

SPELLCRAFT 1181

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

Chapter 1181: Darkness Meets Light [Pt 2]

~VWUUUSHH!~

A pool of black energy suddenly emerged from out of nowhere, having a mucky slimy texture that danced in the air.

It wrapped itself around Legris' waving hand, swallowing the fragment he held in the fraction of a second..

One moment it was present, the next it was as if it never existed, to begin with.

"All that's left is to take care of the trash. They'll be dead eventually anyway. Might as well do them the favor of kicking the their buckets."

Hearing him say those words enraged me, but I kept my cool.

Acting rash at such a critical moment would be stupid at this point. There were a lot more factors to consider, and this was a very important moment for us after all the time we spent tracking him down.

Any wrong step could cost us.

"Still, I'm surprised that Neron isn't here. Some husband he is, am I right? Leaving his wife hanging like that, and putting you all in such a shitty situation..."

The more I thought of everything, and listened to Legris, the more my chest tightened.

The expression Serah was making told me enough about the state of her heart, and I found it to be a miracle that she hadn't taken action yet.

She sent a glance at me, and it instantly sent me a message.

'The only reason I haven't killed that bastard myself... is because of the plan, Jared.'

And I knew her self control wouldn't be able to last forever.

"And what about your, Jared? All your time away from your friends and family... how did you feel? I personally would have liked to do something about your parents, you know? But, Neron had to just send them off to safety."

My heart raced even more, but I still kept my cool.

"Hmm... just thinking about what I would do to them. Your mother looks so soft and young. And your father is such a workaholic. I feel like I could arrange something to help with her ever-growing loneliness."

I still held it in...

"I know a few starving Nether Beasts. They should be able to help her out a little. Hahaha, don't you think so, Jared? Wouldn't it be hilarious watching your mother do it with those wild mutts? I think it would be fascinating." He kept speaking, and I shut my lips.

"Or what? Not exciting enough for you? Then maybe... Maria? Should it be her? Yeah, that works best. And for Neron, my very good friend, I'll have to include Serah to the mix. Hahahahaha!"

His disgusting cackles echoed throughout the expanse as he made more dirty and disgusting comments, yet none of us spoke.

No one uttered a word.

I could tell that so many of them wanted to say something, or do something, and so many voices rammed my mind, raging about my inaction.

However, I simply clenched my fist and listened to the pure drivel that Legris spouted.

Until—

"Are you done?" I finally spoke.

"Huh?"

Legris looked a bit surprised to hear me speak. Or rather, shocked to see the smile that was spreading across my face despite the blood curdling words he had just spouted.

"You have been stalling for time all this while, haven't you? Trying to break free from [The World's Resonance], while also making your escape..." My voice, low but deep, slowly began as I stared at him with deadpan eyes.

"... So are you done?"

At this point, all the bravado Legris displayed before all of us slowly began to crumble.

"What did you do?" He asked, his smile slowly vanishing.

"You didn't think you were the only one stalling for time, did you? I endured all of your insults on my friends and family. Did you really think I would do all of that in vain?"

It was now Legris' turn to crease his brows. The soft glare on his face was enough to tell him me that I had gotten him right where I wanted.

"You can't run..."

I took a step forward from my allies.

"You can't hide..."

Two more steps, and my eyes began to cackle with golden brilliance.

"... And you can't escape."

I had been waiting for this moment since the time he caused Kahn to assault Ainzlark Academy and kill all those innocent children.

The time when he caused the Demonic Incursion, leading to the death of so many innocents.

The time he disrupted the wedding of two of my closest friends, separating them for so long.

And finally, the moment I laid eyes on the destruction he had wreaked upon the first world I stepped into.

All of those instances culminated into this very event.

"The rest of you, protect the civilians..." I mumbled, energy slowly dancing all over my body.

I could sense the unease my allies had. A lot of them tried to send me mental messages, but I blocked all of it and took another step forward.

The initial plan was for the team to gang up on Legris and defeat him with our combined effort. However, the way things had turned out now... I wouldn't be satisfied unless I was the one to do it.

'I'm sorry for being selfish Serah, everyone. But...' My eyes sharpened with resolve, and all the energy I had been stocking for this very moment erupted at once.

"... I'll take care of him myself."

~WHOOOOOOOSSHHH!~

"Hold on, Jared, we still aren't done tal—"

Before Legris could conclude his words, or even sneak in a little attack to catch me off-guard, I was already right in front of him.

"W-wha—?!"

Using [Unknowable] alongside [The Hermit] and [The Tower], while being amplified by the other Arcanas, I could achieve an unreal level of speed and instant travel.

Adding Spellcraft, which I had already prepared for by suplicating Lemi's dome strategy and cloaking them with [Perfect Unknowable], to allow me blend with the residual Aether in the air, I was completely unstoppable.

In simple terms... I could be anywhere and everywhere at once.

"You insulted my family, Legris. Don't expect a simple death."

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Chapter 1182: Inflicting Justice

With my body right in front of Legris already, I proceeded to coat myself in dense Aether to withstand the sheer amount of Nether he emitted.

It was more than enough to serve as resistance, and with all the current amplifications I was receiving from the Arcanas, and Spellcraft... there was no way I could lose!

"[Dark Hori—]"

The way I perceived it, the blast and my Spellcraft were only making the murky liquid stronger as it continued to fester, covering Legris' body.

'No... I can't allow that!'

Whether he would use the black energy to heal, or vanish, I couldn't allow it.

'It's not Aether. It's not Nether either. What is this... this disturbing mix?!' I couldn't comprehend it.

However, that didn't mean I wasn't going to stop it.

I swiftly undid the explosion, dissipating it and the containment chamber with Spellcraft, while rushing towards Legris with a deep scowl on my face.

"[Original Magic: Great Sage's Memoir]."

