

SPELLCRAFT 1201

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

Chapter 1201: Jared Vs Aquarius [Pt 4]

It was trite that no one could resist the power of a Constellation.

If any mortal was to challenge them, it was already clear who would be the victor. However, despite the vast difference in power between Constellation and Mortal, there was one factor that gave the former the edge.

The Unwritten Laws.

As a result of this, no Constellation could attack a mortal directly, with only one exception allowed.

Thanks to this, Jared Leonard enjoyed a substantial amount of liberty in his battle against Aquarius. He was able to expertly evade Aquarius' meager attempts to end the battle, while accounting for the factor that she couldn't harm him.

And for a while, that was a competent strategy.

However...

'Let's mess with his mind a little.' Aquarius thought to herself as she stared at Jared's stationary form.

Using her power to access his mind, full memories or not, she could stir his thoughts and create dissonance in them.

This often led to nausea, confusion, pain, submission, and whatever other reaction she desired to induce in her targets.

'I used this on his allies back then, and they all fell. Well... almost all of them.' It was at this point that Aquarius was reminded of the other human who irked her.

The one known as Ciara Epsilon.

'She was able to resist my power. I still do not know how...'

First was Legris Damien, then Jared Leonard, and now Ciara Epsilon. Why were so many mortals springing up to challenge her power?

It made no sense to her!

'Could Neron perhaps do the same? He is a Singularity, so he is exempt, but... I wonder.' Aquarius decided not to dwell too much on her thoughts any longer.

Instead, she focused on the opponent before her.

His mind... was as good as hers!

"Hmmm...?" If she had eyes, Aquarius would have squinted them, and this was because she had just tried to access Jared's mind... but couldn't.

'Impossible! How can this be?!' She thought to herself as she glared deeply at the young man in front of her.

There was only one explanation.

The Jared in front of her had no mind of his own.

'But just a few seconds ago he... what exactly did he do?!' Aquarius wondered to herself in puzzlement.

This was her first battle with such a problematic opponent.

However, no matter how elusive he could be, there was no way for him to challenge her. She was currently shrouded in her barrier, thus preventing him from being able to reach her in any measure.

'Still, why do I feel uneasy?' She wondered, focusing very deeply on Jared's current dull face.

He had no expression on, giving an unhinged emotionless and thoughtless vibe.

"[Resonatia]." She heard him suddenly mutter, and an incorporeal book appeared in front of him, almost as if he was going to read it.

The book floated in front of him, shining brightly as his eyes glowed in response to it.

'A Spell, huh? He really thinks that'll work on me?' Aquarius smiled to herself.

Throughout their battle, Jared had not used a proper Spell even once, and that was because of its uselessness when facing a Constellation.

Conventional Magic created by mortals had no means of affecting something that existed far above their scope.

'So, unless he just made a Spell on the go... one that is effective on Constellations, then it would be foolish to even—'

"G-gurghhk!" Aquarius suddenly felt her thought process halt, and a sudden intrusion into her mind caused her to grunt slightly.

It felt like her thoughts were being stirred, causing her vision to blur slightly, and her mind fell into a brief moment of confusion.

'W-what... is happening?!'

Aquarius had never felt a sensation like this in her entire life, so there was no way for her to have instantly known that this was the same sensation Jared would have felt had her Mind Interference succeeded.

And by the time she figured it out, Aquarius was bleeding with nothing short of rage.

'He used my abilities against me? How?'

It could have been that his mindless mind accepted her intrusion, but there was nothing to stir, so he was able to harness the frequency and utilize [Resonatia] to return the same to her.

'He used my Representation against me too!'

No attack could pass through her barrier—whether from within or without—but she was the exception. He capitalized on this and keyed into the frequency of her attack, which had a residue path to be utilized.

'Smart. But so what? In the end, it's just a mild inconvenience.' Aquarius thought to herself as her vision returned and her senses were fully functional.

"You are... huh? Where is he?" Her words were now tinged with an emotion she was unfamiliar with. It was an emotion she did not prefer to feel.

Suddenly, Aquarius felt a strange presence shroud her. If she had hair and skin, the latter would probably be erect as a result of the discomfort she felt within her own haven.

It felt terrifyingly clustered in her safe space.

And then...

~WHOOOOSH!~

... Aquarius felt the presence close in on her, almost touching her body with its flesh.

At this point, she had two options:

Keep holding back and taste the humiliating experience of defeat for the first time since her existence.

Or...

To win the current battle.

Aquarius was tired, but also tense. This wasn't physical exhaustion, and it wasn't as if her power had been pushed to some extreme.

No... she was just tired of her situation and the opponent she was fighting. She didn't want to continue the mind games and unexpected twists that awaited her if she kept going down the current route.

Besides, the presence closing in on her was evidently an opportunity for her.

'I'll stop playing around.' Aquarius finally thought to herself as she heaved internally.

"[That's Enough]."

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Chapter 1202: Jared Vs Aquarius [Pt 5]

"[That's Enough]."

Turning to the young man who had just appeared within her haven, something that should have been impossible for anyone to do, Aquarius found herself face to face with Jared.

'This human...'

His body was unmoving, and the space around him was still in flux, not fully stabilized due to his abrupt appearance, and her halting the flow of reality.

'... He invaded my impenetrable haven?'

Aquarius could detect trace elements of his energy around her, and it all began to make a lot more sense to her at this point.

'He used Spellcraft, huh?'

Jared must have disguised his Aether as the surrounding Aether prior to the time she set up her Haven, thus giving her the illusion that she had blocked everything about him out.

'But, even if they were his Aether, the energy was dormant. To activate, they would have required a catalyst...'

Once Aquarius recognized this, she realized what had just happened.

'This bastard...!'

The [Resonatia] Spell he performed must have had two layers to them.

One of those effects was to perturb her thoughts, sure, but what if he used the opportunity to also activate all his dormant Aether, using Spellcraft to control them to do his bidding.

'Once he used Spellcraft on them, he was able to interfere with Space here and appear within my haven, almost as if he had been invited.'

Still, that didn't account for how he would be able to bypass her barrier.

'It's still impossible! Unless...!' Aquarius narrowed her focus on the spatial energy still yet to stabilize around Jared, and she noticed the issue right away.

'I see. So he first of all transferred himself to his pocket dimension, and then used the gateway provided by his Spellcraft to access my haven directly.'

