

## SPELLCRAFT 451

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

#### Chapter 451: Unrivaled Power

Serah and Gerard were both strong—in raw power, they exceeded even me.

But, it was this very power they had that made them so rusty.

'They probably didn't need to learn advanced Martial Arts since they're already so strong.'

"Haaaaa!!!!!" A destructive beam of light flashed at me, but I easily dispersed its power with Spellcraft.

At that same instance, Gerard approached me with a terrifying punch.

I switched places with him and returned the favor with a storm of several Quinta-Storms.

"[Grand Blitz]" I added another Spell to the mix, sending him crashing down with injuries.

The explosion spread about the vast area as I watched from the sky.

'He'll heal from those wounds with his body...' While I was making this thought, Serah's swelling energy caught my attention, and I noticed she was already getting serious.

"I'll admit that you're annoying to beat. But, I refuse to believe that you're stronger than I am." Serah spoke, her face in a glare.

"Is that so?"

My dry response enraged her even more, making me have an even bigger idea about her personality.

'So, you want a strong opponent you can pummel, but you hate losing? Guess I'll show you...'

Considering her long-standing relationship with Neron, I was going to be considerate, but something about this situation felt exhilarating.

>VWUUUUUMMMMM<

She finally brought out her big gun—Original Magic: Invincible.

I felt the horrifying pressure of her existence, watching as she went further away from my reach.

Her power was more than immense—it was incalculable by my standards.

'She's too strong!' I smiled, still not intent on losing.

"Don't forget me!" Gerard growled from beneath me.

Once again, he transformed to his full form, flying majestically in his massive gait.

Both my right and left flanks were occupied by my opponents, and their unbelievable amount of power sandwiched me at the center.

If not for the barrier I placed around myself, I would definitely be crushed under the pressure.

"Let's see how you evade this!"

'I don't see how I can... Space isn't warping properly any longer.' My thoughts trailed.

The atmosphere had become oversaturated with their respective Mana, confusing Space itself.

I couldn't navigate and traverse the distance as a result of that annoying interference.

Since I wasn't fast or strong enough to resist, this was practically a dead end.

'I'm being pushed to the wall, eh?'

"I think that's enough joking around." Glancing at the two, grateful that they revealed their trump cards to me, I decided to play yet another one of mine.

>VWUUUUSSSHHH<

Both Serah and the Beast King instantly reverted to their former state—devoid of power.

"W-wha—?!" Their outbursts of shock filled the air, but I wasn't going to let their moment of confusion go to waste.

"[Vermillion Nova]."

By using my Memoir to combine Serah's Vermillion Burst with Neron's [Nova], a new Spell manifested.

The massive orb was now dyed in vermilion red and glowed ever so brightly—like the sun.

"You should have a taste."

I sent the initial shot to Serah, causing her to receive the highly volatile and destructive blow with barely any defense.

>BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM!!!<

Even though I was utilizing as little Mana as possible, it was still a highly volatile strike.

Once Serah fell with the explosion, I turned toward the naked Beast King and gave him a weaker version of the same strike.

He too was sent crashing to the ground, leaving only me in the sky.

"The view sure is nice from up here." I smiled, looking at the two who were badly scathed.

They rose from the heated ground, looking hatefully in my direction. I was certain they were curious about what I did, but my Anti-Magic was best kept under wraps for now.

'That took up a lot, though. I'm not sure I have enough to do it any longer. It's best I break their will thoroughly...'

"Is that really the best you can do?" I smiled at the two sore losers beneath me.

"H-how are you... beating me?"

"I never knew you were this strong."

As Serah and Gerard respectively gawked at me, I landed on the ruined landscape and used another hidden card up my sleeve.

'[Aura Of Despair: Stage 10]'

The highest point of the Spell I developed, utilizing a huge amount and an intense concentration of Miasma.

'Using it before would have been a waste since their immense Mana would have resisted it, but now... they were vulnerable.'

"W-what is this... chill...?"

"I... I don't... urgh..."

They both shivered under my pressure as I watched them from a distance, approaching steadily.

'With this, I've exhausted the Miasma stockpile I kept till now. I can't use Anti-Magic any longer either.' That was the signal that it was time to bring things to a close.

"Both of you... stand."

As the [Aura Of Despair]'s effects slowly started lifting, I ordered them coldly.

Their eyes had hints of terror, but not absolute submission.

Still, I had destabilized them enough—both mentally and physically.

There was no way they could be threats to me now.

With that in mind, I deactivated my Original Magic and decided to rely simply on Spellcraft and my personal ability.

"The fight isn't over. Come on..." I accessed my special space and brought out a weapon.

It was a Magic Sword—my favorite.

Glistening in its white hilt, the golden blade was filled to the brim with Mana.

I had a similar one that contained Miasma, but utilizing that would currently be ill-advised.

"... Fight." I glared at the two—almost as one would view dirt.

My condescending gaze must have done the trick as their fear and surprise became replaced with anger.

For these two—who had probably never experienced such defeat—to have been owned by a mere child, it must have been beyond humiliating.

However, I was just getting started.

>BOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMM<

They both lunged at me, not anywhere close to their full power.

Thanks to Anti-Magic destabilizing their power at the time, as well as the Aura Of Despair's effects on their body, it was very difficult to use Mana.

Even when they tried, I used Spellcraft to disperse a majority of the climbing energy, so their output was ridiculously low.

"Sloppy..." Using my blade, I took a Martial Arts stance and prepared for them to come at me.

My senses were heightened with Spellcraft, my Mana supply was also steady, and I had enhanced myself to the limit.

I didn't see myself losing.

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#### **Chapter 452: Breaking The Strong**

"... Weak!"

In one easy swing, I broke through their lousy defenses, breaking their mediocre forms.

In another strike, I sent pangs of pain coursing through their bodies.

"Not yet!"

Another hit sent another painful sensation running through their bodies.

Even as they struggled to exchange blows with me, my fluid movements were too much.

Controlling every portion of my body, while getting rid of excess movements, made me much faster and more efficient compared to the two.

'Serah, you call yourself a Mage, but your Magic Attacks are too simple.'

Being focused on destructive ability wasn't healthy.

Why?

'What makes her different from Martial Artists?'

"You'd be mistaken for a Martial Artist... but you're too mediocre to be recognized as an expert." I mocked Serah, swinging my blade down at her feet.

She yelped, falling to the ground.

Seeing this, Gerard became enraged and charged at me with full force.

