

SPELLCRAFT 491

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

Chapter 491: Demon Lord Lubick

The match ended in an unexpected turn of events—Ivan's victory.

As the Demon General coughed his last, having his insides completely filled with burning Wax, Ivan screamed with delight and satisfaction.

His body throbbed thanks to exerting himself so much, but he didn't stop screaming.

"HAAAAAAAAA!!! I DID IIIIITTTT!!!"

Tears dropped from his eyes as he made this shout of victory.

Compared to Jared Leonard who was most likely facing the final boss, or the others who were also pulling unbelievable feats, his achievements might not have been. considerably impressive.

However, it was a giant leap for Ivan.

After all the grueling training Clara put him through, he finally did it—converting his Wax to liquid.

'I haven't perfected it yet. I can't completely control the boiling point, or control the fluid movements yet. It also takes me too long to alter the structure...'

There was still more he could do—lots of room for growth.

'I can do this! I can keep growing stronger!'

With that in mind, Ivan collapsed on the soft wax flooring he made for himself, grinning as he passed out.

Mission Accomplished.

Lubick was the Demon Lord Of Bleu—the most powerful when it came to Spells and Magic Technology.

His gentlemanly demeanor and near-human look didn't make him less of a monster than any other Demon.

No, in fact, he was far worse.

Conducting experiments gave him his greatest satisfaction.

He loved using poor things for finding out new things—even members of the Demon Race were occasionally sacrificed for the greater good of discovery.

As long as it was for the Demon Realm, there was no length he wouldn't go through—no depths he would not reach.

However—

'MADNESS!'

—Seeing the battlefield so one-sided, the Blue Demon could not contain the displeasure that sprang up within him.

The main problem was not the fact that the enemy outnumbered them—though that would also prove to be a challenge.

The issue that assailed the Demon Army was the massive Golem on the side of the opponents.

The Golem—whatever its name was—was beyond what Lubick had ever seen. It was larger, more sophisticated, and more terrifying than any of his creations.

Perhaps that was the reason why complicated emotions began warping within the Demon Lord.

As much as he despised being one-sidedly massacred by the opposing faction, Lubick hated it more when his inferiority was shoved down his throat.

"That Golem..." The Demon gritted his teeth in anger.

He was currently armed with several Magic Items that boosted his power, and he could also summon Golems to aid him.

He had Automatons as well.

With the items at his disposal, Lubick reckoned that he would be able to take down the massive Golem—no, he had to do it at any cost.

>WHOOOOOSSSHHHH<

In a blast of wind, Lubick lunged in the direction of the hulking construct, ready to tear it apart.

But—

>BOOOOOOOOOOMMMMM<

—He was shot down.

"Gark!" Lubick coughed.

Sure, he had released some of his defensive enhancements so that he could move faster, but he hadn't expected a hit that heavy.

The explosion was filled with an element that contradicted his specialty.

Lubick devilishly glared in the direction of the explosion, growling as the pain permeating his body was healed.

And then—in an instant—he spotted the young girl who was responsible.

It was a human!

"You...!"

Any other Demon would have actively chased the child and killed her mercilessly, but Lubick was highly intelligent.

He had his priority set straight.

'I need to get to the Golem and—'

>BOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMM<

Yet another volley destabilized the Demon Lord's thoughts, causing him deeply glare at the girl.

She shot him an equally serious expression, obviously not intending on letting him get away.

"Fine. I'll kill you first." Lubick seethed, descending from his glorious heights in a flash.

>VWOOOOOMMMMM!!!<

The winds parted, and the young lady rapidly made way for his descent on the free battlefield around them.

The terrifying creature known as Lubick made his appearance, smiling like none other than the devil.

His evil gaze was on the human girl who chose to defy him.

She had silver hair and blue eyes. A certain frosty innocence that seemed to accentuate her beauty.

"You... you're shaking...?" Lubick asked, staring at the human with unfettered focus.

She, the one who defied him, was depicting evidence of fear.

Shouldn't she have thought things through before defying him? Now that he had appeared, she was cowering in his presence.

'Is it because of the sheer magnitude of my Miasma? Or my presence itself? Well, it doesn't matter. I'll just deal with her and be on my way.'

And so, he prepared his Spell, ready to blitz her in a single stroke.

'I'm scared.'

Maria's thoughts were a mess at the moment.

Her body wouldn't stop trembling in the presence of one of the Demon Lords. Even though her resolve was strong, her heart remained weak.

She knew who he was before shooting him down, but once he approached, her body naturally gave in to the chill.

Still...

'I won't let this stop me!'

Strengthening herself with Magic, Maria Helmsworth made her defenses stronger, her body lighter, and also created a Mana Field around her.

A Mana Field basically meant one's surrounding was chock-full of positive energy. When fighting Demons who were expert Miasma users, it was best to always saturate one's environment with Mana.

Maria made the necessary preparations while refusing to take her gaze off the Demon Lord.

"Die." The blue Demon Lord muttered, releasing a ray of highly destructive energy.

Maria knew she was too slow to avoid the ray of black light, and her defenses couldn't shield her from its destruction.

Still, she maintained her stance and readied her Magic.

'I'll do it! I'll make sure I defeat this one!'

Even though she was nowhere near Jared's level, Maria had been training like crazy.

She was even fortunate enough to be recognized by Serah Crimson, who taught her privately and allowed her to bring forth more of her latent potential.

'Mage Mode, Fusion Magic, even...' Maria had an array of cards to utilize.

She was prepared to win, and everything started from taking care of the ray that was directed at her.

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

Chapter 492: Grand Mage Of The Royal Court

"[Refle—]"

>ZVUUUUUUUSSSHHHHHH!!!<

Before Maria's Spell could be concluded, a looping warp appeared between her and the incoming blast.

>VWUUUMMM<

Instantly, the ray was swallowed by the spacial rupture—down to its last spark—leaving behind the devastated path it traversed.

Lubick was surprised by the event, glaring at the spatial hole that manifested, and then at the girl behind it.

'What is this? She can use Space Magic? At that age?!'

Lubick remembered that there was a human around her age who had brought them into this mess.

He thought he was the only one, but who would have thought there were other exceptional kids who could pose problems?

'If that's the case, why was she shaking? Was she trying to let me get my guard down?'

As Lubick hardened his glare at the young girl, he noticed something about her.

'She's surprised too?'

He hadn't noticed earlier because of how doll-like her face was—hardly depicting emotion.

However, the widening of her eyes and the slight parting of her lips told the expert Demon Lord that she was indeed shocked by the portal.

'She didn't do it? Then, who di—'

"Apologies for my lateness." A voice appeared, and out of the blue, a man appeared out of thin air.

