

Supreme Lord 291

Chapter 291 Call

"Would you really be alright if I had joined Michael to beat up Mr. Klein and the Zan Twins? Wouldn't that implicate you, and create bad blood with the Zan household, and cause problems in the academy?" Kaleb asked Alice as the siblings walked across the pavement.

They were on their way to the security department where Alice hoped to receive a copy of recordings made by the watchtower's security camera before anyone else could. She wanted to ensure that nobody could alter the recordings.

The recording made by the Barbaric Couple existed but it was quite obvious that the recording focused on Mr. Klein. The couple wanted to humiliate Mr. Klein and release the footage all over Starnet 'anonymously'. However, Alice made sure that this wouldn't happen. She took their recording in her custody and made sure that the Barbaric Couple deleted the original.

Alice didn't really care about Mr. Klein's reputation, or anything like that, but she cared enough about Michael to understand that he would be in more trouble if the video went viral over Starnet. The fact that he beat up a teacher was already troublesome enough. If billions of people found out about it, Michael would definitely face a big problem. His actions wouldn't be in the jurisdiction of the Sapphirelake Military Academy but the government, and that was something Alice wanted to prevent to make sure that Michael wouldn't be punished harshly for his actions.

"Mr. Klein might be the weakest teacher in the academy, and he might have entered the academy through connections, but he is also a Tier-3 Awakened. If Michael had been just a little bit weaker, or if Mr. Klein hadn't grossly underestimated Michael, the one lying in the medical room would have been Michael not Mr. Klein," Alice mumbled, somewhat absent-mindedly.

She wanted to add that Mr. Klein was also one of the few teachers, who're willing to teach the secrets of Soul Manifestation and the unique technique he uses to empower his Armored Knight, but she let it be since she understood that these facts were actually good reasons in Kaleb's favor.

Her attention switched to the holographic screen in front of her.

"Defeating Mr. Klein without sustaining heavy injuries should have been quite difficult even if you and Michael had teamed up. I didn't expect Michael to—..." Alice stopped speaking suddenly, and she halted in her tracks, forcing Kaleb to slow down as well.

"This..." She mumbled, only to close her mouth the next moment.

Curious as to why Alice slowed down suddenly, Kaleb threw a glance at her holographic screen. She was looking at the video recorded by the Barbaric Couple. Kaleb figured that Alice was not looking at Mr. Klein's humiliation. In fact, Alice didn't seem to enjoy the video in the slightest. She wore a deadpan expression and the most she did was frown a few times.

Kaleb noticed that her frowns deepened whenever golden streams shot out of Michael, and when the silver blades manifested around him.

"If I remember correctly Michael was in a Lord Rift. Did he obtain Soultraits from there?" Kaleb asked when he realized why Alice frowned.

Michael already possessed a lot more Soultraits than the vast majority of Awakened could manifest, yet it looked like his friend had obtained a few new ones. Kaleb had been too focused on the fight and didn't even question Michael's powers.

"I...guess so..." Alice said in a tone that made it seem as if she was asking a question.

Kaleb looked at Alice, who was pulled back to her senses only after she received a call on the crystal watch.

It was a call from the security department of the Sapphirelake Military Academy.

Alice furrowed her brows. She accepted the call and spoke for a few minutes with the head of the security department. During the call her expression worsened gradually. Her face contorted in fury when the call ended, and she had to take a few deep breaths to calm down her racing heart.

"What happened?" Kaleb asked, feeling a little restless in his heart.

"It seems like a few families heard what Michael did. They seem to want to make an issue out of today's incident, stating that my 'disciple' is out of control. The head said that these families highlighted that the Zenovia family should pay more attention to their disciples, and that the security department should investigate thoroughly before deciding on a punishment for Michael and me," Alice answered after she sighed heavily.

"Punish? You?" Kaleb asked, not quite believing what he just heard.

"Yes, they want to punish me as well. After all, a master is responsible for his disciple's actions to a certain degree. The head of the security department said that my teaching had too many shortcomings and that they will have to punish Michael harshly to make an example. After all, a situation like this has never happened before. Well, I expected this kind of nonsense. Some of it, at least."

Alice looked annoyed but she was not shocked. Her ability to calm down in an instant and to stay composed even after getting schemed against allowed Kaleb to not worry a lot.

"Michael will be alright...right?" He asked nonetheless. I think you should take a look at

Kaleb trusted his sister but that didn't mean he took the other supreme families, great clans, and high nobles lightly. Kaleb was fully aware that most powerhouses were searching for an opportunity to strike Alice and the Zenovia family – now more than ever.

"He undermined the hierarchy and authority of the Sapphirelake Military Academy, and he severed the arms of fellow students in broad daylight. Even though they started insulting him, they didn't attack him physically," Alice responded. She fell deep in thought and added, "It would have been much easier if they had fought in the arena. Severed arms may not be that problematic given the medical treatment that can be provided in the academy, but his actions are actually enough for them to demand destroying his War Rune. He would probably be considered a criminal by the government's standards, so destroying his War Rune would be an appropriate punishment."

"Destroying his War Rune?!? They can't do that!" Kaleb shouted loudly. He pulled his sister's shoulders back and stared deep into her eyes, hoping that she was lying.

However, there was no trace of a lie, or exaggeration in her eyes.

"Of course, I won't allow that. Not only did all of that happen because I didn't pay enough attention to Michael's mental state, but he was also pulled in the schemes of the adults because of me," Alice said calmly.

She intentionally left out a few facts – such as the fact that the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs wouldn't be able to trust the Zenovia family if Alice allowed other families to destroy her disciple's War Rune without a fight – but Kaleb didn't have to know these facts, in the first place.

Alice took Kaleb's hand off her shoulder and turned away. She accessed the crystal watch, typed a few messages before she made a call.

"It's me. I have to use the favors your family owes the Zenovias...Yes...You already know about that? Well, that makes it easier. Help me out a bit.... Yes, he is worth it. But don't bother... No, that's not necessary....Exactly...Thanks..."

Kaleb couldn't hear everything Alice said but the few sentences were enough to plaster a bright smile on his face.

Even though Kaleb had no idea whom Alice called just now he instinctively knew that everything would be fine.

He stared at Alice with a broad smile as his shoulders sagged in relief.

'My sister is really the best!'

"Alright...I will see what I can do. Bye."

After talking for a few minutes Alice finally ended the call. She looked at the log of the call and changed the name of the person she'd just called, gritting her teeth.

"This is a little bit annoying," She mumbled after a while.

Alice turned to the security department's building and began walking toward it once again. The holographic screen of Michael's fight with Mr. Klein was still playing. After she watched the replay a few times, Alice closed the video, and dragged the file to Starnet Messenger where she dropped the file in an empty chat with the woman she had called seconds ago.

"Why is that bitch always so demanding? What's the use of all those conditions?" Alice cursed under her breath, clearly recalling every single word exchanged in the earlier call.

She sent the video file, closed the crystal watch and continued to curse as they walked to the security department's building.

A few minutes later, she received several notifications, containing laughing emoticons and a particular message that annoyed Alice the most.

[Demanding Bitch: Michael Fang was his name, right?]

"Fuck off."

Chapter 292 Revoked?

Alice advised Michael to lay low for a few days and to attend classes like he would usually. Michael did just that.

He started to attend his courses again, which made him feel that everything about his academy life had returned to normal – with the sole exception being that rumors began to spread.

Some students had seen Michael severing the arms of the Zan Twins, and his fight against Mr. Klein. That wouldn't have been a big problem if not for these students being the worst gossipers in the entire academy. Rumors about his fight against the Zan Twins and Mr. Klein spread like wildfire.

Once the rumor started to make rounds in the academy, students began to pay more attention to him. Michael was looked at differently, and the rumors revolving around him grew wilder – more exaggerated and troublesome, even involving Kaleb, Lincoln, Zeke and the other people around him.

Some found it questionable for a no-name to be around the descendants of the Zenovia family, and two Great Nobles. Everyone except Annabelle Claire was from more-or-less known families, yet everyone seemed to gather around Michael like moths to a flame. It attracted the interest of many freshmen, but also students of the second year, and even seniors.

Michael didn't like the sudden attention he was receiving, but there was nothing he could do about it. At the end of the day, he knew that he made a mistake by allowing the Zan Twins and Mr. Klein to anger him. Thus, he considered the attention he received as the beginning of his punishment.

'I shouldn't have attacked them openly. Challenging them in the arena and beating the shit out of them before they could even think about surrendering would have been much less troublesome,' Michael thought, cursing himself for taking the bait and having been too short-tempered.

He should have known better, but holding back had become too hard at some point. It was as if a switch went off in his head when they mentioned his brother. Was that really his fault?

Either way, Michael was glad that he held back a little when he struck the twins with the Sword Qi blades. He didn't cripple them nor would they sustain any long-lasting damage. To not let matters turn worse, Alice provided them with additional treatment. The additional treatment was more expensive, but it would strengthen the twins' bones, nerves and energy veins in their arms after they were perfectly reattached. Rather than complaining, the twins should thank him for severing their arms!

Unfortunately, the treatment Alice provided didn't compensate for the fact that Michael had attacked the descendants of a Minor Noble with the intent to kill. If he hadn't held back at the last moment, the Zan Twins would be cold corpses in the morgue by now. It was a tricky situation, especially with the involvement of a teacher, and various troublesome personalities, who wanted to reap benefits from the incident.

Five days after the incident next to the watchtower had occurred, Michael sat down at a table in the cafeteria with his jumbo plate with Kaleb and the others. Everything seemed perfectly normal – just like it had been before Daniel Fang died. However, in reality, everything was different.

Michael didn't feel the same as before. He was a little bit more energetic than the gloomy self he had been for the last few weeks, but that didn't mean he had become his former self. No, everything felt different.

He hadn't entered the Origin Expanse either. Michael missed the Untamed Jungle that was bustling with work and distraction. But since Alice told him to stay on the academy's grounds until the next course of actions had been decided, Michael obeyed without complaints.

