

S vs Rebirth 751

Chapter 751 Entering The House

'That easy?' He never thought that the hermit would agree so easily. After all, he came here not invited. They had never met and their races were even different.

"Why are you so shocked? You don't think I will teach you?" Old Ru smirked, teasing him.

"To be honest, yes." Noel chose to be honest here, considering he wanted to make Old Ru trust him.

"Haha. I like an honest person." Old Ru pointed at his house. "In that case, let's enter first. I'll explain it to you after this."

"I understand. Thank you for inviting us." Noel nodded gently. Noel couldn't help but glance back, worried about Dimitri and the others. "But, Sir. Is it fine if all of us enter your house?"

"The more the merrier." Old Ru chuckled.

Noel didn't know what to say. Old Ru looked like a human. He didn't even see anything that made him look otherwise. Yet, the way he conducted himself was so different from a normal human, especially with how he was so open in teaching them.

However, there was no sign of him trying to lie to him. Of course, Old Ru might pretend to accept all of them and do something later, but he was so strong that he could kill them if he wanted. Even if they used their True Spirit Body, the area was filled with demons. They would end up dying no matter what.

When they were about to reach the house, the door was opened.

"Welcome back, Grandpa." A young man, who seemed to be no older than Noel, emerged from the house to greet him. He soon noticed the presence of Noel and the others and looked at them for a moment.

His eyes seemed to be fixated on Noel, who walked together with his grandfather.

Noel could see the young man's identity as well as his affection.

Name: Lupin

Affection: Vague (5/100)

Description: Someone who doesn't like you but doesn't hate you.

Just like the affection, the description was also vague and confusing. It seemed that the young man didn't want him to be here, but because Old Ru brought them here, he ended up accepting them.

Noel couldn't really describe the feeling, but at the very least, he wouldn't be a threat.

At the same time, Noel couldn't help but remember what Anna told him previously. Lupin was actually suitable to become the Sword Saint's disciple.

He didn't know if this was possible, but somehow, he realized that after knowing the future, there was a repulsive feeling as if he had over-analyzed him or something.

If Noel knew that Anna wanted to tell him about the betrayal of the Third Prince and her teacher back then, he would have told her to stop because he wanted to judge them with his own eyes.

Noel took a deep breath, trying to forget what Anna had said. Then, he carefully took a look at this Lupin.

Lupin was a young man who seemed to be of the same age as him. His eyes were fixated on his ears. Instead of a pair of ears that looked like Old Ru or him, Lupin had no ears on the side. It was fixed with a pair of ears on top of his head.

The ears were pointy and hairy, looking like a wolf's ears. His blue hair looked like it was long because it was sticking out of his back, but when he took another look at it, the one on the back seemed to be another thing.

He soon realized that the guy only had short blue hair and the one sticking out earlier was his tail.

In addition, his eyes were sharp and slanted. Other than these three features, Noel couldn't really find anything that made him look different from a normal human. Then again, those three features were enough for people to realize he was not a human.

"Can you guess his name?" Old Ru asked with a gentle smile.

Noel fell silent for a moment before saying, "Lupin."

Lupin was slightly surprised that his name was being called. However, he soon snorted. "My name is not something you can call!"

"Oh my." Old Ru chuckled. "I hope that you don't feel offended by his remark. He has a rough childhood, you see."

"I understand." Noel nodded with a serious expression.

"Can you prepare the seats for the guest?" Old Ru waved his hand.

Since it was his grandfather's request, Lupin could only agree. He entered hurriedly and prepared things as quickly as possible as if he didn't want to meet them.

Old Ru was chuckling the whole time as if Lupin's action was cute. Meanwhile, the others didn't know what to say because this was the first time they saw someone with fox ears.

Anna had heard about Lupin, but she never encountered him in the past.

So, she couldn't help but be curious.

Noel said, "I should be the one to apologize for our rudeness."

It seemed that Noel understood what happened and the reason why Old Ru only apologized once at the start, not the rest.

Because this was the first time they saw someone like him, they couldn't help but stare at him so intensely as if trying to learn about him. That was rude like what Lupin did.

Hence, Noel had to apologize.

As soon as they heard Noel's words, their bodies shook. Dimitri and Damian looked at each other while Nicole and Anna scratched the back of their heads, feeling embarrassed.

"Hahaha!" Old Ru chuckled and patted Noel's shoulder a few times as though he was satisfied with him. After that, he pointed at the door and said, "Please."

Noel nodded and followed Old Ru entering the house. He thought that the hermit's house would be al, especially since he showed such power.

But the moment he entered, there was nothing extraordinary about it. The interior was made of wood and the decoration only gave a warm feeling.

However, there was one thing that piqued Noel's interest.

It was the white sword hanging on the wall.

Chapter 752 High Level Debate

The white sword was emitting a powerful Spiritual Energy as though it was alive. He thought this white sword would be similar to Ardagan, but when he asked Ardagan about it, he realized that his assumption was wrong.

"This is a Spirit Sword. Even though I call it a Spirit Sword, this sword doesn't have any spirit we know so far. However, it contains a lingering will of the previous wielder, allowing it to exude such Spiritual Energy."

"Oh..." Noel was impressed. He heard about Ardagan and his ancestors, but Ardagan surprisingly responded to him.

[The will doesn't have complete intelligence. Instead of saying it is a will, it's more like a lingering instinct of the previous wielder. It can detect danger or anything, but it is by no means alive.]

'It's rare for you to speak to me when encountering an item. Don't tell me, you're jealous and want to tell me that you're superior?' Noel replied inwardly. Unfortunately, Ardagan didn't reply to him afterward.

Old Ru guided them inside, where they found a long table. The ground beneath the table was dug completely, allowing them to slide their legs inside. This way, they could sit down on the floor without any trouble.

"Please." Old Ru asked them to take their seats.

Damian and Dimitri took one side, while Nicole and Anna took the other side. Meanwhile, Old Ru and Noel sat diagonally to them, with both of them facing each other.

"I know that you are tired from your long and dangerous trip. Hence, I won't take too much of your time. I'll just tell you the reason why I agree so easily." Old Ru pointed at Noel without hesitation. "It's because of you."