He was garbed in a luxurious mage apparel, had an ancient staff in his hand, with an open Grimoire floating before him.

Several gem-like crystals were on his body—either as necklaces, earrings, bracelets, or even eyebrow rings.

He had a few orbs floating around him too.

The human appeared beside the human girl, causing the latter to raise her head slightly to lock eyes with him.

"C-Court Mage!" Maria managed to blurt out in her flustered tone.

That's right! It was none other than Elrich Lendertwale, the Court Mage of the Eastern Kingdom, who appeared in the nick of time.

"I saw this scene and decided to intervene. I certainly hope I wasn't too late." He gave a youthful smile.

Even though he was using Magic to maintain his youthful self, the man was a genuine old fogey underneath.

Of course, he could have fooled anyone with his current appearance.

"Tch. Another unnecessary bug..." Lubick gave an exasperated groan.

This caused both humans to grant their gaze upon the Demon Lord before them.

"So, both of you want to team up against me, or what? This is getting annoying."

For a moment, there was silence in the air. Not one person moved or spoke. The two sides simply stared at the other.

"I think you're mistaken here," Elrich spoke, exuding confidence.

He glanced at the human girl, and she nodded too.

'So she understands...' The Grand Mage smiled internally.

"I saw your fight and thought to intervene. In as much as she is extremely skilled, she is still an interning Imperial Mage. You are a Demon Lord. It's not a fair matchup, don't you think?" Elrich once again glanced at Maria, noticing her expression had not changed.

Even with that, the Royal Court Mage could not shake off a weird feeling permeating his insides.

"I-in any case, I'll be the one fighting you. Don't worry, Maria... I've got this one." He gave a thumbs up at the girl while still keeping his gaze locked on Lubick.

For a brief moment, there was no response from his ally, Maria. One would think she was deaf, dumb... maybe both.

However, just as the two parties looked in her direction for an answer, she nodded slightly and began taking her leave.

Both her hands were pressed tightly to make a fist as she stiffly went away. Still, as she went, a whisper escaped her lips.

"... Shameless old man..."

With that, the girl flew away, leaving the two extremely powerful ones to duke it out.

"What was all that about?"

"I know right? She's a bit weird..."

Both enemies returned their glares once they realized that they had unconsciously entered a cordial conversation.

Once again, artificial hate returned to their eyes as they prepared to do battle.

"I'll be done with you soon. Once it's over, I'll simply destroy that Golem and turn this whole thing in our favor." The Demon Lord sneered.

For a moment, Elrich Lendertwale was dumbstruck by the statement. It wasn't because he was afraid of such a thing occurring.

Rather, it was the opposite.

"You really think you can turn this around? It's too late, you know? You've already lost."

"Shut it. What do you know? You think our ruler is like you? He certainly has a plan for this as well. All I have to do is perform my role well and everything will fall into place."

Anyone with common sense would be able to see that Lubick was no longer functioning on pure logic, but rather, blind loyalty.

Elrich somewhat pitied the blue Demon Lord, but an iota of admiration was evident as well.

'I wish I believed so much in the crown as much as this guy does...'

Elrich had been around even before the current King took his crown, so he had a fair knowledge of how things worked in the Kingdom.

It wasn't because the King was absolute that he chose to remain loyal as the Royal Court Mage. Rather, it was to steer the crown on the right path.

That was his entire purpose in the Palace.

As long as he was present, Elrich was certain that the people in authority wouldn't make an unwise decision.

The voice of reason—that was his role beside the King.

"You won't be winning this fight, talkless of the war," Elrich spoke, getting himself prepared for the fight.

"Oh? You are cocky, aren't you?" The Demon Lord responded, doing the same.

"I've heard of you, Royal Court Mage. They say you're an expert in Magic Technology, and you mostly utilize items in your battles. You're also one of the three most skilled in Magic in your Kingdom."

"Oh, stop it." Elrich smiled at the words being rained on him.

"In those regards, we can be said to be the same." Lubick smiled devilishly, activating his own Magic Items.

"Oh?"

The Royal Court Mage was slightly cautious, but mostly excited. It was an ideal match for him, after all.

"Now, then, let us see which of us is superior!"

[SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar](#)
Chapter 493: Demon Lord Versus Grand Mage [Pt 1]

"[Grand Miasma Missiles]"

Starting with a flurry of Advanced-Level Spells, Lubick launched the purple mines in Elrich's direction.

Each Miasma Missile was packed with enough power to explode and devastate a considerably wide radius.

Having so many of them rain down on his target was overkill, but Lubick didn't care.

With widened eyes like one on the verge of insanity, he awaited Elrich's response.

"Not good enough."

In that instant, a barrage of Mana Missiles of the same quality appeared and clashed with the Miasma Missiles.

>SHUUUUUUUUUU<

As a result of the impact between the two, an implosion occurred. The Mana and Miasma elements dissipated.

"I'll let you know now that you can't win if you keep throwing Spells like that around." Elrich smiled.

He pointed his staff at Lubick, and then a blast of purple electricity burst out of it.

"Tch!"

Using a severing Spell, Lubick split the incoming energy apart, so none of its destructive charges touched him.

"Very well." The Demon Lord was pressed for time.

The way he fought was as a Mage, so he always avoided direct confrontations. That didn't mean he was terrible at it, Lubick just figured there were more efficient ways to do battle.

"[Golem Max Summoning]."

Instantly, a large Magic Circle appeared, and it began pouring out highly powerful Golems.

Unexpectedly, though...

>SHIIINNNGGG<

... The same was occurring on Elrich's end of the battlefield.

"W-wha—?!" Lubick wanted to burst out with a surprised yelp, but he stopped himself midway.

A similar Magic Circle had formed in front of Elrich Lendertwale, and it spat out the same quality of Golems.

The Golems on both ends charged and clashed—dealing equal damage until they expired.

'How is he doing this? Original Magic, maybe?'

Not once, but twice now, Elrich had been able to completely offer equal resistance to Lubick's Magic.

It didn't make any sense that they would know the same kinds of Spells, and even if they did, how could the Grand Mage control the output to be exactly the same as him?

'It has to be Original Magic. So he's using that at the get-go...' Lubick cautiously smiled.

It was quite tricky, but wasn't this a good thing?

'He has shown his cards while mine remain hidden. With this, I'll be able to emerge victorious!'

Lubick's wicked grin caused the Grand Mage of the Royal Court to look a bit puzzled, and then words finally emerged.

"Do you want to know a secret?" Elrich Lendertwale smiled.

"What?"

"Well, it's not exactly a secret, but not many people know of this fact..."

'What the hell is he talking about?' Lubick wondered if the Grand Mage was trying to buy time by engaging in a useless conversation.

