

Supreme Lord 301

Chapter 301 Goals

Other than proper farmlands with enhanced vegetables that contained traces of origin energy, Michael made mental notes about a few more things they required to become fully independent.

Right now, the territory didn't rely on imported goods for food, water, or other resources other than the Agriculture-type blueprints, but he felt that this would change in the future if he didn't adapt to the developmental changes of his territory a little bit.

Altering the development path a little should negate his worries about the future entirely.

"Proper defensive mechanisms other than traps would be quite helpful as well. An Orb of Hostility of a higher grade shouldn't be neglected either," Michael mumbled as he returned from his long stroll.

He met up with Tiara, the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team, Blaire, and the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King, Sun Demos, to discuss a few key points. They had to speak about the development of the territory, news about the surrounding area, new information related to the Zentika Empire, and so on.

Sun Demos could only converse with Michael properly because the Taming Soultrait created a channel between them. Their thoughts reached the other party telepathically, which made it easier to comprehend what Sun Demos intended to convey.

The Monkey King pinpointed various locations with rare herbs, small caves, and hunting targets. Sun Demos even pointed out potential taming targets, which was something that interested Michael quite a bit. Michael had yet to tame a second monster using his 5-Star Taming Soultrait.

He was not entirely sure how many more monsters he could tame, but by taking into consideration how much of Taming's space Sun Demos took, Michael could make a rough guess.

"I can probably tame two more Superior Existences at the 2nd Tier at my rank," Michael mumbled, though unsure what kind of monster he should tame.

Would it be better to focus on taming more monster leaders, or was he better off taming Superior Existences with exceptional potential at this point? Sun Demos' talent was not bad, but he doubted that the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys could reach the 3rd Tier. Only Sun Demos might be talented enough to barely cross to the 3rd Tier somewhen.

"You're not in a rush to use up Taming's space, so how about you use it once you think that you found a suitable target?" Lilica suggested with a thin smile on her lips.

"I think Lilica is right. We should also focus more on the farmlands and the defenses of the territory. Most monsters avoid our territory because we're hunting them down one after another, but it's only a matter of time before the Rulers of the middle area will be fed up with us. The Forest Pixie, the Nature Spirit and the highly potent effect of the Untamed Jungle's environment will solve the food issue rather quickly, but our weak defenses won't strengthen themselves that quickly. It will require lots of time, effort, and countless hands of support to create a fortress-like defense strong enough to block the attacks of the middle area's Rulers," Liopham said seriously.

Liopham didn't want to think about encountering one of the Rulers, but given that Michael's territory expanded much faster than most territories, they were bound to face trouble soon enough.

Michael's territory expanded rapidly. He summoned numerous Starless Summons and even talented 2-Star Summons. However, the number of his combatants was way too low.

Michael's army was barely 5% of his population. That may sound like a lot at first glance, but his soldiers were not strong enough.

"We have to find a river as well. The Forest Whisperers said that they traced something but they're not sure if the energy particles were from a Monster with a water elemental ability, or if the traces of water-attributed energy come from a river," Opars Zelk presented another issue.

He noticed that Michael and the others looked at him with intrigue, which forced him to add, "We will know more in a few days. The Forest Whisperers are still new to this territory, so they're slowly combing through the Untamed Jungle rather than rushing and making mistakes."

When Blaire heard 'mistakes', she felt that Tiara's gaze flicked to her. Blaire tried to ignore her stare but that was easier said than done. She knew very well that she made a mistake in the past, a grave mistake at that, but she tried her best to become better. She imparted many Starless Summons with the knowledge of becoming a skilled Tracker to create a vast intelligence system that spread across the Untamed Jungle's outer ring.

That way, they procured various pieces of information about the changes occurring at the border of the Zentika Empire and the changes in the Untamed Jungle's outer ring. The latter may not seem like anything special, but the opposite was the case. Apparently, dozens of monster groups had returned to the outer ring after it had been utterly destroyed by the Chaos Pills, and they had already begun to work on restoring their numbers.

Her intelligence system helped collect information that would certainly be helpful in the future.

Michael took note of everything the others had to say. Most of their comments were of similar nature to the issues he found by strolling through his territory for a few hours. Interestingly enough, most of these issues already had a pretty good answer. Tiara, the Forest Elves, and even Blaire pointed out a few things while also proposing ways to solve them without too many issues.

Their proposals were meticulous and it was obvious that they had given the issues a lot of thought before coming up with their ideas.

That was also why Michael merely had to add a few more points before their proposals could turn into proper plans. His pointers came mostly from the knowledge he had procured from Alice's individual teaching and the Laxarta Library. Combining the masterpieces and works of the Draconia Era with the tips and tricks used by modern Lords such as Alice, Michael could widen his subordinates' horizon.

Michael's pointers sounded grotesque and weird when the Forest Elves heard them the first time, but Tiara was overjoyed and excited. Blaire and the other subjects present at the meeting were also positively surprised. They began to see Michael in a different light. He was not only a powerful Lord, who was kind and forthcoming, but he was also meticulous and sly.

The Forest Elves realized that as well after they took notes of the finalized plans that came into existence once Michael tweaked their proposals. The changes didn't seem like a lot, but they increased the overall efficiency of the plans to a significant degree.

It was already late afternoon when they finished their meeting. Sun Demos returned to his small lair where the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys were waiting, while Michael and the others split up. I think you should take a look at

Tiara stayed with Michael. They sparred a little for Michael to see how much his physique had improved after two Sacred Rectification sessions. He then practiced Sacred Rectification a third time, washed up, and went to eat a late lunch with Tiara.

Talking with Tiara in detail had become a routine after she was finally granted permission to talk more about her family, the Silverfang Tigerfolk, and her past. Michael was still not sure why the Will would suddenly remove some of Tiara's restrictions, but it was a good thing.

Tiara felt much better being able to talk about her family and the Silverfangs, and Michael found comfort in listening to her and sharing his own doubts and worries.

By the time he finished his workout it was already early evening. However, Michael was not yet tired enough to go to sleep. Hence, he and Tiara walked to the outskirts of the territory to start working on the surrounding area. Precisely, Michael used Extraction to remove huge trees that obstructed the growth of several other trees, and bushes, whose roots had spread way too far, restricting the growth of other saplings that had yet to be planted.

With 6-Star Extraction and the means to extract the origin energy out of the surroundings, Michael could work for a few hours before his mind would grow tired. His head began to ache, giving him a clear warning that things were going to get worse if he continued.

Thus Michael looked at the countless trees that had been properly extracted and separated into even parts and decided that he had done enough for tonight. His subordinates had more than enough materials to build a few hundred treehouse complexes with his work of a few hours. That would keep his subordinates busy for a while.

"I am not sure if I should say that, but I was a little bit worried about you in the past, Master," Tiara said as they returned to the Wooden Manor.

Her voice was soft and quiet, barely audible to Michael who was walking next to her. Michael turned to Tiara, who didn't even dare to lift her gaze.

"You know...you can do whatever you want. You are our Lord, and we will obey you no matter what you command us...even if that means you want to wreak havoc and turn the entire Untamed Jungle upside down...or the Sacred Desert..." Tiara said hesitatingly. She kept staring at the ground before adding, "Of course, we would also accept a calm and composed life. It's fine if you don't desire power. Not everyone is thirsty for power."

Michael felt a little bit weird listening to Tiara right now.

What did he desire? Was it power?

Of course, Michael liked the feeling of growing stronger. He loved being able to overpower those who thought lightly of him and to use his power to protect his territory. It was also great to grow stronger alongside Kaleb and the rest.

Did that mean he desired power? Probably.

However, the reason was not because of power itself, but because of the things he could do by being powerful.

"Actually, I think I already know what I want to do..." Michael mumbled mostly to himself rather than Tiara, who lifted her head to look at him.

There was a lot Michael wanted to do and achieve.

One of the dreams he and Danny had was to find out more about the Fenrir family. They wanted to find out who their ancestor had been to enrage so many Divine Lifeforms, and how their entire bloodline ended up getting cursed.

To achieve that they would have to find out more about the Will of the Origin Expanse, and how it worked. Michael and Daniel didn't even know what or who the Will actually was. Everyone only knew that it was omnipotent and that it ruled over the Origin Expanse – or so most said without any hard evidence.

But one thing was quite obvious to Michael. The Will's decisions and actions were weird. Sometimes, Michael felt that the Will wanted to give him a helping hand while doing the exact opposite during other times. The latter happened most of the time, pushing him into hell by throwing obstacles and enemies his way.

It felt like the Will had a personal grudge against the Fenrirs – that it paid most attention to them rather than others. That didn't make any sense.

Other than fulfilling one of his brother's dreams, Michael wanted to raid the Temple of the Forgotten as well. His adventurous spirit had awakened when he found the Temple of the Forgotten, and he wanted to know more about it.

Raiding the Temple of the Forgotten had to be postponed for quite a while, and Michael was not actually sure when he could start the conquest, but he was eagerly working toward this goal.

But there was one thing he wanted even more than anything else.

Michael wanted to know more about his brother's death and avenge him -- even if that meant he had to go against his own kind.

Nobody was allowed to touch his beloved and escaped unscathed!

Chapter 302 Colosseum

Michael left the Origin Expanse a few days later with his physique fully restored.

After returning to the Sapphirelake Military Academy, Michael first walked over to the Bartholomew Shop where he handed his shopping list to the staff. He then entered the appraisal room with another attendant while the staff began to get the goods written in the list.

'I hope they find everything,' He thought while retrieving all Artifacts that had been starting to collect dust in his War Rune's storage space.

Following the Artifacts, Michael also retrieved the blueprints he didn't need since they were duplicates.

"I hope you can give me a good price for everything," Michael said to the attendant, whose eyes widened in surprise.

The attendant took a while to regain his senses. He then called the shop manager to proceed with the purchase of the Artifacts and blueprints since he was not authorized to make such a big deal on his own.

Meanwhile, Michael sat down on a chair and opened starnet messenger. Unfortunately, his good mood was ruined by a particular chat on starnet messenger. It was his parents' chat where a few new messages were waiting to be read.

But Michael didn't even think of opening his parents' chat. He snorted and closed starnet messenger. Now that Danny died they wanted to be back in his life? Sorry, but the train of redemption departed a long time ago!

His mood worsened the more he thought about their parents. That was something the shop manager noticed the moment he arrived in the appraisal room. Swallowing his saliva when he perceived the ripples in the air Michael's presence caused, the shop owner hurried to his attendant.

For the next ten minutes, nobody uttered a word. The shop owner and the attendant appraised the goods as fast as they could before they calculated the price for every Artifact and blueprint using the Diamond Membership's quota. Michael was satisfied with the money he was about to receive.

