

S vs Rebirth 131

Chapter 131 Progress

After that day, Noel had never spoken a single word to Anna anymore. It was clear that there was a bridge between their relationship.

On the one hand, Anna had taken the first step to her change which was to apologize. On the other hand, Noel still couldn't accept that apology.

She could understand Noel's perspective since she might do something even worse if she was in his position. In fact, it was because Noel was kind that he became like this.

She never saw that kindness a weakness. After all, Noel helped so many people and gained many allies from all around the kingdoms in the past. That kindness became the bond between him and the people. That was why Noel's kindness was actually his biggest strength.

The biggest challenge to that kindness was the hatred toward her family and the royal family.

In the past, Anna never apologized and kept being ignorant. That was why it was easy for Noel to decide an uprising to take his revenge.

In this life, Anna wanted to change for the better. She wasn't a cruel person anymore that killed people just because she wanted to do it. Instead, she tried to help others as much as she could like how Noel treated others.

That was why it became much harder for Noel to kill her. And that was why Noel didn't want to be indebted or reliant on her.

Although it looked like a foolish move, Noel stopped sparring with Anna because he had to sort his feeling out.

At the same time, if he continued like this for the next two months, he would lose a total of 180 spars, which could transfer to 0.5% of Spiritual Energy with his training. It didn't look much right now, but Noel would surely feel the effect in the far future when he had more Spiritual Energy.

So, Noel ended up training by himself for five days by himself before he asked Anna to meet him in a quiet place.

Anna and Noel stared at each other for a while before Noel finally opened his mouth. "Sorry, but I don't think I can accept your apology."

Anna had expected this reply, but she still felt disappointed when hearing it from Noel. She closed her eyes for a moment and said, "I can understand that."

Looking at Anna's disappointed expression, Noel added, "I hope that you don't mention it for now..."

"!!!" Anna's expression brightened as she looked at Noel in surprise. Noel's meaning was clear.

'For now.' Those two words meant a world to her because it was clear that the chance for Noel to finally forgive her was there. She just had to keep proving her determination until they reached that point. In the future, there might be a chance for them to finally make up and become a true ally. These two words gave so much hope in her heart.

She didn't know why but she could picture herself standing side by side with Noel as they fought numerous enemies. Unlike the past life where they always clashed their blades against each other, they would protect each other's back and rise to a greater height.

Noel took a deep breath and said, "And... I don't think I want to meet you for the rest of the week. But I'll make sure that I'll be like my previous self after that... It might become awkward afterward, but I hope you don't mind and start teaching me horse riding."

After saying everything that needed to be said, Noel then walked away.

Anna watched Noel's back with a smile on her face. Those two words simply gave her too much hope that she couldn't contain her smile for a few minutes.

Just like Noel promised, he didn't meet her for the next two days as if he tried his best to return to the previous him, treating her apology as if it never happened.

And when he returned, he still acted a bit awkward because of the bridge between them. Luckily, Anna didn't mind that and tried her best in smoothing their conversation.

Anna even brought the horse with Shale's permission to teach Noel. With training, they could smoothen the conversation since everything would be around the training, making them forget about what had happened.

Due to their bodies that had yet to fully develop, the two managed to fit together on a saddle, allowing Anna to hold Noel's hands to teach him better.

Unknown to them, the people could only look at them from far away, not daring to go near them because they didn't want to destroy the good atmosphere around them.

Other than Noel's hatred, they looked like a couple or a rival whenever they trained together after all.

They didn't realize it themselves, but the others had considered them as a thing already.

Nonetheless, the time continued to pass. Noel had learned how to ride a horse and they wouldn't have any problem in having a long journey.

With the Moon Blessing in mind, they decided to get a mission near that area as well so that they could finish it when they traveled together.

They ended up taking a group mission together. To balance it, they wanted to take an individual mission, but Noel hesitated because he had to visit the neighboring kingdom to investigate his family.

After talking it through between them, they agreed to a few things that would smoothen their progress in completing the requirement for graduation while becoming as strong as possible when the fort was still providing them with free lessons from Shale.

Two months later.

The day for them to leave the fort for the group mission had finally arrived.

Noel was putting on his clothes while walking and looking at the status, seeing the progress he had for the past two months.

Name: Noel Ardagan

Job: Rune Swordsman

Weapon: Ardagan Sword

Main Medal: Demon Hunter Medal (Sensing all demons within 50 meters)

Honor Point: 38 Pts

Skill Point: 0 Pts

Status: Stamina +2.2%, Constitution +2.2%, Sword Mastery +2.2%, Spiritual Energy +2.0%, Rune Mastery +1.0%

Low Quality Crystal - 257/5000

Mid Quality Crystal - 33/3000

With his progress, he was ready to take on the challenge again.

Chapter 132 Mission Update

"Let's go." Noel nodded to Anna next to him.

"Yes."

"By the way, do you have any idea about the problem that the Saintess currently facing?"

"You don't know anything about it?" Anna looked at him with a weird expression. Noel already knew about the location of the Saintess and even noticed the trick to get the Moon Blessing earlier, so she expected Noel to know the problem as well.

However, Noel could only shake his head since his mission only told him to go there. Because he was afraid of drought or something similar, he had been storing all the Honor Points he had gathered in the past two months.

After all, there was a case of the village he previously visited. So, he thought there might be a need to summon another water gallon to help them.

Meanwhile, Anna thought, 'Now that I think about it, I never paid attention in the past about what the Saintess did. All I knew was the fact that the Saintess always took a heavy job because that was where her power would work better.

'If only I was an information broker in the past... Or at least someone who worked in espionage, I would have gotten many more information about things happening all around the kingdom. Albeit, my limited knowledge didn't have the information about the Saintess' job.

'When I subjugated her, I only learned that the Saintess had three main Spirit Abilities. The first ability was Moon Barrier. During the day, the demons would be easier to spot and defeat. But during the dark, people had limited vision, forcing them to stay closely and not do anything.

'The Moon Barrier is to erect a barrier blessed by the moon, allowing her to protect everything inside that barrier as long as the moon is still up.

'So, I had to fight the Saintess during the day when she got corrupted by the demon. Then, the second ability was Moon Tears. It was a dangerous Spirit Ability that almost killed me. But still, the most dangerous ability she had should be the third ability, Moon Recall. The ability to create a moon for herself. The Saintess was the strongest during the night, so creating the moon for herself allowed her to fight during the day with her strongest strength.

