

SPELLCRAFT 121

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

Chapter 121: The Oasis

A lake!

That was the only thing that could be said about the sight before me.

The body of water made a smooth circle, surrounded by the earth around which was covered in greens.

Oh, how the pool glistened in the later afternoon sun. Though surrounded by shade, the reflection of light caused its charm to increase even more.

It wasn't very large, and I assumed that if humans were to step into it for a swim, the pool wouldn't be able to accommodate more than ten persons at once. Still, it was so clear and crystal blue that I was left breathless.

The surrounding was exquisite as well. Plants and flowers of varying colors, all looking exotic most likely due to the effects of mana density in the area.

The colorful flora made me grateful for finding this spot, thinking about how I would use them for my benefit. The air tingled my skin, everywhere seemed to radiate with power—even the rocks around brimmed with so much energy that I wondered how long they had been soaking in all that mana.

Still, with such a lustrous environment, I sensed no living being around. No wild insects, or small animals, none. This place that was so full of mana was devoid of life, well, except for the plants.

'Hmm... oh well.'

I couldn't mull over thoughts that wouldn't give me a solution. I needed to do what I came here for... Meditation!

Without wasting any time, I crossed my legs and made a meditative pose while relaxing my buttocks on the soft grass that welcomed me gently. Breathing in and out slowly, I focused on my inner mana supply, observing the channels and controlling the flow to the designated direction I wanted it to go.

Currently, my three Mana Cores were located in my stomach region, brain region, and spinal region.

For my fourth Mana Core, I was going to make it in my heart region!

It was a delicate procedure, which was why I always had to be careful anytime I meditated. However, there was really no time at all anymore. With the rich ambiance of mana here, I hoped to try forming my Mana Core and make it in time for the Familiar Selection Ceremony in three weeks!

"Huu... now then, let us begin!"

With everything now in order, I proceeded to begin collecting the mana around me, pure and unsullied.

Using SPELLCRAFT to attract the Mana around toward me, I also increased the flow of the Mana particles in my body... all converging at a single location. The moment my body began taking in the external mana, the mana in my body became quickened, and my Mana Cores went into overdrive.

'This feeling... ah... I remember it!'

A wave of nostalgia and pleasure enveloped me, feeling so much life pour into my body. With all the mana within my body quickened, the flow became much faster than normal.

I was amazed by the speed... it was incredible!

"Let's not rush, Jared... it's quick, yes, but let's not rush!"

To make a firm and sturdy Core, I needed to pour way more Mana into it than normal. My other cores were made in a rush, so even after I had made them, I was still going through the trouble of refining and strengthening each.

But, if I made a definite foundation with this, it would be much better in terms of efficiency. I could later focus on advancing all my cores to the Yellow Core stage later on, except my base one.

"Yes... keep flowing!"

I still had an hour to spare... it was best I made perfect use of that time!

Once again, I lost track of time. Trapped in the euphoria of meditation, I exceeded the schedule I gave myself. Fortunately, it wasn't by much.

"It's most likely after five... are they still waiting for me?" I huffed, rising from the grassy plains.

Judging the clouds that appeared in the sky, and how low the sun had gone, I was certain that classes would be over by now.

Since that was the case, I needed to hurry back.

"Guh!"

A sharp pain coursed through my body, one which I realized quite well. It was a backlash of the meditation I had just done, something that could kill me if I wasn't careful... Hunger.

"Gurrrrrrrr...."

My stomach made a growling sound, crying for a meal to satiate it. Unfortunately, I could not respond positively to its call. If only ignoring it could solve the problem.

"Ah, damnit... I got carried away and now I'm starving!"

I sluggishly pushed my exhausted body and hurried back to the Lecture Hall, where I agreed to meet up with Anabelle and Edward. The temptation to run off to a cafeteria crossed my mind, but this was more important!

I couldn't create a bad impression of myself now! Not after all I had done to get to this point.

"Huff... huff..."

Fortunately, the Lecture Hall wasn't too far from the weird lake chock full of mana. In what I estimated to be barely three minutes, I arrived at the Lecture Hall. It wouldn't have taken so long if I wasn't so hungry, though.

"Sorry to keep you waiting!" I swung open the door leading to the classroom and gave a light smile, hoping to see my new acquaintances.

But, what I saw... was something I never expected!

"This... this is...!!!"

Edward and Anabelle turned their heads in my direction the moment they heard my voice, but they weren't the ones my eyes were on. The two of them sat at the front row of the class, where they had made their seats... and right on their desk were the things that made me widen my eyes in shock.

"Food!!!"

I unconsciously leaked out my thoughts in an obsessive manner, and following this outcry, my stomach rumbled even more.

The embarrassing display of my hunger echoed throughout the empty classroom, causing Edward and Anabelle to look at me with expressions that told the opposite of respect.

"Haa... haha... haha..."

I could only leak an awkward laugh out of my lips, but the deed had already been done.

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Chapter 122: Intense Preparation (Pt 1)

"Haa... thank you so much. I was really starving. Haha..." I laughed awkwardly as I chomped on a burger that was wrapped around my hands.

Caressing the smooth bread and feeling its texture, I drew it close to my mouth and took a whiff of the meaty aroma locked between the layer of bread.

It smelled good... and tasted good too!

I took another bite, then another, and another!

While enjoying the meal graced upon me by the duo, I could spot both of them staring at me strangely, perhaps surprised by my gumption and intense dedication to finish my meal.

There was nothing to it, though... I was just hungry.

"Yeah, we could tell." Anabelle was the first to speak, making a sweet smile.

Underneath the smile, I could sense shock. Was she disgusted by my unrefined manner of eating? What other choice was there? I couldn't help it after being baited by such a wonderful meal.

When I arrived and saw the bunch of takeouts they had brought, my self-control was lost instantly. Of course, after hearing the humiliating growl from my belly and how I shouted 'Food!', the pair must have thought the right thing to do was to share their meal.

"What made you so hungry, though? Were you training?"

I nodded without paying much heed to Edward's question. What I was doing could be called training, no, it was exactly that.

And it was a good one too!

Judging the progress I made, having a fourth Mana core was doable if I kept meditating in front of the lake constantly.

