

S vs Rebirth 61

Chapter 61 Sorry

"This is... Supreme Devil Organization."

Anna nodded. "Knock him out!"

Without hesitation, the black-clothed man struck his head, knocking Hagar out. It was as if he had a huge hatred to this guy.

"Supreme Devil Organization... an evil organization that has been terrorized the kingdom for a long time. Whichever territory you are in, you have the right to capture or kill any members of the Supreme Devil Organization. Even in this fort... and you, Azgar, have been determined as the accomplices. Even if I kill you right now, there is no one who will judge me."

"Wa-wait! Please listen to me. I don't have any—"

Anna ignored his pleas as she kicked him to the wall while saying, "Get Noel here."

Although hesitant, the black-clothed man received the order and disappeared to bring Noel here.

"Big Brother Noel?"

"Big Brother Noel helped us?"

The children's expression brightened. However, some of them soon lowered their heads, knowing that this started as a grudge between Azgar and Noel.

Eric also felt their sadness and doubt, so he smiled to them and asked, "What's wrong with you all? Haven't we been beaten up by those adults in the past? This much is nothing. Have you gotten so much comfortable with Big Brother Noel's help that you forget about it?"

Those who lowered their heads immediately looked at him as if they remembered the hardship they endured in the past.

Getting beaten was just daily life. They would never think much about it. And to think that they would actually doubt the man that had given them purposes in their lives and a means to change their lives for the better, they now felt guilty.

"This much is nothing." Eric made a big smile, assuring all of them.

Anna couldn't help but take a glance at these children, muttering, 'They're truly strong children.'

Only Erica came to her while groveling.

"We thank you for your help, Miss Noble. We can't repay you for this help."

"Don't thank me... I won't be here if not for Noel." Anna shook her head calmly.

"Ann—" Azgar wanted to shout again after recovering from the pain, but Anna simply put her shoe on his mouth while putting enough force to pin his head on the wall, preventing him from making a fuss.

"Shut up. Don't call me with that filthy mouth of yours." Anna snorted.

The other children didn't know the relationship between Noel and Anna, so they were staring at her curiously.

However, before they had the courage to ask, Noel had come into the house.

"Big Brother No—" Erica, who was outside the room, was the first to see Noel, but she became hesitant when she saw Noel's eyes. They were cold and filled with killing intent. This was the first time she saw this side of him.

However, she also noticed Noel brought a bag and wooden swords.

Anna said, "You can kill him anytime you want. Because of his relationship with this evil organization, he can be executed by anyone."

Noel didn't respond to her. When he saw the conditions of the children, he was so furious that he could torture Azgar for a long time.

However, he knew that the longer he wasted his time on him, the longer the children had to wait to be treated.

Hence, for the first time in his life that he prioritized others' lives before him.

Azgar's face was pale, but Anna's shoe was still stuck on his mouth, so he couldn't even shout.

"Mhmm..."

"Hmtm..."

"Mmmm..."

He tried so hard to produce a sound but to no avail.

And Noel made a swift and precise swing, slicing Azgar's neck without hesitation. Despite this being the first time he killed a human, he had nothing to feel due to his anger.

Yet, the cold expression mellowed a bit when he turned to the children. He looked at their bruises, the blood on their clothes, their messy appearances, and even ripped clothes.

"Big Brother N—" Erica wanted to call him, but Noel was the first one to kneel on one knee.

His face filled with sorrow that she couldn't help but want to touch and comfort him. But Noel pulled back at the last moment while saying, "Sorry... Sorry that you had to endure all this because of me. It's better if we don't meet anymore."

"Big—"

Noel stopped her again by putting down the bag as well as the wooden swords. "There is enough food and water for three days as well as new sets of clothes. Your dance improves by leaps and bounds, so try swinging this sword while dancing. There is no form of swordsmanship, so you can explore it by yourself."

When she opened her mouth again, Noel stopped her by continuously saying, "Sorry... I'm truly sorry."

All the children were shocked by this side of Noel. His gentle and cheerful personality had vanished. He took all the blame into himself.

And before they could say "It was alright," Noel had walked away, leaving them.

Tears couldn't help but flow out of the corner of their eyes. They wanted to reach his back, but it felt so far. Before they realized it, Noel had disappeared.

Anna closed her eyes for a moment, remembering the deal they had.

"Anna Stargaze. Let's make a deal."

"Oh?" Anna widened her eyes in surprise.

"I want to kill him. Make it happen. You are a noble, so you have more influence than a fallen noble like me."

"And what can I get from this deal?" Anna asked with a sly smile.

"Ancient Demon Tree. When it wakes up, the Ancient Demon Tree will be severely weakened. We'll hunt them together and split the reward evenly."

"Deal." Anna agreed without hesitation.

While in remniscent, she was woken up by her assistant's voice.

"Miss..." The black-clothed man had returned and noticed the awkward atmosphere.

"Bring these two to the authority." Anna pointed at Azgar and Hagar. "I know that you doubt me... Why would I cooperate with him while knowing that he wants to kill me? The answer is simple. The Supreme Devil Organization and even the Ancient Demon Tree... why does he seem to know everything?"

"!!!" The black-clothed man widened his eyes upon the realization.

"That's right. I'm going to squeeze all his secrets first." She smirked evilly.

"I understand." The black-clothed man knew that Noel had many secrets. There might even be a person at high level that supported him by giving him this information. So, Anna wanted to get all his secrets first before killing him.

After receiving that answer, he dragged the two bodies out, leaving Anna with the children.

'It's finally done. It's so hard to fool him unless I act like an evil woman.' Anna thought while letting out a sigh.

Unbeknownst to them, the children next to her somehow glared at her with hostility as if they wanted to protect Noel from this evil woman.

Chapter 62 The Birth Of Sword Dancers

"Anyway, the situation has been solved. All of you can return now." Anna smiled at the children while assuring them that they were safe now.

However, the reply came in the form of hatred glares from all of them. They obviously listened to everything she said earlier.

To save them, Noel invited this evil woman who wanted to work him to death and personally kill him. For their safety, Noel gave the parting gifts and left them.

Just for a beating, Noel gave up so much for them, street kids who would die sooner or later.

They couldn't help but hate themselves and Anna who took advantage of the situation. Of course, they didn't know that Anna was acting. At the same time, Anna couldn't tell the real truth to them because they would tell Noel or others that this was a fake and she would face so much trouble in the future.

