

W. Secret 71

Chapter 71: Plans II

“I can’t agree to Count Selin’s request!” Count Phuman put down the letter and said coldly. There was even a trace of anger between his brows.

The countess’ face sank. “Phuman, my brother is in trouble. Isn’t there a few Spell Casters stationed in Ravens Castle? You’re the supreme commander of Ravens Castle. You can easily deploy some of the Spell Casters to his rescue, can’t you?”

Count Phuman felt uneasy seeing his wife who has gotten irritated and explained helplessly, “You’ve seen how those Spell Casters regard me with little respect. Even though I’m the supreme commander of Ravens Castle, I’ve no actual power to deploy those Spell Casters at all. There’s nothing that I can do!”

The countess stood up angrily and shouted hysterically, “So you’ll just watch in silence as my brother and his family is being killed?”

Count Phuman paced back and forth in the room. He appeared as if the burden of the world had been put on his shoulders.

“It’s alright if you can’t deploy Spell Casters but what about those Fourth-level Elemental Swordsmen? I believe my brother will be very grateful for that too,” the countess proposed.

Count Phuman shook his head again. The Fourth-level and above Elemental Swordsmen were all commanders stationed in Ravens Castle who was responsible for important tasks. Even if he was the supreme commander of Ravens Castle, he could not abuse his power and randomly deploy them for private affairs.

“If you’re not willing to help at all, I’ll go live with my brother!”

The countess was extremely enraged. She stood up immediately and began to pack her clothes.

“Hang on, give me a minute to think about it.”

Count Phuman realized his countess was getting genuinely infuriated. He knew that he would not be able to live in peace if the matter was not resolved.

Suddenly, Count Phuman stopped pacing and looked at his wife in surprise. “I’ve got an idea. There’s just a right candidate for this task!”

The countess turned around with an astonished look on her face but Count Phuman had already left for downstairs right away.

“Wizard Merlin, sorry to keep you waiting.” Count Phuman apologized to Merlin as he returned to the hall.

“Right, since Wizard Merlin doesn’t want to stay in Ravens Castle, what if I recommend you to another place?”

Perhaps Count Phuman was showing too much enthusiasm that it made Merlin felt strange. Just moments ago, Count Phuman was still persuading Merlin to join Ravens Castle, the army of the Kingdom of Blackmoon.

“Where’s this place?” Merlin asked politely albeit feeling confused.

Count Phuman replied almost a little too quickly, “Prakash City! This place is very suitable for Wizard Merlin and your family to settle down. The city owner of Prakash City, Count Selin, is my wife’s brother. I can write you a letter to bring to the Count of Prakash, and it’ll assist you to avoid loads of troubles if you wish to settle down in Prakash City.”

Merlin stood up swiftly and bowed to Count Phuman. “Merlin is extremely grateful for your help, my lord!”

Count Phuman smiled faintly. After a brief hesitation, he eventually said, “The thing is, Wizard Merlin, Count Selin seems to be in a difficult situation recently. I don’t know what kind of trouble specifically, but he had asked me to send some people over as assistance. However, there are too many responsibilities in Ravens Castle and I really can’t send anyone over, therefore...”

Count Phuman looked at Merlin in the eyes.

Merlin pondered on that for a bit. Their new journey in a foreign country like the Kingdom of Blackmoon was definitely not going to be all smooth and easy. He had to prove his worth and value to settle down here.

Therefore, Merlin nodded. “Merlin is willing to help if it’s not too much trouble!”

“Haha, perfect! I’ll write a letter at this instance for Wizard Merlin to bring to Count Selin when you arrive in Prakash City.”

Count Phuman appeared elated. With Merlin’s help, he was finally able to solve this tricky matter.

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As soon as Merlin returned to the residence Count Phuman had prepared for them, Old Wilson immediately called upon Merlin and Baron Parman so the three of them could discuss their next move.

“Merlin, we can’t stay in Ravens Castle forever. Where are we going next?” Old Wilson asked in a hoarse voice.

At the same time, Baron Parman also looked at Merlin deep in the eyes. Unknowingly, Merlin had become the backbone of the entire troop.

Merlin took some time to reorganize the thoughts in his head. “Father, Baron Parman, the first thing we’ve to do is to settle down as we’re not familiar with the Kingdom of Blackmoon.”

Both Baron Parman and Old Wilson nodded silently to show their agreement. Merlin continued speaking seeing they were on the same page, “Ravens Castle is a military fortress, hence we must join the army to settle down here. Earlier, in his residence, Count Phuman invited us to join Ravens Castle but I’ve rejected his offer.”

“We can’t stay in Ravens Castle, so we’ve to find some other place to settle down. Fortunately, Count Phuman recommended us to Prakash City. The head of the city, Count Selin, seems to be

facing a little trouble and needs assistance from Count Phuman. Without better alternatives, Count Phuman thought of me.”

“I accepted the offer eventually after some consideration. Prakash City should be our best choice if the problem isn’t too difficult to deal with. I believe Count Selin will take care of us because of Count Phuman, and that’ll assist us to adapt better if we decide to settle down in Prakash City.”

When Merlin finished speaking, smiles washed over the faces of Old Wilson and Baron Parman. Merlin noticed that the tense look on their faces eased down a little.

“Well, we’ll do as you said and depart for Prakash City tomorrow!”

Old Wilson and Baron Parman nodded in agreement to show their support for Merlin’s suggestion. Merlin finally got a chance to rest after a long day. He heaved a sigh of relief when he was alone in his room.

He inspected the Spell Models for Fireball and Frost in his Awareness. Both seemed to be working well in accumulating Magic Power.

The growth of Mind Power was not obvious as it could not be seen in a short time.

Merlin’s present strength had reached a bottleneck. He did not discover any new spells, and the strength of his Mind Power had not reached the level to support a third Spell Model.

The only thing he could currently utilize to enhance his strength was three of those mysterious relief sculptures which he exchanged with the bandits’ leader.

Merlin quickly probed into the ring using Mind Power and took out all three relief sculptures hidden inside. If he could practice all those postures on the three relief sculptures including the set of postures that Merlin had previously practiced, his physical quality could perhaps be increased to a level comparable to a Fourth-level Elemental Swordsman.

A Fourth-level Elemental Swordsman was considered an intermediate Elemental Swordsman where all physical aspects of the person would be significantly improved.

“Let’s give it a try!”

Merlin selected a piece of relief sculpture at random. He concentrated completely to gather his Mind Power, and soon enough, a complete set of postures gradually emerged in front of Merlin's eyes...

Chapter 72: Prakash City I

Merlin had already woken up in the early morning. As soon as he woke up, he felt sticky all over his body and there seemed to be an unbearable odor coming from him.

“Hmm? Sweating again?”

It was winter now, so chilly wind whistled by, bringing rain and snow with it. Weather like this could not possibly make him sweat.

Merlin touched his hands and back. He was covered in sweat. A smile slowly emerged on Merlin's face. He had not had this feeling for a long time.

When Merlin had attained his first relief sculpture, he was covered in sweat every day he woke up since he had practiced the posture for many days continuously. It was only when Merlin's physical attribute had slowly increased that the posture of the sculpture no longer had any effect on Merlin. Even if Merlin kept on practicing the posture later, he would not sweat anymore, nor would he feel any change.

Now, after Merlin had begun practicing the second mysterious posture, sweat had covered his body again. This showed that the posture of the sculpture was effective on Merlin. Once he persevered in the practice, his physical attribute would surely be enhanced in the future.

After that, Merlin let the maid bring him a basin of hot water. He washed himself thoroughly before walking out of his room.

“Phew...”

The wind was whistling out there. A thin layer of crystal had already formed on some parts of the ground. He had to be extra cautious when he walked on it since he might slip.

