

## SPELLCRAFT 151

### SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar

#### Chapter 151: Equilibrium

Pained moans. Broken bones. Uneasy silence. Steady gasps. Shocked expressions... such were the things that pervaded the hall.

The Martial Arts contestants had all gotten their bones broken, causing fractures on numerous parts which resulted in the disfiguring of their bodies.

That alone would have caused them immense agony. After all, the pain of one's bones breaking was one of the worst sensations a person could get.

At the center of the writhing students was the winner of that round, Edward. His blade had been dug deep into the stage, causing cracks to appear all around it, as though it shattered from the inside out.

This was the most surprising feat, considering no one had done anything like that so far.

Even Anabelle's wind-induced explosion only left charred marks on the ground—which disappeared shortly after we left the stage.

'The arena has enhancement placed on it that makes it sturdy—resistant to damage...' I reasoned, narrowing my vision on the cracks that were already closing.

There also seemed to be recovery Magic placed on it, allowing the arena floor to repair itself. As expected of Ainzlark Academy's facilities, it was impressive!

"H-how did Edward do that?"

"Was he always this strong?"

"He just one-shotted all of them and even damaged the stage!"

"D-does that mean all of 'them' are monsters?!"

I heard people murmur and converse among themselves in hushed voices. Their tone contained so much anxiety that it almost made me break out a smile.

"Hehe, looks like Ed won, after all!" Anabelle grinned excitedly as she watched her best friend leave the stage.

'Of course, was there ever a doubt?'

I personally instructed Edward in the art of 'The 9 Fundamental Precepts'. While he hadn't learned it to the point of mastery, his control over the first five was praiseworthy.

The Fifth Form: Break which he used back then was an art meant to deal blunt damage to the opponent, rather than sharply cut through them.

'By using the pressure of the wind made by striking down one's edge to a flat surface and the reverb created from vibrations coursing from the blade, an overpowering pressure is generated that deals a blunt force to the enemy even without the blade touching them directly'.

The effects could also be amplified by the expert use of Mana, thereby increasing the effects drastically.

Edward was able to use his blade to take down five students when he hadn't even achieved mastery and his use and quantity of mana were limited. It made me wonder what would happen if he achieved even greater heights.

'As sharp as an edge and as blunt as a boulder, the Martial Blade God School is focused on equilibrium in every way...' I reasoned with a smile.

That differentiated it from other Martial techniques that either focused on speed—like the 'Illusory Dance' or strength like the 'Heaven Defying Fist Art'. In the end, they all focused on one essential aspect of power, and to be well-balanced, one had to possess the knowledge and skills of several Schools.

But, the Martial Technique in Edward's possession was complete! After skimming through them, I found myself unable to fully decipher the complete contents locked within the scrolls. One thing was certain, though...

One could become invincible in combat by just mastering the Martial Blade God School's techniques!

Edward approached our seats quickly, drawing the attention of many to him. He ignored them, though, and placed all his focus on us.

It didn't take very long for him to return, giving both Anabelle and me fist bumps and high-fives.

"Well done." I calmly remarked.

"Yeah. You literally blew them all away!" Ana excitedly spoke, nearly screaming.

"It's all thanks to you two. Haa, I feel much better now." Edward smiled, taking his seat.

He was pretty nervous before climbing the stage, wondering how it would turn out. But, as soon as he gripped his blade, all the unease vanished and he became a new man.

It was quite the sight to see, the way he used a single technique to decimate his foes.

"Well, I suppose it's time for our Scholars to begin their round," I said, having no enthusiasm whatsoever.

I calculated, based on what was displayed by the challenge of our seniors, what the Lower Class Scholars of our year would experience. It was sure to be nothing short of boring.

With that in mind, my eyes unconsciously trailed to my side where I once again looked in the direction of Stefan, no, the stranger.

Stefan was looking in my direction, or rather, at Edward. He, as well as others, must have been severely flabbergasted by his excessive display.

'He' was an exception, though. The boy that sat on the seats after Stefan and Maria, having closer proximity with our seniors in the third year.

With one of his eyes covered, I could only really see the other. They displayed a hint of amusement, but not enough to warrant interest. It was certain that something else was on the boy's mind—I just couldn't figure it out.

From the corner of my eye, I spotted our Scholars descending to the stage, ready to compete against one another. Klaus was also prepared for supervising the match, and once everything was set... it started.

"Begin!"

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'How boring...' Kuzon thought to himself.

That was the name of the golden-haired boy who sat among those revered to be the cream of the crop for the First Years.

So far, he had been observing the competition, match after match, and he barely saw anything worthy of note.

The Third Years were nothing short of disappointing, as he was hoping for a better show. Granted, they were in the Lower Class, but it appeared even his minimum expectation was told high for them to fulfill.

'Oh well...' He dismissed flippantly.

If he was to choose, though, the last two matches, that took place before the Scholar round going on at the moment, were the best.

He had initially refused to have any expectation for them since they were merely Lower Class dregs, but after watching Anabelle's expert use of Mana, and the confident smile her partner—Jared—gave, he was convinced that they weren't bad.

Then there was Edward, the Martial Artist. He really surprised him. Judging from his movements and the ease of performance used to execute the technique, Kuzon guessed that it had to be a Basic-level Art.

'Yet it has been refined to such a level... not bad...'

Kuzon's slight smile broadened a bit more in anticipation.

His turn would soon arrive, and once it did, he was going to have quite a bit of fun himself. Once he qualified, he was bound to face at least one of the Lower Class students in a round.

Perhaps they would be able to provide some sort of stimulation for him, compared to the others he had encountered.

"That could be quite satisfying..." The young boy softly whispered.

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#### **Chapter 152: The Ones Called Geniuses (Pt 1)**

I watched as the Scholars' match concluded—the winner being Dave, a glasses-wearing boy whole I knew quite well in our class.

Of all the Scholars, he stood out the most, besides Ana. Of course, if he were to go up against her, there was a huge gap in their mental abilities and he would lose.

Looking to my side and watching Ana, I noticed she was smiling slightly and had a grateful look in her eyes that she wasn't participating as a Scholar.

"I prefer using Magic than just solving theories... what was I thinking before now..." She muttered to herself.

My smile widened. Of course, it was only natural that practicing a craft would be better than just studying and propounding theories. Now that Ana had enjoyed the thrill of using Magic, there was no going back for her.

After the Scholars match, that wrapped things up for the Lower Class first years. Next up were the Middle-Class students.

To be honest, none of them caught my eye.

