

SPELLCRAFT 801

SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar

Chapter 801: The Endless Stream

Fun?

As I watched Neron and listened to all he said, I wasn't even sure what to think or believe anymore.

It all sounded too good to be true.

However, when he quoted me and gave me that confident smile, I instantly knew he was up to something. But what exactly?

'Aether, can he achieve it?' I asked her.

~No. Even with this phenomenal amount of power, he doesn't have nearly enough to reach the very dawn of time. That would make his power almost equivalent to ours.~

Then how was he planning on achieving it?

~There is more than one way to do something. When you do not have enough power for a Spell, what do you use?~ Aether asked.

"S-Spellcraft..." I slowly answered.

But, if that was the case, and Neron used Spellcraft, would he still be able to obtain the energy he needed? Wouldn't that mean he'd have to suck all the Aether around him dry, adversely affecting the universe itself?

~The surrounding Aether of one universe isn't nearly enough to accomplish this feat. Besides, he already has a universe's worth of energy at his fingertips. There's also the fact that Neron can't contain all that energy.~

The more I conversed with Aether, the more I realized how absurd this venture of his sounded. I mean, Neron was phenomenally stronger than anything I could have imagined.

However... he wasn't enough!

Even he couldn't defy the laws of equivalent exchange—and he needed the right amount of energy to effect the right amount of change.

"I don't have enough energy. I can't do it. I am limited." Neron's voice echoed in my ears as he made a mockery of our concerns. "Those are all valid concerns."

However, Neron wasn't stopping.

Light from his universal construct shot towards the Nether, shrouding it in its light. At this point, Neron was in control of his body.

"If I am limited by my amount of energy, all I have to do is ensure I don't run out. If I am limited by the durability of my frame, all I have to do is ensure I never perish. In essence... I could simply loop it all."

My eyes bulged once I heard this.

~Indeed. His plan relies on that. The fact that he can simply reset his body to ensure he never takes damage while still churning out a stable supply of energy without running out.~

What sort of loophole was that? How come I never thought of this?

If Neron was able to achieve this feat, and constantly pour out infinite Aether, with no limits... then he had far transcended what I currently thought of him.

He was quite literally unlimited!

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"Let us begin." Neron spoke softly, allowing himself to be completely plunged into the stream of time.

However, it wasn't his time—but the Nether's time.

The stream appeared more like a raging sea—deep, dark, and murky.

Neron felt like he could get lost in its depths if he wasn't careful and the moment he ran out of energy, he would drown.

However, how could he stop now that he had come so far?

'Everything... everything had been for this moment!'

>VWUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUSSSSSSSSSSSSHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!<

And so, he initiated the backward swim against the forward movements of the tides of time.

In one fell swoop, a massive chunk of his Aether was consumed—not only because he was using time in such a way, but because Nether constantly ate through his energy. As a result, he was burning through way more power than normal.

But so what?

In an instant, his power was restored.

It was taken away, then restored. Over and over again, this process continued near infinitely.

Thanks to the power provided to him by the Constellations, his frame was able to handle the strain, and the power he had access to radically increased.

All the cards were on the table, and he just had to keep playing. Everything depended on his will, as well as strong determination.

'I started all of this. I have more than enough!'

The stream was long—far longer than anything that should have been allowed to exist. Even though he kept at it for a very long period, he could not see the end of the stream.

It seemed like an infinite eternity.

Yet... he kept up with the flow, pushing the flow downwards, and erasing anything that existed from that point onward.

By pushing the flow past the border of time, he would achieve his desire.

The extermination of the Nether.

Forever.

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Finally, after pushing for so long, he reached it.

The dawn of time itself—when all that existed and didn't exist began.

It was a wall—one that seemed like complete emptiness. Beyond it would be the world before anything. Before even nothing.

Beyond this place was Origin.

With the flow concentrated at this very point, all he required was one final push, and his goal would be complete. However, Neron felt drawn towards the realm that existed out of the bounds of everything that could be known.

'All Things' waited for him beyond this juncture.

"No." He whispered, closing his eyes slowly. "No more..."

Hardening his heart and giving one final push with everything he had, he sent the flow beyond the wall and used the clog of time to ensure this process was never initiated.

"This loop will constantly ensure this process stops at this point and reverts every single time."

This was the hallmark of his plan.

"The work is done." He sighed, smiling softly, his eyes still closed.

Memories of his past, and the origin of his path, flooded his mind. The mistakes he had made to get to this point, and the errors he'd committed, which caused the ruin of everything.

He could only atone for everything by doing this.

"You were right, Serah." He smiled, remembering the woman he loved with his whole heart.

"We won."

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Chapter 802: The Perfect Aftermath

~Congratulations, Jared. Neron succeeded.~

The dark mist parted right before my eyes, and I could no longer sense any aura of Nether around me.

Everything that existed, that I could feel and sense, in the vast expanse of space... was pure Aether.

"He really achieved it." I muttered.

The Nether was gone and the threat he could ever pose to this reality—and others—was removed completely.

"Neron... really did it."

I wanted to be the one to end the Nether, but after looking at all the conditions, I realized that it could have only been achieved by Neron. I was simply a cog in the machine—a piece in the puzzle to put all the necessary conditions in place.

Surprisingly, I wasn't frustrated.

A strange sense of satisfaction washed over me as I looked towards my world from the distance where I stood.

It looked so small, yet so vast.

Thanks to Spellcraft and Aether's presence within me, I could feel everything there. I could see my allies all safe, their faces displaying relief. Ciel had already been defeated as well.

My gaze trailed away from them and went in the direction of the Eastern Kingdom.

All the denizens were safely there, but my focus was more on one girl in particular.

"Maria..." I whispered in relief.

She didn't seem to be harmed in any way. That was more than enough to soothe my heart.

'However...'

It didn't change the fact that so many people had lost their lives. It was beyond tragic to see the aftereffects of the war on a global scale. As I took in everything at once, the satisfaction I once felt began to dissipate.

So much death.

So much carnage.

So much chaos.

"Aether... these people... is it possible to—"

~Their Souls aren't with me.~

My eyes widened in shock as I heard this.

"W-what are you talking about?"

All souls belonged to Aether. Once people died, they became one with her. Yet... ah, how could I forget the corrosive effects of Nether!

Were their Souls destroyed before they could make it to her?!

