

## **S vs Rebirth 711**

### Chapter 711 Escape Routes

"It seems that we're going to infiltrate the place in three days," said Paul. He had returned from meeting the other group leaders and gathered the Demon Relief Squad to inform them about their plan.

"Three days, huh?" Noel frowned.

"Do you want to say something, ladre?" Paul asked.

"No. I think it's better for us to listen to what has been discussed before we say something." Noel shook his head.

"Alright." Paul nodded.

"Currently, we have a total of two Captains, two Vice Captains, and thirty Spirit Masters. I'm sure you understand the power of the Captain and the Vice Captain. So, you can guess their strength."

Noel closed his eyes for a moment. 'Well, if we're going to have a conflict with the Count Family, we should have enough power to do so. Even if the previous Count is an Arbiter, one Captain and one Vice Captain should be enough to stop them.'

'However, the problem will be Creek Village. I don't know what they have for us. Considering the movement and the involvement of those two, I'm afraid that there is a Devil Bishop or at least a Superior Demon inside the village.'

'Well, even if we don't have enough manpower, I can still ask Dimitri and Damian. Still, I don't want to ask for their help if I can do it myself. I had promised Dimitri that I wouldn't rely too much on him so that I could keep growing...'

Dimitri would surely be disappointed if Noel asked him for help in every single mission. So, if it were possible, he wouldn't ask Dimitri and Damian this time.

In fact, he didn't even consider them in this plan since he didn't want to be dependent on them.

He had some ideas in mind, but he continued to listen to what Paul had to say.

"According to our information, the Creek Village has the support of the Count. However, their connection is quite suspicious. So, there is a chance that the Count won't be on our side. For now, we have two Captains that can suppress the Count easily, but you can't lower your guards."

"For now, all of us have agreed to split our roles. The Demon Beholder Squad will be our scout, heading first to check if there are any traps or anything. But because we couldn't alarm them, they wouldn't be able to find anything until infiltrating the village, which would only happen in three days."

"The Demon Hunting Squad will be the main sword this time, while the Demon Barrier Squad will protect us. Our main role is to maintain the connection between the three of them and coordinate with any of them if necessary."

"In fact, there is a wide river if we want to go there. There is a chance that they will destroy the bridge. So, Jonathan will remain on standby and help anyone cross it if necessary. If not, we can reconstruct the bridge with our power. It doesn't need to be sturdy, just enough to be used for emergencies."

"For now, this is the current condition. I would like to hear your opinions so that I can discuss them with the rest tomorrow." Paul finished his explanation and looked at Noel, who was about to speak earlier.

All of them turned to Noel, wondering what he was about to say.

Noel said, "I believe we should create an emergency bridge ahead of schedule. And we shouldn't disclose this secret to others for the time being."

"!!!" All of them widened their eyes in surprise. On the one hand, it felt suspicious to build something like that without anyone's knowledge. In fact, the Demon Beholder Squad would surely find out about it.

Paul paused for a moment before asking, "Why do we need a bridge? Even Jonathan can use his Telekinesis to transport people. And we can still loop around the mountain if necessary."

Everyone thought Noel had become paranoid after the last defeat. However, Noel added, "Don't you think it's a bit suspicious? It's true that the Count is a threat to this operation. But you have to remember the Count has a father."

"Hmm?" Everyone was startled. Rose looked down and muttered, "Now that I think about it, the Count's father is an arbiter, right?"

"Yeah. His fighting power has to be taken seriously. But that's not all. What if his father is connected to this? There is no way an Arbiter will be working alone to the point where we are being alerted."

"If I'm not mistaken, the enemies that are hiding inside Creek Village this time will be extremely dangerous—at least a few Devil Bishops. They might be ranked quite high to the point they have enough authority to discuss terms with an Arbiter."

Everyone sucked a cold breath, thinking about such a possibility. It was true that they hadn't thought about it this far.

"So, by creating that bridge, we can have one more escape route that the enemy doesn't know? Then, why do we have to hide it from our allies?"

"To fool your enemies, you have to fool our allies. Of course, the Demon Relief Squad is the only one that can create the bridge, so I can't hide anything from you guys if I want to accomplish this." Noel shook his head helplessly.

Paul thought for a moment and glanced at Rose. "What do you think, Rose?"

"I think that's better than nothing. The mountain is steep. So, even though we can loop around it, we will have a hard time without any guides. The enemies should be familiar with the terrain, so they have a big advantage. It's better to have another bridge located a bit farther away."

"Besides, the two Captains shouldn't have any trouble crossing the river by themselves, but the rest are different. I don't think Jonathan can lift everyone in one trip. So, I suggest creating a platform or a boat that Jonathan can use to carry people. The bridge and the platform; these two shall be our escape route in case something goes wrong."

Chapter 712 Injured?

Noel still hid the fact that Anna was still investigating the possibility of another escape route. Since the information was reliable, he had high expectations, but it wasn't guaranteed. So, it was better to hide the information for the time being. It would cause a lot of friction with the Arbiter if they used that secret passage, considering they might have dug a tunnel to connect it.

Paul listened to their advice. Stella and Jonathan also expressed their own concerns, but they weren't that important. At the very least, Paul decided to bring the topic up in the discussion tomorrow.

Last but not least, Paul said, "Alright. I have considered all your opinions. And I will discuss it with the other leaders tomorrow. For the time being, we should begin our preparation for creating the escape route."

"I can understand ladre's concerns and the possibility of hidden dangers. So, I have decided we will proceed with two more escape routes. However, I can't allow you to go out at once since it will be suspicious."

"For now, Jonathan, Ben, and Zion shall be proceeding with the construction of the bridge. Stella and Noel will be preparing for the platform, but they haven't built it yet. It won't be hard to build them, so I want you to procure the materials first. The other three will build it after they are finished with the bridge."

"Are three days enough?" Paul asked the trio.

"Well, this is only an emergency bridge. So, there's no need to be that sturdy. All we want is to let some people cross it." Ben thought for a moment. "Three days should be enough. Though, we might barely complete it. So, I'm going to apologize in advance if I can't return to the city on the day of the operation."

