

SPELLCRAFT 201

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Chapter 201: Intervention

Pain!

Pure, unimaginable pain seared through Jerry's body as he felt crushed by an insurmountable pressure!

He couldn't think or speak since all that registered in the poor boy's mind was the unfair agony he was experiencing.

'Make it stop! Make it stop!' His mind rang.

No, the moment he thought this, Jerry instantly chided himself and returned to his resolute demeanor. Gritting his teeth and enduring the hardship that was already breaking the bones in his body, the Lower Class boy held on to his determination.

'I can't lose... I can't give up now...'

If he was to go down here... what inspiration would be left for those behind him? Once again the Lower Class would live in the shadow of those of higher status. There was no way he could allow that!

Besides... there was one other reason he couldn't back off now.

The image of a girl appeared in the boy's head as he nearly blacked out. Her name was Ciara Epilson... someone he once called 'friend.' Before so much had occurred, they had vowed to reach the top together. It seemed like an impossible goal for him now, especially considering how far Ciara had gone ahead of him.

The burning pain his chest made Jerry want to scream out in anger, frustration, determination, but his opponent took that moment as an opportunity to increase the pressure that weighed down on him.

"Guarrrrrrghhhh!!!"

This was dangerous.

The people who watched the match may have noticed thanks to their distance, but if one took a closer look it was very clear that Jerry would die at this rate. All the crowd saw was Jerry's unyielding spirit despite being faced with a force he couldn't resist.

Some even wondered why he hadn't surrendered yet. Well, the truth was that Jerry couldn't even if he wanted to. That was how bad his situation was.

Of course, the stubborn boy wasn't going to surrender, in the first place. Still, wasn't there a way to end this match seeing that Jerry's forfeiture was less likely and he couldn't even resist if he wanted to.

It made one wonder what the moderator was doing.

Perhaps he chose not to interfere in order to represent the boy's wishes. No, that couldn't be it. Moderators weren't swayed by emotions like that, and the rules of the Exchange made sure he could interfere if things got too awry.

Then why didn't he?

"Hehehehe, look at you... being crushed like the insignificant insect you are. Just give up like the other losers before you. You can't win!" Richard mused, bathing in his superiority.

Jerry couldn't speak, but his silence spoke plenty.

'I won't! Gahhh! I won't surrender!'

This was beyond him now... it meant everything for his whole Class!

The image of a few people flashed in his mind; His companions, his colleagues... and even one exceptional boy he had only met for a brief moment. If this could at least show them the unwavering spirit of a senior, a leader, then he wasn't budging!

"Hahahah! You must have thought you had a chance back then, didn't you? I was going easy on you then, yet you thought you could actually win? Pathetic! You think you're strong you carry the same 'Elite Ten' Title as me? Don't kid yourself!"

That wasn't even what motivated Jerry, yet Richard used his own values to demean his opponent even more.

"You're not strong! You never were...!!!"

Jerry was powerless as those words sank into him.

"You're WEAK!"

The bombshell landed, and the strong mind Jerry had cultivated began to crumble.

Jerry had always known he was not as powerful as he aimed to be. The truth was made even more obvious to him when Ciara's aptitude for Magic surfaced drastically. Still, he never really considered himself weak. While the boy wasn't arrogant about his strength, he didn't dwell on his weaknesses either.

Hee only strived to get better, stronger!

But... these words broke him when he was at his lowest. He was...

'W-weak... I am... weak...?'

Was all he did for nothing? Had it been a fool's crusade to give up so much and train hard instead. He practically lived his life with study and training at the forefront of his schedule. Before he slept, when he woke up, after classes... every day, he improved!

Yet... was this all he could amount to? In the presence of sheer talent and true power... was this his limit?

'Ah... I see...'

The tiny fragments of his mind trailed.

Before geniuses like them... perhaps he truly was...

"NO!"

>BOOOOOOOOMMMMM!!!<

The floor quaked and a sudden explosion assailed the stage.

This blast sent gusts of wind to flying across every corner of the stage, and the audience was flabbergasted by the presence that suddenly appeared.

It wasn't an understatement to say that the eyes of everyone bulged, even those who had been composed earlier on. Someone had just landed on the stage, a place meant for competitors. His attire was simple, a light-grey jacket and a blue inner shirt. The shorts that the boy wore suggested a casual aura. He had slippers on as well.

It was fairly certain he was merely here on a whim, not for any serious matter.

What surprised the audience most was not only the boy's appearance, but his identity as well. It wasn't an overstatement to say everyone sort of knew his identity, or had heard of him at the very least. Having a blond, nearly golden hair, atop his very young face, the young lad's bright eyes sharply expressed dissatisfaction and disapproval.

His name was Jeremy Lewis, a First Year Lower Class student!

What was someone of his standing doing in such a match?

Jeremy, who was now facing the boy on the ground, looked with a resolute expression on his face. His pursed lips opened and words came out.

"You... are not weak!"

Upon hearing those words coming from Jared's lips, Jerry didn't know why those words brought him so much relief... so much comfort and strength. It was almost as if the pressure that completely vanished.

Oh wait, it really had!

Jerry could no longer feel the deathly weights that crushed him, and could now somewhat raise his head despite the throbbing pain. Once he did so, Jared's encouraging smile washed over him and a look of acknowledgement filled the boy's eyes so much that the struggling boy felt like he might cry.

"You're strong!"

Those words carried more meaning than the taunts of his enemy, so Jerry's heart resonated with them. His struggles hadn't been in vain.

"Now, then..." Jared turned away from Jerry and faced Klaus Tallman, who was very much shocked to see the young boy interfering in the match.

"... I'll take it from here!"

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Chapter 202: Dilemma

Klaus Tallman, the moderator of the Exchange, was still dazed when Jared turned in his direction.

The boy's eyes were full of a gleam that didn't belong to a child. With a resolute voice that made even the moderator a little nervous, the first year student spoke.

"I'll take it from here!"

Klaus was puzzled by the boy's statement. So much so, that it took him a moment to decipher his words despite how sharp the man normally was.

'Take over? Does he mean...?'

Before Klaus could complete his thoughts, however, an irritating sound filled the air.

"What are you doing, little brat? Have you no manners? Two seniors are fighting here, so scram!"

The person who bellowed was Richard Novo. His obsessive smile flashed as his narrowed eyes ogled Jared. A part of him wanted to crush the defiant boy, so he had to quickly send him out of the stage before his urges took over.

Jared, on the other hand, wasn't even looking at Richard. His eyes were only on Klaus Tallman, who, for some reason, delayed in his response.

"What are you talking about?"

