

SPELLCRAFT 261

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

Chapter 261: Reunion After Centuries [Pt 1]

"—Not there!"

I ran across the dark streets of campus, trampling the lovely flower petals that danced with the night breeze.

"Not there either!"

Impatience swelled within me as I rapidly moved my eyes and became one with all my senses.

Spellcraft was constantly turned on—without it, this would be a fool's charade.

My speed was phenomenal, and that was because I knew the value of time. My comrades were all fighting out there; risking their lives because they trusted my plan. I needed it to be executed perfectly.

No doubt, the tides were currently in our favor. If I joined in on the battle, perhaps our victory would be assured. However...

'Anything can happen! I can't render a judgment based on the current circumstances...'

Sure, things were going well now, but what would happen if the tables were to turn on us? Would the exhausted students be able to handle it?

This question rang in my head as I desperately sought the only thing that could guarantee our victory and cement the eradication of the enemies—the Lecturers.

If we could locate them, then it mattered not what the enemy threw at us. Once we secured those with authority and power, this elaborate charade would be finished.

Still, the solution was easier thought of than executed.

In the first place, the hall where the Lecturers were supposedly holed up prevented any external interference. It was surrounded by a barrier that practically made it appear as though they didn't exist on the campus.

Normally, no one would be able to find them... unless they were me!

Using Spellcraft, I was basically one with the world around me. The Mana around gave me access to the surroundings. I could extend my senses, perceiving everything beyond the normal scope.

Now, what would happen if I were to utilize my technique where the hall was situated?

—Interference!

I wouldn't be able to tap into the Mana within the premises of the hall thanks to the special Magic around it. Since that was the case, all I had to do was scour the campus to detect anomalies and figure out where they would be holed up in.

'I've narrowed down the search to some places, so it's not a blind hunt!'

Still, it was incredibly annoying—worrying about everyone else when I had my mission ahead of me.

'Jared, focus! You'll be facing the leader of the Shadows, you know?'

With my thoughts chastising me, I shrugged off distracting thoughts and dashed toward my designated spots...

... Until...

... I found it!

I could use Spellcraft with a range of a hundred meters currently. Though, since going so far strained me, I limited myself to seventy meters. It would be pointless if I found the enemy and was worn out when our confrontation ensued.

"FOUND YOU!"

With anticipation gleaming in my eyes, caution raised high, and at an even greater speed than earlier, I dashed in the direction of the anomaly.

>BOOOOMMM!!!<

I was sure my sudden movements caused an explosion at the point of impact, but I didn't care. My reinforced body cut through the wind and I arrived a few meters from my destination in a jiffy.

"Huuu..." A slightly heavy breath escaped my parted lips as I took a measured stance.

"... I'm here."

My eyes instinctively searched the area, but that only lasted for a moment. The moment my nerves settled; I was assailed by the greatest amount of bloodlust I had ever felt since I began this second life of mine.

'AAIEEEEE!!!' My mind rang as I felt every hair of my body rise in response to the pressure.

Sweat—uncountable beads of sweat escaped my pores as the oppressive aura permeating the surrounding area greeted me.

This power was beyond me!

"So, you're finally here..." A voice called out to me.

It was deep, it was dark... it felt disgustingly familiar.

My body trembled as I interpreted the voice of the monster that spoke. My brain referred to the memories of my past life and translated the words of the Demon.

'W—what is... this...?'

My bulging eyes trailed to the figure that materialized before me.

Its body was dark, yet shrouded in a type of darkness that only existed in myths. This power far transcended the level of the Shadows from earlier. No, even comparing the both of them would be a terrible joke.

"T—this aura..." My quivering lips mumbled.

All my bravado from earlier vanished. In the presence of this horrifying being, I was nothing more than an average student cowering in fear. In my trembling state, one predominant thought etched itself in my head.

'THIS POWER SURPASSES A GENERAL!'

"You are Jared Leonard, correct? No, I shouldn't even be asking this..." The figure went on to speak.

Something about it felt familiar. The manner in which it spoke, the tone of its voice, and how its black figure looked from a close distance... it felt too similar to what I knew back then.

It was a gamble, but... I had to take it.

To sort through my thoughts and handle this unprecedented situation, I needed more time.

'THINK! How can you buy time?'

Stall... I had to stall this monster!

It was a gambit, but... at the moment this was the only card I could play—the only one afforded to be played.

"You... who are you?"

I used Demon Tongue, and the being in front of me had his eyes widened in response.

"So, you know it too? Just like him... I wonder..." The dark creature mumbled.

An air of unease was evident in the air and the tension around me was so thick that it felt suffocating. It may have been shameless for me—as someone who had been through worse—to crumble like this, but... there was only so much my immature body and juvenile brain could bear.

All the signals in my body told me to run! Adrenaline was high. My heart was racing at an alarming rate. My brain pounded. I even seat some more.

The only thing keeping me standing was my will... and the Mana I used to coat myself,

"I am surprised you know my language, and that you are still standing despite the fact the surrounding area has been corrupted with Miasma. You are indeed worthy of praise."

Familiar. Too familiar. I knew this Demon. I could tell!

But... perhaps it was a subconscious action... I couldn't accept it!

I didn't want to imagine it!

Because, that would mean...

"Very well, I will tell you my name."

... That would imply...

"I am Kahn."

... THAT THE DEMONS TRULY BROKE THE PACT!

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Chapter 262: Reunion After Centuries [Pt 2]

The Celestial War!

It was a battle that unified the races of the world.

A call to arms against a common foe—The Demons

Humans. Thieranthropes. Elves. Faires. Dwarves.

These five races gathered and bore the same banner with the single goal of exterminating the Demons who were a scourge on the world. Of course, this ended on a bitter note and both sides suffered severely.

Ultimately, a consensus was needed, and a Pact was formed.

The Demons needed sustenance. That was the whole reason they started the war. Once that was satisfied, negotiations became possible.

An entire patch of land was given to them—now dubbed the Demon Realm—situated in the North, formerly the Northern Empire. The Demons would stay there with the rest of their kind, having an abundance of Miasma to sustain them rather than taking the corrupt Souls of other races.

In exchange for peace, the other races—humanity included—sealed all the information they could about them. And then, just like a miracle, the world slowly forgot about the Demons.

Of course, there was a condition.

Should the pact be broken... all hell would break lose again. And the already ignorant humans would be granted knowledge over the fatal flaws of the Demon Race.

This was only an auxiliary measure, though—some sort of attachment.

The deal was mutually beneficial to all races... so no one expected any form of action. And so, centuries elapsed without any sort of clash.

Yet... that all changed with this invasion!

"K—Kahn...?!"

