

## S vs Rebirth 511

### Chapter 511 Next Plan

"I see..." Noel closed his eyes for a moment, thinking about the report. "What do you think about my grandfather, Dimitri? I believe you haven't seen him when you are still with my parents..."

"Yes." Dimitri nodded with a serious expression. He pondered first before giving his opinion. "With all due respect, I believe that your grandfather is extremely powerful. Even after getting some time to ponder, I don't think I have the ability to defeat him."

"Hoh? Interesting." Noel narrowed his eyes while Rose gasped. She truly couldn't comprehend this family.

Noel's father was the richest man in the kingdom and had an extremely wide network. Meanwhile, his grandfather was someone strong enough to defeat the 'Shadow,' the man who was feared as the number one assassin.

There was also Noel's ancestor and his relationship with the Greenwood Kingdom's royal family.

Yet, despite all this, Noel's parents still decided to get executed. Noel hadn't told her about his uncle, who was once a part of the Demon Banner Army.

Noel had all the big shots gathered in his family, but he was actually reduced to this state. It was simply unbelievable.

Contrary to her disbelief, Noel actually kept his calm as if he had predicted it. "Well, he was a former Royal Spirit ian..."

"A former Royal Spirit ian..." Rose was speechless and ended up giving the knowledge she had about it. "The Greenwood Kingdom's power came from their Spirit ians. They had a lot of trade with the Tower Association from our kingdom. And a Royal Spirit ian meant he was the head of all Spirit ians in the kingdom."

"And if we're talking about the former Royal Spirit ian, he was the king's tutor..." Rose shook her head helplessly, realizing the true identity of Noel's grandfather. At the same time, she could understand why his grandfather couldn't help him openly despite having all that power.

After all, the moment he made his move, it could be seen as a declaration of war, which would implicate a lot of people.

Noel glanced at Rose for a moment before returning to Dimitri as if asking him about his opinion.

"Well, I do have some knowledge about him, but even after retiring, it seems that he maintains his sharpness.

"Although I don't know what he has done, I can feel that my life will be over if I make a move against him. I believe he has set some traps without me noticing."

To make a trap without Dimitri's knowledge would put his strength slightly lower than the commander if not equal.

But it was to be expected from the Royal Spirit ian.

"I see..." Noel pinched the bridge of his nose. "If that's the case, I don't have to worry about my grandfather's side. I know that with his strength and influence, he can do his part without anyone's knowledge.

"And in the worst case scenario, the Greenwood Kingdom will notice it and find me to acknowledge my ancestry. Or their king will probably try to bind me by making me marry into the royal family. After all, being the grandson of the former Royal Spirit ian gave me enough status to marry into the royal family."

Noel paused for a moment. "In that case, I'm going to tell you about our next plan. Right now, we are planning to head to Styxcanva as well as Tamworth. In Styxcanva, I'm planning to get some knowledge about the Spirits, especially something related to my abilities.

"As for Tamworth, I'm there to meet my father's former subordinate. Then to the nearby town to meet Countess Christina.

"During that time, I have a few tasks for you..." Noel looked at Dimitri. "I don't need you to fight for me right now. But I want you to help me with the surveillance. The moment I enter Styxcanva, I'm afraid the Third Prince will notice me.

"So, I want you to check anyone that is trying to follow me. You don't have to report to me if that person only follows me, but the moment he leaves to report to the Third Prince, I need you to inform me about it.

"Then, I might have to rely on your stealth ability to help me convince the Countess. But for now, I'm going to meet her first to see whether negotiation is possible or not.

"And one more thing... I think it's quite far away from here, but I have thought about a certain Master Blacksmith. I want you to go there and show him some runes.

"I know his skill, and I'm sure you're already aware of his identity since you've been following me from the beginning."

"..." Dimitri fell silent for a moment as if he was shocked that Noel actually wanted to recruit a Master Blacksmith. Then again, with those runes, there was no way a Master Blacksmith wouldn't be so interested.

Noel had even helped his family, so the Master Blacksmith might end up helping him with some conditions.

"I understand. I'll help you with this. There is some distance from that place to Styxcanva, but I think it's possible to finish this matter before you arrive at Styxcanva."

Dimitri nodded in agreement. It seemed that Dimitri was a bit easy to convince as long as it didn't involve fighting, Noel thought. Though, Noel also understood the reason.

Noel couldn't re-establish his family if he didn't have enough strength. So, it was better to focus on getting stronger while giving the rest to Dimitri.

Noel then turned to Rose. "I want you to buy some iron swords for me. They don't need to be special."

"Are you going to give them to the kids?" Rose asked.

"Yeah."

"I know that you're adept at runes, but can you engrave them?"

"Of course not. I'm going to leave them to Dimitri as practice swords." Noel winked playfully at Dimitri.

Obviously, the practice swords were for the kids, but this was also Noel's way of convincing the Master Blacksmith.

He wanted to let the Master Blacksmith experience the wonder of the runes.

#### Chapter 512 The Commander

It felt like they had finished discussing their plans. However, there seemed to be another surprise the fort had to offer.

Suddenly, Dimitri turned around, glancing at the outside. Rose followed that action, feeling the same thing.

"We have a company..." Dimitri muttered. "I am going to leave right now, Young Master. I don't know what he is planning to do, but seeing how he has been helping you this whole time, I think it's fine to leave you for the time being."

After saying those words, Dimitri disappeared, not waiting for Noel's reply.

Rose was still confused. Although she could feel the presence, she couldn't determine the person.

So, Rose looked at Noel with a serious expression. "I am going to open the door. Please stay inside for the time being."

Noel nodded and moved toward the drawer as if he was trying to hide. It didn't take too long before that presence arrived at their door.

