

As soon as he did this, he swept through the air and went for the Nether, who was still surprised by his ability to destroy a collapsing space with enough force to destroy a world. Yet... with a series of attacks, something like that was destroyed in no time.

It was unbelievable.

'Here he comes again.' The Martial Blade God made to strike the Nether down, but he easily teleported behind him.

He utilized a miniaturized version of [Spatial Collapse] to serve as a thrusting blow to the avatar, sending it flying further into the sky.

"Let's take this above us." The Nether sent a couple more miniaturized versions which the Martial Blade God easily evaded this time.

Many Mind Blades appeared, all to severely wound the Nether, but he created a dense barrier to ward them all off.

"[Corruption]" The moment he cast this spell, the Mind Blades turned purple, and they all became Nether Blades instead.

The Nether sent them flying in the direction of the Martial Blade God, but he counteracted the strikes with more Mind Blades.

"[Inverse Proportions]"

Instantly, the direction of the Martial Blade God changed—almost as though reality had been flipped. The further he tried to get away from the enemy, the closer he got.

The Nether easily closed the distance between them like this, creating a blast at the centre of his palms. It had an especially high concentration of Nether.

"#098: Heaven's Ascent"

The blast went straight for the Martial Blade God, but an overwhelmingly large ball of energy rose from beneath the Martial Blade God as he swung his blade, and it overwhelmed the orb of destruction, sending both of them further into the sky.

The blast detonated above the Martial Blade God and the Nether—causing the darkened skies to have a bit more colour to them.

Sparkles of blue and purple energy descended on them from the sky, and once more, they watched each other in silence.

The air turned stale, and an atmosphere of finality settled on the two.

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

Chapter 772: Shattering The Heavens [Pt 2]

It was clear now that these two were in the closing act of their battle.

Even though it had destroyed all of the water around, and even the lands far away had suffered so much damage, they still had a lot more energy to spare.

Nothing would ever be the same, and it was because of their clash, but what did these two care? They simply wanted to settle the score. Only one thing could be said from an observation of the two monstrous beings.

A man defying a god.

No, perhaps this wasn't a man any longer. He was something more...

'This man has become a pest.' The Nether thought to himself.

Never had he met anyone as strong as this, yet he wasn't a Singularity. As much as he would like to know more, the end had come upon them.

'Time is up.'

Flashes of malevolent power began emanating from the Nether, further increasing his powers. He didn't care if he had to exert himself for this. Everything inside him told him one thing, and one thing only.

'I need to kill that man!'

Thus, he prepared himself.

"[Dark Sun]. [Spatial Collapse]. [Essence Of Death]. [True Corruption]. [Offset]. [Reality Imbalance]. [Reversal]. [Polarity Proportionality]. [Coagulation Of Elements]."

Thanks to his final Spell, all the aforementioned Spells that manifested in the air as he mentioned them, converged into a single glob-like orb.

Its mushy membrane, like that of slime, took in all the power that the Nether poured into it. It now stood above the Nether—at least five times bigger than he was. This pure black blob of an orb was on standby, ready to fall and crush the Martial Blade God and everything around.

"This will destroy everything and everyone." The Nether smiled.

It had enough power to kill everything in this world, to be honest. As much as the Nether wanted to simply absorb the entire world, he wanted to kill the Martial Blade God even more.

With this move, albeit quite extreme, he was bound to die.

"Now what will you do... swordsman?"

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The Martial Blade God felt a lull within him as he stared at the imminent attack of the Nether.

It contained a lot of power—too much power.

In one swift motion, this ascending strike rose to meet the target, hitting the powerful descending darkness.

"Guh!"

Even after putting all his energy into it, the darkness was too strong and heavy for the Martial Blade God. It pushed him down, consuming his Martial Manifestation, and eating up his blade too.

In moments, it was clear who the victor would be.

"UUUUUUOOOOOOHHHHHHHHH!!!" The Martial Blade God did not give up, though.

He kept pushing the unstoppable force, aiming to be the immovable object.

"RAAAARRRHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!"

With a powerful roar, while utilizing everything in his power, he pushed the devastating spell away from him, sending it flying far beyond the sky.

"W-WHAT?!" The Nether's voice depicted shock.

Unfortunately for him, this was just the start of the technique. After all, this technique had two forms; one was the upward vertical strike—the one he used to stop the orb and push it upward. As for the second...

"HAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!"

... It was a descending vertical slash.

Both hands were raised now, and the Martial Blade God showed just as much determination as he earlier.

>SWOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOSSSSSSSSSSSSHHHHHHHHHHH!!!<

In one swift move, he closed the distance between himself and the destructive orb and hit it with his extremely volatile blade.