Instead of rushing to the Origin Expanse, Michael attended the Old Languages course where he deepened his understanding of the Draconia Era's language. After learning the written and spoken language of the Draconia Era in the Lord Rift, Michael inched one step closer to the secrets of the Temple of the Forgotten. Thus, he shared some of his knowledge with the Professor of the Old Languages Course he attended, only to end up reversing their roles by accident.

The Professor turned into the student, asking numerous questions about the Draconia Era's language, its pronunciation, the written language and much more. Michael didn't know everything about the Draconia Era's language, but he found himself comprehending more as he answered the Professor's profound questions.

It was quite intriguing to share his knowledge and deepen it while answering questions. But that was not why Michael spent lots of time in the Old Language Course. He just wanted to distract himself a little bit more.

The rumors about him grew worse and it didn't take long before portions of the watchtower's security camera's footage was released on the academy's forum. Michael's family and personal life were not a secret anymore. Everyone found out about Michael's background; that his sister disappeared and that their parents abandoned him and his brother when they were young. They even found out that his brother died.

This made matters worse for him and it was nearly impossible for him to not be subjected to weird gazes, which was also why he chose to stay out of the Memory Lane course for a little bit longer and focus on courses like Old Languages, and Ancient Ruins where Michael was one of the only students.

The Limit Breaker Course was also fine to attend because he could distract himself by increasing the weight of the heavyweight armor suits as he worked out.

He had yet to regain his old form, but Michael was already increasing the loads of weight pressing onto his body, just to make sure that he didn't have time nor energy to think about his brother, let alone allow some nosy gazes to influence him.

After five days, Alice finally met up with him. The dark circles underneath her eyes clearly showed that Alice was exhausted and that she didn't receive even a moment of rest for the last few days.

As a Tier-5 Lord, rest might not be necessary after such a short time, but that made it even more apparent that Alice had been stressed out in the last few days and working hard – just to ensure that Michael wouldn't be punished harshly. Of course, Alice had to pay attention to her family's reputation as well. This added another level of difficulty since Michael's future and her family's reputation were both at stake. After all, a light punishment for Michael would result in many families voicing out their concerns and disapproval.

If Alice didn't punish Michael for his actions, everyone would call her out. It was highly likely that the powerhouses working against the Zenovias would hire reporters to spread tabloids filled with defamatory news about the Zenovia family all over Starnet just to ruin their reputation. But the exact same scenario would happen if Alice allowed anyone to punish Michael harshly.

A harsh punishment would result in Alice's reputation taking a hit – in the eyes of the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs at least. The Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs wouldn't think of Michael's action as something bad, after all.

On the contrary, Michael's action would be praised in the Tritan Alliance. If the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs were to hear that Alice punished her own disciple for being brave enough to stand up for himself, to not let anyone undermine him, and for doing something as honorable as defending his dead brother's name and the honor of his family, they would likely start considering the Zenovia as fools and despicable.

It was truly tricky, and something Michael was a little sorry about.

"Don't worry too much, Michael. If I was in your position, I would have done exactly the same. Maybe, I wouldn't have been able to hold back at all," Alice said, patting Michael's shoulder before she sat down on the chair opposite Michael's bed.

They were currently in his room since it was still early in the morning when Alice came to meet him.

"Either way. The reason I hurried to your room is that your punishment has finally been decided," Alice revealed with a tired smile, "These bastards, Hiro, and some other family heads, were quite problematic.

You cannot even imagine how annoying these vultures are. Even the principal and the head council of the academy were troublesome to deal with."

She continued after letting out a sigh. "Even after I gave his boys the special treatment to ensure that they benefit from the wounds they'd sustained, he didn't calm down. Nonetheless, Hiro Zan is just an annoying fly. The fact that you undermined the academy's hierarchy by beating up Mr. Klein was not that easy to deal with."

As Alice spoke, several questions formed in Michael's mind. He was a little bit surprised that Alice spoke so much as well. It was a little out of character for words to spill out of Alice like a waterfall, but it was also quite calming – somehow. Thus, Michael continued to listen.

"To be honest, if we're following the instructions of the military law, which applies in the Sapphirelake Military Academy, you should be expelled and all your authority should be stripped off. Following that you would probably end up in jail for a while and your War Rune would get shattered in the worst case," Alice revealed, her voice growing more and more serious.

Michael gasped. They might shatter his War Rune? That was definitely not going to happen! Michael may not love the Will of the Origin Expanse, but the Origin Expanse and his territory had become an inseparable part of him.

Alice smiled lightly seeing Michael make a face.

"Fortunately, the twins' arms could be reattached perfectly. Their arms are stronger than before as well. That means, you will only be charged with excessive violence and assault...well, and a few more minor things. Furthermore, the entire situation at the watchtower had been recorded and broadcast, which reveals quite easily that you were trying to hold back even in your current...state. All of these factors combined with the intervention of the biggest investor of the Sapphirelake Military Academy were enough to change your punishment. As long as you meet certain criteria your punishment can be removed entirely!"

Michael frowned when he heard the last sentence.

After all the trouble the nobles caused to use him to scheme against Alice and her family they were willing to revoke his punishment? Michael might not know a lot about politics, but he was fully aware of

how petty most nobles were. Furthermore, no organization – including military academies – liked seeing their authority undermined by anyone, especially a no-name like Michael.

He actually expected some sort of punishment for his actions. It made sense.

Michael stared intently at Alice, tilting his head. He didn't have to be a genius to tell that Alice had used her connections and influence to revoke his punishment.

But something was wrong. Michael could immediately tell that Alice was holding back some information. The hesitation in her eyes exposed her.

"What are the conditions?"

Chapter 293 Flag War

"What are the conditions?" Michael asked in suspicion.

Alice hesitated for a moment, exposing herself. Something was definitely wrong.

"What is it?" Michael inquired once again.

"Well, it might sound a little weird, but your punishment can be removed if you participate in the Interdimensional Flag War in three months," Alice answered at last, revealing one of the conditions.

"What's that?" Michael asked, confused.

Participating in some event was enough to revoke his punishment? That didn't seem logical.

Alice understood Michael's confusion and gave him a helping hand, "You remember the Battle Exchange, the annual combat exchange of the Tritan Alliance's youngest generation, right?"

"Ah, yes. I remember..." Michael nodded, waiting for Alice to keep going.

"Some Great Nobles, including the Piedra and Lavita household demanded that your punishment be to participate in the Interdimensional Flag War against the Tekur. That means you will have to take part in the Battle Exchange in two weeks, and win at least three fights to become one of the Tritan Alliance's representatives in the Flag War."

'Ohhh, now I remember!' Michael nearly blurted out when Alice mentioned the Tekur.

He recalled Alice telling him about the Tekur and that they had created a Lesser Dimension Gate to infiltrate the Lumina Stellar System.

'Did they call it Flag War because of the Dimensional Pillars that have to be destroyed to prevent the Tekur from infiltrating?' Michael wondered before he gave it a shrug.

He was not really sure how the Interdimensional Flag War was related to not getting punished, but he didn't ask immediately. Michael thought about the Piedra and Lincoln household, not 100% sure whether Lincoln and Zeke had somehow influenced this, or if their family's involvement was a pure coincidence.

"How high do I have to be in the ranking to attend the Battle Exchange?" He asked, hoping to get answers to a few questions before he ended up even more confused.

"You have to become the Sun of the freshman year, or become one of the 12 Stars," Alice answered without hesitation.

There were only 13 spots for freshmen to attend the Battle Exchange. That was a little less than Michael expected, but it was not impossible. The freshmen were mostly his age, some even a little younger, and none of them had as many powerful Soultraits as he did.

"And I have to win three fights in the Battle Exchange to meet the criteria to join the Interdimensional Flag War. That's what you said, right?" Michael asked again, his mind rattling wildly.

The Battle Exchange was interesting for most students of the Sapphirelake Military Academy because their families, households, clans, and guilds wanted to get closer to the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs. Both were old war races with exceptional combat prowess and large territories in the Origin Expanse. Growing closer to them would elevate their status in their family drastically.

Michael was also interested in them, but his curiosity was more in their knowledge than anything else. However, the Interdimensional Flag War seemed more interesting.

'Last time, Alice said that the Tekur are known for possessing powerful Soultraits. If I can...' Michael might have enough Soultraits for himself, but he was worried about Tiara.

Tiara had yet to gain any benefits from his Extraction of Soultrait Symbols and SoulStar Fragments. She would only accept Soultraits that were useful for her. That was only logical but it made things a little bit more problematic. They hadn't found anything Tiara liked until now.

'If Tiara had a strong defensive-type Soultrait, our combined efforts in the Lord Rift would have been enough to protect everyone.'

αΠδαςNovel.com Michael sighed heavily. He thought about providing the Forest Elves with more Soultraits as well, but he didn't like that they could terminate their Link of Loyalty whenever they pleased. Providing them with more Soultraits, and upgrading them further was not something Michael would do without receiving something of an equivalent value. But Tiara was different. I think you should take a look at

While thinking about the Soultraits he could procure in the Lesser Dimension Gate by hunting the Tekur, Michael felt a little confused. For most other youngsters, the Lesser Dimension Gate was merely a training ground and a golden opportunity to realize that other races were extremely powerful, but for Michael, it was a golden opportunity to strengthen himself.

But did he really want to jump into danger once again? So soon after the terror and injuries he had sustained in the Lord Rift?

"You will have to kill at least one Tekur in the Flag War as well...that's the second criterion you have to meet to avoid punishment," Alice said, a heavy sigh escaping her lips soon after.

At this point, Michael was pulled back out of his train of thought. He was too confused to keep thinking about hunting the Tekur for their Soultraits and SoulStar Fragments.

"How is all of that related to my punishment? Shouldn't the academy be like 'You will have to compensate Mr. Klein and the twins for psychological and physical injuries, and you will be sent to detention for X days!?' They should at least give me a Mark, or something like that!" Michael blurted out, his voice containing a trace of desperation. It was almost as if Michael wanted to get punished.

"I thought someone schemed against me because of the Zenovia family's attempts to get closer to the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs. Why is there no setback, and why the hell did I have to listen to those bastards' comments, only to end up not getting punished?!?"

Alice stared at Michael after his sudden outburst, and her eyes widened a little. She didn't expect Michael to get that emotional all of a sudden. It took her a few seconds to understand why Michael reacted like that. Even then, Alice felt a little odd.