"Don't play dumb, you know what I mean! But, if you want me to spell it out for you... then..."

The young boy's voice had no semblance of politeness, despite speaking to a lecturer. Even if Klaus' position in Ainzlark wasn't very high, it still surpassed Jared's. Any student with common sense, except maybe the Rankers, would accord lecturers with at least tiny bit of respect.

This was even more so among First Years!

"... I'm going to take Jerry Keller's place and duel Richard Novo. You have no problem with that, do you?" Jared dropped the bombshell... as if it was an obvious thing to demand.

The crowd, some of which had been paying rapt attention to the whole thing, entered an uproar the moment the young boy said what he did.

"J-Jared, you know I can't allow..."

"And why not?!"

At this point, Klaus wanted to caution Jared on his tone, but... the boy's glare discouraged him greatly.

"The rules state that-"

"You clearly don't care for the rules since you didn't stop the match even though Jerry was nearly killed. Isn't it your job to stop a fight if it gets out of hand, or if one challenger can no longer fight?"

The face of the Middle Class student who fought Ciara crinkled a bit, remembering how Klaus had stopped the massive tornado from hitting him during the match and even halted the whole fight. If he did that then... why didn't the moderator do the same in Jerry's case.

"I'll be fighting in Jerry's stead... after all... I'm stronger than he is! That makes me a member of the Elite Ten, doesn't it? Then this is my rightful match."

Jared's common sense clashed with the school's protocols, so Klaus couldn't possibly condone his actions. He wasn't wrong, per se... that is, if he was stronger than Jerry, but...

"Jared, I can't allow you to participate in this..."

"Oh, I see..." Jared once again interrupted, giving a rueful smile.

"I SUPPOSE YOU'RE HELL BENT ON PROTECTING THAT ENTITLED UPPER CLASS FOOL..."

Everyone could undeniably hear Jared's elevated voice... including the one whom the insult was directed at. Faces of disbelief spread among everyone who watched and they gulped in fear as well as anticipation for what the Ranker on stage would do.

"You... You brat!!!!" Richard screamed with rage.

He had kept his lust for sadism in check, but now he couldn't hold himself back any longer. An arrogant brat like Jared had dared to insult him. How did that even work? A First Year Lower Class student, the lowest of the low, dared to challenge him?

'I'm the fifth most powerful student in this Academy!' His thoughts raged.

Where did someone, who would be considered among the weakest in the whole school, get his confidence from?!

Well, if only Richard Novo had been present during the earlier Inter Class Exchange, or bothered to hear about what had happened there, he would have realized that Jared wasn't an ordinary Lower Class First Year. Still, though... he was a Ranker!

He was invincible!

"I need to show you your place!" With those words, Richard darted from his height and lunged at Jared.

He was moving faster than normal people would be able to perceive. Jared didn't seem to have any enhancements on his body, so he stood even less of a chance. In a moment, he would grab Jared's head and crush it!

'No, I should reach for his neck and squeeze it instead!' Richard gleefully eyed Jared who still faced Klaus.

He reached out his hand to capture his prize, widening his eyes and stretching his lips in anticipation. Richard was already within range and was a few inches from Jared, when...

"Don't be impatient..."

A wall, an invisible barrier, suddenly shielded Jared from Richard's deathly grip. The Ranker's hand could not pass through it, causing him to wonder in confusion.

Just then, Jared turned to face him for the first time. He didn't even move his whole body. Just tilting his head until their eyes met was enough.

"I don't think Klaus has approved of this match yet... so, hold your horses."

The condescending words of Jared, as well as his nonchalant eyes, seemed to mock Richard in his position midair. It was as if time had stopped and the seemingly superior being was frozen.

'H-how did he...?' Richard wondered how Jared beat him in speed.

As these two had their brief exchange, Klaus elevated his face and looked above... where the judges sat. Of course, being confused, he had to seek their inquiry. Suddenly, a sharp ringing appeared in his head and words followed

~Do not give your direct consent, but don't stop him either. Let's see how this plays out. Also...~

Klaus feared that this would be the verdict of the judges, but he most despised the words that would come next.

~... Do not stop the match no matter what happens! That Jared... let him have what's coming to him.~

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Chapter 203: Calm Storm

~... Do not stop the match no matter what happens! That Jared Leonard... let him have what's coming to him.~

This was the same instruction he had received concerning Jerry... all from the same Senior Lecturer! Klaus gulped and his heart sank while looking at Jared who had already turned in his direction for an answer.

"... You know... I can't sanction this, but... I won't stop you either." The man spoke, stuttering for the first time on stage.

Jared's face spoke of an untold maturity, so Klaus had no doubt the boy got the hidden message behind his words.

"You... understand, don't you?"

A moment of silence prevailed and then Jared spoke.

"I do. This much is enough, professor. Just take Jerry off stage, so he doesn't get caught up in the conflict."

Jerry on the other hand, despite all the damage he suffered, had managed to stay conscious. He looked at Jared with a disbelieving expression. He wanted to tell him to 'give up', but those words could no longer come out of his lips. Somehow, he too wanted to see what would happen.

Jerry wanted to see if this would actually be the victory he craved for!

"Both of you should just stand back and watch the show!"

Klaus didn't know where the boy's confidence stemmed from. Even as the older man watched the younger boy turn his back in order to face the opponent, his heart ached. Was this truly the right thing to do?

'Be careful, Jared... I can't help you... you're on your own.'

Once Jerry and Klaus were away from the stage, both watching the young boy in earnest, he took off his jacket, leaving only the shirt and shorts he wore on. Jared stole one last glance behind him, seeing Klaus and his guilty eyes, as well as Jerry, who was seated on a chair made by Klaus' magic. He was being healed as well.

Jared leaked out a smile and nodded slightly, returning his focus to the front... where his enemy floated.

"Keep your eyes peeled, Jerry... I'll show you how a Lower Class wins!"

[A Few Moments Earlier]

Edward and Ana had been watching the match with keen interest, same as everyone else. They were surrounded by Kuzon, Stefan, Maria, and basically other students who had participated in the Semi-finals, for some reason.

Even though the seat area was clearly meant for the Lower Class First Years, those from the Upper Class sat without reservation, all surrounding Jared Leonard and his friends. Amid chatter and side comments, they had been keenly watching this fight in particular... seeing as Jerry strived with all his might.

Then... they saw the whole thing take a sharp turn and Jerry nearing death. The more intuitive students already knew that Richard was taking things too far with his Spell.

'Why isn't Klaus Tallman stopping this...?' Must have been what they thought within themselves.

"That guy is going to die soon..." Kuzon had commented nonchalantly.