"Alright. We can regroup there in the worst case." Paul then glanced at Stella and Noel but didn't say anything.

There was a reason he wanted Stella to accompany Noel. He wanted to keep Noel in check for a good reason. He didn't want Noel to take a huge risk after all. And since Stella always took care of Noel strictly, Noel shouldn't be able to do something big.

Noel also didn't have any objections since there was no reason to reject it. Stella would probably misunderstand the situation if a woman entered his room to give him some information, but it wasn't that big of a deal.

After the agreement, the group was dismissed. Noel was creating some alternative plans in his room most of the time.

Meanwhile, Anna was ready to check on the secret passage. She had covered her face and hair completely. If anyone could find anything about her, they would only see a pair of purple eyes and the fact that she was a woman. Other than that, they wouldn't be able to find anything about her.

Since the secret passage led from the mansion in the center of the city to the other side of the mountain, she had to loop around the mountain, which would take at least half a day just to reach the location. She also had to find traces of the entrance, which would take days.

Hence, Anna had to begin as quickly as possible.

After making enough preparation, Anna left the city in the dark and headed to the mountain.

She crossed the mountain and began to search for any clues. The mountain was covered in thick and tall trees, making it look darker than a normal forest.

Still, Anna had an objective to reach here, and since the brothel's manager had narrowed her search range, she wanted to make sure she found it within two days.

Unbeknownst to her, a great danger was about to befall her.

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In the next three days, Noel formulated several alternative plans. He should be able to react to any kind of situation in his imagination.

So he was quite confident in tackling this mission. Of course, he still remained careful, unlike on the previous mission.

"Iadre. We're going to meet the other group in front of the river in about two hours. So, get ready; we will leave the city in twenty minutes." Stella, who accompanied him in the last few days, informed him from the outside.

"Alright," Noel replied to her. He didn't rise from his seat just yet as he checked all his luggage and plans to make sure nothing was missing.

It took him about fifteen minutes, so he should leave the inn and head downstairs to the gate as quickly as possible.

However, Anna's sudden appearance startled Noel, who was about to leave his room.

'Alright. I'm ready. I should go now...' Noel thought. He rose from his seat and opened his door.

Surprisingly, there was a figure standing in front of his door, about to knock on the door. Just seeing the pair of her eyes, Noel knew this person was Anna.

He could see numerous wounds on her body. They were superficial and not life-threatening. In fact, they wouldn't even leave a scar on her body.

However, the amount of blood that had flowed out of her body should be quite huge. If this continued, she would die from blood loss.

"Anna?" Noel gasped. On the one hand, he couldn't believe what he was seeing. Anna was never in this state before. On the other hand, a deep uneasiness was creeping inside of him.

Anna's body suddenly fell onto him. Noel caught her, but because he was still dumbfounded, he ended up tripping and falling to the floor.

Because of her injury, he instinctively caught her gently to make sure she didn't get any more injuries.

"Anna? What happened?" Noel tried to call her while trying to think about what he should do. He wanted to carry her to the bed and treat her wounds, but Anna seemed to be trying to tell him something. Even though her eyes were shut and her body was exhausted, Anna was trying to warn him about something.

Chapter 713 Help

"Anna? Oi, what happened? Who did this to you?" Noel kept asking Anna while carrying her to his bed.

On the one hand, all kinds of worries crept into his heart. On the other hand, he didn't have time to think about it.

While he was carrying Anna to the bed, Anna seemed to be able to open her mouth before passing out. However, she was so weak that she could only utter two words. "Don't... Go..."

These two words startled Noel. Noel hurriedly put her on the bed while looking at her body.

He had to close her wounds first, but he had to meet with the rest of the group. At the same time, her message caused a lot of thoughts to appear in his mind.

"What do you mean by 'don't go,' Anna? What happened to you?" Noel gritted his teeth before realizing she had passed out. Her breath was stable, but weak.

"Kh." Noel gritted his teeth. He could be late, but if he was too late in treating Anna, she would seriously die.

"I need to treat her." Noel decided to focus on treating her first. He opened his bag and took out a few rolls of bandages. He also came down to bring a basin filled with water.

But there was a problem. Anna's body was covered with injuries. He knew that if he had to treat all her wounds, he had to strip her. As a noblewoman, it was a big taboo. If such a scandal ever spread, her reputation would be ruined. And since the rumor would lead back to him, if she ever got engaged with someone else, both families would surely point their swords at him.

That was why helping her alone carried a huge risk.

"It's still better than dying." Noel clicked his tongue, steeling his resolve. He hurriedly extended his hands, preparing to take off her clothes.

However, someone suddenly banged on his door while shouting, "Iadre. You are late. Are you still inside? We have to go now! The rest are already waiting."

Noel was surprised, but his lips couldn't help but curve downward. He didn't hesitate to open the door, finding Stella outside. Since she was the one who watched him for the last few days and she was one of the fastest among them, she returned to the inn to bring Noel.

And this was enough for him.

Stella was completely confused, but Noel immediately pointed at Anna, who was lying down on the bed. "Stella. Help me!"

"What are you doing?" Stella wanted to get angry, thinking Noel was late because he was playing with a woman. But when she took another look at the woman, she was full of injuries, and her appearance was familiar to her. "Huh? Isn't that Anna Stargaze?"



"We don't have too much time. Please help me treat her. It will be bad if I'm the one who treats her."  
Noel hurriedly dragged her to Anna while picking up a cloth so that he could cover his eyes.

Of course, Noel had to leave the room in this scenario. But he had to make sure Stella didn't kill Anna, considering only Rose knew about the entire matter related to Anna. In addition, Anna's words and situation might cause the mission to shift in a whole new direction.

Stella was confused. She looked at Anna while gritting her teeth, remembering the anguish she felt when she knew Anna had killed Noel. She wanted to refuse, but she decided to see the bigger picture by asking, "Are you two friends?"

