

S. Lord 1001

Chapter 1001 Dagger Storm

The Azure Quetzalcoatl had a good time fighting the strongest Divine. It received a decent power-up from Pesol, who had applied a Soultrait called Guardian Spirit. It wasn't a high-ranked Soultrait Symbol, but it was powerful nonetheless. Guardian Spirit could only be used on other targets if they protected the User from stronger enemies. Since that was exactly what happened – the Divines attempted a few more times to catch up to Pesol and kill him – the Azure Quetzalcoatl's power increased. Guardian Spirit increased the target's power by a significant portion of the difference in power between the User and the predator trying to kill the User. The Azure Quetzalcoatl, which was already stronger than the strongest Divine, was thus even stronger and had an easy time burning the Divine. The Divine retaliated with her Soultrait and expanded in size, which also increased her strength.

Unfortunately, growing in size didn't help her. If anything, it made everything more difficult for her. It was easier to hit her with the mythical flames and bash her with the Azure Quetzalcoatl's tail.

At some point, the Azure Quetzalcoatl caught the Divine with its massive tail. The tail would have missed a smaller version of the Divine, but since she didn't terminate her growth Soultrait, it turned out to be rather easy to restrain her.

The Azure Quetzalcoatl didn't do much. It squashed the Divine and released its strongest mythical flames for more than ten minutes with no distance between the flames and the Divine's head.

The woman tried to escape but her strength dropped rapidly as the Three-eyed Crow, another Divine Beast of the Untamed Jungle, used its innate powers to cast a curse upon her. The curse wasn't permanent and the Divine tried blocking it, but the Three-eyed Crow focused on the Divine after two Divines died. The third Divine was already on the verge of death too, leaving only one fully-functioning Divine to kill. The female Divine would soon, and the Silverfang siblings teamed up – unwillingly – to kill the last unscathed enemy. The Titan Black Bear joined the brawl, but his help wasn't needed. The siblings went above and beyond to land the finishing blow on the last enemy. They didn't even take the danger of sustaining injuries or dying to the Divine Lifeform into account and released one mighty attack after another.

Still, at the end of the day, neither of the Silverfang siblings killed the Divine. The Titan Black Bear squashed the Divine to death when the siblings started interrupting each other. The Titan Black Bear couldn't be any less bothered about their attitude, but it was happy to be the one killing most Divine Lifeforms. Lucia would treat it to some snacks. Hopefully, some of the tasty syrup-honey mixture produced in the Primordial Tree Spirit.

The Titan Black Bear roared at the top of his lungs at the thought, which resulted in a commotion as the Astral Space Cage collapsed. The Divine woman died to the Azure Quetzalcoatl's flames, her head burned to a cinder. She had incredibly high regeneration powers but was still unable to escape the terrors of the Azure Quetzalcoatl.

As the Astral Space Cage crumbled due to the lack of enemies, everyone was pulled back to the border settlement. Tiara was out of energy and even Caesus was having a hard time standing at this point. Their last bout with the final Divine Lifeform had drained their energy entirely. Fortunately,

neither Tiara nor Caesus had to keep fighting. They could retreat, recover, and come back if the Fae Union was still alive once they were back at peak condition.

The siblings looked at each other and cursed quietly, but a massive, brilliant streak of light smashing heavily into the border settlement interrupted their quarrel. The brilliant streak of light was no other than Daniel Fang unleashing a fury through Sword God. Instead of accepting other Soultrait Symbols like most Super Awakened, Daniel chose to go down a different path. He focused on studying Sword God and investing as many SoulStar Fragments as he earned into the Soultrait Symbol. The 10th Star of Sword God had not yet been created but the first snippets of it had already been formed.

Daniel Fang learned a lot every single time he invested SoulStar Fragments into Sword God. Having only one Soultrait might destroy the possibility of learning dozens of combat techniques with a wide variety of powers, but it also helped him become the best in the things he was good at. And Danny was definitely the greatest with blades.

Daniel Fang was in the midst of a large mass of enemies. The enemies tried to crush him with their numbers, stampeding him to death. But that wasn't going to happen. Danny manifested a set of ten small daggers using Sword God. He used his mastery of the blades and conjured a small typhoon of daggers around him. Daggers consumed less energy than Sword to conjure, but it was more important to note that they were easier to link and control. Daniel connected the daggers and transformed them into a rapidly rotating circle that rotated around him. He conjured another batch of ten daggers and did the same. The only difference was that the daggers' blades were a little bit longer this time. The second circle of daggers revolved around Daniel, but it wasn't the last. It was the second of many.

Daniel sacrificed half of the energy inside the Energy Pillar to create a dozen dagger circles, the blades longer with every new circle. Then he set off, approaching the enemy masses.

Some Awakened tried mental attacks, while others unleashed Soultraits capable of harming the soul. However, none of them did considerable damage. Daniel's mental fortitude blocked the mental attacks as a 6th Tier Awakened with perfectly refined and the Fragments of a Divine Shell, while soul attacks were endured with little to no damage.

The soul attacks affected him a little, but the pain was bearable, Danny's soul was stronger than the norm. Even Divine Lifeforms might not have a soul as large and strong as Danny. After all, he was a Perfect Entity, created with an enlarged Soul, awakened a 9-Star Soultrait, and 'born' without a single trace of impurities left in his body.

Daniel's rebirth was far from the norm. It was unique, and the result was apparent. He was unscathed even after several Awakened attacked his soul with their strongest attacks and blocked only some mental attacks to retain his concentration for the Dagger Typhoon.

Since all Divine Lifeforms had been killed by the Divine Beasts, the Guardian Beast, and the Silverfang Siblings, Daniel had an easy time fighting the rest. Initially, he told the others how he was going to conquer a border settlement on his own, but nobody accepted his proposal. Hiraku, Frederik, and others told him that they weren't invincible and that it was unnecessary to challenge their fate.

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As a Fateless individual, Danny found that comment quite funny. Still, he acknowledged how unnecessary it was to attack a border settlement alone.

They had enough powerhouses to fight by their side.

Still, Daniel was having a fun time unleashing Sword God against fellow Higher Lifeforms.

Chapter 1002 Conquering the Fae Union

[Today I had only a few minutes of internet - some issues with electricity. Therefore, I couldn't edit. All I could barely do was copy-paste the chapters to upload something before my internet collapsed. Remind me to edit it again or endure the unedited chapter, please. Sorry for the inconvenience. Please don't kill me :(]

The Fae Union crumbled quickly after the death of the five Divine Lifeforms. They were also the Lords of five out of more than a dozen Lords gathering their forces to attack and conquer the Untamed Jungle. Thus, the biggest forces of the Fae Union dispersed the first day the Untamed Armies retaliated. The lands belonging to the Divine Lords in the Untamed Jungle were retrieved, and the subjects were either killed or forced into signing Links of Loyalties with the Primordial Tree Spirit or Michael.

It was still unknown how the Primordial Tree Spirit lost control of the three Divine Lords since they'd established Links of Loyalty with the Tree Spirit before, but the Primordial Tree Spirit reassured something like that would never happen again. The Untamed Armies needed to be sure about that, but they gave the Primordial Tree Spirit the benefit of the doubt. Michael was too busy to sign millions of Links of Loyalty either way. Thus, Michael did so through the Primordial Tree Spirit, which connected the Links of Loyalty to the Nature Divinity, which he was actively draining. That was efficient enough to work with.

The Fae Union was more troublesome to deal with than the Desert Rebels because there were too many members of the Fae Union. Dozens of Lords were afraid of Michael and thought the only logical answer was to kill him. Most of them couldn't accept Michael's decision to ignore them. They considered themselves as too important to be ignored. The Lords were certain Michael was preparing for a large-scale attack against them because he regarded them as a significant threat. They couldn't accept the bitter truth; Michael couldn't even remember most of them. The Lords of the Fae Union were extra characters to Michael. He couldn't even tell what race they belonged to. Michael never attacked them either. He left the job for the Super Awakened, jungle monsters, and Untamed Armies to complete. The jungle monsters cleared the settlements and claimed the territories in the Untamed Jungle with the help of a dozen Super Awakened, whereas the forces of the Untamed Jungle were thrown at the Lords residing outside the Untamed Jungle.

