

## **S vs Rebirth 311**

Chapter 311 The Start

[Mission: Punishment Game]

[Description: Hunt as many demons as possible within two hours]

[Reward: 10 SP and the right to order Anna for the rest of the day]

[Penalty: Gets ordered by Anna for the rest of the day.]

It might be due to him finally increasing his Spiritual Energy, he could finally gain missions again. And this time, the system planned to hype this game with this 10 Skill Points reward.

Noel couldn't help but smirk, planning to win this battle.

"Start!"

As soon as they heard the signal, Noel and Anna leaped forward.

Anna went straight to the demon that Rose showed. With her senses and illusion, Rose could find the demons and inform Anna immediately, making her the best support of the team.

However, Noel wasn't a pushover either. He used his Demon Hunter Medal and kept walking in the same direction. The size of his Demon Hunter Medal's detection area should be enough to cover a lot of space.

But as expected from Rose's ability, Anna was the first one to find the demon.

The demon was an oak tree. Its branches was spreading in all directions to protect its body.

"Hoh? This is a Mid Level Demon. Let's see how Anna handles it." Paul smiled, observing Anna's movement. Although they were helping the people, the members of the Demon Relief Squad had to equip themselves with extraordinary skills. So, he had to make sure Anna's ability could keep up with them.

As soon as the demon noticed Anna, the branches and the roots began to extend toward her.

Anna pulled out her sword.

"Mhm... That's a good sword. It looks so sharp and majestic. It even has Spirit Enchantments." Paul nodded in understanding, satisfied with her weapon. And now, it would be her time to prove her skill.

Although the snow hadn't fallen yet, winter had arrived. So, the trees had no leaves on it, making the branches look like a spear that could stab someone to death.

This would make it harder for Anna to reach the demon's body.

Anna smiled while drawing a circle with her left forefinger.

Suddenly, the circle sparked out lightning and shot out a lightning strike. The lightning strike wasn't big, but when it touched a branch, the lightning strike sparked and created an electric field that crushed everything in it.

The branches were completely crushed, leaving a hole in the demon's defense.

Anna jumped into the air to avoid the roots while taking advantage of this gap to slip past the tree's defense. She covered her sword with her lightning before precisely swinging at the place where the demon resided.

"!!!" Paul and the others widened their eyes in amusement. Anna's swing was sharp and precise, killing the demon in an instant.

"Amazing." Paul smiled excitedly. "She used that lightning to form a path for her and cleanly strike the demon tree. The lightning doesn't use too much Spiritual Energy and her sword is so sharp that she doesn't have to reinforce it excessively. She has both skills and judgment in the battle. It makes me want to fight her."

The others agreed with him. Anna had completed her task while conserving her stamina. This was a good mindset, considering she didn't know how many demons she had to fight today.

They were expecting her to do an even awesome job next time.

Meanwhile, Noel's luck seemed to be quite high too. He met a demon not long after Anna found her first demon.

This Advanced Level Demon had the form of a fox. Unlike the normal wolf who hunted in a pack, this Advanced Level Demon didn't seem to be working together with the others. Or this wolf might have devoured his entire pack.

Nonetheless, Noel had considered this wolf as his prey.

"We're pretty lucky. To think Noel will find an Advanced Level Demon this soon." Stella nodded excitedly.

"Still, Stella... Do you remember his movement earlier?" Jonathan glanced at her, recalling what happened earlier. Noel was running straight before he suddenly turned around and found this demon. It was an abrupt movement, but it showed that Noel found the wolf with his sense alone.

"Yeah. His sense is quite good. It's a different sense from Rose. Unlike Rose who can observe the entire area, Noel's sense must lie in his sixth sense that can find a living being in his surroundings. Basically, the demon won't be able to sneak attack on him."

"Then, let's see whether he can take care of the Advanced Level Demon or not, shall we?" Zion nodded in agreement while gathering his Spiritual Energy in his feet. He was ready to help Noel in case the worst happened.

Surprisingly, Noel smiled. "There is no snow yet, but it seems the temperature boosts my ability quite a bit."

Noel took a deep breath, cooling down his body as if he was trying to match himself with the surrounding.

The wolf felt something different from Noel and immediately charged forward, trying to strike him down before he could harm him.

Even though Noel didn't close his eyes, he could still imagine the scene where Stella slashed the trunk.

"Precision. You're going to be my practice target." Noel looked at the demon coldly as if he thought the winner had been decided.

The moment the demon wolf jumped on top of him, Noel made two small steps to the right before spinning his body and waving his blade.

"!!!" Stella dropped her jaw, shocked. "That's... That's..."

"..." Jonathan remained silent while Zion gulped down. "That kind of precision is similar to your sword strike, Stella."

All three of them could see the wolf's left ear fall down to the ground.

Noel used his Contempt Emotion to fuel his Everchanging Emotion Sword Style to increase his precision, but as expected, he still couldn't beat Stella in precision.

He tried to cut the ear completely, but there was still a part of the ear that failed to be cut.

"Only 90% of the ear was cut. It's not enough." Noel muttered and turned around, challenging the wolf again.

Chapter 312 Shock

\*Aooo!\*

The wolf howled in pain while glaring at Noel, never expecting that a human could do something like this. It endured the pain and charged at him again, planning to kill him this time.

When the wolf was about to pounce on him, Noel's thought changed.

'Woah, this wolf is quick.'

Although the wolf's speed was still within Noel's imagination, he acted like he was surprised to evoke the emotion for the defense. When a person was surprised, they either stood still or used their reflex to act.

Normal people would surely be standing still, but Noel had a trained body and reflex, so this surprise was just a means for him to use his reflex.

And that reflex allowed Noel to strike the wolf's right foot from below, knocking it up.

\*Aoo?!\*

The wolf was dumbfounded because that strike somehow blocked his paw. Although the claws managed to withstand the sharpness of the blade, they couldn't stop the force from Noel's sword.

Now that the paw was knocked back, the wolf had to land on the ground again and find another way to attack him.

But Noel's emotion changed once again.

Looking at the body that was about to crash into him, a thought arose in his mind. 'The wolf will crash onto me.'

In that instant, the thought became fear and that fear boosted Noel's speed, allowing him to wave his sword once again, striking the demon's body.

