

S. Lord 922

Chapter 922 Rising Star

"What am I supposed to do with this?" Michael asked, his eyes closed to inspect the flood of glowing particles spreading through his body. The particles were energy...but compressed and far more pure than the energy in the surroundings. Using the energy to refine his War Rune would push him closer to the 1st Tier.

"This is much more energy than I'm supposed to obtain from an energy influx. Is that what this trial is all about?" He was unsure, but that didn't know Michael had no idea who to ask. He could ask the Beast God Curses!

Their connection was a lot weaker than it used to be, but Michael noticed something when the glowing particles spread through his entire body. The artificially sealed Seals, the Soul Sphere, and his Soultrait Symbols reacted and glowed dimly when the energy particles brushed past them. Michael didn't think long and channeled the energy particles into some Cursed Seals and Serpent Seals.

The energy particles were potent enough to strengthen the unlocked Seals and remove one artificial seal on Cursed and Serpent Seals. Once unsealed, more curse power coursed through Michael's body. However, that was only the start. His connection with Fenrir and Jormungandr strengthened again. He could hear their voices again.

[The Trial of Regression. Annoying.] Fenrir commented when he noticed Michael could hear them again.

[Probably time-based as well. If you don't manage to unseal the Soul Sphere, Soultrait Symbols, and our Seals, you will leave this place weaker than you used to be.]

"So....you know what this is?" Michael asked.

[It's a fairly common trial to test Demi-God and see if they're fit to attain godhood or if they managed to advance to the Peak of a Divine Lifeform through nepotism. They might ascend to godhood within the Trial of Regression if they're talented and experienced enough. However, many Demi Gods regress to ordinary Divine Lifeforms in the Trial of Regression. They regressed to the 7th Tier and spent centuries recovering from their losses.] Fenrir explained.

"Okay...that sounds good and bad, depending on your situation..." Michael tilted his head, "I guess I'll have to use the glowing particles and the purity of the Primordial Untamed Jungle's energy to unseal my Soul Sphere, Soultrait Symbols, and Seals...but I don't know how much time I have for that."

[Usually, the Trials of Regression last over a decade, but I think the Temple of the Forgotten adjusted your time according to your rank and Tier. If I'm not mistaken, you will have a year, maybe a little longer, to regain your power and grow stronger than you used to be. If you fail to reclaim your power, you will emerge weaker than you used to be from the first trial.]

"One year?" Michael asked, "That is not a lot...but the artificial seals restraining my Soultraits and the once-active Seals are not strong. The Energy Pillar doesn't seem to require as much energy as it used to. I don't think I have to gain my Tiers a second time...It's more like claiming the power I once possessed. No roadblocks or thresholds will block me from advancing and ascending."

He nodded slowly.

"Can you use Sacred Constitution's energy absorption and True Extraction's Aura even if the Soultraits are inactive? If it's possible, please do that. I want to use Rune Vortex while searching for more prey to hunt." [It won't be as effective as you're used to and will drain your curse power, but it's possible. Try to activate Sacred Constitution and Extraction quickly, though. The sooner you unlock them, the easier it will be for you to advance using Rune Vortex and the like.]

Michael was aware of that. He planned to unlock his main Soultraits first, in the first place. Extraction and Sacred Constitution would push his combat prowess to another level. But first, Michael had to search for more prey to hunt.

"The Gem Jaguar didn't know how to attack me. It didn't seem stupid, but I was surprised I didn't have claws. The monsters in this region must not know humans or other bipedal lifeforms using weapons. I should be able to take advantage of that, right?"

Michael formed a longbow using Aethyr and experimented with the little energy absorbed into his energy pillar. He channeled the energy through his arms and condensed an energy arrow. Since his energy control had always been high, Michael didn't have a hard time condensing the energy arrow, but it was a little challenging to condense and maintain the arrow while practicing Rune Vortex. Michael was unwilling to give up his advantage of absorbing energy while walking around. It would be best if his Tier advanced while he was walking around. The stronger he was, the easier it would be for him to push past Tier-5 in one year.

"There are no thresholds to break until I advance to Tier-5, and I don't have any Soultraits activated. Without several high-ranked Soultraits increasing my War Rune's energy demands, I can advance to Tier-5 several times faster than I used to."

The biggest advantage of his current situation was not only that his Soultraits were sealed - decreasing the energy required to advance to the next rank and Tier - but he didn't have to cleanse any impurities or undergo the High Ascension either. His High Ascension already happened. It had been a perfect ascension, purifying his body much more than most Divine Lifeforms could dream of. Only Daniel was in a better state. He was void of any impurities and used special techniques to seal his body from acquiring impurities. The techniques slowed his progress but Daniel Fang was totally fine with that.

One way or another, Michael didn't have to create a perfect foundation for his second High Ascension since he wouldn't undergo a second one in the first place. Michael didn't encounter many monsters in the next few hours. He discovered an injured Frenzy Deer, which he hunted with his Aethyr Bow and the energy arrow. His archery skills were a bit rusty, but the Frenzy Deer wasn't prepared to catch an energy-condensed arrow in its neck...or that it would explode once it dug deep into its neck.