"Yes. She is important to me." Noel nodded without hesitation.

After listening to it, she grabbed the cloth and put it in the water, ready to wipe her wound.

"I'm sorry, but I have to remain here. I have a few things to say."

"I surely want to listen to it. But before that, you should have an explanation as to why you're going to be late, right?"

"Yeah. First of all, Anna has been cooperating with me. We had information about the secret passage of the Count Family that is linked to the mountain. So Anna went there to find the passage's whereabouts since it might be useful for another escape route. I didn't tell you and the others because we still haven't found it yet."

"In any case, before Anna passed out, she told me not to go. I didn't understand what she meant, but it seemed that the mission would be extremely dangerous." Noel expressed his concern.

On the one hand, he wanted to stop and reassess the situation. On the other hand, Stella said, "If this is our mission, then yes, we can postpone it to reassess the situation. But this is a joint mission. Even if you trust Anna, the others don't know about her. Do you think you can stop the others from going?"

Noel couldn't say anything, fully knowing that it was impossible to stop the mission. He thought for a moment and said, "I know that. However, I don't know Anna's exact strength, but she should be at the same level as me... when I'm using both of my elements."

"Yet, despite this kind of strength, she is injured to this extent. Of course, I'm thinking about the possibility of another Spirit Grandmaster, but she is already aware of the joint operation as well as the Spirit Grandmasters we have. But even with all that information, she still asked me not to go."

Stella fell silent. She could understand the concern. However, it was impossible to stop the mission, especially with only Anna's warning.

Stella sighed. "Even so, I don't think we can stop everyone from going."

"I know. That's why I'm thinking about what I should do right now." Noel bit his lips. He knew that the mission couldn't be stopped, so he had to make a careful plan if they wanted to enter the enemy's territory.

It might be because she was also a woman and a bit skeptical of Anna that Stella noticed something. She couldn't help but ask, "Why did she tell you not to go?"

Chapter 714 Discussion

"Why did she tell you not to go?"

"Huh?" Noel was confused as to why she asked this question. However, Stella elaborated on her question further. "I mean, from all the words she can use to warn you, why does she ask you not to go? Maybe there is something she sees..."

"Now that you say it..." Noel looked down, falling into deep thought. 'Why did she tell me not to go? She should be aware of my fighting strength. I also have a few trump cards, such as Dimitri. She should be aware of his presence since they met during the expedition.'

'Does that mean the enemies are far stronger than we expect? Still, her father should have told her about Dimitri's true identity. In addition, we have two vice captains and two captains.'

'Even with this lineup, she's telling me not to go instead of warning me to be careful. It means she has deemed the condition to be far worse than I imagined. In fact, our groups might be defeated completely.'

While Noel was in deep thought, Stella left the room to get some clothes for Anna. This way, Noel could take off the cloth on his eyes.

'Is it a trap?' Noel furrowed his eyebrows. 'But our lineup should be strong enough to escape from a trap. We also have the Demon Beholder Squad, which can locate any traps, and the Demon Hunting Squad. Unlike the Demon Extermination Squad, which boasts to having the strongest firepower, the Demon Hunting Squad is good at tracking their prey.'

'It seems that we can only proceed here. But since this might be a trap, then I have to add another twist to the situation. Should I ask Damian and Dimitri again? If possible, I don't want to rely on them too much so that I don't become too dependent.'

Noel scratched the back of his head. He didn't have an answer.

It didn't take too long before Stella returned with a set of clothes. She also said, "Iadre. Zion came here not long ago, but I told him that there was a problem with the mission. So he is going to call the rest of the members to return to the inn. We're going to be late for this mission, but I guess it's better than sorry."

"Yeah. That's a better option. The two captains will surely not like our warning, thinking we're too paranoid. So, I have to come up with something that can assure people's safety."

Noel let out a long sigh. No matter how he thought about it, he didn't have enough time to come up with a plan.

"What should we do with Anna? I mean, I don't think the group wants to meet her." Stella asked. She also didn't want to see her here. Just taking care of her wounds was already too much for her.

Noel nodded and said, "I have a connection here. I'll ask her to watch over Anna while we're on our mission."

"Got it." Stella agreed with the arrangement. "In that case, we can use my room to talk about the situation."

"Yeah." Noel hurriedly left the brothel and talked to the manager, asking her to watch over Anna.

But when they returned to the inn, the group actually gathered in Noel's room instead of Stella's. They seemed to be glaring at Anna while Rose was sitting on the bed, as though she was stopping them from harming Anna.

Of course, even if Rose told them about what truly happened between Noel and Anna, they would still hold some grudges.

And when Noel returned, they became a bit skeptical.

"Iadre." Paul stepped forward, glaring at him.

Noel also stopped in front of him without getting scared. He was already prepared for this.

"Putting your relationship with her aside, I think we should talk about her appearance here, right?"

"Of course. However, the most important thing is the mission. It seems that Stella has told you about the situation. So, I'm going to ask you instead. Are you sure you're going even with the warning, fully aware that this might be a trap?"

"Even if I support you, it's impossible to stop the mission." Paul shook his head.

"That's why we have to be extremely careful with this mission. I've thought about it, but I can't find a way to let all of us escape. There is simply not enough information."

Paul scratched the back of his head. He had to consider the mission and the teammates' well-being, so this matter put him in a dilemma.

He raised two fingers. "Two hours. We'll stay here for another two hours. If she wakes up by then, we can get more information from her. If she doesn't wake up, you have no choice but to go with the plan. I'll take care of the problem about our late arrival."

"!!!" Noel was surprised that Paul still accommodated him despite the situation.

Paul added, "Use these two hours to think of something."

"Understood." Noel nodded with a serious expression.

Paul asked Zion to deliver the message to the rest of the people since he was the fastest. In the meantime, they were waiting in another room, leaving Anna with the brothel manager.

Noel also explained the situation so that the others knew and tried to come up with something.

