

Supreme Lord 141

Chapter 141 Battle Strategy

Michael and his army began to move after Blaire's arrived with her report.

The Blood-eyed Minotaur had initiated a massacre in the nearby Gem Jaguar hideout – just like Michael and his people had predicted.

The Gem Jaguar hideout was the only gathering place for Gem Jaguars. Hundreds of them had found a habitat in the darkest parts of the Untamed Jungle's outer area because of the evolved Horned Gem Jaguar.

According to their research, the Horned Gem Jaguar was a female with the ability to pull the Gem Jaguars together and create synergy between them. That was also one of the reasons why Michael and his Army always encountered more than one Gem Jaguar in the Untamed Jungle.

The Horned Gem Jaguar was thrice as big as ordinary Gem Jaguars, and she was much stronger than the Sabertooth Wolf pack, which was no surprise.

The Blood-eyed Minotaur picked stronger monster packs as its opponents with every attack, which led to fiercer attacks and more wounds all over the Minotaur's body. However, it didn't seem to mind the pain caused by the various wounds that had yet to fully heal. That was stated in Blaire's report.

Michael spent lots of time reading through the reports Blaire and her people provided about the Blood-eyed Minotaur and its movements. He knew that it was injured, its equipment was badly damaged, and the battle-axe's blade was duller than before, but that was not something he could be happy about.

On the contrary, the Minotaur was a huge problem.

It had grown stronger in the past few days. The Blood-eyed Minotaur had adjusted to fighting large groups of opponents and utilizing the Untamed Jungle's freaky environment to its benefit.

Fortunately, nobody was better at utilizing the Untamed Jungle than the Lord of the Untamed Jungle, and his loyal subjects, who used the Untamed Jungle to their advantage all day.

Michael led his people through the Untamed Jungle straight to the Horned Gem Jaguar.

He gave Tiara command of the close combat unit and ascended the canopy bridge high up in the air with the long-range units.

The Aero Crossbowmen, Crossbowmen, Archers, the Earth Elemental Mage, and the Water Elemental Mage were better off high up in the canopy bridge rather than standing on the ground where the Blood-eyed Minotaur could charge at them and snap their necks easily.

Icarus, and Iglisis, the Demi-Human from the Typhoon Eaglefolk, were also high up in the trees, perched on the branches. They didn't use the canopy bridge, but that was not necessary. In fact, the canopy bridges would restrict their movements later.

The Warriors, Spearmen, Cavalry Riders, Vanguard, Assassins, and others made their way through the thicket of the Untamed Jungle with the help of the Heavy Armored Elephant.

It paved the way through the Untamed Jungle with its humongous body.

The Heavy Armored Elephant didn't like fighting. However, it was one of the crucial members of today's battle strategy because of its heavy weight and thick gray skin, which was covered in a second layer of protection. The blacksmiths had toiled endlessly for the last few days, creating a thick and heavy metal armor for the Heavy Armored Elephant.

The heavy metal armor didn't look great but it would certainly fulfill its goal.

"How far along is their fight?" Michael asked Iglisis as the Demi-Human from the Typhoon Eaglefolk flew past him.

Iglisis shot through the canopy of trees and approached their final destination while remaining undiscovered by everyone. A minute after he departed, Iglisis returned. His face was drained of all its color.

"The battle is already over? The Minotaur won?" Michael asked even though Iglisis' face was enough to answer his questions.

Iglisis nodded his head heavily and responded slowly, "The...the Minotaur sustained a few injuries...but it won. It killed every single Gem Jaguar already!"

Michael didn't expect the Minotaur to be that fast, but it didn't change anything in their plan.

He turned to his right to look down at the ground where Tiara was already waiting for him. Everyone was in position and ready to move.

"Let our Speedster go!" Michael said loud enough for the people down below to hear.

Tiara nodded, and their little Speedster, the Demi-human from the Speedster Rabbitfolk began to move.

She shot past the Heavy Armored Elephant, squeezed through the thicket, and accelerated. She was not at the 1st Tier, but her speed rivaled Tiara's. However, that was not the sole reason why they sent the Speedster Demi-Human out.

Members of the Speedster Rabbitfolk reached an even greater speed in moments of fear and desperation. The hormones they released allowed their body to go past their limits. But on the flip side, the hormones they released attracted nearby monsters as well. Some would fall into a state of rage, while others would be overwhelmed by sudden curiosity. One way or another, most monsters were affected by the Speedster Rabbitfolk's hormones, and they would follow the trail left behind by the hormones.

They were the perfect bait!

Seconds after the Speedster was released into the densely grown habitat of the Horned Gem Jaguar, a terrifying roar reverberated through the surrounding area. The Minotaur took the bait!

The ground began to tremble wildly as the Blood-eyed Minotaur charged behind the Speedster. Meanwhile, Michael and the others began to move.

In the next ten seconds, everyone got into position. The close combat group entered Formation A, with three different types of potions in their empty hands, while the long-range group spread across the canopy bridge with two potions in their hands.

The Master Alchemist prepared various potions to temporarily enhance everyone's strength, stamina, and pain resistance to a certain extent. The potions would have slight side effects once the effect wore off, but that was a small sacrifice in exchange for a boost in strength, stamina, and a certain degree of immunity to physical pain.

'I hope I'll summon a Poison Master soon,' Michael thought when he retrieved a bunch of potions from his War Rune.

The Master Alchemist had never been interested in concocting poison. Thus, Michael and the others weren't in possession of highly potent venom to use against their enemies. The paralysis venom in Michael's possession was strong, but it wouldn't work against a monster such as the Blood-eyed Minotaur. It was partially resistant to venom.

Fortunately, the Master Alchemist was a sly bastard. He had a particular potion that was perfect for the given situation. It was expensive to produce, which was also why they had only a single potion of it, but that was more than enough to fight the Blood-eyed Minotaur and use it at the very end as a trump card.

Now that everybody was in position, Michael summoned the Siltang Bow. He conjured the strongest arrow using the energy stored in the bow frame and coated the entire arrow with the tincture prepared by the Master Alchemist.

Once the arrow was fully coated, Michael stored the half-empty glass vial back in the War Rune. He activated Lesser Enhancement and Eagle Eyes simultaneously, and pulled back the bowstring while calling out loudly, "Ready!"

As his words resounded across the canopy bridge, everyone else moved as well. They pulled their bowstrings back, readied their crossbows, and manifested their elemental spells while waiting for the perfect opportunity to attack.

The commotion on the ground intensified and a terrifying roar rang through the Untamed Jungle as the Minotaur barged through the densely grown thicket, slashing at the desperately running Speedster.

But before the Blood-eyed Minotaur's battle axe could slice through the Speedster's frail body, something heavy smashed into the Minotaur's side with a weight of close to 13 tons.

The impact was hard and unexpected, and the Blood-eyed Minotaur couldn't react in time. It was flung to the side as it desperately tried to regain its balance but was unable to do anything.

Meanwhile, the Heavy Armored Elephant found itself in a state of shock. Its sharp tusks weren't strong enough to pierce the Blood-Eyed Minotaur's hide!

Plan A was thus rendered useless.

The Heavy Armored Elephant reacted quickly. It used its heavy weight to smash the Minotaur against the nearest tree before making space for everyone else to attack.

Even if the Heavy Armored Elephant looked terrifying with its humongous size and heavy weight, the monster's mission was to protect and distract rather than attack.

After losing its momentum, and being smacked upon the nearest tree trunk, the Blood-Eyed Minotaur required a second to regain its senses.

It had been fueled with uncontrollable anger seeing the tiny Demi-Human and had solely focused on it, forgetting to keep a lookout for other unexpected attacks. Hence, the Minotaur simply charged behind it for a few seconds until it had nearly caught up with the little bastard Demi-Human.

In the next second, they charged through the thicket, only to be faced with the assault of a Heavy Armored Elephant and the appearance of dozens of tiny bastards unveiling themselves in front of it.

The Blood-eyed Minotaur's gaze moved across the tiny bastards standing behind the Heavy Armored Elephant. It roared out again, causing some of the human warriors to step back subconsciously.

They were struck by fear and couldn't stop themselves from shivering anymore.

Staring at the Blood-eyed Minotaur, they could only feel its uncontrollable desire to tear apart every single one of them.

The warriors were frozen in place. None of them was capable of resisting the fear that had surfaced from the deepest parts of their subconscious.

The Blood-eyed Minotaur was intelligent enough to notice this. It sensed the weak presence of the tiny bastards in front of it and made a sound that resembled a sneer.

These weaklings wanted to assassinate it? That had to be a joke!

