

## S vs Rebirth 691

### Chapter 691 Small Trick

"We have our own objective."

'Their own objective?' The serpent furrowed her eyebrows as she noticed that message. However, a part of her couldn't help but doubt that sentence. 'Is this just a trick to fool me? If he is truly the one who has been fooling us, there is a big chance that he is saying those words just to confuse me.'

The serpent took a deep breath while hiding behind the snake, trying to find something that would give her a clue about their objective. If she couldn't find it, she would treat it as a trick.

The snake started moving toward Noel, the most dangerous person among them.

It looked like the snake was going to kill Noel, but Hailfa didn't forget their objective, which was to kidnap Noel. That was why she wanted to make Noel think they had a change of plan and decided to kill him to lower his guard against kidnapping.

Noel raised his sword and took a step forward with his right foot. It didn't seem he was planning to dodge.

He even used the Muscle Enhancement Rune and Spirit Blessing Rune to confront this snake.

Seeing Noel's serious face, Rose hurriedly commanded the others. "Attack that woman."

"!!!" They were startled because Noel was in danger. But they remembered when Noel said they had to take orders no matter how strange it was. Although it wasn't from Noel, it was from Rose, the second brain of the group.

"You all are insane." Hailfa narrowed her eyes while raising both daggers, trying to protect herself. At the same time, she was controlling the snake. Since they were targeting her instead, it was convenient for her since it gave her an opportunity to kidnap Noel.

Unfortunately, it seemed that she was still underestimating Noel too much. It might be because Noel had just joined the Demon Banner Army not long ago, but Noel's strength was completely on a different level.

He used the Everchanging Emotion Sword Style to change the purpose of his sword. The emotion he used was contempt which allowed him to look down on everything as if he had the power to do so. And this power gave him the ability to strike the target precisely.

In addition, Noel coated the sword with Spirit Weaponry. When the snake was about to reach him, he used the Split Step to make his body seem to split into two.

"!!!" The snake paused for a moment because it was confused. Obviously, the snake was completely linked to Hailfa, and the latter had trouble recognizing him. She took a gamble and went after the right one.

"..." Noel frowned and hurriedly struck the snake's fang, stopping it. At the same time, the other Noel disappeared.

It might be lucky, but Noel knew that not everything would go according to his way.

He hurriedly changed his approach from Spirit Weaponry to Ignition Sword. The Ignition Sword exploded, blowing the snake's head.

Unfortunately for him, the snake was made of Spiritual Energy, so it didn't feel any pain. However, the explosion force still knocked the head slightly, allowing him to approach the snake's body.

He returned with the Spirit Weaponry and struck the snake's body multiple times. The Contempt Emotion allowed him to strike right at the gap between scales.

The snake was being cut all over as Spiritual Energy was leaking out of the body. It ended up disappearing since it would be a hassle to manage that kind of snake even with Spirit Grandmaster's Spiritual Energy Reserve.

Noel turned around to check on Hailfa.

\*Clink!\*

\*Clink!\*

\*Clink!\*

A series of clicking sounds echoed on the battlefield as Stella struck her with a few quick strikes, trying to overpower her with momentum. But as a Spirit Grandmaster, she maintained her calm the whole time, parrying one strike after another.

Jonathan waved his hand down, putting the pressure on top of her.

"!!!" The invisible pressure was pinning her to the ground. Although she could still move, her speed was reduced.

At the same time, Zion and Ben approached her from two different directions. Zion used his extraordinary speed and weight to kick her.

But Hailfa's movement was more refined than he thought. Even without strength equal to Zion's momentum and weight, she could still deal with this type of attack.

She struck his boot slightly before using the soft approach to let his body slide before redirecting it to Ben, who came from the opposite direction.

"What?" Zion was shocked for two reasons. 'Her speed is below me, but the way she controls her strength is more refined than anyone in the squad. And the way she counters my momentum with soft strength... I guess I should say as expected of a Devil Bishop...'

Luckily, Ben managed to avoid Zion even though his momentum had to stop.

Hailfa took advantage of it to jump toward Ben, trying to take advantage of this situation to kill at least one member.

"!!!" Ben hurriedly threw his body to the side when he saw Hailfa appearing in front of him. However, her dagger managed to graze Ben's cheek.

'I got him!' Hailfa thought. Her daggers were laced on poison, so it would become fatal if they ever got hit by it. After all, this was her specialty. She might not be a good fighter, but her power was surely terrifying.

To her surprise, Ben suddenly spun his body and kicked her on the waist.

"Kh." Hailfa instinctively used her Spiritual Energy to block it, but the impact still felt like it moved her organs a bit and the force knocked her away.

She hurriedly stood back up and checked Ben, thinking the poison should be working by now. But when she looked at Ben's face, the wound suddenly disappeared as though it had never existed.

'Huh, why?' Hailfa's body trembled before her head turned to Rose. That was right. Rose was using her illusion to lower her guard and allow the others to counterattack.

"So, you are the one who I should kill first." Hailfa gritted her teeth, changing her target to Rose.

Chapter 692 Situation

Hailfa leaped forth, approaching Rose. However, Noel suddenly came in her way, striking her dagger with a sword covered in black flame.

\*Clink!\*

\*Clink!\*

\*Clink!\*

The clash lasted for four strikes as Hailfa was forced to retreat when she noticed something from the flame.

When she retreated, she took a glimpse of her dagger's condition. To her surprise, there was a slight dent on her dagger as though it was melting a moment ago.

She realized that the flame was so overbearing that it could melt something despite not releasing that much heat.

At the same time, the poison that covered the dagger had been completely burned. So, even if she attacked someone with these daggers, they wouldn't be poisoned.

It seemed that she had underestimated them too much.

'I guess they should at least be this strong if they want to keep ruining our plan... Normally, a Vice Captain would have trouble dealing with just one Devil Bishop. Well, that demon pair is equal to a normal Devil Bishop, so splitting them is a good idea. Even a Vice Captain should be able to stop them... not defeat them though.'

'But more importantly, these six people are extremely good at their coordination. It feels like there is someone who is controlling their movement. It must be the one with illusion ability.'