'Gerard, your Martial Arts Techniques are non-existent. We opened the eyes of your race to the advantages of Martial Arts in exchange for an Alliance, but it seems you didn't deem it fit to learn it properly.'

His superior ability and sheer Mana already made him invincible among his people. Obviously, Martial Arts would be considered unnecessary to him.

However—

"I can see all your movements. Pathetic!"

—When facing someone with equal or superior strength, it was possible to completely turn the tides of battle with Martial Arts.

Even though I was weaker than the two of them, the way I handled them so easily was proof of that fact.

"Is this all you have to offer?" I asked them once again, staring at them as they fell to the ground.

My grip on my blade was tight, and I was prepared for yet another show of resistance. However...

'... Looks like I broke them already, uh?'

Serah and Gerard crumbled to the ground, completely beaten.

With that, my bloodcurdling battle with the two immensely powerful opponents came to a close.

The winner was none other than me.

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"Eat it," I told my loyal vassal.

He obeyed my words and swallowed the white pill.

>SHUUUUUUUUU<

Instantly, the Mana in his core began to dilute, turning pure white instead.

"Now, just leave the rest to me." I pressed his body and diverted all the escaping Mana to form another Mana Core.

"T-this is—?!" Gerard bulged his eyes as he felt his internal energy being diverted to another spot.

"Do you understand now? This is the measure you'll be taking for yourself. You should understand how it works quickly."

Beastfolk had their bodies attuned to receiving Mana, so they were very conversant with the flow within them.

Once I opened Gerard's eyes to what he needed to do, it wouldn't be long before he could do it on his own.

'Internal Mana Manipulation is their forte, after all.' I smiled.

"With this, I've cured your curse... as agreed."

Upon hearing my words as I finished his treatment, Gerard bowed to me in his buck-naked form.

"I thank you so much... m-master!"

"You don't need to call me that. As long as you understand where you stand, that's more than enough." I spoke to the bowing being.

"You are still the respectable Beast King, so act like one."

He only bowed deeply.

'I guess there's no need to inform him of the Soul Brand I infused along with the White Pill.'

Jane and I reforged the Soul Brand we once had, so I was able to learn its composition from her.

By simply adding the Spell properties to the Pill, I was able to 'Brand' Gerard.

'He's sincerely grateful and loyal. Good.' As I thought, absolute strength was the best way to handle things.

"Well, let us return. I've already repaired your Palace, and everyone there is safe. So, don't worry."

"T-thank you so much!" Gerard's gratitude soared even higher.

It felt weird having a Beastfolk—especially the Beast King himself—as my subordinate, but it didn't feel too bad either.

"Also, let's get you something to wear. You look pretty weird like this." I fished out a nice-looking kimono for the Beast King... as well as a nice pair of pants.

"This should do for now. Get dressed quickly." With that, I turned from him and glanced at the second object of my attention.

'So, how should I handle her?'

Serah Crimson was standing in a corner, looking very depressed. The loss must have shaken her more than expected.

But, wasn't this a good thing? Just like Aloe Vida, people tended to appreciate it when someone pulled them from a deep slump.

Besides, with this, I would be able to obtain a massive powerhouse for myself.

'I used up a great deal of energy earlier... but the results were worth it.'

Even though I could approach her at the moment, it wasn't the ripe moment yet. I had to give it time...

'Sink even deeper, Serah. Once you've gotten to the abyss... I'll pull you back up.'

Of course, I intended to fulfill my matchmaking promises for her as a bonus. As long as she understood who was whose superior, there was going to be no hitch in our relationship.

"I'm done!" The Beast King's voice caused me to sharply turn in his direction.

"Very good." I smiled.

Donning a blue Kimono and black trousers, the brown-haired bearded man looked even better than the first time I saw him.

Both Serah and he were healed using my Magic, so they were perfectly fine.

"Also, I think I'm getting the hang of this multiple Cores thing. I've made five now." He smiled at me.

'Already?!' Considering how it took me so many years to get such a number, I almost bashed my head in envy.

Curse or not, their race was too broken.

Fortunately, I had my Soul Brand on him, so he was forever linked to me—of course, in servitude.

Obtaining the Beast King was only the beginning, though.

'There's a whole lot of people here. Might as well leverage on that.'

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#### **Chapter 453: Guests Of The King**

'All the Mana Cores Gerard has made are all White. He'll need to fill them up eventually. Then, it won't be as fast as his current pace...'

"That's good." I smiled at the excited Beast King who was happy about the prospect of growing even stronger.

Deep within him, though, I could sense another feeling welling up within. It was an emotion I was counting on to appear.

"Let us return to your people. Since I beat you in combat, I have the right to make an absolute command. You'll be Allied with the Eastern Kingdom in the looming war."

"Eastern Empire? War? What's that?"

"E-eh...?"

Just how much did Gerard know—no, the right question was how much didn't he know.

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I filled the ignorant Beast King on the details regarding the current state of the world as all three of us returned to the Beastfolk Kingdom.

"W-wow... I had no idea."

Apparently, the letter for an Alliance sent from the Royal Palace never even reached the King. No one cared for formalities without a show of power.

"Well, now you do."

I was in direct control of Gerard, so the Eastern Kingdom couldn't usurp my authority. It was actually the contrary.

'Both sides will be needing me now.'

"Per our agreement, I won't affect your dealings with the people, and I don't intend on making you control them for me. But, your loss in the earlier fight is a different matter entirely. You'll have to obey the order for an Alliance."

"I understand." Gerard nodded as he bowed.

Serah was silent throughout the conversation, so I decided to adopt her decorum until we reached the Beast King's Palace.

As promised, his Palace and everything about it had been restored.

The other members of our team of Delegates were waiting for us to arrive—though they were being carefully watched by the Therianthropes around.

"Welcome back." Maria and Freya were the first to speak.

Their warm expressions soothed my heart, though I felt a little guilty considering what I had to resort to not too long ago.

'They're so innocent...'

"Stand down, everyone," Gerard spoke to the surrounding Therianthropes.

Hearing the absolute orders of their King, everyone settled.

"I will be having a public announcement by dawn tomorrow. Until then, every denizen should return to their homes to prepare."

The Beast King's voice was enough to echo throughout the massive city.

Since those with Mana could enhance their vision and voices, even though it was a massive piece of land, Gerard's voice reached everyone.

The surrounding guards were also excused, so everyone parted ways.

"Please, can I invite you to dine with me?" Gerard offered.

It had been a while since I tasted their local cuisine, and I was plenty famished after that fight.

"Sure. Will your family be joining us?"

