

SPELLCRAFT 1001

SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar

Chapter 1001: Kuzon's Masterplan

[Zone 2, Grand Federation Military Academy, Commander's Office]

Commander Cromwell, with his distinct red complexion, spiky hair, and multiple eyes, sat behind his imposing desk in his office at the Grand Federation Military Academy.

Opposite him sat a young man who had spent three years within the academy and had garnered astounding results among his peers.

Adrien Skylar, the phenomenal genius!

The commander regarded Adrien with a mixture of admiration and anticipation, his fangs slightly visible as he spoke.

"Skylar, you have proven yourself to be an exceptional cadet during your time here," Cromwell began, his voice carrying a blend of authority and warmth. "Your dedication, skill, and unwavering determination have not gone unnoticed. I have personally recommended you for a position at the prestigious Grand Federation Headquarters in Zone 1."

Adrien, his golden hair framing his youthful face, nodded respectfully. "Thank you, Commander Cromwell. I am deeply honored and grateful for this opportunity."

Cromwell's spiky hair seemed to bristle with pride as he leaned forward. "You have earned it, Adrien. Your performance surpasses that of your peers, and your potential is undeniable. I have no doubt that you will make a significant impact in Zone 1 and beyond."

Adrien's eyes sparkled with a mix of excitement and determination. "I will do my best, Commander. I won't disappoint you."

Cromwell smiled, his multiple eyes glinting with approval. "I believe in you, Adrien. You will leave first thing tomorrow morning, so make sure you are prepared. Your journey is about to begin."

Adrien stood up from his chair, his posture reflecting the confidence and readiness that had made him stand out among his fellow cadets. "Thank you again, Commander. I will make the most of this opportunity."

Cromwell nodded, acknowledging Adrien's gratitude. "Dismissed, Adrien Skylar. Show the universe what you're capable of."

With a final respectful bow, Adrien left the commander's office, leaving Cromwell alone. The commander leaned back in his chair, a satisfied smile playing across his lips. Internally, he praised Adrien's dedication and achievements, considering him not only an exceptional student but also a shining example for others to follow.

"Adrien Skylar," Cromwell mused to himself, his voice barely above a whisper. "I look forward to witnessing the great things you will accomplish. May your path be filled with success and glory."

With that, Commander Cromwell returned his focus to the tasks at hand, his thoughts filled with anticipation for the future of his remarkable student.

Leaving Commander Cromwell's office, a mischievous smile danced upon Adrien Skylar, or rather, Kuzon's lips.

'Well, that went well...'

Internally, he reveled in the satisfaction of his plan's seamless execution, relishing the sensation of manipulating circumstances to his advantage.

Time had played a deceptive game, for only mere hours had passed since the entire charade began, yet in the minds of everyone around, it had been three years.

'Ever since then...' Recalling the events with a sense of Kuzon's mind wandered to his last contact with his comrades.

He had transported both Jared and Aloe to his Emperor's Domain, leaving him all alone to accomplish the mission as he saw fit.

With no restrictions or need for caution, he decided to handle things the most efficient way he could.

The one thing he and his allies lacked was information. With the speculations regarding the identity of the Ciara that Jared encountered, he needed to have access to the Grand Federation's information.

And it turned out the best place to start was the Base in Zone 19.

There, he seized control over everyone's actions and perceptions, weaving a delicate tapestry of illusions granted by his mastery of [The Absolute Emperor].

With their compliance, he was able to delve deep into the base's systems, unraveling the threads of confidential information and secrets that had once eluded his grasp.

'And that's when I found out the real truth about Ciara and the current situation...'

Everything was a mess, but the situation wasn't completely hopeless.

Back in Zone 19, after his senses expanded and his influence spread, Kuzon's awareness was able to permeate every corner of the base. It was during this exploration that he stumbled upon the lifeless body of the former base's head.

The vacuum of power left in the wake of the head's demise presented a tantalizing chance for Kuzon to reshape the base according to his own purposes.

Crafting a new identity as Adrien Skylar, Kuzon seamlessly melded into the Grand Federation Military Academy, where he was perceived as nothing less than a talented cadet. The plan had unfolded flawlessly, affording him the opportunity to infiltrate the academy's ranks, gather invaluable information, and position himself strategically for the future.

'This place isn't really the goal, but Zone 1, the true center of power.'

He would have loved to go there directly, but he had no idea how to get there. No one knew how to get there except those from Zone 1.

'They can only be communicated to by the Commander and a few others. By positioning myself as the top student here, making everyone truly believe it using [The Absolute Emperor], I was finally able to get recommended by the people here.'

It truly was a sublime plan on his end. "And it's almost—"

~You should give credit to whom credit is due! Without my backing, would you have been able to affect their minds so accurately?~

Upon hearing the words of Leo, Kuzon fought the urge to sigh in exasperation. He had wondered why Leo hadn't said anything all day. Had he been biding his time?

"Yeah. You're right. I owe you one. It seems you're truly the only one I can count on in this entire mission."

Despite how the Constellation caused him to either roll his eyes or grit his teeth, Kuzon had to account for his reliability.

~Jared and Aloe are going to stay out of this for your sake. They're trusting you, so don't let them down.~

"Pfft. Do they have a choice? I placed an accelerated time ratio in the Emperor's Domain. Basically, for every day spent here, only one hour is spent in there. It hasn't even been a day here, so I doubt they would have even made up their minds."

According to his timetable, Kuzon didn't plan on taking very long in his task. A very straightforward mission; get the information he wanted, use the technology of the Grand Federation, locate his target, and leave this place.

"I should be done within three days... max."

~Is that so? Alright then... we shall see.~ It seemed like Leo leaked out a chuckle, but Kuzon wasn't completely sure. He could only twist his face in confusion.

"What's that supposed to mean?"

~Nothing. Nothing. Just rooting for you...~

"Hmm. Is that so?" Kuzon's smile widened as he sighed, looking straight down at the empty hallway before him.

~Should you really be talking so brazenly like this? What if someone hears of your plans and all?~

"I'll take what you just said as a joke." The golden-haired boy chuckled as he began to walk in a casual stride.

"It's not like anyone can hear me without my permission."

As Kuzon briskly navigated the bustling halls, the ethereal glow of his golden hair caught the light, lending an air of charisma and confidence to his every step.

A hidden chuckle reverberated within Kuzon's thoughts, a testament to the satisfaction he derived from orchestrating everything to follow his plans

This entire Academy was perfectly tailored to suit his grand design.

Continuing his path through the academy as Adrien Skylar, Kuzon's smile broadened, fueled by the knowledge that the pieces of his intricate puzzle were falling into place.

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Chapter 1002: Audience With The GrandMaster

[Three Days Later]

[Zone 2, Grand Federation Military Academy]

Three days had passed since Kuzon, still masquerading as Adrien Skylar, had settled into his fabricated role at the Grand Federation Military Academy.

As the days wore on, a tinge of impatience gnawed at Kuzon's core. He hadn't anticipated it would take this long for the officials to arrive, but he kept his frustrations hidden beneath a carefully crafted facade.

Summoned to the Commander's office once more, Kuzon entered with measured steps, his golden hair shimmering under the office's illumination. To his surprise, two men awaited him, their appearances strikingly human. Their expressions held a mix of authority and determination, leaving no doubt as to their purpose.

Commander Cromwell, a trace of pride etching his red features, gestured for Kuzon to join the men. "Adrien, these officials are here to escort you to the Grand Federation Headquarters, Zone 1," he announced, a note of admiration woven into his words.

"It seems your time has come to embark on your destined path."

Internally, Kuzon suppressed a flicker of annoyance at the delay. He had grown accustomed to the ebb and flow of manipulating events, but the passage of time had tested his patience.