The moment my Original Magic was activated, the pages of my grand book flipped to the perfect page I required at this point.

"[Soul Hunt]!"

The black energy was almost done covering Legris, but before it could complete the process, I used my Spell to attack the propelling force and agent behind the darkness.

Legris' Soul.

Using Jane's Soul Magic, along with a few modifications on my end, I could attack the Soul and ultimately the Core of my targets.

"Keuk!" I encountered instant resistance from his Soul, but I wasn't going to give up now.

'The [Soul Hunt] Spell is too weak to take down the resistance, but any stronger and I might have to destroy it!'

I was stuck in a precarious situation.

Letting Legris escape my clutches, or using the most advanced Soul Spell to reach his inner self before it was too late.

Time was running out, and I had to make my choice.

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Chapter 1183: Fatal Oversight

Time was fast running out, and I was yet to make my mind.

However, at that moment of hesitation, my thoughts suddenly echoed within me, causing my body to move on instinct.

'What in the world am I doing, thinking this long?'

Right now, there seemed to be only one answer, and it involved not letting Legris get away with what he had done.

Once that sank in, I tightened my fist and echoed out the Spell.

"[Soul Destruction]"

Instantly, the stubborn barrier that denied me access to Legris' soul was broken down, and my pure energy invaded his inner self, like an unstoppable flood.

It eroded everything within, alongside the Soul I was painstakingly trying to capture.

Until...

~VWUUUUUUUUSSSSHHHHHHH!!!~

... Legris' body broke down the moment his soul experienced destruction.

The black energy ceased, along with all of his functions in an instant. Right there and then, I killed the man I had painstakingly hunted down for so long.

'By destroying his Soul, it's possible that I might have destroyed the root problem, but I suspect that isn't the case.'

If that was all it took to get rid of Legris, then Neron would have done so at some point.

'He's probably still out there somewhere...'

If only I had gotten access to his Soul, which was the plan all along, I would have been able to track his other Souls and destroy all of them at once through a complicated, but effective process.

'It seems Legris realizes the danger in that, so he made sure I wouldn't be able to capture his Soul.'

As always, he was one step ahead this whole time.

"At least, we were able to save the people he would have otherwise killed." I sighed to myself, staring into the empty expanse of space.

There was just one more thing that bothered me. It had been worrying me since I first laid eyes on it and felt my senses distorted in its presence.

'That black energy... what is it?'

It didn't feel like Aether or Nether, or even both. It was just... a strange mix of power that I could not completely place.

It disgusted but intrigued me at the same time.

"If that is the source of Legris' power, I'll have to learn more about it when next we... hold on..."

My eyes began to widen the more I tried to complete my sentence, and a realization suddenly dawned on me.

"No... no way..." I had completely messed things up.

I was so blinded by my strategy of bringing down Legris and settling for a decisive battle, while resorting to the destruction of his Soul at the last minute, that I didn't consider the big-picture plan I had concocted at the start of this mission.

"We used [The World's Resonance] to track down Legris to this place, and I killed the one we were tracking. So..."

Clenching my fist, I had to come face to face with my fatal error.

"... The trail ends here."

That's right! Due to my incompetence, we couldn't track Legris beyond this point.

"Damnit! Did he bait me back then? Was he the one truly in control throughout our fight?"

I didn't want to believe it, but... had I gotten played?

At this point, a cloud of both disappointment and frustration coursed through my insides, causing me to clench my teeth, harden my fist, and squeeze my face.

I was honestly disappointed in myself.

'I should return to the others...' I returned my gaze to the planet I just left, sighing heavily.

There was nothing more I could do now.

Once I returned to the group, I found everyone in a golden energy field built by Kuzon.

It was probably built to replace the dissipating one that we found around them when we arrived. Kuzon made the sensible choice of replicating it in order to protect the civilians from the clash I had with Legris, though I was already intent on leaving them out of it.

Once I landed within the force field, everyone was gathered around one old man. It seemed they were asking him some questions before my arrival, however, once I arrived, everyone turned in my direction.

"How did it go? What happened to Legris?" Serah asked first.

A tight feeling enveloped my chest, but I chose to speak anyway. I had the responsibility to inform my team members of my mistake.

"I killed him because there seemed to be no other alternative at the time. I couldn't even capture his Soul due to the interference of a strange energy he was using."

The expressions of my allies didn't change all that much. They hadn't realized the implications of that, so I had to tell them.

"The trail ends here. I can't track Legris any further since I already ended him. I'm so sorry, everyone."

If I had enlisted their help, then perhaps we could have figured something out together.

'It's unlikely anyone else could have had a better solution to the problem, but if I had Lemi and Ana, we could have come up with something together...'

But due to my hubris and undeniable rage, I went at it alone.

"You'll find another way, Jared." I suddenly felt two hands on my respective shoulders, and a voice so soothing it felt like music to my ears.

I had bowed my head due to how humiliated I felt by my mistakes, but the voice forced me to raise my face.

The first person I saw was Maria.

Her smile as she looked at me felt so genuine, and her eyes glittered with such pride that I wondered how she could have so much faith in me.

"You discovered a way to track him down despite the odds. You can find another alternative." This time, it was Kuzon who spoke.

I glanced in his direction and found him smiling at me.

"I agree. Just take this as a challenge, my rival." Ana spoke next, smiling sweetly.

"If it's you, Jared, I'm sure you'll find an answer!" Edward's voice echoed as he raised his two fists into the air.

One by one, my allies echoed their hopeful words at me, suddenly raising me from my state of frustration to that of hope.

Before I realized it, a smile was already forming on my face in response to all that was being said.

And then I remembered Neron's last words to me.

~After all, with Magic... you can do anything.~

"You're right." I said to all of them.

Why did I need to despair when there were several other theories that were yet to be explored?