If Lower Class students were discarded as the lowest of the low, the Middle-Class ones were only seen as average. It was apparent that none of them would be exceptional.

That was why, even while their Magic Department was called out to engage in a Battle Royale, I felt no excitement. I simply wanted to fast-forward time to the point where the Upper-Class students would perform.

Since that was impossible in my current state, though, I had to wait.

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"Winner of the Scholars Division, Terra!"

Once Klaus announced the victor of the final match allotted to the Middle Class, my zeal returned.

The entire competition between the Middle-Class students was as I had predicted, less than my standards.

None of them could replicate or even surpass the bar we set during our round. As a result, their battles looked boring. Now that it was finally over, the moment I had been waiting for had arrived.

The Battle Royale of the Upper Class!

"Now, then, I call upon the Magic Division of the Upper-Class First Years!" Klaus' voice boomed, summoning the seated students.

Out of thirteen of them who sat, only eleven stood, leaving two in their seats.

Immediately I realized this, the thought came upon me.

'The other two are Martial Artists and Scholars... it seems they won't need any Battle Royale to decide their advancement...'

I had at least wanted the Martial Arts division to have two or more students so Edward could see what kind of power they possessed, unfortunately, that wasn't an option anymore.

Of the eleven students who went to the stage, I knew a few quite well; Stefan Netherlore, Maria Helmsworth, and Ivan Smith. The new student also caught my eye, so that made four students who had my full attention.

'I look forward to your performance!'

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The eleven students were scattered all across the arena, all waiting for the voice of the moderator to signal the commencement of their round.

"Begin!" Klaus sharply announced.

Instantly, bursts of mana manifested on the stage, sending waves of power surging through the area. My eyes widened in anticipation as they looked at the potential winning candidates.

'Show me your power, geniuses!'

The students quickly formed bands, apparently realizing the gap in their abilities compared to monsters like Stefan and Maria. If they could take them down, as a group, then this was the most rational strategy.

'Looks like our seniors really corrupted our hearts in this match...' My thoughts trailed, realizing most students were simply following the lead of the initial matches we witnessed.

However, unlike those from earlier, the Upper-Class students formed a group of five. I deduced that they planned on winning the Battle Royale as a team. It wasn't a bad strategy.

>FWOOOOSHHH<

The band of five students who had seamless teamwork rushed toward their target. Based on their trajectory, I realized that they were after the new student.

'Oh? That makes sense...' I smiled.

The Upper-Class students were elites. Only those who scored the highest had any right to belong there. As a result, the Upper-Class students already knew their limits as well as those superior to them.

It would be foolish for them to try taking on someone like Stefan first—suicide to chase after Maria. Their first course of instinct was to go after the one whom they underestimated the most—the newbie who didn't take the exams with every other person.

As they infused their Mana to execute joint Magic, I took a good look at their opponent. I had no idea what his name was, but the young boy casually stood, having hands in his pockets. He had a calm, condescending smile as his adversaries prepared to launch everything they had on him.

It was as though he dared them to do their worst.

>RUMBLE<

The arena shook as the ground quaked. The imbalance caused most of the students to struggle for equilibrium, yet the new guy remained composed.

"[Joint Magic: Intermediate Flaming Earth Golem]"

The rumbles intensified, and from the ground suddenly brought out a massive creature of horror—one that humans stood no chance against.

It was a Golem!

However, unlike other Golems that were strictly comprised of one element, this particular one—despite being made of rock—had bursts of flames covering it.

The flames spread across its head, flowing down its body and every crevice across it. Since it was made through Joint Magic, the flames had no adverse effects on the Earth Golem, rather, they made it stronger!

Every step it took caused rumbles to occur, and the arena floor trembled. The height of the summon was at least seven meters, and its huge build was nothing to scoff at. This thing was a genuine weapon!

"ROOAAARRRRRR!!!" The monstrosity gave a loud bellow, sending echoes and reverb flying our way.

'Judging its Mana capacity and the level of strength this thing must have, this is on the High-Tier of Intermediate Level!'

The Lower Class students were only able to cast a Lower-Tier Intermediate Spell when they ganged up on Ana and me.

Compared to the Upper-Class students who were merely five in number, the Lower Class students had more members, yet they couldn't exceed the limits of the Lower-Tier Intermediate Level.

Given the gap between both Classes, it made me realize just how much of a difference existed between the geniuses and dregs. Such a thing was possible at an early age? Amazing!

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

#### **Chapter 153: The Ones Called Geniuses (Pt 2)**

A Golem could simply be defined as a construct made of elements and bound together by Magic.

Since Golems weren't exactly living, they could be issued commands by their summoner. They also possessed a Magic core that kept their bodies intact. Once such a core was destroyed, the Golems ceased to be.

However, gaining access to the core could be said to be nearly impossible considering the offensive capabilities of a Golem—especially one of a High-Tier Intermediate Level.

The monstrosity roared as it seemingly glared at the opponent, the casual-looking boy. Clearly pouring their strength into the Golem, the five students gave their orders to their creation.

"Crush him!"

Heeding their command instantly, it charged, obviously causing more tremors to permeate the stage.

The heat that emerged from its flaming body caused no one to draw near as the giant launched itself—readying a flame-coated fist to strike.

"How drab..." A whisper danced in my ear, causing me to jerk in surprise.

The voice came from none other than the Golem's target.

Thanks to the Enhancement Magic I cast on my body earlier, I could listen in to whatever conversation transpired on stage. Still, I wasn't expecting anyone to say those words—especially after seeing such a terrible creature charging with full speed.

'What will you do?!' My lips formed a grin as I gazed at the golden-haired boy in expectation.

As though responding to my thoughts, the kid raised his hand slowly, pointing a finger in the direction of the fast-approaching Golem which was already atop him.

From his fingers came bursts of purple lighting, thin and sharp. The sizzle of the electricity was only for a moment, buzzing before it formed a straight line and lunged toward the chest of the Flame-Earth Golem.

>TZZZZTTTTZZZZZZTTT<

In a flash, faster than the eyes could process, the line of purple lightning surged through the Golem's body and exited from the other side.

Shock filled everyone as they watched the fiery construct halt its motion. The flames covering its body vanished instantly and the rock that formed its body slowly crumbled.

How it had happened was a mystery to everyone, but it was clear that the Golem's core had been destroyed.

>BOOOOMMMM<

The earthen shell shattered apart and the debris scattered across the stage. In an instant, the product of five geniuses was thoroughly eliminated through an effortless display of another.

