

SPELLCRAFT 221

SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar

Chapter 221: Departure

"Well, I'll be off now. Jared... you take care of yourself, okay?"

I smiled at Neron and nodded.

We didn't need many words to correspond to whatever we had in our respective heads.

There was bound to be some 'funny business' to occur in his absence, mostly having to do with whatever penalty I would be getting from the higher-ups.

In the few days I had gotten to know my dear teacher, it was evident to me that he was similar to me in many aspects--that included thought faculties as well. He must have also suspected a few things on his own.

"You should take care of yourself too..." I returned his words, watching as he turned his back and began leaving.

"Sure."

In a flash--no, faster than that--Neron vanished from my sight. The evening wind howled as my outfit soaked in the chilly breeze, allowing it to tingle my tired body.

"Huu... looks like he was right. I should rest up a bit..." My smile showed hints of exhaustion and I collapsed to the ground.

>THUMP<

I didn't even feel the impact. My numb body simply went into a brief moment of hibernation. One could question my decision to stay out in the open--unguarded. It wasn't a safe choice.

However, it was certain I wasn't in any form of danger at the moment. I just needed a moment to catch my breath.

'He's gone... in two days, no, I basically have one whole day left. I'll be getting my punishment then, uh?'

There were many ways to wiggle out of this one, so I had to play my cards well. The problem was the 'other party'. Whoever was sent after me, most likely the mastermind himself--or someone closely related--was already in Ainzlak. That much I was certain of.

Everything added up, except the fact that I couldn't predict what would happen next.

'What will his move be? I can't wait to find out...'

He had better pray I wasn't going to survive from whatever scheme he had going since I would be nabbing him right after he played his card.

'Huuu... training, planning, and so many other things. I've gotten quite busy, eh?'

It couldn't be helped, though.

The breeze blew on me for much longer, and the orange sky turned darker. Once I realized that the moon had shown its full splendor, my body limply rose, and I brushed off whatever remnant of dust hung to my outfit.

It took a few seconds for the thought to register that I didn't need to do that. My outfits were enchanted, after all.

"I should get going now." My lips parted and words came out as I stared at the night sky.

I was sure it hadn't reached curfew yet, but... one can't be too sure.

Looking at the brightly lit path before me--illuminated by several magically powered street lamps--I began moving calmly to my destination.

It was time to head to my dorm.

'At this time, there should still be a bunch hanging around, but...'

It didn't matter to me.

For this week, and most likely the next days to come, the path of solitude was the only clear way I could traverse. With so many uncertainties hanging above me... I found myself strained across many sides.

'I just wish these days would elapse quickly...'

More winds howled, the greens danced, the sky grew darker... and I vanished amid the scenery--contemplating as I walked home.

"He has left Ainzlark Academy, uh? Finally..." A voice rang out in the darkness.

It was a completely dark place--like an alternate dimension filled with nothing but black.

There seemed to be multiple individuals in this plane, yet only two were engaged in a conversation.

"So, should we attack now?" A husky, impatient voice surged forth.

It belonged to Kahn--the Shadow Demon that plunged a portion of the Eastern Kingdom into ruin. His eyes narrow as they could see the premises of Ainzlark Academy. The screen he watched displayed the landscape like a magical mirror.

"No. Not yet..." The first voice called out.

While Kahn was raring to go, the other man--the same one who had approached the Demon not long ago--was exercising great caution.

"Why?" Kahn snapped in slight annoyance.

The evil monstrosity glared at the man who stood across from him. Even though they were temporary partners, he still didn't trust the stranger. Was he trying to go back on their deal? Kahn couldn't shake off his unease.

"Relax. I don't plan on changing the plan. It's just that Neron hasn't completely left the area. We must take extra caution to ensure he has a distance of a hundred miles, at least. Only then can we launch an assault."

Kahn's glare loosened a bit.

He kept hearing about the Neron Kaelid man as though he wasn't a mere human. That alone seemed to put the Demon in a wary spot.

"Plus. Even with Neron gone, there are still a lot of strong people in the Academy--myself included. If you attack now, I'll be forced to put you down. I don't want to do that."

The man's voice sounded serious, and the darkness surrounding them twitched.

Neron knew he was in a dangerous spot.

Being trapped in the human's domain meant he would not have an even battle. Perhaps his 'partner' was waiting for a chance to claim his head.

"Sheesh, I've told you several times... I don't have the intention to fight you. You have to kill someone for me, don't you?" The man, who sensed Kahn's slight bloodlust, quickly retorted.

"Why don't you kill him yourself?"

There was an uncomfortable pause in the monochrome room--filled with pitch black darkness.

"Well, that's not your business, now, is it? Just know that I've tried a couple of means already... he just seems to slip out of my grasp. That Jared Leonard is one tricky kid..." There seemed to be a bit of frustration in the man's voice as he spoke.

But that only lasted for a short moment.

"In the end, though, he's still a kid. There's no way someone of his caliber should be able to beat you... right?"

Kahn chuckled a little. The man across from him had just told a bad joke.

"Not a chance."

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Chapter 222: Thorough Preparation

A day passed in the blink of an eye, and a letter arrived in front of my room.

While Saturday was filled with mostly leisurely activities, most students were busy with chores. Since they had messed up their rooms and were carried away by the break we were given, they realized that we would soon resume class.

That meant they had to double down.

It was of no consequence to me, though. Using Spellcraft, I maintained the quality of my room just well. My clothes were enchanted with Magic and were in top condition. All my books and materials were neatly arranged... and my 'research items' were safely stored away in a compartment somewhere.

With that, I spent most of my time getting a feel of what Neron and I discussed—creating a Subcore within my existing Mana Core.

It was difficult, but I got the hang of things quickly. Since I had been able to perceive and control the microscopic Mana Particles within me a few days from my birth, it didn't take long to get a feel of the concept.

But, as expected, it would take a lot of time to complete a single Subcore. It was mostly due to my inexperience.

'Hopefully, it gets easier with time...'

My eyes closed and I spent a great deal of time meditating—circulating my Mana and concentrating on my only White core. It wasn't until after I decided to take a break that I felt a strange presence in front of my door.

'What's that?'

Being adept at sensory Magic, I realized a person had been standing directly at my door front. Well, there was no one there anymore... but something lingered beyond the structure.

