

Supreme Lord 131

Chapter 131 Grinding Stones

The second familiar freshman Michael found was none other than Frederik Kolbenheim.

Michael didn't really like Frederik Kolbeheim, but if he could see him suffer while undergoing Silverian Schild's training course, the next 30 days would be quite fun, wouldn't they?

Frederik had been calling out the idiot, who wanted to sign up for the Devilish Saint's training course without knowing who he was. Thus, Frederik realized too late that it was Michael.

Michael exerted his full strength at once. He charged into Frederik Koblenehim, took him off-guard and threw him over his shoulder before he returned in front of Silverian again.

Jacqueline Orlando gave a startled cry when Frederik was kidnapped, but Michael ignored that. He used his strength to suppress Frederik and put him down next to Kaleb.

"I found number three. His girlfriend will probably join as well," Michael announced, not bothering to ask Frederik whether he was willing to sign up for the training course of Silverian Schild, who seemed to be nicknamed Devilish Saint.

Kaleb and Frederik glared daggers at Michael, while Silverian, Alice Zenvoia and many other Instructors simply stared at Michael with mixed feelings.

Some didn't know that Frederik and Michael had fought before, but even they could tell that something was amiss. Meanwhile, others clearly recalled Michael brutally thrashing Frederik to the ground during their fight in the Real Combat assessment. They had seen the video multiple times, and could clearly tell that the relationship of the two was far from friendship.

So why did Michael do that? Was he trying to provoke Frederik, and make more enemies even before they arrived in the Sapphirelake Military Academy?

In fact, Michael was not sure about that himself. He had no idea why he had dragged them along. Silverian Schild's training course seemed devilish, just like his nickname suggested. However, it was also quite interesting, and would certainly improve his foundation as long as he made it through the devilish training.

In the worst case, he would have merely wasted 30 days. It was not as if he would spend an entire semester training with Silverian Schild.

But then again, there was no apparent reason why he had to force Kaleb and Frederik to join the training course.

However, he pulled them over because he felt that it was the best decision.

It should be fun!

'Even if they don't like me, we can turn into each other's grinding stones.' Michael thought.

Kaleb was likely to awaken a powerful Soultrait soon. He was also from a very influential and wealthy family, granting him many subjects and resources that allowed him to increase his strength rapidly. Meanwhile, Frederik's Soultrait may only be 3-Star, but his control of the surrounding wind currents, and the ability to create air out of origin energy was something that could hardly be found in Soultraits.

It was extraordinary even amongst 4-Star Soultraits!

"Bastard! What the hell do you think you're doing?!" Frederik asked, his dagger-like eyes trying to murder Michael thousands of times.

"Will you join or not?" Michael asked curtly.

He didn't give an explanation for his actions, forget about apologizing. Instead, Michael stared deep into Frederik's azure eyes with a hint of ridicule.

Frederik hated Michael for repetitively humiliating him. Whenever they met, Michael made fun of him. The first time was when they met in the House of Witchery, then during the Real Combat assessment, and now for the third time.

Frederik had not even forgiven him for the first time because his father further humiliated him and his fiancée, forcing them to join the Sapphirelake Military Academy, forget about the second time where Michael had spiked him to the ground with a wooden spear.

Even Jacqueline had looked at him with pity when he had been spiked to the ground during the Real Combat assessment, but it turned even worse. Oliver Zeus, his maternal uncle, sent his parents the video of his fights and actions during the Real Combat assessment, making him receive further lecture from his parents.

Frederik didn't know why his uncle would do something like that, but it was humiliating.

And, it was all Michael's fault! He was the core issue for all the times he had been humiliated and punished. Frederik wanted to see Michael suffer. He wanted to defeat the poor peasant!

Thus, he turned over to Silverian Schild, clenching his fists tightly.

"Let me sign up as well!!!" He declared, sensing an opportunity to see Michael suffer and make him regret his decision to have ever offended him!

Now that Frederik had the chance to compete against Michael again, he would make use of it and take revenge. His family had given him enough resources to refine his body rapidly. Using additional weights would accelerate the refinement process. After all, he was given the Kolbenheim's family inheritance body refinement technique, the Wind Sage's Sacred Body Refinement Technique!

The technique was hard to practice but the benefits were tremendous. Using the resources at his disposal, Frederik was certain that he could defeat Michael and make fun of him while seeing him suffer. Simultaneously, he could grow stronger. That was a clear win-win situation!

Soon enough, he would be able to challenge Michael to a battle, and spike Michael to the ground with the same wooden spear that had pierced his abdomen!

Michael noticed that Frederik was overflowing with anger, but that was something he expected from a person like Frederik.

Frederik might actually not be as bad of a person as he first imagined. He was just a spoiled child that had never been told what 'no' means, or at which point their actions crossed the boundary and became offensive. Nobody had ever restricted descendants like Frederik and children like him had grown up getting very pampered. They had always been protected by their families, treated as if they were precious treasures – flowers that had to be guarded day and night.

Thus, Michael believed that people like Frederik were in need of a good beating to fix them.

It was not Michael's mission to fix Frederik's personality, but he would have to clash often with the spoiled brat if he wanted to turn him into his grinding stone.

Meanwhile, Kaleb was not a bad person either. The young Zenovia was just entitled, and full of himself. It was almost as if Kaleb credited himself for all of his family's achievements and believed that it was him, who brought their family to glory and fame.

Michael felt quite amused by that. It was more interesting to have some weird-ass people around him than boring fools. Furthermore, both Kaleb and Frederik were well-trained.

Their combat prowess might be lower than his, but that was mostly because he was a Tier-1 Lord with multiple Soultraits. Based on his knowledge and experience of martial arts training, Michael was above-average using the standards of an Elite High School Class.

However, compared to the prodigies attending the Sapphire Lake Military Academy, his martial arts techniques were below average. He had a lot to work on!

While Michael was wondering who to pick next, Jacqueline rushed up to Frederik to see if her fiancé was fine. After reassuring herself that he wasn't injured, she started to shout at Michael, only to end up signing up for Silverian Schild's training course as well, albeit reluctantly. Frederik had already signed up, and Jacqueline didn't want to separate from him.

Interestingly, a few more people chose to sign up as well upon seeing a few prominent freshmen taking up the course. They surrounded Kaleb, which was why Michael labeled them 'Kaleb's suckers'. They ignored Michael and gave him a wide berth while trying to become the young Zenovia's friend. After all, he was a nobody and had also forced Kaleb to join the Devilish Saint's training course. But that was for the better.

Michael just wanted to give his best and enjoy the fact that others would suffer alongside him.

Chapter 132 Mind Breaker

Frederik dashed forward. He appeared next to Michael, evaded his kick, and delivered a heavy punch straight to his face.

Blood spurted through the air, and Michael fell to the ground.

Under normal circumstances, Frederik would be smiling brightly right now, however, he stared at Michael with contempt. Frederik was panting, his breathing uneven and ragged while sweat trickled down his temples.

Frederik stared at Silverian Schild in all seriousness. He hesitated for a moment but asked the question that annoyed him the most.

"Why is Michael's heavyweight combat suit three times heavier than mine?" He asked sharply.

His heavyweight suit was configured to weigh exactly 100 kilograms. The weight was distributed evenly across the entire combat suit, which made it harder to move around while keeping balance, and to fight with light and precise movements while wearing ordinary clothes.

However, Michael had a much harder time than Frederik. His heavyweight combat suit weighed a whopping 300 kilograms!

"Michael Fang's physical tests clearly state that his strength, speed, endurance, and other physical limits are very high for a Lowest Tier-1 Lord," Silverian answered calmly.

He then added, "Michael also uses his Soultrait, which increases the weight enchantment's power by 20%. That means he doesn't have to carry 300 kilograms like luggage but he walks around with 360 kilograms weighing down on his body."

Silverian Schild had everything set for his training course. He knew how strong everyone was because of the aptitude assessment. Thus, he frowned when Michael used his Soultrait on the heavyweight combat suit, shrouding it in a white hue – increasing the weight enchantment's potency by 20%.

However, for now, he allowed Michael to do as he pleased. Michael would learn sooner or later that he overestimated his physical strength and that he was too impatient. It was possible to rush and increase one's strength, but a carefully constructed foundation was a sure-shot way to earn long-term benefits!