"N-no. How can I be so rude as to impose on you like that."

"I don't mind, really." I smiled with a friendly face.

"A-alright them. First, I know you must desire to freshen up. Please, I'll personally take you to the spring where you can enjoy yourself with the nice water that flows there."

Gerard was trying his hardest to please me. It would be rude of me not to take him up on his offer.

"Alright. Lead the way."

Fabian and Damien had stupendously shocked expressions on their faces—most likely wondering how I was able to speak to such a powerful entity so freely.

I intentionally made sure none of them could observe my fight with Gerard—even erasing any form of Observation Magic in the vicinity.

To the best of their knowledge, they could only suspect that Serah was the one who engaged in the fight.



"T-then... let's go!"

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The soothing water from the Hot Springs was enough to ease my stressed body.

Not only was it completely comfortable to bathe in, but it also had a similar concentration of Mana as the Oasis did back at Ainzlark.

"Haa... I now understand why Ciara was taking a bath in such a place..."

The feeling of having energy creep around one's body while being washed of exhaustion was simply the best.

'I could get used to this...'

I had a separate bath, and the others were grouped into groups of males and females.

Since I was all by myself, the atmosphere was very comfortable.

"Hey!" A sharp voice rang through my ears.

'What the...?!'

Popping out of the water was a Therianthrope. I never expected to see another person here. Most of all, the person was a—

"I surprised you, didn't I? Haha!"

—A young kid!

He had blue hair and the same color of eyes. The upper part of his body resembled a human's—though his ears were web-like. The lower part was that of a glistening blue fish.

'He's a Merfolk?' I observed the boy.

Was I too focused on enjoying the bath that I failed to notice him?

"I've been training on how to become one with the elements. My limit is only thirty minutes, though. Haha!"

'Where did this weird kid come from?'

"You're one of my father's guests, right? I think you're the first he's ever treated this way."

'Hold up. He's Gerard's kid?'

"This is his personal bath, so I usually just practice here and wait to scare him out of nowhere. Imagine my surprise seeing you here."

The cute kid looked nothing like his father, so I had to guess that he got most of his qualities from his mother.

'Sigh, my peace and quiet is gone...' I prepared to get out of the Hot Springs

"Hey, wait! Don't go!" I ignored the boy's pleas.

"Meanie!"

He was at most ten years old, yet his Mana Core was already at the Golden Stage. That was abnormal—even for Beastfolk.

'Did Gerard intentionally let me see his kid like this? What does he think I'll do?'

My cure wasn't free, neither was it cheap. He should have realized that by now.

"Tell your father that I said he knows what to do." I returned my gaze to the innocent boy who was already climbing out of the pool.

Once he left the puddle, blue-colored legs appeared. His feet were webbed as well.

"Hmph!" With that emphatic scoff, he ran off.

'Gerard works faster than expected. If it's like this, then the family dinner should be quite an entertaining sight.'

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

#### **Chapter 454: A Pleasant Dinner**

As I suspected...

"Jared, let me introduce you to my daughter, Kana! She has such talent, and look at her. Isn't she a beauty?"

... This Beast King called Gerard...

"Ah, what of her? She's pretty lovely, isn't she? Look at all my children. They're amazing, aren't they?"

... Was totally shameless!

Before I arrived, he had already gathered every member of his family, making sure to separate the boys and the girls.

Once I arrived, he instantly moved to my side and began making references to his children. I understood that as a father, he would want his daughters to find a strong Mate, but wasn't this overboard?

Still, I had to admit that his daughters were all beautiful in their own rights, some having traits of Merfolk, or Cats, or Birds, or Rabbits.

Their figures were perfectly in sync, and he was blessed to have such lovely children.

Still, that wasn't enough to bend my will—especially because I wasn't attending the dinner alone.

Behind me was the troublesome Elf Princess, and then there was Maria as well. Serah, Damien, and Fabien were also present.

The two girls who already had feelings for me wouldn't take it too well if I spent the evening ogling the daughters of my vassal, would they?

'Such a waste, though...'

Unlike humans and Elves, Beastfolk could have multiple women as wives. Depending on power, the strong could obtain whatever he desired.

If that was the case, it wouldn't be strange to have all of his daughters if I wanted. Not only would they not mind at all, but they would also even be happy about my choice.

That was the kind of society I was in.

'I'm currently not interested in getting involved in the concept of love, but having pretty women like these to keep me company isn't bad...' I was an adult in a minor's body, after all.

It had been a while since...

'Alright, Jared. Let's not dwell on that.'

I composed myself and decided to enjoy a calm dinner with Gerard's family.

The food was delicious, as expected of a place well acquainted with nature's wonders. Their meat was fresh, and their vegetables were juicy.

I enjoyed the care and attention to detail placed in the preparation of the meal. While I wasn't so particular about food, Beastfolk society made me view it as more than just a necessity for sustenance.

Their foods were the epitome of perfection. And so, I appreciated the meals by devouring them nicely.

Even though the girls were all looking at me, causing my body to shiver in suppressed excitement, I maintained my cool.

'Focus on the meat... Meat. MEAT!'

I was currently fifteen years old. It was a dangerous age to be in—with all the hormones running amok in my body.

However, by utilizing the art of self-control which I cultivated for an immensely long period, I was able to remain myself.

Until... 'it' showed up.

"CHEERS TO OUR VISITORS FROM THE EASTERN EMPIRE!" Gerard gave a thunderous roar, bringing out a barrel from the corner.

I could hear the sloshing sounds of liquid within the massive container, and as Gerard opened the lid, a tingling aroma entered my nostrils.

"Guh!"

The rabid sensations I was trying to suppress began to manifest, but in the form of another desire.

"Let us drink to our Alliance!" The Beast King cheered.

Cups filled to the brim with the bright red liquid of the Beastfolk were set before each of us.

Eyeing mine with keen interest, I took in the fragrance again, reminiscing of the first time I had a whiff—then, a taste.

'Dom, you madman! You got me addicted to this...' My thought trailed.

I was treading a steep slope currently, and any sudden mistakes would lead to an irreversible error.

Still, the red liquid called out to me.

"Nirvana Wine..." I murmured, ignoring the surprised expressions of the Beastfolk.

They were taken aback by my knowledge of this drink from the gods, but their expressions did not concern me.

Gulping, my throat suddenly became parched, and I needed to soothe the itchy feeling it gave off.

While many reasons told me not to attempt it, I was too overcome with the allure of having a taste.

'I've been working so hard. I deserve this... right? Just this once...'