"Me?" Noel pointed at himself, confused.

"Yeah. Do you believe in fate?"

Noel nodded. "Of course, I believe it."

As someone who wanted to gain freedom even from fate itself, Noel definitely believed in fate.

"You could say that our meeting here is predestined. To make it simple, you can say that it's fate that brings us together. However, the real reason is more complicated."

"Do you know that something that has to happen will continue to happen no matter how you try to change it?"

"Hmm?" Noel was confused. "Do you mean that I'm supposed to meet you and I can't escape that fate?"

On the other hand, Anna fell silent for a moment. She was completely shocked by this statement as though this was a statement for her instead of Noel.

"You shouldn't think that way. Instead, I'll give you another example. Let's say you have to take a breath right now so that you can live, will you take a breath?"

Noel nodded.

"That's right. You will definitely take a breath. But what if the moment you breathe, you end up inhaling poison? Will you take a deep breath?"

"No. I will only be poisoned. I'll definitely hold my breath for a while and get into safety."

"Then, after that, will you take a deep breath?"

"Yes. If not, I will die..." Noel looked down for a moment, realizing what he wanted to imply. "I see. So, our meeting has been predestined. No matter how you're planning to twist that fate, it's going to

happen. I might come a bit faster or slower. I might come with other people or by myself. In the end, it will only change the process, not the result."

"Exactly." Old Ru smiled.

"!!!" Anna's body shook. When she heard that the result couldn't be changed, she couldn't help but think, 'Don't tell me... Even with all this knowledge and Noel's cooperation, we can't still fight against the betrayal. We'll definitely die no matter how we twist the history?'

"Still, are you saying that we can't escape fate?" Noel asked.

"No, not at all." Old Ru shook his head. "You can change your fate. Instead of being fixated on something that can't be changed, how about we change our perspective?"

"What do you mean?"

"I want to stand in front of you! To do that, I have to take a few steps, right?"

"That's correct," Noel confirmed without hesitation.

"In that case, what if I walk with a blade?"

"My comrades will surely try to stop you."

"Exactly. But because I'm strong, do you think your comrades can stop me from standing in front of you?"

"Not at all."

"Then, what if we change the perspective this way? I want to save your life. But in order to do that, I have to wield my blade and stand before you."

"Hmm?" Noel raised his eyebrows. "Are you telling me to look far ahead?"

"Exactly." Old Ru lined up three cups in front of him and called them A, B, and C. "Take a look at this. If I am at point A and want to get into point B. Between them shall be the progress, right?"

"Definitely. But if we change our perspective and think that we're at point A. But instead of getting into point B, we want to reach point C. This way, point B will become the progress itself. In the first case scenario, the progress will be the empty space between the two points. But in the second case scenario, the progress will be point B entirely. In fact, you can even add two empty spaces between those three points." Noel gasped, understanding the concept.

"If we can't change fate, then we should change our perspective of our result and see farther ahead. Maybe, once we see that new goal, we will have a different perspective and everything that is supposed to happen will change." Old Ru smiled. He had expected Noel to understand, but it was still quite surprising that Noel could follow him this fast.

"If I want to escape fate... Instead of thinking that way, I should set a goal farther ahead where escaping fate is simply a means to reach that point." Noel looked down for a moment. "But what kind of goal is it?"

"Unfortunately, I can't answer that question. It's beyond my imagination after all. But as long as you keep seeking that answer, you might find it someday. And you might even be able to go even further." Old Ru smiled.

Even though both Old Ru and Noel were engaged in high-level discussion, there was one person who didn't care about it. She only had one thought in mind.

'Does that mean that if we have a further goal where betrayal is something that is meant to be avoided, we can avoid it?' Anna clenched her fists.

Chapter 753 Arrangement

"So, what do you think?" Old Ru asked.

"I think I understand something." Noel nodded with a serious expression.

"That's good then. The reason why I invited you so openly like this is because of the same concept." Old Ru glanced to the side as though he was looking at his grandson. "He has been with me since he was a baby. I have been thinking about letting him integrate back into the society.

"Unfortunately, his identity is somewhat special." Old Ru let out a long sigh. "If I let him go back to the same kingdom, he will end up being targeted. So, I'm thinking about taking advantage of you so that he is a bit more sociable. I can't protect him the entire time, so I have to prepare him to the best of my ability."

Noel frowned and asked, "Are you asking us to only converse with him? Or do you plan to let him enter the human kingdoms?"

"..." Damian's expression became serious. As someone from the military, knowing that there was a potential spy entering the kingdom was dangerous, but Old Ru added, "Of course, the former. As for the latter, I won't convince him or something. But if he ends up following you, then I don't really mind. Just take care of him for me."

Noel fell silent for a moment. On the one hand, he had hinted that he knew a possibility that Old Ru was pushing his grandson to follow them. After all, he was supposed to be the Sword Saint's disciple. On the other hand, he didn't want to openly say that he wanted his grandson.

Old Ru smiled, "In any case, you have understood my intention. I can see that the two of you are still Spirit Masters. Hence, I will train both of you. As for the Spirit Grandmasters, I don't mind if you're observing the training and benefiting from it, but I won't go all the way to teach you. You should understand why I don't plan to teach Spirit Grandmasters, right?"

Nicole, Dimitri, and Damian nodded their heads in unison. Still, watching the training that a Spirit Transcendence Level Expert gave should be beneficial even for them. In addition, Old Ru should be stronger than their Spirit Transcendence Level Experts.

"How long are you planning to stay here?" Old Ru asked Noel.

"We've used a total of 27 days to reach this place. And it's possible that we will take around the same time to return. In the worst case scenario, it will take more than a month. Hence, we only have around four months to stay here. Is it too much?"

"No, not at all." Old Ru shook his head. "In fact, I wish you could stay longer. But since you'll only stay for four months, I'll teach you depending on your talent."

"We understand." Noel nodded without hesitation.