That saved him the relative effort of directly breaking through her barrier from the same dimensional plane.

'He's brilliant. He really thought this through...!' Aquarius thought to herself.

When they first met, she thought of him as weak. While she was yet to dispose of that perception she had of him, Aquarius now recognized that he was more.

'He is weak... but he has a powerful mind.'

Now that she knew his trick, Aquarius also realized that he must have transferred his consciousness to his private dimension, allowing his Great Sage's Memoir to take control of his body and perform preset actions.

That way, she wouldn't have been able to interfere with his mind, and he would merely be a puppet on a string—albeit temporarily.

However, when he traveled to his pocket dimension as a measure to invade her haven, he must have recollected his mind and come for her in full force.

Everything added up nicely.

'A brilliant young man indeed. I will admit it, Jared Leonard...' If she had lips, Aquarius would have smiled at the young man in front of her.

'... I have never met any man like you.'

Unfortunately for Jared, however, his plan had one major flaw.

His opponent was Aquarius.

'Perhaps this strategy would have worked on some of my siblings, but... not me.'

Not only was she smarter than them, but the nature of her Representation was simply too powerful for her to be affected by Jared's plan—despite how grand it was.

'This time, it's over.'

Aquarius stretched out her hand, going beyond the barriers of the present, and into the future.

The magnificent sight appeared as if her water-like form was breaking the surface tension of thicker waters, sinking deep into the recesses of turbulent waters.

The future was uncertain, thus chaotic.

However, for Aquarius, she was able to easily navigate the future and reached out to her target.

'I am certain you used a similar defense mechanism as last time to ensure I can't touch you in the present, even if reality is on hold. However...'

All she had to do was simply do so in the future, at a time where her Great Sage's Memoir would not have registered what she had done in the present.

The result...?

~TAP~

... She easily touched him.

Reality soon returned to normal, and as Jared tried to reach for Aquarius, he was met with yet another impenetrable wall that stopped him dead in his tracks.

"O-ow!" He was forced to bounce back, thanks to the glass-like field that prevented him from even reaching her.

However, before he could do anything else... he felt it.

A touch on his lips.

It felt cool, but also warm. Jared couldn't describe it. It felt like an all-encompassing ocean had graced his moist lips with a touch.

That was when Jared realized the truth.

"I lost, huh?" He smiled, raising his head to look at Aquarius, who simply watched him with a smile on her faceless face.

Within her water-like body, the infinite stars within glittered, and her liquid arms were behind her, almost as if taking a courteous pose.

"Indeed. It was inevitable that you would lose." The Constellation responded. "You're only mortal, after all."

Despite Aquarius saying this, she felt a stirring within her that was impossible to ignore. Never before had any mere mortal come close to impressing her this much.

It was unbelievable that Jared had done all of this himself.

"You are right..." His voice stirred Aquarius from her trance-like thoughts, causing her to return her gaze on him.

"... Rather unfortunately, I am only mortal."

Even though he was smiling, Aquarius recognized some form of sadness evident in his gem-like eyes.

It called her closer to them, but she resisted it instantly.

"Y-you do not need to feel bad, you know? You were actually impressive..." Aquarius found herself stuttering slightly, and she chastised herself for it.

She also felt incredibly embarrassed that she once thought of him as some weak and insignificant human. Her poor judgement came as embarrassing flashbacks that made her cringe despite being made of primeval waters.

"Thank you, Aquarius. For you to compliment me, it must mean I really did something right."

"Whatever. It was impressive, sure, but not particularly revolutionary." Aquarius swiftly snapped back.

She couldn't let a human like him get too cocky.

"Haha... is that so?" All he did was respond with a soft chuckle, and Aquarius felt like he was somewhat laughing at her.

It took a decent amount of her self control not to comment any further.

"Y-yeah. We should probably head back... to the others."

Only the two of them were present in this vast realm, but Aquarius was certain that her siblings were watching them.

That was one of the reasons why she couldn't slip up and praise him too much.

If she did so, then her pride would be tarnished, and the eleven wouldn't let her catch a break. There was no way she was going to mar her image.

"You're right. Thanks for the duel and the kind words." Jared's words echoed in her head, causing Aquarius to stare at him once again.

This time, his eyes showed no hint of sadness or hesitation.

No... nothing like that was evident in the slightest.

There was only one thing that Jared's eyes displayed, and it caused Aquarius' heart to skip a beat... despite not having one.

"This should be more than enough."

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Chapter 1203: The Constellations' Choice [Pt 1]

I was transported out of the dimension where I just fought Aquarius, and previously the other Constellations in the blink of an eye.

The next I knew, I was in an expanse occupied by the other Constellations, and Aquarius appeared right behind me the moment I acclimated to my new environment.

"What'll happen to the sparring space?" I turned to ask Aquarius, who had apparently softened up to me after we concluded our fight.

She didn't say anything for a while, making me wonder if it was just my imagination that we had grown a little closer.

"D-don't address me so casually..." I heard her mutter, but it was barely audible that I might have misheard what she said a little slightly.

"The dimension will be erased since it serves no purpose anymore."

Rather than Aquarius responding to my question, it was Virgo. She was smiling broadly, but her eyes weren't directed at me.

Instead, she was looking at Aquarius.

"Thanks, Virgo." I responded casually, and based on her reaction, she didn't seem to mind at all.

I had already fought all of the Constellations at least once. While I wasn't their match in the slightest, I was able to understand and communicate with them more.

'I think I've pretty much gotten used to them, and the feeling is mutual.'

However, Aquarius still seemed to be stiff around me.

'She said I was impressive, but it seems I haven't reached her criteria just yet...'

Not that I cared or anything.

As long as I was able to achieve my desired result, I didn't mind one Constellation or two not liking me too much.

"How was your match?" Virgo asked, her smile broadening for some reason.

Once again, she didn't seem to be looking at me. I didn't know whether to respond or not, but I decided to do so anyway.

"It was as expected—"

"None of your business! You saw everything, didn't you?" Aquarius' voice overshadowed mine, causing her words to spread within the multicolored expanse.

For a moment, silence ensued and only the faint echoes of her declaration filled the air.

I didn't know where it was coming from, but I was sensing some level of awkwardness—perhaps even tension too.

"Huhu... sure I did. In any case, it's finally over."

