

SPELLCRAFT 721

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

Chapter 721: The Nether Wars [Pt 2]

This wasn't what they were told.

'No way...'

The Corrupted were never informed of this possibility.

'H-how is this happening?!'

They had expected the Elves to be crushed so pitifully that the battle would give them great pleasure. They had hoped to see despair, pain, death, and even more destruction.

However, their expectations were shattered by the unprecedented performances of the Elves and their allies.

'HOW DO THEY HAVE AETHER?!'

*

*

*

Aurora grinned softly as she focused her gaze on the maddened Corrupted who stood a far distance away, writhing in both awe and rage.

She was once again grateful for the introduction of Aether to the Elves—especially in preparation for this fight. Aurora realized now that without such a powerful source on their side, their demise would have been a foregone conclusion.

How, then, did they gain access to this power? The answer was simple.

They didn't.

None of them could generate any Aether. They could hardly even control the energy that was introduced to them so abruptly. However, because they couldn't generate it, didn't mean that they couldn't manufacture it.

Thanks to a brilliant human girl named Anabelle Frederick, who came up with the process, and the investment made by Jane Ursula, they were able to create something revolutionary.

The Aether Conversion Mechanism.

Simply put, it converted Mana or Miasma into Aether by condensing it and isolating the purest particles while dispersing the other foreign elements—thus creating a fluid and clean energy known as Aether.

Of course, this was simply the energy itself.

Converting the energy into useful stuff like Spells and Magical Techniques was another huge leap. The whole technical process had gone over Aurora's head when they had tried explaining things to her, but the gist of it was quite simple.

By making devices that could conduct the energy, while also imbuing Magic Formulas on them, they would be able to utilise Aether as Magic. This was a more practical adaptation of Jared's Spell Cards.

Weapons, artefacts, and even Automatons were imbued with Magic Formulas that allowed them to transform the raw Aether into energy.

With this revolution in Magic and Technology, however, came a problem.

'Resources. Limited Mana Reserves...' Aurora began to use her staff, already possessing the Aether property.

The problem with the Aether Conversion Mechanism was how much Mana it consumed. To produce Aether suitable for one person, they had to sacrifice over a thousand people's worth of Mana.

As such, they could only produce a limited amount of Aether—any more would adversely affect the Elven Lands and the climate.

Another major problem with artificially utilizing Aether was the finite nature of the energy. Sooner or later, they would run out. Aurora knew her people couldn't keep this up forever.

'We have to end this... and fast!'

With that single thought, the energy around her staff climbed to a terrifying degree, and three arrows materialised in an instant.

They were aimed at various locations, and they spun swiftly, increasing in power with every rotation.

"Harbinger Of Rupture... Threefold!"

Aurora directed this blast at the leaders of the army—the Corrupted.

In a flash, she released them, sending a swift and powerful strike to the enemies. Thanks to their paralyzing shock, they could not react quickly enough to defend themselves. And as a result...

>BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM!!!<

"Haa." Aurora heaved a sigh as she prepared her next volley.

Normally, she would be doing her best to conserve her energy. No, everyone was supposed to be managing the resources given to them.

Yet, with the way every Elf and Automaton fought their enemies, they used their powers without any restriction. They did not waste the power they had been given, but they were not frugal with it either.

They simply fought with all their strength... and that was for a reason.

The more drawn-out the battle was, the more disadvantageous it would be to them.

According to Jared, the Nether Beasts had adaptive and extremely dangerous regenerative features. As a result, it was much more effective to not hold back on any of their attacks when dealing with them. Trying to conserve power would ultimately waste time and resources—a luxury they couldn't afford.

'We have to end this fast!' Aurora rained her spell on the opponents once more.

This time, though, they were more prepared. The Corrupted raised a barrier, like a canopy above their heads. Aurora knew this would be a waste, so she redirected her arrows towards the Nether Beasts instead.

As a result...

>BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMM!!!<

More deafening explosions followed.

Aurora noticed the murderous glares of the corrupted, and they all acknowledged the fact that she was the most dangerous of all the threats they faced. As a result, with all their animosity concentrated on her, the Corrupted left the Nether Beasts to deal with the Elves and Automatons, all swearing to do the Queen in.

Aurora, however, had anticipated this as well. Causing the most damage was bound to draw the attention of enemies to you. Which was why...

"I sent those three already." She smiled.

*
*
*

The Corrupted were the riff raffs of the Nether Cult—nothing more than foot soldiers, really.

They had no redeeming qualities, and most were referred to as numbers or codes. Their significance was better felt as a group, and not as individuals.

Some were satisfied with this status quo—happy to simply be gifted with such power that made sure no normal person or Mage stood a chance against them.

However, some wanted more. Way more.

"I will prove myself in this battle and take the glory." A Corrupted told himself in excitement.

He knew he was among the strongest of everyone present, and his level of sync with Nether was extremely high. Even his direct superior—Stefan Netherlore—had told him this.

Stefan also told him about the empty positions within the 12 Seats of the Nether Cult. That had been enough to spark his ambition.

"I want a seat at the table!" He muttered with both delight and greed.

He had once been an exceptional Mage who struggled due to an illness that clogged his Mana, and even though he was brilliant, he was still so powerless because of this infirmity of his.

One could only imagine the frustration he had felt when he watched others surpass him, despite his sheer experience and skill. All due to this weakness, he had watched as others gained fame and fortune, while he was left with nothing.

The likes of Neron Kaelid, Serah Crimson, and even Damien Lawcroft had made a name for themselves—the latter, by becoming a member of the Nether Cult's 12 Seats.

That could have been him! If only he hadn't been so afflicted, he could have done the same too.

"There's nothing special about them. They're just privileged." Even as this man stared at his comrades, he could only see privileged and entitled idiots.

They, unlike him, didn't have to work so hard to attain the power they now possessed. They hadn't felt the despair he'd felt. They didn't have the ambition he had.

Plus, he was far superior to all of them!

'Which is why... I will prove myself, and get that Seat!'

SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar

Chapter 722: The Nether Wars [Pt 3]

Eyes gleaming with ambition, the Corrupted focused their attention on Aurora, the Elf Queen.

They had two options. The first option was to kill her with their volley, while the other was to make her fall on the defensive. The Corrupted definitely preferred the former, but the latter wasn't a bad alternative either.

'That way, she won't be causing any damage on the battlefield and to our troops.'

The Nether Beasts were the major members of the army when it came to brute force and numbers. The Corrupted were simply there for guidance and coordinated assault. If they lost their muscle, that would be too bad.

"I'm gonna kill that bitch. If I do... the Seat!" A certain Corrupted grinned with desperate determination and pride.

His name was Kayers, and he was simply brimming with ambition.

He and his allies were inside a dome made by Nether, all hundred of them, causing the Elf Queen to turn her attention to their troops. They had already lost two hundred thanks to the Elf Queen's first attack, so they didn't plan on losing any more.

Since they were protected by their overpowered ability, they could send some devastating attacks to the Queen.

That was their rationale. However—

>BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM!!!

An explosion suddenly rang behind the hundred Corrupteds.

"W-wha—?!"

It seemed like the eruption came from beneath, and as it did, debris flew off the earth. No one was killed, but the damage was extensive. Plus, the Corrupted became distracted from their main task.

