

S vs Rebirth 611

Chapter 611 Five Groups

As soon as everyone entered the passage, they all looked at each other, wondering what they should do next.

Since he was the leader of the investigation, Septa immediately explained their current situation. "It's not good at all. The layout of this building is far too different from what I have in mind. Our plan won't work this way, especially with those demons roaming around."

"That's true..." Shale looked down while putting his hand on his chin as if he was contemplating their next move.

Noel also looked down, but he wasn't thinking about their plan. Instead, he was recalling every detail about the landscape of the building.

'Hmm... the room is weird. We haven't seen anything much currently, but there is that one white coat that is different from the rest. I don't know the purpose of that coat...

'But when I look at the hallway and the area near the entrance...' Noel closed his eyes, imagining the area.

On the right side, Noel could see a reception table. He often found it in the administration building. With it being placed near the entrance meant whoever came had to go there first to explain their purpose of visit.

But not many administration offices would have a lot of chairs. Noel remembered that on the left side of the room, specifically right in front of the entrance, there were a lot of chairs lining up together.

Just by looking at the number of chairs, he could see that this building was visited by a lot of people.

And there were a lot of rooms from what he had seen this whole time. From the way they were positioned, it seemed that the rooms weren't that identical. In other words, if he could explore all those rooms, he would be able to understand the identity of this facility.

Last but not least, the hallway itself. The height wasn't that much different, but this was the first time he had seen a hallway this wide. It felt like six people could walk side by side without any problem.

'What's the use of having this wide hallway other than wasting space? There is also a reception counter like an administration office... And that white coat... Still, if all the rooms are different, we might have to check every single room, which is extremely hard in the current situation...'

"Iadre."

"Iadre."

His name had been called out repeatedly, but Noel was too focused on his imagination that he didn't hear it. Ultimately, someone grabbed his shoulder to wake him up.

"!!!" Noel's body shook as he looked around, wondering what had happened. But he soon realized that he was the problem when everyone was staring at him. "Y-yes?"

Septa sighed. He wanted to berate Noel for being careless, but it wasn't the time to do that. "Is there any detail you picked up from looking at the hallway? We're planning to split our team even further and try to look around a few floors at once. But we need to understand the situation first."

"Hmm... It's a good suggestion. I have noticed a few details. From the way the doors are positioned, it seems that each room is different. However, I can't say the same about the rooms on the upper floor without looking at the landscape and their position. So, we might have to confirm it. Having a smaller group will help us do that."

"The building should be visited by a lot of people. That's all I can find for the time being..." Noel looked down as if he was disappointed by his own ability.

The others were completely speechless since he could grasp that much within a short time.

But his opinions gave a lot of options for the group.

Septa looked around as if he was calculating their number. At the same time, he was expressing his idea. "In that case, should we split the group into five? Each group shall be led by either a captain or an elder. As for their positioning..."

"Since there are more demons on the bottom floor, I'm going to lead the team on the bottom floor. I'm good at investigating, so I might be able to find an entrance to a hidden nest as well."

"The Stone Lord shall move to the second floor. Although it's not the ground floor, you should be able to feel the vibration of the ground as long as you're not far from it, right?"

"The Plant Lord shall go to the top floor, if possible, the rooftop. He wants to check if there is no more hidden danger from above."

"Clara and Shale will lead each group to two other floors of your choice. Just find the safest one and move as quietly as possible."

"If we end up alarming the demons, those who are spotted will immediately leave the building at once and bring all those demons away. The rest will find any spot to hide immediately. If spotted, do the same thing. Any objection?"

Septa had given them all their tasks. But there was one big question. "How are we going to split our people?"

"Since there are five people from my squad, including me. Each person will have one of us. The Demon Extermination Squad will divide ten people into five squads and split the remaining two into the groups with the lowest combat power.

"Clara should be able to go alone, so six of you divide into three groups. As for me, I only need ladre with me. He seems to be familiar with the layout, so it's better for me to use him."

They all looked at each other. On the one hand, they didn't expect that Septa had such a high opinion of Noel. On the other hand, with all the details he grasped, they could understand Noel's worth a bit.

In the end, Noel and Septa had three Demon Extermination Squad members to fill their number. With Septa dealing with the detail and Noel handling the map and layout, the three Demon Extermination Squad members would have an easy time since all they had to do was follow Septa's instructions and kill the demons.

Now that they had gone to their own group, Septa finally said while opening the door, "Let's go."

Chapter 612 Weird Object

Ro—!

Arr—!

The demons were trying to let out some voice, but they ended up dying before they could do anything.

The three members of the Demon Extermination Squad easily killed all the monsters in the hallway with the help of Septa's barrier ability. Meanwhile, Noel couldn't participate in the execution even though he was also a Spirit Master.

In terms of firepower, he might be able to win against them. But in terms of efficiency in killing demons, he couldn't hold a candle against them.

After all, this was the reason why there were so many squads in the Demon Banner Army. They all had their own specialty and became the name of their group.

Still, Noel wasn't someone who took this 'defeat' easily. He kept observing their movement to understand how they moved and killed the enemies so that he could improve himself. His stare and intention were so clear that the three people looked a bit uncomfortable.

Though, they didn't seem to be against the idea, considering they came from the same root, the Demon Banner Army. If the other party became stronger, the entire Demon Banner Army would grow too. So, they weren't that selfish.

After moving for a while, they finally reached the first room.

The room was different from the one they entered earlier. The room was separated into two sections. The second one was separated by a layer of glass.

'Hmm?' Noel looked around the first section. There was a long table inside this room coupled with a few weird machines that seemed to be of the same type. He couldn't help but look around, wondering what they were used for.

When he was not looking, Septa and the other three members of the Demon Extermination Squad had taken out a small piece of paper. Since they didn't have someone with Shale's ability, they had to keep quiet since the demon's hearing was extremely sharp.