Virgo's face as she uttered those words seemed to contain more meaning than she was letting on, but I wasn't too versed in understanding Constellations to decipher what she meant.

Her pure maiden-like face seemed to be hiding some sort of scheme... or maybe I was just reading some meaning to it.

'No other Constellation seems even moderately interested, so why is Virgo being so persistent?'

I didn't think I would ever find out.

However, in order to quickly alter the course of tension that was currently hovering above my head—between Aquarius, who stood behind me, and Virgo, who was a small distance in front of me—I decided to change to topic of discussion.

"How are they faring... my friends?"

My question seemed to work like Magic, and instantly, the tension vanished from the room. Instead, the other Constellations even began to speak up, and the massive screens they were all staring at came into view.

Almost like windows appearing in his air, each of these screens displayed one of my friends undertaking whatever challenge the Constellation gave them.

A total of thirteen screens depicted each individual and their trial or training, and as I looked at some of the screens, I had my own mixed reactions.

"What do you think? Do you have preferred candidates already?" I turned to the Constellations who were currently watching the trials.

Each Constellation had varying tastes—tastes different from mine.

From what I could see, while most of them were doing their best, they were quite weak. Perhaps it was due to my current level of power, but I genuinely felt they were inadequate.

'After fighting with each Constellation and losing every single time, I'm a bit worried that they won't find anyone impressive...'

Even though I made such a big deal out of my friends when I offered the Constellations a deal, I wasn't so sure any longer.

My only hope was for the Constellations to have less strict assessments concerning them.

"Virgo, Aries, and I have decided not to choose any new candidate from your friends since we already have Hosts among them." Leo was the first to my question.

I stared at Virgo and Aries, seeing as they nodded in agreement with Leo's statement.

"Oh? Any particular reason why?" I responded with another query.

"Well, some of us prefer to have one Host at a time, but it is generally accepted among us that a Constellation should not to have two Hosts who are closely linked or associated."

I could see a few reasons why they would decide on something like that.

'For one, Constellations are bound to have favorites among their Hosts. If two of their Hosts are friends, it could become clear who the favorite is... and that could cause issues for them.'

There was also the factor of skill. Certain Hosts were bound to be more skilled than others. If one Host was more skilled than the other, and they had the same Constellation, it could lead to unsavory emotions and terrible outcomes.

There were other factors involved, so I understood why they would abstain from choosing multiple Hosts in the same friend group.

'But that leaves another problem.'

There were currently ten people who were undergoing trials to be recognized by a Constellation. However, only nine Constellations were already without a Host among them.'

'In essence... one person might not get a Constellation.'

Unless, of course, such a person was outstanding enough to allow them to make an exception—which was highly improbable—I had to brace myself for the worst case scenario.

'It's out of my hands now, though...' A bead of sweat trickled down my face as I forced a smile on my face.

'Everything is up to you guys.'

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Chapter 1204: The Constellations' Choice [Pt 2]

"That woman... Aloe Vida... she's quite impressive, is she not?"

I glanced in the direction of the one who spoke, and it was Libra. Her tone made it clear that she was quite enthralled with Aloe, and that made me slightly relieved.

"Yeah... true."

"I noticed that as well."

"I like her quite a bit too..."

Libra wasn't the only one who had that sentiment about Aloe, as nearly half of the Constellations all applauded her efforts.

'I've been fighting for a while now, so I don't really know of the feats they're alluding to. Still...' I felt strangely satisfied that Aloe was getting so much traction from the Constellations.

It made me curious about the progress of the others.

"What of the one called Anabelle? How is she?" I blurted out, a smile etched on my face.

"Ahh... the dwarf? She has a lot of potential..." The moment I heard Cancer utter those words, I felt an instant surge of pity for Ana.

'She's a Loli, not a dwarf.' I cried internally.

Still, I had no intention of correcting Cancer. He knew more than me anyway, so I had to assume that Ana had some Dwarf blood running in her veins or something.

'Now that I think about it, Cancer's Representation would be perfect for Ana...' My thoughts trailed.

Hopefully, things turned out well.

"Haha... I see." I managed to laugh it off, thinking about who else to bring up.

"That Serah Crimson woman... I want her."

A very bold, imposing tone suddenly echoed throughout the entire Constellation Realm. The primal force from the voice sent jitters down my spine, causing me to instantly recognize the one who spoke.

It was Taurus.

"She has such fine qualities too... of destruction, of course... ahem..."

I didn't know if Taurus was interested in her because of her potential to be strong, or due to other reasons... but I could only leak out a short laugh in response.

"Haha... is that so?"

"H-hey, no fair, Taurus. I set my eyes on her first." This time, it was Scorpio who intervened. "I told you about her first, and then you—"

"Haha! You snooze, you lose."

"Y-you..."

It took some getting used to—seeing these boundless and powerful beings act like this—but I was pretty much desensitized to it at this point.

I didn't know the point at which it happened, but I just slowly began to be more understanding and comfortable around them.

... Almost as if they were family.

"You guys aren't the only one who have their sights set on Serah, but you sure are being little bitches about it."

Hearing Libra talk so crudely made me nearly bite my tongue. However, for some reason, her words seemed to work on the the two arguing Constellations.

Taurus and Scorpio stopped their quarrel, and I could sense satisfaction brimming from Libra. I gave her a secretive thumbs up, and she responded with three thumbs-ups.

Thankfully, I had gotten used to her form now.

Back to the matter at hand, though, there was one person I wanted to ask about most of all. It wasn't because she was my daughter, or anything.

I just... wanted to know who had set their eyes on her.

"What do you all think about Lemi?"

For a moment, there were echoes of silence permeating the hall, and it seemed like my question landed in an empty expanse.

'Perhaps they didn't hear me?' I thought to myself.

I decided to ask again.

"What do you think about—"

"We heard you the first time, Jared. Take a hint, would you?" Taurus interjected, his deep voice once again pulling down the little shred of confidence I had managed to muster concerning my daughter's wellbeing.

"She's too flippant." One Constellation said.

My heart sank.

"Annoying..." Another one intoned.

It descended further.

"Distracted..."

It began to shatter now.

"Too unserious."

It felt like they were ripping my heart out with the way they were talking about Lemi, and in a way... I got a little upset.

'Why can't they see her brilliance, though? She's a genius, just like her father!'