Sighing a bit in annoyance, I jumped from my bed and opened my door. That was when I found the letter.

It came from Ainzlark's council and it was simply reminding me about my scheduled meeting with them the next day.

"So, tomorrow at noon, eh?" I sighed.

The venue was stipulated there, as well as strict warnings if I failed to show up. I rolled my eyes as I went over the details. One would think they were overreacting, but considering how I ruined an annual event and brutalized someone with high status, this was only natural.

Of course, this was simply the front my attacker was utilizing against me. Whatever card he wanted to use was tied to this punishment being dished out to me.

I still didn't know why someone would be so persistent with killing me, but I would soon find out—I guessed.

'This has gone beyond some regular noble skirmishes, and it's too organized to be someone with a grudge...'

My adversary was formidable and very intelligent. There had to be a deeper purpose than some shallow reason. Several reasons popped into my mind, but without much to go on, I couldn't rely on any of them.

"This letter is basically your invitation, isn't it? Whatever you're trying to pull... will take place tomorrow, right? Or maybe..."

'Pfft. I'm not an idiot!'

Still, it would be quite the sight to see how things would progress.

'I suppose we'll see soon...'

After my slight moments of contemplation, I burned the letter and resumed my meditation. Making sure not to push myself so hard, I relied on a few potions for balance. Once it was 7:00 PM in the night, I concluded most of what I was about to do.

In preparation for my big day, I had to sleep... no?

I rested my head on my bed and willed myself into unconsciousness.

'I've done all I can... there's no way I'll lose!' With this resolute thought in mind, everything drifted into darkness and I slept off.

It was dark—not the kind of pitch black that existed in an entirely isolated room, no—this was brought about by nighttime.

It was late at night in Ainzlark Academy, past curfew.

The environment was in a lull, and there was not a single soul in sight. Lamp Posts provided light all around the campus, but even they were shining dimly to reflect the atmosphere of the current atmosphere.

The moon was covered in some strange dark clouds, but it was no bother since Ainzlark hardly had to rely on the illumination of the celestial body. Besides, no one required any form of light during this period. Now was the time for rest.

Well, for the students, anyway.

For the staff, though—the Lecturers who taught at the Academy—they were simply getting started.

In a secret hall, usually inaccessible to students, were the men and women who served as the nurturers of students in Ainzlark Academy. This hall was protected by a barrier that made it completely undetectable from the outside. It basically isolated the building from all forms of interruption.

Since this was achieved by high-class Space Magic, no student could hope to fumble their way into the large structure.

Within were senior lecturers, who sat on a higher pedestal than others, as well as the intermediate and lower staff—all of whom were seated like students in the hall.

There was someone else present. He had a special seat allocated to him and took the position of Vice Head of the Academy.

As the current highest in command in the Academy, he had the most prestige allocated to him.

With the room filled with Lecturers, all over—three Senior Lecturers at an elevated point and the others behind them—all facing the Vice Head, the session was about to commence.

"As is trite, we'll be having our Academic Review." The older man addressed everyone who had eyes on him.

The Academic Review occurred once every semester. During every Academic Session, there were two Semesters than ran for Spring and Fall, respectively. The Review was meant to observe the initial phase of each session and determine modes of improvement as well as other factors moving on in the Institute.

Subjects such as tests and examination questions were also discussed in these meetings. Needless to say, it was very crucial and of utmost necessity.

So important, that all the top players of the institute were in the same room...

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Chapter 223: Start Of The Invasion [Pt 1]

"We were supposed to have this meeting tomorrow, as per the norms. However, after considering the opinion of a senior lecturer, I decided to make an exception and allow it for this night."

Usually, the Academic Review occurred a week after the Inter-Class Exchange, or whatever event that went on during that period before the Exchange was invented. However, this time it couldn't be done in that manner.

After all...

"We will also use this as a medium to decide what Penalty to give the young student who interrupted the Exchange."

... Jared Leonard's punishment was tomorrow. One of their goals was to determine what to do with the troublesome lad. As a result, the meeting had to be tonight!

"Any objections?"

No one said anything.

It would be a long session, so they probably wanted to get the troublesome bits out of the way. Besides, anyone would common sense knew it was practically impossible to change the mind of their Vice Head.

"It's a shame one of us, Neron Kaelid, won't be here today. It can't be helped, though..."

Everyone kept silent.

They knew full well that their colleague had a complicated work relationship with Ainzlark Academy which allowed him to be very unconventional in most of his endeavors. Unlike others, he never properly got sanctioned by the higher-ups as well.

Besides, everyone in the room knew—to an extent—the man's identity. He wasn't to be trifled with.

Fortunately, he had been content with teaching the Lower Class First Years. That alone made it a relief for everyone.

"Since there are no objections, we will begin the meeting."

And so, in the Hall cut off from all of Ainzlark Academy, the powerhouses began their meeting... unaware of what was lurking in the darkness.

Unknown to those within the secret confines of their very important meeting... a very terrible storm was brewing...

... And this storm would completely alter Ainzlark Academy as they knew it—Students and Staff alike

Ainzlark Academy, being one of the strongholds in the Eastern Kingdom, had one of the highest amounts of security.

The barrier protecting it contained layers of Advanced Magic. Also, the level of Mana radiating within, for various purposes, made the Academy self-sustaining. There were guards who defended the institute from intruders—not that their services were especially needed.

No fool would dare to invade a powerhouse that contained some of the most powerful figures in the Kingdom. They would simply be signing their death certificates—this was the general view of the public, and they had every right to think that way.

However, an establishment's security is only as good as its information management.

Once the enemy has intel on the inner workings of a place, it becomes easier for it to fall.

"How annoying..." A voice emerged from the darkness.

The barrier around Ainzlark prevented Kahn from infiltrating the Academy from any other angle except the front gate. As a result, he had to take the long approach, entering as though he was a legitimate visitor of the place he was invading.

After taking in a lot of information from the humans, Kahn was well aware of guerrilla tactics and the intelligence of invasion. With him by his lonesome, it would be difficult to seize the Academy... especially if he needed to use such a straightforward approach.

However...

"Don't worry, it'll go along well. The other Lecturers won't disturb you since we're going to be in a meeting." The man who had partnered up with him had said.

