

Supreme Lord 201

Chapter 201 At A Loss

Michael thought for a long time about the next step to remove the threat of the Jungle Expedition, but he felt a little helpless.

He read the reports written by Blaire, her disciples, and the Forest Elf Summons to have as many detailed pieces of information as possible. Yet, Michael didn't have a foolproof plan.

Multiple strategies formed in his mind, but none of them seemed perfect. Something was missing...and Michael could not put his finger on it.

The thought of trying to reach something within reach but still grasping just air was unbearable. It made him feel like something was eating him from the inside out.

"It should be fine if I leave the Origin Expanse for a few minutes, right?" Michael murmured to himself.

He hoped that a change of scenery would clear his mind and that the missing piece would fall into his lap.

"The scouts of the Jungle Expedition are still far away, and Icarus hasn't returned yet either. So, I believe it will take a while before the Jungle Expedition starts. Just make sure that you come back safe," Lilica said calmly.

At least, she was trying to stay calm. That was pretty difficult in the given situation.

For a moment, she hoped that the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team could just disappear and never return so that they would not have to worry about any of this. However, she knew deep down that it was wrong and selfish. If they did that, Michael would die, his territory would be destroyed, and thousands of Forest Elf Summons would disappear as well.

There was also Michael's tireless effort to produce Armaments for the Forest Elven tribe, and the Forest Elf Summoning Core installed in his Summoning Gate. Even if she was worried, Lilica knew that they would never be able to leave. The entire EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team understood this fact very well.

It was a little bit problematic that thousands of invaders were about to infiltrate the Untamed Jungle, but it was not as if they weren't prepared. The issue was just the scale of the Jungle Expedition and their high numerical advantage.

"I will return in no time. I won't abandon my territory, don't worry," Michael said reassuringly as he manifested the Runic Gate.

He stepped through the Runic Gate and disappeared, leaving Lilica and the others behind.

"You would rather die than see your territory be destroyed, I know," Lilica murmured quietly.

If not for Michael being the Lord of this territory, Lilica and the rest of the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team would have left by now. The threat of the Jungle Expedition was too much to handle for them. Michael's territory didn't even have a military force exceeding 1000 combatants. Only the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer Team's members were at Tier-2 as well.

No matter how they looked at the situation, they could not see any way to overcome this ordeal.

Yet, Michael didn't panic. On the contrary, he immediately initiated an attack to kill hundreds of opponents to reduce the number of opponents even before the Jungle Expedition began.

Then Michael extracted something from the Adventurers that caused the War Runes of the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team to go crazy.

They had yet to ask Michael what these transparent marbles were, but it was not difficult to tell that they were something amazing.

Since the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team joined Michael's territory they learned a lot about Michael, his special powers, and the reason his territory had prospered so much.

The most important reason was Extraction. He could expand the population of his territory much faster than anyone else, but that was not all. It looked like Michael could do much more with Extraction than they first presumed.

Michael didn't tell them a lot about Extraction, but they figured that Michael was in possession of four, or more, Soultraits. They also knew that he had a Soultrait that was eerily similar to the Soultrait used by the Lionheart Leader.

Slowly but steadily the mystery about Michael's Soultraits was unveiled. However, Michael didn't really care about that. If he had been too bothered about keeping Extraction a secret, he would have acted more vigilant.

But there were more important things to pay attention to right now.

Ensuring the safety of his territory was his number-one priority right now!

Michael was deep in thought after he stepped out of his room. He was supposed to be in the training hall as his individual teaching with Alice was today.

Thus, he rushed over to the training hall where both Alice and Kaleb were already training.

Kaleb joined their individual teaching after he manifested his War Rune.

He was mostly focused on his Soultrait study, but he occasionally sparred with Michael.

Today, Kaleb wanted to spar with Michael again. He felt that his control of the Frozen Nova Soultrait had improved enough to fight Michael. If nothing went wrong he might even be able to defeat Michael!

Unfortunately, Michael wasn't in the training hall when he and Alice arrived for the training session.

Kaleb's spirits dampened in an instant, while Alice only shrugged and gave his brother a reassuring pat. Michael was a reliable man. Alice was sure that Michael had a good reason for his late arrival.

However, she didn't expect Michael to be covered in dried blood when he arrived in the training hall.

His short hair was disheveled and he looked like he hadn't bathed in the last few days. His clothes were torn, while blood and dirt were smeared all across his body.

"I won't be able to attend the next few classes. I might have to stay in the Origin Expanse for a few days," Michael said immediately, instead of greeting the siblings.

Kaleb frowned deeply after hearing what Michael said. Seeing his appearance, Kaleb immediately recalled the last time Michael had stayed in the Origin expanse for a longer period. Not only was Michael injured after that, but his mood had been the worst for several days. He had even beat up Frederik and Jacqueline, fighting like a ferocious beast.

Kaleb sensed that something was wrong.

"Will you be fine?" He asked.

Michael just shrugged while looking at his friend, "Probably."

Only when she heard the slight trace of uncertainty in Michael's voice did Alice react.

"What's the issue?" I think you should take a look at

The reason Michael had headed to the training hall was to clear his mind and talk a little to Alice and Kaleb. He wanted to be distracted from the upcoming mid-scale battle. However, it looked like Alice didn't want to give him the peace of distraction.

But that might actually be for the best. Alice had more experience with the Origin Expanse. She would definitely know what he had to do.

"It's a little bit difficult to explain," Michael began to speak but he halted in his tracks the next instant.

Was he going to expose his territory, or would he keep some information a secret?

'It doesn't really matter where my territory lies, right? Not a single human Lord is nearby, either way. Why am I overthinking again? Just act like the foolish idiot you are and reveal everything. If that's needed to save your people, do it, you fool!!!'

Michael slapped his cheeks with great force. A loud slap resounded in the training hall, causing the Zenovia siblings to stare at Michael with slight surprise.

They had never seen Michael like that – flustered and uncertain about what to do next. It was totally different from his usual behavior.

That meant Michael's situation was far from easy to handle.

"My territory is located in the outer area of a really dangerous region, and a Native Empire funded an expedition recently. They want to clear the outer area of the region for the first time in decades."

Michael didn't speak loudly, but the siblings heard every word he said.

"There are two problems; I might have annoyed a Senator of that Native Empire by killing some of his subordinates in the last few months. He never found out that I was the one who killed them, and he probably thinks that the perpetrator or cause is related to the region I have my territory in. Setting aside the first problem, the second one is a little bit more annoying...the expedition has more than 60,000 participants. Most of them are Mercenaries, but at least 10,000 are Adventurers."

The tension in the room intensified when Michael voiced out the second problem. 60,000 combatants were equivalent to a mid-scale army. No matter how strong they were individually, the collective force was already enough to give Kaleb goosebumps.

"Their combat prowess ranges from Tier-1 to Tier-3 – though there are only a few dozen Tier-3 Awakened. Sooo....I'm currently at a loss of how to tackle them because I am trying to think of a way to kill them all without exposing the existence of my territory just yet. Until now, that worked pretty well, but it will be a 'little' bit more difficult."

Michael scratched the back of his head, and he sighed heavily before he added quietly.

"...I am not even that bothered about exposing the location of my territory. It's more important to survive the attack of tens of thousands..."

Alice raised an eyebrow after listening to Michael's worries. Meanwhile, Kaleb's frown deepened.

He might have called all of this a bluff had it been someone else but over the last few weeks, he had gotten a better understanding of Michael and his thought process.

Kaleb was certain that Michael was one of the worst liars in existence. Even if he had some secrets, Michael would rather admit that he had secrets, or that he couldn't talk about something instead of lying.

But that didn't really help in this situation. In fact, Kaleb hoped sincerely that Michael was lying to them right now. If not, Michael's situation was truly the worst.

"Do you need some help? If you need something, I can help you out!" Kaleb thus offered without hesitation.

But Michael just chuckled lightly, "If you cannot lend me a bunch of Tier-3 Soldiers, or your Soultrait, I don't think you can help me."

"..."

Kaleb shut his mouth and frowned deeply.

"I don't know how strong your territory's military force is, but you should try to use the surrounding environment to your advantage. If they need Tier-3 Adventurers to conquer the outer area of the region, it holds a certain degree of danger. Sending more than 60,000 participants also means that the region is quite big. Try to make use of the region's size and existing dangers in your favor as much as possible," Alice advised.

"If the topography is complex and dangerous, exploit that. If there are powerful monsters nearby, use them to your advantage."

Alice gave him a few more tips, but there was only so much she could do. Her pieces of advice might be helpful, but she didn't know Michael's territory as well as he did. It was his battle and only he could fight it well.

If Michael had time, he would have tried finding out some secrets about his enemies, and exploiting certain aspects of his territory, and the means he could deploy to outwit his opponents. However, time was a luxury he could not afford right now.

Hence, Michael listened to Alice's advice intently. Her experience in dealing with enemies in the Origin Expanse helped him a lot, especially since her advice came from someone who didn't know everything about his region. She could stay neutral and look at the situation from a completely different point of view. That helped him a lot.

Furthermore, Alice's words allowed him to gain a better understanding of certain things. He recalled some things he had totally forgotten. It might allow him to change the tide of the Jungle Expedition a little.

"Thanks a lot. You guys are the best!" Michael shouted with renewed enthusiasm. He manifested the Runic Gate and smiled vibrantly, "I'll be going!!"

Then he disappeared inside the Runic Gate, leaving the siblings alone.

"Sis...is it just me, or is Michael's territory's surroundings way too dangerous? I encountered a few Lords, but I've yet to encounter a Monster at the Peak of Tier-1. Why is Michael already fighting Tier-3 Adventurers...and why is he so nonchalantly talking about Tier-2 Awakened? It sounds almost as if he

has been fighting Tier-2 Adventurers and Monsters for a while now..." Kaleb asked, while his eyes were still lingering on the spot his friend had disappeared from.

"When did you start fighting Tier-3 Awakened? Maybe, I'm the slow one here," He added, not sure what kind of answer he wanted to hear from his sister.

Alice smiled wryly – or she tried to. Her smile disappeared, leaving behind an expression filled with uncertainty and confusion.

