

## SPELLCRAFT 91

### SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar

#### Chapter 91: Unexpected Development

I reached the Lecture Hall about ten minutes before 9:00 AM, the designated time for homeroom to commence.

It was, as I already expected, nearly empty. Students had already started slacking off a little, and considering the fact that the lecturer was quite late yesterday, not many wanted to arrive too early.

Still, I surmised that a majority would arrive before Homeroom started.

"Huu..." I made myself comfortable in my usual seat stationed at the forefront of everyone else.

My head fell on my desk and I closed my eyes to have a little rest. The slight exhaustion built up from yesterday still lingered, albeit barely.

Just like yesterday, no one dared to seat anywhere remotely close to me, on either the right or left side of the seats. In a way, it was perfect. Though it meant making friends would be a lot tougher and I could become a social enigma. Still—

'I could get used to this.'

Unfortunately, my thoughts didn't last for too long.

>HUMMP<

I felt a sound coming from just a small distance from me. If I wasn't so perceptive, I could have ignored it. However, this sound was akin to someone having their seat, and it was so close.

My head mechanically turned and I opened my eyes, gazing upon who decided to have their seats close to me.

'W-what the-?!' My tired eyes nearly popped out of their sockets as the person's image burned into them.

Edward Karl Leon—that was the person who sat a few seats from me.

I quickly contained my shock and looked away, returning my head to my desk as though I noticed nothing. Many thoughts ran through my mind, but the most prominent of them was... WHY?

I achieved an overwhelming victory against him yesterday, I allegedly slandered the Martial Arts he practiced and even embarrassed him in front of so many students. He was meant to avoid me like a plague and we would simply ignore each other.

Why, then, did he take the initiative to sit where no one else dared to and choose the right section of the two divides—the exact place I chose?!

'Is he trying to start something again?'

Well, he did seem like a persistent person. Perhaps he hadn't accepted his loss back then. I was conflicted about what to think.

'His eyes back then, though... I was certain I won over his spirit...'

Sighing to myself, I brushed aside those thoughts and concluded that I was simply overreacting. The boy had said nothing to me so there was no need to conclude that he was specifically targeting me.

'Maybe he wants to be a model student and achieve total concentration...'

Giving that excuse to myself, I ignored the gnawing unease within me.

There were other things to consider so it didn't take long for my mind to wander away from the boy beside me.

First was the advancement of my three cores. While they were strengthened to the point of rivaling Yellow Core Grades, there was still a limit to how much growth I could achieve using a White Core.

'Should I begin advancing the other cores to Yellow now?' The thought weighed heavily on my mind.

Of course, I would leave my base core untampered with and focus on the two others. Well, that was one way to go about it. The second would be to focus on making more cores and distributing them to other areas in my body to further strengthen it.

There was a limit to how many I could handle, but having more cores was guaranteed to boost my abilities by several folds.

'If I advance all but my main core to Yellow, I won't be able to quickly form other cores since only the main core will bear the burden...'

In contrast, leaving the cores white allowed me to share the burdens with all three and quicken the process. The problem, however, was specialization.

The reason Grade Cores changed color was due to an increase in mana and specialization. The higher one achieved in their Mana Core Grade, the more intense their specialization would be.

As I currently was, I couldn't use anything but basic magic—a jack of all trades and master of none.

Advanced magic was out of the option without having a more solid Core Grade. That meant I couldn't remain a white Core forever... at least for my other Mana Cores.

The second issue that bothered me was related to my duel yesterday. The poor state of Martial Arts in the world, as well as the crude movements Edward made that seemed to pass as a style according to a particular School.

'I'll need to learn more about modern Martial Arts.'

There were also issues relating to alchemy and potion manufacturing, so I needed to retrieve more plants and get new types that I didn't pluck yesterday.

'Ah, so much to do...'

Our Lecturer arrived in the hall and every student arose. I noticed his entry and followed suit.

"Good to see you, students. Have your seats... homeroom begins."

\*\*\*\*\*

After homeroom—where Neron Kaelid emphasized the upcoming events and also advised us concerning the use of the Library and other school facilities—our dear Lecturer took his leave and gave us enough time to prepare for the first Lecture.

Our first course for today was a General one, which meant every student would be in attendance. After that, it would be Specialized all through the day... not counting Electives.

A thought flashed in my mind as Neron left, but I decided to ignore it. Our Lecturer must have intended to tell us during his time in the first course—where we would be having our Specialized Courses.

There was no mention of a location on our respective brochures—the documents Neron gave us yesterday concerning our courses and the time. It made me curious as to why he hadn't mentioned it yet.

In the meantime, I felt more uncomfortable the longer I spent in my seat. Why? Because I could feel a gaze always shifting to me at several intervals.

'I can't take this anymore!'

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

#### **Chapter 92: Consideration**

I gritted my teeth, enduring and enduring, but there was a limit to my patience.

Intentionally, I had avoided staring at the one who rested his gaze on me, but it was getting too annoying.

And so, with a swift turning of my neck, I faced the left—toward Edward's direction.

The moment I did so, I could see him turning his head as well, trying to avoid my gaze.

'What the heck?!'

Edward had been staring at me frequently, even as we had Homeroom. I was clueless as to why.

'I'm not about to play this childish game!'

First, he sat close to me. Now, he was looking at me. Was he trying to distract me or something? Was this his idea of revenge?

It made no sense whatsoever, and I felt it was just childish. Still, considering our age, it wasn't beyond consideration.

My eyes darted to the second row, on the left side of the Lecture Hall, and I saw Anabelle—Edward's friend.

She had some sort of frown written on her face that somehow distorted the gentle and timid image she usually had. It didn't diminish her beauty, though. Rather, the unusually angry expression planted on her face gave a certain charm that made her look cute—like she was pouting.

'Is she angry at someone...?'

