

S vs Rebirth 961

Chapter 961 Back

Two weeks later.

Noel was about to retire for the day, but the moment he opened the door to his room, he couldn't help but find a familiar figure he had been waiting for a long time.

"Eh?!" Noel widened his eyes in shock. "Anna?"

Because of the nature of her trip, she couldn't show herself in public. So, she had to leave and return during the night, meaning Noel wouldn't know if she was already back or not.

And tonight was a huge surprise for her because Anna had already returned, waiting for him on the bed.

Noel rubbed his eyes, thinking he was hallucinating because he had missed her. "It seems I have overworked myself."

Anna chuckled while saying, "You are not imagining things. I'm home."

Noel's body trembled as he couldn't believe what she had just said. He staggered to the bed. "You are really back."

Anna made a big smile as she leaped toward Noel, hugging him. The hug was firm to show how much she missed him and didn't want to leave his side anymore.

"I'm glad that you're alright." Noel closed his eyes. He felt relieved that Anna was finally back. It didn't seem she received any harm, which finally put his heart at ease.

"Mhm. I miss you. Leaving you for a month made me feel empty, making me realize how much I love you."

Noel smiled. "I miss you too."

"Really? Weren't you too busy to think about me?" Anna grinned.

"What? How can I?"

"So, you felt lonely when I wasn't here?"

Noel's body shook. She didn't expect to see Anna teasing him.

"You might not know it, but I have sworn to myself that I will become bolder once I return. The trip just showed me how important it was." Anna made a big smile. "That's why I'm not going to hold back anymore and show everyone how much I love you."

Noel blinked a few times. The trip seemed to be important for another reason.

"Is that so? I personally don't mind."

Anna buried her face on Noel's chest, but Noel noticed her yawning.

"You must be tired. Let's get some rest." Noel pointed at the bed. She must have gone through a lot in the past month, so everything could wait.

"Oh my? It seems that you have become bolder as well. So, you want to sleep with me or maybe you want to do something more? I don't mind, but..." Anna smirked, implying that if he was ready to accept the fact that he wouldn't be able to fulfill his promise, she didn't mind going beyond that point.

"What are you talking about? I'm still respecting your wishes." Noel sighed.

"Hehe."

"Alright. Alright. Let's sleep!" Noel shook his head. He was a bit too overwhelmed by Anna's change, but he was fine with this kind of change as well. Though, to avoid the embarrassment, he ended up gently pushing her to the bed.

Anna once again made her move. She normally slept without doing anything unless there was something special, but this time, she actually sneaked into his arm and hugged his body.

"Anna?" Noel was startled. If this continued, he might really not be able to hold himself back.

"What? Are you going to do something?" Anna smirked.

"Kh." Noel clenched his fist. Normally, he wanted to tease her back, but Anna had just returned, so he let her win this time. "Fine. Fine."

"Noel..."

Anna's voice echoed in his ears when he was looking at the ceiling to calm his heart down. "Mhmm?"

"I love you."

"I love you too." Noel closed his eyes with a smile on his face. It seemed that he was going to have a good dream tonight, or so he thought.

Right before he slept, an image flashed through his mind. It was the conversation he had with Anna.

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

Noel didn't want her to leave at that time, but as her equal, he knew how to respect her wish. Hence, he didn't reject her but actually wanted to know the reason for that decision. "Can you give me a reason?"

Anna looked pained back then as if there was a big problem haunting her heart. "I can't tell you anything yet. But after this trip, I feel like I will be able to tell you the truth. All I can say is that... this is the only way for me to be able to stand beside you for the rest of my life." lights

Of course, Noel decided to trust her.

He thought this trip was much safer than when they visited Old Ru's together since Anna had become a Spirit Grandmaster and had no trouble using the True Spirit Body.

But this memory actually gave him another question.

Anna had never broken her promise to him. Even if she became bolder, she would definitely use this time to actually tell him about the reason. The fact that she called his name earlier was the trigger for this thought.

And this was the only time they would have time together. They loved to talk about themselves during this private time to learn more about each other.

That was why this scene actually made Noel question whether Anna still remembered the promise or not.

However, when Noel tilted his head to the side and saw Anna's innocent sleeping face, he sighed, fully aware that Anna was tired after the journey. He had to let her rest first.

...

The next morning.

Noel woke up without Anna on his bed. He thought that he might have been so tired recently that he started hallucinating, but when he opened the door, he saw Anna cooking breakfast for him.

"Oh?! You're awake? Go wash your face first and let's have breakfast together."

After confirming that last night wasn't a dream, Noel hurriedly tidied himself to have breakfast together.

While eating, he couldn't help but get bothered by the image from last night. While he didn't want to doubt her, he had to ask. "How was the trip? You were not in danger, right?"

"Of course not. We killed five Superior Demons during our trip in fact."

"Woah, seriously?!"

"Yeah. Unfortunately, we didn't have a lot of spare bags to bring all the Demon Crystals, so we couldn't fight too much." Anna chuckled. "Also, your mother was with us."

"My mother?"

"Yeah. She tagged along to make sure the journey was safer. Besides, she was quite excited to find the ancestral land of the Ardagan Family."

"Really?"

"But there's not much left after nature takes over. So, we couldn't really find much... As for the problem with the underground tunnel, your ancestor seems to be digging up holes underground to create a wall of water."

"A wall of water?" Noel tilted his head while contemplating. "Wall of water, huh? Flooding them?"

"Indeed. The demons are strong, but they can't breathe underwater. Hence, they use that wall so that the demons dig straight into it. If we have enough supply of water, the entire tunnel will be flooded with the natural pressure."

"That's indeed possible." Noel nodded in agreement. "Now that I think about it, it's not like the demons can dig too deep underground. We have a water reservoir underneath us, which is the one providing the city water. And if you think about it, this water reservoir must be linked to the river."

"In that case, the demons can only dig to a certain area before the water starts coming out, which makes the tunnel useless. With that being said, we can dig up the soil around that level and use the river water to flood it, creating a barrier of water."

"If the demon digs lower, they will meet the water reservoir. If they continue, we will have river water, which will flood the entire tunnel. Some of the stronger demons might be able to pass it, but the water itself should weaken it even if they are a Peak Level Demons."

Noel could imagine the entire concept and design. He simply had to dig a hole in the ditch outside his wall. He was going to fill it up with water, so it shouldn't be that troublesome.

"That's a good idea, I think." Anna agreed with Noel. It wasn't much, but it was very effective.

"Still, the demons might create a lot of tunnels underground. At the very least, it will weaken the soil." Noel raised a concern.

"I think it's not a problem. Just like how you can pump out water from the well, don't you think it's possible to use the rune to pump soil underground to fill the tunnel? While it's going to be troublesome to take care of the mess, this is pretty much a simple yet effective method."

Noel couldn't deny it. "In that case, I will talk to Douglas about it. It's going to be hard to dig up that much, but it's not impossible."

"Sure."

Noel smiled. "Thank you."

"Is there even a need for that between us?"

Noel then stood up. Now that the mood had lessened, Noel finally asked, "How about we have a spar? It's been a while and it's not like we can use our full power to avoid suspicion. So, how about a spar with only our swordsmanship? You said you want to become the strongest woman in the world, so I want to see how much you have improved in this one month."

Anna raised her eyebrows. There was a subtle hint in his words, but Anna didn't back down. "Oh? You can talk big now. I should show you that I'm still the stronger one between us."

Chapter 962 Who Are You?

Noel and Anna stood in front of each other. Now that the mansion had been built, they could use the backyard to have a little spar.

"Let's see whether your skill has gotten rusty or not." Noel smiled while raising his stance.

"I should be the one saying that. You have been buried by all those works after all." Anna harrumphed.

"The only way to prove that is by fighting. Are you ready?" Noel pointed his sword at Anna.

"Of course. I'm just waiting for you."

"What a provocation!"

Both of them smiled as Noel began to count.

"3..."

"2..."

"1..."

They said the last count together as their bodies began to move. "0!"

The moment they reached each other, Noel opened the fight with a slash from the bottom left going all the way to her shoulder in the opposite direction. Anna maintained her posture and struck Noel's sword in the middle.

Cling!

The clicking sound was the mark of the start of their battle.

Seeing Anna parry his sword, Noel was about to slide his sword on her before making a second swing.

However, Anna actually rotated her sword slightly toward her so that Noel ended up moving a step forward.

When adjusting to that balance, Noel couldn't retract his blade or take advantage of Anna's sword.

As a result, Anna took a step forward and tried to knock his sword off his hand.

Before she could do it, Noel used his usual strategy, which was to use the momentum to grab Anna's leg. Since he was going to lean to the ground due to the moment, he should take advantage of that opportunity to seal her mobility.

"!!!" Anna clicked her tongue. Because she took a step forward earlier, she had no way of avoiding this. So, she just let Noel grab her lower thigh while making another swing.

Noel smiled as though he had expected her action. He slid his hand to reach the back of her thigh before pulling her. With the strong forward step earlier, Anna's balance and momentum leaned forward, so if he pulled her thigh, she would trip and fall on her back.

Still, Anna had grown accustomed to his trick. She actually allowed Noel to spin her body. By closing her leg, she could sneak the leg toward Noel and her other leg approached him from the other side. Both legs suddenly wrapped around his head as his neck was pinched by Anna's thighs.

"Kh." Noel gritted his teeth and tried to spin her body a bit more until she couldn't see him.

But Anna skillfully placed her hands on the ground and made a backflip, pulling Noel's entire body with only her thighs. She was about to throw Noel into the air.

However, Noel actually used the momentum to do a front flip. After that, he grabbed both her ankles and tossed her by using the centrifugal force from the flip.

"What?!" Anna looked surprised that she was the one losing in that exchange. Unfortunately, she didn't have time to think about it as Noel had closed in with his blade.

Anna regained her balance the moment she landed on the ground and struck Noel's blade.

Because of the exchange earlier, Anna became a bit more careful and just kept fending off all his attacks.

In just three seconds, there were already twenty clicking sounds. They were using the body of a Grandmaster to the highest degree in this spar.

"Don't you think you've grown a bit too used to how a woman's body works? You're not cheating on me while I'm gone, right?" Anna asked while clashing with Noel.

"I should be the one asking you! Do you think that movement is a little bit vulgar for you? I'll be jealous if you use it on another man." Noel smirked while trying to find the gap in her defense.

"Don't worry. It's the secret technique that your mother taught me. It seems to be a powerful weapon to fight you." Anna harrumphed.

"Kh." Noel gritted his teeth. "What did she actually say?"

"It's nothing much. Like how she suspected you to like thighs because you often used the maid's laps when you wanted to read outside."

"Don't you think you have been lied to?" Noel clicked his tongue. He clenched his sword tightly as he made a big swing, using all the strength he had to launch Anna away.

"You should say that with your usual poker face." Anna grinned while maintaining her balance mid-air. She couldn't help but see that annoyed face on him as though his secret had been exposed. "...That face is not going to convince anyone."

