

## Supreme Lord 151

### Chapter 151 Incomplete Soultrait

Michael was disoriented when he woke up.

The headache was still as bad as before, but Michael got up, nonetheless.

He looked out of the window and noticed that it was already early in the morning.

'Did I sleep that long?' Michael wondered before he took a quick bath and changed his clothes.

He left his room after a light workout to examine his body and find out where he was the worst injured.

After he stepped outside the room, Michael was greeted by dozens of Starless Summons who were busy tending to the injured with great care. The non-combat Summons with higher star rating were also there, supporting the injured in any way they could.

Everyone was doing what they could to help their injured, and traumatized friends and colleagues.

'It might take a while for everyone to recuperate from today's fight, but everything will return to normal sooner or later...' Michael thought on his way to the warehouse.

Michael had enough space to retrieve the corpses of the six Adventurers and the Blood-eyed Minotaur inside the warehouse.

First, Michael used Extraction on the six Adventurers. He extracted the items stored in their War Runes, SoulStar Fragments, or Artifacts bound to their War Runes.

Afterward, he did the same to the Blood-eyed Minotaur. However, contrary to the Adventurers, Michael dissected the Blood-eyed Minotaur's corpse. It was more valuable dissected than left untouched – which

was the case for the Adventurers' corpses. They were worth quite a lot in mankind's marketplace, with their corpse left intact.

Of course, the corpses were far less valuable than the other loot he had obtained but he was not going to respectfully burn them either way. Michael extracted a few pieces of paper from the War Rune of the aggressive Lionheart, several huge Zentik bills, and a few Artifacts. Most Artifacts were 2-Star or 3-Star Tierless Artifacts, but they were quite valuable, nonetheless.

Michael was happy about the gains he made, but his biggest focus was on the SoulStar Fragments. Interestingly enough, even the Minotaur dropped SoulStar Fragments.

It was a tamed monster – bound by the Lionheart Adventurer, whose Soultrait was related to taming, but did that mean it could drop SoulStar Fragments? Did that make sense?

'Does it drop SoulStar Fragments because of the Taming Soultrait? If that's the case...was the Black Bear also a tamed beast of that bastard?' Michael wondered as he recalled the Black Bear dropping SoulStar Fragments as well.

Michael was confused, but also angry.

The Senator was getting on his nerves. It felt as if everything Senator Keltos did was to annoy Michael and make his life miserable. Unfortunately, there was nothing Michael could do about it.

He didn't even know the true extent of Senator Keltos' power, or the secret channels of influence in his possession. The few pieces of information Michael read about Senator Keltos were already more than enough to tell him that he couldn't fight such an existence, not now at least.

'In that case, use your peanut-sized brain and throw more low-ranked idiots at me. I will kill them all and use them to grow strong enough to beat the shit out of you!' Michael swore in his mind.

His head flicked to a semi-translucent Symbol that was hiding in the midst of the small SoulStar Fragment pile.

It was a Soultrait Symbol that looked frail and easily breakable.

Michael initially wanted to focus on increasing the star rating of the Soultraits in his possession but thinking about Senator Keltos made him absorb everything.

'It dropped in its complete form. Tearing it apart might not benefit me,' He thought before allowing his War Rune to absorb everything.

When he was asleep, his War Rune had refined the energy influx he obtained from killing six Tier-1 Adventurers and one Low Tier-2 Monster. His degree of refinement didn't increase a lot, but Michael felt more energetic.

His War Rune mirrored his energy, and several tentacle-like streams of energy shot out of the back of his right hand. They coiled around the SoulStar Fragments and the frail Soultrait Symbol before devouring everything at once.

A stream of information entered his mind as the frail Soultrait Symbol fused with the white pillar in the deepest parts of his consciousness.

Michael closed his eyes and focused on the white pillar as well. A moment later, it appeared in front of his closed eyes. He saw his four Soultraits and the frail Soultrait Symbol of Taming.

'Is it broken?' Michael thought at first, but he shook his head.

'No, that's not it.'

The information about the Taming Soultrait didn't seem incomplete in any way.

It took Michael a while but when he finally compared Spirit Whip's 1-Star Soultrait Symbol with the Taming Soultrait Symbol and realization struck him.

'Taming is not even a complete 1-Star Soultrait. Only the outer frame of the first star has formed!'

Michael didn't expect to fuse an incomplete Soultrait. Incomplete Soultraits usually awoke much later than ordinary Soultraits because they lacked the necessary Soul Power to manifest. That was what happened to the Taming Soultrait Symbol. It lacked the necessary Soul Power to completely manifest the first star.

'Fortunately, I have a way to fix this easily!' Michael thought before he moved a single SoulStar Fragment near the Taming Soultrait Symbol.

The frail Symbol shook violently as the SoulStar Fragment fused into it. Michael felt goosebumps all over his body as more information about the Taming Soultrait entered his mind. Simultaneously, the first star of the incomplete Soultrait was fully manifested.

His plan had worked and Michael gained a new 1-Star Soultrait!

"A single SoulStar Fragment was enough? Well, that's even better then!" Michael mused, giving himself a pat on the back.

So far, he had obtained a total of 31 SoulStar Fragments and an incomplete Soultrait Symbol by using his 4-Star Extraction on six Adventurers and the Minotaur.

Michael might not have been lucky enough to extract some memory fragments, but the SoulStar Fragments were more than enough to make him happy.

'I shouldn't use any SoulStar Fragments on Lesser Enhancement, and Eagle Eyes for the time being. It would be too suspicious if the Soul Power of each Soultrait would increase by more than a hundred units in just 30 days, right?' Michael asked himself, recalling that his Soul Power would be evaluated in the second aptitude assessment.

Upgrading Lesser Enhancement to a 3-Star Soultrait would attract even more attention. He might unintentionally reveal his secret and attract everyone's attention.

Michael didn't want that to happen.

With that in mind, Michael chose to focus on Taming and Spirit Whip. Taming seemed quite useful – though it didn't seem to be much different from a Link of Loyalty. The only differences were the quality of the connection between a Tamer and his or her tamed monster, and the ability to communicate telepathically with each other through a long distance.

He could tame monsters of the Origin Expanse and create a combat unit of tamed monsters. That didn't seem like a bad plan.

Spirit Whip had come in handy a few times already. Thus, Michael wanted to upgrade it to a 3-Star Soultrait at once. He spent four SoulStar Fragments to upgrade to a 2-Star Soultrait and spent another 23 SoulStar Fragments to complete the upgrade to 3 Stars.

Michael tested the lethality of his upgraded Spirit Whip, and he was slightly shocked. The energy consumption increased quite a bit, but so did the damage output of the non-physical attack. It was quite exceptional.

"If my opponents are not prepared for a feisty Spirit Whip, I can change the tide of the battle easily!" Michael murmured, feeling quite satisfied.

Afterward, he spent the remaining Soulstar Fragments on Taming, barely completing the second star, and upgrading it to a 2-Star Soultrait.

At last, Michael's gaze fell on the pieces of paper which he had extracted from the War Rune of the Senator's direct subordinate.

"Let's see what you've been hiding from me!"

Chapter 152 Infirmary

Michael spent a while reading through the documents left behind by the Senator's direct subordinate.

There was not much content, but it revealed certain clues about the Lionheart's mission, and what he should avoid doing for the time being.

The documents were a part of the official exchange between the Senator and the five Lionhearts he had chosen as trustworthy enough to complete the secret mission.

'Seems like you never expected someone to be capable of plundering a War Rune's sacred storage space. That's your misfortune, bastard!' Michael cursed the Senator in his mind as he re-read the documents a few more times.

He didn't want to miss a single detail and stored the documents inside his War Rune only after he was certain that he had imprinted everything in his mind.

The Lionheart Leader of the Adventurer team and the aggressive Lionheart from the day before were only two out of five Lionhearts, who had been given the secret mission. Michael wasn't able to find out more about the remaining three Lionhearts, but that didn't disappoint him a lot.

Michael had to prepare for the worst, either way.

'Selling the Minotaur in Xiltra would only attract suspicion. The five Lionhearts should have been connected to each other. If even one of them knows about the connection between the tamer and the Lionheart, they can find out what happened,' Michael concluded after he thought about selling the Blood-eyed Minotaur corpse to the Guild.

He could have completed a guild mission and earned a fortune selling the corpse. Unfortunately, he had to let go of the small fortune for the time being.

The daily report was waiting for Michael. He read through it thoroughly and gave his subjects a few orders that had to be completed on priority before he walked over to Icarus.

