

SPELLCRAFT 321

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

Chapter 321: The Exhibition [Pt 2]

The General Auditorium was packed!

Students were spread across the nearly circular array of seats. There was no bias as to where anyone could sit, except for the Year to which one belonged to.

The excited students were impatiently waiting for the beginning of the event that was promised to them.

In Ainzlark, there existed quite a few extra-curricular activities and general participatory events that spurred its denizens.

Ever since the Inter-Class Exchange was scrapped three years ago, other interesting programs began popping up.

One of them was the General Exhibition Event.

Simply put, all the students of Ainzlark Academy would gather in the hall, and a highly ranked member of the staff would share some innovations with them.

These innovations included technologies that were still in the beta phase, new Martial techniques being developed, or even phenomenal Spells that were still in the development phase.

It involved the dispensation of knowledge through practical displays, rather than the simple method of classroom teaching.

Thanks to the General Exhibition Event, students would get more motivated and strive to achieve higher scores in their fields. That way, they too could achieve great results.

Unfortunately, the opposite was what happened.

Students began to view the event as a simple means of entertainment.

Since they had worse talent than those of the previous generation, they subconsciously believed they couldn't achieve as much as their predecessors could.

So, they only saw the exhibitions displayed with eyes of amazement and amusement—with only a few of them feeling inspired to work hard so they could meet up to the bar set for them.

With their eyes lit with passion, expecting another interesting event, the students cheered for the woman who climbed the stage.

The lady was none other than a Magic Professor they knew quite well.

She had only just started teaching Magic, but her exceptional talent in Light Magic, her phenomenal knowledge, and excellent application in the art, made her very popular—especially among the Magic Users.

Adding to her popularity was the fact that she was a very beautiful and fun woman—young too. This made the boys go crazy, and the girls slightly jealous.

The moderator for this event was none other than Professor Aloe Vida!

Cheers rang—mostly from the boys—as they witnessed their host smile at them all.

"Welcome, students, to the General Exhibition Event!"

More deafening voices burst out.

Even from the stage where she stood, Aloe Vida was laughing uncomfortably at the wild cries of the wards she had been entrusted with.

'I'll never get used to this...'

Still, her job demanded this much from her. After being given a second chance at life, she wasn't going to be lax in any way.

That was why, when she received news that her savior had left something behind for her before leaving, she was so grateful and determined not to let him down.

So far, she had done well for herself.

Other than advancing to the Gold Mana Core Grade, she had also learned quite a number of Advanced Magic. Her ability was so great that Neron Kaelid—as Headmaster—made her a professor of Magic.

She readily accepted the position, hoping she would be able to see a hidden gem like Jared Leonard among them. Unfortunately, none even came close. Still, Aloe wasn't giving up!

'It bestowed me this gift from him for a reason... I won't betray his expectations!'

As the Moderator for the General Exhibition Event, she had been given the order of programs. With the prelude taken care of, she would be introducing the one who would be leading the day's exhibition.

'It's Professor Maro this time, uh? Hopefully, he motivates the students well...' She smiled.

As time stood, the man had to be within the premises, so all she had to do was call for him and he would appear.

'I didn't see any materials to be used for the exhibition, though. Are they still in transit? Is he not ready yet?'

Aloe began to consider stalling for time until she was certain about the arrival and complete preparation of their lead exhibitor.

The impatient cries of all the students convinced her otherwise.

'I'll just do my part!'

"Let us welcome today's Exhibitor! Get ready to get your mind blown. He is —"

As she was about to call out Maro's name, a mental link became established between her and someone else.

~Miss Aloe, change of plans~

Her eyes bulged. The one speaking to her through thought was none other than Neron Kaelid.

Without wasting much time, she replied telepathically.

<Sir, what do you mean?>

~I'll be attending this event, along with the Vice Head and Senior Lecturers. Announce that.~

<Y-you will, sir?! T-that's a great honor! I'm sure the students will be pleased!> Aloe's response was swift, full of shock.

The General Exhibition Event was primarily meant for the students. Most Lecturers didn't even bother attending since they were already quite experienced in their field.

It would be a waste of time attending an event to watch something displayed and explained when one practically knew of it beforehand.

'Does that mean what will be exhibited is something even the higher-ups are interested in?' Aloe's inner thoughts raced.

As she began to get excited, the lady couldn't have predicted the next words that came.

~Also, the Exhibitor for this event has changed. It's no longer Professor Maro~

<Oh? Who, then?>

Aloe already knew it had to be someone of great interest since Neron and the upper cadres of Ainzlark Academy were going to show up.

~It's Jared Leonard. Introduce him well~

With that, the connection was cut.

'E-eh...?'

Aloe Vida's mind nearly broke.

Did she hear wrongly? Was she dreaming? Did Neron Kaelid just say the name of the man she most respected?

"HEEYYYYY!!! WE'RE WAITING!!!"

The loud voices of all the students poured out, snapping Aloe from her myriads of thoughts.

"A-ah, my apologies..."

Her body was already trembling at this point.

No longer did she feel like the confident and powerful Professor, but her current state was no different from the students—no, even greater.

'He's back...'

She was beyond excited.

'... He's coming!'

With eyes glimmering with unrivaled anticipation, Aloe proceeded to resume her duties.

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Chapter 322: The Hero Of Ainzlark

"WHOHOOOOO!!!"

Loud cheers and applause emanated from the students as the honored guests arrived.

By honored guests, they were the Headmaster, Vice Head, and three Senior Lecturers.

They appeared on the elevated platform that hovered above the stage—similar to the position that Judges had during tournaments.

Taking their positions; five seats on a floating surface, the guests of honor smiled at the students.

Aloe was excited, seeing how the presence of so many dignitaries increased the morale of everyone in the hall.

But that wasn't all.

Suddenly, the hall became saturated with Lecturers.

Usually, only a handful would be present —to make sure the students behaved themselves within the Hall. However, Aloe could see about ninety percent of the teaching staff as well as several non-academic personnel, scattered across the Hall.

More were still coming in too.

'They're all here to see Jared! Kyaaaa! I can't wait!' Aloe Vida squealed internally.

The students whispered among themselves, also shocked by the presence of so many grown-ups. They didn't need a special announcement to know that this General Exhibition Event would be different from others.

"Prepare yourselves, everyone!"

Aloe could no longer refer to the audience as students. Among those who looked at her were seniors and superiors. As the moderator, she had to read the room very well.

"Our Exhibitor today is someone who is known well among all the Lecturers of Ainzlark Academy. Even you students know his name very well!"

Everyone was quiet —almost religiously —as they anticipated Aloe's announcement.