They didn't attack everyone but chose to show no mercy to the members of the Fae Union. The Fae Union had decided to move against them. Therefore, they had already planned to embark on a

ruthless battle that could only end in their death or the death of their enemies. Since that had already been decided, the Untamed Armies didn't hesitate to go all-out. Dozens of armies, each consisting of more than 100,000 combatants, charged outside the Untamed Jungle from various spots. They rushed out of the densely grown jungle and overwhelmed the border settlements within days.

It took only a few days to conquer the border settlements, raid the treasuries, and kill all Awakened combatants who attempted to either flee or pass the Untamed Armies' defenses to backstab them.

Siegfried Dragoon led the Sacred Knight Temple's forces into the battle head-first. Close to a hundred thousand Knights joined the struggle with their tremendous prowess. Summons may be known to grow slower than Awakened, and they were generally weaker due to their lackluster Tier, but Siegfried, the Sacred Knights, the Holy Knights, and the Blessed Squires were quite powerful. They were stronger than the norm and could fight several enemies at the same rank and with the same equipment easily. But the Sacred Knight Temple's forces were equipped with different means than other forces. The Sacred Knight Temple's forces were much better equipped. Over the years, the method to forge Spirit Armaments has been researched, improved, and perfected. Spirit Armaments were still, by far, the best devices to increase the combat prowess of Summons through external means. They were similar to Artifacts, but the sole difference was that their effects were slightly weaker. In exchange, they didn't have to be bound to the War Rune, which was essential for Summons because they didn't possess a War Rune in the first place.

A Summon could usually wield two Spirit Armaments of the same Tier without any major issues. Some Summons were strong enough to wield three Spirit Armaments or two Armaments of a higher rank, but they had all one thing in common. The Summons equipped with Spirit Armaments were much stronger than everyone else. Their equipment was the best of the best, evident in battle.

Siegfried Dragoon and his Knights stormed the first border settlement. They blocked the incoming bombardment of projectiles, including dragon bolts – massive crossbow bolts released by a Titan Crossbow – with their Holy Powers, climbed the walls, or used the Awakened's powers and the Golden Stinger Wasps to block the settlement walls. The Holy Knights and Sacred Knights were terrifying. Their power threshold reached the peak of their Tier owed to their Spirit Armaments and combat experience. It came to no surprise when one of the Fae Union's fell victim to the Sacred Knight Temple.

Another temple was burned to a cinder by the Elemental Empress and the Red Dragon. They combined their forces and demonstrated both the Untamed Armies and the Fae Union how powerful they were. Nobody underestimated their combat prowess, but the Fae Union's Awakened had only a few means to counter them. Unfortunately, most ballistae and other large-scale weaponry was destroyed by the Minor Typhoon Rocs.

There were also other troubles, but the Forest Archers, reinforced by Elementals, and the bombardment of various projectiles from Noble Elementals and Superior Elementals solved most problems.

One of the most interesting interaction was between the Golden Queen Bee and Sun Demos. Sun Demos and his underlings were thrown around by the Golden Queen Bee after Sun Demos underwent his second evolution. The Monkey King was stronger than he used to be after gaining resistance to magical attacks and certain physical blows. His rapid regeneration healed him whenever a magic missile or hard blow struck and penetrated his natural resistances. That was enough to transform him into a terror to the Guards of the border settlements.

However, even worse were the Demonic Monkeys, the Nightshade Assassins, and the wide variety of other Blood Oath Demon Monkeys.

The Golden Stinger Wasps teleported the nasty monkeys inside the border settlement, where the agile and dexterous creatures charged into the buildings. They avoided fighting the Guards and Awakened by using the civilians as hostages. At least, that was what it looked like to the Awakened who had Soultraits with high area of effect powers.

The monkeys cared little about that. They ignored most civilians, except those attacking them, and hunted the Guards and Awakened in narrow alleys or from dead angles.

Their strategic combat was flawless, though slow. It took more than 48 hours before Sun Demos and his unterlings, aided by two Super Awakened, conquered the border settlement.

But it worked out. They made it happen!

Chapter 1003 Road to Ancient

As suspected, the High Lords' resistance decreased drastically once the first border settlements fell victim to the Untamed Armies. The forces on the Untamed Jungle were too strong for the average High Lords to deal with.

They tried rallying their forces and attacked the Untamed Armies in an all-out attack as a last ditch effort, but messed up big time. Some Super Awakened like Frederik Kolbenheim or powerful Awakened like Jacqueline Kolbenheim – formerly known as Jacqueline Orlando – had a powerful area of effect techniques, which obliterated bigger numbers of enemies swiftly. But not only Awakened were given enough power to deal with the gathered forces of the Fae Union.

The Elementals, Red Dragon, and Minor Typhoon Rocs also had the means to do so. They didn't hesitate to demonstrate their powers and wreak havoc outside the Untamed Jungle where they didn't have to restrain their powers due to the surrounding environment. Outside the Untamed Jungle, neither was afraid to damage anything. They could go crazy. And they did.

The destruction was shocking, to say the least, but the Fae Union's forces crumbled quickly. They resisted with great effort, but it came to no surprise when the last resisting Lords died no more than one month after the troops of the Untamed Jungle started retaliating against the Fae Union.

The Untamed Jungle didn't need Michael to take care of the leeches harming it. All it needed was a good gardener, and the Untamed Armies were perfect for that job.

Once the Fae Union was shattered, only remnants of the terror and destruction Michael's forces had inflicted upon the surrounding regions remained, but nobody paid attention to them. Once the Untamed Jungle expanded into these regions, flourishing nature would replace the destruction. Life would return and transform the destroyed lands into brilliant places full of life and happiness.

With the destruction of the Fae Union the Untamed Jungle wasn't restrained anymore. It could focus on expanding again. In fact, the Untamed Jungle could transfer more energy and nutrients than usually into the expansion with the corpses of all those who had resisted the Untamed Armies. Contrary to the norm, more than half of the Fae Union's civilians decided against joining Michael's forces. Since they were only given two options; to either die or follow Michael, the majority decided to follow their Lords into death.

That showed how well the Fae Union's Lords had treated their summons. They would much instead follow their Lord into death than serve the men and women who had killed them.

That was a little unfortunate as too many good Summons died from that decision, but their corpses were full of goods to plunder and nutrients to give to the Untamed Jungle.

Michael visited the Origin Expanse after the Fae Union was shattered. He used True Extraction Domain to plunder all corpses and started combining Summoning Scroll Fragments, Summoning Scrolls, Artifacts, and so forth while the plundered corpses were given to the Untamed Jungle to devour and turn into nutrients.

In the following months, the Untamed Jungle expanded rapidly. But the flora was not all that expanded. The jungle monsters spread further, claimed bigger lands to habituate and started with territorial fights to decide who would be the Overlord of the newly claimed lands.

More Pentagon Fortresses were built and the existing Pentagon Fortresses in the center of the Untamed Jungle were expanded. The settlements in the jungle center quickly transformed from fortresses, which were ready for war and to block the charge of massive armies, into large city-states. The city-states were still merged with the surrounding flora and fauna, but the number of citizens living in each city-state exceeded the population of the existing Pentagon Forts easily.

As the number of Summons continued increasing, so did the number of valuable workers, combatants, and rare prodigies. The researchers found a way to upgrade the Intermediate Summoning Gate and how to upgrade the Sacred Knight Temple. The Hunter Academies spread across Michael's territories had already been improved, which was accepted as an official upgrade by the Will, and it was only a matter of time before more such upgrades would be discovered and implemented.

But that would take time, effort, and enough resources.