\*Knock!\*

\*Knock!\*

It was surprising for the person to arrive precisely at their room. This was the first time they had slept in this inn, so unless the other party had a good information network that allowed him to locate them, it was impossible to find them.

Rose gulped down. She opened the door cautiously.

"Y—" But before she could ask for their purpose, she ended up getting shocked. Her body became tense and she couldn't help but blurt out the visitor's identity.

"C-Commander!"

"!!!"

The people inside the room were shocked by his identity. Meanwhile, the commander maintained his poker face as if he had predicted their reaction.

Instead of explaining things, he asked, "Can I enter?"

Rose was hesitant. But she also remembered what Dimitri had said earlier.

Before she could answer, Noel had walked to the front door while saying, "Please come in."

"..." Rose glanced at Noel for a second before opening the door wide, so the commander could enter.

This was the first time she could meet the commander privately. But considering the Ardagan Family's influence, it was possible that the commander was also an ally.

So, she decided to let Noel take over.

After the commander entered and Rose closed the door, Noel politely bowed to him and said, "It's a pleasure to meet you, Commander Oscar. How can I help you?"

"I know you are in this fort after hearing the report. Actually, I am here to tell you about three things that you might or might not be aware of." The commander glanced at Rose, who seemed to be trying to prepare something to drink. He waved his hand as if telling her not to prepare one since he wanted to leave as soon as he was done.

"I understand. I don't think the commander would like to waste his precious time, so let's cut to the chase."

"It's great to talk with someone with that mindset. Alright then." The commander raised his fingers. "The first one is related to the Supreme Devil Organization.

"After getting that suspicion and report, we have deemed that the Demon Relief Squad is in a terrible position.

"Hence, your operation will be extremely limited since we don't want to lose our precious knights.

"I have told Clara about this, but I'm going to tell you too since you are on their watch list. Are you aware of your identity?"

Noel nodded with a darkened expression. "Yes. In addition to the recent events, I believe I know why they are putting me on their watch list."

"In that case, it will make this simpler. From now on, you should get ready to be ambushed by the Supreme Devil Organization. Septa has been investigating the Supreme Devil Organization, but I don't think we can know the exact time of the ambush.

"So, you can only rely on yourself to fend them off. Do you understand?"

"Yes." Noel already knew that his life was in danger after hearing about his uncle from Dimitri. So, he had been planning his trip carefully. And with Dimitri on his side, he doubted an ambush would work. But he would still need to consider the worst case scenario.

"Then, the second warning is still about the Supreme Devil Organization. After a series of investigations, we have found out that the enemies are trying to use the Demons to fight us.

"In other words, they are going to wear us down by using the demons before dealing a huge blow to us.

"I don't have any doubt that the Demon Banner Army will be able to hold on, but I'm afraid the damage will be quite great.

"And I wonder if you have some information about the Supreme Devil Organization that can help us find out about their next plan?"

Noel closed his eyes for a moment. He could understand why the commander was suspicious of him.

After all, the place he went, whether it was a normal village or a fort under the Water Lord, everything was related to the Supreme Devil Organization. And he ended up messing with their plan.

On the one hand, he decided half of their destinations. On the other hand, he truly had no idea the situation would be like that.

But he had already noticed something. He remembered Anna was able to predict the future correctly.

He believed Anna could either see the future or experience it herself. Unfortunately, he had no way or intention to investigate the truth like how Anna respected his boundary by not asking anything about the system.

However, it didn't change the fact that he could gain some information from Anna's prediction. And if he could somehow trigger Ardagan into giving him a mission related to the Supreme Devil Organization, it would be perfect.

Though, he had to make sure he wouldn't become one of the suspects.

'Wait a minute. What if I used my parents' former influence to create an alibi? And it is possible to trigger a mission from Ardagan by using a special circumstance...

'If I play this right, I might be able to get more information about my parents and the organization.'

Noel was shocked as he had just found a loophole.

Chapter 513 Suspicion

Noel looked down for a moment, confusing the commander.

"Hmm? What's wrong? Do you have some information about them?" The commander furrowed his eyebrows.

Noel didn't answer him immediately as if he was considering something.

"I don't have the information. But I might have a way to find some clues..." Noel paused in the middle as if he was expecting something from the commander.

As if seeing through his intention, the commander narrowed his eyes and said, "It seems you want my cooperation..."



"Exactly. Nonetheless, you should be aware of how wide the Ardagan Family's network is, right?"

The commander couldn't help but acknowledge that fact as well. Although Noel's father had been executed, there was no telling whether Noel still knew some relations or not.

This could be a bluff from Noel, but there was nothing wrong if he cooperated with him. It was true that his uncle might be one of the people from the Supreme Devil Organization, but his father was not.

In fact, Luke Ardagan was one of the people who didn't mind helping people who got affected by the organization.

So, Noel might be inheriting Luke's determination and want to continue his father's work to fight the organization.

The commander fell into deep thought. He had to consider the pros and cons first before deciding whether he would cooperate with him or not.

After three minutes, the commander agreed. "Alright. You have my cooperation. So, what do you want?"

"Maybe I can help you investigate them. Though, I hope that the commander can understand my circumstances as well. If I'm too focused on them, I will have no time to get stronger. So..."

The commander's expression was darkened. "So, you want me to tell you about the Supreme Devil Organization information around your destination?"

"Yes." Noel nodded with a smile.

The commander pinched the bridge of his nose. It would be easy to just order Noel around. But as he said, Noel would waste too much time doing this mission.

It would affect his training speed. He couldn't help but remember Noel's state when he first came here.

He was a powerless guy without basic knowledge about spirits. Yet, one and a half year later, his power was at the peak of Spirit Wielder. If he allowed Noel to continue to grow his strength at this pace, he would be able to reach the Spirit Master soon and eventually become the youngest Spirit Grandmaster.

