

S vs Rebirth 931

Chapter 931 Think

"One of you already has them, but the other hasn't formed them."

"Huh?!" Both Annas were dumbfounded by that hint. On the one hand, they thought they were the ones who had it. On the other hand, two of them had been developing in a different kind of situation. So, they didn't know which one had formed them.

Still, the original Anna didn't think she had created something, since the only thing she did was learn how to control her lightning according to the Thunder Berserker Spirit.

So, the one who might have formed them was Anna.

The moment she came to the realization, the original Anna looked at her with envy. That expression was the only thing that Anna needed to finally understand the spirit's words.

"Don't tell me... Spirit Practitioner all the way to Spirit Grandmasters? I mean, the power that's given to each stage?" Anna gasped.

The original Anna's body trembled. Because Anna took over the body, the original Anna had never raised her strength above the Spirit Apprentice Level. In other words, the only thing she had was the awakening of her spirit.

In other words, if she took over the body, she would be able to receive the benefit of Spirit Practitioner, allowing her to manifest her own Spiritual Energy. Then, her body would break through once again to Spirit Wielder and increase the efficiency of her Spiritual Energy.

Still, the most terrifying thing was the Spirit Master and Spirit Grandmaster. As a Spirit Master, she would start assimilating with the spirit and create the Spirit Heart.

After that, she would form the Spirit Mind as a Spirit Grandmaster.

If the original Anna gained all of them, Anna's body would have two Spirit Hearts and two Spirit Minds. And the same applied when she reached Spirit Transcendence if not Spirit King.

The Spirit Heart allowed her to pump out the Spiritual Energy, so having two would allow her to pump out twice the amount. With that amount, Anna would have a lot of ways to utilize it or even create an even stronger technique. A technique that had never existed in the current timeline.

And with two Spirit Minds, things like her control, recovery, and other benefits from the Spirit Minds would be two times more powerful.

In other words, Anna might not be able to reach Noel's level in the future due to the amount of Spiritual Energy Reserve in his body. But the power that she produced might rival his.

This was probably the thing that the Moon Goddess was talking about. The only way she wouldn't lose against Noel.

But when that thought appeared, Anna couldn't help but fall into deep thought.

On the one hand, it would be beneficial for Anna to allow the original Anna to take over the body and create all that stuff. On the other hand, there was no guarantee that she would allow Anna to return to the main body.

In fact, she didn't know how the takeover process would go. Even if she were more powerful, there was a chance that the original Anna would take this chance to do something irreversible.

Both Annas were staring at each other. They each had their own conflicting thoughts.

The original said, "It seems that I have no choice but to do it. This is also beneficial for the body, so give your body to me, and I'll make you even stronger."

"Do you think I will believe you?" Anna gritted her teeth. "You clearly wanted to destroy my soul earlier. If I cease to exist, it means that your soul can go to the surface and control the body."

"That's my body, not yours." The original Anna glared at her. She deserved the body because it was originally hers. However, without the current Anna, there was no way she would achieve all this.

In fact, history might repeat itself.

It was at this time a question appeared in her mind. 'Why would Noel send me into the past instead of himself?'

'If Noel knew about this benefit, he would practically become someone no one could rival. He would get two souls and two spirits.'

'Wait a minute. Is such a thing allowed? I mean, the spirits are contracted to the body. The souls are creating Spirit Hearts and Minds for the body. If he has all that, what will happen to his body? Will it be able to withstand all that pressure?'

'Did Noel send me to the past... I mean, this timeline, not because he wanted it, but because he couldn't use it on himself?'

Something was amiss. If Noel was this selfish, there was no need for Noel to train her in all those dangerous situations.

She found another clue, but she was still missing a few pieces of information to know the reason for her rebirth.

Anna took a deep breath before asking the Thunder Spirit. "What is the requirement for taking over the body? Is it to eliminate the other soul? If that's the case, why would I take over when I haven't eliminated her soul in the past?"

The original Anna furrowed her eyebrows as if she didn't like that question.

The spirit replied, "Taking over is as simple as allowing the other to take over. Since you are currently in charge, you just have to give permission to the others. When she is in charge, she will have to do the same.

"Of course, there are two other ways. The first one would be to eliminate the other soul. But if this is the case, everything you've built so far will disappear. If she takes over right now, she might be able to experience the power of a Spirit Grandmaster and immediately complete the assimilation as well as form the Spirit Mind and Heart.

"But if she eliminates you here, she will have to start again from the very bottom."

"What?!" The original Anna shouted. It seemed she didn't know that she would be crippled if she eliminated the other soul. Wouldn't this mean Anna could just kill her without any consequences?

What the original Anna didn't know was the importance of herself to Anna. The only way to keep up with Noel was to allow two souls to exist in one's body.

It could be said that she would have two personalities in everyone's eyes. But the risk she would have to take the moment she did this was insurmountable.

"It seems that you haven't told us all of them."

The spirit smiled. "The last way is to form a contract... a soul contract."

"Soul Contract?!" Both Annas recognized it as this was what the Sword Saint performed to stop her from prying Noel's secret.

But the Sword Saint had passed away. There was no way she could ask him for a soul contract, meaning that there was no way to go with this path.

"No, wait. There is one more person." Anna gasped. She remembered that there was actually one person who could perform the soul contract.

The Sword Saint's swordsmanship was unique because of the spirit he had. And the one who could inherit his swordsmanship would be the one who had the same spirit. In other words, the person Anna was looking for was the Sword Saint's successor, Old Ru's grandson.

If she just allowed the original Anna to take over the body, it would be too reckless. So, the only safe way to do it was through the soul contract. This might be the only way to reap the benefits of having two souls.

But that also meant she had to share her consciousness with the original Anna.

Even though the original Anna wasn't Noel's enemy anymore after learning about the truth, it felt like she would betray Noel by allowing her to go out. After all, this was the Anna he hated.

However, Anna could actually see that the original Anna had been affected by her experience and feelings for Noel. The original Anna might have fallen for Noel, but because she still retained her original memory, she would have a harder time accepting that fact.

Anna faced one dilemma. This problem was intriguing yet complicated.

If she allowed the original Anna to come out and bond with Noel, would that be considered cheating? But it was with herself. Anna had never wanted to share Noel with anyone else, but it was herself, so they were basically the same person.

Their feelings and the things they experienced influenced each other.

This was a complicated matter for Anna. On the one hand, she wanted to solve everything by herself. On the other hand, the solution was actually 'herself.'

If they worked together, they could reach a height that no one had ever seen before.

Anna looked at the original and asked, "Hey, you said earlier that you're going to steal my man. But you are me, and I am you, right? If that's the case, does it count as stealing?"

"That does—" The original Anna wanted to rebuke her as it really didn't matter. But as Anna thought, the original Anna had been affected by Anna's experience and feelings. It had reached the point where the original Anna thought Noel was already hers. "...matter?"

Because of Anna's transformation as well as Noel's training, both Annas turned into thinkers. They stopped for a moment just to wonder about the philosophical question.

"I have always thought that Noel is mine," The original Anna muttered. "If you are in my position, you will understand how I feel. All those experiences and memories we have created together are real to the point where I believe they are mine instead of yours."

"So, it's like that? If we are the same person, does that mean it's not? But we have different personalities. Wait! If we have two different personalities, why do both of us think like this?"

"That's..." the original Anna couldn't answer that question. She had integrated the habit from Anna's experience. So, when she took over, Anna would also get affected by her own personality habits.

"This doesn't make sense." Anna rubbed her cheeks embarrassedly, not being able to think of the answer.

"But it is really important. I'm confused. Even though you are from a different timeline, you are still me. The only thing that separates us is the experience you have in that timeline, but I have also absorbed that memory, so we both have the same memory and experience."

"This is hard."

"It is hard indeed."

The Thunder Berserker Spirit was watching them from afar. He had a smile on his face as he found this amusing. Anna's change had truly made this matter even more interesting. And the original Anna also responded in the same way Anna would respond. They looked exactly the same, just with a little different personality.

He couldn't help but wonder about the conclusion of their thoughts.

Chapter 932 Trust

The original Anna said, "Even if we are the same, we are still two souls. If you are controlling the body, I have no choice but to stay here."

"The same applies if you control the body." Anna agreed as her expression turned grim. However, Anna still didn't lose some hope and asked again, "Thunder Berserker Spirit. I have a question for you. Is it necessary for two souls to exist to form a pair of Spirit Minds and Hearts?"

The Thunder Berserker Spirit surprisingly shook his head. "I don't know the answer to that question. If you want to know, you should ask someone who has the power of soul."

"..." Anna couldn't help but furrow her eyebrows. On the one hand, the simple solution would be creating an agreement between them. On the other hand, she couldn't be careless because there was a chance she wouldn't be able to control the body anymore.

It appeared that they only had one choice. Before doing anything, she had to consult Old Ru's grandson before doing anything else.

'Wait a moment.' Anna came to another realization. 'In the past, Noel visited Old Ru alone and gained a lot of benefits, including his grandson. At first, it looked like he was training under Noel, but later, I found out that there was an agreement between them.

'That agreement... is it as simple as training?' Anna emphasized the fact that she visited Old Ru with Noel in this life. Due to this change, Anna could actually go back to meet Old Ru as he already knew her.

What if Noel had predicted that she would have two souls and the future him would be introducing Anna to Old Ru? What if the Sword Saint's successor was actually a hint from Noel? What if everything was within Noel's plan?

The moment she thought about it, she came to another conclusion. Noel had never done something meaningless, so there was definitely a hidden intention. And to find it, he might have to revisit Old Ru's place.

She didn't forget that Old Ru's place was also where the former Ardagan Family stood firm until the invasion of the Demon King. So, she had enough reason to leave.

Still, Noel would definitely be worried, considering this trip would be extremely dangerous. She might have to go alone.

The original Anna seemed to be thinking about something. Now that she had the chance, Anna gradually disappeared as though she was trying to return to reality.

"Huh?!" The original Anna was startled. She hurriedly released her power and tried to catch her. "Where do you think you're going?!"

Unfortunately, she was too late. Anna had disappeared, leaving a message. "We'll talk later."

"You..." The original Anna gritted her teeth. She never thought that Anna would be so despicable.

Even the Thunder Berserker Spirit didn't expect Anna to run away. It appeared he had overestimated their similarity.

He could guess the reason Anna escaped. On the one hand, Anna didn't want to give up on the possibility of becoming stronger. On the other hand, Anna didn't want to give the original Anna the chance to control the body.

In the end, if the original Anna controlled her, Anna had to watch everything. Even if their senses synchronized, controlling the body and watching the body were still two different things.

That was why Anna returned to reality as quickly as possible. She had found the source of the problem, so it would be better to fix it even if she was deemed as a coward by the other Anna.

As soon as Anna opened her eyes, Noel had just closed the door. It seemed that he was going to pretend that he was unable to move.

"Did I interrupt you? Sorry." Noel apologized, oblivious to what had just happened to Anna.

Anna didn't know why but there was another emptiness in her heart. She followed her instinct and jumped off the bed so that she could hug Noel.

"Huh?" Noel was stunned. While their relationship was pretty intimate, it wasn't at this level. "Anna? What's wrong?"