Sure, she was a bit eccentric, but in the end... she was an amazing person! She even managed to duplicate my Spellcraft in her own way.

'Though, I guess all of these feats do not really matter where Constellations are concerned.'

It was a shame that they didn't look favorably upon her. I really didn't want her to be the one left out.

"Hahaha! You boomers are too stiff." A voice akin to a child echoed throughout the vast expanse of the realm.

"I think that Lemi girl is pretty fun. She's interesting too..."

My eyes glittered as I turned in the direction of my now-favorite Constellation, who could see beyond what the others couldn't.

The twin-Constellation Gemini!

"Really? I knew you could see her potential." I beamed at them.

"Well, yeah. She's going to be fun. I can see her causing a lot of trouble... hehehe."

"Rather, she would also be difficult to train. I welcome the challenge..."

My heart reached the depths of the abyss once I heard the words that the two offered me as their rationale for supporting my daughter.

The two faces of Gemini had distinct personalities, but it seemed they both agreed that my daughter was a handful.

I had to clutch my chest a little as I considered what kind of impression she must have made to cause the Constellations to think of her in such a light.

"I do not see a cause for your intrigue or interest in any of these mortals..." A smooth, watery voice suddenly surged forth from behind me, emanating from Aquarius.

Her tone felt disconcerted, and her words oozed with disinterest.

Thus far, she hadn't contributed to the conversation, but it wasn't for a positive reason.

No, it was quite the opposite.

"None of these candidates are impressive in the slightest."

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Chapter 1205: The Virgin Constellation

"None of them... at all?"

My head was arched back as I stared at Aquarius, who remained unmoving behind me. She had her arms crossed, and while she had no set expression on her face, the vibe she gave off was disinterest.

"Yes. They're all well below the standard."

Hearing Aquarius' dissenting words, I was caught at a weird impasse. According to the rest of the Constellations, some individuals were already catching their eyes, so what was this?

"Oh, I wouldn't mind Aquarius, Jared." Virgo suddenly intervened, causing my several thoughts to reach an abrupt halt.

I changed gears and looked at Virgo instead.

"You won't get anywhere with her." She added, muffling what sounded like a snicker.

'What does that even mean?'

"Pfft! You better let him know that early." Leo added, his own deep voice accentuated with a slight chuckle.

It seemed like there was a running joke among the Constellations, and I was being left out of the loop. The moment Virgo and Leo established their words, other Constellations began to speak and even laugh.

"Aquarius still hasn't changed, huh?"

"Hahaha! Even now, she's still the same..."

"Hahaha!"

I watched them all say all sorts of things about the Constellation before finally realizing what made them so amused.

'Aquarius has very high standards. Too high compared to the standards of the others...'

I stole a glance at Aquarius, and she seemed to be unmoved by the entire fiasco going on in the group.

Until...

"Hey! I'm standing right here, you know?" She raised her voice, causing the room to fall into an absolute lull.

For a while, no one said anything.

The Constellation space was even quieter than a graveyard, and it seemed like everyone within it was frozen solid.

All until one voice leaked out.

"Virgin..."

My eyes bulged the moment I heard it, and the entire room erupted into uncontrollable laughter at that point.

All the Constellations burst out laughing, and I was too shaken to even move.

Suddenly, it all made sense to me.

'A-ahh... so it's like that...'

Aquarius was a 'Virgin' by Constellation standards because she had never gotten a Host before!

Perhaps she was just too conscious of who her first time would belong to, or she simply had a very condescending perception of her potential Hosts, but she didn't seem to be trying very hard to get her first Host.

'T-that's a little embarrassing...'

However, it wasn't like I didn't understand.

'Aquarius is the oldest and most mature of the group. It's only natural that she would be the most picky and mature. However, with all her siblings already having many Hosts, maybe she doesn't see the need to? Maybe she... ahhhh, what am I even saying?'

Why was I trying to understand what went on in the mind of a Constellation? It was hilarious!

"Hahahahahahahahaha!"

I joined everyone in laughing, and even though I felt a strong pressure rise from behind me, I knew the Unwritten Laws would protect me from certain death.

As a result, we all giggled and cackled at Aquarius' expense.

"This is stupid..." I heard her sigh, and she shrugged slightly.

At that moment, I stopped laughing. I had to admit, I felt a little bad for her. I knew it was all fun and games, but who knew what was going on in her mind?

'Let's cheer her up a little!' A smile formed on my face and I drew closer to her.

"Hey, Aquarius, would you consider me as a Host? You did say I impressed you back then, right?"

I could spot the faces of the other Constellations forming surprise at my statement.

Why?

Because every one of them had offered me a spot, but I refused to be the Host of any Constellation. They must have been shocked to see me ask Aquarius about being her Host of my own volition.

I let out an awkward smile, letting all the attention on me and Aquarius sink in... not expecting what would come next.

"No. You are not my type, Jared."

Yeah, rejection!

"Pfft!"

"Puahahahahahahahaha!!!"

"You shouldn't have asked her, Jared!"

"We told you already... there's no hope for her!"

"Her standards are not just too high... they're impossible!"

"She even rejected someone like Neron. What did you expect?"

"I'd say Neron and Jared are equally valuable in their own way. I would pick any of the two, or even both, any day!"

"Yeah, yeah! Tell that to Aquarius!"

"Sucks to be you, Jared!"

"Hahahahaaha!"

Before I knew it, I became the butt of the joke and laughter, and all the mockery was directed at me.

'All because I tried to cheer you up, Aquarius...!' With watery eyes, I stared at Aquarius and leaked out a small smile.

It wasn't like I was even being serious about the proposal. I had my own reasons for refusing to be a Host, and instead dueling all the Constellations.

There was no way I would throw all of that away now!

'Still... it is what it is...'

I closed my eyes and accepted my fate.

'So this is how it feels to be mocked by Constellations...!' My smile broadened.

They thought they were doing me a disservice, but it was quite the opposite.

This was an achievement for me!

'I can brag about this! They have no idea!'

"Don't feel too bad, Jared." Aquarius' voice suddenly cut my thoughts short, and I ignored the snickers of her peers as I stared at her.

"If you insist, I am willing to establish a friendly pact with you and allow you to borrow my power and wisdom. O-of course, this is only if you desire it..."

My lips parted in slight surprise when I heard this.

"Ohhhh? She's going that far for him?"