“Ha!”

Merlin faintly heard series of shouts nearby. He took a few steps forward and reached a wide yard. He saw Old Wilson, wearing his heavy armor and holding his sword. The sword was glimmering a terrifying flame.

Old Wilson was practicing his sword now. He had already reached the peak of a Second-level Fire Swordsman. He only needed a little more to become a Third-level Elemental Swordsman.

However, this also could take some time, so Old Wilson was not anxious about it. He was simply practicing his sword now. He controlled the flame well in his hands. With a slash, the whistling wind blew forward with flame, creating a strong impact.

Merlin squinted his eyes and stared closely at Old Wilson’s figure. He saw Old Wilson’s muscular body suddenly expanded like a balloon. His swelling muscle almost made the armor burst.

“Swoosh!”

Old Wilson slashed forward and the whistling sound of the wind was especially sharp to the ears. The quick speed was beyond comprehension. The more overwhelming thing was Old Wilson had not used any elemental force in his body. He was simply using the strength of his body.

“Father has gotten stronger...” Merlin murmured lowly. Seeing Old Wilson had paused, he strode forward.

“Merlin, the three postures you gave me are truly amazing. I’ve only been practicing for a few days but I already felt my strength has increased at least two-fold! Even if I don’t use the elemental force, I can also fight against a Third-level Elemental Swordsman!”

The condescending aura given off by Old Wilson was even more apparent. Even Merlin could feel it.

Upon hearing Old Wilson’s strength had increased by two-fold, Merlin was still surprised. After all, when he practiced the posture of the sculpture, his physical attribute had changed slowly. In a

couple of days, there would not be any apparent change at all. However, Old Wilson's change was great. All of this was related to the posture of the three sculptures Merlin gave to Old Wilson.

'Maybe Father's physical attribute is already excellent. The better the physical attribute, the better the effect of practicing the posture.'

Merlin thought about it. According to this speed, the time when Old Wilson's strength became comparable to a Fourth-level Elemental Swordsman would soon come.

After a short while, General Prat strode toward them in big steps and reported to Old Wilson, "Sir Baron, it's all ready. We can depart anytime."

Old Wilson nodded and said to Merlin, "Let's go. The earlier we reach Prakash City, the earlier we can settle down."

Merlin returned to Count Phuman's castle and bid him farewell. Count Phuman then took a few identity cards and letter for Count Selin.

With these identity cards in hands, they could avoid many troubles during their journey.

After bidding Count Phuman goodbye, Merlin then followed the large team and slowly left Ravens Castle.

After three days, the team had arrived in an ancient city. The walls of this city seemed antique. Some of the bricks were seriously weathered. A small gust of wind was able to bring a little grit away.

"Prakash... This should be Prakash City!"

Merlin raised his head to see the few words on the wall. These words were written in Molta language because the Kingdom of Blackmoon claimed to have inherited the pride of the Molta Empire three thousand six hundred years ago. Thus, they had even used the ancient Molta language as their own language.

However, the Molta Empire had perished for three thousand six hundred years and the Kingdom of Blackmoon was only established eight hundred years ago. Rather than inheriting the Molta Empire's pride, they were simply boasting their own name.

"We're finally here..."

Old Wilson, Baron Parman, and the others showed elated faces. They had gone through a harsh journey, running away from the Kingdom of Light to here. They were full of fear every day and had finally arrived at their destination now. If everything went smoothly, Prakash City would be the home for the Wilson family and the Parman family.

The team moved forward slowly until they reached the gate. A few fierce-looking guards blocked their way and said to Old Wilson, "The castellan, Count Selin, has given orders. The gate is currently closed. Without identity cards, no one can enter Prakash City."

"What's the matter? It's still alright yesterday. Why close it just like that?"

"What happened? I heard something happened in Prakash City."

Many businessmen and civilians were full of questions. The gate was usually opened and could be entered at will. Today, it was suddenly closed and identity card was needed to enter the city.

They were only normal civilians. How could they have identity cards? Identity cards were an identification that could only be given out by some nobles and large business guilds.

Old Wilson was also in front of the gate. He waved his hands to bring the team to a halt. Then, he said to General Prat, "Bring Merlin here."

Soon, General Prat brought Merlin to the gate. Upon seeing the tight security in front of the gate, Merlin frowned and said to Old Wilson softly, "Father, don't worry. Count Phuman has given me some identity cards. Let me talk to them."

Then, he strode toward the guards and took an identity card out from his pocket.

The guard looked at the identity card repeatedly and asked in uncertain, "Ravens Castle's identity card? Why do you people come to Prakash City from Ravens Castle?"

“We’re introduced to Prakash City by Count Phuman. Why? Is this identity card fake?”

Merlin did not want to give any unnecessary explanation so he asked the guard with furrowed brows.

The guards heard that they were related to Count Phuman, then carefully inspected the identity card again. After ensuring nothing was wrong with it, he handed the card back to Merlin and said softly, “This is Count Selin’s order. We have to carry it out strictly! Alright, your identity card has been verified. You can enter.”

The guard waved his hands and the gate slowly opened. Old Wilson strode forward first and brought the huge team to enter Prakash City slowly.

As opposed to Old Wilson’s excitement, Merlin was slightly worried. He looked back at the gate in tight security and murmured in a low voice, “Hopefully Count Selin is not in any deep trouble...”

Chapter 73: Prakash City II

Prakash City was a busy city. The bustling people all wore strange clothes. After seeing the large team led by Old Wilson, many of them curiously gathered in groups, murmuring to each other.

Old Wilson frowned. It would be difficult to settle down two thousand people. A common location could not accommodate them at all.

“Father, I think we should get some hotels and settle down temporarily. I’ll go to Count Selin. With his help, I’m sure we can avoid many troubles in Prakash City.”

Merlin had a letter from Count Phuman with him. He should hand it to Count Selin as soon as possible so that it could be helpful for the Wilson family and the Parman family to settle down in Prakash City.

Old Wilson nodded since they could only do that now. So, Old Wilson sent General Prat to book a few hotels in Prakash City and barely settled down his people.

After that, Merlin walked toward Count Selin's castle alone.

It was easy to find Count Selin's castle. After turning a few corners and walking toward the northwest direction, he could see a white, pointed castle. The castle took up a large space and was surrounded by greeneries. White walls encircled the castle and there were iron fences on the outer circle, guarded by around ten tall guards.

Often, a team of knights could be seen inspecting in front of the castle. Everything seemed calm but a nervous aura surrounded them.

These knights were the same as the City Defense Troop in Blackwater City. They were Count Selin's private armed forces. In fact, the whole Prakash City was Count Selin's private land.

During his journey from Ravens Castle to Prakash City, Merlin had a brief understanding of the overall situation in the Kingdom of Blackmoon. Even though the Kingdom of Blackmoon seemed like a huge kingdom, it was totally different from the Kingdom of Light by nature.

The Kingdom of Blackmoon was formed by all the city-states. Prakash City was a city-state which was ruled by Count Kaproh Selin. Once Count Selin was dead, his title would be inherited by others in the Kaproh family. Not even the king could intervene in this matter.

Each city-state was the private land of a noble and the foundation of a huge family. The whole Kingdom of Blackmoon was formed by thousands of these city-states, both large and small. The Royal Family of the Kingdom of Blackmon was the largest noble family in the kingdom. They ruled the largest city-state and thus were named as the ruler of the Kingdom of Blackmoon.

Such a scattered system had existed for as long as eight hundred years without any serious problem. This fact had greatly puzzled Merlin.

Merlin took the letter from Count Phuman from his pocket and walked toward Count Selin's castle.

"Stand there!"

After seeing Merlin, the castle guards immediately became alert.

Merlin said monotonously, “I came from Ravens Castle. I have a letter from Count Phuman for Count Selin.”