It was bullshit, but I raised the cup and downed the content with such precision and thirst.

"Haaa!!! This is iiiittttt!!!" My voice climaxed as I raised my cup for yet another drink.

"Hohoho! You know your stuff!" Gerard grinned broadly at me, refilling my cup.

"Of course!" I gulped down the second round, feeling heat spread through my body and a sensation that could not be described using words.

"Another!" I yelled, ignoring the surprised expressions of the delegates who came with me.

"Hoh? You can hold your liquor quite well, can't you?"

"Hehehe. Don't underestimate me!" I burst out with a wide grin.

To be frank, I was already a little drunk.

But, not to the point of no return.

'If it comes to it, I can just use Magic... right?'

The night was still young, and we were at the peak of our youth.

Enjoyment was a necessity in a life full of distress... such were my drunk thoughts as I passed away the night.

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"Is that really... Jared?" Maria mumbled to herself as she observed the blonde who was laughing and drinking like an idiot.

It was a funny sight, especially because she had never seen him in such a state before.

His cheeks were flushed pink, and he was in such enthusiasm that it was hard to believe that it was the same Jared Leonard.

Maria would have giggled and enjoyed the atmosphere even more... if not for one major problem.

"Hehe. Let me pour your drink for you."

"Kyaaa. You're so cute."

"You're touching me so much. Haha."

"You can keep going. Hihi."

"You're so adorable."

Several of the Beastfolk females had already surrounded Jared and were getting too close for comfort.

Granted, he was drunk, but still...

Maria could not tolerate watching something like that unfold before her.

'They're taking advantage of him. Because he's drunk... they're trying to rope him in!'

While she was angry at them for what they were doing to Jared in his vulnerable state, Maria also envied the Therianthropes.

Unlike them, she did not have the courage to try anything so forward.

Merely showing how she felt concerning the matter was a task.

"Hey! Stop that! Get away from him!" Unlike her, the Elf Princess constantly chastised the Beastfolk females for going too far.

Of course, the complaints fell on deaf ears.

'Jared... I want to help you, but...!' Maria glared at the predators around the disillusioned boy.

If only she had more courage, then perhaps...

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**Chapter 455: Mana Overload**

'Heck yeah!'

Pretending to be drunk turned out to be the perfect way to act in a way without arousing suspicion.

I allowed myself to seem vulnerable, causing the Beastfolk females to swarm me in their numbers.

Fortunately, this action didn't attract any blame to me. Maria and Freya directed their anger toward Gerard's daughters, causing me to enjoy myself as much as I required.

'Hehehe... hehehe...!' I gleefully smiled, enjoying the smoldering affection of the exotic women I was surrounded with.

It was shameful behavior, but my hormones had reached a precipice thanks to the Nirvana Wine.

'Just for a while longer...!' I tolerated its effects.

"Sorry, I'm late!" A sharp cry echoed throughout the room, causing everyone to look in the direction of the entrance.

"Uh?"

The voice belonged to a kid with blue hair, eyes, and faded blue feet.

His familiar tone and outlook caused me to recognize the boy at first glance.

'He's the one I met at the pool!'

"Asa, what took you so long? Don't you know it's rude to keep the guests waiting?" Gerard went to speak to his tardy son.

I pretended to ignore the conversation in my drunken state, but my focus was on the interaction between father and son.

"Is it rude, though? You never mentioned that before..." The child called Asa spoke in a disconcerting tone.

"Haa... this kid." The exasperated Beast King murmured.

"What took you so long, though?" A blue-haired girl asked her son.

She was most likely his sister, considering he shared a lot of features with the lady.

'Where's the mother, though?' Gerard had several wives, and they were all with us in the massive room.

However, I never spotted any Merfolk among the bunch.

It made me consider if the young-looking girl was actually his mother, but she was too young.

'Then... is his mother dead?' That was the only explanation.

"It took me some time to prepare. A-and, I guess I was feeling a little uncomfortable. I'm fine now, though." He replied quickly, trying his hardest to put up a bold front.

Regardless... I could read him like a book.

'Looks like it's already starting.'

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Asa joined the dinner, which had already become a party at this point.

Gerard's wives sang native songs with their melodic voices, and the children began dancing.

The daughters especially flocked around me while the men showed more moves as they followed the rhythm with their bodies.

It was like a festival, but smaller.

I noticed a few of the Beastfolk males approach Maria and Freya, only for them to be blatantly rejected.

'Pfft...' I suppressed a laugh, happy they got turned down for some reason.

But, the funniest sight was spotting Gerard trying to hit on Serah with all he had. I didn't know which was more hilarious; the fact that she was already into someone else, or that this was the worst time for him to make his move.

Serah simply ignored him and began downing booze in silence.

Once in a while, I would notice the girls glancing in my direction, but I pretended to be lost at the center of the Beastfolk cuties that swerved their bodies so seductively at me.

"Hehehehe..."

I was not a womanizer. This was simply the effect of the Wine I ingested.

Definitely!

And so, even as the night proceeded to be very wonderful—at least for the majority of those present—I made sure to keep my eyes on a particular individual.

'Asa isn't dancing any longer. His face is twitching. His body is slightly throbbing. He's holding it in quite well. But... sooner or later...'

Just like clockwork, the festive atmosphere was interrupted by a sharp cry.

"ARRRRRGHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!"

It was bloodcurdling, and the intensity instantly shook everyone present.

Our attention sharply moved in the direction of the agonizing boy who was writhing in pain and screaming. His Body twisted and turned on the ground as he cried.

'Mana Overload at such a young age. It's both impressive and disastrous...'

The girls who all flocked at me immediately ran toward their sibling. Their worried expressions—especially the blue-haired one—showed how much they loved and pitied the poor kid.

Serah glanced at me, but I ignored her.

'She wants me to cure him. But, not yet...'

"Jared Leonard! Please... my son! Please cure him as well." Gerard cried bitterly, looking at me for salvation.

'I expected this outcome.'

Ever since my encounter with the kid at the pool, it was very obvious that he didn't have much longer to live.

His delay in arriving at the party alerted me of a mild episode that must have occurred to him before he made an appearance.

'Asa, this kid's absorption rate is too fast.'

His body was also not too built to handle the intensity of Mana Overload. That meant even more pain and a shorter lifespan.

If left unchecked, he would probably die within five years.

'Tragic...' I looked in the direction of Gerard.

Many eyes were on me at this point, and most people would have compromised as a result of the pressure.

But, I was different!

"Did the child not deliver my message to you?" I asked with a cold gaze.

