

S vs Rebirth 631

Chapter 631 Exterminating The Demons

"Exterminate all the demons!" The Stone Lord shouted, commanding the people.

Clara had been treating Noel's injury for a while, so he was the only one who could hold the fort. Septa was waiting for his help to defeat the Superior Demon, but it seemed his help wasn't necessary anymore.

When the Stone Lord glanced to the side, he was a complete defeat... a complete defeat of a Superior Demon.

Shale actually had finished his fight with the Superior Demon.

Shale was standing gloriously on top of the demon's corpse while looking at the battlefield as if trying to find a spot for him to attack.

When the Stone Lord saw that gallant figure, he couldn't help but smirk, thinking, 'I see. So, that is Shale, the Captain of the Demon Extermination Squad. The man who slaughtered a thousand demons by himself and brought the Demon Extermination Squad to second place in the entire Demon Banner Army. It was said that his strength was second only to the commander and the vice commander in the army.

'And if I remember correctly, there is a rumor of him being the successor of the current commander. Though, the commander isn't that old yet. So, I guess I won't be around when I see the succession.' The Stone Lord smiled as he saw Shale jumping into the Superior Demon in front of Septa.

With them combining their strength, there should be no more threats from the Superior Demon. As long as they could finish this battle before the fourth Superior Demon came, they would win.

They still had Clara and the Plant Lord after all.

The Stone Lord hurriedly took command and started exterminating the rest of the demons. Clara also returned to the battlefield after taking care of Noel's wounds.

Although it would be better for her to continue fighting, she still believed that Noel was more important.

His latent ability, his commanding ability, and his brain were on a whole different level to the point it would be a huge blow if Noel died because of this. That was why Clara prioritized Noel's well being.

Of course, she only treated the worst injury before heading back to the battlefield. After all, the remaining injuries could be taken care of by the healers in the fort.

Noel still wanted to fight, but it seemed that he had to rest, considering Clara had told the people around him to stop him in case Noel wanted to return to the battlefield.

He couldn't help but sigh, feeling a bit disappointed. At the same time, he was also curious about Clara's ability.

He looked at his waist and saw that the waist was looking as good as news.

...

A moment ago.

Clara put him down on the ground and checked his waist. There was a wound made by a claw. It was a deep wound.

It seemed that the Peak Level Demon managed to pierce through his armor made of the Ancient Demon Tree.

The Master Blacksmith had said that it could easily handle Advanced Level Demon's attack. But his opponents earlier were five Peak Level Demons. It was possible for them to break the armor.

In fact, if Noel didn't have the armor, he might get severely injured or even die due to the blood loss.

After inspecting the wound, Clara gathered the Spiritual Energy in both hands. She told someone to rinse the wounds with hot water before using the left hand to circulate the energy around the wounds so that they stopped bleeding.

After that, her right hand formed a needle and started stitching his wound. There was no pain at all and the threads didn't leave any mark as if they never existed.

"This is my ability. Due to the Spirit Thread, I can close a wound without visible scars," said Clara.

"That powerful? You might be able to become a rich woman if you treat patients like that."

"I had a thought like that in the past, but that wasn't something I wanted. So, here I am..." Clara shrugged.

"Fair enough." Noel nodded.

After closing the wound, Clara took another look at Noel's body to make sure she didn't leave any wound that would endanger his life.

"Alright. It seems there's no other wound that needs my treatment. Those people will bring hot water to treat your wound later, so just follow their treatment. I'll come back after the situation has calmed down."

"Got it. Thanks, Captain." Noel smiled.

Clara turned around and waved back without looking. She left a message before returning to the wall. "I should be the one to thank you."

Clara's words could be interpreted in many ways. But for Noel, there was only one reason why she thanked him.

The entire Demon Relief Squad's Zero Squad managed to survive the ordeal. This alone lifted up a great burden on her shoulder, considering she had lost half of the members in the previous expedition.

She glanced to the side, finding Stella, who was treated as well. She was waving her hand, but two fingers on her right hand were gone.

Of course, she managed to recover it and Clara should be able to fix them. The others might be injured as well, but it wasn't to the point they would die or were forced to retire.

So, Clara was thankful for everything Noel had done for the group. If they didn't pick Septa, asked for other squads' help, or even brought another helper from the outside, a few of them would have died.

The fort, the preparation for attacks, and Noel's commanding ability were the main reasons why they managed to survive after all.

Even Shale, Septa, and the Stone Lord acknowledged Noel's ability.

Noel couldn't help but smile. He waved his hand to Stella as well, telling her to rest since her condition was serious.

Though, there was one more person who was impressed by Noel's ability. He was none other than the 'partner-in-crime' for this operation, the Fleeting Arbiter, Kevin Stargaze.

He was standing not far from the fort while observing the situation. His daughter accompanied him.

When he saw the situation had been taken care of, he couldn't help but smile. "Not bad. No, should I say... as expected of your son, Luke..."

Chapter 632 Kevin And Anna

"The situation has become stable. The fort might be half-destroyed, but the demons are almost wiped out. The Superior Demons have died and the remaining demons won't be able to stop those people.

"To think he manages to do it..." Kevin Stargaze looked at the fort with a smile.

Since Anna was the one inviting him to the hot springs in the first place, she accompanied him to this place to see the situation as well. She couldn't help but smirk, feeling a bit defeated.

She expected Noel to survive, but she never thought that Noel's plan stretched to this extent.

"As expected... I still can't be compared to him in this area. Even though I have grown a lot, he is also growing at the same pace." Anna made a frustrated grin. On the one hand, she felt excited to know there was someone who could keep up with her pace. On the other hand, she completely admitted her defeat.

Still, there was one thing that had been bothering her the entire time. She glanced at her father and asked, "Father... May I ask what kind of conversation you had with him? What kind of plan did he give you?"

Kevin looked at her for a moment before having a small smirk. "Hehe. Are you curious? Well, I don't mind telling you about it. To put it simply, I told him that if he wants to be my son-in-law, I won't say no."

"..." Anna blinked a few times as if she didn't believe what she had just heard. Soon, her face became a bit red and she hurriedly retorted. "What are you talking about? I have done all that to him. Even though the misunderstanding has been resolved, we can't go with that route..."

