise’s face was already a shade of ghastly white, as she watched the battle from afar. Her entire body was trembling due to fear. The situation had rapidly worsened; she had not expected that a bunch of bandits who had seemed so weak that they would not be able to withstand a blow, would be so fierce. She saw how the six hundred Firebird knights, the entire army led by Commander Mance, were about to be completely annihilated.

Princess Charise no longer had a choice. It had also been difficult for her to imagine how tragic it was to fall at the hands of bandits.

“Deputy Commander Wayne, prepare for battle, for the honor of the Firebird!”

There was a complicated mix of expressions on Princess Charise’s face. She drew out her silver greatsword as well, ready to fight to the death.

Swoosh.

The remaining two hundred Firebird knights pulled out the greatswords in their hands as well and raised them up high with solemnity upon their faces.

“In the name of the knights’ glory, charge!”

“In the name of the knights’ glory, charge!”

“...”

All of a sudden, Princess Charise and the others heard a deafening sound rumbling from behind them; something that seemed like a black mudslide came crashing down from the mountain slope.

Chapter 63: Big Boss II

The black mudslide was a group of knights dressed in heavy armor. Princess Charise was slightly stunned before recalling the identities of these heavy armored knights.

“They are Baron Wilson’s heavy armored knights. I’d never thought that he’d still lead his knights to come and rescue us after I rejected Baron Wilson’s allegiance. Still, it’s no use, these bandits aren’t ordinary bandits. Baron Wilson’s heavy armored knights are definitely no match for them as well. Deputy Commander Wayne, prepare to charge up there with Baron Wilson, rush in and kill the bandits together!”

Princess Charise was somewhat moved and rueful; Old Wilson taking action at such a time as this was enough to prove his loyalty to the Royal Family. However, Princess Charise did not know that this was not due to Old Wilson’s loyalty to the Royal Family, but his gratitude towards Prince Frederick. This would be the last time Old Wilson stretched out a helping hand.

The heavy armored knights led by Old Wilson dove down the slope of the hill. They were an unstoppable force, immediately rushing in for the skill and leaving a blood trail behind. Numerous bandits were slaughtered by the heavy armored knights.

After all, with the exception of the bandits who possessed extraordinary physical attributes, the rest were just a motley crew formed by a bunch of Normies gathering together, at best. Even an ordinary knight would be able to kill them easily.

Old Wilson was completely enveloped by the flames. His gigantic stature was like a small giant; with every strike of his sword, followed by immeasurable amounts of flames, three to five bandits would lose their lives at Old Wilson’s hands.

Because of that, Old Wilson soon reached the place where Commander Mance was being surrounded. He fixed his eyes on the great commander who had strange patterns drawn on his face.

“Where are my third and fourth brothers?”

When the big commander saw Old Wilson, he immediately guessed his identity and knew that he was the small aristocrat that he had instructed the Third and Fourth Commanders to block.

“They’re already dead!”

Old Wilson answered coldly. There was a great aura of power around his body that went toward the Big Boss of the bandits oppressively. This was an ability that only Fourth-level Elemental Swordsmen possessed. Although Old Wilson was merely a Second-level Fire Swordsman, he was able to reach the peak of a Third-level Elemental Swordsman by coupling with the extraordinary strength he had been gifted with. Thus, he also possessed some imposing aura of oppression.

“Hmph, I underestimated you, but out of everything that you shouldn’t have done, you shouldn’t have come here to die!”

With a sharp flash of light in his eyes, the Big Boss pushed back with both his legs forcefully.

Bang.

It felt as though the entire surface of the ground was shaking. Using the force from that one kick, Big Boss’s entire body crashed toward Old Wilson with a whizz, like a cannonball fired from cannon.

“Flame Cleave!”

Old Wilson let out a roar. The armor all over his body began to emit creaking noises; he was utilizing his power to the maximum, which caused his muscles to swell up. His armor was being spread open.

When Old Wilson engaged in battle, his body would practically be pulled up by a lot in a forceful manner. He was almost two meters tall and could inflict a great psychological shock on people just by standing still.

This was the real extraordinary gift, the real unlimited power, unlike Big Boss, who still retained the physique of a Normie even though he possessed great, superhuman strength.

The two men wielded their greatswords. In the blink of an eye, they brandished and moved them over a dozen times. Collisions between the blades emitted ear-piercing sounds.

Crack.

Both their greatswords shattered at the same time, breaking into few pieces as the blades were no longer able to withstand the terrible power of the other party. The two men were then left fighting barehanded, coming at each other in a series of crazy attacks.

Every punch unleashed by Old Wilson was shrouded in flames; like a god of fire, his force was unstoppable. On the other hand, Big Boss did not seem to be imposing or powerful, but he was exceedingly fast and his strength was great. The two of them clashed like a rock going against a rock; he was not at all inferior to Old Wilson.

“Haha, that’s fun, let’s go again!”

Old Wilson let out a great roar. It had been a long time since he had encountered an opponent who could go against his pure power and be equally matched, like two hard objects colliding against each other. His will to fight was raised up high; ignoring everything else, he and Big Boss got embroiled in battle.

Everywhere the two of them passed through, both bandits and heavy armored knights were either wounded or killed if they came into contact with them slightly. Therefore, everyone hurriedly backed off from wherever they were fighting.

Although Old Wilson and Big Boss’s battle was difficult to finish, his heavy armored knights were no match at all for those bandits who had practiced the special posture.

There were four to five hundred of those bandits, with extremely powerful capabilities. By now, they had surrounded the heavy armored knights once more. If there was no other solution, the heavy armored knights would soon be completely destroyed.

The moment the heavy armored knights were annihilated, it would not be of any use even if Old Wilson was an equal match to the Big Boss of the bandits.

On a hill far away, Merlin stood in front of a horse carriage as he observed the battle at the foot of the hill carefully. The focus of his attention was the Big Boss of the bandits, who was fighting Old Wilson in a battle that was difficult to win to either side.

“As expected, there’s no Elemental aura whatsoever, it’s entirely the strength of his body... The mysterious relief sculptures must be on him.”

Merlin’s eyes narrowed slightly. He had sensed that the fiery aura on Old Wilson’s body seemed to have weakened a great deal in a very short period of time, causing the power of Old Wilson’s attacks to be weaker than before.

“When it comes to depletion, Father still needs to rely on the fire attributed Elements in his body that he has accumulated over days and months. He won’t be able to persist for long at all, attacking in such a crazy manner. As for Big Boss, the strength in his body seems to be endless.”

Merlin understood. If the two were to continue fighting, Old Wilson’s defeat would be inevitable.

By then, Merlin finally decided to strike. He had had some concerns previously; if the Big Boss of the bandits was a Fourth-level Elemental Swordsman or higher, then it would cost Merlin some trouble to defeat this other party.