The battle against the Horned Gem Jaguar might have drained its stamina rapidly, but that didn't mean it couldn't obliterate these tiny bastards.

They should have stayed home and practiced a bit more, instead of throwing themselves at a living inferno.

The Blood-eyed Minotaur was just about to get up from the ground when a loud and confident voice reverberated through the vicinity.

"Charge!!!"

A moment later, dozens of arrows and bolts rained down from the canopy above the Minotaur.

Simultaneously, the deep-rooted fear in the hearts of the Warriors seemed to disperse.

Their Lord had spoken.

It was time for war!

Chapter 142 Unique Racial Ability

The arrows pouring down from the canopy bridges hit their target precisely. The distance was not large enough to miss a target as large as the Blood-eyed Minotaur.

However, despite hitting the target, only a few arrows and bolts did any real damage. The bolts of the Aero Crossbowmen tore through the Minotaur's thick hide, and the Archer's arrows found their way through the cuts, claws, and bite marks from the Minotaur's earlier fights.

Michael's attack was one of the arrows that found its way through a claw mark on the Minotaur's chest. The arrow dug deep into the target's chest after which the tincture coating the arrow tip began to spread rapidly through the veins.

The tincture was a rather simple potion – even though it was made with expensive ingredients. It enhanced the sensitivity of the target's nerves more than tenfold.

In less than five minutes, the Blood-eyed Minotaur's sense of touch would be enhanced to the extreme, driving it to insanity whenever it came in contact with something.

It was not a poison and was often used in an attempt to help cripples regain their sense of touch and help improve the functioning of the nervous system of disabled patients, but it could also be used to drive his opponent to insanity.

Plan B, stalling for time, was executed, and everyone began to move.

Icarus and Iglisis dived down from the treetop above the Blood-eyed Minotaur. They impacted heavily and clawed at the Blood-eyed Minotaur in an attempt to injure it heavily. Following the distraction

caused by the two aerial combat units, the Water Elemental Mage and the Earth Mage worked together to pull the Blood-eyed Minotaur's legs underground.

Earth spikes shot out of the ground, piercing the Minotaur's armpits, while water ropes conjured all around the Minotaur. Most of the manifested water ropes coiled around the Minotaur's arms to restrict its movements. Meanwhile, the remaining water ropes shot toward the hand holding the battle-axe tightly.

The Mages tried to disarm the Minotaur while restricting its movements simultaneously and locking it in place. They stalled time for the close combat group to attack, and the long-range units to prepare their second and third barrage.

Meanwhile, Michael took his time to shoot one arrow after another. He coated a second arrow in the tincture prepared by the Master Alchemist and released the arrow. This time, however, his arrow impacted the Minotaur's left calf.

The Minotaur struggled to free its legs and escape being buried alive by the two Elemental Mages when an energy arrow pierced through the thick hide covering its left calf.

Its left calf was not injured but just scratched, however, the Siltang Bow, enhanced by Lesser Enhancement, could create enough force to further push the arrow through the Minotaur's hide. The arrow didn't dig deep through the Minotaur's calf, but that was not needed. Everything Michael desired was coming to fruition with the slow-spreading tincture prepared by the Master Alchemist.

Michael achieved his goal, which was also why he began to release one arrow after another to restrict the Minotaur's movements and distract it. His arrows targeted the Minotaur's throat, mouth, nose, eyes, and even ears.

One arrow after another was conjured and released through the Siltang Bow, and every single one of them hit their designated target.

Meanwhile, as Michael depleted the energy storage of the Siltang Bow, the other long-range units released their projectiles as well.

The close combat group waited patiently, hoping that their comrades could restrict the Blood-eyed Minotaur while inflicting lethal injuries. That way, the close combat group would have a higher chance of survival, and the terror induced by the Blood-eyed Minotaur would decrease drastically.

Every projectile that inflicted an injury, or worsened an existing wound, no matter how big or small, was a great deal. It meant that the Blood-eyed Minotaur would have a harder time dealing devastating damage once the close combat unit had to jump into action.

However, something was weird.

The Blood-eyed Minotaur seemed to be struggling to regain freedom and escape the attacks of the two Elemental Mages, but its attempts seemed lax and sluggish. It was almost as if the Blood-eyed Minotaur was not actually trying to escape the restrictions of the water ropes or sinking further into the ground.

It was a matter of fact that the injuries all over its body had increased. Michael's attacks alone were already enough to injure the Blood-eyed Minotaur severely. One of its ears had been pierced by an energy arrow, and one of its eyes had been damaged as well.

Why would the Blood-eyed Minotaur allow anyone to injure it to such an extent when it had the means to escape?

Michael frowned deeply. He jumped down from the canopy bridge and replaced the Siltang Bow with Seron Voulge. Simultaneously, the Onyx Dragon Armor Set covered his body.

Michael used Lesser Enhancement on all of his manifested Artifacts while rushing over to Tiara and the others, who approached the Blood-Eyed Minotaur slowly.

His perception heightened to the extreme, and his eyes and focus never left the Blood-eyed Minotaur.

Something was off, but Michael couldn't really tell what it was, at first. Only after he jumped down to the ground and approached the Minotaur did he slowly gain more insights into the situation.

At first, it looked like the Blood-eyed Minotaur's chest was coated in blood. While that may be true, it did not catch Michael's attention.

He noticed that the Blood-eyed Minotaur's hide was about to turn crimson!

'Is that Berserk? No...it shouldn't be...'

His complexion worsened and he paled. The highly intelligent Minotaur was a trickster. It used its fresh injuries and the blood covering its body to hide that it had almost finished transforming!

The sound of steam blowing off reached Michael's ears, and the sound made his brain rattle wildly. It was only after a few seconds that he realized what was about to happen.

"Fuck..."

He regained his senses the next second and shouted out aloud, "Get away from the Minotaur, immediately!!!!"

Michael's shrill voice rang through the surroundings, but it was already too late.

Some of his subjects reacted in time. They noticed that something was off the moment the Minotaur's body began to emit smoke. When its hide turned red they knew that all their preparations had missed out on considering one particular factor; Unique Racial Abilities.

Unfortunately, the realization came too late for some.

The Minotaur's bloody eyes shot wide open and it began to move. Smoke engulfed the monster's body, the water ropes quickly evaporated into thin air, and the Minotaur's legs stomped out of the crater it had been halfway buried into, ignoring the injuries spread all over its body.

The Blood-eyed Minotaur looked over to Michael for a second before it charged toward the closest Cavalry rider, its empty fist smashing downward, mercilessly crushing the Cavalry Rider's head.

However, the monster didn't stop at that.

No, it was just the beginning.

The Minotaur's fist continued to punch downward. And as a result, the Cavalry Rider's body was squashed and the spine of the Battlehorse beneath snapped as well.

Only when the miserable cry of the dying Battlehorse rang through the Untamed Jungle did the Minotaur's fist stop delivering lethal blows.

It looked over to Michael once again, its body covered with black smoke and bloody eyes staring menacingly at him.

And at that moment, Michael realized one thing with jarring clarity.

Hell was about to descend!!

Chapter 143 Burning Life

Monsters didn't have Unique Racial abilities under normal circumstances. Racial abilities were something only highly intelligent lifeforms could attain.

Even then, the chances of having one were extremely low. Humans, for example, weren't born with Unique Racial abilities. On the other hand, all Lionhearts were born with the innate ability to manifest and control flames.

But the Blood-eyed Minotaur was different. Even if the Blood-eyed Minotaur was on the same level as intelligent races, it shouldn't have been born with a Unique Racial ability!

That was why Michael and the others never thought that the Minotaur might have manifested a Unique Racial ability. At most, they had considered the possibility of the Minotaur going Berserk and thought of a few strategies but that was already it.

Berserk was a rare ability a Minotaur could use as long as it met certain requirements. However, Berserk was not an ability that initiated a transformation. It wouldn't change the color of the Minotaur's hide to a deadly crimson, or make the Minotaur's body exude black smoke.

The Unique Racial ability utilized by the Blood-eyed Minotaur was something different, it was something far more dangerous – something Michael and the others never expected to encounter while fighting the Minotaur.

Burning Life- a Unique Racial Ability that provides a tremendous amount of power if utilized properly.

It turned the injuries all over a berserker's body into power by depriving the user of his ability to sense pain. The more injured the user was, the more lethal the granted power, and the stronger the pain immunity.

At the same time, Burning Life turned overwhelmingly negative emotions such as pure hatred and wrath into power by combining the user's life force with the overflowing emotions before they would be converted into energy. The energy would be used to transform the user's body into an existence of immense power.

The Blood-eyed Minotaur exuded black smoke from all over its body as it looked menacingly at Michael. It expelled the tincture that had spread through its body and nullified its effect easily.

