

## **S vs Rebirth 951**

### Chapter 951 Negotiation for the Trip

Unfortunately, the peaceful time couldn't last long.

Just one day after their return, Anna had to leave again.

They used the cover of the night so that no one would know she was gone. They would realize it sooner or later, but it didn't mean much.

Anna was accompanied by Dimitri, who had to finish all the matters before the people reached this city. Of course, Balott tagged along since he had to handle the negotiation.

"I'm leaving them to you, Dimitri." Noel gave a gentle smile.

"Yes, Master. I will not let any harm befall them." Dimitri nodded with a serious expression.

Noel then turned to Anna. "Be careful out there, will you?"

"Don't worry. I will return as soon as possible."

"I don't mind if you take longer as long as I can see you safe and sound." Noel shook his head. He could handle all the problems as long as he worked hard enough, but he would have a headache when he saw her injured.

"Emm," Anna mumbled and just hugged him for a moment. She wouldn't be able to see him for a while.

After Anna became bolder, Noel also became accustomed to this kind of action. He just enjoyed her company, fully knowing that she wouldn't be here for a long time.

Sadly, they had to go soon. So, Noel had no choice but to let her go.

"I'm going."

"Take care." Noel nodded while waving his hands.

The three immediately rode the horses to the north, planning to meet Damian.

Noel stood still until he couldn't see anymore.

Fortunately, the journey was safe as the Greenwood Kingdom had killed all the demons around them.

It only took them three hours to reach their destination. Since they left past midnight, the sun was about to rise when they were about to reach their destination.

Anna couldn't show herself even to the Greenwood Kingdom since her existence here was a secret. Meanwhile, Dimitri and Balott had reached the Greenwood Kingdom camp.

It wasn't a big camp, but it should have contained one to two hundred soldiers. And with Damian at the helm, it was going to be hard to defeat them.

"Who are you guys?" A scout suddenly found them and asked out loud while holding his sword.

Dimitri seemed to have sensed the scout and took out his badge. "I am Dimitri, the butler of the Ardagan Family. I'd like to request a meeting with your commander. It's fairly important."

"!!!" The scout widened his eyes for a moment. He obviously understood that they were here for the sake of the Ardagan Family. So, if the Ardagan Family visited them, they had been told to treat them as their highest level guests. And he had known Dimitri's name as he was one of the most important people in the family according to the report the second princess had sent. "I understand. Please wait for a moment; I will report to the commander immediately."

They followed the scout to the gate of the camp before the guy informed Damian. As expected of Damian, he was already awake a long time ago and was swinging his sword when the scout told him about Dimitri's visit.

It didn't take too long for Dimitri and Balott to reach Damian's tent. He was accompanied by a rather skinny man. His frame didn't look like a fighter, but his gaze kept examining them.

"May I know the reason for your visit this time, Dimitri?" Damian asked.

"The master is thinking about proposing something."

"Oh? I'm all ears." Damian nodded. He perfectly understood that Noel would be generous whenever he made a proposal. It wasn't that he was kind, but he simply didn't want to get the feeling that they owed them something.

"I believe you have heard about our water system from Princess Livia, right?"

The person next to Damian was the first to react. His eyes brightened. All the fuzziness in his eyes earlier had completely gone. "Do you mean the water system that is said to be able to provide the city with unlimited amounts of water without manual labor?"

"Indeed." Balott also stepped up. "That kind of water system. If you agree to our condition, then we don't mind selling this water system, including the runes involved within the system to you. As you already know, the introductory rune book might contain a lot of runes, but it's still very basic and lacks a lot of essential runes for the technology."

He thought for a moment and asked, "And your condition?"

Before Balott said something, Dimitri raised his hand, asking Balott to stop. He looked at Damian first as if confirming something.

Damian nodded his head, showing that they could trust the negotiator.

"We'd like you to accompany young lady Anna to that place," Dimitri stated.

"That place?!" It was vague, but Damian instantly understood which place Dimitri was talking about.  
"Again?"

"Yes. There is a matter that can only be resolved there. Unfortunately, none of the experts in the Ardagan Family can be moved, including me, right now. So, the condition is for you to accompany her there. If you accept it, we won't mind selling the water system."

"Well, she has become a powerful Grandmaster this time. But it's still extremely dangerous, considering there are only two of us." Damian contemplated hard. Even though he had experienced the journey, it was still something he didn't want to repeat.

However, Balott added, "You might not know about this, but the design has been improved further and will soon be perfected once the people working on it arrive. If I have to say, this system will allow every single building in the city to have access to unlimited amounts of water without needing to get out of the building."

"What?!" The man next to Damian couldn't contain his shock. "Did you tell us the truth?"

"What's wrong?" Damian asked.

"I'm researching the technology of the previous civilization as my side job. When I take a look at the prosperous town the previous civilization had, it's clear that they have a system that is capable of such a thing.

"Water is the city's lifeline, so having water in their house all the time will give a lot of benefits like hygiene, easy access to drinking water, and a lot of other things that can boost an establishment or shop. Either way, just by having water alone, you can improve the city drastically."

"I see..." Damian remembered that they mentioned the runes involved in it. The reason the Greenwood Kingdom provided him with a negotiator was not as simple as negotiating with them. This person had authority and knowledge about a lot of things, allowing them to agree on the spot. After all, they were aware that Noel might not be able to wait for them to wait for the royal family to reply to their request.

After contemplating for a moment, Damian asked, "What do you think about the proposal, Mr. Rex? If I were to accept it, would it benefit the kingdom?"

"Benefit the kingdom? I think you're underestimating the value of this water system. Right now, only their city has this kind of access, but if the royal family publicizes this method and applies it to all the cities in the kingdom, what do you think?"

Damian could see the impressive rate of progress in every corner of the kingdom. His contribution wouldn't go unnoticed.

After thinking for a while, Damian said, "I don't really mind accompanying her to that place, considering Earl Noel trusts me that much. However, it doesn't mean that it's going to be an easy journey. If you still think that only two of us are enough, then I will accept the agreement."

"Young lady Anna has become a powerful grandmaster. I'm sure you are also aware of her special ability. So, the master fully supports this notion." Dimitri assured him.

"If that's the case, I will accept the condition. When do we leave?"

"As soon as possible. The young lady is waiting a bit further to the north."

"Alright. Please give me half an hour to pack up my luggage. Mr. Rex, please take care of the rest of the negotiation."

The negotiator nodded his head, seeing that he would be discussing this matter with Balott since Dimitri had stood up as if he were about to leave.

Unbeknownst to them, the trip would become much safer than Noel predicted.

Anna, who had been waiting outside the camp, was waiting for Dimitri to bring the news, only to find that there was a strong presence coming in her direction.

Anna placed her hand on her blade, but soon noticed the familiar level of threat.

"Hmm?!" Anna politely bowed her head while saying, "Good morning, Aunt Leysha."

"Oh my. Your reaction is so fast I can't even surprise you." The same lady Anna encountered during her demon subjugation had once again appeared before her. She was none other than Noel's mother, Leysha Ezenholm.

"The fact that you are here is already a surprise. May I presume that there is another camp ahead?" Anna asked with a solemn tone, knowing that Noel's parents were still helping him in the shadows.

"Yeah. Once we knew that Dimitri visited the camp, he said 'If you want to help, then go. You have met her before, so meeting her twice shouldn't be much of a problem since it's not like she will go anywhere near the kingdom.' Do you want to go somewhere?" Leysha asked.

"That's..." Anna hesitated before saying, "I don't think I will answer that question when there is another pair of ears listening to our conversation." Her gaze was locked on the empty space on her left.

Nothing happened until Leysha said, "She got you good, huh, Silvester?"

"I apologize." That voice was followed by a snapping sound as the light started bending around him and a figure appeared out of nowhere. "My apology. I am Silvester, the former Pillar of Espionage of the Ardagan Family. I greet young lady Anna."

Anna couldn't help but furrow her eyebrows. She managed to find him because of her instinct. If she was a normal person, she wouldn't be able to find him at all. His strength barely reached Spirit Grandmaster, but the way he disappeared was so skillful. Not many could find him.

With him, Leysha, and one more person who was known to be the former captain of the Ardagan Family's garrison, their current power consisted of three Grandmasters and a handful of experts. Anna was quite impressed that they had this kind of power while hiding.

"I'm fine here, so please return for now." Leysha waved her hand.

"Understood." Silvester disappeared once again. This time, Anna felt the danger was moving away, so she finally stated, "I wish to go to the former territory of the Ardagan Family."

"The former territory? Are you talking about our Ardagan Family?"

"No, even older than that."

"!!!" Leysha was quite surprised that Anna knew about the location. Even if they wanted to explore it, they didn't know the location, so they had never set out. "Are you sure you know the location?"

"Noel and I had visited that place once, together with Damian and Dimitri." Anna confirmed it without hesitation. "Right now, Dimitri is talking with Damian to have him escort me there."

"Only both of you are going?"

"Yes. Unfortunately, Noel couldn't send anyone else due to the current situation. And it's not like we can take advantage of the Moon Temple for this, so only two of us will go."

Leysha thought for a moment before nodding her head. "Alright. In that case, the three of us will go. With me here, the journey will be much safer, right?"

"I can't deny it, but are you sure about this?"

"Yeah. I'm quite curious about the former territory as well. Luke still has Silvester and Raven, so he should be fine. He has given his permission too. As much as I want to just tell Silvester and Raven to follow us and ditch the Greenwood Kingdom, we can't do that at the moment. Silvester is still tracing the demons while Raven is building traps to intercept them."

Anna obviously didn't have any objection if such a strong person would accompany her. And both of them thought of another purpose for this trip.

Yes, both Anna and Leysha wanted to form a good bond with each other. Leysha wanted to know more about her future daughter-in-law while Anna wished to know Noel from Leysha.

While they were focusing on each other, Dimitri's voice suddenly echoed in their ears.

"Is that you..."

Both of them couldn't help but turn around, seeing Dimitri's shocked faces. Dimitri rarely showed his expression, so this was indeed a rare occurrence.

In the past, Leysha and Luke had told him to accompany their son and protect him, but they never told him where they would go or what their goal was.

So, it was a shock to be able to meet them again. After all, Luka and Leysha were the ones who changed his life. From the path that covered his hands with blood to the one that took care of others.

Dimitri just walked to Leysha before falling on one knee and saying, "I'm glad that you are in great health, Madam."

Chapter 952 Migration

Noel and Dimitri were looking at the people from the top of the building. In front of them were thousands of civilians that had just arrived from the east mountain.

Because of the previous mission, Dimitri and Balott had to wait another night before returning to the city. And by the time they returned, the migration had started.

"She is accompanied by Madam Leysha and Damian. I believe she will be safe during the whole journey. While my strength is above Madam Leysha, our gap isn't that big." Dimitri explained.



"I see..." Noel didn't seem to react when he mentioned his mother's name. Considering she had made her appearance in his territory, he had expected things like this. So, Noel just felt relieved that Anna was accompanied by two powerful grandmasters.

Even if Damian tried to do something to them, Leysha and Anna could combine their strength and defeat Damian. In fact, he was more worried that Damian would be uncomfortable accompanying the former lady and the future lady of the Ardagan Family.

"So, there are indeed a lot of people. It's going to be hard for you to assign them work." Noel couldn't help but squint his eyes, focusing back on the matter at hand.

The soldiers had created a barrier so that the people could enter through the gap to be easily inspected.

"Master. You said you wanted to inspect them and find the spies among them. How are you going to do it?"

"It's pretty simple. I, too, have a unique ability like Anna's instinct. Most people will definitely be neutral toward me or even hold a good opinion of me. However, the spies won't be able to hide their intention from my eyes." Noel smirked while putting on the Affection Medal.

In that instant, numerous system panels appeared in his vision. It would be hard to look at them all at once, so he created that barrier so that only a few people could enter at a time.

