

S vs Rebirth 281

Chapter 281 Progress

Noel sat down in front of all the Demon Crystals, preparing himself to absorb them. Since he didn't have any trouble in absorbing a huge amount of crystals in one go, Noel didn't hesitate to put the Demon Crystals in both Spirit Seal, allowing the cold and the heat to clash and neutralizing each other.

Noel's Spiritual Energy Reserve kept increasing like crazy from all the Demon Crystals. He even got two missions from the system, signifying his progress.

Now that his Spiritual Energy had reserved, he could take on more skills.

Unfortunately, he had to stop since Anna had called him for dinner. Since it would be awkward and dangerous if Anna went alone, Noel stopped for a moment to accompany her. It was just a simple meal and Noel immediately went back to his room to continue.

On the other hand, Anna certainly felt the gazes of the people around them. She was still one of the most beautiful women in the kingdom, so their gaze was more intense than any other villages she had visited so far.

This was Noel's warning, so she finished everything in an instant. Noel even went all the way to use his ability to purify the drink just in case.

Ultimately, Anna was fine and Noel could finally finish what he was working for.

Before midnight, Noel opened his system to check his progress.

Name: Noel Ardagan

Job: Rune Swordsman

Weapon: Ardagan Sword

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

Honor Point: 32 Pts

Skill Point: 0 Pts

Status: Stamina +3.2%, Constitution +3.2%, Sword Mastery +3.2%, Spiritual Energy +3.0%, Rune Mastery +3.0%

Low Quality Crystal - 1210/5000

Mid Quality Crystal - 255/3000

Advanced Quality Crystal - 7/1500

"Mhm. The progress is quite good. I don't seem to feel any difference when becoming a Spirit Wielder. Is there a reason why this stage is special?"

Noel muttered because he wanted to know what he could get by becoming stronger. He also noticed that people often stayed in a certain ranks too, not because their lack of talent, but because they chose to do so, like the butler of the Ezenholm Family.

"I should ask Anna later." Noel shook his head and continued inspecting the new missions he had just received.

[Mission: First Step]

[Description: The first step to become a Spirit Wielder is facing Advanced Level Demons. Kill one hundred Advanced Level Demons.]

[Reward: Ice Burst]

[Mission: Killing the pests.]

[Description: Kill fifty Devil Worshipers.]

[Reward: 30 SP and Devil Hunter Medal.]

[Mission: Peerless]

[Description: To prove your might, one has to fight a few enemies of the same level. Defeat three Advanced Level Demons by yourself in a single battle.]

[Reward: Flame Conjuring Ability and Newbie Medal.]

"I got these three missions after absorbing the Demon Crystals." Noel fell silent. "I can understand about the first mission, but I can only do it after graduation, so I'll wait."

"As for the second mission, well, they're like pests to me, so the description is perfect. I'll try to kill Devil Worshipers, but I don't know if it's that easy to find them or not."

"As for the last one... I don't know how much stronger I have become by becoming a Spirit Wielder, but if there's no big difference other than my Spiritual Energy output, I don't think I can fight against three Advanced Level Demons by myself."

"For now, I don't see any penalty, meaning these missions are registered for my personal growth. This is good because I can increase my strength in a short time."

"Well, those are the changes, I guess. I want to upgrade my other medals as well, but I guess it can wait." Noel fell silent for a moment. "That's right. I should start working on my runes, considering I have gained all the knowledge about the runes."

"If I increase the level of my Rune Mastery, it should be giving me the knowledge about the application..."

"This is hard. I haven't had too many chances in gathering Honor Points and Skill Points lately. I guess I should focus on this instead of anything else..."

Noel scratched the back of his head, thinking about the best option. After all, he didn't have much time before he and Anna had to go on their ways to complete their objective.

So, Noel had to finish his job as soon as possible.

Noel took a deep breath and used his Honor Points to exchange for Skill Points before learning the Ice Infusion Skill from Heisk. He hadn't allocated this one because he didn't have enough Honor Points previously.

But they had been helping people and killing demons in the past few weeks, so he got some additional points.

Now that he had enough points, he used seven Skill Points to learn the Ice Infusion Skill.

The knowledge of Ice Infusion Skill entered his mind as Noel understood how to use it.

Ice Infusion Skill was a support Ice Ability that allowed him to infuse his ice into his blade, allowing him to leave a frozen mark on the target to numb their body. This was a good ability since people would be weakened upon touching his blade.

"I still have 18 Honor Points which is equal to 9 Skill Points. Should I spend all of them in a skill?" Noel pinched the bridge of his nose and asked, "By the way, Ardagan... You haven't updated the shop in a while. I can understand that you don't add too much training since what has been listed there is to enhance my foundation.

"But a shop is different, right? I can buy something from your shop, so I wonder what I can buy next."

Soon, the system notification appeared before his eyes.

[You have to feed me with something.]

"..." Noel felt a bit weird since this was the first time Ardagan asked him something. Although he didn't know the purpose, it seemed that Ardagan was acting in a way that benefited him, so Noel decided to agree. "Alright. I'll do my best. Update the shop after that, will you?"

Chapter 282 On The Way

After checking everything, Noel finally laid down on the bed while stretching his body to relax.

"Tomorrow is the day to go to the mountain." Noel muttered. Before sleeping, Noel took another look at the mountain in the distance.

The mountain was shrouded by fog, but he could see it from here, albeit barely.

"There is only twenty kilometers away from the mountain. It's said that the mountain is also quite tall and the house of demons. It's a perfect place to get some Demon Crystals while we're heading to the cave."

Noel believed this was the course of their plan, so he went back to his bed and closed his eyes.

He didn't know at that time this trip was more dangerous than he expected.

In another room, Anna was also staring at the mountain in the distance, thinking, 'Now that I think about it, the liquid was found by a Devil Bishop from the Supreme Devil Organization. I didn't remember his name, but it was certainly one of the worst things could happen since the liquid was good to nurture weak people like me and Noel.

'That Devil Bishop actually created two more Bishops. It increases the strength of the organization by a big amount.

'Meanwhile, the fire bird is also acquired by someone from the Supreme Devil Organization. He was known as the Flame Lord.

'Hmm, doesn't this look like the Sword Saint is targeting the Supreme Devil Organization?

