SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar
Chapter 1231: Discussion Amidst Chaos [Pt 2]

Within the vast, nigh infinite branches of an entire tree of existence… a single existence was honored as the chosen one.

Neron Kaelid.

He was special from birth, the one whom Aether herself blessed with glory.

He possessed immense power, excelling at Magic and so many other aspects that required even geniuses to offer a bulk of their dedication to.

His Original Magic made him even more invincible. He was favored by the Constellations, and that made him the single most important existence within the tree.

Yet… yet…

"He neglects you, someone who should be his lover." Legris elucidated, his tone as sullen as it was derogatory.

"He has the ability to see the future, yet he decided to abandon you for ten years. Even after all that, he refused to see you, instead letting Jared and his allies return without him."

Serah was silent throughout all of this. She wouldn't—or perhaps couldn't—give any words of defence for her husband.

"He should know you have a child. He can see the future, after all." Legris shrugged once more. "And yet, he still does nothing about it."

Slowly, the blizzard returned, carrying Legris' hair as they howled in the land of eternal frost.

"None of you truly understand… not you, not Jared, not any of you. You have no idea what Neron is and what he is truly capable of."

Frost began to manifest in the air, filling everything with their indiscriminate chills.

"You constantly make excuses for him. Even now, you probably are. However, a man like Neron… one who knows all, and also possesses power beyond the level of abundance… requires no excuse." Legris muttered, his eyes falling a little.

"Neron is not good… and my very existence is proof of that."

As the final words proceeded from his lips, Legris returned his gaze to Serah, his face now stoic. Expectations filled his eyes, but his pale face hardly showed anything of the sort.

He just sat there in silence… watching her.

"I see. Is that all you have to say?" The response he got from Serah was not the one he expected.

That explained his fallen countenance as he heard her speak.

"I have lived without him for ten years. I already learned about most of what happened from Jared. I know… Legris." Her voice still did not falter despite the kind of words she was uttering.

"Still—!"

"Neron is not a good man? Neron is a terrible lover? Neron is a selfish being who chases after his own ambition? How wrong you are, Legris…"

"What?" Serah's confident smile, one that remained unfazed by the harsh realities he had just revealed to her, shook Legris.

His clenched teeth showed that clearly.

"The mere fact that you are still alive is not proof of his malevolence. At the very least, I do not think so."

"Then what is it, then? Why would Neron let me live despite the chaos and carnage that will be wrought by my existence? Is it because he can not destroy me? Then what is the use of all this farce? Where is he now? At your darkest hour… the point where you need him most… where is your saviour?!"

At this point, Legris was fuming. He had slowly lost all his composure, and it seemed he quickly realized this.

"I'm sorry for raising my—"

"I only have two things to say to you concerning what you just said." Serah cut him short, her smile even more solid then it was a few seconds ago.

"It seems you have an unhealthy fixation on my husband. This obsession of yours… is puzzling."

For a moment, silence enveloped the area.

And then…

"What? I only told you—"

"The second thing I'll say is this. I do not understand why Neron does what he does, and I will not pretend like I do. I am unsure of why he allows you to perpertrate such evil despite his knowledge and power. I… am sadly too limited to see the end like he can."

Once more, there was silence.

"However, I do know this, Legris. You will lose." Serah's lips curled up wider then ever, her crimson eyes shining brighter than ever.

"Oh? And how are you so certain?"

"Neron's very existence is proof of your defeat. At least, that is what I believe."

"Well, your belief is bullshit." Legris responded bitterly, his brows furrowing in repressed annoyance.

"Perhaps. Or… perhaps at the very end of all this, you will fall at Neron's hands… just as you were supposed to from the start."

"SHUT UP!"

This time, it was Legris' roar that banished the blizzard. A deep frown was well outlined on his face as he rose to his feet, his dark eyes gleaming with disdain.

"I WILL NOT FALL BY ANYONE'S HANDS! NOT NERON'S, NOT JARED'S… AND MOST CERTAINLY NOT YOURS!"

His raging voice echoed for a long distance, and the darkness that clung to him began to react erratically.

"We shall see about that, won't we?" Serah responded calmly.

"YOU ALWAYS… haa… you always get under my skin, you know that? I know you do not understand anything, so this was pointless from the start, but… ahh… you are just so annoying! So pathetic!"

Legris placed a palm on his face, almost as if trying to hide the expression he had on his face at the moment.

"I told you everything! I told you Neron isn't a good guy. He doesn't deserve you… your devotion. And yet, you keep… you just never learn! It's beyond puzzling and illogical. It's downright idiotic."

"Well maybe—"

"Neron isn't right for you… or anyone for that matter. He isn't this perfect man, yet everyone seems to desire him. Aether, the Constellations… you… it makes no sense! He is a selfish, egotistical, and miserable being. He has been, and always will be!"

After Legris' long-winded rant, he breathed heavily, his deep glare sharply piercing Serah. However, in sharp contrast to all that he represented, Serah was still with her smile.

"Still…" Her soft voice, coupled with the light shades of pink on her face, brightly shone through whatever gloomy darkness Legris had painted.

At that point, everything faded away.

"... He is the one I love."

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SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar
Chapter 1232: Discussion Amidst Chaos [Pt 3]

The silence that followed Serah's words was deafening.

The blizzard had long been banished thanks to Legris, and it showed no sign of returning. The frost remained, however, but none of the two parties seemed to notice.

They only stared at each other in this newfound decorum.

"Is that so…?"

The smirk on Legris' face as he asked this was distant, almost distracted. At this point, there was no emotion or emphasis left for him to show.

His tired eyes only had one thing left to give.

"I guess I'll just have to destroy yo—"

~WHOOOSSSHH!!!~

Before Legris concluded his words, Serah swiftly appeared before him, almost like an apparition of sheer horror.

Her breathtaking speed overwhelmed him, much so that he could not even change his expression in time for her first strike to connect with his body.

~BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMM!!!~

With a powerful blow reverberating throughout the silent world, Serah sent the entire body of Legris bursting with so much pressure and force that it instantly perished, both internally and externally.

The heat consumed him whole, while his entire body shattered from the inside out.

… All in a single moment.

"About time." Serah grinned widely, her arm completely coated in immensely dense Aether.

'Ah… what's this? Something is eating through my energy…?' Serah swiftly cut off the energy that had been corrupted, preserving the remaining parts, as well as her limb from inevitable corruption.

