

Supreme Lord 111

Chapter 111 Annabelle Claire

"Is it true that you don't have a backer and that your entire strength comes from your great luck?" The skinny man asked with a faint smile on his lips.

Michael's eyebrows furrowed deeply, but he didn't respond. What was that guy trying to do?

He was already a little confused and astonished to see two familiar idiots standing on the other side of the arena, but their appearance didn't irk him as much as the words of the young man. The way he spoke made him want to slap the skinny man.

"Some even said that you were simply fortunate with the Summon you obtained from your Fortune Summoning Scroll. They say that you have no skill and that the Will of the Origin Expanse looks after you!" The skinny man added, still smiling faintly.

"Who the hell are you?" Michael growled in annoyance.

He wanted to rest until his next battle would start, and not listen to an idiot rambling on and on without knowing anything.

"My name is Julian Spinne. Nice meeting you!"

"That was not what I meant," Michael retorted.

"What did you mean then?" Julian Spinne responded, still smiling.

"Who the hell are you...to think that I care about you enough to keep listening to your bullshit?" Michael asked, his voice as cold as ice.

Michael turned away from these words and left. Meanwhile, Julian Spinne stayed behind, the corner of his lip tilting upward.

"Looks like I hit a sore spot. That was easy." Julian mumbled to himself.

Michael sat down on a bench to rest. He was a little bit angry.

'Lucky? Fuck off! I worked my ass off to build my territory in the Untamed Jungle, knowing that everything I've worked for can be destroyed at any moment!'

Was Michael lucky? He was pretty sure that calling himself lucky was a gross exaggeration.

The Untamed Jungle was great to grow stronger in a short time, but it was even more dangerous. Too many powerful monsters resided in the Untamed Jungle, and they could destroy everything he had achieved by razing his territory within seconds.

As for the Fortune Summoning Scroll, summoning Fenrir had been quite helpful. But that was only the case because Michael turned Fenrir into a catalyst to stimulate his own growth. If he hadn't killed Fenrir by now, Cleave Fenrir would have grown powerful and killed him instead. That was something Michael could be certain about.

Fenrir had given him various memories related to combat, and the weakened version of his Soultrait. That was pretty nice. Furthermore, Fenrir had also given him Blaire Tracer, but the Tracker had caused him more trouble than offering help at first.

Was that luck? If it was, Michael didn't really feel lucky.

He was always surrounded by danger inside the Origin Expanse. His territory could be bulldozed at any moment. If a powerful Tier-2 monster charged into his territory, everything would be over.

They might have dealt with a few Tier-2 Monsters by now, but that was with scheming and dirty tricks.

Tier-2 Monsters were many times stronger than Peak Tier-1 Monsters. Even Tiara would have difficulties facing one head-on without her Soultrait, Artifacts, and the help of everyone else residing in the territory. She was only a Mid Tier-1 Battle Maid, after all.

Unfortunately, she was also the only Tier-1 subject in his territory.

Michael could only leave the Origin Expanse without worries because he knew how powerful Tiara was. He recalled her fights against the Lizards in the cave and felt that her extremely high combat prowess was reassuring to his mind.

However, it didn't change the fact that the Untamed Jungle could cause unforeseen chaos and destruction at any time.

One way or another, Michael didn't believe in the concept of luck. He knew that the Untamed Jungle was dangerous, yet with Extraction at his disposal, he could make use of the dangerous territory and turn it into a great opportunity.

Did that mean he was lucky?

It didn't really matter.

What mattered was that Michael was still alive and that he won against Niklas Liekhofen without breaking into a sweat. He finally got revenge on Niklas for everything Niklas did to him in the past. Michael had been weak-willed and afraid of the Liekhofen family's influence. However, that didn't worry him anymore.

He won the first fight of the Real Combat assessment easily, turning him into a savage beast, who didn't know any mercy.

And after seeing his performance, nobody dared to approach him on the bench, which was quite nice. It allowed him to rest in silence until it was time for his second battle.

Half an hour after his fight against Niklas Liekhofen, Michael was called up to the arena again.

"Michael Fang versus Annabelle Claire. Come up to arena three and prepare for battle!" The referee from arena three announced loudly.

Annabelle Claire arrived in arena three first. She manifested a bow in her left hand and an arrow in her right hand before she went into position.

Michael had seen Annabelle's first fight. Her archery skill was impeccable, and she defeated her opponent easily. Three arrows were all she needed to defeat an opponent of the same rank as her.

Michael was already a Tier-1 Lord, while she was at the Peak of Tier-0. This gave him an advantage from the get-go. Feeling confident about his archery skills, Michael summoned the Siltang Bow as he stepped into the arena.

To increase his ranking in the aptitude assessment and ensure that he would get accepted, he had to show off that he was a versatile combatant.

Michael also summoned the Onyx Dragon Armor set before he changed into combat stance.

He grasped the Siltang Bow tightly and waited patiently until the referee announced the start of the battle.

"Fight!!" The referee bellowed a few seconds after the two combatants changed into combat stance.

Annabelle reacted instantaneously. She shot to the side while nocking her arrow on the bowstring. Her eyes were fully focused on Michael as she pulled the bowstring back. The moment the bowstring was fully drawn out, she took aim for a quarter of a second and released the arrow.

'Fast!' Michael realized immediately.

He used the Arrow Creation enchantment of the Siltang Bow and manifested a simple arrow with little energy. It was already nocked on the bowstring and ready to be used. Michael pulled the bowstring back and fired immediately.

A loud twang rang through the arena as Michael released his arrow. The arrow shot through the air with terrific velocity. It collided with Annabelle's arrow in the next second and destroyed it.

Annabelle was baffled when she saw this, but her movements never slowed down. Two more arrows flew through the air, aimed at Michael's vital spots.

'I shouldn't underestimate her,' Michael told himself when he saw how calm and composed Annabelle was. She noticed that Michael's arrow had easily hit her arrow mid-air when it had been at full speed, but she did not let it influence her.

Instead of allowing Michael's shot to influence her mind, she released two more arrows to put pressure on Michael.

However, Michael faced the arrows calmly. He used Lesser Enhancement on his Onyx Dragon Armor Set and the Siltang Bow, strengthening the Artifacts by 20% respectively. Simultaneously, Michael used Eagle Eyes.

He predicted the trajectory of the two arrows and took a big stride ahead to evade them. Simultaneously, he channeled energy into the Siltang Bow to create another Arrow. The arrow consumed the same amount of energy as before, but it was a lot firmer this time.

Pulling the Siltang Bow's bowstring back, Michael realized that the required pulling force had increased by roughly 20% as well.

Michael released the arrow that cut through the air with much more force than before.

Annabelle's eyes widened when she saw the arrow and its ridiculously high velocity. She panicked for a moment but reacted instinctively.

Her gaze turned sharper, and her stance changed at once. The pressure Annabelle radiated intensified severalfold, and her movements became smoother.

She retrieved another arrow, nocked it on the bowstring, pulled it back, and fired.

All those actions happened in the same second.

The arrow she had released was not extremely powerful but it was aimed precisely. It hit Michael's arrow from beneath, altering its trajectory, and ending the attack that could have cost Annabelle her life.

Michael raised an eyebrow when he saw the changes occurring to Annabelle, and he changed his approach to the fight once again.

'Did she just activate her Soultrait?'

Chapter 112 [Bonus]Archer

[A/N: Thanks for the great support this month. I appreciate every single golden-ticket and powerstone. Y'all are the best!]

After Annabelle used her Soultrait, the situation over the battlefield changed.

Whenever one of them released an arrow, the other one would follow suit and shoot an arrow in the air. Their arrows always collided, and none of them could cross half the distance to their designated target.

At one point three arrows were sent mid-air near-simultaneously, and they were all shot swiftly.

To be able to shoot three arrows precisely and near-simultaneously was extremely difficult. It required great aim and a ridiculous amount of practice to smoothly shoot one arrow after another.

However, it was even more difficult to hit the three arrows in mid-air. Not only was it necessary to quickly shoot three arrows, and to have precise aim, but it was also necessary to predict the trajectory of the arrows mid-air.

But Michael made it look like it was as easy as taking a walk in the park. He was already Tier-1 with high agility and perception. Michael also had the Eagle Eyes Soultrait and the Siltang Bow with which he could follow the trajectory of arrows quickly and create an arrow nocked on the bowstring the moment the previous arrow had been released.

These advantages allowed Michael to achieve many things that were supposed to be hard for someone like Annabelle. She was not yet a Tier-1 Lord and didn't possess a Bow Artifact like the Siltang Bow either. Yet, Annabelle was able to keep up with him after she activated her Soultrait.

