

Sixth 121

Chapter 121: Optimization

The spell "Shadowy Corner" is quite useful for escaping, instantaneously concealing one's form. As long as you run out of the enemy's Magical Perception range, it becomes very difficult to be detected.

Herag then purchased a copy of "Dark Imprisonment" and "Dark Energy Burst".

Dark Imprisonment is a Dark Energy Element control spell that can restrict the enemy's movements, with effects dependent on the opponent's strength.

Dark Energy Burst is considered a Beneficial Magic, through which a large amount of Dark Energy Particles are absorbed and infused into the body, thus acquiring a short burst of Power.

In total, Herag bought fourteen spells, spending fifty-seven Magic Stones.

Besides this, Herag also bought twenty portions of Blood Python Bull's blood, spending a total of four Magic Stones.

A portion of Blood Python Bull's blood can be used roughly ten times, sufficient for Herag's usage for a period.

The Wizard Apprentice at the counter was shocked, not because Herag could produce sixty-one Magic Stones, but because he bought so many spells at once, wondering if he could finish learning them all.

Herag didn't care about his view; after all, he's determined to quickly improve his strength.

If tasked by the Moonlight Forest, he must ensure he has sufficient combat capability to handle any situation.

With his current status as a Third Class Wizard Apprentice, buying several spells wouldn't draw much attention.

Anyone slightly observant could know that he is Larry's student, and having this connection could sweep away a lot of trouble for him.

"Shenlan, input all the spells purchased this time."

Upon returning home, Herag immediately instructed Shenlan to start entering the spells.

"Inputting in progress..."

A few minutes later, Shenlan had completed the input.

Herag first picked up the Hand of Weariness: "Shenlan, begin constructing the Hand of Weariness Spell Model."

"Task recorded, execution starting, estimated time required: eight minutes, estimated Magic Power consumption: 2%."

Herag mused: "It takes less time than before."

It's quite normal for the consumption of Magic Power to decrease, given that his Spiritual Power has improved significantly.

Now, 1% of Magic Power isn't what it used to be.

As his strength increased, especially after advancing to a Third Class Wizard Apprentice.

Shenlan's data analysis calculation capabilities have greatly improved, and Herag has input all the books from the second layer, enhancing the efficiency of many tasks for Shenlan.

In Herag's mind, Shenlan was swiftly and precisely constructing the Spell Model for Hand of Weariness.

He too could independently construct the Spell Model for Hand of Weariness, but can't match Shenlan in speed and precision.

Eight minutes later.

"Hand of Weariness Spell Model construction completed."

Herag extended his right hand, muttering two simple syllables, with many Energy Particles quickly converging in his right hand.

The casting for Hand of Weariness was complete, the surface of his right hand showed no abnormality, but upon contact with a target, it could induce a state of weariness.

After dispelling the spell's effect, Herag continued to construct Spell Models for Mana Armor and Great Stride Running.

Twenty minutes later.

Herag tested the effect of Great Stride Running, it could increase his agility by four points, whereas the Wind Elf's Blessing only increased it by two points.

However, the effect of Great Stride Running lasts only one second, and cannot sustain long durations.

Subsequently, Herag spent an entire afternoon completing the construction of all remaining Spell Models.

Even an Official Wizard couldn't possibly master so many Level 0 Spells in such a short period.

Any given spell would be enough for other Wizard Apprentices to spend several months studying and learning it.

Shenlan saved Herag a lot of intermediary learning time.

"I need to test each specific data point." After constructing all the Spell Models, Herag prepared to test the effects.

He took out a vial of blood-red reagent, containing Blood Python Bull's blood.

Herag placed the vial in his palm, dabbed a bit of the blood on his palm.

He muttered strange syllables while guiding Magic Power into the corresponding spell model of Blood Python's Fury.

The blood in his palm began to sink and disappear, seemingly merging into Herag's body.

A warm current flowed from his left palm throughout his body, Herag felt his strength and speed rapidly increase, as if explosive power surged within him.

"Shenlan, detect my current body data." He needed to know concrete data to accurately judge the spell's effects.

"Herag Merlin: Power 8.0(2.8), Agility 7.1(1.7), Constitution 8.8(3.4), Spirit 16.3, Magic Power 72%."

The data in parentheses represented the enhancement effects brought by the Blood Python's Fury spell, which were remarkably clear.

"Shenlan, how long does it last?" Herag continued to ask.

"Based on calculations, the duration is forty-seven minutes." Shenlan replied.

"Forty-seven minutes..." Herag was quite satisfied, this duration was sufficient to handle many situations.

He then began casting another spell.

"Mountain Elf's Blessing."

A phantom emerged on Herag's body, a closed-eye green Elf, arms crossed before chest, unclothed.

The green Elf fell into Herag's body, as if assimilating with him.

Herag felt something immerse within him, followed by a gentle warm flow spreading from the stomach throughout his body.

"Herag Merlin: Power 8.0(2.8)(2.3), Agility 7.1(1.7)(1.2), Constitution 8.8(3.4)(3.5), Spirit 16.3, Magic Power 52%."

With Blood Python's Fury and Mountain Elf's Blessing spells stacked together, Herag's physical data reached an astonishing level.

At this data level, most Third Class Wizard Apprentices couldn't withstand a punch from him if they faced him directly.

In addition to this, Herag had learned many Shield Magic spells.

During real combat, with eight or nine Shields and Beneficial Spells enhancing him, directly charging at enemies rendered non-Official Wizards hard-pressed to withstand him.

The only issue was that all these spells combined would deplete too much Magic Power.

"Shenlan, how much Magic Power is needed for all Shield Magic and Beneficial Magic combined?"

"Estimated Magic Power consumption is 98%." Shenlan provided the answer.

98%...

Ordinary Wizard Apprentices certainly wouldn't choose to fight like Herag, as having only 2% Magic Power left after was too risky.

But they didn't have the time and energy to learn as many spells.

Herag was naturally dissatisfied with this Magic Power consumption, even with Array Map storing 50% Magic Power, the consumption was still too high.

"Optimize, it must be optimized."

"Shenlan, start optimizing Mana Armor, Blood Python's Fury... focus on reducing Magic Power consumption."

"Task recorded, execution starting..."

Late at night.

"Task completed, Magic Power consumption now estimated at 67%."

Shenlan spent several hours reducing Magic Power consumption for these spells.

Chapter 122: Absolute Defense

Herag was already very satisfied with being able to reduce magic consumption by 31%.

The current problem lies in the fact that he has a total of nine shield spells.

Even if casting a spell only takes one second, it would still take him a full nine seconds to stack these nine shields on himself.

In real combat situations, there isn't so much time for him to slowly stack shields, with various unexpected developments likely.

He pondered for a moment and asked, "Shenlan, is there a way to cast the nine shield spells in one go?"

Herag asked with a mindset of giving it a try, as Shenlan had absorbed a lot of knowledge from the second level of the library and might solve this problem.

"Analyzing calculations in progress..."

Ten minutes later.

Shenlan: "Through analysis and calculation, it is possible to construct a central-type spell model connecting the nine shield spell models, allowing for simultaneous casting of nine shields."

Herag didn't expect it to actually work; from the information given by Shenlan, it seems possible to deduce a spell model as a bridge that connects the other nine spells.

"Shenlan, begin inferring this spell model."

"Task archived, estimated to take 72 hours, estimated magic consumption 73%."

