

S vs Rebirth 481

Chapter 481 Hard Fight

"..." Noel narrowed his eyes. This Undying Phoenix was one of his strongest techniques. Even though he had just acquired it not long ago, it didn't change the fact that the Undying Fire was overwhelming.

Yet, the guy managed to stop it. It was clear that the Undying Phoenix wouldn't be working more effectively next time. He knew he could simply extend his blade to stop it.

This wasn't looking good for him.

'I guess this is the current gap between a Spirit Wielder and a real Spirit Master, unlike the one I met in the town. Even with two elements, Rune and my swordsmanship, it's impossible to close the gap between us.'

Even though Noel couldn't reach the Spirit Master's level, he would probably win against the Spirit Master he fought with Anna if he went all out. Unfortunately, he still hadn't reached the level of the Spirit Master before him.

He never thought that a single rank had this big of a gap.

Noel had to find another way to close the last gap. But it seemed he could only take advantage of the terrain or his teammate.

"I have told you earlier, no matter how hard you struggle, you won't be able to defeat me!" The guy stated coldly, asserting his dominance. He had acknowledged Noel's strength and talent, so the only thing he had to do was to use his ability to capture Noel and present him to the organization.

Noel should be valued a lot, so it wouldn't be so strange if he got a huge promotion after this.

Since he had seen a lot of his abilities, he wasn't afraid of Noel anymore. He jumped toward him while extending his blade.

Noel hadn't found any weakness to exploit. Despite getting provoked multiple times, this guy wasn't even angry.

In the end, he was forced to run away, trying to get into a place where he could get some advantages.

The guy kept chasing after him, thinking Noel had no more options left.

He didn't realize that the terrain had changed. The woods had become denser and the ground had become a bit wet, making his step go a bit deeper than earlier.

The instant they arrived at this terrain, Noel immediately formed his Phoenix Wings.

A pair of black wings appeared on his back. This fire would surely burn the trees if touched, but Noel didn't care much about it, considering the ground was wet enough to stop the fire from spreading.

At the very least, it wouldn't become a forest fire.

"!!!" The Spirit Master felt something different from this area. It looked like Noel had been planning to lure him into this area the entire time. He was only biding his time so that he thought he had enough advantage that he didn't need to fear anything.

He scanned the area hurriedly while seeing Noel flying around with his wings. He didn't fly up high since he wasn't running away.

Noel just didn't want to be hindered by the wet ground.

While flying around, Noel released a couple of fire feathers into the air. This was the third ability he received recently, the Undying Fire Feathers.

These feathers stayed afloat for a while before they flew toward the Spirit Master.

"!!!" The Spirit Master found a difference between Noel's Undying Phoenix and these Undying Fire Feathers. They might be formed by the same fire, but they had two different approaches.

The Undying Phoenix used the Hard Approach, while these feathers utilized the Soft Approach.

He expanded his blade and turned it into a shield, blocking all these feathers.

Unlike the Undying Phoenix that would burn everything, these feathers actually melted his shield.

This was where Noel's control was tested. The first wave of Undying Fire Feathers melted a portion of the shield, creating a few holes in the surface.

Then, he sent the second wave to slip through that gap and reach the Spirit Master.

"!!!" The Spirit Master was startled because he couldn't protect himself now that the Undying Fire Feathers had gone past his shield.

He hurriedly threw his body to the left, trying to avoid the feathers. However, one of the feathers grazed him on the arm.

"Arghhhh!" He screamed in pain. The feather actually scorched his skin the instant it touched. Although the feather was blown away by the momentum, it was still extremely painful.

Noel finally saw a gap in his defense. He hurriedly flew toward the guy while covering his weapon with the Spiritual Energy, ready to choose either fire or ice depending on his needs.

However, chills suddenly went down his spine. Noel was astounded when the guy actually stopped screaming.

He endured all that pain while raising his blade. The Spiritual Energy on the tip of his sword flared up as it got extended far further than the previous blade.

"!!!" Noel gritted his teeth while waving his sword to the left.

Clink!

The extended sword hit his blade and cut all the trees within thirty meters radius.

With that length and momentum, being struck by this blade felt like he was crushed by a huge man using a warhammer.

That slash actually knocked him to the ground and continued to cut all the trees in the area, preventing Noel from taking advantage of the terrain.

Noel used his arm to support his body and immediately returned back up. But before standing, he placed his hand on the ground, placing another rune.

Everything was so smooth that he believed the Spirit Master didn't even see him planting one, since he was using the falling motion to cover it up.

As soon as the Spirit Master came in, Noel hurriedly jumped forward as if abandoning the rune he just made.

However, the Spirit Master knew that Noel was out of options and struck him so that he could get some time to think.

He smiled and took this opportunity to take down Noel, releasing all the anger he had after Noel almost melted his arm.

The sword was covered with Spiritual Energy to form a hammer.

Then, he struck Noel's blade and blew him away.

Bam!

Chapter 482 Trick

Noel was flying for a bit. He tried to use his wings, but they couldn't stop his momentum. He ended up falling to the ground and continued to slide for a bit.

But because the Spirit Master had cut down all the trees earlier, one of the trunks happened to fall in the direction Noel was going.

So, he ended up tripping on this trunk.

This was a big opportunity for the Spirit Master to apprehend Noel. So, he rushed to him, only to stumble when he stepped on the ground imbued by Noel's rune. It was so soft that it felt like he had just stepped on the water.

He lost his balance and fell to the ground.

It turned out Noel had actually calculated this. He just wanted to lower the enemy's guard so that he could take advantage of this opportunity.

It was an act as Noel, who was supposed to trip, suddenly released the Undying Fire Feathers.

"!!!" His enemy was startled, trying to get up.

Unfortunately, he was too late. Noel already knew his position, so even without looking at him, he aimed at the right spot, sending forth ten feathers.

"Kh!" The guy gritted his teeth and formed another shield.

Just like before, the shield melted and a few feathers ended up slipping through the gap. The guy couldn't dodge it this time. Even if he threw his body to the side, his foot was stuck on the ground.