"We need a family meeting after this." Noel rushed forth, trying to reach Anna before she landed on the ground.

Anna harrumphed. She calculated Noel's movement and struck him first.

Noel took a step back, spun his body, and struck Anna from another side. lights

Anna seemed to have predicted it as she actually stretched her leg in that direction, kicking his blade with her shoe. After that, she lowered her foot as if she wanted to hit his face with the back of her thigh.

Noel pushed her back and launched her into the air. Anna took advantage of it to lower her leg even further so that she ended up spinning forward instead of upward. She finally landed on the ground safely.

"If I win, you're going to tell me everything my mother told you. I have to correct everything she said so that you don't get the wrong idea."

"In that case, if I win, you're going to confirm everything your mother has told me."

Both of them looked like they were determined to win, but for their own absurd reasons.

Anna was the first to charge forward this time. She struck Noel from above while saying, "Shouldn't you use that opportunity to ask about my secret?"

"Oh, don't worry. Even without you telling me, I'm going to send a letter to my future father-in-law about all your secrets." Noel harrumphed with veins bulging on his forehead. He was definitely pissed off.

Cling!

Cling!

Cling!

A series of clicking sounds kept echoing in the backyard as Noel and Anna traded more than a thousand blows in just twenty minutes.

But it seemed that no one had gotten any advantage in the last twenty minutes. It might be because of the bet but they were extremely careful in this fight.

Although it was faint, Noel felt a subtle change in the way Anna wielded her sword. While it was true that this could happen after a month, Noel couldn't help but remember what the Sword Arbiter said to her. She told Duke Lorelei that her mind was in such a mess that it affected her sword, so he thought this must be the case.

Unfortunately, this was only his theory. He had to confirm whether it was true or not.

On the other hand, Anna felt something weird in Noel's movement. Her sword style was aggressive, but in this spar, Noel looked more aggressive than usual. He was leading the fight the entire time, which made her a bit nervous.

She suspected Noel to be plotting something in this match. Since he had been inventing a lot of things in the past month, she thought Noel must have gotten a weird, but unexpected idea to defeat her.

To her surprise, she finally found a gap in Noel's attack.

Noel actually made a big swing. While it contained power, he might have the weakest control of his sword with this swing.

'A mistake?'

'It doesn't seem that he is tired.'

'A trap?'

'But if I don't take this chance, I might not get a second chance.'

All these thoughts appeared in Anna's mind in an instant. She ended up closing her stance and hit Noel's sword from below, taking the opportunity to end this match.

Cling!hitting

This clicking sound was the mark of the end of the battle as Anna's blade knocked Ardagan into the air.

After that, Anna waved that blade at Noel's neck to end this fight.

Noel didn't know why but he could feel a sliver of killing intent leaking in that swing. As though he had expected this moment, Noel simply closed his eyes, waiting for that blade to reach him.

Ultimately, the blade stopped right in front of his neck as Anna stated, "This is the end, I guess."

Noel gave a wry smile. "Indeed. It seems that you've gotten more powerful than I expected you to."

"Of course. It's me you're talking about." Anna smirked while sheathing her blade. She was ready to help Noel get his blade back, but right after the 'Tak' sound produced when her blade reached the end of the scabbard, Noel's hand moved at its fastest speed, reaching her face in just a split second.

"!!!" Anna couldn't even get surprised before Noel's hand grabbed her entire face. His other hand tossed her blade away.

Then Noel slammed her into the ground so hard that it created a small crater.

Boom!

Anna wasn't hurt because she protected her body instinctively, but she couldn't understand the reason why Noel actually did something like this.

"No-el?!" Anna looked at Noel. This might be the first time she sees this expression on his face.

It was cold, dark, and full of anger. It might be because he was her fiance that this distorted face somehow hurt her heart. The thought that he was looking at her as his nemesis instead of his fiancée made her body tremble.

Noel opened his mouth, his voice was filled with murderous intent as though he would kill her the moment she told a lie. The question was, "Who are you?"

Thump!

Chapter 963 Truth

"Who are you?!"

Anna gave a confused smile. "What are you talking about? I am Anna."

Noel recalled Ardagan back to his hand and stabbed the ground next to her head. "I ask you once again. Who are you?!"

"Noe—"

Before Anna could call his name, Noel shouted, "Don't you dare call me with that filthy mouth of yours."

Noel never expected that the situation would be like this. The reason why Anna wanted to tell him everything after he returned must be related to this. Still, he didn't think that Anna would be this crazy.

'A split personality? Is she being possessed? Did something happen during the trip? But if that's the case, my mother would definitely tell me about it in one way or another. No, even Damian would be concerned since it means he has failed his jobs.'

Noel thought of several abilities, but none of them could explain what he was seeing right now.

Although he didn't want to do it, it seemed that he had no choice but to use the Affection Medal.

Name: Anna Stargaze

Affection: Love (99/100)

Description: Love you from the bottom of her heart and will never leave you.

This was the first time he saw Anna's affection. It was extremely hard for someone to love another person to an absolute degree. After all, it meant that they were ready to throw away their lives without hesitation.

At the same time, the killing intent earlier made him realize that she had somehow changed. In fact, that might be the reason why she was one point short.

When he thought about it, Noel couldn't help but ask, 'Ardagan, does the Affection Medal see someone's body or...'

[It's peeking at their consciousness.]

'Consciousness...' The reason no one could hide their true selves before him was because of the Affection Medal. But if it truly peeked at someone's consciousness, there might be something that affected Anna's consciousness. It could even be possession.

'Do you know what happened to her?' Noel asked.

Ardagan didn't answer his question, which annoyed Noel.

"Ardagan!" Noel shouted in anger.

Anna looked at Noel's pained expression. But before she spoke, Noel had already declared, "I don't mind the price. If you can help her return, I'm going to sacrifice everything, including my life!"

Anna shivered because of what he said. He truly cared for Anna.

"Tsk." Anna clicked her tongue before saying in an annoyed tone, "That's enough."

"You stay quiet!" Noel gnashed his teeth, wanting to kill whoever did this.

"You are the one who should be quiet if you want to know what has happened!"

Noel and Anna glared at each other. Noel obviously didn't want to let her go, knowing that Anna might use this chance to escape.

But he also wanted to know what truly happened and find out if there was a chance for her to return to the way she was.

Noel clenched his fist so tight that his palm started bleeding. Unfortunately, there was no other choice but to release her.

That was why he pulled out his sword, stood up, and took a step back.

"Just to let you know. Depending on your answer, I might kill you."

"Kill the body of your fiancée?"

"So be it. She is the only one for me. I won't have any other woman beside her and will definitely repay her in the next life." Noel's expression was cold as though he had made his resolve.

"She is blessed to have you, huh? I guess this is my loss." Anna scratched the back of her head while sitting on the ground.

"Your loss?"

"Let me introduce myself once again. I am Anna Stargaze. That's not a lie." Anna looked at Noel, who clearly disliked that answer. "In fact, I am the same Anna you know, who 'killed' your parents in this life."

"In this life?" Noel fell silent for a moment before widening his eyes. He remembered that Anna had an abrupt change in personality when he first met her in the Demon Banner Army.

"Let's go back inside. I will tell you about what happened during the trip, as well as the agreement I have with the Anna who has been accompanying you for the last few years."

Noel was a bit hesitant, but it seemed that he didn't have any other choice.

In the end, Noel recalled Ardagan back to his Spirit Seal, showing that he agreed.

As soon as they reached the mansion, Noel made sure that no one was around and asked, "So..."

"First of all, you need to know that there are two souls or, you could say, consciousnesses, in this body. Both of us are Anna, but the original soul is me."

"So, the one I know..."

"She is the intruder. Even if you dislike that title, it's the fact." Anna's tone was stern, especially when she saw Noel's cold expression.lights

"I am aware of that." Noel nodded. "However, there is something I can't comprehend. If you are truly the one who tried to kill my parents in this life. Why..."

Noel stopped. It felt like he shouldn't ask this question at the last second.

"Why do I love you?" Anna smiled.

"..." Noel's silence had told her everything.

"It's pretty simple. At first, I still wanted to kill you, but that Anna took over my body, causing me to remain inside the consciousness space where the spirit resides. Basically, I can see everything about her. What she is doing, what she has experienced, and what she feels about you. Ultimately, I am also affected by that feeling... I guess it's still far different for someone who is affected and someone who experiences it all. The killing intent must be the one that gave you the last hint."

"I can't deny it."

"So, let's talk about her soul. You should know that you are the reason for her rebirth, right?"

"Yes."

"However, what if I tell you that time only moves forward? No matter how powerful the time ability is, it won't go backward."

"It won't go backward?" Noel looked down for a moment. It took him a full minute before he understood the entire situation. And it actually referred to what Anna had told him in the first place.

That was right. Before Anna admitted that she was reincarnated, she had always mentioned the Anna in another world.

In the end, her rebirth was merely a crossover to another world similar to what she knows. But what will happen to the Anna in this world?

The answer was right before him. Anna's body couldn't go to another world, only her soul. And that was the reason why she ended up taking over the original Anna's soul.

And the easiest way to release that soul was none other than by dying.

It cleared up several questions in his mind. Why would the original him die with Anna? If he still had the medicine that the Sword Saint gave him, they could still survive. No, with his intelligence, there was no way he would fall into the Third Prince's trap.

In that case, the Noel in the previous life wanted to die together with Anna, so that her soul would leave the dying body. However, the destination was not the Nirvana, but the current timeline.

This was the true process of rebirth.

Without the rebirth, everything might repeat itself. In other words, while Anna took over the original Anna's body, it was ultimately Noel who planned everything.

Noel gritted his teeth. He didn't want to admit it, but he was the problem.

"I..."

"Don't apologize." Anna seemed to know how Noel would react. She looked at him with a solemn face. "I should be the one to apologize. Even though she has influenced me, after mulling it over, I realize how bad I was. Thanks to her, I can become the person I'm today."

Noel looked down, feeling ashamed.

"Then, how is she right now?"

"She is currently like me, watching everything I've done and said from that consciousness." Anna let out a long sigh. "But it seems that I have lost the bet."

"Bet?"

"Yes. I believe she told you that after this trip, she would be able to stand beside you, right?"

"Yes."

"However, you have two spirits, which allows you to easily become a Spirit King or beyond that. How about her? She has the experience, memories, and instincts from her previous life, but in the end, her progress will come to a halt one day."

"But there are a lot of ways..."

"I know. Since you have a head start, you can progress more than what you have achieved in your previous life. But do you truly believe from the bottom of your heart that she will be able to keep up with you once you go beyond the Spirit King?"

Noel opened his mouth, but the words stuck in his throat. It wasn't that he didn't want to answer it; he had been avoiding it the whole time. He believed that Anna could overcome it, but deep in his heart, he still wondered if it was possible or not.