'With how they are fighting me, I should have no problem in killing them. But it will take a while since I have to wear down their stamina first, so their movement will become sloppy.'

'I guess I will have to fight them for another two hours before I can do anything. That demon pair should probably need around that time to defeat both Vice Captains. As for Sir Laufey, I don't know someone of that level, but there shouldn't be anyone that has the power to contend with Sir Laufey in this kingdom... At least, the ones with their identity known...'

Hailfa judged that the situation was a bit tricky. On the one hand, their victory was just a matter of time. On the other hand, two to three hours would be extremely dangerous.

It was true that they could win, but they would be pretty exhausted as well. There was a high chance that these people would escape back to the wall. And if they were to choose another fort to attack, they would be exhausted and have little time to recover before the reinforcement came.

'In that case, I should take some risk. Sir will surely reward me if I manage to capture Noel Ardagan, right? Besides, his flame can even burn my poison. Even if I poison him a little bit, he should be able to survive.'

Hailfa took a deep breath. A snake tattoo on her back suddenly shone and started expanding as though it was alive.

The snake tattoo started to appear around her arms as the poison density around her increased drastically.

"!!!" Noel widened his eyes in shock, feeling the change in the poison.

"Not good!" Noel hurriedly charged at her with his black fire, striking her. The flame also flared up as though it was trying to devour the poison emitting from her body. "I am going to be the vanguard. Be careful when attacking her! Her poison shouldn't work against me."

Hailfa smiled as she skillfully parried his attack with a dagger. And because Noel was a bit rushed, she managed to spin her body around and struck his left arm.

As expected of Noel, his basics were solid after Dimitri's lesson. That was why he managed to avoid it at the last second. Instead of a deep cut on his arm that might disable his arm, he was only left with a small graze.

But this was enough for Hailfa. In front of Noel, who could burn her poison easily, it meant she had to fight him with pure swordsmanship. Even though in pure strength, she was a little bit weaker than Paul, she was still a Spirit Grandmaster.

The more they fought, the more disadvantage Noel would get. And that strike was enough to prove it.

Hailfa smiled. She planned to create a distance from the rest of the people while weakening Noel this way. With this, she should be able to capture Noel within one hour.

Noel gritted his teeth in frustration. There was no way he wouldn't realize her intention. But the poison emitting from her body was truly too strong for Spirit Masters. If it was Paul or someone, the amount of their Spiritual Energy should be able to stop the poison from entering their body for some time.

But in this group, only Noel, with his Undying Fire as well as Freezing Crystal could burn or freeze the poison in the air and the one in his body. That was why he had to take this job even if it meant he had to fight by himself.

\*Cling!\*

\*Cling!\*

\*Cling!\*

They traded a hundred blows within five minutes. The others could only look from the distance while trying to find a gap in the poison to strike Hailfa. Of course, they didn't go to others because if Noel was alone, Hailfa wouldn't hesitate to capture Noel and bring him away. That was why they had to remain in their position and helplessly watch Noel getting bullied.

Noel had used his Everchanging Emotion Sword Style, especially with Fear Emotion, to increase his speed. Even so, his opponent was a Spirit Grandmaster.

Her daggers gave another few wounds on his arms and feet. Though, the most worrying wound was on his waist.

Normally, it would be blocked by the armor he had underneath his clothes, but the position was right below that armor. It was quite deep as well, so the bleeding was quite big. At the same time, he couldn't use his Ice Ability to close the wound for a moment since it would give away his identity and elements.

So, he was pressing that wound with his left hand while blocking Hailfa with the other hand.

"Haa... Haa..." Noel panted a few times, trying to catch some breath. The fight started to get hard for him. And the condition didn't seem to favor them. Noel had to form another plan while fighting her. Noel thought, 'Should I reveal my ice ability?'

Chapter 693 Desperate

\*Clink!\*

\*Clink!\*

\*Clink!\*

A series of clicking sounds kept echoing on the battlefield. Noel was trying to block all Hailfa's attacks, but she gradually overwhelmed him in speed once she got used to his attacks.

At the same time, she kept releasing the poison to stop the others from coming. This way, Noel had to continuously use his fire to burn the poison, weakening him even further.



That was why even though the battle had begun for only ten minutes, Noel was already tired. This was the first time he had to constantly maintain his element while fighting the enemy.

It was true that his Spiritual Energy could last far longer than this. But this fight took a toll on his mind, especially since he was trying to come up with a plan to turn the situation around.

Unfortunately, there was nothing he could do other than get suppressed by Hailfa.

"Ha... Ha..." Noel panted while blocking a few strikes that aimed for his thigh. Hailfa didn't allow him to get some distance since she didn't want him to rest even for a few seconds.

This might be the first time he realized his weakness. What Damian said to him previously was correct.

He never had the time to master his abilities and made them even stronger. Instead, he just found another more powerful technique that could last for a while before changing it again.

Because of this rapid improvement, there was a hole in his solid foundation. And this hole was the one that caused all this mess.

If only he trained his Undying Fire and even controlled it. He might be able to create something that could extinguish the poison around her, allowing his teammates to help him.

But he could do nothing but regret. No, he didn't even have time for regret since Hailfa kept attacking him.

'What should I do now?' Noel clicked his tongue while looking around. Suddenly, Stella shouted in frustration.

"I can't allow this anymore. There's no way I'll allow him to fight against a Devil Bishop by himself. I'm going!" Stella was frustrated because she had allowed the newbie in the group to fight Hailfa alone. So, she came forth while covering her body with the wind. It seemed that she was planning to blow all the poison smoke that Hailfa emitted before it entered her.

She waved her sword, striking her from the side.

Even Hailfa had to stop for a second to block the attack. The wind indeed pushed her poison smoke away, but the poison didn't only exist in the form of gas. She had excreted some liquid poison on her dagger before blocking her attack. So, when the two blades clashed, the poison would flow to her sword.

Seeing the incoming poison, Stella actually didn't do anything as though she was not scared of poison. It was true that her ability was useful to blow the poison away, but she underestimated Hailfa far too much.

The poison was strong enough to melt her blade and stayed there until it created a hole. If this continued, her blades would be destroyed before she knew it.