This was an opportunity.

The chance to learn more about how the world operated through Magic.

Now wasn't the time for despair at all!

"Maybe we can help a little in your next alternative." Once again, Kuzon's words echoed through the air, causing me to look in his direction.

"What do you mean?"

"While you were off fighting Legris, we were interviewing the villagers, particularly the Elder."

Hearing that made me even more curious, especially because Kuzon had a certain twinkle in his eyes as he spoke.

"We know what Legris is after."

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Chapter 1184: Hero Analysis [Pt 1]

"While you were fighting Legris, we asked the townspeople a few questions, but since the Elder is the most knowledgeable, we focused our queries on him."

I was seated at this point, having all thirteen of my friends all in a circle that I was a part of.

The townspeople were a short distance away, and while I was a bit skeptical about taking down the barrier, Kuzon told me it was inconsequential anyway.

Even though the entire town was destroyed, I was glad to hear that nearly all of the townspeople were accounted for.

"What did you learn?" I asked calmly.

Judging from how Kuzon phrased the importance of the intel, it seemed like learning about it would be very instrumental in apprehending our target.

"First of all, it seems only four people in the entire town died. And those four are closely related to the reason I suspect Legris attacked this place." Kuzon responded.

"Who are they?"

"The Hero and his family."

Hearing that made me furrow my brows a little. It wasn't like I hadn't heard of the term 'Hero', but it felt sort of odd in this setting.

'Legris was after this world's Hero?' That felt too ambiguous.

Fortunately, Kuzon had more information to share with me about the Hero that Legris fought before we arrived here.

"Apparently there was a war here some decades ago, and a Hero surfaced fifteen years ago, and while he had a team, he defeated the most Demons and almost singlehandedly saved the world."

In essence, the Hero was an extremely powerful individual.

"That still sounds vague." I purported.

"I thought so too, but it seems the people of this world really held the guy in high regards. They call him the 'World's Chosen One' or 'Blessed by the Heavens'. He seems special, and the fact that he was only fifteen years old when he ended the war proves he was special."

As Kuzon explained, he raised his brow as if trying to tell me something amidst the explanation.

"Well, I was also fifteen years when I ended a war, and... ahh... I see what you're getting at."

If I was to assume that the Demon Incursion in this world was the same as in our world, then it would take an extraordinary person to almost singlehandedly eradicate every Demon in the world.

Even I required tons of help in ending the war.

"That means he was special beyond just being a genius, right?" I narrowed my gaze on Kuzon, and he nodded.

"Precisely! Apparently he grew up in this town full of mostly inept people, and his parents were not even talented in the slightest."

"Are his parents in the town?" I asked.

"No. Apparently, they became travelers and began to explore the world now that it's at peace."

"Ah, I see. Go on then."

"The point is... there should be no way that someone as special as this Zephyr guy would arise from this place and possess so much power. If we take his titles into account, and Legris' interest in him as well, it's clear there's something unique about him."

I suddenly remembered the energy fragment Legris was wielding when we met, and it all began to make sense to me.

'So that's it, huh? He was after a person here... the Hero.'

He told us he had gotten what he wanted, which was the Energy Fragment, but where did he get it from? It most likely belonged to the Hero of this world.

'Was that his Energy Core? That powerful thing?'

I tried my best not to be too surprised, considering the feats I had just heard about him.

"What do you think, Jared? I feel like the Hero was a Singularity of some sorts. You know, like you or Neron."

After the entire ordeal with the Nether Cult, and my friends finding out about my reincarnation, I finally explained things in further detail to them.

How I was labeled a Singularity and nearly killed even as a child.

Out of everyone, Kuzon was the only one who seemed to have already known this prior to the big reveal. Apparently, Aether told him all about me before his big fight with the Nether.

"Your theory makes sense." I murmured.

After all, the signs of being a Singularity were present in this Hero that I heard. Based on how he lived, he fit the bill perfectly.

However... the way he died disproved it just the same.

"How old was he when he died?"

"Apparently, tomorrow would mark his 30th birthday." Upon hearing that, I felt a little pain in my chest.

Legris chose the worst time to end this man's life... not that any sooner or later would have been better too.

In any case, Kuzon's words response further strengthened my dissenting suspicion.

"There's no way an adult Singularity would lose to Legris. If he stopped a war when he was fifteen, then I can track his growth reasonably. Even if it's an era of peace, I doubt a Singularity would lose so much power that he would die at the hands of Legris."

There was the possibility that Legris used underhanded means to win, or perhaps he was far stronger than he was letting on in my fight against him.

Even if I granted all of those, however, there was still a major problem with Kuzon's theory.

"Singularities exist to face threats that will end the Aether Tree. Threats like the Nether. There's usually only one Singularity."

There was Merlin. After him came Neron, and after Neron was me.

I was only meant to be a replacement Singularity anyway, and the perks I got for being one was incomparably abysmal to the earlier two.

"If he was a Singularity, he would have done something to stop the Nether. We could have combined our powers in the Nether Wars. Aether would have perhaps mentioned him too."

However, none of those happened.

"I see. So he's most likely not a Singularity. But how else can you explain his absurd level of power?"

After hearing Kuzon's question, I reflected on all he had told me, and there was only one viable option that gnawed at me.

It was the only reasonable answer at this point.

"A Constellation Host. The Hero was most likely a Constellation Host."

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Chapter 1185: Hero Analysis [Pt 2]

Even now, not much was known about Constellations.

They were the mysterious entities that hovered above our reality, governing distinct aspects of existence.

As the guardians of a tree, they were directly beneath Aether. However, due to their nature as Familiars, and their conceptual limitations, Constellations often required individuals to carry out their will.

In essence, Constellation Hosts.

Constellation Hosts served as proxies for their respective Constellations, and the latter usually enacted their will viacriously through those they deemed worthy of their power.