This shocked Michael quite a bit. Annabelle was extremely proficient with the bow, and her archery talent was clearly better than his. Given her capabilities, she certainly had more experience with the bow than Michael!

Michael could only compete with her due to his higher Tier, the Artifacts in his possession, and the combination of his Soultraits.

'She is so strong...what kind of training did she undergo, and what Soultrait is she using?'

Michael was impressed seeing how strong Annabelle was and was curious to find out more about her.

However, he couldn't allow her to emerge victorious. He manifested two arrows simultaneously, aimed and released them. Afterward, he released three arrows swiftly within three seconds. Two of these three arrows targeted Annabelle's upper body, while the third aimed to hit her vital spot.

In response, Annabelle moved swiftly. She shot the three precisely aimed projectiles in mid-air and proceeded to counterattack. Her movements were rapid, yet she noticed too late that Michael had changed his tactic.

He restricted her movements by rapidly firing left and right to her while striding ahead. Michael inched closer to her while continuously condensing arrows and releasing them.

Annabelle reacted by releasing arrows that targeted Michael's body instead of his projectiles. He was easier to hit than the projectiles, after all. The closer he came the greater the difficulty of evading the

arrow. Michael was aware of that, but he didn't care. He continued to release one arrow after another while evading her attacks as much as he could.

After a few more minutes, Michael couldn't evade any more attacks. He twisted his body and used his shoulder to protect his vital spots from the arrow's impact.

The Onyx Dragon Armor Set, further strengthened by Lesser Enhancement, blocked the attack easily. Due to the protection enchantment, the Onyx Dragon Armor set didn't even sustain a scratch.

Despite that, a loud bell rang through the surroundings, indicating the end of the battle between Annabelle Claire and Michael Fang.

"Why did the battle end all of a sudden? It was just about to get interesting!" One of the onlooking combatants complained. He was absorbed in the archery face-off and would have loved to see more.

"Didn't you see? Michael Fang was hit by an arrow. It was the first time one of them had been hit. Maybe, the referee chose to end the battle because of that!" Another combatant said as he looked over to the referee.

The referee was sweating profusely and a sigh of relief escaped his lips as he looked over to Annabelle.

Three arrows condensed from origin energy were hovering in the air, millimeters away from Annabelle's throat, heart, and eye.

If one looked closely, one could see three semi-transparent shields blocking the arrows from impacting – and killing Annabelle.

The referee manifested the shield as late as possible to make sure that he wouldn't influence the result of the battle yet ensuring that Annabelle wouldn't die or be seriously injured.

"Victory goes to Michael Fang!" The referee said after the condensed arrows dispersed.

Michael turned to Annabelle, who had lost control of her legs when she realized that she escaped death by a hair's breadth. She looked at Michael with shock and confusion.

"If we were at the same Tier, you would have defeated me," Michael acknowledged in a serious tone, "But I will grow stronger to make sure that you won't be able to defeat me even after you advance to the 1st Tier!"

After he said that, Michael walked out of the arena. He returned to sit on the bench, where he closed his eyes to rest and review his fight against Annabelle Claire.

He didn't have to fight for a while since there were many combatants in front of him, waiting for their turn. This gave him enough time to determine the mistakes in his battle and simulate what would have happened if he had chosen other tactics to fight Annabelle.

However, one thing was sure; he would have lost against Annabelle if he had fought with Tigerfang. In the best case, he would have won by a hair's breadth and with several arrows stuck in his body.

Michael watched some of the remaining battles after he finished reviewing his fight against Annabelle. He saw her third and last fight and analyzed it in his mind. He tried to find out what her Soultrait was, and how the activation of her Soultrait gave her an upper hand in the battle.

The result was quite interesting. Annabelle's presence changed when she activated her Soultrait, and her movements turned smoother. Simultaneously, she grew faster in predicting the attack pattern of her opponent and coming up with counterattacks.

It was quite interesting, but so were the fights of the other combatants. After watching Michael's first fight, the remaining applicants realized that they couldn't afford to hesitate. The final assessment was called Real Combat, not friendly sparring.

How disastrous would their score look if they continued sparring lightly instead of fighting as if it was a life-and-death battle?

Michael saw the change in attitude among many combatants which was a welcome change. They used their full power from the start of the battle and began to inflict more or less serious injuries on their competitors.

However, Michael was sure that it was already too late for most of them. The hesitation in their first battle marked the end of their aptitude assessment.

That was what Michael thought before he started to practice the Sun Soldier's Breathing technique. The Sun Soldier's Breathing technique was more efficient and easier to practice with origin energy in the surroundings, but it was possible to replenish his stamina quickly even if there was no origin energy in the surroundings.

Michael's stamina was fully replenished when he was called up for the third and last time.

It was already evening and the Real Combat assessment was in its last leg. Not many combatants were left with one or two fights.

Yet, oddly enough, Michael faced a familiar face when he entered the arena.

"Michael Fang versus Frederik Kolbenheim. Enter arena two and prepare for battle!"

Chapter 113 Rematch

It felt like a big joke that Michael and Frederik were put against each other in their third fight of the Real Combat assessment.

However, it was also quite interesting.

Michael hadn't expected to meet Frederik Kolbenheim and Jacqueline Orlando in the aptitude assessment for the Sapphirelake Military Academy, but he saw their idiotic faces when Julian Spinne pointed at them.

'Even if they want to attend the Sapphirelake Military Academy, are their families not wealthy enough to purchase two spots to make their kids skip the aptitude assessment?' He wondered as he recalled that both the Kolbenheim and Orlando families were the wealthiest families in the Golden Sun province.

'But that is actually better. I wonder how much this idiot has improved since our last encounter!' Michael murmured inwardly.

A confident smile appeared on his face as he looked straight into Frederik's eyes. His strength had increased drastically, and he was probably ten times stronger than he had been in their last encounter. Maybe he was even stronger than he assumed.

Meanwhile, Frederik had yet to break through the barrier separating him from the 1st Tier. Frederik was not far off, but there was still a gap between them.

Thus, Michael had a great advantage, or so he thought at first.

Michael only realized that he had underestimated Frederik and his background when the battle between them started.

Jacqueline cheered for Frederik loudly, while Frederik remained calm until the referee started the battle.

The moment the referee shouted 'Fight!', the energy within him erupted at once.

Frederik conjured currents of greenish gleaming wind around him in an instant. He condensed the wind currents and formed wind spears. Simultaneously, he summoned two short swords and an emerald-colored leather armor.

Frederik's strength seemed to increase further after his Artifacts appeared, and he charged forward. His wind spears cut through the air and shot straight to Michael.

Four were aimed at Michael while the remaining wind spears cut off his path of retreat, blocking him.

Michael frowned deeply. He could clearly tell that Frederik's wind spears were several times stronger than they had been in the past.

This was not just a matter of possessing more energy or having better control of his Soultrait. No, Frederik's Soultrait had grown much stronger since they last met!

'How?' Michael wondered as he manifested the Siltang Bow and his Onyx Dragon Armor Set. He used Lesser Enhancement on every Artifact, enhancing their overall stats by 20% respectively. Afterward, Michael unleashed the strongest form of Eagle Eyes.

He condensed an arrow on the bowstring, pulled the bowstring back, and fired the arrow at the most threatening wind spear. Michael released two more arrows after the first before he stepped forward.

The Siltang Bow disappeared in his War rune. It was replaced by Tigerfang, which was instantaneously mantled in a white aura. Michael's strength increased a tad and he dashed forward like a bolt of lightning.

The three arrows he had released earlier were enough to pierce through Frederik's wind spears. Meanwhile, the fourth wind spear aimed at him was completely ignored, but that was not a worrisome fact as Michael had already moved away from his earlier position.

He appeared in front of Frederik and clashed head-on. Michael was physically stronger, much faster than Frederik and he could predict Frederik's trajectory using the subtle details his Eagle Eyes detected.

Currents of wind swirled around Frederik's arms and legs, pushing the young man closer to Michael. Some wind currents blasted in Michael's face while others pushed against his whole body, slowing down his movements. Despite being slowed down, and Frederik's movements gaining speed, Michael's attacks impacted hard on his opponent.

Frederik's expression changed when he felt the tremendous force colliding with his shortwords and he instinctively retreated. Simultaneously, he conjured multiple crescent-shaped wind blades around himself and Michael. He controlled them precisely and made sure that Michael would be attacked from all sides.

His head, neck, throat, arms, and legs were targeted precisely, wanting to lock down Michael's movements from all sides and eliminate him.

Michael wanted to evade all attacks, but that was not possible. There were too many wind blades, and they were too fast to hit and deflect them simultaneously.