From his tone, it was obvious that the boy couldn't care less about what happened to their senior. The others who hadn't noticed were surprised by Kuzon's cruel remarks, but others weren't fazed.

Jared, Edward, and Ana had been watching from the start with their enhanced vision, and listened to every word exchanged in the match. Of course, they were aware of how dire the situation was getting.

Kuzon tilted his head and stared curiously in the direction of one student in particular, Jared, and gave a slight smile upon seeing the completely neutral expression on his face.

"You don't seem worried. What's going on in your head?" The golden-haired genius asked the one who had lost to him in the Finals.

Edward and Ana also turned to Jared, surprised that the boy wasn't even displaying the slightest bit of worry or rage even after watching Jerry being pressured to death... literally!

"J-Jared, I think we should stop the match somehow..." Ana mumbled with a nervous tone.

"How? You have no jurisdiction in the matter." Stefan chimed in, also curiously staring at Jared for a response.

It was unusual for his rival to be quiet in times like this.

Ana bit her lip the moment Stefan mentioned the logical answer. In the end, they were merely spectators. Only the judges and moderator could stop a match, and the fact they hadn't done so already spoke volumes.

"I don't care! I'll storm the place if I have to!" The one who spoke now was Edward.

His bulging eyes and gritted teeth showed that he was dead serious and meant every word. There was probably no one who was more agitated than him. After watching the match from the start to this point, how Jerry gave his all in the battle... how honorable he had been...

Those actions resonated deeply and made a deep impression on the young swordsman, making him want to stop any further unnecessary pain being inflicted on a hero... even if it warranted severe consequences!

"Really? Is that what the winner of the Martial Artist Division among us First Years is supposed to say?" Kuzon teasingly remarked.

"I don't care! This is clearly-"

"Kuzon is right..." Jared Leonard's voice sharply cut in, causing everyone to look in his direction.

After so long in silence, the boy finally spoke. But, the words he uttered were not what they expected. He was so calm and collected that those around had suspected it wasn't Jared Leonard who was among them.

"B-but, Jared... I can't watch as-"

Jerry was suffering, nearing death by the second. This was no time to argue!

Edward decided to put off any form of debate and simply follow his heart. Deep within him, the boy still respected his mentor and dear friend... even if he was not being his usual self. Still, Edward was a champion of justice and hard work! Jerry also represented that, and seeing a fellow in need while doing nothing to help was against his policy.

That was why... even though Jared was against it... he was going to plunge to the stage to stop the match.

"I have to try-"

>WHOOOOOSSSHHHH!!!<

Before he could complete his sentence, a sharp gust of wind blew past Edward, as well as everyone on their seats... and descended directly for the stage.

Before the students could wrap their head around the phenomenon, they heard a loud BOOOM!

Looking below, their eyes bulged as the figure who once sat beside them was now standing on the stage platform, exuding an aura that only meant one thing...

... BATTLE!

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Chapter 204: Ranker Versus 'Trash'

"Hey, brat! Who do you think you are? Are you sure you want to do this?"

The first to speak among the two was Richard Novo.

After attacking Jared and failing in that venture, he promptly retreated to the air where he retained his position. To some, it might have seemed like Richard simply controlled himself and chose not to attack the young First Year anymore, but to those with keener eyes, it was obvious that Richard was flustered and had chosen to make a tactical retreat.

In essence, the undisputedly superior Ranker had just run from a Lower Class noob!

"The emptiest barrels make the loudest noises."

Jared's calm words shook Richard where he was. He, who was already agitated by the fact that he couldn't get his prey the first time, was now filled with more fury.

Richard's bloodshot eyes murderously glared at Jared.

"Know your place... YOU BRAT!"

The boy in the air abandoned all form of mercy and common sense, choosing to resort to his ace from the very beginning! This was the fastest, surest way for him to assert his dominance.

Plus, he simply wanted to watch the defiant kid scream in pain!

"[Descending Gravity]" Richard smiled in delight, aiming for Jared's location.

Descending Gravity, like most Spells, could be evaded. For an Area Of Effect Spell like this, it was very difficult to dodge, especially since the effects were invisible and also instant.

The most effective measure in dealing with the Spell was to constantly keep moving. At least, the caster, depending on speed, may not have been able to keep up with one's speed.

Then why... why wasn't Jared moving a single step from his location?

>BOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMM<

The earth around Jared cracked, rumbling to Richard's Spells... but then a surprising sight became evident.

The area where Jared stood was intact! Even though, everything else rumbled and broke, Jared was still unfazed... same as the ground he stood on.

"W-wha-?!" Richard was dumbstruck.

He had never seen anyone resist his Spell to this degree. Well, except for the current Second Chair among the Rankers.

"You little..."

The arrogant boy didn't let any thought seep in before increasing the pressure of his attack in an instant.

>BOOOOOOOOMMMMM!!!<

The heaviness of the air could crush a human and turn their bones to powder now... that is if they didn't use enhancements. Even with Magic enhancements, the damage would still be considerable, yet... Jared was still fine.

"Fine! You asked for this!" Richard, not even considering for a second that his Spell would yield the same result, chose to resort to its highest power.

>BOOOOOOOOMMMMM!!!<

The ground shattered apart in response to the intensity, causing it to collapse. In response, Jared budged from his position.

It wasn't because he was affected, but it was hard to retain balance with the way the platform turned to debris.

>FWOOSHH<

Jared floated now, ascending to the air, since the ground had grown unsuitable for use.

Gasps escaped the mouths of everyone who observed this. Why?

Because, unlike the whirling wind spell that Richard used to maintain his position in the air, little to no wind could be seen around Jared... except perhaps a gentle whisper of the surrounding elements. Yet, Jared floated so effortlessly.

"Are you done?" Jared's calm voice sounded.

The smooth way he spoke caused Richard to slightly lose his nerve.

"H-how are you...?" The senior stuttered, now utterly confused and frankly a little frightened.

He wasn't the only one taken aback by Jared's actions, though. Everyone who watched was trying to figure out the boy's trick... or how in the world he could resist getting crushed to such a degree.

"Once you know the nature of such a simple spell, it's easy to protect yourself from it. As long as you reverse the air flow in my vicinity, it will neutralize the effects of your Spell. In essence, your [Descending Gravity] is completely useless before me."

The boy's short explanation was outstanding. Though it was in a gentle tone, people wondered how they were able to listen so fluidly to his words.

"I took the liberty of using a Sound Amplification spell so everyone in this Hall can hear us. With that in mind, I would like to ask..." Jared answered the question on everyone's minds.

"... Is this all you have?"

To his words, Richard's heart skipped a beat.