"That's where I come in. Having two spirits allows you to have two Spiritual Energy Reserve, which means having twice the limit of the number of demon crystals you can absorb. Hence, she is seeking another way to close the gap."

"But how is it related to you?"

"That's because there is an advantage to having two souls. What do you think will happen if someone ever has two Spirit Minds, two Spirit Hearts, and experiences two times of assimilation and fusion?"

"!!!" Noel's eyes brightened. "They are related to the soul?"

"Indeed. This is the path she decides to walk on so that she can stand beside you."

"Still, you are..." Noel was still concerned. He understood that Anna was going to stand beside him with this power, but the original Anna still took over her body. Even if she had this power, she couldn't go with him if she wasn't the one controlling the body.

And even if they were going to change intermittently, he felt like he was talking to a different person right now. So, it felt like he had betrayed Anna.

"For someone as smart as you, it seems that you are still unable to figure out the agreement between us." Anna sighed. "I guess the idiom saying 'Love makes you a fool,' is true."

"What do you mean? What is the agreement between you?" Noel furrowed his eyebrows. Anna's words made him realize that this agreement seemed to be key to resolving the issue.

On the one hand, Noel knew that Anna couldn't take over and remove this soul if she wanted that power. On the other hand, he couldn't imagine what Anna planned to do to solve the core of the problems.

Anna closed her eyes for a moment before giving a sad smile. "The agreement is..."

Chapter 964 Bet

A few weeks ago.

Anna was sitting in front of Old Ru while the others had to remain outside for the sake of the conversation.

"So, why do you come back here?" Old Ru couldn't help but furrow his eyebrows. While he accepted Anna, he disliked the idea that she would come here again.

"I know that this is too much to ask. However, I still need to ask you about this..." Anna lowered her head. "Please allow me to borrow your grandson's power."

"Huh?" Old Ru's expression turned cold. If it were anyone else, he would have unleashed his killing intent. "Do you know what you are saying right now?"

Noel had promised not to bring his grandson back like what happened in his previous life. So, Old Ru couldn't help but want to reject it right away.

Fortunately, he was still the same calm Old Ru as the one they met a year ago. "At least give me a reason."

"I have another soul in my body. Or should I say... I have taken over this body due to my rebirth?"

"Rebirth..." Old Ru frowned. He seemed to notice something and fell into deep thought. After a moment, Old Ru turned his head to the door and called out loud, "Andreas!"

It didn't take too long for the young man to arrive in the room.

Instead of Anna, Old Ru was the one asking the question. "Andreas. Check her soul."

Andreas tilted his head in confusion, but he still complied with his grandfather's instruction. He came closer to Anna before closing his eyes.

A blue light started coming out of his thumb as he rubbed both eyes in a single horizontal motion.

When he raised his eyelids, his eyes were glowing as though they were enveloped in a blue-colored blaze. It was at this time that Andreas noticed something.

"I see two souls. One is hidden deeply while the other is currently possessing the body. It seems this soul is older than the other." Andreas furrowed his eyebrows, examining the souls.

"So, that's how it is." Old Ru pinched the bridge of his nose. "Even I, who have the time ability, have no way to know what will happen if someone traverses back in time. But when I think about your case, it's finally confirmed that time is only moving forward.

"In the previous life, Noel might have used the shell on you, but he failed in every attempt except for the last one. And that idea probably came from..." Old Ru glanced at Andreas.

When he thought about it, this could be the truth. Since Andreas accompanied Noel at that time, it was clear that Andreas would have realized the problem as to why the shell was unable to bring Anna back. So, the only choice was to separate her soul from the body, which resulted in Anna's current condition.

"Andreas. What do you think?" Old Ru asked.

"This is intriguing. From what I can see, the second soul has been suppressed naturally because the current consciousness is stronger. However, I'm thinking about another possibility. The current soul is the one strengthening the body, so what will happen if the other soul takes over? May I ask if you notice a kind of restriction when you take over the body? Or do you get a body that doesn't have a single bit of Spiritual Energy?"

"Hmm?" Anna recalled what happened in the past and said, "I did feel a bit of restriction at first. When I reincarnated, this body was already a Spirit Apprentice."

"As expected, if that soul took over, she wouldn't be able to control the energy."

"Are you saying she's going to explode?" Old Ru frowned.

"No. It's going to be a cripple until she manages to link the soul with the body and take over all her achievements in Spiritual Energy."

Anna's expression turned grim. "Suppose we have two souls in the body and create two Spirit Minds and the other processes. In that case, will there be an obstacle?"

"Hmmm..." Andreas thought for a moment. "First of all, you currently have three choices. If you remain like this, you should be able to pass your days like nothing happened. But if you wish for the other body to take over, you might lose all the opportunity to go out ever again unless something special happens.

"However, the second option will be to absorb the soul and integrate it into you. This means the other soul will cease to exist. While you can gain full control of the body, you will also not benefit from the second soul.

"As for the last one..." Andreas fell silent, looking hesitant.

"What's wrong?" Anna and Old Ru looked worried.

"Soul Link." Andreas took a deep breath. "Connecting the two souls together. This will allow you to preserve the second soul and it's going to link with your body. However, the disadvantage is that... the

other soul needs to be willing. And there is also a need for containers. Basically, it's like having a ghost around your body."

Anna thought for a moment. The third option was what she wanted. On the one hand, it would definitely make her stronger. On the other hand, she felt a bit unfair to decide this herself.

Still, she had made her resolve before coming here.

She asked, "Andreas. Do you know about the Soul Contract?"

"Soul Contract!" Andreas widened his eyes in shock, not expecting Anna to know about this ability. "Of course. It's one of the most important abilities I've gotten from my spirit."

"I want to make an agreement with my other self. Do you think it's possible?"

"Well, to meet both of you at the same time, we have to go directly into your consciousness. But..."
Andreas looked at Old Ru.

"It's fine. You can do it." Old Ru agreed, thinking this problem came from his unreliable shell.

"Then, please do it now." Anna didn't hesitate to ask, knowing that she didn't have much time left.

As soon as Old Ru nodded his head, Andreas asked, "Please close your eyes. I will also enter your consciousness."

Andreas bit his thumb and smeared the blood on his and Anna's foreheads before he began revolving his energy.

Both of their bodies started to get enveloped in a blue-colored blaze before Andreas closed his eyes.
lights

The feeling on his skin had changed. The temperature was much cooler, indicating that he had arrived.

Andreas couldn't help but see two Annas and a muscular man, whom he suspected to be the spirit.

"O' Mighty Spirit. I beg for your forgiveness for intruding your territory. "

"I have known your spirit for a long time, so I know what you want to do here. Do whatever you need to do and leave this place right away." The Thunder Berserker Spirit granted him his permission.

"Thank you." Andreas nodded and looked at the left Anna, who had an older soul. "So, may I know what kind of contract you wish to make?"

"It's a contract to decide the person who controls the body. If I win this bet, I hope that the other me can become a co-soul that will help me achieve my goal."

"I have seen the details through your very eyes. I think this is also a good idea to settle things between us. However, I'm not satisfied with you being a co-soul. If I win, I want you to disappear completely. Unlike you, I don't have the desire to get much stronger." The original Anna agreed. Considering she knew everything about Anna's plan from the inside, she had prepared herself for this.

"Certainly." Andreas raised both hands and channeled his Spiritual Energy, forming a brown-colored scroll.

Soon, words of different languages began to appear on top of the scroll.

"If the original wins, the older soul will be integrated into the original's soul and disappear for eternity. If the older soul wins, the original will become a co-soul, helping the older soul reach her goal. No objection from both sides?" Andreas asked for confirmation.

"None!" Both of them answered at the same time.

"Then, please state the type of competition you want."

The older soul said, "I will allow you to take over my body and return to Noel. If Noel finds out about you, you lose."

"Oi. That's too vague. That way, I won't know when I will win. The time limit for that competition should be three days. If he doesn't find out in three days, I win." The original soul smirked. She had known everything about Anna, so it shouldn't be hard to impersonate her.

"No." The older soul shook her head.

"What? Is it too long?" The original soul seemed pissed.

"No. I mean, one day is enough, specifically 24 hours. Since you will return during the night according to my promise to Noel, that means if he doesn't find out about you before the next night, it's your win."

"!!!" The original soul was surprised that Anna had such a deep trust in Noel. But this actually benefited her very much, so there was no reason not to accept it.

"Alright." Andreas nodded solemnly, adding more words to the contract. "The competition will be for the Original Soul to impersonate the older soul. If Noel Ardagan can't find out within the next 24 hours after their reunion, the original soul wins."

"No objection." Both souls agreed at the same time.

"In that case, the contract will be finalized. Do both of you have anything to add?"

The original soul raised her hand. "I have a few conditions. But the most important thing will be allowing me to find another body-like container. At the very least, I want to visit the family I have owed the most."

"I don't have any problems. Even without the Soul Contract, I will definitely help you in that regard." The older soul waved her hand as if it were nothing big. "I owe you this much for possessing your body. If

you have any more requests, please don't hesitate to tell me about them. The co-soul should be able to talk with me, right?"

"Yes. In fact, both of you will be able to know what each other is thinking. So, it's like you're talking without the need to say anything." Andreas nodded.

"In that case, that's enough. As long as it's not a ridiculous request like giving Noel to you, I don't mind fulfilling that request."

When the original soul saw her sincerity, she couldn't help but say, "If you are going to help me that much, in that case, I will also do my best for you. Besides, my current feeling is because of your influence. If I am separated from you for some time, that feeling might change. So, I don't really mind not having him."

"One more thing." The older soul raised a finger. "I don't mind searching for a human-like container, but I hope that I can focus on dealing with the incoming Demon King first."

"It's going to happen soon, so I can wait that long."

"In that case, do we have an agreement?"

"Indeed."

Both souls shook each other's hand.

"The Soul Contract is now established. Please check the condition." Andreas extended his hand as the contract hovering in his palm floated to both Annas.

"I don't have an objection." The original Anna nodded her head.

"Same."

"In that case, the soul contract is now in effect." Andreas clapped his hands as the contract turned into a stream of blue light attached to both Annas. "All that's left is to find a container before the competition."

"I think I have that." Anna glanced at the original Anna. The latter thought of the same thing. "The sword?"

"Yes. I received the blade from the Sword Saint, a previous host of the Soul Spirit. If Andreas found out about my two souls easily, the Sword Saint should have known about this and gifted that blade for this reason."

Andreas raised his eyebrows. He didn't expect that Anna would come so well-prepared.

"If that's the case, I can check it first." Andreas politely nodded his head to the Thunder Berserker Spirit before leaving.

Chapter 965 Goodbye

"I see." Noel closed his eyes for a moment. He had a hard time believing that the person in front of her was actually the one who killed his family in this life. Although everything was a scam, he still had a complicated feeling.

On the one hand, he had dropped his hatred long ago because of the Anna he had known this whole time. On the other hand, he wondered if this was a good idea, considering he had wanted to kill this Anna in the past.