"Are you ready for a short trip to Xiltra, or do you want to rest a little longer?" Michael asked Icarus, whose twisted talon had been mended and realigned correctly.

The Greater Eagle was still exhausted, but seeing the glint of determination in Michael's eyes, Icarus could only screech out in agreement.

Michael smiled lightly, got on the Greater Eagle's back and they ascended back into the air.

Icarus didn't dare to fly too high through the air. Their altitude was not even two meters above the canopy of trees beneath them. The fear of the serpent in the Greater Eagle's heart was too strong, and Icarus was not yet ready to fight him head-on.

Michael didn't say anything to Icarus. He understood why the Greater Eagle was so worried. After all, he was also present when the Thunder Pteranodon King had appeared above them, just to be burned to a crisp without the slightest chance of retaliation.

It was far weirder that Michael wasn't concerned about their well-being as they flew across the Untamed Jungle. His confidence was groundless, and merely based on his gut feeling. Michael was certain that no aerial monster would attack them for the time being. The reason- his gut feeling told him that the mythical serpent didn't want any troublemakers in the sky above the Untamed Jungle.

Michael was not sure why he felt like that, but the day they encountered the mythical serpent made him believe that his thoughts were right.

As expected, they didn't encounter a mighty monster in the air. They reached Xiltru, paid the entrance fee and Michael put Icarus in the mount stall, just like he did the last time he arrived in Xiltru.

In the next two hours, Michael sold a few blueprints and the Artifacts that were collecting dust in his War Rune's storage space. The Artifacts were also the batch of items he had extracted from the Adventurers, but that was not important.

Michael earned a small fortune, and he used that money, in addition to the fortune he had plundered from the Adventurers in order to purchase a wide variety of cheap blueprints.

Once he was done purchasing everything he needed, Michael visited the guild house. He wanted to talk to Lilica, but the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team was out on a mission.

Michael didn't want to waste anymore time, so he picked up Icarus and they returned to the Untamed Jungle.

When he was back in the territory, Michael organized his thoughts and watched his subjects work tirelessly before he left the Origin Expanse with a hundred blueprints that were considered rare and hard to procure for most human Lords.

When Michael stepped out of the Runic Gate, he reappeared in his small cabin within the Dekalos-class spaceship.

He opened his messenger to take note if he had missed out on something very important, only to see that Frederik had hurled dozens of messages at him in an attempt to provoke him.

'This kid never learns, does he?' Michael could only ask in his mind before he closed the messenger.

Nothing noteworthy seemed to have happened in the past few days.

Relieved, Michael stepped out of the cabin and made his way to the spaceship's shops. However, he noticed something on his way.

First, inertia grew stronger during the time he spend in the Origin Expanse. It didn't affect Michael too much, but it was important to note that his headache grew worse with the increased gravitational force weighing down on him.

'Maybe, I should go to the infirmary first.'

There was no shame in visiting the medical team on board. Sustaining injuries during training was not an uncommon occurrence. The same applied to getting injured in the Origin Expanse. It happened quite often.

That was why the Sapphirelake Military Academy was prepared for everything. Of course, they had an infirmary of the highest level. Even the spaceship was equipped with the best medical devices and means to ensure your survival even if you're on the verge of death.



However, the cherry on the cake was that all of it was free of charge. It was normal to be injured in the Military Academy, and it was only obvious that the Academy would spend a considerable amount of money to ensure the well-being of its students.

With that in mind, Michael changed his course. He went to the infirmary where he was treated by a middle-aged woman. She was an Adventurer with a powerful healing Soultrait. As the nutrition and origin energy in Michael's body was enough, she didn't even have to use much of her own energy to heal the crack in Michael's skin/skull, the swelling where the Minotaur had headbutted him, and the cracked bones all over his body.

Michael didn't even realize how injured he had been until the medical staff started to question him about how the hell he was able to walk around with such injuries.

They gave up questioning him when they saw the confusion in his eyes. It was obvious that Michael was clueless about how lucky he had been, and how resilient his body was.

"You should eat a lot. Healing you used up most of the nutrition in your body. Take this special meal quota coupon, and use it. The dishes are highly nutritious and they have great medicinal value. Don't waste them and eat everything to recuperate faster," The middle-aged woman advised, transferring a special food coupon to his crystal watch.

He received it with a bright smile, and his happiness was further amplified by his grumbling stomach.

The medical staff chuckled lightly and sent him off with a smile.

Distracted by the thought of more free meals, Michael even forgot about his mission for the time being.

He hadn't eaten for a while now, and that was one of the greatest sins he could commit.

Feeling reenergized, Michael headed to the cafeteria.

It was time to feast.

## Chapter 153 Like A Beast

Michael enjoyed his meal.

He didn't gobble it down like a starving beast but savored every bite of the juicy meat and the vegetables rich in origin energy. The whole meal was a combination of nutrition, origin energy, strong medicinal effects, and exceptional taste.

It was much better than the big plates he received for being a member of the Limit Breaker course!

Michael felt a warm and soothing feeling spread through his entire body. It invigorated his cells and stimulated their growth and regeneration.

Unfortunately, he was still hungry after he emptied the plate of food. Hence, he walked back towards the cafeteria staff and ordered the special meal reserved for participants of the Limit Breaker course.

After he waited for a while, Michael received his plate. He saw that more special meals were brought to another table, and noticed that Kaleb and the Barbaric Couple were feasting on a lavish meal, gobbling down the food on their huge plates.

Michael walked over to them and sat down next to Kaleb without a second thought.

"Where are the others? Did they enter the Origin Expanse, or did they leave the course?" Michael asked when he noticed that Frederik, Kaleb, Jacqueline, and another young woman were the only ones feasting on the jumbo plates.

"Didn't you run away just like them? Because you were too afraid to challenge me head-on?!" Frederik provoked the moment he realized that Michael had returned.

Michael raised an eyebrow but didn't comment on Frederik's nonsense.

"The others have already left. They said that they couldn't keep going like this. Apparently, their bodies won't allow them to move anymore after they attended the lesson after the Limit Breaker training session," Kaleb answered Michael's question, without looking up from the plate.

"Their willpower was not strong enough for the Limit Breaker course!" The young woman seated next to Kaleb declared loudly, proud that she made it this far.

'Who was this girl again? One of Kaleb's bootlickers?' Michael tried to remember, but he gave up quickly.

Kaleb and Frederik were about to finish their jumbo plates, while Michael had yet to begin.

He didn't say anything else and focused on the jumbo plate in front of him. Michael inhaled the aroma of the food and finished the meal before Jacqueline or the unimportant bootlicker of Kaleb were done.

As he devoured the food, Michael noticed that Kaleb's eyes drifted to him every now and then. His eyes were filled with contempt, which was totally understandable.

'To think that Kaleb can get envious. It's such a simple thing as well,' Michael chuckled but kept his thoughts to himself.

He understood that Kaleb wanted to manifest his War Rune and enter the Origin Expanse at last. However, he was not yet 18 years old, and he was surrounded by Elyra's strongest Lords of the youngest generation.

This fueled his envy, but also his motivation to strive for more strength.

In the last few days, Kaleb learned a lot about the competition and his shortcomings. The limit of his body was only one of those things.

He also learned that mankind had many unique Lords, who had overcome great ordeals, the lack of a powerful Soultrait, and various obstacles to make it into the Sapphirelake Military Academy.

Many Lords were like Frederik Kolbenheim and Jacqueline Orlando, children of strong Lords. They were in possession of resources, techniques, the best training methods, and means to expand their territory quickly without harming the territory's foundation by expanding too fast.

However, there were also many no-names and Lords, who had hidden themselves until the aptitude assessment. They possessed many secrets and were hiding the true extent of their power very well.

Michael was such a Lord in Kaleb's opinion.

Kaleb had no idea how Alice and Michael got to know each other, or why his sister was so interested in him. However, Kaleb could also tell how he felt as well.

At first, Kaleb hated Michael to the core. He considered Michael the crux of all his problems. But that was just him being delusional. Kaleb realized that Michael had never really done anything to be worth his hatred.

Before the archery competition started, he learned that Michael had been bullied. His classmates didn't like that he was a nobody without any special background. They thought he was not worthy of being in the Elite Class. Their bullying grew worse when he ranked first in the first semester.

Kaleb knew that, but he could have never thought that Michael would use his archery competition as a way to take revenge on the fools who were brazen enough to bully him in the past.

