

Chapter 2 Part 1

A month has passed since the annex of the Caldwen estate was smashed to pieces.

During that time, many things happened.

First, Reid informed his mother and the village chief back home that he could not return for the time being because he was now officially engaged to the eldest daughter of the Caldwen family, Elria.

His mother's response was, *"Oh, I see! It's a prank, right!? I won't be fooled, but I'm looking forward to seeing your father's reaction when he gets back!!"* and, *"If you are going to stay in the royal capital, can you send me some souvenirs?"*.

The engagement was officially approved by the family head, Alicia.

In addition to the first set of conditions, he also received a mix of encouragement and resentment, saying, *"Go make a name for yourself so that you can make up for the fact that you destroyed the annex"*.

Incidentally, Galleon, who had been blown away in the aftermath of the beating, was found without incident and is now back to work as a mage after being treated with healing magic.

"You have got over the father-in-law wall!!," he said and laughed loudly, so it is fair to say that he approved of Reid, too.

In the past month, Reid has also made several other preparations —

"— Wow, that's a hell of a crowd."

He arrived in front of the academy, where the examination was held, and expressed his feelings.

Vegalta Royal Magic Academy.

It is the oldest and most magnificent educational institution specializing in magic on the continent.

There are many other Magic Academies scattered throughout the continent, but Vegalta Royal Magic Academy, which is considered the cradle of magic, is ranked the highest among them.

The most advanced magic technology has been introduced throughout the academy, a library of knowledge in various magic fields has been gathered, and active mages with various achievements are in charge of teaching.

Even just gaining admission to the academy is a splendid career achievement, and anyone who took the entrance examination may be given preferential treatment as someone with an adequate amount of magic power.

There are many people of different ages and appearances at the examination venue. Some were clearly over thirty, while others were children who appeared to be just twelve years old. The older ones were probably those who had studied at other academies before enrolling in the Royal Magic Academy.

There are also those who wear local clothes, some wearing unfamiliar ornaments and others wearing what appears to be foreign folk clothing, indicating that the Royal Magic Academy in Vegalta is a special place in the world of magic supremacy.

“Come to think of it, Elria, you’re currently sixteen years old, right?”

“Yes. I’ll be sixteen this year.”

“Then why didn’t you enroll when you were twelve?”

“Because I was looking for Reid.”

“Well, thank you for your time.”

“And I also had to postpone it because of family matters.”

“...What do you mean by family matters?”

“The princess was scheduled to enter the academy at the same time as me, and if I did enter at the same time, I would have taken first place in everything, so the king personally asked me to postpone my entrance to keep up the appearance of the royal family.”

“To get a personal request from the king, as expected of Elria...”

“Yes. The sweets they gave me as a gift were very delicious.”

Elria nodded her head as she spoke of her carefree thoughts.

Although the Caldwen family's status is second only to the royal family, they still could not afford to disrespect the monarch's face, so Alicia must have arranged for the enrolment to be postponed.

But that was not the only reason for postponing it —

“So, Elria-san.”

“Hm...? What's the matter?”

“For how long are you going to stick behind me?”

Since arriving at the examination venue, Elria had been sticking behind Reid all the time.

She is carefully tugging at the hem of his clothes.

“Because... I feel like everyone is going to be looking at me...”

After answering, Elria shrinks back to hide.

In the past month, he has learned that Elria's popularity is quite high.

Not only is she from the Caldwen family that has inherited the name of the Sage, but she is also a child full of talent in magic that is worthy of her name and is even called the reincarnation of the Sage by those around her.

In fact, she is the very person herself, but those involved in magic must be so interested in her that they call her the 'Sage'.

And her appearance spurs the situation.

She has silver hair that shimmers gently in the sunlight, eyes the color of the deep sea that shine like jewels, and a face so well-featured that men and women of all ages would admire it.

And perhaps because of her slim and elegant body that would be the envy of any woman, her bosom, which, while not bosomy, certainly accentuates her femininity, stands out unintentionally.

When such a girl was walking around, everyone would involuntarily look at her.