In the end, three of the feathers reached his body with one stuck on his leg and the other two hitting his waist.

"Aaaahhhhh!"

The guy screamed in pain. His body was convulsing and his hands were trying to throw those feathers away. When he grabbed those feathers, his fingers were burned, but he had no other choice but to throw them away.

His anger had been welling up this whole time. When he first got burned by the feather, he didn't care much about it because he believed the reward would be much greater if he could bring Noel back to their base.

However, he was wrong. Noel was far trickier than he expected. He was strong and had a cool head, allowing him to react to any situation and even create a trap for him when he thought there was nothing left to exploit.

It was clear that taking Noel back was close to impossible if he was alone. At the same time, he didn't know whether the other members could come to help him.

His anger was on the brink of exploding. The only thing that calmed his mind was the fact they outnumbered them.

If he bought enough time for the other members, they should be able to catch up to him and capture Noel.

The guy gnashed his teeth while glaring at Noel, who had just stood back up as if nothing had happened. It was a clear provocation to him, who got severe burns on his body.

Ultimately, he chose to extend his blade again. But this time, he formed a chain like the one attaching his blade.

These two chains that came out of the tip of his blades flew in opposite directions to surround Noel.

However, Noel also had his own chains. He still believed that his rune could overthrow these two chains.

The Chain Binding Rune appeared in both hands as Noel pointed them at the two chains. Each rune summoned four chains and all of them captured the Spirit Master's chains.

"He also has chains? How? It's just pure Spiritual Energy... Is it his control? No, if his control is that good, his element will be fiercer. Then, what's that weird symbol that summons the chains?" The Spirit Master shuddered.

He had never seen Noel using his Increase Agility and Strength Blessing Runes, so he wasn't aware of the rune yet, considering he used the Softening Rune in a way he didn't notice.

Hence, he thought Noel still had some tricks on his sleeve, increasing his value even more.

'He has many things in his repertoire. He only has two options... either get captured or die.' The Spirit Master narrowed his eyes. He knew that if he didn't eliminate Noel, the latter would become a huge threat to their organization.

So, if he was cornered by Noel, he decided to unleash everything to kill him.

To prove whether he could capture Noel or not, he retracted the chains and turned back the two blades. After that, he rushed forward while throwing one of his blades.

Noel didn't understand why he threw away his weapon, but he struck this blade to the ground.

Fwoosh!

But the Spirit Master was more clever than he thought. Before the blade reached Noel's range, it suddenly stopped.

Clink! Noel ended up hitting the ground. He gritted his teeth while looking at the chain attached to the back of the sword.

The blade ended up falling to the ground, but it still fulfilled its objective, which was to buy time.

During that time, the Spirit Master managed to reach Noel and swung the other sword.

Noel ducked down, avoiding the sword. But the Spirit Master pulled the other sword with the chain and grabbed it midair before swinging it to Noel.

Noel blocked it with his sword, but he was forced to lean to the side as the Spiritual Energy surrounding that blade turned into a spike, almost piercing his head.

Still, due to that attack, Noel got stabbed in his shoulder. This was the same trick as the first attack, where he almost killed Noel, but this time, Noel managed to get a clear view of what was happening.

"Kh." Noel gritted his teeth as if enduring the pain. His left hand was holding the right shoulder as if trying to cover the wound.

He also jumped back to regain some distance while glaring at the Spirit Master. He wasn't planning to go down, but he might not be able to resist for long because of the injury.

The Spirit Master realized this was the perfect chance to seize him. With confidence, he rushed to him while swinging his blade.

And this was the moment, a smile appeared on Noel's face.

Chapter 483 Killing A Spirit Master

A smile appeared on Noel's face as he looked at the Spirit Master that approached him and stabbed him on the other shoulder, rendering both arms useless.

The sword pierced through Noel's shoulder and Noel was screaming in pain. His face was distorted and his fear started to grow.

This was what the Spirit Master had been waiting for. With this, Noel shouldn't resist anymore.

It wouldn't be too long until he captured Noel... or so what was supposed to happen.

But in reality, while Noel clutched his shoulder because of the pain, the Spirit Master stabbed his other shoulder.

Unexpected, instead of piercing the shoulder, the blade actually stuck as if it had just hit a sturdy wall.

"!!!" The Spirit Master widened his eyes in shock while looking at Noel.

Noel was actually fine. He might have felt some pain in his shoulder earlier, but it wasn't to the point he was injured. The same applied to the stabbed area. The blade actually couldn't penetrate his skin, or specifically the armor underneath his shirt.

This was the armor made of the Ancient Demon Tree and was forged by a Master Blacksmith. Although the Master Blacksmith said it could only block an attack from a Spirit Wielder, Noel had perfected the Spirit Enhancement, turning it into a rune.

At the same time, the Spiritual Energy he used to strengthen the armor was enough to stop a Spirit Master's attack, let alone one without Spiritual Energy.

He had underestimated Noel.

Without the knowledge of this armor, the guy was completely frozen. He felt like time had stopped and he was trying to think like his life depended on it.

Noel, on the other hand, had prepared his attack this whole time. In fact, he had been luring the Spirit Master into this tricky situation. He knew he couldn't defeat a Spirit Master unless he risked his life.

When the opportunity arrived, Noel dropped his sword. The Spiritual Energy on his left hand turned into a phoenix, while the one on his right hand turned into Undying Fire.

Noel placed his right hand on the guy's chest while pushing him away.

The Spirit Master was startled because the fire finally made direct contact with his body. The Undying Fire had been enhanced, so the burning effect was far greater than the one Noel used against an eagle.

The Undying Fire started to spread on his body, burning his clothes away. Though, that wasn't Noel's ultimate objective.

The reason he pushed him away was to create a distance between him and the Spirit Master.

Noel took advantage of that gap to release his Undying Phoenix straight to him.

The Spirit Master tried to use his power to block it, but Noel understood his movement. His hand motion was making a thrust, so when Noel pushed him away, the hand kept pointing at the phoenix.

