

## **Supreme Lord 321**

### Chapter 321 Piloq

Michael put aside the memory crystals and other goods he obtained from Kraft Viton.

After handing Kraft a little bit more than 2000 Agriculture blueprints two days ago, the old man entered the Origin Expanse to give him everything he needed before they arrived in Meku.

Michael used the knowledge that had been imprinted into his mind to record books of vast knowledge into the memory crystals, which were then given to his hard-working Summons.

He made a short trip across his territory to take a look at the expanding Underground Forging Hall, the Relic of Draka, the Alchemy house – in which everyone was working hard to mass-produce potions and pills –, and the Enchanter's Lair before he left the Origin Expanse for the time being.

They were just about to arrive on Meku, and Michael was not sure how long it would take before he could enter the Origin Expanse again to focus on his training, and territory development.

Once Michael emerged from the Runic Gate back in his small cabin in the huge spaceship, he sat down on the chair, adjusted the three seatbelts that he tied around his body, and waited patiently as they landed.

He opened the crystal watch to take a look at the messages and information he'd missed out on in the last few days. Fortunately, he didn't miss anything important.

To ensure that he wasn't going to do anything stupid shortly after landing, Michael read through the guides they had received once again. He knew how to behave, and was fully educated about the traditional values of the Berserkers and the Warlock Centaurs, but it wouldn't hurt imprinting the rules deep in his mind once again.

As he focused on the guides that were written by someone who loved details way too much, Michael didn't even notice that the Tuar-type Spaceship initiated their descent onto Meku. Their descent lasted for close to two hours – which was mostly due to the protocols they had to follow –, but Michael didn't notice anything.

He was engrossed in the detailed guides and the messy thoughts flashing through his mind and only realized that they had arrived when Kraft Viton spoke to him via Whispering Energy.

"Why are you not leaving the cabin? Is something wrong, or are you too stunned to move?" The old man teased, pulling Michael out of his trance.

Michael was first confused, only to be stunned by the bright sunlight shining through the window to his right. He squinted his eyes and looked outside, curious about what he had missed out.

"What the..." He blurted out, his eyes widening in shock as a majestic view manifested before him.

A humongous, majestic city appeared in his view.

But that was not all. The city was not only humongous but also like nothing else he had ever seen before.

The Tuar-Type spaceship landed on top of a flattened mountain range right next to a behemoth mountain that pierced through the clouds easily.

And adjacent to the mountain lay the city.? It was a city that blended elements from both ancient and modern times, a seamless fusion of history and technology.

The city's architecture was a striking tapestry with ancient structures constructed alongside sleek, contemporary skyscrapers. Cobbled streets wound through districts where historic stone buildings adorned with ornate carvings stood shoulder to shoulder with glass and steel marvels that pierced the sky.

It looked odd at first glance, but Michael felt that the city had its own charm. He was drawn to the buildings and couldn't take his eyes off the magnificent cityscape. It was just like the old man said. Michael felt like his pair of eyes weren't enough to observe the marvel that lay in front of him. He even activated Eagle Eyes with several layers of Enhancement to see the fine details of the city that lay several thousand meters below their current position on the flattened mountain range.

At some point in time, Michael was pulled out of his seat. He saw Alice Zenovia glaring at him, only to sigh deeply.

"Since when are you that easily distracted by buildings?" She asked with a little annoyance in her voice.

If it was anyone else, she would have sent her attendants to bring them over, or she would have glared coldly at them until they wished they could disappear. However, Michael was a little different.

"Oh...sorry...I was just fascinated by the fusion of several eras displayed in the city's infrastructure. It looks like some of those buildings have witnessed the passage of time for thousands of years..." Michael mumbled while following Alice, who pulled him out of the cabin.

She grasped his wrist tightly almost like she thought that Michael would disappear the moment she let go of him.

Michael let her do as she wished while trying to take hasty glimpses outside the windows they passed by. The mixture of ancient and modern times was something that intrigued Michael. He could clearly see the dense energy currents intertwined in the old buildings and had thousands of questions but no answers.

He wanted to ask Alice some things but they had already left the spaceship when his lips parted to voice out his doubts. Alice Zenovia let go of Michael before pointing to Kaleb, who walked over to her.

Alice said something to Kaleb, who raised an eyebrow before his eyes flicked to Michael. He nodded afterward and approached Michael.

"Did you really become a daydreamer during the last few days?" Kaleb asked teasingly, "Though, I have to acknowledge that Piloq looks quite nice. The city certainly has its charm."

Piloq. That was the name of the city at the foot of the mountain range.

Michael smiled and nodded his head in excitement.

"I wonder who came up with the idea to combine the eras," He mumbled, earning a glance of doubt from Kaleb.

"You do realize that the Colosseum in the academy is also a building from another era, right? Piloq has just more buildings from another era, mostly because the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs worked together to build Piloq hundreds of years ago. It's the founding city of the alliance between the Warlock Centaurs and Berserkers. They've been working together to build and expand Piloq over the course of centuries – and it's the city where the Tritan Alliance was signed," Kaleb explained while looking over to Lincoln and Zeke, who joined them as well.

"Piloq is also the training grounds for the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs' youngest generation. The strongest of them spend their prime in Piloq, using the Ancient Origin Structures to temper their bodies, minds, and Souls. The Colosseum in the Academy cannot compare to the structures and effect of the Ancient Structures the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs brought over," Zeke said in his monotonous voice.

Lincoln agreed and added with a little bit more excitement, "And this place is where we'll be training for the next three months to prepare for the Interdimensional Flag War...well, after we've been selected as participants during the Battle Exchange. We'll be given several chances to enter the different Ancient Structures, one way or another. It's one of the benefits we've been granted as members of the Battle Exchange."

After listening to the descendants, Michael felt like he was a fool. Well, he probably was a little foolish for not knowing what Zeke and Lincoln talked about.

He knew what Ancient Structures were, and that Ancient Structures could naturally produce origin energy and release it into their surroundings. However, given Lincoln's excitement, Michael figured that he lacked a lot more knowledge about Ancient Structures than expected.

'Filling my brain with the Laxarta Library, Old Languages, and Ancient Ruins' knowledge doesn't mean I'm all-knowing. I get it...' Michael grumbled to himself, shaking his head at his own stupidity.

He didn't think that it was embarrassing to lack knowledge. It would only be embarrassing if he stayed foolish and ignorant despite knowing that he lacked knowledge. Learning was a never-ending process in everybody's life, and Michael never expected that he would know everything.

Nonetheless, it was quite interesting to learn about Ancient Structures that had been collected in the Origin Expanse's ancient ruins and brought over to train the younger generation.

"Piloq is called the Ancient City of Blood, Sweat, and Tears for a reason, you know," Kaleb said, nudging Michael's elbow when he realized that his friend was too stunned to say anything.

Michael's lips curled but he didn't say anything. Instead, he listened to the three descendants as they descended the mountain range.

Until now, Michael had yet to see a Berserker or a Warlock Centaur. He was pretty sure that they weren't hiding, but he didn't expect that none of them would appear to welcome them to their city. It was a little odd in Michael's opinion – even though it had been stated in the guide he read earlier.

The Warlock Centaurs and Berserkers wouldn't welcome their allies – not if they were in an alliance. After all, the Tritan Alliance turned the three races into one big family according to the customs of the Warlock Centaurs and Berserkers. And it was not necessary to pick up your family at the airport, not if they knew the way home themselves.

There was a long-winded staircase leading down to the foot of the mountain. It had thousands of steps the students and Professors had to walk down to reach Piloq.

It was a long way down, but Michael didn't even feel anything. He was more focused on the humongous city beneath him, and the sounds that filled his entire surroundings, especially those coming from above.

Slightly disturbed by the sounds from above, Michael looked high up into the air. Following that, his steps slowed down and a wry smile was plastered on his face.

"It looks like the others arrived," Kaleb mumbled, while Michael kept staring at the eight spaceships that began their descent.

Chapter 322 Last Week

Piloq's marketplace was bustling with activity, showcasing a blend of traditional stalls selling handcrafted wares and exotic spices, as well as boutiques featuring modern technology and fashion. Vendors sold goods from woven baskets, Summoning Scrolls, and digital displays side by side.

The means of transportation at the edge of the city were a symphony of contrasts. Monster-drawn carriages shared the roads with hovering shuttles. The resounding sounds of the horses' hooves resonated alongside the soft humming of the shuttles all around them.

As Michael and the rest walked down the staircase of hell with thousands of steps to take, his attention was drawn to the parks and gardens that could be considered oases of time. Ancient sculptures shared space with contemporary art installations. Traditional pagodas provided shade next to innovative outdoor seating areas equipped with solar-powered charging stations.

Piloq's skyline danced between the past and the present. The silhouette included Aztec temples and clock towers as well as sleek, illuminated high-rises.

And then there were the citizens of Piloq, Berserkers, and Warlock Centaurs, moving through life with unique duality, dressed in a spectrum from flowing robes to modern suits, and even combat suits.

Despite the vast disparities between the eras the city was filled with harmony and comfort. The echoes of the past had fused with the pulse of the present, inviting its residents and visitors to experience a dynamic blend of cultures, aesthetics, and technologies that bridge the gap between ancient wisdom and structures, and the progress of the modern age.

It was a completely different world compared to the places Michael had been to during the last few months. It was exceptional.

But Michael's feeling of awe was yet to subside. In fact, it had just begun.

Once they reached the bottom of the staircase, Michael and the others encountered the first Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs.

They were armed to their teeth, almost like they were ready to wage war at any moment.

The Berserkers were a humanoid race with red skin and mostly crimson eyes. The smallest of them was 3 meters tall, and their wide build and bulging muscles made it seem like they were just as wide as they were tall. Of course, that was not exactly the case. They might have a broader physique, but they looked more like small Giants with bloodthirsty aura engulfing every inch of their body.

Some of the Berserkers possessed two pairs of arms. Some were bigger than others. And then there was a small batch of Berserkers that had a tail that looked like a flexible Morningstar.

They looked impressive as they stared down at the humans in front of them. Their presence was enough to command attention and discipline.