Nevertheless, he maintained his composure, offering a nod of understanding, bowing his head to show respect to the two who stood before him.

The officials wasted no time in their duty. Resonating the matching watches that clung tightly on their hands, a shimmering portal materialized before them, its ethereal glow hinting at the vastness that lay beyond.

Kuzon's gaze flickered between the portal and the Commander, gratitude shining in his eyes.

As the officials beckoned Kuzon forward, their expressions firm and resolute, Commander Cromwell's smile widened.

"Take care of my favorite student," he murmured, his voice filled with genuine pride. "May the path ahead bring you greatness."

With a final glance toward the Commander, Kuzon stepped forward, his heart filled with a mix of anticipation and determination. The officials flanked him, their presence a testament to the importance of the journey that lay ahead.

Without hesitation, they guided Kuzon into the radiant portal, the veil between the known and the unknown.

Commander Cromwell watched as his prized student vanished into the swirling abyss, a sense of fulfillment settling within his chest.

>VWUUUUSSSSHHHH!<

In no time... he was gone.

The scene dissolved into stillness, leaving only the lingering echoes of pride and ambition. The office stood silent, a testament to the grand design that had been set in motion.

The Commander's smile remained, his faith in Kuzon's potential unwavering. Now, it was time for the golden-haired prodigy to venture into the heart of the Grand Federation, Zone 1, where his destiny awaited.

"You... were like a son I never had..."

As the portal dissipated, Kuzon found himself standing in the grandeur of the Grand Federation Headquarters, Zone 1. The vastness of the cosmos stretched out before him, the headquarters occupying an entire system of celestial bodies with awe-inspiring structures and magnificent displays of power.

Surrounded by a transparent, glass-like orb, Kuzon and the officers floated effortlessly through the expansive space, their movement guided by unseen forces. The orb served as a protective barrier, shielding them from the harshness of the vacuum and offering a crystal-clear view of the wonders that lay before them.

'Amazing...' With a fleeting thought, Kuzon took in the wonders that greeted his vision.

In every direction, colossal structures reached towards the heavens, their intricate designs blending seamlessly with the cosmic backdrop. Towering spires, adorned with iridescent lights, formed a tapestry of vibrant colors against the velvety expanse of space. The brilliance of the headquarters' architecture was a testament to the technological prowess and artistic vision of the Grand Federation.

The celestial bodies that comprised the headquarters system served as a testament to the might of the organization. Gigantic planets, their surfaces housing sprawling installations and bustling metropolises, orbited gracefully, their gravitational dance a symphony of cosmic harmony. Moons, each more enchanting than the last, adorned the skies, casting ethereal hues upon the landscape.

As Kuzon marveled at the breathtaking scenery, his eyes were drawn to the central building, a pinnacle of elegance and power.

Its towering presence dominated the celestial horizon, its architectural splendor surpassing anything he had ever encountered. The building emanated an aura of authority and reverence, commanding respect from all who beheld it.

The orb landed at the entrance, and they were granted access inside.

With a gentle motion, the officers guided the orb through the entrance, and the doors swung open, revealing a vast atrium that stretched beyond Kuzon's field of vision. The space pulsed with energy, the air alive with anticipation and purpose.

The officers guided Kuzon into the central building, their footsteps echoing softly against the ethereal silence. As they approached, Kuzon's senses were overwhelmed by the grandeur that unfolded before him. Elaborate sculptures, depicting the history and achievements of the Grand Federation, lined the path, their intricate details casting shimmering reflections of light.

As Kuzon and the officers floated further into the central building, he couldn't help but feel a surge of determination coursing through his veins.

'So this is what I'm up against, huh? Impressive.'

It truly was the right decision to come here.

"Where are we going?" He asked the officers who had been guiding him in silence.

"To see the one who stands at the top of the Grand Federation." One of them spoke, his voice stiff and cold.

"The GrandMaster." The second officer added.

Surprise formed on Kuzon's face and also within his heart. This was news to him.

'I never imagined they would take me to see him of their own volition. But why? Did they figure out my deceit? No, if they did, they wouldn't bring me here in the first place.'

So why?

"Is it rare for Commander Cromwell to recommend a student of the Military Academy to the Grand Federation Headquarters?" Kuzon had no choice but to ask.

He would have used [The Emperor], but he didn't feel the need to go that far yet. If things escalated to that point, though, he wasn't going to hesitate.

"It is indeed rare. However, that doesn't warrant the audience of the GrandMaster." The first officer spoke once again.

'Oh? Then why?'

"The GrandMaster instructed us to bring you to his office when you arrived. It seems he has taken a keen interest in you.'

"R-really? I'm so honored." Kuzon forced himself to utter, smiling like an innocent young lad.

However, deep down, his mind calculated the situation as fast as he could.

'Does the GrandMaster suspect something?'

As Kuzon walked down the exquisite hallway, the subtle sense of unease began to grow within him. Every step forward was a test of his resolve, and he mentally prepared himself for the encounter that lay ahead.

The officers, maintaining their stoic demeanor, led him to the peak of the building where the Grandmaster's office resided. The ornate double doors loomed before him, a threshold to the unknown. With a silent exchange of glances, the officers stepped aside, granting Kuzon passage, but remaining outside.

Taking a deep breath, Kuzon crossed the threshold and entered the chamber. The room was bathed in a soft, golden glow, emanating from the large glass walls that revealed the world beyond. For a moment, Kuzon's attention was captivated by the breathtaking view, the endless expanse of space stretching out before him.

But then, a voice broke through the tranquility, a voice that was both familiar and unexpected. It sent a jolt of surprise through Kuzon's being, causing him to momentarily recoil.

"Welcome, Adrien Skylar," the voice greeted.

As Kuzon's eyes adjusted to the light, he turned towards the source of the voice, and his gaze locked with the figure standing near the glass walls.

The Grandmaster, who had been standing with his back towards Kuzon, turned to face him.

Time seemed to stand still as realization washed over him, and his thoughts burst out uncontrollably. There was no way he could ever fail to recognize such a person.

'N-Neron?!' He exclaimed internally, his thoughts filled with a mixture of shock and disbelief.

The shock of seeing Neron in the guise of the Grandmaster left Kuzon momentarily speechless, his mind racing to make sense of the situation.

A subtle smile played on Neron's lips as he observed Kuzon's completely calm and composed facade.

"Welcome Adrien Skylar," he said, his voice laced with a hint of amusement. "If that is truly your name..."

A smile formed on Kuzon's face instantly, and he dropped the pretense that very moment.

"So you know, huh?"

"Indeed." A spark in Neron's eyes flickered, and his smile broadened.

A wave of power, hinting both authority and danger flowed from him as he maintained his stance.

"It seems we have much to discuss."

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Chapter 1003: Extracting Information

[Zone 1, Grand Federation Headquarters]

Kuzon took a deep breath, channeling his inner resolve as he calmed his racing thoughts.

This encounter with a Neron, who happened to be the Grandmaster of the most powerful force in this universe, demanded caution and composure.

He had to find out exactly what was going on.

"You seem troubled, young man..." Neron took a step forward, his grin widening further.

"... Why?"

Confidence and amusement poured from him as he advanced a little more.

As Neron got closer, a powerful aura radiated from him, an obvious attempt to flex his authority and intimidate Kuzon.

'Who does he think he is?' Kuzon's thoughts erupted instantly, his calm emotions taking the backseat.

In an instant, he unleashed his Aether and used the dominating power of [The Absolute Emperor].

"W-what?!" Neron stammered, his voice trembling with astonishment and fear.

The authority he had so confidently wielded moments ago now crumbled before the overwhelming force radiating from Kuzon.

