

SPELLCRAFT 1131

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

Chapter 1131: Empty World

[The Present]

The world was empty.

I could not see or sense a single living being for thousands and thousands of miles, and even as I spread my senses towards the very edges of the world, I found nothing.

... I found no one.

"What in the world happened here?" I mumbled, my wide eyes twitching as I stared at my comrades.

They were speechless and surprised all the same—meeting the world we called ours, but with no one we recognized.

"Maybe... this isn't our world?" Edward tried to blurt out, but it seemed he was trying hard to convince himself more than the rest of us.

"The coordinates weren't messed up. They haven't failed before." Kuzon sharply responded, his face slowly melting into anger. "Plus, there's no way you can't sense it, right? The resonating feeling you have here..."

Kuzon was right.

There was no doubt that this was indeed our planet. Other than the details around us, like the reception of the wedding—the tons of tables, chairs, and all manner of party confetti scattered around, there were still leftover signs of our presence here.

It had to be our world!

"What do you propose could have happened, then?" Aloe was the next to speak, and her tone was surprisingly calm.

In fact, she was the calmest of all five of us.

"I'm not sure. We might be getting ahead of ourselves a little, so I propose we calm down and rationally deal with this." I responded.

It certainly wasn't easy for me to get my emotions in check, but I did so anyway. Right now, Aloe's attitude was the standard, and panicking would solve nothing.

"We should calmly assess the situation in order to develop an accurate hypothesis about what could have happened—"

"C-Calmly...?" A chilling voice suddenly echoed behind, sending a somewhat prickly sensation especially to the base of my neck.

The voice was familiar, yet for some reason, it felt different.

In an instant, the Aether surrounding Ciara vanished, causing her to descend to the ground.

I swiftly appeared before her, realizing she could simply lash out at the rest of us if I didn't take extra precautions in this rage moment she was experiencing.

"Ciara... calm yourself."

Using [Temperance] to stabilize her emotions, I also added [The Fool] and [Judgment] to offer a soothing memory and warp her mind so that she would have no reason to go crazy on us.

"Jerry is fine. He's just lost. We have to find him... and we need to be calm about it." Even with all three Arcanas in effect, I maintained a soothing tone.

It felt like I was partially talking to myself. The others were also watching, so I was talking to them as well.

"We need each other. We need you to find them. So please... come back to us."

That seemed to be the last straw to end the meltdown.

Ciara's purple eyes slowly dimmed, returning to their oceanic blue color. The energy crackling around her, and the energy veins that surrounded her slowly dissipated.

In no time, she was back to normal.

"A-ah... I'm sorry. I'm so so sorry." Ciara finally broke down, her eyes slowly getting filled with tears.

"It's fine, Ciara. We miss them too..." I smiled, drawing closer to her to give her a warm hug.

At this point, we all needed some kind of warmth to go through this.

"Um... no, thanks. Thank you for your help, but..."

Ciara took a couple of steps back, and her evasive measure couldn't be clearer to me.

"Haha! Yeah, sure... of course."

It was my fault for trying to be nice.

"Well, it is good to have you back."

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Chapter 1132: All In Due Time [Pt 1]

"Alright, since we've all calmed down... let's talk."

We all sat in a circle, and all of us had varying expressions on our faces. This was a matter of utmost seriousness, and as such it needed to be handled with the utmost care.

"H-hey, I already apologized. You don't need to throw more shade at me." Ciara mumbled, most likely feeling guilty because of my opening address.

"It was just a general announcement. No need to take it personally." I sighed.

I hadn't even meant it to be personal, but I could understand why she would think that. Still, with everything going on, it was better to focus on the most important subject.

What happened to everyone here... and how could we get them back?

"Ah, my bad. Please proceed."

With Ciara's kind 'go ahead', I resumed the address, taking a moment to observe the countenance of everyone present.

The one with the most troubled expression, who also seemed to be deep in thought, was Kuzon.

"Kuzon, what is Leo saying about this?" I asked.

Having a Constellation—no, two—on our side had its perks. If we were to begin investigating, the best way to start would be to ask them.

Kuzon stared at me for a few seconds before sighing and shaking his head.

"Nothing. I haven't been able to contact him since arriving here."

"What?" My eyes twitched the moment I heard that.

"It's the same for me. Aries hasn't been responding to me at all."

What was happening here? Not only was everyone missing, but now the Constellations weren't even present to answer our queries.

It could only mean one thing at this point.

"We're on our own, it seems."

There was no point moping around or beating around the bush. As curious as I was about the absence of the Constellations, I couldn't let it distract us from the current problem.

"Does anyone have any hypothesis they'd like to share with everyone else here?" I asked, staring at everyone present.

The one to raise his hand first was Edward, and he had a grim expression that matched the present situation perfectly.

"What if this is because of Legris? I mean, he sent us to various places, right? What of the rest? Maybe he did something to everyone else?"

That was perhaps the worst-case scenario, and I too had thought of something like that happening. But... there was a reason I dismissed it.

"That wouldn't make any sense. Neron would have been able to foresee something like that occurring. So, if it was part of his plan to have us vanish, he would have done something about everyone else."

The moment I responded, however, another problem popped into my mind.

"Why didn't Neron say anything if this was a part of his plan?" This time, Kuzon was the one who spoke.

I knew he would be able to instantly notice the problem with my explanation model.

"That is the mystery, isn't it? But considering how he didn't inform us of anything the first time, isn't it possible that it could be the same now?"

Kuzon's doubtful stare greeted me instantly. I could see some of his distrust for Neron rising, and with the mere fact that he couldn't see anyone still left in our world, those feelings were compounded.

At this point, even I couldn't defend Neron.

"Jared, if this is all going according to Neron's plans, I doubt our friends are dead. The problem is that he would have said something about this when we last saw him. Since he didn't say anything, we should probably consider the possibility that—"

"That what, Kuzon? Our friends and families are gone?" Aloe Vida was the one who spoke up this time, and she had a look of disbelief at the meaning Kuzon was trying to convey.

"Neron isn't absolute, Vida. He is capable of making mistakes. It's possible there was a force out of his control that interfered. We can't be so close-minded as to simply chalk everything down to his plans."