And, well...

... They also just enjoyed existiting through those their Hosts.

"If Zephyr was chosen by a Constellation, then it would make more sense, considering how powerful he was..." I began, my eyes not focusing on anything in particular as I narrowed my gaze.

"The fact that Zephyr was 15 years old when he ended the 15-year-old war shows there's a correlation between the two. He was probably chosen for that specific purpose... or maybe that's too much of a stretch. But when I consider how you two haven't been able to reach out to your Constellations, even now, the coincidences seem to pile up considerably."

I began staring at everyone around me, and it seemed they were already gaining on the theory being pieced together in my mind.

"If Legris targeted the Hero for the sole reason that he was a Constellation Host, that also means that the energy fragment he held is related to that as well."

The more I spoke, the more sense it all made to me.

'The sheer amount of energy from that fragment doesn't surprise me now that I know that it's from a Constellation.'

"You think Legris is targeting Constellation Hosts, don't you?" Beruel suddenly spoke up, and I nodded instantly.

"That's right. It all adds up. I always asked myself what kind of power Legris would be after, but now that I think about it... the energy gotten from Constellations should be far more potent than regular energy."

It was a lot more efficient to go down that route, and knowing Legris, I was sure he was after the most effective means to achieve his goals.

What the true end of his goals were, though... I still had no clue.

"You're right about it being weird that we can't access Constellations at this time. That means they're involved somewhat." Ana murmured.

'Indeed...' My thoughts trailed, and now that I thought of it, there was something else.

Wasn't the most efficient way to harness energy directly getting it from the Constellations? Yet, he was still using such a roundabout way.

That solidified it for me.

"I don't think Legris is powerful enough to face a Constellation now. That's probably why he's going after the Hosts."

Legris wasn't holding back in our fight, at least not too much. He wasn't as powerful as I had suspected him to be.

'The problem is that he's too elusive.'

We couldn't find a way to get rid of him no matter how hard we tried.

"What do you think we should do now?" Maria, who was beside me, asked with her calm tone.

It took me a while to think about an alternative, but I realized that there was only one reasonable solution to our problem.

'We are currently stranded anyway. I see no alternative...'

"The best way we can go about this is to discuss with the Constellations. They're the ones this involves, and we're currently at our wits end."

The moment I said this, a few skeptical gazes greeted me neatly instantly.

"We have already established that problem, haven't we? We can't communicate with them. That's the issue." Kuzon sighed as he spoke.

The look on his face told me that he expected me to have thought of that already, yet I ended up speaking like I didn't.

"Hold on, Kuzon. I'm sure Jared has a reason why he brought that up." Edward responded with his usual confident smile.

The moment he said this, I nodded.

"Indeed. I realize it's a problem. But that only means we have to solve it."

Kuzon's slightly disappointed expression slowly died out, and I could see the skepticism dying out.

"We would be more productive seeking out the Constellations than we would be in searching for Legris. Plus, unlike in our hunt for the latter, we have concrete means we can use to find the Constellations." My eyes rested on Kuzon and Edward as I concluded my proposition.

Silence pervaded our midst, and after a while of no one saying anything, Serah, who had been uncharacteristically silent for a while, finally spoke.

"How do you plan on doing that—talking to the Constellations, I mean."

During the decorum, I had been thinking of that very thing as well. There seemed to be one effective method I could think of, but it was one that I wasn't sure would work.

"[Resonance]" I responded.

More confused than skeptical faces greeted me instantly.

"When you use [Resonance] and connect to another person who uses it as well, you can venture into the astral realm of one another. I've done it with Neron, Lemi and a few others."

The idea here was to use [Resonance] on either Kuzon or Edward—perhaps even both, for good measure. I explained the concept to them as simply as I could, and their responses were encouraging.

If I was lucky, I could access a Constellation and speak to them.

"Their bond with the both of you still exist, so that means I can at least pick up traces of their position."

The reason why I was so skeptical of this procedure working was because I had never attempted going in this deep before. If the Constellations offered too much resistance to my [Resonance], then it would be for nothing.

"There's only one way to find out."

Once we all decided to give it a try, three of us—Kuzon, Edward, and I—sat in a circle and closed our eyes.

"Are you ready?" I asked them.

"Yes." The two responded at once.

The moment I heard them, I initiated the process of [Resonance].

'This had better work!'

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Chapter 1186: Full Resonance

I began the meditation with a deep breath, feeling the Aether stir within me as I expanded my senses.

After expanding it, I narrowed it all down with the two who sat next to me, initiating [Resonance] at that very moment.

My entire self seemed to be drawn towards the two of them—both at the same time—and while it would have felt like I was being torn apart, the fact that they resonated with me meant all three of us became one.

It felt like a three-way bridge that connected all three of us—a triangle of power.

"Haa..." Exhaling deeply, I proceeded to the next step.

My integration into the very depths in order to find the bond that existed between the Constellations and my friends.

My dual resonance with both Edward and Kuzon meant I had to do it at the same time, and while I could not enter two regions with one form, all our energies flowed together, allowing a free entry process.

That was when I arrived at the seemingly infinite expanse of our joint astral realms.

I witnessed the Golden Aether Core of Kuzon, as well as the blazing Azure and Amber Core of Edward. Both of them were magnificent, brimming with so much power that they caused me to shiver despite lacking physical senses.

I was in awe, watching them rise in strength with each passing moment. The concentration of Aether they had was phenomenal, far more than any of my Cores could ever possess.

It was a good thing I had decided on making more Cores and Sub Cores from the start, since there was no way I could compete with monsters like these.

'Edward must have gotten most of his power from the training method of the Martial Blade God, as well as the guidance of the Aries Constellation.'

As for Kuzon, he had the entire power of the Midas Race within him, not to mention the Leo Constellation.