"Hahaha. It's true I told him that though." Kevin chuckled. "Anyway, I'm not going to do anything with your relationship. You have been plagued by your teacher's words in the past. But I don't see anything like that in your eyes now. So, I know that all relationships, whether it's a friend or lover in the future, come from your decision. All I have to do as your parent is to support you."

"..." Anna looked down, feeling a bit dejected. She thought she truly couldn't win against her father.

In her past life, she might not be as old as her current father, but their age shouldn't be that different. Yet, she felt like she was still immature compared to her father.

'Tsk. I can't defeat my father in this... If only I had grown a lot in my past life, I would have been more mature... Well, I guess it's fine for now. I can still feel the joy of being a daughter.' Anna made a small smile before saying, "Hmm... Though, I wish that you could tell everything."

Kevin thought for a moment and decided to tell her about Noel's plan.

...

A week ago.

"So, what's your plan?" Kevin asked.

Instead of answering with the plan he had in mind, Noel fell silent for a moment as if he was adjusting his plan. After a while, Noel began his explanation.

"Before telling you my plan, I'd like to confirm something about your power. Can you create a domain like this for a fight?"

"Yeah. I can maintain the domain and no one will realize it. The distortion will make the others think that there's nothing change inside the domain, but once I retract my power, the only thing you see is the aftermath. That's the reason why I'm known as Fleeting Arbiter."

Noel nodded his head. "Then, my plan is to give the Plant Lord an opportunity to cause a ruckus. If he is truly an enemy, then I'm sure that he's going to sabotage the entire operation. In that case, there's no need to hesitate to kill him.

"If he doesn't sabotage the expedition, then the plan will just end up becoming a failure.

"Anyway, I will create an opportunity. Once the Plant Lord causes the ruckus, the demons will surely attack us. I'll try to manipulate all of them to return to the fort and station the Plant Lord outside the fort.

"It will look reckless at first glance, but if I ask Captain Septa to handle his security, he surely won't reject that idea. It will also be beneficial for us as well.

"During that time, I will prolong the battle or change the situation that forces Captain Septa, Captain Shale, Captain Clara, and the Stone Lord to make their moves, leaving the Plant Lord alone.

"I want you to use your ability to create a domain for his execution. Is that possible?" Noel asked.

Kevin put his chin on his hand and fell into deep thought. "The executioner is Dimitri?"

Noel nodded. "Do you know him?"

"Of course. I know people call him Shadow, the former captain of the Demon Assassination Squad. He saved my life a couple of times under your father's order, you know." Kevin paused for a moment.

"Dimitri didn't cause a lot of ruckus during an assassination."

"So, even if I erected my domain, it wouldn't be hard to clean up. Though, the only problem would be how you planned to explain it to the Tower Association."

Noel smirked. "Just let the Supreme Devil Organization take the blame."

"!!!" Kevin was taken aback before a smile appeared on his face. "I see. So, you're going that way. I get a good grasp of your plan now. I guess it's as expected from Luke's son. You're truly devilish."

"Please call it smart, please."

"No. I will call you the way I call your father, little fox." Kevin smiled. He patted Noel's shoulder and said, "Alright. I'll follow your plan. Just think of this as the repayment for taking care of my daughter."

When Anna heard the story, she couldn't help but shake her head helplessly. "How could he even think that far?"

"Well, you are the same age as him. All I can tell you is that if you decide to do it, make sure to do it as soon as possible. Don't wait until he shines like the brightest star in the sky." Kevin advised her with a smile.

Chapter 633 Conclusion

Roar!

Roaaa...

Most of the demons had been annihilated. Those who had higher intelligence tried to escape back to the woods, trying to attack them again. Meanwhile, the rest could only meet their end in this place.

Although it looked like the fourth Superior Demon should have come, there was no more Superior Demon that actually came. It looked like they didn't have any more demons of this level. But with how the giant crocodile acted, it seemed that the fourth Superior Demon retreated to avoid a confrontation with this group.

After a long struggle that lasted for seven hours, they finally managed to gain victory.

The scout had been dispatched to sign a retreat while the rest returned to the fort. Those who were fine would either help with the cleaning up or bring the injured to the healers.

Meanwhile, Septa, Shale, Clara, and the Stone Lord gathered in one tent to hear the report. And due to his contribution to the battle and his commanding ability, Noel was invited to sit with them like that of an equal.

This was the recognition Noel deserved.

Since everyone was already here, Septa finally gave the report from his subordinates. "I have dispatched my subordinates to check the surroundings and tell the Plant Lord to return to the fort.

"For the time being, I'm going to give you the current situation. There are roughly 1,700 to 2,000 demons attacking us this time with at least thirty Peak Level Demons and three Superior Demons."

"We have managed to rout around 80 to 90 percent of them. So, this is undoubtedly our victory."

"However, our loss is quite great as well. We are still trying to get the exact data, but for now, I've received the report that 17 elite knights from the Demon Extermination, 8 elite knights from the Demon Beholder Squad, and 3 elite knights from the Demon Relief Squad have fallen in battle."

"This is a great loss, considering the people we bring here consist of our best squads. But the expedition and battle are not over yet."

"In the battle, the crocodile sent a roar to alarm the demon. With the current situation and movement, the roar should be used to call the fourth Superior Demon. But due to us ending the battle quickly, we managed to avoid the fourth Superior Demon. We don't know whether the demon returned to the mysterious facility or somewhere in the forest. So, we can't let our guard down and send scouts to make sure the fort won't be attacked when we continue our exploration."

"Also, the exploration team might have to be divided further to ensure safety. And locating the demons should be our priority. Thanks to Knight ladre, we managed to find out that the facility is related to both pharmacy and health care buildings. We don't know the name left behind by the previous civilization, but this facility has to be protected carefully."

"You might already know this, but the drugs from the previous civilization are like wondrous . They have created a powerful drug that doesn't contain Spiritual Energy. Now that the drugs have been radiated by the Spiritual Energy, the effect might be different."

"So, we will later form a collaboration between the Arbiters, the Tower Associations and the Demon Banner Army to conduct research about these drugs after the exploration finishes."