The long duration required for this task is quite normal, as Shenlan is essentially deducing a new spell by itself.

"I didn't feed you all that knowledge for nothing."

Herag was well aware of how immense that knowledge was; even if an ordinary person read through it, they wouldn't achieve the effects Shenlan could.

The data analysis and calculation ability of Shenlan were extremely terrifying; when the amount of stored data reaches a certain level, it causes a qualitative change.

In the following days, Herag specifically informed Larry that he was doing research over the next few days, then focused on studying and meditating, awaiting Shenlan's inference completion.

Three days later.

"Inference complete, the spell model is as follows."

After hearing Shenlan's prompt, a spell model appeared before Herag.

The spell model was simpler than he imagined; the structure was very simple with very few formulas and parameters.

"So concise."

Herag couldn't help but praise it; this is the charm of data calculation, removing all unnecessary structures.

"Shenlan, simulate the operation of this spell model to test for any issues."

For prudence, Herag did not rush to construct this spell model.

"Begin simulation."

Shenlan quickly began simulating the operation of this spell model, testing to see if it could operate normally and if there were any hidden issues.

Ten minutes later.

"Simulation complete, no issues found after tests."

Only then did Herag feel relieved: "Shenlan, start constructing this spell model."

"Task archived, estimated to take three minutes, estimated magic consumption 1%."

Since this spell model was Shenlan's inference, its structure was already the simplest, making construction rapid.

In Herag's mind, a spell model was rapidly forming.

Unlike other spell models, this one had a line connecting spell models like the Mana Shield and Dark Energy Shield.

Three minutes later, Herag looked at this peculiar spell model structure in his mind and thought: "Have I created something remarkable?"

In his current understanding, he hasn't seen such a spell model, nor even heard of a spell model that can connect to other spell models.

For Wizards, spell models are independent of each other; each spell has its own independent spell model.

"Let's test the effect."

Herag thought for a moment and input a bit of magic power into the central spell model.

Once the magic power entered this spell model, it quickly spread to the other nine spell models.

At that moment, a strange shield appeared on Herag's body.

The shield appeared thin, with its surface being colorful, looking like a child had drawn on it carelessly.

"This..."

Herag didn't expect the spell to manifest such an effect, not looking like any serious shield.

"How to get specific data?"

Without testing, it's impossible to know the shield's strength, but Herag had no means for testing.

He thought it over and went to the backyard, then cast a Small Fireball Technique on an empty plot.

"Shenlan, with this Small Fireball Technique as a standard, establish a new unit, 'degree,' to quantify the attack strength of spells and the defensive strength of shields."

"Recording relevant data..."

Shenlan set the degree unit based on Herag's current spiritual power and the strength of the Small Fireball Technique.

He then cast Magical Missile, Corrosive Arrow, Ice Cone Technique, and Ice Arrow techniques, which Shenlan quickly provided corresponding strengths for.

"Magical Missile 0.6 degrees."

"Corrosive Arrow 0.2 degrees."

"Ice Cone Technique 1.2 degrees."

"Ice Arrow 0.4 degrees."

The strength of the Magical Missile was somewhat unexpected to Herag, but a second thought clarified things.

Being specialized in the Dark Energy Element, the strength of the Magical Missile he casts would be higher.

The strength of attack magic is easily tested, but the strength of shield spells is less straightforward to test.

Currently, there aren't many people in the Northern Forest Region, and finding someone to attack oneself randomly would seem bizarre.

"Shenlan, can you estimate the defensive strength of the shield?" Herag thought it over and could only have Shenlan estimate it, which shouldn't be too far off.

"It can be estimated," Shenlan replied.

Herag: "Estimate the strength of my current shield."

"Calculating..."

"After calculation, the estimated strength is 18 degrees."

Herag raised an eyebrow: "18 degrees, indeed that high."

He had a hunch the shield would be strong, but didn't expect it to be this strong.

degrees means that the Small Fireball Technique would have to hit continuously eighteen times to break his shield.

A typical Third Class Wizard Apprentice couldn't possibly cast the Small Fireball Technique eighteen times in a row, and if the apprentice's spiritual power is lower than Herag's, it may require more than twenty times.

"Very good." Herag was very satisfied with this shield's effect.

"Shenlan, name this spell... Absolute Defense."

"Naming complete."

Herag felt the name was quite fitting; he observed the spell model of Absolute Defense and felt it could still be further expanded, being a spell model with extensibility.

This means that if Herag can learn more shield spells later on, he can further enhance the strength of Absolute Defense.

Despite having Absolute Defense, Herag still remained vigilant.

He clearly understood that this shield was indeed hard for Wizard Apprentices to break.

But for Official Wizards, Absolute Defense might shatter with a touch.

Once out on missions, it wouldn't just be Wizard Apprentices to face; he would still need to be very cautious.

Chapter 123: To Stay or to Leave

"Power 8.0(2.8)(2.3)(2.1), Agility 7.1(1.7)(1.2)(2), Constitution 8.8(3.4)(3.5), Spirit 18.6."

"Summing it up, the numbers are: Power 15.2, Agility 12, Constitution 15.7, Spirit 18.6."

Herag calculated that if he enhanced himself with all the beneficial magics, he would end up with these body stats.

With these stats, he could almost outmatch all Third Class Wizard Apprentices, unless the opponent had some special means.

After finishing the spell model construction for these magics, Herag returned to a peaceful life of meditation, studying, and working.

Half a month later.

The talisman stone lit up, and when Herag opened it, he found a message from Larry: "Come see me; I have something to tell you."

Upon seeing the message, Herag quickly left for Larry's place.

Upon seeing Herag, Larry spoke, "Today's matter is related to your promotion to Official Wizard. Have you thought about your plans afterward?"

"Official Wizard? What exactly do you mean by plans after that?" Herag asked.

Larry: "Stay in the Moonlight Forest or leave?"

Herag understood that upon being promoted to an Official Wizard, the current contract would automatically become void, and he would need to sign a new one.

Once promoted to an Official Wizard, if he didn't continue to sign a contract with the Moonlight Forest, he probably wouldn't be able to stay here.

If he couldn't stay in the Moonlight Forest, it would be less convenient for Herag to obtain resources like magic potion materials and casting materials.

However, conversely, if he stayed in the Moonlight Forest, he would need to sign a new contract.

The contract for an Official Wizard would definitely be more powerful than that of a Wizard Apprentice, with more constraints.

As merely a Third-Class Wizard Apprentice, he must accept tasks assigned by the Moonlight Forest.

Once he's an Official Wizard and signs a contract, everything will be tied to the Moonlight Forest, and by then, there will undoubtedly be many uncontrollable situations.

Herag, being someone who naturally loves freedom, is unwilling to be overly constrained or have his destiny controlled by others.

He isn't like Larry, a famous Master of Magic Potions, who can sign an equal employment contract with the Moonlight Forest.

"If I stay in the Moonlight Forest, what will be the costs?" Herag wanted to understand the specifics of the contract.

Larry took a sip of coffee and said, "One hundred years, you must stay in the Moonlight Forest for at least one hundred years."

"One hundred years?" Herag lost all intention of staying in the Moonlight Forest.

Larry nodded, "Actually, many wizard organizations are like this. Official Wizards have to serve the organization for about one hundred to one hundred and fifty years before they can leave freely. Because

the resources needed by Official Wizards are substantial, the organizations invest a lot as well, so this condition can be considered a fair exchange."