How was he to answer such a condescending question? He was still recoiling from the explanation Jared gave concerning counteracting his Spell.

'Is he... really a First Year...?!' His thought rang as he gulped.

"You brat! Of course it's not! I'm a Ranker! I'm the 5th strongest in this whole Academy. You think blocking one of my Spells will be enough to give you an advantage? Don't make me laugh!" Richard rambled on, even though he was deep in panic.

Everyone who knew Richard well were aware of the fact that [Descending Gravity] was his Ace Move.

He would simply crush those who opposed him, that was how he had climbed up the ranks. Of course, Richard had other great Spells, but none were even remotely as impressive as his crushing attack. If Jared could stop his greatest move... how would he fare against his lesser ones?

'Calm yourself, Richard! This is just a kid! There's no way he's stronger than you... yeah!'

Since Jared said he understood [Descending Gravity]'s nature, that meant he couldn't be immune to the others. He would have required time to completely analyze the Spell. That meant Richard could still win if he surprised the young brat with a new move.

'Heh, your luck has run out now, kid!' With a dark gleam in his eyes, Richard's spirits were now elevated and he began considering what Spell he would use against the one who dared to defy him.

"I'm happy to see you so motivated." Jared remarked, now smiling in a relaxed manner.

Richard was a little taken aback by the boy's reaction to his obvious malevolence, but before he could voice a comeback, Jared's voice appeared once again.

"Since you have more in store, I suppose it's time I showed you a little trick up my sleeve as well..."

An air of unease began to radiate around the stage as both flying boys gazed at each other.

"... I'll be crushing you now. So, resist with all you have... okay?"

Richard couldn't understand where the boy's confidence was stemming from. He hadn't even attacked since the match began, and it was common knowledge that First Years couldn't achieve more than Low-Tier Intermediate Spells... especially those in the Lower Class.

"Here I go... Elemental Chamber."

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Chapter 205: Elemental Chamber

>VWUUUUUUUSSSSSHHHHHH<

It was a sight so unreal that everyone gave gasps of surprise... and terror!

The air vibrated and deafening roars pervaded the hall. The only event that could be compared to the phenomenon taking place could only have been Ciara Epsilon's match. It was like the elements themselves unified... and gathered all over one person...

... Jared Leonard!

A sphere of wind covered my body, swirling and whirling so violently that it could skewer anything that attempted to pierce through. This served as both an offensive and defensive mechanism.

This was only the beginning, though...

Bursts of water appeared, swirling diagonally to my left, while blazing flames diagonally stretched to my right. They crisscrossed around the sphere at the center, sending both heat and cool radiating everywhere.

I clenched my fists and commanded the debris that littered the ground, using Earth Magic to compress the shattered platforms. After forming extremely concentrated rock particles thanks to condensing them to their limits, I brought the several lumps of rock to me, making them encircle my sphere horizontally.

With this, four elements gathered, having only me in the center.

This was enough to attract the shouts and gasps of the audience, but I wasn't done! There was still one left to go...

>BZZZTTTTZZZZZ<

Flashes of lightning appeared and electricity buzzed. I summoned the crackles and used them to coat my elemental sphere, further empowering my already extreme shell of multiple elements.

"Haaa... this should do it..." I whispered with a content look while opening my eyes for the first time to take a good look around me.

>VWUUUUUUSSSSHHHH!!!<

Floating in the air, I was surrounded by water, earth, fire, air, and lightning... and so I faced my opponent with a calm glare.

There was no longer any smile displayed on my face. My calmness also began fading away slightly and all that was on my mind was...

'I'll crush you!'

The impossible sight caused even Kuzon to marvel in wonder.

He had expected Jared to pull out something unexpected, but not to this extent! Simultaneously controlling five elements was no mean feat. No, it was even considered impossible! Especially for a Magic User of Jared's caliber.

"Amazing! Simply amazing! Was he holding back in our fight!" Kuzon marveled as he spoke.

He was getting more and more interested in Jared's character the more he got to know him. How could someone so seemingly weak pull off something like this? Kuzon wondered if he could do the same. The answer was obvious.

He couldn't!

Kuzon glanced to his side and watched Ana and Edward making the same surprised expression he was giving. Clearly, they too hadn't been expecting this.

It made the golden-haired boy wonder just how much Jared Leonard was truly hiding!

'Elemental Chamber'... I wonder when I thought of doing something like this...

After using my Multi-Elemental move against Kuzon, I realized how effective it could be if I made it more versatile.

Then, after watching 'her' use Mage Mode, I had an epiphany! It was at that moment that my mind went to work and I devised this special state I was currently in.

While it wasn't as phenomenal as Mage Mode, this state placed me in an extremely heightened state. Also, compared to Mage Mode which only those with Mana Cores of extreme quality could use, I could achieve Elemental Chamber with my current resources.

Which was more difficult, though?

It was without a doubt, mine!

Compared to Mage Mode, it was practically impossible to achieve five elemental layers all at once, and even stabilize them... not unless you had multiple Magic Cores.

In essence, this was a Mode specially designed for me. My Mage Mode... Elemental Chamber!

"Y-you are-!!!"

Before Richard could open his filthy, entitled mouth, I lunged at him at frightening speed!

>WHOOOOOSSSHHHH<

Lightening crackled and the elements trailed in my wake. It didn't even take a moment for me to reach him.

"W-wha-?!"

>BOOOOOOMMMMM!!!<

I used my wind sphere to hit him, causing the high-speed spiraling air that surrounded me to shave through the boy's enhancement Magic and slice off some of his skin. Lightening afflicted him as well, giving off a slight smell of something cooking.

Blood spurted out as he screamed, but I paid him no mind...

'... Just as you ignored Jerry's pain!'

>BOOOOOOMMMMM!!!<

I commanded the spiraling wind to push Richard from its agonizing hold, sending him crashing to the devastated platform beneath.

More rocks shattered as Richard's body collided with the surface, causing him to cough out blood in recoil.

'Don't overreact... that's just one element... I still have more left!'

I sent a wave of water his way, allowing it to wash up on him in large quantities so he felt like he was drowning. He powerlessly squirmed, fighting against the impossible currents as I watched from above.

'That should keep you conscious, then....'

With a single thought, I sent Mana coursing through the large body of water turning into ice in an instant.

"Gahhhhhh!!!" Richard screamed, feeling the frost seep into his skin and shuddered in pain. Mist proceeded from his mouth and his frozen body could not even move even though he would have violently spasmed from that much pain.

'You seem to be in pain... I'm sorry... let me warm you up a bit...'

Interrupting his frozen hell, I sent blazing flames to scorch him next. The fiery attack licked his entire body, and while it got rid of the ice... the burns inflicted were also severe.