After the blast, three beings suddenly emerged from the hole the explosion came out of. As they ascended, their forms became much clearer.

Two humans. One Elf.

"Haaa, that was a loud blast, Jerry. Not that I couldn't pull off the same!" A loud voice pierced the air.

"Haha, thanks... I guess." A gentler tone emerged next.

"Young lads, you have done well. It was indeed Impressive." An older-sounding tone emerged as well.

The two youths were humans, individually covered in their respective elements—one had white flames while the other had white wax. The older fellow was an Elf dressed in white. He barely had any armour or element on.

He simply donned an astounding white suit, as well as a matching white coat. His expression was prim and proper, and his gaze calmly rested on the hundred Corrupteds who now glared at the intruders.

"Old man, how strong are they?" The wax warrior asked the older Elf.

"He has a name, you know? It's Derius."

"Ah, yeah..."

Kayers watched as these three made a stable entry into their stronghold—his face twisting with both shock and anxiety.

'T-they bypassed our dome by moving underground?!'

They had been so focused on protecting themselves from the Elf Queen's aerial attacks that they had neglected to defend the area beneath them. It was indeed a cause for worry. However...

'They sent just three? Really?'

Two of the three were kids. Kids who had shown talent when fighting the Nether Beasts, but kids nonetheless.

'Fools.' Kayers grinned to himself.

He looked around, and it seemed his comrades felt the same way.

'Our Nether barrier is still active—and it functions independently from any other attacks we use.' That was why they were planning to defeat the Elf Queen while remaining in their haven.

'That will have to wait, though. For now, let's get this over with. Hehe.'

Kayers glanced at his comrades, and once again, they agreed on this issue. There was no need to waste any time conversing. All they had to do... was win!

>VWUUUUUUUUUMMMMMMM!!!<

Before Kayers could think any further, the redhead among the trio punched the earth with his fists and all of a sudden, it shook. The quake destabilized all of them, though a lot of them instantly took to the sky.

"I've got the ones below. Take those in the sky."

Jerry nodded, bursting into more flames as he ascended to take care of the floating Corrupted. Kayers was one of the flyers, but he made sure to maintain a stealth Spell the moment he did so. He had been caught off-guard by the opponent, and he refused to fight blindly.

'I'll need to be subtle about this. Observe, then attack!'

"UARRRGHHHHHHHHHHH!!!"

"IT BUUURRRNNNNSSSS!!!"

"GAAHHH, SAVE ME! SAVEEE MEEEEEE!!!"

Hearing the agonizing screams of his brethren beneath him, Kayers realized what was going on.

'Is that... Lava?!' His mind echoed.

Underneath him—flooding the Corrupteds on the ground—was a mix of white and crimson. It seemed like wax, yet the fiery elements, as well as the extreme heat it emitted, proved it to be more.

Even from his position above, Kayers could feel the heat.

'Just how many degrees?!' He thought to himself, watching as his comrades got drowned in an ocean of heated wax. Before long, it hardened, completely burying them in an utterly suspended state.

'SHIT!' Kayers thought to himself. 'That redhead... he's not all talk!'

The wild youth was grinning, smiling at the older fellow beside him. They were being so carefree on the battlefield, and it pissed him off.

>BOOOOOOUMMMMM!!!<

>BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOUMMMMMMM!!!<

>BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOUMMMMMMMMMMM!!!<

Suddenly, even around him, he could hear multiple explosions. Stifled screams of his comrades pierced the air as they were each consumed by white fire.

Their opponent was too fast. In white streaks, he navigated his way through the air. He used the flames generated from his feet and hands as propellers, easily dodging the spells the Corrupteds threw at him.

In a flash, he dispatched one, then two, then five... and it went on forever.

Kayers was gritting his teeth in frustration at this point. Why were his comrades dropping like flies? Why couldn't they handle a single kid? Besides...

~YOU IDIOTS! CAN'T YOU SEE THAT THE ONES BELOW ARE DISTRACTED? KILL THEM FIRST!~ Kayers sent a message to the minds of all his comrades.

Once he said this, their eyes bulged, and their focus shifted from the man in flames to the two people who were discussing beneath the ensuing chaos.

'Hehe! First, we'll kill those two, and then—'

Nothing was going to stop him from gaining his prize. He had successfully reduced his competitors among the Corrupted, but now? Now was the time to get serious.

'We'll kill you all! We'll kill you all!!!'

Kayers watched his comrades descend upon the old Elf and the other youth—mostly focusing on the older Elf, considering the young fellow had just drowned a good number of them, and they were all targeting the weakest link.

Unfortunately for them, they couldn't have been more wrong.

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

Chapter 723: The Nether Wars [Pt 4]

Derius was not suited for battle... at least according to him.

He despised violence, and he was also a very cautious Elf. Even his Original Magic, Absolute Insight, wasn't attack-based in any way. He had always preferred things this way.

Thus, when the youngsters had told him to leave the battle to them, Derius had agreed without even putting up a fight. He was actually relieved that he wouldn't have to fight. Preferring to be a spectator, he watched Ivan and Jerry work their Magic.

Ivan was able to merge his Flame attribute with his Wax Emperor's ability, in order to form his Bond Magic: Boiling Wax. He used this technique to raise the temperature to thousands of degrees. However, that wasn't all.

He was also able to harden his Wax, instantly freezing the enemies in a completely static state as the wax covered their whole bodies. Thus, the Corrupted suffered a very brutal death.

'Impressive.' Derius thought to himself.

As for the second one, Jerry, his battle prowess was off the charts. His speed, his precision, his destructive power... they were all a step above what he had expected. He was a blur in the sky, and the way he naturally displayed his abilities was amazing.

According to Jerry—back when they had been revealing their abilities to one other, before finally engaging the enemy—he had told them he was a fire-based Mage. However, with the speed and skill he currently displayed, Derius believed he had more than simply flames.

Once he studied his Familiar, using Absolute Insight, he realized why he felt that way.

'His Familiar is a Pard, regarded to be extremely fast. Enough to even combust itself. So, that's it. He's using Bond Magic to boost his speed and he's not even in Fusion Mode yet.' Derius found both young men to be amazing.

Even as Ivan kept talking to him and boasting about how awesome his skills were, Derius was enamoured by the two youngsters. They were certainly strong.

>WHOOOOOOOSSSHHHH!!!<

As Derius was enjoying the company of his ally, the Corrupteds shifted gear from Jerry and lunged at him. With all their focus on the old Elf, it wasn't difficult for him to sense their bloodlust.

The problem, however, was what he was going to do about their joint assault.

'They're fast!' Derius thought to himself.

Their desperation must have given them the boost they needed, and they closed in on him too quickly. Derius noticed Ivan had finally spotted the enemies, but he knew the young boy would be too slow to deal with the enemies.

'Plus, he's exhausted from that last move. I can tell.' Derius sighed, realizing he would have to do something if he didn't want to die.

'Very well, then...'

He gave a cold stare at the approaching enemies, not moving from his current position, but instead... he snapped his fingers.

The mere snap of his fingers echoed across the field.

However, before the Corrupteds could make sense of this, or even care to understand it, the most shocking thing happened.

