

## **S vs Rebirth 491**

### Chapter 491 Destinations

Noel and Rose waved their hands as they saw off Dimitri. After giving them a lot of options, Dimitri finally left, heading straight to the Ezenholm Family.

Meanwhile, Rose asked with some doubts in her heart. "By the way, since I'm going with you this time, I think I can hear about the plan, right?"

"Yeah." Noel nodded. "I don't know how long our vacation will be, but I have a few destinations in mind. We'll build an itinerary after getting confirmation from Paul. What do you think?"

"I don't have a problem." Rose nodded. "I can get some information about the place first."

"Alright then." Noel thought for a moment, listing everything in his head to make sure he didn't miss a single place.

Lelelei Fort.

Silica Valley.

Demon Banner Army's Headquarters.

"These three are the primary destinations," said Noel while explaining the history behind them. "In Lelelei Fort, I need to defeat the Fire Bird Demon, which can strengthen my body. I need it, especially when I'm acting as ladre instead of Noel.

"As for the Silica Valley, I still need to do something for the Water Lord. Though, it's mostly because I want him to owe me a bigger favor, which will be useful later.

"And seeing how the situation has become so dangerous, especially in the Tower Association, I'm afraid I have to meet him to talk about his plan. I'm pretty sure that the Water Lord has been secretly working on the investigation, so getting information from him is good enough.

"As for the Demon Banner Army's Headquarters, I don't think I have to explain it to you. That's where we're going to meet Felix anyway."

"I see. It's understandable." Rose nodded with a serious expression. She didn't have any objection to the destination since the reason made some sense.

Noel didn't plan to only strengthen his ability. But he also wanted to have a strong influence that spread in the entire kingdom. This was the only way for him to be safe from the royal family.

After hearing Rose's agreement, Noel added, "I'm also planning to visit your village."

"Huh? My village?" Rose was startled. She misunderstood Noel's intention.

She thought Noel was interested in her and wanted to do this to impress her, but before she could say something, Noel added, "You're my subordinate now. And after exacting your revenge, it's better to visit your hometown to settle everything left."

"!!!" The misunderstanding was solved in an instant. Rose even felt overwhelmed since Noel thought about her when she told him she wanted to follow him not long ago.

"Thank you." Rose bowed her head. It just reinforced the loyalty in her heart, knowing that Noel was someone who took care of his subordinates well.

Noel smiled. "I'm planning to go to one more place, but it's still not decided. Do you have any places you want to visit?"

"Hmm..." Rose looked down with a serious expression. She looked like she was thinking with her life on the line. In the end, she suggested a single place. "If you wish to get stronger, I think there is one place you might want to visit. It's located not far from Tamworth, so you can visit the person he implied while you're at it."

"Interesting. What kind of place is that?"

"The town's name is registered as Styxcanva. But the town is known for its other name, Spirit Paradise.

"The town is located near the border. According to the rumor, the town has everything you need about Spirits. There are many establishments that can help you regarding your Spirits and they even work together with the Tower Association to find out about the new way to use your Spirits. I think we can go there to find some new references to get stronger."

"That's... a quite good idea." Noel nodded, satisfied. "Alright. Let's go with these destinations. If we carefully make our schedule, I believe we can go to all these destinations within three to four months. If we get more days off, then we can find another destination."

"Understood."

With these destinations in mind, Noel and Rose finally returned to the city. Rose showed Noel around the town so that he understood the city's layout.

The city had been thoroughly planned as Noel could find the perfect place for a health center and market.

The people didn't need to walk for too long and waste too much time traveling just to get to their destination. Even the upper-class families weren't that far from the market, stopping them from complaining.

Noel couldn't help but try to remember the placement. This information might be useful when he started governing his family's territory.

So, he took note of the layout. He wanted his city to be as good as possible.

Now that he thought about it, his father might want him to experience the world first before taking control of the family. This way, Noel would understand a lot of things.

He had to work a lot with commoners to know what they thought about the noble. He had to see a lot of nobles to see how they governed their territories.

There were simply too many things to learn. This might be the first time he felt grateful that he was deprived of his status as the Ardagan Family's young master.

Instead of getting stuck in the mansion with mountains of papers, Noel could see, feel, and taste what life was all about.

Rose noticed the change in his expression and couldn't help but feel curious. She had asked him about it, but the latter chose to keep it to himself for the time being.

And Rose respected that decision since there was a boundary that she couldn't cross.

After Noel felt satisfied, they finally returned to their house to get some rest. It seemed Paul had finished the negotiation as he had gathered all the people in the living room, waiting for them.

"You two must have got some fun in the town. But for now, you two need to sit so that I can inform everyone about the holiday."

Chapter 492 One Hundred Days

An hour ago.

Paul and Clara were sitting in front of each other. Even though there was a pile of papers on her desk, Clara actually left them behind so that she could have a serious talk with Paul.

"So, why are you here? You're supposed to come back in a few months." Clara asked with a serious expression. The change of schedule took her by surprise, but Paul wasn't someone who would do it without any reason. So, she asked him first.

Paul explained Noel's worries and how the enemies behaved. Even Clara could connect all of them, so the speculation might be true.

Still, seeing how much Paul trusted Noel, it seemed he had figured out ladre's real identity.

"It seems that you've figured it out, Paul."

"What are you talking about?"

"ladre's identity."

"Ah..." Paul nodded, confirming it. "Yes. He has different powers, so it confuses me even now. But it's clear that ladre is Noel Ardagan. As for his powers, I'll just consider them his talents. Looking at this again, it's clear that Noel is the most talented person in the kingdom, not Anna Stargaze."

"That's true. It's sad that such a talented person is under continuous attacks from the royal family. If he's able to develop his abilities, he might even become the greatest person in the world." Clara let out a sigh. It was such a waste if Noel couldn't properly train and utilize his abilities. But they couldn't really do anything with their current position.

