

## SPELLCRAFT 101

### SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar

#### Chapter 101: Planning

"Haha, we were not even able to reach my office." Neron chuckled, pointing out the fact that we had been transfixed on a single location for a while now.

I joined in his laugh.

"You should head back. I'll be right behind you." He said, making shooing gestures at me.

I nodded and made for class.

"Hold on, Jared. One last thing... how did you know I had a White Mana Core?"

I stopped dead in my tracks and looked at him with an air of mystery around me. Just as he refused my request and delayed it for a later time, I wasn't going to give him an immediate response.

"It's a secret. I'll tell you after you fulfill my request!"

Upon saying this, I turned back to the direction of my class and sped along the clear path. In a few moments, I would be seating in my usual spot.

\*\*\*

"What an amusing kid..." Neron whispered to himself as he saw Jared run off from a distance.

He had a bunch of emotions swirling within him, but the young man kept them on a lid. Even though his cool guy act remained, Neron couldn't help but leak out a small smile of amusement.

The kid had said and done stuff that would make it unbelievable that he was just 12 years old. The sky grin he made, the manner run which he spoke, the craftiness he exhibited... Jared was the most bizarre child of that age he had met.

"I expected him to be different since he scored so high in the exams... but not to this extent."

If Neron didn't know any better, he would have thought he was speaking to an adult—Jared even gave such an impressive speech on magic theories. From Neron's experience, he only knew one other student who was as impressive as the one who just left him.

Himself!

Neron Kaelid, also known as the child of magic, a genius among geniuses. In his time, he had gotten a perfect score and was an elite among the Elite... unparalleled among his mates. That didn't last forever, though.

Neron shook off the thoughts of his past and focused on the young lad that now showed him prospects. He wondered about many things, like how the boy knew of his core... and why he had a pure white Mana Core too.

"Does he know about the advantages of a white Core...? Does he know about that technique? No, impossible... I invented it..."

Neron shook his head slightly, realizing that more time was being expended while he stood idly, thinking about nothing but Jared Leonard. The boy had managed to captivate his attention, distracting him from the usual thoughts of magic he usually had. Still, this wasn't a bad feeling.

He looked forward to the future that would soon present itself to him. Would Jared be able to overcome the trials ahead of him? Becoming first in the Inter-Class Exchange was certainly something that would be quite enjoyable... he had done it too, after all.

"I wonder..."

With this final whisper, Neron made his way back to class to teach a General Course.

\*\*\*\*\*

Classes ended well, at least in my opinion. It was a little awkward looking at Neron after that little conversation we had, but I subdued any feeling of embarrassment. He had certainly rejected me now, but he would regret that choice for now.

I was going to blow his mind, no, everyone's. With that settled, I needed to focus on my next move. Yes, that move involved two people that were of interest to me.

With lectures over, everyone left the hall and either made their way to the library, the dorms, the cafeteria, or just loitered and talked in their already established groups.

I easily spotted Edward and Anabelle, seeing them both discussing as they moved in the direction of the library. With my enhanced hearing, I eavesdropped—silently apologizing for intruding on their privacy.

Apparently, Anabelle wanted to collect some materials from the library, and Edward was accompanying her.

They discussed many things, of which, as I expected, I was a part. Anabelle was upset that Edward was seating beside me. This was expected since I knew of her animosity toward me. Her voice depicted concern for Edward, but it also showed something else... she was nagging him, as a mother would to a child.

Despite her tiny frame and child-like faced, Anabelle sounded like a mature big sister. The boy she spoke to, Edward, obediently listened to her every word and looked almost helpless as her words battered him.

The bizarre situation looked silly, really. It almost made me burst out in laughter from the distance at which I observed them. As if this wasn't surprising enough, Edward gave a response that made me twitch a little in shock. The reason he had been so keen on seating beside me... why he kept looking at me during lectures.

"I can't help it, Anabelle... I don't know why, but I really admire him now... I just wish I could have another conversation with him..." His voice was a mix of admiration, childish idolizing, and a tinge of timidity.

My mouth nearly dropped when I heard this. I quickly picked up my pace behind the pair since their voices were getting fainter and I needed to maintain a minimum distance to hear them.

They kept walking and talking, with Anabelle giving remarks that clearly showed her bad impressions of me. Edward tried his best to convince her to think otherwise, but his ideals were nothing but fragile pieces of paper to her iron will.

'It seems I'm already seeing a path...' I grinned slightly, feeling satisfied for getting information on my targets.

It was clear that Edward was as good as won over. If I offered to make him better, he would bite easily. The issue was Anabelle. During the classes we had, I had shown my intellectual abilities, so she must have had a good idea of my capabilities. Plus, the rumors about my scores in the exams must have reached her and I even beat Edward.

There was no way Anabelle didn't know that I was amazing. It was just that her image of me was distorted. In order to win over to my side, I needed to do something—soon.

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

#### **Chapter 102: The Library**

The Lower Class Library was exactly as I pictured it to be. It was my first time actually entering, but we were shown the libraries of each Class, albeit briefly, during our Orientation.

The only Library in which we actually got the grand tour was the general campus library. It was larger than the others, having several layers and a wealth of books and other research materials.

However, the problem with this Library was that it was only accessible once a student had completed their first three months in Ainzlark Academy. They would be given a special library card that represented their access to the library. Of course, this card was bound by the Class Points a student had accumulated during the time of Library registration.

That was why three months were given to new entrants, so they could earn as many class points before registration.

The Library card a student possessed determined the level of services they could employ from the general library. Plus, since Library Registration only happened once a year, students had to amass as many Class Points as they could to get a decent Library card before the registration.

If they didn't... they would miss out on a whole lot of useful materials for an entire year!

Edward and Anabelle entered the library, so I had to tail them. I picked up the pace and ensured I entered the large buildings at nearly the same time as them.

The pair looked surprised to see me. Edward beamed while Anabelle's face darkened. I pretended not to notice them and made my way through the large hallway.

The Lower-Class library, while not as impressive as the others, consisted of three stories, having the ground floor mainly made up of a lounge, reading room, request counters, etc.