But surprisingly, Stella wasn't panicking when she saw a hole in her blade. Instead, her entire body disappeared as though she moved at a speed not visible to the naked eye.

"Huh?" Hailfa tried to find Stella, but she found out that Stella hadn't taken a single step from her previous position.

In other words, the Stella from earlier was nothing but an illusion. And that illusion came from Rose, giving some time for Noel to catch his breath.

"!!!" Hailfa gritted her teeth. She was truly being played by this group, even though they were weaker than her.

"As expected, I should get rid of you first!" Hailfa turned to the side and leaped toward Rose.

Due to the time Rose brought, Noel could clear up his mind a bit. He hurriedly stood in her way while swinging his sword.

Circular Sword Strike.

Noel spun his body, creating a circle of sharp blades that gradually expanded.

"..." Hailfa stopped this blade from expanding in her direction, causing the expansion to lean toward Rose, who was behind him.

The Telekinesis appeared on top of her and pushed her to the ground, slowing her speed. At the same time, Stella brandished her swords at each other, creating a wind from both sides that tried to crush her.

Hailfa gritted her teeth as she destroyed the wind by making a sharp movement to the sides.

Ben waved his sword, sending forth a crescent-shaped sword strike and somehow stopping her track. Then, Zion stomped the ground and kicked a rock in her direction.

She used soft strength to deflect the rock, but because of the distance, everyone could easily avoid the rock.

They all were desperate to stop her. Even though they couldn't join the battle directly, they still tried their best to help Noel.

Noel took advantage of this opportunity to rest his mind.

As expected, Hailfa hurriedly chased after him again, stopping him from catching his breath.

Noel's face became paler as time passed. Even with their help, Noel would lose sooner or later.

Seeing such a situation, Stella approached Rose and whispered something to her.

Meanwhile, Noel swung his sword upward as the flame that covered his sword flared up, extending its reach for a few meters.

Hailfa effortlessly avoided it and took that chance to kick Noel in the stomach.

"Gah." Noel coughed up some acid from his stomach, but he hurriedly stood back up.

'Ah... I really want to practice.' Noel muttered in his mind. All he could think about was how he could become stronger after surviving this fight. He never felt any more useless in a fight than this.

"Iadre. I am going to help you. I will stop her for a few minutes, so you can catch some breaths." Stella shouted in frustration before leaping forth.

'Hmm? Another illusion?' Hailfa turned to Stella. She wanted to ignore Stella since she thought she was an illusion, but when she used her Spiritual Energy to sense Stella's location, she found nothing. In other words, the one in front of her was the real Stella.

\*Clink!\*

The wind that covered her blade burst, knocking her back.

But Hailfa was still fast enough to send her poison and create a hole in her blade.

The battle had just begun.

Chapter 694 Not Losing

"Stella!" Noel widened his eyes in shock, thinking, 'Stella's element is perfect to stop the majority of her power. But there is something that she can't push with her wind... In other words, Stella is planning to sacrifice her sword and probably her body to buy me some time?'

Noel's body trembled. He never thought that his weakness might cause someone's death in this place.

"Kh." Noel gritted his teeth, trying to find a solution. He looked at his teammates to see if there was someone that had the power to change the situation.

But at that time, he saw the dust getting kicked up on the side.

A short middle-aged man jumped into the air while laughing, "Kikikiki. You won't be able to do anything against me even if our strength is the same. You should understand the strength of a Devil Bishop!"

"Impossible. Paul." Noel gasped as he checked the Vice Captain of the Demon Barrier Squad. He managed to hold on, but there were a lot of injuries on his body.

As for Damian... \*Boom!\* A loud noise shook the battlefield.

A powerful sword strike ran through the ground as Damian used his sword to block it, albeit getting pushed back all the way near their place.

"Kh." Damian also had a hard time fighting Laufey. Laufey might not have reached the Spirit Transcendence like the commander, but his real strength was not far from it. He might even be able to reach that stage within one or two years.

It seemed that he only became one of the Devil Saints just recently. But still, the situation turned for the worse.

He thought he managed to play some tricks on Laufey, stopping their advance. But it seemed that it took more than tricks to stop an absolute power.

They were simply not strong enough to contend with Laufey and the others. That was probably why Anna wanted them to get stronger as soon as possible.

'How do I turn the situation around? Should we retreat to the wall? But if we do it, there will be a lot of people dying. Am I ruthless enough to kill thousands of people just to save myself? Am I a fool for not doing it?'

Noel was in a dilemma. He didn't want to be taken away, but he also didn't want to take the option where a lot of lives were involved.

'What should I do?' Noel bit his lips, using the little time Stella bought to come up with a solution.

That was when one of his father's advice struck him.

"Noel. There is a time when we gamble as a merchant. However, this gamble needs a lot of things before it starts. You have to prepare everything first to give you a higher chance of winning the gamble. Remember this, doing your best and being reckless are two different things. Being reckless will result in your defeat. Doing your best might give the same result, but you will also gain one more thing... It's the leisure of avoiding defeat. If you want to take a gamble, make sure that you don't lose even if you can't win."

Noel's eyebrows twitched when he remembered it.

"Ah, I'm a fool... that's right. There's no need for us to win this battle. All we have to do is not lose." Noel took a deep breath, thinking about something.

All they needed to do was not to stop them. It was to buy time.

'That's right. If we calculate the timing, we have to stop them for two to three hours... since the remaining time won't be enough for them to attack another city.

'In that case, all I have to do is to speed things up so that they won't have enough time.'

Noel gathered his Spiritual Energy on the tip of his fingers and shot it out to the sky, forming a black phoenix.

\*Cry!\*

The phoenix cry shook the battlefield as some people's eyes were glued on it. The phoenix suddenly formed a ball before exploding as if it was trying to give a signal.

All of a sudden, Noel's voice startled everyone, including the soldiers on top of the wall. He used a lot of Spiritual Energy to amplify his voice.

"Listen up, soldiers from Hansville City. Hurry up and inform the headquarters to send reinforcement to the neighboring city. And tell all the people from Hansville City to evacuate immediately if they don't want to die."

"!!!" That shout utterly shocked the people. After all, Noel was a part of the Demon Relief Squad, but he wasn't one of their superiors. So, the soldiers didn't have any obligation to follow his order.