Kuzon had good points, as usual. However, I could tell that he too would prefer all of this to be one of Neron's unspoken schemes.

At least, that way we would be guaranteed of the safety of our loved ones.

While everything played out, Ciara was silent, and so was Edward for most of it. For the former, I didn't think she had anything she wanted to say, and as for the latter, he was probably trying not to imagine the worst.

As I juggled all of these thoughts and possibilities in mind, Kuzon's voice interrupted me.

"What do you think, Jared?"

The gaze of everyone was on me again, and I sighed in contemplation. After a while of thinking, an idea suddenly popped into my mind.

'Why didn't I think of this before?' My eyes widened slightly.

A smile formed on my face as I stared at my audience. If I used this method, then even if we couldn't completely solve the problem, we could understand the root cause.

"I'm going to see into the past using [The Hermit]."

I could hear surprised gasps from everyone, and that was to be expected. The moment they heard of it, they must have realized how incredibly viable that option was and wondered why they weren't the ones who thought of it.

"Can you do that?" Kuzon asked, narrowing his eyes. I could see flickers of doubt and caution embedded in his eyes.

"Not sure. I've never tried it before, but I should know how it works in theory." My response was curt, and I began to imagine the possibilities.

Considering the fact that the wedding site was almost the same as we left it, with a small difference marking at least some passage of time, I estimated a couple of months—at most—had passed since our sudden departure.

'If it's only that long, I should be able to manage.'

All the unused Aether in the environment was mine to command. Plus, I had more than enough stockpiled energy within me.

The main problem was navigating through a concept as complex as time. However, this wouldn't be my first time using [The Hermit], so I had gotten used to its mechanics.

'What did Neron call that Magic again...?' With focused eyes and a determined face, I braced myself for my travel into the past.

Ah, that's right! I remembered now.

"[Time Immersion]."

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Chapter 1133: All In Due Time [Pt 2]

The rules involving temporal manipulation are constantly in a flux.

When it involved future events, even I wasn't skilled enough to navigate through that mess. Time wasn't my specialty, and I hadn't taken due course to learning it.

However, the past was different!

The events of the past were fixed, thus becoming a fixed moment to explore and investigate. All I had to do was calculate the right trajectory and properly navigate through the tides of time to reach my desired destination.

However, that wasn't without its fair share of problems.

'Even Neron never properly traveled to the past before—at least, not that I am aware of.'

The most he did was infuse his consciousness into the Time Stream in order to observe the events occurring.

Hence, Time Immersion.

It was theoretically impossible for a future event to overlap with the past, because that would make it a non-fixed moment, thus unraveling any other fixed point that occurred after that.

In essence, the calculations required for physically manifesting in the past and altering an immutable part of existence... were absurdly high.

As a result, I could only use Time for investigative processes. Nothing more... nothing less.

'Well, that much is enough. If I can see what happened, I should be able to develop a working model to counter the problem.'

Time Immersion involved streaming my soul through the timestream. For Neron, he used his Original Magic in addition to [The Hermit] to achieve a cohesion effect between his soul and the world, allowing him to travel.

I needed something similar for my own process.

'Spellcraft.'

With it, I could manipulate the essence of the world and link my Soul with it. Using [The Hermit] as a propeller, I could achieve the same effect as Neron.

... Or at least something similar.

"Well, that's my theory. I just came up with it on the spot, but considering it isn't breaking any established rules, and I have addressed all the problems that could potentially stop the Spell, I think I'm good to go." Mumbling these words to myself, I rubbed my chin and smiled.

My allies simply stared at me throughout, and once I was one contemplating, they came into focus once more.

"Okay. I'm ready now."

"Need any assistance?" Kuzon and Edward asked almost at the same time, however I shook my head.

Personally, I was curious.

'Can I do this on my own?'

"There's only one way to find out." With a wide grin, I finally burst open my vast supply of Aether.

~VWUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUSSSSSSHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!~

The power that flowed from within me swirled around, causing a wave of power that caused everyone to be pushed back by the pressure alone.

"You had all better stand back." I advised, hoping my words weren't lost in the torrents of power that were wrapped around me.

Fortunately, they weren't.

My friends managed to create enough space between me and them, choosing to watch me work my Magic from a distance.

'Alright, Jared...' I could feel my heart racing as I tried to do something I had never attempted to do before.

For a moment, I forgot about the worries I had, or about the lives that were absent in the world.

Nothing else mattered to me at the current moment.

I just wanted to do Magic.

[The Hermit] generated the formula necessary for the travel in the form of Spells, and I began to orchestrate a navigational guide for the Immersion.

Using Spellcraft, I connected the overflowing Aether within me to all the energies around me, condensing and compressing them to grant me enough force for breaking the barrier that separated past, present, and future.

The world suddenly became still, and everything froze in time, but this was only the beginning of the process.

My actual body was also frozen, but the 'Me' that perceived reality as still was the Soul.

My spectral entity was now one with the world's energy, and with [The Hermit], temporal manipulation was made possible.

It seemed my model was correct, after all.

All the requirements had been met.

~VWUUUUUSSSHHHH!~

The feeling was surreal. As I traveled through the lens of time, feeling it like a wave of the ocean wash over me, I could feel an embrace of warmth and chill at the same time.

It also felt like electrifying currents pulsed around me, and with each second of time I traveled beyond, the sensation was akin to breaking the surface tension of a semi-liquid mass.

The faster I went, the more intense these sensations felt.

So this was Neron's world: the realm he constantly experienced as a consequence of his power.

Seeing realities zoom in and out of view, discarded and regressed as I progressed...

It was amazing!

'Let's slowly unravel what happened here...' Breaking past my thrill, it was time to get serious.

I was resolved not to miss any single detail from the past.

Anything could serve as a clue.

'... One day at a time.'

[Moments In Time Later]

'Nothing thus far...'

I didn't know if I was meant to be relieved or worried about our friends and family.

My Soul was drawing closer and closer to the point where I, Kuzon, and the others were sent to the scattered branches, and throughout my search, I was yet to see a single living entity in this world.