~No, that's not it.~ Aether's voice interrupted my thoughts, sending me into more confusion.

If it wasn't due to Aether or Nether, then what could have happened?!

"I can explain." A voice suddenly appeared behind me, as a warm touch tingled my shoulders.

I swiftly turned back and much to my relief, it was Neron.

"You're back! You did it. That's—"

"It was all part of the plan, Jared. I apologize for using you as a pawn. It is understandable if you despise me for deceiving you for so long. It was all to ensure that everything went according to plan."

Even though Neron was shrouded with such unfathomable power, one that dwarfed even the one I had access to, he was still the same person I remembered.

His gentle face never changed and a warm smile spread across his face.

"It's as you said before. I was necessary. That's all there was to it." I returned his words with mine.

I knew exactly what I would have done in his position. I knew what I would sacrifice for the greater good.

"It was well worth it, but... what did you mean by your earlier statement?"

Aether seemed to be aware of the current issue that plagued my thoughts and so did Neron. It had to do with those who had perished as a result of the chaos.

"I suppose it's time you received the memory that was taken from you, Jared. Once you remember, it'll all make sense." Neron spoke, coursing energy through my body.

In an instant, everything turned blank.

And then deep within the recesses of a seemingly endless pit, a new light emerged.

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I saw it all.

The plan that I had devised with Neron... about how the war would play out and how we could achieve victory.

"Use your Time Immersion to flow upstream into the flow of time and see all the casualties. That way, we'll know the ones that will die and the ones that won't." I had said.

Since it was impossible to cater for the Souls of everyone in the Alliance and to form Soul Brands with everyone, this was the best I could have done.

"We'll use Soul Brands on them to siphon portions of their Souls. I'll preserve them in the Soul Container in my possession."

That way, even if their Souls were completely corroded by Nether, there would be backup Souls left to rely on.

"Afterwards, use [The Fool] to erase the memories of all the candidates whose souls we will be storing. That way, the future won't be changed."

I had even asked him to erase my memory, just in case.

Only Neron remembered this task, so that when the time came... we would return all of the dead back to life.

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"That time has arrived, Jared. Would you like to do the honours?" Neron nodded in encouragement.

I understood what his gesture meant.

Even though I wasn't able to deal the final attack on the enemy, I could still help all the dead beings who required revival. With the power I currently possessed with Aether, it was possible.

'This will be the last thing we do together, won't it?' I smiled, preparing myself to unleash the swelling power within me.

~Indeed. This was only a temporary arrangement, after all.~

I couldn't deny how much I was going to miss the feeling that currently swirled within me. Being one with the world around me and being capable of so much power.

It was amazing beyond words.

"Very well. I'll do it."

Once I made up my mind, I summoned my Soul Container and poured out all the stored fragments back into the world.

Once I did, I initiated the process of [The Hanged] man, which was stored in my Great Sage's Memoir.

Back in the world, bodies began to form, and life swiftly became restored.

Thanks to Aether's help and Spellcraft, the process was swifter than I expected.

In no time at all, everyone was revived.

And so, as the world was renewed and a new aftermath greeted me, I felt Aether leaving my body while her final words soothed my heart.

~You did it, Jared. You saved the world.~

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Chapter 803: Unfinished Business

In a desolate corner of the world, a being could be seen running desperately.

Her legs were shrivelled up and they shook so much with every step that it seemed like she would fall at any moment, but...

"Haa... haaa..."

... She kept running.

Her dishevelled white hair and tired-looking eyes spoke well of her exhaustion. Her pale skin and her emaciated figure clearly displayed her lack of nutrition—or perhaps the deprivation of the energy she desired for sustenance.

Her bulging eyes took in everything in front of her as she kept running desperately, sweeping through the dark forest that surrounded her.

"There's no need for you to be in such a hurry." A man's voice suddenly echoed through the vast sea of dark vines.

The dishevelled woman instantly froze dead in her tracks. She recognized the voice that spoke to her and it caused her to instantly turn around.

Her eyes bulged the moment she saw the man who stood in front of her.

"My, my, how the mighty has fallen. You're a sight for sore eyes... Ciel." He spoke to her in a very arrogant manner.

One would think of this person as impudent, but he had a very good point.

This old, dishevelled, ugly, and drained hag before him had once been the beautiful and pure Ciel that ruled the Nether Cult from the background. Yet, one look at her current state would make that past reality seem like a lie.

Perhaps it was because she recognized the terrible position she was in that she did not complain about the man's gaze on her. Or perhaps...

"L-Legris. I thought you perished."

... She understood the kind of person who was speaking to her.

"That's impossible. I did suffer a great deal of damage from Neron, though. A great deal of my plans will suffer a huge hit as a result of it, as well." He smiled, taking a step forward.

Ciel took a step back almost instantly.

She had lost a great deal of her power in the earlier conflict and it was only thanks to her backup plan that she'd been able to transfer a portion of her soul to the current pseudo-body that housed her.

Not only did she have no internal Nether left, but she was in a race against time. If she didn't hurry and make a better body, then this one would eventually perish and fade away.

'I refuse to die. Not yet! Not while my Master needs me!'

Yes, her plan had failed thanks to the constant interference of her enemies, but how could she allow that to stop her?

Even though her son had perished, and even though the Nether had been banished from the world once more, she was never going to give up.

'S-scratch! I'll start from scratch!' Her thoughts kept echoing as she glared at Legris.

"Don't bother, Ciel. The Nether isn't coming back—not after Neron executed whatever plan he had in mind."

"W-what are you—?!"

"I know Neron well enough to know that he's thorough. I'm even amazed that I escaped from his grasp. It makes me wonder if... no, it can't be. In any case, you failed me, Ciel."

"We had an arrangement. I fulfilled my end of the deal. If anything, you're the one who failed to get rid of Neron!" Ciel barked with frustration and anger.

"Welp. Fair point. Guess we both flopped this time."

Ciel heaved a sigh of relief once she heard this. Legris had been about to heap the burden of failure on her, but how was it her fault?

It was all due to the bastards that kept getting in her way!

"It's not too late. Our goals still align. We can start over. We can do it if we work together." She desperately smiled at her long-time collaborator.

"Oh, I don't know..."

Ciel's face paled even more when Legris shrugged in disinterest.

"You think I don't know what you want to do? I know you possess a fraction of Nether essence. You intend to cultivate it so you can have access to him, don't you?"

