

## S vs Rebirth 391

### Chapter 391 Explanation

"What do you mean by not taking any action? It's already clear that the nobles are trying to make a ruckus in the Demon Banner Army. They have killed one of my members!" Clara gritted her teeth, glaring at the commander, who remained calm this whole time. "Why haven't you done anything?"

Because there was no action from the commander, she couldn't help but go to the headquarters personally to demand an explanation. She was also annoyed by how the Zero Squad kept mourning. So, she came here to settle both problems.

Unfortunately, the commander hadn't answered her question for a whole thirty minutes despite her explaining everything.

"Excuse me." Suddenly, a woman opened the door while bringing two cups of tea and a letter.

The woman seemed to be more mature than Clara as she put a gentle smile on her face while serving the tea.

"Welcome, Clara. Have tea first... It took me a while to brew this tea." She put down the cup as if she didn't notice the tension in the air.

"Milfa. Don't stop me. I have to get the explanation from him today! I won't be leaving without it!" Clara gritted her teeth, glaring at her to shove her away.

However, the other party only smiled at her. "Oh, my. What kind of explanation do you wish to get? I think he has done everything he can..."

"Why are you protecting him? He literally did nothing when one of my squad members died. This is not the first or second squad, but my zero squad member!"

"I'm not protecting him. I'm simply telling the truth."

"Shut up! You are not even his wife, but you're stopping me from demanding an explanation. So, go away and put that last letter in your name in the front if you want to stop me today!"

"I'll take it as a compliment. I'm glad that you're praising me for being mature." Milfa let out a chuckle while putting another cup on the commander's table. "That's right. This is the letter you told me to bring."

The commander nodded with a serious expression. "Thanks."

"You're welcome. So, should I bring Clara out?" She asked.

"What? You want to drag me out of here? Do you think I'm afraid of you? Why don't you go out instead of me?"

"But my station is in the headquarters." Milfa made a weird smile before the commander tugged her sleeve. She turned around and saw the commander handing back the letter as if telling her to give it to Clara.

"Why are you not speaking?" Clara clicked her tongue. "I'm going to sew your lips so that you won't be able to speak for the rest of your life."

"Clara is funny today. You are usually composed, but it seems that today you're getting pretty worked up... It must be an annoying problem for you." Milfa chuckled while handing the letter. "Well, he wanted you to have this letter."

"I don't need it. I have to get an explanation first!"

Milfa let out a long sigh before opening the letter herself. "Well, if you don't need it, then I will burn this away. While I'm at it, I'll read it a bit. Let's see..."

"There will be a knight called Iadre joining the Zero Squad of the Demon Relief Squad. He has a few achievements under his belt. He has a Fire Spirit and wields a white sword. Unfortunately, he is unable

to show his face and is forced to use the Changing Masquerade to hide his face and change the color of his eyes and hair.

"But please burn this letter after you read this line. Iadre's true identity is Noel Ardagan... Oh, my." Milfa was slightly startled before raising her hand. "I have to burn this letter right away since I have read that li—!!!"

Before she could do anything, Clara grasped her shoulder, stopping her. Clara looked annoyed as she demanded the letter back. "Give me the letter!"

"But I have to burn it according to the letter."

Clara glared at her before ultimately snatching the letter away. She instantly read the letter completely.

It turned out the letter was the explanation itself. There was no need to avenge someone who was still alive. But because of a few reasons, Iadre had to wait for a while before meeting with the rest of the Demon Relief Squad.

With how he acted alone, the Demon Relief Squad wouldn't have had any trouble identifying him since he had made a good impression on them. At the same time, the others wouldn't know he was Noel because of a different element and hidden face.

When Clara fell silent, the commander added, "I was going to send that letter tomorrow. By that time, the rumor about his death should have spread. So there wouldn't be any suspicion.

"He was targeted by the royal family and many nobles, so this was the best way to protect him. As for Anna Stargaze, I don't understand their relationship, so ask her the reason, not me.

"As for why I'm sure he's still alive somewhere... I think you have seen the reason already... You even stated in the report."

"The report?" Clara widened her eyes in shock. "Shadow?!"

"With him protecting Noel, there is no way a mere Anna can kill Noel, no matter how good she is. Although I don't understand why Shadow is working for him, I can guess the reason... something like working for his father or something.

"So, what I want you to do is to keep the news about him being alive a secret. I'm sure that the zero squad wouldn't mind doing something like that as well. Though, for now, you shouldn't say anything to them... Just wait until he shows up.

"Is that a good enough explanation for you, Demon Relief Squad's Captain, Clara?!" The commander frowned as if he had gotten a bit annoyed by her action.

Clara bit her lips. Although she was annoyed by how her zero squad reacted, it was true that Noel had contributed a lot to the Demon Relief Squad. Hence, she had to get him justice.

However, it turned out that everything was just a lie, and she also fell for it.

She looked down with an embarrassed expression. "Yes."

Chapter 392 Genius?

During the night, Dimitri was opening his eyes, waking up from his nap. Since he and Noel camped outside the city, they took turns being on the lookout. And this time, Noel was supposed to be watching the surroundings.

But when he took a look around, he noticed Noel had disappeared.

"Mhm?" Dimitri was confused. He thought Noel was slipping away to pee, but he felt the sound of someone swinging his sword.

Dimitri knew whose swing it belonged without even going there. He had seen everything in the past year, so he knew Noel would still be swinging his sword at a time like this.

Though, he never knew the reason why Noel worked this hard.

In his mind, Noel's growth was unprecedented. From a complete newbie, who never wielded a sword and searched for information about spirit, to becoming a Spirit Wielder. It was beyond Anna's growth.

After so long, his curiosity became big enough for him to walk to Noel and ask, "You haven't stopped yet? You should get some rest, you know."

"It's fine. I still have some energy left to spend." Noel shook his head, rejecting the offer to rest.

However, Dimitri caught his blade for a few seconds before using his other hand to open Noel's palms. He could see the blisters all over his palms. "Take a look at this. One year ago, your palms were so smooth. But now, it's all rough and covered by blisters. Why don't you take a rest for a bit?"

