

## SPELLCRAFT 1241

\*

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

#### Chapter 1241: Dimensional Breach [Pt 3]

It took no time at all for Gerard to close the distance between himself and the two women who were now staring at him.

He noticed that their expressions were a little off—one could even say unhappy—but he chalked it up to their tiredness.

The overwhelming atmosphere also had to be a contributing factor to their irritation. Unlike him, they hadn't gotten used to its harshness.

Still, he had faith that Serah could weather the storm at the very least.

Speaking of which...

"A-ahh... y-your legs?!" Those were the first words Gerard uttered the moment he approached the supposed woman of his dreams.

His face paled almost instantly as he saw how nothing but her thighs and barely her knees remained.

Everything else had been cut off.

"H-how did it ha—?!"

"You idiot. Is that really the first thing you're going to ask?" Serah sighed, her eyes giving him a deep glare.

The moment he witnessed her disapproval, Gerard froze mid-sentence, and his brain went into instant overdrive.

'I-I shouldn't make a big deal about all of this. She probably lost it due to a trial or something. She can always heal afterwards...'

Once he had his thoughts settled in his mind, Gerard nodded internally and smiled broadly at Serah, still completely ignoring Maria.

'I have to play it cool!' He decided, now leaking out a calm smile.

"So... what brings you here?"

"Haa! You fool. Now isn't the time for theatrics. We're in trouble and we need your help!" Serah's words, despite being harsh, made him feel strangely good.

As the Beast King, he was not used to being talked down on. In fact, he detested it.

He was the strongest, so no one could look down on him.

However, all of that changed when Serah appeared into his life. She was a breath of fresh air, a ray of light that he never thought he needed.

The only woman who had ever conquered him.

"It pleases me that you need my assistance, but the Constellations were specific about our trials being individual. Wouldn't it be cheating if I helped you out?"

"No! That's not it at all—!"

"I mean, if you insist, I would be willing to defy their instructions and assist, but... they can see all things here, so it's sort of pointless to—"

~WHAP!~

A slap from Serah swiftly landed on Gerard's cheek, causing a hot sensation to permeate his face—far hotter than the scorching desert sun.

He couldn't even react to the speed of her hand, or the sting of the slap, until it was too late.

'W-wow...'

Gerard was once again reminded of the gap between their physical abilities at this moment, and he found himself caressing his slightly swollen cheek.

"Will you shut up and listen?!"

"Yes ma'am." He obediently muttered.

Serah and Maria were both seated on the sandy ground, so he collapsed on it too, completely in submission to the former's words.

"The trial is on hold for now. Something unexpected has occurred, and even the Constellations don't seem to be able to do anything about it."

"Ohhh?" Gerard's face formed genuine surprise.

This was unexpected news.

But, as one would expect, he needed more information.

"What unexpected thing?"

Both Maria and Serah opened their lips to speak, but before they could let word out, everyone who sat felt an ominous presence.

It emerged from the shattered dimensional barrier, and while its advance seemed slow, none of the three could deny the weight it had.

Black mist danced as a single individual floated into the desert world from whatever dimension he was coming from.

His dark float fluttered with the wind, and his dark brown hair seemed to follow the same rhythm. The weight behind his appearance shook all three who slowly raised their head to stare at him.

"The unexpected thing... is me." He spoke, looking down on the gawking trio.

A small smile formed on his pale face, further adding to the internal tremor that crept through their bodies.

"L-Legris Damien? What's he doing here?!" Gerard raised his voice as he jumped to his feet, swiftly taking a defensive stance.

Maria and Serah followed suit, though the letter was floating in the air.

"It's been a while, Beast King... um... what's your name again?" Legris spoke coolly, almost dismissively, as he stared at Gerard's intense glare.

"It's Gerard! What the hell are you doing here?!" He pointed at Legris, still feeling apprehensive, but also strangely enraged.

All his instincts told him to flee, but Gerard knew he could not obey them.

Not this time.

'Serah is right beside me. Ahh... I see. Was he the one who injured her like that? As a man... as one who desires her as my woman... I can no longer let this slide!'

"You have all my assistance, Serah. I will aid you in defeating that monster." Gerard grinned, ignoring the beads of sweat that were slowly gathering on his face.

Now wasn't the time to overthink things. Serah needed him, so he would help her.

It was as simple as that.

"No, Gerard. The situation has changed. The amount of power I'm sensing from him right now... it's different from before." Serah's sudden voice broke Gerard from his thoughts.

"E-eh...?"

"It's better we retreat and seek out even more help. I doubt we can take him on our own."

Gerard felt a slight pang of pain in his heart. Apparently she did not have enough confidence in his strength to think he would be able to make up for the difference that existed between them and Legris.

Gerard did not feel insulted or betrayed. No... he was just disappointed.

"You don't need to worry, Serah. We can take him!"

He had to overcome this disappointment and show just how much he had grown.

'After this fight, I'll propose to her again.'

And somehow... Gerard knew within himself that she was going to tell him "Yes."

\*

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

**Chapter 1242: Beast King's Grand Phase**

This was it.

This was the moment of truth—the decisive point that would determine his victory in making Serah his woman.

Gerard could feel it in his very soul.

"I've gotten much stronger than before. I'm sure we'll be able to take him down if we work together."

Despite his reassurance, Serah seemed to have a doubtful look on her face. Maria had a similar expression, but Gerard never cared for her, so he didn't pay it any heed.

"Magic doesn't work on him." Serah objected.

"That's perfect. I mostly utilize Martial Arts."

"He might be too much for us to handle." She added

"If that's the case, then I doubt he'll allow us to seek out reinforcements."

It didn't matter the excuse she threw at him, Gerard countered with an equally, if not more, reasonable response.

In the end, both Serah and Maria had to admit that he was spot on.

Legris was a predator. There was no way he would let them escape, especially now that he had somehow gotten much stronger.

"Are you done squabbling? Shall we begin?" Legris' voice echoed in the wide space as he looked down on him from his lofty position.

The three, who had now arbitrarily concluded that there was no other viable alternative but a confrontation, decided to finally heed Gerard's suggestion.

They had to fight and win against Legris!

"I'm surprised you're being such a gentleman. Isn't this the point where you bring out your variants and surround us?" Serah jested, at least that was what it seemed like on the surface.

In reality, though, she had been out of her [Invincible] ever since she appeared in this desert world, and it was going to take a little while before she could use it again.

Buying time was the only method she knew was safe enough for her to regain her optimal state for Original Magic.

"My variants, huh...? Ah, I see." Legris smiled, rubbing his chin as he looked at Serah specifically.

The way he smiled felt so piercing, as if he knew exactly what she was trying to do.

However, instead of taking advantage of the moment and attacking, he proceeded to answer her question.