He pinched the bridge of his nose before asking, "Where are you going?"

"I am planning to go to Styxcanva and the area around it, like visiting Countess Christina."

The commander looked down, recalling the information he had about that area. After a while, the commander told him. "There is a suspicion around Tamworth. I am thinking about sending people over there.

"Since you are nearby, I want you to visit that place as well and check whether the suspicion is true or not. Considering you have limited time to travel this time, you only need to look around for three days.

"After that, whether you find anything or not, you are going to send that report directly to me. Understood?"

The moment he finished his words, Noel received a notification from Ardagan.

[Mission: Commander Investigation Request.]

[Description: The City Lord has a shady deal with the Brothel. Get the information related to the shady dealing, including their involvement with the Supreme Devil Organization.]

[Reward: ???]

[Penalty: Your Life.]

Noel wanted to be happy when he found out he could trick the system into giving him a mission.

But he couldn't help but be shocked the moment he saw the description as well as the penalty.

'What? The City Lord and the Brothel? But if I'm not wrong, the Brothel should be related to my father's subordinate, who is skilled in getting information.

'Don't tell me, my father's subordinate has defected to the Supreme Devil Organization? Or has he become one of them from the start?

'Is there any connection between him and the execution of my parents? Maybe he betrayed them?'

Noel couldn't help but feel shocked. He couldn't answer his doubt, but it didn't change the fact that the suspicion was lingering in his heart.

And the fact that the penalty of this mission was his life meant the opponent this time was strong enough to take his life away. If he didn't play his card right, he might lose his life here.

Though, there was one more possibility for such a penalty. It was Ardagan giving a penalty out of spite.

But Ardagan never cared about him tricking the system. In fact, he was thankful because Ardagan could perfect the system he had. So, there was no reason why Ardagan would act this way.

So, he concluded that it was the former.

'It seems that the situation is far more dangerous than he originally thought. But I have promised Dimitri to go there, so I'll personally check it myself, I guess. If I'm not taking this risk, I'm afraid that I'll escape whenever things go rough.

'I am going to challenge myself here and make sure to overcome this challenge.'

With this determination in his heart, Noel bowed. "I understand. I accept the mission. Since I am on their watch list now, it's better to confront them directly instead of letting them approach me and end up sneaking on me."

"Alright then." The commander nodded. "I will entrust this mission to you. However, you have to remember that Septa's subordinates will also come to that city. If you ever encounter a problem, you can reach out to them to get the necessary reinforcement."

"I understand. Thank you for your concern." Noel was glad that the commander didn't just leave him to die. He should know that this mission was a bit dangerous, so he mentioned Septa's squad to remind him that they could take over if Noel decided to stop.

Noel then looked at the commander as if asking him for the third thing he wanted to talk about.

The commander's expression darkened the moment he saw this gaze. It seemed the third topic was something hard to discuss even for him.

#### Chapter 514 Agreement

The commander was hesitant for a while before finally giving him the information.

"The third matter might be the most important one." The commander took a deep breath and continued, "I am afraid that you are going to be ambushed sooner or later. The one who will ambush you is none other than your uncle."

"My uncle?" Noel acted surprised as if he didn't know anything about this.

"Yeah. It seems your father hasn't told you anything. Your uncle was a Devil Bishop back when he was a double agent in the Demon Banner Army. But I'm afraid that your uncle has reached a whole new level..."

"What? My uncle is a Devil Saint?" Noel gasped and took a step back.

"Yeah, I don't know about his current strength, but I don't think it's less than mine. I have been wondering whether I have to inform you or not..."

"At first, I wanted to tell you after you became a Spirit Master, but..."

Noel was the one continuing that sentence as a sign of protest. "I'm thankful for your consideration, but I believe knowing this situation sooner is better. Although I don't know if I have the power to resist or not, it's clear that I will be able to make some preparation.

"I believe you are afraid that after knowing I am in danger, I'll be rushing to increase my strength, making my foundation unstable, right?"

The commander nodded. "Yeah. Sometimes, it's better to be ignorant, but I have deemed that your character and temperament is enough to handle this information.

"As you can see, there are two reasons why I have decided to take you in. As long as you are in the Demon Banner Army, I can observe you to see whether you have a connection with the Supreme Devil Organization or not.

"I have been supporting you so that I can see you slip up, but I guess my worry is unnecessary. So, I'd like to apologize for investigating you."

Noel shook his head. "I can understand why you did that. You don't have to apologize. And what is important here is that you have deemed me to be trustworthy, right?"

"Yes." Oscar acknowledged it. "As for the second reason, I think you are already aware of it. It's related to your father's connection. Since there is an outsider here, I won't disclose too much."

Noel paused for a moment. "Now that we have confirmed the reasons, could you continue, Commander?"

"Yeah. There are two things your uncle has before he reveals his true identity. The first one is something related to your father. Even I don't know about it. Though, it's said to be an important secret to increasing one's strength.

"I'm afraid it's related to your ancestry since it is considered an ancient item. As for the second one, it's a map."

"A map?" Noel frowned. He didn't know what kind of map to be this important.

"The map is about the layout of the Demon Banner Army. In other words, that map is enough for him to strike us with full force, taking us down one by one."

"What?!" Noel gasped. It turned out the map was the most important secret of the Demon Banner Army.

If Anna had been here, she would have realized the reason why the Supreme Devil Organization could deliver a huge blow to the Demon Banner Army.

Noel also knew the importance of that map and asked, "So, you..."

"No, it's impossible to retrieve the map. Even if we get it back, they might have copied it. So, the secret should be known by many people, and it will be easy to attack us.

"That's why I have been asking Septa to go around to find their trace. We have to find their trace and try to protect them."

Noel could understand how the enemies managed to attack a few vital areas related or not related to the Demon Banner Army.