What they didn't know was that the barrier of soldiers had been devised in order to trick the people and the spies.

Noel made a gesture, asking Dimitri to follow him.

He built a small post to ask some basic questions. Of course, some soldiers had also prepared some rations outside to pacify the rest of the civilians.

"I am Aerton, one of the Elite Knights of the Ardagan Family." A knight stood up and shouted, gathering everyone's attention. "We'll be inspecting every single one of you before allowing you to enter the city.

Don't worry. It's just going to be a basic question like your name, age, and so on. We simply want to record your information for administration purposes. After that, just follow the soldiers."

Aerton paused for a moment before pointing at five people at the front. "You five go first."

The first five people entered. Two of them were young men, while the other three were middle-aged women.

Once they entered, they found five soldiers sitting next to each other. Each of them waved their hands to the people in front of them, asking, "Please come."

These people were nervous but still followed the instructions. The soldiers asked, "What is your name?"

The young man said, "I am Sigurd."

"How old are you?"

"I am 17 years old this year."

"What was your profession before coming to the city?"

"I helped my father on the farm."

"Last question, where do you come from?"

"I come from Levinie Village in the southwest."

The soldier nodded with a smile while handing him the paper containing his information. After that, he pointed at the two doors behind them and said, "Please go to the right door and hand the information to them. Someone will check your belongings just to ensure that you don't bring anything dangerous into the city."

The guy nodded his head. It wasn't that much different from the normal procedure in a big city.

Another soldier opened the door for him and stopped the others since they had to enter one at a time.

Of course, the women felt a bit skeptical as they knew that soldiers often took advantage of this opportunity to sexually harass them. However, the soldier who took care of the left door was a woman soldier.

She looked a bit weird, but the fact that there was a female soldier made it a bit reassuring.

"Please don't worry. We have female soldiers as well. They will check your luggage just to ensure that you don't bring anything dangerous inside. We won't sexually harass you or something." The female soldier smiled while opening the door wide. With a single peek, they could see a few female soldiers inside.

With this, the trust had been established and the people just got checked before entering the city.

"Next!" Aerton shouted.

The next five people entered the inspection room where they received the same question.

"What is your name, age, and previous profession? Lastly, where do you come from?" The soldier asked.

"August, 21 years old, a hunter. I come from Tusk City," A man answered the question eloquently as if he had gotten used to this.

"Got it. Please go to that door for inspection." The soldier handed the paper to August and allowed him inside.

There was nothing scary about these soldiers. But when he entered the room, someone hit the back of his neck, causing him to fall unconscious.

"Is this a spy?" Howard asked. He turned out to be the one who took down August with Noel's order. In fact, there was something different in August's identification paper. The first letter of his name had been underlined. Noel controlled his Spiritual Energy so that he could alarm the soldier and put a mark on the identification.

Once the soldiers noticed the mark, they would knock the person down.

Noel said, "It's hard to determine whose spies they were without any mark of identity in their bodies. But he should be from the Supreme Devil Organization."

"!!!" Howard hurriedly pointed at the man. "Strip him down."

Without hesitation, the soldiers pulled off the man's clothes and saw the organization's mark on his back. He truly came from the organization and since he still had a bold mark on his body, it was clear that he was just a low level spy.

"It's truly a spy." Howard and the soldiers gasped in disbelief.

"See?" Noel smiled. "I could see them, so while it's too much to ask, I hope that you can believe my signal."

Howard nodded. "Don't worry, my lord. If they are spies, we'll definitely not treat them lightly." He turned to the soldiers. "Bring him to jail. I will personally torture these spies once this is over."

The soldiers followed his instruction and cleaned up the place as quickly as possible before the next person came in.

Of course, Noel could find it. After all, the man had a unique affection for him.

Name: Sevren

Affection: Hatred (90/100)

Description: Hate you because you killed his comrades.

Noel had never poked any other nobles, so there was only one organization he had fought the whole time, the Supreme Devil Organization.

Noel had asked the soldiers to differentiate the people in four ways. The first one was a normal citizen. He didn't mark them in any way and just let them go through.

The second one was the underline like earlier, indicating that they were spies. The third one was a dot underneath their names, which indicated that they had lied about their names. The Affection didn't indicate that they were spies, but they still needed to be observed because they lied about their names.

The last one was a special profession like a ian, a powerful expert, and so on. This one could receive a mark depending on their affection as well.

This was Noel's way to stop the spies from entering the city. He didn't have any intention of letting them give any information for the time being.

After all, they couldn't lie to the system medal no matter how genius they were in hiding their emotions and feelings. Unless they brainwashed themselves, they couldn't pass.

However, this kind of process was very taxing. Even after the soldiers refined their method to make it faster, they still needed one minute for every single person.

Since they came five at a time, they could only allow three hundred people to enter per hour.

There were about two to three thousand people in the first batch. Including the time they needed to organize the people and the rest of the inspection, it ended up taking the entire day to finish the migration.

Of course, Noel had given the ration to people who were waiting for their turn. And when they entered, there was also food and water as well as the wonderfulness of this city.

Noel had asked Douglas to create some temporary settlement for these people right at the beginning of the construction.

So, they would at least have a roof on their heads once they entered.

Though, the people would have a hard time living together with the rest of the people. And Noel had asked Dimitri to gather special talents and workers in the first batch so that they wouldn't mind being treated as workers right away.

After a long day, Howard finally came to him to report on the result.

"We have a total of 2,891 people in the batch. 76 of them are spies. I will investigate and interrogate them personally. 210 of them have lied regarding their names, so they might have some hidden intention of entering the city. It's impossible to observe all of them, but we will be careful.

"Last but not least, there are about 89 people with special talents. Of course, the kids that you mentioned are among them. They have been guided to a different place if you'd like to meet them."

Noel couldn't help but smile. He had seen Erica and Eric leading the rest of the group inside. Unfortunately, he couldn't greet them just yet.

"I will meet them later. So, tell me about these special talents."

"Yes, sir. The special talents I'm talking about are high level people in their profession. There are a lot of advanced blacksmiths among them. It seems that Mr. Roel's influence as well as the enticement of Runes have brought them here."

"That's good. We need a lot of blacksmiths. Let Roel take care of them later."

"Understood. There are also twenty experts among them. Three of them are Spirit Masters with two of them being Spirit ians. We don't know their intention, but they are not lying about their identities.

"The rest of them vary from Spirit Practitioner to Spirit Wielders. There is also a former mercenary captain, whom I might recruit to help me organize soldiers.

"As for the rest, there are special cases like intelligent people. Douglas's acquaintance is among them. I believe that's all." Howard finished his reports after rechecking them a few more times.

"Let the soldiers cooperate with Dimitri and Charlotte to divide them according to their abilities. The men could work on the construction, the women could help with tailoring and cooking, and the kids could help with some lighter things. As much as I hate to say it, everyone has to contribute. The more they contribute, the higher the chances are for them to be able to live here.

"Don't forget to pay their wages. Since we have nothing right now, just tell them to save their wages. We'll provide them with all the necessities. As for those special talents, I will look at the details later and assign them according to their talents," Noel replied to the reports.

"Understood."

"Also, check the number of people that can be turned into soldiers. We need at least a few hundred normal soldiers if we want to defend ourselves. We'll get more soldiers in the second batch."

"Understood. I will make sure that we have enough soldiers to take care of the city."

"This is the most important thing. Don't mistreat them. The higher their opinion of this city, the better. They are going to be the image of the city and ensure the success of the next migration and everything beyond that."

"Yes, sir. The soldiers know their duty. If they take advantage of this situation, I will be the one to personally punish them."

"Good. Let's go on our way." Noel nodded while waving his hand. It seemed that he was pretty eager to meet the kids.

Chapter 953 Each Division

"We've finally arrived at this place." Eric smiled while looking at the buildings in the city.

"Yes. We can finally meet with Big Brother again." Erica nodded. "It's time for us to repay him for everything he has done."

"Agreed. But did you remember what that old lady... ahem, I mean, big sister Milfa said?" Eric asked.

"About this place becoming a city that no one has ever seen before?"

"Yeah."

"I'm not sure, but I think we'll be able to see it tomorrow. Anyway, let's sleep. The sooner we sleep, the faster the time passes. We can definitely meet Big Brother tomorrow. I hope."

As they were trying to return to their rooms, they suddenly heard a creaking sound coming from the door.

"!!!" Both Erica and Eric immediately looked at each other and sneakily moved around to find out who was actually bothering them.

But the moment they saw the figure standing at the entrance, they couldn't help but tear up and jump straight to him while screaming. "Big Brother!"

"W-woah? Easy, easy!" Noel chuckled while maintaining his balance as these two almost knocked him over. It had been a while since he had met them. In fact, it had been a few years since they first met. Noel still remembered how small they were. To think that their height was already around his chest. In just one or two more years, they might be as tall as him.



"Big Brother. I miss you!" Erica buried her face in Noel's stomach, sobbing.

"I miss you guys too." Noel patted Erica's head while turning to Eric. "Have you protected everyone, Eric?"

"Y-yes! I will definitely protect everyone." Eric furiously nodded.

It seemed that the kids had heard the commotion as well and immediately rushed to the entrance where they could meet Noel.

It was surprising that Eric and Erica had become Spirit Practitioners while the rest of the kids were in the Spirit Apprentice Stage. They must have worked extremely hard.

"I'm glad that you are all here." Noel smiled. It seemed that it would be a long night for Noel.

...

The next day.

"Raise your hand if you have experience in masonry," Aerton asked out loud. After finding a lot of people raising their hands, Aerton pointed to the side. "Those who raise their hands may go that way. There will be another person briefing you about your work. But I can say this for sure.

"You will be paid fairly. And because the city hasn't been completed yet, we'll provide all the food and water you need while paying you. So, work hard if you wish to become a citizen of this city."

The soldiers cooperated with Dimitri in assigning the tasks to the new people. Each division would get a few hundred people at once, so it was kind of hard to assign all of them at once.

However, once it was completed, the construction speed would increase drastically.

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Roel's workshop.

"Alright, you guys. I have only two rules here. First, we're working for the lord, so if I see you doing something that might harm the lord, I won't hesitate to punish you. Second, if you wish to learn the runes instead of the Spirit Enchantment, show me that I can trust you. Of course, you have to remain in this city for a few years. That's the lord's condition to avoid you releasing new technology outside."

Roel was glaring at the blacksmiths, who had just arrived. He knew that the main reason for them to come was the rune. And Noel didn't mind teaching them the runes, since he wanted to spread the runes to all kingdoms eventually.

However, this was their biggest advantage currently, so he had to play a bit more reservedly until the city was fully developed.

Roel would be taking care of the rune for now, but once he promoted a few people, the production of rune technology would increase.

"Alright. For now, I'm going to demonstrate a few items that will be crucial for both rune technologies and our current construction." Roel smiled as a few disciples brought a few tools into the workshop.

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Soldier Barrack.

Howard was examining the former mercenary leader who came to this place. His body was as muscular as Howard's, albeit he was slightly shorter.

"So, you are Genez, a former captain of the Leuvan Mercenary Group?"

"It is I." Genez nodded with a solemn expression.

"Why do you come here?"

"It's because I want to beat those Supreme Devil Organization bastards. My mercenary group was annihilated by them. And when I realized that you were targeted by those people, I thought about joining you so that I could fight them. Even if I have to serve a lord in my lifetime, as long as I can kill those pigs, then so be it."

Howard couldn't help but squint his eyes. On the one hand, their goal was aligned. On the other hand, he didn't like the fact that his lord was in second position in his eyes.

"As a fighter, I could see that you are strong. However, as a retainer, I can't say that you're going to make a good subordinate." Howard raised two fingers and continued, "Instead of talking about your loyalty, which I can't determine right now. It's better I state these two facts."

Genez didn't have any change of expression, knowing that Howard wouldn't like him. But it didn't matter as long as he could avenge his group.