"He is a man who has achieved the impossible. He possesses an all-encompassing ability in Magic, Martial Arts, and even Scholarship. He is the epitome of perfection, someone who is worth admiration and emulation, as well as the one whom I owe my very life to..."

It would seem the Moderator was forgetting herself a bit, displaying her personal bias toward the one who was being introduced.

"He is known as the Hero of Ainzlark, The Unofficial Ranker, The Best of the preceding Generation..."

The students could already guess whom Aloe was referring to at this point, and they burst out in murmurs of disbelief, shock, and great anticipation.

"No way!"

"Really?"

"Could it be?!"

Many voices leaked out, but Aloe's was louder.

"YESSSS! PLEASE LET US WELCOME... JARED LEONAAAARRRDDDD!!!"

As the audience was about to obey their moderator's admonishment, a most astounding sight unraveled before them.

A blue warp in space began forming beside Aloe Vida, and then someone proceeded from it.

He had blond hair, handsome features, and a bright smile on his face.

A mere glance at his person stole the hearts of the girls, while the boys were amazed by his incredible charisma and grand entrance.

His lips parted as he turned his attention to the Moderator who stood, frozen in her tracks.

"Miss Vida... it's been a while..."

"J-Jared! It's so good to finally see you!" She exclaimed, nearly bowing her head in his presence.

The sight of an older lady being so flustered and undignified before the newcomer made all the students realize just how much value he had.

He was the great Jared Leonard, after all!

"Oh, that's fine. I'm happy to see you're doing well, and... how much you've grown."

She nodded and bowed once again.

"T-this much is nothing. If not for —"

"AHM!" Someone cleared his throat.

The sound came from above —from Neron.

Both Moderator and Exhibitor smiled sheepishly once Neron gave another cough, showing that his message had been passed conveyed perfectly.

"We'll talk later."

Upon hearing this, her heart fluttered.

"Y-yes. I will be waiting. I should take my leave now."

"Cool." Jared Leonard nodded at her, smiling reassuringly.

Aloe walked off the stage, unable to contain the smile of glee that appeared on her face as she disappeared from sight.

Stealing one last look at him, the woman's heart raced.

'What will he show us? What will he tell me? I can't wait!'

Running off, Aloe decided to quickly get a seat for herself among the audience so she could get a decent view of her savior in action.

'This is quite interesting...'

My eyes scanned the room, and I observed the Mana Cores and power levels of everyone around me.

It was surprising.

I mean, I was also surprised when I saw Aloe had already reached the Gold Stage, but that was in a good way.

This was quite bad.

'They're all too weak!'

At this rate, even with a good educational system, the graduates produced would not be the best.

'Just look at their faces...'

They all had excited gleams in their eyes. The kind one would have when they saw some fantastic display of fireworks or maybe some rare creature.

Only a few students had the thirst for knowledge and power displayed in their expressions.

'We'll have to change that...'

It would be easy to conjure up some neat spells or show some of the Magic tools I had been developing. But... if they simply enjoyed the show and returned to their weak ways after, there would be no point.

To ensure real change, I needed participation.

"Greetings, everyone. My name is Jared Leonard, and I will be your Exhibitor for today."

'This sure brings back memories...'

I taught several lectures and seminars in my past life. While I didn't know half as much as now, nor did I have true power or confidence in my personal ability, I still managed to pull off decent lectures.

'Compared to then... this should be a cinch!'

"For my exhibition, I will need volunteers. If you're interested, raise your hands."

As expected, quite a number of students did.

My lips formed a wide smile as I stared at the eager audience.

"I have to warn you, though... it will be quite dangerous."

Once I said this, a good number of hands dropped. Some were immediate, while others drooped slowly.

Eventually, only a small fraction of determined students remained. Among them was one of the students I encountered this morning.

'Perfect.'

"Are you certain? It's not too late to back out now!"

None of them dropped their hands.

'Hmm, let's see... ten, fifteen, twenty-five, thirty-one. Thirty-one, uh? That's fair enough.'

"Now, then... everyone who has chosen to volunteer should prepare themselves."

I could sense some fear and anticipation mixed in their reactions.

"You'll all be fighting me."

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Chapter 323: A Bit Of Motivation

In an Academy brimming with over five hundred students, only Thirty-one students were willing to participate in my little game.

'Very well.'

With the snap of my fingers, all the kids who raised their hands were teleported to the stage.

"W-wha —?!" Many voices of disbelief sprang from the audience.

Their reactions were expected.

Teleportation/Transportation Magic had not been perfected in the world of Magic yet. Only short distances could be traveled, and it took a great deal of Mana.

It was very rare for a person to teleport one individual somewhere —as well as downright impossible to do the same for thirty-one people.

'Well, using the Arcana's help makes this sort of like cheating...'

It was worth the use, though. After all, even if I didn't have the attention of some of them before... my actions had drawn them all to me.

"You will all be fighting me." I smiled at the students who were lined up before me, on the stage.

Their flustered and utterly surprised reactions were priceless.

"W-we can't do that!"

"We don't stand a chance!"

"Is this really an Exhibition?"

'And here I thought they were brave ones for choosing to raise their hands... disappointing.'

"I-I'll do it!" One person finally blurted out.

It was the kid I saw just this morning. A smile appeared on my face the moment I saw his determined expression.

'Now that's the spirit.'

"M-me too!"

"I'll fight too!"

"L-let's do this!"

I nodded, satisfied that they were finally gaining morale.

"Alright, then. Let us begin."

>FWOOOOOSSSSHHHH!!!<

The students rushed at me from all directions, coordinating themselves perfectly.

I had given them ten minutes to prep themselves, and in that time they had devised something beautiful.

With fluid teamwork, thirty students encircled me —covering both flanks and my rear.

Of course, a few bombarded me in my front to serve as a distraction. A frontal assault was going to be evaded or blocked, but that was most likely what they were going for.

'Their tactics and impeccable use of teamwork are good. Ainzlark taught them well...'

The problem was power.

>SHUUUUUUUUU!<

Before the spells —fire, earth, water, wind, etc. —hit me, they dissipated into nothing.

'Their output is too weak...'

No matter how hard they tried, none of them could beat me, but I already knew that. Reducing the level of my barrier to only stop low-level attacks was my handicap to them, but... it seemed like that was too much.

"Hmm... is this the best that Ainzlark Students have to offer?"

I heard some tongues click in annoyance. It seemed my words got to them.

>FSHUUUUUU!!!<

Suddenly, a large Magic Circle appeared underneath me. It was crimson, and based on the properties I sensed, the spell that was going to be used belonged to a lower-class Advanced level.