"How long do you think the Untamed Jungle will remain a Grand Region?" Michael was asked by Hiraku when they inspected the rapidly expanding Untamed Jungle from an elevated position. Michael didn't bother using Slipstream to teleport to the various locations he'd intended to visit. Instead, he traveled on Icarus with Hiraku, who joined him to report the events with the Fae Union, the Desert Rebels, their recent gains of natural resources, and the progress of various construction sites all across the Untamed Jungle and the Sacred Desert. The Sacred Desert didn't have much more to offer now that it had advanced to an Intermediate Region. Of course, it could regain its former glory as an Advanced Region as it had been during the Second Epoch, but the effort wasn't worth it. Not yet, at least.

Michael already owned a full-fledged Grand Region, which expanded naturally as long as the surrounding forces didn't restrain it. As long as nobody worked against the Untamed Jungle, it would grow. That was much more efficient than being forced to work on the Sacred Desert to help it advance actively.

"I'm not sure, but given that the Primal Root is a Primordial grade Energy Vein...I don't think we will have any issues. The Grand Region was once a Primal Region as well. It didn't lose the conditions to regain its former glory either. I don't know about the upgrade conditions to form a Primal Region, but given that the Untamed Jungle has a Divinity, Sentience, and a Primordial grade Energy Vein, I think we should be fine," Michael said but tilted his head when he looked down to inspect the undergrowth stretching outside the Untamed Jungle.

"As for your question. The conditions for upgrading the Untamed Jungle to an Ancient Region are mostly met. We're only missing the size threshold and probably the number of residents within the Untamed Jungle. Though, I'm not sure about the latter. The jungle monsters and Summons might already be more than enough to fill that criteria. That being said...I think the Untamed Jungle will be upgraded to an Ancient Region in a year if it continues growing like this, two years if the expansion speed returns to the norm."

That was faster than Hiraku expected, but he smiled. It would be fantastic if the Untamed Jungle would regain a part of its former glory in the next one or two years. "That's great. Your strength will increase even further once the Untamed Jungle regains its power as an Ancient Region. The Links of Loyalty will grant you more Soul Power as a base, and if I remember correctly from Old Scripts, you will also gain a minuscule boost in terms of physique, soul, and mind from every Link residing within the Ancient Region." He said with glimmering eyes.

"That is what I'm working for. The Ancient Region would help me fight some Gods and maybe even survive against the Primal." Michael responded in all honesty. A trace of wary entered his voice, "But I'm not sure if I have that much time before the Gods and Primal act."

Chapter 1004 Aether

The raging storm in the Origin Expanse died down and was replaced by peace and the period of growth. The population in Michael's territories expanded, and the Untamed Jungle also continued to stretch everywhere.

In the meantime, Michael's time outside the Origin Expanse was interesting, to put it lightly. He didn't join too many battles and focused on creating more Soultrait Symbols for his people, finding suitable Symbols to integrate into the Soultraits of the Super Awakened and the other Awakened working for him, but also learning more about his Soultraits.

Michael might not possess a Divine Seed, but he could learn more about his Soultrait Symbols. It might not be feasible for him to create his own Divinity without a proper Divinity Seed – the Seeds of the God Curses might be part of Michael and belong to him, but Michael couldn't create his personal Divinity with them – but it was possible to study the Laws and Authorities of the cosmos and maybe even gain minor mastery over them.

Unbound Laws and Authorities were much weaker than those infused into Divinities, but since Michael had so many Soultrait Symbols and the knowledge and mastery that more than a dozen Demi Gods and hundreds of Divine Lifeforms had acquired, Michael's chances to understand the Laws and Authorities was higher than the norm. It would be interesting to put them into action in the future, given that he acquired some Authorities in the first place.

Other than experimenting with Soultrait Symbols for his people, and studying his Soultraits, Michael practiced with the God Curses Divinities almost daily. He tried nourishing the Divinities to access more of their power while also using them for a prolonged period. Their growth wasn't quick, but Michael noticed a minuscule improvement every single day. The improvements weren't noteworthy, but given enough time and effort, which Michael was willing to give to strengthen his Divinities, they would soon transform into properly sized Divinities.

Months went by after the Fae Union's destruction, and Michael's Divinities continued to grow. While their growth had been slow at the beginning of his practice, Michael had finally gained enough mastery of some highly effective methods to practice with his Divinities while nourishing

them. The results of mastering his Divinities through practice and nourishing them simultaneously were tremendous. In comparison, the gains Michael gained from the expanding Untamed Jungle or from nourishing the Super Awakened were lackluster. Still, they couldn't be underestimated either. Just like it couldn't be underestimated what a few powerful Soultrait Symbols could do to some Awakened. Their boring lives, or lives filled with struggle and problems, changed entirely. They turned upside down from an item that wasn't even valuable to Michael at this point. He had more Soultrait Symbols than he could count and accumulated more SoulStar Fragments than ever. Michael had yet to figure out what he wanted to do with the SoulStar Fragments. Would it be a good idea to strengthen the Super Awakened even further, pushing some of their Soultrait Symbols to 8-Star, or was it better to give them more 5-Star and 6-Star Soultraits? If he wasn't supposed to upgrade the Super Awakened's Soultraits, should he strengthen his Soul and create more empty Soul Sockets, or was the best solution to accumulate more SoulStar Fragments and upgrade one Soultrait – probably Extraction due to the long-term benefits – to 10-Star?

Michael had countless options, but the right answer didn't want to come to him. He could also infuse the SoulStar Fragments into his Aethyr until it would attain full glory once it transformed into full-fledged Aether, but Michael was unsure if that would cause more problems. In the first place, Aethyr hasn't been as useful as it used to be in the last few battles, and it was uncertain how effective it would be against Gods and the Primal. Michael considered trying Aethyr, but the situation wasn't that simple. The Aethyr sucked his SoulStar Fragments dry without granting Michael any great benefits. The amount of Aether inside the Aethyr increased, which also reinforced the structures formed with Aethyr, but there was no increase in his actual combat prowess. At least Michael didn't notice a massive benefit.

The claws formed through Curse Fusion were only slightly stronger and sharper once a layer of Aethyr formed around it. However, the Aethyr Claws without Curse Fusion were much weaker. The same applied to shields and protection. Aethyr Shields were strong, but a Divine Lifeform could pierce through it. However, the serpent-scale armor, which could already block the blows of a Divine, was slightly enhanced when Michael coated them with Aethyr. The effect was present, but it wasn't worth investing tens of millions of SoulStar Fragments into it. Not if the gains were only minuscule. The amount of Aethyr didn't increase enough to consider it a worthwhile investment.

[I think you're forgetting how powerful Aether is and why Aether is so valuable to most Gods and the Primal especially.] Jormungandr noted when the World Serpent sensed Michael's debacle. "What do you mean? Until now, nobody was affected by the Aethyr. They weren't even surprised when I revealed it. It's almost as if Siegfried's comment a few years back was nothing but a lie. Is my Aethyr really this valuable?"

Michael clearly recalled the day Siegfried Dragoon saw his Aethyr. He remembered how shocked Siegfried had been, especially after telling his story, and how multiple Lords attacked him to acquire the tiny trace of Aether he had acquired in an ancient ruin. Seeing Michael with much more Aether infused into an alloy to form Aethyr had shocked him to the core.

But since then, nothing big has happened. It was almost like nobody cared about the Aethyr and the growing amount of Aether within it. Not even the Demi Gods he'd fought.

[That's because they were focused on the fight and didn't sense the Aether in your Aethyr. You have so many Soultraits that most cannot even differentiate what you are doing with which Soultrait. There is no clear boundary, especially with the power of three God Curses, the Nature Heart, your

curse powers, and so forth. Using Aethyr could have been a Soultrait as well, which was why nobody bothered trying to sense what was hidden deep within the Aethyr alloy. They should have sensed it if they had enough time to focus on it, but you killed them long before anyone realized.]

That did make sense, somewhat, at least. But it didn't explain why Aether was so valuable.

"So...what's the point of Aether? Why exactly will Gods and the Primal be excited if I nourish and release Aether?" [Excited? No. They will be anything but excited. Trust me with that one!] Hel chuckled.