Anna just buried her face on Noel's chest and hugged him as tightly as possible. When she thought about not being able to do this and watched the other her do something like this with Noel, she felt horrible and jealous.

In fact, it might be because she could meet Noel right after opening her eyes that the feeling was even stronger.

"I'm just thinking what will happen if I disappear and am unable to do this anymore. Maybe I have taken everything for granted..." Anna said with a sad tone.

Noel was confused, but he could feel her worries from her shaking voice and trembling hands.

It looked like she was truly concerned about it.

Because he didn't know the two souls, Noel thought Anna was worried that he would lose his life and was unable to accompany her anymore.

He hugged her back and stroked her hair. "I don't know what you're talking about, but don't worry. I will be here for you. As long as I have even an ounce of strength in my body left, I will not let you disappear."

Anna wanted to tell him about the two souls, but she realized that it was her problem. Noel would have a conflicting thought when he learned that there was another soul within the body and it was the one who caused his family's demise.

Even though they were the same, the soul who had been spending time with him was the current Anna.

So, she didn't want him to worry. Of course, she planned to tell this to Noel, but after she discussed the problem with Old Ru and his grandson.

"Noel."

"Yeah?"

"I want to request something from you."

"Sure. Just tell me about it."

"If I say I want to go back to Old Ru's place to do something, will you let me go?"

Noel's body shook. The answer was obvious, but because of Anna's strange action, there might be another problem that he wasn't aware of.

As much as he didn't want anything to happen to Anna during the journey, it would be disrespectful to her if he rejected her request right away. It would look like he was a tyrant in the family. Hence, he asked, "Can you give me a reason?"

"I can't tell you anything yet. But after this trip, I feel like I will be able to tell you the truth. All I can say is that... this is the only way for me to be able to stand beside you for the rest of my life. I want to be the strongest woman in history, not the accessory to let you shine even brighter."

Noel fell silent for a moment. On the one hand, he would like to go with her. On the other hand, the territory would crumble without his existence.

Dimitri might be able to accompany her, but he had a lot of work to do.

After some careful thoughts, Noel said, "If I say Dimitri will accompany you—"

Noel didn't even finish his words and Anna already replied, "I don't mind. I know that you are worried about me. But if Dimitri goes with me, it means that no one takes care of the workers..."

"I will be the one handling that problem."

"But you are already overworking yourself right now. If you take on Dimitri's job..."

"It'll be fine. This is the only way I can send you without worry..."

"..." Anna fell silent for a moment before asking, "What if I ask Damian? Damian should be standing by in the north, right?"

"That's..." Noel thought for a moment before saying, "Alright. Go with Dimitri and negotiate with Damian. Even if he gives you a ridiculous price, just agree to it. I will definitely pay it as long as it can keep you safe."

Anna felt blessed. She was still uncertain what to do with the original Anna's soul, but she knew that Noel would be on her side.

She felt bad that she couldn't tell him about everything, but she hoped that the matter could be solved as quickly as possible.

Anna couldn't help but look up and give a little kiss on his lips. She remembered what the original Anna said previously. She was too innocent in terms of relationship because her life had always revolved around the sword.

Those words made her think it would be alright if she wished for more and became more proactive.

"!!!" Noel was completely stunned, never thinking Anna would do something like this. Despite the brief touch of her lips, Noel could feel the anxiety and worry in her heart.

'I will be bolder and more honest when I return. Sorry that I can't tell you everything right now...' thought Anna before giving her best smile to assure him that everything was going to be alright. She said, "Please wait a bit more, alright?"

Noel's body tensed up, but there was nothing he could do. The highest respect he could give her at this moment was to trust her.

"Yes. I will wait for you here. But please don't push yourself too far. Even if it's not going to work right now, I can definitely accompany you after the Supreme Devil Organization launches their attack. We still have a lot of time."

"I know." Anna nodded furiously.

As the atmosphere between them became awkward, they could feel the fluctuation of Spiritual Energy on the back of the mansion.

"!!!" Both of them hurriedly turned around and reached for the windows, trying to see what happened.

They saw the Sword Arbiter pinning someone on the ground with his body while his sword almost slashed this person's neck.

"Who are you?" The Sword Arbiter asked with a strict tone, his eyes were oozing killing intent as if indirectly telling him that if he didn't talk, he would slit his throat.

"Don't kill me. I'm here to deliver the message from the Third Prince."

Chapter 933 Messenger

"Don't kill me. I'm here to deliver the message from the Third Prince."

"!!!" Noel and Anna exchanged looks and immediately returned to the bed as if they had a hard time moving.

As soon as the Sword Arbiter knew this person's identity, he replied, "You should know that both of them are still gravely injured after fighting me, right?"

"I'm sorry, Sir. I'm only here to pass the message."

"..." The Sword Arbiter frowned. On the one hand, Noel had known that the Third Prince would take this opportunity to make him overwork himself. On the other hand, Noel had recovered most of his injuries.

He had made enough ruckus, so Noel should have heard about him and began his acting. Hence, the only thing he needed to do was sheathe his sword and say, "Follow me."

"Yes, Sir." The messenger had three objectives when infiltrating the city. The first was to deliver the message to Noel. The second purpose would be to observe the Sword Arbiter's action to see whether it was possible or not to take down this city. The last objective was to observe rune technology.

He was quite surprised by the third one and was ready to report it to the Third Prince. However, if the Third Prince forced Noel to hand the technology to him, Noel might use this chance to cut ties with him.

Hence, the message wouldn't be related to technology.

The Sword Arbiter led the messenger through the main hallway just to buy some more time for Noel.

Eventually, both of them had reached the room where Noel and Anna were taken care of. Anna looked like she was sleeping while Noel was sitting on the bed while reading something. His face was pale and his body was covered with bandages.

Because of the appearance of the Moon Temple, the Third Prince was in a rush since the longer Noel stayed with the Moon Temple, the more he would recover. After all, the Moon Temple had its own healer.

After observing Noel's complexion, the messenger opened his mouth. "I am the messenger of the Third Prince. I'm here to pass his message to you."

"..." Noel furrowed his eyebrows. "I'm still in this condition. Do you think I have time to do anything else?"

"I apologize, Sir. I'm only here to pass his message." The messenger shook his head, but he was happy that Noel's condition didn't seem to be much better. It seemed that the Sword Arbiter had injured them so severely that even with a healer, it would still take a long time for him to recover.

"I'll listen to his message for now." Noel finally agreed and gave him permission to speak.

The messenger said, "According to our information, there is a weird demon activity west of this city. The demons are most likely to build their nest in that place and will attack this city again in the near future. It's best to eliminate them right now."

"..." Noel let out a long sigh. "Do you think I'm in a shape that is capable of doing so?"

"Do you want me to eliminate those demons?" The Sword Arbiter smirked, confident in his ability to eliminate all of them. "In exchange, I stay in this place a few days less. The city will be safe with that saintess here."

The messenger tensed up. The purpose of this message was to have Noel injure himself further, so if the Sword Arbiter was the one going, it would ruin the entire plan.

That was why the messenger added, "The Sword Arbiter is forbidden to move. The Royal Family is turning a blind eye to your actions because you are staying in this place. But if you go out in a direction other than your territory, the Royal Family is going to take action."

Duke Lorelei narrowed his eyes. "Since when the Third Prince was working with the Royal Family?"

"I'm merely conveying the word of my master. As for the depth of his connection, I'm as blind as you, Sir. The Sword Arbiter is respected as the number one Arbiter. The reasons other Arbiters don't visit this city is because of your existence."

"Huh?!" Duke Lorelei stepped forward, glaring sinisterly as though he were about to kill him.

"Please wait, Duke Lorelei." Noel suddenly opened his mouth. "While it's true that the Royal Family will frown upon your action as soon as you make a move, it doesn't mean that there is a need to act. In the end, Lounstein is a new territory filled with demons. I'm the one governing the territory. Do you think I will just go to subjugate some demons just because someone tells me to?"

"I do respect the Third Prince, but this is my territory. So, please choose your words carefully or else, your head will roll even if you are a messenger." Noel pressured the messenger even further.

The messenger actually expected this rejection. The conversation had been going according to the Third Prince's plan. The Third Prince already knew that Noel wouldn't move without an incentive. And with the Rune Technology and multiple Grandmasters, Noel wouldn't be afraid to go against the Third Prince.

Hence, the Third Prince told him this next part.

"It appears that the Supreme Devil Organization is behind the recent demon activity. There is a high possibility that they are creating a base around this area. There is a possibility that they are going to massacre the surrounding villages. It's better to take them right away."

"Supreme Devil Organization?" Duke Lorelei was the first one to react. "It is the duty of an Arbiter to maintain the stability of the nation. In that case, I will go to subjugate the Supreme Devil Organization. If the Royal Family scorns me for this, does that mean the Royal Family is working with them?"

"!!!" The messenger's heart skipped a beat. To think there was such a reaction from the duke—even he didn't expect it. The relationship between the duke and Noel seemed to be a bit stronger than they originally expected.

On the one hand, if one was good at politics and big enough to understand the entire kingdom's operation, they would know that the Royal Family was connected to the Supreme Devil Organization in one way or another. On the other hand, the nobles didn't really do anything unless they were harming their territory.

So, it was quite surprising to find Duke Lorelei reacting so fiercely.

"Please wait, Duke Lorelei. I'm thankful that you'd like to help, but this is my territory. If I let you, Duke Lorelei, subjugate the evils in my territory, it's the same as showing my weakness. For the subjugation, it's better for me to go personally."

"But... your condition!" Duke Lorelei looked concerned because he was the one inflicting those wounds.

"I am aware of my body's situation. That's why I'm planning to bring the saintess with me. The Saintess won't be dealing with anything other than demons, so the Supreme Devil Organization will be subjugated by me. Even if we fail, the saintess can protect me and allow me to return to this city safely. While I can't move and my inside is still a mess, I should be able to use my Spiritual Energy to defeat my enemies."

Duke Lorelei didn't look convinced, but Noel's eyes were pleading with him to accept the circumstances.

"But... if you use your power, your injury..." Duke Lorelei clenched his fists.

"I know that, but this is the only way." Noel shook his head helplessly.

The Third Prince actually used the Supreme Devil Organization as bait to force Noel to use his power. However, this would make him look bad because it was the same as endangering Noel.

Due to this threat, Noel had no choice but to act immediately before the Supreme Devil Organization noticed. And there was a possibility that the clue he would get from that place would link to another place, which caused him to move around for a few days and worsened his injury.

He obviously expected Noel to be annoyed even though the Third Prince was merely giving Noel some information.

That was why the messenger had one last message to make the Third Prince look a bit better in this situation.

"To congratulate Earl Ardagan for becoming a noble, the Third Prince is giving you this important information. Not far from the target, there seems to be a giant building from the previous civilization.

It's most likely that the Supreme Devil Organization is building the base there in order to explore this ruin. They are using the numerous demons to create a barrier that pushes you away.

"You are the one who discovered the fact that they are able to work with demons. So, there's a high chance for them to enter this building and extract all kinds of things with their secret technique.