These guards exchanged a glance, then their expressions softened. However, they did not let down their guards. They said in a low voice, “Give the letter to me and wait here for a moment!”

Merlin nodded slightly. His Mind Power sharply caught many gazes fell on him from the castle the moment he had arrived.

This showed that the security in the castle was even tighter. Hidden guards were probably standing by all over the castle now.

From such tight security, it seemed that Count Selin had involved himself in deep trouble. Otherwise, an honorable Count, the ultimate ruler of Prakash City and the highest marshal of a city-state would not be so cautious in his own castle.

Just when the guard was about to enter the castle, a carriage came a halt in front of the castle. A sweet young girl alighted from the carriage.

The girl was tall. Her medium-length blonde hair was lightly pulled into a ponytail, making her look cute and energetic. The young girl immediately saw Merlin as soon as she came down and asked, “You came from Ravens Castle?”

Merlin nodded and the girl asked, “How’s Aunt Shara doing?”

“Shara?” Merlin frowned. He had not heard that name before.

The young girl seemed to have thought of something and hit her forehead. She said frustratedly, “Aunt Shara is the Count’s wife.”

“Oh, Count and Countess Phuman are well.”

The girl nodded then said to the guard, “Give me the letter. I’m looking for my father anyway.”

“Of course, Young Lady Shelly!”

The guard passed Merlin's letter to the girl.

"Wait for a moment. I'll pass this letter to Father. Later I want to ask about Aunt Shara's situation in Ravens Castle."

Then, the girl walked toward the castle.

"Have you found any suspicious person in the city?"

Count Selin seemed to be burning with anger. His expression was dark.

"Sir Count, there are too many people coming into and going out of Prakash City these days. We've not finished checking everyone, so we have not found anyone suspicious yet."

A middle-aged man who wore silvery, light armor answered carefully. Count Selin was troubled lately, so he did not have a good temper. Many of his subordinates were scolded for no reason at all.

"Rubbish! Wizard Hill whom I ask you to look for. Have you found him?"

"Yes, we've found Wizard Hill but he has a condition. Sir Count must give him some Zigen Flower," the man in silver armor said carefully.

Count Selin frowned and said, "Alright. Only Spell Casters know the usage of Zigen Flower anyway. If Wizard Hill is willing to come to the castle, we can give him more Zigen Flower."

After a small pause, Count Selin said hesitantly, "The letter sent to Ravens Castle should arrive already. Why haven't I received any reply? If Phuman can send some Spell Casters to me, then our chance of winning will be bigger..."

"Father, it's just dealing with a conceited man. I alone can resolve the issue. Why do we need Spell Casters?"

There was yet another muscular, young man in the hall. He wore a heavy armor and gave out a ferocious aura all over him, beaming with confidence.

Count Selin nodded slightly and seemed greatly satisfied seeing this muscular, young man. He said in monotonously, “Cook, our opponent this time is a mysterious yet powerful Spell Caster! Even though you’re a Fifth-level Elemental Swordsman, no one knows how powerful this conceited guy is. It’s safer if we have a Spell Caster with us.”

Cook continued to say, seemingly unsatisfied, “Father, you’re being too cautious. I’ve once killed an Icelandic Wolf. Am I not able to deal with a conceited guy? It’s fine if that guy doesn’t come. If he comes, I’ll surely tear him to pieces!”

Looking at Cook’s confident expression, Count Selin shook his head slightly and did not say anything. He was already satisfied that he had such an excellent son but this matter could not be taken lightly. He had to be ready in all aspects.

“Hmm? Brother, you’re here, too?”

Suddenly, a lively girl with a ponytail walked into the hall.

Chapter 74: Deep Trouble I

The young girl was full of energy and youthfulness, easily causing others to be fond of her. Different from the muscular and cruel-looking Cook, the young girl seemed sweet. Both did not look like siblings when they stood together.

Count Selin who had a serious look on him earlier immediately softened his expression when he saw the girl. He said with a smile, “Shelly, Prakash City is not safe lately. You should stay more in the castle. I call your brother, Cook to overcome the hurdle this time.”

The young girl, Shelly, stuck her tongue out. Acting cutely, she said sweetly, “Father, I know that. I’ll stay more in the castle after this.”

Cook took a glance at Shelly and showed a hint of a smile. When she was about to leave, Shelly suddenly said loudly, “Father, Brother, there’s a man outside of the castle. He said he’s from Ravens Castle and has a letter from Count Phuman. He let me pass it to Father.”

“From Ravens Castle? Cook, quickly get that person into the castle.”

Count Selin showed a hint of delight. He kept rubbing his hands as he mumbled to himself, “Finally here. He must be sent by Phuman.”

Count Selin got his man to deliver a letter to Count Phuman in Ravens Castle, but many days had passed by. He had been hoping that Count Phuman could send some Spell Casters to aid him.

Finally, the aid he asked for had arrived, so he was naturally excited about it.

Cook furrowed his eyebrows. Albeit unwilling, he still turned around and left.

“You’re the person from Ravens Castle?”

The muscular Cook stared coldly at the young man in front of him. This man was simply too young, even younger than Cook. ‘Count Phuman actually sent someone like this?’

Upon thinking about that, Cook’s gaze became even more unfriendly. His tone turned cold.

Merlin seemed overwhelmed. He sensed that the muscular man gave off a fierce aura around him. Without even getting close, Merlin already sensed the danger.

The Aura of this muscular man was even greater than Old Wilson’s. Merlin could hardly resist the urge of getting away from this man. He gave an extremely dangerous feeling to Merlin.

‘He’s so strong. He must be an intermediate Elemental Swordsman. A Fourth-level or Fifth-level Elemental Swordsman!’

Thoughts flashed across Merlin’s mind. An intermediate Elemental Swordsman was different from a beginner Elemental Swordsman. It could be said that an intermediate Elemental Swordsman was overall much better than a beginner that he could give off a huge condescending Aura.

Moreover, once a person had become an intermediate Elemental Swordsman, normal Zero-level spells would not have much effect on him. Merlin could sense that his normal Fireball and Frost would not threaten this muscular man by the slightest bit.

On top of that, in such a close distance, it could be disastrous for Merlin if the man attacked him.

Therefore, Merlin had put his guards up high against this muscular man.

“Yes, I’m from Ravens Castle. My name is Wilson Merlin!”

Cook ignored Merlin and said in a monotonous tone, “Let’s go. Father wants to see you.”

Merlin suddenly understood everything. This tough, beast-like man was Count Selin’s son.

Right behind Cook, Merlin stepped into the castle. His Mind Power kept inspecting the situation around him. There were many hidden locations in the castle and a few guards hid in these locations. Even walking behind Cook, their stare did not loosen up but stared at Merlin tightly.

Merlin felt a little uncomfortable and furrowed his eyebrows but he did not say anything. He followed Cook to a spacious hall.

In the hall, Merlin saw the lively, beautiful girl named Shelly. Merlin nodded to her as an acknowledgment, then placed his gaze at a middle-aged man in the hall.

This middle-aged man was holding a letter in his hands and appeared to have just finished reading it. He shot a complicated gaze at Merlin, faintly showing a hint of disappointment.

Merlin immediately knew the identity of this middle-aged man, thus placed one of his hands in front of his chest and said respectfully, “Most honorable Count Selin, Count Phuman of Ravens Castle send you his regards!”

Count Selin waved his hands and said, “Wizard Merlin, I’ve read Count Phuman’s letter. You’re not the wizard staying at Ravens Castle. Count Phuman introduced you to Prakash City to settle down. It’s alright normally but Prakash City is having some difficulties at the moment. I’m afraid...”