"I think I was already close to Tier-3 when I encountered my first Tier-3 Awakened in the Origin Expanse. But that was only a single Tier-3 Awakened, and I had to fight him using the territory's whole army. The losses I faced were terrifying. The Glacier Flood Dragon of mine nearly died because he was only a Low Tier-2 Flood Dragon at that time," She said truthfully.

Kaleb's head was beginning to hurt already by just thinking about the dangers his friend was going to face.

"I think he'll have a hard time...will he be fine?" He asked his sister.

"Well. We will see..." She mumbled, "But one thing is for sure."

"Hmm?"

"If he survives, he will come back far stronger than ever."

Chapter 202 5-Star Soultrait

Michael was full of vigor when he returned to the Origin Expanse.

Not even 20 minutes had passed inside the Origin Expanse, but Michael was a changed man.

He entered the deepest part of his consciousness where the white pillar of his War Rune was located. The 2757 SoulStar Fragments were already resting around the white pillar, waiting to be used.

And that was what Michael did without a sign of hesitation.

First, he used 19 SoulStar Fragments to upgrade Taming to a 3-Star Soultrait. Then, he used 185 SoulStar Fragments to create the 4th Star on the Symbol of Taming, followed by 2314 SoulStar Fragments that were required to upgrade Taming to a 5th Star Soultrait.

A vast amount of detailed pieces of information flooded Michael's mind for the next ten minutes. He calmly digested the information, which allowed him to learn more about the limits of Taming, and what he had to pay attention to.

Once he was done, Michael had 239 SoulStar Fragments left. He used them on Spirit Whip after some consideration.

Lesser Enhancement or Eagle Eyes might be a better pick than Spirit Whip, but Spirit Whip allowed him to execute mental attacks. As long as his opponent was unguarded, he or she would falter after a single Spirit Whip struck them. Afterward, he could finish off the opponent rather easily.

Furthermore, even if his opponent was guarding his mind, Spirit Whip would still restrict his opponents' usage of their Soultraits and Artifacts' special enchantments. That was very important against the fire-wielding Lionhearts and more than ten thousand Adventurers.

Spirit Whip's range and lethality increased considerably after the 4th Star formed on the Symbol of Spirit Whip. It provided the means to create various new tactics that had seemed impossible before.

Nonetheless, the most important was the upgrade of Taming.

Michael had never used Taming before, but he knew that it was about time he changed this.

If not for Alice's words, Michael would have forgotten about Taming. But that was not all. Without Alice, Michael might not have thought of a particular Monster to tame.

Feeling determined, he walked over to the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team, where Blaire, Tiara, and a few other people were already standing.

"I found a way to deal with the Jungle Expedition," Michael announced with a great deal of confidence.

Everyone turned around to him, not expecting him to return to the Origin Expanse this quickly.

"You're back, Master!" Tiara exclaimed before she bowed deeply.

The other subjects followed suit and bowed deeply as well, but Michael merely waved his hand dismissively. They didn't have enough time for formalities.

"Has anyone explored the densely grown part of Fiend Trees a dozen kilometers behind the lizard cave yet?" Michael asked, just to add the most important part a moment later, "In detail, I mean."

The fiend trees were trees that had been ordinary giant trees but were corrupted over the course of decades. The monsters inhabiting the area released origin energy that had been altered after coursing through their bodies. The altered origin energy then affected the surrounding area, which included the flora and fauna.

"The fiend trees in the middle zone? Mika should have been there a few times to research the alteration of the giant trees. However, he encountered a bunch of nasty Blood Oath Demon Monkeys, forcing him to retreat after a while," Liopham said, his head turning slowly to the youngest Forest Elf of the EmeraldLead Adventurer team.

"Do you know where the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys live?" Michael asked before Mika could say anything.

"I...do know that, but why are you asking?" Mika asked slowly, feeling that something bad was about to happen.

"We're going to hunt them, and tame their king, the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King!" Michael announced, dropping the bomb as if he was discussing the current weather.

"You want to tame the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King?" Lilica asked, feeling certain that her ears were failing her.

Unfortunately, Michael nodded his head in agreement.

"That's right."

"But you know that the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King is a Tier-2 Monster, a Superior Existence with exceptionally high combat prowess at that, right?" Liopham asked, hoping to convince Michael to change his plan.

"The whole EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team is too weak to fight the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King. He can control the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys, which turns him into an existence equal to a Lord. The only thing he is missing is a Soultrait, otherwise, I would consider him a Lord," Mika said, his voice shrill and filled with the desire to run away from Michael.

To him, it looked like Michael had lost his sanity. The thought of the Jungle Expedition infiltrating the Untamed Jungle must have driven him to insanity! I think you should take a look at

However, Michael merely nodded his head again.

"That's why I need to tame the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King. The ordinary Blood Oath Demon Monkeys are only at the Peak of Tier-1 once fully matured. However, their combat prowess rivals a Tier-2 Monster. Their king can control their whole kind, which means that we can gain a small army of hundreds of Monsters with high combat prowess by taming the king."

Liopham and Mika were not yet convinced, but Tiara and Lilica looked at each other with a trace of understanding.

They were convinced the more Michael spoke about his idea.

Under normal circumstances, nourishing hundreds of subjects with a combat prowess rivaling Tier-2 mercenaries would take months. And Michael had found a risky but a sure-shot way to achieve that within the next few hours as long as he tamed the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King.

It was definitely worth a try.

"I will use Lesser Enhancement on Liopham's Spirit Totem, which will focus solely on the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King. Then, we'll lure him into the lizard cave and pin him down. I'll need half a minute to tame a Tier-2 Superior Existence. That's all I could achieve by upgrading Taming. If I had enough time, I might be able to reduce the time required to create the taming circle, but we don't have that much time unfortunately," Michael laid out the basic steps of his plan, which Tiara approved with a nod.

She thought that taming the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King was the best chance they got.

"I would have to use Rage of the Primal several times to lure the Monkey King and drag him more than a dozen kilometers through the Untamed Jungle...." Liopham mumbled, shaking his head, "That's impossible. I will be dead long before I reach the lizard cave."

"That's why the rest of the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team will attack the Monkey King with two poison-coated Pieckers each. The Blood Oath Demon Monkey King's body can heal flesh wounds quickly, but poison is different. The Demon Monkey King won't be able to heal fast as long as we use the Blood Parthen poison from back home," Lilica added, her expression lighting up slowly.

She regained her former vigor and a tinge of excitement spread through her body as the cogs in her mind began to work.

Even though Lilica had no idea what Michael meant by talking about 'upgrading Taming', she could tell that Michael was not lying to them. At least, that was what she believed firmly.

"The Blood Parthen poison..." Mika mumbled, tilting his head as if he was thinking hard, "...that might actually work..."

The Blood Oath Demon Monkeys had two special traits; Demon Blood, and Flesh Regeneration.

Flesh wounds healed several times faster than they would under normal circumstances, and their blood had been altered by Demon blood, providing them demonic instincts, strength, and viciousness.

But at the same time, the Demon Blood trait was something that could be used against them. As long as their blood was poisoned, it would be increasingly difficult for them to stay in control of their bodies.

Michael gave Lilica a thumbs up. He didn't expect her to approve of his plan, and to improve it by giving a helpful suggestion.

In fact, he thought that Lilica would curse him for the plan he came up with. It wouldn't be the first time, after all.

Fortunately, that didn't happen. She approved his plan, and they spent the next hour creating a few strategies to hunt down and tame the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King without having to slaughter his underlings.

Lilica and the others returned home to get hold of the Blood Parthen poison, which was a rare poison that required a Grandmaster Alchemist and expensive ingredients to be brewed.

Fortunately, Michael received the Forest Elven Tribe Elders' approval to use the Blood Parthen poison. That made things much easier on his side.

They prepared everything and headed in the direction of the lizard cave.

In the next two hours, they tried to lure the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King out of the densely grown patch of fiend trees. It took a while to locate their lair and to find the king. But once they did, Plan A was quickly executed.

The Forest Elves approached the lair of the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King stealthily. They passed by hundreds of Blood Oath Demon Monkeys without being found out.

Once they were close enough, they retrieved their Woodwoven Bows, and the Pieckers coated in Blood Parthen poison.

The four Forest Elves took their time nocking the Pieckers on the bowstring and drew back. They aimed precisely and waited patiently until Liopham made his move.

Once Liopham's Soultrait was fully unleashed, and the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King targeted, everything happened quickly.

The Blood Oath Demon Monkey King roared out loudly.

Simultaneously, a barrage of four Pieckers whizzed through the air with terrific velocity.

Chapter 203 Capture

The barrage of Pieckers shot through the densely grown flora and fauna without being restricted in any way.

They impacted hard and drilled deep into the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King's joints where the Blood Parthen poison began to spread.

The Blood Oath Demon Monkey King roared out once again. He tried to locate the invaders, who were daring enough to attack him in his own territory. Yet, before he could find the invaders, a second barrage of Pieckers came flying at him.

The Blood Oath Demon Monkey King's lengthy arms and tail shot out. He plucked two Pieckers out of the air while blocking a third with his tail. Meanwhile, the fourth Piecker found its way into the monster's left calf.

A roar escaped the Monkey King's mouth as he felt something invading his body.

His palms began to itch, and it was only now that the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King saw the dark-red Blood Parthen Poison that was seeping into his palms.

Blood Parthen Poison was semi-sentient and said to be alive. It would move and infiltrate the bloodstream of any being whose blood was exposed. That turned it into a deadly weapon, but also into a dangerous tool. A small cut in your palm was enough to activate the Blood Parthen Poison. In the worst case, it would infiltrate the bloodstream of the person, who initially wanted to use it on others.

It had to be used with extreme caution!

The Forest Elves used it carefully. They avoided getting poisoned and rushed out of the patch of fiend trees when they knew that the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King had been poisoned.

Now it was Liopham's turn to keep the monster under the influence of the Spirit Totem.

The Forest Elves disappeared long before the ordinary Blood Oath Demon Monkeys reached their former position. They roared loudly but couldn't find the perpetrators.