They knew their locations and simply picked a spot that could be taken over.

"The Demon Relief Squad has been in their way ever since you join us, so I couldn't help but suspect you at first. Though, I have confirmed that everything is just a coincidence. If it's just a coincidence, then I hope it can stay that way, so I can rely on you a lot. But for now, I'll just give you a task and wait for the situation unfolds."

"I see..." Noel closed his eyes for a moment. He finally understood the bigger picture a little bit better. With this information, he might have to adjust some of his future plans.

"Aside from it being a coincidence, I don't mind helping you, Commander Oscar."

"What do you want?"

"Contribution Points. I only need that. Though, if you don't mind, I'd like to exchange some with Demon Crystals."

"I see..." The commander contemplated. "I can agree to that. In fact, all the attacks might be related to you because of your uncle. Since you want to be a problem magnet for us, it's convenient for me. I can station people around you to ambush them. But as I said earlier, I'm going to wait and see first. As soon as I confirm that you are around them, I'm going to invest a lot in you."

"We have a deal." Noel nodded.

"Alright then. I have told you everything. If I want to give you a message, there will be someone from the Demon Banner Army that will approach you."

"Understood."

The commander seemed to have no hesitation to leave after getting what he wanted.

There was one more reason why Noel dared to accept this deal. It was because he had visited the Silica Valley before this.

And in that valley, he had helped the Water Lord, which gave him a new medal.

Affection Medal.

This was what he currently needed. He couldn't help but open the window as if seeing the commander off from his room.

At the same time, he changed his medal to see whether the commander was on his side or not.

And the result surprised him.

"This is..."

Chapter 515 Affection Medal

"This is..."

Name: Oscar Mainwort

Affection: Neutral (54/100)

Description: Someone who has a degree of trust in you, but it can change easily as long as he gets something concrete enough to destroy your reputation.

Noel widened his eyes for two reasons. The first one was the Affection Medal, while the second one was because of the commander's gaze.

"!!!" The commander actually stopped in his tracks and turned around as if he was sensing the gaze that was more than a simple look.

Their gazes intertwined for a second before Noel hurriedly bowed to him as if he was properly seeing him off.

'How?' Noel was asking himself. He didn't know why the commander turned around and how he noticed it.



Luckily, the commander didn't bother to look into it as he simply walked away. But Noel noticed a change in the Affection Medal.

Name: Oscar Mainwort

Affection: Neutral (50/100)

Description: Someone who has a degree of trust in you, but it can change easily as long as he gets something concrete enough to destroy your reputation.

The commander might be suspicious of him with that last gaze, so the affection went down.

But this affection medal scared him in one way or another.

He glanced at Rose in shock, asking, "Did you notice something earlier?"

"Why did you release your Spiritual Energy?" Rose's answer came in the form of another question.

At the same time, Noel forgot that he still put on his Affection Medal and couldn't help but peek at Rose.

Name: Rose

Affection: Supportive (89/100)

Description: She will support your decision and believe in your judgment.

"..." Noel immediately closed his eyes. Although he was still shaken, he didn't forget Rose was still there this time. He pinched the bridge of his nose as if he was trying to buy some time and make Rose think he was confused.

The Affection Medal was far scarier than he originally expected.

There were four important details that Noel managed to figure out in an instant. The first would be the name.

He could see that Rose didn't have a family name, while the commander had one. Although he wasn't a noble, the commander was strong enough to get a family name bestowed upon him. So, it wasn't that weird to have one.

But Noel's focus wasn't there. Noel was far scared by the fact that he got to know someone's true name without asking for it.

On the one hand, he could see whether someone was lying about their name or not. They might be royalty or a noble that was hiding their identity or an assassin that might assassinate him.

Still, it didn't change the fact that he could see their name. At that time, his trust would be greatly shaken and he might end up calling them by their true name out of reflex. So, that kind of slip-up would cost him a lot. There was a benefit of knowing the true name, but it also had its own weakness. So, Noel had to be extremely careful, especially when he was angry, drunk, or emotionally unstable.

Then the second detail was their affection. He didn't know how many kinds of affection one could have. He didn't believe that Rose's Supportive Affection would be similar to his future wife with the same value of affection.

In other words, the number beside the affection was to measure how big their affection was, not a grade to divide how affectionate they were.

Although he had prepared to use this, it was still scary to know that his wife in the future actually wanted to murder him.

What if his loving parents, who had been shielding and supporting him from behind actually hated him and wanted him to die brutally? He would be crushed by the extreme pain coming from that revelation.

So, this Affection Medal was dangerous in one way or another.

Of course, he couldn't deny the fact that it was useful to know who was his enemy and who was not. But if he relied on this too much, he would lose his own affection because what he trusted was the number the Affection Medal provided, not what he had seen himself.

Noel was shaken by the fact that his entire self would change because of this Affection Medal. He wanted to seal this medal forever, but he didn't have the heart to do it because of the benefits.

The third detail was the description. On the one hand, the description was good since he could understand the degree of that number. It literally explained the number. On the other hand, there was a possibility that the description was messed up.

What if someone actually told him she loved him, but it was to the point she would kill every woman that came near him whether they loved him or not?

This kind of unexpected description might give a scar on his heart. After all, depending on the description, he might have to kill that person.

So, Noel didn't know if he would go insane or not when he used this medal. If people knew about it, they could simply say to just check their number and act based on it without getting affected emotionally, but they had never experienced something like this. The emotion was far more unstable than they thought. This was what he had learned after experiencing a lot of things in the past one and a half years.

Noel took a deep breath as he had come to the last detail. Rose mentioned it earlier and it was probably the reason why the commander felt suspicious to the point his point went down.

That fluctuation of Spiritual Energy could mean a lot of things. At the same time, there was something that he got from this information.