Unfortunately, most of it would be used up to pay for the items he was about to purchase. This robbed him of the joy of earning a fortune near instantaneously.

In less than half an hour, Michael earned more than a billion dollars, only to use up everything the next moment. Michael had entered the Bartholomew Shop without any money and he left the shop with empty pockets as well.

'In the past, I would have considered one billion a huge sum. Now...it's still a lot, but I have huge expenses to fortify my territory.' Michael mused to himself, a faint smile on his lips.

He felt much better after leaving his parents' chat unread. His focus switched to the dozens of memory crystals he had purchased to store his memories about the Laxarta Library inside. The memory crystals, followed by more than a dozen body refinement techniques that had been specialized for Summons of particular Classes such as Archers, Assassins, Berserkers, Knights, and so on, required most of his money.

However, Michael was not too bothered about the money he had to pay. If he didn't use the money he had earned through hard work, why would he even try so hard to earn money, in the first place? He knew that combining the specialized body refinement techniques with Pandemonium's Requiem, and the newly procured pills would provide great results. His territory and people would surely benefit from his purchase!

Michael entered the Origin Expanse for five minutes to hand the specialized body refinement techniques to the Librarians and Scholars to duplicate them for his Summons before he left the Origin Expanse once again. He then moved to the Ranking Arena, which was also known as the Colosseum.

It was a huge amphitheater made of stone. The Colosseum was oval with rows of arches and seats surrounding the arena. Michael strode slowly through the entrance, only to freeze in his tracks when he realized just how big the colosseum truly was.

There were a total of ten arenas surrounded by tens of rows of seats that could house more than 200,000 spectators. But that was not all.

Michael was also stupefied by the massive enchantments that created an intricate design all over the Colosseum's surface. The overlapping enchantments were complex, and they seemed to change into different shapes, depicting various images that told stories of the Colosseum's history.

'Is that a Relic of the Origin Expanse?' Michael couldn't help but think.

The Colosseum felt extremely old. The interior of the Colosseum felt ancient and reminded him of some forgotten era, similar to the presence of the Temple of the Forgotten.

Michael spent a few seconds gathering his thoughts and observing his surroundings before his attention moved to the two billboards that levitated high up in the air. The billboards were at a height of

approximately 20 meters above the Colosseum's center and were rotating slowly, showing everyone the rankings up to top 100.

Michael focused on the freshman ranking, where he found Kaleb Zenovia, Lincoln Piedra, and Zeke Lavita amongst the 12 Stars.

'None of them is the freshman's Sun? Interesting.'

His attention lingered on the freshman ranking for quite a while. Only after the noises of a commotion reached him did Michael finally divert his attention.

"William Black challenged Quinn Karta!!" Someone squealed near Michael.

"The Sun has been challenged at last," Another voice reached his ears.

Michael's eyes moved back to the ranking board where he saw Quinn Karta's name framed in golden letters and the Symbol of the Sun etched right next to his name. Quinn Karta was the sun of the freshman year!

On the other hand, William Black was ranked the 10th Star on the ranking board. I think you should take a look at

The Black household belonged to the nobility. They were only minor nobles, but that didn't mean William Black could be underestimated. His Soultrait was much stronger than the Soultraits his family awakened in the last few centuries. He was the hope and future of the Black household and received the vast majority of the Black household's income in the form of investments.

Michael could faintly recall Kaleb speaking about William Black. Kaleb had been challenging the ranking board for quite a while now, and he said that William Black was one of the toughest enemies he had fought. Even his 7-Star Frozen Nova hadn't been strong enough to penetrate William's defenses.

Of course, that was mostly because Kaleb could not yet unleash Frozen Nova's full power, but it was surprising that someone could completely block Kaleb's attack nonetheless. That was also why Michael could remember William Black's name.

'He is only ranked the 10th Star despite such strength? In that case, how strong is Quinn Karta?' Michael thought, subconsciously turning to the first arena where more than a hundred students had already gathered.

All of them wanted to watch the battle between the Sun and the 10th Star, and Michael decided to join them.

He was not really in a rush. Furthermore, it would be better to know how strong the Stars were since he had to defeat one of them until tomorrow. Analyzing their combat prowess and preparing strategies against the Freshman Stars would most definitely help him to be ready when it was time for him to challenge them.

"Michael?" A familiar voice from behind attracted Michael's attention. He turned around and saw Lincoln with Zeke.

"I didn't expect to see you here," Lincoln said before he appraised Michael's physique. He smiled lightly at what he said and patted his shoulder with some force, "It's good to see that you're back."

Michael saw that Zeke nodded his head faintly in agreement. If not for the passive enhancement from Eagle Eyes, Michael wouldn't even have seen Zeke's nod. He had to suppress a chuckle and pat Lincoln back in return.

"Are you guys here for a challenge, or to watch the Sun fighting the 10th Star?" He asked the two childhood friends, who turned to the first arena in anticipation.

"I would say both. We have a challenge scheduled in an hour or so, but we came earlier after we heard that William challenged Quinn. Their rivalry is really...interesting," Lincoln answered, pushing Michael lightly in the direction of the first arena.

"Come, let's watch the battle together."

Michael wanted to watch the battle either way. He joined Lincoln and Zeke, who sat down in the first row to take in every little detail of the battle.

"By the way, who is Quinn Karta? I don't think I've heard of his name before. Is he like me?" Michael asked lightly when he saw the two young men standing opposite each other in the arena.

Michael wasn't mocking Quinn with his question, but it was commonly known that the descendants of big families were born with stronger Soultraits.

Awakened with a high Tier, and powerful high-ranked Soultraits were more likely to produce talented offspring because of their DNA's high potency. However, the highly potent DNA resulted in a low fertility rate due to various reasons.

Awakened extend their lifespan by growing stronger, yet female Awakened possess only a certain number of egg cells with which they were born. By growing stronger and increasing their lifespan, the body will make adjustments and release their egg cells over a longer period of time. On the other hand, men's seed increases in potency as they grow stronger. They require the egg cell of a strong Awakened to ensure the survival of their child.

There were exceptions to both cases, but they were rare to find., which was even more reason why most descendants of big families were treated like treasures.

But even then there were exceptions – just like Michael. Extraction was extremely powerful. It helped him grow much stronger and rival noble descendants even though he didn't have his entire family nurturing him into a future powerhouse.

The training these descendants received changed them. It took away their childishness, replacing it with forced maturity and discipline. At least, that was the case for some descendants of Supreme Families and High Nobles. They were taught about their responsibilities from a young age, and that they had to be the best to bring their family honor and glory.

That was also something Kaleb, Lincoln, and Zeke had been taught. They had numerous responsibilities and were often not allowed to live the life of an ordinary teenager.

But that was exactly why Michael was so confused when he stared at the Sun of the freshmen.

Quinn Karta was jumping lightly up and down with a vibrant smile on his face.

He didn't seem nervous about fighting William Black. On the contrary, he was smiling a bit foolishly.

"I get what you mean. Quinn is...different," Zeke said, speaking for the first time since they met in the Colosseum.

Michael glanced at Zeke, hoping that he would say more. However, Zeke merely pointed toward the arena and added,

"Just watch the battle."

Chapter 303 Sun Vs Star

"Quinn Karta belongs to a High Noble house that collapsed a decade ago. Members of Dark Heavens attacked the Karta household on Quinn's birthday. Every member of the family was present, yet only Quinn survived. Apparently, Quinn had been with his grandfather at that time, and his grandfather unleashed his power as a Peak Higher Lifeform to protect him," Lincoln told Michael when he noticed that his friend was mindlessly staring at the battlefield.

"That day we did not only lose against the Dark Heavens for the first time, but we also lost a High Noble household, and one of the few Tier-6 powerhouses of the human race. It was really a terrifying day," Zeke added quietly.

He looked away when Michael looked at him. It was almost like Zeke didn't want to talk about that day.

Lincoln patted Zeke's back before he pulled Michael closer to him.

"His sister was married to Quinn's brother. They both died in that incident," Lincoln whispered.

Michael figured that he shouldn't speak more about the incident after hearing that. So he diverted his attention back to the battlefield where Quinn and William were waiting for the start of the battle.

Quinn's upbringing was entirely different from the other descendants of High Nobles given that his entire family died a decade ago. Michael was certain that Quinn inherited lots of money, probably even the secret techniques of his family, but none of that was the same as having powerhouses paying attention to your training, studies, and actions.

Quinn didn't have the same responsibilities as his peers, and Michael could imagine that he had other goals as well.

'If I were him, I would strive to become strong enough to execute Dark Heavens,' Michael thought as he watched the young man, whose golden hair fluttered in the air.

Quinn Karta's physique didn't seem anything special. He had flawlessly fair skin and was lean. His physique was clearly honed to turn him athletic rather than bulky. His muscles were well-defined and his golden eyes were full of vigor. The sheen in his eyes was dazzling.

Funnily enough, William Black looked completely different than Quinn. He had long black hair that was tied back in a ponytail. His dark eyes seemed to absorb the light in the surroundings, and he had toned skin that highlighted his bulging muscles even more.

Michael exerted Eagle Eyes at full power as the combatants walked to the opposite sites of the arena. The battle started not long after with the ringing of a loud bell.

The ringing still resounded in the arena when both Quinn and William jumped into action.

William manifested a black armor, along with a thin longsword in his left hand, and a dagger for his right. He then stomped on the ground and blasted forward.

As he shot forward, darkness shot out from the ground beneath him. And his shadow expanded rapidly, coating William's feet and calves, resulting in a sudden burst of speed.

And while William charged forward, Quinn didn't move. He summoned two silver daggers and a leather armor, but he didn't move from the spot. Instead, he used his own Soultrait, which manifested golden marks all over his body.

The golden marks were intricate and complex. They released a heavy pressure in the surroundings naturally, and changed the atmosphere over a long distance.

Even Michael could sense the heavy pressure despite his seat was more than 50 meters from the battlefield.

"Dragon might?" Michael blurted out when he recalled what this familiar presence was.

It was stronger than the Legendary Ring Artifact's dragon might, but weaker than the Red Dragon's presence. Nonetheless, it was clearly the presence of a dragon that resided within the golden marks that covered Quinn's entire body.

The marks were the most apparent on his face, turning Quinn's already handsome face into a masterpiece. Seeing Quinn's face covered in the beautiful golden marks, Michael had to acknowledge that Quinn was otherworldly beautiful. It was eerie.

The dragon marks began to glow as Quinn circulated energy through his entire body to enhance himself. He kicked his feet off the ground and shot forward, crossing a distance of more than ten meters in an instant.