Hearing these words, Merlin nodded his head and said, “Before coming here, Count Phuman has briefly mentioned it to me. If it’s not a huge problem, I’m willing to provide my aid to Count Selin.”

Count Selin nodded his head in satisfaction and replied, "Alright. After this event, I'll think of a way to settle down the family of Wizard Merlin."

"I'm grateful toward Sir Count's kindness! Earlier, I saw that the security within Sir Count's Castle is much tighter than the outside. The guards are all on an alert as well. What sort of trouble has Sir Count encountered?"

Even though Merlin had promised to help, he still had to consider what sort of mess he was involved in. If it was too much of a problem that even he had no ability to help, he had to rethink the decision of staying in Prakash City.

Merlin's words brought upon a silent air in the hall.

Cook took a step forward and asked, "Father, I haven't got the chance to ask as well. You called me back so hurriedly and even called for the return of the commanders of Prakash City. Who exactly is this conceited man to even make Father be so cautious of him?"

Merlin felt a little strange that even Count Selin's son did not know of the reason.

Count Selin took a glance at Merlin and smiled bitterly. His voice went low and deep as he said, "Since Wizard Merlin has asked, I'll naturally tell you this matter. Five years ago, I've dealt with Baron Nelson who has betrayed Prakash City together with his family. However, for some reason, Nelson's son, Merilung has escaped. Now, Merilung is back and he sent me a letter. He said that he'll kill me in my castle with his hands in one month's time. Now, there are only five days left to the time limit Merilung has said."

Merlin did not mind a certain situation where Count Selin had purposely hidden from his explanation. As the highest marshal in Prakash City, he would not be soft-hearted to deal with his subordinate's betrayal. He must have used many unimaginable methods to do so.

However, the old scores between Count Selin and Merilung were not something Merlin took note about. He wanted to know who Merilung was. Why did he have such confidence to threaten a count?

Merlin set his gaze back to Count Selin. He believed that Count Selin had already gotten hold of all information about Merilung with his influence.

Chapter 75: Deep Trouble II

Count Selin heaved a long sigh as if he was overwhelmed with emotions. He was the actual ruler of Prakash City so it was natural for him to make many enemies. He was similar to Old Wilson where the latter had killed many people in his territory.

However, having an enemy was one matter but having a tough enemy was a different matter. Obviously, the fact that Merilung dared to seek revenge from Count Selin after a short period of five years surely indicated that he must have someone or something to rely on.

“I’ve investigated this thoroughly. After Merilung ran away, he experienced something and became a Spell Caster. So, he thinks that he’s strong and brave. That’s why he sent the letter to threaten me.”

Count Selin appeared to be helpless. Little did he thought that dealing with the noble who betrayed him could bring him so much trouble in the end.

“Spell Caster!”

Merlin became serious. That explained why the security was so tight in the castle. It was a Spell Caster who threatened Count Selin. Also, it appeared that Count Selin was extremely nervous. This Spell Caster must have something up his sleeve.

Even until now Count Selin could not be sure how strong the opponent could be. He still had to wait for Merilung to show himself a few days later to be sure.

“Father, don’t worry. In five years, how strong can Merilung become? If he dares to come, I’ll kill him myself to save us trouble in the future!” Cook stepped forward and declared in a low voice.

He was extremely confident with his own ability. He was a Fifth-level Elemental Swordsman and had even killed an Icelandic Wolf. He was naturally unafraid of any threat.

After Cook finished his words, he looked at Merlin.

Although Merlin had noticed Cook's gaze, he did not put much thought into it. He was still analyzing Count Selin's words.

This was indeed a great problem. Being silent for five years and bearing the family grudge, he would not return for revenge without having a certainty of success. If Merlin was involved in this matter, he might put himself in danger.

However, many masters were still hiding outside of Count Selin's castle. Merlin carefully sensed that there were at least ten Fourth-level Elemental Swordsmen. On top of other Elemental Swordsmen and the strong Cook, this was a great force. They should stand some chance to win against Merilung.

Thus, after thinking about it for a while, Merlin had decided to stay in the castle and help Count Selin. If they were able to overcome this crisis, it would greatly help the Wilson family and the Parman family to settle in Prakash City.

"Count Selin, let me first excuse myself. After making the necessary arrangement with my family, I'll return to the castle."

Count Selin nodded then said to Cook, "Cook, send Wizard Merlin out."

The young girl Shelly quickly replied, "Father, let me send Wizard Merlin out."

Without waiting for Count Selin's reply, she pulled Merlin out of the castle.

After Merlin left, Count Selin shook his head and said, "Phuman still has not sent the Spell Casters in Ravens Castle. Those Spell Casters are official First-level Spell Casters and even higher-level Spell Casters. If I have those people with me, why will I still be afraid of this Merilung?"

Cook let out a sneer. "Father, it still depends on us to deal with Merilung! Let me arrange it. Spell Caster also has weaknesses. We can totally kill a beginner Spell Caster with a strong crossbow!"

"That's right. We still need to do this. Cook, I leave you in charge of this matter. Make all necessary arrangements inside and outside of the castle. Make sure not a corner is left unguarded. Once Merilung appears, kill him immediately at any cost!"

“Hehe. Please rest assured, Father. I’ll let Merilung have a taste of despair once again!”

A hint of ferocity flashed across Cook’s eyes.

When Merlin returned to the hotel, he found that no one was there except General Prat and a few knights who were waiting.

“Uncle Prat, where has everyone go?”

Merlin recalled correctly that Old Wilson had booked these few hotels.

Prat replied calmly, “Young Master Merlin, Sir Baron asked me to wait for you here. Right after you left, Sir Baron found a deserted castle in the city. After sending people to ask about it, he found that it used to belong to a baron in Prakash City. The baron died afterward and his family has fallen. The castle became vacant then, ready to be sold. Sir Baron thought that if the family needs to settle down completely in Prakash City, we’ll need a place to live. So, he spent two hundred thousand Gold coins and bought the castle.”

“Oh? So quick? Bring me there.”

Merlin had planned to help Count Selin to eliminate Merilung and raised some conditions to him. He wanted to let Count Selin map out a place in Prakash City for the Wilson family and the Parman family.

However, if Old Wilson had found the place himself, this was even better.

Soon, following General Prat, Merlin arrived at the castle Old Wilson had found.

This castle indeed appeared as if it had been deserted for a while. The walls outside of the castle had completely crumbled. Wilting grass covered the land within the castle.

However, the butler had brought the people to start cleaning the grass and snow around the castle.

This castle was huge, even bigger than Wilson Castle. It would not be too crowded for two thousand people. Moreover, with the presence of the people, it made the cold, lonely castle appeared livelier.

Merlin came to the hall of the castle and saw Old Wilson and Baron Parman ordering the servants. They were busying about the whole place, bringing many things from the carriage into the castle.

Ladies like Macy, Big-breasted Madam, and Avril were all full of smiles as well. They were filled with fear and worry while coming from Blackwater City but now they could finally settle down in Prakash City. It was only natural for them to feel happy.

Even Old Wilson and Baron Parman were directing the servants. They felt much more relaxed now.

“Merlin, what do you think of this castle?” Seeing Merlin who was standing behind him, Old Wilson asked in anticipation.

Merlin scanned the place. Although the hall was covered in dust, it appeared from the decoration that the previous master of this castle was also a noble. The decoration had an elegant style.

Moreover, the area of the castle was large and there were many rooms. Not only the Wilson family, all of them and even the Parman family could fit in this place. To be able to buy such a castle in a foreign land was truly fortunate.

Merlin nodded and said, “It’s good. With a little time and some decorations, we can all settle in here.”

Old Wilson and Baron Parman were very satisfied with this castle. It definitely worth two hundred thousand Gold coins.

