

Extract 778

Chapter 778 Preparing

Even though Michael was busy with other high-priority tasks, he chose to travel through the Untamed Jungle and extract all plant life that threatened the unrestricted growth of the towering trees, bushes, and fauna.

This took longer than Michael suspected, but it did make sense. The Untamed Jungle's flora and fauna flourished even without his help. Pinpointing the intrusive - harmful - plant life wasn't that easy. Fortunately, Michael had Spirit Eyes and Enhancement to identify the dangerous plant life. He extracted the plant life, mostly towering trees that blocked other groups of trees from growing further, and had his subjects process the material to supply the Paradise Valley territory with more resources.

Michael considered leaving the Origin Expanse more than once, but it felt like he wouldn't be able to return for a while the moment he returned from the Origin Expanse. Therefore, Michael deployed the other Awakened to procure everything they needed to expand his business. He informed Kraft Viton that Rebecca Zauber and Hiraku had been given permission to access his finances.

If he ever left for unknown circumstances, which was what Michael suspected would happen soon when he left for the Nest, Michael wanted his territory to expand. Therefore, he permitted Hiraku to purchase everything needed to expand their military force and nourish their subjects, whereas Rebecca focused on the infrastructure of the territories and the population's expansion.

Michael also configured the Summoning Gates with some help, granting Tiara, Lilica, Hiraku, Siegfried, and Rebecca the necessary rights and permissions to access the Summoning Gates function, which included both the Portal Attachment and Summoning.

He spent more than two weeks in the Untamed Jungle and Paradise Valley, acting as a gardener, rewarding his subjects for their hard work with various benefits, and supervising the rapid progress of the main settlement in Paradise Valley. The Starheaven Pharaoh would lead the armies within the Sacred Desert to clear Paradise Valley once the desert monsters returned to cause terror.

Before that, the Starheaven Pharaoh would have to grow stronger. He regained his battle spirit and determination to become a better self. Michael had yet to learn much about the Pharaoh, but he could tell that the Starheaven Pharaoh had to fight a lot with himself. But that was fine. He was trying. That was all that mattered. Nobody was perfect, after all.

At this point, Michael was dead poor. He didn't have a single Energy Stone after handing everything to Rebecca and Hiraku. Michael didn't possess any Artifacts other than the Legendary Ring Artifact and Aethyr. The only things left in his possession were a bunch of tomes, books, scriptures, the Imperial Coins, and a bunch of High Nutrition Solutions.

Once Michael completed all important tasks in the Origin Expanse, he tugged the War Rune lightly to conjure the Runic Gate. The Gate manifested before him, and he stepped through after glancing back at his territory.

It seemed that many things would change before his next return, but somehow, that excited him. Michael looked forward to it.

Emerging on the other side of the Runic Gate left Michael with the usual feeling of emptiness. The surroundings wasn't void of origin energy, but the quantity was insignificant for someone who stayed in the Untamed Jungle for a long time. He tried ignoring the sensation of emptiness that passed through him and used Spirit Eyes to pinpoint Eren Long.

Michael might not know much about the Nest, and he could not yet be sure if he could trust them, but the last few weeks demonstrated quite clearly that Michael was nothing.

He was still weak...an ant...even with his Soultraits. The Undead Pharaoh would have killed him without the Curses helping him out. No. Even with the Curses, Michael would have died. It was a mere stroke of luck that he was still alive.

Michael hated that.

He didn't want to rely on luck to survive. However, fighting the Undead Pharaoh showed him what awaited Michael shortly. It would be even worse once the Supreme Human Alliance returned. Bloodhound was already a problem, but what would happen once more members of the Supreme Human Alliance stormed the Tritan Alliance? Would he run away and witness the genocide of the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs as if he had nothing to do with it?

Michael couldn't do that. He didn't want to end up like that. He knew he wouldn't be able to forgive himself if that happened.

Michael made his decision.

"You have returned," A familiar, sonorous voice appeared beside him. Evalynn Fang, his mother, emerged from the shadows with a faint – forced – smile on her lips, "I was worried that something happened to you when you didn't return for so long. Everyone said the Undead Ruler was killed, but you still didn't return. I only heard about you from Kraft Viton, and you're awake. They have been running around busily for the last two weeks. Did you try to avoid me?"