However, that was not something Michael could pay any attention to right now. The disfigured corpse of a Cavalry Rider was lying right next to the Blood-Eyed Minotaur. Blood was splattered everywhere, and the mashed head of the young Cavalry Rider fell to the ground with a thud.

The Blood-eyed Minotaur's menacing smile widened. It sneered and slashed the battle-axe at the dying Battlehorse, thrashing it viciously as more blood splattered through the surrounding area. However, neither Michael nor the Blood-eyed Minotaur paid any attention to that.

Michael dashed ahead with full speed and uncontrollable anger gleaming in his eyes.

Yet, before he could even cross a distance of more than five meters, the Blood-eyed Minotaur had already reacted. It tilted its battle-axe to squeeze it through the gap between the ground and the Battlehorse's corpse, lift it up, and used some strength to throw the brutally thrashed horse at Michael.

One moment, Michael was able to see the Blood-eyed Minotaur clearly, the next moment a severed horse shot toward him like a cannonball.

Michael had to move quickly. He dispersed Seron Voulge and dived to the side, and rolled on the ground to jump up again.

His head flicked to the Blood-eyed Minotaur's previous position and Seron Voulge manifested in his hands once again. However, the Blood-eyed Minotaur was gone.

Screams of terror and groans of pain to his right informed him about the Minotaur's new position. A group of Warriors and Vanguarders were fighting valiantly against the Minotaur. But before they knew it, their bodies were sliced apart and their intestines ripped out of their mangled bodies.

They collapsed to the ground and died miserably in the next following seconds. But the Minotaur didn't pay any more attention to them.

It was faced with the Heavy Armored Elephant, which charged at the Minotaur at full speed. The Minotaur was too late to twist the heavy battle-axe and behead the Heavy Armored Elephant. However, it could still react in time to not get brutally injured.

The Minotaur released its battle-axe and grasped the Heavy Armored Elephant's tusks, accepting the charge head-on.

The 13-ton-heavy Elephant slammed its body hard upon its opponent, pushing the Blood-eyed Minotaur a few steps backward. But the Heavy Armored Elephant couldn't overpower the Minotaur anymore. Instead, the Heavy Armored Elephant's charge was forcefully slowed down.

Tiny, spider web-like cracks spread across the Heavy Armored Elephant's sturdy tusks as the Blood-eyed Minotaur utilized more of the strength that coursed through its bulging muscles to halt the charge of the Heavy Armored Elephant forcefully.

The power surging through the Blood-eyed Minotaur after it used Burning Life was terrifying. It was high enough to show everyone in Michael's army how powerful a Tier-2 Monster could be.

The Minotaur threw the Heavy Armored Elephant aside and was about to use its battle-axe to slice the Elephant apart when it realized that its weapon had disappeared. It faintly recalled having let go of it, but the battle-axe was nowhere to be seen.

And now it saw a woman covered in whitish-silver fur standing where the battle-axe should have been lying. A long striped tail swished behind the woman as she spun a silver spear around her body. She moved with grace, and it seemed like she was not serious at all. But the wild pressure she radiated, and the energy surging through her body indicated the opposite.

Tiara was one of the first to realize the transformation of the Blood-eyed Minotaur, but she couldn't do anything to stop it from occurring. They didn't expect the Minotaur to be able to use Burning Life.

It was nobody's fault.

Unfortunately, that didn't mean the corpses would regain their vigor and stand up again.

The soldiers, whom she had trained for weeks, had been killed with a single attack. She couldn't even react in time to block the Minotaur's battle axe as it arced through the air, cutting armor, flesh, and bones like a hot knife slicing through butter.

Even if she had been able to react in time, she wouldn't have been able to block the attack. Instead, Tiara would have turned into another corpse.

It was their great fortune that the Heavy Armored Elephant charged at the Minotaur fearlessly and that the Minotaur let go of the battle-axe at the same time. This allowed Tiara to act swiftly, pick up the battle-axe and store it inside her War Rune's storage space. Then, she initiated Plan G and activated her Soultraits.

Now was not the time to hesitate anymore.

Her physique and presence changed the moment she activated her Soultriats. Bloodlust glinted brightly in her eyes, and her wild instincts surfaced. Slowly, she lost control of her reasoning and rationality. The only thought left in her mind was her uncontrollable desire to tear apart the Minotaur.

Everyone was struck with fear when the Minotaur killed several warriors and two Vanguard's with a single slash. However, now that Tiara made her move, the warriors regained some of their wavering confidence.

They began to move as well and surrounded the Blood-eyed Minotaur.

Even if it was terrifyingly powerful, Burning Life should have increased its Agility and Strength in exchange for terrifyingly high consumption of energy, Stamina, and a decrease in its defense.

The Minotaur's body was searing hot and so was the black smoke the monster exuded, but it still had several injuries all over its body. No matter how resistant one was to pain, if the body was on the brink of destruction due to too many lethal injuries, one would collapse.

The Minotaur was still a living being, and not a machine, after all!

Michael was also on the move, and so was everyone else. The Archers and Crossbowmen released their projectiles in an attempt to worsen the Minotaur's injuries, but the searing hot black smoke repelled most projectiles.

Meanwhile, the Earth Mage and the Water Elemental Mages began to move as well. They began chanting the incantation for their higher-ranked Spells.

The Berserker and Knights stepped forward as well. They stood by Tiara's side and waited patiently next to their Commander to charge forward into the battle once the command rang out.

Fear glimmered in their eyes, and they could barely control their trembling bodies, but they were ready.

Tiara bent down to the ground, the finger bones of one of her hands cracking as claws grew out of the tips of her fingers. They dug deep into the ground in front of her as she looked up at her opponent.

Tiara lowered her body closer to the ground, imitating the stance of a ferocious tiger, while pressing the silver spear against her side.

The Minotaur reciprocated her movements. It lowered its head, its hooves pawing across the wet soil.

Then the two ferocious opponents charged at each other.

Chapter 144 Tigress Tiara

Burning Life was a terrifyingly strong Unique Racial ability, but it came with severe repercussions as well.

Activating Burning Life would put the user in a weakened state. The weakened state would be proportional to the increase in strength Burning Life had provided when it was still in effect.

Despite the weakened effect, the power Burning Life could provide was terrifying.

The Blood-eyed Minotaur gained enough brute strength to stop the Heavy Armored Elephant's charge and throw it to the side using its bare hands and brute force.

But even an existence with such a terrifying brute strength couldn't get hold of Tiara!

The Battle Maid from the Silverfang Tigerfolk had transformed into a ferocious and nimble Tiger-like existence. Faint strands of hair had grown all over her skin. It was silverish-white and looked like fur. Her eyes had turned into the sharp eyes of a tiger, and Michael could swear that he heard the sound of breaking bones from Tiara's direction.

She moved around nimbly, using her unique movement patterns, with which some of them were already familiar – including Michael.

In one moment, Tiara dashed to the left at full speed, the next moment something burst out from within her, allowing Tiara to change her trajectory without losing the slightest bit of momentum. The way she could leverage the ability to move around and change her trajectory without losing momentum allowed her to evade the attacks of the superior Minotaur.

The Blood-Eyed Minotaur was twice as fast, maybe even faster, and much stronger after it used Burning Life. Despite that, the Minotaur was not able to get hold of Tiara.

This was not only owed to Tiara's impeccable movement pattern and unique powers, but mostly thanks to the combined efforts of the Elemental Mages, and everyone else present.

Everyone tried to aid Tiara to stall for more time. Every second counted while they thought of a way to kill the mighty beast!

Michael appeared next to her at one point as well. He knew that he was not really helpful, but he could still utilize the Spirit Whip Soultrait. Spirit Whip, strengthened with Lesser Enhancement, could cause considerable damage. Despite not being as lethal as a 1-Star Soultrait with low consumption, Michael didn't underestimate the power Spirit Whip could generate.

He conjured five Spirit Whips simultaneously and intertwined them to create one big Spirit Whip. Each Spirit Whip was strengthened by Lesser Enhancement, which further increased the power of the braided Spirit Whip he had created.

The Spirit Whip lashed out several times. The impact was hard and it weighed heavily on the Blood-eyed Minotaur. It struggled for a moment, which provided the other combatants an opportunity to strike. Everyone in the close combat unit had already surrounded the Blood-eyed Minotaur, and they struck their opponent from all sides now.

Michael initiated an attack with Seron Voulge as well. He was the second strongest warrior in the territory, and his attack should be able to deliver considerable damage.

