

S vs Rebirth 461

Chapter 461 Fearless

"Yeah, you. Join this squad."

"What—!" The people from the Demon Relief Squad were utterly shocked by the demand. After all, asking someone to join their squad in front of his own squad was the same as demanding a betrayal in front of his comrades. And more importantly, the people with him were none other than the Demon Relief Squad's best group.

That was why this matter became even more ridiculous. Unlike the Demon Assassination Squad's captain that offered a chance to Zion, this guy asked it in front of everyone and it sounded like an order.

"..." Noel narrowed his eyes as he spoke in a cold tone. "Captain Igor... Your words are not light, you know."

"Who cares about that?" Igor smirked.

"..." Richard, who was the culprit, could only close his eyes, remembering how the conversation went on earlier.

"So, what do you think about the Demon Relief Squad, Richard?" Igor asked while drinking his wine.

"The Demon Relief Squad is indeed good at their own work... But there is someone who piqued my interest."

"Hoh?" Igor stopped drinking his wine as his expression turned serious. "Who is it?"

"He is ladre. The guy with a masquerade." He paused for a moment before explaining the reason why Noel piqued his interest. "There are a few reasons, but mainly about his fighting prowess. He is extremely good at fighting and taking advantage of opportunities."

"When we were dealing with the Peak Level Demons, he killed half of them. Provided I was the one that grabbed the demons' attention, it didn't change the fact that he killed them.

"And as expected from the Demon Relief Squad, they're good at using their brains. This guy is exceptional. Although he is not as good as their brain, Rose, he is not losing to others.

"I don't have a lot of information about him, but it seems he has just entered the Zero Squad. Though, judging from his voice... I think he is young, younger than Shawn."

Igor listened to him attentively. The drunk look on his face gradually disappeared as he became more and more interested in the one that got such high praise from Richard.

"I see. Though, the real question is..." Igor smirked. "Is he qualified to join our squad?"

"I believe so. Right now, Paul seems to be the next captain... But from what I can see, this guy has the potential to become the captain of the Demon Relief Squad. Of course, we're talking about the future.

"But I'm pretty sure that the Demon Relief Squad won't have a lower rank than their current one as long as he becomes the next captain."

"Hoh?" Igor narrowed his eyes before asking, "Then, what about you? Are you ready to give up your position for him?"

Richard smiled gently as if he had expected this question and had prepared the answer. "You don't become a captain just because you're qualified. You become a captain because the people around you recognize you as one."

Igor was satisfied with the answer. At the same time, he still carefully considered his words, weighing the pros and cons.

After a while, he waved his hands. "Alright. You can go for now. Prepare for the banquet. We're going to have a big party tonight."

"!!!" Igor's body shook at that time as if it was an unexpected decision.

Remembering that conversation, Richard couldn't help but make a wry smile, thinking, 'I was suggesting the idea so that he could talk about it secretly... I never thought he would be forcing him like this.'

Then, he heard Noel saying, "Captain Igor... Your words are not light, you know."

His tone was cold and his expression was displeased. Even the people from the Demon Relief Squad stood up, not liking this invitation.

"Who cares about that?" Igor smirked, ignoring their reactions.

"You don't, but I care." Noel shook his head. "I'm honored by the invitation, but I don't like the way you approach me. That alone is enough for me to reject your invitation right away."

Igor narrowed his eyes. He thought Noel would be giving some reasons to politely reject him, but it seemed Noel was truly one of a kind guy.

He even stood up and walked to him, asking, "Give me a reason why you do not like my Demon Hunting Squad, not me?"

Noel couldn't help but smirk. Igor was standing in front of him and his face was getting closer as if he was trying to intimidate him.

Even the others had rushed to them, trying to stop both Noel and Igor.

But Noel actually provoked him more by saying, "Who cares? I don't want it. That's enough."

Noel was actually using his own words to reject him.

"Captain Igor!" Paul gritted his teeth, glaring at him. He even put his arm between them as if trying to stop Igor from attacking Noel.

"I'm simply giving you a perfect chance to order me around. You want to inform me about the Supreme Devil Organization, right? I don't care about them, so if you want me to act, you have to earn that chance." Igor smirked.

"You—" Paul wanted to snarl at him because he was far too annoyed with his rudeness.

However, Noel had already opened his mouth. "You don't care, huh. Then, I shall report to the headquarter about this. Our mission is to handle the demons, not the Supreme Devil Organization.

"But it changes when the Supreme Devil Organization creates an army of demons. It has become your concern now.

"If you don't plan to act, then I'll just inform the headquarters about your action and the potential of you colluding with the Supreme Devil Organization."

"You bastard. Are you going to slander me?" Igor glared at Noel. His eyes began oozing his fighting intent as if he was planning to pounce on Noel.

Noel was fearless. He stated with a cold tone, "I am simply stating the facts and my conjecture according to your actions."

Igor and Noel were glaring at each other. It felt like they were about to fight despite one being a Spirit Wielder while the other one was a Spirit Grandmaster.

Chapter 462 Fight

When the conflict was about to explode, Noel took a step back as if he was a bigger person. He said with a calm smile, "Though, I'm interested in this bet of yours. It's just that I don't know the details of the bet. What are you planning with that little competition?"

Igor's body shook. He didn't expect Noel to suddenly step back. But seeing how Noel was interested, he decided to explain. "Fight Shawn. Both of you are Spirit Wielder."

"Interesting." Noel smirked.

"Noel!" Paul shouted, not agreeing to this competition.

However, Noel raised his hand as if asking him to stop. This was his decision after all.

He thought for a moment and said, "Fighting the Supreme Devil Organization is mandatory. You can't use it as a chip for gambling."

"!!!" The people from the Demon Relief Squad were stunned, never expecting Noel to agree to this. Then again, Rose felt Noel had another intention.

The fact that he planned to change the chip meant he was planning to get something from the Demon Hunting Squad.

Igor couldn't say anything since Noel had made it clear that the Supreme Devil Organization was the enemy. So, he had to change his reward.

After some thought, Igor ended up asking, "What do you want?"

Noel smirked. "I should be the one asking you. What can you offer? After all, you're the one who wants to invite me, right?"

Igor fell silent for a moment. His bloodlust and fighting intent gradually disappeared as he started using his brain to think about the solution.