"Whoah! That's crazy!"

"I can't believe this!"

The Constellations began gushing over this new development, making it very clear that this was an extremely rare opportunity.

Anyone in their right state of mind would accept it instantly.

"I refuse." My grin became broader as I stared at Aquarius.

Perhaps I was the crazy one.

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Chapter 1206: The Beginning Of Seclusion

Dense silence greeted my response to Aquarius' proposal, and I could feel the shock of the twelve Constellations erupting all at once.

"WHAAAAAAT?!"

The overlapping voices of the shouting entities forced me to shut my ears in recoil.

One by one, they all began to murmur and whisper speculations about my refusal, their surprise palpable as they exchanged glances between me and Aquarius.

"I see. Then let's leave it at that." She responded calmly.

As expected of the oldest Constellation, she was quite understanding.

"You really need to tell us the source of your confidence, Jared Leonard." I smiled once I heard Virgo say this to me.

Her pretty face and irresistible eyes settled on me as she made a soft smile. The way she looked at me with such interest made me shiver a little.

Especially because I could feel a chill from behind me.

"What do you mean, Virgo?" I asked, now trying my hardest to maintain my smile.

"You aren't training alongside everyone, you aren't interested in having Constellations as Familiars or even Friendly Aids. It is intriguing..."

Virgo must have noticed I had another motive. She always had a sort of keen interest in me for some reason, so it made sense that she picked up on that.

"Hmph! I hope you don't let all that power you have get to your head. Don't get too cocky, Jared." Taurus declared with a snort.

"SHUT UP, TAURUS!"

An unexpected duo of both Aquarius and Virgo both raised their voices and silenced the usually imposing figure of Taurus.

"S-sorry..." He shrunk back instantly, suddenly not seeming as intimidating as he was before.

It made me relieved to see two Constellations stand up to me. However, before my thoughts completely settled, Aquarius kept on speaking.

"You have all fought with Jared, so you should already know he isn't cocky. Even I have to admit that he knows what he is doing... I-I mean, that's obvious if you think about it properly! Right?"

At this point, I knew the message had been passed across already. I gave her a smile and nodded in appreciation.

It wasn't out of hubris that I challenged the Constellations, though I knew a good number of them thought that was my motivation.

I didn't even think I would win against them, to begin with. I just wanted to last as long as possible.

My first few fights had their flaws, but the more I fought, the more I learned.

My final fight with Aquarius was quite difficult because most of what I learned was rendered ineffective when I fought against her, but I still did my best to last as long as possible.

'With everything I have gained thus far... I think it should be enough.'

"Don't worry... I'll soon begin my training." My calm words echoed through the vast expanse, and I put both my hands in my pockets while staring coolly at everyone present.

My gaze slowly shifted to the several screens that floated in midair, and I watched everyone training in their respective dimension.

It was inspiring.

"I just wanted to check up on my friends before leaving."

They were all trying their hardest in their trials, so it only made sense for me to give my all in the next phase of my plan as well.

While I couldn't guarantee them the results they desired, I would be rooting for them on my end.

'I sincerely wish you all the best in your endeavors.'

"Where will you be undergoing your training?" Aquarius asked, returning my mind to reality.

I turned to her and smiled.

"The Great Sage's Archives." In essence, my personal domain.

"I figured you wouldn't want to train here." She responded with what I could only assume to be a smile.

This Constellation, I didn't really get her.

One moment, Aquarius would act very hostile, and at the next instance, she would be sweet and understanding.

"It's not intentional. The Archives is just the optimal place for me since it possesses the required conditions for me to achieve my desired results."

"We understand."

Hearing Virgo say that, while seeing the Constellations all nod their heads—even Taurus—granted me some form of reassurance.

"You won't be able to reach me until I am done. Just giving you a heads up." I added.

"And how long will that be?"

"I'm actually not sure of how long it'll take me to conclude my training."

What I was about to undertake had probably never been done before, so I couldn't even put an estimate on it either.

"Since your territory is also outside the bounds of time, I am unsure of the point I will appear in the flow of this place."

Time functioned quite differently in the Great Sage's Archives, so I was sure that not much time would pass in reality before I was done with my task.

'I can't rush this either.'

"Watch my allies closely and take care of them, okay?"

"We will. You have my word." Aquarius readily responded, and I could sense some a measure of reverence in her tone.

I didn't notice it until now, but all the Constellations were staring at me much differently from the way they did when I first appeared before them.

From condescending gazes to that of some measure of respect.

'It feels nice...'

"I'm sure you'll be impressed by at least one person from the group. They're exceptional people, so I'm sure even you will find someone who catches your fancy... Aquarius."

"Hmph! I highly doubt it!" Aquarius sharply responded.

It made me chuckle slightly.

"Well, we'll see about that, won't we?"

I actually wasn't sure if anyone among the group could shatter Aquarius' impossible expectations, especially because I was unable to achieve that.

However... that wasn't my problem anymore.

~VWUUUUSH!~

A shimmering golden portal layered with multiple colors colliding and merging instantly appeared before me once I called for it.

It was the conventional gateway to the Great Sage's Archives.

"Farewell! I'll see you all very soon." I waved goodbye as I slowly stepped into the portal

Time was often said to be relative. I only hoped my statement could apply to that inscrutable proposition.

'When next we meet... I wonder how you'll look at me.'

There was only one way to find out.

~VWUUUUSH!~

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Chapter 1207: Discussion Of The Boundless Ones

Once Jared left the Constellation Realm, all twelve guardians of the Aether Tree looked at each other with unblinking faces.

No one moved or uttered a word for about a few seconds—not like that mattered in a place like this—but it happened anyway.

"Looks like things are back to being boring! Boo hoo!" Gemini was the first to speak, pouting as they folded their arms.

"I miss Jared already..." Virgo muttered.

Sadly enough, the other Constellations had to agree that they felt the same.

Even though they would never explicitly admit it to the young man, these boundless entities had somewhat grown attached to him.

He had the audacity to challenge them to duels, he treated them as his peers—though he still accorded them with some modicum of respect. He had a certain charm and intelligence that was difficult to find in anyone else.

No, it was impossible.

"Sure, Neron was fun too, but..." Aries murmured to himself.

Yes, they all had to admit it—the difference between their dear Singularity and this Reincarnated Scholar.