Meanwhile, the Warlock Centaurs standing next to the Berserkers weren't much different. Their presence was also imposing. However, their calmness was much more impressive.

Looking into their calm, deep eyes made Michael wonder if the Warlock Centaurs were calm lakes standing next to erupting volcanoes.

The Warlock Centaurs' appearance was similar to the description Michael read about them online. Their lower body was more or less that of a horse. On the other hand, their upper body was human-like. But that was not everything. There was a wide variety of Warlock Centaurs as well.

There were a few Warlock Centaurs with three eyes, others, who could shapeshift into a more human-like form, and others whose lower body looked more like that of a humongous bull.

It was an interesting sight for Michael, who had only seen pictures of their allies until now.

The Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs smashed their fists against their chest and said something that Michael didn't understand.

Alice and the other Professors said something in response. Afterward, some of the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs turned around. They motioned the group to follow and walked into the city.

Meanwhile, the other Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs stayed behind. They looked at the middle section of the staircase and waited for the other groups to arrive.

Michael looked back as well, only to turn around the next moment as Kaleb nudged him from the side to follow the others.

While entering the city of Piloq, Michael's attention was drawn to the Ancient Structures. He wanted to enter some of them to study, but the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs guiding them through the city were too fast for him to study anything. They moved them through the outskirts and led the group of human prodigies to a towering skyscraper.

"This place has been reserved for all humans. The Professors and Suns will be given the suits. The rest can figure it out on your own. Fight for a better room if you're dissatisfied," The Berserker standing in front of everyone said after the students of the Sapphirelake Military Academy had entered the skyscraper.

It was a hotel and the place all humans would be staying for the next few weeks. I think you should take a look at

"Because there are nine human groups from different places, you might not know each other well. You can get to know each other today so that the procedures tomorrow will be smoother. There is a gym in the basement, a swimming pool, a gravitation room, and a few more places that can be used to train and spar," The Warlock Centaur standing next to the Berserker announced.

The Berserker then added, "I hope you guys are stronger than you look like. Otherwise, I might accidentally break your bones starting tomorrow."

A few students stared at the Berserker, feeling a little confused. One of them blurted out what the others thought, "You're a participant of the Battle Exchange!"

The Berserker was a Tier-3 Lord with an extremely thick bloodthirsty aura. Most human Lords at the 2nd Tier stared hesitatingly at the Berserker, unable to think of a way to defeat a powerhouse like him during the Battle Exchange.

Meanwhile, Kaleb, Lincoln, and Zeke looked at the Berserker with a trace of interest.

"I am, and I wish for grand battles with some of the true geniuses amid you. Most of you seem like puny ants. That's unfortunate," The Berserker commented with a straight face.

He wasn't even trying to provoke. It was just that he was genuinely disappointed at the sight of the students in front of him.

His gaze moved through the small batch of students. The Berserker's attention lingered on a few students longer than others, but they were mostly 4th grade students such as Kilian Zeus, and company.

After a while, his focus moved to the Professors, Alice Zenovia to be precise. He stared at her the longest, a tinge of excitement and battle spirit surfacing on his face.

"I would love to fight you." He announced, only diverting his attention when the Warlock Centaur pulled him aside.

"We'll be taking our leave now. The staff will handle everything else. They will also add your crystal watches to our network system to ensure that you'll be able to access the information you may need soon enough. We will also send more details about the Battle Exchange to your crystal watches. Rest well, and prepare for the Battle Exchange!" the Warlock Centaur said before turning away.

He pulled the Berserker alongside him and left the hotel without a backward glance.

"The Berserker wants to fight us even before the Battle Exchange starts, or am I misunderstanding something?" One of the 3rd-grade students asked in a low voice, yet he was loud enough for most students to hear given the stunned silence.

"At the end of the day, the Battle Exchange starts officially in a week. But we've come to Meku several days before the Battle Exchange begins, not just for show. There are reasons for that," Another student, Peter Gramm from Killian's group, said without further explaining.

The other students turned around to Alice and the other Professors, but they didn't receive an explanation. On the contrary, the Professors ignored their gazes pointed toward the reception and changed the topic.

"Register yourselves at the reception. Then, you can do whatever you want. Keep a close eye on your crystal watches, and don't spend too much time in the Origin Expanse for the next few days," Oliver Zeus instructed as he moved to the reception to register himself as well.

The students followed behind, while Alice remained on her spot. She glanced over to Kaleb and Michael, who were already back in their own world, chatting excitedly. They didn't seem worried about the reasons why they had to arrive in Meku a week before the Battle Exchange started. On the contrary, nothing in their behavior seemed to indicate that they worried about anything, not even after the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs revealed some of their participants of the Battle Exchange.

Alice wasn't threatened by the Berserker's presence, but even she could feel the Berserker's pressure when his gaze moved to her. He intentionally provoked the students and focused on each of them for a moment to display the might of his presence and power. That was an attempt to clearly indicate that he would start breaking their bones starting tomorrow if their combat prowess wasn't up to his standards.

The higher-ups of the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs always used a similar tactic to intimidate the 'fletchlings' of the human race. They called them fletchlings because they hadn't attained any achievements yet. The fletchlings had yet to earn the Berserkers' and Warlock Centaurs' respect – which was also one of the reasons the human participants of the Battle Exchange arrived a week before it started officially.

There were more reasons but the Professors wouldn't tell their students of that. It was necessary that their students learned about the situation on their own to adapt naturally.

But that didn't mean Alice was not worried.

She was restless, hoping that the week would pass smoothly.

That was all she hoped for.

Chapter 323 Fletchling

"Fletchlins are not allowed in here," The Warlock Centaur facing Michael said.

His voice was neither cold nor was he condescending toward Michael. Nonetheless, Michael was confused.

"Fletchlins are not allowed...in the library?" He asked.

"You want our knowledge, don't you?" The Warlock Centaur responded.

Michael nodded in affirmation.

"In that case, you've to gain our respect and trust. We only tolerate the presence of Fletchlins in Piloq, but that's it."

Listening to the Warlock Centaur explained why the participants of the Battle Exchange arrived in Piloq a week prior to the official start.

If they wanted to use any facility in Piloq to improve their strength or knowledge, they would have to work hard to elevate their status beyond that of Fletchlins.

"I won't even be able to purchase anything in Piloq with my current status, right?" Michael asked, which was affirmed with a simple nod.

Michael was a little disappointed but could not find fault with their reasoning, 'Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs have different spawn points in the Origin Expanse. They should have an easier time with most goods that are hard to come by for human Lords.'

Michael was pretty sure that the Olympus would want to trade Agriculture-type Blueprints with the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs. Kraft Viton told him a few things, including that Oliver Zeus and Killian

Zeus had been sent to Meku to gain the utmost respect from the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs for various reasons.

The reasons included establishing a long-term business contract between the Tritan Alliance and the Olympus, and heavy investment in several projects, including the Agriculture Project.

'It shouldn't be too easy to do business with the Berserkers given that the Bartholomew Corporation was willing to give up 18% of their revenue share to make a deal with me...' Michael thought, looking behind him where Kraft Viton was standing.

The Warlock Centaur hadn't even noticed the old man until Michael looked behind. He subconsciously stepped back and almost instinctively manifested his Artifacts to prepare for battle. Fortunately, he held back upon sensing that he couldn't perceive anything about the old man.

Kraft Viton concealed himself perfectly. It was almost as if the old man didn't exist. To achieve something like that, the old man was either in possession of an extremely powerful camouflage Soultrait, his concealment technique was of the highest quality and mastered to perfection, or he was several times stronger than the Warlock Centaur.

The Warlock Centaur didn't require a second glance to confirm that the old man could overpower him without moving a finger if he desired to do so.

"I hope you can acknowledge our customs. Even if you don't want to do so, you'll have to if you want to stay in Piloq," The Warlock Centaur said, trying to calm his nerves. He often faced powerhouses, but they usually respected their customs. They knew what would happen if they were to disobey their sacred rules. However, the human powerhouse might not be inclined to do so.

"Don't bother about me. I'm just following him," Kraft Viton said, gesturing to Michael, who smiled somewhat forcibly.

"I'll have to change my status as well to enter the library, right?" The old man added, which was reaffirmed after the Warlock Centaur sighed in relief subconsciously.

Michael observed the exchange between the Warlock Centaur and the old man before he pulled the focus of the conversation back to himself, "In that case, how can I change my status? I know that the Warlock Centaurs and Berserkers divide their status into Plerus, Warriors, Champions, Combat Lords, Sacred Diviners, and War Gods, but what exactly do I have to do to become a Plerus, and what are the benefits of becoming a Warrior?"

Michael read that Plerus were mostly citizens, who hadn't manifested a War Rune. Most Awakened were Warriors, but that was already everything Michael knew.

"You cannot become a Plerus since you're not one of us. However, since you're a Lord with a Tier-2 War Rune, you can become a Warrior by getting acknowledged by five fellow Warriors. As long as a Champion vouches for you, you'll become a Warrior as well.

To become a Champion, you need to achieve something in the Origin Expanse, or earn merit points. Merit points can be procured in various ways, including winning combat tournaments, betting in the arena, completing missions set up by Combat Lords, and so on. Other than that, you also need to cross a certain threshold in your combat strength to become a Champion," The Warlock Centaur seated behind the reception of Piloq's Library answered before he added, "The rest...you don't need to know. You won't become a Combat Lord, either way."

'Why do I feel like he doesn't think I will ever become a Champion in the first place? Does being a Tier-2 Lord mean nothing, or does he think that I'm weak? Or...does he have a prejudice against all humans?' I think you should take a look at

The Warlock Centaur working in the Library might answer all of his questions, but Michael wasn't sure why the Centaur's eyes revealed traces of dislike and discontent.

'Or he just had a bad experience with other humans before.'

"How different is the treatment given to a Warrior compared to a Champion?" Michael asked. However, he quickly noticed that the Warlock Centaur narrowed his eyes. He even sighed in frustration, loudly enough for Michael to hear.

The sigh was enough for Michael to raise his eyebrow as he added a little annoyed, "The etiquette guides didn't tell me the difference in status between Warriors and Champions. Do you want me to treat a Champion with disrespect?"