At that time, Kaleb didn't think much about it. He felt provoked because a 'nobody' had accepted his challenge, and he didn't realize that something was off when Michael put a Tierless Epic Weapon Artifact into the betting pot.

He had accepted the bet and rightfully lost because he had overestimated himself. There was no reason to hate Michael. However, Kaleb couldn't accept it at that time. His pride didn't allow him to accept that he made a fool of himself by grossly underestimating Michael's power, and craftiness.

Finally, after the terrifying training sessions of the past few days, and his encounters with Michael and other 'no-names', Kaleb began to understand that his pride was worthless in the face of life and death.

Michael and the 'no-names' had to put their lives on the line whenever they entered the Origin Expanse. Being prideful couldn't bring them anything. Being crafty, on the other hand, may ensure their survival more often than one might think.

"Now that you're back, you should join today's training session," Kaleb murmured in a low voice before he got up from his seat.

He put his plate away and left the cafeteria. It was almost time for today's Limit Breaker training session.

Michael stared at Kaleb's retreating back, his right eyebrow lifted in surprise. Then he nodded his head and followed the young Zenovia.

"I am so pumped! Let me beat the shit out of you today!" Frederik exclaimed from behind, causing Michael to sigh deeply.

"You can do it, babe!!" Jacqueline screamed.

Hearing that, Michael could only shake his head.

'These idiots really don't learn. Is it normal for couples to share one brain cell, or is that unique to these idiots?'

\*\*

Three hours later, the Limit Breaker training session ended.

Michael's face was bruised black and blue, but he still managed to stand firmly on the ground.

He towered above the writhing figures of the Barbaric Couple with a deep frown on his face.

"Is that what you meant by saying 'Let me beat the shit out of you'? To me, it seems like both of you grew weaker. How about you take this more seriously from tomorrow onward?" He snarled coldly, his eyes void of pity.

Everyone wore the same heavyweight combat suit for the Limit Breaker course. However, the configuration was different for everyone.

A whopping 360 kilograms weighed down on Michael after he used Lesser Enhancement on the combat suit. Yet, even such a heavy weight wasn't enough to drag him down or slow his movements. On the contrary, Michael felt as if the heavyweight pressured him to exceed his limits and to use the full potential of his body.

Looking at the bloodied faces of the Barbaric Couple that was writhing on the ground, staring at him in confusion and disbelief, Michael could tell that today's battle had been a little different.

Something felt off.

'Did I complete the first stage of the Berserker Physique?' Michael wondered, feeling like his entire body was overflowing with power – and that too despite having attended a long and grueling training session.

However, Kaleb could only stare at Michael with slight surprise gleaming in his eyes.

'What happened to him in the Origin Expanse?'

Even Silverian Schild couldn't help but spare a second glance at Michael.

He knew that Michael didn't win against the Barbaric Couple by sheer luck, or by reaching the next stage of his body refinement technique. His physical standards might have improved a little bit, but it was not enough to overpower the Barbaric Couple.

Frederik and Jacqueline were arrogant, narcissistic and a little bit stupid as well but they were also hard-working and talented.

It was easy to tell that they had been trained very well for more than ten years.

That was also why it was so surprising that Michael was able to defeat them.

Usually in a two-versus-one face-off, the lone fighter was supposed to block and evade attacks. Michael shouldn't have counterattacked, in the first place.

However, while enduring the Barbaric Couple's punches, Michael prepared a series of counterattacks. He deflected the punches before starting to deliver fierce and relentless punches himself.

It almost looked like a fierce undying beast had been fighting against the human couple.

Chapter 154 Managing System

Michael's body was still damp when he left the shower.

He changed into casual clothes after drying his body and put the heavyweight combat suit aside for it to be cleaned thoroughly.

Afterward, Michael turned to the door to leave without saying a word.

"Wait a moment," Kaleb's voice rang out from behind.

Michael halted in his tracks and turned back to the young Zenovia.

"Are you sure that you're fine?" Kaleb asked reflexively when he saw the impatience in Michael's eyes.

Until the last minute of Michael's battle against the Barbaric Couple, everything had been fine. But after that, the pressure he exuded was heavy, and being around him felt weirdly uncomfortable.

Kaleb was not sure why but he felt like their spar had turned into a desperate life-and-death battle. That was how Michael had fought; as if his life depended on it.

"I am fine," Michael responded emotionlessly before he turned back. The next moment, he opened the door and left.

Kaleb didn't say anything else. He pressed his lips together and glanced over to Frederik and Jacqueline.

The Barbaric Couple, which was known for their barbaric actions, bad temper, and rude attitude, was now silently staring at the ground in front of them. They had been tended to, but they had yet to clean up the dried blood covering their faces.

Their stare was blank, and Kaleb could imagine that their mind was empty as well. Or they were thinking about their fight against Michael.

Kaleb was not sure what was worse; Michael's indifference, or the couple's shaken confidence.

'Well..whatever...' He told himself before he entered the shower to freshen up.

Once he was done, he put on his fashionable clothes and left the changing room, leaving the Barbaric Couple alone.

Only after everyone else left the changing room did Frederik and Jacqueline breathe out heavily. They looked at each other and blurted out in unison.

"Fuck..."

\*\*

Now that the training session was over, Michael could finally focus on his initial mission again. With that in mind, he made his way to the spaceship's shop.



However, he was also a bit confused.

Michael knew that he lost control of himself near the end of the battle. He didn't feel bad for beating up the Barbaric Couple because they deserved to learn a lesson, but it was not as if he had purposely planned to beat them into a pulp before. It...just happened.

He was lucky that his opponents had been the Barbaric Couple. Punishing them for being spoiled brats and arrogant jerks was better than beating up someone else, who had never done something bad before.

This thought put Michael at ease, but it didn't change the confusion troubling his mind.

'Is it the stress of being a Lord in the Untamed Jungle?' Michael wondered, but he couldn't answer for sure. It might be the case, but it might be something else as well.

Confused and deep in thought, Michael was happy to reach the hallway filled with shops. The shopping hallways of the Dekalos-Class spaceship were most certainly enough to distract him. He had a mission to complete, after all!

"Hello Sir, how may I help you today?" A young staff member greeted him at the entrance of the first shop.

The young man wore a vibrant professional smile on his face, which Michael tried to reciprocate, only to fail miserably.

"Hello. I want to sell a few rare blueprints, and I'm not sure which shop will provide me with the best rates," Michael revealed honestly.

He was about to ask where he should go when the young man nodded his head understandingly.

"I haven't seen you before, so I presume that you don't know how the shops in the spaceships all over mankind's territory are managed, right?" The young staff member asked in an amiable tone.

Michael nodded his head. He had heard some rumors, but he never had the time to research the truth. The only thing he was certain about was that every ship above the Dekalos-Class had, at least, one shop to access.

"That makes it much easier. I will transfer a small file to you with all the detailed information. If you want, I can also summarize the file for now, and you can read the detailed information later. How about it?"

"That sounds great. Please share the file with me, and help me out with the summary!" Michael responded, glad to have found a forthcoming staff.

The young staff member seemed nice and ready to go out of his way to help him. That was rare to find in this age and era.

"To summarize the file, all shops are handled by different corporations. The spaceships at the Dekalos-Class and above have one shop managed by the government, but every other shop is managed by the big corporations of mankind. The shop I'm working at is managed by the government, but the shop on the left is managed by Olympus.

The shop left to the Olympus is managed by Pandemonium, and over there is a shop affiliated with the Bartholomew Corporation. There are quite a few corporations, and all of them are managed by an Adventurer."

Michael found himself nodding weakly as the young staff member continued to explain the system behind the management of shops within spaceships. It was very interesting, and the wild thoughts of his spar against the Barbaric Couple slowly turned insignificant.

"An Adventurer has to manage the Shops, but why?" Michael asked quietly, just before he realized something.

His eyes shot wide open and the young staff's smile widened.

"I think you got the gist. All Adventurers have to be Adventurers in order to enter the Origin Expanse. This is not the case for every organization, but most merchant corporations have one big place where all

shop managers are gathered. They may say that their headquarters are somewhere in the solar system, but it is actually in the Origin Expanse," The staff member took a short break.

He took a deep breath to continue speaking and provide further explanation when Michael interfered.

"So, you're trying to tell me that the shop managers are connected to the Origin Expanse and that they trade goods in the headquarters – which is situated in the Origin Expanse as well," Michael pointed out, and he continued to speak when he saw that the staff member nodded his head.