'Still, these three abilities didn't show much about her mission.' Anna thought for a moment before noticing something. 'Now that I think about it, the Saintess was supposed to be corrupted by the demon, right? Because her blessing was strong, she could fight against the corruption for a while, but... when did the Saintess first get corrupted by the demon? If we could prevent it, wouldn't it mean we could fix the situation?

'But then again, is preventing the problem the solution? Noel wasn't supposed to be this strong in my previous life but because of my interference, he grew far faster... If I stopped the Saintess' corruption, what effect would it bring in the future? I won't be able to use the future information anymore.'

Anna was in dilemma. Unlike Noel who was good at coming up with a solution of everything they faced, Anna's thought always wandered about her past life since that was where her advantages lied.

Anna had been considering about her action because she didn't want to get involved too much since she didn't know whether her action would bring good or bad to the world.

Noticing Anna's expression, Noel furrowed his eyebrows, asking, "What's wrong?"

"Ah?!" Anna was startled and immediately turned to Noel while fidgeting.

"I don't know what you're thinking, but it seems to be serious. So, if you're thinking about our mission, can you share that information with me?"

Anna scratched the back of her head. She hesitated for a few minute before asking Noel, "Do you know what it means a divine revelation?"

"Divine Revelation? As in a divination from a being stronger than us?" Noel tilted his head in confusion. Since they were talking about the Saintess, it was clear that her temple had a God that they worshiped,

so Noel believed she was talking about it, not realizing that she was just camouflaging her knowledge about the future.

"Yes. If you have that kind of phenomenon and know the future and see there's a suffering in that place, will you go save them even if it means sacrificing everything?" Anna asked.

Noel's expression darkened. This was indeed a tricky question. On the one hand, if he didn't agree to go, he would be selfish. On the other hand, if he went there, he would lose everything.

After some contemplation, Noel opened his mouth. "If there's such a thing, I won't give up my life."

"Yes, I can understand that." Anna nodded her head in understanding, expecting this answer.

However, Noel also added, "Still, I won't run away."

"Eh?" Anna widened her eyes as if she understood something from Noel's words.

"You mentioned 'the future' specifically, so it means that it hasn't happened. In other words, you shouldn't be sacrificing everything right now. If that's the case, then there are many routes I can go like asking for help, more preparation, and other things... Or in the worst case, I'll save them by making them run away as far as they can. If everything I've done has failed, then it's time for me to run away... I am just a selfish person. I save people when I can, but I won't go all the way to sacrifice my life for them. For me, I think that staying alive is better because I can save more people with it." Noel shook his head, explaining his thought.

"Staying alive is better..." Anna looked down as if she was thinking about something. 'Was that why you never killed me in the past?'

Anna wouldn't know the answer because that was the experience unique only to her in the past. But Noel's words were enough for her to steel her determination.

She looked at Noel with a solemn expression and said, "I don't know what the Saintess' problem right now, but I do know that she's going to be corrupted by a demon sooner or later. When that happens, it would be a nightmare that has to be subjugated."

[Mission has been updated.]

[Mission: Help the Saintess of the Moon Temple in Argali Town]

[Description: The Saintess will soon be corrupted. Go and save her within 75 days.]

[Reward: Moon Blessing and 21 SP]

[Penalty: Regret.]

Chapter 133 Hope

"!!!" Noel was shocked. In Anna's eyes, Noel had this expression due to the shocking revelation about the Saintess. But in Noel's perspective, the mission became clearer.

This was the first time he saw a mission update from Ardagan.

'As expected, it seems that Ardagan has some information about the future while Anna has some knowledge about everything in the world. If I use Anna's knowledge to stimulate Ardagan, I can get more unique missions like this.' Noel got a bit excited because it was clear that he needed to use Anna's knowledge to discover more and more missions.

Only a special mission like this could give so much benefits unlike his repetitive missions.

p After some considerations, Noel said, "Alright. Assuming what you said is true, do you know any demon that can influence such a person?"

"You believe me?" Anna stared at Noel in disbelief. If it was any other person, they would consider her a heresy by cursing the Saintess.

"You won't say something without thinking it through. You are dumber than me, but by no means, you are an idiot. Even though I suspect you too, I'll still listen to what you have to say. Only then will I make a decision." Noel explained.

"Dumber than you..." Anna's eyebrows twitched.

"Don't deny it, that's a fact." Noel calmly replied.

"Fine, fine. I might be dumber than you, but you're weaker than me!"

"You can fix weakness by getting stronger, but you can't fix stupid."

"..." Anna was speechless as she had never won in an argument with Noel. She could make him fall into tricks, but Noel could truly come up with any argument as long as he could lie. Still, she truly wanted to smack him in the head.

"I'll be a bigger person and forgive what you said." Anna snorted and tried to calm her heart down. After that, she said, "Anyway, to answer your question, the demon should be an Advanced Level Demon. I don't know about the type of that demon, considering Demons can grow stronger by influencing living beings like beasts, livestock, or even plants."

"I see. The Advanced Level Demon is scary, but the Saintess should have a good blessing whatever, right?"

"Yes. That's why the Advanced Level Demon shouldn't be that strong in terms of combat because its talent lied on its corruption ability. Still, we're talking about Advanced Level Demon, there was a big difference between Mid Level Demon and Advanced Level Demon..."

Noel squinted his eyes and continued her words. "Because Advanced Level Demons could behave like a human. The previous Advanced Level Demon we found in the Demon Forest, it could fight like you but with stronger power, so..."

"Yep. It's going to be a dangerous mission, but we should still have enough power to kill it." Anna nodded.

The two seemed to have come to an agreement on how to approach the Saintess this time. And they continued their journey to make sure they weren't too late.

...

In Argali Town.

At the top of the clock tower, the highest point of the city, a person stood below the bell that always rang whenever a day had passed.

She had a white robe covering her body but her eyes seemed to be covered with a blindfold. Despite such condition, she seemed to be able to see everything and had no trouble in moving around.

When she reached the top of the tower, she was looking at the night sky, specifically the crescent moon above her.

It was a tranquil city. The city wasn't big, but it certainly had many things they needed. But they certainly had a big problem.

The moment she lowered her vision, she could see a dome-shaped translucent barrier that covered the entire city.