"Last but not least, I'd like to express my thanks to the Stone Lord for taking down the crocodile demon, Captain Shale for handling two Superior Demons, and Captain Clara for taking care of many injured people and keeping the casualty minimum. Of course, the rest of the knights are to be commended." Septa ended his speech with a polite bow as if thanking them and the knights.

Shale raised his hand, stopping him. He pointed at Noel and said, "You forget about Knight ladre. He has splendidly done his job as the vice commander of the battle and led us to victory. Without him helping the command, we would suffer a greater loss that might force us to retreat from here."

He ended it with applause. The rest also agreed with that statement and applauded Noel.

"In that case, we will discuss the rest tomorrow morning after we've got enough rest and the Plant Lord returns." Septa rose from his seat, ready to leave.

The others didn't have any objection, so they planned to leave right away. They were in no condition to discuss a serious topic after all.

However, before they could leave, a knight rushed inside, bringing bad news.

"We have an emergency." The knight panted a few times while falling to one knee.

"What happened?" Shale asked with a serious expression.

"We have dispatched the First and Second Squad to track down the Plant Lord, but we can't find him."

"What?!" Shale widened his eyes in shock. He immediately turned to Septa since the scouts came from the Demon Beholder Squad.

Septa asked while frowning, "What do you mean? Is he missing?"

"We don't know anything yet. It feels like all the traces of the Plant Lord ends in one spot before he vanishes completely. We don't find any trace that a battle took place in that area as well..."

"What?" The Stone Lord gasped and turned to the three captains. Their lives were guaranteed by the Demon Banner Army, so this kind of thing would inflict serious damage to the Demon Banner Army.

Still, the knight said he was missing as if all traces had just disappeared. He wanted to say that the Plant Lord died, but there was no evidence that a battle had happened.

So, the Stone Lord looked at Septa and said, "Captain Septa. I'm not questioning the ability of the Demon Beholder Squad, but this incident..."

Septa gulped down. His expression became grim as he answered the Stone Lord. "In that case, I'll investigate this matter personally. If the Stone Lord doesn't trust us, then you may come with us to check the area."

The Stone Lord thought for a moment. On the one hand, it might look like the Demon Banner Army wants to kill the two elders by separating them. On the other hand, the Tower Association would surely take this seriously if such a thing happened.

So, the Stone Lord agreed with Septa. "Alright. I'll follow you."

Chapter 634 Trace

"This is where the trace ends." The knight from the Demon Beholder Squad pointed at the ground.

The Stone Lord looked at Septa and asked, "Where did the Plant Lord get stationed at first?"

Septa pointed at the tree fifty meters from them. "That tree."

The Stone Lord narrowed his eyes. Just like the Septa, he couldn't find any trace in the area. He tried to touch the ground to check the uneven terrain caused by footsteps, yet there was nothing he could find.

'This is weird...' The Stone Lord frowned, feeling something wasn't right.

Shale thought for a moment and asked, "How could this happen? There is no trace of battle. In that case, does the Plant Lord run away from the battlefield? I mean, he has said that he would leave if the battle goes awry, no?"

"That is a possibility." Clara nodded in agreement, remembering the conversation.

Still, the Stone Lord had to deny it, considering they came from the same organization. "There is no proof about it as well. So, I implore all of you to retain your remarks, or I might have to take it as an insult to our association."

Shale and Clara exchanged looks before shrugging. They had said all the things they wanted, so they had to wait for Septa to investigate this incident.

They all looked at Septa to see if he could find something.

Septa shook his head helplessly. "I can continue the investigation, but from what I can see right now, I can't see anything that can be used to trace the Plant Lord. It feels like he simply vanishes into thin air."

"Aren't you supposed to be the one taking care of the Plant Lord?" The Stone Lord gritted his teeth, glaring at Septa.

"I did. However, there was a greater threat before us... the Third Superior Demon. If you say that 'The Plant Lord couldn't do anything to protect himself against normal demons while I was forced to stop the third Superior Demon so that we could win' was a mistake, then I have to ask you whether the Plant Lord is qualified to be an elder with both wisdom and strength or not..." Septa gritted his teeth.

He was going to investigate, but the Stone Lord started attacking him. There was no proof that the Plant Lord had died or not after all. At the same time, he remembered that Noel had asked him to do something like this. In addition to the secret mission the previous captain gave him, he could see that they managed to execute the Plant Lord.

Still, he didn't know how to get away from this, considering he was tasked to protect the Plant Lord.

The previous captain told him that he didn't have to care about the rest since it would be taken care of. But with the current situation, the Demon Beholder Squad would take a massive blow due to this.

If he could trust the previous captain's words, it seemed that he had to reveal his ability to prove his innocence.

After some consideration, he looked around and said, "In that case, I will use my ability. Other than the Stone Lord and the two Captains, I ask everyone to leave this area."

Clara and Shale widened their eyes. They looked at Septa with a frown.

"During the competition, you never fought with your ability, so no one ever knew about your ability. Are you sure you're going to reveal the ability you've hidden so far?" Clara asked with a serious expression. The two captains aside, there was the Stone Lord from another organization. Leaking this kind of information was a serious matter.

"What choice do I have? This is the only way to prove my innocence and find the trace of the Plant Lord. If you understand that, then leave!" Septa clicked his tongue while waving his hand.

The other captains also sent their people back to make sure there was no witness. Even Noel excused himself. It wasn't that he didn't want to be there to avoid mistakes. He didn't stay because he knew that his plan had already worked.

Since there were only four people left in the area, Septa finally explained his ability. "I hope that none of you reveal it to others or I have to retaliate in the future."

He took a deep breath and continued, "I have two main abilities I usually use in tracking my target. The first ability is this..."

He clapped his hand and suddenly golden particles became visible to the naked eye. "Spiritual Energy Tracking. This ability allows me to trace the movement of Spiritual Energy. The spirit spreads Spiritual Energy in the human body. Just like regeneration, our body excretes the excessive Spiritual Energy that our body produces, leaving a trace in the air."

"By using this ability, you will be able to see the trace of Spiritual Energy for up to twelve hours." Septa pointed to the side. "As you can see, there are numerous glows around us. If you see them clearly, some of them are traces from our subordinates... and this one in the center..."

He pointed at the glow that extended fifty meters from this area. They knew clearly this was the trace the Plant Lord left behind.

And this trace ended right in the middle of them where the last trace was visible.