"Arrogant fool," Kaleb spit out coldly with his gaze fixated on Michael, who was struggling to get up from the ground.

Michael wiped his bloody face as he got up slowly and Kaleb's gaze never left him. Right now, Kaleb was just an ordinary human being. He might be well trained with great resources at his disposal, but he was weaker than everyone else present. That irked him – even more so because Michael acted high and mighty in front of him.

"I want to learn how to subconsciously use Lesser Enhancement. This has nothing to do with being arrogant or overestimating myself," Michael responded to Kaleb, but the young Zenovia moved away from Michael as if he couldn't hear him.

Usually, Soultraits would be deactivated once the user lost focus. No matter if their focus had wavered even for a millisecond, the moment it was disturbed, the Soultrait would be deactivated. Michael wanted to work on that. He wanted to make sure that he could use Lesser Enhancement to enhance his power at all times, even if he was distracted by the loss of a limb or two!

"Stop talking kids! Catch up with the others, make an additional lap around the hall and fight for five minutes!" Silverian Schild instructed before kicking the three young men back onto the track.

The three groaned, but none of them thought of complaining out loud. They returned to the track, made a lap around the central arena before they returned to fight against each other for a few minutes.

Afterward, they would have a one-minute long resting period before the next step of today's training would start.

The Devilish Saint's training was quite unique. It was known as Mental Breaker by some, and Limit Breaker by others. It was a training course that forced both the body and mind to reach their limit, and go beyond – or break down before.

Silverian Schild created this training course as a way to unravel the hidden potential of the human body. After all, the human body was a mystery, a subject that had yet to be fully researched, and a hidden treasure with the ability to unleash tremendous power.

The freshmen hadn't even learned new combat techniques from the Devilish Saint yet. However, they learned something far more important.

They got to know how to use their body's strength precisely, to a near-perfect level. The first task was to make sure that they could put their mind and body in sync with the refinement of their War Rune to feel the most subtle changes in the War Rune's degree of refinement.

Most Lords couldn't even sense the increase of their strength, except during major enhancements such as the breakthrough from the Lowest-grade of a Tier, and the Low-grade.

However, it was important to sense every bit of strength within the body. Duke-ranked Lords would always have soldiers stationed across their territory. Some of them would almost always hunt monsters, invaders, or criminals. The Duke-ranked Lords would receive an energy share from their soldier's energy influx, no matter how negligible the energy share may seem.

Using that little bit of additional energy in a moment of crisis, the possibility to change the tides of a losing battle would increase drastically.

All it took was 100% control of one's strength and perfect perception of the War Rune.

Of course, that was not something Kaleb could achieve for now. However, he had figured out how to utilize 100% of his strength at all times. That was just as important, and it could be deemed as his preparation for the future. His survivability in the Origin Expanse would increase exponentially!

The first training session in Silverian Schild's training course was two hours long. At one point during the training, Michael started to practice the Berserker Physique while continuing to follow the instructions he had been given.

The Berserker Physique's body refinement technique used the precise distribution of origin energy and nutrition and the workout of certain muscle groups to refine them one after another.

Michael was not sure why he thought that practicing his body refinement technique would work out during the training session, but it did. In fact, it was oddly efficient.

Michael practiced the Berserker Physique for five minutes straight before he switched to utilizing the Sun Soldier's Breathing technique because his entire body felt sore, and his Stamina was drained.

Repeating the process until the end of the training session pushed Michael infinitely close to the brink of his bodily and mental limits. He could barely move a single muscle and was on the verge of breaking apart, but he was extremely satisfied with himself.

The refinement of his physique progressed rapidly, and his breathing slowly changed.

It was a great feeling.

"You're a weakling! Your expression makes me wonder if your brain looks like mashed potatoes!" Frederik provoked Michael as he squeezed his wobbly limbs out of the heavyweight combat suit.

He continued to make fun of Michael while barely retaining enough strength in his body to move around. His entire body was trembling, and moving became increasingly difficult, but Frederik made sure that nobody would focus on him.

After the first training session, they moved to the changing rooms, removed their combat suit, showered, and put on their normal clothes.

While Frederik continued to provoke Michael in an attempt to make him snap, Kaleb and the others kept their mouths shut. They didn't have the energy to act as if they were perfectly fine let alone engage in a verbal spar.

Once everyone was done showering, Silverian led the members of his training course to the cafeteria. That was where the second stage of his daily training began.

It was time to feast at the Saphirelake Military Academy's expense!

Chapter 133 Bottomless Pit

"Everyone has to finish their plates, otherwise, you'll be kicked out of the Limit Breaker Course!" Silverian Schild announced nonchalantly.

He snapped his fingers and more than ten staff members walked out of the kitchen carrying humongous plates.

Everyone received one of those plates that were filled to the brim with highly nutritious meat and vegetables.

Since they had already been accepted officially, Michael and the others were now freshmen of the Saphirelake Military Academy. Thus, most of their food expenses would be covered by the Academy. But that was not the most important.

The quality of the food was the most important. Their food had been prepared with high-grade ingredients from the Origin Expanse. They were either highly nutritious or infused with a tremendous amount of origin energy. Both of these were necessary means to accelerate the refinement of the body, replenish the body and mind, and make sure that the daily training regime wouldn't be too taxing on the new students.

Since they enrolled for the Limit Breaker Course, Michael and the others were even given potent medicinal solutions. They could dissolve the medicinal solutions in water and bathe in it for a few hours to ensure that the soreness all over their body would be eased.

Michael told himself that he would use it later once he returned to the Origin Expanse.

Food was Michael's passion. He didn't even need a command to start eating and was genuinely happy that he was given a humongous plate filled with all kinds of delicious dishes.

It felt like he had been thrown into paradise after a hellish two-hour training session. He was tired and his muscles felt like they might tear apart at any moment, but Michael forced them to move. His desire to eat was too strong, and even his sore muscles couldn't stop him!

Michael was not the first to start eating, but he was the first to finish the humongous plate. While everyone else was still groaning in pain and forcing more food down their throat, Michael had already shot up from his seat.

"Can I get another plate, please?" He asked, smiling vibrantly.

His entire body was overflowing with energy. It was almost like he had never undergone a hellish two-hour-long training session.

Michael's body was still hurting, and he was sore all over, but the humongous plate was simply too tasty to focus on the pain.

He wanted to have more delicious food!

Kaleb, Frederik, Jacqueline, and even Silverian Schild stopped in their tracks when they heard him. Their forks froze mid-air, and their heads turned simultaneously over to Michael.

"Are you a pig or what?" Frederik blurted out without thinking.

Kaleb wanted to stay quiet, but even he couldn't help but murmur quietly, "Is his stomach a bottomless pit? Is that another Soultrait?"

Silverian Schild remained silent. He watched him get his refill and finish the second humongous plate when the others were struggling to finish their first serving. Michael looked perfectly normal, while the others were bloated and appeared drowsy. Their bodies were still sore, and now their stomachs were filled to the brim as well.

"Will I have to pay extra for such meals once we arrive at the academy?" Michael asked suddenly, looking straight at Silverian.

Silverian Schild looked at Michael, who moved around nonchalantly as if his muscles weren't sore after having trained until they were on the verge of tearing apart.

"Usually, you would have to pay for these meals. They're prepared with valuable ingredients and require a specially trained cook, who can handle ingredients of the Origin Expanse. After all, we want to make sure that the origin energy and nutrition of the ingredients won't be wasted, right?" Silverian explained. He saw that Michael's expression turned sour and snickered lightly.

"Don't be too sad. As long as you join courses like my Limit Breaker course, you'll be given a special meal quota and a special medicinal solutions quota. But don't be fooled. Most courses with additional resource quotas have higher passing requirements. If you fail the course, you will receive a Mark...and you don't want to receive Marks."

Michael and the others knew that failing your course was bad. One Mark was not that much of a problem but if you failed three courses in a single semester, or five courses over the course of three years, you would either be expelled from the Saphirelake Military Academy, or they would punish you and send you somewhere to make up for failing to uphold the Saphirelake Military Academy's honorable image and standards.

"That means we can either play it safe and pick courses without resource quota and pass them rather easily, or face the challenges head-on, obtain more resources, and pass the courses with higher difficulty," One of the other freshmen, who had joined the Limit Breaker Course pointed out.

