

Supreme Lord 221

Chapter 221 Silver Inferno I

In the flourishing Untamed Jungle, where the harmonious melody of chirping birds, rustling leaves, and distant monster calls ought to be omnipresent, an ominous threat lurked in the shadows.

Unbeknownst to the Invaders of the eerie Untamed Jungle, chaos was about to be unleashed – quite literally at that.

The atmosphere was heavy with tension and anticipation as a deafening silence fell upon the Untamed Jungle.

Slowly but steadily, the 13 Paladins – fully coated in their Holy Aura, their weapons unsheathed and ready to battle – advanced through the dark undergrowth of the Untamed Jungle, trying to pave their way through the Untamed Jungle's dense environment. They ignored the storm all around them and stayed fully guarded to act the moment they sensed the presence of an opponent.

The birds all over the Untamed Jungle ceased their melodious serenades, sensing an imminent danger that disrupted the tranquil atmosphere they had known for ages. A foreboding presence permeated the air, sending shivers through the undergrowth and the Paladins.

They knew that something was about to happen, but they couldn't tell what it was. Michael's eyes were glued to them and he noticed that they had somehow sensed his trap. He had wanted to wait a bit more but could not risk it so he was forced to use Extraction earlier.

The world turned upside down.

In an instant, the world erupted into a violent symphony of destruction. Their vicinity was engulfed in a golden light all of a sudden, and the wet soil beneath the Paladins disappeared.

At that moment, the 13 Paladins' heads flicked in the direction of the golden light's source. A young man, his face covered in a terrifying amount of blood, emerged less than a hundred meters in front of them.

The young man's entire being released thigh-thick streams of golden light. They swirled around like tentacles and devoured everything in its wake.

The 13 Paladins were so focused on the young man, whose body couldn't handle the energy that had infiltrated every single pore, that they didn't even sense the three Elemental Mages that had appeared all around them.

The Elemental Mages hands shot to the ground while they continued to chant a long, complex spell. After consuming more than ten energy pills their origin energy storages were overflowing with energy. They could barely control the massive amount of energy that ravaged through their bodies before they unleashed their spells.

The ground trembled wildly when the Elemental Mages' spells were activated. A huge hole appeared in front of the 13 Paladins, and it widened rapidly.

Michael's subjects had worked tirelessly for 16 hours to dig out the hole. It had been covered with the spells of the Elemental Mages, and the additional support of illusion arrays, and it was unraveled right in front of the Paladins.

Michael unleashed 6-Star Extraction's full power while the Elemental Mages expanded the hole. They terraformed the surroundings, turning the crater's immediate surroundings into a slippery slope. The Paladins reacted fast enough. They pierced their weapons deep into the ground to steady themselves before unleashing their Artifacts' enchantments and their Holy Aura.

The Paladins didn't slip down and fall into the huge hole, ensuring that they wouldn't fall prey to the Unknown Lord's dirty trap – or so they thought.

Not even a millisecond later, golden streams shot through the surroundings. They dug deep into the huge hole, devouring the wet soil at the bottom. Simultaneously, the ground beneath the Paladins kept disappearing.

Slowly but steadily, the Paladins were sucked into the huge hole that kept expanding. It was 50 meters in breadth and width, yet its depth was only 20 meters. However, the depth continued to expand.

21 meters.

22 meters.

25 meters.

30 meters.

At 30 meters, Michael stopped. He retrieved a few more energy pills which he swallowed without hesitation.

He knew that his body had already digested too many energy pills in a short period, but he didn't care about the aftermath of today's fight.

If he wanted to deal with 13 Tier-3 Paladins, he had to accept that he would sustain heavy injuries.

By now, Michael and the Elemental Mages had already accepted that they would either lose a few limbs, or that they would die for good. They knew very well what kind of suicidal mission they'd accepted. But they were fine with that.

If they couldn't kill the 13 Paladins now, everyone in the territory would die later....and that was something Michael couldn't accept. I think you should take a look at

After spending several months inside his territory, his subjects became part of his family, and Michael was not someone who turned his back on his family. He would rather be ripped into pieces than living with the guilt of having betrayed his family.

Taking that into consideration, Michael retrieved a Chaos Pill once again. He looked at it for a moment, took a deep breath and threw it toward the Paladins.

He aimed at the most-crowded area, hoping that the Chaos Pill could pull the Paladins down to the bottom of the huge pit.

'Stop struggling to stay up here. Fall down and succumb to your miserable fate!' Michael screamed in his heart just before a deafening blast tore through the air, ripping apart the fabric of serenity that had enveloped the Untamed Jungle.

The wet soil all around the area of impact convulsed, and a blinding silver inferno blossomed from the epicenter of the explosion.

The silver inferno spread out rapidly, destroying everything in its wake. The life of everything it touched was drained, and the energy in the vicinity was taken and corrupted.

The Untamed Jungle, once vibrant and teeming with life, became a canvas of chaos and destruction. The humongous trees, the guardians of the forest, were uprooted and thrown like mere twigs, their branches splintering.

In an instant, the acrid scent of the burning vegetation choked the air, mingling with the pungent odor of the decaying flora and fauna.

Amid all of that, the roars of the 13 Paladins rang out.

They unleashed their Soultraits, intensified the power of their Holy Auras, and activated the enchantments of their armors to protect their bodies.

However, in response to their actions, they lost footing on the ground. The slippery slope beneath them disappeared – devoured by the silver inferno – pulling eight Paladins to the bottom of the huge pit.

The first explosion caused considerable damage. As the smoke dissipated, the shattered remnants of the once-thriving jungle were unveiled.

The aftermath of the Chaos Pill's devastating impact was far stronger than Michael anticipated. Eight Paladins had been pulled down into the pit that was slowly filled with water, while the remaining Paladins were either backing off, or trying to cope with the aftereffect of the silver inferno after it came in contact with their bodies and Artifacts.

Michael smiled at the sight that unfolded in front of him. He looked over to the five Paladins, who had yet to be pulled down into the pit, his blurry sight giving him a rough indication of where they were.

'Looks like I cannot get all of them,' He noticed while being drained and bleeding all over his face.

Michael had never used Extraction like this. The Soultrait drained his entire energy even after he took more than a dozen energy pills. The amount of energy he had to use to continue expanding the huge crater to pull down eight Paladins had been terrific – yet the 6-Star Soultrait was still not at its limit.

If Michael had more energy, Extraction would have taken more from him to pull all Paladins down into the pit, much faster at that.

His lack of energy was at fault for missing out on the remaining five Paladins, but there was nothing he could do about it now. Right now, the most important thing was to kill the Paladins at the bottom of the pit and instill terror in the hearts of the remaining Paladins.

'I wonder if you will dare to attack me after I show you what I'm capable of,' Michael wondered, retrieving dozens of Chaos Pills at once.

He looked over to the five Paladins, a devilish smile forming on his lips.

Chapter 222 Silver Inferno II

"This is what survival of the fittest truly means. Either you survive, or you go down miserably!" Michael shouted at the top of his lungs, throwing the Chaos Pills down into the pit.

The Chaos Pills released a dazzling silverish light when they came in contact with the droplets of water that poured down in the pit. Their luminescence intensified upon falling into the small puddle that filled the bottom of the pit.

By creating the Chaos Pills with a Water Source Stone as a catalyst, Michael could ensure that each of the pills unleashed its fully destructive force inside the water at the bottom of the pit.

The Untamed Jungle's outer ring was flooded in silver light, and the earth tremored.

The next moment, a silver inferno – a cloud formed from compressed chaos – swept through the Untamed Jungle, devouring everything in its wake – whether it was alive, or inanimate.

Within seconds, the deep pit expanded rapidly. Black-silverish flames burst out of the pit, while the ground around the huge crater burst open. Cobweb-like cracks spread through the ground and trees in a range of several kilometers were uprooted and the heavy Storm dispersed upon colliding with the silver inferno.

The Storm had been devoured in an instant, and allowed rays of bright sunlight to reach the forest for a mere fraction of a second before the disaster sweeping through the Untamed Jungle's outer ring blocked them yet again.

The silver inferno spread across the surface, slowly corrupting all lives, whether monsters, humans, or plants. The soil around the crater was devoured, and so were the clothes and hair all over everyone's bodies.

Michael rushed over to the Elemental Mages. He could barely see through the melee, but he could sense their presence and condition. The silver inferno had already reached them, slowly draining their lives and corrupting their existence.

Michael grit his teeth, bent down and tried to lift the three Elemental Mages at once. However, before he could lift them up, Michael sensed something from his right.

A three-meter-tall monkey burst through the silver inferno. It was Sun Demos, who came to his rescue.

The silver inferno was not searing hot nor would it grant instant death. It merely corrupted the living, slowly killing them from within. The inferno devoured all life in the vicinity of the explosion. That was also why Chaos Pills were rarely used.

First of all, Chaos Pills were hard to produce. It was difficult to collect Chaos Ants alive, let alone harvesting their blood without causing a disaster. Second, while concocting Chaos Pills numerous problems could occur. Third, Chaos Pills were fragile. The probability of triggering them long before you wanted to use them was extremely high.

And last but not least, the chaos essence stored in the Chaos Ants' blood would infest a radius around the area of impact. The chaos essence would spread slowly, devouring the life of everything it touched. The life force that had been drained would nourish the chaos essence, allowing it to spread further until all life was annihilated.

Even if a war could be won using Chaos Pills, what was the worth of unusable, barren land? What's the use of land that has been corroded and the infertility slowly spreading, turning the entire region into a danger zone that would expand slowly?

Only being like the Chaos Ants would survive the corruption of the chaos essence, growing stronger by devouring it.

Was it really worth it to destroy the Untamed Jungle's outer ring to kill a few Paladins, and scare the rest away?

Yes.

That was the only answer Michael had to offer.

He was in possession of Extraction, after all! He could afford to be foolish, and produce Chaos Pills without too many issues.

As for the corrupted land, Michael could take care of that in the future using Extraction.

For now, however, he had to deal with the remaining Paladins and survive this mess.

Thus, after shrouding his body with the golden streams of Extraction, Michael extracted the chaos essence that had infiltrated his body. Afterward, he did the same to the Elemental Mages and Sun Demos.

The silver inferno wouldn't affect them for a while now that Michael extracted the chaos essences that had invaded them. This gave them more than enough time to flee.

However, that was not what Michael intended.

He had yet to receive a single energy influx, indicating that not a single Paladin had died yet. I think you should take a look at

"Save them and stay away until I give you a different order!" Michael ordered Sun Demos aloud.

The Demon Monkey King shook his head, desiring to reject Michael's order, but his body began to move already.

The True Link of Loyalty connecting them forced Sun Demos to obey Michael's order against his will.

