

Sixth 161

Chapter 161: Royal Elf Bloodline

After busying himself in the laboratory for two hours, Herag had a pure white solution in his hands that looked like milk.

"High-quality Giant Hammer Potion."

Herag calculated that at the current pace, spending ten hours a day, he could craft five portions of the Giant Hammer Potion.

In ten days, he could complete fifty portions of the Giant Hammer Potion, but Herag did not intend to submit them so early and planned to deliver them on the thirteenth or fourteenth day, which was most appropriate.

For the next half month, Herag was immersed in potion crafting within the laboratory.

During this period, apart from eating and meditating, he was focused on alchemy.

Chatiya assumed the role of a housemaid, responsible for delivering meals to Herag in the laboratory every day and assisting with things such as preparing baths and changing clothes.

Herag, with a mischievous streak, prepared several maid outfits for Chatiya, equipped with both black and white stockings, allowing her to mix and match as she pleased.

Initially, Chatiya was a bit shy, but gradually she got used to it, realizing that there were only a few people in the castle.

Lennon was mainly stationed at the castle gate as a guard, so Mary and Chatiya interacted more, jointly taking care of Herag's daily life.

Chatiya still couldn't enter the laboratory but could move freely within certain areas designated by Herag in the inner castle.

Every day during mealtime, she would bring the food prepared by Mary outside the laboratory, and when evening came, she would collect the lunch plates as she brought dinner.

Holding a tray, Chatiya indeed exuded some maid-like qualities, though her overly refined face and temperament didn't quite match the role of a maid.

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"Mr. Blake, the fifty portions of the Giant Hammer Potion are done." Herag let out a sigh of relief, looking exhausted.

Mr. Blake glanced at the crate of Giant Hammer Potions and then at Herag's fatigued expression, nodding, "You've worked hard. In just fourteen days, completing fifty portions of the Giant Hammer Potion is truly impressive. I'll apply to the family for an appropriate reward for you."

Herag waved his hand, "The reward doesn't matter, as long as it helps get through the tough times. If more crafting is needed, I can continue."

"No need, no need, you've greatly accelerated the task progress. Take a good rest during this period," Mr. Blake said.

Herag nodded and then dragged his weary body back to the castle.

Upon returning to his bedroom, the exhaustion in Herag's eyes vanished in an instant.

Given his current physical condition, it was impossible for such work to tire him; he was naturally feigning it.

Exhaustion, for sure, but not as severe as necessary.

With the aid of Shenlan, he could naturally exhibit a fatigued state, perfect in every detail, so Mr. Blake wouldn't doubt him at all.

Herag deliberately acted so exhausted because it matched his capability and potion level; otherwise, seeming completely unaffected would be too unusual.

Secondly, by appearing a bit tired and woeful, Mr. Blake would naturally strive to get him more benefits.

With effort comes reward; he couldn't appear too unburdened, or else he would likely be assigned more tasks next time.

Herag, with his rich corporate experience, understood the principle of "the more capable, the more work" deeply.

"Chatiya, come over and give me a massage."

Herag lay down on the bed, pretending to be extremely tired.

"Yes, my lord." Chatiya, always standing by playing the maid's role, quickly approached upon hearing Herag's command.

Chatiya removed her shoes, revealing her feet in black stockings. She knelt beside Herag, using her hands to massage him.

A soothing and refreshing fragrance wafted over, making Herag feel very comfortable.

Over this period, Chatiya had fully mastered the Sivil Language, capable of daily conversations with Herag and Mary without any trace of her being an elf.

Of course, Chatiya's appearance still clearly bore the distinctive features of an elf.

"How is your study of Herbalism and Magic Potion coming along?" Herag asked, eyes closed, enjoying the girl's massage.

Chatiya replied softly, "I'm more than halfway through learning Herbalism, probably needing another three days. After completing that, I'll start on Magic Potion studies. My lord, I'll work even harder."

"Alright, be sure to inform me before you start Magic Potion studies. I need to instruct you on some experimental norms and standards, which are crucial entry-level knowledge for learning Magic Potion," Herag said.

Chatiya knelt on the bed with her legs in an M shape, answering, "Yes, my lord."

Herag certainly planned to teach her the standards and norms of experiments first, which are extremely important. These were the first lessons Larry taught him.

In magic potion experiments, various standards and norms need to be followed, all summarized from numerous tragic lessons.

As Herag's potential magic potion experiment assistant, Chatiya must grasp and understand these standards and norms, which are even more important than the knowledge of Magic Potion itself.

After meditating for a while on the bed, Herag fully recovered his mental state, erasing the previous hint of fatigue.

He turned his head and said, "In a while, I'll take a bit of your blood for research."

"Yes," Chatiya responded obediently.

Herag got up from the bed, fetching a test tube and a dagger from the space ring.

Disinfecting the dagger with alcohol, he said, "Extend your hand."

Chatiya obediently extended her slender, snow-white finger, showing no fear.

After applying some alcohol to Chatiya's finger, Herag swiftly sliced through with the dagger.

Chatiya hardly felt anything as a streak of blood seeped from her finger.

"My lord, you're so quick!" Chatiya exclaimed.

Herag rolled his eyes, unsure of what to say, while catching the blood in the test tube and using a homemade cotton swab to have Chatiya press on the wound.

This blood emanated a lustrous glow, distinctly different from ordinary blood — a hallmark of elf blood.

After sealing the test tube, Herag returned to the laboratory, channeling magic power into the spell model of Great Dark Heaven, with the shadow of an ancient stone slab emerging behind him.

"What a strong sense of bloodline; I wonder what changes absorbing it will bring." Herag muttered, as the Great Dark Heaven began absorbing the royal elf blood in the test tube.

The luminescence in the blood inside the test tube gradually diminished, and its color turned duller. Herag closed his eyes, silently absorbing the Bloodline Power.

During his absorption, the concentration of energy particles around him increased, and particles of various energies surged, enveloping him.

Herag felt an unprecedented comfort, as the energy particles around seemed highly active, eagerly approaching him.

Chapter 162: Elf Magic

"Shenlan, detect the enhancements brought by the Elf bloodline."

"Spiritual Power +5.3. Acquired talent: High Magic Affinity."

"High Magic Affinity: You are born with an extremely high aptitude for magic, mastering magic is instinctive for you."

Herag stroked his chin: "Finally, a bloodline that can increase spiritual power. My aptitude should have improved significantly."

He closed his eyes and carefully felt it, attempting to meditate using the Starry Sky Meditation Technique for a while, his speed more than doubled.

This was still without the boost from the Advanced Starry Sky Potion; if he were to take the Advanced Starry Sky Potion for meditation, the speed could increase much more.

"If I were to retest my qualifications now, I wonder how many points I would get?"

Herag had scored seventy-five points in the previous test. He felt that he might reach over ninety points now, and even a hundred was not impossible.

The feeling Herag had now was as if he had changed an engine; not only had his meditation speed increased, but his casting speed and spell comprehension speed had also improved greatly.

After absorbing the bloodline of the Royal Elf, he directly became a wizard prodigy.

"It seems I can achieve full element mastery now..."

Herag was originally specialized in the Dark Energy Element, making practicing Dark Energy Element spells quite effective.

The casting speed and spell strength for Dark Energy Element magic would also increase significantly.

But after absorbing the Royal Elf bloodline, Herag felt a high affinity for energy particles of the Wind Element, Fire Element, Plant Element, Light Element, and others.

Suddenly, Herag felt something; he noticed a heat in his chest.

Looking down, he saw some changes in the original Thunder God Ancestor Bloodline Mark, with additional complex patterns.