It was the clash between pure light and pure darkness. As such... everything around felt the blow.

The entire world shook as a result of the clash between the unstoppable force and the immovable object. One would have to move eventually, or else the world would rip itself apart.

And the one who moved was...

... Of course, the one without a blade!

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

Chapter 773: Martial Blade God Requiem

"W-what am I looking at?"

Edward could not count how many times he had said this to himself—whether with his lips or in his mind.

He was too flabbergasted to think straight, but his eyes and senses did not remove themselves from the sight before him. They couldn't, even if he tried.

The effects of the battle could be seen everywhere. There was no place to hide where the shockwaves or blasts of destruction would not touch. The entire world was shaking—breaking apart.

And it was all because of the two beings in the sky.

"Martial Blade God..." Edward muttered to himself as he watched him cleave an entire ball of devastation into nothingness.

The blast was sent beyond their world, and the shockwave shook the whole planet once more. Edward knew what would have happened if it had been allowed to explode just a bit closer to civilization.

It would have marked the end.

All Edward and everyone else could do now was watch the sparks in the sky, and the supernova that painted the expanse above them.

He and his allies were currently being protected by the joint efforts of everyone's Magic, and they were quite a distance away from the battle that was taking place. Even though they maintained their distance, it was only for safety.

They hadn't forgotten their mission of stopping the Nether.

Fortunately, the areas that had been affected were devoid of living entities—the work of Elrich, they suspected.

"My scout will confirm," Beruel assured the team, so they only focused on the Nether—waiting for when their turn would come.

However, after watching all that had occurred—all the power being displayed by both the Nether and the Martial Blade God—they weren't so sure about what to do anymore.

What else could they do, but watch?

... And pray.

Even though they all had multiple thoughts in their minds, and several impressions of the Martial Blade God, the allies were similar in one respect. Their minds were connected on a particular matter.

They prayed for the Martial Blade God to emerge victorious.

Whether he was on the side of good, evil, or neutral—everyone internally agreed that the Martial Blade God was a better side to support. As such, even from their distance, they all wished the best for humanity's current champion.

The Martial blade God himself!

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"Haaa..." The Martial Blade God smiled.

Once again, he had surpassed what he considered his limits. He had been able to deflect a world-breaking attack, sending it far beyond their world before it could explode.

Unfortunately, it had expended all the energy he had.

'I would have had unlimited Aether if it weren't for the compromised state of this world. I suppose it's only expected because of the Nether's presence.

No, that wasn't the only reason.

'I'm not a Singularity.'

Singularities had a personal bond with Aether, and a straightforward channel to the power that brought it about. Unlike Singularities, he had to rely on the power he had amassed from reaching such a height, and his allocation was limited.

If the Nether wasn't here, things would have been different, but... what could he say? There were no excuses he could make.

'I always knew this.'

A smile of satisfaction spread across his face as he watched the Nether's face scrunch up with shock.

"You look stunned, Nether. Why? Was my performance that spectacular?" The Martial Blade God smiled.

"Yes. You are more amazing than I gave you credit for." The dark entity spoke, his voice a troubled calm.

"Really? Well... may I ask a question?" Once he saw the Nether nod, the Martial Blade God proceeded with his question. "Among all the humans you've ever fought... am I the strongest?"

For a moment, silence reigned. Both entities stared at each other with nothing but honest eyes. It was as though, at that moment, they were not enemies.

"No. You are not." The Nether finally replied.

"Oh? Is that so?"

"There are two who I will consider stronger than you are. However..." The Nether's face tightened, almost as though admitting defeat.

"You are the first to have ever pushed me this far despite utilizing nothing but your power. You used no Familiar, and neither did you have any assistance from allies. You also never relied on the main source for power, since you are not a Singularity."

The Martial Blade God remained still, unflinching despite the Nether's compliments.

"Singularities are anomalies in this world. They are special beings chosen by the Root itself as its representative. It would be a stretch to even call them humans, at this point." The Nether sighed, now smiling.

"I have changed my assessment. You are definitely the strongest human I have ever fought—undeniably so."

"Is that so? Oh, well..." The Martial Blade God once again gripped his blade tightly. "... Thank you, Nether."

"Hahaha! Now that we've got that out of the way, let us finish this!"

"Indeed. This will be my last move. If you can survive it, then victory is yours."

The Martial Blade God readied himself, watching the Nether very closely. His opponent did the same.

Both parties seemed to be waiting for the other to move first. However, after taking a proper stance, the Martial Blade god finally lunged straight for the Nether.

Throwing his blade like a javelin, the Martial Blade God kept rushing towards his opponent.

Twisting higher into the air, the Nether evaded the blade, and this was the perfect opportunity for the swordsman's avatar to completely close their distance. And, when it was done...