"I have no need for them now. I am more than enough to eliminate you."

His words were condescending, but there was no hubris in his tone. Everything he said felt genuine, as if he was merely stating a fact.

"You bastard! Don't get cocky!" Gerard yelled. Veins were all over his face as he roared in fury.

He slowly turned to the stunned Serah and Maria, his face instantly shifting to that of compassionate understanding.

"I'll buy time for you two. Don't worry, I'll be careful."

Serah's widened eyes took in the image of Gerard smiling at her, while also giving a thumbs up, and something glistened within it.

She didn't know why, but she was moved to nearly shedding tears.

"Thank you." Serah muttered.

Those words were more than enough to energize Gerard. He felt his heart racing and every aspect of his body heating up.

This was it!

"Yeah!"

He stepped forward, his eyes slowly leaving Serah as he now turned to Legris.

"I'll be your opponent."

"Is that so?" Legris' words were like cold water to Gerard's burning flames.

Still, nothing he said was able to quell the raging inferno that kept rising within Gerard's soul. He felt it... the power of his peak.

"[Ultimate Transformation: Grand Final Phase]"

~BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMM!!!~

The entire dimension trembled as a pillar of light surged from Gerard's location.

It ascended far into the heavens, causing even the howling winds to cease their activity. The sands parted, everything banished to the very edges of the world.

The only thing left around Gerard was a scorched ground and the two women who stared at him in shock.

The fiery energy that ascended high finally returned to him, all of it compressing into his bulky frame.

Until finally, Beast King Gerard could be seen in his majesty.

"Haaa..."

With misty breath, he heaved a sigh and slowly flexed his muscles.

Now standing at least fifteen meters, Gerard's Grand Final Phase emanated nothing short of glory.

His flesh felt like burning metal, with several markings imprinted on his skin, like tattoos of various creatures of legend.

He had huge dragon wings that magnificently flapped behind him, and large horns that bent slightly as they pointed upward.

Long hair, almost as if it was a mane, graced his head, and his nine eyes glowed with power.

His jaws possessed sharp teeth, and his immensely muscular body had a total of six arms. A tail danced behind him, and his two legs were bulky enough, yet slender as well, to ensure he could handle all his weight while moving faster than ever.

Everything about him was reminiscent of the perfect beast toned to perfection.

"Now then... shall we begin?" Gerard grinned, his warbling gaze on Legris Damien.

Determination fueled his heart, and his thoughts were filled with nothing short of victory.

He had a woman to impress and a world to save.

There was no need to hesitate.

No reason to fear.

No time to stop.

He simply had to move forward!

~WHOOOOSSSHH!!!~

Defying any speed that Serah and Maria could have ever been able to perceive in their current states, Gerard leaped to the sky.

His wings took him straight towards Legris, and his hulky body was prepared for the most heated exchange he would ever experience.

'I know it won't be easy. I know I have to push myself! But... I will complete my mission!'

Gerard roared as he finally closed the distance between him and Legris, finally ready to give the first strike.

However...

~SQUELCH!~

... All of that seemed to be in vain.

Gerard's invincible body was ripped apart almost instantly, as all six arms, two legs, two wings, and one tail, were severed from his body.

All of it... in just that single moment.

Legris grabbed Gerard by the throat, his gaze still the same cold and disconcerted kind as before.

He opened his lips to speak to the currently agonizing Gerard, his smile growing a little wider than before.

"What a joke."

\*

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

### **Chapter 1243: Sacrifice**

'H-huh...?'

Gerard found himself in a daze.

'What is... happening right now?'

His blurry vision could hardly make out anything that was happening, and the pain he was experiencing was too much for him to feel anything else.

He could no longer move his hands, legs, tail, or wings.

Why?

Could it be because he was still in a haze? Or... could it be that they were no longer attached to his body?

He saw several limbs that resembled his own falling from the height he was currently stuck in. He saw a pair of wings and a tail too.

He could have sworn they were his.

But... what were they doing away from his body? Why was he currently suspended in the air while they lifelessly fell.

It made no sense! Gerard tried to understand it, but he could not reconcile his expectations of how the fight was supposed to go with the fact that he was currently limbless and defeated.

It wasn't even up to a second.

Even now, he still did not know when and how it happened.

One moment he was going to strike Legris from multiple sides to attract his attention, and the next thing he noticed was his current predicament.

"E-eee..." He couldn't even form words from his lips since he felt his throat clogged by the tight grip of his supposed adversary.

Right now, he could not scream in response to the pain, even though he desperately wanted to.

He could not flail around, since his body was nothing but a limbless vegetable that dangled according to the wishes of the one who defeated him.

He felt like nothing but a ragdoll.

... A useless lump of meat.

"What a joke." As Legris uttered those words, Gerard broke down into tears.

"Real men never cry!" He was always fond of saying, yet the flood of bitter liquid that descended from his lips was frightening.

A meaningless, limbless, pathetic man.

That was what Gerard was at the moment, and he knew it fully well.

"Looks like he couldn't buy you any time." Legris now began to talk to Serah.

This caused Gerard's heart to tighten greatly. Serah,.. he had promised her to buy time, yet he failed so horribly.

He tried telling his body to regenerate, but nothing was happening.

Never in his life had he felt this pathetic.

"See for yourself..."

Legris swiftly shifted Gerard's body so he would face Serah, now holding him from the back of his neck.

'No...!' Gerard's thoughts screamed.

"Look at the people you tried to help."

'Please NO!' He begged, but no one could hear him.

With tears in his eyes, he was forced to look at Serah in his pathetic state.

What he saw...

'NOOOOOOO!!!'

... Was the look of pity.

Serah Crimson, the woman he had done all he could to impress, now pitied him.

It hurt him so much that he felt like ripping his heart out and dying at that very moment. Her eyes showed so much compassion, and that was precisely what he wanted to avoid.

Where was the expression of admiration that he desired? Where was the countenance of devotion he had imagined?

None of those were present now.

He didn't want to look weak in front of her, but in the end... that was precisely what he was.

WEAK!

"What will you do now? If you make any unnecessary moves, I'll kill him off, and not in a pretty way." Legris spoke, causing Gerard's heart to tighten once more

Not only was he completely useless, but he had now become a liability in the fight.

He was a hostage!



'No... not that! Anything but that!'

Gerard had always despised relying on others for strength, but the thing he hated most was being a burden.

And right now, that was precisely what he was.

As Gerard looked at Serah, and then Maria, and slowly tilted his head to look at Legris, he instantly realized the truth.

From the very beginning, he was the burden.

'But... I won't let that happen to me! Not anymore!'

~WHUUUUSSSHH!!!~

Power burst from within his multiple Cores, and he overloaded them with energy that they began to shatter and leak out.

