

'Is he that rumored fallen noble?'

'Noel Ardagan...'

'How long can even a noble like him who never saw a battlefield last in this place?'

More than a hundred people glared at the blue-haired young man. Contempt, disgust, disappointment filled the atmosphere because no one ever bothered to hide it.

Noel had been exiled by the royal family and stripped of his title, so he was a commoner like them. At the same time, this fallen noble never had any training or fight a demon, making him far weaker than anyone in this place.

On the contrary, the person in question remained still as if their gaze never bothered him. In fact, he was lost in thought. 'What should I do in this training? If I do something useless in the training, I won't become strong enough to handle the demons when the time comes...'

Still, despite him being in the middle of the crowd, there were three people that stood out: a young man with blue hair who kept staring forward as though he didn't care about Noel, a muscular man who tilted his head in confusion, and a female with sharp gaze.

They felt different from the rest. Although he didn't know why, Noel could feel a different atmosphere around them.

While glancing back and forth to remember these people's faces, a middle-aged man entered the corner of his vision.

He climbed the small wooden platform so that everyone could see him and said, "Welcome to all 120 trainees. I shall be the instructor who will teach and evaluate you from now on."

"!!!" As soon as they heard his deep voice, everyone of them turned around and straightened their backs, looking at the instructor.

'Hmm?' The instructor narrowed his eyes since he was a bit pissed to see the trainees focusing on someone else instead of him. However, it didn't matter much to him as he observed everyone's face and noticed a few exceptional ones.

'I see some fine faces in here this time. Well, the most noticeable one is Alfred Starwood, the second genius of Starwood Family. I heard his talent is similar to his brother but failed to succeed the house just because he's the second son.' The instructor thought, assessing everyone.

As soon as he remembered their faces, he raised his voice. "As you may already know, the Demon Banner Army is the best way to gain money and achievement. If you can rack up achievement, money shall follow. You can even become a knight or even a noble if your contribution is recognized.

"However, the benefits come with a great risk. You can easily die in this place. Hence, I will assess your ability first..." The instructor smiled, took off his vest, and rolled his sleeves.

This action confused the trainees, but the instructor didn't even bother to wait for them to realize. He jumped to the ground and started running around the field.magic

The field where they gathered was quite spacious. One lap was equal to 500 meters.

"Everyone, run!"

The moment the instructor said those words, all trainees immediately followed him.

Even Noel started running while gritting his teeth, thinking, 'As expected, my muscle is in pain.'

His reaction was slower than all of them due to his body, but he soon picked up his pace while remembering the training he had yesterday. 'I can run like yesterday.'

"..." Since all the trainees had followed him, a small grin appeared on his face as he excitedly shouted, "Ah. You're all so boring. Are you trying to run like that when you're chased by a demon?!"

Without hesitation, he increased his speed by two times, leaving everyone in the dust.

The expressions on their faces immediately changed. They didn't know what would happen if they failed this small test, so they gritted their teeth and ran as quick as possible, trying to match the instructor's pace.

"Good!! You're doing good!" The instructor laughed.

The blue-haired man, Alfred, maintained his calm breath while increasing his pace. He thought, 'This is nothing. I have to keep up the pace.'

Contrary to his focus, everyone's attention turned to one person at the very back. It was Noel who ran at a snail pace.

'Kh.' Noel used all his power to muster the strength to run. However, the stabbing and burning sensation kept spreading around his legs and arms, making him unable to focus.

'They're getting farther away... I should have trained my body previously. Can I even survive fighting the demon? There's no way they will wait for me to get stronger first before dispatching me! But...'

Noel couldn't help but remember the leisure life he had in the past. The delicious food always came at the same time every day, the maid would help him put on his clothes, and everything he needed would be provided by his father.

Compared to that life, this place was hell. No one could take care of him anymore. If he didn't have strength, he would die. If he died, he could let go of this grudge since nothing mattered anymore.

The feeling crawled inside his heart, pressuring him to give up.

However, a memory flashed in his mind. It was the symbol on his hand and the blue screen that gave him the possibility.

'Ah...' Noel let out a long sigh.

His sigh didn't escape the instructor's eyes as his expression changed as if he was asking, 'Has he given up?'

The answer came in the form of an expression. A smile replaced it... A smile that contained his determination and resolve.

'I am pathetic... Despite having thrown away the shackle of the past, I still let it influence my mind.' Noel clenched his hands and raised his head. 'I'm so damn, pathetic. Compared to my parents who threw away everything just to allow me to live for a bit longer... This is nothing.'

He started looking forward and running with all his strength, ignoring all the pains in his muscle. Even if he tore it today, he believed someone could heal it. In that case, he didn't need to hold back and kept running.

'I won't be a good for nothing son anymore.'

A smile couldn't help but appear on the instructor's face when he saw those eyes filled with determination.