'Sir Sword Saint should be able to learn about my memory, right? He has shown the proof that he's able to see my secret. So, is there any reason why the Sword Saint is targeting this organization?

'But shouldn't this organization be made a few hundred years ago. When he was alive, there was nothing like this. So, is Sir Sword Saint considering them as enemies because of their conducts? Or is there any deeper meaning to it?'

Anna pinched the bridge of her nose, confused. Since she couldn't get any answer, she ended up sleeping to prepare for the next journey.

...

The next day.

Noel and Anna came out of their rooms at the same time as if they had known each other's habits and were aware when they would come out.

"..." Noel and Anna glanced at each other in silence until Anna broke it. "Good morning."

"Good morning." Noel nodded. "By the way, I've something to ask you later."

"Sure. Let's get some breakfast and leave the city. Since we can't leave our horses here, we should find a path where we can climb the mountain while bringing our horses."

"Yeah. That's the plan. I hope that the slope is not too steep." Noel nodded in understanding.

It only took them half an hour before they left the village without leaving a single thing. During their breakfast, there was actually someone asking them about what they wanted to do, proving Noel's worry.

Noel was the one answering the question, lying to this guy.

When they were outside the village, Anna chuckled. "That guy might be following us, you know."

"No. A guy like him will believe what I said earlier."

"Well, you said it with such a naive expression. Who would think the guy who have such a naive expression would be a shrewd bastard..."

Noel rolled his eyes and changed the topic. "Still, I want to ask you about the difference between Spirit Practitioner and Spirit Wielder. Is there any difference between each rank except for their Spiritual Energy?"

"There is one." Anna nodded and raised a finger. "Try to release your Spiritual Energy."

Noel furrowed his eyebrows and followed her instruction, enveloping his body with Spiritual Energy.

Suddenly, he opened his eyes in amusement. "This is..."

"Yes. What you feel right now is the difference between the two ranks. To put it simply, the Spirit Wielder allows you to give twice the result with the same effort."

"I see. How about the next rank?"

"Spirit Wielder is the rank for efficiency, whereas Spirit Master is the rank for Assimilation."

"Assimilation?" Noel remembered about the lesson from the Sword Saint and nonchalantly added, "What's next? Spirit Grandmaster is the rank for Fusion?"

"You already know about it?" Anna looked at him weirdly as if wondering why he asked her when he knew about it.

"..." Noel fell silent, realizing the difference in each rank. "Basically, the higher your rank, the more synchronize you are with your Spirit."

"How in the world..." Anna gasped. "What you said is not a common knowledge, Noel. Is it your speculation? What people know that the higher your rank, the higher your compatibility. No one would even explain it with the word 'synchronize.'"

"How do you know about it, Noel?" Anna furrowed her eyebrows.

Noel was startled. He was just concluding what he had experienced, but to think Anna would make the matter this big.

Noel thought for a moment and said, "If I tell you, it's a secret. Will you ask for more?"

"No." Anna shook her head. "I'm curious but I'm going to respect your privacy."

"..." Noel sighed and said, "It's from the Sword Saint."

"Then, do you know that the difference in forms of a Spirit is due to their ranks?"

"The five ranks, right?"

"Y-yeah. Then, do you know what kind of spirit I have in my body?"

"Humanoid Spirit..."

"..." Anna was speechless. It seemed that this knowledge came from the Sword Saint. In her past life, this information was popularized by Noel as well. It seemed that he received everything from the Sword Saint.

"I see. So, that's how it is... Then, you must know that our spirits can grow?"

"..." Noel didn't answer this time since this was the information that would give the biggest shock to the world.

Meanwhile, Anna simply asked one more question. "Are you planning to write the information in another book?"

"How can I write a book in something you know? You might claim I'm plagiarizing your idea."

"I won't! There's nothing I can use to prove it anyway." Anna pouted.

Anna didn't seem to be lying from his expression, which was enough for Noel to confirm what he would do in the future.

Since he'd gotten the answer to his doubt, Noel turned around and said, "Well, we have to hurry!"

Anna's eyebrows twitched while she stared at him shamelessly walking away. "I'm sure he was already satisfied with the answer and escaped before I could ask him anything. Tsk."

Chapter 283 Problem

Noel and Anna were running away as they were chased away by numerous demons. If they had to handle like fifty demons or something with only one or two Advanced Level Demons, they wouldn't be running away.

However, the ones chasing after them were numbered two hundred. And there were at least ten Advanced Level Demons leading them.

"This is not like what you're saying!" Noel shouted while running away with their horses.

"How do I even know this?" Anna shouted back while raising her hand, shooting a lightning strike to hit the beam that was about to hit Noel.

Boom!

"Don't you know everything? You even know this Geolythic Mountain has a special liquid!" Noel said while creating the Dispersion Rune to block a fireball that aimed for Anna's head.

Despite their bickering, they were still protecting each other. However, they surely never expected this kind of accident to happen.

...

A few minutes ago.

Noel and Anna had reached the Geolythic Mountain and sought the gentle slope for their horse to come with them.

It didn't take too long for them to reach the end of the gentle slope and they had to fight against the steep ground to reach their destination.

"Is there really no other way to go to that cave?" Noel asked while observing the area to find any path.

If there were no other way, they had to jump off their horses and bring them on foot. In the worst case scenario, they might have to carry their horses.

However, as soon as they jumped off their horses, they suddenly heard a loud cry.

Cry!

"!!!" Both of them widened their eyes and raised their heads, finding a bird flying in the sky. The bird seemed to have spotted them and alerted the other people about Noel and Anna as if they had trespassed their territories.

"What's that?" Noel sucked a cold breath, staring at this yellow bird that was covered by lightning.

"I'm afraid that's a Thunderbird. But judging from its look, it has become a demon."

"Are you serious?" Noel narrowed his eyes. "Isn't the cry from earlier a kind of way to alert its companions?"

"That's true." Anna nodded with a serious expression while jumping back on her horse as if she was planning to run away.

"Oi, why are you on your horse again?" Noel's eyebrows twitched but he also did the same as if having the same thought.

"You too..."

They were glaring at each other as if judging each other's action even though they were doing the same thing.

Their silence was broken by a series of roars coming from their sides.

"!!!" In a single glance, they realized numerous demons had reached the area, ready to kill them.