My mind went to Edward, but it seemed unlikely. Perhaps she was upset by his decision to sit beside me and not beside her. No, even yesterday they didn't sit beside each other. That was most likely not the problem.

As I considered this, I felt Anabelle Frederick's eyes move toward my direction, and for a split second, our eyes met.

I could feel myself drawn to the crystal blue in her eyes, different from the brilliant golden glow in mine.

It only happened for an instant, but the burning glare I had previously noticed on her face intensified as we exchanged glances and she quickly looked away.

It was at that moment that I became aware. Her animosity was directed at none other than me! It made me a little flustered, just thinking about it. But, just as I did for everything, I approached the matter rationally.

'What did I do to her, though?'

Was she upset by my actions against her friend? He started it, so I wasn't to be blamed. I barely scratched him too—a benevolent act considering others would end up having injuries after a Duel.

Then, perhaps the young girl was still hung over my little cough when she was speaking about her goals. It wasn't in my intention to be rude, but I certainly came off that way.

Usually, I would wave it off. However, I slowly considered making an exception for her.

'I still have no friends, and being honest... she's the only one who still has my attention.' I reasoned.

It would be foolish to live a school life all alone—with no allies or anyone to call friend. If I could get on good terms with her by apologizing, then it was a small price to pay. I wasn't so overly fixated on my ego, after all.

'I suppose I'll talk to her after General classes today...' Considering the fact that Specialized classes started after that, it was the best solution.

And so, after making up my mind, I brought out a book I had been studying and continued with it. Since I tried a bit of experiment last night, I had more understanding of what I had been studying for some time and now—this made reading much easier.

\*\*\*\*\*

Neron returned to the class at the appointed time and began our first course for the day. From the corner of my eyes and also as a result of my heightened senses, I could see and hear several students studiously writing down what was being taught.

Many would consider this behavior to be scholarly, but it was far from it. Simply writing down words that could easily be traced to textbooks was a waste of time and energy. It would be better to pay attention to the lecturer and critically examine all he said in case he said something interesting that would be worthy of highlighting. That would definitely be more efficient both in learning and preparing for tests and exams.

My hands barely moved throughout the lecture as I only wrote down the things that were of utmost pertinence. This would have caused some stirs among the other students who were fond of monitoring my movements, but they were all too busy trying to diligently imprint our Lecturer's words into their sheets.

As expected, Anabelle didn't work as hard as the others, though she still wrote quite a bit. Edward, the musclebrain kept moving his well-trained hands and wrote with vigor. I had no idea why I even bothered noticing him.

'Maybe because he's beside me... sigh.'

I was grateful, though. The boy didn't have enough leeway to stare at me the way he frequently did. That alone gave me inner satisfaction.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Alright. That's enough for today. The lecture is over, get ready for the next one." Neron said, stepping down from the lectern.

I looked at the clock conspicuously hung on the wall. It was 10:49 AM, and get was supposed to finish by 11:00. Well, considering the fact that the Martial Arts division had a Specialized course by exactly 11:00 AM, he must have finished early because of them.

'But, he's just going to leave like that?!' I stared at Neron, puzzled.

Wasn't he going to mention where our halls were situated for each department's distinct Specialized courses? Neron did nothing of the sort, though, and kept heading for the entrance.

"Excuse me, professor! You haven't told us where our Specialized Courses will be held! It starts shortly!" Edward bravely spoke up, a split moment before I decided to take action.

Neron paused, the entire class watched in expectation, hoping for a proper response, stemming from good guidance. No one could have expected what would come out of our Lecturer's mouth...

... Not even me!

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

#### **Chapter 93: Bombshell**

"Excuse me, professor! You haven't told us where our Specialized Courses will be held! It starts shortly!"

A smile formed on my face, feeling a little proud of Edward's confidence since it seemed like no one had any intention of saying anything if our Lecturer didn't speak of the matter.

Upon hearing Edward's question, Neron paused in his exit and made a rather awkward stance—like he was stuck in his motion for the door.

He stood upright and gave his usually laid-back smile. His eyes showed every hint of seriousness though, looking at everyone who sat before him—with the exception of Edward who remained on his feet.

"Ah, I guess I forgot to tell you... there is no other hall for learning Main Courses apart from this one... there's also no provisional lecture for your respective Specialized Courses..."

Nearly everyone let out "WHAT?!" out of their mouths, but quickly cautioned themselves since they were in the presence of an esteemed professor—if the young man before us could really be called that.

"W-what do you mean, sir? I don't quite understand..." Edward's voice trailed.

His initial confidence had somehow vanished as he stuttered while speaking. A bead of sweat dripped from his face and I could sense the unease he was experiencing from my distance.

"Yeah, I don't blame you guys. You were never told, uh?" Neron muttered in a sigh.

"Lower-Class students have Electives in provisional halls and are taught by assistant lecturers. However, for Main Courses, only this Lecture Hall has been provided. Also, due to the shortage of staff, I will be the only one taking the main Courses for all departments."

The more he explained, the less I understood. Everyone was equally dumbfounded, except the man who dropped this bombshell on us. What he was basically reporting to us was that our hopes of quality management and an orderly academic session were merely a fantasy.

'He'll be the one teaching all the Main Courses—General and Specialized. This Lecture Hall will be used for all of them. There is no other staff around and the ones who even teach us Electives are mere Assistant Lecturers...'

There was only one word that popped into my head after analyzing the silly excuses our Lecturer gave.

"Bullshit!"

My words pierced the uneasy silence that had permeated the room and everyone stared at me instantly. Shock was written all over their faces as if I had just defied common sense by speaking out of turn, especially uttering a crass word to such a degree.

I didn't care, though.

Rising to my feet, while resting my gaze—no, glare— on Neron Kaelid, I opened my lips to register the burning inquisition in my mind to him and everyone in the room.

"Why are we being taught this way?!"