"H-huh...?!"

"Uwa... uwaaaaahhhhhh!!!"

"Guaaaarrkkkkk!!!"

Suddenly, they found their heads swelling. They were swelling, growing larger and larger, and at the same time hurting the Corrupteds.

Every one of them collapsed to the ground, gripping their heads as they screamed in agony.

Unfortunately, there was no one willing to hear or help them. As such—

>BOOOOOOMMMMMM!!!<

Their heads all exploded at once, causing bursts of black blood to fly around. Fortunately, none of the gore touched Derius, as an invisible wall shielded both him and Ivan.

"Derius!" Jerry yelled, descending from the sky as he finished killing the last corrupted he was engaged with.

He descended, now utterly out of breath. He had used up too much of his white flames, and now all that was left was a flicker.

"Are you both okay?" Of course, seeing the corpse on the floor was enough to deter Jerry from asking any further questions.

Ivan was just as shocked.

Who would have expected an old and gentle fellow like Derius to slaughter so many Corrupteds... with the mere snap of his fingers.

"I'm afraid I have exhausted most of my Aether." He murmured.

"Yeah. Me too. What about you, Jerry?"

"It's the same here..."

It seemed like the three were nearly out of energy. Fortunately, they had managed to subdue all of the Corrupteds, so it was all good.

*

*

*

'T-THEY'RE MONSTERS!' Kayers thought to himself in horror.

He had just witnessed all of his comrades die, dropping like flies. Their power was nothing compared to the three. However, being the optimist that he was, Kayers decided to focus on the good part of all he had experienced.

'A-all my competitors are gone. Besides, they're already out of power, aren't they?'

The deaths of all his comrades had also caused their barrier to go down, so he could leave this place. Yes, he could leave and call for backup!

Looking at the current tide of the battle, it seemed that the Elves were already being pushed back, so there might be no need. However, just in case... at least he should watch from a safe distance.

'I'd better not approach those three.' He gulped, taking flight as he moved to escape.

Then... he heard the finger snap.

'O-oh... oh n—'

*

*

*

"Why did you snap your fingers again? Wanna blow us up too?" Ivan yelled, seeing Derius use the same attack he'd used on the Corrupteds.

It was too frightening to imagine what would happen if he was affected.

"Don't be rude, Ivan."

"It's fine. I understand your concern. However, I just used a little frequency and increased the pitch. Of course, this takes a ton of power, and I am almost out of power. Sound moves fast, so I had to resort to it."

"O-oh, and what about now?"

"Don't worry about that. Just testing something out. Besides, we don't have time to worry about that right now."

Derius and the youths decided to ignore the heavy thud that echoed behind them—the fall of a corpse, no doubt—and focused solely on the battle in front of them.

"This is bad..." Derius muttered.

The two humans couldn't help but agree with him.

Why?

"The Nether Beasts are already overpowering our forces. They're also getting stronger and bigger."

The problem stemmed from the fact that they had run out of Aether. Since that was the case, things were about to get unbearably more difficult.

"We'll need a miracle to win, at this rate."

Derius was right. They had suddenly reached a huge wall... one that was now closing in on them.

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

Chapter 724: The Nether Wars [Pt 5]

[The Southern Continent]

"Oi! Hold your ground!" A very rough and loud voice echoed throughout the extremely noisy battlefield.

Mecha tanks and golems ran through the battlefield, fighting violently with the invading Nether Beasts. Missiles and various bombs were used in this Magical and Technological warfare.

This was Dwarven Territory, and the huge walls that protected their city could not be allowed to fall. Every Dwarf donned their armour and used their respective tank armours or vehicles to fight off their invaders.

The problem now was that their Aether had run out, so they were currently at a disadvantage. Still, they were determined to slow down the advance of the enemy—even for one more second.

The Nether Beasts were especially ferocious, while the surviving Corrupted attacked from behind the wave of monsters that threatened their lives. A good number of dwarves were still alive, thankfully. Due to their reliance on their Golems and tools, most didn't have direct contact with the Nether Beasts.

Unfortunately, those who piloted their Magic Golems manually had to be in the crosshairs, and they had already lost a good number of them. Still, the struggle continued.

"WE'RE NOT FIGHTING IN VAIN! BUY MORE TIME!" The thunderous voice of the Dwarven Chief motivated his people to go on.

That's right, the Dwarves were fighting a meaningful battle. Yes, they had run out of the only thing that could beat these creatures, but they were currently working on making more.

"How much longer, Asa?!" The Chief's thunderous voice echoed.

"Just a little more time..." The response came from a child.

No one could see the child, nor did they sense the presence of anyone like that. It was most probably due to his special ability which allowed him to become one with nature. Still, what would explain the Chief's reliance on Asa for Aether?

Well, that was quite straightforward.

Asa had an Arcana [The Magician], which poured out seemingly unlimited Mana. Thanks to the technology developed by the Fairies, they could transform Mana into Aether. And as a result, they were waiting for Asa to refill their blasters and weapons so they could once again fight the enemies.

But the process of turning Mana into Aether took time, and they also had to fill up each individual's weapon. At this rate, things were going to get pretty bad before it was complete.

Still, the Dwarves held their ground.

Beyond the walls were their families—everyone and everything that mattered to them. They were willing to fight till their last breath, and some did so.

'C'mon, Asa!' A certain red-haired man grunted as he piloted his giant Golem from within it. This was a courtesy gift from Jared, who called it Hugo.

Not only was it massive, but it had many controls and functions that rendered it extremely powerful. Unfortunately, without Mana, these abilities would not affect their enemies. Still, by using Hugo's bulky size, this man was able to hold the enemies off.

He was Maro—and he served as the major support for the Dwarves, along with the many Golems and Automatons around.

They were on the verge of winning. They just needed more Aether.

*

*

*

'Come on, Asa!' The blue-coloured Beast folk growled as he directed his concentrated Mana Blast towards the device in front of him.

The device seemed like a very complicated contraption—having a large bowl-like container, with a pipe that Asa had to keep pouring Mana into. The container processed the Mana and turned it into Aether, releasing the final product from the other end, through yet another pipe.

Asa's duty wasn't very difficult, but he had to be careful with the output of his Mana. Too much would overwork the device. Besides, there was only so much Mana he could control at the same time.

Normally, the enemy would have detected activity of such a scale, but Asa was currently using his special ability—not only on himself, but also on the entire contraption.

'Almost there!' A strained smile formed on his face.

Once he was done, it would be time for a turnaround in the battle. Everyone was being pushed back, exhausted and dying. It was up to him to bring them back to their feet.

'The issue is, after it's done, what next?'

Sure, he would have the help of mechanisms and golems, but he would need to distribute the Aether. That would take more time.

'Damnit...'

In the end, they still needed more time. Unfortunately, it didn't seem like that was something they could afford at the moment,

'Don't worry about that! Just do your be—'

>BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM!!!<

A loud eruption echoed across the area, causing even Asa to lose his balance—further distracting his focus from the mission he was given.

At this point, however, the mission was hardly on Asa's mind. After all...

"W-what in the—?!"

Right at the center of the battlefield was a Nether Beast different from the others around it.

It was massive, about the size of Hugo, with several heads, eyes, and multiple tails. It had the appearance of a black dragon, but its numerous eyes made the monster more repulsive than usual.