Jormungandr hissed in acknowledgment, [Nobody will be excited to face you when you release pure Aether. They will be afraid instead. Including the Primal.]

"Afraid? If Aether is dangerous to Gods and Primal, it would make sense why they're going crazy after it. Maybe it would also make sense how Divine Lifeforms don't think too much about it since they're not affected by... by what, though? What exactly makes pure Aether so dangerous? I cannot sense anything special from it even though I have three Divinities and a growing Divinity Fragment inside me?" Michael asked in confusion.

[The Aether is bound to you and will thus not harm you or us. But to put the lethality of pure Aether into simple words. Pure Aether is the only effective method to harm someone's Essence. The Primal are so old and were born in the Origin, basically, if we believe their legends, and are thus mostly made of Essence. Essence is their existence, and Pure Aether is one of the few means capable of harming Essences with a single scratch.] Fenrir growled.

[Gods, which you should have noticed by now, are different from ordinary Divine Lifeforms. You have a Divinity, and you should be able to tell that you cannot transform ordinary energy into the power that fuels Divinities. That is because Essences fuel the Divinities. You learned early on how to create Extraction Essences, but even those weren't proper Essences. You should be able to tell the difference between your first Extraction Essences and the Essences residing within the Wolf Divinity.] Hel added.

[Thus, being able to harm Essences effectively via Pure Aether allows you to damage the Divinity of Gods and drain the power accumulated within their Divinities rapidly, whereas the Primal have even more problems to take care of if you manage to cut them with Pure Aether.] That was unexpected, but it solved Michael's issue. After the God Curses ' commentary, he knew where to put his SoulStar Fragments. "That's amazing! But why did nobody tell me about this earlier?" Michael asked as he started to infuse SoulStar Fragments into Aethyr.

[First, you didn't have enough SoulStar Fragments. Now that you have enough SoulStar Fragments, it's fine to tell you. However, you should also take note of a particular problem.]

"What problem are you talking about?" Michael tilted his head.

Jormungandr sighed deeply.

[Pure Aether can be detected by the Primal. The more Aether accumulates in one spot, the easier it is for them to sense it.]

"Oh..." Michael furrowed his eyebrows.

That was indeed problematic.

[But you have not yet enough Aether to attract anyone's attention. The Aethyr alloy helps you cover and insulate the Aether, which is quite surprising. I would have never expected a backwater galaxy with a tiny organization such as the Tritan Alliance to create an alloy capable of blocking Aether as efficiently as Aethyr.]

The Tritan Alliance did a good job, indeed. They were the real MVPs!

Chapter 1005 Changes

Michael collected more SoulStar Fragments, probably enough to transform his Aethyr into proper Pure Aether with a single infusion of SoulStar Fragments. But he didn't do it right away. He would wait with the creation of Pure Aether until he couldn't wait any longer. That was either until some Gods knocked on his door for a beating, or until a Primal would appear before him with ill intentions.

The God Curses approved this plan, hoping Michael could further strengthen his Divinities and maybe even increase his Tier a little. Unfortunately, the Titan War between the Altors Union and the Supreme Human Alliance didn't leave him with that much spare time. Michael was still using Slipstream to teleport the Super Awakened around in small teams to obliterate High Hyumans alongside a handful of Divine Lifeforms, but the situation grew a little bit more complicated with time.

First, the tides of the battlefield in the Novix Galaxy switched again. Many Cosmic Beasts had been attacked and killed in recent months. The Supreme Human Alliance focused their forces on the Cosmic Beasts, as the monsters had been inflicting tremendous damage by teleporting around whenever Hyumans powerful enough to harm them arrived before continuing with their relentless attacks in a less protected location.

At the end of the day, Michael had inflicted more damage to the Supreme Human Alliance than the Cosmic Beasts, but they were weaker and more numerous than Michael. Stopping Michael was difficult, but restraining the Cosmic Beasts' movements using spatial blockers was simple. Capturing a swarm of dispersed piranhas in the sea was still difficult, yet it was much more simplistic than trying to capture a whale with a small net. One task was difficult but achievable, whereas the other task required a handful of miracles to succeed.

Michael didn't intervene in the fight of the Cosmic Beasts. Even if he wanted to, Michael never knew where the Cosmic Beasts teleported. In the first place, they could only jump through space alone. Bringing someone along was not within their power. Therefore, Michael never considered using them as a mount for his Super Awakened Units. If not for that restriction, the Supreme Human Alliance would be suffering much more.

One way or another, half of the Cosmic Beast population was killed before the Cosmic Queen Beast decided to retreat. She pulled her babies back into the other dimension, where she came up with new tactics to support the enemies of the Supreme Human Alliance. The Cosmic Queen Beast didn't care who you were or with whom she had to team up. As long as they fought the Supreme Human Alliance, they were the Cosmic Queen Beast's allies.

It was that simple.

The Cosmic Beasts weren't the only ones in pain. Both the Altors Union and Divine Subordinates were slapped in the face a few more times than Michael wanted to acknowledge. More than one

hundred Divine Subordinates died to stupidity, thinking they were strong enough to fight a Demi God head-on. The Heads of the Altors Union thought the same. They were certain the Divine Subordinates were strong enough.

Thus, they deployed a small army of Awakened to support the Divine Subordinates with various Support and Curse Soultraits. There were also Awakened with rare Blessing Soultraits and the like. Still, the forces were too weak to deal with one of the Demi Gods who'd been deployed to the Novix Galaxy to deal with the Divine Subordinates, Cosmic Beasts, and the bothersome forces of the Altors Union once and for all.

Two Demi Gods were all they had to deploy, forcing the Comisc Queen Beast out of her reserves while half of the Divine Subordinates were mortally injured and the forces of the Altors Union decimated.

The Divine Subordinates killed one of the Demi-Gods after the Cosmic Queen Beast unleashed her fury as a full-fledged Leviathan. She didn't want to expose her true power but was forced to do so. At last, one Demi God died while the other one escaped. It was amazing to think the Divine Subordinates killed a Demi God, but the losses were too great. They only survived, thanks to the Cosmic Queen Beast's interference.

Still, the Divine Subordinates gained more confidence from their victory. They entered the Genox Galaxy and started wreaking havoc since Michael hadn't given them a new mission for months. The Divine Subordinates conquered several planetary systems and received even more reinforcement from the Altors Union, only for more and more members of the Divine Subordinates to be killed.

That was when Michael found himself forced to intervene. He might have received enough from the Awakened killed by the Divine Subordinates. His investment and the compound interest had been paid back a long time ago, but Michael was unwilling to let one of his most valuable assets die like this.

The Divine Subordinates threw away their lives. That was too wasteful.

Thus, Michael picked up the Divine Subordinates when the time was ripe. He gathered the Divine Subordinates, redistributed them to different groups, and jumped with them through space using Slipstream. The new locations were outside the Novix Galaxy and in more secure positions where the Divine Subordinates couldn't die as easily. Demi Gods could come their way, but most would either travel too slowly to arrive in a timely manner, or they would have to be teleported to the least active battle zones.

The former was easy to achieve by actively using Slipstream to change the position of the Divine Subordinate groups, while the latter was also easy to work against. Michael could teleport the Divine Subordinates to the battle zones the Demi Gods came from, thus altering the balance on that border before fighting the Demi God head-on.

Well, it wouldn't be head-on. Michael was certain to emerge victorious in a battle against a single Demi God. Michael pursued the tactics for a little while and gained a tremendous amount of resources that way. Every Divine Lifeform killed by Michael or his people rewarded more than 100,000 SoulStar Fragments and massive other gains such as the portion of goods stored within their War Rune storages or their Divine Artifacts. Everything was of incredible value, but the most valuable bodies were the Demi Gods.

They rewarded a Soultrait Symbol, and a vastly ranging number of SoulStar Fragments. Some rewarded half a million, but most crossed the one million threshold easily. Still, the biggest gains were their bodies – used by the Untamed Jungle to expand – and their War Rune storages. Filled with treasures, Michael could easily manage and expand his territory for years...with the gains from one Demi God corpse.