"YOU CAME INTO CLOSE RANGE? YOU FOOOOLL!!!" The Nether made to corrupt the Martial Blade God's avatar by grabbing the huge target.

However—

>SHHWWUUUUSSSH!!!<

—The swordsman's avatar suddenly vanished.

No, it didn't just disappear. It was more like it coalesced so quickly that it seemed like it disappeared.

And where did this energy condense to?

Well...

"W-WHAT?!" The Nether no longer saw the Martial Blade God's manifestation, but rather, the Martial Blade God himself.

He was rushing upward, moving past his chest now.

"YOU FOOL! NOW THAT YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR SHELL, I CAN EASILY—!"

Before the Nether could conclude his statement, he was distracted by the hand of the Martial Blade God.

Every ounce of energy that belonged to the avatar could now be spotted on the fist of the Martial Blade God. And that fist was headed straight for the Nether's jaw.

"I won't let yo—!"

'I can't see the future beyond the span of my life, Edward... however...!' The Martial Blade God's smile grew wider and wider.

'... You must fulfil your dreams!'

Ascending even farther from his native world, the Martial Blade God's body began to have cracks. Energy cracks which indicated that something within him was about to explode. It was power beyond power.

It was pure, unbridled energy.

'Even now, I can't help but wonder how powerful this will be... and if you'll survive it.' The Martial Blade God looked at the stunned Nether.

It was just the both of them, in this infinite darkness that stretched for miles upon miles—and even further beyond.

He could see them, though—the lights that existed beyond the darkness. He could see the sun, the stars... he could see hope within this darkness.

So, why couldn't he be one too?

'My final act is also that of selfishness...!' The Martial Blade God's body was already breaking apart, and his own body was beginning to consume him.

This was the end.

'I have no regrets, though. I lived my life how I wanted, and I will die exactly how I want to.' The Martial Blade God doubted that he'd become a Bond Soul based on the required criteria.

Not only did he no longer have any regrets in the mortal world, but there wouldn't even be a soul after he was done. He was going to use up everything—everything to completely wipe out the Nether.

'Aries, do me a favour.'

~Yeah, I know. I understand...~His Familiar responded through his thoughts, a tone so grave that it seemed like it was the one dying.

'This is farewell.' The Martial Blade God smiled.

~You never used me even once...~

Then came the silence. No one spoke or moved after the statement. It was simply like the world, and everyone in it stood still.

~You followed your desired path till the end. And now, you have no regrets. It is now undeniably true, Martial Blade God... that you are the STRONGEST!~

Hearing it at the end of his life wasn't so bad, after all.

'I am... the strongest!'

And then... the eruption began.

"No. The Nether isn't gone for good. He's not dead. He can't be killed." Kazen sighed, almost showing how exhausted she was.

"W-what do you mean?"

"The Nether is a being of pure anti-energy. It's like the antithesis of this world's Aether given form. Energy can't be created or destroyed, but just transformed from one state to the other. The same applies to a being who is of pure energy—or rather, the opposite."

Once Edward heard this, he stopped the celebration going on within him.

Instead, he focused on Kazen's grim face.

"This isn't over."

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

Chapter 775: Cornered

"S-so, the Martial Blade God died for nothing?!"

Edward couldn't believe what he was hearing. His ancestor had given his all in an epic showdown against the Nether, and he had even protected all of them—no, the whole world—in the process.

Yet... his sacrifice had been in vain?

"No. The Martial Blade God did well in fighting the Nether. That means he's expended a lot of power. Plus, with that blast's effects, I can only imagine that he's gotten even weaker."

Kazen was simply trying to say that the Nether would be a far easier target now that the Martial Blade God had played his part.

"But how are we supposed to stop him if the Martial Blade God couldn't?" Ivan spoke, sighing as he shook his head.

The situation was too messed up for a simple man, like him, to wrap his head around.

"Ivan has a point. If we can't even kill him, then what are we supposed to do?" Jerry asked, looking at everyone in the floating fortress.

He knew their combined might was far weaker than the Martial Blade God's shown power, so if the Martial Blade God couldn't win, how could they stand a chance?

"We don't need to kill him. We just need to offset one of the Arcanas inside him. That should create an unstable reaction, destroying him from the inside out. Jared had the same plan, before he..." Kazen stopped before she could finish.

The mere mention of Jared clouded the faces of almost everyone.

'I understand how you feel, kids. He was a boy that showed so much promise and potential.' Unfortunately, even the most gifted minds had to go eventually—some in worse ways than others.

"For now, though, let's go after Ciel. She must have used a great deal of her power to bring the Nether here. She should also have no energy left to power her Arcana replicas." Compared to them, Ciel was pretty defenceless.