He had been changing his medal depending on the occasion. If he wanted to train, he used the Newbie Medal, which would increase his learning speed. If he wanted to fight, he would use the Peerless Medal or the Demon Hunter Medal according to his need.

And the fact that the commander noticed him meant changing the medal would make his Spiritual Energy fluctuate, causing him to be unable to use it carelessly anymore.

#### Chapter 516 Sorting His Thoughts

'This is not good...' Noel muttered inwardly. 'If changing the medal causes a fluctuation of Spiritual Energy, it means I can only change my medal in a place where no one can find me. Or at least, I have to use it when the people who observe me are far enough or not sensitive enough. Even better if I can camouflage it...

'I guess I can understand the reason why Spiritual Energy fluctuates. Ardagan has warned me before that he gives missions, medals, and abilities depending on the amount of my Spiritual Energy.

'In other words, each medal has taken its own portion of Spiritual Energy in my reserve. Changing the medal means I have to take out the first medal and put on the second one. That transition is the cause of the fluctuation.'

Noel figured out the reason with the information he had pretty easily. But this also concerned him because he had to prepare for everything before he made himself look suspicious.

Just like when he wanted to meet his father's former subordinate, he had to use the Affection Medal before they met so that he didn't realize he was doing something.

Though, at that time, he was forced to see everyone's affection, like Rose's or even Dimitri's.

This action might cloud his judgment at that time. So, Noel had to control this Affection Medal strictly and avoid abusing it despite its overwhelming benefit.

Noel took a deep breath before stretching his body. He also emitted a little bit of Spiritual Energy as a cover while he was changing his medal back.

This way, the fluctuation of Spiritual Energy might still be there, but the others would think Noel was trying to do something.

This action startled Rose a little bit, but Noel soon retracted his Spiritual Energy and hurriedly let out a long sigh.

"What's wrong, Noel?" Rose was concerned because Noel hadn't said anything after she answered his question.

Noel only made an awkward smile as if he apologized for releasing his Spiritual Energy. He said, "Sorry, I'm fine."

Rose frowned. She misunderstood Noel's action, thinking Noel was being affected by something that ended up making him leak his Spiritual Energy. But she didn't know what kind of thing would have such an effect. Poison? Curse? Illness?

Rose wanted to ask Noel's condition, but the latter seemed to have no intention of answering her.

So, she ultimately dropped the matter in her head and asked another question. "Do you need something? I can get it for you."

Noel shook his head. "No, I'm fine."

He walked to the bed and sat on it as if he was tired. He looked at Rose and asked, "Did I release my Spiritual Energy earlier?"

"Yes." Rose nodded, confirming it without hesitation.

"I see. Thanks." Noel made a small smile and tried to change the topic. "Anyway, since we have received another mission from the commander, we have to be quick this time. There is no change of plan as of now, but depending on the situation that we might encounter there, I might have to completely scrap our original plan.

"There is a possibility that I don't have time to explain everything to you, so be prepared to improvise."

"I understand." Rose nodded but still felt a bit hesitant because she was worried about his condition.

Unfortunately for her, Noel didn't have any intention of solving her doubt at the moment.

He had a lot of things to think about because of this new Affection Medal. It truly could change how he viewed the world.

Even if he didn't use it, he might think about using it, believing that as long as he had it, he could see through anyone's intention.

So, he had to sort out his feelings and thoughts so that he didn't make a mistake in the future. But he was just a human, so he knew he was bound to make a mistake one day.

Hence, he also prepared for the action he had to take if he made that mistake.

Because it required a lot of focus, Noel ended up faking it by going to bed.

"Good night, Rose."

"..." Rose didn't know how to respond when she saw Noel acting like a sick person. She wanted to help him, but Noel felt so distant to the point she had to leave him alone in this room. "Alright. Good night. If you need anything, just inform me."

"Yeah. Thank you."

Rose thought he was sleeping, but Noel used every second of that night to think about his future and the restriction he placed on the Affection Medal.

He would still use the medal, but he would try not to use it on his allies easily.

As expected, the Affection Medal was bigger than Noel expected. There were countless possibilities that would cause harm to him, so a single night wasn't enough to sort his thoughts.

But to make Rose less worried, he acted like usual, as if telling her that a good night's sleep was all he needed to recover.

In the morning, Noel gave the complete task to Dimitri. He wanted him to invite a Master Blacksmith as well as give the practice swords to the kids. This was Noel's present to the kids while using them to convince a Master Blacksmith. It was truly two birds with one stone situation.

After that, Noel returned to the administration office. He didn't want to meet the commander or the Demon Barrier Squad's captain.

He went there to exchange his contribution points with some money and Demon Crystals to absorb along the way.

Rose also wanted to get stronger so that she could continue to follow him, so she got some more Demon Crystals. Although she should be increasing her abilities and strength instead of the Spiritual Energy Reserve, Noel didn't say anything because the runes would gnaw a bit of her reserve.

After making their preparation, Noel and Rose finally left the fort, heading to their new destination, Styxcanva.

Chapter 517 Styxcanva

"So, this is the city of knowledge, Styxcanva," Noel muttered while looking up.

They had just entered the city after proving their identity next to the gate. The city was different from anything he had seen.

The city was extremely clean despite having a lot of people roaming around. The economy seemed to be booming.

However, it felt a bit warmer due to the white color the city had. In fact, the city was far too white in his opinion. The building might not have the same structure, but they were all painted white, including the roof.

The road was made of white stone, paved in an organized way that let them shine.

Noel could see a few scholars moving around. The scholars came in various degrees. There was a pure scholar who never cultivated their power and focused on theoretical work about so many things.

