

SPELLCRAFT 1191

SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar

Chapter 1191: Jared's Deal [Pt 1]

After listening carefully and understanding the fundamental flaw that plagued the Constellations, I finally narrowed everything into one central issue.

'The Unwritten Laws.'

They limited these supposedly invincible entities, and they caused a lot of contrivancies and inconveniences that it made it difficult—if not downright impossible—to achieve the goal we all wished they could.

However... there was a simple loophole.

'That's where the deal comes into play!'

"It is unreliable to expect you twelve to solve the current issue. Not only is it one of absolute pertinence, but it requires an immediate solution."

Legris was too smart to slip up when dealing with Constellation who were limited by their own cause for existence.

As a result, we needed to approach things from another angle.

"What is required at the moment are powerful agents who may act on your behalf. That way, you can bypass these limitations placed on you by the Unwritten Laws and put an end to Legris' plans... whatever they may be."

As simple and straightforward as it sounded, this solution was the most efficient way to address the problem.

However...

'I am sure they have already thought of this.'

... There was a reason why this plan wouldn't be particularly favored by the Constellations.

"What you propose brings nothing to the table. It isn't news that our Hosts face Legris and do their best to stop him. It is our hopes that they should succeed in defeating him, but he is too powerful and intelligent to let that happen."

Indeed. That was the risk behind this proposal.

'If the Constellations entrust the duty of stopping Legris to their agents—i.e the Hosts—there's a good chance they will fail to stop Legris, and he will only grow stronger.'

Legris was after the Constellation Essence that dwelled in every Host. If they actively executed this plan, it would be as though they were serving him his meals on a silver platter.

That was probably their reasoning.

'But... it is still fundamentally flawed.'

"Legris isn't as powerful as he appears to be. He is smart and dangerous, I admit that much, but his power isn't as high as you estimate it."

The fact that Legris was able to defy entities like Constellations and ensure he steadily achieved what he desired, was not a testament of his strength, but of his vast understanding of how the world operated.

He was able to use this knowledge to his advantage and execute a strategy that seemed to be centuries in the making.

'From gathering the Arcanas... and now this.'

Everything was connected.

"He has been planning this for much longer than we have been deliberating countermeasures, so he clearly has the upper hand in that regard.'

However, the only way to ruin this plan was to attack him with the antithesis of a well-ordered strategy.

"Brute, unreasonable force. We require an unstoppable power that completely topples all the cards he has built up."

Like a stack of dominos, they would all roll out of order... and Legris would be greeted with chaos.

"Imagine this: your most elite Hosts attack Legris, surprising him in the process. If we coordinate our assault well and properly develop the roles of each individual, we will be able to create an unstoppable collective."

The risks remained that this would only serve a full buffet to Legris, but if we did nothing, the world was screwed anyway.

Yes, it was risky.

"But this is the only chance we have to stop him. You need us the same way we need you."

Once I concluded my speech, silence enveloped the world around me.

The searing gazes of the Constellations kept me stiff, but I maintained a confident smile. This was no time to show weakness or doubt.

They all knew I was speaking the truth. However, their caution or pride prevented them from admitting it.

... At least, not immediately.

"You offer big words, Jared Leonard. However, the only things you spout are ideals." As I expected, Aquarius was the one who spoke.

I couldn't tell if she was scowling or frowning, but her tone didn't sound too pleasant.

"The combined forces of Hosts... all for the purpose of defeating Legris. It sounds perfect, almost poetic even. However, there is such a thing as reality, and the very nature of applying ideals to practice."

Yes, I knew this would surface too.

"Your plan offers no concrete solution. You say we require agents to bypass the Laws and defeat our adversary... but which agents?"

"My friends!"

Aquarius stopped speaking the moment I gave my response. She looked straight into my eyes, and while I didn't know what she saw... the most confident impression was plastered on my face.

"You sure are conceited, aren't you? There are vast worlds beyond your single branch... an infinite spectrum of choices. Yet, you limit us to your biased judgment." I could hear the chuckle of a few Constellations, but I kept my cool.

"Why should we consider your friends, when there are bound to be better candidates in the vast tree of Aether."

"No other branch has fought the Nether and emerged victorious." I responded flatly, my eyes still gleaming with confidence.

Conceit or Arrogance... they could call it whatever they wanted, but I didn't care.

What I uttered were only facts.

"Neron has been breeding us for this, apparently. It all makes sense. The conflict at Ainzlark. The Incursion. The Wars. Our journey into the Lost Worlds. It all culminates into this single point..."

Everything was to ensure we were ready for this final challenge.

"You are free to search the infinite layers of the worlds before you, but you will never be able to find more suitable candidates than the ones I call my friends."

With my right hand on my chest, I boldly declared the truth that all of the Constellations needed to accept.

"I guarantee it!"

*

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

Chapter 1192: Jared's Deal [Pt 2]

The tension in the air was palpable.

I refused to blink, and I forced myself not to gulp, staring at the colossal entities that surrounded me.

If they desired, they could disregard me without a second's thought. They could fling me aside as the mere speck of dust that I was.

BUT... they wouldn't be able to do any of those things.

"We aren't just going to take your word for it." Aquarius' voice echoed, finally breaking the tense silence that consumed the room.

Her tone no longer had the aggressive and condescending taste it previously displayed. Instead, her voice felt somewhat... soft?

"We are... quite picky, you know? These friends of yours... there is no guarantee we will select them."

My smile widened the moment I heard that.

'It seems I was right, after all...'

It wasn't that the Constellations wouldn't be able to refuse my offer, but they simply COULDN'T.

'They are wired to operate with the best interests of the Aether Branch at heart. That means, no matter what they personally think of my plans—irrespective of their pride and caution—they will select the most viable means to protect reality.'

Now that I had brought up this solution, they could not refuse it even if they tried.

'... All because of the Unwritten Laws.'

"I have confidence that my friends will be able to garner the favor of at least one Constellation each. Some may even draw the attention of more."

"Do not push it, Jared Leonard. Who do you think we are?" Aquarius instantly raised her voice, causing my very being to tremble that very instant.