'Using his Original Magic so much has exhausted him, no doubt. I can take this chance to—'

"I don't have Original Magic. I mean, I never cultivated one."

"U-uh?!"

Lubick was beyond surprised by the Grand Mage's words.

There was the possibility that what he just said was a lie, but the man's straight face made that seem far-fetched.

"You think I'm countering your attacks with Original Magic, right? I'm not. It's the effect of a Magic Item—this Grimoire in front of me." Elrich pointed at the floating book in front of him.

"Original Magic takes too much time and effort to master. It's also too lopsided—focusing on one particular field. I prefer something more widespread."

Apparently, the Grand Mage preferred being a jack of all trades, so he refused to concentrate his efforts on developing Original Magic—an admirable effort on his end.

The results?

"These items you see on me aren't mere accessories, you know? Each of them is packed with certain special effects, and their unique abilities help me out in battle."

From offensive measures to defense, perception, traps, summoning, etc. Elrich Lendertwale's specialty was in all those fields thanks to the time he spent on making items rather than building his Original Magic.

"I've lived for quite some time. Not as long as you, but enough in human time to develop many things. So, there's your answer."

As long as Lubick wasn't creative in his attacks, he would never be able to bring down Elrich.

No matter the situation that would go down, the Grand Mage had prepared for it. His tools were geared toward responding to each situation as they saw fit.

If one could refer to that as his own Original Magic, they would be partly right.

Elrich grinned to himself, waiting for the next thing the Demon Lord would show him.

His Grimoire had the [Analyze] effect, while his staff had the [Link] and [Activation] effects.

That meant that while the Grimoire recorded the Spells of his targets—translating them to a contingency he could cast—his Staff would implement the information and cast the Spell.

Of course, he would supply the Mana, but Elrich had equipped several Mana Boosters, so he wasn't worried about the volume of his energy.

"It's been a while since I fought, so this quite exciting."

Lubick's face displayed veins at this point. He was pissed beyond words, and Elrich's snarky comments weren't making things any better.

"Fine, then. You know what? I'm done. I'll just end this now."

A spark of purple light and ominous red mist converged on Lubick's palm. The sparks grew larger, and the mist kept propagating.

"[Original Magic: The Demon Realm]"

Instantly, the entire area was enveloped in purplish black fog, and the clouds above crackled with purple lightning.

The darkness around, along with the red-like smoke that wafted in the air, was akin to a particular place in the world where only Demons were allowed to live in.

"T-this is...?!" Elrich murmured in surprise.

His environment was being protected by a Mana Field, but the surrounding Miasma was eating into the haven like a virus.

It was only a matter of time before the defensive field was completely taken down.

"That's right. I made my version of our territory. It's the nature of my Original Magic."

In simple terms, Lubick had just transformed the territory into home turf. Not only were his powers much more than normal, but his opponent also suffered a constant debuff.

It was the ultimate Original Magic to utilize against non-Demons.

"Let's see how you escape this time."

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

Chapter 494: Demon Lord Versus Grand Mage [Pt 2]

"I see... so you've trapped me in a miniature Demon Realm," Elrich murmured, looking around him.

Fortunately, he was within a safe area thanks to his Magic Tool responding on time, but that was only a temporary measure.

Being surrounded by so much Miasma meant that his barrier wouldn't be able to remain active for long.

"It's not as simple as a Miniature Demon Realm. I can alter the environment however I please. I could increase the intensity of the Miasma, or use any of the surrounding Miasma for a Spell--like so."

With a snap of his fingers, a dense spike appeared out of nowhere, nearly piercing Elrich.

>BOOOOMMMMMM<

His Mana Field suffered a hit, causing Elrich to recoil as a result. The effects were not fatal, but the shield's integrity had been reduced for sure.

"Why can't your Grimoire offer a solution to this one? Or is it restricted to regular Spells and not Original Magic? Maybe it can't deal with an Area Of Effect Spell like this. Oh, there are so many limitations I would love to extrapolate from that power you have." Lubick grinned devilishly.

He currently held all the cards, and that made the Demon Lord bask in his superiority.

"Well, you're not completely wrong about that. When it comes to Original Magic and certain kinds of Spells, it's tricky to win."

Lubick's smile grew wider upon hearing the Grand Mage admitting defeat.

His pride had been bruised more than once since the start of this war, but he was finally regaining his confidence.

At the very least, Lubick was certain he could beat the man before him.

"I could wait... but we should end this quickly. Besides, I don't know how long it'll take for the [Analyze] effect to be completed. This Field may break down before then."

'Uh?!' Lubick thought he heard something weird from the human.

"I suppose I'll be using my Trump Card now."

"W-wha--?!"

>VWUUUUUUUUUUSSSSHHHHHH<

Something akin to a vacuum appeared above the layers of Miasma.

It resembled a portal, but due to its unstable and chaotic nature--as well as its darkened swirl--one could refer to it as a Black Hole instead.

"I haven't completely mastered that Item, but... if I make a mistake and mess up the calculated directions, the portal becomes a Vortex instead."

Lubick could only hear gibberish from the Grand Mage, but what was happening warranted concern.

The swirling singularity above began sucking in the clouds and mists of Miasma.

The pulling force it had completely outweighed Lubick's control over the surrounding field.

"No! No! What are you doing?! This can't be happening!"

The never-satisfied Black Hole kept sucking the purplish-black clouds and red mist... until the Miasma around was so thin that it couldn't be registered as a threat any longer.

>SWUUUUSSSSHHHHHH<

The Black Hole kept sucking in things despite completing its job, causing Elrich himself to give a very worried expression.

"Oof! I'll have to forcefully deactivate it."

Placing his hand in his pocket and bringing out a card--displaying the symbol of a Tower on it--Elrich used his Mana to shut down the bright blue glow emanating from the object.

And then--

>SHUUUUUUUUUU<

The dark blot in the sky slowly closed, and then space returned to normal.

"Haaa, that was a close one. If it went a bit more out of control..." Elrich spoke, heaving a sigh of relief.

"W-what is that? What did you just do?" Lubick growled.

Not only had his Original Magic been combatted, but his opponent was holding something so immensely powerful that even the Demon Lord slowly began to rethink his earlier stance.

"Ah, this? It's an Arcana. You Demons have your Arcana, right? [The Devil], if I'm not mistaken. Jared told me about that."

Lubick was stunned beyond words.

[The Devil] was a National Heritage--the most important thing in the Demon Realm, that ensured their survival.

It was an Arcana, yes, one of the most powerful Items in the world.

Still... for a mere human to also be wielding an Arcana--one that was capable of such a feat--while professing his lack of control... it made Lubick utterly concerned.