'Hm... so they were merely stalling for this, uh?'

The students on my flanks and rear were now at a standstill, all infusing their Mana to charge the circle that was forming underneath me.

The spell was going to erupt at any moment, and since my barrier was not built to handle it, the damage was going to reach me.... or not.

'Alright, I've seen what I wanted to. Let's stop now...'

>VWUUUSSSHHH!<

A burst of energy surged from my body, encompassing the whole stage. Instantly, the Magic Circle dissipated, and all the Mana of the students suddenly vanished.

'E-EH?!'

They all sank to their knees instantly, shocked and completely beaten.

"That's the end of that. You all lost."

With the snap of my fingers, they all vanished and returned to their respective seats.

'As expected, all of them were Magic Users. What about Martial Artists?'

The audience was staring at me, dumbfounded. They were anticipating an explanation.

'Sorry to disappoint, but...'

"Anyone else wants to try? Maybe Martial Artists this time?'

No one responded.

"Well, that's unfortunate. I was thinking of telling you the secret of that special stuff I used if there was anyone who would be able to at least reach me, but..."

For a moment, the audience went uneasy and gave in to complaint.

"Isn't that impossible?"

"This is meant to be an Exhibition!"

"Yeah! You should just show and teach us!"

"Isn't he being too unreasonable?"

"I'm curious, though. What spell did he use to completely stop them?"

"Dumbass, we're all curious!"

I smiled, watching the uncooperative students look at me with slight annoyance. It was certain that they simply wanted me to show them something amazing, and then explain everything to them.

That was all what the ones before me had ever done.

'... And that's why they're in this state.'

Since they were simply watching from afar off, there would have been very little emotional attachment to the topic. However, for those who had fought me, I was certain that none of them would be the same after this Exchange.

'I'm not looking to change everyone. Only those who will take the first step...'

Magic wasn't for everyone. The same applied to other Arts.

Even in the world of Magic, not everyone was interested in fighting. There were so many diverse fields of Magic. However, these were dangerous times.

The strong would devour the weak. Perhaps it was time that these students realized that.

'And what's with saying it's impossible? They just don't want to think!'

Even though I was a kid, didn't I fight with a Demon Lord? Compared to that, wasn't this something very trivial?

There was no risk or harm. It was an opportunity to learn, yet many shied away from it.

'With the way they are now, they won't ever match up to the previous generation...'

And that was something I refused to accept.

Society was meant to be progressive. Magic, Martial Arts, Innovations; everything was supposed to improve with the passage of time.

"I see... how disappointing," I said, shaking my head as I watched the confused students.

"Since there are no volunteers..."

There was one last thing I could try out.

"... I'll be taking my leave now. Consider the earlier match your exhibition."

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Chapter 324: The Secrets Of Success

"WHAAAAAATTT?!" A deafening roar of dissatisfaction surged forth.

My poker face told the audience that I wasn't the least bit fazed by their noise.

"You all wanted an exhibition, right? I just gave you one. Isn't that enough?"

They wanted to sit back, relax, and enjoy the wonders of Magic and whatnot, rather than actively learn. That wasn't the path I would encourage.

"B-but you didn't even explain anything!"

"How are we supposed to understand anything from that?"

"This isn't how it's supposed to go!"

Their voices climaxed, making me sigh in slight annoyance.

"I told you already... if you want answers... come and get them!"

I wasn't going to tell them something so easy. If I did that, they wouldn't know its value.

"Do you know the purpose of this Exhibition? Of Ainzlark Academy?"

Suddenly, there was silence.

My sharp voice snapped at them all, causing the immature individuals who remained glued to their seats to grow docile.

"You are meant to learn, yes. However... it doesn't stop there."

This was something fundamental—an element one could only learn on their own. It was usually brought about by inspiration. However, if that factor didn't work, there were two other critical elements that could do the same.

— Failure... and despair!

"You are meant to desire change, progression, and ultimately, surpass what has been shown. The purpose of showing you something isn't for admiration, but to spark a hunger in you. However, I do not sense any of that among you people."

It was harsh and condescending; I knew...

"You are all weak. That's fine. I was once like you, however..."

I didn't know anything about these students...

"... I didn't remain weak. It doesn't matter how small your talent is, or how minute your skill is..."

I simply refused to believe that certain humans were exempt from success.

"The Hall Of Remembrance shows us the list of Ainzlark's Top Honored Graduates..."

Did these students even notice, or were they too caught up with useless rumors about me?

"Of all the people who were written there, one is a person called Lewis Griffith. I am certain you all know his story quite well. He was inept, someone with no hope for the future!"

Yet, such an individual—without a precedent—was able to revolutionize Magic. Yet... these sheltered ones were complaining?

"If that isn't enough for you all, then you should look at yet another name on the List! His name is Jerry Keller!"

That boy was someone who worked tirelessly to achieve his objectives.

He was weaker than those whom he desired to stand with, but... he desired progress. He acted upon that desire, and he was able to stand among the immortalized ones within Ainzlark.

"Rather than getting caught up with the 'Unofficial Ranker' business, why don't you look up to someone like that as your role model? But you won't do that. Do you know why?"

The answer was simple.

"You all love greatness... but would do nothing to achieve it. The allure of someone who was able to be overpowered at such a young age inspires you, and you remain stagnant in a delusion that perhaps only talent determines success."

Even if the Class System had been banished, it seemed like people didn't change so easily.

"I was a Lower-Class Student. I had a White Mana Core..."

I knew it was unfair to compare myself to these students, but...

"... But I didn't stop thinking! I thought outside the box. I didn't follow the path carved out by many. You will never achieve distinction and progress by going mainstream! I simply chose to use all I had learned to become innovative.... and I still am!"

Now, I was certain many would begin to resist my logic, however...

"Is it impossible, really?"

Mass Teleportation. World Expansion. Reality Alteration. Absolute Resurrection. Immortality. Anti Magic...

These were all things deemed to be impossible, based on the current point of society. However...

"This seems like common sense, but... it seems no one ever thinks about it. Nothing is impossible in this world."

The fact that it had been conceived in the mind meant that it had the possibility of coming to fruition.

"Magic makes the impossible a reality. Isn't that the whole point?"

Something so simple had eluded so many.

However, I wasn't going to be biased.

"For the Martial Artists and Scholars... do not believe that Magic Users are superior to you in the slightest."

Those weren't empty words.

'Their eyes tell me they want proof.'

"Why don't I show you something interesting?"

I could see their faces brimming with anticipation.

"I will ask again... does anyone want to volunteer?"

'Words have power, uh?'