However, for the shy Elria, the gazes of others are not something she is comfortable with.

As a result, she has been hiding behind Reid all the time.

“That’s why... I’m going to stick behind Reid like this...”

“It’s so hard to walk.”

“...Would it be easier to walk if it’s a piggyback ride?”

“A piggyback ride would just attract more attention.”

Reid scratches his head and lets out a sigh as Elria clutches his clothes.

“They’re not really looking at you in a weird way, but it’s because you’re cute.”

“...I am cute?”

Then, for the first time, Elria looked up, reacting with a twitch.

“Before, you were an elf, so you probably stood out, but now you’re just a regular human. So that’s what I mean when I say they are looking at you.”

“...Do you think so too, Reid?”

“Ah? This is not about me ——”

“It’s very important, so answer me.”

Elria tightens her grip on Reid’s clothes as she presses her lips together.

Not wanting to have his clothes torn, Reid told her honestly what he thought.

“Well... of course. I’d even want to brag about you to the people around me.”

“.....Thank you.”

After smiling, Elria let go of his clothes.

She then walks right next to Reid.

“In that case... I will make you proud.”

She looks up firmly with a smile.

After seeing Elria like that —

“Then you can let go of my sleeves, too.”

“T-There’s still a lot of people around... so I’m going to use you as a lifeline...”

“Is it really that hard to be out in public?”

She starts walking around looking sharper than before, even though she is still holding on to Reid’s thin sleeve for her dear life.

It does not look good since she is still holding on to the sleeve, but it is not so bad, considering that it is a step forward.

“— We’ll be conducting the practical examination shortly!! Those with a letter of introduction, please follow the instructions of nearby staff. General applicants, please gather at the place where the flag is raised!!”

A man, who is probably a staff member of the academy, shouts out, and the examinees start walking toward the designated area.

Following the instructions, Reid and Elria called out to a female staff member nearby.

“Excuse me, we were referred to by the Caldwen family...”

“Yes, may I see your letter of introduction?”

The female staff member nodded softly as Reid handed over the two letters of introduction he had received from Alicia.

“Elria Caldwen-sama and Reid Frieden-sama, right? I have verified your letters of introduction and will take you to the designated examination venue now.”

With a friendly smile, the female staff member leads the way.

“I never thought I would be able to guide the Caldwen family. Rumors have been circulating, especially about Elria-sama.”

“Mm... Thank you very much.”

Elria bowed awkwardly. As if like a wary small animal.

And now, the female staff member turns her attention to Reid.

“I’m sorry... but I have not heard of Reid-sama’s family name, but I assume you are related to the Caldwen family?”

“Reid is my fiancé.”

“Oh, I see, your fiancé...”

She spoke back vaguely, and then the staff member turned around vigorously.

“Elria-sama has a fiancé!?”

“Yes. We got engaged a month ago.”

“Then... congratulations, I guess?”

“Mm, thank you.”

Unlike earlier, Elria nodded her head in satisfaction.

“If I may ask, is Reid-sama from a distinguished family...?”

“No, I’m just an extra, so please don’t mind me.”

“T-That’s just not possible! The whole country will be interested in a man who is engaged to Elria-sama, who is said to be the reincarnation of the Sage, you know!?”

“Ahh, that’s how it goes after all...”

Reid waved his hand with a fed-up expression as the female staff member approached him excitedly.

That reaction was expected.

His position as Elria’s fiancé attracts undeniable attention from others.

That is why Reid must show a result that is worthy of it.

In other words, it is not just a matter of passing the examination like usual — he has to show overwhelming ability.

“Haa... this is really depressing.”

“Everything will be fine. I believe in Reid.”

“Thank you for your baseless words...”

Reid pats Elria on the head as she holds his hands and encourages him.

And so — another scene came into view.

“This will be the examination venue for our distinguished guests.”

It was a temporary lot outside the academy.

Facing away from the academy, some sort of device is set up.

“I hate to say this, but isn’t this a place a little too modest for distinguished guests?”