Still, both of them had confidence in their fighting prowess, so they didn't retreat immediately. They were staring at the demons to roughly calculate their numbers since if it was at the level they could handle, they didn't mind taking care of these demons.

Unfortunately for them, the number was not something to be trifling with. Their faces became pale as they signaled their horses to run.

Roar!

Roar!

Roar!

Their actions invited thunderous roars from the demons as they began to chase after them.

This was the start of their bickering. Noel recounted that memory to find any clues about what was happening and asked, "Do you know any reason why the thunderbird is involved? I mean, I can understand the demons are hostile to humans.

"But if there is a thunderbird and numerous Advanced Level Demons, the Demon Banner Army should have taken care of it, right? I'm pretty sure that the villagers are going to report it.

"Even though they're greedy, these many demons are still too much even for them. Or are they foolish enough to think they could handle this number?"

Anna fell silent, recalling the memory of the previous life. 'No. There is no big accident happening here. So, these demons should have been taken care of by the Demon Banner Army.

'As Noel said, the Demon Banner Army will surely take care of this place. Even if the villagers are not reporting the number of the demons, the Demon Banner Army patrolled this area.

'In that case, what's with this number? And we're just a few minutes in... How many demons are actually using the Geolythic Mountain as their home?'

Anna contemplated for a moment. Even Noel didn't want to disturb her, wondering if she would come up with a reason. In the meantime, he was fending off the attacks from all sides.

'The Supreme Devil Organization was the one taking advantage of this area in my past life... But that was supposed to happen fifteen months from now, not at this time.

'Maybe some of my actions have affected the future? I have been avoiding in making a huge change in the world to avoid this problem, but it seems that the effect has begun to appear.

'There are a few problems that I've solved... The bandit and the demon, the cave filled with Demon Crystals, and Kirika's kidnapping case... Maybe those three are enough to cause this effect?

'But if I follow this logic, doesn't that mean the Supreme Devil Organization is the one causing this? In other words, the reason why the demons are more active in this area is due to them?'

Anna contemplated for a moment. She wasn't sure with her guess, but she might have to find the cave first if she wanted the answer.

With that thought in mind, she said, "Noel. Do you mind if we go to a farther village to leave the horse at a stable? We might have to go by foot in this trip."

Noel looked at Anna's serious expression for a while. Anna wouldn't suggest a dumb idea, so he agreed without hesitation. "Alright. Let's go with that. But explain to me your train of thought after we outrun the demons."

"Sure." Anna agreed without hesitation. She felt a bit fortunate since she could blame everything to the Supreme Devil Organization right now.

Chapter 284 Chicken

They were supposed to outrun the demons as soon as they left the mountain. But surprisingly, the demons kept chasing them. Of course, some of the slow demons were quickly left behind, but their numbers were still more than one hundred fifty.

"This is..." Anna muttered while observing the demons' movements.

"Hey, aren't the demons supposed to stop chasing us right now?"

"That's what I thought too... After all, demons are a bit territorial. It's a kind of the instinct they inherit from the animals.

"Then, doesn't this mean we're already causing an outbreak?" Noel's eyebrows twitched, realizing the problems they had in hand.

"That's true. But I don't think we can stop them. What should we do?" Anna was also confused by the demons' behavior. They had been chasing after them and attacking them this whole time as if they were enraged by something.

But if one took another look to their expression, they would know that these Advanced Level Demons had enough wisdom to stop the demons.

"..." Noel contemplated for a moment and said, "I have an idea. First, we have to get away from any villages and see if the demons will stop chasing us or not. If the demons haven't stopped after fifteen minutes, we're going to approach this matter differently."

"Got it. What's your plan after that?"

"I'll say it after the first one fails."

"Tsk." Anna clicked her tongue but still trusted Noel's plan. He wasn't someone who would do meaningless thing, so she should trust him first until he gave an absurd plan.

Noel and Anna then sped up, rushing their horses. Unfortunately for them, it seemed that their first plan failed because the demons hadn't stopped chasing after them.

"This is bad. What are we going to do now?" Anna asked while glancing at the demons on their tail. "Are they going to chase us until we're dead? Should we go to a big city to get some help?"

"Are you planning to become a criminal? It will look like we're bringing an outbreak to them."

"But they will surely understand us, considering we also don't know about the situation itself. They'll also believe us since we're from the Demon Banner Army."

"No, I have another way to stop them or at least stop half of them." Noel shook his head.

"And that is..." Anna narrowed her eyes, expecting another brilliant plan from Noel.

Surprisingly, Noel actually talked about nonsense next. "Do you remember that you have been chickening this whole time?"

"Are you picking a fight with me right now?"

"No, no, no. You're misunderstanding my words. I'm just saying that I hope that you won't chicken out this time." Noel winked his right eye as if giving a signal to her.

"Chickening out... Two people... half of them..." Anna connected the important words in Noel's mouth before understanding what he wanted to do. "You insane bastard."

p "But that's the way." Noel grinned.

'I was expecting a plan to outrun them, but Noel is so insane that he's still thinking about killing them. If we can eliminate half of them or at least buy some time from them, we can annihilate them after a few tries. However, this plan is insane because it's very dangerous.'

Anna understood the risks and asked, "With horse or without horse?"

"Probably without. It seems that we have to abandon them in this situation."

"That's true." Anna nodded in agreement. Although it was a shame, this was something they had to do. "Alright. Let's do it. You give the signal."

"Alright." As soon as they reached an agreement, both of them began to shift their direction, creating some distance between them.

As expected, the demons were following their movements and splitting into two.

Anna kept staring at Noel while waiting for the signal. On the other hand, Noel was observing the demons to make sure no one hit them from a different direction.

After the demons were in line and they had created enough distance, Noel raised his hand as the signal. "GO!"

With that shout, Noel jumped off the horse and began running as soon as he landed on the ground. Anna followed suit.

Both of them had a hard time to adjust their momentum, causing the demons to catch up a bit. Some of the demons almost attacked them.

Noel used his Sword Fall and Anna used her lightning strike to stop those demons.

After that, Noel raised his hand once again as the second signal.

In that instant, their paths began to curve as they were running to each other.

Noel and Anna pulled out their swords as if those two wanted to fight even after being chased like this.

Noel and Anna had a smirk on their faces as if they were challenging each other. If they collided like this, the demons behind them would squeeze them to death. If they didn't have enough firepower, they might be overwhelmed by their number.