The first and second floors above contained the 'goods'. They had books, materials, research centers, and many other facilities required for a prestigious academy. This may have seemed quite magnanimous to a layman, but it was just to be expected from the best academic institute in the Eastern Kingdom, no?

As for the third floor, it was only accessible to the top students of the Lower-Class, also known as the Elite Ten. A wry grin formed on my face as I remembered my academy days.

'That name sure rings many bells...'

After passing the hallway in paced steps, I easily overtook the duo who were not quite over my sudden appearance. Climbing the stairs, I went to the first floor which mostly consisted of books for the first years and had a majority of the research facilities and other centers in the library—with the exception of the ground floor.

The second floor was home to the books and study materials of the second and third years. I had no idea what was beyond there, what was done on the third floor.

If my guess was correct, though, then it had to be...

"Oh well, I wonder if that has changed..."

I shrugged the feeling off and advanced to a particular section of the first floor for my prize.

"Okay, this should be it," I muttered, while reading the name of the particular library section.

'Books On History'

I entered the section, passing through what seemed like a small barricade that was used to separate this section from the others.

Walking through the wall of shelves, I turned my face and observed the many books that hung themselves on the furniture around me.

They were all old, outdated, and not-too-impressive.

Of course, what would you expect from the Lower-Class library? The materials of higher quality had to be monopolized by the cream of the crop. We at the bottom would only be left with the scraps.

Well, none of these books were really any of my concerns. I was after one book in particular. After scanning for a few moments, one of the books that seemed fairly better than the others stood out. The moment I saw the title, a grin formed on my face and I realized it was the one I was looking for.

"The History Of Magic Evolution By Lewis Griffith. Volume 4..." I smirked.

I reached out for the book and took it off the shelf. Compared to the other dusty books on the same shelf, this one had barely a speck. Why?

Someone must have used it recently. Of course, I already knew who it was.

After securing the book, I had nothing left to do in the history book section, or even in the library as a whole. My work there was done.

"Now then..."

With this whisper and the slight tilting of my head as I came out of the barricade, my eyes fell upon Anabelle and Edward who were only a couple of meters from me.

The hand I used to hold the book loosened, and I brought it closer to my chest as I walked. Of course, I naturally ignored them and went my way, but from the corner of my eyes, I could see Anabelle looking horrified and disappointed as she watched me leave the Library's first floor.

Her body refused to move from her position, and her intense gaze didn't leave me until I disappeared from her sight.

From my distance, I could hear her speak to Edward after he asked her several times why she was acting strangely.

"That... that's the book I wanted to borrow!"

'Perfect!'

I went to the ground floor and showed the book with me to one of the clerks who stood at the counter. After filling out a form—adding my mana signature to it—and collecting a tag, I left the counter with the book I had borrowed for two weeks, the maximum time allowed for a student to keep a library material in their possession.

I could still feel a gaze on me, no doubt it belonged to Anabelle. She was stalking me from afar, and it wasn't too hard to guess why.

Gliding out of the library in a confident stride, whole carefully holding my prize, I made my exit.

'Now, then, let the games begin!'

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

#### **Chapter 103: Frustration**

Anabelle was frustrated, no, even worse.

The young girl's annoyance, coupled with the bitter sting of failure hung over her head as she watched the one she could only refer to as her enemy leave the library.

Her cheeks were flushed so much with red that one would think she was sick. Her bloated face, caused by the big pout she was making, as well as the watery eyes clearly expressed by the young girl made it evident that she was in a lot of pain.

"My book!" She growled to herself, watching the object she longed for being taken away by another.

She couldn't even scream out her emotions due to the nature of the building she was in—not unless she was ready to forfeit some of her Class Points.

All the girl could do was sigh.

"Ah, I get it now. Jared took the book you wanted to borrow." Edward blurted out, stating the obvious.

He had been confused about Anabelle's strange behavior and was just silently following her while racking his head on what caused his dear friend to chase after Jared the moment he descended the stairs.

Even now, her moist eyes trailed after him until Jared was no longer in sight. After thinking for so long, and remembering Jared held a book in his hand, Edward pieced all the needed data together and arrived at his conclusion.

Anabelle didn't even know what to tell the dunce of a guy she called her friend. Her swelling emotions might have caused her to say some unsavory words, so she simply ignored his remark and carried her feet toward the counter Jared had just been to moments ago.

Her swift legs swept across the hallway that one would usually transverse with calm, and she desperately kept her eyes fixated on the clerk who was standing, waiting for the next student to attend to.

"Excuse me, sir!" Anabelle called out—not too loud to be labeled as noise, but it wasn't tranquil either.

It screamed of desperation and anxiety. She was panicking.

"Yes, student. How may I help you?" The man spoke dryly, waiting for the student to burden him with a task that was in line with his job.

"The student that just left now borrowed a book. I want to know how long he will have it!" She gasped, filling her lungs back with air.

Why was she so upset?

It was simply because, in the Lower Class Library, there existed no more than one copy of a book. The implications of that fact meant that the book Jared had just taken say would never be accessible to her until he was done using it.

'Hopefully, he only took it for a day or two...' She prayed internally.

The clerk made a puzzled glance at Anabelle for a moment, but after deciphering her intentions, he decided to answer her.

"Two weeks. He'll be in possession of it for two weeks."

The flat statement of the man hit Anabelle's heart like a sledgehammer. It was disheartening, to say the least. She had hoped for the chance of returning in a few days to collect the book, but two weeks was far too long.

"N-no way..."

The clerk rolled his eyes as Anabelle still refused to leave the counter—unwilling to accept his words. There was only one thing he could do now.

The man's eyes, tired and bored, darted to a compartment in his cubicle and brought out the records that had just been filled by the student who exited—Jared.

'All I have to do is show her evidence...' His thoughts trailed.

The man opened the book, flipped the pages, and went to the very last one that wasn't blank. Placing his finger on the last entry, he turned the book and showed Anabelle.

"See? Right there. Two weeks."

It was certain!

Anabelle wouldn't have the book!

"B-but... I need that book!" Her disappointed voice came out, as though trying to plead for some sort of intervention.