However, Noel's words weren't just a message to the soldiers. In fact, the real target was none other than the Vice Captain of the Demon Barrier Squad.

He took a deep breath and shouted at the top of his lungs. "Consider his words as mine!"

The soldiers were completely speechless, never thinking that someone from the Demon Relief Squad would be the one to lead them. However, the Vice Captain had given his instruction. All they could do was to obey him.

They could also tell that these people were struggling against the Supreme Devil Organization, so they hurriedly sent many birds into the sky to deliver the messages.

"!!!" Laufey was the first one to recognize his plan. "Bastard."

If they evacuated the city, even if they went there, it was impossible to massacre all those people. Noel and the others only needed to return to the wall to end this battle.

In other words, sending the message alone had shrunk their time limit from two hours to fifteen minutes.

"We have fifteen minutes. Turn yourself into a beast and kill the enemy before you!" Laufey ordered out loud.

This was a desperate fight, but this was the only option where they could stop themselves from losing, so everything would be decided within fifteen minutes.

Unfortunately, it seemed that not everything would go according to their way.

There were people who saw Noel's phoenix from a distance. And these people would be changing the fate of the battlefield.

Chapter 695 Defeat

Once they heard Laufey's orders, they couldn't help but grit their teeth. They understood what Laufey wanted and the situation they were in.

They never thought that Noel would be able to eliminate their advantage with just a single move.

However, this was not supposed to be possible if Noel never thought about something else other than win or lose.

The world was not just black and white, so Noel realized that he didn't need to defeat them or get obliterated by them as the only possibility.

That was why Noel changed the outcome to this. They might not be able to win, but they wouldn't lose either as long as they could hold them for fifteen more minutes.

With that thought in mind, both sides had reached the same conclusion. They had to use all their abilities to win within fifteen minutes.

Damian and Laufey suddenly emitted a tremendous amount of Spiritual Energy. When their weapons clashed, the ground was shaking for a second as a huge ice crystal appeared before getting shattered into pieces two seconds later by Laufey's rage.



Paul and the Vice Captain of the Demon Barrier Squad also used all their strengths to strike their opponents.

Unfortunately, their opponents were stronger than them. Both of them got pushed back before one of them was launched away and crashed into the demons that were attacking the base.

The situation was constantly changing, including the last battlefield.

Hailfa didn't hold back anymore and used all the remaining Spiritual Energy from her body to form a giant cloud full of poison.

This cloud had a potent poison that when Stella's wind blew it away, the wind somehow got slower and slower before it ultimately stopped.

The poison was so strong that it could corrode the Spiritual Energy itself.

That was why Stella immediately lost the power to stall Hailfa.

The others also helped her, but whether it was illusion or telekinesis, they required Spiritual Energy.

And Hailfa could corrode their Spiritual Energy, neutralizing their attack. So, they couldn't do anything to Hailfa.

Noel was the only one left who could fight Hailfa. His Undying Fire was stronger than her poison, but the amount of Spiritual Energy Noel had was far less than Hailfa.

Even if he could use the fire, he had to channel the Spiritual Energy into it. Meanwhile, the production of poison smoke was so fast that the fire was unable to contain it.

If this continued, Noel would be inside the poison smoke and no one would be able to help him anymore.

At that time, Noel was as good as captured.

That was why they had to come up with something that could stop Hailfa for as long as possible.

Fifteen minutes.

These fifteen minutes felt like fifteen hours. Their frustration kept growing as they were unable to stop Hailfa even at this moment.

Some of them even thought about sacrificing themselves for Noel. But Noel stopped them since he was their target. He had to deal with this personally.

Unfortunately, no matter how hard Noel fought Hailfa, his condition would only turn worse and worse than the previous state.

"Gah!" Noel caught some blood before Hailfa appeared in front of him, kicking him in the stomach.

The kick was strong, causing Noel's mind to stop for a second. In fact, one of his ribs seemed to be broken from that kick alone. If there was no armor, there might be a severe inner injury.

The kick blew Noel away as his body rolled on the ground a few times.

Noel tried to get up, but he barely had any strength left.

Noel gritted his teeth, glaring at Hailfa, who was about to reach him.

'Ah... It seems that I have become overconfident after causing a lot of problems for the Supreme Devil Organization. I dared to do this because I thought I could deal with them.'

'However, what's currently happening is completely different from what I have in mind.'

'Spirit Grandmaster in one and a half years... I might not have that much time. If I'm getting captured, it's basically the end of my life. I don't know what they're planning to do to me, but I won't be alive for sure...'

Noel realized that several successes had made him too confident. In the past, he was careful or even a bit paranoid when dealing with a situation. As a result, he could somehow deal with it and even benefited from it.

However, this time, the reality struck him hard.

All his plans would be useless if he didn't have the strength to back it up. There was no way it could defeat an absolute power. Even his father recruited Dimitri to reinforce his plan. There were also the knight captain and his mother, who were Spirit Grandmasters.

There might even be more trump cards that his father had. When he thought about it, he couldn't help but feel ashamed.

His mind might be equal to Luke Ardagan, but his experience was too lacking. He couldn't see something this simple.

That frustration was the only thing that remained in his heart.

Noel gritted his teeth as he asked Ardagan for one last resort. No, it was his desperation. 'Ardagan... Do you have a way to turn around the situation?'

Unfortunately, not everything would go according to his way.

Even Ardagan couldn't help him in this situation as the answer was obvious.

[No.]

When he saw that answer, the last bit of hope in Noel's heart disappeared. This defeat was entirely his fault. So, he could only blame himself for being overconfident.

Noel tried to rise from the ground, trying to make the last stance. But it was too late.

Hailfa had already stood in front of him and was about to grab his neck before dragging him somewhere.

The poisonous smoke had even surrounded them. Unless one of the members sacrificed their life, they wouldn't be able to rescue Noel.

Obviously, Rose was the first one to sacrifice herself since Noel was her master.

"No!" Rose shouted in anger and approached Hailfa's poisonous smoke.

But before she reached the poisonous smoke, a light pillar appeared from the sky, illuminating the poisonous smoke.