He appeared next to William and slashed at his neck mercilessly. William reacted in time, erupting a wall of darkness that shot out of the ground to block Quinn's slash. Yet, instead of fully blocking Quinn's attack, the dagger was merely slowed down. That gave William just enough time to lift his dagger and block Quinn's attack.

But before Quinn's dagger could be blocked it disappeared. Quinn disappeared along with the dagger, confusing his opponent for a second. They reappeared behind William, whose head had already flicked to Quinn the moment the Sun of the freshman year disappeared. I think you should take a look at

It was obvious that William was aware of Quinn's powers. Everyone participating in the freshman ranking had to expose some of their powers to jump up in the ranks.

With their powers exposed, many students created strategies to counter the powerful Soultraits of their opponents.

William Black had studied Quinn Karta long enough to know how the Sun of the freshman usually fought. His Dragon Mark enhanced his agility, dexterity and perception drastically. But that was not all. They allowed Quinn to jump through space – even if it was only a short distance. William had prepared fighting Quinn for months, and he was finally ready to defeat him!

William used his Soultrait, Darkness Manifestation, to release several darkness vines from the ground. The vines coiled around Quinn's leg, pinning him down to the ground. They restricted his ability to jump through space, drastically reducing Quinn's combat prowess.

However, instead of panicking, Quinn just smiled. He revealed his empty right hand, which caused many students to gasp. William realized that Quinn's weapon had disappeared when Quinn teleported behind him.

He was just about to turn back, only to feel something shoot past his neck. The membrane of darkness covering his neck was cut at once, and the remnants of darkness dispersed in all directions while Quinn moved the dagger artifact in the air using his mind and origin energy.

The Dragon Mark enhanced the energy density and purity of the origin energy inside his body enough to easily control the dagger artifact. The artifact moved through the air according to his will. It cut through the darkness vines that had coiled around his leg, freeing Quinn.

Quinn didn't seem under any pressure. On the contrary, he exuded far more pressure than most Tier-2 Lord could endure without breaking into a sweat.

Witnessing how easily Quinn moved through the arena, and how easily he nearly killed him, William could only grit his teeth in frustration.

He manifested darkness all around him and compressed it into needles. The darkness needles burst forth with terrific acceleration. They could cross a distance of 15 meters seemingly instantaneously. Therefore the darkness needles pierced deep into Quinn's flesh the moment they'd been released – or so everyone thought would happen in the next second.

However, reality was completely different.

The darkness needles shot through Quinn, causing his body to distort. For a moment, Michael was confused. He applied several layers of Enhancement on Eagle Eyes while continuing to watch the battle with increasing focus.

'Mirror Image? A duplicate?' Michael wondered as he watched Quinn's body disperse in all directions as if the young man was made of gas.

Quinn's real body appeared next to William a second later. His Dragon Marks shone brightly, dispelling the darkness in his immediate surrounding all while altering the origin energy around them.

Applying more Enhancement layers to Eagle Eyes, Michael quickly realized that the Dragon Marks were influencing the surrounding origin energy. The Dragon Marks annexed the surrounding energy by slowly altering it. That way, Quinn didn't have to put in more efforts to empower the Dragon Marks with more energy, and channel it into the dagger artifacts. Instead, he could use his own energy storage to circulate it through his body, further amplifying his strength, speed and perception.

The energy altered by the Dragon Mark possessed quite interesting properties as well. It repelled harmful substances, ensuring that William's darkness couldn't touch Quinn wherever he appeared after his teleportation.

Michael considered this quite helpful, but there was more to the Dragon Mark and the ability to teleport than one could see with the bare eye. Being in possession of Eagle Eyes, which had been enhanced with several layers of Enhancement right now, Michael could clearly see the particles of origin energy in the surroundings.

Under ordinary circumstances, the surrounding wouldn't release origin energy. However, the Colosseum released origin energy naturally to mimic the environment of the Origin Expanse in battle. Michael could see origin energy particles and streams of energy with Eagle Eyes – once fully unleashed and enhanced

with several layers of Enhancement. That may not be useful in most cases, but it was exceptionally helpful right now.

The ability to see origin energy allowed him to clearly tell the difference between the Dragon Mark, and Quinn's ability to teleport.

"Is the Dragon Mark Quinn's only Soultrait? Isn't it way too powerful?" Michael asked, exaggerating a little bit intentionally, only to receive a nod from both Lincoln and Zeke.

"His Dragon Mark is quite powerful. The more energy he channels into the Dragon Marks the stronger he will be enhanced physically. Simultaneously, his energy control and the purity of his origin energy will be enhanced the stronger the Dragon Mark glow. It is interesting that Quinn's strength increases the longer he fights. That turns him into an even more terrifying opponent than most, especially with the Dragon Mark's ability to teleport him out of danger, and initiate surprise attacks from every angle," Lincoln explained without looking away from the arena for a second.

But Michael could only frown deeply.

'You guys really think that he has only one Soultrait?'

Chapter 304 Push

It was a little bit tricky to tell, but Michael figured that Quinn's Dragon Marks had nothing to do with his ability to jump through space.

The Dragon Marks and the ability to jump through space complemented each other well, but they were not the same. The two powers were completely different Soultraits.

Dragon Mark was a Soultrait that enhanced the user's Agility, Perception, and energy control drastically. It also purified the origin energy inside the body while altering and annexing the origin energy in the immediate surroundings, resulting in the creation of energy that repelled harmful substances, and forces to a certain degree.

The combination of all effects turned the Dragon Mark into an extremely powerful Soultrait with, at least, 6-Stars. Michael even wondered if the Dragon Marks were a 7-Star Soultrait given that Quinn's strength continued to increase as the fight progressed.

Meanwhile, his other Soultrait was rather simple. It allowed him to jump through space, similar to mages in games blinking through space to change their position.

The Soultrait was most definitely not of a high star-rating, but that didn't affect Quinn much because his Dragon Mark's energy purification strengthened the 'Blink' Soultrait's power drastically. As the fight progressed and the purity of Quinn's origin energy increased, it grew much easier to blink through space with shorter delays. It was also much easier to blink more often in succession.

That was something Michael realized quite quickly.

'Why is nobody noticing that he has two Soultraits? Isn't it obvious...or does nobody bother?' Michael wondered, but he figured it quite easily.

It didn't really matter whether Quinn had one or two Soultraits since everyone knew what he was capable of. Everyone knew the effects of his Soultraits, whether they thought it was just one overpowered, versatile Soultrait, or two complementary Soultraits.

With that in mind, Michael's attention pulled back to the battle that was about to reach the climax.

Quinn's jumps were getting faster while the intensity of his attacks increased as well. He was in front of William initiating a slash one moment, only to blink behind William to continue the slash with the same momentum as before. A wall of darkness shot out of the ground, intending to block the slash just a moment before it was about to connect to William's flesh. But Quinn had already blinked away a third time.

He reappeared next to the wall of darkness, his silver dagger only centimeters away from William's neck.

The ability to slash while blinking through space, and the fact that Quinn could turn his simple attacks into incomprehensible attacks was exceptional. He didn't even use much of his own energy since he was mostly using the annexed energy in the surrounding to support his blinks through space.

'These Soultraits would be quite useful for Tiara,' Michael thought, the golden sheen in his eyes intensifying as Eagle Eyes was utilized at its peak.

William was startled by Quinn's agility. He expected Quinn to be powerful but the lethality of his opponent was beyond comprehension. Quinn's combat style was simple, yet deadly. It had been honed in thousands of battles, turning Quinn's Soultrait and exceptional combat awareness into bloodthirsty weapons that sought the blood of their enemies.

William could barely turn his head away from Quinn while simultaneously releasing a blast of darkness from his left hand. The blast of darkness wasn't deadly but it was strong enough to push Quinn away. His silver dagger missed William by a hair's breadth, which gave William enough time to change his tactic.

William stored his dagger inside the War Rune, replacing it with a dark orb that seemed to melt into William's palm the moment it manifested.

The orb turned liquid and coated William's hand as he channeled energy into it. Following the energy that entered the melting orb, William's presence changed. His pores opened and darkness began to ooze from them. The darkness was denser than before, shrouding William's entire body within seconds.

A fearsome armor of darkness manifested over William's body, protecting every inch of him.

The vast majority of William's darkness gathered around his left hand where the Dark Orb Artifact had molten. The darkness grew thicker and morphed into short sword blades that began to circulate around William to protect him from all directions.

No matter which angle Quinn chose, sword blades were waiting for him.

After the dark orb had enhanced William's Darkness Manifestation Soultrait, his energy consumption increased ever so slightly. But that was worth it. After all, William's Soultrait grew stronger and his control increased exponentially as well.

Unfortunately, Quinn didn't remain idle. His Dragon Marks' sheen intensified. The glowing golden marks shone brighter with every second that passed. Michael could sense a drastic change in Quinn's presence.

Quinn used most of the origin energy inside him to channel them straight into the Dragon Marks, which reacted instantly.

The Dragon Marks expanded in size and dug into Quinn's flesh, causing blood to spill out from the edges of the marks. In response to this drastic measure, Quinn's power doubled, and his being began to radiate the Dragon Mark's repelling force. The repelling force expanded and reached Quinn's daggers in no time.

Once Quinn's daggers were coated in the repelling force of the Dragon Marks, it wasn't too difficult for Quinn to blink behind William and cut through the darkness sword blades that revolved around him. It was only a matter of time before the silver daggers collided with the sword blades, and lost some of their power. They were split apart with brute force, providing Quinn leeway to shoot forward and thrust the silver daggers into William's darkness armor.

Quinn focused the repelling force from all over his body on the tip of the silver daggers, forcefully repelling William's darkness armor as the silver blades cut into the 10th Star of the freshman. I think you should take a look at

A siren resounded through the first arena, causing Quinn to blink backward.

He was still holding his daggers, warm blood trickling down the blades.

On the other hand, William remained unmoving. His darkness armor and sword blades dispersed, revealing William's pale face that was filled with disbelief.

He couldn't believe that Quinn had such an easy time defeating him. Even if he was only the 10th Star, how could Quinn win that easily? William didn't want to accept that. He just couldn't accept it!!

"The victory goes to Quinn Karta! May the sun shine brightly on you!" The referee said loudly while sending the medic team of the Colosseum to William Black to tend to his wounds.

Quinn Karta bowed to the referee before turning away. He glanced over to the rows of spectators and nodded faintly when he saw Zeke seated in the first row. After that, he left without saying a word.

"I don't understand why William keeps fighting Quinn. As long as doesn't find a way to stop Quinn's repelling force he won't ever be able to win against him," Lincoln grumbled quietly, clearly dissatisfied with the end of the battle.