"H-how do you—"

"Well, I'm not interested in your crazy love drama. I'm not even interested in this short-sighted goal of destroying this world, or whatever notion you have of my intentions."

Ciel's eyes were bloodshot at this point.

Legris had always been strange and mysterious, but she'd always been able to count on him as one of her pawns due to their joint ambition. She wanted the Nether to return and he had a twisted ideology of chaos.

Together, they could achieve their goals.

That was what she'd thought.

Yet—!

"T-then... what do you want?"

Even with his arrogance, Legris was still useful. She didn't know how he knew so much, but he had always been very perceptive and knowledgeable about many things.

'As long as he is on my side, then—'

"It's presumptuous of you to think you can 'use' me, Ciel." Legris's voice interrupted her thoughts.

"W-wha—?!"

Before she could properly respond to him, Legris moved like a blur and grabbed her by her face. He easily raised her up, smiling so menacingly that she thought she would die from his look alone.

Her bloodshot eyes widened further, revealing veins, while her lips leaked out helpless whimpers.

"You're still useful to me, Ciel, so I won't be killing you." Legris spoke calmly.

"Your Original Magic... I'll require it for the next phase of my plan."

Ciel could feel such an insurmountable amount of pressure from Legris that she didn't know what to think. The intensity of his Nether made her frightened beyond description.

"The only reason you were able to escape their perception is because of me. It's also the reason they can't spot us now. You owe me your life, Ciel."

She couldn't help but whimper in submission.

"Don't worry. If you're good, I'll take you to where your Master most likely is. However, first, we need to achieve the first phase of the plan."

What could that be? What sort of atrocity was Legris planning?

"You should have realized it by now... how annoying Neron and his allies are." Legris's twisted smile widened as he spoke. "Well, it's time to get rid of them."

A wave of dark mist swept around them, swallowing the two into a brand-new realm of darkness.

"It will take some time, but... I suppose it's time for me to make my move."

And then, everything faded to black.

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Chapter 804: The Wedding [Pt 1]

[Three Months Later]

A lot had happened, hadn't it?

The deaths and destruction that rained down on the world, threatening to end all of it in one fierce blow.

The malevolent being that emerged from the darkness, seeking to consume all that breathed in this world and beyond.

However, that time had long passed.

At this moment, all of the evils of the past had been forgotten. Instead joy, peace, and celebration filled the air.

After all...

"WOHOOOOOOOOOOO!!!"

... It was Neron and Serah's wedding!

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This event was held at Ainzlark Academy's grand Auditorium, and it was chock full of guests from all over the world.

Thanks to Magic, the massive Colosseum was retrofitted to fit the wedding atmosphere—making enough room for the kind of proceeding that was to take place soon.

The seats were arranged like pews, and they stretched as far as the eyes could see. The pews circled the altar, with the exception of the red carpet that stretched from the entrance of the venue to the stage.

Magic Screens floated in the air, projecting the event as it occurred in real-time. This allowed everyone to get a piece of the action—seeing the couple get joined in sacred matrimony.

"Do you, Neron Kaelid, take this wonderful lady to be your lawfully wedded wife? For as long as you remain conscious and breathe, bound by your souls in this union?" A feminine voice echoed throughout the massive hall.

Neron and Serah stood opposite each other, each in their respective formal wear.

Neron donned an all-black suit, and they complimented his eyes and wavy hair. As for Serah, her pure white gown sharply contrasted the dark hue he donned.

Serah's long crimson hair flowed well below her back but was covered by the white veil on her head. They stood opposite each other, smiling and chuckling like little kids.

Right in front of them, at the very center, was the supposed priest meant to join them together. She floated in the air, like a ghost, but she had a brilliant smile that clearly displayed her excitement.

She had white hair, clear skin and green eyes. The dark spot under her eyes and lips were evident as she stared at the married couple, remembering her past.

"I do." Neron snapped her out of her thoughts, and she proceeded to look at the bride to say her vows.

This type of wedding was new to the Eastern Kingdom, and it only existed in the past when one of the Apostles Of Aether developed it.

'I sure wish you could see this, Gus.' The new Pope—Kazen—smiled as she watched the scene play out.

Thanks to Jared and Neron's resurrection effect, even she didn't perish in the fight against the Nether. They created a new body for her, and she was now able to live a new life in this reality.

It was both an exciting and also sometimes lonely experience.

Thankfully, with the people that now surrounded her, there didn't seem to be a dull moment. While they could never replace the friends she'd had in the past, she wasn't alone anymore.

That was what mattered.

"Do you, Serah Crimson, take this wonderful man to be your lawfully wedded husband? For as long as you remain conscious and breathe, bound by your souls in this union?"

"I do!" Serah responded almost instantly. Kazen smiled, happy beyond compare. And she wasn't the only one.

The entire hall, now shaped like a cathedral, was bustling with excited noises and epic screams. It was just an awesome sight to behold.

"Is there anyone who would like to object to this union? Speak now, or forever hold your peace."

The couple instantly cast their gaze on the audience.

With Neron's intense gaze, though accompanied by his slight smile, no one dared to say a peep... or so one would think.

"I... MMPHHH!!!" A muscular Beastfolk by the name of Gerard—also known as the Beast King—tried to protest, but he was easily subdued by the audience around him.

"Anyone at all?" Kazen asked, trailing her eyes through the crowd.

"MMMMPHHHHHHHHHH!!!"

Having no proper response to object to their union, it was time to proceed with the nuptials. And everyone knew what was coming next.

"Then..." They all smiled as they watched this particular part.

"... I hereby declare you husband and wife. You may kiss the bride."

"WOOOOOOOOOOOOHHHHOOOOOOOO!!!"

Everyone's cheers made the hall vibrate with excited tremors.

Neron and Serah could be seen blushing as they drew closer to each other. Everyone's eyes widened as they awaited the public display of affection.

Even the little ones wanted to see this epic sight.

However...

"Timeless World."

Everyone stood still and only Neron remained in this completely silent world.

He cast his gaze upon his bride, and a wide smile crept up on his face as he stared into her adorable eyes. Within this moment, he could feel his heart race and his cheeks burn.

This moment, one which they had discussed so many times in the past—both in this reality and the one that no longer was—now unfolded before his eyes.

"I love you, Serah..." He whispered as he drew closer to her and planted his lips upon her.