That was problematic.

I was beginning to suspect that the cause of our disappearance could also have something to do with everyone vanishing.

That was the only viable theory at the moment, but what exactly did that mean?

It meant that either Neron planned all of this from the start... or something wrong happened with his plans.

I had to know more, so I sped deeper into the time stream—perhaps a bit too much.

Until finally, I arrived at the moment that supposedly changed everything.

The wedding where we vanished.

The exact moment when Legris Damien floated overhead everyone, with his dark brown hair swaying with the wind as his malevolent smile spread over his handsome face.

He looked just as I remembered him.

Just as it happened in the past, he was accompanied by Ciel, and his sudden appearance caught the attention of all our past selves.

This was the point where everything went amiss. If I could at least change a few things that happened, I would, but...

'... All I can do now is watch!'

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Chapter 1134: The Immersive Past

"Why are you all looking at me this way? I came to give my congratulations to you, Neron. Ah, and to the lovely Serah as well..."

I watched the events of the wedding play out, hidden from sight for reason of caution.

Since I was merely a spectating spectre, I couldn't interfere with any events of the past. However, that also meant no one could interfere with me. An invisible veil that held reality separated me from the past.

However, Neron once told me about how the Martial Blade God had managed to sense him in the past. I didn't know the conditions necessary to achieve such a depth of perception, so I decided it was much safer to watch from a hidden location while maintaining considerable distance from the event occurring.

"You both look so happy. What a lovely wedding. Ahh... I'm so jealous."

As I remembered, Legris was talking casually to everyone despite abruptly appearing. It caused the past version of myself, as well as everyone else experiencing the sight to be caught between suspicion and downright violence.

There was nothing anyone wanted more than to erase Legris and his ally right there and then. However, what could we do?

Especially when Neron was standing still.

"What do you want, Legris?" Neron asked with a stern tone, a serious glint appearing in his eyes.

It was at this point that Legris gave the most fascinating response.

"Hmm? Come on, Neron. Stop the act already. You must have known this whole thing wasn't over. Haven't you been expecting me?"

Hearing that now made me realize that Legris had to be aware of just how far ahead Neron had planned. It was mind-boggling, but also somewhat negative.

'If Legris knows Neron's plans, isn't it possible he'll try to change it?'

At this point, I was slowly beginning to think Neron didn't have everything under control as I had earlier posited.

If he did, then why would things have ended up this way?

Suddenly, I noticed Neron's eyes flicker, and even if it was only for a moment, his gaze traveled in my direction.

In just a moment within a second... I felt like we made eye contact.

'What?!'

Had he seen me? Did he notice I was present?

More questions swirled in mind as I watched him continue his conversation with Legris. He and everyone else transformed right there and then, thus causing the entire area to be awash with pure energy.

I could only stare and watch as a battle brewed between both ends.

And then, right at the climax of the battle, when our side was supposed to vanquish Legris and Neron...

"[The World: Displacement]."

... Legris used his trump card.

A brilliant radiation swelled from his position, and it engulfed the entire hall, swallowing all of the space within it.

However, it was also during this process that something spectacular occurred—something I would have missed if I couldn't navigate my way through time.

Everything in the world—space, time, and reality itself—came to a pause.

I would not have been able to witness any of it had I not been outside the main timeline as an observer. My eyes widened in marvel as both Legris and Ciel now stood still in the air, and everyone else remained frozen like statues.

Everything was still. Everyone was unmoving.

... All but one.

"Now then..." Right before my eyes, I watched Neron walk from his position, leaving the hall for a moment.

'What is he doi—' Before I could conclude my thoughts, I felt his gaze on me once more, and noticed how his smile deepened.

Within the blink of an eye—no, far faster than that—the very same Neron manifested right in front of me, almost as if he teleported.

'Ahh...'

I was unable to speak due to the amount of surprise I was experiencing. Or rather, this speechlessness was caused both by the sheer amount of energy that filled the area, as well as the overwhelming presence of the man who now stood before me.

"You shouldn't be here, Jared."

He was speaking to me directly! That meant he could clearly see me despite the discrepancy in our interactive layers.

"Neron... what the hell is going on?" I didn't mean that in the way it sounded.

I could already deduce that Neron was going to do something about the situation Legris was about to initiate. He probably wanted to protect everyone here, which was why he stopped time to achieve that.

However, considering the fact that everyone vanished, it could only mean one of two things.

Either Neron succeeded by taking them to another place not known to me... or Legris succeeded. Either way, I could only wait and see for myself.

"I see you've learned [Time Immersion]. But, anyone with enough connection to Aether will be able to sense your presence. It's dangerous, even if you hide yourself so expertly well." Neron chastized me, and it made me laugh a little sheepishly.

I left my position and stood upright, face to face with the man who had many of the answers I required for my mission.

"I'm here because the future—"

"There's no need to say anything. I can guess it already. It's about everyone's disappearance, correct?"

I nodded instantly.

'So he really did plan for that!' My eyes beamed, readying myself for the answer I would receive.

However, I could never have predicted what Neron would say to me next.

"I can't tell you about that. You'll have to figure it out yourself."

What the hell was he talking about? He could just say something and get this over with! He was talking to me, right? So there was no need to be so secretive about this!

"I have to go now. I'm running out of time..."

"Time? You? Just give me an answer, Neron. A clue maybe! The Constellations aren't even responding at this point!"

"Constellations? Ah... so he's started. You better hurry, Jared. The situation is more dire than you can imagine." Neron suddenly turned his back on me, causing me to grit my teeth in frustration.

I didn't come here just to listen to vague words from him. I wanted to know what happened, even if I had to replay all of these events from scratch.

"I used [Timeless World] to take myself outside time. That's why we're able to have this conversation. If not, the past and the future won't be able to interact." Neron's words echoed in my ears as I drew nearer to him, stubbornly demanding more information from him.

He could just tell me something useful! Anything at all would be helpful.

"When you return, I'd advise you to be more thorough with your search than recklessly messing around with time."

Look at the person talking. Wasn't his whole deal about messing with the timeline due to him messing it up the first time?