Zeke just looked at Lincoln, shaking his head, "Aren't you the same? Even if your Soultrait is disadvantageous against opponents like me, you still try to defeat me every single time. Why? Because you want to grow stronger to survive battles against opponents with similar Soultraits in the Origin Expanse. William might desire to win against Quinn just like you want to win against me, but he uses Quinn as a grinding stone to test out various tactics to counter Soultraits that hold an advantage against his own."

Michael had long since figured that some Soultraits were exceptionally useful against certain enemies. If your enemy had a Soultrait that required lots of focus, Michael could just use Spirit Whip to prevent him from executing his Soultrait. That way, Spirit Whip would even be useful against Awakened with 5-Star Soultraits, or even 6-Star Soultraits – as long as they weren't able to block his mental attack.

Michael had been weak against Soultraits such as Lincoln's Stone Giant, and Zeke's Eye of Illusion. In fact, Michael still had no clue how to block out Eye of Illusion's power. It was simply too difficult to block mental attacks, especially if you couldn't be certain whether you had already been caught in Zeke's Illusion or if the effect of his Soultrait had yet to take hold of your body and senses.

Only Lincoln's Stone Giant was something he should be able to handle now that he possessed Reinforced Sword Qi. Combining his Soultraits, in addition to Extraction, Michael was confident to deal with Lincoln's Soultrait, which was something he wouldn't have been able to do without 6-Star Extraction and 5-Star Reinforced Sword Qi.

Lincoln's Soultrait was quite powerful and focused greatly on Earth Manipulation, Semi-Transformation, and a tank-like defense. The Stone Giant Soultrait was like a combination of three 6-Star Soultraits.

But that was what made it interesting to fight against Lincoln.

"What are you going to do now? I heard that your punishment has been decided and that you have to participate in the Interdimensional Flag War. That means you've come to the Colosseum today to become one of the 12 Stars, aren't you?" Zeke asked Michael, speaking a lot more than usual.

It was almost like the battle between Quinn and William triggered a change in Zeke. However, Lincoln knew better. He knew that Zeke was the most interested in Michael's combat prowess after they witnessed his fight against the Zan Twins and Mr. Klein.

In the first place, Zeke was the reason Lincoln called his family to turn Michael's punishment into an opportunity for Michael to shine during the Interdimensional Flag War.

"I guess, it's a good thing that I have to participate in the Interdimensional Flag War. It gave me a task to strive for, and helped me get back on the path I'm supposed to walk on...I guess... Either way, I'll have to become one of the 12 Stars until tomorrow, otherwise, y'all will leave to meet up with the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs for the Battle Exchange without me." Michael said without feeling any pressure right now.

He might have witnessed the combat prowess of the 10th Star and the Sun of the freshman, but Michael was also aware of the advantage he held over most Awakened.

As long as he didn't challenge Zeke or Quinn, everything should be fine.

He shrugged mentally.

It was a little bit annoying that he had to be present at the Battle Exchange, and win three fights there – to participate in the Interdimensional Flag War, but it was exactly like he said before. Having a goal to achieve kept Michael going forward. It forced him to get back to his senses and look toward the future rather than letting his mind reminisce about the events of the past.

Maybe it was a push he had needed to get back on the track.

Thus, rather than being fueled with annoyance, Michael felt that it was much better to look forward to the battles in the Colosseum, the Battle Exchange, and the Flag War.

At the end of the day, all of those events would allow him to grow stronger.

And strength was what he really needed.

Chapter 305 Destructive Soultrait

All Michael had to do was advance to the 12th Star in the freshman ranking.

Unfortunately, he had to meet a few requirements before he could challenge one of the 12 Stars, otherwise, everyone in the Sapphirelake Military Academy could challenge the 12 Stars all the time.

The requirements were a restriction to ensure that the 12 Stars wouldn't have to be in the Colosseum all day to accept other students' challenges.

First of all, Michael had to enter the top 100 in the rankings. Once that was done Michael had to win five challenges in succession before he could challenge one of the 12 Stars.

He had yet to start his thorough research of the 12 Stars and would do so while waiting for the students he challenged to arrive.

Most students were in the Origin Expanse most of the time. It could take a while before the system found someone who was free and who he could challenge in the top 500 rankings. With that in mind, Michael researched the other Stars.

'I won't challenge Quinn, and William seems a little bit annoying as well. Extraction probably works against his Darkness Manifestation, but I don't want everyone to focus on Extraction yet,' Michael thought, feeling a little bit lost.

He was not hesitant about using Extraction openly, however, he would rather focus on his other Soultraits. Michael noticed that some families took note of his combat prowess, otherwise, they wouldn't have punished him by forcing him to participate in the Interdimensional Flag War.

The Flag War entailed participating in the Battle Exchange, where everyone could witness and record his battles to analyze his Soultraits properly. As a prerequisite, becoming part of the human representatives for the Battle Exchange required him to fight at least six battles. Six battles would be more than enough to analyze most of his Soultraits – if he exposed their full might that is.

Since he was not sure what influential families would do to him once they found out about his Soultraits – especially Extraction –, Michael hesitated a little.

Fortunately, his hesitation didn't last long. The system found a student who readily accepted the challenge he issued to the top 500. Michael entered the first arena less than half an hour after the battle of the 10th Star and the Sun of the freshman.

After stepping inside the arena, Michael browsed through the bits of information the Colosseum provided about his opponent.

"Silas Miller, 18 years old, and Peak Tier-1. Well..." Michael was a little surprised. He didn't expect his opponent to be only at the Peak of the 1st Tier.

'Am I already that spoiled?' Michael chuckled inwardly. 'Obviously not every reaches the 2nd Tier at the age of 18. Danny was already 20 when he reached the 2nd Tier. Not everyone is as fast as Lincoln, and the others.'

Being surrounded by heavenly prodigies such as Kaleb, Lincoln and Zeke changed Michael's opinion of other people's strength drastically. He actually expected everyone in the top 500 to be a Tier-2 Lord with powerful Soultraits.

However, the bitter truth pulled him back to reality. Kaleb and the others were not only prodigies with exceptionally powerful Soultraits, but they were also in possession of the best energy absorption techniques, and resources most people could only dream about.

They could hunt monsters at a higher Tier by themselves, and receive their energy influx to improve their refinement degree rapidly. To add on, they had a much larger pool of Combat Summons from the beginning. Their families supported them with Named Summoning Scrolls to ensure that their descendants would be well-protected, and that their descendant's Summons would hunt for them, providing additional energy shares.

Combining their innate talent with the exceptional support of their family, Kaleb, Lincoln, Zeke and the others could widen the gap in their strength and ranking compared to their peers significantly. Most of them were even stronger than those who were one or two years older than them. But that was not

uncommon for descendants of big families. On the contrary, it was quite normal for them to be stronger.

At the end of the day, there was also a gap between Michael and his friends. Even Kaleb's refinement degree exceeded Michael's at this point. But that was only natural. Michael had wasted several weeks recuperating from his injuries. He spent a good amount of time accepting his brother's death, and getting back on his the tracks. Last but not least, Michael required a lot more origin energy to refine his War Rune than others. He was in possession of seven Soultraits at and above 4-Stars, after all!

But Michael never competed with the others with his War Rune's refinement degree. Rather than that, Michael made the most out of the strength he possessed by fighting Kaleb and the others head-on.

Rushing to improve his refinement degree wasn't helpful either. Michael had so many things to do, and so much to improve that he believed it would be harmful for his foundation if he were to stress himself with the advancement of his War Rune.

While Michael was lost in thoughts, Silas Miller entered the arena no less than ten minutes after he accepted the challenge.

"Hello there. I haven't seen you in the Colosseum yet. There is no information about you on the Colosseum's forum either. Looks like I'm your first!" Silas Miller said with a bright smile on his lips.

He manifested a Chainmail Artifact, followed by a Morningstar Weapon Artifact which he swung around proficiently. Michael merely lifted his eyebrow while pointing at the medic team that was stationed in the middle of the Colosseum. They paid attention to all battles and would rush over when a combatant had been severely injured. I think you should take a look at

By having high-ranked Awakened with strong Soultraits in the Colosseum one didn't have to hold back too much. All one had to pay attention to while fighting was to not instantly kill someone. Other than that, everything was fine.

The medic team noticed Michael, and stepped closer. It was a common occurrence for combatants to motion to the medic team. It usually meant that someone would sustain lethal injuries in the upcoming battle.

"You're already calling the medic team? Don't you think you're already shitting your pants after merely seeing my morningstar?" Silas Miller asked, but Michael ignored him.

Michael thought about summoning the Typhern Leather Armor Set, only to recall that the Artifact had been burned to crisp. Instead, he summoned the Wyverntooth Spear and changed his stance, ready for battle.

Silas lifted an eyebrow but didn't say anything. He changed his stance as well, and the battle started with the ring of the arena's bell.

Silas' body expanded the moment the battle started. His hair grew longer and a monkey tail grew from his tailbone. His chainmail expanded alongside his size as he charged forward with great speed. The morningstar moved through the air like the deadly weapon it was, but Michael remained untouched.

Instead of using the Wyverntooth Spear to attack, Michael created several Qi Swords around him. They were shrouded in a white sheen that came from the three layers of Enhancement he applied to the Soultrait Symbol of Reinforced Sword Qi. After spending a few days training his Soultraits in the Origin Expanse, Michael figured out how to manifest proper Qi Swords. He couldn't control too many simultaneously yet, but that was not important.

A bunch of them were more than enough.

Michael released the enhanced Qi Swords with a burst of energy. They turned into silver flashes and cut through the air, heading straight to Silas Miller, whose countenance changed drastically. His eyes widened in surprise, and he found himself unable to react fast enough when the Qi Swords cut through his tough skin.

A total of five Qi Swords impacted heavily upon him. Four of them focused on Silas' limbs while the last one pierced through the heavy metal chainmail that ought to protect Silas from exactly such attacks. Sadly, the enhanced Qi Sword cut through the metal like a hot knife through butter before advancing ahead, digging deep into Silas' chest.

The remaining Qi Swords cut deep into Silas' limbs as well. They forcefully stopped his charge, and pushed him back. Forced to retreat, a sense of disbelief and shock washed over Silas. He didn't even realise when his legs caved in, and when he slumped to the ground in a puddle of his own blood.

As the Qi Swords dispersed, five fountains of blood spurted out of Silas' body. Only then did Michael react.

'Danny told me that his Soultrait is at the peak of a 5-Star Soultrait in terms of attack power. Seems like that was true,' Michael thought to himself, feeling certain that the Qi Swords wouldn't have required three layers of Enhancement to deal with Silas.