"We have investigated this place before. It appears to be a building with a lot of different things. There is a big hall with a lot of food items. On the other side of the building, there are a few machines that still work. Most of them have decayed or become rusty, but some are still preserved.

"I believe this place might allow you to get something your territory might need in the future. It's best to hurry before the Royal Family uses the subjugation as an excuse to floor your territory, especially with spies."

The Third Prince's information made sense. The buildings from the previous civilizations were definitely interesting, considering they contained a lot of mysterious items. It was especially true for bigger places. Noel had learned it during the expedition with the Demon Banner Army.

Still, this place was extremely dangerous due to the numerous demons inside it.

If Noel took too long to subjugate this place, the Royal Family might get involved. If they sent people here as well as the Demon Banner Army, they could mix the forces with some spies. It might even give them a chance to enter Noel's main city.

The messenger seemed happy when he saw Noel carefully consider the message. The Third Prince gave him one last weapon to cause Noel to agree.

"According to our information, there is no Superior Demon, but there are a lot of Peak Level Demons. Their number should reach one thousand. His Highness will stop the Royal Family for one and a half months. If you can't do it by then, the Royal Family might use this opportunity to invade."

The Third Prince looked generous. If the Third Prince said there was a Superior Demon, Noel wouldn't take the bait. That was why there were only Peak Level Demons, but with enough Peak Level Demons, Noel would have to overwork himself. Even if he didn't die, his injuries would just get worse.

Noel had no other choice but to do this. The Sword Arbiter was agitated by this obvious move, but he couldn't really do anything to stop Noel.

Noel said, "Alright. Thank you for the information. We'll subjugate the demons and the Supreme Devil Organization in five days."

"Sir, I'm afraid that the Supreme Devil Organization will be able to realize your intention if you wait that long."

"Then, two days. At least, I have to wait until my fiancée passes the critical condition. You surely don't want to cause my fiancée to die, right?" Noel squinted his eyes.

"No!" The messenger furiously shook his head to avoid angering Noel. "I will convey your reply to his highness."

"Go." Noel waved his hand with an annoyed expression.

The messenger bowed to him and immediately left the building. The messenger was overjoyed, thinking, 'His highness is awesome. Even that prodigy can't do anything but comply. With this, he will be in critical condition for weeks if not months.'

He was ready to convey everything he had found to the Third Prince.

Unbeknownst to him, Anna was actually holding her laughter the whole time. When the messenger was gone, Anna burst out loud. "Ahahahaha. I can't! He will definitely think that we have no choice but to accept that idea."

The Sword Arbiter shook his head. "To think you expect the Third Prince to use the Supreme Devil Organization as bait. Still, the building from the previous civilization, huh?"

"I have investigated it. Not that much, but I'm already aware of its existence. Considering the Third Prince is using the Supreme Devil Organization as bait, it's clear that he's also working with them. So, he

must have used that secret technique to enter the building and take everything important. I guess this is the downside of having visited by the Moon Temple. The messenger arrived a few days earlier than I expected. Noel sighed.

"They are too wary of them. Either way, the building is precious, right?"

"Yeah. I don't care about the items, but the building itself can be a lot of inspiration for Rune Technology. I'm thinking about using it as a base to create Rune Technology. Of course, you will be my priority, Duke."

"Haha. You're making this even harder for me." Duke Lorelei chuckled. "But don't worry about this city. As long as I'm still here, it won't fall."

"Thanks." Noel looked down, falling into deep thought. "Now, how much am I going to make them believe?"

Chapter 934 Logistics

"I see. So, he is going to make his move. Even though the Moon Temple is going to get involved, it should be enough as long as he exerts his body excessively." The Third Prince heard the report from his subordinate and contemplated.

"Should we set up an ambush?"

"There's no need. I thought that he could become my sword, but it seems that the sword is trying to hurt its own master." The Third Prince crossed his arms. "The Supreme Devil Organization has set up the ambush. Even if it's not enough to kill him, it should be enough to cause him some injuries. This way, he won't be able to recover for a few months."

"Then, what should we do with the Sword Arbiter? It seems that his relationship with him is quite good."

"While the Sword Arbiter is an upright man, he is still a noble. He should understand the current politics and there's no way he would risk everything just to help him. For now, monitor the situation and make sure the Sword Arbiter doesn't leave the city. As for the Royal Family, I will be the one dealing with them."

"Understood." The messenger acknowledged the order and immediately excused himself.

In that instant, an old man appeared behind the Third Prince, saying, "The Supreme Devil Organization has become a bit too rampant. To think they dare to order your highness..."

"That's enough. For now, the Supreme Devil Organization is useful to us. You should know what will happen if Noel Ardagan is left alive. When he becomes a Spirit Transcendence, no one will be able to fight him anymore."

"The Marshall, the Commander and the Devil Saint might be able to contend with them, but the Commander had a favorable impression on Noel. So, there were only two of them that might be able to suppress Noel. But it would be a different case with Anna in the picture." The old man nodded in agreement.

"That's right. There is also the rune. To think that the rune can be applied to our daily lives, this is going to be huge. While he is not as good as his father as a merchant, he has a rune. The technology he produced alone is enough to make him the wealthiest."

"So, your highness is planning to get both him and his wealth?"

"Yes. He is a man who will surpass his father, so that should be enough to reinstate my position as the true owner of the throne. However, I have to find a way to control him and take everything before he grows too strong."

"So, after your highness gets the throne, you will eliminate him?"

"Of course. I don't plan on having someone I can't control by my side." The Third Prince thought for a moment. "Although it's a bit early, we'll begin the fourth phase."

"Understood." The old man received his order and immediately disappeared.

The Third Prince's expression became cold as he muttered, "This world shall be mine."

...

On the other hand, Noel was discussing his plan with the Sword Arbiter. While he couldn't fully trust the Sword Arbiter, he could still control his desire to gain the loyalty of Duke Lorelei for a few months.

Noel said, "Anna. You're going to join me later."

Anna looked at the map and pointed at the village south of their city. "I'm assuming that they are going to make clues from the supposed base to this village before going to the opposite side. This way, you will have to move so much that you end up getting some internal injuries, right?"

"Yeah. So, you should join me at that time."

"I understand." Anna nodded and turned to the Sword Arbiter. "But what will he do?"

Noel pointed at the window. "Of course. I'm pretty sure that if anyone wants to act, it's the best time. I'm pretty sure there will be people trying to steal the technology."

"Don't worry. As long as I'm here, no one can steal them. After all, I've got the dibs on it first." Duke Lorelei chuckled. "Besides, it's not like anyone can study it just by seeing it, no?"

"Well, I have created another layer to protect the rune to be copied. While it's made of unique technique, the rune can be copied. I know it's going to spread sooner or later, but I'm planning to monopolize it for the time being."

"Alright. You can leave this city to me." Duke Lorelei agreed with the arrangement. The duke noticed that both of them suddenly fell silent as though they were trying to think about something. But actually, they were waiting for the duke to leave.

Duke Lorelei could see that Noel had a different plan, so he shook his head helplessly and turned around. "It's time for this old man to walk around."

As soon as the Sword Arbiter left, Noel's expression turned grim. "I need you to send a letter to Dimitri. According to my estimate, it's going to last for five days. With the addition of our rest and the work in this city, we will reach the main city within seven days."

"Alright. That's when we open the migration, right?"

"Yeah."

"But what's the name of our city? I mean, it's hard to call it the main city this whole time."

"I have thought of the name, but I think it's better for the city to be completed first."

"Well, I just hope it won't be a bad name." Anna shrugged. "That's the place we're going to live in for the rest of our lives."

"Of course." Noel chuckled before looking at the map again. "During this expedition, what do you think is the problem?"

"Have you gotten the agreement from Layla?"

"Not yet. But I can convince her. She might bring a few knights as well. So, along with our soldiers, we should have about twenty elite knights and three Grandmasters."

Anna contemplated for a moment. "The purpose of this expedition is not to kill you. In fact, it's already impossible to kill you the moment Layla arrives. So, it means that they are going to cause you to unleash so much power that the backlash will worsen your injuries. And what about those two days and the fact that you don't want to leave your fiancée in this condition?"

"Hahaha. You should know why I chose two days, right?"

"Of course. In two days, we will be fully recovered, so they won't be able to worsen our injuries if there's no injury in the first place. For us, the only problem with this expedition is the logistics." Anna pointed at

three places: the Supreme Devil Organization Base, the Previous Civilization Building, and the route back to the main city.

"Hoh? Interesting." Noel smiled. He wanted to use this chance to train Anna a bit more, but it seemed that she had grown pretty accustomed to thinking about the possibilities.

"First of all, once you reach the Supreme Devil Organization Base, they will definitely surround you with demons. The Moon Temple will help us, but it's not enough. To reach the base, we will have to make our way through numerous demons. So, it will be hard if we bring a cart of supplies with us, causing our supply to be limited.

"If you don't mind using Ardagan's space to provide the water, we can use the demon meat to eat. But if you don't plan to show it, it's better to reach the river and set up the camp there."

Noel nodded in agreement before answering, "It's the latter. The shop in the system is the only weapon to make the Void Arbiter look suspicious. So, I want to use this to sow discord between her and her backers."

"If that's the case, you should go to the river. And by the time you destroy their base, they will definitely stall you and release another clue leading to another village. The supply won't be a problem at this point, but they might use guerrilla warfare to injure you, like disguising themselves as a villager and suddenly stab you when you lower your guard."

"I have my way to solve that issue."

"In that case, we should move on to the expedition for this building. I believe the Supreme Devil Organization is planning to use the remaining demons that we failed to kill during the first expedition to fill up this place."

"Since you won't be by my side at that time, I'm planning to bring Howard with me. Besides, the Ardagan Family will have a lot more soldiers by then. So, I can do it in one way or another. It's also good for the soldiers to get some experience."

"If that's the case, the most serious problem would be the logistics. To reach the main city, you will have to pass this city and go through this route. It's hard to completely monitor the entire route, so if the enemies are blocking this route and attacking anyone that passes it, nothing will reach our city. Even with our current supply, we won't last long, especially during the construction."

Noel contemplated for a moment. "It's going to be hard to solve this issue, considering the Supreme Devil Organization can just use a few grandmasters to block the route."

"Yes. If our city is fully developed, we might not need to have anyone standing by over there and the city will still be fine. But right now, at least one Grandmaster should remain in this city. Should we bring the supply from the opposite site?"

"If we use the Greenwood Kingdom too much, they're going to start demanding ridiculous things from us." Noel rejected the idea.

"Then, how are you going to solve it? Most people underestimate the importance of logistics. If our city can't procure any materials, we won't be able to develop it. Unlike other cities, we're at the border, so we only have one route to reach the city."

Noel also knew that the other cities could be approached from all directions, so even if they wanted to block one route, they could use other routes.

That was why Noel had one more thing. This was probably the reason why he built the dam and created the water gate. It wasn't that he was trying to utilize the dam to get water, but he wanted to create a waterway to connect the two cities.

Unlike the usual road, he could reinforce the ship with a lot of soldiers as well as runes to increase its defensive capability. If he could bring at least a few hundred people on a single trip, the boat would definitely be worth it.