Neron's body quivered, his limbs shaking as he struggled to maintain his balance on his knees. His gaze, once steely and calculating, now betrayed a deep sense of vulnerability in the face of Kuzon's raw power.

The glass walls of the office seemed to vibrate with the intensity of the encounter, amplifying the crackling tension within the room. A silence settled, broken only by the heavy breaths of the two figures locked in this one-sided power suppression.

The weight of the moment hung in the air, as if the entire cosmos held its breath, witnessing this absolute dominance of the golden one.

In the midst of the charged atmosphere, Kuzon's voice rang out, cutting through the silence like a blade.

"You will answer me, Neron," he declared, his tone laced with an undeniable command that echoed through the room.

"How do you know my identity?"

Neron, still trembling, managed to find his voice, though it wavered with a mixture of fear and uncertainty. "I... I have been monitoring... tracking your movements, your actions," he admitted, his words shaky and laced with a hint of desperation.

"I... believed I had the upper hand."

"How much more do you know about me?" Kuzon's cold voice echoed with determination and curiosity, his gaze unwavering.

"I have been monitoring you and your companions for quite some time. Since you appeared..."

Kuzon's eyes narrowed, his annoyance palpable.

"Monitoring us? How?" he pressed, his voice tinged with a hint of impatience.

Neron's face paled and his trepidations increased as he revealed the scope of the Grand Federation's technological prowess.

"The Grand Federation possesses advanced technology that allows us to trace spatial anomalies and monitor events in great detail," he explained.

"Not long ago, a powerful anomaly was detected in a remote area of Zone 19, and our sensors picked up on your presence."

Kuzon clicked his tongue in frustration, realizing the extent of their surveillance. His gaze intensified, now a glare directed at Neron.

"And what exactly did you plan to do with this information?"

"I just wanted to know more about you people, and your involvement in that spatial anomaly. I was specifically interested in Jared Leonard and Aloe Vida, considering they are dangerous criminals in the Grand Federation's Hidden Index."

Kuzon's eyes narrowed, his grip on his power relenting slightly as he listened to Neron's words.

The mention of Jared and Aloe being wanted criminals, their names etched in the Grand Federation's Hidden Index, only made matters worse.

'The Jared and Aloe of this world, huh? Then...'

"Why are Jared and Aloe wanted?" Kuzon demanded, his voice cutting through the tense silence that enveloped the room.

Neron, still subdued and at Kuzon's mercy, hesitated before answering, his voice laced with a mix of fear and apprehension.

"They are connected to the greatest threat the Grand Federation has ever faced," he explained, his words cautious yet revealing. "They are tied to a woman known as Ciara Epilson."

Kuzon's mind raced, pieces of the puzzle falling into place. Was the Ciara in Jared's memories that same person? Was she just a native of this world?

"Ciara Epilson..." Kuzon repeated, his voice tinged with a mixture of contemplation and concern. "Is she the one I know?"

Neron's eyes flickered with recognition, a mixture of surprise and understanding crossing his features. "You know her?" he asked, his voice tinged with both curiosity and caution.

"Tell me more about her."

Neron, still visibly shaken and aware of his vulnerable position, nodded, offering a glimpse of cooperation amidst the tension.

"Ciara Epilson is the orchestrator of a dangerous rebellion against the Grand Federation," he explained, his voice tinged with a mix of trepidation and conviction.

"She possesses knowledge and capabilities that threaten the very fabric of our society."

"And how long has she been a criminal?" Kuzon asked, his thoughts whirring into action to piece everything together.

"O-over a year now..."

Kuzon's brow furrowed as he absorbed Neron's revelations, his mind working swiftly to piece together the fragmented information.

The notion that Ciara had been a criminal for over a year served as enough evidence for him.

Her debut as an outlaw didn't align with the timeline he knew, where his world's Ciara had only arrived in this realm a couple of months ago.

'Sure, there can be time discrepancies since it's all relative, but still...'

"Why is Ciara's name in the Hidden Index?" Kuzon inquired, his voice laced with determination.

Neron's gaze shifted, avoiding direct eye contact as he responded with measured caution. "Ciara Epilson was once affiliated with the Grand Federation," he admitted reluctantly. "She served directly under me."

Kuzon's eyes widened slightly, a mix of surprise and suspicion coursing through him. The revelation that Ciara had once been part of the very organization she now fought against raised further questions.

"Revealing her true affiliation openly would only tarnish my image and potentially cause more harm than good." Neron sighed heavily, his voice tinged with regret.

"She possesses immense power and influence. Her capture remains a challenge, and making her status public knowledge would only cause public disorder and a lack of trust in the Grand Federation."

Kuzon's mind whirled, carefully dissecting the information before him.

The timeline discrepancies, the existence of multiple Ciaras, and the stark differences between the one he knew and the criminal mastermind described by Neron.

It became increasingly evident that the Ciara Jared had encountered and the Ciara he sought were indeed distinct individuals.

'Plus, it's pretty obvious to me now that if our world's Ciara wanted to destroy the Grand Federation, she would have done so already.'

He was dealing with a doppelganger here.

With a decisive nod, Kuzon formed his conclusion, his gaze resolute as he locked eyes with Neron.

"And further actions have you taken regarding us?"

"I-I sent my elite scouts to apprehend the one that remained on the planet you left. By interrogating him, I planned on getting more information." Neron croaked.

'Oh? Jared's duplicate, huh? I don't think I need to worry about that now. He can take care of himself.'

He also didn't need to concern himself with the Grand Federation or its criminals any longer.

What mattered most to him was finding Ciara Epilson—the only one that was of importance, anyway.

'Well, this has been enlightening. But... I've reached the limits of my investigative prowess.'

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Chapter 1004: Ciara Epilson's Wherabouts

'I'm no expert on Ciara, and I can't properly operate the system here as freely as I want to.'

Even if he used [The Absolute Emperor] to control people, he still needed to give them explicit and direct orders.

In as much as he would have loved to complete the mission himself, Kuzon recognized his limits.

'I don't suppose you know where Ciara is, do you?' He sighed, directing his message toward someone else.

~You've asked me this already. While I am indeed a Constellation, I am not in charge of managing the universes. I can't exactly sense everything happening everywhere at once.~

Apparently, there were jurisdictions and limits to each Constellation's power, further leaving Kuzon stuck with only one other option.

"I'll have to bring them back. Aloe and Jared."

"Haaa..." As I stepped back into our world, the weight of the Emperor's Domain slowly lifted from my shoulders.

Everything felt somewhat different yet tinged with relief and nostalgia, like the air itself whispered of memories and challenges that awaited us. Aloe stood by my side, her expression a mix of weariness and determination, mirroring my own feelings.

I scanned the room, taking in the grandeur of the Grandmaster's office, now disrupted by the sight of Neron sprawled unconscious on the ground.

'When did this happen?'

The air crackled with lingering energy, a tangible reminder of the intense clash that had taken place.

And amidst it all, Kuzon stood. His face was stoic, and I could tell he wasn't in the best of moods.

"I should explain what—"

"No need." I smiled, raising my hand to interrupt him.

A surge of anticipation coursed through me as I closed my eyes, activating [The Hermit].

I delved into the depths of time, reaching beyond the present moment. The hidden corridors of the past unveiled the conversation between Kuzon and Neron.

Their words resonated within me, painting a clearer picture of our path forward.

Opening my eyes, I locked my gaze with Kuzon, my expression a mix of understanding and determination.

"I understand what has happened so far," I said firmly, my voice steady. "We'll help you find Ciara, just like you planned."

Kuzon nodded, a small smile forming on his face.

"Are you okay, though? Last time you used [The Hemit], you... well, passed out."

