

SPELLCRAFT 1051

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

Chapter 1051: Two Great Sages [Pt 1]

As I watched the trio get pulled up by my grappling hook, I couldn't help but sigh at myself.

Was it a sigh of relief or exasperation? I couldn't tell.

'I would have ignored these people, thinking they were monsters, but...'

When I was taking the path that would lead me to my destination, I heard human noises—particularly the sound of a woman fighting.

In the end, I couldn't help but check the fight out, and it turned out to be a group of Adventurers, or whatever they were called, here in this world.

'Legris Damien, according to the memories I share with Jared, is also from the Nether Realm, so I knew there would be humans here, but...'

I didn't expect to find some so quickly.

The three finally reached the top, where I was standing waiting for them. The firm rocky foundation here was still intact, unlike what had taken place below.

I could see them breathing heavily as they greedily took in the air around them.

Their faces were a little obscured from me thanks to their current positions, so I could hardly see their faces.

'They look disheveled. They must have been fighting for a while...'

Well, not all of them. According to my sensors, two of the three were extremely weak.

'The woman looks like the strongest. Half Elf, huh? That brings back memories...' A wry smile formed on my face, however it quickly darkened.

'But Emilia is dead. And she wanted me to move on...'

Karlia was still alive, and I had chosen my path already. That was all that had to exist in my mind.

"Are you people alright?" I asked them, finally rising to my feet to greet the three.

"a-aaaH, knaht uoy... rof gnivas su..."

'H-huh?' I recoiled the moment I heard their speech.

It seemed they spoke a different language from me.

'This will be difficult...' It finally dawned on me why they took so long before grabbing onto the rope I sent down for them.

'They couldn't understand me either. This is a bother.'

I didn't have the time to concern myself with e

learning their language, or them learning mine, so perhaps we could just call it even at this point.

"eW yllaer etaicerppa ruoy pleh!"

As I listened to their words more keenly, analyzing it, something struck me instantly.

'Are they speaking my language backwards?!'

To be completely certain, I swiftly tweaked my perception device, allowing a mirror effect to occur in the sound region, thus rendering everything I would hear or say to flow backwards.

'Let's try it now.' I focused my gaze on the other two who were now rising to their feet.

"How can we ever repay you?" The language seemed normal now.

'So that was it, huh? I should also be able to communicate with them.'

"It's fine..." I took in more details about them as they lifted their faces.

One was a buff ebony man. He seemed strong, but I knew quite well that he was really weak.

And then there was the last person—the seemingly oldest in the group.

He had some wrinkles, and he wore glasses, but the moment I saw him, I recognized him instantly.

"Y-you are..."

The elderly man in front of me looked a great deal like Legris Damien!

"My name is Larry Damien. They call me The Great Sage. I am truly grateful to you."

'Larry? Not Legris?'

In any case, seeing the face of the man who caused most of the troubles my other self was going through made me unhinged.

A part of me wondered if I should have just left him and his friends to die.

'The Nether. Legris Damien. The visitors our world has received from the Nether Realm have all had malicious intent.'

How could I have saved three of them just like that?

All three of them began to thank me profusely at this point—especially the Larry Damien fellow.

They introduced themselves, allowing me to know their names and occupation.

After listening to them yammering on for a couple of minutes straight, I realized that I was a bit prejudiced in my first impression of them.

'They're... actually pretty normal.'

Well, as far as normal went.

These three Nether Realm denizens seemed as human as anyone I had ever met. Ah, well, there was an Half Elf too, so that counted as well.

After their initial introduction, I informed the trio that we would have to leave our current position because the explosion had attracted more enemies who were making their way to our location.

My navigation compass detected a few red dots on the map, and the only one strong enough to handle those kinds of enemies was pretty exhausted already.

Our best option was to retreat.

Fortunately, thanks to the map, I knew which areas weren't congested with dots, allowing me to navigate my way out of danger.

It seemed the trio realized I held the key to their survival, considering the way they followed me as baby chicks would run after their mother.

In the end, we managed to escape the immediate crisis, and we even found a cave-like region where we could hide for a bit and wait out the current agitation that swirled in our immediate vicinity.

'At least until everything settles...'

With that out of the way, and with everyone safe, I finally decided to address the gnawing questions that had been eating at me for a while.

"Who are you people? What are you doing in a place as dangerous as this?"

As soon as I asked my question, the expressions of all three expressed unexpected surprise.

"Y-you don't know who we are...?"

Was I supposed to? Ah, I just recollected how the Larry Damien fellow called himself the Great Sage.

The Half Elf Aria called herself the Grand Magic Swordsman, and the one named Drake called himself the Heretical Doctor.

It seemed they were really important people in this world.

'Should I just pretend, or...'

No, there was no need for that.

'I have the advantage in this conversation. I might as well use it to learn more about this place.' With that thought guiding me, I proceeded in the conversation.

"I've been a hermit explorer for a while, so I'm not particularly adept at the current occurrences of the world."

"R-really? That's... unexpected." Larry Damien seemed surprised, fortunately he didn't appear too suspicious.

'Though it's reasonable for them to display a little skepticism.'

"So you saved us without even knowing our identities, and you've treated us with such courtesy. You really are a noble young man." Larry smiled at me with his usual cheerful demeanor.

To be honest, I was still very suspicious about him. His face held too great a significance to be mere coincidence.

"So... who are you people, really?" I asked once again. "And what are you doing here?"

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Chapter 1052: Two Great Sages [Pt 2]

"My name, as I said earlier, is Larry Damien. I am known as the Great Sage." The older man began.

He introduced his allies as well, and they nodded.

"We are explorers who have come to this Labyrinth—The Khaos Labyrinth—to search for an ancient artifact." He smiled broadly.

The moment I heard that, my heart skipped a bit.

'Are they here for the Arcana as well?' So this place was a known Labyrinth? I hadn't encountered any other human here, though.

"To be honest, I'm a bit surprised to see a fellow human here. It took me so long to decipher the location of this Labyrinth." Larry's words interrupted my thought.

'Ah, I see...' So this place wasn't accessible to the public, after all.

That made sense, considering how the Arcana would have been found if that was actually the case.

'Reminds me of the search I went through back in the good old days.'

"There are 21 Great Labyrinths in this world. They are hidden in mystery and shrouded in enigmas. I have devoted my entire life to unravel them, and now that I'm reaching old age, I have decided to seek them out once and for all."

Larry Damien's smile screamed of determination and youthfulness.

Somehow, his words seemed to resonate with me—particularly the energy he used to speak about his mission.

It reminded me a lot about myself.

'But there's something missing...'

"Why do you seek the Labyrinths? The treasure inside... why do you search for it?" I knew I was being impudent, but I had to know something.

"The Arcanas... so you know of them." He asked, his gaze narrowing.