I quickly controlled myself before exclaiming louder than I did. It seemed like the Shadow Demon in front of me had noticed my surprise, but he chose to ignore it instead.

"Now, answer me, human... how do you know our tongue?" He narrowed his eyes in suspicion.

My mind went into overload as he asked me—no, even before—that question.

There were a bunch of things I could say or do, but at this juncture, I was too confused and annoyed to play along any longer.

Nothing good would come out of wasting time.

The Academy was under siege. My comrades were risking their lives. I needed to fulfill my mission and rescue the teachers—fast! That was all that mattered.

That was all I needed to focus on.

Why Kahn chose to betray the pact was none of my immediate concern. The fact that he was here and possessed obvious malicious intents was enough.

In essence, he was my enemy!

"Kahn... I am going to kill you!" I gave my declaration.

The Shadow Demon gave me a surprised look, and then, as expected... he burst out laughing.

"KUAHAHAHAHA!"

His cracked and sharpened mouth gave out cackles of amused laughs and I simply let him enjoy his brief moment of satisfaction.

"You're quite an amusing brat. To think you would say it so bluntly. I suppose you do have a point, though... we ought to fight with the intent to kill as our motivation."

The Shadow Demon went on to speak.

"I can simply collect more information on your ability to understand our language in this Academy's library..."

'You won't find anything there, though.' After all, I only knew this much because of my past life.

"Besides, I suppose you're in a hurry to inform your Lecturers about the Invasion. Hehe, it's just like that man said."

'That man, uh? He must mean the mastermind...'

I would have loved to interrogate Kahn some more, but... I couldn't afford to risk things. Especially since the Demon in front of me didn't mind wasting any valuable time.

We had opposing interests!

"Ah, you must also be aware, then... of the various 'Versions' of myself that I sent to those important areas... Hehehe... I have to admit, I didn't think I would have to resort to that."

'WHAT?!' My thoughts nearly leaked out but I managed to control them.

This was bad!

Very bad!

I never expected a Demon Lord Rank Demon to show up here. Since there were only weak Shadows, and I knew Kahn wasn't the type to launch such an elaborate—or even any—invasion, my mind placed the worst-case scenario as a confrontation with Demon General.

This was an oversight!

Kahn, as a Demon Lord, had an ability only he could use—at least with what I knew. He could split himself into multiple copies. While his maximum number was ten, each 'version' would have a certain percentage of Kahn's abilities.

I shuddered at the thought of a group encountering even five percent of this horrifying creature.

"Oh? So, you know what I mean by 'versions'. I knew you humans couldn't be trusted. You still held on to our information... even children like you know..."

Kahn seemed to be misunderstanding something, but now wasn't the time to correct him. In fact, I couldn't afford any more conversation.

There was only one thing that was necessary—especially now that I knew of his other selves running around Campus.

Gritting my teeth, I poured out all the Mana at my disposal. Nothing less would suffice.

All five Mana Cores of mine went into overdrive and I felt my body being enveloped with energy.

Usually, I would utilize Spellcraft in this situation, but... the Miasma that shrouded our vicinity had completely rendered that technique of mine useless.

In essence, I was at a disadvantage.

A Twelve-Year-Old student versus a Demon Lord! How laughable was that?

The chances of victory were Nil.

My opponent was too strong. I knew that myself. Plus, with his other selves running around Campus, the plan was as good as screwed.

My promise to those students ended up being a lie.

However, now was no time to despair, or to feel the weight of the lives of all those who would die as a result of placing their trust in me.

Now was the time for action.

"I was told to kill you by 'that man'. Initially, I was puzzled by how he was able to sell out this place for a single life. However, now I understand. You are indeed a very exemplary being."

I didn't listen to his conceited compliments and simply focused on my task.

"But, know this... human. You can not beat me."

'Oh, really?'

I quite remember being told that I was unable to do many things in my past and even present life. The only difference between the two was that I betrayed all expectations in the latter.

Why?

It was because of Magic!

Magic makes the impossible possible—that's the whole point!

And so... I was going to show this Demon—Kahn—a miracle.

How a mere child would beat a Demon Lord!

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Chapter 263: Jared Versus Kahn [Pt 1]

My body went into overdrive as I pushed every ounce of my strength to the limit.

Emitting energy that would be deemed suicidal at a steady pace, and refusing to take my eyes—no, my entire senses—from the target; I made the first move.

>WHOOOSHHHH!!!<

My body moved like lightning, coated in golden lightning—a mix of both Light and Lightning! For this fight, this was the best I could do by myself.

"Heh!"

Kahn moved like a blur, sharpening his body in an instant.

Pure Magical attacks would be too ineffective on him, so I used the best means in my current reach.

Martial Arts!

>SHIIINNGGG<

Condensing a great deal of Mana in my hand, I created a blade of light. It brimmed with such brilliance that anyone who gazed at it would be rendered blind instantly

This concentrated blade would easily tear through dozens of Shadows—no, even more! Still, I worried that it would be inadequate for my foe.

'He doesn't have his full strength, so if I can't win now... there's no hope for a comeback!'

There was no room for hesitation. I simply had to follow what I knew best...

... My wits!

>FWOOOSHHHH!!!<

My blade descended with godlike speed, slashing at the Demon Lord in front of me.

>CLANG!<

Sparks flew as he easily parried my full strike with a single bladed limb.

Kahn didn't even seem shaken by the attack... even though our surroundings suffered a great deal from our collision.

>BOOOOMMMM!!!<

The echoes of our devastating impact speed across the area.

I could sense the ground breaking apart, but Kahn remained unmoved.

Usually, Shadow Demons would be obliterated with that reinforced strike, but he took it in stride.

'He's using Miasma to coat himself! Shit!'

Just like I could reinforce myself with Magic to defend against my human weaknesses, this being was no different.

However... I expected this!

>SWIIIISSSHHHH<

Another condensed blade formed on my other hand as I released my grip on my blade.

>SHIIINNGGG!!!<

Kahn blocked the next strike.

Both my limbs and his were busy, occupying each other's blades.

However... for Kahn, he could have as many body parts as he desired.

In a moment, multiple spears burst forth from him, launching themselves at me. If I took even a tiny second more time before acting, I would be riddled with holes.

Instantly, I became a blur and vanished from my position.

"Huh?"

Before the Shadow Demon realized what happened, I appeared behind him, brandishing yet another condensed light blade.

It was very powerful, more powerful than the previous ones I used.

Bringing both arms down with a strong vertical stroke, I cried.

"ANNIHILATE!!!"

The 9th form of the Fundamental Precepts... ANNIHILATE. I used the best I knew of the Martial Blade God's Foundational technique with that hit.