"I'm fine now, don't worry." It felt nice that Kuzon was actually displaying concern despite all that happened.

I wasn't completely fine, but I had recovered a good amount of my energy, at the very least. Kuzon's world was also rich in Aether, so there was that factor to consider.

Aloe met my gaze and nodded at me. I instantly understood what she meant.

'Well... here we go.'

Taking a step closer, I met Kuzon's eyes, sincerity evident in my voice.

"Sorry for what I did."

"What?"

"I know you sorted through my memories, so you should know about everything."

"Oh, that. You don't need to apologize, Jared. It's fine." He sighed.

"No, it's not!" I drew closer to him, putting both hands on his shoulder while smiling sincerely. "I should have trusted you more."

"Damn straight."

Silence encapsulated the moment, and for that period none of us uttered a word.

A warmth slowly began to emanate from Kuzon's eyes, and his expression softened with acceptance and understanding.

A grateful smile curved his lips. "Apology accepted, Jared."

"Glad to hear it," I replied.

In that wholesome moment, with reforged friendship, all three of us stood there in harmony. I could feel our hearts—

"Okay, okay. That's enough of that. Let's find Ciara already."

Ah, Kuzon just had to ruin the moment.

"Kuzon has a point. We don't have all the time in the world." Even Aloe supported him!

"O-oh yeah. You're right."

With no resistance to make, I agreed and decided to get to work.

'Using Spellcraft and [The Chariot] to operate the machines in this entire base, I should be able to get started.'

It would take some time and effort, considering the fact that I wasn't in top form, but as long as I could pinpoint the right frequency that our world's Ciara would emit, and pinpoint the wavelength, I would be able to find her.

'Okay, Jared. Let's get to work!'

[MEANWHILE...]

[Limbo Zone, Ciara Epsilon's Base]

With a brilliant blue spark, Ciara materialized in her spacious apartment, the air crackling with residual energy from her forceful teleportation.

A sharp pain coursed through her body, causing her to groan in discomfort. Despite the physical strain, a smile graced her lips.

Teleportation was always a jarring experience, but it was a small price to pay for the convenience it offered.

Surveying her surroundings, Ciara took in the high-tech marvels that adorned her apartment. Gadgets and weapons lined the shelves, a testament to her preparedness for any situation that might arise.

The room exuded an air of calculated efficiency, every piece of equipment meticulously arranged.

"Damn that Jared..."

As memories flooded her mind, Ciara's smile waned, replaced by a furrowed brow. She thought back to the face of the man who had breached her spacecraft.

How had he managed such a feat? The encounter had left her intrigued and unsettled simultaneously.

Jerry's introduction of Jared and Aloe resurfaced in her thoughts. She remembered the excitement in his voice as he regaled her with tales of their adventures as Freedom Fighters, fighting against oppression and standing up for what they believed in.

It had ignited a flicker of curiosity within her, the desire to learn more about these individuals who challenged the established order.

But those times were long gone now...

Gritting her teeth, Ciara clenched her fist, the memories of their meeting stirring conflicting emotions within her.

A mix of admiration and frustration swirled in her mind. She whispered a name to herself, almost as a plea,

"Jerry..."

>FSHU<

As soon as Ciara uttered Jerry's name, she felt a sudden movement within her room.

Her senses sharpened, and she swiftly retrieved her gun, activating her suit's defensive systems.

The room was bathed in tension as she pointed her weapon towards the source of the movement, her authoritative tone demanding answers.

"Who is there? Show yourself!" A flicker of apprehension danced in her eyes as she prepared for any threat that might emerge from the shadows.

Then, a voice, distinct and hauntingly familiar, pierced through the silence.

"Did you just call out Jerry's name?" It echoed, sending a shiver down Ciara's spine.

As the words reached her ears, a sharp pain coursed through her mind, intensifying with each passing second.

"ARGHHHHHHH!!!!!"

It felt as if her brain would explode from the sheer agony, causing her to stagger back, one hand clutching her head.

Amidst the onslaught of pain, the figure in the shadows gradually materialized, revealing the silhouette of a woman.

Her voice resonated with an air of confidence and amusement as she began to chuckle.

"It was quite difficult locating you. Your notoriety has caused me quite the hassle, you know?" The figure took steps forward. "And yet, here we are... face to face."

Finally, the shadow dissipated, and before Ciara stood a girl.

"I wondered what I would do once we met..."

Ciara's eyes widened instantly as her eyes witnessed the appearance of the brunette before her. They both looked exactly the same!

"... Ciara Epilson."

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Chapter 1005: Ciara's Voyage [Pt 1]

[Months Earlier]

As she tried to gather herself, Ciara's mind swirled with a whirlwind of emotions. Fear, confusion, and a sense of being utterly lost intertwined within her, threatening to overwhelm her sanity.

This strange world felt like a prison, trapping her without a clue as to how she had ended up here.

'Where are you, Jerry?!'

Summoning every ounce of her magical prowess, she closed her eyes and focused her senses. She desperately sought the comforting tether of Jerry's presence, reaching out to the depths of her magical connection.

But instead of the warmth she craved, her mind recoiled at the foreign energy that crackled and surged around her. It felt malevolent, like a swarm of invisible predators lurking just beyond her reach.

Terror clawed at Ciara's heart as she opened her eyes, her gaze falling upon the armed aliens converging upon her. Their numbers were formidable, over a hundred thousand at least.

They littered the sky in their overwhelming numbers, their eyes all converging on her with what could only be suspicion and caution.

Their strange attire and crackling weapons heightened her sense of threat. The surge of panic within her quickly transformed into a dangerous fury, fueled by her determination to protect herself and find Jerry at any cost.

'Do they have Jerry?!'

Her fists clenched, nails digging into her palms as anger surged through her veins. The desperation for answers mingled with a primal urge to strike back against these alien intruders.

'Are they trying to stop me... from reaching him?!'

How dare they stand between her and finding Jerry? Every instinct in her screamed for violence, for the release of her pent-up frustration and fear.

Though her voice trembled with a mix of anger and trepidation, Ciara managed to muster a demand, her words laced with an undercurrent of barely contained rage.

"Who are you?" she spat, her eyes locked onto the one who seemed to be their leader. "Tell me where I am, and tell me what you've done with Jerry!"

The strangers exchanged wary glances, seemingly taken aback by her fury. Ciara's gaze flickered between them, her focus shifting from one individual to another, gauging their reactions. She couldn't afford to be naïve in this perilous world.

She took a step closer, her body radiating an aura of seething defiance.

"If any harm has come to him," she growled, her voice low and menacing, "I promise you, I will tear this world apart to find him. I will make you regret ever crossing paths with me."

The aliens stood motionless, their faces betraying a mixture of uncertainty and caution. Ciara's words hung in the air, an unexpected declaration of what could only be identified as one thing.

WAR!

"Jahshszzzmeieiidhdeeewq!"

"Jsjs kawue klpei whwu qiekd snwmo ejwwodn jeqi ejwi oquoe sjndke... jjoend"

"JEUIIHN DHIW ALKEOEJ APPWOIJ NID!!!"

All the aliens finally drew their weapons toward Ciara, causing her furious gaze to tighten even more. She could not sense Jerry among their ranks, but what if they had captured him? What if they were also threatening him, wherever he was?

She couldn't stand the thought of that!

"Fine... have it your way..." Her voice deepened in a malevolent whisper, and her heart hardened in growing rage.

'You all... will die here!'

>VWUUUUUSSSHHHH<

Energy poured into her as she instantly entered Mage Mode and heightened her already-established magical prowess.

Whether there were a hundred thousand enemies, or a million, none of that mattered to her.

"As long as you stand in the way..." Her voice dangerously echoed as her power swelled to an unprecedented degree.