Even if Kahn didn't fully trust him, he had to invade while relying on the strange man's intelligence. If what he said was right, then all he had to do was take care of the small fry guards that blocked the major areas he needed to pass through.

Kahn was aware that their meeting would take very long, but that didn't mean he had to as well.

"I'll end this quickly..."

He would simply finish the job, retrieve the information and treasure he needed from Ainzlark, and return to his home—the Demon Realm.

"Let's go!"

In a blur, the Shadow Demon charged at the grand entrance of Ainzlark Academy—blending into the darkness.

His movements barely made any sound. It was swift and masterful, as a shadow that traversed an area. In quick lashes, before the unsuspecting guards could even react, Kahn lunged his limbs at them, impaling the guards with the sharpened claws proceeding from them.

The guards, taken by complete surprise, seemed to scream, but their voices didn't reach even their ears. They were forcefully silenced by Kahn's Magic, and as if that wasn't enough, Kahn completely absorbed them into his shadow, dissolving the human bodies within himself.

Once he was done with this role, he ventured into the Academy.

The gates were locked, but that proved no problem for someone like him.

Looking at the smallest gaps in the gates, Kahn slipped into the Academic walls, arriving at a grand compound comprised of several buildings. It was a beautiful sight to behold, but the Demon didn't have the time to gawk. He had a mission to fulfill!

'According to him... this isn't the true Academic grounds...' The darkened creature reasoned, following his accomplice's description to spot the actual location of the true Ainzlark Academy.

Making his way through several buildings, undetected by the guards on patrol, he charged for one that seemed to ascend high into the night sky. Within were no small amount of people, as well as defensive Magic.

Kahn was confident in his stealth abilities, but since the defense was very thick, he realized that fighting was the only option.

And so, he sharpened his claws and coated his body with the evil Mana of Demons—Miasma. Upon enhancing himself, he charged at the guards stationed at the front of the building, butchering them before they could make a sound.

Blood spurted in the air, staining the floor and walls. A great amount of the red liquid flew in the Demon's direction, but was quickly evaporated by Kahn's Miasma, allowing none to even touch him.

The dark being opened the doors of the building, gaining access within.

He saw several other humans who had yet to notice him. It was only a matter of time, though. So, he brandished his arms, ready to resume the slaughter.

"How bothersome..."

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Chapter 224: Start Of The Invasion [Pt 2]

It didn't take very long for Kahn to see a portal leading to what seemed like another dimension within the building.

After slaughtering his way inside, he finally arrived at the room he needed to use in gaining access to the true campus.

The distortion before him twirled and swirled, emitting a purplish-blue glow.

Kahn felt like he would get sucked into it if he moved any closer, so he simply maintained his distance. This was it!

Beyond this portal was Ainzlark Academy!

What lay beyond there could either be a trap or the genuine thing.

"Shadow..."

In a whoosh, Kahn seemed to divide, and a copy of himself tore from the main body. There now existed two Kahns, though their physique told of the difference between the two.

This duplicate had shorter horn-like ears. No spikes protruded from its shoulders either. It had a less menacing presence, and was also shorter than the original.

"Go. Observe."

Immediately responding to his instructions, the Shadow minion lunged toward the portal and vanished within it.

Kahn watched the distortion swallow a vestige of himself, and then used his link to that vestige to observe what was happening on the other side. He closed his eyes, and his sight was opened in another place.

He saw whatever his minion saw. It was indeed true! Beyond the swirling portal was their goal!

'Good...'

With that in mind, Kahn returned to his original senses and opened his eyes to see the warbling rift in front of him.

He wasted no time stepping forward and entering the portal, feeling as space warped around him and his senses became distorted. He didn't panic, though.

In a moment, the Demon appeared on the vast plains within the Academy.

"Haa..." Kahn sniffed the clear air within Ainzlark Academy.

The night breeze was wonderful, and the pleasant scent of nature made even the creature of evil satisfied. He raised both arms, as though welcoming a hug, and grinned to himself.

"This... is it, ah?"

Kahn's white eyes witnessed the beauty of the place he was about to sully. Soon, it would be coated in darkness and fear, but the Demon couldn't care less. No... perhaps he felt some form of excitement—something welling up within him.

"I can't wait..."

Slits formed on his darkened face, revealing his sharpened black teeth as he smiled widely.

His other minion stood behind him, but not long after, several others appeared.

Darkness surrounded the plains, and many Kahns could be seen touching the grass. Many Shadow Demons, all led by their general. Kahn stood, having so many versions of himself ready for a siege—A One-Man Army!

"Let us do this. Today... we shall strike the first blow to the human race!"

An image appeared in Kahn's mind—no, two did.

One was of the few humans he actually acknowledged, and the pact he made with them. But, that was so long ago. Besides, humans were already a threat to his race! He didn't care about those words any longer.

Then the second was the boy he was after. He had ingrained his picture in his head. There was no way he would forget his prey.

There were several ways to kill the brat, but he had to go according to plan, and that was...

"I'll simply make him come to me. Now..."

His minions readied themselves, awaiting command.

"Wreak havoc and chaos! Let the carnage begin!"

>WHOOOOOSSSHHHH<

In an instant, they vanished in the darkness, headed for their respective areas. Their black gaiters could barely be illuminated by the moonlight, yet they raced like sniveling rats, hoping for their share of despair.

Kahn watched as he also began heading in a different direction.

'I'm only meant to kill one of them, but... why leave the rest alive?'

They would only be nuisances in the future.

He had several targets.

The monument, the library, the sacred area, the dorms, etc.

By attacking several areas at once, no one would be able to fully understand what he was after—at least, not until it was too late.

Kahn's destination was the most pivotal area—one which was indispensable to the operation. It was both an area of advantage and that of weakness.

He couldn't leave that task to anyone but himself. Besides, according to the words of the strange human shrouded in darkness... his prey was going to make his way there.

"I'll be waiting, Jared Leonard..."

With this, Kahn vanished into the darkness as well.

>WHOOSH<

I swiftly rose from my bed, sitting upright in an instant.

'Something isn't right...'

My dark room was as it should have been, and while my vision was a little impaired, none of my senses were. I had prepared for this night since I realized the plan of my opponent.

"He's going to use the Penalty as a distraction for me, but in actuality, he'll strike sooner. It has to be tonight!"

