

## S. Lord 921

### Chapter 921 Back to Zero

A pristine light enveloped Michael, shrouding the changes around him. But he paid little attention to that in the first place. He was more affected by the changes happening to his body, mind, and soul.

He...was growing weaker.

His Soultraits were sealed individually, and his Energy Pillar narrowed until it was only a fraction of what it used to be. Even his War Rune storage was empty and only a portion of what it used to be.

Michael returned to his old self as a Tierless Awakened. But this time, something was different. This time, Michael was a Flawed Awakened. He didn't manifest a Soultrait. He was Soultraitless, Tierless, and his War Rune storage was empty. Only his Aethyr remained, though weakened due to the lack of energy inside him.

No, the Aethyr wasn't all he had left. His connection to the Beast God Curses was still there...just much fainter than ever since he awakened Fenrir. Only one Cursed Seal and one Serpent Seal were unsealed and ready to be used. However, even the curse power coursing through him was minuscule.

"Fenrir? Jormungandr? Can you hear me?" Michael asked, but nobody answered. He panicked a little, feeling oddly lonely for the first time in years. It was the first time he was truly alone. That bothered him much more than he was willing to acknowledge to the Beast God Curses. Still, despite being alone, Michael calmed down in the next few minutes. The pristine line enveloping him disappeared, revealing a massive forest. Towering trees much bigger than the trees in his territory surrounded him. Some were hundreds of meters high, blocking the sun through their thick canopy. Only a few rays of light shone through the canopy, dimly illuminating the surroundings. The bushes and smaller trees were also massive compared to what Michael was used to. However, the most shocking was the energy permeating everything. There was so much energy. It was compressed and far more pure than anything Michael had ever sensed.

He swallowed hard and absorbed the energy, hoping to regain some of his power quickly. He couldn't use Extraction to absorb the energy subconsciously, but he had his old techniques, such as Rune Vortex, to use. The Cursed Seal was still present, but activating it instantly drained his curse power reserves without granting any major benefits. The Cursed Seal might be powerful if used together for a long duration or with Extraction, but a quarter of a second wasn't enough to unfold its effect.

Michael cursed quietly, but he moved. His eyes settled on a large fruit tree that appeared oddly similar to one of the trees in his territories. Since he was familiar with the tree, Michael climbed it to retrieve its fruits. He provided attention to potential enemies while collecting the fruits. His War Rune storage was small but big enough to contain enough fruits for a few days.

Since his Tier had reverted to Tierless, Michael wasn't as resistant to his needs as he utilized to be. He was back to being an ordinary mortal. That was all he was.

Unfortunately, the monsters of the jungle, which had never been touched before – or so it looked like – weren't like that. The monsters were strong, and they found a weak target to fill their

stomachs. A fully matured Gem Jaguar emerged from the thicket. It sniffed in the air and stared right up the tree Michael had climbed a moment ago.

'You are much bigger than the Gem Jaguar version I know. Are you still a Tier-1 Monster?' Michael's mind was rattling. He had a faint idea of where he was and what was going on, but he was unsure whether he liked the answer or was supposed to throw a fit at the Temple of the Forgotten to remind him what the Untamed Jungle used to look in its prime.

How it looked like when no Lord had destroyed the Untamed Jungle just yet.

'I made sure to live with you and not to destroy you. Everything I've destroyed was repaid with enough nutrients to grow stronger than you utilized to be!' Michael swore in his mind while accessing the Aethyr in his Soul. Since his Soultraits were sealed, his Soul Sphere was also sealed. That clashed a little with the Aethyr, which was also primarily connected to his Soul Sphere, but it worked out...somehow.

The Gem Jaguar was skinnier than most of the Gem Jaguars Michael had been in the past, but it was much bigger. It was probably one of the older kin who had been exiled due to sickness or old age. Of course, that was just one of Michael's thoughts. The thoughts flashed through his mind, but it encouraged Michael, which was all that mattered. He gathered his bits of courage and stared straight into the deadly eyes of the massive monster.

It sensed his Tier, eyed his teeth, hands, and feet, and tilted its head. Its prey didn't have any weapons. A snarl escaped the Gem Jaguar's mouth and driven by hunger and the thirst for blood, it pounced on the tree and climbed quickly to reach Michael and tear him apart.

Michael released a curse. He felt naked without his Soultraits, curse power, and all of his Seals to activate, but there was no escape for him. Michael had to face the creature head-on...alone.

He grit his teeth and waited until the Gem Jaguar reached his branch. He squatted, but his entire body was tense. His muscles bulged, ready to go at the Gem Jaguar in one move. The Gem Jaguar had to twist its body and kick the thick tree trunk to reach his branch. That was when Michael moved.

He dashed forward while accessing his Aethyr. A glaive appeared in his hand. He swept it down while using the curse power accumulated within the Serpent Seal to activate it for a quarter of a second. His body burst in power, confirming Michael's guess. Even though his Soultraits and Curses were sealed, Jormungandr was still linked to Sacred Constitution. Activating the Serpent Seal increased his physical strength, even if only for a quarter of a second. It was enough to strike the Gem Jaguar's skull. The glaive impacted next to the large gemstone embedded in the Gem Jaguar's skull. It crashed down heavily, cracked the Gem Jaguar's skull, and was about to do more damage when the Gem Jaguar's claws were about to reach him. Michael swore and jumped to the side while Aethyr was still activated. The Glaive transformed into a hook with a silvery rope coiled around Michael's hands. Michael fell, but the rope slowed his descent. Instead of falling ten meters to the ground and breaking all bones in his body, Michael settled a little softer. His ankles hurt, and he was hurled into a nearby bush, but the Gem Jaguar had a much worse fate. The hook dug deeper into its skull when Michael's whole weight pulled it down. The monster lost all balance and fell to the ground. It swung around, but the damage to its skull must have been more extensive than

Michael had expected. The Gem Jaguar didn't fall smoothly onto its legs. Instead, it stumbled and fell to the side.

The fall wasn't enough to kill the monster, but it was momentarily stunned by the damage done to its head and the shock spreading through its body. Michael reacted fast. He charged ahead with a spear forming from Aethyr and thrust it deep into the Gem Jaguar's chest. He hit its heart precisely and penetrated it in one go.

The creature died....and dispersed into a flood of glowing particles that shot toward Michael, where they waited for new orders.