One hundred years is one-third of the lifespan of most Level 1 Wizards; it's not really that long.

For ordinary newly promoted Official Wizards without any background, staying in the Moonlight Forest is a fairly reasonable choice, at least with no concerns about resources.

A normal Level 1 Wizard takes a long time to advance to Level 2, and many Level 1 Wizards never make it to Level 2 Wizard in their lifetime.

Even powerful Level 1 Wizards like Dino and Malcolm, after so many years of training, are only nearing the threshold of advancing to Level 2 Wizard.

But for Herag, things are a bit different; with Shenlan within him, his advancement rate is certainly faster than ordinary wizards.

For normal wizards, learning and constructing spell models consume a lot of time, but Shenlan can save Herag that time.

Spending one hundred years in the Moonlight Forest could very likely slow down his cultivation speed.

More importantly, once the contract is signed, life and death would be in someone else's hands.

Not knowing this upon entering the Moonlight Forest was one thing, but since Herag now knows it, he doesn't want to sign such a contract again.

Fate must be in one's own hands.

"Mr. Larry, I probably won't choose to stay in the Moonlight Forest," Herag replied.

Larry nodded and said, "Hmm, I guessed as much. Actually, the Moonlight Forest had me ask you this. If you agree to stay in the future, they will provide you with a free Ancient Magic Potion and an Amanda's Potion."

"Free?"

"Yes, for ordinary wizard apprentices, saving up magic stones for an Ancient Magic Potion takes a long time. And, it's crucial to advance to Official Wizard as soon as possible, which can't afford delays. So, this offer from the Moonlight Forest is highly tempting for ordinary wizard apprentices."

"But your situation is different; you have enough magic stones to buy them outright."

Larry smiled, having not disclosed much about Herag to the Moonlight Forest.

He's just working here too, not very close with them.

This offer from the Moonlight Forest is almost irresistible to ordinary wizard apprentices, especially those without a background.

An Ancient Magic Potion along with an Amanda's Potion costs over a thousand magic stones, and earning such an amount is extremely hard for ordinary wizard apprentices.

Herag asked, "Mr. Larry, can you acquire the Ancient Magic Potion and Amanda's Potion?"

He felt the need to prepare in advance in case something went awry with the Moonlight Forest.

The Ancient Magic Potion and Amanda's Potion differ from the Dawn and Dusk Potion, as they have a very long shelf life, remaining stable for decades.

Larry understood his meaning and nodded, "I can, but I'd recommend only preparing three of Amanda's Potion. You're young, and the limit you might need is three. However, I don't have them in stock; come and get them in a few days. I'll give you a discount off the market price, totaling 1,200 magic stones."

"Thank you, Mr. Larry!" Herag expressed his gratitude.

"I'll mention to them that you haven't considered this issue yet and will discuss it closer to your promotion."

Larry worried that if he directly said Herag wouldn't stay in the Moonlight Forest, it might cause him trouble.

After all, he's still a Third Class Wizard Apprentice, and it's impossible to refuse tasks assigned to him.

...

After leaving Larry's place, Herag continued pondering his plans.

Since he decided not to stay in the Moonlight Forest, he needed to gather more information about the Kala Continent to decide his next steps.

Shortly after returning home, the talisman stone lit up again, with a message from Bessie: "Can we talk? I've been injured, so it's inconvenient for me to move. Would you mind coming to my place?"

Herag replied, "Sure, when and where?"

He didn't know where Bessie lived; she was one of the few familiar faces still around.

"Today is fine, I live in Northern Forest Area K District No. 16, not far from you."

Chapter 124: Rejection

Herag's seat wasn't even warm before he had to set off to Bessie's residence again.

Bessie's home was indeed not far from him; just through two patches of forest.

"Number 16..."

Herag looked around and saw a red wooden house.

He walked over and knocked on the door, and footsteps quickly followed from behind the door as Bessie opened it.

At the moment Bessie opened the door, Herag's gaze was irresistibly drawn to her.

Bessie was wearing a small camisole top, just barely covering up the surging parts.

The long legs were adorned with black stockings, revealing a section of fair, tender thigh, making it exceptionally enticing.

Bessie was already very tall, with particularly long legs, creating a striking visual effect.

"Are you injured? You look quite well to me," Herag noticed his gaze was a bit disrespectful and promptly found a topic to ask.

Bessie smiled softly, "The injury is almost healed, please come in."

The main structure inside was similar to Herag's house; the wooden cabin structure was pretty much the same here.

The first floor was also a living room, furnished with some sofas, and next to it was a fireplace, which was currently lit and burning fiercely, making the room quite warm.

Bessie brewed a pot of coffee, took out the prepared cups, and bent over to pour coffee for Herag.

This bend revealed an impressive and magnificent view.

Herag hadn't expected this mountain range to be so grand; before, he had only noticed Bessie's long legs, not realizing there was such a hidden view.

Of course, he only glanced and then quickly looked away.

The first glance was involuntary, but viewing again would be impolite.

Bessie seemed unaware, and after pouring coffee for Herag, she sat down directly next to him.

A subtle and elegant fragrance filled the air, very pleasant to smell, not overwhelming, making one feel comfortable.

"I heard Mr. Larry say you were promoted to Third Class Wizard Apprentice. I didn't expect you to do it so quickly," Bessie said softly, her body leaning slightly toward Herag.

"You are also a Third Class Wizard Apprentice, way earlier than I am," Herag felt the warmth and softness close to him.

Bessie looked gloomy, saying in a low voice, "Although I am a Third Class Wizard Apprentice, after being injured, I no longer have hope to be promoted to Official Wizard."

She then emotionally hugged Herag's arm, wrapping his right hand with her softness: "Besides, you are different. You have high talent; it's rare to see Wizard Apprentices progress so quickly. You even have Mr. Larry, a Master of Magic Potions, as your teacher, leading to a great future."

"No hope to be promoted to Official Wizard?" Herag suppressed his inner restlessness and remained calm.

He was more curious about why Bessie could not be promoted to Official Wizard; she seemed fine enough now.

"During the recent war, my Spiritual Power suffered heavy damage, unable to be enhanced anymore. Without increasing Spiritual Power, naturally, there's no hope to advance as an Official Wizard," Bessie said with some dejection.

"Unable to enhance? Has Mr. Larry had a look?" Herag asked.

Bessie replied, "Mr. Larry has looked at it and tried to help me, but it had no effect."

Since even Larry could not help, it indeed seemed difficult to resolve.

Herag didn't know how to console her; for a young Third Class Wizard Apprentice, her hope for promotion was severed, one could imagine how desperate she was.

The longevity of a Third Class Wizard Apprentice is just a bit longer than ordinary people, whereas Official Wizards have at least three hundred years of life.

So close, yet such different lives.

The room suddenly fell silent, only the slight crackling sounds from the fireplace's burning wood and the breath of the two people were audible.

After a long silence, Bessie suddenly leaned her whole body against Herag, hugged him tightly, and said, "Herag, let's live together."

"Huh?" Herag exclaimed in surprise.

Bessie looked at Herag and said, "Don't you want to? Am I not pretty enough, or is my figure not good enough? If you think anything's wrong, I can learn some Beauty Techniques..."

Herag interrupted directly, "Wait, wait, you're very pretty and have a good figure. I just wonder, why?"

He was just a Third Class Wizard Apprentice himself, even if promoted to Official Wizard, it would be difficult to solve Bessie's problems.