They didn't stop searching for the ghost-like invader for a long time. Their king didn't order them to stop, which meant that they would relentlessly seek their enemy. Only after their enemy was split into two halves in front of their eyes would they be able to calm down.

But some Blood Oath Demon Monkeys were confused after a while. Their king would have given them orders to spread out and continue their search by now. However, there hadn't been an order since the invaders arrived.

A few demon monkeys turned back to the lair of their King, only to find out that their King had disappeared.

The Blood Oath Demon Monkey King's eyes were bloodshot as he nimbly moved through the Untamed Jungle. He was extremely fast and pursued the thing that caused constant pain and suffering in his head.

When he found the Spirit Totem the first time, he lunged forward but it disappeared a moment before he could crush it. The Spirit Totem then reappeared a few kilometers ahead. Enraged, and void of rationality, the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King unleashed his physical strength and burst in the direction of the Spirit Totem once again.

His arms lunged toward the thick tree branches high in the air to grasp them tightly, swing and gain more momentum. This allowed the monster to avoid the obstacle posed by the densely grown undergrowth and move even faster through the Untamed Jungle.

"This guy is really mad," Michael mumbled when he saw the agility of the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King beneath him.

Michael and Liopham were seated on Icarus, who was circling above the Untamed Jungle at a low altitude. That way, Michael and Liopham could focus on the Spirit Totems without the need to move around faster than the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King – which was not possible, in the first place.

The Monkey King was much faster than Lilica and the others as well. The moment the Monkey King found them; the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team would end up dead.

They might be strong enough to stall the Monkey King for a while given their strength, but the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team was likely to die the moment the Monkey King caught up.

That was something Michael realized only now. Mika and Liopham hadn't been joking when they talked about the dangers of facing the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King!

They had to be quick. Michael's attention moved to Liopham, who was sweating buckets. His right hand was pressed against Liopham's back. He utilized Lesser Enhancement on the Spirit Totem Liopham manifested, providing Liopham with the means to utilize Rage of the Primal like he had never been able to do before.

The range of his Spirit Totem had expanded by more than two kilometers, and the potency of the bloody hue had increased by more than half.

Liopham had been shocked when he first felt the effect of Michael's Lesser Enhancement. It was quite terrifying if he was to be honest. But at the same time, it was really helpful.

Unfortunately, the consumption of energy and the difficulty of controlling his Soultrait increased with the expanding range and potency of the Spirit Totem.

He had to use his entire focus on controlling Rage of the Primal and to disperse the Spirit Totem in the perfect moment.

Maintaining the Soultrait for close to 15 minutes was necessary to drag the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King inside the lizard cave where everyone was already waiting to ambush him.

Yet, at the same time, Liopham had to stall some more time to ensure that Lilica and the others could reach the lizard cave just before the monster stepped in. I think you should take a look at

This forced Liopham to gulp down more than ten energy pills and a few energy potions. Swallowing too many energy potions and pills in a short period was harmful to the body, but that was not something the young Forest Elf could pay attention to right now. Headaches and some short-term issues with his health were nothing compared to the safety of the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team, and to ensure that he lived up to everyone's expectations and trust placed on him.

He didn't want to be the reason for everyone's death. If they all died facing the Jungle Expedition, Liopham wanted to be the reason they could face the Jungle Expedition for so long and not the reason for their demise!

Michael knew that he could trust the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team. After fighting side by side for several months, their Link of Loyalty had grown firm enough for him to consider the Forest Elves great allies. Their trust and loyalty might be founded on his deepening relationship with the Forest Elven tribe, but Michael didn't think that it mattered whether they were loyal to him because they loved and respected him, or because of the benefits he provided to their tribe.

One way or another, the Forest Elves were now part of his territory. Almost a third of his territory's subjects were Forest Elf Summons due to the increased probability of summoning Forest Elves. Even if the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team were to dislike him, they would have to fight next to him to ensure the safety of their deceased ancestors.

That may not be just, but being fair and square while his territory was at stake was laughable.

He relied on Liopham and the rest of the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team to injure and enrage the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King before pulling him to the lizard cave.

The plan worked out nearly perfectly as well.

All members of the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team arrived near the entrance of the lizard cave when the three-meter-tall figure of the black-furred Blood Oath Demon Monkey King passed by.

The Blood Oath Demon Monkey King's rage had been steadily building up for the last 20 minutes, and he was about to go insane. The constant pain and voices that swept through his head affected him a lot. The monster didn't even notice that his movements had slowed down and that it became increasingly more difficult to control his body precisely.

The Blood Oath Demon Monkey King only realized that something was wrong when he arrived in front of the Spirit Totem. Enraged, he destroyed the Spirit Totem, tearing it into small shreds with a few simple movements. Little did he know, he was distracted and the real danger was slowly advancing towards him.

By the time the Spirit Totem was destroyed, Michael and Liopham arrived at the lizard cave as well.

Everyone was prepared to move as they entered the lizard cave.

The Blood Oath Demon Monkey King had been led into a dead end deep down in the lizard cave, and the Blood Parthern poison was slowly taking control over his body and mind. While he moved rapidly through the Untamed Jungle, the poison spread much faster through the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King's body. He could only roar in anger when he saw a dozen figures appearing in front of him – just as he was about to leave.

At this point, the Monkey King realized that he had been tricked.

Being more intelligent than ordinary monsters at Tier-2, the Monkey King figured that the last half an hour was all part of a setup and an elaborate, well-thought plan. However, he also knew that he couldn't have done anything against it. The plan had been meticulous, abusing the few weaknesses of his kind precisely.

His blood was poisoned, his mind corrupted and dragged away from his underlings, the Monkey King's biggest strength had been taken away, and now he was left to fend off the dangers alone.

The Monkey King tensed as he lowered himself slowly. He knew that the poison spreading through his bloodstream had weakened him and that the effect would increase over time.

It was either now or never!

Yet, just as the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King was about to burst forward with every ounce of strength residing in his mighty body, Michael began to smile.

"Sorry, but I didn't work that hard to fight with you," He said calmly.

The next moment the two Elemental Mages made their move. They combined their power and released the spell, which they'd been chanting for several minutes.

The walls around the Monkey King began to move. The ground beneath the monster burst, and it was like someone was pulling his legs down. Mud ropes shot out from all directions before another barrage of Pieckers shot through the narrow space of the cavern tunnel with terrific velocity.

"I lured you into the lizard cave to make you mine without giving you a chance to retaliate!" Michael added, his lips curling upward.

A second later, the cavern tunnel collapsed as the ceiling burst open. Rocks the size of the Black Bear crashed down, followed by wet soil weighing hundreds of tons, burying the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King alive.

Meanwhile, Michael swallowed three energy pills at once before he began utilizing the Taming Soultrait for the first time since he'd obtained it.

A large array of silver lines manifested in front of Michael. It moved in complex patterns forming intricate symbols that connected and combined, slowly forming a huge array with a diameter of five meters.

"You should surrender and become my loyal subject before it's too late. You won't have long before you'll die miserably. Suffocating isn't nice, you know?"

Chapter 204 Combined Forces

The taming process was far from easy. It took a great deal of effort, focus, and origin energy to create and maintain the taming array.

However, that was not all. The taming process took the willingness of the target and its willpower into consideration as well.

If it submitted without much resistance, the monster would be much easier to tame. Of course, such a case was pretty rare. Most monsters were unwilling to submit to others.

That was also why Michael spent almost 15 minutes taming the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King.

The monster's mental resistance was quite powerful. This made the entire taming process much harder for Michael. In the last few minutes, it looked like he would fail due to mental exhaustion.

Only a trace of origin energy was left inside him as well. It was a close shave but luckily the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King collapsed right at that moment, sealing his fate.

The monster was about to suffocate to death.

While battling death, he couldn't resist Michael's consistent attempts to tame it anymore. A crack formed in the formidable mental resistance of the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King just before it collapsed.

Michael tore down the remaining resistance, achieving his goal at last.

"I'm done. Remove the rubble quickly!" Michael ordered hurriedly.

He swallowed a few more energy pills to replenish his origin energy rapidly and began to work.

Everyone gave their utmost effort to create a cage that the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King couldn't escape under any circumstances.

Close to 100 tons of wet soil and a bunch of big rocks had crashed down on the monster. Even if he wanted to move he couldn't, especially not under the influence of the Blood Parthen poison.

Removing the wet soil and big rocks wasn't an easy feat. It required the help of the two Elemental Mages, Michael's Extraction, and the combined workforce of hundreds of warriors.

The Priestess had to tend to the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King for half an hour after they retrieved him from the collapsed cavern tunnel before they could be certain that the monster would survive.

Michael used extraction on the monster to extract the Blood Parthen Poison until every last trace had been removed from his body.

Once he was done, Michael felt like sleeping for days. Unfortunately, sleep was a luxury he couldn't enjoy right now.

The Jungle Expedition wouldn't wait for him.

On the contrary, Michael was certain that the Jungle Expedition would start earlier than announced beforehand. He had killed too many Adventurers and Mercenaries in the last three days to leave his actions unnoticed.

The authorities were bound to make a move sooner than planned beforehand.

Knowing that Michael forced a few potions down his throat to stay awake and keep his mind running before he took a deep breath.

"Capturing the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King wasn't as hard as I expected," Mika murmured quietly. He seemed satisfied with the result of his work.

"We did a good job, but it was also a great deal of luck that played straight into our hands.

The plan could have gone wrong with a tiny mishap. A single wrong step and all of us could have died!" Liopham declared loud enough for Mika to hear, and Michael nodded his head.

"That's right. Good thing that nothing went wrong," He said in all honesty.

As he finished the sentence, Michael felt a tingling sensation in his mind.

The Blood Oath Demon Monkey King was about to wake up.

Michael walked over to the first monster he tamed using Taming, and a sense of accomplishment and pride spread through his body.

Despite being a 5-Star Soultrait, Taming's taming capacity was filled to the brim already. Taming should have been powerful enough to allow Michael to bind two Monsters, but the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King seemed to be too powerful, taking up more space and energy than expected.

That was fine with Michael. He didn't have enough time and energy to look for another monster like the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King. Instead of wasting his precious time, he might as well move to the next step.

