

SPELLCRAFT 851

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

Chapter 851: The Outgroup's Proposal [Pt 3]

'T-they're lying... right?' Kuzon thought to himself as he sat on his throne.

He quietly observed Neron, but it didn't appear as if he was being dishonest. No, Neron had always been a difficult man to read. What about the other Outers? Surely, they would fidget at the ridiculous words of their leader.

'None of them are reacting out of the ordinary. Are they really being honest?'

But that was impossible... right?

As far as anyone knew, the Outgroup was made up of a rag-tag group of exceptional individuals. He even knew most of them, except the little girl who seemed to be clinging close to Stefan. She appeared to also be a newcomer.

'In any case... should I believe them, or not?' Kuzon glanced at the Dragon King, Z'ark for his counsel. 'I wonder what the old dragon thinks of this...'

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'Why the hell are you looking at me? You've always done whatever you wanted.' Z'ark's thoughts echoed as he maintained his outward persona.

He was also rattled by Neron's claims. Such a thing as having over five million soldiers at their beck and call was an extraordinary claim. The issue was the evidence.

'Do they have any way to prove the veracity of their words?' He thought.

If the Outers did, then Z'ark already knew he and his people would be better off following them than taking their chances doing nothing. In fact, after considering all of what Neron had said, he found himself having a change of heart.

'It would indeed be wiser to strike them hard and fast, and as soon as possible too. With an army of the proposed number, we should be able to win.'

Plus, with an intelligent person like Neron on the team, they would be able to follow a well-structured plan. Honestly, the plan sounded lucrative enough to him.

'Not that Kuzon really cares what I think...'

In the end, the absolute Emperor would make all the decisions himself. That was how it always was.

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"I have considered your words carefully." Kuzon began, his tone low and sullen.

I watched as his eyes drifted around uncomfortably, only to find their way back to Neron. Despite the obvious signs of discomfort, I could also sense some sense of resolve in his eyes. It indeed seemed like he had come to a decision.

"I will accept this alliance you have proposed. And we will operate according to your plan—if, of course, you have the five million troops you claim to possess." Kuzon stated.

That sounded fair. In fact, it was only rational. Something told me he wouldn't stop there, though. Unfortunately for me, I was right.

"If we are to lend you our strength and follow your plan, then I have one condition." Kuzon smiled, his eyes narrowed. "The one who will end up fighting Jared... will be me!"

Ah, so this was what everything was all about.

'In the end, he agreed because our plan still makes it viable to reach Jared. Does he even care about his own troops or the lives we'll be saving thanks to our strategy?'

It didn't seem like it.

This looked to me like he was a guy who just wanted to use us and his own resources to increase the chances of his selfish ambition—revenge.

'I guess it doesn't really matter as long as we get the job done.' Shrugging a little, I sighed.

Neron picked up on my gesture, no doubt, so he knew where I stood on the matter. In the end, it was up to him to decide, though.

He was the leader and this was his world. I could only serve as an advisor, trainer or whatever. However, the decisions still had to be made by Neron. Fortunately, he was very good at what he did.

"Very well. You will be given the right to challenge Jared. Our plan will accommodate that detail and we will not get in your way unless it's unavoidable."

"You had better not. I'm going to crush him!" Kuzon responded with a bitter tone.

I wondered how he could say something so haughty, especially after just losing to a newcomer in the Outgroup. I thought that would humble Kuzon a little, or at least, make him doubt his own strength.

However, it seemed he was still as stuck-up as he always was—especially where the Jared of this world was concerned.

'I'm relieved he agreed to this easily, though. I didn't have to take any other measures...' A smile formed on my face as I observed my invisible surveillance automatons in the air.

They had captured the entire fight I had with Kuzon, as well as Neron's rousing speech. If I wanted to, I could broadcast it to all the citizens of the Midas Empire, as well as the Magic Beasts.

They would see just how much sense we were making, and an inevitable insurrection would grow from the people.

'That method is too volatile, so I wanted to save it as a last resort.'

There were also other methods we could use—like an active threat or even controlling Kuzon himself. However, I just thought a diplomatic approach would help everyone out, especially considering the long run.

'And what do you know? It ended well.'

"So, what now, Neron? Outgroup? When should we begin our plan? Or rather... how much time would we need to sort out the details."

That was indeed a valid question. As much as I would love to take out my evil version as soon as possible, it was much better to go through some logistic checks, discuss the plan in detail and observe the armies that the Midas and Magic Beasts claimed to have

"Well, first of all, we—"

>VWUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM!!!<

Suddenly, I felt a vibration pulsate throughout my body. It spread all around me, and I could see Neron and the rest of the people in my line of sight trembling as they felt the wave permeate the building.

'W-what is going on?!' My thoughts echoed and a bad feeling began to rise in me.

The surge of Magic Power I was experiencing was beyond ordinary.

It felt... out of this world.

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

Chapter 852: The Return Of Darkness [Pt 1]

"T-this power... it's just like back then..."

I swiftly looked in the direction of the quivering voice, only to find Ciel mumbling as she shivered in fear. Her widened eyes which seemed about to pop out of their sockets told of an untold trauma, and her pursed lips trembled with terrifying horror.

A dark sense of expectation hung above her and I could feel tension spreading throughout the hall at a rapid rate.

'I need to find out exactly what's going on.'

"One second..." I told everyone, instantly teleporting out of the throne room.

>VWUUSH!<

In a flash, I appeared outside, floating directly on top of the grand Midas Palace. My head was raised high into the sky, and my senses enhanced to their limits.

That was when I saw it... the sight that was impossible to miss.

'N-no way...'

Many miles and kilometres away from the Midas Empire and its pleasant ambience was a thick formation of dark clouds. I recognized the coordinates well.

'The Eastern Kingdom's Capital. The enemy's main base.'

A bright purple light shot out of a particular compound and seemed to connect with the sky, causing a cloud of darkness to form around the area.

'I can sense extremely dense energy from that light, and also something within the dark clouds. It feels otherworldly...'

My eyes widened in realization and shock.

'Is he trying to—?! Already?! But how will he? No, this doesn't make any sense!' I had a million questions on my mind, but how could I start addressing them at that particular moment?

Upon closer observation of the dark clouds, I saw a disk-like energy projection. It was very small, but I saw it gradually expand. It looked like a portal, leaking a great amount of malevolent energy that threatened to tear everything around it apart.