I couldn't compete with either of those things with sheer power alone.

Seeing their Aether Cores firsthand reminded me of the kind of monsters these two were, and just how far they had come from when I knew them back in Ainzliark Academy.

'Time to go deeper!'

As my thoughts echoed in resolve, I stretched out my hands and reached for both of the Cores before me, sending out my energy to connect to them at the most fundamental level.

It worked!

Our energies were so compatible that I began to feel it mixing in, and I experienced the true depths of their power.

However, the moment our connection grew deeper, and I felt myself being drawn further in... another thing began to manifest.

Something within me.

'T-this is...!'

It was the 'N' Arcana I had with me for safekeeping! It was glowing brightly for some reason, resonating with me as I was resonating with Edward and Kuzon.

The Arcana glowed brightly, and before I realized it... I felt something glowing within the Cores of both Edward and Kuzon.

It felt overwhelmingly strong, but it strangely resonated with the N Card, which resonated with me by extension.

'I feel... odd...'

Suddenly, my form began to dislodge from the Cores I was resonating with. Instead, I felt something higher calling for me.

A door of white opened up before me, a result of the resonance that the N Card offered me. I could feel pieces of Kuzon and Edward in the door, but most of what dwelled on the other side was a mystery.

But the call was too strong that I couldn't resist.

I took one step forward, then two, and before I knew it... I was stepping into the door of light, unaware of what awaited me on the other side.

"Hm? This is a surprise..."

My eyes slowly fluttered open as I heard a voice.

It was deep, imposing, and awe-inspiring all at the same time. I could feel my entire being shiver as I heard the voice reach out.

My blurry vision was yet to acclimate to my current location, but the rest of my senses were already taking in the grandeur of the expanse.

It felt like infinity in a box, and the Aether that filled the realm far surpassed anything I had ever experienced—besides Aether herself.

However, other than the nature of my surrounding itself, there was an even more pertinent observation I made.

... The occupants that currently watched me.

I felt twelve distinct entities staring at me, their presences so imposing that I felt like bowing to them. At the same time, they had so much glory that I felt an innate need to serve them forever.

So many emotions were conjured within me all at once.

Fear.

Awe.

Amazement.

Desire.

It went on and on, and it was almost maddening, being assailed by so many elements. Fortunately, I was able to control my entire Aether-based form thanks to my expertise in Aether Manipulation.

Even though I could not stop the excess Aether assailing me, I could guard myself from receiving any.

"Impressive. To think you'd be able to maintain your composure in our presence..."

"Well, for him to be here is impressive enough, don't you think?"

"Ah, that's true."

As I heard more chatter among the twelve, my vision slowly got sharper, and I could finally see the world spread around me.

It was a world filled with divergent layers of various colors. It felt like a realm sewn out of a rainbow of infinite colors.

It felt like the opposite of any dark expanse of space, filled with so much light and energy that it took my phantom breath away.

This world was beautiful beyond words.

"It is good to have you here, Jared, though it is still surprising." A familiar tone echoed in my ears, and I looked in its direction.

No, in all their directions.

And that was when I found out... I was in the presence of the very beings I sought after.

The Constellations themselves!

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Chapter 1187: Meeting The Constellations

The air seemed to vibrate with an ancient energy, humming with a power beyond comprehension.

My surroundings dissolved into a swirling vortex of colors and lights, and I was transported to a place that defied all logic and reason.

I found myself suspended in the cosmos, weightless and free. The stars, once mere pinpricks of light in the night sky, now burned with an intensity that was both beautiful and terrifying.

All around me, the celestial bodies had taken on a life of their own.

And then, I saw them—the Constellations—in all their majestic glory.

The one who said my name was Aries, so they were the first I observed. They had the form of a Ram, having golden and white fleece that shimmered in the starlight. Their horns gleamed like polished bronze, and their eyes seemed like priceless amber gems.

'T-that is... Edward's Constellation!'

The feeling of awe did not vanish as the other Constellations began to greet my sight one after the other, drowning me a seemingly endless pool of magnificence.

'A-ahh...!' My eyes widened as I witnessed an imposing being whose name I knew almost as soon as I saw them.

Taurus, appearing in the form of a Bull, felt so immense and powerful that I felt my being tremble. Their eyes were blazing with an inner fire that could light up the darkest of nights, and they pawed at the cosmic ground with massive hooves, sending sparks of stardust flying.

I didn't have time to dwell on them when another Constellation's glory filled me up.

Gemini—looking like conjoined Twins—was essentially two ethereal figures locked in an eternal embrace, their forms constantly shifting and merging.

Their laughter echoed through the cosmos like a celestial melody, and I felt a tinge of embarrassment for some reason.

Cancer looked like a Crab, but nothing like anything I had ever seen before. Their shell was adorned with iridescent pearls that gleamed with an otherworldly luster. Even though their body was mostly black in color, the glimmers of gems that decorated their exoskeleton made them irresistibly glorious.

"Haha... to think you'd come this far. I wonder what look Kuzon must have on his face right now."

I recognized the voice instantly!

It was the first sound I heard when I first arrived in this realm. The one with so much authority that made my entire body unable to stop shaking.

Leo, appearing like a Lion, had a majestic and regal form. Their long mane was composed of burning stars that radiated warmth and strength. They gazed down upon me with glowing crimson eyes filled with what I could only chalk up as amusement.

'He's Kuzon's Constellation. That's so... overwhelming...'

"Stop teasing him. He's my Host's lover, you know?" I heard a sweet-sounding tone course through my ears, causing me to instantly look in the direction of the voice.

Partly because I was curious, and partly because I was confused, I raised my brow while staring at the entity before me.

'Eh?'

Did she just say her Host was my lover? How?