With that thought lingering in his mind, the Memory Exchange between the tamed Monster and his Master was initiated.

The Monkey King had just regained consciousness when a flood of memories impacted him heavily. I think you should take a look at

The memory exchange was an ability the Taming Soultrait gained after it had been upgraded to 4-Star.

It allowed the Master and tamed Monster to gain a better understanding of each other and to enhance the firmness of their True Link.

The memory exchange felt like it took an eternity to finish, but the two didn't spend more than five seconds being blanked out.

"It's time to visit your underlings, lil guy," Michael said while looking over to the Monkey King who was getting up from the ground.

Most Warriors moved instinctively. They grasped the handles of their weapons and prepared for battle as the monster rose.

But Michael lifted his hand to signal them to stay put.

His War Rune gleamed faintly as Michael retrieved a bunch of potions. He threw them toward the Monkey King, who swallowed the content without hesitation.

The monster looked at Michael with a trace of confusion, but it didn't show any hostility toward him. It was weird. The hatred that was engraved deep into his bones earlier seemed to have vanished as he looked at Michael.

It was truly miraculous.

The Monkey King issued a few incomprehensible noises while pointing in a particular direction.

"Yep, a huge group of Adventurers and Mercenaries will invade the Untamed Jungle soon. That's why we need your help, and the help of your underlings," Michael said, fully understanding what the incomprehensible noises of the Monkey King meant.

The Monkey King issued a few more incomprehensible noises, apparently communicating with his Master, and Michael affirmed with a nod.

Afterward, Michael gestured to the others to follow him.

Less than half an hour later, their group had returned to the lair of the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys.

The Blood Oath Demon Monkeys instinctively initiated an attack on the invaders, but their king intervened. His long arms lunged forward like a python striking its prey as he grasped his underlings' heads tightly.

The two monkeys struggling in their King's grasp screeched loudly. They were desperate to survive, but they couldn't escape their king's grasp.

The king roared loudly before hurling his underlings straight at the rest of his bunch.

After that, a stunned silence enveloped the Blood Oath Demon Monkey Lair.

As the Monkey King ordered around his underlings, Michael took a closer look at the surroundings. The thickly grown crown of the fiend trees restricted sunlight from shining through. Most parts of the lair were dark and details were hard to make out.

However, Michael could use Lesser Enhancement and Eagle Eyes to improve his eyesight. It was not possible to see clearly in the dark, but he didn't require a source of light to see.

Hundreds of pairs of eyes were glued to the group of new arrivals. Their hostility was clear to perceive and tension was high in the air.

They merely didn't attack the new arrivals because of their King. Their King was protecting the newcomers!

"Several hundred...maybe there are 1000 in total? If they can deal with a dozen Tier-1 Adventurers and Mercenaries without sustaining heavy injuries...maybe..." Michael mumbled, trying to visualize several plans in which the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys and Michael's army could be enough to deal with the Jungle Expedition army.

Most of the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys were Peak Tier-1 Monsters with high combat prowess.

In an advantageous environment, even ordinary Tier-2 monsters and Mercenaries wouldn't be able to put up a fight against the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys.

The Forest Elves praised them to the moon and beyond. Not many of their Lords and Adventurers had faced Blood Oath Demon Monkeys in the past, but they were known to cause chaos and a massacre when they clashed head-on.

However, this time, the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys were on their side!

'Should I prepare weapons for them? No, they need to maintain their nimbleness while moving through the Untamed Jungle.'

Michael clearly recalled the Monkey King's nimble movements. He didn't want to sacrifice this nimbleness in exchange for higher attack power.

On the contrary, Michael felt that the nimbleness of the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys could turn into the most lethal weapon inside the Untamed Jungle.

"Let's take a look at how we can turn the tables with you guys!"

Chapter 205 Revolt

"Will we be strong enough to tackle a Tier-3 Adventurer if we join our forces?" Michael asked the group of people surrounding him.

He had never fought a Tier-3 Adventurer, but he couldn't tell for sure if they were stronger than Lincoln Piedra and Zeke Lavita.

Michael did not have even a rough idea about their strength and how many weapons or soldiers would it take to overwhelm the attackers.

The Blood Oath Demon Monkey King, Tiara, Michael, and the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team should be strong enough to deal with powerful opponents if they worked together. But was it enough to fight a Tier-3 Adventurer?

He was not confident about that, and both Lilica and Tiara shook their heads simultaneously to reaffirm his premonition.

"It won't be enough. Advancing to the 3rd Tier meant that they were either very talented or that they spent years and a great deal of effort to reach this far. Their experiences and battle strategies allow them to exhibit tremendous power. Don't ever underestimate that!" Lilica warned.

Michael took her advice to heart.

With the incoming danger approaching them rapidly, and new allies – several hundred Blood Oath Demon Monkeys -- joining their ranks, Michael and the others spend the next 20 hours coming up with various plans to deal with the Jungle Expedition.

They took turns catching up on some sleep and rest to regain their stamina and replenish their used-up energy while always ensuring that someone was on guard to warn everyone if something unexpected was to happen.

Unfortunately, not even a full day after Michael tamed Sun Demos, the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King, bad news reached them.

The scouts of the Jungle Expedition had slowly begun gathering near the outskirts of the Untamed Jungle.

Icarus, who was hovering above the jungle, noticed their advance almost immediately.

The Greater Eagle had been circling in the air all around Xiltra and the plains to watch the movements of their opponents. To Michael's misfortune, Icarus returned earlier than they'd hoped.

The Jungle Expedition was about to start.

One day was not enough to finish everything Michael had planned. He came up with many strategies to stall his opponents and decimate their numbers, but they required time – a luxury they didn't have right now.

He had to make some quick adjustments to his plans.

Michael looked over to Tiara, Blaire, and a few others. He tilted his head for a while and nodded subconsciously once he came to a conclusion.

"Can you do it without me and the others?" He asked.

Tiara's eyes widened.

"You don't want me to join the battle, master?" She asked, clearly displeased.

However, Michael just smiled.

"I trust you."

Three words was all it took to shut Tiara's mouth. She didn't even dare to retort to Michael after hearing those seemingly simple words.

Tiara nodded grimly and issued a silent sigh. Her head flicked to the side where Blaire and the others were standing, awaiting further instructions. A single gesture toward them was enough to make them move. They disappeared and returned to the territory first.

"We should give it a try," Michael mumbled to himself. He then started telepathic communication with Sun Demos.

Sun Demos and his underlings had left their habitat more than half a day ago. They initiated one of the more important steps of the multi-layered plan they'd come up with.

Sun Demos was somewhere within a radius of 10 kilometers from him. That was the current limit of telepathic communication between a Master and his tamed monster. However, there was more to the 5-Star Taming Soultrait. It wasn't as simple as it seemed.

Taming allowed him to communicate through their minds over a long-range, tap into the power of his tamed monster, and order around Sun Demos' kind. The period was extremely short, but Michael could use a tiny portion of the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King's power.

[Tell your underlings to locate the scouts. If they're exposed, they can attack. Other than that, stay back and keep me updated about the position of the scouts. We will hunt them down first.] Michael ordered Sun Demos.

[Guckuck?]

[Continue with the initial plan, yes. But don't overdo it. The main force of the Jungle Expedition won't enter the Untamed Jungle before noon, given how slow they travel.] I think you should take a look at

Michael came up with rather simple battle strategies because they didn't have time to enact special tactics that required exceptional teamwork between the Demon Monkeys and Michael's army.

They would hunt down the scouts before they could return to report. The goal was to keep the Jungle Expedition team in the dark about the Untamed Jungle's detailed topography, monster habitats and other important details.

Michael wanted to use the environment as their ultimate advantage and hide the fact that the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys were practically part of his army.

Next, the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team split up into five groups. They created five hunting units using the Forest Walkers, a bunch of Archers, and a few more units that could fight melee and long-range simultaneously.

Their numbers and strength were more than enough to wipe out the scouts. That was something Michael was certain about.

The hunting units passed through the Untamed Jungle's outer area using the well-developed and hidden canopy bridges. The canopy bridge network had developed rapidly in the last few weeks. It was no problem to swiftly move through the territory in a range of five kilometers, which provided great momentum and saved travel time.

Lilica accepted his orders without delay, and she handed Michael a small orb before leaving with her hunting unit.

The other members of the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team followed suit. They vanished one by one to complete the tasks they'd been given.

Michael and the rest finished their last preparations as well before they began to move.

For the next three hours, hunting down the scouts held the biggest importance.

Michael kept talking to Sun Demos even while moving to stay up to date about the situation. That way, he could convey messages to the people around him after they returned from hunting a few scouts.

The Hunters collected the scouts' corpses and brought them back to Michael who stored the corpses of the adventurers away.

Afterward, he gave the Hunters a new target, using the information Sun Demos and his underlings had collected.

Michael was the single point of contact and a bridge for everyone right now. Due to the constant influx of information provided by Sun Demos, Michael could pinpoint the location of the invaders easily. He would relay that information to the Hunters who would then sneak up and attack the invaders.

Meanwhile, Sun Demos finished the other tasks he had been given as well.

He and his underlings finished riling up the Tier-2 Monsters located near the border to the Untamed Jungle's middle zone.

Sun Demos came up with the idea to use the Tier-2 Monsters in the middle zone against the members of the Jungle Expedition.

The Blood Oath Demon Monkey King had made various enemies over the course of years, and his army had fought them often enough to know how to enrage them.

The Blood Oath Demon Monkeys split up and actively infiltrated the territory of their enemies during the last 24 hours.

They either stole their eggs, squashed them, or hurt their youngest. Then the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys continued to fool around with their enemies – slowly luring them away from their natural habitat and enraging them more and more.

By the time it was noon, the Demon Monkeys had enraged most of their enemies. They'd pulled them to the Untamed Jungle's outer area where they found themselves faced with the invaders of the Untamed Jungle.

Around the same time, the Jungle Expedition began to invade the Untamed Jungle – just like Michael predicted earlier.

Yet, the moment the invasion began, the Jungle Expedition was faced with something they didn't predict.