>BOOOOOMMMM!!!!<

Light filled the area as more debris scattered around.

I was forced to generate a shield to defend myself from the impact that radiated around me.

The move I employed boasted of the most destructive capabilities among all nine. Quickly maneuvering my body, I took light and quick steps in retreat.

—However...

"Nice one!"

... Kahn appeared from the thick smoke, grinning like the monster he was.

His body was covered in black spikes, and his size was much bigger.

Changing his mass and rendering his form more durable... the being in front of me was finally beginning to take this fight seriously.

"Dodge this!"

A cackle escaped Kahn's cracked mouth as he launched a dark javelin in my direction.

>WHOOOSSSHHH!!!<

Space tore as the long and sharp projectile homed at me.

I was stuck in mid-air, still in my attempt at a retreat. The insane velocity Kahn's attack employed was enough to tear me to shreds—even with my enhancements!

Fortunately, I had bought enough time.

"Let's go!"

With that, a massive burst of energy swirled around me, and then—

>BOOOOMMMMM!!!<

—Everything around me vaporized. The dark spear was no exception.

Floating amid the destroyed area was me—in a completely different state from earlier.

My body glimmered in various colors, shrouded by a condensed amount of energy that was too much to belong to me.

My blond hair had already taken a fiery red state and my complexion transformed into a Cian hue.

Red

Ashen

Blue

—And Green bursts of energy all swirled around me.

"Grand Fusion State..." I whispered.

I was currently utilizing the abilities of all four Wisps in my possession.

Wind.

Fire.

Earth.

Water.

I had a vast amount of these at my disposal, and each of my Cores functioned individually and simultaneously to maximize the elemental attributes to their full potential.

"Oh? Nice trick!"

The Shadow Demon shrouded himself with even more Miasma and began to levitate as well.

He charged at me with intent to kill, enough to send shivers down my spine, but I refused to back down.

"[Quadro Storm]"

Just as I used [Blitz] by combining two Elemental Attributes—Light and Lightning—I combined all four elements that welled up within me and sent them straight at Kahn.

>BOOOOMMMMM!!!<

A more powerful explosion—the most I had ever made—erupted. A swirling wave of power burst through the area, sending anything in the path Kahn took to smithereens.

'That won't be enough... but that's enough time bought!'

Taking advantage of the chaos, I added another technique to my current fused state.

Elemental Chamber!

>VWUUUSHHH!!!<

My immediate surroundings swirled with all four elemental attributes, and then I added my golden lightning to the mix.

Now armed with five elements—each core operating them respectively—I glared in the direction of the blast trail, only to see Kahn unscathed.

"Oh? You changed again?" The dark-coated monster remarked, returning from the air from whence he descended.

"Aha! This is quite interesting!"

Black wings sprouted from behind him, and he developed several tentacles and spike-like limbs that spiders possessed.

Now having so many more options and combinations for offense at his disposal, he raced at me with full speed.

"Cheh!"

I refused to back down and charged at the opponent with all I had.

Creating another elemental storm, I launched a barrage of attributes at him, but he was able to take them all thanks to the dense Miasma that shrouded his skin.

"Tch!"

He had already closed the distance between us, so I could only strengthen the air sphere that surrounded me as his multiple appendages struck.

>BOOOOOWMMMM!!!<

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Chapter 264: Jared Versus Kahn [Pt 2]

>BOOOOOWMMMM!!!<

Despite my resistance, I was flung to the ground, crashing upon the earth like a comet.

The floor scattered dirt and chunks of debris got sent in multiple directions.

Fortunately, my sphere protected me—though barely—else I would have been severely damaged.

Still, I couldn't give in now.

"Hehe, that thing is quite durable... I wonder..." Kahn spoke from above, looking at me as though speaking to an insignificant insect.

"... How will you be able to handle my Magic?"

My eyes widened the moment my opponent said this, and I grated my teeth in anticipation...

... And fear!

Kahn couldn't use his Original Magic since he wasn't at 100 Percent yet, but his Magic abilities were still troublesome—no, downright terrifying.

"Let's begin with this..."

Black orbs began appearing around him. They were no larger than the head of a newborn child, but they multiplied at an alarming rate.

I gulped and waited... not for his attack... but mine!

I had to time this perfectly, or I would die.

"... This should penetrate that barrier, right?"

The black orbs—estimated to be about a hundred as a result of my quick calculation—began taking morphing shapes... and then spat out numerous needle-like projectiles.

Yes, sharp bullets came from the dark orbs as they fired en masse.

With a hundred of those things firing an immense amount of hardened shadow shrapnel at me, it was impossible to evade them all.

They were also dense enough to penetrate my defenses after a few rounds.

"Rahhhhh!!!"

My cry burst forth and I called upon one of my most destructive Spells.

It was the same kind I used against Kuzon, but on a much larger scale.

"[QUINTA BURST]!"

With that, all five of my Mana Cores, as well as my Familiars released a surge of terrifying Mana, and I poured them all into the Spell.

A massive charge of five elements, shimmering golden-white, burst in the direction of Kahn's bullets.

They vaporized in an instant, and even my enemy had to hack away from the exploding path.

"Haa... haa..."

My heart was racing, and my body felt strained.

I had pushed myself so hard from the start—utilizing so many Spells at once—just so I could keep up with the monster in front of me, yet...

"You're interesting, kid." Kahn had a twisted smile and prepared for any lunge at me.

This time, his Miasma reached high into the sky and created a massive orb of darkness.

This orb condensed and became a giant spear.

Unlike the hundreds and thousands of needle-like spikes, this one was far more terrifying.

One Quinta Storm wouldn't be enough!

"Eat this...."

The spear became energized, whirring as though it was alive, and then Kahn—from his distance above me—sent the object of destruction my way.

If it connected, I was going to be torn to shreds, blown to smithereens!

However... I was already aware of this move. There was no way this would be the end of me.

"Haaaaaa!!!"

Mustering a great deal of my strength that would have killed anyone, I created multiple Quinta Storms.

It would have been impossible, but I had a bit of help from my Potions.

Common Knowledge assumed that Potions had to be ingested through the mouth to be rendered effective.

However, this only applied to regular Potions that served as medication.

Magic Potion could be absorbed through any part of the body as long as one could receive it through the pores by attracting the effects through Mana.

I used my Mana to attract the several Potions in my possession, sending me into a state of Mana Overflow.

I used this pressure to exert myself beyond the limit and create three of my most destructive Spell, charging it with more Mana than was usually possible.

Three High-Tier Advanced Spells... at my disposal... and they all charged at the black spear overhead.