“I’m sorry to hear that... When it comes to guests who have been introduced to us, distinguished guests usually use magic that is so powerful and dangerous that we have to limit the damage through this method.”

The staff member bows her head apologetically with a wry smile.

Certainly, examinees would have to go all out to measure their abilities, and it is only natural that they have taken such measures to avoid the destruction of the equipment and damage to the academy.

“— Yeah! Please be careful, a big one is coming!!”

A red-haired girl with a shrill and joyful voice said, far above them.

Right below her — is a huge black dragon.

Over the past thousand years, magic has developed in many different forms.

Not only does it create and shoot things like fire and ice out of thin air, as it did a thousand years ago, but their shapes can be changed into any desired form and be used as weapons,

strengthening the mage's own physical abilities and senses, there is also healing magic to enhance natural healing power and revive lost tissues.

And... the girl who rides the dragon is using magic called summoning magic.

Generally, it is a magic that involves enslaving magical beasts, which are usually considered Kaijus that attack humans, and summon them at will to engage in battle as servants. This magic is difficult to handle because it requires not only the caster's magic power, but also the necessary qualifications recognized by the magical beast being enslaved.

However, the black dragon faithfully follows the girl without showing hostility toward her.

Perhaps noticing Reid's gaze, the staff member added.

"Ah... She is Rufus Lailas-sama of the Serios Federation."

"Serios Federation, you say... Are you talking about the country across the straits that lives in harmony with magical beasts?"

"Yes. The country is composed of seven Chief of State specializing in summoning magic, and is a country based on merit and talent, where superiority is determined by the magical beasts that have been enslaved."

"...But then, why did she end up at the Magic Academy in Vegalta?"

"Well, even though the disputes with other countries have long since ceased... it is a great honor for a country to produce great mages, and if they can produce results at Vegalta Royal Magic Academy, the cradle of magic, they would have an advantage in cross-national relations."

"In other words, it's like a proxy war between countries?"

"That's right. The king of Vegalta also recommends a magic competition between nations from the aspect of 'promoting the development of magic', and has promised to provide many benefits to the country where the top graduate belongs to. That is why influential people from other countries who have made a name for themselves and royalty from other countries who are talented in magic also wish to enroll in our Magic Academy."

This is a world where magic reigns supreme.

This is true not only for Vegalta but for other countries as well, not only for the benefits in diplomatic relations that the king of Vegalta has promised but also for the advantage that

magicians from their own country can have an advantage over other countries by producing results.

“Rufus-sama is also related to one of the seven Chief of State of the Serios Federation and is widely known as the <<Dragon Princess>> because she is able to handle all four dragons that are the symbols of her country, the ‘Guardian Dragons’.”

“Heh... that’s quite amazing.”

Looking at the giant jet-black dragon in the distance, he expressed his thoughts.

At that moment... Elria unexpectedly pulled his sleeve. Moreover, for some reason, she seems to be a little grumpy.

“What’s the matter?”

“...I can use summoning magic, too.”

“Ah... Well, that’s only natural for you.”

“I can use many other kinds of magic, too.”

“Ah... Show me something really spectacular next time.”

“Yes, I’ll show you something truly spectacular.”

Elria’s eyes were unusually motivated. It seems to have ignited her fighting spirit, but she must have remembered something from her old fighting days.

After such an exchange, the staff member from earlier led them to their designated position.

“Now then, please cast your magic toward the device placed over there.”

Pointing to a device visible in the distance, the staff member continued to explain.

“The device has multiple layers of protection and barrier magic attached to it. The result will be decided based on how much of that magic you can destroy within the time limit.”

“Does it matter what method is used to destroy that protection?”

“No, any method is acceptable. Basically, many would just use simple magic, but some people used the method of dismantling the magic itself by reversing it. That being said, the latter is a rare case, because it requires a deep knowledge of magic in general.”

In other words, it's to, *“Hit them with everything you got”*.

“I will be the judge. Who would like to go first?”

“Then let's start with me.”

With that, Elria took a step forward.

Then — she picked up the wand that was on her waist.