However, he had now discovered that the Big Boss of the bandits was more or less at the same level as Old Wilson. His overall strength could rival that of a Third-level Elemental Swordsman, which made him much easier to fight.

Thus, Merlin struck!

Merlin slowly walked down the slope of the hill alone, directly into the midst of the bandits. When some of the bandits saw Merlin, they immediately brandished their greatswords and swung them down without hesitation.

Crack, crack.

Before one of the bandits could bring his greatswords down, his entire body was already frozen in place. Still maintaining the pose of a man brandishing his greatsword, he was unmoving, looking like an ice sculpture that was true to life.

Merlin's footsteps did not falter. He walked into the midst of the bandits, as before. Not only that; several bandits were mysteriously frozen into ice sculptures wherever he went. It was extremely strange!

This weird situation caused many bandits to exchange looks; they did not dare to charge at Merlin again.

In his heart, Merlin was clear that he had just unleashed six Frost in just an instant, moments ago. He was lucky that the Spell Model for the Frost had accumulated a lot of Magic Power over a period of time. Only because of that, Merlin could squander them so recklessly.

Although it looked like he had spent his Magic Power lavishly, the effect was superb. At least, no more bandits dared to rush at Merlin.

"A Spell Caster!"

Big Boss had also noticed Merlin. After clashing forcefully against Old Wilson once more, he speedily retreated and increased the distance between him and Old Wilson, fixing his eyes upon Merlin vigilantly.

"Stop!"

Princess Charise who previously wanted to rush toward the bandits was shocked at Merlin's appearance, as well as the sight of all those bandits that were frozen into ice sculptures. Immediately, she commanded the team to stop moving forward

"A Spell Caster..."

Princess Charise muttered in a low voice. Being the royal princess, she had a certain understanding of both Spell Casters from the Kingdom of Blackmoon and Wizards from the Church of Light.

Moreover, there were still some Spell Casters hidden secretly among the royal family, such as Prince Frederick.

Princess Charise stroked the black ring on her finger gently. Prince Frederick was a powerful Spell Caster. He, whose identity remained hidden among the royal family, possessed a terrifying power.

It was also because of Prince Frederick's hindrance that Princess Charise and the others were able to escape Light City safely.

Because of the Church of Light, Spell Casters from the Kingdom of Blackmoon had been proclaimed as an evil heretic, an embodiment of terror, evil, and despicableness. However, here they were at the border between the Kingdom of Blackmoon and the Kingdom of Light. These bandits had encountered some powerful Spell Casters, hence they were no strangers to the latter.

Most bandits stopped what they were doing. Their faces full of fear as they looked at the ice sculptures around Merlin.

The Big Boss was still silently withdrawing, but Merlin who has been paying attention would never allow the other party to leave. Hence, in small, quick steps he approached the Big Boss.

Big Boss frowned, his face full of dread for what might happen. He said in a low voice, "Honourable Spell Caster, I don't know that you are among this troop. I am terribly sorry if I've offended you! I'll leave with my people immediately."

"Leave? You think so?"

Merlin took his time to approach the Big Boss.

Big Boss's expression changed, and suddenly he waved his hand in an exaggerated move. Immediately, several bandits rushed to his front. Still, he did not dare to loosen down. He asked in a deep voice, "Honourable Spell Caster, I don't know what is the relationship between you and these people, but once I order my men to attack, I am afraid that apart from you, the whole troop will not survive."

"Try it, then, and see if you stand a chance."

Merlin's calm eyes suddenly turned sharp.

"Frost!"

A group of ice crystals appeared on the body of the Big Boss as a dozen more bandits gathered in front of him simultaneously. Their physical qualities rivaled even First-level Elemental Swordsman.

“Father, now!”

Merlin shouted aloud. With a fierce wave of hands, he sent three balls of fire that flew quickly at bandits. When the fireballs blasted, strong flames burned continuously. The bandits immediately fell into chaos.

Old Wilson who grasped the meaning of Merlin’s call quickly shouted. He resembled a humanoid beast as he waved his greatsword and rushed toward the Big Boss.

“Bang bang bang.”

The frightening Old Wilson whose strength was infinitely close to the level of a Fourth-level Elemental Swordsman forcefully threw off several bandits who guarded in front of their Big Boss.

“Cracks.”

Unbelievably, the ice crystal frozen on Big Boss cracked. His face was filled rapidly with redness. There were also bloodshot in his eyes. He shouted in a twisted grimace, “Haha, you can’t ground me!”

Merlin narrowed his eyes slightly. Indeed, he had underestimated his opponent. A common beginner Elementary Swordsman could never have broken out of Merlin’s Frost.

However, like Old Wilson, the Big Boss was infinitely close to the existence of a Fourth-level Elemental Swordsman. Ordinary Frost could limit his movement only for a while.

Big Boss struggled forcefully to shatter the ice crystal on his body. Immediately, he turned around, prepared to run frantically to the opposite direction.

“Large Frost!”

Merlin did not hesitate to release the Large Frost, which was several times stronger than ordinary Frost.

Big Boss had just lifted one foot when, almost instantaneously, he was covered by ice crystals. His whole body was completely frozen by thick ice crystals except for his head.

“Ah, break at once!”

Big Boss screamed hysterically. The blue veins on his forehead bulged, and his muscles seemed to expand to their limits. He had exhausted all his strength, wanting to break free from the ice crystals on his body.

However, no matter how hard he tried, the ice crystals on his body showed no sign of rupture.

“Swoosh.”

Merlin accelerated and sent out more fireballs, one after another, despite this requiring a large consumption of Magic Power. They blasted around Big Boss to prevent other bandits from coming forward to rescue.

“Father, we want him alive.”

Merlin blurted as he noticed Old Wilson approaching the Big Boss. He was afraid Old Wilson would lose control and kill the target.

Old Wilson came to the side of Big Boss who was frozen into ice crystals. He sneered and kicked the man in Merlin’s direction.

“Swoosh.”

A fireball emitting a horribly high heat appeared in front of the Big Boss instantly.

Merlin’s mouth curled upward into a smile. He looked at Old Wilson who was still slashing the bandits and said calmly, “Big Boss, I think your men should stop the attack.”

Big Boss's expression kept shifting like the clouds. As he felt the scorching temperature of the fireball floating in the space, he knew that he had no choice but to scream aloud. "Stop fighting at once. Second Commander, order the men to retreat!"

These bandits dared not defy the command of their Big Boss, and gradually retreated backward. Although, they did not move too far back, all the while keeping their glares at Old Wilson and others fiercely.

There were thousands of bandits, not including those fierce bandits whose bodies were comparable to those of the First-level Elemental Swordsmen. If they gathered and attacked, perhaps it would turn out as the Big Boss had mentioned earlier, that no one would be spared other than Merlin.