"This is..."

Herag felt as though the bloodline mark had integrated something new, just as he had absorbed the Elf's bloodline power.

It seemed a new bloodline mark was about to form, but it was absorbed and merged by the Thunder God Ancestor bloodline mark.

He wasn't sure what changes this would bring, as he had not yet truly activated the power of this bloodline mark.

When Herag returned to his bedroom, Chatiya was staring at him, astonished.

Herag gave her a peculiar feeling, very familiar, almost as if she were seeing one of her own kind.

"Teach me some Elf magic," Herag said directly, without explaining the changes to himself.

Chatiya was momentarily stunned, then said, "Humans seem to have a hard time mastering Elf magic, requiring Elf bloodline to do so."

The spells of the Elf Race typically require Elf bloodline as a prerequisite. With human bloodline, even mastering the spell model won't allow normal spellcasting.

"Don't worry about that. You just teach me," Herag instructed.

Chatiya then said, "Well, I'll teach you the spell 'All Things Have Spirit' first. It allows you to communicate with small animals and plants to gather some information."

"Plants can communicate too?" Herag asked, puzzled.

"Of course they can. They may not speak, but anything that happens around them can be known to you through this spell," Chatiya explained.

Herag said, "This spell is quite nice, quite practical."

With this spell, gathering intelligence would become much easier in the future.

Chatiya gathered energy particles in her hand to draw out the appearance of a spell model, then began to explain.

Herag watched her easily manipulate energy particles as if it were effortless, and could only admire that Elves were indeed natural casters.

The spell model for this magic wasn't complicated, with complexity and difficulty similar to an ordinary Level 0 spell.

What caught Herag's attention was that after observing it for a while, he discovered that this spell seemed to have a verification structure.

This verification structure effectively checks the bloodline; only the correct bloodline can execute the subsequent spell model process, allowing the spell to be cast normally.

The normal casting of this spell is also based on the correct bloodline, utilizing some hidden powers within the bloodline to complete the casting.

After listening to Chatiya's explanation, Herag closed his eyes and began constructing the spell model for 'All Things Have Spirit.'

This time, he did not rely on Shenlan's assistance, but completed the construction of the spell model entirely on his own.

This level of spell model was very simple for him, taking less than half an hour to complete.

Herag glanced at the small pot plant in the room, approached it, and used 'Spirit of All Things' on the plant.

Scenes from the past few hours quickly appeared in his mind, where he saw Chatiya sweeping the room and diligently reading.

Herag estimated that the scenes covered the past two or three hours.

Chatiya understood what he was doing and explained, "This kind of plant can only remember very short scenes; the plants in the Elf Plane can record a longer duration of scene information."

Herag nodded and said, "Teach me more Elf magic."

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A few hours later, Chatiya watched the wind around Herag, puzzled at how a human like Herag could learn Elf magic without obstacles.

Herag learned some small spells, all of which had no direct enhancement to combat strength.

Chatiya, being quite young, was only just over a hundred years old.

She hadn't yet learned any powerful Elf magic, let alone taught any to Herag.

Herag became more curious about the Elf Plane, wondering what kind of world that was, and asked, "Chatiya, tell me about your homeland, what kind of place it is, and how you came to be captured here."

Chatiya thought for a moment and began, "The Elf Plane is a very beautiful place."

"There, World Trees are the main focus, with branches spreading throughout the world, and smaller World Trees sprouting in many places, all growing from the original World Tree branches."

"Our Elf Race lives under these World Trees, where we thrive and multiply. The Royal Elves reside beneath the oldest World Tree, which is the center of the Elf Plane, and where I grew up."

"The World Tree is the most important existence in the Elf Plane and is the faith of our Elf Race."

"One day, I heard that the World Tree of a remote small tribe began to wither. As a princess of the Elf Race, I felt it was time for me to take some responsibility, so I went there to investigate."

"Unexpectedly, just a few days after arriving there, a group of humans appeared. They massacred my kin, killing all who resisted and caging all attractive Elves, regardless of gender."

"I and the Elf Maiden of the small tribe were locked together in a cage."

"They all knew my identity, but none betrayed me, so those people had no idea of my true identity, only treating me as an ordinary Elf Maiden."

Chapter 163: Turmoil

"Many of my fellow clansmen were tragically killed in front of my eyes, and many others suffered humiliation."

When Chatiya spoke of this, her eyes were filled with fear, hatred, and a sense of helpless guilt.

"I was supposed to face a similar fate, but someone stopped it."

"At the time, I didn't understand, but after I learned the Sivil Language, I understood. They said I was beautiful and keeping me intact could fetch a higher price. So, the clansman beside me was dragged out and humiliated. Even so, she never revealed my identity and kept it a secret."

"After arriving on this plane, I was kept in a cage, surrounded by darkness most of the time. When I next stepped out of the cage, it was for that day's auction, and then I was bought back by the adult."

After speaking, Chatiya had become a small, pitiful figure sobbing with tears.

Herag patted her head, unable to do anything more.

The invasion of the Elf Plane by the Wizard Plane is essentially no different from the colonial invasions of the New Continent, inevitably filled with bloodshed and darkness, showing the ugliness of human nature.

Herag might one day play the role of this invader, so he had no words to comfort Chatiya.

At the same time, Herag couldn't help but think, "Wizards are the invaders now, but who knows, one day, they might become the invaded."

This is something entirely possible; there are many planes more powerful than the Wizard World.

Herag felt a myriad of thoughts in his mind, leading to an even greater longing for strength.

"Stop crying. Focus on studying Herbalism and Magic Potion during this time. If you learn it sooner, you can help me too." Herag said.

Chatiya nodded, wiping away her tears, and placed a thick book on her lap, opening it to read, occasionally sobbing.

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Half a month later.

During this time, Chatiya had learned the basics of Magic Potion and began assisting Herag in Magic Potion Refining, handling some insignificant tasks.

For example, she could take care of some simple Magic Potion processing and potion preparation, allowing Herag to focus on the most crucial parts.

The Elven Race's talents are indeed high, and their strong affinity with plants is evident in Magic Potion Refining.

Chatiya handled various plant-based Magic Potion materials smoothly, encountering hardly any difficulties.

"Don't your elves refine Magic Potions?" Herag asked.

Chatiya thought for a moment and said, "The elders can, but it's not as refined as yours. They use simple herbs to create them, and the effects are quite good."

A new batch of orders also came in during this time, which required urgent completion.

Herag, after only a few days of rest, plunged back into work, calling upon Chatiya to help refine Magic Potions.

With Chatiya's help, the progress was indeed faster and much easier.

Herag no longer needed to juggle multiple tasks, reducing the strain on his energy.

Chatiya worked diligently and carefully enough that after familiarizing herself for a few days, Herag felt confident entrusting some tasks to her.

Herag packed the refined Magic Potions into a basket and headed to Blake's garden.

"Mr. Blake, this batch of Magic Potions is complete." Herag placed the basket on the ground.

Blake opened the door and came out, his face showing some fatigue, nodding, "Well done."

"Have you found out who did it?"

A batch of Magic Potions had been intercepted recently, leading to these orders.

Blake shook his head, then gritted his teeth, saying, "I don't know, but sometimes, it's not about finding out who did it but knowing who would do such things."

"Our Cheqi Family controls seven Magic Potion Garden bases in total, and we've long monopolized the source of Magic Potion Materials. The pricing for these materials and potions is practically set by us, which has unsettled some."