'There's still something I can do! I won't be a burden to anyone!' His thoughts echoed as he embraced the pain.

What he was doing was simple.

Initiating his own Mana Burst Sequence, where he would overload his body with energy and explode his Core from within.

Why... why would he do something like this?

'I would rather die than be a burden to anyone!'

There was only one way to buy some more time, while also preventing a hostage situation.

That was to take himself off the equation entirely.

And so, Gerard decided to kill himself.

~BOOOOO—~

Right as the explosion was about to occur, however, Gerard felt a hand dig into his chest.

~SQUELCH!~

Blood spurted out, and so did an immense amount of energy.

"Trying to cause an energy overload so you can kill yourself and damage me in the process, huh? Did you think I wouldn't notice?" Legris asked, his gaze as cold as ever.

His hand reached out for Gerard's heart and crushed it in an instant.

'Guark!'

Gerard felt unimaginable pain as his heart was destroyed. His body throbbed in response to the agony he faced

However, despite all of that... he could not help but smile.

'Of course... I knew you would notice. But so what?'

The energy in his cores finally broke forth, surrounding Gerard, and by extension, Legris.

'You can't stop what's about to happen!'

There was something Legris did not know, which Gerard capitalized on even though he was on the verge of death.

'I have a second heart... idiot!'

~BOO MMMMMMMMMMM!!!~

As the final explosion devoured Gerard, he stole a final glance at Serah and found her smiling.

It was strange, but he felt satisfied to see her this way in his last moments.

'Thank you, Serah. I... will... always... love you.'

And with those last thoughts, Gerard sank into the abyss.

\*

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

#### **Chapter 1244: Sacrilege**

A moment of silence is usually given for the dead, but the explosion that erupted in the sky completely erased such expectations.

~BOOOOOOOOOO MMMMMMM!!!~

The eruption roared, swallowing a huge chunk of the vast sky.

However... it didn't last for long.

~WHUUUUSSSSHHHH!~

Darkness slowly began to surface around the edges of the plumes of fiery energy until it consumed everything.

The black matter closed in on the rest of the blast, until it converged at the center of the explosion.

Once the smoke dissipated and the dust settled, only one man was left floating in the air, and he had a casual smile on his face as he watched the two who stood beneath him.

"In the end... he still couldn't buy you any time." Legris snickered, exhaling gently.

His darkened gaze focused on the expressions that the two women had, and much to his chagrin... they had absolutely resolute expressions.

"Even after the death of your comrade, it seems not much has changed." Legris uttered, now rubbing his chin ever so slightly.

"We'll have to change that."

\*\*\*\*\*

Serah felt a pang of pain as she stared at Legris.

The way he had easily subdued Gerard made her heart ache even further, though it was the way he made light of their ally's sacrifice that pissed her off the most.

'Gerard knew he would be a burden to us, so he removed himself from the equation. That's brave and honorable.'

If things had devolved into a hostage situation, the situation might have gotten a little dicey, though she somehow had the feeling that the outcome would have been the same.

'I would have killed him myself if that was the case.'

Death, at this point, was only a temporary state of being, after all.

The goal was to stop Legris from doing whatever he came to the Constellation Realm for.

"I can see that fiery look in your eyes. You're thinking of how to stop me, aren't you?" Legris' voice interrupted Serah's thoughts, causing her to grit her teeth.

Still, rather than get worked up, she focused her attention on recovering her energy.

"Not even taking some time to mourn the death of your ally... you're so heartless, Serah. You too, Maria. I thought you were both better than that."

"You're doing a nice job projecting your own inner state." Maria responded, her brows furrowed in disapproval.

Serah remained silent, and she had thought Maria would follow suit. However, it seemed like Gerard's death struck more than just a nerve for her.

"Say what you wish, but Jared is going to resurrect Gerard. There's no need to waste our time mourning him. We only have to—"

"Hold on... what?" Legris interrupted Maria's declaration with words of his own.

His expression oozed genuine surprise, and his hand slowly made its way to his mouth, covering his lips as if experiencing a downright shocking event.

"Don't tell me... you guys haven't figured it out by now." He mumbled more words.

The path his tone was taking began to trouble both Serah and Maria.

The mockery within it... the ecstasy... it felt too surreal.

"Hehe... hehehehe... hehehehehehehehehehe..."

Before Serah and Maria realized it, Legris went from silent chuckles to loud bursts of laughter.

"H-hey..."

"Hahahahahaha..."

"Hey! What's so funny?"

"HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!!"

"I asked... WHAT IS SO FUNNY TO YOU?!!"

~VWUUUUUSSSHHHH!!!~

An overwhelming surge of energy suddenly swept through the area, everything emanating from Serah's position.

Right now she was even more troubled than Maria. Perhaps it was because she had been getting a creeping suspicion within herself.

One that she desperately wished Legris would not confirm.

"Everyone and everything I consume ceases to exist. They become a part of me... a personification of what should not exist."

"N-no... what are you saying? You're spouting nonsense!" Serah let out.

All the reserves of anger, sorrow and pain that she had kept hidden within her due to the hope of an eventual resurrection slowly began to surface.

"The same applies to your lost limbs, Serah. They won't be coming back. Once I have devoured something, that thing is gone forever."

"S-shut up! You're lying!" She gritted her teeth, even though her deep-seated suspicions were being confirmed.

Somewhere within her, she had suspected such an outcome.

But... but...

"Right as Gerard exploded himself, I absorbed him. He is now a part of me, Serah."

"You're bluffing! You have no basis! Jared, no... the Constellations will bring him back!"

"I apologize that you thought otherwise, but... none of your dead allies are returning. Not Gerard, not Z'ark, and by the time I'm finished... not even you."

As she heard another familiar name, Serah paused for a second, her eyes wide open.

'Z'ark is dead too...?!'

Z'ark was in a different dimension, so if Legris had killed, that meant he was in more dimensions than what he let on.

Since Serah now knew of his ability to generate variants, it all connected very quickly in her head.

'How many of our allies has he already...'

Everything began to converge to form a chaotic mess in Serah's head, and she began to breathe heavily.

"That's right, Serah. Keep guessing. You already know that both Z'ark and Gerard no longer exist. How many more could be in that equation? There's no way for you to find out, is there?"

Rage. Unbridled rage swirled from within her.

Somehow, she could not doubt his assertions. Even though there was no definite proof backing his claims, Legris' words rang true within her.

And it was frightening!

"Once I leave this Constellation reality, the effects of their nonexistence will bleed into the world, and all worlds within the Aether Branch. Thus, all their descendants and the effects of their existence will cease to be."

Serah found it unbelievable. There was no way someone like Legris had that much power.

Yet, the ease at which he spouted those grandiose statements made her believe him.