I was, once again, reminded of my place.

"A-apologies. Haha... do forgive my disrespect."

If it was for the sake of the world, I could take on whatever role that was expected of me... at least that was what I had initially thought.

But this... this was frustrating.

'I want to do more—be more!'

Merely appealing to a higher power was insufficient. Even if I had a fair amount of confidence in my plans, there was no fulfillment in it.

I was merely a dog doing its possible best to beg for a bone.

"What do you desire in exchange for our acceptance of this deal?" Aquarius' words suddenly lifted me out of my thoughts.

"What?"

"You made an attractive offer, and we have accepted to consider it. However, you have yet to mention what you want in exchange."

The moment I heard this, my eyes widened in surprise.

'I wasn't expecting this. I can actually get something in exchange for a mutually beneficial plan?'

I had thought the plan I offered was something that benefited both parties, so there was no need for an additional advantage on my end.

It seems I was wrong.

"Do you desire to become a Host as well? Do you have particular Constellations you desire to be bonded with? Certain exceptions can be made for your sa—"

"No. That's not what I want." My answer was swift.

Now that it had come to this, perhaps I could finally obtain what was missing in my current state.

"Then, do wish to maintain a friendly relationship and loose contracts with all of us? That is also something we can consid—"

"No, that's not it either."

Both of their suggestions were appealing. If I had the exclusive ability to decide the Constellations I wanted to have as my Familiars, or even maintain loose Contracts with all of them... that would be HUGE.

I could end up becoming even more powerful than Neron, and I was probably going to surpass any of my peers that had ever existed.

However...

'... It's not enough.'

I didn't like those offers for one major reason.

"I'm tired of it—feeling inadequate and powerless before colossal forces of nature like yourselves."

My thoughts could be interpreted in many ways. Perhaps I was being too greedy, conceited, entitled, or prideful.

I didn't see it that way, though.

"Borrowing power and not being capable enough to properly protect those I love... it's frustrating to me." I said, clenching my fists as the words came forth.

"I desire to fully comprehend Magic, but it feels worthless if I have to appeal to higher powers to obtain it. It is no longer an achievement but a gift..."

A mere bone tossed to the dog.

"I see. So what is it that you really desire?" I heard Aquarius ask.

The direct gazes of the Constellations also seemed to imply the very same question. They desired to know what I really wanted.

Well, it wasn't any form of Contract.

"I want an exchange. Me versus each of you."

"W-what?"

"That's right! I want a fair match between me and each of you. That's a total of twelve matches. No time limit, and the free use of abilities."

That was all!

"Are you serious? Your request is internally inconsistent. A duel between a mortal and a Constellation is not only impossible, but it is far from fair."

I grinned the moment I heard this.

"Well, maybe you are right. But that is what I desire. It is a simple request from me to you..."

I could sense their skepticism as they stared at me in silence. As a result, I decided to push the matter a little further.

"Just as you Constellations are very picky, so am I. You desire to test my friends to determine their worth, do you not? Well, consider me doing the same to you."

~VWUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM!!!~

The moment I uttered those words, I felt a powerful pressure envelop the vast expanse before me.

It felt unbearably dense—like the very aspects of existence had turned against me.

"DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU REFER TO THIS WAY? YOU DARE...?" I heard them thunder, both in surprise and anger.

Despite all the tension that enveloped the world, however, I let out a light chuckle.

"Haha... hahaha..."

Why?

I knew they weren't going to hurt me. They couldn't do so, thanks to the Unwritten Laws.

'No free will, bound by the laws of your existence... yes, I know who you are quite well.' My smile widened as I maintained my defiant stare at them.

"Yes, I dare."

The air felt heavy still, and it was difficult to breathe, but I endured all of that anyway.

Stretching forth my hand slowly, I faced the leader of the twelve, ensuring my expression was that of goodwill.

"So, do we have a deal?"

*

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

Chapter 1193: The Constellations' World

'I hope he's alright...'

Maria's thoughts trailed as she looked carefully at Jared's body from a close distance.

Something about his pale skin and his barely moving body seemed to signify lifelessness, and it bothered Maria to no end.

It had only been a few minutes since he began his [Resonance] with Edward and Kuzon, but it felt like an eternity to her.

'Edward and Kuzon don't look pale at all. It's just him!'

Why? She had no idea, and that was what made her fret even more.

"You don't need to be worried about him, Maria. The dude can take care of himself." She heard Ana's voice echo in her ears, and she felt her hand resting on her shoulder.

Maria appreciated the sentiment, but it wasn't something she could turn on or off.

'I know he's very strong and capable. But... seeing him like this is...' She couldn't describe it easily.

'If it was Kuzon, I'm sure you'd feel the same.'

Of course, Maria didn't dare speak out her thoughts, so she only nodded and smiled as Ana comforted her.

~WHUUUUUUUSSSHH!~

A sudden gust of wind appeared, and it instantly surrounded all three of the guys who sat in a circle. A bright light also consumed them, shining so brightly that it would blind any man instantly.

"KUZOOON!" Ana's voice was the first to peak, as her eyes bulged despite the bright light that just appeared.

However, her shock and worry were only going to be temporary as the next moment, bright light began to emanate from her—as well as everyone else—too.

The gust of wind that swirled around Maria and her comrades felt light, almost pleasant. The light also felt familiar, and it seemed to be guiding her somewhere.

She closed her eyes for a moment, taking in these strangely serene sensations, and the moment she opened them... she was in a completely different realm.

The same went for all her comrades.

No longer were they in the ruined town, or in anywhere resembling an aspect of reality. Instead, they found themselves in an inexplicable realm.

"W-whoah..." Maria mumbled to herself as her eyes took in the marvelous sights before her.

It felt like she was living on a canvas that had been created by converging rainbows.

The palette of colors that filled her eyes caused her heart to race in excitement, and the world itself seemed so vast that it could very well be infinite.

Thankfully, she wasn't alone in this place.

"Just like Jared Leonard, it seems his friends also lack manners. Are these truly the ones we should bestow our powers to?" Aquarius murmured.

It was impossible to determine if she was frowning or now, but from the tone of her voice, Maria guessed that was the case.