I was slowly beginning to get upset at Neron's lackadaisical tone, and his flippant way of handling the case of our missing loved ones.

However, in response to my deep frown and glare, Neron simply leaked out a tired smile.

"If you see Serah, tell her I'm just going to be a little late. And... I love her."

I gritted my teeth and hardened my fist as I tried to reach out to Neron, who was already walking away.

"Tell her yourself!" I wanted to say, but before I could utter any word... I felt a repelling force that pushed me away.

"Go back, Jared. It's up to you to finish what I started." Neron's voice danced in my ears as I felt the overwhelming force launch me further away from Neron.

No... from the timeline.

"After all, with Magic..." His tone sounded instant, but I could sense genuine intent within them.

Neron meant every single word.

"... You can do anything."

And with those final words ingrained in my soul, I returned to the present.

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Chapter 1135: Plans For The Present

"H-haaa!"

I exhaled deeply as I opened my eyes to the world, feeling sensations I had lost slowly return to me.

The soft touch of the wind on my skin, the scent that the air carried, and every sensation the body could offer that my soul could not accurately receive... I felt them all at once.

"Haa... haaa..."

My golden eyes took in the world around me, and I nearly collapsed due to the influx of so much information at once. Any other person would have probably gone into shock, but for me it was only a few seconds of disorientation.

"Hey, Jared!"

"You look pale, what's wrong?"

"Did it work?"

"Jared, are you okay?"

I heard the voices of my friends overlapping as they converged close to me, surrounding me with their warmth.

It seemed I was back in the present, and the familiar faces of my allies soon registered in my ahead, as well as the details of what happened prior to this point.

"It worked... and I'm fine." Shaking off the last remaining vestiges of my [Time Immersion] side effects, I rose from my knees and sighed.

'It took a lot more Aether than I calculated. Is it because of my interaction with Neron? Damn... this amount of energy is no joke.'

I was once again reminded why Neron had so much energy stockpiled within himself.

My eyes felt tired for some reason, and my mind was processing a lot of information at this point. It took a while to become composed enough to tell the eager audience what I had seen.

However, once I was ready... I told them everything.

"I don't know what happened. Neron refused to tell me."

To be honest, now that I thought of it, I didn't really have any valuable information for the group.

That didn't mean my trip was useless, though.

"Neron seemed to be unable to tell me what happened. Either due to some external interference I was unaware of, or a reason that should work to our advantage sooner or later." I iterated, hoping to quell some of the rage that Kuzon was already displaying.

"The crux of the issue is that we have to investigate properly and obtain clues ourselves. Neron told me how urgent our predicament is, so I'm sure he would have told me the truth if he could."

I explained to them how Neron told me we had to be more thorough in our investigation. He also seemed worried about something, and there was a sense of urgency I couldn't quite explain.

It made the situation seem more pertinent than I had given it account for.

"So, what now? Our only clue was Neron, and now that he has refused to cooperate, what next?" Kuzon sighed, nearly slapping his palm on his head.

I could sense his genuine frustration.

"Could you travel back and deliver a message to him from us? Maybe it can be a bit more convincing."

Kuzon should have known better than to think that would work. Neron had proven time and time again that he had our best interests at heart.

"I believe we should solve this ourselves. I also think Neron didn't give us the answers when we met him because of this very reason."

In the end, we just had to put in the work.

"Where should we start, then? Since this is urgent business, that means we have to hurry, right?" Aloe asked, to which I nodded.

"Yeah. I recommend splitting up and searching independently. There's a chance we missed something through sensory perception alone, so I think we can start off by being thorough."

We were currently five on this team, and all of us were considerably good at sensory perception. The worst one among us in terms of ability had to be Ciara, but even she had proven to be strong enough to pull her own weight.

'With Jerry's location being on the line here, I reckon she'll have more than enough motivation to give it her all.'

And that was all I needed to see.

"Kuzon, take the North. Aloe, the East. Ciara, the West. Edward, the South." I promptly assigned everyone their tasks, going further as to explain the guidelines for a detailed exploration of the land.

"What about you, Jared?" Kuzon asked. "What will you be doing?"

A small smile coursed through my face as I gazed above.

"There's something I want to find out, so I'll take to the skies for a while. It might end up yielding profit."

"Alright then." He nodded, seemingly satisfied by my response.

Since everyone understood their duties, as well as how to go about fulfilling them, there was no longer any need to huddle together.

It was time to depart.

"Ciara, maintain a telepathic link between all of us. If any of you find anything, contact the rest through the link, and we'll converge in your position.

"Well, just don't stray too far. My range is limited to the immediate environment." Ciara murmured, itching her head a little.

Ah, that could end up being a problem.

"What's the limit of your range?" I asked.

If it was too short, I would just have to use an Arcana to do it myself. The reason I didn't suggest that, to begin with, was because I was trying to recover my lost energy.

Using Magic and fully absorbing Energy at the same time was impossible, unless I used separate cores for varying roles.

Unfortunately, most of my energy resources had been depleted, so I couldn't afford to spend any more on a Spell that my colleague could easily use with her Original Magic.

"Well, anywhere within the planet... ah, and just the immediate surroundings of it."

... Huh?

"What did you just say?" My eyes twitched as I stared at Ciara with a certain look of disbelief.

Perhaps I heard wrong.

"I can link us together as long as we don't travel beyond this planet. That's my limit for now."

I didn't hear wrong, after all.

Ciara's range... the same one I was thinking would be insufficient... ended up being far more than even I had expected.

'It seems I have underestimated this girl.'

How could I have forgotten what kind of a beast Ciara Epilson was? The same girl who could use Mage Mode and Original Magic at just 13 years old.

'She's a monster.'

"W-well, it's more than enough for our purposes." I managed to leak out a smile as I stared at her.

Damn Genuises. If I was as talented as her, wouldn't I have reached Neron's level by now?

Ah, well... it wasn't good to jump to conclusions yet. But, I knew I would be much stronger than I was now.

'I heard her ancestor is one of the Apostles of Aether. It's the opposite of me, who comes from a household that hasn't had a proper Mage for generations.'

How unfair life was.