Given the information provided by Adventurers who had entered the Untamed Jungle in the past, they weren't supposed to encounter Tier-2 monsters until they reached the border to the middle zone. At most, their biggest problem would be the overpopulation of fierce Tier-1 Monsters.

That was what they had expected to face and easily overwhelm.

However, the reality was brutal.

When the first Adventurers and Mercenaries encountered the hordes of angry Monsters that were dashing through the Untamed Jungle's densely grown flora and fauna with great nimbleness, their first reaction was shock. They couldn't comprehend how easily the monsters of the Untamed Jungle could move around the obstacles in their way.

The Monsters used the thicket to hide the changes in their movement patterns before launching their bodies higher in the air, using the 'obstacles' as launching pads.

That was how the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys could escape their enemies, while also pulling the attention of the Jungle Expedition's main force to the flood of monsters that appeared out of nowhere.

The Untamed Jungle was revolting against its invaders.

Chapter 206 Monster Rampage

The mission of Sun Demos and his underlings was rather simple. First, they split into several groups with various tasks.

The first unit received the task to determine the location of all scouts across the border of the Zentika Empire and the Untamed Jungle, and to forward the information to their Master.

Meanwhile, the remaining groups were spread out to enrage their enemies, whose habitat was in the Untamed Jungle. They riled up their enemies and fled from the scene once they received the signal from Sun Demos.

A loud roar issued by their king was the said signal. It caused the Demon Monkeys to get moving onto their next target.

By the time the enraged Monsters were about to catch up with the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys they encountered the invaders of the Untamed Jungle.

And when the two unsuspecting groups clashed against each other, the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys changed their direction suddenly, brushing past the Adventurers and Mercenaries with much faster speed than they demonstrated before.

While pursuing the monkeys to tear them apart, the enraged Monsters sped up as well – ignoring the Adventurers and Mercenaries in their way. Blinded by rage, they tried to catch up with the Demon Monkeys, desiring to tear them apart, once and for all.

But the moment they brushed past the first few rows of Mercenaries and Adventurers, the enraged monsters realized that something was wrong. Driven by haste and fury, some of the heavier monsters squashed Mercenaries to death without realizing it, while others slashed at them, trying to remove the trash-like obstacle at once.

But that was a mistake, which the monsters learned to regret quickly.

The first wave of the Jungle Expedition's main force might not be omnipotent, but they weren't weak either. Most importantly, they were at a numerical advantage and ready to abuse this fact.

The Adventurers and Mercenaries had ventured inside in big groups with evenly distributed tasks. There were melee fighters, vanguards, assassins, supporters, archers, and many more combatants, which

played major roles in the groups. Based on their experience and confidence, the groups ought to be able to handle Superior Existences at the same Tier, and multiple Tier-2 Monsters with ease.

Unfortunately, it was becoming increasingly difficult for the group members to execute every role perfectly in an unknown place like the densely grown Untamed Jungle. The ground was covered in thick bushes, and big trees, while the dense treetops restricted the invasion of the bright sunlight that ought to illuminate every nook and cranny around them.

Furthermore, the monsters living in the Untamed Jungle had long since adapted to the harsh living conditions -- developing special traits that allowed them to overcome all kinds of ordeals in the danger-filled region. They wouldn't go down that easily.

The Untamed Jungle was their home and they knew what to do against ignorant opponents -- who didn't know certain factors that were a necessity to survive in the Untamed Jungle --, and how to utilize their special traits to near perfection.

Thus, the first clash with the monsters of the Untamed Jungle ended up being completely different than what the participants of the Jungle Expedition had envisioned.

A large number of Adventurers and Mercenaries were slaughtered. Their bodies were reduced to ribbons of flesh, and their blood dyed the surrounding a rich shade of crimson. Their intestines and other organs were splattered all over the thicket, decorating the Untamed Jungle's outer area in an obscure way.

Eventually, the Adventurers and Mercenaries would be able to fight back. They would regain their morale and deliver deadly blows to the monsters.

But that was something Michael sincerely hoped. He and most of his military had worked tirelessly for the last four days to ensure that they made every participant of the Jungle Expedition live their worst nightmare. His subjects were stressed out and lacked sleep.

If the Jungle Expedition failed after the first setback and retreated in fear of sustaining more casualties, Michael and his team's effort would have been for naught. But that was not the core essence of Michael's thoughts.

He could tell that if the Jungle Expedition failed, things would get more complicated. Senator Keltos would use the newly acquired information to adjust his plans to tackle the obstacles of the Untamed Jungle with an even more carefully curated approach.

At least, that was what Michael expected from Senator Keltos if the Jungle Expedition was to fail immediately.

Fortunately, Michael could clearly decipher the emotions of his opponents at this point.

They might have been scared and shocked at first, but they quickly adapted to the unexpected encounter with Monsters they should have encountered at the border of the middle zone rather than near the entrance of the Untamed Jungle.

The monsters couldn't fight forever either. Most of them didn't desire to fight to death, in the first place. Their initial plan had been to hunt down the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys, not fight some invaders of the Untamed Jungle.

Nonetheless, they couldn't leave the invaders unharmed. The Invaders were large in number, demonstrating quite clearly that they didn't come inside just to hunt a few Tier-1 monsters and return. This time they had come in with more preparations, and the Monsters with more intelligence realized this quickly. I think you should take a look at

Following that, it took almost half an hour before the first monster group retreated. They received their first big counterattack and moved back quickly.

However, that was not something the prideful participants of the Jungle Expedition wanted.

If these monsters had attacked them once, what was the guarantee that these monsters wouldn't initiate a second attack in the following days – possibly late at night when the Jungle Expedition participants were tired and wanted nothing more than to sleep soundly?

They could not allow that under any circumstance. Hence, the first wave of the Jungle Expedition spread out to pursue the monsters they'd been fighting before. Michael saw this from high up in the trees above the Jungle Expedition.

He, and close to 200 Archers were spread out across the trees in the outer area. Everyone had learned how to move stealthily across the trees, using the thick branches and the densely grown leaves as a cover, and that was something they chose to make use of soon enough.

But before Michael and his patiently waiting Archers attacked, they allowed more members of the Jungle Expedition to enter the Untamed Jungle.

They watched the Adventurers and Mercenaries precisely while continuing to wait.

'They have spread out much more than expected. If it's like this across the border...we will be extremely lucky!' Michael thought, the corner of his lip curling up.

They might have close to 65,000 opponents to fight, but the border between the Zentika Empire and the Untamed Jungle was also close to 20 kilometers long. If the Zentika Empire desired to clear the outer area of the Untamed Jungle alongside their border, they had to send more participants, or put in more time to conquer the outer area.

Yet, from Michael's perspective, it looked like they had been acting too hurriedly. He was not sure if he was mistaken, but there were only a few thousand Adventurers and Mercenaries around Michael and his people.

[Gather information about the remaining members of the Jungle Expedition. I don't want to be stabbed in the back suddenly.] Michael told Sun Demos telepathically while continuing to wait.

He and his people sensed several great opportunities to strike the opponents below them, but Michael didn't give the signal to attack.

Instead, he continued to watch as the Adventurers and Mercenaries pursued the Tier-2 Monsters and their underlings.

[Guckuck Gaagaa!!]

'The main force stopped advancing? Why would they do that?' Michael wondered when he heard what Sun Demos told him.

Apparently, more than 50,000 participants of the Jungle Expedition had started with the construction of a camp on the plains less than a kilometer from the Untamed Jungle.

It was always good to have a place to retreat, but Michael was pretty sure that dividing their force wasn't an extraordinary move.

'I will make you regret splitting your army!!'

15,000 Members of the Jungle Expedition split up into five armies. These armies entered the Untamed Jungle through five different spots. They were separated by roughly four kilometers each.

'The two armies on the outer ring are too far away to deal with properly...but we can annihilate the rest....'

Michael adjusted his plan according to the information he'd been given. Then, he gave Sun Demos an order.

[Charge in my direction without hiding your appearance. The louder you guys are the better.] Michael said, [But don't bring the Intel Unit with you. Let them continue to gather information.]

In the next ten minutes, the first army of 3000 Jungle Expedition members was annihilated after being lured by the monkeys.

Meanwhile, Michael's side didn't face a single casualty.

Chapter 207 Battle Mode

[A few minutes earlier]

Michael and his archers moved silently on the thick branches hanging high in the air.

Their steps were muffled and the noises they made while moving drowned because of the loud noises the Adventurers and Mercenaries below them made.

Meanwhile, Michael and the archers waited for Sun Demos and his underlings.

They would arrive at any moment and be fully prepared to attack.

The members of the Jungle Expedition on the ground were relaxed. The group beneath Michael had been farther away from the other groups and didn't encounter the enraged monsters that had been lured to the outer area.

Most of the Adventurers and Mercenaries beneath them were well-seasoned warriors. They respected the dangers of the Untamed Jungle, but they didn't fear the outer area. Their numerical advantage boosted the naïve fearlessness of the 3,000 Adventurers and Mercenaries.

They thought that their time to shine had finally come.

After they had been moved to the first batch of participants, who were given the honor to enter the Untamed Jungle, they experienced great euphoria. Their minds were filled with the imagination of them fighting glorious battles about which they could tell their children and grandchildren in the future.

However, imagination was often different from reality.

The small army of 3,000 Adventurers and Mercenaries was faced with a completely different scenario than they could have hoped for.

Loud noises filled the Untamed Jungle in front of the Adventurers and Mercenaries suddenly. The bushes in front of them began to shake, and a sudden sense of animosity filled the air all around them.

The well-seasoned warriors tensed up and moved closer to each other instinctively.

A sudden feeling of uncertainty and fear shrouded their bodies and minds. They quickly entered a close-knit formation and prepared for the incoming attack from the front.

The next moment, thunderous roars filled with power and charisma filled the air, sending shivers up their spines.

Yet, no monster lunged at them.

There was nothing.

Screams filled the air in front of them, and the roars of mighty monsters followed suit, but no monster came forward to attack them.

At first, nothing seemed wrong. It was eerie that the area in front of them moved, and that screams and roars filled the air, however, that was all. There was nothing more to worry about.

Some warriors began to think that the Untamed Jungle created an eerie atmosphere in an attempt to inflict fear on its invaders.