"When you were chasing after me, you saw all those worlds that got destroyed, didn't you? Well... not all of them were my doing. Sometimes, the ripple effects of the nonexistence of one or two individuals can lead to an entire reality unraveling."

A society without its ruler was bound to fail. A generation without its patriarch would never exist. A world without its Hero was bound to fall.

Such was the nature of causality.

"You must have realized it now, right? What you have to do in order to prevent more chaos in the world." Legris grinned wickedly, raising both hands as if prepared for an embrace.

"You need to prevent me from leaving this Constellation Realm."

As a place outside the time and space of the regular world, it was a separate realm entirely.

As long as Legris remained, the ripples would not be able to spread.

"If I leave this place, the nonexistence of your allies will be cemented into reality."

Thus, it would become an irreversible event!

"So, I hope you—"

"LEGRIIIIIISSSSS!!!"

\*

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

#### **Chapter 1245: Allies' Interception**

~VWWWUUUUUUSSSSHHHHH!!!~

A burst of crimson power rose from Serah, and all the overflowing Aether shrouded her body once again.

She replaced her lost legs with energy-based limbs, and her entire form was shrouded in fiery crimson flames.

Once more, she was using [Invincible].

"Yikes! Looks like someone is mad." Legris chuckled, his body recoiling from the powerful force that Serah caused to manifest around her.

"SHUT UP!"

Her deep glare made it clear just how grieved she was by Legris' revelation.

Tears fell from her eyes, and they instantly evaporated the moment they left her hate-filled eyes.

"There's no need for you to say any more..." At this point, Serah signaled Maria to stand back, her energy pulsating with unforgiving fervor.

The young woman understood what Serah meant instantly.

'Legris is mine!'

With each step she took, the earth beneath her melted, and the air sizzled with inexplicable heat.

Space contorted around her, unable to stand the immense energy that was condensed within her frame.

"I'll kill you! I'll utterly destroy you!" She roared, her voice echoing throughout the trembling world.

"Ah? Is that so? Well, come on then." Legris flexed his hand, inviting her closer as he gave a mocking gaze.

"Give it your best shot."

That was more than enough to push Serah beyond the breaking point.

She suddenly lost her rational thought, failing to imagine that this could all be a trap, or that she could also lose her life—permanently too—if she was being too hasty.

None of those mattered to her.

She only wanted to utterly destroy him.

"GRRRRRRRRR!!!"

Serah arched her entire body, positioning it to give her the best mileage in the air as she charged at Legris.

'One hit! I only need one hit!'

With that single thought continuously echoing in her thoughts, she clenched her fist, gritted her teeth, and initiated her ascent.

~WHOOOOOOO—!!!~

"SERAH STOP!" A mix of oddly familiar voices suddenly reverberated through the air.

At that moment, three figures rushed towards her, catching up thanks to their voice stunning her.

Despite Serah's overflowing rage and unbridled determination, the sounds she heard were enough to cause her to hesitate in her reckless reverie.

09:26

"Y-you guys...?" Her head creaked silently as she looked beside and behind her, watching the three who tightly held her.

To her left was Beruel, and to her right was Aurora. Hugging her from behind was Ana.

All three of them were tightly holding her, their facial expressions depicting enough of their desperation.

"Let go..." Her bulging eyes remained unblinking as she uttered those words.

"Let go of me this instant."

She did not know how or when they had arrived, and frankly she didn't care.

Not at this point.

The only thing she desired was killing Legris Damien in the cruelest way possible.

"If you attack him now, he'll absorb you in one fell swoop!" Aurora yelled at Serah, beads of sweat falling from her face.

"YOU DON'T KNOW THAT!" She yelled.

"We do! We've been studying his wavelength for some time now. Right now, he's building up energy to use for a large-scale attack. If you're reckless, he'll absorb you too." This time it was Ana who spoke.

Her small body struggled to latch onto Serah, but it was becoming increasingly difficult thanks to the sheer power that the latter had.

"Calm yourself, Serah. Nothing will be solved from going on a fit of rage." Beruel's calm voice echoed.

"If you truly desire to defeat him, please reconsider."

In the end, all three of them recognized that they could not stop her. If she truly desired Legris' immediate destruction, none of them could hold her back from completing the task.

The only thing they could rely on at this point was reason.

"And how do you know that? How can you be sure?" Serah's voice began in a soft whisper.

However, slowly, it regained its tempo.

"EVEN IF IT COSTS ME MY LIFE, I WILL DESTROY HI—!" She yelled.

"Please reconsider. You're not just responsible for your life. You know that!"

As soon as Serah heard Aurora's words, she remembered the living being that dwelled within her.

That was more than enough to finally satiate her rage.

"Haaa..."

Serah slowly regained her senses, and the three were finally able to let go of her simmering hot form.

"... I understand."

\*\*\*\*\*

'Phew! We've finally been able to calm her.'

Ana felt the most relief of the group that surrounded Serah.

After all, she had been the one studying Legris' wavelength, so she was the one who truly knew how dangerous the man was.

'First things first, though...' Ana swiftly tapped a device on her wrist.

~WHUUSH!~

In a flash, Serah, Aurora, Ana and Beruel vanished from their position and reappeared beside a dazed Maria.

She wiped off the beads of sweat that had gathered on her face, and she could see the other two doing the same.

'Thankfully we intervened when we did. If things had escalated beyond that, then...'

Ana gulped, and then sighed.

"Sorry for losing it. I was just..." Serah could not say any more.

Her face was now downcast, though her body brimmed with more than enough [Invincible] Energy.

"It's fine, Miss Serah. More importantly, I'm glad to see you and Maria in good health."

The reason for Ana's hesitation was due to her suddenly looking at Serah's severed legs.

'Well, she's alive. That's what matters most at this point.'

With all five of them in a close cluster, Ana felt more comfortable, and a bit of her unease left.

Though, the imposing figure of Legris above them still gave her the chills.

"When did you all arrive here? I didn't even detect anything." Maria asked, and from Serah's expression, it was obvious that she was just as curious.

"Well..."

Both Beruel and Aurora took their gazes to Ana, who was in the process of sighing.

"... I can explain."

\*



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

### **Chapter 1246: Dark Nature**

[A While Earlier]

A world filled with endless horrors and monsters of varying sizes and abilities—that was the realm that a little Mage occupied.

The darkened clouds added an eerie atmosphere to the world around, and the deserted wasteland only had a couple of massive boulders, withered plants, and mountains that peaked to the ends of the sky.

This landscape filled with the stuff of nightmares stretched for a distance that even she could not properly account for, though she was still in the process of gathering more data.

At the moment, however, she was just doing her best to survive.