Many demons were swarming the barrier and kept hitting it as if they wanted to break it, but to no avail.

Still, the fact that the entire city was surrounded from all directions meant there was no path to enter or exit the city.

There wouldn't be any supply coming into this city and vice versa. The longer it continued, the harsher the situation would become as the city would be destroyed because the people inside died due to starvation.

Suddenly, the woman glanced to the back before a man covered in armor emerged from the stairs, bringing a plate of food.

"Saintess. Please eat your food... We can't afford to have you collapse because you don't eat anything." The man paused for a moment, looking at the Saintess. He wanted to say many things, but the words stuck in his throat. In the end, he put down the plate and left her. "Please eat it, Saintess."

It turned out the woman was the Moon Temple's Saintess. She was looking at the food and frowned. "The food still has meat, but there's no more seasoning. The water has become a bit scarcer as well... And this must be the best food they can give me... How about the people? They might not be able to eat in this circumstances... the town has truly suffered."

The Saintess bit her lips, regretting the fact that she couldn't do anything to help them. The only thing she could do was to erect that barrier during the night to let the people recover for their fatigue from fighting against the demons during the day.

"And I don't think I can last for that long either..." The Saintess bit her lips while glancing to the west where she spotted a black spot on her golden-colored barrier. It was clear that such a color shouldn't appear in that barrier, especially with the fact that it continued spreading to all directions.

She fell on her knees while joining her hands, praying. "Dear Moon Goddess... please bless us with your grace. If you need a sacrifice, please use my body as a sacrifice to help all 1021 people left in the city. Please send your help because we can't last any longer."

Suddenly, the light of the moon seemed to be enveloping her body. The Saintess felt a slight discomfort in her body but there was one word that suddenly flashed in her mind.

And that word was...

"Hope."

Chapter 134 False Hope

"Hurry up!"

"These gates will be getting ran by the demons soon."

"Reinforce the other gates."

The soldiers were shouting at each other, trying to defend the gates from the monsters that came to them.

Some demons managed to jump so high that it surpassed the wall, so they had to deal with those demons. Obviously, normal soldiers couldn't deal with the demons by themselves. But it would be different with height advantages.

When those demons tried to jump, the normal soldiers just shoved their spears onto them before they could attack them.

Those with thinner skin would get stabbed while those with thicker skin would be able to repel them and reach the top of the wall.

It was then the holy knights under the Saintess worked as they eliminated the demons before they could kill the demons.

Meanwhile, the demons that couldn't go that high would ram their bodies as if trying to take down the wall. Unfortunately for them, the wall was sturdy enough for them. They wouldn't be destroyed so soon, considering most of the demons were Low Level Demons.

It would be a different case if the majority that attacked their city was a Mid Level Demons or stronger. Their attacks contained Spiritual Energy, so the city would be destroyed sooner or later.

"Our people are getting exhausted," said one of the knights.

"How many soldiers left?" Another knight with a golden armor asked while furrowing his eyebrows, looking at these demons.

"The normal soldiers are around one thousand left. As for the holy knights, Albres and Hensai have passed away from their injuries."

"Tsk. If this continues, we won't be able to hold this city for long... The most we can do is three more days..." The knight bit his lips, trying to find a solution. "There is also a problem with the supply. We don't have much supply, so we're weaker."

"Will the reinforcement even come?"

"I don't know. The city is under the Earldom's jurisdiction. The Earl has supplied us with two thousand soldiers at the start, but because everything has been blocked, we can't get any more support from him. Then again, no one wants to go to a city filled with demons... We can only expect the royal family to send their elite army." The knight paused for a moment and asked, "How is the Saintess?"

"Her body has grown significantly weaker. It seems that she's enduring pain whenever using the barrier."

"This is going to be troublesome." The knight remembered the black spots that had been contaminating the Saintess' barrier. The Saintess had been denying everything to make them feel assured, but he was the captain of the Holy Knights that came with her, so he knew everything.

Those black spots were eating away the Saintess' soul, so it would be troublesome if they didn't deal with them as soon as possible.

"What's the situation in the city?"

"All elderly, women, and children have been evacuated to the temple's basement. Even if we have to fall, they should be able to wait until the reinforcement comes."

"Good. The least we can do is to have as many survivors as possible."

"There is one thing that I want to ask, Captain... Has Goddess of the Moon abandoned us?"

The holy knight captain's eyebrows twitched as he slapped the knight's cheek and looked at him coldly.
"Never say that again!"

"..." The knight felt the slap was unjustified since he thought the situation already had no other route other than death. But a female's voice soon echoed in his ears.

"Our Goddess hasn't abandoned us. This is just a trial from her... However, please don't give up hope as she has told me that hope will appear today."

"!!!" The two knights turned around and saw the Saintess coming to the wall. They immediately lowered their heads with their right hand on their chest. "Saintess."

The knight captain immediately asked, "Please don't go to the wall, Saintess. It's dangerous."

"Even though I'm the Saintess, do you forget that my power is above you."

"But you... you have exhausted your power..." The knight captain gritted his teeth, worried.

"Please say no more. I come here to see the hope that will appear today." The Saintess smiled.

"The hope, huh..." The knight captain muttered, wondering what kind of hope that would come to this forsaken place. "Who will come? I do know the Royal Army won't come to this place. Even if they come, it'll be too late due to the distance."

"I'm not sure. But they seem to be the one that will solve our problems." The Saintess shook her head.
"Can you keep a close look to our surroundings to see whether they are around or not?"

"I understand. Please wait in the city. I'll inform you as soon as they come."

"I've told you that I'll wait here." The Saintess shook her head. "Even if I have exhausted my Spiritual Energy, it's still enough to use my barrier for a bit, so you don't need to care about my safety."

The knight captain reluctantly agreed and informed. "Tell the other squad captain along with Knight Romanez that there might be a group of people coming to this city today. Inform me as soon as they find them."

"Understood." The knight bowed his head and immediately rushed to the other walls.

Now that they were alone, the Saintess asked with a serious tone. "How long can we last?"

"The water has almost run out. Two days, our casualties will increase by half. Three days, most people will die. Four days, then the city will be overrun by the demons." The knight captain informed her the real situation which was more dire than the one he told the knight earlier. "I'm sorry. It's not that I believe you, but even if they come, can they solve this problem before today is over?"

"I don't know." The Saintess shook her head. "But they're certainly the hope."