I would need to draw a schedule, as well as return there for samples of the rocks, flora, and even water that existed there. They could contain special properties that could be useful even more.

'I'm not breaking any school rules, too. If the place was off-limits, they would have told us. Plus, it was just hidden among meadows and trees, no barricade exists there whatsoever. That means it's a safe area.'

I could also take as many samples as I wanted as long as I didn't disturb the general state of the place or cause destruction. It was a gold mine that picked my interest, and I hoped for returns.

"Wow! Amazing! What kind of training did you do?" Edward interrupted my thoughts while staring at me with fiery eyes of passion.

'Ah, does he think I meant Martial Arts Training?'

I swallowed my food and washed it down with the cool water that the two also provided.

They seemed to be done eating on their end, most likely before I arrived, so I was the only one who ate... it was about awkward, but that was fine too.

"It wasn't Martial Arts," I replied after making sure my food was properly ingested.

Edward's face fell a little, but he also grew a bit more curious. As for Ana, since she wasn't an expert at 'training', she was a bit lost in the conversation.

"By the way, how did you get the food?" I asked, suddenly wondering why I hadn't thought of the question before now.

"Ohh, that. We finished our Electives early, so we went to the cafeteria to grab something to eat. We bought some for you, in case you were hungry too. When we arrived and saw you weren't here, we ate our portion and waited for you..." Edward replied.

"... We thought you had ditched us, though. It's a relief you didn't." Anabelle continued where Edward could not go beyond.

Both their faces showed a slight fondness for me, and I was certain they still held me in high regard, despite my current pathetic state.

"I'm sorry for keeping you waiting. I lost track of time in my training."

Now back to the topic of training, I was certain Edward would say something... and he did.

"What type of training was it?"

I smiled, already expecting the obvious question. However, I wasn't ready to tell them about my multiple Mana Cores. It wasn't even certain that I would ever be.

"That's not what's important currently..."

My voice now had a more serious tone to it, allowing Edward to realize that it was best he didn't further his question.

"You all said you wanted to talk to me about something, and I also have something to tell you. Let's address that first... oh, and thanks for the meal."

While the last part seemed a bit half-hearted, I actually meant it with all sincerity. Without the sumptuous treat that they blessed me with... I wasn't sure I could—

"Well, I should go first then... I asked you first." Anabelle took the lead.

Her forward personality often contrasted with her innocent and charming young look. This time was no exception as well.

I waited for her question.

"I thought a lot about what you said, and I realized you were right. To fully surpass our joint rival, Lewis Griffith, I need every weapon in my arsenal. That's why... I want you to teach me Magic!"

A smile formed on my face as I took in the determined look she had in her eyes. It was exciting to watch a young child with so much vigor concerning Magic, so much so that I nearly saw my younger self in the girl.

"Why would you ask me, though? Are you sure you want a mere White Core Grade to teach you, someone with such talent?"

This was a test, obviously. I wanted to see if she spoke out of depth, curiosity, or blind desperation.

"I heard the news of how you got a perfect score on your exams in Magic. I also know you're skilled at Magic theories and have a great wealth of knowledge. Since you're basically walking down the path I wish to thread on, one of a Scholar and Magic-User, there's no better person! Plus, we both dare the same rival! Let's help each other out!"

I nearly cringed when she made her last statement but, since my self-control had returned, I only nodded slightly.

'That's good enough for me!'

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Chapter 123: Intense Preparation (Pt 2)

"Fair enough, but if I'm to do it, you'll need to cooperate very well with me. Plus, it won't be for free. You'll be helping out in my research and experiments. I'll need more than one set of hands and head on my current project."

Anabelle beamed in delight the moment I said this.

For a Scholar, being included in experiments and research was another reward in itself. That meant there was practically no downside in our relationship.

"I'm happy you came to that conclusion, Anabelle. I look forward to being friends and close rivals with you."

"Me too!"

Her beam was so bright that I nearly shielded my eyes. How could one be so cute?

'Control yourself, Jared... you're a dignified man. You're better than this!'

Taking a deep breath to calm myself, I turned to the boy who impatiently awaited his turn.

"Now, then... what about you, Edward? What would you like to ask of me?"

My question was blunt and straightforward, and I stared directly into his eyes.

Having a knack for reading the emotions of others, I knew he was conflicted or even unsure of what he was about to say.

However, what other choice did he have? Ultimately, he couldn't get left behind!

"Please, Jared... please teach me Martial Arts!" Edward's voice rang loud, echoing across the room as he spoke.

I would have been flustered had I not prepared for this much. His face was stiff and his fists tightened. Clearly, a mix of embarrassment and determination clashed within the boy's soul.

"Hmm... why?"

It was a good question, natural for someone in my position.

"After watching you fight, I realized how superior you were in terms of combat. The way you spoke also showed your superior knowledge in arts and techniques..."

A very sound conclusion. But, this much was obvious already. I would need more than that if I was to be convinced that he was bright enough to be taught.

"... After my loss, I observed your body for some time and noticed it's incredibly well built, though not as noticeable as me. You focused on balance, and I can tell your physical status is high. Also..."

'Oh? Not bad. What else?'

"... That move you showed to me in order to evade my strike... the blurry movement that made you appear beside me in a flash. It's a technique that belongs at least on the Intermediate Level of Martial Arts. Yet, you used it so casually. It's clear you're a very skilled Martial Artist on the level of an Intermediate master at the very least, no, an Advanced one!"

I smiled as soon as he was done with his assessment. In all fairness, he was both right and wrong.

[The Illusory Dance], the motion technique I used in front of him was a Martial Arts technique belonging to the Basic Level. Thanks to the fall of Martial Arts, it could be said to be on the same level as Intermediate Techniques, though.

'In my past life, I never made it past the Intermediate Level in Martial Arts. I hit a wall and couldn't reach the Advanced stage.'

That was why I thought it would be nice to learn more about Martial Arts since I had a well-tempered body and Magic on my side. The state of the devastating art had declined, though, and my Intermediate Level could basically be translated as an Advanced stage currently.

Yes, I was an Advanced Martial Artist based on recent standards.

'I don't intend to make the mistake of settling for that, though. I won't lie to myself... I'm still an Intermediate Martial Artist!'