So, Clara changed the topic. "So, I'm assuming that you want to get the holiday..."

"Yes. How long do you think we should hide from the public eye?"

"Hmm..." Clara fell into deep thought, not being able to find a concrete plan. Since they were targeted by the Supreme Devil Organization, they wouldn't easily disappear from their list.

At the same time, they should be able to lower their guards for a bit if they get a holiday here.

That was why Clara had to consider how long they needed.

After thinking for a few minutes, Clara suggested, "Since this is not a planned holiday, I think you can get around two months."

"But you have to consider the Supreme Devil Organization. The previous attack alone involved multiple Spirit Grandmasters. If we're not lucky, we might die before we know it." Paul tried to persuade Clara to get a longer vacation.

Clara pinched the bridge of her nose. She was thinking carefully and made sure to calculate their situation.

After pondering for a few minutes, Clara finally made a decision. "One hundred days. I can't give you more than that."

"One hundred days, huh." Paul felt slightly disappointed because he expected more in this situation. He believed the enemies had yet to forget about them within one hundred days.

Unfortunately, he realized that it was impossible to negotiate for more after seeing Clara's expression. Usually, she would show a gentle smile or a poker face when talking to someone, but this time, Clara's tone was strict and her frown boosted the power of her words.

Paul scratched the back of his head, feeling bad that he failed to get his team more. Still, he accepted Clara's condition without even asking about the reason why she could only give this much.

"I understand. 100 days then." Paul let out a long sigh. "I also have a few things to inform you."

"Sure."

Paul told her the story about Noel. There was a lot of praise about him, but the most shocking one came from the Demon Hunting Squad's leader, Hendry Igor.

It seemed he was satisfied with Noel's abilities and asked Clara to transfer Noel to his squad.

Paul convinced Clara that Noel wouldn't go to other squads simply because his relationship with Rose had become a bit too good. He was afraid that Rose would leave if Noel joined another squad.

Understanding his concern, Clara assured him that Noel wouldn't go anywhere unless Noel asked for a transfer himself.

After talking about everything, Paul finally excused himself to inform the rest of the group.

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"100 days, huh?" Stella looked down while letting out a long sigh. She was clearly disappointed even though one hundred days wasn't a short time.

Still, it was a holiday she could enjoy every few years, so she expected more.

"I see. One hundred days should be enough." Noel muttered with a serious expression.

Rose glanced to the side and noticed Noel's change of expression. It seemed that he was planning to finish the trip before the vacation was over.

"So, when does the vacation start?" Jonathan asked.

"The day after tomorrow. So, use today to get some rest and tomorrow to prepare for your vacation. We'll meet again in this place one hundred days later, understand?"

"Yes." The group acknowledged the instruction.

Some of them were anticipating this as if they had prepared a long to-do list. But some weren't that energetic. They probably didn't expect this would happen, so they were confused when they had to make a vacation plan.

Noel didn't hesitate to leave them alone and return to his room. Rose was the second person to leave since she had to follow Noel to confirm their plan.

Noel told her that they would be speeding up in their journey so that they could cover all the destinations within the time limit.

Rose had expected this, but following Noel surely wasn't easy. Despite being so talented, Noel's thirst for victory was strong, making him extremely competitive.

Though, she was also blessed by this fact since Noel would continue to improve.

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Finally, two days passed peacefully. Noel and the others had completed their preparation. Even Paul planned to spend some time alone.

They gathered in front of the house while staring at each other. It seemed Jonathan and Ben decided to remain here because they were more interested in what this city had to offer than the trip.

They ended up seeing the rest off as their vacation finally began.

#### Chapter 493 A Letter

Anna was sitting at her desk, looking at the report that could help her with the current mission.

"Hmm... there is nothing I can use right now," Anna murmured while reading all the papers. Soon, someone knocked on her door.

\*Knock!\*

\*Knock!\*

"Miss, you have a letter."

Anna looked at the door for a moment, checked the person's power, and said after confirming that he wasn't a threat. "Come in. The door is unlocked."



A middle-aged man opened the door, holding a white envelope. He didn't say anything and just handed the envelope to her as if he was just doing his job as a courier.

Anna received it and dismissed him while looking at the letter. But she noticed something weird. "Hmm? The seal is broken?"

The middle-aged man made a wry smile while scratching the back of his head as if he was embarrassed. He said with a shaking tone. "Come to think of it, I tripped earlier. Ah, did I just mess up? Am I going to be laid off from this job?"

"Geez, get a grip on yourself." Anna sighed. The latter maintained his awkward expression, but deep down, he was sweating profusely. Anna was known as Bloody Mary.

Back when she had just joined the organization, she massacred the people that wanted to mess with her. The blood that she spilled dyed her clothes red like a drink. That was why it became her nickname.

If Anna felt something weird, it wouldn't be so strange that she would kill him.

But to his surprise, after hearing his reasoning, Anna waved her hand to dismiss him. She didn't say anything or kill him out of suspicion.

Without hesitation, the man left before she changed her decision.

She opened the letter and read it.

'Dear Anna

'It's been so long since you've got some time for the family. After the Demon Banner Army, you're doing your job as an Inquisitor.

'I was an inquisitor in the past, so I knew I could ask you this. Can you use the Expedition Leave to get some time for the family?

'We can go to the hot spring town, Alkasia, or we can visit the green city, Elkia, or the healing mountain, Ezenben. If you're not fond of a long trip, we can go to your mother's family.

'Your father and mother will always be waiting.'

When she read this letter, she frowned. It was impossible for her father to ask for a vacation.

The Expedition Leave was a special privilege granted to the inquisitor. During the leave, they couldn't be given any missions.

However, there were a lot of restrictions and rules imposed on it, so most inquisitors couldn't take it because they couldn't handle the consequences.

But Anna had the backing of a Marquis, an Arbiter, so no one would be able to stop her if she wanted to take the leave.

Of course, this was what other people knew about these circumstances. On the other hand, the truth couldn't be any different.