Still, Michael managed to use up all the resources within weeks, not only to progress in his War Rune but also to push everyone to progress and go above and beyond their limits.

The Super Awakened were all-in and showed that quite clearly by giving their utmost, but it was obvious how displeased the Divine Subordinates were with Michael's actions. Whereas the Super Awakened received more Soultrait Symbols and Soultrait Upgrades – they received their fair portion from the Awakened they'd killed –, the Divine Subordinates received nothing. But that was only fair.

They had betrayed him. Why would he give them a reward for that?

Chapter 1006 Give Me!

Michael found himself fighting more recklessly as time went on. He is at the top of the game, knowing how nobody in the Supreme Human Alliance could easily stop him at this point. Michael could kill whoever he wanted to see dead and devour planets as he pleased. Nobody stopped him. His Divinities were growing quickly, but while that was great, not everything about it was good. His Divinities pulled more attention to him, and it came as no surprise when stronger Demi Gods in pairs or even larger groups appeared to fight him.

The Supreme Human Alliance wanted to see him dead, and they were willing to weaken their defenses to hunt him down and end their misery once and for all. But the forces weren't enough. Michael's Divinities, Soultraits, and curse power were too potent and lethal. The Demi Gods inflicted severe wounds to Michael, but most wounds were inflicted intentionally. Michael would allow the Demi Gods to injure him and have them feel like they were about to win in one of the next few moves, only to retaliate with full power and counterattack when their excitement overwhelmed their guard and vigilance. The tactic might have been dangerous, but Nature Heart and River of Vigor did an extraordinary job protecting Michael. No matter how severe the wounds were, River of Vigor's supreme healing serum would mend him quickly. The Nature Heart further augmented his regeneration while ensuring his organs would be quickly pushed back to their peak state.

However, Michael's high time was never supposed to last forever. He should have been more careful and used Slipstream more often to travel to new locations all over the Supreme Human Alliance's outer regions. But Michael didn't do that. He was too confident nobody in the Supreme Human Alliance could kill him that his teleportations through the SHA's territory turned into something others could predict. There was a pattern in his movements, and he was found out.

One day, Michael teleported to the inner region of the Supreme Human Alliance alone to wreak havoc with a bunch of Divine Lifeforms and possibly destroy another Divine Academy with a few quick and deadly attacks, but he was already awaited. To be precise, someone stepped out of a large bridge when Michael appeared from Slipstream.

The man was also alone and had long golden hair, bright ruby eyes, and a perfectly lean physique. His skin had been tanned in the sun for a long time, but there was more to it. Michael felt odd about what True Vision saw in his skin. Something merged into his skin.

[That's Essence. This guy is a God. No, not really. He was a God, but only for a short period, and must have pulled his Divinity apart. He still feels like a proper God, but if you look at his Divinity, you can see that God pulled parts of his Divinity apart.] Fenrir explained as they inspected the God through Michael's Eyes.

They could see a lot with Seer and True Vision active at full power. The God's Divinity looked like a molten ball that had been cut open and pulled apart. It looked like an ugly flower made in a child's metalcraft workshop. Though, despite being ugly beyond recognition, the Divinity was powerful. It was large and must have been nourished for decades.

"So... you are the kid with multiple God Curses? How about you give me Jormungandr's Power Authority, and we leave it at that? I don't really care about the Supreme Human Alliance's fate. They have been annoying me for centuries and deserve a good beating." The God offered, but Jormungandr hissed angrily.

[He must have stopped the completion of his Divinity when he heard about you. The SHA seems to have found out about Fenrir and Jormungandr, and now he wants your Authority to strengthen his Divinity before it is too late to make changes.] Hel laughed, enraging Jormungandr even further.

"How about...no?" Michael responded with squinted eyes. He couldn't give the God his Authorities even if he had wanted to, which was not the case. The Power Authority was unique and already intertwined with the World Serpent. Michael might be able to use it through his Divinity, but that was because the World Serpent was part of him. They were one entity and couldn't be distinguished at this point.

"If you don't care about the Supreme Human Alliance, how about you let me destroy it first?" Michael asked, knowing the answer wouldn't be pleasant.

"You don't want to give me the World Serpent's Authority?" The God asked again, the Essence within him stirring. A membrane of viscous dark-red Essence coated him.

"I cannot do that. That would kill me. So, nope. I am not giving you anything," Michael affirmed while slowly infusing large batches of SoulStar Fragments into his Aethyr. More Aether formed within the Aethyr, but Michael wasn't sure if that was enough to deal with the God.

'Fortunately, ordinary injuries harm Gods as well. All I have to do is to hit him hard enough.'

Michael exerted Foundation Break by conjuring energy Soullife Energy before also activating the Perfect Heavenly Beast Physique technique. The Serpent Seals were also activated, pushing his physical power even higher as the Serpent Seals unlocked more of Primordial Vessel's full potential. Last but not least, Michael used Soul Tears to augment Primordial Vessel and Greater Enhancement with several layers on his physique.

He considered using Curse Fusion for a moment but decided against it. Instead, Michael used Slipstream to appear beside the God with the Power Authority activated. His hands transformed into a blade as Emperor Qi, enhanced with Unlimited Enhancement, and a Soul Tear shrouded it. Michael didn't hesitate to coat the Emperor Qi Blade into Aethyr, which was mostly made of Aether at this point. The God might notice the Aether, but he would have sustained an injury by the point

he realized what was going on. At least, that was what Michael had been hoping for. The Emperor Qi Blade whisked past God's chest as he turned around smoothly. The only damage inflicted was a minuscule scratch, which severed the essence around the area of impact. The God instantly realized that something was off about Michael's attack, but he couldn't see the silverish Aether as Michael retracted it almost instantly.

Still, the God was enraged, shot toward Michael with shocking velocity and grasped his shoulder. A flood of magma burst from his hand, burning Michael's arm in seconds.

Michael cursed but acted quickly. He was in the God's grasp and couldn't change that as long as the God held onto his arm. Thus, Michael cut the burning arm with a quick slash. A moment later, Michael used Slipstream to move away from the God.

[Are you sure you want to fight him? You could use Slipstream to get away.]

'I won't start running away after everything I've gone through.'

[Okay. Go for it then,] The God Curses said simultaneously. They sounded excited. Even more so because they knew Michael better than most. The God Curses were full away of his attitude and that he wouldn't start running away.

But was he strong enough to fight a God until the end? Would he emerge victorious?

Chapter 1007 Volcano God

Michael wasn't going to flee from the Pseudo God, or was he a proper God? Michael couldn't really tell the difference right now. The man's body was infused with far more Essence than all the Demi Gods he'd met and killed together. His Divinity was also larger than Michael's Divinities. If not for the damage inflicted on the Divinity, he could have been considered a proper God. Not a powerful one, but a full-fledged god.

[Just call him a God. It doesn't matter. You think you can kill him, so you are not scared of him because of the 'God' label. Some newly reborn Gods think of themselves as lesser than other full-fledged Gods when they first attain godhood. They think they are supposed to be weaker than old Gold, but that is not necessarily the case. Every Divinity is different, and it is not impossible for you to kill an older God merely because you just attained godhood. Either way, the label doesn't matter to you, which means you will be fine whether you consider him a God or a Pseudo God.]

Michael agreed with a shrug while the supreme healing serum healed him. Michael expanded the naturally forming Extraction Aura to draw in more energy while converting some of the Void Ingots stored in the Swallow Domain storage into nutrients. He then activated Unlimited Enhancement on River of Vigor to regrow his arm within seconds. The energy and nutrients required to do so were enormous, but it was only an insignificant fraction of what he could have formed by using Permute on the stored Void Ingots.

The God observed the burning arm for a second and turned to Michael, the regrowing arm attracting the God's interest.

"Looks like I will have a fun time burning you to death. You will suffer for a long time. Don't you worry about that!" He declared and made his move. The God moved through the open space, bursts of lava gushing out behind him.