"If you come to my group, I'm planning to make you join the Zero Squad and give you a chance to fight for my seat. It's clear that you have the potential to reach it. So, I don't understand what you actually want."

"If you don't even know what I want, how can you even try to poach me from the Demon Relief Squad? After all, this squad is ranked higher than the Demon Hunting Squad." Noel harrumphed, provoking him again.

Surprisingly, this time, Igor didn't raise his voice as if he knew about the fact already. He just tried to see what Noel was planning to do.

Igor closed his eyes for a moment before giving a suggestion. "If you win, you can request one thing from me. I won't reject it as long as I can give it to you."

A blank check.

Noel actually got a blank check from the Demon Hunting Squad's Captain if he won this competition.

However, the price was also quite heavy. After all, Noel had been with the Demon Relief Squad for a while. It wouldn't be easy to simply ditch them even if he planned to use them as a stepping stone.

Igor added, "But if you lose, you have to join my Demon Hunting Squad. What do you think?"

"One-on-one fight, huh?" Noel smirked. "Fine by me."

"!!!" Paul and the others were surprised that Noel actually agreed to this. Although the reward was big and they had some trust in Noel, they were afraid that Noel would end up losing because of some circumstances.

Noel had become a big part of their group after a while, so they didn't want to lose him.

Unfortunately for them, Noel had agreed. Rose, who had chosen to follow Noel, considered joining the Demon Hunting Squad to follow him. She was indebted to the Demon Relief Squad, especially the captain, but Noel was the one who avenged her. She didn't know what to do.

It was then she saw Noel's smile as if everything was going according to his plan.

"Fine. I agree." Noel finally gave his answer.

At this party, they were going to see the most promising rookie from their Demon Hunting Squad fighting against a new member of the Demon Relief Squad. It was a fight worth seeing since they could see the gap between the two squads.

If the Demon Hunting Squad lost, they could see Noel's true strength and potential to find out how far the Demon Relief Squad planned to go in the squad ranking.

If the Demon Relief Squad lost, they could get this rookie Noel who was completely fearless against their captain. Obviously, Noel had a lot of achievements under his belt, so it wasn't their loss if they could get him.

That was why this battle excited most of the people inside the base.

"Since you have agreed..." Igor raised his hand and shouted, "All you guys! Prepare the stage!"

"Ooh!" The people from the Demon Hunting Squad cheered as they immediately cleared the area and created a small boundary for those two.

Noel was talking with his group after this decision. He first apologized for not consulting with them. Then, he told them to believe in him.

Paul gritted his teeth. He wanted to berate Noel's actions, but he couldn't say anything because he knew Noel treated them as his stepping stones. It was clear that Noel could easily switch sides as long as they provided the chance to rebuild his family, which meant becoming a noble.

However, only Rose, who was supposed to be his assistant, came up with a wild but Noel-like guess.

'Wait a minute. If he is treating the squad as his stepping stone, isn't it the same for the Demon Hunting Squad? In that case, is he planning to force Igor to give him the captain position so that he can rebuild

his family? Then again, Igor will reject it because he is not strong enough... I still can't see through his plan.' Rose sighed, disappointed that she didn't know about her lord's plan.

After talking with them for a while, Noel stepped onto the arena while unsheathing his blade. Shawn was in front of him, ready to defeat him to show who was stronger.

Igor became the referee, making sure they didn't go overboard.

"Remember. No killing, no permanent injury, and no hard feelings. After this fight, both of you have to move on and the bet shall be fulfilled. Do you understand?"

"Yes," Shawn answered with a cold tone while glaring at Noel.

Noel maintained his collected expression and nodded, "I do."

After looking at their expressions one more time, Igor finally stepped back and declared. "Match starts!"

Chapter 463 Recognition

"Match Start!"

Noel and Shawn immediately released their Spiritual Energy, trying to see who had more Spiritual Energy.

The winner might look like it had been decided in an instant. Shawn actually released a powerful Spiritual Energy that was rampaging around like a raging fire. It was trying to crush everything in contact with it. The Spiritual Energy was so overwhelming that the ground beneath his feet started to crack.

On the other hand, Noel's Spiritual Energy was very subtle like a candle without any wind. The Spiritual Energy didn't seem to be overwhelming as if he didn't have much Spiritual Energy.

Most people thought Noel would lose against Shawn as the latter would eventually overpower him. However, the Spirit Masters or above actually found something else in Noel's Spiritual Energy.

"This is..." Igor narrowed his eyes, feeling something weird. Although the Spiritual Energy wasn't overwhelming, it was very solid and seemed to be giving Noel enough energy to do everything.

"It seems that Shawn will have a hard time," Richard muttered in a low voice. He could remember how Noel utilized his Spiritual Energy, so this might not be good for Shawn.

"Despite not having an overbearing energy, he seems to be able to control his Spiritual Energy better."

When the others were shocked by Noel's strength, the two finally jumped forward, trying to test each other.

Shawn channeled this overbearing Spiritual Energy to his sword as he swung his blade downward.

On the other hand, Noel covered his sword with Sword Aura as he gently received this swing while gradually deflecting it to the ground.

Clink!

The clicking sound echoed as they saw Noel's sword get pushed back. However, Noel skillfully let Shawn's sword slide on the surface as it continued moving downward. In the end, the sword reached the ground.

Noel took this opportunity to kick Shawn, but the latter seemed to be exerting more power on all his body. This surge of power gave him an explosive burst of speed, allowing him to spin his blade and swing it to Noel's body before the kick arrived.

Seeing the incoming sword, Noel hurriedly jumped to the side, avoiding the sword like a coward. He had the option to stop the sword, but he didn't plan to do so.

In the end, there was a few meters gap between them again, allowing both of them to catch their breaths.

Still, this was the Demon Hunting Squad's base. The people from this squad obviously cheered for Shawn.

"What's wrong? Are you scared?" One of them was trying to provoke Noel.

"Make sure you don't piss on your pants. Or else, we don't have anyone to clean that up."

"Oh wait. You're from the Demon Relief Squad, so of course, you can clean it up yourself!"

"Hahahaha!"

The people were mocking Noel's actions as if they showed cowardice.