The power from this sword wasn't much and the demon's skin managed to stop the blade with only a hollow wound. But the force still knocked the wolf to the side, moving it away from him.

'This is not enough. I have used Fear (Quick), Contempt (Precise), and Surprise (Defense), but I haven't killed the demon yet. I guess the Fear lowers my strength more than I expected. Still, I can't really use any other abilities while using my Everchanging Emotion Sword Style... No, wait...'

Noel thought of something in this battle.

Although he was disappointed in the result, the trio who had been watching him this whole time had a different opinion. They were utterly shocked by his battle.

"Did you see it, Stella?" Zion sucked a cold breath.

"Yeah." Stella nodded in agreement, realizing why he could become a Spirit Wielder.

"I can see three different swings as if he has three different personalities. The first swing is precise. It might not be at your level yet, but that kind of precision is hard to find among other groups.

"The second swing has speed, but it feels like the sword turns blunt. If you look at the Spiritual Energy emitting from the sword, you can see that it spreads a bit to increase the area of impact. It is a swing to protect himself.

"Last but not least, that quick strike... If it was not a demon but a human, they would have died from that sword. Looking at these three strikes alone, you can see the balance is lacking. In other words, he has more strikes to unleash. Have you heard this swordsmanship?"

"No. Is it his self-created swordsmanship?" Stella narrowed her eyes, judging Noel.

"Are you serious? Do you know how hard it is to create your own swordsmanship? He is supposed to be someone who just learned how to fight a year ago, right? Do you think he can create swordsmanship with his current experience?"

The answer was obvious to most people. There was no way someone could create unique swordsmanship, especially without training. Noel had been lazy in his entire life, so they couldn't believe it either.

However, Stella still said, "There is no telling whether he has a teacher or not. That teacher might be teaching him this swordsmanship, but if he doesn't have a teacher..."

She paused for a moment. Even if she didn't finish her words, Zion and Jonathan already knew what she wanted to say.

"Yeah, Noel's talent might be higher than anyone can see..."

But they were going to be shocked once again because Noel had thought of another way of using his technique.

The injured wolf was glaring at him, wondering how to kill Noel. This entire time, the wolf had shrouded its body with Spiritual Energy to increase his physical ability, but Noel seemed composed throughout the battle.

The wolf had to find another way to kill Noel. Instead of utilizing its speed, the wolf decided to overwhelm him.

It gathered a huge amount of energy in its mouth and shot a blue beam.

"Hu..." Noel took another deep breath while raising his weapon. Anger began to rise in his heart as if he was mad at the wolf who didn't come to him anymore.

The Spiritual Energy around his body began to flicker as he infused his Spirit Weaponry into this strike.

The Spirit Weaponry was the Sword Saint's ability that allowed him to cut down Spiritual Energy itself. So, the moment Noel swung his sword downward, the Spiritual Energy flew forward and struck the beam, splitting it into two.

"What? He split the Spiritual Energy into two?" Stella dropped her jaw to the ground. This was the first time she had seen something like this. If it was a Spirit Ability, she wouldn't be so shocked. But what Noel showed was pure Swordsmanship.

Although he was shocked as well, Jonathan stepped forward while waving his hand because one of the beams went directly at them. He used his Telekinesis to push the air forward. When it touched the beam, it felt like there was a barrier on its way, causing the beam to disperse to the area.

"A swordsmanship that can even cut down the Spiritual Energy... With that alone, I'm convinced that Noel is strong." Jonathan muttered while blocking the beam.

"What kind of monster has our Demon Relief Squad got this time?" Zion scratched the back of his head. "This couldn't be called a battle anymore. Noel is simply bullying the Advanced Level Demon with only his Swordsmanship. If he starts using his Spirit Abilities, I don't know what will happen..."

#### Chapter 313 Not Enough

Noel took a deep breath, staring at the demon before him. After learning how Noel fought this whole time, it started pouncing on Noel while releasing blue light balls around its body.

All of these balls shot out beams that could kill Noel.

Normally, he would easily repel this attack by using the Spiritual Energy Dispersion Rune. But he had to consider what his second identity, ladre, could do.

Although he wanted to use all his strength here, if he gave these people too much information, they would realize ladre was him.

So, Noel had restricted himself to Everchanging Emotion Sword Style and Ice Spirit. Of course, Noel also planned to use his Everchanging Emotion Sword Style when he acted as ladre, but he made sure no one was there first. As for the others, Noel could use his fire ability and Rune, which should be enough for him to climb the rank.



As long as he became a vice captain, he should be able to find a way to retire and become a baron. At that time, he would start climbing the nobility ladder and reclaiming his land.

So, in this fight, Noel had sworn only to use his Swordsmanship, honing it as much as possible.

When he saw the incoming beams, he leaped back, avoiding all of them. This wolf was clever. He knew that Noel Joy's emotion which was used to protect could only handle one beam at a time.

Hence, if it scattered its attacks, Noel had no other way but to avoid it.

"Tsk. Is this the limit of his current swordsmanship? I can see that he's still making awkward movements here and there, but is this really his current limit?" Stella gritted her teeth. She was annoyed that Noel couldn't do much more, considering the uniqueness of the swordsmanship itself.

"Mhm?" Jonathan raised his head and turned around as if feeling something. "Hey. Do you feel it?"

"!!!" Stella instantly spread her presence and realized multiple demons were coming by. "Not good. We have to stop th—!"

Zion grabbed her hand, preventing her from interfering.

"Zion?" Stella gritted her teeth, confused to why Zion stopped her.

"That's enough, Stella. We've discussed this. The reason why everyone wants to stop you from becoming his mentor is due to this. Just take a look at it more calmly, he could sense the demon wolf earlier, so don't you think he has felt those as well? Then, why is he not using all his power?"

"!!!" Stella's body trembled, realizing Noel had a plan.

Zion stopped her earlier, not because he wanted to endanger Noel, but because he didn't want Stella to spoil him. As long as Noel hadn't given up, he would believe in Noel.

Stella bit her lips and decided to watch after him for the time being.

As Zion said, Noel had sensed them with his Demon Hunter Medal. There were a total of four demons planning to ambush him. He didn't know about their levels yet, but he felt they wouldn't be too weak.