"Father, take him to the carriage."

Merlin let Old Wilson brought Big Boss to the carriage. The latter was frozen by the Large Frost. No matter how strong he was, he would not be able to break free in a short time.

Old Wilson then raised Big Boss and threw him into the carriage directly. Merlin followed closely and got into the carriage, while Old Wilson gathered the remaining black-armored knights and continued stood facing the thousands of bandits located not far away.

In the carriage, Merlin did not rush to speak. Instead, he just looked at Big Boss quietly. The latter could not help and finally broke the silence with a sneer. "You don't dare to kill me either. If I die, my men will tear you all into pieces!"

Merlin shook his head and smiled playfully. He said in a calm tone, "It seems that you still don't understand the current situation. Your immediate man, that leader, is not content with his lot. Perhaps, he wishes for your death even more so than myself!"

The expression of the Big Boss changed and fell gradually.

After what seemed like a long time, the Big Boss finally asked in a hoarse voice, "What do you want?"

Big Boss eventually understood that this mysterious Spell Caster in front of him was hoping to obtain something from him.

Chapter 65: Deal II

Merlin gave a slight smile before gently opening his palm, revealing a relief sculpture in his hand.

Shivers went down Big Boss's spine as he stared at the relief sculpture in Merlin's hand.

The shocked look on Big Boss's face already told Merlin the answer. With that, he asked nonchalantly, "You should know this relief sculpture?"

Big Boss finally recovered from his surprise after a long time. His expression eased down when he looked at Merlin again. Before, he had no idea what Merlin's purpose was; now that he knew Merlin only wanted the relief sculpture, it set his mind at rest. At the very least, Merlin would not cause him harm until he obtained his goal.

"I didn't expect you to also have a relief sculpture. I assume you've noticed the strange posture on it?"

Big Boss stopped speaking for a while as he scanned Merlin up and down with his eyes. However, one's physical state would not change significantly even after practicing the posture on mysterious relief sculpture. Therefore, Big Boss was not able to figure out Merlin's physical quality.

"I do have these relief sculptures. Three of them! I've them kept in a secret place. If you let me go, I can exchange one of mine with yours."

Big Boss collected himself and began to bargain with Merlin.

Merlin shook his head and said in his usual calm voice, "I never thought of killing you. To do that will end up with your bandits killing my entire troop. A battle that even I can't win! My 'invitation' to you over here was only to make a deal."

As soon as his voice ended, several fireballs appeared within Merlin's hands. They began to float around Big Boss. The high heat emitted gradually melted the ice crystals that trapped the man.

Frozen ice crystals quickly turned into water droplets. Big Boss stretched himself slightly. It seemed he was not very much affected by it.

However, he did not leave. Instead, he continued sitting opposite Merlin. His eager eyes glanced at the relief sculpture in Merlin's hands from time to time. He was dreaded to obtain that relief sculpture in Merlin's hands, as it could enhance his physical quality.

"I want all three of your relief sculptures!"

Merlin announced eventually. His unexpected request astounded Big Boss, who later sneered, "Honourable Spell Caster, although you've just let me go, and my life is in your hands at any time, but don't you think your request to exchange a relief sculpture with three of mine is rather ridiculous?"

Big Boss clenched his fist, and his whole body went on the alert. He would definitely go all out if Merlin wanted to start a fight again.

"I can make you a Spell Caster!"

Merlin said softly. However, these words which carried the weight of feathers landed like a deafening thunder in Big Boss's ears. He felt as if he has been struck by the lightning.

"What did you say?"

"I can make you a Spell Caster!"

Merlin repeated himself. The composed Big Boss just seconds ago was already shaking slightly. His fists were still clenched tightly, as he could not restrain his inner excitement.

"My name is Gulliver Keane!"

Big Boss suddenly stood up. His face was a little flushed because of his boiling excitement.

"You've got yourself a deal!"

Big Boss Gulliver Keane agreed to Merlin's conditions without any hesitation. Keane also expressed his sincerity to Merlin by immediately revealing his real name.

A Spell Caster mastered extraordinary power! Keane was definitely clear about this. He who loitered actively on the border of the Kingdom of Blackmoon all these years had surely heard numerous rumors about the Spell Casters.

At the moment, even though his physical quality has reached the terrifying peak of Third-level Elemental Swordsman with the help of these three mysterious relief sculptures, he was still easily subdued by Merlin. This also further proved the power of a Spell Caster.

Being able to become a Spell Caster was something Keane would have never imagine. Now he was being offered such an opportunity only at the cost of exchanging three relief sculptures. He had long memorized those postures on the three relief sculptures in his mind. In fact, they were of not much use to him anymore.

"Spell Caster..."

Keane stood up, wanting to say something, but felt slightly embarrassed as he realized he did not know Merlin's name.

"Wilson Merlin!"

Merlin finished his sentenced.

"Merlin, my three reliefs are kept hidden in a secret place. Do you want to go with me, or wait here as I pick them up?"

Big Boss Keane turned around to ask after he jumped off the carriage.

Merlin thought for a moment before replying, "I'll go with you."

Keane smiled. Of course, he knew that Merlin still had some concerns. Besides, he would not dare to have any extraordinary behavior if Merlin followed along.

“Alright, let’s go.”

Keane nodded and led the way at the front. He waved slightly at the Second Commander of the bandits. The man hesitated for a second but eventually came forward with a few other bandits.

“Merlin, what’re you doing?”

Old Wilson frowned and asked in a puzzled tone as he noticed Merlin was actually letting the bandits’ leader off.

Merlin could not explain in detail. Hence, he brushed him off with a simple reply, “Father, this is a misunderstanding. I will first leave with Keane, and explain to you in detail when I get back.”

After that, Moss hopped on the carriage behind Big Boss Keane and slowly drove to the bandits.

Merlin has not yet learned to ride horses. In the process of fleeing, Merlin had felt a lot of inconvenience because of this. He secretly made up his mind that he must learn how to ride after settling down in the Kingdom of Blackmoon.

“Stop right there!”

Merlin drew the curtain at the sound of that angry yell. Prince Benin from Firebird Knights was blocking himself in front of Big Boss Gulliver Keane.

His face was filled with rage. He pointed a finger at Keane and shouted, “You despicable bandits want to leave now after killing so many of my knights? Deputy Commander Wayne, kill these mean and shameless bandits immediately!”

Big Boss Keane glanced at Merlin and noticed that Merlin’s expression had not changed. He could not help but sneer. “What an idiot!”

He then ignored Prince Benin and quickly returned to the bandits.

Merlin also shook his head helplessly. He shifted his attention to Princess Charise. Prince Benin was still a naive child who knew nothing, but Princess Charise should be well aware that Big Boss Keane was a captive of Merlin's, not of the royal family.