"On the surface, everyone is polite and cordial, but inwardly, they wish each other would die sooner. These incidents are likely the handiwork of those Wizard Families."

"Be careful and avoid leaving Black Rock Valley recklessly. I suspect their next step might involve targeting our alchemists."

So far, the other side has only stolen their finished Magic Potions, which is considered minor.

If they continue to act, the future maneuvers surely won't be this simple.

The Magic Potion Gardens or alchemists could become targets. The Black Rock Valley has the protection of a Level 2 Witch Array, so it's relatively safe.

But other Magic Potion Gardens don't have Witch Array protection. Black Rock Valley is the largest and most important Magic Potion Garden base, hence the Witch Array protection.

If they target other Magic Potion Gardens, the Cheqi Family will suffer considerable losses.

After all, they are just a Pure-blood Wizard Family with limited manpower, and when distributed, not many people are left for each Magic Potion Garden.

The defense force at Black Rock Valley is minimal, with only Herag and Blake as stationed Official Wizards, and Herag isn't considered a combatant.

If conflicts continue, it's very likely that battles will occur, though this isn't something Herag needs to worry about.

Herag's position in the Cheqi Family is an alchemist, and having just been promoted to Official Wizard, the Cheqi Family wouldn't involve him in battles.

Herag asked, "Can't we retaliate?"

"There's no way. Without evidence, how can you unjustly accuse others? We also can't pinpoint which family did it. Acting rashly would only worsen the situation." Blake explained.

The biggest issue now is that while suspicious targets have been identified, it's impossible to ascertain which family is responsible, forcing the Cheqi Family to quietly endure the loss.

Herag felt this matter wasn't that straightforward, and it wouldn't end anytime soon.

Even within Black Rock Valley, Herag knew he needed to remain vigilant and couldn't feel complacently secure just because of the Level 2 Witch Array.

Five days later.

Herag received news that one of the Magic Potion Gardens had been attacked.

The assailants came and went quickly, throwing a few spells into the garden before fleeing, leaving no time for the garden's people to capture them.

This loss, though not significant overall, greatly vexed the Cheqi Family.

Blake summoned Herag, his expression heavy as he said, "I'll be away for some time, and anyone who dares to come won't be allowed to leave. I can't go into details, but just stay in Black Rock Valley and don't go out unnecessarily. During this time, Black Rock Valley will be on lockdown, with no one allowed in or out."

After speaking, Blake left Black Rock Valley, leaving Herag in charge.

Since Herag hadn't signed a contract with the Cheqi Family, many confidential matters couldn't be shared with him.

Blake's departure clearly indicated that the Cheqi Family had formed a plan, making it more difficult for those attempting sabotage to succeed, at least requiring them to pay a price.

Chapter 164: Mutation

After Blake left, Herag not only continued his daily meditation practice, studying, and teasing Chatiya, but also took on an additional task.

That was to patrol various places in Black Rock Valley from time to time, count the number of people each day, and check if there were any unusual signs in everyone's condition.

As the only official wizard in Black Rock Valley, he had absolute authority over everyone.

After several days, Herag didn't find any problems.

All these people were veterans, with the shortest having stayed for at least seven years.

In the entire Black Rock Valley, ironically, Herag had been there for the shortest time.

Herag patrolled twice daily, once in the morning and once in the evening, only returning to the castle to continue his own affairs after ensuring nothing was amiss.

Five days later, Blake was still outside and hadn't returned.

In the dead of night, Herag lay on his bed with his eyes closed in meditation, while Chatiya had already fallen asleep in the room next to his.

In the distance, at the far west side of the Magic Potion Garden, there were rows of houses.

This was where the wizard apprentices and knights who took care of the Magic Potion Garden lived. Most of them would be sound asleep by this time.

But now, seven people had sat up from their beds, looking around with complicated expressions.

The castle where Herag resided was located at the northernmost part of Black Rock Valley, very far from here, beyond Shenlan's detection range, so he did not notice these seven people's movements.

After getting out of bed, the seven people stood in front of the bed or on the empty ground in the house, taking out a dagger or longsword.

Their expressions were somewhat complex, seemingly struggling internally, but their actions bore no hesitation, all of them cutting open their own stomachs with the weapons, then collapsing onto the ground.

Blood flowed from their bodies, spreading over the ground.

The positions of these seven people formed a strange rune, their blood seemingly responding to each other.

A circular array appeared above the residential district, with two figures appearing in the center of the array.

Magic power waves spread out, alerting Herag, who was meditating.

He immediately opened his eyes and looked toward the residential district.

"Such strong magic power waves..."

Herag sensed something ominous and went to the adjoining room to knock on Chatiya's door.

Chatiya opened the door, bleary-eyed, wearing a small strap revealing her figure.

She didn't notice this, though, and asked, "Sir, what's the matter?"

"You immediately hide in the basement; something might happen. Don't come out unless I call for you," Herag instructed seriously.

Seeing his serious expression, Chatiya sobered up instantly, also sensing a powerful magic power wave.

After Herag instructed her, he left, and Chatiya hurriedly grabbed her maid outfit, too late to put it on, and ran to hide in the basement.

Herag came outside the castle; Lennon was still snoring in the gatehouse, and Herag did not wake him up.

"This distance should be enough."

Herag arrived at the edge of Shenlan's detection range, observing the situation in the western residential district.

Two people appeared in the sky above the residential district, quickly alerting the wizard apprentices and knights below.

One was an old man with white hair, the other a middle-aged man.

The old man glanced at the people running out below, looking at him in panic, quickly gathering magic power in his hand, and then softly said, "Ice Rain."

Countless ice cones formed above the residential district, then fell like a storm, piercing through the bodies of people below.

Even wizard apprentices hiding in the houses were directly pierced through the stomach by the ice cones, pinned hard to the ground.

Some quick-reacting, clever wizard apprentices avoided one round of ice cones, but immediately after, another wave of Ice Rain Technique followed, wiping out all the wizard apprentices and knights in the entire residential district.

"A Crystalization Wizard, a Liquidation Wizard."

Herag quickly learned the strength of these two through Shenlan, starting to feel overwhelmed.

The exit of Black Rock Valley was at the southernmost part, whereas he was at the northernmost part, so escaping unnoticed by these two official wizards was impossible.

"Terry, according to the intel, there's another Level 1 Wizard in that castle over there. He's an alchemist, newly promoted, not much of a combatant. Go take care of him, then come over to help me take control of the array."

The old man pulled out a long red crystal, glanced in the direction of the castle, and said.

The middle-aged man, Terry, nodded and said, "Alright, sir, I'll be quick."

In their intel, Blake was still at another distant Magic Potion Garden.

Now, in the entire Black Rock Valley, there was only Herag, a Level 1 Wizard, and he had been promoted for less than a year, still in the Gaseous Stage.

For Terry, a Liquidation Wizard, dealing with such a novice Gaseous Wizard was more than manageable, and the old man didn't take Herag seriously at all.

These two were from the Moss Family, and they had placed people in the Cheqi Family many years ago.

The seven wizard apprentices who committed suicide were planted there by them.

For years, they hadn't had these wizard apprentices do anything, behaving exactly like everyone else, so the Cheqi Family naturally hadn't discovered anything.

The Moss Family had long coveted Black Rock Valley. To seize control of the place, they had laid the groundwork many years ago.

Now, with Blake away from Black Rock Valley and unable to return for a while, it was the best time for them to take action.

A Level 2 Witch Array was extremely difficult to breach from the outside, so the Moss Family naturally wouldn't choose a frontal assault.

But if they struck from the inside, it would be different.