Unfortunately, Anna didn't wake up in the next two hours. Noel had no choice but to follow the original plan, even though it was a bit late. Since it was Paul's decision, he would be the one to apologize for their late arrival.

Noel thanked him and apologized to him since all this was caused by him. In the end, all he could think about was Dimitri and Damian. They would be his trump card. However, he would judge the situation first.

Finally, they arrived in front of the bridge that connected the city and Creek Village.

The two captains already had annoyed expressions on their faces. While Paul was apologizing to them, Noel came to Zion and whispered, "I want you to loop around the mountain to find the secret passage. You're faster than Anna, so you should have no problem leaving in case something goes wrong."

Zion nodded.

Despite knowing this was a trap, Noel and the Demon Relief Squad had no choice but to walk into it.

Chapter 715 Seen

Before crossing the bridge, the two captains gathered the entire group.

"Alright. I think you have understood your own role. Although we are late by more than two hours, we still have to continue this mission." Captain Faust informed them while pointing at the bridge. "There is a possibility that this is a trap. So, I want the Demon Beholder Squad to be more careful than usual. Check every corner and make sure there aren't any traps that will give us disadvantages."

"The Demon Relief Squad will remain in the rear for the time being. After we have secured the area, you will enter the village. The Demon Hunting Squad and the Demon Barrier Squad will be following you right behind, ready to help in case something happens."

"Don't forget that Creek Village is suspected to be a branch of the Supreme Devil Organization. From our understanding, every branch has at least several Devil Bishops. That's why there are two captains here."

"Once we cross the bridge, the plan will start. Is there any objection?" Faust looked around, but no one raised their hand.

He pulled the bow on his back while commanding, "Onward."

Igor also raised his head, looking at the mountain. The steep mountain would be treacherous terrain for them to hunt. In fact, the terrain alone was enough to make this Creek Village a natural fortress.

However, the original village was never built for that purpose. The Supreme Devil Organization might have realized the potential of this village and used it for themselves.

Unfortunately, they couldn't discern the true reason why the Supreme Devil Organization used this place. All they could do was be careful.

Noel looked around. He had seen the Vice Captain of the Demon Beholder Squad in the past. But this was the first time he saw their Zero Squad. Meanwhile, the Demon Hunting Squad didn't bring their Zero Squad.

It seemed that if the one who led them was the Vice Captain, they would deploy the Zero Squad to make up the firepower. But if the captain was the one leading them personally, they would only bring their First Squad. It was proven when Noel saw the same figure who talked to them when they tried to relieve the Demon Barrier Squad headquarters.

Well, he could understand the reason as well. After all, their headquarters had to be defended by their Vice Captain or the Zero Squad if their captain left, unless something urgent happened.

From what he could see, the team was quite balanced. So, they should be able to do something in case this was just one big trap.

The group began to cross the bridge. The river was wide, and the water formed raging waves. Even a Spirit Master wouldn't be able to cross the entire river with a single jump. And if they fell, they would be able to escape from it, but they would still struggle for a while.

Noel knew if this was a trap, the first thing the enemy would do was destroy the bridge.

That was why, the moment he crossed the bridge, he became extremely vigilant.

The Demon Beholder Squad immediately dispersed, trying to find any clues along the way. Meanwhile, the Demon Hunting Squad began to move forward. They were hunting dogs, so they were perfect to be the vanguard in this operation.

The Demon Barrier Squad remained with the Demon Relief Squad for the time being.

After several minutes, there was a signal that told them it was safe to climb the hill.

So, the two squads started climbing while maintaining some distance from the Demon Hunting Squad.

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While the group was advancing toward the village, Zion had been sneaking around according to Noel's instructions. He was going around the mountain to reach the other side and find the secret passage.

When he was moving between the trees, he abruptly stopped when he sensed a presence coming from the north.

'Hmm? This is?' Zion suddenly jumped off the tree, erasing his presence. He couldn't allow anyone to catch him. He thought, 'I can feel two people's presence. Their strength is beyond me. Two Spirit Grandmasters?'

Zion tried to look at these two people through the gap between leaves to discern their identities.

However, Zion suddenly stopped for a moment when he took a peek at their faces.

One of them was an old man who seemed to be in his seventies. He was old, but his body was still emitting powerful Spiritual Energy. Meanwhile, the other one was a middle-aged man. He might not be as strong as the old man, but their facial features looked similar, making him look like he was a relative of the old man.

Two powerful Spirit Grandmasters and seemed to be relatives. It took him an instant for Zion to realize their identities.

'Wait a minute. Are they the Spirit Grandmasters of the Count Family? They are the current Count and the Fist Arbiter?' Zion gulped down. 'What are they doing here? No, I think it's pretty obvious.'

Zion was in a dilemma. On the one hand, he wanted to follow them to confirm their actions and involvement. On the other hand, Noel had predicted this would happen. So following them would just waste his time searching for another escape route.



'What should I do? Should I confirm their actions with my own eyes? Or should I focus on my task?'

Zion thought for a few seconds before choosing to believe in Noel's prediction. It was better to focus on his task since his teammates' lives depended on him.

Zion continued to cross the mountain. He became even more careful because those two existed.

However, it didn't take too long for him to hear a huge explosion coming from the bridge.

**\*Boom!\***

The loud sound shook the mountain. The birds that resided on the mountain immediately flew away.

It seemed that they deliberately caused such a scene in order to alarm everyone. They wanted the people in the village to know that the rats had sneaked in.

"Kh..." Zion gritted his teeth. Although he was worried about his teammates, he had to keep going. "I promise I'll find the secret passage."

Chapter 716 Attack

**\*Boom!\***

The Demon Banner Army was also able to hear the explosion. All the vice captains and captains immediately gathered in one place.

"As expected, this is a trap." Faust remained calm while looking at Igor. "Aren't you happy, Igor? This way, you can fight against all those people."

"That's true." Igor nodded with a serious expression. He seemed eager to fight. Even if he had to fight multiple Devil Bishops, he wouldn't cower.

"Though, we still have to figure out their current power." The Vice Captain of the Demon Beholder Squad replied.