As soon as they approached him, Noel glanced at them with a weird expression, wondering what they were trying to do.

Septa pointed at the second section as if telling Noel that they were going to that area.

Since it was a bigger room with a lot more items inside, they might be able to find something. So, Noel nodded while looking around.

The first item that piqued his interest was a small item on the table. Its shape was similar to his pen, so he couldn't help but pick it up, observing it.

pαndα`nove1~coM 'Hmm? This looks similar to my pen. But there is something different from this...' Noel frowned while looking at the inside of the pen. The 'pen' he had was made of wood with a black material inside that allowed him to write on paper. On the other hand, the one in front of him had a translucent body with a small tube inside containing a black-colored liquid. It looked similar to the ink they used in the home.

But the one they had back home was separated. The ink was inside a small container and they needed to dip the tip of the pen to be able to write.

However, the item he found didn't seem to need it since he couldn't find any ink around.

He looked at the pointy tip and couldn't help but try writing on the paper. Unfortunately, there was nothing coming out. As expected of an item from the previous civilization, if they still worked after a thousand years, it could be as good as an artifact.

Instead of focusing on the small matter, he took a look at the second item. This time, the shape was oval. The top looked like a mountain. Noel didn't know why, but he felt the item was made for his hand. He only put his hand on top of the item, but it surprisingly fit.

The bottom of the item was a flat surface with a small hole in the center. He tried to observe every inch of it but couldn't find anything useful.

The surprise came from the tip of the item. It looked like they were separated from the main body, so he tried to apply a bit more pressure on it. And surprisingly, the area slightly moved down, followed by a clicking sound.

"!!!" Noel couldn't help but feel shiver since he had just made a sound. He hurriedly put it down, but not so hard that it would create another noise.

It seemed that his action had been seen by Septa. He couldn't help but return to Noel's position and found the pen on the table.

Septa picked it up and pointed at it as if asking whether he knew anything about it or not.

Noel could only shake his head helplessly, not knowing what it was for.

To his surprise, Septa seemed to be familiar with the item. He spun the tip of the item and pulled out the small tube inside.

He showed it to Noel first and infused his Spiritual Energy into the tube. After a while, he put everything back like before.

After that, he tried to write something on Noel's note. It was still the same, but after more than ten strokes, black ink started coming out of the item, allowing Septa to write Noel's name on the book.

"!!!" Noel opened his eyes wide. He simply couldn't believe what he saw.

Looking at Noel's shocked face as if he was asking, 'How do you activate that artifact?', Septa couldn't help but smirk. He wrote down something.

'It's not an artifact. It's similar to the pen we usually use. I infused my Spiritual Energy so that it can work again, but it doesn't need Spiritual Energy to begin with. The black liquid inside is similar to our ink, but we still don't know about the transparent gel above it. If we can recreate this, we will have something like yours but with the ink.'

Noel was completely shocked. As a noble, he often saw how a careless approach could spill the ink. If such a thing existed, they wouldn't need to worry about it. They could even carry it around so easily. That was why Noel felt it was a revolutionary idea and praised the previous civilization for being able to create such a thing.

Septa continued to write in his notebook.

"The machine here doesn't seem to be useful, so let's enter the second section. It seems to have some drugs..."

Chapter 613 Deduction

"Some drugs." These two words piqued Noel's interest. Since Septa had invited him, he chose to follow him to enter the second room.

There was a giant machine in the middle of the room. It was a big cylinder, but Noel could see a complex mechanism inside the machine a bit through the translucent glass on it.

There was even a hole in the middle of the cylinder. The length and size seemed to fit a person. The people from the previous civilization might be sending a person inside for something.

'Hmm? What's the use of this machine?' When Noel was thinking about it, Septa returned with a few glass bottles.

There were a few pills inside one container. Noel could also see a syringe in another, but he was a bit surprised to see such a thin needle sticking at the tip of the syringe. This might be bigger than a needle for sewing, but it wasn't big enough to be lethal. There was also a container that contained an unknown liquid.

Noel frowned because he didn't know much about all of them. He looked at Septa, wondering if he had something to say.

Septa wrote a few more things.

'The liquid smell is a bit nauseating. I don't know the details, but it feels like they are medicine. As for this syringe, I have tried to move them a bit. You will be shocked by this...' Septa stopped writing and started pointing at someone.

The person seemed to understand his intention and immediately raised both hands. With minimal Spiritual Energy, he conjured a small ball of water.

Septa then pointed the syringe into the water and pulled the handle on the top. Surprisingly, the syringe gradually filled with water.

'It sucked the water?' Noel widened his eyes in shock. He looked at the size of the needle again and couldn't help but think of something.

Noel wrote a few words and showed it to them.

'Can this item inject a liquid into our flesh?'

"!!!" All of them were surprised as if they thought about the same thing. They exchanged looks and couldn't help but nod.

Septa still maintained his barrier so that the demons outside wouldn't find anything suspicious. So, he immediately came out, cut the demon's flesh and brought it back inside.

He placed it on top of the bed and grabbed the syringe. He tried to stab the skin, but because it was too hard, he ended up using his Spiritual Energy to let it penetrate the demon's flesh.

He then pushed the handle carefully. Surprisingly, the liquid gradually came out, moved around the flesh, and gradually wet the bed.

"!!!" They all looked shocked because they had never seen something like this before.

But Noel couldn't help but write a few more things, planning to give them the analysis. Instead of waiting for Noel to show it to them, they simply took a peek at Noel's writing.

"This place might be similar to a pharmacy. They have those weird pills like the things we've seen in the pharmacy. And if I'm not wrong, this syringe is specialized for injecting a liquid into our body. We have a similar syringe, but there is no needle like that. So, what if our technology simply isn't enough to recreate the needle to pair with the syringe?"