"..." The knight captain sighed as he could only place his hope on this unknown group that would come to save them.

But to his surprise, when he raised his vision, he found two youngsters standing on top of the tree three hundred meters away from them. They were looking at the city as if they were assessing them.

"What?! Children? Are you kidding me?"

Chapter 135 Speechless

Meanwhile, Noel and Anna who had been standing on top of the tree to assess the situation.

"So, how are we going to get inside the city, Noel?" Anna asked.

"I'm not sure. What do you think you can do to enter?" Noel replied with another question.

Anna thought for a moment and said, "Duplication Rune. If I have enough time, I can use the Duplication Rune to duplicate our power up to eight. It means, our Spirit Ability would become eight for one moment."

"So, you know about rune and can use it too?"

"Hehe." Anna chuckled, refusing to give any explanation.

"Anyway, we have a horse to bring as well, so..."

"Yes, I understand. We need to enter through the gate. But the monster will enter together if they open the gate, so it'll be a bit of a dilemma." Anna nodded in understanding. "What do you think about running them over? With our superior firepower?"

"But will they open the gate? That's the most important question." Noel shook his head, thinking about the most important problem. If they didn't open the gate, they had to abandon their horse and leaped to the city wall.

"Fair enough. Still, there are around one to two hundred demons on this side... If we multiple it by four, there are around 500-700 demons."

"What's wrong with that multiplication?"

"Just using a more accurate range." Anna shrugged. "Anyway, most of them are only Low Level Demon, so that's good. Do you think we can kill them?"

"From the top of the wall, that is. It's impossible to kill them all from the outside unless you want to get swarmed by hundreds of demons in an instant." Noel thought for a moment and said, "Well, I think I know how to enter."

"Heh." Anna smirked. "Let's go then."

Noel nodded. "Prepare your Duplication Rune."

After Noel gave the instruction, he looked at the wall and found that someone was actually looking at them. Even if they didn't, they should be able to see what he was going to make.

Noel turned around and looked at the trees in their surrounding. Without hesitation, he chopped down the trees, making Anna panic.

"Wh-what are you doing?"

"Sending a message." Noel shrugged. He continued chopping a few trees then used his Strength Blessing Rune to allow him to carry this wood and even erect it.

He placed them to each other and even used his ice to freeze the joint so they stayed together, forming four words.

"Open"

That was the word that Noel wanted to convey by arranging the logs. And with the trunk's size, it should be easily visible from the top of the wall.

As expected, the one that was confused the most was none other than the holy knight captain. "What the heck? Open? What do you mean by open?"

"Opening the gate, I think." The Saintess added. "So, the hope has truly come."

"Saintess. There must be something wrong with this. I can see two people from here, but they are not even an adult. Are you going to pin your hope on them? There must be another group that will come here later."

The Saintess thought for a moment and still decided. "Open the gate."

"Saintess!"

"That's my decision. I'll use my barrier as soon as they enter so that you have enough time to close the gate again." The Saintess clenched her fists as if she believed they were the hope.

"Saintess!" The knight captain tried to persuade her. On the one hand, he didn't have any hope in these two kids. On the other hand, he didn't want the two kids to get involved in this problem, considering it was a dangerous situation that could endanger their lives.

"Unless they're a complete fool, they won't charge straight at the city surrounded by demons. So, that means they have enough confidence to handle these demons."

The knight captain gritted his teeth. He glanced to the side and realized the soldiers had also seen the message from afar.

"Ten people with me. We will open the gate. Carlos, you handle the timing."

"Yes, Sir!"

He took another look and found Noel and Anna had started moving. "What the heck? Are they so confident that they have come right away? Hurry up! If we're too late to open the gate, they're going to be swarmed by the demons."

The knight captain ended up moving down as quickly as possible despite his continuous rants.

Meanwhile, the soldiers, whose eyes were not as good as the captain, could see the appearance of their reinforcement.

"Children?"

"How old are they?"

"What's wrong with this?"

"Are these kids playing with their lives?"

There were so many doubts in the soldiers' minds, not believing that Noel and Anna could do anything.

However, the next thing they realized, those two children proved how wrong they could be.

Anna clapped her hand and formed a huge rune on top of her head.

"Where do you want to strike them?"

"Lining them up to the gate." Noel instructed.

"Got it." Anna clapped her hand again. Another eight runes appeared and Anna arranged four to each side.

When they almost reached the gate, they could see that the gate gradually opened. Noel and Anna could see several feet behind the gates.

"The gate is opening. We shall slow down and prepare to handle the demons before us." Anna warned Noel.

Noel's reply came in the form of action. He swung his sword and shot the Spiritual Energy into the rune.

Suddenly eight giant swords appeared next to the gate.

"!!!" Anna widened her eyes. 'I had seen this skill.'

But her thought was disrupted when Noel shouted, "Prepare an explosion to blow up their corpses!"

As soon as he gave the instruction, the eight giant swords fell down and pierced the demons that stood below it. None of them were spared no matter how tough their skin was.

But more importantly, the swords were lining up perfectly that they could block the demons' advance for a while, giving them a passage to enter the gate.

As long as they annihilated the demons in the passage, they could easily enter the city.

This was the time for Noel to show the result of his training. The Ancient Spirit Technique that he hadn't been able to use a few months ago.

Noel waved his sword and sent a beam of light toward the monster, but soon the beam bounced from one place to another, making a random and unpredictable attacks.

"Bouncing Spirit Slash."

It was a massacre. Without being able to move around, the demons fell one by one.

Anna also didn't want to lose by summoning the lightning sword that would result in a huge explosion to clear their path. "Sword D'Dantalian."

Before the explosion, behind the gate, the knight captain could finally see what was happening behind the gate since it had opened enough.

He immediately shouted to his squad. "Prepare to fi—"

Before he finished his words, an explosion occurred, destroying all the demons in their path and revealing the unscathed Noel and Anna.

Boom!

He couldn't even react as Noel and Anna smoothly entered the city and passed them.

And Noel was the first one to berate his late action by shouting, "Hurry up and close the gate! Do you want to let them in?"

"Fi... Fi... fight my ass. Close the gate!"

Chapter 136 Situation

"Close the gate."

All the soldiers he brought earlier immediately closed the gate, making sure that no demons entered the gate.

Bang!

Seeing the gate was finally closed, Noel could finally feel at ease.