Princess Charise bit her lip tightly. She knew that Merlin had definitely reached an agreement with the bandits' leader without taking the royal family into consideration.

At the thought of this, Princess Charise took a deep breath and gradually calmed her mind. She was not Prince Benin. It was clear that their current situation was actually extremely dangerous. Their troops of 800 Firebird Knights was only left with 400. Besides, many of them were wounded, so there was not much combat power.

Hence, their priority now should be to settle down in the Kingdom of Blackmoon as soon as possible.

"Baron Wilson, thank you very much for saving us! However, we'll not stay any longer as we have a long journey ahead of us. Please forgive us!"

Princess Charise bit her lip again as she suppressed her anger. She did not look at Merlin at all, but took the remaining Firebird Knights and left quickly.

'It's good for them to leave, as it means one less trouble for me.'

Merlin glanced at Old Wilson. He did not care much about the departure of Princess Charise and others. Merlin was glad that they had taken the initiative to leave because that meant he did not have to worry about Old Wilson insisting in escorting the royal members to the Kingdom of Blackmoon.

Therefore, Merlin ordered Moss to move the carriage. They followed closely behind a large number of bandits and gradually drifted away to the distance.

Chapter 66: Deal III

Merlin sat in the carriage. Although his eyes were closed, his Mind Power was expanded out there, inspecting Big Boss Keane's every move. Once the other party made any strange movement, Merlin was definite that man would be killed in an instant.

However, he had already lured him with the temptation of "becoming a Spell Caster," something he believed Keane would never refuse. Moreover, Keane did have the qualifications to become a Spell Caster.

Merlin had long realized that anyone who was able to see the strange postures on those mysterious relief sculptures possessed extraordinary Mind Power than other people, and that was one of the most important conditions for becoming a Spell Caster.

As long as one's Mind Power reached the required qualifications for becoming a Spell Caster, the person could try constructing Spell Model in their Awareness with Mind Power. Once successful, the person could then become a Spell Caster.

Big Boss Keane possessed such qualifications. His Mind Power was actually even greater than Merlin's before he turned into a Spell Caster.

Using a Spell Model in exchange for three mysterious relief sculptures, coupled with the possibility of resolving a crisis for the entire troop – the deal was indeed worthy.

Otherwise, even if Merlin could kill Big Boss Keane, he could not handle the thousands of bandits left behind. Especially those bandits to whom Keane had taught the strange postures on the relief sculptures. They were more powerful than Old Wilson's knights and were difficult to deal with.

Brief moments later, the bandits arrived at a massive valley surrounded by mountains and water. Its environment was very suitable for living.

There were several simple wooden houses in the valley, as well as numerous caves of different sizes. Old people, women, and children shuffled around the valley. The whole valley appeared like a thriving little village.

As the many bandits returned to the valley, many women stepped forward and looked at the crowd to see if their husbands were well.

This was nothing like a bandit's' lair. It resembled more like a peaceful, quiet village.

“What do you think? It took me five years to build it!”

Keane revealed a hint of pride in his face as they looked at the busy scene under the valley.

“Not bad. Those elite bandits and knights have physical qualities comparable to First-level Elemental Swordsmen. Was it you who taught them the posture on the relief sculptures?”

Merlin had high regards to those four or five hundred extraordinary bandits, whose physical qualities were on par to that of a First-level Elemental Swordsman. Even the Firebird Legion at its peak had no more than a thousand Elemental Swordsmen greater than the First-level.

Keane looked at Merlin, his eyes showing deep emotion as he whispered. “That’s right, I’ve carefully selected these people. I only taught them one set of posture, hence they can just cultivate to the level of a First-level Elemental Swordsman. On the other hand, those who are more talented and more loyal, I will teach them two sets of posture, so that their physical qualities rival a Second-level Element Swordsman. It’s with their force that the Hurricane Bandits run wild in this area. No other bandits gang is able to compete with us.”

Merlin nodded. These rabble not equipped with many armors were invincible in this area by relying on just those five hundred bandits endowed with a force comparable to First-level Elemental Swordsmen. Even a heavy armored knight troop specifically trained by Old Wilson could not stand as their opponent.

“Do you know the origins of the relief sculptures you obtained?”

Merlin continued asking.

Keane frowned and shook his head. “I retrieved these relief sculptures by chance. I only know they’re probably relics from the Molta Empire. I don’t know the specifics.”

The Molta Empire had always remained a mystery. It unified the whole continent but was later overturned within a night. It seemed that no one knew the reason for the collapse of this huge empire.

Moreover, more ideas developed in Merlin's mind now that he saw these relief sculptures and the five hundred powerful bandits.

These relief sculptures were the product of the Molta Empire. If every ordinary soldier of the Molta Empire had practiced the postures of those relief sculptures and possessed the strength of First-level Elemental Swordsmen, Second-level Elemental Swordsmen, and even Third-level Elemental Swordsmen, they would have thousands of soldiers comparable to the powerful Elemental Swordsmen. With such an army, it was not unbelievable that the Molta Empire could unify the entire continent.

However, why would a strong empire that was too mighty to even imagine been overturned in a short period of time? There were even many historical rumors that mentioned the Molta Empire collapsed almost overnight.

What actually happened? What kind of force had led to the collapse of the Molta Empire overnight?

"Come with me, the relief sculptures are stored in the place I live."

Merlin shook his head slightly, as if to dismiss the doubts and puzzles about the collapse of the Molta Empire from his mind, and followed behind Keane closely.

Keane lived in a massive cave. There were traces of artificial excavation in it. The exterior environment looked peaceful and quiet, with no one around. It seemed that Keane has made some arrangements for the place to receive only Merlin and Keane.

"Please take a seat!"

After Merlin sat down, Keane turned around and entered a room in the cave. It took him a while to reappear, but when he did, he was holding three relief sculptures in his hands.

Keane put the relief sculptures on the stone table, allowing Merlin to examine them.

"Sure enough, they are the same type of relief sculptures!"

A hint of sparkle flashed across Merlin's eyes. He picked up one of the relief sculptures and gently stroked it with his hand. His vision became blurred and was covered with an illusion. Only to his

eyes, some strange postures began to surface on the relief sculptures. They appeared quite different from the postures that Merlin had practiced before.

This time, he did not dwell too long in the “illusion.” With Merlin’s current Mind Power, he was able to regain consciousness from the “illusion” at any time.

“As part of the deal, this relief sculpture is for you.”

Merlin also handed his relief sculpture over to Keane.

Keane narrowed his eyes slightly but he was not anxious to pick up the relief sculpture on the table. Instead, he looked at Merlin with eager eyes. “Merlin, you mentioned that you can make me a Spell Caster...”