My eyes darted at the clock, and it was around 11:00 PM. It was the perfect time to act, at least close to it. Why wasn't anyone coming?

I had set lots of traps across my room and even prepared my cards well. Yet... what was going on? No one was coming. I couldn't even sense anyone approaching my room at all.

It was perplexing.

"Did I read too much into their action? Is the penalty really it? No..."

I was certain my opponent was smarter than that.

But, maybe I was miscalculating...

Maybe...

...

My eyes bulged as I felt something creep up my spine.

I had been worried that I sensed no presence earlier, but now I could feel something approaching. No, that wasn't quite an apt description. It wasn't just one. They were several... and judging by their movement patterns, it didn't seem like their target was me.

It was at this moment that my eyes widened—almost to the point of being bloodshot.

I WAS WRONG!

I had thought the opponent would attack me in my comfort zone, trying another assassination or something close... but to think they would use this tactic! It was a bold move, but considering who I was up against, I couldn't rule out the possibility!

"They're trying to force my hand..."

This was no longer a battle on my turf! The enemy was luring me out, and I had no choice but to respond. I could feel the presence around me increase. They were dark and sinister... filled with bloodlust and malevolence.

If they were this much and this powerful, then that could only mean one thing.

I wasn't the only one they were after!

'This dorm... is surrounded! We're hostages!'

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Chapter 225: Infiltration

My breathing was uneven as perspiration trailed down my face.

I shivered as I felt the menacing beings creep around the building I was in. Their movements were uncoordinated, not befitting professionals. However, the killing intent they had far surpassed any I had ever encountered in this life.

It was almost as if they weren't human!

'Shit, what's this?!'

I made a blunder.

I had thought the enemy sought to ambush me, but who would have expected him to prepare such an elaborate scheme? At this rate, the other students were going to get caught up in this mess.

"Wha—!!!" I quickly sprang to my feet upon realizing that our dorm had been breached.

I sensed three of the evil presences inside the building. They were still on the ground floor, but it was only a matter of time before they made it up.

'The Dorm Master's quarters should be situated downstairs...' I reasoned, wondering if the usually lackadaisical man had noticed the presence of whatever evil crept below.

I didn't have time to waste... if I didn't act now, then...

Glancing across the room, I spotted all the necessary things I needed to take. I wasn't confident in my current abilities, and the fact that I couldn't foresee this event made me even less certain that fighting was the right choice. However, it was already too late to retreat!

"I can only move forward!" Gritting my teeth, I prepared myself and frantically prepared my resources.

My traps were wasted.

My elaborate plans were ruined.

All that was left... was my ability to compensate.

>BOOOOOMMM!!!<

I heard a large sound emanate from the ground floor. The force of whatever impacted was enough to shake the whole building. I nearly fell as a result of the tremors—but after using my Mana effectively, I regained my perfect form and prepared desperately.

Since my attention was divided, I couldn't completely tell, but a fierce fight was going on downstairs. It was most likely between the group that had entered the dorm and the staff responsible for our building.

I didn't particularly like him, but since his strength was real—at the very least, up to the standard of a Mage—I tolerated the man.

Even if the enemies were strong, surely, he could buy a few minutes... right?

'Shit... damnit!'

My senses picked up more enemies. The ones who had swarmed the building began converging at the point where the loud sound originated from. I heard the howls of the wind and felt more evil auras emanating from beneath me.

It all happened too fast!

More explosions erupted, and for a few seconds, the entire dorm shook violently—almost as if it would collapse.

Finally, the commotion ceased, replaced by a temporary dead calm that seemed to pierce my very soul. If I was naïve, perhaps my mind would have concluded that our Dorm Master had won. However, I still sense the strong presence of the enemies. They seemed to be increasing in power and numbers.

"Ahhhhh!!!"

"What the hell?!"

"What the heck is going on downstairs?"

"Should I check it out?"

"The Dorm Master will handle it, right?"

"What if something really dangerous is going on?"

"I actually feel something scary."

"I should just stay in my rooms... just in case."

I began hearing the several grumbings of the students in their respective rooms. Usually, the building walls were soundproof, so no matter what a student did within their rooms couldn't be leaked out. For me to hear sounds must have meant that they were opening their doors, most likely to sneak a peek outside.

After feeling such a terrible quake, it was no surprise. Some of the braver students were most likely going to check it out. But...

'None of you should move!' I gritted my teeth as I finished my preparations.

>Bam!<

I flung open the door of my room and darted across the dark hallway.

The dimness around me was no problem since all my senses were currently heightened. My elevated body made its way downstairs as I jumped down the stairs in a hurry. One of the figures was already in the hallway of the first floor. I had to corner it... fast!

>FWOOOSSHAAA!!!<

My lightweight body glided through the air easily, thanks to my enchanted outfit.

Fortunately, I was fast enough to block its path, just before it could reach any door in the vast hallway. My body trembling slightly, and my eyes fixed on the opponent, I prepared myself to give it all I had no matter the identity of the enemy... until it registered to me!

The figure appearing before my eyes... I couldn't believe it!

"S-shadow Demon?! How?!"

However, before I could even question the existence of this creature, it launched several parts of his shadow-like body, creating multiple spears to impale me.

My eyes bulged and I forced myself to recover from the shock. Willing my body to move, I was fast enough to evade the multiple strikes even though the Demon caught me by surprise.

I leaped back, creating some distance between us, but the monster sharply took the initiative and dived at me, wilding both arms as though they were sharpened claws. Its face cracked to form a malevolent smile, and its darkened body blended with the darkness.

It truly was the kind of Demon I remembered!

Multiple questions appeared in my head, but I temporarily locked them all away. Now was not the time to dwell on the 'whys' and 'hows'. I had to fight! I had to win!

That was all that currently mattered!

>WHOOOSSHHH<

I strengthened my body once more and dived headfirst into the approaching Demon.

It seemed to delight in my recklessness and brought forth several spikes around his body to impale me from all sides. The sharp, black needles lunged at me with devastating speed.

I didn't falter in my motion, though. Using Spellcraft, I created several barriers to block each and every one of the spears that were about to assail me—focusing on the enemy in my line of sight.

"Die, monster!"

I extended my hand and touched it with my Mana-coated hand.

>SHIIIIINNNNGGGG<

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Chapter 226: Fighting Demons [Pt 1]

Bright blue light shone from within the monster, causing its body to jerk violently.