"I wouldn't be here if I didn't." My response was simple and precise.

If the old man wanted to try something funny, I had a plan for that. If he turned out to be an enemy, I would have to neutralize both him and his allies.

'That's why I chose this cave, after all...'

However, I was sort of hoping it wouldn't come to that. Despite being currently stuck together, I could say I enjoyed their company a little.

It was much better than being alone, at the very least.

"I... want to make a final contribution to Magic. By finding the Arcanas, our world will make a significant leap in the world of Magic." He muttered.

I knew those words sounded hollow. His tired and distracted gaze told me there was more to it than that.

Would he tell me? Would he not? I was curious to see his choice.

"... At least that's what I tell everyone. But there's something else that I want."

Ah, so he was going to reveal his true goals.

"My wife died at childbirth. She was going to give birth to our child... our son." He began, his voice slowly permeating the space between us.

"We were going to name him Legris. But... even he perished along with my wife in childbirth."

I wasn't certain before, but hearing the story of this man, I was sure now.

'He's the father of Legris Damien! Or at least, he was supposed to be.'

He went on, further elaborating on the cause of their deaths—something about a weak constitution that could not sustain energy, and drained both the child and the wife—causing their deaths.

"I couldn't offer a solution then. I could only watch as both of them died."

It was a pretty sad story. And it seemed I was finally understanding his motivation.

"It's been decades since then, and I've done nothing but bury myself in research ever since I lost them." Larry spoke, a bitter tone tinged in his words.

"I'm recognized as the world's best Magic Scholar. I've revolutionized Magic and brought countless innovations to this world... all in the bid to save them somehow."

It seemed like his heart was aching as he spoke.

"I don't know why I'm telling you this. We've only just met, and while you saved my life, I don't even know anything about you, but... all I've done since I lost those two is to find a way to bring them back."

To be honest, I understood how Larry felt. I could sense some sort of bond between us—like we were kindred souls.

Even now, hearing his story, I couldn't help but find similarities to mine.

I glanced at his companions, and they appeared sad hearing Larry's words. The expression of the Half Elf, Aria, seemed particularly sad.

'Does she feel that bad for him?'

In any case, I now understood why he wanted to find the Arcanas. Sure, finding them could revolutionize the world, but that wasn't all there was to it.

"I want to bring my family back. That's why I seek the Arcanas." He finally confessed.

Arcanas could grant miracles. The ones I found, and the others that my other self collected, all had miraculous abilities that could bend laws and change the world.

His wishes could definitely be actualized by the Arcanas he sought after.

'But, I can't help but wonder if that's the right way to live life.'

I didn't have any rights to judge, considering I also journeyed to find Arcanas in order to make things right with Emilia instead of just being a man and making up for my mistakes.

I thought I could simply reverse everything.

'Perhaps he is right. He should have a chance to save his dead family.'

That was all I could say.

'He deserves it, after all.'

"You can indeed save your family. The Arcanas can do it." I smiled at the Great Sage Larry, a positive twinkle in my eyes.

"It seems you're very sure. You must have studied the Arcanas too."

"Indeed. More than you realize." My grin grew wider.

Back in my own world, I was known as the Great Sage.

It felt nice to find another who shared the same title.

"My name is Lewis. I also seek all 21 Arcanas, and I don't plan on stopping until I have all of them."

Stretching my hand to the trio, I made my proposal.

"Why don't we make a temporary alliance and find these Arcanas together?"

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Chapter 1053: Temporary Pact [Pt 1]

I knew what I was suggesting.

A temporary alliance between me and these strangers, pending the time we got all the Arcanas.

It was both sudden and shaky, but the way I saw it, the benefits made it all worth it.

'Firstly, there's the fact that my knowledge of this world is insufficient. Having these three provide me information, while serving as my cover in this place, is perfect.'

The second, and most obvious reason, was the conflict of interests that would arise from operating separately.

'We both want the Arcanas, so if one side gets it first, it could cause conflict for the other.'

I, for one, needed every single piece of the cards, and I desperately had to lay my hands on them.

'I don't want to hurt anyone in the process, especially if they're not enemies.' Which was why I proposed an alliance.

"Hmm. A teamup, huh? That's actually a great idea." Larry Damien rubbed his chin as he smiled at me.

"It's similar to what I proposed to both Drake and Aria."

"Really?" I expressed a tinge of surprise. "You weren't a team from the get go?"

Looking at both Drake and Aria, I thought they would be his long-time companions, but at second glance, I could see why that might not have been the case.

"We were strangers just two months ago." Larry spoke. "Well, we knew of each other and had met each other many times in the past—mostly at public events—due to our accomplishments and fame, but we never really knew each other."

"So what changed?" I asked in curiosity.

I could see Aria's face darken instantly. It made me wonder what secrets she hid behind her clear face.

"You really aren't from around here, are you? Two months ago... was when these two became outlaws." The old man spoke.

'What? Outlaws?!' I was proposing to travel with criminals?

I thought they were famous and trustworthy people, so I would have an easy time cruising with them without any real trouble.

But if they were criminals, that meant we would all live our lives on the run.

"The Eastern Empire fell two months ago. And it was at the hands of the Grand Swordsman. She was gravely injured afterwards, but the Heretical Doctor healed her and helped her escape." Larry spoke with a grim tone.

"News spread of their crimes, and so they became outlaws. We met not too long after they escaped, after they were cornered and had nowhere else to go. Fortunately for them, I remained neutral about the whole thing, and after hearing them out... I realized they weren't as guilty as they were painted to be."

Larry continued telling the story, and it seemed like a political scandal that involved a lot of factors that I wasn't very invested in.

Apparently, Aria used to be the Head Knight of the Eastern Empire, but realized that the system they ran was oppressive and tyrannical.

The government was corrupt, and they greatly oppressed the poor.

Slavery. Forced Prostitution. Drug Trafficking.

The system was messed up from the inside and no one at the top was willing to change it since they all enjoyed from its fruits.

Once Aria found out about all of this, she grew appalled at the Empire she had dedicated her life to serve, and turned her blade on the Emperor.

After hearing of his countless atrocities, and seeing firsthand what he was doing in the privacy of his room, she could not think of a more befitting punishment than sending him to the graze.

However, it wasn't just the Emperor.

The Nobles also fell at the hands of her blade, and all the ones she had caught in the act—which was pretty much all the upper echelons of the Eastern Empire

"The downside of everything was that she became a criminal in the process, and thus was accused of treason. The neighboring countries that have an alliance with the Eastern Empire, as well as the Criminal Underground all rose against Aria, but she couldn't take them all on at that point."

As a result, she fled with Drake, and left for Larry's home, which was in the middle of nowhere at the time.