'Did he want to get punished for his actions? For satisfaction? No, probably not. Does he not like that others agree that he did the right thing?'

Almost everyone approved of Michael's actions after they saw the footage of the watchtower's security camera. Was that something Michael hated? Why? Wasn't it nice to receive approval for something like that? He broke the rules yet everyone supported him.

Michael didn't really understand himself either. He was not sure if he wanted to be punished. He hated the fact that the twins and Mr. Klein played with his emotions using his family, but he also knew that he should have handled the entire situation differently. He would rather get punished instead of receiving favoritism from Alice and others.

'Ah, I don't know anymore!' Michael screamed in his mind while trying to look fine on the outside.

"To get back to your first question... the relation between the punishment and the Interdimensional Flag War is a little bit complicated," Alice said in all honesty before she continued, "To put it in simple terms your punishment is to fight for mankind at the Interdimensional Flag War. As long as you obtain enough

merit points, your punishment will be waived. That has been decided as per the voting of the military academy's Grand Elders."

Michael remained silent at that. He knew that he would spout nonsense if he opened his mouth right now. His emotional state was too delicate...once again.

Alice took the silence as a sign to continue, "The biggest investor of the academy questioned Mr. Klein's credentials. She demanded a detailed report about the reason the Zan Twins and Mr. Klein stalked a freshman for several days, why they provoked the freshman using confidential information they weren't supposed to have, in the first place, and why a teacher was not only unable to stop a freshman, but was also defeated by a freshman."

"The Investor also said that the Zan Twins should be thankful that you held back. You were obviously strong enough to leave them with permanent injuries, but you cut them cleanly, allowing them to reattach their arms without any issues. Adding the special treatment I provided, the investor said that you shouldn't be punished for teaching the Zan Twins a lesson as a fellow freshman. At the same time, Mr. Klein's professionalism and intentions were questioned," Alice said before adding lightly, "Overall, the situation was a little bit more complicated, but that bit—...the investor demanded that you shouldn't be punished."

'Who is that investor?' Michael wondered, continuing to listen to Alice.

"Unfortunately, the Investor was overruled by the Grand Elders, and the other families and households investing into the academy. Some were impressed by your strength, which included the Piedra and Lavita households. They said that it wouldn't be a good idea to be lenient with you. That would only cause more trouble in the future. Instead of waiving off your punishment, your strength should be used for humanity's sake."

"After a little bit of back and forth it was ruled that you have to use your own strength to participate in the Battle Exchange, be picked as a member of the Flag War and that you have to kill one Tekur. That will give you enough military merits in the name of mankind to have made up for your 'reckless behavior' and cancel your punishment. After all, the other party picked a fight, and you merely reciprocated their actions with force."

Michael was a little confused – quite a bit actually. However, the plan didn't sound too bad. It was definitely better than losing his War Rune.

There was just one thing that bothered him.

'They're not canceling my punishment but changing it in order to see how I perform. They definitely saw the video footage and are now curious about my power.'

Chapter 294 I'm Back

"Thank your friend for helping out please," Michael said after he put the pieces together.

The investor Alice mentioned was definitely one of her friends. Maybe she just wanted to help Alice to ensure that she wouldn't be affected in any way, but her intervention helped Michael quite a bit.

"That bitch is not my friend!" Alice scoffed, which caused a smile to blossom on Michael's lips.

Michael was pretty sure that Alice and the investor were best friends if Alice cursed her openly like this. After all, nobody could really get close to Alice. She wouldn't pay attention to people she didn't like, forget about cursing them with a smile.

"I am sorry that you've been given such an annoying task. A punishment would have been a lot less dangerous than participating in the Interdimensional Flag War. I think, no... I know that I caused you lots of trouble," Alice said, subtly changing the topic, "Under ordinary circumstances, you would have been expelled at best, or you could have ended in detention for a few months if the nobles pressed on a few more charges. But because of me..."

She trailed off and only looked at the floor with a sad expression. However, Michael didn't think like Alice. It was not Alice's fault. Even if it would have been, Michael knew that he would have been involved in the schemes of more powerful organizations, families, and households sooner or later. It was better to be pulled in earlier with badly planned traps like Mr. Klein and the Zan Twins 'set up' to learn from instead of immediately ending up getting involved with the big powerhouse's dirty schemes.

He was still slightly confused about the punishment he had received, but he accepted it regardless. Maybe getting expelled from the Saphirelake Military Academy would have been a lot less dangerous

than being told to join the Interdimensional Flag War, but Michael didn't really want to be separated from the friends he got to know.

Furthermore, the Interdimensional Flag War seemed like a good opportunity to grow stronger. He was not sure about the rules applying to the Lesser Dimension Gate, but he knew that the Gate had similar restrictions as the Lord Rift in terms of strength. Thus, even though the Tekur were strong, they should definitely not be as powerful as the Red Dragon.

Of course, Michael didn't want to die in the Interdimensional Flag War, but that could be taken care of easily. That only meant Michael had to strive harder than anyone else to get back to his peak form and grow stronger until the Interdimensional Flag War, which would start in three months. Three months were half a year in the Origin Expanse, which was more than enough to make use of the resources he had obtained in the Lord Rift to increase his strength by leaps and bounds.

If he could study his Soultraits more in-depth, and upgrade them a little, his combat prowess would definitely be high enough to fight some weaker Tekur. That was something Michael was certain about. After all, he had nine Soultraits out of which six could be used in battle – seven if Taming was included.

Thinking about the Interdimensional Flag War gave Michael a goal to strive for. It allowed him to get his act together and fueled his motivation to grow stronger instead of staying idle in his territory – thinking about Danny all day.

"I am allowed to enter the Origin Expanse again, right?" Michael asked, the sparks of life shining brightly in his eyes again.

Alice didn't expect to see Michael like this. It was almost like his personality changed suddenly.

But it was a good change.

"Yes, you're allowed to enter the Origin Expanse again," She answered with a nod.

"And we'll depart to meet up with the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs in two weeks, is that right?" Michael added another question to make sure that he didn't hear it wrong earlier.

His mind was still a mess from the information he had obtained earlier, but he didn't want to overthink anything anymore. He was tired of thinking too much, which was also why he jumped into action rather than sitting idle.

"No. The Battle Exchange starts in two weeks. We'll have to depart in three days. That means you will have to reach the top of the freshman ranking as soon as possible," Alice answered with a smile, even though she didn't look that confident.

Michael's Soultraits may be powerful, but his physical condition wasn't that great right now. His body had suffered a lot while fighting Mr. Klein, and she was unsure how much more his body could endure before breaking down.

However, Michael just nodded his head. His eyes regained their former vigor, and a tinge of excitement filled him – which was a little surprising even for himself. He took a deep breath before he got up and charged out of his room.

"I will be back in three days then."

That was all Alice could hear from Michael as he rushed across the hallway, her piercing ocean-blue eyes staring at his departing figure.

She knew that Michael would have a hard time regaining his former physique in merely three days. However, Alice also knew that Michael had entered a Lord Rift a few weeks ago. It was possible that Michael made some useful gains other than the new powers he seemed to have obtained in the Lord Rift.

Alice had many questions about Michael's powers but it was hard to ask him about them – especially since the secrets of one's Soultraits were usually confidential. Most powerful Lords, including herself, wouldn't unleash their full power in front of other Lords if it was not necessary. Forget about revealing the secrets of their Soultraits, they didn't even want others to know how strong their Soultraits were. I think you should take a look at

All they revealed was their Soultrait's star rating on the day of their awakening, but that was already it.

But Michael didn't seem to be interested in keeping his Soultraits a secret. He exposed them whenever it was necessary... but that was exactly what caused all this trouble.

Alice's eyes darted to her vibrating crystal watch, and a holographic screen appeared in front of her.

"What am I supposed to do with you, Michael?" She sighed deeply, opening starnet messenger where dozens of new messages had appeared.

"I should have tried to delete the video footage. Too many people are interested in you now... Your life will definitely not be as quiet and peaceful as before...sorry..."

Silence encompassed Michael's room after Alice's words resounded. She scrolled through her past chats for a few minutes before getting up to leave as well. The concern in her eyes disappeared and was replaced by an eerily cold expression – the expression everyone was used to seeing on the Frozen Duchess' face. Alice Zenovia had a lot to do, and both concern and worry were not suitable emotions for those tasks.

Instead, being her cold and unapproachable self was much more suitable for her upcoming tasks.

She left Michael's room and promptly returned to her office where she manifested her Runic Gate.

"Let's take a look at how far the Daemons advanced," Alice murmured before she disappeared in the Runic Gate. A trace of her Soultrait's power had subconsciously leaked from her body, freezing everything in the office instantly.

While Alice had already returned to the Origin Expanse, Michael was still busy looking through the catalogs of the Bartholomew Shop. He had already used his Diamond membership to order a wide variety of high-quality herbs, concoction tools, medicinal serums, recipes, and other goods.

Most of the goods were useful to tend to his body and stimulate his body's natural healing process. Michael wanted to practice the Sacred Rectification body refinement technique from the beginning to the second stage in the next three days.

That would have been impossible if Michael hadn't reached the second stage with the Sacred Rectification body refinement technique already. His physique may not be great right now. However, his constitution was still refined to near perfection.

Re-refining his body a second time could be considered both a stimulation for his muscles and a workout – which was all he needed to regain his former physical strength within three days...alongside nutrients, origin energy, and Body Strengthening Pills.

Michael wouldn't have been confident to regain his former physique within three days without the recipe of the Body Strengthening Pill. But that changed since he had the recipe, a Master Alchemist, and the ingredients to produce several batches of the required pill.

He used most of his funds to purchase various goods in the Bartholomew Shop. Afterward, he rejected the shop manager's offer to have an afternoon tea with him and talk about the Agriculture Project.

Instead of taking a break, Michael rushed back to his room where he willed his War Rune to manifest the Runic Gate. He stepped through it and returned to the Untamed Jungle where his people were already waiting for him.

Tiara and the Forest Elves of the Adventurer team sensed through their Link of Loyalty with their Lord that Michael had returned with a newfound motivation. They could immediately tell that a different man was walking towards them as Michael reappeared in front of them.