Rose frowned as she knew Noel's action had meaning behind it. 'Although Noel is retreating, it's to avoid using the Spiritual Energy unnecessarily. Noel still has the advantage against him. That Shawn might have explosive power, but he lacks Noel's stability and a cool head. Noel will win no matter what.'

The others who could see the meaning behind Noel's action had a similar opinion to Rose. Shawn might have the upper hand right now, but the longer they fought, the higher the probability of Noel winning.

"Tsk." Shawn clicked his tongue. As expected from the most potential newbie in the Demon Hunting Squad, he might be lacking in perception, but his instinct was sharp. He realized how dangerous Noel was.

That was why he decided to end this fight as soon as possible. Without hesitation, Shawn leaped forward while swinging his blade diagonally.

The sword strike was extended until it reached Noel's location, forcing the latter to raise his sword to block it.

The force seemed to be overwhelming Noel as it pushed him two meters back. However, this just made Noel gain more distance which he could use to think about his next move.

Surprisingly, Noel took this challenge head-on. Instead of waiting for the right moment, he was planning to crush Shawn.

This was to show that he was more amazing than Shawn, which reflected the quality of the Demon Relief Squad. Of course, he was going to do it respectfully so as to avoid offending Igor.

Clink!

Clink!

Clink!

Shawn and Noel clashed a few times. Their swings were bold and precise as they continued at high speed, trying to take advantage of the gap made by each other.

Shawn made his first move by channeling more Spiritual Energy. Noel didn't want to lose in this class, so he utilized his Ignition Sword.

"!!!" Both of them widened their eyes the moment their swords collided.

Boom!

Noel's Ignition Sword caused an explosion, while Shawn's overbearing Spiritual Energy caused a shock wave that ended up dispersing the Spiritual Energy.

In the end, both of them jumped back to understand what was going on.

'That explosion...' Shawn frowned, realizing that his Spiritual Energy was burned by that flame. Although he managed to disperse it, the fire was still too dangerous. He was afraid that it was too much for him to handle that fire.

On the other hand, Noel also noticed something from Shawn. 'This is weird. I believe he is using the Hard Approach, but there is something else hidden in his Spiritual Energy. I'm afraid even though this energy looks overbearing and uses a lot of energy, it's actually not.'

Noel and Shawn seemed to have realized that the enemies this time had a lot of tricks. Although he had seen Noel killing multiple Peak Level Demons, it didn't change the fact that it was impossible to achieve it without Richard.

The same applied to Noel. Despite knowing how reckless he was, Shawn didn't get a single injury in that battle. He seemed to have some energy left after fighting for so long.

It seemed that their opponent this time was stronger than they originally expected.

There was a spark between their gaze as if trying to show they were superior.

The second round would soon start after both of them recognized each other's strengths.

Chapter 464 Runes

Shawn gathered his power in his blade again while heading to Noel. This time, it felt like the energy was acting like a huge hammer that would crush him if he dared to block it.

'This feels similar to my Everchanging Sword Style, but his power is focused on destruction.' Noel observed Shawn's flow of energy and wanted to use his unique sword style, albeit it wasn't the time yet.

He changed his strategy to focus on his fire element.

"Flame Conjuring," Noel said inwardly. The black fire was leaking out his left hand and gradually forming a palm.

The powerful fire made Shawn wary. He hurriedly changed his target from Noel to this palm.

He struck it with his power and used his Spiritual Energy to cause a shock wave to disperse the flame.

In that instant, the flame disintegrated as if there was an invisible force ripping them apart.

'As expected, it seems that his power is an invisible force...' Noel narrowed his eyes. Noel thought the reason why Shawn's energy was overbearing must be because of that energy.

Shawn was bolder than Noel. Even though he didn't know the full extent of Noel's power, he still confronted him without any fear.

This time, he gathered the energy to both his feet and hands as though he was planning to use hand-to-hand combat as well.

Noel wasn't afraid of this provocation. He used Sword Fire to cover his sword with fire.

He blocked Shawn's sword effortlessly, but Shawn's energy erupted, causing the fire to disperse.

Noel hurriedly used his control to maintain the flame's form. He then made a full swing and shot the flame to the ground.

Surprisingly, the flame began to follow its looping path and started moving around Noel. It ultimately reached Shawn's head from the side.

"!!!" Shawn widened his eyes in shock. He hurriedly punched the flame with all his strength.

Bam!

The shock wave occurred again, dispersing the flame.

"Hmm..." Noel continued observing him as if he was interested in that power. Although it was a unique power from the Spirit, he felt like he could imitate that power to a certain extent. It should provide a good boost to his ability.

After using the energy on his fist, Shawn hurriedly raised his foot, kicking forward. The energy from his foot shot forth, planning to destroy everything in its way.

Noel was supposed to avoid it here, but he actually stood in the original position as if he was planning something.

Suddenly, a rune appeared in front of him and blocked the shock wave.

As he originally expected, the energy suddenly dispersed like how normal Spiritual Energy scattered whenever he used this ability.

"!!!" Igor and a few others widened their eyes as they could understand what this rune meant. Although it was only a few resemblances, they felt like Noel had an ability similar to the Spirit Enchantment.

"Impossible. Have I underestimated him?" Igor gasped. If Noel was actually someone who could use Spirit Enchantment, his worth had to be reconsidered. After all, Noel had the ability to become a Master Blacksmith on top of his fighting prowess.

Richard was as surprised, considering Noel only used the Chain Bind Rune this whole time while the rest was taken care of by Rose.

It seemed he had been deliberately hiding it as their trump card.

But the moment the rune had come out, Noel's fighting style changed.

He formed another rune and shot out a few chains toward Shawn.

"!!!" Shawn instinctively moved back as if he was scared by these chains. He even gathered a lot of Spiritual Energy to it as he tried to smash it.

Surprisingly, the chain was only knocked down. It didn't even leave a down, let alone get destroyed.

Noel hurriedly used his control to take over the chains. In that instant, the chains rose to the air and started wiggling like worms.

The chains soon continued expanding, trying to capture Shawn.

The latter jumped back like how Noel escaped from his attack earlier.

"!!!" The people were shocked because it made them look like they were a hypocrite.

"Shawn?"

"Why are you taking a step back just like that?"

"Show him who's the boss, Shawn!"