So, this was a plan where they had to put their trust in each other.

Noel pointed at both of them first before pointing to the left as if telling her that both of them would move to the left at the same time.

Anna acknowledged this command and nodded.

The demons obviously didn't understand their hand signal. Even Noel didn't say the whole sentence this whole time, fearing that the Advanced Level Demons would understand them and cause the plan to fail.

Noel and Anna became closer and closer as the tension rose to the sky. Their hearts were beating crazily, having both fear and excitement.

Right before they collided with each other, both Noel and Anna stomped the ground with their right foot and jumped to the left.

"!!!" The demons were stunned because they tried to follow both of them, but the distance from one group to another was too close.

The demons with lower intelligence ended up colliding with each other, launching them into the air or destroying each other on the ground.

Chapter 285 Ice And Lightning

Roar!

Oe!

Uoo!

The demons collided with each other and ended up getting injured. Some even died on the spot due to being squeezed from two sides.

Noel and Anna managed to use all their strength to take a single leap to get outside of the clash.

However, they didn't have an easy time either.

When they were about to come out, a few Mid Level Demons and Advanced Level Demons managed to see through their plans and attacked them.

Noel glanced at them and used his Freezing Crystal to block them. As soon as the snowflake exploded, the ice covered the demons. Due to their position, the Mid Level Demons created an ice formation due to their large body and the distances between them, blocking the Advanced Level Demons.

Noel took this opportunity to come out while slicing a few Low Level Demons on his way.

On the other hand, Anna had an easier time due to her power. Lightning sparked around her shoes as it gave her a boost when jumping.

In a single jump, Anna managed to get out without even fighting. But like Noel, she also planned to kill as many demons as possible.

She aimed the lightning on her shoe to the collision between demons and kicked forth, releasing the lightning strike.

The lightning turned into a dragon and swallowed those injured demons, delivering a killing blow.

Now that they managed to escape for a moment, Noel and Anna headed to their horses as if trying to catch up to them.

However, the Advanced Level Demons stood in their way.

"Tsk. You make me loss twenty Gold Coins." Noel clicked his tongue, angry because he had to lose his horse.

Unlike Anna's, his horse was given by his grandfather, so it was his possession. So, he didn't like the fact that he had lost that much money due to them.

Noel released that anger to these demons.

Ice Infusion.

The chilling aura began to envelop his sword as Noel struck one of the Advanced Level Demon.

When Noel sliced the demon's skin, he realized that it was too tough to penetrate with a normal attack. However, his Ice Infusion realized its might.

The ice froze the skin, weakening the toughness of the skin. Noel knew the effect of the Ice Infusion due to the knowledge he got from the system. When the ice froze the skin, he struck the frozen spot with his Anger this time.

Surprisingly, the sword cut through the skin, creating a deep wound on the Advanced Level Demon's body.

Roar! The demon was screaming in pain.

"!!!" Noel was amused by the power of this Ice Infusion. As expected of Heisk, even though she wasn't a humanoid spirit yet, she was still strong.

Unfortunately, Noel couldn't land a killing blow on that demon and was forced to retreat due to their number.

In the end, both Noel and Anna just continued to escape until they passed the demons and found each other.

They regrouped while glancing at their back. "What should we do now? It's more effective than I thought."

"Gain some more distance." Noel answered while pointing his palm at the demons. Anna also did the same.

Sword Fall.

Lightning Dragon.

The three giant swords appeared next to Noel, but when they fell, they suddenly curved and flew horizontally. This was what he had learned in the Ezenholm Family.

Anna also shot her lightning dragon but there was another twist that she applied in this ability.

Before the three swords struck those demons, the lightning dragon moved to the swords and coated them in lightning.

"What?" Noel widened his eyes in shock, glancing at Anna.

p "Hehe." Anna smirked. "I have given your swords my lightning. Go for it."

Noel didn't understand how Anna could do it, but he knew that the swords became even stronger.

When it reached the demons, the swords actually pierced through the demons, killing at least twenty demons in a row. Although they were only Low Level Demons, the number they could kill with a single ability was truly beyond their expectation.

"This is..." Noel was amused by this power before Anna added, "There is a Demon using a fire. I want you to block that fire with your ice. I'll do the rest."

Noel nodded in agreement as they moved together to make the demons chase them again. Most of the Low Level Demons had a hard time to get away from the collision while those who had escaped from there were the Advanced Level Demons.

"That viper!" Anna shouted while pointing at a white viper.

Noel pointed his palm at the viper and released his Snowflake Crystal.

The viper's cheeks became inflated all of a sudden before it opened its mouth, releasing a white-colored fire breath instead of poison.

The snowflake was hit by the fire and exploded, trying to freeze the fire. But as expected from an Advanced Level Demon, its attack was extraordinary. The fire was so strong that it tried to evaporate the ice itself, but because Noel's ice came from a powerful spirit, it only ended up melting instead of evaporating.

The other Advanced Level Demons used the fire breath as a cover as they approached Noel and Anna.

Unfortunately for them, this was what Anna wanted all along. The fire melted Noel's ice, but the momentum between them caused the water to splash around, hitting a few Advanced Level Demons.

Anna placed her hand on the ground and released her lightning.

"Die." Anna muttered as she watched her lightning running through the ground.

Reaching the collision between ice and fire, the lightning began to spread through the water and electrocuted three Advanced Level Demons.

Roar!

Roar!

Roar!

The Advanced Level Demons were screaming in pain because the lightning felt like they were roasting them alive.

"Noel!"

"I know." Noel saw the opportunity Anna created for him and summoned three giant swords on top of the demons.

Sword Fall.

The three swords fell right at the demons' heads, killing them.

"Nice."

Chapter 286 Another Level Of A Team Fight

"Nice."

Noel and Anna smiled at each other before a roar disrupted them.

The Advanced Level Demons who had some distance from the water managed to come closer, forcing the two of them to run.

While running, Noel actually felt the difference between a Spirit Practitioner and a Spirit Wielder.

He had known the difference earlier, but this was the first time he fought as a Spirit Wielder.

'So, this is Spirit Wielder. When I used my Freezing Crystal, I felt like I could summon the snowflake in two ways. The first way is to release a normal but continuous burst like earlier. The second way is an explosion that gives twice the strength.