"Let's see... if I combine the additional effects of this technique, and I account for its adverse effects on this kind of situation, then..."

Anabelle Frederick sat behind a massive boulder, hitting a few keys on a gauntlet that had manifested from her bracelet.

The gauntlet had nine buttons, all with their unique functions and attributes.

By using permutations and combinations, she could achieve effects that weren't restricted to the nine base attributes she had registered within it.

"Alright! Let's go with this." She smiled, tilting her big glasses.

Slowly lifting herself from the dirty ground, she deftly left her position behind the barrier and attracted the attention of the closest monster that crept around.

"Hey! Over here!"

The creature resembled a cockroach, though its body glistened like metal and its multiple eyes glowed with a similar hue as Ana's luminescent glasses.

~WHOOOSSSH!!!~

The horrifying creature rushed towards her, slicing through the air as it loosened its jaw in order to have its fill of a young and attractive human.

Unfortunately for the beast, she was faster.

Swiftly tapping a few buttons on her gauntlet, a brilliant echo of light manifested, completely shrouding her environs in its power.

The cockroach-like monster was bathed in the energy Ana released, and it stopped right before it touched her.

Once the light subsided, Ana gave the monster a careful look.

Just as she expected, it was kneeling in front of her.

"Looks like it worked, after all. I can use this to control them."

She slowly approached the cockroach, touching its silvery-like exoskeleton.

"I thought it would be gross, but it's actually really pretty. The advantages this presents is also considerable."

Without wasting much time, Ana mounted the creature and rested her flat buttocks on her new minion's back.

"It's not very comfortable, but it beats traveling on foot for too long." She muttered to herself, looking up at the darkened skies.

"Predators lurk above. If I carelessly fly, they'll all gather. I don't want to waste my energy fighting droves of creatures without a purpose."

In the end, she had to look for the most efficient way to fulfill her trial.

"Hey, you..." She returned her gaze to the creature who twitched as soon as it heard the voice of its master.

"Take me to your nest."

\*\*\*\*\*

[Several Moments Later]

"Entry log: It has been three days, nine hours, and twenty five minutes since I began my approach of conquest on these monsters."

Ana was all alone in her primitive, but spacious abode. She was speaking directly to the gauntlet, which also served as her journal.

"I've taken over the entire southern lands, and I am considering expanding my base even further. Unfortunately, based on the information Anabelle has been compiling for me, it seems the task won't be as simple as I anticipated."

These words were followed by a sigh.

"After considering my options, I have decided to finally confront the predators of the sky. If I can control them, my chances of victory will increase, and I will possess sufficient force to progress."

Of course, plans never ran smoothly all the time—especially in an unpredictable place like this. Ana recognized this fact well enough.

However, since it was her careful planning that got her to this level, she felt it was pertinent to continue the streak.

"... End of Log."

After deciding on a matter, it was better to get right on it.

Following this philosophy, Ana jumped to her feet and decided to initiate her mission.

However...

~DING!~

~DING!~

"Hm? What's this?"

Ana's eyes widened once she realized the cause for one of her alarms to ring out.

"The proximity tracker I kept on both Maria and Serah is being activated? How is that possible?"

Since they were teammates for years, Ana designed specific Magic Technology unique to the both of them, allowing her to detect their proximity to her and themselves, as well as track them once the need arrived.

However, this was only scratching the surface of what her technology could do.

"We all have respective dimensions allocated to us, though. Why would they be together? Hmm...  
[Activate Auditory and Visual Projection]."

Once Ana did this, she was able to see and hear what both Maria and Serah perceived.

That was how she found out that Legris Damien had invaded the Constellation Realm!

The moment she realized the current situation, she abandoned her current mission and decided to rush to their aid.

\*\*\*\*\*

[The Present]

"I found Aurora and Beruel on my way. Since I knew I would require backup, I enlisted their help and we all rushed after you."

Once Ana explained her side of things to Maria and Serah, the two instantly grasped the reason behind their sudden appearance.

"On our way here, I used the devices within you to analyze the energy wavelength of Legris. I wasn't able to do so since it didn't seem like he was using energy at all." She further stated.

"Not using energy? How is that possible?"

Serah was confused, and rightly so! She had witnessed Legris' dark energy firsthand, and so had Maria.

Even now, he had the black power clinging to his body.

Wasn't that energy?

"I understand your confusion, but make no mistake. That isn't energy. I don't know what it is, but if I am to guess... it's the opposite."

"The opposite?"

"I told you I wasn't able to analyze his wavelength, right? Well, I decided to do an inverse analysis and backtrace. That was when it clicked."

There wasn't enough time for Ana to go into details, but her point remained.

"He's using some sort of Anti-Energy. Or is it Anti-Matter? I'm not sure, but that is what is shrouding him." Ana concluded, narrowing her gaze on Legris.

"I'm guessing you aren't able to use Magic on him because he breaks it down, right? And even his mysterious ability of Existence Erasure probably stems from that as well."

Everything Ana said hit hard, but she did not allow it to distract her from the major problem.

"At this point, I do not think we are properly equipped to handle something like this. We lack both the knowledge and ability to properly go against him."

As much as it pained her to do it, Ana had to give everyone a reality check.

"We can't win."

As one would expect, Serah's glare deepened, and the mood fell instantly.

Ana understood the frustration her Allie's were experiencing—  
especially Serah and Maria.

They had given it their all, fighting an opponent they didn't have a chance against.

After coming this far, the temptation of completing the mission existed.

However, Ana knew they had to ignore those burning sensations within if they desired to survive.

"I... am sad to see Gerard gone. I wish I acted sooner, so I could save him." Aurora said, placing her hand on Serah.

Though, she quickly took it off thanks to the burning surface that was now Serah's skin.

"You would have died if you acted. We all would." Beruel sighed.

Even though his gaze appeared disconcerted, his clenched fist was more than enough proof that he was not immune to the tempest of emotions among everyone.

"None of you knew he wouldn't return. It's not your fault." Ana's voice calmly echoed within the storm.

"Besides, we are yet to confirm if his assertions are valid or not. I am not saying this to give you all unfounded hope, but to ensure you're not distracted or confounded by his words."

Hesitation meant death on the battlefield. If they continued down this emotional downward spiral, as Legris intended for them to, it could mean their demise.

Ana recognized that.

"You're an impressive one. You've really grown from the bratty, incompetent child that I knew back at Ainzlark." Legris suddenly spoke, causing the skins of everyone present to nearly jump.

"I was twelve then. How about you? What's your excuse for being bested by a twelve-year-old despite your age and experience?"

Legris' smile at Ana's words were chilling, but his gaze showed a hint of annoyance.

"Touché. Looks like you have a sharp tongue to go along with your mind."

"Well... I am a genius. I can't say the same about you." Ana smirked in defiance.