"Alright. You must be exhausted from the trip, so it's better if you take some rest. We've plenty of rooms in this house." Old Ru extended his hand, asking them to follow him. "Also, since both of you are going together, it's better if you stay in one room. The essence of my training is kind of like that. I usually circulate the energy between me and my grandson, so you two might have to do the same later."

"..." Noel and Anna widened their eyes, not believing what had happened. On the one hand, they didn't know what kind of training they would receive. On the other hand, Noel actually came to this place by himself, meaning he had to get help from someone else. This old man seemed to be joking with them to a certain extent.

"What's wrong? You don't want your training to be fast? I thought you didn't have a lot of time." Old Ru asked with an innocent face as though he thought it was nothing big.

"..." Noel and Anna exchanged gazes. It seemed that they had no choice. They had gone for a lot of adventures together and ended up sleeping in the same tent, so there should be no problem as long as this didn't cause any scandals later.

"I guess we don't have any choice." Noel let out a long sigh.

"Yeah." Anna nodded.

In the end, Dimitri and Damian shared a room while Nicole got a room for herself. But due to the old man's scheme, Noel ended up in the same room as Anna.

The room was quite spacious. There were two single beds side by side. It seemed that even though Old Ru wanted them to be in the same room, he didn't push them to sleep on a single bed.

When Noel entered the room, he noticed something. Every single thing in the room, except for the bed, was only for one person. They had one table, one chair, one window, and even one cupboard. In other words, they had to share everything with each other.

"Old Ru. Are you sure you're not plotting something?" Noel asked with a weird expression.

"I'm not. You can see the training tomorrow and understand why I put you in a single room." Old Ru shook his head helplessly.

"..." Noel furrowed his eyebrows, wondering what kind of training could convince them. Ultimately, Noel decided to enter the room, resigning to his fate.

Meanwhile, Anna still stood at the entrance as if she was hesitating.

"What's wrong? You don't want to do this?" Old Ru asked.

"That's not it." Anna shook her head. Their relationship and identities as knights had gone past the point where they would be embarrassed by this.

The only thing that distracted her this time was what Old Ru had been saying the whole time. It felt like her reincarnation was related to his.

She wanted to ask about it, but she didn't know whether the other party would answer or not.

"It seems that you have a lot of worries." He snapped his fingers. Suddenly, the world became tranquil.

"Huh? This is..." Anna looked around, finding everything stopped. Even Noel didn't make a single move.

Old Ru's expression turned grim. "So, do you want to talk about your reincarnation, little girl?"

Chapter 754 Why?

"So, do you want to talk about your reincarnation, little girl?"

"!!!" Anna's body shook as she looked at Old Ru in shock. "You..."

"You should have suspected it already. If you haven't, then I don't know why I should drop you more hints after all this."

"..." Anna paused for a moment before asking, "Are you the reason behind my reincarnation?"

"Yes and no." Old Ru slightly turned his head to the side as if asking her to follow him.

They walked to the living room again. Anna didn't notice it previously, but there was a picture frame of Old Ru and his grandson. But unlike the current Old Ru, the one in the picture had a shell like that of a turtle.

"This is..." Anna gasped.

"As you can see, I am a turtle, while my grandson is a wolf. But that doesn't matter for now since I'm only going to tell you about the time." Old Ru ended his statement with a question. "How much do you know about your reincarnation?"

Anna wondered if it was alright to tell him about it. But considering the other party already knew about it, he should have pretty much guessed everything. "I only knew that I somehow got reincarnated after I died because of a betrayal."

"Was Noel involved?"

"He died with me."

"Then, what did he say at his last moment?"

"He only told me about his name."

"I see." Old Ru looked at Anna with a disappointed expression. "It seems that you were a big jerk in your previous life."

Normal people would definitely get angry because Old Ru insulted them all of a sudden. However, Anna had accepted the past and nodded in agreement. "You are correct."

Anna's expression was calm and tranquil. Her smile genuinely came from the bottom of her heart.

Of course, she felt disappointed in herself and wanted to remove her past. However, her past shaped the current her and gave her this strength. She could regret it all she wanted, but it wouldn't change. Since there was no other path, she could only move forward.

'I had done a lot of bad things in life. I had killed numerous people indiscriminately. I had made a lot of people suffer just because of my instinct and feeling. In fact, I shouldn't belong here as my sins were so great that I should be placed in hell for eternity.'

'Yet... despite all that, he came to me. We fought against each other, not realizing that both of us influenced each other. I never backed down from his challenge. He never gave up on me no matter how deep I had fallen.'

'If there is something I want to do after all this, at the very least, I want to help him achieve his dream. This is my atonement, my resolve, and my gratitude.'

Anna took a deep breath and showed a complex yet simple smile.

Old Ru couldn't help but open his mouth in surprise. He smiled back and said with a relieved tone. "I can see why he gives you that chance."

Old Ru pointed at the picture and said, "I am one of the Guardian Deities of the kingdom, known as Longevity Guardian. As a turtle, I can live a lot longer than most people. And my ability is related to time. Even if you see me like this, I am already four hundred years old."

Anna was slightly startled, but she soon calmed her down, thinking this was the only possibility and an answer to why he was so strong.

"The shell on my back is the only thing that has witnessed all my journey. It has been exposed to my power for as long as I can remember. Eventually, that shell becomes an artifact that stores a massive power of time.

"As you have probably guessed, the power of that shell is to turn back time. And around two years ago, the shell... disappeared." Old Ru instantly gave the answer, showing that he was the one who truly gave her a second chance.

However, Old Ru continued, "But from what you've told me, Noel didn't bring you to this place like this time, right?"

"Yes," Anna confirmed without hesitation.

"Then, you should have thanked Noel instead of me." Old Ru smiled. "I have guessed a few things. I know that I will be teaching Noel. I don't know the reason why I chose to accept him in my previous life, but I can guess a few reasons."

"More importantly, I should give him my shell in order to help my grandson. You can consider it as a payment too. I told him if he failed to protect my grandson, he should use this shell to restart the time and not fail again."

"In the end, that shell was used on you. I don't think he is the type who will break the promise, so I know that he has successfully protected my grandson."

Anna paused for a moment. "Yes. There were a lot of problems, but he successfully protected him. In fact, their relationship was so close that your grandson became the Sword Saint's disciple... The Sword Saint from one thousand years ago."