The pressure around her was too much for her to speak her mind, and it troubled her to no end.

'Jared... what did they do to Jared?'

"Hey! Who do you think lacks manners?!" A sudden voice echoed in the massive space, causing Maria's eyes to widen.

Someone among them had just spoken, and her loud voice broke through the tense silence like a hot knife through butter.

"You just dragged us all here without proper warning, and without explaining things to us, you're subjecting us to whatever nonsense you want!"

Maria was bewildered.

Everyone else was on their knees, trembling due to the inescapable power that weighed them down, and yet one of them was standing... spewing words that would only fuel the rage of those who stood above them.

"You're just bullies! Now stop hurting my Jerr... I mean, my friends...!"

Ciara's voice stuttered at the last portion of her sentence, but that didn't seem to be from nervousness. Both hands were on her hips, and she had a scowl on her face that defied all logic.

Maria was beyond surprised, and so was everyone else.

Even the Constellations.

"You..." Aquarius murmured as she seemed to draw near with her imposing presence.

"... What did you just do?"

*

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

Chapter 1194: Potential Hosts

Ciara felt uneasy.

No, it wasn't because of the imposing stares all the Constellations gave her, nor was it due to the question she was just asked by Aquarius.

The reason for her discomfort was one thing and one thing alone!

'Jerry! He's being forced to kneel!'

However, the moment she had this thought, Ciara quickly corrected herself and looked at the rest of her friends who suffered the same.

Yes, this wasn't just about Jerry. Her allies mattered too, and right now, they were being held captive by these all-powerful Constellations.

'I wonder why I'm not being affected, though...' Ciara wondered to herself.

It wasn't like she was that much different from everyone else in the room, and there were even more powerful people in the hall.

"Answer my question, human. What did you just do?"

Upon hearing Aquarius' question, Ciara felt even more perplexed.

'I don't think I did anything, though.' However, even though that was what she thought, Ciara decided not to tell the truth.

Instead, she gave a smug look and crossed her arms in absolute confidence.

"I'm not going to tell you."

Her defiant gaze met with Aquarius' faceless face, and the both of them stared at each other for some time, before a voice finally broke the silence.

"She has a point, though. They are merely ignorant children. We should do well to enlighten them."

Ciara turned and spotted Virgo speaking.

Her pure white form served as an inspiration to Ciara, and for some reason, she instantly lost her cocky attitude.

"Hmm... I suppose you are right. Very well, then." Aquarius muttered, and the rest of the Constellations nodded, though a few of them simply shrugged.

"Listen carefully, all of you."

At this point, the pressure in the multicolored expanse vanished, and all the thirteen individuals who stood at the center of the surrounding Constellations looked at Aquarius.

"Your friend, Jared Leonard, has made a deal with us. It involves all thirteen of you, and your prospects in relation to defeating the scourge known as Legris Damien."

"Where is Jared?" Maria's voice suddenly echoed out, interrupting Aquarius with her tone of concern.

Instantly, Aquarius turned to her, and in what could only be interpreted as a glare, she spoke.

"Be quiet. I am still speaking."

That was all it took to silence the worried girl, and so Aquarius continued.

"All thirteen of you will undergo trials within this place, and we will spectate these trials. This is so we can see if you are worthy of our power, as Jared Leonard has told us you are."

Of course, the expressions of all the mortals in the room said it all.

What kind of deal did Jared make with the Constellations? Why would the Constellations want to give them their power?

... Would they be able to succeed in these trials?

"Should you pass your trials, you will be selected by a Constellation that fancies you. This keeps things fair for everyone, and leaves it all to your abilities."

Silence pervaded the hall as Aquarius concluded her words and stared at everyone present.

"Any questions?"

Maria swiftly raised her hand, but Aquarius instantly ignored it.

"Any other question?"

"I have a question. What about those who already possess Constellations? Is there a need to undergo those trials?"

The one who spoke was Kuzon, and he had a serious demeanor etched on his face. He gave a sideway glance at Leo, before returning his gaze to Aquarius.

"That is a very good question. For those who have already been favored by a Constellation, you may choose one of two options."

Kuzon and Edward stiffened their faces as they listened.

For these two, they had already undergone trials of unspeakable horrors and persistence in order to attract the attention of their respective Constellations.

It was ridiculous to think they would have to undergo another trial just like the rest of their comrades.

"You may choose to participate in the subsequent trials and gain the attention of another Constellation, or choose to train and develop your powers with the Constellations you are currently contracted with."

As soon as Aquarius finished her words, she looked at the ones with whom they were concerned.

"What will it be?" The moment she asked, Edward and Kuzon answered without missing a single beat.

"Develop my powers with the Constellation I'm currently contracted with."

"I'll develop my powers."

There was no reason to hesitate.

In the first place, it wasn't guaranteed that they would be able to get the attention of another Constellation. Besides, they both recognized that their current levels of mastery in their respective Constellation abilities were too lacking.

The better option was to sharpen the blade they already possessed, rather than seek out another dull blade that wasn't even guaranteed to be theirs.

"What about you... Maria Helmsworth?" Aquarius turned to the flustered young girl who still seemed slighted by how she had been treated thus far.

All she wanted to know was Jared's whereabouts, and all she got for it was the harsh response of Aquarius.

"What do you mean?" Maria asked, her brows furrowed in confusion. "I don't have a Constellation as a Familiar."

"Well, you do. You just never realize it." A voice appeared from behind her, drawing Maria's attention to the angelic-looking entity that stood majestically among the other Constellations.

"Hello, Maria. My name is Virgo, and I chose you as my Host."

The moment Maria heard this, her heart nearly stopped. Not only was Virgo beautiful beyond anything she could have ever imagined, but the news was too shocking for her to comprehend at the moment.

"Y-you're... not an Angel?"

"I am not. I often appear that way to those I choose as my Hosts, though. In essence, the Archangel that is your Familiar is a part of me, an extension of myself that I gave to you."

In essence, Maria had made an indirect contract with Virgo by contracting with a portion of herself.

When put that way, it all made sense.

However, something was still strange about this whole arrangement.