"HAAAAAAAAA!!!"

More cries that emanated from the great pain enveloping me rang out.

>BOOOOMMMMMM!!!!<

I shielded myself from the immense explosion that burned through the area.

As light and darkness collided, everything in the vicinity was rendered into dust and ash.

Before long, I was standing within a crater, and Kahn had descended from his high estate.

The knockback was too much for even him to bear, and while he may have seemed composed, the Shadow Demon expended a lot of energy to use that move.

"You're... quite good..."

I was sure he didn't expect me to survive. Still...

"Guark!"

... I had reached my absolute limit.

Blood spurted out of my mouth and lots of the crimson hue dyed the ground.

My red fluid was thick, dripping from my tired and quivering lips. I was feeling indescribable pain—for overwhelming my Mana Cores and also using Magic way beyond my means.

This was the price I had to pay for relying on abilities beyond my current build.

It felt like every muscle in my body was torn. Using enhancement Magic to push my physical state to its limits was also disastrous.

The repercussions of my earlier actions had led to this... leaving me with nothing but a pathetic state.

"It seems you're already used up. You barely have any Mana left, and your body is a mess." Kahn grinned, assured of his victory.

He was right.

My body was already beyond redemption. I wasn't very adept at healing, but even that would take some time.

I was also running on fumes as a result of my depleted Mana.

Anyone would judge this match over and rule in favor of Kahn.

However...

"You..." My quivering, bloodied lips formed a smile.

"... I told you already..."

My trembling and powerless body slowly moved as I stood atop my two feet. I staggered a little, but regained a proper posture.

My sharp gaze never left the opponent, I even as my very being screamed in agony.

Pain! Pain! Even more Pain!

I was assailed with such despairing terror and pain that I was sure I could pass out at any moment. No, this was enough to kill most people.

My eyes were moist with tears, but... I held them in. Even though I was experiencing such grave horrors that made torture seem satisfying, I couldn't reveal my suffering or give in to it.

Why...?

"—I'm going to kill you!"

... Because I was going to go through even more pain from this point onward.

But, it was all worth it!

After all...

'IT'S TIME!'

... Everything was going according to plan!

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Chapter 265: Raising The Stakes

"Haa... haa..."

My breathing was ragged, my eyes were heavy. My parched throat craved for relief, and my entire body swelled with unimaginable pain, but I held them all in.

"You've done well to hold on for so long. You're quite a monster. If there were more of you... perhaps things might have gone differently."

Kahn's voice was calm, collected... and arrogant.

'Hehe...'

Just as I wanted.

"You must be feeling pretty good, picking on a kid. I didn't think Demons were such despicable scum, but I guess the legends were true, after all.

"WHAT?!"

Yes...

"YOU LITTLE RUNT!"

... Just like that...

"TO THINK I THOUGHT OF SHOWING YOU MERCY!"

... Lose control, Kahn!

>WHUUUUSSSHH!!!<

Instantly, shadow spikes began emanating from the floor, heading in my direction as they made to completely tear me apart.

My body was too weak to do anything. Evasion was impossible, even if I tried. But... at this point... I didn't need to!

>SHUUUUU!!!<

The massive shadow spikes that came my way were instantly neutralized, turning into dust.

"Uh?"

Kahn's eyes bulged wide open, but before he could act on his surprise, I made my mood.

"Spellcraft: Magic Fortress!"

I gathered immense Mana from my surroundings.

A large quantity of Mana swirled around me, compressing to form the greatest barrier I had ever made.

The field of concentrated Mana shielded me, emitting golden light that illuminated the dark night.

"W—what is this? You shouldn't have any Mana left—no, you shouldn't even be able to do Magic in your current state!"

"What state?" I smiled.

Kahn's eyes bulged, and he seemed to have realized that my body had recovered to quite an extent.

'I used up all my Potions, but only achieved about sixty-five percent recovery, uh?'

I wasn't certain if my current condition would be enough for what was to come, but... right now, there was no longer any option.

It was do or die!

"... Spellcraft..."

Everything for a distance of two hundred meters became illuminated by golden fragments of light all around.

Like fireflies dancing in the dark, these light particles permeated the area, encircling the vicinity—with Kahn and me at the center.

"W—what is this? What's going on? M—my Miasma?!"

The Shadow Demon appeared frantic at this point, confounded by the disappearance of the demonic energy that once pervaded our immediate vicinity.

"It's all gone..."

Kahn glared at me with shock and confusion, but I didn't plan on saying anymore.

This was a gambit that required all my concentration—my everything. Any mistake and I was fated to die.

'It's time to activate them... my Magic Stones!'

>SHIIIIINNNGGGG!!!<

All around Kahn, forming a circle across his location, ten pillars of light sprang up. Each pillar contained an intensity of Mana that was incomparably greater than the total sum I had in all five Mana Cores... and there were ten of them!

"W—what is this?!"

Kahn reacted by attempting to escape, but his actions were too late.

>SHUIIIII!!!<

The light pillars formed a barrier around him, trapping the Shadow Demon at the center. He couldn't escape even if he tried his hardest.

After all, it was fortified and concentrated to the limit.

"YOU BRAT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!!!"

He lost his composure and barked at me, glaring hatefully at my grinning self. I could sense his panic. Kahn probably knew what was coming.

My smile was short-lived, though. My face contorted into a pained expression and blood spurted out of my mouth.

"Guarggghh!!!"

More crimson liquid dyed the ground—the consequence of pushing myself so far—but I wasn't about to let up now. I had finally come so far.

"You're going to die here... Kahn!" I growled.

The Demon growled and barked some more, desperately trying to free itself from the barrier.

The only way out was through defying space itself and teleporting. To prevent that possibility, I made sure to make him waste his energy in his earlier assaults. As Kahn currently stood—he didn't have enough to escape.

The golden fragments of light that spread for over two hundred meters began converging, atop Kahn, far above him—in the sky.

Several million pieces quickly merged with the orb that began forming as it sucked Mana fragments like crazy. The orb slowly got bigger, and as it did, I compressed it.

My body was in overdrive, working to move the Mana particles to the orb, as well as condensing the mass of Mana that formed above.

"Kuakk!!!" More blood poured out, but I ignored it.

"HEY! LET ME OUT NOW! YOU KNOW I HAVE VERSIONS AROUND, DON'T YOU? I'LL KILL YOUR FRIENDS WHERE THEY ARE! YOU CAN'T SAVE THEM ALL! RELEASE ME NOW!"

"Hehehe... hehehe..." I made a slight laugh, staring at the foolish and ignorant Demon in front of me.

"Unfortunately for you... I have no friends..."

My voice was hollow, but I made sure he heard those words.