He might be able to use the blade extension at the last minute, but Noel had made a little tweak to the phoenix.

It suddenly leaned to the side a little bit, avoiding the blade.

"It moved?" The Spirit Master's body was shaken.

Noel was smiling. He still remembered what he had learned when he visited his mother's family. After training with Dimitri, he finally mastered the way to make a parabolic movement.

That was why he waved his hand horizontally, so the phoenix would move to the side for a bit before going back to its original track and hitting the Spirit Master.

Boom!

The phoenix devoured the Spirit Master with that raging fire and gradually turned into a giant fireball.

"Aaaahhhh!" The Spirit Master was in agony. He was trying to cover his body with Spiritual Energy, but the overbearing flame instantly evaporated it.

The energy was so strong that he had a hard time enduring the pain. His skin was charred and his organ seemed to start failing.

He threw his body to the side to escape the fire, but the Undying Fire had been boosted by the Undying Phoenix, so the flame wasn't extinguished.

Even after using the Spiritual Energy to push away the flame, he still couldn't get rid of it.

The only way to get rid of it was to use an even more overwhelming Spiritual Energy, but he didn't have the time to do it. After all, Noel had reached his position while swinging his sword.

"!!!" The Spirit Master used all his strength to avoid it while enduring the burning pain.

"Tsk." Noel clicked his tongue, not because the Spirit Master avoided him, but because he only managed to cut his right arm.

"Aaaahhhh!" The Spirit Master screamed in pain. The fire that covered his body started to spread to his inside through that wound.

The Spirit Master thought he had the ability to catch Noel and bring him to the organization, but it seemed he had made a mistake.

He didn't realize that Noel had made him think this way by exposing one weakness to another. At the same time, Noel also inflicted some damage.

He would have released all his strength if he was cornered, but Noel had controlled his power so that the wounds wouldn't be that big to the point he would change his objective from capturing him to killing him.

And at the last moment, he used one powerful attack to kill him. Everything was going according to Noel's plan.

Even if the end result was a bit unsatisfactory to Noel, it didn't change the fact that the Spirit Master had been wounded severely.

Noel and the Spirit Master glared at each other. They knew that their roles had reversed.

Noel took a deep breath and charged forward while the Spirit Master shouted as loud as possible, alarming his people.

"Help!"

Noel didn't allow him to talk too much as he had reached him and swung his blade. The Spirit Master tried to use his ability, but the fire burned his organs, causing him to be unable to use more power to resist him.

Ultimately, Noel ended his life in a single swing.

Chapter 484 Realization

"Help!"

"!!!" The other Spirit Masters from both the Demon Banner Army and the Supreme Devil Organizations were alarmed by that shout.

Rose, who was having a hard time fighting two Spirit Masters, noticed this voice, thinking, 'It's not Noel's voice... If it's reached this point, I'm pretty sure that Noel has defeated that guy.'

Rose couldn't help but smile. She focused on one fact. Noel managed to defeat a Spirit Master, not a new Spirit Master, whose strength was still not far ahead from a Spirit Wielder, but a Spirit Master with solid strength.

It proved Noel's strength and potential. She couldn't wait to see how far Noel could go if he reached Spirit Master level.

Meanwhile, Ben was fired up. Noel had fought someone above his level, so he should work a bit harder to defeat two people of the same level.

'I can't lose to a Spirit Wielder, can't I?' Ben smiled.

The Spirit Masters from the Supreme Devil Organizations had come to a realization. They never expected their teammate couldn't handle a single Spirit Wielder.

One of them gritted his teeth and jumped away, "I'm going there to help!"

"Wait!" Ben and Rose stood in their way, preventing them from attacking Noel. Unfortunately, they were still outnumbered two to one.

And with Rose's ability not being focused on combat, she ended up letting one of them slip past her.

"Kh." Rose was frustrated. She truly had a hard time dealing with these Spirit Masters.

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Noel fell on his butt, tired after fighting this Spirit Master. He had sustained a few injuries as well and his Spiritual Energy was depleted a lot.

He leaned on the tree while looking at the corpse.

'It's truly hard to fight against a Spirit Master by myself. And I defeated him this time because he underestimated me and tried to capture me instead of killing me.'

Noel sighed. After fighting against a Spirit Master, he realized a lot of his new objectives.

'I need a lot of things. I have to get more Spiritual Energy and break through to Spirit Master as soon as possible. The runes might be working, but I have to add more variants.'

'The Everchanging Emotion Sword Style works, but it's still lacking a lot. Even this guy has a similar swordsmanship as me, but with a more unique and complete style.'

'My fire is overbearing, but the more the person sees it, the more they are wary of it. I'm afraid I'd be in a more disadvantageous position the longer this fight lasted.'

'Last but not least, the ice might work, but it's still too dangerous to expose it.' Noel sighed. He still remembered how greedy the guy's eyes were when he realized he had two elements.

'I'm afraid the kingdom will try to crush me wholeheartedly when they know about these two elements.'

'Right now, there are only a few people who know about my two elements: the commander, the Third Prince, Anna, and the people in the Demon Relief Squad.'

'With the fact that I'm being suppressed like this by a mere Spirit Master makes it clear that I won't be able to endure the suppression from other forces if this is exposed.'

Noel couldn't imagine the battle between many forces that wanted him and knew about his two elements' secret.

'Now that I think about it, did my father know about two elements before he executed this plan? What if my parents did this because they wanted to protect me?'

'My father never really trained me in combat. Instead, he only taught me a few things regarding human characters and business plans.

'If he knew about Ardagan's secret and the importance of being chosen, his execution must be his way to help me escape the royal family's grasp.

'Basically, the instant they know about two elements like the one in legend, people will flock around me and assassins will start coming to eliminate future threats.

'It seems there are a lot of meanings behind the execution and I might have to ask my father about his reasons so as to avoid misunderstanding his intentions.'

Noel became more and more impressed with his father. It felt like everything he did, from the execution to Anna being the mastermind, was just a ploy to protect him.

Noel became more sure that he had to meet his father to understand the entire conspiracy.