'I miss the part where that's my problem.' The clerk wanted to say, but he withheld his opinions and simply watched in silence.

At this point Edward was already beside Anabelle, choosing to have slowly walked through the hallway, rather than risk it and cause commotion around the hall of decorum.

Unlike Anabelle, his body was heavy and made noise if he moved too fast.

"Sorry about the book..." Edward muttered, not knowing what else to say to his dear friend.

On their way to the library, no, even before then, Anabelle had been telling him so much about the book she wanted to borrow from the library.

According to her, she had read all three volumes of the series, and was surprised to have found the fourth volume in the library. Anabelle even beamed when she told Edward about how this volume would allow her to completely grasp her theory on Lewis Griffith, and perhaps shine more light on what she had been missing concerning the holes in some of his treatises.

She was really looking forward to it, too... it was a shame Jared has whisked it away at the last minute.

"I should have just borrowed it when I saw it yesterday, but the line was too long and I had other things to do—I simply skimmed through it and decided to come back to borrow it today instead... what a mistake!"

Wallowing in regret wouldn't solve anything, Anabelle knew that as much as the second person, but what was she to do?

"Let's go, Ed..." She mumbled in disappointment as she hung her head and began moving toward the exit of the library.

Edward felt guilty, he really did. He knew it wasn't Jared's fault that he was also interested in such a book, but he felt it couldn't be anything short of bad timing.

'Ana really wants that book, and Jared took it instead. This could make her hatred for him increase...'

He really loved Ana as a friend, and respected Jared as a person. This situation would cause a serious strain on what he was hoping to be a three-way friendship.

'Damn... what a mess...' His thoughts trailed as he moved beside Ana, ensuring he was silent around her.

When she was like this, the only comfort Edward could give her was silence.

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

**Chapter 104: The Plan**

"Puahaha!" I burst out triumphantly as I fell onto my bed.

I was finally in my dorm after I concluded my activities in the outdoors, so after doing some experiments without bothering to rest, I was a little spent.

My body felt a little tired, but it was nothing compared to the thrill that was coursing through my veins.

Not only had I managed to find seven new plants, but two out of them also had properties synonymous with those in rare herbs. I was finally reaching a breakthrough!

"Let's take a break now..." I muttered

My eyes darted to a book that I placed on my study desk. It caused a smile to form on my face.

"A book written by me, uh?"

Of course, that wasn't what excited me about the piece of text.

There was probably nothing inside that would prove of any worth to me at the moment. However, I had borrowed it from the library for an extensive period because of one reason alone.

"She must be freaking out by now, uh? That Anabelle girl."

While tailing Anabelle and Edward, I overheard many things, including the mentions of the book Anabelle was going to the library to retrieve. She spoke of it with so much passion and zeal that I nearly blushed, being the author of the book.

The History Of Magic Evolution—a book I wrote when I was nearing old age. It was quite a masterful piece, and quite extensive. It had five volumes, well six, to be exact. I only published five, though.

Anabelle seemed so crazy about it when she spoke, making me think up an idea. I would borrow the book ahead of her and monopolize it for very long. Judging by how much she was looking forward to its contents, it would make her upset and impatient, and that was exactly what I wanted.

"Sooner or later, our paths will cross and she'll need the book which is in my possession. I'll use that as a good basis for conversation!"

The Lower Class Library only had one copy of any book, after all. There was no other option for the young girl, except to come to me.

"Pfft..." I chuckled and stifled my laughter.

If anyone saw me now, they would think of me as childish for resorting to such tricks, but I had no choice.

To bait a child properly, one had to think like them. There were more mature ways to handle this, but this would be the most efficient. I just had to make the most use of her emotions and childish curiosity. No doubt, Edward would step in as well since he was her friend, so I could use that to reel him in too.

It was basically killing two birds with one stone.



The best part of it was that there was really no evidence pointing to an ulterior motive on my end. I was innocent by all counts, so none of the two could blame me. With me having the moral high ground, my options were widened.

But, I wasn't a monster or anything.

I planned on giving the girl the book she so desperately wanted. In fact, this whole thing was sure to benefit both Anabelle and Edward.

'Tomorrow, we'll see how it goes...'

For now, I still had plenty of work to do. Looking to my left where I nearly arranged a total of thirty transparent vials of extracts, I smiled a little.

Progress was assured in that department, now all that was left was to get something to eat and continue training my Mana Cores and internal mana circulation. Oh, and my proficiency with SPELLCRAFT too.

"Ah, so much to do, so little time!"

\*\*\*\*\*

Homeroom ended without anything noteworthy, it was merely the third day of class, after all.

As I remained on my seat, I brought out the 'bait' I had prepared and waited for it to reel in my prey. Of course, the bait in question was the book I borrowed from the library. By conspicuously placing it on my desk and pretending to read it, I was actually drawing the attention of Anabelle and Edward.

Anabelle leaked out so much frustration and slight hatred toward me that it was impossible not to notice. As for Edward, I saw his eyes dart in mine and Anabelle's direction at intervals.

'I just need to wait... it might not be immediate, but—'

I felt an abrupt shift in my surroundings and noticed, from the corner of my eye, that Edward approached me.

I suppressed a smile and waited for him to draw closer.

"E-erm, excuse me..."

His voice was nothing like the confident, authoritative tone he had used the last time he confronted me. It appeared he had mellowed out quite well.

I cocked my head as I looked in his direction, slightly placing my hand over the book I read—a subtle message that it was mine.

"Yes... what is the matter?" My voice was small and calm, exactly how I had addressed him the last time.

Considering his aggressive attitude toward me previously, and how I had one-sidedly wrecked him, it would surprise anyone why I was still maintaining a calm, non-imposing demeanor with him.

"Erm, well, see..."

I looked at him blankly, tilting my head to the side a little to indicate confusion.

"I need to make a request of you! I'll do anything in return!"

His voice sounded desperate, and the gleam in his eyes reflected sincerity. I knew his relationship with Anabelle ran deep, but this was actually genuine love I was seeing—well, the friendly type anyway.

"Hm? A request?"

Since my expression and tone didn't signify any hostility, but slight curiosity, it encouraged Edward to press on.