He was one of Kaleb's henchmen and initially joined the course to please Kaleb and become the friend of the Zenovia family's young master. However, after a hellish two-hour long training with a 100-kilogram heavyweight combat suit and feasting on several times more food than he would usually eat, he was not sure if he could keep going.

Was the possibility of breaking down worth becoming Kaleb's underling, and pleasing him day in and day out?

Michael didn't bother pleasing anyone. Silverian's lesson was over, and both Kaleb and Frederik seemed hooked. That was enough for him.

"Looks like I'm the winner today. I feel great, so I'll leave now," He said simply while patting the sore shoulders of Frederik and Kaleb. Afterward, he disappeared from their sight with quick steps.

"This bastard..." Frederik growled quietly, while Kaleb stared coldly at Michael's retreating figure.

Meanwhile, Silverian Schild began to smile lightly.

"These youths...I wonder how far they can go by competing."

Michael could tell that his body could convert nutrition and origin energy much faster than others. He was not sure if that was solely caused by his high metabolism, or if there was more. Either way, it was extremely helpful to recuperate.

Initially, Michael wanted to use the Sapphirelake Military Academy's network to research more about foreign languages, but he disregarded that idea for the day. They had just entered space and he had more than enough time to do so in the future.

But there was something else he had to do before returning to the Origin Expanse. He joined a few more classes, one of them being [History of the Origin Expanse], another one being lectured by Harry Baren, called [Soul Power Study] and a third being [Memory Lane].

Amongst his four classes, Memory Lane was the only popular lesson Michael joined. It was a lesson on how to improve the memorization ability of the mind. It was quite interesting.

Meanwhile, Soul Power Study was not something anyone was curious about at this point. It was not a popular study anywhere because it didn't really matter how strong your Soul Power was. Every Lord

could tell how strong their Soultraits were by utilizing them. As such, it was not important to measure your Soul Power.

Despite that, Michael was curious about Soul Power. It was not popular, but there were a few things only he could test out using Extraction. The History of the Origin Expanse was something everyone learned in high school, and in afterschool. Most freshmen had been taught about the History of the Origin Expanse, including Michael.

However, there was a major difference between knowing the History of the Origin Expanse from mankind's point of view, and the point of view of older races.

Michael hoped that the History of the Origin Expanse lesson from the Sapphirelake Military Academy used information collected from older races. Maybe, it would help him find out more about Fenrir, his own family...or the Temple of the Forgotten.

In the worst case, Michael would ask the Professors about information related to the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs, and how to get closer to them.

They were his best chance to get to know more about the Temple of the Forgotten, and Michael already had a feeling that he would have to approach them to find out more about the underground ecosystem and the languages used before the Third Epoch.

However, he already knew how to get closer to the Berserkers and the Warlock Centaurs and grab their attention.

The easiest way was to get stronger and be assigned as the freshmen's representative in the next Tritan Battles.

Unfortunately, that was easier said than done.

It was a fierce competition. Everyone wanted to reap the benefits of being the freshmen's representative.

This included Michael, but he was up for the challenge.

The competition excited him.

It ignited his desire.

It made him want to get stronger by all means!

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His gluttonous greed was slowly awakening...

Chapter 134 Bloodthirsty Berserker

At last, Michael returned to the Origin Expanse.

He reported his arrival to his subjects before he made all preparations to take a medicinal bath.

Even if his sore muscles felt much better after devouring two humongous plates of savory and highly nutritious food, Michael took the medicinal bath. He wanted to provide his body with the best possible treatment.

While he immersed himself in the bathtub to relax, a young man entered his room to hand Michael the daily report. Michael smiled lightly at the young man, who could only see his Lord's battered face and the bruises all over his body.

The young man left shortly, confused, and unsure what kind of torture their Lord was going through outside the Origin Expanse.

Michael didn't even know that Frederik had beaten him black and blue. He felt great!

'Trails leading outside the Untamed Jungle have been successfully laid, the traps are installed, the Nature Spirit stretched out its roots, and the Heavy Armored Elephant is currently paving a way straight to the lizard cave. The trail will be completed soon...great!' Michael summarized in his mind while reading through the daily report.

'Tiara and the others went out to kill hundreds of monsters. Looks like they want to increase their rank swiftly. Well, it makes sense. Tiara and I are the only ones in Tier-1. It's time to change that.'

It was important to strengthen the military's combat prowess, not only to protect the territory, but also to conquer the lizard cave, and ensure the safety of the miners once they would start mining the ore deposits in the cavern tunnels.

"The constructions of the Enchanter's Lair, the Smithy, and the Alchemy House have been completed, and the Bilrox Ranch has been expanded. That's pretty fast," Michael realized.

But now that he thought about it, Michael also understood that his territory's workforce had increased rapidly.

With more Combat Units in his army, who had great equipment, high star ratings, and a vast, highly populated region to hunt, it was only obvious that Michael could summon dozens of subjects every day.

After all, he possessed a Soultrait that complemented his military power and the highly populated Untamed Jungle perfectly.

Despite that, Michael didn't think that he would have to extract more than 350 Monster Corpses once he finished the medicinal bath. 350 Tier-1 Monster corpses resulted in an extraction of 261 Ordinary Summoning Scrolls after the Summoning Scroll Fragments were combined in addition to three Tierless Artifacts, other unique drops, and 41 blueprints.

Some of the blueprints were new to Michael. There were even recipes among the blueprints, which were new.

One particular recipe attracted Michael's interest. It was a recipe called Jungle Street Mixture. It didn't seem like anything special at first, but it created a concrete-like substance using the most common resources of the Untamed Jungle.

"I can upgrade the dirt-paved trails into proper streets. What a great recipe!" Michael exclaimed.

He immediately stepped out of his room after wearing fresh clothes, found someone, and gave new orders. The Jungle Street Mixture had to be mass-produced and used immediately.

After the new orders were given, Michael walked over to the Summoning Gate. He used up all 261 Ordinary Summoning Scrolls at once, adding 234 Starless Summons and 27 1-Star Summons to the population of his territory.

As usual, the Links of Loyalty slowly formed between the Lord and his new subjects. Michael approached his subjects, and talked to them while ordering his older subjects to explain the situation, give the Newlings a place to stay, and so on.

The summoning process had already become a daily routine, and it was completed quickly without any disturbances.

Just as Michael thought that the next few days would be calming and without any trouble, Blaire appeared with a request to him.

Since the population in his territory expanded so quickly, Blaire Tracer turned her desire to train more Trackers into one of her missions.

More than enough Summons had the means to become Trackers – even if they did not possess the natural skills of a 3-Star Tracker such as Blaire. She taught them in an attempt to help Michael to ensure his territory's safety.

Michael had heard about that, but he didn't expect an incident to happen already.

'What did Blaire do again? Don't tell me that she stole the cubs of a Tier-3 Monster or something like that. I swear, I will whip her bum if she did that...' Michael cursed quietly in his heart.

He clearly recalled the last incident with Blaire, and couldn't help but worry.

Fortunately, Blaire and her students hadn't done anything wrong.

The report was about something they had witnessed. It was a huge mess.

Michael was relieved when he read the first few sentences of the report. He was happy that Blaire didn't do anything stupid. However, his expression turned sour real quick.

"What...the..." Michael blurted out, and his expression turned deadly serious the next moment.

Apparently, Blaire and her students had been near the habitat of a Sabertooth Wolf pack. She initially planned to teach her students more about the Sabertooth Wolf pack, the power disparity of an Alpha, Luna, and Beta of a wolf pack, and point out a few more pieces of information by giving them a live tour.

However, their study trip turned into a horror trip shortly after they arrived near the Sabertooth Wolf pack's habitat.

A single monster had invaded the territory of the Sabertooth Wolf pack.

According to Blaire's power scale, the Alpha, Luna, and Beta of the Sabertooth Wolf pack were as strong as the Black Bear respectively at the Lowest Tier-2 with exceptional instincts and above-average combat experience.

Yet, despite being that strong, and having a pack of more than 200 Peak Tier-1 Sabertooth Wolves by their side, a single monster annihilated them in less than half an hour!

Michael could tell that had been a close shave with death with a single glance in Blaire's eyes. Blaire may be a little stupid, but she was a confident young woman. She knew how strong their small army was, yet she was scared witless.

Adding the detailed content written down in the report to her reaction, Michael felt that the monster was far more troublesome than any opponent they had encountered until now.