"Is that so? It seems that my grandson had a great time with him." Old Ru smiled. He pointed at Anna, "In that case, what are you going to do with this information?"

"Actually, I don't understand the reason why Noel chose me." Anna shook her head. "I was a jerk and was not as smart as him. I might have paid some attention to the matter of the world, but I didn't remember every single thing. I still believed that I didn't deserve this chance. In fact, the world would be better if he used this chance on himself."

"I am not him." Old Ru shook his head. "The only person who can answer that question is himself. Why don't you ask him instead?"

"As much as I want to ask him about it, I don't know if I'm prepared for the answer." Anna looked down.

"Then follow your heart. He doesn't seem to be someone who will do something without a reason. So, if you want that answer, the best thing you can do is to stay beside him for as long as possible until you can uncover that answer."

Anna looked down with a disappointed look. It turned out she had been receiving a lot from him without her realizing it in the past. That was why he said she was naive, ignorant, and other similar things. It was true.

"Why..." Anna sighed.

Chapter 755 Lesson

'Why?' That question kept flashing in her head. On the one hand, she felt like Noel had a grander scheme. On the other hand, she had been with Noel for a long time and didn't sense anything like it.

She had thought about telling him all the information about reincarnation, but she somehow became hesitant after listening to Old Ru.

Still, she had prepared the 'alternate world' as a reason to avoid the suspicion. For the time being, she could use this as an excuse.

"Well, I've told you everything. The rest will be up to you and him." Old Ru smiled while waving his hand.

Their bodies felt like they were moving backward. Her vision was blurry and her balance was tipped over.

Eventually, they returned to the room in the position before Old Ru snapped his fingers.

"Have a good rest." Old Ru smiled and immediately left as though nothing happened.

"..." Anna was completely speechless. When she turned around and found Noel checking the room, the question once again crept into her mind.

'Why did Noel do all that? For what reason?' Anna gulped down. She was curious about it, but she felt like she wasn't prepared for the answer.

"What's wrong?" Noel asked, noticing her anxious expression.

"Ah. It's nothing." Anna smiled awkwardly. "Still, we need to share living space, huh? Even more, all the things we need come in a single set."

"We are a bit lucky since we don't have to share plates and utensils." Noel shrugged, noticing the items were only related to the bedroom, not other purposes.

"Fair enough." Anna nodded in agreement. "So, which one will be your bed?"

Noel pointed at the right one without hesitation.

"There is no 'ladies first' in your dictionary?" Anna chuckled, teasing him.

"Do you want to be treated as such? I can change it the way you like." Noel smirked.

"Of course not." Anna waved her hand nonchalantly while moving to her bed. She sat on the bed and asked, "So, what kind of training will we receive here?"

"Shouldn't you know more about it?" Noel tilted his head in confusion.

"You kept challenging me with new power, so I didn't know which one you got from here." Anna shrugged.

"Then, how about this arrangement? Is there anything that can be used only when we're together like this?" Noel asked.

Anna tried to recall the memory, but nothing came to her mind. "We can only wait for tomorrow, I guess."

"Indeed." Noel nodded. His eyes seemed to be fixated on Anna. "Say... If it were the me from the alternate world, would I bring you to this place? Would I agree to your suggestion?"

On the one hand, Anna wanted to say no. On the other hand, she recalled that her reincarnation might be Noel's gift.

"What's wrong? It looks like something is troubling you?" Noel noticed her anxiety. She had been like this ever since she entered the room, perplexing him.

"That person..." Anna glanced at the door as if looking at where Old Ru was standing earlier. "He told me something, making me remember my childhood. What if... I'm talking about what if... what if you received a present from someone? That present was so big that it was beyond your imagination. What would you do about it?"

"Huh?" Noel didn't feel anything special from this question. So, he just answered with whatever words came to his mind. "That depends on the context. If it's just someone random, I will take it and probably look at it later. If it's from a friend, I will cherish it. If it's from my family, I will take care of it."

"..." Anna scratched the back of her head, wanting to say that wasn't the answer she was looking for.

However, she could only sigh. She had been acting weird this whole time, so it would just make her more suspicious. It was better to wait for another day to solve this problem.

They spent the rest of the day getting some rest and cleaning their bodies, conditioning themselves for the training.

The next day.

Anna and Noel were standing in front of Old Ru. The training would take place in the field, slightly away from the garden.

Nicole, Dimitri, and Damian were standing from afar, watching them. They couldn't participate in the lesson, but they could observe them from afar. As a Spirit Grandmaster, learning about the movement of the Spiritual Energy should give them some ideas about what they were planning to do.

"Are you ready for the training?" Old Ru asked with a smile.

"Yes." Noel and Anna nodded in unison. It was their reason for coming here after all.

"Then, before proceeding with the training, I will explain the three stages of training you'll be receiving from me. If you can clear the first stage, you can proceed to the second stage and the same applies to the third stage."

Old Ru raised his hand and began releasing his Spiritual Energy from his palm. "Releasing your Spiritual Energy is not that hard, right? How about releasing your Spiritual Energy? Just enough to wrap your body in a thin layer of it."

Old Ru demonstrated it by wrapping his body with a thin layer of Spiritual Energy. It felt like he had a second layer of skin.

Noel and Anna shut their eyes to concentrate. After that, their bodies began to emit Spiritual Energy. Noel's energy was oozing out like a flowing river, while Anna's energy looked like a balloon.

"This is..." Noel and Anna frowned. They realized that they couldn't do it. Even Anna, with her knowledge and experience, was unable to reproduce that feat.

Old Ru smiled. "As a Spirit Master, Spirit Grandmaster, or even Spirit Transcendence, you would definitely have a lot... lot more energy. However, the Spiritual Energy in your body is by no means limitless.

"What I want to teach you is to control the output of your Spiritual Energy. This way, you will be able to conserve more Spiritual Energy while maximizing the efficiency of your usage."