It had slimy drool dripping from its mouth, and emerging from its body were several spikes. This enormous monster was so intimidating that Asa found himself trembling in fear. His Nether was too much for even he to resist.

And he was not the only one.

The Dwarves were all paralyzed due to the overwhelming surge of this Nether Beast's Nether. Unknown to Asa, while he had been so focused on his mission, several Nether Beasts had gathered to form this monstrosity

Its invincible form easily took Hugo down, sending a couple of tails towards it and crushing it to pieces.

The components of Hugo instantly turned black, and soon after faded away. The Nether Beast had made it nonexistent... and it was just getting started.

"ROOOOAAAARRRHHHHH!!!"

The paralyzed Dwarves expected this to be the end at this point. Even Asa was too scared to focus, thus turning his entire body visible. He could hardly see with his blurry vision, but he was able to witness Maro's escape from Hugo before it completely got destroyed.

Still, what of it?

The great Nether Beast could not detect Asa, as well as the contraption. It even stared in his direction, grinning evilly as its menacing glare told the kid he was not going to survive.

>RUMBLE!<

>RUMBLE!!<

>RUMBLE!!!<

It approached slowly, killing the stationary Dwarves in its way. The very few Nether Beasts who were left stood behind their champion, and they proceeded to take the lives of everyone present.

Asa, utterly powerless as he watched all of this, could do nothing but mumble unintelligible words. Wide-eyed and deep in despair, he saw the monster draw closer and closer.

"U-uh..."

He felt like breaking down. It felt like he was being crushed by boulders—like he was being stabbed by millions of needles. Simply maintaining eye contact with this terrifying Nether Beast and watching as it eliminated all of the Dwarves in its path... Asa could only think of one thing at that moment.

'F-father...' Tears flowed down his face as he completed his thought.

'Father... save me... please...'

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

Chapter 725: The Nether Wars [Pt 6]

[The Northern Continent]

"ROAAAAARRRRR!!!" A deafening roar emerged from the head of the United Beast Council.

The Mighty Dragon King, Z'ark let out a powerful sound, causing all of his followers to follow his charge into battle.

Dragons, Griffins, Minotaurs, Centaurs, Manticores—and many more magic Beasts—trailed behind him, all letting out various battle cries. Their powerful roars and screeches echoed across the battlefield.

With the elderly, pregnant, and young ones safe in the shelter, the able-bodied adults—both male and female—did not hesitate to move towards the enemy.

They understood only one tactic in battle—fighting until the bitter end. And as such, showing neither fear nor hesitation, the mighty Magic Beasts began their clash with the Nether Beasts and the Corrupted.

Their immense numbers, alongside their savage strikes, easily won them momentary victory.

>BOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMM!!!<

The Corrupted were easily the first to die. They could not match the savage brutality of the Magic Beasts, thus leading to their immediate eradication.

"UARRGHHHHH!!!!"

They all suffered under the breath of the mighty dragons.

"GAHHHHHHHH!!!!"

Spikes and arrows appeared from more Magic Beasts. The variety of attacks they possessed made them too much for the Corrupted to handle. In no time at all, thanks to their all-out attack, the Corrupted were exterminated.

The only ones left were the Nether Beasts.

"Damnit!" Z'ark growled as he floated in the air.

He was running low on the Aether he had lent from the Aether Generator, so he had every right to worry—especially now that the Nether Beasts were merging to form massive creatures.

'They're too much!' The Dragon King thought, his eyes narrowing on the five giant Nether Beasts.

Their size towered the clouds, and the amount of Nether they had was nearly enough to overwhelm him. However...

'My people are counting on me. This land... I will not let our race down!'

With an intense glow evident in his eyes, Z'ark decided to exert every ounce of his strength. He had to fight the Nether Beasts in place of his already weary soldiers.

He could tell from their expressions and body movements that they too were running out of strength.

'It's now or never!' No delay was allowed.

"Original Magic: Breath of Creation!"

Pouring every drop of his Mana in combination with the Aether permeating through him, Z'ark generated a massive surge of power from his mouth. The mix of energy swelled, condensed, and then swelled once more.

>WHOOOOOSSSHHHHH<

Z'ark ascended to the sky—flying far beyond the clouds so he could reach a level above his enemies. Once this estate was reached, the energy bomb in front of his open mouth was ready to be launched.

'One shot... I have one shot!'

He pointed the Breath of Creation in his target's direction, squinting his eyes to confirm his target for the last time.

'NOW!' Widening his eyes, he launched the huge bomb at the very center of the five Magic Beasts.

The closer the orb got to its destination, the faster it became... and the larger it got. In a flash—faster than light—the blast became much larger than the Nether Beasts. Then—

>BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM!!!<

—It encompassed the entire location.

Fortunately, Z'ark had telepathically informed his subordinates and allies to leave the area. As a result, the bomb was able to completely envelop the Nether Beasts.

"Haa... haa..." At this point, he was certain.

The mighty Dragon King had exhausted all his power.

'Damn it, should I have asked for backup from Jared?' He huffed even more.

Jared Leonard had informed them of the brewing crisis, but the number of allies and support were limited. As such, the priority of support was going to be determined accordingly.

The Magic Beast Council was currently the most populated Nation. Plus, they were the strongest in terms of manpower. As such, it was expected that they would get minimal support.

However, thanks to Z'ark's compassion for the defence of the other nations, as well as the pride of the Magic Beasts, he insisted they could handle the threats.

'Did they send more Nether Beasts here, accounting for our strength?' He strained his breath.

Fortunately, he had managed to execute his Magic.

'It's not over, though...' Z'ark's eyes narrowed on a particular location.

His Original Magic was not really based on destruction. As an expert on Matter Manipulation, he could assemble and disassemble them at will—with enough Mana, of course.

However, his current stock was not enough to achieve that feat on such a large scale. As such, he had to compensate.

The five massive Nether Beasts were not yet dead. They hadn't been atomized—not even close.

"RARRRRHHHHHH!!!" They screeched.

However, unlike their massive and intimidating forms, the five Nether Beasts were now the size of an average Dragon—not too small, but not too large.

Z'ark had managed to cut down their mass, but he couldn't kill them completely. And now, he was out of energy.

'The people are exhausted too...'

Even though only five Nether Beasts remained, it seemed the Magic Beasts were at their wits' end. Without Aether, they couldn't damage the Nether Beasts.

'This means trouble!'

*
*
*

[The Western Continent]

"Hold them down!" Beruel yelled.

He knew he didn't need to shout commands at his legion of soldiers, but he did so anyway.

His clones were decimating the Nether Beasts, and they were pretty much done eliminating the Corrupted. On normal terms, they would have won a long time ago.

Even though all the Nether Beasts invading them were massive, Beruel thought he would be able to handle them with his clones, the Fairies' defences, and the soldiers who were fighting alongside him.

However... there was a big problem.

'They just keep coming!'

The Nether Beasts invading the Fairies were far more formidable than the ones attacking the other nations. Not only were all of them massive, but they were too many.

More and more kept appearing despite Beruel's best attempts to contain them. The worst part was that the Nether Beasts were learning from each assault, thus becoming even more powerful.