The wolf had been howling this whole time and it turned out it was trying to call its friends. But because he acted alone earlier, his group had been separated from him, causing them to be delayed for this long.

Noel kept fighting the demon wolf without an expression, not telling the wolf that he was aware of the demons that planned to ambush him.

It was until one last moment when the wolf and Noel were about to clash, four demon wolves suddenly rushed to them and leaped into the air.

\*Aoo!\*

\*Aoo!\*

'Three Advanced Level Demons and one Mid Level Demon...' Noel assessed their abilities.

The demon wolf before him smiled as if everything went according to his plan. However, Noel smiled back as if he made him think it was according to his plan.

"!!!" The Advanced Level Demon was smart enough to realize Noel had calculated all this. \*Ao—!\*

Before it could alarm the other demons, Noel leaped to the side.

Noel waved his left hand and formed a snowflake, throwing it at them.

\*Aoo—!\*

The demons realized they were fooled. Unfortunately for them, their realization came too late.

The snowflake had touched them and exploded.

\*Boom!\*

"!!!" Stella, Zion, and Jonathan felt chill down their spines when seeing the ice blast.

"This is..." Stella gulped down, watching how a single explosion covered all five demons in ice. They couldn't avoid it because they were pouncing on him earlier.

Still, as one would expect from Advanced Level Demons, they released their Spiritual Energy and even their abilities and broke free from the ice. But it was clear that the cold had entered their bodies.

The injured wolf and one other Advanced Level Demon got their bodies shaking while the Mid Level Demon was completely frozen to death.

"Is this truly an ability of a Spirit Wielder? What kind of Ice Spirit he has?" Jonathan asked with a grim expression.

Noel had proven himself to be strong enough to join their Zero Squad. Some of the people from the First Squad were indeed a Spirit Master, but they were lacking in talent.

All of them were already middle-aged people, so it was clear that they didn't have too much potential in going further. That was why they were not cut to become a member of the zero squad.

However, Noel was different. He only learned everything for less than a year and somehow became this strong. His observation skill was extraordinary as well.

Looking at these facts alone, Noel was truly a peerless talent. His future would be limitless as long as people allowed him to grow. They were glad that Noel joined them because it would also elevate their status like when Septa joined his army.

But amidst of their praises about Noel, there were two things they didn't know. Noel was actually clicking his tongue while glaring at the demons. "This is not enough. Ardagan, use my Skill Points to raise Freezing Crystal's level."

That was right. This competition was simply to let Noel find his weakness and solve it. He knew that his Freezing Crystal would be useless sooner or later, so he had to increase its level. This was the first thing that Stella and the others didn't know. Noel's system was beyond their imagination.

As for the second one, it was...

Chapter 314 Anna's Overwhelming Strength

"This is..." Paul was shaking, witnessing what was happening.

In front of him was Anna standing on top of nine corpses.

"Three Mid Level Demons and Six Advanced Level Demons are crushed by her. Is she truly a Spirit Wielder? This is already at the level beyond it..." Rose dropped her jaw to the ground.

A few minutes ago.

Rose was pointing at the northwest direction. "In that direction, there are a few demons. I can't say the exact number but there should be more than five. Be careful."

This instruction was given in consideration of Mid Level Demons in the mix. And she also wanted to see Anna's limit.

As long as Anna showed a sign of defeat, she would step in and kill the demons.

However, the reality couldn't be any different from her expectation.

When Anna found the demons, there were actually nine demons.

"This is..." Rose hurriedly stepped forward to stop it, but Anna raised her hand, stopping her.

In this overwhelming disadvantage, Anna was actually smiling.

"Will this allow me to win this game?" Anna smirked as she pulled out her sword. "I'm sorry, but all of you are going to die here."

The demons were a pack of mountain goats.

'They are lightning mountain goats. They were fast and could run in any terrain. However, the danger came from their sturdy horns. Not only it was hard and could impale you, but the horns acted as a tool to conjure their Spiritual Energy. Yeah, yeah. I know everything about them...'

She couldn't help but recall her past life where she was stuck in a library, learning all kinds of knowledge about the demons.

She was locked inside by her teacher back then because knowledge was necessary.

And in this life, that knowledge was extremely useful for her to discern the demon's type and weakness.

"Lightning, huh? I have it too!" Lightning began sparking all over her body.

In the instant the mountain goats rushed to her, Anna also confronted them head-on. She raised her palm and released forth a lightning bolt.

The demon goats gathered their Spiritual Energy into their horns and shot it forward. This was the difference between fighting a single demon and a pack.

The Spiritual Energy they shot forward actually merged with each other and created a barrier. This way, the mountain goats could rush to her without being hurt.

When the lightning hit this barrier, it was instantly dispersed in all directions.

"As expected, it's hard for her alone to handle all these demons." Rose bit her lips and glanced at Paul.  
"Should we step in, Paul?"

Paul narrowed his eyes and shook his head. "No. She isn't this weak."

As Paul said, Anna didn't flinch even after her attack was neutralized that easily. Instead, she smiled and charged her lightning in her feet.

She then stepped forward and kicked the barrier, confronting nine demon goats with her strength alone.

\*Bam!\*

The lightning was dispersed by the barrier and the strength behind that kick produced a shock wave that was also scattered in the area. Still, that kick managed to stop the demon goats for one second.

"!!!" The demon goats didn't expect that a human could stop them with a kick. They were enraged and pushed harder.

Anna's right foot was still on the barrier, but her left foot was sliding on the ground. She was getting pushed back.

Looking at this difference in strength, Anna actually said, "Fools."

Suddenly, the ground beneath the demons exploded, discharging the electricity.

\*Boom!\*

Some of the demons were blown away while some fell to the ground after being electrocuted.

Nonetheless, the barrier was crumbling. Anna took this chance to slice two demons in their necks, killing them.

"That's two..." Anna smirked while turning to the right, kicking the goat that was about to recover. Her foot discharged a lightning strike, creating a hole in the demon's body. "That's three."

The demons behind her also had recovered and were about to ram her.

But Anna waved her sword, shooting out lightning strike. This lightning strike surprisingly looped around her body and hit the goat from the side.