'C-can I even win?'

The Demon Lord had once imagined himself being in possession of [The Devil] Arcana, and how much power he would be able to control.

The possibilities were endless.

Now that he was facing someone who had another equally powerful Arcana.

'N-no way...'

"Ah! What do you know? [Analysis] is complete." Elrich Lendertwale interrupted Lubick's inner conflict.

"Uh?"

"Let's try it out. [Mana Realm], I guess."

Instantly, the environment was filled with Mana--a dense supply of it--rather than Miasma.

Unlike a Mana Field that spammed just the Caster's immediate surroundings, the effects of [Mana Realm] covered a large area, just like Lubick's Original Magic.

And, as a result...

"Guark!" The Demon Lord fell to his knees, coughing violently.

His blue body shuddered, feeling the invasive force of the toxic Mana that surrounded him.

"N-no way... H-how...?!"

Lubick was now shaking violently, unable to defend himself from the Mana-saturated place he was trapped in.

"It takes some time, but even Original Magic can be analyzed. There are exceptions like Neron Kaelid's and Serah Crimson's. Those two are monsters, and my Grimoire wouldn't be able to keep up..."

Lubick was slowly losing control of his sense. He fought to stay alive, but even an extra second was too painful.

"Yours took a bit over five minutes. I expected it to be longer. Maybe because the concept is similar to Mana Field. If it was more complicated, then that would have been disastrous."

Lubick felt insulted, but he couldn't even raise any objection at this point.

"You weren't a bad opponent. To be honest, I was unsure of who would win. But, then again, isn't that what a battle is supposed to be about?" The white-haired man smiled at the blue-skinned Demon.

The Demon Lord's body was already rotting, and in a few seconds, he would die from Mana Poisoning.

"Y-you..." Was all Lubick could say as he faded from existence.

"I suppose there's a lesson to be learned here. Just because you have Original Magic doesn't make you superior." Elrich Lendertwale raised his hand and smiled.

Of course, that was only because he was armed to the teeth with several Magic Tools. Even with all that help, he wasn't guaranteed to win.

Everything was due to skill and a bit of luck.

"Huu, looks like I win. That sure was one tough fight."

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

Chapter 495: Archangel Drive [Pt 1]

"That shameless old man..."

Maria didn't show how she felt internally, but if anyone could look within the girl, they would find out she was very frustrated.

Her reasons were also quite valid.

'I wanted to fight him. That Demon Lord... I caught him!'

Elrich Lendertwale just had to swoop in like a false knight and stole Maria's prey from her. It was not only embarrassing, but the girl was disappointed by it.

'I missed my chance to do anything...' She sighed, moving amid the horrific battlefield.

Her protective barrier was on, and her senses were still sharp, so she was in no danger at all. That was why she was able to walk in melancholy while drowning her frustrated thoughts.

'I wanted to achieve something... I wanted to at least show him how useful I can be. How much I've grown...'

Sure, fighting a Demon Lord seemed a bit over the top, but Maria felt like she could achieve it if she played her cards right—not that the opportunity would ever present itself again.

And so, the pure and innocent girl kept traversing the battlefield. Until—

"Hey, you!"

—Someone called out to her.

Maria's body halted, and her head slowly turned in the direction of the voice.

From where she stood, the girl could feel the bloodlust... the evil energy swirling around the person who stood a good distance from her.

"Are you strong?"

The one who spoke took on the appearance of a devil.

His red skin, horned forehead, and dangling tail made him appear even more menacing. No doubt, he was a Crimson Demon.

"I asked... are you strong?"

This time, the Crimson Demon stood from the pile of corpses where he previously sat on.

Mangled, burned corpses were strewn all around, but most of them had formed a pile where this Crimson Demon stood.

"Disgusting." Maria voiced her thoughts upon taking in the truly grotesque sight.

Still, despite how scary it was, the girl did not run. She simply did not move from her position. Her eyes were still locked with the Crimson Demon.

"Hahahaha! That's the spirit. So, you're strong! That's good."

In a small leap, the shirtless, muscular Demon descended to the ground, grinning with his sharpened teeth.

His height and build would make most bodybuilders shrink in fear and inferiority. The sheer amount of energy that burst from within him would also make most Mages shrivel up.

But, Maria did no such thing.

She simply watched as he drew closer to her.

"My name is Lucien. I'm the highest ranked Demon General, second only to the authority of the Demon Lords and the Supreme Lord over the Demons—The Demon King."

Maria wanted to point out how his statement made no sense considering his hierarchy was third place, not simply 'second only', but she decided against it.

Her stoic expression simply met the menacing grin of her adversary.

Still, a spark of interest lit up within her.

'Highest ranked among the Demon Generals? That should be enough as a consolation prize...'

It was made painfully clear that she wouldn't be getting the chance to fight a Demon Lord. Maria thought it was wise to go for the next best thing—especially if they came to her on their own accord.

"Alright. Let's begin, then." She softly smiled, readying herself for battle.

>WHOOOOOSSSHHHH<

A blow surged from Lucien, making its way to Maria with breakneck speed.

The Demon General grinned, wondering if all it would take was one hit from his blow to turn the little girl into another one of the corpses around.

Sure, a few Automatons would come around, but the little buzzers were no match for him too.

The girl before him would also become one of the many dead chunks around him. Lucien felt pleased and increased his speed to completely wreck her.

However—

>VWUUSHH<

—His wrist was grabbed just as the girl before him exuded some energy in a flash.

Her body glittered white, and glistening apparel covered her—pure white armor, white feathered wings, and a white crown.

Her light-armored hand was able to grab his wrist, preventing his fist from reaching her face.

"Archangel Drive... this is good enough."

"W-wha—?!"

Before Lucien could utter another word, a volatile fist made its way to his face.

>BOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMM<

The Crimson Demon heard something snap as his body was sent flying a great distance. There was no resistance as his crimson flesh traversed the battlefield and landed on the ground like a stray meteor.

The earth shattered upon impact, and a crater was formed upon his crash.

"Guark!" Blood spurted out of his mouth, and his deformed face looked in horror as the white-clad being approached him at top speed.

"W-what... what the hell?!"

Before he could move his damaged body, she had reached him, readying another fist.

"N-no!" Lucien blocked his face, but the next thing he felt was her hard blow shattering his ribs as they dug into his stomach.

"Urghhh!" He wanted to throw up, but her grip clasped his face shut, causing whatever would come out to stay trapped within.

Another blow sent his jaw cracking as he flew into the sky above him.

>BOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMM<

Lucien was in too much pain—an unfamiliar emotion for someone as powerful as him.

His body burned with every strike, causing him no temporarily go numb.