The boy seemed to swallow hard, clenching his fist with resolve as he opened his mouth. From my distance, I spotted Anabelle looking at him with shock written on her face. Was she not expecting this outcome—that Edward would try to make me give her the book?

No, she probably did.

That was why she didn't even attempt to stop him, unlike last time. That was how badly she wanted it.

All that was left were the words I wanted to hear.

'Say it, Edward... what do you want?'

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

#### **Chapter 105: Expected Outcome**

"Please, can you lend me that book you're reading? Just for a day, no, three days! Please!"

Edward's diligent voice echoed across the classroom, causing all eyes to fall on both of us. I was certain it wasn't his intention to draw attention to us, but his loud and serious tone made that inevitable.

Now everyone awaited my verdict. It would be nice of me to accept his request, but that wasn't the public opinion. Everyone in the class, with the exception of a few who couldn't be bothered, shot Edward somewhat disgusted glances.

Why?

After challenging me and losing, he dared to approach me for a favor. That was the height of shamelessness, was it not? I was certain Edward knew the implications of his actions, but his firm face showed no signs of backing down. For his dear friend, he could suffer any form of persecution... so long as he got what he wanted.

"Hmm... why do you want the book? You don't strike me as someone who would like something like this?"

My question, while being the natural thing to ask, stuck Edward like a lightning bolt.

His resolved expression loosened, and a form of confusion permeated his face, breaking the serious look he once had. From the way his body fidgeted nervously, I could only deduce one thing.

'THIS GUY... DON'T TELL ME HE DIDN'T THINK OF A RESPONSE TO THAT?!'

How dense could one be?

I knew Edward didn't want to drag Anabelle into this, so he tried to appear as the one who was interested in the book. It was a noble idea and all, but the young boy couldn't escape certain things.

He was in the Martial Arts department!

His focus was on getting stronger in body and mind, and subjects such as the history of magic and its evolution were of no concern to him, at least not to the point of asking someone who vanquished you not so long ago.

Hadn't he thought of an excuse to make before coming to me? The way things were going, it would only look bad for him if he couldn't profer a correct answer.

"E-erm, well... I-I..."

Should I not have asked that question? No, it was the natural thing to do. Edward was the one who was just plain stupid.

"I see..."

I had no choice but to shift this in my favor, to speed things up a little.

"... Is it perhaps for your friend over there?" My eyes went in Anabelle's direction, and my head followed.

Everyone turned to the young girl as well, looking with curiosity. No doubt, they all wanted to see how this would end.

Edward immediately got flustered the moment I mentioned the possibility of Ana being the one who was interested in the book.

"N-no! Why would you say that? She has nothing to do with this!"

He made another mistake on his part. I merely asked a question, and it was a calm and harmless one.

If he had responded in a collected manner, nothing would have seemed out of the ordinary. However, his response now only warranted more suspicion.

Before Edward made more of a mess, I had to rescue him from his foolishness.

My eyes pierced Anabelle, who watched the entire thing play out with a powerless expression on her face.

She looked like she wanted to help her dear friend. However, doing so would only ruin the lies that Edward had told me. But, with the way things were going, her intervention was necessary.

Conflicted with two choices, Anabelle had to choose between keeping silent and speaking. With everyone's eyes on me, and the pressure building up on Edward, the obvious choice would be—

"Yes, you're right. I was the one who wanted to read the book. Edward realized that and went to ask you."

Her confession caused the class to let out little 'oohs' and 'ahhs'.

Edward turned his head and looked in Anabelle's direction, apparently trying to protest her decision, but she shook her head. It was time to come clean.

"Forgive Edward's impudence, asking you for the impossible and all, let's just forget this matter."  
Despite her looks, she made a most mature statement.

Anabelle still had the burning desire to get her hands on the book in my possession, I was certain of it. However, she forfeited it in order to protect her friend from any further disgrace.

Plus, she probably thought I wouldn't give Edward or her no matter how much they begged, anyway.

"..."

My face finally broke into a smile as I looked at her. Lifting my hands from the book on my desk, I covered it and held it up. Anabelle's eyes widened as I did all this, and I could sense the whole class holding their breaths.

"All you had to do was ask..."

My tone was meek and kind, my eyes reflected these virtues as well. Standing from my seat, I thrust my hand which held the book forward, pointing it in Anabelle's direction.

"... Three days, right? You can have it for that long."

A hint of suspicion remained on the young girl's face, but I could already feel her animosity toward me melt away. A mere act of kindness such as this was enough to make even her cold gaze soften.

She moved from her seat.

Hesitation was written all over her, wondering if I was actually being genuine, still... she moved.

Her desire for the book was far more than the possibility of rejection. Plus, Edward had gone so far as to ask for it from me. He was currently smiling at her proudly, happy that she was finally being offered what she so desired.

In a short moment, she stood right in front of my outstretched arm.

"A-are you sure about this?" Her voice broke into a myriad of anticipation and uncertainty.

"Sure... I need to digest what I've read so far, plus... 'Application is far more profitable than blind study', don't you think?"

Anabelle's eyes bulged the moment I said this.

"That is... from Lewis Griffith's 5th Treatise on Magic Construction!" The young girl's eyes sparkled in both surprise and admiration.

I could see that she was already seeing me in a new light.

My smile broadened and I was certain my plan had worked. With this final word binding the two of us, Anabelle reached out her hand and took the book

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

### **Chapter 106: Anabelle's Passion (Pt 1)**

'Young ones are so impressionable... it's easy to dye them in any color—like a blank canvas.'

Not only had I improved Anabelle's opinion of me, but even the whole class now had a better image of my person. I had truly killed two birds with one stone, no?

Opinions breed image. Image breeds reputation. Reputation breeds identity. Identity breeds position. Position breeds capacity... and that capacity defines an existence.

All I had just done was to shift something so minute, seemingly inconsequential. But, the rewards would be enormous.

That was a guarantee!

\*\*\*\*\*

[Three Days Later]

Classes ended for me, and it was already late in the afternoon. Others began leaving the class to attend their Electives courses, but such things didn't concern me.

I had something more important to do...