The second type of scholar was a battle scholar. They were mostly Spirit ians from the Tower Association. They were the ones with the highest population in this city, considering Styxcanva was a city directly under the Greatest Scholar, the White ian, Light Lord. He was one of the elders of the Tower Association, whose position was similar to the Water Lord.

There were a few more types, but Noel was focusing on the second type. They might be numerous in this city, but he actually wanted to know about something. And only they had the answer.

"So, what should we do now?" Noel glanced at Rose. She was the one suggesting this place, so she should know more about this city.

"We have four options here. First, the street will always be busy until evening. There are various items you can trade here.

"Although the number of goods can't be compared to the city of trade, the quality is quite good. There is numerous research conducted in this city after all, so they obviously want a lot of things.

"If you don't want to look around, we can go to an inn. I have gone to this city once with Jonathan, so I know a good inn for us to stay.

"Or you can go sightseeing with me. You don't need to buy or do anything. Just looking at the city alone should give you some inspiration. We can go to the academy if you want.



"Last but not least..." Rose paused for a moment and pointed at the huge tower standing in the middle of the town. "We can go to the Tower of Knowledge. That tower is basically the biggest library in this kingdom.

"If you have any inquiries, you should go there and get some book recommendations. Although you have to deposit some money as insurance, it's still a good opportunity. What do you think?"

Noel looked down, contemplating. He was quite interested in the last two options: the tower and the academy.

So, Noel couldn't help but ask, "What's the deal with the academy?"

"Well, this academy is made by six elders from the Tower Association, including the Light Lord. Even though the Light Lord is the one governing the territory, it doesn't change the fact that this city is heavily guarded because the other lords have put a lot of investment into it, including the biggest library.

"There should be three lords at a time who guard this city. So, even the organization doesn't dare to strike this town that easily.

"As for the academy itself, it's basically what you know about the academy, except for the fact that it produces all kinds of scholars.

"There are many influences who love to wait in front of their gates to recruit newly graduated students. Though, most students ended up working with the Tower Association.

"If you visit there, you might be able to get some treatment and know about their facility. After all, it's not easy to be one of the Zero Squad members in the Demon Banner Army, especially the Demon Relief Squad. We have a lot of prestige, you know.

"Do you want to visit this place? There is also a benefit you can get from the academy. You can negotiate with the students to guide you to the library. As you know, with the number of books in the library, it'll be hard for us to find a single book that we want.

"We can hire a student who specializes in that field of study to bring us the book of their recommendation."

Noel closed his eyes for a moment, thinking. It was truly a wonderful idea. Due to the tower being the biggest library in the kingdom and it being open to the public, he believed there would be a lot of people visiting it.

So, they might want a guide to lessen their burden.

Noel nodded his head. "In that case, let's go to the inn first to drop off our luggage. We'll get something to eat before heading to the academy."

"Alright, then."

Rose guided him to the inn near the academy. Although the fee was a bit expensive, it was the best inn in the town. So, it was worth it. And they had exchanged a lot of money with their Contribution Points, so they didn't worry too much about their money.

After dropping off their luggage, they used the inn's restaurant to get something to eat before heading to the academy.

To Noel's surprise, the academy was bigger than he originally thought. It turned out the academy was actually the building that separated the tower from the rest of the town.

With that size, the academy was split into a few categories, so they could go to one school of thought to find a person.

This academy could be said to be the biggest academy in the kingdom, far better than the royal academy. Though, their purpose was different.

Noel never went to the royal academy since his family could afford a tutor and his father also wanted to teach him himself.

So, Noel didn't know anything about the academy's life. He was a bit excited to see what was inside the academy.

#### Chapter 518 Academy

Noel entered the academy with a calm expression. He saw a lot of students wearing uniforms. The uniform consisted of a white shirt and brown pants for the male and a knee-length brown skirt for the female. They also wore a robe that had numbers on them, implying something.

He didn't care much about them since he only wanted to go around the academy while finding a guide for the library.

Though, his appearance, especially his masquerade, piqued many people's interest as they wondered what kind of man was visiting this time.

Noel ignored their gazes while walking toward the administration office to get their permission to go around the academy.

"Hello, we would like to enter the academy and find a guide to visit the tower." Rose smiled, facing the young staff.

The young staff nodded politely as if they had been trained to be courteous to everyone since there might be a noble hiding their identity.

"Thank you for visiting El-Alanca Academy. I'll be processing your permission. May I know your name or any proof of your identity?"

At first, Noel didn't want to use their identity, but Rose told him that they could speed up the process with their identity, so Noel agreed with it.

Noel and Rose took out their badges while activating them, showing him the badges were real.

"Iadre, Demon Relief Squad's Zero Squad."

"Rose, Demon Relief Squad's Zero Squad."

"Zero Squad..." The staff seemed to be shaken a bit. Although they weren't nobility, they could easily marry into one of the noble households. So, their status was similar to that of a noble child. And if they waited a bit longer, they could gain the Vice Captain or Captain status, so Noel and Rose were a big shot in the staff's eyes.

He politely nodded and received their badges. "I will be processing it immediately. It won't take more than five minutes. Please wait here."

Before he left, he asked one question. "May I know what kind of guide you're looking for? As you already know, we have several sectors, so I can inform you of the building you need to visit for the specific field."

The staff might look calm, but his voice cracked a bit. Still, he opened the door and let them enter the waiting room. It wasn't extravagant, but it was enough to get a relaxing feeling.

"Hmm..." Rose glanced at Noel. She only accompanied him here, so she didn't know what kind of knowledge he wanted.

"I need two guides at separate times. The first topic is about the Spirit."

"Spirit? Is it battle-related Spirit? If that's the case, you might want to visit the Spirit ian Sector."

"No, no. What I want is information about the Spirit itself. Their origin, their potential, and so on."