[Is that our mother?] Danny asked in Michael's mind, voicing out what he was thinking.

Evalynn Fang looked the same as ever, but she regained some confidence. Her self-esteem had skyrocketed in the last few weeks.

Michael scrunched his nose, unsure what to think about his mother's current state. It annoyed her quite a bit. Nonetheless, he decided to remain honest – lethally honest.

"Actually, I forgot that you were still here."

How could he avoid someone he forgot? That was quite difficult and certainly not something Michael had done. The smile on his mother's face cracked, but she remained firm. Unfortunately, Michael didn't care too much about her fragile confidence at this point.

"Do you know where Eren is? He promised me some rewards for killing the Undead Pharaoh," Michael asked his mother, ignoring the twitching corners of her mouth, "The rewards better be worth it. The Undead Pharaoh was a lot stronger—...."

Michael didn't finish his sentence. His head flicked to the sky one moment, and he side-stepped in the next. Eren Long burst through a cloud, splattering it, and smashed hard into the ground next to the mother-son duo – or trio, depending on how they viewed the Living Soul inside Michael's Soul Grimoire.

The ground around them should have burst apart, but nothing enjoy that happened. There was not even a single crack or sign of destruction in their vicinity.

"You want to be rewarded? Do you have evidence to prove that you eliminated this so-called Undead Pharaoh?" Eren asked, his azure-blue eyes locking onto Michael's eyes.

"Evidence?" Michael frowned deeply, "I have his corpse, a few hundred thousand aged Imperial Coins, and I've unlocked another Serpent Seal, almost two, actually. If you desire to look at my Cursed Seals, all of them are cracked a bit. It's only a crack as thin as a strand of hair, but it's everywhere, which I don't like. Is there a way to control the number of Seals your Curse can unlock at a time, or how to distribute the curse power your Curse devours? Cause I don't really like that the Wolf Curse splits the curse power equally. I don't want all Cursed Seals to unlock simultaneously."

Michael was ready to remove his shirt and activate the Serpent Seals and Cursed Seals while also retrieving the Undead Pharaoh's corpse and some Imperial Coins when Eren lifted his hand, beckoning him to stop.

"I wasn't being serious. The Ancient Curse Spheres spread throughout the Origin Expanse and detected the Undead Pharaoh's death. They also detected your Curses right next to the Undead Pharaoh when he died, so we know that you, or your Curses, killed him. It must have been more challenging to kill the Undead Pharaoh than you've expected."

Michael scowled deeply but stopped in his tracks.

"Did you know the Undead Pharaoh would be this strong when you gave me the mission to kill him?" He asked, his voice growing sharper and colder with every word escaping his lips.

Eren's mouth opened, but it shut tightly after a second of silence. He tried to grin at Michael but ended up sighing heavily instead.

"I was aware that the Undead Pharaoh had the combat prowess of a Mythical Existence that ascended to a Higher Lifeform. However, I didn't know that he kept a Cursed Artifact sealed. That was out of my expectations."

Michael was about to get angry but calmed down instead. He nodded slowly.

"If you didn't know that...it's fine. Dealing with the Undead Pharaoh was only so difficult because my Soultraits were sealed, to some extent. The Staff of Epos was truly bothersome..." Michael shuddered, recalling how terrifying the Staff of Epos had been.

"The Staff of Epos? Are you serious right now?" Eren nearly blurted aloud, grasping Michael's shoulders, shaking him with enough strength to almost tear him apart.

"If you keep shaking me enjoy that, you're going to get me killed, you know?"

Eren released Michael from his grasp with an "Oops."

However, he didn't stop staring at Michael.

"Are you sure that it was the Staff of Epos? How do you know that Ancient Cursed Artifact in the first place?"

"My Curse informed me. How else was I supposed to know what the Staff of Epos is, or what exactly Imperial Coins can do?!"

Michael scowled deeply, but his eyes widened in shock when he realized what he'd just said.

"You can communicate properly with your Curse, can't you?" Eren asked, fully comprehending what Michael's words entailed.

He noticed that Michael didn't respond, but that was the answer enough. He was right.

"That's bad. Your Curses are getting too attached to you while you're still a Lesser Lifeform. That's really bad."

Michael tilted his head at Eren's words.

"We have to change that as soon as possible!"