"J-Jared Leonard... here..." A soft voice called out to me.

I had been expecting her all day, but she really held on to the book until the last minute—Anabelle, that is.

I glanced in her direction and flashed my usual calm smile.

"Oh, you're done already. That's good."

She returned my smile with hers, a sharp contrast from the glare she would usually give me.

"Thank you for lending me this book. If it's not too much to ask, I'd like you to tell me when you're returning it. We could go together, so I can borrow it from the library at the same time..."

Her voice sounded shrill and tame for some reason. Over the past few days since I lent her the book, the air around us had certainly loosened. We now exchanged greetings, and Edward often made small talk with me, though not much, since I always made myself occupied.

Currently, he was attending an Elective amongst over two-thirds of the whole class. That made the Lecture Hall nearly empty, giving Anabelle and me ample time to discuss.

"Alright, no problem. I'm guessing you've not completely digested the contents in the book."

"Y-yeah. Lewis Griffith's words are quite deep. I need more time to cross-reference this with other materials and draw a reasonable conclusion."

'Ah, she's talking about her assertion from that time!' My thoughts rang, remembering how she declared in front of everyone that the Great Sage's materials and theories were incomplete.

"I see... you hold a keen interest in him, the Great Sage Lewis Griffith, uh?"

Her face morphed from the somewhat nervous look she had, to a more confident one. Passion blazed in her eyes and I could tell that she was excited about the topic.

"Yeah! I've been studying him and his works ever since I was a child, after all! He inspired me to be a Scholar, after all!"

I could sense that this was genuine affection toward the man whose works must have lit a bright fire in the girl's heart. It just felt weird because the man in question was me, and having a very cute fangirl fawning all over my works just made things a bit awkward.

"I think every Scholar sees Lewis Griffith as motivation, though. Even Magic-Users also admire him..."

My response seemed to surprise Anabelle a little, as she looked at me in a peculiar, strange manner.

"Hm? I guess... but it's not like how I feel. I somehow feel like he's my rival, you know? I mean, I'm working so hard so I can catch up to him and surpass him! It's not like I worship him or anything... even though he's so amazing and handsome, I mean, intelligent. Ahem!"

'You almost said 'handsome', didn't you?!

This girl was giving me mixed signals, and I couldn't tell if her admiration for Lewis Griffith was purely academic, or if it extended into something deeper. A chill ran down my spine when the thought surfaced and I quickly buried it.

'You don't even know how I looked like back then!' I nearly screamed at her, but kept it within me.

Well, I wasn't that bad-looking, but my facial features couldn't exactly be said to be top-tier. In fact, compared to how I looked now, my past self may have as well been trash.

'Must be due to my current noble bloodline...'

In any case, I took the book from Anabelle's hand, though her tight grip on it before she finally released what was mine, clearly showed how unwilling she was to part with it.

I could have extended her time with it, but that would only bring suspicion upon me. Why would I borrow a book for two weeks and lend it to another person, when I could be using it?

I had to act natural.

Plus, something told me that no time I gave Anabelle would be enough to satiate her uses for the book. It would just be best if she borrowed it from the Library after I was done.

"It's Friday, already... last day of our first week."

I had to wrap things up with the pair of both Anabelle and Edward before more time elapsed.

"It's nice to see that someone feels the same as I do. I also share your opinion, Anabelle. Lewis Griffith... I intend to surpass him."

My sudden statement, devoid of any lies, struck a chord within Anabelle the moment they were uttered.

Her eyes widened in surprise as I gave her a fierce look to show I was serious. Sparkles showed in her clear blue eyes and I could see more of her excitement build up.

"Kyiiiiii!!!" She suddenly let out a squeal that caught me off guard.

"So, you feel the same way? I knew it! I mean, I'm always watching how you read during your spare time, and how you look at the flowers in the garden, plucking quite a few. I assume those are for experiments, right? You also brilliantly answer the questions in class and give your ideal opinion. You mix in your assertion, argument, and possible proof when offering an answer! Do you know the significant similarities in those things?"

Anabelle was rambling now, she couldn't be stopped. My statement had opened a chatterbox that exceeded my control.

"I-I guess it's—"

"—That's right! It's what Lewis Griffith used to do back in his school days!" Anabelle refused to let me complete my excuse of a response and just continued speaking.

Perhaps I didn't have everything under control as I had initially thought.

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

#### **Chapter 107: Anabelle's Passion (Pt 2)**

The girl—Anabelle—kept rambling for so long that I lost track of time.

It was frankly a waste of time since the conversation was terribly one-sided, but I endured it regardless. It wasn't out of sentiment or consideration for the young girl's emotions.

No.

It was out of satisfaction!

While I was certainly not benefitting much from listening to her excited talks on Lewis Griffith, it was certainly a good sign that Anabelle had warmed up to me wholly. Perhaps it was due to the fact that she was lonely and bored.

Edward, her only friend, was currently unavailable due to his Elective course. Was she just looking for another person to talk to and while away time with?

No, she could have easily spent her time reading a book and doing more research... which would pay off in the long run.

Anabelle genuinely divulged her passion to me because she felt we were of like mind. She traced a lot of my actions to the same ones Lewis Griffith made back when he was a student, which was no wonder since I was the same person.

'Old habits die hard, uh?'

I ignored the fact that she had been mildly stalking me and observing my movements ever since I gave her the book. I mean, I picked up constant observation on me, but I just thought it was Edward's usual monitoring.

Who would have thought Anabelle had joined the fray?

That must have been why she grew friendlier and more comfortable with me, seeing that I had a keen interest in research and not just strictly the use of mana and spells.

After speaking and speaking, Anabelle finally showed signs of slowing down and caught her breath.

"W-wow. Since we have so much in common, we should be friends. There's so much we can learn from each other." I managed to blurt out.

There was no resistance on her part and she wholeheartedly agreed... so easily!

I didn't even need to apologize for my actions on our first day of class. She must have realized that it was a misunderstanding all on her own. That was a relief!

"The reason you coughed back then was probably because you were surprised, right?" As though she was reading my mind, Ana brought up the very same topic I was thinking about.

She wasn't wrong, so I nodded.