His physique may be weak but the bright sheen in his eyes didn't belong to a weak man, that was for sure.

"I'm glad you're back," Tiara said, a vibrant smile blossoming on her lips.

"You guys did a good job handling the territory while I was ... out of it," Michael praised.

He took a deep breath of fresh air and looked high up into the canopy of ginormous trees above him.

"I'm back."

Chapter 295 Unpacking Gains

Since Michael had been in the Lord Rift for 100 hours, unconscious for a week outside the Origin Expanse, recuperating for two more weeks, and not functioning properly for an additional ten days, he had some catching up to do – quite a lot actually.

However, before he started extracting the monster corpses that had been stashed up in six different warehouses, Michael handed the recipes of the Energy Nourishing Pill, Blood Replenishment Pill, Body Strengthening Pill, and Warrior Enlightenment Potion to his Alchemists.

He provided enough ingredients to concoct a few batches of pills and potions before trusting his gardeners and the Botanic Magician with the plants, herbs, trees and various flowers he had collected in the Lord Rift. Michael was not sure how many of them could be replanted, but he was confident that his Summons were capable enough to save most of them. He trusted their capabilities!

Afterward, he handed Lilica the highly valued monster parts of more than 1000 Superior Existences. Lilica stored the body parts of the Superior Existences and rushed over to the Underground Forging Hall where the body parts would turn into high-quality armaments.

Michael also had several tons of ores that could be used to forge high-ranked Tier-2 and Tier-3 armaments. However, instead of handing them over Michael came up with a different plan with them. He had the Relic of Draka, which he handed to Tiara, who was tasked with the construction of a heat and fire-resistant room inside the wooden manor.

Even though the Relic of Draka may look more aesthetic and pleasant in the Underground Forging Hall, it would be much more secure in the wooden manor. It was a Relic, a magical smithy, capable of creating Artifact-like Armaments. Even low-grade ores could be turned into unique weapons with effects similar to a natural low-quality Tier-1 Artifact. Something like that was better secured in the center of his territory rather than the underground ecosystem. At least, he could supervise and research the Relic much better inside the wooden manor where it will be always in his sight. Michael wouldn't have to run around like a headless chicken all day.

Once the monster parts, the exotic recipes and the Relic of Draka had been handed out, Michael began to sort out his spatial pouch and the storage space of his War Rune.

He retrieved everything and asked several hundred Summons to help him out in sorting through the loot, and store everything they didn't need.

Afterward, he gave his best architects, engineers, and Enchanters a new mission; They were told to work on constructing the teleportation array.

Michael was aware that the creation of a teleportation array was not easy. It would probably require several weeks of hard work, the detailed coordinates of the destination, and various complex engravings. Michael actually didn't understand the mechanics and logic behind the teleportation array completely, but he hoped that it could be used to create a connection between the Untamed Jungle and the Sacred Desert.

The array he wished to set up was only a 'short-distance' teleportation array, but that was something Michael could achieve given the vast knowledge and information he had obtained inside the Lord Rift. One could say that the Laxarta Library was now stored in his head along with the highly advanced knowledge that was lost in the Draconia Era.

Michael had purchased a few memory crystals to store his memories about certain books inside them. Using memory crystals was much easier than allowing someone to read his mind with the reversed effect of his Mind Reader Soultrait. The idea of using memory crystals was something he came up with inside the Bartholomew Shop. He saw the crystals and the item description by chance and fell in love with it immediately.

It would take a while to sort out and store the knowledge of the Laxarta Library in the memory crystals for others to easily access and learn, but it was worth it. After all, the content of the Laxarta Library was not restricted to the history of the Draconia Era, but also its technological knowledge, unique martial art techniques that had gotten lost over the course of time, various Bestiary, Information about Artifacts, Monsters, the Origin Expanse's Will, Ancient Ruins, various races and so on.

But the memories Michael had stored in the memory crystals were mostly about the creation of teleportation arrays, how to overlap or alter them, and so on. The team responsible for the teleportation array would have to research the memory crystals for weeks, if not months before they could start experimenting. Only then would they be able to alter the short-distance teleportation array to 'possibly' connect him to the Sacred Desert.

Once he was in the Sacred Desert it was only a matter of time before he found the hidden region and both the reason Danny died, and who killed him.

Michael could also try to find out who Mr. Klein's master was, but he was pretty sure that this would be a lot more troublesome given his current strength and nonexistent influence. Searching for the truth in the Sacred Desert was bound to be much easier in comparison.

Once his Summons finished organizing his loot, they put everything in the warehouses.

"6817 Summoning Scrolls, 118,041 Summoning Scroll Fragments, 195 1-Star Tier-2 Artifacts, and 2006 rare blueprints. I should have sold the Artifacts and blueprints to buy more Summoning Scrolls," Michael thought with a grin on his face.

If he fused the Summoning Scroll Fragments to create ordinary Summoning Scrolls, Michael would have more than 10,000 Summoning Scrolls. He was pretty sure that expanding his territory's population by 10,000 would be beneficial – given the influx of Soul Power he would receive from the additional Links of Loyalty. I think you should take a look at

But he was not sure if they had enough space to house everyone. Furthermore, Michael had yet to extract thousands of monster corpses that had been stored in the large warehouses.

That was what Michael did in the next few hours while patiently waiting for his Master Alchemists. The first batch of Body Strengthening Pills should be completed soon.

"Extraction on Tier-1 Monsters reward 25 Summoning Scroll Fragments on average. They have a 60% chance of dropping an Ordinary Summoning Scroll, a 45% drop rate for blueprints, and 3% for a Tierless Artifact," The attendant next to Michael said after they returned to him with their statistics.

"What about Tier-2 Monsters?" Michael asked all while computing the statistics on his own.

"My Lord, Tier-2 Monsters have an irregular drop-rate according to their strength ranking, and rarity," The young attendant answered hurriedly, only to calm down a little after he saw Michael smiling kindly at him.

He felt stressed being Michael's attendant for today's report, especially because their Lord wanted a detailed report about today's loot and the mass summoning he would initiate later.

"But we made a rough calculation. Tier-2 Monsters are likely to drop more than 3 Summoning Scrolls with Extraction's use. More than 60 Summoning Scrolls can be extracted from every Tier-2 Monster corpse. They will also drop at least one blueprint, and the drop rate for Tier-1 Artifacts is also quite high at 3%, while Tier-2 Artifacts drop with a probability of 0.09%." The young attendant read aloud while golden streams swirled around him.

The golden streams of extraction finished dissecting the monster corpses in the sixth warehouse, and dozens of Summons picked them up to store them properly.

Small piles of Summoning Scrolls, Summoning Scroll Fragments, Artifacts and blueprints were placed all around Michael. The goods had been appraised and everything was noted down precisely to give Michael better insights about the goods in his possession.

"Adding the last batch of goods, 3842 Tier-1 Monster corpses and 891 Tier-2 Monster corpses have been looted and perfectly dissected. 158,420 Summoning Scroll Fragments, 5870 Summoning Scrolls, 2628 blueprints, 115 Tierless Artifacts, 28 Tier-1 Artifacts, and one Tier-2 Artifact have been harvested."

A trace of excitement was laced in the attendant's voice as he calculated Michael's gains. He was happy for his Lord and felt pure joy at the thought of the territory's expansion after the mass summoning. Michael smiled at the innocent young man before he made his own calculations.

"Combining the loot from the monster of the Lord Rift and the prey of my hunters I have a total of 12,687 Summoning Scrolls, 276,461 Summoning Scroll Fragments, 4634 blueprints, and a shitload of Artifacts at my disposal," Michael mumbled before he fell deep in thoughts.

If he fused the Summoning Scroll Fragments to form ordinary Summoning Scrolls he could add another ten thousand Summons to the 12,000 he was bound to summon later. However, adding more than 20,000 Summons to his territory would be too much. Michael didn't have enough treehouses, food, and other necessities in place to take in so many summons at once. Even an expansion of 12,000 ordinary Summons was a bit of a stretch given that his territory housed less than 30,000 citizens at this moment.

Fortunately, his Summons had already predicted the occurrence of such a situation given that Michael had been away for several weeks. Hence, they continued constructing treehouses and prepared everything for a mass summoning in his absence.

Michael felt truly proud when he first heard that his Summons thought so far ahead. It was as if a huge responsibility had been taken off his shoulders and he was happy to have such thoughtful subordinates.

But even they hadn't expected their population to double at once. Thus, Michael decided to turn the 270,000ish Summoning Scrolls into 27 Mythic Summoning Scrolls. One of his Summons found a stash of 5,000 Summoning Scroll Fragments in the warehouse and handed it to Michael, allowing him to fuse a 28th Mythic Summoning Scroll.

Once that was done, Michael called everyone who was currently not busy with the Summoning Gate. He retrieved all Summoning Scrolls in his possession and cleared his throat to command everyone's attention in the vicinity.

"Let's welcome the new members of our family!"

Chapter 296 Expansion I

Unleashing the origin energy inside him with a single thought, Michael engulfed the Ordinary Summoning Scrolls and broke their seals with a snap.

In the following moment, thousands of Summoning Scrolls shot into the air of their own accord. They unfolded and revolved around Michael as if he was the center of the storm before they shot toward the Summoning Gate. The Summoning Scrolls disappeared in the energy pool of the Summoning Gate, creating subtle ripples that grew stronger with every additional Summoning Scroll entering the Summoning Gate's energy pool.

Michael's heartbeat accelerated and a tinge of excitement spread through him as he awaited the arrival of his new subjects. All this while, his expression remained calm and composed – a huge contrast to his inner feelings.

Several minutes passed before the first outlines of his summons formed in the Summoning Gate. Starless Summons began to emerge from the energy pool. Michael's smile widened as he saw dozens of new summons appear at a time back-to-back for several minutes until the streams of newly summoned Starless Summons ceased.

More than ten thousand Starless Summons had emerged from the energy pool, looking around in confusion in Michael's territory. They could instinctively tell who their Lord and Master was, and that they had been reincarnated as Summons after dying inside the Origin Expanse, but that was already it.