It was impossible for her father to request a vacation. It wasn't that he didn't miss or worry her. But they had agreed that they would respect each other's choice and wouldn't mess with their schedule and goal.

That was why she knew her father wasn't asking for a trip. Instead, he was warning her about something.

'What is this? What's the real meaning behind this letter?' Anna was contemplating. She also remembered how the Marquis Family's seal was broken when the letter arrived.

Not many people dared to break the Marquis Family's seal. After all, the Marquis could use it to frame them and even hunt them down.

If the Marquis Family used a courier firm, the firm could be held accountable to the point they would have to hand in a ridiculous amount of money to compensate the Marquis.

However, the letter this time didn't use such a thing. Her father sent this letter through his subordinate.

With how the middle-aged man acted earlier, Anna could get a grasp of the situation.

'It seems that there's a lot of spies in the family. My father can't get rid of them because of the king.

'They opened the seal to confirm the letter's content. My father knew about this and wrote a letter about the Expedition Leave... There should be a hidden meaning behind these sentences.'

Anna was racking her brain to see the hidden message. She had a hard time figuring out the reason.

But she felt the important message was left on the destinations of their trip.

'Now that I think about it...' Anna fell silent for a moment before rising from her seat. She walked to the shelf on her right, picked up a huge scroll, and laid it down on the table.

'My family, Alkasia, Elkia, Ezenben Mountain, and my mother's family...' Anna muttered these five places a few times before finding something weird. 'Wait a minute...'

She looked at the map carefully and measured the distance between them.

'Alkasia and Elkia are in the opposite direction while the Ezenben Mountain is between them. However, there is one similarity between these three. All of them require a one month trip.

'It seems my father wants to tell me something that will happen in a month. If that's the case, why is he telling me about my mother's family that is only ten days away?'

Anna narrowed her eyes, trying to connect all of them. Something clicked in her mind as her eyes flashed. 'Maybe he's not trying to tell me about this one month. Instead, he wants me to sum up the number of days required to travel to all of these since he can't say to do the trip a few times.

'Three months and ten days... In other words, one hundred days. Then, the expedition leave...' Anna gasped. She finally understood the content.

'So, that's how it is. The expedition leave is not for me but for Noel. He must be using whatever leave the army has for this trip that will last for one hundred days.'

#### Chapter 494 Figuring Out The Situation

Anna sucked a cold breath. This was the first time she got a coded message from her father. It was hard to decipher it, but she was thankful to both Noel and her father.

After all, Noel had been teaching her a lot through experiences while her father actually supported her.

This also showed that her father had trusted her enough to handle this conspiracy.

'And with this coded message, I finally know what my father's stance is. It seems that my father and Noel's father are truly best friends. Even in this situation, they're still working together.

'But because of the circumstances, none of them can make their move right now. Noel's father is hoping for Noel to be able to decipher the situation and move toward the goal.

'Meanwhile, my father has never given me any trust because of my actions in the past. I was too immature and would continue to live in that bubble for the rest of my life if I didn't get a second chance through rebirth.

'And with this letter, my father has shown me that I'm trustworthy to be his hand that stretches all over the kingdom. He finally allows me to participate in this grand scheme.'

Anna couldn't help but smile. She never got involved with her father's plan because she was brainwashed by her teacher.

If she had gone through this in her past life, she might be able to get along with Noel. In fact, the reason why Noel never killed her was probably that she was just a pawn in the grand scheme. And he was trying to change her to convert her.

When that happened, the royal family and the Supreme Devil Organization would be panicking because they lost one of their greatest pawns.

'I'm happy that my father has involved me now, but the situation doesn't change. It seems Noel won't be available for the time being. But the fact that he's leaving for more than three months, it means he won't be there to discuss the update of the situation with me.

'Does it mean we'll ignore the next meeting and focus on the one six months away? Or does he want me to go to him during his vacation...'

Anna was confused about Noel's intention. On the one hand, she had already got the information, so it was possible to track him. On the other hand, the one who gave this information was her father.

If it was only her strength alone, she doubted she could get this information, meaning she wouldn't know where Noel was going this time around.

'If I know Noel correctly, he should be using this trip to get stronger. In other words, the aim of this trip is to reach the Spirit Master Level.

'It seems I shouldn't go to him right now so that I can reach the Spirit Master Level as well. Wait a minute, I still remember that I have to tell him about the firebird demon that can strengthen his fire... I'm sure he's going there right now since his strength is enough to fight against a Spirit Master.

'I see.' Anna nodded her head a few times. She was enjoying the time she took to connect all the dots to figure out Noel's plan.

Anna had to consider her mission as well.

'Spirit Master, huh. The Third Prince will make contact with him and give him a new mission. What happened when Noel reached the Spirit Master Level in my past life...'

Anna recounted all the memories from her past life.

'There are simply too many things that have changed from the past life. In the past, Noel would have to subjugate Kirika, who had caused the deaths of one thousand knights.

'Wait a minute. That amount of demons... I'm afraid that the demons were related to the Count. In this life, the Supreme Devil Organization couldn't get the Count to set up the farm and Kirika to lead them.

'In other words, this shouldn't happen in this life. I'm just afraid that the Supreme Devil Organization is trying to do something to them...'

"!!!" Anna dropped her jaw when she realized something was wrong with the situation. 'Wait a minute. He shouldn't have left yet in the past life. If I'm not wrong, the normal schedule is still a few months away.

'If that's the case, what compels him to take this decision? There's no way the Demon Relief Group would have realized all this conspiracy, so this must be Noel's plan.

'So...' Anna paused for a moment and immediately grabbed the report about the previous event.

'The Demon Hunting Squad was attacked by a huge number of demons. Then, there was the Demon Nest, the Supreme Devil Organization's spy, and Noel going to the Demon Hunting Squad's base...'

Anna was connecting all the dots before finally figuring out the situation.