When he thought that this Anna wanted to help the current Anna get stronger, he was grateful. At the same time, it meant that she would lose her body. In fact, she might not be able to call herself Anna anymore.

As if seeing his true thoughts, Anna said, "You don't have to feel bad about me. In fact, this is something I deserve. I have done too many bad things. As you said to Anna, let's look toward the future. Even if I can't be Anna anymore despite being the original, I want to at least become a proper person in the

future. I know that it won't wash away my sin, but I will continue living forward for the sake of tomorrow."

Noel took a deep breath before asking, "So, what are you going to do after this?"

"I think you should come with me. There is another part that I haven't told you yet, and it's better if you see it yourself."

"Alright." Noel nodded with a serious expression.

Both Anna and Noel actually left the city and headed straight to the mountain as if there was something waiting for them. He thought it would be related to the mine, but by the time they reached the foot of the mountain, Noel noticed a presence.

"Hmm?!" Noel raised his head, finding a human with a pair of wolf ears sitting on a branch. "Andreas?!"

That was right. It turned out Andreas went back together with them. Even Noel didn't expect this. He had promised Old Ru not to bring Andreas after all.

"This..." Noel looked at Anna. "What is going on?"

"Actually..." Anna gave a wry smile as she began recounting the other part.

...

After forming the soul contract, Andreas came out of the consciousness and inspected the sword.

"This is a rather interesting sword. I can feel the trace of someone's ability related to soul... It indeed has the power to contain a soul, but more importantly, there seems to be something else related to it."

Anna opened her eyes. The original Anna had taken over according to the agreement.

"The blade was given by the previous host of your spirit. He was known as the Sword Saint one thousand years ago."

"Sword Saint?" Andreas, and surprisingly, Old Ru exclaimed.

Old Ru looked down for a moment while Andreas asked, "The Sword Saint aside, I can definitely move your soul into this blade. I think there is another mechanism that can be used to empower the sword. But I guess I will explain it later if the competition is over."

"That's probably a good idea." Anna nodded in agreement.

Old Ru scratched the back of his head. "It seems that fate is really ruthless."

"Grandfather?" Andreas was confused. It was rare for his grandfather to show such a distorted expression.

"Andreas. Do you want to go to the human kingdom?"

"Huh? What do you mean? Are you trying to throw me away, Grandfather? Have I made a grave mistake?"

Old Ru shook his head helplessly. "No. You might not know about this, but our kingdom has sent information about the current situation to me. It seems that the demons are causing unrest. There is a chance that a massive outbreak will occur, involving a few hundred thousand demons. I, as one of the Spirit Transcendence, have to go back to protect the homeland."

"Then, I will also go with you."

"No." Old Ru glanced at Anna, specifically her sword. "Let's just say that we're repaying the Ardagan Family."

"The Ardagan Family?" Andreas tilted his head in confusion.

"You don't know about this, but do you know how your kingdom is formed? It's thanks to the ancestor of the Ardagan Family. My grandfather, the first generation of soft-shelled Turtlenoid was saved by that very person. Without the Ardagan Family, our lives would be vastly different. In fact, we might only be an object in humans' eyes. That's the reason why our people hate humans, but hail the Ardagan Family."

"There is such a story?"

"Yes. The reason why I chose this place to live in seclusion is because this land is the ancestral land of the Ardagan Family. Isn't it?" Old Ru looked at Anna.

"I learned about it just recently."

"That's the reason. I'm planning to entrust Andreas to the Ardagan Family."

"But Grandfather. If we're going to fight the demons, I'll also go back to protect our homeland." Andreas didn't seem to like the idea that he was pushed away to safety.

"No. I have three reasons for sending you there. First, it's to repay the Ardagan Family. Second, it's for you to train and become even stronger. The last one is the most important... I want you to lead them to our kingdom once they become Spirit Transcendences."

"Huh?!" Anna and Andreas were confused.

The first reason was still within their common sense if the history they knew was correct. The second reason made Andreas wonder if this was the correct choice, considering Old Ru was a Spirit Transcendence while they were only Spirit Grandmasters. But the last one was quite surprising.

"The ancestor of the Ardagan Family leaves something behind for the current lord of the Ardagan Family. No, should I say for the current master of Ardagan?"

"!!!" Anna widened her eyes. He even knew about the sword. It seemed that whatever he was saying was related to Ardagan.

"You will train my grandson well, right?"lights

"The original plan was for him to become the Sword Saint's successor. In fact, the Sword Saint has entrusted us with the book for him." Anna nodded.

"In that case, it's settled." Old Ru turned to Andreas. "I know that I'm deciding your future right now, but please understand, Andreas. Following him for a while will be extremely beneficial for you."

"But..." Andreas contemplated hard. He had watched Noel during his stay here, so he knew that Noel was working harder than anyone else in this place. It was just that the situation was a bit too sudden for him.

"In that case, how about leaving separately? We can leave a bit later since their speed will be quite slow due to her changing soul. You can use that time to consider this matter."

"Well..." Andreas let out a long sigh. He wasn't aware much of what happened in the past, but this was the first time his grandfather acted this proactively. He usually asked him what he wanted and fulfilled his wish.

Andreas wasn't a spoiled kid who had little common sense. Like how his grandfather had been taking care of him, he also didn't want to disappoint his grandfather.

It seemed that he had no choice but to go to the Ardagan Family.

"Still, my ears and tail will definitely be seen. It's going to be troublesome for both me and the Ardagan Family if they are seen, right?"

"I have an artifact to solve that problem. It's a very old artifact, but it still works."

"..." Seeing there was nothing to argue about anymore, Andreas finally agreed.

Even Anna was quite surprised that Andreas would come to the Ardagan Family because of her visit.

"Unfortunately, I can't tell you more than this. If you want to learn more, you might have to come to our kingdom in the future. Of course, make sure that you are a Spirit Transcendence and be a part of the Ardagan Family... future lady of the Ardagan Family." Old Ru squinted her eyes.

He was implying that if they weren't married yet by that time, she couldn't follow Noel.

"You must be tired from the trip. You are free to sleep here for the next two days to adjust your condition. After that, please leave this place."

"You don't mind if I'm examining the ruin of the Ardagan Family, right?"

"Of course. If the owner of that land has given you permission, who am I to say no?"

...

After listening to the story, Noel couldn't help but furrow his eyebrows. "I see. So, Andreas is here to become the successor of the Sword Saint."

"As requested by my grandfather, yes. While I will help you, I'm not planning to become a part of the Ardagan Family."

"Sounds about right." Noel had no problem. Having an addition of fighting power was welcome. "It won't take long for us to become Spirit Transcendence anyway."

"Alright." Andreas nodded. He then took out a bracelet given to him by his grandfather and wore it in front of Noel and Anna. In that instant, the Spiritual Energy started wrapping around his body. The animal ears disappeared, replaced by a pair of human ears. The tail had also disappeared.

Andreas completely looked like a human, but if they came closer, they would feel the softness of the tail. Then again, he could camouflage it with something else.

"In that case, let's start with the last process. I am going to send your soul into the sword and let the older soul take over."

"Please." Anna nodded as though she had accepted her fate. She would be lying if she didn't want to remain in the main body, but they had made a bet and she had lost completely.

The one beside Noel could only be her.

"Before sending you into the sword, I have to tell you about two things. First, the sword has a way to improve the connection between you and even nourish your soul. I'm not one hundred percent sure, but it should be related to blood. By using the blood of the main body, your soul can be nurtured and become even stronger. When you are going to change hosts in the future, you won't have much trouble doing it."

"That's good." Anna smiled.

"Second. since you will be using this sword as a living space, you can actually control the input of the power and other things. No, should I say that you can use the blood smeared on this sword? The blood of enemies or even the host is usable. By refining that blood, you can actually replace the blood of your next body with yours to make that body more compatible with you."

"Well, it's going to take a few years, but I'm good with it." Anna smirked. "This is going to be an enjoyable few years."

"Do you have any last words?"

Anna shook her head without hesitation. "No. Please proceed."

Andreas bit his thumb and pressed Anna's forehead and the sword. His body started emitting Spiritual Energy as Noel could see a line that connected the two blood prints.

The bridge seemed to have a bulge that moved from the forehead to the sword, indicating the movement of the soul.

Anna, who felt the process, noticed that her time was near. The original Anna couldn't help but glance at Noel.

She made a sad smile, giving him a sensation of remorse and regret. Before her soul was completely sucked into the sword, Anna said, "Sorry, Noel, for everything. And goodbye."

Noel's heart felt like it was being shredded apart. Even though she was the original Anna, it didn't change the fact that she had changed from the past.

If there was no rebirth, would he do the same thing as what his previous life did? Despite being the original, she had to be driven away from her own body.

And it was due to him.

Noel swore that even if there was only one Anna he would ever love, he would definitely repay the original Anna for her sacrifice.

Chapter 966 Last Progress

966 Last Progress

Anna gradually opened her eyes as the one he had known this whole time finally returned before him.

The first thing she did was make a sad smile. Even though this was her victory, she couldn't help but feel guilty for driving the original soul away from her body.

Anna looked at Noel's horrified expression as though he couldn't meet her anymore. Anna said with a soft tone, "See? You've known everything as I promised."

Noel walked toward her. It looked like he wanted to confirm if it was her or not. But the first thing he did was actually surprising.

Pak!

The crisping sound of a slap echoed. Anna and Andreas widened their eyes in shock. That was right. The first thing Noel did was actually slap her.

Anna covered her cheek with a surprised expression, but soon Noel hugged her as tightly as possible.

"Do you know that one mistake will completely erase you? What am I going to do without you?"

Anna's body shook. The one who was most pained by this agreement was not the original Anna. It was Noel.

Ultimately, they had played with Noel's feelings. Anna knew that she deserved this slap but thought that Noel would hug her afterward.

He was indeed angry, but more importantly, he was just glad that he could see her again.

"I'm sorry." Anna closed her eyes. Tears began to flow out of the corner of her eyes.

"Never do this again!"

"I know. I won't ever do this again. I promise!"

Noel took a deep breath. As much as he wanted to continue, he knew that this was not the right time. He released her and stepped back. "So, Andreas. What are you going to do?"

"As promised, I'm going to stay in your territory. I will help you defend your city, but I won't become a part of the Ardagan Family."

"That is good enough. In that case, I welcome you to our city. I will ask Dimitri for your accommodation."

Andreas nodded. "The soul transfer is done. It might take a toll on the soul, so let her rest for one or two days before doing anything."

"Understood. Thank you, Andreas."

Andreas nodded.

"In that case, let's go back."

Noel led the group back into the city. Dimitri was obviously surprised to see Andreas here, especially with that disguise. But Andreas was strong. If he could become a Spirit Grandmaster after learning from the Sword Saint, he would definitely be a powerful ally.

After experiencing a rollercoaster of emotion, there was no way Noel could be calm enough to do his work. In the end, he chose to spend the rest of the day with Anna.