Its sturdy, shadowlike body began to spasm and change form incessantly. I watched as the sharp spears lost their luster and simply became dull, shapeless blobs. The blobs hardened as light traveled through the Shadow Demon's body and began to leak all around the monster's body.

The blackness of the Demon's body turned ashen and it began to crumble apart. At this point, the creature looked bloated and rigid, like an overgrown statue, ready to burst.

>BOOOOMMM!!!<

The Demon died—rather, it exploded—turning into particles of dust and smoke.

I watched as the grey remains of the monster I slew fall on the ground, looking around me to see no semblance of it anywhere... though I sensed the presence of two more climbing the stairs.

>CREAKKK<

Doors opened and I noticed that students were watching me with various expressions; surprise, fear, and curiosity. I didn't have the time to attend to all of them since I was about to encounter more enemies. Clicking my tongue as I prepared for the next bombardment, I glared at the few I noticed poking their heads.

"SHUT YOUR DOORS AND STAY INDOORS!"

My scream resembled a battle cry, and I stormed forward—charging at the two Shadow Demons who had gotten wind of my presence for sure.

>SWOOOOOSSSHHHH<

I created a blade of light, ensuring I condensed it with enough light and pure manner, allowing me to slice through the several dark spears that came my way.

>SWISH<

>WHOOOOSHHH<

My steps quickened as my flow became more fluid. My body gradually became accustomed to their patterns and the speed within me acclimated. Little beads of sweat appeared on my face, but it was due to the worrisome thoughts going on in my head, not for lack of confidence.

'If it's just these... I can win!'

I brandished my blade of light on one hand and prepared a great deal of Mana on my second.

The two Shadow Demons appeared flustered by my closeness and began generating several more shadow spikes. This time, they were like projectiles—bullets—flying my way.

I couldn't evade them all, not with the way I currently was.

The only way out was through!

My brain went to work and my expert control over Mana manifested. Instantly, a powerful shield formed around me. Usually, regular barriers would do very little to stop Shadow Demons, however... I infused quite a deal of Mana into it, plus the density could not be compared to regular barriers.

As a result, it was watertight!

>CLANGANGANG<

Sounds like deflected metal echoed across the hallway/stairs as their hardened bullets failed to infiltrate my defenses.

I raised my blade and prepared my slash. With my eyes already focused on the two, and my distance closed, I went for the kill.

The Demons, not even caring for their lives, lunged the last of their attacks—their claws and aimed to kill me.

>SKRRRRRIIIIIII<

Noise akin to grating metal sounded as neither attack had enough luster to reach me.

>SWOOOSHAAA<

>WHUUMM<

I used my blade of light to instantly cut through one of my enemies while lunging my fist at the other. The exploding light that emanated from both caused them to explode into dust, same as the last one I killed.

'That makes three!'

I had several questions and my confusion intensified, but it still wasn't time to give them any attention. I could still sense more enemies downstairs, after all.

I would be entering a den of enemies, there was no way I could be burdened by my thoughts... or worries!

"Hey!" I shouted, darting my vision at a student who was peeping at my battle the whole time—despite my warnings.

"Eeek!" He let out a weak squeak.

I saw in his eyes the dim spark that belonged only to weaklings who had too much curiosity. People like him were bound to die easily!

"Go knock on all the doors in this hallway and give everyone my message!" I addressed him with an urgent tone and nearly bloodshot eyes.

He nodded, both in terror and a form of excitement.

'He's crazy!' My mind rang.

But that made the guy perfect for this job.

"Tell them we're under attack. Make sure to let everyone know that none of them are safe! Go to the topmost floor, the one that belongs to the Elite Ten! Stay there and keep safe." I barked, making sure my focus didn't waver from the enemies that were fast approaching.

The Elite Ten who occupied the topmost floors... they were cowards, but still more powerful than the other students here. If they were to go there, I could at least be at ease about their safety and focus more on the Demons that sought destruction.

Besides, I knew Jerry—one of the Elites—would do his best to protect everyone. Once I was done with the mess downstairs, I would go to check how they were faring.

This was the best I could do... given the circumstances.

"Go! Do it now!" I shouted at the hesitant boy.

"A-ah, okay!" He got out of his room and dashed toward a nearby door to knock.

That was the last I saw of him—or even thought of him—before focusing on the ones who would preoccupy my entire being until they were dead.

"Rahhhh!!!"

I yelled, ensuring their attention would be drawn to me, and only me.

The Shadow Demons—who were already ascending the stairs—saw me charging at them and took defensive stances.

Seeing as their numbers were easily over ten, I couldn't afford to even let up for even a moment. I was at a major disadvantage, my mind was rattled, they had the initiative... I could go on about how unfair this was.

The only thing I had to balance things out was knowledge!

Shadow Demons had high resistance to physical attacks, but were weaker to Magic. Their major weakness among the elemental attributes was light. However, pure Mana-based attacks also worked perfectly fine.

Armed with extensive knowledge and experience, I could somehow manage against them, but... I still felt something was off.

No matter, all that mattered now was to kill my enemies... before they killed me!

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

Chapter 227: Fighting Demons [Pt 2]

Shadow Demons are one of the six tribes of the Demon race.

They possess bodies that allow them to phase through physical matter and also increase their density to bolster defense. Using their bodies as the ultimate weapon, no other Demon tribe boasts versatility as much as they.

They also possess resistance to physical attacks and can bypass normal defenses by exploiting the smallest gaps. As a result, even stronger opponents end up losing to them.

Well, at least back in my days.

The war against the Demons was a harsh one that claimed many lives. We couldn't continue down that path, which is why we settled for a peace treaty.

Of course, things weren't so simple. Humans would never allow the threat of the Demon scourge to persist, and the Demons couldn't ignore the threat humans posed to their race.

Ultimately, the Hero Party—of which I was a member—made a deal with the so-called Devils. The pact satisfied both parties, and we were ultimately satisfied with the results.

The Demons withdrew their forces, and the humans were convinced that their race was wiped out—or nearly.

Humans didn't pay much mind to the Demons and would eventually treat them as fairy tales. As a result, the fear that fueled the war was quelled. Lewis Griffith—me at the time—was the one who proposed this treaty, seeing as there was no other way to end things without resulting in a major loss on both sides.