Children were blank canvases, so easy to dye in any color.

After my speech, over half of the students raised their hands. Of course, the stage was enough to accommodate all of them, so I teleported all to my presence.

This time, Martial Artists wanted to take the lead.

"I'll fight with Martial Arts this time."

Using my Spatial Magic, I brought out a sword from a storage space that existed in another dimension I created.

It was this very ability that allowed me to transport so many Demon Beasts after I killed them. I also had several tools and treasures within.

'There are limitations, but... it's quite useful.'

I had to thank 'The Tower' Arcana for this innovation.

"Now, then..." With my blade still in its sheath, I stared at the determined students.

"... COME!"

The results were the same.

Every single one of my attackers ended in crushing defeat... all in a single strike.

Even as they shot Spells, or used various techniques of theirs, I cut through them all in a single slash and blew them all away.

It was an undisputed, one-sided victory.

Once I was done with them, I teleported all the students to their seats.

"Next. Scholars!"

This was a tricky part.

The Path of Scholarship wasn't something that could be easily taught or tested. So, to pass my message across...

"Did you know...?"

... I resorted to one of the innovative theories I came up with.

— Anti-Magic.

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Chapter 325: Aura Of Despair

"N—NO WAY!"

The Scholars began gawking.

Of course, the theory I gave wasn't exactly functional, but the very concept of it was alluring. That was what mattered.

"Do you all realize it now? It's not strength that makes you qualified for progress. It's conscious efforts at progress that make you strong."

I was sure they were all curious about how I became this way.

"I am only fifteen, you know? Yet... I doubt anyone here could beat me—that includes your Lecturers. Do you know why?"

'It's because I reincarnated!'

There was no way I would say that, though. Sometimes it was necessary to lie in order to spur the right kind of emotion from kids.

"It's because I thought of things differently. In essence, I was nothing like you. The same applies to everyone whose name was written in the Hall Of Remembrance. You'd do well never to forget that."

While it was true that the right choice of words could transform a child, there was a limit to its power. That was why I had to show them with action. Still, even that wasn't enough.

I needed something to create a lasting impression in their hearts.

'Now, then... let's spur them a little...'

"Kahn..." I whispered.

Suddenly... a chill began to form in the air.

>VWWWUUUUUUUSSSSSHHHHHH!!!<

Before anyone could react, the aura emanating from me permeated the entire hall.

"U-U-UAAAARRRGHHHHHHHHH!!!" Everyone erupted in deep fear and absolute terror.

The darkness that squirmed about caused some students to pass out, while others gave maddening screams.

Some couldn't even speak. They simply shuddered violently. I heard chattering sounds of teeth; I smelled a faint whiff of ammonia.

The Hall had suddenly been transformed into a place of utter despondency.

"Aura Of Despair: Stage 5"

There were nine stages. Using only the middle area was enough to drive everyone—both Lecturers and Students alike—into a useless state.

"That's enough, Kahn."

With that, the hellish atmosphere ceased, and sanity returned to the hall.

"Do you understand now? This is the world that awaits you."

The illusion that these students had; it was time to shatter it.

"Do not believe for a second that you have a choice. It's either you improve... or you die. That's the nature of this world."

Surely, they knew about the Demonic Disturbance. Soon, the looming War would be revealed to them as well.

There was no room for weakness.

"This world does not require more useless lumps of meat. You were privileged to attend this Academy. It's an opportunity many people will never have till they die."

They needed to understand one fundamental truth.

"To someone whom much is given... much is also expected! Do not imagine, for one second, that you have a choice. You do not."

Their entitled mindset had to be shattered.

"You must all become strong. You will rise above your predecessors and attain far greater heights than they ever could."

That was the true goal of civilization.

"Is that possible? Someone could ask that question. However... I am living proof of my words."

After all... in all the history of this Kingdom... no one was as strong as me when they were my age.

Reincarnation or not; it remained the truth.

"That feeling you just had... was the same that your predecessors had when they faced the Shadow Demons during that incident. Seventeen perished in that struggle. It was a hellish night."

Yet, these little ones spoke of the whole incident with sparks in their eyes, thinking of a hero who rescued the Academy from destruction.

"I, too, was scared. I wanted to run away. It hurt like hell. It was overwhelming. But, do you know why we all fought? Why we all won?"

It was one simple fact.

"We had no choice!"

And that was my lesson to these people/

"Now, then... do we have any volunteer who still wants to try?"

Silence.

'Of course...'

This was it. The lowest point.

No sane student would raise their hand. I didn't expect any to.

Right now, they were all supposed to reflect. They had to wallow in despair. Only by achieving failure and hitting rock bottom would they be capable of generating enough propelling force to rise.

"Why don't I give it a go?" A voice came from above me.

'What?!'

Suddenly, someone came descending upon the stage.

'Why are you...?'

My body throbbed a little as I stared at the confident man who was standing before me.

"HEADMASTER NERON!" The students were just as surprised.

"What are you trying to do?" I asked, raising my brows.

It was a bit baffling. Why would he interrupt my education process? Surely, he must have told me to 'exhibit' while knowing what kind of person I was. Was he offended that I took things a bit too far?

"I can't hold myself back any longer. After that aura you unleashed earlier..."

'Ah, so he's upset?'

"... I just can't contain my urge to fight you!"

For a moment, I paused—letting Neron's words completely sink in.

'Of course! What was I expecting?'

"So, Jared... what do you say? I raised my hand... and you didn't specify that only students could volunteer!"

Well, he wasn't wrong about that.

'Should I just take him on?'

As tempting as it was, I had to consider things carefully. I wanted to fight Neron as badly as he did, but... we had to consider several factors.

"Don't worry. Nothing will happen to —"

"If you're thinking of holding back, then forget it. There was no point in fighting Neron when he was holding back."

"But... wouldn't you also be holding back?"

'Tch. Fair point...'

There were many cards I couldn't play at the moment.

'Now that I think about this... our fight could be instructive for the students. Neron probably sees that too, right?'

One glance at the excited look in his eyes told me that he was simply concerned about our battle—nothing more.

"Huu... very well."

I had nothing to lose, and quite a few things to gain.

"I suppose it's time I showed you a little something I've been working on."

There was a reason I had Fusion Cores—a mix of Mana and Miasma. Showing it to Neron, and the rest of the audience, would be nice.

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Chapter 326: Jared Vs Neron [Pt 1]

Silence pervaded the atmosphere, but it was hardly stale.

Students and lecturers watched the stage fervently, with bated breaths. Their eyes were locked on the two individuals who stood opposite themselves —smiling at each other with pure confidence.