"First, the lord is aiming to eradicate the entire organization. Second, you will become my subordinate. In other words, the lord will make a decision he thinks is best in that situation even if it means not killing those members right away. If you disobey the lord or your hatred takes over, I will not hesitate to cut you down immediately. Do you understand?"

Howard wanted him to know the end goal. And there was a chance that Genez couldn't kill those people and had to bury his hatred for a while before he could achieve his revenge. If he couldn't agree to this, he would be executed.

Genez clenched his fists. "If I truly can't control my anger, you are free to cut me or whatever you need to do. As long as I can see those bastards perish, even if I have to kill myself, I will do it."

"Alright. I, Howard, welcome you to the Ardagan Family Garrison."

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Ardagan Family's Main Office.

"Oh my, this is going to be troublesome." Harley looked at the pile of paper on the table. "Why do I need to help you when I'm in charge of our information network, Balott?"

"You are the most experienced in handling money because of your establishment. I'm currently short staffed to take care of all these funds." Balott sighed. "Why don't you help me since you're free?"

"Come on. I'm busy establishing my own brothel here. There are a lot of people, so I'm sure that they are going to be tired and stressed." Harley shook his head.

"If you're not going to help me, you're going to open your own coffer from this point onward."

"You always threaten me like this." Harley let out a long sigh. "Fine. I will help you, but only after everything settles down. You have to do the rest by yourself."

"I know. I'm going to recruit some more people later."

...

In another building, Livia and Tristan were drawing a rune on the table. It was then that Sandra entered the room, bringing them tea. "Please have some rest."

"Oh! Sandra." Tristan smiled. "Thank you for doing this all the time..."

"You have been sitting here for a long time. Aren't you curious about the new people we get?"

"I do, but Master is working extremely hard, so I should do the same. The more I improve my rune ability, the more he will rely on me. Besides, I want to learn more about Rune Enchantment, Rune Engineering, Rune Body, and Rune Spell so that I can help Master." Tristan smiled. "Sorry, just for a bit more."

"Fine. You are useless without me. I'm going to drag you when I deem that you're too tired."

"Hehe."

When Sandra left, Livia couldn't help but tease, "What a cute girlfriend you have."

Tristan's body shook as he looked away, embarrassed. "Don't tease me."

Livia chuckled. "By the way, Tristan. Are you planning to teach at the Rune Academy?"

"Hmm? I'm not sure. I'm thinking about assisting Master, but if Master wants me to teach there, I don't mind. It's just that I heard that the Rune Academy will be filled with a lot of nobles. I'm just afraid that my status is too low for it."

"You always have low self-esteem. In fact, your talent in rune is better than mine. If you get more Spiritual Energy to use, I believe that your achievement will be more extraordinary than that of a lot of nobles. I just hope that you can regard yourself a bit more without forgetting about your humility."

"Thank you."

...

Noel's house.

Just like the others, Noel was also meeting the people, specifically his talented people.

There were three people who needed to meet him. The first one was Douglas's acquaintance.

"You are Alan, right?"

"Yes, Sir."

Noel took out the blueprints of the water system and asked, "What do you think about this?"

"This is..." Alan took a look at the blueprints in amusement. But it didn't take too long for him to notice something was missing in the blueprints. "Where is the number? What is the height of this one? What is the length of this rod? But..."

Despite missing the number, he was mesmerized with the concept and asked, "Are you planning to build this, Sir?"

"Something like that. Do you think it's possible?"

"We have to measure the pipe's size to make it work and adjust the height of the storage while watching out for the water pressure. But if you can actually get a constant supply of water constantly, then yes. It's possible."

Noel smiled. "What if I allow you to work on that project?"

"What? Me?!" Alan widened his eyes in shock. Although he had heard from his friend that there were a bunch of interesting projects, he didn't think that Noel would be this kind to grant him one immediately. "I-I would be delighted."

Noel could see that Alan's affection only increased slightly. He stood up and extended his hand. "I don't expect you to be loyal to me. However, I have long heard about your ambition and desire to create something that doesn't exist. In that case, lend me your hand in building this city. I will show you a city that has never existed before."

"I-I am honored." Alan hurriedly shook Noel's hand, still feeling a bit overwhelmed.

"Ask the soldier to bring you to Douglas and Roel to ask about the details. They should have a copy of blueprints for our projects, so ask them which one you should work for."

"Yes." Alan nodded furiously. He didn't know what to say anymore since he had just arrived and received such a huge task.

After Alan, Noel brought in the two Spirit ians. He confirmed their strength to be at Spirit Master.

According to Anna, he would have a Spirit ian at grandmaster level in the future. Considering there were two Spirit ians at master level before him, he thought that one of them might become one of the grandmasters in his city.

The first Spirit ian was a middle-aged man. Despite his thin frame, his gaze was calm and felt like it was filled with wisdom.

The second Spirit ian was a woman in her mid twenties. It was amazing that she managed to reach that level at that age. However, there was one thing that piqued his interest. Even though the Spirit ian loved to wear robes, this was the first time he saw a Spirit ian wearing an oversized robe as though she were trying to hide something.

"You both come from the Tower Association, right? In that case, I'd like to hear the reason why you came here."

Chapter 954 A New Retainer

The middle-aged ian stepped up first. "You have visited El-Alanca at least once, right, my lord?"

"Indeed." Noel nodded, remembering the time he visited the academy with Rose.

"I am one of the professors at the El-Alanca Academy. And it seems that one of my students has become your guide for a while."

"One of your students?" Noel recalled two people who had become his guides. So, he didn't know which one was his student.

"Yes. He goes by the name Sharkan. After his meeting with you, he asked me about the origin of the spirits. Does every single person have a spirit in their body? If that is the case, won't the world feel like it's fair to everyone but unfair because we're limited by the conversion rate?"

Noel maintained his poker face, but he indeed had this name. He was the one suggesting that the spirits lived in everyone, but most of them couldn't awaken them.

"But why would you be the one telling me this?" Noel frowned. If he remembered it correctly, Sharkan should have asked him to use this topic as his thesis, meaning that this teacher might be trying to use it for his own purpose.

That was when the middle-aged man took out a small book from the handbag, handing it to Noel.

Title: Spirit Manifestation Theory

Author: Sharkan, Dr. Gran

Inspired by: Noel Ardagan

"Hmm?" Noel opened the book. And the opening of the book instantly made him understand the entire thing.

'The Spirit Manifestation Theory introduces the concept of the fairness of the spirits residing in everyone's body, but also the unfairness of one's talent in awakening it. This work is inspired by Noel Ardagan.'



'Dr. Gran' in the book was none other than the man before him.

Noel couldn't help but ask, "Where is he?"

"He is currently handling his graduation ceremony. And since my job there was done, I took the opportunity to see the man who proposed such a wonderful idea. He said he wanted to meet you once he graduated."

"Hmm..." Noel examined his face and found no lies. Even the Affection Medal gave him similar information.

Name: Gran

Affection: Admiration (60/100)

Description: Hold dear admiration for your contribution.

"So, Mr. Gran. Why do you visit this place? Since you came through the migration route, you should have agreed that you can't leave this place for a while, right?"

"Of course," Gran confirmed without hesitation. "There is no healer who doesn't learn about injuries and sickness. There is no antidote without knowledge about poison. I believe in this principle, and this is also the reason for my visit. You, who have created runes in order for normal people to fight without a spirit, should be a perfect inspiration for my works."

Noel squinted his eyes. On the one hand, he didn't like that he wanted to take advantage of him. On the other hand, this Gran was quite useful, especially for the mission Ardagan had.

[Mission: Helping Heisk advance to Humanoid Rank]

[Description: Get a lot of materials that could be used to improve Heisk's ice power.]

[Reward: Spirit Information Part 2]

[Penalty: None.]

In the second mission, he gained knowledge about the fact that the True Spirit Body was either the spirit reaching its peak or they needed to be granted that power by the Spirit God.

And with how Ardagan planned to tell him more about the spirits, he was certain that he could get the third part.

This Spirit ian, who was researching spirits, would allow him to peek and even trigger a mission, which resulted in more information about spirits.

Noel weighed the pros and cons. If he let him stay here, he could also inform Sharkan to bring more Spirit ians in the second batch of migration. This way, he would get a squad of Spirit ians that would be able to alleviate a lot of burden from the soldiers' shoulders.

With that thought in mind, Noel said with a disappointed tone, "Still, I have to know what you want from me and what you can do for me. After all, you've only stated your desire, and it doesn't look like it's going to benefit my territory."

"I know, sir. That's why I came up with a proposal. While I admit that I'm not reliable enough as a combatant, I'm still a Spirit Master. I can help the soldiers with my firepower. Additionally, I can provide some lessons to people whether it's basic knowledge or anything. I am a teacher after all."

"You don't have any interest in runes?"

"While I do have some interest in it, I don't have any plans to switch my research subject. I will probably ask some questions about runes if it actually benefits my research." He paused for a moment. "I hope that Lord Earl will be kind enough to answer a few of my questions once in a while. You don't have to aid my research since it's not that expensive."

Noel contemplated for a minute before raising three fingers. "I have one question, one condition, and two warnings."

"Please." He understood that Noel would be wary of him.

"Since you're researching Spirit, you should know about Spiritual Energy, right?"

"Indeed. After all, Spiritual Energy appears together with the demons and spirits."

"I want you to help me with my own research for rune technology. Of course, you'll be paid accordingly. You may use it as funds for your own research."

"I don't have any problem with it." The Spirit ian nodded without hesitation.

"Then I have to warn you. Everything in this city is still a secret. If I see you spreading information, I'm going to cut you down even if it means offending the Tower Association. Second, I won't have too much time to spare."

"You are the lord of Lounstein, so I understand you have to do everything to protect your territory. You are also the creator of the Rune, so I don't mind waiting as long as I can get my answers eventually."

"Alright." Noel finally agreed to accept him. "For now, I will assign you to a small house. You can use it as your research building as well."

"Thank you very much, Sir." Gran politely bowed his head. While he didn't become Noel's retainer, he still considered Noel his superior.

After that, Noel turned to the female ian and asked, "So, may I know your reason, Miss?"

The female ian looked at Noel with an emotionless face before saying, "I don't want to be looked down upon by other Spirit ians."

Noel tilted his head in confusion. "Sorry? I don't understand."

"Ah, Sir. You may not know her, but she is quite popular among the Spirit ians in the Tower Association. She is known as an eccentric battle specialist among the Spirit ians... More importantly, she is..." Gran was hesitant and even stopped when the gaze coming from the woman was filled with murderous intent.

"It's because of this, alright?!" She suddenly raised her arm, revealing everything underneath the robe.

There were numerous bottles hanging from her clothes. Those bottles varied in size and shape, but because they were made of glass, Noel could clearly see that the bottles were actually empty.

'No, it's not empty. Spiritual Energy?' Noel frowned. "May I know what they are?"

"My Spirit is called Spiritual Wisp. Basically, it's a spirit that can accumulate Spiritual Energy and utilize it in its original shape. It's like the Hard and Soft Approach, but on a larger scale.

"I once aspired to become a powerful Spirit ian that could fight with a wonderful element, but I ended up with this spirit. Of course, I'm grateful that I have a spirit in my body, so I try to become a Spirit ian despite my condition.

"However, my Spiritual Energy doesn't contain elements, which makes other Spirit ians best me since their elements end up affecting my pure energy. It's like I'm simply amplifying their power.

"That's why when I learn about the Runes, I research it to the best of my ability and notice something. The runes are incompatible with elements. It's not that they can't fuse, but the runes have made the pure Spiritual Energy count as an element... a Void Element.

"There is a difference between pure Spiritual Energy and this new Void Element. Pure Spiritual Energy has elements within it, so spark it and you will get a blaze. On the other hand, the rune produced a Void Element, which is a Spiritual Energy that has no elements within it. Even if you torch it, the Spiritual Energy won't flare up. I believe that this is what I need to fight those Spirit ians."