Unfortunately, the demon goat had recovered completely. Seeing this surprise attack couldn't kill it anymore as the demon goat used its horns to attract the lightning and turn it into its own lightning.

\*Mbeee!\*

The demon goat discharged that lightning from its horns.

"As expected of Advanced Level Demon." Anna leaped into the air to avoid the lightning charge. She concentrated her lightning and Spiritual Energy in one spot and struck the goat's horns in that concentrated spot.

The lightning between the two sparked, clashing with each other.

However, the conclusion came in a sudden.

\*Crack!\*

"!!!" The demon goat widened its eyes, seeing its horns crushed by Anna. But that was the last thing it saw because nothing stopped Anna's sword from cutting the goat's head anymore.

\*Mbee—!\*

The goat fell down to the ground while Anna smiled. "That's four."

Looking at this overwhelming strength from Anna, Rose was actually trembling. "Is she really a Spirit Wielder?"

She couldn't believe how a Spirit Wielder killed two Mid Level Demons and two Advanced Level Demons in an instant. It was simply too absurd, considering Anna had just graduated.

"Cool mind, fiery heart, good judgment and extraordinary skill..." Paul closed his eyes for a moment. "So, this is the most talented person in the kingdom, Anna Stargaze. I have heard the rumor about her, but this kind of skill surpasses all the rumors.

"She looks experienced and knowledgeable. She also knows how to utilize her strength very well. Last but not least, look at how she manipulates the Spiritual Energy... I'm afraid that her control is better than mine."

"Better than yours?" Rose gasped. "Are you joking?"

"No. I'm not. Just take a look at the battle... At first, she discharged her lightning through her right foot and the next second, she discharged it through her other foot and implant them underground to blast those demons. Then, her curving lightning strike as well as that concentrated lightning that could destroy the goat's horns...

"This is her strength... Anna Stargaze's strength." Paul said with a grim expression.

Chapter 315 Newbie Medal

"Huuu..." Noel took a deep breath while staring at the demons.



'As expected, defeating them won't be that easy.' Noel thought, trying to figure out another way to end this battle easily.

The demon wolves became even more careful in approaching Noel, believing there would be another trap like earlier.

As if taking advantage of their doubt, Noel leaped back like he wanted to run away.

"!!!" The Advanced Level Demons instinctively chased after him. Although they were intelligent, they would still chase after their prey.

Hence, the sign of Noel retreating was the signal for them to kill him.

Noel smiled and formed the snowflake again on his palm. He then tossed it to the wolves.

The wolves had learned from the previous attack, so they immediately leaped to the side, looping around it.

Unfortunately for them, they didn't realize his Freezing Crystal had evolved.

The moment it burst out, the ice explosion was far bigger compared to the earlier one. This explosion lowered the temperature even more and a huge ice crystal was formed in the middle of the explosion.

This crystal had a longer reach than the previous one, engulfing two demon wolves. Meanwhile, the other two weren't in good condition either. Due to how close they were to the ice crystal, the chill had seeped into their bones, causing their bodies to numb.

The sudden change in their body got taken advantage of by Noel. He appeared in front of one demon wolf while slashing his sword downwards.

The demon wolf used its claws to deflect the blade, but the wolf realized that was the last thing he should do at that moment.

The moment the sword touched Noel's sword, ice began to form on the wolf's claws, spreading straight to the wolf's body.

\*Aoo!\*

The wolf was howling in pain, but no other demon could afford to save him as two of them were frozen while the last one was quite far due to looping around the ice crystal.

The sword sliced the wolf's neck cleanly, finishing it in one blow. After that, Noel turned to the frozen wolf and changed his emotion.

This time, he was using Disgust to make his sword like a blunt bat and struck the ice, crushing it into pieces. The demon's body had also fused with the ice, causing it to be split into pieces according to how the ice broke.

"Two more..." Noel muttered while glancing at one frozen wolf and one angry wolf. The frozen wolf was trying to crack the ice this whole time.

"I don't have too much time. I have to kill this wolf as soon as possible." Noel looked at the angry wolf and used his Sword Aura that had been enhanced by the Body Strengthening Liquid.

When he used his previous Sword Aura, the Spiritual Energy only enveloped the sword to sharpen it. However, the level of this skill had increased by three after using the Body Strengthening Liquid. He had even used it to strengthen his organ by evaporating it and allowing the vapor to enter his body.

So, when he used his Sword Aura again, the Spiritual Energy burst out like a raging fire.

Noel struck the wolf with this Sword Aura. Surprisingly, the Sword Aura bent the claws, allowing the sword to slice the wolf's paw and all the way to the body.

\*Aoo!\*

The wolf dropped to the ground, still alive. Noel didn't have a hobby in letting them suffer, so he immediately impaled the wolf's head, killing it.

After that, he crushed the ice before the wolf could escape, killing it.

With this, Noel had successfully killed five demons by himself.

"Hu..." Noel let out a long breath to calm his heart down, seeing Stella and the others dumbfounded expressions.

They were completely shocked Noel was able to achieve this feat.

While they were still stunned, Noel asked inwardly, 'Ardagan. I should have finished the mission, right?'

[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.]

[You've acquired Flame Conjuring Ability.]

[You've acquired Newbie Medal.]

Noel glanced at Stella and the others, knowing he couldn't show a weird behavior. So, he was staring at the demon's corpse as if inspecting it.

Meanwhile, he was asking Ardagan to do the entire thing for him.

'What is Newbie Medal?'

Medal: Newbie

Effect: Sword Mastery +2%, Spiritual Energy +2%, Rune Mastery +2%

'What? You serious? There is a medal like this?' Noel was shocked because this might be the best medal he had ever got. It improved his overall ability.

'Now that I think about it, can I change my medal during the battle? I mean, depending on my medal, I might be able to handle the enemy in a different way. And yes, I've started feeling the difference in the amount of my Spiritual Energy with different medals.

'If my Spiritual Energy becomes even higher, these medals will be very useful. I see. The mission is called Peerless but I get a Newbie Medal... Does this mean this medal can evolve?'

Ardagan didn't answer that question yet. At the same time, Noel heard Jonathan's voice.