They kept cheering for him while watching the battle.

However, Shawn didn't attack Noel again after that. Seeing Shawn become passive, Noel took advantage of this opportunity to launch his attacks.

Noel applied his Increase Agility Rune and Strength Blessing Rune to increase his overall physical ability. After that, he applied the Softening Rune on his sword.

Noel tried to attack Shawn's neck but was blocked by the sword.

Surprisingly, the sword began to go deeper as if it was cracking.

"!!!" Shawn panicked for a second as he hurriedly jumped back to avoid it. After all, the shrapnel could injure him, let alone the snapped blade.

As soon as they gained some distance, Shawn hurriedly checked Noel's weapon to see whether there was a mark or not.

Unfortunately for him, he didn't find anything. On the one hand, he still doubted what he saw since he had to be careful if he didn't want to die. On the other hand, Noel's sword could cut multiple Peak Level Demons, it shouldn't be destroyed easily by his own sword.

That was why Shawn realized he had been tricked. He immediately charged forward, trying to regain his honor.

Unfortunately for him, this was what Noel wanted this whole time. The moment he was only three meters away from him, the ground suddenly became soft, causing him to stumble to the ground.

"Kh." Shawn gritted his teeth while falling to his knees. He hurriedly raised his body back up to avoid Noel's attack, which really came right after.

Clink!

Their swords clashed again as Noel was already in front of him. He could barely block Noel's sword with his strength boosted by the Strength Blessing Rune.

"This is..." Shawn did his best to stop Noel's strength but he ended up falling short. The blow launched him away.

Shawn landed on his feet, but when he looked back at Noel, he realized he was already in front of him again, ready to kill him. Noel had already sworn that he would crush him after all.

Chapter 465 Fooled

Clink!

"Kh!" Their swords clashed again as Shawn was pinned to the ground. He tried to fight back, but Noel kept pushing with his strength.

Both Noel and Shawn were staring at each other without using their Spiritual Energy. Noel knew that Shawn would use his Spiritual Energy the moment he used the Ignition Sword and vice versa. So, they were trying to wait until one of them gave up this waiting game.

It seemed Shawn was the first to give up. However, Shawn didn't want to make himself look bad. Hence, Shawn let out a burst of Spiritual Energy not on his sword but on his back.

Bam!

Noel got pushed back for a bit due to the momentum produced by the impact that hit the ground. Still, Noel gritted his teeth and stomped Shawn's stomach to prevent him from leaving the ground.

Unfortunately, that was actually a bad move. The real reason for Shawn to use that burst of Spiritual Energy was due to the soft ground. A single burst slightly crushed the soil, causing him to fall a bit further.

This caused Noel to lose his balance because it was deeper than he imagined.

Using this opportunity, Shawn kicked Noel in the stomach, blowing him away. Noel might get pushed back a bit, but he didn't get any real injuries.

At the same time, Shawn managed to get up while holding his stomach.

"..." Shawn and Noel narrowed their eyes. They realized they might need a lot of time to defeat the opponent before them.

As if having their own plans, Noel and Shawn jumped toward each other.

"Haaaaa!" Shawn roared while stomping the ground to stop the momentum. After that, he spun his body, kicking Noel from the side.

On the other hand, Noel also did the same, trying to take his opponent aback.

Unfortunately, it appeared they had thought the same plan as their feet almost hit their faces at the same time.

Both of them ducked down, causing their feet to hit each other and ultimately stopping their momentum.

"Kh." Shawn gnashed his teeth, feeling frustrated. Noel clicked his tongue and took a step back, trying to find another way to defeat his opponent.

'It seems that he can neutralize the gap between our strengths by using his Spiritual Energy. The same applies to my Ignition Sword, which is dispersed by that power.'

'According to my observation, he should have a Spirit that has a unique way of controlling Spiritual Energy. However, that Spirit doesn't have any element. So, I can utilize the elemental advantage to suppress him. If only I could use my Ice Element or my Everchanging Emotion Sword Style, it would be an easy fight.'

'I can probably use the latter, but it means I might alarm my own team. Only Rose and Jonathan know about it right now and I'm planning to wait for another three to six months before revealing my identity to them.'

'Still, it doesn't change the fact that I've decided to crush him. In that case, with only my Fire Ability and Rune Mastery, how do I crush him?'

Noel thought as his sword began to be enveloped by black fire.

Sword Fire.

Noel's expression turned grim as he wouldn't hold back anymore. He might accidentally injure him, but he had confidence that Igor would have the ability to stop him at the last moment.

He even glanced at Igor as if showing his intention.

"..." Igor frowned, not pleased by this decision. At the same time, he couldn't say anything because Shawn actually expressed the same thing. Their battle would probably become even bigger than he imagined.

Noel and Shawn took a deep breath.

Shawn was the first one to make the first move. He let out a burst of Spiritual Energy around his feet to blast him to Noel.

Seeing the incoming Shawn, Noel stomped the ground to reinforce his stance and raised his sword.

Bam!

Their swords collided, but this time, Shawn was shooting himself like a bullet, so the momentum immediately pushed Noel back. In fact, Noel could be said to be remarkable to even block it.

Feeling not enough, Shawn jumped into the air and stepped on the air, launching himself at Noel. This time, he wanted to use the same tactic as Noel's and pinned Noel to the ground.

Instead of dodging, Noel actually ducked down, placing his hand on the ground. He was forming the Hardening Rune.

However, Shawn's momentum was greater than he imagined. The moment he finished the rune, Shawn was already right before him.

Noel had to throw himself to the side to avoid Shawn's attack.

Bam!

Noel clicked his tongue, feeling a bit hurt on his side due to throwing himself a bit too strong to escape from that momentum.

Though, Shawn's condition was worse than his.

"Gah," Shawn screamed while holding his left fist that almost hit Noel. Even his blade fell down because it failed to penetrate the ground.

"!!!" The people widened their eyes. They knew how soft the ground was since it was made of sand and dirt. Yet, Shawn actually failed to stab the ground.

They simply couldn't believe it.

"What's happening?" Igor sucked a cold breath, remembering the rune Noel placed before he escaped. "What is that earlier? Its appearance is similar to Spirit Enhancement. But a Spirit Enhancement is supposed to be exclusive to Blacksmiths... And seeing how fast he can enhance the ground, I'm afraid there's no one as fast as him in the entire kingdom."