Anger was evident in my tone, and I was sure I had just acted disrespectful, but I didn't care. In the first place, it was this Academy that disrespected me, rather, us first.

Neron's gaze was still cold as usual, but he did turn in my direction.

"This Academy is renowned as the best of the best, yet you're telling me they are short on staff and halls meant for Lectures? What kind of excuse is that? Besides, I have been noticing your methods of teaching and the topics you border on... they are too basic!"

I was in an uncontrollable stride, and while many students gritted their teeth and gave me astounded expressions of fear and disbelief, I kept my mouth moving.

"Frankly speaking, this is all underwhelming. If this is what Ainzlark, the greatest Academy in the Kingdom is like... I wonder if it truly is the best!"

My sneer seemed to have lit a spark in our Lecturer's eyes, just as I wanted. He seemed a little dissatisfied, no, angry at my words and I expected it. I didn't intend to apologize, though. If this man had any sense, he wouldn't expect me to either.

'After going so far and training so hard to reach this stage... why would this Academy resort to such careless and whimsical teaching standards?'

As someone who once attended this Academy and even taught within it, it was a disgrace to meet it in such a state. I already knew what the problem was, but I wanted Neron Kaelid to give me his answer!

"Why are you being taught this way, uh? I wonder..."

Neron's voice trailed coldly as the spark in his eyes died back. This made me even more furious

He must have already known the point I was driving at. This arrangement must have also been hard on him since he was the one who would teach all departments—something so exhausting...

Why then? Why was he being so calm and nonchalant? Despite his knowledge concerning the reason we were reduced to such a state based on our Lower-Class status. Neron showed absolutely no emotion and kept his cool.

'This guy is...' I gritted my teeth and glared at him.

He returned my expression with a cool and collected face. However, the moment our eyes met, I realized that my annoyance was misplaced.

'Ah, I see...'

This man wasn't being too nonchalant. I was the one being too fired-up. Despite my criticisms of Edward, I nearly acted in the same way. There was nothing I could do in this matter, and the same probably applied to him.

That was why he remained composed and decided not to pointlessly fight a losing battle, at least until an opportunity arrived. For someone like me who thought of everything rationally, I had messed up on this one.

My enraged face softened up and I loosened the tension that permeated my body.

"Huu... I understand."

Returning to my seat as abruptly as I stood from it, my usual demeanor resumed and I smiled softly.

I was being a brat—an immature little kid—just now. If I was angry at the system, if I was dissatisfied with our treatment, if I wanted something better, yelling at our Lecturer wasn't going to solve it.

'I'm done whining...'

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

#### **Chapter 94: Cause For The Decline**

There was only one path to victory as well as the freedom I sought.

To become unparalleled and unrivaled, I needed more experience and knowledge. To get it, I needed higher qualifications which my Lower Class Status couldn't get me.

However, if there was one thing in Ainzlark that hadn't changed since its foundation, it would be the absolute factor that determined nearly everything for a student.

This factor was even higher than the Class system that had been erected and the prejudice against the untalented. An immutable rule that had existed before I was born—and the only reason I was able to rise up to great heights despite being inept.

Merit!

Talent was worth a lot, but in the end, what everyone looked forward to was results. Results earned by pure merit was the deciding factor of anything in this world... and if I was confident about anything, it would be Merit-based results!

\*\*\*\*\*

Neron gave us a couple of options—those who weren't offering the Martial Arts Specialized course.

We could choose to sit at the back of the Lecture Hall while the Martial Arts students were taught at the front of the class, or we could leave.

Those who left could go to the Library, the garden, the cafeteria, or whatever. It was their free period, after all. Due to Edward's question and my little interference, only about five minutes were left before the class began so a majority of the students poured out at once. I also stood from my front seat since it would be used by the Martial Arts students.

'I should go to the Library to read up on some stuff...'

While reasoning this, I made my way toward the exit. However, before I completely passed the door, I stopped dead in my tracks. A thought flashed, causing me to reconsider my initial plan.

'I should stay here...'

My head tilted toward the direction of the seats. Most of the students were already gone, leaving only the few Martial Arts students in the class.

A smile formed on my face as I returned to the seats and climbed the small steps that led to the seats behind. It was my first time doing such, so I stopped at the third row and had my seat there.

I ensured I sat on the left side of the classroom since the Martial Arts students sat on the right.

'They're just seven...' Their small numbers made me slightly cringe.

The total number of Lower Class students was thirty-eight.

Eleven were Magic-Users.

Seven were Martial Artists

Twenty were Scholars.

It was a little surprising to see the small number of Martials in our class, but considering the state of decline the Art was, it was understandable. The ten front rows were nearly filled up by the seven students as they sometimes made glances behind them to look at me strangely.

Everyone who wasn't a Martial Arts student had left. Everyone except me... and for due reason.

'I've been wondering why the Martial Arts Edward performed to me was so crude, yet everyone thought it was impressive. If I listen in on this Lecture, I could gain a thing or two...'

A book would have done the trick, but I felt more inclined toward the teaching method given by the institute concerning Martial Arts. After this, I would research more on it in the library.

I hated it when something festered in my mind for too long. If I was curious about something, I needed to find the answers. It was just a shame that I hadn't studied Martial Arts sooner.

'I was too focused on Magic, I guess...'

Neron entered the Lecture Hall after leaving for only a few minutes. His eyes initially darted at me curiously, expressing slight surprise that I was still in the class while everyone had left. I returned his puzzlement with a knowing grin.

The young Lecturer gave a short smile, what seemed like a smirk, and faced his students. I had to admit, one of the reasons I remained in the class was because I was also curious as to how Neron would manage to teach Martial Arts, Magic, and Scholar Courses by himself. No matter how well diversified a person was, there existed no way they could be entirely proficient in everything.

There was no way Neron could teach Martial Arts as well as he would teach Magic!

\*\*\*\*\*

I was wrong!