With Shenlan, there might be a small possibility, but this was a problem even Larry couldn't solve.

If he solved it, it would be too extraordinary.

Shenlan is his biggest secret and most important asset; he couldn't possibly reveal even a bit of information.

"I want to find a backing," Bessie said directly.

"Backing? Even if I can get promoted to Official Wizard, I have no background, can't help you much," Herag shook his head.

Bessie continued, "No, I'm well aware of my conditions. Aside from appearance, nothing about me can attract those powerful Official Wizards or wizards with a deep background. In the wizard world, beauty is nothing."

"But you have great potential, great talent. I very much believe in your future. If I am with you, I promise to help you go further. My talent is 82, neither of our talents is bad. Our offspring will definitely have a good aptitude, and we can establish a pureblood wizard family on our own."

Bessie was very self-aware, knowing that wizards with backgrounds wouldn't be interested in her. Even if accepted, she would mostly be treated as a plaything, discarded when tired.

After much thought, she felt Herag is the most suitable choice.

With talent and potential, having Larry as a teacher, and no background, he was simply the best candidate.

Herag hadn't expected Bessie to think so far ahead, from her words, it seemed she had been pondering for a long time.

But he had no interest in establishing a pureblood wizard family; in his view, numerous excellent descendants are not as practical as his own strength.

No matter what, as long as he has enough strength, he doesn't need to rely on any external objects or others' power.

Herag shook his head, "Sorry."

Bessie's beautiful eyes instantly welled up with tears; her voice trembled, "Why..."

Herag couldn't tell her he had no plans to stay in Moonlight Forest; he could only say, "Now all my focus is on preparing to be promoted to Official Wizard. I'll consider these things later."

He planned to tell Bessie after he truly got promoted to Official Wizard.

Of course, he could enjoy Bessie's company for a while and then say out loud about leaving Moonlight Forest once promoted.

But doing so would be too disgraceful; Bessie was at least an acquaintance, if not a friend.

In the wizard world, friendships are precious; acquaintances are also valuable.

Bessie was already so miserable; Herag didn't want to push her down further.

Not being able to offer much help doesn't mean causing harm.

Chapter 125: Assignment

Bessie lowered her head and was silent for a moment, then said, "Then we could move in together, and you can focus on your practice while I handle everything else."

Herag refused, "No, I'm still used to living alone. Let's talk about it later."

After saying that, he got up and left, ignoring Bessie's attempts to keep him.

Bessie was different from Erza; while Erza wanted a child from the start, Bessie wanted to form a long-term pureblood wizard family with Herag.

Herag knew he couldn't stay here and have children with Bessie forever, so he could only refuse.

After leaving Bessie, Herag hadn't had two days of peace before news came again.

"Task: Patrol the Western Mountains for a month. Report to the task hall within three days. If special circumstances arise, please state them in advance, or bear the consequences."

This was a task directly assigned to Herag by Moonlight Forest through a Talisman Stone, and Herag sighed, "What had to come, has come."

He suspected that a few days ago, when Moonlight Forest sent Larry to ask about his intentions, it was to prepare for this task.

If he had clearly stated he wanted to stay, he would likely have been given an easy task, or perhaps no task at all.

But if he refused or didn't clearly state his attitude, the assigned task wouldn't be easy.

The Western Mountains are located to the west of Moonlight Forest, a vast area said to contain the Ten Thousand Mountains.

Patrolling such a place is naturally not a simple task, as the Western Mountains are filled with many demons and fierce beasts.

Furthermore, because the area is so vast, Moonlight Forest can't control every spot, often leading to the presence of wizards from other places.

The Ten Thousand Mountains are also rich in Magic Potion Materials and Casting Materials. In theory, these belong to Moonlight Forest, but they can't manage such a large area.

So, other wizard organizations or rogue wizards often come to steal resources, and patrolling there involves stopping these people.

Stopping them naturally leads to conflicts. Wizards who come here to steal resources aren't easy people; they know this is Moonlight Forest's territory and dare to come, so they're prepared for a fight.

Herag sent a message to Larry: "Teacher, my task has been assigned."

"What task?" Larry asked.

Herag briefly explained his task situation.

Larry replied, "This isn't an easy task. You should make more preparations and remember to be cautious."

He couldn't do much about it and couldn't interfere with Moonlight Forest's arrangements.

After chatting with Larry for a bit, Herag headed to the task hall.

The task hall was much quieter, with fewer people posting and accepting tasks, making it appear quite deserted.

Moonlight Forest's task assignments have a dedicated window. After Herag completed some simple procedures here, he was told to reach the west station within three days and then take the Hellfoot to the farthest western station in the Western Mountains.

Herag didn't rush over immediately. Instead, he used the three days to buy a batch of Magic Potions and miscellaneous items with the Magic Stones he had.

Besides, the Ancient Magic Potion prepared by Larry and Amanda's Potion had also arrived, so Herag went to pick them up.

"Twelve hundred Magic Stones." Herag counted a large amount of Magic Stones painfully and placed them on Larry's table.

Larry waved his hand and collected them all: "Be careful with this task. After you complete it, there should be no new tasks for a while, allowing you to focus on your practice."

Herag nodded and said, "Hope everything goes smoothly."

The Ancient Magic Potion looked dreamy, a vial of azure blue liquid with the shadow of a giant tree faintly visible.

Amanda's Potion looked like orange juice, a very pure orange color, and there were three portions in total.

Herag stored these potions in his Space Ring, waiting to complete his ascension once his Spiritual Power met the requirements.

After completing his preparations, Herag set off for the west station.

The journey was relatively long, requiring a night's rest at a station along the way, and the Hellfoot would rest in a dedicated stable.

Early the next morning, the Hellfoot woke early and stood at the station entrance, sneezing and stamping its feet, urging the people inside to hurry up and set off.

Herag and a chubby wizard boarded together, and Herag remembered him as the wizard who helped Bessie deal with the Stone Giant's heart at the Red Maple Forest station.

The chubby wizard's name was Fred, and he also had a patrolling task in the Western Mountains.

After boarding, Fred murmured, "Sigh, this task isn't easy. I heard it's quite dangerous and often involves battles. Most people here are Third Class Wizard Apprentices without background or potential."

Herag nodded, "We'll just have to be extra careful then."

The carriage reached the Western Mountains station by afternoon. The Hellfoot didn't return immediately; it would rest here overnight and begin returning the next day.

The Western Mountains station was quite large, with a big yard and castle-like walls around it.

After getting off the carriage, Herag realized there were already eight Third Class Wizard Apprentices and a Level 1 Official Wizard stationed there.

The Official Wizard was a gaunt old man, with skin as if hewn from deadwood, named Batty.

He glanced at Herag and Fred and said, "Hmm, everyone's here. Pair up in groups of two for daily patrols, alternating day and night shifts, with five groups taking turns. Herag and Fred, you're a team."

Herag and Fred were the last to arrive, and the others had already been grouped, so the two of them ended up together.

The patrol duty would formally begin the next day, lasting for a month.

Herag and Fred received a map, on which they found the area they needed to patrol.

"For now, it's a relief we don't have the night shift," Fred sighed.

Herag asked, "During night shifts, do we have to stay overnight in the mountains?"

Fred nodded, "Yes, nights are the most dangerous."

Herag checked the roster, noticing that their night shift patrol was scheduled for three nights later.

He received a red water ball filled with some unknown liquid.

This was the Whispering Water Ball, meant for sending messages.