The monster was a three-meter-tall Minotaur, wearing metal armor, and a huge war-axe. A monster foreign to the Untamed Jungle had somehow appeared, and wreaked havoc, massacring the Sabertooth Wolf pack, without sparing a single soul.

Its huge war-axe sliced through the air, flesh, and bones without any resistance. The Minotaur's crimson glowing eyes which were fixed on obliterating one opponent at a time struck Blaire and her students with terror. They were frozen to the spot while the Minotaur slaughtered one Sabertooth Wolf after another.

The Sabertooth Wolves attacked the Minotaur from all sides, but it never paid much attention to them. Instead, it used its empty hand to grasp the Sabertooth Wolves, nonchalantly, and smashed their skulls with brute force.

After their skulls were smashed, the Minotaur tore their Sabertooth out of its hide before it proceeded to kill the remaining Sabertooth Wolves as if nothing happened.

The Minotaur was like a highly combat aware, yet bloodthirsty Berserker. It was a monster that obliterated everything in its way before it disappeared from sight.

Michael read through Blaire's report several times, and his expression worsened every time he finished reading through it.

He took note of a few points and pieced the clues together. Unfortunately, the result wasn't really pleasant.

It was the second time a Tier-2 Monster had gone completely wild and acted weirdly. The first time was the Black Bear, and now a Minotaur – a monster that didn't belong to the Untamed Jungle, just like the Black Bear.

This time it was worse than the first incident. The Minotaur wore a set of high-quality armor, and wielded an exceptional weapon.

Was it a Summon, or possibly a tamed monster? The probability was not zero, but it could also be something else.

'Maybe the Minotaur is an evolved species? It's not impossible for monsters to evolve after they have absorbed enough origin energy. It could have broken through its racial genetic limitations. The Armor and Axe might be from Adventurers which it hunted after evolving.' Michael theorized in his mind, but it was not adding up together.

There was something about the theory that irked him. It was like he was missing an important piece of information.

What would be the easiest way to obtain this missing piece of information? How could he find out more about the Minotaur after it appeared out of nowhere?

'Maybe it wreaked havoc somewhere else before?' Michael wondered.

The thought crossed his mind, but he had nobody to ask about the Minotaur.

'Wait...I do have someone to ask!' Michael realized, recalled a familiar Elven face.

It was about time to visit Xiltra!

Chapter 135 [Bonus]Aerial Encounter

Xiltr was the nearest city bordering the Untamed Jungle. It was one of the outer cities belonging to the Zentika Empire, and a place Michael had to visit due to various reasons.

Xiltr was a good place to gather more information about most of the things Michael was curious about – including the Crimson-Eyed Minotaur.

Other than the Minotaur, Michael was also curious about the person supporting the Lionhearts Leader. He hadn't heard anything about the supporter for a while, and he grew increasingly worried.

Was the Lionheart Leader's supporter not curious about what happened to his investment? Was the supporter aware of what had happened? If so, why didn't the supporter do anything up until now?

Michael was not only interested in these few questions. His interest in the Origin Expanse increased consistently as well.

He was curious how a city in the Origin Expanse looked, what races he would meet, and what kind of information he could procure in Xiltr. Furthermore, Lilica lived in Xiltr as well. He wanted to find her and ask her a few questions.

'I hope she will be in Xiltr when I arrive.' Michael thought at that moment.

But there were more reasons why Xiltr grew increasingly important to Michael. He wanted to expand the Bilrox Ranch quickly. Buying fully matured Bilrox in Xiltr would be the fastest way to do so. Last but not least, Michael could earn a fortune using Xiltr's market.

The shops in the spaceship required Sapphire Points – if one wanted a fair deal. They accepted dollars as a currency as well, but their conversion rate was ridiculous. He would have to pay a lot more for everything he purchased, and his goods weren't worth that much when he requested to sell them.

That was when Michael first realized how much the Golden Bartholomew Membership Card had spoiled him.

He gained so many benefits from the House of Witchery that he felt like crying now that he realized his loss.

But there was nothing he could do to change it now.

It was time to think of a better way to earn a fortune, and Xiltra was the best to achieve that!

Michael had already manifested the Runic Gate when he recalled the Limit Breaker training. He opened his messenger and typed a short message to Silverian Schild.

[Micheal Fang: I apologize for the inconvenience, but I have to enter the Origin Expanse for a day or two. I will make up for the lack of training once I return. Sorry!]

Remark: Please make sure that Frederik and Jacqueline suffer the most. These two are a nuisance!]

Michael grinned when he sent the message. The remark was something he added on a whim, but it was definitely something he hoped Schild would listen to. Seeing the Barbaric Couple struggle felt great!

With a foolish grin on his face, Michael entered the Runic Gate. He appeared in the Origin Expanse, where he found Tiara and Blaire talking to each other.

They turned to Michael the moment they saw him and bowed deeply.

"Master, you've returned!"

"Welcome back, my Lord!"

Michael simply nodded, before he told the two women what he planned.

Neither of the two women was surprised that Michael wanted to travel to Xiltra. Too many reasons were pulling them to the Border City.

"If you use Icarus, you'll arrive in Xiltra in less than an hour," Blaire proposed, pointing at the black-feathered Greater Eagle. Michael named it Icarus, which the Greater Eagle seemed to love.

"We can send the Cavalry Rider through the trails to pick up the fully-matured Bilrox. You won't have to waste your time herding the Bilrox through the Untamed Jungle that way," Tiara added after she considered it for a second or two.

Michael agreed readily.

"I will take Heran Tarn with me in that case. He knows the most about Bilrox, and he can deal with them much better than anyone else in the territory. Heran will be in charge of the Bilrox purchase," Michael said after he gave it a thought.

The Lesser Tamer had raised three Bilrox, and his Link of Loyalty was extremely firm. Heran could be trusted, that was for sure!

Michael was curious about what riding Icarus would feel like. He couldn't use the Bilrox to travel around yet because they were still a little bit stubborn, and the Battlehorses were certainly much slower than Icarus. However, the most important factor was that Icarus could fly through the air and cut down the travel time by a large margin.

Additionally, Michael was a little excited to freely fly above the densely grown ground of the Untamed Jungle. It made his heart thrum wildly!

Thus, Michael chose to travel on Icarus with Heran by his side.

When Michael informed Icarus and Heran about their mission, Icarus screeched in excitement. Meanwhile, Heran's face was drained of all color.

He didn't dare to say anything, but it was obvious that he was afraid of making a mistake. Heran didn't like the responsibility that had been placed upon his shoulders.

However, they didn't have any time to waste as Michael wanted to depart immediately.

He sat down on Icarus' back and pointed behind him. Heran hesitated only a moment before he sat down behind his Lord. He grasped his Lord's clothes tightly to make sure that he wouldn't fall off.

The next moment, a piercing screech rang through his ears and Icarus' body tensed up. The black-feathered Greater Eagle flapped its wings and stirred the dirt around before taking up from the ground.

In an instant, Michael and Heran were pushed against the Greater Eagle, who shot high up into the air. They passed through the open space of the clearing and continued to ascend higher even after they left behind the canopy of the humongous trees around them.

Michael's heart was beating wildly in pure excitement, while Heran screamed at the top of his lungs. Heran's arms were coiled around Michael's waist, using every bit of strength to stay on Icarus' back, and not to fall.

On the other hand, Icarus continued to screech loudly, voicing out his excitement to soar high in the air.

After ascending for a few minutes, Icarus changed his course. He tilted his body just a little, changing direction before adjusting his position mid-air.

The Greater Eagle's body was parallel to the ground, several hundred meters separating them. His wings were spread out as far as possible as they glided through the tranquil sky.

At least, the sky was supposed to be tranquil. It was cloudless without a single aerial monster bothering them.

Or so Michael presumed at first.

The cloudless sky turned dark between one moment and the next, raging thunder swept their surroundings all of a sudden, and a huge shadow engulfed Icarus.

Michael, who had been watching the seemingly endless Untamed Jungle from a bird's view, turned around slowly and was shocked to the core.

'I didn't even sense anything!' He wondered as he turned to the humongous existence, whose shadow engulfed him, Heran, and Icarus easily.

A 30-meter-long streamlined body, wings with a wingspan of more than a hundred meters, supported by sturdy bones and adorned with translucent membranes, a beak-like mouth with sharp teeth, and large round eyes that seemed to be staring deep into Michael's soul entered his view.