It was a wonder how the portal was able to remain firm, rather than simply crash upon itself. The energy utilized in generating it had to be immense, and it also had to resonate with the force that dwelled on the other side.

'Now isn't the time to analyze this, you idiot!' I gritted my teeth and chastised myself.

This only proved that we had much less time than I initially thought. We couldn't allow ourselves to be patient and wait for a while before developing a plan.

We had to act quickly.

'Damn, why don't things ever go according to plan?'

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"M-Merlin's plan... it's going down now. I can feel it. This creeping sensation, this growing darkness. Can't you sense it? Can't you feel it?"

As Ciel shivered, the Outers surrounded and comforted her. She was always the pillar that gave them a purpose, so it was very difficult for everyone to see her break down like this. The very thing she feared and had hoped to avoid was now upon them.

And she wasn't strong enough to stop it.

"Let's not focus on that for now. The plan comes first." I told Neron, who kept glancing at Ciel.

"A-ah, yes. You're right." He responded hesitantly.

I could tell he was concerned about the woman and also worried for the world, but we didn't have time to be hung up on emotions. This was a decisive moment that required action. Hopefully, he could see that.

"I apologize for being distracted. I'm fine now."

Once he said this, I nodded and decided to leave the rest to him.

"Emperor Kuzon, King Z'ark... we no longer have time to spare. Right here and now, I will brief you all on the plan, and we will act as quickly as possible."

Kuzon and Z'ark also seemed flustered by the sudden wave of vibration and the strange energy that was strong enough to even invade the closed walls of the Midas Empire.

However, they had no time to be afraid.

"The war has begun."

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As expected, Neron gave a precise, concise, and charismatic rundown of the plan.

By designating roles, and assignments, and also issuing warnings to others, he was able to quickly make sense of the situation and deliver his message succinctly.

In a nutshell;

The Midas forces were to storm the Fairy Kingdom to take it over, along with Beruel and Kido, who would be serving as the commanders.

The Magic Beasts would go to the Beastfolk Kingdom, and they would be led by Vaizer and Reed.

Ana and Stefan, who seemed to be the best duo based on their compatibility in Magic and Technology, as well as in other areas, were in charge of the Dwarven Kingdom. Their goal was to eliminate the opposition, but more importantly to emancipate the enslaved Dwarves there.

My Automaton would be evenly distributed among the members, creating an army large enough to resist the enemies, while also ensuring the safety of the people.

'I'll be transferring the consciousness of my Familiars into the Golems, so they can have even higher combat ability than usual. As for the Automaton, they function well enough with orders.'

It was going to take some time to gather the armies belonging to the Midas and Magic Beasts, so we simply began the preparations while they gathered.

"W-we still haven't figured out a way to transport all of the soldiers you lot claim to have!" At this point, Kuzon was panicking more than normal.

His hysterical voice, widened eyes, and perspired face showed what kinds of thoughts he was having.

"Don't fret. We have a way to handle that." Neron responded.

That way was simple.

'We'll use [The Tower] to transport the armies to their respective locations.' I smiled, exchanging glances with Neron.

There was a bit of a hiccup with the plan, though.

Since I would be transporting a lot of soldiers (Automatons/Golems/Magic Beasts/Midas), it would take me some time. Besides, I needed to attach my Bond Souls to the Golems and grant accurate instructions to the Automatons before releasing them.

In any case, we couldn't afford to wait for all of that before confronting whatever Evil Jared was cooking up.

"It is as you think." Neron smiled as he placed his hand on my shoulder. It seemed he was also having the same line of thought.

To ensure things didn't progress too much in our opponent's favour, we had to disrupt his plans as early as possible.

That meant one thing.

"Some of us will have to head out first."

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

Chapter 853: The Return Of Darkness [Pt 2]

The plan was set.

"Karlia, Ciel, Kido, Edward, Emperor Kuzon, Dragon King Z'ark, and I will attack the main base." Neron declared before nodding at me.

My Automatons and Golems were going to handle the surrounding area to ensure that the people were safe, while also doing their best to handle the myriad of security protocols that my malevolent counterpart would have set in motion.

'I'll have to send my big guns to assist them. They're going to have their hands full, after all.'

My Scout Automatons pretty much gave me the laydown of the topography and geography of this world. I could teleport anyone anywhere I wanted. Plus, with my constructs occupying key areas all over, I could switch places with them at any time.

'It's not yet time for me to act. I should save that for later...'

For now, I had to focus on my task of transportation, while the real players dealt with the threat.

"Alright, everyone. Let's begin the mission."

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In the massive compound that surrounded the gigantic castle belonging to the Overlord Jared, there stood a group of people, alongside an immense army.

The group comprised of none other than Jared's elite members, and they all stood behind his magnificent form as he watched the humming machine in front of him carry out its task.

The device was a towering structure made of sturdy metal and advanced technology, standing over 100 feet tall. At its core was 'The Matrix Core', a powerful energy source that could generate a beam of intense energy capable of piercing through the atmosphere and beyond.

This was the result of the combined efforts of him, Merlin and the engineer Jane Ursula. It was the main carrier of their ambition, meant to bring their goal to them.

"The time is nearly upon us." Jared whispered, his white hair fluttering as he stared into the swirling dark abyss in the sky.

With every minute, the blot increased in size and the skies around it darkened even more. The dark portal's power spread its influence around the sky, showing how much it was growing.

"Soon, very soon, we will be able to harness this power." Jared smiled.

All they had to do was wait for the portal to become stabilized. Any rash decision now would cause the event horizon to collapse, and all the expended energy they had harvested over the course of so many years would be expended.

'Ever since my death, the Matrix Core has been constantly absorbing energy and compressing it to form this high-density energy.'

They couldn't waste all their efforts and resources, so this project had to be delayed until all the right conditions were met.

'We've finally mapped a coordinate, and the sample of 'Dark Energy' has led us to its source. A world full of it... full of that ultimate power.'

With it, he would finally be able to conquer this world and everything beyond the bounds of his planet. He would conquer any and all forms of Magic, and then, rule the universe.

Those who accepted him would prosper.

Those who rejected him... ah, they would wish they were dead.