Kahn's eyes widened, his expression intensified, and he screamed like a mad man.

No one wanted to die—not even a Demon.

Too bad for him...

'... You reap what you sow.'

The clusters of golden light had reached a crescendo, and the orb—now the size of about a curled-up adult man, brimmed with so much power that I felt my skin stand from my position.

'It's ready!'

I commanded the ten Magic Stones around Kahn to go into overdrive, increasing the destruction that was to come, as well as exploding the multiple pieces of light that still floated around.

Like fireworks, each light fragment exploded into golden glimmers of destruction, getting sucked into the critical orb that was moments from erupting.

Like a swirling wormhole, it took in all the excess Mana around, leaving only my barrier and the one around Kahn alone.

"... It's like I said... Kahn..."

The Demon, who was frightfully staring at the mass above him, now sharply glanced at me.

"... I am going to kill you..."

"DON'T DO IT!!!" He bellowed.

I brushed off all the memories I had of the being in front of me and focused on my goal—my duty!

>KRAAAAAAKKKKK!!!<

Flashes of golden lightning and blinding light surged from the orb.

"... Die, Demon!"

Golden light filled the night sky, and the entire campus was illuminated.

It was brighter than the sun.

More intense than summer.

The bright light burst through the nearby areas and all of the denizens of the city of Ainzlark City and beyond witnessed the glorious display.

Was it the result of a festival?

Was the cause a Magic demonstration?

What could have generated such power?

Even those in the mountains could see the faint glow from where they were.

This power exceeded the level of any single human.

No, probably a few could do it, but... they existed on a level that far surpassed anything considered ordinary.

Even the laymen who witnessed the beautiful mass of light considered this the work of gods.

A blinding light hung in a distance--Ainzlark Academy--and at that moment, all the humans of the city and beyond could only think of one thing.

God.

This was an act of God.

And so, they bowed.

The destruction spread. It kept growing bigger.

The heat swelled.

The denizens of the city felt like the light would consume them, so they prayed.

They bowed and prayed.

This was something that mere humans should never have seen.

This was the epitome of Magic.

There existed Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced Magic... but another cadre existed that far outstripped anything these levels had to offer.

The Peak Level.

That was the demonstration that was given for the world to see... a blast of golden light that spread--like an ever-increasing dome--destroying anything and everything in its path.

The Grand Blitz.

"Haa... haa..."

I was all spent.

My body collapsed to the ground, and I felt my consciousness fading fast.

For a total of five hundred miles--an estimate based on my initial calculations--the Spell destroyed everything around.

Fortunately, my barrier held out... barely.

Now shattered, the dome that shielded me vanished into particles, and I was on the ground.

My Elemental Chamber was nil.

My Grand Fusion State was expended.

I was bottom-dry in Mana reserves.

My Stamina was depleted.

I was practically nothing.

The only thing that existed was a little countermeasure I kept in place, but I couldn't even worry about that now.

All that filled me, from the tip of my hair to the sole of my feet, was agony!

Intense, pure, unadulterated pain.

I suffered, but I had no energy to cry or scream in pain.

All I could do was lie on the ground like a vegetable.

'It's over...!' The thought of comfort trailed in my head.

At least, my pain wasn't for nothing.

I defeated Kahn. I killed him.

In the end. I won... right?

But, I felt like I was forgetting something important.

No, that didn't matter now. With this victory, I could close my eyes and rest. I would wake up in the Academy's sick bay and be met with my comrades who fought hand in hand.

There would have been some casualties, but... I had faith. My allies... they would live.

With Kahn gone, his Versions would slowly fade, and the threat would be extinguished. Yes, his Versions... his Versions.

NO, WAIT, HIS VERSIONS WOULD BE...!!!

"Haaa... You little brat..."

A dark, disgusting voice emanated from a couple of meters away.

It was twisted, filled with malevolence. The owner of the voice, a figure of darkness, sprouted from the ground.

My blurry vision picked up its distorted body. It looked misshapen, absolutely repulsive, It looked like the Shadowy being was attempting to pull itself together.

"... That was... a close one..." He muttered.

My heart began beating rapidly.

I knew what happened.

Why hadn't I accounted for it? Why?

FOOL! JARED, YOU FOOL! YOU RETARDED IDIOT!

"... I thought, for sure I was going to die..."

My face couldn't properly depict the fear and horror I felt within myself. Add that to the pain that currently permeated me, I was assailed with a myriad of negative emotions.

Enough to break a person.

More than enough to cripple a person mentally.

I felt like I was going insane.

"... To think I nearly lost to you. How disgraceful."

His darkened body finally morphed back, forming the creature known as Kahn. He had restored himself...

... And he now approached me.

"Looks like even eighty percent barely made it out... how frightening..."

NO. NO. NO. NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO!

"To think... even two perished... how confounding."

NO WAY!

"But, now... it seems like you're already out of cards. It may have been a close battle, but... I win this one."

I felt so frustrated. Added to the pain and fear swirling within me, I was breaking down in all aspects. It was too much. I couldn't hold it in, but no strength remained to leak out a sob, talkless of cries.

"It looks like you were wrong, Jared Leonard..."

I was wrong...

"... You didn't kill me."

I failed to kill him.

"The one who's going to die... is YOU."

'I'm going... to... die...?!'

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

Chapter 267: Desperate Front [Pt 1]

[Moments Earlier]

"Huff... huff..."

Edward tightly gripped his blade like his life depended on it, because he knew the awry truth—it did!

Standing beside him was Ana who readied her most powerful array of Spells and simply waited for her opportunity.

The look on both their faces was that of tension... and fear.

Standing in front of them, in a position that showed she was protecting the two, was Aloe Vida. Her Light Attribute shield was erected, but everyone knew that her Spell would do little to nothing to stop the being that faced them.

Emerging from the darkness, amid a fearsome aura that could make anyone pass out, was a being of sheer power and utter wickedness.

It was a Shadow Demon. However, unlike the others they had faced, this was on a completely different level. In fact, comparing the two would be considered synonymous with madness.

It had a much larger build, spikes on its shoulders sharper horn-like ears... and a malevolent pressure, unlike anything they had ever seen.

Edward gulped, Ana shivered, and Aloe braced herself.

Unlike the two kids, the Dorm Master was determined not to show any weakness.

Not only was she responsible for them—as a Staff of Ainzlark—but she also owed Jared her life. These two were important to him, so the young woman had sworn to protect them.

Plus, the emergence of this powerful entity made it certain that their current location had some semblance of value to the enemy.

If they gave up now, the Demons would win. As a human being, Aloe couldn't allow such a scary outcome.