"Well, since all of you are fine now, it's time for me to leave." Anna had a wry smile as she left the house while thinking, 'This is not like what I imagined. Those kids look like they want to kill me. Did I just make more enemies by helping Noel? Why do I feel like more misunderstandings are created every time I act? I am so unlucky.'

Whether it was fortunate or unfortunate, Eric was the first to get up and woke everyone up with his voice. He made sure Anna had left the house before saying, "Alright, I know that you're sad and angry.

"But don't forget what Big Brother Noel did to us! He gave us a purpose in our lives... To us! A street kid that no one will cry for if we die.

"Do you know why Big Brother Noel left us? It's simple. We're simply too weak. If Big Brother Noel always needs to protect us, then there is no way we can repay him! This life will be no different than what we have right now.

"That's why... I know that you are angry, but use that emotion to motivate yourself. Just like what Big Brother said, 'If we keep begging and getting beaten, we'll continue to starve for who knows how many days.

'I know that we're bad at everything, but everyone was like that in the first place. But we still need to do it, our hundredth time dancing is better than our first time.'

"I'm sure that you know it already! That's why we need to pick up the sword and prove to Big Brother Noel that we can follow him. Our relationship with him started with a dance and ended with a sword. We'll use both of them to improve ourselves.

"In the future, we'll start our relationship again with both sword and dance! We'll fulfill our promise to dance a unique style that no one has ever seen before! This will be the Sword Dance that connects us to Big Brother Noel." Eric shouted, encouraging the rest of the children.

They couldn't help but look at Eric in awe. They realized they didn't think this through.

Some of them regretted they couldn't help Noel when he needed them the most when Noel had given them everything.

Erica bit her lips and grabbed the sword. "No matter how many times I'll fail, I'm going to prove it."

"I'm going too!" Bluhan gritted his teeth and reached for his own sword.

"I'll too."

"I..."

All the children inside that house took the arms, determined to repay Noel in the future.

Outside, Anna closed her eyes while smiling. She was leaning to the house's wall while listening to Eric's inspiring speech.

"Now that I think about it, even without my interference, Noel's talent would make that big guy envious. This situation must have happened in my past life too. And this speech gave birth to that group..."

"The dance group that had a unique sword style that no one had ever seen before, the Sword Dance. And those twins... will be called the Twin Sword Dancers."

"I want to believe that this is due to the kid's speech, but there are many more important talents that will bloom after meeting Noel. They have potential, but it seems their encounter with Noel is their turning point.

"As expected, Noel has that charm to gather those talented people. It's a waste to kill him. The only thing I can do right now is to solve the hatred between us." Anna smiled while walking away.

The next morning, Anna and Noel met again before the meditation training so that they could have a spar like the usual schedule.

But before they started, Anna asked, "So, what is your plan? When will the Ancient Demon Tree appear?"

"I don't know. I can give you the range... But we're going to hunt it together, so I'll just inform you when I'm going." Noel shook his head helplessly.

"Won't you just leave me here?"

"I am not like you, evil woman. I fulfill my promise." Noel snorted.

"Is that so? Hunting the Ancient Demon Tree together, eh? It's quite nice. I mean, its body can be sold for money... By the way, I can give you the demon crystal, but I want the part that protects the core."

"I know that you have some use for it, but this is not a bad deal." Noel agreed without hesitation.

"We sell the rest and split the money?"

"Yes."

"Then, what should I do with the individual mission?"

"The individual mission and the group mission, huh... Although it's said to be an individual mission, no one said that you can't take it together. We can simply take a similar mission."

"You don't want to be separated from me? Or do you like the food I made that much?" Anna smirked.

"No. It's just for the first one. I'm not going to cooperate with you for the other four individual missions."

"Eh?" Anna let out a long sigh.

'It's true that I can improve by cooperating with you, but I need other experiences. If I continue relying on you, I'm afraid that I'll owe too much that I'll need to forget my hatred,' Noel thought while glaring at her.

"What?" Anna tilted her head in confusion because Noel had been staring at her weirdly.

"No. Are you ready?" Noel raised his sword.

"Of course." Anna pointed her sword at Noel's neck while smiling as their clash had begun.

Chapter 63 Payback

Before the meditation training, Shale gathered all of them with a solemn face.

It seemed that some of them had realized that Azgar hadn't come to the training ground. So, this announcement must be related to him.

As soon as Shale stood in front of them, he opened his mouth. His tone was cold and his eyes released killing intent.

"I have an announcement. Azgar has been found to have a connection with the Supreme Devil Organization. I think this organization has been a common knowledge, but I'll explain it to you again.

"The Supreme Devil Organization is a group that believes in the Supreme Devil. What is the Supreme Devil? To put it simply, it is the ruler of the demons.

"I know that you're going to ask 'Is there a ruler for the demons who don't have much intelligence?'

"My answer is simple. There are no rulers of the demons. However, there were three existences in history that could be depicted as the ruler of the demons. They were so strong that they had that title.

"But that's not important right now, I'm going to talk about the Supreme Devil Organization a bit. What you need to know about them is that they have a tattoo of a skeleton with two red eyes and a sword planted on its head.

"The tattoo can be anywhere in their body, so it won't be easy to find them unless you strip them.

"If you meet a person with this tattoo, you're obliged to kill them! However, don't be blinded by this instruction. The reason is as I said earlier, you have no way to find them unless you strip them. If you happen to see this tattoo, you can kill them. But I need to remind you that you shouldn't abuse the tattoo too much.

"Men, don't use this suspicion to strip a woman because in most areas, there are laws that will punish you if you misuse it. Women, don't strip men to embarrass them. Just remember it! If you coincidentally find them, that's the time you should act.

"After the torture, we know that it's Azgar who lets him into the city. Anyway, remember this! You hear me?"

"Yes, Sir." All of them answered.

Meanwhile, Noel narrowed his eyes and realized that the simple rule could be easily abused. He could even be framed by those people.

However, this was where the Spirit Oath came in. He could easily prove his innocence with the help of the Spirit Oath, but it would be different if the people who had no Spirit Seal.

'No, this might also be the objective of the organization... By increasing their evil reputation, they can strike a deep fear to many. And if they are aiming for the demons, they must want this world to fall to chaos. That's why they use this terror to force the people to create this law and use it to create more confusions and terrors. The very law itself might be a flaw that the organization takes advantage of. No wonder they're that evil...'

Noel narrowed his eyes. Although he wanted to care about this organization, it didn't mean much in his eyes currently. He still had his original objectives, so he had no time to get involved in this matter.