The one who controlled the lightning still had his finger stretched, and yet another spark appeared.

"Surrender, or you're next." He mumbled with disinterest.

I saw the five previously determined students shrink back in fear. Their eyes were filled with terror as they witnessed the same magic that ended their Golem manifest before them.

The electricity buzzed, signaling the end of its charge. If the boy so wished, he could launch it at any time.

"So? What will it be?" The glow of the lightning increased.

The students looked at each other—they were most likely close friends. There was no need for words to be exchanged among one another. It was already pretty clear that they stood no chance.

"W-we... give up..."

Just like that, five out of eleven dropped out of the Battle Royale—all as a result of a single boy.

As I watched him return his hand to his pocket, my body quivered in an unexplainable excitement that seemed to drive me nuts.

'That tiny spark of lightning packed enough power to penetrate the defenses of a High-Tier Intermediate Golem... amazing!'

It was no mean feat for a single boy to one-shot such a construct—yet, he did such a thing effortlessly.

This guy couldn't even be compared to the other geniuses gathered in the ring. I knew it within myself... that the boy who smiled casually and had an air of ease, was most likely the strongest one among the Upper-Class students—a Genius among geniuses!

It was no wonder why he didn't need to take the exams with us. His identity remained a mystery, the same as the source of his power. However, one thing was clear to me now...

'I want... to fight with him!'

Still, despite eliminating five students at once, six remained on stage. Apparently, one still needed to go.

I smiled, looking at the remaining contestants; Stefan Netherlore, Maria Helmsworth, Ivan Smith, Rias Lendertale, Polly Zetsarquil, and the mysterious new student.

Rias and Polly were the students who got fourth and sixth place in our Entrance exams respectively.

Since I memorized the names of all the promising students, I couldn't forget their faces. I was amazed by the sheer number of girls among the excellent students.

Three of the contestants were girls while three were boys—it was a contrast to the general belief that the male gender was more suited for Magic.

As I, and most assuredly everyone in the hall, awaited the results of the deadlock among the six students, the unexpected occurred.

"I surrender." Someone's hand was raised among the contestants.

It was Polly Zetsarquil, a bright-looking student that brought to mind amber and yellow radiance.

It was unexpected that she would give up now, especially since it was so late in the game. However, the moderator respected her wish despite the obvious dissatisfaction of the audience and escorted her off the stage.

"I guess I can't compete with you guys..." Her voice trailed, and I sensed a hint of sadness in her tone.

My eyes darted to Rias and I noticed sadness locked in her eyes as well. Those two were most likely friends, perhaps even rivals.

'Well, she's the weakest among everyone there... it's best if she gives up than end up in a world of hurt—embarrassing herself in the process.'

While others thought of giving up as cowardly, I wasn't so conceited. If a height was unattainable by a person's current capacity, it was best to stop trying at the venture. Instead, more focus should be made in an attempt to improve one's capacity so they could try at another time.



In the same vein, Polly's choice was correct. A smile formed on my face as I watched her give a stern expression while leaving the stage. In my heart, I knew she would be much stronger the next time the Exchange took place.

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

#### **Chapter 154: Conclusion Of The First Day**

"We have the winners of the Magic Division!" Klaus climbed atop the stage to announce.

The audience was silent, most likely because most of the students were too stunned to speak.

Out of all the matches so far... this one was the shortest—and only one individual grabbed all the attention.

"We have our qualifiers. Stefan Netherlore, Maria Helmsworth, Ivan Smith, Rias Lendertale, and Kuzon Midas. You may return to your seats."

The moment I heard his name, a memory flashed in my mind, but it quickly vanished. After all, there was no way that was possible...

'Kuzon, uh? So that's his name...' I smiled.

I watched as all the students returned to their seats, having my eyes focused on the golden-haired boy in particular. As usual, his gait was casual and the air around him oozed with ease.

It was as if he was well aware of the limits of his strength, and that it surpassed everyone else who competed in the Exchange.

"Now, then, onto the next match," Klaus said, drawing my attention back to the stage.

"Due to the numbers of Martial Artists and Scholars in the Upper Class of the First Years, there will be no elimination round for them. That means we'll be skipping over to the Second Years now."

Even as Klaus welcomed our seniors for their bout, my mind couldn't escape the boy—Kuzon— and the peculiarity of his existence. A nasty habit I had was obsession!

Once I didn't understand something or had an interest in someone, the feeling didn't disappear until I satiated my desires. It was something that plagued me even in my past life and caused me to make so many reckless choices.

Fortunately, with age came experience and maturity, so I was able to control it to a degree. Still...

"I'll have to speak with him later... that boy..."

With my resolute thought giving me strength, I returned my attention to the stage and decided to watch our seniors fight. If I was lucky, I could learn a thing or two from their round.

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"Aaaand, that concludes the matches for today. All preliminary matches have been exhausted, and we now have our champions who will be representing their respective Classes in the upcoming events." Klaus announced.

According to him, we would be proceeding to the quarter-finals tomorrow, eliminating even more students from the tournament. I didn't do a fast calculation in my head to fully grasp his words.

Seven students from each class—five from the Magic Division, one from the Martial Arts Division, and one from the Scholar Division—three classes in a Year, and three Years in total. That made a total of twenty-seven kinds of matches for the quarter-finals.

'That'll be quite interesting...'

"That concludes the Inter-Class Exchange for today! The Exits will now be opened. All students may now leave the Hall."

The moment Klaus Tallman rendered his final words, the students who served as both competitors and spectators rose to their feet, me included.

The exits, ten in total, were spread about in the hall. This prevented anyone from rushing into such a large place.

Well, there was also the problem of deducting a student's Class Points, so everyone behaved themselves.

I ensured to quickly descend the stairs, though. My goal wasn't to reach the exit in time, but to actually catch up to the student who caught my attention. It would be beneficial if I knew him personally—not just watching him from a distance.

"Sorry. Excuse me. Coming through." I whispered, overtaking some students who were walking between me and my goal.

'Tch...'

After struggling against the currents of people, I finally reached the point where the Upper-Class students were, and standing among them was the guy no one bothered to stand beside—Kuzon Midas.

"Hey," I called out to him, being only able to see his back from where I was.

He turned slightly, revealing his face to me. Being so close to the boy felt different, like an overpowering sensation of awe had just descended upon me.

"You're... Jared Leonard, right? I've heard quite a bit about you." He smiled, narrowing the one eye I could see in intrigue.

His response caused me to gain more confidence in my approach, so I returned the gesture and responded.

