

SPELLCRAFT 23

Chapter 23

"It's a good thing you've learnt your lesson, Jared. I'm so proud of you, by the way. That spell of yours... it was... amazing..." My mother slurred, finally giving in to her exhaustion.

Her eyes closed and she fell asleep. My tears which had ceased, flowed once again. Somehow, what she said made me genuinely happy.

'Mother Anabelle, even though I'm an old man and this makes things a little awkward for me... you're such a great woman!' I wept internally.

The servants that held onto her, made sure to support my unconscious mother's weight and carried her away from us, taking her to her chambers.

They nodded respectfully at us, and Alphonse gave them a wave of approval, dismissing them to do the needful.

'But, he's injured too!'

"A-Alphonse, your shoulder is-"

He raised a finger, interrupting my protest. Shaking his head, he gave me a stern look, once again meaning business. I felt a resolute expression emanate from my tutor's demeanor.

"Jared. Indeed you surpassed my expectations today, and it's no secret to say you won the bet." He began, kneeling down to meet my gaze at an even level.

Even though I felt bad for the damage and destruction I had caused, as well as the harm I brought unto every one, Alphonse's praises felt good.

"But, as your master, I'll have to tell you this. No matter how much magic you eventually possess, or the heights you reach in the art, without anyone by your side to share it with you... it's naught but a vain pursuit!"

Those words hit me like a sledgehammer, resonating within my soul.

They felt familiar. I had heard them before... in my past life. Yes, from one of my old acquaintances.

He had told me the same thing.

'How does Alphonse know about that?!'

"Remember this, dear pupil! Magic is meaningless without people! That's your final lesson from me."

Alphonse grabbed my hand and gave me a warm smile, then raised his second hand and rubbed my head, giving it a light pat.

"I was also impressed by your spell today, Jared. Well done. You have impressed me, not just as a tutor... but as a fellow Magic-User."

My eyes bulged in shock as I received those words.

I somewhat understood what Alphonse had just told me, as well as the words of my friend back then.

No matter the height I would eventually reach in magic... it could never compare to the feeling of accomplishment I got from Alphonse that day.

The warm sensation within me, and the tingly feeling welling up inside me... I felt really happy.

'So this is it... a true feeling of accomplishment!' I beamed, returning Alphonse's smile.

Such warm feelings of satisfaction would only be gotten from someone else. And as such, I needed others.

'What a valuable last lesson you gave me, Alphonse...' I smiled.

However... despite the bliss and fluffy magical bursts of joy flashing around, there was no way anything or anyone could make me forget.

"But, Alphonse... you haven't forgotten the deal we made, right?"

Yeah, I know that he was trying to pass a message across to me, and to be honest, he was really cool. I truly learned a great deal from his words and I had the resolution to change.

However...

"Alphonse, you still haven't made good on the bet, you know? My special magic spell, where is it?"

"What the-?!" The old man gave me an unbelieving look as he stared at me.

'Am I being too impatient again? It's just that he said that's my last lesson, so I have to make things clear... that's not the wrong thing to do!'

"You little rascal! Get the hint, will you?" Alphonse said, knocking my head as he spoke.

"Ow, ow... Alphonse, when did you start resorting to violence?" I asked, wincing at the slight beating he gave my head.

As someone whose body wasn't used to pain, it was an odd sensation. But, it wasn't like I could complain. I had caused more pain to others, after all.

The both of us burst out in laughter, filling the tense air with the friendly environment I had grown to love.

"Of course, I haven't forgotten our bet!" Alphonse finally said, interrupting my thoughts.

He stood from where he knelt and looked at the devastated training field. A small smile formed on his face.

"However, looking at what just happened, I doubt there's any magic in your level that I can teach you..."

'What? Come on, man. Don't try to run away from this! Take responsibility!' My mind rang.

I wasn't being insensitive. This was my right! It was something I had been looking forward to for so long. As much as it was nice being commended by Alphonse and my mother, I needed something concrete as a trophy for my accomplishment!

“... Don’t worry, though. Before the end of today, I’ll make sure to make good on my word.”

Upon hearing this, it finally dawned on me. Why hadn’t I thought of it earlier? Alphonse had been staying with us for five years straight, not missing a single day in teaching me Magic. As per the contract, today would be his last time here before heading back home.

“W-wow... you’re really leaving tomorrow...” My voice trailed.

I now felt a tinge of regret coupled with my emotion. He was a great man and an interesting magic tutor, but did I even get to know him more than that? Even after so long had passed, I didn’t really know anything about Alphonse.

“Don’t make that look. It’s not like I’m going to die, or anything. Besides, since you passed, you’ll soon be going to the Magic Academy, right? Our separation was inevitable.” The old man smiled at me.

‘Shame on you, Jared. You’re being reprimanded and comforted by your junior.’ I smiled to myself.

“You’re right. Thanks, Alphonse.”

“Now then, why don’t we go inside. They should have laid Anabelle on her bed. We should check her condition.” Alphonse said.

I nodded. While Ana wouldn’t die, she would be in a state of weakness for some days.

“I’ll offer some treatment, so she’ll be able to get up before you leave for the Academy. So you don’t need to worry too much.” Alphonse smiled, noticing my troubled expression.

‘Am I so easy to read? Oh boy...’

And so, former master and pupil returned to the manor, after having reconciled with each other.

“Oh, by the way, what about my special-”

“You little-... I said I haven’t forgotten! You know what? Come to the courtyard after dinner, and I’ll show you before you sleep!” Alphonse barked, already growing frustrated with my reminders.

“Haha, sorry. Thank you...” I responded.

‘I think I should shut up now...’