Sun Demos grasped the three Elemental Mages, who had fallen unconscious, and he disappeared from the core region of the explosion.

Looking at the fleeting figures of his subjects, Michael sighed deeply.

He turned around, retrieved some more energy pills which he gulped down without hesitation.

Then he accessed his War Rune to retrieve the remaining Chaos Pills.

The Paladins were not yet dead. It was time to change that!

Michael rushed to the huge pit that had expanded to thrice its former size. He activated Eagle Eyes under tremendous pain to search for the Paladins.

It didn't take long to find the Paladins. But instead of eight, ten Paladins entered his field of vision. Two of them must have jumped down to aid their comrades in survival.

The ten Paladins had gathered in a small space. They made use of their Artifacts' enchantments to strengthen their Holy Aura, which surrounded the ten Paladins like a dome of protection.

Michael could faintly make out the cracks in their Holy Aura, and the sweat pouring down their temples.

'Chaos Pills are strong enough to kill Tier-3 Adventurers. Aren't you guys too tenacious? Can't you just die?' Michael cursed in his heart, retrieving the last batch of Chaos Pills in his possession.

The last batch was equivalent to a few dozen Chaos Pills, and Michael was not sure how much more damage they would cause.

However, what he could tell for sure was that the Untamed Jungle's outer ring was destroyed, and that his body was slowly being invaded by the chaos essence.

It corrupted his body and devoured the origin energy inside his body. Michael figured that it was only a matter of time before he died if he continued to stay in the silver inferno. Even the golden streams of extraction wouldn't be able to help him all the time.

Extraction merely drained the chaos essence inside his body. It didn't seal his body to prevent more chaos essence from infiltrating him again.

'I have to finish this immediately!'

Determination flickered in Michael's eyes as he walked around the humongous pit. Once he reached his final destination, Michael took a look into the pit.

Then, he dropped dozens of Chaos Pill straight on the heads of the ten Paladins who were desperately fighting for their survival.

Afterward, Michael fled, trying to escape the aftermath of the Chaos Pills' explosions.

Less than ten minutes later, the humongous energy influx of ten beings flooded Michael's War Rune.

[Sun Demos. Come and get me!]

The next moment, everything around Michael turned black.

Chapter 223 Xiltra's Terror

The tension spreading in Xiltra was heavy and enormous.

Since the Jungle Expedition had been defeated humiliatingly, leaving only 15,000ish mentally broken Adventurers and Mercenaries behind, nobody felt safe near the Untamed Jungle.

The situation grew worse as the stories of the Jungle's Curse began to circulate. Rumors spread like wildfire, and the situation didn't improve even after the 13 Paladins arrived.

In fact, the fear of what might happen to the 13 Paladins was why some citizens asked the Paladins to retreat to the city and leave the Untamed Jungle.

The citizens didn't want the Untamed Jungle to take revenge on them for enraging it. But that was not all. Some citizens knew that the morale within Xiltra would worsen if something was to happen to the 13 Paladins. If they died, nobody would want to stay near the border of the Untamed Jungle anymore.

However, what nobody expected was the chaos that erupted not long after the 13 Paladins left Xiltra.

A huge storm gathered high up in the sky above the Untamed Jungle's outer ring, and the tension all over Xiltra intensified. Instinctively, everyone could tell that something bad was about to happen.

But the surreal display of unimaginable power that unfolded far away from Xiltra was not something they could have anticipated.

At the epicenter, a blinding flash of silver light erupted. It was intense and searingly bright, engulfing the surroundings, washing away colors, and distorting the perception of space and time. It was as if the essence of the sun had been captured, mixed with the light of the moon, and unleashed upon the earth.

Simultaneously, an expanding silver inferno kept surging forth from the point of detonation. It manifested as a rapidly expanding sphere of billowing silver flames, consuming everything in its path. Shades of silver, gray, and black danced and merged within the fiery tempest, creating a mesmerizing yet terrifying display that could even be seen in Xiltra.

The silver inferno engulfed and incinerated the flora and fauna of the Untamed Jungle's outer ring. Any living being unfortunate enough to be caught within its grasp died miserably, whether it was through the explosion that tore apart soil, Artifacts, and flesh or the silver inferno that corroded everything in its wake.

The immense chaos essence unleashed by the explosion caused the air to shimmer, the origin energy in its range to decay, distorting the surroundings with a mirage-like effect.

As the silver inferno expanded outward, it created a shockwave, a formidable force that rippled through the atmosphere. The shockwave radiated in all directions, flattening bushes, uprooting trees, and hurling debris with unfathomable strength. The air itself rippled as if the fabric of reality was about to be torn apart.

In the immediate aftermath, a rising column of smoke and debris ascended from the epicenter, a grim testament of the destruction created by the explosion. Dark and ominous, it twisted and billowed, obscuring the sky and blackening the landscape in a veil of devastation.

The atmosphere itself underwent a drastic transformation. As the explosion unleashed an immense amount of chaos essence, the land got even more corrupted, devolving into barren land.

What was left behind was a huge patch of desolate land, scarred and forever changed. The once-vibrant surroundings had been reduced to rubble and ash, with lingering silver inferno that continued to spread and corrupt the land.

Meanwhile, an eerie silence hung heavily in the air within Xiltra. Everyone stared in the direction of the Untamed Jungle with terror and shock in their eyes.

Even for those who didn't see the explosion, the commotion and the heavy pressure descending onto the plain were enough to show that something big had just happened. Not even the loudest babies dared to cry aloud in their mother's embrace. They went eerily silent, as fear crept up their spines.

Tens of minutes passed in utter silence. It was as if life in Xiltra had come to a standstill. Nobody even dared to move, fearing that something worse might happen.

Only after what felt like an eternity did a voice rang through the surroundings.

"The Paladins..." A young man mumbled quietly.

However, in the eerie silence of the border city, it felt like the young man standing on Xiltra's walls was shouting aloud.

"...but there are only three...and they're injured..."

Every word that rang through the ears of Xiltra's citizens felt like a bombshell that had been dropped right next to them.

If there were only three Paladins, what happened to the rest? And why were the returning Paladins injured as well?

"Their veins are black..." Another one blurted out all of a sudden, and the voice of a third guard on the city wall echoed shrilly. I think you should take a look at

"They collapsed!!"

Seeing the three Paladins stagger through the plains and collapse in front of Xiltra's walls, the citizens were shocked to the core. A few guards rushed outside, followed by healers, who cursed in terror.

"Their bodies have been contaminated with chaos essence. Who the hell is crazy enough to fool around with chaos essence?!?"

The healer's voice was louder than intended, but he couldn't control his emotions anymore. Just a quick examination of the three Paladins was more than enough to tell that the happenings in the Untamed Jungle's outer ring were far from ordinary.

The silver inferno in the Untamed Jungle turned into something far more threatening in the eyes of the healer, and his eyes shot wide open.

But the silver inferno was not the end of the mayhem. If anything, it was just the beginning.

If the explosion had already been horrifying, or the fact that only 3 Paladins returned from the Origin Expanse, what awaited them now turned into their worst nightmare.

Heavy pressure descended all over the Untamed Jungle's outer ring and the Zentika Empire's plains. The pressure affected every existence within a range of more than 100 kilometers, restricting their ability to move entirely.

The temperature in the vicinity increased drastically, and the silver inferno began to ripple unsteadily as a humongous shadow appeared above the Untamed Jungle.

Something appeared high up in the air, far above the clouds.

The outlines of a humongous serpent with feather wings manifested seemingly out of nowhere.

The serpent didn't utter a sound when it appeared and glided above the cloud, exuding a heavy pressure subconsciously which was enough to announce that it had arrived.

It inflicted fear; terrifying fear that could only be caused by a being, whose strength was unfathomable.

There was no need to ask a professional to find out what kind of monster appeared above the Untamed Jungle. It was a mythical creature that had been disturbed by the actions of the Unknown Lord.

Some feared that the wrath of the mythical serpent would affect them as well. However, there were also others, who hoped that all their problems would be solved soon.

"Will it kill the Lord inside the Untamed Jungle now?"

But instead of killing the Unknown Lord within the Untamed Jungle, the mythical serpent opened its wide maw.

It released blazing azure flames to devour the silver inferno before disappearing once again.

The silver inferno lit up in azure flames. The azure flames burned down the silver inferno, just to disperse into all directions, vanishing as if they'd never existed.

Following the dispersing silver inferno, the destruction caused by the Chaos Pills could be seen with much more clarity.

It was terrifying. More than half of the Untamed Jungle's outer ring had been destroyed.

Yet, the Unknown Lord was still alive.

He had emerged victorious against the Jungle Expedition and the 13 Paladins.

Michael Fang was the final winner of the battle.

He had won his first large scale war!

Chapter 224 Fix It!

In a small room within the wooden manor, a pained groan escaped Michael's lips.

His eyes opened slowly, while his expression distorted in raw agony.

'I am still alive? How?'

Michael couldn't remember a lot of details pertaining to the end of the 'battle' against the 13 Paladins. However, he could hazily remember the destruction caused by the Chaos Pills, the silver inferno that devoured Extraction's golden streams of light, and that darkness engulfed him when the energy influx of the Paladins reached his War Rune.

'I received 10 energy influxes...right?' He tried to remember, but he wasn't certain. His mind was a total wreck, just like his body.

'So there are still three Paladins left? Will they attack us again? Fuck this shit!' Michael cursed in worry.

He tried to get up from the bed, just to feel immense pain spreading through every cell inside his body upon moving.

Michael looked down at himself, but the only thing he could see was bandages. His entire body was covered in them.

'I shouldn't have sustained flesh wounds,' Michael thought while trying to push some of them aside to see what was underneath.

Unfortunately, what unveiled itself beneath the bandages was not pleasant to look at. His veins were black and his skin had a silver tinge. He had been corrupted by chaos essence and was slowly rotting away.

Even without the silver inferno, which accelerated the spread of chaos essence, Michael was slowly dying.

Michael forced himself to get up from the bed. He stood inside his room and began to use Extraction.

His palms began to glow golden as streams of light conjured all around his hands. But just as Michael wanted to use Extraction to extract the chaos essence out of his body, he felt immense pain wherever the golden streams passed by.

'Is that the aftereffect of using too much origin energy? Or is that from devouring too many energy pills?' Michael wondered, unable to arrive at a definite conclusion.

He just knew that utilizing Extraction caused immense pain. Nonetheless, he had to do it.

Michael used Extraction on his body, slowly but steadily extracting the chaos essence that had infiltrated every single pore within him.

He grit his teeth trying to endure the immense pain as the golden streams infiltrated his body. They extracted the chaos essence all while causing unbearable pain. It was only at this point that Michael realized how weak and injured his body actually was.

Everything was in disarray. It was a big mess.