But then blood-curdling screams reached their ears.

Screams and muffled groans rang out from all around them as the first dozen warriors found themselves lying on the ground, blood gushing out of their throats, eyes, and abdomen.

They could barely muster the strength to register what happened and how they died when the Grim Reaper sliced their souls with his soul-reaping scythe.

A barrage of close to 200 arrows flew through the air in a beautiful arc, and they pierced deep into the bodies of the fallen warriors!

Only a dozen targets died, but more than half of the arrows impacted where they hurt combatants the most -- drilling into their vital spots and joints.

Another wave of terrified wails filled the air, but the perpetrators didn't seem to care. They released the second barrage of arrows from all directions.

Hell broke loose the next instance.

Dozens of Adventurers and Mercenaries died, and even more sustained heavy injuries, which restricted their combat prowess greatly.

Then, a three-meter-tall monkey covered in black fur with lengthy arms and blood-red eyes shot through the thicket with terrifying velocity.

The monkey looked like a demonic beast that had just escaped from hell's gates. I think you should take a look at

It stared at its opponents like a predator stared at dead prey before it appeared in front of the closest Adventurers. Sun Demos grasped the heads of two of them. The next moment, Sun Demos applied some force onto his palms, squashing the heads instantaneously.

The Adventurers couldn't even issue a scream when their brain matter spurted out of their shattered skulls.

Not even a second later, the Sun Demos' tail shot forward. It coiled around the neck of the next closest Mercenary. The Mercenary slashed the tail with all his might, hoping to cut off the tail, or block the attack, but the tail didn't even budge. It continued to advance unaffected.

Sun Demos' tail coiled around the mercenary's neck and choked him to death. A moment later, Sun Demos threw the motionless body into the group of shivering young men and women next to him.

Sun Demos' bloody eyes lit up seeing the fear in the eyes of the men and women.

However, he was not alone. He shouldn't keep the fun for himself.

His arms shot in the air and a deep roar escaped his lips as he beat his arms on his chest, calling for his underlings.

Hundreds of two-meter-tall Blood Oath Demon Monkeys shot out of the thicket all around the Adventurers and Mercenaries.

They were extremely fast and deadly, not missing a single opportunity to strike and kill.

The attack of the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys was already enough to bring the group's morale to an all-time low.

But the Demon Monkeys were not on their own. In fact, they were merely a distraction!

The never stopping downpour of arrows was the main culprit of the Adventurers' and Mercenaries' suffering.

Death hailed down without mercy, killing the opponents without discrimination while the beasts advanced toward them from all directions.

At one point, Adventurers found Michael and his Archers hiding high up in the trees all around the trees surrounding them, but they couldn't do much.

Their morale was at a low point, and the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys attacked fiercely.

Michael and his archers didn't show any mercy either. They didn't focus on delivering killing blows. Instead, their focus was purely on inflicting injuries to restrict their opponents' combat prowess.

This worked out better than planned.

However, the battle was still not over. It only ended when the hunting units of Michael's team returned.

The EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team and the Forest Elf Summons were fierce and brutal with their onslaught. They killed their opponents swiftly, without batting an eye. The Forest Elves didn't even grace their opponents with a single glance. All they did was ensure that their opponents were dead before moving on.

"Did you finish your mi--...." Michael asked, just to shut his mouth when he saw the expressions on the faces of the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team's members.

Their faces were void of emotions. They didn't even flinch when they entered close combat and blood spurted on their faces.

The Blood Oath Demon Monkey ripped their opponents apart right next to the Forest Elves, but they didn't give any reaction.

'Is that the Battle Mode Lilica mentioned before?' Michael wondered, recalling faintly that Lilica mentioned something about the way Forest Elves fought.

[Our numbers might not be great, and most other races would consider us as lovers of nature and pacifism, but not all of that reflects the truth. We love nature, that's true. Nature is part of our life, so we try our best to live with nature. But what most people tend to forget is that death is also part of the cycle of life. Without death, there wouldn't be life, and without life death wouldn't exist. They're two different sides of a coin, and we Forest Elves are trying to become the coin – becoming part of life and death....]

Before, Michael didn't really think too much about Lilica's words. He had seen them fight more than once, and he never thought that their combat style was too weird.

But today's battle was different than usual.

Today's battle was not a deciding factor between life and death.

It was a fight that determined the destiny of Michael's territory.

The fate of countless would be decided today, and nobody could say who would emerge victorious, and whose string of fate would be cut today.

Chapter 208 Presents

The corpses of the Adventurers were collected once the battle ended, while the rest was either stored or disposed of immediately.

Mercenaries were natives of the Origin Expanse. Yet, Michael couldn't extract nearly as much from them as monster corpses provided.

He was not sure why that was the case, but it was a fact that Mercenaries didn't drop great loot, and space was tight after the second and third army of 3,000 Adventurers and Mercenaries had been obliterated.

Using the Untamed Jungle, his army, and the Blood Oath Demon Monkey to the extreme, fighting 3000 Adventurers and Mercenaries wasn't an issue.

Michael initially thought that he would encounter his first Tier-3 Awakened among those armies, but no Adventurer in the three small armies was at the 3rd Tier or even close.

That was surprising yet not.

"They're testing the waters with the weakest participants," Liopham voiced out his opinion when they finished cleaning the battlefield, and the other Forest Elves agreed.

"I think they want to see them dead," Mika said nonchalantly.

His words attracted the attention of the people around him, causing him to add awkwardly, "That's my guess. I think the stronger participants don't want to share the rewards of the Jungle Expedition with the weaker participants. The more they can earn the better...and it's not like our opponents were strong until now.

We faced less than five casualties, and that was also mostly due to strikes of misfortune."

Even though it felt a little bit weird to consider Mika's words true, there was definitely a possibility that he was right. Greed was not only a trait of humans but of most intelligent races. It was something many felt at one point in their lives, some more often than others.

"Maybe, you're right," Lilica agreed quietly. She had witnessed first-hand how terrifying greed could be.

In fact, she fell victim to her own greed twice since she awakened. It was not something she was proud of, but she could understand the train of thought Mika pursued.

"I think they might weed out their weaklings while collecting information. By telling them to collect information, the survivors will return with information while the shares of the dead will go to the living. It's a scummy strategy, but it plays in our favor. We removed 9,000 opponents in exchange for five lives," She said, glancing over to Michael to see what was going on in his mind.

The others looked fine, some were even happy that they defeated so many opponents with close to no casualties. However, Michael couldn't feel like this.

Of course, he was satisfied with the results of the fights. It was great that they didn't lose many men and women fighting the members of the Jungle Expedition.

But Michael also took into consideration that the strongest forces of the Jungle Expedition would be informed about the tactics Michael and his people had utilized to fight. A few Adventurers and Mercenaries were bound to escape mid-battle, and the information they forwarded to the stronger forces would turn into a big problem for future battles.

"We need to deliver an additional blow...this is not enough..."

Michael didn't speak loudly, but everyone heard him clearly.

The others didn't think that it was necessary to travel through the Untamed Jungle and deal with the two armies on either side of them today. Rather than going all out immediately, some believed that they should preserve their energy and prepare for the next day.

"How about we--..." Lilica began, just for Michael to raise his hand.

She was silenced in an instant.

"They will learn of our tactics as long as we leave behind a single survivor...and I'm not certain that we killed all of them. Some must have gotten away," Michael explained before he added, "They will find out about Sun Demos and his underlings, and they will make plans to counter us next time." I think you should take a look at

"We have Tiara, and the others, who're curr--..." Liopham began, but Michael shook his head before the young Forest Elf could finish.

"We have Tiara, but we need to give our all and make use of the tactics we have as long as they work fine."

Michael stayed firm on his opinion. He was not being adamant but he couldn't agree with the others.

It was obvious that they had to rest. Fighting three huge battles and running around all day had taken a huge toll on their minds and bodies. Nonetheless, he could not ignore the fact that they had a huge advantage right now.

With that in mind, Michael began to extract the corpses that had amassed inside his War Rune's storage space.

After defeating three small armies with 3,000 members each, Michael collected a total of 700 corpses from Adventurers. He extracted them one by one to gather a total of 2914 SoulStar Fragments and five Soultrait Symbols.

Then he looked at the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team with a faint smile.

"If you're too tired, how about I give you some motivation?" He asked mysteriously while moving the five Soultrait Symbols in front of the Forest Elves.

Their War Runes went crazy in response to Michael's simple move. Several streams of white energy shot out of their War Rune, desiring to devour the Soultrait Symbols and fuse new Soultraits. However, Michael didn't allow that.

He moved back while his smile widened.

"I know that you guys have been confused as to where my Soultraits come from, and how my Soultraits are constantly getting stronger. In a few weeks, you guys would have figured it out either way. So...I thought I might as well stop this charade and show you guys what I'm capable of."

Michael didn't want to keep lying to the Forest Elves. However, that was not the only reason why he revealed the power of the Extraction Soultrait.

He wanted to clearly demonstrate how big their advantage would be if they killed more Adventurers today. It required only 900 weak Adventurers – most being Tier-1 – to harvest a total of five Soultraits and 2900ish SoulStar Fragments.

The SoulStar Fragments were enough to upgrade one Soultrait to 5-Star. That was a great deal, not only for human Lords but for most races.

Only some of the strongest races didn't think of 5-Star Soultraits as rare and extremely powerful.

Killing the remaining 6000 invaders inside the Untamed Jungle meant that they were likely to harvest 2000 SoulStar Fragments in addition to 2-3 Soultrait Symbols. Not only was that worth the effort and danger, but it felt like a 'must-do' task.

Michael knew that very well, but he had hoped to keep himself unaffected by the influence of greed. However, that was near impossible.

He was not a saint, and he never intended to be one. He was greedy. A glutton, quite literally.

As much as he could devour food in every dining session, he devoured in the Origin Expanse – in the form of SoulStar Fragments and Soultraits. He would never feel full. That was something his heart could tell him.

His greed was insatiable.

He didn't want to share his greed knowing that it was not healthy.

Yet, Michael also knew that the Forest Elves would find out his secret sooner or later.