"Well, that's flattering. I haven't heard of you, though... even when you're this impressive."

If he was an exception and got transferred to Ainzlark Academy, I could understand why I didn't see him at the Entrance Exams, but I also didn't notice anyone of his caliber during the Familiar Selection Ceremony.

That was absurd!

"It's only natural. But, not to worry..." He muttered, turning back to face his front.

"... We'll see each other during our matches. If you manage to impress me, I wouldn't mind being your friend."

'What a sharp-tongued guy!' My brain rang.

That wasn't how to speak! Not only was he cheeky, but the aura of confidence that swelled around him could easily make anyone feel inferior. I wasn't sure if it was just elderly sentiment that made me dislike his attitude.

"Well, I plan on winning, anyway. So, I look forward to your friendship." I impudently fired back.

Kuzon, who had already begun moving away from me, stopped dead in his tracks. The air around him suddenly changed, and I heard a snicker come from his location.

"You had better give up on that..." A jovial tone oozed out of Kuzon as he turned to look at me, this time completely facing my direction.

As usual, a casual smile played on his face and his hands remained in his pockets. His black jacket, danced around, slightly beating the white shirt underneath.

For the tournament, we were allowed to wear our casual clothes.

His pale-light skin complimented the dangling hair that covered one of his eyes, while the other seemed to sneer at me.

"... The winner of this Exchange will be me!" Kuzon declared, not showing even the slightest hint of doubt.

This drew the attention of the nearby students—I even saw Stefan look my way, though I ignored him.

This brat had just said something I couldn't overlook!

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#### **Chapter 155: The Quarter-Finals (Pt 1)**

The boy's tone of confidence didn't seem to stem from underestimating me, or overestimating himself.

No, it appeared he simply didn't see any way I could win.

A bead of sweat formed on my face as I struggled to make the same casual smile Kuzon Midas had on his face.

"We'll see, won't we? Till then..." I managed to say, before turning my back and returning to my companions who were most likely waiting for me at the exit closest to our seat area.

'I wonder why I couldn't confidently say I would win... even though I've come this far...'

With those distracting thoughts playing in my mind, and anticipation for what tomorrow would bring, I decided to ignore the pangs of anxiety coiling in my heart and went my way.

'Tomorrow... we begin!'

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The next day arrived in the blink of an eye!

While I had been anticipating it all night long, it still surprised me how the clock seemed to be moving faster compared to before. Of course, it was only my imagination, but...

"... I should meet up with Edward and Ana before leaving for the Hall," I muttered and left my bed, preparing for what the day would bring.

[Moments Later]

Since Edward and I were in the same dorm, it was easy for both of us to meet up.

By the time I was done and went to the rendezvous point, I saw my dear companion already swarmed by many guys who—for some reason—were talking to him excitedly.

Edward, in his kindness, couldn't refuse the pile of ravens that circled him and powerlessly smiled as he talked to them.

'Hmm, they must be Martial Artists who are curious about that move of his...' I mused, remembering how Edward one-shotted his enemies.

Anabelle was most likely going through something similar in her dorm, considering she was able to easily overpower all those Magic-Users despite being a mere Scholar. I kind of wondered what sort of reaction she would have at the sudden attention on her.

'Well, their standing had increased... that's a good thing.'

I wasn't without attention too, but no one simply dared to approach me. For some reason, I was like a repelling force that made people back off. That worked out fine for me, though.

It would simply be bothersome if I had to cater to everyone as Edward was currently doing. Speaking of the boy, it was best if I helped him out a bit.

"Hey, Edward. What are you doing? Let's go!"

The moment my voice echoed across the vast field, everyone reacted by looking in my direction. That very moment, the enthusiastic seniors and classmates alike became mellow and had uncomfortable looks on their faces.

Instantly, they backed off and began dispersing. Such was the power of my antisocial aura.

"Oh, hey, Jared!" Edward took his chance and, having a somewhat relieved look in his eyes that I showered up at the right time, dashed toward me.

He reached me in a flash, and I instantly turned in the direction of the hall for the both of us to start moving.

"Good timing." The young Martial Artist whispered before moving along.

After walking for a few minutes, we were basically a couple of steps away from the Hall when we saw Ana.

'She's early...' Edward muttered.

"Or, we're late."

After I snapped at him, the silly guy realized that my words were most likely accurate and picked up the pace.

"You guys, what took you so long." Anabelle puffed her cheeks in slight annoyance.

I rolled my eyes at her exaggeration.

"Don't be a baby. It hasn't been that long you were here yourself."

Anabelle's eyes bulged and her honest face couldn't help but give her away.

"H-how did you know?" She gasped.

It was evident that she would have also encountered the same problem as Edward. There was no way she got here on time too. The girl just happened to be fortunate to have gotten here before us—most likely a few seconds before we saw her waiting—yet she decided to make it seem longer.

"I have my ways, now let's go inside." I retorted halfheartedly.

The two followed behind me, as though I had somehow become the shepherd to sheep. It was strange how the time we had spent together had changed quite a few things in our relationship.

Perhaps it was due to my training methods, or simply the aura of age I exhibited from time to time—Anabelle and Edward had come to see me as their master.

Of course, they still related to me as a friend and didn't outrightly declare me as their master, but they heeded my every word, even the ones I meant as a joke, as though they were law.

'Oh, well. If it helps them in the long run, that's fine by me...'

And so, we entered the Hall for the Quarter-finals of the Inter-Class Exchange.

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"Welcome back, everyone. This is, as you know, the second day of the Exchange.

Those who have qualified are seven from each Class—twenty-one from each year—and a total of sixty-three participants!" Klaus Tallman stated in his usual loud and awe-inspiring voice.

The Hall was silent, receptive to his words.

Those who qualified, myself included, were placed at a different seat area that contained a total of one hundred seats.

That meant I sat with all the qualifiers, including Stefan, Maria, Ivan, Rias, and... 'him'.

Seated by the edge of the row was the guy I wanted to fight the most—Kuzon Midas.

"The matches from now on will be One Vs One. Magic-Users, numbering a total of fifteen in a year, will have to face others from another class. Of course, the contestants will be selected at random."

The silence intensified.

"Of course, since the numbers are in the odd figure, that means one of the contestants will have to fight twice. But, this is also a part of the competition. Just pray your luck is good!"

I wouldn't mind that. No, I was already stuck with that role.

Ana and I had to fill in for three other people, which meant we would be having at least two matches.

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

#### **Chapter 156: The Quarter-Finals (Pt 2)**

"As for the Martial Artists and Scholars, you will also be facing off against each other. Since there exist three in each Year—one from a Class—each individual will encounter two matches."