Looking back at Edward, he was probably at the peak of Basic Martial Arts, however, if I were to use my normal standards, he was probably as good as a beginner. He had the right body, but the wrong expertise and techniques.

He would need to be taught from scratch.

"Very well. Edward, you've convinced me. I'll teach you as well. The motion technique I used in front of you that day... I'll make sure you learn it before our Inter Class Exchange, among other techniques too!"

The young boy's eyes bulged in surprise, most likely questioning if such a thing was possible. However, the moment he gazed at my confident and calm face, the worries that festered within him probably dissipated.

"I'll be honest with you two..." I now addressed Anabelle as well, drawing both their attention to me.

"... You have talent, a good physique, and enough potential to reach the top among your peers. However, you all lack the proper guidance."

I wasn't wrong. Whenever I looked at both of them, nostalgic memories popped up. I usually had a keen eye for people, and that special trait wasn't going to fail me now.

"For Anabelle, you have talent in Magic, but you've not actively used it or exercised your Mana Core as others have. As a result, you are completely behind in Mana Core development and the use of Mana. But, don't worry... with your talent, you'll get the hang of it soon."

Anabelle's face budded into a relieved smile once my assurance resonated with her.

"Edward, your physique is excellent, and your will is commendable. Your determination is also admirable. The only downside with you is how untalented you are in Magic. Your Mana Core is pretty much less than average, which is why you got stuck in the Lower Class in the first place."

The young boy bit his lip in frustration. He was most likely already aware of this fact, so I was just rubbing salt on his injuries.

"But, your Mana Core will pose no problem at all! Trust me... you can become strong even with your poor talent in Mana!"

Edward's eyes bulged as soon as he heard my unexpected statement. Hope and doubt sparked in his eyes as he seemed to be in conflict with deciding which one to pick.

"R-really?!"

I nodded emphatically.

"Edward, take it from someone like me with a White Mana Core... you can become strong!"

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Chapter 124: Intense Preparation (Pt 3)

Mana is important for both Magic-Users and Martial Artists.

This is why it was one of the requirements for choosing the class placements in Ainzlark according to the new system.

Just as my old friend posited in my first life... there are heights unattainable without skill in Mana.

That was why he remained stuck in the Peak stage of Martial Arts despite his freakish talent in the sword... never attaining Transcendence.

Edward now faced a similar problem. His skill in Mana was very low, his Mana Core was despairingly underdeveloped, and he probably had difficulty manifesting his inner mana to enhance himself.

But, unlike the time in my first life, I had a solution to this issue now!

I could try making multiple Mana Cores within Edward, just as I did for myself. This would allow him to increase the speed and efficiency of his Mana use while also boosting the quantity of Mana he had.

Unfortunately, that was impossible.

The young boy's core had already been sullied by the yellow color and was no longer pure. Creating multiple Mana Cores now was out of the window.

If it had been white, even though Edward possessed very little talent in Mana Control, I could have helped him to redirect his Mana Particles and form another Core.

'There's no use crying over spilled milk, though...'

The only other option would be too much of a hassle, but at this point, I just had to do it.

"I always knew I could be a great Swordsman even with my poor talent in Mana! Haha! Who even needs that!" Edward blurted out in excitement.

The moment he said this, my gaze shifted to his overly joyous mood and I gave him a cold glare.

"Are you crazy? Without Mana, you'll be no more than average. What do you think you are?"

My harsh, cold, and blunt statement shook the two who heard me. The atmosphere suddenly shifted and became gloomy in a split second.

"B-but you said I—"

"Don't quote me wrong. I know what I said."

My sharp words cut him short instantly.

"Don't be stupid. Mana is everything. It makes things so much easier. Why would you ever think for even a second that you would be better off without it?"

My words hammered on the boy even more, and he appeared to be on the verge of tears. It seemed like I had raised his hopes and then shattered them apart.

It wasn't my intention to be unnecessarily harsh, but I needed him to rid himself of any toxic thoughts that told him he could be a decent fighter without needing Mana. If he held on to that logic, he would give up halfway through Mana training and settle for what he knew best, Martial Arts.

Though Edward told me to teach him Martial Arts, I wasn't going to stop there. If he wasn't well grounded in Mana, his potential would only be stunted.

"I said you can become strong with your lack of talent in Mana, and I wasn't lying. Even though you're hopeless in it, you have me! I'll help you out!"

Using the method that the Priest used for me when I was younger, as well as making sure we all trained in the secret spot I found earlier, I was going to fill this boy's body to the brim with Mana! His Core would rapidly absorb his Mana Particles and through my expert Mana Control, I would ensure he obtained a decent Core.

'The problem with that is that it'll affect my own training as well. I can only rely on this at the initial stage. He'll need to learn how to do it himself too!'

I was going so far for these kids in hopes that they would be useful to me in the future. Hopefully, I was right.

'Nothing ventured... nothing gained!'

"I'll personally ensure the success of the both of you! That much is guaranteed."

Anabelle and Edward had stars in their eyes as they gazed upon me with so much respect.

"Is that what you wanted to tell us?" Ana asked, still beaming and grinning from ear to ear.

'Oh, yeah! About that...'

"Well, pretty much. But, there's one more thing as well."

"Oh? What is it?" They asked in unison, having even greater expectations surge from within them.

"You'll need to quit all your current Electives so we can make time for training. Also, clear your schedules from the end of classes to about 6:00, no, 7:00 PM. We'll be doing intensive training and a lot of time and effort will be put into it."

Silence.

The pair looked discombobulated the moment my words landed on them. They looked at each other, looked at me, looked at each other again, then looked at me... their expressions told me they weren't prepared to handle this news.

With every action comes an equal and opposing reaction... I knew that very well. And now, in response to my seemingly absurd action... an opposing reaction appeared in full force.

"WHAAAAATTTTT?!!"

As I instructed, both Anabelle and Edward quit their electives.

Their faces looked disheveled after returning from Neron's office for finalizing the details and they muttered words of regret.

"I'll miss you... cultural studies..." Anabelle sniffed as she walked back to her seat.

Edward said something similar, but I didn't even care enough to listen.

The important thing was that they had taken the bold step and proven their determination. With that in mind, I could trust them a little.