"Anyway, now that we have lost one of the junior soldiers, we need to change the condition for a bit. The commander has told me that the pair will remain as it is, so I can't use my authority to recreate the three-person group system.

"Hence, I'll alter the current situation a bit." Shale raised one finger. "There will be one person to be left alone, but it's not fair to do all the missions and training alone! Hence, I'll help whoever wants to volunteer to be a one-man group.

"In other words, I'll guide you personally during the meditation, train your body intensely, and give you some personal advice when doing missions. Yes, the one who volunteer themselves will become my mentee."

"!!!" The people widened their eyes in shock, never expecting this kind of offer from Shale. It was clear that the moment they were chosen by Shale, their status would be elevated significantly.

Although Shale would only help them in mission and training, they didn't need his help if a fight broke out because they would be strong enough to defeat anyone.

Obviously, all the people were excited because they knew how strong Shale was... All, except two people: Noel and Anna.

Glancing at Anna, Noel asked with a nonchalant tone as if it wasn't an important question. "You don't seem to be interested in it. It seems that you are confident that your knowledge is more than him... especially after showing all that stuff. Your understanding is better than him, right?"

Anna's eyebrows twitched but she didn't say anything.

However, this was enough for Noel to realize Anna's secret.

'Got her!' Noel smirked. 'She shouldn't be the arrogant type who flaunts a non-existent strength. So, she must have a big secret that allows her to have more understanding than Sir Shale. Sir Shale might be a powerful veteran, but Anna Stargaze is a rising star.'

'Since she is a woman that I must kill, I should stay with her instead of fighting my way to become Sir Shale's mentee. I hope that I don't regret this decision.' Noel thought while stepping back as if he wasn't interested in fighting for that position.

Meanwhile, Anna was sweating. Her face became pale as she realized. 'I've been had!'

'That one question was enough to know that my secret is much deeper than he originally thinks. With this kind of secret, he must be finding a way to dig out all of them so that he can see a way to kill me.'

'He is paying me back for the question I used to trap him in the forest. Tsk.' Anna gritted her teeth as their battles seemed to haven't ended yet. She ended up backing down like her original plan. No matter what bluff she threw him, it was impossible to conceal that secret from Noel.

'It's payback time.' Noel made a smug smile while Anna bit her lips in annoyance.

Chapter 64 Missions

Due to the amount of people wanting to be taught by Shale, the competition lasted for a few days.

In the meantime, those who weren't interested in it immediately picked up their pace in training.

Noel also stepped up on his training. After the incident, Noel knew if he wanted to shut people up, he needed strength powerful enough to scare them. So, he trained his body to the limit.

He even asked Anna to increase the pace of their training by a whole different level. Instead of running around the training ground, he proposed to run around the town. They could use the people as the obstacles, allowing them to have a greater return when facing a forest terrain.

Anna, of course, agreed and asked for the permission from Shale. After agreeing to his condition in not bothering too much people, Shale let them go.

With this kind of training, Noel could fulfill two missions at the same time. He could do "Training: Running" and "Helping Townspeople Medal," allowing him to progress by leaps and bounds.

Of course, there was no restriction to where they could train anymore. Hence, Noel asked Anna to have a spar before and after the training, progressing his "Training: Rivalry" and "Rivalry medal."

With this advantage, Noel could shift his time to do "Training: Push Up" and "Training: Sword Swinging" in his nighttime exercise. And before he slept, he could study about Rune Strokes.

Noel utilized this schedule to improve everything that he could.

In the meantime, the person that became Shale's mentee was the last of the three people that didn't bother Noel when he started training here, the bald muscular guy.

Even so, Noel didn't bother to look at everyone because his mind was filled with training. And it seemed that everyone was scared of him as well.

It couldn't be helped, considering Noel beat Azgar half-dead and the next morning, Azgar somehow died due to his relation with the Supreme Devil Organization.

They didn't want to provoke Noel anymore because they might end up dead.

With such a peaceful environment, Noel progressed by leaps and bounds.

And finally, two weeks had passed. Noel and Anna came to Shale to accept their missions.

"Hoh? You are the first pair to come to me for a mission." Shale widened his eyes because he expected some fools to go to him first. It seemed that the duo were impatient. "A group mission is it? Alright."

"No. We'd like to have one group mission and one individual mission."

"Can you even handle two missions? And what are you doing with the individual mission?"

"You don't state any rules that we can't cooperate in our individual mission." Noel shook his head.

"Tsk." Shale clicked his tongue, knowing that a noble should be smart if they wanted to govern the territory. "Alright. I have a total of one hundred missions for each here. So, you can choose from them."

Shale handed them some thin books.

"Can you show us a mission related to the Dark Demon Forest?" Noel asked.

"Well..." Shale flipped a few pages and pointed at five missions. "These are the missions."

"I'm going to take this then." Noel pointed at a mission without hesitation.

Mission: Low Level Demon Exterminations (0/25)

Reward: 100 Contribution Points

Time Limit: 5 Days

"By the way, what is this contribution points?" Noel asked, frowning.

"Contribution Points can be used for two things: Rank Up and Exchange for benefits. Your current status is Junior Soldier or people know it more with "Apprentice Knight," so you can become a full fledged knight after accumulating 5,000 points. The points can be exchanged for many things in the fort. You can get books, weapons, and so on."

"I see. The more points you have, the better the stuff gets?"

"Yes."

"That's convenient." Noel nodded in agreement. "I can see that there are a few requests involving people. Won't people pay the fort to solve their problems?"

"Exactly. I mean, the fort can't run without money. So, the fort will get the money from the requests while rewarding you with points. You can even exchange important stuff you got from your missions for some points."

"With that, the fort can run without any problems." Noel nodded with a serious expression.

"Indeed."

"Thank you for your explanation."

"Then, which mission do you want, young lady?" Shale asked, turning to Anna.

"I'll take this then." Anna chose a mission.

Mission: Kill a Mid Level Demon and retrieve the Mid Level Crystal

Reward: 75 Contribution Points.

Time Limit: 5 Days

"I see." Shale nodded and recorded it in a book. "How about the group mission?"

"This." Both Noel and Anna pointed at the same mission.

Mission: Kill 25 Mid Level Demons and retrieve their Mid Level Crystals

Reward: 500 Contribution Points.

Time Limit: 15 Days

"Hoh?" Shale was impressed that they were aiming for the deepest region of the Demon Forest, but it was clear that both of them had that ability. If it was anyone else, he would deny their request due to the danger, but Shale accepted it because it was Anna and Noel. "Alright."