"And the second ability is Barrier Record." Septa formed a barrier next to him. "The barrier can record the Spiritual Energy to see what has happened in this place. So, I'm going to let this barrier absorb the remnant of Spiritual Energy so that all of us can see what has happened in this place. Are you ready?"

Septa looked at them. The two captains knew why Septa wanted to hide this power since it was extremely useful to track people, especially the Supreme Devil Organization. If the organization knew about this ability, they would use all their might to kill Septa.

On the other hand, the Stone Lord nodded in understanding.

Septa then utilized his ability and started showing them what had happened.

To their surprise, after the Plant Lord moved to the last trace, he stayed there for a few seconds before he completely disappeared as if he had just teleported.

"!!!" All the people widened their eyes as if they couldn't believe what they had just seen.

"He...disappeared?"

Chapter 635 Noel's Scheme

Once the barrier was erected and projected what happened earlier, everyone instantly narrowed their eyes, observing every little movement.

There were two people at first. It was clear that they were Septa and the Plant Lord.

As soon as Septa sensed the third Superior Demon, he immediately pointed his hand toward this direction while telling the Plant Lord what he should do.

After making sure of the Plant Lord's safety, he finally began intercepting the Superior Demon.

This was a careful move that should be considered properly. Even though the situation had gone awry, Septa had done his best to keep the Plant Lord safe.

And the Plant Lord stayed in this place for a while. He even used his Spiritual Energy to begin a counterattack.

However, everything took a weird turn once the Plant Lord suddenly stood still. It lasted for a few seconds before his Spiritual Energy completely disappeared. It felt like he never existed in the first place, confusing everyone.

"This..." The Stone Lord narrowed his eyes. Shale, on the other hand, turned to Septa and asked, "Since you understand your ability the most... what does this mean, Septa?"

Septa frowned. "Actually, this is the first time I have encountered this kind of situation."

On the one hand, Septa was as confused as the other. On the other hand, he couldn't help but recall what his mentor had said previously. It seemed that his mentor, who also knew about his ability, had prepared something in order to counter his ability.

'The executioner is the famous 'Shadow.' Considering his position, such a thing can happen. But if this is the case, I think I can work around the situation and prove my innocence. This way, the Plant Lord will be considered missing and I can try to get a hand on his information, including the relation with the Supreme Devil Organization.'

Septa became silent for a moment, falling into deep thought. He glanced at Shale and raised three hands. "There are three possibilities such a thing can happen if I understand my own ability correctly.

"First, this person is dead. But in this case, the Spiritual Energy should remain for a while since the corpse will still release the Spiritual Energy for a while. So, I don't think the Plant Lord is dead."

"The second possibility is that he is completely missing. You can say that it's kind of a Space Ability. If I remember correctly, there was a man who could control Space and teleport from one place to another... That man came from the neighboring country and etched his name in history."

"Last but not least, there might be a third method that I'm not aware of. To be honest, I can't help but believe this can happen, considering I have a hard time tracking the Supreme Devil Organization."

"Huh?" They became confused.

Clara looked at the first situation as a doctor and said, "That's right. Death shouldn't be an option. I mean, even if there was an ambush, the Plant Lord wasn't that easy to defeat. So, the fact that there was no ruckus meant there was no resistance. I didn't smell any blood around here as well."

"Then, is it the second one?" Shale asked while explaining his reason. "Frankly speaking, I can't believe the second situation. I have never heard anything about Space Element Spirit for as long as I can remember."

"And if we connect it to the third option, are you thinking that the Supreme Devil Organization has this kind of power? This will turn the kingdom upside down. And I don't think the Plant Lord is that important enough for other kingdoms to use this kind of trump card... objectively speaking. It's not that I'm trying to look down on the Plant Lord."

The Stone Lord gritted his teeth and shouted in anger. "What did you say? The Supreme Devil Organization? Are you suspecting us?"

"I am not suspecting you, Stone Lord. However, I can't say the same to the Plant Lord." Shale shook his head helplessly. Before the Stone Lord released all his anger, he formed another barrier and showed them the record of what happened on the top floor. "This is the record of the Plant Lord in the facility."

He even showed all the details, especially regarding the mushrooms.

"I have brought back the two mushrooms: Aldiesta Mushroom and Malafeita Mushroom. You should be aware of their purposes, right?" Shale narrowed his eyes.

"Aldiesta Mushroom... it's a mushroom that can disturb the flow of Spiritual Energy. If ingested, that person will have a hard time controlling their Spiritual Energy. But this kind of mushroom should have been guarded heavily..." Clara frowned.

"True. The same applies to the Malafeita Mushroom. It's a mushroom to hide the flow of Spiritual Energy. Say..." Shale looked at Septa. "Don't you think it's possible for the Plant Lord to use this mushroom to hide from your ability?"

"!!!" Clara widened her eyes in shock.

Septa furrowed his eyebrows. He wasn't that sure either. "If he takes out the mushroom, I should be able to record the mushroom's energy like in this record. And the other possibility is that he has hidden a mushroom in his mouth this whole time. But I don't think he has that ability, considering he doesn't realize that I have recorded all his deeds in the facility."

Septa and Clara exchanged looks, wondering what pieces were missing from the puzzle. They didn't realize that Noel had been manipulating everything.

He had asked Marquis Stargaze to create a domain for this. Obviously, Dimitri had contacted his friend, the former captain of the Demon Beholder Squad. Not only did he get his cooperation, but he also got the information about Septa's ability from him.

That was why Noel changed his plan. With this, there was no way they would find any trace of the Plant Lord. And all that was left was the suspicion about the Plant Lord.

They didn't realize that they had been playing in Noel's hand this whole time.

Chapter 636 Cooperation

Septa looked at the Stone Lord, who had a hard time believing everything. However, he couldn't really get any argument to turn around the situation.

No matter how he said it, it didn't change the fact that the Plant Lord was suspicious. After all, there was no need for him to do all this if he wanted to escape.

And if that was the case, he would have returned already.

He could say he was a deserter, but because he wasn't from the army, he wouldn't really get punished.

Yet, the fact that he disappeared after causing all the ruckus simply felt like it was a scheme.

It looked like the Plant Lord had tried to kill them.