It was as though the energy clashing with his was designed to bypass all his defenses and deal the greatest amount of pain to him.

The girl's brute strength also didn't help matters. Sure, he was a Demon... but she was the true monster.

"W-wha—?!"

Maria had already ascended to his location at this point, still donning her pure Angel look. Her deadpan expression, coupled with the way she gruesomely hit the Demon would make anyone wonder what kind of entity she was.

So bright, yet unbelievably dark.

"Hey, you..." Maria grabbed the Crimson Demon's throat, glaring at his mangled face.

"... Are you certain that you're the strongest of the Demon Generals?"

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

Chapter 496: Archangel Drive [Pt 2]

Maria's eyes showed contempt, disappointment swirling in her heart.

Her opponent whom she expected to be strong enough to pose a challenge was already shivering in her grasp.

Surely, the real deal would have shown more resistance than this pathetic excuse before her.

'He hasn't even struck one blow yet...' Her thoughts trailed.

Maria wasn't particularly looking for a fight where she would struggle, but wasn't it common sense that a truly powerful enemy would at least make her push everything she had to the limits?

'Archangel Drive is my Fusion Mode in addition to Mage Mode...' Her thoughts trailed.

Was that truly enough to defeat the upper echelon of the Demon Army?

"I should finish what I started, though..." Maria murmured to herself, already losing interest in the red lump of meat in her grasp.

Unfortunately or fortunately for her, the Crimson Demon she held had a differing opinion.

"Y-you... you've humiliated me to this extent..."

Maria was surprised that the one called Lucien could still speak despite his swollen lips and bloodied face.

"You call me weak... you treat me this way... no more!"

Maria could feel the negative energy within and outside him growing stronger than ever. It was peaking to a point that even Maria had to let go of the opponent.

"You..."

The Crimson Demon began growing in bulk. His muscular figure grew even bulkier.

Lucien darkened in complexion, and a fiery aura enveloped him. His dark hair turned amber, and his eyes glowed as well.

His injured body slowly had a makeover, and signs of damage slowly faded away.

"I don't know what you did to hamper my regeneration... my power... but no more." His sharpened teeth let out steam as he spoke.

In his current state, even as they both floated in the sky, he was much bigger than her.

'About twelve meters? Maybe thirteen...' Maria thought as she analyzed her predicament.

Of course, her expression was as stoic as always.

"Looking down on me, uh? You little bitch! I'll make sure to tear you apart!" He roared like a battle-hungry maniac.

Currently, the Crimson Demon had adopted a form known as Martial State.

As one who relied on only brute force and Martial Arts to fight, he didn't know any Magic. Still, he was strong enough to become the most powerful among the Demon Generals.

The reason for his edge over everyone was the special abilities he developed in his Martial State.

For one, he attained instant recovery—though, for some reason, it had slowed down thanks to the girl's troublesome ability.

Secondly, he grew more and more powerful depending on how enraged he was. His energy would keep climbing until it reached a threshold.

No one had been able to beat him in this Martial State, as he would decimate every one of his opponents.

"You... I'll make sure to kill you and everyone you love!" Lucien growled, now baring his fangs at the angelic girl before him—his eyes bloodshot.

"What did you just say?"

"What?"

"You just said something.... killing me and everyone I love... something like that."

"Y-yeah! What about it!"

Lucien was conflicted about how to feel about the girl he was about to rip to shreds. Anyone who saw this form of his would instantly realize the power gap and at least show some level of fear.

They would flee, or at least show a degree of despair.

But, this one was not like that at all.

Her expression seemed to turn even colder as she stared at him icily.

"You? Don't make me laugh. You're not worthy."

Veins appeared all over the Crimson Demon's face as his bloodshot eyes bulged.

He hated being looked down on the most—especially when it was an inferior human scum that was responsible.

"I'll rip you apart!"

>WHISH<

A white blade sharply interrupted Lucien's lunge at Maria—piercing the right side of his chest.

"U-uh??"

It had moved faster than he could process.

The sinking white blade burned Lucien from his insides, causing him to roar in pain as he tried pulling it out.

However—

>SWOOOSH<

>SWISH<

Two more pierced both arms, causing him to shout in greater pain.

His body felt like it was burning from the inside out. The amount of agony he suffered was indescribable.

"My Familiar is an Archangel Seraph. I imbue Holy Magic to all my Spells in this form. I suppose Demons are quite vulnerable to that energy..." Maria spoke as she stared at the Demon condescendingly.

She slowly ascended as the Demon began raising his head to view her Majesty. His body throbbed in pain, and his heart began racing in fear, yet Lucien could not take his gaze off his opponent.

"Someone like you can't threaten to hurt Jared. You're nothing."

As she made this statement, over a dozen more blades appeared in the sky, surrounding her as they brimmed with power.

"Die."

The blades took that as the go-ahead and were launched simultaneously—each piercing respective parts of Lucien's body.

"Guar—"

Even his mouth was impaled by a white blade, and the sheer force caused his body to plummet to the earth.

Maria turned her gaze from the Crimson Demon General and snapped her fingers.

As Lucien made crashed upon the ground, the blades began glowing brighter and brighter, making ominous hums as their power swelled beyond control.

"O-Ohhhh..." Was the only sound the Crimson Demon could make before his end arrived.

>BOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMM<

The area of impact was shrouded in white light, consuming everything around—including the rotting dead bodies of Lucien's victims.

"Rest in peace... that is, until Jared resurrects you."

After all, everything that had happened so far was a part of his grand scheme.

Even though she couldn't see Jared on the battlefield, and she was unsure whether or not he was watching her exploits in the fight, Maria still felt relieved that when push came to shove, she didn't disappoint herself.

'All those times I spent with Serah really paid off...'

With a smile on her face, Maria flew off—most likely to find a better opponent.

[A/N]

Who do you think is winning in a fight between Maria and Ana?

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

Chapter 497: Monster

The battle had reached a crescendo—and that was because the surviving Demon Lords fought with all they had to ensure there was no loss.

Demon Lord of Vert—Zenkiel—as well as the Demon Lord of Jaune—Serci—remained undefeated...

... Though it was only a matter of time.

"Guark!"

Serci, the giant Demon—a monster in every right—fond herself spurting blood.

Her enormous body throbbed in pain as her grave injuries slowly healed.

The enemy that rendered put in this state was none other than the champion of the Beastfolk Race—Gerard.

"You... are quite strong." Once again, she coughed blood as she spoke.

The corrosive fluid burned the earth as it fell, but none of the opponents took that to mind.

"Oh, me? I'm actually not that strong..." Gerard mumbled.

His light shrug and distant smile showed that he meant every word. The Beast King was being honest about his weakness.

"What?"