'Is that his power? That black stuff around him? I'll have to be careful about how and when I hit him, then…'

Even though Serah had just finished Legris off, her instincts screamed at her that the battle was far from over. As a result, she took a defensive stance and readied herself for Legris' reappearance.

There was no way she would be cut off guard.

"As expected, your battle instincts are still impressive." Legris' voice suddenly echoed in the vast expanse.

"But… I wonder…"

"Would that be enough for you this tim…?"

Serah's brows twitched as her eyes slowly widened as the voices around her began to echo. The smile tugging at her lips widened, but it wasn't a positive response in the slightest.

She could feel it… the immense pressure closing in on her.

A bead of sweat trickled down her face as she finally began to notice dark blots appearing in the sky. They resembled murky black spheres, but upon closer look, these multiple clusters were birthing people.

And these people all had the same appearance.

"Oi… you've got to be kidding me." Serah's grin intensified, and she felt her heart racing uncontrollably.

Right before her eyes, she saw multiple versions of Legris manifesting.

They all donned the same thing—the dark trenchcoat, with their brown hair flailing around, and the darkness sticking close to their outfits.

They numbered at least fifteen, and their numbers seemed to be growing even more.

'They're now nineteen. What in the world…?' Serah had never heard of Legris being able to bring forth multiple versions of himself.

Not from Neron, or anyone else for that matter.

Seeing such a huge number surround her from above caused her racing heart to pick up the pace. The situation had just gotten much deadlier than she had anticipated.

"I thought about it for a while, and decided…" Legris' voice traveled to Serah's ears as the horde prepared their assault.

"… I won't be going easy on you."

"I won't play with you."

"There's no point."

"It's better I just end this… and you… as quickly as I can."

Serah found herself chuckling, even while knowing how dangerous her current position was.

"Oh? Why? What's with the special treatment?" She responded, also preparing herself for whatever would follow Legris' response.

"…" For a moment, Legris did not say anything.

All the versions of him simply looked down on Serah with the same empty eyes.

And then…

"Who knows? Maybe because you belong to Neron now."

"Again with Neron. Why are you so obsessed with my husband?" Serah heaved a heavy sigh, one of her brows raised as nonchalantly as possible.

It almost felt like she wasn't even taking the situation seriously.

"C-could it be that you… like Neron… that wa—?"

"WHAT? W-what are you even talking about? When have I ever given that impression?" Legris swiftly burst out.

Even though he tried to hide it, his pale face exposed the light hues of red that appeared on his cheeks.

"Pfft! Come on, you don't have to hide it."

"No! You've got it all wrong. I'm not in love with Neron, or anyone in fact." Legris made his protest, swiftly returning his face to normal.

"I mean, I can't blame you. Neron is quite the charmer, so I can see why even you might…"

"I told you, you are mistaken!"

"Still… you have to move on. Neron is mine, and you are mine to kill… at least right now."

"…"

At this point, Legris said nothing at all. He simply covered his face with his palm, as if completely dumbfounded by Serah's assertion.

"You never change, huh? Well… I suppose it is indeed meant to be this way." His whisper leaked out, causing Serah's face to warp slightly in confusion.

"It is better this way too…"

All of Legris' variants removed their palms from their faces, their gaze returning to the same stoic kind that he preferred to have.

"Killing you will hurt Neron. So… I will."

Wide smiles formed on their faces, and the darkness around them intensified in power. Despite the facade, it was clear that he was being absolutely serious.

Serah knew this as well, so she gathered all the Aether she could muster and prepared for combat.

"[Original Magic: Invincible]"

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SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar
Chapter 1233: Serah Vs Legris [Pt 1]

~BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMMM!!!~

Brilliant bursts of crimson energy surged from Serah's position, her body now coated in Aether so dense that it broke the surface tension around her.

Everything surrounding her warbled and bended, and space collapsed the instant it came into contact with her immediate vicinity.

And the cold? The overflowing cold ceased to exist around her, as everything began to melt, turning into hot steam that filled the area in a fog of white.

All due to Serah's Original Magic.

"It's been a while I've seen that form." Legris commented, his tone showing not even an ounce of intimidation from her transformed state.

"It won't do you any good."

"Not against my power…"

"... Or my overwhelming number."

It was currently nineteen against one. The match was not even, to begin with.

"Hahaha!" The response Serah gave was a loud laugh, one that caused the pressure around her to travel even further beyond.

"Enough talk, Legris. Let's begin already!"

~WHUUUUUUUUSSSSSSSHHHHHHH!!!~

As with the nature of her Original Magic, her Aether climbed to an even higher place, towering anything that could be considered her limits.

She was more than ready for the challenge.

"As you wish."

~WHOOOOOSSSSSSHHHHHH!!!~

The legion of Legrises charged towards Serah, becoming swift blurs as they dived downwards.

"Now that's more like it!" Cackling like one afflicted with insanity, Serah began the race… one that was bound to leave everything in utter destruction.

'Let's go!'

~WHOOOOOOMMMM!!!~

Sparks of flames burst forth as Serah vanished from her position, her legs dancing at a speed that exceeded the limits of sight.

Every step she took destroyed the surface which she treaded on, causing the entire mountain to shatter apart in just a few light steps.

Realizing this, Serah decided to leap to the skies, at least to meet up with her fast approaching adversaries.

"Hup!"

As soon as she took off, her crimson legs kicked the air benath her, propelling her upward even further. As space bended at her feet, so did the power that boosted her increase, creating an explosion that sent her flying upward like a reverse meteorite.

~WHOOOOOOOOOOSSSSSSSSSSSHHHHHH!!!~

A multitude of Legrises swarmed all around her as soon as she drew close to them, all of them coating their hands with darkness, ready to decimate her with their numbers.

However…

"Too slow!"

Twisting her body midair, Serah, twirled around, creating a force that pushed everything and everyone around her away.

The darkness relentlessly reached out for her, but it only caught her afterimage.

With only a burst of power, she closed in on one of the scattered Legrises, who was still recoiling from her almighty push.

No second was wasted on hesitation. Serah sent a straight thrust flying to his head, causing it to shatter to pieces, and by extension, melting everything within and without.

The result?

Absolute combustion!

~BOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMM!!!~

In a flash, Serah appeared before her next prey and dealt another blow, but this time with an upper kick right on his jaw.

~BOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMM!!!~

The same spontaneous combustion took place, killing off the second Legris in a brilliant explosion.