Last but not least, Septa opened his mouth. "There was one thing that first raised my suspicion. Are you aware of the Fagant Leaf?"

"!!!" All three of them were shocked for different reasons.

Clara, as a doctor, obviously understood the Fagant Leaf more than anyone else. She knew how powerful that leaf was since even her ability wouldn't be able to break free from the binding. Even though there was a treatment, most people would choose to spend some time until the effect wore off. During that time, they would become extremely vulnerable.

Shale, on the other hand, knew this because he once sent Noel to investigate the missing Kirika. He had received the report regarding the Fagant Leaf and the appearance of the Devil Bishop. "This is bad. The Fagant Leaf incident involved a Devil Bishop back then..."

The Stone Lord wasn't that aware of the incident. Instead, he focused on the current fact about the leaf. "Hasn't this plant gone extinct a few hundred years ago?"

"That's the problem." Shale pointed at the Stone Lord. "I once sent Apprentice Knights to check the situation. But it turned out there was a noble cultivating this leaf. He even used it to kidnap people for the Supreme Devil Organization.

"If this leaf was truly resurrected and used by the evil, I'm afraid that there would be a lot of chaos in the kingdom. And the one who could revive such a plant..." Shale fell silent while turning to Septa.

"Yeah. There are only a few handful individuals who have the ability to revive this plant. But the only person who can do it in this kingdom is none other than the Plant Lord." Septa nodded his head with a

serious expression. "I won't deny that there is a possibility that the other kingdoms are reviving it as a war weapon. But it doesn't change the fact that the Supreme Devil Organization is involved.

"Although I'm saddened by the fact that the Plant Lord is missing, I would like to ask the Stone Lord to cooperate with the investigation. I have to get to the bottom of this and find their relationship."

The Stone Lord gritted his teeth. "Do you think your Demon Banner Army is above our Association?"

Septa narrowed his eyes. Of course, they were debating about dignity. The Tower Association would become a huge joke if they were known to harbor a member of the Supreme Devil Organization.

The Demon Banner Army once experienced it when Noel's uncle was revealed. They obviously didn't want to endure such ridicule.

However, Septa's intention was clear. "If I give this investigation to the Tower Association, you are simply going to bury this matter to avoid being ridiculed by the whole kingdom."

"But don't forget that our enemies remain the same. They are the Supreme Devil Organization. If we can't find anything, we will suffer at the Supreme Devil Organization's hand."

"That's why I would like the Stone Lord to cooperate with me. At the very least, I can ask the commander to set up a hidden investigation. This way, the report won't be published, and we still can discover the secret relationship the Plant Lord and the organization have."

"You only need to stay quiet about this incident. If no one knows the Plant Lord is dead, it will give us time and opportunity to do everything without anyone's knowledge."

The Stone Lord gritted his teeth. He wanted to berate Septa, but this might be the best solution.

Even if he reported this incident to the association, the other elders would only cause a mess. There might even be a war with the Demon Banner Army.

On the other hand, the Demon Banner Army would have the chance to do everything since they would be the ones to have the people's support.

And the one who benefited the most from this incident was the Supreme Devil Organization. Even the Royal Family might get involved and support the Demon Banner Army.

In addition, with all that ruckus, the Supreme Devil Organization would have wiped all the records about them.

The Stone Lord could see this scene in his eyes. That was why he was angry. Despite the fact that the association's dignity and prestige were tarnished, he couldn't help but agree with Septa's suggestion.

The Stone Lord gritted his teeth. He didn't give any reply yet since he had to consider the pros and cons.

Shale and Clara already supported Septa's arguments. Septa even said, "We can use the Spirit Seal to know whether I'm lying or not."

This showed how serious Septa was in handling this matter.

The Stone Lord took a deep breath. "Alright. You will retell the entire plan while under the influence of the Spirit Oath. If it's truly the truth, I will cooperate with you."

"However, I have a condition. During the expedition, I want you to continue to look for a trace of the Plant Lord."

"I understand." Septa nodded with a serious expression. "The Plant Lord remains a good guy until it's proven otherwise."

"Alright then." The Stone Lord sighed, feeling a headache.

They immediately returned to the tent to get the information from Septa. Once they knew what Septa told them was the truth, the Stone Lord finally agreed to remain quiet for the time being.

Meanwhile, Septa had sent someone to relay a message to the commander, preparing for the investigation.

They didn't realize that Noel was the one who caused all this. He had expected this outcome. Last time, they were almost wiped out by the Supreme Devil Organization and were forced to take an early vacation. So, this was his way of making the organization pay for what they had done.

Chapter 637 Urgent Request

A bird dove down and perked on a gap between the castle wall. The bird stayed there for a while as if waiting for someone.

The bird appeared to be trained since it didn't move until a man reached the top of the wall and grabbed the bird.

There was a small scroll attached to the bird. The man immediately grabbed it and opened it to understand its content.

It didn't take too long for the man to be shocked.

He gasped and rushed back to the barrack. He didn't even bother to greet others because his destination was a room that held the highest authority.

Without hesitation, he slammed open the door and shouted, "Commander. We have an emergency request from Captain Septa."

"Hmm?" Commander Oscar, who was busy with the paperwork, suddenly stopped and raised his head with a frown. The fact that the message came from a Captain alone reflected the severity of the situation.

But he wasn't the only person inside the room. There was a woman who Clara encountered when she last visited this place. She was none other than the Demon Adjudicator Squad's Captain, Milfa.

"Is there something wrong? Should I leave the room first?" Milfa asked, while rising from her seat.

The guy recalled the information and immediately informed them, indirectly telling her that she didn't need to leave.

"Captain Septa requests a reinforcement from the HQ as well as immediate permission to investigate the Plant Lord's possession. He has sent someone here to give a formal explanation. In the last sentence, he gave a name... It seems to be related to the Supreme Devil Organization." The guy explained while handing the small pieces of paper to Oscar.

Both Milfa and Oscar furrowed their eyebrows. She immediately moved to Oscar to see the letter while Oscar confirmed the report.

"Immediate permission..." Oscar recalled all the reports about the Supreme Devil Organization and remembered the one that had Fagant Leaf in it. He started making the connections between the cases and this letter.

"It seems that the expedition has to continue." Milfa thought for a moment and said, "In that case, I will go this time."

