

## Supreme Lord 281

### Chapter 281 Inside Me

Michael missed several weeks of school to recuperate.

However, even after his War Rune's Essence had been tended to, Michael didn't bother to return to school. Instead, he disappeared through the Runic Gate to return to the Origin Expanse.

Upon stepping into the Origin Expanse, Michael was immediately surrounded by a bunch of Summons. Even though only three weeks passed in the Saphirelake Military Academy, a total of six weeks had passed in the Origin Expanse.

His territory progressed rapidly in every possible way. More high tree houses had been constructed in the proximity of the Summoning Gate and the wooden manor. Wells with fresh water had been dug out in several spots all over his territory, and his army had grown much stronger.

Just a fleeting gaze throughout his territory was enough for him to tell that they progressed well even without his help.

Every little bit of progress would have made him happy if Michael was still the same as in the past, but that was not the case. His eyes were void of emotions, just like his expression. It was almost like Michael was an emotionless robot.

The Starless Summons gathering around Michael noticed that something was wrong about Michael, but they didn't know what it was. It seemed too far-fetched to think that Masked Saber's death would have such a big impact on Michael's life. It was not that uncommon for Summons to die in battle, after all.

Yet, Michael had lost a lot of weight. His muscle mass had receded drastically as well, which made him look like skin and bones.

When Michael emerged in his territory, a wooden chest materialized in front of him. It looked delicate and had intricate enchantments engraved all over it.

It was the lootbox given by the Will of the Origin Expanse, granting him treasures according to his accomplishments in the Lord Rift.

Michael didn't want to open the chest at first, but it appeared next to him after he stepped aside. The chest followed him wherever he went.

Annoyed and frustrated, Michael opened the chest, and emptied it at once before kicking the chest. The chest didn't break. Instead, it began to glow brightly and burst into countless white wisps that dispersed in all directions.

Michael cursed quietly, but he picked up the loot one by one. There wasn't that much, in the first place.

But just as he was about to pick up the first item, Michael froze in his tracks.

A Soultrait Symbol with tiny roots attracted his attention. It was among the drops generated by the Will, causing his eyes to turn red. Even if the image shown on the frontside of the Soultrait Symbol didn't say a lot, Michael could immediately tell what it was...and it broke his heart.

The image shown on the frontside of the Soultrait Symbol was none other than a Sword shrouded in silver energy. It was the Reinforced Sword Qi Soultrait...Danny's Soultrait...

Michael's hand began to tremble horribly, yet he continued to move. He bit on his lower lip so hard that it began to bleed, but he forced himself to pick up the Soultrait Symbol nonetheless.

However, when he picked up the Soultrait Symbol something unexpected happened. As usual Michael's War Rune desired to absorb the Soultrait Symbol. The white tentacle-like streams of energy emerged from the back of his hand, ready to devour the Soultrait Symbol. Michael tried to restrain the streams of energy because he was not ready to accept Danny's Soultrait.

He didn't even have enough time to digest that his brother was actually dead, and that he would never return to talk to him, to fight beside him. How could he be daring enough to absorb his brother's Soultrait?!

Unfortunately, his War Rune didn't care about his emotions. It desired the Soultrait Symbol that had tiny roots growing out from the bottom of it.

Unable to restrain the energy streams that poured out of his War Rune, Michael had to miserably witness how his War Rune devoured the Soultrait Symbol.

Recalling what had happened when he absorbed Glacicle last time, Michael was forced to enter his subconscious. He appeared in front of the humongous white pillar of energy, only to see that the Reinforced Sword Qi Soultrait took root in the Sphere of Light's inner area. Michael didn't even have to spend his SoulStar Fragments to expand the Sphere of Light and create a socket for the Soultrait. It took root and firmly lodged itself in place before a flood of information streamed inside his head.

Michael learned various secrets of the Reinforced Sword Qi, but he couldn't feel happy about that. He may have gotten hold of another Soultrait – a 5-Star Soultrait at that –, but he would rather see Daniel using it.

His heart felt heavy sensing the power of his brother's Soultrait inside him. However, at the same time, Michael felt a turmoil of emotions raging through his entire being. His brother had died, but one part of Daniel would always be with him.

Michael was not too sure what to think about that.

He clutched his chest and sighed heavily before he picked up the remaining items.

There were five items, two of which were the remaining materials Michael required to construct a teleportation array. I think you should take a look at

There was also a note – a message from the Will itself –, a ring artifact, and a keychain that looked like a miniature coffin.

The ring was crimson in color and had the head of the Red Dragon engraved on it. Seeing the Red Dragon, Michael wanted to throw the ring away instinctively. The Red Dragon's mythical flames were

the reason his brother wasn't around him anymore. Of course, he didn't want to stare at the Red Dragon's engraving all day.

Unfortunately, Michael could feel tremendous power from the ring. Even Tac Lec and Taros' Epic Tier-2 Artifacts didn't exude as much power as the Tier-2 Ring Artifact he was holding.

"A natural 6-Star Tier-2 Artifact...fuck..." Michael cursed, realizing that he couldn't throw the ring away if he wanted to stay strong enough to protect his subordinates in times of peril.

Michael was not sure what he wanted to do now, but his heart told him that he couldn't abandon his subordinates, otherwise, he wouldn't be any better than his parents.

'Danny would never forgive me if I abandoned anyone...'

Michael put the natural Legendary-grade Tier-2 Artifact away, ignoring the sting in his heart. If not for the overwhelming grief consuming him, Michael would have been overjoyed about the Ring Artifact. But he could not, not right now.

After he put away the ring, Michael wanted to put the keychain away as well. It had intricate enchantments engraved all over its surface, yet it wasn't an Artifact. In the first place, Michael hadn't seen most of the overlapping enchantments ever before. They were extremely complex and too hard to comprehend for someone, who was not taught properly – and someone who couldn't care less what this casket was, at this point.

Michael quickly realized that he couldn't store it inside the War Rune's storage space, nor the spatial pouch.

For some reason, the miniature casket keychain couldn't be stored. Michael stared at the casket for a while. He lost his sense of time staring at the casket. Michael was not sure why, but the keychain seemed to both mock him about his inability to protect his brother and calm him. Staring at the casket made him feel like everything that had happened was not as bad as he imagined. It was even worse, yet not.

It made him feel as if he could bend fate as long as he was alive. Yet, despite the ability to bend fate, Michael had been incapable of protecting his brother. It was frustrating.

'A calming aura? Is that what it is?' Michael wondered, fastening the keychain to his belt a moment later.

The keychain ought to be his constant reminder about the things he lost even though he had given his best to protect them. It was a reminder that life was uncertain.

After the keychain was fastened to his belt, Michael retrieved the Ring Artifact, which he labeled Dragon Might Ring, due to the presence released naturally. It was the presence of a dragon exuded – even though it was a lot weaker than the Red Dragon's dragon full might.

He released a white strand of energy and bound the Dragon Might Ring Artifact to his War Rune slowly to ensure that he wouldn't receive a backlash. The higher the grade of an Artifact, the stronger its external enhancement would be. He might have lost his Typhern Armor Set Artifact to the Lord Rift, but Michael was still in possession of a few more Artifacts.

Thus, he had to hope that binding Dragon Might to his War Rune wouldn't cause any issues.

Some Artifacts had their own will as well. It would be necessary to force the Artifacts into submission, or come to an agreement before the bound Artifact's full power could be unleashed.

Michael felt some resistance while binding Dragon Might, but he didn't give up. On the contrary, Michael forced his way through Dragon Might, using his rage and anger. The Red Dragon was one of the reasons he suffered so much. The more he thought about that, the weaker Dragon Might's mental resistance felt to him.

Upon binding the Legendary Artifact, Michael didn't feel a big difference in terms of physical strength, or endurance. The Legendary Artifact's external enhancement didn't increase his strength, perception, or endurance. Instead, it enhanced Michael's brain. His memory improved, and Michael could immediately tell that it was much easier to multitask.

His mind power had increased drastically.

The binding process of Dragon Might had been completed within an hour, without causing a backlash from binding too many Artifacts to his War Rune. In fact, Dragon Might's enhancement was different from other Artifacts, allowing Michael to bind more Artifacts to his War Rune, as long as they didn't enhance his mind power any further.

With that understanding, Michael picked up the note written by the Will itself. He couldn't care less about the gains he made from Lord Rift, but something made him hope that the Will of the Origin Expanse was being nice to the Fangs – even if it was just once...

Picking up the note, Michael read it silently, only to end up far more confused than before.

[May the Star with the greatest accomplishments shine the brightest. May his light ignite the embers of the dying star anew. May his Cursed Soul bend fate as he pleases.]

"Fuck this shit...what even is this nonsense?!" Michael cursed when he finished reading the note. He grits his teeth and called himself stupid for hoping that the Will would be generous for once.

"Fuck you, Origin Expanse!!"

Chapter 282 Legendary Ring's Power

Michael read the note of the Will twice before he put it away in disappointment.

The Will might be trying to tell him something, but Michael's mind didn't work properly right now. His mind felt sluggish and he felt as if someone was squeezing his heart painfully.

He lifted his head weakly, only to notice that the Starless Summons around him were lying on the ground, struggling to get up. Dragon Might's presence was weighing down on the Starless Summons, forcing them to the ground.

Seeing the fear in their eyes, Michael quickly dismissed Dragon Might's presence. That was quite easy now that he bound the Legendary Ring to his War Rune. He could easily adjust the naturally exuded dragon might.

The Starless Summons got up from the ground with Michael's help. For a moment, they looked at him with a trace of fear, only to recall how well Michael had treated them until now. The Summons saw the surprise and guilt in Michael's eyes as well, dispelling the trace of fear that was about to take root in their hearts that somehow their Lord was angry with them.

"I'm sorry for startling you. I didn't expect the Artifact's presence to be that strong," Michael said weakly, helping the Summons up from the ground.

After that, he excused himself while his eyes remained locked on the Legendary Ring Artifact.

He sensed that Ring Artifact had another power, other than the naturally exuded dragon might. He kept some distance from everyone else before his energy surged inside the Ring Artifact. After a few seconds of channeling energy inside the Ring Artifact, Michael sensed something interesting.

The Extraction Soultrait was triggered, altering the origin energy inside Dragon Might into the power of Extraction. The crystalized eyes embedded in the ring's Red Dragon changed into a bright golden color as the power of Extraction filled it.

This surprised Michael a little. He stopped channeling energy inside Dragon Might and tried to use the power of extraction stored in the Ring Artifact. In response to his mental command, the power of extraction reacted. It shot out of Dragon Might, waiting for Michael to set a target to extract.

'The Ring can store the power of a Soultrait?' Michael wondered, dispersing the power of extraction before he filled Dragon Might with origin energy once again.

But this time, Michael used Glacicle to fill the crystalized eyes with its power, changing its color to glacier blue.

Michael stopped utilizing the Glacicle Soultrait to test something. He easily accessed the power of Glacicle stored in the crystallized eyes of the Red Dragon and conjured a handful of Glacicles without activating his Soultrait.