Now it was the Warlock Centaur's turn to raise an eyebrow. Before he could say anything, Michael added, "If so, I will gladly tell everyone whom I accidentally mistreat that it was you who told me it's fine, Mister...Klerus Makal"

Michael read the name tag written on the Warlock Centaur's uniform and continued to stare intently at him.

The Warlock Centaur's expression changed and a subtle smile appeared on his lips, "Looks like our fletchling has some backbone."

"Alright. You want to know the difference in status, right?"

Klerus Makal had a sudden change in attitude. He noticed that Michael didn't allow anyone to look down at him, and pointed out his issue without losing his temper. That was a lot more than one could expect from Berserkers, or most human prodigies, who came to Piloq during the last few years.

Michael was a little surprised but he waited patiently until Klerus Makal continued speaking.

"To put it simply, all Awakened become Warriors. The difference between Unawakened and Awakened is similar everywhere. You receive special benefits, funding from the government, and several years of training in the military to grow stronger. Talented Combatants will be sent to different cities to train with their stronger brethren and hone each other's skills. The strongest Awakened will receive advanced training in Piloq where most Ancient Structures for all types of training were relocated over the years.

Warriors are allowed to use one Ancient Structure every week free of charge. Additional training sessions have to be requested and paid for via merit points, and other means," Klerus Makal explained calmly while analyzing Michael's response.

Michael merely nodded his head. He thought that it was a pretty good idea to train all Awakened and send the rest of the talent pool to other places where they could gather and grind each other to unravel

their hidden potential. Those capable of unleashing their full potential would then be sent to the advanced training course where the most talented would be trained with advanced means such as Ancient Structures.

A little bit of research was enough to determine that a few particular Ancient training Structures were situated in Piloq. For example, one of them could be used to examine the energy veins within their body, and research ways to strengthen the weaker parts while also fully utilizing the advantages of having strong energy veins in certain areas. That way, specialized martial arts techniques could be unleashed with much higher destructive force and effectiveness.

Michael was also interested in the Ancient Structures, so he listened intently as Klerus continued, "Warriors have a much higher status than Plerus. They're essential for the protection of our races, and provide resources from the Origin Expanse. They're allowed to enter the second floor of the library and utilize most facilities with a special discount. But Champions are on a whole different level. Most facilities are free of charge for them, and they're allowed to the second and third floors of the library in Piroq. Disrespecting them is something you should avoid if you're not confident of surviving a Challenge of Honor. Champions are powerful, bring honor to their people, and provide essential support to the economy for both Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs."

Klerus stopped to take a breath following the lengthy explanation. Michael was just about to say something but Klerus lifted his hand to stop him.

"Wait a moment. You should also listen to this. It's quite important since you're human – and this is about you," Klerus said, taking another deep breath before he added, "Human Warriors have restricted rights compared to Berserkers or Warlock Centaurs. This includes the rights to enter the library, use our Ancient Structures, and the purchase quota."

A frown appeared on Michael's face when he heard that. He didn't expect Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs to be racists.

Klerus noticed his reaction and smiled wryly as he added, "This is something we did to ensure that humans won't try to exploit our economy. You shouldn't frown at me. Your kind is at fault for this. If your companies wouldn't have tried to force some of our Champions to sell all of their goods to them that issue wouldn't exist. One of your companies even tried to kidnap our Champions, forcing the Sacred Diviner to step in."

"Ohh..." Michael added, having no difficulties imagining the greedy human Lords trying to kidnap Champions to exploit them and force them to work for the human Lords.

For the next ten minutes, Michael continued listening to Klerus. The information he obtained was very helpful. Every piece of information was stored in his mind, and a plan soon began to take shape.

'Let's start with becoming a Warrior first!'

Chapter 324 Timing

Since he wasn't allowed to enter the library and most of the other facilities, Michael chose to stroll through Piloq for a while.

He wasn't bored or anything like that, but he wanted to talk a little bit with Kraft Viton.

Michael asked Kraft Viton a few questions using his low mastery of Whispering Energy to ensure that the conversation between them remained a secret.

"You volunteered to accompany me to analyze the Zeus family's interactions in the Tritan Alliance, or am I wrong?" Michael asked straightforwardly, slowing down to make sure that he and Kraft Viton walked next to each other.

It didn't take a genius to understand that Kraft Viton was not Helen Ascaln's subordinate. If anything, Helen Ascaln was Kraft Viton's subordinate. However, Michael never understood why a high-ranked member of the Bartholomew Corporation would accompany him to the Battle Exchange. It didn't really make any sense —especially if it was just to protect him.

"The Zeus family is quite annoying, but watching their interactions with the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs is only one of the reasons why I decided to accompany you," Kraft Viton acknowledged without hesitation.

He further added, "I finalized my choice to take a trip to Meku when I heard that you, one of our Investors, were told to participate in the Interdimensional Flag War. I've heard about the ridiculous

'punishment', and decided to use the opportunity to get a better understanding of our investor while taking care of a few more tasks. "

Michael had already figured that much. The attention of too many powerhouses had been pulled toward him when he, a normal youth, overwhelmed a teacher at the 3rd Tier using a wide variety of Soultraits. That was also why his 'punishment' turned out to be an opportunity to grow stronger and make more connections rather than a laborious task.

"There is something I've always wondered," Michael said to Kraft, whose head turned to him.

"Why did Helen Ascaln accept my ridiculous demand for 18% of the Agriculture Project's profit share?"

Even though Michael couldn't purchase anything in the shops all over Piloq with his status as a Fletchling, he was certain that enough human Lords working for the Bartholomew Corporation could settle in Piloq and work their way up the social ladder. It might be a little bit problematic at first, but once they became Warriors, or even Champions, the Awakened would have an easy time purchasing Agriculture-type Blueprints, without the need to give up close to one-fifth of their profit.

The old man didn't say anything at first. However, Michael imagined that he saw the corners of the old man's lip curl up ever so slightly.

"I think you underestimate the opportunity you and the other participants of the Battle Exchange have been granted. When the Tritan Alliance formed, the first humans were allowed inside Meku's cities. Everything worked well for a few years, our economy grew rapidly, and our combat prowess increased considerably. Unfortunately, some Lords grew greedy. They wanted to move back to the human territory, but they didn't want to give up their connection to the goods of the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs. Thus, these idiots decided to kidnap a few Berserker Champions," Kraft Viton sighed heavily after the last sentence. He shook his head for a second and continued,

"Of course, the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs didn't like that. They considered dissolving the alliance, and waging war with the entire human race. Some higher ups in the government caught the perpetrators, freed the Berserker Champions and brought them back. They handed the perpetrators over as well and asked for forgiveness. However, once you break someone's trust, it becomes increasingly difficult to get it back. It was only fortunate that the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs had enough problems with the Tekur, otherwise, we would be waging war with them instead."

Kraft took a deep breath, allowing Michael to digest the new pieces of information.

"The Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs decided to forgive mankind for the time being. They executed the Lords, who'd kidnapped their Berserker Champions, and threw all humans out of their cities and settlements. All humans lost their status, and were given a purchase limit all over the shops and markets affiliated with the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs. Only the youngest prodigies of the human race – the participants of the Battle Exchange and the Interdimensional Flag War – were given the exception to upgrade their status."

"That means the Bartholomew Corporation has no chance of procuring a massive number of Agriculture-type Blueprints from the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs. After all, the Bartholomew Corporation wasn't found by several Supreme Families, or High Nobles. We don't have that many prodigious Lords working for us, even less if you include the Lords with enough strength to participate in the Battle Exchange," Kraft Viton revealed in all honesty, before he lightly added,

"We nearly gave up on the Agriculture Project, in the beginning. It was our dream to change the Barren Lands, so we funded the project. But it was a lot more expensive than we thought, and the results were...not so nice. The project might have been shelved if not for your sudden and unexpected arrival out of nowhere."

As the old man spoke about the dream to turn the Barren Lands into a flourishing land full of ripe crops, Michael felt a little odd. It was easy to tell that the old man revealed his sincere desire to change the Barren Lands into a land of flourishing nature. That was admirable, and it explained why the Bartholomew Corporation was willing to invest so much into him.

They almost gave up their dreams because it was not feasible at this point in time. If not for his timely arrival, they might have already terminated their project. It was a win win situation – for both Michael and the Bartholomew Corporation. I think you should take a look at

Intrigued by the progress of the Agriculture Project and the other projects of the Bartholomew Corporation, Michael decided to chat a little bit more with the old man.

He had yet to figure out who exactly Kraft Viton was, but that could wait. It was not as if the old man would run from him anytime soon.

A full hour passed in the blink of an eye until they finally arrived at their destination; the arena.

Since being a Fletchling was useless, Michael decided to upgrade his status to a Warrior as quickly as possible. It would be even better if he could become a Champion anytime soon, but he was certain that it wouldn't be that easy.

Being able to enter the Library's ground floor as a Warrior should be more than enough for the time being. Whatever happened after the Battle Exchange started was something Michael could pay more attention to later on. For now, he picked the easiest way to get recognized as a Warrior. He was ready to fight a few Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs!

Michael stepped into the large modern arena with a tinge of excitement. Talking to Kraft might be nice and entertaining, but fighting powerful opponents gave him the much needed boost and motivation to keep going on.

The arena looked like a modern version of the Colosseum from the inside. There were more than ten combat rings in the center, surrounded by a forcefield and rows of seats for visitors and other Warriors to spectate the fights.

"Where is everyone?" Michael wondered as he looked for other students.

By now, the other students should have noticed that they couldn't do much with their Fletchling status, but nobody was at the arena to fight.

There might be multiple arenas spanned across Piloq, but this was one of four arenas that were close to their hotel. Michael expected to see a handful of students, if not dozens of them.

"Most of them should be busy planning their next steps with their family. They're probably in a deep discussion with their parents and well-wishers to upgrade their status and the changes in Piloq. Other than that, many students will probably spend the rest of the week inside the Origin Expanse to make the most out of their time. Spending one week in Piloq with the Fletchling status seems like a loss compared to two weeks in the Origin Expanse, after all," Kraft explained.