"No. I don't have time to rest. Although rest is important, I believe I have slept long enough with my current schedule. So, while I'm awake, I should spend that time training my body."

Dimitri scratched the back of his head and asked, "Young Master... I have been observing you this whole time and I know how stubborn you are in training like this. However, I don't see any reason for you to do something like this. In fact, I'd suggest you sleep at least six hours a day instead of three to four hours. Why are you working this hard? I mean, you are so talented, Young Master... You can reach this level just within a year, so your future is limitless."

"Dimitri." Noel stopped him by calling his name. As soon as he gained Dimitri's attention, he shook his head and said, "Am I talented in your eyes?"

"Of course. You're the most talented man I've ever seen. Even Anna can't be compared to you."

Noel smiled. "I'm thankful that you're thinking that way. But you are wrong... I never consider myself talented!"

"Huh?"

Dimitri was completely confused. If Noel wasn't talented, then there was no talent in this world.

What he didn't know was the fact that Noel's Spirit only had a Conversion Rate of eighty percent. Compared to Anna, he was far less talented than her.

But how did he keep up with her progress? There was only one answer. Ardagan.

Ardagan became his spirit and bumped the conversion rate for both of them to one hundred percent. And he also gave him a system. A system that had been helping him to learn everything and reach this level. If he didn't have a system, he would have died long ago.

The medals, daily training, and even the Shop Function. Everything made him stronger, depending on how he used it. He even managed to see the future with them, helping him solve a problem that couldn't be solved.

That was why he thought Ardagan was the one giving him this opportunity, not his talent. His talent might be above average, but it wasn't enough for all this.

That was right. Noel understood that not many people could see. No, they just might refuse to see it, taking everything for granted.

Noel didn't see it that way. Noel believed that something that could be given, could also be taken away. If his conversion rate was increased by Ardagan, it would mean Ardagan could take it back. What if he lost Ardagan in the future and stayed with only Heisk? His Conversion Rate and his limit of Demon Crystals would be gone.

Hence, Noel didn't care whether Ardagan would be leaving or not. Instead, since he still had Ardagan, he would continue doing his best to raise his level as much as possible so that even if Ardagan left, he wouldn't return to his trashy self.

Noel couldn't help but smile while asking, "Dimitri... I want to ask you again, am I talented?"

"You're a genius, Young Master. I can say that without hesitation!" Dimitri answered.

"No. Perhaps you and other people would say I'm a genius, but after following and observing me from the start, I'm sure you know this... I've never been a so-called 'genius.'

"Just take a look at it, the Swordsmanship I have right now comes from a constant beating from Anna. All the abilities I have right now have been paid for by my blood and sweat!"

Noel gritted his teeth, thinking about his parents and the Ardagan Family.

"After that execution, I have come to a realization. If I don't want to lose something important, I can only count on myself. This time, I want to grasp it... a strength that allows me to do anything I want, including protecting everything I care for!"

Dimitri couldn't help but shudder when he heard his speech. This kind of speech coming from a 16 years old man was quite surprising for him.

He couldn't help but smile, thinking, 'That's right. People only see him when he succeeds. But they don't know the price you've paid to acquire this success.'

'However. I'm right. My Young Master is a genius. People said that hard work could beat talent. I do agree with that, but on the premise that the common people utilize all their energy to keep practicing while the talented individual wastes his time not honing his talent.'

'But what if that genius gives all his time and energy to keep practicing like he will die tomorrow? There is no way common people can surpass him. This is why the Young Master can become this strong.'

Dimitri closed his eyes for a moment. "I understand, Young Master. I apologize for my rude remark. From now on, unless it concerns your future or the foundation of your strength, I won't stop you from training."

"That's good enough."

Chapter 393 Promise

"Are you sure about this, Anna?" Kevin asked Anna, who was putting on her belt. She had chosen to take the punishment that she never had to get.

"I don't mind, Father. It seems that the Royal Family is planning to do something." Anna shook her head helplessly.

"It's because you're getting strong too fast. I don't have a problem as your father, but the royal family has a different perspective. I'm afraid they're trying to pin you down here and make you rely on them." Kevin explained his point of view and the speculation.

"It's truly surprising. We have done a lot of things for the royal family, but the only thing we get is something like this..." Anna narrowed her eyes as if she was dissatisfied with the royal family.

On the one hand, her father didn't know she suspected the royal family. So, he thought Anna said this because she thought the royal family had betrayed them.

No matter what, Anna's teacher was Josephine. Even though she personally might not be related directly to the royal family, the relationship between her and the royal family should have been quite good before.

But everything changed after she came home. It looked like the royal family had betrayed her trust and she planned to get her revenge.

On the other hand, her father was hiding the matter between him and the Ardagan Family. It also became the main reason why they could force them into this.

Anna glanced at her father and said, "I don't know much about the family's matters, but I know this one thing. The Stargaze Family is strong. You're one of the Arbiters, so I'm pretty sure that not many can push us like this... I don't know why you're willing to accept this, but you should know that I'm unwilling."

"If that's the case, let me take care of this problem for you."

Anna shook her head again. "No. I'm going to take this fall for the family. But I have a request, Father."

"What is it?"

"I want you to acknowledge me as your successor. During this period, I'm going to show you that I have learned a lot and am worthy of being your successor. When I become the successor, you have to tell me everything..."

"What do you mean?" Kevin was confused for a moment.

"When I 'killed' Noel, he told me one thing... If only there were no barriers between us. I couldn't understand what he was talking about no matter how hard I racked my brain.

"There wasn't even remorse on his face as if he had accepted his own fate. I couldn't comprehend why a man, who should hate me to the bone, would be like that.

"So, I thought there were a few things I must not be aware of. The reason why you hid it must be because of my actions that kept troubling the family. That is why I will walk down this path and show you that I have the right to know the secret."

Anna didn't talk about Noel in this life. Instead, she recalled the one in her previous life.

As she said, Noel seemed to be torturing her, but because of them, she grew even stronger. Her personality also changed.