Meanwhile, the medics looked at the bloody mess in front of them in stupor.

The fastest medic required two seconds before he rushed to Silas Miller, his healing-type Soultrait already fully unleashed.

"I should have challenged the Zan Twins in here...Nobody would have complained about their severed arms," Michael cursed quietly to himself.

Challenging the Zan Twins and provoking them if they rejected his challenge would have been much more effective than dealing with them next to the watchtower.

He didn't resent having attacked them, but Michael was not foolish enough to think that Alice and others could save him every single time.

Michael had yet to learn more about the influence and power of the strongest families. He couldn't afford to act foolish just because everything worked in his favor once.

He would have to keep this in mind for the future. For now, Michael shook his head lightly and turned to the side.

"Referee. How about you proclaim the winner?" He asked the referee, who nodded his head slowly as he watched the medics do their job.

"Victory goes to Michael Fang. Good job," The referee said, which was responded with a faint nod.

"Let's continue then."

Chapter 306 Consecutive

The next three challenges ended just like the first one.

Michael used enhanced Qi Swords to overwhelm his opponents. He inflicted mortal wounds that nearly killed the poor students.

The 4th challenge had been a little bit more intense but the challenge was still not comparable to his sparring sessions with Kaleb, and Lincoln. The sparring sessions were simply on a different level.

He had begun to lose interest when he saw his opponent for the 5th challenge. Michael was facing a familiar Awakened; Frederik Kolbenheim.

"I never knew that you reached the top 100 of the freshman ranking," Michael said to Frederik when they met outside the arena.

"I've been trying my best to deepen my understanding of the Inheritance technique. That means I need to fight as much as possible while feeling my Soultrait, Aeoran, and how it influences my body, mind, and soul. It's pretty interesting," Frederik answered somewhat nonchalantly.

It was easy to tell that Frederik was a little bit tense at this moment, but he tried to look calm and composed.

Michael knew that Frederik had been working much harder than most Awakened in the last few months. His control of the 3-Star Soultrait, Aeoran, had improved drastically, and his understanding of the Inheritance technique had deepened a lot as well. His Soul had been altered to fit his wind-attributed Soultrait perfectly, and his mind had been refined with the sole purpose of gaining better control of the wind element.

One could say that Frederik's whole being had been attuned to the wind element. His control increased exponentially with the passing of time, and his Soultrait's energy consumption decreased considerably.

Other than practicing his Inheritance technique to the 3rd stage within a few months, Frederik also advanced to Tier-2. In terms of his War Rune's refinement degree, Frederik was among the top 25 of the entire year. That achievement spoke volumes about the work he put into becoming stronger and to close the gap between himself and Michael.

"You've been working hard. Good job." Michael said, only for Frederik to scoff.

Looking at Michael's body, Frederik could tell that Michael had gotten back to his senses. The monster he had known earlier had returned.

"How about we get started? We should show how strong we've grown rather than throwing pleasantries at each other!" Frederik said as he turned to the arena. He entered the first arena and waited impatiently for Michael.

Michael was pleasantly surprised by Frederik's temperament. It looked like he changed a lot in the last few months. Maybe, he noticed that he is not a prodigy, and that he has to work hard to compete with the real prodigies in the Saphirelake Military Academy.

Possessing a 3-Star Soultrait was a grave disadvantage compared to the prodigies with 5-Star, or even 6-Star Soultraits. However, controlling a 3-Star Soultrait with high mastery and proper techniques, such as the Inheritance technique that focused on attuning the entire being to the Soultrait meant that Frederik was most likely stronger than most Lords with 4-Star Soultraits. Maybe even some Lords with 5-Star Soultraits and a War Rune on the same rank would have issues dealing with Frederik.

That was also why Michael was a little curious. His fight with Frederik was supposed to be unpredictable.

Once Michael entered the arena the challenge between Michael Fang and Frederik Kolbenheim started soon after.

Michael Fang summoned Dragon Might and the Wyverntooth Spear. He readied himself the next moment, and paid attention to Frederik's movements.

However, all Frederik did was summon a large staff. The staff had a large emerald crystal embedded at the top. It released a bright sheen as Frederik came in touch with the staff that began conjuring strong winds around him in response.

"Fight!" The referee's shout rang through the surrounding alongside the arena's bell.

Both Michael and Frederik moved simultaneously. Michael instinctively exerted Eagle Eyes with three layers of Enhancement to see the traces of origin energy all over the arena. Afterward, he conjured six Qi Swords that were released with a burst of energy.

Michael then shot forward by kicking the ground with a tremendous force.

Frederik had seen some of Michael's challenges so he had an inkling of what would happen next. He didn't advance toward Michael, knowing that the silver swords would come for him. Instead, he coated his entire body in strong winds all while focusing on his lower body to enhance his agility drastically.

His weight decreased and he began to move through the surrounding rapidly. Frederik moved left and right without losing any momentum. He evaded the Qi Swords easily and conjured invisible wind swords in response.

The invisible wind swords were one of Frederik's deadliest attacks.

Frederik released them without hesitation as Michael closed in. However, the invisible wind swords didn't even make it past his Wyverntooth Spear forget reaching Michael.

Michael had coated the Wyverntooth Spear in the Power of Extraction. He applied several layers of Enhancement as well, further strengthening the natural Weapon Artifact. Thereafter, Michael moved rapidly, cutting through the invisible wind sword, and extracting bits of the energy that held them together.

Once they lost these bits of energy, the entire foundation of the compressed wind swords collapsed. The winds that had been compressed prior were released at once, turning the deadly attacks into warm gusts that brushed against Michael's face.

'Don't think that I will fall into the trap of your invisible winds again,' Michael thought, the corner of his lips curling up. I think you should take a look at

He was aware of the invisible winds Frederik could conjure. They consumed more energy, but they were also deadlier than the greenish hue that coated his winds normally. The greenish hue around the winds Frederik controlled exposed his plans quite easily normally. That was also why Frederik used mind games against his opponent by relying on a combination of the winds controlled normally, and the natural invisibility of winds he controlled using a unique elemental technique.

But to Frederik's dismay, it didn't matter whether Frederik attacked him with invisible elemental attacks, or if he used the wind swords coated in the greenish hue. He could see the invisible wind swords just as well thanks to enhanced Eagle Eyes.

Michael pushed forward, evading several wind blades from all directions with subtle motions. He didn't have to make any big moves against the wind blades that bombarded upon him from all the directions. Instead, he could destroy the most annoying attacks while evading the rest without losing too much momentum.

By the time, Michael finished evading all attacks, the distance between him and Frederik decreased to less than five meters. Frederik was pushed into a corner due to Michael's precise movements, creating the opportunity Michael had been waiting for.

He created a Spirit Whip with several layers of enhancement and lashed out at Frederik. However, a quarter of a second before the Spirit Whip impacted, Frederik unleashed a powerful wall of winds. The winds moved rapidly and wrapped around Michael, instantaneously lifting him from the ground.

In a second, the wall of winds had turned into a typhoon that drained most of Frederik's energy. But Frederik was ready to use his entire energy as long as he could throw Michael out of the arena that way.

After sparring with Michael for months, Frederik knew that Michael was extremely strong in terms of physical strength. He was also aware that Michael had an offensive-type Soultrait with which he could issue mental attacks. Mental attacks were Frederik's biggest worry while tackling an opponent. Unfortunately, he couldn't make up for his lack of mental fortitude for the time being. He had to focus his whole attention on his Inheritance technique first, otherwise, he would fall back.

Thus, by allowing Michael to close in, Frederik was already ready to exploit the Colosseum's rules to the peak. His plan was to carry Michael out of the arena before he could lash out with his mental attack.

The typhoon engulfing Michael was not humongous. On the contrary, it was rather small and held tightly onto his arms and legs in an attempt to restrict his movements. The winds were powerful and somewhat eerily sharp, cutting into Michael's flesh hundreds of times. Michael could only groan in response before he grit his teeth to calm his heart and his fiercely working mind.

Then he allowed his instincts to take over.

The Power of Extraction shot out of his body, dyeing Michael's body golden. The winds around his arms and legs were drained of their energy even before the Power of Extraction could be fully unleashed. A screech rang through the surrounding as the Power of Extraction was released explosively, extracting the typhoon's energy mercilessly.

Frederik only noticed that he lost control of the typhoon, which dispersed in all directions with great force. The winds whipped against Frederik's face, who couldn't help but stare at Michael with an expression of shock and confusion.

Michael landed softly on the edge of the arena with a faint smile on his lips.

His entire body exuded a golden sheen that enhanced the ever-increasing pressure in the arena. Dragon Might's presence was fully unleashed for the first time since he started challenging his enemies, and several Qi Swords coated in golden light manifested around him.

"You better evade them," Michael said just before releasing the Qi Swords with a burst of energy.

Frederik had seen the golden sheen shrouding Michael's body a few times already. However, he never figured out what the golden sheen could do. Even now that he lost control of the typhoon that had been manifested with his entire focus, the unique ability of his Aether Wand, and the vast majority of his energy, Frederik couldn't be certain about the power the golden light represented.

Nonetheless, he was scared witless. The golden light was several times stronger than his Soultrait – which was something he hardly ever sensed. He felt overpowered, just like it had been when he fought against Zeke, unaware of the potency of his Eye of Illusion.

It was scary, but Frederik didn't want to give up.

He tapped into his last reserves of energy, leaned forward until he nearly touched the ground, and released a burst of wind beneath his feet after he kicked the ground.

Frederik shot through the arena in an instant. The Aether Wand in his hands disappeared and was replaced by two dangerously gleaming daggers.

In an instant, Frederik crossed the distance to Michael. He appeared in front of him much faster than Michael could move. His heightened Agility and Dexterity came to display for the first time in a while.

Frederik's hands moved faster than most could follow, his daggers advancing toward Michael's vital spots with dangerous precision.

But Michael could see it all.

The moment Frederik began to lean forward, he had been prepared to enter a close combat fight with his friend.

What Michael didn't expect was how fast Frederik had become. Even though they were at the same rank, Frederik was much faster than Michael. His body refinement solely relied on Agility, and Dexterity build.

His physical strength was not low by any means, but it hadn't been refined like Michael's, whose Sacred Rectification body refinement technique focused on an equal distribution of strength, agility, dexterity, and endurance.

Unfortunately, Frederik missed out on considering an important point.

Michael was still full of energy – and three 5-layer enhanced Spirit Whips hovered around him, ready to lash out at Frederik at a moment's notice.

Chapter 307 People Pleaser

When the 5-layer enhanced Spirit Whips crashed down on Frederik's mind, his world turned upside down.