~WHOOOOOOOOOSSSSSHHHHH!!!~

Traversing the already fickle space, Serah easily dodged the charging limbs and dark constructs that Legris directed at her.

She was just too fast!

She kicked the air around her, while using [Flight] Magic and an [Anti-Friction] Spell to further improve her speed.

Compared to her, Legris was sitting ducks.

Serah evaded the combined assaults of the multiple foes, once again only leaving her afterimage to be dealt with before proceeding to kill the several enemies in her path.

'There's still quite a few more...' Serah thought, looking around her to see so many Legrises, almost as if their numbers had barely decreased since she started the fight.

She considered using Magic, but after recollecting how the black energy ate through her Aether, Serah decided against it.

'Even now, every time I hit him, a chunk of my Aether is corrupted and needs to be replaced.' He thoughts trailed.

She was only fortunate that she had so much energy layered and condensed around her, thus guaranteeing her safety.

'If physical attacks like this work, then I shouldn't risk using Magic and wasting energy...'

However, that was when it struck Serah.

Why was she being so cautious about wasting energy? Why was she so concerned about the corruption that was eating through her Aether?

She was currently using [Invincible].

'My Aether only keeps rising, and my entire output is in overdrive.'

As long as she kept up her Original Magic, she had more than enough energy to spare!

"[Invincible Magic: Vermillion Shower]!"

The moment she activated this Spell, she ascended far above the Legrises that sought to overwhelm her.

And then the skies darkened.

The multitude of variant raised their heads, lifting their eyes to the sky to see what was clouded the light. It was only then that they realized the terror that was descending upon them.

Meteors—all coated in vermillion energy—filled the vast sky.

Each meteor had to be the size of a planet, and there were multiple of them descending upon the vast landscape.

The frost that covered the land was no more. Instead, burning heat and smokey mist pervaded everything.

Above all of these things was Serah in her shining form, arms folded as she caused her massive creations to descend.

"Let's see how you handle these…"

The meteors quickened their pace, their impact imminent. It was certain that everything would change the moment they landed, and Serah looked forward to it.

A Spell of this magnitude, one that could eviscerate solar systems and galaxies if they went out of hand, was bound to leave severe impact on Serah's Aether pool.

However… she hardly felt a thing.

As a result of her Original Magic, her pool and the energy within it only expanded further, granting her even more power than she previously had.

In essence…

"I can do this all day!"

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SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar
Chapter 1234: Serah Vs Legris [Pt 2]

The falling meteors charged at the complete variants of Legris, and all of them equally expressed shock.

Perhaps it stemmed from a place of surprise, as none of them expected their target to be so powerful. It could have also been due to joy, considering the amount of Aether they would be able to consume if they absorbed the Spell in its entirety.

However…

'It's too big!' Legris found all versions of himself panicking.

The sizes of the meteors were too large. Plus, while they were created by Magic, their force was definitely real.

In essence, absorbing all of them would be a tedius use of time—especially since it wasn't made up of the purest form of Aether, but instead… it was Serah's fiery one.

"I'll go on the defensive, then."

Whispering silently to themselves, all nineteen variants shrouded themselves in their respective cocoons of darkness, completely cut off from the imminent destruction that was bound to take place.

And then…

~BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO OMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM!!!~

… The DESTRUCTION began.

Everything in the landscape was wallowed by the plumes of fiery judgment, completely eviscerating alll that was in the path.

The last bit of cold vanished from the world, turning it into a complete hellscape.

Smoke, crimson embers, and remnants of fire danced in the air as the earth sizzled with destruction.

Within this devastating canvas of chaos, however, the foes who were engaged in battle remained intact.

On one end were the group of Legrises who were unaffected by the explosion, all thanks to their formidable defenses. And on the other?

Well, high above, amidst the clear skies that toppled the smokey world beneath, was Serah Crimson.

Her arms were folded as she watched the destruction beneath her. Dissatisfaction was etched on her lips, a sigh escaping them.

"Hmmm…" Serah murmured, her gaze flickering. "It seems that wasn't enough."

She recognized that Legris remained unaffected thanks to his dark cocoon, a new technique she was just witnessing for the first time.

It troubled her greatly.

'So he can defend himself against Magic Attacks, huh? Even something of this scale…' That was enough to soldify her rationale.

'I can use Spells for diversions, maybe. But… I guess that settles it.'

The only thing she needed to use in order to win was her body. Once Serah realized this, a fearless smile took over and she stared down at the cloud of chaos beneath her.

'It's so quiet here…'

However, the silence was just about to be interrupted. After all, the fight was far from over.

~WHUUUUUMMMM!!!~

All of a sudden, several hands of darkness broke through the smoke and lunged at Serah. They were massive hands, all completely blackened.

'That's… the same kind of energy Legris oozes out!' Serah's senses instantly sent her body into overdrive, igniting her motion.

Fiery flames burst forth from her already crimson form, propelling her even higher above.

The dark arms wriggled in the air, all chasing after her relentlessly. Their long reaches, along with their flexibility and numbers, made them difficult to evade, but Serah was superior in speed, thus giving her the edge.

~WHOOOOOOSSSSHHHH!!!~

She glided through the air, twisting her body to the sides, and even curling it up at times in other to cleanly avoid even the slightest scratch from the darkness.

Ascending even further, she could feel something… a barrier that began to slow her down.

'Ahh…' Serah smiled in realization. 'I'm reaching the edge of this dimension.'

She pushed past the surface tension that tried to stop her, charging straight for the barrier itself. Unsurprisingly, the hands did the same, all of them fast approaching her.

Still ascending at a fast pace, Serah rolled in the air, evading the assault of multiple attacks at once. As she concluded this, she finally found the sole of her feet reaching the barrier that separated her dimension from the others.

In that split second, she had two options.

One was to escape using this pathway and meet up with another ally. Combining their abilities, there was a good chance that they could defeat the enemy together.

It was a viable plan, but there was a fatal flaw associated with it.

'I don't know who I'll meet on the other side. If it's someone weaker than me, then they'd only hold me back.'

In such a situation, her ally would be a liability rather than an asset.

Since there was no way for her to know for sure, it was going to be random. Serah instantly realized that she could not afford that.

That left the second option.

~WHOOOOOOOSSSSSSHHHHH!!!~

Using the barrier as a propeller, and the surface tension as a boost, Serah allowed herself to descend from her heights at unfathomable speeds.

'I just have to toughen this out and beat him myself.'