'Interesting...' Michael thought, indicating Liopham Zelc, the Forest Elven Adventurer, to come towards him when he saw him from the corner of his eye.

"Use Rage of the Primal on the Ring after I channeled some origin energy inside it," Michael commanded, his tone low and weak.

Yet, despite having such a weak and low tone, Michael's eyes were cold and void of emotions. It was confusing, and totally different compared to the way Michael acted usually.

Liopham followed Michael's order, but he couldn't help but think that Michael was different today. He looked weak and exhausted.

"You don't look good. You should rest, Michael" Liopham said after hesitating for a few seconds. The power of the Rage of the Primal Soultrait was already entering Dragon Might, yet Liopham's gaze never left Michael.

Even though their Link of Loyalty determined that their relationship was that of a Lord and a subordinate, Liopham had begun to consider Michael as a friend now.

They had fought side by side for months and strived hard to expand the territory together. Michael often had his meals with the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team, sharing stories about their native worlds and the things they had experienced. Sometimes, they even talked about their friends and families, their future goals, and the hardships in their life.

Liopham wanted to be a good friend, give Michael some time to rest and get better before talking to him about his hardships. After all, it was obvious that something was terribly wrong.

But Michael just shook his head.

"I cannot rest..." He responded firmly, "If I rest, I will always think abo—...No, forget it..."

Michael shook his head vigorously again. His focus returned to Dragon Might which he accessed to manifest the Totem of Liopham's Soultrait, Rage of the Primal.

Seeing the totem that belonged to his Soultrait, Liopham was momentarily stunned. He even forgot what Michael had just said, and stared blankly at his Soultrait, which had been utilized by Michael just now.

"It's a Legendary Artifact that stores the power of a Soultrait, whether it is my own or somebody else's Soultrait. That's quite amazing," Michael mumbled, staring at Dragon Might for a while. "The only downside is that I cannot use any complex Soultraits through the Dragon Might Ring since Soultraits require the corresponding knowledge I can only obtain from thorough research or by fusing the Soultrait Symbol to my War Rune. Only simple functions of a foreign Soultrait can be used..."

He tried to focus on Dragon Might and its extravagant power, but Liopham's earlier comment pulled Michael back to reality.

Distracting himself by studying the Legendary Ring Artifact worked quite well for a few minutes. Unfortunately, Michael's mind was a menace. His attention pulled away from Dragon Might.

Michael's eyes moved to the keychain fastened to his belt subconsciously.

"A miniature casket keychain as a gift from the Will...Is the Will trying to make fun of me?" He mumbled quietly, his voice cracking before a tear trickled down his cheeks.

Michael sighed heavily. He turned around and walked away, his head hanging low. I think you should take a look at

Michael left Liopham and the Starless Summons stupefied. They stared at his sloppy figure as Michael began to take a stroll through his territory.

The number of his subjects didn't increase in the weeks of his absence. However, his territory's infrastructure changed considerably. The training grounds for his army had been expanded threefold, the high treehouses had been upgraded to ensure their longevity, and Michael could tell that the canopy bridge network system was longer and wider than ever before.

Michael was not sure how far his army conquered the middle area of the Untamed Jungle, but he could easily sense the strength of his people through their Links of Loyalty. The Links of Loyalty showed quite clearly that Michael's subjects never stopped working on themselves even in his absence. They continued to work hard even after Michael didn't return for several weeks. That was promising, and it eased Michael's worry a little.

He feared that his subjects would struggle without him, but they were doing quite well. The warehouses were filled with Agriculture-type blueprints and various low-level Armaments that had yet to be sold to the Forest Elven Tribe. At the same time, Michael's army had been equipped with better equipment. The Enchanters of the territory had finally begun to use their theoretical knowledge to start practicing etching enchantments on the low-level armaments to gain experience, and to reinforce the armaments.

Taking a deep breath as he strolled through his territory, he inhaled strong herbal scents mixed with the sweet smell of the Tiatcha. Only six weeks passed in his absence, but the small farms that had been cultivated beneath the treehouses were already in full bloom. The Tiatcha trees grew rapidly, and the first batch of sweet Tiatcha was ready to be harvested. The same could be said about the cocoa pods of the Cocoa Trees, and most other plants planted inside his territory.

Overall, Michael could say that he was the proud owner of dozens of small but highly efficient house farms with various plants, herbs, and other plants of the highest quality.

They gained the grace of the Untamed Jungle's highly nourishable soil and dense origin energy, followed by the blessing of the 4-Star Nature Spirit that had taken root in the center of his territory. Other than those two favorable factors, there was also a 3-Star Botanic Magician, and farmers nurturing and aiding the herbs, flowers, and other plants to grow under the most beneficial conditions.

Usually, Michael would feel happy just by glancing at his bustling territory. Everyone was working hard, giving their utmost effort to ensure that the settlement could be expanded. Seeing the satisfied expressions on his subjects would have been enough to dispel most of Michael's worries.

But everything was different now. Even Michael's desire to live was not as strong as it used to be.

He didn't want to die but being alive seemed nothing short of hell at this moment. It was like the essence of life was pain, suffering, and torture. At least, that was what Michael felt at this moment.

The memories of the past felt even more torturous than ever before. Recalling the time he spent with Masked Saber, and the easy time they had when they first entered the Lord Rift, Michael could only feel guilt and regret coursing through him. These feelings wreaked havoc within him, making him lose the will to do anything productive.

"Both I and Masked Saber chose to enter the Lord Rift alongside you. You never forced us," A familiar voice rang out from behind, "We wanted to enter the Lord Rift with you because we wanted to grow stronger. It's not your fault that a Dragon appeared out of nowhere."

Michael halted in his tracks. He turned around slowly, just to stare straight at Tiara's face. She had an impassive expression on her face and her lips were pressed into a thin line.

Michael felt a little uncomfortable being stared at like that, but he didn't say anything. It was not that he couldn't say anything, but Michael didn't know what to say.

Tiara was correct.

Both Masked Saber and Tiara chose to enter the Lord Rift willingly. They were fully aware of the dangers, which included death.

In the first place, the death rate inside rifts was known to be quite high. Everyone willing to enter the Lord Rift knew that they were risking their lives in exchange for the golden opportunity to obtain great wealth and treasures.

Despite that, Michael couldn't really forgive himself.

"It's good to see that you're fine," Michael said while looking at Tiara in an attempt to subtly change the topic.

She had shorter hair than before, but other than that she was perfectly fine.

He had sensed that Tiara was alive when he regained consciousness thanks to the Link of Loyalty connecting them. Tiara's injuries hadn't been as severe as Michael's either. He had thrown himself in front of her while utilizing Extraction to the fullest when the dragon breath reached them. Nonetheless, Tiara healed extremely fast, which was quite surprising given that their territory didn't have any great healers. There was one Priest, but that Priest was not exactly what one would consider a miracle healer.

"We Silverfangs are good at healing. The Silverfang Tigerfolk are known for their tenacity. We're exceptional fighters, and great at surviving. As long as we have a single breath left in our bodies, we won't die!" Tiara said proudly before her attention moved back to Michael once again.

Right now, was not the time to brag about her race or survival instincts.

Tiara clearly recalled Michael saying "Danny..." just before the Lord Rift closed. She saw him cry and the desperation on his face when Masked Saber's face was revealed.

Michael had spoken about his brother quite often in the past. Thus, Tiara was already aware that Michael's brother was also called Danny.

Seeing Michael's physical and mental state, it was not difficult for Tiara to connect the dots.

Tiara stared at Michael for a few seconds before she strode forward to pull him in a tight embrace.

"Everything will be alright..." She mumbled, holding him even tighter in an attempt to warm his heart and console him.

However, Michael could only stare ahead with an empty gaze.

"No...it won't..."

Chapter 283 Storytime

No matter how Tiara looked at Michael, she could tell that he was going through a tough phase. Maybe he was even at the lowest point in his life at this moment.

He had lost too much weight within a few weeks, and he seemed dispirited even though he had obtained a Legendary Ring Artifact. Both the ring and the keychain casket felt weird to Tiara even though the ring was the only object radiating some energy.

'Concealed energy?' Tiara wondered, staring at the keychain for a while.

She stood hugging Michael for several minutes, not wanting to let go of him even after he told her that it was enough. Tiara knew that Michael could order her to let go of him and step back, but he never did that. His resistance was weak, if she could even call it as such, in the first place.

Tiara felt that Michael's resistance crumbled slowly. He gave in to her warm hug and reciprocated it after a while. Fat drops of tears trickled down his cheek as he began to cry quietly.

Michael didn't want to look weak and vulnerable in front of his subordinates, but Danny's death had left him completely shaken. He felt as if he had been abandoned all over again and this time he had nobody to lean on. His mind was a mess, just like his heart.

"Do you want to talk about it?" Tiara asked gently after Michael loosened his grip around her.

Michael stepped back and was just about to shake his head when his eyes made contact with Tiara. He noticed her staring intently at him. There was no ridicule, or prejudice in her eyes.

Even if Michael didn't want to acknowledge it, his condition was bad. He was not physically injured anymore, but it was a fact that he had hardly eaten or drunk anything in the last two weeks. He didn't do any workouts either, and stayed in the infirmary without moving from his bed, thinking about his brother all day and staring into nothingness.

He kept cursing himself over and over that everything was his fault, and that he was stupid for not recognizing his brother. Michael started to hate himself for his stupidity, and his uncontrollable greed, which had caused Danny's final death at last.

Tiara had only observed him from a distance before but now she was getting genuinely worried about him. After mustering a lot of courage, she slowly pulled him into an embrace, hoping that he could open his heart to talk about his pain.

What she didn't know was that Michael had learned to be independent from a young age. Before his family broke apart, he had been just a regular kid living an ordinary life. He never hesitated to speak his mind when he was young. But everything changed when reality struck him hard.

His sister disappeared, and their parents left too, leaving him with only Danny to talk to. However, Michael didn't want to bother his brother because Daniel had always been busy being the responsible elder brother. Michael knew that his brother wanted to take care of him and ensure that his future was bright. Thus, Michael would always hold back and keep silent whenever something bothered him.

That was also why Michael never bothered to tell Daniel about the classmates, who bullied him in the prestigious elite school in the Golden Sun province. He didn't want to worry Daniel. Thus, he never caused trouble and endured everything silently.

Despite being an independent young man, who didn't share his biggest troubles openly, Michael felt that he had to tell Tiara about his situation. Tiara had been by his side since he manifested his War Rune. She didn't feel like his subject or a subordinate. Her origin was not ordinary at all, and she had great social skills.

She empathized with Michael and could help him overcome the most torturous phase of his life after losing a beloved one. At least, that was what Michael felt as he stared deep into her eyes.

For the first time in forever, Michael opened his heart to someone else than his family. Even if it was just a small gap leading to his innermost feelings, all that mattered was that Michael began to trust someone else enough to show that he was also a human, a being full of emotions...someone, who could get hurt as well.