'Wait a minute. The Supreme Devil Organization was the one who forced him to make this decision. If that's the case, he should have recognized that the Demon Relief Squad wasn't strong enough to take them on, so they had to go into hiding for the time being.

'In other words, this trip...' Anna's expression became serious. She had noticed the change in the Supreme Devil Organization.

The Demon Relief Squad, specifically Noel, had been in their way multiple times. They had lost a lot of people, including the Blood Berserker and another bishop that Anna wasn't aware of.

So, it wouldn't be strange for the Supreme Devil Organization to focus on wiping out the Demon Relief Squad first.

In the past life, the original and strong Demon Relief Squad were no more, so they didn't need to focus on them because Noel didn't trust that team completely.

Everything made sense in Anna's thoughts. In other words, further meeting with Noel would be dangerous because the Supreme Devil Organization and the Third Prince would be watching Noel.

She had to prepare herself too, since her power was needed for what was going to come.

'It seems that I have to change my focus as well...'

#### Chapter 495 Arrival

Noel was riding a horse straight to his next destination. He was accompanied by Rose this time.

He glanced to the side, taking a peek at Rose's expression. She was confused when he announced the first destination.

Early in the morning, they had just finished washing their bodies.

Rose came to him and asked, "By the way, where are we going first?"

They had five destinations, so Rose had made some plans regarding the course to make the trip as effective as possible.

But to her surprise, Noel gave her a different plan.

"I have a plan in mind. Though, I don't know if you'll agree or not." Noel smirked.

"Huh?" Rose was confused. She usually managed to comprehend Noel's plan, so the one in her head should be similar to what Noel had in mind. So, she was the first one to reveal the itinerary.

"We are going to the Lelelei Fort, Silica Valley, Demon Banner Army's Headquarters, my village, then Styxcanva, right?" Rose asked for confirmation.

"No." Noel shook his head calmly, correcting her. "We're going to Silica Valley, your village, Demon Banner Army's Headquarters, Styxcanva, and Lelelei Fort."

"Huh?" Rose was perplexed. There were a few reasons why she couldn't approve Noel's plan. "Wait a minute. The Styxcanva and Lelelei Fort are supposed to have the furthest distance among our destinations, so why do you want to visit them both in succession? It'll take a lot of time just to travel between them. I don't understand."

"Yes. You haven't understood the situation, Rose." Noel sighed. Rose had yet to understand how far the Third Prince could extend his hand.

Now that Dimitri was on another mission, they didn't have many options left. One wrong move could make the Third Prince get involved.

When that happened, Noel feared that they couldn't move according to their plan anymore.

And the one thing that might make the Third Prince move was Noel getting stronger.



He must be monitoring his movement so that he would appear before him when Noel reached Spirit Master Level. That was why getting stronger was the last thing he wanted to do.

What Rose knew was Noel wanted to get stronger as quickly as possible. She failed to see the urgency of the situation.

"I'll tell you about the situation once we get out of here." Noel sighed. Although Rose was good at planning, she still hadn't learned about the fight between aristocrats that happened in the shadow.

Since his parents couldn't help him, he had to be careful.

After remembering it, Noel turned his head around to check the distance before speaking. "Rose. Have you thought about the plan?"

"Yes. But I still fail to see your objective in making such a plan. If we follow your itinerary, I'm afraid that we'll be late for the gathering. Well, we can still speed up, but it'll put a strain on our body if we do this." Rose shook her head helplessly.

Noel smiled. It was time for him to teach Rose about nobility.

It took him a few hours to explain everything. If people heard about it, they would be confused and angry at the same time.

Most people never traveled out of their cities. So, the only place they knew was the city they lived in.

If Noel gave them a different point of view, they would be confused and even pitied the people that got oppressed by the nobles.

So, it was better to talk about it without any ears around.

The more Rose knew about what was happening behind the scene, the more serious her expression became.

She might have learned from some rumors when working in the Demon Relief Squad. But it was truly beyond her imagination.

Luke Ardagan had taught Noel a lot of things, including the darkness in the nobility, so that Noel could handle the family well when he succeeded in his position.

And this time, Rose had to learn it as well since she was going to be his secretary that would handle most of his affairs.

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Two days later.

Noel and Rose finally reached their destination, the Silica Valley.

This was where the chain of sadness began. Noel had to make it look like he had died and the Demon Relief Squad had to mourn for him.

However, Noel had finally returned once again to settle everything.

He already had a mission for a new medal. It was a very controversial medal since he could learn one's affection, but this would be beneficial for him in the long run. He just had to be careful not to use it against the people he loved since sometimes ignorance was bliss.

With this thought in mind, Noel said, "Let's enter the city."

"Yes." Rose nodded.

They rode straight to the gate. As expected, the city was asking for its purpose and a lot of other things.

After the attack from the Supreme Devil Organization, the defense became pretty tight.

Since they had no intention of harming them, they just followed their procedure to enter the city.

It took them thirty minutes before they finally entered the fortress.

"Alright. Let's split up for the time being." Noel looked at Rose. "I'll be bringing the horses to the inn. You'll be the one to inform our arrival to the Water Lord."

"I understand. Though, will he accept us? We might have helped him once, but it doesn't mean he will accept us easily because we come without notice."

"That's why I need you to give this." Noel took out a white envelope from his bag and handed it to Rose.

"What is this?"

"A weapon to make the Water Lord agree to meet us." Noel smirked.

"..." Rose nodded. It might look like Noel didn't trust her by not telling her about the content. But Rose saw it as Noel's way to protect her from knowing something that she shouldn't have.

In the end, Rose accepted the letter and went directly to the Water Lord to inform him about their arrival. Meanwhile, Noel went to the inn to prepare their rooms.

#### Chapter 496 A Deal

"Sir, you've got a guest." A middle-aged man entered the Water Lord's office. Due to the previous incident, the butler had changed into a newer one.