"Why? Why would you choose me?"

For a moment, there was silence. Neither Constellation nor human spoke, and they simply stared at each other for what could be calculated as an eternity encapsulated in a second.

However, Virgo finally broke the silence.

"Let's just say... I made a promise to someone. It started out that way, but I suppose I'm genuinely interested in you now."

"Haa...?" Maria did not completely get it, but she could at least understand what Virgo was saying.

"So what do you say? Want to develop yourself under me?"

Yet another period of silence enveloped the room. However, this one didn't last very long... because Maria opened her lips to speak.

"D-do you know where Jared is? I'll accept everything if you can tell me."

"Hahaha! You're an interesting child. Jared is fine. He has already begun something akin to his own trial."

Upon hearing this, Maria opened her lips and eyes in both relief and surprise.

"You don't want to get left behind, do you?" Virgo's additional words spurred something within her, and she instantly shook her head.

"Then what do you say?"

Maria's lips curled up to form a grin. Now that her heart was settled, and she knew Jared was doing his best to become even stronger, there was no longer any room for hesitation.

She had long made up her mind before the question was posed.

"I'll do it! I'll develop under you as well!"

*

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

Chapter 1195: Grand Preparations [Pt 1]

The thirteen mortals were split into two categories after they were informed of their purpose in the realm of Constellations.

The first group involved those who would undergo trials to garner the attention of a Constellation. Those under this banner were Serah, Aloe, Ciara, Ana, Aurora, Lemi, Jerry, Z'ark, Beruel, and Gerard.

The second category belonged to those who would be training under their respective Constellations. In essence, Kuzon, Edward, and Maria.

Despite being divided into two main groups, each individual had their own compartment where they would undergo their trial.

It was a personal journey for everyone, thus they were separated into what could only be defined as distinct realities all locked within the Constellation Realm.

With each person in a world of their own, they would undergo trials unique to them. As for the Constellations, they would observe the prospective Hosts, as well as the ones who aimed for improvement.

Whether or not Jared's allies would be able to meet up to their expectations was not up to the Constellations, but the allies themselves.

There was no need to rush too.

This Realm stood outside the reach of concepts like time. As such, they could spend an eternity within this place, and not even a second would pass in the real world.

Besides awaiting the results of those who desired to harness their power, the Constellations had one more responsibility.

... The Exchange between each of them, and the one called Jared Leonard.

It felt foolish and pointless to them, but since it was part of the deal, they had all agreed to do it.

"Of all the things he could desire..." Aquarius muttered as she watched Jared in a vast expanse that was a mere fraction of the entire Constellation Realm.

"... He chose this?"

She could see the determined face of the young man as he prepared to face his first Constellation. He didn't have any expression of pride or confidence.

Just... pure resolve.

It intrigued Aquarius a little, causing her to draw her attention closer to the scene.

'Well then, let's see what you can do...' She smiled to herself, despite having no face to achieve that.

The entire Constellation Realm held its breath to see a mortal challenge a Constellation.

'... Jared Leonard.'

[Meanwhile...]

A black misty gate opened up in a world filled with carnage.

The skies were darkened, as if a terrible storm was brewing, and the bright rays of sunlight were dimmed by the sheer presence of darkness that now shrouded the entire world.

Dead bodies lay strewn all over the battlefield; from mangled corpses to dismembered body parts... all of them painted the landscape in death and despair.

The only two living people among this horrid sight were two individuals—a woman and a young man.

They both looked at the dark portal that opened before them, and from within it emerged the third member of their group.

"It looks like you're already done..." Legris smiled as he stepped foot into the world before him.

The smell of dried blood and the pungent odor of boiling flesh filled the air. It was a disgusting mix of several unpleasant odors, but Legris didn't mind at all.

After all, he was already used to it.

"You're late. Here you go." Ciel murmured, throwing what appeared to be a glass-like shard of energy at Legris.

The fragment brimmed with such intense light that it illuminated the dark expanse that surrounded them.

"Thanks." Legris accepted the light fragment and instantly opened a black portal to place it inside. "I had a bit of interference... namely, Jared Leonard."

Legris appeared to be in good shape. He looked handsome, as always, with his dark brown hair and pale skin. His dark coat complimented his tall physique, and nothing about him seemed disheveled in the slightest.

He was perfectly fine.

"Jared, huh? That Singularity bastard? The one who ruined my plans!" Ciel burst out, her beautiful face contorting into one of absolute rage.

The glow in her golden eyes made clear the amount of malice she held towards the owner of that name.

"No. The real Singularity is Neron. It has always been him. He was also the one who ruined your plans. Jared is more like a festering parasite that doesn't seem to go away." Legris muttered, shrugging slightly as he drew closer to his allies.

"He has gathered a team of thirteen other individuals, apparently. Most of them are nobodies, but a few of them pose a considerable amount of threat to us."

The moment Legris mentioned a 'team', something in Stefan's eyes flickered, and his ears twitched slightly.

He didn't say anything, but his furrowed brow made it clear that he was now paying closer attention to every word that came out of Legris' lips.

"I didn't expect him to return so soon. It puts a wrench in our plans, considering how he and his friends are closing in on us."

Ciel gave a sigh, and Stefan simply looked at the two of them in silence.

"Are they really that close? You couldn't do anything to get rid of them?" She asked, an annoyed expression replacing her previously malicious one.

"It's not that easy. I don't know much about his allies, but Jared is ridiculously strong now. You should have seen how he wiped the floor with... well, me." The way Legris explained his terrible experience with Jared was almost comedic.

He sounded unaffected by all the pain he must have endured... the horrors that was forcefully imprinted on him.

"In the end, I got him to destroy my soul. That way, he won't be able to track us down using his previous method. Knowing Jared, though, he might come up with some other machination eventually, which means we have to be more careful."

Even though it pained Legris to utter the next words that came out of his lips, the way he saw it... the situation called for it.

It was inevitable.

"Our plans will have to be delayed."

*

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

Chapter 1196: Grand Preparations [Pt 2]

"WHAT?"