Obviously, he wanted to know everything that happened during the trip, making sure that Anna was fine. He also wanted to know about his mother.

"Did my mother really tell you everything about me?" Noel frowned.

"Yes. Do you want to sleep on my lap?" Anna made a cheeky grin while patting her thighs as though she were inviting him.

"Hmph! You shouldn't trust people's vision too much since there is a limit to what they can observe." Noel harrumphed as if he were denying it.

But Anna looked down while saying, "It would be more convincing if you didn't put your head here."

Yes, Noel actually accepted her invitation out of habit, confirming his mother's words.

"So, what did she do during the trip?" Noel asked.

'Changing the topic?' Anna shook her head helplessly. "Well, the trip was much safer than our trip since all three of us were Spirit Grandmasters."

Anna began to recount everything that happened during the trip. They had killed a lot of demons on the way. Anna wanted to show her prowess by defeating a Superior Demon easily.

However, Leysha turned out to be more monstrous than she expected. In the past, Dimitri might have been the strongest fighter in the family. But after a few years of continuous training, it seemed that Leysha had reached Dimitri's level.

That alone would make the Ardagan Family much more powerful. If his parents made their appearance, the Ardagan Family would become the target of admiration and envy. The nobles would definitely switch sides after seeing two peak Spirit Grandmasters, a lot of Grandmasters and Masters, and the fact that the current head was someone like Noel.

They wouldn't even bother fighting for the head wife position with Anna as long as they could become concubines. That was how strong the Ardagan Family was.

Unfortunately, they couldn't really do it because of one big reason. They had been executed by the kingdom. If they announced to the world that the execution was fake, it meant that the Ardagan Family had fooled the kingdoms. People would wonder if they could put their trust in them or not.

In addition, it gave the royal family a reason for launching an all-out attack on the Ardagan Family, demanding the lives of Leysha and Luke. The marshal would definitely come to this place.

Even Commander Oscar or the Tower Association could only let them do whatever they wanted.

That was why Luke had been restraining Leysha the whole time.

Just the rumor of her being alive alone was enough to create suspicion in everyone's minds.

"It seems that I have to be careful for the time being." Noel fell into deep thought.

"Agreed. I believe most of the preparation is done, right?"

"Yeah. We're just trying to progress as far as possible. The north wall should be completed next month. All the main buildings should be ready to be used. What we need left is..." Noel paused for a moment.

"Let me guess. The dam, the ditch, and tunnel?"

"The dam is not that urgent right now. However, we need to direct the river toward here. The ditch is our priority because we have to stop the advancing demons. As for the tunnel... Do you think you can lead this project, Anna?"

"Is it that important?"

"Yes. If it can increase our chance of survival, I don't mind spending all our funds and resources. This tunnel will become extremely important."

"If that's what you want, then I will seek its completion."lights

"But before that, I think we have to focus on the rune weapons."

"Rune weapons, huh?" Anna recalled the weapons from the past. "I think you had a lot of them in the previous life. Your Rain of Light can be shot into the sky to reduce their number. And there are other intermediate runes... which I don't think you have right now."

"Well, I've prepared for it." Noel nodded and looked at the shop. After helping a lot of people multiple times, he received a lot of honor points.

[Shop]

Available Points: 3820 HP

1 Skill Point (2 HP)

Water Bottle (1 HP)

Water Gallon (2 HP)

Water Tank (3 HP)

Random Rune Scroll (30 HP)

Random Upgrade Scroll (30 HP)

This many honor points came from helping the citizens in several steps, triggering the repeatable mission multiple times. And if there were thousands of people in this city and the neighboring city. So, it wasn't weird for him to have this much Honor Point.

He could pull out the Rune Scroll right away, but it would only give him low level runes.

"Ardagan. Do you have any way for me to get Mid Level Runes? All the Mid Level Runes I have right now are supplied from mission rewards. Even if I use everything I have in the Random Rune Scroll, I will only get 1 intermediate level rune every fifty runes, right?" Noel asked.

[Mission: Shop Upgrade]

[Description: Spend 1,000 HP in the shop]

[Reward: Shop Upgrade]

"1,000 honor points? That's too much, right?" Noel fell silent for a moment. It didn't seem too much when he thought about it. He could use this chance to upgrade all his abilities as well as get a few more runes to complete the mission. "But don't you think it's a bit excessive? I mean, I don't need that many Low Level Runes, and what will happen when you run out of runes?"

[You will get multiple low level runes. If you haven't mastered it, the level of that rune will increase accordingly. If you have mastered it, nothing happens.]

"See? That's not really tempting."

[Random Rune Scroll]

Chance of getting a Low Level Rune: 98%

Chance of getting an Intermediate Level Rune: 2%

[Random Super Rune Scroll]

Chance of getting a Low Level Rune: 25%

Chance of getting an Intermediate Level Rune: 70%

Chance of getting an Advanced Level Rune: 5%

"!!!" Noel widened his eyes in shock when he saw the chance of getting an Advanced Level Rune. Still, five percent was extremely low. It was no wonder why Anna didn't find a lot of Advance Level Runes in the past.

When he thought about this, Noel said, "How many do I need to upgrade all my skills from swordsmanship to runes?"

[1530 Skill Points are needed.]

"Come on. I don't use most of my skills. Some of them aren't strong enough anymore like the Swift Strike and Mega Slash. So, don't include them.]

[480 skill points are needed, in which 200 of them are for the last level of Undying Fire.]

"Alright. Convert the honor points and level up all those abilities. Then, buy two Random Rune Scrolls. This should be enough to complete the mission."

[Processing...]

Noel knew that there would be a lot of problems with the influx of information. So, Noel turned to Anna. "Sorry, I will be advancing as quickly as possible. Once I'm done, I should get a lot of intermediate runes. We'll be busy designing items after that."

"Do you need any help?" Anna had known about Ardagan and knew the rule, so she didn't stop him.

"Just a quiet place would be good. It won't take that long anyway."

"Alright." Anna hurriedly walked out of the room while warning the people around the mansion.

[...Completed.]

[Commencing the transfer?]

"Go on!" Noel nodded while closing his eyes.

In that instant, information started to flow inside his head. It felt like his brain was being fried inside, but it was better to do it simultaneously since it saved time and effort.

"Aaaargggghh!"

Anna was standing outside the room with a sad smile. Sadly, she couldn't help him in this process. But of course, she would be busy soon since the original Anna would begin to assimilate with the Thunder Berserker Spirit until it produced a Spirit Mind.

There was one more thing that Anna didn't tell Noel. The reason why Anna agreed to find a new body for the original Anna was because Noel once told her that his power was superficial. And in the future, he might let his son inherit this power from him. When that happened, Noel wouldn't have the system anymore.

Hence, it would be time for Anna to also let go of her rebirth, which meant her original soul wouldn't be helping her anymore.

Of course, they were planning to do it after they reached a conclusion between them. At that point, would the system win or would rebirth triumph?

Chapter 967 Runes

967 Runes

"Haaa... Ha..." Noel's right hand was holding his head as a buzzing sound kept ringing in his head. He had just absorbed a lot of information in one go. "Ardagan. How is progress?"

[Mission: Shop Upgrade (Complete)]

[Description: Spend 1,000 HP in the shop]

[Reward: Shop Upgrade]

[Shop]

1 Skill Point (2 HP)

Water Bottle (1 HP)

Water Gallon (2 HP)

Water Tank (3 HP)

Random Rune Scroll (30 HP)

Random Upgrade Scroll (30 HP)

Random Super Rune Scroll (100 HP)

Random Super Upgrade Scroll (100 HP)

Random Medal Scroll (5000 HP)

"Random Medal Scroll?" Noel widened his eyes in shock. He never thought that he could earn a medal through this method. Noel looked down.

"How about the progress of my other missions like the Everchanging Emotion Sword Style and Rune Master?" Noel remembered these two missions that he still failed to complete.

The former wanted him to master the basics of the Everchanging Emotion Sword Style. He had progressed by leaps and bounds after meeting the Sword Arbiter, but there seemed to be something that blocked his path. This was one last hurdle to overcome to fully complete the sword style.

As for the Rune Master, he had to become a Proper Rune Knight and master the combat with runes. He had been training in this aspect, but there was a difference between fighting with runes and using runes as support in a fight.

So, Noel still couldn't complete the mission.

[You already know the assignment and your progress.]

"Hah..." Noel let out a long sigh. He was quite curious about this Random Medal, but the price was too high. It wasn't possible for the time being.

However, when his territory was completed and he could help people in all directions, getting all the necessary points wouldn't be a hard task.

"Still, the Undying Fire has finally reached its maximum level. It might be due to the fact that I have completed mastery and even awakened the flame that I don't notice any significant improvement."

Now that he had found the random runes for the intermediate runes, he couldn't help but wonder what was the right number to purchase. On the one hand, he wanted to get all kinds of intermediate level runes. On the other hand, he had to keep some of the honor points not only to upgrade their levels but also to save them in case he needed them in the fight against the Supreme Devil Organization.

After careful consideration, Noel said, "Since I still have almost three thousand points, exchange eighteen scrolls and save one thousand points for other things."

[Processing...]

[You've acquired the Momentum Rune.]

[You've...]

[You've...]

The runes appeared one after another as their information was transmitted directly into Noel's head.

"Kh." Noel endured the pain while checking the runes he got. Some of them might not really be relevant to his fighting style, but there were some that would make him even stronger. He also noticed that some of the runes were useful for the weapons and armor he planned to build.

But more importantly, he found one Advanced Level Rune.

"This is..." Noel gasped. The Advanced Level Rune was called the Executioner Rune. As the name implied, it was a ridiculously strong offensive rune. If Noel were to unleash this, he might be able to kill hundreds of low level demons with a single rune. But the power consumption and the amount of time required to create this rune were also massive.

He thought about using an item to trigger this rune. Unfortunately, it didn't seem to be possible. Not only was the rune massive, but it was also so violent that the item would be destroyed after unleashing this rune once. He might even need a lot of Peak Level Demon Crystals if he wanted to activate it.

However, if he was only talking about a trump card, this rune might be able to fulfill its role.

He finally understood why Advanced Level Runes were said to be able to rival those of Spirit Transcendences. Even Noel could only use this rune twice before he was completely empty.

"The rune is ridiculously strong. As for the others..." Noel took a look at the other runes he thought would be useful in a battle.

There were two runes that could aid him in battle: the Amplification Rune and the Meteor Rune. He could take advantage of their firepower to suppress the enemy.

Meanwhile, there were runes that could be useful in their defense. The Meteor Rune could produce a ball of spiritual energy that would cause a massive explosion once it hit. He thought about utilizing this rune as a catapult on the wall.

There was also the Momentum Rune which allowed people to charge the momentum of an object to launch it at very high speed. Combined with a spike, it might penetrate a powerful demon.