Chapter 756 Three Stages

Noel gasped while Anna recalled this kind of technique from her previous life. Back then, Noel's energy was indeed calm. He managed to control his energy perfectly so that he could concentrate a portion of energy on the spot where she was going to hit, absorbing a portion of her power.

It seemed that the essence of the training was about that ability, she thought.

Old Ru raised his hand again. "Take a close look at my Spiritual Energy."

He wanted them to look at the thin layer of energy that wrapped his hand. Suddenly, it became a bit inflated until it was thick enough to consider it as a glove.

"By controlling the output of your energy, you could do something like this." Old Ru grabbed Noel's hand with his other hand and lifted it up to the front.

"Feel the power difference." Old Ru extended his palm to Noel's hand and the energy hit Noel's hand. The impact felt like he was being hit by a punch of a Spirit Master even though Old Ru didn't use a lot of momentum to increase the power.

"Then, how about this..." Old Ru did the same thing, but this time with less energy. This time, he felt the impact was like a kid pushing his hand.

"..." Noel frowned, feeling the difference.

"I was watching your battle yesterday before deciding to meet you." Old Ru punched to the side. The Spiritual Energy around his arm became like a flame, covering his skin. But once he completed that punch, the energy flowed to the fist and flew away due to the momentum. "You utilized your energy to follow the flow. You do nothing to control that energy. It's such a waste."

"..." Noel and Anna looked down, recalling how they used the Spiritual Energy.

"There are two reasons. By using the energy this way, the energy will be less concentrated, causing the loss of power. Of course, your offensive abilities are overwhelming. That's something I acknowledge. However, you haven't fully utilized your ability to its full potential.

"Then, the second reason is..." Old Ru grabbed a stick lying on the ground and wrapped it with a layer of Spiritual Energy. "Noel, swing your blade at me!"

"But Old Ru..." Noel didn't want to do it because Old Ru was only using a stick. Even though he had this technique, Ardagan was a living spirit. He believed Old Ru was underestimating him.

"It's fine. Just do it."

Noel frowned. He had no choice but to comply. However, he made enough distance that even if he completed his swing, Old Ru wouldn't be in his range.

"I'm going to strike it." Noel declared. As soon as he got a nod from Old Ru, he swung his blade as hard as he could.

Old Ru also did the same, striking Ardagan.

But surprisingly, instead of getting chopped by Ardagan, the stick managed to stop the blade as if it was made of metal.

"Huh?!" Noel widened his eyes in shock.

Old Ru smiled, noticing that the sword managed to break through the layer of Spiritual Energy and cut a portion of the stick. In the end, the stick fell down because it couldn't support its weight.

"I see. It seems I've underestimated your blade. It's truly sharp." Old Ru apologized.

"No, no. That's not a problem. It's already impossible for a stick to stop my sword!" Noel shook his head furiously.

"This is the second reason. The durability. With this power, you should be able to increase the durability of your ability. I'm sure it can help you even for an offensive Spirit Ability, right?"

"Yes..." Noel was shocked by the potential that this single ability could have. In addition, this might be something that his Undying Fire needed.

Damian had taught him how to master a Spirit Ability, but the one he chose was the Undying Fire itself. He had trouble controlling the fire because it was too overwhelming. But this ability might be the solution.

"This is the first stage. I want you to have some control over your Spiritual Energy. As for the second stage, I want you to match the Spiritual Energy in your surroundings. Spiritual Energy has strengthened all subjects and objects in this world. It might be small, but that stick also has Spiritual Energy. I control my Spiritual Energy, match it with the stick, and pour it to increase its strength."

"This is the essence of the second stage. As for the third stage, it's as simple as pouring your element into the mix. You should know that your Spirit Ability is unique. Most people receive elemental spirits, but those who have unique spirits are not that low either. So, I want to incorporate the element, or specifically your spirit, into this ability."

Noel listened to the explanation attentively. Meanwhile, Anna seemed to be contemplating as if she had realized something.

"Old Ru... may I ask a question?" Anna raised her hand.

"Sure."

"The reason why you put us into the same room is for this, right? In the first stage, you want us to share all items inside the room while using this ability. The Spiritual Energy will linger for some time, so if you want to use the item, you have to match the amount of Spiritual Energy that remains on that particular item."

"After that, you want us to gain more mastery and finally notice the Spiritual Energy that the items originally have. With both of us using the same thing, we might notice each other's mistakes and make improvements."

"Last but not least, the elements. Both of us have conflicting elements, so there might be a reason why you arrange our stay like that." Anna explained her observation.

Old Ru thought for a moment and made a mischievous smile. "For that question, I will give you sixty points. You have a general idea, but not fully correct yet."

"Let me give you a hint, I told you that the Spiritual Energy had empowered all subjects and objects in this world." Old Ru emphasized the 'subjects' and 'objects' so much that Noel and Anna could easily notice.

"Don't tell me..." Both of them thought the same thing and looked at each other. It seemed that Old Ru wanted them to circulate their energy to each other as well.

Chapter 757 New Training

Noel and Anna looked at each other.

"Are we going to circulate our energy between each other?" Noel and Anna asked at the same time.

"That's obvious. You two will control your Spiritual Energy, then circulate it to each other and continue to the level where your element will be circulated as well." Old Ru nodded.

"Won't this be dangerous?" Noel frowned.

"Of course, it will be dangerous. If you don't trust each other, then you will be fighting back against the energy whether consciously or subconsciously. However, I do think that you can do that, right?"

Noel and Anna looked at each other. It might be a challenging task for them, but it might not be as well.

Noel hated Anna in the past. He might still hold some grudges, but it didn't change the fact that he trusted her enough to gamble his life. Anna, on the other hand, had a complicated emotion because of what happened during the adventure as well as what Old Ru said yesterday. She felt like she couldn't treat Noel the same way as before. But she also trusted him and even dared to sacrifice her life to help him.

Noel and Anna took a deep breath as they made a decision.

"I..." Noel and Anna opened their mouths before correcting their words, "No, we will do it."

Old Ru smiled. "For now, your training will be to control your Spiritual Energy in your hand. Try to decrease the amount of energy and form an outer layer that will stop your Spiritual Energy from flowing outside. Then, make it as thin as possible so that it will become like another layer of your skin. Once you reach that stage, you can begin circulating your Spiritual Energy to each other."