For a moment, there were no more words exchanged.

Only silence pervaded the world as both sides stared down each other in silence.

But then...

"No arguments here. Your 'genius' allowed you to notice my accumulation of power, allowing yourselves to evade certain death."

... Legris' grin began to curl up even more.

"It's a shame that the others didn't pick this up on time..."

The moment Legris said this, Ana's eyes widened, and so did Serah's.

After all, the both of them understood the implications of his statement.

"Our allies might be in trouble!"

Unfortunately for them, this hesitation was going to cost them.

"It's too late for them. Just as it's too late for you."

Darkness surged from Legris and covered everything in the space around him.

This was the Dark Curtain.

However, it only served as the beginning.

'Damn it! I was too naive! Not only has he been planning on absorbing all of us from the start, but he's also doing the same for the others!' Ana's thoughts echoed.

Unfortunately, she could not use Teleportation or any other form of Magic thanks to the interference of the darkness that filled everywhere.

"It's all over." Legris' voice was the last sound that echoed in everyone's ears.

Before finally...

~BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMMMMM!!!~

\*  
\*  
\*

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

### **Chapter 1247: Purgatory [Pt 1]**

[Moments Earlier]

"You...?"

In a graveyard that extended for miles, lacking even a modicum of an end in sight, two people stood opposite each other.

The dreary sky that painted the image of an eternal night, and the several tombstones that had intelligible epitaphs engraved upon them... all of them constructed an ambiance of dread.

However, despite such darkness and eeriness that the landscape offered, the true architect of fear was one of the two who faced each other.

The man stood imposingly tall, his hands in his trench coat as he stared down at his prey.

His eyes were a glassy reflection of emptiness, and his callous smile showed no mercy. Nothing but a lack of empathy oozed from his cold gaze.

And that was more than enough to frighten the young man who faced him.

"Why are you here... Legris Damien?" He muttered, still stuck between disbelief and caution.

This graveyard served as his trial, and he had been facing several opponents—all of which were undead.

The undead had various types, so he had to utilize varying methods to defeat them, but even after facing so many foes, he wasn't expecting this.

'He just came out of nowhere. Is he also one of my challenges?' The young man asked as his auburn hair danced with the cold night wind.

'But... this feels different. It feels... dangerous. Too dangerous!'

He felt like he would die if he took even a single step forward. That was what the cold glare and imposing aura of Legris was telling him.

'T-then... could he be the real deal?!'

But even that felt more improbable. How could it be possible for Legris to invade the Constellation Realm?

As this young man wrestled with his thoughts, beads of sweat fell from his face as flickers of flames danced around his body.

In this deep, dark graveyard, he was the only major source of illumination.

"Well, that's a good question. Why am I here...?" Legris suddenly spoke, causing all the bones in his body to shudder.

As Legris took a step forward, he subconsciously stepped back.

Was it caution? Was it fear? Perhaps it was both.

"I came here to eliminate and absorb you. You're the weakest of your teammates, so I figured you'd be an easy target." Legris smiled broadly, causing all the hair on his body to rise.

"That's right, Jerry. I'm the real deal."

At this point, Jerry knew he could not afford to dwell in doubt any longer.

He was standing right in front of the man they had traveled so far to defeat—the one responsible for the destruction of worlds.

'He wants to kill me! I... I have to stop him!'

Right now, Jerry had two options.

One was to retreat and wait for help, and the second was to stand his ground and fight.

The first option seemed like the safest, but he had no idea if there would be anyone coming to his rescue. As for the second, he wasn't sure if he could even land a hit on Legris.

'Still...!' Jerry gritted his teeth and clenched his fist.

Both options seemed like dead ends, but Jerry preferred the second one by a wide margin.

'I might not be able to win, but if I can play my part and damage him a little, then it should be well worth it.'

Resolving within himself to fight, and to do so without holding back, Jerry knew he had to give it his all from the very start.

And that meant... using his newly developed Original Magic!

Gathering all his Aether together, and then releasing everything to his immediate surrounding, Jerry widened his glowing eyes and roared from deep within his soul.

"[Original Magic: Purgatory]!"

~VWUUUUUUUMMMMM!!!~

Instantly, the entire graveyard, at least what surrounded him for at least a few miles, was engulfed in flames.

The fire burned fervently, dying the cold night with brimming illumination. The searing heat banished the cool atmosphere, and standing at the center of it all was Jerry.

However, this was only the beginning.

"I'm not done yet!" He roared.

~RUMBLE!~

As soon as the hellish domain was erected, the earth began to tremble.

~RUMBLE!~

"What are you up to now?" Legris smirked, using his hands to fan himself a little.

Beads of sweat could be seen on his pale face, but that was all there was to it. None of the flames had managed to consume him.

At least, not yet.

"You'll see..." Jerry whispered.

~RUMBLE!~

And then, from the depths of the earth rose the ones who were meant to be resting.

The skeletons that belonged to the dead... they all rose to the surface, their bony bodies now covered in intense flames.

From mere skeletons, to ghouls, to zombies, to death knights... they all arose from their graves and climbed to the surface.

Despite the raging inferno that consumed their entire bodies, they weren't burning up.

In fact, they seemed even more intimidating.

"Not yet...!"

~BOOOOOOMMM!!!~

As if the landscape hadn't changed enough, volcanic eruptions rose from the four corners of his territory, sending molten magma to consume the world he commanded.

A sea of flames and lava eroded any semblance of the previous landscape.

Only those coated by his flames were safe.

At this point, even Legris had taken to the air, avoiding the brewing danger that awaited him below.

"It is done. And now, for the final touch..." Jerry grinned, his body suddenly getting engulfed in purple flames.

This was a step up from his [Grand Flame Admiral], considering it was his entire body that was now covered in purple flames, and not just his blade.

His purplish crimson orb floated right above him and everything else, like an all-seeing eye that would oversee the entire fight.

He tightly gripped his flaming blade, resolve sparkling in his eyes as he uttered the words that reflected his current form.

"[Grand Flame Emperor]"

\*

\*

\*



## SPELLCRAFT: Reincarnation Of A Magic Scholar

### **Chapter 1248: Purgatory [Pt 2]**

As Jerry presented himself in his full strength, he stared at Legris, with only one thought in mind.

"I don't care if I'm the weakest or not. But... thinking I'm easy prey was your biggest mistake!"

Jerry did not know how long had passed since he began his trial, but he was not messing around during that period.

He had honed all the powers he could and applied them in every conceivable way.

His [Original Magic: Purgatory] was the peak of his accomplishments, and he was also able to improve his most powerful form.

All he had done in this place was grow.

This was the result of all that—the culmination of his efforts.

"There's no way I'm going out without a fight!"