Paul raised his hand. "Excuse me. I think you have to know about this. There is a reason we are late. I have told you about the two Spirit Grandmasters from the Count Family, right?"

"Yeah. They might be the ones who blew up the bridge." Igor nodded. "However, they wouldn't be likely to attack us. In fact, if all of us died here, they would also get into trouble, especially with the Royal Family. After all, one of them is the Fist Arbiter."

"In other words, we might be able to focus on handling the Supreme Devil Organization. Captain Faust and I can handle two or three Devil Bishops each, depending on their strength. Meanwhile, the two Vice Captains have to focus on commanding the group to take down the remaining members. If the enemies are overwhelming in number, we are going to break through."

"Do we have to go around the mountain to escape?" Faust asked.

"Of course. The terrain doesn't look good, but that's the only way. As long as we can get something from this investigation, we can get even more people to surround this place and even destroy the Count Family for their cooperation with the Supreme Devil Organization." Igor nodded. "I don't know much about politics, so I'll let the headquarters deal with it. All we need to do is finish the investigation and survive."

"Sounds simple enough." Faust nodded with a serious expression.

"Since the enemies have known of our existence, we are going to move together. It's safer this way. The Demon Beholder Squad will continue to scout the area around us, making sure we're not ambushed by them." Igor gave the last instruction.

Igor might be a big, muscular man like Faust. But unlike the latter, Igor had an exceptional brain. It might not be equal to those who used their brains to defeat their opponent, but it was still enough to make a completely rational decision.

Now that they had reached an agreement, the group had changed their formation.

The Demon Hunting Squad remained at the front. But behind them was the Demon Relief Squad, followed by the Demon Barrier Squad. The two squads were protecting Noel and the others.

The Demon Beholder remained on the sides, trying to find any ambush.

But surprisingly, even though they were alarmed by the loud explosion from earlier, nothing came out.

Noel couldn't help but say, "This is rather creepy."

Paul glanced at Noel. "What do you mean?"

"They haven't done anything, even though they have been alarmed. It feels like they are planning to lower our guards by making us think they are just normal people. After all, if they are our enemies, they would usually storm out and attack us." Noel assessed the situation.

The two captains could hear Noel's assessment as well. They had met Noel before, so they knew that he was the real deal. His description was pretty accurate, so it seemed that the enemies were more dangerous than they thought.

"In that case, let's do it our way." Igor covered his fists with Spiritual Energy. "Demon Hunting Squad, we are going to rush forth and become the bait. The Demon Barrier Squad is to remain on standby, ready to block any attacks that are going to harm us. Since the enemies want to lower our guards, then we will have to catch them off guard by arriving faster than they expect."

Noel didn't say anything about his plan. On the one hand, it looked reckless. On the other hand, it could truly cause some disorder in the enemy ranks.

Before they could think of a solution for the sudden change, they could strike them and gain an upper hand.

After hearing their captain's order, the Demon Hunting Squad pulled out their weapons and covered their bodies with Spiritual Energy. All of them were ready to charge forward.

"Alright. Let's go!" Igor declared as he started running. The others followed him.

"There are about three hundred meters to reach the village. I should be able to hear small movements within fifty meters. I'll tell you if there are any suspicious movements once we reach that distance." Rose stated, focusing all her attention on her senses.

Noel also switched his medal to the Affection Medal. This way, if the enemies disguised themselves as normal villagers, he could easily figure out their disguises and attack them.

The Demon Barrier Squad, on the other hand, had prepared their Spirit Abilities. Two of them seemed to have the ability to create a shield, while Captain Faust was already pulling his bow.

The three groups increased their pace. They were supposed to reach the village in another thirty minutes because they had to be careful. But because of the change in their plan, they were going to arrive in three minutes.

"I can see the village now!" Rose stated. She shouted, "It seems that they are not hiding their intention!"

Rose could see several people hiding among the houses and roofs. Even Noel could see a few system panels that contained their names and affection.

"Get ready!" Noel warned them.

Igor charged confidently, as if he didn't fear their ambush. Meanwhile, Faust made the first move. He charged his arrow with a lot of Spiritual Energy before shooting at a house on their right.

"!!!" There were two people on the house's roof. They were surprised that they were attacked like this. And the arrow contained so much power that once it hit the house, it shattered the house into pieces, exploded, and blew everything away, including the two people.

"Attack!"

More than ten people suddenly came out of hiding, ready to take them on.

Chapter 717 Die?

More than ten people came out of their hiding, trying to attack them. They all gathered their Spiritual Energy in their weapons and moved toward the Demon Hunting Squad, trying to eliminate them.

Captain Igor's eyes flashed as he stepped forward. Despite having a big body, he swiftly moved to the right side while punching the air.

He punched the air so hard that he created an air pressure that was strong enough to blow two of the attackers away.

After that, he used his big hands to grab two heads, crushing their skulls with his bare hands.

Even Noel couldn't help but gasp, witnessing the monstrous strength of the Demon Hunting Squad's captain.

'Their strength might not be comparable to his, but they are still Spirit Wielders. One of them is even a Spirit Master. Yet, they can't do anything to him. No, more like Captain Igor handles them like trash.' Noel thought while his body shuddered.

In the opposite direction, there were two barriers that appeared next to the Demon Hunting Squad, stopping two attackers. Meanwhile, a few attackers managed to slip past the barriers and reach the Demon Hunting Squad.

When they were about to clash, a sharp and destructive arrow flew from the side, piercing their skulls.

The arrow was not a normal arrow. Instead, it was so long that one might mistake it for a sword.

However, because of its length, the arrow pierced through three people's skulls like a skewer.

It was Captain Faust's arrow. Just like Captain Igor, Captain Faust also killed them effortlessly.

This was the power of the two captains. Meanwhile, the Demon Hunting Squad immediately marched forward, hunting down the remaining attackers.

The Demon Relief Squad and the Demon Barrier Squad remained in their positions since the enemies had been defeated before they could even move.

