

Supreme Lord 4

Chapter 4 Final Exam (II)

Michael's chest was heaving up and down heavily.

A dozen cuts spread chaotically across his entire body while fresh blood trickled down the thin longsword.

Only a few minutes had passed since Michael finished answering two out of the three questions given, but he was already tired.

More Emactyls spawned in the air around him, making loud screeching noises as they circled him. They were restraining and distracting him. This was also part of the test.

Amid the chaos, he gathered his thoughts, trying to come up with the best possible answers. The final examination tested the students' stamina, combat prowess, willpower, calculation abilities, and the ability to think quickly. All these factors combined would give a final score, which determined the initial quality of the graduate.

Only by surpassing the ordinary would one be able to stand out from the crowd and distinguish oneself in the government's university entrance exam, stepping onto the road of real adults – where Lords, Adventurers, and influential organizations entered the big picture.

'The question 'What is a War Rune?' can be answered easily but given that the answer holds 60% weightage of the quiz part in this section, it needs to be more detailed.' Michael thought before accessing the crystal watch to open a note.

A holographic screen appeared in front of him, and he began to scribble a few pieces of information on it. This was quite helpful since he could hardly focus on the question with more Emactyls diving down.

In the next ten minutes, Michael killed ten Emactyls. He finished noting down the key points he recalled about the War Rune.

After he had the bullet points ready Michael was quite satisfied with the final outcome once he elaborated his answer in neat phrases.

[– A War Rune forms at the age of 18. However, not every intelligent lifeform manifests one.

–Everyone with a War Rune is directly connected to the Origin Expanse and can enter it at will.

–All War Runes have isolated storage space. The higher the War Rune's Tier the larger the storage space.

–A War Rune is a direct path to the soul.

–When a War Rune manifests, the Will of the Origin Expanse must confirm the link. Within a week, one must enter the Origin Expanse, otherwise, the War Rune's connection will slowly grow weak, and it will disappear at last.

–War Runes are also known as Limit-breakers. Only by possessing the War Rune is it possible to feel and absorb the energy prevalent in the Origin Expanse. Becoming stronger and exceeding the limit of a mortal/human being is possible. Origin energy refines the War Rune, and in return, the War Rune nourishes and strengthens the body and mind.]

A few points mentioned in the list weren't directly pertaining to the given question. Thus, Michael scratched them.

Organizing the notes, adding a few things, and scratching others, Michael spent a while until he was finally able to answer the first question that showcased his extensive knowledge on the subject.

The tiny devils, aka Emactyls, continued to bother him while he kept adding more points so as to ensure that he would pass in the written exam with flying colors.

Unfortunately, Michael was quite sure that their numbers would only increase, and that the final examination would become trickier.

Since there was no way around this predicament, he continued his trip to the top of the mountain.

Michael had to fight more monsters and there were more questions that had to be answered. Fortunately, not all questions required recitation, or notes. They required bits of knowledge and a functioning brain.

[A newly summoned Lord sends his summoned subjects outside the protection barrier to kill monsters. How many Low Tier-0 Monsters (10) must be killed by the subjects until the Lord's War Rune is filled and ready to advance to the next Tier?]

Evading several attacks from all around him, Michael nodded his head faintly. The question seemed quite difficult, but the answer was quite simple.

'A newly summoned Lord's Summon will have a Neutral Link of Loyalty. On average, the share of energy sent through a Neutral Link of Loyalty is 1%. That means the Low Tier-0 Monster mentioned will provide 0.1 energy...'

Michael was not fond of calculating while razor-sharp fangs sunk deep into his shoulder, ripping out his flesh, but there was not much he could do about it.

He gave his best, answered, and went ahead – not forgetting to cut the Emactyls around him into small pieces whenever they got too close to him.

By the time he answered a few more questions, his entire body was covered in close to a hundred cuts of many sizes. His shoulder was his biggest concern. Chunks of flesh were missing in several areas and his shoulder blades were exposed to the chilling air of the mountain.

He knew that it was just an illusion, but the pain was as real as it could be.

[Summary Question – Start of the Great Origin Era]

No question was asked but the task was obvious. He was supposed to summarize the start of the Great Origin Era.

"Let's see..." Michael began, just to halt in his tracks.

What kind of revelation would create the biggest impact on the scoring system? Should I start with the creation of the first successful colonization of another habitable star in another stellar system? The appearance of the alien races 563 years ago? The Appearance of the Origin Expanse 511 years ago? Or the birth of the first Lord 510 years ago?

Michael thought about it for a moment before he noticed that his body was slowly crumbling from the constant attacks of the dozen or more Emactyls swarming around him.