Chapter 696 Disappointed

A light pillar suddenly fell down to the poisonous smoke, illuminating it.

The poisonous fog seemed to be disintegrated by this light and even Hailfa slightly bent her knees as though a huge amount of pressure had just fallen onto her shoulder.

"Kh." Hailfa gritted her teeth.

The appearance of the light pillar shocked everyone on the battlefield, especially Laufey.

'A light pillar? But isn't that...' Laufey's body trembled as he hurriedly blew Damian away before he jumped toward the light pillar and crushed it with his blade.

"We are retreating!" Laufey shouted in a hurry.

Hailfa didn't know what was happening, but she hurriedly dragged Noel away. However, another light pillar fell on top of her hand, knocking Noel down.

"!!!" Hailfa looked at Noel and wanted to grab him back. But Laufey's arm had circled around her waist and shouted, "Retreat. Hurry up!"

They didn't even bother to retake Noel as a shout echoed across the battlefield.

"LAUFEY ARDAGAN!"

Hailfa glanced to the side and recognized the woman. "Huh? Why is she here? The Captain of the Demon Adjudicator Squad, the successor of Sir Laufey, Milfa."

Hailfa was confused. On the one hand, she didn't know Milfa's true strength, so she thought a single captain couldn't change the situation. At least, they should still have a few more minutes.

On the other hand, Laufey's desperation seemed to stem from her strength. So, there might be something she didn't know about Milfa.

She would never expect that Milfa was actually as strong as Damian, so leaving was the only option here even if the mission had to end in a failure.

Milfa was trying to chase after them, but the rest of the people were stunned.

"We should—" Milfa wanted to command them to help her capture them. But most of them were frozen because of one reason.

All their eyes were glued to the figure that was lying on the ground. He seemed to have fallen unconscious. However, his expression told them how frustrated he was because of the situation.

Yes, that figure was none other than Noel.

Damian's priority was himself, so he instantly disappeared from the area since he didn't want to get involved with the rest of the Demon Banner Army. As long as he could see Noel was fine from a distance, that was enough. His mission was related to Noel, not the Supreme Devil Organization after all.

Meanwhile, the Demon Relief Squad was more concerned about Noel's well-being much more than the Supreme Devil Organization. Noel was one of their core members, so, of course, they didn't want something to happen to Noel.

Only the Vice Captain of the Demon Barrier Squad was ready to follow Milfa and the rest of the Demon Adjudicator Squad members.

But when Milfa saw this situation, she deemed they wouldn't be powerful enough to capture those four.

In the end, she dropped the mission with a long sigh.

She came to Noel and checked his condition.

"He's passed out. There are some injuries, but nothing fatal." Milfa glanced in the direction where Laufey was leaving, disappointed that she couldn't do anything to the former captain of her squad. But as much as she wanted to blame them, everything that happened here could only be possible with the Demon Relief Squad here, specifically Noel.

Milfa carried Noel in her arms while glancing at the rest of the people. "All of you are to remove all the demons near the city. Silvan, cooperate with them."

"Yes, Ma'am!" A young man nodded with a serious expression.

"I will bring him to the city. Lifeal, follow me."

They were shocked to meet Milfa here, but Milfa ignored all of them as she approached the wall. With just a wave of her hand, more than twenty demons died after being illuminated by her light.

After that, she jumped over the city wall and used one of the buildings to lay down the unconscious Noel.

The battle had an abrupt end, but it was different for Noel.

...

When he passed out, Noel was actually dreaming. It felt like he was drowning in deep dark water, being unable to move.

All he could do was think as a few scenes flashed in his mind.

The image was about several important moments in his life. The first image was about the time when Noel killed the first few demons in his life with traps.

He had put out numerous traps around the forest, thinking there were not enough traps even though he only needed one to kill a Low Level Demon.

After that, he could see the image of him defeating the Ancient Demon Tree. Back then, he had nothing to prepare. The risk was too great, but he could do nothing but do it.

The image soon changed to the time he reached the Silica Valley, where he met the Water Lord.

'Traps, Anna, Water Lord, Shale, Dimitri, and even Damian... I have been relying on a lot of people to achieve all this.'

'At first, I always made a lot of preparations like there's no such thing as enough traps. But when did it change...'

'My preparation started to be less. Even during the infiltration of the brothel where I met Harley... I was far too reckless. What if Harley was a Spirit Grandmaster and he was extremely hostile to me? Even with Anna and Rose, I would have died.'

'I have become overconfident after a few successes.' Noel fell silent, regretting that decision.

Of course, it was normal that one's confidence would grow after some successes. However, the risk Noel had was far greater than anyone.

That was something he almost forgot. One might suffer some setbacks when they were overconfident, but Noel would have died if Milfa didn't come. He wasn't even aware of Milfa's arrival.

In other words, his survival this time was caused by luck. Noel was disappointed in himself.

If he had to rely his survival on luck, then it wouldn't be long before he met his demise.

That was why Noel took this defeat very seriously.

Chapter 697 Information

"Mhm..." Noel let out a moan as his eyes gradually opened. He looked at the unfamiliar ceiling. They had never entered the house in the city, so he didn't know whether this was the city's house or the Supreme Devil Organization's base.

But all doubts were cleared when he heard a familiar voice.

"It seems you have woken up."



"..." Noel weakly turned his head, looking at the woman who was sitting next to his bed. She crossed her legs and slightly raised her head as if she was expressing her anger. Noel had little energy, but he still called her name. "Cap... tain... Mil... Fa.."

Yes, she was Milfa, the one that saved Noel from getting captured by the Supreme Devil Organization.

"I don't really want to berate someone who is still too weak to even speak. However, I have to do this for two reasons. First, your action is simply too reckless. Second, you dare to try recruiting me with this kind of result. If someone wants to be my master, getting beaten like this is simply a no for me. That's why I have to tell you this..."

"Noel Ardagan. Your action has gone too far. By looking at your formation and the number of enemies, I can see that you were already aware that the Supreme Devil Organization would attack you, especially Laufey Ardagan."

"Yet, you still recklessly left the city to lure them out. Do you know that one wrong action will kill your teammates?"