"Hello." A feminine voice soon echoed in everyone's ears as they turned around and found the saintess coming.

'Saintess Layla, the person that is said to be the strongest Saintess of the Moon Temple. Though, she died in my hand before she could develop all her strength.' Anna narrowed her eyes, looking at this saintess wearing a white robe as if symbolizing the light from the moon. She could also see the crescent moon symbol on her chest. 'She's truly the one I fought that time.'

Anna confirmed her identity and politely bowed her head. "Saintess Layla."

"Oh my." The Saintess raised her eyebrows, but because she was blindfolded, no one could see her surprised eyes. "Do you know me?"

"Who doesn't know the Saintess of the Moon Temple." Anna smiled.

"This is quite surprising... I guess I'm infamous."

"Infamous? Not at all, you are a kind soul, so there's no reason for me to see you in a bad way." Anna shook her head politely.

"Is that so? The way you talk to me feels a bit familiar." The Saintess smiled, not knowing why she felt that Anna seemed to know her more than she imagined her to be. Still, there was one important question that needed to be asked. "May I know who you are?"

"Apprentice Knight of the Demon Banner Army, Anna Stargaze."

"Likewise, Noel Ardagan."

"Oh my. You two are nobles." The Saintess was quite shocked that the people that endangered their lives to save them were actually nobles.

"Fallen, yes." Noel didn't hesitate to add this time, not wanting to make them think he was using his family name to instill something in their heart.

"..." The Saintess fell silent as the atmosphere became awkward.

"The Demon Banner Army?" The knight captain was the first to react from the important information they just shared. "The Demon Banner Army is a special elite army specialized in solving problems related to demons. No wonder that you're so strong... But Apprentice Knight should be recruited four months earlier, so... how in the world the army train their people to make them so strong in just a short amount of time?"

"I don't think that's an appropriate question in this situation." The Saintess stopped him before the two talked, considering each army had their own training method and secret.

"Let's just say that both of us are a special case." Anna added, which could be taken as the answer.

"Ah, I apologize." The knight captain lowered his head. Although he was a bit skeptical to these two kids, it was clear that they could easily kill those demons and enter the city unscathed. Their skills were enough to give some respect.

"In that case, let me formally introduce myself. I am the Saintess of the Moon Temple, Layla. It's my pleasure to meet you." The Saintess gently nodded with a smile on her face.

Noel was curious about the blindfold but didn't say anything. Even so, she must look beautiful if she had ever taken off that blindfold, he thought.

Instead of thinking about such a useless question, Noel immediately cut to the chase and asked, "May I know the situation of the city?"

"Please tell him everything. I hate to admit it but he's smarter than me." Anna shrugged. Although she could analyze the information as well, she didn't want to do it to keep the little pride she had left in terms of analyzing.

"The situation is a bit dire. There are around seven hundred demons surrounding the city. And I don't think there will be help coming to this place. In other words, we need to defend the city ourselves."

"No, I'm not talking about that." Noel shook his head. "We can talk about the demons later. What I want to know is the city's situation. How many people are living in the city, how many injured people, and how much supply left?"

"!!!" The captain and the Saintess were amused by Noel's question. The Demon Banner Army was specialized in hunting demons, so their priority should be the demons outside. Yet, the man in front of her actually cared people more than the demons.

The Saintess thought for a moment and glanced to the knight captain. "Can you?"

That glance was enough to tell Noel that she had no problem in sensing the people around her. But Noel ignored his curiosity and immediately turned to the knight captain.

"There are around 5,000 people in this place, 2,000 of them are soldiers. But because of the continuous fights, the number of soldiers have been reduced to one thousand. To protect the Saintess, there are four division of Holy Knights. In total, we have around one hundred holy knights that could kill Low Level Demons.

"There are already 676 deaths and the rest are injured. As for the supply, we have no problem in food supply since we can use the demons to supply food. The problem is the water. Due to the lack of outside help, the water is scarce. The well seems to have been drained out and the river has been blocked. It's impossible to get any more water."

Noel lowered his head, thinking, 'Now that I think about it, when I was in that village, I could feed around one hundred people with a water gallon. And if I remember all the past missions about helping the townspeople, it gives me around 3 Honor Points per one hundred people I save...

'And there are around 4,300 people in the city. If I use 2 Honor Points and get 3 Honor Points per one hundred people, I can get an additional 43 Honor Points. But then again, I can only do this once since Ardagan only consider the first help to be valid unless I give them a different kind of help that's completely unrelated to the first form of help. It's his way to prevent me from abusing it I guess.'

"I'm sorry, but even if you're here, I don't think we can spare you much food and water as well." The knight captain apologized since they came here just to suffer.

However, Noel waved his hand and smiled, "I'll solve the water problem for at least a day. Within that time, we'll try to finish the problem as soon as possible. So, let's talk about the demons now."

Chapter 137 Solution

"!!!" Everyone was shocked to hear that Noel could fix their water problem. Even Anna didn't expect this and suddenly remembered what made Noel famous in the past.

'That's right. Noel always saved people like a disaster relief while solving the problems. It seems that he's going to ally pull out water or something.' Anna narrowed her eyes, observing Noel.

"You can provide that much water? Do you know how much you need to feed more than four thousand people?" The captain doubted him immediately since the idea alone was insane and no one in their right mind would believe such a thing was possible.

"I do have my way, so shut up. Just talk about the problem here!" Noel sighed. He wanted to finish this problem as soon as possible because he wanted to check something.

However, the Saintess still grabbed both of his hands, stunning everyone.

"Huh?" Anna was dumbstruck because that action would only be taken by those who believed him.

The Saintess' hands were shaking, but her tone was filled with gratitude. "Thank you. Thank you."

"..." Noel felt her anxiety and said, "If we want to distribute the water as quickly as possible, I think we should discuss about the problem first. Don't you agree?"

"Y-yes!" The Saintess nodded her head furiously. This time, she was the one to give the explanation. "Actually... The enemy this time is quite tricky."

She raised her hand and created a translucent shield next to her. However, there was a huge black spot that had contaminated a third of that shield.

"You can think of this shield as my power."

"So, a third of your power has been contaminated or something?" Noel squinted his eyes. Anna also became serious as it turned out the corruption had begun.