None of the dark hands even stood a chance to catch up to her, so she kept falling in a straight line. Everything became a blur, and for a moment, time seemed to be nothing but a lie.

Once she plunged into the smoke, she used the pressure of her Aether to clear it all out since it obscured her view.

'You're in the way!'

~WHUUUUUUUUUUUUUUMMMMMMMMMM!!!~

Once she did this, however… she was met with the most unexpected sight.

'What?!'

Of course, she met nineteen Legrises, all of whom were still controlling the dark hands that were still high up in the air. However, besides them, the sight of something else shocked her to her core.

'A-another group?!'

There was a second group of Legrises, about ten, who seemed to be waiting for her in the darkness.

"Time to die, Serah!" The Legris variants smiled, stretching their hands towards her.

The darkness around them flared up, and it all charged at her with the same ferocity she had as she descended.

The collision was inevitable, and that meant one thing.

Serah's defeat was assured.

SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar
Chapter 1235: A Helping Wish

There was no escape.

Serah's speed as she descended was well matched with the encroaching darkness that was closing in on her.

She couldn't turn back as well, since the nineteen hands from above were rapidly descending to catch up to her as well.

The way it looked, her forefront and behind were already danger zones.

'What about my flanks?!'

Those were not even options at this point. All nineteen variants of Legris had specifically divied themselves into two groups, occupying her lef and right flanks. Not only that, but they also had one hand free, and those hands were pointing at her.

Darkness flickered on them, and it was clear that any move in their direction would lead to injury.

Any position she decided to go to would result in damage, so Serah found herself with only one solution.

… Choosing the direction that dealt the least harm.

So far, she knew the darkness ate through her Aether at a remarkable pace, and that it corrupted her energy beyond recovery, unless she got rid of the corrupted version quickly. If all nineteen hands got a hold of her, they would corrupt her faster than she could ger rid of them.

That was an automatic loss.

The darkness that would soon explode from the ten Legrises beneath her also had the same level of danger.

If such a concentrated blast was able to connect, she was most likely going to die.

'That leaves my flanks…'

The problem with either option was that she had no idea what they had in store for her. They also seemed like the most obvious options, but her instincts kept ringing danger anytime she considered them as alternatives.

Once again, Serah realized how trapped she was.

'Damnit! If I knew this would happen I would have properly learned teleportation.'

As the attacks closed in on her, and with her unable to make a choice, Serah decided to brace the storm as it approached her.

"[Vermillion Shell]!"

A projected layer of pure vermillion suddenly covered her in an arc, almost like an umbrella. It shielded her face and most of her upper body from the blast that was approaching.

Whether it would be enough to brace the darkness while she tried her best to evade the rest of it was up for debate.

She could only take her chances.

~BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMMMMMMM!!!!~

The darkness erupted, instantly closing the gap between Serah and the ten Legrises. It ate through all things in its path, including the highly condensed barrier that Serah just generated.

Everything was taken in, and Serah was next.

However…

~WHISH!~

… She suddenly vanished.

For a moment, there was silence, and all ten Legrises looked at each other in surprise—same as the nineteen who had the same expression.

They had designed the perfect trap, only for their prey to vanish right when she was about to be destroyed.

This confusion, however, only lasted for a second. As soon as they recovered from it, all the variants gazed above them, and in a far corner in the sky two people stood.

Among these two was Serah Crimson, perfectly safe, expressing both relief and surprise.

Who could blame her?

Even the Legrises were surprised by the current situation—or more specifically, the presence of the second person in the sky.

She had shiny silver hair, with glowing blue eyes and an stoic face. Her apparel was a pure white gown, with hints of blue frolicking around.

She was currently in an embrace with Serah, and while the both of them were currently stagnant in the air, Legris remained hesitant to attack.

At least… not yet.

"Maria Helmsworth, huh? Seems like another player has arrived." He murmured to himself.

"What to do now… ?"

******

Serah's widened eyes were well complemented by her slightly gaping lips.

"I-I'm alive…?"

Surprised couldn't begin to explain how she was currently feeling. Not only was she saved from immediate death, but her protege—Maria Helmsworth—was the one who saved her.

It was a shocking thing to experience all at once.

"That was a close one! I'm so happy I arrived in time." Maria's booming voice betrayed her stoic face, but Serah was able to get the idea instantly.

"H-how…?"

"Wish! I desperately wished for it! I was afraid my Constellation abilities wouldn't work because of the interference I started experiencing, but it worked well enough for you."

Once again, despite being very thrilled by the results, Maria remained lull in her expression. It almost felt like she was a doll.

"A-ah, I see."

"O-oh… sorry for my expression, Master Serah. I haven't moved any of my facial muscles in so long. It'll take some time to adjust…"

Serah didn't think Maria could completely blame that on her lack of emotional display. Still, she was able to nod in acknowledgment.

"Well, thanks. I would have been toast if it hadn't been for you."

"Don't be so modest. I'm sure you would have done fine without me." Maria's words made Serah's heart sting a little.

'Well… I would have lost an arm and a considerable part of my body, but… yeah, I could probably have survived it.'

Still, what would have happened after that? Facing twenty-nine enemies by herself while handicapped was suicide.

She was more than happy to have Maria with her.

'She's not a burden.'

Even though Serah didn't mention it, she could tell just by staring at her protege.

'She's strong!'

Most likely even stronger than she was!

'Her training with her Constellation must have paid off.' Serah smiled, finally dislodging from Maria's embrace.

The latter seemed a little hesitant to let her go, but she did so without much resistance. It was awkward at first, but once the two women dislodged from each other, their eyes met, and they swiftly arrived at an understanding.

"We can catch up later." Serah muttered.

"Yeah. We need to take care of Legris first, right?"

Serah nodded, truly impressed that Maria could suppress her curiousity and other emotions she had to be feeling for the sake of the mission.

After all, even though she had been composed throughout her entire exchange with Legris, she was also in the dark about his sudden arrival in the Constellation Realm.

There was a time and place for everything, though.

And now… now was the time for action.

"I'll follow your lead, Master Serah." Maria's words echoed with determination, and that caused a surge of pride within Serah.

"Those black things around him consume any Aether in their path. Magic doesn't work on him, so… ah… hold on…"

It was at this point that Serah realized a fatal truth that she hadn't taken into consideration since she saw Maria.

"You… your forte is Magic, right?"

"Yes. Why… ah…"

Maria also realized it the moment she remembered Serah's earlier statement.

Legris was the very antithesis to Spells and Magic-Based attacks. In essence, Maria's presence here was the very thing Serah feared from the start.