The Water Lord frowned and asked, "You might be new here, but you should know that I'm not accepting any guests easily, right?"

"Yes, Sir. However, she said that she is from the Demon Relief Squad and she wants me to give this to you." The middle-aged man handed the letter.

"Hmm?" The moment the butler mentioned the Demon Relief Squad, his expression turned grim. He immediately glanced at the letter and took a look at the content.

In that instant, he said, "I'm going to meet them tomorrow morning."

"Understood. I shall tell her about it." The butler nodded and started walking away.

But before he left, the Water Lord added, "Also, tell them to have a nice rest tonight."

"Yes, Sir."

When the butler left, the Water Lord looked at the ceiling as if he was overwhelmed by the content of the letter. He leaned on the chair and muttered, "Now I finally understand what happened back then."

Rose was also surprised by how easily the Water Lord agreed to the meeting. It seemed that Noel had predicted everything.

She was wondering what kind of letter he had given her. At first, she thought it would be Noel revealing his identity, but there shouldn't be any matter left between Noel and the Water Lord.

Even though he helped him tremendously, it didn't change the fact that Noel had just done so according to his role as a member of the Demon Relief Squad.

Unfortunately, she couldn't get the answer.

Obviously, Noel kept it a secret until the next day when they met the Water Lord.

...

The next day.

They finally arrived at the Water Lord's office.

The three of them sat in front of each other. The Water Lord had a calm expression while observing the other two, especially Noel.

"Water Lord..." Rose opened her mouth to melt the awkward atmosphere. "I believe this is the first time we meet officially like this. I'm Rose. The reason why I'm here is for..."

Before Rose finished her words, the Water Lord waved his hand as if asking her to stop talking. He continued, "I know. I'm more surprised by the fact that I have been deceived by a kid... right, Noel Ardagan?"

Rose's body shook as she turned to Noel, realizing that the content of the letter was actually his introduction.

However, her doubt was quickly resolved when the Water Lord handed them back the letter. "Still, how do you know that I need your help?"

Rose was confused and took a peek at the letter.

'I know you need help with your current project. I have the ability you need.'

She didn't find anything that could give away Noel's identity other than the fact that the one sending the message was a part of the Demon Relief Squad.

Noel shrugged. "It's simple. The moment you see me that favorably the instant you know about my purification ability, I know that you need my ability. I don't know what kind of project you have, but I'm sure that I'm the only one you know that has the purification ability."

"..." The Water Lord narrowed his eyes for a moment before giving up. "I can finally understand why your name is Ardagan. To be honest, I underestimated you."

"Well, thanks."

"Before I ask for your help, I want to know about your price."

[Mission: The Valley Master's Interest.]

[Description: The Valley Master requires your ability for his project. Help him.]

[Reward: Affection Medal.]

[Penalty: None.]

Noel shook his head. "I don't need any reward. Besides, I'm pretty sure you're already aware of my request."

"I guess so." The Water Lord nodded his head. Noel only had one request. He always wanted to re-establish his family.

The Water Lord closed his eyes for a moment before nodding his head. "Alright. I can help you with that."

Noel nodded.

"Wait a minute. If you don't know about what kind of project he is doing, how do you know we can fit it into our schedule? We have limited time, so..." Rose frowned.

Instead of Noel, the Water Lord was the one to answer that question.

"Don't worry. It won't take longer than a week. I can assure you that." The Water Lord waved his hand. "In addition, I'll give you another reward. I know that you don't want anything, but I think you want to know about this information."

"Hoh?" Noel narrowed his eyes, wondering what kind of information he needed.

The Water Lord smiled. "It seems that you're under a lot of stress against the Supreme Devil Organization."

"..." Noel and Rose became serious in that instant. Their gazes felt like they suspected him of being one of the people from the Supreme Devil Organization.

But he dispelled their doubts by saying, "I have been investigating the Tower Association after that attack. Although it's only the beginning, I have found a few suspects."

On the one hand, the fact that the Supreme Devil Organization had some spies in the Tower Association was a big thing, and their Demon Banner Army needed it. On the other hand, this was the Tower Association's matter, not the Demon Banner Army.

Even if he gave them the information, he should be the one to solve this problem.

Still, it meant a lot for Noel since he planned to fight against the Supreme Devil Organization and the royal family.

So, Noel agreed without hesitation. "Alright. It's a deal."

"Great." The Water Lord smiled. "I know that you're on a tight schedule, so let's not waste any more seconds and start."

Noel nodded. "Alright. How about her?"

The Water Lord glanced at Rose for a moment before asking Noel, "Are you going to be responsible for her?"

"Yes," Noel answered without hesitation, showing his stance.

The Water Lord immediately stood up and led them to another place. He actually led them to the garden inside the castle, where he worked on his project.

It was separated by a giant double door.

With anticipation in their hearts, they saw the Water Lord open the gate.

"Welcome."

Chapter 497 The Seed Of Molecule

"Welcome."

Noel and Rose finally entered the room where the Water Lord experimented. The room was spacious with a few tanks around it.

Some were filled to the brim, some only contained some liquid. The colors of the liquid also varied.

There were some smaller containers, from a gallon to a small tube. On the opposite side of the room, they could see a huge stone table where he experimented with the water.

The Water Lord led them to that table and offered them some seats.

"Please sit down. I'm going to bring some samples first, along with the chalk." The Water Lord immediately walked away, only to return with a chalkboard filled with some drawings and explanations.

It was too complicated for Rose and Noel, so they wondered what the Water Lord wanted to say.



"Before helping me with my experiment, you have to know the basics of what you're working for." The Water Lord put down two small glasses, one filled with water and one filled with a green liquid.

"These two are different liquids, as you can see from their colors. The first one is water and the other one is Herimone Poison extracted from the Herimone Snake.

"When I was young, I traveled to all corners of the kingdom and learned a lot. At one point, I actually came to a certain note, saying that the water is actually formed by something smaller."