"Yes. The demon seems to be an Advanced Level Demon. I'm not sure myself, but according to Knight Romanes, the strongest knight of this Earldom, the demon is a kind of fungus. The fungus seems to be

able to affect one's mind. And those demons have been infected by the fungus... We have tried to confirm it and if you try to take a look at those demons, there should be a fungi somewhere in their bodies. It's the proof that they have been controlled."

"So, its power is a kind of parasite that can corrode one's mind."

"Yes. Because it can't attack my mind, it's aiming for..."

"Your power." Noel finally understood the gist of the situation.

"Yes. If it continues, I'm afraid that my power will be demonified and eventually go to my mind."

"So, that's how it is." Noel asked a few more questions. "Alright. I only have three more questions."

"Please ask anything. I'll answer it to the best of my ability."

"How does it affect one's mind?"

"Infected. If you have any wounds where it can enter your body, you'll be affected."

"So, not only that the enemy is an Advanced Level Demon, we have to kill it without getting injured."

"I'm afraid so."

Noel glanced at Anna. "Is that possible?"

"Oi, oi. You're kidding, right? We're not at that level yet. Although if both of us combine our strength, we will be injured even if we manage to kill that demon."

Noel was pondering his plan while the knight captain couldn't believe the absurdity of their discussion. 'Seriously? These two kids can actually kill an Advanced Level Demon? And they're still at Apprentice Knight level? Is this a joke or something?'

While Noel was thinking, Anna gave a suggestion. "We can fight without any injuries as long as..."

Anna was glancing at the Saintess as if she was implying that she would take part of the battle.

"Do you want to use my ability to prevent any injuries?" The Saintess furrowed her eyebrows. "Well, I do have confidence in defensive ability, but my offensive ability isn't reliable. So, all the thing I can do is to block something."

"Yes. That's all. Leave the offense to us." Anna nodded. "What do you think, Noel?"

"That's possible, but..." Noel looked at the Saintess with a worried expression.

"It seems that I can't hide it. I don't have much Spiritual Energy left. And by the time it recovers, I need to use the barrier during the night to let the soldiers rest."

"Anyway, I can see that the town has many people."

"Are you asking them to fight as well?" The Saintess asked while furrowing her eyebrows. "All the men have been forced to become a soldier, you know. There are only women, children, and elderly left."

"So, where are they?" Noel kept pressuring this matter.

"They... they are inside the houses or the temple to hide in case the demons break through."

"Huh?" Noel's eyebrows were twitching, annoyed. "Why are they not helping?"

"But they are..."

"I don't care what is their condition. As long as they can move, they're expected to help! If they can't fight, then they can carry water to the people above or near the wall. They can carry arrow, weapon or rocks. They even can tend the wounded. If they can help, then they should help. We're risking our lives here."

"But..." The Saintess wanted to refute him, but Noel added, "So, are you a male?"

"Ehm, no."

"Then, is she a male?" Noel pointed at Anna.

"No." The Saintess shook her head.

"Then, there's no problem with women. And it seems that this old guy is considering us as children, so I don't want to hear any excuses about children either. As for the elderly, they can tend the wounded. There are even some old people standing on top of the wall, right? You don't have to fight, but you should contribute in a time like this." Noel sighed.

"This..." The Saintess truly had no way to rebuke him because everything made sense.

"I'll provide them with water. And with their help, the soldiers will have an easier time on top of the wall. That's why they should be able to preserve their stamina and keep fighting through the night.

"During that time you should recover your Spiritual Energy so that tomorrow, we can leave the city and fight the Advanced Level Demon. As for today, Anna and I will be locating the Advanced Level Demon.

"No matter how hard it is, tell them to endure it for one day." Noel looked at the Saintess. "And the one who can tell them is the one who has protected them this whole time. It's you, Saintess Layla."

Layla fell silent for a moment. Noel's argument was solid and made sense. Listening to his speech even gave her some determination and energy to finish this problem as soon as possible.

It took her a whole five minutes before she decided.

"I understand. I'll try to convince them."

Chapter 138 Darkness

A moment later.

All citizens were standing in the middle of the square, the biggest place they could gather all people, especially the women, children and elderly that had yet to participate in the battle.

"What's wrong?"

"I don't know. They said the Saintess wanted to tell us something."

"That's the Saintess."

Everyone looked at the Saintess that stood on top of a podium so everyone could see her.

Even with her eyes blindfolded, they could feel how determined she was.

After checking everyone's condition, she finally opened her mouth. "Listen to me, my beloved people!"

Her tone was unlike everything they had heard previously. Her voice contained a strong energy as if she was preparing to fight in a battle herself.

"I don't think I need to tell you this, but our condition is bad, bad enough that we won't be able to last more than four days.

"We can kill the demons but a hundred demons will soon come to our city, reinforcing those demons. It will leave us besieged by an unlimited number of demons. If we don't do anything and only expect help, we'll be the ones to be destroyed in a matter of days.

"In fact, I'm aware that some of you have almost gone insane due to your thirst. That's why this desperate measure has to be taken.

"I don't want to die because of starvation or thirst. If I have to die, I'd like to die of old age because that way my life has been fulfilled because I've helped more people. Even if it's not possible, then I'll die in the battle, trying to save more people.

"Hence, I won't use my barrier tonight and conserve my power so that I can go out tomorrow to hunt the demon that causes all this."

Layla's statement contained a strong fighting spirit that could incite everyone's heart.

"Saintess, Please don't do this."

"You can die in the battle."

"What will we do if you die?"

The people who had a heart movement tried to persuade her to stay because they should be the one to fight. The Saintess had truly done her best for so long and she deserved that rest.

However, some of the people weren't the light itself. They were shadow. And the brighter the light the Saintess had produced, the darker the shadow would be.

"If you don't erect a barrier tonight, what will we do then? The demons will be attacking us during the night."

"Are you trying to leave us in this situation? You worded it like you're going to fight, but aren't you just trying to make an excuse to escape?"

"Do you want to leave us to die here?"

The people got influenced by them also started screaming at her as if she was a criminal.

"Wha—" The Saintess never expected these dark thoughts to appear here. Even she hadn't prepared for it. She had pledged to fight, but they couldn't trust her even after the effort she had made for so long. Her body was trembling because she was scared.

Just like the Saintess, Anna, who was watching the entire thing from the roof of a building near the plaza, was stunned to see people not believing the Saintess.