'I'll take them to the lake and begin their training there.'

First, they both needed to get a feel of Mana since they were both really inexperienced in it. Anabelle was sure to get it first, so I had the next thing in mind for her. She would rebuild her Mana Core and cause it to advance on her own while I only taught her the basics.

As for Edward, I would personally inject my mana and redirect it to his core in order to increase the growth of his Core too.

As soon as that was over, we would start the main thing.

For Edward, training on proper Martial Arts techniques. I was thinking of beginning with Imperial Sword Arts and Haze Martial Method for him.

[The Illusory Dance] was a basic technique belonging to the Haze Martial Method School, so having him learn it was essential.

For Anabelle, she would learn Spell Activation, and once she got the hang of it, I could teach her more practical uses of Spells. Using the creativity of a Scholar, I was certain she would be able to combine various spells and produce desirable results.

It wouldn't be as fast as mine, since I had multiple Cores, but with her very powerful one, she would be able to compensate greatly.

I also didn't plan to neglect my training and experiments. If these two seemed to be getting in the way of my activities, I would ditch them. But, for now, I didn't see that happening.

The Familiar Selection Ceremony was in merely three weeks... I was eager to see how much we would have grown by then!

'And so it begins!'

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Chapter 125: Prelude To The Selection (Pt 1)

Weeks passed in the blink of an eye.

During that time, I and the two who were under my wing did our hardest, achieving results that were synonymous with the efforts we put in.

And so, after training and tempering ourselves, we found ourselves seated in our Lecture Hall.

Neron Kaelid stood atop his stage and placed both hands on the lectern that stood erect in front of him.

"The time is here, guys. It's time to select your Familiars!"

Everyone nodded, some swallowed, others looked nervous enough that sweat seemed to pour out of them. No matter how experienced or weak an individual was, they weren't ignorant of the concept of Familiars.

Seated in my usual spot, now sandwiched between Edward, to my left and Anabelle to my right, I interlocked my fingers together and gave a somewhat excited smile.

'Huu... it's finally that time, uh?'

After so long, for the first time in both my lives... I would get a Familiar!

"As you all know, this is a very important step to take in the journey of everyone—Magic-Users, Martial Artists, and Scholars. As a result, you all need to become undeniably successful in this if you hope to advance further in your respective fields."

From Neron's tone and the students' expressions, one could easily deduce that this was a matter akin to life or death. This Ceremony would usually be yet another thing that separated the talented and those without potential.

'If you end up with spectacular Familiar, Lecturers begin to show interest and can take you in as an apprentice.'

Most apprentice candidates were chosen using their Familiars as yardsticks in estimating their prospective growth. Neron didn't mention anything like that, but I was certain everyone thought of it.

"Due to how important this Ceremony is, we'll be having a joint session with the students of both Middle Class and Upper Class."

My grin widened the moment I heard this.

'So, I'll get to see them again, uh? I wonder how they're doing.'

"You have an excited look on your face, Jared. Did the teacher say something interesting?" A feminine voice appeared from my right.

Of course, it came from none other than Anabelle. She had a somewhat inquisitive glow in her eyes that seemed to want to peer into the recesses of my soul.

"No, it's not that... I'm just looking forward to meeting some people. They are Magic Users I got to know since the Entrance Exams."

With my statement made and my tone initiating the end of the conversation, I returned my gaze to Neron.

"We'll leave for the General Meeting Spot by Ten, so you have some time to yourselves. Also, the Familiar Selection Ceremony begins at Twelve on the spot. Prepare yourselves."

With this as his final statement, Neron took his leave.

As we watched him exit the hall in silence, everyone's uneasy gazes shifted to each other, and carefully waited for our Lecturer to completely disappear.

The moment he did so, an uproar replaced the decorum pervading the room and chattering began. One would think these students were not aware that today was 'The Day' from the way they spoke.

"Are you guys nervous?" I calmly looked at the two who sat on both my sides.

"A little. I wonder what I'll end up with... I hear the Ceremony is mostly a game of chance." Edward honestly replied, making me lightly laugh in response.

'Well, he's not wrong...' My thoughts trailed.

Anything could happen during the Ceremony. There were cases where individuals deemed to be talentless got to have high-grade Familiars, while the seemingly talented ones got the less desirable outcomes.

These situations were rare, though. Usually, the more potential and talent one had, the better the familiar would be.

"We've done our best. We can only hope for our efforts to be reciprocated! I'm not nervous at all."

Edward and I mechanically turned out heads to face Ana and gave her an expression that told her to shut up.

'What best? What effort? This girl and her freakish talent...'

My eyes nearly popped out of their sockets thanks to the glare I gave her, and I was sure Edward was doing the same.

Her potential was even more than I expected. It was a good thing I had convinced her to stop wasting away her affinity for Magic. No, it was extremely fortunate that I made her into an ally... though sometimes I felt like I made a mistake.

"Come on, guys. It won't be that hard. By the way, Jared... these people you look forward to meeting... who are they?"

I rolled my eyes and tried to stare into an empty space the moment she spoke. This was the problem with Anabelle... she was too inquisitive, no, clingy!

"Come on, just tell me. Are you keeping secrets from me, I mean... us, now? Edward, tell Jared to spill it!"

I once again ignored her words.

"Come on, I'm sure it's nothing. We should be more focused on the Familiar Selection Ceremony." Edward rightly said, earning my respect.

"Tch, how useless. You can't even back me up."

I winced at those words, and Edward seemed to be struck by lightning as all the energy in his body appeared to be drained off.

"I already told you, don't worry. Be confident in your abilities! Now, support me on this!"

Anabelle kept babbling and I had to shut off my hearing with magic in order to concentrate on other important things.

I had initially found her personality to be entirely absurd and thought it was due to our shared passion regarding Lewis Griffith, but it turned out I was wrong. According to Edward's testimony, Anabelle had always been like that... even to him.

They basically knew all there was to know about each other. Pure transparency!

It seemed like she was trying to adopt that kind of atmosphere in my relationship with her... too bad it was impossible.

I was a bit glad that she considered me close enough to share secrets with, but I wasn't ready to divulge any of mine to anyone... especially not to a 12-year-old.