"You're truly great. This is the first time I've seen someone like you." Jonathan smiled. "Normally, it's hard for a Spirit Wielder to kill an Advanced Level Demon. The Spiritual Energy inside their body might be similar, but the demon has a stronger body, so the result is obvious.

"That's why we're improving our skills. We hone our skill to the highest degree, allowing us to exert strength beyond our power. This will result in us being able to defeat a few people on the same level.

"Take Stella as example, due to her precise strike, she could defeat four demons of the same level. So, I'm telling you this, please hone your skill continuously while you're with us. Welcome to the Demon Relief Squad, Noel Ardagan." Jonathan extended his hand.

Noel smiled after getting acknowledged by Jonathan. He shook his hand. "Thank you. I'll surely learn a lot here."

Chapter 316 Assessment

Stella walked over to him and said, "Everything is good. But do you mind if I suggest you something?"

"Yes. Tell me everything I've done wrong." Noel nodded without hesitation. This was a chance to improve after all.

"Then, I want to talk about your ability to envelop your sword first." Stella paused for a moment. "You should feel your it like a blazing fire, right?"

"Yes. I call it Sword Aura. The name is inspired by Spirit Aura Breathing." Noel lied a bit to smoothen the conversation.

However, Stella didn't care much about the name as she continued her explanation. "That's good for explosive power, but what you're using right now is a sword. What is a sword used for?"

"Mhm? Everything?" Noel tilted his head in confusion. His Everchanging Sword Style allowed him to wield the sword like a bat or even a shield, so there was nothing wrong with his answer.

But Stella facepalmed and said, "I mean, in general. Your case is unique."

"To cut and stab the enemy." Noel corrected his word this time to match what she wanted.

"Exactly. What you should focus on right now is your control over Spiritual Energy. Imagine if you can tame that blazing fire and turn it into a calm Spiritual Energy that sharp the edge of your sword? The claws earlier will be sliced like butter.

"As I said earlier, you are kind of unique who used a sword like everything. If you can control your Sword Aura precisely, you could turn that sword into anything you like."

"Ah!" Noel finally understood what she wanted to say.

"As for Spiritual Energy Control, Paul and Jonathan can help you with it."

"I'll help him." Jonathan nodded, excluded his own Spiritual Energy, and formed a ball purely made of Spiritual Energy from his palm. The ball then transformed into a sword, a shield, and a spear. "See this? I'll be helping you in controlling your Spiritual Energy to this level."

"I understand. I'll be looking forward to it." Noel thanked him, excited to grow even stronger.

"Then, I'll take care of your Swordsmanship. Spare some time in the morning to spar with me."

"Mhm... But I always have a spar with Anna." Noel politely declined. It wasn't like he didn't trust Stella. He just felt Anna had more refined swordsmanship, and there was also a mission involving her. There was no way Noel wanted to throw away all those free benefits.

"Hmm..." Stella narrowed her eyes. There was actually another reason why she set up this punishment game. Whoever won, she wanted to see their orders. She tried to discern the relationship between Noel and Anna.

If they hated each other, Noel or Anna would surely give an absurd order. At that time, she would be wary of Anna because she was a threat to Noel.

But seeing how Noel preferred Anna over her made her doubt her decision.

She thought for a moment and said, "In that case, what about the normal physical training? Do you run?"

"Yes." Noel nodded.

"Then, I'll join you. I'll also bring some equipment to develop your body further."

"If that's the case, then I'm fine with it." Noel nodded.

"That's all for now, I guess. I can't really comment on those different sword strikes because I still can't understand the concept behind them. At the same time, it seems you know how to improve them, so I'll focus on your foundation instead."

"Alright." Noel agreed with her.

"Good. For now, you can continue with what you're doing and win this game. We'll be taking care of the corpses for you." Stella nodded and gave a thumbs up.

Jonathan waved his hand once and the Demon Crystals came out of their bodies, flying toward him. This was his way of telling Noel not to worry about the rest.

With such reliable people behind him, Noel started going to the peak to hunt as many demons as possible.

Of course, Anna was also doing the same. She also had reliable people beside her like Rose, who could inform her of the location of the demons near them.

That was why the competition between the two was fierce. No one wanted to lose.

Paul, Stella, and the rest of the people had gotten used to Noel and Anna's extraordinary strength. They kept showing their power to let them know they were reliable.

Although they were not Spirit Masters like them, they indeed could rely on them in some easier tasks.

This was extremely useful for Rose, who was in charge of the group's movement with her illusion ability.

They didn't know Clara was actually watching their game from the peak. No one even realized she was there this whole time.

She smiled, knowing there were two talented people in her group.

"Anna is like a polished diamond. She is talented and seems to be experienced. The thing she needs is probably Spiritual Energy, and from the looks of it, she isn't that good at helping people. So, I guess her purpose in staying here are those two.

"As for Noel, he is a rough diamond. Although he isn't as good as Anna, the fact he reaches this level alone in less than a year shows how talented he is. He'll learn in the group and gain more experience. And from the report, it says the people love him more than Anna, so I can expect a lot of things from him.

"Either way, there are two talented children coming to my Demon Relief Squad. I'll surely develop them." Clara smiled and disappeared as if she had satisfied her curiosity.

...

And finally, the sun had reached the top of their heads and the competition had finished.

Rose informed them not to go back to the lake to show the result of their hunt.

Noel and Anna were standing next to each other with their Demon Crystals lying on the ground. From one glance, they seemed to be accumulating the same amount of Demon Crystals, but they had to calculate it carefully to know the result.

Jonathan stepped forward and said, "I'll be counting your Demon Crystals. Are you ready?"

Chapter 317 Draw

Jonathan lifted their crystals with his Telekinesis and compared their number by lining them up in the same way.

"Oh?" Paul narrowed his eyes. "Anna got 23 Advanced Level Crystals and Noel got 22 Advanced Level Crystals. Impressive."

Even though the number of Advanced Level Crystals showed Noel had lost, Paul didn't declare the winner immediately.



Jonathan then lifted the Medium Level Crystals, showing the difference.

"Amazing." Paul nodded with a serious expression. "Anna got 68 Medium Level Crystals and Noel got 77 Medium Level Crystals and..."