The seven dead wizard apprentices had hidden traps placed inside their bodies, only triggered upon their deaths.

Once these seven people died, the hidden magic runes inside them would link together, forming a temporary teleportation witch array.

However, this witch array was unstable, able to at most teleport two people inside.

With Blake having left, once they entered Black Rock Valley, a Crystalization Wizard and a Liquidation Wizard would find it unchallenged territory.

The red crystal in the old man's hand was acquired from the Land of Dawn, capable of seizing control of the array.

But it had to be done inside the array, and it would take considerable time, approximately three hours.

Even if the Cheqi Family were alerted and rushed back, they wouldn't be able to reach Black Rock Valley in three hours.

By then, with the Moss Family controlling the array, Black Rock Valley would belong to them.

Simultaneously, the Moss Family had deployed forces in several other places as well, aiming to inflict a single devastating blow to the Cheqi Family, completely knocking them off the magic potion control chain.

The stakes were high, and the Moss Family had been planning for a long time.

This action was meant to be conclusive, not giving the Cheqi Family much time to react.

The most crucial part of the whole plan was Black Rock Valley.

It was the largest, most important Magic Potion Garden base of the Cheqi Family. Without control of it, even severely weakened, the Cheqi Family could make a comeback.

Chapter 165: Power

The old man floated in the air, holding a red crystal, with a ground full of corpses below, as blood spread around, releasing a foul, metallic scent.

He glanced around and softly murmured, "Where is the core of the witch array?"

The red crystal in the old man's hand was a witchcraft artifact specifically used for seizing control of a witch array, requiring the core position to be found first before using the red crystal.

He circled around the residential area without finding anything, then flew towards the Magic Potion Garden to check.

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On his way to the northern castle, Terry saw many magic potion materials planted in the Magic Potion Garden.

The growth of these magic potion materials was excellent, and the area was vast. Terry thought to himself, "In the future, these will belong to the Moss family. I'll deal with that kid in the north first."

Terry had been in the Liquid Stage for a long time now, and dealing with a newly advanced Gaseous Wizard was not an issue for him; he did not think this task would be difficult at all.

As he approached the castle, Terry expanded his magical perception and quickly grasped the situation inside.

There were a man and a woman hiding in the outer castle, both ordinary people without any combat power, posing no threat, so Terry did not bother with them.

In the basement of the inner castle, there was a woman who was somewhat special, her magical aura was quite intense, and her ability should be around that of a Third Class Wizard Apprentice.

Terry silently took note of the person in the basement, then focused all his attention on the plaza behind the inner castle, where a man was standing, with magical fluctuations indicating he was the Herag mentioned in the intel, a Level 1 Gaseous Wizard.

He uttered a few syllables under his breath, and a flame shield appeared around his body.

Although Herag was just a Gaseous Wizard, Terry was determined to go all out, not giving Herag any chance at all.

Terry made his way through the castle, ignoring Lennon and Mary who were hiding, and arrived at the plaza.

Herag was gazing at the starry sky, his back to him.

"You've come?" Herag said softly, his tone calm.

Terry asked curiously, "Were you waiting for me?"

Seeing Herag like this, it seemed as though he had known he would come and was waiting here intentionally.

If he knew I would come, why not attempt to run away?

Although the inside of Black Rock Valley was enclosed, with no place to run, surely he wouldn't just surrender helplessly.

Thinking of this, Terry sneered, "Good that you know there's nowhere to run; it saves me a lot of effort. I'll act a bit faster."

He carefully sensed again, confirming Herag was indeed at the Gaseous Stage in terms of spiritual power.

Herag turned around, calmly looking at Terry and said, "I've always been pondering a question, whether absolute power can surpass everything. It's just right to use you for an experiment. Liquid Stage, not too strong, not too weak."

"Just perfect."

Terry felt uneasy being looked at by his eyes, which seemed to completely disregard him.

Talking about conducting an experiment, does this guy not understand the current situation?

"Blood Python's Fury."

Herag took out a vial of blood and smeared it onto his palm.

Seeing his action, Terry was initially cautious, but upon realizing it was just a Level 0 Spell, he smiled, "How useful can such an enhancement be?"

"Mountain Elf's Blessing."

"Wind Elf's Blessing."

"Absolute Defense."

Herag consecutively used three spells, with light flashing over his body continuously, and a multicolored shield appeared around him.

Terry frowned slightly; those two beneficial spells were fine, he didn't think those spells were particularly formidable.

What caught his attention was the odd-looking shield which seemed somewhat unusual, and he intuitively sensed something was off.

"Giant Body."

Herag's body expanded rapidly, his clothes instantly shredded.

Terry was dumbfounded, slightly lifting his head to look at the muscular giant before him, a sense of foreboding rising within him.

"Dark Armor."

Herag had no habit of running around naked and swiftly donned the dark armor, his entire body being fully enveloped in the black armor.

He swiftly invoked the power of the Thunder God Ancestor Bloodline, with arcs of lightning flickering across the black armor.

Seeing the giant exuding an aura of darkness in front of him, Terry involuntarily took a step back.

He quickly formed a Fireball in his hand and shot it towards Herag.

Herag neither dodged nor avoided it, as the fireball hit him, bursting into many sparks without causing him the slightest harm.

"Fire Energy Mastery? Your luck really isn't that good," Herag murmured.

With high-level flame resistance, such fire magic posed no threat to him in this state.

Herag glanced at the scattering sparks, saying in a deep voice, "My turn now."

His entire body tensed, with a forceful stomp, launching himself forward with electric light flashing past in the air behind him.

In the next instant, Herag appeared in front of Terry with a right fist clenched tightly.

He swung a punch, an ordinary straight punch, accompanied by a fierce gust and whooshing sound.

Terry's pupils contracted, caught off-guard as Herag's fist crashed into his flame shield.

In an instant, the shield cracked into countless webs, then shattered into pieces.

A layer of flame automatically surfaced on Terry's body—a talent spell of his.

Herag's fist struck Terry's chest, with the colossal force bending Terry's body backward, making him spew a mouthful of blood, with chunks of flesh in it—his shattered organs.

Immediately afterward, Terry was sent flying.

The flame layer on Terry's body could not withstand such immense power, barely hindering Herag at all.

Herag followed up closely, appearing behind Terry in a flash, lifting his leg for a fierce kick right at Terry's tailbone.

The crack of bones was clear, and Terry didn't even have time to utter a scream before his body changed direction again, being sent flying, dragging a long trace on the ground before rolling to a halt at the edge of the plaza, his body twitching incessantly.

Herag flickered and appeared next to Terry.

Terry was still alive, struggling to move his eyes to look at the black-armored giant beside him, his eyes filled with fear.

It was too fast.

Terry hadn't had the chance to react, many of his magical tactics hadn't even been executed yet before being severely injured by just a punch and a kick from Herag.

Laying on the ground, Terry's body had lost sensation across multiple areas, and there was a strange absence of pain.

What Terry didn't know was that his body was currently grotesquely twisted, with his waist appearing almost broken, bent at an extremely unnatural angle.

Once Terry had stepped into the plaza, Herag felt a confidence of victory swelling in his heart.

With his speed, unless prepared and on guard beforehand, it was almost impossible for Terry to react in time.

In full state, Herag, after invoking the power of the Thunder God Ancestor Bloodline, was exceedingly fast.

The distance between them was so short, Herag could easily overpower Terry.

Even being a wizard in the Liquid Stage, with a respectable physical constitution, Terry couldn't withstand Herag's immense power, which ordinary bodies couldn't hope to resist.