He pointed at the river and said, "The downstream has a high flow rate, which causes the boat to have a hard time going upstream. However, it will be different if we are the ones using it."

"Ah! Are you going to use the Enhance Forward Rune to push the boat?"

"Yeah. It's a faster way to reach the city and the safest way, so if there are other people that want to use it, we can let them pay a high fee to cover up some costs. And because the river flows across at least five territories, we can use it to open a business." Noel smirked.

The idea was brilliant. She never thought it would be possible to utilize the river that way. It seemed that Noel had decided that the first dam would be sloppy since he wanted to use it as a weapon, but the second dam would be an extremely sturdy one so that he could control this weapon.

And with the addition of the ship, he could force the other territories to cooperate with him.

However, there was one problem. "How are we going to make the boat? Although I don't want to say it, the boats in the Muivell Kingdom are rather bad in quality."

"Of course. That's why we're going to use another kingdom to make a boat for us. The Greenwood Kingdom has sent us a congratulatory gift, right? What about the other kingdoms?"

"The Atracaeca Kingdom has a bad relationship with us, but the Zaecuria Kingdom hasn't arrived because we are still blocking access to the main city... I see. You're going to use the Zaecuria Kingdom?" Anna gasped.

"Exactly. Zaecuria Kingdom is most advanced regarding ships due to the nature of their location. So, once they arrive, we'll establish a contract to create a ship. Well, I can give a few things to them so that they will be satisfied with the condition and send their craftsmen."

Anna was dumbfounded. She never thought about utilizing the river at all. As Noel said, reinforcing a ship to bring hundreds of people would be safer compared to patrolling the entire land route.

She thought logistics would be their biggest problem, but it turned out Noel already had a plan in mind to solve the issue completely.

However, there was one thing that she was curious about.

Anna asked, "Noel. I'm not sure if I should say this or not, but in our previous lives, I have never heard anything about you utilizing the water with a ship or something."

Chapter 935 Ruckus

"Noel. I'm not sure if I should say this or not, but in the previous life, I have never heard anything about you utilizing the water with a ship or something."

"Hmm?" Noel thought for a moment. "Well, I'm not very sure about it. There might be a difference in details that you didn't notice like the connection, the speed, and the value of the runes. Just like how you're the one coming up with the idea of having lamps with runes, I might have a different idea that ends up causing it to be unable to be completed or something."

"Fair enough." Anna nodded. She remembered the explanation about time from the Thunder Berserker Spirit. All those variables were the ones shaping the future.

"Either way, I want you to focus on the future trip. Injury is not allowed." Noel smirked. "If you're injured, I'm going to punish you or something."

"Eh? You're going to punish an injured person?" Anna rolled her eyes but soon laughed. "Then, if I come back without any injuries, are you going to reward me?"

"Shouldn't you compensate me for suddenly leaving?" Noel harrumphed.

Both of them glared at each other before laughing out loud.

Noel said, "In any case, I have to prepare for the incoming expedition, so I'll be visiting Layla. You should remind us here that for the time being, we don't know if there are other spies or not."

"Got it."

...

Just like how the messenger from the Third Prince had arrived, the message that the Moon Temple had sent to the elders had also arrived.

In the Moon Temple Headquarters, five people were sitting behind a round table.

"So, what do you think?" One of the wearing elderly men asked.

A middle-aged man, who was wearing a knight armor, said, "If there is a technology that can allow us to replace the horses, I think it's worth it. We have spent a lot of money on a horse, and it's troublesome since we have to protect the horses. There's even a chance that they will be killed or injured. Isn't that right, Archbishop Noah?"

An old man wearing a red-colored priest robe nodded in agreement. "That's true. We can direct that resource to another place. Besides, the report told us that there are other inventions, right? If that's the case, won't it mean that we have a chance to find something better? I think I agree with Paladin Lloyd."

Another elder replied, "Still, mobilizing two paladins and the Saintess itself... It's too big of a move."

"You shouldn't think that way. The Saintess is the backbone of our temple. And if you look at her request, I think I can understand what she wants." The last elder nodded his head in approval.

"His request is Paladin Lloyd and Paladin Aurelia. Paladin Lloyd is the calmest one and quite smart, so you might be able to learn a thing or two during your stay there. But the most important thing is Paladin Aurelia. She was a former noble with a high education. If she and the Saintess join hands, they might be able to get important technology from the inventor of the rune." Archbishop Noah pointed at Lloyd. "The question is, do you wish to go?"

"That's..." Paladin Lloyd fell into deep thought. On the one hand, it would be meddlesome to stay in one city, especially a half-destroyed one. On the other hand, it was reported that the lord was planning to build a water supply that every single house could get without even going out of their house. It made him curious.

"No. I think there is one most important thing." An elder stopped them with a grim tone. "If we create a new headquarters, the territory is bound to expand. Take a look at the location of Lounstein."

"Hmm?" Everyone couldn't help but look at the map. Lounstein was located at the northern border of the Muivell Kingdom. It was situated not that far from the Greenwood Kingdom, which had close ties with Noel.

And with their help, the territory would expand. If Anna and Noel joined hands and reached Spirit Transcendence or even higher, there was a huge chance that the expansion would be at the scale they never imagined.

In other words, the Muivell Kingdom's territory would become so big that it might cause the Lounstein territory to be located in the middle of the kingdom. In other words, the Saintess was gambling on an even far future where Noel and Anna became so strong that they set their eyes to retake the lands from the demons.

Since they invested in Lounstein as quickly as possible, they would definitely be able to reap some of the benefits.

"Did... the Saintess see this far?" Even an old man like Archbishop Noah felt like his wisdom was inferior to the Saintess.

"Who knows? We all know that the Saintess is a unique individual. She often looks like an airhead and just a genuinely kind person, but if you know her a bit more, she is like someone who can see the future. I guess that's the reason why the Moon Goddess took a liking to her."

"The problem is that Noel Ardagan and Anna Stargaze have to survive the ordeal. It won't be easy, considering their enemies are the royal family and the Supreme Devil Organization. We won't take part in that turmoil, but we'll definitely help him fight the demons. As long as we maintain our neutrality, even if they are defeated, we can still bail out without too much of a loss."

"So, no one is against creating a headquarters there?"

"I think that's fine for now. It's not like we're in a hurry."

"Yeah. We can only go there after a few months, so let's use these few months to make the necessary preparations."

"Indeed. In that case, let's recall Paladin Aurelia and have her be prepared for the next mission."

When they looked like they had made their decision, someone suddenly slammed open the door while shouting, "Emergency. We got an urgent message from the Saintess!"

"Huh? What's going on?" Archbishop Noah stood up. Even Paladin Lloyd was holding his scabbard as if he were ready to fight.

"The Saintess is about to go on an expedition to kill a lot of demons. And there's a high chance that it's related to the Supreme Devil Organization. The Saintess will take care of the demons and the Earl will be eliminating the organization. She said the expedition would be in two days."

"What?!" Archbishop Noah trembled. Even for the Saintess, it looked so reckless.

"Are you kidding me? What the hell is the Saintess thinking?"

"Does he not know that the Supreme Devil Organization has a lot of Grandmasters and those Devil Saints?!"

"No. This must be the Earl's plan."

"But should we send reinforcement? This is still far too reckless."

Archbishop Noah turned to Paladin Lloyd and asked, "If you use your full speed, can you reach her within two days?"

"No. We're too far. Even if I go right now, I still need four days... That's without rest in between." Paladin Lloyd shook his head. He said, "Wait. Where is Paladin Aurelia right now?"

"She is..." The bishop looked at the map and gasped. "She is in Marquis Havister's territory. She can fly and if I roughly calculate the distance, she should be able to reach her within one day."

"Immediately send a fast bird to her location and tell her to directly go to the Saintess! Hopefully, she is enough to help the Saintess... and make sure to restrain that Saintess from doing something like this in the future!"

"Kh..."

"Hurry!"

"Y-yes!" The messenger hurriedly rushed to send the message.

All the people in the room became annoyed due to the recklessness. They never thought the Saintess would do something like this. They hoped the bird was fast enough to reach their paladin.

"It might tip the power balance if Paladin Aurelia is there. So..." The bishop turned to Lloyd.

"I know. I will just assemble the volunteers, priests, and knights for the next few months. She requested one branch and one headquarters, right? If that's the case, how many people do we need?"

"If we're talking about a branch... No, let's make it a bit more special so that it's like we're doing them a favor. Send five priests and seventy knights. Depending on the situation, we'll send a few of them to the main city. As for the headquarters, let's send eight... no, ten priests and one hundred fifty knights. If possible, ten of them should be spirit masters. We can't send too much to maintain the power balance."

"In that case, I will take care of the preparation. We will measure the city first before calculating the number of volunteers."

"Alright."

They finally came to an agreement after the shock the Saintess had given them.

...

A few hours ago.

Noel and Layla were sitting in front of each other. Layla was calmly sipping her tea before asking, "So, may I know the reason for you to meet me?"

"If I say my life is in danger without your help, what would you do?"

"Noel. The Moon Temple is going to help you, but please remember that we're here to help your territory, not satisfy your greed." Layla replied without a change of expression.

"I guess so." Noel nodded as though he had expected this. "That's why I came here with a proposal. I'm about to rush to kill a lot of demons and it's related to the Supreme Devil Organization. I'd like you to kill the demons while I handle the organization."

"Hoh? For you to raise such a request, the price that you need to pay is high, you know. After all, the Moon Temple is usually passive and will remain in the city for protection. We are never this aggressive."

"I know. That's why I'm going to only ask you, not the Moon Temple. I am making this proposal to Layla Leinfoth. I will be making you an automatic carriage before we head to the main city. You can test it however you want since it's yours."

"Hmm..." Layla fell into deep thought. The offer was quite nice, but it was still too low to change their policy. "I'm afraid I can't do as you wish. I heard that the Spirit Enchantment is the downgraded version of the rune. They can be used to reinforce things. So, how about making me a personal carriage?"

"A carriage? You might as well call it a mobile fortress." Noel sighed. "It's too high."

"In that case, we will provide the material and assemble it ourselves. You are only responsible for reinforcing it. Of course, we want it to be automatic."

"The design is slightly different from the normal carriage, so in the end, I have to bring my own expert to make the carriage."

"Then we will take a step back. Since this will be the flagship of our Moon Temple as well as a symbol of our cooperation, we'll provide the materials. And during this expedition, I don't mind receiving only twenty percent of the loot. If that's not enough to satisfy you, then I will also bring a small elite unit as well as a powerful fighter to help... Hmm, a paladin should be enough, right? And I will play along with that charade of yours."

"And now, you're increasing your offer too high. You know that I don't like debt, right?"

"Oh my. Was my life worth that little? Without you, I would have died or even been controlled by that demon. How about this? You make this carriage a top priority. That should suffice."

Noel sighed. "Alright. I will agree to this condition."

"Also... please beware of plant type demons. You should have witnessed their horrifying uniqueness."

"Speaking from experience?"

"Of course. Plant type demons are rare because the plants' consciousness is far too low compared to animals, so demons have a hard time infecting them. But a high level plant type demon is going to be far more terrifying. The Supreme Devil Organization might have been cultivating them or something. It's just speculation, though."