He was not an emotionless robot, nor an invulnerable Immortal. Michael was just an ordinary young man.

Several hours passed in the blink of an eye, but Michael had yet to stop talking. He ended up telling Tiara about his situation – starting with the fact that Michael and Daniel had to take care of each other, and grew up all alone. They only had each other to lean on.

Michael told Tiara in detail about their hardships, what they had to go through, and how life had been on Elyra – their home planet. He recalled numerous events that caused him to sigh deeply, frown, and curse other people, but there were also more than enough good memories.

The good memories in Michael's life were mostly together with his brother. Recalling these days caused a faint smile on Michael's lips to blossom. He chuckled faintly every now and then when the most ridiculous memories resurfaced.

Michael's mood dampened soon after, creating a heavy atmosphere in the room he and Tiara had chosen to talk with each other. Nonetheless, Michael continued to talk about his past. After he started talking, the young Lord was an unstoppable force.

The pain in his heart didn't lessen, but Michael found solace in emptying his heart about everything that had happened, and that he didn't even realize Masked Saber was Danny. Michael cried a few more times, which Tiara took as a sign to hug him tightly once again.

Even though he was embarrassed to cry his heart out, Michael could tell that it lessened the burden on his heart. He was still in pain and grieving, but it was also quite obvious that Daniel would hate him if he was to give up now.

Recalling his time with Daniel gave Michael the push he needed to regain his will to stay alive. Michael was still in low spirits. That would last for a while. However, talking to Tiara was enough to rekindle his hunger and thirst.

Michael began to eat and drink once again.

When Tiara saw Michael eating and drinking she felt relieved as well. Listening to Michael's story made her recall her own family and her race, causing a pang of sadness in her heart.

"I hope they're all doing fine. I miss all of you," She mumbled, realizing something only after the words escaped her lips.

Before today, Tiara hadn't been allowed to talk about her family and race. Even her thoughts about the Silverfang Tigerfolk had been strictly restricted. Everytime she tried to recall details about them, she was slapped with a light headache that grew intense the more she tried to recollect. All she could think and talk about was the training she had received, and that she was a member of the Silverfang Tigerfolk.

But now that she could think about her family, friends, and her race, Tiara thought that the restrictions had been lifted.

Alas, they hadn't been lifted. It was just that the restriction wasn't as strict as before.

Being able to think and talk about her family after so long warmed her heart. Tears welled up in her eyes, and she instinctively looked over to Michael.

"Do you want to hear a little bit about my past? I am not sure if it will make you feel better to exchange my story with yours, but I can reassure you that my story is, at least, as painful as yours," Tiara said, trying to make a light joke to ease the situation. I think you should take a look at

However, Michael could only stare at Tiara expressionlessly. He had always been interested in the Silverfang Tigerfolk's history, and Tiara's past, but hearing that it was painful was enough reason to hesitate.

If he was already in that much pain talking about his past events with Danny after he died, how would Tiara feel?

"Don't think too much about it. I know you're interested," Tiara said lightly before she added, "Painful memories will always stay the same. Time will never heal these wounds completely. You will always be left with deep scars that will affect you all your life."

Michael could only nod hearing what Tiara said.

"All time does is help you cope with the pain, and how to learn to live with that," He added quietly.

His words gained Tiara's approval.

"Since you're interested in the story, let me tell you about it," Tiara said, done with waiting.

"It all began long before I was born. The Great War of the Beastfolks rampaged through the Plekur solar system... centuries of war caused nothing but massacres and bloodshed all over the solar system, but nobody was able to gain the upper hand. By the time centuries of hatred passed, nobody could clearly remember how it all started. All the Beastfolks knew was that their enemies had killed their families, friends, and beloved. The Beastfolks wanted to take revenge for the deaths of their beloved ones, yet their participation in the Great War caused only more deaths. The beloved of the dead continued to loathe their enemies – even though they only desired revenge as well," Tiara spoke slowly and without break.

It was almost as if Tiara's recitation was not related to her own race, and as if she copied the text from a history book. However, the dark glint in her eyes showed Michael that the real story was just about to begin.

"I was born in this unreasonable war. Taught by the head of the Silverfang Tigerfolk, I quickly realized that my people didn't desire to participate in the war actively. We were the strongest and tenacious, posing a threat to everyone else, but we stopped participating in the Great War a long time ago. Unfortunately, that was something our enemies didn't seem to realize. Our enemies hated that the Silverfang Tigerfolk had an entire planet to themselves and were the sovereign rulers of nature and monsters."

"They traveled to us even though they could have continued their mindless massacre on the other inhabitable planets of the Plekur solar system, just to destroy our crops and everything we had built over the course of centuries," She voiced out in spite.

"Of course, we had to protect ourselves. We fought to protect our home and killed those who came with ill intentions. To our misery, our home was big, full of nutritious earth to farm, and mountains with rich resources to plunder. Many Beastfolks desired our home – probably all of them. After all, nobody other than us was able to become the ruler of an entire planet in the Plekur solar system. They used the Great War and the fact that we killed in order to protect ourselves as an excuse to attack us with all their might. Their forces joined, even the strongest Silverfang was unable to protect the old, ill, and the young. In merely one decade, the Silverfang Warriors were either killed or crippled, unable to ever pick

up a weapon for the rest of their lives, and the old, ill, and the young were exiled... But there was no place for us to go."

"When we were exiled, I was only 15 years old. I was filled with hatred and anger after seeing my family getting beheaded in front of everyone as an example to show the Silverfang what would happen if they ever tried to reclaim their home," She said, the hatred and sadness in her eyes showing clearly that she had not yet forgotten her harrowing past.

She grit her teeth and clenched her fists tightly recalling the most painful memories in her life. Michael could only guess how she felt. He was unsure if he would be like her in the future as well. He lost his brother right in front of him, but he had nobody to take revenge on. It was impossible to re-enter the Lord Rift, seek the Red Dragon and break its neck, and butcher it to avenge his brother.

Michael wasn't given the opportunity to seek revenge, but that was not what he wanted, in the first place. The Red Dragon was not the problem. The problem was that Michael didn't know how Daniel died in the Origin Expanse. Michael could only guess that he died somewhere in the Sacred Desert during his raid on the Primedival Pyramid. However, he didn't have any detailed information.

That was one of the things that frustrated him the most; the uncertainty.

Losing Danny left a big hole in Michael's heart, a gap that could never be filled again.

However, Tiara's situation was different. She lost her family and most of her race. She and the exiled survivors had to suffer, while her enemies were still alive, and enjoying the benefits of claiming a new habitable planet for them to use.

Michael was not sure how that must feel. He could only imagine that it must be torturous, similar to how Michael was feeling right now.

"I understand..." He said, unsure what else to respond.

But there was something that confused him. If her people had been exiled when she was 15 years old, how did she end up in the Origin Expanse, and what happened to her people?

"That might be a little inconsiderate to ask after you told me your painful story, but there are a few things I don't understand," Michael said, the glint in his eyes showing that he was truly curious about something for the first time since his brother died.

Tiara was actually hoping that this would happen. She didn't reveal a short summary of her story to be pitied or anything like that. No, all Tiara desired was to re-awaken Michael's curiosity about the Origin Expanse, and the vast expanse of the Universe.

"What happened to you after you and your people were exiled, and how did you end up as a personal maid in the Origin Expanse then? You had a Tier-1 War Rune when we first met, which is definitely not something a personal maid ought to possess. You are the first personal maid with a War Rune. At least, I don't know anyone else with an Awakened as their personal maid," He asked in curiosity.

His eyes shimmered like tiny stars, and his entire attention was on Tiara as he waited patiently for her to answer.

"Both questions have the same answer," Tiara started slowly, "It might sound complex but it's pretty simple. All Awakened collect achievements during their life. These achievements are one of the factors used by the Will of the Origin Expanse to determine your star rating as a Summon. But that is not the only way to use achievements. In fact, achievements are similar to currencies. They can be used and exchanged."

As Tiara spoke, Michael inevitably thought about the Lord Rift and the loot box he obtained for the contribution he made to the Lord Rift. He imagined the contribution to be similar to the achievements Tiara talked about.

"Either way, Races collect achievements as well, and by using up all achievements collected by all Awakened of the Silverfang Tigerfolk we were able to make a deal with the Will, and find asylum inside the Origin Expanse – even though some of the Old Silverfangs never manifested a War Rune, while other Silverfangs like me were too young to have had the chance to manifest our War Runes." She explained with a faint smile on her lips.

"As long as we want to enjoy the benefits of the asylum, we have to fulfill the conditions of the Origin Expanse's Will," Tiara added, providing Michael with enough information to gain a rough understanding of the situation.

"The Will then called you, and you paid heed to its call, becoming my personal maid in the Untamed Jungle," Michael completed.

Tiara reaffirmed this with a nod.

"Whether that was fate or a coincidence is unknown," Michael mumbled quietly to himself, but Tiara shook her head.

"It's fate. It has always been," She said, just to quietly add, "At least, that's what I believe."

Chapter 284 Hate

Michael was a little bit surprised. He didn't expect the Will of the Origin Expanse to allow Tiara to speak about her race and how she ended up in the Origin Expanse. She had been restricted before, which meant that something must have changed. However, Michael was not sure what that might be.

Even though she didn't reveal many secrets about the Silverfang Tigerfolk, Michael was intrigued by the little pieces of information she shared with him. They decided to spend more time with each other to talk more about the Beastfolks, her pasty, and if she desired revenge.

Michael was curious whether Tiara's hatred made her desire revenge, or if she would rather try helping the Silverfang Tigerfolk to find another place to live and call home. After all, the home they'd been given by taking asylum in the Origin Expanse was not quite like the normal areas in the Origin Expanse.

Tiara wanted to tell Michael more about the place they took asylum in, but a splitting headache overcame her when she tried to speak about the asylum in detail. Nonetheless, Michael got enough information from Tiara to tell that revenge was not her highest priority. If possible, she would use her future achievements to free the Silverfang Tigerfolk from the asylum and find another home for them.

After all, they were currently forced to obey the Will of the Origin Expanse, no matter what order it issued. If even one of the Silverfangs rejected the Will's order, everyone else would suffer and be thrown out of the Origin Expanse – if they didn't have a War Rune.

Michael tried to put Tiara at ease when she tried to force herself to reveal more secrets to him. She tried to fight the splitting headache, just to tell a few facts about the asylum and other places controlled by the Will.

"You don't have to tell me more. I understand what you're trying to say. And...I understand how hard it must be for you to continue with your attempts. Thanks," Michael tried to reassure her with a subtle smile forming on his lips.

He stood up, patted Tiara's shoulder, and left the room – his emotions in a chaotic mess.

For the next three days, Michael didn't leave the Origin Expanse. He spent most of his time with the subordinates that were bustling through his territory, completing one task after another. Michael chose to help with labor first. Physical exhaustion distracted him the most.