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Chapter 126: Prelude To The Selection (Pt 2)

The thought of Anabelle knowing I was the very man she worshipped, and actively competed with, made me throw away any idea of revealing my true identity.

Besides, it was too risky to begin divulging such secrets.

'Haa... how long do I have to put up with this, though?'

I looked at Anabelle and saw that she was still talking. She looked almost as a child would, and her cheeks were already getting red. The girl was most likely getting angry and flustered that I hadn't said anything.

'I better quickly end this...'

"Shh... that's enough. You're right." I quickly interrupted her while removing my magical ear blocks at the same moment.

Slightly raising my hand to her face, one of my fingers planted itself on her lip. With this gesture, and my words, Anabelle finally fell silent, her eyes bulging in surprise and her face growing even redder than before.

'What? She's getting more flustered? Why?'

I was an expert at reading people, especially women. During times when I wanted them to keep quiet, it was best to agree with anything they said, even if I really didn't feel that way.

Still, doing that would make me seem like a pushover and it would encourage her to try something similar next time.

To curb that, I asserted some dominance and made a bold step. Telling her "Shhh" and placing my finger on her lips would allow her to know I was serious and didn't want any more words slipping out of her mouth.

But what was this?

Her child-like face was bright red, and her expression showed immense shock... it felt like I had done something wrong.

She made a short breath from her lips, causing the tip of my fingers to feel the heat that came from within her.

'Maybe I embarrassed her. Did I go too far?'

I removed my hand from her lip and dropped them, still intensely gazing into the extremely cute expression she currently had.

"I-I see... so that's how it is..." A whisper leaked out of her mouth before she finally placed both hands atop her desk and buried her head in between them.

"Uh?" Was she upset or something?

I couldn't read this girl.

"W-wow, I didn't know you had that side of you, Jared," Edward mumbled, his voice quivered in a little surprise as he spoke.

I looked in his direction and saw a somewhat uneasy smile form on his face.

"But, I support the action you took. It's a good thing you let her know now!"

Was he talking about what I did and said to Anabelle? It was really nothing spectacular, though. In any case, I was glad he understood the importance of making the girl shut up before she became a nuisance.

"Well, it had to be said one of these days. The sooner the better, right?"

Edward coughed hard the moment I said this, like he was caught off-guard, but he quickly regained his composure and nodded.

"Hey, are you okay? Still nervous?"

"Yeah... I'm fine..."

With that, he smiled softly and also buried his face underneath his arms, following Anabelle's lead.

I had a faint feeling that I had done something more than I initially thought was necessary, but there was no need to push the issue.

'I should think about the course of action to take from here on out...'

After all, the concept of Familiars... was one of the very few things I wasn't so knowledgeable on!

Familiars, also known as Bonds, are beings and creatures that contract with humans, forming a form of symbiotic relationship.

The origins of Familiars are diverse. They are basically souls of creatures who possess lingering attachments to the world and have egos powerful enough to allow them manifest as Familiars.

In essence, when a being dies and had a strong attachment and powerful ego, such being becomes a Familiar.

However, just as all humans aren't equal, Familiars are the same. Power varies depending on the type of being a familiar was before death, as well as the Ego they possess.

For this reason alone, Magic-Users often search for the more powerful Familiar to make it their Bond. Unfortunately, another issue arises from this.

Familiars and their Hosts have symbiotic relationships to which both must agree! No matter how desperate a Host is, if the Familiar refuses to form a contract, it is all in vain. Likewise, Hosts could also refuse to form a connection with proposing Familiars.

Just as people had various personalities, Familiars are the same. Some are endearing, some are harsh, some are kind, and some are proud.

However, it is usually expected that a powerful Familiar has a degree of pride due to the great level of Ego it possesses. As a result, they do not settle for just any Host.

The power of a Familiar is indispensable, and they are often known to be life partners. This is why nearly all Magic-Users and Martial Artists possess one.

Since a person's power is often inadequate and requires assistance, it would be best if they had a partner to assist in their endeavors. As such, Familiars have made their mark in the world.

Now, as for why I know so little about these creatures that have gotten so widespread and the reason for me not having one in my past life... it all stems from one single fact.

Familiars were not very famous back in my day.

In the past, contractual magic was very complex, so only top-tier Mages could use it. Plus, while the existence of Familiars was known to us, forming a Bond with one was something most Magic-Users couldn't do.

Only those of the highest caliber could form contracts with Familiars, and they were revered as the pinnacle of the realm of Magic... The Grand Mages.

I once aimed for that position myself, until I found out I was inept.

Grand Mages, and a few other exceptions possessed familiars, and they were quite powerful, while those of lower status didn't. Also, since Familiars had symbiotic relationships with their Host, they required something in exchange for the power they would give.

A home to reside in called the Mana Core!

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

Chapter 127: The Familiar Selection Ceremony (Pt 1)

I was inept in my previous life.

That made it impossible for me to even dream of having a Familiar. As wondering souls with Egos, they all needed a place to call home. Without a Mana Core, a person was not qualified to house even the lowest of Familiars.

That was the reality of my time back then, though.

In modern times, even those without Mana Cores possessed Familiars. Among the Scholars registered within Ainzlark, even those in my class, some didn't have Mana Cores and were Inept.

Thanks to my accomplishments in the past, there was really no discrimination against Inept Scholars since I proved that even without the use of Mana, a person could revolutionize Magic.

As a result, the Academy accepted Inepts in the Scholar Department alone.

'The Familiar Selection Ceremony is compulsory for everyone, even the Inept Scholars... that means there is a way even those without Mana can form Bond contracts.'

And I knew what the solution was.

Artificial Mana Cores, or rather, Mana stones.

By infusing Mana into a particular device, similar to the way Mana Particles converged within the body, a Mana Core could be formed.

These 'Stones' served as an external source of Mana, allowing those who couldn't use Mana to perform Magic as long as they knew the procedure and commands already imputed within the stones.

For the Inept students, those who didn't have Mana Cores, they would be given a Mana Stone each. This gave them an equal chance of getting Familiars for themselves.

"Huu, Magic has really advanced, uh?" I muttered to myself.

Just as Neron said, immediately it was time to leave, he returned to our classroom and led us to the place where everyone would converge for the ceremony.