As he wanted to think more about this matter, he was interrupted by the appearance of the Spirit Master from the organization.

"Raker!" A deep voice echoed from the side. It was filled with anger, shock, and grief.

"!!!" Noel widened his eyes as he turned his head around, finding another Spirit Master approaching him.

This Spirit Master didn't expect Noel to be able to defeat him. He deemed Noel as dangerous, not caring about Noel's potential or anything. He just wanted to avenge his dead teammate.

So, he rushed to Noel while covering his hands with Spiritual Energy.

Noel raised his blade. Although he was exhausted, he didn't plan to go down without a fight.

The Spirit Master waved his hand, sending forth all the energy built up in that palm. Noel also tried to strike it down, but before he had the chance to do so, there was a hand touching his shoulder.

Noel was startled, but this hand actually pulled him back as if trying to protect him. Then, he saw another hand that released the same amount of Spiritual Energy as the enemy was releasing.

Their energy clashed and caused a huge burst to the surrounding, blowing away all the dust and fallen leaves.

Noel was surprised by the amount of power those palms had, but soon, he raised his head and found out the identity of the person that helped him.

It turned out the one who had just arrived was none other than Jonathan. He was annoyed and frustrated that Noel didn't bring him here to handle these enemies. But more importantly, he was angry that these people dared to harm his family.

And he... was planning to kill them.

Chapter 485 Retreat

This might be the first time Noel saw the angry Jonathan. He normally didn't show his emotion and maintained his poker but gloomy face.

It seemed Jonathan had found out about their movement earlier. But because Noel didn't have the chance to inform him, Jonathan took everything into his own hands.

Instead of helping the Demon Hunting Squad stop the demons, he chose to go after his teammates, considering Paul and the others weren't there. He had to protect them this time, especially Noel, who was known to be reckless.

And it was proven right because he found Noel almost died at the enemy's hand. Though, he was also shocked to find out that Noel managed to take down a Spirit Master. It was a huge accomplishment.

But due to the aftermath that was visible on the battlefield, he realized Noel had utilized both elements.

If the enemy was aware of Noel's ability, they wouldn't have left him alone. So, he decided he was going to kill this one person.

Noel, on the other hand, didn't know Jonathan's motivation this time. But it was clear that his power was overwhelming.

He actually suppressed his enemy with his Telekinesis. When the enemy used his Spiritual Energy, Jonathan would disperse it with his ability. When the enemy tried to attack him, Jonathan controlled their body until they were severely injured.

Noel finally understood that Stella's strength might be second to Paul's in the Zero Squad. But Jonathan might be the underdog who never really used all his strength.

The battle only lasted for ten minutes before another Spirit Master from the Supreme Devil Organization died.

Jonathan let out a sigh after making sure the enemy died. He turned around to check Noel's condition. "Are you alright?"

"Yes. I'm just a bit exhausted." Noel nodded. "Although it's impossible to kill another Spirit Master, I should be able to run away."

Jonathan thought for a moment and said, "In that case, you're going to follow me. At the very least, you will be safer this way."

"Yeah." Noel pointed in the southwest direction and said, "They are in that direction. It's better if we hurry up. As long as we can tilt the balance over, the enemy will be in a disadvantageous position."

"I see. Our victory is assured then." Jonathan nodded in agreement. With Noel looking so confident, it was clear that the battle was in the bag.

So, Jonathan led Noel in that direction and found the other three Spirit Masters.

Although the logical option would be to take one of Ben's enemies, Ben actually pointed at Rose's enemy as if telling him to target him first.

Jonathan understood what he wanted and worked together with Rose to kill the Spirit Master. This way, they could conclude the battle faster.

And having the number disadvantage, the enemies chose to retreat.

Noel stood in front of them and used his Undying Phoenix to make them stay for a while until his team caught up. And they ended up dying in Ben and Jonathan's hands not long after.

After handling the enemies, they gathered up to discuss their next move. Obviously, they were staring at Noel as if it was the normal thing to do. Even Rose, who took care of the group's strategy, asked his opinion.

Noel sighed. He wanted to leave the battle plan to Rose, but since they didn't have a lot of time, Noel accepted the role and gave some plans.

"We're going to help Captain Igor to buy some time from one of his enemies. I'm pretty sure he will be able to defeat his enemy. We have Richard as well. Although his strength can't be compared to Captain Igor, he still has enough abilities to handle one Spirit Grandmaster with our help."

Rose contemplated for a moment and nodded. "Yes. If we have Captain Igor back, we can launch a sneak attack against the enemies and figure out their objective."

Noel nodded. "That's why we have to hurry up. I'm afraid the enemies already know about our existence and aren't sure about the situation."

They exchanged nods, reaching an agreement. They hurriedly moved toward Igor and found Richard fighting against one Spirit Grandmaster.

With Igor only fighting one Spirit Grandmaster, it was clear that Richard managed to stop one of them. But the difference in skill was visible since Richard's body was covered in wounds. It would be bad if this continued, so Noel hurriedly waved his hand, asking his teammates to move.

"!!!" The four Spirit Grandmasters immediately found their presence on the battlefield and spared some attention to see their identities.

The moment they confirmed they were from the Demon Relief Squad, Igor and Richard smiled since this was the time to counterattack. Meanwhile, the people from the Supreme Devil Organization seemed to have a prior arrangement in case they failed.

And looking at the Demon Relief Squad appearing on this battlefield, they finally fulfilled their objectives.

Without hesitation, one of the Spirit Grandmasters took out a small cylinder where he poured his Spiritual Energy and threw it to the sky.

Boom!

The small tube exploded, releasing red-colored particles in the air. It was so big that everyone in the area should be able to see it.

'Hmm? Why did they—' Noel tried to figure out the enemy's intention by using that signal. He thought they wanted to inform the others so that they would get surrounded, but the Spirit Grandmasters actually turned around and jumped away as if they were planning to leave.

'Huh? A signal? Leaving? Don't tell me, it's a retreat signal?' Noel gasped as he shouted in panic. "Not good! We can't let them get away. Chase after them and kill them!"