I instantly understood what Klaus was implying.

Assuming the three qualifiers were A, B, and C. A would have to fight B in a single match, and then proceed to fight C. The same applied to B and C too. In essence, the match was to ensure that all contestants had equal chances to fight.

"The winner will be determined if the contestant is capable of winning at least one match. Since you have two tries, it shouldn't be too difficult, right?" Klaus announced.

'Of course... but that only worked in theory.'

No matter how it played out, it was certain that one person would be eliminated from this round.

Usually, it could be assumed that everyone had equal chances. But, was that truly the case?

If A was capable of beating B, and B was capable of beating C, what chances would C have against A? At the end of the day, C would be disqualified. Of course, compatibility mattered a lot in battle, and it was possible that an opponent who was able to beat someone superior to you could fall when fighting you. However, I didn't see any of that playing out here.

In a battle of pure skill, where equipment was basically of equal value and the stage prevented any lopsided advantage, it was simply the strong that would emerge victorious!

For the Scholars as well... intelligence and knowledge were something without bias. If a person didn't know something, they couldn't possibly win. Therefore, once an individual lost a single match, it would be difficult to make a comeback unless the next opponent was weaker. If that happened to be the case, then that opponent wouldn't be able to win at all.

While considering all these factors, more excitement began surging from within me as I stared at the stage where everything would go down.

'This match... will be quite interesting!'

"Now, then, we shall begin in earnest!" Klaus announced.

"The first rounds will be conducted among the First Years. I shall now call upon the contestants!"

Tension filled the air. Silence pervaded the Hall. I could sense the overwhelming expectation of the students as they awaited the call of the moderator.

"Ivan Smith and Jared Leonard! Both students should come to the stage!"

The moment the call was made, my eyes sparked and I turned in the direction of my opponent.

He did the same, and we both stared at each other for a second before rising from our seats. I descended to the stage, having a small smile on my face.

'Who would have thought I'd be fighting him in the first round...'

In no time we both stood opposite each other on the massive stage. I was certain that some of the people who watched this match would have a slight notion of what would happen.

"H-hey, this match... isn't it a bit unfair? An Upper-Class against a Lower-Class right off the bat? This Exchange is going to be hardcore!" I noticed someone speak as I enhanced my hearing.

"Hey! Don't say that. You don't know who that kid Jared Leonard is, do you?"

"Yeah, back when we were still in Orientation, the boy easily beat up Ivan!"

"Oi, oi, you're kidding, right?"

"I'm serious! You're a Scholar, so you weren't there."

"Ivan... lost...?"

"Yeah. But I think it's because he underestimated that Jared boy."

"He's gotten way stronger since the Orientation. I'm sure he'll be able to win now!"

I concluded that I had heard enough from the masses, so I deactivated my hearing enhancement.

'He's gotten even stronger, uh? I look forward to that!' My eyes narrowed on the target who glared at me with determination.

I could barely see any form of pride in him. It was as though the boy was resolved to fight earnestly in order to win.

'I have always thought you had potential... now that you've managed to work on yourself, why don't you show me what you can do.'

Klaus took a couple of steps back and got to the edge of the stage.

"Begin!" He declared.

>CLAP!<

Instantly, Ivan brought both his hands together, silently casting something. I patiently waited to see what he would do. If I chose to be too hasty, I was most likely not going to see how much he had grown.

Ivan separated his hands which were already crimson and steaming, pressing them on the ground as he knelt.

Instantly, the arena ground swelled, and a form of burning light seeped into the earth, like veins. The sparkling veins swiftly began moving in my direction, closing in on our distance with frightening speed.

'T-this is...!'

As soon as I realized what was happening, Ivan pressed his hands deeper into the ground and caused the veins to move even faster

In a flash, the crimson veins surrounded me, and a sharp beam of burning light sprang up from beneath—searing flames that ascended at least a dozen meters into the air.

>BOOOOMMMM!!!<

The flame pillar that grew from the ground sent heat waves dispersing in the area, but the concentration of mana was focused on the uptight burst of fire that could torch one's body in an instant.

'This is... an Intermediate Spell... around Middle-Tier...'

To think he would resort to this right off the bat. Ivan was certainly not messing around.

While trapped in the pillar of flames, bound to get turned into cinders, I smiled and decided to reciprocate the boy's earnest display with a more serious action of my own.

>SNAP<

With the flick of my two fingers rubbing on each other, the burning pillar dispersed, as though snuffed out by the wind.

>FWOOOOSHHH<

The flames cleared and I stepped out of the charred area, completely unharmed.

I could hear gasps from the audience, shocked noises that clearly told me they expected me to have suffered some severe injuries while being trapped in the burning prison.

The most amusing of all was Ivan's shocked expression that seemed to permeate his face. He had most likely gone all-out from the start, yet I once again easily turned things around.

"You've certainly improved, Ivan. But... you're not the only one." I smiled and stepped forward.

His aura of determination seemed to dwindle as my grin grew wider.

'Allow me to show you a bit of my growth too!'

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

#### **Chapter 157: Emerging Victor**

"Allow me to show you a bit of my growth too!" I grinned with satisfaction, drawing closer to a stunned Ivan.

"A-amazing... to think you brushed that off too..." He whispered.

With his hands still on the ground, the boy shot a look that told me he was far from being finished. This caused excitement to course through my body as I picked up my pace and approached him.



>RUMBLE<

Suddenly, the shake quaked once more and I was confronted with a massive lump of earth emanating from the ground.

'This is...!' My mind rang as I saw the lump take on the form of a giant hand.

"I'm not just good at Fire Magic, you know! Let's see how you snuff this out!" He yelled, controlling the massive brown construct to form a fist—nearing me at an alarming rate.

"Hehe, I see! So you figured it out!"

I thought he was just a dense idiot, but after suffering defeat by my hands, he must have widened up a bit. His earlier attack, while being very powerful, was something I dealt with by protecting myself with a denser wind barrier and sniffing out the oxygen around the flames.

As soon as I completed this, pushing the remnant flickers away with my wind spell was a simple task. Ivan must have suspected I would do that, so he resorted to this tactic instead... using a different element!

The brown-colored blow approached me in a hurry, but I wasn't going to allow it any closer. Smiling in anticipation, a brilliant idea came to mind.

Stretching my finger at the earthen attack, I produced a surge of lightning, sending the sharp spark to my opponent's magical attack.