If encountering any unexpected situations, like meeting a very strong resource thief, they must immediately infuse magic power into the Whispering Water Ball, so Batty can be notified as soon as possible.

Usually, there are two Third Class Wizard Apprentices patrolling, enough for most situations.

If they genuinely needed to use the Whispering Water Ball to report, it would most likely mean they encountered an Official Wizard. At that point, Herag and the others would only have time to inform Batty before their likely demise.

Chapter 126: First Battle

As the Official Wizard of the Moonlight Forest, one of Batty's tasks was to be stationed here.

However, unlike wizard apprentices like Herag, he didn't have to patrol the mountains laboriously; he could simply oversee the station.

Generally, it was uneventful and quite leisurely.

Early in the morning, Herag and Fred started their patrol on horseback, heading towards the designated area.

The path in the Western Mountains was extremely difficult, full of narrow and muddy trails, with plenty of weeds stretching out to block the road.

Occasionally, they could see small snakes quickly slithering across the path into the opposite bushes.

The mountain roads were hard to travel, and their horseback speed was slow, but neither was in a hurry.

There's no task quota for patrols, and they could return to the station on time; as Herag would say: "Just go with the flow."

Herag rode slowly, enjoying the scenery, appearing quite at ease.

However, even though he appeared relaxed on the surface, he remained very vigilant.

The Shenlan Environmental Detection was always on, keeping track of everything within a radius of 500 meters.

"Last time I saw you, you were a First-Class Wizard Apprentice, and now you're a Third Class Wizard Apprentice. With such potential, no wonder Mr. Larry took notice of you," Fred commented.

He already knew that Herag was a student of Larry's; Herag did not specifically hide this fact.

At least within the Moonlight Forest, having an Official Wizard as a teacher could help avoid some troubles.

"Just lucky," Herag responded modestly.

They walked in the mountains for half a day, and everything was calm without any incidents.

At a mountaintop, Herag found a flat area, tied his horse to a tree nearby, and then sat down under the tree to have some dried food.

After a simple lunch, Herag leaned against the tree to rest with his eyes closed, and seeing this, Fred found a large stone to lie down on.

For this journey, Herag was in charge, and Fred had no objections.

When Herag decided to rest, they rested, and when it was time to set off, Herag decided.

Fred was already twenty-five years old and had a low chance of promoting to an Official Wizard.

And Herag was only sixteen, with Larry as a teacher, promising a bright future; naturally, Fred wanted to maintain a good relationship with Herag.

Half an hour later, Herag suddenly opened his eyes and then stood up.

Fred sensed movement, saw Herag looking west, realized something might be happening, and also became alert.

Not long after, a small red bear covered in blood ran over in a panic.

Seeing Herag and Fred, the bear grew even more frantic, not daring to approach.

The bear kept looking back while fearfully gazing at the two people ahead, caught in a dilemma.

"Mountain Fire Bear! A very rare demon," Fred recognized it at once.

Herag nodded: "A bear this small wouldn't act alone; the mother bear should be nearby. But seeing the blood on the bear, it's likely the mother's blood, indicating hunters are after it."

Fred's expression became serious: "The Mountain Fire Bear's fur is precious and can sell for hundreds of Magic Stones. Now, only the Western Mountains can find remnants of the Mountain Fire Bear, and often poachers take the risk to hunt them."

One of their tasks was to protect the resources of the Western Mountains, and the Mountain Fire Bear was naturally under protection; these were part of the Moonlight Forest's resources.

The Mountain Fire Bear itself had the strength of a Great Knight Level, and it was stronger and had more Constitution than a regular Great Knight.

Those daring to hunt the Mountain Fire Bear were usually at least Third Class Wizard Apprentices.

Herag and Fred headed in the direction from which the bear had come, and soon heard sounds of a fight.

After crossing a ridge, they saw three people attacking a giant Mountain Fire Bear at the foot of the mountain.

The Mountain Fire Bear's fur was a bright red, and flames emanated from its body.

Herag quickly scanned the area, finding two Third Class Wizard Apprentices and one Second-Class Wizard Apprentice among the attackers.

The Mountain Fire Bear already had many wounds by then, including a huge gash on its belly that exposed its organs, showing it wouldn't last much longer.

"Absolute Defense."

"Blood Python's Fury."

"Indomitable Will."

"Mountain Elf's Blessing."

"Dark Energy Burst."

Herag cast an Absolute Defense shield on himself, then silently applied several Beneficial Spells on himself.

Fred only saw Herag smear some blood on his palm, followed by a magical surge, but couldn't tell what spell Herag was casting.

"Shadowy Corner."

Herag turned into a shadow and merged with the ground, moving swiftly and silently towards the foot of the mountain.

As he approached the three, he cast another spell: "Dark Imprisonment."

The trio instantly froze, realizing they were under an imprisonment spell but unable to find the caster.

The two Third Class Wizard Apprentices were about to dispel the imprisonment effect when they noticed a shadow appearing on the ground before them, and, in the next moment, a shielded person emerged from the ground.

Herag struck straightforwardly with a punch at the Third Class Wizard Apprentice before him, whose body had only a thin mana shield.

Herag's punch was lightning-fast, with a loud whoosh, shattering the mana shield like paper.

His fist passed through the shield unhindered, hitting the Wizard Apprentice's chest.

The apprentice's chest caved in immediately, his body bending backward, and in the next second, he was sent flying, crashing into a distant rock wall, mumbling no more.

The remaining two were terrified, awed by Herag's formidable strength and speed.

Reacting quickly, the other Third Class Wizard Apprentice broke his left hand's pinky, chanting a few syllables rapidly, and freed himself from the Dark Imprisonment.

He turned and ran without hesitation, with a mana shield up, having no intention of fighting Herag.

Whoosh!

A strong wind suddenly hit from behind, and in the next second, Herag was right behind him.

After Herag shattered his shield with a punch, he grabbed the man's arm, pulling him back.

Without hesitation, Herag smashed a fist into the man's neck, driving him into the ground, creating a small pit and severing his head, which rolled several meters into the bushes.

The remaining Second-Class Wizard Apprentice watched in horror, his legs trembling uncontrollably, wetting his pants.

He had witnessed battles and seen death, but never something like Herag's sheer brutality, strong enough to crush a person with a single punch.

Chapter 127: Prisoner

A gust of wind blew through, and the next second, Herag stood with his arms crossed over his chest, his towering figure blocking the view of the Second-Class Wizard Apprentice like a mountain.

He looked down expressionlessly at the Second-Class Wizard Apprentice, and with a thought, he released the Dark Imprisonment on this person.

As the Dark Imprisonment was lifted, his legs went soft instantly, and he fell to the ground, trembling all over.

"Ple... Please let me go..." He pleaded, his voice shaking with a sob.

"Name, origin, purpose," Herag's tone was devoid of any emotion.

The person continued to tremble, stammering, "I... I'm called Benik, from the Green Cottage. We... we came to steal some valuable Magic Potion Materials to sell."

It was then that Fred came down; he looked a bit fearful at Herag's face.

Just on the mountain, Fred had witnessed the entire process of Herag's action.

He first slipped into the shadows, getting close quickly without the three noticing, then punched swiftly, cleanly killing two Third-Class Wizard Apprentices.

The speed and strength were beyond Fred's comprehension.

In his mind, even Great Knights who followed the knight's path did not have such overwhelming physical power.

In the face of such terrifying power, all Shields were mere paper.