This was the Constellation Virgo, dressed as a pure and beautiful Maiden. She stood with an aura of purity and grace, her presence imbued with an innate sense of order and perfection. She held a magnificent shot staff in one hand, and she was smiling warmly at me.

"Maria still doesn't know, but I'm her benefactor."

My eyes widened and my jaws nearly loosened as I heard the news. It was unbelievable, but why would a Constellation lie to me.

I had to simply swallow it as the truth.

Viro's smile felt so warm, and she was so beautiful that I had to look away from her moments after staring due to how embarrassed I was.

My gaze turned to the next Constellation, who was right beside her.

It was Libra, who had the weirdest form out of everyone I had seen thus far.

They looked like some an amalgamation of a glorious Fairy, thanks to their wings and shimmering form, and a six-arm creature. They had a pair of Scales, hanging on their shoulders in perfect balance. The scales seemed to be a part of their body, and they also had six hands—two folded, two on their waist, and two balancing the scales.

The scales swung gently as they looked at me curiously, but I swiftly removed my eyes from them before things got too awkward.

The next one my eyes met was Scorpio. They had the form of a Scorpion, and they weren't really paying much mind to me, but rather, the one beside them. With a graceful, deadly beauty, their tail poised to strike, they had eyes glowed with a fierce intensity, a reminder of the power they possessed.

Unlike Cancer, who was pure black, Scorpio was gleaming white... like milk.

The one whom Scorpio was speaking to was staring directly at me as they were having their conversation.

They were Sagittarius, and they had the form of an Archer. Their bow was right behind them, and they seemed to have eyes all over their body. Each eye shone like diamonds, and its face... surprisingly had no eye at all.

It was just a blank mask that was well-decorated with a helmet.

"Hey, kid, don't mind those two. One is a talkative, and the other is a prude."

The voice that spoke to me was as gentle as it was soothing. I looked in the direction and found the one known as Capricorn.

They had the form of a Sea-Goat, an odd mix, in my opinion.

Their body was adorned with glistening scales and they had majestic horns rose so high, like tall twin trees.

They smiled at me, and I smiled back. For some reason, those simple words from Capricorn calmed me.

"There's a lot we're curious about. So why don't we start with that?" A voice behind me caused me to look, and what I saw was... a fish?

Well, not just an ordinary fish.

Pisces looked like a giant fish made of a glass-like substance. And the odd thing about their nearly transparent form was that within them were numerous fishes who swam gracefully through the astral waters, their scales shimmering with the colors of the universe.

The way the fishes swam within the much larger fish felt reminiscent to the flow of life itself..

'But they're right. I shouldn't get too distracted by all of these...' My thoughts slowly retune to the matter at hand.

I realized that thus far I had only seen 11 of the 12. There was still one more that I was yet to see.

My eyes scoured the Constellations that surrounded me in a circle, and I found the one whom I hadn't yet feasted my eyes on.

'Aquarius...?'

They were made of a liquid substance that resembled water, and within them were shells, pearls, and other shimmering items without end.

It felt like I was looking at the universe itself from outside it.

Somehow, merely looking at this body of water in a humanoid form, ever-flowing and changing, I felt a boundless energy from within.

I could see no end to Aquarius. Just a seemingly infinite layer of depth.

As I gazed upon these celestial beings, I felt a profound sense of wonder and awe. These were living embodiments of the forces that shaped our world and the mysteries of the entire tree.

I had to choose my first words to them wisely.

"Where have you all been? Worlds are getting destroyed because of Legris Damien, yet you all do nothing!"

I was surprised by the words I uttered, almost to the point of apologizing, but I continued anyway.

"Why are you not doing anything?!"

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Chapter 1188: Unwritten Laws

I was upset, and understandably so.

Here I was, standing in the presence of these magnificent, awe-inspiring, and boundlessly powerful entities, now witnessing their greatness... yet I couldn't help the rising feeling of annoyance within me.

"You're all so powerful. You could stop Legris. You could do something, anything, to prevent all those calamities he has been causing."

Yet why hadn't they acted? They couldn't even tell any of us about Legris or assist us in any way.

Instead, they remained in this perfect realm, watching as realities got destroyed as a result of Legris and his actions.

I wanted to know why.

"You are reasonably upset, Jared. The one called Legris Damien is an incredibly dangerous force that even we recognize as a threat." I heard Aries say.

"Then why—?"

"Because we can't do anything about him. It's both an internal and external problem..." This time, it was Libra who spoke.

I didn't understand what they meant when they put things like that.

"Ask yourself this, Jared. Why were we unable to act when The Nether attacked the Aether Realm? His level of power back then would have been no problem for one, not to mention all, of us."

The moment they brought that to my notice, my eyes widened in realization.

'Ahh... I never thought of that!'

Why indeed hadn't the Constellations helped back then? Of course, I wasn't much aware of their existence at that point, but they should have been able to easily handle the Nether with their combined strength.

Yet... they did nothing.

"W-why...?" It confused me so much.

"We couldn't."

"Isn't your purpose to maintain the Aether Tree and everything within it?" I asked, unknowingly raising my voice to respond to Capricorn.

I instantly felt bad the moment I did so, but my rising annoyance did not allow me to dwell on those emotions.

In fact, I soon forgot all the awe I had towards the Constellations.

"It is indeed. However, there are unwritten laws that even we have to abide by." Cancer answered with what I could only see as a sigh.

"Unwritten laws?"

"Yes. Laws that even the Primordial Ones—Aether and Nether—abide by. It is the unwritten law of existence itself that binds all things that exist in any measure."

Even the most powerful existences were bound by these laws? That made no sense! They were the architects of the very fabric of our reality.

How could they be under a higher law? No, that wasn't the real question here.

"Laws are made. If you are all bound by these unwritten laws... then who made them?" I asked, my eyes narrowing in sheer confusion.

For a moment, silence pervaded the world around me.