Unfortunately, Tiara and the Forest Elven of the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team had to inform him that his Summons were uncomfortable working side-by-side with their Lord and Master.

They trusted Michael and liked him a lot as their Lord, but that didn't change a particular fact; He was their Lord, not their friend. Michael's responsibilities were different from theirs, and so was his strength. Most Summons were given basic or simple tasks. They had to do what their superiors asked them to do. Most of these tasks were focused on labor and the expansion of the territory.

Meanwhile, Michael had to control and supervise everything. He was the heart of their territory and the strongest combatant. Everyone, who had seen Michael fight was fully aware of his terrific combat prowess and knew that he was far from ordinary. He was special, and so was his status as the Summons' Lord.

Since he didn't want his Summons to feel uncomfortable, Michael decided to focus on something else. He began to spend more time with Tiara, the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team, and his monster subjects. Sun Demos, his tamed Blood Oath Demon Monkey King, was included in this small list.

However, Michael didn't take the time to train or to go out to hunt. He spent most of his time talking and thinking about lots of things. This included the bitter fact that he had to accept the cruel reality of his brother's death.

Michael didn't want to bother the others at first, but he ended up talking to them for hours nonetheless, and it helped him quite a bit knowing that he had people to talk to by his side.

Nonetheless, Michael was low in spirits. Everything was a little different compared to before. It was just a little bit too hard for Michael to accept that there would be nobody to look forward to meeting upon returning home.

"...I should message our parents as well...shouldn't I?" Michael mumbled after spending three days in the Origin Expanse doing nothing more than talking, eating, and sleeping a little.

At first, Michael considered not messaging their parents about Danny's death, but he dispersed that thought quickly. No matter what happened between them, their parents were still their parents – whether Michael and Daniel liked it or not. They should know.

They deserved to know.

Thus, Michael collected the Agriculture-type blueprints stored in the warehouses before he left the Origin Expanse with a weary heart.

He manifested the Runic Gate and stepped through it the next moment. I think you should take a look at

Emerging inside his tiny room, Michael slumped down on his bed. He sighed deeply and opened the holographic screen of starnet messengers.

His eyes widened slightly seeing dozens of messages popping up on the holographic screen. Alice had sent him a few messages, and so had Kaleb. Even the Barbaric Couple, Zeke Lavita, Lincoln Piedra, and the Barscht triplets had messaged him.

Michael didn't open their messages, but he could guess what the messages were about. It was not hard to grasp the situation. Hence he first decided to talk to his parents. For that, he had to open his chat with his parents where he found a deciphered audio that had been sent to him three weeks ago – on the same day the AI wrote a message about the error of Daniel's Lord ID, and that he was dead.

The audio message was deciphered, and it had an auto-delete function installed. Five minutes after the audio had been listened to it would be automatically deleted and the content destroyed on the starnet messenger's server.

In the chat with their parents, Michael and Daniel had never been able to send text messages. Such messages were always deleted seconds after they had been sent, and the same happened to audio clips as well. Thus, Michael would have to listen to the deciphered audio and reply to it using the same code.

It was a hassle and something Michael would rather avoid if possible. He still listened to the audio message, nonetheless.

["We noticed that Daniel's Lord ID has been destroyed. There might have been an error, which deters the golden time, but we can still make use of this. If we hurry up, we should have enough time to complete the Resurrection Ritual to ensure that Daniel will be summoned in one of our territories – even if it's as a Summon. Message us as soon as you can. We need some of his stuff to complete the Ritual!"]

The content of their parents' audio message was weird. Michael listened to it a second time, causing his eyes to narrow, and his face to turn red.

'They don't even sound sad. What resurrection? Summoning him as a Summon...I did that already without realizing, you s....'

Michael felt conflicted staring at the deciphered audio. His finger hovered above the replay button but he hesitated to press it again. He didn't really care about his parents' voice or anything like that, but the nonchalant tone of his father was grating on him, making him feel nauseous.

In the end, three minutes of utter silence passed before Michael sent a reply to his parents' audio message.

"I summoned him, and I saw him die...right in front of me... I summoned him...and I didn't even know that it was him. He...sacrificed his life, just to protect me..." Michael said, feeling that a knot formed in his throat as he forced the words out.

Tears trickled down his cheeks and he realized only after he sent the audio to their parents that he was sitting on the ground, sobbing.

Even if the time spent in the Origin Expanse with Tiara and his subjects had calmed Michael a little bit, his parents' emotionless message broke him down once again.

He didn't have a great connection with his parents after they abandoned them – neither of the brothers had – but he couldn't think of them as good people anymore, not if they were that unaffected by their oldest son's death. Wasn't it already bad enough to abandon the kids with nothing but a deciphered chat and some money behind?

Nothing made sense anymore, and Michael wanted nothing more than to scream and shout at his parents, tell them how miserable he and his brother had been because of their decision, and what they had gone through.

Maybe, if they hadn't been abandoned, Daniel wouldn't have died...twice at that. Michael was sure that they could have done something to help them prepare for everything that awaited them as descendants of a cursed bloodline. Was that too much to ask for?

The anger and frustration that had accumulated over the years began to surface. Michael, who had always hoped that their parents abandoned them because they wanted to search for their lost sister, or that they had to abandon their children because they were hunted, began to hate his parents.

He was always very patient when it came to relationships, and he always hoped for the best outcome when it came to relationships with other people – no matter what race –, but his parents had pushed beyond the limits of his patience. They made him not just hate them but despise them!

Chapter 285 Lingering Gazes

It took him quite a while to calm down after replying to his parents' message.

He still felt like shouting at them, but he began to wonder whether they were worth his effort or time, in the first place. If they could abandon him and Daniel that easily, why should he even bother about them at this point?

Michael sighed heavily and got up from the ground. He left his room and paved his way slowly to the Bartholomew Shop. He had yet to complete a large transaction after his deal with the Bartholomew Corporation had been completed. It was about time to change that.

Almost a month passed since his deal with the Bartholomew Corporation had been signed, and the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team gave their utmost to procure as many Agriculture-type blueprints as possible. That was how Michael ended up with nearly 3,000 blueprints, which he spread out in front of the young woman, who had been told to inspect the blueprints in the appraisal room.

Michael didn't waste any time in chitchat with the shop manager, or the young woman. Instead, he finished his side of the deal in exchange for a small fortune as his base fee. Once the transaction had been completed, Michael reconsidered purchasing a few things. He had yet to sell the valuable body parts procured in the Lord Rift as well. However, Michael chose against blindly purchasing stuff and selling the valuable monster parts in a hurry.

He was not in a good mood, which heavily influenced his train of thought, and his ability to determine whether it would be more useful to use the Underground Forging Hall, and the other Artisans in his territory to turn the monster parts into finished products rather than selling the raw materials in the Bartholomew Shop.

Michael was not in a rush, so he left the shop once his business was completed. He reconsidered returning to the Origin Expanse to avoid the people around him – fearing that they might take pity on him –, but he chose against doing so. Instead of returning to his comfort zone, Michael felt that it was better to push himself out of his comfort zone and feel the discomfort of being around people, who might or might not ask him about his brother.

He was pretty sure Kaleb and a few more people knew about his situation. Even if they didn't know, it was rare for someone to miss classes for three weeks straight, and to look like him – a zombie with dark circles under his eyes.

Michael lost a lot of weight, and he was not as energetic as before. Nobody saw him eating the amount of food that would feed ten people at the cafeteria either.

No matter how dense one was, it was impossible not to understand that something major must have happened in Michael's life and that it affected him greatly, wiping the smile away from his face.

Hoping to find distraction in the training hall where Silverian Schild's Limit Breaker course was held, Michael slowly walked through the enormous academy grounds. His pace was slow and his shoulders sagged a little, but he continued walking onward, even after a few students stared at him, looking slightly surprised.

The students he encountered were fellow freshmen, who had once battled Michael. They knew how he used to carry himself, and that he was quite energetic. Michael looked nothing like his former confident self – though his bald head was the same as ever. It was almost like Michael would never be able to grow his hair again given that his hair had burned several times by now.

Michael took a deep breath after noticing the surprised stares of fellow freshmen weighing down on him. It was uncomfortable, but not as bad as he expected. Maybe, he would be able to learn to live with the haunting memory of having seen his brother die in front of him. Eventually, he had to overcome the trauma, either way. There was no way around it, other than accepting it and moving on.

As he strode past the large forest that was mostly used by Awakened with Plant-type Soultraits, and Agility-type Awakened to train their parkour skills in the 'wild', and keep training their Soultraits in the most versatile manner, Michael noticed something from the corner of his eye.

His heightened perception allowed him to sense the gazes lingering on him. That was also why the gazes on him had been uncomfortable.

However, the most uncomfortable were three particular gazes that had been locked onto him since he left the Bartholomew Shop. At first, Michael thought that it might have been Kaleb and others trying to figure out what he was doing in order to find a good opportunity to approach him and strike up a conversation. But his Eagle Eyes allowed Michael to see Kaleb, the Barbaric Couple, and the other members of the Limit Breaker Course standing in front of the training hall's entrance.

The training hall's entrance was more than a kilometer away from Michael's current location, but he could easily tell that neither Kaleb nor the Barbaric Couple were looking in his direction. In fact, they had yet to take note of his arrival.

Something was off.

Sensing that, Michael halted in his tracks. He took a look to his left where a small building was located. It was a watch tower replica that was used by archers to use and practice upon as an ordinary archer tower in the Origin Expanse. He tilted his head and changed his direction to walk straight to the watchtower while the three gazes were still lingering on him.

"Seems like you're not as useless as the rumors say. You could even sense our presence," A youthful voice rang out from behind the watchtower when Michael stopped in front of it.

A young man, roughly the same age as Michael, stepped out from behind the watchtower. He threw a condescending look at Michael and began to smile mockingly.

"But your perception is the only impressive thing about you...and the fact that you can just skip lessons for three weeks straight without receiving a Mark," The young man continued to speak, his jarring voice growing colder by the second, "...Or is that the benefit of having a dead brother?"

Michael narrowed his eyes. His anger flared up and he was about to manifest the Wyverntooth Spear when another young man stepped out from behind the watchtower. I think you should take a look at

They were twins, both with vibrant golden hair and large ocean-blue eyes. The twins had smooth skin and beautiful facial features – something the young men were definitely aware of. They wore silky clothes that enhanced their appearance even more, creating a beautiful picture to look at.

Sadly, the gibberish leaving their mouths was a stark contrast to their pleasing appearance.

"I never expected her student to look like... this? It has been a while since I saw someone looking more like the Undead," The taller twin said. He chuckled lightly at his own thoughts and voiced them out a moment later, "Maybe he wants to look like his brother!"

The shorter twin joined his brother's laughter while Michael stared at them with a deadpan expression.

"What do you want?" Michael asked coldly.

He clenched his fists in an attempt to control his emotions, but that was increasingly difficult as the twins continued to make fun of him, and his brother.