He could name a few more reasons, but the point he wanted to get across was that Michael acted out of the ordinary. Michael didn't even enter his room in the hotel before he left everyone behind. He merely registered his arrival at the hotel reception, and received the code for his room, just to disappear and rush over to the library.

"I will also enter the Origin Expanse every now and then...but isn't it a waste of precious time to keep the Fletchling Status? Even without the status issue, wouldn't it be a good idea to spar with other Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs before the Battle Exchange starts?" Michael asked rhetorically.

He knew that the other students would work hard to grow stronger using the time difference between the Origin Expanse and outside to their advantage, but it was not as if they couldn't spend some of their time to socialize.

'Well, whatever.' Michael told himself.

He initially came to the Saphirelake Military Academy to get closer to the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs. He hoped to collect more knowledge about the origin tongue in the library, and he still wished to do so. However, given the knowledge he obtained in the Laxarta Library, Michael wasn't too sure how much the library of the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs could provide him with.

But even then, Michael always desired to get to know foreign races outside the Origin Expanse. Finally he achieved his goal.

Now it was about time to find out how powerful Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs actually were!

## Chapter 325 Arena

Michael's arrival in the arena attracted some attention. He was the first human student to enter the arena, causing a small commotion among the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs.

"Look who's here. A pair of old and young. Two tiny little humans," A Berserker bellowed through the arena, his voice filled with a mixture of scorn and disgust.

"Is this old wreck your nanny, little one?" The same Berserker asked. He jumped across the arena and landed in front of Michael with a thump.

The ground around him trembled as he landed, causing tremors to spread through Michael's legs.

Prideful, bad temper, and always out for a fight. The four meter tall Berserker in front of Michael was one of the best examples to describe the Berserker race. His muscles were bulging and his crimson eyes were filled with battle intent. Michael wouldn't be surprised if the Berserker were to throw a fist at him in the open.

Actually, that would be quite interesting.

Michael used the Eagle Eyes Soultrait with four layers of Enhancement. Simultaneously he exerted Pandemonium's Requiem to replenish the energy his Eagle Eyes used up.

The origin energy in the arena was not dense or of high quality. It was incomparable to the origin energy that permeated the air in the Untamed Jungle. Nonetheless, it was enough to keep Michael's energy storage filled to the brim.

"Origin Generators. Six of them in a single arena, at that. Piloq is really a city constructed for the sole purpose of whetting the strongest, and preparing for the worst in the Origin Expanse," Michael mumbled. He looked past the Berserker at the origin generators that generated the origin energy permeating the air using high-ranked monster cores as fuel.

The Berserker's provocation was entirely useless against Michael. It would take a little bit more to gain his interest – or wrath. After his last clash with the Zan Twins and Mr. Klein, Michael grew a lot calmer. He understood that he had to learn how to control his emotions, how to read the room, and what to do if something similar to last time was to happen again.

"Puny Fletchling! Are you ignoring me?!" The Berserker growled, origin energy circulating through his body. A crimson membrane covered the Berserker's body and his eyes turned crimson. His veins popped up, and his flat hand smashed down beside Michael the next moment.

The Berserker's hand missed Michael by a hair's breadth, yet Michael didn't even blink. He looked over to the Berserker and smiled lightly.

"I read a lot about your kind, but you guys really have a short temper. Isn't that why most Berserkers lost their rights as Lords?" Michael asked straightforwardly. He didn't have to use a sarcastic undertone in his voice, or anything like that. His words cut deep into the hearts of the Berserkers in the range of his voice.

They began to shout angrily and some of them were about to jump out of the combat rings to remove Michael from the arena first. But before they could do something, they heard bursts of laughter from left and right.

The Warlock Centaurs couldn't contain their laughter seeing how easily a few sentences enraged dozens of Berserkers.

"Why are you laughing, Mekhaz?!" The Berserker standing in front of Michael shouted across the arena, staring at a particular Warlock Centaur, who had three eyes and a much larger body than the rest.

The Warlock Centaur, Mekhaz, continued to chuckle. He ignored the Berserker, whose expression turned sour.

"See, even the Warlock Centaurs agree that your temper is messed up. If you were a little bit calmer, you might still have your territory," Michael delivered another deep blow.

However, this time, the Berserker couldn't hold back anymore. It hadn't been long since he lost his territory in a huge war against three enemies, who had combined their forces to wear out his combatants and defeat him. He and his army might have been strong enough to fight against enemies five times their numbers, but that hadn't been enough to win the war. He lost, and had to leave the Origin Expanse to survive.

Even then, he barely survived by a hair's breadth. His honor was lost, and his pride took a hit. Everything he had worked for had been taken away from him – just like it had happened to many Berserkers in the past.

Berserkers were a war-loving race. However, they weren't strategists. Their temper led to many wars in the Origin Expanse, most often against multiple parties simultaneously. But the Berserkers loved this. They loved the challenge of fighting against enemies no one else could defeat.

Unfortunately, many Berserkers had overestimated their prowess. Their combat prowess might be exceptional, but that didn't mean nobody was capable of using petty tricks to wear down the Berserkers and kill them when they reached their weakest point.

Pride and honor was the most important to Berserkers, yet it didn't play an important role for many other Lords. All that mattered was to survive and to obliterate their enemies – no matter what it would take to emerge victorious!

The Berserker in front of Michael roared loudly. A stream of crimson light shrouded his other arm and he smashed down with the intention to squash Michael.

Kraft Viton noticed the killing intent and rage in the Berserker's eyes, and he was just about to move when he noticed that Michael tilted his body a quarter of a second before the Berserker had moved.

Michael predicted the Berserker's attack. He moved forward and used the Berserker's size against him. Michael moved out of the danger zone by slipping under his right arm before his left arm hit the ground. He summoned a Glacicle the next moment and released it toward the Berserker, precisely his large ear.

Even though the Glacicle was not powerful, it could pierce through the ear and shatter inside the Berserker's head, freezing everything in its way.

Michael controlled the Glacicle precisely, stopping it right before it drilled deep into the Berserker's ear.

Interestingly enough, a layer of crimson light covered the Berserker's head even before the Glacicle reached the Berserker. The Glacicle would have been blocked even if Michael didn't do anything.

"At least your senses are pretty good, even when you're throwing a fit," Michael remarked, clearing his throat before he added, "I apologize for my rude behavior and for provoking you and your people."

Michael was sincere when he apologized, but his tone was sharp as he added, "But that doesn't mean I allow anyone to think of me as a pushover. You started this conflict because you hold a prejudice against me."

His voice grew colder as he spoke, and a freezing chill spread out of Michael's body.

"We can solve this issue with a battle. After that, your prejudice against me will disappear. I promise you that," Michael said, his tone clarifying that he had just made a statement and a promise.

The Berserker had been enraged, but also a little surprised. He didn't expect Michael to move that quickly nor that the human would attack him so fearlessly.

Michael's words rang through the arena even before he could initiate a second attack. The Berserker came back to his senses just as the Warlock Centaur he called out earlier arrived next to him.

"Thaor. I know that you just lost your territory, but the human is not wrong. Just spar with him and go all-out," Mekhaz suggested, turning to Michael as he continued to speak, "This should be interesting."

Michael agreed with a simple nod. He receded the power unleashed through Glacicle and waited patiently. Thaor, the Berserker was a Mid Tier-2 Adventurer with an extremely strong physique. The crimson light felt like an extension of Thaor's body as well. It was different from the bloody aura most Berserkers learned to control when they were close to becoming Higher Lifeforms.

Michael presumed that Thaor was a prodigy participating in the Battle Exchange, and that his crimson aura was part of Thaor's Unique Constitution. By sparring with Thaor, Michael hoped to gain the respect and acknowledgement of more than five Warriors. That combined with his combat prowess should be more than enough to change his status from a Fletchling to a Warrior.

"I won't hold back," Thaor said, looking intently at Michael. He turned around and jumped down into the combat ring where he told everyone to make space for them.

The other Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs moved back instinctively, not daring to obstruct Thaor in any way.

Michael stared at the scene in front of him with interest. Mekhaz noticed that and explained, "He was a Champion until a few days ago. By losing his territory, he also lost his status. Regaining his status will be increasingly difficult now that he is not a Lord anymore."

Michael looked over to Mekhaz, his lips pressed together for a moment. Then, a smile formed on his lips.

"Fighting a Champion only a few hours after I arrived...that's exciting!" He responded, which earned him an interesting gaze from the Warlock Centaur.

"Do you even know what it means to become a Champion before advancing to Tier-3?" Mekhaz asked.

Michael shook his head. He didn't know, and he actually didn't really care.

"It means that he could hold his forte against another Tier-3 Champion. He is strong enough to defeat Warriors at the 3rd Tier." Mekhaz elaborated.

Michael was thankful for the explanation, but he could only shrug.

"So what? He is not the only one who can fight someone a league above him."

Chapter 326 Champion's Might I

After Thaor ordered everyone to leave the combat ring, he and Michael had more than enough space to go all out.

Mekhaz and the other Warlock Centaurs looked for a good place to sit down and watch the battle. Meanwhile, the Berserkers shouted loudly, telling Thaor to beat the shit out of Michael.

Michael ignored the Berserkers. He glanced over to Kraft Viton, who sat down in the first row without any worries. Rather than being worried about Michael, curiosity could be seen in the old man's vibrant eyes.

"Ready, puny human?" Thaor asked while manifesting a set of black knuckles. The knuckles had various miniature enchantments engraved on their surface, creating a pressure that rivaled the Legendary Ring Artifact's dragon might.

'Can they customize Legendary Tier-2 Artifacts? That's...amazing.' Michael thought, his heart stirring in excitement. If he could find the Blacksmith and Enchanter who created Thaor's knuckles, he might as well get hold of a customized Legendary Weapon Artifact. By then, he would have even better equipment than many descendants.

Michael licked his lips at the sight of the black knuckles, and he manifested the Wyverntooth Spear and his Spirit Armor Set not long after. As for the Legendary Ring Artifact, Michael wouldn't store it away under normal circumstances. Instead, he would keep it around, infusing bits of energy into Dragon Might's storage whenever possible.