"Hmm?" Oscar frowned. "Are you sure? You are..."

"It's fine. I don't have the intention of fighting for your seat. That's why I remain in the HQ, but it doesn't change the fact that I'm the Captain of the Demon Adjudicator Squad."

"I will replace Septa and hear the explanation from the people there. This way, Septa can start the investigation immediately. Hopefully, we can move faster than the Supreme Devil Organization." Milfa explained with a serious expression. She seemed to be stressed with the matter of the organization as well, so she wanted to get a lead and solve it.

Oscar didn't give the permission immediately. He considered all the pros and cons, including the weight of this information. He was the one who shouldered all the responsibilities in the Demon Banner Army, so he couldn't be rash.

After ten minutes, Oscar made his decision. "Milfa, you are to head to the expedition camp and take over the Demon Beholder Squad. We don't know the situation there, so be careful."

"Send the message to Septa that I have authorized the investigation of the Plant Lord. He is to head to the Plant Lord's territory right away."

"Yes, Sir." The guy immediately left, writing the message to send back to Septa.

The commander looked at Milfa and asked, "Are you sure about this?"

"Of course. To be honest, I'm quite interested in a certain guy..."

"A certain guy..." Oscar narrowed his eyes before understanding her target. "Don't tell me..."

Milfa smiled. "It's been a while, but I guess I will meet my mentor... the man who is feared as 'Shadow,' Dimitri. I have already known that ladre is Noel Ardagan."

"..." Oscar narrowed his eyes. This matter was a secret, but he never thought that Milfa was able to decipher it.

Milfa chuckled. "You have done a great job hiding it. But you shouldn't have underestimated women's instincts. Anyway, I'm going there. You surely don't mind if I help with the exploration, right? I'm not going to take credits though. It's also a perfect chance for me to see what kind of person the man called Noel Ardagan is."

Oscar pinched the bridge of his nose. "Well, you may go. However, you should understand the situation..."

"Of course. I don't care about the power struggle in this kingdom. After all, I only want to keep this Demon Banner Army safe. The rest doesn't really matter... including your relationship with the Third Prince."

Oscar let out a long sigh. He had hidden everything, but it seemed that Milfa could see through everything.

Oscar gave her a few orders. "Then, I order you, Captain Milfa. Immediately head to the exploration camp and meet up with Captain Clara and Captain Shale to continue the exploration. Make sure the exploration succeeds."

Milfa gently patted her right chest and bowed to him. "Understood."

Both of them stared at each other for a few seconds before Oscar asked, "How long do you need to get there?"

"I'm not a bird, so I won't be as fast as them. But... judging from the distance, two days should be enough."

"Got it." Oscar nodded. He closed his eyes for a moment. Even though the exploration team wouldn't have any more trouble, Oscar felt a headache just thinking about the problems that would come from Septa's side.

It seemed that he had to prepare for the friction between the Demon Banner Army and the Tower Association.

"Don't forget about the Arbiters. They are annoying..." Milfa smiled, reminding him.

Oscar let out a chuckle. "Don't read my mind."

Milfa waved her hand and started leaving. She had to reach the exploration camp as quickly as possible after all.

Oscar sighed when he saw Milfa leaving. There was a reason why she remained in the Headquarters all this time. Now that she has decided to leave, the problem should be easily solved. But he was worried about what she would do after meeting Noel and the one who protected him, Dimitri.

"Whatever... I'm not going to deal with that problem. Better look at the Tower Association and the Royal Family."

Chapter 638 Milfa

The next day.

The three captains gathered in the meeting tent. Noel was fortunately invited as well. His insight was extremely useful after all.

Septa had a grim expression the whole time. It seemed that there was a huge problem coming their way.

He looked at them for a while to the point Clara couldn't help but ask with an annoyed face. "What's wrong, Septa? You surely don't gather us like this for no reason, right? Looking at your equipment, it seems you're about to leave. Is that all?"

"No..." Septa shook his head helplessly. "I have received a reply from the Headquarters to immediately investigate the Plant Lord. But there is something more..."

"It seems that the Headquarters is sending a troubling reinforcement to replace me..." Septa sighed.

"Huh? Isn't the reinforcement supposed to be the mad wolf Urza? Although he is a rough bunch, he is not that troublesome to deal with." Clara frowned, feeling something bad.

"No. The reinforcement this time is... that woman."

"!!!" Clara and Shale were dumbfounded when they heard about the replacement.

"Seriously?" Shale gasped and looked away. "Is this true? What should I do this time? I haven't done anything wrong, right?"

Noel was startled by Shale's reaction. Shale's strength was among the top in the Demon Banner Army. There was nothing he should be afraid of other than the commander. But he didn't understand why he had such a reaction from this mysterious woman.

Clara let out a sigh. "This is truly annoying. To think that the situation is like this... it seems that the one who suggested it is not the commander... but that woman."

Even Clara looked troubled when she heard the identity. Noel was confused since he didn't know who they were talking about.

He raised his hand and asked innocently. "Excuse me. Who are you talking about?"

Clara looked at Noel with a pale face as if blaming him for something. It seemed she still remembered how she was annoyed with the fact she had to meet her when discussing Noel's matter with the commander.

Septa, on the other hand, wasn't truly bothered, considering he would be away during that time. So, he explained it to Noel. "The one we're talking about is the Captain of the Demon Adjudicator Squad, Captain Milfa."

"Hmm... To be honest, I don't know much about her." Noel shook his head helplessly as he still couldn't understand why it was a problem.

Septa pointed at Shale and said, "See that Shale over there? He is the third strongest person in the army. And he is the one who most likely succeeds in the commander's seat. However, there is one scary woman whose strength is second only to the commander... She is Milfa.

"Despite having that strength and cool head, she has stated that she has no intention to replace the commander. Instead, she will support whoever becomes the commander."

"In a head-on fight, I don't think Shale has ever won against her... right?" Septa asked Shale.

The latter only looked away, but that was enough for the answer.

Septa shrugged. "See? Well, her strength aside, that woman is kind of strict. I mean... she is easy to get along with most of the time, but on a mission, if there is a single mistake... no matter how small it is, she is going to judge you. That's the reason why she is the captain of the Demon Adjudicator Squad. That's why she is so scary and troublesome. Her advice is good though."