Obtaining another relief sculpture would allow Keane the strength to cross a big realm to be on par to compete with a Fourth-level Elemental Swordsman. His strength would multiply, but that seemed to be less alluring than the idea of him becoming a Spell Caster.

“The key to becoming a Spell Caster relies on Mind Power and Spell Model. You already equip sufficient Mind Power, as for the Spell Model...”

Merlin trailed off for a while and finally took out the Whirlwind’s Spell Model from old man Etha’s Spell Manual. He spoke without much interest, “Here’s Whirlwind’s Spell Model. It’s only a Zero-level spell. If you can construct the Spell Model into the Awareness, then you can become a Spell Caster!”

“Spell Model!”

Keane’s eyes were glued to the Spell Model on the table. Even his voice trembled a little because of overwhelming excitement.

Chapter 67: The Kingdom of Blackmoon I

“Swoosh!”

A whirlwind appeared out of thin air. Some dust and gravel were caught into it, whistling and rotating constantly.

Big Boss Keane beamed with joy. This was his first time casting a spell.

The whirlwind dissipated quickly as Keane was so overwhelmed with excitement that he did not control his Mind Power carefully. However, he did not care. He could practice slowly in the future as long as the Spell Model did not collapse in his Awareness.

“Not bad, you’ve gotten hold the basics of Whirlwind. You’re now an Entrance-level Spell Caster. You only need to increase your Mind Power continuously and practice on more Zero-level spells to enhance your strength!”

Merlin said with indifference. He had spent a day here explaining to Keane the general knowledge of a Spell Caster and certain aspects that needed more attention. Then, he successfully helped Keane to construct Whirlwind’s Spell Model in his Awareness.

“It’s time for me to leave!”

Merlin stood up after seeing that Keane had completely mastered Whirlwind. The deal between them was completed, and both parties had benefited tremendously.

Keane looked at Merlin and thought for a while before offering, “I’ll send you a team as an escort if you’re going to the Kingdom of Blackmoon. You’ll not encounter any more bandits along the way with the presence of the Hurricane Bandits.”

Merlin nodded in agreement. Although they could definitely take down common bandits with the strength of Old Wilson’s knight, encountering great numbers of bandits along the journey would be troublesome anyhow. Naturally, it would be better if they could avoid the problem altogether.

Later, the team of twenty knights sent by Keane waved the flags of Hurricane Bandits proudly in the air, and made their loud departure as they escorted Merlin out from the valley...

...

“Father, will Merlin be in danger?”

Macy was practicing her swordsmanship. She wiped the sweat off her face and asked in a low voice.

After the unexpected change of events in Blackwater City, Macy truly felt how weak she was, hence she was impatient and spent all her time in practicing her swordsmanship. However, the more eager she was, the lesser amount of Fire Elements were absorbed into her body.

Naturally, Old Wilson understood Macy’s anxiety, but right now he was not able to teach Macy properly. He could only wait until they settled down in the Kingdom of Blackmoon before he could direct Macy’s cultivation in the right direction.

“Wilson, is Merlin going to be okay?”

Baron Parman also asked with slight concern.

Old Wilson’s expression was unchanged as he replied calmly, “There should be no problem. There’s nothing we can do but wait. If Merlin still has not return tomorrow –”

Before his words were finished, the knight in charge of the vigil rushed forward to report, “Lord Baron, Young Master Merlin is back.”

Sure enough, when Old Wilson looked to the said direction, Moss was slowly bringing the carriage to a stop. Though, behind the carriage were twenty bandits.

Merlin alighted from the carriage, looking the same as before he left. Old Wilson quickly came to Merlin and murmured as he looked at the twenty bandits, “Merlin, what are these bandits doing here?”

Merlin did not answer but whispered back, “Father, I’ll give you a detailed explanation regarding this.”

Later, Merlin asked for Commander Prat. He and a dozen knights were ordered to surround the carriage so no one would come forward to disrupt.

Inside the carriage, the expression on Old Wilson's face grew even more concerned. He knew that it must be some matter of great importance since Merlin was being so cautious.

"Merlin, what actually happened?"

Old Wilson, who had always maintained a composed manner, finally felt uncertain about this.

Merlin took out three relief sculptures from his arms and placed them in front of Old Wilson. He then asked in a hoarse voice, "Father, don't you ever wonder how those bandits become so strong? Their physical qualities rival those of First-level Elemental Swordsmen, and the leader of the bandits is even powerful enough to stand as equal with you?"

Old Wilson was confused regarding this matter for a long while, but he did not know what the specific reason was. Now that Merlin mentioned, an idea flashed in his mind as his eyes swept past the three relief sculptures in front of him.

"Is it because of these relief sculptures?"

Old Wilson asked in confusion. He picked up the relief sculptures, turned them over and examined for a while, but found nothing special.

"Father, an average person can't discover the secrets of these relief sculptures. Only people with strong innate Mind Power can realize the mystery! Each piece of these relief sculptures contains a set of strange postures. Practicing these postures with perseverance will increase one's physical quality to rival even the Elemental Swordsmen!"

As soon as Merlin's voice faded, Old Wilson's face changed. Only now did he know these small relief sculptures in front of him had such a huge effect.

If one piece of relief sculpture meant the possibility of becoming a First-level Elemental Swordsman, then two pieces, three pieces or even more, coupled with the pure body strength, could make one completely comparable to those powerful Elemental Swordsmen.

The value contained in these relief sculptures was priceless. It might cause an immediate uproar if the news was leaked. Old Wilson was an excellent soldier. Naturally, he realized the military value of these relief sculptures.

“These relief sculptures belong to those bandits?”

Old Wilson could not resist his curiosity.

Merlin nodded in reply. “Yes, I exchange these relief sculptures with the bandits with a Spell Model. It was a fair deal! The people outside are the bandits instructed by their leader to handle the small bandits we might encounter along the way. They can guarantee us a smooth and pleasant journey to the Kingdom of Blackmoon.”

Old Wilson said nothing but sat there as if in a trance. Even though he had experienced numerous peculiar things in his life, this was the first time he heard of such a magical thing in the world.

Elemental Swordsmen constituted the foundation of a kingdom. They represented the pillar strength! However, it was not simple to cultivate an Elemental Swordsman. Naturally-born talents were fundamental. Without an elemental affinity, one could never be an Elemental Swordsman.

However, the postures on this mysterious relief sculptures did not require any elemental affinity. Any ordinary people, like Big Boss Keane of the bandits, could practice it. In a short period of time, he managed to train 500 hundred bandits who were equally strong in strength as First-level Elemental Swordsmen. His men made a clean sweep of all the bandits in this area and eventually became a tremendous force.

These are all thanks to the mysterious relief sculptures.

If such powerful relief sculptures were passed on, those Elemental Swordsmen would no longer be the backbone of the army, and the entire continent might encounter a massive change.

