

## **Extract 817**

### **Chapter 817 Joining**

Once he was done stabbing into his body to test River of Vigor's power, Michael returned to work. He had many things to do, including refining his Physique, Soul, and Mind. It was only apparent, but he shouldn't start slacking off only because he ascended to a Higher Lifeform. If anything, Michael should use his High Ascension to work even harder.

Unfortunately, he didn't have too much time to spare. He had to continue to cleanse the Untamed Jungle of harmful plant life. His work as the Untamed Jungle's Gardener never stopped. It wasn't too bad, though. Michael learned a lot about the surroundings, including where High Beasts had taken residence and how bad the population issue was in certain regions.

Michael could have decimated many monsters with a snap, but that would be wasteful. The Untamed Army used the overflowing monster population to train and grow. They could use the experience and the energy influx granted from every kill. Michael would get a share of their energy influx as their Lord, but it wasn't like the minuscule amount of energy was impactful.

One way or another, Michael liked traveling through the Untamed Jungle. He could sort his thoughts, learn more about the deeper parts of the Untamed Jungle, cleanse it properly, and get more used to his new powers. Even though his High Ascension had already been a while ago, Michael was still not used to all changes. That included the massive increase of Soul Power granted from the millions of Links of Loyalty that provided a considerable amount of Soul Power to his Soultraits, each of them.

Besides playing Gardener, Michael was busy dealing with the Valyr and Forest Elves. He trained a little bit and refined his physique as much as possible. Still, the Energy Mine, his territory's expansion in both the Untamed Jungle and Paradise Valley, and other stuff occupied him much longer than he would have loved to.

Several days passed before Michael realized. Finally, he received a report about the Valyrs. He met them, a bright smile plastered on his face.

"I heard that you want to stay in my territory. That's great!"

Kodas stared at Michael, forcing himself to smile, "We decided to stay, but I'm not sure if your decision to accept us is a good one. You do understand that we loathe our people for everything they've done to us? Accepting us into your territory is like agreeing to nourish two ticking time bombs."

He glanced at Pierl and shrugged lightly.

"Maybe one ticking timebomb, but that doesn't matter. Don't you think accepting us into your territory is foolish?"

Michael's smile didn't cease even though Kodas' words would have offended most people, "I don't think the Untamed Jungle is the right place for you. I would send you to my other territory, a desert. It's pretty nice there. You would have to accept establishing a Link of Loyalty with me if you want to go there. By doing that, I will make sure you won't go wild and attack the Valyr all of a sudden."

"But then again, I'm not sure how long I can maintain my relationship with the Valyr. Their last move wasn't that smart. They lost a good portion of the trust between us with it," Michael said nonchalantly, "I won't attack them, but as you said, They fear me. If you cannot control what you fear, you either remove it or make sure to run as far as possible. The Valyr won't run. They wouldn't abandon the Savannah Region easily. But they know that they annoyed me. Either they'll attack soon, or they realize that the open trade with Dash was their last opportunity to make up for their mistakes."

Pierl stared at Michael upon hearing him mention the Dash Soultrait Symbol, "I heard that you have been supplying the Untamed Awakened with Soultrait Symbols. Is it possible for us to get Soultrait Symbols?"

"Of course. All you need is enough Jungle Points. It won't be easy to earn enough Jungle Points without being part of the Untamed Awakened...or being in a large-scale war. The Untamed Awakened have been given permanent discounts in the Soultrait section. This applies only to the first few Soultrait Symbols, but that's more than enough to transform into a powerhouse. After all, you can also purchase Soultrait Upgrades in the Jungle Shop," Michael explained, "Keep in mind that you have to sign a Soul Pact to become part of the Untamed Awakened."

Michael went on to tell the two Valyrs about the Soul Pact and how it worked. The clauses weren't too bad. Michael didn't like restraining anyone's freedom. Instead, he made nice offers to ensure his people would love to work overtime for him. They received a lot in exchange for their hard work. That was the only proper way to treat his subjects, and the Awakened working for him. Wars were especially worthwhile.

The two Valyrs learned about the Savannah Region's war from Michael and how much the Untamed Awakened gained. Their eyes glimmered brightly, but Kudas got back to his senses quickly.

"What would happen if I signed a Soul Pact, grew stronger, and earned several Soultraits?" Kudas slowed down and tilted his head. "And I take revenge on everyone responsible for my family's downfall. That includes the bastards who imprisoned me..."

Pierl's ears perked up at Kudas' words.