No one spoke for a moment, and I suddenly felt all eyes flowing in a single direction.

It wasn't on me... but on a Constellation—the last Constellation I laid eyes on.

"We do not know."

As I heard the voice from Aquarius, like an endless stream of waters, and a feminine voice rising to the surface, I could not move.

It felt more powerful than any other sensation I was feeling at the moment.

Her voice completely overwhelmed me.

"That is why they are referred to as the Unwritten Laws. No one knows who established them. The time before existence. The time before the primordial entities and realms were built... no one knows the architect that established these things."

What could I say in response to her words? I was rendered speechless as I watched the primeval body of seas that glowed before me.

"I am the oldest of the Constellations. I was the first to exist after Aether herself. Even I... no, even Aether has no clue about the identity of the one who established our existence."

At this point, I could only utter one word.

"So what are they? God?"

"We call them the Crafter. They exist at a point no one can reach. A realm beyond the Root itself." As Aquarius uttered those words, I felt a strange tingle within me.

However, it was so subtle that it vanished as soon as it appeared.

"So... this Crafter made some laws that you are unable to defy? That's why you couldn't stop the Nether, and why you refuse to do anything now?" I blurted out my inquisition, not even knowing what I felt at this point.

I couldn't blame the Constellations any longer, but I could not direct my rage at one whom I did not know.

"It's more complicated than that, Jared." Virgo spoke to me in her sweet tone. "The unwritten laws are not as precise or particular as you imply."

"Indeed. They are simply limitations to the interference we can initiate on existing reality." Gemini added.

The more they spoke, the more I understood. However, I still had to know what these rules were.

Surely, even if they did not know the Crafter, they knew their laws!

"The reason we could do nothing against the Nether was due to the Unwritten Law of Heirarchy. As lesser beings, we can not challenge a higher existence like the Nether." Aquarius once again iterated in her wave-like voice.

What they were trying to say was that even if the Nether was weakened, he still had an advantage of authority beyond them.

"I-I see..."

"Aether is bound by a different Unwritten Law, which prevents her from directly interacting with reality except through the one she has chosen."

"A Singularity." I muttered.

"Indeed." Aquarius responded, and the others nodded as well.

"Aether dwells within the Root, and the Unwritten Laws prevent her from interacting with much of reality, which is why we exist as Constellations. We are the extension of her will, and the ones who manage existence on her behalf."

I now understood the roles of the Constellations and their relationship with Aether. However, they were still yet to address my main question.

The one that burned within me above all else.

"Which Unwritten Law stops you from stopping Legris?"

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Chapter 1189: Fundamental Flaws

No one uttered a single word.

We all basked in silence as my question hovered in the air, waiting for any form of address.

And then...

"We... do not know."

... I got my answer.

"W-what?" My face warped in surprise as I looked at Aquarius.

She was without a true face, just a humanoid form of water, ever-flowing and fluid. She had no expression to offer me, so I was stuck with her stoic demeanor as she uttered the last words I desired to hear at that moment.

"What do you mean... you don't know?"

"We simply do not understand why we are unable to eliminate him. There are many constraints we possess, and that certainly causes some issues in stopping his deeds, but it is still very difficult to intervene completely."

I didn't understand.

No, perhaps I just couldn't let myself understand.

"C-can you... elaborate?" A question slowly proceeded from my lips, almost as if I was tired of listening to the explanation being offered by these powerful ones.

"Each of us represent and govern certain aspects of existence. As such, we have jurisdictional limitations. We suspect that this Legris knows of this, and as such has found ways to evade our combine actions, bordering on territories that require the attention of only one or two Constellations."

I listened calmly, doing my best to keep my emotions in check.

Of course, I wasn't conceited enough to think I could think of a better solution than these boundless entities, but I had to understand the solution better.

"Something about his presence brings interference to our connection, thus preventing us from reaching areas he has visited unless we actively attempt to do so. It is to my knowledge that you possess a few comrades who are Hosts to my brethren, yet they were unable to communicate with them. Am I correct?"

"Yeah!" I swiftly answered.

Edward and Kuzon couldn't communicate with their respective Constellations at all. The same had to apply to Maria, since I just learned that her Familiar was a Constellation as well.

"The areas you occupied were regions that had too much interference for our boundless reach. As such, you were unable to reach us."

The more I thought about it, the more I began to piece it together.

'So, Legris affects the way they are able to use their abilities, huh? It has to be that black thing I saw back then! It also interfered with my Magic!'

Since we were chasing after Legris, that meant every world we ventured into had the same interference as the last, thus preventing the Constellation from reaching us—or rather, us from reaching them.

"But what about back then, in the world Neron hid all our friends and family? We couldn't reach you back then, and it's not like Legris interfere...d..." My words trailed as I arrived at a realization.

"It seems you have figured it out." I heard Aquarius say, and I nodded slowly.

"Neron... interfered with your authority in that world, didn't he? How is that even possible?" I asked.

"No. It was more like he made a deal with us, to leave that reality alone. So we complied..."

This was news to me.

Why would Neron make a deal with the Constellations to prevent them from communicating to us? If they had, a lot of the mysteries we had to uncover by ourselves wouldn't have taken us so long.

This also reminded me of how he didn't tell me the truth back when I traveled through time to meet him, instead forcing me to find the truth myself.

'Why? To what end?'

Was it really so we wouldn't take the easy route? Was that really all there was to it?

"Can you tell me the details of your deal?"

"No. It is a confidential arrangement between him and us." Aquarius shot me down almost instantly.

I suppose Constellations took their agreements pretty seriously.

"More importantly, this Legris erects barriers which prevents us from detecting him passively, forcing us to actively scour the infinite layers of the Aether Branches to find him. Once we do, and we actively break through the barrier, he would have already detected this and fled. As a result of this, it has been impossible to track him down or put an end to his actions before they are wreaked."