My classmates seemed excited and nervous, and I could somehow feel the same way. My focus was somewhere else, though, even as we all moved in two orderly lines of boys and girls.

'Almost... there...' My thoughts raced as I looked inward.

My fourth Mana Core... it was still forming, though very close to complete manifestation!

For the three weeks that I trained Edward and Anabelle, I couldn't completely focus on my Mana Core growth.

Of course, that didn't mean I neglected it, but, I was also very much occupied with my pupils. While Edward needed more of my attention, even Anabelle required assistance at the beginning due to her inexperience with Mana. As a result, I ended up spending a great deal of time boosting their Mana Core development.

At some point, I made them return the favor to me by using the same method of 'Excitement' that I learned from the priest. They both skillfully infused their Mana into me while I absorbed the rich mana of the surroundings, causing my speed to reach phenomenal speed.

That was what made me arrive at the threshold, nearly completing my Mana Core formation. If I had just one more day, I would have completed it. Unfortunately, the next day was today!

Being out of time, I resorted to the method of light meditation, skillfully pulling my internal mana particles to my fourth Core. Since I could not achieve total concentration, the speed was rather slow—but steady.

I just needed to keep at it.

"We're nearly there. Pick up your pace."

With Neron's statement, I was brought back to reality and observed the surroundings. It was oddly familiar. It took me a second to realize it, but once I did, my eyes bulged in surprise.

'T-this is... our destination?!

A short distance from where I currently walked was the terrain I had been training in for three weeks. There was no way I could miss the cluster of trees, the exotic colors of the flowers nearby, and the rich density of mana emanating from the region.

'That's my Meditation spot!'

My eyes darted to Anabelle and Edward and I realized that they too were surprised by this. To think that the location for selecting our Familiars would be the very place we had been training for the past three weeks... how unbelievable was that?!

"Welcome to the Oasis!" A deep voice boomed.

I rolled my eyes slightly and contained my disgust as I watched the man who addressed all of us. He was none other than Damien Lawcroft, the idiot who was hell-bent on Mana Core Grade superiority.

The entire first-year students were already gathered in the lush garden, the clearing at the center of the forest where the pool was situated. The grounds were big enough to contain all of us, with enough space for us to form lines separating the Upper Class, Middle Class, and Lower Class.

Just like on our way to this location, we were divided into two lines of boys and girls, making four lines in total. Standing firmly and listening in absolute silence, we faced Damien Lawcroft, as well as the three Lecturers who stood behind him.

The lake at the center separated us from them and the temptation to stare into the clear blue water instead of facing the Academy staff in front was sure to gnaw at everyone who stood in line.

Damien's hardened face had not diminished and his tone was as harsh as ever. He addressed us at the Familiar Selection Ceremony, going over the rules and procedures in a precise manner.

"The pool before you is known as the 'Gate', and it is a massive Mana Core that is used to store Familiars of various kinds. Some of you may have already noticed the intensity of Mana that is permeating the area. It is all as a result of this lake."

I was surprised to hear that the lake itself was a Mana Core. No, that wasn't accurate. The most likely description would be that an artificial Mana core dwelled within it. And so, the lake served as a vessel to hold it.

'I have taken samples of the lake water, and even herbs from all around... if this is really a spot so important, why was it left unguarded? Plus, why is it located on the academic grounds of the Lower Class?'

I had many questions, but now was the time to listen.

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

Chapter 128: The Familiar Selection Ceremony (Pt 2)

"Once the Gate is opened, Familiars will pour out and swarm the area. Do not worry, none shall harm you." Damien began explaining the ceremony.

No student dared zoning out at this critical juncture.

"Special Magic has been placed around that prevents them from being hostile. Besides, they are Familiars, and all seek satisfactory hosts. None of them will attack potential candidates."

Our supervisor continued his explanation, telling us about the time frame for selecting a Familiar. The ceremony started at exactly 12:00 and a period of three hours was provided for every student to get a Familiar.

For the Inepts, they would all be given artificial Mana Cores—Mana Stones, to form contracts with their Familiars.

Since the ceremony was sacred, disturbances were not allowed, so all the staff would steer clear from the forest, though observational Magic would be used to watch us.

Once a contract was made, the student would exit the forest and meet the Supervisor and Lectures waiting at the entrance of the forest and give his/her report.

This allowed for registration, grading, and future assessments.

"Since this is a non-biased Ceremony, we will not interfere. The same kind of artificial Mana Cores will be given to all Inepts, and as for the rest who possess Mana Cores, it all depends on your ability and affinity with the Familiars."

Damien Lawcroft said that, but I wondered if he actually meant it.

Even if this ceremony was meant to be fair, reality made it hard for that to be possible. Talent and skill played a huge part in scoring a good Familiar, something we as Lower-Class students lacked a great deal.

Very little avenue for growth was provided for us, so there was no way we would be superior to those in the higher Classes. This ensured that they would obtain the better Familiars and we would be stuck with the less impressive ones.

'A Familiar is said to be one's bond for life... though that is not strictly so. It is possible to sever one's bond with a Familiar, but the method is very rare and costly. I doubt Lower-Class graduates would be able to afford it even after they become fully-fledged Mages, Martial Artists, or Scholars.'

'Well, the rich ones probably can... but what about people like Edward?'

It would be difficult to change one's Familiar if such a person didn't have the means to. Also, it wasn't possible for an individual to have more than one Familiar at once.

'The Mana Core is the house... and Familiars don't like to share...'

One could argue that a person could bypass the rule by contracting with many Familiars and storing them in artificial Mana Cores, but in all fairness, the Familiars who would subject themselves to such a method were very rare and also extremely weak.

No one in their right mind would resort to such a high-cost method only to contract with weak Familiars.

The better the core and potential talent, the better the Familiar one could score. Artificial Cores weren't that appealing.

The only reason they were being used was to give Inepts a chance to get Familiars, though it was obvious their Familiars would be very weak.

No one cared, though. Scholars weren't meant to fight, anyway. They belonged in the realm of studies and strategies. If a Scholar was lucky and ended up with a wise Familiar to aid in his research, then that would be better for them than having powerhouses instead.

The same rule applied to Inept Scholars, though. Even though their Mana Cores were artificial, the 'Bond' contract still applied to them.