However, Michael didn't hear their voices anymore. His sight had already turned red in anger, and he barely managed to hold back due to two particular facts. First, the taller twin asked if he was really 'her' student. That may not sound like anything special, but Michael could immediately tell that the taller twin was referring to Alice Zenovia with 'her'.

Not many knew that Michael was receiving personal training from Alice. Kaleb should be one of the only students of the Saphirelake Military Academy to know about the Individual training since he became part of the training regime after manifesting his War Rune. Other than that, only teachers and Professors should be able to look at his timetable.

But that was not the crucial point that made Michael feel wary of the wannabe bullies. The biggest factor was that the twin followed him while being fully aware that his brother had recently passed away.

Michael was sure that Alice wouldn't tell anyone about his brother's death other than Kaleb. Kaleb might tell the Barbaric Couple and his other friends to make sure that they wouldn't say something wrong in front of Michael, but that was already it.

So how did these twins – fellow freshmen whom Michael never met before – learn about his brother and his death?

"What do we want? Quite a lot actually. Much more than you can imagine," The taller twin drawled, laughing lightly. He strode forward and walked toward Michael.

His steps were eerily slow as he stopped directly in front of Michael. The twin moved in a slow circle around him and whispered quietly.

"But what do you want?" He asked before lightly adding, "You probably want your brother back. Is that not it?"

Michael continued to clench his fists. He grit his teeth and took a deep breath.

Even though Michael didn't really know what was happening right now, he could tell that the twins were here to provoke him. They were probably waiting for him to attack them. At least, that was what Michael guessed.

He didn't want to give them that satisfaction, so he endured their words.

"It's quite funny don't you think?" The shorter twin asked the taller twin, "First, his sister died, then his parents abandoned him, only for his brother to die miserably as well. It's hilarious!!"

The twins laughed and the taller twin said something else. However, the taller twin's words were barely audible to Michael.

The words rang through his ears, words of humiliation and disaster, causing Michael to lose his cool and look them in the eye.

Then, he snapped.

Chapter 286 Severed

"I wonder if Michael is better now," Annabelle mumbled quietly as she met up with the Barbaric Couple and the remaining members of the Limit Breaker Course.

She had joined the Limit Breaker Course a little bit later than everyone else, but her tireless efforts to catch up with the others paid off. Her physique was much stronger than before and she was slowly getting accustomed to using multiple weapons to ensure that she could protect herself in close-combat fights as well.

Annabelle Claire joined the Limit Breaker Course thanks to Michael. She thought that she would meet him during the training sessions and planned to thank him for his help, but Michael had suddenly disappeared for a few weeks. It took her quite a while until she learned that Michael had been heavily injured in the Origin Expanse, and that his mental state was terrible. After he had recuperated, Michael left the infirmary to enter the Origin Expanse.

Today he had returned. He had been online on starnet messenger.

"I am...not sure. Maybe he needs some more time," Kaleb answered a little bit helplessly.

He didn't really talk a lot with others, but since Annabelle mentioned Michael he felt obliged to say something. After all, only he and his sister knew exactly what was going on. The others thought that Michael had been affected by a major battle in the Origin Expanse, but that was not quite it.

Kaleb's words rang through the surroundings, just for Zeke Lavita to pull the students' attention toward him. His heterochromatic eyes glimmered lightly as his focus moved to a place farther away from the training hall.

"Michael is over there talking to the Zan Twins," Zeke pointed in the watchtower's direction before he added, "I didn't know that he was familiar with them. The Zan family is quite messy. It would be better if he avoided them."

Zeke didn't dislike Michael, but he didn't consider Michael his friend either. He only paid attention to Michael and his friends because Lincoln had a good impression of them. If not for Lincoln, Zeke wouldn't even bother being here.

After hearing Zeke, Kaleb, Annabelle, and the Barbaric Couple turned toward the watchtower. They could pinpoint the Zan Twins quite easily given their bright golden hair and attention-grabbing clothes. The young man in front of them looked plain in contrast.

"I am...pretty sure that Michael has nothing to do with them. He is way too busy with the Indiv—...." Kaleb began but stopped abruptly and shut his mouth before he finished his sentence.

"Whatever, I'll drag Michael over here. Now that he is back, I might be able to defeat him in a spar!" Frederik declared, ignoring the disapproving gazes thrown at him.

"That's really petty, you know? But I also agree with dragging Michael over here. The Zan Twins are sly bastards, just like the rest of their family," Lincoln said before he started jogging toward the watchtower.

Kaleb and the others followed Lincoln without hesitation. It didn't take long before they reached the watchtower, but they didn't join Michael and the Zan Twins immediately. They heard them talking, and froze in their tracks for a few seconds, disbelief evident in their eyes.

They were certain that they had just misheard the Zan Twins, because they couldn't believe that someone could stoop so low. But their ears weren't failing them. There was no misunderstanding. The Zan Twins had said exactly what the others heard.

"It's quite funny don't you think?" The shorter twin asked the taller twin with a wide smile plastered on his face, "First, his sister died, then his parents abandoned him, only for his brother to die miserably as well. It's hilarious!!"

The shorter twin of the Zan family began to chuckle loudly, just for the taller twin to stare deep in Michael's dark eyes.

"Looks like you're fated to die alone, and be abandoned by everyone you loved. Maybe you're just cursed, and your brother wouldn't have died if you didn't exist, in the first place."

Kaleb's lips parted when he heard this. He was the only one who had known that Michael's brother died, and that was also only because of Alice. Even Alice only knew about it because she helped Michael setting up the Lord ID's live-update with the government AI's service.

Hearing the Zan Twins' words that were overflowing with ridicule, Kaleb saw red. He might not love Michael like a brother, but he knew that Michael was a good guy, who never played foul. Michael might not be the best at socializing, and he had some flaws, but he was a genuine person. Thus, hearing someone talk about Michael and his family like this angered Kaleb.

Kaleb's anger intensified as he began to imagine what would happen if Alice was to die, and if the Zan Twins came to him mocking his dead sister and his family.

The answer was pretty simple; He would beat them to death if nobody held him back.

Rage consumed him and Kaleb activated his Soultrait.

But he was not the only one fuming in anger for the Barbaric Couple was staring at the twins with contempt as well.

"Are these bastards serious right now?!" Frederik cursed quietly, and Jaqueline curled her fists, "These bastards are asking for a beating!"

They were ready to beat the shit out of the Zan Twins. Michael was their nemesis, and nobody was allowed to make fun of him – except them, of course.

The Barbaric Couple was aware of their image, and that they were considered despicable and bad-tempered, but the Zan Twins were going too far, even for their standards. Neither Frederik nor Jaqueline hesitated. They activated their Soultraits as well to help Michael beat the shit out of these two menaces.

But before anyone could act four crescent shaped blades, silver in color, passed through the air with shocking velocity. Even Zeke, who followed the group because he was a little bored, could barely follow the trajectory of the four silver blades.

His head flicked to the Zan Twins, whose bright smile transformed into expressions of utter horror as the blades reached them. The blades drew blood that spurted around like fountains. In the next instant, four arms flung through the air, landing limply on the ground two meters away from the Zan Twins.

The Twins stared down in shock, just to scream in terror as realization struck them. The silver blades had cleanly severed both of their arms!

Meanwhile, Michael appeared in front of the Zan Twins, several crescent-shaped Sword Qi blades revolving around him. He was unable to conjure Qi Swords yet, but that didn't matter at this point. The Sword Qi blades had been more than enough to relinquish some of his anger.

But that was not enough. It was far from enough.

Michael's ice-cold eyes locked onto the Zan Twins as he strode forward. He was already in front of the Twins while they were still processing what had just happened. Their eyes widened in shock, and the twins retreated. Before they realized what happened, their legs caved in and they slumped to the ground.

"W-wait. W-w-wait for a moment!" The taller twin screamed loudly. He wanted to say something else, but Michael's leg was already in front of his head.

Michael was done hesitating. He was done holding back. If someone wanted to fight him, they should be ready to let go of the mortal realm.

His leg shot forward, and a loud thundering crack reached the small group of spectators as his foot smashed into the twin's head. The sound of something snapping rang out as well, but it was definitely not Michael's foot. The twin's head smashed into the grass behind him, causing the smaller twin to gasp in shock.

"D-Don't kill us. P-p...Please... We just did as we've been to—...." He began, only to be interrupted by a loud noise from behind the watchtower.

At last, the source of the third gaze that had been lingering on Michael the entire time exposed himself.

"Shut up, Niko!" A hoarse voice shouted angrily, cutting Niko Zan before he could finish his sentence.

Michael lifted his gaze to stare at the origin of the voice without a trace of hesitation. However, the same couldn't be said about Zeke and Lincoln, who looked at each other for a second. Then their eyes moved to Kaleb Zenovia, only to turn back to each other.

'A trap against the Zenovias,' The two descendants of Greater Nobles concluded near-instantly.

No matter how they looked at it, Michael did not deserve this ridicule and mockery right now. Michael might have great potential given that he didn't belong to a noteworthy family, but that was already it. But that made it even easier to scheme against him, and to use him as a pawn to put pressure on the Zenovia family – precisely Alice Zenovia, who could be considered Michael's official teacher.

As Michael's personal teacher, Alice officially proclaimed that she would take responsibility for Michael's actions in exchange for making sure that no teacher would try to steal him from her. Given his status, Michael should also be able to avoid trouble with most teachers and students – under normal circumstances, at least.

"Isn't that Mr. Klein, the teacher of the Soul Manifestation Course?" Annabelle asked aloud, the surprise in her voice clear.

She was not the only one surprised. The Soul Manifestation Course was a minor course, and something that was useless for most students, but it was very important for the minority whose Soultraits met the specific requirements.

Mr. Klein stared at the Zan Twins scornfully. He didn't seem to be particularly worried about their well-being either. Instead of trying to help them, or call a healer to ensure that they could get treatment as soon as possible, Mr. Klein simply stared at Michael.

A small smile formed on his lips slowly. Michael's reaction had been even better than anticipated.

Everything was going according to plan!

Chapter 287 Scheme

At this moment, Michael's presence was like that of a fierce beast. He towered in front of the Zan Twins, and was looking at them as if he would pounce upon them and end their lives.

His killing intent reached its peak before fusing with the dragon might of his Legendary Ring Artifact, guiding Michael's rage, channeling it straight into the ring to unleash true dragon might.

However, he held himself back from killing the twins, knowing that it would put him in an even worse situation.

"Restrain your killing-intent you idiot! Are you trying to kill your fellow classmates?!? Do you have the slightest idea about what you're doing right now?" Mr. Klein blared loudly, but Michael could only shrug his shoulders.

He was painfully aware that he fell victim to these dirty bastards' scheming, but he didn't mind – not anymore.

"I think I was already nice enough to leave them alive. They're not dead...yet," Michael responded coldly, not even bothering to avoid Mr. Klein's gaze.

"How about you spout less nonsense and call a healer? Otherwise, you will be at fault if they cannot get their arms reattached. Or do you want to become my accomplice? Feel free to join me!"