'The same as the Sword Fall. I can concentrate my Power into the swords, making them even heavier and stronger.

'It seems that Anna has been fighting in this realm this whole time. No wonder I was losing this whole time.' Noel never expected that they could kill a few Advanced Level Demons this easily. Even those Low Level Demons weren't a match for them.

If Noel wanted it, he might be able to kill a few of them with Freezing Crystal.

'I see. Have I been underestimating myself this whole time? Or do I become complacent for thinking this way? No, I should be more bold and confident but don't forget to be careful.'

Noel took a deep breath to rethink his strategy. It was clear that they had a chance of winning against these demons as long as they could keep fighting this way.

However, Noel also thought about a certain mission.

,m [Mission: Peerless]

[Description: To prove your might, one has to fight a few enemies of the same level. Defeat three Advanced Level Demons by yourself in a single battle.]

[Reward: Flame Conjuring Ability and Newbie Medal.]

'Three Advanced Level Demons by myself while fighting these demons... Should I go for it? No, wait. There is a possibility that there are more demons in that mountain, since the Thunderbird that notified those demons didn't chase after us. Since I can get a safer option, why don't I do it like that? I can't become overconfident.'

Noel took a deep breath before saying, "Anna. Change of plan. We're going to kill all these demons here. Follow my instruction."

"Got it." Anna nodded with a serious expression. She glanced at the demons again and realized that all Mid Level Demons had managed to get out of the collision and Low Level Demons began to do the same.

There were still at least seven Advanced Level Demons, twenty Mid Level Demons and one hundred Low Level Demons. So, they had to be fast before those Low Level Demons and Mid Level Demons joined the chase.

"Duplication Rune and Jump!" Noel commanded.

Anna raised her hand and created the Duplication Rune before jumping like Noel. Surprisingly, when they landed on the ground, they slid on the ground.

"!!!" Anna looked down and found ice spreading underneath their feet, allowing them to maintain their current momentum while focusing on those demons.

Anna hurriedly pointed the Duplication Rune on those demons while Noel released his Freezing Crystal instead of Sword Fall.

"Are you serious?" Anna clicked her tongue as she felt her Spiritual Energy draining as soon as the snowflake was duplicated. "Hey, I have to spend my own Spiritual Energy to duplicate them, you know!"

"I know." Noel nodded. He had the knowledge about the runes, but never learned it because he was lacking in Spiritual Energy Reserve. So, he only knew about the weakness of that rune and took advantage of Anna's huge amount of Spiritual Energy.

Eight Freezing Crystals flew toward the Advanced Level Demons.

The viper was dumbfounded because his breath could only stop one.

It ended up hitting the middle one with his breath while the rest had to take care of the rest.

All Advanced Level Demons released all of their power to hit the snowflakes from the distance, but one of them had to fight an extra snowflake.

Unfortunately, Noel's Freezing Crystal had become stronger due to him becoming a Spirit Wielder, so an Advanced Level Demon couldn't defeat one snowflake that easily, resulting in the extra snowflake to reach the demon's body and froze it.

Boom!

The snowflake burst out in unison, creating a white chilling mist that covered the entire battlefield. The wind soon blew the mist away, revealing a huge ice wall that separated the pair and the demons.

Taking advantage of this huge wall as their camouflage, Noel leaped to the wall to prepare for an ambush while Anna understood his intention and followed him.

They went to the left side of the wall as an Advanced Level Demon managed to loop around the wall to keep chasing them.

Unfortunately for the demon, it couldn't see its preys. Suddenly, the demon felt their presence coming from the side and turned its head around, only to see Noel and Anna right before his eyes.

Noel struck the demon's head with Ice Infusion, softening the skin. And Anna struck that frozen spot with her lightning sword, severing its neck.

"Next one!" Noel said while turning to the side, finding another Advanced Level Demon that just came out from behind the ice wall.

"Haha, let's go!" Anna was excited because they had managed to do a more exciting battle now that they had become a Spirit Wielder.

In the past, both of them were hailed as strongest experts in the kingdom, so Anna was slightly bored by her inability to reproduce her skills from the past.

But now that she had gained some power with Noel, she couldn't help but feel excited, anticipating the team fight that consisted of two strongest experts in the kingdom. She took glimpse of that sight in this battle.

With a smile on her face, Anna summoned a lightning dragon from her hand to attack the Advanced Level Demon.

It was surprised to find Anna and Noel on this side, so it didn't have time to react and ended up getting electrocuted by the lightning.

Its body was numb and stopped moving for a second. Noel took this chance to use two Emotions in his sword. He used Contempt to shame the penetrating force of his sword and struck the demon's eyes before changing the emotion into Anger to cleanly cut the demon's head from the inside, killing it.

"That's two. We have five more Advanced Level Demons and a bunch of other demons." Noel stated while assessing their situation.

But Anna excitedly said, "But we will do it, aren't we, Noel?"

Noel smiled. "Of course. Keep up with me."

Chapter 287 Food

"Ha..."

"Ha..."

"Ha..."

Anna and Noel were panting. They were sitting on the ground with their backs leaning on each other.

"I'm so tired." Anna let out a long sigh of relief.

"Still..." Noel glanced to the side, looking at the numerous corpses.

"Indeed. It's quite a sight to see this many corpses here." Anna nodded in agreement while taking pride of their hunt. It was hard to fight them, especially the Advanced Level Demons, so they should be proud they could defeat all these demons in one fight.

"Then again, we have to face more demons in that mountain. There is something wrong with that mountain, don't you think?"

"I believe so. Even the bird that alarmed the demons didn't come to chase us. I'm afraid that there are more demons than we originally expected."

"But this danger comes with an opportunity. The more demons we're going to face, the more Crystals we could get. In fact, with all these demons alone, I can pay off the debts." Noel smiled and pointed at the demons. "There you go, this is the hunt, you can get all of them."

"..." Anna was speechless, never expecting Noel to think about this opportunity. He had absorbed all their Demon Crystals not long ago to become a Spirit Wielder, and now he claimed he had finished repaying the debts.

Considering there were many Advanced Level Demons, she finally accepted. "Fine... We'll split as usual after this."

"Good." Noel nodded in agreement.

"I think we'll be in trouble if we bring these Demon Crystals on top of the ones we'll get on the mountain. So, do you mind if I absorb them first? It'll take a while but no more than a half day."