Michael couldn't even control the origin energy inside his body properly. Utilizing Extraction had never been as difficult as today, but Michael forced himself to maintain his Soultrait.

After half an hour, Michael found himself lying on the ground, sweating profusely. He had yet to extract the last bits of chaos essence ravaging inside his body, but they were a little bit resistant. It would take a while to cleanse his body and remove the traces of the chaos essence.

At one point in the last half an hour, Tiara entered his room. She tried to aid his recovery but was told to stay back and report the territory's current situation to him.

That way, by the time he finished using Extraction on his body he was up to date with the current scenario.

Tiara helped him up from the ground before retrieving a few potions.

"Most of the Untamed Jungle's outer ring is now corrupted, but thankfully everyone survived. Three Paladins survived but they ran away. I don't really think that they'll come back. In fact, after the humongous, winged serpent appeared, nobody should be daring enough to enter the Untamed Jungle for a while," Tiara summarized to make sure that Michael heard the most important points.

"Winged serpent?" Michael asked quietly while gulping down the viscous liquid inside the glass vials.

"Yes, a winged serpent. In fact, most of us could only see the shadow of the humongous serpent because we weren't able to move. The wing serpent's presence was overbearing and prevented us from moving," Tiara explained, "The winged serpent extinguished the silver inferno before it disappeared again."

Michael could never forget the mythical serpent he saw the day he went out with Icarus for the first time, and he could imagine how everyone must have felt being in the mythical serpent's presence.

One way or another, it would be great if the remaining Paladins never returned to the Untamed Jungle. That would save him lots of trouble.

Thinking about the Paladins, and how ten of them died in the epicenter of the Chaos Pills' explosion, Michael recalled his loyal aides in the battle.

"How are Sun Demos and the Elemental Mages?" He asked carefully.

Michael knew that they were still alive, but he could also tell that their condition was not that great.

"Their condition is similar to yours. In fact, I believe that the Elemental Mages' condition must be worse. Sun Demos' bloodline should have a faint resistance to the influence of chaos, and I've heard that you used Extraction inside the silver inferno. The Elemental Mages must have been hit the worst," Tiara summarized what Michael thought.

"In that case, let's save the Elemental Mages," Michael announced, walking out of his room to find the Elemental Mages and Sun Demos.

He was far from fit and felt like collapsing on the ground with every step, but Michael didn't want to give the chaos essence inside the bodies of his loyal aides more time to destroy them.

It didn't take long to reach the medical hall. Many combatants of the territory were being tended to there.

Michael greeted all of them as he passed by. He thanked them sincerely for giving their utmost in the battle against the invaders of the Untamed Jungle until his gaze fell onto the three Elemental Mages and Sun Demos. I think you should take a look at

They were unconscious and lay in the beds, their skin gray and their veins as black as the darkness of a starless night. Michael's expression turned gloomy upon looking at his subordinates. Even Sun Demos didn't seem to be doing fine. Most of the Demon Monkey King's hair was missing, and he was writhing in pain as if a nightmare was causing him intense physical pain.

"Their hair fell out," Tiara mumbled next to Michael, whose expression distorted even more than before.

He realized something, and instinctively reached out to his own head. His face was drained of all its color and his frown deepened.

"Again...really?" Michael cursed as his hand rubbed across his shiny bald head.

Michael was bald again.

He shook his head in disappointment. After having patiently waited for months for his hair to grow it fell out again. Was that a cruel joke?

It took him a few seconds to regain his composure and return his focus to the Elemental Mages and Sun Demos.

Michael exerted Extraction, ignoring the pain that spread through every cell inside his body, and he began to extract the chaos essence within his allies.

Michael didn't stop using Extraction until the last bits of chaos essence had been extracted from the Elemental Mages and Sun Demos.

He vomited blood more than a dozen times and fainted a total of three times, which was how Michael ended up in a worse state than before, but he succeeded. The Elemental Mages and Sun Demos were cleansed of chaos essence!

"They're still not awake? Well...at least, they survived..." Michael mumbled before slumping down to the ground.

His legs felt squishy like jelly, and he was too exhausted to keep standing.

Unfortunately, Sun Demos didn't allow him to lie on the ground. The Demon Monkey King woke up shortly after the last traces of chaos essence had been extracted from his body, and he was overjoyed to see his lord again.

After witnessing the power his Master could unleash, Sun Demos felt incapable of containing himself anymore. He was excited for the future that awaited them.

Michael could feel that quite clearly through their Link of Loyalty. He smiled weakly in response, unable to tell Sun Demos to calm down.

The last few days had been way too exhausting. His body was badly damaged, not only from the chaos essence, but also from an overkill of energy pills and energy potions. It would be best if he didn't use any energy pills for a while, otherwise, he might end up with permanent injuries, or other issues.

In fact, Michael would be better off not using too much origin energy at once. He knew that he had to give his body some time to recuperate if he wanted to keep using it for a long time.

Michael felt like sleeping for days. He was tired and his body was begging to rest as every muscle and bone in his body was under tremendous pain. The Jungle Expedition was over, and it was about time that he got some quality rest without anyone or anything bothering him!

But his mind didn't want to give him qualitative rest. On the contrary, his mind dug out something that had imprinted itself deep into his brain.

It was something ethereal that had forced itself into his head when he fell unconscious. Unknown words that resurfaced in his mind.

"Repair what you've destroyed?" Michael mumbled when he recalled the unknown words of the ethereal voice that had infiltrated his head, "Is that what it means?"

Michael was not sure how, but he could understand the meaning of the unknown words.

He was also not sure who or what told him the unknown words, but if he had to make a guess he would probably think of the mythical serpent.

Though he had no proof about it, the mythical serpent was the most likely to order him to repair the Untamed Jungle's outer ring.

'Well, I did destroy the Untamed Jungle, and I have Extraction to fix the corrupted land...it should help me to fix it...'

Even if Michael didn't have the right means to carry out reforestation of the Untamed Jungle, he felt like he had to fix it. After all, he didn't want to turn the mythical serpent against him.

'Let's be thankful that this monstrosity didn't take out its anger on me by burning me alive,' Michael thought, goosebumps spreading all over his body.

"I will fix the Untamed Jungle, no worries. Just stay where you are!"

Chapter 225 Moving?

225 Moving?

"Will it be enough if I purchase a bunch of monster corpses and soil to fill in the holes after I extract the chaos essence from the corrupted land?" Michael asked himself quietly.

The ethereal voice had only instructed him to fix the destroyed part of the Untamed Jungle, but the real question was how to do that.

He knew that the Untamed Jungle devoured carcasses and that it digested them to accelerate the growth of its flora and fauna. Thus, purchasing a bunch of monster corpses should do the trick.

"I cannot return to Xiltra to purchase monster corpses either. Seems like I have to return home to place a big order."

After the battle against the Jungle Expedition, it was obvious that he couldn't return to Xiltra. Michael was certain that his identity had been exposed by now.

While that was a little annoying, it wasn't too bad. His territory was self-sufficient and didn't need the help of the border city.

Unfortunately, a small problem occurred; the aftermath of the Chaos Pills' explosions had destroyed most parts of his territory. The vast majority of his treehouse complexes had been destroyed, the canopy bridges had been torn apart, and the small farms spread all over his territory didn't look any better either.

After listening to Tiara's report from earlier, Michael was certain that more than three-quarters of the territory had been destroyed due to the Chaos Pills, and the shockwaves they unleashed. It was quite troublesome.

'The Chaos Pills are even stronger than ballistic missiles. Chaos essence is truly terrifying...'

Michael was fully aware that he would have never dared to use Chaos Pills if he didn't possess Extraction. Even with Extraction upgraded to a 6-Star Soultrait, using the Chaos Pills was dangerous enough to make him and everyone else feel worried. That also showed how desperate he had been to use Chaos Pills even though they were frail and dangerous for both the user and the target.

He could barely kill 10 Tier-3 Paladins by using more than 100 Chaos Pills, which caused the destruction of half the Untamed Jungle's outer ring. As a matter of fact, if not for the mythical serpent burning down the silver inferno, the entire outer ring would have been destroyed, turning into corrupted land, long before Michael regained his consciousness.

In the worst case, the silver inferno would have reached his territory, and infested his subjects with chaos essence, killing them slowly and painfully.

"Chaos Pills are not considered Forbidden items for no reason...If the Master Alchemist had failed, the entire territory would have blown up long before the Paladins reached the Untamed Jungle," Michael mumbled with a deep sigh.

'But it was worth it. If not for the Chaos Pills, I would have never been able to eliminate the Paladins...

why the hell are they so strong, in the first place? 100 Chaos Pills were barely enough to kill 10 of them...'

Michael was glad that they survived, but it was still a nuisance that they had to resort to such a dangerous product, in the first place. Everything could have gone wrong and Michael was fully aware that he and his people had been extremely fortunate.

'Whatever. The most important thing is that we survived. The method is secondary!'

With that in mind, Michael diverted his focus to the reconstruction of the territory. At least, that was what he planned.

Doubts filled his mind, and he felt a bit dejected knowing that more problems awaited him in the future. He doubted that the Zentika Empire would leave the Untamed Jungle alone now that Michael had been discovered as a Lord in the Untamed Jungle.

Other than that, there was still Senator Keltos, who was bound to change his plan and leave no stone unturned to infiltrate the Untamed Jungle.

'They will attack the Untamed Jungle eventually. But next time their attack will be more lethal than before...I am certain...'

Michael was not sure how much time he had before they would attack again, but he could tell that fear had been instilled into the citizens of the Zentika Empire. That should give him some extra time to prepare for the worst-case scenario.

'I doubt that ordinary Adventurers will dare to attack the Untamed Jungle after everything that happened. Even Tier-3 Adventurers will hesitate to attack since the Paladins were not ordinary Tier-3 Adventurers. I defeated them in an unorthodox way as well. No sane person who realized that I'm crazy would be willing to take the risk.'

Fighting an enemy who was crazy enough to destroy his own land to kill less than a dozen enemies was definitely not someone most would dare to fight.

That meant stronger enemies had to come to conquer the Untamed Jungle.

However, Higher Lifeforms such as Tier-4 Adventurers were not easy to find. Most couldn't spare them since there was always work for them to do as well.

Only prodigies could become Higher Lifeforms. Most were either Lords, or they worked for other Lords and couldn't be spared easily.

That gave Michael another reason to believe that he had some time to prepare for the next battle. And time was something Michael needed badly.

"I should expand my territory deeper into the Untamed Jungle," Michael mused quietly.

Tiara heard him and joined his monologue, "Can't you relocate your territory? I heard that it's possible to move the Summoning Gate and wooden manor to change the location of your territory as long as you're still in control of the vicinity you're relocating to."