These relief sculptures might bring forth an intimidating change. It was no wonder Merlin was being extra cautious.

“Merlin, always bring these relief sculptures with you. Never pass them onto others, and never mention this again.”

Old Wilson finally spoke after a long time.

A smile washed over Merlin's face, and he nodded. "Father, be rest assured, I'm well aware of the importance of these relief sculptures. That's why I'm going to pass all these relief sculptures, a total of four sets of postures, to you, Father. After settling down in the Kingdom of Blackmoon, you can choose whomever you want to pass on these four set of postures to."

Merlin had high expectations. When Old Wilson mastered these four postures, with his natural innate talents, his strength would increase to an unbelievably strong level. This could ensure Wilson house would not decline when the time comes for Merlin to leave the family.

Chapter 68: The Kingdom of Blackmoon II

Ravens Castle located in the Kingdom of Blackmoon was an enormous military fortress. The population used to be scarce, but recently, Ravens Castle was visited by many people.

These were the people who escaped from the Kingdom of Light. Some were refugees, some were businessmen, some were small aristocrats; all of them wanted to make their way into Ravens Castle.

That was because Ravens Castle was the only entrance leading to the Kingdom of Blackmoon. Otherwise, they would have to go through thousands of miles of deserted mountains.

The deserted mountains contained with them all sorts of dangers. Almost no one had crossed the barren mountains to get into the Kingdom of Blackmoon. Therefore, the deserted mountains became a natural barrier between the Kingdom of Blackmoon and the Kingdom of Light.

However, it was not easy to enter the Kingdom of Blackmoon through Ravens Castle either. Everyone must pay the required amount of gold coins before they were allowed to pass through. On the other hand, those dressed in ruin and had not enough gold coins were denied entry and held up outside.

These refugees either returned to the Kingdom of Light or waited endlessly for the day Ravens Castle might grant free entry for all until they eventually died in front of Ravens Castle.

“Hey, look, there’s a troop of knights with numerous horse carriages. Hehe, there’s even heavy armored knights... Seems like they’re from an affluent house. We can definitely rip them off with a huge deal later!”

Some of the guards in Ravens Castle noticed a huge fleet in the distance dressed in bright, shiny armors that came with numerous carriages. From experience, they knew they could rip this other wealthy family off for passing through Ravens Castle.

The troop approached Ravens Castle in a steady motion. It was headed by a sturdy middle-aged man who frowned at the sight of Ravens Castle and waved for the troop to stop.

“Father, why did you stop?”

Merlin jumped off from the carriage and walked to the side of Old Wilson.

The troop that the guards were eyeing on was indeed Old Wilson’s troop of nearly two thousand people. After spending three to four days of long journey, they finally arrived at the border of the Kingdom of Blackmoon.

The bandits that escorted Merlin had left. According to the information they provided, the only way to enter the Kingdom of Blackmoon was through Ravens Castle.

Merlin noticed a fortress not far away and assumed that must be Ravens Castle that the bandits mentioned. As long as they passed through Ravens Castle, they would be finally safe, and no longer have to worry about the pursuit from the Church of Light.

Old Wilson pointed at Ravens Castle and said in a deep voice, “Merlin, we must remove our armors and weapons in order to enter Ravens Castle. We’re a large troop, and our combat power will be drastically reduced without weapons and armor. We’ll be in a difficult situation if something unfortunate happens.”

Merlin looked toward the direction of Old Wilson’s finger and noticed that, indeed, several knights were removing their armor and weapons before entering Ravens Castle.

It was not difficult to understand. The Kingdom of Blackmoon would never allow a large number of armed personnel to pass through Ravens Castle. They would be inflicting troubles on themselves if these people were sent by the church.

“Father, we certainly can’t have our large troop bring in armor and weapons. We have no choice but to unload them first, and then find another way upon entering Ravens Castle.”

Merlin thought for a moment but could not come up with a better solution. They had to bear patiently for the better good.

“Well, Merlin, Baron Parman, the three of us can go ahead first.”

Therefore, Old Wilson urged Prat to look after the troop. Along with Baron Parman and Merlin, the group of three headed for Ravens Castle to get a hold of the situation.

The castle guards that have long noticed Merlin and the others immediately barred them aside, then announced in a cold tone, “Leave the horse, remove your armors and weapons, and then pay ten gold coins for each person as entrance fee!”

Old Wilson and Baron Parman’s face fell simultaneously. To remove armor and weapons was not impossible, even if the whole troop of nearly two thousand people had to pay the fees of 20,000 gold coins in total, that was also not a problem to the wealthy Wilson family and Parman family.

However, to leave behind the horses? That exceeded their limit. Without horses, how should they ride their carriages? Were they supposed to let the ladies travel on foot?

Besides, without the horses, this massive troop consisted of two thousand people would move extremely slow, not to mention the problems and tricky situation that would arise along the route.

That idea made Merlin frowned.

“Even the horses? But why did that knight that passed through earlier didn’t leave his horse behind?”

Baron Parman tried to press down the boiling anger beneath his skin and asked in a hoarse voice.

Those guards threw a sideways glance at Baron Parman and sneered, “He was alone. Besides, he’s an Elemental Swordsman, so he’s allowed to keep the horse.”

“You mean, Elemental Swordsmen can keep their horse?”

A guard shifted his attention to Merlin and nodded. “That’s right. Not only Elemental Swordsmen can keep their horse, they can enter right through Ravens Castle in their armors and weapons.”

Merlin and Old Wilson exchanged glances and nodded slightly at each other. Perhaps the Kingdom of Blackmoon was trying to encourage the influx of Elemental Swordsmen from the Kingdom of Light. After all, the Kingdom of Blackmoon and the Kingdom of Light was still in hostility. If they could attract more Elemental Swordsmen, which were the opposition’s strongest military force, that would definitely deal a blow to the Kingdom of Light.

The only thing was, even if Old Wilson and the others would be grant entry, not every person among the two thousand people were Elemental Swordsmen.

“We can leave behind armors and weapons, even the gold coins are not a problem, but can we keep the horses? We have a massive troop, after all. Without horses, we’ll encounter many difficulties even if we manage to pass through Ravens Castle.”

Merlin said to the guards in Ravens Castle calmly. The guards looked at the huge fleet stopped in the distance, and the corners of their mouths curled up into smiles. They also pressed down their voice, “Actually, you can keep your horses, though at the price of sixty gold coins per horse. You can bring your horses along by paying sixty gold coins per person.”

“What? Sixty gold coins?”

Old Wilson’s expression changed immediately. Simultaneously, Imposing Aura and sparks of flames appeared around his body.

If they had to pay the insane amount of sixty gold coins per person, that would mean a total of 120,000 gold coins for the troop of nearly two thousand people. Although the Parman family and the Wilson family were wealthy, 120,000 gold coins was an astronomical figure far exceeded their family properties.