"We have Moon Blessing, so the night is not a problem."

As soon as Noel agreed, Anna started taking out the Demon Crystals from the corpses and gathering them in one place.

Noel was near her all the time to protect her from any threats, but luckily, nothing came to this area.

A few hours later.

Anna was woken up by a sweet smell. She had just finished absorbing all the Demon Crystals, so she hadn't eaten this whole time.

When the smell entered her lung, it incited the reaction from her stomach.

Growl!

"!!!" Anna's body trembled as her face was flushed red. She never expected that she couldn't even control her stomach.

She glanced to the side and found Noel steering a soup in a black wok. Although they had been traveling together for so long, this might be the first time she saw Noel cooking.

After all, her food was so delicious that Noel couldn't resist. However, she forgot that Noel would also start cooking to make sure he wasn't dependent on her and by the time she realized it, Noel's cooking was already quite decent.

She gulped down while looking at the yellowish white soup. "This is..."

"Sweet and creamy soup from the Greenwood Kingdom. I have to boil it for another thirty minutes. So, why don't you head to the river over there to wash yourself first?" Noel pointed at his back.

"O-oh!" Anna didn't know how to react to this bizarre finding. "Since when did you started cooking? I have never seen you cook."

"A few months ago. I know that my cooking skill is low compared to yours, but at least, this one tastes decent." Noel rolled his eyes as if Anna was looking down on his food.

"..." Anna fell silent for a moment before she decided to go to the river. On her walk, her heart was beating crazily. She gulped down and screamed inwardly, 'What is that? Noel can cook? If he can cook,

does that mean he doesn't need me anymore? I thought I could conquer Noel through his stomach, but if he can cook, that's a different problem.

'That's right. We have to go separate ways in a few months... by the time we meet again, Noel shouldn't be interested in my food anymore.' Anna pinched the bridge of her nose. She knew that the food wasn't that relevant anymore after solving the hatred, but there was a disappointment in her heart when thinking that she couldn't cook for him anymore.

"Well, shouldn't I be happy that I don't have to cook all the time anymore?" Anna muttered, trying to make her feel better, albeit failed. She hung her head low as she walked toward the river.

After a while, she returned to their camp while drying her hair with towel. "I'm back."

"Mhm." Noel nodded, took out a bowl, and poured the soup on it. "Here you go."

"Thanks." Anna received the bowl and sat next to Noel. She didn't hesitate to taste the soup, trying to measure Noel's cooking skill.

But when the spoon entered her mouth, the sweet smell from the food instantly filled her mouth and lung. But more importantly, the soup actually had two tastes. It was sweet but sour, making her confuse the taste for a second before realizing the clash between the two actually enhanced the dish's flavor.

Cough! Anna coughed once, overwhelmed by the flavor.

"What's wrong? Is it that bad?" Noel let out a long sigh, knowing that it wasn't up to par with Anna's cooking.

"No, it tastes good, but there are a few problems. The taste is a bit too overwhelming. You have to dilute it with water a bit more. I can understand that you pair it with hard bread, so that the bread will have a good flavor and soft texture if you dip it into it... But you have to understand that we're adventuring right now.

"If you eat something too overwhelming, there is a bigger chance that you will fall ill. Even if our body is stronger as a Spirit Wielder, you have to take care of your diet. One time might not be a problem, but if you continuously do it for a period of time... You might also create a chronic illness in your body."

"Ah!" Noel scratched the back of his head before remembering something. "Is that why your cooking feel so light but fulfilling?"

Anna nodded.

"I see." Noel sighed, muttered inwardly, 'So, Anna didn't cook something just for the sake of filling our stomach. She also took care of our bodies but still gave us the satisfaction that we needed...'

Seeing Noel's disappointment, Anna quickly devoured the soup and said, "Still... I said that once in a while is fine. So, another bowl please."

Chapter 288 Decision

"What do you think?" Noel asked while looking at their perimeter.

After eating, they rested for a while before they began to move, taking advantage of the darkness to infiltrate the mountain. They didn't know whether the Thunderbird would come down again or not, but they had to prepare for everything.

"There is nothing for now. I can see a few demons, but I haven't seen a strong ones." Anna shook her head. "It seems that they haven't found demons to refill those we have killed."

"Then, this is the perfect chance for us to infiltrate the mountain. Can you set up a route for us?"

"I'll try. But we don't know where the Thunderbird lives. I'm afraid that we're going to encounter that bird while we're in the middle, causing us to be surrounded from all sides."

"So, your suggestion?" Noel furrowed his eyebrows. Although he already knew what she wanted to say, he still asked to confirm her intention.

"Yeah. We have to kill the demons first before we can go in without any interruption. In the best scenario, we kill the Thunderbird who seems to be controlling the demons in this area."

"..." Noel fell silent for a moment as if he had come up with a ridiculous idea. "Say... is it possible for Advanced Level Demons to be domesticated or something?"

"You want to domesticate an Advanced Level Demon? Are you insane? Do you want to fly?" Anna's shock was understandable because no one had ever thought about befriending the demons, considering the latter always attacked them as soon as they met them.

However, Noel explained his thought which gave her another understanding about Noel's question. "No, do you remember the case of the bandits with the demons? You're talking about the Supreme Devil Organization at that time, so I thought since this commotion might be related to that organization..."

"Ah!" Anna stared at Noel in disbelief. In her previous life, she had seen an even stronger demon taking side of the Supreme Devil Organization, so it might be possible to control Advanced Level Demons.

In other words, the Thunderbird, who was controlling this mountain, might have been domesticated by the Supreme Devil Organization.

The fact that the Supreme Devil Organization's bishop found this place and took advantage of it reinforced this thought.

"Our situation might not be as good as we originally thought." Anna's body trembled because of the realization. The fact that the commotion that wasn't supposed to be here actually occurred before her eyes meant the Supreme Devil Organization had found this cave.

The future had changed slightly and this was the result.

"There is a possibility that the Supreme Devil Organization has found out about the liquid and the Thunderbird is used to protect it. In other words, this whole commotion might be related to them." Anna confirmed it while clenching her fists.

"No. I don't think the Supreme Devil Organization is that stupid. The fact that you're using your demon and other loose demons to create this ruckus means you're ready to make your presence known.