"I mean it... really."

After suffering defeat at the hands of Serah Crimson, and then Jared Leonard, he knew his place in the world.

Of course, he was determined to keep growing more powerful until he could consider himself a strong person.

However, at the moment, Gerard knew he was yet to achieve that.

"I am weak... and you are simply weaker." He stared at her with a bit of disappointment.

"Oh? I see..." The monstrous Demon Lord smiled with her beastly face as she stood from the spot where she fell.

Even though she was easily over 12 feet in height, her body slumped a little.

She tightened the muscles on her four arms, strengthened her wings, and readied her four eyes on the target.

Her yellow fur, with black stripes, was now dirty thanks to being mercilessly beaten by Gerard.

Even her five horns remained two, as the other three were broken in the conflict.

In simple terms, she was in a terrible state, but Serci was not one to give up—not in love, or in battle.

'I'll make sure his Majesty, King Abellion, notices me in this battle. We'll survive, and get married! We'll have children, and we will live happily ever after!'

Oh yes, she was also very delusional.

"Let's end this, shall we? I refused to do this earlier because I go berserk, but..."

Even a monster like Serci had a trump card.

>VWUUUUUMMMMM<

Immense energy began swelling from within the Demon Lord, causing steam to emanate from her damaged body.

Gerard braced himself, watching the horrifying creature slowly morph into something more terrifying.

"... Apex Form: MONSTER"

The already beastly form of the Demon Lord adopted a brand new form.

She grew in mass, shooting to sixty meters in height.

The new Serci's giant wings flapped, causing the entire area to shake as the wind blew past everyone.

The monster took to the sky, having a mass that seemed impossible. Her four hands became at least a hundred—all pushing out of the yellow body that now looked slimy and repulsive.

Eyes appeared in every area, and several horns protruded out of nowhere.

A massive slit appeared on the monster's face, and a large mouth opened from there.

The spiraling sharp teeth it has within were more like blenders, and the amount the monster had was unbelievable.

In short, Serci had become a terrifying being that was both incredibly monstrous and even more difficult to kill.

"ROAAAAARRRRRRR!!!" The monsterized Demon Lord gave a loud bellow, causing the earth to tremble.

Her large mouth was open, causing bits of her saliva to pour into the battlefield.

At this point, no one could ignore the yellow monster that floated above the battlefield.

The Demons who saw this instantly knew that they had to flee—as they too would get caught in Serci's attacks.

Their Demon Lord in this form was nigh invincible. The only problem was the loss of her senses.

While Serci couldn't know it at the time, since she had lost every ounce of reason, all her comrades were actually rooting for her.

They were happy—excited to see the tides of battle change.

Zenkiel, who had been subdued by Serah, looked at the monster and gave a satisfied smile.

"You won't be able to beat that one..." He groaned as he spoke, looking at the one who beat him spitefully.

Serah Crimson, not even having a scratch on her body, looked at the floating monster and grinned.

"I won't need to."

After saying that, she returned to beating the crap out of her victim—or rather, her opponent.

"ROAAAAARRRRRRRRRRRR!!!"

Serci's loud roar echoed in Gerard's ears, but he was hardly intimidated.

Instead, he decided it was time to once again assume his apex form.

In the past, doing this would put a strain on his body. But, thanks to Jared's Cure, he could utilize it at will.

"Joint Transformation State: Phase 2!"

Instantly, Gerard manifested and fully integrated all forms he could attain. Building every part to its peak, he was now a beast among beasts—an absolute monster.

His lava-like Dragon body soared to the sky as he lunged at the target.

Though Gerard wasn't as large as Serci, he could feel the intensity of his energy to be more superior to hers.

Her power was spread out and running amok in her bulky body, but Gerard's energy was more concentrated. Plus, he had his sanity.

'This is it! With this, I'll be able to once again surpass my limits!'

Gerard's speed increased and he prepared for impact when—

"Uh??!"

—Something weird entered the gaping mouth of the yellow monster.

It looked like a long cylinder, but it had an abnormal amount of energy stocked within. Gerard looked at the trail of smoke and noticed that the weird rocket-thingy emanated from the massive Golem in a distance.

But, as soon as he was about to process what was occurring, the Beast King noticed something else.

"BWUUUUUUUU!!!"

The hulking body of the flying monster began to swell at an alarming rate.

Since he was near it, Gerard could see it more clearly—how its flesh enlarged, and the energy that seemed to be rising every second.

"Oh, shi—!"

>BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMMM<

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

Chapter 498: King Abellion [Pt 1]

"Wha—?!"

Everyone was shocked beyond words as the monstrosity above them suddenly enlarged... and then ruptured.

Its body became nothing but many fragments of flesh and blood, dropping upon the battlefield as rain.

As the dead Demon Lord's entrails were strewn all over the field, her master was in shock.

Demon King Abellion couldn't keep his mouth closed as he watched his dear subordinate become nothing but dead meat and blood.

"H-how...?"

Once his eyes spotted a trail of smoke from where Serci's massive mouth used to be, Abellion saw something standing on the other end.

"It's that thing!"

The large Golem, the same one that decimated the small army back when Zenkiel launched his Two-Pronged attack, was the same one responsible for Serci's death.

It had also claimed the lives of many Demons on the battlefield.

Unfortunately, no one had been able to stop it yet.

Thanks to standing at the far end of the battle, if one wanted to attack the Golem, they would need to go past the large army arrayed before it.

It was due to this reason that Abellion surmised that no one had yet succeeded in the task.

"Damnit!"

Since he was linked to his Demon Lords, Abellion knew just how many were left—a meager number of one.

'Zenkiel is the only one who is alive right now...' He glanced in the direction of his Commander-In-Chief, who was being nothing but a punching bag for the human woman who fought him.

Not only was Zenkiel unable to retaliate thanks to the flurry of attacks he received, but the woman didn't even seem to be taking the fight seriously.

It was as though the Demon Lord was nothing but a toy she could use.

'Damnit!' Abellion gritted his teeth, now taking a good look around him.

The battle that had once been at a climax was sizzling out.

Over ninety percent of his forces had been killed, and the rest were just about on the verge of dying.

His Demon Lords were all dead as well.

Zenkiel seemed to be holding on well, but it was no secret that he was simply overwhelmed.

If the lady hitting him wanted him dead, Abellion imagined how possible that would be.

"And you..." The Demon King now focused his gaze on the opponent before him.

"Are you ready to resume?" A warbling voice answered him.

It wasn't human, but wasn't a Demon's either.

"How come you survived my attacks for so long? I still don't understand..."

Abellion was currently facing the Automaton Jared Leonard left behind as he went to take care of other business.