In their last moment, she could remember his exhausted but smiley face. It felt like there was no hatred in his heart. If there was an opportunity where they could talk to each other to know their circumstances, they might be able to understand each other.

So, she wanted to take this chance to directly ask her father. No matter how hard she tried to create a plan like Noel, she couldn't do it so perfectly. Hence, she didn't beat around the bush and asked her father while mixing a couple of lies to smoothen her words.

However, Kevin was startled because Anna seemed to have realized the connection between the Ardagan Family and the Stargaze Family.

Kevin thought for a moment and said, "There are four ranks as an Inquisitor: Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum Inquisitor. You're going to start at Bronze and will take mission after mission to get enough points to reach the next rank.

"The higher your rank, the harder the mission will be. If you wish to know about it, you have to reach Platinum Inquisitor at the very least. I don't have any doubt that your current strength can make you a Silver or even a Gold Inquisitor, but you have to become a Spirit Master and reach the highest rank.

"Only when you reach that level can you challenge one of the Arbiters to take their position. That's why you have to reach that level and challenge me. If you take my position, my job will be over and I have no reason to hide it anymore. The problem is... will you be able to accomplish it?"

Anna smirked. "Of course. In fact, I'm wondering what to do if you still refuse to talk about it. Since you've given me a concrete task, it'll make the whole thing easier. Just wait for a little bit since I will become a Platinum Inquisitor very soon."

"Yeah. I'll be waiting for you. Also..." Kevin took out a small notebook and handed it to her. "Take this as well."

"What is this, Father?"

"This is my notebook... Or specifically my friend's notebook. He gave it to me in the past so that I could grow stronger and overcome all the challenges.

"In that notebook, there are a lot of guides on how to be an Inquisitor, including all kinds of tricks that they might use to trap you.

"So, I want you to learn many things from that notebook since it's the one helping me become an Arbiter.

"Take care of that notebook since it's a precious notebook that I got from my friend."

"I understand." Anna nodded with a serious expression, planning to read it on the way.

"The royal family might use some schemes to put you in a different spot. So, you have to be careful out there. I can't help you too much because they're putting some ears and eyes around me. That's all I can say, I hope that you can overcome everything, Anna."

Anna maintained her silence as she walked together with her father outside. She hopped onto her horse, planning to go alone.

"I don't know how long we can meet again, but please take care of your health, Father." Anna politely nodded and began to ride her horse, leaving the mansion.

#### Chapter 394 Bloody Mary

The trip only took three days before she reached the capital city. She immediately went to the place marked on the map.

It was a bar. When she entered, she instantly startled everyone because of how beautiful she was.

However, Anna ignored all of them, especially their vulgar gazes, as she made her way to the bartender.

Right after she sat down, a big muscular guy approached him.

"It turns out there is such a beautiful young woman here. Hey, Miss, what do you think? Both of us can go straight to the inn after this!" The guy smirked, glancing at her breast.

Anna coldly stared at him before snorting. "Shut up before I shut you up for the rest of your life."

"Oh! A tough woman. I do love a tough wo—" The guy wanted to laugh, but Anna suddenly grasped his neck and pulled out his tongue. The Spiritual Energy suddenly sparked around her fingers as she used them to cut the man's tongue.

"Aawawaawhhh!" The guy instantly screamed in pain but couldn't muster a single word.

After that, Anna punched his jaw, knocking him out.

"Shut up." Anna snorted, looking at how the guy dropped to his knees before falling unconscious.

In that instant, the entire bar fell silent as all the people dropped their jaws to the ground, not believing what had just happened.

An unknown woman who had just come to the bar actually cut someone's tongue and knocked him out.

Seeing their friend treated brutally, all of them suddenly stood up as if planning to avenge him.

Anna ignored them and asked the bartender, "One sweet luvu with a cherry on top."

"!!!" Not only the bartender but also the rest of the people recognized that code.

That code was used if they wanted to enter the secret hideout. It meant this unknown woman wanted to become an inquisitor.

Before the bartender could reply, one of the guys roared, "Do you think you can join after what you have done?!"

"Just shut up! Do you think I want to join your little gang? You're the one sully my reputation!" Anna snorted. She looked high and mighty because this was supposed to be her original personality.

She never showed it to Noel this whole time, but to make everything a success, she had to revert back to this character.

"A little girl like you who doesn't know what's good for you?! I'm going to discipline you right now!" The guy gritted his teeth. With their number, it wouldn't be that hard to suppress Anna alone.

Little did they know, Anna was different. These people were only Spirit Practitioners while she was a Spirit Wielder.

And Anna also had that notebook. She had read it and remembered a paragraph.

'The organization doesn't have laws outside their hideout. As long as normal people don't see what you've done, you're free to do whatever you want among the inquisitors. Killing, crippling, and so on are allowed, so there's no need to hold back. When they're using their numerical advantage, if you have the ability to face them, don't hesitate and... kill them all.'

As soon as she remembered that paragraph, her expression turned extremely cold as she released her killing intent, planning to fight all these people.

Looking at how they seemed to be targeting her, she thought these people were working with the royal family. They were trying to suppress her by using numbers to test her strength.

So, Anna understood what she had to do in this situation.

As soon as the guy reached her and was about to grasp her shoulder, Anna swiftly dodged to the side while pulling out her sword, cutting his arm.

"!!!" Everyone widened their eyes as a scream soon echoed inside the bar.

"Aaaaahhhh!" The guy fell to his knees while holding his arm. "You... You bitch!"

"Do you think I don't know what you're planning to do?" Anna snorted. "You want to sleep with me even though you're so weak? And you are trying to use your numerical advantage to suppress me and r\*pe me?"

"This place is different. Do you think you can get away after doing all this?!" The guy glared at Anna before shouting, "Attack her!"

"Get away after all this? Of course, do you think I came here without knowing anything?" Anna smirked as she cut the guy's other arm.

"Aaaahhhh!"

The people were shocked because this was the first time they had seen a woman who would do something like this.

'Ah, I was planning to enter peacefully, but why did all of you have to provoke me? You don't know how cruel I was in my past life... I guess I don't mind showing it again so that no one bothers me anymore.'