It was a risky venture, especially considering that the Demons could betray them. Of course, there were countermeasures put in place in case that happened, but... the Great Sage—I—felt the Demons wouldn't betray the pact.

The results were satisfactory... and the world enjoyed peace for over five hundred years.

Even when I reincarnated, I was happy to find out that Demons were no more than fairy tales and vestiges of history. I was grateful for both sides, relieved that the plan went well even after everyone's death.

That was why I was so surprised to see a Shadow Demon!

What are they doing here?

What of the pact?

Why now?

Are my enemies the demons?

Did they find out I reincarnated?

But, then that would mean...

What is going on?!

My mind was in disarray as multiple thoughts surged in my mind.

In the end, these thoughts would only hinder me in my fight, so I sealed them away.

I was initially hesitant to slay the first Shadow Demon I came across, especially since it reminded me of an old acquaintance—a very troublesome one. However, considering the circumstances; the fact that many of them surrounded the dorm in a siege, they killed the Dorm Master, and leaked out such bloodlust; I had no choice but to steel my resolve and go in for the kill.

They betrayed us first; I didn't do anything wrong.

No, it was too soon to conclude that the entire Demon race was in on this. I only saw Shadow Demons, and a few of them for that matter—compared to their actual numbers.

It could be that a few had gone rogue; that was actually more plausible.

I could suspect a few who could pull that off... like Kahn, the Demon Lord at the time. But, he was too loyal to the Demon King to betray the pact. His loyalty was what bred his hate for humans, to begin with, so I couldn't really suspect him.

Then what was the matter? Did something happen to the Demon King? Did the humans do something first? Was this the reason Neron left Ainzlark?

So many inquisitions, no time to answer them.

My subconscious swirled around these thoughts as I brandished my blade of light and slew my opponents.

>SWOOOSHHH!!!<

Against me, the Demons were no match!

Not only was I experienced in their moves, but I also knew their weaknesses, so it was easy to dispatch them. Fortunately, these were only clones. I didn't sense any form of intelligence from them, which was why I didn't attempt to converse while fighting.

>WHOOOOSHHHH<

I sped across the room and faced off the final opponent, impatiently cleaving through its body with an intense light-attributed stroke.

It shrieked in pain and I plunged in for the finishing stroke.

>BOOOOOMMM!!!<

It exploded into particles of dust, causing me to resume my internal deliberation.

Clones of this level meant that my actual opponent was a powerful Demon. Was it a Captain? I certainly hoped it wasn't a General!

The image of my enemy flashed in my head. He was a Senior Lecturer within Ainzlark, and now that I began seeking a rational explanation, I was beginning to see the light.

Was it possible that 'he' was a Demon in disguise? It would make sense that he commanded these Shadow Demons.

But, going this far would mean he was risking his position in Ainzlark. Was it just for me, or did he have another objective? I wasn't so conceited as to believe the former so I went with the latter.

There was certainly something bigger in the works here.

But, that also led me to another conundrum.

Shadow Demons were impressive in many areas, but intelligence wasn't one of them.

My opponent was a brilliant strategist; there was absolutely no way Shadow Demons could be responsible for that, especially if I used someone like Kahn as a standard.

They were too dense and inflexible—a sharp contrast to the nature of their bodies.

'Then what the heck is going on here? An alliance?' That made more sense, but more questions popped up.

I had gotten rid of the Demons within the vicinity, but my mind wasn't set at ease. Something this grave was bound to be more elaborate. I suspected that things weren't over—not by a long shot.

'I'm currently lacking in information...'

Using that as my objective, I quickly took the initiative this time.

"[Spy Automaton Creation: Basic]"

A creature formed as a Magic Circle appeared in the air, just a few meters from me.

It was like a one-eyed bat, having red eyes.

"[Concealment]" I cast an Intermediate stealth Spell on it, causing the construct to turn invisible.

I nodded satisfactorily. This would do, for now. Given the situation, nothing was more optimal.

"Go. Scour the area..."

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

Chapter 228: Careful Consideration

Automatons could function without the need to control them remotely, which is why I chose one to scour the area for me.

I watched the invisible bat fly out of one of the openings a Shadow Demon probably made when infiltrating this building.

Of course, since my eyes—no, my whole body too—were enhanced with Magic, I could make out the automaton's soaring form.

It was made using Earth Magic, making it quite sturdy, but since it was a basic summon, I didn't expect much in the department of offense and durability.

It was mostly for spying, after all. That was why I even cast a cloaking spell on it.

I needed to figure out what was going on. Hopefully, my Spell and the darkness served as a good cover for my little Automaton.

'I'm happy I learned that Spell...'

Thanks to my interest in a lot of fields, I ended up diversifying and learning lots of things in various areas. Automaton creation was one of them. The field would be considered very difficult to master, especially for someone my age—and they would be right.

Fortunately, my past knowledge gave me an edge since I had quite the knowledge and experience handling Golems and their designs.

'Automatons are simply modern upgrades to the Golems...'

It was still difficult, so I could only reach the Basic Level. But, this much was plenty for me. After all, there were tons of other fields that required my notice.

"That's enough of that..." I whispered, slightly chastising myself for getting carried away in my thoughts.

I looked at the floor, a distance from me, and saw a human lying in his pool of blood. I recognized that face well. It was the Dorm Master.

He had been impaled in many areas, bleeding out of so many openings in his body. His blood had turned dark thanks to the lack of oxygen in them, and I could smell the gore from my distance.

Many would consider the sight sickening, but I only found it sad—a vestige of some memories I would very much like to forget.

My eyes left the dead man and trailed to the flight of stairs that hung before me.

With the immediate threat extinguished, it was best to check out how the other students were faring. It would take some time before the Automaton completed its mission.

It was a bother. I sincerely wished none of the students were here with me. That way, I could act more proactively, but...

"JAREEEEDDDD!!!" I heard a couple of voices call after me.

My ears prickled, and I sharply tilted my head upward to see three people rushing down the stairs. My eyes widened as I recognized them immediately.

Edward, Jerry... and that kid that was peeping through the door back then—the one I gave the mission to.

'For them to be here, that means everyone is probably safe...'

"You guys..." I made to speak but was assailed by their torrents of questions.

"Jared, what's going on?"