If it was yesterday, Michael would have been confident to announce that he was the strongest in his territory. He had four Soultraits, and three of them could be used for combat. Even though Tiara's

degree of refinement was higher than Michael's, he had been certain that he could overpower her using his Soultraits.

Unfortunately, that turned out to be nothing more than a daydream. Michael realized at last that Tiara was much stronger than he thought – she had never revealed her full power before.

Her combat prowess was even higher than it had been when they fought the Lionheart Adventurer group.

Michael was certain that she had given her all in that fight, yet the power she exuded in front of the Blood-eyed Minotaur was clearly stronger.

'Who the hell are you?' Michael shouted in his mind, confused and unsure why his personal maid was so powerful and mysterious.

With no time to think about something else than the fight ahead, Michael's Seron Voulge pierced through the smoking crimson hide of the Blood-eyed Minotaur. He cut deeply, twisted the blade in the wound, and pulled out his blade the next moment.

Afterward, he retreated immediately. The Blood-eyed Minotaur might have been affected by the braided Spirit Whip, and Tiara's relentless distraction, but the Minotaur was neither weak nor stupid.

Michael feared that the Minotaur would do something crafty once too many people dared to get into its range.

His fear couldn't be more true.

The moment more than ten people reached the Blood-eyed Minotaur's range, it shot to the side, both arms lunging forward like vicious pythons. One hand grasped a Warrior's head, while the other hand grabbed the Berserker's chest.

The head was squashed mercilessly while the Berserker was used as a projectile. The Minotaur flung the Berserker across the battlefield and it smacked hard against a few Warriors, who were clearly too slow to react in time.

And just like that five combatants were rendered unable to continue fighting but the Minotaur was not yet done.

The moment the Blood-eyed Minotaur began to move again, chaos descended onto the battlefield. Several Warriors charged fearlessly at the monstrosity, but it didn't even cast a sideward glance at the oncoming attackers.

The Minotaur clenched its fists and executed several high-velocity punches. The Warriors slumped down like sacs of potatoes and didn't even twitch forget about getting up and attacking it.

"PRIESTESS, get moving!!" Michael shouted at the top of his lungs.

The young Priestess had yet to move since the Blood-eyed Minotaur began wreaking havoc, and Michael couldn't leave her like that anymore. She was a Priestess, someone who was supposed to help the injured and prevent unnecessary deaths.

She may only be a young Priestess without much experience, but she was a 2-Star Summon, and they had various potions at their disposal. As long as she did not freeze in shock and began moving, many lives could be saved from the Grim Reaper's merciless soul-reaping scythe.

Michael's gaze lingered on the Priestess for a moment. That was all she took to start moving. The hair all over her body stood up on its end but she still ran straight towards the Berserker and the Warriors, whom she appraised and tended to.

Meanwhile, Michael saw their 2-Star Summoner for the first time since the battle began. The Summoner had been chanting summoning spells for a few minutes straight by now. Sweat trickled down his tanned face and his back was drenched in cold sweat as well.

'How much longer do you need?' Michael wanted to shout aloud, but he held back.

The Summoner had already announced that his summoning incarnation would need his full attention and several minutes. He wanted to summon a Tier-1 Monster and require every bit of attention to do so. After all, he was only a Late Tier-0 Summoner right now.

Controlling a Tier-1 Monster wasn't that easy!

Michael was not sure how a single Tier-1 Monster would help them against the Minotaur, but the confidence in the Summoner's eyes at that time told him that he could trust his subject.

'Hurry up and show me how strong you are, Summoner!' Michael shouted in his mind.

He turned back to the battlefield and rushed forward. A braided Spirit Whip appeared in front of him again, and it lashed out at the Blood-eyed Minotaur the moment he reached its range.

The second Spirit Whip attack was less efficient than before. It looked like the Blood-eyed Minotaur was prepared this time to deflect it.

Its arms shot toward Tiara, who evaded the attacks easily. The Blood-eyed Minotaur knew that it couldn't catch Tiara that easily. Thus, its attack was merely a feint.

It shot to the right, grasped two Spearmen, and smashed their hands against each other.

Their skulls cracked and blood gushed out like a fountain.

Chapter 145 Chaos

Tiara was trying her best to distract the Blood-eyed Minotaur, but the intelligent monster had already taken note of her attempts. It used Tiara as a plaything to make it seem as if it was fully focused on her while the exact opposite was actually the case.

The Blood-eyed Minotaur focused on Michael, his mental attacks, and the other ant-like opponents.

The Spearmen, Warriors, and other 1-Star Summons weren't even worth its attention. Only Michael and Tiara were at Tier-1. Thus, nobody would be capable of inflicting injuries on a 2-Star Monster like the Blood-eyed Minotaur.

However, that was actually what was happening right now.

The Blood-eyed Minotaur couldn't feel the pain caused by the minor injuries they inflicted, but it could clearly sense the resistance of its hide when the sharp blades and projectiles impacted upon its body, and its flesh stopping the advance of the minority of attacks strong enough to pierce its hide.

Fueled with anger and frustration, the Blood-Eyed Minotaur began to slaughter the lowly ants that were daring enough to approach.

Tiara fought with the Minotaur with all her might, and the others tried to help her desperately. But it was useless.

The Warriors were picked up like toys and torn apart with brute force, or flung through the air, crashing into others or the trees like cannonballs.

The damage caused by the Minotaur's basic attacks was already extremely terrifying, yet it looked like the Blood-eyed Minotaur was just getting started.

A single attack could injure several combatants severely, or kill an individual quickly. It was terrifying.

The Priestess did her best to contain herself, but she was shocked to the core. In the years she had lived as a young Elite Priestess, she had seen many bad things, but even she felt at a loss when one of the Assassins was impaled by one of the Blood-eyed Minotaur's horns and pulled through the air.

The Assassin's horrified screams echoed through her ears as she – and everyone else on the battlefield – witnessed how their comrade was flung around and slowly torn apart from the insides.

The Minotaur didn't even seem to realize that it had impaled the Assassin as it continued to fling its head around and throw its fists. The Assassin's insides were slowly torn apart as the gaping hole in the

young man's chest widened. At one point, his horrified screams grew more and more muffled and silent until they were no more.

The Assassin stopped moving completely. He was dead.

Yet, even after the Assassin died, the Blood-eyed Minotaur didn't seem to notice anything. It attacked the nearest opponent, whose head it squashed like a watermelon. The next opponent was torn apart mid-air, and another was flung through the air like a deadweight.

At last, Michael's subjects stopped and nobody dared to approach the Blood-eyed Minotaur anymore to fight head-on. But that did not mean they had given up already. The Water Elemental Mage had combined her spell with the Earth Elemental Mage to create a mud field around the Minotaur's hooves.

It restricted the Minotaur's movements and speed, but the effectiveness was not exceptional.

Icarus and Iglisis attacked the Blood-eyed Minotaur from behind. Their dive was sudden and their acceleration terrific.

The Blood-eyed Minotaur noticed them but the Elemental Mages controlled their mud-field spell precisely. They released two pillars of mud from the ground. The pillar engulfed the Minotaur's arms, slowing down the monster effectively.

Utilizing the opportunity, Icarus' talons pierced through the Minotaur's damaged left eye, drawing a line of blood, while Iglisis pierced his shortwords deep into the Blood-eyed Minotaur's back.

A flood of black smoke burst out of the Minotaur's body when Iglisis' swords pierced his back, and a terrifying roar reverberated through the vicinity. The weakest combatants lost their ability to move and breathe as the roar seemed to shake the deepest parts of their souls.

For a moment, they weren't sure if their territory could overcome this ordeal.

Their death seemed to be inching towards them with every passing second, creeping closer to deliver the final blow.

The black smoke burned some of Iglisis and Icarus' feathers, forcing them to retreat immediately.

One of Iglisis' wings caught fire and began to smoke, but they extinguished the likelihood of a Demi-human getting burned to a crisp at once with a flood of water splashing all over Iglisis' body as he returned to the canopy bridge.

The temperature in the Minotaur's vicinity increased drastically as the black smoke engulfed the Blood-eyed Minotaur like a second layer of hide.

Overflowing with rage and power, the Blood-eyed Minotaur demolished the mud pillars. Meanwhile, the sodden mud field around its feet dried up, returning the Minotaur's movements and speed back to its peak.

In fact, the Blood-eyed Minotaur seemed faster than before. Its hooves kicked the ground and it shot toward the closest enemy at once.

The monster's armor had long since disappeared – fallen to the ground after its armor burned to a cinder – exposing the rippling muscles all over the Minotaur's body.

It appeared in front of Tiara, who was the only one left in its range – other than Michael. However, instead of attacking it with its fists and attempting to defeat her with a single attack, the Blood-eyed Minotaur slowed down and tried to catch her first.