"You kids... should run. Get inside the Museum and stop the rest. I'll take care of this one."

Edward and Anabelle were stunned to hear the older woman suggest this.

Her voice was quivering despite how she tried to control the fear swelling within her. Aloe must have known of her inevitable fate if she alone was left to fight against this monster.

'Still... I can't let these ones suffer the same—'

"No!"

"We're not leaving!"

Aloe Vida widened her eyes in shock. If not for the fact that the enemy was right in front of their group, she would have sharply turned to reprimand them.

"B-but—!"

"We understand you're trying to protect us, Miss Vida..."

"But, we're no longer capable of turning back now. Trust us!"

The two spoke in sync, as though they had been reading each other's minds.

"You can't beat him... you'll die..." Aloe muttered.

The Shadow Demon was watching them patiently, speaking in some unintelligible language that they couldn't decipher. However, once it attacked, she knew they were done for.

"You can't beat it alone either!" Edward barked back, gripping his blade tighter than usual.

The frustrated look on his face told the woman that he was probably feeling quite frustrated by his powerlessness.

"I-if we work together, isn't there a better chance to win? If that thing kills you, it'll come after us next. Alone, we can't match its power..." Ana spoke in a trembling tone.

Though her voice and body made it obvious that she was frightened, Aloe could sense that she too didn't intend to back away.

Besides, they were both right.

What could she do by herself? Ultimately, they were in the same boat. There was no turning back at this point.

"Fine... we'll attack it together, but—"

"Got it! I won't be holding back from this point on!" Edward declared, sheathing his blade for some reason.

"Yeah! Let's give it all we've got!"

Aloe knew they were hiding a great deal of their power, which was why she was about to tell them to go all-out in the battle. It would seem that her worry was unnecessary.

Both students were prepared.

"\$%^&^%#%#@ " The Shadow Demon grumbled, finally taking a step forward.

Once they saw the monster move, the trio took a step forward.

So far, they had only been fighting at Base strength, but... it was time to switch things up a bit.

"BOND MAGIC!"

Both students raised their voices and, instantly, bursts of terrifying energy poured out.

Black and blue energy emerged from Edward and Ana respectively. Mana swirled around them—an intense amount of power was forming.

At this moment, Aloe was grateful that the students had offered to help. Unlike them, she didn't have a Familiar to Fuse with or even use Bond Magic. Right before she died, her Familiar left. Even when her Soul returned, the contracted Bond Soul was nowhere to be seen.

That was why—seeing the kids display this level of mastery and coexistence with their Bond Souls—Aloe felt touched and encouraged.

With the power they currently wielded, maybe... just maybe... they stood a chance.

The darkness that swirled Edward was Mana—not Miasma. It was Dark Magic, an extreme aspect that was close to Miasma, but not quite the same. However, it was because of this essential aspect that the swordsman was confident.

He may not have been adept at Light Magic, but there was a concept known as fighting Fire with Fire. Using the Dark Magic of his Dullahan Familiar, he was ready to fight the Shadow Demon.

The blue energy that covered Ana belonged to her Naiad-Fairy. While it would seem that the current level of mastery she had achieved was not enough to face the opponent before them, the young girl didn't give up hope.

To be honest, her Magic Specialty wasn't related to the major weakness of the Shadow Demon, which was why Ana decided to play the support role. Leaving the offensive measures to both Edward and Aloe while she would handle their healing and also provide defense.

"You two, I've got you covered! Trust me and attack with all your might!" Ana declared to them.

Edward nodded without hesitation.

He trusted his best friend with his life. While Aloe didn't share the same sentiment, the woman had no other choice but to go along with the plan.

She readied the surplus Mana stored within her and prepared a barrage of Light Javelins.

Edward slowly unsheathed his blade, which had already turned pitch black, with waves of purple around it.

Ana readied her Recovery Magic, with Defensive Magic also in tow.

The group of three readied themselves to fight the greatest opponent they had ever faced...

... praying for nothing less than victory!

SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar

Chapter 268: Desperate Front [Pt 2]

Once they had readied themselves, the three Magic Users launched themselves into action.

The one at the vanguard was Edward—brandishing his blade and utilizing his Martial Arts. He controlled the flow of Dark Magic around and within him to boost his body to its limit.

"FLOW!"

In a flash, he propelled himself even further and devastated his surroundings. Whirling like a storm of darkness, he quickly closed the distance between himself and the enemy, bringing his blade down in a flash.

>CLANG!<

His sword connected with one of the Shadow Demon's raised limbs.

'—Nng!' Edward's mind rang, feeling the impact on his body.

He had put all his strength behind that blow, yet it was so casually blocked. Edward bit his lip, feeling frustrated, but his distracting thoughts had to wait.

Suddenly, Kahn's body started changing... as though something was about to come out. Edward picked it up quickly and sprang away.

Fortunately, his retreat wasn't a second later.

>WHOOOSSSHHHH!!!<

Just as he leaped away, several dark spikes came out of Kahn. They would have impaled and killed him if he hadn't stepped away when he did.

But, the boy didn't have the luxury to sigh in relief, as these spear-like tentacles lunged at him.

"Don't worry about them! Just attack!" He heard a voice call out to him.

Despite what his instincts told him, Edward chose to trust in his best friend and charged straight ahead. His steps quickened and he swelled more power to the tip of his blade.

He was going to reach! That thought remained on his mind as his speed reached a new level.

The spears were moved out of the way by Ana's Magic. The blue energy that shifted the bladed objects from him flashed a pale glow. The attacks scattered all around Edward, but none touched him.

Smiling at the reliability of his comrade, and thanking her from the bottom of his heart, he leaped forward and gave a mighty roar as he came crashing down.

"DEVASTATE!"

>BOOOOOOMMMMMMM!!!<

The ground ripped apart and the surrounding area was shrouded in darkness and debris. Edward felt his blade sink into the monster's black flesh, but... it was too shallow to be called a wound.

Unfortunately, his blade had already sunk too deep—even though it really wasn't by much—for him to retreat as fast as he did the last time.

To make matters worse, the spear-like things were beginning to appear from Kahn. Even Ana's Magic wouldn't be able to protect him if he was at such point-blank range.

"Shit!"

Edward felt all the hairs on his skin stand.

Was this truly the end?

Fortunately, his question was answered by another trusted comrade of his—Aloe Vida.

>SHIIINNGGG!!!<

Blinding light surged from her location in the form of spears.

They were condensed to their limits, and several of them appeared. They numbered fifty—a phenomenal amount.

>WHOOOSSH!!<

These javelins launched at Kahn, making him shift his focus to Aloe. This allowed Edward to escape, and he leaped a great distance back until he was just in front of Ana.