"The tremors, what caused it?"

"I-I completed the mission!"

The three boys finally finished descending the stairs and presented themselves before me, expecting my response.

I simply sighed and cast a sidelong glance at the corner of the room where our Dorm Master drowned in his blood. The boys followed by gaze, and a few seconds after.

"Bleughh!"

The weakling vomited, and soon after, Jerry and Edward both made sick expressions. The gore seemed to overwhelm them, so much so that they glanced at me with surprise that I was unfazed by the sight.

"When I descended, he was like that." I calmly retorted, hoping they didn't have any funny thoughts and maybe suspected me of killing the man.

"W-who... what could have done this?"

"Urh, this is so..."

"Blueughhhhhh!!!"

I grew a bit irritated by the vomit the other boy kept splurging, even more than the corpse within my line of sight.

"I'm not sure what they are, but... I will soon find out. How about everyone? How are they?" I asked with concern.

"A-ah, they're safely tucked upstairs. The other Elites are guarding them."

I gave a dubious look at Jerry the moment he uttered his last statement, causing him to look a bit nervous. He soon felt like correcting himself, but I raised my hand to stop him before he could say any more.

Anyone who watched would have been surprised if they knew who the senior one among us was. In any case, Jerry kept quiet, allowing me to give a deep sigh.

"I can't assess the situation properly currently. I sent an Automaton to check our vicinity. It should be done in a few minutes. In any case, we should prepare for the worst."

My voice sounded grave, obviously frightening the two. I was sure the little vomiter had told them what he saw when he peeped—how the enemy wasn't human. I allowed their imagination to run wild a little.

"W-what's the worst?" Jerry was the first to speak, clearly trying to stay calm.

Was it his pride as a senior, or... did he really feel he could handle it?

"An invasion. The whole Academy could be infested with the enemy. I killed about thirteen just now, but judging from my calculations, they should be close to a hundred." I murmured.

The duo before me appeared fazed.

I wondered what was more surprising to them—the numbers of the foes we had to defeat, or the fact that I casually mentioned killing. There were no bodies around, though—well, other than that of a hero we died fending off the enemy... probably.

That should have at least told them our opponents weren't human.

Besides, if they didn't believe me, they simply had to wait until my soy returned. If it didn't show up after a few minutes, I would have to assume it was destroyed; then we were going to prepare for the worst.

It was an automaton, so it could function on its own, plus I didn't have the luxury of attaching my Mana to it. There were too many variables to consider.

"For now, let's go check on everyone. I should fill you guys in now, but I'll wait until I get to address you all."

It would be a pain explaining things twice.

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

Chapter 229: Worst Outcome

After defeating the Shadow Demons and encountering a few acquaintances, I decided to climb the stairs and head for the last floor—where everyone else took refuge.

Upon getting to the large hallway, I was met with the gazes of several students. They were well over a hundred, and murmurs flowed among them. Of course, the volume of their disgruntled tone drastically reduced the moment they saw me.

'Sigh, let's get this over with...'

Now practically surrounded by curious, frightful students, I calmed their nerves and decided to explain a few things to them.

"WHAAAAAATTTT?!"

To put things into summary, the students instantly flipped once I told them the identity of our assaulters.

They simply couldn't believe that Demons—the stuff of fairy tales and legends—were actually real... and that they were attacking. Many students gave me suspicious glares, most likely conceiving whatever notion suited their heads best.

I was less concerned, though.

More important things occupied my brain.

'Why are the Demons here? How large is the scale of their attack?'

As though answering my voiceless query, the automaton I sent returned. Since I had already programmed it to search for my Mana signature within the building, it easily found me on the last floor, flapping its invisible wings.

The crowd of Lower-Class students surrounding me didn't even notice when the Automaton arrived. Since my concealment Spell was still active on the bat-like construct, that made sense.

"Undo."

Instantly, the invisibility wore off, and the little flying thing appeared in front of everyone.

"ARHHHHHH!!!" Shrieks of fear rang throughout the room.

I glared at the crowd, causing them to instantly zip up their lips.

'One of the perks of being feared, I guess...'

It would have been a pain to try convincing them, but after seeing my performance in the Exchange, it was pretty evident that I was the strongest guy around. They must have also noticed how merciless I could be.

Fear proved to be a good incentive to make them behave.

"This is my Automaton. I had it scour the area to better understand the situation." I explained, hoping they would at least calm some of their nerves.

'This is why I don't like relating with these guys... I'm like a babysitter now...'

"In any case, it has no attack or defensive function, but it is capable of far-ranged image and sound detection. There's a storage compartment within as well, so it stores all it perceives inside—like a brain or a memory cube."

I was painstakingly explaining these things to them so they wouldn't question the validity of whatever they were about to see. I certainly hoped it wouldn't be much.

I sincerely prayed I was overreacting.

"No, then, all I have to do is use Magic to extract the image and audio, use Sound and Light Magic to display whatever the Automaton saw."

I reached out to the flapping thing and poured my Magic into it. It was a complicated thing, using specialized Magic like Light and Sound, and normally it would be impossible to use two at the same time.

My multiple cores solved that, so as soon as my Magic infusion was complete, the eyes of the bat shone brightly, becoming a projector that displayed some sort of window panel in front of everyone—myself included.

"This is it, uh? Let's see what you found out."

And so, the sound and image played right before our eyes.

"N-no way..."

"T-that's i-impossible, right?"

"Demons... there are actually demons!?!"

"What do we do? Argh! Shit!"

"This is bad! Are we going to die?!"

Reactions sparked as the projected sight was displayed for all to see.

I was silent throughout, but my inner self was in a panic. I didn't want to believe it, but things were very bad!

Shadow Demons had swarmed the entire Academy!

They not only took over all the public infrastructures like the library, classrooms, and other important spots, but they also went after the Dorms.

Other than this one, there were five others. Two belonged to the Middle class and Upper-class boys, and the remaining three were for the girls. The Demons that converged on their location were incredibly more than those that showed up here. Perhaps they judged the level of importance based on how glamorous or shabby each structure was.

It could be Mana concentration as well.

"Shit, damn it..." I whispered under my breath.

This was the worst-case scenario!

"W-where are the teachers?!"

"Shouldn't the guards be patrolling as well?"

"D-don't tell me... all of them were killed?!"