They somehow agreed with Noel's analysis. Still, they couldn't really explain all the machines inside the room.

"I don't know anything much about the machine, and this is also my first expedition. So, I think we should search for another two rooms to confirm our guess. There is also that white coat... I don't know what they're used for, but if they're getting put on, the color is something useful to recognize the liquid that is stuck on the clothes."

Septa looked down for a moment. He could agree to Noel's request. After all, the logic was there and he couldn't find any way to rebuke him.

Still, checking two more rooms was easier said than done. To enter this room alone, they needed around twenty minutes to clear the demons and forge the path. They also needed to use their Spiritual Energy to maintain the current situation to avoid the demon's suspicion.

But if Noel's prediction was true, they could confirm the identity of this mysterious facility.

They all looked at each other before Septa grabbed Noel's note.

"It's going to be hard. With the current situation, I don't think we have a lot of time. Then again, searching for two more rooms will take around one hour. We also need to find a clue about the hidden nest."

"I'm afraid that the situation will become dangerous past this point. So, I'm asking you guys right now. Are you ready to risk your life?"

The three members of the Demon Extermination Squads exchanged looks for a second. But it seemed that all three of them had the same way of thinking. They didn't hesitate to raise their thumb as if accepting Septa's invitation.

They had been wrestling their lives this whole time since they hunted a lot of demons on a daily basis. So, risking their lives like this was just another day of their life.

All that was left was Noel.

Septa looked at Noel, asking for his permission.

Noel wrote down his intention.

"I am also a Spirit Master. I don't have the efficiency of the three from the Demon Extermination Squad, but I'm confident with my firepower. Although it is a bit dangerous, I'm also going."

All of them looked at each other to confirm their will. As soon as they got their message clear, Septa finally put everything down before pointing at the items that were small enough to fit in the bag.

Noel nodded and immediately put everything, including the 'pen,' the 'syringe,' and the few containers that stored liquid and pills.

Meanwhile, Septa used the note to communicate with the other three about how they were going to proceed.

The moment they reached an agreement, they immediately walked to the exit, ready to sneak around.

Chapter 614 Hospital

As expected of the members of the Demon Extermination Squad's Zero Squad, once they learned the way Septa moved around to clear the hallway, they refined their movements. The previous awkward movement was gone, replaced by a refined and precise movement, allowing them to work faster than Septa's original prediction.

Noel thought that the people in the Demon Relief Squad's Zero Squad were already outstanding. They could accomplish almost everything, and their fighting power couldn't be underestimated.

However, he realized that in terms of a job like this, they couldn't defeat the Demon Extermination Squad at all. Even Stella, the most efficient person in the squad, was completely defeated by these three.

That was why Noel couldn't help but feel amazed by their performance and wondered what kind of training they had in order to be that good.

Noel didn't realize that the people from his squad might not be the best at fighting, but they were certainly the best in anything related to structure.

That was the reason why he was even selected by Septa in the first place.

Noel was simply not satisfied with his current power and wanted to get more.

So, whenever the three people from the Demon Extermination Squad took action, he would be there to observe them.

His gaze was so intense that the three felt it easily. But they didn't say anything since it didn't do any harm. They simply continued their task and reached the next room within fifteen minutes from the expected twenty to twenty-five minutes.

Inside the new room, they found other machines and a lot of pills. Some pills even fell to the ground, while some seemed to have been eaten.

After that, they continued to the next room and found a lot of containers falling to the ground. It seemed that the demons had completely ransacked the entire room.

The container didn't seem to be spilling any liquid, considering the floor looked clean.

Since they had reached the third room, Noel finally confirmed their suspicion.

He gathered the entire group and wrote on his note.

"I believe everyone has reached the same conclusion just from looking at the drugs scattered around the second room, as well as the containers on the ground here."

"This place is indeed a place where people are getting treated. I don't understand why they need a lot of room like this, but I'm sure that they offer a different treatment."

"If I'm not wrong, the people above us will find a lot of rooms similar to this. It must be the rooms where the patients are allowed to rest."

"I have seen a similar room from the surveillance spots, so I think I'm correct about this one."

After writing those words, Noel looked at all of them as if asking them whether they had an objection to the conclusion.

No one raised an objection. Even though they weren't as smart as Noel or an expert in structure, they could understand Noel's explanation before that deduction. They had arrived at the same conclusion.

"In that case, I'll give you the conclusion. If you have gone to the capital, you should be aware of this building. It's a place where you treat a lot of people, but all these pills should be in the pharmacy. I believe this place is a combination of a health center and a pharmacy."

"Now that we are aware of what kind of facility this building is, we should decide what to do next."

The three members of the Demon Extermination Squad didn't hesitate to look at Septa. He was the strongest and currently their leader, so he should decide their next move.

Septa thought for a moment. Although he wanted to praise Noel for his ability, he couldn't open his mouth yet. He also had to come up with their next plan.

After two minutes, Septa wrote down his idea.

"No matter how good the current situation is, there is no way it will go according to our plan during the expedition. That's how dangerous the expedition is."

"Now that we have understood the identity of this facility, we can change our plan. Instead of dealing with the demons bit by bit while exploring like this, we should find a way to eliminate a lot of demons at once, making things a bit easier on our side."

"Of course, if it's possible, we want to kill any Superior Demon in this place. But even at this time, not a single of them has been found. Considering the number of demons, there should be at least three Superior Demons around us."

"And if you take a look at the containers on the ground, it's clear that someone must have eaten the drugs here. The demons must be the culprit."

"The reason why the expeditions are dangerous was because the items inside the building itself can strengthen the demons. That's why the demons who eat the drugs here must have mutated and become stronger. They would be Peak Level Demons if not Superior Demons by now."