With this in mind, the team moved in the direction of their target—hoping that their actions would end up saving everything and everyone they cared about.

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Ciel's eyes widened in devastation.

Her expression showed shock and fear, and her body was paralyzed because she was overwhelmed by it.

'I... I didn't know he was that strong!'

The Martial Blade God proved to be a more formidable threat than she had surmised. How could she have let him live to face her master? How could she have let the both of them fight?

As she stared into the sky, spotting the supernova that stretched throughout the space that was beyond the world, Ciel could feel her heart pound violently.

She knew her master wasn't dead, but she just hoped his body wasn't completely damaged. Unlike his core self, his vessel could be injured. If that happened, then he would either be forced to appear without a vessel, or his vessel would become imbalanced—both of which were terrible outcomes.

"I am so sorry, Master. I should have interfered.' She knew the Nether would have refused her assistance, and also... she was no match for the Martial Blade God.

At this point, she hadn't seen anyone display that sort of power since Merlin. With a great deal of her power depleted, she was also vulnerable.

'If I'm vulnerable, and the Nether is vulnerable... that leaves us in a bad position.' She thought to herself while gritting her teeth.

It was all so infuriating.

'WHY DO PEOPLE GET IN THE WAY OF MY—!'

"CIIIEEEELLLL!!!" A loud voice emerged from a distance, and Ciel recognized it instantly.

The owner was none other than—

"Kazen. You..." Ciara growled.

She really wasn't in the mood for this.

Kazen and her allies rode on their fortress projection, all of them grinning at Ciel, ready to strike.

"Tch."

They finally stopped a mere couple of distances between both sides.

"It seems your plan was once again thrown into the pit, and by one of your allies nonetheless." Kazen grinned, revealing herself as the roof of the fortress vanished.

All those who remained present and accounted for focused their gazes on the lone Ciel.

Edward, Serah, Ciara, Jerry, Ivan, Lemi, Aurora, Jane, Dulum, Z'ark, Gerard, Asa, Maro, Beruel, and Ana. With Kazen leading the charge, they were raring to go.

"You've had your fun with this world, haven't you? You've caused so much death and suffering. But now... your Cult is gone, and even your 'master' has been badly damaged by the strike of your own ally." Kazen knew it would take some time before the Nether fully recovered.

Or even partly recovered.

As a result, she and her team were going to end Ciel before the Nether returned. Once the force of malevolence returned, she would enact the final part of her strategy.

'I just pray this body holds on for much longer...' She thought to herself.

"Do you really think you've won?" Ciel narrowed her gaze on Kazen.

For a second, perhaps two, there was silence. And then—

"Don't let her stall us. Use all you can on her." Kazen broke the silence with words, and her allies prepared for action.

With the Nether gone, this was the perfect chance to—

"HAAAAAA...."

Sudden paralysis befell everyone who opposed Ciel. In a mere instant, none of them could move at all. They could only watch with bulging eyes of confusion, as the skies darkened once more and an utterly despicable being descended from the heavens.

Contrary to what any of them had thought, the Nether wasn't in a terrible state, and neither did he look weakened in the slightest bit.

He was miniature in size—about five meters tall—but that didn't seem to diminish his power. No, it was even the contrary. It was almost as if—

"This body has acclimated again. I have evolved—and at the perfect time too." The Nether grinned at his shocked audience.

"And now... it's time to continue from where we left off."

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

Chapter 776: Last Ray Of Hope [Pt 1]

The Nether stood above all who watched him in a completely new form.

He was about five meters—now bulkier than before, and brimming with more power than they could fathom.

"That Martial Blade God... he really had me running, didn't he?" He muttered, resting his gaze on the next set of heroes who would dare defy this new—better—version of him.

"MASTEEERRRRR!!!" Ciel squealed in excitement as she rushed over to his side.

Her widened eyes and drawn-out smile clearly depicted how excited she was, and she jumped on him despite the immense amount of Nether that seared her body as a result.

"Haaa... your warmth feels amazing!" She rested more on him.

The Nether patted Ciel, and then removed her from his embrace.

As expected, her contact with him caused her own body to suffer damage. Her clear skin was now afflicted with dark scars, and a sizzling sound came from her burning flesh.

"Avoid contact with me for now, Ciel."

"E-ehhhh? But, master—"

"That is your punishment for your misdeeds. Surely you understand..."

Ciel understood that it was because of her carelessness that the Martial Blade God was able to reach such a height and threaten the plans of her master. She had no choice but to take the blame.

"I understand, master." Upon bowing, she still couldn't help but feel so enamored by the Nether.

Wasn't he so great? Despite the Martial Blade God displayed, it still couldn't stop the Nether. In fact, he had only gotten stronger since then. That was the nature of the invincible master she served.