His clones, who had the upper hand initially, were now being pushed back.

Things weren't looking too good.

The Fairy Forest Defenses had already been rendered obsolete. The only thing they had going for them were the many machines that Beruel built, as well as the few Fairies who could actually fight.

With their Aether running low, though, they soon became liabilities—up to the point whereby only Beruel and his clones remained.

Only he was hanging on.

'C'mon, you two. Ana... Jane... hurry up!'

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

Chapter 726: The Nether Wars [Pt 7]

>BOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMM!!!<

The vibrations and echoes of war leaked into the facility where Jane and Ana were.

The two could be seen quickly operating on their devices. Jane was swiftly configuring some keys, moving faster than any eye could process. As for Ana, she was running around, ensuring the reactions of each and every subject was stabilized.

The thousands and thousands of tubes around them did a lot to hurry them up, as well as the battle cries and booms they perceived from the outside. If there was one thing these two were aware of, it was the fact that there was no time.

Literally.

'All my calculations have been thrown out of the window. Damn it! Why did Neron's Arcana effect stop working? Our time ratio is back to normal!' Jane thought to herself in a panic.

If only they had the time right, things would not have escalated to such a degree.

'I calculated everything perfectly, yet...!'

She had tried contacting Jared, Neron, and whoever else followed the main group, but no one was responding. As much as Jane was determined to remain optimistic, she couldn't stop the dreadful thoughts that constantly crept into her mind.

She cast a sideways glance at Ana and noticed the girl was also looking worried. Of course, this was a natural reaction. Considering her friends had gone on said mission, this much was expected of her.

'But we have to focus!'

There were almost done with the final configuration. Just a bit more time to process the final variables.

Her people were busy fighting out there—ah, and one other person.

Beruel!

Even Jane had to admit how much Beruel had assisted them in the project of creating the Aether Conversion Mechanism. The conductivity issue, as well as the assembling of the materials, were both done by him.

His Arcana was extremely useful.

After the battle—if they survived—Jane decided to keep Beruel by her side. The possibilities of his Arcana, especially regarding her private project, made the possibilities of success far higher than normal.

But, all of that would have to wait!

She knew they were all relying on her—no, them. Ana was trying her best, and so was she. Jane knew she had to do her best to protect this place. The enemy couldn't interfere, no matter what!

Not only because of her people's safety, and it was certainly not because of Ana and Jared's project. No, there was something else...

'I can't let them near Lewis' Soul! It's still gestating, and it's in a critical state.' Worry spread all over her face, but her hands were just as steady as normal.

Nothing... absolutely nothing would stop her from this mission!

'Just hang on, everyone!'

*
*
*

>BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMM!!!<

"Gah!" Beruel grunted, feeling a hot sensation permeate his insides.

His Arcana was demanding more Aether from him, but he now had none. He was all out.

His clones—those who were yet to be consumed by the corrosive effects of the Nether Beasts—were all on the ground. They, like him, were out of energy.

The Nether Beasts were still quite a lot, and he knew he could barely hold them off for a few more minutes.

>BOOOOOOOOOOMMMMM!!!<

Scratch that! A few more seconds would be generous.

"GRRRRRRRRRR...."

The several dozen Nether Beasts now approached the exhausted Beruel, and he realized he was about to meet his end again.

'Damnit...!' He still feared death.

He didn't want to die. He didn't want to meet a fatal end now.

'If I put in my best, I can escape. I can use full speed, utilize my Mana stockpile, and race out of here!'

Yes, the thought crossed Beruel's mind. However, to his amazement, he found himself not fleeing. Here he was, taking a hard stance, even though common sense told him to run away.

Why?

Why wouldn't he budge, even though death was simply a few inches away?

Perhaps it was because of the hopeful looks the Fairies behind him were sending. Their respectful gazes washed over him, and they were all looking at his back with reverence and amazement.

As the only one standing between the enemy and them, Beruel had become their guardian.

No one could see him as a tyrant. Rather, there was only one word that could describe the kind of being Beruel was at the moment.

A Hero!

"FAIRY KING BERUEL!"

"FAIRY KING BERUEL!!!"

"FAIRY KING BERUEEEEEELLLLL!!!"

Screams and yells permeated the air, and he could feel his heart thumping.

'How can I back out now?' He asked himself, donning a crazy smile on his face.

It wasn't an expression befitting royalty, but Beruel's wide eyes and disheveled hair screamed of desperation. The genuine desire to win.

"I won't die... and I won't run!"

A sword of light manifested on Beruel's hand, and several mechanical blades formed behind him. He daringly smiled at the group of Nether Beasts who had almost reached him—ready to launch all he had at them.

"GRRRRRRRRRRRR..."

As soon as they were well within range, his eyes bulged even further, and he readied himself for the launch.

"RIGHT NO—!!!"

>BOOOOOOUMMMMMM!!!<

>BOOOOOOUMMMMMM!!!<

>WHOOOOOSSSHHHHHH!!!<

>SWIIIIIISSSHHHHHHHHH!!!<

>WHUUUUUUUMMMMM!!!<

Before Beruel could complete his commands, several beings suddenly charged toward the Nether Beasts—each donning blades, blasters, staffs, spears, or simple gauntlets.

These entities were shrouded in pure Aether, and they lunged at the Nether Beasts within moments—tearing them to pieces at the same time.

The remaining monsters stood no chance.

All were eradicated by the legion of beings that trooped from beyond the Sanctuary's dome. Their ferocious strength, their heightened utilization of Aether, their immense battle prowess, their violent strikes... these beings depicted their primal instincts for chaos and destruction as they wreaked havoc all around them.

"Well done, Beruel!" A voice called out for him, causing him to remove his eyes from the amazing sight in front of him and instead look behind.

Ana and Jane floated from the Sanctuary, both approaching him with a smile. He knew instantly from their smile, and the chaotic creatures around him, that they had succeeded in their task.

"We did it, Beruel!" Ana yelled, jumping excitedly at the smaller being.

His small frame was almost squished by the overenthusiastic girl's swift hug.

Beruel, whose body was already worn out from overexerting himself, screamed out to him in pain, and his eyes turned bloodshot.

"Let him go, Ana. You're hurting him." Jane smiled calmly.

"A-ah, sorry." She quickly detached herself, laughing awkwardly.

"It's no problem... ah... ow..." Beruel groaned in response.

"You don't need to hide your pain. Judging from the landscape, it seems you've done a lot to hold back the enemy, Beruel."

"No need to mention it, Jane. I was just performing my duty."

"Perhaps. However, you still have my respect. I admit I was wrong about you, Beruel. You have indeed changed."

To Beruel's surprise, Jane extended her hand in his direction, giving a very genuine smile.

The Fairy King never expected such a thing from Jane—though he had desired it many times.

Of course, he took her hand.

And so, as they both shook hands, Beruel and Jane smiled at each other; not as enemies, or as strangers...but as comrades.

"Apologies for interrupting you all, but I must now speak." A deep voice, containing authority and power, snapped the two fairies from their friendly exchange.

They both glanced in the direction of the voice, and sure enough it was a heavily built man.

He was the leader of the Beastfolk, known by all as the Beast King. This entity was right in front of them, his people floating behind him as he approached Ana, Beruel, and Jane.