"The public still has no idea they're with me, so I'm technically not an outlaw yet. Though I consider myself one already... considering how absolutely repulsive the system is."

When I first saw these people as denizens of the Nether, I thought their morality would be warped, but to think they actually shared my values on morality...

'It shows we're not so different after all.'

"Aria was actually the one who suggested going to The Great Sage's home for refuge. I wasn't sure we could trust him, but she seemed to have faith in his integrity." Drake laughed with his deep voice.

"S-shut up! It's just because his house was close by. Plus, he was a weak. He wouldn't have posed a threat to us."

Aria's cheeks were beet red at this point, and I couldn't help but think something was up.

'I'm no expert on these issues, but...'

"... Do you like Larry, Aria?" I asked, my face drawing a clueless smile.

"W-what?!" Her face instantly became redder.

'It seems I was right.'

"A-are you crazy? What the hell are you saying? You shouldn't say something so preposterous! Why would I... !!!"

She kept rambling on and on about it, but there was already no point.

I stared at Larry, and it seemed like he already knew of her feelings for him.

'She probably admired him from afar. And even now, she's hiding her feelings for him for a particular reason.'

"What are you talking about? Don't tease Aria too much. We're all just comrades. Right, Aria?"

"Y-yes." She murmured, avoiding eye contact with Larry himself.

'She's not going to say anything because Larry is still focused on his past family, huh? Well, I suppose that makes sense.'

Larry's purpose was to revive his wife and child. There was no room for Aria in his plans, so she was better off giving up from the jump.

'I kind of feel bad for her, though...'

But what could I do about it? Larry made his choice, and I had to respect that.

'Looking onto the past... while refusing to move on with the future...'

I couldn't particularly judge him for that, but it was a shame, really.

'I just hope it ends well.'

"So, what do you think, Lewis? You still want to partner up with us after knowing the truth?" Larry asked with a grimace on.

"Just got reference sake, what would you do if I decided to turn you in?"

I saw their expressions darken instantly. Their faces rang of instant caution, particularly Larry's.

"It would be unfortunate, but..."

"You'd kill me, huh?" I widened my grin.

"What? No! We'll make you lose your memories of ever meeting us."

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Chapter 1054: Temporary Pact [Pt 2]

"Ohhh..." It seemed these people were more moral than I gave them credit for.

"What the hell? Why would we even—?! What do you think we are?"

"Pfft!" I nearly burst out laughing. It caught them all by surprise, and they looked at me like I was strange, but it didn't matter to me.

"I don't care what anyone else in this world says. You three aren't criminals in my eyes." I chuckled.

I had met worse people in the world, and compared to them, these three were simply saints.

"The offer still stands." I stretched out my hand to the trio. "Let's form an alliance."

I wasn't planning on getting involved in the political conflict that was currently taking place in this world, but I also couldn't ignore the obvious problems that would arise if we weren't teammates.

... As well as the obvious benefits that would arise from being comrades.

'Most of all, I like them.' I smiled, looking at the three individuals before me.

In a way, they reminded me of my teammates. I knew they were different people with different personalities, but being in a group like this... it had a warmth I craved.

'As long as they don't slow me down, they'll be perfect.'

"I think it's a great idea." Larry smiled, his positive energy beaming across the room.

It spread to Drake and Aria who also shared similar answers to him.

"I don't see why not."

"It's a good idea."

And just like that, all four of us became a team.

After we created our partnership, I was able to learn more about the three individuals, especially Aria and Drake.

As expected, each of them also sought the miracles of the Arcanas for personal reasons.

Drake wanted to save lives, and prevent suffering by curing illnesses and bringing healing to the world.

It was quite a grand dream to have as a doctor.

However, considering how he had experienced a lot of trauma treating many patients who ended up dying or suffering despite being in his care, his wish was valid indeed.

A world without the need for doctors like him. That would really be something to see.

As for Aria, her desire was to bring down the corrupt people that were left in the world, both from the surrounding nations, but also the ones in other continents.

She wanted to liberate the weak while bringing equality to the world.

Also a noble aspiration, if I said so myself.

"What about you, Lewis? Why do you seek the Arcanas?" The question I was expecting finally came.

All three looked at me with curious eyes as they waited to see what I would tell them.

My dream wasn't as grand as bringing my family from the dead or saving the world.

It was far more selfish and personal.

"I just... want to save the woman I love. She's trapped somewhere I cannot reach, and she is suffering every second of every day." I smiled sadly.

In order to save her, I had to use the power of the Arcanas.

"That's why I need to find all the Arcanas. It's the only way to save her."

As expected, after my confession, the three wanted to know more about the woman I was willing to risk everything for to save, and I told them a bit about Karlia.

Of course, I left quite a few details.

Like the fact that she was a Succubus from another world... and that her prison was in the Root of Nether Realm.

After waiting out the commotion for a while, it was finally time to leave the cave, and so we journeyed out of it and went towards the direction of the strongest energy signature together.

It turned out, the same way I had my Googles and Map to help me navigate, Lewis used a Special Meter which he constantly referred to, while Drake checked rock patterns and various ores to see if we would be heading to a dead end.

As for Aria, her job was to sense approaching monsters and either avoid them, or fight them.

Their trio was pretty balanced, but inefficient.

With me in the mix, I simply used my special navigation map to locate the monsters around us, while also finding out the general direction that would lead us to our prize.

I pretty much made their entire shtick a bit irrelevant, but not completely useless.

I couldn't accurately determine paths, or tell them apart. In the case of two caves appearing beside each other, both with strong energy presences, it would be impossible for me to tell which one would be best traversed.

That was where Drake came in. As for Aria, since she was stronger than everyone present, she could defeat monsters for us.

'And Larry has the locations of all the Labyrinths, or at least a good number of them, recorded for use.'

The compass I was given by Jared only showed me their approximate location, so it was very reassuring to have an expert with me on the journey.

I could probably pull everything off on my own, but this way it was far easier... and less lonely.

To my relief, none of them slowed me down. In fact, the moment we started journeying together, we were on an endless roll.

Even Larry didn't stop to catch his breath. Apparently, he had a Magic Device that assisted his physical abilities, and this also wasn't his first exploration.

As a result, none of us weighed the other down.

It took another hour or so, but we finally reached what could be called the final challenge of the Khaos Labyrinth.

It was a massive gate made in form of a double door.

It seemed to be made of stone, with engravings on it that rang of carnage.

"This is it, guys." I smiled wryly, sensing the most absurd source of energy I had ever perceived from beyond the gate.

"It's a purple marker."

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Chapter 1055: Joint Efforts [Pt 1]

Tension spread through the air as we all stared at each other in choking silence.

And then...

"P-purple?!" Aria was the first to comment on the absurdity of my observation.

I had explained the concept of my markers prior to our arrival at the very entrance of the Final Juncture.