Michael rolled his eyes and turned away. He felt that his anger had not dissipated completely yet, but it would be better if he could avoid fighting a teacher of the Saphirelake Military Academy. It was quite obvious that he was already in enough trouble for attacking the Zan Twins in the middle of the Saphirelake Military Academy's grounds.

As he turned around, Michael noticed Kaleb, the Barbaric Couple, and everyone else. Their gazes kept flicking between his face and the Sword Qi blades that were still moving around him.

Michael didn't force a smile on his lips. Instead, he stared calmly at his friends.

Kaleb was stunned seeing the blades revolving around Michael, but he snapped out of it quickly. He accessed his crystal watch and called for the Medic team. As long as the twins wouldn't sustain any permanent damage from Michael's attack, everything would be fine. Kaleb was certain that his sister could solve this issue quickly and not let Michael receive any serious punishment.

There was only one big problem; Mr. Klein.

Kaleb knew that Mr. Klein taught the Zan Twins, but it was unusual for the teacher of the Soul Manifestation Course to be on this side of the campus. Precisely, neither the Zan Twins nor Mr. Klein ought to be on this side. They didn't have a reason to be here.

Mr. Klein's smile was creepy. It made Kaleb nauseous. Simultaneously, Michael's uncontrollable rage made things more complicated as well.

"Do you think you're something special just because you're Alice's disciple? Nobody in the Saphirelake Military Academy is obliged to pity you just because your brother died. Get down from your high horse and accept reality. Your brother is dead!!" Mr. Klein shouted when he noticed that Michael was about to leave.

The plan was perfect, but Mr. Klein felt that the situation could be worsened even further. Thus, he started where the Zan Twins had stopped.

Kaleb narrowed his eyes at this. He accessed his crystal watch once again, and said coldly, "Send a team big enough to treat two students and a teacher."

"A teacher? What happened?" The Medic on the other side of the call asked in confusion, but Kaleb didn't answer.

"Just do what I say." He insisted, his voice demanding submission.

Then he disconnected the call and stared at Michael, who was still contemplating. The fury in his eyes was obvious, but he was still holding back. Severing the arms of two students was already troublesome enough.

Just as Michael was about to make a decision, Zeke's voice rang out.

"Since you've already started, you might as well continue. Beat the shit out of this asshole!"

Lincoln's right eyebrow rose hearing his childhood friend's words.

"That's quite surprising!" He remarked, only for Zeke to shrug his shoulders, "Since they thought he was an easy target, he might as well use this opportunity to make an example. He should show everyone what happens if you mess up with the wrong person."

Lincoln smiled at that.

'So you think Michael can deal with a Tier-3 Adventurer? Didn't you always say that Michael—....' He thought, shaking his head lightly.

Zeke's thoughts were incomprehensible. It was hard to understand what was going on in his mind, and how he thought about certain people. He didn't talk a lot, and he was not known for his great socializing skills either. Instead, he was excessively honest, to the point of sounding blunt if he wished to express his opinion. Most of the time, he would never bother saying something unnecessarily, or something that wasn't true.

While Lincoln wondered about his friend, the ground beneath Michael crackled when he heard what Zeke said. His overflowing rage didn't allow him to concentrate much on his friends, but the words that reached him were more than enough for Michael to agree wholeheartedly.

Mr. Klein might be a Tier-3 Adventurer, but he was alone and didn't seem to bother putting up a defense either.

Thus, Michael planted his feet firmly on the ground, narrowed his gaze, and stared deep in the eyes of his teacher. Until now, Michael had never mentioned anything about Alice nor had this whole fiasco occurred because of him demanding others to pity him for his loss. Mr. Klein was clearly trying to pick a fight and rile him up as well – just like the Zan Twins.

'They're connected. Are their families scheming against Alice...using me as the weakest link to harm her?'

Michael felt a little bit sorry for Alice because he was dragging her into trouble, but he didn't really care at this point.

"Don't you think you're a little bit too old to pick a fight with freshmen? Is that how a teacher is supposed to act? Though looking at it, you seem to be nothing more than these freshmen's pawn, either way. I guess it's fine to pick a fight in that case," Michael mocked, his eyes still ice-cold.

However, he didn't attack Mr. Klein yet, not physically at least. Even though Zeke said that he should beat the shit out of Mr. Klein, Michael was still hesitant to beat up a teacher at the military academy. He didn't know how much trouble it would cause to attack a teacher.

He had already held back from killing the Zan Twins, so he might as well hold back from attacking Mr. Klein.

But Mr. Klein didn't want to leave it at that. Listening to Michael's mocking words enraged the teacher. He was not as patient and tenacious as Michael and immediately snapped.

His face turned red and white fog emerged from his back. Yet, before Mr. Klein unleashed his entire Soultrait, he recalled something that caused him to laugh lightly.

"The Sacred Desert was it, right?" He asked, still laughing, "What was it called? Primal...no Primedival Pyramid...what a beautiful yet fierce place..."

Michael's eyes widened. He stared blankly at Mr. Klein.

How did he know? The Primedival Pyramid was in the Sacred Desert's hidden region. Not many should know about the hidden region, let alone the Primedival Pyramid.

Michael's blood began to boil and the hair all over his body stood up on its end.

"Do you know—..." He began, his voice cracking with raw emotion at the memory of his brother, only for Mr. Klein's smile to widen.

"I'm merely a pawn, isn't that what you said? How would a pawn know how your brother died?" Mr. Klein interrupted Michael. He continued to speak with a much wider smile on his face, seeing that he had hit a nerve. "Well...even pawns can get hold of some interesting information. Don't you think so?"

The instant Mr. Klein's words left his mouth, the ground beneath Michael's feet moved. Michael kicked his feet off the ground after instinctively utilizing several layers of 5-Star Enhancement on his entire lower body. His acceleration was shockingly fast, and he appeared in front of Mr. Klein the next moment.

His left hand shot forward, reaching for Mr. Klein's head while his Soultrait, Mind Reader, was fully unleashed. Michael didn't care about the scheming against him anymore, or the fact that Mr. Klein was a Tier-3 Adventurer and a teacher at the Sapphirelake Military Academy.

All he desired was to find out how Mr. Klein knew about the Primedival Pyramid, who told him, and what else he knew.

His fingertips were just about to reach Mr. Klein's forehead when he collided with something hard. His fingers were repelled, forcing Michael to respond by releasing the Sword Qi blades that had been revolving around his body.

The Sword Qi blades shot forward to support his first attack. But Mr. Klein had already reacted. He slapped Michael's hand away and let his Soultrait deal with the Sword Qi blades.

Then he shot forward and punched Michael straight in the stomach, hard.

Unlike Michael, he didn't hold back and used his entire strength to punch Michael, flinging him several meters through the air. Michael collided against a wall and he felt like his breath had been taken away, but he shot up from the ground like nothing happened.

He ignored the blood that trickled down the corner of his lips, and stared valiantly at Mr. Klein and the Armored Knight that had appeared behind him. It was Mr. Klein's Soultrait [Armored Knight], which evolved his Soul into a Martial Soul that could be manifested outside his body to aid him in battle.

Michael, however, didn't pay any attention to the Armored Knight. All he cared about was procuring Mr. Klein's memories about his brother and the Primedival Pyramid.

Michael forgot about the people around him, where he was, and that he wasn't supposed to attack a teacher. He was not supposed to break the hierarchy in the Sapphirelake Military Academy nor disrupt the decorum. But how did that matter if he could find out more about his brother's death?

A burst of energy shot out of Michael's body, forming a sphere of white golden light around him.

His presence changed entirely, and the ground around him began to tremble while the grass, soil and the surface of the watchtower were removed layer by layer simultaneously.

"Tell me everything I want to know," Michael demanded, his voice as cold as ice.

"Or I will make you."

## Chapter 288 Armored Knight

The Armored Knight behind Mr. Klein was a unique existence. Its entire body was white, and it was semi-transparent, allowing Michael and the others to see through it. Yet, its body seemed solid, except for the parts of the Armored Knight, which Mr. Klein could change to gaseous form at will with precise commands.

Manifestation-type Soultraits were rare, and they were hard to control. However, upon learning to control them precisely such Soultraits would grow extremely powerful – possibly rivaling the power and efficiency of Soultraits of a higher rank.

Michael wasn't really fazed by the Armored Knight. His entire body was engulfed in a six-fold Enhanced Extraction field that was precisely aimed at the connection between the Soul Manifested Armored Knight and Mr. Klein. Michael's origin energy was drained quickly but Mr. Klein lost control of the Armored Knight in exchange. This exchange was clearly in Michael's favor.

His entire focus was on Mr. Klein as the Wyverntooth Spear manifested in front of him.

Michael grasped the spear and engulfed it in several layers of Enhancement before he did the same to the Legendary Ring Artifact. Afterward, he swallowed a few energy pills before kicking the ground beneath him to dash forward.

Michael's body turned into a blur as he accelerated rapidly. He thrust the Wyverntooth Spear toward Mr. Klein's shoulder while using a many-fold enhanced Spirit Whip to lash out at his teacher.

Not expecting a mental attack to strike him down, Mr. Klein's expression changed. The smile on his face was wiped away, replaced by a deep frown. Unable to control the Armored Knight, Mr. Klein was forced to move aside. He evaded Michael's thrust, only to realize too late that the field of extraction around Michael began to affect him.

Mr. Klein's clothes were removed layer by layer, only for the hair all over his body to follow suit.

Michael could instinctively tell that his Extraction wouldn't be strong enough to gouge Mr. Klein's eye out. He was only a Tier-2 Lord, while Mr. Klein was a proficient Tier-3 Adventurer. Even Spirit Whip hadn't been powerful, given that Mr. Klein's mind and soul had been refined several times. But extracting Mr. Klein's clothes and hair was already enough to rattle him. Once Mr. Klein realized that he was naked and that his body looked like that of a humongous baby – without a single strand of hair –, he would be affected mentally.

It didn't take Mr. Klein long before he realized that he was magically stripped off by his student. He wanted to do something against it, but he couldn't afford to unleash his origin energy outside the body. That would consume too much energy and even more focus, which was required to regain control of the Armored Knight and to keep it manifested.

The Armored Knight didn't stop moving even after its connection with Mr. Klein was disrupted. It was not wholly sentient, but fiercely loyal so it could follow orders and move swiftly – even if it was weak. The self-consciousness was just enough to know that it was part of Mr. Klein's being and that Mr. Klein's death would mean it would perish as well. All enemies of Mr. Klein were thus also the Armored Knight's enemies!

The Armored Knight lifted its sword and charged at Michael. It was fast, much faster than most Tier-2 Monsters. Michael guessed that the Armored Knight was at the Peak of the 2nd Tier, missing only a little push to cross the barrier separating the Tiers. Right now, that was Michael's great fortune.

Dealing with a single Tier-3 Adventurer was already cumbersome for someone like Michael. However, dealing with a Tier-3 Adventurer who was fighting alongside a manifested Soul at the 3rd Tier was near-impossible without suicidal tactics such as throwing Chaos Pills all over the battlefield.