She explained everything she had found as that was the reason she came to Noel. She lowered her head and asked out loud, "Please take me as your disciple. I wish to learn to be the best."

Noel was quite surprised that there was a spirit like that. But when he thought about it, this woman might be more knowledgeable about Spiritual Energy than Gran.

At the same time, he didn't think he could take her as his disciple. It wasn't that she didn't have talent in runes, it was just that her talent was much more focused on the Spiritual Energy, not the Rune itself.

Noel asked, "Since you have researched the runes, can you demonstrate the runes?"

She nodded while raising her hand, trying to form a rune. But as Noel expected, she only managed to form most parts of the rune but was unable to complete it, causing the rune to disappear.

Even though she never learned from him, it didn't change the fact that she was an established Spirit ian at the level of a Master. Her control and strength should surpass those of Tristan and others.

Hence, a few months should be enough for her to at least form one simple rune.

The fact that she couldn't do it showed her affinity with the runes, which made him unable to accept her as his disciple.

Noel asked, "In that case, what can you do with those bottles?"

"This..." She scratched the back of her head. "I can't demonstrate it here."

"Why?"

"It's because once I use these bottles, it will cause massive destruction."

Noel then walked to the window and opened it. "In that case, can you demonstrate it outside?"

"But will it become a problem if I destroy it?"

"It's fine as long as it doesn't destroy the building."

"In that case, I will set up a barrier with my Spiritual Energy once I throw this." She nodded her head and walked to the window.

Noel didn't understand what she meant, but the moment she threw a round bottle, she hurriedly concentrated her Spiritual Energy to protect the building.

As soon as the bottle shattered due to the collision with the ground, the stable Spiritual Energy expanded rapidly, causing a powerful blast.

Boom!

The building shook for a split second as Noel formed a Spiritual Barrier Rune out of reflex, feeling the true impact of the explosion.

Noel couldn't help but widen his eyes in amusement. He seemed to have underestimated this Spirit ian.

"What happened?!" Dimitri suddenly slammed open the door, worried about Noel.

"Oh! We're just testing something. Please tell anyone that we aren't in trouble." Noel made a wry smile, apologetic since he didn't want anyone first.

"Master. Please don't do that to me." Dimitri sighed and left.

Before saying anything to her, Noel turned to Gran, saying, "Sorry, but can you leave us alone?"

"Yes, Sir." Gran hurriedly left the room. It seemed that she had piqued the lord's interest.

Noel said, "Honestly, you don't have a high aptitude for runes. Your talent lies in Spiritual Energy, not the rune itself."

Her body shook as if she had expected this reply from Noel, but she was still determined to get stronger.

"However, I have a way that will allow you to fight with runes without learning them directly. In fact, your talent for Spiritual Energy far exceeds that of most people, and you might be able to overpower those who have mastered the runes with this method.

"Though, it's not something known to the public and it's not like I can disclose it to outsiders." Noel smiled as if implying something.

She was smart enough to notice the hint and hurriedly fell on one knee. "If Sir... I mean, if my lord will be kind enough to accept me. I, Felicia, would like to offer my loyalty to you."

This was another path that Noel offered. He wanted her to be his retainer. Although Anna never disclosed the identity of the grandmaster level Spirit ian, he knew this would be her. Even if she wasn't the person Anna mentioned, Noel didn't mind training her to become one.

"Still, as a Spirit ian, I need to ask you to help with the rune research. Your knowledge of Spiritual Energy will benefit us very much. In the meantime, I will also arrange your training in wielding runes."

"Of course. As your subordinate, I shall dedicate my energy to your greatness."

"In that case, I'm counting on you, Felicia."

"Yes, my lord."

Both of them got the benefits. Noel anticipated Felicia's future and Felicia didn't want to waste his kindness.

Though, that moving moment couldn't help but get interrupted by Noel's question. "Why do you bring that dangerous stuff here by the way? What if they blow up here?"

"...My apologies."

Chapter 955 Insight

"By the way, what do you think about this?" Noel produced two runes on his hands. The right produced an Enhance Forward Rune, moving the chair forward. The left hand created a Rune Sword, forming a sword made of Spiritual Energy.

These runes should have a different concept, so he wanted to know what Felicia thought about these runes.

"This is..." Felicia widened her eyes. Her gaze was glued to the sword, which seemed to contain the 'Void Element' she was talking about.

Noel had to agree with the 'Void Element' concept, considering the rune ability couldn't be affected by elements. However, he still didn't know whether the Enhance Forward had the same Void Element or not.

After examining the Rune Sword, Felicia moved to the Enhance Forward Rune. Noel might not notice it, but there was nothing different in this rune.

"If you're asking me about Spiritual Energy, then I don't think there is anything different. Both of them have a Void Element." Felicia replied with a serious expression. "This sword is pretty obvious. While the other rune is a bit hard to see, there is indeed a thin layer of Spiritual Energy that pushed the item forward."

"Hmm?" Noel had never thought about this before. When he used the Enhance Forward Rune, would it actually create a thin layer of energy on his back that pushed him forward, or would it envelop his entire body?



He indeed mastered the rune through the system, but he didn't learn this concept. Even the Void Element was a new term that Felicia had created to match the rune's ability.

Noel asked, "Can you sense the Spiritual Energy?"

"Thanks to my Spirit, not only can I sense it, but I can directly see the Spiritual Energy."

"What does my Enhance Forward Rune do?"

"It's..." Felicia paused for a moment. "The Spiritual Energy seems to be enveloping the entire chair, pushing it forward. This way, the chair is able to move without changing its balance. But if you apply a different force..."

Felicia suddenly pushed the chair's top rail backward. As she expected, the chair's balance slightly tipped upward, causing the Enhance Forward Rune to slightly elevate the chair instead of moving it forward.

Felicia didn't realize it, but this was also the concept that Noel used for his floating plate that Anna usually used to fly around.

He never had any explanation earlier, but Felicia actually managed to see through the concept and even provided a clear detail.

It seemed that it wasn't a mistake to make Felicia his retainer.

When Noel thought about this, he pulled the chair back and cut everything except for the seat, creating a small plate where Felicia could stand.

He then said, "Since I promise to allow you to fight with runes, I will show you what I promise. How about standing on top of this?"

Felicia didn't understand what he was talking about, but she still followed his direction and stood on top of the seat. Noel then used the Floating Rune to elevate her a few centimeters above the floor.

"This is..." Felicia spread her arms to maintain her balance.

Seeing Felicia was ready, Noel activated the Enhance Forward Rune to propel the seat forward.

"Woah!" Felicia almost tripped right away, but she managed to hold it for one second before her left foot stepped slightly stronger than the other, causing the plate to curve upward.

She slipped off the board and fell to the ground. "Ouch!"

Instead of the pain on her butt, the first thing she thought about was what the rune could do. "My lord... Correct me if I'm wrong. Does this plate fly?"

"It seems that you understand it." Noel smiled. "I'm planning to create a board that can fly. It looks like you are surfing in the air. This will allow you to be able to fly in the sky, right?"

"But the speed..."

"It can go pretty fast. And since the rune is embedded in it, you just have to control how much Spiritual Energy you pour into the rune to get the speed you want. The first thing I imagined when seeing your power was you flying in the air with this and throwing that bottle at the demons, blowing them up from the sky."

Felicia sucked a cold breath. She had never thought about this before. Due to the nature of her power, she was never able to fly. In fact, most people couldn't.

Yet, the rune made this a possibility. "There are so many things you can make. In fact, you can create a flying carriage!"

"Flying carriage?" Noel tilted his head in confusion.

"Yes, Sir. I thought that you could create something like a boat and use the rune to let it fly. You mentioned that the speed was determined by the amount of Spiritual Energy poured into the rune, so I believe weight, height, and other things are also determined by Spiritual Energy.

"I believe it would cost a lot of energy, but if you think about it, a carriage in the sky would definitely be fantastic for a lot of things. First of all, you wouldn't be harmed by bandits or low level demons. Even if you do, you can reinforce the carriage like the city walls. And maybe you can even create a small mobile fortress that is able to bombard the enemy."

Listening to Felicia's explanation widened Noel's perspective. He thought about using the small board to let his soldiers fly so that they could bring news like the bird message or even a special flying squad.

But Felicia actually went one step further and thought about a flying carriage.

When he thought about it, he couldn't help but smell money. Yes, the development and the cost would be extremely high.

But there were going to be a lot of people who wanted to experience it, especially nobles. They would pay a huge price to experience such a thing.

When he thought about it, Noel posed a concern. "Still, this is going to be dangerous. What if it's taken down in one way or another? If it's a fortress, once taken down, it will be destroyed by the demons and all the people will be killed."

"That's..." Felicia thought for a moment. "I am not sure about it. Maybe create an armor for it."

"What do you mean?" Noel frowned.

"If I'm not wrong about the Spirit Enchantment, the Rune System should be able to embed the same rune on armor, right? If the board is taken down, this armor will be activated. And everyone should move back to the city. While it's true that the platform will be crushed, the humans will be saved.

"Of course, there is also a chance that you will be shot down while flying back, but this is also part of the risk. You can't simply save everyone, especially with the current level of technology. Though, if you use armor, you might need to strap their bodies so that the armor is not the only thing that moves forward."

"Interesting." Noel thought for a moment. Felicia seemed to be knowledgeable about weird technology. But considering she was affiliated with the Tower Association in the past, she should have seen the weird technology that the association tried to replicate.

The boards that the soldiers would use weren't going to be that expensive since their only purpose was to fly. The expensive ones were the soldiers who used it. If the soldiers only needed to abandon the board and fly back, it would certainly reduce the casualties.

For the time being, he might only be able to let a soldier at the Spirit Practitioner or Wielder stage use it since, lower than that, they had to resort to the Demon Crystals and had a higher chance of dying in the process.

"Your insight is quite helpful." Noel nodded. "As a reward, I will show you another way to fight."

Felicia watched Noel closely, wondering what kind of wonderful thing Noel planned to do.

To her surprise, Noel started unbuttoning his shirt.

Felicia dropped her jaw as she hurriedly covered her eyes and said embarrassedly, "My lord. Although I agree to be your retainer, I haven't thought about being your mistress."

"What are you talking about?" Noel shook his head helplessly. "Look at this."

"Huh?" Felicia opened the gap between her fingers to take a peek at Noel's body, noticing the drawing on his body. She subconsciously put down her hand and asked, "Is that... rune?"

"Yes. Armor is not the only one that can be embedded with runes. Your body too. Though, because of the Spirit Seal, it requires a different way to draw a rune like this." Noel activated the Energy Gathering Rune on his body, causing the Spiritual Energy inside the room to gather around him.

Felicia trembled as she couldn't help but think, 'This is just the first time we've met. While I have become his retainer, I never thought that the lord would be this open to revealing his secret. He doesn't seem to be a fool, so is it because he trusts me? Or is there anything else?'

Noel obviously saw the increase in Felicia's loyalty. At the very least, Noel showed that he trusted her enough to show something that the public had yet to know.

Name: Felicia

Affection: Loyal (67/100)

Description: Dedicate her energy to you.

The system used 'energy' instead of 'life' to show that she still wasn't loyal enough to lay down her life for him. But Noel never expected someone to be like that after the first meeting.

Noel showed this to test Felicia's loyalty. Her knowledge might be useful, but if he couldn't possess it, it would just be a weapon that would be used against him.

But since her loyalty could be increased this way, he knew how to treat her in the future.

Noel put on his clothes while saying, "I told you earlier. Give me your loyalty and dedicate yourself to the Ardagan Family, and I will fulfill your wish. I want to show you that I can fulfill your wish."

Just like the soldiers, Felicia had to contribute to the Ardagan Family if she wanted this rune. Only by helping the family would she be able to fulfill her dream.

Felicia lowered her head and said, "I apologize for my action earlier. I have understood my part. So, what should I do now, my lord?"