Thus, he might as well give them an early present, and a taste of the fruit they should have never tasted.

Chapter 209 Annihilation

"How about we go to their camp after hunting the remaining two armies?" Mika asked in an excited voice.

His eyes were filled with greed as he activated his new Soultrait. The flood of information that had entered his mind was enough to give him a basic understanding of his new Soultrait, which shocked Mika and the other Forest Elves deeply.

The other Forest Elves stared at Michael like starving beasts with an expression on their faces identical to Mika's.

The entire EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team wanted to continue hunting, and their minds were overflowing with determination.

Michael gave each of them one Soultrait Symbol to fuse with. Their War Rune bound it to the white pillar in the deepest parts of their consciousness, granting them their second Soultrait.

It was something they never thought would be possible, but Michael made it happen. But that was not all.

Not only had they received a 1-Star Soultrait from Michael, but he even gave each of them 300 SoulStar Fragments, which was enough to upgrade their new Soultrait to a 4-Star Soultrait.

They even had some extra left and used it on their first Soultrait to strengthen it.

Some Soultraits were more expensive to upgrade while others were easier. Fortunately, the five Soultraits Michael handed over were on the cheaper side.

The remaining 1714 SoulStar Fragments were stored inside Michael's War Rune. He wanted to keep them there and use them to upgrade his Soultraits in combat – to unleash a burst of power when he needed it the most.

"Since everyone is willing to continue fighting, let's go," Michael said with a faint smile on his lips.

He split his army and the Demon Monkeys into two groups to attack the two armies simultaneously.

It wouldn't be long before the darkness of the night would descend. They had to hurry up if they wanted to deliver a heavy blow to the Jungle Expedition before they reorganized their groups according to the information they'd collected today.

Lilica and Liopham were in Michael's group, while the remaining members of the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team went with Sun Demos.

Since Michael was Sun Demos' master, he could control the Demon Monkeys as well. This made it much easier to split up the group of Demon Monkeys.

They split up evenly and one group followed Michael without any complaints.

Even if some of them were still confused, unsure how a tiny, hairless being could become the master of their king, they were satisfied with the results of today's battle. Their enemies within the Untamed Jungle had suffered heavy losses, while their group had learned new tactics to apply in combat.

They didn't make any losses by being Michael's subordinates.

After they split up, Michael and Sun Demos made their moves.

Michael sent the Demon Monkeys out to gather intel. Over 400 Demon Monkeys were more than enough to search through the right side of the Untamed Jungle's outer ring in an hour. The information they collected was detailed enough to come up with a quick plan.

"Gather in groups of ten and attack them from all sides. Once you kill the group closest to you, disperse in all directions and gather further away from the battlefield. Then change your position and search for an opportunity to strike again," Michael ordered using the information he had been given.

"Make sure that nobody dies. This tactic heavily relies on short collisions where we'll use the surprise effect to kill a few opponents before retreating. We're at a numerical disadvantage but the Untamed Jungle is our territory. Let's make use of that!"

Since Michael was at an advantage in terms of combat power and knowledge about the Untamed Jungle, he figured that Guerilla Warfare was one of the best battle strategies. They had unique combat units but were at a gross numerical disadvantage.

Fortunately, all of that was something they could make use of – which was exactly what they did.

The Demon Monkeys split into 40 groups before they disappeared in the Untamed Jungle. Meanwhile, Michael's small army was divided into five groups.

First, Lilica and Liopham gathered the Forest Elf Summons around them. The two Forest Elves said that they had some special tactics among Forest Elves, and that it was too difficult to teach them to others.

Michael was curious about the tactic they wanted to use, but he didn't force them to tell him more about it. Instead, he gave them his approval before he picked up the Berserkers, Knights, Vanguard, and other close combat units. They weren't the fastest in the Untamed Jungle, but they were strong and overflowing with the desire to kill the invaders.

Michael couldn't leave them behind, so he took things into his own hand and became their leader for today's battle.

Meanwhile, the remaining long-range units gathered next to the two Elemental Mages, and the Summoner. The Summoner didn't require a lot of focus to control an ordinary Tier-1 Summon. Thus, he could pay attention to just one of the long-range combat units to give them precise orders.

On the other hand, the Elemental Mages might have a harder time giving out orders. However, their advantage was their exceptional focus and great spatial awareness. They knew when to retreat and when to attack.

Once they reached the range of the small army on the right side of the Untamed Jungle's outer ring, everyone turned silent. Only the sounds of the Untamed Jungle and the rustling of leaves caused by their opponents resounded in the vicinity.

Michael summoned Saron Voulge and the Onyx Dragon Armor Set as he passed through the dense thicket, silent like a ghost.

A commotion broke out farther away, attracting the attention of the small Jungle Expedition's army.

The Demon Monkey had initiated their first attack.

After activating Lesser Enhancement on his eyes and the Symbol of Eagle Eyes that was also utilized, Michael's eyesight improved drastically. He could see subtle movements through the gaps in the dense bushes in front of him and accelerated his steps.

He activated Lesser Enhancement on his Artifacts as well, increasing their external enhancement by 35% respectively. As a result, Michael's strength increased as well.

Michael burst through the bushes, followed by his loyal subjects, who roared out loudly at the sight of their opponents.

A group of more than 30 Adventurers and Mercenaries appeared not too far away from them.

The group was focused on something to their left, giving Michael and his people the opportunity, they'd sought.

Thus, Michael accelerated rapidly. He crossed more than 20 meters in the blink of an eye and struck out with Seron Voulge.

His opponent was a Late Tier-1 Lionheart. The Lionheart unleashed blazing fires all around him, ready to attack Michael. Yet, just as Michael's attack burst forth, a Spirit Whip manifested above the Lionheart's head. The whip lashed out, impacting heavily. I think you should take a look at

The Lionheart's eyes turned white for a moment and he struggled to stay conscious and fight the mental attack. His concentration was broken as a result so the blazing flames around him dispersed. Meanwhile, Seron Voulge never stopped. The lengthy blade pierced through the unprotected neck of the Lionheart without any resistance.

Blood gushed out of the Lionheart's neck and a groan of pain escaped his lips. However, Michael didn't show any mercy. He twisted the blade in his opponent's neck before he pulled Seron Voulge downward to inflict more damage while pulling his weapon back.

Michael then used Spirit Whip on the opponents all around him to aid his allies in defeating their opponents as well.

He retracted Seron Voulge and shot forward to eliminate the remaining survivors of the small group. His energy was quickly drained but Michael didn't pay too much attention to his energy consumption. Instead of saving his energy, Michael rather preferred utilizing it in large amounts to ensure that his opponents died as quickly as possible.

Thus, in the next two minutes of the battle, a total of 30 opponents died. Their corpses were collected in seconds before Michael's team moved to their next target.

They didn't suffer a single casualty but managed to decrease the number of their opponents by 30 with a single attack.

Michael had begun to use the Sun Soldier's Breathing technique subconsciously at this point. He had finished practicing the second stage, which meant that his breathing had changed fundamentally. That way, Michael could ensure that his stamina didn't decrease quickly and that his origin energy replenished at a faster rate naturally.

Adding a semi-active utility of Pandemonium's Requiem, Michael could replenish most of his energy before they found their second target.

In the next two hours, they decimated the army of 3000 Adventurers and Mercenaries. A few might have escaped, but Michael didn't stress about that at this point.

He knew that some Adventurers and Mercenaries were bound to escape and that they would report their finds to others.

They would report that a bunch of Forest Elves, and another race – humans – existed in the Untamed Jungle, and that they worked together with the monsters of the Untamed Jungle to defeat them.

Michael was not sure whether the Adventurers and Mercenaries thought that there had to be a Lord in the outer ring of the Untamed Jungle, or if the Untamed Jungle was actively involved in the happenings today. However, he knew that his hidden existence as a Lord in the Untamed Jungle had been exposed.

While that was a little bit annoying, it was not something he could change. He didn't have the luxury to keep his existence a secret since a mid-scale expedition was knocking at his door, wanting to break in.

After the battle, Michael and his people collected the corpses of the Awakened, while storing some of the other corpses. The rest were left behind for the Untamed Jungle to devour.

Once all corpses were taken care of, Michael and Sun Demos' party reunited.

Sun Demos gave him a detailed briefing of the situation and happenings on their side of the battlefield, while Michael extracted the SoulStar Fragments and Soultrait Symbols from more than 500 Adventurers.

Instead of binding the Soultrait Symbols, Michael used Extraction on them once again. He tore the Soultrait Symbols apart to gather more SoulStar Fragments.

That way, Michael collected a total of 2591 SoulStar Fragments from 500 Adventurers. The gains were comforting, but Michael was not yet satisfied with the result of today's warfare. He knew that the next few days would be much harder, which meant that today may be the only day in their favor.

With that in mind, he allowed his War Rune to devour the SoulStar Fragments before he took a good look at the condition of his people.

'The majority is tired by now. Telling them to follow me outside the Untamed Jungle won't be helpful,' Michael concluded with a simple glance.

He was also tired, but he wanted to ensure that the Jungle Expedition's camp wouldn't be able to rest tonight either. Michael wanted them to be too afraid to fall asleep.

'Since they're daring enough to sleep less than a kilometer away from the Untamed Jungle, we might as well welcome them properly!'

Preparing for the next steps in battle was not further difficult.

First, he chose to send back those who had sustained injuries or were too tired from the last battles. This included the Demon Monkeys as well.

Then he gave everyone the chance to avoid tonight's battle outside the Untamed Jungle if they wished to rest. The possibility of death was much higher outside the Untamed Jungle because there were hardly any trees and other obstacles to hide behind. It would be dangerous as the darkness of the night was their only ally.

Interestingly enough, many chose to accept the dangers of tonight's battle and join Michael. They realized that killing 15,000 members of the Jungle Expedition was not enough. There were still roughly 50,000 enemies left, and they now knew about the tactics Michael's army had utilized over the course of the day. So, finishing them off before they came up with counter strategies was the best move.

Michael was glad that many chose to follow him onto the battlefield. He split up the Demon Monkeys and his people equally to attack from various positions before he pinpointed the most important task for tonight's surprise attack.