>BOOOOMMMM!!!<

The javelins all charged at a single target, dealing a great amount of damage in the surrounding area thanks to their impact.

Once the fifty were launched, Aloe converged with the two students, and they took formation again. They kept their eyes—no, all their senses peeled—in the direction of their overwhelming opponent.

"@#\$%^&@!"

The Shadow Demon emerged from the blast area, appearing completely unscathed.

'W—what?!' Aloe Vida was shocked.

She knew it was tough, but not to this extent!

Even a barrage of attacks of that level didn't end it?

"Shit!" Edward cursed as he gripped his blade tighter.

He seemed to be thinking of something, but hesitation made him reconsider every single time.

"I don't think we can beat this thing at this rate..." Aloe Vida gave her honest opinion.

"We can, and we will!" The only boy in their midst growled.

The dark glint in his eyes showed them that he had resolved to.

"Do you have a trick up your sleeves?" Aloe asked.

There was desperation and exasperation in her tone. If they had nothing else, then this was already a failed venture.

The Automaton around had not taken action yet because their lives were not in critical danger, but once they lost the three, that was the end.

"I do." Edward gave a surprising answer.

"But, it takes too much strain on me, and I won't be able to concentrate on anything else but my target and my blade."

Edward's ace and final move could only be done now because he was boosting himself with Bond Magic. Still, even at that, once he exhausted the card, he would be out of commission.

"Got it! I'll be sure to watch out for your defenses, and also heal you if you get injured." Ana said.

"I'll support you as well. My Javelins can't deal a fatal blow, but they should be strong enough to constitute a nuisance!"

Edward looked at the two beside him and smiled at them gratefully. He was happy they didn't try to stop him.

The honest truth was that the boy was feeling powerless.

Jared's words from back then still rang in his head, and the worst part was that he couldn't refute them. He was a burden to his friend!

Edward was certain that if Jared was here, he would have been able to handle the monster before them. Unfortunately, he wasn't. These two were stuck with someone as incompetent as him.

However, Edward did not let his weakness weigh him down too much. He knew he was weak. He knew he was pathetic. However...

'I've been working hard too! I won't back down now!

... He too wanted to show the results of his growth!

"Okay, everyone... I'm counting on you!"

Edward raised his blade and prepared his stance.

He wasn't sure if the monster would die from this, but it was bound to suffer some damage.

Afterward, they would use the Automaton as sacrificial assaulters to launch a barrage. Hopefully, that finished it up.

Edward knew he was being optimistic, but... he needed to cling to some form of hope that things would work out.

If they didn't, they were all dead.

"Huuu..."

He shook off all distracting thoughts. Focusing solely on his enemy and the blade he wielded, his Mana swelled to an unprecedented degree.

"Fundamental Precepts..."

His muscles tensed, and his strength rose.

"... Self Made..."

The enemy was right in front of him. All he had to do... was strike!

"... #0: Martial Blade God Dance!"

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

Chapter 269: Martial Dance

>WHUUUUSSSHHH!!!<

The area around Edward erupted in an explosion as immense power covered him.

Dark whirling energy surrounded him, enough to send shock to the faces of both Aloe and Anabelle. However, before they could say anything, the boy vanished...

>BOOOOOMMMM!!!<

... Leaving a trail of debris in his wake.

Edward steeled his resolve as he made his move toward the enemy.

His movements made everything irrelevant, and the whole world became a blur.

Only three things existed in Edward's current state. Himself, his blade... and the opponent!

The stifling air rushed to him, but he ignored it and tightly ripped his blade to perform the dance he developed himself.

The Martial Blade God Technique had nine foundational forms known as the 9 Fundamental Precepts.

However, as their name implied, they were basic moves--not meant for serious battles against powerful and seasoned opponents.

Unfortunately, Edward had only started properly training in his family's Martial Arts, and his level of mastery couldn't allow him to advance beyond the basic stage. This feeling of powerlessness choked him to the point of frustration.

As a result, he racked his brain to figure out an alternative--a way he could use the basics he had to become even more powerful.

Just like Jared always emphasized, he decided to be innovative and let go of his rigid mentality. And after contemplating so hard, Edward finally obtained enlightenment.

Combination!

He would combine all nine moves and perform them in succession until they could be compressed into one.

"HAAARHHHHH!!!" The boy cried as he approached the enemy.

It was hard.

Going through all that training felt pointless.

'I can do it... I can reach!'

He felt like giving up so many times, but how could he? After seeing Jared and Ana improve by a large margin, how could he afford to be left behind?

The one-week break that everyone was given to rest was spent on nothing but honing his skills. However, after trying and failing many times, Edward came to the realization that it was impossible to achieve his desired result... at least not with his current strength.

However, with the aid of his Familiar, that was a different matter entirely!

'I can only do this once, because of the strain, but... I can do it... I MUST!'

Tightening his grip even more, while gritting his teeth, the boy closed the distance between himself and the Shadow Demon.

From 1 to 9

From REND to ANNIHILATE.

He converted those moves into one dance--a beautiful, uninterrupted flow that took the form of a dance.

That was his Form #0: Martial Blade God Dance!

>WHOOOOSSSHHHH!!!<

"\$#@@\$%!!!"

>FWISH<

The harsh winds blew.

>SWISH<

Space warped.

>FWOOOOSSSHHH<

Thunderous echoes rang out.

>BOOOOM<

An immense surge of power burst wide.

>SWUUUPPP!<

A recoil of unimaginable speed was released.

>CLANG!<

Two equally opposing blades met.

>KRIIIIIIII!!!<

Sparks flew.

This exchange continued at a phenomenal rate.

A total of nine strokes formed the Martial Blade God Dance, requiring the utmost concentration and precision. All focus was spent on offense, and Edward's defenses were left wide open.

The Shadow Demon attempted to take advantage of that weakness, but Edward wasn't alone in this fight.

His comrades--Ana and Aloe--provided constant support, using barriers to shield his blind spots while also attacking the flank of the Shadow Demon.

This teamwork was what allowed Edward to exchange blows with the Shadow Demon on equal--no, superior--grounds.

It was obvious to all the witnesses. Edward had the upper hand in skill and precision.

After a few strikes, the young boy was in the lead, gaining more speed the further down he went in the dance.

By the seventh strike, he was already suppressing the enemy, enough that it retreated.

'YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY!'

The eighth move closed the distance in a flash and Edward once again suppressed the enemy, throwing the limbs he used to defend itself into disarray. The opponent was flustered and wide open, glaring at Edward who didn't flinch and simply prepared the next blow.

"@\$#%^^!!!"