“What are you doing? Want to attack the fortress?”

Old Wilson's natural burly built was already intimidating. As he released the Imposing Aura, the guards of Ravens Castle immediately became nervous.

Therefore, on top of Ravens Castle, a team of guards appeared within seconds, densely packed around the entire fortress. The heavy crossbows in their hands aiming accurately at Old Wilson, Merlin, and the others. In an instant, the atmosphere in the air tensed up.

Merlin looked up at the guards on the fortress, and his face revealed a slight sense of helplessness. A military fortress as such was itself a terrifying war machine. Although Old Wilson once said that powerful Spell Caster could destroy a military fortress alone, Merlin still had not possessed such ability for now. Even he could not handle if these many arrows shoot across the sky.

Chapter 69: The Kingdom of Blackmoon III

The guards in front of Ravens Castle sneered as they saw Merlin and others stand there motionless. "This is Ravens Castle, the Kingdom of Blackmoon! Yesterday, there were even some people that came claiming to be royal prince and princess. Hah, in the end, they still paid us gold coins obediently just to pass through here. Either leave the horse or pay the gold coins. There is no other choice!"

Old Wilson and Baron Parman were furious. They stared hard at these guards, but they were still rational enough to not start a fight. In front of such a military fortress, let alone a thousand knights, even tens of thousands of well-equipped, well-trained knights, were unlikely to succeed in taking down this heavily guarded military fortress.

Merlin was reduced to no options, so he whispered to Old Wilson, "Father, let's go back to the troop for a more comprehensive discussion."

Hence, Old Wilson and the others returned to the troop.

Merlin took the lead and spoke, "We're never going to surrender the horses. It seems that Princess Charise and her troops have also paid the required gold coins to the guards so they could bring their horses through Ravens Castle. If there is no other way, we have no choice but to work hard to gather 120,000 gold coins..."

After a while, Old Wilson whispered, “I’ve spent almost all of the taxes collected from my territory on the heavy armor knight troop. Right now, Wilson family can only contribute 40,000 gold coins at most!”

Merlin frowned slightly. The entire Wilson family’s income was supported only by the taxation on the territory, and almost half of the taxes had been used by Old Wilson to train the heavy armor knight troop. Hence, several years down the road, the wealth of the Wilson family was left with only a small amount.

“Baron Parman, how much can you contribute?”

Merlin looked at Baron Parman who later forced a smile. “I can contribute slightly more, but only 60,000 gold coins at most. It’s still far away from 120,000 gold coins!”

The gap of 20,000 gold coins was, indeed, not a small amount.

“What should we do?”

Merlin was really out of ideas. 20,000 gold coins were not a small number. Besides, even if they managed to gather the required amount, how were they going to support the daily life after nearly two thousand people after arriving at the Kingdom of Blackmoon?

On the other side of the coin, they only needed to pay 20,000 gold coins if they surrender the horses. However, without horses, the traveling speed of the large troop would be unimaginably slow and might possibly cause numerous other incidents to arise later.

Forcing their way through Ravens Castle was an even more whimsical idea. Even tens of thousands of elite knights were not necessarily strong enough to break through a terrifying military fortress such as Ravens Castle, let alone their troop of thousand knights.

“If there is really no other way, I might have to return along the same path we came from, and finally exchange some gold coins with Keane using another Spell Model.”

Merlin felt extremely helpless. Since he arrived in this world, he had never been worried about money. Never had he expected to fall to the point where he had to exchange a Spell Model with bandits for some gold coins.

“Don’t worry, you guys should wait here for a few days while I go back to the bandits -”

Merlin narrowed his eyes slightly before he could finish his sentence. He noticed a large number of knights appearing outside of Ravens Castle. There was about a thousand of them, well-equipped, gradually moving towards Ravens Castle.

After seeing these knights, those guards in Ravens Castle hurriedly went forward to greet them respectfully. “Dear my lord, Lady Countess just sent someone to ask about Your Lordship, it seems like an urgency that requires Your Lordship to head back quickly.”

“Alright.”

The troop was headed by a count, which seemed like an important figure of Ravens Castle. These guards who treated the count with utmost respect immediately opened the gates of the fortress.

“Maybe there is a way...”

Merlin’s eyes lit up as he said to Old Wilson and Baron Parman, “Wait here for a minute, I will come back soon. Hopefully with a solution to our obstacle.”

After saying that, Merlin walked straight toward the big number of knights.

“Honourable Count, my lord!”

A strong-built count dressed in bright, shiny armor turned his head around at the direction of the unfamiliar voice. He then frowned and asked, “Who are you?”

It was Merlin. He raised his head fearlessly at the count who had just spoken. “Honourable Count, I’m Wilson Merlin, who had just escaped from the Kingdom of Light with my family. However, we’ve encountered a little trouble at Ravens Castle. If my lord will be so generous to lend us a helping hand, in return, my lord will have me as your friend!”

“A friendship with a fallen nobleman who’s on the flee?”

The count laughed immediately as he looked at Old Wilson and other people in the distance. Small aristocrats like Merlin that tried to escape from the Kingdom of Light were so common recently that he had already become accustomed to them.

“Yes, that’s right! A friendship with a Spell Caster!”

Merlin rested his hand on his chest and bowed slightly, but on his face was still his usual composed, calm look.

“Spell Caster?”

The smile on the count’s face froze in an instant. Then, the expression turned into something strange and undecipherable, as if it was an emotion filled with disbelief and absurdity.

“Click.”

Merlin smiled faintly, then extended his finger and pointed toward the count’s hand. The big sword in the count’s hand was immediately frozen by a thick layer of ice crystals in the blink of an eye.

The knights around the count became nervous. An earthy-yellow colored light even flashed around several knights. Those were the light of Earth Elements.

The strong aura clearly revealed they were Earth Swordsman that reached the peak of Third-level.

“Relax, Commander Bain. This is a respected Spell Caster!”

Lord Count recollected his thoughts and ordered his knights to stop. Then, he looked at Merlin with a smile on his face and announced aloud, “Dear Spell Caster, welcome to Ravens Castle in the Kingdom of Blackmoon! Unexpectedly, in a barbaric kingdom like the Kingdom of Light, there exists also Spell Caster who pursues true knowledge.”

After a pause, the count turned to look at Old Wilson in the distance and somehow guessed what was going on. “Wizard Merlin, I, Beckens Phuman, sincerely invite you and your family to be a guest in my residence!”

“I’m grateful, my lord, for the invitation!”

Merlin finally felt slightly relieved. Before he came to the Kingdom of Blackmoon, he knew that this was the holy land of Spell Casters. Numerous Spell Casters lived in the eastern realm represented by the Kingdom of Blackmoon. It was only in this land where people were respectful and tolerant to Spell Casters could they give birth to tremendously-powerful Spell Casters.