He was Gerard!

"You uploaded the necessary information to us in our comatose state, so I am up to date on the current happenings. I am also aware that we are meant to provide backup to the other nations."

"That's right. It's all according to the plan—though it is a bit late in schedule." Jane nodded in response to the Beast King's words.

"I understand. We will now be leaving for our respective regions to provide backup to those who require the assistance. However, I have one question before I leave."

There was hardly any time for discourse—they all knew that very well.

However, Gerard's serious demeanor, and his narrowed gaze, showed how serious he was.

"Ask away." Jane smiled.

With a wide grin and a determined gaze filled with nostalgia, Gerard asked the only question on his mind.

"Where is my son, Asa?"

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

Chapter 727: The Nether Wars [Pt 8]

It became a swift victory for the Allied Nations after the Beast Folks were awakened.

They swept through the battlefield, displaying such power and speed that the tides were easily turned in the favour of their allies. Nether Beasts were eradicated by the Aether-based weapons that the Beast folks possessed, and they did not stop until they were all destroyed.

The Elves were fortunately rescued in the nick of time.

Many had been killed, and far more were injured. However, the moment the Beast folks arrived, they were saved.

The same happened in the North, and then the South—with Gerard leading the charge there personally.

One could only imagine the joy on Asa's face when he saw his father. Their reunion, warm and charming, seeped through the despairing battlefield, and with the hope of victory growing, everyone celebrated.

With the Nether Beasts and the Corrupted vanquished, they were done with the incursion of the Cult. However, there was a stagnant fear in the minds of everyone who had faced this crisis.

What would happen if even more monsters appeared?

As such, the Beast folks stationed in each nation remained on standby. The soldiers, after resting and pulling themselves together, also remained on high alert. The worst thing that could happen at this point would be a devastating ambush.

However, despite all of this caution, they also realized how little the chances were for such an occurrence. As a result, there were two more concerns on their mind—far more urgent than the initial one.

"We have yet to spot the leader of this coordinated assault." Jane Ursula used her Magic to communicate with the allied nations.

Right in front of her, in the vast expanse, several screens popped up, revealing the faces of each leader she was referring to.

The Elf Queen

The Dwarven Chief

The Dragon King

The Beast King

The Human King

And finally she, the President of the Fairy Sanctuary.

Beruel and Ana were beside her while she made the call, and a look of concern was etched on her little face. Adjusting her glasses a little, she gave them all a serious expression.

"The leader has to be an Upper Seat in the Cult. We have yet to see anyone like that." Jane was worried that as long as he remained unaccounted for, their problems were far from over.

And she was right!

"And what's the second concern?" Gerard asked in an excited tone.

He had just woken up from his slumber, only to fight Nether Beasts and see his son become a warrior. When he arrived at the scene, he had seen Asa fighting so bravely—even though the boy was powerless.

This was a perfect day for him—both as a father and as a Beastfolk. Thus, he itched for even more action.

"The second problem has to do with the main team invading the Nether Cult. I have lost contact with them, so I can't tell how they're doing, but I suspect it's not very good."

"Really? Lack of communication shouldn't be sufficient reason to think that, though." Aurora added.

"I agree. I'm connected to Jared's Soul due to our bond, and so far he doesn't seem to be in any kind of mortal danger."

"Then—"

"But Neron's Magic suddenly stopped working, and the entire plan was almost thrown out of the window. This battle strategy that we developed is so intricate that it falls apart if even one side does something wrong. Fortunately, we pulled through at the last minute, Or else..." Jane heaved in relief.

At this point, the faces of the other leaders were beginning to show just how dire the situation was.

"What do you think the problem is?" Z'ark asked in his deep tone.

"I'm not sure. Fortunately, the assault of the enemies—while being very precarious—was not as terrible as Jared had predicted. As a result, we were able to finish much faster than expected. I think we should all try to assist Jared and his team."

"Wouldn't that risk our stronghold? The one we're protecting?"

"I get your point Dwarf Chief. We can leave enough capable individuals to defend our territories while we leave. It's risky, sure. But my gut tells me something is going down at the headquarters. I believe, even if it's just a few, we should send our best forces to assist Jared."

"Hmmm... fair point. That is the enemy's base, after all. Jared and his team might have trouble doing it alone."

"Yes, and if they fail... all of this would have been for nothing."

The whole plan hinged on the Nether Cult being totally wiped out. If Jared's team failed, it would affect everyone terribly. As a result, their mission had to succeed.

"But still... all of this is due to Neron's Magic not working as it should?"

"Yes. If something has happened to Neron, then I can guarantee that the team will be out of whack. Knowing Jared and Serah, they'll want to rescue him. Things could get messy quickly." Jane sighed.

"But... if Neron is in trouble, and team Jared won't be sufficient to handle the mission, what is the guarantee that we can?"

"Well, there's no guarantee. But we need to increase our chances." Jane added stubbornly.

"May I make a suggestion?" An aged voice interrupted the back-and-forth.

After a brief moment of silence, Jane conceded. "Sure, King Albion."

"Why not send an elite team to go after team Jared? Let it comprise our strongest warriors. It would be a waste and a shame if we sent a crowd, only for them to die."

Once everyone heard this suggestion, they immediately appreciated it and thanked Albion for his wisdom. He had been silent throughout the meeting, but who would have thought that he had such smart words?

'I would have brought that up eventually, but...' Jane smiled.

"Alright. Let's go with that instead. I'll personally assemble the ones that will be going. By the way, King Albion, it's a surprise that no Nether Beast has invaded your kingdom yet."

"I am as surprised as you are. My Mages and Warriors have nothing to do here." The king chuckled.

"Nevertheless, I'll be sending some Beast folks your way... just in case."

"That would be much appreciated. Thank you."

Jane nodded with a smile. Caution was necessary in times like these. As such, they had to be on guard at all times.

As for the elite team she wanted to form, Jane had an idea of the members she wanted for it.

'Whatever is going on, I'm gonna make sure we don't lose this war!'

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

Chapter 728: The Nether Wars [Pt 9]

"Haa..." Albion Lestrome Indiavel, the current king of the Eastern Kingdom, heaved a sigh as he ended the call he was having with his allies.

Something about meeting with far more powerful and influential leaders than him made the king feel on edge. He hadn't spoken throughout their exchange simply because he had been nervous. However, after having a good enough idea, he finally spoke up.

'Thank goodness I wasn't shot down.' He said with relief.

The leaders adopted his idea, and he was even praised for being wise... how gratifying.

Currently, the king and a few of his nobles were in the royal court. They had prepared for this historic day, but those who couldn't fight—like Damien Leonard—remained in the castle.

Those who made it their duty to protect the Eastern Kingdom—like the Helmsworths and Crimsons—and practically every other powerful individual in the kingdom, stood and guarded it with their life.

This was somewhat unnecessary since Elrich had kept all the citizens in his special space, thanks to [The Hermit], however, there was one factor he had to consider.

Their Pride!

Just as the king wouldn't abandon the capital, even though the rest of his family had done so, these few nobles and soldiers had the strong will to defend their capital. They refused to back down.