>BOOOOMMMM!!!<

Instantly, the rock fist was decimated, turning into nothing but rock particles that crashed upon the ground.

"Tch!" I heard Ivan utter in disappointment.

I kept approaching him the moment his attack failed, waiting to see what he would pull off next.

"Damn it! Take this!" He growled, sending his mana coursing through the stage again.

Two giant earthen hands came from both my left and right. The speed and intensity by which they moved told me Ivan intended to squash me by pressing my body between the two slaps.

"Not a chance.

The moment they drew closer, a wind barrier covered me, pushing both earthen constructs back. That wasn't all, though.

With a snap, sickles of wind appeared, cutting apart the earthen hands and rendering them into chunks as they fell.

"Damn it!" Ivan growled in more frustration.

My pace was increasing, and in no time, I would reach him—once that happened, it was game over! I awaited more of his futile attempts for victory, crushing him with my pressure of dominance.

"T-then... how about this!" Ivan clapped his hands together and made a strained sound.

His voice depicted slight pain, and I could see veins protruding from his head. It was as though...

'... He's using up a great deal of Mana for this move. Does he want to win that badly?'

As I suspected, a huge surge of energy appeared, and suddenly, from all sides, four earthen hands appeared.

Their size was much bigger than the previous ones, and they moved so quickly that the others would be nothing in comparison.

'He's able to use Earth Magic so we'll despite being having a Fire Specialty... this Ivan guy is a genius!' I smiled.

"I'm not done!" His voice ascended, nearly deafening me.

The earthen constructs suddenly had veins emanating from them and the veins became bursts of flames.

Yes, like molten magma on a volcano surface, the four hands erupted with flame-like attributes, increasing their potential for greater damage.

This was Ivan's trump card!

'I see... so I can snuff out the flames and decimate the rocks, but what about both? That must be his rationale...'

Unfortunately, even with dual elements charging toward me, they would not pose an issue.

"[Grand Earthen Spikes: Intermediate]" I smiled.

Instantly, all around me, the stage floor morphed into massive spikes and intercepted the flaming rocks that charged at me. With frightening precision, the multiple spikes pierced all of them, causing the hands to burst and explode in a single strike.

>BOOOOOOMMMMM<

Like fireworks all around me, the fiery rocks scattered in different directions. I made sure none approached me with the wind shield protecting my body.

I carefully observed Ivan's trembling body. He was certainly shaken beyond doubt that I was able to easily handle his ultimate move in an instant.

"Anything else?"

I was already directly in front of him, looking at the boy's kneeling body from my location. I was well within striking distance, but I waited to see his next course of action.

"Heh... none at all... you've utterly beaten me yet again." He muttered while shaking his head.

As expected, he didn't flare up in rage. I had no idea what happened to Ivan Smith during the months we had been apart, but he was a completely different person. No, perhaps this was his true self.

"I surrender! This match is my loss."

His declaration shook the audience, especially those who had underestimated me. Even though many thought he could have still kept going, even if that meant his shameful defeat, I was happy about the wise choice he made.

"You've gotten stronger." Stretching my hands to him, I gave a slight nod.

He sighed and took my hand.

"It's not enough..."

From the flames that sparked in his eyes, I could tell that he was somewhat viewing me the same way Stefan did—as a rival. It was a shame, though.

'None of you guys can really compete against me... not as you are now...'

Even if they decided to become better, I was also doing the same. When would they realize that? The gap between us would only get wider no matter what.

Still, compared to how much he would have grown if he hadn't met me, Ivan had exceeded my expectations by leaps and bounds. He was sure to be one of the most powerful mages of his generation if he kept up this pace.

After all, throughout our match... he only ever used Intermediate-Level Spells. He must have judged me to be that much of a threat.

'What a scary Mana Pool he has...!' I mused.

"The winner of this round is... Jared Leonard!"

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

### **Chapter 158: Forfeit**

I returned to my seat with a pleased smile playing on my face.

It wasn't due to the satisfaction of crushing Ivan easily, but as a result of the shocked faces the spectators made.

A Lower-Class dreg defeating an Upper-Class elite was something most would fail to comprehend, much less believe. Still, I had so one-sidedly achieved this.

Of course, I got many stares as a result of my performance, but who cared? I followed the rules and won fair and square. There was no problem at all!

"For the second match, we have..." Klaus mentioned, drawing everyone's attention back to the stage.

If the first match for the day was that splendid, how would the second one play out?

"... Aaron Pufferhall versus Rias Lendertale"

I noticed the people's anticipatory gazes widened more as the Middle-Class student was called to face yet another elite. My grin of amusement grew a shade as I saw both boy and girl descend the stairs to the central arena where they would exchange magical blows.

Aaron Pufferhall, a Middle-Class student, would be fighting the one who scored the fourth highest in our exams—Rias. It was already clear to me who would win.

'That poor guy...' My thoughts trailed.

It wasn't impossible for someone of a Lower Class to win against those of higher classes. I was living proof of that. But, to do that, one had to be either very knowledgeable and skilled in their use of magic, or have someone skilled enough to guide them.

I was the former while Anabelle and Edward were the latter. However, for Aaron, he was neither. After observing his previous match, it was certain what level of skill he had.

Even as others cheered on for the fight, I gave a bored glance at both of them, completely predicting the results.

It would be a boring match.

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"Winner, Rias Lendertale!" The moderator declared.

I nearly rolled my eyes at the predictability of the whole thing.

So far, four people had fought, two of which had lost. As Klaus had earlier stated, only eight students would be able to pass. We only needed a couple more matches to go.

"Next, we have Maria Helmsworth versus Desir Selman."

'Again? Pitting a genius against another no-name?' I smirked.

Well, the whole thing was chosen at random, so I understood how the match-ups worked. It was also a good thing Maria didn't get stuck with me or Ana.

While it was uncertain how her fight with my dear companion would go, there was absolutely no way she could win against me.

It wouldn't be nice if she got disqualified this early in the game.

"Winner, Maria Helmsworth!" Klaus announced while I was still buried in my thoughts.

My head sharply sprang up as I looked in the direction of the stage. It was a terrifyingly amazing sight, what I feasted my eyes upon.

Pillars of ice surrounded the target as the white mist filled the air. The opponent, Desir, was completely petrified with fear, shivering amid the cold layers that enveloped him—threatening to freeze up his entire body if he so much as took a single step forward.

'E-eh...?!' My mind rang at the sudden decisive factor of the match.

It ended too quickly, even shorter than Kuzon's match. I watched as she returned to her seat, noticing how she briefly looked in my direction with her usual blank expression. Her clear, smooth face was as mesmerizing as ever.