Anna nodded with a serious expression. Although she hadn't done it before, she had a good foundation and experience to do so. In fact, she was most likely to be the first one to succeed.

Meanwhile, Noel didn't want to lose to her. However, he completely understood that her talent far surpassed him. Even if his talent was above average, it wouldn't be enough to follow the rate of her growth. Hence, Noel prepared one more thing that could allow him to bypass the gap in their talent.

'Ardagan. You should have heard about the challenge. Since this is a task that I have to complete as soon as possible so that Anna and I can begin tackling the same problem at the same time... I think I don't need to ask for it, right?' Noel tried to negotiate with Ardagan inwardly.

And it seemed that his prediction was correct. Ardagan's response came in the form of a mission and a repetitive training task.

[Mission: Keeping up with Anna]

[Description: The training is supposed to be taken by two individuals at the same time. You have to keep up with Anna. Hence, prove yourself by creating an outer layer of Spiritual Energy.]

[Reward: Spiritual Medal.]

[Penalty: Time depending on the progress speed.]

Training: Maintaining the outer layer of Spiritual Energy for 1 second.

Reward: Spiritual Energy Sensitivity +0.1% (Accumulation: 0%)

Noel couldn't help but smile. He had also received the Fighter Medal and Rune from completing the previous mission to meet the hermit. With this, he had prepared everything to tackle the problem.

Still, he only expected a mission from Ardagan. To think that Ardagan would go one step beyond that and give him a training task.

He knew that the training task would continue to become harder and harder, but it didn't change the fact that the accumulation would definitely help him. In fact, he began noticing the difference in the amount of Spiritual Energy whenever he used medals to increase his Spiritual Energy. And if he just looked at the amount he had accumulated, he could roughly guess the amount that had increased due to the training.

Noel checked a few other training tasks and realized that it had become too hard that a new training task had to be given.

Training: Run 3,000 km

Reward: Stamina +0.25% (Accumulation: 7.20%)

Push Up: 120,000 times

Reward: Constitution +0.25% (Accumulation: 6.95%)

The ridiculous amount was impossible to fulfill in a short period of time even if Noel used all his abilities to complete five push ups in one second.

Noel took a deep breath and changed his medal.

Medal: Best Rival

Effect: Learning and Teaching +10%

Medal: Elite

Effect: Sword Mastery +5%, Spiritual Energy +5%, Rune Mastery +5%

Noel took a deep breath. With this, he had done everything to increase the odds of his success.

Noel began shutting his eyes and circulating his Spiritual Energy around his body. After that, he tried to move all that energy into his hand, causing his right hand to emit a huge amount of energy.

Noel concentrated his focus on the flow of Spiritual Energy, trying to decrease the amount that seeped through the pore.

At first, the amount of energy felt like there was a blazing fire engulfing Noel's hand, but after one minute of trying to decrease the amount of Spiritual Energy, there was a total of fifty percent reduction.

'Good. A bit more...' Noel muttered inwardly while controlling his Spiritual Energy.

Anna had been doing the same, but as one would expect from a regressor, the amount of energy around her hand was minuscule. If this continued, she might grasp a perfect amount of energy within thirty minutes to an hour.

Despite his partner being able to reach that level in a short period of time, Noel remained calm.

Noel emptied his mind and focused all his instinct on his hand.

"Good... slow down..." Noel kept muttering as if he was talking to his own Spiritual Energy.

Old Ru was stupefied when he saw their talent. With Anna's experience and knowledge, this kind of result was to be expected. But he was completely surprised when Noel reached this level all of a sudden.

Old Ru didn't know that Noel had been training his control so that he could master his fire. Although the concept was slightly different, the training was still effective for this challenge.

It seemed that he had to re-evaluate their training.

Chapter 758 Challenge

Noel and Anna continued for another ten minutes.

Anna managed to slow down the rate of her Spiritual Energy leaving her body. If she could maintain this rate for a period of time, she could begin the second phase which was to create an outer layer that would contain the Spiritual Energy.

Meanwhile, Noel was still struggling to decrease the rate of his Spiritual Energy. But compared to what it was ten minutes ago, the current rate was only a fourth of its original rate.

Noel also noticed one problem that might actually help him in this challenge. "Can I ask a question?"

"Sure." Old Ru nodded with a serious expression while watching their progress.

"What is Spiritual Energy? Are they like gas coming out of our bodies? Or is it like water? Or maybe it's something that I don't know about?"

"!!!" Old Ru was quite surprised by the question, yet Anna actually answered that question first.

"Spiritual Energy doesn't have any form. In fact, its form follows anything that it's attached to. For example, if you're trying to circulate your Spiritual Energy inside your body, it will have a liquid form, which is like blood flowing in your body. Once it's outside, it will use air as a medium, which is like gas."

"I see..." Noel nodded and began to change his approach once he knew about it. If the Spiritual Energy inside his body was like blood, then the process of letting it out and turning it into gas should be evaporation.

Just like how the water turned into vapor when boiling, he imagined the blood evaporated, releasing Spiritual Energy. His hand would be acting as the bowl used to boil it.

Noel had just made a connection that he thought was the correct one for him. If his power was the one that acted like fire, boiling all that Spiritual Energy, he should focus on his control to find the right flame for this to work.

The flame couldn't be too big, but it couldn't be too small either.

All of a sudden, Noel's rate of releasing Spiritual Energy began to decrease. In just another five minutes, he managed to bring the output to only ten percent.

On the other hand, Anna had begun to work with the outer layer.

Their pace might be different, but they were improving at a rate Old Ru never saw before.

'Are they serious? I can understand Anna, but Noel... How does he progress so quickly? It's not that I don't believe him, it's just that his talent is beyond my imagination. Is he using a drug or something?' Old Ru frowned. In the end, he thought it was Noel's talent, not realizing his medal and other things also contributed greatly to his growth.

'I haven't even explained the easiest way to control Spiritual Energy, but it seems that Anna has the same knowledge about it. I guess I don't have to do anything for the time being.'