"That's why we should regroup with the others and thin out their number before continuing our exploration. And I think we will hear a lot of ruckuses not long after this if my prediction is correct..." Septa stopped for a moment as if falling into deep thought.

After a while, he crossed the last sentence as if he wanted to take back those words. The only one who understood his meaning might be Noel.

As expected, Septa was actually trying to investigate the Plant Lord and currently he had some suspicion.

He must want to end the exploration for this group as quickly as possible so that he could catch the Plant Lord in action.

Septa hurriedly corrected his words.

"We'll leave the building and return to the base. You guys are to escort ladre to the base while I'll stay here after showing you the path. I'll inform the rest of the people to regroup. It's easier for me to move around by myself as the captain of the Demon Beholder Squad, so I hope you can follow my instruction."

Chapter 615 Demon Awakening

His instruction was frowned upon. On the one hand, everyone here was loyal to their squad. They had a sense of camaraderie. There was no way they wanted to leave their team in this dangerous place while they were going to a safe place.

On the other hand, they could understand why Septa wished to move around. With Septa's ability as a captain of the Demon Beholder Squad, it should be easier for him to move around by himself. Yes, they acknowledged the fact that they were dragging him down.

The only reason why they were here was because Septa required their specialty. But this time, he only had to sneak around.

Noel glanced at the three from the Demon Extermination Squad, wondering their decision. The trio also looked at him with a serious expression. It seemed they had made their decision.

Without even saying a single word, they had come to a tacit understanding. They should leave this place and allow Septa to do the rest.

However, Noel wasn't someone who would just agree without fighting back. He wrote a few things on his note.

"This exploration can't be called a success yet. We might have found the identity of the building, but we haven't found the hidden nest or explored the rest of the building."

"So, this retreat only serves as bait to thin out the number of the demons. After that, we shall enter this place again, as you said earlier."

"But before that, we have to spread them. The number of the demons is still too much for all of us to take them down, even with the help of the fort. Hence, I'll go back and create more ditches and traps around the fort. I hope you can buy us enough time to do that."

"And I still haven't forgotten about my true role. I have to create a map of the building... According to the information, there is a flammable gas in this area. Captain Clara has told me about it, so if possible, could you find it? It's going to be important for our exploration."

The three people from the Demon Extermination Squad were dumbfounded. This was the first time there was someone who dared to order a captain.

This ladre was a person from the Demon Relief Squad. Even though he was a Zero Squad, his rank wasn't enough to tell Septa all this.

However, Noel dared to do it because he knew that Septa would do it. After all, there was no way he hadn't figured out ladre's true identity. He wouldn't have become the captain of the Demon Beholder Squad if he hadn't found out about it.

This was the exact reason why he was so sure about Septa's reply.

Septa actually nodded to him as if he was planning to follow his instruction.

The Demon Extermination Squad was an extremely strict squad. Since the command was absolute, they became this disciplined and strong. They couldn't understand Septa's action, but at the same time, they didn't stop Noel. Captain Septa had agreed, so who were they to stop him?

Now that they had reached an agreement, all of them prepared themselves to leave the building. They checked the situation from the window. Septa might have predicted that they would leave after reaching the third room, so he decided that the third room should be close to the outside.

And there was only one thing they needed to exit. It was to open that window.

Septa made sure first that no demons were nearby before opening the windows. He even took a peek before he waved his hand, telling them to go.

One person left.

Two people exited.

Three people came out.

But when Noel was about to jump off, there was a huge roar that shook the entire building.

Roar!

Roar!

Roar!

"!!!" All of them immediately stopped and subconsciously looked in the direction of the roar. Their faces became pale because the roars were something different from before.

Normally, the roar would be followed by a series of answers from other demons. But this time, the roar wasn't accompanied by anything. The only reply was in the form of action.

The entire building soon became active as the demons began to move around as if they were trying to follow the instruction hidden inside that roar.

All of them knew this roar was an order. And there was only one demon that dared to order the demons around without anyone complaining.

A Superior Demon's roar.

As they thought about it, they looked at each other, wondering what they should do. The three Demon Extermination Squad members had turned around, ready to fight the demons from the outside.

Meanwhile, Septa opened his mouth. They didn't have time to quietly discuss things anymore. He even pushed Noel out before jumping off the window himself.

"Follow me, hurry up!"

Septa didn't even wait for their reply as he had already used his fastest speed to reach the woods near the building.

Noel and the other three were confused, but they knew that if they didn't act, they would become dinner. So, they hurriedly followed Septa.

This was the first time for Noel to see Septa in action. And surprisingly, there was nothing happening.

They didn't encounter any demons, nor did they cross difficult terrain. And this was the reason why Septa was terrifying.

There should be a lot of demons roaming in this area. Yet, Septa managed to avoid all of them while choosing a good terrain to cross.

His sense alone might be far better than that of Rose. And the way he executed it was impeccable.

He felt safe when Septa led them. And in the end, they managed to leave the area without meeting a single monster.

But the moment they reached the safe area, Septa turned around, saying with a panicked tone. "You guys go to the fort right away. I have to leave or it will be too late. Prepare everything because we don't know what will happen after this. And... Don't follow me."

Chapter 616 Three Plants

A moment ago.

The Plant Lord had reached the top floor.

The person from Septa's squad wrote down on the note to communicate, "There is a path leading to the rooftop if we continue, but it's locked."

The Plant Lord glanced to the side. The stairs still continued even though they were on the top floor. So, it was clear the stairs were leading them to the rooftop.

But since their scout had confirmed that it was locked, they had two options. First, they could go to this floor to check the situation around or they could blast open the door to the rooftop and reach their original destination.

The Plant Lord looked down, contemplating for a moment. He placed his hand on the ground and started channeling a minimum amount of Spiritual Energy as if he was trying to scan the area.