"The search involves this planet anyway, so your range is perfect." I explained with a strained smile.

"And what of you? Aren't you leaving the area?" She asked, her brow raised.

"I won't be going very far, don't worry."

"Ah, okay then. I can manage that."

For someone who didn't spend 100 years training exclusively in the arts of Magic, who also didn't have some sort of secret method of getting stronger, it sure was easy to make such statements such as 'manage'.

Then again, I had already accepted this part of life.

'As long as I can close that gap by understanding the more fundamental laws of the world... not even talent will be able to compete with me.'

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Chapter 1136: Encounter At The Safehouse

~Well, I'll see you all soon... hopefully.~

Once Ciara established the telepathic link through her Original Magic, [Phantom Link], we were all connected through a single channel.

Of course, we could have independent thoughts without being heard within the general space of the Spell. However, once we had important messages to pass across to everyone, we could always use the phantom tether that Ciara attached to all our minds.

We could also sense our positions by tracing the tether placed on all of us, making it easier to reach the location of any ally if they found something.

With everything functioning as intended, we bid one another a temporary farewell and set off for our respective destination.

~WHOOOOOSSSHHHH!~

Whether it was through teleportation or simply high-speed movement, all four of my allies swiftly departed the moment I gave the signal to begin.

'I should get to work too...' Ascending to the clear sky above me, I raised my body far above the earth, and then the clouds, and kept lifting myself till I reached the very borders of the planet.

The view, watching as everything that would otherwise have seemed relevant and overwhelming, now seemed insignificant.

Perspective really was everything.

"Alright, Jared. Let's see..." Closing my eyes, I spread out the Aether I could afford to release from my Cores, fusing them with the pure energy that shimmered around in the void of space.

Activating Spellcraft, I now had access to more than enough Aether, granting me heightened control over my senses.

Like connecting the dots that existed around me, I could navigate through the recesses of space that I wouldn't be able to perceive normally.

The result?

"Ahh..." I could sense the immediate worlds—that is, planets—within our galaxy.

"... It's as I suspected."

Whatever happened to our planet happened everywhere else.

I had just done a widespread search for life throughout all the planets and dwarfs I had access to, and ended up with only one result.

NIL!

Not a single one had life within it.

"They're all empty. Gone. Why?"

No, perhaps that wasn't the right question to ask. The reason for their disappearance could range through multiple possibilities.

The true problem was where they had all gone to.

"Legris couldn't have gotten rid of so many people. For what purpose would he even do that? It means Neron had to be the one who sent everyone away."

I was certain of that now.

But where?

I returned my gaze to the world directly beneath me, and I stared long and hard at it, using my heightened abilities to spread my senses through the entirety of the world.

I could see all four of my comrades doing their best to search for anything that could lead us to the truth. Would we have to search every single planet in the cosmos like this in order to scrape together the information we required?

That was absurd! Especially if time was of the essence.

In the silence of space, I contemplated our options as I kept observing the landscape of the planet. I took note of the Eastern Kingdom, the Fairy Sanctuary, The Beast Kingdom, The Dwarven Kingdom, the Elf Kingdom, The United Kingdom of the Magic Beasts... the...

"... Hold on, something is missing."

I didn't notice it before since I was just giving a general overview, but now that I was being specific about the various locations I knew, there was one place I couldn't find.

"Where is the Safehouse?"

My heart thumped slightly as I focused on the location that the Safehouse was supposed to be in, but I found absolutely nothing at all.

"This makes no sense..."

The Safehouse was a place my friends and I built to keep our secrets, including the Arcanas we found in our lifetime.

It was meant to exist between the East and Western area, and I couldn't forget its exact position, yet from the way it seemed at the moment...

... The Safehouse didn't exist at all.

"What in the world?" I murmured, slowly descending from my position and nearing the position where there had to be something present.

Yet, to my surprise, nothing appeared.

"Strange..." My shoes touched the earth and I looked more than perplexed by the current situation that had presented itself to me.

"Something isn't right here."

The hidden lair of the Hero Party, the place I trained rigorously for a hundred years... all of it didn't seem to exist.

I looked around and found nothing but a wilderness that stretched on for a long distance, and just as I was about to utter something else, my gaze picked up a glittering stone on the ground.

It sat not too far from my position, and it gleamed with a forbidden blue light that called for me.

"I don't remember anything like this being here. Is this a clue?" Whispering barely inaudibly, I reached out for the gem.

However...

~VWUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUSSSSSSSSSSSHHHHHHHH!!!~

An intense wave of energy suddenly blasted its way through the stone, sending me sliding a few meters back.

A swirling twister made of pure azure energy manifested before me, like an untamed torrent of blazing power that would not be silenced.

The whirlwind of energy then began to converge, almost solidifying in structure. It grew smaller and smaller, and it began to take a form that seemed humanoid.

Before long, a being of pure energy was born.

The entity looked human, except made of blue energy. It was bald, and it had no appendages that would signify a sex. Its eyes were pure white, and its energy-like skin were sparkling blue.

This creature, whatever it was, looked at me with cold—almost mechanical—eyes.

"Jared Leonard. You have finally come." The entity spoke, its tone warbling with each syllable it uttered.

"You know who I am, huh? Figures. Did Neron put you up to this?" I sighed.

So this was the big secret he was hiding. Was this energy being going to tell me everything I needed to know? If so, I could understand why Neron told me I shouldn't have traveled to the past.

Had I been a little more dilligent, I would have found it, after all.

The blue entity rushed in my direction with breathtaking speed, causing my eyes to flash in both shock and amazement at the sight.

Its glowing hands stetched towards me, almost as if desiring to tear me to pieces once they touched my skin.

'No, you don't.'

The moment it got close, I teleported behind it and generated a sphere of darkness on my palm.

"[Dark Vortex]."

The Spell swirled into a giant mass of a dark swirling pool and flew in the direction of the blue entity, promising to rip it apart.

However...

~VWUSH!~

It also teleported away from harm as soon as the darkness reached its position.

'So it could teleport too?' My eyes narrowed on it as I contemplated the next move to make.