The people were confused. Although it was bad that they couldn't kill the enemies, repelling them was enough since they could use this opportunity to ambush the remaining enemies along with the demons.

They didn't realize the meaning of a retreat signal. And that meaning would be engraved to Noel and the Demon Relief Squad instead of the Demon Hunting Squad.

Chapter 486 Holiday

They didn't understand why Noel's reaction was so big. But seeing how desperate he was, they thought it would be bad if those two escaped. Hence, they chased after them and chose to ask him later.

Unfortunately, the two Spirit Grandmasters had made their first move to escape. Even with Jonathan and Igor, it was impossible to catch up to them.

The best they could do was to maintain their distance, but the enemies had prepared another wave of demons, which ended up stopping their chase.

Igor unleashed his beastly strength to crush all the demons as they gradually retreated to clean up the base.

Unfortunately, it seemed that the enemies managed to escape before they reached him. They noticed a few more signals exploding in the sky, which was enough to inform all the Spirit Masters on their side.

"Kh..." Noel gritted his teeth while standing on top of the wall, looking in all directions.

Next to him was Igor and the Demon Relief Squad. Igor was confused as to why Noel wanted to do all this, so he asked, "Why is it bad to let them escape? Although the Supreme Devil Organization is our enemy, we're not going to send our people to a possible trap... So, I'm afraid to inform you that I won't be sending more people... unless you ask me for that favor. Even the commander will understand my reason."

Noel shook his head. He had a headache just from thinking about the possible reasons.

"Your Demon Hunting Squad won't matter that much, I think..." Noel sighed.

"Huh? It's not my squad's problem?" Igor became confused since his base had been attacked like this. There was no way it wasn't his problem.

Noel shook his head. "Their primary objective is us, the Demon Relief Squad."

"What are you talking about?" Igor couldn't understand Noel's words. Even Rose, Jonathan, and Ben tilted their heads, asking each other what he meant.

Noel finally revealed the reason why he couldn't afford to let them leave.

"They have two objectives: the count and the Demon Relief Squad. I can finally understand the reason why those nests are filled to the brim and how the Demon Hunting Squad suffers from many attacks."

Noel narrowed his eyes, realizing the enemies were far smarter than he originally thought. He was completely outplayed in this battle.

"They flooded the area and attacked the Demon Hunting Squad with demons so that the baron would call us.

"And with how we managed to intervene in their plans three times, I'm afraid that the Supreme Devil Organization already knew we were going to disturb their plans again.

"In other words, they assumed that we would know about their movement and stop them... which we did.

"They wanted to confirm that the Demon Relief Squad was a huge threat to them and would go all out to wipe us out. I'm afraid this is their primary objective."

After listening to Noel's senses, his worry made much more sense. Igor thought for a moment and asked the most obvious question. "So, they attacked us because of you?"

"I'm afraid so. I already told you about this, right? We had messed with their plans multiple times."

"True." Igor nodded. He couldn't see that far ahead from Noel's explanation, but it was clear that the Demon Hunting Squad was completely a victim this time. However, he couldn't blame the Demon Relief

Squad as well since it was unintentional. And the Supreme Devil Organization was their enemy, so it was fine to lend a hand to kill them.

Meanwhile, Rose got a more in-depth understanding of their current situation. "So, you're saying they did all this to lure us and confirm that possibility... With how they retreated, I could see that.

"But doesn't this mean they're putting the Demon Relief Squad above the Demon Banner Army?"

"More like they put the Zero Squad of the Demon Relief Squad above everything else. They know that we might intervene with their plans again, so it's better to lure us out before exterminating the Zero Squad." Noel nodded while sighing since the future looked bleak.

Rose looked down, contemplating their current situation.

On the other hand, Ben seemed to have a solution. His expression remained calm as if everything was still within the calculation.

He suggested, "Then how about going back to enjoy your time?"

"What?" Noel was confused, while Rose agreed with that suggestion. "I think that's a good idea. Since we have become their target, it's better if we remain hidden for a while until they don't aim for us anymore."

"What are you two talking about?" Noel couldn't figure out their suggestion.

This was when Jonathan came in. He explained, "Four months from now, we'll have a holiday that comes every three years. We will go back to the Demon Relief Squad's headquarters before reporting to the Demon Banner Army's headquarters.

"After that, we will be enjoying a holiday that will last for a few months, depending on the situation. We can use that time to visit our families or pursue what we want."

"Huh? This is the first time I've heard about it."

"Well, you were supposed to know about it in a few months." Jonathan shrugged. "Anyway, I think it's possible to move up the holiday if Paul suggests it to Captain Clara. She will judge the situation and handle the approval."

"I already told you before that the Demon Relief Squad was extremely flexible. If we were in danger, we could get help from other squads, including their captains. And in this situation, we might be able to get an early holiday as long as we can explain our circumstances."

"If it doesn't go according to that scenario, then it's nothing but an early off session. So, yeah... You don't need to worry about the condition since we'll take care of it."

Noel was contemplating since this was the first time he had heard about a holiday. It seemed both Rose and Ben agreed with this decision.

Of course, it might not go according to the scenario, but Noel had been right from the day he joined the squad, so the chance of it happening was quite high.

It was better to take this route.

Chapter 487 Warning

"I see. So, that's how it is..." Paul closed his eyes. After returning from the hunt, he regrouped with Noel and the others and listened to Noel's speculation.

It made some sense, so he couldn't dismiss it easily. He murmured, "By laying low for the duration of the holiday, we can strengthen our group in a safe environment."

"Yes. If their target is us, the fact that we're on holiday means they can ignore us for the time being since we're no longer a threat." Rose nodded in agreement. She had finally understood Noel's plan after thinking for a while.

Paul considered everything before agreeing to the request. "Alright. I don't have trouble with that. I don't know how many months we can get this time, but I'll try to ask the captain's opinion about this matter and try to negotiate with her."

"Thank you." Noel bowed his head. This was only a speculation, but he still chose to believe it. Paul might be the only one who was this friendly to a newbie like him. So, Noel had to express his thanks.