Instantly, she moved, wrapping her arms around him, as she passionately returned his kiss.

They remained like this for as long as they wanted, unfazed by the several frozen eyes that watched them.

"I love you too, Neron." She whispered, before burying her lips in his once more.

The wedding ceremony was officially kickstarted by the exchange of oaths, but that was only the first part of the entire event.

After the couple enjoyed their kiss—though no one was able to see it—the real ceremony began.

The party!

Music blared across the reception hall, as tables were set for the respective guests, almost instantly, using Magic.

Food, drinks, and souvenirs were passed around to everyone, and they all enjoyed themselves by having a good time.

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Chapter 805: The Wedding [Pt 2]

"I guess everything worked out."

Maria and I were currently walking around the banquet. We could see many groups clustered together, and even pairs discussing, however, we didn't care much for anyone but each other.

Neron and Serah were busy attending to guests and discussing with the important folks around, so I didn't want to concern him with any distractions so far.

Besides, we would eventually have a little after-party between our small circle, so it was all good.

"I finally made up with Ana, and just recently, Lemi too." After telling her all about my experience in the Root, and about what ultimately happened to Emilia, my daughter was finally willing to give our relationship a shot.

"I'll try to start out as friends, and see if we can progress from there."

Speaking of Emilia, after my entire death experience, I realized that there was no longer any reason to hang on to the past or cling unto all that my previous life had been in order to live a new one.

'I've chosen to spend the rest of my life with Maria. That's all that matters.' I smiled at her clueless face as we kept walking and discussing.

There was one thing, though...

"I am still worried about Karlia. It's been three months and we're yet to find any way to reach her in the Nether Realm."

Utilizing all the Arcanas, I could most likely use [The World] to travel to the Nether Realm, but with Karlia's current trajectory unknown, it would take forever to sort through the nigh-infinite realms that existed there.

"The Automatons you sent there as probes completely lost contact with you, right? You're trying your hardest." Maria tried to soothe my heart.

However, despite how much she tried to encourage me, the thought still ate at me.

"I haven't tried my hardest. Not yet."

If I were really desperate, I would have plunged myself into the Nether Realm while damning the consequences, in order to find Karlia.

But could I really do it? Could I throw everyone and everything I currently knew just so I could go on a search that could ultimately yield fruitlessness?

Not even Aether knew what would await me in the Nether Realm, and its infinite branches.

'I can't abandon Maria and everyone here, neither can I put them in danger.'

As a result... I was stuck.

"I'm not giving up, though." I smiled at Maria, feeling her soft hands nudge me on my shoulder.

"That's the spirit. Hehe."

Her short laugh tickled my heart, and the heaviness within me slowly dissipated.

"So, are you ready now?"

She was referring to what we had already discussed beforehand—the 'thing' I was going to do at this wedding.

"Of course. I'm still quite nervous." I responded, a bead of sweat forming on my forehead.

"Don't worry. It won't be that scary."

Based on my last experience, I knew her statement was utterly false. Still... I had to put my trust in the girl I had chosen for myself... right?

Plus, who could resist her adorable face—especially when she let out that soft smile?

"Alright, then. Let's go."

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Just as Jared and Maria moved to their respective destinations, several other people were engaged in discussions.

One of these conversations was between two fairies.

They stood in a corner, speaking in an obviously secretive fashion as they discussed out of sight. Thanks to their minuscule height, this wasn't a very difficult feat to accomplish.

Still, who would have thought that these two would be discussing alone?

Jane Ursula and Beruel.

"So, what do you say? I really need your assistance with this project. If I had your expertise, as my assistant, we can do many amazing things."

Jane was currently smiling broadly at the white-haired, male fairy.

Beruel wore a neat suit, a mix of white and gold, while Jane's outfit had a dazzling splendour of silver. Sequins and glitters were dusted all over the dress, making it exquisite.

Honestly, it had been imposed on her by her female acquaintances.

"For you to request my help, you must be quite desperate. How important is this project of yours? No, it's not only about its importance. It must be something very complex and technical. Why else would you require assistance?"

Beruel's whisper was well expressed by his facial expression. While he rubbed his bare chin, he looked at Jane's restless expression.

"Why me? Don't you think you should let Jared know about thi—"

"No! Jared can't know!"

"Why...?"

"I-It's a surprise! Yes! It's a surprise project."

"But I'm a blabbermouth. Why would you trust me to keep my mouth shut if it's that secretive?"

"I'll make you keep your mouth shut."

Beruel instantly gulped. He knew Jane wasn't bluffing about this, and there were also many ways she could actualize her words.

"I am choosing you because you've managed to convince me that you're not scum. At least, not anymore. I didn't want to believe it before, but perhaps I'm willing to give you another chance. A chance to prove yourself."

Beruel's eyes widened when he heard this. His heart raced, and his cheeks reddened instantly. He never could have imagined that he would hear Jane utter those words to him.

It felt like a dream.

"So? What do you say?" She smiled, stretching her hand as she awaited his sure answer.

"I... I'm sorry, I can't."

Jane's expression instantly devolved into shock and her eyes widened beyond their usual size. Beruel had refused her offer, though his expression showed that he didn't want to.

"May I ask why?"

"I... I made an earlier commitment to Ana and I intend to make good on it." He finally spoke in a murmur.

His head was hung low and his cheeks were still flushed with embarrassment. He really wanted to go along with Jane, but how could he give in to his selfishness and go back on his promise?

"You really have changed." Jane suddenly gave a different smile as she stared at Beruel. "How interesting..."

Beruel felt a rush of warmth in his heart and he felt like bursting with such great excitement when he received her compliment.

Jane actually thought he was interesting?!! How awesome!

"I understand. It's very understandable." She nodded slightly and began to fly away.

"There's no need to feel bad, Beruel. It's fine. I hope you find satisfaction with Ana. She's a brilliant girl, so support her well."

Beruel felt his heart drop as Jane flew off. He wanted to say something, but a lump was stuck in his throat. He couldn't find the right words to utter.

"W-will you be okay? Who will you ask to help you out with it... with the project?"

Jane paused in her flight and gave him a confident look. Her eyes were gleaming with such energy that he found himself unable to look away.

As her peach-coloured hair danced in the wind, Beruel was reminded why he found Jane Ursula so captivating and absolutely enthralling.

"I'll just have to do it myself."