The Spirit Armor Set was the most recent creation of the Relic of Draka. It was dark blue and glimmered brightly as the surroundings' origin energy naturally channeled through it. Michael had used highly purified Zention metal to craft the Spirit Armor Set that fit him perfectly.

The Spirit Armor Set didn't have a single enchantment engraved on its flawless surface, but that was acceptable. The Spirit Armament forwarded its strong external enhancement to Michael the moment he put it on. All of his skills received a considerable boost, while his Agility was enhanced the most.

Spinning the Wyverntooth Spear around his body, Michael moved around slowly. It had only been a few hours since the Spirit Armor Set had been forged and it was the first time he wore it. He slowly adjusted his body to the enhancement he received from wearing the high-quality Spirit Armor Set by moving around and jumping up and down a little.

Once both sides were ready, one of the Berserkers stepped forward. He lifted one of his arms high into the air and bellowed loudly.

"FIGHT!"

Thaor's muscles bulged the instant the battle started. His body expanded by a few centimeters and his red skin color changed into a darker tone.

His foot kicked the ground and he propelled forward, crossing half the distance to Michael in an instance.

Michael had already activated Eagle Eyes with four layers of Enhancement. Nonetheless, he was surprised by Thaor's speed. He was definitely faster than Mr. Klein had been.

Michael saw that Thaor's crimson aura engulfed Thaor's fists like gloves, so he prepared for impact.

First, Michael released a small domain of extraction that covered a range of five meters around him. The golden dome caused ripples in the surroundings as the origin energy permeating the air was annexed. Simultaneously, Michael conjured dozens of Glacicles around him. They were released with great velocity and crashed into Thaor the next moment – just as the Berserker entered the dome of extraction, and his attack range to inflict bloody attacks on Michael.

Michael willed the dome of extraction to extract the crimson aura engulfing Thaor's hands when the Berserkers entered the dome of extraction. Unfortunately, extracting the crimson aura didn't work well. It was just like Michael expected.

'Extracting the creations of Innate Powers seems a little bit too hard without enough layers of Enhancement,' Michael concluded instantaneously. For a quarter of a second, he considered using the Power of Enhancement stored in Dragon Might to enhance the dome of Extraction, but he chose against it.

Extracting the crimson aura engulfing Thaor's hands wouldn't necessarily result in his victory.

Michael manifested a large Glacicle vertically in front of him. It acted as both a shield and a visual blockage against Thaor. Thaor had already seen Michael manifest several Glacicles before. Thus, he wasn't surprised to see a large Glacicle appear in front of him.

He had also felt the effect of the Glacicles before since more than a dozen Glacicles burst on his skin a second ago. The prickling sensation of his body working against the freezing chill that enveloped the areas that had been hit by the Glacicles was nothing new for Thaor. He easily concluded the effect of Michael's Glacicles and acted instinctively – moving around the large Glacicle with a single stride to avoid releasing a massive amount of freezing mist by crushing it.

Thaor's left arm jerked back and propelled forward, ready to bash Michael's head, as he moved around the Glacicle. However, what Thaor didn't expect was to see six silver swords hovering amidst tens of

Glacicles. Six Qi Swords, strengthened with three layers of Enhancement had been conjured the instant Michael sensed Thaor moving around the Glacicle.

His dome of extraction allowed Michael to sense everything that happened in its range even if it was in his blind spot. Thus, by blocking the view of the other person, Michael could rely on the dome of extraction to pinpoint Thaor's position.

That was also how Michael could react perfectly in time to retreat a few steps and manifest Qi Swords and Glacicles in front of him. He sent a burst of energy through the Qi Swords and Glacicles to release them with as much velocity as possible. I think you should take a look at

In the next instance, they smashed upon Thaor.

Thaor reacted quickly. He forcefully terminated his attack and moved his arms to block his vital points as well as possible. At the same time, a dense membrane of crimson aura covered his body, which began to release smoke.

Thaor's hide-like skin tightened as puffs of smoke were released through his pores, allowing the crimson aura to spread smoothly all over the Berserker's body.

His defense, reinforced repetitively, was powerful. It was strong enough to block dozens of Glacicles, and the freezing mist they released upon shattering, easily. However, Thaor's means of defense wasn't enough to block six enhanced Qi Swords. The Qi Sword's destructive power was terrific, and it grew even more terrifying as layers of Enhancement reinforced the blades.

Two Qi Swords shot straight ahead, crashing into Thaor's black knuckles, forcefully blocking his movements, while the remaining four Qi Swords shot toward his shoulders and thighs.

Thaor's crimson aura erupted when he sensed the danger of the Qi Swords, but he was already too late. The crimson aura was unleashed too late, merely altering the trajectory of the Qi Swords by a few centimeters. They still cut into Thaor's arms and thighs, leaving deep gashes or so Michael thought.

Thaor tilted his body after the four Qi Swords cut him. He sustained only light injuries through the cuts – nothing noteworthy. His combat prowess wasn't affected at all. Thus, he moved rapidly, smashing the Qi Swords that collided with his knuckles before he unleashed the power of his black knuckles.

A dark sheen spread all over the knuckles' surface, sucking in the hostile energy that permeated the knuckles' surroundings.

Michael released two more Qi Swords, which were crushed as they collided with Thaor's fist.

Michael raised an eyebrow when he saw that, but a smile formed on his lips soon after. The dome of extraction regained its original shape when the Qi Swords cut into Thaor, and infiltrated Thaor's body by bypassing the crimson aura with a considerable amount of energy left within them.

Thaor didn't even notice the golden streams that disappeared inside his body, however, everyone else watching the battle saw that. They witnessed the golden dome shaping into golden threads that disappeared in the four cuts Thaor sustained.

But that was not the most surprising thing that had happened since the battle started.

The most surprising event was the huge variety of Soultraits Michael had displayed since the battle started.

His black eyes turned golden when the battle began. He summoned a golden dome, conjured icicles, and manifested silver swords. That was something everyone could see. However, Mekhaz and Kraft Viton could clearly tell that the white hue around his golden eyes, and some of Michael's silver swords were another Soultrait, a powerful Soultrait at that.

The silver swords strengthened through the white hue were a lot sharper, more resilient, and their destructive power was a lot higher than the ordinary silver swords Michael could conjure with a single thought.

"This Fletchling...has five Soultraits?" Mekhaz asked himself quietly, his third eye shimmering brightly. He continued to watch the battle with a lot more focus than before as a single thought flashed through his mind.

'What kind of monster did these humans breed?!'

Even Kraft Viton was surprised watching Michael. He had watched Michael's fight against the Zan Twins, and Mr. Klein several times, and knew that Michael had multiple Soultraits but Michael's execution left him stunned.

Michael told him that he obtained the Reinforced Sword Qi Soultrait from the Lord Rift, which was the truth, but that didn't explain his other Soultraits – especially not the appearance of the Soultrait he used to conjure icicles.

Michael hadn't even revealed Glacicle in the battles within the Colosseum. Yet, he used Glacicle and his other Soultraits so easily that Kraft Viton began to question his own talent.

He had been a prodigy when he was young, yet the ease with which Michael controlled five Soultraits simultaneously was terrifying to watch. They weren't even low-ranked Soultraits. All of them had to be 4-Star Soultraits or higher.

'How did Alice poach this kid into her team?! This...freak...' Kraft Viton asked himself before realizing what he just thought.

'It's a good thing that he is Bartholomew's ally...'

Chapter 327 Champion's Might II

Thaor didn't know what happened after the Qi Swords cut his arms and thighs. However, he could feel that something was wrong.

Yet, instead of trying to figure out what exactly happened, Thaor stared at the human in front of him with uncontrollable anger in his eyes. The human smiled cockily at him, and moved around nimbly, avoiding his attacks, and restraining his advances.

Dozens of Glacicles were manifested in batches repetitively. They weren't powerful, or endurable enough to pierce through the Berserker's crimson aura without bursting apart. But that was exactly what Michael wanted. The freezing mist in the combat ring grew denser as the battle between the human and the Berserker continued.

Michael didn't rush anything. He focused on distracting Thaor with Glacicles, and occasional Qi Swords to restrain the Berserker's attacks. Thaor was physically a lot stronger than Michael, but he didn't have an easy time approaching Michael. The freezing mist affected his crimson aura, forcing Thaor to use more origin energy to keep his aura stable.

He tried to retract his crimson aura to slow down his energy consumption, but the freezing mist permeating the air all over the combat ring affected him at once. Thaor's body was searing hot, enhancing his physical strength in every aspect. Yet, the freezing mist dampened the effect, cooling his body the moment the crimson aura receded.

Forced to maintain the crimson aura spreading across his entire body, Thaor's origin energy was naturally consumed. But what Thaor didn't even seem to realize was that four golden threads of energy were slowly extracting some of the origin energy circulating through his body as well.

The origin energy was slowly extracted and transferred to Michael, who annexed it instantaneously. Michael then used the annexed origin energy to create more Glacicles which he crushed intentionally to fill the entire combat ring with freezing mist.

Michael controlled his energy consumption precisely. He used only as much energy as he annexed from Thaor to ensure that he had enough energy reserves for the worst-case scenario. Michael would love to go all-out and attack Thaor head-on, but the vast difference in their physical strength was the first thing he realized when the battle started.

The gap in their physical strength was not something Michael could cover just because he wanted to. He wasn't a Berserker whose physical strength was innately superior to humans, neither was he in possession of a Soultrait that enhanced his physical strength passively and actively like Thaor's Soultrait did.

Not even the external enhancement provided by the Spirit Armor Set was enough to bridge the vast gap. If anything, the Spirit Armor Set barely allowed him to move away from Thaor whenever the Berserker attacked, thereby allowing him to escape being defeated.

In the next five minutes, Michael focused on draining Thaor's origin energy, and filling the air with freezing mist. The mist was not thick, but it made it much harder for them to see each other. Michael was fortunate that Thaor was four meter tall, and that his red skin continued to smoke. That allowed Michael to retrieve Zark and condense energy arrows which he released mercilessly.