Listening to his Lecture, I felt drawn in by the eloquence with which he spoke. It was as though Neron was a different being entirely, compared to the easygoing lecture he gave in the past.

I could see a fire burning in the eyes of the students he taught as a result of his passionate words. The topic for discussion was something I had heard during my duel with Edward.

The Martial School of Fundamental Sword Arts!

He explained the six basic forms that existed in this school; Footwork, Mental Resilience, Muscle Alignment, Motion Control, Sensory Perception, and Sword Techniques.

I listened attentively, as though I was also among the students he taught. The more he spoke, the more I understood. This school, same as four other fundamental schools which he mentioned briefly, were the core lessons these young Martials would learn in their first year.

For now, he mulled over the theories, but they would commence practical sessions subsequently.

"I see..." A whisper escaped from my lips.

If I was confused before, that feeling had completely left me now. The reason Edward moved in such a crude manner that was regarded as Martial Arts, and thus Fundamental school, among the others—I slowly reached my conclusion on the matter.

'Martial Art Techniques have really declined, uh?'

It was the complete opposite of Magic!

Magic had improved while Martial Arts had reduced. It made me wonder about something.

"What really started this? Is it the reduction of talented and skilled martial artists that caused the decline of the Art, or was it the decline and disinterest of the Art that caused the reduction of talented and skilled Martial Artists?"

It was like the chicken and egg scenario... which came first?

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

#### **Chapter 95: Spectating**

"I understand now..." A smile formed on my face as I gazed upon the cluster of students who looked at Neron with blazing passion, focusing on one person in particular.

Edward Karl Leon... his dream wasn't so bad, after all.

My interest in him was rekindled.

Judging from the fact that everyone was learning the fundamentals with such vigor—the same fundamentals Edward had shown me during our Duel—it meant that it was really a big deal in the modern world.

If Edward was skilled at Martial Arts, though restrained by the quality he was exposed to, I could help him attain even greater heights.

'As I thought... it wasn't a waste to attend this lecture!'

\*\*\*\*\*

As soon as the class ended, the Martial Arts students began leaving the hall. The time was exactly 11:45 AM, giving the Martial Arts classmates enough time to leave the hall and for the next batch of students to trickle in.

Edward looked in my direction as soon as Neron left the Lecture Hall and gave a warm smile.

I didn't reciprocate, even though I wanted to. t

There were many things on my mind, and that included the young boy. The only problem was how I would approach him.

"The next class is for the Scholars, uh? A Specialized Course for them too..." I whispered, considering whether or not to remain in the hall.

Unlike Martial Arts, my understanding of Scholarly Arts was vast. There was basically nothing being taught that would be worthy of my attention at such an elementary stage.

Still, I was curious about how Neron would teach the Scholars. If he truly was an exceptional lecturer, I was certain this class would be interesting.

"Alright then..." I remained in my seat and brought out a book to pass time.

It was my journal where I stored important information. I was putting down important goals for the future concerning Edward, whom I had already written off before.

There was another name on the page of my journal... it belonged to another student. My eyes darted to the entrance as I saw her enter the room. Her blonde hair always stood out to me, and the tiny frame she had made her look odd in the multitude of more mature people.

Anabelle's eyes darted in my direction and our gazes met once more. Mine, full of observation... and hers was full of annoyance.

I looked away first and proposed to myself that I would apologize to her the moment I got the chance to. If I didn't, my offense could evolve into something more in her heart.

The Scholars filled up the first two rows in the hall, making me feel weird since I was seated on the third. I considered moving back, but decided not to.

'If Neron has a problem with my proximity, I'll move then...'

My hands and mind were busy as I stroked my pen to create a formula to work out my schedule with Edward—and hopefully Anabelle.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Lecture started at exactly 12:00 PM and ended by 12:47 PM. I assumed it would end sooner, but due to Anabelle's persistent questions, Neron was forced to make room for it.

And, as for Neron's teaching... it was fantastic. He did just as well as when he taught the Martial Arts student. By mapping out the theories before the students, he gave an in-depth analysis of them as well as his personal opinion.

But, that wasn't all! He allowed everyone to speak their mind and give their opinions on the topics. The one who took the most advantage of this opportunity was Anabelle.

She asked questions and gave radical answers, causing Neron to smile nearly every time.

This, however, attracted negative stares from her fellow students. Due to her enthusiasm and rapid firing of opinion, the other students looked unserious. They didn't have much to contribute, unlike her, so Anabelle was making them look bad.

It was fun hearing her tiny voice speak with such confidence, though. I controlled myself from laughing or choking in order not to cause any further misunderstanding.

Once the class was over, the Scholars made for the exit, and a new set of students entered.

A grin formed on my face as I stood from the back row and made my way to the front. The students now trickling in neither belonged to the Martial Arts department nor the Scholar Unit. No, they were the same as me—Magic Arts Students.

I was excited, to say the least.

After hearing the first two lectures, it would be strange to say I wasn't psyched about this... especially since I would be able to directly participate in it.

After having my seat at the far end of the right side on the first row, I watched as other students awkwardly took their places beside me.

Unlike in the General classes, where one could seat wherever they wanted, the Specialized classes ensured that all students filled the first rows for better communication and interaction between us and the lecturer.

Not long after we had all settled down, our lecturer, Neron, entered the hall.

We all stood and paid our respects to him before he waved at us to have our seats.

"I would like to begin this lecture by asking a question." Was the first thing that came out of his mouth.

His lips were pursed and a refreshed smile poured all over his face. I could sense a passion in him that didn't exist in the other two courses he had taught. No matter how well-diversified one was, they still had an area of specialty.

Or, at least, an area they loved over all others. As someone who was the same in my past life—engaging in Scholarship and Martial Arts—I knew of the feeling. Now that Magic had also come into the fray, I could be said to be diversified.