The Plant Lord opened his eyes and grabbed the note.

"Since nature has taken over the building, I can sense the plants around us. Unfortunately, the rooftop doesn't seem to have anything useful for us. So, we shall explore the top floor."

"There are approximately three monsters near us. So, we'll kill them the moment we come out of this passage."

The Plant Lord drew a sketch of the layout and pointed at the three locations.

All of them looked at each other, wondering what they should do.

"I shall take the farthest one. Can your speed handle the other two?" The Plant Lord asked on the note while staring at the people from the Demon Extermination Squad.

They nodded without hesitation. They were only unsure about the farthest demon because they weren't as strong as their captain of Septa.

Since the Plant Lord wanted to handle that demon, they obviously agreed to the suggestion.

The person from the Demon Beholder Squad took a peek through the window on the door, trying to locate the demons. It seemed the Plant Lord gave the correct information.

So, he nodded his head, showing that the plan was feasible.

Since they had reached an agreement, the only Demon Relief Squad member that joined their team, Zion, opened the door for them.

Without hesitation, all three members of the Demon Extermination Squad members jumped out while wielding their weapons, eliminating the two demons near them.

The farthest demon found their movement and wanted to let out a roar to inform the others, but there was a plant branch near him. That branch suddenly came to life and extend itself, grabbing the demons from the feet to its mouth and stopping it from doing anything.

Since it hadn't died, the trio ended up moving toward the third demon and delivered the killing blow.

With this, the entire floor was clear.

Zion and the Plant Lord came out of the passage. The Plant Lord immediately took the right turn while Zion looked around to observe the layout of the top floor. As expected, there was a void that led to the bottom floor, but most of the area was blocked by the walls.

'The top floor has the least amount of demons. But there's no way it's only inhabited by three demons. We have to immediately dispose of the corpses and hide somewhere.' Zion thought before realizing that the Plant Lord had entered the room near the corner.

Confused, Zion tried to follow him, wondering what he was planning to do. He entered the room to follow him while the others disposed of the corpses.

When he arrived, the Plant Lord didn't even bother to glance at him. He continued to stroke the plant's trunk that managed to pierce through the building and reach this height.

It turned out there was a tall tree inside the facility. And this tree occupied a third of the room.

He didn't know what the Plant Lord planned to do.

But it seemed the latter had realized his presence and opened his mouth as if thinking there was no other demon that would hear them. "This tree is around seven hundred years old. Its branches should have spread to the entire building and its roots should have become the demon nest.

"Is it fine to speak here?" Zion asked carefully.

"I already said that the tree has spread its branches all over the place. I can sense what the tree is feeling, so I know their location."

"Are you already aware of this tree? Shouldn't we go with the others to see this tree on the first floor?" Zion asked another question while frowning. It was weird for the Plant Lord to wait this long.

If they moved according to Zion's scenario, they would be able to have a lot of brains to think about their next move. It would be better if the Plant Lord used that sensation to find the demons so that they could kill them.

He even knew that the roots were used as the demon nest, so he couldn't help but suspect him.

The Plant Lord shook his head calmly as if he wasn't bothered by Zion's reaction. "That's what I wanted to do at first, but there is something wrong with the sensation. It seems that there are a total of three plants that spread their existence all over the building."

"I'm currently checking this tree to find their existence. I'm afraid that I need to confirm these three plants first before I can do anything."

"And if my ability is on point, one of the plants is not on the first floor. That's why I can't go with them. I have to go to the upper floor to confirm the existence of all these plants."

Zion fell silent. It was absurd, but he didn't know the full extent of the Plant Lord's strength. So, it seemed that they had to work with his current explanation.

Zion asked, "So, are we going to move around to check the existence of the other two plants?"

"Yes. Fortunately, their branches are on the top floor as well. We can take advantage of the situation to check on them. This would allow us to pinpoint all the demons inside the building. Depending on their size, we might be able to locate the demon nest hidden in this building."

Zion let out a long sigh. "I understand. I'll cooperate. What should I do?"

Chapter 617 Mushroom

Zion cooperated with the Plant Lord, trying to locate the other two plants. They were following the Plant Lord and moved stealthily to avoid the demon's detection.

The Demon Extermination Squad managed to kill all the demons quickly and precisely, allowing them to die before they could do anything.

It seemed that the Plant Lord also helped them by asking the plant to help him. He extended the plants and captured all those demons so that the others could kill them for him.

As for Zion, he had an easier time compared to the rest. His role had changed from mapping the area and gathering the necessary items they could find in this place to someone who helped the Plant Lord locate the plants.

They moved swiftly and found the second plant not far from their current location. The Plant Lord immediately checked the plant and confirmed its identity.

Then they continued to move to the third plant. They had a hard time finding this one because it was the plant that didn't have anybody on the first floor. Unlike the other two plants, its body was hard to find.

They had checked the branches or leaves that stuck out around the top floor, but most of them belonged to the two plants. The rest were wild plants that weren't as mighty as the other two.

So, they had to keep searching, wondering where they could find the third plant.

However, everything changed thirty minutes after they found the second plant.

A demon suddenly let out a roar as if it noticed something.

Roar!

This roar was different from the rest as it wasn't followed by another series of roars but a series of actions.

"!!!" Zion widened his eyes in shock as he checked the area around, wondering if the demons would come to them.

The members of the Demon Beholder Squad even took a peek at the void to check the condition on the other floors.

It was chaotic. Some of the members who were outside earlier were taken aback by the roar and ended up facing the demons. These demons let out a roar to inform their people.

Meanwhile, those who were inside were trying to erase their presence, doing their best to wait until the situation calmed down before continuing the exploration.