The staff thought for a moment. "In that case, you should visit the Spirit Research Academy. They are the ones who specialize in Spirit Research, from the origin to the applications."

"If you go to the administration office in that academy, the staff should be able to guide you to the specific class where you can find the people that will be interested in being your guide."

"I see." Noel nodded with a serious expression. "Then, the second topic is related to Spiritual Energy."

"If that's the case, my suggestion is to visit the academy that I previously mentioned, the Spirit ian Academy."

"Alright. Thank you." Noel smiled and took a step back as the staff immediately processed his permission.

It didn't take three minutes before the staff returned with two papers and two badges. The paper stated a similar thing with only their name being the difference. Meanwhile, the badge was made of silver.

"You should be able to find a guide easily with this badge. We issue three badges: bronze, silver, and gold. Bronze is for a normal visitor, silver is for a distinguished guest, and gold is for a person with extraordinary status."

"Alright. Thank you for the help. Where should we go to reach those two buildings?"

"If you go through the hallway, you will find the gate leading to the inner area of the academy. There should be a few guides waiting for you there. As long as you state your purpose, they'll immediately help you."

Noel had learned everything he needed to know, so he nodded his head and started walking with Rose.

The corridor was next to the office, so they only needed to cross it. It seemed there were a lot of rooms above the corridors, which should be the outer part of the academy.

Unfortunately, Noel didn't have any intention of looking around too much since it would be just a waste of time.

He and Rose kept walking until they found the gate. As the staff said, there were a few staff who were standing by to guide the people who wanted to enter the academy.

One of them immediately walked to them as soon as he noticed their presence. He bowed to them and made a gentle smile.

"Hello, Sir and Miss. Welcome to El-Alanca Academy. My name is Sharlack. How can I help you?"

Noel took out his badge and said, "Yeah, can I trouble you to lead us to the Spirit Research Academy and Spirit ian Academy? I'm looking for a guide to go to the tower."

"!!!" The guy was surprised by the silver badge. He immediately nodded his head and asked, "May I borrow your badge? I can bring you to the class and handle all the necessary tasks for you."

"Sure." Noel handed him his badge.

"This way please." Without hesitation, the guy hurriedly guided them.

This was when Rose and Noel felt the gap in their technology.

When they passed through the gate to the inner academy, they were shocked by the sight of new applications of Spiritual Energy, Demon Crystals, and Spirit.

"Ho..." Noel was amused as he couldn't help but smile as new knowledge actually interested him.

Chapter 519 Moving Pathstone

"Ho..."

On the right side, Noel could actually see a hallway that was far different from anything he had ever seen.

This hallway was separated into three parts. The left and right part was made of normal stone where people could walk on them. There were even some papers stuck on the wall as if showing someone's research.

But the middle part amused Noel. It was made of a huge block of stone that kept moving automatically with Spiritual Energy.

"This is..." Noel muttered while approaching this weird, moving stone.

"This is one of the technologies we have found from the demon territory. We call this one 'Moving Pathstone,' The principle is pretty simple.

"We link up a few big smooth stones together and make them move in one direction. And at the end, they will go down and move backward. Repeat the process and you will get this Moving Pathstone."

"I see. It's pretty unique." Noel nodded with a serious expression.

"But isn't this a waste of resources? Why don't people just walk normally?" Rose asked while tilting her head.

The guide wanted to say something, but Noel stopped her. "I don't think you should think that way. If we take a look around us..."

Noel pointed his finger at the two people in front of them. They were the scholars who were actually discussing something while they were moving forward. Because their bodies weren't moving, they had an easier time focusing.

"Take a look at those two scholars. They are moving toward their destination while discussing something. Without this Moving Pathstone, they can't do it because it's hard to read while walking.

"Of course, I don't say that this is entirely good. For us, who train our bodies, we are required to move a lot or our bodies will become lazy and it will cause a lot of problems to our muscles and so on.

"So, I can say that it suits the scholars but not us. So, it's good but not applicable everywhere." Noel explained carefully.

"I see." Rose nodded in understanding.

Meanwhile, the guide seemed to feel relieved from Noel's understanding. Many people didn't know the usage and completely mocked them.

Rose was a better case where she only questioned the usage. So, the guide felt a bit better when there was someone who could see through their use.

On the opposite side of the hall was actually another Moving Pathstone, but in their direction. Because the school was made to surround the tower, this hall was made circular.

Meanwhile, in the front, they could see a huge garden that separated the academy with the tower. If they wanted to get inside the tower, they simply needed to walk forward from the hall. But because they wanted to go to the academy, they ended up moving along with the rest of the people.

This was the first time Noel used the Moving Pathstone. He couldn't help but enjoy it.

He only had to stand on top of them while using the time to take a look at the garden. It seemed the garden was used as a meeting between scholars.

"By the way, where are the training facilities for the scholars?" Noel asked the guide.

"Although most of our scholars are non-combat, we do have a few schools that have combat lessons. The training is usually held in the respective school. Each school has its own training area inside, which is not visible to most people.

"But most of the time, they conduct the training outside the town. We might prioritize safety, but it doesn't mean we're going to deprive our people of combat. After all, we have bandits, demons, and other threats that we might encounter outside this town."



Noel nodded in understanding while looking at the garden. There were many scholars discussing their projects outside. Some of them were very young and some of them were quite old.

Eventually, they reached their first destination, the Spirit Research Academy.

The hallway that connected the academy was similar to the one they entered. There was nothing they could see from it.

The guide led them to the administration office and immediately took care of the process, telling the staff about their purpose.

As soon as they got permission, they immediately walked away from the office and headed to the second floor. This was where the academy began to look more interesting.

There were numerous scholars chatting in the hallway. They all became curious when they saw Noel and Rose.

For the scholars, guiding these people had two purposes. If they were from a wealthy family, they could earn some pocket money since people often gave a hefty tip.