He activated the protection enchantments of his Onyx Dragon Armor Set, blocked a few wind blades with Tigerfang, and twisted his body to evade the vital attacks.

Afterward, he had to retreat because another batch of ten wind spears had already been conjured by Frederik.

'How did his Soultrait grow that much in such a short time?!?'

Frederik was not even at the 1st Tier, which meant that the increase of origin energy inside his body was not that high. Michael couldn't understand the cause behind the sudden boost in Frederik's strength which was not a mere quantitative increase. Frederik's attacks were not only much more in terms of quantity, but their quality was also much higher. The attacks were stronger than last time.

'Is that a Soultrait technique from his family? No, that shouldn't be it...'

Michael's expression turned sour as he moved through the arena nimbly. He cut through the wind blades that pursued him and evaded most wind spears easily.

However, there were too many attacks restricting his movements. He was not able to handle all of them at the same time. One attack after another impacted upon him.

Luckily, they were blocked by the protection enchantments of the Onyx Dragon Armor Set, but they reached him nonetheless.

This was beyond his expectations. He was already a Tier-1 Lord, while Frederik was still at the Peak of Tier-0. Why was he at a disadvantage right now?

Frederik saw the change in Michael's expression, and he couldn't help but smile arrogantly.

"It required only a few thousand subjects to defeat you, a Lord of a higher Tier than me? That's boring. I thought you were stronger!" Frederik said arrogantly. His voice rang through the arena before he continued to speak in a ridiculing tone, "You disappoint me...but why did I even expect anything else from a peasant like you? It was my fault to have high hopes from a dirt poor fool!"

While Frederik continued to make fun of Michael, Jacqueline exclaimed in joy.

"Honey, you're so smart and powerful! The gift was well utilized. You are a genius!!"

That was when realization struck Michael. His eyes widened slightly and his combat stance changed immediately.

His first thought was completely wrong. Frederik didn't learn a new technique. Instead, his Soultrait grew stronger because Frederik had summoned thousands of subjects. Their Links of Loyalty nourished Frederik's Soultrait exponentially, strengthening it. That was how Frederik was suddenly so strong.

Summoning thousands of subjects just like that was a direct showoff of his wealth. The Kolbenheim family must have spent millions to strengthen Frederik, and there was nothing wrong with that.

'Frederik's father must have helped his son by giving him money, or thousands of Summoning Scrolls!' Michael understood immediately.

Instead of spending billions to buy Frederik a seat in the Sapphirelake Military Academy, he invested in his son directly. That was much cheaper, and it would continue to strengthen Frederik in the future.

After all, thousands of additional subjects were an exceptional workforce for young Lords, who lacked workers the most in the early phase of their territory expansion.

But did it really matter whether Frederik had been sponsored by thousands of subjects from his father? Michael didn't think so.

If his confidence wavered in the face of Frederik after that idiot's Soultrait grew a little stronger, he might as well give up becoming a Lord capable of protecting his people.

He was bound to come across many such fools in the future who would try to downplay him using their resources or connections.

Recalling that, Michael strengthened his resolve. He was not ready to give up..

The fight was not yet over!

Chapter 114 Invisible Blade

Michael twisted his body to evade a few wind spears. They shot past him and pierced into the ground.

Meanwhile, the wind blades around Michael moved irregularly, cutting his arms and legs.

He could avoid severe injuries, but still sustained minor injuries all over his body. Nonetheless, Michael was not discouraged.

His eyes moved through the arena at all times, analyzing Frederik's combat style and the true extent of his Soultrait's current prowess.

'His wind blades never exceed 20 at a time, and his wind spears don't exceed 10. The wind blades move through the air through simple commands, but the same doesn't apply to the wind spears. They fly in one direction and don't stop. However, they're also much faster than the wind blades!'

The wind spears were fast but Michael could still react in time and avoid them. His perception, Agility and Eagle Eyes allowed him to detect the wind spears and determine their trajectory early enough, providing Michael enough time to duck or parry.

Despite being able to move, Michael couldn't approach Frederik. Frederik was utilizing his Soultrait well. He turned the range of 20 meters around him into his little domain of control that Michael was trying to figure out a way to breach.

Even changing to the Siltang Bow was not useful. Michael released a few arrows, but Frederik blocked them easily. Each arrow was first blocked by a wind blade that burst into wind currents the moment they collided before a wind spear destroyed the energy-condensed arrow.

Michael switched back to Tigerfang after his attempts to shoot Frederik failed. He used Lesser Enhancement on his Artifacts once again before he put some of his remaining energy into his lower body before he kicked off.

The moment his feet kicked on the ground, Michael turned into a cannonball. He ignored the wind blades and wind spears around him, leaning his body closer to the ground, and appeared in front of Frederik in the blink of an eye.

A wind spear was all that separated them. Michael took care of that quickly. Tigerfang arced through the air with high velocity and cut through the wind spear before it could reach Michael.

In the next moment, Michael appeared next to Frederik, Tigerfang held high in the air to cleave down.

However, before he could bring it down, Michael suddenly felt disoriented. He couldn't see anything separating him from Frederik, but he heard the faint sound of something cutting through the air. Simultaneously, something subtle – conjured with energy – had manifested in front of Frederik.

The problem was just that Michael couldn't see it. Something was wrong, and he moved instantaneously, pulling down Tigerfang to block his throat and head. Simultaneously, he ignored his high speed and changed his movement path by force.

His ankles screamed in agony when he changed direction all of a sudden, but Michael ignored the pain spreading through his ankles. He continued to move and charge forward.

And it was not too late. The moment he sensed that something was off, the invisible object shot forward. It shot past his head and scratched his neck before it dispersed.

Warm blood trickled down Michael's neck, but he couldn't even feel the pain. The adrenaline coursing through his body blocked the pain he was supposed to feel.

'He can control the wind without making it visible?' Michael concluded in shock.

Until now, Michael had been certain that the wind Frederik controlled, or conjured, would be clearly visible for everyone to see. However, that didn't seem to be the case anymore now that his Soultrait had grown stronger.

But that was not the only thing Michael had noticed. When he was about to cleave down, Michael noticed that Frederik was ashen pale and that he was drenched in sweat.

He was gasping for breath and his feet were wobbly indicating that he was already past his limit.

'He quickly ran out of the energy to keep using his nourished Soultrait! His energy is limited as a Tierless Lord!'

The moment Michael realized that Frederik was at his limit, he unleashed more energy. He had more than enough reserves to unleash the protection enchantments on the Onyx Dragon Armor Set simultaneously and at their highest level.

The protection enchantments strengthened the Onyx Dragon Armor Set, but that was not everything. They also manifested small energy barriers around his vital spots to decrease the impact of incoming attacks.

Because of the protection enchantments, Michael was not worried about his safety. He charged at Frederik once again by changing his movement pattern. His ankles begged for respite, but they obeyed his command, nonetheless.

Michael turned into a flash and appeared in front of Frederick once again. Several wind blades impacted all over Michael's body, but he simply ignored them as he sliced down.

Frederik grit his teeth and slashed at Tigerfang with his two shortswords. However, Michael just smiled.

His Soultraits were also stronger than before. The number of his Summons was not small, and they had grown much stronger than before. Last but not least, their Links of Loyalty were extremely firm. The value of his subjects' Links of Loyalty was at least three times higher than the Links of Loyalty of ordinary subjects.

Michael could see the wind spears Frederik manifested to his left and right, but he knew that they would never hit him.

Instead of backing off now, Michael put more force into Tigerfang. Frederik's arms trembled wildly while trying to block Michael's attack with his shortsword, but it worked somehow. He could stall enough time to focus on the wind spears, finish manifesting them and order them to pierce through Michael.

It was just a moment later when Frederik realized that he made a grave mistake. He had only focused on Tigerfang and his wind spears while ignoring various other factors that were crucial in a fight.

But it was too late to react. Michael's left leg moved fast and deadly, kicking Frederik's right leg hard before pulling it closer. At first, pain spread through his leg, and it was only after a second that he noticed that he lost balance.

He crashed down onto the ground, while Michael cut upward with Tigerfang. The sudden change in force caused Frederik to lose one of his shortswords as he landed on the ground.

But Michael was not yet done. He twisted Tigerfang mid-air and cut downward with the blade's tip facing the ground.

Tigerfang shot past Frederik's head by a hair's breadth, grazing his neck before it lodged itself into the arena ground.

Frederik gasped for air as he stared at Michael who was towering right above him. A faint but confident smile appeared on Michael's sweaty face before a bell rang through arena two.