"If I were to sell 100 rare blueprints, the shop manager would bring them to the headquarters where they would be distributed among the shops all over mankind's territory to make the highest profit. At the same time, if I were to request 2000 Summoning Scrolls, but the shop in question has only 500 in stock, the shop manager would visit the Origin Expanse and bring the Summoning Scrolls I've asked for."

All in all, Michael felt that the managing system that combined the Origin Expanse and the outside Universe was very intriguing.

The only problem in the managing system was that the shop manager had to find a way to travel through the Origin Expanse and make his way to the headquarters of the corporation he worked for. Once the Runic Gate's anchor was set up, everything was fine, but to get that far was a long journey for some.

Under normal circumstances, that may not be difficult because most humans spawned in specific regions, and not as far from mankind as Michael. People as unlucky as Michael would have a hard time becoming a shop manager. Fortunately, becoming a shop manager was never something Michael had wished for. His dreams had always been other things.

"You can put it like that. It is a little bit more complicated, but I've shared the files with detailed information with you, if you're interested in understanding the mechanism and logic behind the managing system," The young man said as Michael received a notification on his crystal watch.

Michael smiled in return.

Suddenly, he recalled something the young staff member had said earlier.

'If there is a branch of the Bartholomew Corporation...they wouldn't decline my Golden Membership Card right?!'

Chapter 155 Agriculture

Michael hadn't expected to learn so many new things about mankind's managing system, and special tricks that allowed a more efficient means of transportation.

By using the Origin Expanse and the outside world, it was quite easy to transport goods from one planet to another within minutes. Unfortunately, this means of transportation was restricted to objects. The living couldn't move back and forth that easily.

Michael's interest was piqued, but he chose to satiate his curiosity later. He entered the shop affiliated with the Bartholomew Corporation and showed them his Golden Membership Card.

And the moment he did that, the attitude of the staff changed at once. They became overly polite and treated him like a little king.

Michael retrieved the rare blueprints he bought in Xiltra before returning a faint smile in their direction.

"Please offer me a good price."

The staff member standing behind the counter stared at the blueprints in awe. He had seen numerous blueprints by now, but the moment he realized what types of blueprints they were he knew that this transaction was not something he could validate.

"I am sorry for the inconvenience but I have to notify the manager. The transaction you want to conduct exceeds my authority," The staff member said apologetically while calling the shop manager.

A sigh of relief escaped the staff member's lips when the manager picked up the call a few seconds later and was informed about their customer.

Not even ten minutes later, a middle-aged woman with thick glasses appeared. She saw the blueprints and immediately knew what she had to do.

"I will appraise the blueprints and give you a satisfactory pri-...." The shop manager had begun her usual sales pitch before her eyes fell on the Golden Bartholow Membership card in Michael's hand.

She swallowed her words and glared at her subordinate before she straightened her back and began to work fast and thoroughly.

"Are you looking for something special, Sir? Maybe, I can help you out while the manager appraises your goods!" One of the female staff members offered.

Michael thought about it for a moment and nodded.

"I'm looking for Named Summoning Scrolls. Warrior, Spearman, or Archer Summoning Scrolls."

Even with the Golden Bartholow Membership, Michael would have to pay roughly 100,000\$ for a Warrior Summoning Scroll. They were pretty expensive, but Michael knew that he had to use his entire fortune and the money he would earn from the blueprints to purchase as many Combat related Summoning Scrolls.

He now required mentally stable, physically fit Warriors to protect his territory. Summoning Warriors, Spearman, and Archers using Summoning Scrolls was the easiest way to achieve that.

They wouldn't be strong just after being summoned, but their combat prowess and numerical advantage would be more than enough to deal with the Monsters of the Untamed Jungle's outer area.

However, there was another problem Michael had yet to solve- How to accelerate his subjects' growth?

He knew that his subjects were growing stronger at a fast pace already. Unfortunately, they were too slow, nonetheless.

A single Tier-2 Monster with a Unique Racial Ability had been strong enough to kill dozens of people, and injure the rest of his Military might – whether it was a mental or physical injury.

What was he supposed to do when a group of Tier-2 Adventurers decided to attack his territory?

Michael wasn't willing to watch his territory getting bulldozed, and his subjects massacred mercilessly. He didn't want to see that. Thus, he had to help them out. After all, he was their Lord. They relied on him and trusted him with their whole heart.

"Furthermore, I can spend 2.6 million dollars on a neutral energy absorption technique that can be used efficiently by anyone. It shouldn't require the practitioner to have a high comprehension ability. Even subjects without talent should be able to use the technique," Michael added carefully.

He only had 2.6 million left in his bank account, but it was fine to use up all of it.

After he watched his subjects use the Sun Soldier's Breathing technique, Michael realized that the technique was too complex and time-consuming. It was a great technique once the second stage was completed, but most Summons didn't have the time, let alone talent to reach the second stage.

That was why a second energy absorption technique was required. The term 'neutral' meant that it could be practiced anywhere and that it was not necessary to meet any conditions to practice the technique.

It was not even impossible to continue working while practicing a neutral energy absorption technique. Of course, the efficiency with which one absorbed energy would decrease drastically if one didn't pay full attention to it. But that was the thing. Not paying full attention to the technique wouldn't cause a backlash. It would merely slow down the rate at which energy was absorbed into the body!

"If there is still some spare money left, I would like to buy a neutral body refinement technique as well."

Michael's train of thought was pretty simple. If he could provide good techniques, better meals with great medicinal effect, and high energy value, it shouldn't be impossible to nurture strong combatants in a short period.

That was something they had learned in school as well. Unfortunately, Michael never had enough funds to invest that much in the things that accelerated the growth of his military's prowess. It hadn't been his highest priority until now. However, now that two incidents happened in a short time span, Michael changed his list of priorities in accordance.

"A budget of 2.6 million for a neutral energy absorption technique, and a neutral body refinement technique. That's pretty difficult, if you want something of quality," The young lady mumbled to herself. She opened the item catalog and moved next to Michael to show him a few techniques that might intrigue him.

'None of those techniques are exceptional,' Michael thought, 'But what did I expect? Neutral techniques are rare, and their efficiency is exceptional. Everyone wants them, and only Lesser techniques are sold in most shops. The bigshots keep their techniques for themselves and their families.'

At this point, Michael wondered if Frederik, Jacqueline, Kaleb, and everyone else had been given a neutral energy absorption technique to use.

'That should explain why Frederik and Jacqueline's Soultraits grow stronger even though they don't enter the Origin Expanse that often.'

After they searched through the item catalog for nearly 20 minutes, they had yet to find the perfect techniques.

The manager finished appraising the blueprints at last. The corner of her lip twitched and a droplet of sweat trickled to the ground.

She stared at Michael for a while and flicked her attention back to the blueprints.

"What I'm going to ask you might sound insulting, but can you tell me where you spawned after you entered the Origin Expanse for the first time?" The manager asked, breaking the silence around her.

She moved the rim of her glasses up her nose bridge and stared intently at Michael.

"I spawned in an area that has an abundance of densely grown flora and fauna. The region doesn't lack any of that," Michael answered without hesitation, pointing at the blueprints in front of him.

He thought about it for a moment and added, "However, they're not cheap either. These blueprints drop rarely from Tier-2 Monsters, and are more likely to be found in the drops of Tier-3 Monsters."

"I understand...so you purchased them in the hopes of earning a small fortune. That's pretty smart. It works, after all." The manager murmured quietly like she wasn't speaking to Michael.

A few hundred thousand Zentika and seven Tierless Artifacts of high value had been turned into 108 rare blueprints.

The blueprints were not the ordinary blueprints Michael could procure by killing a few Low Tier-1 Monsters. They weren't worth a few thousand per piece. No, their value was on a whole different level.

No, these rare blueprints dropped only from Tier-2, or Tier-3 Monsters. They might be considered cheap in Xiltra, and rather useless because the lands were fertile, but they were still worth quite a lot.

However, for mankind, these blueprints were exceptional. Each of them was related to the agricultural industry, something mankind needed. After all, one of the regions mankind spawned in was a barren land spanning tens of thousands of kilometers.

Both Michael and the shop manager understood mankind's predicament. It was hard to turn the barren lands into a verdant grass field, forget about large fields of wheat, vegetables, and so on. Farming was hard, and the price for energy-rich ingredients was high.

"Can you procure more?" The manager asked, a glint in her eyes shining brightly.

However, Michael had already figured out what she wanted to do.

"Why are you asking?" He responded lightheartedly,



"Are you trying to propose a deal?"