Michael moved rapidly through the mist to avoid Thaor whenever he attacked. Everytime Michael released an energy arrow he moved to a completely different spot, preventing Thaor from pinpointing his exact location.

Over the course of the battle, Thaor was growing restless. He could tell that he was getting played, and that Michael tried to stall time. It was not difficult to perceive that Michael's energy storage was either huge or that his Soultraits didn't require a lot of origin energy to be activated. On the contrary, Thaor's crimson aura consumed a considerable amount of energy as it engulfed his entire body constantly, and his Soultrait drained his stamina, slowly wearing him out.

His origin energy was drained much faster than he expected, but Thaor presumed that this was related to the potent effect of the freezing mist. It affected his crimson aura.

Only after more than five minutes into the battle did Thaor finally realize what happened to him. His senses picked up the four golden threads that had infiltrated his body, and that the threads drained his origin energy.

Once Thaor understood that Michael drained his origin energy, the cogs in Thaor's mind began to move rapidly. Thaor's biggest weakness had always been that he didn't use his head in battle. His combat awareness, physical strength, and natural awakening of a Unique Constitution allowed him to grow stronger than most peers, but he was not capable of applying his wits mid-battle. It didn't feel right to him to use his rational thinking in the battle. On the contrary, it was most natural to allow his instincts to take over.

And that was exactly what Thaor started doing when he realized that Michael was not a puny human; a fletchling who could bark but not bite. Instead, Michael was a powerful opponent against whom the Berserker could go all-out without any worries.

Thaor unleashed the full power of his Red Giant Soultrait, elevating his physical strength rapidly. After his body reacted to the active utilization of Red Giant, Thaor took a deep breath. His muscles bulged and

the crimson aura covering his body seemed to mend into his skin, further enhancing the power of his Soultrait.

The temperature in the combat arena increased drastically, and the crackling of embers resounded through the surrounding area. The Berserker's body began to glow as he expanded until his height reached 4.5 meters. His presence intensified gradually, and the red in his eyes expanded until it covered his eyes entirely – even the white.

Michael retreated instinctively. He replaced the Zark Bow with the Wyverntooth Spear and manifested several Qi Swords which he blasted toward Thaor. However, before the Qi Swords could impact, Thaor moved quickly. Despite enlarging his size and his muscles inflated, his agility never decreased. On the contrary, his agility increased. I think you should take a look at

Thaor released six rapid punches with exceptional precision. His knuckles hit the tip of the Qi Swords precisely, destroying each of them with a single hit. In response to the sudden destruction, the black knuckles began to shine brighter. They seemed to grow more resilient as they sucked in the energy released from the dispersing Qi Swords.

Michael could faintly fathom black blades growing from within the black knuckles. He raised his eyebrows in response but didn't have enough time to think about the unique power of the knuckles when Thaor appeared next to Michael.

The Berserker crossed the distance between them in an instant – much faster than Michael could react. He barely fathomed what was about to happen when the Berserker's right fist shot out. Michael instinctively manifested a firm Glacicle between him and the Berserker, hoping that it would be enough to slow down the Berserker's attack. But it was far from enough. Thaor's right fist smashed into Michael's side. The next moment Michael flung through the air.

Michael felt his abs tightening and a shockwave of energy spread through the Spirit Armor Set the instant Thaor's fist impacted. He crashed into the ground several meters ahead, turned around with the intention to jump up, only to see Thaor towering above him.

His fist smashed down once again on Michael.

Feeling severe pain in his sides, Michael wondered if something broke, but he couldn't pay attention to his injuries right now.

Instead, he used a considerable amount of energy to manifest six Qi Swords right next to each other. There was no gap between the Qi Swords. The tips of the blades were stacked against each other as Thaor's fist collided. Michael pushed his body to the side as the Berserker's fist and his Qi Swords collided. Afterward, he used a layer of Enhancement on the Symbol of Extraction.

He enhanced the energy drain of the four golden threads that had invaded Thaor's body earlier.

Michael shot up from the ground and released another batch of six Qi Swords toward Thaor. But this time the Qi Swords were enhanced by three layers of Enhancement and spread out. They shot through the air much faster than before and pressured Thaor into blocking the attacks if he didn't want to sustain more injuries.

Meanwhile, Michael took a deep breath. He circulated origin energy through his body to perceive how severe the injury to his sides was. Fortunately, he quickly figured that it wasn't too bad. The Spirit Armor Set blocked most damage before distributing the remaining force across his body. The injury would hurt for a while, but it wouldn't affect his combat prowess in the slightest.

After observing Thaor for the last few minutes, Michael couldn't help but feel a little bit jealous.

Thaor was born with a Unique Constitution, his physique was naturally stronger than most Berserkers, and his Soultrait further enhanced his physical strength – passively and actively. His Crimson Aura was highly compatible with his Soultrait as well, further strengthening his physical strength.

But that was not all.

Michael realized that Thaor was a monstrosity. Being able to rely on his combat instincts to fight against someone with several high-ranked Soultraits was far from easy. Yet, Thaor had overpowered him – quite easily at that.

The only downside was that the Berserker underestimated him at the start of their battle. Thaor didn't seem to focus on training his mental resilience to a high degree. He used some sort of technique to

refine his mind to integrate his combat instincts perfectly into the battle whenever he wanted to, but that was not enough to resist 6-Star Extraction's light energy drain – forget about 10-layer Extraction's mega drain.

"You would have won, had you not underestimated me earlier," Michael mumbled as he unleashed the Power of Enhancement stored inside the Legendary Ring Artifact.

"Seems like I got lucky today."

In the next moment, the Power of Enhancement was fully unleashed and Extraction began to wreak havoc within the Berserker.

Chapter 328 Insider

At the end of the battle, the Power of Enhancement stored in Dragon Might had been applied to the Symbol of Extraction. Thereafter, the four golden threads of extraction inside Thaor grew several times stronger.

Compared to the light energy drain before, 10-layer Extraction evolved into a mega drain of energy, emptying Thaor's energy storage near instantly.

The sudden drain of Thaor's remaining energy took the Berserker by surprise. His crimson aura was forcefully retracted, and the freezing mist in the combat ring took effect. Simultaneously, Michael's origin energy was rapidly replenished by annexing the energy Extraction had extracted within Thaor.

Six Qi Swords and close to a hundred Glacicles manifested around Michael as Thaor appeared in front of him. Thaor was about to deliver one fierce blow after another when his eyes widened in surprise. His energy storage was empty, his crimson aura had forcefully receded due to the lack of energy to maintain it outside his body, and his physical strength decreased ever so slightly.

Michael released the Qi Swords and Glacicles with a burst of energy. He dived to the side, rolled over the ground and jumped up smoothly. As he jumped up, Michael manifested more Qi Swords and Glacicles, ready to release them toward Thaor at any moment. But that didn't seem to be necessary.

Thaor could barely destroy the six Qi Swords before nearly 100 Glacicles shattered all over his body. Thaor's body temperature decreased rapidly, and it exhausted a tremendous amount of his stamina to increase his body's temperature once again. His stamina was rapidly exhausted to work against the highly potent effect of the freezing mist each of the Glacicles released upon shattering.

Michael released several batches of Glacicle and Qi Swords one after another. Thaor's movements slowed down, his body temperature decreased, and his hide-like skin began to freeze slowly. Meanwhile, the Qi Swords seemed to accelerate with greater velocity as they bypassed Thaor's black knuckles, inflicting deep gashes all over the Berserker's body.

Not even a minute passed since Michael drained Thaor's energy storage to annex his origin energy when Michael disappeared from Thaor's sight. The Berserker was panting heavily. His stamina was drained, and his body made loud crackling noises as every single move broke some of his frozen hide-like skin, chipping it off.

When Michael re-appeared, he was in the air above the Berserkers, standing on one of his Qi Swords. His Wyverntooth Spear was coated in Reinforced Sword Qi, and several layers of Enhancement. Michael kicked his feet from the Qi Sword and propelled himself downward with the speed of a cannonball. He smashed into the Berserker's shoulder just moments before the Wyverntooth Spear cut into the Berserker's neck.

"Dead," Michael said quietly as he pulled the Wyverntooth Spear away from the Berserker's neck. Blood gushed out of his neck like a fountain, but Michael didn't pay much attention to that.

He retracted the Wyverntooth Spear and lifted his right hand high into the air. In the next moment, a strong suctioning force pulled on the freezing mist that enveloped the combat ring. He retracted the freezing mist into his body, where Glacicle would dismantle the freezing mist and turn it back into energy – though much less than he had used to create the Glacicles.

Once most of the freezing mist in the arena had been retracted, Michael retracted the golden threads of extraction within Thaor's body as well. He looked into the Berserker's eyes, where shock and disbelief were the most apparent. Michael sighed, hoping that Thaor wouldn't cause problems now that he had been defeated.

He didn't realize that the opposite was the case. As Thaor regained his senses, he looked over to Michael with a meaningful smile on his face.

"You're strong," His voice cut through the silence of the arena.

"I shouldn't have underestimated you. My prejudice against humans led to my miserable defeat. I owe you an apology," The Berserker said in a voice loud enough for everyone to hear, "I am sorry for my ignorance in front of a brave fighter such as you. I embarrassed myself."

Michael never expected Thaor to apologize, let alone that he would be loud enough for everyone to hear. It took him by surprise, but it was not bad. On the contrary, Michael felt quite good after hearing Thaor's apology.

"Lions use their full strength even when they hunt rabbits. You learned after losing to this young Warrior. This lesson might save your life in the future," Mekhaz, the Warlock Centaur, said.

He had appeared next to Michael and Thaor at some point. A vibrant smile plastered his lips as he looked at the wounds all over Thaor's body. Mekhaz called for a medic who rushed over to tend to the Berserker's wounds. Mekhaz's attention moved over to Michael with great curiosity gleaming in his three eyes.

"Seems like I should apologize as well. I didn't expect Thaor to lose either. The prodigies, who can defeat Thaor with a lesser refined War Rune, can be counted in just one hand. At least in Piloq," Mekhaz revealed in all honesty, "I apologize for my ignorance."