He glanced downwards and saw one small Demon Crystal lying next to Noel. "... one Low Level Crystal. This is amazing... You are so lucky."

"..." The others rolled their eyes. In this area, they would hardly find a Low Level Demon. So, you could be considered lucky to encounter one.

Still, a Low Level Demon couldn't amount to a Mid Level Demon, let alone an Advanced Level Demon. They didn't know whether they could call it luck or not.

"A close competition." Paul nodded. "I'm surprised. After seeing Anna's overwhelming strength, I thought she would win. But it seemed Noel had done his best as well."

Paul glanced at Stella, who proudly nodded her head.

"That's why I suggest Noel is the winner. Ten Low Level Demons are equal to one Mid Level Demon and ten Mid Level Demons are equal to one Advanced Level Demon. This is common knowledge. It seems that Noel is lacking nine more Low Level Demons, but in this area, his luck is immeasurable, considering he could find one Low Level Demon, which should be a Mid Level Demon if not Advanced Level Demon.

"If it was a Mid Level Demon, it would be a draw, but if it was an Advanced Level Demon, which was most likely to happen..." Stella smirked.

"No can do. Low Level Demon is Low Level Demon. It's Anna's victory." Rose stopped her, not wanting to follow her order.

"Just take a look at this, Noel hunted more monsters than her. It was proof that he could win if he encountered one Advanced Level Demon among those last ten demons."

"If you consider luck is a part of one's strength, then Anna is luckier than him since she encountered the right amount of demons. In a battle, you can't say you're lucky because your opponent accidentally hit your vital despite you having dealt many shallow wounds and expect people to say he's lucky because you don't hit a vital spot among those strikes." Rose glared at her.

"You can't compare them. You should know that—"

"I don't care what you say. A win is a win!" Rose glared at her.

"It seems that you want to fight." Stella smirked while holding her blade's handle.

"Sounds right. Why don't I make your idol grovel before me?"

"You're making someone's father do that? It seems that the Demon Relief Squad doesn't want to accept him."

"You..."

Rose and Stella were glaring at each other while the others only looked away as if trying to ignore them.

Anna clapped her hand and said, "How about we call this a draw? This is just a welcome game for us anyway."

"..." Rose and Stella stopped for a moment and turned to her, finding her awkward smile. They couldn't help but feel a bit embarrassed to show such an immature action.

"That's true..." Rose coughed once to regain her bearing while saying, "This is just a welcome game to test your ability. And we have agreed that we can trust you to watch our back. So, there's no need to continue."

"Indeed." Stella ultimately agreed since they should better spend the time introducing the two newbies to the Demon Relief Squad's work.

"Still, we can't really drop this game easily. This is also a part of our tradition. The game is basically telling you if you don't want to get ordered around, you should get stronger. And that's how this Zero Squad has become stronger this whole time." Paul stopped them and gave the suggestion. "In that case, how about this... We won't call it a draw, but both win and lose simultaneously. So, each of us has the right to order the other party once!"

The group looked at Paul for a moment and glanced at each other.

Even Stella and Rose seemed to have reached an agreement. "Sounds good."

"Then, that's decided." Paul nodded and ended the game. "The order can only be used today. Since that said, let's go back."

Ben came to them and brought a demon's corpse. It was a boar demon that was somehow found in this place.

He said, "I've brought the meat. This should be enough to feed us and the rest of the people in the village."

"Good work, Ben. As expected of our all-rounder." Paul gave a thumbs-up and waved his hand. "Alright. Let's go back. Anna, Noel, you two can get the Demon Crystals. You were the ones who obtained it anyway."

Noel and Anna nodded and grabbed their crystals. In their mind, they were thinking about what kind of Order they would give.

Noel and Anna smirked while glaring at each other as if saying, 'Just you wait...'

Paul couldn't help but warn them after seeing their smirks. "Just in case you don't know about the limit, you shouldn't force someone to do something exaggerated, you know. There's no way they will comply if you ask them to run around the village naked. Just make sure you know the limit of your order, alright?"

"Don't worry. My order can easily be done." Anna and Noel said in unison. They were in sync as if they had known each other for years.

"..." Paul looked at their enthusiastic face and shook his head helplessly, letting the two youngsters do whatever they wanted.

The group simply went back to the village for lunch before they started working again until dusk.

Unbeknownst to them, Stella was hiding something from them. She glanced at Anna from time to time as her heart became cold. If not for her bright mood and wide smile, she would give one's chill down their spine.

But little did Stella know, Anna noticed her glances this whole time... a glance of hostility.

Chapter 318 Intention

"Mhm. This is nice." Rose let out a satisfied moan, annoyed Stella who was massaging her.

That was right. Her order to Stella was to massage her.

Stella obviously got annoyed since they were the only women in the Zero Squad, considering they couldn't consider Clara as a part of the Zero Squad. So, they often challenged each other.

"Should I do a sensual massage for you?" Stella smirked while grabbing Rose's butt firmly.

"!!!" Rose glared at her. "You... Do your job correctly! I don't order for that!"

"Tsk." Stella clicked her tongue and looked away. However, her hands still massaged her.

However, she soon heard Rose's voice. "So, have you confirmed everything from this punishment game?"

"..." Stella's expression changed as she looked at Rose, who was closing her eyes to make herself more comfortable. She sighed. "So, you know about it?"

"They're pretty famous, you know. Anna Stargaze was the one asking for the Ardagan Family to be executed. Thanks to his father's previous achievement, Noel Ardagan was spared and exiled to the Demon Banner Army.

"The main purpose in sending him there should be to let him die from monsters. Yet, he manages to overcome all hardship and reaches this place as a talented knight.

"But the problem is Anna's presence. Why did she come to the Demon Banner Army in the first place? It was a mystery. In one glance, it looked like Anna wanted to kill Noel with her own hands. If that was the case, Anna wouldn't wait this long.

"With her abilities, it was a simple matter to kill him. Yet, she didn't... At the same time, Noel and Anna's talents were pretty similar.

"Although I couldn't understand it completely, I could see Anna is experienced despite her age. This is weird even for me. I can understand her being strong and knowledgeable due to her talent, but experiences comes from age. That's why I can't understand how her behavior doesn't match her age.