If these people came from a powerful figure, it was their chance to make a connection. There was a chance that they could be sponsored by them. After all, this type of people always had a way of procuring rare material with their connection.

Though, there was a possibility that these people came from commoners. In this case, they usually didn't get anything.

As sad as it looked, it was the reality.

So, they were wondering which type Noel and Rose belonged to.

'Are they...'

'Who knows? They don't seem to be commoners. Just look at that masquerade, it seems he doesn't want to show us his face.'

'But if you look at his body and posture, I think he is pretty handsome.'

The people were whispering to each other. Noel and Rose ignored them completely as they only had to follow their guide.

Eventually, they reached a classroom.

The guide introduced this classroom. "Welcome, Sir and Miss. This is the Origin Spirit Classroom. I have received permission from the staff that we can enter the classroom to introduce ourselves and our purpose to get a guide. I'm going to ask the teacher first."

"Is it alright for us to intrude on their class like this?"

"There are some teachers who are strict about this, but most of them are not for many reasons."

"I see. Please."

Chapter 520 Guide

The guide entered the classroom first while Noel and Rose waited outside.

Noel took a peek inside and found around fifty people in one class. The teacher was a man in his early thirties. He had a calm and gentle expression, so it didn't seem there would be any restriction inside.

After a while, the guide came out and informed him. "We can enter for five minutes."

"Is there a way to get a student guide easily?"

"You just have to introduce yourself and explain the thing you're searching for."

"I see. Let's enter then." Noel nodded and entered the room.

In that instant, everyone's gaze was locked on them. Noel shook the teacher's hand first.

"Pardon my intrusion."

"Welcome to my class. Please don't hesitate to tell them about your purpose."

"I understand." After receiving the confirmation, Noel immediately turned around as the guide took out the badge, handing it back to him.

The students frowned when they saw the silver badge, showing that Noel wasn't an ordinary person.

"My name is ladre, a member of Demon Relief Squad's Zero Squad. This is my comrade, Rose.

"We are here to visit the tower to find anything related to the spirits. I often wonder where the spirits come from... The demons... And why are they even residing in our bodies...

"So, if you are interested, please raise your hand." Noel made a brief introduction before stepping back.

"I see. This is quite an interesting topic. We don't get someone like you very often." The teacher smiled.  
"Even I feel like going."

"Haha, no one is stopping you from helping me." Noel winked his right eye playfully.

"Hahaha. Who can teach these kids if I'm not here," the teacher made a light joke while they were waiting for the students' responses?

Surprisingly, there were three people that raised their hands.

"You can pick one of them, Sir." The guide whispered.

Noel thought there would only be one person that wanted to help him, but it seemed the topic was more popular than he thought.

But there was something even more shocking. Another person raised his hand and couldn't help but ask, "Sorry, Sir. Before volunteering, I'd like to ask you a question."

The teacher furrowed his eyebrows since it would waste their time and be a bit rude to this person.

However, Noel didn't know their custom, so he nodded his head. "Sure."

"What do you think about spirits?"

Noel already had an answer long ago. Even the spirits had told him about it.

Without hesitation, Noel answered, "The spirits are like us, humans. The only difference is that we're controlling our bodies while the spirits are residing in ours."

"!!!" This statement stunned the people. Even the teacher couldn't help but become more interested in Noel as if he wanted to guide Noel personally.

But the student who asked the question earlier had made his move first. "Please take me, Sir. You don't have to give me anything. Just by looking at you, I feel like I can know something more about spirits."

"Hmm..." Noel narrowed his eyes, observing this person. He had spiky red hair and slanted eyes. His body was average, but there was something he noticed about this person. He had a Spirit Mark on the side of his neck.

He himself had already received the spirit's recognition, while the other three didn't have one. Only one who had talked with the spirits knew what they meant to them.

So, Noel agreed. "Alright. You will come with me then. As for the schedule..." Noel glanced at the guide.

"You are free to set the schedule, Sir. Though, please don't interfere with the current class if possible."

"When is this class over?" Noel asked.

"In two and a half hours." The teacher answered.

"I see." Noel looked down for a moment. On the one hand, he was curious about the knowledge. On the other hand, reading with a tired body wouldn't be as effective.

So, he decided. "How about tomorrow morning? I've just come to this town, so I'm going to recover from my fatigue first so that it will be more effective."

The guy nodded without hesitation.

"Good. We'll meet in front of this academy then."

"Yes, Sir."

Noel was satisfied with the search and immediately thanked the teacher for giving the permission. He also apologized to the other students for taking their precious time before leaving the class.

It was quite surprising to see how well Noel conducted himself inside. It felt as if he was a noble.

But there was rarely a noble that wanted to become a part of the Demon Banner Army. Even if there was one, they were the other way around. They came from the Demon Banner Army first before becoming a noble.

So, it seemed that Noel was one of the rare nobles.

It was a big opportunity for them, albeit it was taken by someone who had acted rudely by asking a question.

After getting the first guide, they immediately moved toward the second academy, the Spirit ian Academy to find their second guide.

This time, the teacher was a bit strict, so they had to wait for fifteen minutes before the teacher allowed them to come in, albeit reluctantly.

Noel also got another guide here. She was actually a noble daughter, but because she was adept in and she was the second-born, it was clear that her option was either to become a scholar or get married off.

Though, Noel didn't care about it as he only needed her as a guide. After reaching an agreement, Noel left the academy. Of course, he didn't forget to leave a hefty tip for the guide.

It was a bountiful day since he had seen an amusing structure of the academy, from their unique technology to their unique class.

He couldn't help but wonder if it was possible to set up a smaller academy in his future territory, one that didn't care whether they were nobles or commoners. He just wanted to increase the people's academic levels.