The wooden manor and the Summoning Gate were considered the core components of a territory. If the wooden manor was destroyed, the Summoning Gate would malfunction. Meanwhile, if the Summoning Gate would be destroyed all Links of Loyalties would be destroyed in the following 24 hours.

Repairing a Summoning Gate was possible, but it was much better to protect it by all means. Ideally, if both the wooden manor and the Summoning Gate were located in the center of the territory, they would receive the best protection.

Simultaneously, if the Summoning Gate was destroyed despite being in the center of your territory, you would have bigger problems to face than the repair of the Summoning Gate. Your biggest issue would be to survive the invasion of the enemy, who was strong enough to barge into your territory and infiltrate its heart to destroy the Summoning Gate!

"The Untamed Jungle feels more secure than the Zentika Empire. By relocating the territory's center to the middle zone I can prepare for the battle against the empire, while simultaneously upgrading the hunting grounds," Michael mumbled after he gave Tiara's idea some thought.

He was in control of a small area in the middle zone. Relocating the wooden manor and the Summoning Gate might take a few days, but it would provide considerable benefits.

"Alright. Forward the order. We're moving to the middle zone," Michael declared after he finalized his decision. He then moved out of the medical hall to walk over to the Nature Spirit.

The timid nature spirit had already grown into a small Tree Spirit with a height of close to ten meters. Thus, relocating the Nature Spirit was likely to be the most difficult task.

"Hey little buddy. I have good and bad news for you. Which one do you want to hear first?" Michael asked lightly, trying to smile through the pain that continued to bother him whenever he moved an inch.

The Nature Spirit communicated with the use of emotions. Taking the firmness of their Link of Loyalty into account, Michael and the Nature Spirit could communicate with each other without problems.

A sad emotion reached Michael, indicating that the Nature Spirit wanted to hear the bad news first.

"The bad news it is? Well, it's pretty simple actually. We're going to relocate the territory, which means that you have to uproot yourself," Michael said as a matter of fact without showing too many emotions.

"The good news, however, is that the Heavy Armored Elephant can carry you and that we'll be moving to the middle zone. That means you can absorb more nutrition from the middle zone. After all, the middle zone's flora and fauna is even more dense than in the outer ring, and the origin energy's density is much higher as well!"

The Nature Spirit was at first disappointed when it heard that they had to relocate. It had just grown accustomed to staying in the center of the clearing. However, hearing that they would be moving closer to the center of the Untamed Jungle, the Nature Spirit released immense joy.

A flood of joy swept through Michael, influencing him enough to make him chuckle.

Despite the pain and exhaustion sweeping through him, Michael couldn't feel unhappy when the Nature Spirit's joy spread through him.

It felt great to be alive and to know that his territory had overcome another ordeal. No matter how much they lost and how dangerous it had been, they had survived and made the attackers retreat after defeating them humiliatingly. That was all that mattered.

Moving to the middle zone might be a little troublesome at first, but most of the Tier-2 habitats at the border to the middle zone had been eliminated or affected by the invasion of the Jungle Expedition. Michael was not too worried about encountering Tier-2 Monster habitats.

"If you're happy about the relocation, that's good. Be ready to move as soon as possible. We're not going to waste time idling around!" Michael ordered, which resulted in another burst of joy sweeping through him.

His entire being felt drained of all its power and he began to vomit blood again.

The Nature Spirit was eager to move!

Michael smiled at that before he went ahead. He found Blaire, Lilica, and others, to whom he forwarded the details of the relocation.

Afterward, Michael found himself in a weird situation.

His entire being felt drained of all its power and he began to vomit blood again.

Breathing grew increasingly more difficult, and his sight blurred. After a while, Michael started to lose the feeling in his arms and legs as well.

'What is going on? Is it the Chaos Essence? Did I use Extraction too much while I was still injured?' Michael began to panic.

His breathing grew labored, and he stumbled through his territory, holding onto the tree trunks for support. His mind was a mess, and full of chaos that couldn't be organized no matter how hard Michael tried.

The only thought Michael could gather was that something was terribly wrong with his body, and that the young Priestess in the territory was far too weak to tend to his issues.

Instinctively, Michael manifested the Runic Gate in front of him. He stumbled through the Runic Gate and emerged in the training hall within the Sapphirelake Military Camp.

Alice Zenovia and Kaleb Zenovia had been diligently training in the training hall every day, including today.

They had been worried about Michael for a while now, but they didn't expect him to return so soon. Alice predicted that Michael wouldn't return for another week. He had to deal with tens of thousands of enemies, which included a few Tier-3 Adventurers. That wasn't easy and would take quite a while.

Thus, seeing the Runic Gate manifest in the center of the training hall, the siblings stopped training at once. They walked over to the Runic Gate, only to freeze in their tracks when they saw a figure swaying through the Runic Gate.

The swaying figure was Michael, it had to be. However, Michael's appearance was nowhere close to how he usually looked.

His bald head was silverish, and his swollen veins were straining against his skin, looking as black as the darkness. Most parts of Michael's body were covered in bandages, but the only bleeding areas were his nose and eyes. Silver blood trickled out of his nose and eyes.

"Oh fuck..." Kaleb blurted out, staring at his friend, his eyes shot wide open.

Alice, on the other hand, frowned deeply before she burst forward. The ground beneath her feet cracked open due to the strength she unleashed with a single burst, and she appeared in front of Michael the next instant.

Michael was not even able to fully grasp that someone had appeared in front of him. He only felt a soothing cold embracing him tightly. Michael felt extremely comfortable all of a sudden. His body grew heavier, and his mind turned hazier.

'I should be fine now... right?'

He could only utter a few words before the world around him turned dark once again.

"I did it."

The next moment he fell into Alice's embrace.

Chapter 226 Buy and Sell

226 Buy and Sell

Six middle-aged men and women were standing around a small bed, their sweat trickling down onto the ground where a small puddle formed.

"How can someone's condition be so bad?" One of the middle-aged women murmured quietly as she stepped back to take a good look at the situation unfolding in front of her.

A young freshman was lying on the bed, fighting for his survival.

While that was nothing unique in the medical hall of the Sapphirelake Military Academy, the young man's condition was far from a common occurrence. It was grave, even when compared to bad cases.

"Why did he have to arrive during my shift..." A middle-aged man complained quietly, and others agreed with a faint nod.

Alice Zenovia glared coldly at the complaining medics, her gaze causing shivers to run down their spines.

"I...just panicked a little. Please ignore what I said, Miss Zenovia..." The middle-aged man added hurriedly, feeling like his life depended on it.

Alice didn't say anything but she averted her attention from the medic to look at Michael once again.

Michael's complexion was much better than before. After the medics spent more than four hours tending to Michael's wounds and issues his condition was finally a little bit better.

That was a given considering that the medics used their high-ranked Soultraits, various concoctions, and medical devices to stabilize Michael's heartbeat before they tended to the issues one by one.

But even after all of that, Michael had yet to regain his consciousness.

"His condition is severe. I am actually not sure how he was still alive when you brought him in," The oldest medic said bluntly.

He had been in the Sapphirelake Military Academy since it opened and spent decades in other academies within the solar system, yet he had never encountered a case like Michael. Michael's condition was intriguing from the point of view of a medical researcher, but it was terrifying as his attending medic.

The old medic forwarded Michael's medical report to Alice to show her how severe the situation was.

"He had been infested by Chaos Essence? What did he do?" Alice blurted out loudly upon reading the first sentence of the medical report from the holographic screen in front of her.

However, she was not yet done. Michael's medical report was several pages long, full of lethal issues that could have killed him easily.

"His origin energy storage was overloaded and damaged repetitively. Something like this happens usually if you use too many energy potions to quickly refill your energy storage. However, in the patient's case he used not only too many energy potions, but he used thrice or quadruple the amount his energy storage could bear, multiple times at that," The medic explained while Alice was focused on the holographic screen in front of her.

"It seems like his mental power has been drained to an extent in which his brain was burdened, forcefully shutting his body off to prevent permanent brain damage," He added.

"There is still a lot more I could say but the report says it all. If I continue telling you about his issues and what we had to tend to in order to fix him, I would be standing here for another hour or two. Unfortunately, I have other patients to tend to."

After the old man said everything that had to be said, he excused himself and left.

The other medics finished tending to Michael's injuries before they left as well.

Meanwhile, Kaleb stared blankly at the holographic screen in front of Alice. The holographic screen displayed all pages of Michael's medical report, where Michael's issues were written in great detail.

Even though Kaleb couldn't understand every point or the medical terminologies mentioned in the report, he could understand most of it – and that was bothersome enough for him.

"He will be fine, right?" Kaleb asked his sister in worry.

However, Alice didn't turn over to her younger brother. She merely shrugged her shoulders.

"I guess."

Her voice was emotionless but a deep frown appeared on her beautiful face not long after.

"How did he even end up with all those problems? Collecting them shouldn't be his hobby... If any of these issues had worsened just a little, he would either be dead or crippled," She mumbled.

Kaleb's eyes widened at that. He had yet to face great dangers within the Origin Expanse, so he couldn't fully comprehend what Michael must have encountered to end up in such a bad state. Yet, upon seeing his sister's grim expression and how serious she acted, Kaleb could tell that Michael must have escaped death by a hair's breadth.

"Good thing that he's alive..." He mumbled, looking over to his unconscious friend.

****[Several days later]****

After spending several days in the medical hall of the Sapphirelake Military Academy, Michael was finally allowed to leave.

The last traces of chaos essence had been removed from his body, and his other issues had been tended to as well – fortunately.

Michael didn't even realize the horrifying state of his body until it was already days after he regained consciousness. Only now did he understand that he had been extremely lucky. If he hadn't instinctively returned to the Saphirelake Military Academy, he would be dead by now.

'A healing-type Soultrait would be quite useful,' Michael mused as he left the medical hall.

He was happy that the healing hall in the Saphirelake Military Academy had exceptional facilities and was completely funded by the government. The students didn't have to pay a dime for the service they received. That was great since Michael would have been robbed of his entire fortune otherwise.

Michael felt much better than before, but he was still weak. His body required lots of nutrition and naturally absorbed energy to bring him back to his peak state. The medics gave him a prescription to abide by, followed by several instructions he would have to obey if he didn't want to end up as a cripple.

There were a lot more orders, but Michael could summarize them rather simply.

'Don't drain your origin energy for a few weeks. Don't exert your Soultraits over a long period in the next few weeks. Don't fight straining battles for the time being. Don't strain your brain too much. Take it slow.'

Michael didn't intend to disobey the medics' orders. He wanted to focus on his training in the next few weeks while observing the relocation, and expansion of his territory in the middle zone.

The only time he would have to use his Soultrait was in the Untamed Jungle's outer ring. He had to fix the outer ring by extracting the chaos essence that had taken root in the corrupted land. Fortunately, there was no deadline to complete the task given by the mythical serpent. He could fix the Untamed Jungle's outer ring slowly by exerting Extraction for a short period daily.