Just like that, another ten minutes passed.

Anna had formed an outer layer and tried to contain the Spiritual Energy inside before shrinking it. However, the longer she did this, the harder it was to maintain that level of Spiritual Energy.

Meanwhile, Noel had reached the desired amount of Spiritual Energy. Then, he began creating the outer layer.

'What kind of outer layer do I want?' Noel asked himself. Since he was using boiling water as a reference, he continued with it. 'In that case, the outer layer is like a lid. By putting the lid on, I can contain the vapor inside.'

Noel tried to form a layer a few centimeters above his skin, making it look big. However, he gradually shrank it.

"Kh." Noel gritted his teeth, having trouble controlling the outer layer.

Meanwhile, Anna managed to reach her minimum goal. The outer layer might not be as thin as Old Ru, but it could be considered as another layer of clothes covering her hand.

However, this was her current limit. If she tried to push it, the Spiritual Energy would go berserk.

Anna's extensive knowledge and experience deemed the spot where she had to stop. Unfortunately, Noel didn't have that.

As a result, he continued shrinking the outer layer to the best of his ability. The Spiritual Energy started to fill up the space inside the outer layer and expand to the point where they were pushing back his control.

"..." Noel's expression gradually became distorted as he had a hard time controlling it.

"Keep shrinking." Noel gritted his teeth, doing his best. But when the outer layer was only three centimeters away from the skin, his control couldn't contain the Spiritual Energy from exploding.

Just like water vapor, the Spiritual Energy kept increasing inside. With no way out, the pressure from the Spiritual Energy began to increase. Once Noel failed to control it, it popped like a balloon, releasing a shock wave.

Bam!

The shock wave was strong enough to knock Noel down to the ground.

"Kh." Noel gritted his teeth. "It hurts."

Anna was startled and immediately retracted the Spiritual Energy, not wanting it to explode. After that, she checked on Noel before grinning, "You failed?"

"No way! I'm just a late bloomer." Noel snorted. He could see that her progress was beyond him, but he immediately got up and challenged it for the second time.

Old Ru could only shake his head, realizing that these two were not geniuses but monsters.

"Your talents are not so bad." Old Ru nodded in approval. As much as he wanted to acknowledge their talents, it wouldn't be too good if they became too complacent. "You manage to reach that level within thirty minutes... I can say that I'm quite surprised. However, you have to reach the skin level within a day. It's fine if it can last only for one second. But you should do it!"

Noel and Anna nodded with serious expressions. Little did they know, Old Ru was adding inwardly, 'Even though it was supposed to be a task for a week... Maybe I was too harsh?'

Chapter 759 Understanding

"Hu..." Anna opened her eyes, feeling a bit relaxed. She looked at her hand. The outer layer was as thin as her skin, and the energy was contained extremely well.

However, because only her hand had this outer layer, the excess energy had to flow out from her arm. It would be more troublesome to wrap her entire body with this.

"Congratulations." Old Ru smiled. He glanced at the sky and continued, "You only used six hours to reach that level. I should say I'm impressed."

"It's quite hard." Anna shook her head helplessly. "Still, what's the benefit of this ability? I have some guesses, but I'm not sure yet."

Old Ru smiled and raised four fingers. "This control has four benefits. The first is..."

Old Ru channeled his energy into his hand. "As you saw earlier, depending on how much energy we put into this, the thin layer could become a plate that is harder than steel. And the burst of energy, once it's popped out, will also be beneficial for an attack."

"Indeed." Anna nodded with a serious expression.

"As for the second benefit, try to channel your energy again to your arm, but this time starting from your Spiritual Energy Reserve."

Anna tilted her head in confusion and followed his instruction. The moment she poured the Spiritual Energy into her arm, the flow was so smooth that she couldn't believe it. "Huh? This is..."

"This is the benefit. Once you get used to it, your body, your instinct, and your mind will get used to the smoother flow by utilizing that control. This way, you can use your power more efficiently since you can control the amount of Spiritual Energy you want to use and quicker due to the smoother flow."

Anna sucked a cold breath. These two alone were enough to make this technique a national treasure. This kind of mastery would allow them to fight against a Spirit Grandmaster in the future.

However, Old Ru mentioned there were a total of four purposes.

He raised three fingers. "The third is related to your training. Once you get used to it, I don't think I have to explain what you will be able to do, right?"

Anna nodded furiously. "Yes. Once we get used to this, we will be able to adapt to our surroundings and have a better connection with the things around us."

"That's not all..." Old Ru closed his eyes for a second. His Spiritual Energy started to come out, interacting with the environment. "There are five ants next to your right shoe."

"Huh?" Anna widened her eyes and checked. As he said, she noticed ants, but there were only four ants. But two seconds later, she saw an ant crawling from beneath the grass, revealing its appearance. "What? How can you..."

"Everything in this world has its own frequency of Spiritual Energy. I'm simply spreading my Spiritual Energy and trying to make a connection with them. Once you get used to it, you can find hidden enemies or any details from your surroundings. And if you continue, you should be able to extend it from your body to a certain distance."

Anna fell silent, astounded by the claim. However, it was still within her reason, making her realize that this ability was much more terrifying than she originally thought.

"Then, what about the last one?"

Old Ru smiled. Suddenly, a few lines began to appear from his chest and gradually spread all over his body. The lines were glowing in green.

Her instinct was telling her that this was dangerous, but the lines didn't exude anything that could be deemed as dangerous. However, Noel didn't show this in the previous life. Instead, it was Old Ru's grandson.

Considering Old Ru told her that it was one of the benefits, it seemed that Noel either purposely hid this power or simply hadn't reached this level yet.

"Bloodline Release. This is the ultimate stage of what you're learning right now. You are basically stimulating your Spirit Seal and creating an artificial Spirit Link."

"You can consider that you are directly borrowing the Spirit's power through this artificial Spirit Link. Since you are already aware of True Spirit Body, you can think of this as a downgraded version of the True Spirit Body."

"The power might be a third of the True Spirit Body, but there is one big advantage of this ability. It doesn't have any side effects like the True Spirit Body."