"Well, since we're both rivals of Lewis Griffith, that makes us rivals too! I don't plan on losing to you!"

Her voice radiated childish innocence, but I could sense a tinge of strict competition from them. She really meant it.

'I don't really wanna compete or anything, but okay. If that's what will motivate you...'

With this, I had created a common interest that would serve to bind me with the girl.

'Since we've come this far, I might as well ask...'

"Anabelle, if you don't mind me asking, why did you join the Scholar Department?"

It seemed like a foolish question now that I blurted it out, but there was a reason behind it. I understood her obsession with Lewis Griffith, I understood her unrivaled intelligence, but...

"Why? I thought you already knew. Lewis Griffith is my—"

"I don't mean that, Anabelle—"

"Call me Ana!" She snapped.

"Okay, Ana... what I mean to say is... you have Mana Core, don't you? Enough to be a Magic-User. "

My words dropped like a bomb, and Ana looked stunned, no, beyond stunned to hear me say what I said.

"H-How did you find out?" She muttered, having a conflicted expression on her face.

The air became uneasy, and I could feel the tension rise between the two of us. No one else was in the classroom, except for one boy who carelessly slept.

I swallowed a little while staring into Ana's curious, suspicious eyes. Perhaps I shouldn't have said anything?



No... this was certainly something I needed to know.

"I've sort of always known. See, I can just tell if someone has a core... one of my family's secret techniques."

The first part was true. The second one? Not so much.

Her eyes lit up the moment I said this, and for a moment, the cloud of unease cleared away.

"Whoah! I've never heard of anything like that! What kind of technique is it?"

"Um, it's a 'secret technique' for a reason, you know?" I tried to laugh it off, but my message was sharply passed across to her.

"O-oh, okay... sorry..."

The cloud returned.

Everything seemed awkward, but I had to press on. It was clear that Anabelle was hiding something from me, and I wasn't giving up until I knew what it was.

"You're right, Jared. I have a functional Magic Core... it's more than enough to get me a shot at this institute, and I 'Awakened' ever since I was very young. But... I just... I..."

It looked like a lump was in her throat, or was she just embarrassed? I couldn't tell the difference.

"Maybe you can—"

"I just felt it would be cheating, okay?!" Her loud voice cut off my small attempt at a suggestion as she blurted out her reason.

'... Eh?'

It didn't make me understand any better, though.

"Lewis Griffith was a Scholar who rose to the position of Great Sage. But, most importantly, he was inept! For such a great man to rise out of a people known to be worth nothing, it goes to show how great he was!" She began her speech.

"If I am to surpass him and prove my superiority, I should be able to perform a bigger feat, while also restricting myself. If I can't do that much and take only the easy route, how can I call myself his rival?"

'Are you stupid?' I nearly blurted out, but restrained myself.

"And your parents are okay with this?" I asked with concern.

"Oh, I'm the last child of my family, and my eleven siblings are all Magic-Users. My father said I can choose whatever path I want." Ana puffed her chest out proudly.

'What the heck?!'

This was just getting more bizarre.

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

### **Chapter 108: Conflicted Reasoning**

According to Ana, her family had more than enough Magic-Users, and since she was a female as well, she got away with doing anything she wanted.

It kinda made me feel like she was abandoned, but to her, it couldn't have been any better. She was able to drown in her study and research, even being able to choose the career path she wanted.

Her parents were rich and powerful nobles, so enrolling her into Ainzlark was no big deal.

As I already expected, the exams for Scholars greatly differed from ours. There was no Mana Core Grade exam or practical magic session.

Other than the rigorous written portion of their exams, the Scholar entrants had to solve various riddles and perform practical analyses of problems. They were also interviewed and bombarded with nerve-racking questions which would determine their Class within the Academy.

"I intentionally scored lower so I would end up here!" Ana proudly said once again.

I truly felt like spanking her head, but my self-control saved the day.

"Lewis Griffith never faced this kind of challenge during his time, so when I end up rising above everyone else despite my Lower Class Status, I'll be able to prove myself."

'Something is certainly wrong with this child.' I concluded with a sigh.

Well, even oddballs had uses. I just had to make her into the ideal image... and she'd be more than good enough for the task.

"Anabelle... you can surpass Lewis Griffith, not by putting yourself at more of a disadvantage, but by excelling with all you have."

Anabelle fell silent the moment I said this, her face clouding up.

"Mana is a huge part of you, you can't deny that. Just because you aspire to be better than the Great Sage doesn't make you an Inept like him."

These were words she probably didn't hear from anyone else since they allowed her to live her life, but she needed to understand something very pivotal.

"Lewis Griffith was bound by his inability to use or sense mana, that was why his theories and discoveries couldn't reach the peak. If you want to do better, be better. You have the power to reach a higher summit... don't waste it trying to follow his path and beat him in his own race!"

My voice grew stricter and firmer as I tightened my fist. I didn't know why I was so worked up on this matter, but it ate at me the way Ana was blindly trying to prove something to the 'me' of the past.

'It's because I'm Lewis Griffith that I know...'

"Don't waste your time on the route he went through. Forge your own path and take a swifter journey through Magic. That's the only way to win!"

I said this because that was what I realized. This was the principle I was living with—to surpass my previous self, I was going to actively use magic.

"Discovery is born out of experiments, not so? Then... why not experiment on what Lewis Griffith was never able to? Your own Magic!"

Upon making this final statement, I stood from my seat. Anabelle was still petrified, listening to my blunt words.

'This may seem hypocritical of me to say, but...'

"Don't waste your life on theories you'll never be able to apply for yourself. Magic is only fun when you're able to do it yourself... remember that."

I put the books on my table into my bag and began twisting my body to jump over the desk that separated me from the forefront of the class.

"Hup!" I hovered through the hurdle and landed safely away from my seat.

Flinging my bag to my back, I took a careful stride across Ana, and walked past her. She was still a bit shaken by my unfiltered words that chastised her immature thinking—at least that was what I could pick up from her slightly bulging eyes and flinching body.

"Think about what I just said and decide on what you want to do. I need to be off now..."

With that as my final statement, I left the young girl.