There were a few other runes that could be useful, but he had to discuss it with Anna and Roel to see whether crafting those weapons was possible or not.

Before calling Anna, Noel checked the upgrade requirement for the new runes, wondering if he should increase their levels or not. But after looking at the cost and benefit of saving the Honor Points in case something unpredictable happened, he ultimately chose to save the points.lights

As expected, after showing the list of runes to Anna, she could think of some ideas on how to utilize the runes.

They ended up discussing a lot of things with Roel.

...

One month later.

Noel and Anna stood in front of their northern wall. Due to the star-shaped city, the wall was split into two sides. Noel had to make sure that each side had all the runes it needed.

"Have you decided what runes you plan to draw here?"

"Yeah. There will be five runes on each wall. After drawing everything, we will cover the runes with demons' hide before adding one or two layers of bricks. This way, we could hide the runes from anyone." Noel looked satisfied.

"But won't it become a problem if you want to repair them? What if the runes are damaged?"

"That's the use of the hide. The bricks will take the impact while the hide will separate the outer layer and the rune layer. I will also add some random patterns that make it hard for anyone to understand which runes I'm using. I have to speed things up a little bit since the enemies are coming soon."

"Do you need my help?"

"How is the tunnel?"

"It's almost completed, so I'm quite free right now."

"In that case, help me with covering the area with hides and adding some random patterns to confuse the enemies."

"Which blood are we using for the runes?" Anna asked.

"The fake can use Peak Level Demons. The real ones will use the Superior Demon's blood. Thanks to you, we have enough supplies to cover these walls. The remaining walls will be strengthened by the Superior Demon's blood that we'll get from defending the territory."

"Got it. In that case, you may start. I will bring the hide."

"Alright." Noel nodded and looked at the wall. He had brought a few gallons of Superior Demon Blood. Most of it came from the Superior Demons that Anna killed on the last trip.

The most important runes among the five he planned to draw was none other than the Spiritual Barrier Rune. This rune had the same task as Saintess Layla's barrier, protecting walls from demon attack. Since they were made of Superior Demon Blood and powered up by the Peak Level Demon Crystals he got from the Zaecuria Kingdom, they should be able to withstand the demons' relentless onslaught for some time.

After that, he obviously wanted the Hardening Rune so that normal demons couldn't destroy the walls by slamming their bodies against it. And there was also Rune Blast as he remembered the problem with the demon corpse stairs.

He added two additional runes to solve other problems he saw during the small expedition.

He only had less than one month before the Supreme Devil Organization came. In the last month, he focused on two things. Crafting weapons for the wall and exploring the ruin of the previous civilization that the Third Prince told him.

As expected, the Third Prince had plundered almost everything from that place. When he subjugated that place, he didn't find much other than numerous demons.

The messenger told him that there were a lot of food items. But everything had been ransacked not long ago. And the few machines he claimed to still work had been either destroyed or taken away.

They made too much ruckus to make it look like the Supreme Devil Organization was the culprit. But it was clear that the Third Prince was grabbing all those pieces of important equipment.

In the end, that building was only a bait to make him overwork himself.

Either way, he didn't care much about the ruin. If he wanted, he could set up another expedition outside the territory after expanding the border in the future. So, he prioritized building the trench from the river to his territory.

In fact, he had been standing right in front of the ditch. In the middle of the ditch was a deep trench that reached as far as twenty meters.

The ones who managed that project were none other than Noel and Layla. Noel used Ardagan and the Undying Fire to melt the soil deep underground. Layla used her barrier to separate that soil so that the Enhance Forward Rune could be used to pump out all the soil underground. This way, they managed to build the entire ditch system within two weeks.

There were only three things left to do to face the Supreme Devil Organization. The first would be completing the runes. Secondly, he had to dig the last part of the trench, connecting the ditch and the river, which would ultimately fill the ditch with water. Last but not least, he had to bring all the weapons to the top of the walls.

With all these preparations, he believed that he could defeat the Supreme Devil Organization.

"Alright. Let's start, shall we?" Noel smirked. He didn't have a lot of time left, so he hurriedly drew the runes. Of course, during the process, everyone was forbidden to be near the walls. Any attempts to peek would be akin to admitting to being a spy. Even Saintess Layla was no exception.

The method of the drawing itself was similar to the Spirit Enchantment. But unlike the Spirit Enchantment, Rune's power could be enhanced depending on the blood used to draw it. That was why Noel's method was slightly different from what Roel used.

There were two other people who knew this method other than him. They were Anna and Roel. Noel had taught Roel since he was a pillar and the most important person during the preparation.

Livia and Tristan would learn this as well, but after the battle. They would learn the Rune Body, Rune Enhancement, and even Rune Array.

Howard had also been training the new recruit. They managed to at least raise the number of soldiers to five hundred. This should be enough to supply the northern wall.

Harley always remained vigilant, trying to spread his information network outside and inside the border. He had to make sure that not a single noble took advantage of this moment to bring down the Ardagan Family.

Khalid also prepared a lot of medicine to heal people and boost their strength. During the battle, he might be the most crucial person in the Ardagan Family.

Outside the city, Felicia had been training the flying squad to become the most lethal squad of the Ardagan Family.

Andreas had also improved by leaps and bounds after learning from the book the Sword Saint left behind. To everyone's surprise, he believed that his foundation was already strong enough and chose to advance to the Spirit Grandmaster, which meant the Ardagan Family had another grandmaster.

Unfortunately, Felicia tried to do the same, but she was still too focused on the rune and got stuck at the peak of Spirit Master.

Lastly, Saintess Layla had finished the foundation of the Moon Temple's new headquarters. If they somehow lost, they only needed to hide inside this Moon Temple and no one dared attack them.

However, the Supreme Devil Organization this time came without underestimating him. They would surely bring an army of the size no one had ever seen before. So, whether Noel was able to protect his city or not was still questionable.

Chapter 968 Move Out

968 Move Out

"Master." Dimitri looked at him with a serious expression. They were standing in front of the trench leading to the city's ditch, which would surround the city with water.

"Alright. Let's begin!" Noel nodded. Dimitri hurriedly raised his right hand, signaling for the workers to begin.

Without hesitation, the workers started scooping the ground out of the trench. After a few minutes, the trench finally connected the ditch with the river.

Water began flowing through this small channel, eroding the remaining dirt. The flow was quite stable due to it being not too deep, but the first thing that the water had to fill was the deep empty wall Noel had dug before.

The water was sucked completely. Noel and the others couldn't help but try to look at it, but because they couldn't get too close, they failed to see the bottom.

It would take time to fill it completely, but with this, the ditch would be completely filled with water. Noel planned a waterway that would link the water from the river into the city, but there was a water demon, so he had to abandon this plan for the time being.

"With this, everything is ready." Noel smiled. He looked at the wall, which had been covered with bricks.

Of course, he knew that if they prolonged the fight, they would be at a disadvantage, considering Layla would have exhausted her energy. Hence, he needed a battle plan to kill most of the demons within the first twelve hours.

If he couldn't do it, the city would be in danger. In fact, he believed Qiel would use attrition warfare to destroy the Ardagan Family.

"How is the situation inside?" Noel asked.

"The guests from the Demon Banner Army have arrived. The two elders coming from the Tower Association have also arrived, but one of them seems to be inspecting the mountain. The Moon Temple has been here for a long time, so there's no need to say anything about them. And we received the people from the Zaecuria Kingdom yesterday."

"What is our strength in total?"

"Including both of us and Andreas, we have thirteen grandmasters on our side. There are approximately twenty masters, most of them are new recruits. Knowing Howard, he should be able to command them perfectly."

"Our soldiers?"

"We have about 80 elite soldiers and 10 flying soldiers. Their strength ranges from Spirit Apprentice to Spirit Wielder. There are about five hundred normal soldiers. The people seem to be eager to help with other chores like bringing water and food to the wall, helping with injuries and other things."

"I'm sorry for them, but whether they are kids, women, or elderly, I have to work them to the bone in this battle."

"They have seen the greatness of the city, so of course, they will help." Dimitri nodded. "Are we going to create a separate unit for an ambush?"

"No need. As long as the wall remains intact, the Ardagan Family can't be destroyed." Noel thought for a moment. "What about the weapons?"

"The heavy weapons have been transported onto the wall. They are placed in their designated area, so there's nothing to worry about. Everything is ready to receive the enemies."

"Has Harley noticed a movement from the north?"

"Not yet. But it seems to be extremely quiet."

"I see." What he meant by quiet was that there were no demons. It was impossible for people outside the border not to have a demon unless they had been moved to a different place. Noel nodded. "Alright. Make sure that the water is ready and keep vigilant in all directions."

"Understood."

...

Outside the border.

Laufey and Qiel met up again.

"It seems that it's a success." Qiel looked at the numerous demons standing quietly like that of a soldier.

"Yeah. We have a lot of Superior Demons and almost a hundred thousand demons. This should be enough, right?"

"To think that we would need this much just to destroy a city with only a single wall." Qiel sighed. "If we fail, those kingdoms will definitely not let us off. They might even use this demon army as an excuse to attack us."

"How are the new Devil Saints?"

"They are currently watching the movement from the Greenwood Kingdom. We'll pick them up on the way."

"Well, we'll have to reorganize these demons later, but the journey from here to that city is about four days. Have the people been stationed?"

"They are on the way. We're going to delay it for another three days before departing. We have to place our people carefully to stop the Demon Banner Army."

"The Tower Association? We have our spies stopping them. But it seems that some of the elders are getting involved with the Ardagan Family."

"That doesn't matter. If they want to die, then they can die. How about the royal faction? Are they going to send reinforcement?"

"No. They are in no position to send them. Marquis Stargaze is using all his power and influence to stop them. Besides, the Sword Arbiter is also standing on the south side of that city. I heard there is another Paladin stationed in that city. The nobles are sitting quietly. Some were willing to help the Ardagan Family but were rejected."

"It seems that we can fully commit to destroying the Ardagan Family."

"Yes. But there are two places that are forbidden to be attacked, the Moon Temple and the port of the Zaecuria Kingdom."

"Zaecuria Kingdom, huh... Even though they have gotten involved in this?"

"This is an order. We'll just focus on taking down the city. Spread our army in all directions and start attacking the barrier. The main attack will be on the north wall. All of us are going to focus our attack on that wall and clash with their main power. Even if we can't exhaust them, we will have to show our overwhelming strength to pummel their morale."

"Got it. Is there anything else I need to know?"

"No."

...lights

Zaecuria Kingdom.

"It's starting, isn't it, Marquis Benedict?" The king asked with a smile.

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"If we take a look at their strength, I doubt that the Ardagan Family would fall without a fight. But we will be able to see how much the demon army can threaten us. If they exceed our expectations, I hope that Your Majesty will consider wiping the Supreme Devil Organization out before they grow even stronger." The minister of war opened his mouth.

"We can only wait for the result right now. For now, just ensure that the Atracaeca Kingdom beside us won't create any variables. That's the least we can do."