With that fine statement of finality, she zoomed off and Beruel watched her in a daze.

"Haa..." He could only sigh in wonder.

'She really is amazing.'

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Chapter 806: The Wedding [Pt 3]

"Come on... you can't be serious."

"Fr, fr... I'm not joking."

"Hahaha. Stop it!"

Two people were shamelessly enjoying each other's company.

Even in this loud and active ceremony, they seemed to be in a world of their own. They laughed and spoke intimately, as they enjoyed each other's company.

These two were none other than Kuzon and Ana.

"When will I be meeting your parents, though? Are they still busy?"

"Come on, I'm not emotionally prepared yet." Ana covered her face, blushing as she squealed.

Kuzon couldn't help but poke at her little body, causing her to burst out in laughter as he tickled her.

"S-stop... people are watching... haha..." Even though she said that, Ana made no move to halt his advances.

What could she do with her tiny body, though?

"Hehe, maybe I should search for the Frederick family among the guests."

"S-stop... nooo..."

"It shouldn't be too hard. I'll just look for any woman who looks like you... but is a little taller."

"KUZOOONNNN!!!"

"Hahaha!"

At this point, Kuzon fled and Ana chased him with her little legs—both of them laughing and yelling at the same time.

A couple of weirdos, they were.

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"Jerry, where are youuuu!"

Ciara Epilson was faced with a major problem. She couldn't find Jerry, who had promised to be her date for today's event. Ever since the opening ceremony, she hadn't laid eyes on him.

'Why does he keep avoiding me? This is so not fair.'

Ever since the war ended, they hadn't had much time together. It hurt her and she didn't know how else to deal with it.

'He promised to tell me something after we ended the war. And he still hasn't... Jerry, that jerk! Could it be... that there's another girl?'

A murderous aura instantly took over Ciara and her eyes shone with violence as she activated her sensory Magic to search every nook and cranny of the massive hall to find him—as well as whichever whore he was with.

'Jerry is mine and mine alone!' Her thoughts rang as she walked with climbing rage.

Searching and looking around proved futile, so she decided to ask the people she met on her way. Her first target was Ivan—who was talking with Freya.

Ciara didn't know—neither did she care—what they were discussing, but Ivan was swirling the wine in his cup and smirking weirdly as he spoke. In return, Freya was giggling. The fact that they even stood close to each other while speaking also sent a special message.

"Hey, have any of you seen Jerry?" She interrupted their moment with no remorse.

"Uh.... no?" Ivan said, clearly annoyed.

"Are you sure?" Ciara narrowed her eyes and more of her intimidating aura leaked out.

Instantly, Ivan corrected his glare and beads of sweat formed on his face. He once again realized his place in the hierarchy—especially where Ciara was concerned.

"U-uh... I am... sure..."

Freya simply watched in silence, wondering what the big deal was.

"Hmm. I see..." Ciara narrowed her eyes further, and then after a few seconds of tense silence, she left the both of them alone—although, she decided to leave a passing comment before completely walking away.

"You both like each other, don't you?"

With that, she skittered off, leaving the two acquaintances blushing hard.

Ciara continued her search and saw Edward and Lemi being stupid, as usual. Edward was blushing hard and laughing, while Lemi was busy regaling him with whatever thrilling tale she had.

It was mostly stuff about her research, but Edward seemed to dig the stuff. He didn't even appear to be pretending. It felt like he genuinely liked hearing her talk about Magic Technology and experiments.

Considering he was best friends with Ana, though, that wasn't a surprise.

"Tch." Ciara ignored the two, proceeding to look elsewhere for a more productive answer.

To be frank, the atmosphere was getting to her. Everywhere she looked, she would either see couples or potential couples talking and enjoying themselves.

It made her very salty.

Where was her date? Where was Jerry in this obviously magical moment? She missed him, and she so desperately wanted him to be by her side.

So much so that she was slowly going crazy.

'Jerry... Jerry... Jerry...!!!'

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[MEANWHILE]

"I bet you're wondering what I'm doing here..."

Jerry's voice was a bit hollow and soft and he was speaking to the being that sat beside him.

"Uh... not really."

Gawain was the one beside him—an Automaton who was rather sentient but was also not as interested in humans and their events.

"Everyone is out there enjoying the party, but here I am... hiding."

"Dude... I don't really—"

"I need to let this out, man. I hope I'm not bothering you too much."

To be frank, Jerry was indeed bothering Gawain. The Automaton came to this place, the storage area, to have some alone time since many people kept looking at him and asking him questions.

He was a sentient Automaton, but that didn't mean he was a very social one.

Not long after he found his solitary paradise, this human walked in and practically began to pour out unnecessary information.

"I... I'm actually hiding from someone. She's a close friend. We've known each other since we were kids."

'Is he talking about Ciara Epilson? No shit.' Gawain nearly let out an external sigh.

Information on Jared's teammates were already among his memory files and he knew all about Ciara and Jerry's very odd relationship— though even he didn't understand what the heck was going on.

Well, if Jared couldn't comprehend it, who was he to get what they were all about?

"I promised we could hang out today, but I can't bring myself to face her. It's been this way for three months now. I... I just..."

These feelings swirling within him, was it finally time to let them out?

Jerry could think of no better time and no better person to talk to.

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Chapter 807: The Wedding [Pt 4]

"It all started to feel weird after that kiss we had that one time. And then as time went on, especially after the war, this strong emotion within me seemed to increase. I can't control it." Jerry clutched his chest as he spoke with a blushing face.

His heart always raced whenever he thought of Ciara and he couldn't spend too long in her presence because he always ended up having dirty thoughts about his own friend.

He felt extremely guilty about that.

"I... I think I have feelings for her."

'No kidding.' Gawain once again rolled his eyes.

He didn't have emotions like humans did, but he could analyze behavioural data and deduce it to mean a particular thing.

Jerry indeed seemed to display all the symptoms.

"Then, why not confess to her?" Gawain finally spoke up, giving the most optimal answer to the dilemma Jerry currently faced.

"B-but what if she doesn't like me back? It'll make things weird between us." Jerry protested in worry.

"Things are already pretty weird between you guys, though..."

"I just don't want to ruin our friendship. Ciara is... she's too precious for me to lose..." He muttered.

Gawain was really uncomfortable now. He truly wanted to help the kid, but what could he say?