Anna glanced at the guy and cut his legs this time.

"NO!" One of them shouted, trying to stop her. But it was too late, she had cut his legs and the guy screamed in pain. "Aaaahhhh... My arms, my legs."

"If I lose, my fate would be worse than death itself. Then, don't you agree that you have to experience the same thing?" Anna smirked while releasing her killing intent as if she had gone insane. "Don't worry. Painless death will be the last thing I'll give you. You shall experience the last hours of your life in agony."

When they heard it, all of them attacked Anna, trying to suppress them.

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A few minutes later, a bald man suddenly entered the bar, finding the entire mess. The people were screaming in pain. Some of the lucky ones passed out and would surely die without experiencing all the pain. Some of them were in agony as if begging Anna just to kill them instead.

All of them had at least two of their limbs cut down. Just like she said, she left them alive but made sure they had no ability to fix themselves, so their only fate was to die slowly.

The blood covered the floor, and some splattered on her clothes, dyeing them red.

"What is this?" The bald guy was utterly shocked as he saw the woman drenched in blood, releasing a killing intent that made his body shudder.

"Branch Manager..." One of the guys recognized him and tried to beg for help.

The Branch Manager couldn't understand what had happened. The only thing he could see was Anna and the bartender who was presenting a drink to Anna.

"This is my present for you, Miss. Please enjoy this... Bloody Mary." The bartender said as if giving her a nickname from the drink itself.

Chapter 395 Violence

"..." The bald Branch Manager was sitting in front of Anna with an awkward expression. He glanced at Anna's calm expression as if she wasn't bothered by what had happened earlier.

She even had the nerve to sip her tea like a noble lady.

He was completely taken aback by what happened and the brutality inside his own place.

'What the hell actually happened earlier?' He muttered inwardly, recalling what happened earlier.

...

Ten minutes ago.

"What is happening here? Who are you?" The Branch Manager glared at Anna while covering his body with Spiritual Energy, planning to fight.

However, the bartender stopped him by saying, "Manager. She would like to register as an inquisitor."

"Huh? Register? After all this?" The Branch Manager looked around, smelling the foul stench of blood. There was so much blood splattered on the floor and wall that he couldn't smell any fresh air inside the bar.

If not for the fact this bar was quite remote and shady, there would be a lot of people listening to the shrills of these grown men.

However, the Branch Manager couldn't dismiss the words of the bartender easily since there was a rule to make sure the master couldn't be touched as they were the ones connecting everything.

No matter how big the fight would be, as long as the bartender remained neutral, they shouldn't touch him.

So, seeing the bartender protecting Anna made him reconsider his decision. He glanced to the side while muttering inwardly, 'Now that I think about this, these guys are from the same group. Although they're reckless, they're not the type of people who would provoke anyone without knowing the other party's identity.'

'And from the looks of it, the girl in front of me is the famous Anna Stargaze. I don't understand why she is here and joining the organization, but it seems there is something fishy going on.'

'And the third party must be influencing these boys to take action. In other words, these guys are at fault. Still, how am I supposed to handle the matter after all this...'

The Branch manager wanted to cry but had no tears. He was truly speechless that someone who wanted to join the organization actually killed a total of 14 men before even joining. At the same time, it also showed her strength. Anna Stargaze wasn't someone easy to bully.

The Branch manager took a deep breath and asked, "Let me confirm this again. You want to join the organization, right?"

"Yes. I believe that the royal family has given a statement about it." Anna nodded.

"Royal..." The Branch Manager paused for a moment, remembering the letter. However, they only stated that they would send someone over without specifying their name. He thought it was a letter of recommendation, but after what happened earlier, it seemed that the letter was a kind of punishment for Anna.

He wasn't planning to get involved in their feud, so he said, "I understand. I'll process your registration. But I have to remind you that no matter what kind of connection you use, you have to start from the bottom."

"Don't worry. I know the rules of the organization." Anna nodded.

"Well, we allowed anything, including killing. But please refrain from making a big mess in the organization."

"I will... as long as others don't provoke me." Anna agreed without hesitation before adding, "Of course, if they dare to do something to me, they should prepare for the worst. Death might be the easiest way..."

"..." The Branch Manager couldn't rebuke her. Death might truly be a mercy after that incident.

To think Anna would cut them up into pieces but make sure they wouldn't die for a while. It was gruesome to see. At the same time, for those who were cut down, the despair of being unable to do anything other than waiting for their death was simply excruciating. The pain from the wound itself added to their misery.

If they provoked Anna, she wouldn't mind showing them what it meant to be cruel.

The Branch Manager felt like there would be a lot of problems coming his way soon. However, he could do nothing to stop it. He could only sigh and suck it up.

"Alright. Let me grab the registration paper and notify the badge master. Please wait here." The Branch Manager rose from his seat and left Anna alone.

As soon as the door was closed, Anna let out a breath of relief.

'Luckily, Noel wasn't with me. If he ever saw me doing all that, no one knew what would happen after that. He might join them and kill me...

'Well, I did all those things in my past life. But the targets weren't my enemies, but innocent people. Aaaahhh... I'm too embarrassed... Now that I'm looking at it again, I wonder how in the world I could do that...

'And now, my soul has gotten used to it. The organization didn't allow me to erase the bloodthirsty nature that had grown in me... No, is this a perfect opportunity for me to test it?

'Since I wanted to remove the bloodthirsty nature and brainwashing, shouldn't I take advantage of this opportunity? If I could endure all their useless ramblings, I should be able to suppress those negative traits...

'Although I wasn't as cruel as the Blood Berserker, I was pretty brutal in my past life. Then again, I did this for another reason.'

Anna couldn't help but recall one of the quotes in the notebook.

'If you want to make an impression, make a big impact. The scarier you are, the safer you are in the organization. Hence, if you ever wish to tell them not to provoke you in the future...

'Gather all those people in one place where other people could see as well and show them what it means to provoke you. The moment they see and spread that, your name will resound in everyone's ears. Although you're known for your infamy, you're going to be pretty safe inside the organization. Yes, this might be a bad thing to say, but...