"... I'll destroy you all!"

At that moment, all the alien soldiers fired their weapons, raining everything all on one location; and Ciara watched them approach her with breakneck speed.

>BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMMM!!!<

The ground trembled as explosions erupted, tearing apart the landscape. But Ciara remained unyielding, her shield shimmering with an ethereal glow, bearing the brunt of the devastating assault.

As the relentless assault continued, Ciara's mind raced, searching for a way to turn the tide. She would have used her Original Magic to instantly destroy all of them, but the odd wavelength of this alien world disrupted her connection.

Her mind-based attacks would be ineffective against these enemies. Furthermore, her Arcana, leaving her with only her raw strength.

'More than enough for me!'

[**SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar**](#)

Chapter 1006: Ciara's Voyage [Pt 2]

As the first wave of alien soldiers charged, energy blasters aimed in her direction, Ciara unleashed her magic with a flourish.

"[Grand Flame Torrent]."

A torrent of flames erupted from her outstretched hand, engulfing the closest enemies in a searing inferno. Their screams of agony filled the air as they crumbled to the ground, charred remnants of their former selves.

Using her heightened agility, Ciara leaped gracefully, dodging the incoming energy blasts with ease.

With a swift motion of her hand, she conjured a gust of wind that propelled her forward, closing the distance between herself and the next group of adversaries.

As she landed, her fist connected with the face of an alien soldier, her augmented strength shattering bone upon impact.

With each move, she danced with lethal grace, her spells unleashed in rapid succession. Ice spikes erupted from the ground, impaling her foes, while lightning crackled from her fingertips, reducing them to smoldering ashes.

She commanded the very elements, manipulating them to her will, as fire, water, earth, and air responded to her call, devastating her enemies with relentless force.

>BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMMMMMMM!!!<

Ciara Epilson stood at the epicenter of chaos, her entire being thrumming with raw power.

The remnant of the enemies continued hovering around her, their intent clear in the glint of their energy blasters and gleaming blades. Their faces were hidden behind their helmets, but their stubbornness only brought annoyance to Ciara.

'It's useless! You're a worthless waste of time!'

With her immense Mana Pool and the vast wellspring of energy within her, she was a force to be reckoned with.

In Mage Mode, her eyes blazed with determination as she tapped into the very essence of her magic. With a sweeping gesture of her hand, more torrents of flames erupted from her fingertips, engulfing the nearest wave of enemies in a searing inferno.

The air crackled with the heat of her elemental control, scorching the battlefield and reducing the assailants to smoldering remnants.

"You haven't had enough yet, have you?!" Ciara's voice rang out, her words infused with commanding authority.

Her movements were a blur as she wove through the chaos, her agility and strength a testament to the extraordinary power at her command. She leaped and twisted, evading enemy attacks with nimble grace.

One alien soldier lunged at her with a wickedly sharp blade, but Ciara effortlessly sidestepped the strike. "Is that the best you've got?" she taunted, her voice filled with confidence.

>WHUSSSHHHH!!!<

A ferocious strike of wind sent everything around her flying away instantly.

Her Mana Pool seemed bottomless, fueling her with boundless energy as she unleashed a barrage of spells upon her foes.

Earth erupted in towering spikes, impaling the alien soldiers unfortunate enough to cross her path. Water surged in tidal waves, crashing into her adversaries and sweeping them away like leaves in a storm.

A group of aliens converged upon her, their energy blasters blazing. Ciara's eyes narrowed, her focus unyielding. She conjured a shimmering shield, deflecting the incoming blasts with ease.

"Your weapons are no match for my magic!" She declared, her voice carrying a mix of pride and defiance.

As the fight wore on, Ciara's dominance became apparent. The alien ranks began to falter, their forces thinning under the relentless assault of her magic.

"Hahahahaha!!!" Her laughter echoed all across the destroyed land. "How about this one?"

Ciara's eyes blazed with an intensity that matched the crackling energy coursing through her veins. The alien soldiers stood before her, their ranks stretching as far as the eye could see.

They trembled, their confidence waning as they witnessed the raw power radiating from the young mage.

"Peak Magic: [Grand Lightning Descent]"

With a sweeping motion, Ciara summoned a storm of lightning from the darkened sky. Thunder rumbled ominously as bolts of electricity crackled and danced in her outstretched hands.

Her mana surged, an unstoppable force yearning to be unleashed.

The first strike came as a blinding flash, slicing through the air with a thunderous boom. An electrified tendril of energy surged forward, arcing and snaking its way through the alien ranks.

The soldiers cried out in agony as the lightning consumed them, their bodies convulsing with each searing jolt.

Ciara's movements were fluid and precise, her attacks relentless. She darted through the chaos, her figure a blur as she weaved between alien soldiers.

With a flick of her wrist, lightning tendrils lashed out, striking with pinpoint accuracy. One by one, the soldiers fell, their bodies smoldering as the electric current scorched their armor.

The very landscape shook beneath her as Ciara's power intensified. She extended her arms skyward, drawing upon the storm's energy. It crackled and surged, building to an explosive crescendo.

Then, with a cry that mingled triumph and fury, she released the full force of the tempest.

A torrential downpour of lightning cascaded from the heavens, engulfing the battlefield in an electrified inferno. The earth trembled beneath the onslaught, the sheer force of the attack decimating everything

Her Original Magic was still on the fritz, and the only reason she could affect the girl in front of her was because she was her doppelganger.

As Ciara stood before her doppelganger, a sense of calculated triumph washed over her. Her mind replayed the sequence of events that had led her to this moment, a smile playing at the corners of her lips.

'Our wavelengths are different, but we share a lot in terms of our psyche. That's enough for me...'

Now, as she gazed at the doppelganger, a twinge of sympathy flickered within her. However, it wasn't enough to dissuade her from her already made-up mind.

'If I deliver this Ciara to the Grand Federation, I should finally be able to move more freely. If I can also get the cooperation of the Grand Federation, I should be able to return home...'

Her plan was simple yet calculated.

By delivering the doppelganger into their custody, she would earn their trust and, in turn, gain access to the information she sought.

Ciara's eyes hardened with determination as she focused on her ultimate goal: returning home.

'The Grand Federation holds at least some portion of the key to my return. And as long as there's that small chance... that's all I need.'

[SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar](#)

Chapter 1007: Revelation Of The Truth [Pt 1]

Ciara closed the distance between herself and her doppelganger, her eyes fixed upon the imposter with a mix of curiosity and determination.

The doppelganger, still groaning from the pain inflicted by Ciara's powers, mustered the strength to speak, her voice strained yet filled with a plea for understanding.

"Who... who are you?" the doppelganger managed to utter, her voice trembling. "And how did you find me?"

Ciara's grip tightened on the doppelganger's shoulder, her expression unyielding. "I am a Ciara from another world... not that it'll matter to you." she replied, her voice low and commanding.

"And I found you by following the traces of your mental wavelengths. You left a trail that led me straight to your base."

The doppelganger's eyes widened with a mixture of fear and confusion. "Please, listen to me," she pleaded, her voice strained.

"There's more to this than you know. I can't die yet... not until I've had my revenge. The Grand Federation must pay for what they did to Jerry."

The mention of Jerry's name struck a chord within Ciara. Though the Jerry in question was not the same one she knew, the emotional weight behind his name resonated with her. She arched an eyebrow, her curiosity piqued.

"Revenge?" Ciara questioned, her tone laced with skepticism. "Tell me more. Be honest with me, or you won't have much time left."

The doppelganger nodded, a flicker of relief crossing her features. She knew the gravity of the situation and understood that her survival depended on her ability to provide answers.

'I understand that Jerry is dead in this reality, but the circumstances of his death remain a mystery...'