A Familiar's contract differed depending on the type of soul it had. The Host and Familiar would deliberate and agree on the terms stipulated. Once they reached a consensus and the Bond was made, it was permanent!

So, even Inepts with Artificial Cores were bound by the agreement. Breaking such a contract that was made by two souls came with extreme repercussions.

In essence, anyone who ended up picking the wrong Familiar ran the risk of being stuck with it for the rest of their life.

"Huu... thinking in this line, anyone would get nervous," I whispered to myself.

"Now, then... we shall leave you to relax or prepare yourselves. Those who are inept should see the Lecturers in charge of their Classes and obtain their Artificial Mana Cores." Damien Lawcroft spoke in finality.

His face moved slightly as he appeared to be scanning through the students. I assumed he was looking at those he deemed to be extremely talented candidates.

Suddenly, as he glanced around and I looked at him, his eyes came to me and our line of vision connected.

Instantly, a glare formed and a look of disgust was shown.

'Immature', would be the best description for this man. I often wondered if he was an adult due to his philosophy.

'Is he still upset about what happened at the Assembly back then?'

I shook off my distracted thoughts and ignored him, focusing more on resuming the formation of my Core. If only I could concentrate more, the external mana that saturated the area would aid in my cultivation.

But, with so many eyes around—including professionals, I couldn't risk being noticed.

Fortunately, I only had to be patient for a bit. Damien and the rest of the Lectures would be exiting the forest soon, giving us some time to prepare, and once it was noon, we would begin.

"Alright everyone, you may relax and move to your respective spots where you will remain for the ceremony," Damien said after the Artificial Mana Cores had been provided for all the Inepts.

Following this, all the adults left us to ourselves as the students each looked for locations in the vast grassy plains where it would be most comfortable or strategic in attracting the Familiars.

Our straight lines broke as everyone began scouring for areas most profitable to them.

"What should we do, Jared?" Edward asked, drawing closer to me.

Anabelle also came nearer, appearing happy that we had all been reunited. A glint of the conflicted expression she had back in the classroom remained, though.

'Is she still thinking about that?'

"While waiting, you can continue meditating to strengthen your Cores. Every second counts." I addressed everyone, getting obedient nods in return.

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

Chapter 129: The Familiar Selection Ceremony (Pt 3)

"You can also choose to stay anywhere, it won't matter. The right Familiars will flock to you, so don't worry about it."

"Then I choose to—"

Before Anabelle finished her statement which I already suspected to be an attempt to stick close to me during this Ceremony, I quickly fired back.

"I would like for you not to be close to me, though, since there the Mana Density will be thinner around me. We should all stay apart from each other so we won't rob one another of the surrounding Mana."

With this smart and accurate protest, I silenced Anabelle. None of my two comrades had any complaints about it, so I took it as acceptance.

Suddenly, I felt two familiar presences and heard their footsteps as their feet trample the juicy grass beneath.

"It's been a while... Jared Leonard Alphonse Sereth."

A smile formed on my face. Only one person would choose to use my name at length like that. Plus, even as they had approached, I already knew it was them.

Turning my face in the direction of the incoming footsteps and voice, I looked behind me and saw the pair.

"Stefan Netherlore. Maria Helmsworth. It's been a while."

The boy and girl came into view, their contrasting features made it clear who they were.

Stefan Netherlore, with his dark hair and deep blue eyes, handsome to a fault and always putting on a serious front around me that made it appear as though he was in a bad mood—I suspected this was only to hide his true intentions.

Maria Helmsworth, the genius among geniuses, a prodigy in her own right. Her silver hair was as elegant as always, and her gem-like blue eyes rivaled even that of Anabelle, except she had a gleam of maturity attached.

These two came to me of their own volition... something I didn't fully expect.

"Yeah. It has." Maria spoke first, and then fell silent almost immediately.

A moment of silence dwelled amid us since none of us had really spoken on favorable terms before. Still, I wasn't going to go out of my way to speak to them.

'You guys came to see me. I don't plan on trying to drive this conversation.'

I felt a sudden shift in my surroundings. It came from behind me, and the proximity was scary close. Looking back at the source, my eyes met Anabelle, who seemed to be glaring at the two prodigies that just approached.

A scary look appeared on her face that I couldn't completely decipher.

"U-uh, these are the two I was telling you about." I decided to drive the conversation in a different direction by addressing my new comrades.

My initial plans were to befriend Stefan and Maria, making them my comrades instead. Unfortunately, they were out of my reach so I had to make do with Edward and Anabelle.

I had no regrets, though.

"Ohhh, I see... nice to meet you two." Anabelle forced a smile as her darkened expression remained.

Clearly, she didn't mean what she was saying!

Edward also rendered his formalities, though nervously. Since they had both been present during the Assembly, the two must have realized that Maria and Stefan belonged to the Upper Class.

While Edward showed reverence to them and displayed his inferiority, Maria was simply oozing hostility. Why was she so upset?

I traced the direction of her eyes and found them heading in a single direction. That had to be the cause of her annoyance!

Quickly, I followed her gaze and laid eyes on the object of her strife. It was...

'Maria Helmsworth? Why? Does she have any beef with her?'

My confused thoughts forced me to finally break the unbearably heavy silence among the five of us.

"Do you perchance know them from somewhere?" I asked Anabelle with the little smile I could muster.

"No. First time meeting them." She shot Maria a dirty look.

"Likewise." The silent Maria returned the favor.

This just got me more confused.

'I don't have time for this! We should be meditating and preparing for the Familiar Ceremony!'

With that in mind, I decided to conclude this farce.

"So, why are you guys here? I don't think you'd just come to say hi..." My eyes narrowed at the two Upper-Class elite geniuses.

The moment I said this, Maria's eyes seemed to bulge and she looked away instantly.

'D-don't tell me... that's all she came to do?!'

"I don't know about Maria, but I came for a different reason. She decided to tag along after I told her I would be seeing you..."

Stefan's eyes intensified as he now gave me a determined glare. The boy hadn't changed since I last saw him.

"The Inter-Class Exchange that occurs in two months... make sure you come prepared. I'll destroy you then!"

'...Eh?!'

Now I was lost.