These two Third-Class Wizard Apprentices might have had more tricks, but they had already been approached by Herag, leaving no time to react in such short distances.

Imagining himself in front of Herag, Fred simulated the scenario a little in his mind, and cold sweat broke out instantly on his forehead.

"Are there any others?" Herag continued to ask.

Benik quickly replied, "No, no, just the three of us."

"Isn't it a ceasefire period now? Did you come to provoke new conflicts?" Herag questioned.

"No, no, it's exactly because the war just ended, both sides are short of manpower, so we figured that patrols in the Western Mountains might be less frequent right now..." Benik explained.

Seeing that Fred had arrived, Herag said, "Take him back, hand him over to Mr. Batty."

Their patrol duty could end early today because of this sudden incident. It was necessary to report back to Batty and, more importantly, to take Benik back.

Benik's fate wouldn't be any better than the two dead Third-Class Wizard Apprentices; after being brought back, he would definitely have his memories explored thoroughly by any means, and once his value was exhausted, he would be executed or used as Necromancy materials.

Thinking of Necromancy, Herag realized he had not yet had the chance to learn Necromancy knowledge.

Necromancy knowledge is quite complicated; it's not just about buying a couple of spells from the Magic Shop and learning them. It requires complete knowledge inheritance.

But Necromancy courses are rare; one must contact Official Wizards in the Moonlight Forest to see if they can purchase knowledge inheritance.

Herag had originally planned to digest the spells he bought before considering learning Necromancy knowledge, but due to this patrol task, he first had to come to the Western Mountains.

Fred took out a pair of Anti-Magic Handcuffs, cuffing Benik's hands behind his back.

Once the Anti-Magic Handcuffs were on, several tentacles extended, piercing into the flesh on Benik's back, completely restricting the flow of his Magic Power.

Now Benik was no different from a normal person, unable to use Magic Power.

After temporarily cuffing Benik, Herag slowly approached the injured Mountain Fire Bear.

Seeing him approach, the Mountain Fire Bear cautiously backed away a little.

Herag spoke in the Monster's Universal Language, "We are Wizards from the Moonlight Forest. If you trust me, I can help heal your wounds."

The Mountain Fire Bear's eyes showed a human-like hesitation; she glanced at the human corpses on the ground, then decided to trust Herag, nodding.

Herag took out three bottles of White Sage Healing Potion, slowly approaching the Mountain Fire Bear, maintaining his Absolute Defense Shield.

He first poured a bottle of White Sage Healing Potion onto the Mountain Fire Bear's belly, where the wound was the worst.

After the White Sage Healing Potion entered the wound, the Mountain Fire Bear's expression showed pain, but she knew Herag was healing her, so she endured it silently.

The Mountain Fire Bear's wound visibly stopped bleeding and began to heal. As a demon, her recuperative power was already strong, and now with the White Sage Healing Potion, it wouldn't take long for the wound to close.

After dealing with the wound on the Mountain Fire Bear's belly, Herag poured the other two bottles of White Sage Healing Potion on other areas of the bear's body.

He then took out a bandage, circled the Mountain Fire Bear once, and wrapped the wound on her belly.

"You are fine now, you can leave," Herag said in the Monster's Universal Language.

The Mountain Fire Bear glanced at Herag, nodded, and roared towards the mountain top.

The cub quickly peeked its head out from the bushes, sprinted down the mountain, and hid behind the mother bear, sticking out a small head to look at Herag and Fred.

Herag waved at them and then proceeded to walk towards the mountain top.

The two Mountain Fire Bears also turned and left, their figures gradually vanishing into the mountain forest.

On the way back, Herag was summarizing this battle.

Overall, if he could approach the enemy through Shadowy Corners with all sorts of Beneficial Spells cast on him, even a Third-Class Wizard Apprentice couldn't stand against him.

If the enemy was alert from the start, using Shadowy Corners to get close wouldn't work.

But Herag had both Flash and Great Stride Running spells; Flash allowed him to leap directly to the enemy's side after closing a certain distance, and Great Stride Running could burst instant speed, enhancing his ability to get close.

After this battle, Herag was even more determined to make Great Dark Heaven his Talent Spell.

"Truly, personal strength is the power that surpasses everything," Herag mused to himself.

Great Dark Heaven can infinitely enhance one's bloodline and strengthen the body, fitting Herag's requirements perfectly.

When they returned to the station, they immediately reported the situation to Batty, though omitting the specifics of Herag's fight, and Batty assumed they had resolved the enemy together.

Looking at Benik, Batty said, "Lock him up. I've notified the Forest; someone will come to take him away tomorrow."

The station had cells built with Forbidden Magical Materials, specifically for imprisoning Wizards.

After dealing with this matter, Herag continued his patrol life.

Since that day, there had been no more anomalies, and he peacefully spent half a month.

Chapter 128: Malcolm

In the early morning, the sun rose from the horizon, and the dawn light illuminated the entire Western Mountains.

Herag crawled out of the tent, breathing in the fresh mountain air.

A drop of dew fell from the branches above, landing on his face with a chilly sensation.

The campfire outside the tent had already gone out, with only some embers still radiating warmth.

Herag tossed a few dry sticks into the fire pit, manipulated the fire energy particles, and reignited the fire.

A pot hung over the fire, containing last night's unfinished food, which he intended to heat up as breakfast.

Fred heard the commotion and woke sleepily.

Not every wizard substitutes meditation for sleep every day. Many cannot commit to such diligence and self-discipline as Herag does.

For someone like Fred, who has difficulty advancing to an official wizard, it's even harder to persist, so he chose to sleep comfortably.

Herag was stirring the porridge in the pot when his hand suddenly stopped, and sweat began to bead on his forehead.

"Absolute Defense!"

A multicolored shield appeared instantaneously, leaving Fred somewhat perplexed, not understanding what had happened.

In the next second, a terrifying aura descended from the sky, pinning Fred entirely to the ground.

A blood-red hand fell from the sky, directly targeting Herag.

The shield on Herag's body endured for a few seconds before developing spiderweb-like cracks and then shattering.

Immediately following, Herag was flung out, spitting a mouthful of fresh blood while airborne.

Seizing the opportunity, he took out the Whispering Water Ball and immediately notified Batty.

"Official Wizard!"

The term surfaced in Herag's mind; only an official wizard could possess such an aura, and only an official wizard could break through his Absolute Defense with one strike.

"Shenlan, how many degrees was the attack just now?"

"After testing, the attack intensity was approximately 21 degrees."

Herag's expression was grave; such an attack was undeniably a Level 1 spell, on a different scale from standard Level 0 spells.

When he landed on the ground, all beneficial magic spells were already cast on him.

The current issue was that he didn't know who the enemy was, nor where they were.

While he was cooking porridge, Shenlan detected intense magic power fluctuations, prompting him to use Absolute Defense immediately.

A slight delay would have resulted in being smacked into a pulp.

In his current physical state, without magical enhancements, there's no way he could withstand that 21-degree blood hand.

Soon, Herag heard a familiar yet strange voice: "You were able to survive? I initially intended to slap you to death, then slowly probe your soul."

A man shrouded in a black robe riding a Night Steed appeared mid-air in front of Herag.

This person had brown hair, a face full of freckles, and was squinting with a harmless smile.

"Malcolm," Herag subconsciously uttered the name.

Before embarking on the wizard path, he had witnessed Malcolm curse and kill Baron Buck at Melissa's wedding.