"Greet our new friends, and explain everything to them," Michael instructed his older subjects who were standing next to him. They began to move immediately and welcomed the new Summons.

After the first Summons moved to greet their new friends, others joined as well to help their new members settle in and share the amount of work evenly.

Meanwhile, Michael waited patiently. The first star on the Summoning Gate's ring began to illuminate brightly, indicating that 1-Star Summons would now emerge from the energy pool.

Time passed slowly until the first batches of 1-Star Summons stepped onto the metal platform of the Summoning Gate. They emerged one after another until there were hundreds of them. Michael could instantly tell what most of their occupations were as subtle information about their occupation name and age appeared in his mind.

Links of Loyalty formed – thousands of them near-simultaneously. Under normal circumstances, this would have given Michael a bad headache because too many pieces of information flooded his mind. However, after reaching the second stage in the Ceasurium Menta technique, and undergoing the horror of extracting, processing, and storing the Laxarta Library's knowledge in his mind, Michael's mind had become much more efficient at digesting information, and a lot tougher.

Michael's mind quickly absorbed the incoming streams of information about his new Summons to be stored and digested properly.

'700ish 1-Star Summons and close to 12,000 Starless Summons. The ratio is pretty bad, but with the Warrior Enlightenment Potion that shouldn't be much of an issue,' Michael thought, not really minding

whether the vast majority of his territory was flooded with Starless Summons or 1-Star Summons. They were all of exceptional value to Michael!

Michael glanced at the 28 Mythic Summoning Scrolls and released his origin energy once again. Most Lords would never be able to collect as many Mythic Summoning Scrolls as Michael, but Michael couldn't be happy at this moment.

Mythic Summoning Scrolls were exceptional, but that was obvious. However, Michael also clearly recalled that last time he summoned Masked Saber, his brother, from one of those.

Even if he knew that he couldn't summon his brother anymore, what would he do if he was to summon someone he knows? What if he summoned his sister?

Summoning a deceased acquaintance was unheard of. The probability was so low that it could be neglected. And for Michael, who had a high probability of summoning Forest Elves, the chance of summoning his sister ought to be really low.

But that ignored the unpredictability of the Fang bloodline's curse.

Michael was not yet 19 years old, meaning that an entire year hadn't passed since he became a Lord. However, he had already summoned the 1st Ancestor of the Fang family, Cleave Fenrir, and his brother. Was it really that unlikely to summon another member of his family?

Michael was actually not sure about that...and that scared him much more than he thought it would.

It took him two minutes to calm his racing heart, surround the Mythic Summoning Scrolls with his origin energy, and break their golden seals. I think you should take a look at

The black scrolls unfolded slowly, revealing the intricate golden letters within. The letters inside were incomprehensible, written in a language only the Will understood. They began to glow brightly before the pulling force of the Summoning Gate's energy pool sucked them inside.

While Michael waited for the Mythic Summoning Scrolls to reward him with great Summons that possessed exceptional potential he focused on the creation of the Links of Loyalty, and how they increased the Soul Power of his Soultraits.

Summons with weak Links of Loyalty didn't increase his Soul Power by a lot, but the difference was still apparent if thousands of Links of Loyalty were formed instantaneously. Furthermore, most Summons' Links of Loyalty would strengthen quickly. Once they realized that they were treated well and that their Lord paid attention to their well-being, education, and their progress, their Links of Loyalty would quickly grow stronger, resulting in a higher reinforcement of his Soul Power.

Michael tried to look calm and cool as he waited, but the heels of his right foot gave him away as it tapped nervously on the ground. This kind of behavior was humane, and it eased the hearts of the new Summons, who had been scared due to the powerful personality and presence exuded by their Lord. They quickly realized that he was just trying to look cool and nonchalant in front of them.

A second star formed on the surface of the Summoning Gate's metal ring and the first 2-Star Summons of the second mass summoning stepped out of the energy pool.

New 2-Star Summons stepped out of the Summoning Gate one after another, each of them causing Michael's right eyebrow to continue rising a little higher.

"Half of them are Demi-Humans," Michael mumbled in surprise, "I never summoned that many Demi-Humans before."

Out of 23 2-Star Summons that stepped out of the energy pool one after another, a dozen were Demi-Humans. Out of the remaining 2-Star Summons, five were Forest Elves and only six were Human Summons. The ratio was a little messed up, but Michael quickly calmed his heart.

Most Demi-Humans had more or less useful racial traits. As long as he could make use of them, the 2-Star Demi-Humans would become valuable assets to his territory. That didn't explain why so many Demi-Humans appeared in his territory all of a sudden even though he was a human Lord with a Forest Elven Summoning Core, but it was not as if he could complain. His first subject was an Awakened from the Tigerfolk, after all.

Nothing really made sense in his territory, in the first place.

The 2-Star Summons at today's mass summoning were also quite confusing. The human Summons were a Priest, two Doctors, and three Master Chefs. Meanwhile, the Forest Elves consisted of two Enchanters and three Forest Whisperers.

A Forest Whisperer was the Forest Elven's version of a human Scout – just several times better. Michael was quite satisfied with that. Nonetheless, it was quite confusing that none of the 2-Star Human-Summons and Forest Elven Summons was a combatant. On the other hand, all dozen 2-Star Demi-Humans were fighters.

Two Demi-Humans were Wolf Berserkers, five were Frenzy Rabbit Archers and five more were Shadow Panther Assassins. The names of their occupation suggested what kind of Demi-Humans they were, and the little information he obtained from their Links of Loyalty gave him some insights about their powers and potential.

At first, Michael was a little stupefied, but a subtle smile formed on his lips soon enough. The Demi-Humans were quite powerful and talented as well!

As Michael focused on the new Summons in front of him a third star formed on the Summoning Gate's metal ring.

Michael's attention moved to the Summoning Gate when he realized that five 3-Star Summons had stepped out of the energy pool.

His eyes widened slightly as he heard a familiar screech and his head flicked to the Summoning Gate, in confusion and anticipation.

It looked like he was quite lucky today!

Chapter 297 Expansion II

Michael was positively surprised when he heard a familiar screech resounding through the periphery of the Summoning Gate.

He turned his head and smiled lightly. Today was a good day.

"A Greater Eagle?" Michael mused quietly as a green-feathered Greater Eagle appeared in his vision.

It was a little bit smaller than Icarus and its plumage had a unique sheen, which was a clear indicator of its sex. The Greater Eagle was a female.

As if Icarus realized that Michael was thinking about him, the Greater Eagle appeared above the Summoning Gate. He descended and landed in front of the smaller, green-feathered Greater Eagle and screeched much louder in response.

The smaller Greater Eagle opened its wings as wide as possible, and everybody watched them in anticipation, fearing that the two would fight. However, the smaller one lowered its head and bowed to Icarus.

Michael and the Summons in the surroundings were a little stunned at the show that unfolded in front of them, but Michael quickly realized what had just transpired.

"Since we have a male and female Greater Eagle now...we might have to create a nest for Greater Eagles in the future. Maybe, I will become the Lord of the Greater Eagles Army." He joked before moving his attention to the other 3-Star Summons that had stepped out of the Summoning Gate one after another.

There was not a single 3-Star human Summon, but that was something Michael had somewhat expected. His gut feeling told him that his summoning ratio would be weird today -- and that was definitely the case.

Instead of a human, there was a Forest Elf, a Demi-Human, another monster, and a Fae.

The Forest Elf was a 3-Star Master Enchanter, and the Demi-Human was a Mythic Engineer of the Rhinofolk.

Meanwhile, the Fae was a tiny humanlike being with a height of a few inches. It shot toward Michael and patted his head all while laughing mischievously. The Fae had delicate, ethereal features and a mischievous aura that seemed to radiate from their very being. Her body was slender and graceful, which was highlighted by the delicate wings that sprouted from her back.

Her wings resembled those of butterflies and were iridescent, reflecting light in a mesmerizing manner. She had long silver hair that bounced around as if the essence of wind wanted to play with the little Fae.

She was a Pixie, a Forest Pixie to be precise.

Michael didn't expect to summon a Pixie anytime soon. Most reports said that they were rare to summon and that some Lords didn't receive one even after their Summoning Gate was upgraded to the Intermediate rank.

Pixies exuded an aura of enchantment that affected the surroundings. They naturally attracted origin energy to themselves, which allowed Lords to create energy-rich environments in their territory. But that was not all. Their existence embodied the mysteries of the natural world, accelerating the growth of the surrounding Flora and Fauna.

As for the last 3-Star Summon he had summoned, Michael first didn't quite notice it. He could only pinpoint the Monster when the little stream of information entered his mind through the Link of Loyalty.

The Monster was even smaller than the Forest Pixie. It had a slender body and narrow waist, and distinctive black and yellow stripes marking its abdomen. These markings served as a warning to potential predators as they indicated the Monster's ability to defend itself with a potent sting. It had two pairs of wings, six legs, and a large golden stinger that gleamed dangerously.

The Monster he summoned was a 3-Star Golden Stinger Wasp!

It was tiny and didn't seem too dangerous. However, the spark of intelligence in its eyes indicated that it was not an ordinary monster and that it deserved its star rating.

"My little friend, what are you capable of?" Michael asked, only to see that Wasp pointing its stinger at him. It released a burst of energy that looked like a replication of its stinger.

Michael could have avoided the stinger but he didn't. He didn't sense any danger from it. In fact, he didn't sense anything from the energy stinger. The energy stinger hit Michael, but nothing happened afterward.

He didn't feel anything for a few seconds and narrowed his eyes while staring at his smallest summon.

Yet, just as Michael began to wonder if the Golden Stinger Wasp was a con-artist, something miraculous occurred.

Michael and the Golden Stinger Wasp switched places. Michael disappeared from his initial position, and he reappeared next to Icarus. I think you should take a look at

The next moment the Golden Stinger Wasp ascended higher into the air. It landed on a tree branch and switched positions again.

Michael landed on the branch while the Golden Stinger Wasp was next to Icarus in the blink of an eye.

παπιδαςNovel.com "Teleportation? It's more like switching places with the person it stung with the energy stinger...that's amazing!" Michael exclaimed, jumping down from the tree branch.

"Show me what else you can do!"