The Hero and Unofficial Ranker Of Ainzlark...

... And the Headmaster of the same institution.

Gulps and tense breaths spread across the audience.

Their thoughts all rang of the same thing.

'Who is going to win?'

'How ignorant...'

I couldn't blame most of the people who were witnessing this, though. None of them had ever seen Neron at full strength, which was why they could entertain the thought that I had a chance.

'Well, maybe I could turn the tides with my Arcanas...'

But, I wasn't going to be using those in this match. Based on what little information I knew about Neron, he surpassed me in Mana quantity, and even bested me in overall quality —since he had too much.

I could close the gap with Spellcraft, but the second factor also came into play.

—Experience!

Neron was as shrewd as me. Even without reincarnating, he figured out so many things at such an age. The fact that he had more Familiars than I had ever seen in my entire two lifetimes proved that he had lots of experience in the Magic department.

'I bet he's older than he looks...'

Then there was his pesky Original Magic.

'Who knows what else he's hiding...'

Out of ten, I could only see myself winning once —and that was being generous. Still, since I had just preached about making the impossible possible through Magic, I intended to lead by example.

'I won't know unless I try!'

"Let's set some ground rules for the match, first." I retorted, smiling at the grinning man.

How shameless could he be? Openly showing his excitement like this...

"Firstly, there will be no use of any Magic Items. Secondly, there will be no use of Original Magic. Thirdly, we'll limit the use of Magic to the Highest Tier for Advanced Magic. I'm afraid this place won't be able to handle anything higher."

"We could use a barrier to shield the place. That way, no one gets hurt." Neron interjected.

'Tch. Sly guy!'

"Very well. We can use Peak Level Magic... but not Transcendental..."

Magic Spells had cadres, and usually, the highest one could achieve as a Mage was the Peak Level. Even then, only a few ever arrived at this juncture.

However, one realm existed above it...

... The Transcendental Level!

Spells that defied logic and even bent the laws of nature were classified under this. Neron's Original Magic could be classified under this.

The Arcanas were also Transcendental.

In essence, this Realm was so dangerous that even barriers would not be enough to contain their power. I was certain Neron understood that.

"That's fine..." He murmured.

'Good. If it's like this, then I can manage...'

I had long given up on fighting Neron at full strength —at least, not unless I was ready to go all out.

But, I wasn't in a position to do that just yet.

"Since we're done with setting the rules, shall we begin?"

Neron and I both erected respective barriers to encompass the stage. Two translucent veils covered the stage, nearly transparent in nature.

'This should work...'

The stage was large enough for even a thousand people to stand on —with room to spare. Certainly, it would be large enough to contain us, right?

"Then... let us begin..."

Neron and I stared at each other with excited expressions.

"... NOW!"

>BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM!!!<

The entire platform we stood on shattered instantly.

An explosive gust of wind spread across the stage as we sharply lunged at each other.

My body had radically transformed —coated in a dense amount of Mana. Several lights danced around me —all condensed forms of Mana. They served as my support, and each had enough power to rival an experienced Mage.

In a fight with Neron, they would be next to useless, but they were better than nothing.

'I have Familiars stored in them, so they'll be in control of the respective orbs.'

>WHOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOSSSHHHHHH!!!<

I swung a blade that I manifested from a condensed quality of Mana.

>CHING!<

It crashed upon a dense barrier made by Neron, breaking the weapon instantly.

"Come on, Jared!" Neron said, lunging at me with a highly volatile punch.

His attack pattern was simple, but I could feel the amount of force behind it.

"Tch!"

>WHOOO MMM!!!<

I dodged his offensive maneuver, sending a bunch of orbs charging at Neron.

They jointly cast a rain of highly destructive lightning, decimating the area.

>BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMMMMMM!!!<

If the barrier hadn't existed, I was certain that the entire hall would have been blown apart.

"Hahaha! That's more like it!" Neron yelled, swiftly emerging from the thick smoke and dust.

His body had changed —shrouded in multiple colors and special features.

'He's using Grand Fusion Mode already?'

I could notice at least a thousand distinct features from Neron's body alone —and even several more Mana qualities that differed from one another.

'He's using that many, uh?'

>WHOOOOOOO SSSHHHH!<

As I was still in thought, Neron appeared in front of me.

"Wha —"

And then he was behind me.

"Tsk tsk."

Before I could respond to his taunt, a bright blast of multiple mixed energies shot at me with immense speed.

>BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMM!!!<

I was thrust to the ground, but quickly regained composure and took to the sky.

Thanks to my little spheres that automatically went into defense, I would have been in quite the pickle.

'He's faster than me now...'

With a grin, I decided to elevate my form, utilizing the power of a dozen Familiars —all Wisps!

>VWUUUSHHH!<

Energy swirled around me, and I achieved a glowing state, brimming with fiery energy and power.

As the brilliant display of a rainbow, I floated in the air.

The orbs around me had increased in size and number, granting me more versatility and efficiency in combat.

In my current Grand Fusion state, I could keep up —for now. However... this was only a prelude.

'The actual show is yet to come!'

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Chapter 327: Jared Vs Neron [Pt 2]

"You've grown, Jared. Those twelve Familiars are quite strong! They're individually stronger than the three thousand I'm currently using."

'This monster...' I nearly coughed.

Even if I pushed myself, I couldn't use over a hundred at a time.

Just how did Neron become this kind of person? Was he naturally inclined to Magic, or...?

"Here I come!"

>WHOOOOOSSSHHH!!!<

Once again, he vanished from his position and moved to my right flank. Unlike last time, however, I could see his movements.

'A feint?'

Using pure speed, I dodged his attack and swiftly changed positions.

He chased me nearly immediately, devastating the area even more. At this point, there was no longer anything around us that was intact.

'I would have used Teleportation, but that's against the rules...'

Using my 12 Wisps, I entered into Elemental Chamber, coating myself in 12 Distinct Elemental Properties.

Other than the five basic ones I initially developed, additional attributes like metal, acid, ice, etc. Were implemented, granting me greater offensive capabilities.

'Grand Harmonious Storm!'

With a sleight of hand, I sent a mix of twelve attributes charging at Neron in a highly concentrated blast.

>BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM!!!<

Once again, the entire area shook.

'Now, I'm beginning to feel confined...'

Neron easily passed through the attack —as his barrier was strong enough to protect him.

I kept sending blasts at him, and he returned the favor —placing us at a stalemate.

'Haa... alright, this should be enough...'

Neron seemed to share my thoughts, as he stopped his flurry of attacks and created some distance between us.

Now a couple of meters from each other, we both smiled. Neither of us was spent.