Of course, the ones who were allowed to remain behind consisted of, the best of the best. Archmages, and those who were Archmage Candidates. For Martial Artists, the most powerful ones were chosen. They were in the Peak Stage—all five of them—and they were resolved to fight to the very end.

The only exception to this rule was Damien Leonard—Jared's father.

And that was simply because he was their fallback in terms of strategy. Once things got too dangerous, Elrich was determined to instantly place him in his special space.

All the Archmages, Archmage Candidates, and Head Warriors gathered on the capital's outskirts—where they determined the fight would take place.

Their numbers were about fifty—although, they mostly consisted of candidates. With twenty Archmages—Alphonse alongside another from his household, a couple from the Helmsworth Family, the Crimson Family, and also one from the Frederick household. There were also twenty-five Archmage Candidates, thus, the number was a total of fifty.

A good number of them were left behind to protect the king, so only thirty were left standing on the battlefield as they awaited the enemy.

Several Automatons and Golems also stood guard, making their numbers skyrocket to the thousands. According to Jared's instructions, if the enemies were too powerful, everyone was to simply retreat to the special space.

There was no reason to throw lives away unnecessarily.

However, judging from everyone's hardened faces—Elrich's included—none of them had any intention of retreating. Right here and now... they would fight against the enemy and win.

Leading this charge were the two most exceptional Mages that were currently in the Kingdom.

The Grand Mage and the Royal Court Mage—Elrich Lendertwale.

And...

Maria Helmsworth.

With these two standing strong, the defenders rallied behind them—ready and waiting for the enemy's strike. Though, after some time and yet no attack, they had to wonder... just where was their opponent?

'Several Automaton Scouts are scouring the Kingdom for signs of an enemy, but none has been spotted yet.' Elrich thought to himself, glancing at Maria.

Her serious nod told him she was thinking the same.

'We'll just have to wait it out if that's what it takes. We're never letting our guards down!'

According to the king's reports concerning the other nations, the attacks were harsh and brutal. The Nether Beasts overwhelmed them so greatly that it was too difficult to win. However, with the awakening of the Beast folks, things changed.

A legion of them was coming over for backup, ensuring the fortification of the Eastern Kingdom.

'It'll be fine...' Elrich and Maria thought to themselves, waiting for the rumble that would indicate the approach of the enemy.

Dark clouds of despair. Quakes of devastation. Roars of savagery—they waited for the assault of the Nether Cult, or at least the signs of their coming.

However...

"Apologies for being late." A gentle voice greeted all those who waited.

It came from the sky.

"W-wha—?!"

Floating in the air, with a long flowing cloak, dark hair, and a menacing smile on his face, was the enemy.

It was a single person and he looked like a young man—not qualified enough to be labelled an adult yet. His blue eyes watched them intently, and while one of his hands was in his pocket, the other hand held something akin to a metal head.

"I had a bit of disturbance on my way here." The boy in the sky threw down the metal head, and from what Maria could decipher, it had a familiar form...

'G-Gawain!'

The Automaton's head landed on the ground, echoing emptily and lifelessly. Obviously, it was long dead.

"This, and a couple of others, tried to interfere with me and my troops on my way here. I had to take care of them." Both of his hands were now in his pockets as he descended.

As his hair fluttered with the wind, his face came into closer view. Of course, Maria already knew who the boy was from his voice alone. However, as he drew closer, so did everyone else.

He was none other than Stefan Netherlore.

"I hear you've been treating my family 'well'." He grinned widely. "That must be nice."

"Why do you ask? You want us to free them of their crimes?" Elrich narrowed his eyes as he stared at the young boy.

He was prepared to fight at any moment, but something else bothered him.

'Where is his army? Did they get destroyed on his way here?'

"Nah. There's no need. Do with them as you please." Stefan shrugged.

His expression told them that he truly did not care about his family. His gaze was simply filled with one element—himself.

"You must be wondering where my army is, right? Even now, you're using your senses to scour for their whereabouts. I'll advise you not to."

"What?"

"I came alone. It makes this easier for me, and all the more satisfying."

'He's bluffing... right?' Elrich was dumbstruck by Stefan's words.

This sort of confidence was on another level entirely. Who did Stefan Netherlore think he was to be able to fight the whole Eastern Kingdom by himself?

"Oh, don't give me that look." Stefan grinned, especially at Maria who had a glare on her face. "This makes things easier for you people, doesn't it? There's no need to be worried."

His tone was condescending, and he seemed to be enjoying the attention.

"If you beat me, then you win. As for me, I'll have to crush all of you. That's sufficient as a handicap, don't you think?"

"Do you really think you'll win?"

"I do." Stefan brought both of his hands out of his pockets and pointed in the direction of the capital.

"First, I'll destroy that place... then I'll deal with you all."

Elrich's eyes widened in both surprise and rage. His body was pulsating with energy, and his heart raced as he gave a swift prompt to move.

However—

>WHUUUUMMMMM!!!<

Seemingly in a flash, Stefan was no longer in their presence. It seemed like he had vanished, but was that just his speed?

Just as he'd proclaimed, Stefan was now atop the capital. He had a mischievous expression on his face, and his eyes were glowing red.

"NO, YOU DON'T!"

In brilliant bursts of light—filled with Aether—the team of thirty, and even the strong ones within the capital, leapt to the sky. They all went straight for Stefan, their expressions depicting desperate valour.

Unfortunately—

"Watch and learn... Witness true power."

'The Nether Beasts and Corrupteds in the other nations have been destroyed, and so quickly too. This is thanks to you, isn't it, Jared?' It upset Stefan that Jared had planned ahead and ensured the victory of the other nations.

It was also annoying that he sent some Automatons to intercept him. While they were quite formidable—especially because of the special weapons they had—they still didn't stand a chance against him.

'Did he really think I would be so easy to kill? Or did he simply intend to stall me? I have no idea.' Stefan sighed in frustration.

Still, all of this wasn't going to be a waste—at least, he hoped so.

'Maria is here. Ah, and the Court Mage too. Both of them should make for formidable opponents. I want to fight them so badly.' His grin widened maniacally.

Groans of the injured echoed through the air, and their voices annoyed the hell out of him. He didn't like how the battlefield was filled with weaklings. To him, only the strong were worthy to stand in his presence and fight.

'I came here to fight strong people, after all.'

"STEFAAAAAAAANNNNNN!!!" A scream emanated from beneath him, causing him to look in its direction.

'Ah, Maria... that's a lovely expression you have on your face. Do you finally see how much I've surpassed you? You can't do stuff like this, can you?'

Stefan had always been compared to his cousin, and it had always irritated him. He was always considered inferior to the true genius... and that was beyond annoying. His family had pressured him persistently, and Maria never understood how he felt.

But now, the situation had been flipped.

'I'm stronger. You're weaker.'

And while this fight wouldn't be as satisfactory as his intended battle with Jared, it would have to suffice.

"This is just a show of strength. I'll advise you to teleport all the dregs around to safety. They'll only slow you down. Ah, and I'll kill them if they remain here."

Elrich's face twisted instantly, much to Stefan's delight. He loved seeing their faces; how they showed the anger, shock, rage, and multiple other emotions that were directed at him.

His favourite, though... was despair!

Elrich, as he'd expected, obeyed and teleported the wounded and weak to whatever safe location he had in mind.