Ciel's voice reached a pitch that could destroy the eardrums of anyone who listened to her, as she glared at Legris and uttered her query.

The ground trembled in response to her voice, and a sudden chill manifested all around her. It felt dangerous, enough for mere men to kneel and beg for mercy.

Fortunately for the men in her presence, they weren't ordinary men.

"Calm yourself." Legris' calm voice suddenly echoed in the turbulent storm of Ciel's wrath, and she slowly retracted the dangerous aura that she emitted.

"It's not like I personally prefer to delay the plan. It's just the safest option right now."

"..."

Silence followed Legris' words. Based on her expression, it seemed Ciel was trying to understand what he was saying.

After about a few seconds of saying nothing, she eventually spoke.

"So how long will it take us to achieve our goals?"

"Well..." A bead of sweat drooped down Legris' pale face as he looked at Ciel's curious gaze. It was clearly a tough choice for him to answer her honesty, but what were partners for?

"A couple more years. Five to seven, give or take."

There was a calm before the storm, lasting an approximate of 0.0000000000005 seconds, enough time for Ciel's brain to fully process what Legris just said.

And it was more than enough time to come up with a response.

"What the hell did you just say?!"

"You have to understand how difficult it is to obtain sufficient energy to reunite you with the Nether and also achieve my goals. The reason for the extended time frame is because of the interference from Jared's team, not to talk of our skirmish with the Constellations too."

Legris was simply being reasonable in his calculations.

The current situation placed them at a disadvantage, and he knew that very well. Currently, he had managed to escape the interference of the Constellations, but with Jared and his allies now in the mix, it was too much.

At the very least, he had to compensate for the time spent hiding, running, planning, distracting, etc. It wasn't even like he desired any delays either.

"It's just how—"

"NO! No way! I refuse to accept waiting that long!" Ciel's voice overshadowed his very reasonable tone.

She sounded like a whiny brat, but what could Legris do about it?

He completely understood how she felt. Not only had she done her part in his plan for some years now, but every waking moment of her existence was pushed towards bringing the Nether back.

To tell her she would have to wait for even longer... that was beyond awful.

"Be reasonable, Ciel."

"NO! I don't want to! We've worked so hard, all this time, and you're telling me we have to do even more work?"

Legris sighed the instant she said this. If anyone was to be complaining, it was him. He was the central figure behind this whole operation, and frankly speaking, he was the one who experienced the most trouble out of all of them.

'Yet I know what must be done. Perhaps I'm approaching this the wrong way...' He swiftly turned his attention to the other male in the group.

"Back me up here, Stefan. You agree that it's reasonable to be cautious, right? We should bide our time well, right?"

Stefan's dull expression faltered a little when he stared at Legris' exaggerated smile. The latter's bulging eyes and slowly nodding head made it clear that he wanted Stefan to agree with him.

"Well, I—"

"No! Stefan, think about it! Don't you want this mission done with as soon as possible? Then you'll also achieve your goals, right? No risks, no rewards! Don't you think so?" Ciel swiftly interrupted the young man before he could get more than two words in.

"Stefan, don't listen to her!" Legris protested, his tone becoming higher than Ciel in an attempt to return Stefan's attention to him.

It worked! Stefan slowly turned his gaze to Legris.

"Stefan, don't listen to him!" Ciel's pitch got even higher, causing Stefan's head to steer in her direction.

"Stefan!"

"Stefan!"

At this point, both sides were calling for him, making him stuck at the center of the impossibly polarizing choices that had to be decided on.

He had to say something... and fast!

"ENOUGH!"

The moment he raised his voice, the entire atmosphere fell silent, and the two who had been talking over him fell into a strange lull.

The energy that pushed them to spew words almost instantly left their bodies.

"Ciel, didn't it take you centuries to gather the members and Arcanas for your Nether Cult? Why are you making it sound like you don't need to consider several factors and exercise patience in order to achieve what you desire?"

As Stefan's question dropped, so did Ciel's countenance.

A guilty expression played on her face, and she hung her head low, realizing just how much truth the boy before her had just spouted.

"Haha! You get it, Stefan! I knew I could count on—"

"And you, Legris... you can't tell me this is the only strategy you could come up with. I doubt you would prefer to just delay your plans because of the appearance of new threats."

Upon hearing this, Legris' body quivered slightly.

"Use your big brain to figure something out... a beneficial plan that is the most efficient, considering the current situation."

As the remnants of Stefan's words echoed in their midst, Ciel and Legris stared at each other for a few seconds.

"It's ultimately up to you, Legris. What do you want to do?" She sighed, finally giving up her tantrums to hear the decision of their leader.

In the end... he was the one who would make the call.

"Well, there is another plan we can use..." Legris began, a small smile forming on his face as he stared at his two loyal comrades.

"It's quite risky, but if we can pull it off... I'll be able to get all the energy we need in one go."

*

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

Chapter 1197: Grand Preparations [Pt 3]

"For real? In one go? You're serious, right?"

Once again, Ciel's voice dominated the lifeless expanse surrounding them. However, this time, her pitch indicated something different from anger or frustration.

No, it was brimming with excitement.

"Yes. I'm serious." Legris responded with a slight shrug.

"Yayyyyyy! Let's go with that plan then!"

Ciel began to jump in anticipation, not even concerned at all that her two partners were staring at her with embarrassed gazes.

She even started dancing!

"You really... know no shame, do you?" Legris asked, one of his hands covering his face as he shook his head.

There was a reason this woman was determined to be mentally unstable.

"Shameless woman..." Even Stefan muttered words that connoted his thoughts on Ciel, though he ensured no one could hear what he just said.

"Pssh! You two are no fun."

"It's not about fun at all. Sure, the plan is incredibly efficient, but like I said earlier... it's risky." Legris shattered the excitement that Ciel had been building up.

Something told him she didn't hear the whole 'risky' part, but instead focused on the benefits attached to this backup strategy.

"A-ah... is that so?"

"Legris, considering the benefits alone, you would have made this backup plan your main strategy. For you to have relegated such an efficient solution to the background... that means the risks are incredible..." Stefan iterated, causing both of the other two to look in his direction.

"... Am I right?"