After fighting Tiara for a while, it had realized that the young member of the Silverfang Tigerfolk was nimble, in perfect control of her body, and that the Tigress possessed a unique power with which she could execute unique movement patterns and change her direction with a terrifying speed.

The Blood-eyed Minotaur was intelligent enough to come up with a different tactic to deal with Tiara. It was overflowing with wrath and clearly influenced by the rage and power surging through its veins, but the Monster could still follow the simple tactic of catching her opponent before tearing her apart.

Tiara noticed the change in the Minotaur's strategy the moment it slowed down. She reacted at once and closed in. Her silver spear shimmered brightly, reflecting the afternoon sunlight straight into the unscathed eye of the Minotaur.

The Minotaur instinctively shut its eyes close and backed off while one of its arms shot forward to shield its vision from the blinding light. However, it was already too late. A barrage of arrows whizzed through the air, and most of them found their designated target. A handful of them were repelled, but a few pierced through the layer of black smoke and the crimson hide beneath.

Following that, Michael, the Berserkers, and the Knights appeared around the Blood-eyed Minotaur. They issued various attacks and hacked at the black smoke protection layer before they could reach the Minotaur's hide and flesh.

Michael was the closest to the Minotaur so it heard him and kicked in his direction. However, Michael twisted his body at such an awkward angle that his bones creaked but he managed to avoid turning into the Minotaur's plaything.

The Minotaur's leg missed Michael by a hair's breadth, but Michael didn't even realize that anymore.

Seron Voulge pierced forward, digging the lengthy blade deep into one of the many wounds all over the Minotaur's chest.

He twisted the blade inside the Minotaur, and pulled it down with all his might, worsening the injury tremendously.

The Minotaur didn't feel any pain, yet it stared menacingly at him when it opened its eyes.

'You don't like that, huh?' Michael thought to himself before driving the blade deeper into the Minotaur's body.

But even then, the Minotaur didn't move.

It even turned its head to look at one of his hands.

Subconsciously, Michael's head turned to his left as well, and his eyes widened in terror.

Tiara was dangling in the Minotaur's grasp, clawing the Minotaur in a desperate attempt to free herself.

Chapter 146 Vengeful

At last, the Blood-eyed Minotaur did it. It caught Tiara just before retreating.

The dazzling reflection of the silver spear hadn't been enough to force the Minotaur to give up.

The black smoke engulfing the Minotaur burned Tiara's fur as she continued to viciously claw the Minotaur.

She began to scream like a trapped beast, blood spurting out of her nose and ears, and her eyes turned bloody red.

'Fuck fuck fuck!!!' Michael screamed in his mind. He pulled out the Seron Voulge, ready to use every bit of strength inside his body to sever the Minotaur's hand holding Tiara. However, Seron Voulge got stuck the next moment.

The Minotaur's other hand grasped Seron Voulge tightly while staring at Michael in amusement.

It had been consumed with anger, and the desire to kill, but at this moment, the Minotaur's entire being felt a sense of amusement.

Seeing the reaction of the young man, and watching him struggle as he put more strength in the hand holding the Tigress filled him with a new feeling, something he hadn't felt while destroying the Tier-2 Monster habitats – excitement.

Watching the young man's struggle excited the Minotaur. It made him want to see more of his despair and to be able to watch the young man's crumbling confidence and expression as he witnessed the

desperate struggles of the Tigress and force him to see the spark of life leaving her eyes while he watched helplessly, unable to do anything.

But, Michael was not going to let that happen, not when he could still breathe. He instinctively dematerialized Seron Voulge, inched closer to the Minotaur, and jumped high up in the air.

With his muscles coiled and his heart beating wildly, he shot up. Michael's target was the Minotaur's unscathed eye. He hoped that the Minotaur would react instinctively and protect its last unharmed eye. After all, it was fated to die the moment it lost both of its eyes. And when that happened, Michael and his people could retreat, wait for the Burning Life ability to wear off, and slaughter the blind monster in its weakened state.

But Michael miscalculated something. He didn't expect the Minotaur to stare at him and smash its iron-like skull downward. It headbutted Michael, not with full force, but with a force strong enough to make him dizzy and make sure that he wouldn't be able to do anything about what happened next.

Michael felt like his skull was about to burst when the Minotaur headbutted him. His sight blurred for a few seconds and his mind went totally blank.

The last thing he remembered was that he smashed hard on the ground and blood was pouring down his face.

As he regained his composure several seconds later, Michael's head flicked upward. The Knights and Berserker had been pushed away. Some of their bones were broken, rendering them incapable of continuing the fight against the Minotaur.

However, none of them was dead.

The Minotaur felt it was high on adrenaline that was pumping in its body while watching Michael's fear and desperation. It wanted to see him struggle more, watch him as he slowly lost his sanity at the death of his precious comrades and subjects.

'Fucking piece of shit!' Michael screamed in his mind.

He unleashed the braided Spirit Whip in its strongest form and whipped the Minotaur several times. The Minotaur responded by further tightening its grip over Tiara. She was scrambling against its body, trying to kick and claw while gasping for air. A pain-driven squeal was all she could issue at this moment. Her movements were weak and all it required was a little bit more strength to break her neck. Yet, the Minotaur didn't move. It watched Michael as he struggled to get up from the ground.

'They suffered enough...I...I cannot...'

Michael's mind was a mess. His head felt like it was on the verge of exploding and his vision was blurred. Blood covered his right eye and he could hardly move.

However, he couldn't give up. If he allowed the Minotaur to keep killing his people, it wouldn't be over with Tiara. Tiara was just the beginning.

Michael knew that he shouldn't allow the Minotaur to keep going, but he was too weak.

Just as Michael thought Tiara was taking her last breath, a terrifying scream rang through the surrounding area.

The scream made Michael's skin prickle with nervousness. It was filled with emotions and felt oddly weird when it reached Michael as if it didn't belong to this realm.

The scream originated from behind them, from the Summoner's location.

At last, the summoning circle had been completed, and a haunting figure had emerged out of it.

A monster, mantled in darkness and clad in tattered, blackened robes was now standing in front of them. Its eyes, hollow and malevolent, cast an eerie light on the bloody battlefield, while its semi-translucent skeletal hands stretched out toward the sky.

Floating above the ground and exuding frosty, vengeful energy, the haunting figure seemed to be silencing all the sound around itself.

As the haunting figure passed through the battlefield, a heavy gloom descended, and the atmosphere seemed to be screaming in terror and fright as ripples of energy could be seen with the bare eye.

It seemed ethereal, distorting, and warping, as if caught between dimensions, unable to ascend into the afterlife, and banished from the mortal realms at the same time.

The haunting figure, a Vengeful Ghost, represented the torment of the soul. Draped in darkness, it infused a sense of despair in the skin, flesh, and bones of those, who were brave, or stupid enough to stare at it.

'Oh my...' Michael nearly screamed aloud as he recognized the existence the Summoner had manifested.

A Vengeful Ghost, and an existence without a physical body. An existence that was far from being alive, but unable to leave the physical world due to the hatred and resentment that had corrupted its soul.

Fighting such an existence unprepared would lead to the loss of sanity, at best, and the loss of one's soul in the worst case.

Such an existence ended up summoned and subdued, fighting on their side, against the Minotaur.

Even though the Summoner couldn't keep the Vengeful Ghost for a long time in the Origin Expanse, a short period was all they needed!

The Summoner commanded the Vengeful Ghost to attack the Minotaur, which it did immediately.

As the Vengeful Ghost shot through the air like a semi-translucent bolt of lightning, the Minotaur felt danger approaching rapidly towards itself.

The sense of danger was intense and affected the Minotaur's mind immediately.

Michael's danger senses were tingling as well, but he trusted his subject and hoped that the Vengeful Ghost was completely under the Summoner's control.

He manifested several braided Spirit Whips and lashed out simultaneously.

The Vengeful Ghost appeared above the Minotaur the next moment, and its gloomy pressure immediately affected the Minotaur, who was already in pain.

Burning Life fueled its anger and physical strength but didn't enhance the Minotaur's mental power. In fact, it weakened the Minotaur's willpower in exchange for the power the Unique Racial Ability granted.

The Minotaur responded quickly. It let go of Tiara and kicked fiercely.

Now that Tiara couldn't satisfy him anymore, keeping her alive was of no meaning.

Michael saw the glint in the Minotaur's eyes and responded by pure instinct. He jumped ahead, took Tiara in his embrace, and held her tightly. Simultaneously, he unleashed the full power of his protection enchantment and strengthened both the protection of his Artifacts and the protection enchantments with Lesser Enhancement.