"Next, we have... Jared Leonard versus Stefan Netherlore!"

This announcement shook me to my foundation. I wasn't expecting it!

Instantly, Stefan rose to his feet and shot me a determined look before heading down for the match.

I was uneasy for a second, but quickly pulled myself together and descended as well.

'Shit! I didn't want this to happen so soon...'

I would have preferred it if Stefan fought someone else and we met in the Semi-finals. Why did it have to now?!

Stefan got to the battleground before me and gave me his usual confident grin as I arrived late.

"Looks like we have to fight each other now. That's good! I was getting impatient, anyway!" The boy said with enthusiasm.

To be fair, I wasn't in the mood.

As much as I wanted to fight Stefan, I didn't want someone as skilled as him to lose in the mere quarters. It would be better if we both med it to the Semi-finals or something.

"Oh well..." I shrugged, realizing the best solution to the problem.

Klaus observed both of us until it seemed like we were both good to go and drew closer to the edge of the stage. That wasn't going to be necessary though.

"Begin!" He declared, causing both of us to spur into action.

"Prepare yourse—"

"I surrender!"

My voice seemed to cut the very air of excitement and tension that had enveloped the entire hall.

The echo seemed to resound over and over again as I noticed the sudden turn in everyone's mood. From 'Yesss!!!' to 'What the—?!'.

The moderator, Klaus was surprised by my decision, and I could see Kuzon and Ana's faces depicting shock. Someone like me... giving up so easily... certainly, it was something too absurd to accept.

Still, the one who was most affected by my decision was the boy in front of me.

"What is the meaning of this? What do you mean you give up?!" Stefan growled with a glare as his outstretched arm—which he had prepared for a Spell—fell instantly.

While I wasn't obligated to respond to him and explain the rationale behind my decision, my feelings of pity wouldn't let me leave without a proper answer.

"It's simple, Stefan. As you are now... if we fight... you'll lose!"

The moment I said this, the boy's eyes widened in utter shock and disbelief.

"I don't want you to lose before reaching the Semi-finals at least."

Thanks to the decision of the Judges, I had at least two rounds to fight. Even if I forfeited this, I already had one which ended in my victory. That was enough to advance!

"Once you qualify and we meet in the Quarter-finals, we'll have our final match!"

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

#### **Chapter 159: The Exchange Continues**

"W-what are you...?!" Stefan gritted his teeth, apparently still not satisfied with my response.

There was nothing I could do about that, though. My line of reasoning was for his benefit, whether he accepted it or not.

"I don't agree with this! Fight me fair and square!" He protested, raising his voice harshly.

For the usually collected and cool Stefan to lose his composure in such a manner—our match must have meant a lot to him. I could understand, more than most, the drive to fight someone. But, the kid also needed to learn the art of patience.

"Moderator, I'm leaving the stage now," I muttered, snapping Klaus from the surprised daze he found himself in.

"A-ah, I see..." The man muttered, eyeing me in disbelief.

"I don't accept this, moderator! Call him back to stage."

Stefan's elevated voice didn't stop my steady pace as I moved to the edge of the stage in order to leave.

"There's nothing I can do about it. He forfeited." I heard Klaus console the boy.

"The winner of this match is... Stefan Netherlore!"

With this declaration made, the audience responded dryly. It was a victory, but nothing about it felt like one. I felt several eyes on me as I walked back to my seat. It was an action no one would expect someone of my personality to take, after all.

Fortunately, Klaus knew how to read the room and quickly announced the next match without delay.

"Anabelle Frederick and Zesh Derkiond. Both of you should step out!"

My eyes darted at the girl who sat beside me, giving her a thumbs-up.

Ana nodded and sprang to her feet, sharply making her way down the stairs in excitement. I was partly grateful that none of my companions had decided to ask me the reason for giving up.

It saved me the time and energy required for an explanation. Plus, they probably overheard me talking to Stefan by using the enhancement Magic I taught them.

My eyes frolicked as I saw Stefan get off the stage with an air of disappointment hanging above him. He grudgingly accepted his victory and returned to his seat while Ana and her competitor climbed the platform for their duel.

'Another Middle-Class, eh? Show them hell, Ana.' I smiled in amusement.

"Begin!"

The moment Klaus gave the announcement, Zesh Derkiond, Anabelle's opponent, sprang into action.

Using enhancement magic to boost his movements, he closed in on the girl very quickly.

'Oh? So he's a close-combat battle-mage type?!' I reasoned in amusement.

It could be that, or perhaps the boy thought Anabelle was weak in close combat since the spell she used the last time was long-ranged. Magic-Users had their areas of specialty, not just comprised of elemental attributes, but also the type of magic to be used.

Some excelled at Area-Of-Effect Magic, while others were more Short-Range oriented. It was possible to have various specialties, but for a Lower-Class student, that would be expecting too much.

>FWOOOOSHHH!<

In a blur, the exemplary boy was already in front of Ana, ready to pounce on her with his electrifying fist.

>BAM!<

His fists connected with something—just inches from Ana's face. The moment his highly-volatile, lightning-coated fist hit the invisible wall that separated the two of them, I smiled.

'So, she's using my Invisible Barrier tactic, eh?'

Ana didn't know of SPELLCRAFT, so she simply used her Mana to execute it, unlike me—but it was still an impressive feat.

"W-wha—?!" Zesh cried out.

Unfortunately for him, his reaction time wasn't as quick as Ana's, and she had already prepared an attack of her own.

"[Wind Fall: Intermediate]"

Instantly, a heavy gust of wind fell and pushed Zesh's unsuspecting body to the floor.

>BOOOOMMMM!!<

The weight of the wind must have been unbearable as the boy groaned, falling flat-faced unto the ground. The arena floor shook as he began screaming.

'He's forcefully trying to get up by enhancing his body!' I noticed with a smile, watching the young boy glow with blue light as he struggled to get up.

The moment Ana noticed this, she tightened her hold on the spell and increased the force by which he was pushed down, causing him to fall helplessly to the ground again.

"Guarkk!!"

At this point, he must have started to hurt all over, but if Ana increased the pressure once again, his bones wouldn't be saved from damage. The match was over.

If the Zesh guy was sensible enough, he would—

"I-I give up! I surrender!" He cried, just like clockwork.

There was only enough pain a person could endure, especially at our young age. It was inevitable that he wouldn't be able to withstand much more thanks to his lack of experience in battle.