"Alright. We'll be sleeping here today and go back to our base tomorrow." Paul waved his hand, dismissing them.

They nodded and walked away. They were pretty tired since they hadn't gotten a good rest since the mission started.

Meanwhile, Rose came to him, asking to discuss their next move.

Noel invited her to the wall where they could get some space to talk.

"What do you want to discuss?" Noel asked while looking at the horizon.

"I'm thinking about using this chance to go with you."

"Hmm?" Noel frowned. Although he was happy that Rose wanted to follow him, he had to consider Rose's matters as well.

However, Rose seemed to have made her decision as she immediately supported her request with all the reasons she had prepared earlier.

"First of all, I have to inform you that I have no one left in this world... You have heard about my story.

"So, I usually use my time to improve my skills or just go to the library to learn some new stuff.

"I don't have anything to do, so I think it's better to follow you. I'm sure you need my strength this time."

Noel frowned. He still couldn't accept it since this was a precious chance they got every few years. So, he didn't want Rose to waste it.

But before he could say anything, Rose added, "I can improve myself if I follow you. I'm sure you're planning to go somewhere dangerous to get stronger. So, it's better if I go with you. Not only can I get stronger, but I could also learn about your habits and work.

"I'm going to work for you in the future, so I think it's good to know more about you during this time."

Noel couldn't help but scratch the back of his head. "Is learning from me necessary? You've understood me this much."

There was nothing Noel could say to reject her. She truly knew how to handle him.

As long as she could provide all kinds of logical reasons, there was no way Noel had the heart to reject her.

Rose smiled embarrassedly. "Hehe. I might be useless on the battlefield, but I'm good at learning."

Noel actually had a few destinations in mind. And having Rose on this trip would certainly help him a lot.

Though, he had another problem. He wondered how to contact Anna since the latter would try to find him three months later.

In the end, he believed in Anna, thinking she would know that there was no need to meet up during that time.

He was also thankful for Rose's help. Although Rose told him that she wasn't useful in a battle, Noel knew that Rose still could hold back one or two people of the same level with her illusion.

This power alone was enough to give him more options. That was why he was happy that Rose decided to follow him.

Still, Noel had to warn Rose about what she should expect from this trip. "Rose... I'm thankful for your gesture, but I have to warn you. My trip is going to be extremely dangerous. Even I don't know whether I have the strength to protect myself or not."

To his surprise, Rose answered as if she had prepared for it the whole time. "I know. Do you think following you is a joke? I know that you're bound to rise up... That path is thorny. I'm sure you have understood it well.

"Despite knowing that I might lose my life in the process, I still choose to follow you and become one of your vassals. So, there's no need to hesitate. I've prepared for the worst before even asking you to take me in." Rose assured him with a smile.

Her expression couldn't help but put a smile on Noel's face. He looked at the horizon and stretched his hand as if trying to grasp the world. "Rose... Following me might be a headache, but I'm going to make sure that the journey is something unforgettable."

"That's what I'm expecting from you, my lord."

Noel and Rose exchanged a smile as the former finally asked Rose to walk back together. They had to leave in the morning after all.

After packing up and getting a good night's rest, Noel and the others stood in front of the base with Igor and Richard seeing them off.

Before they left, Igor walked to Noel and stated, "If you still wish to join my Demon Hunting Squad, you're free to come here. I'll welcome you with open arms."

"Thank you for your appreciation. However, I still wish to stick with these guys." Noel pointed at the rest of the Demon Relief Squad. This was the squad that had taken care of him the whole time, so he wanted to repay them by sticking with them for a while.

"Is that so? Well, I won't force you. Though, I have to warn you a bit." Igor lowered his body and his head approached Noel's ears, whispering, "The blaze is everywhere: the kingdom, the army, and even the tower. I can smell it, the big blaze that will envelop this kingdom and spread its poison to the others."

Chapter 488 Help

Two weeks later.

The group arrived at a city located northwest of the Demon Banner Army headquarters. The city was called Limebridge Town.

It might be a bit far from the border, but it was at the very center of the border. They could easily dispatch the soldiers to any front.

The reason why this town was called Limebridge was due to the bridge, made of limestone, located outside the city.

The city was built near a cliff. Its sides were surrounded by farmlands, leaving only one entrance which had a river spanning over thirty meters. This was the river that gave life to the entire area.

The bridge was made to connect the land and the city.

This city was governed by a baron called Baron Gilbert. The baron had a mutual relationship with the Demon Relief Squad. These two never interfered with each other. The Demon Relief Squad gave them a good place to live while the baron governed it well.

It was a peaceful city, perfect for the Demon Relief Squad.

They arrived at the Demon Relief Squad's headquarters which was located in the west. The area might be only a tenth of the Demon Hunting Squad, but it was enough for their storage and small training area.

They reached the administration building where Captain Clara was supposed to do her work.

"Alright. I'll tell the captain about it. The rest of you can get some rest. Since ladre is new here, someone should guide him around," said Paul while opening the door. He didn't wait for anyone's reply as he just entered the building, knowing the rest would take care of themselves properly.

They exchanged looks for a moment and Rose immediately volunteered. "I'll take care of ladre. But before that, we should go to our lodging house."

They agreed with the suggestion and immediately moved southwest of the administration building. There was a big building in the center where most soldiers stayed. This building was surrounded by a few cabin houses that could host ten to fifteen people each easily.

"The biggest one is the main barrack where most knights and workers live. When you reach Tenth Squad or below, you can get one of these houses for the group to live in. It gives a lot of privacy and space to bond with your team." Rose introduced the buildings while the rest took care of the admission.

After a while, they asked Noel and Rose to follow them to one of the houses to put their luggage down.

But there was one thing bothering Rose this whole time. Noel had been frowning a lot recently.

Noel had been dodging her questions the entire time, making her worried. But the matter must be a secret, so she couldn't really demand Noel to explain everything.

What Noel was thinking about was the warning Igor gave to him.