'Ten people: 8 Spirit Wielders and 2 Spirit Masters... are obliterated just like that.' Noel furrowed his eyebrows. 'Maybe Anna miscalculated our strength? We're strong, right?'

Despite thinking that way, Noel still didn't forget that Anna looked like she knew everything. So, she might have expected this and deemed them to still not be enough.

Noel looked around, finding no one inside the buildings.

'Hmm? This place looks empty.' Noel furrowed his eyebrows, looking around.

"Captain!" One of the Demon Beholder Squad members came to Captain Igor. "Sir. I think this place is empty."

"Empty?" Igor furrowed his eyebrows, looking around. "Are you sure about it?"

"Yes." He nodded with a serious expression. He pointed at the mountain and said, "We have climbed to a significant height, but we couldn't find any clues about their movement. In addition, several of us have circled the village. From what we can see, there is no movement in this village."

"Huh?" Igor looked down, contemplating. On the one hand, he couldn't dismiss the investigation report. On the other hand, he didn't believe this village was empty, considering he heard the explosion earlier. The enemies should have known their existence and tried to lock them up here.

However, he couldn't find any reason as to why they trapped them here.

He glanced at Noel and waved his hand, calling him.

Noel was confused, but he was his superior. So Noel had no choice but to come to him.

Once he arrived, Igor said, "Even though Paul is the one taking responsibility, I know that you are the first one to know this place is a trap. However, do you know what kind of trap it is?"

"Unfortunately, no." Noel shook his head. He didn't want to stand out, but he felt something was off.

"The village seems to be empty. So, I'm not sure what to do right now. After all, they have blown up the bridge. There should be another catch or trap that we aren't aware of. They might even be looking at us as if we are prey ready to be devoured." Igor pinched the bridge of his nose, trying to figure out the situation.

Sadly, Noel wasn't omnipotent. He could think of something, but he was as confused as he was in this scenario.

"A trap, huh? An empty village." Noel looked down for a moment before asking, "What if they want us to be away from our headquarters so that they can attack our places simultaneously?"

Igor didn't dismiss that opinion. However, he added, "The commander is taking this matter seriously. In fact, you should know that the role of the Demon Relief Squad is to be the bait, right? Just that fact alone makes him pay attention to our headquarters. He has thought about this possibility, you see."

"I see." Noel did his best to come up with a potential trap. But nothing made sense.

"Sir. We have just explored the area around us, but there doesn't seem to be a hidden spot anywhere. The village is truly empty, and all we can find are the fifteen people who attacked us earlier." A member of the Demon Beholder Squad reported while scratching the back of his head.

"So, should we go back to check the bridge? The explosion might make us think this place is a trap." Noel stated with a serious expression.

...

While Noel and the others were discussing their current situation, Anna gradually opened her eyes.

'Uh... where is this?' Anna mumbled. She had a hard time moving, and she could feel pain all over her body. However, it seemed that she wasn't tied up, making her remember the last thing she did before passing out.

She hurriedly tried to get up while shouting, "Not go—Ahhhh!"

She clenched her chest and ended up dropping back onto the bed.

"Please take it easy." A familiar voice echoed in her ears as Anna couldn't help but turn around, finding the brothel manager sitting next to her.

"You... Why are you here? No. Where is he and his group?"

"They have left the city. I believe they have reached Creek Village by now." The manager answered with a confused expression.

"Not good. They have to leave right away. Don't go to that village!" Anna was struggling to get up, trying to catch up to them. "It's a trap. They are going to die!"



## Chapter 718 Trap

Noel and the others were exploring the village to confirm there was a clue they had missed.

In the end, they reached the same conclusion. It seemed that the village was empty. Only those fifteen people resided in this village. And they were truly people from the Supreme Devil Organization.

As for the rest of the people, they might have evacuated the village.

The two captains, the vice captains, and a few people who were adept at using their brains, such as Noel and Rose, gathered in the center of the village. They had to discuss their next move, considering they couldn't find anything.

Most of the Demon Beholder Squad were in the village as well, while the rest were scouting the nearby area to see if there was a cave or something.

"So, there is nothing we can find here." Igor sighed and said, "Maybe they have left the village. They are already aware of our movement from the beginning or something."

"That is a possibility." Paul nodded in agreement.

Rose and Noel were still in deep thought, believing this was not the case. As much as they wanted to believe this was the situation, there was simply no reason why Anna had to be in that situation.

"Is there something you wish to add?" Igor asked Noel, wondering what the brain of the Demon Relief Squad could do.

Noel scratched the back of his head. He was weighing the pros and cons of sharing Anna's situation. But that was the only clue that led to this place being a trap.

He decided to explain it. "Actually, I have another partner, not from the Demon Banner Army. She has been helping me with the investigation of a secret passage that the Count Family uses."

"Well, it's for an escape route. So, I haven't mentioned anything so far, considering we can't find the truth about it. And when she returned not long ago, she was covered in injuries. I couldn't hear her explanation since she hadn't woken up after two hours. That was the reason we were late."

When they heard the stories, they couldn't help but frown, feeling a bit dissatisfied.

However, as an expert in investigation, that small piece of information gave him another thought. The Vice Captain of the Demon Beholder Squad asked, "Wait a minute. Did you say a secret passage? I could understand that the Count Family was suspicious. But what do you mean by a secret passage? Is it somewhere near this place?"

"Yes." Noel nodded. "The secret passage was said to be connecting the Count Mansion to this mountain, specifically the other side of this mountain. So, we tried to find the secret passage so that we could build a tunnel and use the passage to escape in case something went wrong."

They could understand the precaution. Since the Demon Relief Squad was the one who did all the small work, such as an escape route, they didn't question Noel further.

Surprisingly, that secret passage made the vice captain fall into deep thought.

"A secret passage. What kind of secret passage? What's the size? This is the Count Family. No, what if the Supreme Devil Organization is cooperating with the Count Family? They also have an Arbiter."