'Huu, I know it's not my business, but... did I go too far?'

I had certainly given her a lot to think about over the weekend. This could play out in a bunch of ways, but I hoped things turned out well... for her sake and mine.

"When we see next week Monday, I'll fully begin what I have in mind. For now, though, I should gain more knowledge about the state of Martial Arts. Maybe I can learn a few... hmm..."

I made my way to the library after considering my next course of action. This weekend would certainly be very busy for me.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Haa, just like that, the first week of class is over. Time flies really fast, doesn't it?"

Edward was the one who broke the awkward silence between the two friends.

He gazed at his partner, Anabelle, as subtly as possible. He hoped she would have worn off the awfully glum expression on her face... that hope died.

There was no change in Anabelle's face, no, her entire demeanor.

'Damn... what's got her so down?' Edward wondered to himself.

Ever since he finished his classes and met up with Anabelle, he had found her like that. She didn't utter a single word about what was bothering her and he didn't want to make her mood worse.

With that in mind, Edward decided to leave the lecture grounds along with a sulking Anabelle and hope that her emotional state would improve as they went on.

"Hey, Ed..." Anabelle finally spoke up, causing the one she addressed to nearly freeze up.

"Y-yeah...?" The boy found himself stuttering, looking at Ana keenly.

He couldn't mess up and say the wrong thing, or he would lose the opportunity he had. Since he had been Anabelle's friend for very long, he knew her well.

Her next statement would be decisive.

"Do you think I should... have registered as a Magic-User?"

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

#### **Chapter 109: An Answer**

Edward knew most things about Anabelle, and it was vice versa.

Their extremely straightforward relationship allowed the young martial artist to know of Anabelle's ability to use mana, ultimately possessing the potential to perform Magic.

No, to simply call it an 'ability' would not do it justice. Simply put, Anabelle was talented at Magic. With no tutor, she was able to sense mana freely and even use her Mana core which she established at an early age.

Anabelle was a genius!

However...

"I won't use Magic! It wouldn't be fair!"

... Anabelle decided not to sully her rivalry with the inept man who became the famous Great Sage, Lewis Griffith. In her words, she wanted to surpass him using pure wits alone.

Edward, who couldn't understand the refusal to use all that existed in one's arsenal to achieve greatness, tried to protest. However, after seeing the determination in Anabelle's eyes, and her pure resolve to stick to this ideal, he gave up on the thought.

And so, years passed... Anabelle didn't practice Magic.

She registered as a Scholar and, according to what she told Edward, intentionally scored low on the tests so she could be placed in the Lower-Class.

The final part annoyed and partly hurt Edward, since he couldn't understand why she would go so far to prove something. Unlike her, he wasn't privileged to choose the class he wanted.

Edward had skills with the blade, an art he sharpened ever since he was little. But, he couldn't escape his lack of talent in a qualifier that existed in the Academy.

His use of Mana!

Perhaps it was due to the minuscule amount he possessed, or the fact that he preferred training with the blade and didn't pay much heed to magic—his Mana Core Grade refused to improve beyond where its current level.

His Core Grade was Yellow, but only barely. As a result, it was only to be expected that he would be placed in the lowest class despite the abilities he showed in other departments.

So, that was why he was quite upset when Anabelle revealed the intentional part she played in ensuring her placement. Still, though, he endured.

Edward loved Ana and would always support her. If this was the path she chose to follow... who was he to stop her?

He too... had something he wanted to do!

That was what he thought of the matter—all he made himself think of it.

Until she asked him a question he wasn't expecting.

"Do you think I should... have registered as a Magic-User?"

At first, Edward's mind shut down.

Of all the questions simulated in his brain, none came close to what was playing in his ears.

Dazed and awestruck, Edward took a closer look at Ana, not even hiding the intensity of his observation.

'She's serious... she's seriously asking me this?!

Pushing down the saliva that had formed in his mouth, Edward swallowed hard and tried regaining his composure.

"W-well, I think the decision was up to you, after all, you—"

"No! I don't mean that!" Anabelle gave a sharp, desperate cry.

Edward wasn't getting it, the true intentions behind her question.

Of course, he couldn't understand. The boy hadn't been there when Jared had spoken to Anabelle. He couldn't feel the intensity of her burning inquisition.

Right now, Anabelle was conflicted. Had she been wrong all along? Was it truly the best choice to try beating Lewis Griffith in his own game rather than following her oath and surpassing him in her own way.

Jared Leonard had inspired these questions within her, and now she felt restless. She desperately sought some sort of calm—maybe reassurance.

If her best friend, Edward would only speak... perhaps she could finally have some clarity.

'I wasn't wrong, right? I just wanted to be better than—'

"If I'm to be honest, Ana..."

Edward's solemn voice broke through her inner turmoil and bustling emotions. She looked at his face. It was hard, resolute... a bit scared, though.

Edward looked weird, but the face he made was synonymous only with one thing. He wanted to be honest with her.

"... I believe a person should use everything they have to get what they want. That's the only way one can live without giving excuses for failure!"

No 'what ifs' or 'If I had's' or 'Had I known's'... one who gave their all to something felt very little regret! It was that simple.

"Wouldn't it be better to use your full strength than half your strength? Especially when against a powerful opponent?" Edward asked sincerely.

Anabelle didn't say anything, but she knew the answer to that question.

It was 'common sense' to try one's hardest in a battle when victory wasn't certain.

"You're up against Lewis Griffith, the best of the best. Don't you think you need to give all you have at it?"

These words resonated deeply in Anabelle's soul as they aligned with the seeds sown by Jared not too long ago. Her heart beat fast as she received the picture being painted by both boys.

Her stubborn heart loosened, and she began embracing the possibilities.

"You're a Magic Genius, Ana. I've known that since we were kids. I think it's time you owned it."

Just like that... the turbulent sea that was Anabelle's inner consciousness experienced a great calm. The cloudy skies cleared up and brilliant rays of illumination burst forth.

It was warm all over her, no, within her. Anabelle didn't even realize when she had started smiling.

First came a smile, then came tears, then came a voice.

"Thanks, Ed... I really needed to hear that.