"Victory goes to Michael Fang!" The referee announced at last.

Michael retrieved Tigerfang back into his War Rune and stepped aside.

"That could have been your head," He mumbled before he turned around, "I hope you know what that means."

Michael was a little exhausted, but he was quite satisfied with his performance. He may not like Frederik as a person, but the young man from the Kolbenheim family was certainly strong.

"It's not over yet!!!" Frederik growled, seething in anger just as Michael was about to leave the arena.

Michael sensed ripples of energy around him, and he heard the referee shouting loudly, "Stop right there!!"

However, despite shouting loudly, the footsteps didn't quiet down. On the contrary, Michael could hear clearly that Frederik was rushing at him like a mad bull.

He knew that Frederik was a sore loser, but Michael didn't expect him to be unable to control his emotions during the aptitude assessment. A loss didn't mean that his application to the Sapphirelake Military Academy was rejected, after all.

Michael accessed his War Rune at once. He retrieved a wooden spear, grasped it tightly, and gathered great momentum by turning around with a blinding speed.

The moment his body turned to Frederik, Michael threw the wooden spear. It soared through the air with great precision and tremendous force, and it impacted exactly where Michael wanted it to be.

Frederik didn't expect such a sudden attack, and even the referee couldn't react in time. The referee had been more focused on Frederik and how to calm the youth's bad temper when a wooden spear pierced Frederik's stomach suddenly.

The wooden spear possessed enough force to slow down Frederik and force him down to his knees.

"I don't think you understood me when I said it the first time," Michael spat coldly while staring at the severely bleeding youth, "I told you that I spared your life by piercing the ground instead of your bean-sized brain. Be graceful enough and accept your loss, idiot."

Chapter 115 Kindness Of The Fierce Beauty (1)

Michael knew that Frederik was strong, but his intelligence and personality were questionable.

He was already in a bad mood because the Barbaric Couple was once again around to annoy him once again. Michael could tell that Julian Spinne must have heard them gossip about him, which is why the young, skinny man approached him with bad intentions.

Julian Spinne was not important to him, but the Barbaric Couple felt like a parasite. The first time he came across them was at the House of Witchery. Michael could accept their actions in the House of Witchery because he had received many benefits from interfering in their lover's spat.

But their attitude during the aptitude assessment was truly annoying. They were not weak, by any means, but the Barbaric Couple was just too full of themselves, bad-tempered, and looked down at their opponents.

Whenever they fought someone weaker than them, they fooled around intentionally, just to show off that they were superior.

And this was visible with the way Frederik's first two opponents ended up with hundreds of cuts all over their bodies. Frederik could have but purposefully didn't end the battle quickly. No, he made his opponents suffer and humiliated them. They had to surrender for the battle to end.

Meanwhile, Jacqueline's opponents were partially frozen before the battle ended with the interference of the referee. She toyed with her victims and never even thought about fighting seriously.

They made fun of their opponents and disrespected them. It was unfair to those combatants who gave their utmost to fight seriously.

Michael really wanted to see the Barbaric Couple have a taste of their own medicine.

Their actions made him recall the fight against the Lionhearts from a few days ago. The Lionhearts had fooled around with his subjects, killing them slowly one after another with their blazing flames. They didn't show mercy. Instead, they used Michael's subjects as toys to fool around with and torture them.

Michael's mind had been flooded with the memories of his fight against the Lionhearts after he defeated Frederik. He had been generous enough to the annoying brat by not slicing Frederik's throat when he had the chance but Frederik was testing his patience. Michael couldn't hold back anymore when Frederik was foolish enough to ignore the mercy he had shown the first time.

The tension and the memories of the gory battle where his people burned to death right in front of him were still fresh in his mind.

So in order to not thrash the hopeless fool, Michael only stared at Frederik's pitiful figure for a few seconds and walked out of the arena. He noticed that Silverian Schild's gaze was fixated on him, staring at him intently, and Michael returned his gaze.

Their eyes met, and neither side was afraid to maintain eye contact. The right corner of Silverian's lip tilted upward and he nodded subtly to Michael before he turned back to Frederik.

Michael had finished his third fight, and he could go home now. Many other applicants had already left after they finished their quota of three fights, hoping that they had done well enough to be accepted into the Sapphirelake Military Academy.

Michael was not too worried about that. He gave his best and showed what he was capable of. If that was not enough to get accepted, then the Sapphirelake Military Academy didn't deserve someone like him.

It was not as if his future would be destroyed by not getting accepted into the Sapphirelake Military Academy. Some things would be a little bit more cumbersome such as researching the old languages

before the Third Epoch and being taught unique combat techniques by high-tiered instructors, but that was it. He would not fret about rejection and simply move ahead with other tasks.

With that in mind, he went for a shower and returned to the cafeteria. After using up so much origin energy, Michael was hungry once again.

He had to refill his body with nutrition to provide the War Rune enough power to replenish his origin energy back to the full capacity of a Lowest-grade Tier-1 Lord.

Being able to use nutrition to replenish origin energy was another function of the War Rune. Not only did it refine the body and increase the limit of origin energy that can be stored inside the body, but it could replenish the origin energy Michael used up.

By the time he finished dinner, it was already past 8 pm. He was a little tired, but he didn't go to sleep just yet. Instead, he hailed a shuttle that brought him to the Central Trading Hall.

Michael had a vast fortune of 40,000,000\$ to invest in his territory and didn't want to return to the Origin Expanse empty-handed.

There were many things Michael wanted to purchase, but he had to do some research first. He opened the Bartholomew Network and spent an hour researching a few items, including the price for a Basic Summoning Core.

Unfortunately, Summoning Cores weren't sold online. Some articles reported about Summoning Cores being sold in VIP auctions, but there was no price mentioned. Most of the time, Summoning Cores were exchanged with other valuable goods rather than money.

That was a little sad because Michael would have loved to purchase more Summoning Cores in the future, but it was fine even if he couldn't procure more Summoning Cores for the time being.

He was about to close the crystal watch's holographic screen after completing his research when he noticed that he had received a message.

Michael opened the message, hoping that it was his brother. Unfortunately, Danny had not yet returned from the Origin Expanse.

Instead, he received a message from Alice Zenovia.

[Alice Zenovia(fierce beauty): I heard that you reached the last round of the final assessment easily. Congratulations. Message me please once you're done. I want to complete our transaction. The Mythic Summoning Scrolls have been prepared for you!]

'Transaction?' Michael was confused for a moment. However, upon reading 'Mythic Summoning Scrolls', he recalled something.

'Ahh, right. I forgot that Alice wanted to buy Tigerfang!'

Tigerfang was an exceptional Weapon Artifact. He was thankful to Danny for gifting it to him, and it hurt his heart a little bit to sell it off.

However, Danny also told him to make the most use of Tigerfang and gain as many benefits as possible when handing over the Epic Artifact to him.

Danny knew that Tigerfang's utility would decrease the further Michael progressed. That was also why he told his little brother to sell Tigerfang once he felt the need to purchase better weapons.

And according to Michael, exchanging Tigerfang with a bunch of Mythic Summoning Scrolls was certainly worth it. After all, Mythic Summoning Scrolls couldn't be purchased easily. They were increasingly rare, and only a few people would sell them instead of using them to strengthen their own territory.

Michael didn't have to think long before he responded to Alice.

[Michael Fang: I finished the aptitude assessment, and I'm currently in the Central Trading Hall. If you're not in a hurry, we can meet up somewhere close in an hour or two. I just want to purchase a few things.]

He closed the crystal watch once he sent the message to Alice. He strode toward the House of Witchery but stopped just outside the entrance when he received several notifications.

[Alice Zenovia(fierce beauty): If you want to purchase stuff for your territory, wait until we've met. I can be in the Central Trading Hall in ten minutes!]

The second message was the location of a restaurant in the Central Trading Hall, which was followed by a third message popping up in front of him.

[Alice Zenovia(fierce beauty): Let's meet up there. Just tell the staff that you have a reservation in my name, and they'll take you to a private room]

Michael finished reading through the messages in no time. He was not sure how the Mythic Summoning Scrolls were related to his purchases, but there was no harm if he waited a bit.

Nonetheless, Michael was mildly curious about her plan.

'What is she planning again?'

Chapter 116 Kindness Of The Fierce Beauty (2)

Michael didn't have to wait long until Alice arrived in the private room.

Nobody would come to bother them here.

Michael retrieved Tigerfang, and he quickly terminated his connection to the Epic Artifact while Alice sat down on the opposite side of the dining table.

She smiled vibrantly upon seeing Tigerfang and retrieved a bunch of Summoning Scrolls made from black leather. The Summoning Scrolls had a golden sigil sealing them tightly.