"If you don't do anything, you just might lose your friendship... and her."

Once Gawain's voice sunk into Jerry's head, his eyes widened and his blushing face took on a brighter shade of red.

"Y-you think she'll leave me for someone else?"

Gawain never said that, nor did he intend for his words to be construed in such a way. However, the very thought seemed to drive the young boy in front of him.

After calculating the probabilities in his head and weighing the chances of success, Gawain finally settled on the perfect solution.

"That's right. You need to be upfront about your emotion before it's too late."

"A-ah..."

"This is a wedding, you know? Lots of candidates for Ciara. If you don't make your move quickly, then..."
Gawain narrowed his metallic eyes as he stared at Jerry

"... You could lose her forever."

Those words heavily resonated with Jerry as his eyes nearly popped with fear and his heart burned with pain.

"Will you allow that to happen?" The Automaton's voice echoed in the storage room.

"N-no... I c-can't..."

"I can't hear you."

"N-NO, I ca—"

"I can't hear you!"

"NO, I WON'T ALLOW CIARA TO BE TAKEN AWAY BY ANOTHER MAN!" Jerry raised his voice in determination.

"Now go, young lad. Go and claim your woman!"

"YESSIRRRR!!!" Jerry, pumped to the brim, rushed out of the storage area to face his destiny.

No more running away! No more hiding! He was going to confront it all!

'Whew... took him long enough to leave.' Gawain smiled in satisfaction.

He could finally rest without interruptions.

>CREAK<

Suddenly, the door creaked slightly open and Jerry returned, poking his head into the storage hall.

"B-but... what if she doesn't like me back?" His tone was sullen, and Gawain could see signs of fear and anxiety on his face.

"Have faith. The worst she can tell you is 'no'."

With a smile on the Automaton's face, accompanied by a mutual nod, these two understood each other perfectly. They felt their emotions resonate with each other—a good consensus between man and machine.

"Thank you, friend."

"You're welcome... friend."

Thus, the doors closed once more, and Jerry left Gawain in peace.

This time, however, the Automaton wasn't just happy that he was left in peace. The smile on his face did not dissipate and his thoughts remained on the brave young chap.

"Go get her!"

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"Hicc... hicc... I... I wanted... to marry her..."

Gerard was drowning himself in booze as he spoke with a slur. He appeared to be tipsy and his face was bright red, but he kept consuming the alcohol in his massive jug.

"I can't... bear... this..."

The grown Beastfolk—a king in his own right—began to wail and cry.

He was most likely the only one in the entire event who was resorting to tears—in a negative way, for that matter.

"Dad, calm yourself. Don't you have tons of wives already?" Asa sighed as he stared at his drunk dad.

"You wouldn't understand, kid. When you grow older..." Gerard gulped more alcohol and drowned himself in his sorrows.

Asa clicked his tongue and left his father. Instead of hanging around a complaining man, he went to a more interesting scene.

Aloe and Maro, all alone.

'Hehe. So it's finally happening, eh?' Asa grinned devilishly, deciding to sneak up on the two in order to hear what they were talking about.

Just looking at them, he could tell they had gotten much closer compared to a few months ago.

"It feels funny, seeing Kazen floating around. She used to be in my body, you know?" Aloe laughed with Maro.

They had talked about many things thus far and this comment of hers was only a way to slow things down. Small talk was always appreciated among good friends.

"Yeah, you never talk about that. How did it feel?"

"I really can't describe it. But I felt everything she felt and I knew she wasn't evil. She simply wanted to do the right thing."

After the entire saga, when Jared resurrected everyone, Aloe and Kazen had a long talk. The latter apologized to her and they even made up.

Considering how long they had spent together back when she was unconscious and how much Kazen taught Aloe about Aether—among other things—there was no way they would just drift like that.

Kazen's apology and Aloe's forgiveness brought them much closer to each other. In the end, they settled as friends.

Maro allowed her to narrate and describe her experience in full before he spoke again. "Well, I'm glad I get to talk with the actual Aloe."

"True. I'm glad that I get to talk to you with my body and soul intact too."

They clinked their glasses and would have talked even further. However... the most unexpected occurred.

And it would forever change their line of conversation.

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

Chapter 808: The Wedding [Pt 5]

Elrich Lendertwale enjoyed himself as the moderator of the entire wedding ceremony.

From the exchange of oaths to the reception, he was also in charge of organizing the programs, ensuring the event went as planned and that there was absolutely nothing wrong with anything.

Of course, that also meant protocol and security officers.

It felt good to be busy... to be relevant. Sure, the stakes weren't as high as saving the world, but just for today, he was the hero!

"And now... it's time for the 'Magic Toss'!" Elrich declared with great pleasure.

The reception was swelling with so much excitement that not everyone picked up on his words and the consequences until it was too late.

Neron and Serah, who had returned to the stage, after spending so long greeting guests and having a generally good time, now had a purposeful look in their eyes.

The Magic Toss was something they couldn't forego.

"You ready?" Neron asked Serah with a knowing smile.

The whole thing was riding on her, so it was only a matter of course to ask her.

"Definitely." She returned his grin.

In one swift motion, she turned her back to her audience and generated a small flaming spell on her hand. It wasn't powerful enough to seriously harm anyone, but it was concentrated with enough energy that dodging it was impossible.

This ball of flames burst into a bouquet-like structure and as soon as it did, Serah lifted it above her head.

"Readyyyyyy? GOOOOOOOOO!!!!" Elrich's voice echoed throughout the hall, instantly prompting Serah to launch the flaming bouquet.

>VWOOOOOSSSSHHHHHH!!!<

Like an unstoppable rocket, the projectile ascended into the air and shot through the sky, finally descending upon the anticipating audience.

The pressure was on and the flaming construct was descending in a particular direction—towards an unsuspecting target.

>BOOOOOOMMMMMMMMM!!!<

The moment the bouquet hit the target, it burst into sparkles of amber light. Like glitters, the bright fragments of light showered her body.

"W-wha...?" The shocked lady muttered, glancing at the man she had been speaking to and then at the entire crowd that had their gaze fixated on her.

As her blond hair danced and her innocent eyes searched for an answer, she quickly realized what was going on. She had been chosen!

'W-wait a secon—!'

Even before her thoughts could completely process how she ought to respond, a loud shout rang through the air, sealing the deal for her completely.