She was dead weight.

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SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar
Chapter 1236: Maria's Chance

"Ahh…"

Maria felt her heart sink the moment all the pieces began coming together.

She had gotten the major gist of the situation from Virgo, her Constellation, but that didn't mean she completely understood Legris and his abilities.

It also didn't help that her connection with Virgo was on the fritz, so she couldn't properly utilize her Constellation's powers, or even communicate with her smoothly.

She only happened to arrive in Serah's dimension because she desperately wished for it. When she did, and saw that Serah was in danger, she also instantly wished for her salvation.

These two consecutive wishes—one which transcended the barriers of dimensions, and the other that forcefully saved Serah from certain doom—were very intense uses of her abilities, especially given the current situation.

She couldn't always rely on that ability, which meant she had to suppliment it with her own capabiltiies.

Unfortunately…

"Magic doesn't work on Legris…"

Those words echoed in Maria's mind as she considered the situation.

She was no good at Martial Arts, so Magic was all she had going for her. Close quarters Magic Combat was also out of it since she was more effective in long-range battles.

In conclusion, she had become a liability on the battlefield.

"I know what you're thinking. Don't you dare think that way, you hear me?" Maria's eyes widened as Serah's words sharply woke her from her thoughts.

"We don't have the luxury of doubting your abilities right now."

Serah's face displayed utter seriousness as she spoke. Her gaze was fixed on the Legrises beneath them, but it was clear that her focus was on Maria.

"It can't be helped that your abilities follow a particular path. However, that should not lead to despair. Instead, find a route in which your abilities can become useful in this situation."

Serah was well versed in offensive Magic, but she knew her limits in commonplace or more versatile Spells.

That was why she embraced her destructive nature and dealt the most damage in fights that required it. However, having been in situations where brute strength wasn't enough to win, she had also used her intelligence to be more versatile in her approach.

That was what she needed from Maria at this moment.

A way to use Magic against an opponent whose darkness prevented him from being damaged with Magic.

"Can you do that?"

As the question echoed in Maria's head, her brain instantly went into overdrive.

All the doubts that had begun to accumulate dispersed, leaving room for her thoughts to freely manifest.

The conclusion was simple.

With a broad smile on her face, Maria gazed hard at the dozens of foes that stood before her and her mentor, having only one thing to say.

"I can!"

******

'Surely they've realized they're at a disadvantage now…'

Legris silently watched the two women who seemed to be getting ready for combat.

He reckoned they would be using Telepathic Magic to communicate with each other, or perhaps [Resonance], but that didn't make their plight any less predictable.

'Maria is the weak link among the two of them. Her over reliance on Magic makes her the perfect prey.'

The problem was Serah.

She was still too fast for him to properly intercept, and Legris knew it was impossible for him to succeed in using the same trap from earlier.

He had to think of something else.

'But, if Maria ends up rescuing her like last time, it'll end up being another frustrating bust.'

That meant the most optimal method he could use in order to defeat his enemies was by first taking out Maria, while keeping Serah occupied.

With Maria eliminated, he could use Serah's shock and grief to his advantage and catch her off guard.

Even in a situation where Serah wasn't distracted by Maria's elimination, Legris reckoned he would be able to overwhelm her with his numbers if he positioned himself well.

'I just need to cage her in, and then—'

~WHUSH!~

The next thing Legris was was Serah's face directly in front of his.

Her brilliant crimson eyes shone like rubies, and her wild smile was enough to drive anyone crazy.

The fact that she had suddenly appeared in front of him with no signs of spatial distortions or even distance closure from her part made Legris flustered beyond words.

His thoughts came to a halt, and his body jerked backwards.

"W-what the—?!"

~BOOOOOOMMMM!!!~

That variant of Legris instantly exploded violently, it's bones and flesh eviscerated by her powerful blow.

Before any of the twenty-eight could even move in response to Serah's sudden appearance, she vanished from her position and appeared before the next Legris.

"W-wai—!"

~BOOOOOMMMMM!!!~

He too erupted without being able to complete his words.

~FWISH~

Serah vanished once again, soon appearing right behind another random Legris.

He could not see her blood becoming as his skull was crushed by her powerful downward chop.

The only sound that proceeded from his position was that of his body being torn apart by the pressure of r powerful attack.

~WHISH!~

~BOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMM!!!~

~WHOOSH~

~BOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMM!!!~

~FWISH!~

~BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMM!!!~

Like whispers lost to the wind, followed by deafening roars of demolition, Serah kept up her consistent but random path of carnage.

None of the Legrises knew what was happening, and her overwhelming speed was too much to keep up with at this point.

Being slaughtered mercilessly pushed them to a point of desperation, and that was when they stared above them.

'It's her… she's the one behind this!' They all looked at Maria Helmsworth.

She appeared to be concentrating her energy, and Legris instantly linked it to Serah's teleportation.

"Serah can't use spatial Magic, and since Maria was able to teleport her to safety earlier it only makes sense that she's the culprit.'

Legris still found it strange that there was no sign of spatial interference before and after each teleportation, but he chalked it down to her Constellation's ability and decided to cease their teamwork.

'I have to kill her… and fast!'

*

SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar
Chapter 1237: Dark Curtain's Fall

~BOOOOOOMMMM!!!~

The deafening blast caused by Serah killing yet another variant seemed to be the signal for Legris.

At least a dozen versions of himself abandoned all concerns with Serah, taking only one entity as a priority at the moment.

'Maria Helmsworth!' Legris screamed internally.

The several variants stretched out their darkened hands at Maria, lunging them in her direction without a moment's notice.

They shrouded themselves in darkness, thus improving their speed and defenses, just in case any of them were attacked by Serah.

'Still… Serah is busy with the others. I only have one shot at this!'

Maria seemed to be in deep concentration since she was behind Serah's spontaneous teleportation.

The lack of focus made her a perfect target.

'There might be some measure of defense erected to protect her, but that won't stop me.'

The several darkened hands charged at Maria, all of them targeting various parts of her body in order to swiftly corrupt and end her as swiftly as possible.

And then…

'Haha!'

… They met their target.

The hands grabbed Maria and apparently even ripped into pieces.

She turned into nothing but darkness—dust that had no form or meaning.

Legris had taken in whatever Aether she had to offer, rendering her nonexistent in the world as a consequence.

However…

'Hold on. Something is off. Why isn't there—?'