It all made sense to me now.

At this point I couldn't even fault or blame the Constellations, even if I tried.

'They are programmed to uphold reality, after all. It only makes sense that they do their utmost to achieve that very function.'

"You must know that Legris is targeting your Hosts, right?" As I said this, all the Constellations around me nodded slowly.

"So why don't you just break the connections between you and your Hosts to—"

"That is impossible. Our connections with those whom we have bonded with can never be broken."

The moment I heard this echo in my ears, I realized just how troublesome the whole situation had become.

Not only were the Constellations in a tight spot when it came to directly intervening, but they also couldn't take away the incentive that Legris had for wreaking such havoc and marching ever so closer to his goals.

"As you can see, Jared, we have also been working on our end to put an end to him, but Legris Damien and his allies are incredibly difficult to deal with." Virgo's words drew my attention

"Allies? I thought only Ciel was working with him." I murmured. "There's another?"

After I asked my question, a deafening calm echoed in response.

The Constellations glanced at each other, almost as if deciding on whether or not to reveal whatever was hidden from me.

Thankfully, one of them finally spoke.

"Jared, the other partner of Legris is one you know well. His name is Stefan Netherlore... and he has become just as dangerous as Ciel."

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Chapter 1190: An Offer's Consideration

Shock coursed through me as I heard the familiar name of someone I considered a friend in the past.

"S-Stefan... is also...?" My eyes twitched slightly.

I was already aware of the atrocities he had committed for the Nether Cult, but I had viewed it in a sympathetic lens when I considered his family's history and the inherent inferiority complex he had developed over time.

He desperately wanted to surpass his cousin and rival me, but, much to his despair, the gap kept getting wider.

In the end, he sought the Nether Cult for more power.

'Maria doesn't remember much about their fight, but she told me the details of what she remembers. She defeated Stefan and managed to rid him of Nether through her Familiar's Purification Magic.'

He had managed to escape, but I didn't expect him to be on Legris' boat.

'No... what am I thinking? It makes sense!'

Wasn't Legris the one who brought Stefan into the Nether Cult's fold? It all added up, considering the manipulative nature the former had.

'I wonder what he offered you, Stefan...'

What could he have to gain in exchange for destroying countless worlds and destroying so many lives? I had no idea.

"As Constellations, we are unable to directly mere mortals. The only way we intervene is when they intrude on our territory or disrupt an essential part of existence... like the balance of a world's order, or something like that." Aquarius interrupted my thoughts.

With that she was saying, Ciel and Stefan were just a slippery as Legris was. As such, all three of them made a formidable team, evading the Constellations when they could, and retreating whenever they got close enough.

"Its a stalemate, huh?" I murmured.

No, not really. Legris and his party, while having to worry about the Constellations from time to time, still had the advantage of moving forward with their goals.

But the Constellations were stuck.

"You're all in a bind. I can see that now." Rubbing my chin, I began to stare at each othe twelve.

I didn't know when my body had become acclimated to my surroundings, to the point that I no longer felt the pressure of their presence. Instead, I felt comfortable.

Almost as if I had been here forever.

"Do not say it so casually. Its too crude." Aquarius muttered, causing me to bow in apology.

However, after all the problems had been exposed, there remained one thing I needed to know.

'... What can we do about it?'

Clearly, the Constellations couldn't do anything on their own at this point, so I had to find a reasonable solution to the problem.

'I don't have enough arrogance to think I can think of a better plan than them, but...' If there was something I had learned in this brief exchange, it was that the Constellations weren't perfect.

They were immortal and boundless, sure.

But... they were still fallible.

As long as that was the case, I thought it would be alright to think things through on my own and profer a solution to them.

Right here and now, that was the only thing I could do.

"Why don't you all make a deal with me?"

My voice echoed in the infinite expanse as the twelve watched me with both curious and surprised eyes.

"What?" I heard some mutter, but I didn't let that deter me—not when I knew how desperate these entities were.

"Neron made a deal with you, right? That means its possible for a mortal to bargain with you Constellations. I want to propose a mutually beneficial arrangement for both sides."

Stretching out my hands and widening my lips, I gave them my stare of confidence and opened my lips once more.

"Do you care to hear me out?"

"It depends on what kind of deal you are willing to make." Leo responded.

"We should at least hear him out." I heard Libra mutter.

"He did manage to come to this space. That shows his worth, at the very least." Aries added with what I could only guess was a smile.

"He has a track record too. Going against the Nether, though the latter wasn't at full power..." Saggitaurus uttered.

"He also met Aether, so there's that..." Next was Virgo.

"If Aether chose him, and Neron approves of him, then he must have something good to propose." Pisces bubbled out.

"He also has the world's best interest at heart. We would do ourselves a disservice if we do not hear his words, at the very least." Gemini echoed out.

The other Constellations aired out their thoughts. However, once they were all done, all of them glanced in the direction of one Constellation for the final call.

The oldest of them all—Aquarius.

"Are you confident your offer has worth?" She asked me with her faceless face.

I could respond with a million things, but there was no need to overplay my card right now. I was well aware of my position.

The only reason I was allowed to speak was because of the recommendations of stronger, more important figures.

Aether and Neron—those two granted credence to my worth.

As frustrating as that was, I had to swallow my pride and focus on the task ahead.

'Even though you have only chosen to listen to me because of them... I will make sure my words stand on their own merit.'

That had been my goal from the very start.

"I am confident." My response was swift and simple.

Aquarius nodded, giving her implicit approval.

"Let's hear it then... Jared Leonard." Their combined voices filled the expanse around me, and my brows furrowed in determination.

'Neither Aether nor Neron are here to save you. The only one present...' My lips curled up to form a grin as I prepared to speak.

'... Is me!'

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