Chapter 166: Seizure

Herag looked at Terry, who was twitching at his feet, and shook his head, "Too weak, didn't achieve the experimental effect. I was still too cautious, should have given you more chances to make a move."

Herag, being cautious, had used his full strength in both attacks.

Unexpectedly, Terry's reactions were so slow that he didn't even have any countermeasures.

Herag felt a bit regretful, the battle ended so quickly, and there wasn't much experimental result.

But in times like these, there's no room for mercy; safety is the most important.

Herag looked down at the dying Terry, clenched his right fist, and struck Terry's body with a loud bang.

Terry's body stopped twitching, his hands weakly falling to the ground.

Herag pried off the space ring from Terry's finger and then conjured a fireball in his hand, burning the body.

He used several Fireball Techniques in succession to ensure the body was completely incinerated.

That wasn't all; Herag immediately used Evil Spirit Perception to locate Terry's Spirit Body.

Terry's Spirit Body stood blankly in front of him, motionless, with no perception of the surroundings.

"Last time, because Lune's soul was retrieved by Malcolm, it brought me a lot of trouble. Can't let such a thing endanger me again."

Herag conjured a white Light Saber in his hand, it was the Undead Sword, a Necromancy learned from Lady Moran, capable of harming Spirit Bodies.

He wielded the Undead Sword and slashed at Terry's Spirit Body.

A hole quickly appeared on the Spirit Body, but it hadn't dissipated yet; a Wizard's Spirit Body is always stronger.

But one slash isn't enough, more blows will do.

Soon, Terry's Spirit Body completely dissipated.

Herag used another Fireball Technique, erasing some traces on the scene, finally feeling at ease.

"This should completely solve it."

Terry was dealt with, but the crisis wasn't resolved.

Herag glanced in the direction of the Magic Potion Garden; there was still a Crystalization Wizard there.

The old man from the Moss Family had already searched the entire Magic Potion Garden but hadn't found the core of the Witch Array.

He was getting anxious; he needed to find the position of the Witch Array quickly, time waits for no one.

Herag watched him flying around and realized this guy must be looking for something.

He took out a Talisman Stone, which flashed with Blake's message: "Hold on, the family is on their way, you must survive!"

Herag had already informed Blake about the situation here in advance, a Crystalization Wizard, a Liquidation Wizard.

Blake immediately realized the seriousness of the problem; although he didn't know how the other side infiltrated, it was no longer important.

Black Rock Valley is their Cheqi Family's most important Magic Potion Garden base, it must not be lost.

But now the other side had two Official Wizards, while Black Rock Valley only had Herag, who had just advanced to a Gaseous Wizard.

The outcome was something Blake could already predict.

He hoped Herag could survive, but he knew deep down that the hope was slim.

The Cheqi Family only now realized they had been played; the other side's target had always been Black Rock Valley.

Stirring up trouble in various other places was just to distract the Cheqi Family, diverting most of their defensive forces elsewhere.

And with Black Rock Valley protected by a Level 2 Witch Array, they naturally assumed it was the safest, the most secure place.

Little did they know, the other side had long been laying out their plans here, acting at the crucial moment.

The Cheqi Family immediately dispatched people to Black Rock Valley, even using the Flue Network to hasten the journey.

Even so, it would be at least five to six hours before they could arrive.

Within such a long time, it could all be over by the time they got there.

The fact that they dared to make a move shows that they have the means to control Black Rock Valley.

...

Elsewhere, the old man from the Moss Family finally found the core position of the Witch Array, a vegetable garden.

The location of this vegetable garden was the core of the Witch Array; the old man only needed to insert the Red Crystal into the ground, wait for the time to pass, and he would be able to seize control of the Witch Array.

The old man flew down into the vegetable garden from the air and then inserted the Red Crystal into the ground.

Once the Red Crystal was inserted into the ground, it quickly lit up, a red beam soared into the sky, visible throughout the entire Black Rock Valley.

The old man stood beside the beam, looked towards the castle, and murmured, "Why isn't Terry dealt with yet?"

He then started chanting, the Red Crystal began to tremble, and complex runes appeared on the ground.

Herag observed from a distance.

He paid attention to the old man's actions, feeling uneasy about the Red Crystal on the ground.

Herag thought for a while and decided to intervene and stop the old man's actions.

Otherwise, if he were to complete his task smoothly, it would surely spell trouble for him.

Herag also considered running out of the valley while he had the chance, but then Black Rock Valley would easily fall into the other side's hands.

The Cheqi Family would suffer greatly, and he might not receive protection anymore.

Not to mention Mr. Larry had been kind to him, and he should do something when he had the ability to do so.

After the battle with Terry, he already had some understanding of his own strength.

Herag might not be able to handle the Crystalization Wizard, but the Crystalization Wizard also wouldn't find it easy to deal with him.

If his purpose was merely to disrupt the old man rather than fight to the death, Herag was confident he could stall for a long time.

The Cheqi Family was on their way; he just needed to delay long enough.

Herag took out a Spirit Stabilizing Potion, replenished his recently consumed Magic Power, and then headed to the vegetable garden.

The old man from the Moss Family opened his eyes, looked in the direction Herag was coming from, and upon seeing Herag, he stopped chanting and said, "Where's Terry?"

"Dead," Herag said calmly, as if discussing something insignificant.

The old man walked out of the vegetable garden and looked at Herag covered in black armor, "Seems like he was careless."

Herag nodded, "I guess so, but whether he was careless or not doesn't change his inevitable death."

The old man sneered, floating into the air, "Judging by the magic on you, you should be melee combat type. Terry must have been too careless and let you get close, which caught him off guard."

Herag looked at the old man in the air without speaking.

His biggest problem now was indeed having to be in melee to maximize his combat power. If the opponent distanced themselves, like flying into the air, he'd have nowhere to utilize his power.

Herag crouched down, stomped heavily on the ground, and leapt up.

Immediately, his figure vanished, appearing behind the old man the next moment, punching towards the back of the old man's head.

Chapter 167: Abandonment

"Flash." The old man quickly reacted, also sensing Herag behind him, but he made no move.

As Herag's fist was about to hit the old man, the old man still did not use any shield, allowing Herag's fist to approach the back of his head.

Although Herag was a bit puzzled, he couldn't stop at this moment.

"Hmm?"

Suddenly, Herag lunged into thin air; the old man in front of him vanished.

A tremendous wave of magic surged from behind him, and in the next moment, a massive ice cone struck his back.

Herag was knocked to the ground by the ice cone, rolling over several times.

Pain emanated from his back, but it was nothing serious.

Herag's absolute defense and dark armor, along with his formidable constitution, left him almost unscathed.

Climbing to his feet, Herag gazed at the old man in the air and said, "Spatial defense spell?"

"That's right." The old man sneered.

The old man hadn't dodged at all. As Herag's fist approached, the surrounding space automatically distorted, and then Herag appeared in front of him.

The old man didn't need any shield spell; his innate talent spell was an extremely rare spatial magic that could automatically twist the surrounding space, redirecting all attacks elsewhere.

For someone like Herag, who specialized in close combat, this spell practically rendered the old man invincible.

Herag's attacks couldn't get close; no matter how strong, if it couldn't reach the old man's body, it was meaningless.

Realizing this, Herag stood on his spot, staring at the old man, but still did not strike.

"Ice Rain." The old man amassed a large quantity of ice energy particles in his hand, followed by a shower of ice cones falling down.

Herag's spiritual power was highly concentrated, swiftly dodging these falling ice cones.

His speed was already extremely fast, and with Shenlan's assistance, each step cleverly avoided the ice cones.

