

Ambrosial Alchemy

Dear Students,

I sincerely hope that the past four years you spent at the Arcane Institute of Magical Arts have been enjoyable. As you all know, AIMA is amongst the most prestigious and esteemed colleges that our world has to offer. Moreover, AIMA is a member of the renowned and reputable "Mystic League". The culmination of our academic voyage leads us to none other than the famed Arcanic Practical Dissertation. To obtain your degree, each of you will collaborate in groups to complete a unique project.

I wish you all the best of luck,

Professor Bivolo

Ben Clarke, Olivia Jackson and Ella Cooper all sat around a table at the Grand Atrium of AIMA, with its crystallized roof arched overhead, resembling a celestial sky of shimmering stars, sparkling and twinkling over the populous Atrium like a magnificent and exotic spectacle.

The hushed tone of students trickled over the Atrium like a mellifluous stream. The harmonious mood was a symphony of delight, aided by the throng of magical creatures fluttering above.

This euphony was briefly disrupted by an exuberant exclamation from Ella Cooper- "I can't wait for our Practical Dissertation!"

"I definitely can," said Ben, brimming with apathy. "I get a unique project, work on it for a month or two with two crazy girls, and, 'Oh! I forgot,' it's all assigned by Dear Professor Bivolo!" Ben finished mockingly.

"Two crazy girls?" Olivia questioned sarcastically, while staring blankly at the statue of some famed wizard.

Ben grunted in assent.

"Maybe if I lose my sanity we'll have three," Olivia retorted.

"Whatever you say" muttered Ben distractedly while striking his staff authoritatively to summon an Arcane Attendant for some spare Sorcerer's Scroll.

"Well it's 4 o'clock, time for us to receive our project." Ella chimed enthusiastically. "D'you reckon we'll get something easy? I heard that the worst project someone has ever gotten was to make a *variation of a spell*! Could you imagine that?"

"Is that what you're hoping for Ella?" Ben remarked, as the group ventured out the Atrium and through the stunning mahogany corridors, glancing at the resplendently

vibrant portraits of those same statued, old-timers, as Ben called them; “Because you seem overjoyed at the prospect”

“I just hope we pass this silly ‘Arcanic Magical Dissertation’ to get our degree” Olivia declared emphatically.

“Arcanic *Practical* Dissertation” Ella corrected, while sighing disdainfully.

Her mood illuminated, however, as they eventually arrived at the ornate, heavy oaken door of Professor Bivolo’s office. It had the intricate embroidery of the Mystic League, and it imposed a menacing and intimidating mood as it gazed upon them haughtily. Ben rapped the door 3 times in quick succession. With a creak, the door oozed open. Professor Bivolo sat there waiting, with an inviting glare and a beckoning smile, he called upon the trio to advance. Ben, Ella and Olivia cautiously ventured into the embellished and elaborate room. They all sat at command of the Professor’s gesticulation, and they waited anxiously.

“You all have great potential in this ‘Wild World of Mysterious Magic and Mystics,’” Prof. Bivolo commenced.

“Of course he quoted Silas Ward,” Ella mouthed exasperatedly.

“Is there an issue?” Professor Bivolo questioned. Taking the silence as an answer he continued, “therefore, I am faced with a conundrum. I could give you all a simple incantation or recitation for your practical dissertation, or,”

Ben winced bracingly.

“I could push the boundaries of magic, and present you with an unparalleled challenge—a quest that will validate your ingenuity and perspicacity. You will create a spell” Bivolo finished with a flourish as he snapped his gauntlets.

At that moment Ben, Ella and Olivia felt a rejuvenating aura sweep over them like a zephyr. Ben flinched, staring at those gauntlets, he was already petrified at the prospect of some difficult task for his dissertation, and now Professor Bivolo was suggesting something even more daunting. He had to find a way to make his dissertation a success or risk his entire education.

“2 weeks in, and we don’t even know what we want our spell to do!” Ella declared wildly.

“No need to panic,” Ben began desperately, “let’s just think. Maybe Bivolo gave us some clue when he was giving us our quest.”

“You think Bivolo -Sage of the Unknown, Arcane Arbiter, Miserly Master, Meanest Professor at AIMA- would be kind enough to give us a *hint*?” Olivia said incredulously.

“Do I need to remind you that he failed all of us on our incantation projects *just* because our pronunciation wasn’t ‘magical’ enough.”

“Wait, who was that wizard that Bivolo quoted, Ella?” Ben asked, ignoring Olivia.