Since that wouldn't be enough to tend to the wounds he had inflicted upon the Untamed Jungle, Michael visited one of the shops that were affiliated with the Bartholomew Corporation.

"I want to purchase half a million Tier-1 corpses. The fresher the better!" Michael ordered shortly after he entered the shop. He handed the attending staff his golden bartholomew membership card and waited patiently.

"500,000 Tier-1 corpses? Is that order...correct?" The attending staff asked in a slightly hesitant manner, unable to understand what someone wanted to do with half a million carcasses.

"It's correct, yes. Please proceed with the order. My bank account details are connected to the membership card. Money shouldn't be an issue."

Michael was able to earn a vast fortune in the last few weeks. Every agriculture-related blueprint rewarded him with a profit of several hundred thousand dollars. His expenses rose a lot as well, yet Michael had a hard time using his entire fortune.

Since he had been rather poor before, Michael found himself saving money more often than he spent it, even though he knew that it was not the most efficient way to use his fortune.

"I would like to sell a few thousand Tier-1 Artifacts, and a little bit more than 500 Tier-2 Artifacts as well," Michael said calmly, dropping another bomb right in front of the attending staff.

The young woman stared at him with her mouth slightly open, her brain trying to process what was going on. Was that young man in front of her a tycoon or something like that?

"For purchase orders, and transactions with thousands of Artifacts...I will have to call my superior..." She mumbled quietly, hoping that the customer was not in a hurry.

Michael smiled in response. The young woman's troubled expression amused him.

"Do that then," He said before adding, "And calm down a little."

Despite telling her to calm down, the young woman couldn't. She hurriedly called her superior, telling him everything that had just happened.

quickly noticed that the Tier-2 Adventurers had been quite poor. Their Tier-2 Artifacts were either 22:49

1-Star, or 2-Star Artifacts with common enchantments. While that may be exceptional for some In less than ten minutes a middle-aged man arrived in the shop, panting heavily. His forehead was glistening with sweat that he wiped off hastily with a handkerchief as he strode toward Michael and greeted him politely.

"Good morning, sir. I am terribly sorry for taking so long. Your order has already been placed and is currently being processed. We'll pay attention to the freshness of the 500,000 Tier-1 monster carcasses. Please don't worry about that!" The middle-aged man said before gesturing to a door at the side of the shop.

"Please follow me for the appraisal of the goods you wish to sell. I am curious what our esteemed guest wants to sell to our honorable and just shop!"

Michael didn't like the shop manager's overly formal way of speaking, but he gave it a shrug. Earning money was more important.

He followed the shop manager to the appraisal room where he retrieved batches of dozens of Artifacts.

Initially, Michael wanted to keep a few Artifacts, but he, Tiara and the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team quickly noticed that the Tier-2 Adventurers had been quite poor. Their Tier-2 Artifacts were either 1-Star, or 2-Star Artifacts with common enchantments. While that may be exceptional for some Awakened, Michael and Tiara didn't find any Artifacts that suited their combat style. There weren't many natural Tier-2 Artifacts either.

Michael and Tiara were not willing to change their combat style for a mere 2-Star Tier-2 Artifact. That wasn't worth it.

Thus, rather than keeping the Artifacts, Michael would rather earn a fortune from selling them. That way, he could invest his money into his territory and still purchase 500,000 Tier-1 monster carcasses.

The shop manager's expression changed drastically upon seeing the sheer mass of Artifacts that appeared in front of him. The young man retrieved a huge pile of Artifacts from his War Rune like it was nothing.

Michael's expression remained calm and composed as he observed the shop manager's reaction.

"It should be a total of 4752 Tier-1 Artifacts, and 521 Tier-2 Artifacts. Please appraise them carefully, and offer a satisfactory price!" Michael said with a faint smile on his lips.

However, to the shop manager, Michael's words sounded like an order, and his faint smile looked like the incarnation of the devil's smile.

Goosebumps spread all over his body and he began to shudder involuntarily.

'Who the hell is that guy?!'

Chapter 227 Distress

227 Distress

"The total for 500,000 fresh Tier-1 monster carcasses sums up to 501,530,000\$. However, since you were willing to sell a total of 4752 Tier-1 Artifacts and 521 Tier-2 Artifacts in our little shop..., 5.3 billion dollars will be transferred to your account," The shop manager said, his back drenched in cold sweat.

When he first received his subordinates' call, he didn't think too much about it. Yet, seeing more than 5,000 Artifacts in the hands of a single Lord was more than enough to make his heart skip a beat.

The shop manager had no idea where the Artifacts came from, but that was not important. The only important fact was that he could contribute to the profits of the Bartholomew Corporation by selling the Artifacts using the Bartholomew Shop Managing system.

As long as he sold all Artifacts at a high profit, he was bound to obtain a generous bonus. The thought of a bonus excited him, causing him to treat Michael much better than before.

Michael turned into a treasure trove in the shop manager's eyes.

Michael noticed the shop manager's change of attitude pretty quickly, but he didn't mind it. He received the first batch of Monster corpses which he stored inside his War Rune's storage space, and Spatial Pouch before he opened the Runic Gate in the middle of the shop.

He disappeared in the Origin Expanse, where he spread the monster corpses along the outer area of the corrupted land. Afterward, Michael returned to the shop where the next batches of monster corpses were waiting for him.

Since Michael's storage space was not big enough to carry 500,000 monster carcasses in a single trip, he had to travel back and forth several times.

It was a little bit annoying, but Michael spent only a few hours before he was finally done.

A total of 500,000 monster corpses had been spread across the border to the corrupted land.

'That should be enough for the time being,' Michael thought before he started utilizing Extraction to extract some of the chaos essence that had taken root in the corrupted land.

He didn't spend much time using Extraction, but the results were great nonetheless. Extraction was already a 6-Star Soultrait. Even if he didn't spend much energy or time extracting chaos essence, fixing the corrupted land wouldn't take too long. Half an hour a day was enough for him to gradually extract the impurities and fix the corrupted land in a month or two.

Michael was satisfied with that. He left the Origin Expanse once more to purchase hundreds of tons of soil. It didn't even have to be nutritious since the Untamed Jungle would fill its surroundings with nutrition as long as he provided it with enough monster corpses.

Michael spent the next few days extracting the chaos essence of the humongous pit. Afterward, he filled it slowly with soil.

"Did the corpses of the Paladins disintegrate?" He wondered at one point in the pit.

The corpses of the 10 Paladins seemed to have vanished. The only signs of their death had been the energy influxes and the fact that Michael could extract a small piece of paper coated in gold from the humongous pit.

The piece of paper looked like the plane tickets of ancient times – just that it was coated in gold.

"Did that belong to the Paladins? What is it used for?" Michael wondered when he picked up the golden paper.

Unfortunately, he couldn't find out its use. Not even channeling origin energy into it had an effect. Thus, Michael stored it inside his War Rune's storage space without giving it much thought.

The days after the Jungle Expedition's defeat were calming. Nobody bothered Michael nor his people – not even the monsters inhabiting the Untamed Jungle. Everything was quiet and relaxing, providing Michael with the luxury of resting properly.

Michael didn't use Extraction too often or too much these days – just to a degree he was comfortable with without draining himself. Despite that, he found himself using Extraction considerably more as his condition improved.

After five days of adequate rest inside the Origin Expanse, Michael was full of vigor and able to use Extraction to the extreme without any issues.

Nonetheless, he didn't rush the process of fixing the corrupted land of the Untamed Jungle. He didn't want to attract unnecessary attention from the Zentika Empire so soon after the warfare against the Jungle Expedition ended.

A good thing was that Michael had lots of things to do both inside the Origin Expanse and outside the Sapphirelake Military Academy.

The relocation of his territory's epicenter had been completed; the wooden manor and the Summoning Gate had been moved along with the Nature Spirit.

It had been a difficult task that required the brute force of close to a thousand subjects and several days, but it worked out at last.

Now that the relocation of his territory had been completed, Michael could change orders and expand his territory once again, focusing on the growth of his military force, their nourishment, and rebuilding everything that had been destroyed in the warfare with the Jungle Expedition.

Once everything had been reconstructed, Michael would use his remaining funds to expand the Underground Forging Hall.

Michael spent a hefty sum of close to 5.5 billion dollars to expand his farms and both Alchemy and Blacksmithing businesses. That way, he could focus on the production of energy pills, potions, and low-level armaments while ensuring low costs in the long term.

"With the current efficiency of basic energy pills and low-level armament productions, I should focus on stability. Once everything has been stabilized, I should focus on the nourishment of my Blacksmiths and Alchemists," Michael thought aloud while wondering about the best possible way forward, "...should I purchase a few manuals, blueprints, and recipes for them to study, or should I wait a little bit with that?"

Michael was located in the Untamed Jungle, where the flora and fauna grew multiple times faster than anywhere else, and he was in possession of both a high-ranked Nature Spirit and a Botanica Magician. Taking gardeners and farmers into account, Michael would never have issues farming Tiatcha, herbs, and other plants.

That was great, but it was also one of the reasons Michael fell into deep thoughts. Alchemists required a large amount of ingredients to concoct potions, pills, and to research new recipes in order to advance to the next rank. Focusing on their growth was something Michael was supposed to do as a Lord in the Untamed Jungle.

proper Enchanter's Lair and nourish Master Enchanters if I don't have enough money to expand the

Alchemy House and Forging Hall properly?!?' Michael cursed in his heart.

However, the lizard cave and the Underground Ecosystem provided the best environment for the Underground Forging Hall. Splitting his attention and funds to nourish both businesses was great, but it drained his money much faster than a wildfire could do.

'I haven't even started focusing on the creation of Artifacts yet. How am I supposed to create a proper Enchanter's Lair and nourish Master Enchanters if I don't have enough money to expand the Alchemy House and Forging Hall properly?!?' Michael cursed in his heart.

He knew that 5.5 billion dollars were a vast fortune and that it was enough to nourish a few Master Blacksmiths, and Master Alchemists. However, Michael knew how greedy he was better than anyone else.

"I need more money!"

But money was not everything that kept him on his toes.

He had to catch up to the other students in his classes as well. Adding the days he spent to eliminate the Jungle Expedition, the days he'd been unconscious in the medical hall, and the time he spent to recuperate and relocate his territory's center, Michael missed out two weeks' worth of lessons in total.

While that was not a problem in the Limit Breaker Course nor Alice's Individual Teaching course, missing the other lessons was a little bit more troublesome.

The Researchers and Instructors didn't like that he missed the Memory Lane, Old Language, and Ancient Ruins courses.

He didn't receive a Mark for not attending the courses, but it was noted down, which was not in his favor.