"Aloe Vida is going to get married next! And her suitor is right beside heeeeerrrrr!!!"

The voice came from a rather young boy who excitedly jumped out of his place of hiding. He had scaly skin on some parts of his body—an obvious sign of being a Beastfolk.

This was Asa and his mischievously bright smile said everything that needed to be understood.

"N-no wai—"

Before Aloe and Maro could contest Asa's sudden announcement, a loud roar pierced the air. It was the deafening sound of victory, surging from the crowd.

They had all seen the bouquet descend on her like a comet and they all knew what the Magic Toss meant—at least, it had been explained in their invitation cards.

The toss was meant to choose the next person in the audience who would get married.

Not only did it fall on Aloe, but she'd also been having a very engaging conversation with a man when it happened. These were signs that were too clear to refute.

Aloe Vida and Maro Smith... those two had to be getting married soon.

"WOOOOOOHHHOOOOOOOOO!!!"

The audience drowned Aloe's protests and Maro's awkward laughter with their cheers. The supposed couple clearly had no say in their union.

It was fate!

It was destiny!

It was... LOVE!

"WOOOOOOHHOOOOO!!!" The audience cheered even more.

As they all cried in happiness and excitement, plunging the bashful duo into a tumultuous sea of unwanted attention, Neron and Serah were grinning.

"You did well to aim at her." Neron grinned with mischief.

"Come on. I know you improved the speed of the Spell with your Magic. They never stood a chance."

These two had clearly planned it out. Why they would do such a thing remained a mystery. However, they were clearly having the most fun.

"Hehehe... hehehehe."

Thus, the party continued in even higher spirits than before—with everyone drowning themselves in the joy that filled their hearts.

Well, not that everyone was in that festive state.

A particular group seemed to be in a more serious mood compared to everyone else. It consisted of a mature and important couple... and a young one.

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'Why did they have to do the Magic Toss now? Things just got even more awkward'

I was standing right in front of the Helmsworths—Maria's parents. Their cold gazes were more than enough to make me uncomfortable, but now the joyful mood increased the tension in the air.

Frankly speaking, it was overwhelming.

"I have come to greet you both, as the parents of the woman I love, as well as my future in-laws." I managed to squeeze out a statement.

I spotted my father making a wry smile while my mother cringed a little. Was I so stiff in my statement that it fell completely flat?

"You have done well, Jared." Fortunately, Maria's father didn't seem to think that way.

"What Franklin says is true. We appreciate your efforts to greet us and even planning for our families to meet like this. You have my appreciation."

As I had already noticed before, the Helmsworths really didn't show any emotions when they spoke. It unnerved me at first, but it seemed I was getting used to it.

"Your compliments are too much. I have not forgotten the agreement we made in the Royal Palace. Once I am of age, I will officially visit your estate with my family and declare my intentions to the entire Helmsworth Household.

The two nodded in agreement and it seemed like they leaked out a small smile. It could have just been my imagination, but I could have sworn I saw it.

"We anticipate your presence."

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Chapter 809: Abrupt News

After our mild introductions and brief complimentary greetings, I began to talk to Maria's parents.

Surprisingly, they weren't as bad as I imagined.

Duke Franklin was a charming man, who cared for his daughter much more than his expression allowed him to show. I somehow got the vibe of my father when I spoke to him.

A man who was quite busy, but loved her more than words could tell.

As for Maria's mother—Lilia—she was someone who had a jumpy body and a very active personality. It just felt odd that she remained stoic the whole time.

If she could change expressions the slightest bit, I could peg her as a very playful woman. Fortunately, it didn't really bother me after talking to both of them for some time.

'They're really good people.' I concluded within myself.

I honestly couldn't wait till we officially sealed the deal between our families.

"Psst! Hey, Jared!" A voice suddenly called out of nowhere, interrupting the small talk that was going on between both of our families.

I immediately recognized the voice, as well as the presence that approached us. It was Alphonse, in the flesh.

"Dad, where have you been?" My mother was the first to speak. "You won't even greet your daughter."

"Keke. You should know how it is by now. You're a big girl now, and yet you want some pampering every now and then? No way!" Alphonse fumed, walking towards me as his wrinkly face formed a smile.

"Got a sec, kid?" He whispered in my ear.

He didn't even give me any time to respond before he began drawing me away from the discussion.

'What the...?'

His face was particularly excited, and it seemed like he was about to burst just by holding whatever he was keeping inside. I was curious but also hesitant.

'Can I just leave the discussion like this?' I wondered to myself.

However, after looking at the Helmsworths and getting their nods of consent, I decided to go with the flow. Maria also didn't seem to mind—and I could now tell if she was upset or not, thanks to the time we had been spending together.

Since no one was against it, I went along with him.

"Well, it's always a pleasure, Alphonse." My father chuckled as he watched Alphonse drag me off.

"Yeah, yeah. Take better care of my daughter, will you? She's been craving an Adventure for some time now." My grandfather waved nonchalantly, not even bothering to look back at the two.

"W-wut...? Stop... it..." My mother whispered, blushing as she looked away.

That was the last scene I witnessed before I was completely carted away by the overexcited Alphonse.

'He had better have a good reason for this!' I found myself thinking.

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"I overheard Elrich and Neron just now. They were discussing it so passionately. Apparently, it's the King's decision and everyone in the inner circle unanimously agreed!"

Alphonse regaled me of the highly improbable tale of his espionage.

There was no way my grandfather—despite how skilled he was—could sneak up on Neron and Elrich. And if it was something as important as the King's command, then that made it all the more secretive.

'Unless... they wanted him to hear it? Maybe.'

I still hadn't heard what this amazing news was. Anytime I asked, Alphonse used a roundabout tactic to keep talking about how important the whole thing was and how this would be the very first time something like it would occur in the Kingdom.

I was just about fed up at this point. Fortunately, Alphonse finally decided to fess up.

"You've been chosen as the new Grand Mage, Jared."

The moment I heard those words, my mind shut down.

And then, after a few seconds, my mind slowly began to recover. It returned to the past—to my first life. Back when I had been an ambitious child.

"I will be the greatest Grand Mage of the Kingdom!" I had often told myself and the many others around me.

I worked hard and studied even harder. I did all of those things, only to be told that I was inept. Back then, that path became completely closed to me.

Yet...

"R-really?" I muttered, surprised to hear my voice tremble.