"Guarghhhhh!!!" Richard gave more screams of pain, most likely unable to think of nothing else.

The water must have boiled him while the flames torched him at the same time. What a horrible fate that would have been. Refusing to be merciless, I offered relief and doused the suffering 'Ranker' with more water.

"Guburbuuu!!!" More drowning sounds were made, but I naturally ignored them.

Richard must have been grateful for the water and tried offering his thanks. That was the only thing I understood from the distorted noise he made.

'In that case... let us proceed.'

Next flashed lightning... the several crackles of electricity now manifested even more as I summoned them.

With water currently enveloping my opponent and lightning being prepared... it was left to anyone's guess what the outcome would be.

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Chapter 206: Absolute Dominance

>BZZZZZZZZ<

>BZZZZTTTTZZZZZZ<

Flashes of electricity proceeded from my spherical fortress and charges at the drowning target.

>KRRRIIIKKAAAANKKKK<

The result was a surge of power that erupted the water, as well as the screaming figure of my target.

Richard bellowed out in pain, clearly feeling the overwhelming sting of currents invading his body. I could only imagine how much they tickled... no... my bad. How much they hurt!

Of course, I didn't go overboard, stopping at what would not kill him... bit still leave him with enough pain that he wished things ended very quickly.

"Guarkkkkk!!!!!"

Upon seeing his smoked body being assailed with so much voltage, I stopped... before actually going too far. This caused his jerking body to powerlessly collapse in exhaustion and unspeakable agony.

I was sure because this was proven fact.

At this point, steam proceeded from the ground, forming some sort of mist around us. This would make visibility poor and impair the vision of the spectators. I couldn't very well allow that to happen.

>WHOOOOOOSSSSHHHH<

My wind sphere blew away all the white smoke, once again allowing the shattered stage to be completely visible. With that, I was ready to proceed.

Next were the rocks. My hardened, compressed rock particles that circled me like pebbles. Each one had been super condensed to be extremely strong and durable. Plus, they had been heightened with my Magic!

"Go!"

In an instant, I fired several, not all, bullets at the target on the ground, assailing with so many small hails of projectiles he could not avoid. Much to my chagrin, the weakened boy raised a defensive spell as a last resort since he was too hurt to evade them.

'Guess he isn't a Ranker for nothing. But...'

>KRIIIKAAAHKKK!!!<

The barrier shattered like glass and my rocks bit their target.

>BOOOOOOMMMMM!!!<

All at once, they bored holes into Richard Novo, shattering the ground even more.

As I saw blood spurt of the agonizing boy and tears flow from his eyes, I noticed the tiny sounds of bones shattering from within him.

Of course, I missed all vital spots so he couldn't die by my rock bullets. But, still, having suffered such a barrage, it was impossible for him to move any longer. With all options of resistance gone, I decided it was time for the main course...

... Me!

>VWOOOOSSSHHHH<

>BOOOOOOMMMM!!!<

I landed directly on Richard, pressing his battered body with my sphere causing him to yell and cry bitterly. He seemed to be apologizing and begging me to stop, but we had gone beyond that!

His lips were also moving to say something like 'I give up!'... but, of course, I wasn't going to let him finish!

Currently, I was bound by my sphere, so I couldn't directly touch Richard. Seeing that it was in the way, I compressed the elemental properties that surrounded me until they formed layers on my body and shrouded me instead.

With this done, I was sitting atop Richard readying my hand to deal a strike at him.

"I-I gwib u-"

Before he completed his distorted statement, my highly powered fist, which contained the might of five elements, descended with a heavy impact.

>BAM!<

I felt his flesh squish like soft butter. It wasn't even my full power, yet I was met with no resistance.

Still... hitting his soft face felt nice... more satisfying than just sending spells his way. It was so nice, in fact, that I decided to do it again.

>POW!<

And again...

>BOOM!<

Another round!

>KRAAKKK!<

One more time!

>SQUELCH!<

Blood and flesh now clung to my fist but I kept firing my fist at the target. As long as he still had breath... as long as he still clung to life like a cockroach, I would keep hitting and hitting and hitting him until he was on the verge of death.

And then, maybe he would...

"I SAID THAT'S ENOUGH, JARED!"

At this point, I heard a sharp, authoritative cry and someone was already tightly gripping my hand. Feeling the warm touch of a person, firm than the bloodied body I was used to hitting, I felt like a jolt coursed through me and turned to see the identity of who interrupted me.

It was Klaus!

His face depicted what could only be interpreted as complete shock... with a hint of deep fear. The lecturer stared at me with an aghast expression, looking at my bloodied hands and back at my face. I slowly grew irritated by his silence.

"What is it?"

My voice rang cold and dark, with my eyes narrowing in inquisition. I was in the middle of a match... why was I being interrupted?

"I... I'm ending this match!" The lecturer seemed to be trying a firm stance, but his hesitation wasn't so convincing.

"I wasn't supposed to be interrupted, right? What is the meaning of this?"

My words seemed to hit the mark! He fidgeted uncontrollably. He knew I was right, so why did he-?

"I... I shurend-"

Hearing Richard give a weak sound in an attempt to escape his due punishment, I used my unoccupied hand to smash his head in, making another squelching sound. Due to my aggravated state, I may have gone a tad bit far since my blow rendered my opponent unconscious.

"Tsk" My tongue clicked in dissatisfaction.

This automatically meant he had lost.

"Fine... it's over anyway..." I turned to Klaus who was still looking at me with disbelieving eyes.

"I won... right?" My lips curled into smile and I wiped off a bit of sweat on my face, smearing quite a bit of blood on my already blood-stained face.

My eyes went away from Klaus and I wondered what he was doing away from Jerry, whom I had left in his care.

His expression was lit with shock, and even though fear was hidden within his eyes, they contained mostly a feeling of triumph. Watching the person who tortured him now suffer such a fate must have appealed to his darker aspect.

My eyes trailed to the audience, most of which seemed appalled by my actions. I couldn't care less about those and faced my friends... and the few acquaintances I had made in the past few days.

They were grinning widely, pleased by my actions, and the terrible state my opponent was. Despite the overwhelming silence that filled the area, I was certain of one thing... and that made me smile genuinely.

"That's one win for the Lower Class!"

[A/N]

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Also... this beatdown feels very satisfying.

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

Chapter 207: Unofficial Ranker

Choking, unbearable silence filled the auditorium.

The piercing gazes of everyone, and I mean everyone, washed upon me.

I saw some people rushing in from the corner of my eyes. They wore white and had masks. They were four, and behind them was a cart. Instinctively, I realized who they were and what they came for.