Noel noticed that Felicia's loyalty increased again and finally reached 70 points. He said, "You are to help Roel and Douglas in their project. Your insight regarding Spiritual Energy will be useful there. And since you have become my retainer..."

Noel took out a badge of the Ardagan Family and tossed it to her. "This is your identification. Show it to Dimitri and he will direct you to your own place. Bring all your luggage there first before learning the projects from those two."

"Understood, my lord. If there isn't anything else, please excuse me." Felicia looked excited as if she wanted to acquire this power as quickly as possible.

Noel knew that Felicia's loyalty could decrease as quickly as it increased, but he also wanted Felicia to love this city with all the new inventions. When she became attached to the city, her loyalty would definitely remain at a certain level.

'When that happens, I think it's not bad to make her one of the pillars.' That was right. There was one more status that Felicia could get in the Ardagan Family. It was the last pillar that Noel wanted in the family, the Pillar of Research and Development.

Although Felicia's talent in rune was low, her insight regarding Spiritual Energy and how to utilize it was extremely high. She would be suitable as the leader and manage all the developments in the team.

Still, Noel had to make sure of her loyalty first. He didn't want to give the pillar status to someone who could easily be swayed.

'Well, things are going to get interesting from here on.'

Chapter 956 All Influences

"How is the progress?" Qiel asked while walking to Laufey on top of a cliff.

"The progress is steady. I have brought at least 30 thousand demons with at least 4 Superior Demons."

"4 Superior Demons? That's quite big, but it's not enough." Qiel frowned, slightly worried.

"We still have more than two months, so I should be able to bring more. I'm not sure how many Superior Demons I can get, but that swarm should be enough to destroy multiple cities." Laufey nodded. "Once it's done, I'm going to destroy the city and get anything they've left behind, especially the secret of the Ardagan Family."

"Don't underestimate him. We have lost against him multiple times in the past."

"I know." Laufey nodded with a grim expression. He had suffered a lot of ridicule after that defeat, so he obviously didn't want to do this half-heartedly. "So, how is the situation over there?"

"All our spies have died. The Rune City is hard to penetrate due to the Sword Arbiter. However, the first Rune City should be quite amazing, considering our agents said he had a carriage that could move without a horse."

"Hoh?" Laufey squinted his eyes. "Is it possible for him to create a weapon?"

"Most likely. After all, he has a Master Blacksmith with him."

"Their strength?"

"I am not sure. The last time we spotted him was when he went back to the city with the Moon Temple's Saintess and a single paladin. According to our agents, it seems to be Aurelia."

"Moon Temple... I guess we can't attack them." Laufey looked at Qiel with a worried expression.

"Yeah. Our action this time will definitely garner the attention of all kingdoms. The fact that we can manipulate a demon army of this size means we can threaten their kingdom. If we kill the Moon Temple's Saintess after defeating the Ardagan Family, those royal bastards in the Greenwood Kingdom would rally all other kingdoms to subjugate us. That's why we can't harm the Moon Temple to buy more time to assemble more power."

"Since we don't know the condition in their main city, how many demons do you think we need?"

"I am not very sure. Right now, the Ardagan Family has four Grandmasters. The top powerhouse is still Dimitri, but Noel and Anna are extremely powerful. Sending a few ordinary grandmasters would be useless. Howard's strength might not be high, but he was the vice captain of the former Ardagan Family. His commanding ability far surpasses his combat ability.

"Also, they have Saintess Layla and Aurelia. Aurelia is known for her overwhelming ability, so killing two Superior Demons by herself might be possible, especially with Layla taking care of her protection. Layla is enough to stop a few Superior Demons with her barrier. And it's most likely that she will cover the entire city with the barrier, leaving only the already-built wall to counter our attacks."

"The Demon Banner Army?" Laufey frowned.

"I expect them to give some help. I'm planning to have Alexander make them busy. While we can stop a lot of captains and Oscar, they will definitely send one or two captains to help Noel."

"In that case, they have a total of eight grandmasters. But Noel and Anna are severely injured, right?"

"Don't underestimate them. Even with that kind of injury, they should have no problem killing one or two Superior Demons together. Besides, do you think that's the only connection he has?"

"What do you mean?"

"I am talking about the Tower Association or maybe other external allies that the former Ardagan Family has."

"Oh? So, we need more demons than this."

"Yeah. Still, I'm more concerned about the force outside the border."

"Huh? What do you mean?"



"Have you forgotten about another special person in that city?"

"...Greenwood Kingdom's second princess?"

"Yeah. I'm not sure about their size, but there should be more than one thousand soldiers and the vice captain of the Royal Army."

"Are you serious? If he is there, then the army he leads should be the royal army. Those soldiers are troublesome. Even if they only have one thousand, they can easily kill five thousand demons."

"That's why I want you to get at least eighty thousand demons with at least 15 Superior Demons... That's just to attack the city. We need another two Superior Demons and twenty thousand demons to stop the outside force. You and I will also be in the army that attacks the city." Qiel thought for a moment. "I'm thinking about adding two more people to the rank of the Devil Saint in order to win this battle."

"Two more people? Then, the four of us will attack them alongside the demons."

"Yeah. Unfortunately, the rest of the grandmasters have to be by Alexander's side to stop Oscar and the Demon Banner Army."

Laufey thought for a moment. "The Saintess's ability... how long can it last if we are the ones attacking it?"

"If I have to estimate, she shouldn't have a problem keeping that barrier up for a day. And Noel should use that time to eliminate the Superior Demons and us on that first day to relieve the burden on her barrier."

"Alright. I will prepare for an army of that size. You should take care of the rest of the preparation."

"I know." Qiel started walking away, but she remembered one thing and stopped. "Laufey."

"Huh?"

"Remember that if we fail to defeat them even with this, we will be the laughing stock of the entire kingdom. The Greenwood Kingdom will most likely attack us outside the border... especially the people from the Ezenholm Family."

"I know. If that city is fully developed, we might need at least a few hundred thousand demons to destroy it, but right now, it's only partly built. I will simply gather as many demons as I can."

...

Demon Banner Army.

"It seems that the Supreme Devil Organization has begun to move." Oscar said while reading the paper in his hand.

"What's wrong?" Milfa asked while furrowing her eyebrows.

Oscar gave the paper to her.

Milfa began to be concerned the moment she read the letter. "The Third Prince is forbidding you to help Noel."

Oscar remained silent, but he still looked concerned.

Milfa squinted her eyes and slammed the table. "Commander. Are you going to follow this? Do you remember what I said back then? Even if you are the commander, you are going to prioritize the Demon Banner Army, not your affiliation, right?"

Oscar nodded his head. "Of course, I remember."

"Then..."

Oscar still shook his head. "I am not going to move. I'm sorry, Milfa."

"You..." Milfa gritted her teeth as if ready to fight it out with the commander.

"I am not going to move, but if my captains just disobey my words, I can't really do anything about it. Demoting my captains in times like this? That's the most foolish decision I could ever make."

"!!!" Milfa widened her eyes in shock. "Are you serious?"

He nodded. "I will stop Alexander."

"Alright. I will bring Clara with me, since she is good at things like this and has worked with Noel previously."

"There is one more person you need to bring." Oscar took out a letter and handed it to her. It felt like he had prepared for this situation the whole time.

When Milfa opened the letter, she understood why Oscar didn't plan to move.

"Alright. That's enough." Milfa nodded.

"Don't rush there immediately. In the end, he is keeping his weapons secret, so if you go right away, the progress might become slower because he has to hide a few things no matter how he can trust you and the others."

"I know. I will ask Septa to give me the perfect time."

"Alright." Oscar nodded. Seeing Milfa leave, Oscar couldn't help but say, "The enemies are going to be something we've never seen before. May fortune be with you, Milfa."

Milfa abruptly stopped. Oscar's expression had shown her that he was restricted but still wanted the best for the Demon Banner Army and the future of the kingdom. Milfa knew that she shouldn't hold any grudges about his decision and politely bowed to him. "You, too, commander. May fortune bless you with its presence."

...

Silica Valley.

"Oh my. To think that he is truly asking me for help." The Water Lord looked at the letter with a smile. "This is quite interesting."

"Is it Noel Ardagan, Master?" A middle-aged man asked. He had become his personal butler after the incident.

"Yeah. It seems that the enemies are stronger than expected... Do you think I should help?"

"Considering our history and how you are praising him, I do think we should help. The Supreme Devil Organization had once attacked this place as well."

"That's true. My life is quite pricey after all... I guess this should be enough to repay him for saving my life from those evil creatures." The Water Lord smirked. "I'm going to go."

...

Muivell Royal Family.

"How is the situation over there?" The king asked.

"The situation is not looking good. We have suppressed a few noble families, but their desire to get a portion of what Noel has is quite strong. And Marquis Stargaze mobilizes all his force to suppress the Arbiters."

"The Void Arbiter?"

"We can send her, but it's going to be troublesome if the Sword Arbiter knows about this."

"Evan..." The king gritted his teeth. "How is the situation on the other side?"

"The Greenwood Kingdom won't dare pass the border. And there doesn't seem to be any movement from them yet. As for the Zaecuria Kingdom, we're afraid we can't stall them any longer. They should arrive within two weeks."

"Atracaeca Kingdom?"

"We are unsure about their condition. It seems they are split. Some of them want to mend the relationship with Noel Ardagan to learn runes. Some want the Supreme Devil Organization to succeed. But the majority is abstaining as of now. They know that if Noel somehow defends his territory, it's going to be extremely hard to destroy his city from that point on."

"Just leave the Zaecuria Kingdom alone. It's impossible to stall them completely. As for the Atracaeca Kingdom, try to incite their hatred so that more people support the destruction of the Ardagan Family. As for the Greenwood Kingdom..." The king covered his eyes.

He seemed to have a headache thinking about it. After all, the Greenwood Kingdom had sent them a letter stating that their princess was in the Ardagan Family. And Noel was also considered a part of the Royal Family as the blood of the Greenwood Kingdom's ancestor ran in his veins.

"Make sure to stop the Greenwood Kingdom no matter what."

Each influence in the kingdom had been anticipating this battle. They wanted to know whether the Ardagan Family could survive or not. Unlike the Stargaze Family, who sent their daughter to marry Noel Ardagan, they couldn't do much after all.

And Duke Lorelei had stolen the lead by directly going to Noel's territory and protecting the second city of Lounstein.

However, none of them had yet to realize that there were two more people who could change the tide of the war. The first was none other than the force that used the Greenwood Kingdom as a cover to hide their presence, the former Ardagan Family.

As for the second one, he was an elderly man. Despite his age, his body and face were still exuding youthful energy. He had short white hair and a long white beard. Each of his fingers had a ring that had been polished with different colors of gemstones.

He was currently reading the letter on the table as a smile appeared on his face.

"Hoho... It seems that the Lord of Lounstein is rather generous. Since he is going to pay such a high price, it appears that I'm going to annoy the hell out of the Supreme Devil Organization."

Chapter 957 Envoy

Two weeks later.

A middle-aged man with several soldiers arrived in front of the city.

"So, this is the Ardagan Family's main city, huh?" The middle-aged man squinted his eyes.

The construction of the city had sped up considerably after the migration. The lord mansion had finally finished and the foundation of the northern wall had been completed.

The main water storage still needed a bit of refinement, but the blueprints had been adjusted with the details that Alan provided.

The problem with the water storage was the height. It was true that as long as there was a differential height, water would flow. However, if they made the main storage too high, the water pressure that would come out later would be too high, which might end up harming people.

In the end, they used the smaller storages that each district would have to adjust the pressure. And of course, the area where Noel resided would be the first to be completed.

"Welcome, the guest from afar." Dimitri appeared before him. "I am Dimitri, the head butler of the Ardagan Family. As per my master's order, I shall guide you to the mansion."