"The blaze is everywhere: the kingdom, the army, and even the tower. I can smell it, the big blaze that will envelop this kingdom and spread its poison to the others."

"..." Noel looked down, contemplating. Igor didn't seem to be lying. So, it meant he had sensed the incoming chaos that would envelop the entire kingdom and affect the neighboring kingdoms.

Igor might not look smart, but his senses were sharp according to others' descriptions of him. The way he looked at the world was different from everyone else.

According to Igor, there would be conflict everywhere. Noel believed the blaze meant the fight.

The kingdom meant the Royal Family and the nobles, including the Arbiters. He could somehow believe that the Royal Family, the nobles, and even the Arbiters might have spies from the Supreme Devil Organization.

But he was quite surprised that the Demon Banner Army also had one. Seeing how Igor looked at them equally, it meant the spy in the Demon Banner Army had a high position that could be equal to that of an Arbiter. In other words, a captain.

As for the Tower Association, he didn't have much information about them, so he couldn't get any conclusion.

Still, he didn't believe that Igor's sense was that sharp to the point he could predict something. So, he thought Igor might not be as foolish as he thought he was.

'Does that mean Igor is affiliated with someone? Since he's close with the commander, then is it the commander? He's putting on a fool front to make others underestimate him and strike them when they don't expect him.'

Noel was trying to figure out the situation. There were simply too many possibilities like Igor being a spy and trying to confuse him.

In the end, he left the house after putting down his luggage. Rose was accompanying him, but the latter actually asked for a deserted place.

Rose didn't understand what he meant but still guided him around. They ended up leaving the town for a bit and made their way to the farmland.

There was a thick forest next to the farmland, so they were using that place to hold a meeting.

Noel had been raising his arm since earlier as if he was trying to do something. Rose was confused, but all her doubts were answered the moment Dimitri appeared before them.

There was a pool of shadows that emerged from the ground like a fire.

"!!!" Rose sensed that fluctuation of Spiritual Energy and hurriedly positioned herself in front of Noel, trying to block any threat.

She didn't expect the shadow to rise from the ground and form a humanoid figure as if it was a human from the start.

And Noel placed his hand on her shoulder to assure her that this was what he had been doing the whole time.

Yes, Noel actually called upon Dimitri. The latter had told him that he didn't want to help him too much when he was still growing, but the situation was worse than Noel thought, so he had to ask him.

The shadow gradually revealed his appearance as he bowed to Noel, greeting him. "Young Master."

"It's been a while, Dimitri. Let's cut to the chase... I need your help."

Chapter 489 Task

"Let's cut to the chase. I need your help."

Dimitri couldn't help but frown upon those words. He didn't want to help excessively, but it seemed Noel had another plan in mind as he added, "I'm not going to ask you to protect me or even kill someone else. I only want you to bring something to my mother's family."

"..." Dimitri closed his eyes for a moment. Bringing something wasn't that hard for him. This kind of help could be replaced by others, but since Noel asked him like this, it was clear that the item he wanted to transport held great importance.

Only Dimitri was trusted enough to bring this item. And since the help wasn't about a fight, it didn't matter that much. He only worried that the moment he left him alone, Noel would face great danger, especially from the Supreme Devil Organization.

After mulling it over for a few minutes, Dimitri finally agreed to the request. "I understand. I'll bring the item for you, Young Master."

Noel smiled and took out a notebook. "I want you to give this book to my grandfather."

"This is..." Dimitri fell silent because he could see the title of this notebook. It was actually about the rune that only he knew.

He had observed Noel for a long time, so obviously, he was aware of the runes that Noel had taught Rose. Its potential might be beyond what the richest family had.

"This is the second part. I've given the first part to my grandfather. I want you to tell him to combine the two books and make a book for a basic introduction to the rune.

"However, he has to abide by one promise. He can only publish the book six months later. Even showing the king of the Greenwood Kingdom can only be done not long before the book is published."

"..." Dimitri frowned. He wasn't sure about this plan. As Luke Ardagan's right-hand man, he obviously understood the lineage of the Ardagan Family. If Noel did this, the Royal Family of the Greenwood Kingdom might take some action. He had to ask Noel to confirm his doubt. "Young Master. Are you aware of your lineage?"

"I know. My ancestor came from the royal family of the Greenwood Kingdom and the Sword Saint, who was my ancestor's sworn brother, was also from the same royal family." Noel nodded with a serious expression.

"Huh? Royal Family?" Rose obviously didn't know anything about the lineage. She was shocked to know Noel was related to the royal family. Although the line already became so thin after a thousand years, it didn't change the fact that he was also a part of the royal family.

And with the Greenwood Kingdom having the record about the Spirit Enchantment, the downgraded version of the rune, they might potentially acknowledge Noel as one of their members.

When that happens, Noel might face a big problem since the other princes and princesses who wanted the throne might want to eliminate him.

Though, this problem could be solved by simply not visiting the Greenwood Kingdom altogether. It seemed that Noel only wanted to do this so that he could stop the Greenwood Kingdom from helping this kingdom or any organization to kill him.

Still, publishing this book would give a lot of power to his mother's family, the Ezenholm Family, especially since his grandfather was a great figure among the Spirit ians.

Dimitri could see a few reasons why he entrusted this notebook to his grandfather. As a Spirit ian, his grandfather would be interested in it and could arrange the training for a lot of people. The teaching could be spread easily.

"But Young Master, if you want to spread the knowledge about the runes..."

"I know. There are three major problems. First, there will be many influences that want to monopolize it. And with the Ezenholm Family having sole possession, they will be threatened from all directions.

"That's why I want to ask you this... Who was a big enemy to our Ardagan Family?"

"Huh, a big enemy?" Dimitri was confused for a moment while trying to come up with a name. Noel wanted a big enemy, not the arch nemesis, so it was clear that the Royal Family wasn't the correct answer.

With him knowing the truth about the Stargaze Family, Dimitri crossed them out as well. That left two names in his mind.