Frederik had expected a mental attack to hit him, but three consecutive strikes were too much for him to handle. He didn't even have any energy left to channel through his brain to protect his mind.

Frederik couldn't cope with the mental attack without any protection. He was out of energy, groaned in pain, and blood began to ooze out from his nose just before he collapsed.

'I wonder if there are inheritance techniques for something like Extraction as well,' Michael wondered while staring down at Frederik.

His friend lost consciousness and was lying on the ground in front of him, but his mind was fully focused on the power Frederik had been able to exert with a 3-Star Soultrait. Aeroan was a rare elemental-type Soultrait with a focus on materialization. It was stronger than most 3-Star Soultraits, which was also why Frederik reached the top 100 of the freshman year. Unfortunately, Frederik had no way to defeat Michael.

Extraction's power was simply too strong. Michael had a strong will and high mental power thanks to the Ceasurium Menta mind-refining technique, and Extraction was a 6-Star Soultrait. Overpowering Frederik's typhoon hadn't been too difficult.

Nonetheless, Michael was impressed. He didn't expect Frederik to grow so strong in such a short amount of time. As long as he learned to fight using the strongest moves with Aeroan, Frederik would turn into a menace on the battlefield. That was good to know.

'Maybe, I can help you out a little bit with your Soultrait once I can trust you fully,' Michael thought, feeling that it was a shame to leave Frederik behind like this.

Frederik had great combat senses, and now that he focused on growing stronger with all his might, he could make sure to make the most out of the fortune his family possessed.

The Kolbenheim and Orlando families were not highly influential nobles or descendants of a powerful bloodline. However, they had great advantages in terms of business because Frederik and Jacqueline's territories were near an ocean. That was rare.

Unique ingredients to the ocean, energy infused salt, and fishes with rare properties procured in the Origin Expanse could be sold for a fortune, especially the Origin Siphon Starfish.

The Origin Siphon Starfish was not killed and sold. Instead, it was a monster that was caught alive and sold for an enormous price because it had a very useful Unique Racial Trait. The Origin Siphon Starfish generated and hoarded origin expanse at the expense of food and dispensed it into the surroundings, creating origin energy-rich environment – even outside the Origin Expanse.

The Kolbenheim and Orlando family's business empire had been built upon goods procured from the ocean for centuries, and nobody else had been able to dispute their monopoly until now. On the contrary, The Kolbenheim and Orlando families were unparalleled in that domain, and they were experienced at making use of it.

That was also why they had such great influence in mankind's society even though their Soultraits were considered relatively weaker.

Despite being wealthy enough to create Inheritance techniques, unique elemental techniques, and various other means to increase their strength, the gap between Frederik and Michael would grow in the future. That was bound to happen with Michael possessing a Soultrait like Extraction.

Even his weakest combat-type Soultraits were 4-Star right now. In the future that would change as well with the star rating of his Soultraits increasing.

Right now, Michael waited patiently until the medic team had tended to Frederik. Out of all the students he had challenged, Frederik was the least injured. The only wounds he sustained were mental, along with being drained of energy.

Once Frederik regained consciousness, Michael handed him one of his Energy Nourishing Pills. He smiled at his friend and pulled him up from the ground.

"I really don't understand how you can grow so much stronger every single time we meet. Your strength is not increasing normally at all. Even the Wind Sage's Sacred Body with Initial Mastery at the 3rd Stage is not enough to take you by surprise. I really hate to have a monster like you as a friend!" Frederik cursed while looking deep into Michael's eyes.

"At least you look at me as a friend now. Took you quite a while," Michael responded, ignoring Frederik's curses.

Frederik raised an eyebrow and shrugged lightly. He was not really sure what they were either.

Their competition was nice, but Frederik felt a sense of hatred and helplessness inside him whenever Michael defeated him. Competing with Michael was really not a good moral booster.

"But seriously... How the hell are you getting stronger that quickly? I know you said you've been in a Lord Rift, which explains where you got these Silver Sword Soultrait from, but that doesn't explain everything. You really are a mystery...and a monster, if I didn't mention that already," Frederik said, trying to hide how frustrated he was after losing miserably against Michael...again.

Michael thought about revealing bits of his secret for a moment, but he chose against it. He trusted Frederik enough to tell him about some parts of his secrets, but he was also certain that Frederik wasn't good at keeping secrets – especially with a nosy, clingy lover such as Jacqueline around.

Michael considered creating a Soul Contract for Frederik, Kaleb, and potentially Alice, but he was not confident enough to cover all potential loopholes yet. His lack of knowledge about Soul Contracts was enough reason to hesitate. He didn't want certain facts about Extraction to be exposed to the public – not yet, at least.

"Maybe, I'll tell you later. Just know that I'm not going to slow down," Michael teased, a crafty smile forming on his lips.

Now that he defeated Frederik, Michael entered top 100 with five consecutive wins. He could challenge one of the 12 Stars, which was what he planned to do immediately.

Unfortunately, the 12 Stars were busy. Except for William who was being tended to, nobody was in the Saphirelake Military Academy right now. Well, there were Zeke, Lincoln, and Kaleb, but he didn't want to challenge them. Michael wished to go with them to the Battle Exchange.

That was also why Michael had to tell the system that he wanted to challenge the 12th Star, and that the system should inform him once the 12th Star returned.

Afterward, Michael focused on channeling origin energy into his Legendary Ring Artifact.

Since his opponent was not here he might as well prepare for the battle properly. Michael felt that he should gift the 12th Star a welcome present once she returned from the Origin Expanse.

With that in mind, Michael joined Frederik and walked over to Lincoln and Zeke. The childhood friends greeted Frederik lightly – neither showing the same enthusiasm they felt for Michael nor being distant like they were usually with other students.

Frederik didn't mind their attitude. He knew that they were more interested in Michael. After all, Michael was not affiliated with any big organization, nor related to one of the Supreme Families, or High Nobles. He was powerful and mysterious, and it should be possible to make him their subordinate.

Even if Michael wouldn't become their subordinate anytime in the future, it was obviously easier to deal with Michael – someone who was kind and didn't meddle in politics and scheming –, rather than dealing with the other descendants, who had been taught how to scheme and exploit others.

Lincoln liked Michael's personality and strength. He could tell that Michael was the least likely to betray him in the future – except for Zeke. That, in addition to Michael's kindness, made it easier to get closer to him.

On the contrary, Lincoln was not sure what to think about Frederik. It was obvious that Frederik and his lover were spoiled rotten and that they enjoyed the benefits of belonging to a wealthy family. Their Soultraits were not special in his opinion either. The only reasons they accepted the Barbaric Couple were that Michael had befriended them and that it looked like Michael's influence affected them positively.

"Who are you going to challenge?" Zeke asked straightforwardly.

Michael smiled lightly at Zeke's bluntness.

"The Blood Witch, or whatever she calls herself. The 12th Star," He responded while continuing to channel origin energy into the Legendary Ring Artifact.

Zeke noticed the faint fluctuations from Michael's origin energy. He looked at the crimson ring and tilted his head lightly.

Michael didn't say anything, but he didn't hide his plan either. He simply waited while continuing to chat with Lincoln and Zeke.

Meanwhile, a few more students approached the two childhood friends. They tried to get closer to Lincoln and Zeke, only for them to ignore most of them.

Lincoln and Zeke were not interested in expanding their social circles with weaklings. If anything, the students had to be one of the 12 Stars to gain their attention.

Michael didn't really like the way the two thought, but he could understand them to a certain degree.

"It must be quite annoying to be flocked with strangers all the time. I would have been annoyed for sure," He said at one point. Two dozen students had gathered around their small circle, all of them trying to talk to Zeke and Lincoln.

Some were also trying to talk to Frederik and Michael in an attempt to get close to Lincoln and Zeke through them. However, Michael simply ignored them. Frederik, on the other hand, decided to turn around and glare at them threateningly.

A few students stepped back, only for others to glare at Frederik and step closer.

"We learn from a young age what it means to be...us. Most Descendants of big families are surrounded by people pleasers from the day they're born. That is also why it's important to find people, who are straightforward, honest, and would rather beat the shit out of us than trying to please us by losing intentionally," Lincoln said, looking straight at Michael.

"Hmm...yeah, I would rather beat the two of you than lose miserably," Michael said, while silently adding, "...soon..."

Zeke raised an eyebrow when he heard what Michael added silently, while Lincoln smiled.

"That's exactly what I'm talking about!"

Chapter 308 Blood Witch

Michael had assumed that he would have to wait a while until the Blood Witch returned from the Origin Expanse, but he didn't expect to be kept waiting until early next morning.

Hence, he decided to attend the Limit Breaker Course, and deepened his understanding of the Memory Lane technique. Now that Michael could extract knowledge and information from books, Memory Lane's efficiency decreased drastically. Nonetheless, it was helpful to have Memory Lane as a back-up to use if he couldn't extract the information straight from the source.

Michael had to reach high mastery of Memory Lane's 2nd Stage until the end of the semester to pass the course, either way. Thus, he might as well practice the technique whenever he had time.

Other than practicing Memory Lane, Michael spent some time refining his mind with Ceasurium Menta. He consumed two Energy Nourishing Pills and refined his mind for a few hours before he decided to sleep.

He only caught a few hours of sleep as his crystal watch rang early in the morning, a notification of the Colosseum's system waking him up.

The notification was pretty simple. The Blood Witch had accepted his challenge. She was given half an hour to prepare before their battle would start in the third arena.

Michael immediately shot out of the bed and took a quick shower. He made his way toward the Colosseum where a handful of tired students were already waiting. The students were busy watching all battles of the Sun and the 12 Stars, but not for their own sake. No, they were recording the battles, and analyzed the fights of the strongest freshmen before selling their results to other students. The students strategically analyzed the strongest freshmen's power, and compared it with other powers in great detail.

Michael didn't really like these students. Their gazes made it much harder for him to fight carelessly. Michael was always reminded that someone was recording his battle and that they would analyze the powers he exposed. He didn't like that.

But even if he didn't like that, Michael figured that bits of his power had already been exposed and analyzed. It didn't really matter if more bits would be added to their finds.

'What if I use you vultures to my advantage?' Michael thought as he looked at the students, who were almost desperately trying to collect information to make a fortune.

He didn't want others to challenge him once he defeated the Blood Witch. It would be a hassle if he had to accept more challenges until afternoon when they departed.

'So my goal is to instil fear in the hearts of my enemies to ensure that they won't even think about challenging me?' Michael asked himself before he gave it a shrug.

He was overthinking again and realized that it was better to focus on the present.