Judging from the attitude of Count Phuman, Merlin roughly guessed that Spell Casters were indeed well respected in the Kingdom of Blackmoon. They were able to enjoy all kinds of privileges that even in a sense, their identity almost equivalent to a noble title.

With the nod of approval of Count Phuman, the guards of Ravens Castle naturally did not dare to trouble Merlin and others anymore. Therefore, after Old Wilson and the others removed most of their weapons and armors, they followed behind Phuman’s knights and finally passed through Ravens Castle successfully.

Chapter 70: Plans I

Merlin and the rest of the troop followed Count Phuman’s knights through Ravens Castle into a small town inhabited only by soldiers. This site which was built specially to provide supply for Ravens Castle had war supplies scattered everywhere.

The legendary heretic kingdom – the barbaric, evil, and the horrible Kingdom of Blackmoon was now in front of Merlin and the others. Old Wilson, who had remained silent, appeared solemn, but Merlin noticed from his gaze that the complex surges of emotions must have emerged in his heart.

After all, Old Wilson had once participated in the extremely difficult and cruel Slaughterhouse battle and fought against the heretics of the Kingdom of Blackmoon for several years. However, here he was now, embarking on a journey to the heretic land. It was not surprising for him to experience feelings of uncertainty and change in the heart.

Apart from Old Wilson, the others such as Macy, Big-breasted Madam, and Avril were curious and found everything exciting and interesting. They drew their curtains to check out the new environment eagerly.

Count Phuman's knights gradually began to leave after returning to the small town. When they finally arrived at a white castle, there were only a hundred guards left with the count.

"Commander Bain, please help Wizard Merlin's family to settle down."

Count Phuman nodded slightly at Merlin with a smile. "Wizard Merlin, that's my castle in front, please come in!"

Old Wilson suddenly spoke in a deep voice, "Merlin, will you be safe?"

"Father, we're at the Kingdom of Blackmoon, the holy land of Spell Casters. Don't worry, nothing bad will happen to me. You should all go to rest, and we'll start planning for the next step when I return."

Merlin followed Count Phuman into the castle after reassuring Old Wilson.

There were many knights in Count Phuman's castle, making the atmosphere rather tense and murderous. Merlin explored the surrounding with his Mind Power and noticed there were more powerful knights watching his every move in the dark.

However, what confused Merlin was that he did not sense any other Spell Casters' Mind Power around. Old Wilson once mentioned that Spell Casters regularly stationed in some military fortresses at the Kingdom of Blackmoon but Merlin did not find any Spell Caster since he entered Count Phuman's castle.

He followed Count Phuman into the grand hall, and soon, the warmth from the fireplace filled the entire hall.

Count Phuman took off his heavy armor and sat on a wooden chair with ease. He waved at Merlin and said, "Be my guest, Wizard Merlin, please take a seat."

As soon as Merlin sat down, the maidservants in the castle brought in small cups of viscous soup. Some black leaves and pieces of strange objects looked like fish scales floated on the surface. Soon, a scent of fish filled the warm air.

Count Phuman smiled as he picked up the cup. “Wizard Merlin, try Ravens Castle’s specialty – the icefish soup.”

Count Phuman tilted his head backward and gulped down the soup in one gulp. He heaved a sigh of relief, though his face showed an unsatisfying pleasure.

Merlin was not interested in such a strange-looking soup, but he could not help to be curious when he saw Count Phuman’s indulgence in it. Hence, his curiosity made him take the cup and sip on it.

The first taste of the icefish soup was slightly sour but the aftertaste was an unexpected burst of sweetness on the tip of the tongue. When the fish soup went down the throat, a warm feeling quickly rose and spread rapidly in his entire body. It tasted so good that one could not help but felt comfortable.

Merlin finished the soup in the cup with his eyes closed. Finally, he expressed his admiration, “Not bad at all, this icefish soup is really wonderful.”

Naturally, there was a massive difference in the cuisine of a foreign country.

Count Phuman felt his body warmed up after drinking the icefish soup. Then, he asked casually, “Wizard Merlin, I can only imagine how difficult it must have been on your journey to Ravens Castle. What kind of plans do you have for the future?”

“My plans?”

Merlin thought for a moment before replying, “The main priority is to settle down before considering anything else.”

It was primordial to settle down in a foreign country and become familiar with the environment.

A hint of brilliance flashed across Count Phuman’s eyes. He suddenly lowered his voice and asked, “Wizard Merlin, you should be a free wizard! Why don’t you join me in Ravens Castle and station here? There must also be some powerful Elemental Swordsmen in your family who can also join Ravens Castle. I give you my word that your family will definitely have a comfortable life in Ravens Castle.”

“Join the army? My dear Count Phuman, I’m really sorry. Right now, we only want to settle down in the Kingdom of Blackmoon. Moreover, we’ve just experienced some tough battles in the Kingdom of Light, hence, my family and I do not wish to join the army at the moment.”

Almost immediately and without thorough consideration, Merlin rejected Count Phuman’s offer.

Due to his former identity, Old Wilson certainly would not agree to join the army of the Kingdom of Blackmoon. Besides that, Merlin was thinking of expanding his force as a Spell Caster in the Kingdom of Blackmoon, so it was impossible that he would bind himself to the army.

In addition, the current unstable situation in the Kingdom of Light meant a war might break out anytime soon. If that happened, perhaps Ravens Castle would bear the brunt and face the chaos first-hand.

Due to these reasons and at a time like this, Merlin would not join Ravens Castle, the army of the Kingdom of Blackmoon.

“That’s a shame…”

Count Phuman shrugged. His tone filled with regrets.

“My lord, Lady Countess wishes to see you immediately regarding an urgent matter.”

A maidservant dressed in gray hurried to the hall and whispered to Count Phuman.

“What happened?”

Count Phuman frowned and looked upstairs with a puzzled look on his face. Then, he stood up and looked at Merlin in the eyes. “Wizard Merlin, please be seated for a while. I’ll return in a minute.”

Immediately, Count Phuman walked up to the second floor.

In one of the rooms located on the second floor, a beautiful figure of a woman was pacing around the room anxiously, looking out of the door from time to time.

“Madam, what’s the matter? Why the hurry?”

Count Phuman pushed open the door impatiently and noticed his countess pacing around the house looking uneasy.

The countess was hesitant for a second, but eventually took a letter from the desk and handed it to Count Phuman. “It’s a letter from my brother, Selin. Take a look at it yourself.”

“Count Selin? What happened to him?”

Count Phuman took the letter suspiciously and began reading the letter.

Gradually, Count Phuman’s furrowed his brows, and his face took on a ghastly expression with a hint of anger.