"Thank you for the warning."

Chapter 936 The Start of the Expedition

"Is everyone ready?" Noel asked while sitting on the carriage. His body was still covered in bandages to the point that he couldn't even follow the entire group without the help of the carriage.

Fortunately, this was the time for the automatic carriage that Noel created to show its true might.

"Yes, Sir." Grandell replied without hesitation. He couldn't help but glance at the temple knights that were going with them. Unlike the Ardagan Family, who didn't required to wear armor, the temple knights actually wore full body armor, except for the helm.

The only reason why the Ardagan Family didn't have the basic armor was because they were elites. And with the contribution points, they could actually ask for a tailored-made armor. And it didn't have to be from metal.

Grandell actually used a coat made of Peak Level Demon's hide as his armor. It had been reinforced by rune, so it was even sturdier than the armor the temple knight was wearing. In addition, it was easier to move with the coat than the armor.

The only thing that symbolized the Ardagan Family was the family crest on his chest. That was the only requirement for Noel's soldiers.

Of course, Noel had prepared basic armors if he ever recruited normal soldiers.

"Unfortunately, my paladin seems to be a bit late." Layla smiled apologetically. Considering the amount of time the bird had to fly to the headquarters before informing their paladin, it would be amazing if the paladin arrived before their departure.

"That's fine. In any case, we should get going." Noel nodded. "I will start slow and increase the pace soon."

Because of her eyes, or more like she used her eyes as the reason to board the carriage with Noel. She wanted to know how Noel utilized the carriage.

Instead of using demon crystals, Noel infused his own Spiritual Energy to the carriage. The carriage itself was just a four wheel cart that had been modified with a steering wheel. The steering wheel was a simple stick. Noel had just to rotate it to the direction he wanted to go.

Noel activated the Enhance Forward Rune in the carriage, propelling it forward. The gravity pushed the carriage down and the wheel maintained the balance, allowing this carriage to behave like a normal one.

Seeing that their leaders had begun moving, the knights hurriedly followed on foot. They were going to a dangerous area, so it wasn't wise to bring a horse.

"I've experienced this, but this is quite good." Layla smiled.

Layla might think so, but for the one who created it, the carriage caused him some concern.

"As expected..." Noel looked down. "Unlike the paved road in the city, there will be a lot of bumps in this kind of road. And if the carriage is moving faster than this, it's going to be extremely uncomfortable."

"Oh my. You're trying to find a solution? I'm looking forward to it."

"Are you expecting me to give that solution to the carriage I promised you?"

"You're not going to?" Layla looked down with a disappointed expression.

Noel didn't bother to reply to her. He muttered inwardly, 'Should I use the Reduce Impact Rune? But it's going to cost more demon crystals. Should I change the material? But is there any material that can be used to reduce the impact? I might be able to use Reduce Impact Rune for a high-end carriage, but if I'm going to sell the normal one, I need a cheaper alternative.'

'Besides, if common people start using this, I have to create a new law. It can endanger people after all.' Noel sighed. He should discuss it with the master blacksmith in his territory first.

After contemplating for a while, Noel's focus returned to the carriage. This was the first time he drove one, so he couldn't help but want to test the brake and the steering wheel.

He rotated the stick to the left, causing the front wheel to slightly rotate to the left. With the help of the wheel, the entire carriage ended up turning left. This was a bit different from a normal carriage since their front wheels couldn't rotate like this.

It could be said that the rotating front wheel made the turn smoother.

However, Noel could feel the centrifugal force that was trying to knock him to the opposite direction. It was much more powerful than the normal carriage. If he went faster than this, he might be blown away by this force and fall from the carriage.

That was why he pulled the level on his side, causing the carriage to slow down. The centrifugal force also became much less.

"Hmmm..." Noel frowned. On the one hand, he was satisfied with the performance. On the other hand, there were a few flaws with the current design.

And Roel might be the only one who could fix this problem.

The last thing Noel noticed from this carriage was the power it had. That was right, he only used a little Spiritual Energy to drive it forward. But when he looked back, this carriage brought all the supplies they needed in this expedition.

Despite having so much weight on the back, it could still smoothly move forward. He was concerned about the weight distribution though.

He wanted to test some theories in his mind, so Noel began forming a rune underneath them, the Reduce Impact Rune.

As he expected, the moment he bumped into small rocks or uneven soil, the impact reduced significantly. Even if they traveled for a long time, the bump shouldn't make their butt sore.

"This has become even more amazing." Layla also noticed the change. "If we ever use this carriage to transport people or even the injured where we have to lay them down, it won't be as painful."

Layla was right. If he needed to lie down in this carriage, the bump might end up killing them if they traveled at high speed.

There was also an intermediate version of Enhance Forward Rune, which could propel the carriage even faster. But for that, he thought it would be better if he flew in the sky to avoid all the bumps.

He couldn't imagine what kind of future rune would bring.

The knights were quite surprised by the performance of the carriage. This was the first time it roamed outside the city after all.

If they had this kind of carriage to travel around, the journey wouldn't be as tiring. They could understand why the Saintess was trying to form a good relationship with the lord.

While Noel was supposed to be unable to move around so much, this carriage allowed him to go on an expedition without stressing himself. This was the picture Noel wanted to show to all those people.

However, their peaceful journey seemed to have been cut short by the appearance of a few demons.

"My lord." Grandell rushed to his side, still worried about Noel's injury. "Please leave them to us."

Noel thought about using his power to kill them and head straight to the river, but it wouldn't be good if the lord did it while his vassals remained on the back. So, he approved Grandell's request. "Alright. I'll leave them to you."

Unsurprisingly, the temple knights also came forward as if requesting their Saintess so that they didn't lose to Grandell.

"You may go. Show the Earl our power." The saintess smiled. Since they were cooperating, she had to show the strength of their temple knights so that it looked like the agreement was worth it.

All twenty knights came forward, ready to challenge all these demons.

"Moon Temple, ten knights. We're ready to assist the Ardagan Family's knights." One of the knights stepped up and informed Grandell of their action.

"Is that so? Behind me are the elite knights of the Ardagan Family. I hope that you can keep up with us."

"We'll leisurely fight alongside you, then."

Grandell raised his hand with three fingers up. The soldiers understood the signal and changed their formation slightly.

As soon as they were ready, Grandell sped up. "Go!"

The other knights increased their speed as well. Since Grandell had begun, the temple knights followed suits, matching their pace with the soldiers.

Unlike the battle formation that Anna saw during the first exploration, this formation was used to crush the enemies with their momentum. There wasn't a single shield-bearer among the soldiers after all.

There were a total of fifteen demons coming toward them. When they were about to clash, Grandell sped up once more and shocked them with his speed.

The first demon tried to strike him with its claw before another demon pounced on him.

Grandell struck this claw without hesitation, but his fighting style had changed a little bit after sparring with Anna.

As Anna said, he had good speed, but his power was lacking. Back then, he tried to compete with Anna and overwhelm her with her speed. The thought was correct, but the way he did it was wrong.

That was why when the sword was about to strike this claw, Grandell lowered the strength of his grip, causing the sword to slide down underneath the claw.

It brushed the demon's skin until it managed to slip past the entire paw. It was then Grandell sped up once more and swung straight at the demon's neck, slicing it.

After killing the first demon, he moved to the next one. This time, the demon had more time to regain its composure and try to strike his blade first.

However, Grandell kept avoiding the direct clash until he got a perfect opportunity. He utilized it to kill the second demon.

After killing the demons, he kicked their corpses to the side, messing with the other demons' movement. And it was the time for the other soldiers to kill the rest.

When the temple knights saw the brilliant performance, they realized that they had lost the initiative by allowing Grandell to make his move first. In the end, they could only clean up the rest of the demons.

Noel watched them with a smile. While the demons were just low level, Grandell and the others managed to defeat it with minimum strength.

That was what he wanted, considering there were a lot of demons residing near the river and the area beyond it.

He imagined the scene where his elite soldiers dominated the battlefield. And at that time, they would be strengthened with runes.

Once that happened, they would be invincible.

"It seems that you've gotten quite excited, Noel. I guess your soldiers perform better than mine." Layla sighed.

"Don't worry. I am expecting a lot from you guys once we penetrate deep into their territory. It's only going to be troublesome from this point on."

Chapter 937 Prelude

"Amazing." The soldiers couldn't help but admire when both leaders stepped forth.

Grandell was overwhelming all the demons coming toward him, allowing the soldiers behind them to have an easier time. The same applied to the Moon Temple's knights.

They had gone quite far from the city and should be able to reach the river before the sun was right above their heads.

So, the number of demons had increased significantly. This time, there were a total of a hundred demons that came toward them at once.

The knights fought gallantly. The Moon Temple had shown clearly how they had grown accustomed to fighting demons. Their method was similar to that of the Demon Banner Army, but Grandell and the others were the elite soldiers that had been picked to protect their lord on this trip, so they were the best among the soldiers.

Their prowess dominated the entire battlefield to the point where the Moon Temple looked like a sideshow.

Still, the most important thing was Layla.

When Grandell noticed another few demons coming toward them, a translucent barrier appeared in their way, blocking the demons. It gave him enough time to deal with the current demons before intercepting them.

That was right. Layla had been creating barriers to delay the demons so that the knights weren't overwhelmed by their numbers.

Noel had been observing this whole time. In just three hours, they had encountered about eight hundred demons. It was certainly not a normal number. Someone had artificially increased the number of demons.

And the closer they were to the target, the higher that number. It would be troublesome if they had to fight thousands of demons with their number. For the time being, it was good enough since they only had to fight tens of demons a time.

But if the Supreme Devil Organization started commanding them and turned these demons into an army, Noel had to join the fight.

"Thank you for the help," said Noel while looking at the barrier curiously. Layla couldn't see anymore, so he wondered how Layla knew where and when to deploy the barrier.

"Don't worry about it. As long as the opponents are demons, I don't mind going all out. So, just make sure to conserve your energy since the true enemies haven't made their appearance yet. And if you're wondering about my barrier, then don't forget that I'm a contractor of the Moon Goddess."

It was still daylight, so there was no moon that could help her. But when he recalled the Moon Goddess's true identity, which was the Dark Butterfly Spirit, he got some ideas. It appeared that the Saintess didn't only use her sharpened senses, but also released pollen that allowed her to sense everything around her.

"To be honest, you're far too different from the last time we met."

"Hahaha. I was too weak after maintaining my power for a long time, so I couldn't do anything back then and had to rely on you two. But don't worry, I'm fully recharged now." Layla chuckled.

"That's reassuring. In that case, we will go straight to the river and clear up the area for our camp."

"Is the base near the river?"

"Yes. Today, we'll try lowering their numbers as much as possible. Though, I doubt they will just let us be."

"So, we're going to get attacked today?"

"Yeah." Noel contemplated for a moment. "I will leave this cart to you."

"Don't worry. It will be safe in my hands. Besides, I've taken a liking to this carriage. Just look at its maneuverability. I can't help but want to possess this thing as soon as possible." Layla smirked. "But how are you going to fight them?"