Then he began.

"The Great Origin Era began with t..."

After he spoke for more than ten minutes, Michael finished and closed his eyes for a moment. He felt dizzy and could hardly stand on his feet.

A moment later, the searing pain in his shoulder disappeared. Confused, he opened his eyes.

He was now standing in the middle of the examination chamber; the illusion was no more around him. His breathing was still ragged and cold sweat trickled down his back, but he had left the illusion without a single visible injury.

"Finally...it's over..." He mumbled, touching his body as if to make sure that everything was truly just an illusion.

[Congratulations, Student Michael Fang. You've completed the final examination. Your score will be calculated in no time and a notification will be forwarded within the following week once all students of the Golden Sun province have finished the final examination. Thanks for your cooperation!]

The thin longsword too disappeared from his hand, but he found his backpack lying around in the corner.

"Thanks. Have fun torturing my classmates. You can be just as rough with them!" Michael said sarcastically as he picked up his things, but the emotionless voice decided to reprimand him.

[I shall not favor anyone. Fairness is my highest priority!]

"That was not meant...forget it," Michael responded, not even bothering with an explanation.

He was already mentally exhausted, and his shoulder was a little sore. Actually, he felt sore wherever he was wounded in the illusion, but the shoulder was the most apparent.

'The receptors in my brain still think that I'm hurt? If that's the case...what would have happened if I had died inside the illusion?' He thought and began to shudder as his overimaginative mind went wild.

'Well, whatever. I think I made it far enough to graduate. Nothing inside this building matters anymore!'

Michael chose not to ignore the soreness and pain all over his body. He would rather go home and ponder over his dream from earlier. The dream was permanently etched in his mind, and it continued to nag him, making him feel restless. It was bothersome and distracted him a lot.

Furthermore, there was no reason for him to go back to class.

Now that he was done, Michael was about to leave. However, before he could even make it out of the examination chamber, Michael found himself in a tricky situation.

A fierce-looking woman was standing by the entrance, staring at him. She wasn't even trying to hide it!

Michael bowed lightly to her. It was an instinctive move upon perceiving the fierceness in her gaze and the presence she radiated naturally.

'An unknown fierce beauty...that can only mean trouble!'

He tried to walk past her after the bow, but the fierce-looking woman took this as a sign to initiate a conversation.

"Kiddo, how are you feeling?" she asked, her voice crisp and sonorous.

'Kiddo? Do I look like a kid?' Michael wanted to retort but he didn't speak his mind. Instead, he shrugged inwardly and smiled lightly.

"I should have scored high enough to graduate, but that's it. I never really aimed to attend an elite university, or an influential academy, so I don't really care. It's not like attending a university or academy would help me anyway," he replied, only to slow down when he realized that he was blabbering.

His eyes narrowed, and he squinted while looking at the fierce beauty, who continued to smile at him with a glint in her eyes.

'She is doing something. Is that the effect of an Artifact, or the power of her Soultrait?'

"Don't worry, kiddo. I approached you because I hope you can consider applying to the Sapphirelake Military Academy's and sitting for their entrance exam. If you get accepted, you will have more options once the military drafts all Lords and Adventurers," The fierce beauty said. It sounded as if her words were not important, but Michael's expression changed drastically.

They didn't even know each other, yet she threw an invitation at him...out of nowhere at that?

Multiple thoughts flashed through his mind and none of them put his mind at ease.

'Military drafting? We're currently not at war...or are we?'

'... Sapphirelake Military Academy...It's a pretty big one on....where was it again?' Michael wondered, just to shake his head and slap his cheeks. How was the location of the Military Academy important right now?!

'Why would she tell me about the Military Academy and a possible draft call? Who is she, in the first place?!'

Something was fishy, that was for sure. However, Michael was not able to speak his thoughts aloud. Something was holding him back.

"My score won't be high enough to join the Sapphirelake Military Academy, even if I want to apply," he said instead.

The fierce beauty's smile widened in response, "You should have a decent score. If you achieve something special as a new Lord in the Origin Expanse, I can help you!"

"But why would you?" He asked this time, finally able to speak his mind.

Michael was certain that he broke through the spell that had been put on him. Yet, instead of staring at him baffled, the fierce beauty's smile turned even brighter. It was vibrant enough to dazzle Michael.

"Seems like I was right about you," She muttered, taking a big stride closer to him before she made a big announcement,

"I like you, kiddo!"

Michael took an equally big stride backward with one thought – that couldn't be more true — in his mind.

'...This woman is definitely sick in the head!'