"How can those people think that way? The Saintess has protected them for more than a month. Yet, those people actually thought that the Saintess would betray them at the last moment? I mean, I can understand their worry, but can't the Saintess preserve her own life at the very end? If all the people protecting you die, who will protect you then?" Anna complained with a pout, disappointed in the citizens.

She turned to Noel, wanting to know about his opinions about this problem. At the very least, Anna believed that the Saintess deserved to rest and save her own life. Knowing the Saintess' character, even if she fled here, she would still help more and more people in the future. If she abandoned four thousand people so that she could save a hundred thousand people in the future, it was a good trade in Anna's mind.

It was logical enough that Noel wouldn't reject the idea since he was in the same opinion.

Noel sighed and said, "That's why I don't want to make my appearance."

"Huh?"

"That's why I was so mad when the Saintess locked those people inside their home instead of asking them to participate in the battle." Noel sighed.

"Not locked, it's hiding them. But yes..."

Noel glanced at her for a while as if she was annoyed by her remark but he still continued, "If they fight together from the start, they'll understand the Saintess more, allowing the trust to form. When the decisive time comes, they'll be able to trust the Saintess. And the people on top of the wall will have an easier time this whole time."

Anna sucked a cold breath. Normally, the people would lock the ones who couldn't fight in the church or their homes, hoping they could survive in the worst case possible. But Noel's thought was different.

He expected people to contribute. Even if they couldn't fight, there were other roles they could do. Anna knew this was Noel's style. That was why he could encourage the people he met in the past.

'Those kids and those women he encouraged in the past... I see. So, that's why Noel is loved by the people. There is already a trust formed between them. He always involves them in his plan, forming that bond. It is not that he saves the village, but it is that he works together with them and saves their village.'

'The former only shows that he has done his job while the latter shows that the villagers are not useless because they can work together to overcome any problem in the future even if he isn't there anymore. The latter is stronger.'

Anna's body trembled as she had done something fundamentally wrong. That was the reason why she never received any thanks from the people she saved before. In their eyes, she just looked like doing her job.

"Hmm?" Anna was startled when Noel suddenly pointed at the Saintess.

"If I were there, the people would doubt a kid. Demon Banner Army? Can they believe an Apprentice Knight? If I were there, they would think of me as a dictator who forces them to fight. Although I hate to admit it, I don't have the strength or the influence to raise their spirit." Noel had a sad smile on his face

as if he was disappointed in himself. But he added, "If there is someone who can convince them, it's the one who has protected them this whole time. The Saintess."

Chapter 139 Moon Goddess

The Saintess didn't know where she had gone wrong. To think that the people couldn't even trust her the slightest bit.

'What have I done wrong? I just wanted to save them and protect them. The reason I made a Moon Temple here was because they were a city that was suffering due to the demon's siege. I immediately rushed to help them. I even brought four knight divisions.

'Everything I did was for their sake. But why? Why could they not trust me? Please believe me that me leaving this place is for the sake of defeating the demon who causes all this mess, not to save my own life.'

The Saintess' body was trembling because of the shock she received.

Even her faith was shaken for a split second. And it was also the same time she strengthened her faith.

'No, the Moon Goddess is not wrong. She, who can only work during the night, has been helping the people during their sleep. It's a thankless job but that's what my intention is this whole time.

'Even without their thanks and appreciation, I'll help them. That's my mission as the Saintess of the Moon Temple.' The Saintess took a deep breath and prayed, 'Oh, Goddess in Heaven. Please grant this weak person the strength and courage to help them.'

Suddenly, her body was enveloped by the light like when she received the divination from the Goddess.

"Huh?"

"That's..."

The people suddenly stopped screaming. They could see the golden light that emitted from her body but the Saintess was still praying.

"What's happening to her?"

"That golden light..."

There were three Holy Knights that guarded her and all of them immediately kneeled on one knee upon seeing this phenomenon. They even clasped their hands, praying.

"Thank the Goddess. Even with our faith shaken, you don't abandon us."

Their statement shook the entire plaza.

Even Noel felt the power as the Spirit Seal on his hand started emitting heat.

"Kh!" Noel gritted his teeth, enduring the pain from the heat. He wanted to touch the Spirit Seal, but couldn't do it due to the heat.

"What's wrong, Noel?"

"I don't know." Noel shook his head in confusion. Even he wanted to ask Ardagan about this sudden reaction because this was the first time he experienced it. "What is Moon Goddess anyway?"

"Is this a time for that question?" Anna panicked, worrying about Noel's well-being.

However, Noel kept staring at her with a serious expression as if he had to know the truth.

"That's... Logically, the Moon Goddess is a kind of being higher than anyone else and grants the people the Spirit for the Moon Temple. That's why the Saintess is born as she is her representative in this world. Through the Spirit granted by her, the Saintess could understand her intention.

"Although we don't know what kind of being that can grant someone a spirit, we can't dismiss the fact that many miracles have appeared either... So, we don't know what kind of being she is but it's clear that she exists.

"But for the people of the Moon Temple, the Moon Goddess is their symbol... symbol of hope."

When Noel heard it, he fell silent as the pain subsided. He was confused but still muttered, "Symbol of hope..."

He suddenly found the Saintess raising her finger and writing a word in the air. The light in the tip of her finger remained in the air, forming that one word.

Hope.

All the citizens who saw this phenomenon were stunned.

The Saintess opened her mouth. But her voice couldn't be any more different. This time, her voice sounded ethereal as if it didn't belong to this world. Her voice shook their heart to the point they wanted to immediately kneel upon her presence.

However, her words were stuck in everyone's mind at that time.

"The darkness in your heart can be the hope you are searching for and the light in your eyes can be the despair that will haunt you."

The people stopped screaming when they heard this statement. They muttered these words in their hearts.

The meaning was clear. The Saintess was the light that wanted to liberate them, but their eyes turned that light into despair simply because they couldn't believe her.

However, she also reminded them that the darkness in their heart could be the hope they were searching for. That was why she wrote that one word.

The darkness in their heart meant their desperation. The Saintess was their last hope that remained, but because of their desperation, they thought the worst.

So, what the Moon Goddess wanted to say was that the Saintess was their hope. They just had to believe in her.

Noel somehow grabbed his sword at this time while gritting his teeth to make sure he didn't do anything suspicious.

"Noel?" Anna was startled.