"What the Supreme Devil Organization currently has... Why do they want to lead us here? Why do they use the empty village to make us think there is a cave or hidden passage near us?"

The vice captain fell silent for a moment. All of a sudden, he gasped as though he had seen through the scheme.

He looked at Igor and said, "Sir Igor. If you don't mind, can you assist me in my investigation?"

"Sure." Igor nodded without hesitation. It seemed that he had gotten a clue, so it was better to check it. They didn't have anything to do here anyway.

The vice captain pointed at the ground and said, "Please hit the ground. No need to hit it so hard."

"Sure. But why do I need to do that? What did you find?" Igor asked with a curious expression.

"After thinking about a secret passage that led to the other side of this mountain... I couldn't help but think the hidden passage was beneath this village. I don't know if they are related, but if the secret passage is beneath us, then it's going to be dangerous. There are a lot of things to suspect."

"Alright then." Igor put his knees on the ground while raising his fist. "Tell me when you're ready."

The vice captain placed his ear on the ground. He then released his Spiritual Energy before concentrating it on his ear. It seemed like he was using the vibration and the Spiritual Energy to listen to the movement of the ground. "Please."

\*Bam!\*

Igor hit the ground with his fist. It wasn't hard, but the vibration moved downward. All the vice captain needed was feedback from the sound. As long as there was a gap, there would be a huge loss in the vibration he could hear.

But he was stunned the moment the loss happened.

He opened his mouth wide, as if he couldn't believe it.

"The vibration stopped only a few meters below us. There seems to be a huge room beneath us. But the problem is that we are at least fifty meters above ground."

'A room beneath us? No, if there is indeed a room beneath us, then the Demon Beholder Squad should be able to find the secret entrance. The connection between the Supreme Devil Organization and the Count Family... the secret passage, a tunnel, an escape route...'

Noel suddenly connected everything and shouted at the top of his lungs, trying to warn everyone. "Not good. Leave this village at once!"

But the moment he warned the others, a series of explosions occurred. All those explosions came from the edges of the villages.

\*Boom!\*

\*Boom!\*

\*Boom!\*

They were confused, but the ground didn't seem to allow them to react as they began to crumble.

"We're going to fall!"

Chapter 719 Situation

"We're going to fall!"

The ground crumbled, and the people on top of it began to fall. The hole was so big that it swallowed the entire village.

They ended up falling together with the buildings as they became an obstacle to them.

Noel looked around. It started to be hard to see the surroundings due to the sunlight not reaching this far. Noel could hear a lot of noises from the sides.

"What is going on?"

"Why are we falling down?"

"Help me!"

The situation was chaotic. The people were panicking because it was something they had never seen before.

However, Noel tried his best to remain calm. He immediately activated the Moon Blessing, allowing him to see in the dark. Even so, he had a hard time finding the bottom. It seemed that they would fall from a tall place. This way, a lot of them would be heavily injured.

'They are using the same strategy. Creating a tunnel that leads to the passage. But they use the tunnels to swallow the village and the secret passage as...' Noel instantly understood what they wanted. '...An executing ground.'

Even if they managed to survive the fall, they would be surrounded by demons and enemies if his prediction wasn't wrong.

'Should I tell Jonathan and all Wind Element Spirit Users to fly? No, they won't be able to carry all of them in this situation. Then, should we just let them fall like this? We will be exterminated. How about reaching for the wall?' Noel glanced to the side, finding all the debris. 'No, the buildings and debris are blocking us. Even if some of us can stop, the people below will be slaughtered. What's the plan that can ensure the survival of all these people?'

Noel didn't hesitate to shout, "Wind Element Spirit Users, create a blast of wind to become a cushion for our fall. Don't reach for the wall. If we don't have enough people, we will be slaughtered by the enemies that have waited for us at the bottom! I have the Moon Blessing, so I can tell you when it's time to release your power!"

The people were still panicking, so not all of them could hear Noel's voice. However, the two captains and vice captains who were not far from Noel immediately shouted at the top of their lungs and even used their Spiritual Energy to transmit the messages.

This was the only option to survive.

They said the same thing as Noel. It seemed that it was pretty effective, considering that a lot of people suddenly became quiet. In addition, there were four people who were ready to use their Wind Spirit Ability. And another person who planned to use his Telekinesis.

Noel could see the bottom after falling for a moment. It seemed that the secret passage was located at least 200 meters beneath the village.

"I can see it. Get ready!" Noel didn't even count, as they didn't have enough time left. He could only shout, "Go!"

The instant they heard it, they hurriedly released their Wind Spirit Ability, forming a powerful wind that reached the bottom. Then, the wind dispersed and even bounced back, pushing them back up for a split second and allowing the people to fall safely down as if they just hit a cushion.

However, the buildings shattered into pieces as their power wasn't enough to lift up the house. Some of the buildings seemed to have reached the ground first. But those who were lighter dropped only a split second before they reached the ground.

The woods and rocks scattered upon impact, causing a ruckus all around the floor. All the people that had just landed immediately covered their bodies with Spiritual Energy, trying to prevent any injuries.

However, some of the splinters and rubble were far too big and quick, and when they hit a body, it felt like they were being struck by a Peak Level Demon.

"Aaahhh!"

"Aaahhhh!"

"Help!"

A series of screams filled the area. Noel wanted to help them, but he had to ignore them for one obvious reason.

Since they had set a deliberate trap to bring them here, they would surely station their people to kill the people who survived.

The two captains were the first to notice the serious expression Noel had. They also wanted to help their subordinates, but it seemed that the danger hadn't passed yet.

He was grateful for his Moon Blessing which allowed him to see his surroundings. The secret passage the Count Family had seemed to be bigger than he originally thought. But when the dust settled, he realized that this area had been dug up specifically.

Two hundred meters in front of him, the path became smaller. He realized that this was the real size of the passage.

However, beyond this shrinking passage was what made him panic. He could see demons and people standing side by side. He couldn't calculate their number, but they would surely be pincered in two directions.

He didn't have time to look back, but if there was a need for rough calculation, he believed there were at least a few hundred people and demons in this place.