Igor was completely clueless about Rune.

This was a fighting technique that everyone could learn after all. That was why its worth far surpassed anything everyone could offer. If it was monopolized by a certain individual, that individual would become the greatest existence in the kingdom. Thus, the reason why Noel wanted to spread the knowledge sooner or later.

Though, these people were still unaware of the real potential of the runes. They simply saw this weird ability, thinking it was Noel's Spirit Ability.

Noel hurriedly stood up, seeing Shawn, who was still in pain. It was time for him to end this fight.

Chapter 466 Undying Fire Upgrade

Noel hurriedly approached Shawn, but surprisingly, Shawn was actually faking his action.

Although he was hurt, he still managed to endure the pain. He just acted like this to make Noel approach him while lowering his guard.

As soon as he arrived, Shawn spun his body and struck Noel.

"!!!" Noel was surprised that Shawn would utilize something like this, considering Shawn was a straightforward type. It seemed he realized he wouldn't be able to win unless he resorted to cheap tricks.

Noel gritted his teeth and hurriedly threw himself to the side, barely avoiding the blade. The blade scratched his shirt, albeit blocked by the armor underneath his shirt.

"Hmm?" Shawn widened his eyes, feeling the armor. "You're cheating."

"I'm not." Noel rolled on the ground and stood back up.

"You're using armor." Shawn pointed at the ripped shirt.

The others also saw the spot and realized Noel was using armor underneath his shirt.

They immediately cursed at Noel.

"What are you doing? Wearing armor?"

"You're such a coward."

"Just get out. You're not our Shawn's match."

Noel heard their insults and said with a calm tone. "There are no rules about using armor though."

In the Demon Hunting Squad, this reckless behavior was actually to show their power. On the other hand, not wearing armor or any protective layer was a foolish action in the Demon Hunting Squad.

These two ideologies ended up conflicting with each other in this battle.

Shawn actually started looking at him in contempt, while Igor understood their difference and clarified, "There are no rules about using armor."

Even with his words, the crowd didn't calm down. No matter how indifferent Noel was toward their insults, he still heard all those words and became a bit annoyed.

'Now I can understand why people have a hard time controlling their anger after being provoked. One cheap provocation won't affect me, but it seems I'm getting pretty annoyed right now.' Noel took a deep breath.

"..." Noel paused for a moment before taking off his shirt. "Well, you succeeded in provoking me, I guess."

"What is ladre doing?" Paul narrowed his eyes. It was a foolish action to leave behind his advantage. He didn't know that Noel had actually given enough handicaps to Shawn by not utilizing both Ice Ability and Everchanging Sword Style. And with him taking off his armor, he would simply cause Noel to be far weaker than the usual him.

Still, he couldn't say anything more because the atmosphere had turned in Shawn's favor. Even he was gritting his teeth, wanting to beat all these people.

Rose, who knew about Noel's identity, could see the emotion behind that mask. She made a weird smile, "I don't know what they have done, but he is getting annoyed right now. I think we should pray that Noel doesn't end up destroying him too much to the point he breaks the rule."

Noel's eyes started releasing his killing intent. He had gotten pretty annoyed and wanted to release all this anger to Shawn. He might want to crush Shawn before, but this time, it felt like he wanted to destroy everything Shawn had, including the small pride he had left.

'Ardagan. Upgrade Undying Fire.' Noel gave instruction to Ardagan inwardly.

It seemed Ardagan noticed his change of emotion and warned him first before making a change.

[You have to calm down first before making a decision.]

'Don't worry. I'm still maintaining a clear head right now. I always want to upgrade this ability, but I have to prioritize the others. The city and the bridge that connected to this place gave a lot of points, so I wanted to use the points I got from them to crush them.'

Ardagan paused for a moment before agreeing to Noel's decision.

Undying Fire (2/5)

Skill: Undying Phoenix (0/5)

Requirement: 15 SP

Skill: Phoenix Wings (0/5)

Requirement: 6 SP

Skill: Undying Fire Feathers (0/5)

Requirement: 12 SP

Seeing how he got three new skills, Noel immediately ordered, 'Upgrade them to level 1.'

"Hahaha. It seems that you're not as cowardly as I think you are." Shawn snorted, laughing at him. He was looking down on Noel, thinking he could only achieve this result due to his armor.

However, provoking him was the last thing he wanted to do at this time.

Noel glared at him while releasing a glare filled with bloodlust. "Shut up for a moment!"

Shawn didn't know why but he felt chills down his spine from that glare. It was weird because the gaze was so different from what Noel had been giving this whole time.

He didn't know Noel was actually stressed out because of the amount of knowledge he got from upgrading four skills at once.

"Do you think your opponent will wait for you?!" Shawn roared, not caring about Noel's opinion. In fact, he planned to crush him to show that his fear from earlier was just his imagination.

"I have been saving this the whole time, but I guess I should test it on you. You better not die, muscle-brain monkey. Even I can't control this flame fully." Noel stated with a cold tone.

"Hahaha. You should worry about yourself because I'm going to crush—"

Before Shawn finished his provocation, Noel had raised his left hand, waving it diagonally.

"Undying Phoenix," Noel muttered in a low voice.

The flame around his hand suddenly flared up and shot forth a black phoenix.

The phoenix let out a cry as if it was alive.

Everyone who saw this phoenix actually shuddered as if they felt suppressed. Even the Demon Relief Squad was as shocked as the Demon Hunting Squad. They were completely unaware Noel had been hiding this powerful technique this whole time.

But remembering Noel saying he was saving this because he couldn't control it yet, they could somehow understand it.

Shawn gritted his teeth, not scared of this phoenix. He let out a roar as he punched forward, trying to destroy this phoenix.

But this was the time a figure suddenly appeared between them, getting hit by both the punch and the phoenix.

Boom!

Chapter 467 Victory

Boom!

A figure suddenly appeared between them. He caught Shawn's fist with a single hand and did not flinch. At the same time, he punched Noel's phoenix as his Spiritual Energy swept the entire phoenix as though it was disintegrating it.

But the phoenix was far stronger than he originally thought and ended up exploding. The black flame soon devoured them, albeit it didn't last for too long before a single wave of hand extinguished the fire.