"There's a possibility that it's not an enemy and simply the Arcana's energy signature, right?" Drake smiled uncomfortably.

He was clearly trying to run away from the dreary fact that seemed to be crouching upon his senses.

"No. The frequency of the Arcana is different. Markers represent living entities." I responded.

One could say that the Arcanas wouldn't fall under any marker color, and even if it would, the color was going to be black.

Still, the Arcanas location was certainly beyond these doors. My sensors picked the entire area within the room ahead as the position of the Arcana

That meant the purple marker was something else.

"We should brace ourselves for an enemy encounter."

"But a Purple? Didn't you say Aria was a Red? She's the strongest among us. We don't stand a chance if we go in there."

I understood what Larry was saying, but we couldn't turn back now either.

We also didn't know the kind of enemy we would be facing, so we couldn't generate a specific plan to counter it.

The only thing we could really do was move forward.

"Don't worry, Larry. I don't plan on losing this fight." A smile formed on my face as I stared at the double door.

Sure, I couldn't use Magic, but that didn't mean I didn't have some tricks up my sleeve.

"There's more than one way to win a battle. Just trust me."

Drake and Larry were useless in a fight, so the only person I could really count on was Aria.

She was weaker than the opponent that existed within, but she was still formidable.

"With our combined strength, we should be able to win."

No... we had to win!

As the massive double doors swung open, revealing the foreboding Labyrinth's Core Room, a rush of anticipation and fear coursed through my veins.

The air was thick with tension as our small group stepped inside.

Larry and Drake remained close to the entrance as instructed, considering the fact that they were non-combatants, while Aria and I prepared to face the monstrous being that awaited us.

"Haha... this will be a bit difficult."

The creature before us stood at least fifteen meters tall, its crimson skin pulsating with an unholy energy.

Horns protruded from its skull, curling menacingly, and a long tail lashed back and forth, demolishing everything in its path.

It truly resembled a giant demon, a nightmarish creation from the depths of darkness itself.

Aria, our masterful Magic Swordsman, readied her gleaming weapon, crackling with the power of lightning and light magic.

I, on the other hand, lacked the ability to harness magic directly, so I could only rely on the items I had in my satchel.

'I have to use them sparingly...' My thoughts trailed.

Aria took the lead, as agreed, charging towards the towering demon with swift and calculated movements.

~SWOOOSH!~

Her lightning-infused blade slashed through the air, leaving trails of crackling energy in its wake.

"GRRRAAAUGGGHHH!!!"

She weaved between the demon's colossal limbs, narrowly avoiding its sweeping attacks while retaliating with her own lightning-charged strikes.

As the demon focused its attention on Aria, I seized the opportunity to support her from a distance.

I rummaged through my satchel, finding a small silver orb.

With a quick toss, the orb exploded in a blinding flash of light, momentarily disorienting the demon and giving Aria a chance to strike with even greater force.

~FWISSHH!!~ Her attacks connected, drawing blood from the monster.

"GRUAAAHHHH!!!" Its screams pierced the air, and based on that alone, I had to admit we were off to a great start.

But the demon was relentless. It roared in fury, its crimson eyes burning with a malicious intent.

It grew stronger, channeling dark energies that surged through its massive form.

Aria and I exchanged a brief glance, our determination unyielding. We couldn't back down now.

With a surge of adrenaline, Aria unleashed her most powerful spell. Brilliant beams of light shot forth from her blade, piercing through the darkness that enveloped the room.

The demon howled in agony as the light seared its flesh, causing it to stumble backward, momentarily weakened.

I seized the moment, delving into my satchel once again.

This time, I retrieved a small glass vial containing a swirling red liquid. With a swift motion, I hurled it towards the demon's feet, shattering on impact.

The liquid ignited into a raging inferno, engulfing the demon's lower body and hindering its movement.

"RAAARGGGHHHHH!!!"

I was honestly grateful that the beast we were fighting had no intelligence.

We were allowed to get away with our lackluster strategy as long as we timed out attacks perfectly and acted in sync.

Unfortunately, it seemed the Giant Demon's vitality was its most dangerous attribute.

'Its hardly scathed...'

We pressed on relentlessly, exploiting every opening, every weakness.

Aria's lightning-infused strikes grew more ferocious, each blow delivering a surge of electricity that ravaged the demon's monstrous form.

I provided support, alternating between hurling explosive orbs, using artificial protective barriers to defend us both, and enhancing Aria's sword with temporary enchantments to amplify her attacks.

"ROOOAAARRRRRRRRRRRRHHHHH!!!"

The demon fought back with renewed vigor, its attacks growing increasingly desperate and devastating.

But we refused to yield. We evaded its massive fists, its crushing tail, and its searing breath.

We danced through the chaos, our movements synchronized and fluid, as if we were two halves of a single entity.

~VWUUUUSSSHHHH!!!~

As the massive demon beast roared in fury, its crimson skin crackling with dark energy, a surge of adrenaline coursed through my veins.

'It's getting stronger again!'

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Chapter 1056: Joint Efforts [Pt 2]

The air crackled with tension as Aria and I braced ourselves for the intensified battle that lay ahead.

Aria, her eyes blazing with determination, moved with lightning-like speed, her magic-infused blade slicing through the air.

~BOOOOMMM!~

Bolts of lightning danced along the length of her weapon, illuminating the room with flickering bursts of electrifying energy.

She darted in and out of the demon's reach, her strikes precise and powerful.

The demon, now empowered by the dark forces it had harnessed, swung its colossal fists with even greater strength and speed.

~WHUM!~

The ground trembled beneath its weight as it launched itself at Aria, aiming to crush her under its monstrous might.

But Aria, with her agility and mastery of the sword, evaded the onslaught with acrobatic finesse, narrowly avoiding each bone-shattering blow.

Meanwhile, I scoured my satchel for any item that could aid us in this desperate battle.

I pulled out a gleaming silver amulet, swiftly pressing its center button.

Activating its function, a barrier of shimmering light surged around Aria, bolstering her defenses against the onslaught of the demon's attacks.

~BOOOOOOMMM!~

That hit would have been dangerous. Fortunately, I was able to activate the barrier around her in time

With the barrier providing temporary respite, Aria gathered her focus, calling upon her inner reserves of power.

She unleashed a torrential onslaught of lightning and light magic, sending crackling arcs of energy cascading toward the demon.

"GUAARGGGGGHHHHH!!!"

The bolts struck the beast with searing force, eliciting agonized roars that reverberated through the room.

But the demon was not so easily defeated. It summoned its own dark magic, conjuring a swirling vortex of shadows that threatened to envelop us both.

Aria's eyes widened with urgency as she leaped backward, narrowly avoiding being ensnared by the tendrils of darkness.