'It doesn't matter. I'll be taking both your Arcanas and then I'll destroy everything in this Kingdom.' Stefan grinned with delight.

This was going to be fun no matter how he thought of it. He versus the great genius and the Court Mage.

"Show me your best moves."

*
*
*

In a flash, Maria donned her Mage Mode, Fusion State, and allowed the power of her Arcana to course through her veins—granting her even more power.

In essence, she was in a more heightened state of Archangel Drive.

Her Familiar was an Angel—an Archangel Class one. It was supposedly a Star, and it was certainly very powerful. Her power was rising at a fast rate, but Maria felt that it still wasn't enough.

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

In this Archangel Drive, she was strong enough to decimate most targets. However, after witnessing all Stefan had done—how he had killed her father who had been close to the impact, as well as her other relations, she knew she had to do far more.

>WHUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUMMMMMMMMMMMMM!!!<

Golden and silver designs began appearing all over her armour, and her wings grew even longer. The crown on her head appeared more majestic, and several feathers floated around her.

Everything around her bloomed, and white flowers began to blossom all around her. This was what happened when she poured enough power from [The Pope] into her Archangel Drive.

It became something else.

"Celestial Archangel Drive"

Glancing to her side, she could see Elrich also donning his Magic Items and entering Mage Mode. He fused with his Familiar, one that happened to be a Centaur.

Centaur's possessed great minds, and their intelligence was said to have reached a transcendent degree.

"Cheiron... let's do this." Elrich muttered.

He didn't have hooves—neither did he have any particular horse feature. However, several tattoos formed on his body, especially his face and his body also turned ebony. Along with the effects of Mage Mode and his Magic Items, he appeared to be a dark-red entity, with cracked marks of power covering his skin.

Bursts of energy, like flames, covered his body. A Magic Grimoire floated in front of him, glowing with several colours. He also held a staff, and the necklace on his neck glowed ominously.

"Maria... do not hold back." His warbling voice was stern and intimidating.

The girl beside him nodded, and the both of them faced the enemy.

"I should return the favour." Stefan grinned.

>WHHHHHHHHHUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUMMMMMMMMMMM!!!<

Dark scales shrouded his body, and his cloak was stained with red energy. A tail formed behind him, as well as a pair of dragon wings. Horns appeared on his head, and his dark hair grew far longer than before.

Cackles of red and black lightning surrounded him, giving more credence to his form.

He appeared to be a dragon—and quite a majestic one, at that.

"My former Familiar was removed by the Cult, and I got this one as a replacement. Haha... isn't that great?"

The Dragon's power was indeed impressive, and the surge of power he was currently depicting had to come from Mage Mode. With these two factors, along with his Arcana's power, Stefan was more than prepared for their challenge.

Maria now understood the weight behind Elrich's words. Stefan was too powerful... and dangerous!

Thus, all three stood—two against one—as they prepared to clash.

With no one around to witness the battle, or get in the way, they were free to fight without worry or fear.

"Let's go!"

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

Chapter 730: Stefan V The Eastern Kingdom [Pt 2]

'I would love to use my Grimoire's [Analyze], with my staff's [Link] and [Activation] effects, to counter Stefan's abilities, but...'

Doing that against an Arcana was a tall order. Perhaps that would have worked for other Spells, but Elrich was unsure.

He would simply use them when the need called for it. His major options in this battle were his Arcana, the many items that heightened his raw power, and the necklace that would shield him. He also had his rings—each having various elemental attributes that would be somewhat useful depending on the situation.

His Familiar had many uses—most of it involving precognition, battle analysis, weakness identification, information supply, and complete awareness of the details around him. His current mode also vastly improved his cognitive ability, so he could think very fast; much faster than his body could move.

His Familiar, while not having any major offensive ability, was perfect for support!

'The Gem on my forehead can allow me to redirect an attack—but depending on the intensity of the attack, I don't know how many it can handle before expiring.'

Stefan was far more powerful than his precious opponents, so he was unsure of how the battle would go. However, Elrich didn't despair. After all, he wasn't alone.

Maria was right beside him, and based on raw power alone, she was pretty much his match. He wondered how someone so young could possess such prowess, but this wasn't the time to delve into such things.

Besides, their enemy was about the same age as Maria, and his power appeared to exceed theirs—at least on an individual level.

'Working together, using our Arcanas... we can win!' With this in mind, Elrich signalled to Maria and she made the first move.

*

*

*

>VWUUUUSSSHHHHHH!!!<

Maria sped through the expanse of space between her and Stefan, instantly appearing right behind him.

"Not bad." The boy arrogantly commented.

At that very moment, Elrich teleported in front of the target. Both he and Maria coordinated their strikes, prepared to destroy Stefan. However—

'Fools.' He grinned, perfectly capable of sensing both Maria and Elrich as they closed in on him.

>BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMMMM!!!<

With a surge of power, he sent Maria and Elrich flying away—at least, he was supposed to.

However, the moment he tried this, Elrich had already teleported Maria and himself far away from Stefan, thus wasting the attack.

"Smart move. Running away from me like that." Stefan grinned, watching them from their distance.

Thanks to Elrich Lendertwale's teleportation ability, they could easily evade attacks. Thus, making their increased mobility very difficult for Stefan to counter.

'Hmph! Is that what they really think?'

He watched as the two prepared another set of attacks—this time from their distant range.

Maria's energy appeared to be condensed into the form of a spear, while Elrich was using ten different elements to form a massive sphere. Both were dangerous attacks—and they were sure to cause considerable damage to any target.

'But I can easily repel it. What are these idiots thinking?' Stefan thought to himself in disappointment.

It was as though they were using their abilities without much thought. It ruined the experience for him.

A beam of light—like a kaleidoscope pillar of many colours—descended from above and consumed their target.

>BOOMMMMMMMMMMMMMM!!!<

With Stefan completely baptized by the pillar, and its influence spreading to consume Elrich and Maria, both vanished from their position and retreated a far distance away.

"Haa..." Elrich heaved a sigh.

Even though he was used to the basics of his abilities, and even got around to mastering a few other tricks, using the Arcanas in quick succession—especially in split-second intervals—was a bit of a bother.

If it weren't for the abilities of his Familiar, he wouldn't be able to keep up with such speed. Still, it seemed they had dealt their first strike.

And it was all thanks to their cooperation.

*
*
*

Maria's Arcana, [The Pope], created a purification effect that eliminated anything considered evil, and as such, anything labelled with malevolence. It was especially effective when battling Nether.

This contrast allowed her to nullify Nether and its influence.

Just as it was possible to operate an Arcana using Mana or Miasma, Nether apparently also worked. Since Stefan was using it, Maria could nullify it—at least that had been their belief.

To test this out, she encased Elrich in her energy and allowed him to intentionally receive Stefan's attacks head-on.

Of course, Elrich was sent flying—but only as an act. The Arcana's effects didn't work on him. Through this short interaction, they were able to figure out a way to escape the influence of Stefan's power.

Who else could have thought of that? Maria was Stefan's natural enemy.

"You..." Stefan emerged from the light pillar, a little roughened by its impact.

His wounds soon healed, however.

"I'm done playing. Why don't we kick things up a notch?"