Michael didn't worry too much about being underestimated. In the first place, he knew that he only won against Thaor because he grossly underestimated him for being a human. If Thaor had unleashed the full power of his black knuckles, and the fusion of his fully released Soultrait and his Crimson Aura, Michael would have lost within seconds.

The Qi Swords would have been destroyed easily, and the Glacicles would have been repelled.

Fortunately, Michael could inflict four shallow cuts to infiltrate his body with the golden threads of Extraction before the Berserker went all out. It secured his victory, which was great for Michael, but also a little disappointing. He used most of his Soultraits without holding back, yet he could only win because his opponent underestimated him.

'I'm still not strong enough.'

"Little Fletchli—....no, I should call you young Warrior now. I challenge you for a spar!" A loud voice resounded from behind Mekhaz. I think you should take a look at

A Berserker – shorter than Thaor – jumped down into the combat ring. Excitement gleamed in his eyes as he stared intently at Michael.

"Your Soultraits are extraordinary. Show me your power in an honorable battle!"

Michael looked over to Mekhaz and Thaor, who didn't say anything. However, Kraft Viton's voice reached him through Whispering Energy.

"It's normal for Berserkers and the Warlock Centaurs to challenge you after you defeat one of their strongest. They want to see how strong you're compared to them, or if you were just lucky. They also want to defeat you to defend the honor of their race that might get tarnished after you earned your victory against Thaor."

Michael nodded his head in understanding. He glanced over to Kraft and smiled thankfully.

Then his attention returned to the Berserkers, who jumped down into the combat ring one after another.

'You guys cannot defeat Thaor, but you want to gain honor by defeating me – who defeated Thaor. You sly bastards...I'm up for it!'

"Give me five minutes to replenish my energy," Michael replied calmly to the challenger.

He retrieved a normal energy pill from his War Rune's storage and consumed it. His energy storage was almost full due to the vast amount of energy he had annexed from Thaor, but Michael didn't want to make it too obvious.

Five minutes later, his second fight in the arena began.

His enemy was a Mid Tier-2 Berserker, who had still a long way to go before he would be promoted to a Champion. He still had his powers as a Lord, but his combat awareness, and combat prowess was much lower than Thaor's. Michael bombarded the Berserker with hundreds of Glacicles before entering close combat using four-layer Eagle Eyes, and the Wyverntooth Spear with Reinforced Sword Qi and three layers of Enhancement.

Reinforced Sword Qi couldn't be applied to the whole Wyverntooth Spear, but it could be used on the Wyverntooth Spear's blade. The Soultrait's potency was comparatively lower than it would have been if applied on a proper Sword, but Michael was not really a sword wielder. He had only used a sword before because Danny taught him how to wield swords – and because Danny gave him Tigerfang.

But now that he obtained Danny's Soultrait, Michael wondered if he should switch back to wielding a sword. In the end, Michael decided to focus on long-range combat these days using Glacicles and Qi Swords as his primary strategy.

By using Glacicles and Qi Swords, combined with Eagle Eyes to pinpoint the movement patterns of his enemies, and Enhancement to further empower his other Soultraits, Michael defeated two more Berserkers before Mekhaz pulled him aside.

"You should check your notifications. I made sure that your status will be upgraded as soon as possible," Mekhaz said, giving him a thumbs up before he looked over to the Berserkers, whose expressions were overflowing with sourness.

"It was about time that someone beat the shit out of them. Fighting these muscular no-brainers is quite...mentally draining. Unfortunately, their combat awareness, battle instincts, and physical strength is quite terrifying. They're perfect if you need a punching bag with anger issues, who punches back at the slightest inconvenience," Mekhaz joked lightly.

Thaor frowned deeply upon hearing Mekhaz.

"At least we're revealing our honest feelings rather than accumulating it in our hearts. We might be considered a short-tempered race, but you Warlock Centaurs are even worse. The moment someone

sparks the wrath that has been accumulated within your hearts for weeks, months, if not years, you brutes won't even calm down before your bodies are covered entirely in blood. If anything, we Berserkers are an honest race, while you guys turn into maniacs when someone triggers your wrath!"

Mek haz was still smiling at Thaor, but a glint of anger flashed through his eyes. He pointed at the combat ring and stomped with his hooves on the ground.

"You know nothing, brainless fool! Fight me, and you'll witness what I can do once I'm angry!"

While Mek haz and Thaor quarreled with each other, Michael stared at the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs with a faint smile.

If he felt like an outsider before entering the arena, Michael now felt like he had been fully accepted by the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs.

It was a weird feeling, but it was certainly not bad.

Chapter 329 Back

[Congratulations! Your Status in the Tritan Alliance has been upgraded. Successful promotion from 'Fletchling' to 'Warrior'. Read thoroughly through the attached files to get to know more about your benefits and responsibilities.]

Michael finished reading through the newest notification on his crystal watch and opened the attached files. The files weren't big, so Michael read through them before the battle between Thaor and Mek haz reached the climax.

Once he was done reading, he sat down next to Kraft Viton to observe the battle of the former Champion Thaor against Champion Mek haz. They were both extremely powerful, granting Michael a great opportunity as he watched the fight with four-layer Eagle Eyes.

Using Eagle Eyes with four layers of Enhancement drained his energy considerably, but it was definitely worth it. Watching two powerhouses of the Berserker and Warlock Centaur race fight each other without holding back provided far more information than he could have hoped for.

Several cracks formed on the ground of the combat ring during the fierce battle. Interestingly enough, the combat ring repaired itself using bits of the origin energy that permeated the air in the arena.

Observing the combat ring repair itself magically was quite interesting. Nonetheless, Michael got up after a few seconds, and prepared to depart.

He fulfilled his mission by attaining the status of a Warrior. At last, he could enter Piloq's library now.

But before Michael could leave, he noticed both Thaor and Mekhaz walking towards him. They could tell that Michael wanted to leave and approached him.

"How about training with us until the Battle Exchange starts? You can improve your fighting style against opponents who are physically much stronger than you, while we can attune our instincts to deal with your long-range attacks better. Everyone would gain something," Thaor proposed, but Michael shook his head.

"Maybe, I will visit you guys in the next few days, but I think I will be busy for a while. I learned a lot while fighting you guys, and I think I found a few ways to improve my strength as well," Michael politely declined their request before he added, "Furthermore, I wanted to visit the library to study a little. I had to become a Warrior to enter the first floor, which is why I entered the arena in the first place."

After fighting for a while, Michael felt that it was about time to read. He was still excited about the prospect of fighting the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs, but it was not as if his sparring partners would disappear all of a sudden. Michael was bound to have more than enough opportunities to fight during the Battle Exchange – for an entire month at that.

"The library?" Mekhaz asked, staring at Michael.

Even Thaor looked at him a little oddly.

"What about it?" Michael couldn't help but ask.

"Nothing, really," Mekhaz said, pulling Thaor away from Michael.

"Let him go to the library," He told Thaor before turning back to Michael, "I hope you have a...good time in the library. Just come back to train with us whenever you feel like it."

"I will."

Michael turned to the entrance of the arena and departed without saying anything else. He would return soon enough. There was no need to worry. After all, he was looking forward to learning more about his strength, his Soultraits, and ways to deal with opponents such as Thaor.

Today Michael learned that he was still a rookie. He might be powerful, but that didn't mean he was omnipotent – not that he ever felt like that. He left the arena and headed to Piloq's library, hoping that the first floor would have some records about old Ancient Ruins, and the origin tongue used before the First Epoch.

'If I'm lucky they might have some books about the Dragon Tongue. It should be similar to the Primal Origin Tongue – or whatever language the Temple of the Forgotten uses.'

Michael was deep in thought, and didn't even notice the glimmer of surprise in Kraft Viton's eyes. The old man had been surprised several times since Michael's battle with Thaor.

One thing about Michael was that the youngster was pretty good at making friends and connections. He wasn't even trying but naturally got closer to the people around him – especially the people who insulted him first.

Now that Michael left the arena Thaor was clearly the most upset about his departure. Seeing how the Berserker's attitude toward Michael changed so quickly was quite intriguing for Kraft. The old man recalled the Barbaric Couple and the fact that they had grown attached to Michael. The Barbaric Couple even defended Michael when Mr. Klein and the Zan Twins schemed against him.

Kraft Viton heard enough rumors about the Barbaric Couple, and how they had been before meeting Michael. Calling their behavior 'bad' was a gross understatement. It was much better to consider them freakish devils – until they met Michael, who was said to have beaten them up pretty harshly, several times at that.

The old man knew so much about the Barbaric Couple because they were the reason why the Orlando family and the Kolbenheim family were nearly rejected as business partners of the Bartholomew Corporation. After all, the Bartholomew Corporation would rather avoid bad publicity than add the two families to their list of business partners.

Fortunately, the Barbaric Couple's attitude improved after they joined the Sapphire Lake Military Academy. They were still spoiled, but the Barbaric Couple realized that their strength was not as exceptional as they initially thought. They left their little pond and jumped into a huge ocean where the true powerhouses resided and their inflated egos took a hit.

Their arrogance was dampened, and their motivation to grow stronger was fueled as the gap between them and the other students – including Michael – widened.

Thinking about Michael's combat prowess was reason enough for Kraft to furrow his eyebrows. Kraft Viton had seen many young prodigies appearing out of nowhere. However, nobody was as confusing as Michael. Especially Michael's last attack against Thaor had left him stunned.

The Berserker's energy had been drained suddenly, resulting in his combat prowess decreasing drastically, only for Michael's energy to erupt all of a sudden, allowing him to counterattack and take advantage of the Berserker. Michael was destined to lose the moment Thaor unleashed his full strength, yet Michael changed the tide of the battle with a single attack.

'The golden threads...' The old man recalled. 'The golden threads are the reason he won. What kind of Soultrait was that? Were those energy leeches? Is that it? Can he drain the energy within the air and objects his golden threads touch...and annex them?'

The more the old man thought about it the more sense it made. He had replayed and watched Michael's fight against Mr. Klein a lot more often than he wanted to acknowledge. He had been drawn to the golden energy because it was something he couldn't comprehend. However, now that he witnessed the power of the golden threads, Kraft Viton gained a better understanding.