'If violence can't solve your problem, that means you haven't used enough violence.'

Chapter 396 Organization

The Branch Manager came back after a while. He presented the registration form. "You know how to write, right? Or do you want me to write it for you?"

"No need. I'll write it myself." Anna shook her head and immediately grabbed the feather pen and filled out the form.

After that, the Branch Manager presented her with a bronze badge and said, "This is the badge for Bronze Inquisitor. You need this if you want to get or turn in a mission. Please bring this wherever you go."

"I know. Is there anything else I need to know about the organization?"

"Our organization is similar to the Demon Banner Army. We have many branches all around the kingdoms for two reasons. First, we want to keep the nobles and other parties like the Tower Association and the Demon Banner Army in check. Second, the branches can be used as a rest spot for the inquisitor.

"Each branch is equipped with a few rooms to rest if you don't have enough money or want to save some money. Of course, it's not mandatory to use the rooms. If you don't like it, you're free to use the inns, though, we won't cover it for you."

"How do I become a Platinum Inquisitor?" Anna asked.

"That's simple. You just have to finish the missions. I'm sure you have seen it before coming to this room. In the hall, you should have seen the big board with a lot of papers sticking to it. That is the request board.

"The mission comes from nobles or wealthy merchants. As for the missions, they can come in various types such as escorting and so on. You'll be paid in points if you complete the mission."

Anna thought for a moment and asked, "What if the clients are asking something ridiculous?"

"..." The Branch Manager knew what Anna was thinking. Since they were the employer, they had more rights than them.

And it was especially true when the royal family was messing with Anna. In other words, they might take advantage of this situation to request an atrocious thing.

However, the Branch Manager couldn't do anything other than say according to the rule, "Unless you are a Gold or Platinum Inquisitor, you're the only one who will choose your mission. So, there's no pressure from my side.

"Of course, there will be a penalty if you choose to abandon the mission. So, if your employer is asking a ridiculous thing, you only have two options: suck it up or quit the mission."

Anna frowned. This wasn't something acceptable in the Demon Banner Army. At the very least, the Demon Banner Army would back their people up in case a case like this happened.

On the other hand, the organization was a dirtier place than the army. They didn't support each other. Even your ten-year best friend would stab you in the back if the opportunity arrived.

Anna knew exactly what was going to happen to her.

She couldn't help but close her eyes, muttering inwardly, 'Now that I don't have Noel with me, I feel a bit scared to go forward. One misstep might destroy me.

'In my past life, I never experienced something like this because I was too ignorant to know what was happening behind the scenes. And the result was my death.

'This time, I have to go through all this, beating all those dirty people in their own game. If not, Noel would be able to surpass me effortlessly.

'That's not going to happen. In this life, I'm going to stand at the top with Noel and unravel the connection between the royal family and the Supreme Devil Organization. I'm going to bring the kingdom to its golden age while making sure no one can control or betray me.'

Anna took a deep breath and said, "Alright. I understand the mission. One last question, since our purpose is to keep the Demon Banner Army and the Tower Association in check, shouldn't we have an espionage system that can track them?"

"Of course, we do. Though, you might need to get some points to exchange the information. Also, I can't guarantee you if their information is correct or not."

"It's enough. I know what to do in this place. For now, I'm going to get some rest before doing my first mission." Anna took the badge and stood up, preparing to leave.

The Branch Manager couldn't help but pity her. He never expected that the most talented person in the kingdom would be in this situation.

'The greater the light, the darker its shadow. As expected, the more overwhelming her talent is, the more those people are afraid of her. They're trying to control her...' The Branch Manager sighed.

Even if he didn't agree with this, he couldn't do anything.

Anna didn't bother to ask for his opinion either. She simply left the bar without talking to anyone.

Her father left her some money for her. He even promised to provide her with enough money so that she could focus on getting the points. So Anna didn't need to think too much.

She rented the greatest inn in the capital city that cost a lot of fortune a night. But since she was here only for a day, she should get the best service. Noel said the same thing.

"Noel. Why do you get the best inn? You don't have much money left."

"Haha, it's fine. There are two options normally: a good, affordable inn or the best, most expensive inn. To be honest, I prefer the former if I know the area around. But in an unknown area where my life is on the line, I'll get the best inn."

"Although it's expensive, they guarantee my safety and have a lot of things to reduce my fatigue. Of course, don't let your guard down even with all the services."

Anna recalled that conversation while relaxing in her hot tub.

"Noel might be ignorant in fighting knowledge such as swordsmanship or spirit. But he's surely knowledgeable about other things. I'll take advantage of all the advice I've ever heard and escape from their scheme."

#### Chapter 397 Realization

One month later.

Under the waterfall sat down a young man with black hair. He had been meditating under the beating of water for a while. Despite the height of the waterfall, the young man maintained his inner peace as if he had gotten used to the pain.

A middle-aged man came near the water while calling him. "Young Master. It's been a month. It's time for you to go back."

Noel gradually opened his eyes while raising his right hand. The Spiritual Energy around his arm began to form a shield that blocked the water.

He had undergone a lot of training during the past month. It was hard but fulfilling. Although he could only use a bit of Soft Approach, the shield was proof that it was only a matter of time before he mastered it.

He jumped from under the waterfall to the ground in a single leap.

"I see. It's been a month." Noel muttered while walking to the side, getting his clothes back.

"Yes, Young Master." Dimitri nodded with a serious expression. He had nothing but praise for Noel.

Noel's ability might have soared to Spirit Wielder, but because of his rapid progress, he didn't have too much time to consolidate his strength.

So, the only thing they did was fix Noel's mistakes in his movement, correct his Spiritual Energy control, and give him some knowledge about everything, especially survival and battle.

During that time, Noel absorbed all the knowledge like a sponge. Even though no one taught him the basics, he had a solid foundation in his swordsmanship.

Although Noel had learned it through the system, Dimitri still managed to catch a few mistakes in it. That was probably the reason why his swordsmanship was still level 8 instead of 15.