Chapter 156 [Bonus ]Project

"I didn't expect to find such a good opportunity with freshmen on the Dekalos-Class spaceship," The shop owner mumbled quietly to herself.

Her gaze moved back and forth between Michael and the blueprints until it remained on Micheal, at last.

"Are you interested in an Exclusive deal with the Bartholomew Corporation?" She asked.

Michael smiled lightly in response, but he didn't answer immediately.

"My authority is high enough to promise you a higher price than the highest market value. Nobody else will be able to match the price I can offer," She pointed out, while pushing the rim of the glasses up her nose before adding, "If you're not satisfied with that, I can promise you a higher discount for items purchased in the shops affiliated with the Bartholomew Corporation. This benefit is far better than the benefits of the Golden Membership, and only a handful have been granted it."

Michael recalled the young staff member mentioning that the big corporations had shops in the Saphirelake Military Academy as well. This included the Bartholomew Corporation, which meant that he could make use of the benefits even in the Academy.

Michael nodded when the shop manager finished mentioning the benefits.

"And what do I have to do in return? You won't give me such benefits if there is no condition attached," Michael asked.

It was quite obvious what the shop manager wanted, but Michael wanted to be certain. It was pretty difficult for anyone to offer benefits exceeding the Golden Bartholomew Membership as they were

already quite nice. Yet, from the way the manager spoke, she suggested that she could offer something that exceeded the Golden Membership by far.

'I have to see the numbers to make sure that she's not deceiving me...but this sounds too good to be true, doesn't it?'

"It is pretty simple actually. I want to sign an exclusive contract with you. You will receive the benefits mentioned above and the Bartholomew Corporation will be given 300 agriculture-related blueprints on the same level as the blueprints you bought today," The woman exclaimed calmly.

Her gaze turned sharper as she added, "Since it will be an exclusive contract, you won't be allowed to sell blueprints related to agriculture to any other organization, Supreme Family, Great Clan, and so on!"

Michael's expression changed when the shop manager mentioned the Supreme Families. He had been deep in thought, but all of his thoughts dispersed at once.

At last, he realized something about the way the shop manager worded her sentences.

"You don't even want to sell the blueprints, do you?"

The manager's eyes widened slightly, and a faint smile blossomed on her face. Her guess was right. The young man was not a fool.

"What do you think will happen to the blueprints after you sell them to the Bartholomew Corporation?"

Faced with this question, Michael remained silent for a while. At first, he didn't think that anything special would happen to the blueprints, but the manager's words stirred up his thoughts.

"The Bartholomew Corporation will probably keep the blueprints. Then...you might gather some Lords in the Barren Lands, sign them under the Bartholomew Corporation...and form a big farming industry using the blueprints. Yes, that is probably what you're thinking about," Michael murmured more to himself than to the shop manager.

"The Lords will use the blueprints to develop the Barren Lands and become high-scale farmers, who will then supply the Bartholomew Corporation with energy-rich vegetables, and all kinds of other plants. Basically, the blueprints will be purchased and used as an investment into the Barren Lands. The Barren Lands will then develop in your treasure trove...and to make sure that nobody else can achieve the same results as the Bartholomew Corporation, you would want to make sure that people like me won't be able to sell their blueprints to anyone other than you!"

Given the widening smile on the manager's face, Michael realized that his theory was spot on. He came up with the theory after the manager mentioned that he wasn't allowed to sell the goods to other organizations, families, and clans.

'It's pretty smart,' He thought.

The staff member was staring with a stupefied expression at Michael, while the shop manager kept smiling.

"If your theory were to come true, would you complain about the benefits I've offered, or would you still be willing to accept them?" The manager asked, seemingly nonchalantly.

The manager didn't smile, nor did she glare at him. However, Michael understood what she wanted to convey.

If he came up with ridiculous terms, his relationship with the Bartholomew Corporation might end before it even started, in the first place. Michael knew that he had been quite lucky with the Golden Bartholomew Membership, and he understood that he shouldn't be too greedy right now.

"The terms and benefits stated sound nice. However, I'm in need of a high-quality neutral energy absorption technique," Michael said in a heavy voice.

He intentionally left out stating that he wished to have a neutral body refinement technique, knowing that he might be asking for too much. The manager sighed heavily upon hearing Michael's request, which was why Michael decided to speak up again.

"I know that top-notch techniques are kept secret. I am not asking for such a technique since I know these are heirlooms. I just want to ensure that my territory can grow fast. If you wish to discuss my terms with your superior, you can do that. However, I don't think that I'm asking for too much. The Bartholomew Corporation will gain far more from this deal in the long term!"

Michael studied the manager's reaction carefully. When he noticed something, he lightly added, "In the worst case, we can just forget about the deal. We—...."

"No no!" The manager exclaimed in a startled voice.

How could she miss out on such a great opportunity? Did that little brat even realize how long they'd been planning the redevelopment of the Barren Lands? They couldn't allow anyone else to purchase Michael's blueprints!

The corner of Michael's lip curled upward at her reaction. He had caught her!

Agriculture was a big deal in the Origin Expanse. The regions most populated by humans were the Barren Lands. It was the biggest region with the most human Lords. Other than that, there was the Frozen Cataclysm, the Sacred Desert, and a few more minor regions. Only two of the minor regions were suitable for farming on a large scale.

Realizing that he had the upper hand, Michael used some leverage to obtain what he wanted.

After some back and forth with the manager, the deal was done and signed.

In the end, Michael was quite satisfied with his gains. Even if it wouldn't be easy to find an exceptional technique for him, a high-grade neutral energy absorption technique should be feasible. That was something the manager stated confidently.

The manager told Michael that she would talk to her superior, show the Manager the blueprints, and reveal the conditions and terms of the deal she struck with Michael. Afterward, they would figure out what kind of neutral energy absorption technique they would hand over.

She would do her utmost to provide him with the best technique. In accordance with the technique's level, Michael's monthly quota of blueprints would either increase or decrease.

It would take a few days until the manager would get hold of the technique, but Michael was more than fine with waiting. At last, he would obtain his high-quality neutral energy absorption technique. By then it wouldn't be too difficult to increase the refinement degree and Tier of his subjects.

That was the most he could do for now- increase the Tier of his subjects. After all, Michael and Tiara were still the only beings at Tier-1 in his territory.

The deal put aside, Michael earned a fortune by selling 108 rare blueprints. They earned him 17.5 million dollars, which was enough to purchase a neutral body refinement technique for a little bit more than 5 million, and 150 Combat-related Summoning Scrolls.

Michael had to tap into his 2.6 million dollar savings to purchase everything, but that was something Michael had already expected.

With his wallet considerably lighter, 150 Combat-related Summoning Scrolls in his possession, and the body refinement technique called [Sacred Rectification] in his hands, Michael left the shop.

Michael returned to his cabin, where he manifested the Runic Gate.

He entered the Origin Expanse, and shared the body refinement technique with the librarians and scholars, who were asked to duplicate the technique for everyone to read.

Afterward, he focused his attention on the summoning process. Michael broke the seals of 150 Summoning Scrolls to summon 50 Warriors, 50 Spearmen, and 50 Archers at once.

Michael introduced himself to the new Summons before he gestured to the Starless Summons to guide them through the territory and explain their situation thoroughly.

Simultaneously, the Links of Loyalty with their Lord were formed.

Once Michael completed everything, he finished a few minor tasks before he left the Origin Expanse once again.

He had a few more lessons to attend.

Chapter 157 Pandemonium's Requiem

[Michael: What is the most cost-efficient external means to improve your subjects' refinement degree and Tier?]

Michael knew a few external means to accelerate a subject's growth and boost his refinement degree, but most were too expensive for someone like Michael to afford.

The external means were consumables, which were priced much higher than the money Michael had in his bank account most of the time.

That was also why he had sent a short message to Alice before he closed the messenger.

Alice might not be able to help him, but he could at least try asking her for guidance.

Once the message was sent out, Michael closed the messenger. He arrived in the small room that was set up especially for Harry Baren to conduct his research on Soul Power and Soultraits.

Other than the Limit Breaker course, Michael had three more lessons to attend. He had applied for the History of the Origin Expanse, Memory Lane, and Soul Power theory.

He had attended a Memory Lane lesson before and was impressed and intrigued by the subject. Memory Lane taught a technique that applied origin energy in a specific and a very complex way to accelerate the brain's memorization process. It was a very tricky technique that had been separated into ten different stages.

Mastering the first stage increased the brain capacity by 30%, allowing the practitioner to memorize content much easier, and imprint it deep into the mind to ensure that it wouldn't get forgotten.