Michael was a little regretful as well. In two weeks, he could have learned so much about Ancient Ruins, and the Old Languages, and his proficiency in the Memory Lane technique could have increased drastically.

Unfortunately, he couldn't do anything about the Jungle Expedition's attack, and its aftermath. It was not his fault that they attacked him, after all!

But there was nothing Michael could do about it. He accepted the Professor's remarks and decided to give his utmost to make up for missing their lessons.

He began to practice the Sacred Rectification body refinement technique in the Limit Breaker Course. Michael's Berserker Physique reached its peak after refining his body to the Lowest-stage of Tier-2.

It was a great feat to practice Berserker Physique to the limit, but Michael had to replace it. Sacred Rectification was its replacement, and it had a much higher limit.

Practicing the first two stages of Sacred Rectification was rather simple. It used Berserker Physique's refinement as the foundation to refine his physique a second time. But since Sacred Rectification was a body refinement technique of a higher level than Berserker Physique, practicing it refined his physique to an even higher degree than before.

The re-refinement required a considerable amount of nutrition and energy, but the result was exceptional.

Other than Sacred Rectification, Michael started to utilize Pandemonium's Requiem as well. He initially purchased the neutral energy absorption technique for his subjects. Michael didn't intend to use the technique because he was certain that he could depend on the energy share of his subjects to refine his War Rune.

However, Pandemonium's Requiem allowed him to improve his natural energy circulation after he overcharged his energy storage in the warfare against the Jungle Expedition. Without Pandemonium's Requiem, Michael might still be suffering from the aftereffects of the warfare.

Thus, he began to practice Pandemonium's Requiem more diligently, hoping that he could further improve his energy circulation and prevent future incidents before they occurred, in the first place.

Other than Pandemonium's Requiem and Sacred Rectification, Michael also focused on Caesurium Menta. It was a great mind refining technique that had great compatibility with Memory Lane.

Practicing Ceasurium Menta was likely to give him the momentum he required to catch up with the others in their practice of Memory Lane.

All in all, Michael had the means to grow stronger in a short period. As a matter of fact, Michael had already grown a lot stronger in an extremely short period and reached the Peak of Tier-1.

Meanwhile, his Soultraits advanced a lot, providing him a wide variety of abilities, which empowered his combat prowess even further.

Despite all of that, Michael felt powerless.

His friends noticed that as well.

It was not difficult to see that Michael had grown a lot stronger in the last few weeks. Yet, instead of rewarding himself with a few more days of well-deserved rest , Michael's focus switched to getting stronger consistently.

The thought of being helpless against the Tier-3 Paladins caused him great distress.

The Chaos Pills might have saved him, but he never wanted to use them again. Only after using them did Michael realize how foolish it had been to concoct the Chaos Pills inside his territory, and how lucky he had been to survive – and not to obliterate his own territory by triggering 100 Chaos Pills.

Michael might have won the territorial war, but he lost the war of nerves.

He never wanted to feel like this again, and the only way to achieve this was to grow stronger...strong enough to deal with hundreds of Paladins on his own!

Chapter 228 Jack Of All Trades

Kaleb received a lot of attention from fellow freshmen and the seniors of the Saphirelake Military Academy.

Even the Professors and Instructors paid more attention to him when he attended their lessons. The attention was a side-effect of awakening a 7-Star Soultrait. He was added into the Heavens, the group of people who had awakened a 7-Star Soultrait.

Kaleb's potential was extremely high, and so were the hopes of the people around him. Everyone hoped that he would become a pillar of support for humanity.

Yet, despite all of the attention he received from the people around him, Kaleb didn't feel superior compared to Michael.

He had been certain that he would overpower Michael soon. After all, he used an Inheritance technique that strengthened Frozen Nova even further. In addition to the Inheritance technique, Kaleb was also given more than enough resources to refine his War Rune rapidly and expand his territory much faster than others could expand their territory within years.

The resources at his disposal were alarmingly high, and so was the luck he had with the awakening of a 7-Star Soultrait and a Growth-type Summon.

So why did he still feel that Michael was superior to him?

Kaleb was not certain about that either. Michael's War Rune might have advanced to the Peak of Tier-1, but Kaleb was not much behind. He would catch up with Michael in a few weeks. By then, Kaleb should be strong enough to overpower Michael. But why did that feel like an impossible task?

Kaleb felt weird while watching Michael train and study tirelessly. Something about his friend had changed in the last two weeks, but he couldn't grasp what it was.

One way or another, Kaleb could tell that Michael continued to grow rapidly. Rather than slowing down eventually, Michael was slowly gaining momentum.

'If I want to keep up with him, I should hurry up. Having a powerful Soultrait doesn't mean that I'm invincible!' Kaleb reminded himself, coiling his fists tightly.

Meanwhile, Jacqueline and Frederik were faced with a similar problem. The Barbaric Couple felt dread, and desperation spread through their entire being noticing the rapid pace at which Michael grew stronger.

They were giving their all – spending most of their time in the Origin Expanse, and training –, but it felt like their strength didn't increase by much. It was evident that Michael's strength increased much faster than theirs. Why was that the case? How was it possible for Michael to be way stronger than them? They were in possession of upgraded versions of their family's Inheritance techniques. Shouldn't that give them an advantage over Michael?

While they kept wondering about this, Michael didn't even notice that something was wrong with Frederik and Jacqueline. He didn't have much to do with them at this point. Their War Rune's refinement degree increased rapidly, but Michael was physically much stronger than them. Facing them in the spars of the Limit Breaker Course was not too exciting for him anymore. Their fighting style didn't change, and Michael could tell that they couldn't unleash their full combat prowess whenever they faced him.

Michael was not sure why that was the case, but he didn't care too much about it either. Lincoln, Zeke, and Kaleb were far more interesting in his opinion. The descendants of the High Nobles and the Supreme Family had a versatile fighting style and they used their Soultraits in unique ways, providing Michael with enough material to research his own Soultraits.

Upon fusing with a Soultrait one was usually given a flood of information related to the Soultrait. This made the utilization of the Soultrait much easier.

However, that didn't mean all functions of the Soultrait were handed out to the Awakened. Certain abilities required more energy before they could be utilized, while other abilities required a unique approach.

Extraction was the best example. When he first fused with Extraction, all Michael knew was that Extraction could extract certain objects from other objects, or beings. That was how Michael started using Extraction on the soil beneath him and the corpses of Tier-1 Monsters.

Slowly but steadily, Michael found out more about Extraction's limits and how to use it to make the most use of the Soultrait. Eventually, he would learn more about Extraction. After all, the Soultrait would continue to develop and he would find out more about the remaining functions of Extraction.

His other Soultraits were the same. Each of them was likely to have some hidden functions that required thorough research to be discovered. But that required time, which was what caused problems for someone like Michael. He was in possession of too many Soultraits, and the number was bound to increase in the future.

Michael would focus on Extraction in the future because his growth was bound to the development of the Extraction Soultrait, but that meant he couldn't spend much time researching his other Soultraits.

"Looks like I'm going to become a Jack of all trades, master of none," Michael shook his head as he walked over to a large table with several places full of nutritious dishes.

He just finished the daily workout of the Limit Breaker course and was ready to devour the dishes in front of him when he noticed that someone familiar sat down opposite him.

"It's not that bad to be a Jack of all trades. After all, being a master of none means that you're oftentimes better than a master of one," Annabelle Claire said wisely as she reached for her spoon and fork.

It had been a while since Michael and Annabelle met. Nonetheless, they often used starnet messenger to chat with each other. That was also how they knew about each other's progress, and also the reason they met up at the cafeteria today.

"Aren't you way too busy to think about improving your archery skills? I heard some rumors about you, and all of them turn you into a training maniac, and a masochist, who likes getting beat up by the descendants of the Zenovia, Lavita, and Piedra family. You look tired as hell as well. If you look in a mirror now, you would probably think that your reflection is a ghost!" Annabelle remarked with a deep frown on her face.

Not many focused on Michael, but rumors soon spread that Alice had picked him for individual lessons, and it was also well-known that Michael often sparred with Lincoln, Zeke, Kaleb, and the Barscht

Triplets. Whenever someone saw Michael, he was either eating, sparring, or training. It was almost like Michael didn't know what the words 'rest', 'fun', or 'relaxing' meant.

"I am quite busy, that's true. But I cannot neglect my archery skills. I want to become a better archer since I have a suitable Soultrait. It would be a waste of potential to leave behind archery and focus solely on close combat," Michael explained lightly.

Both Alice Zenovia and Silverian Schild trained him, but none of them was proficient at using the bow. Silverian Schild was a brute close combat fighter, who mostly focused on heavy blows and sudden surprise movements to attack.

On the other hand, Alice was a nimble combatant. She could fight close combat and long distance. However, her long-distance attacks were the creation of her Ice-type Soultrait. Alice would conjure icicles and throw them at Michael using her willpower rather than her eyes to aim precisely.

While it was interesting to learn Alice's approach to a long-distance battle, it didn't help Michael in his current state. He had yet to fuse with an Elemental-type Soultrait and couldn't use her approach to improve his archery skills either.

Annabelle might not be an instructor, but her mastery of bow and arrow was on par with an Instructor's. She was the best Archer he knew – by far.

"If you think that training with me will help you... I don't have a problem with that," Annabelle said after a while.

She thought about rejecting Michael's request, but there was no reason to do so. If anything, Michael's request benefited her. After all, Michael could connect her to his social circle – which was something most freshmen would love to be a part of at this point.

"Thanks a lot. If you need help in the future, just tell me. I owe you!" Michael declared.

He finished his meal in mere seconds and resumed his training. Meanwhile, Annabelle sent him a copy of her schedule and the time of the day when she usually focused on training her archery skills. I think you should take a look at

Michael took notes and he adjusted his schedule accordingly, adding two archery training sessions a week.

Once he finalized the schedule everything was set in stone.

Michael could follow his schedule without anyone bothering him for the next few weeks.

Likewise, a full month passed in the blink of an eye.

The situation in the Saphirelake Military Academy changed slowly. More students diverted their focus to the ranking boards to challenge their fellow friends and colleagues to a ranked battle.

The Battle Exchange of the Tritan Alliance would be held in less than two months, and everyone wanted to participate.

Most freshmen had been sent to the Saphirelake Military Academy for three reasons. First, most influential families wanted to ensure that their children could accumulate military merit points in the Saphirelake Military Academy in order to improve their military rank before a large-scale war broke out.

Second, the influential families showed interest in the Berserker and Warlock Centaur races. They wanted to connect to the fellow races of the Tritan Alliance and strengthen their family's influence and power by becoming close friends with the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs.