"Oh?!" The middle-aged man couldn't help but feel a bit pressured. To think that the head butler was a person of this level. Because of the importance of this visit, he was chosen as the representative.

"It's a shame that we have to display an incomplete city to the guests from the Zaecuria Kingdom. But if you don't mind, please follow me." Dimitri extended his hand, gesturing for them to follow him.

The middle-aged man was accompanied by multiple experts, who could also see Dimitri's strength. It seemed that the Ardagan Family really couldn't be underestimated.

"Please forgive me. I haven't introduced myself. I am Zaecuria Kingdom's envoy, Marquis Benedict. I am here to congratulate Earl Noel Ardagan for becoming a noble." Marquis Benedict introduced himself while taking a step forward, implying that he was going to follow him.

Dimitri nodded, remembering Noel's order. "Show them what could be shown, but never explain anything to them. Make sure that not a single one of them slips away and takes another look at the city."

With that thought in mind, Dimitri was accompanied by several soldiers that would seal their movement.

Now that the Marquis had done with the pleasantries, Dimitri began to lead them according to the route that Noel wanted them to take.

The first thing that caught Benedict's eye was the technology on the wall. It was high up, so it was easy to spot.

"Is that..."

He saw a normal person going up with a lot of materials. Once it reached the top of the wall, the guy handed over the materials so that the walls could be constructed far easier. Normally, they would have to use the ladder and bring a few items at a time, but with that technology, they could bring more materials than what twenty people were capable of at once.

"It's nothing much. Just a technology to speed up the construction." Dimitri smiled, prompting him to say that he didn't plan to give him any information.

The Demon Relief Squad might be able to achieve something like that with their prowess, but if they had this technology, they could actually allow normal people to get similar results.

While he was in shock, a carriage had just passed through. "Ah, Sir Dimitri! Mr. Roel has asked you to come to his workshop later."

The carriage moved fast compared to their carriage. More importantly, it wasn't pulled by horses, which made it mysterious. Though, it was just Noel's order to show off his technology.

Of course, Benedict should have seen these two technologies in the previous city. However, he wanted to make sure that he knew all those technologies originated in this city.

"Sorry, but I have to take care of an important guest per my master's order." Dimitri replied, but the guy had gone away.

Benedict frowned upon the action of that man, but he immediately forgot about it once he saw another invention.



"What is that?" Benedict pointed at this invention. It looked like an automatic carriage, but the front had been modified to make it look like a shovel.

Since they required a lot of pebbles and sand, this automatic carriage was used to push those things toward their spot.

The humans could do the same thing with their shovel, but it would take more time. With just a simple push from this invention, it could actually get done.

There was even a giant automatic carriage that had been loaded with a lot of weight underneath it. A horse would have a hard time pushing it, but the rune actually pushed it forward. Due to its weight, it flattened the pavement on the ground, allowing the road construction to finish far faster.

"We just modified the automatic carriage to fit our needs. It's nothing much really." Dimitri chuckled.

'Kh.' Benedict wanted to smack Dimitri, but he knew there was no way he would openly say it.

The reason why the Zaecuria Kingdom entrusted him with this gift was because he was an expert in negotiation and an experienced man in this field. He was, after all, a minister in the Zaecuria Kingdom.

He was instructed to observe this young man's territory and negotiate with runes. However, it appeared that their Zaecuria Kingdom had severely underestimated Noel's invention.

Of course, Noel didn't think about these modified versions in the past. However, he had given the citizens some opportunity to speak up to make the construction easier. It was then that Roel started modifying the automatic carriage.

In fact, depending on the weight and the enhancement, the automated carriage could do a lot of things. Even Jasmine thought about using it to break down the soil for their farmland later. And there were some thoughts about using such technology inside the mine.

In the end, they could make a lot of modifications to suit their needs.

As expected, they also found water storage in this city. They had seen how much water the citizens could receive from the previous city.

However, Noel actually went one step further by installing a small water tower near his mansion. lights

By the time he arrived, he saw a man watching the water flow out of the pipe to fill out his drum.

"This is the lord's mansion. Unfortunately, the Earl is currently busy at the moment. If you don't mind waiting, I'll lead you to your room first." Dimitri smiled strictly as if he didn't take no for an answer.

"If that's the case, can I walk around the city? This old bone will be stiff if I don't work out."

"I don't think that's possible. Besides, I don't think you will be bored here." Dimitri squinted his eyes, demanding them to play by their rules.

After seeing all those technologies, it seemed that he should not provoke the Ardagan Family further. If their relationship deteriorated, it would cause a lot of problems.

But he soon noticed that the guy who filled the drum with water actually grabbed a cup and drank the water directly.

"Hmm?" He furrowed his eyebrows. The drinking water was not as surprising as the maid coming over while shouting, "Switch out. I need some water to wash the clothes."

"Oh!" The guy nodded and just took the water elsewhere while the maid filled her bucket.

It was so convenient that they could get all that water without even leaving the mansion. Of course, some mansions usually had their own dedicated well, but the maid still needed to draw it.

"I have noticed this from the previous city. But you don't need to draw the water from the well anymore?"

Dimitri thought for a moment. Instead of giving him the information he wanted, he actually chose the answer that would fill his dream. "Every single citizen will have access to that water without the need to take a step out of their house."

"What did you say?" Benedict widened his eyes. His imagination was running wild.

"The soldiers will have to stay in the guest house. If you want to wash your body or do something, please ask the maid to show you the trick." Dimitri gestured to the soldiers to escort Benedict's escorts, while Dimitri pointed at the mansion. "Please follow me."

Benedict, who was still in complete shock, followed Dimitri blindly, not knowing what he was planning to show this time.

Meanwhile, the soldiers escorted these people to the guest house, which was located at the corner of the mansion. It was usually used for either both guest soldiers and the Ardagan Family's soldiers.

"Welcome. Are they the visitors?" Sandra was the one who actually greeted them.

"Yes." One of the soldiers nodded.

Sandra pointed at the building. "This will be the place you'll stay today. If you need water, you can go to this place." She moved toward a pipe next to the entrance. There was a tube on top of the pipe, so when Sandra pulled it, the water came out naturally.

"If you want to wash your body, you can fill the bucket with water. If you want to simply wash your face, there is also a big plate to do that. Please don't hesitate to tell the maid what you'd like to do."

The soldiers couldn't help but gasp. They remembered the time they were staying in the barracks.

Water was easy to get, but it was because of the number of maids. They would spot a maid in every single corner of the mansion because they needed a lot of people to make sure there was a supply of water every time.

During the night when everyone slept, they simply had to endure the thirst.

But it seemed that they could get access to water anytime they wanted.

And Benedict was currently experiencing that shock. He was taken to the bathroom, where he saw a big tub. It should fit at least ten people inside.

A noble usually only had a small tub or just a large bucket because filling that tub would take a lot of time and effort. So, they usually used it whenever they met an important guest or if there was a special occasion.

But Dimitri actually opened the pipe, filling it with water.

"What is this? It's filling so fast? Can you do this every single day?"

"I don't see any reason to not do it. It will take an hour to fill the tub, so I'll inform the maid to warm the water." Dimitri smiled.

Benedict dropped his jaw to the ground. Everyone seemed to have underestimated the power of having unlimited amounts of water. He could see how the city developed with this kind of power.

At first, he thought that the Zaecuria Kingdom had been generous in bringing all those gifts to an Earl. He might be the creator of the rune, but the gift was at the level of a marquis.

However, this invention alone made him realize that they had severely underestimated Noel. He should be given the treatment of a duke.

The only thing that haunted Benedict's mind was Noel's disappointment with their gift.

As soon as he was shown his room, Benedict hurriedly gritted his teeth. 'What should I do? The initial plan was to give this gift in exchange for a spot in the Rune Academy. But after seeing those inventions,

I'm afraid that we have to acquire them. The second princess of the Greenwood Kingdom is in this place, so I'm sure she will disclose this information to the Greenwood Kingdom.

'In the current situation, the Greenwood Kingdom has the highest advantage. In that case, I should offer something more. I can't let this chance go. In fact, those bastards from the Atracaeca Kingdom must not know this yet. If they know, they will do anything in their power to either kill Earl Noel or mend their relationship. That's right. I'll ask the king to stop them from harming Earl Noel.

'What to do next? Dimitri has prevented me from moving around, so I'm sure that these are the only things I'm allowed to see. There must be a lot more inventions that are currently hidden. I should have asked the king to bribe those officials with a higher price so that I could see this city earlier. No, we might have lost the initiative, but we have to get second place. Screw with the Muivell Kingdom.'

Marquis Benedict didn't realize that everything he had seen was according to Noel's arrangement. The people he met, the construction, and even this water bath were instructed precisely by Noel to increase his worth. Someone as smart as him would definitely bite that bait.

Chapter 958 Fund Secured

Creak!

The sound of the door opening echoed inside the room as Marquis Benedict turned his head around to confirm the identity of the person. As soon as he saw a black-haired man entering the room, he hurriedly stood up and placed his hand on his chest. "Marquis Benedict from the Zaecuria Kingdom. It's a pleasure to meet you."

"I apologize for making you wait even though I know that you have a long journey to reach this place." Noel smiled while walking to Marquis Benedict. After shaking hands, both of them sat down.

"Please don't worry about it. Me and my soldiers have gotten some rest thanks to it." Marquis Benedict shook his head.

"So, may I know the reason for your visit this time, Marquis Benedict?" Noel asked.

"I am here to congratulate you for becoming a noble, O' Master of Runes, Earl Noel Ardagan." Benedict paused for a moment before listing the gifts. "It's not much, but I've brought a lot of jewels, gold, treasures, and Demon Crystals."

"I thank you and the Zaecuria Kingdom for showing such kindness to a mere earl like me." Noel just played along with the pleasantries.

However, that was enough to make Marquis Benedict twitch his eyebrows. Who would believe Noel was just a mere Earl? His technology would allow him to become a Marquis easily if he spread that technology. Once he established his strength, becoming a Duke was not impossible.

In fact, if there was no conflict between the Ardagan Family and the Royal Family, the latter would have sent their princess to marry Noel to make it easier for them to elevate Noel's position as a Duke.

Marquis Benedict said, "Seeing how busy you are, I believe that we can skip pleasantries and focus on the main topic."

Noel's expression turned serious. "Please..."

"First of all, we would like to know about the Rune Academy. Do you know the age limit for attending the rune school?"

"Rune Academy... As the name implies, it's an academy for the young generations to become better than the current generations. At the same time, I know that it's going to be unfair to those older generations because they know more and will probably learn it faster than the younger generations. That's why I'm planning to first separate it into three categories: Expert, Talented, and Common. I think you know what I'm implying here."

"So, the Expert Class is for the older generations whose experience and wisdom have been polished. The Talented Class is for the younger generations. As for the common, are you trying to recruit commoners, Mr. Noel?"

"No. Talented is for those who have Spirits while Common is the class for people who don't have spirits. After all, my runes only need Spiritual Energy, not spirits. And I'm not planning to separate the nobles and the commoners in my territory."

"Not separating nobles and commoners? Won't this cause friction between them?"

"Indeed. Theoretically speaking, the principal of this academy will be my direct disciple, Livia. Do you think anyone has a higher status than her?"

Benedict fell silent for a moment before shaking his head.

"And if you look at my city, do you think those nobles are treated better than the commoners in my territory?"

"That's..." He obviously could see that the convenience that this city provided far surpassed that of the noble families. The only thing that was different between a noble and a commoner was their financial resources and status. "Still, I do think there will be prejudice."

"So be it. My academy will have its own rules. Break the rules, and they shall be expelled from the academy. We'll see if their noble families will ask for my explanation or beat their own children." Noel's expression was serious.

Noel perfectly knew that the people who didn't awaken their spirits were still able to absorb the Demon Crystals. However, they didn't know their conversion rate because the spirits didn't tell them. So, it wouldn't be weird to see a high conversion rate among them. This was what Noel wanted.