I understood the pain of a father, but I wasn't an idiot either.

'He wants to garner my pity or curry my favor, so I can spare his family...'

Apparently, the Beast King wasn't as stupid as I picked him out to be.

"B-but, he is only a child!" Gerard returned my question with words.

For a moment, there was silence pervading the room—well, except for the obvious cries of the agonizing boy.

That wasn't silence, after all.

Many would consider me the villain. A child was screaming in horrifying agony, yet I was doing nothing about it despite having the means.

Even the expressions of Freya and Maria had morphed from mere surprise to slight fear and rejection.

'If this stops them from having feelings for me, then that's even better.'

My focus was on Gerard and the statement he had just made. There was only one response suitable for such an assertion.

"And?"

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#### **Chapter 456: Vassals**

My question shook everyone.

At this point, everyone around me must have realized that the whole drunken act of mine was only a false front.

It was unfortunate, but the bigger picture was in sight.

"My deal to you was as humane as possible. I offer the same to everyone who desires it. A chance to be free of the shackles that bind you to premature death, and also the opportunity to become stronger."

Raising my hand, I stared straight at Gerard.

At this point, his heart was racing rapidly.



"All I ask in return is to become my subordinate. Is that unfair? Is that wrong? Isn't it exactly in accordance with your rules? I'm the strongest one here, so isn't it common sense that you would all conform to my will?"

Was I too kind to Gerard? It seemed as though he was taking my goodwill for granted.

"I could have done this by force, but I gave you a choice. You knew from the start what the only option was, yet you decided on this path."

I wasn't the villain here.

Gerard had enough time to prevent the hardship that his son was going through. In essence...

"... The one who is to blame is you."

Upon seeing that I was not going to budge in my stance, Gerard finally conceded.

Hanging his head in shame, he knelt and faced his trembling and screaming child. I could sense fatherly affection.

Considering the fact that this Asa kid had enough latent potential to surpass any Beastfolk in history, it must have made the Beast King very pained to lose him.

"Asa... you can be cured. But, you will have to serve that man from now on. Do you understand? You will get to live. You will also become stronger than ever before. You will surpass your father, and everyone that came before you. Do you understand? Asa..."

The screaming boy could not respond properly amid the pain, but the tears that gushed from his eyes were enough to tell his father that he would do anything to escape his agony.

"We agree to your terms. Please... do it. Save my child."

"Understood."

In response to Gerard's plea, I began treatment immediately—wasting not a single second.

\*\*\*\*\*

That very night, every member of Gerard's family became my subordinate.

Their Souls had 'Brands' linked to mine, so I had access to their current status—as well as information—in real-time.

Once the process was done, the previously joyous dinner closed abruptly.

We were all shown to our respective quarters, and Gerard's family retreated to their residence.

Even though they hadn't said much, I could tell how they were feeling. An initial assumption of being taken advantage of would swirl within their hearts.

However, eventually, they would realize the huge favor I had done for them.

'All of them will be grateful.'

With that in mind, I ignored the watchful gazes of everyone on my team and retreated to my room in silence.

\*\*\*\*\*

Serah Crimson couldn't sleep.

It was a lovely night, and usually, the woman would never feel the urge to remain awake with the current atmosphere.

However, for some reason, she couldn't sleep this very night.

Though she didn't want to admit it, the reason for her insomnia was a Fifteen-year-old boy.

"Jared Leonard..." She murmured and rose out of her bed.

She looked out her window and appreciated the dark allure of the night even more. Still, even with the amazing view, her mind couldn't let go of the image of the kid who bested her in combat.

The only one who had ever beaten her in a fight was Neron—and that was so long ago. Serah had grown much stronger since then, and she was certain that the superior one among them was her.

It wasn't vain pride, but a genuine one. The fact that Serah Crimson was the most powerful Mage in the Eastern Kingdom had already been established.

"So, how...?" Her body shook a little as she remembered the humiliating defeat she experienced at the hands of a single boy.

Even with the aid of the Beast King, who was also mercilessly beaten, Serah was unable to land a single injury on the boy—talkless of having a decisive hit.

He was always one step ahead, and his power was enough to overwhelm her.

The Queen of Destruction didn't want to admit it, but... Jared Leonard was the most powerful person she had ever met.

How would he fare against Neron? She had no idea. Normally, the woman would think that since he was able to beat her, he would beat Neron.

But, with how her strength had been rendered obsolete before him, Serah was beginning to wonder if she was actually more powerful than Neron.

This state of confusion left her unable to think about much else.

"Damn it..." For the first time in years, she could feel the emotion of frustration come over her.

Despite her natural prowess—despite the privileges she had been bestowed with since birth...

"Why can't I catch up? Why can't I keep up?"

Serah thought the answer was simply destruction and straightforward violence, but she was now beginning to reconsider her stance.

For the first time in years, her lips quivered and her body became delicate. In a totally confused and vulnerable state, the woman spoke to herself in the solitude she had in the room.

"What should I do now...?"

>KOK<

A knock roused her from her deep thoughts, and Serah glanced in the direction of the door.

"Who's there?" Her lips moved before she realized the presence she was sensing.

"It's Jared."

The voice was calm and collected—and that scared Serah somewhat.

How could someone, who had been so frightened of her when they first met, turn into someone so assertive?

"May I come in?" The voice came again after some moments of silence.

"What do you want?" Serah's voice slightly quivered as she spoke.

"I want to talk. For some reason... I can't sleep. I imagine it's the same for you."

Even though Jared was behind the door, Sesh felt that he was standing right in front of her.

Though she was in her negligee, the material wasn't transparent, so her apparel could hardly be considered indecent.

After considering his words for a brief moment, Serah decided to let the boy in.

"Fine. You may enter."

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

#### **Chapter 457: Loneliness At The Summit**

'Welp, this is awkward...'

I was seated on the same bed as Serah, who was glancing away silently.

Her expression was deadpan, but that was simply a front. I was sure she simply didn't want to express how curious she was concerning my visit.

Still, the silence was unsettling, so I decided to speak first.

"You couldn't sleep too... why?"

A sharp gaze came from her the very instant I asked, causing me to shiver slightly.

"A-ah, sorry about that..." I murmured.

Even though I managed to beat Serah that one time, it wasn't like I was superior to her in power. It was all because of planning.

'I don't think I can replicate that situation right now...'

Besides, it wasn't my intention to have that kind of relationship with Serah.

My goal was to become closer to the woman, securing for myself a dependable ally. But, to do that, I needed her to realize my worth in a way that would also diminish hers.