After recording their mission, Shale said, "Don't forget about the time limit, alright?"

"We understand." Noel and Anna nodded their heads.

"In that case..." Shale took out two wooden tokens from his pockets. He then poured his Spiritual Energy into the tokens.

Suddenly, a few words appeared on the token along with a symbol. The symbol was two swords crossing against each other with a demon's head in the middle. This was the Demon Banner Army insignia.

"Apprentice Knight"

"This shall be your proof of your identity." Shale then turned the token around and showed them a few more words and a number.

Anna Stargaze

0 Pts

Noel Ardagan

0 Pts

"This is a al token where we can record your rank and contribution point. Of course, we're using a special technique from the fort. Without our special technique, it'll be impossible to alter it. I hope that you two don't misuse this token." Shale handed them the tokens.

Anna and Noel nodded with a solemn face while receiving the tokens.

"Thank you, Sir Shale."

"Alright. You are free to go right now or tomorrow. The basic survival kits are there, so you can get them by yourself."

After thanking Shale, they walked away as Anna asked, "So, when are we leaving?"

"Have you prepared?"

"Yeah. Only need to get the tent and some stuff."

"After lunch then."

"Alright. We'll meet at the gate?"

"Yes."

Chapter 65 Noel's Progress

Noel had some time before lunch, so he checked all his progresses during the past few weeks.

Name: Noel Ardagan

Job: Rune Swordsman

Weapon: Ardagan Sword

Main Medal: Military Service Merit III (Spiritual Energy +2%)

Status: Stamina +1.7%, Constitution +1.7%, Sword Mastery +1.7%, Spiritual Energy +1.5%, Rune Mastery +0.5%

Low Quality Crystal - 109/5000

Mid Quality Crystal - 2/3000

"This is quite good. The more percentage I can accumulate, the bigger my progress will be." Noel smirked. After learning more about Ardagan in the past two weeks, he realized that he could also negotiate with Ardagan to make the system more convenient.

Ardagan had said to him that he would support him, so changing it to match Noel's preference was better.

And for Noel, this was the best way to track all his progress.

"Still, Spiritual Energy +3.5% in total... If I can accumulate it to 50%, with the fact that I can absorb twice of the amount of crystals due to two spirits residing in my body... it means I'll have an additional spirit. And if I can reach 100%, it means I'll have four spirits worth of Spiritual Energy. This is the best improvement I can get.

"No wonder my ancestor can rise to the very top. That's why I need to be careful when using my power. If the royal family knows this power, they won't hesitate to kill me.

"I thought about using the Ancient Demon Tree as the entrance for my second identity, but did I make the wrong choice when making that deal? I was too angry at that time." Noel scratched the back of his head. "Well, I shouldn't cry over spilled milk. Instead of focusing on the past, I need to think about my plan for the second identity."

After shaking his thoughts off from the unnecessary matter, Noel continued to his other progress.

Skill: Swift Strike (1/5), Ardagan Swordsmanship (3/15), Mega Slash (2/5), Rune Mastery (1/10), Increase Agility Rune (1/3), Strength Blessing Rune (1/3)

"Well, I will only use my rune abilities when using the second identity, so I'll need to defeat the Ancient Demon Tree with Swift Strike and Mega Slash. I have 9 Honor Points right now and with the demon extermination, I can get more Honor Points before the fight against the Ancient Demon Tree. If push comes to shove, I can level up Mega Slash or use runes."

Noel nodded with a serious expression. "Alright. That's all. I really wish I could prepare more, but there's a time limit. This might be the test that Ardagan has to test me whether I'm qualified or not to wield him. He wants to see if I have the potential to be someone like my ancestor... No, for my goal, I'll surpass my ancestor."

After finishing his preparation, Noel went to the training ground to get the tent and other stuff. He had agreed to share the stuff with Anna, so he only brought one person worth to lessen the burden.

As expected, Anna had been waiting for him in front of the gate with her own luggage.

"We're good to go?" Anna smirked.

"Yes. The time limit is five days. We'll return here after killing as many demons as we can."

"The Ancient Demon Tree will appear within these five days then?"

"I have no proof but it should be like that."

"I wonder how do you know all this?"

"I wonder if your family account book can give me some secrets to expose." Noel rolled his eyes.

"Hehe." Anna chuckled.

Despite the hatred in Noel's eyes, their conversation had surely mellowed down. At the same time, after being with Noel for almost a month, she realized that Noel wasn't a bad guy down there. The hatred was the one corrupting him.

As long as she could solve the hatred between them, he was a very reliable ally. In fact, she admitted that Noel might be her strongest ally, even stronger than her who had the future memories. That showed how strong Noel's potential was.

In their past lives, if Noel attacked her a few years later, he might have become too strong for her to handle.

Since their main focus was on the Ancient Demon Tree, they immediately headed straight to the lake and set a camp there before night came.

Only after this they could roam around to kill some demons.

"Have you finished setting up the tent?" Anna asked while looking at the soup she currently made.

"Yeah. It's done. We'll be switching every four hours." Noel looked around and asked, "By the way, I want to ask you something."

"What is that?"

"What was the reason you wanted to kill my family?" Noel's face was solemn but there was no trace of killing intent coming from his eyes.

Still, the question came out of nowhere. Even Anna was stunned for a few seconds.

After contemplating for a while, Anna answered with another question. By using doubt, she could shift Noel's direction from that matter and eventually, he would reach his own conclusion. "Have you ever learned about your family's history?"

"..." Noel couldn't answer the question because he never had any interest in it. All he did was just lazying around every day. Even though he didn't harm any citizens or his servants, he also did nothing.

In the end, Noel looked away as if he didn't want to say anything.

Whether it was fortunate or unfortunate, a demon's howl echoed near the lake, interrupting the awkward situation.

Noel and Anna followed the sound and saw a black-colored wolf standing twenty meters before them. The monster was bigger than a normal one and the bloodshot eyes made it look like it had become a demon.

Before Anna took out her sword, Noel had already unsheathed Ardagan and said, "I'll take care of this."

Noel stepped forward while focusing on his internal body.

"Spiritual Energy..." Although it was not as strong as Anna, Noel felt the Spiritual Energy surging from the Spirit Seal on his right hand flowing to his entire body, strengthening his muscle. This was the first Spirit Technique he learned.

When his eyes released his killing intent, the demon charged forward. Noel also jumped forth while swinging his blade as quickly as possible.