Meanwhile, Benedict knew that if Noel properly developed the city and repelled the Supreme Devil Organization, they wouldn't dare to cause trouble.

In fact, if the noble children were to get expelled, their family would blame the child for not enduring it and losing the opportunity. That was why the noble families would definitely tell their kids to follow the rules no matter how much they had to endure.

If he added the connection between Noel and the Greenwood Kingdom's princess, the Sword Arbiter, and the Demon Banner Army, no one could actually oppose him.

Benedict sighed. "I can understand your plan. So, I believe there is no age limit."

"The Expert class won't have any age limit. However, they do have stricter requirements and background checks."

"Well, you can't afford to have a lot of people that can threaten the territory." Benedict nodded in agreement.

"As for the other two classes, the maximum age will be 15 years old. If they're too young, they will break the rules."

"I see. Suppose our Zaecuria Kingdom wants to buy a quota. In that case, how much do we have to pay?"

"Each class will have a maximum of 50 students. They will be directly taught by my direct disciples, Livia and Tristan. And I will personally hold a class every once in a while. And 30 slots are reserved for normal recruitment for commoners or regular sources. What do you think the price of those remaining 120 slots is?"

Marquis Benedict felt pressured. Instead of giving a price, Noel actually directed that question back to him. If he made it too low, Noel would reject it. If he made it too high, they would suffer a loss.

"The Zaecuria Kingdom would like to buy 5 slots for the Expert Class and 10 slots for the other two classes. As for the price..." Marquis Benedict paused. "We'll offer you 20,000 gold for each slot in the Expert Class and 10,000 gold for the other two. Of course, this is only the gold coin.

"We'll also add 20 Peak Level Demon Crystals, 200 Advanced Level Demon Crystals, 300 Mid Level Demon Crystals, and 1,000 Low Level Demon Crystals for each slot in the Expert Class. Double that number for every two slots in the other classes."



Even Noel didn't expect that Marquis Benedict would offer this much for 15 slots. Just getting 200 Peak Level Demon Crystals alone was already tremendous. And this was only fifteen slots. He still had 105 slots left, of which 45 of them had been reserved for other influences who had helped him like the Greenwood Kingdom and the Ezenholm Family, the Sword Arbiter and Marquis Stargaze, or even the Demon Banner Army.

In fact, Noel felt he had overpaid. While Noel could simply brush this matter off, he didn't like to feel like owing someone. lights

"Hoh. It's an interesting offer. It seems that you are also aiming for other things." Noel squinted his eyes.

"I can't hide anything from you, Mr. Noel." Marquis Benedict smiled. "I have seen a lot of wonderful things you could do with runes. If possible, we would like to order some of them."

"You should know that they are new technology. Even though they are still prototypes, they're still very expensive."

"Of course. We'll pay the full price." Marquis Benedict nodded, thinking they could buy some and learn the production method by analyzing those products.

However, Noel actually gave him another offer. He first asked, "Marquis Benedict... If I'm not wrong, your Zaecuria Kingdom is famous for its navy."

"Hmm?!" Benedict was surprised and confused at the same time. He didn't know why Noel would mention something like this, considering the Muivell Kingdom was the furthest from the ocean. "Yes?"

"I happen to have a river here. And do you think that the automatic carriage is the only thing that can move forward?"

"A river?" Benedict contemplated for a moment before standing up while gasping. "Are you intending to make a boat?"

"Since the Zaecuria Kingdom has shown their sincerity, I'm thinking of creating a boat that can go upstream by using runes. Don't you think it's beneficial for those five slots?"

"!!!" Benedict's eyes brightened. The five slots he mentioned must be about the Expert Class. Noel actually gave them the opportunity to work together to create a boat. If Noel could make the boat with runes, it would definitely help the Zaecuria Kingdom a lot. In fact, they might be able to cross the ocean far more easily and explore a new land somewhere.

The ocean was also filled with a lot of demons, so killing them and using their crystals to refuel the ship would make the trip far easier.

And the prototype would be built in Noel's territory. If those five experts learned Noel's method, they might be able to build a ship that could reach a new land.

There was no need to buy the carriages whatsoever. The same runes would definitely be used on the boat.

"It's just... This place will be attacked soon. I'm just afraid that I can't realize that project if I die here..." Noel sighed helplessly.

Marquis Benedict fully understood Noel's plan.

He must want the Zaecuria Kingdom to send multiple experts, including those who would be placed in the Expert Class to come first and build the boat. And among those experts would be powerful people who could stop the Supreme Devil Organization.

In exchange, Noel would work together personally and might even impart his rune skills.

This would also annoy the Muivell Kingdom a lot. They might have to pay a high price in order to send those experts.

But the boat was the most important. They could simply find a new land and extract every resource from it before any other kingdoms did.

Of course, he couldn't send five grandmasters to avoid tipping the power balance in the Ardagan Family.

Marquis Benedict replied, "One grandmaster and four masters. Since Mr. Noel is this sincere for our Zaecuria Kingdom, we will also repay your kindness by becoming the sponsor of the creation of this boat. All we want is for them to work together with Mr. Noel."

"It seems we have a deal." Noel smirked while extending his hand.

Marquis Benedict shook his hand. The man before him was not a new noble. He was scarier than the devil.

If he could get a grandmaster this way, there was no doubt that Noel could gather a few more grandmasters to protect his territory through some channels.

The Supreme Devil Organization might need to face more than ten Grandmasters if they wanted to harm this city. Just thinking about it made this city look safer than anything else.

"Because this matter is extremely important. Should we begin right away?" Noel added, indirectly implying that he wanted the Marquis Benedict to leave his town as soon as possible so that they couldn't see any more technology.

Considering he had gotten the best deal, he definitely had no problem. "Of course. We are very excited to bring this news to our kingdom. We will definitely return in three... no, less than two weeks."

"I'm looking forward to our cooperation." Noel smiled.

"Indeed. It's a shame that you were not born in the Zaecuria Kingdom. If not, you would have become a great figure. If you don't see any future in the Muivell Kingdom, please don't hesitate to knock on our door. We'll welcome you."

"Please don't jest, Marquis Benedict. This is the land that my ancestors protected, so I will remain here."

"But of course..." Marquis Benedict sighed. He almost offered him women from Zaecuria Kingdom, but remembered that the report stated that Noel only loved a single person and would be annoyed if this talk was mentioned. Even other nobles had given up because of it.

Even though it was only a few hours away from dusk, Marquis Benedict hurriedly ordered the soldiers to leave the city. Although confused, they had no choice but to follow his order.

On the other hand, Noel had finally finished with his initial preparation. The fund was secured, the demon crystals were abundant, and the rune technology had a good talent for development.

If he managed to defeat the Supreme Devil Organization this time, he might be able to use the Demon Crystals to reach the peak of Spirit Grandmaster together with Anna.

Chapter 959 Reaction Of Two Kingdoms

Zaecuria Kingdom.

Marquis Benedict's movement was extremely swift. The moment he got an agreement with Noel, he immediately sent the information directly back to their king.

The king of the Zaecuria Kingdom was not like the others. He had short brown hair and slightly slanted eyes. Coupled with the big round glasses, it gave him the atmosphere of a smart and calculative mind.

Because of the importance of the matter, the king had asked all ministers to attend so that they could hear directly from Marquis Benedict.

"Are you not lying?" The king asked with a shocked expression.

"I don't dare lie to you, Your Majesty. I have made a deal with Noel Ardagan. We're going to create the first automated ship in history with runes," said Marquis Benedict in a solemn tone.

"The first automated ship..." The minister of defense contemplated. "If we have that kind of thing, we can deploy it around the river and sea. The fact that we don't need to bring more workers to paddle the ship means we can increase the number of soldiers on board. Just imagining how a ship can bring hundreds if not thousands of soldiers in peak condition upon landing... it's unbelievable."

"No, no. You can't just think about the defense. If we use this ship as a mode of transportation. With our kingdom's layout, we can actually decrease the price of goods." The minister of economy waved his hand, thinking his idea was better.

"No. We should explore the sea with this ship. It's basically a high-risk, high-return investment. If we can find another land, we might be able to get more resources from that area." The minister of exploration and exploitation also intervened.

The king raised his hand, asking his ministers to shut their mouths. "Is such a ship possible?"

"I have seen an automated carriage that can move forward without a horse. When modified, it can also do a lot of things. I believe we can use that on a ship." Marquis Benedict nodded without hesitation.

"An automated carriage, huh? That's also good, but the ship is better for our Zaecuria Kingdom."

"But won't it use the same rune? If we have the ship, we can actually create that automated carriage."

The ministers whispered to each other again, thinking about the benefits for the Zaecuria Kingdom.

"What is the price we have to pay?" The king asked.

"First of all, we need about 200,000 gold coins and a lot of demon crystals to pay for the slots in the Rune Academy. As for the ship, we will be sponsoring it while sending five of the experts to work together with Noel Ardagan personally. In other words, these five will be able to learn the core technique to create the runes.

"However, he asked us to help the territory by sending those five experts in 1 grandmaster and 4 masters composition. From what I can see, he shouldn't have any problem gathering at least 10 grandmasters in his territory.

"And this is just a rumor, but the Moon Temple is planning to create another headquarters in his city. Their Saintess and a Paladin have been stationed there."

"!!!" The people widened their eyes in shock.

"Sponsoring the ship? Do you know that we need a lot of materials to do that? We might need at least 50,000 gold coins to bribe so that the materials and our workers can enter the Muivell Kingdom. What about the materials? What's the size? Depending on the size of the ship, the cost of materials can reach 200,000 if not 300,000 gold coins!" The minister of economy gasped, not believing the condition.

"That's not all. If the Muivell Kingdom knows about this, they are going to be hostile toward us."

The king furrowed his eyebrows. He waited for the ministers to discuss it first as he listened to their conversation.

There was one thing that piqued his interest. "Benedict. Humor me with this question. If the Ardagan Family manage to withstand the attack this time, how are you planning to take them down?"

"I don't think I'm capable of answering that question. I suggest..." Benedict glanced at the minister of war. If he was going to invade the Ardagan Family, what would he do?"

"Noel Ardagan is a smart man. The location of his main city is very strategic. On the east, there is a mine that can act as a second fortress. Beyond that, there is also the Greenwood Kingdom. In the west, he has a river. First of all, the purpose of creating that ship is probably to take advantage of the river and create a natural defense line.

"With this, both sides have been taken care of. In the south, he asked the Sword Arbiter to stay, meaning that place won't be attacked unless the Supreme Devil Organization plans to drag the twelve Arbiters in this battle.

"So, the only way to attack this city is through the north border. However, he should have thought about this and the Greenwood Kingdom might also use this to help him. In that case, they have to divert a portion of their power to stop the Greenwood Kingdom while the rest attack the Ardagan Family.

"I don't know what kind of fortress they are planning to build, but I know one thing. Gathering the necessary number of demons to take down that city must cost them a lot of time. And if they want to attack again, it will require more than a year if not two years. By that time, Noel Ardagan should have completed his city.

"To summarize everything, if the Supreme Devil Organization fails to kill Noel Ardagan in this invasion, it's extremely hard to take him down next time. Unless they bring at least two Ancient Demons, I can't see any way to take them down." The minister of war finished his explanation with a scale that no one had ever seen before.

"Ancient Demons?! But the last attack from an Ancient Demon was thirty years ago. Can they even bring an Ancient Demon?"

"If they can, all kingdoms might have to subjugate them. There's no way we will feel safe if we let a terrorist organization that is capable of moving an Ancient Demon exist."

The king seemed to have made a decision. "Alright. I shall accept this agreement. In fact, bring out another half million gold coins to build the port for Lounstein."

"Your Majesty?!" The minister of economy wanted to reject it since it would definitely hurt their budget.

"Let's take it this way. If we help him now, we will be considered his closest ally. So, all we need to do is ensure his safety for the sake of future development. As the minister of war said, it would be close to impossible to take him down if he survives this attack, so he should feel grateful if we help him so much right now. The boat might not be the only project we will have with him."