"Oh?" Noel widened his eyes before nodding in understanding. It seemed that the woman who would come this time was interesting.

He didn't really mind personally, considering the woman would point out all the mistakes he had. He wanted to complete something to perfection, so, of course, her presence was like an opportunity.

Though, he didn't know whether he would regret this decision or not after seeing how annoyed Shale and Clara were.

"Well, that's all I want to say. Good luck in dealing with her." Septa waved his hand as he hurriedly escaped.

"Oi, not fair!" Clara gritted her teeth. Even Shale clenched his fists. "I'm going to remember this, Septa. Just wait... I'm going to annoy you to death the next time we meet."

"..." Noel scratched the back of his head, not knowing what to say. "Is there anything I have to know about this? I mean, I am not one of the captains, so I don't think I will be noticed by her."

"No. You can leave." Clara waved his hand, dismissing him.

Noel nodded and left the tent. Meanwhile, Clara and Shale exchanged looks.

"A bet?" Clara put a smile on her annoyed face.

It seemed both of them had the same idea in mind as Shale completed the bet. "To see whether he is annoyed or not?"

Clara nodded. "The loser will have to drink and tell her she is annoying."

"..." Septa closed his eyes for a moment and nodded. "Sure. I believe he will be annoyed by her as well."

"Then, I am going to believe in my squad."

Noel didn't know their little bet. But they didn't know that there was someone eavesdropping on their conversation.

The shadow from the torch flickered for a split second before it calmed again.

And when Noel was about to return to his tent, he heard a voice ringing in his ears.

"Young Master. I'm going to apologize in advance. Actually, I was the mentor of that woman. Because I was strict with her, she ended up becoming strong and strict. She might give you some trouble..."

"!!!" Noel widened his eyes, not because of the content of the discussion, but because Dimitri chose to talk to him.

Noel looked around, especially at the shadows around him. But there was no sign of Dimitri. He was surprised that Dimitri would stay this close to him and even contact him this way. It seemed that there was something more about this Milfa.

"Well... I don't mind perfection since it's beneficial for me too. But I don't know to what extent, so I guess I'll wait and enjoy the show." Noel let out a sigh.

The next day.

Noel ended up standing outside the fort with Shale and Clara.

Milfa had arrived with a smile.

Noel was surprised by her appearance. Despite how they described Milfa, she looked like a mature woman who took care of others. Even her smile was warm and made one feel secure. While waving her hand, she introduced herself.

"Hello, I'm Septa's Replacement. I'm the Captain of the Demon Adjudicator Squad, Milfa. Pleased to meet you."

Chapter 639 Test

"Hello, I'm Septa's Replacement. I'm the Captain of the Demon Adjudicator Squad, Milfa. Pleased to meet you."

Noel looked at this woman. She had long straight brown hair, gently tied into a horse tail and rested on her back. Her gentle and mature smile made him feel like he was being taken care of without her doing anything.

From the way it looked, Clara and Milfa's ages didn't seem to be that different. Yet, Clara gave a cold and young fighter while Milfa had a gentle and caring mother aura.

Noel was standing here with Shale and Clara, but as expected, since he wasn't one of the captains, Milfa's eyes were completely locked on him.

Shale, as the leader of the exploration, coughed to gain her attention and said, "It's our pleasure to have you with us, Captain Milfa. This is Knight ladre. He has shown his ability both in commanding and strategy, so I have him act as the vice leader of the exploration this time."

"ladre, this is Captain Milfa from the Demon Adjudicator Squad. Greet her."

Noel politely bowed to her. "My name is ladre. I'm honored to see Captain Milfa. Please take care of me."

"Oh my. How polite." Milfa chuckled. "You are a good kid, unlike these two."

"What kids? Our ages aren't that different." Clara clicked her tongue."

"..." Shale only looked away, not wanting to have a longer conversation than it needed to.

Milfa clapped her hands and said, "Well, it's true that I'm going to participate in the exploration replacing Septa, but I think my role here is just support. So, I won't interfere with your decision... as long as you make the right decision."

She emphasized the last sentence. Her tone sent chills down their spine and the pressure on their shoulders suddenly increased by two folds.

Noel didn't understand the pressure yet, but he could see that the two became a bit more tense after she said it.

Milfa observed their expressions and said, "Anyway, I went here without any knowledge about the current situation. So, I hope that you can inform me of everything that has happened."

"Understood. Please come in." Shale nodded and extended his hand, inviting her in.

They immediately entered the meeting tent, where Shale briefed her about the whole situation.

As one would expect from someone equipped with both power and brain, she instantly understood the situation.

"I see. So, the Plant Lord is missing and there is a chance that the Supreme Devil Organization is involved, considering the Plant Lord sabotaged the exploration first."

"Because of that, you requested Septa's replacement to continue the exploration so as to not alert the enemies."

"Yeah. That's the current situation. We have recognized the facility as well. So, the drugs are going to be useful for the research. If we play this correctly, we might be able to get something to boost the overall strength of our Demon Banner Army." Shale nodded with a serious expression.

"But with me replacing Septa, who is better at the exploration, is causing a problem to the exploration, right? In addition, the Plant Lord is missing as well." Milfa thought for a moment. "There is one more problem. We haven't found the hidden nest. There might be more Superior Demons than we can imagine. So, we can't let our guard down."

Noel nodded. "Yes. And because there are a lot of people who haven't recovered from their injuries, I'm planning to divide the group into two instead of four with each captain and elder leading."

"This way, we will have enough fighting force as well as someone to watch out for the elder."

"Not bad for a plan." Milfa nodded in understanding. "You said your name is ladre... right?"

"Yes."

Milfa raised two fingers. "Aside from the compliments, I think I have to remind you about two things. First, don't expect too much from someone who had just come. No matter how you brief it, they will still have a hard time adjusting to this environment, especially the exploration. That's why in a big mission, you usually have a longer time to prepare. It's to avoid all the small problems."

"As for the second one... I'm going to ask this first. Who will pair up with who?" Milfa asked."

Noel thought for a moment and said, "I believe it's better to have you with the Stone Lord. I have heard about your reputation, so I believe that your strength is needed to keep the Stone Lord in check."