"Thank you, Jane." He whispered while glancing at the lovely fairy who stood among his subordinates. "Without you, I would never have made it this far."

The both of them were going to achieve their goals, together.

'And no one is going to stand in our w—'

>VWUUUUUUUUUUSSSSSSSHHHH!!!<

Before he could complete his statement, a sudden gust of wind and a wave of light appeared a good distance from him and his device.

Blue and white bursts of light danced around the sudden cluster of energy, and a group of people emerged from it.

"I knew you would come." Jared grinned, watching as each Outer made their appearance. He could also see the Midas Emperor and the Dragon King with them.

"It's perfect that you're all gathered in one place. I can just destroy you lot at once."

Still, something seemed slightly off.

While seven was a decent number for their attack, especially when considering their elite nature, he also had to consider something very important.

"Did you really come here without reinforcements? You're outnumbered, you know?"

Behind Jared, other than his Four Generals, were hundreds of thousands of troops. They consisted mainly of Golems, but powerful Mages and Warriors were also among their ranks. All in all, they were over five hundred thousand.

"You're surrounded by my army. They might be inferior to your individual quality, but together, you and your team don't stand a chance."

Of course, he knew Neron would have known that. That was what made him even more confused.

Where were they hiding their soldiers?

"Hey, Jared..." Neron suddenly spoke, causing him to glare at the dark-haired man. "... You talk too much."

The moment he said this, Jared furrowed his brow and broke into a grin. It was just like Neron to get him agitated, but he was too composed to allow that to happen.

'I was asking questions in order to feel them out. However, as expected, Neron has made sure all their lips are shut.'

Whether or not they chose to answer him was inconsequential to his plans, though. In the end, he had an insurmountable advantage.

As much as he knew that Neron must have a backup plan, he was also aware of the limits of the Midas Race and Magic Beasts—both of which seemed to be allies of the Outgroup.

'At the maximum, they should be able to squeeze in two million. The number of sentinels I have surrounding this capital is more than that amount.'

The soldiers behind him alone were five hundred thousand, and there were many others around; in the sky, beyond the compound, and even camouflaged.

In the end, they were still outnumbered, no matter what.

Several other specialized Elements covered the Golems, and despite being lifeless pieces of machinery, they were being controlled by the Familiars within them, making them as capable—if not more capable—than the Automatons.

Jared and his allies didn't know much of any of this, though.

The portals closed as soon as the 'things' within came out, and the blue blots that littered the sky rapidly vanished.

All except one.

'What is... all this? What is that?!' Jared wondered to himself, already feeling immensely threatened by the number of adversaries that now stood before him.

Using a supposedly impossible power, the Outers had managed to bring an army of three million to the scene. It boggled his mind, made him anxious and slowly brought in an emotion that he thought he had long discarded.

Fear!

'No... I shouldn't jump to conclusions. They could be advanced holograms or they could even be fodder.' He couldn't guarantee their efficacy in battle just by looking at them alone.

'That one portal still bothers me, though.' Jared glared at the last remaining blue blot, hovering at the epicentre of the army that littered the sky. 'What could be within?'

Fortunately, or rather, unfortunately for him, he didn't need to wait for long.

The blue distortion of spacial energy slowly parted, revealing the one that proceeded from it. The being was shrouded in platinum-like armour, and it appeared so regal that its elegance could not be described with mere words.

It was brimming with dignity and power, having a humanoid form, yet the nature of an artificial entity.

'That looks like... Gawain?!' Jared's eyes widened instantly.

He couldn't believe it. The enemies had their own version of 'Gawain'?!

'How? Did they find the prototype? No, that can't be. How did they replicate my masterpiece? How were they able to get the materials or effects right?'

It made no sense!

What made matters worse was that this version of Gawain seemed even better than his own model. It puzzled him to no end.

"L-Lord Jared... What should we do?" He heard a voice ask him from behind.

It belonged to Jane, his sweetheart. She had an expression of worry etched onto her face. No, it wasn't just her. All the generals had looks of horror or disbelief as they all witnessed the amazing sight before them.

"What else?" Jared forced his lips to curl upward and he gave an undaunted smile. "We attack, and we win."

They couldn't postpone their project any longer, after all, they had already come so far. No matter the enemy's intentions or strength, Jared still believed his forces could hold them off until the process was complete.

And once it was complete, it would be the end of everything.

"Jane. Summon Gawain and Hugo. They will lead the army while we take care of the Outers." Jared narrowed his eyes.

"Understood!"

"As for the rest of you Generals... you are not to underestimate them. Give your best shot and do not even consider losing!"

"Y-yes sir!" Abellion responded instantly.

"I understand!" Elrich Lendertwale answered.

"Yes, my lord!" Gerard replied.

With most of his elite forces concentrated in this place, Jared was confident in ultimate victory. He had been planning this for so long after all.

'Curse that Neron. He took me by surprise!' Even though he had tried his best not to underestimate the Outgroup and the Midas Empire, this sort of thing happened.

It made him look foolish.

'But how could I have predicted this?! DAMNIT!' As he was having this thought, an incorporeal entity moved close to his ears, dropping its bony hands on his shoulders.

~Curse that Ciel. What has she done? Has she reawakened her Ancient Magic?~ A cold, hollow voice leaked out from the ghost.

'What do you know about this, Merlin?' Jared swiftly asked, his frown deepening.

This was his problem with Merlin. He never told him everything he knew.

~Ciel possessed vast power akin to this in her past life. But reincarnation has made her weaker since she lost the connection to this World's power source...~

Jared gritted his teeth in even more frustration. 'And you didn't tell me this, why?'

~I didn't consider it to be relevant. Ciel was already weakened. There was no need to know of her past strength.~

No need? Looking at the situation now, how could Merlin be such a fool as to say that there was no need for him to know?

Still, Jared swallowed his annoyance and joined Merlin in glaring in the direction of the white-haired girl among the Outers.

'So Ciel is the one behind this, huh?'

Now that he knew the strongest in the team, as well as their weak link, Jared felt more confident.

'Let's kill them all!'

~Agreed.~

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

Chapter 855: Final Clash [Pt 2]

Neron took in a deep breath as he watched Jared leak out a malevolent grin while glaring at Ciel.

'As expected, they think this is Lady Ciel's doing.'