At the same time, Dimitri praised his ability in the Everchanging Emotion Sword Style. Even he didn't expect Noel was able to come up with this unique swordsmanship by himself.

But he was assured because the swordsmanship had a good foundation and limitless potential.

In fact, he enjoyed teaching Noel. Unlike the past, where Noel was lazy, the current young master was hardworking.

He thought it was impossible for Noel to change so easily. So, he believed Noel never changed.

He was diligent but in a different area. Even though he had been lazing around, his father was still impressed by how smoothly Noel talked to him.

At first, he thought Noel was just smart. But he soon realized that when Noel was lying on the maid's lap, just enjoying the weather, he was actually thinking.

That was right. Noel might look lazy, but he was working hard by thinking about all kinds of things. He came up with a lot of answers in his thoughts. Thus, the reason why Noel looked knowledgeable in noble's knowledge and tactics.

Luke gave him a little bit of knowledge and Noel simply developed all that idea, creating numerous possibilities. This was the reason why Noel was able to come up with a lot of plans and even outsmarted other people. He had gotten used to thinking about it for a long time.

When Dimitri realized it, he couldn't help but feel apologetic for thinking Noel was just a lazy young master.

He even doubted whether Noel could become a good lord or not. In the past, Luke always told him that Noel was the only person who could succeed the Ardagan Family. No matter if he had many children, Noel was the only one who could develop the Ardagan Family. And now, he could see it was true.

"What is it?" Noel asked while putting on his shirt. "You have been daydreaming a lot recently."

"That's..." Dimitri thought for a moment. On the one hand, he wouldn't be able to easily meet Noel since he didn't want Noel to rely on him a lot. On the other hand, he acknowledged Noel's status as Luke's successor.

Hence, Dimitri said, "Young Master. If you wish to call me, please raise your left hand like this."

Dimitri raised his left hand. He pulled down his ring and middle finger so that only his forefinger and pinky were pointing upward.

"I'll appear and solve your problem when you do it. However, please remember this one thing... The more you use my help, the less I'll respect you." Dimitri took a deep breath. "Master always said I can respect him if what he's doing is worthy of being respected.

"And currently, you have the ability to succeed the Ardagan Family, albeit you still haven't reached that level yet. That's why I'll protect you and help you in secret, but this is also a test for me.

"I'd like to see the young master's determination as the lord of the Ardagan Family. If you have become my master, then I won't hesitate to help you in all kinds of situations, but right now..."

When Noel heard it, he waved his hand as if treating it as no big deal. "You don't have to worry about it, Dimitri. I'm not planning to rely on you to solve my problem. I know that I have been ignorant and need you to help me, but from now on, I'll solve my problem by myself.

"I'll show you that I'm worthy of being your lord. And when I reach that point..." Noel paused while glancing at Dimitri as if asking him to finish his sentence.

Dimitri smiled and fell to one knee. "When that happens, I shall recognize you as my lord. If you wish to assassinate the king, I will gladly throw away my life to accomplish that objective. No matter who you want to kill, I'll go through fire and water to fulfill your wish."

Noel smiled and stated, "What are you talking about? You are not an assassin anymore, Dimitri."

"!!!" Dimitri widened his eyes in surprise and raised his head.

"You're the butler of the Ardagan Family, Dimitri, not the Demon Assassination Squad's Captain, Shadow. I don't need your help to assassinate someone. Instead, I need you to help with the household's affairs, take care of my future children, and witness how far I can go. Isn't that right, Butler Dimitri?"

Dimitri was dumbfounded. He couldn't help but recall the time he pledged his loyalty to Luke.

At that time, Luke only said, "I'm not worthy of your loyalty. But since you offer it to me, I'll gladly take it. However, remember this, Dimitri. In the future, there will be a person who is worthy of being your master... But before that time arrives, please take care of my child."

Luke looked down, stroking baby Noel's head as if implying he was the one Luke was talking about.

Although it was only an image, Dimitri couldn't help but feel excited because... that image might come true one day.

Chapter 398 New Guy

Demon Relief Squad.

"What do you mean we're going to accept another person here, Captain?" Stella shouted while slamming the table. She still couldn't forget about Noel, so she didn't have the heart to accept another person.

Clara, on the other hand, wanted to say the new person was Noel but with an alternate identity. But she thought it would be amusing if they realized it themselves, so she didn't say anything about it.

It was a good payback for Noel, who made her Zero Squad like this and created more trouble for her since she had been going back and forth to the headquarters. Of course, she took into account his contribution to saving her Zero Squad. So, she just let him settle everything with them.

"I've got the recommendation letter from the commander himself. It seems that the commander has been suppressing the information about him.

"According to what I've heard, this guy is quite good as well. He has a connection with a Master Blacksmith. He's slightly older, but his strength has reached Spirit Wielder recently.

"If Noel and Anna weren't in this generation, he would undoubtedly become the first rank. His talent seemed to be similar to Septa's. Other than that, he had saved people too, so he was quite fitting with our squad."

"Another Spirit Wielder? Since when has the Demon Banner Army received a lot of talented people?" Paul frowned, feeling something was wrong.

Clara shrugged. "I don't know. Though, his identity is truly a problem. If his identity is revealed, I'm afraid that the Supreme Devil Organization will hunt him down. So, make sure you don't reveal his identity."

"What? He's a target of the Supreme Devil Organization?" Paul looked down, contemplating. There were a lot of reasons why one could become the organization's target.

But more importantly, for him to be targeted as soon as his name was heard meant he was already on the 'must-kill' list of the organization.

Since he had to protect his group, Paul couldn't help but ask, "Do we have the power to protect him or something? What should we do if his identity is known to others? We can't really abandon him, right? I'm sick of losing a good comrade."

Clara nodded. "Of course, you don't have to protect him or something. If you want to do it, you're free to do it. But you don't have an obligation to risk your life for him. As long as you're not deliberately revealing his information, that is enough."

"I see." Paul glanced at Ben. "What do you think, Ben?"

"I don't really mind. From the looks of it, this guy doesn't seem to be planning to stay with us for a long time. In fact, I feel like he's using us as his stepping stone. So, why not?"