Yet, even after doing everything he could to protect himself, Michael felt as if his entire body was breaking apart the moment the Minotaur's kick impacted.

At last, Michael thought he heard the sound of cracking bones.

The next moment he was flung through the air before he could launch a counterattack.

Meanwhile, the Minotaur began to struggle against the Vengeful Ghost.

Chapter 147 Escape

Michael and Tiara were flung through the air and crashed hard against a nearby tree.

His breath hitched, and Michael gasped for air while also trying to ignore the pain that spread through his entire body.

He opened his eyes wide and looked at Tiara. Her neck was bruised and she had difficulties breathing. She was weak and her body was shivering as he held onto her tightly.

'She's still alive...good,' Michael thought, sighing in relief.

He got up from the ground with some difficulty and picked her up from the ground.

His eyes flicked once to the Minotaur, who was struggling against the Vengeful Ghost's spiritual attacks, and briefly held the Priestess' gaze.

"Make sure she survives!" Michael ordered sternly before manifesting the Siltang Bow once again.

Since the Vengeful Ghost was playing the role of an immortal vanguard, Michael didn't have to approach the Minotaur to deal more damage.

He used bits of energy to conjure an arrow before he drew back the bowstring. With no pressure around him, Michael had enough time to aim precisely before he released the arrow.

The arrow made a beautiful arc through the air before it hit its target. It pierced the Minotaur's chest – exactly where Michael's Seron Voulge had caused considerable damage.

The other Archers, the Crossbowmen, and the Mages released one projectile after another to attack the Minotaur, slowly wearing down their opponent.

It may not be able to feel pain, but it could still bleed to death.

Overflowing with adrenaline, Michael could ignore the pain all over his body as well. He was tired and a mess, but he knew that he couldn't stop before the Minotaur died. It had to be defeated – today.

After the Vengeful Ghost had been summoned to the Origin Expanse for exactly 150 seconds, it screamed out loudly. It turned to the pale Summoner and screamed in anger and resentment. The next moment, it disappeared, just like the summoning circle that brought the Vengeful Ghost to the Origin Expanse.

Michael's first reaction was a deep frown. Now that the Vengeful Ghost was no more, they had nobody to use as a vanguard against the Minotaur.

However, it was at the same instance that Michael noticed something about the Minotaur.

'Is it emitting less black smoke than before?' He first mused to himself, until the realization struck him hard, 'Brown hide!!'

The Minotaur's crimson hide was slowly reverting back to its original brown color! Meanwhile, the black smoke was about to disperse completely.

Burning Life's effect had worn off, and the Blood-eyed Minotaur was about to enter a weakened state!

Coincidentally, both Michael and the Blood-eyed Minotaur noticed at the same time that its Burning Life ability completely wore off.

Slowly, the sensation of pain returned – and the Minotaur felt like it was burning in hell. It had sustained hundreds of minor, and dozens of serious injuries during the last ten minutes, but the pain reached the Minotaur in its full force only now.

The moment it noticed that its immense power had been drained, and pain spread through every cell in its body, the Minotaur threw a last glance at Michael.

Afterward, it turned around and ran with all its might.

The brutal monstrosity, which had traumatized everyone on the battlefield, fled. It ran for its dear life instead of attacking them!

Michael couldn't really believe it either. He stared blankly at the departing Minotaur, his eyes shot wide open in shock.

He spent a second or two regaining his composure. His eyes moved across the battlefield, and he clenched his fists tightly.

Everyone was either drained, in a state of shock, injured with broken bones as the lightest injuries, or they were dead. Nobody was full of energy at this point.

However, Michael knew that he shouldn't allow the Minotaur to escape, recuperate and return. Too many loyal subjects had valiantly fought to wear down the Minotaur, and Michael didn't want to repeat the same procedure once again. It would be a great loss to let the Minotaur flee like this.

"Good job, everyone. Tend to your wounds, and help your comrades. Don't let anyone die!" Michael commanded as loud as he could before he turned over to Icarus.

The Greater Eagle sensed his gaze, and it subconsciously dived down from the canopy bridge.

"Let's follow the Minotaur. We'll finish it for good!" Michael said as he jumped up on Icarus' back.

Icarus was also traumatized due to the Minotaur's great combat prowess and terrifying brute force, but it could also tell that the Minotaur's presence weakened considerably after its hide reverted to its original color.

He screeched loudly in agreement and shot through the air. They tore through the canopy of trees and reached the sky. Both subconsciously stared into the sky to make sure that there was no mythical serpent waiting for them before Icarus dashed in the direction the Minotaur had run off.

It might have been a subconscious decision, but the Minotaur charged straight outside the Untamed Jungle. Michael and Icarus had a hard time pinpointing the Minotaur's exact location through the canopy of trees, but flying high up in the air was the easiest way to pursue the Minotaur silently.

In fact, the Minotaur couldn't afford to pay any attention to potential pursuers in its current state. It was already on the verge of death, and it was only a matter of time until it would bleed to death – if nobody was to tend to its wounds.

The Blood-eyed Minotaur continued to run even after it broke through the thicket of the Untamed Jungle. It reached the plains bordering the Untamed Jungle and continued running. The weakened Minotaur slowed down with every minute that passed, but it never stopped running.

Half an hour after it reached the plains, Michael noticed something further ahead. He had been following the weakened Minotaur from above and would have continued to do so, if not for the ripples of energy spreading through the area in front of him.

The ripples were hard to perceive, but they were there. Michael didn't dare to order Icarus to fly through the ripples at first. Yet, when he saw the Minotaur pass through the energy ripples and disappear suddenly, he began to understand something.

'Invisible Dome?' He mused before he dared to test it out. He pushed one of his hands through the energy ripples, only to see that his hand seemed to have disappeared.

Michael retracted his hand, and he could see it again.

Driven by curiosity, and the desire to kill the weakened Minotaur, Michael ordered Icarus to fly through the energy ripples.

They passed through the energy ripples and disappeared from the plains – or so it seemed for everyone outside the barrier.

'It's just like an invisible dome, but it feels different. There is no device empowering the barrier.' Michael noted after he passed through the invisibility barrier. The barrier felt eerily natural. It was certainly different from an artificially manifested dome of protection.

In fact, it felt similar to the protection barrier given to Rookie Lords. The effects of the barriers were different but they both felt and looked very natural.

It was very interesting, but even more so were the three tents on the ground, and the fact that six Adventurers were standing around the weakened Blood-eyed Minotaur.

'Found you, bastards!!'

Chapter 148 Mission

Michael had to use his entire willpower to control himself.

Seeing the Adventurers standing around the weakest Minotaur made his blood boil. He instinctively knew that they were on the same side as the Minotaur.

The Monster collapsed on the ground the moment it saw the six Adventurers as if finally relieved to be with them..

Michael wanted to retrieve the Siltang Bow and shoot them all, but he knew that he shouldn't do that, not yet at least. He didn't know if the six Adventurers were the only perpetrators, or if there were more of them somewhere else.

Additionally, Michael had yet to find out why the Adventurers used the Minotaur to invade the Untamed Jungle, in the first place. The Minotaur massacred the Tier-2 Monster habitats, but it never paid attention to their corpses.

Plundering the Untamed Jungle didn't seem to be their final goal. In that case, what did they want?

Michael's head was buzzing as Icarus circled above the tents. He shook his head and Michael closed his eyes to concentrate. Next, he circulated origin energy through his ears and used Lesser Enhancement in an attempt to increase his hearing sense as well.

"Didn't you say that the Minotaur would be strong enough to finish the mission? Why to Kanekul's beard is the Minotaur in such a state then?!" One of the six Adventurers, a Destors, asked loudly.

Destors were a very emotional race. They were driven by their emotions and couldn't control themselves properly. They were purple-skinned and had scales on their bodies which they could control at their will. Destors were born with great physical strength and two pairs of arms. They were larger than humans but had a similar physique.

"Calm down, will you? Control your energy barrier, and keep your mouth shut while I stop the Minotaur's internal bleeding," The only Zantur in the group of six Adventurers said sharply.

He broke into a sweat while utilizing his Soultrait to tend to the weakened Minotaur's internal wounds.

Fortunately, the Destors didn't say anything else. He kept his mouth shut as told even if his eyes seemed to be shooting lasers at the Zantur.

"It lost its Battle-axe and the Armor Set as well. Looks like it encountered something much stronger than we researched," A woman added. She was the only female in the group, and also a Destors.

The group of Adventurers consisted of six people- two Destors, one Zantur, one Jeglaw, and two more Lionhearts.