“His name was Silas Ward II, and he was incredibly influential in the development of all the spells and potions that we have today.” Ella started. “He passed 80 years ago from—”

“Magical Overdose!” exclaimed Ben and Ella simultaneously.

“That’s perfect,” Ben began, “If we can make a spell that cures Magical Overdose, then we’ll be the most famous witches and wizards ever!”

“Yeah, but it’s not like Magical Overdose is an easy fix, it affects hundreds of millions of people every year and- Ben, do you even know what MO does?” Olivia questioned.

“Of course..” Ben started nervously, “it’s an overdose.. of magic!”

“Ben, MO is a very serious issue, it happens when witches and wizards spend too much time around concentrated magic,” Ella explained with an aura of a teacher, “if someone spends too much time around their wands, staffs, gauntlets, whatever, it can lead to a deprivation of the magic inside them.”

“It doesn’t seem *that* difficult,” Ben remarked, “we just need to look at the cause.”

“What causes MO, Ella? Olivia questioned, finally trying to contribute.

“No one really knows, but there are many theories and sources. The main one- infected ambrosia” Ella stated.

“Ambrosia?” Ben said dubiously. “Ambrosia, the healing elixir?”

“Yes, before Ambrosia is formulated into a liquid elixir form, it’s in a semi-solid form, kind of like a honeycomb. Many experts suggest that during its distillation process, it tends to get infected. No one has been able to take action because the Ambrosia industry is so huge, and so many people depend on it” Ella said.

“Ok, that theory checks out, ambrosia needs to be activated by magic, and when you spend more time around magic you get exhausted, and consume more ambrosia.”

“Exactly, and the issue with infected ambrosia is that it isn’t fully purified, and it still lies in your system, intact; then spending time around magic activates the ambrosia and poisons your magic; inside of you.”

“We need to start researching about that- compile our knowledge -mainly Ella’s- and spend our time working on a spell”

“Perfect, I agree” said Olivia, who had zoned out at the sign of complex magical talk, her effort for contribution crushed.

The trio converged at the Atrium, pouring over books, analyzing and studying the composition of Ambrosia and potential flaws in its structure.

As they worked, Olivia began to seem more and more fidgety. It occurred consistently until...

“I’ve got to go,” Olivia said suddenly.

Despite Ben and Ella’s protests, Olivia got up promptly and left, in a hurried manner.

“This is only the second session she’s joined, and she’s left early *again*.”

“I know, and she has such a disgusted look whenever we analyze flaws of ambrosia”

“You noticed that too?” exclaimed Ben.

“Yeah, it’s like we’re insulting her each time we find a defect.”

“I mean, I kind of get her, Ambrosia is amazing, it heals any disease, other than MO, because it causes it, and it tastes like whatever we want it to!”

“Of course, I see your point, but there’s no reason that she should have *that* much of an emotional connection.”

“I know, there’s something she isn’t telling us..” Ben finished dramatically.

They both burst out laughing, but as the echoes of their mirth faded away, the air was still thick with Olivia’s absence— solidifying the change, from friend to enigma.

As Ben and Ella continued their research in the Grand Atrium, Olivia’s absence became more and more profound. All the magic around them seemed less enchanting without the vibrant energy that Olivia brought.

Olivia’s departures became more and more of a pattern, and as the days of poring over monotonous books, scrolls and ancient texts stretched into weeks; Ben, and even Ella began to feel discouraged.

One evening, after another abrupt departure from Olivia, Ben turned to Ella with a determined look, “We can’t keep ignoring this, Ella. Something’s wrong with Olivia, and it’s affecting all of us. We need to find out what’s going on”

Ella nodded in agreement, her concern mirroring Ben’s. They decided to confront Olivia, aiming to provide support for Olivia and whatever burdened her.

The next day, when the trio gathered together in the Atrium, the tension was palpable. Olivia was clearly distraught, her eyes puffy and red. Sensing some apprehension, Olivia attempted to hide the distress etched on her face.

“Olivia, we’ve noticed something’s not right” Ben began gently. “You’ve been leaving abruptly, and it feels like you need to tell us something. Whatever it is, you can trust us”

Olivia began to tear up as the weight of her personal turmoil compounded. It all began to spill out.

“My mother is in a critical condition right now,” Olivia began shakily, “she’s on the verge of- of- she’s only hanging on because of Ambrosia right now.”

“Olivia, I’m so sorry, I didn’t know you had such a storm to weather,”

“Likewise, I’m so sorry Olivia,” exclaimed Ella

“I completely regret not telling you guys about my situation, but I thought I could handle it on my own. However, there is a positive to this situation.”