After he asked the question, attention shifted to Legris, and he rubbed he shut his eyes, almost as if considering all that Stefan just postulated.

Then... he smiled.

"You are correct. This second plan is indeed very risky. It is a simple 'high stakes, high reward' scenario."

Despite Legris' aversion to risk, however, he seemed to be warming up more and more to the prospect of the plan.

"If we had undertaken this mission at the start of our journey, maybe we would have a 2 percent chance of success—at most." Despite saying that, his grin did not disappear.

Instead, it grew wider.

"But now, I'd say we have a 30 percent chance of success. A lot has changed since we started this journey. We've been through quite a bit together, and now... well, it's our final stand."

Legris heaved a sigh as he looked at the expectant faces of his two colleagues. Spending years together was more than enough to draw people closer to each other.

When they first started their journey, Stefan was never expressive, and Ciel would never speak out her thoughts so brazenly.

Yet, as time progressed, they found themselves drawing closer and closer.

Even though they now stood above the toppled corpses of their victims, Legris realized just how much of a bond he had formed with these two.

Which was why he had to ask them...

"... Are you both willing to undertake this risk with me?"

It was a simple question, but the meaning behind it was evident.

For a while, no one said anything.

The trio simply took turns exchanging glances, waiting for the respective answers they would deliver to the question.

"I am willing to do anything as long as I can be with my Nether." Ciel was the first to respond, her brilliant smile.

Her golden eyes showed no fear or hesitation at all, and she seemed completely supportive of the plan.

But why?

Perhaps it was truly due to her desperation to be reunited with her lover... or the trust she now had in Legris and his competence.

Either way, her choice had been made.

"I... am not sure." Stefan's voice broke through the bright atmosphere that was already beginning to form due to the camaraderie being expressed in the group.

Hesitation bled from his expression, and his words did not betray his true feelings on the matter.

However...

"I am curious about what this plan is, and how you intend to execute it. So, I'll be tagging along."

... As a member of the team, he was not going to abandon it now.

"You two..." Legris' grin contorted into an expression of genuine emotion.

His widened eyes slowly began to fall slightly, and a soft smile played on his lips as he looked at the two allies before him.

"... Thank you."

Both Ciel and Stefan returned his thanks with optimistic smiles, and that caused him to smile even more.

"I suppose since we all agree to this, we should initiate the plan. But, just to increase our odds a little more... let's be a bit more patient." He raised his index finger, and a look of seriousness instantly shrouded his face.

"We need a bit more Constellation Energy... to make the odds at least 50 percent. Since we only have one shot at this plan, I reckon we meticulously handle the matter."

Stefan and Ciel both nodded at his words.

Legris had never been wrong about their plans and actions before, and he wasn't going to let them down now.

That was why they trusted him... and he trusted them.

"Now I'm excited about all of this!"

"Are you ready?"

As I heard the Constellation before me speak, my thoughts were split into various fragments.

My body trembled slightly, experiencing both excitement and aversion, but I refused to give in to either or both.

I gulped down my saliva and readied my nerves for the gut-wrenching battle that was about to occur.

'So far, I have somewhat gotten accustomed to the way Constellations fight. I still can't completely get used to it, though.'

Each Constellation possessed power beyond the reach and imagination of limited entities like me, and even when fighting me, they used such a variety of abilities that threw me in for a loop.

'So far, I have fought 11 Constellations... and I have lost every single time.'

My final opponent was the most difficult one yet.

Her viscous, liquid-like body floated before me, waiting for me to signify my readiness to initiate the fight.

'She's apparently the oldest and most powerful...' I shuddered at the thought of going against her head-on, but I realized I had to do this anyway.

And so, bracing myself for the last time, I maintained my glare and clenched my fist. My lips slowly parted to reveal my response to her earlier question.

"I'm ready!"

*

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

Chapter 1198: Jared Vs Aquarius [Pt 1]

Aquarius calmly stared at the young man before her, and she only had one thought.

'He's weak.'

As a Constellation who was boundless, having access to the infinite branches of her realm, she knew what true power meant.

Of course, she knew that by mere mortal standards, Jared was already among the 0.0000000000001 percent in existence—no, perhaps even in a smaller range than that.

However, there were still several entities that towered over him.

One of those entities happened to be her.

"I'm ready!" Aquarius heard him say definitively, and all she could do in response was sigh.

If she had a face, what she would be showing now was disinterest at the sheer pointlessness of this exchange.

Still, as a Constellation, she was bound to honor the deal.

"Very we—"

~WHOOOOOOSSSHHHH!!!~

Before Aquarius could conclude her statement, she suddenly felt a strong coalition of energy gathering in a single location.

'Hm?' Focusing her senses so she could detect even the most minute building block of energy and existence, she realized the truth.

Everything was flowing in one direction!

'Him, huh? So he is absorbing as much Aether as possible. But he can't handle that much power, can he?'

The Aether in this plane was far purer and more concentrated than anything that existed in the mortal worlds.

A certain amount was bound to utterly destroy a person.

'He seems perfectly fine, though. Ahh... he's not particularly absorbing it, is he?' She thought, realizing that the young man was simply drawing all the energy to himself without taking it into his body.

'A wise choice. So he's drawing more energy to his end. Why?'

Aquarius already knew of the abilities that Jared Leonard had in his arsenal. She knew he could use all 22 Arcanas, though none of them would do him any good in this realm, and against her.

This tier of existence surpassed anything the Arcanas had any business manipulating. As such, he had no ability to control things on a conceptual level.

'He also has a wide array of Spells, a variety of Familiars, a few Transformations, Martial Arts, and a couple of other tricks.'

Then again, that would do him no good against her.

'No Spell of his can affect me. Plus, his Transformations and Martial Arts are useless against me.'

She had seen him try to combine all of his unimpressive traits to challenge the other Constellations, and while he held his ground for some time, he ultimately failed in his pathetic venture.

'But I'm different...' Aquarius thought to herself, feeling the Aether within her swell.

None of those petty tricks would work on her.

"I'll finish this pointless charade in one blow." She declared.