"I still have my flying ability. I will just act like I can't move my body too much but can control my Spiritual Energy."

"Fair enough. In that case, I will put you in the best position to crush your enemies. Let's get this done as soon as possible."

"Thanks." Noel nodded. He continued assessing the situation, wondering how many demons the Supreme Devil Organization brought to this place.

The group continued toward the river. They drastically slowed down due to the demons, but it shouldn't take more than two hours before they reached the river at the current pace.

During that time, the knights had killed a total of two thousand demons. It was a very large number, considering they only brought two Grandmasters and twenty knights. In addition, Noel hadn't even made a single move during the ordeal.

While some knights were injured, they managed to reach the river without losing a single person.

However, there was still one problem.

"How should we cross this river?" Grandell asked, looking at the size. He might be able to jump over the river, but barely. The other soldiers wouldn't be able to do it.

"Move, Grandell. I'm going to create a bridge." Noel finally stepped forward, only to be held by Layla from behind. She said, "I will create the bridge. I told you earlier that I'm going to send you in your best condition."

"Then, how are you going to make one? I mean, isn't your barrier..." Noel fell silent, realizing that her barrier wasn't as simple as it looked.

He remembered that the barrier always appeared in various shapes and sizes.

The Saintess smiled and went back to the carriage. She then fell to her knees and joined both hands as though she were praying.

A horizontal barrier suddenly formed on top of the ground and soon extended to the other side of the river. It was sturdy and wide enough for all of them to cross at the same time.

One of the knights said, "The Saintess is able to manipulate the shape and size of her barrier. But the more complicated the shape is, the more she has to concentrate. Lord Earl, please use this chance to cross the river with the carriage. The Saintess won't be able to reply to you for the time being."

Grandell actually walked first to ensure that the bridge was safe to cross. But Noel soon said, "Let's go."

While he was grateful for Grandell's attention to detail, it would be rude to the Moon Temple if they didn't trust them in this matter.

So, they had no other choice but to cross the river. The soldiers were still wary, thinking they would be attacked in the middle of the river.

As if understanding their worries, the Saintess formed an additional wall that would protect them from the outside. Though, there was no need to do so since no demons attacked them.

They ultimately reached the other side of the river safely.

"Hu..." The Saintess let out a long breath as the barrier disappeared.

"Thanks." Noel extended his hand. Since they had arrived here, Noel wanted to help her get down from the carriage so that they could set up the camp.

"You're welcome." Layla smiled and took his hand.

After that, Noel turned to Grandell. "How are the soldiers?"

"All of them have small injuries, but only two need a bit of rest. The others can still go on."

The knights from the Moon Temple seemed to report their conditions to the Saintess. But they had four people that needed to recuperate on their side.

With this, there were only fourteen soldiers that could fight at the moment.

Noel asked Layla. "Do you have anyone that can heal?"

"No. I've only brought one priest to this place, and I leave him in the city. I can make a barrier to give some time for the knights to recuperate after all."

Noel then turned to Grandell. "Bring me the injured soldiers."

Grandell didn't know what Noel was planning to do, but he followed his order without a question.

As soon as both of them stood in front of Noel, the latter grabbed their arm and checked the condition of their bodies.

Their injuries weren't that heavy, but it was true that those injuries would hinder their movements on the battlefield. So, Noel injected his Spiritual Energy and utilized the Force Control.

The Force Control allowed him to influence the Spiritual Energy of another person and Noel used it to stimulate their recovery... the same recovery speed as that of a Spirit Grandmaster.

In other words, Noel utilized the Force Control to act as the Spirit Mind for these people.

In just ten minutes, both of them noticed that there was no more pain in their bodies.

"Huh? This is..." The two soldiers were baffled while Layla noticed how the breathing of these two people became stable as though their injuries had disappeared.

"This should be enough. Can you two still fight with this?"

"Y-yes Sir!" Both of them hurriedly replied.

"You're truly interesting." Layla looked at Noel. "Fire and Ice Spirits... And now, it's a healing ability? Don't tell me, it's your third spirit?"

"There's no way I can have a third spirit in my body." Noel shook his head. "Though, I do have a technique to boost your recovery. How about bringing your soldiers here?"

"But..." Layla obviously didn't want to do it since Noel had to use his Spiritual Energy.

What she didn't know was that Force Control used the target's Spiritual Energy, so it wouldn't burden his Spiritual Energy that much. It would only take a toll on his mind since he had to stimulate their regenerative ability, but considering he didn't do anything this whole time, the burden wasn't much.

"If your soldiers can continue fighting, I can do nothing and recuperate."

"..." Layla finally agreed. In the end, she could also buy some time for Noel to recover. "Bring the injured ones forward. The rest will set up our camp."

While Noel was healing the injured soldiers, the demons had been gathering around them. The demons weren't close enough to Noel and the others, so it was impossible to know their presence.

However, there was one thing that these demons had in common. There was a yellow-colored flower on top of their heads.

And behind all of them were a lot of people. Their strength varied, but the strongest ones were also Spirit Grandmasters.

"How many demons do we have?" one of the Grandmasters asked.

"About three thousand."

"It is not enough to kill them. Three thousand might be a high number, but that Saintess can hold off thousands of demons when she is only a Spirit Master."

"That is going to be fine. The Saintess has no choice but to open her barrier as long as we become bait."

"We will lure Noel Ardagan out and attack him together with the demons. Our objective right now is to injure him. It would be better if we could kill him, but if it's not possible, we at least want him to overexert himself. Understood?"

They nodded.

"Alright. Let's begin. Do your best to not die, but sacrifice yourself if it's impossible to survive."

Noel didn't know at this time that the battle that awaited him was something he had never seen before.

Chapter 938 Siege

The peaceful situation lasted for an hour. They had set up all the tents so that they could return here once they finished their jobs. And there would be a few people protecting this camp, considering the enemies might use this chance to destroy their camp.

But to everyone's surprise, the enemy actually did it right off the bat. There wasn't even a need to wait for the group to divide into two.

When Noel was recovering his Spiritual Energy, he noticed that the atmosphere had changed. The demons rarely roared unless they met an enemy, so the moment he heard a roar, followed by a series of them. He realized that the enemies had begun making their move.

Roar!

Roar!

Roar!

Everyone was startled as all of them hurriedly picked up their weapons.

Judging from the source of the noises, it was clear that they had been surrounded from all sides. And it wasn't like they could cross the river easily.

Noel gradually opened his eyes as though he had expected them to come.

"My lord." Grandell hurried to Noel's side, wanting to know his order.

"It seems that they have come. We're lucky to have them come at us instead of making us look for them." Noel nodded.

"They might be scared of the appearance of a paladin. The one who should be coming to us is Aurelia. While she is not the best fighter the moon temple has, the one who has the highest firepower among the grandmasters is her. She is also smart enough and possesses an intellect like that of a general." Layla smirked. "Still, should we begin?"

"Yeah. How is the barrier?"

"You have made an anchor point, so I will just form a barrier that connects those anchor points. This way, we could create an artificial wall. I will take care of our left."

"In that case, I will take the front. The soldiers will take the right side and your knights will become our reserve while watching our rear. As for your barrier... It can withstand the attack of a Peak Level Demon, right?"

"While the barrier doesn't have an offensive ability, it has the strongest defense among the spirits. I can easily block their attacks with minimal energy."

"That's good."

"You should be worried because you are going to be targeted."

"That's what I want. The sooner I wipe them out, the better." Noel nodded and turned around, ready to stand by in his position.

But before he left, Layla called him. "Noel."

"Hmm?"

"May the Moon Goddess bless you with fortune. Happy hunting."

Noel nodded with a smile.

The Saintess then began to pray. There were four anchor points Noel had set up, creating a rectangle like that of a city wall. However, he didn't stretch it across the river since there was a chance that they would use some amphibian demons to ambush them from behind.

Layla formed a thick barrier that allowed one to stand on top of it.

Noel stood on top of the wall on the opposite side of the river. Layla formed a weird shaped barrier that was most likely trying to stop and redirect the demons to the other side. On the other hand, Grandell and the others were used to fighting in a defensive battle like this as they had been trained as the soldiers of the Ardagan Family by Howard.

Now that everything had been set up, Noel turned his focus to the horizon. It was quite hard to see everything with all the trees around them, but he could see a lot of demons coming toward them.

"A few thousands at once, huh..." Noel muttered. It wasn't enough to kill Noel since he could easily escape, but Grandell and the others wouldn't be fine. The only way to do it was to kill the ones who controlled all these demons.

It was at that time that he found a flower on the demons' heads.

Noel sighed. "This is going to be a bit difficult."

Layla had reminded him of the terror of a Plant Type Demon. He didn't know what kind of flower was on top of their heads, but it was pretty clear that they were in the same group and could act in an organized manner.

Noel had thought about it in the past. What if the enemies had an army of demons? Thousands of demons might only be called a swarm instead of an army. After all, they were just charging ahead with their instincts.

However, when they had someone commanding them and that someone had the knowledge of warfare, the demons would become far more terrifying.

After all, human warfare had evolved for so long that they had a lot of effective formation whether it was melee combat or ranged combat.

This was also the reason why Noel planned to employ normal people as soldiers in his territory. He needed the number to deal with the demons after all.

"Fortunately, we fight in the woods... And since this is going to be where the port is, I think it's fine to clean up this area, right?" Noel smirked.

In the past, he had never used his power to the fullest in case it would burn the entire forest. Now that he was a lord and could do anything in his territory, there was no law that prevented him from burning the forest as he could write it off as an expansion.

"Ardagan. You can burn the entire thing off, right?"

[My fire can burn the entire forest and it will use normal wood as fuel. However, you still have to maintain it with your Spiritual Energy. It's minuscule, but when the fire is wide enough, you will feel the consumption.]

"You know that you're claiming that your fire is unable to spread without my energy... which is not like the real fire, you know."

[But what you want is firepower, right? Supply the fire with your energy, and the forest will be razed to the ground in no time. Besides, isn't it easier to put out all the fire this way? You're the one who identifies my fire like this.]

"Haha. The ground is slightly wet, but I guess it's not a problem for us, right?"

[Of course.]

"Time to work, Partner." Noel smiled while pulling out Ardagan.

The closer the demons got, the more horrifying they became. All their eyes became bloodshot as if they were going to kill these people even if it cost them their lives.

Roar!

Roar!

Roar!

Noel waited for them to become close enough before releasing his Spiritual Energy. If it were any other fire spirit, the wet environment might weaken their fire, but this was the Undying Fire.

Undying Phoenix.

A black-colored phoenix flew out of Noel's fingertip and headed straight toward the demons. However, the target wasn't actually a single demon. Instead, it was a tree.

Boom!

The moment the phoenix hit the tree, it exploded and shot splinters in all directions. The blaze erupted and engulfed the entire tree. The leaves that touched other trees ended up connecting the blaze to other trees. The splinters set ablaze a lot of trees, creating a chain of fire.

Some of the leaves fell down and were set alight before touching the ground or the demons.

Just like what happened in the Greenwood Kingdom, the wet soil was burned and became dry as though every droplet of water had evaporated.