'Most times, friendships are made when two parties have something of somewhat equal value.'

The exchange is subtle, but it exists nonetheless.

But, no matter what I tried, there was seemingly nothing of value she could obtain from me. If I made it glaring that I wanted an exchange, it would cease to become a friendship.

That was why I had to resort to beating her alongside the Beast King—though there were other reasons.

'That was the carrot, though. Time to give the stick.'

"Serah... are you mad at me?"

"What? Why would I be?" The red-haired woman gave a quizzical expression.

She wasn't exactly mad, but she simply couldn't come to terms with her weakness. That meant Serah's annoyance was directed at herself.

'That makes things easier.'

"I don't know. It may have to do with the fact that I was too hard on you and Gerard. I'm sure by now you must have an apprehension of me."

The whole episode with Gerard's family was seen by everyone. While I was being efficient in my dealing, my lack of empathy towards the other party made me appear somewhat... cold.

"You did what you had to do. I understand that perfectly. It's fine." The woman sighed.

I found myself grateful for having such an understanding woman. It turned out that she really held nothing against me.

"Then why are you like this? Why can't you sleep?"

"Why should I tell you that?" Serah eyed me.

Despite her free-spirited personality, it seemed she still drew a close boundary between those she considered friends and those she didn't.

"There really isn't a reason. Then, if it's alright... is it fine if I tell you why I can't sleep?" I smiled warmly at her.

"Hmph! Do what you want." Her gaze returned to the night being displayed through her window.

"It's pressure. I feel pressured, Serah..."

My words, and the tone which I used to express them, got my target's attention.

"This whole expedition... it's been taking a toll on me. Any mistake I make could cost me the future of our Race. And... if I make a single error, I could lose my life." I wasn't lying at this point.

While it was well within my plans to express a vulnerable side of myself to garner Serah's attention, I wasn't faking it.

"It could be considered selfish, but... I don't want to die. Everything I've done so far may seem like it's for the Kingdom's benefit, but it's just to satisfy my selfishness."

Serah simply watched me in silence—her gaze was already showing hints of surprise and affection.

"I've been getting more sleepless nights as the pressure builds. I think to myself 'Will I die today?' or 'Is it tomorrow that I'll draw my last breath?' Either way... the uncertain future keeps me thinking every time."

I returned my gaze to her and gave a tired smile.

"It's pathetic, right? But that's what's keeping me awake."

For a moment, no one spoke. We didn't even blink. Our gazes were simply locked for an indefinite period.

"Well, I think I feel much better telling that to someone. I should be on my way." Rising from the bed, I made my way to the door.

Then—

"Wait!"

—My target picked up the bait.

She tightly grabbed my hand, and then softly released it in hesitation. Her gaze lacked focus, and I could tell that she was still conflicted about her next course of action.

"You're strong, Jared... why are you so worried about survival?" Her lips parted and she murmured.

'I think I understand more about you now, Serah.' A thought trailed in my mind as I gave a sad expression.

"Many believe that the powerful have nothing to concern themselves with. But, we are actually the most miserable. We suffer more than the weak."

Neron battled boredom daily. Serah was the same.

It was easy to get lost in one's power that the very definition of existence became blurred. That was the dangerous aspect of absolute strength.

"I just want to reach the furthest heights and deepest depths. But, at this point, I'm worried that once I get there, all I'll find is solitude."

Alphonse's words still echoed in my heart, even now, but I wondered how long they would restrain me.

'Eventually... will I really be able to rely on anyone?'

The summit that I dreamed of reaching... just how many people were capable of getting there?

Ultimately, I would have to leave everything and everyone I cherished to attain those heights.

"Aren't you suffering too, Serah? Don't you feel a void within you? You're strong, so you understand as well. Tell me... what do you use to fill that emptiness that lurks within?"

We locked eyes once more, but this time Serah's expression was different. Something bright swelled within.

"Ah, I see. I understand what you mean." She murmured looking at me with a smile.

For the first time, it was a genuine expression of warmth.

"The answer is simple, Jared. It's how I cope with everything. This power I have attained, the reputation I have built... everything seems hollow without the mold that holds everything together."

What could it be? I stared hard at Serah for an answer.

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

#### **Chapter 458: Serah Crimson [Pt 1]**

Somehow, I felt like I could obtain my answer from this woman.

What could be capable of gluing absolute strength with the Identity of a person intact?

Was it a great desire for even more? No, that would only sink the person into more despair.

Could it be emotions such as revenge or desperation? No, once the focus of those emotions was eliminated, everything that was achieved by such feelings would be rendered meaningless.

Then... what was the answer?

"It's Love."

"...?!"

"There is a saying that love conquers all. I don't believe in childish fantasies, but... it's Love that has kept me together all this time. I am strong, happy, content, excited, satisfied... stable... because of Love."

It sounded like the ramblings of a delusional being. But, I couldn't deny the effects of what she said.

She truly believed what she was spouting to me.

"I love Neron. That's the only reason I've made it this far."

'But, that makes no sense? Love is only an emotion you feel towards a person you have a strong attachment to! Eventually... even that would be—!'

"I know it may seem silly to you because you're young, but... eventually your desire to avoid solitude will rise even further."

The desire... to avoid solitude?

Those words struck a chord within me.

"Maybe you'll experience it sooner than you think—the desire to dedicate everything to someone."

Everything she was saying opened the door to the locked memories within me.

"You'll want to go stronger, become better, strive to never lose yourself... just for that person."

An image flashed in my head—no, two did!

'Ah, there was a time... when I really believed that too, wasn't there?'

Unfortunately, everything went up in smoke. It was precisely because my ambition couldn't coexist with the concept Serah was preaching to me.

My love for Magic and my commitment to a partner could not coexist. Unlike Serah, whose mold was the latter, I knew what attempting both had caused me in the past.

"Does Neron feel the same way?" I asked the question out of the blue.

My sharp inquisition surprised us both. It was enough to make Serah's face falter for a moment.

"I... don't know."

Then her words began to make less sense to me. If he didn't feel the same, then what was the point of even having such emotions?!

"If that's the case, then—"

"But I won't give up! I don't want to give up!" Her sharp voice shook me for an instant.

Something stirred within me, but I failed to grasp what it was.

"It's something I've had for as long as I can remember. I won't give up now. I want to keep going. I know one day my feelings will reach. Till then, I won't fall. That's what has fueled me for so long."

My heart began pounding quickly.

'This woman... she's the same as I am.'

I failed to comprehend her words to me before, but I finally understood them now. The confusion clouding my heart began drifting away.