'I've exhausted myself a bit, but this guy doesn't even seem tired at all...'

His body fundamentally functioned in a way that placed it in a loop, allowing him to escape negative status conditions. However, since we agreed to discard the use of his Original Magic, that was probably not in effect.

His current state could only be attributed to the fact that he was simply that strong. Battles of this level were not enough to tire him out.

"Looks like you're ready to begin for real? I want to see that new power that you have, Jared." Neron retorted.

"Oh? Why are you in a rush?" I smiled ruefully.

"Well, I'm getting bored. Plus, we had better end this quickly, right?"

Well, he wasn't wrong.

There were more important matters to address, after all.

"You're right. We better end this soon... for their sakes too..." I stated, looking at the ones who were watching the show.

One glance at the audience was enough to tell me that they were completely mesmerized and utterly broken by the brief exchange between my mentor and me.

'Just how will they react to what's to come?'

"I'll be getting a bit more serious now... so, let's see what you're going to do."

Neron's tone was enough of a warning. He wasn't joking at all.

'Don't tell me...!'

The energy within him swelled, and I felt Neron's Mana climb to an unbelievable state.

I gulped unconsciously, feeling my body shiver. In my current state, I was not going to stand a chance.

"That's enough... you've all done well..."

Instantly, all my Familiars retracted their abilities, leaving me bare.

With my flapping white cloak and my enchanted attire, I felt insurmountable pressure from my opponent. It was a familiar experience...

His hair turned white, and lightning-like energy danced around him. In addition to his Grand Fusion, he was adding something equally dangerous. Just how unreasonable could he be?

"Grand Fusion Mage Mode."

Something so absurd was manifesting before me.

"Why don't we end it with one final move?" He grinned, already raising his hand to gather an unbelievable amount of energy.

"Sure... let's do that."

'Just as expected...'

Now that it had come to this, it was time to reveal my hand.

"Kahn... let's do this."

My Mana Cores —starting from my primary one —brimmed with energy, and I was coated with a phenomenal amount of power.

Unlike previously, the nature of the energies that were surging from me was of two conflicting natures.

Mana... and Miasma!

Black flashes of light lashed around, dancing with their white counterpart. At the center of these two opposites, I floated with absolute confidence.

Kahn pumped out the Miasma locked within me, and I controlled the supply of my Mana, generating absolute equilibrium.

"I'm not waiting for you!" Neron grinned, already done with his preparation.

Sitting atop his palm was a massive ball that shone with multiple colors. It was coated with Neron's white Mana, but the multiple attributes of his numerous familiars squirmed within the huge orb.

It was as gigantic as a thousand human heads combined —brimming with enough power to easily destroy Ainzlark Academy —and even beyond.

'This guy... so that's why he was against the ban of Peak-Level Magic...'

Still, at this point, it was useless.

"Take my Grand Nova!" Neron excitedly declared, sending the massive orb of destruction my way.

My face was unfazed as I looked at the looming blast.

I was currently not using any Magic to enhance or defend myself —I couldn't.

While utilizing Spellcraft, Mana, and Miasma, to form something unique, I couldn't activate any Magic myself —at least not at the moment.

Why?

"Won't you defend yourself?" Neron asked with a bright grin.

I was certain that this Spell of his would consume any barrier I wanted to throw at this juncture.

Which was why... I wasn't even interested in defense.

'Neron... you're curious about my newfound ability, right?'

My eyes went in the direction of my watchers for one last time; observing their confused, fearful, and overwhelmed expressions.

'I'm sure they're all interested too...'

Well, everyone had better keep their eyes peeled. After all, this was another example of how nothing was impossible.

If Magic made anything possible, then anything that would be considered impossible was probably in a realm against Magic.

There was only one word to describe such a concept.

>VWUUUUUUUMMMMMMMMMM!!!!<

Instantly, the Grand Nova disappeared — turning into tiny particles of light, before completely vanishing.

That wasn't all that happened.

Neron's Mage Mode evaporated, and his Grand Fusion Form was completely deactivated.

All the Magic in the area —including the barrier that covered the ruined stage —shattered and was rendered null.

This was something that could only be achieved by something of equal opposition to Magic.

'You look surprised, Neron. Are you satisfied now? Did my show intrigue you?' I grinned, watching Neron's eyes bulge in surprise.

It would be my first time seeing him so surprised... as well as intrigued.

'It seems you understand it now.'

The power I obtained from the sublime fusion of Mana and Miasma...

... Anti-magic!

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Chapter 328: Great Expectations

What would happen when two contrasting elements collide?

Usually, they would simply conflict, and it would cause an imbalance—friction between the opposing parties.

However... what if one managed to find the perfect way to merge the two? If that was possible, then the product of such would be something completely different from the two initial sources.

Anti-Magic... a concept that stemmed from the equal merge between Mana and Miasma.

Joining equal properties—quality and quantity—of the two elements into one, would create a null effect. In essence, both would cancel each other out.

By utilizing this properly, infusing it with my Spellcraft ability, I could spread the null effect through a wide distance, completely eradicating the use of Magic within my vicinity.

That was the new source of power I had developed from the union between Mana and Miasma... a feat that had been deemed impossible by all.

"Looks like I win, Neron."

My mentor gave a slight nod as we fell to the ground, having the effects of our Magic wear off.

I could control the area of influence of Anti-magic, but on a wide scale, it was simply easier for me to affect everything in my surroundings—me included.

"It would seem so..." Neron gave a calm answer, touching the ground with his feet.

At least he wasn't a sore loser.

"My, my, look at the devastation we caused..."

The barrier shielding the students had long perished, thanks to the corroding effect of my last move. With the veil completely removed, the students' expressions became clearer to me.

"I'll handle this mess. You should complete your address to them." Neron smiled, activating his Original Magic on the spot.

His hair sparked white, and a surge of energy burst forth from within him. The Mana he exuded enveloped the destroyed area, and suddenly, time began to reverse—at least for what had been wrecked.

'As expected... I can't get used to it...'

The fact that he could do this much without the aid of an Arcana showed just how immensely powerful Neron was. Would I be able to get to his level someday?

'Pfft. What a useless question...' I laughed at myself.

It wasn't even worth asking.

My eyes scoured the seated audience, lecturers and teachers alike, and I addressed them with great vigor.

"Do you understand now?"

There was a gap they had to fill.

I was certain that many of them felt awfully weak and lacking after watching the exchange between the both of us. They felt so overwhelmed that it was easier to convince themselves that it was an impossible feat.

—That they could not achieve it.

However...