The one who appeared in the middle of the battle was none other than the Demon Hunting Squad's Captain, Hendry Igor.

"That's enough," Igor stated with a clear understanding. He glanced at Shawn for a moment before closing his eyes in disappointment. Of course, Shawn had done his best in his eyes. Unfortunately, it wasn't enough as he declared, "The winner of this competition is ladre."

"!!!" The entire base was stunned, not believing what they had just heard. They had seen Shawn crushing a lot of Spirit Abilities, yet, Noel actually won to the point Igor had to take that attack by himself.

Igor hurriedly put his hand on the back as if trying to hide his hands. At the same time, his straight body and intense glare looked like he reluctantly admitted his defeat.

"You have won, ladre."

Noel closed his eyes, feeling relieved. He used a Spirit Ability that he had just got after all, so he was worried that the ability wasn't strong enough. Even with the knowledge integrated into his mind, he still had to practice that ability after all.

Now that Igor had declared his victory, Noel could finally lower his guard a bit. Though, after making sure that his opponent or the spectators had no intention to sneak attack him.

"Captain. I'm not convinced. Do you—" Obviously, Shawn would complain. He hadn't fought against that phoenix once, so he wasn't convinced it was his loss.

Since Igor's back was facing him, he tried to grab Igor's arms to grab his attention.

But all of a sudden, he instinctively pulled back his arms while shouting in pain. "Aahhh!"

The people were obviously shocked because they didn't know what was happening. Meanwhile, Shawn certainly felt it as he was looking at his hand and Igor's arm, not believing what he just felt.

'It's hot?' Shawn asked himself inwardly. There was only one person who used fire ability in this place. It was Noel.

He had seen Igor crushing every enemy with his fists. Yet, Noel's flame almost broke his defense.

It was proven by how Igor's arms became hot. If Shawn actually took on that attack, he might get burned or even worse, his arm might melt.

That was why Igor declared Noel's victory. There was simply a big difference in strength between them. And with how Noel remained calm this whole time, he should be able to find a way to hit Shawn.

Still, the others were unconvinced. They didn't know what had happened. All they knew was how Noel was cheating with armor.

"What's wrong, Captain?"

"Are you favoring them that much?"

"I'm di—"

The people wanted to complain, but Igor simply shouted in anger. "It's enough. The competition ends here. Anyone who disapproves of the end result will be talking to me directly."

In that instant, the entire base fell silent. They knew what it meant to talk to Igor directly. There was someone who did it and ended up getting disabled, so it wasn't best to provoke Igor.

On the other hand, Igor was glaring at Noel and said, "It seems you have hidden your trump card successfully. That one is an extremely powerful ability. I hope that you can continue to hone it until you master it. I'm looking forward to seeing you mastering that flame of yours."

Noel nodded politely. At the very least, Igor seemed to be honoring the bet.

"..." Igor paused for a moment before asking, "Do you have something you want from me?"

Noel shook his head. "I'm sorry, Sir. I think I have to put that request on hold. However, I promise it won't be something you can't do."

Igor nodded. "In that case, you can go back to your guest house. It's not like everyone is in the mood for a party anyway. So, you can get some rest and come to me tomorrow morning to explain the situation and your plan to me. Understood?"

"Yes, Sir." Noel nodded with a serious expression as Igor gradually walked away as if he had just admitted defeat.

Noel knew it was better for them to leave since these people would just look at them with hateful gazes. So, he turned around and walked to his group, saying, "Sorry. It seems the atmosphere became awkward because of me. Let's go back first."

They nodded, not objecting to his decision. It was clear that Noel had shown a strength no one would expect from a Spirit Wielder. Even Stella could feel danger from that ability.

Although the Fire Phoenix wasn't that fast compared to someone's speed, it had a lot of power and effect, so Noel planned to use it more in the near future.

After seeing Noel returning just fine, Igor finally shouted, "Those who still want to party can enjoy the food and drink here. The rest will have to abstain and get yourself ready for tomorrow."

"Yes, Sir!" The people shouted in sync.

After making sure they behaved, Igor finally returned to his room, followed by Shawn who demanded an explanation and Richard, his vice captain.

When Igor sat down in his room, he leaned back as if trying to relax himself. However, if one took a closer look at him, he was sweating profusely as if something was burning him.

This was when Richard came to him with a bucket of cool water and a towel to wrap his arms. "I'm sure you need this."

Igor looked at the bucket first before smiling at Richard, who knew what he needed.

"Yeah." Igor nodded while recounting the battle. "It seems the Demon Relief Squad has just gotten a monster."

Chapter 468 Observation

"Is he that strong?" Richard narrowed his eyes. This was the first time he saw Noel releasing that powerful fire after all.

"It seems that he hasn't used this power in front of you. Seeing how he agreed to my proposal and baited me to accept his condition, he must know he would win if he used this method. What a monster." Igor gritted his teeth, impressed and annoyed at the same time.

If Noel was in the Demon Hunting Squad, he would have shone brightly. There was a high chance that he would become the next Captain of this squad.

Still, Igor had Richard and Shawn. They might be lacking at the moment, but they were improving rapidly. So, he believed he could leave the base to them.

After making sure Richard wasn't angry or anything, Igor finally presented his right arm that stopped the flame earlier.

"This is..." Richard gasped, taken aback by the arm's condition. He could see steam on the surface of the hand as if the fire was just extinguished. He approached it with his palm, feeling no heat coming from it. "What is this flame? To think it's so strong when it's not even releasing a blazing fire."

"I'm not sure, but it's clear that Iadre possesses this kind of power. Now that I think about it, what's the reason for using his masquerade?" Igor asked while wrapping his piping hot arm with the towel.

"I'm not sure, Captain. However, it's clear that he's good, and seeing his talent, it might cause the kingdom to fight over him just like Anna Stargaze.

"I'm afraid the reason why he's hiding his face is because he wants to remain unknown," Richard explained his observation. Though, he wasn't sure either.

At the same time, he noticed Igor's serious expression and couldn't help but ask, "Why are you being silent, Captain? If it's the normal you, you would have gone to spread the words out of spite. This way, you can force him to use that favor to stop you from spreading the words around."