Unfortunately, my opponent gave me no room to breathe, as the next thing I noticed was it lunging straight for me, vanishing from sight the instant I blinked.

Using [The Star], I generated a gravity field around me, mostly for two reasons. One was the fact that gravity directly affected space-time.

'The greater the mass of an object, the greater the distortion it creates in space-time. Hence, teleporting something of a considerable mass as that blue entity will cause more spatial curves than a smaller object.'

That was where my use of gravity came in.

The mass of an object determined the gravitational pull it had. This attraction, coupled by the distortion it made, made for an interesting interaction if I influenced the gravity to my desire.

The approaching object would be caught in a state of suspension, unable to to reach me since their distorted space-time was being affected by my gravity, which would generally attract towards them, but was being directed towards me instead.

Ultimately, it would be impossible for either to happen, which would lead to...

"A suspended null." I smiled, watching the blue entity appear in front of me, unable to move, as space seemed to collapse and relapse around it.

'It's been a while since I toyed with concepts like this.' A smile appeared on my face as I stared at the blue entity before me.

It wouldn't be able to teleport away since my gravitational field would acclimate to its space-time variable, further ensuring it remained in a fixed state of moving and not moving.

It was a trap I designed to capture enemies who would otherwise prove evasive through teleportation.

"[Absolute Suspension]"

Now right in front of the suspended blue entity, I narrowed my gaze to observe it even more. I had never seen anything like it before, and while it seemed like a living entity, it functioned as one without a proper body.

'If I'm to make a comparison, it resembles a Wisp...'

With a body made up of only a Soul, yet functionally a living being. The problem, however, was its evident enmity with me.

"Why are you targeting me?" I asked the blue entity point blank, watching as it continued to struggle to escape my Spell.

"It's useless. Don't bother to—"

~VWUUUUUUUUUMMMMMM!!!~

Before I could conclude my warning, the energy levels of the monster slowly began to rise. It felt like they were climbing at an abnormal rate, and I knew what would come next.

~BOOOOOOOOOOOOUMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM!!!~

The explosive scale covered its immediate vicinity, turning everything around it into nothing but pressured dust. However, I was too fast to be caught in something like that, so I escaped relatively easily.

Blue radiation spread out from its point of impact, sending shockwaves flying around.

However, that wasn't the most curious part.

The being exploded into several thousand particles, spreading across the area which I had teleported from and now watched from my position in the sky.

"Hm? It exploded itself? The range or level of destruction wasn't even that great, so why...?"

If it wanted to destroy me, this would be an inefficient way to go about it. Unless... ah, so that was what it was after.

A little smile formed on my face as I watched the blue particles of light converge together to reform the blue entity, as if it was being created from scratch.

'It must have realized that its mass was the problem, so it broke itself down to smaller particles to escape the suspension. That's smart.'

It had the intelligence to grow from a trap I developed, and it was also considerably powerful. Putting those two factors together, it was possible that my opponent could end up becoming too difficult if I dragged on the fight for too long.

'It's best I destroy it as fast as I can, and then maybe save a bit of its soul essence for investigation later.'

At the moment, I couldn't afford to be playing games.

"[Four Cardinal Bombardment]." I whispered, stretching my hand in the blue entity's direction.

Instantly, from all four cardinal directions of the target, a strong pressure pushed them forward.

North, East, South, and West.

With all sides generating such powerful propulsion to force the target forward, and from every end, it forced the target to remain still—trapped in a single position.

Even if it split into smaller particles, it would be unable to stop the intense wave of force that was pervasive in the area.

'And now that it's completely still, I'll finish it in one blow.'

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

Chapter 1138: A Scholar's Warfare [Pt 2]

"Haa..."

There were a lot of Spells in my arsenal that I could utilize to my advantage, but after considering for a moment, there was one I could utilize which would ensure the swift demise of my opponent without taking up any energy from me.

[The Sun]

It had the ability to destroy anything, whether it be energy or concepts.

And right now, I had to eliminate this thing before it wreaked any further havoc or learned anything more than it was supposed to.

"[S Bomb: Level 5]" Opening up my palm, a crimson-orange orb manifested above it.

It hovered gently above my palm, but even I could sense just how much energy it had within it. This was an 'S Bomb', after all.

[S Bomb] was classified into Levels ranging 1-9, depending on the amount of energy output I wanted to release.

The destruction of the entire Demon Continent could be labeled as a Level 7 explosion. Compared to that, Level 5 was considerably weaker, but that didn't make it a joke either.

'If I reduce the range and concentrate it on the target, it should be able to completely destroy it.'
However, if I was to do that, how would I obtain the energy sample I desired?

[The Sun] wasn't going to leave any trace for me once it was done.

'Perhaps this isn't a good idea after all... hmm?' My eyes narrowed, and then widened as I stared down at the enemy I was deliberating against.

'What in the world?'

Hovering on his palm was exactly the same stuff I had on mind.

'An S Bomb?!'

How could it have replicated my Spell if I didn't sense either an Arcana, nor the capacity for it to have done something like that earlier?

'Don't tell me...!' My eyes widened in surprise as the intense radiation from the orb was enough to offset the restricting Spell I had surrounding him.

In essence, it was now free!

'It's not just learning from me... it's downright copying me!'

It probably copied my teleportation, just the same way it now used my S Bomb. The more I thought of how and why this was possible, the more it dawned on me...

'This enemy is dangerous!'

All this time I thought I was the one observing it, but it was the other way around. It was slowly learning from me and developing itself to counter my abilities.

'I can't afford to use my Original Magic or anything more powerful since it'll get even more difficult to defeat it in the long run.'

Fortunately, I was still in my base state, so this thing hadn't gotten the opportunity to learn any of my powerful forms—that is, if it could.

I still didn't know how its abilities functioned, and while my overly curious mind wanted to know more, I had to find a way to eliminate it completely, while also obtaining its essence for future study.

~WHOOOOOOOSSSHHH!~

As I was still deep in thought, it threw the S Bomb towards me.

'This guy...!' Using Spellcraft unconsciously, I instantly used my energy to destabilize the energy reaction within the S Bomb, instantly rendering it null.

Before long, the whole orb faded into nothingness before it even reached me.