Ana deactivated her spell the moment he surrendered and Klaus arrived back on stage.

"The winner of this round is Anabelle Frederick!"

The petite girl beamed in excitement, slightly jumping as a result of her victory.

She began leaving the stage to return when Klaus suddenly grabbed her by the shoulder. His eyes were on the list, yet he prevented her from going anywhere. Was there a problem?

"Don't go yet. The next match is your turn again."

A heave of relief escaped my lips and I eagerly expected who would be next.

So far; I, Rias, Stefan, Maria, and Ana had passed. Three more were required to qualify.

"The contestants are... Anabelle Frederick and... Kuzon Midas!"

My eyes instantly bulged in shock upon the announcement.

'What?! Shit!' My mind sparked.

Kuzon rose from his seat—located to my far right—and gave a casual smile as he descended to the stage.

I gulped hard as I watched Ana's tiny figure standing beside Klaus on the stage.

'Why didn't I think of this possibility?'

Currently, I wasn't sure Anabelle could win against Kuzon, even with her remarkable talent. Besides, even if she could, I didn't want her to resort to her full power when it was just the Quarter-Finals.

'Quit, Ana! Just forfeit this match!' My intense eyes screamed as I looked at her.

She wasn't staring at me, though. Her eyes were on the boy who approached the stage—Kuzon.

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

#### **Chapter 160: Winners Of The First Years**

Kuzon and Anabelle stood opposite each other on stage, both staring at each other—Ana had an intense gaze, while the boy was simply donning his usual expression.

'Knowing Anabelle's personality, will she even consider quitting?!' I reasoned, taking the girl's bubbly nature into account.



She was academically smart, as well as a genius in the field of magic. But, in real-life situations and decision-making, she was very dense—an absolute idiot.

Evidence of that was her childish logic in refusing to practice Magic in order to surpass Lewis Griffith on equal grounds.

I just hoped she wasn't planning on going all-out when it wasn't even a match with any stakes for her.

'She could also be trying to gain information on what kind of magic he can use using this match as a basis... that's not a bad rationale.'

Considering it was often important to know the specialty of your target and learn a lot from them in battle, that line of reasoning could prove advantageous if we encountered Kuzon later on in the competition.

But, such tricks wouldn't work on someone of his caliber.

I was certain he wasn't planning on using all his cards in this match. So, no matter how much information Ana tried to wriggle out of him, it was of no use.

Plus... how sure was I that Anabelle was capable of drawing out Kuzon's full power?

'In any case, it's a risky venture... not worth it in the slightest!'

"Relax, Jared. You should believe in Ana more." A voice interrupted my thoughts.

I looked at Edward, who must have been watching me agonize over what Anabelle would do in this situation.

"Huu... you're right..." I whispered and calmed myself.

I was overthinking things, as usual. Whatever decision she made was her choice. She had already passed, so just as I was free to use up my second match as I pleased, she was also allowed to as well. What would it be, though?

"Begin!" Klaus announced, commencing the match.

"I surrender." Ana let out, waving her hand casually in the air.

Kuzon had not even attempted to move or fight, almost as if he had expected this.

Klaus looked in Ana's direction and gave a nod in resignation.

"Winner, Kuzon Midas!" He declared.

My lips curled up in a smile and I nodded in agreement with her decision. I was worrying for nothing!

"Why did you give up?" Kuzon's calm voice played in my ears.

His playful tone contrasted the power and authority he wielded. Even now, the expression he had on was as if everything was a joke to him.

"Well..." Ana began.

"I just didn't want to fight you."

Her flat statement caused my high expectations to mellow down. Anabelle was honest, so I had to assume that what she said was actually how she felt.

That meant she had no real tactical reason for refusing to fight. She just didn't want to face him.

"Haha, is that so?" Kuzon chuckled.

His laugh caused the girl to flush in what I could only call embarrassment and I saw her cheeks turn red.

"W-well, the match is over. I'm off." She stuttered and took her leave.

Kuzon said nothing more and simply walked off, returning to his seat as well.

Their brief exchange, albeit awkward, was a little funny to me. I had never seen Ana act so cute in front of anyone but me.

She came back to her seat in a jiffy, puffing her cheeks, and sat silently. Edward and I knew better than to interrupt Ana while she was sulking, so we simply looked to the stage and ignored her obvious attempt at a fit.

'Now, then, we have six winners... we just need two more.'

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The round after Anabelle vs Kuzon was me against a Middle-Class student. This represented the last round allotted to us Lower Class first years.

Of course, I easily emerged victorious, securing a total of three slots for the Lower Class.

The final match was between the last member of the Middle-Class and an additional person who would be randomly selected among the students. To my surprise, Ivan Smith was chosen.

This allowed the boy who lost at my hands to have a comeback. As I watched his march from my seat, I came to admire his growth even more. He was able to easily win against the Middle-Class student, properly displaying his strength in Magic.

The only reason he lost back then was because his opponent was me. Against someone from the Middle Class, his victory was guaranteed.

With that, the champions of the First Year Magic Division were chosen.

Three slots from the Lower Class; Two for me, one for Anabelle.

Five slots from the Upper Class... all of them passed to the Semi-finals.

It was a bit funny how no one from the Middle-Class survived the Quarters, but this was simply reality. Against the Upper-Class Elites, average students stood no chance. Even though Anabelle and I were Lower-Class denizens, our abilities rivaled the Upper-Class members.

'This is why the Class System is stupid...' I reasoned.

Thanks to the entitlement given to the Middle-Class, their growth wasn't very evident. After all, there was a Class lower than them, causing them to have a false sense of superiority and security.

They must have been lax in their training, thinking they would at least be able to crush the Lower Class contestants with ease.

Unfortunately for them, the end results proved otherwise.

'Hopefully, they learn from the error of their hubris.'

With the victors already determined in the Magic Division, Klaus wasted no time declaring the beginning of the next phase of the Exchange.

"We will now begin the Quarter-Finals for the Martial Arts Division!"

I noticed Edward's stiff face let out a smile. He must have been fighting impatience all this while, and it was finally time for him to prove his worth yet again.

I was certain the Middle-Class Martial Artist wouldn't really pose a problem for him, but I hadn't even seen the skills of the Upper-Class student, so I couldn't determine his strength yet.

Still, I was confident in Edward's strength! Being the one who taught him Martial Arts, I was assured that his level of skill was the Intermediate Level of the old scaling system. That made him of the Advanced stage in the present realm of Martial Arts.

With a smile forming on my face, I waited for Klaus to begin the match.

"You better not lose!"