"Our focus will be Tier-2 Adventurers. Tier-1 Adventurers are not too important because we can still deal with them, but Tier-2 Adventurers are a nuisance. If they have good Soultraits and compatible Artifacts, we won't be able to deal with them easily even in the Untamed Jungle," Michael cautioned before lightly adding, "We can ignore the unawakened Mercenaries altogether. They don't have Soultraits nor Artifacts to increase their combat prowess. Dealing with them inside the Untamed Jungle will be more efficient!"

Killing the Awakened first had several advantages. First of all, Awakened were stronger than ordinary people and monsters. They possessed Artifacts and Soultraits to strengthen them, after all. But there was also the importance of their corpse.

Michael could use Extraction on them to collect their Soultrait Symbols and SoulStar Fragments. Enhancing his Soultraits, and the Soultraits of his people increased their combat prowess, and thus the chance of survival in the later battles.

Taking that into consideration, Michael chose to adjust his earlier plan a little.

He used 3041 SoulStar Fragments to upgrade Extraction to a 5-Star Soultrait. Then, he used 256 and 301 SoulStar Fragments to upgrade Eagle Eyes and Lesser Enhancement respectively.

At last, Michael was in possession of three 4-Star Soultraits, two 5-Star Soultraits, and 707 remaining SoulStar Fragments.

Information flooded his mind once the upgrade of his Soultraits was completed, creating a sense of familiarity between Michael and his Soultraits.

Soon, a smile full of confidence blossomed on his lips.

He was ready to continue the battle!

Chapter 210 Silent Reapers

Michael instinctively felt that the lethality of Extraction had increased rapidly.

After upgrading Extraction to a 5-Star Soultrait, he could instinctively feel that Extraction's limit expanded to a wide range. The first thing he could tell was that he could use Extraction on things in a range of five meters without the need to pay full attention to it.

Other than that, the potency of Extraction increased while the energy consumption decreased a little. By using Extraction on a few Mercenary corpses he could reach a good conclusion about the improvements of his Soultrait.

'The drop rate for all loot created by the Will of the Origin Expanse increased by roughly 30 to 40%, while the energy consumption decreased rapidly. It also feels like I can control Extraction much more easily now. It requires much less focus than before. But testing it out mid-battle is still out of option. Experimenting against an invasion of 50,000 opponents is too dangerous...'

Michael knew that Extraction was very powerful and that he had yet to learn how to use it with more variations, but he had so many combat related Soultraits that it was hard to keep his focus on everything at the same time to mix and match.

In fact, now that Eagle Eyes and Lesser Enhancement had been upgraded to 4-Star trait, their utility was much higher, and their potency was much stronger than before.

Eagle Eyes' passive enhancement at 4-Star was as strong as the active utility at 3-Star. Meanwhile, activating Eagle Eyes heightened his eyesight and senses even further. As long as he had a powerful long-range weapon, Michael was confident of hunting opponents more than a kilometer away from his position.

But that was not all. Eagle Eyes' active utility allowed him to see better in the dark after the Soultrait had been upgraded to the 4th Star. That was perfect given that they would attack at night.

Adding Lesser Enhancement, which had been upgraded to 'Enhancement' after it became a 4-Star Soultrait, his combat prowess and range of attack increased even further.

Enhancement's enhancement didn't receive a boost in strength. A single enhancement was still equivalent to a strengthening of 35%. However, Enhancement could be layered now. Michael could use Enhancement on his Artifacts and body several times and the enhancement effect would stack. The energy consumption would naturally increase with the number of stacks, but Michael also noticed that the energy consumption of a single layer decreased drastically.

Maintaining Enhancement had also become much easier!

Overall, he was satisfied with the progress as they headed towards their opponents. Close to 600 Demon Monkeys, the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team, and almost 200 members of Michael's army left the Untamed Jungle.

The Demon Monkeys could see in the dark due to the demonic blood coursing through their veins. On the other hand, the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team and the members of Michael's army had to apply the light source ointment on their eyelids to see in the dark.

Their sight was restricted to a few meters ahead of them but that was better than nothing. It was much farther than most could see in the utter darkness of the late night.

The light source ointment was expensive to produce, and it hadn't been easy to procure the recipe either, but Michael was glad that he made an investment into ointments, potions, and poisons early enough.

Given his investment, Michael and his people had a much easier time pacing through the plains of the Zentika Empire.

They paved their way toward the dimly lit camp of the Jungle Expedition, unseen by the eyes of their enemies.

The sound of drunken people speaking and growling reached their ears. It attracted Michael's attention and he looked over to the center of the camp just to see that hundreds of Adventurers and Mercenaries were drinking.

Many were already swaying from left to right, and some were lying on the ground dead drunk.

'Is that really an expedition into the Untamed Jungle, or a party trip?' Michael wondered while his gaze moved slowly through the camp.

It was big to fit the remaining 50,000 members of the Jungle Expedition, but it was not enormous. There were less than 10,000 tents, and quite a few Mercenaries and Adventurers were either sleeping on the ground or talking to their comrades.

The camp's atmosphere was relaxed, which was quite unexpected.

'Did they not hear that their people died?' Michael couldn't help but ask himself. For a minute, he wondered if they had killed all of the mercenaries and adventurers inside the Untamed Jungle, or if nobody reported the happenings within the Untamed Jungle to the others.

However, Michael quickly figured out the reason.

"Are they just not bothered about the truth?" Michael mumbled quietly to himself when he saw two familiar faces.

They were two Jeglaw with large scars on their faces. Michael recalled them because he had seen them at noon. They fought some of his people and ran away after sustaining heavy injuries.

Right now, their injuries had been healed and they were talking to other members of the Jeglaw race. They didn't seem to be scared of staying near the Untamed Jungle, or at the thought of entering the Untamed Jungle.

'But why are you guys not scared? Are you confident that you will survive? Why? Is it because of your numerical advantage, or because of the Tier-3 Adventurers?' Michael bit his lower lip and frowned deeply.

He told his people to split up and mark their targets. The first attacks were supposed to be deadly and silent. Instead of creating a big commotion right off the bat, Michael wanted his people to be silent reapers.

His plan worked out better than expected.

He reached the outer area of the camp with his people.

While the center of the camp was lively, certain parts of the outer area were dark and silent. Thus, their focus of attack was the dark tents from where they could hear people snoring, sleeping blissfully after having consumed alcohol to their heart's content. I think you should take a look at

Michael and Lilica entered the first tent alone with their Artifacts manifested. Michael scanned the room with a single glance and discovered three Adventurers and two mercenaries.

He moved Seron Voulge in his hands and manifested two layers of Enhancement around the voulge's blade. With two layers of enhancement, it was sharp enough to pierce the neck of the sleeping enemies without making much of a sound.

Lilica looked over to Michael and attacked when Michael struck down with his voulge. His attack was fierce and precise, not taking much effort to slice through the flesh of his target. Lilica's motion was rapid and nimble, dealing with her target without causing any unnecessary pain.

They killed their first sleeping targets with a single motion.

But as Lilica pulled her dagger out of the target, one of the other adventurers was woken up. The adventurer heard Lilica's blade piercing into the flesh of his comrade. Startled, his eyes shot wide open.

However, before he could scream out loudly, a white stream passed through his field of vision. In an instant, he sobered up, realizing that something was terribly wrong. The next moment the adventurer's world turned upside down. A curse escaped his lips before his head tumbled onto the ground.

A fountain of blood was sprayed through the tent.

Warm blood trickled down the bodies of the sleeping mercenaries, yet they didn't wake up. They continued to snore loudly.

Lilica was just about to walk over to the mercenaries and finish them off when Michael lifted his hand to stop her.

He shook his head with a sly smile on his lips.

Instead of killing the mercenaries, who were deep asleep and under the heavy influence of alcohol, Michael wanted to make use of them.

He used Extraction on the corpses of the three adventurers to extract their SoulStar Fragments and the other loot created by the Will of the Origin Expanse.

Afterward, he looked down at the golden streams in his right palm before his gaze fell on the sleeping Mercenaries. He tilted his head and gave it a shrug. Michael bent down next to the sleeping Mercenary, his hand hovering above his head.

Then, Michael extracted the Mercenary's left eye.

The mercenary flinched, but he continued to sleep. It didn't seem to be too painful for his victim whose eye was extracted from his body which was a big contradiction to Michael's expectations.

'Shouldn't their natural mental defense block my extraction even while they're asleep? And why didn't it hurt him if I extracted his eyes? Is Extraction actually painless, or is it just because they're drunk? Well, either way...that's good...'

Extraction was a weird Soultrait, and Michael knew that he had yet to learn a lot about it. Nonetheless, his initial plan worked out.

He killed three adventurers and extracted an eyeball out of the mercenary next to him.

Michael placed the eyeball into the hand of the mercenary before he ordered Lilica to leave the tent with him.

Lilica stared at him confused at first, but she quickly understood his intention.

If they wanted to induce fear in the participants of the Jungle Expedition so that they would be too scared to sleep, they had to leave witnesses.

The two heavy sleepers were good witnesses, especially with one of them losing an eye without realizing it. Even if they were dead tired, they wouldn't dare to go to sleep anymore. Who knew what would happen the next time they fell asleep? Maybe they would become the silent reaper's next target!

Michael hoped to instill the worst fears in the hearts and souls of their opponents through his actions. He wanted to tire them out and make sure that they wouldn't be able to fall asleep without feeling unsettled or scared at the thought of not being able to wake up the next day.

Michael and his people were already tired, and they wanted their opponents to feel the same. It would be even better if their opponents felt worse.

They should be afraid of the Untamed Jungle, thinking that the region is cursed.

Even staying in the proximity of the Untamed Jungle should inflict fear in the hearts of the invaders and make them subconsciously step back.

That was Michael's plan for tonight, and it turned out to be highly successful.

Even by the end of the night, Michael and his people had never been found, yet they killed more than 500 sleeping Adventurers, and close to 200 mercenaries – who'd been woken from the commotion of their comrades dying.

Afterward, Michael disappeared into the night, leaving behind the dead corpses and mutilated sleeping mercenaries, who were all missing one eyeball.

"I hope you guys will have a nice morning!"