'Ah, I used Spellcraft. It can't copy that, can it?' Narrowing my eyes on the blue creature who simply proceeded to create two new S Bombs, I reached my conclusion.

It couldn't replicate Spellcraft.

'Just the same way it didn't copy my [Absolute Suspension] and use the Spell to free itself, it also can't use Spellcraft.'

Perhaps its ability was only effective on Spells it could directly observe and analyze, something akin to my own Original Magic. It couldn't indiscriminately know and use any Spell I utilized.

'That's why it split itself into numerous particles instead of just cancelling out the Spell.'

The way I saw it, this creature's abilities were divided into two-fold.

'One is its ability to replicate a Spell it has observed, and the other is to adapt to situations where replication is impossible.'

So far, all of that checked out. None of my observations from earlier contradicted—whether directly or indirectly—with the model I created.

Thus, the best way to kill this thing would be to use a sure-fire attack that it couldn't directly observe. If I added my desire to preserve its energy to the mix, I would have to take a different route to achieve that objective.

With all of these conditions in place, I could see a clear path to victory.

My opponent was now combining both S Bombs, generating a fusion reaction that would birth a new Bomb—obviously one more powerful.

By my estimate, it would lead to an S Bomb: Level 6.

"Let's end this already." I declared, stretching my hands in the entity's direction, a smile witten all over my face.

"Agreed." It responded, a swirling mass of energy now hovering on the palm of its hand.

Whether or not I decided to defuse the blast. The creature would take a further step in its evolution, and most of my abilities either consumed too much Energy to utilize, or were visible to the naked eye.

Well... unless I added a little thing called [Unknowable].

"You've already lost." I smiled at my opponent who, for some reason, couldn't leave its position.

All I needed was a few more seconds, and the results would become evident.

"A-ahhh... ahhh..."

The S Bomb in the palm of its hands suddenly burst, like a baloon, turning into several particles of light, which in turn burst and turn into more particles of light.

The process repeated itself almost infinitely until the particles of light were invisible to the naked eye.

'[Degradation]' My thoughts as I smiled at the powerless creature before me.

Simply put, it was the breaking down of energy into smaller units, and causing them to further dissipate with the flow of time. This reaction would cause energy to be released in smaller increments.

As such, this Spell was the natural enemy of my opponent who was made of pure energy.

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

Chapter 1139: A Scholar's Warfare [Pt 3]

Spellcraft was everything in the utilization of [Degradation].

Once I released my energy into the energy-rich environment, thanks to the S Bomb I had disengaged previously, I caused all of that energy to flow around my opponent, preparing for the next phase.

The next thing I did was to use [Unknowable] to mask the effects of the surrounding as it transformed into a Spell.

I wasn't sure how minute a Spell had to be for it not to be detected since my previous interactions with it hadn't given me enough data to make a perfect estimate.

My [Absolute Suspension] delved into the realm of concept manipulation, and law control, which were generally invisible to the eyes.

As for Spellcraft, since it was a technique, it could be that the enemy didn't register it as a Spell that required copying. As a result, now that I was going to use Spellcraft to make a Spell, it was possible that my opponent would sense it and copy it.

If that happened, it would prove more difficult to take the target down.

Fortunately, I had [Unknowable].

Using [Unknowable] in conjunction with Spellcraft, I activated the Area-Of-Effect Spell I called [Degradation].

In simple terms, the Spell caused an inevitable breakdown in energy, and it could continue this process in a loop until said energy had reached its smallest unit.

Spellcraft allowed me to improve its range so it covered the vicinity of the enemy, and using [Unknowable], it didn't suspect anything until my Spell began to take effect.

The first thing I got out of the way was the S Bomb it had generated. Once it got degraded, I absorbed the energy into the currently working model of Spellcraft, thus improving the power of the Spell.

Once that was done, only one thing was left.

'If it splits itself into smaller bits, it'll make the proces faster for me. Also, I have used [Absolute Suspension] to ensure it doesn't teleport away from the Spell.'

All paths of escape had been shut off, and if it tried to run away, it would be met by a force field I had erected around the area.

"No matter what you do... I will win."

I suppose this was inevitable from the start. No matter how much potential it had, this being was too outclassed when facing me.

'It's too weak.'

Once [Degradation] ran its complete course, the enemy was now nothing more than several invisible particles of nearly imperceptible energy.

Of course, as someone who had been working with energy manipulation since he was one week old, I was skilled enough to detect and manipulate said energy around me.

'Now that it has been broken down to this extent, I'll store it with this...' In a flash, I reached into my pocket dimension and brought out an artificial Aether Core.

Or rather, the container for one.

It was currently empty, so by storing the blue guy's energy here, I could leave it untainted for the most part.

"Alright then... let us begin."

Using Spellcraft to direct all the energy belonging to the blue entity, I pulled everything into the Aether Core, ensuring I didn't leave even a particle behind.

Once I was done, the air turned stale once more.

... At least, that was what was supposed to happen.

~VWUUUUUUUUUMMMMMMMMM!!!~

The Aether Core in my grasp suddenly began to hum and warble.

"What is..."

The thing suddenly started shaking, almost as if there was something inside attempting to get out.

'That should be impossible. The state of its energy should be in utter pieces. Unless they combine, which I have ensured won't happen as a result of [Degradation], there should be no will displayed.'

As I had this thought, trying to understand what was happening, the Aether Core suddenly vanished from my grasp.

"W-what?!"

Instead, it appeared in the air in front of me, still warbling and trembling as if something within it was trying to be free.

"If it hasn't been extinguished after that, then I'll just have to get serious..." Narrowing my gaze, I prepared myself for even more of a challenge.

However...

~FSHWUUUUUUU!~

The Aether Core slowly began to contract, as if trying to squeeze itself together. It looked like a bubble without form, attempting to become something it was not.

'Is it trying to return to its previous state?' I wondered

But no... that wasn't it.

It was far from what I had imagined.

It was...

~SHIIIIIIINNNNNNNNGGGG!~

The light that flashed from the orb enveloped the area, but I kept watching as the final phase of the core's transformation was completed.

