

"Fine. Let's do it your way. You are pretty useful even though you are annoying and weak." Alfred had made his decision.

Noel's answer came in the form of a smile. That was why Alfred thought he had nothing left to say.

"Since we've been talking here without doing anything, it should be enough for resting, right?" Alfred glared at Noel.

"Of course." Noel smiled. In fact, his stamina was still enough to run for a while. After all, he had been running for tens of kilometers for his training. The only reason he stopped here was to conserve his stamina a bit, allowing them to have a perfect condition to fight against the demon.

After getting what he wanted, Noel then followed the group entering the forest.

The trees in the forest were mostly 20 feet tall. They had different types of trees, but their heights were roughly the same. The difference was in the size of the trunk.

If all trees had big trunks, it would make it hard for them to see all the things around them. However, because their size varied, it gave a hallucinating effect that confused them in discerning things.

But it seemed Alfred was overconfident with his ability that he ignored the terrain and continued to move forward.

Noel wanted to advise him, but they still had enough stamina to go all the way to their destination. Hence, it was better to hold back.

Whether it was fortunate or unfortunate, Alfred suddenly stopped in his tracks, staring at the front.magic

"Huh?" Noel was confused for a moment and found a small sphere on the ground. If it was just a small sphere, he wouldn't be that worried. But this ball had six legs.

This small creature wiggled on the ground and turned around when it noticed Alfred's gaze.

The black ball turned out to have a big eyeball. When their gazes intertwined, the creature immediately jumped to the side, leaping for over one meter contrary to its small size.

"!!!" Alfred widened his eyes in surprise before his body rushed forward. "Kill it!"

Noel and the bully hurriedly followed him, but the black ball attached itself to a tree as if it was getting swallowed by the tree.

The ground started trembling as there was a faint sound coming from underneath.

Alfred continued to charge at the tree, but Noel stopped, observing the sound movement.

It turned out the sound was gradually moving toward him before stopping right beneath his feet. And the next thing he realized, a spike came out of the ground, aiming for his neck.

"!!!" Noel gritted his teeth and threw himself to the side. "Spike? No... It's..."

Noel took a closer look at the object and realized it was a tree's root.

"It's dangerous!" Noel wanted to warn the others, but it seemed they were attacked by the roots as well. Even Alfred stopped to block the root while the bully had his lower left arm pierced by it.

But his decision to warn the others actually bit him on the back.

Three more roots emerged from behind and looped around him, trying to strike him from above.

Noel followed the sound and turned around, waving his sword toward the three roots.

Unfortunately, it didn't go like he expected, Ardagan cut through the first root, but stopped in the middle of the second root.

"I can't cut it?" Noel widened his eyes in shock. Ardagan's sharpness was beyond his imagination. He had tried to cut a rock with it and it was able to cut it like a butter.

'Is this root harder than a rock?' Noel gritted his teeth while leaning his body to the side. Although Ardagan cut one root and stopped the other one, there was still one root moving toward him. And he wasn't in the position to reach it.

Luckily, with that last ditch movement, the root missed his arm, only grazing the skin.

"Kh. It hurts." Noel hurriedly pulled Ardagan back, raised it to the top of his head, and swung it down, cutting the root that injured him earlier. "Ha!"

Surprisingly, the root was cut so easily that he felt no restriction from it, unlike the first one.

"Eh? I can cut it like cutting the stone..." Noel was surprised by the revelation. But his mind soon tried to figure out the reason.

It was said that a sword master could cut more than a normal swordsman. And what was the reason?

'Is my technique lacking?' Noel was bewildered by what he found. 'But if that's the case, why did the first slash have the restriction while the second didn't?'

While thinking about this problem, Noel leaped back to regain some distance from the roots.

"Wait a minute. Sir Shale is training us to do only three movements... A vertical slash, a diagonal slash, and a stab." Noel figured out the reason. The first slash wasn't among the three he practiced, so his technique, even with the help of Ardagan Swordsmanship, was still lacking compared to the three techniques he'd learned.

As if giving Noel an opportunity, two roots emerged behind him. The roots were pretty straightforward, so Noel didn't even need to look at it before jumping to the side, avoiding the roots that always aimed for his body.

'Let's try it.' Noel thought as he raised his sword to the side, making a diagonal slash that perpendicular to the root. "Ha!"

Surprisingly, the two roots were cut cleanly that he felt no restriction unlike the first swing.

"This is..." Noel gasped. It turned out a sharp sword wasn't everything. He also needed a proper technique to handle the sword.

"So, that's how it is. Although it's only three techniques..." Before he finished his words, he heard a scream from the side.

It turned out the bully got his right thigh pierced by the roots.

'Tsk. Although I hate him, he's still useful when he's alive. It's clear that the demon can release more than ten roots... and if all of them go to me, I would be dead. I'm not strong enough to defeat a demon by myself right now, so...'  
As the thought appeared in his head, Noel's body had reached the bully as he struck the root that hit the bully, cutting it down. He muttered inwardly, 'You need to live until I get stronger.'