“——— **Deploy.**”

In response to her soft voice, the wand in her hand changed shape. It then became a staff as tall as Elria. The tip began to have rings circling around a deep sea-colored jewel in the center, shining faintly.

It is a magic tool that is made for Elria.

“This time, I want to show Reid something good, so ——”

Lightly handling the huge staff, Elria looked at the device in the distance and then,

“—— I will cast magic that's a little stronger.”

Such a muffled whisper.

As if to drown out her voice, a huge pillar of flame soared high into the sky.

The red pillar of flame turned the clear sky into a red lotus color as it engulfed the surrounding atmosphere with a thunderous roar similar to that of oxygen burning and exploding.

And now... there was not a shadow or figure left at the center of the explosion.

The surrounding area has turned to scorched earth, and the smoldering red flames continue to scorch the ground.

The sight left everyone speechless.

Seeing the overwhelming power, everyone understood the meaning of that word.



'Sage'.

A great being who stands at the pinnacle of mages, she is worthy of being called as such.

However, she turns around with a nonchalant expression on her face.

"How was it, Reid?"

"It was a lot more flashy than before."

"Because Reid wanted to see it. But I made sure to disable all the protection and barrier magic just before I unleashed, so it wouldn't lower the power of the magic."

"That's amazing. It's like the strongest set of greed."

"Yes, I tried a little harder."

Elria stares at Reid with a slight blush on her cheeks. Perhaps she wants to be praised.

As he patted Elria on the head to reward her for her efforts, the staff member who had been paralyzed with shock after witnessing the scene called out to him.

"H-How can you look so calm after seeing that...?"

"Ahh, well, I'm used to seeing that."

"That magic is equivalent to the highest level of magic, the tenth tier, you know!? I've never seen anyone other than those who are registered as special rank mages using it!!"

said the staff member with a mixture of excitement and awe in her voice.

However, it was something that Reid had seen many times.

In her previous life, Elria used not only the magic from earlier but more powerful and battle-oriented magic with fewer gaps. She used a wide range of magic, not only on Reid personally but also for strategic purposes. Compared to that, it was probably more modest.

"More importantly, what are you going to do with that, Elria?"

"That?"

“That scorched ground over there.”

Reid pointed to the ground that was being scorched by fire.

The pillar of flame created by the magic has vanished, but the fire damage brought about by it is still scorching the ground.

“...It’s beautiful, I guess?”

“I wasn’t asking for opinions...”

“Well, now I’ll use a different kind of magic to put out the fire.”

“The result is going to be a great flood. Oh well, I’ll handle it.”

In the stead of Elria, Reid steps forward.

“Excuse me, what would my evaluation be if I put that out?”

“Eh? Ah, yes, err... since that fire was created by magic, it would require magic of the same tier to offset it, so you would be evaluated to be on par with Elria-sama...”

“Ahh, then that would do it.”

Reid readies his fist as he gazes into a sea of blazing fire.

At that moment — the sensation of something gushing out was born inside his body.

The feeling as if one’s own body has switched to something else.

“——— **Ha!!**”

The moment Reid swung his fist with a short breath ——

The pressure of his punch instantly erased the red flames that were encroaching on his vision.

With a sound that shook the air and the ground, the red flames were smashed and extinguished by the blow, and the aftermath of the blow cratered the ground.

And so... the red color that was in sight vanished, and a devastated land of mixed black and brown spread out in front of them.

“Phew... it’s been a long time since I’ve blown off Elria’s magic.”

“It was a good punch just like old times.”

“But still, it doesn’t feel right... I used to use weapons and armor.”

“It’s still good enough. Reid is strong, after all.”

As she says this, Elria stretches her body to put her hand on Reid’s head.

It looked very painful, so Reid thought that he would lower his head next time.

As they were having such an exchange —

“Um... may I have a word with you two?”

The staff member trembled and showed the communication magic tool in her hand.

“The headmaster... wants me to bring in the people who had caused a ruckus here.”

The staff member who told them this was on the verge of tears.