I, too, swiftly retreated, knowing that our lives depended on maintaining distance from the abyss of darkness.

Seeking to regain the upper hand, I retrieved a small vial containing a vibrant, glowing liquid.

The liquid pulsed with raw elemental energy, promising a temporary surge in power.

'It only affects the physical functions of a person, but that's still incredibly useful.'

If her physical aspects were boosted, she would be able to generate more energy to fight.

If she could pour out just enough power, then...!!!

"Aria!" I yelled, drawing her attention towards me instantly.

Without hesitation, I hurled the vial toward Aria, who deftly caught it mid-air.

With a swift motion, she uncorked the vial and consumed its contents, her form briefly shimmering with ethereal light.

'It worked!' I beamed from a distance.

Now empowered by the elixir, Aria launched herself back into the fray with renewed vigor.

Her strikes became swifter and more ferocious, each blow accompanied by a dazzling display of lightning and radiant light.

She maneuvered around the demon, exploiting its momentary vulnerabilities, striking with lightning-fast precision.

I continued to support Aria from a distance, utilizing the array of magical items at my disposal.

I pulled out a small cylindrical device, adorned with intricate wires and a volatile core within., and activated its function.

A burst of energy emanated from it, forming a protective shield around Aria, warding off the demon's desperate counterattacks.

"UWOOOAAHHHHH!!!" At this point, our opponent summoned its darkest powers, enveloping itself in a cloak of shadow that amplified its strength and resilience.

Its attacks grew more frenzied and devastating, threatening to overpower even Aria's lightning-infused onslaught.

"Haaaaaaa!!!" With a battle cry that echoed through the chamber, Aria unleashed her most potent spell yet, channeling all of her remaining energy into a single, concentrated burst of light and lightning.

~VWUUUUSSSHHHH!~

The blinding explosion engulfed the demon, searing through its shadowy defenses and scorching its flesh.

"GUUAAAARGHHHHHHH!!!"

It writhed in agony, its monstrous form convulsing with the intense pain inflicted upon it.

Sensing the opportunity, I, too, unleashed the full might of my arsenal, bombarding the demon with a barrage of explosive orbs.

~BOOOOOOMMMM!!!~

The demon fought back with its last vestiges of strength, its attacks growing more desperate and erratic.

But Aria and I had become a synchronized force, moving as one, each supporting the other flawlessly.

We anticipated the demon's now sluggish movements, evading its strikes with calculated precision and retaliating with devastating counterattacks.

Finally, as our combined assault reached its crescendo, the demon's resistance crumbled.

"GU-urrghhh..."

Its form convulsed one last time before collapsing to the ground, a mere husk of its former monstrous self.

"This should be enough..." I threw a tiny orb in it's direction, watching as the object clashed with the enemy's crimson skin.

And then—

~BOOOOOOMMMMM!!!~

—it exploded, completely swallowed in the destructive eruption.

The explosion only lasted for a moment, though. Soon enough, only the hissing sounds of smoke filled my ears, and that soon vanished as well.

The room fell silent, save for our ragged breaths and the fading echoes of battle.

Aria and I stood together, battered and weary, but triumphant.

Sweat mingled with the dirt and grime that covered our bodies, evidence of the intense struggle we had endured.

We shared a silent moment, acknowledging the victory we had achieved through sheer determination and unwavering teamwork.

"Good work." I smiled at her, receiving a similar sentiment from her facial reaction.

"You're better than I thought." She responded.

"Hehe. Thanks."

This would have been really tough if I had faced the monster on my own.

'Well, tough... not impossible.'

As the dust settled and the echoes of battle faded, we turned to our companions at the entrance.

They stared at us in awe, admiration gleaming in their eyes.

"L-Lewis, Aria... you did it!" Larry seemed especially moved by it all.

'Well, we actually pulled something epic off, didn't we?'

But I wasn't in a hurry to celebrate yet

We had succeeded, but the journey was far from over.

'Now, for the grand prize...'

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

Chapter 1057: Being In A Team

As the final echoes of the battle faded away, we stood amidst the aftermath, panting heavily, our bodies covered in sweat and dirt.

Well, that was the case for me and Aria. Larry and Drake seemed perfectly fine.

The sense of accomplishment and relief washed over us, yet we knew our journey through the labyrinth was far from over.

We still had to receive our reward.

It was in this moment of respite that something caught our attention—a brilliant light radiating from the center of the room.

We turned our gaze towards the source, our eyes widening with curiosity and anticipation.

The light shimmered and danced, growing brighter by the second. It seemed to coalesce, taking shape before our very eyes.

And there, floating in the air, was a card—an otherworldly card that seemed to exude a mystic aura.

The card hovered, seemingly beckoning to us, and I couldn't help but feel a surge of excitement.

My fingers twitched with anticipation as I cautiously stepped forward, reaching out to grasp the card.

Aria, ever vigilant, mirrored my caution as she extended her hand towards the floating artifact.

The moment her fingers made contact, a jolt of energy coursed through her, causing her to gasp in surprise.

I watched as Aria's eyes widened, a mix of awe and realization dawning upon her features.

Once her stunned state dissolved, she presented the prize for all of us to see.

The card she held was none other than [The Devil] Arcana—which had the power of Miasma in my original world.

'Does Miasma even exist in this world? Or maybe the abilities of the Arcanas are different in this world...'

Either way, I wasn't sure of the consequences of using the item, so I didn't want to jump to conclusions.

Still, a smile tugged at the corners of my lips as I muttered to myself, "This is a start."

The discovery of this Arcana confirmed the existence of the others. That brought relief to my heart.

It meant that we were on the right path, at the very least.

Turning to my teammates, I couldn't contain my pride and admiration for their unwavering courage and skill.

"Well done, everyone," I exclaimed, my voice filled with genuine appreciation. "We've collected our first Arcana. This is just the beginning."

With a sense of camaraderie, I extended the card to each of my companions in turn, allowing them to behold its ethereal beauty for themselves.

Aria and Drake marveled at the card's crimson colored radiance, a mix of wonder and determination evident in their eyes.

Seeing the result of the hard work they put into the venture made it all worth it.

The one who was most excited of all of us, however, was Larry.

With eyes shining with childlike awe, he gazed at the Arcana in his hands, his expression a mix of joy and disbelief.

He had spent his life studying and delving into the mysteries of Magic, and to hold such a rare artifact that represented the very peak was a dream come true for him.

"I-it's beautiful..." I think I saw tears in his eyes.

I nodded, positivity swirling through me.

'I've missed being in a team.'

Ford. Dom. Gawain. Jane. Raphael

I truly, genuinely missed them.

'Emilia too. And then, there's you... Lilith.'

Ever since that time, I hadn't seen or heard of her again.

'She's not dead, is she?'