"!!!" The minister of economy abruptly stopped, showing his agreement.

"Minister of Economy, keep track of the budget. If it starts hurting, the royal family will open its treasury to raise the fund."

"Understood, Your Majesty."

The king looked at everyone, asking, "Who is the most suitable person to lead this project?"lights

Marquis Benedict raised his hand. "I suggest Duke Briton, Your Majesty."

"Duke Briton?" The ministers looked at each other. They wanted to suggest themselves, but when they thought about Duke Briton, they somehow felt a bit inferior.

"Duke Briton was an excellent shipwright. He is also a Spirit Grandmaster and has a lot of experience in battle. If he leads the project, he will surely do a great job. But hasn't he retired?"

The king didn't hesitate to declare. "Call Duke Briton to the palace immediately. This is a Royal Decree!"

"Ha!" One of the ministers hurriedly left the room to prepare the royal edict. For the sake of the future, the king didn't hesitate to pull the retired veteran back.

"Last but not least, gather ten talented kids in my country. Even if they are commoners, you just have to adopt them into the noble household in case people don't like it. I want them to be extremely talented in runes... so talented that Noel Ardagan has no choice but to accept them as his disciples. We're not going to lose against the Greenwood Kingdom!"

"On your command!" The ministers lowered their heads. All of them wanted to hold a competition to find talented people. These talents could be used in order to achieve further success on the court.

...

Greenwood Kingdom.

They seemed to be not the only ones who were busy discussing the slots in the Rune Academy.



The king had also assembled his ministers, including Raincart, Noel's grandfather.

"We'll be receiving the Water System from Noel Ardagan once Lady Anna returns. According to the second princess, the water system works perfectly as it's been described. She has gone to the lord mansion to test it herself.

"As for matters about the Rune Academy, the second princess has helped us get 20 out of 150 slots. The condition is only for us to help defend his territory for another two months.

"There are also a lot of new technologies that were not possible before. While she can't see everything, Noel Ardagan seems to be planning to use the runes for military weapons." The negotiator that accompanied Damian had finally returned and reported everything in front of all the ministers.

"What do you think, Raincart?" The king glanced at Noel's grandfather. He was supposed to be the one who knew him the most.

"I heard from the report that he was injured." Raincart looked at the negotiator.

"Y-yes. He and Lady Anna were rumored to be heavily injured."

"Yet, Anna went out with Damian."

"Are you implying something, Raincart?" The king frowned.

"Their injuries must be fake. Even if the others have confirmed it, we can think that their injuries have been completely healed."

"What? But he has the temple... No, wait. The Moon Temple only sent Saintess Layla and Paladin Aurelia. None of them have healing ability."

Raincart nodded with a smile. "He has someone who is good at making medicine. If I'm not wrong, his name is Khalid."

"Khalid? That Khalid?!" The king widened his eyes in shock.

"Yes. That's why I believe that the Supreme Devil Organization has fallen into his illusion. By using that to our advantage..." Raincart looked at another minister.

The minister sighed, knowing what Raincart wanted. "...I believe it's better to send reinforcement to Damian. If they can hold off more demons, it's going to be easier for Lounstein to withstand the organization's attacks."

"We got confirmation not long ago that the Zaecuria Kingdom had made contact with him. Their envoy seemed to leave right away."

"Did he shoot them down?"

"He won't be that foolish."

"Then, they might receive a deal so important that their envoy immediately returns to the Zaecuria Kingdom..."

The king felt pressured once again. They couldn't find out about this deal, but if they didn't do something more, they would be defeated by the Zaecuria Kingdom. "What does he actually want, Raincart?"

"I'm not sure this time." Raincart shook his head. "I think we should ask her highness Livia. The fact that he just wants help, not money, means he has secured enough funds. So..."

"So, Livia is the only one who can ask him." The king closed his eyes for a minute. "Ask Livia about what Noel Ardagan needs right now. Also, tell Count Agnus to assemble another army to reinforce Damian."

"What will be the size of the army, Your Majesty?"

"Five thousand elite soldiers. Not only will we defend the territory, but we might also use this opportunity to attack those demons. Make sure we contribute more than the Zaecuria Kingdom."

"Yes, Your Majesty."

The king sighed while looking at Raincart. "It seems that the son is more troublesome than the father. Why doesn't he surpass his father by stealing not the daughter of a duke but a princess of a royal family?"

Raincart chuckled. Luke had stolen the princess of the Ezenholm Family in the past. He was angry at that time, but now that everything had passed, it was probably the best thing he had ever experienced. He proudly said, "As expected of my son-in-law and grandson."

Chapter 960 Last Person

"How is it going, Felicia?" Noel asked while looking at Felicia in the air. Her posture was terrible. While she was indeed flying, it was her upper body that was following the armor. Her lower body was simply hanging.

"As expected, this is not going to work." Felicia stopped supplying Spiritual Energy into the armor and landed on the ground. "I managed to maintain my posture for a bit, but once I lost my balance, I couldn't regain it. As expected, we have to attach the lower body to the armor so that we can fly like a bird."

"If it's like that, doesn't that mean we don't need the boards to fly?" Noel asked.

Felicia fell into deep thought. "That's true. If a person can fly with the help of a rune, then there's no need for the flying board anymore. The flying board can be used to transport materials or something else."

"I see." Noel imagined Anna flying in the sky. On the one hand, the flying board looked exciting, but in terms of functionality, the flying armor would be better. Since every soldier was going to wear that armor in one way or another, he thought it would be better to just give them only the armor.

If the enemies shot them down, it meant they wouldn't survive.

However, Felicia actually gave another suggestion. "Instead, why don't we exchange their roles? The armor is used for fighting while the board... Hmm, let's not use the board. Why don't we use a small object that can be carried in one's pocket and embedded with Enhance Forward Rune? This way, when they are shot down, they could still use this small item to glide in the air as the last resort to get away."

"A palm-size item, huh?" Noel thought for a moment. "To be honest, it's far easier to embed a rune on a larger surface. So, a palm-sized object is kind of hard to give, even for me."

"Then, I will think about this a bit more. All I can say is that the flying squad is possible. While they need a lot of practice before they get used to this feeling, they will definitely become a terrifying squad. In fact, they might be able to protect the city from the flying demons."

"In that case, I will select a few soldiers. I want you to practice together with them. What do you think?"

"That's a good idea. We can also bombard the demons from the sky." Felicia agreed.

"That's settled then. While I do want you to get a Rune Body, I don't think I can grant you that right now. It's not that I don't trust you, but I don't want to betray my fiancée." Noel smiled wryly.

He didn't mind seeing other people naked, but he didn't want to do it unless it was necessary.

"Don't worry, my lord. The situation is not urgent, so I can afford to wait for another month."

"She will be back in half a month if nothing goes wrong." Noel nodded, thankful for her consideration. He suddenly turned around and noticed Dimitri coming to him.

They were training a bit away from the city so no one knew about this flying squad. But it seemed that something had come up.

"What's wrong, Dimitri?" Noel asked.

"We have received the word from Mayor Dan. He said the people from the Zaecuria Kingdom had arrived along with the materials."

"They are faster than I thought." Noel raised his eyebrows.

"What should we do?"

"Tell him to guide them to the location of the port. I will meet them there. While I'm not here, take care of the city."

"Mayor Dan has told them about the port. They've gone there by the time the letter arrives and they await you there."

"In that case, I'll meet them right away."

Noel waved his hand as he summoned his phoenix wings and soared into the sky. It had only been seven days since Benedict visited his city. The return trip alone should take at least three days if they rushed, so it was quite amazing to be able to reach his location in just seven days, especially with the materials. The Zaecuria Kingdom appeared to go all out for this deal.

It took Noel a few hours to fly at full speed to reach the location.

He noticed numerous carts of materials moving toward the river. There were, apparently, about a hundred people actually going to build the ship.

As soon as Noel landed on the ground, a muscular old man stepped forth and said, "I presume you are the lord of Lounstein, Earl Noel Ardagan, correct?"

"It is I. May I know who I am speaking to?" Noel examined this person's strength and affection.

"Although I've retired now, I was a Duke, a General, and a Shipwright before. My name is Roger Briton. It's a pleasure to meet you." The old man introduced himself while holding his cigarette in his hand.

"It appears that the Zaecuria Kingdom is going all out for this project." Noel smirked.

"I shall pass his majesty's words to you. 'The Zaecuria Kingdom shall sponsor the construction of the first automated ship as well as the port of Lounstein. I hope that Earl Noel Ardagan receives it so that you can survive. I wish you luck.' That's the message."

Noel was quite surprised that the king would even sponsor the port's creation. While it wouldn't become a port city, it was still a port. And they would even cover the cost of materials. lights

"Alas, our cooperation will be hard to hide," Duke Briton exclaimed while looking at the materials.

There were so many carts coming here and many more would come as the project progressed.

"Indeed. Then again, it's fine at this point, right?" Noel smirked.

"As you said. If they dare to destroy the ship, it's the same as slapping the Zaecuria Kingdom in the face. We will retaliate to the best of our ability." Duke Briton stopped for a moment as if he wanted to know something.

"What's wrong?"

"While this is rude to ask, I wish to see the rune that allows you to move the boat upstream." Duke Briton looked at the flow of the river. While there was no raging flow, the speed was still pretty high. Even the Zaecuria Kingdom needed a lot of people to go upstream on this river.

"I don't really mind showing it to you." Noel glanced at the other people before pointing to a more secluded area.

Duke Briton nodded in understanding and followed Noel after ordering the rest of the people to stay here.

As soon as he couldn't sense any more people, Noel pulled out his blade, cutting a tree. He skillfully stripped all the branches from the log.

"While this is—" Noel wanted to start, but Duke Briton actually interjected. "Please wait a moment."

Duke Briton took out a small knife and started cutting the trunk like butter. He took out a chisel and started ripping the inside to create a small room for someone to sit in. It was narrow, but this was a very simple boat.

"The trunk is big enough, so I guess this should imitate the boat a little bit." Duke Briton nodded in approval. He had just shown his expertise to show Noel that he would do a great job.

After that, Duke Briton waved his hand as the flow started to split, creating still water in the middle. It seemed that Duke Briton had a water type spirit, which was perfect for controlling the river.

"Please."

Noel nodded, tossed the wood into the still water, and said, "I'm ready."

Duke Briton retracted his ability after Noel's signal. The boat began facing the water, but Noel remained standing as if he were skilled enough to maintain his balance.

After that, a rune appeared behind the boat and started pushing the boat forward. The speed increased at a stable pace, indicating that the limit of this rune was unknown.

Seeing how it could indeed go upstream even in this flow was enough for Duke Briton to see the success of the boat. "I see. Thank you for demonstrating it to this old man, Earl Ardagan."

"I'm not familiar with the boat. What we want is a grand boat that can hold up to a few hundred people at once as per the agreement. I believe that the weight will also affect the effectiveness of the runes, so I will personally embed the runes to see if I need to draw more runes for the boat to function or use a better rune."

"I understand. I will begin working with my subordinates to create the perfect boat for you. If you have any requests, then please don't hesitate to tell me."

"How long do you need to complete the boat?"

"We promise to complete the boat before your territory is open to the public."

"After that, you and the other four shall enter my territory as students of the Rune Academy."

"There is no shame in learning something even if it's from the younger generation. After all, you are the future." Duke Briton smiled while extending his hand.

"I believe we have a deal." Noel shook his hand firmly.

The progress of the territory had been smooth. The people he wanted to meet had come to the territory. There were also outside helpers that would come right before the battle according to the agreement.

All that was left was watching the progress until the time limit and waiting for Anna to come back.

...

Two weeks later.



As Noel predicted, Anna was returning to the city at night. But Noel didn't realize at the time that Anna's return would stir trouble he had never faced before.