The title of Grand Mage wasn't supposed to mean much to me at this point. I had already surpassed the Kingdom's current Grand Mages and the most powerful person in the kingdom wasn't even a Grand Mage.

Neron had shown me that one didn't need a title to be recognized as the most powerful. It should have been hollow to me.

Despite that, I found my heart racing and a smile forming on my face.

It was almost like I had become a child once again.

"Are you sure you heard it right, though?" I tried to shut down the welling excitement that seemed about to devour me whole.

"Come on, Jared. Don't you trust me? I wouldn't lie to you about something this important."

If Alphonse was sure, then how could I try to deny it?

Still, it sounded unbelievable. Granting such a title to someone who hadn't come of age yet... wasn't that too absurd?

'Well, I've done absurd things, so I guess it's understandable.'

This Kingdom and the other nations had been through a lot. We had endured and overcome the literal end of the world together.

We won.

'There are still a few important things to address... most importantly, Karlia. However, isn't this what I wanted?'

I was surrounded by friends, family, a lover, a purpose and a place in this new world. I could change this world even further and we could all grow together.

'This is all I've ever wanted—'

>VWUUUUUUUUUSSSSHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!<

Suddenly, even before I could properly respond to it, a dark swirling blot appeared in the sky. It contained sheer darkness and within it emerged two individuals.

A man and a woman.

And the most shocking part was that I recognized them both!

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

Chapter 810: Malevolence Resurfaces

A tense silence filled the hall as we watched both man and woman appear above us. Everyone was either shell-shocked or cautious and with due reason.

Silence and preparation to strike pervaded the hall as we readied ourselves for instant battle.

"Why, hello everyone!" The very familiar man spoke, his eyes gleaming with delight and his grin widening for all to see.

My eyes widened in shock as I stood, almost paralyzed beneath his malevolent smile and oddly friendly demeanour. There was no way I, or many of the people present here, could forget this man.

Legris Damien! What the hell was he doing here?

My eyes went to the woman who floated beside him. She was covered in white and she had clear skin, like a being of purity—though I knew better than to judge her based on her appearance.

Ciel was a very cruel woman and her selfish desires nearly brought the world to ruin. Seeing these two side by side, my mind processed a few things in a flash.

'Neron did say that Legris escaped, but why is Ciel still here? She should be dead. And why do they look so healthy? Neron said he'd badly injured Legris, and even if he was alive, he would still be badly affected.'

There was a lot I didn't know about Magic—like how they were able to escape our supervision for this long, and how they were able to interrupt the wedding, despite the defensive measures already in place.

"Why are you all looking at me this way? I came to give my congratulations to you, Neron. Ah, and to the lovely Serah as well. You both look so happy. What a lovely wedding." Legris began talking so casually, almost as if nothing was wrong.

"Ahhh, I'm so jealous."

"What do you want, Legris?" For the first time since this bizarre halting of the event, Neron finally spoke.

"Hmm? Come on, Neron. Stop the act already. You must have already known this whole thing wasn't over. Haven't you been expecting me?"

"I don't know what you're talking about." Instantly, Neron's hair turned white and currents of power flowed from his body.

I followed his lead and took on my most powerful transformation. Grand Fusion Mode, with Mage Mode and Elemental Chamber.

Unfortunately, it was all Mana-Based.

Without the Arcanas, I couldn't use Aether. Plus, I hadn't gotten around to forming an Aether Core yet.

Neron was different, however. He was pulsating with the stuff and he seemed completely infuriated by Legris' return.

"Things have deviated so much from the original timeline, Neron, but that doesn't mean I've lost. I admit that you caught me off-guard with the Nether, and how you resolved that... but..."

Legris' eyes narrowed and his grin formed a sadistic curve. It appeared he was enjoying every second of this moment.

"Keep talking. You won't escape this place." Neron spoke calmly.

"Ah, so you've trapped me in this place. You've also activated your time Magic. Whatever shall I do... I wonder..."

Something told me that there was something not right about this whole thing.

Legris was the most cunning person I had ever met. I doubted he would be foolish enough to challenge Neron during his wedding, with only the strongest of people gathered in the same location.

Or perhaps... was this exactly what he wanted?

As I pondered this, I maintained my guard and made sure to prepare my Original Magic in case of any emergencies.

My family was in sight—same as my friends and family.

"Let's see..."

My eyes instantly bulged when I watched the manifestation in the air. Twenty-one cards circled him and one hovered above his head.

Those were the Arcanas!

'Of course! Ciel can manufacture more Arcanas, as long as she has enough energy!'

How Legris was able to survive the aftermath, or how Ciel had enough energy to manufacture all twenty-one Arcanas in order to produce [The World] which hovered above both she and Legris' head.

How in the world?

Unfortunately, there was no time to process all of this. Not while we were in this kind of danger.

'S-Spellcra—'

"[The World]... Displacement."

A bright light suddenly engulfed the whole room, overwhelming all my senses in a flash. It was so much that I was instantly paralyzed.

It felt like I was being pushed away, yet I remained completely still... unaware of what was happening around me.

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Legris and Ciel watched the now-empty hall in silence.

There was no one in sight, despite the hundreds and thousands of people that had occupied it just moments earlier.

"I could only get six of them. How disappointing..." He sighed.

Neron Kaelid.

Jared Leonard

Kuzon Midas

Ciara Epsilon

Aloe Vida

Edward Karl Leon

'I wanted to capture the others... especially Serah Crimson. They're still very troublesome—especially considering the long run.'

But, it seemed despite all the Arcanas in his possession, he couldn't outmanoeuvre Neron's impeccable defence.

"He must have teleported everyone to safety. Perhaps a joint effort between him and Jared? Well, if six of the major players are gone, then the mission is just about done, right?"

With a shrug, Legris caused the Arcanas around him to vanish.

"Where did you send them to?" Ciel muttered softly, her gaze not daring to look in the direction of the man she spoke to.

"Nowhere important. Even I don't know. I just used [The World] to scatter them around various branches within the tree."

Without Arcanas or the proper knowledge of how to cross the branches—as well as the way to navigate how to get to their own branch—the victims were as good as stuck.

"I don't doubt their ingenuity. However, by the time they figure everything out—if they don't die first—I'll be done with all my preparations."

A black void appeared behind Legris and Ciel and they both ventured inside.

"No... I would have long won."