Michael spent the next ten minutes testing out the Golden Stinger Wasp's powers.

It could only switch places with a target it had hit with the energy stinger. Every Switch required origin energy, but the consumption was not all that high as long as the target was nearby. The energy stinger's effect would disperse after ten minutes. Thus, the Golden Stinger Wasp had to switch places within a time frame of ten minutes.

But that was perfectly fine. Ten minutes was more than enough to wreak havoc by switching places continuously.

Once he was done testing, Michael understood that the Golden Stinger Wasp was the best Summon he had obtained today – alongside the Forest Pixie, of course.

Both the Forest Pixie and the Golden Stinger Wasp had unique abilities. That didn't mean the Greater Eagle, the 3-Star Enchanter, or the Mythic Engineer were of no value. It was just that the Pixie and the Wasp had more unique traits that would come in handy to trick an opponent.

Now that all Summoning Scrolls had been used up and the Summons' information had been noted down, Michael received a detailed report from his attendant.

"My Lord, here is the report. Please take a look at the second and third page as well. The second page has a detailed report about the daily Summons that appeared while you were in the Lord Rift and recuperating from your injuries. The third page can give you a clear indicator of the territory's growth, and population. We measured the strength of the army, everyone's individual ranking, and the total population," The attendant said, bowing lightly before he added, "The information of the third page has already been updated to include today's summons."

Michael nodded his head in satisfaction. He was thankful that the attendant was meticulous in his work.

Michael went to the second page without second thoughts. He roughly knew the number of today's summoning so the second page was more intriguing.

He was in possession of three Summoning Cores that had been purified with Extraction several times, and roughly eight weeks passed in the Origin Expanse since the Lord Rift had opened. That means 168 Summons should have been summoned through the Summoning Gate's daily summons.

[List of Daily Summons since the Lord's departure to the Lord Rift.

119x 1-Star Summons: 12x Apprentice Enchanter, 9x Apprentice Blacksmith, 25x Warriors, 9x Assassins...

49x 2-Star Summons: 8x Berserkers, 5x Knights, 4x Forest Elven Sharpshooters]

Michael was not shocked about the high number of 2-Star Summons. He had already expected that many. After all, his Summoning Cores were of extremely high purity. It was only obvious that the number of stronger, skilled, and resourceful Summons increased in his daily Summons alongside the improvement of his Summoning Core's quality.

Nonetheless, it was nice to see that Extraction had been useful once again. It was a great long-term investment and increased Michael's desire to focus on collecting more Summoning Cores. Unfortunately, they were too expensive to purchase in large quantities.

It was better to purchase tens of thousands of Summoning Scrolls and train his Summons using Instructors, Warrior Enlightenment Potions, and other means to create 1-Star Warriors rather than purchasing a single Summoning Core.

One way or another, Michael was satisfied.

He moved to the last page and took a look at his territory's population, and the evaluation of his army's combat prowess.

A smile crept up Michael's face as his eyes read through the last page, and he exclaimed quietly.

"Ohooo..."

Chapter 298 Relief

Michael was very interested in the charts that had been written down on the third page. It was done meticulously, showing Michael clearly how large the territory's army was and how big the territory had grown in terms of population. That was very interesting and it kept Michael interested for quite a while as he read through the charts slowly to take in all information.

[Territory Population Chart

36031x Starless Summons[55%M/45%W] – 16,532 Lowest Tierless, 8,539 Low Tierless, 5973 Mid Tierless, 3317 Late Tierless, 1502 Peak Tier-0, 168 Lowest Tier-1

2648x 1-Star Summons(55% Tierless – 45% Tier 1)– 19x Architect, 3x Lesser Tamer, 236x Craftsmen, 127x Gardener, 119x Potter, 111x Artists, 86x Tailors, 5x Pub Owner, 3x Financial Managers, 30x Weaver, 3x Surveyors, 121x Masons, 85x Librarian, 249x Cooks, 123x Carpenters, 94x Scholars, 39x Alchemist Apprentices, 25x Enchanter Novices, 207x Blacksmith Apprentices, 20x Botanists, 415x Warriors, 203x Archers, 2x Aero Crossbowmen, 156x Spearmen, 4x Cavalry Rider, 64x Vanguard, 78x Assassins, 21x Knights in training,

133x 2-Star Summons(10% Tierless – 90% Tier-1) – 8x Doctor, 1x Architect, 5x Weaponsmith, 6x Expert Blacksmith, 3x Expert Tailors, 1x Tamer, 1x Old Librarian, 8x Expert Alchemists, 3x Merchants, 3x Master Chefs, 6x Enchanter. 2x Priest, 1x Aerial Scout(Eaglefolk), 1x Courier(Speedster Rabbitfolk), 17x Knights, 25x Berserkers, 11x Forest Walker, 2x Wolf Berserker, 5x Frenzy Rabbit Archers, 5x Shadow Panther Assassins, 14x Sharpshooter, 3x Forest Whisperer, 1x Summoner, 1x Earth Mage.

8x 3-Star Summons(New Units=Tierless – Others=Tier-1) – 1x Star Cook, 1x Master Enchanter, 1x Mythic Engineer(Rhinofolk), 1x Earth Elemental Mage, 1x Water Elemental Mage, 1x Master Alchemist, 1x Botanic Magician, 1x Tracker.

1x 4-Star Summon(Peak Tier-1) – 1x Nature Spirit

6x Awakened (100% Tier-2)– 1x Silverfang Tigerfolk, 5x Forest Elves

82x Tamed Monsters – 73x Bilrox, 1x Sun Demos(+673 Blood Oath Demon Monkeys), 4x 0-Star Horses, 1x 2-Star Heavy Armored Elephant, 1x 3-Star Golden Stinger Wasp, 2x 3-Star Greater Eagle, 1x 3-Star Forest Pixie]

At first, Michael was a little bit overwhelmed with all those numbers, but he quickly got hang of them. It was actually not that confusing.

The information provided to him was clearly separated according to the Summon's star-rating, Monsters, and Awakened. After reading through it twice Michael had successfully stored the information in his mind.

"Now...the Combat Chart. I wonder how my subordinates evaluated the military prowess of the territory," Michael mumbled, his attention moving to the second chart.

[Combat Chart

Total number of Combatants – 1714 (459x Tier-0, 1249x Tier-1, 6x Tier-2)

Size: Small-scale Army

Types of Combat Units – Vanguard, Assassination, Scouting, Melee, Rangers, Cavalry, Monkey Army, Monster Unit

Vanguard Unit: 21x Knights in Training, 64x Vanguard...

Cavalry: 4x Cavalry Riders...

...

...

Monkey Army: Tier-2 Monkey King(Sun Demos), 673x Peak Tier-1 Blood Oath Demon Monkeys.

Monsters: Heavy Armored Elephant(Mid Tier-1), Greater Eagle(Icarus – Peak Tier-1), Greater Eagle(New – Lowest Tierless), Golden Stinger Wasp(New- Lowest Tierless)]

Michael's mind rattled once he finished reading the second chart. It was very detailed but Michael couldn't stay focused on every single bit of information. So, he only paid attention to the rank of his combatants and the fact that he had only 1700ish combatants overall.

'With the Energy Nourishing Pill, the Body Strengthening Pill and the Warrior Enlightenment Potion it should be quite easy to exceed 2000 combatants and help everyone advance to the 1st Tier within a

month. In a month some of the Peak Tier-1 Combatants should be able to break through to the 2nd Tier as well. At least the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys should be able to break through to the second stage – some of them.'

Given the details about his army and population, Michael could make a rough estimation of how fast his army could expand and grow stronger quickly. An increment in physical strength alongside the advancement of their Tier through potions and pills meant that Michael could train them using specific body refinement techniques.

Focusing on certain muscle groups with specialized body refinement techniques was definitely better than turning every Summon into a bulky, physically strong powerhouse. After all, Mages didn't depend on their physical strength, while Archers relied on their agility and dexterity. Archers would actually have the biggest problems with a bulky physique.

This fact was obvious, but Michael wrote down everything nonetheless. He noted down a few things, and was more than willing to keep investing most of his fortune into his army and other subjects. After all, his subjects – especially his army – could be considered the majority of his combat prowess. Nurturing them was comparable to enhancing himself.

Using the knowledge he procured in the Laxarta Library, Michael could provide some special secret techniques, share unique tips and tricks, and help his Summons in a lot more ways than he first thought.

When Michael was done making notes about his to-do list, he was informed that the first batch of pills had been created.

Both Energy Nourishing Pills and Body Strengthening Pills had been concocted. The proficiency of the Alchemist was not perfect, by far, but Michael could tell at a glance that both pill batches were extraordinary. I think you should take a look at

The energy-rich and potent smell they exuded naturally was several times stronger than the faint scent of ordinary energy pills.

The Energy Nourishing pill was white, and it had a clear, polished surface. It looked like a piece of marble that had been ground and polished for several hours. The pill in Michael's hand exuded a chill that contained a tremendous amount of energy.

'I should purchase some boxes with perfect Seal enchantments.' Michael thought, looking at the Energy Nourishing Pill slowly losing its energy as it seeped out of the pill. It didn't release too much energy at a time, but it would only take a few days before the Energy Nourishing Pill' would lose its exceptional potency and effects.

Michael's attention moved to the steamy red pill. It was the Body Strengthening Pill that exuded searing heat. Just looking at the pill was enough to tell that its potency was high enough to cause some discomfort once consumed and digested.

But instead of shying away from the incoming discomfort of the searing heat, Michael headed to the training ground where he consumed one white and one red pill. The pills disappeared in his mouth and Michael swallowed the next moment.

Near instantaneously after the digestion of the pills started in his stomach, Michael could sense a frosty aura and a heatwave spread through his body.

The frosty aura spread throughout his body, reaching every single nerve. The frosty aura even spread across his skin, yet it never left his body. It stayed inside him and continued to spread in waves as layer after layer of the Energy Nourishing Pill was removed through his rapid digestion. The amount of energy released inside his body increased with every wave, filling Michael's body to the brim.

'So much energy!' Michael exclaimed while trying to endure the heat waves that spread through his bones, veins, and muscles before seeping inside the marrow.