'We can go up with the help of Wind Element Spirit Users and Jonathan, but the people who don't get picked will be slaughtered. In that case, the best option right now is to fight back and break through the enemy ranks. It's better if we can leave this place by charging in a single direction.'

'In that case, we should reach the exit that is supposed to be nearer than the entrance.' Noel pointed to the back and said, "Calculating the direction, the exit is a better option if we want to break through. There are a few hundred enemies, demons and humans, in both directions."

The two captains who saw him glanced at each other. Although they wanted to discuss the current situation, it seemed that the moment the dust settled, they would be ambushed from two sides. It would be better if they took the initiative and disrupted their plans.

"I will take the lead and create a path for us," Igor stated with a serious expression.

"Then, I will take the rear and protect us." Faust nodded while raising his bow, ready to shoot another arrow for a counterattack.

## Chapter 720 Rescue

Due to the fact that they were scouting the area, a few members of the Demon Beholder Squad weren't swallowed. They gathered at the edge of the hole, discussing the situation and wondering if they had to jump to help their people.

Unbeknownst to them, there were two more people who were discussing what they should do in this situation.

"What should we do?"

"I'm not sure."

They were Damian and Dimitri. They stood side by side, looking at the hole.

"The hole doesn't seem to be within the plan. In fact, even if I knew this was a trap, I would never imagine they had this kind of trap for us." Dimitri furrowed his eyebrows. Even as a former captain, he never encountered this level of trap.



"Well, I might not participate in the mission, but Noel surely told me about the mission. When I saw this hole, it seemed that the Supreme Devil Organization intentionally spread the information to bait the Demon Banner Army." Damian expressed his concern.

"I know. I'm still thinking about whether I should join or not. After all, I might have to expose my identity if I enter the hole." Dimitri frowned.

"So, your master's life is less than making your identity a secret?" Damian rolled his eyes.

But Dimitri simply added, "I simply believe in my master's potential. He might be able to escape this without my help. So, if I were to help him now, he might end up having future problems for no reason."

Dimitri and Damian were panicking as well. But they didn't act immediately since they had to remain as calm as possible to not make any mistakes in this already grave situation.

After some thought, Dimitri asked, "What are you planning to do? If you help him now, you might be able to get more favors, you know."

"What are you? Selling your own master?" Damian shook his head helplessly. "I can still faintly sense the badge in his hand. It seems that he has begun moving toward..."

Damian pointed at the mountain.

"It seems that the hole is connected to the secret passage of the Count Family. He must be heading toward the exit. But if I were the enemy, I would place a lot of people in this place to stop them. Won't it be better if he goes another way?" Damian was confused.

Dimitri said, "It's better to break through. If they go in the opposite direction, they have to be chased by the enemies for at least one hour since the exit will be in the Count Family's mansion."

"Fair enough. In that case, should we go around the mountain and ambush the enemies from behind? We will just reduce the enemies and let them do the rest." Damian gave a good suggestion.

Even Dimitri thought about agreeing to this arrangement.

But all of a sudden, they felt a presence coming from the bottom of the mountain. It was moving so fast toward the village.

"!!!" Dimitri and Damian turned their heads around, finding a person clad in lightning.

Dimitri instantly recognized that person and mumbled, "Anna Stargaze?"

When Damian heard that name, both of them suddenly disappeared, heading straight to Anna Stargaze.

Anna saw Dimitri and abruptly stopped.

Surprisingly, her face was completely pale. Some of her wounds reopened. In fact, she might be standing here with her willpower alone.

It was clear that Anna exerted her remaining energy to reach this place as quickly as possible. She used the second bridge they had prepared as an escape route to reach this place.

And when she saw Dimitri, she finally dropped to the ground and coughed up some blood.

"Oi, Anna Stargaze! Get a grip!" Dimitri had no obligation to help Anna, but since Anna was currently cooperating with his master, she couldn't die.

Anna hurriedly grabbed Dimitri's sleeve and shouted, "You have to go! Hurry up and save him!"

"Calm down. Your condition is deteriorating. And explain to me why you are like this!" Dimitri wanted to go immediately, but he had to understand the full picture first.

Anna gritted her teeth, enduring the pain. It seemed that she had to explain it, so she worded it as simply as possible so that Dimitri would leave as soon as possible.

"The reason why the Fist Arbiter and the Count agreed to cooperate with the Supreme Devil Organization was that they had no choice. The Strongest Demon Saint, a Spirit Transcendence..."

Dimitri opened his eyes wide and said, "Don't tell me, that Demon Saint is in the tunnel... Not good!"

Without hesitation, Dimitri disappeared from the area as he headed straight to the hole and jumped off.

"What?" Her words shocked even Damian. Even though the Supreme Devil Organization was a problem for the Muivell Kingdom, it didn't change the fact that there was a possibility that it would become an international organization.

So, the Greenwood Kingdom had been keeping an eye on the organization as well. That was why Damian knew what kind of being the strongest Demon Saint was.

'The Strongest Demon Saint, the one who is said to be on par with the Commander of the Demon Banner Army, a Spirit Transcendence.' Damian's body shook. He wondered if he should help as well, considering Dimitri was not enough to handle someone at that level.

"I have to go." Anna gritted her teeth, trying to exert her energy.

"Enough. Your condition is rapidly deteriorating. If this continues, you might die without being able to do anything."

"It's fine. I can keep going!" Anna took a deep breath and opened her mouth, "True Spirit—Hmph!"

The first two words were like thunder reverberating in his ears. He instinctively covered Anna's mouth and said in shock, "You... You can use it? No, even if you can use it, you shouldn't use it now. The moment you use it, you will seriously die!"

Damian gritted his teeth. "It seems that I have to remain here to make sure you don't become reckless. You are cooperating with him, so I don't think he wants you to die!"

Damian used his ice to gag her mouth and form a handcuff to tie her hands behind her. Anna was glaring at him, telling him to leave her alone. But Damian decided not to leave her alone.