"Looking at the Supreme Devil Organization's movements this whole time, I know that they won't be doing this unless..." Noel paused for a moment, creating the suspense. Anna was staring intensely as if demanding the continuation while Noel simply pointed at the cave's direction. "They haven't found it."

"Do you mean that because they haven't found it, they're mobilizing these demons to find the cave?"

"Yes. I believe they have found out about the general location, not the specific position."

"So, are we still going to aim for it? I'm afraid that the enemies have a Devil Bishop. It will be over if we go straight there."

"No." Noel shook his head. Although he had a thought about Dimitri who was supposed to be protecting him, he didn't want to rely on him so that he could mess around. He considered his plan carefully and said, "We're going to slip past all these demons and go straight to the cave. We take a bath on it and then I'll burn the liquid."

"But that means we can't report it to the Demon Banner Army?"

"The Demon Banner Army might be able to protect and take advantage of it, but with the distance between this place and the branch, it's impossible to mobilize them before the enemies find the cave. When that happens, the organization might be able to transport all the liquid away... I mean, they have demons."

"Still, the demon army's alone is enough to cause a ruckus in the Demon Banner Army, let alone the Body Strengthening Liquid... I see. You want to destroy the Body Strengthening Liquid to decrease the number of problems?"

Noel smirked, confirming her suspicion.

Anna once again was impressed by his decision. It was true that they could take advantage of the liquid if they reported it to the Demon Banner Army. They might even gain an achievement and rewards, but this Body Strengthening Liquid was outside their mission, so no one could tell them they couldn't destroy it.

Hence, Noel chose to eliminate the problem after taking advantage of it.

Noel waved his hand as he climbed the mountain a bit while looping around the mountain as if he was trying to show her something.

"I'll pretend that I believe you completely. That's why if I were them, I would be staying in this mountain with the demons to find the liquid." Noel suddenly pointed at the front, specifically at the smoke that rose to the sky. It was covered by the mountain before, but now they had changed their position they could find the smoke on the other side of the mountain.

"!!!" Anna knew that this camp must be from the Supreme Devil Organization.

"They might be using the demons who don't know about the day and the night, but that's precisely their weakness. The humans, who control them, have to rest during the night and start searching again during the day. Hence, the best time for us to go to the mountain is now... That's why what is your decision, Anna? Are you going with my plan or do you want to report it?"

Anna let out a long sigh as if she acknowledged the defeat this time. She looked at Noel with a smile. "I've told you about the liquid, so it's now yours. Since you want to go, who am I to refuse such an invitation?"

Noel smiled slyly. "Let's go, shall we?"

Chapter 289 Thoughts

Anna waved her hand while hiding behind a huge tree, taking a peek at the demon not far from them. Since the demon was controlled to take a rest, it left a gap for them to exploit.

Noel took advantage of it and quietly moved to Anna. They had been doing this for two hours, approaching the cave.

It was truly hard because of the number of demons in this place. However, it wasn't impossible because the demons wouldn't be wandering too much like what happened during the day.

After passing this obstacle, they walked again, climbing the mountain. Noel thought the cave was located near the top of the mountain, but he soon found he was mistaken.

Anna began to climb down and head to a small valley next to the mountain.

Even though he had many questions in his mind, Noel didn't utter a single sound because of their current situation. He didn't want his sound to be heard by the demons and caused them to alarm the people from the Supreme Devil Organization.

Although he had Dimitri, Noel never confirmed Dimitri's existence and strength. Even if he believed Dimitri's existence through the letter from his father, he didn't know about his true strength.

Noel didn't know that Dimitri had the power to fight a Devil Bishop and believed his strength to be somewhere around Devil Inspector. Hence, he never considered Dimitri as a part of the plan, even if he had to destroy such a treasure.

That was why Noel had been following Anna quietly this whole time. As long as they could use the treasure and leave this place before dawn, this trip would be considered useful.

It took another hour before they reached the valley and surprisingly, he didn't pick any presence with his Demon Hunter Medal.

Noel abruptly stopped while looking around.

"What are you doing?" Anna asked in a low voice.

"I don't feel any demons in our surroundings." Noel explained while furrowing his eyebrows.

"That's good then. The bunch from the Supreme Devil Organization must have thought of it the wrong way." Anna pointed at the mountain. "They thought the liquid is on the mountain, but that's not true. I'll explain it to you after we enter the cave."

Anna stopped talking and began to move a bit faster, heading straight to the end of the valley.

With her back facing a steep slope, Anna turned around and smiled, "We've arrived."

Even though the night covered the valley with darkness, Noel and Anna had their Moon Blessing, allowing them to see the night brighter.

The valley was covered in a short grass and didn't seem to have been touched by outsiders. With the light from the moon, it looked like Anna was basking in a blue, graceful light.

The happiness that was reflected by that smile somehow warmed up the cool and serene atmosphere.

This might be the first time Noel traveled to a beautiful place like this without carrying his hatred. Even when Anna brought him to a cliff with a beautiful view, he didn't think much about it.

But because the letter from his father, Noel somehow saw the world a bit more differently. It felt like there was a sound in his heart, telling him that the world wasn't just about hatred.

Noel closed his eyes for a moment, recalling the world he had seen after his parents' deaths. It felt like he had lost his hope and the color disappeared from this world.

In that black and white world, Noel stood there alone. He felt cold and lonely because this was the first time he stood by himself without any support from his family.

He remembered the two soldiers who brought him to the Demon Banner Army. He couldn't forget about their stature, but he couldn't recall their faces as if he had put it away from them.

It might be due to his heart back then, but Anna's face felt different. Her beautiful smile looked like a sly, devilish smile. There was also an instance when she beat him up. He didn't know it at first but when he saw Anna like this, he understood Anna was only acting this whole time.

She had to act to fool the marquis because there should be someone who followed her. After all, there was no way the marquis would allow his daughter to go without any protection.

Noel didn't know what Anna had done in the previous life. In his memory, the only bad thing Anna had done in this life was the execution of his parents, which turned out to be a lie.

He didn't know what his previous life thought about Anna who once had killed many innocent people, behaved like a tyrannical nobles, and thought others as nothing but mere ants.

He didn't know his previous life actually tried to change Anna for the better. No one knew the reason and why he did it, only to let her die in the previous life.