However, there was a distinct difference between the two Lionhearts and the rest. They didn't say anything about the Minotaur's condition. Instead, one of them looked impatiently at the group of four Adventurers, while the other one glanced at his brethren every few seconds.

It looked like some silent communication had occurred between them through their gazes.

"What are we even doing here? We're just wasting our time and resources..." The Jeglaw suddenly said out loud. He looked at the Minotaur and shook his head in denial.

It hadn't been easy to raise the Minotaur, forget about the training and equipment.

"Shut up, and do what you've been paid for!" One of the Lionhearts growled.

'They don't seem like a team. Are the Lionhearts their clients? No, the Lionheart on the left is being subjected to glares by the others even though it was the Lionheart on the right who's acting aloof!' Michael comprehended, his eyes now open and staring intently at the group.

He had activated Eagle Eyes to get a good look at the six adventurers on the ground, and he grew quite interested.

According to his understanding, the male Destors was in charge of the invisibility barrier. It was probably related to his Soultrait. On the other hand the Zantur possessed a healing Soultrait. The female Destors was more concerned about the lost armaments, and there wasn't much to figure out about the Jeglaw.

The Jeglaw wielded a wand and was probably some sort of a Mage with a related Soultrait.

Only the timid Lionheart seemed to care about the Minotaur's well-being.

'Is he a Tamer? He is timid, but his War Rune has the highest degree of refinement. His War Rune is being refined right now as well. Did he obtain a large influx of energy recently? But there are no monsters near—....' Michael was deep in thought when he recalled something Heran, the Lesser Tamer, told him a while ago.

[Some Tamers are extremely powerful because of the bond they can create with their tamed monsters. It is said that they receive a small portion of their tamed monster's energy influx when it kills a monster!]

Heran's words kept echoing through his mind repetitively. At first, the words didn't seem to be related to the current situation, and Michael was about to disperse them. But the realization struck him before he could disperse these thoughts.

His expression worsened drastically, and pure hatred emerged in them. He was on the verge of bursting apart.

'That bastard is using the energy share left behind by my subjects to refine his War Rune!!!'

Ordinary Monsters weren't able to absorb the energy influx released by the lifeforms they killed of the Origin Expanse. They had a Monster Core in which they could absorb the raw origin energy in their surroundings. The energy influx was too pure for the vast majority of monsters. However, tamed Monsters were slightly different.

Michael had noticed that to be the case with the Heavy Armored Elephant and Icarus. Whenever Icarus killed a monster, Icarus's Monster Core received a small portion of the energy influx. Simultaneously, Michael received his energy share through their Link of Loyalty.

The same seemed to apply to the timid Lionheart and the Blood-eyed Minotaur. The Minotaur grew stronger by massacring the Tier-2 Monster habitats, and the Lionheart received a small energy share through their link as its Tamer.

That also meant the Lionheart used the energy share the Minotaur had procured from killing Michael's subjects. That thought made him lose his mind. He wanted to jump down to the ground and beat the shit out of the Lionheart.

However, he held back knowing that he had to gather more information first.

'The aggressive Lionheart mentioned 'pay'. Did he hire them to attack the Tier-2 Monster habitats? If so, why would he do that?'

None of the five Adventurers dared to say anything after their pay was mentioned, and the information Michael could gather was negligible.

He found out that the five Adventurers were a team that had formed only recently. They weren't strong by any means, yet their Soultriats complemented each other. All they needed was a powerful force amidst them to tie them all together. This core turned out to be the Blood-eyed Minotaur, who was now in a weakened state.

'If you guys are unwilling to provide more information...I won't be able to hold back anymore...' Michael told himself, holding onto the last strands of willpower to restrict himself.

However, his entire being was filled with pain and agony. When two more Links of Loyalty tore apart – indicating the death of two more loyal subjects – Michael finally snapped.

He couldn't control his rage anymore.

Michael retrieved a bunch of potions, which he consumed at once. He then manifested the Siltang Bow Artifact in his hand and condensed an energy arrow. Afterward, Lesser Enhancement came into effect, enhancing his Artifacts considerably.

Michael didn't have much energy left in his body, but he couldn't care less about that at this point. The only thought that permeated his mind was the desire to kill the Minotaur and the other perpetrators to quell his anger and avenge his subjects.

By now, the reasons why they attacked the Untamed Jungle didn't matter anymore. His people died because of those jerks, and they didn't deserve to stay alive even for a minute.

Their fate was sealed, and he was going to deliver it to them, once and for all.

Chapter 149 Senator

Nobody had taken notice of Michael and Icarus even after they had been circling above them for quite a while now.

The Adventurers beneath them were too focused on listening to their client and tending to the wounds of the weakened Blood-eyed Minotaur.

Michael knew that the element of surprise was on his side, and he made full use of that.

He planned his attack within seconds and started right after by drawing the bowstring back. The first arrow was released in the next second.

After the first arrow was released, Michael had to move fast. He released several arrows in quick succession while Icarus dived down to the ground.

Surprised by the sudden attack, the Adventurers were just a moment too late to react. The Zantur and the Jeglaw had already been hit in their chest and eye when the others stared upward in confusion to see Michael and Icarus dive down.

By the time they manifested their weapons, the female Destors had already been killed.

Icarus smashed into the ground without slowing down. The Greater Eagle crashed onto the male Destors' body to absorb the impact and used it to soften the blow. As a result, a few of his bones cracked and Icarus screeched out in pain. He knew that one of his talons broke but it was certainly worth it. The Destors was momentarily incapable of moving, which provided Michael enough time to replace the Siltang Bow with Seron Voulge and thrust the curved blade through the Destors' head.

Four enemies had been killed in the course of a single attack, but Michael and Icarus were not yet done.

Michael pulled Seron Voulge out of the Destors' head before he began moving again. He used Eagle Eyes and Lesser Enhancement before throwing Seron Voulge at the weakened Blood-eyed Minotaur. The bleeding all over its body had barely stopped when Seron Voulge's long blade penetrated deep into its chest, worsening its injuries.

Michael jumped down to the ground, while Icarus shot toward the Tamer Lionheart.

Icarus might not have been part of Michael's subjects for a long time, but it had grown attached to Tiara, and everyone else in the territory's small army. Witnessing the death of the people he had grown attached to wasn't nice nor was the trauma caused by the Blood-eyed Minotaur's tremendous power.

The Minotaur might be in a weakened state now, but it had been terrifying, shocking the Greater Eagle to the bones.

It wanted to take revenge, but Michael was already dealing with the Minotaur. Thus, the next target was obviously the Tamer of the Blood-eyed Minotaur!

Screeching loudly, Icarus charged at the timid Tamer and began to tear him apart, using his talons and razor-sharp beak.

Meanwhile, Michael emerged in front of the weakened Minotaur. Seron Voulge had impaled the Minotaur. The Monster was already at death's door so Michael's attack simply sealed the Blood-eyed Minotaur's fate. It didn't even retain enough strength to reach out for Michael when he stood less than two meters away from the beast.

Michael grasped Seron Voulge's shaft, twisted the curved blade in the Minotaur's body, and dragged the weapon downward, ripping the insides of the Minotaur.

The Blood-eyed Minotaur's body was in a weakened state. Even the resistance of the Minotaur's hide and flesh seemed to have been affected. The razor-sharp curved blade cut cleanly through the Minotaur, nearly splitting the monster in two.

Michael would have loved to torture the Minotaur a little longer and witness its miserable death, but he was also aware that the battle had yet to end.

Revenge was not over just yet!

Hence, he pulled Seron Voulge out of the Minotaur's body and turned around.

Icarus was viciously tearing the Lionheart Tamer apart. The timid Lionheart was physically stronger than Icarus, but the Greater Eagle was heavier and more ferocious. The Lionheart could only protect his face and hope that the Greater Eagle's attack would end soon.

Meanwhile, Michael dashed forward, spinning Seron Voulge around his body. He accelerated rapidly, gained momentum, and slashed Seron Voulge across the Lionheart's throat, beheading the Tamer at once.

Icarus shot in the air a moment before Michael's attack reached the Lionheart Tamer. He wanted to torture the Tamer a little longer, but it was not as if the Lionheart Tamer was the last enemy.

There was still one more Lionheart left to attack and kill.

The Lionheart, who had been shouting at the Adventurer team a minute ago, had gone completely silent. He didn't look scared. Instead, his gaze was filled with curiosity and a trace of disbelief.

"So, that's how it is?" The Lionheart mumbled after a few seconds. It looked like he had finally gained some understanding of the situation, "You are a Lord in the Untamed Jungle, aren't you? By any chance, did you encounter a group of Lionheart Adventurers in the Untamed Jungle before?"