"Well, I better finish things here. It seems the process of consuming this world was interrupted because of the Martial Blade God, and Aether managed to resist me. I'll have to start all over." The Nether murmured.

With the current power he possessed, he would be able to achieve it within moments—but only if he chose to put his focus on the task. As such, he desired to eliminate any further potential threats.

Looking at the group before him, he could only spot one.

"Kazen... you don't look so good." The Nether grinned.

"Y-you..."

Out of everyone in the group, Kazen was the only one who could still speak. The rest were too overcome by the Nether's pressure that they could not do anything except watch the exchange while awaiting their inevitable demise.

"You look so pale. It seems you won't last much longer in that body of yours."

The Nether stretched out his hand toward Kazen, his smile unfading. He simply enjoyed seeing her painful expression, and watching her suffering.

"Unstable... imbalanced. My body... gahhh... Kazen, you bastard!" The Nether growled, overwhelmed by what was happening to him.

Fortunately for them, Ciel knew exactly what was going on.

'His body is experiencing an imbalance due to a reaction in his body. Did Kazen cause this? Yes, that must be why he mentioned her. But how? Damn! This most likely means one or more Arcanas have been compromised.'

"W-which one? Which Arcana was hit?" Ciel asked in desperation.

"Which one do you think, you fool? Are you retarded? Gahhh! Of course, it's her Arcana!"

Ciel felt ashamed of herself for asking her master such a useless question. Of course, the only Arcana Kazen would have been able to affect was her very own, [The Moon]. Her bond with the Arcana must have manifested once she became one with the Nether.

Was this her plan the whole time? Ciel had no idea. Even she hadn't expected Kazen to make such a move.

She understood one very crucial thing, though...

'If I don't act fast, my master's plans... his new life... they'll be forfeited.'

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

Chapter 777: Last Ray Of Hope [Pt 2]

"GUAAARRRRRGHHHHHHH!!!"

The Nether's scream of pain spread through the lands—or whatever was left of it. It had a mix of agony and rage—pure rage toward the one who put him in this state.

'I can't believe she destroyed her own soul and counteracted the unity of my Arcana formation. By damaging [The Moon] Arcana, it's already useless to me. Without a stabilizer... I'll be—!' The Nether could feel his body breaking down.

Once one offset occurred, it was only a matter of time before the next one happened, and after that the next. This chain reaction would keep going until there was nothing left. That was how delicate he was internally.

'I made a mistake!' And it cost him dearly.

"Master... here!" Just when the Nether thought it was the end, his little pet came through for him once more.

Ciel was holding a card up in the air, while panting as if she was close to death. Her eyes seemed bloodshot, and a couple of wrinkles slowly appeared on her previously clear face.

Not only did she now look old, but her tone was rather coarse, and her breathing was uneven. Blood trickled down her nostrils; yet despite all of this, she leaked out a toothy grin.

"Use this!" She yelled, flailing the card at him as she approached.

"This is...!"

It was an Arcana replica of [The Moon].

"When I retrieved the Original from her, I studied its components well enough to replicate it..." She was heaving now, barely speaking.

Even though Ciel knew the components and structure, there was one thing she was lacking—energy.

She had used almost all the power she had in trying to revive the Nether—over a thousand years' worth. The remaining energy, coupled with the stockpile she had kept for herself in case of emergency, as well as the immense energy that kept her in her youth, was what she used to create this new Arcana.

It literally took everything out of her.

"Hahaha! You did well, Ciel! This is why I love you so much!" Yanking the Arcana from her, the Nether absorbed it instantly.

Ciel blushed hard, even in her older form, as she watched her master get well. He ejected the damaged Arcana from his body, sending it plunging down into the darkened abyss. Now that a new one replaced it, he was now perfectly fine.

"Haaa... now that's more like it."

Now full of health, the Nether could return to his menacing grin.

"Where was I? Aah... yes, kill them all, Ciel. I have no further use for these worms." He smiled, slowly ascending to the sky.

Once he reached a certain threshold, he would spread his energy far and wide, thus consuming every single thing in this world. Once he got to the core of the planet, it would die. With that, he would have taken one part of the Root.

'Once I take complete control over this reality, I'll have the properties I need to be whole. Haha... I can see it now.'

He ascended and left Ciel below.

Even in her weakened state, surely she would be able to deal with a couple of paralyzed fools. In fact, killing them off so prematurely would be an act of mercy, wouldn't it?

They wouldn't be around to watch their world die.

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It felt strange how meaningless everything was.

Ana realized that now that she was right in front of the jaws of death. The enemy was overwhelmingly powerful, and there was no further alternative left to explore.