Abellion had initially thought he would decimate the construct and quickly give chase to Jared, but things didn't turn out to be so simple.

It turned out to be very difficult to even land a hit on the platinum-armored being.

'It's like he was built for that purpose. It keeps evading my attacks, and then destroying my blades whenever they get too close...'

The Automaton hadn't dealt a decisive attack on him yet, so Abellion was certain that its combat potential was lower than his.

'The only thing you're good at is speed! Your evasive maneuvers may be tricky, but they're not impossible.'

At the very least, Abellion was determined to kill the Automaton before him, and then come to Zenkiel's aid.

Once he defeated the Automaton and the human woman who assailed his most loyal subordinate, he would then go after the Golem that killed Serci.

As the Demon King, his responsibilities demanded that he avenged his comrades—even if it was a losing battle.

Abellion had long forgotten common sense and the tactical need for retreat.

"Right here and now... we'll settle things!" King Abellion growled, instantly summoning several purplish-black portals behind him.

In response, the Automaton simply shrugged. This did nothing but tick the Demon King off even more.

"Die!"

>WHOOOOOSSSHHHH<

Several black blades surged forth, darting in the Automaton's direction beyond the speed of light.

The immense concentration of Miasma within the blades would mean nothing but death if they so much as grazed anyone with Mana.

Yet, so many of them targeted the shiny Automaton and chased it with dangerous precision.

"I'll have to defend myself." Came its warbling tone, and instantly, a long blade appeared in the Automaton's grasp.

>VWOOOOOOOSSSSSHHHHH<

In one strong swing, the several blades were turned into nothing but cinders... and we're purified in white light.

"What?!" Abellion couldn't believe his eyes.

'Those blades were constructed with a calcified amount of Miasma, meant to be strong enough to take it down...'

Abellion had also calculated the Automaton's speed and sent weapons that would definitely kill it.

'So why...?'

Not only had the Automaton grown faster, but its power had also risen to the point where the attack he rendered became obsolete.

"How dare you... you weren't using your full power, were you?"

In a fit of both rage and embarrassment, Abellion summoned more purple holes—making them surround his target instead.

"Fine. But I have a good idea of what to use now. You won't survive this next round."

The portals around the Automaton made it impossible for it to flee. Abellion intended on using overwhelming the opponent with quick-fire, ensuring his victory.

"Begin." With a snap of his fingers, the rain of dark blades on multiple ends began.

>FWOOOSH<

>SWOOOOSH<

>VWUUUSHHH<

In their hundreds, they poured out and charged at the target.

Each blade was strong enough to take down the large wall that he devastated back when the Demons began their attack on the humans.

With hundreds of weapons with the same quality relentless raining on a single target, there was no way it could survive.

>BOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMM<

Everything enclosed within the array of portals was devastated, and smoke rose from the location.

Abellion deactivated his portals and looked at the pile of rubble, hoping to see the destroyed body of his adversaries.

However—

"It seems you were wrong about that, Demon King Abellion..."

—The Platinum Armored Automaton simply flew out of the pile of smoke and rubble, completely unharmed.

"... I survived."

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

Chapter 499: King Abellion [Pt 2]

Abellion's Original Magic, [Gates Of Hell], allowed him to create spatial ruptures anywhere he desired, and then summon blades from within them.

The thing most people didn't know about this ability was that the blades were a manifestation of Abellion's will.

In essence, they were as strong as Abellion's desire—and the quality of his Miasma.

As such, he could choose the kind of weapons he wanted to summon, as well as the effects he desired from them.

It was an ultimate power that employed ultimate violence.

As long as Abellion's imagination was unhinged, he could make his blades into anything... possessing whatever quality he desired.

Of course, the only limiting factor was Miasma.

"How are you still alive?"

The recent bombardment contained enough power to level a city to the ground, and everything was focused on a single target.

Yet, why was it still standing?

"Who knows? Your attacks were strong, so I barely managed to deflect them."

"You deflected... all of them?"

At this point, the Demon King was dazed. The Automaton also seemed to be a bit worked up, as it scratched its head a little.

"E-er, no, I didn't deflect all of them. I'm not that strong. I was simply able to heal of the injuries that some of those blades gave me."

"They all have anti-healing properties. Yet you healed from their damage?"

The Automaton appeared even more flustered.

"W-well... okay, you were right the first time. I deflected all of them. Whew, I am not good at this."

Abellion had a feeling that he was being mocked, but it was hard to prove that with the opponent's lack of a facial expression as well as its somewhat official outlook.

'I don't understand... what's going on here?'

Even though it was very obvious that Abellion had the upper hand in the fight, he still felt like he was being played.

'Or am I imagining things?'

The opponent was weaker than him. That was why Abellion hadn't gone all-out and decimated the entire area they were in.

He still intended to conserve power so he could assist his comrades.

While a lot of time was flying by thanks to the opponent's evasive measures and sudden burst in power, Abellion still couldn't imagine resorting to his full power when fighting a much opponent.

'I'll kick things up a notch to get it this time...!' The Demon King smiled.

Upon observing the Demon Lord for a moment, the Automaton heaved a sigh of relief—or at least acted as though it did.

It was built with the whole warrior getup as its natural look, so it didn't have any respiratory organs, to begin with.

The reason for Gawain's relief was that the truth about it was yet to be found out.

'Master told me to occupy the Demon King, but I'm not allowed to use excessive force...'

As such, Gawain had been restricting most of its functions so he could simply fulfill that role.

It made sure to prevent any damage that would be inflicted on him—since that was a core defensive property it possessed—but other than defense and light offense, the Automaton resorted to nothing else.

'My goal is to stall for time and ensure the Demon King doesn't overexert himself when fighting me...'

After all, Gawain wasn't his opponent.

'This is a bit difficult, though. I wasn't designed to hold back to this extent, and my adversary is already figuring things out a little...'

If they continued like this, it wouldn't be long before Abellion realized he had simply been leading him by the nose.

That didn't mean it would stop trying its hardest to hold back.

With that in mind, Gawain prepared itself for the next barrage of blades that rained upon it.

They came from every direction—even beneath and above it.

'I can think of a few dozen ways to handle this... but the only means I can utilize is to evade and cut down the blades one after the other.'

Gawain took flight and began moving faster than the homing blades could get to him, cutting them with the blade it had on hand.

The chase was swift—but only to onlookers. The Automaton felt as though time was slowed, but it had to endure this much.

It was its master's orders, after all.

>WHOOOSSH_{HHH}<

As it kept dodging and dribbling the locked-on blades, Gawain had a single thought while scanning the area for miles.

'He's late!'

'Unbelievable!' Abellion was amazed at how the Automaton was able to fluidly evade his torrents of blades.