"Neron was too sly. This Jared... he feels pure. I wonder why Aether didn't simply choose him as her representative."

"You forget that he wouldn't have existed if not for Neron."

"Ah, yes..."

"Besides, it isn't the pure of heart that wins wars. It is the crooked... those willing to do whatever it takes to achieve victory."

"I think Jared is the same as Neron in that regard, though."

"I suppose. It's just... Neron is different."

The Constellations once again reached a consensus about the man that they all knew well, yet understood almost nothing about.

"Jared made his true intentions and grievances known to us, but not that Neron. He... is still a mystery in a sense."

Jared wanted to walk his own path.

He admitted to his current state of weakness and explicitly stated his desires. Even though the Constellations did not know what he was up to at the moment, they could all swear that they understood his end motives.

But what about their Singularity?

"What does that man desire... I wonder?"

"Do you now understand why I refused him as my Host, or even as a Friend?" Aquarius' voice suddenly cut them all short.

Every Constellation turned in her direction, and she smugly folded her arms while speaking in the most collected manner ever.

"No sentient entity is pure. Whether it is Neron or Jared, and it makes me reluctant to grant them power. For power is an amplifier of that which a person is within. As a result, it stands to reason that..."

At this point, most of the Constellations had already zoned out of the conversation.

Why?

Because this wasn't the first time Aquarius would be saying all of this as an excuse for her lack of any Host under her belt since she had begun to exist.

It was getting old for them.

"Let's change the topic, shall we? Let's talk about which of Jared's allies we prefer!" Gemini finally spoke up, putting an end to the boorish atmosphere that Aquarius was generating.

Every Constellation in the room—except the oldest of course—agreed to this new proposition, thus shifting the focus from Neron, Jared, or Aquarius' same reasons for being a 'Virgin'.

"Well, I have already chosen Kuzon. That's pretty much settled too... and he won't be gaining any new Constellation since that was established in our agreement." Leo smirked, his eyes glimmering in pride.

"My Host has made so much progress in Magic, and soon... he will be able to properly use Primeval Magic!"

Every Constellation in the room could see how excited Leo was due to his optimistic demeanor and the pride etched in his tone.

"Well, Maria is also incredibly talented, you know? Kuzon has had some time to get accustomed to you, but she hasn't had much time... and yet she's slowly getting attuned to my power."

It seemed the Constellations had reached a threshold of bragging that couldn't be controlled any further.

"I think it's specifically due to her strong emotions that she's made such progress with me as her Constellation. That means there's no one better suited, so no one should even think of laying eyes on her... understood?"

Virgo was known to be very territorial, so the rest knew very well not to cross her.

But, they didn't even need to.

Every Constellation was different, and their criteria also varied. Just because Virgo liked Maria, it wasn't guaranteed that the rest would.

No, it was most likely the case that they wouldn't.

"Haa... you guys have it easy." Aries suddenly added with a sigh. "My Host is being held back mostly due to the absence of the Will to get more powerful."

Unlike the Martial Blade God who desired strength above all else, it seemed Edward was distracted by his other desires.

It got in the way of his acclimation with Aries.

"At this rate, Edward will soon reach the limit of his power due to the lack of will he possesses." The Constellation added, recollecting his past conversations with his young man.

Aries had asked him what he truly desired, and the response greatly differed from his past Host.

"Edward simply wants to live happy and content with those he cares about and doesn't have much desire for power. That isn't necessarily a bad thing, but..."

He had to admit that it was holding him back greatly.

"He's so different from the Martial Blade God, but still... those two share the same kind of stubbornness." Aries didn't realize when he began to smile.

Was it due to nostalgia, or something else? Perhaps he was just reminded of the reason why he chose these kinds of Hosts in the first place.

"They just never listen to me... even though I'm a Constellation... such stubborn kids."

Even though he said it like that, Aries' smile did not diminish.

Instead, it grew even more.

"I suppose this is why I find them so intriguing."

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Chapter 1208: The Dark Stain

It started off as a mild suggestion, but before long, the Constellations were all gushing about the Hosts they had, or the potential ones they would soon possess.

No one really knew how long conversations like these lasted, especially among boundless entities like Constellations.

From discussions of compatibility, to arguments on superiority, they kept going on and on about the primary subject of Hosts.

Perhaps the reason for their attitude was the fact that there had been no major incident in a while, and they also recognized that they could currently do nothing about the current situation until their vessels were ready.

And even that seemed to be drawing ever so closer.

As such, not only was their powerlessness the reason for their free discourse, but also their confidence in Jared's plans.

However... even the almighty Constellations could not foresee what was to come.

None of them could imagine it.

... Not until it happened!

"I personally like the kind of people that are all 'fired up', you know? Talent and stuff like that are meaningless in the presence of Constellations, you know?"

"What the hell are you talking about now, Sagittarius?" Leo rolled his eyes as he glanced in the direction of the Archer among them.

"Look, I'm not downplaying talent or anything. It's just... those are dime-a-dozen in the branches. All of those geniuses are pretty much frogs in different wells. It's so commonplace to find geniuses in the branches."

"What's your point, dude?" Yet another Constellation, Cancer, asked with a gnawing sense of impatience.

Sagittarius' current position was that their myriads of conditions for Hosts were too skewed, and ultimately pointless.

Naturally, not many took what he said well.

"I'm just saying it's better to find a Host with a spine. Passionate and with a nature that is willing to charge headfirst into danger to get what he wants! Even in the toughest tribulations, they choose the path they have set on... and protect the ones they love!" Sagittarius declared, almost as if he was reciting poetry.

"Geniuses are dime a dozen in the Aether Tree, but it's hard to find someone with a spine."

In a sense, Sagittarius had a good point.

After all, most living beings would operate on instinct when danger manifested. It was the nature of life to preserve itself when threatened.

Those who would rather throw away their existence than abandon their passions, desires... love... were the outliers.

Rare entities in the world.

And it seemed those were the kind of people that Sagittarius sought—those who were willing to change the world, not for themselves, but those they cared about.

"Whatever, man. I still think your standard is the skewed one..." Pisces mumbled.

"Haha! You want to say that to me when my Hosts have been proven to be one of the most integrated ones ever? Can you say that about your own?"

"Why you..."