The Water Lord raised chalk and said, "Take a look at this chalk. I have 'one' chalk in my hand, right?"

Noel and Rose nodded in agreement. Then, the Water Lord scooped a bit of the water and let it stay on his palm. "How about this? Can I call this one water?"

They shook their heads. "Well, it's the difference between tangible and intangible..."

"Yes, that's true. But..." The Water Lord took out another glass, this time, full of oil. "This is the vegetable oil that you're familiar with. I'll pour this oil into this cup of water. What do you think will happen? Will they fuse?"

"Hmm? Yes?" Noel tilted his head in confusion. He remembered that the poison would fuse together with the water like what plagued this town not long ago.

But to his surprise, the water and the oil didn't fuse with each other.

"Hmm? It didn't..."

"Yes." The Valley Master nodded. "They don't mix. Then..."

The Valley Master grabbed another cup of water and poured it on the poison. At first, the water remained clear, but as time passed, the water became more polluted, showing the fusion process.

"Why is the first cup not mixed while the water in the second cup mixes with the poison? I'm not very sure myself either. But when I received that note saying that the water is actually made of something smaller.

"That's when I got the idea. What if the water is composed of particles... something smaller than particles where we can actually divide that water and call it one water, two 'waters,' three 'waters,' and so on..."

The Valley Master pointed at the image of a cup of water on the board. The cup of water was actually divided into three categories: A, B, and C.

"This is my hypothesis. I believe that liquid is composed of something smaller than particles. I don't have the name for it yet, but let's assume there are three different things inside that water.

"Then, there should be another three different things inside that water..." The Valley Master pointed at the drawing of the oil cup and the poison cup.

The oil was divided into three called: X, Y, and Z. Meanwhile, the poison was also divided into three but with different naming: D, E, and F.

"Let's take a look at these nine... let's call them particles for the time being. These nine particles are the ones that determine whether they can combine or not."

The Valley Master was trying to explain his research, not knowing whether this was the correct answer or not. But since he was experimenting with everything, he could only go forward until he reached the answer.

"In the first cup, I believe that these A, B, and C are not compatible with the X, Y, and Z in the oil cup. Those particles can't fuse with each other. On the other hand, the water is compatible with the poison.

"Hence, they fuse and create AD, BE, and CF. Well, I don't know if there are three different types of things inside the water or whether those are the right combinations.

"However, one thing is for sure. That note is right. There is actually something smaller than particles.

"And now, I want to actually know about the particles that make up the water and everything else. The scope of the study is a bit too big, so I'll limit it to the water right now.

"My hypothesis is that there are things that are incompatible and things that are compatible. So, there can be a partial fusion as well."

Noel was confused by the explanation. He understood what he wanted to do, but he didn't see why his ability worked.

"So, what do you want me to do?" Noel asked.

"That's where your abilities come in." The Water Lord smirked playfully. "I believe that your purification ability is to let the water revert to its original form. Of course, the only thing that can allow such a process is Time Ability.

"However, your ability rests in your Ice Element. I assume that this purification ability breaks apart the smaller particles and reattaches them to form the original waters. After that, it destroys the other particles aside from the water.

"That's the only explanation I had when you purified the lake. So, by taking advantage of your ability, I can prove those particles and get closer to what kind of smaller particles the water has.

"It will be a huge breakthrough in human history... So, I need your help to purify the water in all kinds of liquid.

"Of course, you are allowed to refuse a certain liquid when you realize that it's too potent and might harm your body. What do you think?"

Chapter 498 Experiment

"What do you think?"

The condition was good. Since he had the right to refuse, he could certainly avoid long lasting injury because of venom or something else.

At the same time, he could also see a portion of the goal of this research. "If you succeed in this experiment, I'm afraid that it's like opening a huge door..."

"Exactly." The Water Lord smiled. "I won't lie to you. If I succeed in this experiment, my name will surely go down in history. And I promise that I won't forget about your assistance.

"Though, I might not be the first one to find it. After all, this research starts with a note..."

Noel looked down, contemplating for a moment. As the Water Lord said, if he succeeded, there would be a whole new world opened to them.

They might be able to solve a problem with the liquid in case someone who had purification ability was present.

It could also aid the mixing liquid whether in the form of a war weapon or household utility.

His name certainly would go down in history. But Noel was more curious about the paper instead about this research.

"I have a few questions. Just answer the one you can answer." Noel raised one finger. "First question, where did you find that note?"

"I think this is already a public secret. Do you know what lies outside the border?"

"Demons?"

"No. A limitless possibility." The Water Lord shook his head. "Everyone already knows about this little secret that everyone thinks it's a fairy tale. Humans once conquered the whole world. Only when the demons came did they perish.

"However, the civilizations didn't perish completely. Some still remain, and that note is one of them."

"!!!" Noel widened his eyes in shock. "Do you mean..."

"Yeah. I believe that the past humans have actually gone beyond what we currently have. And I'm just trying to rediscover a portion of the secret." The Water Lord smiled.

"I see." Noel thought for a moment and said, "Alright. I can help you with this experiment. Having the right to refuse is big as well, so I don't have any reason to reject your proposal."

"Then, we have a deal?" The Water Lord smirked excitedly, feeling that there would be a huge breakthrough soon.

The Water Lord and Noel shook each other's hand while Rose didn't know what to say about this cooperation.

It was clear that the success of this task would be a huge help for Noel. But Noel had forgotten something.

"Still, I believe it's not the time for you to show your real identity..." Rose added, concerned about Noel's safety.

The Water Lord seemed to have expected it and nodded. "Don't worry. I understand that. In fact, I don't desire his downfall either."

"Hmm?" Rose narrowed her eyes, feeling something off from that statement.

Looking at her confused expression, the Water Lord explained a bit of his intention.

"Whatever I'm doing right now, it doesn't change the fact that I have been interested in the heir of the Ardagan Family." The Water Lord turned to Noel. "Your father is a great man. Even I have heard his good name.