She, and the rest of her allies, were completely frozen. Their joint efforts ultimately amounted to nothing. In this situation, more than anything, she felt like crying.

Her vision was stuck in a single direction, and that was the Nether himself.

He must have ensured they were all staring at him as he ascended to destroy their world. The last thing she was going to see would be the monstrous actions of an absurdly powerful being who was immortal.

They would watch as he consumed the world, all while his servant—Ciel—executed them.

To distract herself from these thoughts, even though her widened eyes could not close, Ana remembered the past—the times when things were so simple.

She remembered her family—how her brothers were so accomplished and she was allowed an almost unlimited reserve of freedom. She remembered how she befriended Edward, the pauper who had a nice personality and a strong will.

Ana remembered how they both shared their dreams with each other, and how they enrolled at Ainzclark to fulfill them. She remembered how Lewis Griffith had inspired her to never give up, and her childish assumption of not utilizing Magic to surpass him.

Then... Jared came along and changed everything.

She remembered how they all hung out as friends—how they trained together, and how he helped them to become the best versions of themselves.

The more she thought of it, the more it hurt her. She regretted her actions toward him in her time of grief—how she was so mean and angry at him, when it wasn't his fault.

'I... I'm so sorry, Jared.'

Perhaps she deserved this. Yes... perhaps this was her punishment for being so inconsiderate.

"You're amazing, Ana." A voice suddenly played over in her head.

It belonged to the person who believed in her far more than she did herself. He was also dead, and it made her realize how the two people she loved, and who encouraged her to strive for growth beyond the limits, were both dead.

... It hurt her so much.

'Jared... Kuzon... I'm so sorry.'

Perhaps it was best that they weren't here to see the end of the world—though, it wasn't as though they got to have peaceful deaths.

Still, how she wished to see them again—especially the boy she loved with all her heart. Even now, in the brink of death, with her eyes forcefully witnessing the victory of the Nether, his image appeared in her mind's eye.

'Kuzon...'

>VWUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUSSSSSSSSSSSSHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!<

Suddenly, a bright and blinding light surged through the area.

It pushed Ciel far away from the helpless group, who weren't so helpless anymore. The glorious burst of Aether that just appeared had done the impossible—it made the group completely free from the Nether's paralyzing influence.

"N-no way..." Ana whispered, watching the golden light, like a flare, ascend into the darkened heavens—clearing it away instantly.

'My ring!'

The golden light emerged from her ring, and its power still resonated with her. She could feel the energy coursing through her veins, and a bright beam of hope shimmering in her heart.

It seemed, even though Kuzon was gone, his will still protected her.

That is... if that was the case.

"Wow! This is quite the mess!" A voice emerged from the flare that ascended above.

The voice sounded young, cool, yet playful. It belonged to someone still in their youth—perhaps late teens.

"I hope I'm not too late." The bright glow of the flare dispersed, revealing the man who was within it.

Flashing a confident smile, while moving his gaze to the group beneath him—especially the short blond girl who returned his gaze with hers—the returned Kuzon gave a wink and spoke with ease.

"Thank you all for waiting. I'm back now!"

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

Chapter 778: The Golden Palace

[Some Mysterious Moments Earlier]

"W-where am I?"

Kuzon Midas was beyond confused. However, because he had no other words to express himself, he asked this question out of complete ignorance.

The area surrounding him was literally covered in gold—golden floors, golden walls, golden ceilings, etc. Everything took on the luxurious color of gold.

The stairs that led to higher ground stood in front of him, but he currently stood in a place that resembled a ballroom. It was very big, and the golden chandelier that hung above him illuminated everything in its luxurious splendor.

He could not describe the shimmering beauty and grandeur of this place, even if he tried.

"Amazing..." Was all he could whisper—and this came from the boy who had seen the beauty and glory of his own Midas Empire.

Compared to the designs and beauty, this place seemed to have the upper hand. It was just so pristine and otherworldly, and yet something about it felt warm and welcoming.

Despite all of this, though, confusion remained foremost.

'The last thing I remember is dying with Kido. What's going on?' Kuzon thought to himself as he looked around him.

He had most certainly died back then. Was this life after death? If so, was Kido with him?

Kuzon looked around him to be certain, but he found no one. He also activated his senses, but those didn't seem to work here, either. Still, there was no place to hide here.

In this vast expanse, he seemed to be all alone.

'Our Lore states that when a Midas dies, they're taken to the Root. That they're welcomed by their people. But I see no one here. Is this the Root?'

Kuzon had a lot of questions—one of them was how he had gotten his body back.

It was a glowing form, but it was still a body nonetheless. Was this simply the manifestation of his Soul? He could stand around all day contemplating these issues, but he felt a rather urgent drive within him.