Igor shook his head this time. "It's not good to provoke that guy. Even I can see that much. Although his current strength is not good, his talent is top-notch.

"The moment he's strong enough to oppose me, he might come for my life. That's why it's better to let him be unknown for the time being.

"Instead, what we should be doing right now is a reform in the Demon Hunting Squad." Igor seemed to have gained some inspiration from Noel. It actually stunned Richard.

"What do you mean, Captain?" His Captain never did something like this since he always thought power was the most important.

But Igor sighed, "I don't have a concrete plan. It's just... seeing their battle gives me some inspiration that I can't say out loud. I want to see whether it's possible or not.

"At the end of the day, we are the Demon Hunting Squad. We hunt demons. However, no one is saying that we have to hunt demons by using brute strength. I have a fuzzy picture in my head, but I'm sure it can help us become stronger."

"I see. In that case, let's gather all our thinkers to see whether they have an idea or not. Since Captain is planning to listen to them, I'm sure they will give us all kinds of ideas." Richard nodded in agreement. There was no need to reject the change if they could get stronger.

Shawn gritted his teeth and slammed the table. "You two have been ignoring me this whole time. You still owe me an explanation, Captain. Do you think I will lose to that fire?"

Igor shook his head helplessly, not knowing what to say. "Shawn... What we're doing is hunting. There is a difference between sparring and hunting. I'm sure you have felt it as well... That flame might melt your hands if you touch it.

"Unless you have enough Spiritual Energy, that flame will continue to spread until there is nothing left to feed it."

"But—" Shawn wanted to complain, but Igor glared at him, stating with a cold tone. "Sometimes, there is a time when you have to admit defeat if you want to get stronger. You should use this chance to find a way to get stronger instead of watching your rival!"

"..." Shawn couldn't say anything to rebuke him.

"For now, you should go back to your room and we'll discuss what we're planning to do with them tomorrow. I hope it won't be something weird."

"..." Shawn was still unwilling, but in the end, he left the city, not knowing anything.

While they were thinking about what happened earlier, the Demon Relief Squad threw a small party for Noel.

But after that display of power, it seemed Paul had begun to realize Noel's real identity. And he was actually visiting Rose to talk about it, considering Rose gradually moved on after Noel appeared.

Of course, Noel was explaining the reason why he hid the fire phoenix to the rest of the group.

They had to accept his ridiculous reason since he just wanted to avoid hurting them.

In the end, they agreed with the explanation before Rose brought up the plan to deal with the Supreme Devil Organization and the Demon Farm.

They were discussing the details since they had to present their idea to Igor, the strongest man in this area.

So, they had to make sure they convinced him.

...

The next day.

Igor had agreed to discuss their plan to handle the Supreme Devil Organization, so both Zero Squads and Captain Igor gathered in a single room.

Igor crossed his arms while asking, "I have heard about the situation concerning the Supreme Devil Organization. I'm planning to deal with them as well, but I have to bring a lot of opponents while protecting my home. This is exhausting."

Rose nodded and began her explanation. "Alright. This is the plan we'd like to suggest..."

Chapter 469 Agreement

"Alright. It's time to spread." Igor stood on top of their wall while looking at the horizon. He could see numerous hunters waiting for his call.

As soon as he gave the order, the people who were holding flags raised blue flags, signaling those on the ground to start moving.

Seeing those guys spreading in all directions, Igor couldn't help but recall their conversation.

"Alright. This is the plan we'd like to suggest..." Rose paused for a moment as she used her ability to create an illusion on top of the map. There were several pieces on the top: ugly-looking demons, a castle, humanoid figures, and a few circles.

"We believe that the Supreme Devil Organization is currently watching every movement of this base from somewhere.

"Hence, we're going to spread all the people here to find them." Rose gave her plan with confidence.

Even Igor, who wasn't used to fighting with his mind, couldn't help but feel confused. "If we spread our people, won't they notice us and make a run for it?"

"Of course. They will do something like that. If this were another squad, I wouldn't propose such an idea. But the Demon Hunting Squad is different, right?"

Igor fell silent for a moment while the guy with slanted eyes asked, "Are you implying that we're going to find them from their trail?"

"!!!" Igor understood what she wanted in that instant. He murmured, "The Demon Hunting Squad is adept in hunting demons. But in order to hunt one, we have to find this demon by following the trails. Although we are the rough bunch, it doesn't change the fact that tracking is our base training.

"Even without our mind, it's easy to track those people as long as we follow their trails." Igor narrowed his eyes, still feeling a bit unconvinced about the plan.

Rose took this opportunity to fill in the missing link. "We're going to spread all the people at once and at a very high pace. The Demon Observer Squad might be good at careful investigation, but what we need right now is speed.

"The Demon Hunting Squad can sniff their trails in an instant and chase after them. So, if we startle them with this, they won't be able to cover their trails since they have to run."

Igor nodded in understanding. "And that's where we come in."

"Yes. I want the Demon Hunting Squad to send the signal and we'll focus the people on that area."

"Then, it's better to send a smoke signal since it will be easily seen."

"No." Rose shook her head. "If we use the smoke signal, the enemy will be able to see it too. Unlike people from the Demon Banner Army, the Supreme Devil Organization can simply leave their people behind if that will endanger them. That's why we'll be using the flag."

"Flag?"

"Yes. By using flags, we can let the people from the wall see them. This way, we can find which one finds the trail."

"I see." Igor looked down for a moment. "We don't have much problem with the flag, since we have a lot of Demon Banner Army flags."

"That's good. In that case, we can use those." Rose nodded, feeling satisfied with the condition.

"Still, how do you know that the Supreme Devil Organization is still around?"

Rose paused for a moment. She wanted to glance at Noel because he was the one who provided the answer.

She recounted the answer he had prepared and told him with confidence.

"We captured a Supreme Devil Organization member. Since he was a Spirit Master, his rank shouldn't be so low.

"I'm pretty sure your subordinates have told you about the incident, so I'll just cut to the chase. With them operating near the Count, I'm sure that they have to put a watch on this base.

"After all, the biggest problem would be you making a move. Thus, the reason why I suspect them to be around here.

"With that guy getting captured, they won't hear the information anytime soon. And they can only confirm it after seeing us entering your base... Since they aren't sure yet if we actually found their person or not, it'll take time for them to confirm it, giving us enough time to hit them.