~BOOOOOOOOOMMMMM!!!~

The sound of the distant explosions getting closer suddenly caught Legris' attention, and before any of his variants realized it, all the several other versions keeping Serah busy were already destroyed.

In a flash, she appeared in their midst, still using the same teleportation they were supposed to have gotten rid of.

'A-ahh…!'

At this point, it dawned on Legris that he had been fooled.

~BOOOOOOOOOMMMM!!!~

He hadn't taken in or eliminated Maria, but a mere duplicate at best.

It was no wonder that he couldn't obtain any Constellation Essence from her when he devoured the body.

~BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMM!!!~

Instead, he had been intentionally lured to target Maria, while reducing his focus and defenses against Serah, allowing her to eliminate more of his variants than she would have normally been able to.

Now that she had cleared over twenty of his variants within a second, it seemed barely possible for him to compete with her attack speed and veracity.

'Especially when I do not know where that brat is!' Legris gritted his teeth and looked around him.

For some reason, he was unable to detect her.

'Did she use some sort of Magic to do so? Maybe something about her Constellation's Representation?' It irked Legris, but in the end he had to chalk it up to that.

And if he was to settle for said conclusion, it would be a waste of time and resources to chase after Maria—especially when Serah was gaining on him.

'Serah was my original target. Aided by Maria or not, I should still be able to kill her if I try.'

And so…

~BOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMM!!!~

… As the last explosion echoed in Legris' ears, signaling the death of his twenty-fifth variant, he clenched his teeth and decided to kick things up a notch.

"[llaF niatruC kraD]"

Instantly, the entire domain that seemed to be simmering in Serah's heat became enveloped in darkness.

It felt like someone had cast a thick blanket on the sky, blocking all forms of light and radiation in the world.

'This consumes a lot, but I suppose it'll take this much to finally eliminate you…'

The dark barrier that now seemed to pervade the entire world oozed malevolent energy that only Legris could provide.

It suddenly felt like the black energy that coursed through Legris now filled the world around him.

"Haha… what now?"

"Serah Crimson."

"Maria Helmsworth."

"How long will you last?"

"Will you survive?"

"I wonder…?"

Suddenly, more Legrises seemed to pop out of nowhere, leading up to a total of twenty.

It was a smaller number than before, but considering the corrosive effects of the darkness that now filled the realm, it was overkill.

Multiple Legrises had appeared in a world dominated by them.

At this point, even the spontaneous Serah stopped her vanishing act and conserved her Aether by shrouding herself in dense Aether.

Her Invincible Form seemed to be holding up quite well, but was it not a matter of time to decipher how long she would last before his darkness seeped in?

Right beside Serah was Maria, who seemed to be within a bubble that also seemed to be fighting the black corruption, but even that was slowly being affected.

"It's only a matter of time…" He declared with a devilish grin.

Even though this was terribly draining, he found the results to be perfect.

In the end, it would be his victory.

"Is that really what you think?" Serah's voice suddenly echoed in the darkness, her crimson form piercing the darkness in all its glory.

"What?"

Legris' brows perked up as he expressed surprise by the sheer amount of arrogance Serah displayed—both in her speech and her wild smile.

It bothered him to no end.

"It seems you do not know the true nature of my Original Magic."

The brilliant ambers she emitted grew brighter as she slowly moved towards Legris.

"If my Aether is corrupted, I only need to release it and replace it with a new supply. Anyone doing that will naturally run out of Aether, but…" Her fiery grin only became wider as she spoke.

"… I only grow stronger the more I use Aether. That is the power of my [Invincible]."

In essence, this was never a battle of attrition for Serah.

It was always a 'Winner takes All.'

"Now, then Legris…" Fiery energy surrounded Serah, almost as if she was at the center of a violent storm.

The darkness quaked in her presence, and her power only seemed to rise as she shook of her corrupted chrysalis.

"… Shall we continue?"

*

SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar
Chapter 1238: Crimson Frenzy

'Master Serah…'

Maria silently watched as her mentor squared off against the villain of this entire event.

Her fist was clenched, and her lips tightened, but there was nothing she could do but remain in her bubble as she watched the whole thing.

Thus far, she had been useful by utilizing her Constellation's Representation, [Wish], to change the tide of battle.

She would cause Serah to disappear and appear in whatever location she desired, while doing so within the fraction of a moment.

She also rendered herself invisible while using a clone to occupy her previous position.

All of these things were the methods she cooked up so she would be useful to Serah in their conflict with Legris.

After all, even if Magic did not affect him, it affected other people and things.

By using her Magic on herself and Serah, rather than directly on Legris, she was going to assist her mentor in emerging the victor.

However…

'This Spell ruined it all…'

Maria looked around her and her chest tightened in frustration. Everything was going so well that they thought the fight would finally end.

Who would have thought their opponent had more cards up his sleeve?

'The battle is now a lot more lopsided than we ever accounted for. At least, for me…'

Unlike Serah, she did not have any Magic that could recover her Aether at such a quick pace.

Especially not while she was protecting herself from rapid corrosion.

'Right now, the best I can do is defend myself from whatever Spell he has activated.' Maria looked at her shield and noticed how fast it was deteriorating.

The rate was getting faster by the second.

'I won't be able to maintain this forever…'

As much as she hated to admit it, she was going to be a major hindrance to Serah. After all, the latter was perfectly fine with the current situation and would never lose a battle of attrition.

The problem here was how long Maria could last.

'I'll do my best to hold on, Master Serah!' She clenched her teeth in determination, watching the rest of the fight unfold from within her bubble.

'Please win!'

****

~WHOOOSSHHH!!!~

The darkness parted as Serah sped towards the swarm of Legris that gathered together.

Her sharp gaze shone with nothing but resolve, and her body brimmed with unrelenting energy.

As she appeared within their midst, the entire area instantly broke into distortion thanks to her breakneck speed.

"Get her!"

"Die!"

"It's over!"

The various variants of Legris uttered their nonsense, but none of their words shook Serah in the slightest.

She simply focused on her task at the moment.

… To fight!

~WHOOOMMM!~

Becoming a blur, she twisted her body and kicked her first victim, instantly dislocating his neck with her strike.

The instant she did this, three more opponents closed in on her, their dark fists ready to eviscerate her.

However, she was too fast.

Swiftly moving her head, she dodged their fatal blow, bending downward to evade the next barrage of assault that sharply lunged at her.