So far, they had kept most of their individual ability and growth hidden from Jared and his forces. They knew very little about their group, so the most likely choice of attack was Ciel. She had been seen as the powerhouse of the group for so long now.

However, Neron was waiting for something else. Something he knew Jared would soon ask him.

"Where is that new member of yours? The one with the blue hair."

'I knew he would eventually ask about him. Thankfully he doesn't seem to know anything about our Jared.'

If he did, he wouldn't think Ciel was the perpetrator behind the multiple portals and their army. Based on his calculations, Jared and his forces would concentrate their abilities on stopping Ciel.

'We'll have to use formation B, after all.'

"I don't know what you're talking about." Neron answered with a shrug.

"Liar. It's obvious. By the way, how were you able to build all these Golems? I doubt the Outers have any industrial site to use for constructing... ah, wait... I see now..."

Neron decided to keep quiet and let Jared's imagination run wild.

"Why didn't I notice it before? Kukuku... So that's how it is."

The answer was pretty simple, but Neron couldn't allow himself to be a wet blanket. He too was curious about what Jared would say.

"You and the Midas Race have been collaborating for a long time, haven't you? Yeah, that makes sense. You attack our bases and factories, steal materials and blueprints, and then give the Midas Empire to build these things on a large scale. Considering how long the Outgroup has existed and started their insurgence activities, that makes sense..."

Neron's smile widened as he shrugged. "Who knows? Maybe."

"You can't hide the truth from me, Neron. You think you have the upper hand? We shall see."

Division wasn't usually advisable in a team, but this was mandatory.

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"Tch... so I'm stuck with you, huh? I'll make this quick." The Beast King, Gerard growled at his opponent.

The young man with long auburn hair, who chose this particular opponent on purpose, smiled as he gave him a gentle gaze.

"You caused my friend a lot of suffering. I'll make sure I pay you back in full... for Vaizer."

"Bitch, do you really think you stand a chance against me?!" Abellion said, glaring at the other Demon in front of him with contempt.

"Shut up! Traitors like you have no right to speak." Karlia responded, forming a fist already. "I'll pummel you to death."

"I suppose I'll handle the big Golem. Hugo, is it?" Z'ark smiled as he watched the massive construct trod along. "What about you?" He stared at Kido.

"I think I'll just help out where I can." The golden-haired Midas answered, looking very carefully in the direction of Kuzon.

"I might be needed soon..."

"So, you're the one I'm fighting." Elrich smiled as he watched the very leader of the Outgroup approach him. "Isn't this unfair? A seasoned Mage against an Inept?"

Neron shrugged off the question, maintaining his expression of absolute confidence. "Maybe you're right."

However, his demeanour alone told a different tale. It was clear that this man did not have any intention of losing.

"Looks like I'm the only one who got to you. I'm not sure how powerful you are, but... I'm going to do my best to eliminate you."

The one who spoke was Jane Ursula, and she was standing directly in front of Ciel. The latter had a calm demeanour on her cute face and her gorgeous eyes were narrowed in caution.

"You overestimate my capabilities." She said, almost at the point of exasperation. Still, resolution remained etched on her face.

"I won't lose, though. Prepare yourself."

With everyone fighting their own battles, being lost in the seemingly endless swirl of chaos and devastation, two individuals found each other.

One had golden hair and the other's hair was white as wool. They both stared at each other, each with contrasting expressions.

"Jared... finally, I have you within reach." Kuzon, the Absolute Emperor grinned like a maniac as he stared hard at his opponent.

"Urgh. It's you. Stay out of my way, weakling." Jared responded with a frown, no, more like a look of disgust.

Despite this, however, Kuzon would not back down. Never!

"I've come this far. I've mastered my family's secret techniques, and I've honed my abilities... all for this moment."

"I don't care."

"You will pay for what you did, Jared. I will make sure you die in the most painful way imaginable."

At this point, Jared was already rolling his eyes.

"Right here, right now; I will use my all to end your life!"

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

Chapter 856: Final Clash [Pt 3]

[MEANWHILE]

[The Southern Continent: Dwarven Colony]

The Dwarven Nation was once revered as the hub of all smithing activities—the paradise for all technological advancement and construction.

Of course, that hadn't really changed much, but one look at the nation now and one could only see vestiges of the city's former glory.

The Dwarven Colony, brought under subjugation by Jared Leonard—head of the United Nations—now had the appearance of a slum setting.

Well, not quite.

Towering above the heads of the Dwarves were huge monoliths, and tall buildings called Forges. Factories littered the Colony, and they consumed most of the land. The remaining habitable areas were overpopulated by desperate Dwarves who wanted to survive.

Yet, even that proved to be very difficult.

Thanks to the thick smoke and toxic waste that came out out of the overcrowded factories, the skies that hung above their head was constantly grey and uncolorful. A certain fould smell constantly wafted in the air, and everything within the civilization was affected.

It became inevitable that the denizens would eventually begin to experience poisoning—sicknesses that were caused by the toxic waste they were forced to live with. In this sort of community, where one had to slave away and work in order to survive... what manner of hope was there for these people?

Were they fated this sort of existence forever?

Well...

>VWUUUUUUUUSSSSSHHHHHHHHHH!!!<

In the outskirts of the Dwarven Colony, a burst of bright blue portals manifested, revealing a myriad of entities appearing in the sky.

These entities consisted mainly of Automatons and Golems, and they numbered a couple hundreds of thousands in number.

At their center was an especially large Golem—about sixty meters in height. It looked geared for battle, with gleaming metallic skin, and a color combination of white and black radiating out of it.

Its golden eyes shone brightly, and it had wing-like thrusters that allowed it to be suspended in the air—though thrusters also existed at the sole of its foot and palm.

This Golem was Hugo. And operating it from the inside was none other than the only Magi-Tech expert in the Outgroup other than Neron and Jared.

"Haaa... I'm so nervous..." Ana leaked out a worried sigh, seated right in front of the interface before her.

What would she do if she failed to work as efficiently as she could on this mission? She didn't want to be a burden to everyone, so she chose whatever task was given to her. However, now that she was in the field, she was beginning to have second doubts.

'Compared to everyone else, I am not talented in Magic at all. My Mana Output is low. I can only help with Magi-Tech and Research...'

That was also why she was given Hugo to operate. She had no combat prowess, so she had to rely on the Ultimate Golem granted to her by the good Jared.