The demon was also burned by the fire. Since most of them were Low Level Demons, they didn't have the Spiritual Energy to withstand the fire.

In the end, they were burned alive. Their hot ashes started igniting the nearby trees as well, spreading the blaze wide.

With just a single skill, Noel actually killed more than ten demons. And with all the fire spreading around, the number of demons dying would be numerous.

And the blaze carried so much heat surpassing that of a normal fire. Even if the demons didn't die from the fire, the heat would severely impact them.

The knights and the soldiers were dumbstruck. The intense heat could be felt from their position and the horrifying scene before their eyes completely showed them the other side of Noel.

In spite of his caring and gentle nature like that of a lord, his power was so tyrannical that it could easily destroy a city.

"So, this is Noel Ardagan." The Saintess muttered. She obviously felt the power of Noel, especially with the fact that the pollen that covered Noel's area was burned by Noel's fire, blocking her entire vision.

Though, she could pretty much guess what happened to those demons.

Even though they were controlled, they were still letting out a shrill as the burn was unbearable.

But as one would expect from the demons, they continued marching forward without caring for their bodies. As long as they hadn't died, they continued rushing to the wall and hitting it.

Layla felt the brunt of the demons, but this also meant that the demons carried Noel's fire near her barrier.

It actually influenced her barrier. While it would take more than that to melt her barrier, it was the first time she saw a power so strong that it affected her barrier to this degree.

Noel could see the number of kills in his repeatable mission was increasing. He had to thank the Supreme Devil Organization for giving him a lot of demons for the Honor Points.

Unfortunately, there was one big flaw when using this technique. The fire was so strong that it burned the demon's body and everything in it. Yes, it meant that Noel couldn't utilize the demon's blood for painting the rune body, the demon's hide to inscribe runes, or even the demon crystals.

He had to sacrifice all that if he wanted to kill a large number of demons. This was another reason why Noel rarely wanted to use this tactic.

However, the enemy had brought so many demons that he had to decrease their number with this method until it reached the level they could take on.

Noel could feel that his Spiritual Energy was draining. The rate wasn't high, so he could let it burn for an hour easily. But if the fire continued to spread, he would begin to feel it.

In addition, there was one more problem. He still hadn't made his second move since the demons were still dying to his flame, but he soon felt spiritual energy brushing his skin. It was as if someone was trying to inform him.

He followed the direction of the gaze, which turned out to be Layla. The latter couldn't talk while deploying this complicated barrier, so she must want to tell him something.

At first, he thought it would be about the hidden danger lurking in the woods, but the breeze suddenly changed and pushed him down as though it wanted him to look down.

When he lowered his head, he saw the flame the demon carried hitting the barrier. He instantly realized her concern.

"Ah." Noel couldn't help but rethink his decision. On the one hand, his fire was effective against them. On the other hand, if he was standing on a real stone wall or even a temporary wooden wall, the flame would set it ablaze as well.

While the fire had extraordinary power, the tactic itself was flawed. It didn't seem like he could use this tactic in a defensive battle.

Before Noel began extinguishing his fire in a controlled manner, he saw a torrent of water bursting from the ground.

The water was directly raining down on the entire area to extinguish the fire. In addition, a few huge rocks formed along with the appearance of a few flying demons.

Noel couldn't help but furrow his eyebrows as he first experienced the true raid of a demon army instead of a demon swarm.

"I see. The Supreme Devil Organization seems to have another objective in luring me here. They not only want to probe my strength, but they also want to try a siege with the demons. And it's all for the preparation of the incoming attack... They must be building their army somewhere."

Noel couldn't help but clench his fist. Since the Supreme Devil Organization was using him to test their army, he also planned to get experience that would be useful in the future siege.

"Come then. I'll entertain you."

Chapter 939 Lure

Looking at the incoming boulders, Noel was thinking about several things. This was the true siege warfare from the demon army. He knew that it would happen again in the future, so he had to prepare a weapon that could shoot down those boulders.

These boulders were also a double-edged sword. Precisely because Noel knew that he had formed an ice lotus above his head.

The petals flew toward the giant rocks and froze them upon impact. Not only were they covered with thick ice, but the momentum also stopped, causing the rocks to fall right in that area and crushing a lot of demons.

He didn't bother to see the result as he had to extinguish his own fire.

The water that a demon released into the air earlier rained the fire down, but the fire didn't seem to be affected. There was no sign of it weakening. In fact, it continued to spread.

This was Noel's Undying Fire. Unless the demon concentrated all their power on stopping the fire one area at a time, it would be impossible to extinguish his fire.

More and more demons continued moving toward him. Multiple Advanced Level Demons suddenly released their own attacks into the air, letting it curve parabolically toward Noel.

He had seen this type of attack multiple times during his time in the Demon Banner Army. At that time, the Demon Banner Army used the wall as well as the enchantment within the wall to withstand it.

Now that he didn't have that enchantment, he wondered what kind of thing could stop this type of attack.

He wanted to use the Ice Mirrors, but they would only stop the attack. He wanted to use all kinds of attacks to act as a double-edged sword against the demons.

Unfortunately for him, some things were better to be shot down before the impact. Even if it couldn't harm the demons, they wouldn't lose a soldier with a bold and risky strategy.

Hence, a pair of fire wings appeared on his back. With a single flap of the wings, multiple flames were shot to the sky, skillfully hitting those attacks.

Still, this was an army of a few thousands. The number of Advanced Level Demons among them was rather high. Even with the fire feathers, he couldn't stop every single one of them.

Some of the attacks ended up reaching his position. Some of them missed the targets and ended up hitting the ground outside the wall, which killed some demons.

Some of them hit the wall, causing it to vibrate. However, the barrier was extremely sturdy and withstood the attacks without even a single scratch on it. Three attacks ended up hitting inside the wall, which destroyed a part of their camp.

This was Noel's concern, considering the city would be the target.

Most of the time, they created a tall wall in order for the attacks to hit the wall instead of the town. So, Noel took note of this result as well.

As for himself, he had shot down all the attacks that would come in his direction, so he remained still the whole time.

Even though Noel wanted to use all his abilities, he thought about using the Supreme Devil Organization to report something false. And he was still gravely injured, so it wouldn't be wise to show everything.

However, there was one more reason why Noel hadn't made any big moves except for the first one. He was wondering if the Supreme Devil Organization would send their Devil Saints on this mission.

While their mission seemed to be worsening his injuries, they should know that killing him would be more beneficial.

So, he had been focusing on the horizon, making sure that Qiel wasn't among the enemies. After all, her power was far more terrifying in a battle like this.

...

As he predicted, the Supreme Devil Organization was watching him from afar. They couldn't help but gasp when they saw how Noel killed hundreds of demons just by spreading his fire. In fact, they felt like they would be in trouble if they crossed the blaze.

"What should we do? We can't extinguish that fire."

"It's fine. The headquarters have told us that his fire is special, so we just have to report all this later. As for what we're going to do with him, we still have a lot of demons to deal with. spare. Let's continue wearing him out. Once he begins showing any sign of weakening, we'll lure him out."

"Got it."

The people from the Supreme Devil Organization didn't step up even when they saw numerous demons dying. In fact, they had prepared a lot of things to force Noel.

And their plans began to take shape, starting with what happened within Noel's camp.

"Hmm?!" Noel raised his eyebrows when there was a crumbling sound coming from within the camp.

Even the knights couldn't help but turn their heads to the inside, finding a centipede breaking through their camp by digging the ground.

Without hesitation, a knight from the Moon Temple jumped off the wall and sliced this big centipede, killing it in one blow.

However, more and more demons appear from the hole. In fact, the one he killed earlier was not the only centipede. Three more centipedes broke through and created a hole within them.

Noel's expression darkened. If the enemies utilized this kind of attack in order to infiltrate their city, it would become even more troublesome. In fact, Noel wasn't the only one who thought about this.

The Saintess experienced this kind of tactic for the first time. She hurriedly formed another barrier to block the hole as the temple knights killed the other demons, stopping them from spreading.

Seeing that the reserve had been deployed, the Supreme Devil Organization stepped up their game by sending another wave of demons. It didn't come from the ground this time. Instead, it was a few crocodiles and frogs appearing from the water. Some fish even came out just to spurt out a lot of pressurized water.

"There are more coming!" The Temple Knights shouted. They had to split their forces into two. The first group took care of the demons that managed to infiltrate their camp while the other group stopped the attacks from the water.

The Saintess wanted to help them, but she was also pressured from her side. The only thing she could do was seal the hole with her barrier to stop more demons from coming. Though, she believed that the demons would dig to another place.

It would have been easier if she could actually just isolate this place with a spherical barrier, but that wasn't what Noel wanted.

When things couldn't get worse, the flying demons that had been hovering in the air finally began their moves.

They flew past the demons and released their respective attacks to harm the Saintess, Noel or any of the knights.

Noel flapped his wings, using the fire gale to blow away their attacks. The heat also affected some of them as their skin started melting.

Flying demons, amphibians, and underground demons. He seemed to have underestimated the potential of a demon army.

He couldn't help but wonder how his ancestor repelled all this demon from his city. After all, the demons were controlled by a Demon King, who was said to outsmart him.

When Noel was thinking, a few demons were climbing the wall. They stacked up in front of the walls and the surviving demons climbed on top of their kin's dead bodies.

This was only an army of thousands of demons. His city might have to endure more than ten thousand demons, so he had to find a way to stop them from climbing the wall this way as well. They might even be more dangerous than a human army since they could do the unthinkable.

There were a lot of things he had to do once he returned to the main city.

But before he could do all that, he had to eliminate all these demons.

"This is getting dangerous." Noel muttered.

One of the demons managed to climb the wall and hurriedly rush toward Noel, ready to pounce on him.

Without hesitation, Noel summoned the Flame Devil. A huge fire avatar emerged from his back and grabbed the demon, melting its body completely.

After that, the Flame Devil bent its body forward and grabbed all the corpses as well as a few surviving demons to melt them down so that other demons couldn't use them to climb the wall.

When Noel had shifted a part of his attention to the demons underneath him, the Supreme Devil Organization ordered the demons to launch another volley of attack.

Noel clicked his tongue. While maintaining the Fire Devil, Noel formed a few Spiritual Barrier Runes to block the incoming attacks.

However, the Flame Devil's movement seemed to become sluggish. A few Advanced Level Demon and a Peak Level Bison suddenly appeared in the front line. Some of the low level demons actually used their bodies to bulldoze everything on its path so that the stronger demons wouldn't be harmed by the fire.

Those Advanced Level Demons were climbing the bodies before the Flame Devil melted them down. Their target wasn't Noel. Instead, it was the Flame Devil.

They covered their bodies with Spiritual Energy. Some of them even released crescent-shaped attacks or beams to destroy the Flame Devil's body.

The fire avatar wasn't that easy to beat. Even when the attack affected its body, the Flame Devil grabbed their bodies to kill them. Still, there was one Peak Level Demon that had been waiting for the right time.

When the Flame Devil got weaker, the Peak Level Bison charged ahead.

The barrier should be enough to stop the charge, but surprisingly, the bison actually hit the lump of bodies before him and launched it into the air.

"Oooooaaahh!" It let out a roar as if telling the demons to do something.