Just for a second, Noel forgot about all his problems and saw the real world. The cool and slightly earthy smell associated with the grass entered his nose. The grass regained its beautiful green color.

And Anna standing in the distance, waving her hand to invite him. Noel had a complicated emotion when realizing he was sealing himself in his own world to protect himself.

He didn't want to be betrayed anymore, so he only buried that hatred to Anna in his heart and kept reminding himself to work together with her only for the sake of getting stronger without getting attached to her.

Despite all his kind and genuine words to other, Noel felt like he was only acting on how he had been taught by his father.

Noel couldn't help but want to punch his father for putting him in this spot. He wondered if his father never manipulated the situation that made Anna look evil, would they be able to work together and raise to an even higher position? Could they act like what their parents did?

Could they become best friends that would be able to sacrifice their own lives for the other?

An image of his father standing side by side with Marquis Stargaze flashed in his mind. With a smile on their faces, they fought all the problems coming toward them.

At the same time, a blurry image came together with it. It was an image of Noel and Anna who watched each other's back on the battlefield. Even with the blood covering their clothes, the smiles on their faces hadn't faded away because they knew there was a reliable person watching their back.

Seeing this image, a tear couldn't help but form in the corner of Noel's right eye because the image was soon shattered because of this whole situation.

Chapter 290 Cave

"Huh?" Anna was startled to see Noel's tears. She hadn't shed any tears in this life, but she certainly had a lot in the previous life when transforming to a better person.

So, she could understand if Noel cried like in the Sword Saint Tomb.

"Are you alright?" Anna stopped while going back to him to check his condition.

Noel remained silent while wiping the tear. He walked past her while saying, "I'm sorry."

"Huh?" Anna's body trembled as chills went down her spine. Noel was only saying, "I'm sorry," but she could feel the emotion behind those words.

The sadness, regret... all the complicated emotions mixed into one. Anna didn't know why Noel apologized when he had done nothing wrong, but it felt like there was another burden lifted from her heart. It felt like this apology was directed to something in the past.

"What did..." Anna turned around, looking at Noel's lonely back. A thought appeared in her mind. 'Why do I feel like Noel has changed once again?'

Anna feared that Noel changed for the worse when she was currently enjoying the current Noel, who was able to work together with her this well. It felt like they were true comrades in the past one month.

So, she didn't want it to be changed, afraid that Noel would just return to the previous one.

Anna slapped her cheeks as if trying to return to her energetic self, planning to transfer this energy to Noel.

She playfully walked beside Noel while teasing him, "What's wrong? You're a grown man already... No, wait. You're still 15 years old, right? How many days are left until your birthday? This is an important celebration since you're going to be an adult."

"..." Noel glanced at Anna with a troubled expression. He knew that Anna wanted to brighten the mood and considering they were on a mission, he shouldn't be this down.

He took a few deep breaths and said, "Yeah, you're right. I guess that'll be the last time I shed any tears since I'll become an adult soon."

"Come on. You can cry. Come come..." Anna spread her arms as if preparing to be an adult to calm him down.

"What are you doing? You're the same age as me." Noel shrugged. "Anyway, we should focus on our mission. I apologize if I made the atmosphere awkward a moment ago."

Anna checked Noel's expressions again and knew that he was trying to shift the mood. So, Anna played along and forgot about it.

"Alright. Let's go!" Anna pointed at a steep slope that could be said as a wall as well. This steep wall had vines covering the wall.

Anna grabbed the vines and pushed them to the side, showing a bit of opening on the wall. The gap created a rectangle shape as if it was an artificial stone that blocked the cave like a door.

"This is..." Noel narrowed his eyes. "A door."

"Yes. According to the legend, it's rumored that a great figure from one thousand years ago was using this cave in the past. The man lived inside this place because it had water dropping from the ceiling and that water allowed him to stay alive inside. It could even make him feel full..." Anna pointed at the ground and made Noel realize the muddy ground near the entrance as well as the wet part of the rock.

"Doesn't that mean it's already flooding inside?"

"What do you expect? It's already one thousand years, you know." Anna shrugged and took out her sword. "Help me up in pulling out this rock."

Noel thought for a moment and nodded. He stabbed the gap between the rocks, trying to cut everything that connected the rock with the entire wall.

After making sure there was nothing that stopped them from moving the rock, Noel stabbed a single gap and used his Ice Control to extend his sword and looped it around on the rock.

,m He took a glance at Anna's sword and connected this ice to her sword.

"Hmm?" Anna felt the change in her sword as if something entering her sword. She glanced at Noel who winked his right eye.

There was actually ice that connected their swords. Noel planned to use this to pull the rock out.

"Ready?" Noel asked with a smile.

"Got it." Anna nodded with a serious expression.

"Pull!" Noel gave the signal as they pulled their swords with all their strength.

Luckily, the bottom part of the rock was wet, reducing the friction and allowing Noel and Anna to pull the rock with half the effort.

Grumble!

Grumble!

"!!!" They felt the slight movement from the rock, indicating it was possible to pull the rock out.

They looked at each other, thinking the same thing. As soon as they nodded their heads, they pulled the rock again, moving it a little at a time.

It took them a whole five minutes to pull out half of the rocks.

Noel even asked, "Is there any need for us to do this? Can't we just destroy it?"

"No. We have to do this. Do you know if you put a lid when you're cooking without creating a hole on the lid, your food will suddenly burst out?"

"Hmm?"

Anna was explaining about the pressure the steam built up inside if there was no hole to allow them to travel.

Although Noel didn't understand completely, he knew what she wanted to do. "You're pretty bad, you know."

"You called me evil witch in the past."

"You like that name?"

"..."

The two chuckled and started pulling again. Finally, after their continuous effort, they managed to pull the rock out of the entrance, revealing the cave.

The cave wasn't big or long. There was a small basin in the middle of the cave, which was used to store the water, but because a long time had passed since someone took this, the cave was already flooded.

"By the way, did you say you can drink it, not bath in it?"

"If it's a small amount, it can work like ration. If it's a huge amount, you'll die from overdose. So, it's better for the pore in your skin to absorb it bit by bit to strengthen it. That's the principle."

Noel noticed something in that explanation and asked, "So, we will take a bath one at a time..."

Upon hearing that question, a sly smile appeared on Anna's face as if she had been plotting something.