"That feeling of desiring something... will grant you the strength to keep going—no matter what!" Her smile broadened even further.

I couldn't help but agree wholeheartedly.

Why?

Because I felt the same way. After all... just as Serah was dedicated to her Love for Neron, I too had a similar commitment.

—Magic!

How could I have forgotten?

In the first place, wasn't that what I wanted? I wanted to explore every nook and cranny of the concept.

There was only one emotion strong enough to fuel that desire for two lifetimes.

'It's love! I love Magic!'

Serah was right, after all. Just as she loved Neron and would keep striving till she reached her goal, I too... couldn't let up now.

'I won't give up too!'

"Thank you, Serah. I think you just opened my eyes to something I have been too distracted to see."

The woman's gaze rested on me with mold surprise and amusement.

"You have someone who is the object of your dedication?"

I nodded slowly.

"And I'll do anything to reach it."

"Good. I look forward to seeing the kind of man you'll become, Jared." She nodded.

"Thanks for your words. And don't worry... I haven't forgotten about our promise. Your feelings for him have touched me so much. I'll do everything in my power to make sure you two end up together!"

"Really? I can't wait!"

We spoke like little girls, smiling stupidly as we continued conversing.

I had a goal when I entered Serah's room that night, but we both ended up discussing many things—especially concerning her past with Neron.

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Apparently, she first encountered him when they were about five years old.

She was referred to as a genius and was the strongest person her age.

Her family hosted a party when she clocked five years old, inviting nobles from all over the Kingdom.

Neron was the adopted son of a Viscount who lived in the boonies. They both attended the party.

Their first meeting was bland. Unlike the many individuals who showered her with praise and affection for her amazing talent, Neron did nothing of the sort.

He simply lazed around in the party and ate their free food and took their wine—even though he was underage.

Serah caught him in the courtyard, all alone, simply snacking on more food and wine. He actually ditched the party and was enjoying the cool night breeze.

Serah, who had been slightly irritated with him, finally made an outburst.

To her surprise, Neron ignored her and said something no one had ever told her before.

"You're a bother."

That was what caused the last vestige of self-control within her to vanish.



"I'll kill you!" She had screamed when she activated Magic.

Serah had always been a violent child, so she impulsively attacked Neron.

Even if she ended up injuring, or killing the boy, her family could always cover it up. Besides, they had someone who could utilize Resurrection Magic, so if she was careful they could revive him.

Besides, even if they couldn't, he was a mere adopted child. A commoner like him was of no consequence to the Crimson Household.

But...

"Is that all you can do? How boring..."

... Neron Kaelid was completely unharmed.

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

#### **Chapter 459: Serah Crimson [Pt 2]**

Rather than decimating the child with her barrage of Basic Spells, the boy was unharmed.

"Disappointing." Were the words that came out of his mouth next.

Serah had never heard those words from anyone before.

From birth, she had a special constitution that made her regarded as a special child brought from the heavens.

Like the Beastfolk, her body naturally absorbed Mana from her surroundings. That way, she kept growing stronger at an alarming rate. Within a month, her Mana Core had already formed—and it was a Special Grade Core.

Special Grade Cores had no limit.

Serah Crimson was bestowed the ability to keep absorbing Mana into a Core that could grow indefinitely.

Her potential was limitless.

But...

"If this is all you can do, doesn't that make you weak?"

... A single kid dared to talk down to her like that.

And so, as the red-haired girl and black-haired boy locked eyes, a strange sense of attachment was born.

Fortunately, their parents arrived before any further damage was done.

They were separated, and their respective family members took them away.

What surprised Serah the most was that her father profusely apologized to the Viscount who was Neron's adopted father.

Her father was a Crimson. He was extremely tough and proud, yet he bowed his head to apologize to a mere Viscount.

That made her upset beyond words.

And so, Serah never forgot that incident. She decided to dig up all she could about the boy who had so brazenly defied her.

"He doesn't even have a Mana Core yet!"

The anger raging within her turned into determination, and that fueled her training even more.

Her father must have noticed her obsessive attitude, so he told her that Neron would be attending Ainzlark in the same year as her.

Whether what she felt was happiness or even more rage, Serah didn't know.

She simply worked hard every single day.

Eventually, she would meet the brat and teach him a lesson. Then, he would have no choice but to acknowledge his inferiority.

And so, the day finally came.

They enrolled in Ainzlark.

The first thing she did, even before the beginning of the exams, was to approach him and declare how she intended on decimating him.

But, his response shocked her beyond description.

"Uh, who are you?"

The boy whom she had spent seven years training with him in mind, had said something so unforgivable!

"Y-you..." Serah's cheeks felt hot at that time, and it seemed like tears would come out at any moment.

It was so embarrassing, and it also hurt her deeply, that he did not even remember her... the same boy who had been on her mind for so long.

The attention of many people was on that particular scene, so they all rained harsh words at Neron for his discourtesy.

In the same vein, they tried to pamper Serah and befriend her.

"U-uh? What did I do, though?" The dark-haired murmured to himself, leaving the already crowded scene.

The exams began, and Serah gave it her all. She was sure she would end up being placed first, without a doubt.

None of the other students came close to her abilities. Even the lecturers were amazed by her raw talent and great skill.

The results were inevitable.

However...

[EXAM RESULTS]

~First Place~

Neron Kaelid [100/100]

~Second Place~

Serah Crimson [97/100]

[.]

No one had ever scored a perfect score in the history of Ainzlark Academy before. No... no one had even attained close to Serah's score as well.

They were both phenomenal monsters who broke the records of the Academy.

However, it was clear to everyone—especially Serah herself—who the bigger monster was.

Even after so long, she couldn't catch up to him. She felt worse than ever on that very day.

But... once again, the mysterious black-haired boy appeared to her while she was sulking.

"You're pretty good. I didn't think I'd see someone like you here."

It was as though the previous words he told her vanished into thin air.

His smile was so genuine that it made her heart race faster than ever.

"My name is Neron. Neron Kaelid. What's your name? Let's be friends!"

And thus, their complicated friendship was initiated.

It was during their time together that Neron told her he wanted to marry her when he grew older.

I wonder why he said that, or if those were his exact words.

But, Serah was so serious when she narrated the story, and it didn't seem like she was lying. So, I had no choice but to accept those words.

Neron had actually told me something about not believing anything she said, but... perhaps he simply wanted to hide these sides of himself.

Continuing the story, Serah never let go of those words he said. She still clung to those words and pestered him to make good on his promises, but he always avoided the topic.