Noel narrowed his eyes, glaring at her. It wasn't that he hated the lecture. He just wanted to tell them that he was already aware of all his mistakes.

He had become overconfident just because of some small success. He still underestimated the power of a Spirit Grandmaster.

He should be grateful that Laufey was still at the peak of Spirit Grandmaster, not yet reaching the Spirit Transcendence. If he had reached that stage, he would have been crushed.

"..." Milfa couldn't help but fall silent after looking at his expression. She let out a long sigh before raising three fingers. "All right. I'll end my lecture after saying these three things."

"First of all, I came here because I have gotten the information about the Plant Lord. Since you are directly involved in this, I'll write the details down later. But one thing you should remember is that your name is within the top ten targets in their list. So, you should be even more careful from now on."

"Secondly, I have to ask you... Do you have anything you want to tell me about that mysterious person? I don't think he is from this kingdom..." Milfa and Noel looked at each other for a minute before Milfa closed her eyes and looked away. "I will consider that person as the Ardagan Family's secret weapon for now. But the moment he becomes a threat, then I'll immediately chase after him even if it means becoming your enemy."

"Last but not least, your teammates are fine. So, all you have to do is to recuperate from your injuries. According to the healer, you should rest for another two days before doing any activities."

Noel understood her intention, especially the second one. He was already thankful enough that she helped them this time, and she even overlooked Damian's existence.

After regaining his consciousness for a while, it seemed that Noel had gathered some energy to speak.

"Captain Milfa..." Noel still couldn't lift his head, but he had stopped stuttering. "Thank you for your help. And I surely have disappointed you. I have become too overconfident because of a few small achievements."

"Unfortunately, it seems that I have to be shameless once more and ask you... Can you teach me a few things about the Supreme Devil Organization?"

Milfa pinched the bridge of her nose. The information about the Supreme Devil Organization was a secret, especially regarding their high-ranking people.

But Noel was in the middle of the storm and the commander seemed to trust him a bit, especially after his help in capturing the Plant Lord as well as Marquis Walford.

So, Milfa considered this request seriously. After a few seconds, she opened her mouth. "You should know the ranking in the Supreme Devil Organization. The leader of the organization is known to be the Supreme Devil. Unfortunately, he is the most mysterious, so we don't have a lot of information about him."

"All we know is that all people, including the Devil Saints, are loyal to him. And even the Saints rarely see him. It's said that the Supreme Devil is at Spirit Transcendence, but his strength is still growing rapidly. According to the rumor, his power is going to surpass everyone soon."

"As for the Devil Saints... According to the current information, there are approximately five Devil Saints, including Laufey Ardagan."

"Only one of them is a Spirit Transcendence. If you add the Supreme Devil, both the kingdoms and the organization have two Spirit Transcendences each. As for the remaining four Saints... they are at Laufey's level. Their strength is at peak Spirit Grandmaster. Though, your uncle has a high probability of reaching the next level sooner or later."

"For the time being, our power is still enough to contain the organization, especially the Devil Bishop. Thanks to you eliminating two Devil Bishops, we have weakened them greatly. After all, those two Bishops are among the strongest Bishops."

"We don't have the exact number, but we predict there are around thirty to fifty Devil Bishops. Of course, the high-ranking people can stand toe to toe with a Captain in our army. But those in lower positions can still be stopped with a Vice Captain. Though, if you have to deal with them, you need a Captain since we can't waste a precious chance to capture or kill them."

"That's all you can know for the time being. Do you want to ask something else?"

Noel looked down for a moment before asking a pretty weird but obvious question.

"The organization is as strong as the kingdom. Yet, they don't create their own kingdom. At the same time, they don't threaten other kingdoms. In other words, the organization is only a problem to our kingdom... Don't you think it's a bit suspicious why they don't become an international organization? It feels like they are related to the royal fa—Hmpph!"

Chapter 698 Sorry

Noel's mouth was covered by Milfa.

Of course, Milfa understood Noel's concern.

There was even a discussion about it previously. Some even thought that the Royal Family was related to the Supreme Devil Organization as the Royal Family used them to control the kingdom.

After all, when there was fear, the royal family would become a hope, continuously reinforcing the royal family's position.

However, they had no proof, so it was better not to say it. If someone heard it and told the people about it, they might get executed.

Some of the Arbiters might be dispatched to execute people at their level.

"I don't mind speculation, but some things are better to be unsaid. You should have heard some rumors about the way they handle the kingdom, right? You are guilty until proven otherwise."

"I don't like to do the same. In fact, I believe the other way around is better. So, don't speak ill without any proof. If you have proof, then I will apologize right now."

Noel nodded with a serious expression.

"I apologize."

Milfa sighed. "In that case, it's time for me to leave."

"Before that, how long was I unconscious?"

"Four hours," Milfa answered while walking to the door.

But before she left, Noel stated one last thing. "Captain Milfa. You can consider my recruitment to be a joke."

Milfa abruptly stopped, looking at Noel with a frown. On the one hand, she didn't plan to leave the Demon Banner Army. On the other hand, she felt displeased to see Noel giving up just like that.

However, Noel added, "Without your help this time, I wouldn't be able to survive. You were not even included in my plan. And despite such a failure, you still told me about the Supreme Devil Organization. So, please... this is the responsibility of my failure... this is... a lesson for me."

Milfa sighed and opened the door. She left while giving a message. "Failure is not the end. Stopping to improve is the end. Take this as a lesson then."

Noel closed his eyes. He was truly hurt by this failure. This kind of price felt a bit too light for his blunder this time.

But before he could rest, Rose opened the door, taking a peek at Noel's condition. When she saw Noel was awake, she entered the room while bringing water and fruit. "Iadre. Are you alright? I bring you some food and water."

Noel looked at Rose's face. Instead of harboring hatred or disappointment, it felt like Rose was blaming herself for the recent failure.

Noel couldn't help but grit his teeth. He looked at Rose with a determined expression. "Rose... can you gather everyone here? There is something I want to tell them."

Rose obviously didn't want to do it if he didn't look adamant.

"Alright then. But you have to at least drink the water for a speedy recovery." Rose brought the water to him and helped him drink. Since the latter had shown his determination, she decided to help him.