Swift Strike.

Noel's body tilted to the right as he still precisely struck the demon's neck, severing it in an instant.

"Hoh?" Anna was impressed. "That strike never killed a demon in one stroke before, but with the muscle enhancement, he increased his speed and strength to amplify that attack, allowing him to cut a demon in one strike. It's similar to what I showed him the first time we met..."

Chapter 66 Suggestion

"Hu..." Noel let out a breath of relief as he lowered his vision, making sure the demon was dead. "It seems that I can use it right now."

He recalled the sensation from the muscle strengthening. The power surge coming from all over his body made him feel like he was flying.

"Muscle Strengthening, one of the most basic spirit techniques. My current control doesn't allow me to maintain it for a long time, but this is a perfect chance to hone it. With the life and death battle, I can force myself to continue using this spirit technique.

"From what I felt, it seemed that the Muscle Strengthening increased thirty percent of my power. According to Sir Shale, it can reach fifty percent. There are other spirit techniques that can amplify my power even further, but that's not something I can use right now.

"For now, I need to focus on honing my current skills." Noel was satisfied with his performance and dug out the crystal before disposing the demon's body and cleaning the blood. They were going to live here, so they didn't want the bad smell to disturb them.

"Impressive." Anna smiled while scooping the soup and handing the bowl to him. "Come eat."

"Mhm." Noel nodded. He didn't say anything more because of the previous question. It seemed that there was something that his parents had hidden from him. Or, they might simply never told him because he was never interested in learning about the family business.

'Maybe I should investigate my past... But it's impossible to do it currently since my mansion has been taken over by the royal family. In that case, should I make another deal with Anna? No, I can't trust her one hundred percent. She was the one ordering the execution, so she could lie easily.

'If I don't find anything from my investigation, I need to suspect her as well since she has been lying this whole time. In any case, I'll get stronger first. As long as I become a full fledged knight, I can do more.'

Noel fell into deep thought while he was eating, confusing Anna.

"What's with the long face?" Anna asked, concerned that he was thinking about the Ancient Demon Tree.

"By the way, what do you know about the Ancient Demon Tree? Its strength, appearance and other stuff." Noel asked back, changing the topic.

"You don't know?" Anna frowned but she started talking after seeing Noel's expression. "Well, I have three pieces of information. The appearance of the Ancient Demon Tree is... well, it's just a normal tree. However, the tree reaches 20 meter tall. Can you imagine how tall it is?

"Anyway, that's not important. The problem is the Ancient Demon Tree's strength. In the past, the Ancient Demon Tree could wipe out the fort with its branches alone. That was how powerful the Ancient Demon Tree was.

"But it had slept for thousands of years, so I believed the Ancient Demon Tree didn't even have 0.001% of its strength. We need to kill the Ancient Demon Tree as soon as possible because we can't afford to have it regain its full strength.

"In one hour, the demon can kill us with a single snap. So, we need to kill the tree within an hour."

Noel thought for a moment and asked, "How about the Supreme Devil? How is it compared to the Ancient Demon Tree?"

"Supreme Devil is one level stronger." She shook her head helplessly. "Ancient Demon Tree can threaten the entire kingdom, but a Supreme Devil can threaten the entire world. I'm sure you can understand the comparison."

"I see." Noel lowered his head with a serious expression. "It seems that the world is a bigger place."

"Anyway, the last piece of information is how to kill the Ancient Demon Tree. Normally, we'll kill the tree by severing its body, right? But that's not possible with this huge tree. Hence, we're going to climb the tree and create a hole for us to go inside the tree.

"After that, we'll head directly to the Demon Crystal and destroy it. Don't worry, even though the crystal is destroyed, you can still absorb it.

"But the Demon Crystal is too potent for you, so I don't advise you to absorb it." Anna suggested.

"..." Noel narrowed his eyes. "What do you mean?"

They had agreed that Noel would get the crystal while Anna would take the piece of wood, but now Anna suggested not to absorb the energy, Noel felt unpleasant.

"The energy is too much for you to handle. Even I don't have the capability of absorbing the energy." Anna shook her head, explaining. "I'm sure that you know about Spirit Vessel, right?"

"Spirit Vessel." Noel looked down, recalling the information he got from reading about Spirit. "Spirit Vessel is a kind of a cup that holds the Spiritual Energy in our body. The more we absorb the Demon Crystal, the bigger the vessel will be. That's why we should absorb all the Demon Crystals to make our Spirit Vessel as big as possible, allowing us to have a huge amount of Spiritual Energy."

"Yes. However, can you imagine this..." Anna raised her wooden glass and asked, "This is your current Spirit Vessel. And the moment you absorb the Ancient Demon Tree's crystal, your vessel will evolve into this lake."

"Isn't that good?" Noel tilted his head in confusion.

"No. The rapid expansions will lead to an unstable foundation. If you think about it, how do you transform this small cup to this lake and suddenly fill all the Spiritual Energy to the brim? It's simple, you need to do it slowly so that you don't get drowned by it. Your Spirit Vessel might even break and you'll die."

"Does that mean there is no meaning in killing the Ancient Demon Tree?"

"There is one!" Anna raised one finger. "That is the part that protects the demon crystal. That part is elastic but durable, a perfect item to create armor or sword handle... My original plan is to use that part as my sword handle."

"As for the Demon Crystal, it's best to give it to the fort and exchange it for other rewards."

Chapter 67 Using Each Other

"Other rewards? Then, why did you agree that we'll split the money?" Noel narrowed his eyes. "If you already knew about this, you should have talked about this."

"Why? I had no reasons to give any explanation? In fact, if you didn't ask, I would have just allowed you to absorb the Demon Crystal. Won't it be good for me if you die?" Anna shrugged. "Don't forget that we're at odds, Noel. I have no obligation to tell you unless you ask it yourself. And even if I tell you, I know that you're not going to believe me that easily. So, why should I take extra effort to tell you?"

Noel couldn't refute her. As she said, he was still trying to kill him. So, there was no way Anna would help him easily. Even though she didn't want him to die for the time being, she didn't want to stop him from courting death because they were enemies.

Noel pinched the bridge of his nose and said, "Alright. Your suggestion is quite good. By exchanging for another reward, I can get something good at my current level. At least, they'll be beneficial for my current state."

"That's right. Do you think what are the most important things someone like us need? Powerful weapons? Durable armors? No! It's Spirit Technique... precisely Ancient Spirit Technique.