"Understood."

...

Greenwood Kingdom.

"Raincart. Are you sure you're not going?" The king asked.

"As much as I want to go, it's not a place for me to intervene. Damian is protecting the border, so we can only wait and see for now. Besides, I believe that my grandson is more than capable of repelling those armies."

"Hehe. If your grandson loses, I don't mind accepting him here in the Greenwood Kingdom."

"I thank you for your consideration, but it's fine. I believe in him." Raincart smiled.

...

North Border.

Luke and Leysha were looking at the map as Silvester knocked on the door. "Master, Madam. We have found their locations."

"Come in," Luke ordered.

"What should we do?" Silvester entered the room while asking.

"We won't do anything for now. But get ready, as we'll block their escape route later."

"Understood."

Leysha smiled. "It seems that the time for us to not remain as bystanders is going to come soon. You promise that we will be able to see our son openly in the future."

"Of course. I'm not planning to take back that promise."

"That's good then."

...

Supreme Devil Organization.

Alexander stood up and saw a few Devil Bishops and said, "Get ready into positions. We're going to play with the Demon Banner Army a bit. I hope that Oscar won't bore me."

"Yes, Sir."

"Remember. Our mission is to stall the Demon Banner Army and ensure that they can't send more reinforcement to the Ardagan Family. Use your life to ensure the success of the mission and don't forget to create an escape route in case the Ardagan Family surpasses our imagination once again. There's going to be a hell lot of trouble coming in our way after this, so I want our group to preserve as much strength as possible."

"Yes, Sir!"

...

Royal Family.

The king was accompanied by the marshal.

"What's the odds of the Ardagan Family surviving this attack?" The king asked.

"It's pretty low. But I don't know the strength of their runes, so if I have to predict, it's a 50-50 chance. That young Earl also has the influence to gather a lot of important people, so he should have gathered more than ten Spirit Grandmasters in that city."

"50-50..." The king gritted his teeth.

"Your Majesty. There is something I'd like to ask. The Supreme Devil Organization is an organization created by the Royal Family. Now that they have so much strength, what will we do if the dog bites its owner's hand?" The marshal asked.

"You don't have to think about it. The Ardagan Family is more important." The king snorted.

The marshal couldn't help but furrow his eyebrows. Unfortunately, he couldn't express his opinion here after seeing the king's expression.

He was a bit too fixated on the Ardagan Family. On the other hand, Duke Lorelei had been talking about him a lot. The marshal had a good relationship with Duke Lorelei, considering he was the strongest arbiter who could at least put up a fight whenever they were sparring. So, the marshal could only bury his opinions. Ultimately, he was the royal family's sword, so he would remain loyal no matter what happened.

...

Finally, three days passed by.

The promised time had arrived.

Qiel looked at Laufey, who was waving his hands toward the Superior Demons. "Move out!"

Chapter 969 Raising The Morale

969 Raising the Morale

Noel stood on top of a podium, witnessed by almost all the people from his territory. The soldiers were obviously at the very front.

He was accompanied by Anna and Howard by his side.

The people couldn't help but look at this youth before them. Most of them weren't aware of Noel's appearance due to him isolating himself in either his workplace or his mansion.

However, those whose workshops were visited knew the identity of this man.

"Is that the lord?"

"Is there something wrong?"

"Yeah. It's weird for him to gather us here."

"Haven't you heard the rumor about the Supreme Devil Organization?"

"Right? It seems that they are about to send tens of thousands of demons to our place."

"What? Will we be destroyed?"

"No way. This city is splendid, but it's not fully built yet. So, I don't want it to be destroyed."

"That's right. Why would those terrorists harm us? Where is the kingdom?"

"There's no way those people will send reinforcement here. I heard they executed the lord's parents in the past. They must want him dead."

"Then..."

The people were quite scared because of the incoming attacks. How could they not? The scale of this attack was far bigger than anything everyone had seen before. Their city hadn't been completed as well.

However, some of them gritted their teeth and said, "If that's the case, I'm going to fight on the wall too. I don't have the same ability as the soldiers, but I can release some arrows. I can even bring items to the top of the wall if necessary."

"That's right. I have confidence in my stamina."

"This place can't be destroyed. It's the place where our dream lies."

Their words echoed from across the street, making people realize how wonderful the city was. It was a dream for the commoner to have a chance to get a good life with treatment beyond that of a noble.

They had to protect this place from their enemies.

After a lot of whispers, Howard suddenly stepped forward and shouted, "Silence!"

The people were startled by his voice. It was loud and echoed through the city, thanks to the help of spiritual energy.

They all couldn't help but look at Howard with a dumbfounded expression.

"Some of you might have known me, but..." Howard raised his hand and introduced himself. "My name is Howard, Ardagan Family's Garrison Captain!"

"The captain?"

"I heard the captain is a strong man from the soldiers."

"Then..."

Howard extended his hand to Noel and continued, "And the man standing here before you is none other than your lord, the Earl Ardagan, Noel Ardagan!"

The people looked shocked. While most of them had heard the rumors, this was the first time they saw their lord.

They never thought that the lord was so young. Then again, they heard of his achievement. Repelling the Supreme Devil Organization, killing a Devil Saint, and even becoming the creator of the runes. More importantly, it was the lord who enabled them to live in comfort.

People who had experienced bad things and endured harsh reality in their previous place knew what kind of change brought into this city. For the first time in their entire lives, they thought they wanted to dedicate their lives for the sake of the city and chase after a dream that wasn't possible before.

At that time, they couldn't help but bend their knees.

"My wife died in the harsh summer because we didn't have enough water."

"I was treated like trash because I broke my ankle and was exiled."

The people who heard and saw their change couldn't help but follow them. They fell to their knees while lowering their heads. It wasn't a rare sight for a noble, but this was probably the first time that they bent their knees solely for admiration and gratitude.

"As expected of the lord..." Charlotte smiled while glancing at the woman beside her. "Are you going to fight as well, Rose?"

"Of course. While I'm learning from you to become your successor, I am a former knight of the Demon Banner Army. Still, this is the first time I've seen a noble so respected before." Rose smiled.

"This is just a start. Master is going to become an even bigger figure in the future." Tristan looked at him with a smile.

"This is necessary steps if we want to win the war. If the hearts of the people don't unite, they might panic and cause commotions inside the city. Our current strength is only enough to handle the threats from the outside after all, so we can't afford the citizens to be rioting." Livia closed her eyes, understanding Noel's action. But she had no power to inspire the common people despite being a princess.

The pillars were standing not far from the platform. They all looked at the difference between this city and any other cities they had visited. They looked like they were aware that Noel might be able to make the unthinkable happen.

Finally, Noel stepped forward while spreading his arms. "I am Noel Ardagan, the head of the Ardagan Family."

His voice was solemn and calm, neither too soft nor too loud. He spread this voice to soothe the people's hearts with spiritual energy.lights

Everyone's eyes were glued to his figure.

"As you all know, we are about to fight against the Supreme Devil Organization. This treacherous organization wants to unleash tens of thousands of demons on this land.

"However, our city hasn't prepared itself for combat yet. Only our northern wall has been built, while a lot of buildings have yet to get the foundation.

"In other words, we will be in a very disadvantageous position. I say again. Without the complete wall, we have to completely annihilate the enemies."

The people were stunned. If there was only a north wall, they would be flanked by every other side, which would be impossible to protect.

One of the people couldn't help but ask out loud, "But... but how? We don't have any walls to protect ourselves from the demons."

Noel's expression remained calm. "I am aware of that. However, we have no choice but to stop them here. That's why I have asked for help." Noel raised his hand and asked, "Saintess of Moon Temple, Layla!"

Layla, who had been standing at the very center of the city, released her spiritual energy. All of a sudden, a translucent barrier emerged from the ground and shot up to the sky, creating a star-shaped wall. However, the barrier continued expanding upward to create a dome.

"That's..."

"A barrier?"

Noel continued, "This is the barrier of the Saintess of the Moon Temple. It's said that this barrier can hold tens of thousands of demons for days. Do you understand what this means?"

"It means that no demons can enter our city. However, if we only hole up here without doing anything, the barrier will collapse sooner or later, and in the end, everyone will lose their lives here. That's why we have our wall!"

"This wall is not only for our protection but also the symbol of our counterattack. Are you tired of having the Supreme Devil Organization terrorize the land?"

"I understand that you are terrified. The enemy is that notorious organization, while many of us are normal people. And if you do fight, many of you will lose your lives."

"However, do you know why they want to destroy us? Take a look at the people around you. Have you seen their smiles? Or maybe you have grown tired of it."

"I want this city to be the pillar of ushering in a brand new era, a city where people get what they deserve and live like proper human beings. But because they are afraid of our land, they are trying to destroy this city. That's right. They are so afraid of us that they need so many demons to attack us.

"That's why we will fight. We will show them that this city will be the zero point of the new era. We will show them that we don't have to fear the Supreme Devil Organization anymore. Instead, they should be the ones to fear us!

"WE ARE STRONG!" Noel paused for a moment.

One of the younger people couldn't help but stand up while shouting, "My lord. This city fills me and my mother with hope. My dad died because of the brutality of the previous city and it was only after arriving in this city that my mom started to smile again. I promised him I'd protect my mother. No way, I'm not gonna let my mother lose her smile anymore!"

The woman next to him teared up. She was proud and grateful.

"My lord. I couldn't become a soldier because I lost my hand, but I can still wield a spear to fight."

"My lord. I might only be a carpenter, but I can still wield my spear if necessary."

"My lord, I might be a woman, but I can still release an arrow or help with anything."

"I'll fight too!"

"Please allow me to fight too!"

"My lord. Me too!"

"We're done being weak."

"Rise up, everyone."

"It's time for us to instill fear in those treacherous bastards."

"That's right. We're done being the oppressed!"

"We'll show them our courage."

"Uooohhhh!"

The people couldn't help but stand up as a sign of joining the battle. They all roared the same thing. "We chose to fight!"

While hearing the voices filled with energy, Dimitri couldn't help but smile. He remembered the time that Luke Ardagan helped the people, the people were only on the receiving end, satisfied that they got the help they needed.

But Noel was different. He didn't want the citizens to only receive. Instead, he inspired the citizens to believe that they were not so weak that they could only do nothing but rely on their lord. They could do the same thing.

As Noel said earlier, this city would become the land that would create a new brand era. The runes made it possible for even normal people to fight the demons.

"Maybe I've grown too old." Balott rubbed both his eyes, wiping the tears from the corners of his eyes.

"This is the man who will surpass all the previous heads of the Ardagan Family." Jasmine smiled excitedly. She was quite frustrated that she couldn't do it more recently.

Noel raised his hand and shouted, "I have heard your resolve. This battle will determine the new brand era. Will we be etched into history as the vanquished? Or will we fight for our survival and emerge victorious?"

"Without a doubt, we will be under the protection of the ancestors of the Ardagan Family.