And as such, he proceeded to the stairs.

Upon leaving the massive hall through the wide golden gate that stood before him, he found himself in a hallway—one so exquisitely beautiful that he was nearly gawking.

Still, Kuzon did not lessen his steps.

He had already faced the reality of his death and the structures he was seeing here, as well as the unrealistic nature of his own body, proved that he wasn't in the normal plane.

'I'm definitely dead. I killed Kido, and I completed my mission.'

The thought alone gave him a good deal of satisfaction, but also a tinge of pain. After all, he'd had to leave some people behind.

'In any case, let's find out more about this place, shall we?'

In this place, which resembled an elaborate castle, Kuzon could sense nothing. He couldn't use Magic as well, so he was powerless.

Despite all that, though, this warm feeling of familiarity and safety enveloped him as he traversed the hallway—and even when he had been in the ballroom—so he felt no unease.

Finally, after walking past the hallway, Kuzon finally arrived at an even bigger door. It had markings on the surface—a mural carved in gold.

The mural depicted the image of a phoenix rising from the ashes, with two cards floating on both wings. Within the phoenix were three items—a ring on the right wing, a bracelet on the left wing, and at the center of the flaming bird, as though it was wearing it, was a necklace.

All of them!

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

Chapter 779: The Golden Throne

"D-dad...?"

Kuzon was beyond stupefied to see his father standing right in front of him.

"M-mom...?"

His mother too. Both his parents stood beside each other, smiling so warmly at him.

"Fabian... Alura... Gus..."

His three friends, who had been more like the siblings he'd never had. Though, Kuzon remembered that he had often viewed Alura as a little more than a sister.

To think they were all here. If this had been all, Kuzon knew for a fact that he would have been satisfied. Yet, this was only a fraction of the whole.

"... E-everyone?!"

The entire population of the Midas Empire—save for two—stood before him.

They all bestowed warm smiles upon him. Even grumpy old Dez was smiling. It was a magical, unexplainable sight that he could not explain.

"Y-you're here... wi-with me... I..." Kuzon already felt tears forming in his eyes, and his body instinctively moved to rush towards all of them—his parents first.

He could not quantify how much he had missed them, and how happy he was to see the thousands of people, that belonged to their glorious Empire, right in front of him. The only two missing from the picture were him and Kido.

But, as he made to jump at them, he knew the picture would be complete very soon.

HOWEVER...!

"W-what...?" Kuzon encountered a bit of a problem.

He couldn't rise from his throne.

'I... what is the meaning of this? My parents! My friends! My people!' Kuzon desperately looked at all of them, desiring above all else to hold them in his arms.

It wasn't fair that they were right in front of him, yet he couldn't do anything.

"Kuzon, relax. It's fine." His father's voice echoed through the air, causing him to finally cease his fruitless struggle.

"If you stand up from the throne, you won't be able to get this message, which is why you'll have to wait it out. Sorry, son." His mother smiled warmly.

Tears were already dropping from his eyes at this point. This was because he realized something very crucial—something he had discovered as a result of their words.

'T-they're not real!'

His parents, his friends, and his people... they weren't really themselves! This was a mere projection.

"Kuzon, listen to me." His father's voice brought him back from the distraught state he was sinking into.

Just when he'd thought he was reunited with all of his people, he now realized that this was simply a message recording left for him after so long.

"It's alright to cry, Kuzon. We understand it must be hurtful for you. However, there isn't much time. We need you to listen."

It seemed there was an important message they desired to pass across to him. Even though Kuzon was curious about what it was, he wondered what good any urgent message would do.

"I'm already dead. What else is important?"

"But you're not dead, Kuzon. Not completely, anyway." His mother gave him a knowing smile and nodded slightly.

'What? You don't mean that—'

"Indeed. The resonance of the two Arcanas, the three Royal treasures, and your Soul, transported you to this realm that was built since the time of the ancient Midas Emperor."

Kuzon could not believe his ears.

'My soul got transported here, instead of the afterlife? And it was designed specifically for me to return this way? But why?'

"This is the Realm Of The Emperor, and it is now a part of you... no, it is one with you. As you are the last Midas, this is now yours—all of it."

Kuzon was still trying to wrap his head around everything when yet another bombshell landed.

"A portion of the souls of every single Midas, since the dawn of the Empire, resides in this realm. Only we appear to you because of your direct link to us." His father whispered, and the people behind his parents nodded.

They all had distinct smiles and expressions, almost making them appear alive.

"As a result, you not only sit before the people you knew but also those of ages past—those who came before any of us. This is the final treasure of the Midas Empire. It is your inheritance."

Kuzon felt that everything was so abrupt, yet he did not want to interrupt the dead—not while they were still speaking.