His momentum increased to top speed, and he appeared before Michael. However, Michael was already prepared to face the Volcano God. He activated Curse Fusion on top of the already activated techniques and allowed his body to transform. The serpent scale armor grew out of him alongside the serpent tail. The right side of his body withered and looked like it was about to die at any moment. It transformed into a replication of Hel's undead appearance. Claws grew from his hands, his eyes transformed into the slits of a deadly predator, and his hair grew rapidly. Michael's presence changed drastically as the Essences of Fenrir, Jormungandr, and Hel influenced it even more. But that was not all. It hadn't been long, but the Nature Heart grew under the influence of curse power. It gained more of the Untamed Jungle's Divinity and expanded. At some point, the growth of the Nature Heart changed something. Something about the Nature Heart changed.

It grew more effective whenever he channeled curse power through it, which was even more apparent when Michael activated Curse Fusion. The Nature Heart didn't have any great means of attack or even defense, but it filled Michael with lifeforce. It flooded Michael and allowed him to unleash his Soullife Arts as much as he pleased and to convert some lifeforce into energy if needed.

The latter wasn't needed just yet. The River of Vigor had accumulated enough healing serum, advanced healing serum, and supreme healing serum. There was no need to prepare anything else to heal him any further. Even regrowing lost limbs was rather simple once he used Unlimited Enhancement.

Once Curse Fusion jumped into action, Michael applied a few more layers of Greater Enhancement on his body. Simultaneously, he conjured hundreds of spears coated in ice using Emperor Qi and Galaxies of Elements to their fullest. The ice used had highly compressed freezing properties infused, alongside a trace of God Curse poison and True Extraction Essence, of course.

Michael hurled the Emperor Qi spears at the Volcano God, whose leg jerked toward Michael. He wasn't much faster than Michael once he didn't unleash his Volcano Essence to boost his speed, but Michael didn't do much to block his attack. All he did was to grow Emperor Qi Spikes, coated in Aethyr – which was amplified by Unlimited Enhancement – around the area of impact. The God struck Michael's leg, smashing it into countless pieces, mangling it in the most horrendous ways, but Michael accepted the pain.

Seeing the Volcano God's expression change when the Aether spikes pierced into his leg, penetrating the Volcano Essence and puncturing his leg, was enough for Michael. The pain was worth it, especially since his leg wasn't needed in a fight in the middle of empty space. It regenerated rapidly from the passive effect of the three stored versions of healing serum in large quantities.

Michael released the Emperor Qi spears when the Volcano God struck him and the Aether Spikes pierced his legs. They burst forward in batches of dozens and struck their target with ease. However, that is as far as the first batches went. The freezing ice covering the spears melted before they could pass through the Volcano Essence, but the Curse God Poison and the Extraction Essence jumped into effect nonetheless. Since they couldn't enter the God's body easily, Michael had applied Insert as well, ensuring the poison and Extraction Essence could invade "something". That something was the Volcano God's Essence. The spears exploded, pushing the Volcano Essence aside, even if it was merely one millimeter, probably less. It was enough for the God Curse Poison and Extraction Essence to invade. The poison weakened the Volcano Essence until it was also destroyed, burned to ashes, whereas the Extraction Essence affected the weakened Volcano Essence,

draining a minuscule portion of it. It was easy to overcome the damage inflicted by one, or even a dozen of such attacks, but Michael had conjured hundreds of Emperor Qi Spears with the exact same augmentations.

The freezing ice continued melting as they struck the Volcano Essence covering the Volcano God, but both sides quickly realized what was about to happen. The Volcano God's Essence was drained with every Emperor Qi spear hitting him. He was forced to either remove the Volcano Essence and allow the spears to hit him, which wouldn't have harmed him much, but it was still too dangerous. Or he could escape close combat and reorganize his tactics to prepare for the next clash with Michael.

The latter was exactly what he did. The Volcano God didn't know what exactly Michael had done to weaken and drain his Essence, but if - whatever it was – entered his body, he would have trouble continuing fighting Michael.

Furthermore, for every injury he inflicted to Michael, the Volcano God would be injured as well. The worst, however, was that Michael could heal himself while the Volcano God's naturally high regeneration didn't kick in as it should have.

And he knew why. For a moment, the Volcano God hated himself for jumping into the battle. He shouldn't have attacked Michael without ample preparations.

'Fuck this bastard. I am going to tear him apart! Who cares if he has Aether or not?!!!'

Chapter 1008 Domain

The Volcano God disappeared in a mass of molten magma, which exploded, destroying the Emperor Qi spears instantly. Michael conjured several Imperial Barriers, stalling the molten magma long enough to move away.

The molten magma melted through the barriers, easily destroying them as Michael moved in the opposite direction. The Volcano God retreated as well, but he quickly shifted from retreating to attacking when he noticed Michael's lack of response. Michael didn't retaliate against the molten magma, which was why the Volcano God thought Michael didn't have the means to block his attacks properly. The Imperial Barrier wasn't strong enough to do so.

He released a burst of lava to push ahead and move forward and reached Michael in no time. Michael conjured Imperial Barrier between them, but the God pierced through the barrier with brute force. He didn't even lose much momentum in the act. More Imperial Barriers appeared, but they were shattered just like the first one. Still, the quantity made a difference, slowly but steadily forcing the Volcano God to slow down. Michael used that moment to lunge at the Volcano God. The serpent tail burst forward as Michael clawed the God. The claws were coated in Aether and Emperor Qi, which was enough to pierce the Volcano Essence, but the crucial attack came from the serpent tail. The serpent tail had been attached with True Extraction Essence, Aether, and Curse God Poison and was reinforced by Greater Enhancement. The Volcano God sensed some danger from the serpent tail and reacted in a timely manner but Michael had used Unlimited Enhancement on Seer's Domination to attack the God's mind and soul, while also dazzling him with a wave of pristine light. The Volcano God blocked Domination rather easily, but the dazzling light was unexpected.

"How many Soultraits do you have, bastard!" The God roared in anger as the serpent tail pierced the Essence infused thigh. It was painful, but not as much as the Volcano God had expected. He sensed something entering his body but sacrificed some of his Essence to burn his insides and dispersed the poison and foreign essence entering his body.

Michael clicked his tongue, True Vision studying the Volcano God with deadly precision.

'Nothing is working against him. He lost some of his Essence, but this is too slow. If we keep this going this bastard will keep me here for days! Is he stalling time?' Even though Michael didn't think the Volcano God was stalling time, maybe that was exactly what he did. It could be a trap, but he was too agitated to leave like this. [If you let us help, we will. You don't have to struggle against someone like this.] Fenrir said lightly, but something seemed to anger him.

[Are you angry because he wants my Authority and not your Laws? Poor you. Do you want a treat, brother? I can spare a bone or two.] Jormungandr teased and even Hel chuckled.

Fenrir didn't think it was fun, and Michael was also having a hard time smiling. His situation was not exactly all that fun.

[But Fenrir is right. We can help if you want us to.]

Michael clicked his tongue at the World Serpent's comment but nodded inwardly, 'Just let me test a little bit more before helping me.'

He accessed the Wolf Divinity and the Death Authority before attacking the Volcano God again. The Volcano God noticed a change in Michael's attacks and released a burst of molten lava toward Michael. However, instead of backing off to escape the molten lava, Michael used Slipstream to appear behind the Volcano God. His hand was already stretched out and he pressed his hand tightly against the Hyuman God's broad back.

Molten lava burst from the God's back like a fountain when he noticed what happened but Michael coated his body in dozens of Imperial Barriers. This time, the Imperial Barriers were stronger than before. Michael used Permute to produce more energy from the stored Void Ingots to strengthen the Imperial Barriers, which blocked the most lethal blows.

The Volcano God noticed the lack of response and damage caused by the molten magma streams and cursed. However, it was already too late. Death had entered the God's body after Michael managed to use the Wolf Divinity to devour the Volcano Defense, trying to burn anything foreign invading the Volcano God's body. The Wolf Divinity was drained, but using Permute on more Void Ingots and the Volcano Essence, which he'd just consumed, was enough to replenish some of the Wolf Divinity.