If the Grand Federation were truly behind Jerry's death in this reality, wouldn't that make them her enemies?

Jerry was still Jerry in any universe, and while she would never desire another Jerry, she understood that Jerry couldn't have been in the wrong.

'I mean, isn't he a good guy in this reality? He is a local hero too...'

Ciara stared at her doppelganger for answers, and the latter nodded in obedience.

With a trembling voice, she began to reveal the depths of her connection to Jerry, painting a vivid picture of their shared past.

"Jerry... he wasn't just a friend, he was my everything," the doppelganger confessed, her voice thick with emotion. "We grew up together, with nothing but our dreams and each other. When I had the opportunity, I enrolled in the Grand Federation Military Academy, hoping to make a better life for both of us."

Ciara listened intently, her eyes locked onto her doppelganger, the lines of her face softening with empathy.

"But Jerry... he found his own path," the doppelganger continued, a mix of sorrow and pride in her voice. "He befriended Jared, Aloe, and the others. They called themselves the Freedom Fighters, fighting against oppression and corruption that had consumed our galaxy. They were labeled as rebels by the Grand Federation."

A pang of realization coursed through Ciara's heart. Jerry's hidden identity as a Freedom Fighter began to make sense, the pieces of the puzzle falling into place. She could now grasp the significance of his absence from her life during her time at the Grand Federation.

"We kept in touch, even though I was in the academy," the doppelganger continued, her voice filled with nostalgia. "But he never came to visit me there, and I never ventured close to any Grand Federation base. It was a secret we both kept, to protect each other."

The weight of the doppelganger's revelation settled upon Ciara, the depth of their friendship and the sacrifices they had made coming into focus. The doppelganger's voice trembled as she spoke, reliving the moment of discovery.

"It wasn't until one of my missions that I found out the truth," she whispered, her voice heavy with regret. "I stumbled upon a mission led by the Freedom Fighters. They were distributing resources to those in need, defying the Grand Federation's oppressive grip. And there he was, Jerry, fighting alongside them."

Tears welled in the doppelganger's eyes, a mixture of joy and anguish, as she exposed the truth that had altered the course of her life.

"I confronted him, demanded answers," she continued, her voice quivering. "He pleaded with me to understand, to join their cause. But I was torn. Loyalty to the Grand Federation clashed with the love I had for him. In the end, I had to make a choice."

Ciara's heart ached with the doppelganger's pain, the choices they had both faced and the diverging paths they had taken.

The realization of the parallel lives they had led, filled with struggle and sacrifice, knit their souls together in a bond that transcended their differences.

'She... she's just like me!'

Ciara knew what she would do if anyone tried to take Jerry away from her. She knew how her life would be without him standing by her side.

'Yet she lost such a person!'

At that moment, Ciara felt a strong surge of respect for the girl opposite her. She felt they were kindred souls!

"What choice did you make?" She asked, a soft smile forming on her face.

"Of course, I took Jerry's side! He was in the right. The Grand Federation tyrannically governs the known world, and there have been a lot of problems with their administration that have been either ignored or swept under the rug!"

Ciara nodded, her smile growing wider.

"A lot of Zones would prefer self determination, secession, or at least some level of autonomy. But what do we get? Nothing!"

All the power now belonged to the Grand Federation, and every Zone was under hostage to act exactly as stipulated by the all-encompassing might of the zentih.

In the end, the Freedom Fighters were right in going against the system... even though they were criminalized for it.

"I have no idea where Jared and Aloe are. Last I heard from them was after Jerry died. They wanted me to join them, but I couldn't. I couldn't move on with my life while Jerry's death still haunted me."

"I understand..." Ciara whispered.

"I did see Jared recently, and he asked me to come with him, but I refused. I just... as long as the Grand Federation is still out there... I cant... I can't forgive them for what they did to Jerry. How they took him away from me!"

Silence enveloped the room as the ladies stared at each other, both having tears locked in their eyes.

"Is that why you went rogue? Turned to a life of crime?"

The doppelganger nodded slowly.

"The Freedom Fighters are indeed against the Grand Federation, but their main objective is helping people. It's too restrictive for me." She muttered as her eyes began to glow in more rage.

"There's only one thing I want now, and the Freedom Fighters can't do it for me. In the end, I have to do it myself."

Ciara watched all of this with a racing heart, her mind echoing with exhilaration and pride as she watched the doppelganger in front of her.

"And what is it that you want?" She asked, though it appeared both of them already knew the answer to the question.

"... To see the Grand Federation burn to the ground. And I want to be the one to do it!"

*

[SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar](#)

Chapter 1008: Revelation Of The Truth [Pt 2]

Ciara's eyes bore into her doppelganger, filled with a mixture of solidarity and determination. The weight of her next question hung heavily in the air, the very essence of it threatening to crush her interlocutor.

"How... did Jerry die?" Ciara's voice trembled, the words escaping her lips with a raw vulnerability.

She braced herself, her heart pounding in anticipation of the truth that awaited her.

The doppelganger's eyes glistened with unshed tears, her voice choked with sorrow as she began to recount the harrowing events that had stolen Jerry's life.

"They... they used me as bait," she uttered, her voice trembling with pain. "Knowing my connection to Jerry, the Grand Federation lured him into the fray, hoping to eliminate him once and for all."

"But I thought you decided to support him."

"I had indeed made my choice to stand by his side, but I chose to help him and the Freedom Fighters from within the Grand Federation."

In essence, she became a double agent.

Ciara's breath caught in her throat, the weight of the doppelganger's revelation crushing her soul. She clutched her fists, her knuckles turning white as she listened intently, her eyes locked onto her doppelganger's face.

The resolve this girl had was even more than she had given her credit for.

"The Grand Federation must have discovered our relationship," the doppelganger continued, her voice tinged with bitterness. "They sent me on a solo mission, a mission so dangerous yet I had no choice but to go. Jerry, ever loyal and fiercely protective, found out and insisted on joining me as backup."

Ciara's heart clenched, the love and devotion between Jerry and her doppelganger painting a heartbreaking picture of sacrifice and courage.

"We arrived at the mission site," the doppelganger whispered, her voice trembling with the weight of guilt. "And that's when we realized it was a trap. Countless Grand Federation operatives lay in wait, concealed within the shadows. They wanted to kill both of us."

Tears streamed down the doppelganger's face, her pain and remorse etched across every feature.

"Jerry... he used his failsafe," she choked out, her voice barely audible. "A forceful teleportation device. He activated it, sending me away, while he... he was executed by them."

The room fell into a heavy silence, broken only by the stifled sobs of the doppelganger. Ciara's heart shattered into a million pieces as the gravity of the doppelganger's words settled upon her, the weight of loss and regret engulfing them both.

The doppelganger buried her face in her hands, her voice muffled by the despair that consumed her. "It's my fault... I led him to that trap, I couldn't protect him. I should have known... I should have..."

Ciara's hands, trembling with a mix of grief and resolve, reached out to gently touch her doppelganger's shoulder, offering a momentary comfort amidst the storm of emotions. Through tears of her own, she spoke, her voice laced with determination.

'It is indeed your fault. You should have protected him more, but...' Ciara's eyes glowed bright blue as she stared blankly into space.

"... Those bastards are the ones most at fault. And they deserve to SUFFER!"

Ciara smiled at her doppelganger, trying her best to comfort her while also feeling the pain of loss that Jerry's demise must have cost her.

"Ciara Epilson, let me help you!"

"W-wha...?"

"Let's do this together! I know you want to be the one to bring them down, and I respect that. But count me in too! We're both pretty much the same, so that logic still follows, don't you think?"