The technique was quite difficult to master, and Michael could only marvel at the few people, who were able to practice Memory Lane to a high stage. Their comprehension ability, willpower, and endurance to keep practicing the technique for years had to be excellent.

Michael could feel that he had gained a basic mastery of Memory Lane after working on it for a few times, but that was already it. He would have to spend months to improve his understanding of the subject and slowly attain perfect mastery.

Courses like Memory Lane were exceedingly popular. To apply for the Memory Lane course in the Sapphirelake Military Academy, one would have to spend a small fortune of Sapphire Points. That was not necessary on the way to the Academy since everything was free of charge during that period.

It was one of the open secrets that certain courses required special conditions, and a fee if one wanted to sign up for them in the Sapphirelake Military Academy, and that they were free of charge while you were traveling to the Academy.

That was also why certain courses were flooded with students while others were avoided. This included the Limit Breaker course, History of the Origin Expanse, and Soul Power theory.

However, Michael didn't pay much attention to these things. He signed up for the lessons he wanted to spend the little spare time he got.

Michael tried to use Memory Lane to remember the teachings of the history professor. It worked to a certain extent, but Michael quickly noticed that he couldn't recall everything the history professor taught him. Thus, he rather focused on the teachings instead of memorizing everything word for word.

There was a significant difference between memorizing something and understanding it. Michael wanted to understand the History of the Origin Expanse and connected the events of the past with each other to gain a better understanding of the Origin Expanse, how devastating simple actions can be in the grand scheme of things, and the reasons certain races came to an end.

History lessons seemed boring, but they were quite intriguing once a point of interest was found. Michael's point of interest was the Temple of the Forgotten and the backstory of his family.

Unfortunately, not many were interested in the history lessons taught in the Dekalos-Class spaceship.

It was similar to the case of Soul Power theory.

Michael was the only freshman who signed up for the lesson. However, Harry Baren didn't seem to mind that. On the contrary, he was quite happy that Michael was intrigued in the subject he taught.

The young researcher was overjoyed to see that Michael shared an interest with him. However, that was not the only happy occasion for Harry. No, Michael seemed to have been invested in the research of Soul Power even before they met. Michael made a few suggestions about Harry Baren's theory, which the researcher first denied before he took a second glance at it.

Michael didn't know much about Soul Power, but he often spent his time theorizing about Extraction, the SoulStar Fragments, Soultraits, and ways to maximize his power.

While he was busy spending his time with the four courses he applied for, and searching for ways to strengthen his subjects, two weeks passed in the blink of an eye.

Only 11 days were left before they would arrive in Kelta, where the real competition would begin.

By now, most students had formed groups, and the competitive spirit between the groups began to surface. A handful of fights had already broken out until now, and the tension would only increase in the next 11 days.

Michael didn't join any group, but he didn't make any enemies either. That was probably because he was around Kaleb Zenovia and the Barbaric Couple whenever he visited the cafeteria. The four didn't become friends after they trained next to each other for hours every single day, but they spent enough time together to get to know each other much better than before.



Frederik and Jacqueline were oddly silent since Michael had humiliatingly defeated them in the spar. But that was actually for the better. The couple focused on their training rather than wreaking havoc in the cafeteria, or throwing a tantrum whenever something didn't go their way.

Frederik's comments and provoking messages stopped as well. That one fight against Michael had been enough to open his eyes and beat some sense into him.

Michael made it a point to visit his territory every day. He spent more than half a day in the territory to help the injured and give out more orders. Furthermore, Michael introduced the body refinement technique [Sacred Rectification], and the neutral energy absorption technique called [Pandemonium's Requiem].

When Michael was given the technique a week after he signed the deal with the Bartholomew Corporation, he was stupefied. It was different from what he'd expected. Pandemonium's Requiem didn't really sound like an energy absorption technique to him. Fortunately, it was a high-grade neutral energy absorption technique of the highest quality.

He introduced the two techniques, followed up by some tactics which Alice had introduced to him. Alice Zenovia was very busy, but she found enough spare time to send some files to him a few days ago.

Michael was very thankful for her great support.

After he had received all the techniques and tactics from her and safely stored them, Michael got back to work. Most of his combatants had recuperated from their injuries within seven days. Michael gave them three more days to rest and make sure to get back to their peak state before they began hunting again.

The trauma caused by the Blood-eyed Minotaur was still apparent in the minds of some combatants, but they had overcome their fear by facing it head-on. Michael was lucky enough to summon a few 1-Star Summons with knowledge related to overcoming traumatic events.

That was something Michael desperately needed because his knowledge about psychology and how to tend to traumatized Soldiers was really bad. It was one of the mandatory courses in the Elite Class when he was in high school, but he never excelled at the subject.

Thus, four days ago more than 230 Soldiers of the territory's Military went into action. They began to hunt once again!

Within four days more than 1000 Low Tier-1 Monsters had been hunted, near-perfectly dissected, and transported to Xiltra, where they had been sold. Michael also sold the blueprints and Artifacts dropped by the Monsters, leaving himself with only a vast fortune of Zentik to purchase rare blueprints and 754 Ordinary Summoning Scrolls.

Michael purchased enough blueprints in Xiltra to fulfill his side of the deal with the Bartholomew Corporation. He earned a fortune from selling the blueprints to the shop manager, who had introduced herself as Selina Magna, at last.

The fortune was used up to initiate one of the tactics introduced by Alice; grow your own herbs and concoct energy-rich pills.

It may sound stupid but purchasing a ton of herbs and plants to grow, and a few recipes containing Low-grade energy pills seemed to be the most cost-efficient way to utilize cheap external means to accelerate the growth of his subjects.

The initial investment was extremely expensive, but the funds required for a long-term production of energy pills were rather low.

Thanks to Alice's tactic he was poor again. However, at the same time, his territory was stronger than ever.

Not a mere handful but a total of 30 Summons broke through the barrier and ascended to the 1st Tier in the last two weeks!!

The territory's foundation was growing firmer, slowly and steadily!

Chapter 158 Guests

The majority of the 30 Tier-1 Summons had a higher star rating.

Higher star ratings indicated better potential, which made it much easier to break through the barrier separating the Tiers.

That was also why the Nature Spirit and all 3-Star Subjects advanced to Tier-1 even though they had been summoned only recently.

Other than that, many Combat Summons had advanced to Tier-1 thanks to the support granted by external means, and the energy influx they obtained from killing Monsters.

Michael didn't venture out to hunt often, but his War Rune had also reached the low refinement degree of the 1st Tier by now. The soul share he received from his subjects was quite high, after all.

Even though his territory had grown much stronger than before, it opened a lot of opportunities for them to explore. In fact, it was because of the strength they gained that they had a lot more things to do.

One of the tasks they could focus on now that they had grown much stronger was the conquest of the lizard cave.

But before they started working on it, Michael had to look after a few more administrative tasks. He had summoned 750 Summons, who had to be introduced to the territory and help them settle down. Their helping hands had to be distributed according to their past lives work experience, and they had to be given a place to sleep.

They required nourishing meals, enough water, clothes, and the wish to support their Lord and territory. By planting a seed of desire in their hearts, Michael could ensure that his subjects would work hard to maintain the basic living conditions they'd been granted upon being summoned and would strive to upgrade their living conditions to a higher level.

Michael knew that not everyone would selflessly sacrifice their time and effort to work tirelessly for their Lord and territory. Thus, he provided new summons with a basic package or more of a welcome kit to ensure their survival. They would survive in his territory even if they wouldn't work hard. After all, Michael gained something from their sheer existence; their Link of Loyalty strengthened his Soultraits.

To gain a higher level of treatment, which included a home, better food, more sets of clothes, and the chance to take a glimpse at the neutral energy absorption technique [Pandemonium's Requiem] the subjects had to work hard. Starless Summons would be distributed tasks evenly and given work somewhere inside the territory.

Meanwhile, 1-Star Summons and Summons with a higher star rating would pursue their occupation and strive toward helping their Lord and territory while becoming more adept at their occupation.

There were even higher perks, but they could only be attained by having an increasingly firm Link of Loyalty, and by meeting certain conditions.

As long as they fulfilled the above criteria, they're given energy pills, better resources, tools, and equipment, and full access to copies of [Sacred Rectification] and [Pandemonium's Requiem].

It was necessary to implement different levels of benefits offered at this point in the territory's progress. His territory's population expanded rapidly, and it was not possible to distribute all the resources uniformly among his subjects. In the first place, not every Summon was in dire need of energy pills, forging blueprints, books related to forging, concocting, enchanting, carpentry, and so on.