'I have to admit, though... this is amazing.'

The Jared of this world also had a 'Hugo', and while she had never seen it in person before, she was able to extract footages of the Ultimate Golem by diligently scouting. She had also heard many informed statements of it.

'Based on my assessments, this one is better.'

Then again, she couldn't be so sure unless the other was right in front of her, and she could compare their functions. Simply put, Ana didn't have enough information.

'Haa... enough about that! What now? I'm so nervous, I could die.'

She was seated behind the Golem Interface, and a large screen was displayed in front of her, showing her exactly what her Golem was seeing.

Its sight range was far higher than anything humans were capable of, so she could easily spot the Dwarven Colony from her distance. She could even see detailed activities going on there, including the sad lives the poor denizens lived.

'Jared, that monster!' Once more, she became reminded of how vile the evil overlord was.

Though, at some point, it became very conflicting to think of 'Jared' with hate when his doppelganger was a very nice and compassionate person.

They shared the same name and face—only different in hair color and personality. The latter made all the difference, but it was still difficult for her.

"Haa... okay, enough thinking! I can do this. I can do this..."

"Are you alright there, Ana?" A voice sounded behind her, instantly sending her into a state of shock and panic.

"Eeeeeep!!!"

"Relax. It's just me." The young boy named Stefan was also taken aback by Ana's exaggerated response. His cheeks slightly reddened, and he took a few steps back while raising his hand.

"A-ah, sorry Stefan." Pink shades appeared on her cheeks as well.

Were the both of them so embarrassed? Or...

"S-so, why are you here?" She asked, looking away to stare at nothing in particular.

"W-well, I just came to see you one final time. We're commencing in a minute, and we probably won't see each other until its all over, so..." Stefan stopped nearly at the end of his sentence and leaked an awkward smile.

Stefan and his troops were in charge of emancipating the Dwarves, and defending them, while Ana and her troops were supposed to destroy the enemy forces. Since they had different missions, they would probably not interact much until they had finished their tasks.

"Y-yeah, you're right." Ana responded. "Thanks. I was a bit nervous just now, you know..."

"Me too. We're barely adults yet we've been given this responsibility." Stefan chuckled slightly, a distant glow appearing in his blue eyes.

However, not long after making this statement, his gaze deepened, and a stronger look of resolve formed.

"However, I believe we were chosen because we are capable enough. The only thing we can do now is to give it our all." With the warm smile on his face and the look of confidence in his eyes, Stefan blurted out his words.

Instantly, Ana's eyes widened, and she found herself nodding in response.

"Thank you, Stefan..." A bright smile instantly formed on her face. "You just cheered me up!"

Her reaction garnered a shocked demeanor from Stefan, causing his cheeks to feel even hotter than before. Ana's words resonated in his head, and his heart suddenly began to race beyond his control.

"T-thank you too..." It seemed like steam was rising from his head as he spoke. Fortunately for him, Ana was leaking out the same steam.

Both of them looked at each other for a few more seconds, basking in the awkward moment.

>BEEP!<

Thankfully, Hugo's alarm system kicked in, saving the both of them another second of feeling intense emotions at the beginning of a nerve-wrecking battle.

"W-well, I gotta go then. Wish me luck!" Stefan quickly said, utilizing the Spell Card he was given to transport out of the Golem.

"M-me too. And good luck!"

Blue light replaced Stefan in his location, and in an instant, he vanished. Now alone once again, Ana held her pink cheeks and shut her eyes for a few seconds.

'Not now, Ana! Let's focus on the mission!'

With that in mind, she manned her interface and prepared for her task.

'I won't let everyone down!'

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

Chapter 857: Final Clash [Pt 4]

Stefan set aside the lofty feelings and warm sensations permeating his heart and he decided to focus on the task he had been assigned to.

Ever since he lost his cousin and all his friends, joining the Outers in the process, he never really had much of an opportunity to interact with someone his age. He had to force himself to grow up, becoming more like the grown-ups around him, so he could properly contribute to his team.

The Outgroup was his family, and he loved all of them as one would cherish older siblings or parent-figures. However, something felt missing amid all of that.

But everything changed when Ana joined their team.

'These past months... I really enjoyed myself.'

It had been so long since he felt something like this for anyone. However, he couldn't assume that Ana felt the same. He didn't want to burden her with how he felt, especially when things had reached this critical stage.

'Let's make it out of this alive, Ana. I'll tell you how I feel once this is all over!' Stefan gritted his teeth as he floated in the air among his troops.

'I promise you!'

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"The Safe Zone has been established already. It's time."

The Safe Zone was a large patch of land, just outside the bustling Dwarven Capital, which was now covered in a bright white dome.

'We'll bring all the Dwarves here while Ana and her forces eliminate the threats.'

The Dwarven Colony was filled with poisonous air, and the levels of infections were high. The only reason the denizens could survive in such a place was because of their strong vitality. However, by taking them to the Safe Zone, their health would be guaranteed, and they would be protected from harm.

It was Jared's idea, but Stefan couldn't help but feel immensely proud of the idea.

The Safe Zone Core was designed by the joint efforts of Ana and Neron. It uses the Mana around and creates a dense layer of protection that hardens and prevents any form of entry. Only those whom it recognizes will be allowed entry by the Mana Layer lowering its density in the direction of the ally, enough so that the person could enter with no problems arising.

'My troops and I are all recognized by the device. We'll bring the Dwarves here and keep them safe.'

The Safe Zone was only about half the size of the Dwarven Colony, but when you considered the current population, and the fact that most of the land in it was occupied by Evil Jared's minions and factories, it became easier to see how it would occupy all of them.

'They should have already sensed the Mana Convergence in the Safe Zone, so the scouts should be here at any moment. Looks like Ana and her team will be making their move soon. I should play my part now!'

>WHUUUUUUSSSSSHH!<

With a wry smile, Stefan navigated his way through the air, his troops behind him, and he lunged toward the Colony.

Within moments, he closed the distance and arrived at the Dwarven Colony.

"HALT! INTRUDER, SURRENDER!"

As expected, he was met with resistance by pretty much all of the Colony's Security.

Golems and Exoskeletons manned by pilots appeared before Stefan, as well as other Magi-Tech constructs that imposed a grave apprehension of harm.