Michael ducked his head, avoiding the horizontal sword slash that would have most likely beheaded him. As he ducked, he could see the Armored Knight's knee shooting upward, ready to bash his head with tremendous force. Luckily, Michael reacted just in time. With Eagle Eyes fully unleashed it hadn't been too difficult to predict the Armored Knight's move. Michael could have evaded the attack but he didn't have any time to spare.

He was unsure how much time he had until the authorities would show up, and Michael had yet to get hold of the information he wanted to know. Michael didn't even know how long it would take to extract a conscious being's memories, and how helpful Mind Reader would be against an enemy of a higher Tier.

Given those unknown factors, Michael manifested several Sword Qi blades that had been further enhanced by Enhancement. The Sword Qi blades shot toward the leg that was about to smash into Michael's face.

And just before Michael's face could be mashed and broken into pieces, enhanced Sword Qi blades cut through the air. They impacted one after another, aiming precisely at the same area; the joint.

Michael twisted his body to ensure that the Armored Knight couldn't target him immediately. Simultaneously, his field of extraction compressed into a huge stream. The stream of extraction flooded the Armored Knight, precisely the joint that had been cut by several enhanced Sword Qi blades. The blades hadn't been powerful enough to cut through the Armored Knight's leg, but that was also fine. I think you should take a look at

Michael compressed the field of extraction and forcefully intruded the Armored Knight's body through the joint. He began extracting the Armored Knight's energy thereafter.

The Armored Knight had its own energy storage, but it had a much smaller storage capacity than most other beings. It was merely a manifestation-type Soultrait with restricted prowess, after all. But while its storage capacity was low, and just enough to maintain its solid form, and fight using a minuscule amount of origin energy to reinforce its attack, the Armored Knight's energy storage was also shared with its master, Mr. Klein.

Draining the Armored Knight forced the manifested Soul to tap into the energy storage of Mr. Klein, draining him rapidly. At first, Mr. Klein wanted to support the Armored Knight to ensure that it could fight by his side. After all, it was much better to outnumber his opponent in a battle. However, Mr. Klein quickly realized that the Armored Knight was draining way too much energy. At this rate, his entire energy storage would have dried up in less than a minute. That was not something he could handle.

Meanwhile, Michael's energy storage had been fully replenished.

Since the Armored Knight didn't have a strong self-consciousness, let alone a mental defense that could restrict Extraction, Michael had an easy time devouring the Armored Knight's energy. Once his energy storage was filled to the brim, Michael began to fill Dragon Might's crystalized eyes with the Power of Enhancement.

He didn't apply Enhancement on the Legendary Artifact but filled the storages with the Power of Enhancement for later use. Since his energy storage was already filled to the brim he may as well fill Dragon Might's storage now that he had an easy time absorbing the Armored Knight's energy.

Michael's attention moved away from the Armored Knight when he saw that the bright, shimmering hue around it grew fainter. He switched his attention to Mr. Klein, who had appeared next to him.

Seeing the naked middle-aged man would have usually caused Michael to feel funny or smile foolishly. But all Michael did was stare at Mr. Klein with an ice-cold gaze and a dead-serious expression. This made Mr. Klein even more uncomfortable than the loud laughter to his left, or so he thought.

He was just about to arrive in front of Michael, two swords manifested in his hands when he heard someone to his left shouting loudly, "This video will definitely gain millions of views all over Starnet!"

In a moment of shock, Mr. Klein's head flicked to the left where he saw that a freshman couple were joking with each other while pointing their high-quality video recorders in his direction. The azure eyes of Frederik Kolbenheim glimmered in joy all while Jaqueline Orlando also could not suppress a chuckle. She pushed her hair back and zoomed closer to ensure that their video picked up every little detail – including the tiny worm that looked hideous enough to put even the ugliest Goblins to shame.

"You bastard!! Stop filmi–..." Mr. Klein began but was unable to shout anything else.

Several Spirit Whips impacted heavily on his mind just before the Wyverntooth Spear pierced through his shoulder with tremendous force. A humongous golden stream shot out of Michael's palm, coiling around the Wyverntooth Spear before it shot inside Mr. Klein's body where his origin energy was drained even faster.

Mr. Klein screamed out in shock. He was just about to grasp the Wyverntooth Spear when Michael's right hand shot forward. His right hand was engulfed in a Reinforced Qi Sword that had been further enhanced by eight layers of Enhancement, attaining a power threshold the Reinforced Sword Qi had never reached before. Michael's right hand shot forward, drawing blood and inflicting horrifying pain as the enhanced Qi Sword pierced through the joint connecting Mr. Klein's arm and shoulder.

The sound of cracking bones rang through everyone's ears as Michael's attack went through Mr. Klein's arm. But Michael was not yet done. He twisted the Qi blade and used his brute force to slash to the right.

Blood spurted through the surroundings and a severed arm followed soon.

Mr. Klein stumbled backward, but Michael didn't allow him to escape his grasp. Driven by rage, Michael released another burst of Extraction's golden streams to invade Mr. Klein from a second spot.

In the next moment, Michael began to drain Mr. Klein's origin energy even faster, all while destroying his mental defense layer by layer, slowly draining his life force as well.

#### Chapter 289 Memories

At the end of the day, Mr. Klein was not a great combatant. He might be a Tier-3 Adventurer, but it was quite obvious that he hadn't been fighting in the Origin Expanse for years. He was rusty and his movements were sluggish. Lords like Taros and Tac Lec would have an easy time dealing with Mr. Klein – if not for his Armored Knight.

The Armored Knight was extremely strong at combat, and if not for 6-Star Extraction enhanced sixfold with 5-Star Enhancement, Michael would have had a much harder time dealing with the Manifestation-type Soultrait. Its combat prowess was at the Peak of the 2nd Tier, and on the verge of breaking to the 3rd Tier, after all!

Michael turned the tides of the battle against the Armored Knight after he inflicted a shallow injury to it with several enhanced Qi Sword blades. He overwhelmed its faint self-consciousness and drained its entire energy, pushing both the Armored Knight and Mr. Klein into a tricky position.

Being weak in real combat, Mr. Klein could only rely on the Armored Knight to clash with Michael head-on. However, the Armored Knight drained most of its energy after fighting Michael for a few minutes. This put Mr. Klein in a bad position, which could only be solved by retracting the Armored Knight and attacking on his own.

Unfortunately, being a prideful person, the Barbaric Couple's shouts had distracted Mr. Klein. He wouldn't have minded being naked in front of his enemy. Defeating his enemy would have been more than enough to cover up for being naked. But the video recording of the bystanders was not something Mr. Klein could accept. And that was when Mr. Klein's loss was determined.

Being rusty didn't cause his defeat. Mr. Klein would have been able to fight head-on against Michael. Using some tricks he had learned over the course of the years, Mr. Klein should have easily defeated Michael. But his pride and clear underestimation of his opponents' powers and trickery led to his defeat.

Mr. Klein fell hard onto the ground when Michael's Extraction tapped into his Lifeforce. A wisp of fear emerged in his heart, and a trace of confusion plastered his face.

Michael's eyes glowed in a golden sheen that ought to spread warmth and comfort. Yet, to Mr. Klein, the warm golden hue felt as cold as ice. He saw fury and hatred in Michael's eyes...and the intention to kill.

'Is he really going to kill me? This kid is insane!' Mr. Klein screamed in his mind.

They were in the Sapphirelake Military Academy, and he was a teacher. How dare a student attempt to kill him?! It didn't matter that Mr. Klein was not a well-known teacher and that his combat prowess ranked the lowest, just like his Tier. He was still a teacher and ought to be respected, no matter what he said or did!

But being a faculty was not going to be of much help to him. The moment Mr. Klein mentioned the Primedival Pyramid, he invited trouble and ridicule for himself. Michael didn't even think about holding back anymore. In fact, he wouldn't give up until he obtained the information he desired – even if that meant he had to torture and humiliate a teacher in the middle of the academy's grounds, making a public spectacle of him.

Staring blankly at Michael's crazed expression, Mr. Klein finally realized that they made a big mistake. He had already gotten a bad feeling when the Zan Twins were attacked mercilessly. Michael might have said that the twins could be healed easily – which was true –, but Michael broke the sacred rules of the military academy, nonetheless.

Was he not afraid of the aftermath of his actions?

At this point in time, Mr. Klein could clearly tell that Michael did not care. He might have been holding back before but that was a thing of the past.

'Who the hell said that Alice's student is a naive weakling? What kind of dumb idiot gave us this order?!?' Mr Klein screamed in his heart all while watching Michael retrieving the Wyverntooth Spear.

He twisted the spear blade in Mr. Klein's shoulder to inflict more damage before pulling it out. He then stored the weapon artifact back into the War Rune while unleashing Mind Reader enhanced with the Power of Enhancement that had been stored in the Legendary Ring Artifact.

Simultaneously, he unleashed the ring artifact's full dragon might. The dragon might fused with Michael's fury and killing intent, impacting heavily on Mr. Klein. A seed of fear and despair had long since been planted in Mr. Klein's heart, but it blossomed into a huge, thorny plant that wanted to tear him from the inside out. Staring at Michael felt like staring at a ferocious monster that was about to tear him apart.

For the first time in the last decade, Mr. Klein felt the Grim Reaper slowly creeping closer. His body was twitching horribly, but Michael was merciless. His left hand shot forward and clutched Mr. Klein's head tightly.

"Now tell me everything you know about the Primedival Pyramid and how my brother died. If I sense that you are lying to me, I will kill you and get everything I want from your memories, you fucking bastard!" Michael growled, continuing to unleash both Extraction and Mind Reader simultaneously.

Mr. Klein's mental defense was already weak. However, Michael did not hesitate to further attack his defenses and removed the last remaining layers of Mr. Klein's mental resistance before he started to read his mind – every single thought that flashed through it!

[I don't want to die!]

[Please, just let the teachers arrive. PLEASE COME!!]

[I shouldn't have listened to their orders. Why would anyone want to scheme against Alice by using such a monster as a target!?] I think you should take a look at

[Easier target? That guy is a monster!!!! Hiro...I hope your sons will never be able to reattach their arms ever again!!!!]

Michael's expression worsened as he kept listening to the nonsense flashing through Mr. Klein's mind. His grip around Mr. Klein's neck tightened and his right hand pierced into the teacher's abdomen, inflicting tremendous pain.

The enhanced Qi Sword shrouding his right hand could easily cut through Mr. Klein's skin and flesh. However, to inflict pain, Michael mostly released small waves of Sword Qi inside Mr. Klein's body after he cut inside his flesh.

Mr. Klein screamed out in pain, but Michael only stared coldly at him.

The weaker the life force and mental defenses the easier it would be to read his mind and extract Memory Orbs. That was something Michael had learned after using Extraction for months.

Michael also learned that inducing fear and despair was exceptionally useful to further weaken the mental defense of his targets.