But Noel also felt a strange thing. Despite wanting to unsheathe his blade, the desire that had been raising in his heart was not to kill the Saintess but to protect her. "I don't know... I just want to protect her. I don't even understand what's going on."

"Huh?" Even Anna was confused as his action and statement were the exact opposite.

While they were in the confusion, the Saintess finally regained her consciousness.

"This is..." The Saintess' body trembled again, but this time from the confusion because she had experienced the blessing personally.

"Hope..." The Saintess muttered in a low voice. Now that the people were silent, the Saintess lowered her head and said, "I've got a reinforcement earlier and we should have enough water supply for all people for a day. That's why during this one day, I want all people, whether they are women, children and elderly to take parts in the battle."

"I don't mind if you can't fight. You can just support them from the back like tending their wounds, cooking meals, or bringing some stones or weapons to the soldiers on the wall. With your help, you can make them have an easier time."

"I know that you can't trust me, but the hope is there. If our fate is to die in this place, then I want to die while trying to escape death! I want to die while trying to protect all of you. So, please..."

The people couldn't say anything afterwards. Unbeknownst to her, most people in that plaza had been converted to Moon Goddess's believers.

Chapter 140 Unexpected Revelation

After that speech, the citizens had agreed to participate in the battle. There were some complaints left, but they were minority this time and couldn't influence other people.

At the very least, they should take care a third of the soldiers' jobs, making them having an easier time on the wall.

Meanwhile, Noel and Anna immediately headed to the building where the Saintess lived when she was in this city since they were going to distribute the water.

"And now, you need to go out." Noel commanded as soon as he reached the house since he was going to take out the water gallons from the system.

"What? Why do I need to go out?" Anna narrowed her eyes. "You're going to miraculously pull out some water, right?"

"How do you know?" Noel had thought about using all kinds of excuses to fool others, but Anna seemed to have known about his power. 'Is Ardagan's system known by others? But the only person who should know about it was the first wielder of Ardagan, my ancestor. How does she know?'

Seeing Noel's confused but displeased face, Anna immediately raised both hands and said, "Fine, fine. I just need to go out, right?"

Anna left the house without any more complaints. She was considerate enough to show some space for Noel even though she had known a bit about Noel's power. There was no need to look into the information desperately since she would end up being annoying which could lead the friction in their relationship this way.

"..." Noel even felt grateful for her consideration.

'There are three big questions in my mind right now. Firstly, Anna seems to know me and my power more than I expected. Secondly, the answer to what happened to my family. Lastly, there seems to be a connection between Ardagan and this Moon Goddess... It looks hostile at first, but I have a desire to protect in the end. I have to meet Ardagan, but that's for later. I have jobs to do.'

As soon as Noel sorted his thoughts, he immediately used all points to summon the water gallon. Two water gallon could feed more than sixty people for a day and there was still an excess water, so if he stretched it, he believed one gallon could feed a hundred people for a day. The rest would depend on the ability of the Saintess.

Without hesitation, Noel summoned twenty water gallons due to the lack of space. But it was still a huge amount of water.

Creak!

The door was opened as a voice echoed in the house.

"Excuse me. It seems that you are here since your friend is out—ouch!" The Saintess accidentally kicked the gallon and stumbled. "Wa—!"

She ended up falling on top of the gallons while fidgeting like a fish trying to find water.

"What's going on?" The Saintess tried to save herself from the embarrassment.

Noel chuckled and hurriedly helped the Saintess by pulling her up. "Here you go."

"What are you doing, Mr. Noel? Are you trying to embarrass me?" The Saintess' face reddened from embarrassment.

"No, no. You're falling on top of the water gallons that I bring." Noel chuckled.

"Water gallons?" The Saintess frowned.

'She doesn't realize the obstacles? What's going on? Shouldn't she be able to understand her surroundings since she has been walking around without any problems this whole time?' Noel asked the questions inwardly.

"So, those are water gallons... I thought you also received the blessing..." The Saintess let out a sigh of relief.

"Blessing?" This statement confused Noel since he was here to get the blessing.

"My eyes might be blind but it can still perceive Spiritual Energy. And the energy from this water has a similar kind of energy like that of a blessing."

"Huh? It doesn't make sense. I can't even see anything."

The Saintess fell silent, turned around, and bent her knees in front of the gallon, examining it. She touched every nook and corner before pulling it up.

"I see. Judging from the size and the weight..."

"Can it feed one hundred people for one day? It might be a stretch though."

"It definitely can and it's not stretching." The Saintess shook her head. "If I see the amount of energy from the water, I can see that it has a refreshing effect. Have you ever felt refreshed and not get thirsty easily after drinking this water?"

Noel scratched the back of his head. The only experience he had with this water was the first water bottle he brought. He wanted to test the power, so he drank it. Her explanation was accurate but he didn't drink enough water to determine such effect.

"It seems that you haven't realized what kind of power you have." The Saintess nodded in understanding. "This water gallon can provide one hundred people with enough water for a day. I just have to make sure they don't get more water after drinking it just because they like it."

'So, those people in the village actually liked the soothing effect that they kept drinking it? If I knew, I would only provide them with only a single gallon...' Noel remembered the village where he needed to destroy the dam.

"Anyway, I'll distribute them right away."

"Ah, one more thing." Noel stopped her and said, "We'll be leaving the town in a moment to locate the demon since according to you, the demon won't be able to go that far away from the demons they control. Hence, I want to ask you if you prefer to leave the town by yourself or escorted by us?"

The Saintess understood what he meant. If they were outside, they would have a hard time going back to this town. So, they asked her to know whether they should return to the town or wait in a rendezvous point.

"I'll have a group of knights to escort me. While it is true that we'll be chased by the demons, I'm pretty sure this is better. Not only can we work together to take down the demons but my Holy Knights can help you in stopping the demons that will most likely protect the Advanced Level Demon."

"You entrust me with that job easily... Isn't your holy knight stronger than us? Since we're younger than them."

"No. I can see that both of you are stronger than any of them. After all..." The Saintess took her blindfold for the first time, revealing gray-colored eyes that lacked of light to signify her blindness. If it was any other person, they would be appreciating how beautiful she was. Her beauty, in fact, wasn't any lower than Anna. But Noel was more focused on those eyes that seemed to be able to see through him.

And the Saintess even made his heart skip a beat by saying, "I know that you have two Spirits in your body, Mr. Noel."

"!!!"