Meanwhile, Michael had unleashed almost every bit of Death accumulated within Hel's Divinity. The Soul Sphere was drained of its Death Authority for a while, except if Hel replenished it, but that was fine. Death fed on the Volcano God's lifeforce, slowly but steadily devouring him. The lifeforce sustained Death, which grew in strength as the Volcano God's power decreased.

The corner of Michael's lips curled upward. He was on a good way to deal with the Volcano God.

Serpent fangs grew from his knuckles and his claws extended as well as he coated them in Pure Aether. He didn't have much Pure Aether, but it was enough to affect and damage the God. The Volcano God's eyes widened, but he didn't give up. He had gotten too far to give up now. Michael's

Tier was lower than the norm for Demi Gods. His strength might surpass that of most Demi Gods, but Michael was not yet a God.

The Volcano God unleashed his essence into the wide-open space with the intention to show Michael what a real God was capable of. Michael might be strong, but that did not matter to him. So what if Michael had more than a dozen Soultraits, three God Curses, and Pure Aehter? Michael was still weaker than him!

The surrounding temperature increased drastically. From the incredible low temperature of space, it suddenly felt like they were in the middle of an active volcano. Michael frowned deeply, but he could endure the heat. It bothered him, yet having Taming with a Red Dragon and an Elemental Empress, as well as the Galaxy of Elements helped him overcome everything. His magical resistance was already high, but his resistance toward heat was the strongest. That was how Michael survived the Volcano God's attacks until now.

However, the situation wasn't as simple as it looked at first glance. The Volcano God's domain expanded until it reached the nearby planets. Michael sensed massive changes in the atmosphere of the first planet the Volcano God's domain reached. His Death Authority jumped into action and rewarded him with the energy of the dead. That could only mean one thing. The Volcano God's domain killed the civilians living on the nearby planet!

However, there was no hesitation in the Volcano God's actions as he continued expanding the domain. The farther it reached, the hotter was the center of the domain. Michael felt uncomfortable as the temperature around the Volcano God increased and it was no surprise that Michael's blood started boiling.

Even his natural fire resistance wasn't strong enough to block all harm caused by the tremendous temperatures around him.

At the same time, the expanding domain of the Volcano God obliterated all life on the nearby planet and Michael was certain it wouldn't stop there.

The entire planetary system was bound to cease to exist after today.

'Since you start playing dirty...let's do it!'

Chapter 1009 Playing Dirty

The horrifying temperature increases weren't easy to deal with, but Michael made it happen. He created ice-attributed energy using Galaxy of Elements, avoiding adding the freezing attribute to the energy, and circulated it through his body in an attempt to lower his body temperature. But that wasn't enough.

He had to conjure the ice attribute of his energy into his blood using Insert. Simultaneously, it helped Michael when he added ice to the healing serum, which he circulated through every inch of his body to heal him while further regulating his body temperature. His actions were enough to overcome the horrifying temperature in space, but it was a little bit annoying nonetheless.

The domain continued spreading, and the temperature in its center reached an all-time high. The aftermath of that course of action was apparent. The planets in the domain's range died, which benefited Michael quite a lot. Every death fueled Michael's power. The deaths in the planetary system also granted Michael a great opportunity to strike back. It required some preparations, but

Michael could form Undead Souls from everyone's death. Michael didn't even have to touch the corpses to summon the Undead Souls. Accessing the Death Authority was more than enough. The deaths were well within its range. Fortunately, the Death Authority was very interesting in certain regards. Michael might have used the entirety of Death accumulated in his Soul Sphere, but he could replenish the Death Divinity faster than his other Divinities without doing anything special.

The deaths happening around Michael did all the work.

Every death replenished a fraction of Death. That being said, Death inside the Volcano God was still in effect, while Michael's Death Divinity gained strength and essence. His Energy Vortex also gained a lot of energy from the deaths, but Michael's focus lay on the Undead Souls. He summoned as many as he could handle simultaneously and merged them using Insert. The energy and Death Authority required to do all that was considerable, but the result should speak for itself once Michael finishes his job.

He gathered and combined more Undead Souls, while his Energy Vortex absorbed more energy to progress. Simultaneously, Michael was forced to evade some deadly attacks from the Volcano God. The God was slightly stunned by how casually Michael blocked the horrifying temperatures near him, but he quickly overcame his surprise. Michael had annoyed him often enough since their fight started to accept that the kid was both dangerous and annoying.

The Volcano God moved, his arms and legs shrouded in lava. Michael evaded a few attacks without getting hit before the temperature got to him. The Volcano God wasn't faster, but being close to him was already enough to sustain considerable damage. Only the ice within him and the healing serum helped him survive. Also, a thick layer of Extraction Essence helped him absorb some of the heat and Permute it into even more ice.

The Volcano God couldn't kill him easily. He gave his utmost and struck Michael twice in the following ten minutes, but nothing worked as intended. The biggest issue on Michael's side was that while he might not be dead, he wasn't faring well either. The Volcano God's power was wearing on him. He had more than enough reserves of energy, life force, nutrients, and healing serum, but his resources weren't infinite. Michael couldn't tell if a fight of attrition was the best way to deal with the Volcano God, given how little Volcano Essence he seemed to use at a time. The Pure Aether must have caused the most damage alongside the Death wreaking havoc within him. As for the amount of energy left within the God, Michael could see it very clearly...and that scared him a little.

'Are Gods infinite energy piggy banks or what?' He grumbled, but neither of the God Curses answered. That wasn't good.

Michael grumbled while lifting his hand to block a punch from the Volcano God. He added a few layers of Imperial Barrier, which Michael had amplified with water-attributed energy infused into the Soultraits before Greater Enhancement augmented it further. Unfortunately, the barriers shattered and melted quickly. They reduced the following impact, but the heat easily burned through Michael's serpent-scale armor, skin, flesh, and bones.

Not even Unlimited Enhancement applied to the serpent scale armor was potent enough to block the attack. It was frightening but also intriguing. Michael would never say it openly, but he finally enjoyed having a challenge. It had been eons since he encountered someone who could be considered a proper challenge. Michael grew stronger with every Soultrait Symbol he added to his

arsenal of Soultraits. Every day his Divinities grew. They were nourished and provided Michael with more power as the days passed. Even his connection to the God Curses was firmer than ever.

There had been no challenge for him in the recent years and the number of enemies coming his way – actual enemies who could threaten his life for good – decreased drastically by the day. Therefore, the Volcano God was exactly what Michael needed. The God was a force to be reckoned with, an enemy who required tremendous power to be dealt with. The kind of power Michael couldn't unleash easily. It required ample preparation, concentration, and the right moment to be executed. Of course, the Volcano God also had to be injured and weakened. The latter hadn't been easy, but Michael made it happen.

He unleashed Permute on the stored Void Ingots and transformed a small fortune of them into energy, life force, and nutrients. His arm regrew rapidly while he teleported away. The Volcano God appeared right where Michael teleported to in no time, but that was fine. Michael used ten layers of Greater Enhancement as he manifested the strongest Imperial Barrier. A moment later, Swallow Domain jumped into effect, consuming every bit of the energy left behind by the Void Ingots.

Instead of using Swallow Domain on the Volcano God, which wouldn't have worked either way, Michael applied it on the dying planets in the planetary system. The Volcano God's domain had eradicated all life forms on the planets, and even the planets were about to cease to exist. To be precise, they would transform into dead stars. Michael could have made use of that with the Death Authority, but he would much rather use the dying planets for something else.

Jormungandr's massive body appeared underneath one of the dying planets. It shot toward the planet, coiled around it, and started devouring the defenseless planet. The Volcano God noticed what was happening, but he couldn't do much to deal with the World Serpent. Michael tapped into the Wolf Divinity and accessed the Death Authority simultaneously to stall the Volcano God. He released a Death Blast, which struck the Volcano God square in the chest. The God groaned in pain, which was an opportunity Michael grasped instinctively. His speed improved through the Wolf Divinity, but there was more to it. The energy circulating through his body was altered and devoured everything in the surroundings once it left Michael's body.