"That's a no from me." Milfa smiled and continued, "The reason is that we are not familiar yet. Even with my reputation, you shouldn't trust new people easily unless you know them well enough. That's why I will go with Clara, and Shale will keep the Stone Lord in check."

"Shale's strength is second to me, so it should be enough to handle the Stone Lord in case something happens. I see... I can understand how you have been faring up until now... It seems that you have put a lot of trust in someone's strength. It's a double-edged sword. If you use it correctly, you might be able to gain a huge advantage. But if you fail even once, it might come to bite you, you know."

Noel closed his eyes for a moment. He couldn't really rebuke her words. As she said, he had put a lot of trusts even though they had just met like the Brothel and Countess Christina.

Noel nodded in understanding. "I see. Thank you for your advice."

"But as expected, I'm sure you're going to provoke me by asking, 'Are you sure you are not capable of doing this? With your strength and reputation, you should be able to do it, right?' or something along those lines..." Milfa made a cheeky smirk as if she had just read Noel's mind.

Noel shook his head. "Nope. I'm not going to provoke you. I know my place well."

"!!!" Milfa suddenly fell silent before realizing Noel's real strength. If he didn't provoke her, then there would only be one more method people like him would use in that situation.

Milfa's expression became serious as she looked interested in Noel. "Interesting."

Chapter 640 Question

"Interesting." Milfa seemed to have understood why Noel was favored by Shale and Clara. She thought for a moment and said, "Alright then. I'm going to have you with me in the exploration. It seems that you are more interesting than I originally thought."

"Is that so? Having someone whose strength is only second to the commander to say that, I can only say that I'm honored." Noel smiled politely.

However, it seemed that both of them understood that they were a bit similar.

"Since that's the case, Clara and Shale can continue preparing for the next exploration. When can we go?" Milfa asked.

Clara thought for a moment. "Judging from the condition of our knights, we can probably restart the exploration in two days."

"Good. I'll leave the rest of the preparation to you." Milfa nodded her head and turned to Shale. "You should check the condition of the Stone Lord and impose an information lockdown. We don't want Septa to have a hard time after all."

"Yeah. But we haven't told you about the details." Shale wanted to stop her, but Milfa simply pointed at Noel and said, "He will be with me, explaining all those things while we are going around the area to check the situation. It should be fine, right?"

Shale looked at Noel with a frown before getting a nod from Noel. It seemed that Noel was also interested in Milfa.

"Good." Milfa smiled.

Since they had reached an agreement, Shale and Clara immediately left the tent, not wanting to get involved with Milfa any longer.

Meanwhile, Milfa came to Noel with a gentle smile. "Please take care of me."

"I should be the one to say that, Captain Milfa." Noel smiled.

"Shall we go? Or do you want to get something first?"

"No. We can go now." Noel nodded while extending his hand.

It seemed that both of them could talk to each other without even opening their mouths. Both of them knew that they were of the same type.

It might be because of her repulsive feeling toward Milfa that Clara didn't notice it. But Noel and Milfa were like monsters equipped with both knowledge and brain.

And these two 'monsters' were going straight to the woods to check the current condition.

But after they entered a bit deeper and reached the place where they couldn't be spotted by anyone else, Milfa suddenly increased her pace while saying, "You should have realized it, right?"

"What do you mean?" Noel tilted his head in confusion as if he didn't understand anything.

"I'm talking about how I have taken the lead in the conversation earlier. You should have realized that I have started commanding the two captains around despite me being a replacement and Shale being the leader."

"And despite realizing it, you didn't do anything. I wonder why you would do such a thing..." Milfa let out a small smirk.

Noel realized that playing dumb wouldn't be useful. At the same time, hiding it wouldn't benefit him. So, he said, "You should have already known the answer."

Milfa chuckled. "You wanted me to show a bit of my power... So, how was it?"

"How can I say this... If I can be honest, you are completely like a different person." Noel shook his head helplessly.

That was right. Milfa had been showing a gentle expression and gradually took the lead without anyone realizing it. Yet, in front of Noel, she showed a cheeky and sly face. If the people knew this side of her, they wouldn't really be annoyed by her usual activities.

"Is that so? Aren't you the same? You are like a completely different person. Where is the powerless and docile Noel Ardagan?" Milfa suddenly dropped his identity.

Noel didn't have a change of expression. Still, it didn't change the fact she knew about his identity.

The commander didn't seem to be telling her about his identity. And looking at how sly Milfa could be, it seemed that she figured it out herself.

"I see. Thank you for showing me your ability." Noel smiled.

"You are not going to deny it?"

"You have taken me this far into the woods. I won't be able to escape from you, right? Besides, if you decide to kill me, the one you will fight is the commander. So, it seems that you just want to make something clear with me, not more than that."

Milfa added, "I can simply erase you and tell everyone that you are ambushed by demons or the Supreme Devil Organization."

"If only you didn't have your reputation." Noel completed her words.

Noel and Milfa looked at each other, knowing that they could counter each other's words since they were the same type.

Milfa took a deep breath and said, "To be honest, one of the reasons why I chose to go here is you. And I can confidently say that you have surpassed my expectations."

"Well, thanks."

Milfa raised one finger. "In that case, I'm going to ask you one thing. Will your existence harm the Demon Banner Army?"

Noel closed his eyes for a moment. This question had a deep meaning for Milfa. Despite having the power to replace the commander, Milfa never aimed for that seat. Instead, she supported the

commander from the shadows without getting credit to herself. All... for the sake of the Demon Banner Army.

If Noel's existence caused harm to the Demon Banner Army, she might do everything to remove Noel from the army.

Noel might be able to lie here, but he had no intention to do so, considering Dimitri was her mentor.

Noel's expression turned serious as he stated clearly, "I don't know if my presence will harm the Demon Banner Army. But I have never intended to harm this army."

Milfa looked at Noel for a moment before nodding her head. "I... will accept that answer then."

Noel was a bit curious about Milfa. He couldn't help but ask, "May I ask one question..."

"Sure. You have answered my question, so I don't mind answering yours."

"Why are you doing all this?"

"I see... You should ask another question. It's not that I don't want to answer it, but the one who will answer it is also here... After all, that person is the reason why I can't do anything to you..." Milfa glanced to the right and smiled. "Isn't that right, Mentor?"