My thoughts seemed like a bad joke upon more analysis. Did I really have the luxury to worry about an undying entity like her?

'Even though we traveled together for years...'

I removed my thoughts from the past, internally chastising myself with a smile.

'And I criticize Larry for not letting go of the past. It seems I'm also guilty of that in part. But still...'

I was at least allowed some measure of nostalgia, wasn't I?

At the very least, for my friends.

"Well, we should be leaving this place now." I said to the members of the team.

They nodded on agreement, their faces forming resolute expressions.

The journey had only just begun, but we were ready—ready to face the trials, to overcome the obstacles, and to emerge victorious, one Arcana at a time.

"Huh?"

Reluctantly, I held the precious [The Devil] Arcana in my hands, a sense of responsibility weighing heavily upon me.

My teammates insisted that I keep it safe within my satchel, their unwavering trust in me warming my heart.

Despite my protests, their confidence in my abilities and judgment bolstered my resolve.

'They're really going to trust someone they've just met that easily?'

Still, what could I say at this point? If they trusted me, I only had to live up to their expectations.

As I carefully secured the Arcana in its protective casing within my satchel, a mix of emotions swirled within me.

A warm tingle washed over me, and I was grateful for the unwavering trust my companions had placed in me.

Aria, Drake, and the esteemed Great Sage Larry—they were more than just teammates.

'I feel ashamed of myself for even thinking terrible of you at this point.'

After deciding on who would hold the Arcana, we ventured out of the central room of the Labyrinth and thanks to Drake and Larry, we found our way to the exit.

I truly didn't know how I would have found it so easily without them.

Leaving the Khaos Labyrinth behind, we stepped out into the outside world, and what met our eyes was what even I didn't expect.

It was a land shrouded in darkness.

"T-this is..." I could only whisper as I looked around me.

The barren landscape stretched endlessly, devoid of life and light. It felt as if a heavy fog of desolation clung to every inch of the surroundings, casting an eerie pallor over everything.

Compared to the vibrant realm I called home, this world seemed dull, lifeless, and filled with despair.

'Dark skies, thick clouds, dull colors, heavy air, barren surroundings...'

My allies didn't seem to be the slightest bit affected by what I was seeing.

Could it be that this was their version of 'normal'.

'I... can't even imagine.'

The contrast between the two realms hit me with an intensity I hadn't anticipated. My thoughts raced, trying to comprehend the suffering and stagnation that enveloped this desolate land.

And in that moment, the importance of our quest resonated within me.

'I can see why this world needs the Arcanas more than anything.'

If everything in this world was like this, then it needed saving.

And so, with a determined smile and a heart brimming with resolve, we embarked on our , ready to face the challenges that awaited us.

The world needed us, and we needed one another.

Thus, we couldn't falter. Not yet.

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

Chapter 1058: The Triumvirate

[Location: Unknown]

The atmosphere in a particular underground meeting chamber was as pristine as it was foreboding.

Soft candlelight flickered across the polished marble floors, casting long shadows that danced along the walls adorned with intricate tapestries.

A circular table stood at the center, where three figures, cloaked in darkness, sat with an air of authority.

Each of them was accompanied by two imposing escorts, their presence a stark reminder of the power they held.

On one end, there appeared a muscular man who looked like a giant. His bulging muscles and imposingly huge figure made the aura around him appear even more intimidating.

Behind him were similarly built men, though none could compare to him.

He had weirdly shaped ears—like an animal, and he had some furry skin on his arm, as well as a white furry tail behind him.

His eyes glowed with blue light, and the fangs for teeth he had were clear as he smiled broadly.

On another end was a short and stout man. He had flowing long beards, and an aged face. Despite that, his wide eyes and crooked grin made it evident that his intentions were anything but pure.

Behind him were two men, both as short as the important man was, though their beards were brown and not white like his was.

Finally, on the last end was a woman with pointy ears, clawless skin, and flowing silver hair.

Her eyes were lustrous green, and a thin linen veil covered her face for the most part.

She had a crooked smile underneath the veil anyway, so no one needed to guess her facial reaction.

And so, in this gathering of the Beast King, the Dwarven Chief, and the Elf Queen, all members of the Triumvirate was accounted for.

As the figures settled into their seats, a sense of anticipation hung heavy in the air. The meeting was about to begin—a gathering of minds steeped in secrecy and illicit dealings.

Their voices, laden with whispered words and veiled intentions, echoed through the chamber.

"It's been a while, my esteemed companions," The Dwarven Chief spoke, his voice low and commanding.

"Tonight, we convene to discuss the state of our respective kingdoms and the flourishing trades that bring us prosperity."

The Beast King chuckled darkly. "Ah, yes. The profits continue to blossom, as our illegal enterprises grow in strength and influence."

In the end, profit and influence was all that mattered to him.

He would sell his own people, or ruin the lives of others, just to make an extra income.

"Hahahahaha!"

Laughter filled the room, a chilling melody that echoed off the walls.

These three reveled in their exploits, their disregard for laws and morals evident in their gleeful exchange of stories and schemes.

However, the conversation took a darker turn as they delved into more sinister matters.

The focus shifted to the Eastern Empire, the nation that was teetering on the brink of unrest.

"It's getting serious, especially profit-wise. Let's make a decision about it now." The Beast King murmured.

He wasn't particularly good at coming up with plans and strategies, considering his straightforward personality, but he knew his allies were a different breed—literally.

They contemplated the best course of action to solidify their control over the empire, their eyes glinting with a ruthless ambition.

"We must ensure that our grip on the Eastern Empire remains firm," the Elf Queen suggested. "A puppet Emperor will serve us well—a mere figurehead to quell the unrest while we operate in the shadows, manipulating the strings of power."

"Oh? That's perfect! Got anyone in mind?" The Dwarven Chief grinned widely.

"Let's just look for the most popular person in the Kingdom right now. We bring him over to our side either using money, drugs, blackmail, or if it comes down to it, Mind Control Magic." The Elf Queen continued with an arrogant smirk.

"Women are also strong temptations for men, after all."

Everyone knew how the Elf Queen seduced the Emperor of the Eastern Empire with her charms and got most of the power she now possessed from the man's weakness.

The daughter born from that affair was a testament of the Queen's ability to go to any length to get what she wanted.

"Pfft. As long as he can make the sheep get in line, I don't care the method we use." The Beast King added.

Their laughter reverberated through the chamber once more, a chilling symphony that echoed their malevolence.

With a bit more detail, they concluded their decision on what they would do about the current unrest in their previously rivaling nation.

Once it was settled, they ventured on to other topics.

However, as the discussion progressed, the three now turned their attention to perhaps the most pressing matter of all—Aria and Drake, the notorious outlaws.

Whispers filled the air as they acknowledged the threat the duo posed to their clandestine operations.