But Michael didn't pay much attention to the Summoning Scrolls at first. He retrieved Seron Voulge from the War Rune's storage space and bound it to his War Rune. The binding procedure was slowed down to decrease the burden on his body. It took 10 minutes to complete.

Alice watched him patiently for a few minutes before she picked up Tigerfang to inspect the Epic Artifact once again.

A few minutes later, she diverted her attention back to Michael and retrieved a few more black leather Summoning Scrolls.

Once he was done binding Seron Voulge to his War Rune, Michael retrieved it. He accessed his War Rune to take out the study material he had obtained from Alice and gave everything back.

"The study material was very useful, not only for the aptitude assessment but will also come in handy in the future. Thanks a lot," Michael said sincerely.

Alice smiled in response. She pushed the Summoning Scrolls closer to him and cleared her throat.

"There are a total of 20 Mythic Summoning Scrolls. You should know how difficult it is to purchase one, and how pricey they are. Usually, my parents wouldn't even think about giving you 10 Mythic Summoning Scrolls in exchange for a natural Epic Tierless Weapon Artifact, but they're very interested in Tigerfang," Alice said straightforwardly.

"They seem to be a little bit...under the weather because Kaleb has become stubborn these days. They're also about...no, that doesn't really matter. Let's just say that they want Tigerfang, so they told me to give you as many Mythic Summoning Scrolls as you need. 20 is all I have on me... though I would love to use them myself," She added quietly as if talking to herself.

Michael wouldn't have complained even if Alice had only given him 10 Mythic Summoning Scrolls in exchange for Tigerfang. He knew how valuable Mythic Summoning Scrolls were from experience. His 3-Star Water Elemental Mage had been summoned from a single Mythic Summoning Scroll, after all!

However, Alice Zenovia was honest and straightforward. She gave him all 20 Mythic Summoning Scrolls her family had procured since they last met.

It warmed his heart that she didn't think about keeping a few of the Scrolls for herself and negotiate hard with him to make him settle for a lesser number.

But Alice was not yet done.

"This is a small gift from me," She said, retrieving a bunch of ordinary-looking Summoning Scrolls with golden letters written on the black seals. The golden letters formed words, precisely names of occupations.

The scrolls Alice retrieved were actually Named Summoning Scrolls!

"I want to give you these Named Summoning Scrolls as an unofficial congratulatory gift. With your aptitude, you'll definitely be accepted by the Sapphirelake Military Academy!" She announced proudly while continuing to retrieve more Named Summoning Scrolls.

Alice Zenovia retrieved close to 30 Named Summoning Scrolls before she stopped. She looked straight into Michael's eyes and smiled.

However, Michael could only frown deeply. Each of the Named Summoning Scrolls was worth more than 100,000 since all of them had Combat Occupations written on the seals!

'She spent three million on a congratulatory gift? What nonsense is that?!' Michael could only wonder in his mind.

It didn't make sense, none at all!

"Why are you being so nice to me?" Michael blurted out, confused and unable to find out why Alice was being so generous.

It was one thing being honest about the Mythic Summoning Scroll, and a whole different thing when it came to spending your own hard-earned money to give someone scrolls worth more than three million dollars!

"Hm?" Alice responded subconsciously. Her eyes widened slightly as she continued to look at him.

However, Michael didn't repeat his question. He waited for Alice's answer.

"There is no apparent reason. But if you want some reasons to make you feel better...you can consider my gift as an apology for the incident with my brother," Alice said with a shrug.

"He acted up a little, so I felt bad. Or you can consider the gift as an investment for the sake of your future. That will work as well!" She said nonchalantly.

Alice smiled faintly seeing that Michael's frown deepened and added, "I hope you will repay me well once you're a bigshot!"

'...That's nonsense...' Michael wanted to say, but he held back.

He could clearly tell that Alice avoided answering him truthfully, but there was only so much he could do about it.

Michael was not satisfied with her answer. Alice didn't seem to care about his dissatisfaction and got up from her chair. She stored Tigerfang in her War Rune and took a glance at the notification she had received just now.

Afterward, Alice walked over to the sliding door of their private room and pushed it open. She turned her head around and waved at him.

"I am a little bit tight on time. Let's talk about that later. Bye!"

Michael wasn't even given enough time to say goodbye, forget about waving back. Alice disappeared at once, leaving him alone in the private room...again.

"I understand their parents' worries about Tigerfang, and that I might be unwilling to hand it over...but why is Alice so confusing?"

Michael couldn't quite put a finger on Alice's behavior.

Alice Zenovia was a powerful Lord and a direct descendant of the Zenovia family. They were wealthy, highly influential, and had power. There was no reason for her to pay any attention to him. It didn't make sense like...none at all!

'Is she trying to get on my good side?' Michael wondered, 'But why would she do that? I am not a people-pleaser, and I wasn't exactly nice to her when I ignored her messages at first...'

'She doesn't have a crush on me, right?' He asked himself but quickly disregarded this possibility.

'What nonsense was that? Just because someone treated you well, didn't mean that they have a crush on you.'

Alice didn't seem like someone who falls in love easily, either.

'Is she trying to lure me over? Could she gain something from treating me nicely and showering me with expensive gifts?'

To a Lord of her caliber, a few million dollars might not be much, but that didn't mean it was worthless.

She had been focusing on him way too much. It couldn't be a coincidence.

Or was it?

Chapter 117 Ranking

Seated around a large oval-shaped table, several imposing men and women had pensive looks on their faces.

All of them were staring seriously at the dozens of holographic screens, which had appeared above the oval-shaped table.

Various statistics, personal assessments, rankings, and videos were displayed on holographic screens.

"The supercomputer finished computing the aptitude assessments. Layla generated the ranking according to the given instructions. It's done," A young man with a long white coat and blue jeans reported. He stared intently at the holographic screen in front of him and made a few adjustments.

"Are you sure that is the correct ranking, Harry? Are you sure that you didn't give Layla faulty commands? Maybe she broke down from all the information we've provided in such a short period!" A young-looking, but serious woman asked.

She had long crimson hair and ruby-colored eyes that highlighted her unusual combat uniform even more.

"A supercomputer breaking down from some measly pieces of information? Please don't take Layla lightly. She is amongst the best 10 supercomputers of mankind. Her artificial intelligence is on par with us humans, and her computing skills are a thousandfold advanced, if not more!" Harry Baren retorted with a deep frown on his face.

He was the same young man, who had tested Michael's Soultrait and Soul Power level, and the only one who voiced his concerns aloud. The atmosphere around him changed drastically the moment he spoke but Harry Baren was unfazed by the immense pressure filling the room. Almost everyone in the room other than him was a powerful Lord or Adventurer, but Harry didn't care.

The crimson-haired woman scoffed at Harry's comment, but she diverted her focus back to the final ranking of the applicants from all over Elyra.

Out of millions, only ten thousand made it to the ranking, and only the best 1500 would be given a spot in the Sapphirelake Military Academy.

The Sapphirelake Military Academy might be humongous, and almost the size of a city, but they wanted to only take in the cream of the crop. Their growth was the most important for the future of the Tritan Alliance and mankind's future.

Furthermore, every planet in the solar system was given a quota, and certain families purchased a spot to make sure that their children could attend the Sapphirelake Military Academy without prior testing. Giving Elyra 1500 slots was already a lot.

"It looks like the child you recommended didn't make it into the top 1500, or am I wrong, Ophelia Blaze?" A young man with blond hair and vibrant green eyes asked mockingly.

He was sitting in the chair not too far from the crimson-haired woman and smiled provokingly in her direction. Ophelia Blaze's head flicked to the young man wearing casual clothes and she showed him the middle finger.

"The child I recommended made it into the top 1500, so keep your mouth shut, will you, Oliver? Nobody asked for your opinion. Just mind your own business and stay far away from me if possible!" Ophelia Blaze cursed quietly but in a voice loud enough for Oliver Zeus to hear.

Everyone else seated around the sizeable oval-shaped table sighed deeply upon hearing the bickering between Oliver Zeus and Ophelia Blaze. The Blaze family and the Zeus family were known for their hostile relationship, and their feud had been going on for more than 100 years already.

Nobody really knows how it started but something created blazing sparks between the two families, turning them into enemies.

"Dear Professors, how about we move back to the main topic? We still have to determine if the top 1500 are suited for the Sapphirelake Military Academy, or if there are a few bad seedlings that are not suitable for the Military Academy and our teachings!" A middle-aged man with a well-trained body, an imposing aura, and a scarred face said calmly.