The Frenzy Deer died and transformed into a cloud of glowing particles entering Michael's body. With the rush of energy and the hours spent practicing Rune Vortex with Fenrir and Jormungandr using their custom Perfect Soul Techniques, Michael reached the 1st Tier and unlocked 1-Star Sacred Constitution.

Michael was surprised to find that Sacred Constitution didn't unlock as an 8-Star Soultrait or that it didn't devolve back into the weak Soultrait it used to be as a 1-Star, but that was one of his greatest

advantages. Sacred Constitution could do everything it used to be able to. The only issue was that seven additional artificial seals sealed its power.

Fortunately, unlocking Sacred Constitution at 1-Star wasn't too expensive. He had enough glowing particles left to unlock another Soultrait. He didn't have to unlock the Soul Sphere, but that would change quickly. Michael could tell that his Soul was already revolting. Nonetheless, he unlocked Greater Enhancement instead. Enhancement was too expensive to unlock, unfortunately. Thus, he went with another tactic.

Since the Primordial Untamed Jungle monsters were quite powerful, Michael pushed his physical strength to another level. Sacred Constitution was already good enough to push him a little, allowing him to increase the pulling force of the Aethyr Bow, but Greater Enhancement improved his overall combat prowess.

First, he could use Greater Enhancement – even after it was weakened since it was also demoted to a 1-Star Soultrait – on his body and Sacred Constitution to unleash the hidden potential of both and enhance their prowess by 25% with one layer. It was also important to note that Michael couldn't apply multiple layers on the same target with Greater Enhancement at 1-Star. Still, he had more than enough targets to apply Greater Enhancement. This included the Aethyr Bow and his energy arrows.

This drained a lot of energy, but Michael used Greater Enhancement only when hunting monsters much stronger than him. He'd advanced to the lowest rank of Tier-1 and continued using bow and arrow to hunt some monsters. It was inconvenient when a group of Gem Jaguars attacked him, but Michael worked with deadly precision. The Gem Jaguars didn't know what weapon he used and could thus not react fast enough to block the first two arrows. One Gem Jaguar died instantaneously, while another Gem Jaguar was heavily injured.

The rest attacked Michael as he willed Aethyr to shape into a set of daggers. Greater Enhancement was applied to his low body and Sacred Constitution, while two active Serpent Seals were activated afterward. His Agility surpassed the Gem Jaguars' for a moment. It was enough to kill the heavily injured Gem Jaguar and injure two Gem Jaguars, decreasing their mobility and combat prowess. Slowed down, Michael could attack them with a barrage of slices and thrusts. The Aethyr daggers transformed into a spear suddenly, taking the last Gem Jaguar by surprise. A spear blade pierced through its eye, killing the monster instantly.

The glowing particles of five Mid Tier-1 monsters entered Michael's body, allowing him to unlock the Soul Sphere and 1-Star Extraction. The excessive energy was used to push his Tier and crack the 3rd Cursed and Serpent Seal.

He licked his lips and considered rushing to the next monsters to keep on hunting, but stopped in his tracks when he sensed how tired his body, mind, and soul were. His body was not used to being this fragile, nor was his soul or mind. Michael fought like he used to fight, though his Soultraits were sealed or weakened, resulting in too excessive motions and the use of too many Soultraits and too much curse power in too little time.

Michael was hungry and tired. He filled his stomach with some fruits, still frustrated that his War Rune storage was not what it used to be, and climbed a tall tree to find a decent place to sleep. He used Extraction to extract his scent and noises as he moved, which fueled his exhaustion. Michael closed his eyes shortly after he found a suitable place to sleep high up in a tree.

The next morning, Michael woke up sore. 'I cannot go hunting like that. That's so frustrating!' He cursed but accepted his fate quickly. Once he filled his stomach again, Michael switched his position and sat cross-legged before he focused on practicing Rune Vortex. Simultaneously, his energy circulated throughout every inch of his body, slowly soothing the soreness bothering him. Not only a few hours later did he realize what he was missing.

'Do I need to refine my body, mind, and soul again? My mind and soul seem fine, but why is my body like that? It could be because Sacred Constitution is only a 1-Star Soultrait right now and because Seer is not even active.'

His mind and soul progressed with his Tier like usual, but his physique was much weaker than he remembered. It didn't scale as naturally with his advancement in rank and Tier either. That was a lot more frustrating than expected.

'You only realize how important something was when you lost it...'

Michael chuckled at the thought and shrugged. He didn't lose Sacred Constitution, but his physical strength wasn't what it used to be. That was annoying, to put it simply, but being weak again was also exciting. He progressed much faster than he used to, and it was only a matter of time before he reclaimed his former prowess. 'If I work tirelessly for a year like this...I shouldn't have an issue surpassing Tier-5...right?'

Michael couldn't say anything but could tell that reclaiming his former prowess would be feasible. But what about unlocking more Cursed and Serpent Seals or advancing to Tier 6? He licked his lips in exhilaration and got up.

It was time to hunt and grow stronger again!