My eyes darted to the shattered ground, at the brutalized body of a senior, a Ranker... Richard Novo.

'So they came to take him, uh?' I reasoned.

It was probably the right call to make, but the very thought made me incredibly annoyed. If they had medical personnel on standby, why had none arrived when Jerry was in such a terrible state?

So, the disparity between Classes was even more than just academics? That had gone too far.

My head was raised, and I shot the judges a disgusted look. Sitting up there, they hadn't interfered in the matches so far, even when someone was about to die... or maybe they had.

'Telepathy is a thing... so they must be relaying instructions to Klaus...'

In any case, my job on stage was done. I had taught a mannerless boy the true meaning of power; I had saved and fulfilled the wish of my senior... and I showed everyone just what a brat from the Lower Class could do!

Of course, there were more intricate reasons, but so far... things had worked out well...

I began walking off the stage, but before I took a few steps, a voice boomed across the Hall. It made me smile wryly, because I knew it was coming.

"Jared Leonard, you have violated the rules of the Exchange and interrupted the match between two Elites..."

Of course, the person who spoke was Damien Lawcroft. I cocked my head and gave him a coldhearted smile, completely unfazed by his announcement. The man seemed a bit shaken by my reaction, but I allowed him to finish.

"You will receive a penalty for your actions... one week from now. Be prepared!"

I shrugged my shoulder and casually left the stage.

Usually, a student would be distraught... perhaps even try appealing right there and then. But, I wasn't a fool who believed that would actually work.

There was a reason neither Klaus nor the judges gave their tacit approval for my actions, even though they basically gave the 'go ahead' by conduct. Of course, I was sure they expected me to lose, and on top of that, they would also grant me penalties... ruining my school life!

To their surprise, I emerged victorious. Still, it wasn't like it was possible to completely avoid the repercussions of my actions. What I did was 'wrong', so the authorities were well within their rights to punish me.

"How laughable..."

With this whisper, I climbed off the stage and made my way... not toward my former seat... but in the direction of the exit instead.

'I'm sick of this!'

Everyone watched in silence as Jared Leonard left the hall.

The doors creaked open, and he exited without a word. People were speechless by his brazenness, the audacity by which he conducted himself. However, no one could stop him... not after what they had just experienced.

"H-he beat a Ranker...!"

"That First Year..."

"... Shit! I didn't know he was that strong!"

It wasn't expressly stated, but the thoughts of everyone within the hall were fairly obvious.

Richard was carted away in his bloodied state; the previous allure he had was totally nonexistent in his new form. As the other Rankers and Elites watched one of the strongest in such a terrible condition, they couldn't help but gulp.

Rankers were the most powerful students in Ainzlark Academy, that was common sense!

However, even though they had ranks that separated each from the other, the power gaps between them were not so much that one would be rendered completely helpless when fighting the other.

With the exception of Fabian and Ciara, the other Rankers only had slight gaps in power from one another. That was why it was so surprising to see Richard Novo become a rag-doll in his fight with Jared Leonard!

He was beaten so one-sidedly that even those of higher ranks couldn't help but shudder. Richard was nothing in the presence of a First Year Lower Class brat! That seemed impossible, but the evidence was burned into their eyes.

It was at this point that it became absolutely clear to everyone that, while Jared did not have the official title yet, he was more than strong enough to be a Ranker!

And it wasn't just as a member of the lower bench, but... at least the 3rd Seat among the Rankers was rightfully his! No one knew what would happen beyond that point, but it was certain that not even the Martial Artist that occupied the third place could make short work of Richard the way Jared had done.

And he achieved all that... in the mere three months since entering Ainzlark Academy. That broke even the record of Ciara Epsilon! Though it wasn't official, it broke any record in the Academy!

The eyes of the Elites slowly turned in the direction of the genius of the century who was seated among them. They took great care in ensuring no eye contact was made, but their eyes narrowed on Ciara. She had been praised to possess unrivaled talent in Magic, but even she didn't achieve this when she was a First Year.

The moment the Elites focused on her, they came to regret it.

Out of the girl was oozing an unpleasant feeling that chilled the bone. The way her eyes glared onward made anyone who saw her to shiver in fear. Even those who sat beside her gradually gave space since the murderous aura she emitted was causing them to tremble.

It was clear that the usually cheerful Ciara was upset... but, why? Was it because Jared Leonard broke her record? Was she jealous, or green with envy?

Those were the theories that went on in the hearts of everyone who sat close to her and watched her emotions slightly get out of control. They were all wrong, though...

If only the Elites knew what caused her such displeasure... perhaps they would see a different kind of monster in Ciara.

[A/N]

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[Come on, guys... please support me.]

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

Chapter 208: Rationale

I really didn't want to intervene.

Of course, with the maturity and level-headedness I possessed, it was an easy feat to keep my emotions under control... sort of. I was even of the opinion that pointless conflict with someone stronger than you was simply a waste of time.

But, my neutral stance slowly evolved to a swirling storm once I began watching the Elites duke it out.

"I give up!" One cried.

"I surrender!" Another proclaimed.

"I forfeit!" Yet one other declared.

It sickened me!

Why did those who were meant to be leaders show such pathetic side? Of course, it was clear they didn't stand a chance and would lose, but still... they weren't permitted to give up so easily!

If any other person had surrendered in such an outmatched fight, I would perfectly understand. In fact, I would even encourage such action.

But, these were leaders! They represented a brand... our brand!

If they gave up, what did it mean for the whole Class that they represented? That was what went on in my mind as I watched. The consequences of their actions would ripple through all the years and the disgrace that followed would be too much for us to bear.

Those who were already deemed trash would be thought of as even more than trash!

I looked at the expressions of my fellow Lower Class Students and saw their sunken, powerless expressions. Our seniors were basically teaching us that growth and change were inevitable and we could only succumb to our fates as the worst.

I couldn't accept that! Especially since I, Edward, and Ana did our best to change everyone's views on that during the Inter-Class Exchange.

To an extent, I could see the stereotype slowly change among the audience... until these idiots ruined all our hard work!

Elites had more influence than a bunch of First Years, so whatever they did would have more effects on the student body as a whole. And they... shamelessly retreated.

I watched as the Lower Class Elites returned to their seats and jokingly spoke to one another even after showing such pathetic display before their Class, no, the whole school!

'Disgusting!'

That was why I was satisfied to see Ciara inflict pain upon one of those pathetic seniors. It was a shock to see that she could both use Original Magic and Mage Mode, but I couldn't help but admire her... especially since she was the same girl I met in the Oasis the other day.