He released the Extraction energy at full power after teleporting above the Volcano God. It was necessary to use a different tactic to deal more damage to the God, but Michael's current focus lay on stalling time. The Wolf Divinity and streams of Extraction energy did exactly that. They burst forward and extracted the heat from the surroundings. The streams swallowed the heat and transformed it into more Extraction energy which expanded to consume more heat.

The horrifying temperature was high enough to destroy the Extraction energy slowly, but it created more Extraction energy from absorbing the heat than the heat could destroy at a time. The difference was only minuscule, yet it forced the Volcano God to act. The God released some of his Volcano Essence, burning the Extraction energy, while Michael responded by conjuring a blade of Pure Aether. He grasped the blade tightly and severed the Volcano Essence as it burned through the Extraction energy before attempting to deal a more serious blow to the Volcano God's chest.

Unfortunately, the Volcano God used more Essences to accelerate his movements. His skin was torn into shreds as explosions of lava and magma erupted behind him, but the God cared little. His naturally high regeneration kicked in mere moments after the explosions damaged him. He ignored the pain and attacked Michael fiercely. Michael was forced to up his guard against the Volcano God's blows and resorted to using Slipstream more often. Seer with True Vision were active and

used to their fullest, but even Seer's prediction wasn't fast enough to respond to all of the Volcano God's attacks.

Still, it was enough to survive and stall enough time to consume the dying planets in the planetary system. The planets had been consumed by the World Serpent's Swallow Domain, yet the Star Cores weren't stored away or wasted by using Permute on them. Instead, Michael inserted them into the Undead Souls, which he had formed by merging billions of unfortunate Souls.

Souls that sought revenge against their vile murderer.

Michael didn't expect the Hyuman Souls' desire for vengeance to be this intense, but he was glad. Merging the Undead Souls magnified the desires all Undead Souls had in common. Many didn't understand what was happening but the majority had realized what was happening before they died.

They had heard about the Volcano God in the past and recalled the powers of their youngest Godling.

It was the same power that ended up killing them, their families, lovers, and friends.

Fury filled the souls of the deceased right before they died and Michael decided to make use of that.

Chapter 1010 Unexpected

Michael chose to use the Star Cores for a particular task. They might be worth a lot if converted into something else via Permute, but Michael used Insert on them to merge them with the four Undead Souls he had formed from the billions of Undead Souls he'd acquired with the Volcano God's help.

The Undead Souls were massive Wraths, souls tarnished by their raging emotions, but they didn't look Hyuman. The Undead Souls were made of eerily black fog, which was shaped into a Hyuman upper body with an elongated neck and head and a cloud-shaped lower body. Their appearance was interesting, but nothing to spend hours studying intensely. Michael solidified their abilities by inserting a Star Core into each of the four Undead Souls.

The resulting power was tremendous, even if the Undead Souls were not yet powerful enough to defeat a God. They weren't Godly Undead Souls but should be powerful enough to deal with Demi Gods and could negate physical attacks. They were immune to mental attacks and physical blows, which left only magical and soul attacks to obliterate them.

The Volcano God didn't have any attacks affecting souls, but the Volcano Essence and streams of lava were of a magical nature. Michael used Greater Enhancement on the Undead Souls a few times in quick succession, enhancing them before they whizzed to the Volcano God. Their bodies inflated, and they seemed to lose shape as they inched closer to the Volcano God. Michael watched the Undead Souls for a moment but lost interest in their actions after seeing how easily they merged with the surrounding space. It might not be a problem for the Volcano God to kill the Undead Souls with one or two precise hits, but for that, he would have to hit the Undead Souls in the first place. That wasn't going to be easy.

Michael jumped into action a moment later as well. Several dead planets were now stored alongside the Void Ingots in the Swallow Domain storage. Some of the Void Ingots had already been consumed, but the Floating Union comprised more than a dozen Void Ingots. The Floating Union had been a massive structure that would keep him supplied with everything he needed.

Still, Michael prepared the planets for what was about to happen.

'I think I need some help. There is no need to continue with this fight.' Michael requested help from the God Curses, who unleashed their domains through Michael for the first time.

Three domains, one golden, one black, and one poisonous green, burst from Michael. They expanded rapidly expanded and overwhelmed the Volcano God's domain by combining their power. The three domains fused, creating a darkish-green domain with vibrant golden streaks and spots. The streaks and spots combined, creating a vein-like pattern, which expanded quickly as the Essence and energy infused increased.

"This feels much better," Michael mumbled, feeling refreshed. The domain of the Volcano God was rendered useless against Michael now that the God Curses supported him. This allowed Michael to stop channeling ice into his healing serum and blood since there was no need to keep wasting precious energy on keeping his body temperature low.

The alterations caused by Curse Infusion grew more potent. The serpent tail expanded and a new layer of pristinely polished serpent scale armor grew from his skin. His hair shimmered like the stars in the cosmic sea while something particular in his eyes changed. Michael didn't look at the Volcano God like the God was a more formidable enemy anymore. The situation changed with the intervention of the God Curses, and Michael sensed that instinctively. The Volcano God would die today.

Michael was going to make sure of that, but he didn't take a few things into account. He had been too focused on the enemy before him that he forgot the enemies lurking in the shadows. The Undead Souls attacked the Volcano God, who gave his utmost to defeat the pesky wraths before they could hit and harm him. After all, even wraths, augmented by Star Cores, could inflict damage to a God. The Star Cores made it possible. Michael tried to focus on the Volcano God, but an unsettling feeling swept through him when he prepared for the all-out battle. The three God Curses unleashed their power through Michael while he retrieved the Pure Aether to form into a massive blade coated in Emperor Qi, Soul Tear's reinforcement, True Extraction Essence, God Curse Poison, Death, and Unlimited Enhancement.

Michael was about to burst forward and behead the Volcano God when time slowed down, At least that was what it felt like to Michael, the God Curses, and the Volcano God. Even the Undead Souls stopped moving.

The space farther away distorted and was torn apart. The fabric of space and reality ripped open, and something...someone emerged from it.

The fissure in the fabric of reality looked grotesque. The edges of the torn fabric seemed to be bleeding purple blood while wailing in pain, sadness, and terror. That was what Michael picked up through Seer's True Vision. The fabric of space was...sentient. Or was it just this particular part of the fabric? Neither was important enough to distract him from the man emerging out of nowhere.

The atmosphere in the planetary system switched with the arrival of the unknown man. He wasn't overly tall, and his physique wasn't special either. In fact, Michael couldn't help but wonder how long it had been since he saw a powerhouse with a small belly. The metabolism of Divine Lifeforms was extremely high. That was why most Awakened at the 7th Tier or higher started using energy to supplement their system rather than relying on mortal food. Yet, energy couldn't fill someone like this. There was no way someone could grow a belly like this from energy. After all, all excessive energy would be transferred to the Energy Pillars. That was the norm.

But the newcomer was different. He was...overflowing with Essence.

Michael paled, and so did the Volcano God, who retreated instinctively when the man with pitch-black eyes turned to them.

[That was dumb.] Fenrir commented, barely containing his rage.

A moment later, Michael realized what the Beast God meant. The newcomer blinked once, and a surge of Essence shot from his eyes.

The Volcano God didn't have time to move. Maybe, if his Divinity hadn't been cut open – by himself – the God would have been able to move. Maybe he would have been fast enough. But he didn't even have the slightest chance. The Volcano God groaned in pain and...exploded into countless pieces.

Michael swallowed hard as the Death Authority picked up the Volcano God's death. Energy surged into him, but Michael wasn't happy. On the contrary, he was scared because he knew who or rather what had appeared before them.

[One of the Primal.] Hel informed Michael, but he didn't respond.

Michael had already figured that a Primal had appeared before them. That was...unfortunate.