'Could it be that it has a learning function? Had it been studying my patterns? If it evolves as time passes, then it would be best to simply overpower it with a decisive blow.'

As much as Abellion despised using too much power on an inferior target, he was pressed for time.

As someone whom everyone depended on, he couldn't betray their trust.

"I'll finish things with this."

A single portal appeared above Abellion's left shoulder. It seemed even more deadly than the others, and red lightning sparked from within it.

Emerging from the void-like portal was a weirdly shaped blade.

Its twisted edges warbled as it brimmed with immense Miasma.

'The manifestation of my twisted desires. One of the most powerful in my reserves.'

More crimson lightning flashed, and the atmosphere undulated as the immense force seemed to rear whatever was around it—including space.

"Let's see how you handle this." The twisted blade was already preparing for take-off, having its whole body coated in red energy.

Abellion's eyes widened in expectation, hoping to see how the Automaton would be ripped to shreds by the twisted nature of his weapon.

Suddenly, the Automaton raised its hand in a bid to make something known.

"Apologies, but can we end this fight? You see... my role has been fulfilled."

"Uh?"

Abellion couldn't understand what the Platinum Armored being was saying.

"I mean, my task is complete. I was meant to keep you occupied—as in, a warm-up—before your opponent arrived."

What did the Automaton mean by that? What opponent was it referring to?

Demon King Abellion didn't understand—at least... not yet.

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

Chapter 500: Arrival [Pt 1]

The Demon King still couldn't grasp what was going on. Perhaps he simply didn't want to.

"Just die. You can't call it quits now!" With an obsessive grin, he sent the twisted blade lunging at Gawain.

>WHOOOSHHH<

The blade was beyond lightning-fast. The deadly thrust of the weapon caused everything in its path to rip apart as it made its way toward the lone Automaton.

The end had already been reached—at least, according to Abellion.

"Okay, that's enough." Someone snapped.

It was a strange voice—belonging to a third party.

Instantly, the fast-approaching blade came to a stop. It remained suspended in the air, as though frozen in time.

"The guy told you already, didn't he? He's out."

Abellion was both astounded by the fact that one of his most powerful weapons was simply standing still, as well as wary of the new person that made his entrance.

The stranger was standing right in front of the twisted blade, pocketing and looking unfazed by the thing that was simply inches away from him.

"Who... are you?"

His eyes narrowed as a glare replaced his previously bulging expression.

Abellion could feel his heart skip a beat. He didn't know if it was due to caution... or a more intense emotion.

All he knew was that his blade came to a sudden halt once the newcomers made his appearance.

"Me? Wow, this is a bit awkward... I thought the Demon Army would have known about my identity at the very least." The mysterious man spoke so casually—so carefree.

His black hair fluttered with the wind as he turned away from Abellion and looked at the Automaton behind.

"Or am I being narcissistic? Shouldn't I expect that they know me?"

In response to the question, the Automaton raised his hands and shoulders, as though saying he didn't know what to say.

"I don't know, man. All I can say is that you're late. How can someone who professes to have all the time in the world have such a behavior."

The Automaton's warbling tone was followed by a loud laugh from the strange man.

"Hahaha! You're right, at least to an extent."

"H-hey...!" Abellion's words were ignored as the human kept talking to the Automaton.

"You say I shouldn't be late because of my abilities, right? Well, I beg to differ a little."

Now turning to the Demon King, who was getting impatient at this point, the man in question grinned broadly.

"If because I have all the time in the world that I can be as late as I want.

Abellion's eyes bulged as he heard those words. They felt somewhat... familiar.

"Now, then, Demon King Abellion, I suppose introductions are in order."

Stroking one hand through his dark hair, the young-looking human gave a confident, cool smile.

"My name is Ne—"

"NEROOOOOONNNNNN!!!" Another voice sharply interrupted, and the owner came lunging in the man's direction.

The man, Neron, instantly jumped as a result of the sudden halt in his introduction, as well as the one who caused it.

"Oh, crap... she's here already."

The woman who was lunging at Neron with unquantifiable speed and a wide smile on her face was none other than Serah Crimson.

Her bright smile and blushing face were in clear contrast to the beast she had been, prior to Neron's arrival.

"One sec." He raised his hand to Abellion, and then prepared himself for what would come next.

Serah approached rapidly, and Neron readied himself for their usual greeting.

"SMOOOOCHHHH" The woman shamelessly puckered her lips and prepared for an embrace with the love of her life.

Of course, this would always be returned by a violent halt thanks to Neron's time barrier. Still, Serah had made it a habit that she couldn't stop—even though she knew the consequences.

And so, she charged at him.

>WHOOOOOSH<

To her surprise, she wasn't stopped.

Instead, a pair of arms wrapped themselves around her, and she was lifted into the sky—far above the reach of the dying battle.

"Eh?"

As she ascended with the one whose arms were caressing her body, Serah's face turned red. She was close—too close to the one who half her tightly.

"N-Neron...?"

"Shhhh..." The black-haired man smiled charmingly.

Serah's red hair flowed, touching the young man's face as he didn't waver in his intense gaze.

Her heart pounded, yet she too couldn't look away from his entrapping eyes.

"I..."

Before she could conclude her statement, Neron's face descended, and then, in a surprising yet romantic turn of events, his lips met hers.

Right there and then, as they floated in the clouds, Neron and Serah were locked in a passionate kiss while being in each other's embrace.

As if the mood wasn't enough, fireworks ascended to the sky, painting it in multiple colors.

The fireworks sparked red, purple, and blue, making the couple continue to smooch while enjoying the feel of the moment.

Their eyes were open, though barely, as they kept kissing.

And, after what seemed like an infinite amount of time doing the deed, the two finally stopped.

"W-what... I don't..."

Serah was still flustered. The current state of things, and how fast things had progressed, put her in a state of shock.

She stammered, unable to make words as her eyes felt drawn into Neron's pitch-black irises.

"You don't need to understand. Just accept it, Serah. I'm sorry I took so long." Neron drew her close and kisses the flustered woman on her forehead.

"You... you..."

Unable to hold back any longer, the woman's floodgates finally opened and tears proceeded from her eyes.

She tightened her embrace with Neron and bawled her eyes out.

The fireworks ceased, and nothing could be felt from a distance. It was simply Neron and Serah who were left in the whole world.

Slowly, they descended from the far reaches of the cloud.

Both of them were too focused on each other to care for the frozen individuals all over the battlefield.

All of them were unmoving—stuck in time.

And, in this timeless world that spoke of eternity, Neron Kaelid finally opened his lips and uttered the words that the woman before him had been longing to hear all along.

A statement that resonated deeply within her.

"Serah... I love you too."