"If you learn about history, your mind will be blown away when you realize that every single person in the world was born with Spirit. There is no need for awakening!

"And Spirit Techniques... the current Spirit Techniques are the result of the optimization that suits the current situation. Their power has been toned down to match our body. On the other hand, the Ancient Spirit Technique is an extremely powerful technique! They can release a far more powerful strength compared to the current Spirit Technique.

"Most people can't use Ancient Spirit Techniques right now because they don't have what it takes. But it'll be different for us... or me? My conversion rate is close to one hundred percent like the people in the past. I have enough qualifications to learn the Ancient Spirit Techniques.

"I'm planning to use the reward to exchange the Ancient Spirit Techniques to strengthen myself. That's what I'll suggest to you as well. Instead of courting death, why don't you take a bit of the tree to make an armor for you? Though, it'll be hard to process it. You might need a skilled craftsman and they might not be humans.

"Either way, this is my explanation and suggestion. Whether you want to believe in my word or not, it's entirely up to you."

Noel paused for a moment. What Anna said made sense. He couldn't question the logic at all. Although his knowledge about Spirit was low, he had read a few books regarding this topic, so he could still make judgment whether what she said was good or bad.

As Anna said, he realized that it was better to trade the reward. However, he still said, "But we have agreed that I'll have the demon crystal and you get whatever that covers it. I'm not going to take what is not mine."

"You're so uptight, eh. For better or worse..." Anna chuckled. "In that case, how about I propose you a deal?"

"A deal?"

"Yeah. In exchange for a part of my possession, I want you to follow me to a certain place. At least, find a group mission that is around that area, so that we can visit a place together."

"What are you plotting?" Noel's eyebrows twitched.

"Who knows?"

"I need to hear the deal first to know whether I should agree or not."

"Sure. Eight months from now, I want us to go to the border between this kingdom and Vrueniel Kingdom. In that place, there is a ruin I want to enter. It's said that the ruin comes from a thousand years ago. Many explorations have been done, but none of them could find anything. I want both of us to go there."

"It seems that you know something." Noel narrowed his eyes.

"What do you think?" Anna ignored his statement. "I mean, this will benefit both of us since whatever is inside can increase our strength tremendously."

Noel thought for a moment. However, his fate was sealed when Ardagan started speaking like he knew every single information, even the future.

[Mission: Explore the Sword Saint Ruin]

[Description: A Soul of the Sword Saint Enzelgal has been buried under this ruin. Meet him and pass his test.]

[Reward: ???]

'Sword Saint Ruin? Sword Saint Enzelgal? How does Ardagan know everything? Now that I think about it, a thousand years ago... Isn't it the time when my ancestor started making a name for himself? Does that mean my ancestor lived in the same era as this guy?' Noel narrowed his eyes.

'Still, there is no penalty when I fail to do it like this Ancient Demon Tree mission. It seems that the penalty is simply a way for Ardagan to test me whether I'm qualified to wield him or not. If I can prove that I'm qualified, there is no need for penalty because he's going to fully support me. If that's the case, I'm truly grateful. There is no reason for me to reject this offer.'

After contemplating for a few minutes, Noel nodded his head. "Fine. I agree."

"Great." Anna smirked while thinking inwardly, 'Hehe, you've fallen into my traps, Noel. In the previous life, Noel entered this ruin alone and received everything inside. This time, I'm going with him so that I can leech off him.'

'Well, Noel was the only one that could open this ruin in the past. There were two theories back then. First, Noel was actually related to the person inside the ruin. Second, Noel had talent that piqued the ghost inside the ruin. It seemed to be the latter, so it might be related to his conversion rate... It seems that Noel's Conversion Rate is above me... He might even have a perfect conversion... Either way, I'm going to leech off his opportunity. I'm so awful but I need it so that Noel doesn't get too strong that fast and I don't get left behind.'

Just like Anna, Noel had also his own thought.

'The mission only benefited me, so there's no reason for me to reject. Thanks to her, I can discover something this good.'

Noel and Anna looked at each other smiling as if they had come to an agreement. However, they both had an opposite thought.

'I'm going to use her knowledge to discover more missions.'

'I'm going to leech off his opportunities.'

Chapter 68 Sense

'How the hell did this happen?' Noel asked himself as he was looking up to see Anna's face. Anna was sitting behind the tree while her hand was holding his head and burying his face on her breast.

...

A few minutes ago.

"How is the situation on the other side?" Anna shouted while carefully deflecting a few Mid Level Demons' attacks.

Her answer came in the form of action. Noel suddenly rushed to one of the Mid Level Demon and covered his sword with the Spiritual Energy.

Mega Slash.

Noel struck the Mid Level Demon's head, only to be stopped by its horns.

If it were three weeks ago, he would be useless against the Mid Level Demon. However, this time was different.

As soon as he saw the demon stopping his attack, Noel took a step back and looped around the demon. In fact, he was going around the several Mid Level Demons to hide himself with their bodies.

'As expected, the Low Level and Mid Level Demons don't have that much intelligence. Mid Level Demon is better, but they're still using their instinct.' Noel thought as he saw the Mid Level Demon chasing after him, slipping past several demons.

Using that to his advantage, Noel could bother the other demons.

"Ooohhhhh!" The demon let out a roar as if informing the other demons who had yet to realize Noel's appearance due to him not saying anything.

When the other Mid Level Demons turned around to find Noel, Anna charged forward with a smirk.

Her sword and body had been covered by lightning. Her jumping speed felt like a bullet as she appeared next to the demon in an instant.

After that, her sword struck the demon's horn. Unlike Noel, she had a complete control over her Spiritual Energy. Even if the demon could stop her sword with its horn, the Spiritual Energy sparked, resulting in the same reaction from the lightning.

The spark cracked the horn and Anna released all her strength to push forward, destroying the horn and cutting the demon's head.

"..." Noel narrowed his eyes, thinking, 'As expected, her control of Spiritual Energy is so high. I can't kill her with my meager ability for now.'

Seeing one of them getting killed by Anna, all the demons turned around and directed their anger toward her.

Noel used this chance to approach the demon from behind to attack their softest spot.

However, Noel took one step further as he pointed his palm forward.

Ice Control.

The skill allowed Noel to create ice around him, so he covered the soil with a thin layer of ice, causing the demons to fall down.

"Kill them!" Noel shouted as he and Anna jumped to the demons together.

Noel killed two Mid Level Demons during the confusion with the help of his Mega Slash while Anna took care of four. With the addition of one Mid Level Demon, she managed to kill five Mid Level Demons in total.