Seconds later, the ground was filled with ice cones, but Herag stood unharmed at his original spot.

Herag smiled at the old man, still not taking the initiative to attack.

The old man, seeing his somewhat provocative smile, felt a surge of anger.

But then he realized: "You're stalling for time."

Herag no longer took the initiative to strike, just standing there watching him.

Meanwhile, the old man's attacks couldn't take down Herag in a short time, creating a stalemate.

Herag's intention was clear: to stall for time until reinforcements arrived.

But the old man couldn't afford to wait; he had to quickly seize control of the Witch Array.

If the Cheqi family arrived, even as a crystallization wizard, he might not make it out of the Black Rock Valley.

The old man instantly felt a bit troubled, watching Herag slowly retreating, constantly testing the edges, fueling his frustration.

Without eliminating Herag, he couldn't seize control of the Witch Array smoothly.

But Herag's speed, power, and constitution far exceeded his expectations; as long as Herag didn't engage him directly, it was impossible to take him down in a short time.

The most crucial factor now was time.

"Freeze!"

The old man's hand clenched, and the temperature around Herag rapidly plummeted, a thick layer of ice forming over Herag's body surface.

This was a Level 1 ice magic spell, capable of trapping someone in ice for a long time.

However.

Bam!

Electric sparks flickered from Herag's body, causing cracks in the ice, followed by a faint sound, shattering the ice away. He regained his freedom of movement.

The old man exhaled a breath, as he had anticipated.

Herag's constitution was too high; these binding spells were too weak against him.

The old man weighed his options, then reached out to the ground, retrieving a red crystal in his hand.

Then, he flew directly towards the mouth of Black Rock Valley, abandoning his plan to seize the Witch Array.

With Herag interfering, he couldn't succeed.

He couldn't afford to continue wasting time; otherwise, not only would the plan fail, but he himself might perish here.

Herag watched him fly away, slowly following, keeping a distance behind him.

Seeing the old man fly out of Black Rock Valley, Herag confirmed that he had truly given up on seizing the Witch Array.

"Pretty decisive," Herag thought to himself.

The Moss family must have been preparing for this plan for a long time; abandoning it like this was undoubtedly a great loss for them.

Since the old man had flown out of Black Rock Valley, returning wouldn't be easy.

The Witch Array had identity recognition features; unless the old man used the teleportation Witch Array again, he couldn't enter.

After the old man's departure, Herag headed for the residential district to check the situation.

A scene of corpses lay before him, many houses smashed by ice cones, with a thick stench of blood in the air.

Herag searched through the area, finding not a single living person; everyone had been slaughtered.

Wizard apprentices and Knights were so vulnerable before a crystallization wizard, hardly having any room for resistance.

That Herag survived Marco's onslaught back then was already a miracle.

And it was mainly because Batty arrived in time; if he had been a bit slower, Herag would not have survived.

These people had always worked diligently; entering the Cheqi Family represented a bright future for them.

Who could have imagined that disaster would strike from the heavens, and many were killed by ice cones in their sleep, ending their lives?

In this moment, Herag once more felt the fragility of life; without strength, one could not control their own fate.

Had Herag not possessed enough strength this time, he would have perished at Terry's hands.

Arriving at the mouth of Black Rock Valley, a castle was present, with a few Knights and wizard apprentices surviving.

It just happened to be their turn on duty today, allowing them to narrowly escape disaster.

The old man noticed them when fleeing but was in too much of a hurry to harm them.

"Sir!" They came out of the castle upon seeing Herag.

Herag had already restored his original appearance, wearing a new set of clothes.

"Continue to guard here; reinforcements will arrive soon." Herag checked their condition, finding they were all right, and gave orders.

Seeing Herag granted them a great sense of assurance; with an official wizard present, they felt secure.

They were unaware of the magnitude of the gap between Herag and the old man; after all, both were official wizards, equally powerful.

Several hours later, Blake appeared at the mouth of Black Rock Valley, cautiously observing the situation within.

Although Herag had informed him through the Talisman Stone that the opponent had retreated.

Yet, who could verify whether the person on the other end of the Talisman Stone was Herag or an enemy.

In Blake's estimation, Herag should have already been killed; thus, the person on the other end of the Talisman Stone was likely the enemy, deliberately setting a trap.

Therefore, upon reaching the outside of Black Rock Valley, he didn't rush in but observed for a while with the Cheqi family members.

Herag, at that moment, was standing atop the gatehouse of the castle, and when Blake saw him, he was a bit surprised. Sensing that the control of the Witch Array was still in his hands, he felt much relieved.

Chapter 168: Peace Talks

"Mr. Blake." Herag stood atop the castle and shouted to Blake in the distance.

Blake finally approached slowly, followed by more than a dozen people, all from the Cheqi Family, including two Crystalization Wizards, while the others were Wizard Apprentices.

The Cheqi Family had a total of three Crystalization Wizards, and they were all present.

For a Wizard Family, having three Crystalization Wizards was already a strong foundation.

Most Wizard Families might only have one or two Crystalization Wizards stationed.

The Wizard Organization had many more Crystalization Wizards, and generally, Wizard Organizations would have a Level 2 Wizard stationed, although they wouldn't easily show themselves.

Some Level 2 Wizards from Wizard Organizations weren't even at home but wandered outside, only returning when something happened.

So, in the Barren Land, a Level 1 Crystalization Wizard was basically the ceiling of combat power.

Through these two battles, Herag gained a further understanding of his own abilities.

At least in the Barren Land, he had the ability to protect himself, and could escape even if he couldn't defeat a Crystalization Wizard.

After Blake and his group entered Black Rock Valley, they first checked the state of the Witch Array, noticing signs of being seized, but control was still intact.

"You not only killed a Liquefaction Wizard but also drove away Old Man Karl from the Moss Family?" Blake, although aware of this in advance, still found it somewhat incredible.

"Just luck, I didn't fight him head-on, just interfered with him seizing the core of the Witch Array. Seeing time was running out, he left, and I couldn't stop him." Herag didn't detail the process.

Blake wouldn't ask either; he knew Herag surely had his secrets to achieve such a feat, and it wasn't convenient to inquire.

As a Wizard, it was normal for everyone to have some personal secrets.

Blake said, "It's hard enough; you're just a Gaseous Wizard, yet you could contend with a Crystalization Wizard. Although the opponent was cautious, this is already remarkable."

"We suffered quite a loss this time, nearly wiping out everyone we've nurtured in Black Rock Valley over the years."

"Who was the opponent?" Herag asked.

He still didn't know the exact identity of the opponent. With such a big move, the Cheqi Family must have figured it out.

Blake said solemnly, "It was someone from the Moss Family; they've been coveting our Magic Potion business for a long time. Now, it's our turn to retaliate."

Blake's eyes were full of anger; although the Moss Family hadn't succeeded in seizing Black Rock Valley, they still inflicted significant losses on them.

The Cheqi Family certainly wouldn't let it go and were preparing for a counterattack.

Herag didn't need to participate in the battle for the time being; he had other tasks.

"We'll arrange for some newcomers during this period, all personnel from within the family this time. They've just arrived in Black Rock Valley, and many things require your guidance," Blake said.

Most Wizard Apprentices and Knights in Black Rock Valley had died, but the daily management of the Magic Potion Garden still required personnel, which needed to be resolved quickly.

The Cheqi Family had transferred some trustworthy personnel from elsewhere, but these people were unfamiliar with Black Rock Valley's management procedures.

Especially Herag's management style, they would need some time to learn and understand before gradually getting the hang of it, which required Herag's time to teach them.