Ophelia and Oliver turned silent the moment the scar-faced man began to talk.

Their expression turned sour, and they looked like puppies who had been scolded for eating their poo.

The other men and women seated around the long table had to suppress a burst of laughter when they saw the reaction of the two bickering Professors, but nobody said anything.

The awkward silence was broken when the large arched gate leading to the room opened, and a familiar figure walked inside. The men and women inside the room nodded their heads in respect, while Oliver Zeus and Ophelia Blaze shot up with a smile on their faces.

"Alice, you're back!"

"Professor Zenovia, we were waiting for you. Glad to see that you finished your business so quickly!"

While Oliver Zeus remained more formal and polite, Ophelia rushed to Alice Zenovia and embraced her arm – or she was trying to.

Alice flicked Ophelia's forehead and walked past her to sit down in the empty seat next to the scar-faced man.

"How far are we, Silverian?" Alice Zenovia asked the scar-faced man, Silverian Schild.

"We have far more applicants compared to the previous years. The overall competence of the youngest generation seems much better than before as well. That's mostly related to the Great Clans, Supreme Families, and the High Nobles. Only some of their descendants were sent to the Big Five Universities and the Great Three Academies before. That changed now that more news of a possible upcoming war reached the Lord Network.

As expected, every family wants to ensure that their children and disciples will have a higher rank in the military once war erupts and the draft call reaches them," Silverian Schild explained calmly while showing Alice the ranking of more than a hundred applicants.

These 100+ students were all ranked in the top 200 and hailed from the Great Clans, Supreme Families, and High Nobles.

"Most applicants who came with a recommendation made it into the top 1500 as well. However, we have yet to finish looking through every applicant's score and performance in the top 1500. It shouldn't take too long until we're done, Professor!" He explained calmly while studying Alice's reaction.

"Is that so?" Alice murmured absent-mindedly before she started to take a look at a few assessment forms from applicants within the top 1500.

Silverian Schild kept looking at Alice and trying to make note of the forms of which students she was studying, but he didn't receive the response he'd hoped for.

"Didn't you say that you recommended someone? Is he in the top 1500, Professor Zenovia?" Oliver Zeus asked after a while.

He was curious about what kind of powerful child Alice Zenovia had laid her eyes upon.

Most Professors could recommend a few students for the aptitude assessment of the Sapphirelake Military Academy.

Nobody expected Alice to have recommended someone because she was not the type of person to be around other people if she didn't have to. Where was she supposed to find someone to recommend, in the first place, if the only things she did was take care of her troublemaker brother, and work?

Hence it was a surprise that against all odds, Alice Zenovia not only recommended one person to the Sapphirelake Military Academy, but she had also kept his identity secret so far. That way, nobody could tell whom she had recommended, or that the person had entered the aptitude assessment through the recommendation system.

"Don't worry, he made the cut. You should be more focused on your little nephew. It looks like he and his fiancé were quite the troublemakers during the Real Combat assessment," Alice Zenovia pointed out as her eyes stopped on one of the video footage of the Real Combat assessment.

Oliver Zeus didn't expect the topic to change to his nephew so suddenly. He didn't even know that his nephew had applied to the Sapphirelake Military Academy.

However, upon searching up his nephew's name and looking at the video of him openly humiliating other applicants during the Real Combat assessment, Oliver's expression changed drastically.

"Frederik, you fool!! What the hell did my sister do to raise you to become such a spoiled brat??" Oliver cursed after watching the second Real Combat fight of Frederik Kolbenheim, his nephew.

"Oh? Look. Your nephew was beaten into a pulp and thrashed to the ground in his last fight. What a funny fella!" Ophelia Blaze mocked after her attention moved to Oliver's nephew as well. She watched the final fight in the Real Combat assessment and kept exclaiming about Frederick so as to further anger Oliver.

"This fella is not bad. Which family is he from? He is already Tier-1, and his Artifacts are exceptional. Isn't he using two Soultraits simultaneously? Just who is he?"

The more Ophelia squealed in excitement the more Instructors and Professors switched their attention to Frederik Kolbenheim and his opponent in his last fight.

"Who is that young man?" Another Instructor asked, only for Alice Zenovia and Silverian Schild to answer simultaneously.

"That's Michael Fang," Alice murmured.

"Michael Fang. He is an applicant from the Golden Sun province. I watched his fight!" Silverian declared loudly with a trace of excitement in his voice.

This attracted even more interest. After all, everyone knew what it meant if the Devilish Saint showed interest in someone.

Everyone's eyes flicked to see the rank of the young man, curiosity getting the better of them.

[Michael Fang #146, No Affiliation, Ordinary Background, Double Soultrait. Exceptional Talent]

Chapter 118 Orb Of Hostility

"That's 39,954,350\$ in total. Do you want to pay everything at once, or do you wish to utilize the installment system of your Golden Bartholomew Membership Card, Sir?" The clerk asked carefully as he looked at the young bald-headed man in front of him.

"I'll pay in full," Michael answered, scratching his bald head.

His expression changed when he recalled that there was no hair left on his head, and he let out a sigh.

'How long will it take before my hair regrows? Give me back my eyebrows at least...'

Michael grumbled to himself, and he left the House of Witchery once his purchase had been completed.

He spent most of his fortune in a single shopping trip, but he was still the most furious about the loss of his hair rather than his depleted bank balance.

The money he spent was solely used for his territory and subjects. Michael already had enough exceptional Artifacts and techniques for the time being, so he did not feel the need to spend on himself.

That means his shopping cart was filled to the brim with high-quality arrows, bows, crossbows, bolts, sets of leather armor, different types of weapons, various traps, and much more for his beloved subjects. There were also a few very expensive items on his shopping list.

Michael didn't mind their exorbitant price since he earned money to make use of it, and not to let it rest in his bank account. He was always reminded of the bad equipment his subjects had to use when facing the Lionhearts. Not only was the equipment his subjects used against the Lionhearts bad but there was not even enough for everyone to use.

That was not something Michael could accept. He somehow blamed himself for not being able to provide them with enough strong weapons which led to their deaths.

Hence, he reached deep down into his wallet and invested his money in the right means of protection to prevent incidents like the Lionheart Invasion and be prepared for all kinds of unexpected scenarios.

Michael hailed a shuttle back to his apartment once he finished his purchases. He organized his things and sent a message to Danny saying that he would return to the Origin Expanse and that Danny should message him the moment he returned from the Origin Expanse and manifested the Runic Gate.

Michael returned to the Origin Expanse where he was greeted by the eternal darkness of the Untamed Jungle late at night.

'I should just sleep. It would be weird to wake up everyone now. The daily report can wait until tomorrow morning,' Michael told himself. He yawned loudly and stretched his body before he fell heavily on the soft king-size mattress.

The next moment Michael had already fallen asleep.

A few hours later, Michael woke up to the sound of nature and his hard-working subjects.

He felt refreshed and took a deep breath of the vibrant air. Not only was the air in the Untamed Jungle refreshing and free of pollution, but the Origin energy in the surroundings had an additional refreshing effect. It calmed Michael's stressed mind and body.

Only two days had passed in the Origin Expanse since Michael left. It was not too long but it was also longer than the time Michael spent outside the Origin Expanse usually.

Both Michael and his subjects had to get accustomed to him staying outside the Origin Expanse for longer periods. They had to create a system where the territory could flourish and work even without the constant management of the Lord. Only by coming up with a better system would it be possible for Michael to spend more time outside the territory, whether it was to conquer the Temple of the Forgotten, travel to Xiltrá, or spend more time outside the Origin Expanse to acquire knowledge, receive thorough tutelage, get to know more human Lords, and become stronger.

Michael did a quick workout using the first level of the Berserker Physique technique. After that, he used the Sun Soldier's Breathing technique, bathed, and went down to listen to the daily report.

Upon his arrival, the atmosphere all over the territory had changed. Some subjects had been sad that their Lord left them shortly after they lost so many good friends and comrades. They thought that their Lord might have left them because he was guilt-ridden and that he couldn't carry the responsibility of being the Lord of territory with hundreds of subjects.

However, now that he returned, their worries dispersed at once. Everyone's mood improved significantly, and one could tell that the subjects felt better than two days ago but there was still a heavy shroud of sadness enveloping them. They were still mourning their comrades.

Many good people had died an untimely death because of the Lionhearts Invasion. That was a fact.

"Four new 1-Star Subjects spawned, and Tiara went out with her Combat Unit to hunt a lot during the last two days," Michael mumbled as he read the report.

The daily reports were getting more detailed and longer than before. That was something Michael liked a lot. The more detailed information he received about the situation of his territory, the easier it was to determine how to continue developing his territory.