Once he saw the Blood Witch entering the Colosseum, Michael entered the third arena. The Blood Witch's black wavy hair twirled in the faint morning gust passing through the Colosseum as she strode proudly through the entrance. She had a voluptuous figure and wore clothes that highlighted her figure even more.

Michael could tell from a single glance that the Blood Witch was a prideful woman, who liked the attention of men lingering on her. That didn't mean she allowed them to get closer, but only that she loved the attention she received.

'Is she a pervert?' Michael wondered when he locked eyes with the Blood Witch.

The spectators stared at her with great interest. They were captivated, and felt drawn to her with every step she took. Michael, on the other hand, couldn't help but feel a little bit at a loss.

The Blood Witch had beautiful facial features. She was gorgeous and her black wavy hair complemented her pale skin very well. However, the Blood Witch's appearance paled compared to the beauty of Alice Zenovia and Tiara by a large margin at that.

If the Blood Witch was considered beautiful, Alice and Tiara would be considered otherworldly gorgeous – untouchable and unapproachable.

"There you are, my little black horse," The Blood Witch's seductive voice rang through the surrounding as she stepped in the third arena.

She moved gracefully, yet Michael could tell that the Blood Witch's movements were specifically aimed to draw his attention to her bust.

"Are you a pervert?" Michael blurted out before he realized.

The Blood Witch froze in her tracks for a moment. One of her eyebrows rose faintly, only to be replaced by a charming smile.

"Isn't everyone a pervert in some ways? Don't be shy, my little black horse~" The Blood Witch responded, causing Michael to shake his head.

He went to the other side of the arena, summoned the Wyverntooth Spear and waited. I think you should take a look at pantheonovel.com

The Blood Witch noticed that her words didn't have any effect on him, and pressed her lips together before she retrieved two items from her War Rune.

The referee looked at the two combatants to make sure that they were ready to fight before lifting his left hand high in the air.

In the next second, his hand shot downward alongside the sound of a siren, initiating the start of their battle.

The moment the battle started, the Blood Witch threw a vial in the air. She unsheathed a pitch-black dagger and cut her palm deeply. Following that, her dagger pierced through the vial, releasing a sticky black substance into the air.

It was blood, the blood of a Daemon, to be precise.

The Blood Witch was known for being able to manipulate blood. Her standard tactic was very simple. She retrieved a vial of Daemon Blood, cut herself, and fused the Daemon Blood into her bloodstream to receive a temporary yet drastic boost in her strength.

It was dangerous to circulate Daemon Blood through your body for a prolonged period because it was toxic to the human body, but it was no problem to do so for a few minutes. Being able to control her blood precisely, the Blood Witch could easily expel the Daemon Blood once the battle was over.

Thus, she usually followed the same tactic by cutting herself and infusing Daemon Blood into her bloodstream at the start of the battle.

Unfortunately, she encountered Michael as her opponent this time who was not fazed by her.

Michael turned into a flash and advanced rapidly the moment the battle started. The Blood Witch noticed his attempt and smiled lightly.

With a burst of energy, the droplets of blood that spurt from her wound levitated in the air. The blood droplets turned into bullets that shot toward Michael with terrific velocity. Even Frederik's invisible wind swords were slower and less lethal than the bullets.

But Michael wasn't concerned. He released a burst of Extraction's power to coat his entire body in a golden sheen. Following that, Michael used the energy he had stored in the Dragon Might ring since the day before. The energy he stored had turned into the Power of Enhancement, which Michael unleashed at once.

Michael used the stored Power of Enhancement to apply a total of 10 layers of Enhancement onto the Extraction Symbol. The 10-layer enhancement would last mere two seconds, but that was more than enough time for Michael to make full use of Extraction in the strongest form he had ever unleashed.

By enhancing Extraction with 10 layers, the golden sheen engulfing Michael intensified. It expanded rapidly and formed a thick layer in his immediate surroundings.

The blood bullets were still shooting toward him, and they were about to smash into Michael when something unexpected happened.

The blood bullets lost all their energy and they disappeared before they could even reach Michael. A quarter of a second later, the blood bullets appeared next to Michael before they fell powerlessly to the ground.

Michael had never changed his movement trajectory nor did he slow down at the sight of the blood bullets. On the contrary, he had accelerated the moment he unleashed 10-layer enhanced Extraction, and appeared in front of the Blood Witch with a vibrant smile blossoming on his face.

The power that surged through his body was something he had never felt before. It was addictive and made him desire more. Excitement filled his entire being as the origin energy, oxygen, and the Daemon Blood were engulfed by his enhanced dome of Extraction.

He extracted everything, annexed the origin energy in the surrounding area, and extracted the oxygen from the air all around the Blood Witch. Simultaneously, he took charge of the Daemon Blood to ensure that it would never get close to the Blood Witch, who lost control of her own blood and the Daemon Blood for the first time since she manifested her Soultrait.

The Blood Witch's eyes widened in terror when she sensed that tendrils of Michael's golden sheen shot toward her hand, or the wound on her palm, to be precise. Golden tendrils shot inside her wound, devouring her origin energy before she could even react.

She was too shocked to put up a mental wall to block the golden tendrils, and could only stare at Michael with utter shock in her beautiful eyes. This shock turned into utter disbelief and a trace of desperation as six Qi Swords manifested around Michael. They shot toward the Blood Witch, mercilessly cutting through her skin, flesh, and joints.

The Blood Witch's lips parted, and she was just about to scream at the top of her lungs when she realized that her surroundings had gone completely silent.

There was no sound, no smell, no energy. It was almost as if time had stopped around her. All that was left to remind her that she was not caught in a terrifying nightmare was a dark-eyed young man covered in a golden sheen – his dark eyes staring at her emotionlessly.

Chapter 309 Popular

The news of Michael's victory against the Blood Witch spread like wildfire.

It took less than ten minutes before Lincoln, and Kaleb gave him a call to question him.

He expected some calls, but he didn't accept any. Instead, he told them to meet at the cafeteria since he was hungry.

Michael was a little exhausted – more mentally than physically –, so he called them over to talk while he would fill his empty stomach to the brim.

On his way to the cafeteria, Michael noticed that some students looked weirdly at him. He tried to isolate his mind and ignore their gazes, but the respect and fear he sensed was too intense to ignore completely.

A sense of pride filled Michael's heart the longer his fellow students stared at him. This didn't change even after the lingering gazes disappeared as he entered the cafeteria.

It was still early in the morning, so the cafeteria was mostly empty. Only a few cooks from the night shift were present. They were bored at the lack of students coming over to the cafeteria at night, only to rejoice when they saw Michael.

Michael was glad that the Sapphirelake Military Academy was adamant about having a 24-hour service in the cafeteria. Not everyone had enough time to schedule their meals precisely while juggling studies and the development of their territory. Thus, a handful of students could be found in the cafeteria at any time.

"You old scheming bastard. Did you really defeat the Blood Witch in two seconds?!?" Lincoln shouted excitedly the moment he spotted Michael juggling two jumbo plates while heading towards an empty table.

His voice rang through the entire cafeteria, attracting the attention of the few students around. Even the cooks looked up to see what was going on, only to see that Michael sat down and started to eat as if nothing happened.

Lincoln approached Michael hurriedly and sat down opposite him, followed by Zeke, who didn't say a word. He just listened while staring at Michael.

"Do you even know how many rumors your fight against the Blood Witch caused? It hasn't even been an hour since the ranking changed, yet the academy forum is filled with more than 20 threads about you," Lincoln said, pressing his palms against the table while shifting his weight from one leg to another restlessly.

Lincoln had always been a little impatient, but it was worse when he was excited.

"Since the ranking can only be changed by the referees and higher authorities, it's a fact that you defeated the Blood Witch. Congratulations," Zeke said calmly, ignoring the excitement of his childhood friend.

Michael smiled at Zeke before his attention moved to Lincoln.

"Most of these threads are exaggerated. I used my ring artifact's storage ability to overpower the Blood Witch before she could transform. She didn't expect me to barge through her blood bullets and restrain her daemon transformation, or whatever she calls it," He answered nonchalantly before he continued to eat.

The cooks of the Sapphirelake Military Academy were the best, and Michael felt captivated by the wonderful taste. The food in front of him was clearly better than staring at the Blood Witch!

"I went all out to ensure that no one would even think of challenging me before we depart to the Battle Exchange. I am busy and have to do a few things before we leave," Michael added between mouthfuls of food.

Using the Power of Enhancement stored in the ring artifact allowed him to unleash a power that someone at his rank would never be able to reveal. No one possessed enough energy to do so as a Low Tier-2 Lord.

"So that's why you've been storing energy in the ring since yesterday," Zeke remarked, suddenly recalling Michael's actions from before, stating it more as a matter of fact than a question.

Michael affirmed Zeke's suspicion with a nod while continuing to eat.

"But that doesn't explain why you had to traumatize her," Kaleb said, approaching the group from behind.

He heard what Michael said as he entered the cafeteria and joined their discussion.

"I actually expected her to be a little bit stronger: It was a little bit underwhelming, so I ended up piercing her with the Qi Swords even though she had already given up mentally," Michael explained.

He sounded nonchalant but the disappointment in his eyes was apparent. Seeing his expression was enough to lighten the atmosphere. Lincoln and Kaleb smiled at their friend, and the corner of Zeke's lips curled upward as well.

"Aren't you getting too arrogant now? Do you want me to beat you a little bit?" Lincoln asked jokingly, only for Kaleb to add, "Add me as well. It has been a while since we sparred. Let me show you how strong my Frozen Nova has gotten!" I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

Lincoln stared at Kaleb, frowning deeply, "Aren't you too proud of your 7-Star Soultrait? How about I beat some sense into you as well? You're getting cocky...or is that how you've always been?!" He provoked while the smile on his face never ceased.

Kaleb stared at Lincoln, also smiling as he got up from the chair, "Let's go then. We have until the afternoon before we depart. I will show you how strong I've gotten!"

Michael and Zeke looked at the quarreling duo before exchanging amused glances. They smiled wryly and shook their heads.

"I can be the referee," Zeke added when he realized that the quarreling duo was serious.

Meanwhile, Michael shook his head as he said, "I will have to make a few purchases before I deal with the Bartholomew Corporation."

He earned a few confused gazes, which led Michael to explain the situation a little bit more in detail, "I'm investing in the Bartholomew Corporation with Agriculture-type blueprints. They expect a monthly quota, which will be hard to fill once we depart for the Battle Exchange. After all, we'll be staying there for a while."

The Battle Exchange would last for a whole month. After that, the winning batch of students that would be sent into the Lesser Dimension would train to represent the Tritan Alliance as one unit. They would spend two months with the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs to focus on becoming stronger and improving their teamwork until the Flag War would start.