\*\*\*\*\*

'It seems I underestimated him.' Legris thought to himself as he stared at Jerry.

As he floated about the sea of lava, watching the pillars of molten magma constantly erupt from all four corners of the domain he was in, and witnessing the innumerable minions Jerry had accumulated with his power, Legris found himself being impressed.

'So, he found a way to use his pyrokinetic abilities to manipulate other targets. Those subordinates of his are being controlled by his flames, which are being controlled by him. Interesting...'

However, that was just scratching the surface of the power that Jerry was displaying.

'Does that mean he'll be able to control his opponent if he manages to drown them in his flames? I wonder...'

The fact that the entire area around Jerry made it easier for successful combustion lended credence to Legris' theory, but he couldn't draw his conclusions just yet.

After all, despite how impressive the aforementioned abilities were, they weren't the real threat to Legris at the moment.

'The real problem is the domain itself.'

Legris had sensed it earlier, which was why he chose to float above the sea of flames and magma. If he had stayed in his position, he would have taken damage, even if he used his black ability.

And that was due to one major factor.

"He's using real flames... not Magic."

Or, at the very least, he was mixing both of them in his domain.

'I found it surprising that someone like him was able to generate Magic of this scale, but once I take this major component into account it makes a lot more sense.'

Jerry's pool of energy was extremely limited, and to complement his lacking abilities, he must have found ways to ignite the oxygen in the air and burn carbon for real flames to manifest.

'That's just my theory, though. I'm not sure how far he planned this, or how intentional his actions were, but...'

This placed Legris at a disadvantage.

"My ability devours existence—Aether and Nether respectively, it does not discriminate."

When it came to Magic and Spells, it had the same effect.

The problem was, however, that his power was limited within certain boundaries.

Legris still had to breathe, and he still had to regulate his temperature, or feel stimulus.

As a result, not everything could be erased by the darkness that surrounded him.

That included the heat and burning abilities of Jerry's real flames.

'I can handle the minions since they're made of Aether. Jerry's body is coated in dense Aether, but it's not a problem if I am able to catch him.'

The real challenge remained the lava and flames that pervaded the area.

'Whatever. They won't matter if I distance myself from them.'

In the end, this was still Jerry. It wasn't like he could manage this level of Magic for very long.

'Sooner or later, he'll reach his limits. I doubt he'll be able to survive that long, though.'

With a wide, almost maniacal grin, Legris prepared for his first assault, readying his body for departure.

'Let's see you handle this... hm?!'

Legris instantly widened his eyes, and in that split second, he ceased his plans to attack. Instead, he focused all his strength and speed into tilting his body at least a meter away from his position.

And just in time too.

~WHOOOOOSSSHHH!!!~

An immensely concentrated burst of energy sped through the air and passed through the very location that Legris had previously occupied.

The blast resembled light in both its speed and appearance, though Legris could only catch a glimpse of it.

In the end, the missed shot ended up being buried under the rising sea of lava.

'That was close! If I didn't move, it would have overfed my head.'

That meant instant death.

Of course, the death only applied to one variant, but Legris found it absurd that he would require more than one version of himself to deal with someone like Jerry.

It wasn't due to pride or anything like that, but simple logic.

If he used more than one version of himself, it meant Legris was implying that Jerry was stronger than him.

That was just wrong.

'In any case, how was he able to target me so accurately, and at such a point blank range?' Legris gazed to the sky, where he first noticed the accumulation of energy.

'Ahh... it's that orb of his. He plans on using that for long-range assault. If I come closer, he'll use his blade for mid-range and close-range combat, all while the environment deals constant damage to me.'

Legris had to admit... that was brilliant.

Still, he couldn't help but suspect that he was giving Jerry too much credit. Perhaps he was simply reading meaning into a majority of his attacks and patterns.

'That doesn't stop them from existing, though. Alright, then. Now that I know all the elements involved, I should begin my comeback.'

With a smile on his face, Legris prepared himself for his own counterattack.

'Let's see how you do in a real fight!'

\*

\*

\*

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

#### **Chapter 1249: Purgatory [Pt 3]**

~WHOOOOOSSSHH!!!~

Legris lunged at Jerry, becoming a jet black blur as he blended with the distorted space riddled with heat.

Several blasts were shot at him from the orb high above, but he expertly dodged them all as he closed the distance between him and his adversary.

Despite the certainty of his victory, Legris was curious...

'What more tricks do you have up your sleeve?'

After dodging the attacks a few more times, finally reaching Jerry, Legris teleported right behind him.

'If he expects me to attack him in a certain direction, his guard will be lowered in the opposite one.'

Legris grinned as he saw Jerry's glowing back, reaching out to it.

'I'll rip out your heart and that'll be the end of it.'

Just as he was about to touch him, though, the strangest thing occurred.

'H-huh?!'

Several arms made of flaming bones held onto Legris' legs.

They belonged to Jerry's undead minions, and the way they tightly gripped Legris reeked of desperation.

'Ah! Did he prepare a defense just in case I strike from behind?' We're his initial thought.

However...

"H-huh?!"

... The flaming undead began to drag him down, specifically towards the rising sea of flames.

That was when Legris realized it.

'They're not for defense, but rather offense!'

In the first place, Jerry had been awfully closer to the sea of flames than Legris. He was probably seeking a chance for the latter to draw closer so he could drown him in the lava.

'He didn't react to my teleportation at all. It's just that his plans directly interfere with mine.'

Legris found himself gritting his teeth as he easily knocked away the bones that held onto him, shattering them instantly.

The annoying beam of energy from earlier rained down on him, but he was too annoyed to dodge this time.

Instead, he used his darkness to consume the blast.

'I'm killing him now!'

Refusing to budge from his original plan, Legris reached out to Jerry, his hand already dyed in darkness,

This was the end!

~SQUELCH!~

The sensation felt a little off, but Legris succeeded in his action.

He grinned victoriously, crushing the heart he gripped tightly, while ensuring his corruption spread through the entirety of Jerry's body.

However, the moment he did that, Legris quickly realized...

'Something is off!'



A fatal flaw that he had no idea Jerry had also noticed.

"I've got you now." A voice suddenly echoed from underneath Legris, causing his eyes to bulge in shock.

Emerging from the depths of the flaming sea was Jerry.

His flaming hands tightly gripped Legris, and his grinning face was covered in the same properties. His entire body oozed with both natural and magical flames, and to an overwhelming degree.

As Jerry gripped Legris, so did several other flaming hands that belonged to a myriad of subordinates.

That all rose from the lava and flames, gripping Legris wherever they could.

They grabbed his coat, his other leg, and everything they could lay their hands on.

"Tch! You...!" Legris gritted his teeth as he glared at the smiling Jerry.