Until it was about time, Old Wilson and Baron Parman called Merlin to the room upstairs which was promptly cleaned just now. Old Wilson asked in a serious tone, “Merlin, after you met Count Selin, did you hear from him what sort of trouble he’s in? Is there any danger?”

Old Wilson and Baron Parman were concerned about the outcome of Merlin’s meeting with Count Selin. If the danger was too great to handle and Merlin could not help Count Selin, it would obviously affect their plan to settle down in Prakash City.

Chapter 76: Wizard Hill I

‘It’s not a big problem.’

Merlin thought about it and decided that it was best to first not talk about this matter. Old Wilson and the others were still indulged in the excitement of settling down. There was no need to let them worry over this matter.

“It’s good if there’s no problem.” Old Wilson obviously became relaxed.

“In the next few days though, I’ll probably stay in Count Selin’s castle to deal with the Count’s trouble.”

After explaining to Old Wilson, Merlin returned to the room which was cleaned earlier.

...

In the early morning, Merlin woke up and his body was covered in sweat as usual. After he continued to practice the posture of the sculpture, Merlin had felt that his physical attribute was improving slightly.

Although it was not an obvious change, it was definitely improving. According to this speed, maybe in a few months’ time, his physical attribute would be comparable to a Second-level Elemental Swordsman.

After changing his clothes, Merlin saw that Old Wilson was still resting. Surely the harsh journey all this while had exhausted Old Wilson. Now that they were settled down and he became relaxed, he could truly rest himself. Thus, Merlin did not disturb Old Wilson and only spoke to General Prat. He then strode toward Count Selin’s castle alone.

The guards outside of the castle had obviously received orders from above, so they simply pulled the iron fence open respectfully after seeing Merlin. In the castle, the “monitoring” gazes yesterday were still there but there was much less than yesterday. The guards hidden in the dark had apparently acknowledged Merlin’s identity.

In the hall, Cook was not in sight. Neither was the young girl Shelly. Count Selin was sitting right in front of the fireplace, and a black-robed old man was sitting across Count Selin.

Merlin habitually checked out the whole hall with his Mind Power, especially pausing his gaze at Count Selin and the black-robed old man. With Mind Power, he could clearly see the thin wrinkles on the old man's face that resembled an old tree's skin. Although he seemed energetic, his face could not hide his age.

"Didn't anyone tell you that it's rude to check people out with Mind Power?"

Suddenly, a hoarse sound rang.

Merlin jumped. The black-robed old man turned around. Large black iron rings hung on his ears and his skinny hands were pale white but there were a few fingers which appeared completely charred.

It was the old man speaking earlier. Obviously, the man was also a Spell Caster, or else Merlin's Mind Power would not be found out.

"Wizard Merlin, let me introduce you. This is Wizard Hill!"

Upon seeing Merlin's arrival, Count Selin stood up and introduced Merlin to the black-robed old man. "More than ten years ago, Wizard Hill has participated in that cruel 'Slaughterhouse' war against the Kingdom of Light!"

"Slaughterhouse?"

Merlin frowned. The "Slaughterhouse" war was too infamous not because it had any crucial effect upon the countries involved but because this war was simply too cruel, even exceeding both side's expectation.

At that time, regardless of the Kingdom of Light or the Kingdom of Blackmoon, both had sent millions of soldiers into the "Slaughterhouse" war. No one knew how many Wizards of the church and Spell Casters of the Kingdom of Blackmoon were lost in that war. A strong presence that could destroy a military fortress by himself would seldom lose his life in a battle. Just from this fact, it was sufficient to show how terrifying that war was.

Those who were able to survive from the “Slaughterhouse”, albeit only normal knights, were the best amongst the elite like Old Wilson. After he had returned from the “Slaughterhouse”, Old Wilson was directly granted a noble’s title. Moreover, the heavy-armored knights he trained were undoubtedly strong.

Old Wilson was only a normal knight then. The black-robed old man had participated in that war as a Spell Caster. Being able to survive that war, he must have his own specialties.

Therefore, even if Merlin had not felt any terrifying presence from the black-robed old man, he still became alerted. He did not dare to look down upon the old man.

“Hehe. What about the ‘Slaughterhouse’? Now, aren’t I just an old man nearing his end?”

The black-robed old man’s words were filled with a lonely tone. There must be many stories about him that were unknown to others.

In a while, the muscular Cook came into the hall.

Cook took a glance at Merlin and the old man then said in a low voice, “Father, I’ve already made all arrangements. If Merilung dares to come, I won’t let him get away!”

Cook’s face was beaming with confidence.

“Fifteen Fourth-level Elemental Swordsmen! Sixty-eight Third-level Elemental Swordsmen and up to hundreds of Second-level Elemental Swordsmen coupled with special-made crossbow arrows. Tsk, tsk. Sir, you sure have put a lot of effort into this!”

The black-robed old man, Wizard Hill suddenly said that. Everyone’s expression changed slightly, especially Cook. He had not taken his gaze off Wizard Hill, giving off an enormous Aura.

If Count Selin was not here, Cook would have attacked the old man by now.

Merlin was also lost in shock. He was impressed by Count Selin’s great force, at the same time, he took greater notice of the old man in front of him.

When Merlin's Mind Power scanned the old man, he only thought that the old man could be an Entrance-level Spell Caster. He was not clear about the old man's true strength. After all, he had not seen the old man fight in battle.

However, the old man's Mind Power had reached such a horrifying stage. His Mind Power could cover the whole castle and even pinpoint Cook's location.

Such strong Mind Power had even gone past any normal First-level Spell Caster. With such Mind Power, he could totally become a First-level Spell Caster, but for some reason unknown, the old man had not become one.

Count Selin felt a little awkward. The supposedly secretive arrangements were now out in the light due to the old man's words, but he soon calmed down. A smile appeared on his face as he asked the old man softly, "Wizard Hill, is there anything wrong with this arrangement?"

The black-robed old man shot an emotionless look at Cook. As if he was not affected by Cook's ferocious Aura at all, he said in a low voice with his cold tone, "There's naturally no problem with this arrangement, but to deal with Merilung, I'm afraid it's not so easy."

"Oh? Wizard Hill knows about Merilung's ability?" Count Selin's eyes brightened and quickly asked. Currently, he only found out that Merilung was a Spell Caster. He was not clear about Merilung's other information at all.

Not only Count Selin, Merlin also desperately wanted to know more information about Merilung since it was extremely disadvantageous to be unclear about the enemy.

Chapter 77: Wizard Hill II

"Merilung's situation. I do know a little about it."

The black-robed old man's voice was hoarse and let out a hollow laugh. The sound of it was sharp to the ears.

“Merilung belongs to the Abyss Fort!” the old man lowered his head and said in a calm voice. His sharp gaze scanned Count Selin’s face and gave him a meaningful smile.

“the Abyss Fort?”

Count Selin’s face turned instantly pale. His whole body began to shiver uncontrollably. Although he had tried to hide it as best as he could, Merlin caught that sharply.

“How can he belong to the Abyss Fort?”

Count Selin’s eyebrows were furrowed and his face was slightly pumped red.

Merlin looked at the muscular Cook who seemed confused as well. The latter obviously did not know what was the Abyss Fort which the old man spoke about was referring to.

“Wizard Hill, can you tell us about the Abyss Fort in detail?” Merlin asked suddenly. From Count Selin’s reaction, he faintly realized that there must be something with the Abyss Fort or the usually calm Count Selin would not be so fretted.

The black-robed old man looked at Merlin. His face that seemed like an old tree’s skin showed a playful smile as spoke in a hoarse voice, “The Abyss Fort is a strong Spell Caster organization. I believe Sir Count has heard about it before.”