However, if I had to pick my best... it would be Magic! The same could be said for our Lecturer. He was just like me.

'He loves magic too, uh?'

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

#### **Chapter 96: The Origin Of Mana**

"Where does Mana come from?" Neron dropped the question upon the class, causing an echo of silence to pervade everywhere.

The students blankly stared at him.

Yesterday, and even for the first Lecture of the day, we were only taught the most basic things that everyone was aware of before arriving at Ainzlark.

However, this question that was posed was different. It was an advanced problem that had beget many theories which remained unsolved to date.

Yet, Neron was starting his lecture with this.

The name of our current course was called 'Magic Theories', and just as the name implied, it dealt with the several theories that made up the Magic body as a whole.

None of us had any idea why Neron had chosen to start off with this question, at least it didn't seem like we did. One thing was certain, though... he was leading us to a theory.

'I see... so, instead of just dumping the information upon us like last time, he wants us to think. If he gave us the topic for today, we would most likely give him an answer that jibes with that particular theory...'

It was a smart move. Neron was aiming for one thing by asking us for an answer. He wanted to know which theory we supported, or if we supported any theory at all. It was possible that among us existed someone who had a separate view from the already existing theories in response to the question of the origin of Mana.

Neron started from the left and moved to the right. Based on how things were going, I would be the tenth person to speak. I wondered what I should say—one of my theories?

"I believe Mana comes from the heavens. It is a gift from God himself." Said the first student.

It was an ambiguous answer, not well thought-through.

When asked a question, one had to consider a couple of things before answering. First, lay out an assertion, then explain your reasoning, and then give proof. Only then would you be able to correctly lay out your opinion without leaving any room for uncertainty and confusion.

What the boy said lacked no substance. It was like he just recited one of the theories he heard. And, this didn't just apply to him.

One after the other, the students spoke. All of them were the same, either agreeing with each other or giving another lame answer. It didn't take very long before my turn came to speak.

"Where does Mana come from, eh?" I smiled, while rising to my feet.

Everyone's eyes were fixed on me, I could tell. The students, even lecturer, wanted to know what the one who got perfect scores in both theory and practical exams thought.

"Permit me to reply to your question with an inquisition... do you mean the Mana that dwells within our bodies from when we are born? Or the Mana that exists in the environment?"

My unique response shocked everyone. Instead of simply replying based on a textbook answer, I dug deeper into the question and asked for clarification.

"Are you saying those two are different?" Neron responded with yet another question.

"Are they? I don't really think so. Humans are a product of their environment. As a result, the origin of the Mana that permeates the surroundings must be linked to the Mana that dwells in every Magic-User..."

Neron's grin grew broader.

"And? What would you call that origin?"

My grin grew broader as well.

"The soul!"

Everyone looked at me like I was crazy, but before excitable murmurs spread, I continued.

"Humans all possess souls. They are invisible and make up our personality. That is why when people die, even if their physical bodies are restored—because something non-physical has left it behind, it does not return to life."

My hands moved in sliding motions as I unconsciously began gesticulating.

"Research has been conducted in the past where dead and living bodies of equally talented Magic-Users. It was seen that while the living Magic-Users still had mana particles flowing in them, the dead had none. Further research was made on the dead, and they realized that at the point of death, mana particles begin to disappear bit by bit. So, the fresh corpse of a Magic-User still had lingering Mana particles which die off after some time."

The students were captivated by my long explanation, but I wasn't done yet.

"Why would mana dissipate from the dead if their physical forms still exist? Some would say the heart that pumps blood also pumps mana, so if the heart stops, mana particles gradually cease. However, anatomy experts have argued against that logic. Mana is the energy of the supernatural, and physical organs can't produce it. The only answer that was able to address this dilemma was the existence of 'something incorporeal'. In essence, a soul."

My explanation was long, but it was easily grasped. This was because the Soul-Mana Theory already existed. I postulated the theory, after all.

But, now that I had mana coursing through my veins and knew what it felt like to use magic, my position on this theory had slightly tilted, though still on the same path.

"Our souls generate mana in form of particles. The mana slowly converge and form mana Cores. Once our soul no longer exists, the mana dissipates and died off, most likely returning to the environment."

Neron smiled, pursed his lips, and finally made a statement—no—a question.

"So, you said mana comes from the soul within humans, but that is only answering one part of the question, not so? Mana also exists in the environment. Where does the mana around us come from?"

A tricky question to ask someone my age. At the moment we were currently discussing advanced magic theories, yet Neron didn't seem fazed. It seemed like he had the confidence that I possessed the answer to his question.

"Professor... I believe I already answered your question, didn't I?"

Everyone was surprised by my response. Even Neron was! From my explanation, it didn't seem like I had answered the whole thing, but I already did.

They just needed to use their heads a little.

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

#### **Chapter 97: Astounding**

"For the human body, mana comes from the soul, right? Humans are a product of their environment, so the mana within humans, including the sou,l comes from the environment. However, the environment, no... the world itself is one massive body on its own. Everything is connected, the ecosystem, plants,

animals, weather, seasons... it's like we're all living in the body of yet another being known as this world."

As I spoke, Neron began to understand where I was going. From his facial reaction, he was astounded that I thought so far.

"If, then, mana originates from the soul of humans, shouldn't the same apply to this massive world we live in? Yes, what I'm simply trying to say is this; This World has a soul... and that is the source of all Mana!"

Silence!

Pure silence radiated around me as I finished giving my answer. The students looked surprised and confused about what to do. Should they applaud me for my immensely complex answer, or jeer at me for saying something so out of the norm.

Neron also didn't say anything. He just kept looking at me with a twinkle of amazement in his eyes. I felt uncomfortable on my feet, so I bowed my head and returned to my seat.

"I see..." Was all the lecturer could mutter before looking at the final student who would speak.

As expected, he also followed the same path as the other students, blankly asserting without any basis. By the time he finished giving his answer, the boy sat down and made an awkward look.