Some of the Mid Level and Advanced Level Demons actually used those bodies to propel themselves above the wall so that they would surround Noel once they fell.

Noel wouldn't allow such a thing as he hurriedly flapped his wings once again to release the Fire Gale that would push them away. Some of the demons that could release a wing also helped neutralize Noel's attack.

Ultimately, three demons managed to reach the wall and rush to Noel.

Noel used his wing to wrap two of them in flame, but the last one managed to reach him. Noel grabbed the last demon with his hands before launching it with a Rune Blast.

Some of the demons also continued moving unpredictably, causing Noel to have a lot of information to process.

The people from the Supreme Devil Organization couldn't help but laugh. "Can you see that?"

"He is starting to get overwhelmed."

"Yeah. Is this really the so-called Noel Ardagan who is said to have eliminated multiple Grandmasters when he was only a Spirit Master?"

"It must be because of the injuries. He is amazing to be able to release that level of power with that kind of injury."

"We should just come straight to him and kill him."

"No. Madam Qiel ordered us to avoid a direct confrontation. Besides, the Saintess hasn't done anything yet. If the situation becomes more dangerous, there's a chance that she will isolate all of them by creating an enclosed barrier. When that happens, we won't be able to lure him out."

"So, we're going to separate him from the Saintess first?"

"Yeah. Since we've weakened him enough, let's begin."

The people from the Supreme Devil Organization continued to the next phase, which was to show themselves.

Little did they know, everything was just an act from Noel. While it was true that he started getting overwhelmed, if he were to release his full strength, the demons would be crushed.

However, he still had to act extremely weak since he was sure that was the only way to make the organization show itself.

Both Noel and the organization had forgotten about one more variable that could upset the battlefield.

Chapter 940 Acting

While killing the demons, Noel couldn't help but raise his eyebrows when the demons cleared up the trees so that Noel could see everything behind them.

And among those demons, Noel could see a giant boar. Its height reached three meters. If it rammed its giant body, it might not be able to destroy the barrier, but it would shake the barrier.

However, what piqued Noel's interest was not the boar, but the people standing on top of it. There were two Spirit Grandmasters standing on top of the boar. The fact that they could do that indicated their identities. And they were not the only ones who could be seen.

As the trees were cleared up, a few more people were spotted.

"This is..." Noel frowned. It was clear that they wanted Noel to come out of the barrier. If they didn't manage to separate Noel from Layla, it would be impossible to do anything to him.

On the one hand, Noel should capture them and interrogate them for information. On the other hand, he wasn't so foolish as to fall into their trap.

He could just kill all these demons first before chasing after them. Even if they ran away, he could still go after their base. Though, he doubted there was anything useful. In the end, what Noel wanted was to kill all these demons since they were the ones threatening his territory.

Even the Third Prince couldn't say anything if he just said that these people ran away and he couldn't chase after them because of his condition.

Noel smiled at them as though he provoked them by not falling into their traps.

The people from the organization didn't seem to be rushing even though a lot of demons had fallen and Noel had no sign of coming out. It seemed that he was so sure that they could make Noel leave.

"As expected, everything has gone according to Madam Qiel's plan," One of the Devil Bishops said while squinting his eyes. "He wouldn't fall for our provocation and endanger himself."

"Does that mean we still have to make our way through that fire? Although we have demons to spare, that fire can't be suppressed."

"I told you earlier that everything has gone according to Madam Qiel's plan, right? She knew that he wouldn't leave, so we just had to force him." He shook his head and shouted down. "Get ready to direct the flower."

"Where?"

"That way." The Devil Bishop pointed to the south.

The guy didn't know why it had to be this direction, but he still followed the instruction. He took out the powder and spread it to the south as if signaling the demons to change directions.

The flowers on top of the demon's heads suddenly faced to the south.

Noel and his group had killed around seven hundred to eight hundred demons. There were still one and a half thousand demons surrounding them as if it were to lock them down. However, the rest of the demons actually turned to the south and ignored everything.

"Huh?!" Noel frowned. He couldn't see why the Supreme Devil Organization turned that way. If their original purpose was to stall him here and attack the city, it would be useless. After all, he still had the Sword Arbiter as well as Dimitri protecting two of his cities.

He soon remembered the discussion they had earlier, regarding the organization's aim in stalling him.

That was right. Noel had expected that the Supreme Devil Organization was planning to link a hint in their base to the villages in their surroundings, so Noel overworked himself.

But it seemed that he made a slight miscalculation. Instead of leaving a clue to stall him, the Supreme Devil Organization was planning to destroy the village with this army.

On the one hand, it wasn't really a big loss if a village was destroyed. But Noel wanted to create a second layer of defense by using the village, so it would be troublesome if there was one village destroyed.

The village could be rebuilt, but the trust was quite hard to restore.

"So, that's what they want." Noel clicked his tongue. If they crossed the river and went a bit further to the south, they would find the village. This was the only chance for Noel to stop them.

After properly considering his plan, Noel shouted, "Grandell! I will leave this place to you. I'm going to chase after them."

"!!!" Grandell, who had just stabbed a demon, kicked the body away and turned to Noel. "But, Sir, your condition!"

"I don't have time to explain it. I'm going!" Noel shouted. Without waiting for Grandell to respond, Noel took off into the air and flew within a safe distance from the demons on the ground.

In that instant, the demons couldn't help but raise their heads. Those, who had a ranged ability, especially the Advanced Level Demons and Peak Level Demons were planning to shoot him down.

Noel had no choice but to boost his speed further so that their attacks would reach him too late as he had flown past them.

But the moment Noel sped up, the Devil Bishops and Devil Inspectors targeted their attacks. Even if they were not at the level of Qiel, this was the exact reason why they were chosen for this mission.

One of the Spirit Grandmasters summoned a few flying swords and released them toward Noel. Another Devil Bishop split his Spiritual Energy into multiple light balls and shot Noel. Other Devil Bishops and Devil Inspectors used their respective abilities to attack Noel.

Noel flew to the left, trying to avoid it, but a lot of these attacks actually curved and followed him.

"What?" Noel gritted his teeth.

"My lord!" Grandell shouted in panic.

Noel kept flying like a bird, avoiding the attacks. However, no matter how many times he changed direction, they kept chasing after him. Only those that hit another attack ended up destroying each other.

But a lot more were coming after him.

While flying, Noel waved his finger at the giant boar, releasing his Undying Phoenix.

"Dodge it!" The people on the boar hurriedly hopped onto another demon, watching how the phoenix blasted the top of the boar before the flame devoured it.

After avoiding the Undying Phoenix, the people continued attacking Noel.

"Tsk!" Noel was in a pinch. Even though he could attack them, their distance was too far since Noel had to fly high enough to avoid getting attacked by other demons. But it also meant that the people from the organization could avoid his attack easily.

All of a sudden, a flying demon dove down from an even higher altitude, appearing behind Noel out of nowhere.

"!!!" Noel turned around and saw the appearance of the demon. It turned out to be an eagle, a Peak Level Demon on top of that.

He hurriedly covered his entire body with the fire wings. The right side was attacked by the eagle while the left side was hit by the homing attacks from those people.

He expanded the wings and burned everything that touched their surface. It showed the absolute strength of the Undying Fire, but that didn't matter.

When Noel successfully defended himself, the eagle suddenly rushed through the fire wings and dove to the ground.

"!!!" Noel got hit by the eagle's head. Despite its skin burning, the eagle was actually trying to drag him to the ground. "You!"

Noel gritted his teeth and tried to kill the demons with his fire. He even used the Flame Scale to melt everything that touched him as well as the Flame Conjuring to form a pair of giant hands that ripped the eagle's wings apart before tossing the eagle away.

Unfortunately for him, the eagle had done its job. Noel managed to flip his wings two times, but it wasn't enough to stop his momentum. It only reduced the impact when he hit the ground.

"Attack!" The Devil Bishop shouted excitedly, thinking that he could kill Noel Ardagan.

Noel was on his knees, clutching his chest. Even his fire wings were flickering as if Noel had a hard time maintaining them due to his internal injuries.

The Devil Bishops and Devil Inspectors released their attacks. The demons surrounded him and pounced together.

"My lord!" Grandell shouted while jumping off the wall. He was going to cut his way through these demons to protect Noel.

However, it wasn't that easy to defeat Noel. A huge fire avatar appeared once again. This time, Noel poured everything he had into the Flame Devil, causing its reemergence followed by a blast that knocked the demons away.

The intense heat was burning the demons alive. The Flame Devil used one hand to melt the incoming attacks from Devil Bishops and Devil Inspectors while sweeping the demons with the other hand.

"Roar!" The flame devil let out a huge roar to scare them.

It looked like Noel was safe, but on the ground, Noel suddenly covered his mouth before coughing up blood. The fire that had been burning around Layla's barrier started to disappear as though Noel couldn't control it anymore.

"Gah!" Noel coughed a few times; his face was still down so the people from the organization couldn't see his expression.

Still, it was enough to show Noel's current condition. The Devil Bishop thought he could finally kill the famous Noel Ardagan, so he shouted, "He's about to die. Unleash all your power and suppress that fire avatar. Once it's gone, we'll kill him!"

The people from the organization became even more energetic. Grandell was struggling to create a path. In fact, the demons started to overwhelm him with their numbers. The other knights rushed toward him so that they could create a path together to their master.

However, none of them had enough time to reach Noel. No matter how they struggled, it would be impossible for Noel to come out of this alive.

Among all the people on the battlefield, there was only one person who remained calm the whole time.

From people's perspectives, she might not know what was happening because she was too focused on her task. What they didn't know was that she was still aware of everything around her and could still talk inwardly.

When she heard all those screams, Layla couldn't help but mutter in her mind, 'His acting is so brilliant that I would definitely fall for it if he didn't tell me.'

That was right, Layla actually knew what happened. It wasn't just Noel's condition that was fully recovered, she also knew that Noel had another plan, which was to plant this sight in their memories.

...

An hour ago.

Layla couldn't help but ask, "Say... I'm going to play along with your charade, but do you mind telling me what you're going to do? At least, I know which one is real and which one is fake."

"Well, depending on the situation, it might change. But I will try to create a situation where I become desperate enough and get kind of... defeated. Of course, I will struggle for my life."

"Are you going to injure yourself to make this even more believable?"

"Of course not." Noel took out a thumb-sized ball and secretly showed it to her. He placed it on her hand since she couldn't see.

"What is this? It's squishy like a liquid."

Noel whispered, "Tomato juice."

"..." That answer alone was enough to know what Noel was planning to do. He wanted to use it to create fake blood to show his injury.

...

When Layla recalled that conversation, she couldn't help but think, 'To fool your enemies, you need to fool your allies first. Grandell and the others don't know about this, which makes his condition more believable. With his desperate struggle, he would have no choice but to retreat. That's probably what's going to happen next.'

When Layla thought that Noel was about to fly away, she suddenly felt the temperature become a bit warmer. The sunlight brightened as feathers started falling from the sky.

There was a woman floating in the sky with a pair of angelic wings.

Layla made a wry smile. 'Is this a good or bad time to make your appearance, Aurelia?'