"W-wait, what are you trying to say exactly? You... want to help me?" Her doppelganger's eyes widened in both warm surprise and an emotional expression of gratitude.

"Damn right, girl. I'll let you deal the finishing blow, but I also want to take down the Grand Federation!"

It seemed the current plan had slightly tilted from her original one.

Instead of selling out the Ciara in front of her, she would work together with her to take over the Grand Federation! Once that was done, she would gather all the useful information and technology that could help her return home, while her doppelganger would finish the job and destroy the Headquarters.

'In the end... it's a win-win!'

>BZZZTTTZZZZ!!!<

A buzzing sound suddenly echoed across the room, interrupting the emotional moment both Ciaras were having, and a bright voice followed.

~Ciara! It's Jared, from our Original World. I'm with Kuzon and Aloe, and we finally traced your whereabouts.~

"J-Jared?!" Ciara's eyes widened as she looked around her, her lips cracking open in relief and unexpected happiness.

'Jerry isn't with him, though...' Her mood plummeted instantly.

~We have a way to return home. And now that we've found you, we can finally be on our way.~ Jared's voice echoed once more.

~So, Ciara... why don't we go back now?~

[Meanwhile...]

[Zone 0: The Unknown Territory]

A man reclined in his comfortable seat, surrounded by holographic screens that flickered with information and data.

His eyes darted across the displays, absorbing every detail, as a faint smile played on his lips. He muttered to himself, his voice filled with a mix of admiration and frustration.

"Well, well, I underestimated that golden-haired boy and his band of misfits," he murmured, his tone laced with a begrudging respect. "They proved to be more formidable than I initially anticipated."

His dark hair swayed and his lips curled up as his face reflected the little flashes of light in the darkness of the room.

Rubbing his chin in contemplation, he continued his soliloquy, his voice tinged with a touch of annoyance.

"And my soldiers... all destroyed on that remote planet of the spatial singularity. I thought they had the upper hand, but clearly, I was mistaken."

His gaze shifted to one particular holographic screen, displaying the image of his android duplicate lying defeated. A scowl crossed his face, quickly replaced by a self-assured grin. "Even my duplicate couldn't handle that golden-haired brat. Impressive, I must say."

Leaning forward, the man's voice dropped to a conspiratorial whisper. "But what they don't know is that they've only taken over Zone 1 of the Grand Federation. The true headquarters, Zone 0, remains untouched, impregnable."

He seemed to be truly enjoying himself.

"They'll never reach me here." A sense of triumph infused his words as he spoke, his eyes gleaming with a mix of excitement and anticipation.

"Ah, yes, Project Phoenix XY-001. It's almost time for its grand operation. Soon, everything will align according to my plans."

A laughter, equal parts exhilaration and madness, bubbled forth from his lips, echoing in the room.

"I can't wait to see it all unfold. They won't even know what hit them. The power, the control, all within my grasp."

As the sound of his laughter dissipated, a chilling silence enveloped the room, leaving only the soft hum of the holographic screens.

The man's eyes sparkled with a malevolent gleam as he relished the impending chaos he had orchestrated, his mind already envisioning the triumph that awaited him.

'This entire universe... and even beyond... they will be mine!'

[SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar](#)

Chapter 1009: Teamup [Pt 1]

'What should I do?!'

Ciara's mind raced with conflicting emotions as she absorbed Jared's words.

The possibility of returning to her original world, where she could finally see Jerry again, sent a surge of longing through her.

Her heart yearned for his familiar presence, the comfort of his warmth. She hesitated, her resolve wavering as she contemplated the choice before her.

But then, a deeper sense of compassion welled up within her.

Thoughts of her doppelganger, who had endured so much pain and loss, resonated strongly within her. It was more than just a desire to help, it was a fundamental need to support a friend in their time of need.

Ciara realized that her connection to her doppelganger ran deeper than mere resemblance; it was a bond forged through shared experiences and empathy.

With a determined glint in her eyes, Ciara voiced her decision, her words resolute and unwavering.

"I... I have to help her!" She declared, her voice carrying a firmness that brooked no argument.

"As much as I miss Jerry and want to see him, I also want to be there for a friend in need. I just can't abandon her."

~Uh... what did you just say?~ Jared's tone rang with confusion, but she didn't let that bother her.

'I gave her my word. I wouldn't normally do this, but... this time I can't back down! Not after everything!'

Ciara's face scrunched up in resolve, and she nodded at her shell-shocked doppelganger. The reaction on her face when Ciara said she would not abandon her seemed to radiate sheer gratitude.

~Ciara. We have to hurry back, you know? We still have our problems to deal with. We don't have time to spend here!~ This time it was Kuzon's voice that radiated out.

"I understand! But I can't back down now! I'm going to help my friend here and we're going to crush the Grand Federation together!" Ciara raised her voice, ensuring her message reached her comrades.

~Hold on... what did you just say?~

"Listen up, Jared, Aloe, Kuzon," she called out, her voice clear and resolute. "I'm not changing my mind. Either you get on board and support me, or you step aside and let me do what needs to be done. This is my choice, and I won't back down."

There was a brief silence as her words hung in the air, the weight of her determination palpable.

And then...

~Slow down a little. Did you just say you wanted to take down the Grand Federation? We're currently at the Headquarters. We've pretty much taken it over. That's how we were able to pinpoint your location and communicate with you.~

"... Eh?"

Ciara's eyes twitched as soon as she heard that. The idea that the mission was already complete before it started caused her heart to fall a little.

~We even have the leader with us here. Neron, the Grandmaster of the Grand Federation.~

"H-hold on, Neron is involved in this? He's the leader of the Grand Federation?!"

~Obviously not our Neron, but... yeah...~

Ciara's thoughts mellowed out a little as she sorted through the new information in her head.

'Neron, huh?'

"He was the one who scouted me himself back when I had nothing. He told me I had potential... that I was special, and then he brought me to the Grand Federation Military Academy..." Ciara heard her doppelganger speak, her voice now hollow.

"I trusted him, and even believed in his words. I had no idea he was just using me and everyone else. He was the one who assigned me to that dangerous task... and he was also the one who personally spearheaded the ambush against us."

Hearing her doppelganger's tale reminded her very faintly of her own story. After all... it was also Neron who approached her and brought her to Ainzlark Academy.

Now that she thought about it, she wasn't particularly close to Neron, and neither did he express any special interest in her besides acknowledging her talent and bringing her to the Academy.

'But the resemblance is uncanny...'

And it made her wonder.

~Ciara, we may not fully comprehend your decision, but we respect it.~ Jared's voice suddenly interrupted her thought.

~I would be a hypocrite if I said I didn't~ He added.

"You said you've captured the Grand Federation Headquarters, right? And you've even caught Neron? I suppose there's nothing left to do..."

~Not quite. Come over here first. I'll explain in greater detail.~

"What do you—"

>VWUUUUUUUSSHHHHH!<

Before Ciara could conclude her words, a portal opened right beside her, swirling and pouring out spatial energy.

~We're on the other side, so it's best you see for yourself.~

"I see..." Ciara glanced at her doppelganger and nodded. "Alright, then. I'll trust your words, Jared."

It was tense in the room as Ciara made her way to the front of the spatial rift, finally deciding to take a leap of faith.

~You can bring your friend over too. It's about time we all converged.~

"You don't have to tell me that." She smiled, glancing at her doppelganger who was also walking towards the portal.

"Here we come."

And so the both of them ventured into the swirling gate in front of them, already somewhat expecting what lay beyond.

[Zone 1, Grand Federation Headquarters]

As I stood there, watching the two identical Ciaras emerge from the portal I had prepared, a sense of surrealism washed over me.

It was truly uncanny how alike they looked, down to the smallest details.

'Well, except for that shade of purple...'