Michael also noticed that some Starless Summons had grown lazy. Before implementing the new reward system, everyone received the same opportunities whether they worked tirelessly for their Lord and territory, or if they didn't do anything. It didn't really matter before. That resulted in increased laziness and slacking around. Not everyone loved to support their Lord wholeheartedly.

It was understandable.

However, Michael couldn't accept that lazy subjects received the same benefits and perks as hard-working subjects. Thus, the new system was implemented, allowing the lazy slackers to survive and sleep in a slightly crowded space, and eat ordinary, but filling food.

After the new system was implemented, a portion of the lazy slackers began to work harder again. Not everyone did their best, but the situation improved considerably.

Slowly but steadily, everything in the territory seemed to be working out.

There was no news about the three Lionhearts, who had been tasked with the Senator's secret mission, either.

Michael finally felt like he wasn't surrounded by trouble all the time. The last two weeks had been quite enjoyable, peaceful, and very beneficial.

At last, Michael perfected the Berserker Physique's first stage. He had yet to complete the second stage and finish the Berserker Physique for good, but Michael was not in a hurry. Rushing through the second stage wouldn't help him in any way. Slow and meticulous work was far more important when it came to the refinement of the body. Everything had to be perfect, after all if he did not want to injure himself.

Michael could have switched to the Sacred Rectification technique now that he finished the Berserker Physique's first stage. However, he didn't want to change mid-way – even if it was possible to do so using Sacred Rectification. Switching to new techniques whenever something with higher potential appeared wasn't good. Michael would rather finish one process after another to minimize risk and ensure the best performance.

"What should I do now?" Michael murmured to himself as he went through his mental to-do list.

There was a lot to do, but nothing that put him in a tight spot. He wasn't pressed on time anymore which was quite a relief.

Unfortunately, his joy didn't last long.

The moment he saw Little Rabbit, the young Demi-human from the Speedster Rabbitfolk barge through the thicket of bushes, he knew that something was wrong.

Little Rabbit looked distressed as she charged straight at him. She was so fast that Michael thought Little Rabbit might have advanced to the 2nd Tier. Of course, that was not the case. She was just in stress, which resulted in her racial trait activating itself naturally.

"Lord, you have to see this!!" Little Rabbit shouted loudly.

She could barely slow down to prevent crashing into Michael and skidded to a halt inches away from him.

"Did you guys find something? Is it a Tier-2 Monster?" Michael asked, without feeling too worried.

After working tirelessly on the conquest of the lizard cavern, Michael and his people came up with various ways to separate Tier-2 Monster groups and how to kill them. He could keep his calm in front of her. After all, he was confident enough to say that they had grown strong enough to win against the Blood-eyed Minotaur without a single casualty if the attack were to happen now.

That was how strong they had grown. Another encounter with a Monster like the Blood-eyed Minotaur wouldn't end in a humiliating defeat this time!

However, Little Rabbit shook her head, "There is no monster, my Lord!"

'Hmmm?'

"We found a group of Forest Elves!" Little Rabbit added, her voice filled with concern.

"Forest Elves? Do you mean the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer Team?" Michael asked, slightly confused. Tiara and Blaire knew about the EmeraldLeaf team, and that they were the only Forest Elves nearby.

"Why didn't you guys bring them over? They're not our allies, but the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team is not our enemy either," Michael said lightly. He was not too bothered about hiding the territory's progress from the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team.

However, Little Rabbit didn't seem to be convinced. No, the conviction was not the problem.

"My Lord...that might be a little bit difficult..." She began to speak, only to shut her mouth when she saw the darkness deep inside Michael's eyes.

He looked straight into her eyes, causing Little Rabbit to lose the ability to speak for a moment.

"They've been poisoned, and it looks like they were pursued. Tiara and the others weren't sure what to do with them..." Little Rabbit revealed at last.

"Pursued? So, they brought guests?" Michael asked, which Little Rabbit affirmed with a faint nod.

"Then let's welcome our guests!"

Chapter 159 Poisoned

Michael looked at the writhing figures of the five Forest Elves with a deep frown.

Their breathing was rough, and it looked like they were about to pass out at any moment. The five Forest Elves were conscious, yet at the same time, they weren't.

Tiara was standing next to him, wearing her combat armaments and a grim expression. She and the territory's army had been hunting when they noticed a commotion. They found the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer Team lying on the ground, writhing in pain as they tried to endure the effect of the highly potent poison that coursed through their bodies.

Due to the poison, the bluish vein beneath their fair skin had turned purple. They were throbbing wildly and were clearly visible to the eye.

"What happened to them?" Michael asked quietly while bending down.

His hands hovered above Lilica's body, golden streams manifesting in his palms.

"Icarus, Iglisis, Blaire, and her tracker team are currently observing the pursuers from a considerable distance. They'll warn us once the pursuers get too close to us, or our territory," Tiara explained calmly.

She threw one glance at the Forest Elves writhing in pain and added, "It looks like there are quite a few Adventurers after them!"

That was not an answer to his question, but Michael simply nodded his head. He began to use Extraction on the Forest Elves to extract the poison that coursed through their veins.

Extracting the poison within all of them required great focus and a total of half an hour. Afterward, they were given healing potions to invigorate them and aid their recuperation.

In the meantime, the pursuers inched closer to their position. Iglisis reported that they had issues passing through the densely grown Untamed Jungle and that the pursuers were very careful. They expected to encounter monsters and the Forest Elves behind every bush and tree trunk.

According to Iglisis, most pursuers were also injured. Some even pursued the Forest Elves after they'd sustained severe injuries.

'Why are they doing that? Are their lives worth less than their desire to kill the Forest Elves?' Michael wondered at this point.

It wouldn't take long before they would encounter the pursuers, and Michael had yet to make a decision about what he was going to do.

"W-where are we?" A weak voice reached his ears.

Michael turned around and saw that the first Forest Elf had regained consciousness fully.

"What happened?" He asked instead of answering the Forest Elf's question.

Something felt off. The trackers reported a few minutes ago that the pursuers were split up in six different groups, and that it looked like the six groups were not working together. They insulted each other and threatened to attack each other more than once.



Michael believed that the pursuers were different Adventurer teams, which had joined their forces to pursue the EmeraldLeaf team into the Untamed Jungle. But that was especially weird.

By now, Michael had been to Xiltra many times. Hence, he knew that most people avoided the Untamed Jungle. Rumors in the city were ripe that most Adventurers wouldn't make it out of the Untamed Jungle if they were to venture in – which was more or less the truth.

If one didn't know the topography of the Untamed Jungle, and the location of the monster habitats, it would be quite difficult to pave a way through the Untamed Jungle and survive.

"Y-you...you are the human Lord... Are we in the Untamed Jungle?" The Elf asked weakly, barely able to keep her eyes open.

"What happened to you guys?" Michael asked again, a little bit sharper this time.

The Elf's pointed ears twitched, and she moved her head to look straight into Michael's dark eyes. The next moment, her eyes turned moist.

She was not able to say anything as she pressed her lips together in a thin line and began to cry silently.

Fortunately, Lilica had regained her full consciousness as well. She was disoriented and looked around to figure out where they were. She only stopped moving frantically when she saw Michael.

"Thank Yggdrasil. We're not dead," Lilica murmured while the tension in her body eased a little.

She ended up lying flat on the ground, staring gratefully at the canopy of humongous trees high up in the air.

"We were on a mission," Lilica said after a minute of silence.

"A mission?"

"Yes, but that doesn't matter right now," Lilica sighed deeply before she added, "Important is just that the mission was outside Xiltru, and that six Adventurer Teams ambushed us. We managed to kill or cripple the strongest Adventurers we faced, but they managed to poison each of us..."

A stunned silence followed Lilica's words. It was only when the remaining members of the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer regained their full consciousness that one of them added painfully, "...Jighorim sacrificed himself to help us flee into the Untamed Jungle..."

"If six Adventurer teams joined their forces, you guys must have offended someone big in Xiltru. What did you guys do?" Michael asked straightforwardly.

While it was sad that one of them had sacrificed his life to protect his team, that was not important to Michael. He didn't want to intervene in a battle against a powerhouse if Lilica and her team had done something stupid.

Michael may not hate the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team, but it was not as if they were best friends either. Their relationship was nothing special – and he wouldn't sacrifice his loyal subjects by offending another powerhouse just to save a few people he was barely acquainted with. Senator Keltos was already problematic enough.