And last but not least, the freshmen were told to befriend the students around them. Since many big families were willing to send their prodigious descendants to the Saphirelake Military Academy, other families sensed a golden opportunity. Many prodigious descendants left their family's protective shell for the first time to attend the Saphirelake Military Academy, and many wanted to exploit this situation to befriend the strongest families and create a highly influential social circle.

Compared to the political reasons and scheming of the influential families, Michael's reason to join the Saphirelake Military Academy seemed like a big joke. He was also interested in the Berserkers and the Warlock Centaurs, but that was mostly because he wanted to learn more about the old origin tongue.

Furthermore, he had been certain that he could learn a lot from the professors and instructors.

Never would Michael have imagined that he could get closer to the descendants of several nobles, forget about becoming close friends with two High Nobles.

But then again, Michael had also never imagined obtaining a Soultrait like Extraction, or that he would advance to Tier-2 in less than six months after his War Rune manifested.

But that was precisely what happened.

Michael focused so much on his studies and training that he didn't even realize when his War Rune began to break down the barrier to the 2nd Tier.

He only sensed that he was on the verge of a breakthrough when the barrier to the 2nd Tier was fully covered in deep spider web-like cracks.

His War Rune pulsed wildly, notifying Michael that it was about time to focus on the breakthrough.

Michael entered the Origin Expanse and sat down cross-legged to utilize Pandemonium's Requiem. Pandemonium's Requiem allowed him to control the circulation of origin energy inside his body and vicinity precisely. He calmed the origin energy inside his body while absorbing the energy in the surroundings.

Afterward, he focused on the deepest part of his consciousness where a pillar of light appeared.

The pillar of light pulsed vigorously, and every vibration caused streams of light to flood toward the pillar of light from all directions.

It looked like the pillar of light was a humongous tree that branched out in all directions, reaching every part of his body.

Michael entered a state called introspection, allowing him to see the origin energy everywhere inside his body. He was utterly fascinated to be able to see every wisp of energy inside him and continued practicing Pandemonium's Requiem to accelerate the flow of energy in a controlled manner.

The pillar of light's pulse grew stronger, deepening the cracks that spread through the barrier restricting the pillar's growth.

It was only a matter of time before the sound of crackling glass echoed through Michael's entire body. The sound intensified with the passage of time until a thunderous explosion rang out.

In the next instance, soothing warmth and unfathomable power swept through Michael.

A groan escaped Michael's lips as the soothing warmth slowly turned into searing heat that flared up instantly. It turned into a viscous blazing flame that spread through every inch of his body.

It made him feel like he was on fire; as if hot, molten magma was circulating through his body.

The burning heat first emerged inside his heart, which made Michael feel like his heart would melt on the spot.

However, he knew that this wouldn't happen. In fact, Michael had already faced the exact situation before.

By advancing to the next stage, his body would undergo a natural cleansing – which was exactly what was happening right now.

Understanding the situation, Michael braced himself and endured the pain and discomfort.

The pores all over his body opened, and a black reeking mass began to slowly ooze out of him.

At this point, Michael sensed that he could activate Extraction, and that was what he did the next moment.

He unleashed Extraction in its strongest form, picking himself as the target.

The next moment, Michael's entire body was engulfed in intense golden streams of light that seemed to devour him.

Chapter 229 Tier-2

229 Tier-2

By the time Michael advanced to the 1st Tier, he had already used Extraction to aid his first natural cleansing.

Extracting impurities from his body wasn't possible under ordinary circumstances. It seemed like he could only meet the conditions to extract impurities during a natural cleansing.

That was also why Michael used 6-Star Extraction, strengthened by several layers of Enhancement during his second natural cleansing.

The fewer impurities he left inside his body the faster his energy circulation would be. At the end of the day, the overall strengthening he received from his War Rune's advancement would be on the higher side with fewer impurities restricting him.

A body void of impurities was what Michael worked toward. Perfectly purifying himself would increase his strength drastically, and using 6-Star Extraction was his approach to get closer to his final goal.

The means at his disposal at his current stage were incomparable to Extraction when he first used it to extract the impurities during the first natural cleansing. At that time, Extraction had only been a 3-Star Soultrait, and Michael hadn't been in possession of an Enhancement either.

Time passed slowly, and several layers of thick black mass covered his body. It stuck to him and made him feel filthy and disgusted. Even the intense golden streams of Extraction got buried under the mass of badly reeking impurities.

'The human body is really filled with nothing but rubbish...' Michael mused at one point.

Advancing to the 2nd Tier wasn't an easy task. It required a tremendous amount of origin energy and nutrition to strengthen his body and expand the pillar of light properly.

Using up a tremendous amount of origin energy immediately after advancing to the 2nd Tier was something most Awakened would advise against. However, Michael had to use Enhancement and Extraction to exploit the opportunity that appeared with the second natural cleansing.

That was also why Michael was drained of all his energy when the second natural cleansing ended. He could barely crawl into the bathtub that had been filled with warm water and a medicinal solution before he dozed off.

When he woke up again, the layers of impurities covering his body were no more.

Michael was confused at first, but he found Tiara standing next to the bathtub, clearing his doubts.

"I removed the impurities and cleansed your body, Master. You don't have to worry about the stench either. I took care of everything!" She explained with enthusiasm in her voice.

Michael raised an eyebrow while keeping his attention on Tiara. He was not sure when she started to wear her maid uniform once again, but he faintly recalled seeing her in it a lot in the last month.

Michael hadn't given her an order in that regard. Tiara did it on her own volition, which was quite confusing. Tiara was a great combatant. Using her as a maid seemed like a waste of her talent and potential. However, the Battle Maid of the Silverfang Tigerfolk didn't seem to care. She would fight the moment Michael ordered her only to return to the territory and wear her maid uniform once again.

"...Good job. Thanks for looking after me..." Michael could only say, not sure whether to scold Tiara or to praise her for cleansing his body.

He looked down at himself and noticed that he was still wearing his underpants, causing a sigh of relief to escape his lips subconsciously.

'At least, she didn't go overboard.'

"You can go outside. I'll change and come out in a minute."

Michael waved his hand, gesturing to Tiara to leave. Tiara bowed politely to Michael and left the room.

Tiara closed the door behind her as she left. Her cheeks turned red like a tomato and her tail started to swish wildly.

"...I'm insane..." She blurted out, shaking her head furiously, trying to control the thoughts that began to corrupt her innocent mind.

While Tiara was fighting with her inner demons, Michael got out of the wooden bathtub. He stripped off his wet underpants, dried his body, and put on a neat set of dry clothes.

Afterward, he stepped out to meet up with the rest of his people.

By now, the corrupted land of the Untamed Jungle's outer ring had been fixed. Michael spent a small fortune and a considerable amount of time to extract every single trace of the chaos essence that had taken root in the corrupted land before nourishing the Untamed Jungle with a few more batches of hundreds of thousands of Tier-1 monster carcasses.

He had already finished fixing the corrupted land, and placed a few watchtowers in the Untamed Jungle's outer ring, and stationed a few guards who would report the movements in that area to him.

Since Michael couldn't simply show up at the gate and demand to enter Xiltra as he pleased anymore, he had to find other means to stay up-to-date. It would be easier with a meticulously planned information network, but setting up something like that was easier said than done.

Thus, watchtowers were the fastest and a cost-efficient solution for the time being. He could switch to other means of surveillance once the time was ripe.

When he stepped out of the wooden manor, Michael was greeted by the densely grown Untamed Jungle. It was dimly lit because only a few rays of sunlight made it past the thick canopy of jungle trees.

The trees all around them were old and had a thick trunk. They were decades, if not centuries old, and continued to grow without anyone disturbing them. At first, Michael wanted to cut down the trees around the wooden manor and the Summoning Gate, but he chose against it.

He only cut down the areas where it was unusually dense to ensure that some trees could survive and continue to grow.

When trees grew too closely together, their branches, roots, and foliage overlapped, leading to intense competition for resources, such as sunlight, water, and nutrients. Michael made sure to break down the competition between the trees in his territory with the use of Extraction.

Simultaneously, he used the trees he cut down to construct treehouse complexes and put them in the trees he had salvaged.

Most residents of his territory lived in large treehouse complexes. This was to ensure that the highly nutritious ground could be kept free for the Bilroch ranch, the farms, warehouses, the Alchemy house, the Medical hall, the public canteen where food was distributed to everyone, the training grounds, and much more.

All in all, Michael didn't alter the environment around him too much. He wanted to use the Untamed Jungle and live alongside it in a symbiotic relationship rather than draining the Untamed Jungle like a parasite. That was the best solution he could think of considering that he desired to stay a long time in the Untamed Jungle.

Of course, Michael had to get rid of the harmful plants that spread through the Untamed Jungle's middle zone and remove huge chunks of the thick undergrowth. But Michael made amends for that. He chose to consider the Untamed Jungle a sentient existence, which was why he made tributes to the Untamed Jungle whenever he harmed it.

His tributes were mostly monster corpses which the Untamed Jungle devoured and digested to accelerate the growth of its flora and fauna.

Finding a raised spot, Michael climbed it and his gaze moved through his territory. Wherever he looked, people were busy with work. New treehouse complexes had to be constructed at all times, ensuring that there would be enough space for new summons to stay and rest. Other than that, a new system had been constructed for the canopy bridges.

The infrastructure of the territory had been upgraded, creating more pathways to pass through the Untamed Jungle in a much shorter period.

They even completed a straight pathway to the fiend trees where Sun Demos and his Demon Monkeys resided. Sun Demos and his subordinates hadn't been relocated to Michael's territory. They felt more comfortable in the darkness of the gloomy fiend trees.

Michael let them be. If the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys were satisfied with their habitat, who was he to drag them out of their favorite place? He was not a tyrant, after all!

He took a deep breath of fresh air, and a smile blossomed on his lips.

Everything in his surroundings felt much more vibrant than ever before. It was hard to explain since Michael felt like this for the first time, but everything around him felt restlessly alive. Even the gusts of air were full of vigor, seemingly sentient as they brushed past him.

His body felt much lighter than before, and he could see a faint luster of twinkling stars spread across his body. Looking down at his body, Michael could clearly see his shimmering skin, and the smallest details of his pulsating veins and bulging muscles.

Michael couldn't comprehend it yet, but the extraction of impurities didn't only lead to a drastic increase in his origin energy circulation and physical strength. The removal of impurities sharpened his dull senses that had been affected by impurities as well.

It improved his stamina by removing the impurities in his lungs and other vital organs, in addition to improving his endurance and regeneration abilities, enabling the smooth circulation of blood, origin energy, and transfer of nutrition.

Advancing to Tier-2 and completing the second natural cleansing should have increased his strength and overall capabilities by more than 50% under normal circumstances. However, by taking the additional extraction of impurities into account, Michael guessed that his power and overall capabilities must have increased by nearly 100%!