"Where the hell are they? We can't fight those things!"

Clamors continued, and I furrowed my brow.

'Good question... where are the teachers?'

Of course, I had some idea what the answer to their queries was. If my suspect was truly the one behind this assault, it wouldn't be difficult for him to keep the teachers occupied—or at least distracted—while this tragedy occurred.

'It looks like this is an alliance between the Demons and that guy. Maybe the Shadow Demons want something else... which explains their uncoordinated behavior. But this chaos is very dangerous and widespread. There's no way I can ignore it.'

I was caught between a rock and a hard place—save my life and abandon others, or try to quell this whole mess even if it meant playing into the enemy's hands.

'He's going to use this chance to kill me...'

It was dangerous, risky, and terribly inefficient. However...

'I'm not abandoning you guys!' My eyes were focused on Edward and Jerry.

There were very few people I cared about in Ainzlark, and it would be terrible if they lost their lives this early. In the face of calamity—especially one as intense as this—there were bound to be casualties.

I had to ensure it was kept to a minimum.

'These guys are the future of the Kingdom. If the Demon Race is truly behind this, we can't afford to lose the lives of promising youths.'

I didn't want to be burdened by anyone, but this was probably the best route to take.

"We're evacuating!" I said to everyone present.

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

Chapter 230: Stealthy Advance

They all looked at me like I was crazy. No one had any intention of budging an inch from their location. At least Demons weren't here... yet.

But even that was only a matter of time.

"Those who want to remain can choose that option—I don't need useless worms with me, after all..." I said, staring at everyone intensely.

"A word of warning, though. If you remain in this building... you'll die!"

My tone was firm, hinting finality.

"I can guarantee that," I muttered, turning my back on everyone as I began moving toward the stairs.

I felt no footsteps behind me. Only the rattling of flesh and the trembling associated with terror made their way to my ears. I sensed great unease and fear build up, but I didn't halt my movement until I reached the start of the stairs.

"So, who's coming?"

Everyone trailed behind me in a row of three, having straight files arranged behind one another. It was a coordinated formation, one that allowed for an orderly evacuation.

Silence pervaded our group as we stepped out of the Dorm compound, making our way to the first destination—the Middle-Class Dorms.

The reasons for that were simple.

Firstly, thinking based on short-term logic, it was probably smarter to remain in the Dorm. Sure, more Shadow Demons could come our way, but I could still somehow fend them off. The problem with that, however, was that other students would suffer casualties.

There were a few I was certain would be fine. Students like Kuzon and Ciara didn't need my worry. Others like Stefan had what it took to fight, but without the proper knowledge of their weaknesses, it would be very difficult for them to come out victorious.

After the war with the Demons, we didn't publicize the weak points of their race. That was one of the terms we had to agree with... for peace.

Did I make the wrong choice then? No, I didn't! The fact that no incident occurred for over five hundred years since my death proved that the method was effective. Something else was in the works here... and I planned on figuring it out.

In any case, the best shot we had in driving out the Demons and ensuring our collective safety was to gather as a bigger group and form a coalition. Sure, it made us easier targets, but Magic Users were more powerful when forming teams.

Besides, if we put up enough resistance, it could disrupt whatever objective they had in mind.

'My goal is to completely eradicate these guys!'

I couldn't let them roam around this Academy! Plus, it was imperative to find the mastermind behind the chaos. Sure, Demonic Mana wasn't infinite, but if we kept defeating these mere clones, we wouldn't be able to solve the root problems.

Fortunately, the clones were weak, so the summoner couldn't be very strong. My concern was their numbers... there were too many of them!

'It makes me wonder if there is only one commander in charge here...'

In any case, I sent out two Automatons to scour the area before us. One would cover our front, and the other would focus on the rear. I ensured they stayed within a particular range from me, and also connected my Magic to them both.

Two windows appeared in front of me, displaying the scenery my Automaton Bats were viewing. Using them as surveillance, I could determine the optimal path to take and also notice any enemy ambush coming from the rear.

Of course, I was also using detection Magic, and my enhancements were activated.

'I'll prefer avoiding combat as much as possible, but we can't be slow as well. The more time is wasted, the more lives could be lost among the students.

No Middle-Class Student could defeat a Shadow Demon... at least none that I knew of. The Elites could manage, but without knowing their weaknesses, it would be very difficult. I had to hurry!

My eyes suddenly bulged as I saw several Shadow Demons approaching our location. They were similar to the ones I fought—no, identical! That meant it wouldn't be too much of a problem.

"Keep moving!" I commanded the students while leaving the group to quickly intercept the enemies.

It would be disadvantageous fighting them if I was surrounded by civilians.

"I-I can help too!"

"Let me join in as well!"

Edward and Jerry offered with all their might, but I quickly shot them a dark glare, telling them to obey my instructions.

"NO!"

With my firm and slightly hostile tone, I dashed away at full speed.

>WHOOOSSSHHH<

Some would consider my actions insensitive, but it was far from it. This wasn't training. It wasn't a game. It wasn't a contest either.

This was a real battle!

And they couldn't handle it... at least not yet.

'Any little error will lead to a series of mistakes, and the whole thing could be ruined. I can't allow that!'

That meant I had to fight alone, at least until we secured our first landmark.

Mana sparked in my hands as I created a blade of light.

>SWOOOOSHHHH<

Plunging into the group, I used a vanishing stride, focusing on speed, to quickly lope off the limbs of my adversaries before they could react. They must not have expected such skill from someone like me since I heard shrieks of surprise.

Before they could do any more, though, I tightened my muscles and tore through their dark bodies, turning them to dust.

The moment I did so, the light sword in my hand vanished. Since it stood out so much, having the bright blade active for too long would only lead to a disadvantage.

The Lower-Class Students were cloaked with a Spell—my Spell—but it wasn't too difficult finding them. After rejoining the group, I took the lead, and we kept up our pace; moving as fast as the camouflage could allow.

I used an Intermediate Spell to hide them since an Advanced Spell would be a hassle. Intermediate Level was enough for our current enemies, plus I also had surveillance around. It would suffice.

If it came down to it, I would use SPELLCRAFT to camouflage all of us, but it was best to save that for when we needed it.

We cleared several hurdles; I slew more enemies, and finally... it came into view!

"I can see it, the Middle-Class Dorm!"