Clara raised her finger as if remembering something. "That's right. He wants to be a noble, so you can say that way."

"I see. It's not that weird for someone wanting to be noble." Ben nodded in agreement. "By becoming a Vice Captain, you can receive a baron title from the kingdom if you choose to join the nobility. If you are a Captain, you're equal to a count. Even better if you're among the strongest captains since you can become an Earl. Above that, it's better if you marry into the royal family."

"Yeah. Since we're only stepping stones, there's no need to get attached so deeply." Paul agreed. He didn't want to feel so down like after losing Noel again, so he chose to put some distance from this new guy.

"When is he coming?" Zion asked.

"It should be around this time. We're staying in this Ricomoro Town for another five days. He should reach here within those five days."

"Got it."

They nodded. Though, Stella was showing her displeasure the whole time. No matter if this was a stepping stone or not, Stella still couldn't get over Noel's death.

Still, the one who got hit the hardest wasn't Stella. It was Rose.

Noel had fulfilled her revenge even if it cost him his life. He was even the first one to suggest the revenge plan. Her feelings for Noel were much deeper than anyone else here.

When she saw Noel's death, Rose didn't leave her room for a whole week.

The moment she heard about this new guy, she just remained silent as if she was devoid of emotion. She just couldn't bring herself to be attached to anyone else, thinking she would just kill them.

If she didn't share her story, Noel's death wouldn't have happened.

After that announcement, she simply stood up and left the tent.

"Oi, Rose! Where are you going?" Paul asked her since Clara was still with them.

However, Rose didn't say anything.

"That's fine, Paul." Clara shook her head, letting her go.

"Well, I can kind of understand her feeling right now. She has been blaming herself for Noel's death, saying this wouldn't have happened if Noel didn't think about her revenge." Jonathan let out a long sigh.

"We can only give her some time. Hopefully, she will be able to recover soon." Paul nodded with a heavy heart.

There was actually one thing they didn't expect. It was a meeting between Noel and Rose.

Rose had just left the tent, walking aimlessly for a while to get some air. She just wanted to calm her heart.

"Huu... I was rude again to the captain and the others..." Rose let out a long sigh. She didn't want to cause problems for them, but she just couldn't help it.

She leaned on a tree while staring into the sky, thinking about how to get over Noel's death and stop causing trouble for the rest of the squad.

It was at this time she heard someone's footsteps.

She glanced to the side, finding a young man wearing a masquerade. He had short blond hair and a pair of blue eyes. His sword was white.

He was the complete opposite of Noel, who had dark hair and a black sword. Yet, her instinct was telling her it wasn't their first encounter.

Both of them involuntarily locked into each other's eyes.

At that moment, something clicked in their mind.

#### Chapter 399 Reunion

Noel thought no one would be able to recognize him, at least with just a single glance. However, he might have severely underestimated Rose's senses.

She instantly picked all the details with her eyes. The different colors in his eyes, hair, and sword, but a similar body figure. There might be one more thing so detailed that Noel forgot to match so that Rose couldn't see through him.

It was his movement. Yes, Rose could see the familiar way of walking. It wasn't something other people could easily pick, but Rose saw all those details just from a glance.

The moment their eyes met, all the clues clicked in her head, pinpointing the identity of this person.

Yes, even though he was different, Rose knew the person standing before her was Noel.

Desperate, she jumped forward and tackled Noel to the ground, refusing to let him go anymore.

Noel was startled because he didn't expect Rose to pounce on him. He ended up falling to the ground with Rose on top of him.

"Wait, what? Who are you? What are you doing?!" Noel asked in panic with a slightly heavier tone to match his disguise. "Hurry up and release me. Who are you?!"

"Noel," Rose called his name.

Noel's heart skipped a beat. However, he tried not to show it in his action as he shouted, "If you don't move away, I'm going—"

He couldn't complete his words when he felt something touch his cheek. It was wet.

In that instant, he raised his head and saw Rose's face, filled with tears.

"Why are you crying, woman? Hurry up and release me!" Noel shouted, gritting his teeth.

"Even if you're using a disguise, I will always know who you are." Rose smiled. "This might be one of the rare times that I'm so glad I have these senses..."

"What are you saying? I don't understand. Who is Noel?! You must have got the wrong person. I am—"

Again, Rose lowered her head, resting it on Noel's chest. Her body was trembling and her shaking hands held Noel's hands. Relief and fear, happiness and sadness, all of them mixed in her heart.

With a coarse tone, she uttered, "I'm glad... I'm glad. Thank god... you're alive. I..."

Noel's body shook a bit. This was the first time he saw Rose break down. In fact, he was aware that Rose might be hit the hardest by his plan, but Noel couldn't do anything because he had to ensure his life as well.

Still, when seeing Rose like this, Noel began to doubt whether it was alright for him to continue lying to her. She was supposed to find out his identity sooner or later after all.

He contemplated whether it was alright to admit it or not since it was best for the rumor about his death to keep spreading for a bit longer.

Ultimately, Noel let out a long sigh and said in his original voice. "Ah, I give up!"

Rose's body shivered when she heard that voice. She was convinced this person was Noel before, but she hadn't confirmed it. But when the other party had admitted it, she felt relieved that he was the right person.

She hurriedly tightened her grip as if refusing to let Noel go, afraid he would truly leave her for good this time.

Noel checked Rose's condition once again before saying, "I'm sorry, Rose. I didn't want to hurt you like this, but I had no choice but to do it. Well, I'll explain it to you, but can you keep it a secret from the others for the time being? I'll also give you the reason for that."

"Mhm..." Rose nodded weakly but still refused to let him go.

Noel scratched the back of his head as he tried to push his body upward. Surprisingly, Rose also matched the movement even though she still buried her head in his chest.

'It seems that it was too much for her. Maybe I should let Stella witness it instead... But if I let anyone else witness my death, Anna would be in danger... Well, I can understand why she is like this.' Noel gradually stood up before holding Rose's hand. "Sorry, Rose. But with this, I can't go anywhere now."