"They just went off the grid. I didn't expect them to be so witty." The Dwarven Chief clicked his tongue.

"I know, right? I was looking forward to fighting and defeating the Grand Magic Swordsman myself." The Beast King grinned while licking his lips.

"There's a possibility that they're being assisted by a third party." The Elf Queen sighed.

Considering how they had managed to evade capture for two months, it was indeed very strange to think only those two would be capable of such a feat.

"If it's you saying that, then you're probably correct." The Beast King nodded with a smile like the simpleton he was.

"We must smoke out the ones aiding those pests." The Dwarven Chief hissed, a glint of menace in their eyes.

"They threaten our profits and our very existence."

Not only was it uncertain just how much they knew about their group, but also the plans they had for the world.

So far, only the Wilds hadn't fallen into their grasp yet. Everything had been under the control of the Triumvirate for centuries now.

Even the Eastern Kingdom, which was in something akin to a partnership with them was now going to be completely subjected by their control and swallowed up by their influence.

They had control over the known world.

"Don't get too worked up about them." The Elf Queen interjected, a sinister smile playing upon their lips.

"I have already sent my elite squad to track them down. Once they locate Aria and her allies... they will be eliminated."

The Elite Squad of the Elf Queen consisted of the most powerful Elves—direct descendant of royalty.

In essence, the Elf Queen's children, nephew, or nieces.

They were the most powerful Elves, and while Aria was known as a prodigy... could she really match the full brunt of the Elf Queen's forces?

Curiosity and surprise rippled through the room, and the Beast King dared to question the Elf Queen's motives.

"Eliminated, huh? Are you sure about that?" He asked

"I was thinking the same thing. Aren't you Aria's mother? Will you really kill her?"

Perhaps it was foolish to ask such a question from someone like the Elf Queen, but curiosity made them do so anyway.

The Elf Queen's ethereal beauty seemed to magnify, her pointed ears and flowing hair accentuated.

Yet, her lips curled into a malevolent smile, betraying her pristine appearance true intentions.

"I have many daughters," She replied casually, her voice dripping with calculated malice.

"I have no use for a good-for-nothing child who can't fulfill her duties and only causes me trouble."

The chilling assurance in her voice sent shivers down her companions' spines.

"Is that so? Well, your resolve is greatly appreciated." The Dwarven King laughed awkwardly.

He, for one, would never coldheartedly sacrifice his seeds.

Everything he was doing was for his descendants to enjoy the fruits of his illegitimate labor.

Looking at the Beast King, it was certain that he too cherished his kids—those who were strong at least.

Unlike them, however, the Elf Queen was brutal to the core.

"There's no need for compassion in our line of business." The Elf Queen must have noticed their sense of unease, but she didn't seem to care in the slightest.

This was a gathering of dark forces, a Triumvirate bound by their shared pursuit of power and control.

As rulers of the underworld, and their respective nations, they were at the apex of power.

"No one who dares to stand in our way should be spared."

The Elf Queen's words hung heavy in the air, a whispered promise of doom for those who opposed them.

"Damn straight." The Beast King joined.

"Correct you all are." The Dwarven Chief added in his own chuckles.

As the meeting concluded, the chamber seemed to absorb their malevolence, leaving only an eerie silence in its wake.

The Triumvirate dispersed, their intentions set in motion, ready to eliminate any obstacle that dared to challenge their dominion.

... Completely unbeknownst to the prey.

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

Chapter 1059: The Despero Labyrinth

As we stood at the entrance of the Despero Labyrinth, a sense of anticipation mingled with trepidation filled the air.

Larry, the Great Sage, stepped forward, his eyes filled with a mix of caution and excitement.

"A-ahem, may I have your attention please?" He cleared his throat as he addressed all of us.

He began to explain the lore surrounding this perilous place, detailing its connection to fear and despair.

He warned us of the dangers that awaited within, but I found myself consumed by a sense of determination, pushing aside any concerns for my own safety.

I listened attentively as Larry painted a vivid picture of the labyrinth's perils.

The thought of facing the embodiment of fear and despair did give me pause, but at this point, I couldn't let the dangers deter me.

Time was of the essence, and we had to press on, regardless of the risks.

Larry's words lingered in my mind as I remembered how it had taken us nearly a week to reach this Labyrinth, the closest one to us.

The sheer magnitude of our journey hit me, and a tinge of frustration crept in.

How long would it take to gather all the Arcanas, given the vast distances we had to cross?

'If only we would find an Arcana that could make our travel easier in this Labyrinth...' My mind trailed.

It would be nice to have something that could address the immense distances we had to cover.

However, a bitter realization washed over me.

Even if we were to find such an Arcana, it would take considerable time for my companions to understand and harness its power.

'It takes time to use an Arcana, especially without help.'

Wishing for a solution in the form of an Arcana seemed futile. I had to accept the reality and bear the burden of our journey, no matter how arduous it may be.

As these thoughts swirled within me, guilt tugged at my heart. Karlia, the woman I loved, suffered immensely with every second we wasted.

The weight of her pain weighed heavily upon me, and it fueled my determination to conquer this labyrinth as swiftly as possible.

With a renewed resolve, I stepped forward fearlessly, my companions beside me. Aria, Drake, and Larry—all of them shared my fiery determination, their eyes burning with the same unyielding spirit.

We were a team, bound by a common goal, and their unwavering commitment comforted me in the face of the daunting challenges that lay ahead.

'The upside of the long time we spent getting here is that I got to know them more.'

... And they also got to know me a little more.

Together, we ventured into the depths of the Despero Labyrinth, its ominous corridors stretching out before us like a labyrinthine maze of fear and despair.

We moved forward, one step at a time, prepared to face whatever trials and horrors awaited us.

We could already hear echoes and cackling sounds from within the darkness, but I could see the stern resolute expressions of everyone.

We weren't letting up now.

As we delved deeper, the echoes of our footsteps mingled with the distant howls of unknown creatures.

The air grew thick with anticipation, but I embraced it. I would do anything it took to ensure the mission was accomplished, and so would they.

'Alright, everyone. Let's do this!'

[A Few Moments Later]

"ARRRRRGHHHHH!!!"

As we raced through the labyrinth's twisting corridors, fear gripping everyone's hearts, a chorus of screams and shouts filled the air.

Drake's voice pierced through the chaos, his exclamation a mix of surprise and frustration.

"This... This isn't what I signed up for!" he shouted, his words laced with disbelief.

Aria's terrified scream echoed alongside his words. "Ghosts! I'm scared of ghosts!" she cried out, her voice trembling with genuine fear.

Larry, too, couldn't hide his distress as he added his own panicked yell. "Me too!"

Amidst their cries, I remained silent, my mind focused on the task at hand.

I rummaged through my satchel, my fingers seeking out a particular item while my eyes darted around, analyzing our surroundings.