When I first saw her, I nearly screamed in surprise, but after carefully considering things, it made sense how she was able to bathe in the highly concentrated Mana Pool. And then after watching her fight end, it dawned on me that she was a talented genius comparable with Kuzon who sat close to me.

Yes, for some reason, I had made a ton of acquaintances and they all sat surrounding me... even if it was a Lower Class spot in the Hall. It didn't feel too bad, though. If not for the disgust welling up within me as I saw my seniors fight, I was having a good time...

... Until Jerry's fight completely surprised me!

If it had just been a powerless struggle made by the weak against the strong, I wouldn't have been impressed, but I could tell from Jerry's abilities that he had painstakingly trained hard for the match. His expert use of Mana, his heightened senses, his lack of wasted movement... this was what I wanted to see in an Elite!

Of course, I knew he would lose based on how things went, but still... the determination in his eyes was refreshing to see.

And then, when he fell and began undergoing so much torture, my heart churned with frustration. I knew Jerry wouldn't give up since that was what the others had done. My respect for him deepened, same with my fear of something irreparable occurring.

'What are you doing, Klaus? Interfere!' My mind rang, but the moderator stood rigid.

It didn't take me very long to realize the situation.

Jerry was on his own!

If he didn't give up... he could die... no, he would!

Well, maybe he would pass out before that happened, but that was only a slim chance.

And then noise began occurring around me.

Ana, Edward, and the other students argued on whether or not to save Jerry from his predicament. I kept quiet and began working my brain.

Richard, the opponent, was a Ranker... the fifth seat.

Ana and Edward stood no chance against him if they wanted to forcefully stop his actions. Klaus showed no interest in intervening and the judges were silent too...which could only mean that they wanted this particular scenario.

A dark thought flashed in my mind and I eyed someone who sat among the judges suspiciously. Could this be the kind of situation he wanted to create in order to force my hand? Using Damien Lawcroft's obsession with demeaning the Lower Class, this person actually simulated this knowing I would intervene?

If that was the case, I couldn't play into their hand! Not only would there be a penalty, but to stand a chance against Richard, I needed to use more power than I wanted to show... at least for now.

'I need to use SPELLCRAFT to counter the [Descending Gravity] Spell, and use all five cores to activate Elemental Chamber...'

That was revealing a lot of my hand! Could I risk something like this, especially when thinking on the long term?

I grinned within myself even though my outward expression still showed a stoic expression.

Of course, I would intervene!

I was sick of playing these games, anyway! So far, myself and 'that man' had been walking around in circles, none taking the next step. However, if I initiated the first move, that would leave him no choice but to act too!

If that was the case, I needed to make a very big impression, though not more than would be necessary.

They say the best way to catch a big fish is to use the most alluring bait!

That was what I intended to do.

In order to completely corner the mastermind of the whole assassination incident... the one who had been responsible for a great deal of my worry... it was time to strike!

'I will smoke you out... and this little game will end the only way it can... my victory!'

[A/N]

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

Chapter 209: Grim Ending

The Inter Class Exchange ended on a grim note.

It was a far cry from the excitement that had enveloped the hall on the first day, but no one seemed to notice the drastic change of atmosphere.

As expected, the final match was considered to be Invalid, so the Elite Tournament ended with the results gotten from the first nine matches;

Upper Class: 9 Wins, 0 Losses

Middle Class: 0 Wins, 9 Losses

Lower Class: 0 Wins, 9 Losses

No one objected to the results since it was obvious from what they had witnessed.

The expressions of the Elites of the Lower Class rang of relief. They seemed overjoyed that the bothersome exchange was over and they could now properly rest... unshackled by any more responsibilities on their part.

It was a wonder how none of them felt any shame or embarrassment concerning the gruesome loss they had suffered.

For those in the Middle Class, it was clear that they were frustrated.

Even though they had given their all in battle, all of them still encountered loss. Their results were no different from the Lower Class Elites who didn't even bother. It made them feel foolish for even trying, in the first place.

Fortunately, their reputation increased a slight bit in the Exchange since some of the Middle Class Elites put up a pretty decent fight. As a result, unlike the Lower Class losers, they could still hold on to a fraction of their dignity.

This was the only merit they got in exchange for not giving up.

As for the Upper Class Elites, the undisputed winners of the Exchange, their expressions should have been that of pride and confidence. They should have reveled in their victory! However, the sour expressions that painted their faces contrasted what would have been expected from them.

Fear

Anxiety

Disappointment

Bitterness

Anger

A mix of negative emotions coagulated the atmosphere of the champions, enough to make a person confused as to who won and who lost.

Even the audience was in unrest!

After experiencing the ghastly sight of a single Lower Class student easily trouncing one of the strongest Rankers in the Academy, it felt like their concept of balance and logic had completely shattered.

Still, with the events of the day concluded, and the fact that the students had their personal businesses to attend to, a conclusion had to be made concerning the bizarre event.

Despite the uncertainties in the air, the Exchange ended, and the students were allowed to leave the hall.

Ana and Edward exited the hall, having worried looks on their faces.

They wondered about Jared, where he went to after he left the hall back then. At the time they wanted to follow him, but Kuzon and the others advised against it, lest they got caught up in the mess the boy had made.

Of course, the two didn't care in the slightest, but after considering the possibility that Jared wouldn't want them to suffer for his actions, and also that the boy most likely wished to be alone, they backed off.

Now that the Exchange was over, Ana and Edward were obviously going to look for their friend. It was only a matter of where he had run off to.

"You guys, hold up!" Someone called out after them.

There was no way anyone could mistake his casual, smooth voice... it was Kuzon.

"You're off to look for Jared, right? Count me in!" The boy flashed a slight grin.

It appeared that after his match in the finals, he had taken an interest in Jared and wanted to be in his company. Since the latter didn't seem to mind his presence, Ana and Edward so no problems if he tagged along...

... That is, if it was only him!

"Count me in too!

"You bet I'm coming as well..."

"... Me too..."

Ivan Smith, Stefan Netherlore, and Maria Helmsworth chimed in, appearing as though they had been there all this time but were just waiting for their entrance.

While Edward and Ana felt slightly uncomfortable with the crowd, they didn't have the time nor energy to banter, so they agreed to everyone's offer.

"Alright! I have a pretty good idea where he might be, so let's go there first." Taking the lead, Edward declared and started moving swiftly.

The rest followed.

>CLACK<

>CLACK<

>CLACK<

Sounds of footsteps echoed across the bright corridor, and a girl's elegant shoes were clearly seen as her legs trotted across the passage.

There was a large door directly in her front, just a few meters from where she was, making her steps slow and confident. There was no need to rush since the target was just within reach.