Rose's body shook before she nodded, knowing he meant she was holding his hand now, so she didn't need to fear him leaving again.

"Well, let's go somewhere else to talk. Since I'm not used to this area, do you mind showing me a place where we can talk without being found out?" Noel asked with a gentle tone.

Rose nodded timidly and turned around as fast as possible, not wanting to show Noel her face. She gently pulled him to another spot where she usually cried by herself.

It seemed she was embarrassed by the earlier outburst. She had been a cool elder sister to Noel in the group, so showing that side of her to Noel was the same as breaking her character.

After reaching the area, Rose sat down on the ground while covering her face with her knees. Though, she didn't let go of his hand.

Noel made a sad smile before saying, "Well, there is a lot to explain. But I'll try to make it as brief as possible. So, where do I start..."

Noel began to tell her the whole story about how his life was at risk. The only reason he disguised himself like this was to fool them. And his death had to be done and witnessed so that the information spread.

He also gave her the reason for choosing her. He just never expected that the Blood Berserker was the target of her revenge. That was why the impact hit her more than Noel originally expected.

After listening to his reasons, Rose couldn't really bring herself to blame Noel. If he didn't do that, he would die sooner or later but in a more tragic way.

Of course, Noel also blamed himself for her current state. He knew he had his reason, but it didn't change the fact that he had hurt her like this.

Noel ended his explanation with, "Sorry, Rose, for making you go through everything. And thank you..."

#### Chapter 400 Rose's Decision

After listening to his story, Rose could finally raise her head again, staring into his eyes.

"Mhm... I thought I would lose you forever."

"I won't make any excuses. If you wish to hit me, then don't hesitate. I won't blame you for it." Noel put on a gentle smile while spreading his arms as if inviting her in.

Rose shook her head. "No. I don't hate you or blame you for this. I can understand everything after your explanations.

"You were the one to bring the idea of revenge and fulfill it even if it cost you your life. I felt helpless this whole time for not being able to help you after you'd done so much for me.

"I'd talked big by saying I would pamper you after all this, but I never had the opportunity to do so. I was just afraid that I couldn't repay you."

Rose was thankful to everyone on the team for helping her in the revenge. But Noel's contribution was on a whole different level. It became even higher when she considered Noel a Spirit Wielder while the others were Spirit Masters or even a Grandmaster.

With that weak strength of his, he overcame all the challenges and fulfilled her revenge. That was why Rose felt this indebted to Noel.

Noel shook his head and said, "You don't have to repay me. I actually pretty much like the Zero Squad. You treated me, an outsider, like your own family. I couldn't help but feel the same way.

"You are like my family, Rose. So, I won't hesitate to do things for you. That's how much the Zero Squad matters in my heart." Noel smiled. "Besides, everything wouldn't have worked properly if I had missed any of you.

"Without you, we wouldn't be able to notice the enemies among the people. There wouldn't be any communication network in the group as well.

"So, please don't think too much. You've helped me... helped us enough."

"That's not it." Rose furiously shook her head. "This and that are different. I'm not talking about us or the Zero Squad. I'm talking about you and me as individuals.

"You've done a lot for me as an individual. I want to help you." Rose looked down for a moment. "I have been thinking about what I can do to help you during the past month if you are still alive.

"And after seeing you here, I seem to have found the answer." Rose smiled, staring into his eyes. "Do you mind if you take me under your wing?"

"!!!" Noel widened his eyes, startled. "Under my wing?"

"Yes." Rose nodded with a serious expression. "I've heard from the introduction the headquarters gave about you. It seems that you're trying to reach either Vice Captain or Captain position this time to become a noble and rebuild your family.

"That's why... When you're retiring after reaching your position to become a noble, I'll do the same and follow you.

"Though, in the premise, you still want to accept a Spirit Master who can't even fight." Rose made an awkward smile, embarrassed for her lack of strength.

That lack of strength was the complete opposite in Noel's eyes. He was shocked beyond belief that Rose would become a part of the Ardagan Family.

From Noel's perspective, Rose was the smartest among the original Zero Squad. She had good judgment and was a hard worker. She even focused on the very details.

If everything went according to his plan, Dimitri would submit to him and become his right-hand man.

What he lacked was someone like Rose. If Rose actually followed him, Noel would gain a left hand. He didn't need Rose to fight since Dimitri would take care of it.

He needed her to help him with all his work as a noble like a secretary. She might not possess an overwhelming strength, but her strength as a Spirit Master was enough to protect herself.

There was no secretary as capable as her.

That was why Noel was shocked when Rose volunteered to follow him.

He couldn't help but ask, "Are you sure about this? We're talking about your future, you know. If you continue on the Zero Squad, you might receive a lot of benefits and could become a noble yourself..."

Rose shook her head. "I have put a lot of thought into this. I might be able to become a noble myself... Or at the very least, marry into a noble household. However, that's not something I want.

"I might be a commoner, but it doesn't mean I have no pride. For others, marrying into a noble household might be the best goal. But for me, it's nothing but a burden.

"I don't wish to be someone's possession whose sole purpose is to make them shine. I want them to know me not as a certain noble's wife... but as Rose. That's why if you don't mind, would you like to take me under your wing."

"Joining me might make you lose your wings... There is a chance that you will lose your name." Noel was implying that she might become nothing but an average person whose life had nothing to be remembered. "In fact, you might even lose your life by following me... I have told you the reason."

But Rose shook her head. "I know it's dangerous. I know the risks. However, this is a decision I've made. Please, Noel."

Noel closed his eyes, contemplating. On the one hand, he didn't want Rose to choose him. After all, his path was filled with big rocks, while her current path was smooth sailing. On the other hand, he had to consider that this was a decision Rose made herself.

After a few minutes, Noel extended his life. "I'm looking forward to being with you. I can't promise you anything right now, but I will continue to strive for a better future for my own household. For that, I need you, Rose."

Rose smiled and took Noel's hand without hesitation.

In that instant, Ardagan sent a notification to Noel.

[Mission: Help Rose's Revenge.]

[Description: Kill the Blood Berserker with whatever means.]

[Reward: Rose's Loyalty.]