"Magic is meant to evolve. If you can not make it progress, then why do you study it? What's the point of walking in the footsteps of others for the rest of your lives? Original Magic teaches every Mage one thing... personal identity!"

Their unease reduced.

"You all have the potential to become good at something. It may not be combat, but alchemy, or even engineering. However the case may be, all of you have something you can excel in and push forward."

That was enough motivation for anyone.

"So, why don't you get to it? I want to see the names of all those who are in that hall... completely erased."

New names. New people. Fresh blood.

That was what the world needed.

Whether in the realm of Magic, Martial Arts, or Scholarship. Eventually, we were all walking toward the same goal.

"Become the best!"

With that finally said, I teleported away from the stage, catching a glimpse of many students—some weeping, and some steeling their faces in resolve. I was certain that a lot of them would revert to their old state within a short while.

But, among the ones who witnessed the show, I was assured that a few would emerge and carry on the torch of excellence.

'I look forward to that.'

>VWUUUUSSSHHHHH<

With Jared Leonard gone, the hall fell into a deathly silence.

For a moment, no one said anything. They simply stared empty at the place where Jared had previously stood.

The repair of the stage was complete, and Neron now climbed the platform to address the students. The smile on his face was uncharacteristic of the usual lull Headmaster.

"I certainly hope you got something from the Exhibition. I know I did."

The students had to admit it.

Even though his methods were unconventional, he passed his message across to everyone.

Aloe, from her seat, trembled in delight and excitement. Even with Jared gone, she couldn't get rid of how severe the experience was for her.

As expected of the one who saved her from death!

The Senior Lecturers and Vice Head, who had been watching everything, were also amazed and completely overwhelmed by Jared's entire display.

From his Mass Teleportation, to his Aura of Despair, and the match with Neron; it was clear that Jared had reached a height that far outclassed any of them.

In merely three years, the mere student of Ainzark had become a Magic User beyond the ArchMage Level.

What manner of monster was he?

Even with everyone's awe for Jared, there was one thing that lurked in their mind, soiling their image of him.

"You know..."

A fundamental error the boy had made.

"... He never explained anything to us."

Anti-Magic. Mass Teleportation. Martial Art Skills. In-depth Knowledge of Magic Theories.

Jared Leonard never explained a single thing.

All they gained from the Exhibition was an experience they would never forget. How a 15-year-old boy... could attain the heights of masters

'So, this is how much you've grown...' A petite girl smiled to herself as she viewed the whole incident from a screen.

Anabelle couldn't make it to the Exhibition, but she had observed the entire event. It wasn't an understatement to say that she was completely bewildered by the display Jared gave everyone.

"Just when I thought I had improved greatly..."

A saddened smile crept upon her face, but it didn't last very long. Soon after, Ana's bright demeanor returned.

Inside the office when she sat, she smiled widely and focused her gaze on the screen.

In the background, several automatons flew about and crept around. They were busy with several things, building something for Ana.

She ignored them and simply focused on the boy at the center of the screen.

"I'll also be trying my best, Jared! Until I can stand by your side... until I can surpass Lewis Griffith himself!"

Unknown to the clueless girl... her two rivals were one and the same.

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Chapter 329: Hidden Familiar

"How did you do it?"

Neron was looking at me intently. The excitement in his pitch-black eyes was nearly swallowing me whole as I stared into the endless abyss.

We were back at his office, seated opposite each other.

After the Exhibition, I teleported here and waited for him. Once he was done on his end, he sharply arrived as well. The moment our eyes met, that was the first question he asked.

'Well, I'm glad he's interested...'

My lips curled up in a grin and I explained the concept.

Mana and Miasma were contradicting elements that could never be completely fused. That was why the next best thing was to create a phenomenon by canceling them.

By harnessing the reactions they gave off, I could control the outcome to my advantage.

By the time I was done with my explanation, Neron was dazed.

"Amazing... you keep amazing me, Jared."

For Neron, who was probably the most ingenious person around—excluding me, since I reincarnated—he must have been completely flabbergasted by how I came up with the concept.

"To be honest, I owe you greatly for it..." I told him with a smile.

"Me? What are you talking about?"

I nodded.

It was true that without Neron, I would probably not have taken this path. If he hadn't given me that gift of his...

"I'll show you. Kahn..."

The moment I said this, a swirling pool of Miasma emanated from my body, and something began manifesting.

"You mean...?"

"Yes."

In a moment, the looming figure completely formed, revealing a being shrouded in darkness.

"It has been a while, Neron Kaelid."

"You are... that Shadow Demon...?"

I watched the exchange between the two of them with an amused smile. It wasn't the reunion I was looking forward to, but...

'... Oh, well!'

"Thanks to Kahn, I was able to cultivate Miasma alongside Mana. I made the guy my Familiar and corrupted a portion of my Mana Core to make a home for him."

Neron's face turned to me with an astonished look.

"But, wasn't that risky?"

"It was."

If Kahn had completely taken over my Mana Core, I wouldn't be able to utilize Mana as a source of energy. The best scenario would be me having to practice Magic with Miasma instead.

Since my body was more attuned to Mana, and I was a human, proactively using Miasma as a source of power would damage me.

Worst case scenario would mean death or losing control. If Kahn succeeded in possessing me, or I lost my sense of reason, it would be terrible. Dying was also something I didn't desire.

"Which is why I was careful," I replied with a smile.

I made sure not to try the whole thing out without precautions. Fortunately, everything worked out well.

"But, how much does he remember? From the way he spoke, he recollects our encounter..." Neron asked with concern.

"I remember everything," Khan replied this time.

His dark presence seemed to swell with pride the moment he made this comment. I merely smiled once he made this display.

"He does? But, how did you—?"

"I intentionally returned those memories to him."

Neron recoiled with shock once I gave my answer. His eyes showed that he needed more answers. Since I was planning on telling him, I went straight to the point.

"Familiars are simply the essence of those who have died. Their leftover will—a fraction of their Souls. That means they won't have the total abilities they had in their prime."

I couldn't have that!

Khan was a Demon Lord when he was alive. It would have been a waste to keep his weakened Soul as a Familiar.

"I made sure to repair his damaged soul as I absorbed his Miasma. Even a Soul fragment has the entire memories and potential ability of that being. By culturing it properly, I returned him to full strength. His memories were also restored as a result."

"Ohh, I see..."

Neron must have understood this already. He probably did the same for his Familiars.

"I know you're concerned that he could betray me now that his memories have returned, but..."

"I WOULD NEVER DO THAT!" Khan made an emotional outburst.

Neron and I looked in the floating being's direction.

"You are my master now. I owe everything to you!"

I nodded and flashed him an understanding smile.