No longer was it an Aether Core, or a spherical mass of energy. It wasn't even a humanoid energy entity.

The new form of the energy was none other than a card—something resembling one of the Arcanas.

I drew closer, narrowing my eyes on the floating object that now remained suspended in the air.

Inscribed on the card was neither illustration nor symbol, but a single letter.

"N." I whispered, reaching out for the pulsating card with a small smile on my face. There was no way I wouldn't know what this meant.

"Neron... what exactly are you up to now?"

The card called to me, and I answered, stretching my hands towards it. In response, it drew closer to me, and I could feel it resonate with me the closer it got to me.

Until finally, our forms connected.

"A-ahhh..."

The moment I touched the card, my eyes widened, and it felt like I was being pulled into a different realm that I couldn't explain at all.

It felt like I was being pulled upward, away from the planet I stood on, and even out of the galaxy I occupied.

I felt propelled away from this world, and into another.

It all happened so fast that it took all of my strength to keep up with all the information overwhelming my brain.

And then, after an eternity locked in a single moment, my vision ceased and I finally understood what was happening.

"Haa... haa..." My body trembled slightly, and my breath was heavy.

I nearly fell to my knees out of sheer weakness, but throughout all of this, I was grinning widely.

There was only one reason for that.

"... I know where everyone is!"

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

Chapter 1140: The Gathering

I instantly reached out to my friends the moment I was finally able to stabilize my thoughts.

Once again thankful for Ciara's telepathic link that served to connect us all, I got the word out that I found something that could potentially lead me to where our friends were.

The first to respond was Kuzon, and he wondered if it had anything to do with the fight he sensed happening where I was located.

Since Kuzon had grown extremely powerful, he could detect the happenings of our planet if he tried. The same went for Edward as well.

I didn't think Aloe and Ciara had reached that level, but considering how Aloe's range spread out through the entire planet, something told me if she really wanted to, she would find a way to replicate our sensory prowess.

"I'll explain everything to you all. Come back as soon as you can." I responded to Kuzon, and also everyone else at the same time.

Based on the distance calculated, I assumed either Ciara or Aloe would make it first since they had been sent to the West, and East continents respectively. Plus, I also estimated them to arrive after a considerable amount of seconds.

Though, with Aloe's speed, I wouldn't have been surprised if she made it first.

However, much to my surprise, it wasn't either of them that arrived first.

~VWUSH!~

A golden flash of light manifested before me, and from its swirling pool of distorted space, Kuzon appeared.

"I came as fast as I could. What's the situation?" He declared in the most formal and serious tone ever. His eyes revealed curious concern, and they begged me to spill everything I knew.

'I should have known...' A sigh almost escaped my lips. Of everyone else, he was still the most eager, so it made sense that he would be first.

'Ah, well... maybe I should give the 'most eager' title to Ciara.'

As if responding to my thoughts, Ciara arrived next, her breath ragged and her hair all over the place. Blue sparks of energy lashed around her, and her eyes seemed to be reminiscent of a lunatic.

At least, that was how it looked like to me.

"What did you find—"

~WHOOOOOSSHH!~

After Ciara, behind by just a few seconds, was Edward. He seemed absolutely calm in his fit body, and he looked around to acknowledge the presence of everyone.

He seemed to have arrived here by sheer speed alone.

Unlike the bumbling Ciara and zealous Kuzon, he didn't seem at all flustered by the news. His eyes seemed to say "It was only a matter of time before you found them anyway, Jared."

That was the level of faith this guy had in my ability.

"Sorry I'm late everyone." Aloe's voice suddenly echoed in the air as she appeared in a flicker of light.

"I was checking out my old office for some things and I sort of got lost in the moment."

'She also seems quite collected. Well, that's Aloe Vida for you, I guess.' A smile escaped my lips as I told her it was fine to arrive only a few seconds after I made the announcement.

In fact, everyone here was too fast.

"Did you find what you were looking for?" I asked Aloe.

"Me? Ah, I wasn't particularly looking for anything. Just checking my old stuff. I couldn't find some things, though..."

Now that was curious.

"Things like what? Your grimoires, notes, Magic Items?" I was getting more and more invested in this situation.

If some of her stuff was missing, did that mean there was still someone in this world who took them? But that would imply that they managed to escape our perception.

Such an individual would be quite formidable.

'Or maybe it's the same way the Safehouse is missing in this world. No, but the Safehouse served as a clue to what I found.'

Did that mean Aloe's missing properties served as clues as well?

"Well, just some of my underwear. There was one pair of panties I bought the other day before the wedding... and I couldn't find them."

... Ah...

For a moment, I felt my lips glue together, unable to formulate any sensible response to her words.

'I don't think Neron would use those as clues. And if there's someone running around in this world, stealing underwear, then... what the heck?'

Using all the data I had collected so far, this information seemed very confusing.

Would I have to change my model once again?

"I probably just forgot where I kept them is all. I could have sworn I took them to my—"

"Ahem, that's enough." Kuzon cleared his throat, interrupting Aloe from saying any further.

I had never been as grateful for such an act until this moment.

"Ah, apologies." Aloe laughed a little sheepishly, and while it was pretty cute—enough to lift any tense atmosphere that would have been present otherwise—it also felt a little uncomfortable.

None of us here were kids. At least, not in the technical sense.

'I can't believe my age is still 15. My 16th birthday hasn't arrived yet, so it's odd.'

Even Kuzon and Edward had already become adults.

I was the only one who was still a minor!

"I-in any case, let's begin the briefing." I smiled awkwardly, trying my hardest to regain my composure after trapping myself with my earlier thoughts.

I explained everything to them; from what led to my investigation on the vanished Safehouse, to my fight with the blue sentry, and how it ended up becoming an Arcana.

After some minutes of bringing everyone up to speed, I brought out the card and showed them.

"This is our ticket to our friends. I'm guessing it functions the same way an Arcana does, and it'll take us to where Neron kept them."

The epiphany I had when I touched this card showed me a world where everyone was. The message was very vague, but I pretty much understood what Neron was trying to show me.

"So, everyone... ready to reunite with our friends and family?"

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