"Nice ice ability." Anna nodded with a serious expression.

"Not as strong as your lightning ability."

"Come on. Mine is powerful, but yours is versatile." Anna smirked.

"Hu..." Noel took a deep breath as he didn't want to continue the conversation. He looked around while making sure that they were not watched by the demons. "We have been pretty deep inside the forest. Although the stronger demons living in the deeper region make sense in one way to another, I still don't understand why..."

"A tree can grow in a good soil, right?"

"Yes."

"But there is another theory about it. The richer the soil is, the more it contains the Spiritual Energy. You might not be able to feel it or see it right now, but this world is filled with Spiritual Energy.

"The demons like to live in an area rich of Spiritual Energy. As for why stronger demons live in the deeper area, it's simply because the deepest region is where the Spiritual Energy is concentrated. The rest is simply hierarchy."

Noel thought for a moment and asked, "In that case, does that mean the deepest region has the strongest demon?"

"Yeah. We're already a bit too deep right now, so we should pull back soon."

"So, a higher ranking demon, an Advance Level Demon?"

"Perhaps. I'm not too sure currently, but let's just—!!!" Anna stopped abruptly and turned around, staring into the woods.

"Anna?" Noel was confused but remained vigilance when he saw Anna's solemn face.

Suddenly, Anna ran toward him and dragged him while putting her finger on her mouth as if signaling him to not make a single noise.

They hid behind the biggest tree in the area. She even held him close so that he didn't stand out.

"Don't make a single sound or release your Spiritual Energy if you don't want to die. I'm going to use my power to erase the trace of our Spiritual Energy," said Anna with a low voice while raising her right hand. Her index and middle finger rose as if she concentrated her power into the fingertips.

"Wh—" Noel was confused, but Anna hurriedly grabbed his head and pulled his head into her breast as the means to silence him.

Noel was startled by Anna's action. Despite the hatred, he still couldn't deny the fact that Anna was the most beautiful woman among the Knight Apprentice. And to think she would have his face buried on her chest, it was unthinkable as a noble.

However, when he raised his vision, he stopped struggling. No, he stopped every little movement.

Anna had closed her eyes to get more focus, but her forehead was covered with sweats as though she had been utilizing a great amount of Spiritual Energy.

Noel knew that this was a dangerous situation, so he decided to cooperate with everything she said.

He didn't dare to move even though he was curious about what she saw.

Whether it was fortunate or unfortunate, the answer to his curiosity appeared.

He felt an immense Spiritual Energy coming toward them. Unlike their Spiritual Energy, he could sense the killing intent and bloodlust emanating from this creature.

Although he couldn't see its figure, he felt dread that his body was trembling.

This was the reason why Anna panicked and did the unthinkable.

In the end, Noel also closed his eyes to calm his heart. He wanted to make sure that his body was in the condition to respond to the worst case scenario.

Chapter 69 Advance Level Demon

'Hu...' Noel took a deep breath because it was quite hard to breathe due to their position. It truly took a bit of effort to even breathe.

However, Noel could feel that the immense pressure started moving away after two minutes standing still.

He felt a bit relieved but he wasn't foolish enough to drop his guard. He maintained his vigilance to make sure that they wouldn't be discovered.

Seeing how scared Anna was, it was clear that the demon was pretty powerful.

Even though Noel couldn't sense the pressure anymore, Anna didn't release him yet. Remembering that Anna managed to pick up his presence far before him, he knew that the demon had yet to leave that far.

Hence, they waited. Their position was perfect for Noel to shame Anna, but he didn't do anything to make sure that he didn't disturb her concentration.

Still, no matter how hard he tried to hide his desire, Noel's thoughts ran wild.

'If I disturb her right now, I can grab the attention of that whatever creature here. I don't know how strong Anna is, but she might die facing this demon.'

'However, Anna is a mysterious evil woman. She should have some secrets that can allow her to escape as long as she abandons me here. As for me, I'll certainly die here. So, I can't disturb her no matter what.'

Yes, in the midst of this situation and position, Noel still thought about killing Anna. Fortunately, he realized that this plan didn't guarantee Anna's death, only his, so he abandoned it immediately.

After what it felt like four hours, Anna finally opened her eyes while feeling relieved.

She dropped on her butts as Noel was also dragged to the ground.

"We're safe now." Anna let out a breath of relief before lowering her vision, finding Noel's face on her breast. "..."

Noel pointed at her hand as if asking her to release him.

"Ah..." Anna realized what she had done as her face slightly reddened from the embarrassment. She hurriedly let him go while glaring at him.

"You did this, not me." Noel immediately justified his position.

Anna's instinct wanted to slap him, but what she did was the exact opposite. She took a few deep breaths to calm her heart and said with an embarrassed face. "Yeah. Can you forget about it?"

"That's impossible. It has been burned into my mind."

"Can you be a bit more gentleman?" Anna sighed, feeling a headache. Instead of embarrassment, she felt a bit angry.

"Well, I am a fallen noble, so I don't care about that anymore. But I guess I can do that as long as you explain to me..." Noel glanced to the direction where the intense pressure went.

"What is the difference between Low Level Demon and Mid Level Demon?"

"Their abilities. The Mid Level Demon has a better physique, but more importantly, the biggest difference they have lies on their Spiritual Energy. The Mid Level Demon can utilize a bit of their Spiritual Energy."

"Exactly. However, the Mid Level Demon can't use their Spiritual Energy that easily. Their condition is similar to the you a few weeks ago when you can only apply your Spiritual Energy to one task, which is attacking." Anna nodded, confirming his statement.

"And that one is... an Advance Level Demon?"

"Yes. An Advance Level Demon can fully utilize their Spiritual Energy. They also have opened their wisdom, making them a hard opponent to fight. Even in the current me, running away is the only option. Well, my skill is enough, but I don't have enough Spiritual Energy to fight them right now." Anna felt disappointed because she couldn't defeat the Advance Level Demon.

"I see. It seems that the Demon Banner Army wants us to reach a level similar to that demon before graduating to the real knight?" Noel contemplated for a moment.

"No. Their aim is just Mid Level Demon. However, the most talented people will surely surpass that target before graduation." Anna smirked as if she was stating she would be one of them.

"I see. Every year, the Demon Banner Army doesn't accept that many soldiers after all, but they sure create numerous elite soldiers." Noel nodded in understanding. "So, do you want to create a target?"