Michael was not even sure what was happening to him while the Body Strengthening Pill's potency affected his entire body. It felt like every cell in his body began to itch and heat up – increasing with intensity with every additional heatwave the Body Strengthening Pill released.

The discomfort of the searing heat waves was considerable and quite hard to endure for ordinary people. However, the frosty aura that permeated every inch of his body cooled down the heat spreading through him, while also drastically reducing the itching all over his body.

It was almost like the effect of the Body Strengthening Pill and the Energy Nourishing Pill complemented each other. Michael was not sure if their effects would weaken upon clashing, but that was something he could find out later.

For now, Michael could think clearly without being too affected by the frosty aura, the heatwaves, and itching. This made it much easier for him to change his stance and start practicing Sacred Rectification.

Sacred Rectification was a body refinement technique that required a tremendous amount of nutrients and origin energy to stimulate the energy veins, muscles, flesh, and so on to precisely refine flawed bodies into the epitome of perfection. At least, that was what the description of the technique said.

Michael was pretty sure that there was no way the technique could create a perfect physique. Nonetheless, Sacred Rectification stimulated his body to grow faster and use the hoarded nutrients and energy to strengthen his physique while refining his body.

Since Michael had already refined his body to the second stage of the Sacred Rectification technique, all the body refinement technique did was use the energy and nutrients inside his body to regain his former physique.

Michael quickly noticed that the itchiness and heat all over his body intensified as he practiced Sacred Rectification. Strengthening his physique felt like insects crawling all over his muscles and flesh under normal circumstances. However, the effect was amplified manyfold due to the Body Strengthening Pill's miraculous effect and high potency.

Time passed slowly and it was already dusk by the time Michael stopped. Several hours had passed without him realizing and a thin smile formed on his sweat-drenched face.

He was exhausted beyond measure and sore all over his body. But even then, Michael felt alive. It was a good feeling, something he wished to feel more often from now on.

Being alive was great.

Life may be filled with horrors and many bad memories, but Michael was the type of person, who recalled good memories more easily than bad memories. Slumping to the ground exhausted, Michael

recalled the times he had been working out with his brother when he was not yet an Awakened. Afterward, he always worked out alone, or with Kaleb and Frederik after forcing them to join the Limit Breaker Course alongside him.

His friendship with them had a rocky start, but they slowly grew closer to each other. Even the Barbaric Couple's nasty personality improved over time. Beating them up a few times was enough to punch some sense into them.

Thinking about the others and everyone's tireless efforts to grow stronger, Michael knew that it had been a good decision to join the Sapphirelake Military Academy.

He might have been pulled into some nasty schemes, but that was something that would have happened to him sooner or later. The timing was messed up, but Michael learned a lot from it. This time, Michael also learned that he had many people to rely on and that he was not all by himself.

The Barbaric Couple had recorded the battle. Their records were edited and released on Starnet even though Alice tried her best to take their original video file away. The Barbaric Couple edited the video to clearly show that Michael had been bullied and that he was innocent, gaining the public's pity, and sympathy.

Michael didn't want the public's pity, but he could tell that the Barbaric Couple had meant well. It was a means to protect Michael from losing his War Rune – which was one of the worst possible punishments an Awakened could obtain.

For most Awakened even death would be better than losing their War Rune. It was their only means to become superhuman existences with high status wherever they went. Being an Awakened, whether it was being an Adventurer or a Lord, meant that one's status exceeded more than 90% of mankind.

Losing your status and accumulated power obtained from the War Rune was likely to drive most Ex-Awakened to insanity. The thirst for power and the feeling of a great loss would kill them after they suffered for weeks, months if not years.

Michael heard some stories about criminal Awakened – people who had betrayed mankind to plead loyalty to other races in exchange for power and great wealth. Some of them had been caught and stripped of their War Rune after their interrogation revealed the dirty secrets of the criminal members

of the traitor organizations that had been created to tarnish mankind's reputation, and the relationship between the human race, the Berserkers and the Warlock Centaurs.

All Michael could say was that the videos he had seen were horrifying. They were a clear example of what would happen to traitors of the human race. Their War Rune would be removed, and they would be driven to insanity.

Chapter 299 Energy

Zeke Lavita and Lincoln Piedra were a little bit different from the Barbaric Couple.

They had responsibilities as the descendants of High Nobles, and couldn't favor a noname like Michael. Their actions were thoroughly eyed by their families and the informants of other households, after all.

Michael was a little confused because the Lavita and Piedra household inferred in his punishment. He wondered if they talked to their family about him to extend a helping hand. Alice said that the Piedra and Lavita households had interfered in his punishment. They decided to propose that he would have to join the Interdimensional Flag War to gain merits for mankind's sake.

While that may sound like they tried to push him closer to death, Michael felt that it was easier to compare their tactics as a means to please all sides – including their curiosity revolving around Michael.

Michael was not too sure what to think of the Greater Nobles yet, especially Lincoln and Zeke's families, but he was happy to have them around.

They were strong and interesting people. Last but not least there were Kaleb and Alice Zenovia. They gave their best to help him, even if it could have harmed their family's reputation. That was something Michael didn't take lightly.

Their actions were also part of the reason he was able to get back to his senses that quickly. He regained his motivation to grow stronger, to fight alongside his friends, and regain the clarity he had lost for a few weeks. His sorrow and anguish caused him to lose sight of what was important, and the things he should pay attention to.

He even ended up neglecting his territory for several weeks, not just his body.

Daniel would have been disappointed in him if he had known about all of that.

Regaining the clarity and motivation he had lost for a while, Michael found himself back at the starting line with renewed vigor.

Lying on the ground, Michael smiled lightly. He stared blankly at the thick canopy of the old towering jungle trees and chuckled foolishly.

"To think that I would end up like this. Who would have thought that my life would be...so messed up?" Michael mused to himself.

His mind was a little bit messy after he exhausted himself physically to the limit. His body required more nutrients and origin energy, but Michael didn't move. Instead, he kept his pores open to absorb the dense origin energy in his surroundings naturally. He retrieved a few slabs of meat that had been grilled this afternoon and began to eat it all while continuing to lie on the ground.

Even though he ought to be stressed because of the Battle Exchange, and the Interdimensional Flag War, Michael didn't feel an ounce of pressure weighing down on his body.

On the contrary, he felt oddly liberated and free for the first time in what felt like an eternity. Michael couldn't really explain the feeling, and he felt a little bit guilty to feel like this after his brother died, but he was content with himself.

He had made some great friends for the first time in forever, and his territory developed rapidly.

His army would expand rapidly and the Starless Summons who had been training with various weapons in their free time would finally obtain the chance they had been eagerly anticipating for the last few weeks. Using the Warrior Enlightenment Potion they would obtain an opportunity to attain enlightenment and become a 1-Star Warrior. That was something they never expected, but it was an opportunity to grow stronger and become more useful.

It was an opportunity for those who felt worthless to attain value and some sense of worth, whether it was for themselves or in the eyes of others.

"Maybe we can mass produce the Energy Nourishing Pills and Body Strengthening Pills soon. Once we can do that even my small-scale army will turn into a place full of ferocious monsters. Dealing with the Jungle Expedition will be a walk in the park," Michael mumbled to himself, still smiling lightly.

He guessed that the Energy Nourishing Pill was more than ten times more effective than ordinary energy pills. That was quite exceptional. As for the Body Strengthening Pill, it was just as effective as the Energy Nourishing Pill. Even though Michael never used a different type of Body Strengthening Pill so he had nothing to compare it to, he could tell that it was even more valuable.

After all, Body Strengthening Pills were extremely rare in the market. Not only was it hard to find recipes for ordinary Body Strengthening Pills, but they were also quite hard to make. The ingredients were valuable due to their effects and rarity, and they were hard to process – increasing their value even more.

Planting the ingredients and rare herbs his Alchemists required to concoct all potions and pills would definitely help Michael to decrease the costs required to strengthen his territory and army. They were basically free since Michael had already collected the saplings and seeds for most ingredients – all thanks to the Lord Rift.

Nonetheless, there were still many resources Michael had yet to procure. He wanted to take the development of his territory to the next step and focus on mass-producing the new potions and pills. After all, the stronger his army the less likely would they have issues once the Zentika Empire made their next move against the Untamed Jungle – and Michael.

"If that's how potent the Energy Nourishing Pill and the Body Strengthening Pill are despite being concocted with low proficiency, I wonder how much stronger the effect of the pills will be once the Alchemist's proficiency increases," Michael mumbled, looking down at himself with a tinge of surprise and excitement.

Given the potent effect of the Body Strengthening Pill and the massive amount contained in the Energy Nourishing Pill, Michael was certain that he could recuperate from his weakened physical state in two days. As long as he supplemented his body with enough nutrients other than origin energy and the miraculous Body Strengthening Pill, Michael might as well end up refining his body to a higher degree than before.

He might actually have enough time to practice the Ceasurium Menta mind-refining technique as well. The Energy Nourishing Pill contained more than enough energy to allow him to practice Ceasurium Menta for a few hours without having to take a break!

Nonetheless, the Energy Nourishing Pills were better off being used by other people. Michael could only use them efficiently to refine his body or mind. Refining his War Rune solely by using Energy Nourishing Pill would be too expensive and ineffective. After all, his War Rune required a lot more origin energy to properly improve his refinement degree than most other Awakened.

The reason he required more origin energy than most other Awakened was pretty simple as well; The star rating of a Soultrait, and the number of Soultraits fused with the War Rune determined the amount of origin energy required to refine your War Rune!

Not many knew about this fact because most Awakened were only in possession of a single Soultrait with less than five stars, but Michael had noticed this quite a while ago.

After fusing more Soultraits with his War Rune, Michael first experienced a drastic decrease in his War Rune's refinement degree. But he didn't think too much about it at first. Michael simply thought that fusing with a new Soultrait required a considerable amount of origin energy. While there was a bit of truth in it, it was not the whole truth.

The whole truth was that Michael's War Rune refinement degree had stagnated for quite a while after the warfare with the Jungle Expedition, especially with Extraction being upgraded to a 6-Star Soultrait.