Upon reaching the door, she opened it lightly, reflecting her clear, beautiful skin, and ventured into the large room inside.

Within the room, though separated by thin layers of sheet that hung like curtains, were two boys. They were lying on their beds, clearly asleep.

This was a Medic Ward, and the two boys were in some nasty conditions before they were brought in for treatment. Thanks to some high-class Potions and very impressive Magic, their condition had stabilized, and they were currently in deep sleep thanks to a Spell cast by their medical supervisor.

Other than the two boys, no one else was present in the room... the medics were on break... until one person entered.

The girl, her blue ribbons evident in her long, brown hair, entered the room with zero caution. Her deep blue eyes currently had some sort of dark gleam radiating within, but the slight bowing posture she currently had made it nearly Impossible to completely make out the contents of her face.

Was she smiling, or...?!

Her first mode of action was to swiftly glide across the room, to the section where one of the boys lay. His auburn hair hung loosely as his body lay comfortably on the bed. This boy's name was Jerry, and after fighting in the Exchange, his injuries were so severe that they were just shy from fatal.

The intruder—now by his bedside—used her delicate-looking hands to brush Jerry's face as she stared longingly at him.

Now looking so intently—no, obsessively—at the boy she gently stroked, the culprit's face came into view.

Her name was Ciara Epilson... the Second Seat among the Rankers!

[A/N]

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Chapter 210: Obsession

Ciara Epilson stood rigidly, staring at the body of a boy who was deep in sleep.

Other than the gentle hand of hers that stroked his cheeks, and the curling up of her lustrous lips, the girl could have been mistaken for a statue.

Her eyes fervently, without blinking even once, trailed the boy's body. She observed his even breaths, how his chest puffed and deflated as air seeped into them, how he had a peaceful face... the sharp opposite of the pain that dwelled there.

"You big dummy..." She finally uttered words.

Her voice was smooth, low, and hinted affection.

Despite the prideful and cold way she addressed Jerry in public, now that it was just the two of them... well, just her... she seemed awfully caring.

Her eyes showed pity, and something else hidden within.

"... You could have just given up. Though, I guess I should have seen this coming..." Ciara's voice trailed.

She sighed a bit in frustration.

"You big idiot!" The girl wanted to scream, but she couldn't as well disturb Jerry's sleep.

Ever since she knew him, Jerry had always been a determined fellow!

He had managed to seep into her icy, distrusting heart, and became her friend. Even now that they were apart, she couldn't help but smile in remembrance of their past... how Jerry made her heart flutter many times. Things were different now, but...

Her hands stopped frolicking his chin and went further down, massaging his chest. She felt the boy breathe, how his heart beat. It seemed like the beats matched hers.

Just as she felt his heartbeat, Ciara began losing a grip of her self-control and her hands slowly began to sink further down, reaching his stomach, but still trailing down.

Her cheeks were red now, and her eyes sparkled in delightful anticipation. Her fingers were aiming for something.

"Nng..." Jerry suddenly made a groan, snapping Ciara out of her slightly berserk state.

"Ah, looks like I nearly lost it again..." She whispered with a playful look on her face.

The girl realized the implications of her attempted action, what would happen if she was caught, and she backed off. Her eyes still hungrily stared at his body, though.

"Looks like this isn't the time... or place..." Ciara's eyes slowly trailed past the boy's bed and turned in the direction of the other guy in the room.

"Before we continue... I should take care of something real quick..."

With plucky footsteps, Ciara left Jerry's side and approached the boy who was carefully laid on the second, or rather first, bed.

"The one who put Jerry in this sorry state... was YOU..."

Ciara's eyes seemed to display something else now. Yes, her devotion to Jerry still remained, but it now warped into something more.

"I'm a bit grateful to you... if you didn't injure him this much, I probably wouldn't have had this chance to be with Jerry... I would have had to use my usual methods and snuck into that filthy dorm of his..." Her voice was heading in a twisted direction.

"... His room isn't bad, and I do enjoy our time together, but... I certainly like this atmosphere better..."

Though she said that, Ciara felt it would have been perfect if this particular person wasn't in the room. He was invading her private time with Jerry.

"... But, you went too far in your fight..."

The air in the room seemed to get heavier as her eyes were widening with a glint of passion.

"... You hurt him too much. No, the fact that you hurt him at all is enough..."

'For that alone... you deserve to be punished!' Her mind rang.

A wide smile appeared on Ciara's face. Not the kind she had been displaying when beside Jerry, no, this was darker. It seemed like the expression of a mad woman!

Her bloodshot eyes screamed of rage, but it sharply contrasted her curved grin that showed something dangerous. Ciara cocked her head slightly, making her look like a doll of horror. The persona she now donned was fundamentally different from her usual self.

She only showed this form to those who had crossed her... those who had committed the gravest sin.

'You hurt... MY Jerry!'

With that line of thought, a wave of Mana flickered from her and filled the surrounding area. She had just cast a Silence Spell, one that would prevent anyone from hearing even the loudest of noise emanating from the room.

Once the Spell was done, her total focus was now on the boy who lay on the bed, oblivious of what would be coming.

'For that... you should receive a little... PUNISHMENT!'

With this, her eyes widened even more, and a psychic wave was sent to the body of her target

Instantly, her target, Richard Novo, bulged open his eyes and widened his mouth to let out a deafening scream.

"ARGHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!"

The scream would have been enough to send someone into shock, but, Ciara seemed just fine hearing it. In fact, she relished every moment of the boy's pain.

She didn't even mind that his eyes nearly popped out his sockets and blood-like tears streamed down his cheeks. Drool fell from his mouth and mucus dripped from both openings of his nostrils.

"Guarghhhhhhhhhh!!!" More screams filled the air.

"You won't remember any of this since the mental strain will be too much to bear...."

"UWAHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!"

"... Once this is over, you'll never be the same, though. I wonder what trauma I should give you..."

"ARGHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!"

"... Something to ensure you stay away from Jerry... stay far away..."

"YAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!!!"

"... Yes! That's perfect!" Ciara beamed upon deciding just what route to take in her mental punishment of the Ranker before her.

The boy's distorted face turned uglier and uglier as he screamed even more.

Of course, Ciara wasn't bothered about his noise. No one outside the room could hear him, and even within the enclosed area, sound was limited to her and the agonizing boy.

Once she was meticulously done with Richard, Ciara would return to observe Jerry for as long as was permitted. She would watch him sleep, watch him dream... and relish the fact that he endlessly thought of her.

That was the true identity of the girl known as Ciara Epsilon...

"Haa, Jerry... you truly are the only one for me."

... A being afflicted with absolute obsession!