Compared to the particularly compelling speech I made, his was so underwhelming. From the cold, stagnant air in the room, everyone could tell that this was an anticlimactic ending.

"Good. You've all spoken." Neron smiled as he left the lectern and moved closer to our desks.

We were only eleven, after all.

"You've all given what I will assume to be answers based on your personal opinion, however, this question remains one of the unsolved ones in the history and continued existence of Magic."

Now closer to us, his students, Neron's eyes could capture everyone's movements, and I could see his gaze shifting to me every once in a while.

"The one who is acclaimed to have gotten the closest to the answer is the Great Sage Lewis Griffith. He postulated, as one of you mentioned, the Mana-Soul Theory."

I stifled a smile.

"The only reason his theory isn't accepted as the final law concerning the origin of Mana is due to the fact that Great Sage Lewis Griffith was inept, so arguments rose concerning the validity of his statement. Although his reports were accurate, and he did a detailed study into the subject matter, the inability to use mana himself made it the final hurdle that his theory couldn't cross in order to be proven as law."

Despite how painful it was to accept, the truth was evident. Many of my revolutions to magic took way longer than they should have since I didn't have mana. If not for my friends and acquaintances who decided to cooperate with my experiments and lent me their aid several times, I wouldn't have discovered many groundbreaking truths.

In the end, I owed it to them. Still, there was only so much second-hand knowledge and experience that could help a person. I intended to make the utmost use of my mana-infused body and again bring a revolution to Magic.

But, not just magic... not anymore!

"With that as a pretext, I'll be introducing today's topic to you. We'll basically be dealing with several theories and analyzing them one after the other. You will all tell me what you think, and give a supporting basis for it." Neron stated

I saw the look of discomfort and guilt on the faces of many students who realized that they had made that mistake in answering the question our Lecturer had thrown at the class.

"I do not want you to just blindly follow a theory just because the proponent was revered. I do not also want you to easily accept the words I speak to you—not without opinions of your own. This will be an interactive class, and I hope you will all cooperate."

We all responded positively, at least on the outside. But, I could tell that many students were not pleased. They most likely just wanted to be taught and didn't want to have to think for themselves.

Magic theories, spells, mana applications—most students simply wanted to learn them without much hassle. As long as they did so, they could excel as Magic-Users. However, Neron Kaelid, our lecturer, wanted us to think outside the box and be innovative... the worst thing a lazy person would love to hear.

'I don't really expect much from anyone in the Magic Department. I took my time to study them back at the apartment, the little I could. They have little potential, same as everyone, but just barely enough. Unlike me who had my past memories and had already built a foundation for myself using SPELLCRAFT and my multiple cores, the ones didn't have such privileges.

They were most likely going to end up being mediocre Magic-Users once they left the Academy. I somehow understand why the academy felt the need to separate the students from each other. It was merely flawed since they decided it only based on Mana core grades.

'They're not very talented, plus they don't have too great an attitude to learning. They're lazy!' I made a fine assessment as I stared at them.

The only route for non-talented students to escape the mediocrity that awaited them would be to work extra hard and also endeavor to be innovative. By being unique and applying one's knowledge in a bizarre, unprecedented way, even the underdog had a chance to make it to the top. These guys weren't for that though. Well, there were technically seven boys and three girls—minus me, of course.

Neron sure had his work cut out for him.

"Now then, let's dive into the first theory for today! It is the—"

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

#### **Chapter 98: Walking With The Professor**

The Lecture ended on a happy note, and just as Neron was about to leave the hall, I heard his voice.

"Jared Leonard... a word?"

My ears prickled the moment he said this and I faced him nearly instantly. Cocking my head to the side a little, my face showed puzzlement, genuine puzzlement. Still, what kind of student would ignore the call of his lecturer?

I stood from my seat and left the Lecture Hall with Neron Kaelid while the others remained glued to their seats. I could see them all curiously staring at me though, all drawing conclusions in their mind.

There were two major possibilities;

One would be that I was out of line when I spoke. My tone could have been rude, or I may have generally overstepped the Lecturer's intentions by going further than what was fitting for the class at that exact moment.

The second would be that Neron Kaelid was actually impressed with my answer and wanted to further discuss it.

I hoped it was the latter since my opinion of him would drop if it was the former. There was no way he could reprimand me if he intended for the class to be Interactive, in the first instance. I merely spoke my mind, same as the others.

That was fair enough.

We moved out of the lecture hall, and Neron took me past the yard, in the direction of the staff office, basically a two-minute walk from the Lecture Hall.

I followed him, trailing a step behind him patiently, while still making sure I was by his side, and not directly facing his back.

"That was quite the impressive theory you gave there, Jared. I was impressed." Neron finally broke the silence.

It was as though he read my mind and decided to give me a straight answer concerning which of the possibilities would play out when he called me. This put me more at ease and I smiled softly.

"Thank you, Professor Neron Kaelid." I formally replied.

"Please, call me Neron. Professor Neron at most." He chuckled slightly.

"Alright, Neron. I'll take you at your offer."

The Lecturer stopped dead in his tracks the moment I said this and turned to me, displaying an entirely different expression from what I imagined. I also froze for a moment, daunted by his sudden reaction.

Was it surprise? Shock? Maybe. But his awfully cold and pitch-black eyes sent chills down my spine.

"Wow, I'm surprised. I only meant that as a joke, but to think you would seriously address me like that... even going for the most casual option." Neron burst out laughing, finally breaking apart the tension that was forming in me.

I was already beginning to wonder if I made the wrong call by taking him up on his offer. How was I to know he was just joking.

"You're really an amusing kid, aren't you? I mean, I already knew you were strange since I first met you, but now, I know for sure."

Calling a young person like me strange... how awfully rude of this man. Wasn't he supposed to cushion his words a little more? Well, of course, I wasn't really feeling that way.