After a pause, the old man set his gaze tightly on Merlin and continued, “Wizard Merlin, it seems you’re the same as an old man like me. We’re both free wizards! Hehe. O’ free wizards. Free and without worries. It sounds free, but is it so? We’re just a bunch of roaming wizards! In the Kingdom of Blackmoon, other than roaming wizards, there are some strong Spell Caster organizations. These organizations provide spells, some knowledge, and experience of strong wizards regarding Spell Models, Potions class, Alchemy class, and more. In short, joining a Spell Caster organization provides the opportunity to become a strong Spell Caster. It’s totally different from us, the roaming wizards.”

Merlin listened attentively. He had become a Spell Caster according to old man Etha’s Spell Manual. He was not clear about the situation of Spell Casters in the Kingdom of Blackmoon.

Now that he heard about the Spell Caster organization from the old man, Merlin slowly began to grasp the overall organization of Spell Casters in the Kingdom of Blackmoon.

The most spread out, or the largest in number, was these free wizards. They were not bound to any force and were free. However, on the other hand, they were mostly Entrance-level Spell Casters and were weak in strength because they did not possess a new Spell Model. Without strong Spell Caster teaching knowledge and experience about Spell Model, many free wizards could not progress any further. They could only forever be Entrance-level Spell Casters.

Therefore, free wizards were also known as roaming wizard. They were the most pitiable group of people amongst the Spell Casters.

The second was Spell Caster organizations. These Spell Caster organizations gathered all sort of strong Spell Casters and their influence was the greatest amongst others. They had many resources and could provide lessons for Spell Casters.

Thus, the Spell Caster organizations basically had the largest force. Some large Spell Caster organization even had the force greater than the whole kingdom.

The third was the Spell Casters in the army. These Spell Casters were mostly roaming wizards. To attain some Spell Models or potions or casting tools, they had no choice but to join the army. After they served the army for a while, they could receive all sort of rewards.

There were some Spell Casters staying in Ravens Castle. In fact, they were roaming wizards who have joined the army.

“In this case, Merilung belongs to the Abyss Fort?”

Merlin frowned. He raised his head and took a glance at Count Selin to find the latter was pale. His darting eyes showed restlessness in his heart.

The black-robed old man nodded. With his hoarse voice, he continued, “That’s right. Merilung belongs to the Abyss Fort indeed! Hehe. He’s a lucky one. It isn’t easy to join a Spell Caster organization even if the Abyss Fort is only a relatively small Spell Caster organization. If he has no letter from the Abyss Fort or isn’t valued by the core members of the Abyss Fort, he has no chance of joining the Abyss Fort.”

The old man did not hide his envy toward Merilung in his words. Maybe the old man wanted to join a Spell Caster organization all this while but he was unsuccessful. That was all.

“Wizard Hill, if we kill Merilung, will Abyss Fort support him in attacking us?” Count Selin who had been silent all this while finally asked.

This was the most important question. Would Abyss Fort attack them? This was related to Count Selin’s attitude toward Merilung after this. It was extremely crucial.

The black-robed old man nodded and said in a serious tone, “Merilung is only the son of a normal baron. What sort of letter does he have to join the Abyss Fort? Thus, he must be valued by the core members of the Abyss Fort. That’s why he can join them. If we kill Merilung on purpose, we can’t be sure that we won’t anger the core members in the Abyss Fort.”

Suddenly, Merlin raised his head and a smile escaped him. If the strong Spell Caster supporting Merilung would really attack them, then would Wizard Hill still accept Count Selin’s invitation?

Therefore, the black-robed old man surely knew some hidden facts.

After seeing Merlin’s smile, the old man also knew that Merlin had guessed it. He no longer hesitated and said directly, “Although the Abyss Fort is scary, Sir Count, the Abyss Fort is truly too far away from Prakash City. This place is not under the Abyss Fort’s influence. Instead, it’s under the force of the Dark Magic Region!”

“If a strong Spell Caster from Abyss Fort dares to attack Prakash City, that will bring about a detrimental consequence. It can possibly cause a war between the Dark Magic Region and the Abyss Fort!”

“A war between Spell Caster organizations, huh. It’s an outcome that no one can bear to have! Thus, Sir Count, even if killing Merilung can cause anger of a certain group of strong Spell Casters from Abyss Fort, you don’t have to worry about the Spell Casters appearing in Prakash City.”

When he mentioned the war between Spell Caster organizations, a hint of fear escaped from the black-robed old man’s face.

“Phew...”

After hearing the old man's analysis, Count Selin heaved a sigh of relief. His face slowly became flushed again and he smiled. "That's right. Even though the Abyss Fort is strong, Prakash City is under the influence of the Dark Magic Region! Even if the Dark Magic Region won't mind these little things, if strong Spell Casters from the Abyss Fort come here, then the talks will be different."

Upon thinking about this, a killing aura faintly leaked out of Count Selin's body.

Chapter 78: Arrival I

"So tired!"

The young girl Shelly was waving a huge sword that was not compatible with her figure. She waved her sword at full power each time, so beads of sweat appeared on Shelly's fair skin even on such a chilly winter day.

After she was tired, Shelly put down her sword and took the hot towel from the maid. She wiped away her sweat lightly, then went beside Merlin.

"After such a long time, you don't move at all. Are all Spell Casters this way?"

Shelly opened her eyes and stared curiously at Merlin. From the time she started practicing her sword, at least three to four hours had gone by. Merlin had sat there on the chair, eyes slightly squinting and unmoving. He made Shelly extremely curious about him.

Merlin opened his eyes slightly. In fact, he was meditating earlier but he could still sense his surroundings.

He had already stayed in Count Selin's castle for a few days. Today was the revenge day Merilung spoke of in his letter. It was also the day Count Selin had ordered to eliminate all members of the Nelson family in the past.

Merlin had naturally heightened his alert, so even in his meditation state, he still took note of his surroundings. No one could be sure how Merilung had planned to take his revenge.

"Young Lady Shelly, I also have a sister who's almost your age."

Merlin did not directly answer Shelly's question. Instead, he mentioned Macy.

"Oh? Your sister grew up in the Kingdom of Light since she was young. Does she practice sword like I do?"

Shelly was interested as expected and immediately asked about it. In these few days, Shelly had taken a liking to Merlin and always wanted him to talk about the interesting stories in the Kingdom of Light.

Interesting stories from a foreign country were always attractive to a young girl like Shelly.

Merlin nodded and smiled. "That's right. Macy is the same as you. She practices the sword since she was young. At that time, she learned from an Elemental Swordsman of the Church..."

Merlin did not know much about Macy's stuff. However, any "interesting thing" about Macy could bring excitement to Shelly, especially when he mentioned that Macy had scolded "Anson" very badly once. Shelly's eyes gleamed with excitement when she heard that.

"Wizard Merlin, is Macy in Prakash City? She must be incredible. She dares to hit your friend. I don't dare to hit my brother's friend..."

Shelly stuck out her tongue and seemed to be impressed about Macy's "bold moves".

Merlin shook his head slightly and said, "Macy is still not an Elemental Swordsman."

Maybe it was her aptitude or something was wrong with her mentality. Macy had not truly become an Elemental Swordsman until now. On the other hand, Shelly, albeit naïve and young, was already a First-level Elemental Swordsman!

Since she had not experienced any cruel battle, Shelly's sword technique still appeared naïve.

"Not an Elemental Swordsman, huh... Maybe it's her cultivation method. My brother is a true prodigy. He's already a Fifth-level Swordsman now! He had killed a strong Icelandic Wolf by himself before. I practice with my brother. That's how I have become a First-level Elemental Swordsman so quickly!"

When Shelly mentioned Cook, she was brimming with pride. It was obvious that she looked up to Cook greatly.

“General Cook? He’s very strong indeed!”