Her statement wasn't out of arrogance or some elevated conceit. No, to Aquarius, she was just stating the facts.

Her power was the simplest, but also the most effective when it came to any situation.

'[Representation: Freedom]'

In an instant, all of time seemed to stop, and Aquarius was the only one who was functionally existent.

Jared Leonard stood still before her, a complete mannequin that could do nothing.

"It's over." She whispered.

The Unwritten Laws prevented her from directly harming him, but according to the details of the deal, if she was able to reach him in a way that would definitively mean her victory, then it would be counted as such.

'In the end... it was this wasy.'

Jared had indeed fared better against her younger ones, but she wasn't as considerate as them. There were more important things to consider than this human.

'He was too greedy.' In a flash, Aquarius appeared right in front of the frozen body of her target, and then raised her hand to touch him.

A single touch would be enough to prove her victory, wouldn't it?

'Then... hm?' Aquarius' hands slowed down, and downright eventually stopped almost as soon as she reached out to Jared.

For some reason, her liquid hands trembled slightly, and ripples appeared on her fingertips as she tried to touch him. It almost felt like... there was some sort of wall that separated the both of them.

A wall of infinite distance.

'What is this resistance?!' Aquarius wondered to herself.

She had never felt anything like this in all of her existence. No... it shouldn't have been possible, to begin with!

Aquarius represented the concept of Freedom.

As such, she had never been shackled by a barrier in all of her existence. The problem with Legris Damien was the every first time anything of the sort had happened, which was why it puzzled her so much.

But even that felt different from this!

'I am one with the energy around, and am unshackled by any form of boundaries.'

Her power negated any and all kinds of barriers, allowing her to be able to achieve desired results through being connected with everything.

Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Omnipresence—even among the boundless Constellations, she was truly limitless.

That was why she was able to pass through a conceptual layer of space-time that not even Jared could detect, making it seem like he was completely still.

In reality, he probably wouldn't know what hit him until it was too late.

Yet... why was she being stopped?

Why couldn't she reach him? She didn't understand it.

'Does it have something to do with all of that Aether he was gathering earlier? If so, then what Spell did he use?'

Aether was annoyed to no end, but no matter how much she tried to reach him, it seemed like he was only getting further away.

"It seems I will have to try a different approach."

The instant she said that, reality resumed as usual, and Jared began to move. However, even before he could take a single step to react to Aquarius, she lunged at him with her hand, now able to easily bypass all the supposed limitations that would have held her back.

There was no escape this time... nothing to hold her back.

'You're mine now!'

*

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

Chapter 1199: Jared Vs Aquarius [Pt 2]

For anything to exist, there have to be building blocks that support that existence.

For a building to be formed, there are blocks that are required to form it.

What of the blocks? Well, a single block is formed by adding several materials in order to attain the shape, size, and quality that is desired.

And what of those materials? They also require various elements and compounds in order to be formed.

In essence, all that exist require building blocks. Initially, it starts with simple and physical elements, but the deeper one goes into the components, the more the revelations of the invisible, undetectable begin to unravel itself.

However, no matter the building blocks or Concepts, Aquarius never had a problem with any of them. In fact, she could freely detect, reach, and influence all of them.

She could interfere with areas that would be considered the limit for even the most powerful entities.

A truly limitless entity, only bound by the Unwritten Laws.

And yet...

"What is the meaning of this?"

... It suddenly seemed like everything that had been said prior to this moment was a lie!

Aquarius felt perturbed, seeing as she had just tried to grab Jared a second earlier, and now it seemed like he was nowhere to be found.

No... it was more like he had never been there to begin with.

'An afterimage? No... that's not possible!'

Aquarius knew exactly what she detected! It was Jared Leonard through and through! There was no way to fool her perfect detection.

'B-but if that's the case, then...?!'

She had never been flustered when facing an opponent before. Perhaps it was because she had never fought an enemy that she couldn't have easily defeated with her first move alone.

By simply sifting through layers that no one else could reach, and using that opportunity to strike her target before they could even suspect it, she was guaranteed any victory.

That was until she met this mere human.

"What did you do...?" Aquarius turned to her far right, her expressionless face depicting nothing short of rage.

Floating in the nigh infinite space, with his hands folded as he stared at her with a confident grin, was the man she should have defeated by now.

"... Jared Leonard?!"

"Why should I tell you?" The young man responded, his golden eyes brimming with light as he spoke.

"I see. So you used the Aether that was absorbed to create a perfect replica of yourself, down to the building blocks."

The instant she said this, Jared's confident demeanor shattered, and his jaws fell in shock

"W-what?!"

"That would naturally be impossible, considering the time and amount of power it would take to achieve perfect duplication. However, since the Aether here is so dense and rich, you were not only able to replicate your physical components, but the total amount of energy you possessed at the start of the exchange."

Silence followed Aquarius' words, and it seemed to surprise Jared to no end. He probably never expected her to understand what he had just done.

That was his mistake.

"H-how did you even...?!"

"Your thoughts are not hidden from me. There is nothing I can not reach." Aquarius spoke with absolute authority as she stared at him.

Seeing him so flustered and powerless made her feel a strange sense of fulfilment.

It felt good!

"As for how I was unable to reach you earlier, it seems you were able to integrate some measure of Space from an alternate source to the barrier you made around yourself. As a result, the more space I bypassed, the more space you generated to further distance yourself from me."

Even though Aquarius knew all of that by reading his mind, there was still something that concerned her about the whole thing.

'How was he able to do all of that while being entirely immobile?'

There was no way he could have detected her actions and calculated the right amount of space he would deploy to stop her. It seemed absurd to even consider that he had ventured into the same conceptual layer that she had.

That left only one explanation.

'An automatic response, huh? His Original Magic: Great Sage's Memoir allows him to generate automatic responses to situations even without his consciousness being able to keep up.'

It all began to make sense to Aquarius at this point, especially with Jared's own memories providing her with even more information.

'His Memoir is in sync with this world's Aether, and since it basically operates on pure Aether, it is not limited by the consciousness or complex processes that intelligent entities have to undertake to perform an action.'