It didn't take too long before the entire team was assembled. Unlike Noel, they only suffered small injuries.

There were various responses to the recent failure. Stella and Paul seemed to be tense as if thinking they couldn't protect the group. Zion and Ben had a troubled look as if they still couldn't believe they lost. Jonathan was different. He was intensely glaring at Noel as if he wanted to berate him.

As soon as everyone gathered in the room, Noel tried to rise from the bed.

"Kh." Noel let out a groan as the pain was still all over his body.

"You should lie..." Rose wanted to stop him, only to end up helping him.

Noel sat with a serious expression. Before saying anything, Noel lowered his head.

This action startled everyone. Although Noel was a former noble, it was still rare to see Noel lower his head.

"I am sorry, everyone. My decision seems to have made all of you suffer. Without Captain Milfa helping us, all of you would've been in danger."

"I have become overconfident after our success. And this is the reason for our failure. I am going to take responsibility for this. If you want me to leave the group, I will immediately give my resignation letter to Captain Clara."

Noel was ready for them to berate him, beat him, or even punish him severely.

But surprisingly, Paul said, "Alright then. You are forgiven."

"Huh?" Noel's body shook. He stared at Paul as if telling him that it was his fault and that the mistake wasn't something that could easily be forgiven.

However, Paul added, "I have told you previously. Everything that happens to the group is my responsibility. It's my fault that I have misjudged your condition. If I had a better eye and noticed your confidence, I would have stopped it. That's why the problem lies with me."

"That's..." Noel was speechless, but Stella gritted her teeth, glaring at Paul. She raised her voice. "Your fault? No, it's me! I once said I would take care of him, but this is the result!"

"Huh?" Paul and Stella ended up glaring at each other.

Ben shook his head helplessly and said, "Well, they have said everything. We are a unique bunch, you see. Instead of focusing on the mistakes of the past, it's better if we focus on improving so that we don't make the same mistakes anymore. That's how our Demon Relief Squad has survived this whole time."

"He took the words out of my mouth." Zion nodded in agreement.

"Oi, be more creative and tell him something else." Ben chuckled.

"Though, it's true that you have brought all this danger." Jonathan stepped forward, saying something else. It looked like he was going to berate him. Even the others were ready to stop him.

But once again, he surprised everyone by kneeling in front of Noel.

Jonathan said, "I told you back then. Stop fighting alone. That's why... instead of blaming you for this mistake, I wish you could involve us a bit more. We are there for you, so please talk to us about the problems. It's not like we will turn you away."

Noel's body was trembling as his head looked down. He had just realized that he had made one of the biggest mistakes in his life. The mission wasn't a mistake, but turning away from the family he had around him was the mistake.

He couldn't help but want to cry.

"I'm sorry."

Chapter 699 Learning From Mistakes

Noel kept apologizing. Though, the reason gradually changed from the previous failure to not trusting them.

The Demon Relief Squad was indeed a weird bunch from Noel's perspective. Instead of blaming him for getting them into danger, they were actually disappointed that Noel didn't have the heart to talk it out with them.

In fact, they didn't really mind helping Noel in his scheme as long as Noel told them about it.

However, for Noel, whose trust and life had been broken before, the Demon Relief Squad was actually a perfect place to get it back. He could start trusting the people around him without the need for the Affection Medal. There was a family he could rely on here.

They were what Noel truly needed. And somehow they became closer after this failure.

To think, to fail, and to learn. When the group challenged and overcame strife and carnage, their bond became sturdier.

Noel was gratified for their affection. However, it didn't change the fact that he was planning to take responsibility for this failure.

After they left him alone in the room to get some rest, Noel closed his eyes for a moment.

'There are three big reasons for my failure. First, I don't have enough strength. That's the most important reason. If I had enough strength to fight against that woman, we wouldn't be in this situation.'

'There aren't many things I can do to increase my strength right now. I can easily gain Spiritual Energy reserve from hunting demons since I have twice the limit of Demon Crystals than the others.'

'However, having more Spiritual Energy doesn't guarantee me strength. Even if I somehow reach the Spirit Grandmaster by consuming the Demon Crystals, my foundation will become brittle. To have a



great foundation means to have a battle technique that can match my reserve, have the experience to back it up, and have the knowledge to understand it.'

'I lack all of them. Most of the battle techniques come from the system. As Sir Damian said, I was just using what the system gave me. That's all. A true expert could do something even further with their technique.'

'As for the experience, this is the hardest since I haven't lived long enough. I will do my best to experience a lot of things, but it'll take time.'

'Last but not least, the knowledge. I'll try to ask people around me about the way to use their abilities, the information about Spirit Masters and Grandmasters, and other things. But I need to return to the base first. After all, asking Captain Clara is a good way to gain a lot of new information.'

'In that case, I should focus on the battle techniques first...' Noel paused for a moment as though he was thinking of an absurd plan. 'Should I ask Sir Damian? He is the Vice Commander of the Greenwood Kingdom's Royal Army. Captain Clara can teach me if I ask, but she is a Healer. The same applies to Dimitri who is an assassin. Their way of fighting is too different from mine.'

'On the other hand, Sir Damian's fighting style matches my own. He has good control over his Spirit Abilities and his swordsmanship is excellent. He is a perfect teacher... However, asking him to teach me is easier said than done. It seems that if I want to become strong, I have to go broke.'

Noel let out a long sigh. Still, money could still be gained with all the Runes and his abilities. So, Noel decided to ask Damian about it after this.

He continued to the second reason for his failure.

'That's right. The second reason should be this... the lack of trust in the Zero Squad. If I talked to the others, we could make some changes to the plan. In fact, we could even prepare another captain since Zion could use his speed to contact the nearby reinforcement to speed up, at least their captain alone.'

'There were other possibilities that could increase our chance to win. So, this was truly my mistake for not trusting them.'

'Last but not least, I underestimated the Supreme Devil Organization. They have a lot of secrets and the fact that they have that kind of power without becoming an international threat is something that I should reconsider.'

'There is a chance that the Royal Family is related to them. No, the Third Prince might even be related to them. The reason why they're fighting is because they want to get a hold of the Supreme Devil Organization. Of course, this is just speculation, but they are indeed suspicious.'