The doppelganger Ciara's eyes widened in recognition as she locked gazes with me.

"Jared?" she uttered, her voice filled with a mix of surprise and uncertainty.

I met her gaze with a reassuring smile. "Yes, it's me," I replied, my voice calm and steady.

Her expression softened with relief. "I'm sorry for what I did," she said, her voice tinged with remorse. "I didn't know. it was you... or wasn't you, ah..."

She was probably referring to what happened back on the spaceship. Now that I thought about it, she hadn't also been the Ciara I was searching for. In a way, both of us had been afflicted with a grave misunderstanding.

I raised a hand, dismissing her apology. "It's alright," I assured her. "Sorry for intruding on your spacecraft."

She gave a warm smile and nodded, and I did the same.

As our attention shifted, we took in the sight of Neron lying unconscious on the floor. Hatred burned in both Ciara's eyes. I wondered what happened that made the both of them so close.

It pretty much eluded me.

"Actually..." I quickly chimed in. "... Your anger is a bit misplaced."

Both Ciaras turned to me, their expressions a mix of confusion and curiosity. Their anticipation hung in the air, waiting for the revelation I was about to unleash.

With a theatrical flair, I continued, "The Neron lying there, defeated and unconscious, is not the real Neron, after all."

Their eyes widened in surprise, their emotions shifting from anger to intrigue. The doppelganger Ciara spoke up, her voice laced with a newfound hope.

"What do you mean? If that's not Neron, then who is it?"

Kuzon and Aloe also stared at me in surprise. It seemed the both of them were also unaware of this fact.

'If not for [The Chariot], and a couple of other Arcanas, he would have had me fooled too...'

Unfortunately for him, things weren't going to be so easy.

"This one is nothing more than a decoy, a pawn used to carry out the real one's schemes. I already detected it a while back too."

More surprised expressions greeted me, but I wasn't done yet.

My grin broadened, and I spoke aloud, as if addressing thin air. "You're watching all this, aren't you... Neron?"

The room fell into silence, the weight of my words hanging in the air.

At that moment, I felt a surge of anticipation and satisfaction. The true Neron, had been watching us all along, and it didn't take much of an effort to detect all of that using [The Chariot], when I finally took control over the entire Headquarters.

"Don't worry, and just sit tight. We'll be with you soon."

[**SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar**](#)

Chapter 1010: Teamup [Pt 2]

"What?!"

Neron jumped to his feet, his eyes widening as soon as he heard Jared's words.

"H-he knew all along?!"

Sweat began to form on his face as the grin he had been cultivating for a long time slowly dissipated.

'H-how?!' As his thoughts attempted to process this, his irises began to shift.

He had made sure to be careful, using inconspicuous nano-bots to achieve his ends. No one also had any knowledge of this, so there shouldn't have been any information leak.

'Then how?! How did he know?!'

"Don't worry, and just sit tight. We'll be with you soon." Jared's words echoed in his ears as he watched his surveillance screen go blank.

'See me soon? Does that mean they are all aware of this place?'

Neron's thoughts were a mess, but he did his best to calm himself.

"That's not possible. Even if by some miracle, they found out I was watching them, they have no way of knowing my location."

He plopped back to his sofa and crossed his legs, deciding not to fret too much.

'They're all very powerful, but this much is impossible...'

Taking a sip of the wine he now had in his hand, Neron smiled and stirred the cup's contents even more.

'At this rate, they know too much, though. Should I completely destroy the Headquarters? If that will achieve the purpose of killing all of them, it will be worth it.'

All the information of the Grand Federation had been backed up to this place, so there wasn't really a problem regarding information.

'I also have a substantial number of androids, so it won't be difficult running the activities of the Headquarters from here—at least for the time being.'

The reason the Headquarters was so grand was so people wouldn't look beyond it. But now, since they knew about his facade, there wasn't a use anymore.

'Besides, all of them—including Ciara—have now converged in a single location. I might as well do it now.'

As a wide grin formed on his face, he snapped his fingers, causing a screen to pop open before him.

[Please Confirm]

<Destroy Headquarters?>

[Yes] [No]

"Hehe... ye—"

>VWUUUUUUUSSSHHHHH<

Before he could complete his action, a swirling blue portal suddenly appeared before him, and in that instant, the bright screen in front of him buzzed, as though glitching.

In no time, it completely fritzed out and vanished.

'No... no way!' Neron's eyes widened as his body shook a little.

His gaze directly went for the portal that stood not too far from him. And emerging from it were the people he wanted to see least.

"Well, isn't this place sleek?" The voice of the obnoxious golden-haired boy he remembered rang out as he stepped into the room.

His smile radiated nothing but sheer confidence and absolute control.

'Damn you...'

His female associate also appeared, and then two Ciaras emerged. Finally, the one who had uncovered his secret—Jared—proceeded from the portal

The moment he appeared, the portal closed, leaving all of them gathered in the room.

'How did they get in here?!'

"What do you think, Jared? About this place?" Kuzon grinned, looking around him to observe Neron's office.

I didn't know what to tell him in particular.

The office was more akin to a living room, with a very large relaxing spot, where Neron currently sat, cross-legged too.

I could detect other objects around, and the more I expanded my senses, the more I reached out to deeper parts of this fortress of his.

"Well, it's dark." I responded half-heartedly.

My current focus was on finding the true meaning behind this base, but it was going very slowly because the dampeners in this place alone were off the charts.

'They're actively trying to suppress my power. No wonder it took a while to create a portal here.'

I was able to pinpoint this area by tracing a faint signal I detected from the device that Neron was using to monitor us.

'It led me straight here. To be honest, it isn't too difficult.'

"[The Chariot]" I whispered, instantly sending my energy coursing through everything in the room.

>VWUUUUMM<

In a flash, the dampeners ceased their effects, and the lights in the room flashed on, revealing more of its splendor.

The purple carpet was woven exquisitely, and the red curtains were also pretty amazing as well.

The pristine furniture that surrounded Neron, along with the state-of-the-art technology that surrounded him, all screamed of luxury.

'It's a shame that they're no longer in your control, Neron...'

It felt odd calling him by the name, but I had pretty much gotten accustomed to the weirdness.

"W-why aren't my automatic defense mechanisms working?" Neron burst out in exasperation, dropping the glass cup he was holding.

His cross-legged posture straightened out almost instantly.

"You're all supposed to be vaporized by now!" He spat, his widened eyes and perspired face depicting nothing short of exasperation.

It kind of made me feel bad for him—enough so that I decided to answer his question.

"That isn't going to happen for two major reasons, Neron..." I smiled, stepping a little forward.

"First of all, I've taken control of all your automated systems and machinery."

"W-what?!"

"And secondly, even if I hadn't... I'm sure our defenses are strong enough to withstand anything you can dish out."

It seemed my words only drove him deeper into the pit he was digging up for himself.

"S-shut up!"

The pit of disbelief.

"Hey, Neron... we meet again." The main st of the event finally spoke up, after being silent for so long.

"Ciara. You have some nerve to come here. Have you forgotten what happened the last time you defied me?"

Even though I could sense unease in Neron's words, he did well in hiding it behind a facade of false confidence.

"Did you forget that I ca—"

"Shut up." Ciara's voice echoed, and the room suddenly fell under a pressure.

'This... I remember it!'

It was the same sensation I felt when I touched Ciara back then. That buzzing feeling that seemed to distort my abilities.

Ciara was now leaking of it, and her widened eyes captured nothing but rage.

"Shut up and suffer, Neron. I'm so going to enjoy this!"

As I watched the Ciara Epsilon of this world draw closer to Neron, I couldn't help but think that we had brought a monster along with us.

'This should be interesting...'