"And, right now, I'm confused. I don't know what to do anymore. I thought becoming stronger would make him give me more attention, but... at this point, I don't know..."

Apparently, her defeat by my hands made her sullen because she wondered if she had still been inferior to Neron all this time.

The one thing Serah thought she had an advantage in was finally destroyed by my actions, so she was left in despondency.

Finally, she revealed the state of her heart—just as I wanted.

But, to be honest, I wasn't very concerned about my plan when she did.

At this point, I didn't see her as a potential ally, or as the Queen Of Destruction, but... the Serah Crimson who sat beside me was no e other than a girl.

Just a girl.

"Neron... that bastard... why won't he just..."

Watching her feel this way made me realize just how unfair I was being toward the girls who had been attracted to me as well.

Was it better to spare them heartbreak, yet cause them to suffer in uncertainty?

No, that would be cruel.

'I don't know how you feel about this woman, Neron... but...'

It was time to take full responsibility—both for me and him.

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[A/N]

I'm actually considering writing a separate Novel on Neron. His character and abilities just deserve a backstory (Especially with what we'll see in the future).

Well, once we get to that bridge, we'll cross it.

Also...

I hope this explains why and how Serah Crimson is so absurdly strong.

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

**Chapter 460: Conclusion Of The Alliance**

"Thanks for keeping me company tonight." I smiled at the woman.

As we both sat on her bed, my previously heavy heart was finally at rest.

A new sense of clarity came over me, and the resolve to further my ideals manifested intensely.

"Thank you too. I never thought I would say this, but... it feels good to share stuff like this with you."

'Of course, knowing her personality, she won't openly admit that we're friends now.'

Still, I knew Serah finally saw me as a trusted ally and comrade.

"You should also settle things with Maria while you're at it. It's not fair to keep a girl waiting." She smiled.

"I will."

Not just Maria, but also Freya, Ana, and any other girl who came my way.

'Magic is my only passion!'

"Also, don't feel bad about losing to me. You were very strong. To be honest, if you just had more skill... I'd never stand a chance."

Serah sighed and gave a bitter smile.

"Neron said the same thing. But, I can't help it. Overly complicated Spells are a bore to me, and even though I practiced Martial Arts, it's just easier to move freely and attack."

I understood her logic. However, just as I helped Neron advance in power, I also desired growth for the lady beside me.

"Why don't I help you with it? Getting stronger."

"Really? You can?"

"Of course."

I didn't know why, but I had positive feelings toward Serah. Something about her and Neron resonated with me.

"After this war is over... I promise you."

If everything went well, I would be able to finally put one of the most dangerous Arcanas to good use.

"I can guarantee that you'll truly become Invincible. When that time comes... let us fight once again."

Serah's smile grew broader and her cheeks flushed a bit.

"Very well, Jared. I'll look forward to that."

And so, we brought our meeting to a close. I returned to my room, and Serah remained in hers.

That night, I slept better than I had in over a century.

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At dawn, as Gerard had commanded, every member of the Beastfolk Community was awake.

They all gathered and waited for their King to address them.

Gerard, the Beast King, stood atop his mighty hill and looked upon his people.

A certain emotion swirled about his heart. it was resolve.

Behind him were his children, spouses, and delegates from the Allied Nations. One boy, in particular, stood out.

His smile caused Gerard to wonder if he knew what was about to happen.

'He most likely does...' The Beast King said to himself.

The previous night, he had been very upset with the human. However, after he thought about it, he had no just cause for such emotion.

Jared had granted him and his family a brighter path to walk, and he had every right to demand their subservience.

Once Gerard realized this, rather than feeling animosity, gratitude permeated his heart.

He was certain his kin also felt the same.

One glance at Asa's smile told him that he made the right choice.

And now, it was finally time for his entire nation to know the truth.

"We will be going to war with the Demon Race." Gerard began without mincing words.

The silence among the people remained. When an absolute being was talking, the weaker ones could only be quiet.

"We will also be allied with the Eastern Kingdom, as well as the other Kingdoms in a united front against the Demons, and all other adversaries that may arise after their threat is extinguished."

Even in silence, the people's apprehension could be felt.

Beastfolk were violent, but not needlessly reckless.

They weren't killing machines, but living beings who needed reasons for their actions.

"The reason I have conceded to this Alliance is that I—as your King—lost to not just one, but two of their delegates."

At this point, surprised gasps leaked out from the people.

"The first match was fair, and the second was even to my advantage. Still, I lost. The reason is because I'm weaker."

No one could imagine the Beast King losing against humans, yet here he was, openly admitting it.

"But, I assure you... other than my defeat, there is another reason why I have decided to forever be allied to the Eastern Kingdom—no, rather, to one individual." Gerard's eyes turned in the direction of the smiling human.

"I have an announcement to make, everyone."

What other announcement could be more important than the declaration of war? The Beastfolk could not imagine any, but the voice of their King rose to an unprecedented degree.

Clearly, he wanted to utter something of even greater pertinence.

"The Beast Curse... there is a cure!"

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I was amazed by how Gerard coordinated his speech.

His charisma was befitting the title of Beast King.

Without uttering incoherent words, Gerard made his point to the people. He told them of how he and his family accepted the deal, and the possibility of even advancing further than before.

Gerard finally mentioned his intention of not forcing anyone to accept my deal. It was their choice, after all.

But, after expressing his own stance on the matter... I doubted if anyone would refuse at this point.

And so, ending his very touching speech, Gerard raised his hand in a roar.

"We will finally be emancipated from the shackles of the curse that has pervaded our race for so long. We will be the strongest of our kind ever recorded in history. More powerful than the Beast Hero, Dom, achieving greater heights than ever before. Now, I ask you, do you wish to see such a future with me?!"

"YEEEEEEAAAAHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!"

And so, the deal was sealed.

My grin only broadened from that point onward.

'Finally... I have them in my grasp.'

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With that, the announcement came to a close. To move forward with the plan, I had to divide our team of delegates further.

Serah and Bradford were sent to the Dwarf Kingdom as delegates, accompanied by Gerard himself.

I remained in the Beastfolk Nation to fulfill my promise to the denizens there.

I had my work cut out for me.

Not only did I need to cure them and teach them how to create more Mana Cores on their own, but I also needed to watch over their progress and ensure that they grasped everything I said.

'This will take a few days...' I sighed to myself.

But, I wasn't worried in the slightest.

'Ana and Neron should be handling things for me over there. Things should be getting quite interesting on their end...'