His body began to tremble subconsciously as the earthy tones and unique markings of the monster invaded his sight.

'I am so dead...'

Chapter 136 The King's Death

The moment the monster, whose magnificent sight captured the essence of a prehistoric existence, appeared high up above them, Michael came to a realization.

'The canopy of the Untamed Jungle protects its inhabitants from the ferocious existences in the sky!'

He was terrified and rightfully so.

High-voltage electricity currents engulfed the earthy tones of the prehistoric monster as it issued an earth-shattering screech. Icarus' body stiffened and he instinctively adjusted his wings to lose altitude. The closer they were to the Untamed Jungle, the higher their chances of survival were.

'What is a Tier-4 Thunder Pteranodon King doing in the outer area of the Untamed Jungle?!?'

No matter how terrified Michael might be, it didn't make sense that a Thunder Pteranodon King turned the aerial space above the Untamed Jungle's outskirts into its territory.

Monsters with the name 'King' in their names may not be on the same level as Saint Beasts, or Mythical Creatures, but they were existences with enough strength to fight monsters a rank above their Tier head-on. They may not necessarily win, but they wouldn't easily lose either.

For a Tier-4 King-level Monster to turn the space above the Untamed Jungle's outskirts into its territory...what kind of nonsense was that?

The Thunder Pteranodon King was one of the few existences Michael had read about. It was a terrifying King-level monster that was known for living high up on the peak of the Thunder Range. The Thunder Pteranodon King ought to love regions where thunder-attributed origin energy was present.

Attributed origin energy was rare, especially rare elemental origin energy such as thunder origin energy. Yet, such an existence chose to stay in the Untamed Jungle? Did someone throw logic into the garbage bin?

Just as Michael thought that it couldn't get any worse and that the Thunder Pteranodon King would strike them with a bolt of compressed lightning, the atmosphere all over the Untamed Jungle changed suddenly.

The dark clouds manifested by the Thunder Pteranodon King dispersed as the intensity of the sun increased severalfold. It was impossible for Michael or anyone else to look high up into the sky because it was too dazzling.

The sky was shrouded in a golden light that expanded infinitely.

And it seemed as if time slowed down for Michael all of a sudden. He felt weird as if someone was watching him from afar. Michael broke out in a sweet and goosebumps spread all over his body.

The next moment, a heavy pressure weighed down on him, Icarus, and Heran. His body stiffened and he felt incapable of even moving an inch.

Even Icarus stopped moving, unable to flap its wings. However, instead of falling to the ground as they should have, they remained hovering in mid-air.

Michael's eyes were fixated on the Thunder Pteranodon King, but something was odd. At first, he thought that the Thunder Pteranodon King was playing with them and that it was at fault for the heavy pressure.

However, Michael was quickly proven wrong as he made eye contact with the fear-stricken eyes of the Thunder Pteranodon King.

'Oh fuck...'

He had never seen someone being that afraid. Forget monsters, any existence as afraid as the Thunder Pteranodon King was either at the brink of losing its last strand of sanity, or realized that they were on the verge of death – an almost invisible, thin line separating them from being struck by the Grim Reaper's soul-reaping Scythe.

Micheal could clearly see the Thunder Pteranodon King struggling while the heavy pressure weighed down on its body, pushing it down. It struggled desperately and regained control of its beak-like mouth. The next moment, it screeched out loudly.

To Michael the screech felt like it was filled with desperation, the fear of death, and the monster's unwillingness to succumb to its fate.

But it couldn't escape its fate, no matter how much it struggled.

Before its desperate screech dispersed in the seemingly endless sky, the Thunder Pteranodon King's wings caught fire.

Blazing, azure-blue flames engulfed the Thunder Pteranodon King's wings entirely within seconds, and they continued to expand. In less than half a minute, the entire humongous body of the Thunder Pteranodon King was shrouded in blazing azure-blue flames.

The desperate screeches of the monster turned into pitiful, pained wails that seemed to be pleading for mercy, and to end its misery.

However, Michael and the others could only watch with a horrified expression. The heavy pressure weighing down on them prevented them from moving. They couldn't even close their eyes from the terrifying sight unfolding in front of them.

The smell of burning, sizzling flesh reached their nostrils, and smoke spread everywhere as the dark outlines of the burning Thunder Pteranodon King distorted.

At a speed much faster than Michael could have ever expected, a Tier-4 King-level monster had met its death, and a pitiful way at that. The magnificent creature had burned to a crisp without the slightest chance to even flee, forget about fighting its opponent.

The Thunder Pteranodon King didn't even see its opponent before it died miserably.

Would the same happen to Michael and his subjects?

They were merely insignificant ants in the face of the Thunder Pteranodon King. Shouldn't that mean the being that killed the Thunder Pteranodon King easily wouldn't notice their existence, in the first place?

It was only after the Thunder Pteranodon King turned into ashes that Michael saw a huge shadow in the seemingly infinite sky.

The shadow was humongous even from tens of kilometers above them. Its outlines looked like a serpent slithering through the air, but it had two magnanimous pairs of feathered wings as well.

Michael couldn't make out who exactly this mysterious monster was even after he used Eagle Eyes at their full capacity.

The dazzling golden hue in the air disappeared following the death of the Thunder Pteranodon King. Simultaneously, the blazing azure flames dispersed in all directions.

Hot air blasted upon Michael's face, forcing him to close his eyes.

It was only then that he realized the heavy pressure weighing down on him had also vanished. He could move freely once again and opened his eyes wide.

He searched the sky for the humongous serpent but couldn't find it anymore. It left, just like that.

The next moment, Icarus regained control of his body as well.

Heran shivered in terror, and Icarus' initial excitement seemed to have disappeared after the spine-chilling encounter.

What they had witnessed just now was simply too terrifying!

Michael pressed his right hand against his chest in an attempt to calm down his wildly beating heart, but it hardly worked. His entire body continued to shiver, recalling the pitiful demise of the Thunder Pteranodon King, and the mysterious humongous serpent.

"Buddy...I think it's better if we fly at a lower altitude..." Michael ordered Icarus at last.

Icarus followed Michael's order quietly. They flew across the canopy of trees, not uttering a single sound in the hopes of not attracting the attention of another terrifying aerial beast.

They didn't fear the monsters living on the ground of the Untamed Jungle's outer area. However, the space above the Untamed Jungle was an uncharted territory. It was terrifying, and a place that ought to be avoided if possible.

Flying at a low altitude seemed a safe bet for short distances, but Michael didn't dare to make long trips at a high altitude.

Even Icarus didn't dare to do so anymore. The Greater Eagle was a prideful monster with great prowess, but it was incomparably weaker than the two monsters they'd encountered in air.

It knew that the sky several meters above the canopy of the Untamed Jungle was off its limits.

Chapter 137 Xiltra

The flight to Xiltra which ought to be filled with excitement and magnificent landscapes covering the infinite horizon of the Origin Expanse, fueling his adventurous spirit turned out to be a complete disaster.

The scenery around Michael was still extravagant and magnificent as they flew through the air, but Michael's heart and mind couldn't feel the excitement anymore.

They reached the plains adjacent to the Untamed Jungle, and a vast expanse unraveled itself in front of Michael, yet the beauty of nature had suddenly lost its appeal for him.

Not even the towering walls of Xiltra attracted his attention.

The Border City was humongous, surrounded by a huge wall that had intricate enchantments engraved in every nook and cranny, and hundreds of Archers and Mages had been stationed on top.

It was only obvious, but besieging Xiltra wouldn't be easy. Even the most ordinary Guards were at the 1st Tier. Older Guards reached the 2nd Tier, and the Guard Captains were even stronger.

Icarus landed on the ground a kilometer away from Xiltra's arched gates that served as the entrance. Michael and Heran got down from Icarus' back and the three of them approached the city on foot.

Entering Xiltra was not further difficult. Michael was told to press his hand against a small semi-translucent orb, which he did without complaints.

Heran was the next to press his palm against the orb, and Icarus pushed his head against the Orb. Their data was fed into the Orb, and they were registered since they'd never been in Xiltra before.

Entering the city and being registered in the database of the Zentika Empire cost money, which they didn't have. They didn't have a single Zentik, the currency used in the empire, in their hands.

Fortunately, that was not a problem. Michael retrieved a Tier-1 Gemstone and handed it over to the guard, who accepted it readily.