He gritted his teeth, wondering what they should do. On the one hand, their floor seemed to be safe, as they had killed almost all the demons on their floor. The remaining demons would go to their destination without passing their location, so they could remain here and remain undisturbed.

On the other hand, the current situation was worse than he thought. The demons had found at least two out of the five groups. Even if they came out and brought those two squads away, the demons would still be alarmed.

However, that nightmare didn't stop there.

There was a sudden surge of Spiritual Energy coming from the bottom floor.

The increase was so drastic that it alarmed him, who was sensitive to Spiritual Energy.

'This is... a Superior Demon?' The guy thought while taking a peek at the bottom floor, wondering if there was a demon coming out. He wanted to see whether there was a hidden entrance or not.

However, he couldn't see anything as the Spiritual Energy gradually changed its position.

'He's leaving?' The guy gritted his teeth before moving away, informing the others. "The situation is not good. The demons have located the Stone Lord and Captain Clara's squads. Captain Shale seems to be hiding at the moment, but I can't see anything regarding the bottom floor..."

"And judging from the surge of Spiritual Energy, I'm afraid a Superior Demon has left the building. There might be more Superior Demons since the Superior Demon this time casually leaves its nest. What should we do, Sir Plant Lord?"

The Plant Lord narrowed his eyes for a moment before pointing upward. "We should go to the rooftop. With the current situation, the demons will have a hard time hearing the door being blasted open. We will use the rooftop to check the situation around the building and try to evacuate. I believe the other two squads are going to retreat since the Superior Demon has begun to move. We should regroup with the others first and thin out their number before continuing the exploration."

The others seemed to have no objection. Although the building was quite tall, they weren't so weak that they couldn't jump off the building. So, it was better to figure out the situation.

Without hesitation, the squad immediately returned to the passage and blasted open the door, allowing them to reach the rooftop.

They remained low so as to not show themselves to the demons. Meanwhile, the guy from the Demon Beholder Squad kept checking the situation around, finding an escape route.

After five minutes, he came back and informed them of the good news. "I've found the escape route. Captain Clara and Stone Lord's squads are heading to the north, so the demons are chasing them right now. We should go to the south and head back to the camp to get reinforcement or at least regroup with Captain Shale."

They didn't have any objections. Without hesitation, they moved toward the edge of the building.

They took a peek first to make sure the demons weren't waiting for them down there.

After they were sure that the demons were chasing after Captain Clara and the Stone Lord, they jumped off the building and started retreating from the area.

However, none of them realized what happened on the top floor.

On the tree trunk and branches the Plant Lord found at first and on the branches of the second plant, there were some mushrooms that weren't supposed to be there earlier.

Two types of mushrooms seemed to have grown in a short amount of time and were releasing their pollen. The pollen was invisible to the naked eye and didn't have Spiritual Energy, so no one seemed to have noticed it.

Though, there might be someone who has realized the entire plan.

The top floor might look empty, but the shadow of a few objects seemed to be moving despite not having anything that could interrupt the source of light.

Chapter 618 Trace

The entire area turned chaotic the moment the Superior Demon came out of its hiding.

Clara looked around as if staring at the amount of Spiritual Energy the demons were emanating around her. She realized that the situation was pretty dangerous.

Luckily, the escape this time was a joint effort with the Stone Lord's group.

Clara looked at the Stone Lord and asked, "Do you have any way to stop them?"

"There is a Superior Demon chasing after us. Even if we can stop the Superior Demon, there are too many demons to fight. I'm afraid your subordinates will die if we fight them here."

"No. I just want you to stop a portion of them. At least, this will allow us to have an easier time. We'll thin them out while holding the rear after that. As for the Superior Demon, we'll join hands so that we don't lose any speed." Clara explained her plan with a serious expression.

The Stone Lord didn't have a lot of time to think. Since it was reasonable, the Stone Lord said, "Alright. I'll form a lot of walls around us, turning this place into a labyrinth. It won't trick Advanced Level Demons or above, but the rest usually try to avoid walls. Thankfully, there are a lot of trees that can be used as a pillar."

"Got it. We'll regroup with group B before returning to the fort to get a terrain advantage to kill these demons."

The Stone Lord nodded. Since they had reached an agreement, the Stone Lord immediately raised his staff. He created a golem to carry him this whole time, so he could spare some focus on the labyrinth creation.

"Legies De's El Stone." The Stone Lord released the Spiritual Energy gathered on his wand.

Numerous trees suddenly exuded a brown-colored Spiritual Energy. Those brown Spiritual Energy linked to each other in a random way before a stone wall came out of the ground, turning the woods into a labyrinth.

As expected, the Advanced Level Demon recognized these walls to be superficial. So, they blasted through them with their power. It didn't take too much power, so they believed this was the best option to go through the labyrinth.

However, the Low Level Demons and Mid Level Demons that were in front of them followed the labyrinth while trying to move forward. Unfortunately, it caused them to slow down.

The demons behind them caught up to them in no time, especially the ones behind the Advanced Level Demons or even the Peak Level Demons.

But because of the sudden intrusion and the low intelligence of the Low and Mid Level Demons, they ended up crashing into each other.

Roar!

Roar!

Roar!

The demons were angry at each other, but some of them died after being stepped on by a lot of demons behind them.

With this, the Stone Lord and Clara had more time to react against their enemies. Since no one was below Spirit Master Level, they didn't feel threatened by the Advanced Level Demons.

They only feared retaliation from the Peak Level Demons and the Superior Demon. The Peak Level Demons moved like they were not bothered by what was happening to the other demons.

Meanwhile, the Superior Demon hadn't shown itself as if it was waiting for the right opportunity to attack the two squads.

...

While they were chased by the demons, there was someone that still tried to go back to the building, searching for something.

He went straight to the passage and tried to go to the highest floor.