'Well, Anna is investigating the Royal Family while I'm investigating the Third Prince. There aren't many opportunities, but I should continue.'

'Knowing about their strength alone is enough for me. After all, I can predict how many Devil Saints and Devil Bishops will move.'

'In fact, I should be happy that they didn't bring any Devil Inspector or lower. It would be troublesome if they used them as cannon fodder.'

'One Supreme Devil, Five Devil Saints, thirty to fifty Devil Bishops, and there is some public knowledge about the Inspector, Officer, and Worshipers. It's said they have a few thousand Worshipers and at least a thousand Officers. As for the Inspectors... there should be a few hundred of them.'

'It's going to be difficult to fight them, especially in a large-scale attack. I see... that's also something to worry about.'

Noel took a deep breath. As much as he wanted to continue thinking about the possibilities, all of them were just speculation. It was better to get concrete evidence of their number.

'Well... I can work on my mistakes later. Before that, I have to do one important thing.' Noel grabbed the badge from the drawer next to his bed and channeled his Spiritual Energy.

It didn't take too long before Damian appeared in front of him, albeit with a bit annoyed expression.

"Sir Damian... Please teach me how to get stronger."

Chapter 700 Teacher

"Sir Damian... Please teach me how to get stronger."

Damian's poker face remained unchanged as though he had expected something like this.

"It seems that you have learned your lesson this time." Damian took a seat while saying, "I don't mind teaching you though. However, the price is kinda steep. After all, my fighting ability is closely related to the Greenwood Kingdom. I can't really give you any secret of the Greenwood Kingdom without getting anything, you know."

Noel nodded with a serious expression.

"Of course. I'm prepared to pay the price. So, you can tell me what you want."

Damian thought for a moment. On the one hand, he could ask for an exorbitant price from Noel. They had just failed not long ago, so if he blackmailed Noel with that failure, he could easily increase the price.

However, if he did it, Noel would be skeptical of having a business with him. He might be able to gain a good benefit in the short term, but the total benefit he would get in the long run would surely be less than the original expectation.

On the other hand, becoming too good of a man would make him suspicious as well. So, he had to set a fair price with the current condition. It was something he liked as well, considering he could get more benefits from Noel.

After a few minutes, Damian raised one finger. "I only need one thing."

"And that is?"

"The concept of Rune Engineering."

"!!!" Noel was slightly astonished by the demand. Considering he was planning to spread the knowledge in the future, giving this information away only made the Greenwood Kingdom slightly ahead of the others.

After Noel spread it, the advantage would be gone. Still, it didn't change the fact that the concept would allow them to understand the runes far faster and even take some precautions before the other nations.

So, the price he asked this time was kind of high, but Noel didn't have enough reason to reject it either.

Of course, Damian added, "I can see that you have been improving rapidly without a teacher. Well, you should have some mentors since your basics are still solid. However, you don't have any teacher to guide you. That's why even though you are strong right now because of your numerous abilities and innate strength, that advantage will gradually lose its meaning once you get stronger."

"That's why if you agree to this deal, I will be guiding you to fix all your problems, from your battle techniques to future development."

Noel scratched the back of his head. It was no wonder why they sent Damian instead of anyone else.

"I'm wondering how you became a Vice Captain of the royal army instead of a merchant." Noel chuckled while rolling his eyes.

"To advance in the Greenwood Kingdom, you need more than strength, you know. I think the concept is similar to the Demon Banner Army. But the kingdom is emphasized on it more than the Demon Banner Army."

"Fair point." Noel nodded. He thought about the price first. 'Well, there are five Rune Systems: Rune Enchantment, Rune Engineering, Rune Spell, Rune Body, and Rune Array. The Greenwood Kingdom has the Spirit Enchantment.'

'Even though it's the downgraded version of the Rune Enchantment, the basics are still there. They only need to connect it with the runes and perfect them. So, they don't really need the information about the Rune Enchantment.'

'As for Rune Engineering, this is the second stage of Rune Mastery. Rune Enchantment needs a Rune Master to draw the Enchantment. The same applies to Rune Engineering.'

'However, once you reach Rune Spell, it will become different. Even ordinary people would be able to use Rune Spell as long as they can draw it. So, they will be like me, a Rune Spell Thrower instead of a Rune Master.'

'Then, there is the Rune Body. A Rune Master can embed the Runes on a normal person's body. Once it reaches this level, ordinary people don't need to learn anything about Runes, and they'll still be able to use it.'

'Last but not least, the Rune Array. It's basically the combination of all four systems.'

'The Rune Engineering is important, but giving the information isn't a problem. But things will be different for the Rune Spell and Rune Body, considering they are for ordinary people.'

'Those who are waiting for my development will surely become greedy once they know about it. That's why I think I can agree to this deal.'

'Though, I have to be careful when exposing the Rune Spell to Sir Damian, lest he understands the potential. At the very least, I want him to remain clueless until I become Spirit Grandmaster.'

'The deal gives a good reward, but it's a bit risky. On the one hand, Sir Damian might change his objective and try to kill me after knowing the potential. On the other hand, with him teaching me how to fight, I can become stronger rapidly since our fighting style is similar.'

After a few minutes, Noel finally agreed to the deal. "Alright. I'll agree to this deal."

Damian nodded. "Then, take two days off to recover from your wounds. After that, we can start training."

"I'm also planning to finish the previous few runes to uphold my promise. And we'll be returning to the headquarters and staying there for a while because of this failure."

"So, we should have enough time to practice there. I'll start writing the concept while you train me."

"Sounds good." Damian didn't have any objection to the arrangement.

Noel smiled. Before Damian left, he added, "Still, Sir Damian always appears whenever I activate the badge. You are not going to tell me that you do something that makes you look like my servant to make me open up to you, right?"

"..." Damian abruptly stopped. He didn't answer or deny his accusation. In the end, he chose to ignore it and left the room.

"Well, you didn't deny it either..." Noel chuckled. "I guess the only reason why he remains as a Vice Captain is because his strength is not enough. Once he reaches the required strength, he can easily become the captain. Having a connection with him is not that bad, I guess."