'Tiara and the others hunted monsters like crazy...was that to relieve their stress and vent their anger?' Michael wondered as he read how many monsters Tiara and the others hunted in such a short time.

There were close to 300 corpses waiting for Michael to extract. He had yet to empty the warehouse of the remaining dissected Tier-1 Monster corpses, and 300 new corpses were added once again.

If he wanted to sell everything stored in his warehouse, he would have to make several trips back and forth using the Runic Gate.

That was a little cumbersome and would take up way too much time. Thus, Michael would rather wait until his War Rune's storage space expanded more.

"Let's focus on the distribution of equipment, and the installment of traps and defensive mechanisms first," Michael said after pointing at the to-do list. One of his subjects noted down his words immediately.

"Since I will summon more subjects in the next few days, we'll have to expand the territory. Let's focus on triple treehouse complexes in the central area around the clearing and single treehouse complexes around the central area. If the Architect Apprentice has finished the canopy bridge network, we should start this project. I want to make sure that we can move as high up in the trees as we can on the ground!" Michael commanded after giving it some thought.

The canopy bridge system was one of the most important projects Michael came up with before. It held significant value for Michael because the Untamed Jungle was filled with dense vegetation. It would be much easier to travel above the ground using the canopy bridge network than meandering through the obstacle course of a landscape. At the same time, the canopy bridge network could be used to run away, hide, and to initiate surprise attacks from all directions.

If invaders such as the Lionhearts would attack their territory once again, they would have a hard time finding a well-hidden canopy bridge system, while simultaneously preparing for attacks from above and all remaining directions. Michael could position long-range combat units taking advantage of the camouflage and height provided by the trees and give the close-combat units some leverage to circle around their opponents using the canopy bridge network.

As long as it was constructed properly, and used cleverly, Michael and his people would have a tremendous advantage against their opponents!

"The Bilrox Ranch can be expanded a little, and we need a second and third warehouse to separate and store the goods properly. I don't like the mess in the warehouse. It's too unorganized...."

Michael said a few more things before he finished giving instructions. He was not certain that he had covered every single point that had to be pointed out, but he gave his best. Michael allowed his subjects to openly share if they were bothered by something, or if they thought that the territory was in dire need of something.

That way, his subjects could help him out if he missed out on something. He was just a human, and not a machine, after all!

Once all instructions had been given, Michael retrieved most of the goods he purchased in the House of Witchery. His territory would soon have barracks where all weapons would be stored, and a proper training field for everyone to use. Until then, Michael would just hand out the weapons and other goods inside the wooden manor. It was the biggest building, after all.

"Be careful when installing the traps, and the arrays," Michael cautioned as he distributed some of the tasks. His subjects listened intently, and their eyes widened slightly when Michael's finger moved onto a huge semi-transparent orb. "This is an Orb of Hostility. It needs to be treated with great care and is one of the most expensive items in our territory. It is also one of the most important ones that need constant supervision."

The Orb of Hostility cost more than 15 million dollars, and its effect was quite simple. It was connected to Michael's War Rune and sensed the hostility directed at him and his subjects. His subjects were connected to him through the Links of Loyalty, which enabled this function.

Hostility could be further divided in several types, which would be reflected in different colors. If monsters thirsting for blood entered the range of the Orb of Hostility, it would show crimson dots in the monster's direction. The stronger their bloodthirst the brighter the crimson dot.

On the other hand, if someone invaded their territory it would show a blue dot. The stronger the invaders the brighter the blue dot.

Meanwhile, a green dot would appear for all monsters and invaders that had been registered as non-lethal or friends.

This included the three Bilrox younglings that had grown a lot during the past few days.

The Orb of Hostility consumed lots of energy, which was quite expensive over a long period, but Michael was fine with the expenses.

It was the price he was willing to pay for safety. Of course, Michael was fine paying!

Chapter 119 Mass Summoning

While Michael was away, Blaire Tracer visited the lizard cave several times.

She used the GPS treasure map to travel through the cavern system and took notes about the variety of monsters underground, their habitats, and the location of exposed ore and Gloa Crystal deposits.

Blaire even wrote a full report about the cavern system, which included a grading of the monsters' power level. She couldn't determine the exact power level of the monsters she encountered, but their presence gave her a rough indicator of how strong they were.

For example, the Warriors in Michael's territory received 0.8 points from Blaire, while Tiara received a 1.7 as a level indicator of her combat prowess.

That way, Michael could roughly gauge how strong the monsters in the lizard cave were and which cavern tunnels he should avoid for the time being.

Some habitats received a Level 2 Indicator, while others were given a 1.999 because Blaire couldn't precisely determine whether the monsters in that area were at the Peak of Tier-1, or if they had already broken through to the 2nd Tier. She could only tell that certain Tier-2 Monsters were stronger than others.

She could not come up with a perfect scale of measurement either. 0 stood for Tierless, 1 for Tier-1, and 2 for Tier-2. It was just a rough indicator Blaire could use with the help of her high perception.

Of course, this didn't determine how strong certain monsters were in reality. Some were weaker but had strong instincts and unique racial traits like the lizard mother's acid spit.

The number of monsters was also written down in the report, providing more information to determine whether Michael's people could deal with them or not.

His Warriors had an average rating of 0.8, but if 20 Warriors fought together, they would be strong enough to defeat two or three Late Tier-1 Lionheart Adventurers, even if they were to own decent Artifacts.

Michael read Blaire's report with great interest. He hadn't expected Blaire to know the combat prowess of his subjects and the monsters of the Untamed Jungle so well. In her report, she even made a comparison between the combat prowess of the Gem Jaguar, Frenzy Deer, and other monsters.

It was very accurate, which meant that the level indicators of the monster habitats in the cavern system were likely to be accurate as well.

'I should use Blaire's talent more often. It's a waste to limit her potential only to tracking.' Michael thought as he put the report aside.

He reached the warehouse with more than 20 volunteers, who wanted to help Michael organize the stuff and store it in an orderly fashion.

Their help was necessary because Michael couldn't spend his entire day moving around 300 monster carcasses after he dissected them. That would be too wasteful.

With that thought in mind, Michael opened the gates to the warehouse and a humongous pile of monster carcasses entered his sight. He stretched his body a little and exerted the 4-Star Soultrait Extraction.

Dazzling golden streams manifested around his palms as he began his work.

He extracted a total of 309 Tier-1 Monster corpses in the next two hours.

When Extraction was still a 3-Star Soultrait, extracting many corpses would have taken up his entire morning. However, that was not the case anymore.

The speed at which he could extract a corpse was halved now that Extraction had been upgraded to a 4-Star Soultrait. But that was not everything. Extraction's Soul Power increased a lot thanks to his advancement to Tier-1 and the strengthened Links of Loyalty with his subjects.

The efficiency of his Soultrait increased a lot, but so did the quality of Extraction.

After extracting a total of 309 Tier-1 Monster carcasses, Michael obtained a total of 36 blueprints, 77 Ordinary Summoning Scrolls, 4019 Summoning Scroll Fragments, and two Tierless 2-Star Artifacts.

On average, every fourth Tier-1 corpse dropped a complete Summoning Scroll and 13 Summoning Scroll Fragments. That was a great qualitative increment!

Overall, Michael was satisfied with his progress. He combined the Summoning Scroll Fragments and ended up with a total of 237 Ordinary Summoning Scrolls.

Combined with the 28 Named Summoning Scrolls and 20 Mythic Summoning Scrolls which he brought back, Michael could summon 285 new subjects!

It was a massive number for a small territory like his. After all, his population reached barely 500 after the Lionhearts' Invasion.

'This is a great way to give my people a fresh start and something to look forward to after a terrifying nightmare!' Michael thought.

He rushed out of the warehouse, leaving his people alone with the nearly perfectly dissected corpses.

Michael reached the Summoning Gate in excitement. However, instead of tearing all Summoning Scrolls in his possession apart at once, he did something else first.

He stepped onto the metal foundation of the Summoning Gate and opened the hatch. Surprisingly, it didn't resist and opened smoothly.

Two dazzling Summoning Cores entered his sight. Michael reached for them while activating Extraction.

Extraction had improved exponentially in terms of quality and the efficiency with which he extracted objects.

That was also why he was certain that Extraction could extract more impurities from within the Summoning Cores than before.

His gut feeling didn't betray him, and he was proven correct shortly.

He extracted a considerable amount of impurities from the Summoning Cores. The badly reeking black mass caused a bright smile on Michael's face. It might smell disgusting and make him gag, but it was a good sign that his Summoning Cores could be purified slowly over time.