"We believe that the Supreme Devil Organization was the culprit of the last attack you suffered.

"Hence, it wouldn't feel bad to mess with them, right?" Rose smirked.

Igor looked down, thinking about her answer. Even though he wasn't good in this area, everything she told him was pretty simple and easy to understand.

He agreed with her since he wanted to pay back if there was a mastermind in the last attack. They suffered a lot after all.

If the Supreme Devil Organization was behind this, they had to hit them as hard as possible.

Igor thought for a moment and glanced to the side, asking the opinion of his subordinates.

Surprisingly, all of them agreed. Even Richard confirmed their abilities, so there was no need to underestimate their plans.

After pondering a lot, Igor finally agreed with their plan. "Alright. I'll mobilize my people. However, what if they're not around here? And it's just you who wants to mess around with me?"

Igor was just afraid that they didn't like how he behaved earlier, especially recruiting Noel that they had to play tricks with him.

This was when Noel stepped up by stating, "If that's the case, then you can consider we are even. You don't have to fulfill the bet anymore."

A promise from a captain was enormous. It was simply priceless since there were only a few people whose strengths were higher.

They managed to show their credibility and determination by making Noel bet on that favor.

Igor looked into Noel's eyes for a moment before agreeing to this plan.

"Alright. You've got the full support of my Demon Hunting Squad. If the situation is truly the case, I'll welcome you once again to the Demon Hunting Squad." Igor nodded and ordered, "Call all squads to start moving."

Chapter 470 Found

While watching the people from the wall, Igor had a sudden visitor.

"Hmm?" Igor glanced to the side and asked with a little smirk. "So, you're coming here means you want to join my Demon Hunting Squad?"

That offer is only meant for one person. He was none other than Noel.

Noel had a grim expression on his face. It felt like he had a lot of problems, and he wanted to inform Igor about his concern.

He hesitated for a moment before he finally said, "I'm afraid that we might need your help this time."

"My help? Haven't I helped you enough with this?"

"No. I'm afraid that Sir Igor has to make a move today." Noel shook his head with a sigh.

"Your reason?" Igor felt like the Demon Relief Squad was more of a mind type like Rose. So, Noel asking for a favor must mean a serious problem.

"Our Demon Relief Squad has been dealing with the Supreme Devil Organization this time. From the incident regarding the coordination between bandits and demons to the one in Silica Valley where a Devil Bishop died, we have been in their heads for a while.

"I'm afraid that they're going to mobilize a Devil Bishop or more. So, you might have to make a move."

"Hoh?" Igor narrowed his eyes, interested in this matter. "It's been a while since I have gone with a Devil Bishop. It's going to be interesting then. You should be the one to worry about this since if we succeed here, your Demon Relief Squad will be targeted."

"I know, but I'm going to focus on the enemy in front of me."

"If that's the case, you should go back to your team. After all, you will be participating in this hunt."

Noel nodded. He turned around and started walking away. Still, this was a problem their Demon Relief Squad brought, so Noel thanked him before returning to his team.

As soon as he reached his squad, Noel whispered some possibilities to Rose.

After three minutes, they finally heard a shout echoing across the walls.

"We have found them. They are in the east!"

"!!!" The people from the Demon Relief Squad became focused as they started unsheathing their weapons, ready to join the hunt.

Without hesitation, they immediately ran toward the gate and left the base, heading straight to the location indicated by the Demon Hunting Squad.

Noel had another plan for this hunt.

He was pretty sure that the Demon Hunting Squad would bring a lot of people this time. After all, they were trying to keep the Demon Hunting Squad busy by sending many demons.

To keep up with those demands, they had to mobilize many people or a few strong people. If it was the latter, Igor would have found them.

So, Noel assumed there would be at least tens of their members with a few high-ranking people to supervise their actions.

This was the perfect time to finally finish one of his missions, where he had to kill fifty Demon Worshipers.

The group saw the guy waving the flag and hurriedly approached him. The latter actually pointed at his back as if telling them to go on.

They decided not to stop and followed his instruction. They began to find footsteps on the ground that were easily visible to others.

The people from the Supreme Devil Organization might not leave the trails purposely. And seeing the footprints slightly deeper than they were supposed to, Noel and the others knew these trails were left behind by the Demon Hunting Squad so that others could follow them.

They followed this trail while increasing their pace. They had to get as close as possible to the ones chasing after the enemies since they wanted to deal with the Supreme Devil Organization.

It didn't take too long for them to find the leading squad.

Their squad was made of a Spirit Master and eight Spirit Wielders. But with how they were running at fast speed while tracking their enemies, it seemed like they ranked pretty high in the Demon Hunting Squad.

Paul sped up and introduced them, "We're from the Demon Relief Squad."

The Spirit Master nodded. "We know that. Since you're here to help us, be quiet for a moment as we have to focus on following their trails.

"We're going to wait until we find their base before engaging them. For now, just match our pace until the person we're chasing right now reaches their camp."

"Got it." Paul agreed with the arrangement even though he was a Spirit Grandmaster while the other party was only a Spirit Master. He didn't care about pride as long as they succeeded in their mission.

Paul also asked the others to follow their instructions until Rose saw a huge number of enemies ahead.

"Hmm? I can find a lot of people in front of us. Their strength is unknown, but their number is around seventy or even more. I can't find them all." Rose pointed forward.

"What about the squads behind us?" Paul asked about the reinforcement.

"None for the time being."

"Are we going to engage them?" Noel asked with a serious expression. He knew how dangerous it was to deal with the current Supreme Devil Organization. So, he had to confirm it with Paul.

It seemed that Paul was confident in stopping the enemy for a while in case they needed it.

Hence, Paul said, "We're going to engage them. Make sure you get some distance to understand the entire situation first. In the worst case, I want Zion to use your ability to get the reinforcement here."

"Got it." The group nodded their heads while Noel added, "The Demon Hunting Squad should be following us unless they find another trail."

"Let's deal with them first." Paul nodded. Since he was the strongest among them, he planned to make the first move to check the enemy's strength.

He released his Spiritual Energy and sped up before jumping into the air, looking at the enemy's camp.

He raised his warhammer and struck the ground with his momentum. "Hey, hey! Time to die!"