"All of this is yours. The Realm, the People, and that Golden Throne you are currently seated on. The power of the three treasures, and the two Arcanas, are already yours as well."

They were promising him so much power, but Kuzon could no longer feel any excitement about it.

Why should he?

"It doesn't matter, anyway. I already destroyed my body, and my soul isn't even in the living plane. Besides, all of this power is meaningless if this is the cost. All of you... all of you make up this power, yet you're all gone."

Despondency began to spread all over Kuzon's soul, and he felt hopeless.

The throne held on to him tight, and he felt so stuck in this new role that was thrust upon him.

"I thought... I thought I'd finally reunite with you and rest. I thought I would finally be happy..." He couldn't hold back his sobs.

He was forced to sit before all of his people, yet he could not stop crying.

"Kuzon..." Suddenly, he felt the warmth of two people resting on him.

Opening his eyes, Kuzon saw his mother and father holding him in their arms. They... they were real?!

"Only a fragment of our souls are left here, so this is the most we can offer you." His mother whispered lovingly.

"You'll just have to wait until you join us after living your life to the fullest. Not now, but eventually... we will meet." His father added.

Having both his parents hug him, and speak loving words to him—words he hadn't heard in years—Kuzon finally broke down and immersed himself in their embrace.

Crying and laughing at the same time, he responded to their words.

"I understand.... I understand."

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Chapter 780: The Golden Legacy

The Realm Of The Emperor—also known as the Emperor's Domain.

Kuzon had learned all about it from his parents.

It was the plane made for the Emperor, meant to offer guidance and assistance to him in his time of need. By combining the joint powers of the Arcanas and the Royal Treasures, a true heir would be able to enter into this world and consult with past Emperors.

As for why the ordinary denizens were here, it had to do with their Soul Brands. Every denizen had a Soul Brand linked to the main Midas Central System—used for both research and the wellbeing of the people.

This was used to monitor the activities of the Midas people, to eliminate crimes or unjust punishments—in the very unlikely event of one.

This Central System could pinpoint the malicious minds in the Empire, and it could also apprehend culprits guilty of an offence. However, this wasn't simply used for security, but also for the progression of Magic Research.

The Midas Empire had prospered in Magic because they'd had the Fragments of their entire population to work with. Their goal had been to use these soul fragments to learn more about the world—especially about Aether.

They had made many advancements in this, and while they could have made more discoveries—like inventing immortality—the Midas Empire had been more focused on the nature of Aether, and on the flipside Nether, as well as the truth of existence.

Their primary objective had been knowledge—especially about the Root.

And with each generation, the advancement progressed.

The Soul Fragments harvested from the people had been taken to the Emperor's Domain at some point, and that had been the cycle.

Unfortunately, the executive officer in charge of this Soul Fragment Management had been Kido, which had allowed him to get away with his own crimes—as well as his plan of decimating the Midas Empire.

Still, all of that was in the past, and Kuzon was now being told about the future.

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"I see now..."

Kuzon was on his throne, his parents and all his subjects were standing in front of him, watching him expectantly.

Everything had just been revealed to him, and while it felt a bit overwhelming, Kuzon now had the resolve to accept it.

Apparently, all the Soul Fragments in the Emperor's Domain, alongside the very structure itself, now belonged to him.

With him being the last of the Midas, everything was going to be condensed into pure Aether and bestowed upon him—all for him to use as he pleased.

"You are now the one true Emperor. You are the hope of our race. Therefore, it is up to you to create a new Empire—a better one. Become the first progenitor once again, and shine the light of the Midas people on the new world."

Now burdened with a new purpose, one which he now had the power to achieve, Kuzon couldn't reject this destiny.

All the Aether he needed was right with him—and he was no longer alone in the world.

Suddenly, the entire Golden Palace began to get sucked into Kuzon as well. The golden light absorbed everything, and the entirety of the Realm went into the seated boy.

Finally, nothing was left except for the boy... and his throne.

And then—

"It's finally time..."

—Even his throne followed suit.

Now all alone in a blank void, Kuzon could feel himself brimming with the heritage he received from everyone—the joint power of the Midas.

In this empty space where time and space were irrelevant, he had to digest all the power he had just received. They were all a part of him now.

"When I'm done, I'll leave this plane through my ring, which is still resonating with me."

It was a good thing he gave Ana his ring. It served as a tether to reality, hence making everything much easier than it would have otherwise been.

Time and Space didn't matter here, but Kuzon knew reality went by those rules. Once he reached the entry point and sought to return, he would have to be guided by the will of the world—by Aether herself.

"When I'm ready, lead me to the path I must take..." He whispered, closing his eyes in the blank void.

"... I will not fail."