Even a Low-stage Tier-2 Adventurer wouldn't dare to face Michael head-on right now, even if Michael didn't use his Soultraits and Artifacts!

Now that Michael advanced to Tier-2, he was not sure how strong he had become. However, he knew that he still had a long way to go.

Michael was satisfied with the increment in strength he had attained by advancing to the 2nd Tier, but he found himself getting impatient and greedy.

Despite knowing that it was not healthy, Michael found himself caught in his desire and greed to overpower everyone around him and to be able to expand his territory without the need to be wary of the people, empires, and regions around him.

Letting his greed lose, Michael sensed that something inside his War Rune's storage was tugging at his consciousness.

The golden piece of paper, which he had procured from the deep pit where he'd killed the 10 Paladins, appeared in front of him.

It glowed dimly as it levitated in front of Michael's eyes.

"What is that?" Michael mumbled, lifting his hand to touch the levitating golden paper.

However, the piece of paper evaded his hand. It revolved around Michael three times until it slowed down to hover in front of Michael's forehead.

All of a sudden, the golden paper burst forward. It shot toward Michael's forehead where it was supposed to collide.

Yet, instead of colliding with his forehead, the golden paper passed through his forehead.

The paper's solid form changed suddenly, turning gaseous as it entered Michael's head, where it infiltrated his mind.

Once inside his mind, the golden paper dispersed in all directions, leaving behind a golden strand and a flood of information that swept through his entire mind, occupying every corner.

'Why does this look like a golden gate?' Michael wondered in shock as he visualized the golden strand that looked just like a golden version of the Runic Gate.

"What the hell is going on?" He blurted aloud just before the flood of information almost knocked him out.

Chapter 230 Lord Rift

Coherent Information was pieced together in Michael's mind, and he digested it quickly.

"An entrance ticket to enter the Lord Rift? How did I obtain that?" He wondered.

Michael recalled that he extracted the golden piece of paper from the deep pit where he killed the Paladins, but the Lord Rift Entrance Ticket didn't originate from the Paladins. Their bodies had been destroyed, leaving Michael no target to use Extraction on.

'Did I meet a certain condition to extract the entrance ticket?' Michael wondered, thinking that it was the most likely case.

He nodded subconsciously before focusing on the information that had entered his mind.

'By using the Lord Rift Entrance ticket, I don't even have to travel through the Zentika Empire to enter the Rift. Utilizing it will teleport me straight into the Lord Rift when it opens. That's pretty good.'

The Lord Rift would open in less than four weeks, providing Michael with enough time to reconsider whether he should enter the Lord Rift or not.

'I just relocated the Summoning Gate. Shouldn't I focus on my territory for the time being?' Michael thought at first, but the information related to the loot he could procure within the Lord Rift surfaced in his mind.

The treasures that can be harvested in the Lord Rift were exceptional. One of them was an Instant Upgrade for any kind of Soultrait. It would upgrade his 6-Star Extraction to a 7-Star Soultrait.

Other than that, Michael could get hold of Legendary Summoning Scrolls, Legendary Artifacts, unique blueprints, exotic recipes, and much more.

Each of those treasures was worth fighting for since they could change the development course of a territory in its entirety.

Michael was excited at the thought of obtaining a Legendary Summoning Scroll, or an exotic recipe with which he could concoct higher-ranked energy pills or other exotic pills. But what excited him most was the restriction put on the Lord Rift.

To enter the Lord Rift, one had to be a Tier-2 Lord. No one at the 3rd Tier or above could enter the Lord Rift, not even the old powerhouses of the Zentika Empire's Council.

'Only two members of the Lord's territory can enter the Lord Rift alongside their Lord, and only one of them is allowed to be an Awakened. What a weird restriction. But fine...the non-awakened would probably be Masked Saber. Other than that, I should pick an Awakened who is compatible with us...Tiara would be best in that case,' Michael thought, feeling that Masked Saber and Tiara were the most obvious choices.

The Links of Loyalty of Masked Saber and Tiara were the firmest. Their individual combat prowess was exceptional, and it was not difficult for Michael to work with them. Their teamwork was pretty good, to the extent that Michael felt a bit confused.

His heart beat rapidly, and he anticipated the next few weeks until the Lord rift would open.

'Why am I already this excited? I didn't even finalize my decision, yet I am thinking about a strategy to enter the Lord Rift and reap all benefits...ridiculous.'

Michael was amused at his own train of thought. He couldn't deny that he was very curious about the Lord Rift, but that was only obvious. The Lord Rift was extremely valuable for everyone, no matter how wealthy they were, or how lucky they had been in the past. It was definitely worth a try.

However, Michael was also a little bit worried.

'Wouldn't it be a slap in the Zentika Empire's face if I appear in their Lord Rift, and take everything? Every Lord from the Zentika Empire would have heard rumors about the happenings in the Untamed Jungle by the time the Lord Rift opened. Wouldn't they team up with each other to eliminate me?' Michael thought about the possibility, and he didn't like it.

Even in the worst-case scenario, some Lords would report his appearance in the Lord Rift to others. By then, the Zentika Empire's council would surely find out that he entered the Lord Rift.

They were bound to be enraged.

While that might sound bad, it was quite exciting.

Despite the possibility of facing the worst-case scenario in the future, Michael felt that it would be a worse decision to stay low-key.

Ignoring the opportunity that had unveiled itself in front of him in the form of a golden entrance ticket meant that Michael was willing to give up the chance to improve.

It was a sign of weakness; the fear of failure.

Just thinking about the Zentika Empire, and how helpless he had been against the Tier-3 Adventurers was enough to make the hair all over his body stand up on its end.

'If I don't take this opportunity to grow stronger, am I going to complain bitterly when the Zentika Empire decides to attack me again? Will I use suicidal tactics to desperately fight for my survival? Why am I even hesitating? By using the golden entrance ticket, I can enter and leave the Lord Rift safely without having to travel through the Zentika Empire! I shouldn't hesitate...am I that weak?!?'

No, Michael wasn't weak. He was in possession of a 6-Star Soultrait, a 5-Star Soultrait, three 4-Star Soultraits, and two 1-Star Soultraits. Nobody was as well equipped with Soultraits as Michael.

As long as he upgraded his equipment by procuring Tier-2 Artifacts, and trained himself to utilize the combination of multiple Soultraits thoroughly, it should be a walk in the park to obtain some invaluable treasures inside the Lord Rift. After all, his opponents would only be Tier-2 Lords. They wouldn't be as strong as the 13 Tier-3 Paladins!

There was no need to hesitate. The Lord Rift ought to be his treasure trove, the sacred land he was supposed to plunder!

'Tiara will break through and advance to the 2nd Tier in a few days, and Masked Saber reached the Peak of Tier-1 as well. If I nourish him a little bit more he'll advance to Tier-2 before the Lord Rift opens as well. All I need are proper Tier-2 Artifacts for myself and Tiara.'

Purchasing Tier-2 Artifacts was not a problem. Michael had been setting aside enough savings from the money he earned by selling Agriculture-type blueprints, and the other loot he harvested in the last four weeks.

The only issue was to find Artifacts with great quality.

Until now, Tiara continued using Fenrir's silver spear. The silver spear was even better than Michael's Seron Voulge, and it was unlikely that they would find a better weapon anytime soon. Fortunately, that was not a big problem. Michael could focus on purchasing an Armor Set Artifact, a Shield Artifact, and Protective Accessory Artifacts for Tiara.

On the other hand, Masked Saber's equipment was much easier to procure. In fact, the Weaponsmith of the territory could forge a perfectly balanced saber for Masked Saber as long as he was given the right raw materials.

The thought of upgrading his people's equipment was quite exciting, and it was no different from the excitement he felt at the thought of purchasing Tier-2 Artifacts for himself.

Thus, Michael left the Origin Expanse, ready to rush to the Artifact shops for a shopping spree.

But before Michael could step out of his territory, he found himself bombarded with dozens of messages.

'How can someone be that annoying?! Is it Frederik, or Jacqueline?!' Michael cursed inwardly while opening starnet messengers.

Yet, what he saw confused him quite a bit.

[Kilian Whira(Shop Manager): Good Morning, Sir Fang. I hope I'm not bothering you, sir, but I noticed that you sold fewer Agriculture-type blueprints than before to our esteemed shop in the last few months. Could it be that you're dissatisfied with our service?]

[Kilian Whira(Shop Manager): Good Evening, Sir Fang. I am terribly sorry for messaging you again, but could it be that something is wrong? If you encountered some trouble in the Origin Expanse, feel free to message me. I will try my utmost to help you out. After all, we're close business partners!]

[Kilian Whira(Shop Manager): Sir Fang, would you be willing to meet up with me in the near future? The Bartholomew Shop has a promotional event with great discounts. There are many items you'll probably be interesting in.]

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More than a dozen messages with similar content swamped his chat sent by the owner of the shop affiliated with the Bartholomew Corporation.

Michael had been doing business with them for quite a while now, but over the last few months, he stopped sending more Agriculture-type blueprints than he had to. He fulfilled the monthly quota to earn a small fortune before putting aside the remaining Agriculture-type blueprints for later use.

There was no reason for Michael to spend more time and money selling the Agriculture-type blueprints when he was already wealthy enough. He only did the bare minimum to reach the monthly quota, fulfilling the conditions of his contract with the Bartholomew Corporation. Why should he sell them more when it was not necessary?

'You guys shouldn't have given me such a weird exclusive contract. I was in need of hard cash at that time and didn't focus on the small details. Why should I allow you to exploit me?' Michael asked in his mind.

He didn't think about offending the Bartholomew Corporation, but he was not willing to let them trample all over him.

His exclusive contract with the Bartholomew Corporation had a duration of 12 months, and he was doing his part diligently.

But since he was not in need of hard cash anymore, he decided to store as many agriculture-type blueprints as possible to sell them later – for a better price than suggested in the exclusive contract.

Thus, Michael prepared a lovely message to send to Kilian Whira.

[Michael Fang: Hello Mr. Whira. I have been a little bit busy these days and couldn't access starnet messenger. Please don't worry, everything is perfectly fine. My territory is still standing. There won't be a problem with the agriculture-type blueprints either. I will fulfill the monthly quota by handing over exactly 100 blueprints until the month of the contract's duration. I can ensure that there won't be an issue until then.

Greetings, Michael Fang]

Michael read through the message a few times. He edited a few words, adding hidden meanings to certain phrases to ensure that Kilian Whira understood what he was trying to convey. Then he sent a message.

Afterward, Michael walked through the gate. He left the building, only to receive a call less than a minute after he sent out the message.

"You fell straight into my trap. It's always fun to deal with impatient people," Michael mused, clearing his throat before he picked up the incoming call.

"Hello? Michael Fang speaking. How may I help you, Mr. Whira?"