"No problem, leave it to me." It was naturally not an issue for Herag.

The cleanup work soon began, and the corpses in the residential area were all buried on the small hill outside Black Rock Valley.

For those with family members claiming them, the bodies were taken back by the relatives.

Apart from those few traitors, the Cheqi Family would also provide some compensation to the families of the deceased.

...

A few days later, the Cheqi Family arranged for fifteen newcomers to enter Black Rock Valley to handle the daily management of the Magic Potion Garden.

As before, Herag explained the significance of the schedule and various data reports.

These were all internal members of the Cheqi Family, and those sent over were quite astute, so Herag didn't take much effort to get them all acquainted.

During this period, the Cheqi Family's retaliation also began, attacking several estates of the Moss Family.

The Moss Family mainly conducted some trade business, buying and selling goods everywhere.

The Cheqi Family targeted these trade caravans, specifically plundering the Moss Family's caravans everywhere, causing them substantial losses.

Initially, they were unclear of the target and didn't know who did it.

Now that they knew it was the Moss Family, the Cheqi Family's target became clear, focusing on them.

Of course, the Moss Family also took action, and the Cheqi Family suffered not insignificantly, resulting in mutual damage.

Such a situation certainly couldn't persist for long, and soon negotiations began.

The negotiations were mediated by people from Augustus Academy, with some from other Wizard Families also sitting down for careful discussion.

The responsibility of Augustus Academy was to maintain stability in the Barren Land, and large-scale conflicts between two Wizard Families were certainly not allowed, as it would affect the stability of the area.

Once Augustus Academy intervened to mediate, no matter how great the animosity between the Cheqi Family and the Moss Family, they had to obediently sit down and negotiate.

The result of the negotiations was that the Moss Family would compensate the Cheqi Family with one hundred thousand Magic Stones.

Meanwhile, the Moss Family would have fewer slots for this year's Death Swamp Ruins exploration, while the Cheqi Family would have more.

The Death Swamp Ruins was one of the few ancient ruins in the Barren Land that produced various Magic Potion Materials and Casting Materials.

Most importantly, it might yield materials needed for a Level 1 Crystalization Wizard to ascend to a Level 2 Wizard.

If a Level 1 Crystalization Wizard wants to advance to a Level 2 Wizard, they must comprehend a Rule.

Upon comprehending a Rule, one can initially touch Rule Power, thereby advancing to a Level 2 Wizard.

This step is quite elusive, without external help, relying entirely on personal comprehension.

Some may comprehend it within a year, while others may never comprehend it in their lifetime.

Such advancement conditions are obviously very unstable, and in the Land of Dawn, many Level 2 Wizards couldn't have possibly advanced by personal comprehension alone.

The vast majority needed to rely on external objects.

The forms and types of these external objects varied, but they all shared one common point.

They all contained some World Rules, and Wizards could use these external objects to comprehend World Rules, thereby helping themselves to touch Rule Power and complete the advancement.

In the Land of Dawn, such things are not uncommon.

The Land of Dawn, long in campaign across other Planes, has many channels to obtain items imbued with Rule Power.

However, in the Barren Land, such things are seldom seen.

Unless they flow out from the Land of Dawn, Wizards in the Barren Land have almost no way to access such items.

The only place where they might be produced is the Death Swamp Ruins.

Chapter 169: Demonized Items

The production chance is very low, and it's hard to find.

The last time someone found something with the Power of Rules in the Death Swamp Ruins was over a hundred years ago.

Nevertheless, each time the Death Swamp Ruins open, many people still go in.

The Death Swamp Ruins open once every ten years, and this year happens to be the opening time.

The Death Swamp Ruins have long been controlled by major Wizard Families and Wizard Organizations; wizards without a background have no chance of entering.

The entry slots for each faction are also limited, and these slots have already been allocated.

For the Moss Family, losing a few slots is more painful than losing those hundred thousand Magic Stones as compensation.

There are many items in the Death Swamp Ruins that can't be bought with Magic Stones, their value simply can't be measured by Magic Stones.

But, this is the result led by Augustus Academy, even if the Moss Family has complaints, they can only accept it.

...

"Herag, we have a few extra slots now, are you interested in going to the Death Swamp Ruins?" Blake asked with a smile.

Herag did a great service for the Cheqi Family this time by defending the Black Rock Valley and received a reward of five thousand Magic Stones.

Besides, after a discussion, the Cheqi Family decided to grant Herag a slot to enter the Death Swamp Ruins, just to see if Herag wanted to go.

After understanding the matter of the Death Swamp Ruins, Herag began to ponder.

The first thing he considered was the problem of danger.

The interior of the Death Swamp Ruins is certainly full of dangers, although after so many years of exploration, various factions are already clear about which places to go and which places are best not to go.

But once inside, it's hard to say what variables may emerge.

However, danger also comes with opportunities; there are many good things inside.

Especially items with the Power of Rules. Although Herag is currently only gaseous, he will eventually achieve crystalization in the future.

If he can obtain them in advance, it will certainly be of great help in the future, at least increasing the chances of advancing to a Level 2 Wizard.

The Death Swamp Ruins open once every ten years; if missed, one must wait another ten years.

The Cheqi Family especially gave Herag a slot as a form of welfare for him.

Because more people from the Cheqi Family are going in this time, naturally making them stronger.

Herag just needs to follow them and pick up some things along the way, which would be a considerable gain.

Herag felt somewhat tempted, but still thought it wasn't stable enough; what if he encountered some unexpected events once inside?

He thought that going was possible, but he needed to be well-prepared, Herag thought to himself.

"How long until the Death Swamp Ruins open?" Herag asked.

Blake replied, "Three months."

"Three months, that should be enough. Alright, I'll prepare during this period." Herag pondered and then agreed.

Currently, he at least has some ability to protect himself, unlike before when he was so fragile.

Since he decided to go to the Death Swamp Ruins, naturally he needs to be well-prepared.

His strength won't increase significantly in three months, so he needs to leverage external items.

Herag just uses this opportunity to test some of his ideas.

He returned to his underground laboratory: "Shenlan, infer a method to create a demonized item. Requirements: possess enough stability, can be detonated by command, structure may be similar to various bombs from the previous life, and the materials should be relatively easy to obtain."

Herag wanted to create a bomb-like demonized item; he hadn't seen such a thing yet, at least wizards in the Barren Land hadn't created similar items.

With his experience from his previous life, he naturally knows what kind of power can be born when energy is compressed and released, hence he uses this opportunity to experiment.

"Task archived, inference in progress, expected to take five hours," Shenlan provided the estimated time.

The creation method of demonized items was already recorded in Shenlan's database, but Herag had not actually created one.

Five hours later.

"Inference completed. Based on current data, the inferred structure is as follows."

A circular structure appeared before Herag's eyes, with a red crystal inside and wrapped in animal fur externally.

"Materials used are: Fire Salamander Crystal, Fire Salamander Fur, Saltpeter, Mandrake Juice..."

Herag noted the main materials come from a type of demon called the Fire Salamander.

This demon exists in many places in the Barren Land, and after maturity, the Fire Salamander will have a Fire Salamander Crystal inside.

The Fire Salamander can use this crystal to eject flames at extremely high temperatures, which is also the Fire Salamander's most important energy source.

The structure inferred by Shenlan primarily employs the Fire Salamander Crystal as the core, utilizes magic power to ignite the crystal, then coupled with special structures and other ingredients to produce a powerful explosive force.

Because it is wrapped externally with Fire Salamander Fur, it inherently has very good compatibility, ensuring sufficient stability.