"I...also want to take revenge. I want to make right what went wrong," He said, "My brother wasn't the only one who betrayed me. My entire family, I don't even want to call them that anymore, is responsible for my downfall."

He stared intently at Michael, "Will taking revenge on them conflict with your goals? If so, I...cannot become part of the Untamed Awakened. I would have to stay a Rogue in your territory. Of course, I can still sig—..."

Michael smiled, seeing Pierl getting flustered the more he said. The Valyr was very serious for a point, only to suffer under the pressure of Michael's intense gaze.

"Grow stronger and take revenge. For now, nobody knows that I kept you guys alive. Go to my other territory and work hard. Obtain the strength to take revenge and leave the Origin Expanse to fulfill your goal. If the aftermath of your revenge affects my relationship with the Valyr...so be it."

Michael's eyes turned dead serious, his gentle smile replaced with an icy expression, "But don't you dare to take innocent lives on your revenge spree, or I will tear you apart personally."

"I know that my actions might have been the cause of the death of many innocent lives, but I don't want anyone to intentionally slaughter innocent people. There are things I regret, and I do not want others to go down the same path," Michael added, his expression growing somber. He unobstructed his throat, his expression still as icy as before, "Promise me to leave the innocent alive, and I will take care of the aftermath of your actions."

Pierl nodded enthusiastically, "I can agree to that. I never planned to kill my sisters. I only want to take revenge on my other brothers, my uncle, and my father after making sure that they plotted against me together. I will research their scheme thoroughly, and I won't kill anyone innocent!"

Michael's icy expression was replaced by a smile again. He glanced over to Kudas, who acknowledged slowly.

"Killing the families of the two Clan Heads would probably be easier, but I think I can...wait a little bit longer until I'm strong enough to deal with the Clan Heads properly," Kudas tilted his head slightly, "But I am not sure if the death of the two Clan Heads will change everything. The entire system is corrupted. Only a few nice families are at the top of our race's food chain. Zira is a kind girl; her mother is also good, but their family..."

I'm not sure if you would like them."

Michael shrugged, "Leave that to me. For now, the Valyr need me, and I can use them well. Zira and her mother have to emerge from their Clan's grasp, but that is easier said than done. They obtained their Clan's help to survive the Regional War, and I doubt they retained much control of their territory."

"Maybe I have to reach out a hand to help them a little in the future. That would be much better than fighting needlessly."

Even though Michael was busy, he chose to talk to the two Valyrs for a while. They were driven by rage and desire, but that could be an advantage if channeled in the correct way. As long as the two Valyrs followed the right path, they might be able to make major changes in the Valyr race's hierarchy. But that was a thing for the future.

Michael looked forward to it.

However, one thing was certain. The more Michael listened to the duo, the more he disliked the strongest members of the Valyr race. He started to hate the Clans in charge of everyone. Michael couldn't believe that he liked them at some point. It didn't make any sense.

Kodas urged Michael to use Mind Reader on him multiple times to show his memories and thoughts of the Valyr race. The memories were...even worse than the things Michael had seen before. It was saddening.

For a moment, Michael considered bulldozing the Valyrs in the Savannah Region, but his emotions diminished and got less violent as he channeled River of Vigor.

Kodas and Pierl sensed their opportunity and Michael's rage. They told him to persist trading with the Valyr and treat them like before. They would grow stronger and commence a coup to overthrow the old system. Michael raised an eyebrow at their ambition, but he figured their rage and desires were best channeled in that direction.

He liked the two Valyrs and took them in. They inked the Soul Pacts and established a Link of Loyalty with Michael. Afterward, Michael brought them to Paradise Valley. They would do well in the Sacred Desert, just like the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs – now that the blacksmiths released their newest invention.

Their newest creation was a set of boots that had been improved with a particular runic array. It was a miniature runic array, one that wasn't used often for any practical purposes other than practice. The miniature runic array was called "Hardening," which sounded quite powerful if applied properly. However, the downside of the runic array was that it could only be applied on a small surface.

It was barely enough to harden the sand underneath boots or hooves. That was perfect for the Berserkers, Warlock Centaurs, and everyone else in the Sacred Desert.

They didn't have to adjust to the piles of sand in the Sacred Desert. The new set of boots and hooves took care of that.

Their combat prowess didn't decrease a tiny bit. If anything, Michael's combatants gained a substantial advantage against his foes in the Sacred Desert.

But it was not like there were many foes left, to begin with.

For now, that is.