Back then, he was nothing more than an ant in front of Malcolm, unworthy of even a glance.

From Malcolm's expression, it was clear he had no recollection of Herag, didn't remember meeting him.

After these years, Herag found himself still powerless against Malcolm, the vast disparity in strength turned him into a slightly stronger ant, meriting an extra glance.

"Lune's death is related to you," Malcolm slowly spoke these words.

"Lune? The Third Class Wizard Apprentice that Shivara killed?" Herag recalled.

Malcolm coldly declared, "It's indeed related to you. I don't know why his soul seems absent from this world, making me spend an extensive amount of time summoning Lune's soul back. I could only glimpse some fragments from his soul due to the long interval, and you appeared in them."

"Except for Shivara, the Abyssal Demon, you're the only person in those memory fragments I don't recognize. I spent some time investigating your identity. Herag Merlin, Third Class Wizard Apprentice from Moonlight Forest, discovered via divination and locating that you're actually in the Western Mountains."

"What a godsend opportunity. If you stayed put in Moonlight Forest, I'd have been helpless. But being here allows me to directly come and take your soul for a slow interrogation."

Herag took a deep breath, "Lune's death has nothing to do with me; Shivara killed him."

Malcolm laughed, "I never trust anyone's words, only the truth seen from the depths of a soul. Lune's soul, due to the passage of time, holds too fragmented images. But you're alive, and your soul must harbor the entire sequence of events, which I'll recognize at a glance."

Herag clenched his fist, hoping Batty would arrive soon.

He absolutely couldn't let Malcolm capture him because he harbored numerous secrets.

If captured and Malcolm learned Herag possessed Shenlan's Chip, Malcolm would undoubtedly go mad, using all means to try to extract Shenlan.

Additionally, Herag had his memories of the past life, and the Meditation Method inheritance of the Sixth Ring Tower, secrets that must remain hidden.

More importantly, if caught, death would be the least of his worries. Given Malcolm's usual methods, Herag would surely find living worse than death.

"What spells comprise the shield on you? It's not a Level 1 spell, yet it endured my strike, how strange," Malcolm frowned, seemingly puzzled.

Herag naturally ignored him, every muscle tense, watching Malcolm's movements closely.

He cast another Absolute Defense Shield on himself while checking his remaining magic power: 24%, plus the 74% stored in the Array Map.

Malcolm pondered for a moment without conclusions before turning to Herag: "Looking at your soul will reveal the truth."

He smiled, once again conjuring a blood hand, reaching for Herag.

Just as the blood hand was closing in, Herag's form twisted and vanished, reappearing several meters away in the forest.

Malcolm let out a stunned exclamation, "You know Flash? Quite intriguing."

His interest in Herag grew, a slight thrill appearing on his face, "You will certainly be an excellent specimen."

"Originally, there was a fun specimen, but I carelessly let him escape. Now I'll use you to compensate for my amusement," Malcolm spoke slowly.

Upon hearing his words, Herag quickly grasped his meaning; the specimen he referred to was likely Fegar.

"Remaining magic power: 11%."

Currently, each use of Flash consumes 13% of magic power, leaving Herag with only enough magic power for three more flashes, while Malcolm's blood hand was already forming again.

Chapter 129: Perilous Situation

Herag ran forward, constantly keeping an eye on the blood hand in the sky, ready to use Flash to dodge at any moment.

Malcolm watched Herag sprinting away and muttered, "Pretty fast speed."

He then stretched out his hand, using magic power to draw a few runes in the air, then chanted a few syllables, "Blood-colored Imprisonment."

While Herag was sprinting to escape, he suddenly noticed a blood-red wall rising in front of him.

He looked around and found that the entire area was covered by a blood-colored dome.

"Got you, worm." Malcolm smiled cruelly.

Herag punched the blood-red wall, causing it to shake, but it still stood firmly in place, unbroken.

"Such strong power," Malcolm was somewhat surprised and grew more curious about Herag.

The blood hand coalesced and once again reached down to grab Herag.

Herag was fully focused; Flash couldn't be used too early nor too late.

If used too early, Malcolm could manipulate the blood hand to change direction, wasting a Flash opportunity.

Relying on Shenlan to monitor the blood hand's position, Herag used Flash at the moment it was about to hit and avoided the attack.

The blood hand slammed down where he just stood, creating a large pit.

Malcolm thought, "Remarkable judgment, dodging perfectly twice is intriguing."

Just being able to dodge these two attacks continuously is not something an ordinary Third Class Wizard Apprentice could do.

Malcolm extended his hand, summoning a gigantic bone spear.

The next second, the bone spear directly vanished.

Upon seeing the bone spear, Herag sensed a tremendous threat, and Shenlan only detected the swift approach of magic power fluctuations.

Herag had no time to determine the direction of the bone spear and had to use Flash to evade.

Boom!

Just as he Flashed away, a massive bone spear stuck into the ground where he had been.

Malcolm looked at Herag and said, "You clearly have issues. A normal Third Class Wizard Apprentice would have exhausted their magic by using so much magic already, yet you still use Flash. Also, you seem to sense attacks in advance; is it a talent?"

"Let's see how many more times you can use Flash."

Another blood hand formed, and Herag looked grim; his magic power could only support one more Flash.

To replenish his magic, he'd have to drink a potion.

But at such a critical moment, he had no time to drink a potion; every attack happened in an instant, leaving no time for it.

The blood hand swooped down again, and Herag used his last bit of magic for Flash.

He took out a Spirit Stabilizing Potion, about to drink it.

Another blood hand descended from the sky, breaking through his Absolute Defense and smashing him to the ground.

Herag felt several ribs break and spat out a mouthful of blood.

It didn't stop there; he barely propped himself up when another blood hand followed closely, slamming onto his body.

This blow fractured multiple bones throughout his body and injured his internal organs.

If not for being under a few Beneficial Spells, raising his Constitution to 15 points, that hit would have killed him outright.

"Still not dead!" Malcolm was somewhat shocked.

An ordinary Third Class Wizard Apprentice would have been smashed into pulp by now, but Herag was only gravely injured.

"Should I preserve the body for research?" Malcolm pondered, considering keeping Herag alive to study him later.

Herag lay on the ground, feeling piercing pain all over his body.

Looking bad, death seemed inevitable.

Just then, the ground began to tremble, making rumbling noises around.

Herag managed to lift his eyelids slightly and saw many trees growing rapidly around, breaking through the blood-red walls from underneath.

He heard some movement coming from underground, feeling the ground he lay on vibrating.

Through Shenlan, he quickly learned what was below — a plant root was tunneling towards him.

Unclear about the root's intent and whether it was friend or foe, Herag couldn't move or evade.

In a blink, the plant's root reached the ground beneath Herag, emerging with a bud at its tip.

The bud rapidly bloomed, enveloping Herag entirely.

The root swiftly retracted, taking Herag into the ground.

Herag suddenly felt surrounded by darkness, wrapped in the sticky interior of the bud.

The sticky fluid spread over his body and seeped into his wounds.

"This fluid seems to have healing properties."

Herag felt his injuries slowly healing, the fluid aiding in stopping the bleeding and hastening recovery.

This whole process happened in the blink of an eye, and Malcolm tried to catch Herag but was a step too late, the blood hand grasping at emptiness, leaving only a bottomless hole in the ground.

"Malcolm, are you intending to provoke a war again?" Batty arrived at some point, standing on a giant tree leaf, with Fred beside him.