Faced with the malevolent forces that threatened to halt his mission, Stefan resorted to one of his Trump Cards—one that was drilled into him, and his comrades, by Jared.

'Spellcraft...'

In an instant, the Mana he had spread around began to coagulate with the surrounding Mana, creating a fierce reaction that stunned everyone who watched.

"[Frost Blizzard]"

In an instant, a severe ice storm consumed the environment, creating a screen of fog that encompassed everything within a couple hundred meters.

'Not only will the frost slow them down, but they'll have a hard time seeing or even sensing me thanks to the thickness of the blizzard.'

Since it was a Mana-condensed area, even Mages who had Sensory Magic would find it difficult to find him.

>WHOOOOOSSSSSHHHHHH!!!<

Completely unharmed by his Spell, thanks to his preemptive utilization of a defensive barrier, he continued his journey into the Colony. His main mission was now about to begin.

'Getting the people to cooperate in our efforts to relocate them to the Safe Zone as quickly as possible...'

Normally, this would have been quite a difficult task to undertake. Not only was he an unreliable stranger, but these Dwarves had been living in fear and captivity for so long. Why would they dare defy Jared and listen to him?

It was a problem that would have threatened the viability of the entire mission.

Fortunately, the solution dwelled in his second Trump Card.

'Arcana Spell: [Temperance]'

Within moments, a burst of magnificent light spread from him and covered the entire Dwarven Colony. This peach-colored glow pierced the dark clouds, turning them into pink-like fluff. Soon after, showers of the fluff began raining down on the city.

'Alright... let's see what happens now.' Stefan watched as the shocked and worried Dwarven Denizens tried to escape the falling pink snow, though not all of them could avoid it.

The moment the snow touched a Dwarf, their eyes glowed bright pink, and a smile of pleasure coursed through their faces. They stopped moving, almost as if stuck in a trance.

"Take them to the Safe Zone." Stefan told his Automaton and Golem troops, and they instantly obeyed.

The ones who did their best to avoid the snow, either by seeking shelter or using the tools in their possession, were still a problem for Stefan—though not for long.

'[Temperance] deals with emotions. It forcefully drowns emotions while bringing a dominant one to the surface. It affects anything, as long as it is living. By putting the catalyst in the clouds, I was able to spread it faster as snow... but its effects aren't limited to that.'

All that was required was physical contact with the catalyst, and that existed in many ways.

'For one...' Stefan smiled as he watched even those that avoided the snow suddenly showing signs of its influence.

They came out of their hiding places, showing ecstatic smiles while leaving themselves defenseless.

'... The sense of smell can also be used.'

The pink snow leaked out a sweet smell that permeated the Colony. Even if the snow itself couldn't reach everyone, the aroma would. In the end, it was just like the spread of an epidemic.

'This way, all of them will easily comply with my wishes and safely evacuate.'

Stefan was grateful for the perfect conditions that made it more convenient for this plan to work. Not even he had enough Mana to influence an entire nation—no one among the Outers did, except perhaps Jared.

It was thanks to Spellcraft that he was able to utilize the dense Mana in the surroundings to spread his influence over these people. Without the right conditions, it would have been too draining and time-consuming to do so.

'Also, these people are physically and mentally worn-out, making it easier.'

All in all, the conditions were simply made for the solution he utilized.

>BOOMMMMMMMMMM!!!<

He could hear the sounds of battle in the distance, realizing that Ana must have begun handling the enemies.

'Good luck, Ana. I hope to see you soon.'

SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar

Chapter 858: Final Clash [Pt 5]

>BOOMMMMMMMMMM!!!<

Destruction littered her environs, yet Ana did not pause or hesitate as she operated her massive Golem, Hugo.

Enemies came to her in droves, but they were easily repelled by Hugo's immensely powerful defensive field. Its offense was even more impressive, considering the fact that Hugo had a homing function that could target thousands of enemies at once.

The firepower at her fingertips was also no joke.

'Just how much Mana does this Golem have?' Of course, she already knew the answer to her question was foolish.

The 'Mana Core' of Hugo was more of an engine that artificially produced the result of Spellcraft. Every time it was active and used energy, it gained more by collecting the surrounding Mana.

To prevent an overload, a stabilizer existed in the Mana Core—one that reduced the intake of Mana if the Core was getting full, and also expelled Mana from it if it had reached its peak state. In the end, every contingency had been accounted for, making this the bulkiest, most efficient construct she had ever seen.

"After this fight, I'm going to bury myself in research! I won't stop until I have made my own ultimate construct!"

Ana didn't know why, but a competitive spirit towards Jared was budding. She didn't want to lose, and she felt—for some reason—that she could do much better and eventually attempt to surpass him.

'I'll do my best!' She shot yet another missile at her enemies, easily decimating their ranks.

Since the Dwarf Colony was highly toxic, pretty much all the soldiers here were machines. The evil Jared's empire wouldn't want to endanger capable soldiers by placing them in such a wretched place, so the next best thing was to make Automatons and Autopilot Golems do the work.

Unfortunately...

>BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMMMMMMM!!!<

... They stood no chance against the Ultimate Golem!

'I wonder how Stefan is doing...' Ana thought to herself, her cheeks turning a little pink.

Her heart began to slowly race, and she clutched her flat chest with a little bit of concern. Even then, a small smile began to appear the more she thought of him.

'What am I doing...?'

Ever since she was a kid, she never had much interest in romance and the likes. Boys weren't really her priority, considering she was surrounded by her male siblings.

Ana's major interest dwelled in knowledge, and she pursued that with all her passion.

However, ever since she and Stefan began to interact, she could feel this budding attraction no other person had managed to make her do.

'Is it because I've never really interacted with boys until now...?' When she thought of it, she had mostly been too busy—either with research or revenge—to give romance any thought.

'Even when I first met Jared, I was flustered, wasn't I?'

But, how did that explain the thumping in her heart whenever she talked with or thought of Stefan? In the first place, the kind of connection she had with Jared was a more competitive and respectful one.

However, for Stefan, she could feel a longing and attraction that defied prior experience.

And it was for good reason.

'He's kind. He listens well. He teaches me new things. He's very smart and curious. He's veery handsome too. He's strong. He encourages me all the time, and he's so proper. He can be assertive at times, but I like it when he's all shy and cute too.'