"!!!" Anna's body trembled. She obviously knew the True Spirit Body. The True Spirit Body forcefully stimulated the human's body and turned their bodies into that of a Spirit. This way they could fully utilize the power, allowing them to release power beyond human limits.

The power didn't have to be questioned anymore as it allowed Dimitri to challenge a Spirit Transcendence Level Expert.

If what Old Ru said was true, they could create an Artificial True Spirit Body. The effect might be lower, but there was no side effect.

When one used the True Spirit Body, their links with the spirit would be ruined, causing them to be unable to use the spirit for a period of time. They had to endure the excruciating pain of mending those links as well.

So, this ability could only be described as god-like. It was no wonder why his grandson used this ability a lot.

"I would never think such a thing is possible." Anna shook her head helplessly.

"So, how is it? I think this makes your trip here worth it, right?"

"Indeed. But by telling us about this powerful ability, aren't you afraid that we'll be giving these to human kingdoms to fight against your kingdom?"

Old Ru shook his head. "I don't really mind to be honest. Besides, there are two big limitations to this ability. First, you need at least 80% of the Conversion Rate. Lower than that, your link with your spirit is simply too low to stimulate this power. In fact, you might not be able to create an outer layer."

Anna nodded in agreement. Even with her conversion rate, previous life knowledge, and her experience, it was hard to even maintain it on her hand, so she understood the difficulty. "Then, what about the second limit?"

Chapter 760 Progress

"The second limitation is the Spirit Link. Even though I said that this ability could create a Spirit Link, it wouldn't be possible if your body didn't have a Spirit Link in the first place. You could say that your body had to understand the Spirit Link first before being able to attempt this."

"..." Anna was stupefied. The requirement was extremely hard. There might be some humans that could reach this level, but each kingdom wouldn't have more than five people. It was no wonder why Old Ru taught them without any care. "Still, how do you know our conversion rate and the Spirit Link?"

"I simply read your Spiritual Energy frequency." Old RU smiled while adding inwardly, 'The girl is extremely dangerous. 95% conversion rate and a Spirit Link... It seems that her Spirit Link is extremely solid as well. Her talent is above my grandson, who only has a 90% conversion rate and a Spirit Link.'

'However, the terrifying one is Noel. He has a conversion rate of 100%. There is a Spirit Link in his body, but it feels like half completed. I have never encountered an incomplete Spirit Link, but if I have to guess, it seems that this Spirit Link is completed. The only reason why it looks incomplete is because there is another Spirit residing in his body.'

'In addition, that Spirit is taking precisely half of his body, meaning that Spirit also has a 100% conversion rate. In other words, Noel has two Spirits with a 100% conversion rate and potentially two Spirit Links. His name will surely go down in history.'

Old Ru didn't know that if he didn't have Ardagan, he couldn't get this opportunity.

However, Old Ru also noticed the speed of his growth. It was less than Anna, but the more time passed, the more refined his ability became.

Old Ru didn't know that Noel had yet to complete the training task, which would allow him to be more sensitive to energy, increasing his training speed further. If he knew about it, he would probably expel him from here, unable to take it in his heart.

"Now that I have managed to do it, what should I do?" Anna asked while pointing to his other hand.
"Should I do two at the same time?"

"Yes. You will have to reach the full body eventually. So, it's better for you to start early."

Anna nodded without hesitation. Although she could wait for Noel here, she didn't hesitate to proceed, completely believing Noel was able to catch up.

Of course, Noel had been listening while training. He finally understood the reason for his training which made him more fired up.

It was no wonder why he could catch up to Anna in the past life. This ability would definitely play a huge part in it.

On top of that, he also planned to get the True Spirit Body for both spirits. He didn't know what would happen at that time, but this True Spirit Body would definitely give two different kinds of power, allowing him to make his opponent unable to get used to his power.

Noel took a deep breath and continued with his training.

After another three hours, Noel managed to cover his hand with this thin layer of skin.

"I have finished my first task." Noel opened his mouth, showing the result.

"That's good enough." Old Ru nodded after observing the outer layer. He glanced at the sky and said,
"There are about two more hours before sunset. You can continue if you want. Since you've succeeded, you should be able to do the rest by yourself. I'm going to prepare your food."

"Thank you, Old Ru." Noel politely bowed. There was no obligation for Old Ru to accept them, yet, he actually did so much for them. He didn't know how to thank him.

"It's fine. If you want to thank me, do me a favor before you depart. That's enough." Old Ru waved his hand with a smile.

"I understand." Noel nodded. After Old Ru returned to the cabin, Noel took a peek at Anna's progress.

As expected of Anna, she managed to cover both shoulders already. It seemed that once she knew the trick, she could proceed at a far faster speed.

If this continued, she would have cleared the first hurdle which was to envelop the whole body with this layer of Spiritual Energy.

And that was where the serious training would begin.

Noel only managed to cover an entire right arm after another two hours. His progress might not be as good as Anna, but his pace gradually became faster. After all, this training allowed Noel to actually adapt to his Spirit Link.

Heisk had given him the Spirit Link, increasing his Spiritual Energy Sensitivity. The training task should also be related to Heisk.

And with this training, he could finally make full use of it. It was awkward at first, considering the first time he tried it, the surge of energy caused a shock wave and knocked him down.

But the more he used it, the higher his mastery became. If this continued, he should be able to catch up to Anna within three to four days.

"Huu..." Noel took a deep breath, feeling a bit exhausted.

"How is it? It seems that you've made good progress." Anna smiled, checking his condition.

"Yeah. However, I'm not going to lose against you." Noel smirked.

"Is that so? I won't be pulling my punch, you know."

"Haha. We can decide once we go back to our room. Maybe I will hinder you..." Noel had a mischievous grin on his face. "How about a bet?"

"Hoh? Interesting. The loser will have to say one line that the other party wanted."

"Huh? One line?" Noel tilted his head in confusion. The bet looked small at first glance, but he soon realized that she could force Anna to say she loved females to Nicole, causing a ruckus among the Stargaze Family. It seemed that the bet wasn't that small either.

Noel and Anna grinned, feeling excited.

"We have a deal."