"You're also very amusing yourself, Professor. For such a young person to receive such a title... you must be really amazing. You're plenty strange yourself." I replied with my own snarky statement.

Surely, he too wouldn't take offense. After all, I even mixed compliments with it.

"Hahahaha!" He burst out in uncontrollable laughter.

"Haa, as I expected. You're very amusing. Well, I'm not as amazing as you think, though." He grinned.

The usually cold and stoic man, who finally displayed good teaching ethics today, and was now showing me an overly bright side I hadn't seen before... how very weird. The sharp turn in his personality was puzzling, but I wasn't going to delve into it at the moment.

Looking at him closely as he laughed, I once again took account of Neron's outfit. It was a simple white shirt, loosened by the wrist, tucked out, and a little too large to be his size. His black trousers went well with the casual black sandals he wore.

Apparently, there was no one around to reprimand him, so he got away with dressing like this to class. His other colleagues were most likely wearing suits and specially woven cloaks. Well, it didn't bother me in the slightest. Considering the fact that no other lecturer had to teach so many departments consecutively, my respect for Neron was currently above all of them.

"I'd say you're plenty impressive, though." I grinned, looking at the man who would be in his late twenties at most.

His youthful exuberance was now clearly on display with his smile. Such a man, full of mystery and intellect. I wondered what his story was.

"Oh? You seem pretty convinced." Neron replied with a sharp gaze fixated on me.

A part of me wondered if this was really the right move to make, but I shook off my unease. After seeing the state of things, this was the best thing to do.

'From the moment I realized how messed up our Lower Class system is and what needs to be done, I told myself not to whine any longer!'

My current situation was disadvantageous for me, that much was painfully obvious. Even while waiting for my chance to strike back at the system, I needed to put some things in order.

That was another reason I had stayed in all Neron's lectures and also made sure to bombard him with my complex theory. It was all to draw his attention toward me. And why would I need to do that?

"Oh, Professor... of course I am." My smile broadened as I stared straight into his eyes.

In this world, connection was everything! Power was good. Intellect was outstanding! Results were ultimate. However, connection was just as brutal a tool.

"After all, I know you must be very special."

Neron looked puzzled again, not really understanding what I was referring to. I needed to break it down, didn't I?

"You have a White Mana Core Grade, don't you, Professor Neron?"

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

#### **Chapter 99: Astounding**

Neron's eyes immediately burst wide open, nearly popping out of their sockets, in shock... or so I would have loved to say.

No, the man merely let out a broad grin in response to my similar expression. I could see a hint of curiosity in his eyes, but he remained calm even at this moment.

"Oh?" Was all that proceeded from his lips.

"It's amazing, isn't it? A white Core Grade at such an age. And you were able to become a Professor even with that kind of Mana Core... you're truly special, aren't you?"

My time sounded more daring, but I needed to do at least this much not to seem like a total pushover or a snotty little brat.

"Hmm. Is that what you think?" Neron asked, his face showing what I could only conclude to be slight disappointment.

He wasn't satisfied with my comment just now. Of course, I knew why. I had predicted all of this, so I didn't intend on stopping here.

"Hehe, of course not. That's what a normal person would say. Disqualifying a person who has a White Mana Core shouldn't be what I, someone with the very same Grade, should be resorting to."

Neron shrugged, as though trying to tell me that he knew that much. I needed to get my point through to him. My answer would decide everything.

"A Mana Core is important to every Magic-User. But, it is a mistake to decide the power of one with the Grade alone. After all, Mana is ultimately mana. Core Grade or not... what matters the most is the quality and use of mana. And I know, Professor... that you have a lot more mana than all the people I have seen so far!"

More than Legris Damien. More than Damien Lawcroft. More than literally anyone in this Academy. This man, Neron Kaelid... was a beast in disguise.

As I said this, a wide grin formed on his face, replacing the calm one he had donned after I revealed his Mana Core Grade.

"What are you trying to say, kid?"

I just had to come out and say it, then.

"You only possess a White Core Grade, yet you're more powerful than most of the others here. Your teaching skills are amazing, and you have deeply piqued my interest. While I don't know how you managed to get so strong using only the base core as a foundation and nothing more, I have to say... Professor Neron Kaelid... I am very interested in your person."

Yes, I just had to tell him what I wanted.

"Please, take me in as your apprentice... and teach me!"

Silence.

No one said anything after I made this statement. Neron and I only stared hard at each other. This uncomfortable decorum seemed to last forever as I wondered what his answer would be.

An apprentice was simply one whom a senior chose to personally train. In Ainzlark Academy, lecturers were allowed to take a single disciple. Of course, that meant there would be a lot of competition among students to attract the attention of the most prestigious Lecturer. This also applied to the lectures, as they would all compete to secure the most promising student.

This system was implemented to improve the performance on both ends. Also, since apprenticeship was outside the normal school curriculum, Lecturers weren't allowed to show preferential treatment to their disciples within the classroom or in any academic activities. Still, the mere privilege of having one as a mentor made the difference between those who did and those who didn't.

I would very much prefer to be in the former.

It certainly wasn't impossible for a Lecturer to choose me as his disciple, but the chances were slim. That was why I had to add more value to myself by drawing more attention to my abilities. Still, the issue of a White Mana Core Grade would drive almost all of them away.

My initial goal was Legris Damien, but he was out of my reach at the moment. Even if he had an interest in me, it was too forward of me to think he would actually go as far as making me his apprentice.

At the present moment, only one was qualified to guide me and also serve as my connection to the system... Neron Kaelid!

'It's a good thing I was able to sense his Mana Core...' I smiled in relief.

There would be no prejudice since we both had White Cores. After watching him teach, I had no doubt about his abilities in that area, and he seemed quite powerful based on his mana quantity and concentration alone.

He fulfilled all my conditions, the only problem was... did I fulfill all of his?!