There was one other thing that attracted her to him—something that shocked her till this point.

'H-he... always mentions how cute I look... because of my stature.'

Why was she so giddy about this?

Usually, Ana got upset when anyone brought her height and overall appearance into the conversation. It felt like those who did this were looking down on her, or something. Even Stefan did something similar in their first meeting, for which he already apologized for.

In essence, she didn't like it.

Yet, why was it that when it came to Stefan, she was smitten by his charming way of implying how cute she was with her small stature?

'Most of the time, I overhear him talking about it. I wish he could say it to me more...'

Ana found herself drowning deeper and deeper in the vast sea of her emotions, almost to the point of forgetting her task.

"A-ah, what am I doing? I have to focus!"

She could honestly put the Golem on Autopilot and it would still do well in handling the enemies. Plus, she had hundreds of thousands of reinforcements. However, Ana knew she wouldn't feel comfortable if everyone was working hard and she wasn't/

"Stefan..." She whispered one last time, watching the pink snow falling in the distance. "... I can't wait to see you after this is all over!"

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[A FEW HOURS LATER]

"You're all safe now. There's no need to worry."

It took some time, but the issue was finally resolved. After evacuating all the Dwarves, and also defeating all the enemies they faced, Ana and Stefan rendezvoused at the safe zone, commanding all their forces to remain suspended above the wide dome.

Fortunately, there were no casualties, and everything went exactly according to plan. The shaky part of the entire mission was pretty much how to explain the entire situation to the Dwarves.

Fortunately, the Dwarven race was more understanding than they gave them credit for. Perhaps it was due to all they had suffered, but the Dwarves slowly warmed up to their words, and they even thanked them.

All in all, it was mission complete.

... Or so they had thought.

>VWUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!<

Stefan and Ana instantly looked beyond the safe zone and watched the skies darken from a distance. It was the direction of the Eastern Continent, so the two of them knew it had to be the doing of their prime enemy.

A dark pillar of pure, unexplainably repulsive energy slowly converged at a point. They couldn't properly observe all that was happening, even with enhanced sight, but what they saw and felt bought a grim expectation upon them.

The black void in the sky had broken forth... and the darkness was now descending.

"Oh no..." They found themselves whispering as the dark clouds began to spread.

Was this the end?

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

Chapter 859: Final Clash [Pt 6]

[MOMENTS EARLIER...]

[Western Continent, Fairy Kingdom]

The Fairy Kingdom was well-fortified, thanks to Jane Ursula's immense talent and skill in Magic Engineering.

Golems, Automatons, and droves of weaponized constructs were already prepared to resist Beruel and Kido, who led the invasion. Other than the inanimate weapons of war, the Fairies were also prepared to defend their Kingdom from external aggressors.

Whether they did so of their own free will or not was irrelevant.

Thanks to Jared's calculations, though, the total number of soldiers with Beruel and Kido was sufficient to handle the resistance put up by the Fairy Kingdom.

Despite their possession of enough forces to eventually take back the Fairy Kingdom, the duo decided to take a much different approach.

An approach that rendered the thousands of troops behind them...

"[The Charriot]"

"[The Emperor]"

... completely unnecessary.

[The Chariot] easily hijacked control of the enemy's technological advantage, while [The Emperor] took over the living opponents.

In essence, just the two of them were enough to subdue the entire Fairy Kingdom—all within a matter of minutes.

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"There's a problem..." Beruel whispered.

Even though they had already disabled all the technological defenses, and forced the Fairies to surrender, there was a much bigger issue that caused the Fairy King worry.

"Using [The Chariot], I was able to detect something from them." He added, looking at Kido with a very concerned expression.

Kido could only depict shock.

"[The Chariot] only works on technology, though."

"Exactly!"

"W-what are you saying, Beruel?"

It seemed a lump had formed in his throat, since it took him a great deal of time to form the words properly. His expression was so downcast that he seemed too distraught to know where to begin.

"Their bodies... inside their bodies, there is a multitude of technological devices."

"H-huh?" Kido was confused now.

He glanced at the dazed Fairies, who were pretty much on their knees thanks to his power.

"I wondered why they didn't show any emotion when they attacked me. I wondered why they would easily throw their lives away, considering how very fearful of death we Fairies are. Now I know."

He clenched his fist and gritted his teeth.

"Jane Ursula... how dare you...?" Beruel growled as he tightened his fist and scrunched up his face.

The fact that Kido could control the Elves showed that they were organic lifeforms. However, the fact that he could also affect them with his Arcana Spell showed they were partly machines too.

No, that wasn't quite right.

The Fairies weren't wholly organic, and neither were they machines. They were something else... something more.

"She must have injected Nano-Machines into them, forcing them to do her bidding. I'm sensing explosive materials within them. If they disobeyed her orders, she would have killed them. It's no wonder the coup was so successful. Just how long did it take for her to take control of everyone...?"

The Fairies had these tiny machines within them, so they had to hearken to Jane's instructions. The technology wasn't very complicated, but he was sure that Jane would have made it seem even more dangerous than it was.

'It's just technology that explodes upon meeting special conditions. The firepower isn't exactly large-scale, considering the size, but if there are millions of them in a person, that person is sure to die...'

From what he was learning from the devices, they functioned parasitically. Absorbing the Mana Particles in the body t stay functional, and if they were going to explode, they would simply overwork the stabilizer by taking in more Mana Particles, thereby leading to self-destruction.

"Kido, tell one of the Fairies under your control to explain how he was threatened."

In response, Kido nodded and brought a random soldier before Beruel.

"Tell us about the card Jane Ursula uses to keep you fighting for her." He said very calmly.

"I... I have a wife and three kids. If I don't fight and win, they'll d-die!" The Fairy said with as much emotion as a controlled puppet could muster.

"How would they die?"

"All of us have been injected with Queen Jane Ursula's powerful nano-devices. It can read our minds to decipher our loyalty. It can cause us sickness or bring us health. It can also kill us at any time. If we desire to live, we must remain loyal to the Queen and do whatever she desires."

Beruel's face darkened the more he heard about the plight of this single Fairy. He wondered about the many other Fairies and the stories they had to tell.

"Jane lied to them. The device can't read their mind or do anything else. It can only bring death to them by using their Mana Particles against them..."