"Even if you mature early like Noel, it gives off a different feeling. And don't you think it's weird that someone can pinpoint our weaknesses that easily? As if she is a veteran who has fought thousands of battles.

"That was why I knew you were plotting something when you suggested that punishment game. You were trying to make Noel and Anna compete with each other to know which Order they would give to the other party.

"If Noel won, you would know he wanted to kill Anna if his order was excessive and vice versa. But this time... I'm not very sure if they're going to order something that bad. From the looks of it, they don't seem to have a hatred between them. Instead, they're like best friends who have gone through many life-and-death battles.

"So... what are you planning with this?" Rose finished her analysis with a sigh. She had completely deciphered Stella's intention. Rose added, "The fact that Anna is so experienced means there's a chance that she has felt your intention, Stella. Are you planning to fight the Marquis Family?"

Stella paused for a moment and said, "I guess only you who can read me like an open book."

"How many times do you think we have competed with each other?"

"Haha, that's true." Stella sighed. "Still, I don't like sitting around either. Noel is clearly talented, very talented. He might easily surpass Septa at this rate. You should know about Septa's talent, right?"

"Yeah. He started at 16 years old and climbed through the rank to become a Captain Class Individual at age 23. It was said that he could become the next commander." Rose nodded. "If I'm not wrong, Noel is 15 years old right now... and he is already a Spirit Wielder."

"Yes. Reaching Spirit Wielder at age 15, then Spirit Master at age 17, and Spirit Grandmaster at age 20. This is just my rough calculation without knowing the extent of his talent. He can even reach that step even faster and has the possibility of becoming a Captain Class Individual at age 21. Don't you think it's a waste to kill this individual?" Stella bit her lips.

"It's a waste if you think the benefit of having such a talented individual. But the royal family and the Stargaze Family have executed his parents and seized his family's assets. With that kind of grudge, don't you think he will become a threat to them? This is such a world... where if you have too much talent, you'll become a threat to others."

"That's why I want to understand their relationship." Stella nodded. This was her concern. She had to know whether Noel would die or not. Although she couldn't help him too much, Noel was still her idol's son. So, she wanted to help him as much as possible.

"I understand your concern, but he is not that weak. Anna might be more experienced, but Noel is more cunning. All you can do is to observe them for the time being... Ah, right. I think you have one way to help him. Why don't you ask him to train together with you? Just separate Noel and Anna."

"I have asked him about it, but he prefers to spar with her instead of me. Though, he will be with me for physical training."

"Hoh?" Rose narrowed her eyes, interested in this matter. "Sparring with her? Does that mean he wants to beat Anna to release his hatred?"

"I don't know. That's why I'll be watching them. They're still 15 years old anyway. No matter how hard they hide it, they'll leak out killing intent in one way or another. I won't miss it." Stella nodded.

"Is that so? Well, just don't bother them too much or that hostility will be directed at you. I know that you're concerned about him, but I'm the type who will trust him. I think he wants to deal with his situation himself." Rose smiled, stood up, and stretched her body. "Hmm, my body feels very light. It's time to eat. Ben should have finished cooking."

"..." Stella looked at Rose who shamelessly walked away. She clicked her tongue and walked outside.

Chapter 319 Order

Meanwhile, Noel and Anna were staring at each other in a tent as if planning to use their orders right away.

"How about you say it first? What do you want me to do?" Anna asked.

"I'm a gentleman, so ladies first." Noel extended his hand to Anna, throwing the chance at her.

"Mhm... if I say mine first, you can easily change what you want after that." Anna harrumphed, glaring at him.

"I don't know what you're talking about. I wouldn't change my decision." Noel shook his head.

"Yeah, you wouldn't because you haven't made the decision. There's nothing to change if you haven't even made one in the first place." Anna rolled her eyes, knowing how Noel's brain worked.

"..." Noel looked away before saying, "How about this, we write down our order on the ground and show it to each other at the same time?"

"That's a good idea. Though, why the ground? If we want to write, we write on paper."

"Don't waste ink and paper." Noel shrugged and stood up. "Anyway, let's write it outside."

Anna didn't think much about the ink and the paper, but she forgot the fact they were camping with the Demon Relief Squad. The supply was limited.

They hadn't learned anything about their supply route, so it was better not to touch their supply if possible. This was Noel's thought.

Anna and Noel ended up walking outside and used their swords to write on the ground. They made sure their bodies covered the writing until they finished.

"Are you done?" Noel asked.

"Yeah. I'm done." Anna nodded.

"Then, let's turn our back at the same time and show it."

"Sure."

Noel and Anna turned around and stepped to the side, showing their order.

"Massage me before midnight."

"Cook me something before midnight."



"Huh?" Both of them widened their eyes because they were asking for something before midnight.

"Why do you want me to cook before midnight?" Anna asked, confused.

"You too, why do you want me to massage you before midnight?" Noel furrowed his eyebrows, suspicious.

"That's because my birthday is tomorrow. Tomorrow is when I become an adult. Normally, there would be a ceremony for this and the party will be big, but because I'm here, can I at least ask for something nice?" Anna explained her decision.

Surprisingly, the explanation was the exact same as Noel's.

"Eh? Yours is tomorrow too?" Noel blinked his eyes a few times, shocked.

"Eh? You too?" Anna covered her mouth while sucking a cold breath.

"My father used to celebrate it because he wanted to feel joy before the harsh winter," Noel explained before making a weird expression. "What's wrong with this situation... Are you sure your father hasn't told you anything?"

"No, no. Shouldn't I be the one asking it? Your father was the one manipulating things in the shadow, so I can't see any reason for not suspecting your father."

"My father is gone now. Only your father is around, so you should ask your father about this!"

"That's true..." Anna looked down, contemplating. "There are simply too many coincidences. The plan to make me murder your parents, our birth..."

"..." Noel couldn't say he wasn't suspicious either.

"Well, I would be going back to my family after this, so I would be asking my father about it. You surely don't mind if I use your name to check my father's reaction, right?"

"Yeah." Noel nodded. He also felt strange about this coincidence. He didn't know how much his father was involved, but the marquis, his best friend, shouldn't be that oblivious to his plan too.