Usage is simple too; before using, infuse a bit of magic power into the sphere, then detonate through pre-set phonetic commands.

The structure is already established; the next step is experimentation.

The first issue is raw materials. Herag approached Blake and asked, "Mr. Blake, can you help me procure a batch of Fire Salamander Crystals and Fire Salamander Fur?"

"Fire Salamander? What do you want that for?" Blake asked with confusion.

Fire Salamander Crystals are casting materials for some Fire Magic spells, but Herag specializes in Dark Energy Element, typically not purchasing these items.

Herag explained, "For some experiments."

Blake didn't ask much, nodding, "No problem, if I recall correctly, a set of Fire Salamander Crystals along with Fire Salamander Fur should cost about thirty Magic Stones, this stuff isn't expensive, how much do you need?"

"Let's start with ten sets; I might need more later."

Herag didn't purchase a large quantity; he needed to first make the item through experiments, then verify if the power was satisfactory.

If unsatisfactory, he'd definitely need to change materials and formulas; buying a lot would be wasteful.

Three days later, ten Fire Salamander Crystals and ten pieces of Fire Salamander Fur were delivered.

The Fire Salamander Fur was small, just enough to wrap around one set.

The Fire Salamander itself is relatively small, only the size of a house cat, so the fur correspondingly is small.

After paying three hundred Magic Stones, Herag hurried back to the underground laboratory to start his first demonized item creation.

His status in the Cheqi Family rapidly rose, almost all his requests were granted, so these materials could be purchased quickly.

Returning to the basement, Herag began crafting demonized items according to the structured inference by Shenlan.

The structure was actually quite simple, far less complex than crafting magic potions.

Before long, Herag had a leather ball in his hands.

Chapter 170: Fire Salamander Bomb

Herag arrived at the plaza behind the Inner Castle, holding a leather spherical object in his hand.

He first enveloped himself in Absolute Defense, stood at the edge of the plaza, inputted a bit of Magic Power into the sphere, and then threw it out.

After the sphere flew a certain distance, Herag muttered: "Bumeng!"

Boom!

A loud explosion sounded, the sphere burst open instantly, unleashing a massive fireball that surged a wave of heat and sent powerful shockwaves in all directions.

"Shenlan, assess the explosion's intensity." Due to his distance and the Absolute Defense protection, Herag was unharmed.

"Assessment in progress..."

"After assessment, the estimated explosion intensity is 23 degrees."

Herag was quite satisfied with this result: "Very good, it's already surpassed Marco's attack intensity back then."

The energy compression and release structure designed by Shenlan truly was impressive, unleashing tremendous power.

"Shenlan, name this demonized item 'Fire Salamander Bomb,'" Herag instructed.

"Name completed."

After successfully conducting the experiment, it was natural for Herag to prepare more Fire Salamander Bombs.

The more of these the better, so when danger arises, he can directly toss out a pile of bombs.

"Sir, what happened?" At this moment, Chatiya came running over in a fluster, sensing a strong Magic Power fluctuation. Seeing Herag was fine, she felt relieved.

During this period, Herag had treated her quite well, causing her to develop a sense of dependency on him.

The Master-Servant Contract inherently affects the servile side, making the servant's body and soul ultimately belong entirely to the master.

Furthermore, if Herag dies, Chatiya will also die, leaving her no choice but to care.

"Nothing much, just conducting some experiments." Herag turned back and said.

"That's good." Chatiya exhaled a sigh of relief.

The noise was so loud that the entire Black Rock Valley heard it.

Even Blake rushed over to check the situation, asking: "What happened?"

Herag smiled awkwardly: "Nothing, just a little experiment."

"A little experiment?" Blake looked at him with a peculiar gaze.

Herag shifted the topic: "By the way, Mr. Blake, could you help me purchase more crystals and pelts of Fire Salamanders?"

"Sure, no problem, how much do you need?" Blake asked.

Since Herag seemed okay, he didn't press further.

"Not much, just a hundred sets to start," Herag replied.

"How much?" Blake was startled.

Herag chuckled awkwardly without explaining.

Blake understood immediately; since Herag didn't want to say more, it wasn't appropriate to ask further, so he said: "Alright, I'll help you contact them. This large quantity should allow for a discount."

"Thanks a lot, Mr. Blake." Herag expressed his gratitude.

Cheqi Family acted quickly, delivering a hundred sets of Fire Salamander crystals and pelts to Black Rock Valley within half a month.

It cost Herag a total of 2,900 Magic Stones, which was considered very cheap.

A single set would normally cost over thirty Magic Stones, but a hundred sets were only 2,900 Magic Stones, a significant discount.

Herag stored all the goods in his Space Ring and upon returning to the basement, started the relentless production of Fire Salamander Bombs.

In the Death Swamp Ruins, dangers are sure to abound, along with encounters of many Level 1 Wizards.

Such as Marco.

Though Herag could now survive under the hands of a Level 1 Crystalization Wizard, preparing more never hurts.

Utilizing every single set of materials, Herag meticulously crafted each Fire Salamander Bomb without waste.

Half a month later.

Herag's Space Ring contained over a hundred Fire Salamander Bombs, all lying silently, with no external indication of the immense energy within.

With two months left until the opening of the Death Swamp Ruins, having completed Fire Salamander Bomb preparation, Herag started crafting several magic potions.

His Space Ring already stored the vast majority of necessary magic potions.

During his work in Black Rock Valley, each completed potion order produced leftover materials.

These leftover materials belonged to Herag, so he crafted additional potions for his own storage.

Accumulating over time, Herag's Space Ring almost became a storehouse for potions, containing a variety and substantial quantities.

He didn't neglect his Meditation practice during this period either; in Herag's mind, the ninth star of the second Array Map had been illuminated, leaving six stars to complete the second Array Map.

His mind already contained lots of fog-like Spiritual Power, and he estimated that completing two more stars in Meditation should fill his mind with gaseous Spiritual Power.

Then he'd begin entering the Liquid Stage, advancing his strength considerably.

This stage usually takes a long time, but with the absorption of the Royal Elf's bloodline, his Spiritual Power increased significantly, accelerating his progress into liquefaction.

For over a month, issues between the Cheqi Family and the Moss Family gradually calmed down, restoring peace to their days.

Previously, the Cheqi Family's Magic Potion Gardens suffered losses, causing a decline in the production of magic potion materials.

During this period, the market's potion materials and potion prices began to rise, owing both to reduced production and deliberate manipulation by the Cheqi Family.

They used these methods to prove their strength, deterring potential enemies and broadcasting that the Cheqi Family is not to be trifled with.

Potions and potion materials are essentials that Wizards can't avoid purchasing anyway.

The Cheqi Family leveraged price control to compensate for past losses.

Of course, such behavior cannot last indefinitely; Augustus Academy won't allow unchecked market manipulation.

The damage to your potion gardens allowed temporary price hikes, but such conduct can't persist.

Therefore, the prices of potion materials and potions started to slowly decrease, expected to return to normal in about two months.

Herag had been quite idle during this time, receiving very few order assignments from the Cheqi Family.

Since his battle with that Moss Family elder, Herag began to gain some reputation.

Just at the Gaseous Stage, he could confront Crystalization Wizards, marking a notably impressive feat.

The elder from the Moss Family naturally wouldn't spread word of it, but under intentional promotion by the Cheqi Family, the news spread nonetheless.

The intention was to suppress the Moss Family's reputation and also to showcase their strength.

A member of our family at the Gaseous Stage can make your Crystalization Wizard flee!