But whether she was lying to them or not about how effective her technology was didn't change the fear it had on them. No, the lie was most likely what made her hold over them so strong.

"Do you think you can deactivate the machines, or something?" Kido asked Beruel.

"I should be able to. The machines shouldn't be too much of a bother to manipulate. The problem is that there are at least a million in every Fairy. There's a limit to how much I can control at once."

In the end, he would have to do this by saving one Fairy at a time.

"It's going to take a great deal of time..." Beruel narrowed his gaze in resolve. "But, I will save my people... NO MATTER WHAT!"

That was his duty as the Fairy King.

"One last question, Fairy. What do you think of your former Ruler, Fairy King Beruel?" Kido asked the controlled being before the two of them.

"Fairy King Beruel... was the kindest ruler I have ever known. Everyone regrets betraying him, I'm sure. He was... the best!"

A warm smile formed on Beruel's face, and his twinkling eyes expressed gratitude to Kido.

"Come on, Fairy King. Time to get to work."

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

Chapter 860: Final Clash [Pt 7]

[A Few Hours Later]

Beruel and Kido were in the process of ridding the Fairies of the life-threatening nanomachines inside them—with the Fairy King doing most of the work, and Beruel filing the Fairies in an orderly fashion to increase the efficiency required.

The both of them were in the middle of this when they felt an immense pressure that emanated from the Eastern Kingdom.

The surge of what could only be described as malevolent energy coursed through them, and they felt chills pervading their bodies. The swirling dark portal in the sky seemed to be leaking its contents into a single location.

And that spelled an unpredictable calamity to come.

"Should we go and check that out? It looks bad." Kido asked, concern etched on his face.

Beruel remained silent for some time, lost in his own thoughts. He had to weigh his options—saving his people as fast as possible, or the world.

"Jared and the main team should be in charge of that region. If they were unable to stop this... I don't see what we can do." He muttered.

Beruel was right.

Most of their heavy hitters—if not all—were supposed to be there. If they failed, then just the Fairy King and one Midas wouldn't change much.

"Still, I'm worried about everyone..." He added, tightening his fist as he glared at the spreading dark clouds.

"Let's go, Kido. I'm not sure of what we can do, but I can't afford to stay here while my family perishes."

Kido gave a soft smile and nodded. It turns out he too felt the same.

"Yeah. Let's go."

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[MOMENTS EARLIER...]

[Southern Continent, Beast Kingdom]

The Beast Kingdom Recovery Expedition was meant to be the most problematic of all the assaults.

Not only were the enemies completely organic, but they were Beastfolks whom Jared had cured, thus making them extremely powerful—and very loyal.

In essence, if one were to come to their land with the intention of taking it over, then they would fight till their last breath. They would defend their land with honor, and wouldn't care about throwing their lives away to protect the leader they had sworn loyalty to.

... If only that was the case.

"W-we surrender!"

The Beastfolk, after experiencing Vaizer and Reed in action, realizing that the two were practically unstoppable by this world's standards, instantly gave up.

It was a pity their Beast King wasn't present to see their shameful decision.

The Beastfolk, who had gotten introduced to life without Mana Overload, must have gotten softer over the years. Perhaps they now valued life too much to throw theirs away.

They wanted to grow stronger, live longer, and have even more children. Who among them would desire to throw their lives away so meaninglessly?

"We'll be taking over this land. No longer will you be under Jared Leonard's control. Neither will you be subjects to Gerard." Vaizer declared to the trembling people.

He still remembered his past life in this place. The desire to become the king of these people was long gone. Once he established enough order, and a new King was selected, he would leave this place.

'My wives... my children...'

He remembered their lovely smiles, and the way they often warmed his heart. He missed them every day—so much so that it hurt at times.

He didn't want to relive those memories, so it was best to let his past go.

'Nothing is waiting for me here.' He smiled sadly, watching over the lands.

"It seems you really won't be ruling your people any longer." Reed's voice interrupted Vaizer's thoughts.

The old Mage drew closer to the smiling Beastfolk. He had a wry smile plastered on his face, and he too seemed distant in his thoughts.

"You know, after this is all over, I'm thinking of spending the rest of my days as an Adventurer. I want to explore more of this world, discover hidden treasures, and defeat monsters." Reed said with a smile.

Frankly, he had already had his fill with society and its intricacies. He wanted more freedom now.

"I'm not going senile, am I?" He grinned.

"You're not. In fact, I was thinking the same thing just now." Vaizer returned Reed's warm smile.

The old man must have wanted to cheer him up, and he succeeded. Being an Adventurer, enjoying the pleasures of the world as well as the dangers, perhaps that was what he needed.

"That would be nice. Where do you reckon we begin from?" Vaizer added.

"Well... I'm thinking of Land Of Eternal Glaciers far North."

"Oh? Any specific reason why?"

"I've only heard rumors and myths. I want to see for myself, if there's a Frost Dragon dwelling within the Glacier Cave. It would be nice to see if we could get the Frost Dragon and travel the world on its back as we continue our Adventure."

"That sounds pretty reasonable."

"Once we gather enough experience and treasures, we can even open an Adventurers Academy, or something. I'll spend the rest of my old age bragging to young'uns about my epic adventures, while teaching them to follow their dreams and stuff."

The more Vaizer heard of Reed Sterling's plans, the more he felt inspired to join the old man. Something about the picture he painted resonated with him.

He thought of the danger, the pleasure... and then the fulfillment.

"I guess that doesn't sound so bad."

"No, it doesn't."

Both men laughed heartily, enjoying each other's company as the surrendered Beastfolk watched in sheer confusion and timidity.

... But then...

"What is that?"

Black clouds formed from a distance, and the direction was one they were all too familiar with—the Eastern Kingdom.

"It seems everything didn't go exactly according to plan," Reed whispered, his brows narrowing as he made the statement.

The dreadful energy he was sensing was too dense and malevolent to be dismissible. It had to be the endgame of their prime enemy.

"We should go and help them out... as much as we can." Reed tightened his fist as he stared at the distant clouds.

"It seems our Adventuring plans will have to be put on hold, Reed."

"Right, you are."

The pair laughed, knowing deep within themselves that the plans they had just relished, and looked forward to, was most likely going to be snuffed out.

... And very soon as well.