It seemed like the guards didn't care that Michael didn't have any Zentik. He retrieved a few golden shimmering coins from his purse and put them inside the metal box used for depositing the city entrance fee. Meanwhile, the Tier-1 Gemstone was stored in his pockets.

The Guard sneaked a small fortune for himself to let them pass and was overjoyed.

"Can you tell me where the best merchants are located, and where to purchase fully-matured Bilrox?" Michael asked in the Origin language, smiling amiably as if he didn't see what the Guard had just done.

"Of course, my friend!" The Guard said in a friendly tone before pointing out a few places he had to visit to make sure that he wouldn't be exploited as a newcomer.

The Guard meant well after he became 'friends' with the stranger. It was quite intriguing.

Michael could tell that it was rare to see humans in Xiltrā. He and Heran were eyed with more curiosity and vigilance than Icarus, who was a black-feathered Greater Eagle.

Icarus should be unique to the citizens of Xiltrā and make heads turn, but nobody paid attention to him.

But that was something Michael could have anticipated.

'There are Lionhearts, Destors, Zantur, Jeglaw, and a few more races I've never seen before. Are there no Forest Elves? Looks like they're also a minority here.'

Michael's gaze roamed across the bustling main street of Xiltra. He quickly determined that there were no humans and that it was more common to see unique monster mounts than a Forest Elf, or human in here.

As a matter of fact, Michael didn't see a single Forest Elf as he paved his way through the bustling street.

He led Icarus to the mount stall after the Guard from the entrance had directed him to it. It will be much easier to travel through Xiltra while Icarus would wait in the mount stall.

After all, it was quite difficult for the Greater Eagle to fly around when there were countless Tier-2 Archers, Mages and Adventurers. If they felt like hunting down Icarus, Michael wouldn't even be able to do something against them.

Thus, Icarus was led to the mount stall, where they were told that they had to pay a fee when they returned to pick up the mount.

'To think that Icarus entered the stall so easily...maybe he got traumatized after we encountered the Thunder Pteranodon King and the mythical serpent,' Michael wondered, 'Is he too scared to fly around all by himself now?'

It was not as if they would stay in Xiltra for several days, but Icarus' behavior was still a little bit weird. For the prideful Greater Eagle to obediently enter the cramped mount stall was anything but normal.

Michael was a little worried about Icarus' mental health, and he told himself to spend some time with the mighty beast once they returned. He would talk to Icarus and make sure that they would overcome his trauma together.

Oddly enough, Michael wasn't terrified of the mythical serpent anymore. He had been afraid when the Thunder Pteranodon King appeared, and he had been at his wit's end when the mythic serpent burned down the King-level Pteranodon as if it was the easiest thing in the Origin Expanse, but he was fine now.

It was weird. Michael couldn't understand himself either. Why was he not terrified anymore? He should be afraid to return to the Untamed Jungle, and forget about the fact that he and Icarus would fly back since they wouldn't want to waste a day traveling by foot.

"Let's meet up with the Rainbow Koi Zantur Merchant first," Michael said out loud to change the topic, seeing that Heran was still shaken by their encounter.

Heran nodded his head faintly and they set off.

As they made their way through the bustling streets, Michael learned a lot about Xiltra, its infrastructure, and the living conditions of the various races living in the bordering city.

He spent the next hour distracting himself until they finally reached the Rainbow Koi Shop of the Zantur Merchant. It was a big shop with an even bigger ranch connected to it.

They entered the shop where they were welcomed with bright smiles.

Michael noticed the slight astonishment on the staff member's faces, but they were professional enough not to be affected by the arrival of new faces from unknown origin.

That was a bonus point in Michael's opinion, and he felt much more comfortable staying in the shop and supporting it by purchasing and selling goods.

"It's rare to see new faces in my humble establishment. How can I be of your service, esteemed Lord?" A young man of the Zantur race asked in an overly polite manner as he approached Michael and Heran.

The Zantur race was a calm and business-oriented race. They would rather shed ink on a piece of paper, and fight verbally than shedding blood and spreading death and misery.

Michael didn't know much about the Zantur race, but the young man was just like he had expected – with silver skin, human size, one eye, three-pointed ears, and a thick skull that protruded out of the back of his head.

"I have a few dozen Low Tier-1 corpses from the Untamed Jungle to sell. I also collected a big stash of blueprints for a while, and I think it's about time for me to sell them," Michael got straight to the point, "I hope the Rainbow Koi shop can give me a satisfying price for the goods I wish to sell."

The young Zantur Merchant responded near-instantaneously, moved his body to the side, and pointed at the backdoor.

"Please follow me, esteemed Lords. We will appraise the goods first and give you a satisfying price." He said while flashing Michael and Heran his business smile.

"My friend here wants to take a look at the fully-matured Bilrox. We want to purchase a few healthy ones," Michael added, to which the Zantur Merchant reacted by motioning his assistant to get moving.

The assistant led Heran outside to the ranch while Michael was tended to by the shop owner.

In the next ten minutes, Michael retrieved more than a hundred near-perfectly dissected Low Tier-1 corpses, 82 blueprints, and a few other things, which he had wanted to sell for quite a while now.

The merchant was slightly astonished at first, but he calmed down quickly. His business-oriented mind took charge, and he appraised all corpses and blueprints precisely and efficiently.

Once the merchant was done, he retrieved a notepad, scribbled a few things, and looked at Michael intently before he tilted his head to an uncomfortable degree.

At last, he nodded his head subtly. He made a final note and was about to hand Michael the estimated price when his assistant returned with Heran.

The assistant whispered something in the merchant's ear, and the merchant scratched something and wrote a new one again before clearing his throat.

"It seems like your comrade has good eyes. He picked the three female Bilrox of the highest quality," The merchant said with a tinge of respect in his voice as he looked at Heran.

Afterward, he returned his attention to Michael, whom he handed a note.

"After deducting the price for the three high-quality Bilrox females, you'll be left with 32,532 Zentik. This is the best I can offer!"

Michael was actually a little bit surprised. Initially, he was worried that the corpses and blueprints wouldn't be enough to purchase more than two Bilrox females. However, that couldn't be farther from the truth.

He was even left with 32,532 Zentik after deducting the price of three high-quality Bilrox females!!

Michael subconsciously turned his head to the nearest shelf to inspect the price for the displayed goods.

At first, everything seemed perfectly normal, but when his gaze landed on the price for Summoning Scrolls, blueprints and other drops of the Origin Expanse, he was not sure what to think about them.

'Did someone switch the price-tags, or am I just high on air?'

Chapter 138 Adventurer Guild

Michael noticed a few things by comparing the price tag of the items in the Rainbow Koi shop, and the price he was given for the goods he sold.

First, the Tier-1 Monster carcasses of the Untamed Jungle were being sold for a pretty high price. Michael expected many Adventurers to enter the Untamed Jungle to hunt monsters, but it looked like they couldn't supply enough to cover the demand.

Second, Summoning Scrolls and blueprints were ridiculously expensive. In fact, the blueprints Michael sold were priced much higher than the blueprints that were hard to purchase in the House of Witchery, and other shops under humanity's governance.

The blueprints he sold were duplicates that could be procured everywhere in the Untamed Jungle, yet their price was quite high. The price of Summoning Scrolls was even more ridiculous. Using a rough conversion from Zentik to dollars, Michael guessed that Summoning Scrolls were roughly three to four times more expensive.

That was also why Michael ended up signing the deal before he used his small fortune to purchase the blueprints he thought of as rare and cheap, and a few special techniques that had been created specifically for Starless Summons. Apparently, these techniques provided enough information to increase the Summon's probability of attaining enlightenment.

As long as they reached perfect mastery of the respective techniques, their chances to be promoted to 1-Star would increase. That was extremely helpful, and something Michael wished to provide to all of his Summons.

With that thought in mind, he bought two dozen techniques, both combat and non-combat-related techniques while his eyes continued to roam through the shelves in the Rainbow Koi shop.

Michael's interest in the displayed items was extremely high. It was enough to make him retrieve a bunch of Tierless Artifacts, which he placed on the wooden counter in front of the Zantur Merchant.

"How much can you offer me for these Artifacts?" Michael asked, pointing at the batch of Artifacts.