"I see..." Neron murmured, breaking the long-held silence between me and him.

He stroked his bald chin, looking at me with his pitch-black eyes. I couldn't tell if he was being condescending, wary, or curious.

"I honestly wasn't expecting this... it's quite early, isn't it?"

Neron was right. This was merely the second day of Lectures, and I was already asking to be his apprentice. There hadn't been enough time to fully grasp both our worth. Of course, I already knew he had extremely high value as both a Magic-User and teacher. The problem was with him.

'Usually, Lectures observe the students for a while and then decide on who to choose. He must be referring to that!'

The problem was uncertainty—and time!

"The early bird gets the worm, no? I believe I have judged your worth to be top-tier, Lecturer. You're more than skilled enough to be my Master." I smiled with a twinkle in my eyes.

Neron sighed and patted me on my shoulder.

"You're quite the kid, I'll give you that. To be honest, I would like to say yes..."

My expectations plummeted instantly and my expression dropped.

'But...?!'

"But, it's too early, Jared. In fact, at the moment, I'm too occupied to deal with having an apprentice."

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

#### **Chapter 100: Time Flies**

I had to swallow his words and agree with him. As one who taught so many students back-to-back, it wasn't easy for him. I had just seen how he taught, not losing vigor in any of his lectures. Asking him to teach me would only be adding to his workload.

"You proffered an interesting theory, and you've caught my attention, I'll admit that much. But, it's not enough to motivate me yet. I'll need more than that to say yes and become your master."

I clenched my teeth. Even after all I had shown, it still wasn't enough for an immediate answer. Of course, I had realized this. I just had hope that there could a sliver of a chance where he would accept my request.

"I understand. Well, then, what would be enough?" My eyes lit up with a new passion, unwilling to be fazed by Neron's rejection.

The older man's eyes sparkled the moment I said this.

I needed to prove myself as soon as possible. With so many things to do, I couldn't delay my apprenticeship. I wanted to at least reach the level of an Advanced Mage before leaving this institute after my three years here. There was no way I could dawdle.

"The Familiar Selection Ceremony... no, let's not go with that..." Neron muttered, half talking to himself.

The ceremony was in a month's time. That was bearable. I could delay my plans with Neron for that long.

"How about the Inter-Class Exchange? Yeah, that'll work!"

My eyes bulged the moment he said that. The Exchange was in three months! One month was bearable, but in three months, so much would have happened. It was far too long.

"B-but, that is-" I tried protesting.

"Well, that's my condition. If you feel you can't do it... that's fine." Neron smiled broadly, most likely happy to see me flustered for the first time in our short exchange.

'Tsk!' I nearly clicked my tongue in frustration.

Neron was being unreasonable, well, to me. For other students, this would have been an even deal. But, I needed to get way stronger before the Exchange, which meant I needed his tutelage. Without his guidance, it would be very difficult to achieve the state I wanted before then.

Well, lecturers were fond of giving hurdles to students who wanted to be their apprentices, so I had to accept this one as well. However...

"Well, I can't argue with you. But, professor, is this really the best move?" I asked.

"Hm?"

"You want me to give an acceptable performance during the Exchange, right? Aren't you worried that other Lecturers will set their eyes on me and approach me? If superior lecturers make me tempting offers... I may rethink becoming your apprentice, you know?"

Just as lecturers could only have one apprentice, apprentices could only have one Master as well. If multiple lecturers had their eyes on one student, that student had the right to choose who he wanted to go with.

There was no way I wouldn't garner attention during the Exchange. If that happened, I could have other Lecturers who were willing to be my Master.

"Well, the possibility exists..." Neron shrugged a little, then gave me the most confident statement I had ever heard him say.

"... It would be your mistake though."

He could have meant a lot with what he said, but I chose to interpret it in the most literal way. His eyes told me he wasn't bluffing, and I could feel it resonate within me.

'There's no Lecturer superior to me that will approach you!' That was what Neron Kaelid was implying.

"We'll see." I returned his confidence with mine as well.

"Looks like it's agreed, then."

"I'll have to wait, but I hope you'll make it worth all the trouble once I become your apprentice."

"This kid... you're already talking like it's a guaranteed win on your part. Despite my personality, my standards are pretty high, you know?"

Of course, they had to be. If they weren't, I wouldn't have approached him in the first place. However, it didn't matter how high his standards were. I intended to trump everything.

"No matter how high your expectations peak, it doesn't matter. I plan to come out top in the Exchange. That's more than enough!"

Neron appeared a little fazed, the most flustered I had seen him so far. He quickly reverted to his usual demeanor.

"That's ambitious... maybe a bit conceited."

Of course, anyone would think that. A Lower Class, White Core Grade student thought he could get the first position in the Inter-Class Exchange. How absurd could that be?

"But, if you manage to get that high... I promise to be your Master, no, not just that... I'll fulfill any one of your requests."

I nodded, happy he hadn't entirely written off my declaration. Usually, even if a student passed the hurdle set before him by the Lecturer he wished to be his master, the Lecturer could still refuse the apprenticeship. However, now that Neron had promised, he would be held bound by his word.

There was also his promise of fulfilling one of my requests. Of course, it was implied that the request had to be in his capacity, but it still was a big deal. I already knew what I would ask for.

"Sounds fair enough. I look forward to—"

>BZZZZRRRNNNGGGG<

A buzzing, ringing sound abruptly interrupted my moment with Neron. For a moment, I was dazed and frankly a little irritated by the sound, until I realized that it was coming from the man I was speaking to—his pocket to be precise.

"Ah, looks like we've spent quite a bit of time here already. It's nearly time for your next Lecture." Neron mumbled, looking at the pocket watch he pulled out of his pocket.

Time flies when having fun, also when speaking to one's Lecturer... the latter was due to experience. I didn't know we had taken so long in discourse.

'Welp, it was worth it, though!'