With the thrust of her adversaries entirely evaded, Serah bounced back, head-butting one Legris, instantly shattering his skull, while sending her two fists flying towards the necks of the two others.

With one chop sharply dished to the respective two, they fell to their knees.

Serah ignored how they grabbed their necks, making choking sounds. Instead, she kicked them as if they were mere balls on the field, sending their flesh bursting as a result of the pressure.

More Legrises swarmed around her, launching dark arms towards her, but at this point, she was able to dodge their assaults with ease, even predicting where the next would arrive from.

Rushing towards her next foe, she evaded his dark attack at point blank range, turning slightly so only fragments of her flaming hair was grazed.

Once she closed the distance, Serah clenched her fist and delivered an almighty punch of justice.

He instantly exploded, sending his mangled flesh and darkened blood spurting around the darkened space.

With her eyes darting up and about the rest of the landscape, Serah became a blur once more, charging towards her next target.

Several Legrises charged at her, hoping to overwhelm her in a melee, but even that proved ineffective.

As they launched hands at her, she easily caught and deflected them, twisting her body and shifting her head for moves she couldn't catch.

Hands danced around in a blur, and she even supplemented her defenses by raising one or two of her legs to stop attacks that she could not ignore or evade.

In the end, even a group brawl could not take her down.

And the best part?

"Hahahaha! Is that the best you can do?"

… She was still growing stronger!

Serah's aura burned brighter than ever, and all the Legrises around her could only watch in obvious frustration as they threw themselves back into the wringer, only to experience the same results.

Serah simply dominated the fight.

Suddenly, however, about half of the Legrises abandoned Serah and rushed at the stationary Maria, clearly targeting her since she was vulnerable.

Stuck in yet another melee, Serah witnessed this and instantly got agitated.

"No!"

In a blur of crimson, she swiftly abandoned her victims and lunged at the other group.

Unfortunately, that was a move they already predicted.

"G-gugh!"

Serah felt something cold course through her legs, and upon looking… she found a bunch of Legrises tightly gripping them.

"W-wha—?!"

The Legrises grinned manically, refusing to let go.

"Where do you think you're going?"

"Let's keep fighting!"

"We were having such fun!"

"Come back here!"

"Hehehehe!"

His disgusting voice echoed in her ears as the corruption seeped in.

Until… it finally tore through her Aether and reached her skin.

"Arghhh!!"

Serah screamed, forcefully pushing back the group that tightly gripped her legs.

The pain that coursed through her was unbearable, but even at that Serah ignored it and launched herself in the direction of her protege.

All the Legrises were already closing in on her, and she felt like a bird in a cage, surrounding by a swarm of bloodthirsty predators

Whether or not her injury was deadly, Serah instinctively knew her first priority was Maria.

'As long as I breathe… I will not let any harm fall upon thag child!'

She bridged the gap between the both of them in no time, pushing her body even higher than before.

Once she did, Serah twirled in space, sending a flurry of fatal hits towards the horde.

The ones who noticed her attacks in time tried to block or dodge, but it was of no use.

~BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMM!!!~

She eliminated all of them nearly instantly.

But…

"Haa… haaa…"

… Even that victory came at a cost.

"M-Master Serah!" Maria's voice echoed out, her tear-filled eyes focused on the bottom half of the woman she loved and respected.

"Y-your legs…"

*

SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar
Chapter 1239: Dimensional Breach [Pt 1]

Tension filled the air.

The bittersweet smell of tears oozed into the darkness as another pungent odor tickled the nostrils.

It was the stench of blood.

"Are you alright… Maria?" Serah asked, a warm smile on her glowing face.

Her eyes felt weary, but she felt a genuine sense of happiness and fulfillment since she had just protected her protege from certain death.

But, at what cost?

"M-Master Serah… your legs!"

The protege she saved had her eyes widened as if they would pop out, with tears gushing out like a river. Her eyes were fixated on Serah's two legs which seemed to have been reduced to half their former size.

"Ah… these old things. They aren't important right now."

"N-no… for me, you… it's because of me…" Maria's sobs were stifled, but even she could not suppress the emotions she was experiencing at the moment.

After all, even though the whole thing had happened faster than she could perceive, she understood everything that led up to this present.

Serah was corrupted by Legris after being distracted by Maria's plight, and she had to amputate her legs before the corruption progressed any further.

As a result, everything from Sarah's knees and below were cut off.

"This isn't the time to whine, Maria. I could recover them later. Right now we have to focus on the present situation."

Serah was no expert at Healing Magic, but she had at least stopped the bleeding and sealed the wound. Even though she was currently at a disadvantage, it wasn't like hope was lost entirely.

Being distracted by grief would only further weaken them.

"You're right. I-I'm sorry I—"

"It's fine. You were shaken. It happens…" Serah murmured, her gaze now focusing on Legris.

"Still twenty of them, huh? It feels like I didn't even do anything…"

Even though Legris' variants remained the same number, Serah suddenly began to feel like they were one too many for her to handle by herself,

Her entire mode of combat relied on all parts of her body to secure the perfect coordination. With two legs gone, most of her combos and fight patterns would be out of sync,

Plus, she had lost two means in which she could attack, decreasing her effective offensive capabilities by half. Last but not least, the reach of her legs had also been reduced considerably, which meant her speed was also compromised.

Then, there was the latent fear that her hands could be next. It wasn't something Serah could control as it was purely instinctive.

That primal fear of losing… it was slowly creeping in on her.

Fortunately, her resolve to win still kept her afloat.

'I also have to protect Maria no matter what, and… ah, hold on…'

Serah realized something at that moment.

'Why did I risk my legs for her? Even if she died, could she not have been revived later on? She's currently a liability anyway, so would it not be best if she was taken off the board quicker?'

Logically speaking, there was no need to have lost her legs for such a situation.

But…!

'All of my instincts screamed at me to save her. Almost as if I would never see her again.'

It was an odd feeling, especially considering how Serah prided herself on being decisive in battle.

'I suppose the bond we share can't be underestimated.'

Emotions would always be an integral part of living beings. While it could serve as a person's greatest strength, it was also a weakness that could devolve into a lapse in judgment.

Serah suspected she must have fallen into the trap of the latter.

'I can't dwell on that now, though. Right now, we can only weather the storm.'

Serah glared at all twenty Legrises, bracing herself in the dark world that seemed to be closing in on her.

"Haha! Classic Serah move."

"You've always been soft despite trying so hard not to be."

"This is only the star… argh…"

The Legrises could not complete their taunting messages as they suddenly began to spasm, a strange sight for even Serah.