They were 2-Star Tierless Artifacts and worth a small fortune, which was just enough for Michael to buy various Beast Tomes and books about the Zentika Empire, the Untamed Jungle, the adjacent regions, and various other forces within and around the Zentika Empire.

The Rainbow Koi shop had a small library section, which Michael nearly emptied with a single purchase.

Information was the best investment of his money right now. Michael understood that Xiltra's shops were advanced and that they didn't have as many restrictions and requirements to purchase and sell goods. This was something Michael could make use of to become stronger until they arrived in Kelta – even if he could not sell the Monster carcasses to the House of Witchery anymore.

As long as he used the information at his disposal well, Michael could create a loop of infinite money. He merely had to buy certain blueprints for a low price in Xiltra and sell them for an exorbitant price to other human Lords.

Of course, creating a loop of infinite money was just theoretically possible. Practically, it was just temporary income since the price of the cheap blueprints would increase if his purchases decreased the already limited supply of rare and cheap blueprints too fast. The supply would lack and the cheap blueprints would become more expensive.

Nonetheless, Michael would give it a try.

He was starting to become increasingly more interested in Xiltra, which included the races living in the border city, and the seven races that made up the majority of the Zentika Empire's population.

Michael didn't really like being around the Lionhearts because it made him recall the Lionheart Leader, but it was not as if it was fair to turn all Lionhearts into devils just because a bunch of them had invaded his territory. That was not only unfair but also nonsensical. Why would he fault someone for someone else's mistake?

'Instead of acting like a piece of shit, I should focus on procuring information about the Eras before the Third Epoch. There should be a few old veterans in Xiltra.' Michael thought after he mentally chided himself for his earlier thoughts.

Heran took care of the three Bilrox females and left Xiltra riding on one of them. The Lesser Tamer subdued the Bilrox females quickly and he returned, feeling happy that he didn't have to fly back on Icarus anymore.

Heran swore to himself that he would never fly in the sky above the Untamed Jungle anymore. He had learned his lesson!!

Michael – now all by himself – walked through Xiltra's bustling streets. Many people stared at him, but they seemed more curious to figure out about his race rather than glaring at him in hatred. That was also why Michael ignored their gazes as nobody stepped forward to talk to him. It was not as if they had bad intentions, after all.

After walking through the bustling border city for an hour or two, Michael finally reached Xiltra's Adventurer Guild. Most Adventurers would register at a guild. That way, they could earn money easily, purchase Artifacts using secret channels and accumulate more benefits by increasing their Adventurer rank.

However, Michael didn't go to the adventurer guild because he had a mission to post, or because he wanted to register as an Adventurer. Michael went there because he wanted to meet Lilica.

He had yet to see any other Forest Elves, which answered his earlier doubt. Forest Elves didn't have a main spawn point in the Zentika Empire, which also applied to humans.

It was known that all races had a specific area where most of their Lords would emerge. That was also one of the many reasons why certain Supreme Families chose to bond together and join their forces. Their territories in the Origin Expanse were nearby, and they wanted to fight together against their common opponents. To ensure that they would be loyal to each other, they arranged marriages of their descendants so as to strengthen their ties and become one family.

Arranged marriages were more common than one expected in the era of technology and interstellar travel, and it was initiated because of the Origin Expanse most of the time.

Frederik Kolbenheim and Jacqueline Orlando were a great example. They were engaged with each other because their parents' territory was located near each other. They had joined forces decades already, but it had only been ten years since they announced the engagement of their children. One of the reasons may have been because Jacqueline clung to Frederik, but the biggest reason was that a powerful opponent had appeared at the borders of their parents' territories.

Michael didn't think highly of arranged marriages, but it was not as if this affected him, in the first place. Neither his nor his brother's territories were located somewhere near human forces.

Only a few human Lords had spawned in the Zentika Empire or the area around it. Most of them were unlucky souls, who had to give up their territory to survive. Thus, Michael couldn't even hope to encounter a human Lord, or Adventurer in the Origin Expanse. Not anytime soon at least!

But that was fine. Michael didn't have anything against other races. In fact, they may be easier to deal with than humans.

One way or another, Michael was in need of a reliant informant, yet he couldn't find Lilica anywhere.

Where was she when he needed her?!

'In that case, I might as well spy a little!'

Chapter 139 Lilica

Xiltra was a border city, and the city closest to the Untamed Jungle, and his territory.

Michael had to know more about the military power of Xiltra to be prepared for the worst-case scenario.

In the future, he might clash with the Zentika Empire, and Xiltra would become his first hurdle to overcome at that time. Of course, it was too far-fetched to consider Xiltra and the Zentika Empire his opponent already, but it may turn into a real scenario in the future. The future was not set in stone, after all!

Feeling confident about himself, he entered the Adventurer guild without any worries, ignoring the attention he received from everyone.

His focus moved to the guild's counter at first. However, instead of asking about the whereabouts of the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team, Michael's attention moved subconsciously to a particular mission on the mission board next to the counter.

A detailed drawing of a well-armed Minotaur caught his attention. Michael approached the mission board where he read the details of the hunting mission.

"Highly intelligent Tier-2 Minotaur acting like a bloodthirsty beast 20 kilometers southwest of Xiltra. It's unknown if the Minotaur is a subordinate of a Summoner, or if it evolved on its own. However, it is extremely deadly and doesn't seem to feel pain. The hunting mission has failed four times in total. Casualties: 159 Citizens, 9 Guards, 17 Adventurers. Recommended Rank: B(If alone) C-rank Group(5 Members). Reward: 150,000 Zentik," Michael murmured some of the descriptions mentioned in the hunting mission.

He wanted to collect some information about the Minotaur, but it looked like the Adventurer Guild didn't know more than the information Blaire had reported to him.

"Why are you so interested in this hunting mission, dear Lord of the Untamed Jungle?" A sonorous voice rang out behind Michael.

Hearing the last words, Michael's head flung back and he was about to manifest Seron Voulge and pierce the curved blade outward. Fortunately, he had held back instead of attacking the newcomer.

Lilica Balrean, the leader of the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team was standing behind him, her long hair combed into a neat ponytail, and a mischievous smile plastering her face.

"Nice haircut, by the way," She added lightly with a look at his bald head.

Michael was already frustrated that his hair didn't grow back as fast as he hoped for, but Lilica made things worse by rubbing salt in his wound.

Despite being annoyed, and a little tense because he had expected the worst when Lilica said, 'Lord of the Untamed Jungle', Michael sighed in relief. Lilica hadn't left Xiltra yet!

His expression lit up and he smiled brightly at the Forest Elf.

"The haircut is part of the reason why I came to Xiltra," Michael said half-jokingly before he added, "But I'm also here because of that Minotaur."

Lilica didn't have to be a genius to understand what Michael's words entailed. His haircut was most likely the result of his fight against the Lionheart Adventurer team and the reason he came to Xiltra was probably to find out more about the person supporting the Lionheart Leader with a Lord Seal.

The Minotaur was Michael's most recent issue. It should have invaded the Untamed Jungle. That was what Lilica deduced.

"Since you're already here, we might as well talk. Your haircut is – somehow – my team's fault, after all!" Lilica responded with a faint smile.

She gestured to Michael to follow her and walked out of the guild house. Michael followed closely behind.

Less than ten minutes later, they found themselves sitting in the bright sun, munching on some snacks from a nearby stall.

Lilica ate her snacks with sparkling eyes. She didn't even pay attention to Michael as he stared at her, waiting patiently for her to reveal more information about the supporter of the Lionheart Leader.

After she finished her packet of snacks, she looked at Michael's half-eaten packet and pointed at it though her mouth was still filled to the brim.

"Are you still eating that?" Lilica asked while her hand had already reached forward, taking away the packet from Michael's hands.

She savored the snack and continued to eat in excitement.

Michael was not even sure how to react to this kind of behavior. Was he supposed to flick her forehead for stealing his food, shout at her to start revealing information, or was he supposed to kidnap and torture her until she would finally pay more attention to him than a puny packet of snacks?

There were too many things he could do, but all of them were created by his intrusive thoughts. They wanted him to hurt Lilica, and he felt his subconscious agree more and more to the idea of scolding her openly.

Fortunately, he kept his mouth shut.