Edward—who had been a little surprised by his friend's tears, but quickly realized it wasn't one of sorrow—smiled at the young, child-like girl, and gave his usual confident smile.

"You're welcome!"

There was silence for a moment as both friends looked at each other, staring deeply into their eyes. But, Anabelle broke the decorum not long after.

"Oh, you were wrong about one thing, though."

Edward gave a slight raise of his eyebrow, not really understanding what she meant by that.

"What's that?"

"We're still kids!" Anabelle laughed.

Edward remembered his earlier statement where he mentioned their 'kid' status as though it had passed. It was just like Anabelle to nitpick on such little detail.

"Pfft, yeah you're right... I guess we are."

And so, with their moods raised, the pair resumed walking... this time, with a different air about them. They smiled, laughed, and enjoyed each other's company.

Unknown to them, and nearly everyone in the whole Academy... these times wouldn't last very long.

For Darkness would consume everything soon enough. After all, it had already arrived!

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

#### **Chapter 110: The Start Of Despair (Pt 1)**

The town of Urich was an integral part of the Eastern Kingdom, albeit small.

Being a rural area, greatly underdeveloped, its denizens were also not too many. A total of three hundred and thirty-nine dwelled there—approximately 120 adult males, 150 adult females, and the remaining were children. Many of the adults were also elderly, living up to a ripe old age before death called for them.

Despite the small size and hardly civilized means of living, this small dot on the map was within the border of the Kingdom. Urich wasn't exempt from the obligations toward the Kingdom and the benefits that came with them.

As a rural settlement, the people made a living using trade by Barter, exchanging one item for the other, rather than using the currency of the Kingdom.

To them who lived at the furthest end of the Eastern Kingdom's border, facing the north, there was no better means of exchange. They mostly dealt in arables—grains and legumes when it came to agriculture. The town also had a couple of animals who were used as beasts for burdens to plow the land and transport goods.

Livestock wasn't in fashion, though a few homes had a couple of domestic fowls that they raised. Still, it wasn't as though the entire village practiced such a thing.

Any commodity the town lacked was supplied to them by the Merchants who came to buy from them. In exchange for high-quality grains and legumes, they would receive meat, milk, and other necessities. They sewed their own clothes from the little cotton they grew, and made their shoes from malleable wildwood and rough plant parts.

The homes resembled thatched huts, built of straw and wood. These weren't perfect constructs, but each of their homes was made to be sturdy—they lasted years without the need for repair.

While their lives couldn't be said to be comfortable and ideal, they lived in harmony and unity. Their small numbers caused a deeper understanding of everyone in the community. They were one large family. Happiness was a luxury everyone could afford.

This same town, at the edge of the kingdom's territory to the north... was about to receive a rude awakening!

\*\*\*\*\*

Kahn was still brimming with anger, fury, no, shame... his slumped shoulders drooped even further whenever he remembered the humiliation he suffered at the hands of his previous subordinate.

It was utterly disgraceful!

As a Demon, rank was everything. Despite being among the six Demon Lords and the ruler of his race of Shadows, he lost it all in the Succession Challenge.

"Kyron... that bastard..." The Shadow Demon growled with hate and rage.

There were countless thoughts on his mind, but first, he had to keep moving.

Keeping up his steady, slow steps, he walked in the only direction he had been moving in ever since he exiled himself from the Demon Realm.

He was sure he had come to the human world, but wasn't sure where he was.

So much had changed since he was last here, after all.

Kahn kept moving, passing mountains, deserts, rivers, forests... he didn't stop. The burning passion within him gave him the strength to persevere... until he finally laid eyes on the first human settlement to be encountered after so long a journey.

"This is...!" His distorted voice let out a whisper.

The body made of shadows and pitch-black darkness moved closer to inspect the area more, and the Demon's whitened eyes narrowed to zoom in on the targets in sight.

With its heightened vision, everything else became a blur, and even from such a great distance—nearly a mile away, atop a giant hill filled with clusters of trees and shrubs that endlessly bothered the Shadow Demon—Kahn could see all that happened in the village.

He noticed how they jointly worked on the small farmland located at a far corner from the thatched and tattered excuse for houses that they had.

It was evening time, so the people were rounding up all the day's work.

He saw them rejoice while working—how they smiled and enjoyed one another's company. It was extremely infuriating.

"Those insects..."

No, calling them that would have been an overstatement. The insects in the Demon Realm were far superior to the silly creatures who worked their fields and had fun doing it.

For someone like Kahn who was enraged by his disgrace, he could not condone the happy expression implanted on the faces of others.

Only the strong had the right to be happy!

These ones were weak, so pathetically weak. He could not tolerate their blasphemy.



>WHOOOOOOSH HHH<

In a flash, the Shadow Demon vanished from the cluster of plants as though he was never there, only a trace of darkness remained.

He rushed at the village with such immense speed that the wind parted way for his dash. In mere moments, the Demon closed the distance between himself and the village. And so, seeing that he was only a few more moments away from reaching the little fence they used to surround their village, Kahn leaped high into the air and lunged at the village settlement within the flimsy wooden barricade.

The unsuspecting, hardworking villagers could not have expected what came next. They, who were simply enjoying their daily activities—the children having fun in their own way by chasing after one another, adults working hard, even the elderly, sewing wears, making shoes, and attending to the children— were met my utter despair.

>BOOOOOO M M M M M!!!<

The loud explosion caused the entire area to tremble as a gust of wind filled the village. No one could be exempt from the effects of an unknown force crashing into the village.

The reverb lasted for only a few moments, but everyone trembled where they were and instinctively looked in the direction of the cloud of dust that seemed to be the origin of the loud noise.

It was located at the edge of the village, closed off entirely by the barricade since that was neither an entrance nor exit. No one came from the edge where the dust came from... it was a secluded area.

Yet... yet... what was this disturbance the people felt?

Everyone, even those who tirelessly worked on the field, left all they were doing and began moving in the same direction. Like iron being attracted by a magnet, like prey drawing closer to bait... these unsuspecting, hardworking villagers moved closer to their doom.

And that doom—Kahn— patiently waited for his prey!