"If I have to say, then it's Duchess Priscilla and Marquis Simon. The Duchess wanted your father's aid back then, but because your father chose the Third Prince's side, she held a grudge and was the one helping the execution of your problem.

"As for Marquis Simon... he has a different problem. He has been aiming for the Ardagan Family's wealth for a long time. If not for Marquis Stargaze stopping him, he would be the one to take the Ardagan Family's wealth and land.

"If these two didn't meet your requirement, then there was Earl Michael, who was your father's love rival."

Noel contemplated for a moment. "I still don't have enough power to go against a Duchess, but this plan is a waste if I only use it against an Earl. In that case, let's attack Marquis Simon... If I'm not wrong, his full name is Simon Walford..."

"Yes. He is Simon Walford, the head of the Walford Family. His territory is located northwest of the Ardagan's territory. He was the one to condemn your father when he took care of that territory, only to bite him when your father succeeded in making the territory prosper."

"I see. That's a perfect target. Then, do we still have any trusted allies left? Their relationship with Marquis Simon is bad if possible."

"Hmm... Marquis Stargaze is our trusted ally, but I don't think he can do anything right now. As for your second condition, I can only think about one person. It's Countess Christina. Her territory is situated near both Ardagan and Walford's territories, but your father had a mutual relationship with her while the Marquis loved to oppress her."

"That's perfect. I have a plan." Noel smirked.

Chapter 490 Ally

"I have a plan." Noel pointed at the book. "The Third Prince planned to get this knowledge from me, but if I let him possess this, he would have too much power. It's good if I want to fully support the Third Prince and reclaim the throne, but the situation is not that good.

"My father suspects that the Royal Family is involved with the Supreme Devil Organization. It's a bold claim, but it makes sense for a lot of things.

"Hence, I'm not planning to let one side possess that much power before determining whether that person is involved with the organization or not.

"My grandfather will handle that side, while in this kingdom, I'm planning to use both the marquis and the countess."

Rose frowned, feeling something off with this plan. "But if you go this path, won't the Third Prince question your loyalty? I can kinda understand the current situation and that's why I'm confused."

"No." Noel shook his head. "There is a catch. I'm planning to meet the countess to talk about the book, but I'm going to ask her to make it look like the marquis stole the book.

"At the same time, the countess will spread the knowledge, starting from the Marquis' territory. This way, the knowledge will spread from there and the blame will fall on the marquis."

Rose contemplated for a moment and murmured, "I see. You can simply say that you want the countess' help as an ally of your father for this book. But because it's stolen, the blame should be directed to the marquis.

"I don't know how much influence the Third Prince has, but it's clear that he's still very strong. The fact that he's still called the Third Prince, his former title, and the Royal Family refusing to give the third-born child that title shows a lot about his power.

"You want to use this incident to measure the Third Prince's strength while using them to eradicate the family's enemy. The countess will surely join because she can finally fight back against the oppressor and finally be liberated from all those sufferings."

"That's the plan," Noel confirmed without hesitation. "As for the details, I'll leave it for later.

"That's true. What you should worry about is the Greenwood Kingdom. How do you explain the leak of knowledge?"

"It's simple. I've given the book to my grandfather before graduation, so I can claim that my grandfather arranged the book with the ancient Spirit Enchantment Book." Noel shrugged.

With this excuse, it was clear that the Third Prince would have a hard time finding fault. Noel could simply claim that he wasn't as clever as his father, so mistakes were bound to make, especially since he wasn't actively taking part in the management of the family.

Noel had truly prepared a lot for this.

"There is also another benefit to giving this book to the Ezenholm Family other than spreading the knowledge and the Royal Family.

"I'm sure that my father will put my name on it as the creator of this rune system. This alone will give a lot of protection since they will think twice about whether to eliminate me or bring me to their side.

"The neutral parties will try to negotiate with me or even wish to develop the rune with them. The enemies will try to eliminate me because I'll become a huge threat to them, while the Ardagan Family's allies will contact me to help. This way, I can see who is my enemy and who is my ally."

Rose understood that intention. Although Noel didn't seem to care about it, he also considered the Ezenholm Family's interest. With this book, their status in the kingdom would increase. And the Ezenholm Family could openly protect him since Noel was an important resource that could develop the Rune System far faster than anyone else. Even their Royal Family might give a decree to the Ezenholm Family personally.

There were some disadvantages to this plan since it brought a lot of enemies to him directly. But Rose didn't miss the detail where Noel said to publish this book six months from now.

"Then, I assume the six months..." Rose narrowed her eyes.

"Yes. I should be able to become a Spirit Master within six months and consolidate my strength. Although I still won't be able to fight against a Spirit Grandmaster, I should be strong enough to escape."

"I see." Dimitri nodded in understanding. He couldn't reject Noel since the latter had considered all this. "If that's the case, I'll use my full speed to go straight to the Ezenholm Family. With the current distance, I think I should be able to return to you within two weeks. But I don't know where you're planning to go after this. You're not planning to visit the countess before becoming a Spirit Master, right?"

"Yeah. I'm planning to visit the border after this to do something before going back to the Demon Banner Army headquarters within one month. Let's meet up there."

"I understand." Dimitri didn't know what Noel planned to do there, but it would be easy if they could regroup there. He turned to Rose and said, "I'll leave the young master to you, Miss."

"Y-yes." Rose politely bowed. She didn't know Dimitri's real identity, but she could feel the overwhelming strength hidden underneath that gentle appearance. It seemed the other party was an expert whose strength was on par with Paul's or even higher.

"Good. Thank you for doing all this, Dimitri."

"No, it's my job."

"Though, do you know anyone who is trusted enough to investigate something?" Noel asked.

"Hmm..." Dimitri thought for a moment. "I think there is one person that you want to visit. Although he is only the second in command for information gathering under your father, he is still available."

"The second in command?"

"Yes. The one in charge disappeared after the executions. I'm afraid he's the one helping your father. So, it's best to approach the other one."

"I see. Who is he?"

"His name is Harley, he is currently an owner of a brothel called Eternal Flower. If you wish to meet him, he should be in Tamworth."