Merlin also nodded. During his journey from the Kingdom of Light to the Kingdom of Blackmoon, he had met many strong Elemental Swordsmen. However, Cook was the strongest of all by far.

Fifth-level Elemental Swordsman was truly strong! The Aura Cook gave out unintentionally had always given a dangerous feeling to Merlin. Even if Cook was not a Spell Caster, Merlin would not underestimate him.

“Wizard Merlin, I heard you’re a strong Spell Caster. Even though I have seen one myself, but I don’t know how strong you guys are. Are you as strong as my brother?” Shelly tilted her head and asked in giggles.

Merlin was a little speechless and did not answer. Shelly continued to say, “Surely, Brother is stronger. You haven’t seen him fight. He’s too strong! This Merilung wants to hurt Father in the castle. Brother won’t let him go easily, so I’m not afraid!”

Shelly was confident about Cook and indeed seemed unafraid at all.

After Shelly saw Merlin had fallen silent, she thought he was no fun and went back to practicing her sword again. Merlin placed his gaze at another side of the hall. The mysterious black-robed old man was not moving. Just like a statue, he sat crossed-legged on the floor.

Merlin still thought that the old man was full of mystery. His Mind Power had reached a high level, even comparable to a First-level or a Second-level Spell Caster.

However, having such strong Mind Power, the black-robed old man still maintained his Mind Power on a stable foundation, almost the same as Merlin’s Mind Power so it seemed odd to Merlin.

Merlin stood up and approached the old man.

The black-robed old man sensed Merlin coming toward him and opened his eyes.

“Wizard Hill, how high of a chance do you think Count Selin can deal with Merilung?” Merlin asked calmly.

The black-robed old man took a glance outside of the castle, his gaze distant. He said with a shadow of a smile, “Count Selin has let General Cook make proper arrangement. More than ten Fourth-level Elemental Swordsmen and strong crossbow arrows. Hehe. So well prepared. What does Wizard Merlin worry about?”

“Well prepared?”

Merlin snorted. Only a Spell Caster could truly understand another fellow Spell Caster. How could Merilung not know about the situation?

“Merilung belongs to Abyss Fort. If he brings some strong casting tools, Wizard Hill, I’m sure you understand as well how strong a Spell Caster with casting tool is. What effect can these arrangements of General Cook bring at that time?” Merlin said as he sneered.

He thought of Wizard Jason back then. With just a Spell Scroll, he forced Merlin to give his all. Merlin even had to use Bell Pendant to finally defeat Wizard Jason in the end.

If Merilung had strong casting tools with him, then Cook’s arrangement in the castle would probably simply become a decoration.

The black-robed old man looked at Merlin, impressed. He nodded and reached out his dried-out hands. He pointed at Merlin, then said in a calm tone, “This is why the Count has invited us. To deal with a Spell Caster, a Spell Caster is needed to do the job!”

A hint of ferocity flashed across the old man’s distant gaze.

Merlin felt a small weight in his heart. It seemed both Count Selin and the black-robed old man knew that Cook’s arrangement could not stop Merilung.

The true trump card was this black-robed old man who seemed to be weighed down with age!

Chapter 79: Arrival II

The sky slowly darkened. Drizzles of rain and snow were still falling outside. Often, gusts of chilly wind were blowing into the house from the door, preventing the hall from warming up.

The flame in the fireplace was going strong, often giving out crackling noises. The crackling noises were extremely clear in the silent hall.

There were only four people in the hall at this moment – Count Selin, the black-robed old man, young girl Shelly, and Merlin.

Count Selin was leaning against his wooden chair and sitting beside the fireplace. He squinted his eyes and half of his face turned bright red due to the heat from the fireplace. He seemed calm but his tightly-clamped hands had betrayed his nervous feeling.

The old man was still sitting cross-legged on the floor. His long black robe had covered his whole body. Since he did not move, a mysterious air surrounded him under the gradually darkened sky.

The young girl Shelly was moving around the hall, doing nothing. Since today was Merilung's "revenge day", Count Selin had called Shelly to the hall as well. He wanted her to stay with him to avoid any accident.

Merlin had been meditating all this while. It was not suitable to practice his Spell or the mysterious posture of the sculpture here but it was alright to meditate his Mind Power.

However, even if Merlin was meditating his Mind Power, he did not lower his guard toward his surrounding, especially outside. As soon as anything happened, he could awaken his senses from his meditation immediately.

It was already near dusk, though. Why hasn't anything happened yet?

Not only Merlin, everyone was confused. Could it be that Merilung would not be coming anymore?

“Father, where did Brother go?” Young Lady Shelly asked with a long face.

She was an energetic and lively girl. She was already frustrated that she was asked to stay in this hall for almost for a whole day.

“Shelly, stay here obediently. It’s not any normal day today. Don’t...”

Just when Count Selin was attempting to scold Shelly strictly, a loud colliding noise came from outside of the hall suddenly.

“Bang!”

Following the loud bang, the outside of the castle seemed chaotic. Sounds of horses could be heard faintly and many people were yelling about.

“Did he come?”

Merlin was shocked and immediately awoken from his mediation. He immediately opened his eyes wide and looked toward the outside.

Count Selin became tensed. Both his hands grabbed tightly at the chair’s handle and stared outside of the hall. Even the calm old man also raised his head and squinted his eyes, looking outside of the door.

At once, everyone in the hall became nervous. They stared at the door.

“Phew...”

A gust of chilly wind blew. Along with that, a tall figure appeared.

“Cook? What happened out there?” without lowering his guard, he asked in a deep voice while frowning.

Cook's black armor was covered in snow. His bright red eyes indicated that he had not loosened his guard at all and was staying on guard outside.

"Father, a few horses in the castle are surprised and ran out of the stable. The horses crashed into our people in hiding, so it's a little chaotic out there. I've already sent people to control the surprised horses. The confusion is now under control."

Cook explained what happened out there briefly. It was only a small incident. Merilung had not arrived.

"Maybe everyone is too nervous. Cook, stay on guard out there. The sky is almost dark. It's the most crucial time now. Everyone can't lower their guards."

Count Selin waved his hands. When he was about to let Cook go outside, the calm black-robed old man stood up abruptly.

"Hehe. Merilung is here!"

The old man suddenly sneered with his hoarse voice.

Cook frowned. His gaze toward the old man was cold as he asked in an unfriendly tone, "Wizard Hill, how will I not know if Merilung is here? The whole castle is completely closed off. Where does he come in from?"

"Bang!"

When Cook had finished his words, a loud bang rang from the outside again. This time, the noise was accompanied with a few terrified shrieks.

"He's really here!" Merlin took a deep breath and said in a low voice.

He felt strong waves of Fire Element. That was the trait when a Spell Caster cast a spell.

Cook's face turned dark and immediately turned around. He left the hall in a stride.

“Five years... Finally, I’ve come to see this day, Selin! Hehe. That scene five years ago. You surely won’t forget about it. My father, mother, brother, and sister... All are put to death on your order! Haha, but I didn’t die. I even became a Spell Caster. Today is my day of revenge. Everyone in the castle has to die!”

A young man with short brown hair wearing an armor the same as other knights in the castle kept waving his hands. Balls of fire flew out from his palm and burnt each knight who came before him.

No matter if they were First-level, Second-level or Third-level Elemental Swordsmen, they could not block the fire. The intense heat had melted the snow around the man and lit up the grass hidden beneath the snow. At once, smoke rose, and the place was engulfed in screams, rendering a loss of direction.

“Merilung!”

In his black armor, Cook finally reached the place. His face appeared grim and he stared straight at Merilung who was slaughtering the people. Seeing Merilung’s outfit, Cook instantly understood.

Merilung had already come into the castle since the beginning. The incident with the horses earlier was probably intentionally caused by Merilung. His aim was to take away the people’s attention and mess up Cook’s arrangement.