As a result, even though she was in a conceptual layer that no one could reach, with his Memoir being composed of pure Aether, in sync with the world around them, it could still respond to her actions.

Or rather, it could ensure her inaction.

"A smart move, Jared Leonard." Aquarius spoke.

It seemed she had underestimated him too early. Despite not having the advantage of any Arcana or complex Spells at his disposal, he still managed to avoid her victory.

'Not once, but twice now...'

She could now better understand why her siblings took so long to defeat him. Even though she was the most powerful of all of them, she had still fallen prey of his deceit.

However...

"There is a limit to which intelligence can take you." Aquarius declared.

Now that she understood how his abilities fundamentally functioned, he wasn't going to be able to deceive her any longer.

"This time, I will wi—"

"Is that so... ?"

Aquarius suddenly froze, instantly pausing all of reality.

If she had eyes, they would be bulging to their limits, all in response to what had just happened.

'I-impossible!'

Right behind her, almost touching her shoulder, was Jared Leonard!

His lips were curled up to form a smile, and his face was awfully close to hers. His charming eyes and fluttering golden hair... everything about him was so close to her that she felt an overwhelming sense of dread.

At that moment, Aquarius only had one question rush through her mind.

'H-how did he get there?!'

*

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

Chapter 1200: Jared Vs Aquarius [Pt 3]

'What is going on?!'

Aquarius found herself in yet another conundrum.

First of all, Jared Leonard had slipped her assault, not once, but twice. And now, he was getting the jump on her.

... HER!

'He was right in front of me a second ago. What did he do?' She wasn't going to be able to read his mind since everything about him was static, but she could make guesses based on what she already knew about him.

'Did he allow himself to be anywhere and everywhere at once? No, that's impossible. He can't use his Arcanas here.'

Then what was he using? [Perfect Unknowable] perhaps?

'If he's fusing his Aether with the Aether around him, that means he'll have to compensate for the purity and density of the surrounding Aether. Does he have enough Aether for that?'

It was that very improbability that made Aquarius certain that Jared wouldn't even be able to properly utilize Spellcraft, considering the purity difference between his own Aether and the Aether within the Constellation realm.

It already seemed to be an impossible challenge for him, yet he had managed to surprise her in so many areas already.

'And one more thing bothers me...' Aquarius glared at the smiling face of the young man she now stood in front of.

'Why did he announce his presence behind me? If he had just touched me, he would have won the match according to the rules?'

Of course, he wouldn't have been able to touch her, but he could have at least tried.

Wasn't it victory he desired?

Aquarius decided it was better not to dwell on simple conjecture. Instead, she would have to consult with Jared's thoughts themselves.

'I should also take extra precaution...'

Generating a barrier around her that prevented anything from getting in, or going out, she created some distance between her and the young man.

'In this barrier, I am the only one who can function properly since I transcend limits.'

As a result, Jared wouldn't be able to reach her again.

'You missed your opportunity as a result of your hubris. That is your mistake.'

Reality resumed, and Jared's distance from Aquarius was now considerable—enough for him to make a light grin about it.

"I see..." He whispered, his eyes narrowing on her.

Aquarius felt uncomfortable under his scrutinizing gaze, but she ignored his bravado and decided to venture into his memories to further dig up how he was able to get behind her.

However...

'W-what? I can't see it?!' Aquarius' thoughts screamed out in shock.

This was absurd!

There was no thought hidden from her! Nothing was beyond her reach! How was he able to hide his thoughts from her?

Unless...

Her nonexistent eyes instantly widened as she glared at him with a repulsed, but also slightly intimidated gaze.

'He erased his memories!'

That was the only explanation she could think of now. After all, the only thoughts she could not reach were 'no thoughts'.

In essence, Jared currently had no thoughts or memories concerning what had just happened!

'That sly bastard. I shouldn't have told him I could read thoughts...' It was at this moment that Aquarius grasped another thing she hadn't considered before.

'Why did I reveal my cards in the first place?'

Well, the simple answer was that she felt good doing it.

But why?

'He goaded me into confidently revealing my abilities to him. Even now, he must be actively doing his best to obtain more information from me... scrutinizing my abilities.'

It annoyed Aquarius to no end, finally realizing how much she was being played by this mortal.

'It's dangerous to let things drag out any further.'

"I thought you were stronger than this, Aquarius. Your siblings offered a better challenge than this, you know?" Jared's voice suddenly echoed in the vast expanse that existed between and around them.

Hearing his highly conceited words pissed her off instantly.

"If I went all-out, you wouldn't last even one second." Aquarius responded, disdain oozing from her liquid body.

"Is that so? Why don't you do that, then?"

"There is no need to go that far for someone as insignificant as you."

"Come on, I dare you!"

Aquarius, despite being nearly as old as time itself, felt incredibly irritated by Jared and his constant disrespect.

She found herself at the edge of her patience.

'No! I won't let him goad me. He probably has some other plan that he wants to execute if I undertake that action.'

Aquarius honestly doubted Jared being able to withstand her full power, or anything even close, but after underestimating him a few times already and being unpleasantly surprised by the results, she didn't want to make the same mistake again.

'He could be cooking up another scheme, after all...'

Besides, her pride just wouldn't let her go all-out on someone as insignificant as Jared Leonard. Aquarius found it impossible to take their battle even half as seriously as she would have if she was to go all-out.

"I won't fall for your provocations. You will lose this fight whether I use my full strength or not."

It was inconceivable to think Jared would achieve victory against her after losing to her younger ones.

At the very least, that was what Aquarius thought.

"This is the end of the line for you." She sighed, finally deciding to kick things up a notch.

So far, she had been limiting herself to simply finishing Jared off by playing cheap tricks on him. However, she was a little tired of that already.

'I can't directly harm him, but...' If she had lips, she would have leaked out a smile at this point.

'... I can buff him!'

If she circumvented the Unwritten Law by sending a wave of inescapable Aether by disguising it as a blessing rather than an assault, then it would end up as her victory.

By using her unbridled connection to his thoughts, Aquarius decided to grant him a non-lethal blow that was guaranteed to bring him to his knees.

'Let's mess with his mind a little...'