A branch approached, with a flower on it, its core opening to reveal a person—Herag.

Herag was drenched, severely injured, lying on the ground unable to move.

"Herag," seeing the situation, Fred quickly approached, examined Herag's injuries, and took out a White Sage Healing Potion to treat him.

"He's linked to my brother's death; hand him over," Malcolm's face was grim.

Batty sneered, "So what? Even if he killed him, what then? If you want him, come get him; see if you have the skill, see if you want to continue the war."

His attitude was strong, not taking Malcolm seriously at all.

If it were the unharmed Malcolm, it would indeed be troublesome.

But now Malcolm's injuries hadn't fully healed, Batty didn't fear him.

Moreover, Moonlight Forest had always been tough on Green Cottage and was unlikely to show any kindness.

No Official Wizard of Moonlight Forest would ever hand over their Wizard Apprentice to Malcolm—it would be a humiliation.

Malcolm had a fierce look, but he was wary of Batty, especially since this was Moonlight Forest territory.

If a fight broke out with Batty, he couldn't resolve it quickly.

As long as the fight dragged on, Moonlight Forest's reinforcements would arrive soon, and then he might not be able to leave.

He glanced at Herag lying on the ground, "You better stay in Moonlight Forest forever, and never come out."

Chapter 130: Rescue

Malcolm's words were obviously threatening; unless Herag stays in Moonlight Forest all his life, Malcolm would attack once he comes out.

After considering, he still decided to leave temporarily.

The current Batty was difficult to deal with, making it almost impossible to capture Herag from his hands.

Malcolm glanced at Batty, and then rode on the Night Steed and flew away.

Batty stood on the spot watching him leave, not making a move to stop him.

Now, at this critical moment of the ceasefire, he didn't want to stir up the situation again.

Batty looked down at Herag: "Let's send him back to the forest first, I'll notify Larry."

He knew Herag was Larry's student, and although the injuries were serious, he wouldn't die.

Batty summoned a huge leaf, and with a flick of his finger, Herag floated onto it. He stepped onto the leaf himself afterward.

Once steady, the leaf suddenly accelerated, flying towards Moonlight Forest.

"Mr. Batty, I haven't gotten on yet!" Fred shouted from below.

"Adding a person is more burden, you return to the station and continue the mission yourself." Batty's voice came from afar in the sky.

Fred watched the rapidly disappearing leaf and glanced in Malcolm's departing direction, feeling nervous.

If Malcolm turns back now, he would undoubtedly die.

He wasn't as strong as Herag, and probably couldn't last a second under Malcolm's hand.

The circle of giant trees around hadn't disappeared; these were summoned by Batty's magic.

Fred climbed down from the tree, wiped the sweat from his forehead, and started running back.

...

Three days later.

Herag awoke after being unconscious for three days, only to feel a splitting headache and soreness all over his body.

"You're awake?" A gentle female voice sounded.

Herag's consciousness slowly returned, discovering himself lying on a bed in his home's bedroom, with a woman sitting beside him. Upon closer examination, it was Bessie.

"Why is it you?" Herag was somewhat surprised.

Bessie said: "Don't say too much now, you haven't fully recovered. Mr. Larry just left, he has been treating you these days. Your broken bones are all connected now, and you need to rest quietly. I can't heal, but there hasn't been much to do recently, so I'm staying here to take care of you."

"Thank you." Herag found it difficult even to lift his head.

"Shenlan, check my current physical condition."

"Multiple fractures all over the body, all currently connected. Multiple soft tissue bruises, the lung was pierced by broken ribs, now repaired. Liver rupture with massive bleeding, now repaired..."

"The body is in a state of severe injury recovery, estimated to require a month of rest to fully recover."

Herag looked at the results Shenlan provided: "Seems I almost explained myself there."

This was his first time facing an official wizard, the huge gap in strength left a deep sense of helplessness in his heart. Even if he strived with all his might, he could only live a little longer.

Fortunately, Batty's rescue came in time; otherwise, he would already be lying in Malcolm's lab dissected and studied.

"Water." Herag felt very thirsty, his lips somewhat chapped.

Bessie immediately got up and poured a glass of water, slowly helping Herag sit up, placing a soft pillow behind him, and then slowly fed him water.

"Thank you." Herag expressed gratitude.

"No problem, we're friends after all." Bessie smiled.

Herag noticed that she dressed very conservatively today, unlike the last time when she was more stylish.

He then asked: "How long was I unconscious?"

"Three days." Bessie replied, "Your body is really strong. Mr. Larry said, normal people who suffered such severe injuries wouldn't wake up within ten days or half a month."

Herag knew it was due to his strong constitution, but compared to an official wizard, it was still far worse. He shook his head: "I'm still too weak, barely made it back."

Bessie quickly said, "No, you're already very strong. Malcolm is a Level 1 Crystalization Wizard, and you managed to hold on under his hand for so long until Mr. Batty arrived for assistance. That's really impressive; barely any third-class wizard apprentices can achieve your level."

The gap between official wizards and wizard apprentices is an insurmountable chasm, with strength like heaven and earth.

Normally, Herag should have been killed instantly at first sight.

Herag smiled bitterly, knowing it's a compliment, yet feeling so helpless inside.

"Ascend to become an official wizard! I must ascend to become an official wizard!"

Never before had he felt so strongly the desire to become an official wizard.

Facing life and death, Herag's yearning for strength grew increasingly intense.

After feeding him some water and food, Herag continued to lie down and immediately began meditating.

"You really work hard, no wonder you progress so fast. Mr. Larry said that meditation indeed can speed up recovery, but don't do it for too long, adequate rest is still needed." Bessie reminded him, then lightly closed the door and left, not disturbing Herag further.

In Herag's mind, a second star lit up in the array map.

In the third-class wizard apprentice stage of the Starry Sky Meditation Technique, five stars can be lit, he still lacks four.

His current spiritual power is 18.6, and Herag estimates that reaching the extreme in his current stage of the Starry Sky Meditation Technique can get to a spiritual power of 24 or 25.

Generally, the ascension requirement for third-class wizard apprentices is around twenty, and if Herag can ascend with a spiritual power of twenty-four or twenty-five, it's naturally very advantageous.

"Meditate to the extreme before ascending."

Despite his urgent desire to become stronger, Herag remained calm.

He could choose to ascend once his spiritual power reaches twenty points.

But Herag wants to pursue the utmost, and he is perfectly capable of reaching it, planning to prepare thoroughly before ascending.

Half a month later.

Herag was already able to get out of bed and walk slowly, recovering faster than he imagined.

"Perhaps it's related to the Starry Sky Meditation Technique." He speculated in his heart.

During this time's meditation, the twelfth star is close to solidifying, and within two to three days, meditation will likely be completed.

Bessie was helping him to the living room when suddenly someone knocked on the door downstairs.

"I'll get the door." Bessie assisted him to sit on the sofa, then went downstairs to open the door.

Through Shenlan's perception, Herag saw a middle-aged man wearing round glasses; from the magic power fluctuation, he seemed to be a powerful Level 1 Official Wizard.

"Don't know him, why is he looking for me?" He hadn't seen this person before.

Herag observed the movements downstairs; Bessie obviously knew him after opening the door, her expression very respectful, this person's status and identity appeared unusual.

After Bessie brought him upstairs, this person looked at Herag and said: "I'm Salin Ellison, one of the current managers of Moonlight Forest."