"Still..." Anna glanced at the order and used her feet to remove the writing on the ground. With this, there was no order given to each other since she erased Noel's as well. After that, she said, "How about this... I'll cook us something for us to celebrate, and you're going to help me. We can't really celebrate it any other time since we can't disturb the others."

Noel nodded in agreement. "Sounds good to me."

Noel and Anna finally reached an agreement. After that, they were simply following the group to finish whatever they were planning to do today.

And it seemed they had a good work balance because they stopped the moment dusk came. Each of them went somewhere as if retiring for the day. However, Noel and Anna knew that they were using this time to practice.

Noel and Anna obviously would do the same if they didn't plan to celebrate their birthday tonight.

They let go of their swords just for today as Noel and Anna searched for some vegetables to cook.

Anna made a simple but delicious meal. She also made sure the others didn't notice since it was better not to disturb them.

That night, Noel and Anna met each other in the back of their temporary house in this village with a bowl in their hand. The soup gave them warmth on this cold night.

While leaning their backs against the wall, they were looking at the sky together.

"Still, I have never thought that I would be sitting together with you like this." Anna smiled.

"That's true. I have always thought about killing you. But after reading that letter, I don't know how to feel about you." Noel sighed. "Even right now, I still hate you, but that hate gives me complex feelings. It feels like I hate you, but I can't hate you at the same time."

"I have realized everything I've done wrong in the past. I have no excuse for that because I truly thought about killing your parents for the sake of stability in the past. But when I realized it, I immediately rode my horse to you, wanting to fix my mistakes.

"You were the one teaching me a lesson that I would never forget. You were the one who changed me." Anna smiled, reminiscing about her past. It was tough, but she truly grew up.

Noel misunderstood her words. Since he didn't know about his past life, he thought the execution was a lesson for a lifetime. Or that might be what his father's plan was to change the daughter of his best friend.

Noel remained silent and just sipped the soup.

"Congratulations to both of us for becoming an adult."

Chapter 320 Desire

Noel and Anna spent one week in this village.

The first three days were spent to introduce to all kinds of works they usually did in a village. In the restoration of the village, they helped constructing the wall and buildings. They even dug the ditch and filled it with water.

There was a lot to learn and the reason behind those constructions. And each time they worked on something, they surely utilized their power in a unique way that could help them in finishing their work.

Just seeing it alone made Anna and Noel confused, trying to find a way to help them with their strength.

It was hard for both of them, considering three days weren't enough to handle it. But they could only continue working on this matter.

The next four days were spent in training.

Noel had a spar with Anna as always, but Stella seemed to be sticking close to him as if she wanted to learn about their current level after watching their hunt previously.

Her excuse was, 'Because I have to create a good physical training schedule for you, I have to observe you a bit longer to see what you need.'

Noel accepted her logical reason because it was impossible to learn everything about someone with a single hunt.

After that sparring, Noel went over to Stella to practice together with her.

They started it with running, which was obviously a chance for Noel to talk about something with Stella.

"I don't know if it's appropriate for me to say this, but I feel like you have known me before, Stella..."  
Noel looked at her while furrowing his eyebrows. He felt Stella purposely approach him because of something as if wanting to separate him from Anna.

Stella's body shook a bit. She made a weird smile while pointing at herself. "Am I making it that obvious?"

"Not really." Noel shook his head. "But your attitude toward me is different from the others."

Stella scratched her head, wondering how to explain it. In the end, she let out a sigh and said, "Well, I idolized your father. Do you know how much your father has helped the people, including us?"

"I'm not very sure. I do know that my father has charity work aside from his business. But I don't know much about the details."

"That charity work extended to a third of the kingdom. It provided people with water, food, and protection. It could be said that your father single-handedly created the second Demon Relief Squad.

"We would be very grateful every time your father extended his hand to the place where we worked because the entire work became even smoother.

"And in one village, a small village girl, who almost died from starvation, got helped by him. It was the reason for me to join the Demon Relief Squad. I wanted to help people like how your father helped me.

"Even if I couldn't do it at that scale, with my current position, I should be able to get a lot of money, which could be used for that. That's why I want to help his son... because..." Stella paused at that moment.

However, the reason was obvious to both of them. It was Anna.

Noel didn't know what he was planning to do to Anna because of the letter from his father. But he still said with a serious expression. "I appreciate your feeling and desire to help me, but I ask you not to get involved in my matter. I'll solve my problem with my own hands."

"!!!" Stella paused for a moment, staring at Noel's serious expression. This was his resolve and duty. If he could only ask for help, how could he reclaim his right as a noble who helped others? That was why he wanted to solve the problem with Anna with his own hands.

Stella bit her lips before making an awkward smile. "I guess that's how you are. I'm sorry if I somehow make you uncomfortable."

"No. I'm really thankful for your feeling."

"Mhm. But if you need help in the future, don't hesitate to talk to me." Stella pumped her fist as if she was raring to go.

"Well, if you don't mind, please help me to get stronger. What you know about me is that I am Luke Ardagan's son. And people will think of me as such. However..." Noel raised his hand as if trying to reach the sky. "I want the people in the future to know me as Noel Ardagan, not someone's son or someone from the Ardagan Family. And for that..."

"You have to get stronger." Stella finished his words. She couldn't help but feel admiration after listening to him.

Despite falling to rock bottom, Noel still had a fiery desire to write his own future. With all the experience and deeds on his back, he wanted to leave a legacy that everyone could remember.

He wanted to tell them, "This is Noel Ardagan's legacy," not, "This is a story about the son of Luke Ardagan, who chased after his father."

Stella took a deep breath, realizing the son wanted to surpass his father. She couldn't help but feel a bit excited to see how far Noel could go. And in one chapter of his life, there would be a story about her.

Stella smiled and said, "If that's the case, then I won't hesitate to help you! Are you sure you can follow me?"

"Of course. There's no need to hold back." Noel nodded with a smile.

It was the start of their gruesome training together.

The training only lasted for four days because the group had to start moving to their next destination. The time limit given by Clara was two weeks, but they had to use one week to reach their destination, so they could only go today.

And just like how the people always reacted when Noel left, the people in the village stood together in front of their village, waving their hands as they watched them leave.