"I actually don't know too much about the Lionheart Leader's backer either, but you probably expected that already," Lilica finally finished the packet and dusted her hands with a satisfied smile. Michael tried hard not to roll his eyes at her as she started to speak, "I only know for sure that the Lionheart Leader's

backer is a higher-up of the Lionheart race. The Zentika Empire's interest in the Untamed Jungle increased in recent years. Of course, this is just my guess, but I think that the Zentika Empire is trying to find something in the Untamed Jungle and that they're preparing meticulously for the day when they find what they're looking for."

Michael listened intently to Lilica's words. His theories were not that much different from Lilica's, but it was not nice to hear.

"It looks like one of the Lionhearts couldn't wait patiently any longer. He probably acted on his own and won't invest too much money to investigate the whereabouts of the Lionheart Leader," Lilica added, "If the higher-up didn't want to stay secretive, he would have sent stronger Lionhearts into the Untamed Jungle. Hiding the actions of a few dozen Tier-1 Adventurers is much easier than covering the disappearance of stronger Adventurers. You shouldn't worry too much about him for now."

Now that Lilica had reassured him and dismissed his worries, he felt that the backer of the Lionheart Leader was a small problem. On the contrary, the Zentika Empire's interest in the Untamed Jungle seemed to be more problematic.

'Are they searching for the Temple of the Forgotten?' Michael asked, but he could already guess the answer.

The Zentika Empire must have some old records revolving around the Temple of the Forgotten. Or maybe, they had someone with a unique treasure-hunting Soultrait, who was led to the Untamed Jungle to find a great treasure.

It bothered him a little bit, but Michael was sure that there wouldn't be a problem as long as he could hide the Temple of the Forgotten. After all, the mythic serpent in the air, the eerie Untamed Jungle, and the powerhouses inhabiting the ground would ensure that the Zentika Empire wouldn't act until they were certain that the thing they were searching for was actually in the Untamed Jungle.

Oddly enough, the thought of the Zentika Empire attacking the Untamed Jungle with all its might, felt less threatening than not knowing what would happen, and being ignorant to the truth.

The uncertainty was more burdening on Michael's mind than knowing what would happen in the future if the Temple of the Forgotten was to be exposed.

It was oddly relieving, and a bright smile blossomed on his face.

"Why are you smiling like a creep? Stop it!"

Chapter 140 Counter-Strategies

Michael didn't have much hope when his conversation with Lilica started, but it ended up being quite an interesting one.

He enjoyed it thoroughly and didn't have any regrets when he left. The information he gained today was everything he needed to analyze the importance of Xiltra, the Zentika Empire, and the Temple of the Forgotten.

His territory's position was dangerous, but it was not as if that was breaking news.

Michael picked up Icarus after paying the fee of the mount stall, and they left the city together while the afternoon sun descended slowly.

It was not the last time he would visit Xiltra, Michael was certain of that.

He got on Icarus' back and they ascended in the air.

"You can do it, buddy. Don't worry, I'm here for you," Michael said reassuringly while patting Icarus.

The prideful Greater Eagle was still traumatized from their earlier encounter with the Thunder Pteranodon King and the mythical serpent. Michael's words calmed Icarus a little bit, but the Greater Eagle was still too afraid to fly too high in the air.

Michael was certain that everything would be fine, but he didn't have any hard evidence to prove his point. His certainty was solely based on his gut feeling, after all.

After flying through the open plains for almost an hour, they reached the Untamed Jungle. Icarus was tense the whole time they flew above the Untamed Jungle, and he didn't dare to leave the vicinity of the canopy of the trees.

The Greater Eagle could only feel at ease when they finally reached their territory. Icarus landed in the clearing before he collapsed on the ground. The tension that had accumulated in his body during the whole flight had been released at once, and his body couldn't handle this right now.

Michael was greeted by Tiara and Blaire when he returned to the territory. They told him that Heran and the three Bilrox females had already returned and that the Blood-eyed Minotaur had attacked a second habitat of Tier-2 Monsters.

Blaire retrieved one of the maps she made based on her knowledge of the Untamed Jungle and pointed out the destroyed habitat of the Sabertooth Wolf pack, and the habitat the Minotaur had attacked now.

"It's getting closer to our territory," Michael realized, and both Tiara and Blaire nodded their heads in unison.

"We're not sure if the Minotaur is looking for our territory, or if it's getting closer to us without realizing. However, it's a fact that the Minotaur's second attack indicates that it will find us sooner or later!" Tiara explained.

Michael bit his lower lip in response. He understood what her information entailed.

They had to get rid of the Blood-eyed Minotaur!

"It looks like I won't be leaving the Origin Expanse for the time being," Michael mumbled to himself before he returned his attention back to the two women, "Blaire, search for the Minotaur and secretly follow it. Make sure that it won't find you while you track its movements on the map. I want its movements to be noted down as detailed as possible!"

"Tiara, make sure that everyone close to reaching the next refinement stage will advance soon. You can go out and hunt with everyone, but don't go too far from the territory. Return immediately when I call

you guys through the Link of Loyalty. Our Link of Loyalty should be firm enough to transfer a simple pull when I call for you."

Michael didn't stop with these commands. He spent the next five minutes issuing commands to various people, including the Master Alchemist, the Weaponsmith, the Mages, the tamed monsters of his territory, and the Nature Spirit.

Maybe he was overdoing it with the sheer amount of orders he gave out just before the Untamed Jungle would be devoured by the darkness of the night, but he wanted to make sure that everyone would know what they had to do from tomorrow onward.

Some of his construction projects and other plans had to be postponed with the approaching danger of the Blood-eyed Minotaur. Everyone understood Michael's worries. Everyone followed his commands without batting an eye.

Meanwhile, Michael handed out the special techniques he had purchased. He gave them to the Librarians and Scholars to take a look at them. Michael hoped that they could be replicated to ensure that all of his Starless Subjects would be granted a higher chance of attaining enlightenment and the opportunity of a star rating promotion.

Unfortunately, the Librarians and Scholars felt overwhelmed by the special techniques. At first glance, the special techniques looked like ordinary books. However, that couldn't be further from the truth.

The special techniques were techniques that stored the experience of Summons with higher star ratings, their memories, and special skills that could only be fully mastered by 1-Star Summons with the specific occupation that was taught through the technique.

Understanding the special technique was one point, mastering it was entirely different. As for duplicating it, without being at least a 4-Star Summon of that particular occupation, it would be a near-impossible task to duplicate the techniques.

While that was a bummer, Michael was not too disappointed. The inability to duplicate the special techniques meant that they were the real deal. Michael would wait until he received the first results, and purchase a few more once he was certain that they worked as intended.

At the end of the day, the special techniques were an attempt to distract his Starless Summons. He wanted to train them as well, but he was more worried that the Starless Summons, who were willing to fight for their Lord and territory, would use the same sacrificial tactic as they did when the Lionhearts invaded.

Michael hoped that the special technique and the new orders were enough to distract them from foolishly thinking that they stood a chance against the Tier-2 Blood-Eyed Minotaur with their current strength. The Lionhearts and the Blood-Eyed Minotaur were not on the same level. Facing the Blood-Eyed Minotaur would lead to the death of all Starless Summons!

Like that, Michael spent the next four days inside the Origin Expanse.

He didn't leave the territory because he had to be always ready for an all-out fight.

Of course, that didn't mean Michael idled around. He spent his time reading through all Beast Tomes, and the books he purchased in the Rainbow Koi shop. Michael worked out a lot as well. He could clearly tell that he was on the verge of fundamentally changing his breathing pattern.

At first, it felt like his breathing fundamentals changed only subtly, but Michael was certain that he was on the verge of achieving something big. He wasn't missing much. Just a small bit of enlightenment was all he needed to change his breathing pattern completely and reach perfect mastery of the Sun Soldier's Breathing technique.

Unfortunately, attaining enlightenment was easier said than done. It couldn't be achieved at will and would reach him at the weirdest times. Michael was fine with that. He wasn't rushing anything.

Instead, he patiently waited for the last report from Blaire.

According to her detailed reports, the Blood-eyed Minotaur had attacked two more areas with Tier-2 Monster habitats. It continued to get closer to their territory, and it was time to tackle the Minotaur.

After Blaire arrived with the final report, at last, and he read through it, one thing was clear; the Blood-eyed Minotaur had to be dealt with today itself.

The preparations had been completed, everyone was armed to the teeth and multiple strategies had been prepared to battle the Blood-eyed Minotaur.

There was no way that anything could go wrong.