Multiple spikes proceeded from the Shadow Demon in a last-ditch attempt to impale the superior swordsman, but Ana and Aloe got in the way, pouring all their energy to ensure they created the perfect window of opportunity for Edward.

And they did!

Their joint efforts were enough to deflect the hurriedly made spikes... giving the boy his golden chance.

More power than what he had displayed earlier manifested. The aura he exuded increased dramatically, and it was clear that he had reached the precipice--the critical point of his attack.

'I... CAN... REACH!!!'

"RAHHHHHHHH!!!!!"

His blade descended.

And... as the arc formed, a blast surged from the point of impact.

>BOOOOOOOOMMMMM!!!<

Everything around them was engulfed in darkness, and the pressure was enough to nearly blow Ana and Aloe off their feet.

The wind howled, and the tempest oppressed the witnesses.

Swirling and turning and twisting, the darkness ascended and spread apart... until finally, it climaxed!

Finally, after reaching its crescendo, everything scattered apart, nullifying the harsh pressure as though it was never there. Such was the conclusion of Edward's dance.

It was beautifully executed, an epitome of both grace and savagery.

However, the question that rang in everyone's mind was the same.

"WAS IT EFFECTIVE?"

For a moment, a hollow silence permeated the area...

... And then a dense, oppressive aura was ignited.

"Haa... @\$@@! #\$\$%^ @\$\$\$%^ ^^&&@"

Anabelle and Aloe's eyes widened as the harsh night breeze took away the smoke so they could witness the aftermath of Edward's struggle.

"N--no... way..." A voice leaked out.

"E--Ed..." Another slowly came forth.

The boy in question was on the floor, completely spent and out of energy. He groaned, but there was no luster in his tone.

"@\$% @#%^ @\$^& (&^%\$"

No one could understand the Demon's words, but it was clear to everyone that he was gloating.

Evident to that was the fact that he raised his sharpened limb and prepared to stab Edward--resulting in instant death.

Ana tried to help, but she was out of Mana.

Aloe reached out, but she wouldn't have enough time to cast the Spell.

Tears fell from Edward's eyes. He seemed to curse his powerlessness as he lay on the cold, hard ground.

This was truly the end.

Until...

"Guhk! I thought... I was going to die..."

"Wohoooo! Help has come! That crazy guy pulled it off!"

"I just wish... this night was over..."

"It's bright as day!"

As the comments rang out from various students in their respective groups, one particular group was also staring at the golden eruption of light that grew bigger with each passing moment.

A boy and a girl were side-by-side. The latter was supporting the former, so he could walk. It was obvious who was more beat-up out of the two.

"Haa... haaa... I couldn't beat it..." The boy spoke with strained breaths.

He was Stefan Netherlore, one of the brightest in Ainzlark—a genius.

Who would have expected such a prodigy to look so disheveled and dumbfounded? Disappointment and frustration swirled in his heart and he cursed his weakness. Despite how hard he trained, despite everything! He still couldn't do shit when faced with the adversary.

"...Jared did it, uh?" A voice interrupted his thoughts.

It belonged to the girl who was supporting him.

Her silver hair was shining brightly, reflecting the light that enveloped the surroundings for miles.

Her name was Maria Helmsworth, a genius who had even more recognition than Stefan. She was also powerless when they were confronted with the enemy, so her pride must have been bruised as well.

Yet... no single wrinkle of frustration could be seen on her face.

Rather, what was akin to gratitude—and intense admiration—coursed through her. She beamed at the bright light, and her eyes reflected the image of a single person.

"He must have succeeded in his mission." Another whisper escaped from her lips.

Stefan was still caught up in his deep frustration, but he caught on to her words—as well as the tone she used to speak.

"You really like that guy, uh...?" He spoke in a grumble.

At that moment, there was silence.

The other students around who were rejoicing and clamoring in delight didn't hear Stefan's question—no, more like an affirmation. Still, an air of awkwardness enveloped the two.

Maria's slightly pale face gave a faint pink glow as she blushed and smiled softly. Her memories seemed to trail back to the first time she met the boy in question—how he had approached her so abruptly and brazenly.

Even though she had just nearly died now, Maria couldn't help thinking about him now.

Back to Stefan's question, the boy stared at her with all conviction that he was right, and then Maria's eyes moved in his direction. He seemed to be expecting an answer.

"Well... I don't know..."

Stefan was the closest thing Maria had to a friend, though they were mostly rivals. Since the two were cousins, it was clear that they would have some sort of link. Their families also seemed to be competing to see who would be better.

These expectations brought them together, and before they knew it, they became quite close.

"... Maybe..." Maria's eyes returned to the blast.

A smile formed on her parted lips.

It was silly, but... she felt quite fuzzy inside.

'I messed up!' Kahn's thoughts chided him.

He had managed to survive Jared's attack—though barely.

If he was merely ten percent short of his eighty percent form, he would have died. The blast was that strong!

Still, Kahn wondered what happened to the remaining twenty percent. He couldn't sense them at all, so he had to conclude that they were dead.

That fact didn't surprise Kahn too much, seeing that the 12-year-old before him was capable of killing him at 70 percent.

'This kid is strong... too strong!'

While he gritted his teeth in contemplation, Kahn realized that this whole invasion had been a mistake from the very start.

He jumped the gun, and his information was too little. Plus, his flawed alliance with his shady partner was what nearly got him killed.

As a result of his near demise, his neural link to all the Clones became severed, causing them to disappear.

They were all gone, and he was practically all that was left of the enemy's force.

'SHIT!' Kahn cursed internally as he glared at Jared who was practically a vegetable.

'He got me good...'

Not only had he somehow replaced the Miasma around with pure Mana through some strange means, but he was also capable of controlling Mana to such an extent and his plans were so perfectly executed that Kahn didn't have the faintest clue that he was falling for a trap.

In a way—even though the Shadow Demon didn't want to admit it—the kid reminded him a lot of Lewis Griffith!

"Damn... looks like the mission is a failure..." He mumbled to himself.

Kahn had lost, and he was too weak to scour the Campus for the information and objects he desired. He was sure the students would have also been weakened and there was a chance to still obtain what he wanted, but...

'It's too risky. I should count my losses and just retreat...'

The problem was the kid in front of him.

He was too dangerous to be left alive. The boy was a major threat. Both his intelligence and power were abnormal. If left alone for a few more years, he would be able to defeat a Demon Lord.

Kahn was certain of it!

'I need to eliminate him here!'

Though he didn't like the fact that he was still following the bidding of his shady partner, Kahn was going to execute Jared Leonard for the sake of his people.

"You are going to die here, Jared Leonard... you fought well."