"And his son is as talented if not more talented than him. Since I don't have any grudge against your father, I might as well help his son.

"Even though the royal family doesn't like you, I can see that you are trying to gather a lot of outside help to re-establish your family. So, I'm simply acting as one of them... I wish to see another Count Ardagan, one that is strong and loves his people."

The Water Lord was implying indirectly that he also loved his people like Luke Ardagan. So, he wanted to help Noel, believing he would do the same thing as his father.

Noel and Rose still felt a hidden intention behind his statement, but that wasn't necessary for the time being.

Noel waved his hand to stop Rose from asking another question. Then, he said, "I understand. Let's work together."

The Water Lord and Noel finally reached an agreement.

Since Noel had decided and the Water Lord had given enough explanations, Rose finally stopped reminding or interfering with the decision.

Because of the agreement, Noel and Rose decided to stay inside the castle. The Water Lord even offered the best treatment he could give.

Before they started working, Noel would be training his body, making sure he didn't slack off just because he had something to do.

Rose also followed him while the Water Lord prepared for the research of that day.

From the morning to the afternoon, they focused on the research.

Noel would be purifying a lot of liquid, from poison to weird chemicals. It was a lot of work, and Noel didn't understand most of the things the Water Lord wrote down.

He wasn't someone who worked in this area after all, so he didn't have to understand all this. Still, he was also a bit curious as to what kind of liquid they would become after the purification.

Sometimes, the water level went down as if everything had just evaporated into thin air, leaving only a small portion of water. In fact, the liquid might only be composed of that amount of water.

The Water Lord also continued on with his work, trying to get whatever he could find during Noel's stay.

He made a lot of progress as he said previously. After all, his explanation of Noel's ability was correct. What he was searching for was none other than the molecules.

Although Noel wouldn't be with him by the time he found it, it didn't change the fact that the biggest contributor to this experiment was Noel.

He swore that he would add Noel's name when someone wanted to publicize his achievement. It would surely give good publicity for Noel, who wanted to rebuild his family.

Time went by so quickly. Without them noticing, Noel had stayed for eight days and the work had been completed.

Noel and Rose were standing in front of the castle's gate, ready for their departure. The Water Lord was seeing them off as a friend.

"Thank you for helping me with this research. It truly means a lot to me." The Water Lord extended his hand.

"Yeah. It's truly a fruitful week." Noel nodded while shaking his hand.

"If you ever visit this place again, I will welcome you greatly."

"Haha, the next time I visit you is probably the day you get the medal for your achievement." Noel smiled. "Good luck with your work."

#### Chapter 499 Burial

After finishing their work, Noel and Rose immediately made their way to the next destination. They didn't have a lot of time, so they increased their pace.

Rose's village was located east of the Silica Valley. It took them five days to finally reach this village.

The location was so remote that it was surprising that Rose even came to the Demon Banner Army.

They had to get slightly into the forest to find this village.

When they arrived, they could only see ruined buildings everywhere. The wooden houses had crumbled, leaving only three houses that still managed to stand.

There were scorched marks all over the rubbles. Noel could also see dried blood here and there.

From the number of houses and the size of the village, he predicted there used to be more than sixty people living in this place.

"It was quite surprising that Rose managed to flee from this place. The way it was destroyed, she shouldn't have been able to escape." Noel muttered inwardly while closing his eyes for a moment.

Rose looked at this familiar landscape. She had never stepped foot in this village anymore after that incident.

She had sworn that she would avenge them before she could face them again.



Now that the person responsible for this massacre had died, she could finally return to this place.

The emotions were mixed in her heart, making her a bit weak. Her feet were giving up and her hands were shaking.

She had a hard time calming her heart down. Meanwhile, Noel didn't plan to say anything because this was her village and her matter.

She should be the one to settle everything in order to move on.

Since Noel was here, Rose tried to make a warm smile so that Noel wasn't worried about her. She started walking while saying, "Do you know..."

When he heard her voice, Noel opened his eyes and followed her, listening to what she had to say.

"When the raid happened..." Rose pointed at the center of the village. "Everyone was supposed to rush to the center so that they could resist or something.

"However, my father was the village chief. He understood what was happening far faster than anyone else. Instead of sending me to the city center before directing us to another safe location, my father sent me away immediately.

"It was hard. I was told to run even though I didn't want to. In the end, my mother decided to accompany me so that I could run away with her, leaving all the villagers behind.

"However, my mother ended up leaving me soon because of the animal in the forest. So, I ran away... I kept running away, thinking I should stay alive for as long as possible so that I didn't disappoint them."

Rose's breath started to get rough. She couldn't help but remember what had happened in the past.

...

More than a decade ago.

"Haa..."

"Ha..."

Rose was panting while running through the bushes. She kept looking back as if the enemies still hunted her down.

The jungle was the home of many beasts, so she kept hearing roars and howls here and there. So, the Supreme Devil Organization wasn't the only one to hunt her.

She hadn't eaten for two days and her legs were giving up. She didn't know whether she still had the strength to do this anymore.

But at that time, Rose still hadn't given up, knowing that her father was fending off the enemies so that she could stay alive.

This was where her senses were trained. She got used to the sounds near her, keeping her awake.

The thick woods and bushes made her eyes stay vigilant and sharp like an eagle's. If she wanted to stay alive, she had to avoid all those creatures that wanted to prey upon her.

She had gone through many sleepless nights and endured extreme hunger.

Still, Rose didn't stop running until she eventually came out of the forest, albeit from the opposite direction of the entrance. That was why it took her a long time to escape from the forest.

Rose roamed around the area until eventually she reached a town where she ended up joining the Demon Banner Army.

When Noel heard all that, he couldn't help but feel a bit ashamed. Rose was telling him about the story. Of course, he sympathized with her, but there was something that caught his attention.

"Hmm?" Rose noticed the change in Noel's expression and asked, "What's wrong?"