"Haha! I'm just stating facts! In the end, the most—"

Before Sagittarius could conclude his sentence, and before Pisces could think of a rebuttal for whatever would proceed from the Archer, the both of them instantly dropped anything else they would have engaged in.

Instead, they joined the rest of the Constellations in their troubled silence.

Those who had eyes widened them in shock, and jaws were instantly loosened as a result of the current occurrence that all the Constellations were privy to.

"Something's wrong..." The first to speak was Aquarius.

She would have been the first to notice it, but not before even her connection was lost in the process.

Her face was made of primeval waters, so it was impossible to get a read on her expression. However, the way her voice quaked proved the situation was dire.

"Something... something is here."

Every Constellation instantly agreed, as they all shared their senses with the realm they occupied. They were made aware of what went on within it, and as such... they knew quite well that something was off.

And that feeling only began to swell until it felt too overwhelming to be encapsulated in a single second.

All the Constellations instantly turned to the floating screen that was spread out in front of them—almost as if they were driven by instinct—only to find the most unexpected sight manifest itself.

Just a second ago, the screen only displayed the figure of Dragon King Z'ark, who was taking a break after a rigorous round of his trials.

The area around him was brimming with heated sulfur that would make anyone's skin melt many times over, yet his tough physique allowed him to endure despite it all.

The heat, and the nigh-infinite landscape that consisted of all sorts of complicated regions he had to travel in order to obtain certain items... it was all a lot for Z'ark to do, so a break was expected.

As such, he was currently seated in his true Dragon form, his eyes closed for just a few seconds... until the very second that caused all the Constellations to widen their eyes and stare at the screen.

Right beside the resting dragon, a stain began to manifest.

It slowly evolved within that same second, growing into something bigger and blacker, until it became a murky black portal that now warbled in malevolent delight.

All within the same second, a hand proceeded from the black portal.

It was pale, and most of it was covered in what seemed to be pure darkness. The hand touched the resting Z'ark, who was too tired—and frankly too slow—to even sense the portal manifesting, talkless of the hand.

The hand pressed itself on the slumped shoulder of the Dragon King... and then the first second passed.

"Zar'k, NO!"

It was unclear which Constellation said that, but it was already too late.

~FSSHUUUUU~

Right there and then, before Z'ark even realized it... he was consumed by the darkness, reduced to less than dust within that second.

At that point, Z'ark the Dragon King... ceased to exist.

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Chapter 1209: Legris Invades [Pt 1]

When a living entity experiences chaos that they are unfamiliar with, their natural response would be to freeze for at least a few seconds.

This, other than their reflex actions, was a universal biological function that allowed one's mind to fully comprehend or understand the current situation, while trying to generate a solution as swiftly as possible.

Many times, living entities would fail to reconcile the shocking experience before them with the action that was required.

The result would be them 'freaking out.'

However... Constellations were not like that.

The moment they sensed that something had interfered with their world, they swiftly took action and focused their attention on the appearance of the intruder.

Once they identified the malefactor, unfortunately witnessing the demise of one of the wards in their care, they did not allow themselves to be stunned by the sight.

Instead, they took immediate action, their intentions fully evident.

Eliminating the threat!

However, despite their swift action, spanning what would be considered merely a second, the current situation had already escalated beyond what even they could have imagined.

"W-what's going on? I can't leave!"

"Me neither!"

"Why can't we leave this dimension?!"

"Why can't we access the other dimensions? Why can't we go there?!"

At this point, despite the best attempt of the Constellations to stay composed, they were now getting uneasy.

For one, an unrecognizable entity had invaded their most sacred place.

Secondly, they had just lost one potential Host that could aid in the grand plan proposed by Jared Leonard.

And finally... they could do NOTHING about it!

"What is going on?!"

Aquarius, who was the most sensitive to the Constellation Realm, and also had the Representation of Freedom, reached out the most innate power she possessed to spread herself beyond the current dimension that she occupied.

However... she was met with a barrier.

"No... impossible."

No barrier should have been able to stop her—especially not in this place!

This was the Constellation Realm! The Constellations were all-powerful here. They were at their most powerful due to being unaffected by most of the Unwritten Laws that governed the rest of reality.

Aquarius—with no exceptions at all—could sense and reach everything within this Realm.

'So why...? This shouldn't even be possible with either Aether or Nether! What is preventing me from passing through?'

The threshold that separated their dimension from the others that existed in the Constellation Realm seemed to be cut off from everything else.

Aquarius had never felt this sensation before.

Like an island, cut off from the rest of the world... no, no this was much worse.

She felt like she was in a cage. The cage prevented her from reaching beyond what was beyond the dimension she currently existed in.

"WHY? NOTHING SHOULD BE ABLE TO STOP ME! NOTHING CAN STOP MY REPRESENTATION! NOTHING IS...!"

It was at this moment of increasing anxiety and desperation that it finally struck Aquarius—the problem that currently afflicted her and the rest of the Constellations.

'N-Nothing...?'

The barrier that seemed to cut her and her siblings off from the other dimensions was neither Aether nor Nether, or any variant stemming from both.

It was a disgusting blackish mesh of forbidden power, one that oozed with such discrepancy that it shouldn't have existed.

And perhaps... it didn't.

The hollow darkness that Aquarius sensed when she was unable to pass the barrier was simply the only thing that could stop her.

... Nothing.

"What is... this? Who is this man?!" Aquarius trembled slightly as she was forced to lift her face to the floating screens, witnessing the aftermath of Z'ark's demise.

The hand that proceeded out of the black portal was followed by a leg, and then the other arm, with the second leg dragging itself out not too long after.

A human-looking 'thing' appeared from within the depths of the hollow swirl of blackness. He had a dark coat on, with dark brown hair gracing his pale skin.

His tall height accentuated his overall lean physique, and a smile was plastered on his face as he stepped out.

Something about his dull eyes seemed to hint purpose, but there was a certain indifference he had towards the life he had just taken, as well as the action he was currently perpetrating:

Invading the Constellation Realm!

All twelve boundless entities—now trapped in their own little world—could do nothing but gnash their teeth and watch this man... Legris Damien... walk into their haven.

"He... he is... what is he...?"

No one knew at this point.

Even though he was standing right in their domain, they could do nothing but watch him stand in the very vastness of the dimension that Z'ark once occupied.

There were certain emotions that Constellations had never felt once in their lives.

One of them was fear.