Since the door to the roof was open, he checked it first. Unfortunately, there was no trace of a fight or investigation on the roof.

He could easily see a few footsteps that led to the edge of the building, but it should be used as an escape path.

So, he returned to the inside and checked the top floor.

He closed his eyes for a moment before forming a barrier in front of him.

"Trace on." He muttered in a low voice before opening his eyes. "That way, huh."

The barrier actually showed a record of the Plant Lord moving with Zion as if they were searching for something.

They went into the room near the corner, raising the guy's suspicion. He snapped his finger, breaking the barrier into pieces. After that, he moved toward the said room and found nothing.

There was only a tree that pierced through the building. There was no monster or any trace of the room being investigated.

'What's going on with this room?' The guy frowned and formed another barrier. "Trace on."

He channeled his Spiritual Energy to the room and barrier, allowing the barrier to release the track of all the traces of Spiritual Energy inside the room, projecting it like a recording.

This way, he would be able to see everything that happened inside the room.

And to his surprise, the Plant Lord and Zion didn't do anything other than admire the tree. Although the record didn't have any sound since it only tracked the Spiritual Energy, their actions were extremely clear.

"This is..." the guy widened his eyes in shock as he approached the tree.

He knelt down and looked at the branch on the floor. To his surprise, there were mushrooms growing on the branch.

In the recording, there were no mushrooms growing on the branch earlier, so it was clear that there was someone who planted these mushrooms.

"Still, among the two, the only possible suspect is none other than the Plant Lord. Zion... was it? Although he is a good fighter, he doesn't seem to have this kind of ability."

"Besides, these mushrooms... I think I have seen them somewhere. If I remember correctly, the blue one is Aldiesta Mushroom. It has the effect of disturbing the flow of Spiritual Energy. It doesn't have a huge effect, but strong demons or humans with extreme senses would notice the change."

"And this other mushroom... Malafeita Mushroom. It's a mushroom to hide the flow of Spiritual Energy. It's effective to hide your presence from low level demons..."

"This..." The guy looked down, contemplating.

Chapter 619 Secret Mission

"This..." The guy looked down, contemplating. He couldn't help but remember what happened before the expedition.

Back then, he received a summon from his mentor, the previous captain of the Demon Beholder Squad.

He stood there, looking at an old man who seemed to have been too weak to move.

"Septa..." The guy smiled while calling his name. His eyes were closed, but he seemed to be able to find Septa without any problems.

"Yes, Sir. I have arrived upon your call. May I know why you call me here? You are not a person who would call me without any reason, so I'm afraid..." Septa didn't continue, but the meaning was already clear.

Since he had predicted it, the old man didn't even bother to hide it anymore. He said, "I got a piece of information from an old friend, you see..."

"An old friend?"

"Yeah. That freak who lurked in the shadow. It's a pretty interesting piece of information, you see."

"I think you should cut to the chase."

"Alright then." The old man smiled. "I am asking you, as your mentor as well as the previous captain of the Demon Beholder Squad, to investigate the Plant Lord during the expedition."

"Hmm? You have received information about the expedition? And why the Plant Lord?"

"According to my information, the Plant Lord seems to be related to the Supreme Devil Organization in one way or another. Unfortunately, we don't have any proof right now. The only thing we know is that the Plant Lord has a high probability of screwing all of you during the expedition."

"That's why I want you to investigate him." The old man paused for a moment. "You should understand by now. The main reason for you to be my successor was your ability... The Spirit with sixth sense where it can track all traces of Spiritual Energy and project it with the Barrier Ability..."

"That ability is so powerful, especially in our line of work. And because it's too dangerous and sensitive, I and the commander have been keeping your ability a secret since you are one of the trump cards to finding the Supreme Devil Organization."

"People only know that you can project something with your barrier ability, they don't know where the projection comes from."

"That's why in this investigation, I want you to give the Plant Lord an opportunity to screw all of you. Basically, allow him to be alone where he can utilize his ability."

"And we will use your ability to prove his action."

Septa thought for a moment. "Are you saying that we should expose my ability?"

"No. You just have to confirm and gather the proof with your ability. That's all."

"So, I don't need to kill them? To be honest, my strength is not equal to the Plant Lord."

"That's why I'm only asking you to gather the proof. As long as you confirm that the Plant Lord is doing something bad to the group, I want you to put a note with whatever you can find as confirmation."

"The rest will be handled by the others. Well, to put it simply, let the executors do their jobs."

"!!!" Septa widened his eyes in shock. Although he could gather the proof, if he had to prove it, he had to reveal the secret of his ability. So, there was no way the commander would do it just to prove that they were not related to the Plant Lord's death.

Hence, the only outcome of this execution was friction between the Demon Banner Army and the Tower Association. There was no way the elders wouldn't hold the Demon Banner Army accountable, considering they lent the elders so that they could investigate the surroundings.

In other words, they were not there as their fighting force to begin with. So, their safety was under the Demon Banner Army's care. That was why the Tower Association would use this to cause some problems for the Demon Banner Army.

Septa couldn't agree to this. There were only four people who knew about his true ability: his mentor, the commander, the adjudicator, and himself. All of them were related to the Demon Banner Army; this showed how much Septa cared about the army. There was no way he wanted to harm them like this.

The old man saw through him and said, "You don't have to worry about it, Septa. We have prepared for everything. There won't be any problem with the Demon Banner Army. If something happens to the Demon Banner Army, you can go to me again."

Septa was hesitant, but it seemed that the old man was confident with his plan.

After some consideration, he finally nodded his head. "I understand. I shall follow your plan. Is there anything else I need to know?"

"The executioner is my old pal. I don't understand how his mind works, but if you somehow meet him, be respectful."

"..." Septa couldn't comment on that since it wasn't that important.