"In one hour, the demons will arrive at our door. We shall kill every single demon and crush the Supreme Devil Organization.

"If you have any doubts, just look at my back. I, Noel, will show you that we, too, can fight back."

Chapter 970 Begin!

970 Begin!

Roar!

Roar!

A series of roars resounded across the land. The demons were making their way toward Lounstein as they bulldozed everything on their path.

Laufey, Qiel, and two other Devil Saints sat on top of a giant bull.

"I can see the river. It won't be long before we reach that city." Qiel looked at the distance while frowning. This was the clash she had been waiting for. Just like them, Noel should have prepared a lot of things to intercept them.

She believed that the winner of this battle would be the one who had made more preparation.

"His brain... Well, is better than mine. And we can't underestimate his prowess."

"Since there are four of us, should we take one side each?" Laufey asked.

"No. According to the information, it didn't seem that his wall was the usual rectangle. I'm sure that he is going to use that wall to kill as many demons as possible. And that's the place we're going to concentrate our strength. All of us will remain on the north side and have two Superior Demons commanding the army on the other sides."

"Ro—" Laufey suddenly stopped and noticed a cloud of dust coming from the north. "Huh?"

Qiel couldn't help but glance to the side. She shouted, "Enemy attack. As discussed, a Superior Demon and ten thousand lower level demons will be stopping them!"

When she ordered it, there was a roar coming from one of the Superior Demon as it began to curve to the left to stop the incoming attacks.

On the other side, Damian couldn't help but smile when he noticed the movement.

"Supreme Commander. Approaching enemy. According to the size of the dust cloud, the number should be about ten thousand."

"Begin our plan!" Damian nodded. He was currently leading a total of two thousand men, planning to engage in melee combat with the demons.

With his order, his subordinate blew a horn, signaling all infantry.

"GO!" All the Spirit Masters and Spirit Wielders in the infantry began to spread and struck down all the trees. All the soldiers stopped and carefully avoided all the trees.

Damian actually wanted to create a small battlefield in this wood by cutting down all the trees. The demons were also crushing everything on their path, which would create a bigger plain.

Damian raised his hand, signaling to his assistant.

"Move out! Assume position!" All the commanders under his command immediately moved out of their army. In just an instant, they created two lines of soldiers, consisting of one thousand soldiers each.

"Huh?!" Qiel couldn't help but widen her eyes. "Is he..."

Although there was no big war between the four kingdoms due to the demon's threat, it didn't change the fact that war knowledge had been passed down. And Damian actually took advantage of all his experts to create a battlefield where he could apply military formations. With these formations, he would become a bigger threat.

"Not good!" Qiel gritted her teeth, recognizing what he wanted to do. "Send another—"

Unfortunately for her, Damian was one step ahead. He shouted, "From the right, charge in succession!"

Qiel's face was pale. The soldiers were actually charging in an echelon formation. What he was trying to achieve was not to conserve energy or anything. Instead, he wanted to make the battlefield even bigger.

When the first wave arrived, they hit the demons from the right, causing the shock wave to travel through the demon's rank toward the opposite direction.

In other words, the demons got pushed back toward the left, which ended up crushing more trees and flattening the area. With this, Damian managed to create a field at least fifty meters wide and a hundred meters long, opening a path straight to Qiel's position.

"Second wave!" Damian signaled the soldiers.

The second wave moved forward and hit the demons, consolidating the battlefield.

"Flatten them!" Damian ordered.

Because the demons were still affected by the shock wave, they had a hard time regaining their balance and started attacking the humans. Damian took advantage of this to release all their firepower.

All of a sudden, numerous attacks from arrows to spirit abilities flew into the sky, raining the demons down. The Greenwood Kingdom was known as the land of Spirit ians, so they brought around one thousand of them to provide cover fire.

Some of the demons tried to shoot them down, but it was futile. There were simply too many of them.

"Kh!" Qiel gritted her teeth. "Send another ten thousand demons to him! If this continues, those demons will die."

Roar!

The Superior Demon informed the demons, causing more and more demons to change their direction.

However, Qiel still severely underestimated the power of the vice captain of the royal army. Qiel might be smarter than him in a mind battle, but a battlefield was where Damian shone.

"Jean!" Damian called.

Jean immediately blew a different type of horn. All of a sudden, two more clouds of dust appeared on the battlefield. They were flanking the demons from both sides.

"!!!" Qiel widened her eyes. It turned out that each cloud of dust consisted of one thousand cavalries. They moved swiftly from both sides and cut off the demons in the middle.

Those were the demons that got affected the most by the shock wave of Damian's echelon formation.

Seeing the progress, Damian ordered, "Tell the first wave to get back and the second line will become the vanguard. Have the reserve standby. If there is a chance, we'll strike deep into their

—"

Damian abruptly stopped and jumped into the air. A giant turtle moved toward them and let out a purple beam from its mouth.

Damian waved his sword, deflecting the beam to the side. At the same time, he noticed another strong demon coming from the army. "Two Superior Demons, huh... There are at least ten Superior Demons as well. And an additional five thousand demons. So, in total, we stop twenty five thousand demons with only six thousand soldiers. I guess this is enough. More than this and our army might collapse."

As soon as Damian landed on the ground, he said, "Jean. Inform all the commanders to push our infantry and bail out the cavalry. After that, we'll reinforce our defense and stop these demons here. Remember, our goal is not to crush all these demons. It's to stall them here. We don't want high casualties."

"Understood." Jean nodded and began sending signals to the army commanders.

"We have done our job. The rest is up to you, Noel Ardagan. I hope that you can withstand all these demons." Damian sighed. "Still, an army, huh? In a sense, they're extremely dangerous. In another sense, you can beat them with tactics."

Damian kept watching the two Superior Demons as he didn't want them to destroy his army.

Meanwhile, Laufey looked frustrated. "What? They took a fourth of our army immediately? We managed to retain most of our Superior Demons, but..."

He had a hard time gathering a hundred thousand demons, so he got angry when a fourth of his work ended up disappearing in one go.lights

"..." Qiel's expression darkened. "I have severely underestimated Damian. It's no wonder he was chosen as the Supreme Commander. Laufey. Use your anger to decimate the Ardagan Family, not here."

Laufey clenched his fists before sighing. "I know."

Although their number had been reduced, they still had seventy-five thousand demons and a lot of Superior Demons. It wasn't that bad when they thought about it.

"Should we send some demons along the river? He might be placing some weird traps there."

"No need. The Fish Demon should be leading its fellow water demons through the water." Qiel shook her head.

Eventually, they could see Noel's towering wall in the distance.

Just like them, Noel could see the incoming demons and hurriedly ask Layla to erect the barrier.

A star-shaped wall barrier emerged from the ground. All of them could see the enormous spiritual energy behind that barrier.

"So, that's the Saintess's barrier. Can't you destroy it, Qiel?" Laufey asked.

"Impossible. It was said that even after getting attacked by all bishops and paladins, the Saintess still maintained her barrier easily. Even with all the Superior Demons we have here, we can't destroy that barrier easily. And using too much energy will allow Noel and the others to come out of the castle to openly hunt our Superior Demons."

"I see. So, we'll use the low level demons to wear them off first?"

"Yes." Inform the demons to take their position!"

...

On top of the castle wall, Noel looked at the incoming demons.

"So many demons? I can't even see the end of the cloud dust... How many are they?" Howard frowned.

"I'm not sure. But..." Dimitri frowned. The demon army began to spread their force like a normal army and gradually surrounded the city.

"This is..."

"All of these are demons?"

"They're not attacking us?"

"They can be controlled?"

The normal soldiers felt a bit scared because this was the first time they had seen a demon outbreak of this scale. At most, they only saw two to three thousand demons at once, but this time, there were so many demons that they looked like ants.

Qiel seemed to adjust their positions to match the shape of the wall. Noel asked, "Are all the grandmasters in their positions?"

"Yes. We are ready to intercept them, Master." Dimitri reported.

It took them a moment to move all the demons, but the scale was gradually clear. Howard said, "From what I can see, they have around seventy to eighty thousand demons. About fifty thousand of them are in our wall while the rest are spread quite thin to reduce the barrier's strength."

Dimitri added, "Still, each side has two Superior Demons. At the very least, eight Superior Demons are contained on the other side for now. And in our front, I can see about eleven Superior Demons as well as four Grandmasters, including Laufey and Qiel. There might be other demons that are ready elsewhere, either as reserve or ambush."

"Eleven Superior Demons, huh..." Noel's expression turned grim.

The soldiers clenched their weapons tightly, wondering if they could do it.

All of a sudden, a giant bull moved forward, bringing Qiel to the front. Qiel shouted, "O' people of the Ardagan Family. I can't help but praise your bravery in protecting your territory. However, we have seventy thousand demons and a lot of Superior Demons. No matter what you do, you won't be able to protect this city. If you drop your weapons now and go inside the Moon Temple, then I can promise you that you won't be harmed!"

The people widened their eyes.

"We won't be harmed?"

"The Moon Temple..."

There was a doubt in people's hearts. If they could easily solve the war through that method, wouldn't that be better?

"That Qiel is manipulating people's minds..." Anna gritted her teeth.

"Don't worry, lady Anna. The current master is far stronger than Qiel could imagine."

A pair of black wings appeared on Noel's back as he floated not far from the city. He opened his mouth, transmitting his voice to everyone. "You should come up with a better excuse, Qiel.

"Despite having all those demons, you don't even dare attack the Moon Temple? Don't tell me, you're actually afraid."

"Huh?!" Qiel widened her eyes. There was no way she was afraid. She was merely ordered not to hit the Moon Temple.

However, the people in the city thought differently. That was right. If they were so mighty, why would they not harm the Moon Temple, who clearly fought together with them?

Noel said earlier that they were afraid, so it might really be true. The Supreme Devil Organization and the demons might not be as scary as they originally thought.

"I have defeated your Supreme Devil Organization multiple times, including yourself. Back then, I was alone. But look!" Noel spread his arms as if he wanted to show his pride and joy. "I have all these people standing with me today. Do you think a mere demon army can scare me?"

"My lord..."

"Lord..."

The soldiers looked at Noel in awe. That was right. They were currently standing with him to create a new era.

Noel looked at them with a smile. He pointed at his back. "If you don't know what to do, just look at my back and follow me. I shall lead you to victory!"

All of them gritted their teeth in excitement. They couldn't help but raise their hands and roar. "Oooooohhhh! Long live the Ardagan Family!"

Qiel clenched her fists, her face was distorted. She didn't know how civilians could even have that kind of morale. She thought she could incite a rebellion inside the city, but her action ended up raising the enemy's morale.

"You... again... and again..." Qiel raised her hand. It carried all the frustration of not being able to outsmart Noel the whole time.

Noel also raised his hand, giving a signal to his soldiers.

Both Qiel and Noel waved their hands down while shouting, marking the beginning of the battle.

"Attack!"