Being in possession of several Soultraits with four or more stars meant that his War Rune required several times more energy to be properly refined. His Soultraits grew stronger alongside his War Rune's improvements. They were one and the same.

Thus, while Michael received numerous advantages in possessing more Soultraits than most could fathom, the biggest downside was that he required more origin energy to refine his Tier-2 War Rune from Lowest to Low than some Awakened would need to refine their War Rune from Tier-2 to Tier-3.

Of course, that was only a rough guess he made and not something he could prove yet, but the speed at which his War Rune was refined spoke volumes about the truth behind his theory – even if the exact amount of energy required to increase his rank had yet to be determined.

For most Awakened with high-ranked Soultraits such as Lincoln, Zeke, and Kaleb the increased requirement of origin energy could be solved by investing a vast fortune in supplements such as high-quality potions and pills like the Energy Nourishing Pill. However, Michael didn't have the support of a Supreme Family, or Great Nobles.

He would rather invest his fortune into his subjects to expand his military force. More Combatants meant that more monsters could be hunted, and more hunted monsters meant that Michael would receive more energy shares.

Despite that, Michael knew for a fact that he would require much more time than others to refine his War Rune and upgrade it to the next Tier. But that was not a problem. After all, his Soultraits were perfect for combat, allowing him to overwhelm enemies at a higher rank than himself without much difficulty.

Using the Energy Nourishing Pills and the Body Strengthening Pills, Michael could refine his mind and body to the peak while relying on energy shares to refine his War Rune simultaneously.

Even if it would take a while to advance to the next Tier, it was not as if Michael made a loss. On the contrary, his power would only increase exponentially with the passing of time, and the increase of his rank!

Chapter 300 Cobweb

After he spent a while lying in the middle of the training ground, Michael got up and went back to his room. He washed up and fell asleep on his bed – or he tried to. Too many thoughts flashed through his mind, disrupting him whenever he was about to fall asleep.

Michael had five days left in the Origin Expanse before the spaceship would leave the Sapphirelake Military Academy to bring the participants of the Battle Exchange to the meeting place. That meant Michael had at least three more days before he would have to start challenging the freshman ranking.

At first, he didn't think that this would be enough time to recuperate from his weakened state, but now that he tested the efficiency of the Body Strengthening Pill and the Energy Nourishing Pill his opinion

changed. Right now, Michael was certain that he had more than enough time to recuperate with some additional free-time which he could use to focus on his territory's development.

Michael fell asleep at some point. He woke up with the first rays of sunlight shining through the canopy of the gigantic jungle trees, and got up, feeling greatly motivated.

He consumed a Body Strengthening Pill and an Energy Nourishing Pill and began practicing Sacred Rectification. His workout lasted no more than two hours, but the results were astounding. Michael was lying on the ground in a small puddle of his sweat, taking in the ambient origin energy in the surroundings.

He rested for a few minutes before he got up once again.

'After lunch, I should be fit enough for a second session. In the evening I'll have a third session, and six more sessions tomorrow and the day after. That is definitely more than enough to fix my physique,' Michael concluded with a simple nod.

He was so lost in thoughts that he noticed too late that his stomach was protesting. He was starving and in dire need of more nutrition. But he was drenched in sweat and his clothes were soiled.

Thus he forced himself to move, ignoring the discomfort that spread through his entire sore body, and went to the bathroom. Once he was done washing up he left the wooden manor and went to the open mess that had been built near the training ground.

The Untamed Jungle's middle area didn't have many spots with little to no plants. There was no clearing as it had been in the outer ring. That was a little unfortunate, but it was not a big problem. Michael and his subordinates had long since cleared most bushes and other obstacles before building structures around the humongous tree trunks.

To be precise, Michael and the others made use of the tree trunks to fortify most constructions. That way, the tree trunks were not considered annoying obstacles but part of the buildings that could be seen everywhere.

Michael knew that he had a lot of work to do by removing the trees that obstructed others from growing, but it was also quite obvious that Michael's Extraction worked wonders on the inner area of his territory. Michael's Extraction had removed everything that was not supposed to be inside his territory a long time ago, ensuring that the jungle trees they used were healthy and the most durable.

'Since we're going to expand the territory, I should focus on removing more of these obstructing trees adjacent to the outermost treehouses. The more combatants receive space to move freely, the better the hunting results. That means more Summoning Scrolls and more Summons.'

Michael noted another task in his mental to-do list as he sat down on a wooden table balancing several plates in his hands. Once he started devouring the delicious food in front of him, Michael's mind began to rattle once again. He began to think about what he wanted to do once he returned from the Lord Rift and thought of a way to sort them based on priority. Unfortunately, the situation had been unfavorable after he returned from the Lord Rift. That means Michael had a lot of unfinished work.

'Good thing that the trip to the meeting point of the Battle Exchange will take a few days. That gives me enough time to make up for the tasks I've missed in the last few weeks.'

Once he was done with the first serving, Michael returned to the cooks thrice to refill his plates. Even Michael was a little bit surprised about how hungry he was, but he also noticed that the nutrition entering his stomach was quickly used up to nourish his starving cells.

Practicing Sacred Rectification twice while using the Body Strengthening Pill and the Energy Nourishing Pill as stimulants and means to accelerate his practice left his body craving for more food and nutrition, no matter how much he ate.

Michael listened to his body and filled his stomach to the brim. After that, he took a stroll around the territory to take in the changes that had occurred to his territory.

The daily reports he received were nice and brief, but they didn't give him a clear picture of his territory. There was still a big difference between staring at a document and observing everything on his own.

The outlines of his territory were pretty simple, following the structure of a giant cobweb. The center was a bustling place where the Wooden Manor, the Summoning Gate, and the main warehouse were located. Other than that, most of the space was used to create meeting places for the citizens. There

was a huge pub, a playground, and several other structures leading to the canopy bridges that connected the center with every part of the territory.

The canopy bridges could be compared to the silky threads of a cobweb. The main canopy bridges were constructed in straight lines spanning a distance of several kilometers. The center was connected to a total of 16 main canopy bridges that had been distributed equally in all directions. The main canopy bridges were connected through side-alley canopy bridges, creating a circular pattern that resembled a giant, functioning cobweb.

The side-alley canopy bridges oftentimes moved upward and downward, connecting to other canopy bridges that led straight to the treehouse complexes, and high treehouses that could be found everywhere in Michael's territory. The density of the high treehouses and treehouse complexes was a little higher near the center of the territory, but it decreased considerably as one moved farther from the center of the territory.

'Slightly more than 2,000 High Treehouses and 6500ish treehouse complexes. To think that we've come that far.' Michael mused to himself as he paced through his territory. I think you should take a look at

He looked up to see the base of many treehouses and found it hard to believe that they had built so many huge treehouses. Contrary to most territories, Michael focused on providing enough living space for his people. He tried to give them lots of space high up in the trees to ensure that his subjects wouldn't be too far away from the center of the territory. After all, it would be quite problematic if his territory spanned tens of kilometers with less than 2000 members of the military protecting everything and everyone.

Thus the ground was used for farmlands, gardens, Enchanter's lairs, alchemy houses, warehouses, schools, wells, libraries, training grounds, barracks, monster ranches, medical houses, and much more while everything above the ground belonged to the citizens; their homes to be precise.

Living high up in the air was something new for most humans, but they adjusted to the changes quite easily. There were more than enough ways to climb down, whether it was by using the canopy bridges to find their way to their destination, or by using the ladders that were included in the construction of every treehouse.

Michael didn't really realize how huge his territory had grown. The written reports only gave him detailed numbers, but realization dawned upon him only now that he saw it himself. He could see some of his subjects wherever he went. Most had just woken up, but there were some Starless Summons who

were training further away from the training grounds, using heavy wooden sticks as replacements for proper swords and spears.

His subjects greeted him overly politely whenever they took note of him. They were shocked to see their Lord taking a stroll so far away from the center of his territory. This gave Michael a lot to think about.

He chose to approach the Starless Summons, who were training so far from the training grounds, handed them dulled training weapons, and smiled lightly at them.

"You're allowed to use the training ground to train. In fact, everyone is allowed to do so, even if you're not an official Warrior. Your star rating doesn't matter," Michael said, looking gently at the young man in front of him as he added, "You can also inform your friends that everyone is allowed to use the training ground. In fact, I will ensure that the most hard-working people will obtain a chance of becoming Warriors."

Michael hadn't been sure how to tell his subjects about the Warrior Enlightenment Potion without causing a war between his subjects. But that changed upon seeing a bunch of Starless Summons training outside the training grounds. Not even the reports stated that so many Starless Summons were training in their free time – that too at the crack of dawn.

They would workout in the hope to attain enlightenment before leaving their home for work.

Thus, Michael chose to allow everyone to train at the training ground where the most promising and hard-working Starless Summons could be recorded.

'If we create a file about the people who work the hardest we can reward them once they cross a certain threshold...for example, if the attendants noticed their hard work and effort to grow stronger several times - let's say five or ten times - they'll obtain a Warrior Enlightenment Potion.'

Michael felt that this was a good idea to ensure that his Starless Summons would work even harder. It was a clear indicator that showed Michael favored the hard-working, and that he wasn't stingy in rewarding everyone who worked tirelessly to grow stronger – and be more useful to the territory and their Lord!

Satisfied with himself, Michael switched his attention to another problem; food and water supply.

The Water Elemental Mage had been quite useful in filling the water barrels and searching for sources of water underground, but it was quite obvious that this was not a long-term solution. The sources of underground water weren't huge near their territory, and the population was expanding rapidly.

Close to 40,000 people had to receive enough water and food to not only survive but to live properly. If Michael wanted to ensure that their Links of Loyalty grew firmer and that his subjects lived a good life without any issues, he had to think of a better solution than the few wells they had dug out so far.

For now, the wells would be good enough especially with the Water Elemental Mage searching for more water sources, but that was not a permanent solution.

As for food, Michael knew that they had more than enough meat stored in their warehouses. Nonetheless, eating meat all day was not exactly a healthy diet either.

"Seems like I'll have to turn a part of the territory into proper farmlands, rather than using every bit of ground to plant more ingredients for the potions, and pills," Michael mumbled softly.

"It's time to become a farmer, I guess!"