But now... more than ever, they were closer to experiencing the real thing—the overwhelming fear that came with the inability to do anything.

In essence, despair!

"Jared's Allies... our Hosts..." Aries murmured, speaking for everyone who watched.

They all knew the sad truth.

"... They're on their own."

Legris could feel his lips quivering as he took in the purity of the realm he had now stepped into.

His hands trembled slightly, and he found himself perspiring slightly, not due to the immense heat that surrounded him—that was no problem for him—but the sheer abundance of energy he was sensing around him.

"So much Aether... and it's so pure..." Legris widened his lips and showed his perfect white teeth.

He seemed genuinely happy about the current situation, but also... strangely terrified.

"My first time in the Constellation Realm. So this is what it's like. So... colorful..."

Legris had gone over this plan so many times in his head that it was now all he could think about. However, now that he was here, he found himself overwhelmed by the sheer magnificence of it all.

"Amazing. Everything is amazing!" He beamed, raising his hand as he cackled loudly.

Something about the way his voice echoed in the vast expanse surrounding him sounded ominous—no, downright malevolent.

"You were right, Ciel," Legris whispered as his malevolent grin spread even wider.

"This plan is the best."

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Chapter 1210: Legris Invades [Pt 2]

"Now then..." Legris inhaled deeply, preparing himself for what was about to happen.

He had made all of these plans and preparations for this very moment.

"... I should begin the absorption."

With his wide grin still remaining on his face, he stretched out his hand, and a swirling black portal began to swirl around it.

~WHOOSH!~

The swirling blackness generated such great suction that it caused everything around—the sulfur, the landscape, and the ever-growing heat—to rapidly break down.

They all shattered into what seemed to be tiny glass fragments, and everything swiftly went into the darkness Legris generated.

"So many Energy Particles... it's unbelievable." Legris whispered to himself as he watched the once vibrant landscape slowly devolve into a blank space.

There was still so much Aether to absorb, so he kept his arm upright and kept taking it all in.

All of this, within the span of a few seconds.

"Maybe an hour more and I'll be done with—"

~CRAAAAAACCKKKKK!!!~

Suddenly, the sound of crashing glass echoed within the entire dimension, forcing Legris to look in the direction where it originated.

What it seemed like was a dimensional collapse—a forceful entry from one dimension into another.

The barrier that separated the two dimensions shattered like paper-thin glass, leaving shattered fragments flying in the air as another intruder made his presence known.

"You..." Legris murmured, his eyes widening, as he took in the features of the young man before him.

He had long golden hair, with an oversized flowing robe that seemed only befitting of royalty. He also had jewels adorning his neck, like a shimmering golden sea of various proportions.

His bare chest showed due to the absence of a vest, and his puffy trousers complimented his black and gold shoes.

He was currently floating in the air, staring down at Legris with his golden eyes.

"... Kuzon Midas."

The whisper that Legris made served as both an acknowledgment and a warning.

His eyes instantly narrowed as he looked at the young Midas, unknowingly sizing him up as soon as he fully registered his presence.

'He's stronger than before!' Legris had to admit to himself.

He even found himself swallowing down bits of his saliva, wondering who would make their first move.

"I'd stop that if I was you." Kuzon eyed Legris' hand, which was still trying its hardest to absorb as much Aether as possible despite the situation.

"Well, I mean—"

~WHISH!~

Before Legris could conclude his sentence, his arm got severed, leaving a trail of sticky black liquid that gushed out of both openings.

"Guek!"

The black vortex instantly dissipated as his lifeless arm plopped to the ground, leaving Legris wincing in both pain and shock at what just happened.

He gripped his wounded hand slightly, gritting his teeth as he stared at Kuzon's cold gaze.

"How did you arrive here so fast? Don't tell me..." Legris murmured to himself, studying Kuzon's calm demeanor despite the current situation.

"The Constellations told you, right? Or to be more specific... YOUR Constellation did."

Even though he felt the sharp sting of Kuzon's blow on his hand, Legris couldn't help but chuckle lightly.

"Your expression says it all. It's unfortunate, though. Even though I managed to cut off their connection to this realm, I still can't do much with the bond they have with their Hosts." He whispered.

It had taken so much out of Legris to isolate the Constellations from his business, since he would lose otherwise, but even he had his limits.

'Their connection with the Hosts they have bonded with still exists, though in a limited quality.'

Just as a radio signal could be jammed, leading to a poor connection, but not completely cut off... that was the best way to describe the current state of the Constellations and their respective Hosts.

'Also, only three of them had Constellations when I last saw them. It seems my guesses were correct, and Jared decided to make his allies Hosts. But, it'll take some time for them to be accepted by Constellations, so I can be assured that not all of them have Constellation Familiars at this point.'

This suspicion he had was further reinforced by the death of Z'ark, who had no Constellation Energy within him before or after death.

'He seemed to be undergoing a trial when I killed him. That means the Constellations are yet to choose. Perfect! It means the numbers have probably not changed from before.'

Still, Legris knew he couldn't be too careless.

Even just one Host could pose a problem to him and his plans, especially if they were being guided by a Constellation—irrespective of how unstable the connection was.

"I thought your Constellation would tell you to run. You know, if you die and I get access to the Constellation Essence you have... it would only doom your cause." Legris decided to prolong the conversation a little.

If he could gain even a few strands of information from his target, it would be well worth it.

"He did. But I won't ignore your presence here." Kuzon responded, his eyes narrowing even further, almost as if examining Legris thoroughly.

'I see. He isn't being hasty to attack because he's cautious as well...!' Legris smiled to himself.

He didn't know what the Constellation told Kuzon, but he was sure that the boy was apprehensive of him and his abilities.

That was why he was being so indecisive.

'He also wants to extract information from me while ensuring I do not absorb more Aether. In a way, he kills two birds with one stone and increases the odds of his victory the longer he keeps me here.'

If Kuzon successfully bought enough time for his allies to arrive, they could all attack him with minimal efforts toward strategy and still emerge victorious.

'However, if I can kill him and collect his Essence first, the advantage lies with me.' Legris liked the idea of this plan.

Right now, it seemed his goal was now divided into two—obtain Kuzon's Constellation Energy, and absorb as much Aether as he possibly could.

With Kuzon being wary of him, Legris thought it was the perfect chance to take the initiative in their inevitable clash.

'Let's give it a shot!'