"That's the thing. We didn't offend anyone. Since we're the only Forest Elves in Xiltru, and one of the few groups of Forest Elves in the entire Zentika Empire, we have always been very careful. The only time one of us has been careless was when our youngest went out to drink with a few Lionhearts. He exposed that there is a Lord in the Untamed Jungle – you. However, that is something I already told you, and it is not exactly something that justifies the ambush of six Adventurer teams either..." Lilica said while her tone grew colder as the words tumbled out of her mouth.

"I think...I heard someone asking if we've killed the Blood-eyed Minotaur..." A weak voice from behind Lilica added all of a sudden.

It was one of the other Forest Elves, who had regained his consciousness.

"One of them asked me who our Master is. It was a little weird. We clashed, and he asked that question out of nowhere," Another Forest Elf added.

At this point, Michael roughly understood what must have happened.

'Did the remaining subordinates of the Senator take action? That should be it!' Michael murmured to himself, 'That must be it! They probably thought that the Forest Elves lied to them to kill the Lionheart Leader and his group, and the Lionheart, who was working with the Blood-Eyed Minotaur's group. That's why they chose to eliminate the EmeraldLeaf team altogether!'

Michael couldn't be certain that his guess was right, but he was confident that it was, at least, close to the truth.

He took a deep breath, and let a few thoughts run through his mind.

Not long after, Blaire, her group of trackers, and the two aerial units of his combat team returned to him.

The pursuers were about to reach them.

Michael manifested the Onyx Dragon Armor Set before he waved his arm once. In the following seconds, the territory's entire army disappeared in the thicket of the Origin Expanse.

"The guests are about to arrive," Michael mumbled with a small smile on his face,

"How about we welcome our guests?"

Chapter 160 Military Might

After sending off everyone else, Michael and the Forest Elves were left alone.

The poison inside the Forest Elves had been extracted, but they were still worn out and drained of all the origin energy. Maybe, they could release a few arrows, killing one or two Tier-1 Adventurers in the process, but that was already it. Their combat prowess was nowhere close to their peak.

"Will he rat us out?" One of the Forest Elves couldn't help but ask Lilica.

She could tell that none in Michael's Army was above the 1st Tier. In fact, the Battle Maid seemed to be the strongest – and she was merely a Mid Tier-1 Adventurer.

Lilica didn't seem too bothered by that. She wasn't close to Michael, but their few encounters were enough for her to have a rough image of the young human Lord.

Michael could have hated them for the mistake the youngest in their team made. Their youngest told a Lionheart about Michael and his territory when he was dead drunk. Yet, instead of blaming the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team for what happened afterward i.e., the attack of the large Lionheart Adventurer team, and taking revenge, Michael stayed put.

He even helped them remove the poison in their bodies, saving their lives in the process. Why would he have done that if his plan was to get rid of them?

Michael decided to ignore the discussion of the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team. Instead, he focused on the commotion that broke out in front of him.

The first Destors, Lionhearts, and members of other races broke through the thicket of the Untamed Jungle. They noticed the Forest Elves, along with Michael immediately and didn't hesitate to charge forward.

Meanwhile, Michael took a step forward as well.

"Did Leopold Darkin, Olikan Darkin, or Zuak Paluv send you guys?" He asked the six Adventurer teams calmly as they charged ahead.

The six Adventurer teams had more than forty members left. Six of them were Low Tier-2 Adventurers, while the rest were either at the Peak of the 1st Tier or at the Late stage.

Under normal circumstances, Michael would be shuddering at the sight of such a powerful force charging at him. However, Michael's expression didn't change. He remained as calm as before.

Some of the Adventurers slowed down for a moment when they heard what Michael asked, while others snapped at him, "Just shut up and die!!"

Michael raised an eyebrow at the outburst. His gaze never left the Adventurers as they passed slowly through the densely grown Untamed Jungle.

He raised his arm slowly and cleaved downward once his arm was fully stretched out.

The next moment, the Siltang Bow manifested in Michael's empty hand. Simultaneously, the canopy of trees was covered by spears and arrows that flew through the air in a beautiful arc.

Earth spikes shot out of the ground, and water whips emerged from all directions.

The attacks impacted one after another. The water whips coiled around the arms and legs of the Adventurers in the vicinity, restricting their movements before the earth spikes pierced their calves. Simultaneously, the spears and arrows hit their targets, further immobilizing them.

The majority of the Adventurer teams used their Soultraits and Artifacts to block the attacks or evade them. However, some of them were a second too late. Targeted by the water whips and the earth spikes, they couldn't even move as a barrage of spears and arrows hit them hard.

As if that was not enough, precisely targeted crossbow bolts whizzed through the air the next moment, piercing through the vital points of the Adventurers that had been hit the worst.

Michael watched the release of the first barrage of projectiles with a satisfied smile.

He might have chosen to spare them if they were unwilling to kill him. However, none of the six Adventurer teams seemed to care about his life. It was not as if Michael expected them to care but being targeted with killing intent allowed Michael's consciousness to be void of guilt and remorse while killing them.

He conjured an energy arrow, began to draw the bowstring back, and activated Eagle Eyes. After adjusting his angle once, Michael released the arrow. It whizzed through the air with terrific velocity and pierced through the eye of the closest opponent.

"That was a little weak," He murmured to himself before exerting Lesser Enhancement.

Michael conjured another arrow and pulled the bowstring back once again. He released the second arrow in the next second.

Alongwith Michael's second attack, the second barrage of more than 100 projectiles shot through the vicinity simultaneously. The pressure was less than before because there were no earth spikes nor water whips restricting the Adventurers. Nonetheless, more than a dozen projectiles found a way to their designated target.

It was only after the second barrage that Michael retrieved the Siltang Bow. He manifested Seron Voulge and whistled aloud. Following his whistle, the bushes all around the Adventurers began to shake. A tremor rang out from the left and a screech reached their ears from the right.

The Heavy Armored Elephant barged through the bushes on the left, and Icarus dived down from the canopy bridge from the right. Icarus dived down swiftly and picked up one of the Destors before he shot back into the air.

Meanwhile, the Heavy Armored Elephant charged ahead fearlessly – but it was not alone. The Demi-Humans, Warriors, Spearmen, Knights, Berserker, and everyone else followed behind the Heavy Armored Elephant.

The territory's close combat units emerged from all directions, led by the Heavy Armored Elephant on the left, and by Tiara on the right side.

Thunderous roars filled the surroundings as the Warriors roared out loudly. Their morale skyrocketed as a third barrage of arrows and spears flew through the air. The projectiles impacted moments before the Warriors appeared in front of their opponents.

The earth spikes and water whips didn't resurface anymore. But that was only a short moment of relief for the few Tier-2 Adventurers in the front who found themselves caught in the mud and faced with a sudden pulling force that wanted to pull them underground as if they were stuck in quicksand.

Luckily, escaping the mud trap was not too difficult for them. However, it grew increasingly tiring to evade the projectiles flying toward them while trying to escape the muddy pool. The Tier-2 Adventurers were already injured and not in their best form anymore. Fighting against the Forest Elves had been more devastating than expected.

Nonetheless, the Tier-2 Adventurers were not weak. They possessed multiple Tier-1 Artifacts respectively and could utilize their Soultraits to gain an advantage.

Their vitality was strong enough to ignore most projectiles that found their way to them. They were simply not strong enough.

However, everything changed when several Assassins appeared around them all of a sudden. As their weapons were coated in poison, even minor injuries could turn into a big problem.

But that was not everything. A small group of Cavalry Riders passed through the thicket of the Untamed Jungle. They rode through the bushes and shrubs in a straight line, pierced a weak Adventurer, who was already covered in several cuts, and impaled the Adventurer with their lance.

Afterward, they dragged the impaled Adventurer through the bushes until they disappeared in the thicket of the Untamed Jungle. The only thing the impaled Adventurers left behind were endless screams of terror. At one point, the screams died down, and an eerie silence followed suit.

But the fight was not yet over. The massacre had just begun, and the Forest Elves witnessed all of it from the VIP seats.

"What the... This... I am not seeing things, right?" One of the Forest Elves asked, feeling utterly confused.

However, even Lilica wasn't sure what to say right now. She stared blankly at the massacre that unveiled itself in front of her, her expression turning uglier by the second.

"If you're seeing what I see, then we're not imagining things."

"...But it doesn't make sense!" The young Elf exclaimed, and Lilica couldn't agree more.

"No, it doesn't."