Thus, he kept torturing Mr. Klein while simultaneously weakening his mind with Spirit Whips that struck the teacher's mind, hard.

A minute felt like an eternity for both Mr. Klein and Michael. While Michael was trying to get hold of useful information, Mr. Klein could only scream in horror and pain. His voice grew weaker by the second, which decreased the influx of useful and coherent information even further.

Michael grit his teeth and slapped Mr. Klein, just to change his tactics.

He stopped extracting the teacher's life force and origin energy. Instead, he used six-fold enhanced Extraction to extract Mr. Klein's memories – focusing on the information related to the Primedival Pyramid and Daniel Fang.

By now, Michael had found out that the head of the Minor Noble House, Hiro Zan, had given Mr. Klein a mission for the last decade. Michael first thought that Hiro Zan was somehow involved in the incidents revolving around his brother's death, but he quickly realized that Hiro Zan was merely a pawn as well. It was just that Hiro Zan had a higher authority than Mr. Klein, and that he was given the mission to forward them to the lower-ranked pawns.

It confused Michael a little bit when he heard that the patriarch of a Minor Noble house was merely a pawn, but given the powerplay and shifting dynamics of the human race's hierarchy, it did make sense for Minor Nobles to work for High Nobles, Supreme Families, Great clans, or possibly even the Big Five Universities and the Great Three Academies.

Politics were never something Michael was interested in, but he could tell that he was already dragged into some dirty politics.

The moment he accepted Alice's personal lessons, Michael indirectly accepted to become a chess piece in the game of the powerhouses. The only question was what kind of chess piece he was. He was schemed against in order to drag Alice's name and reputation into the mud. The plan worked out well, but the damage caused by Michael was beyond everyone's expectations.

He had severed the arms of the Zan Twins, cut off one of Mr. Klein's arms, and also collected a considerable number of useful pieces of information.

Michael focused Extraction upon Mr. Klein to extract his memories. He used the vast majority of his stored energy, and broke past the teacher's last strands of resistance before a small Memory Orb manifested in Michael's hand. At last, Michael extracted his first Memory Orb from a living being – though draining tens of times more energy than usual.

Michael ignored the ghastly expression on Mr. Klein's face as he absorbed the Memory Orb. He then grasped Mr. Klein's face, closed his eyes, and overexerted himself to extract the memories of the last few seconds from the teacher's mind.

After all, Michael didn't want Mr. Klein to share with everyone that he could extract someone's memories.

The other bystanders might have seen the orb in Michael's hand, but they wouldn't know what he had actually done. As for the rest they witnessed, Michael wouldn't bother explaining. There was simply no need to do so.

His Soultraits were his, and he wasn't obliged to tell anyone about it just because they were curious.

He destroyed the second memory orb containing Mr. Klein's understanding of his Soultraits. That way, Mr. Klein would forget what exactly the golden streams did to him after they entered his body.

At the same time, Michael began to frown deeply as his mind began to digest the teacher's memories related to the Sacred Desert, the Primedival Pyramid, and his big boss.

Chapter 290 Proud

Michael frowned deeply when he finished digesting the information and memories of Mr. Klein.

All he got to know was basic information about the Sacred Desert, and that the hidden region couldn't be accessed anymore. Mr. Klein was familiar with a few human adventurers who had been spending the last few years in the hidden region. They had almost been thrown out of the Origin Expanse after losing their territories, only to be picked up by Hiro Zan and the unknown mastermind, who nurtured them into loyal underlings.

The human adventurers in the Sacred Desert died according to their broken Lord IDs, which Mr. Klein got to know in the same period when the government's AI sent Michael a message about Danny's death.

Michael wasn't a genius but he could put two and two together.

'The adventurers were probably the humans Danny had talked about in the past. There were only a handful of human adventurers in his region, and they all ended up working for him. Well, given that they

were the mastermind's underlings, it's probably more likely that they tricked Danny...these bastards...' Michael cursed in his mind before various questions flashed through his mind.

'Did they backstab Danny? But how did they die then? Did Danny kill them after getting backstabbed? But if that's the case, Danny should have survived somehow... They shouldn't have killed each other. There has to be something else. I'm definitely missing some pieces.'

It was annoying that Mr. Klein didn't even know who the mastermind was. Mr. Klein obtained various benefits and rewards in exchange for working for someone he never met. That might have worked well until now, but the teacher made a mistake when he tried provoking Michael.

Underestimating Michael – his fury and poor anger management – was Mr. Klein's biggest mistake. He shouldn't have done that.

Looking down at Mr. Klein, who was lying on the ground near his feet, Michael bent down and punched fiercely. He wanted to kill Mr. Klein for being useless and for setting up a trap. The Zan Twins and Mr. Klein had been ordered to provoke him. They had most probably been instructed to enrage Michael until he couldn't hold back anymore.

That worked out well – much better than they could have hoped for. Michael ended up snapping, severely injuring two fellow freshmen and a teacher. Their plan had yielded good results, too good results. The broken arms of the trio lying in puddles of their own blood were hard evidence for that.

'To think that other people are so worried about the Zenovia family's plans. Politics is really scary.' Michael thought, punching Mr. Klein once more for needlessly dragging him into the scheme of other families and powerhouses.

The reason Michael had been targeted was Alice, or the Zenovia family, to be precise.

The Battle Exchange would happen soon, and the mastermind wanted to tarnish Alice's image just before she would meet up with the Berserker race and the Warlock Centaurs. It would be best if she had to step down from her position as a representative of the freshmen, and that she would be restricted from attending the meeting of the Tritan Alliance.

She was not supposed to gain the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs respect in the Battle Exchange, otherwise, she was likely to succeed in approaching them for future business deals with the Zenovia family by establishing cordial business relations. The Zenovia family was trying to push forward and surpass other Supreme Families by becoming a core piece of the Tritan Alliance, and many families disliked that.

Speaking of Alice, Michael was not surprised to spot her running to the watchtower alongside a large team of medics a while later. The medics had already spotted the injured and rushed to the twins. They didn't dare to approach Mr. Klein yet, because Michael was standing next to him, lightly bent over, his fists smeared in blood from punching Mr. Klein.

The presence Michael exuded was unnatural and exceedingly dangerous. Looking at Michael was enough to see the goosebumps spreading all over the medics' bodies.

Michael straightened his upper body and moved away from Mr. Klein after kicking him in the medics' direction.

"Make sure he won't die," Michael snarled before he stored his artifacts back in the War Rune.

Once Dragon Might disappeared, Michael's killing intent dispersed as well. He was still angry about the things the twins and Mr. Klein said, but beating the shit out of them had helped him let out some steam. At the same time, Michael got to know a few pieces of information that might be useful in the future.

His gaze moved to Alice when he perceived that she was staring at him. A trace of disbelief and incomprehension could be found in her eyes as she stepped closer. Michael was also surprised to see concern in Alice's eyes. It was rare for her to show so many emotions at once, especially since she was usually not that concerned about anyone or anything – except her family, maybe.

Kaleb and the others saw Alice as well. Seeing her look at Michael, Kaleb couldn't help himself. He rushed over to her and began to explain the situation from a bystanders' point of view, hoping that Alice wouldn't be angry with Michael for causing trouble. I think you should take a look at

However, Michael didn't feel the need to do so. He wanted to return to his room and wash up. The blood on his body and clothes made him feel disgusted. After all, it was Mr. Klein's blood. The teacher's

sight was already enough to make him feel nauseous, forget about roaming around with his disgusting blood smeared on his body.

But before Michael could move he heard Alice's lecturing voice, something he was very familiar with at this point.

"You didn't do anything after you heard that? Didn't you say that you're Michael's friend?! At least the idiotic couple of the brute brats recorded everything. What the hell did you do, other than watching??" Alice cursed her brother loud enough for everyone to hear.

The medics looked up in surprise. They couldn't recall having heard Alice speaking that loudly ever. It astonished them greatly, even more so that she was lecturing her younger brother. Alice was a strict teacher, she was known as the Frozen Duchess for being emotionless, but people also knew that she pampered her brother – except when it came to training.

Seeing her like this was quite unexpected.

"What was I supposed to do then? I didn't want to stop him after hearing what these bastards said... As for Mr. Klein, nobody likes him either way. He deserved the beating as well..." Kaleb responded meekly.

The other students behind Kaleb nodded their heads in approval. If not for Zeke holding Lincoln back, the descendant of the Piedra family would have happily joined hands with Michael to help him beat the shit out of Mr. Klein and the Zan Twins.

"Are you an id—... You did a good job by not stopping him. But that was not what I meant. You should have helped him beat the shit out of these three bastards!" Alice declared, pointing at the twins and Mr. Klein, who were all being tended to for their injuries.

The medic team were busy using the levitating stretchers to pick up the three injured, storing the stumps of the trio's arms in technologically advanced boxes that had been invented to preserve severed limbs, and releasing special mist that ought to heal the arm, allowing perfect reattachment to the body.

But just as the medic team was about to leave, they heard what Alice said. Their eyes widened and they looked back at Alice for the second time. However, this time, Alice looked back at them, her agitated expression replaced by utter coldness.

"If they die while you're staring at me, I will personally skin you guys alive. My student won't take responsibility if any of you mess up," She said in a seething tone that was barely loud enough for the medics to hear. They gulped hard and left hurriedly.

By the time Alice scared off the poor medics, Michael had calmed down a little. He stepped closer to Kaleb and Alice, and met their gazes.

"It seems like I caused you some trouble," Michael said straightforwardly, without a trace of guilt in his eyes. "But I won't apologize for that. Had they not chosen me as your weakest link, they would have picked on Kaleb for sure. He would have fallen into their trap even if I hadn't."

Alice had already suspected that something would happen soon. The other families had been too quiet in the last few weeks. It was almost as if they silently agreed to allow the Zenovia family to become an important part of the Tritan Alliance. After all, it was quite obvious that Kaleb would rock in the Battle Exchange. The Zenovia siblings were bound to gain the Berserker and Warlock Centaurs' respect since they were both young, powerful, and talented.

But all while Alice paid close attention to Kaleb to shield him from bullies and low level politics, she forgot to pay close attention to Michael. Under ordinary circumstances, Alice was certain that Michael would answer provocations and fight back people using petty tricks much better than Kaleb. That was something she had sensed in her first meeting with Michael at the afterparty of his and her brother's graduation ceremony. Unfortunately, Alice totally forgot to take into consideration that Michael was not exactly in high spirits, and that Daniel Fang's name could be used to easily provoke Michael at this point.

Alice was pretty sure that nobody would have been able to hold back as long as Michael did if they were in his position. He did well, and Alice was proud of him after she heard what he did from Kaleb.

She took a step closer to Michael and gently flicked his forehead.

"There is no reason for you to apologize in the first place. Everything will be fine," Alice reassured him with a small smile blossoming on her face, "Trust me. I'll handle it!"

Michael looked at her in surprise and his heart felt warm for the first time since his brother died.