Ben and Ella stared at each other incredulously.

“My mother has been suffering for a long time, from MO actually, but that means I’ve been studying everything about MO since I was a kid. I’ve discovered that the fibers of infected Ambrosia in one’s system are very difficult to break down, however, if we use the causative agent itself, it might be curable with the right spell.”

Ben and Ella, now intrigued by Olivia's sudden breakthrough, leaned in to hear more.

"You see, the key is to understand how Ambrosia causes MO, and how we can reverse it *inside* of the victim's system. It's not just regarding the purification of Ambrosia; it's making sure that it's completely compositionally deconstructed. So, I've discovered that the only way to truly purify infected Ambrosia inside a person's system; by combating Ambrosia *with* Ambrosia. If we somehow formulate a spell that harmonizes the causative agent with its purified counterpart we can heal MO.

Ben's eyes widened with realization. "So, we use Ambrosia not just as a healing elixir, but as a catalyst agent for a spell, so it will directly counter the effects of MO? That's brilliant!"

Ella, her mind practically vibrating with innumerable possibilities, added, "So synchronizing the effects of Ambrosia with the spell will create a viable remedy for Magical Overdose?"

"What are we waiting for?" They all exclaimed simultaneously.

Ben, Ella and Olivia all rushed to the Archives. They needed to formulate and create the spell quickly. They all delved into the various components needed for the spell.

"The spell is very Ambrosia based, so when we create it, we'll need a large supply" Olivia stated.

"Lucky for us, our Healing Ward has a *massive* supply of Ambrosia at our disposal- I'll be right back." exclaimed Ben.

As the group converged, they all compiled their knowledge, and individual insight. Ella, with her extensive knowledge of magical theory, suggested theorems and formulations during the process. Ben's knack for physical applications helped the trio, though not as much as his humor. Olivia drew on her personal experience and intensive study to provide invaluable details and caveats on the nature of Ambrosia.

At last, with a simultaneous snap of gauntlets, strike of staff, and swish of wand the spell was created. The spell was a magnificent amalgamation of the properties of purified Ambrosia.

"We did it. I can't believe we did it" Ella kept mouthing breathlessly.

They all stared at each other, stupefied at their genius.

They rushed to Professor Bivolo's office, regardless of the unholy hour. Ben rapped the door 3 times in quick succession. This time, there was a slight delay before the door opened. Professor Bivolo's silky voice sounded through the night.

"Who is it?"

"Ben Clarke, Olivia Jackson and Ella Cooper, Professor."

Professor Bivolo opened the door with a very vexed face.

“Professor, we’re extremely sorry to bother you, but we’ve successfully created the spell to counteract Magical Overdose,” Ben announced eagerly.

Professor Bivolo’s stern expression softened as he examined the trio. “Well, this is indeed unexpected. Come in, show me what you’ve got.”

The trio entered the synergy between purified and infected Ambrosia, the harmonization of magical properties, and the potential it held for curing Magical Overdose. As Professor Bivolo listened, his eyes glinted with a mix of curiosity and approval.

“Impressive work, students. You’ve not only met the challenge but surpassed my expectations. Now, the true test awaits. You must demonstrate the efficacy of your spell.”

With a nod from Professor Bivolo, Ben retrieved a vial containing a small amount of infected Ambrosia from his bag. The trio gathered around, their hearts pounding with anticipation. With a synchronized incantation, they cast the spell over the vial, weaving the magic to counteract the effects of Magical Overdose. A soft glow enveloped the vial as the spell took hold. The infected Ambrosia underwent a visible transformation, purifying before their eyes. Professor Bivolo observed with a keen gaze, nodding in approval as the spell demonstrated its effectiveness.

“Well done, he finally remarked, his voice carrying a rare note of admiration. You’ve not only created a spell but a potential solution to a longstanding magical ailment. This accomplishment will be recognized beyond the walls of AIMA. This confirms the theory that Magical Overdose is caused by nothing other than poisoned Ambrosia.”

The news of their success spread through the Mystic League, earning the trio a newfound respect among their peers. They became known not only for their academic prowess but as pioneers in magical healing. As for Olivia, the spell held a personal significance that surpassed academic achievement. The potential cure for Magical Overdose brought hope to her family and countless others who suffered from the affliction. The bond between Ben, Ella, and Olivia strengthened, solidified by the challenges they overcame and the triumph they achieved. In the weeks that followed, the trio continued refining their spell, documenting its effects, and exploring potential applications. Their work not only altered the fabric of their magical reality, but the fabric of their camaraderie.