"That's right. Khan is extremely loyal. He won't betray me."

"Is that so? Then, does that mean he would attack his fellows for you? Is he on the side of humanity?"

For a moment, an uncomfortable silence spread throughout the room. Neron and Kahn were eyeing themselves, obviously displaying their dissatisfaction with each other.

"He's not on humanity's side..."

Neron's brow furrowed once I said this.

"But, he's also not on the side of the Demons. He's simply on my side. That's all there is to it."

Surely, my mentor had to understand this much. His Familiars were the same way, after all.

"I get it. Since you say so, I'll trust your words." Neron shrugged slightly.

"But, the victims of that incident, and also the ones connected to the students who died... they may not be so understanding."

That too, was something I had foreseen.

Khan had claimed many lives during his raid. While I couldn't completely fault his actions now that I knew what happened, not many could handle the truth.

I would have revealed the same to Neron, but we were short on time. There was something more important to discuss.

'In the fullness of time, these things will be revealed naturally...'

"So, what was it that you wanted to see me for?" Neron took the hint and ended the conversation about Neron.

I smiled and commanded Kahn to return. In a swift motion, the Demon Lord Familiar returned to his home, leaving only me and the man I respected and feared most alone.

"It's about this..." I whispered, digging my hand into thin air.

Space parted, and I began poking my hand into another dimension—my special storage space.

Neron's expression was back to normal—stoic and calm.

He must have been expecting something spectacular, so he was steeling himself.

I began drawing my hand out of the warped space the moment I got what I wanted, bringing something from the other dimension.

"... Right here."

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Chapter 330: The Hermit

A card was locked between my two fingers, and it shone with golden brilliance.

"That is—!!!" Neron's calm outlook broke apart.

'That's right...!' My grin grew wider.

It was a present that I was going to give this man... something only he could utilize to its full potential.

"—An Arcana?!"

Not just any Arcana. It was one of the most difficult to use. It was also most instrumental in my three years of training...

... The Hermit Arcana!

During my time at the base made by my friends and me in my past life, I was able to spend at least over a hundred years in training and research.

It felt like time was moving so slowly that the world was still. I defied the laws of nature and exceeded my limits as a result of the extensive period I was granted.

But, that couldn't last forever.

All Arcanas—with certain exceptions—were not self-sufficient. They required some sort of energy for them to activate.

Without energy, they were simply cards with vast potential and dormant Magic circuits.

The Tower Arcana in my possession required the simple charge of Mana, making it easy for me to use.

The Devil Arcana of the Demon Race simply multiplied the surrounding Miasma it fed on, creating a self-sufficient atmosphere full of negative energy.

Unfortunately, the Hermit Arcana consumed something that had a steep cost.

—Mana Cores!

It consumed too many Mana Cores per use.

While its powers were well worth it, I couldn't sustain the use of the Arcana. The hundred years I spent in the base was only possible due to the Arcana's passive ability to store Mana over the years.

Over five hundred years of storing Mana only lasted me three years of use, and everything ran dry. I also had to support the effects of the Arcana with several artificial Mana Cores and Spellcraft.

If I hadn't, it may not have lasted a year.

Once I came to the realization of its greedy nature, the decision to give it away became much easier to make.

In my two lifetimes, there was only one person I knew who possessed enough fee to sustain the Hermit Arcana.

Neron Kaelid was his name.

"Here!" I said, throwing the card at the surprised man.

He caught it thanks to reflex, but Neron's eyes never left me. However, after a few seconds of holding the Card, I could see his expression change.

"This... it resonates with my Original Magic.

Of course!

That was the second reason I wanted Neron to have this Arcana.

"It utilizes Time Magic."

But, unlike Neron's Magic which was restricted in many ways, the Arcana interfered with the world itself. In essence, if he could completely control it... he could once again attain a higher realm.

"Jared... you're giving this to me? Why?" Neron's body quivered as he spoke.

"Because... I'm stuck."

"Stuck?"

"Yeah. I can't use that thing. So, when you figure out the kinks and everything... I'll ask you to teach me how you did it."

Even I had my limits.

I couldn't dedicate my entire time to learning something too complex.

'Since Neron is more specialized in that field, it'll be easier if he figures it out and tells me.'

Once that happened, I could make The Hermit's Magic my own.

"Huhuhu... Hehehehe... Kekekeke..."

My lips parted as I watched Neron chuckle in excitement.

"Well then, Jared, I accept this gift!"

I nodded.

'That's one out of four...'

Only three Arcanas were left in my possession.

The Tower

The Sun

And The Hanged Man.

Well, the latter was currently at work, so...

As for The Sun, I had plans for that.

"Now, I won't be bored for some time... to think you'd have Arcanas."

At least he was aware of their existence. As expected of someone as brilliant as Neron.

"I found them by chance... among other things."

Neron's face brightened up once I mentioned yet another interesting subject. He probably wanted me to speak some more, but that was about everything I would be giving him... at least alone.

>KNOCK<

>KNOCK<

>KNOCK<

The sudden sound of knocking caused both of us to turn to the entrance of Neron's office. Both of us knew who was standing at the other end of the door.

'They're finally here...'

"Come in!" I called out before Neron could even say anything.

I gave him a knowing look, revealing that their presence was required.

>CREAK<

The door opened slowly, welcoming three people to the office.

They were individuals that were were both acquainted with, and their assistance would be indispensable in my grand objective.

Neron and I welcomed them with warm smiles as they drew closer. They must have been curious and surprised when they received my message.

It was a last-minute decision to gather these three, but, based on all that I had observed, they would be perfect for the job.

"Ana. Miss Vida... and Mr. Maro... welcome."

It took a while to get everyone settled. There was a lounge in Neron's office, so we all moved there in order to accommodate everyone.

Once everyone was seated, their eyes were on me.

I had invited each of them because of particular skills I required.

"There's a particular project I need your assistance with."

Their eyes widened with both curiosity and surprise.

It was difficult to imagine that I would be challenged with an issue that they could solve. However, the most important factor in everything was time.

I didn't have enough time to do everything on my own. As a result, I needed to rely on humans during a moment like this.

"There's a device that I need your help to build."

It would be instrumental in ending the conflict that was about to unfold. Before the enemy could become an even bigger threat, I had to lay out all the groundwork.

Once I was done here, I would be leaving for the Capital to finalize my plans. This was currently the most important aspect of the plan—especially the endgame.

"I have the blueprint and a few core materials you will need to construct it, but... it'll take a great deal of time and energy."

The fate of the Kingdom—no, the whole world—was resting on the success and failure of the construct they were to create.

"Will you help me?"