"No...nothing." Noel shook his head helplessly, not wanting to hurt Rose in this situation.

"Come on. What's wrong? You're the one who gives me this opportunity, so I don't want you to be uncomfortable because you're accompanying me." Rose furrowed her eyebrows, concerned about Noel's condition.

Noel looked at her face for a bit, still hesitant about asking this question. But seeing Rose's adamant face, he ended up asking for it. "I know this is very rude and I don't want to hurt you like this..."

Noel paused for a moment, making Rose a bit impatient since she didn't know what was inside Noel's head. She wanted to ask again, but Noel uttered his question. "Don't you think it's strange that your father sent you away without hesitation when you were supposed to gather in the center of this village?"

"Huh?" Rose widened her eyes in surprise. She didn't expect that Noel would be questioning her father.

The purpose of this trip was to pay respect to Rose's parents and allow her to move on. But Noel questioned her father, showing a sign of disrespect.

Still, it was Rose who demanded him to speak. Noel couldn't be blamed either since he wanted to remain silent if not for her demand.

And Rose couldn't help but feel something was amiss with the situation now that Noel had reminded him about it.

"Now that I think about it, you're correct..." Rose fell into deep thought.

The atmosphere became awkward as Rose kept thinking about it. To Noel's surprise, Rose actually said, "Before asking about it, I think we should go to my house first. If possible, I'd like to find everyone's remains so that I can bury them properly."

#### Chapter 500 Hidden

Rose started going around the village, finding all the bones and clothes lying on the ground. She picked them up and gathered them in one place. She didn't know whose remains they were, so she gathered all of them in the center so that they could build a simple memorial for all of them.

Unfortunately, there was no telling which one was her father. Rose felt dejected, but there was nothing she could do.

She ended up gathering everyone in that one tomb.

Noel was helping her by digging the soil for all of them, cutting some wood, and bringing some stones for the grave.

While paying his respect, Noel couldn't help but recall what happened in his parents' execution.

...

One year ago.

"Father, Mother!" Noel was running into the city's plaza while being chased by the soldiers the Royal Family had dispatched.

There was a wooden platform in the plaza. They only erected it when they were about to execute a dangerous criminal.

But this time, the ones kneeling on the platform were none other than his parents. Their appearance wasn't a mess. There were some wrinkles on their clothes, but they didn't seem to have been tortured.

The townspeople surrounded the platform. Most of them had sad expressions as if they didn't want this to happen. Some couldn't even bear to watch the execution.

It showed a lot about what kind of leader Luke Ardagan was. He was kind to people and his people loved him.

Yet, it didn't change his fate. He had to be executed.

Their hands and neck had been locked by wooden stocks and their feet had been chained to the platform, preventing them from escaping.

There were two executioners, both wielding a sharp glaive.

They were wearing a helmet, so no one could see their faces.

"Father, Mother!" Noel kept screaming while pushing away the people, trying to reach his parents.

But because the people were slowing him down, he got caught by the soldiers.

One of the soldiers grabbed his head and slammed his body to the ground while the other pinned his ankles down.

The people were confused at the moment and when they saw Noel, the sole heir of the Ardagan Family, they couldn't help but slightly back away as if trying to let Noel go through the mass.

Unfortunately, with the soldiers pinning him down, he couldn't do anything but watch his parents executed.

"Start!"

"Father, Mother!" Noel struggled to set him free but to no avail. To his surprise, his parents didn't say anything to him.

They only looked at him and gave their best smiles as the sharp blades sliced their necks.

This was the first time Noel felt the excruciating pain in his heart. He had been doing everything at his own pace, so he enjoyed most of his life.

But with the death of his parents, he finally realized how helpless he was without them. The memories about them resurfaced in his mind, making him realize he hadn't done anything for them before they left her.

All the sadness, pain, and regret were swelling in his heart.

There wasn't a single word exchanged between them. The only thing Noel realized was the soldiers were dragging him away so that they could send him to the Demon Banner Army.

Back then, he didn't know that those people were not his parents. The reason why they didn't say anything was to avoid making people notice the change in their voices. They might have the same face, but it was with the help of cosmetics. And cosmetics didn't change their voices.

So, Noel still recognized them as his parents at that time.

Now that he knew everything, he started to wonder what was happening at that time. Where were his parents? What were they doing?

In a sense, Noel had some similarities with Rose. He couldn't help but take a few peeks at her face to see what kind of emotion she had and what she wanted to do after this.

Though, he soon stopped and focused on the burial.

As soon as they finished giving them a proper burial, Rose took a deep breath as if trying to push away all the matters in the past.

Noel gave her the water bottle, which she needed the most to calm her down.

Rose made a wry smile and felt grateful that Noel was here. Although it would mean she had shown her weak side to Noel, it didn't change the fact that Noel was all the support she needed to go through all this.

"Thank you, Noel. For everything you've done..." Rose looked at the houses around before saying, "I'm going to guide you to my house. What you said earlier made some sense..."

"This village is quite remote, so there should be no reason for the Supreme Devil Organization to attack us.

"And when the raid happened, the people should go to the center like usual. Yet, my father sent me away as if he knew what was happening.

"It felt like my father knew about something that the villagers didn't." Rose gave the last glance at the furthest house from them. "If we want to know about the secret, the only way to do it is to go to my house..."

Noel nodded. He didn't say anything since there was no need for an additional emotion invoked by Noel's voice.

Rose guided Noel to the house while trying to remember every detail of when she lived with her parents.

It felt like her father possessed something the Supreme Devil Organization wanted.

"I can't help but wonder now..." Rose frowned as if she remembered something. "My father had never told me anything about the outside world. However, his body was muscular enough even though he was always inside the house, handling all kinds of matters.

"I never saw him training his body. Now that I had tried to look back, it felt like my father knew some manners, unlike normal villagers..."

"And I think I know what my father is hiding..."