'Energy Leeches, combined with at least four more Soultraits...one to enhance his sight, one to enhance his other Soultraits, and two Soultraits that can be used with great versatility... None of those Soultraits is weak either... However, Energy Leeches is the strongest. Is it a 5-Star Soultrait?'

The old man shook his head. The silver swords were more likely to be a 5-Star Soultrait. On the other hand, the icicles felt more like a weak ice-elemental Soultrait. It was probably a 4-Star Soultrait given that Michael had little to no problem controlling it as a Tier-2 Lord.

But if that was the case, what about the golden threads? They were clearly stronger than the silver swords – and the gap was not that small either.

Kraft Viton's frown deepened even further as he looked intently at Michael's broad back.

'It couldn't be a 6-Star Soultrait...right?'

Michael didn't know what was on the old man's mind. He could only tell that Kraft Viton wasn't even trying to hide his stare. But Michael didn't really mind. He was also deep in thought, wondering what to do with his new connections.

The Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs were prideful people, but they were also honorable. It wasn't a disgrace for them to lose against a powerful opponent. On the contrary, they would honor the fight and show respect to their opponent. That was something Michael noticed quite clearly.

The moment he defeated Thaor, everyone showed much more respect toward him. They challenged him officially and did not hold a grudge against Michael. In fact, after losing, they felt much closer to Michael as well. It was really interesting.

Recalling the scars covering the bodies of every Berserker that served as clear evidence of the bloody battles they had fought over the course of years, Michael couldn't help but feel a little bit jealous.

'I wish I could hire some of them to become my subordinates. With the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs leading my Summons at the frontlines, I wouldn't have to worry about the safety of my army ever again,' Michael thought, sighing deeply.

Kraft Viton told him that some humans kidnapped Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs. Thus, he doubted that he could hire the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs in the future. Even if he could, many would frown upon him.

It was not that Michael was bothered about the opinion other people had of him, but he cared about his subordinates more than anything else. That meant the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs he would hire would have to be trustworthy. Michael would also pay a lot of attention to ensure that the Link of Loyalty's clauses would restrict Adventurers from harming his other subordinates.

'Most of their Awakened lost their powers as Lords. Can I take advantage of that somehow?' Michael wondered as he turned around the last corner to arrive in front of the library entrance.

Michael stepped inside, where he found the Warlock Centaur still seated behind the reception counter.

A frown appeared on the Warlock Centaur's face when he saw him, only for Michel to chuckle lightly.

"I am back!"

Chapter 330 Analyzed

Piloq's library was pretty simple and ordinary. There were rows of shelves holding countless books on different topics.

Every now and then Michael spotted cozy chairs and tables where he could sit down to read and study. It was a place to explore new worlds through the pages of the books that could be found everywhere – just like any other library.

Once Michael made it past the Warlock Centaur receptionist, Michael stepped into this new world – a world full of books to read, and knowledge to devour.

Michael wished he could extract the knowledge of all the books around him, but he knew that his wish was not feasible. He would destroy the books the moment Extraction extracted the Wisps of Knowledge from within the books. But that was fine. Michael was not in a hurry right now.

He walked past the rows of shelves, trying to get a rough understanding of the library's structure. But what he got to know instead was that he was one of a few visitors, not the only one. On the first floor of the Piloq Library Michael saw only three Warlock Centaurs and one Berserker. The Berseker didn't seem too invested in the book in front of him, and the Warlock Centaurs whispered to each other. Michael didn't find a single book on the table in front of the Warlock Centaurs.

"Are you surprised?" Kraft Viton asked Michael through Whispering Energy.

Michael turned around, his lips tightly pressed together.

"I am more curious to know how you entered the library rather than finding out why the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs don't love to spend their freetime reading some books. They love the arena, and are races that grew up with the desire to wage bloody wars, and not a war of philosophy," He responded to the old man also using Whispering Energy.

Kraft didn't say anything. He just smiled seeing how confused Michael was. Michael shook his head and turned back to the front.

After walking through Piloq's library for a few minutes, Michael found a librarian – or so he presumed. The Librarian was a colossus with a height that easily crossed 5 meters. He was six-meter-tall, and the white coat he wore did a miserable job of covering his huge, ripped body.

Michael could clearly see the way the Berserker's muscles twitched with every move the librarian made.

Noticing a gaze lingering on his back, the Berserker turned around. His eyes moved to Kraft Viton first, only to show a glimmer of surprise when his attention moved to Michael.

"It looks like someone was in a hurry to receive a promotion," The six-meter-tall Berserker said, his sonorous voice resounding in the surroundings, "Were you in a hurry to enter the library?"

Something in the librarian's voice caused Michael's body to tense up. He instinctively changed into a defensive stance and circulated origin energy through his body. Michael was ready to manifest his Soultraits and run for his life.

He could have attempted fighting the librarian, but something deep inside Michael told him that fighting the monstrosity in front of him would be suicidal.

A bead of sweat trickled down his temple, resulting in a smile blossoming on the librarian's face.

"It seems like your perception is quite high. That will probably help you survive a long time in the Origin Expanse," The librarian said lightly, "I am merely a tired warrior, who finds joy in reading. There is no need to be wary of me."

It was odd, but Michael felt that he could trust the librarian's words. The tension all over his body dispersed at once. A heavy sigh escaped his lips as his gaze flicked to his right where Kraft Viton relaxed visibly as well.

'Even the old man was affected? That's...surprising...'

Michael wondered how strong the librarian must have been before he decided to switch his job. The librarian didn't even have to release his presence or circulate energy through his body to affect both him and the old man.

'Is he Tier-5? No, that's probably not it. I don't know how strong the old man is, but Alice talked to him with respect. Kraft is probably also a Tier-5 powerhouse. Doesn't that mean the librarian is either at the Peak of the 5th Tier or already a Tier-6 powerhouse?'

"The two of you are not really talkative, are you? Well...that doesn't really matter. Quiet people are usually preferred in this little place of silence," The librarian said lightly before adding, "What books are you guys looking for?"

Michael required a few seconds to realize that the librarian asked him a question. He shook his head lightly and looked up to meet the Berserker's eyes.

"I am searching for records about old Ancient Ruins that were raided successfully, and old languages that were used before the Second Epoch," Michael replied, just to carefully add, "The older the language the better."

The Berserker glanced toward Kraft Viton for a moment before his attention was pulled back to Michael.

"So you found an Ancient Ruin, and you don't know its danger level. If we take into consideration that you rushed over to my library in Piloq not even half a day after your arrival in Meku, you must be quite worried," The librarian remarked. He then fell deep in thought.

The librarian kept looking at Michael, the glimmer of curiosity in his eyes intensifying, "The Ancient Ruin you found must be quite old if the knowledge accumulated by humans is not enough for you. Before the Second Epoch you said, right? Interesting."

"It's a good thing that you decided to come to the library instead of rushing to enter the Ancient Ruin. Most of my kind would barge into an Ancient Ruin the moment they find one. Instead of doing the same, you want to learn more about the Ancient Ruin before you decide if you can enter it right now, or if you have to achieve a certain level of strength to enter it without dying miserably. That's good."

The librarian was a lot more talkative than Michael expected. Most librarians shushed everyone, who was daring enough to talk loudly. Yet, the Berserker Librarian was the loudest by far. His voice was extremely loud, and it attracted the interest of the other visitors.

It bothered Michael a little how easily the librarian could guess Michael's plan. However, it was not as if Michael was trying to hide his interest in the old languages, and Ancient Ruins. Anyone with enough brain cells could connect the dots and come to the same result as the Librarian; Michael found an Ancient Ruin, a very old one, and was looking for answers about it.

Even if one lacked crucial information, one could easily determine that Michael's interest in Ancient Ruins was uncommon. Alice Zenovia should have already come to the same result as the Berserker Librarian, even though she lacked information.

Fortunately, Michael didn't really care whether someone knew about the Temple of the Forgotten or not. No other human had a territory in the Untamed Jungle, after all.

"Can you help me, or is the information I need hidden on the second or third floor? If so, what's the fastest way to be promoted to a Champion?" Michael asked straight ahead.

The Berserker Librarian seemed different from the other Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs he had gotten to know until now. Rather than focusing on fighting and improving their combat prowess, the librarian was wise, or so Michael felt.

As long as one was interested in the history of their own race, one could learn a lot about their past mistakes, and how to avoid repeating them. The same could be said about the history of other races. Reading reports about the experiences other Awakened went through would allow Michael to prepare everything to counter them.

Other than history and detailed records, Michael had also learned from a young age that war strategies taught by strategists and scholars were essential in every territory. Michael and his territory would have ceased to exist if not for the war strategies he had learned in the past, and Michael wanted to learn a lot more.

But first of all, he hoped to procure more information about Ancient Ruin raid records, and the oldest language books stored in Piloq's library.

"If you have notes written in the language the Ancient Ruin used at the entrance, I might be able to help you. After all, it is just like you said. The information you desire is stored on the third floor, and being promoted to a Champion will require a considerable amount of achievement points. They're hard to acquire, and it will take you more than a year – 3 months minimum if you want to break the record for the fastest promotion – to become a Champion." The librarian said calmly, causing Michael to scratch his head.

He didn't really want to go as far as to reveal the text written in the origin tongue. Even Lilica said that the language used by the Temple of the Forgotten was extremely old – much older than her own race...and the Forest Elves were likely to be older than the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs.

"Looks like your Ancient Ruin is a lot more special than I first presumed. You wrote down what it said, but you don't want to show me because you're uncertain if I will exploit you once I find out that the Ancient Ruins are extremely old. That is very interesting, little boy," The librarian said with a cheeky smile.

Michael's lips parted for a second, only for him to close his mouth again. He pressed his lips together and stared at the librarian, who acted as if he could read his thoughts, which was something Michael hated to the core.

'Is he trustworthy? Will he be able to help me? What is the worst that could happen after I show him the paper?'

Countless questions rang through Michael's mind, but he couldn't answer any of them.

On the contrary, more questions surfaced the more he thought about it.

Meanwhile, Kraft Viton stared at Michael with furrowed brows.

'Just what is this kid?!'