Slowly, the dark curtains that covered the world began to lift.

The swift corrosion that filled the entire landscape returned to its source, the Legris variants.

As soon as Serah took all of this in, she looked above her and a brief glimmer of hope reflected in her eyes.

"Now's our chance! Ascend upwards, Maria!"

"H-huh? Okay!"

While the variants seemed disoriented, absorbing the darkness that now appeared to stabilize them, Serah and Maria shot upwards, increasing their momentum with every second that passed.

Until finally…

"Can you feel it? The dimensional barrier?"

"Y-yes!"

Serah smiled, charging up her energy while nodding at Maria to do the same.

"We are going to break through it and enter another dimension!"

"Really?!" Maria's eyes widened as she heard Serah's solution.

"We can't handle him on our own. Not in our current state. It's best we gather more allies and fight him together."

It was the most logical approach Serah could think of at the moment.

And since they had been presented with a golden opportunity, one where Legris was too distracted to get in their way, this was most likely going to be their only chance.

"Understood!"

Maria gathered her Aether, creating a dense covering for herself so she could fight the tide of the surface tension that seemed to propel her back.

The fiery Aether around Serah burned brighter too, and she was able to swim against the dimensional tides that desired to keep them in the dimension.

"On the count of three, Maria!"

"Yes Master!"

The two women pushed past the stubborn forces around them, their eyes the epitome of determination.

"One…"

The barrier that seemed ironclad began to crack.

"Two…"

Massive breaks spread through its invisible surface.

"Three…!"

~CRAACCCKKK!!!~

Like glass, the cracks spread to the far reaches of the space around them until it finally reached its limits.

~WHUUSSHHH!!!~

The dimension shattered, leading the two victorious women into a new world that was devoid of Legris Damien.

A world another ally occupied!

*

SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar
Chapter 1240: Dimensional Breach [Pt 2]

[A Few Moments Earlier]

Beast King Gerard was currently having a break in an open building.

A tent hovered above his head, shielding him from the hot sun, while there were sturdy fences by his sides to prevent the terrible winds and sands from invading his sanctuary.

"Haaa…" Smacking his lips as he downed the cocktail he had in his hand, Gerard smiled softly and looked beyond his camp.

He was surrounded by a harsh, unforgiving desert.

The golden sands constantly felt like they would drown him. The burning sun constantly burned him, leaving him extremely dehydrated.

He could hardly resort to flying due to the intense winds that occupied the area, and even his defenses could only mitigate the effects of this world, not eliminate them entirely.

Bottom line… he was being tortured here.

However, the only silver lining to all of this was that he had break periods.

After reaching a certain threshold, he would be allowed to rest for an hour within a haven with shade and refreshments.

He had no idea how long he had been at this whole thing, but this was the fourth time he had experienced the sanctuary, and every time he could not get completely used to it.

It was heaven incarnate, especially after being drowned in hell.

"Haha… hehe… haaaa…"

Taking another sip made him chuckle slightly, allowing him to indulge in his more base thoughts since he was comfortable.

'I wonder how Serah is doing?'

The only reason he had agreed to stop Legris with everyone else was to grab her attention. With Neron's disappearance, the thought it could finally be his time to step up.

'I still can't believe that Neron bastard ditched her.' Gerard grumbled to himself.

If Serah was his woman, there was no way he would treat her that way. Gerard was so sure of that fact that he nodded to himself in agreement.

'The only reason I have made it this far is because of you, Serah…'

He only wished the Constellation had made their trials a joint activity so she could watch as he dominated his own trial.

If she saw how far he was willing to go for her, she was bound to be impressed by his chivalry and growth.

That was obviously going to score him points with her, and eventually…

"Hehehe… that's right!"

Still, since he could not help the way things had been arranged, Gerard decided the next best thing he could do was to excel so much in his trials that he attracted the attention of a lot of Constellations.

That way, Serah would be so impressed by his power that she was finally going to take him seriously.

'My trial is to travel from one point to the final point in this desert. Under these harsh conditions and with only a small period of break. I doubt many have it as bad as I do. If I complete my own challenge before everyone else, that would make me very impressive, I'm sure!'

While Gerard had no idea how delusional he sounded, he drowned in his imagination and found himself sipping more of his cocktail.

"Cheers to our eventual union, Sera—"

~BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMM!!!~

A sudden quake pushed Gerard off his comfy couch, forcing him to land on the soft ground.

His cocktail glass flew off his hands, thanks to him holding it so flippantly, and its contents spilled on Gerard's head.

"What the… hell…?"

He had never experienced such a violent quake since he arrived in this world, and its effects seemed to traverse as far as Gerard could detect.

It made Gerard both curious and worried.

What in the world could have happened? And why did it have to occur during his resting period?!

Gerard angrily left his sanctuary and narrowed the scope of his vision to the source location of the commotion.

He also spread out his senses to properly detect the cause.

That was when he saw her.

"A-ahh…?"

Emerging from what appeared to be a breach in dimensions, spilling all over his own world like shattered glass, was the woman he had just been thinking of.

"S-Serah… is that you?"

A minuscule distance behind her was a silver haired girl, but Gerard didn't care much for her.

His thoughts only focused on Serah's entry.

He didn't even realize it when he took to his heels and rushed towards the gaping breach that spat out the woman of his dreams.

"You came for me, Serah! You cameeee!"

******

Serah and Maria heaved a sigh as they arrived in the new world.

It was a desert region, and while it's climate seemed extreme, the two women felt they could handle it pretty well.

"Who occupies this territory?" Maria was the first to break the silence.

Her tone contained apprehension and worry, especially since she kept staring at the gaping hole they had made thanks to their forceful entry into this place.

Her question did not remain unanswered for long, though.

"It's Gerard." Serah muttered, almost tiredly.

"R-really? How did you know? As expected of Master Serah!"

Maria's star-filled gaze greeted Serah, who totally seemed to be out of it.

She only sighed further.

"N-no, it's not that. I mean, look over there. He's coming straight for us."

Maria turned in the direction that Serah pointed at, and sure enough there was Gerard running towards them with unbelievable speed.

Normally, she would have been happy to see an ally rushing at them, but this man had a wide smile and a perverted look on his face that put Maria off.

She looked at Serah and found a similar expression of disgust on her face.

Even though it was never explicitly said, both women were clearly disappointed that they ended up in Gerard's dimension.

"Ahh… he's waving at us now."