"I noticed it from the very start, but... your recent actions just convinced me."

Legris instantly realized what Jerry was referring to. The fact that Legris avoided the sea of flames and lava, showing those to be undesirable dangers.

'I tried to hide that by evading the blasts from above, but since I was able to absorb the blast, and I remain unscathed by his explosion, he must have realized that my real weakness is his sea of flames.'

Everything that had happened thus far had culminated into this very moment.

'He played me!'

\*  
\*  
\*

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

#### **Chapter 1250: Dangerous Pressure**

~WHUUUUUSSSHHHHH!!!~

The beam from above descended on Legris as he struggled to fight back the overpowering pull that he suffered from Jerry and his minions.

Once again, he was able to defend himself from the blast.

However, this momentous distraction on Legris' part gave Jerry all the advantage.

~WHUUUUUUMMMMMM!!!~

Legris was pulled into the flaming depths of purgatory, feeling his blood boil and his flesh and bones melt the instant he was dipped inside.

"ARRRGHHHHHHHH!!!"

The lava seeped into his eyeballs, invading his throat as it burned down his windpipes and lungs when he struggled to breathe.

This indescribable agony swallowed Legris whole as he descended deep into the abyss.

Fortunately for him, the pain did not last very long.

After all, he died within a few seconds.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Haaa... Haaa..."

Jerry was now breathing heavily as his simmering flames began to die out, and the lava that fueled the area hardened.

The magma cooled down within moments, and Jerry's flame-coated body dissipated.

"Looks like I ran out of Aether. Just in time too..."

Any second later, and it could have meant bad news for him.

'I actually did it! I won against him!'

It felt like a dream, an actual miracle, rather than something that just happened a minute ago.

Jerry smiled at himself and his accomplishments as he lay flat on the obsidian surface of the hardened ground.

The bones and other forms of undead that he controlled with his Original Magic had all been buried under the magma, so he did not concern himself with cleaning up or anything like that.

'I lasted a lot longer than the last time. That's good! I can grow even stronger!'

Jerry knew within himself that he had reached the limits of his power.

He most likely wouldn't be able to evolve any more than his current state. However, if he could master his current abilities and cause them to last longer, he was sure he could be more useful to the rest of the team.

'I'll be able to protect Ciara too...' His smile broadened even more as he closed his eyes.

Sure, he wasn't like the others who could destroy planets or shake galaxies. At most, his power could destroy an entire nation, but what of it?

As long as he tempered his power to its fullest, then anything or anyone that ventured into his domain was going to lose.

And in the end, wasn't that that mattered most?

"Haha... this is crazy." He muttered to himself.

"I shouldn't be lazing around. I better inform everyone of Legris' arrival."

Jerry still didn't understand how the Constellations could have missed the invasion, but he knew he couldn't just lay on the ground and expect answers to come.

That was why, even though he was beyond exhausted, Legris willed himself to move.

"I wonder how Legris was able to appear here though. That's just—"

"Absurd? Yeah... that's what I think too."

Right as Jerry was about to rise from his position, he heard Legris' voice in the most bitter tone possible.

"H-huh?"

Before he could even react to what he was hearing, or even process how the Legris he defeated was responding to his words, Jerry found Legris standing right beside him.

"It's absurd that you actually won against me. I know compatibility and chance had a lot to do with it, but those are all excuses..."

'H-how...? How is he still here?!' Jerry's thoughts screamed as he helplessly watched Legris.

The sheer bloodlust that filled the area, evident by the deep glare on Legris' face was enough to paralyze Jerry.

It was... OVERWHELMING.

"It doesn't change the fact that I lost to SOMEONE LIKE YOU."

Once again, Jerry felt his body powerless before the crushing presence he was experiencing.

Legris slowly lifted his leg and placed it on Jerry. The weight behind his feet slowly descended, crushing him as he remained on the ground.

"A-agh... ARGGHHHHH!!!" Jerry's screams filled the desolate area, but there was no one present to hear his cries.

He screamed and howled in agony as Legris crushed his rib cage, shattering his bones.

"No pain I inflict on you will be enough. In fact, this is all pointless..."

Suddenly, the pain stopped, and Legris sighed, almost in reflection of his actions.

"What am I doing? This is just petty."

He stared at Jerry with eyes now colder than the chill running down Jerry's spine.

"I should just end this..." Legris smiled, his hand now coursing with the dark power he had.

"... Right here..."

He drew closer to Jerry, his palm wide open as he reached for his face.

"... Right now."



The powerlessness Jerry felt at that moment told him there was nothing he could do. Despair held him in a tight grip, and his body remained still.

Death was approaching, and he could only stare it in the face as it neared.

'Is this... the end?' Jerry asked himself as he thought of all his allies.

Soon, though, those images were replaced by the one girl he wished he could see most.

'Ciara... I'm sorry...'

Tears fell from his eyes as the last embers of his energy left him.

'... I'm sorry I couldn't keep my promise.'

It burned him from within, but Jerry gave his final farewell as he cried.

His blurred vision remained on Legris, though, and despite his thoughts being clouded by memories of him and his lover, he refused to look away from his imminent demise.

His eyes were wide open, his heart was wide open, and he was prepared for what would come next.

... Or so he thought.

~WHOOOOOOOSSSHHH!!!~

Like a flash of lightning, with the sound of Thunder, a blur suddenly pushed Legris away, knocking him off Jerry.

The instant the impact hit, Legris' entire body became mangled, ripped apart by an invisible force.

All of this occurred within a moment, as the next thing that appeared before Jerry right as he blinked was the very girl he thought of.

The one that filled his mind right as he was about to die.

"C-Ciara...?" Jerry whispered as he noticed the fierce-looking girl that stood beside him.

Her brown hair fluttered as her eyes shone purple. Energy danced around her as she looked in his direction.

"You have some explaining to do, Jerry..." She whispered.

At that moment, Jerry felt a strong sense of danger—even exceeding the overwhelming bloodlust Legris had given off.

He didn't know whether to be relieved for salvation, or frightful for annihilation.

Right now, the latter seemed more appealing.

"Who gave you the permission to die without me?"

As her voice echoed, so did the energy within her flicker and rise.

"I-I'm sorry...?" He managed to mutter.

Whether that would be enough or not was up to her.

He was still recoiling in shock as to how she was able to come into his dimension and one-shot Legris when he needed her the most.

"Much better. You're never leaving me, just as I'm never leaving you." Ciara's voice sent shivers down his spine, but strangely enough... It also made him happy.

Happy enough to forget the pain that currently coursed through his body.

A smile formed on her face as her eyes sparkled when they locked gazes.

At that point, everything else seemed to fade into obscurity.

"Next time... I won't forgive you, okay?"

\*

\*