"What do you mean by that? Destroy me? Are you still upset about what happened in the waiting area? Get over it already."

"What? No! Don't play dumb!"

Now I was even more perturbed. I had no real business with Stefan, so why would he personally target me in the Exchange? Unless...

'So that's how it is. Pfft, how childish and simple.'

"Fine, then. Stefan, you should also be prepared... I don't plan on taking it easy now that you've declared your intentions." My calm voice carried a tone of arrogance that seemed to unnerve the young elite a bit.

"I wouldn't have it any other way! Till then!"

As soon as he made his final statement, Stefan took his leave, and Maria followed beside him. I watched them for a few moments and sighed to myself.

'That Stefan guy probably thinks of me as a rival or something. His ego is bruised and he needs to fix it so he must be seeking to win against me for him to regain his confidence.'

Unfortunately for him, it wasn't going to be possible, talkless of being easy. Besides, he was too weak and young to be considered my rival.

As for Maria Helmsworth who walked beside him, did she really just tag along to say 'hi'? How strange she was. No, the two children were weird in their own right.

"Okay, you two. Spread out and begin meditation." I said to both Edward and Anabelle—who had already regained her usual demeanor after Maria took her leave.

'Okay, this has been a strange intermission, but I'm done with interruptions. It's time to complete my fourth Mana Core and then get myself a Familiar!'

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

Chapter 130: The Ones Called Familiars

'Almost done... just a bit more...'

My eyes were crinkled as I felt the tiny dots become one with a much larger swirling orb located in my heart.

The other three resonated well with the forming last one, and all that was needed was a little more push.

Fortunately, with the spike in the Mana I absorbed and the energizing of the excited particles within me, the final piece was unified with my fourth core, making it fully established!

"Haa... haaa..." I huffed.

Sweat covered my face and I felt drenched all over. Fortunately, everyone maintained some level of distance from one another so no one could notice the pungent odor I emitted thanks to exercising myself in such limited time.

The fragrance of the flowers around also helped, and the lake gave off a lovely scent that overpowered any foul odor residual in the atmosphere. I was saved thanks to those factors.

A magical clock was placed above us, allowing everyone on the Oasis grounds to see it just by lifting our heads. I did so after smiling proudly to myself and found out I had a little over thirty minutes of free time left.

My face returned to its position and I looked at both Edward and Anabelle, both were focused on firmly establishing their core and even increasing its capacity. They had both made considerable progress ever since training started and it was fortunate that they showed no limits to their growth yet.

I noticed the other students, some of which were looking at me strangely. The majority of students were either practicing basic spells to further improve themselves before the main show began or some simply just relaxed.

A few could be seen discussing, but other than I and my two comrades, no one else was meditating.

They didn't know, to begin with. Plus, doing something so absurd at such a critical moment seemed off. This made us there garner a bit of attention.

I ignored the multitude and considered my next approach. Now that I had four cores, I was a step closer to my goal.

'This should be enough for my Familiar Selection Ceremony!'

With that out of the way, I stared at the pool and waited for the show to begin. Once it did, I would enact the next phase!

Time passed in nearly the blink of an eye, most likely since I was practicing combinations in my head while waiting.

The moment the clock hit 12 noon, the most incredible sight emerged!

The blue lake suddenly emitted a bright white light that covered the entire watery surface. Just as how ice would permeate a river during winter, the brilliant light hardened the body of water in front of all of us, giving it a solid shape.

Everyone seemed to marvel as I noticed from the corners of my eyes, and I also couldn't stop myself from smiling in amazement. Seeing something like this up close was truly amazing.

Different colors began swirling within the lake as sparks flew out. The white lace that covered the surface like glass maintained its form, but within it, different colored lights bloomed and formed a whirlpool.

Red. Blue. Yellow. Green. Orange—so many hues that could make the eyes of any human sparkle.

'That must be the Gate!' I reasoned.

>FWOOOOOSSHAAA<

After a few seconds of swirling, balls of light began to pop out of the Gate. They sparkled and glowed, warbling as they made their way past the glassy white light and appeared in the environment where we all stayed.

Those were the Familiars!

Hundreds of them poured out and glowed, taking on various shapes and sizes.

Some appeared to be flickering light, some had the form of flaming crimson, some were simply spheres of light, and some had mushy forms that changed as their colors warbled.

With hundreds of these seemingly alive souls pervading the environment, the students could not help but feel amazed.

However, now wasn't the time for sightseeing! The Gate had opened, the Familiars had poured out. The only thing left for us to do... was to call for them!

The Call, a term coined by an expert on Familiars who appeared after I died, was simply done by releasing one's Mana to attract the lingering souls to the person.

If the Familiar felt attracted to a person's Mana, they would flock around the individual and offer their terms for a contract. While it was simple, it also very tricky.

Familiars can sense a person's potential and growth from the energy being emitted since they are in the form of pure mana—souls searching for a residence.

A weak Call would, of course, attract weak Familiars and the opposite also applied. Using this rationale, it was best to get as strong as possible to attract the best of the best.

'Now, then... I should begin, shouldn't I?'

As soon as I was about to infuse my mana and generate my Call, a sharp sensation pulsed through my body, causing me to cease my attempt immediately.

'T-this is...?!'

The moment I realized this, my plans were altered immediately.

The density of Mana in the atmosphere had gotten far more than before. I could sense the saturation, so thick that I could almost touch it. Compared to this vast flood of mana, the one I had been enjoying previously could be said to be no more than a trickle.

It was too amazing, too distracting! The Mana called for me!

'So many Mana-based beings are here, and that Gate too... the Mana around is overwhelmingly huge! I can't pass this up!'

I was faced with two choices at that moment. Choose a familiar with my newfound prowess... or patiently cultivate and increase my capacity.

I was obviously going to go with the second.

'I have time... let's do this! With this much Mana, I should be able to do it...'

Right there and then, the assurance was so high it was guaranteed. It was possible, after all. If I played my cards right, I would be able to make a fifth Mana core!

And so, while the rest of the students attracted their Bonds and began conversing with the balls of light that were gathering around them—some having a few dozen, while some having one or two, I closed my eyes and began the most exciting venture of my life!

... Making a Mana Core in less than three hours!