The apparitions and ghost-like creatures that pursued us seemed ethereal, otherworldly, but there was something off about them.

My gaze shifted to my goggles, their lenses reflecting the dim light of the labyrinth. I activated the device, hoping for any hint of energy emanating from the phantoms that pursued us.

Yet, to my surprise, my goggles detected no readings, no traces of supernatural energy.

A realization dawned upon me—they were not real apparitions.

The labyrinth had conjured these phantoms as illusions, designed to strike fear into our hearts.

The lack of markers on the map confirmed my suspicions—they were mere figments of the labyrinth's twisted machinations.

I decided not to voice my findings to my friends. They were already running in the right direction, guided by their instinct to escape the haunting illusions.

There was no need to burden them with unnecessary details.

Besides, there was a mischievous part of me that found amusement in witnessing their fear, even as we navigated this perilous labyrinth.

'Pffft. They're usually so composed.'

Through the labyrinth's twists and turns, we ran, the phantoms chasing at our heels. I maintained my silence, holding my secret close, relishing the thrill of our shared experience.

'It looks like I'm the only one having fun.'

[Moments Later]

We finally arrived at the center of the Labyrinth, and as soon as we did, the phantoms vanished.

Everyone commended me on not screaming while recoiling as they remembered their pathetic displays of fear.

I swore to myself at that moment never to let them know the truth of the Labyrinth.

'I can only imagine how embarrassed they would be then.'

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

Chapter 1060: Conquering Fear

As we arrived at the epicenter, the heart of the Despero Labyrinth, a sense of foreboding settled over us.

The eerie silence of the labyrinth was punctuated by our cautious footsteps, echoing through the winding corridors.

And then, as if summoned from the depths of nightmares, a colossal creature emerged before us.

"ROOOOOAAAAARRRR!!!"

The horrifying screech of the creature caused the room to tremble, the beast's terrifying visage sending shivers down our spines.

Gasps of fear escaped my companions' lips as they stared wide-eyed at the monstrous being.

It seemed like a phantom, but having the form of a magnificent dragon.

It was at least thirty meters tall, with a terrifying aura that threatened anything that dared to move close to it.

"Another one?"

"T-this beast... is strong!"

"We can't win!"

Their worries were palpable, the weight of doubt and uncertainty settling upon their shoulders.

The sheer strength and intimidating presence of the creature left them questioning their ability to face such a formidable opponent.

"Hmmm... I see."

Unlike the others, I remained steadfast, my voice cutting through the fear that gripped our group.

"Don't be afraid, guys." I assured them, my tone unwavering.

"This monster is not real."

It was just another illusion conjured up by the Labyrinth.

'I'm surprised Aria can't detect the hollow energy wavelength.'

Perhaps there was some sort of effect at play here. If Aria was seeing and feeling the power of this illusion, that meant her senses were being affected.

'But since I'm using the goggles to see through the illusion, my actual senses are inconsequential.'

That meant I was the only one here with the Ability to discern what was going on.

My words didn't seem to offer any comfort to my friends. Their gazes were still filled with a mixture of disbelief and anxiety.

"The hell are you talking about, Lewis?"

I groaned as I heard Larry's shaky tone.

"It has a black marker, right? I can tell that it's unfathomably strong!"

It didn't even have any color on the marker. It wasn't real at all.

"We should retreat." Drake whimpered.

'Haa... this is what I get for now explaining things thoroughly to them.'

My past decisions were coming to bite me now.

Unfortunately, I didn't have the time to begin educating them on what was going on.

And so, while everyone shrank back in fear, I forged ahead.

My steps were resolute, ignoring the roars and the creature's menacing approach.

It was crucial that we pressed forward, undeterred by the illusion's attempts to shake our resolve.

Drawing closer to the monster's massive form, I steeled myself for what lay ahead.

"GROOOOAAARRRRH!!!" As the creature lunged towards me, its wicked claws poised to strike, I did not flinch.

I continued moving forward, my focus unwavering, refusing to let the illusion break my stride.

'It's very scary. All my senses are telling me I'll die if I don't run.'

But then, I knew it wasn't real.

None of it was.

'I just have to keep moving forward!'

And then, as if on cue, the monster's imposing form began to flicker, its roars turning into a deafening buzz.

~ZZZTTTZZZZ!~

It was fading away, dissolving into thin air like a mere mirage.

"Bingo."

As soon as the dissolution occurred, the heavy feeling of intimidation began to lift as well.

In the place where the illusion once stood, a spark of light emerged, coalescing into a card—an Arcana.

'Finally!' My grin widened as I watched the glowing card float before me.

"Lewiiiiissss!!!"

"You were right!"

"How did you figure it out?!"

Awe and shock painted the faces of my teammates as they drew near, their eyes wide with amazement.

'Guess they can move now.' I mused.

I could see the admiration and gratitude in their expressions. It could have been my imagination, but I saw Larry wipe away some droplets of tears.

As they gathered around me, I explained that it was through the use of my goggles that I was able to see through the labyrinth's deceit.

"T-then... does that mean that all along, we were just seeing—"

"Let's focus on the task at hand." I quickly interrupted Larry's words, pulling the focus to our grand prize.

'They can't find out that I knew everything was an illusion all along!'

Fortunately my diversion worked.

We all stared at the newly acquired Arcana—the card of [Temperance].

A sense of elation washed over us, smiles forming on our faces, as we reveled in our triumph.

'[Temperance], huh? Makes sense.'

The Arcana induced various kinds of emotions in a target, so it made sense that the Labyrinth was able to trick everyone by taking advantage of their emotions.

It was a good thing I had my goggles

The team once again unanimously decided that I should keep the Arcana.

I didn't mind at all, though it made me feel reassured that they trusted me that much.

Honestly, the more I thought about my earliest apprehension of these three, the more I laughed at myself.

I kept the [Temperance] Arcana in my satchel, and once the task was complete there wasn't any further reason for remaining in the Despero Labyrinth.

It was a shame that none of these three could use any of the two Arcanas we had found, but there was nothing we could do about that.

There was simply no time.

'I have to wonder how they'll use it to fulfil their wishes, though. It could take decades to fully master an Arcana.'

Hopefully things turned out well.

After walking through the labyrinthine paths of the Despero Labyrinth, we finally saw the opening.

'Finally! We can start looking for the next one.'

However, the moment we stepped out of the Labyrinth, I suddenly had a dark feeling of foreboding wash over me.

My goggles were detecting a wave of imposing energy, and I quickly realized something was off.

'Huh? This is—!'

"Guys... something is wrong." Aria beat me to it as her brows furrowed and she frowned while looking around us.

It seemed she already realized the problem. I also looked around, my heart steadily racing.

'We're surrounded!'

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