That meant Michael couldn't provide Agriculture-type blueprints to the Bartholomew Corporation for three months straight at the bare minimum. He had to talk to the higher-ups to make sure that he wouldn't face any penalties for not meeting the requirements stated in the contract, or find another solution.

"You're the new Investor of the Agriculture Project in the Barren Lands?" Zeke asked, his eyes widening a little.

"Hm? Oh, yeah. Didn't I say that before already?" Michael asked, realizing too late that he never told anyone about the deal he made with the Forest Elves and his sponsoring of the Bartholomew Corporation's Agriculture Project.

Zeke stared at Michael for a while, not uttering a single sound. Meanwhile, Kaleb and Lincoln glared at each other with battle spirit in their eyes. The quarreling duo didn't even hear what Michael said. They were only waiting for Zeke to come with them to act as their referee.

"That is...surprising. Or maybe not?" Zeke asked himself. He quietly muttered, "Is that where his fortune comes from? I thought Alice decided to nurture him to turn him into her subordinate...but that might not be the case?"

The words spilled out of Zeke's mouth without him realizing. He had mumbled all of it so silently that Michael could barely hear a small portion of them.

It took Zeke a few seconds to regain his composure. His expression reverted back to his emotionless self, and he got up to leave.

"Seems like I underestimated you. Looks like Alice found a shark among fishes," Zeke mumbled before he turned away, gesturing Lincoln and Kaleb to leave.

Michael couldn't tell what was on Zeke's mind, but it was a positive surprise to see Zeke reacting like a normal human. It was much better to see him react normally rather than his expressionless face, and his monotonous voice.

After his friend left, Michale continued eating. He opened the holographic screen of the crystal watch, looked at the messages he received from Alice, and the Barbaric Couple, who had also heard about his fight with the Blood Witch. After that, he opened the academy forum to see how exaggerated the threads about him were.

Michael read through the threads for a few minutes. He scratched the back of his head and smiled lightly.

"They didn't really exaggerate. 'Using Powers stronger than his Tier' doesn't seem wrong since I used 10-layer enhancement with the help of Dragon Might's storage, and I 'overwhelmed the Blood Witch before she could transform'. Maybe I didn't traumatize the Blood Witch, but given that she was twitching like a fish on land after the medics healed her...she might have been traumatized."

Somehow, Michael felt a little bit bad when he read through the threads. He had been genuinely surprised to find out that the Blood Witch was much weaker than he expected. He thought that his attacks had been necessary to emerge victorious. Unfortunately, he didn't realize how overwhelmingly powerful Extraction had grown with a 10-layer Enhancement.

The Blood Witch hadn't been able to react at all, meaning that Michael's Qi Swords hadn't been necessary.

The threads described him as a merciless and cruel Awakened who should be avoided at all costs.

Even Michael felt a little bit disgusted with himself once he finished reading through all threads. But then again, it was not as if he should have held back in the first place.

It was better to go all out.

Chapter 310 Personal Attendant

Michael thought that the Bartholomew Corporation would stir trouble when he explained his inability to fulfill the contract for a while and the problems that came with it. However, the shop manager merely called Helen Ascaln, who seemed to have already been informed about his situation.

["You won't be able to provide blueprints for a few months. That's what you were going to tell me, weren't you?"] Helen Ascaln asked Michael seconds after their holographic video call began, not bothering to small talk.

She didn't seem angry, or upset, which surprised Michael a little. He expected Helen Ascaln to throw a tantrum because they would face a scarcity of blueprints for several months just after Michael's investments started.

'She is really good at controlling her emotions. As expected from an Executive Director,' Michael thought, while faintly nodding toward Helen Ascaln.

["That would be quite problematic and it's not something we can accept. We've already adjusted our plans and are dependant on the stable influx of Agriculture-type blueprints."] Helen Ascaln added, causing Michael to sigh inwardly.

The ideas that had formed in his mind dispersed when he heard that they'd already adjusted the development plans of the Agriculture Project according to his influx of blueprints. It was only obvious, but it made the entire situation a little bit more complicated.

"Sorry about that. It's not like I ca-..." Michael was just about to say something when Helen Ascaln stopped him by raising her hand.

["There is no need for excuses. I never expected you to stay in the Sapphirelake Military Academy until you graduate. You're young and full of potential. I researched you and figured that you would participate in the Battle Exchange. Though, I didn't expect you to participate this year. I thought this 'problem' would occur next year, not this year"] Helen Ascaln revealed, not hiding anything.

Compared to their last interaction, Helen Ascaln seemed much calmer than before. Michael actually thought that she would dislike him for taking away a profit share of 18% from the Agriculture Project. But the opposite was the case.

Helen stared at him with a trace of trust and respect. She respected his negotiation skills, his ability to procure so many Agriculture-type Blueprints in such a short amount of time, and the fact that he was already strong enough to participate in the Battle Exchange without a great family background.

["I've already sent one of our Awakened to the Saphirelake Military Academy. He should have already arrived. You will meet him once all the formalities have been completed. After that, he will be joining you to Meku. You'll be giving him your Agriculture-type Blueprints, and he will enter the Origin Expanse to hand them over to me. That way, you won't miss your monthly investments of blueprints – except if you're incapable of procuring enough blueprints in the first place."]

Michael had yet to say more than a sentence to Helen, yet his problems seemed to have dissolved into thin air.

"You sent an Awakened to the academy to follow me? That's...pretty smart," Michael acknowledged after a second.

He didn't even think about the possibility of using an Awakened as a courier to send the blueprints to the Bartholomew Corporation when he met the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs in Meku.

"Will I be responsible for his safety, or can he take care of himself?" Michael asked, revealing his only concern.

He didn't really have anything against paying attention to the Awakened, but he was also a busy man. Babysitting someone in Meku was not really something Michael wanted to do. He didn't have enough time for that either.

"You don't have to babysit me. On the contrary, it's more likely that I will have to take care of you if something happens," A hoarse, old voice rang through the small room in the back of the Bartholomew Shop.

Startled, Michael jumped up and turned around. His eyes glowed golden as Eagle Eyes was instinctively triggered, followed by six Qi Swords that manifested around him as well.

"Young lad, if I wanted to kill you, your head would be rolling over the table before you even realized it," The old sounding voice spoke again, this time next to Michael.

He felt something cold press against his neck, only for a wrinkled finger to appear in front of his face. Michael turned his head, where he saw an old man with short, white hair and a short beard staring intently at him.

The old man was short and wrinkles covered his hands and face, which was a huge contrast to his radiant eyes. His emerald-green eyes were clear and full of vigor, speaking volumes about his health and well-being.

His body had aged, but he was eons away from dying due to old age. I think you should take a look at pandasnovel.com

"O..okay..." Michael could only say, staring at the old man, and trying to find out how strong he was.

His gaze moved to the back of the old man's right hand, but all Michael could see was a glove covering the old man's War Rune.

The old man snickered when he saw Michael's gaze. He didn't say anything about it, but removed his left hand from Michael's face. Scaring the younger generation with his sneaky attacks was usually funny, but Michael's reaction had been boring.

It was almost like Michael had been prepared to fight against him, even though he knew that he was likely to die. There was no trace of hesitation or a sliver of doubt about his own survival in Michael's gaze – only the intent to face his opponent's head-on. It was like Michael was endlessly reckless and that was not something a young man such as Michael should feel.

Helen Ascaln had already informed him about Michael's situation, and the incident that happened between Michael, a few students, and one of the academy's teachers. The old man had done his own research, quickly finding out that Michael's brother died recently, and that the rest of his family had abandoned the brothers in the past.

At first glance, it looked like Michael was doing fine, but the intent in Michael's eyes right now was far from normal. If his fingertip had been a blade instead, Michael would have died the moment he sliced through his throat, yet Michael looked like he was confident to handle such a situation – which was definitely not the case.

There was no way Michael could handle the old man while merely being a Tier-2 Lord.

"Hello, Sir. I'm Michael Fang. Nice to meet you," Michael introduced himself calmly. He was still staring at the old man's right hand but found nothing.

He was still unable to tell how strong the old man was.

'I couldn't sense his presence and even Eagle Eyes was unable to detect his movement when he appeared next to me. That old man didn't even use origin energy to move through the room. His physical strength is manyfold higher than that of Mr. Klein.' Michael thought, concluding in his mind that the old man was most definitely a Higher Lifeform – an Awakened who had advanced beyond Tier-3.

He also concluded that the Bartholomew Corporation wanted to ensure that nobody could kill their golden goose – him – in Meku, or anywhere else. They considered the fact that Michael might face danger outside the Sapphirelake Military Academy. Otherwise, they wouldn't have sent over a weak-looking old man, who was actually a powerhouse with immense strength to act as the courier for the Agriculture-type blueprints.

"My name is Kraft Viton. Don't stir unnecessary trouble in Ketu. I don't want to move my old bones too much while I'm traveling around with you," The old man introduced himself. He grasped Michael's hand and shook it lightly, before his eyes turned cold as he added, "And don't even think of fighting others suicidally. I will beat the shit out of you if you think that you can handle dozens of Tekur on your own after the Battle Exchange."

The old man had seen how strong Michael was after watching the video recording of his fight against Mr. Klein, followed by the information Kraft Viton received after entering the academy grounds. He had also looked through Michael's battle records in the Colosseum just before arriving at the Bartholomew Shop, and could roughly guess why Michael was so confident in himself.

He had multiple powerful Soultraits and was clearly one of the strongest freshmen in the academy even without the support of his family. He was a self-made Lord, who made it much farther than many descendants of minor nobles, and other influential families.

Given the profit share he would obtain from the Agriculture Project, it was only a matter of time before Michael could invest a fortune into his territory just like other families spent a big portion of their

fortune to nurture their children. Once the Agriculture Project took off and started making money, Michael would be on par with everyone else in terms of funding. By then, Michael's power would increase even faster than before.

That was why he was slowly growing a bit too confident, bordering arrogance. He was powerful and knew that he would grow even faster in the next few years.

But the Tekur couldn't be handled with a little bit of strength. Their combat prowess was incomparably higher than the power humans could display. It usually took six prodigies with high mastery of their 5-Star Soultraits to deal with a single Tekur at the same rank and Tier. If the Tekur was a genius with some combat experience even six Awakened with 5-Star Soultraits wouldn't be enough.

Participating in the Interdimensional Flag War with arrogance and overconfidence would lead to death, and that was something Kraft Viton couldn't allow to happen. Michael was the most important investor of the Agriculture Project, and the Bartholomew Corporation's means to succeed the Olympus.

He was their golden goose, their treasure.

He had to be protected by all means!