As long as Extraction grew stronger, Michael could extract more impurities within the Summoning Cores. The first extraction of impurities improved the Star Rating of his daily summons. Maybe it was possible to further increase the Star Rating of his daily summons by continuously extracting the Summoning Cores' impurities!

The thought of summoning two 2-Star Summons everyday was quite enticing. However, Michael's mind went even further, and began daydreaming. What if it was possible to summon 3-Star Subjects as long as he kept extracting the impurities within the Summoning Cores?

That would be amazing!!

With excitement filling his heart, Michael began to break the seals on the Ordinary Summoning Scrolls. Breaking 237 seals took quite a while, but his heart was filled with joy and anticipation making the time fly like the wind.

He didn't use the Named Summoning Scrolls and the Mythic Summoning Scrolls yet because he wanted to see what kind of hidden gems more than 200 Ordinary Summoning Scrolls would give him.

At first, only Starless Summons appeared in the Summoning Gate. There were more than 200 of them, and all of them were confused. The information in their heads told them that they had been resurrected, and the Links of Loyalty that formed slowly over the course of the next ten minutes showed them who their new Lord and Master was.

However, other than that, they were helpless and confused. Michael ordered his people to explain the newly summoned subjects about the situation, and their territory.

Meanwhile, his eyes never left the Summoning Gate as 31 1-Star Summons emerged out of the energy pool.

'Seems like I was quite lucky. Great!'

He summoned more 1-Star Summons through the Ordinary Summoning Scrolls than expected, but the mass summoning was not yet done.

In fact, the most important part was just about to start.

Michael broke the seals on the 28 Named Summoning Scrolls, and the 20 Mythic Summoning Scrolls one after another.

"Let's go!"

Chapter 120 Tamed

After breaking the Named Summoning Scrolls, 1-Star Summons began to emerge from the energy pool one after another.

First, three Warriors emerged, wearing ordinary leather armors and wielding a longsword. Following the three Warriors, six Spearman, five Archers, five Vanguards and four Assassins stepped out of the energy pool, filling the Summoning Gate's vicinity with 1-Star Combat Summons.

Last but not least a group of five heavy-armored Cavalry Riders emerged out of the Summoning Gate, wielding a large lance and shield while riding on a battle horse.

Every Summon of the Named Summoning Scroll was a Combatant. They wore ordinary combat equipment and wielded weapons of decent quality. If a battle was to break out right now, they would be ready to fight immediately.

'The Warriors are the weakest combat unit. That's great.' Michael thought with a bright smile on his lips.

Out of the 31 1-Star Summons that had emerged from the Ordinary Summoning Scrolls, eight Warriors, three Archers and two Spearmen had been added to his Military Power. That meant, the total strength of his Combat Units had reached to 41 today...and he had yet to add the Summons of the Mythic Summoning Scrolls.

The Summons of the Mythic Summoning Scrolls didn't rush to step outside the Summoning Gate. It felt like the Will of the Origin Expanse was still determining what his Summons would be.

However, Michael was already very satisfied. He had expanded his Military Power by 41 Combat Units, but that was not everything. Many new 1-Star Subjects with a wide variety of occupations were added to his territory as well.

There were weavers, a carpenter, a potter, an artist, a tailor, masons, surveyors, a pub owner, a financial manager, craftsmen, gardener, a cook and a librarian.

Some of these 1-Star Summons were exactly what Michael needed. For example, he was happy to find masons, a pub owner and a financial manager.

They were important either for the expansion of his territory, to make sure that his subjects would have a place to meet, drink and have fun after working hard all day, and someone to look after the administrative affairs when he would leave to do something outside his territory, or outside the Origin Expanse.

Just as Michael was about to call up some of his new subjects, he sensed a change in the Summoning Gate. He turned back to the gate and focused on the most important summons for today.

A total of 20 Summons with the lowest possible rating being 2-Stars had arrived today. He even had a decent chance of summoning one or two 3-Star Summons!

The Summoning Gate's energy pool startled to ripple wildly. Simultaneously, two brightly shining stars shone on the surface of the Gate's outer ring.

At last, the outlines of more than ten people entered Michael's view. The 2-Star Summons stepped out of the Summoning Gate simultaneously.

Michael's eyes shot wide open and his grin turned wider than before – if that was possible, in the first place. Following the first batch of a dozen 2-Star Summons, four more 2-Star Summons emerged out of the energy pool.

Three of them were chubby men wearing expensive clothes. They radiated the presence of wealthy merchants.

Michael had yet to find proper businessmen among his subjects which was why he was delighted to summon a few merchants. However, his attention was quickly moved to the gigantic summon that stepped out of the energy pool right behind the chubby merchants.

The chubby merchants turned around when the ground beneath them began to tremble, and they nearly pissed their pants. One of the three merchants let out a shrill scream before he fainted on the spot. Meanwhile, the remaining two merchants began to run as if their lives depended on it.

Michael couldn't take offense with that. Even he was astonished. The 16th 2-Star Summon that had emerged from the energy pool today was not an ordinary Summon. No, it was far from ordinary.

It was actually a monster; a Heavy Armored Elephant, a monster with a height of more than four meters and a weight close to 12 tons. It had two long and deadly tusks, and thick gray skin that shielded it from most injuries.

Even Michael was not confident breaking a Heavy Armored Elephant's armor-like skin. It wouldn't be easy at least.

"Oh my gosh..." Michael blurted out loud enough for the people around him to hear clearly.

However, nobody focused on Michael. Everyone's attention was pulled to the Heavy Armored Elephant, which looked around in confusion, turning its head in all directions until it found Michael.

A faint Link of Loyalty was already forming between him and his newly summoned subjects. This included the Link of Loyalty of the Heavy Armored Elephant that stepped closer to him with loud steps as its legs created big craters in the ground.

The earth around the Summoning Gate trembled as the 12-ton monster paved its way through the sea of people. It didn't pay much attention to others, and only focused on Michael.

Once the Heavy Armored Elephant was only four meters away from reaching Michael, it bent its front legs and lowered its head to the ground.

To Michael and everyone else present, it looked like the Heavy Armored Elephant was bowing to him. The bow was a sign of respect and reverence toward its Lord by the Heavy Armored Elephant.

It had accepted Michael as its Lord and Master almost immediately!

"I didn't expect to summon someone like you. Nonetheless, I'm glad that you heed the call of my summon. I am very happy to welcome you in my territory," Michael said in a cheerful manner once he regained his senses.

He was still a little bit shocked that he was able to make a monster submit to the Link of Loyalty so soon. However, that was for the better. It would make many things much easier.

Interestingly enough, the Heavy Armored Elephant was only one of many surprising 2-Star Summons. It stole the spotlight due to its enormous size, but it was not the only odd summon.

Michael also recalled summoning a woman with fluffy rabbit ears, and a young man with feathered wings sprouting out of his shoulder blades.

He couldn't see them right now since most of his view was blocked out by the huge body of the Heavy Armored Elephant, but he could swear that he had definitely seen these two oddballs.

Michael turned to his right side, where Tiara was standing, trying her best to maintain her poker face and composure. She had appeared next to him at one point during the mass summoning.

"Please make a list of all the new Summons. Write down their gender, age, health, star rating including their occupation, what they want to do, where they were born before the Will resurrected, and so on," Michael ordered quietly.

Tiara bowed deeply and responded politely, "Your wish is my command, Master!"

Saying so, the Battle Maid of the Silverfang Tigerfolk disappeared and she launched into action immediately.

Michael's eyes followed her retreating figure, but he could only smile dryly.

'Does she have two personalities? One personality that surfaces when she is in combat, and another a more docile personality on stand-by when she is not out for blood?' He wondered at this point.

Tiara seemed like a mystery to him. She was definitely not an ordinary member of the Silverfang Tigerfolk. Unfortunately, she didn't answer the questions he was the most curious about. In fact, Michael was certain that she couldn't answer his questions, not that she didn't want to.

Whenever he asked about the Silverfang Tigerfolk or her being his personal maid while simultaneously being an Adventurer, her expression would change, turning into one of pain and sadness.

'Maybe she can talk about it in the future, whether it's her heart restricting her from revealing more about her identity, or the Will of the Origin Expanse putting restrictions on her...' Michael thought, wondering when he would be able to find out more about Tiara's past and identity.

He was so deep in thought that Michael didn't even realize that a third dazzling star had manifested on the metal surface of the Summoning Gate.

He looked up to see multiple 3-Star Summons stepping out of the Summoning Gate.

However, the next moment, a terrifying screech rang through the surrounding area, pulling Michael out of his thoughts.

'What's going on? Are we under attack?!?'