Though, when he remembered the conversation at this time, Septa couldn't help but look at the mushroom and said, "It seems that the Plant Lord has betrayed the kingdom and humanity. There is no proof that the Plant Lord did it for the organization, but he must be doing it for a kind of plot..."

"That's why my job is to investigate, not to execute or prosecute that person. After this, I shall begin a full investigation regarding the Plant Lord to see his current affiliation. If he's truly related to the organization, then I shall expose him."

"And this kind of job will be easy since I don't think the Plant Lord will leave this place alive, meaning that no one will take care of his things anymore."

"Isn't that right, Mr. Executor? No, I should be polite to you... Sir Executor."

Septa talked as if he knew there was someone in the room. Actually, Septa didn't know whether that executor was still in the room or not. What he knew was that the executor once visited this room.

In the recording earlier, he noticed a slight change in the shadow. It was the only trace he needed.

He suddenly turned around, looking at the wall. To his surprise, the wall suddenly had a human shadow that turned out to be the extension of his shadow.

This shadow had a blood-red mouth and eyes as if it was alive. And this shadow suddenly... smiled.

Chapter 620 Suggestion

"We are from the exploration squad." Noel and the other three members from the Demon Extermination Squad waved their hands to the people on the fort.

Those who had been standing on top of the wall saw them and immediately jumped over the wall to check on them.

"I am ladre from the Demon Relief Squad. These three are from the Demon Extermination Squad. I bring bad news with me." Noel gritted his teeth.

The moment Noel mentioned 'bad news,' the scout's expression turned serious.

"Please go in. The Demon Extermination Squad's Vice Captain Rhane has returned to the fort and taken over the command."

Noel exchanged looks with the trio as they agreed to report to her.

They were immediately brought to the main tent where they usually held the meeting.

"Vice Captain Rhane. There are a few people from the exploration squad returning to this fort and they want to talk to you."

Rhane, who was frowning as she examined the map, couldn't help but shift her focus.

"Tell them to come in." Rhane nodded.

Not long after, Noel and the others entered. Rhane instantly recognized all of them. The three members aside, Rhane had seen Noel in the meeting since Clara always brought him.

"You are... ladre... the masked man that Captain Clara had always brought to the meeting." Rhane narrowed her eyes and asked, "Why do you return and what is happening in the facility?"

Noel glanced at the map first before reporting, "The condition has become chaotic. The demons have been alarmed and a Superior Demon has left the facility. Captain Septa, who is supposed to be with us, has chosen to return to help the other groups. So, that leaves us to report."

Rhane furrowed her eyebrows. That glance at the map didn't escape her eyes. She immediately asked, "Why did you glance? It seemed you could read the map. In that case, could you tell me the current situation with this map?"

Noel nodded. "Yes, Ma'am."

"We don't know much about the current situation. However, the fact that they are alarmed like this means a group has been found out. At first, we split ourselves into five smaller groups."

"But the demons started to become chaotic as if someone was being spotted. However, I noticed something from that roar. Instead of continuous roars like channeling the information to the entire facility, there was only a single roar."

"The demons didn't spread the message. So, the one that gave such an order must be a powerful demon. But if a Peak Level Demon wouldn't be powerful enough to do such a thing. The only one that could release that roar and order all those demons was..."

Rhane frowned. "That Superior Demon..."

"Yes. We left pretty early so that we didn't get caught, so we didn't know the situation that much. But if my understanding about the groups is correct, once the demons are released from the facility, they will be leading them to the north." Noel pointed at the woods north of the facility.

Rhane thought for a moment. "It's possible. Our people are directing those demons to the east. So, if we take a look at the map, the only possible route is to direct them to the north. They will loop around through the western area to confuse the demons before eventually going to the south and reaching this place.

"What are their numbers?" Rhane asked as if she was planning to intercept them.

"We are not sure. But I don't think there is more than one Superior Demon currently. So, I believe they are trying to confuse the demons and regroup with the rest in this fort."

Rhane thought for a moment. "It seems that the situation is worse than I thought. The number of demons isn't much of a problem, but we lack information. We don't know the extent of their strength. How many Peak Level Demons and Superior Demons do the enemies have?"

"And there is a chance that the facility has more than one Superior Demon. So, it will make the situation worse if we charge blindly."

Noel agreed with her assessment. The Demon Extermination Squad might look like they were a group of people with muscle brains. But looking at Shale and Rhane, it felt like they were more rational than his original expectation.

Since it was possible to reason with her, Noel gave her a suggestion. "I think we should reinforce the fort while setting up a group of scouts around us so that they can measure the number of the enemies, including the reinforcement from the facility."

"Then, we're going to set up an ambush squad as well. But the ambush squad only has one person, which is extremely efficient in this situation. He is the Plant Lord. We are surrounded by thick trees, so if he ambushes the enemies from the side or even their back, we should be able to repel the enemies without a great loss."

Rhane thought Noel's plan was reasonable, but there was one thing she couldn't accept. "Unfortunately, it will endanger the Plant Lord. He is here not to explore the facility but to support us with his knowledge. So, we have to protect him. Giving him this risky role will cause some problems with the Tower Association."

Noel suggested another idea. "In that case, why don't we give him a scout? With his power, it should be easy to avoid their detection range. As long as he attacks them from a safe distance, he should be safe most of the time. Then, we can simply give him a scout to lead him to a safe location in case something happens."

"I'll try to convince Captain Clara to suggest this idea as well. But I need your approval so that we can start early. The sooner we prepare, the less casualties we will get."

Noel's expression was serious, thinking she would be convinced with this arrangement.

Still, Rhane was a bit hesitant in sending the Plant Lord to such a risky move. But since a Captain would be involved in the decision making, she nodded.

"I authorize early preparation. But the final decision will lie on the captains and the two elders."

"Got it. Thank you very much."