One had to say that Merilung had attained his aim. The guards hidden in the dark were all noted by Merilung and were cruelly killed after that.

Even though Merilung appeared mad with his bloodshot puffy eyes and ferocious expression, he had not lost his reasoning completely. In fact, he was rather cool-headed. Every time he cast a spell, some Elemental Swordsmen were burnt from the fiery flame while he dodged around unaffected.

“Fire-type spell and Wind-type spell!”

Wizard Hill in his black robe was also standing on the stairs outside of the hall. His distant eyes gazed at Merilung as if he was observing the latter’s ability.

Merlin was sending out his Mind Power as well. He stared right at Merilung. Just as the black-robed old man had said, Merilung had only cast two spells currently. They were Fire type and Wind-type spells.

Fire-type spell was greatly different from Merlin's Fireball. There seemed to be no explosive effect but it could form a sea of fire and cause a large area of damage.

However, the thing that attracted Merlin's attention was Merilung's Wind-type spell. Merilung's ghost-like figure was, in fact, the effect of Wind-type spell.

This was the support Wind-type spell which Merlin had been looking for!

"Merilung!"

Suddenly, Cook howled like a beast. His voice echoed throughout the castle.

Following that, Cook took big steps toward Merilung with his Aura building up gradually. It was as if his Aura was solidifying.

"It has begun!"

Seeing that Cook had walked toward Merilung, the black-robed old man, Merlin, and the others wore a dignified look. They stared at these two people fixedly.

Chapter 80: Battle I

"Boom!"

Cook strode toward Merilung. As his right foot stepped on the ground, it was as if the whole ground shook. At the same time, Cook raised his sword. When he came to a few meters away from Merilung, he shouted and slashed his sword at Merilung.

"Swoosh."

A ball of bright light flashed. As soon as it appeared, it seemed to bring a biting cold with it. The snowflakes falling from the sky were immediately frozen because of it.

“Ka-chak. Ka-chak.”

Cook’s sword suddenly became larger in size and a thick layer of solid ice crystals laid on top of it. With his enormous strength, this sword which was almost made of ice crystals suddenly exploded. Countless ice debris flew toward Merilung like raindrops.

Cook was an Ice Swordsman and he had demonstrated his ability as a Fifth-level Elemental Swordsman perfectly. He was able to bring out the power of Ice Element from a distance.

This was the substantial difference between an intermediate and a beginner Elemental Swordsman. Other than possessing Aura, an intermediate Elemental Swordsman could bring out the elemental force from a distance, causing damage to the opponent.

In a way, an intermediate Elemental Swordsman had the ability to hurt a Spell Caster!

Cook was the same. He was a Fifth-level Elemental Swordsman. If any of his ice debris had hit Merilung, it would cause great damage to Merilung.

Even a slight hit could injure Merilung badly. After all, a Spell Caster’s body was only slightly better than Normies.

From Cook’s Aura which seemed to solidify to releasing thousands of ice debris, everything was done swiftly in one movement. His strength as a Fifth-level Elemental Swordsman was demonstrated perfectly.

However, facing Cook’s fierce attack, Merilung simply dodged to the back quickly, then pointed both his hands forward.

“Swish, swish, swish.”

Gusts of wind whistled by and three gigantic flames flew up, forming a large sea of fire. It blocked in front of Merilung and the ice debris could not penetrate this sea of flame which Merilung created.

However, Cook’s attack was not finished. His muscular body dashed forward in a sudden movement. As he waved his sword, a chilly aura of few meters long flew from the sword toward Merilung.

“Ice Seal!”

This icy aura was the Ice Element Cook had accumulated in his body for approximately twenty years. It exploded completely and the terrifying air had frozen everything in its way.

Cook had relied on such sudden breakout previously to seal the movement of the Icelandic Wolf, then killing the fierce beast in the end.

“Swoosh.”

Merilung’s figure swayed and he had reached behind Cook in the blink of an eye. Cook had missed his hit. The enormous inertia had almost knocked Cook out of balance.

“D*mn. Too fast!”

Upon seeing Merilung’s terrifying speed, Cook could not help but cursed. Even the Icelandic Wolf he faced before did not have such quick speed.

Merilung had reached behind Cook and without a moment of hesitation, he directly created a ball of flame. The scorching heat had given Cook a shock. Without having the time to think, he retaliated by slashing his sword. Ice Element turned into icy aura and fought against Merilung’s flame.

“Cook, this is just the beginning!”

Merilung gave a grim laugh as the Wind Element on his body kept vibrating. He then released his Wind-type spell again. His figure flashed like a ghost to the point that Cook could only hear the whistling wind in his ears.

During Cook and Merilung’s short battle, Merilung only utilized Fire-type and Wind-type spell to take advantage of the situation battling Cook. These two spells were only Zero-level spells.

“Merilung is still an Entrance-level Spell Caster!”

After observing for a long time, Merlin roughly knew Merilung's current stage. He had not reached the stage of First-level spell Caster. However, he was extremely experienced in casting spells. The combination of two spells had created a rather surprising effect in battle.

"I caught you. Haha. Merilung, die!"

Cook's face was pumped red right now. He was completely in a disadvantaged situation. Since Merilung's speed was too quick, he could not pinpoint Merilung's exact location at all. He was very passive.

Thus, when Cook sensed that Merilung was behind him, he did not care about the scorching heat behind him and defended against Merilung's spell directly with his arms.

"Tsk, tsk, tsk."

The ferocious flame and white chilly aura kept interweaving while half of Cook's arm was in the middle of the flame. Thus, even if Cook was strong and had covered his arm with Aura, he was still burnt and injured by the flame. His previously white skin had instantly turned charred black.

Enduring great pain, Cook had finally pinpointed Merilung's location. He had grasped the chance to seal Merilung's movement at the cost of his arm's injuries.

The chilly Aura in Cook's body immediately froze and Merilung's figure paused a little. The latter was obviously affected by the Ice Element released by Cook.

"Crossbow, do it!"

Cook howled loudly with all his might.

Cook had arranged many crossbows in the castle. Their aim was to eliminate Merilung. After all, without special casting tool or scroll, a beginner Spell Caster could be easily killed by a crossbow that had strong penetrating power.

"Swoosh, swoosh."

Dozens of black arrows were shot silently toward Merilung under the dark sky.

Cook had retreated beforehand and jumped away from the attacking region of the arrows. His right hand which was burnt by the flame was still trembling but a hint of a smile had escaped from Cook's face.

Many arrows were shot. No matter how quick Merilung could be, he had no way of dodging the arrows. Once he was hit by an arrow, Merilung would suffer great damage because of it.

"Bang, bang, bang."

The sound of numerous arrows colliding rang. It sounded as if the arrows had hit the wall and Cook's expression changed. The smile on his face gradually disappeared.

"He's not dead?" Cook mumbled to himself softly.

These arrows were all shot from crossbows. Even he could not be sure that he could get out of the attack easily.

"Phew..."

A gust of wind blew. A figure slowly stood up in the middle of the region where the arrows were most dense under the dark sky.

Merilung was not dead! Around him, rows of hard cob walls appeared without knowing when they had appeared, forming an unbreakable defense line for Merilung.

"Earth-type spell! Three Spell Models. Merilung possesses all the conditions required to become a First-level spell Caster..."

Merlin's current look had turned extremely serious. He stared closely at Merilung. Being able to create three Spell Models showed that Merilung had possessed the conditions required to become a First-level spell Caster. However, Merilung was still an Entrance-level Spell Caster. There must be some unknown reasons for this.

Merlin shot a glance at the black-robed old man beside him unknowingly. He found that the old man appeared calm as if he was not surprised about this at all.