"A target?" Anna tilted her head in confusion.

"Yeah. Let's kill that Advance Level Demon in a few months."

"A few months, huh..." Anna calculated it a bit and said, "Three months?"

"Sounds good to me. After this mission, we're going to train a bit more before heading outside this place. You and I will do one or two individual mission group missions each. The details can be discussed later like the place, the time, and the mission."

"Sounds good. I'm not going to stay in this place for too long." Anna agreed with him. "How about killing the Advance Level Demon for a group mission after we return here?"

"Fair enough. We can discuss the details later." Noel nodded. "In that case, let's continue the hunt."

"Right." Anna glanced at the demon corpses they left behind earlier.

"Still, you smell good even though you are an evil witch."

"What? I've told you to forget that! I've explained the situation to you earlier!" Anna gritted her teeth.

"No, the agreement is just forgetting about your attempt of murder, not about your smell."

"Attempt of murder? It's you who are enjoying my body!"

"Do you think I'd enjoy that? I was about to be suffocated earlier." Noel denied her with a poker face as if he meant it.

Even though Noel looked far too young compared to her soul, she still had some confidence in her body and beauty. But this man truly frustrated her.

"How about I beat you up since I couldn't suffocate you?" Anna raised her fist with veins bulging out of her forehead.

"I'm going to scrap the crystals." Noel escaped in an instant, doing something that could stop Anna from bothering him.

Unbeknownst to them, the seal under the lake had gradually deteriorated.

The lines started shining dimly as the ground started to crack, resulting in the green lines beginning to disconnect to each other.

Rumble!

Rumble!

Chapter 70 Ancient Demon Tree's Emergence

"Your solo mission was completed in the first day, mine was the same. And the group mission was completed on the second day since we managed to kill 12 Mid Level Demons on the first day and 15 Mid Level Demons on the second day. Today, we managed to kill 25 Mid Level Demons. Don't you think this is a good progress?" Anna stretched her hands while yawning.

They were walking back to the lake as soon as the sun came down, so they felt a bit tired, especially due to the sudden appearance of the Advance Level Demon.

Even Noel believed they had done so much, considering Low Level Demons were the majority in this area.

Even though he still needed to submit a portion of the crystals, they still had a plenty of them to share. And they had an abundant amount of Low Level Crystals.

However, Noel stayed quiet when Anna told him their progress.

"What's wrong?" Anna turned around, looking at Noel who seemed to be occupied by his thoughts. Noel looked like as if he was observing the lake.

"No, I'm just thinking that tonight or tomorrow morning..." Noel closed his eyes while thinking about all the knowledge he had regarding the runes.

"What do you mean?" Anna tilted her head in confusion.

Noel pointed at the lake, specifically the middle of the lake.

"Huh?" Anna glanced at the lake and noticed the glimmer green light emitting from within the water. In that instant, she opened her eyes wide in shock. "Since when?"

"I'm not sure, but it's been like that ever since we came back."

"That's clearly the case. It seems that the seal is breaking. I don't think I feel anything such as the increase of Spiritual Energy. A demon at that level should have a ridiculous amount of Spiritual Energy, but I guess that shows how weak he is right now. Mid Level Demon, probably the strongest Mid Level Demon you can ever imagine, but it won't be as strong as Advance Level Demon."

"Then, there is its size." Noel added.

"True. The size will make it hard since we need to climb the tree. Can you do it?"

"I have tried it yesterday. Climbing a tree won't be a problem since my grip is stronger now, but it'll be a different matter if the demon is stopping me from climbing it."

"Even I don't have too much details on the Ancient Demon Tree, so we can only improvise our approach."

"Fair enough." Noel nodded. "For now, let's have some rest so that our bodies are well enough to kill it."

Anna agreed as she immediately prepared some food while Noel kept staring at the rune but still couldn't find anything. It seemed that his knowledge wasn't enough to decipher the rune.

'I guess, my ancestor was too powerful for me to comprehend right now. Well, the history indeed claimed that he was one of the strongest, if not the strongest.' Noel thought for a moment and asked, "Hey, Anna. Do you mind if I'm the one to kill it?"

"Huh? A question like this out of nowhere..."

"I just want to know whether it's possible or not. I don't care if we split the reward, but I want to kill this demon." Noel looked at Anna with a solemn face.

Anna narrowed her eyes and pondered.

"I know that it's a kind of a request, but I don't think this much is a problem for you, right?"

"Yeah. I'm simply going to be the vanguard and let you deliver the killing blow. That much is not a problem, but can you keep up with me?"

"I will, even if it takes all of my power." Noel nodded without hesitation. He got the mission from Ardagan, so he needed to kill the demon no matter what.

"Alright then. I'll open the path for you, but lend me your Ice Pearl for a day." Anna also had her own condition. Although becoming a vanguard was a simple task, Anna knew how hard it was to not being able to kill her opponent.

Just like the sparring, she needed to go with the intention of killing her opponent, but didn't kill them.

With such an awkward situation, her strength would be greatly reduced and had a big potential to be injured. Hence, she asked for this condition.

"Alright. Just for one day, I'm going to trust you for one day." Noel answered with a grim tone.

Anna felt the heaviness in the word 'trust' due to her destroying his family. Even though Noel had been listening to her suggestions and cooperating with her, it wasn't based on trust. He simply chose the most optimal solution.

"It's just for one day. In fact, you can watch me during that time, so I won't run away with the pearl."

"..." Noel sighed and said, "It's alri—!"

Rumble!

Rumble!

Suddenly, the ground started shaking.

"!!!" Noel and Anna hurriedly rose from the ground and faced the lake as they saw the water started raging.

The light shone brighter and brighter as time passed.

"It seems that I have made a mistake." Anna gulped down. "It's not that there is no Spiritual Energy, it's just the seal has been absorbing the Spiritual Energy to the point I can't sense it. And now, the seal is..."

Boom!

A shock wave from a Spiritual Energy shook the area, affecting all living beings in that area. The trees, tent, and the water were blown away. The ground soon started to crack as a few pieces of branches emerged from the ground.

The branches expanded and the lake gradually collapsed. A huge trunk soon emerged from the now dried lake and continued to rise to the sky.

Even though they had expected the tree to be big, they never thought it would be this big.

The small lake had a diameter of forty meters, yet, the tree was actually a fourth the size of the basin. In fact, now that the water had been blown away, the basin looked like a crater that was used to seal the demon tree.

"So, this is the Ancient Demon Tree..." Noel sucked a cold breath.