The Lionheart could see the scars and remnants of healing burns all over Michael's head and arms. It wasn't easy to see them, but the Lionheart had great eyes and an exceptional understanding of the Lionheart race's fire affinity. He didn't have to be a genius to conclude that Michael's burns had been caused by something hot enough to burn his hair and skin.

Michael coldly stared at the Lionheart without saying anything, but that was enough of a response for the Lionheart, who began to smile.

"Let's join forces. How about it?"

The Lionheart stretched his hand out while his smile widened.

"What about your friends over there? You surely want to take revenge, don't you?" Michael asked, neither sounding friendly nor enraged. His voice was devoid of emotions.

The Lionheart burst into laughter when he heard what Michael said.

"Friends? These idiots were merely my tools. I used them to search the Untamed Jungle for something. However, now that the Lord of the Untamed Jungle appeared in front of me, I don't need them anymore. You just helped me get rid of some annoying pests. I should thank you," He said, still chuckling.

Michael raised an eyebrow, but he didn't say anything for a while.

"You are a weird one," Michael finally said after a full minute of utter silence had passed.

The Lionheart knew about the Lionheart Adventurer team, and about the existence of a Lord in the Untamed Jungle. It was only obvious, but it would be best if he killed the Lionheart standing in front of him as well. Many problems could be solved, or postponed that way.

The Lionheart should know that as well. Yet why did he seem so confident?

"I can tell what you're thinking about. It's actually nothing special. I work for Senator Keltos, just like the Leader of the Lionheart Adventurer Team, whom you've killed I presume. My rank is higher than that idiot, so having killed him is not a big deal. It's fine...as long as you join me. You'll be rewarded generously if you help me complete Senator Keltos' mission!"

Senator Keltos was one of the Senators in the Zentika Empire's Congress. Michael recalled having read something about him in one of the books he had purchased in the Rainbow Koi Shop. Senator Keltos was one of the Senior Senators, a powerhouse, and a highly influential Lord. He was the Lord of a large territory in the Zentika Empire and a Lionheart.

Yes, he was also a Lionheart.

The corners of Michael's lips curled upon hearing what the Lionheart said.

"That sounds interesting," He answered, nodding his head faintly.

However, his expression turned cold the next moment.

The Lionheart's mission was the reason his people died. Whether it was intentional or not, Michael didn't care.

He only cared about his people.

They had been killed cruelly, and Michael wanted nothing more than revenge – complete revenge.

Recalling the pained cries of his subjects, Michael's grip tightened on his weapon. Seron Voulge gleamed dangerously, and the Lionheart noticed that something had gone wrong.

He only saw that Michael's lips parted as a dangerous glint emerged in his eyes.

"But I don't really care."

Blood splashed like a fountain in the next moment, and a head flung through the air.

Chapter 150 Last Wish

"Looks like this Senator Keltos sent multiple people to search through the Untamed Jungle without attracting anyone's attention. His interest in the Untamed Jungle is pretty high," Michael murmured quietly to himself.

He recalled Lilica's words and began to frown deeply.

'It is not only the Senator, but the rest of the Zentika Empire is looking for something as well! It's just that Senator Keltos is more proactive...Are they looking for something else, or is it actually the Temple of the Forgotten they're looking for?'

One way or another, Michael figured that Senator Keltos was a piece of shit and that he wouldn't receive much peace in his territory anytime soon. Even if he and his territory were now strong enough to survive the dangers of the Untamed Jungle's outer region, his territory's location was too close to the Zentika Empire.

It would not take Adventurers much time to spot his territory while searching through the outer region and, they would end up in front of his territory sooner or later. It was located between the middle area of the Untamed Jungle, and the Zentika Empire, after all.

'What a hassle...'

Michael was already dead-tired and on the verge of collapsing, but more trouble seemed to unveil itself in front of him. He was in pain, and his head was aching horrifyingly – especially the area headbutted by the Minotaur.

Unfortunately, it was not the time to rest yet.

His gaze moved over to Icarus' talon and a sigh escaped his lips. One of Icarus' talons twisted when the Greater Eagle had dived toward the ground. He was lucky that only a talon had twisted and that the Greater Eagle hadn't broken his neck, but it was still a grave injury nonetheless.

Thus, Michael retrieved a potion, unstopped the lid, and made Icarus drink it. Then he stored the corpses spread around him in his War rune before he returned to the territory on Icarus' back.

The trip back to the territory was short. The atmosphere was gloomy, and nobody cheered like usual when he returned. However, it was not as if Michael expected them to be in a mood to celebrate.

They had far more casualties than they could have hoped for, and that didn't even include the number of injured.

A little over two dozen people had died, and almost no melee fighter returned from the battlefield unscathed. The smallest injury was a broken leg.

Meanwhile, the Mages had used too powerful spells to subdue the Minotaur, draining more origin energy than their body could hold or make use of. As a downside, they entered a state of magic overcharge, which sealed their ability to cast spells for several days.

The Summoner had fallen unconscious from the backlash he received after summoning a monster that was not only of a higher Tier than himself was, but also from a different realm.

Then there were the Archers and other long-range combat units. Their confidence was completely shaken after witnessing how useless their attacks had been against the Minotaur. They were unstable after having been forced to watch their comrades and friends die at the hands of the Monster that they couldn't kill.

They hadn't even been strong enough to seriously injure the Blood-eyed Minotaur. It was a shame.

Last but not least, Tiara was seriously injured. She had to be tended to for the next few days until they could see whether she would be able to recuperate fully, or if she had sustained permanent injuries.

That was a hard blow for Tiara and for everyone else.

Nobody was in a condition to fight anymore. The close combat units had to recuperate, and the long-range combat units were in a bad mental state as well. They needed some time to digest what had happened and how to improve themselves so as to avoid a repeat of this incident at all costs. Their uselessness had led to the death of their friends and they blamed themselves for the massacre.

Michael was not a therapist, but he could tell that everyone required some time off. This included himself as well. Fighting the Blood-eyed Minotaur had been an eye-opener for him and he realized with glaring clarity that he and his territory were still far too weak. They might have won the battle, but it didn't feel like it. Their losses had been far too great.

All in all, the potions the Master Alchemist had created in bulk were completely used up after the battle with the Blood-eyed Minotaur. It was a stock that should have lasted for ten battles. Unfortunately, too many injuries had to be treated with great care.

Once all the fallen comrades' bodies had been brought to the center of the clearing, a huge pyre was set up and ignited. Everyone stood solemnly in front of the pyre, their hands crossed and their heads bent low as they offered prayers to the departed. It was nothing special but it was the least Michael could do to wish a final goodbye to his loyal subjects who had fought valiantly.

Michael looked like he was on the verge of collapsing on the spot, but he ensured to give the fallen the last rites they deserved. Their souls were cleansed and they were given food as a tribute to ascend to heaven, fully satiated.

Michael sensed that the Links of Loyalty of hundreds of subjects were growing firmer, but that was not his intention when he set up the memorial fire. He wanted to take care of the people, who had died to protect the territory.

Before the corpses of his subjects were burned, Michael tested Extraction on the 2-Star Berserker, who died in battle today. He remembered the Berserker from a few days ago. Michael had asked his soldiers what they wanted to happen to their corpses if they were to die in battle at that time.

Nobody really wanted to die, but they knew that the possibility was there.

Michael recalled their simple wishes and one particular wish that had astonished him at that time. The 2-Star Berserker wished that Michael would use his corpse to experiment with his Soultrait on it. The Berserker wished to provide something for the territory even after he died in battle and had said that it would be his greatest honor.

At that time, Michael had been quite surprised by the Berserker's wish. He always thought that his subjects wouldn't want to be touched by Extraction because they believed that their Soul shouldn't be touched, or affected in any way after death.

Michael completely understood and respected his subjects' beliefs. He wouldn't experiment with their corpses if they didn't want him to. That was why the Berserker's wish shocked Michael a little bit.

Unfortunately, the Will of the Origin Expanse didn't create any special drops for the summoned subjects under one's control. The Berserker didn't even drop a single Summoning Scroll Fragment after Extraction was used on him.

'Even if you cannot provide the territory with Summoning Scrolls, you did a great job. Thank you for allowing me to find out the limit of Extraction!' Michael prayed in his heart.

He didn't know what happened to the souls of the deceased, especially subjects who had been resurrected once already, but he was not sure if he would like to find out more.

Maybe, it was great that some mysterious things would stay a mystery forever. It retained the magic behind the unknown and allowed the living to hope and dream.

He had a lot to do, but his body and mind didn't allow him to stay awake.

Michael stumbled into his room before he fell heavily on the bed.

In the next moment, he found himself in a deep slumber.