

Supreme Lord 41

Chapter 41 One-Man Army

A few minutes after the roar resounded through the Gogi Lord's territory, Michael found himself standing on a wide branch of a large tree.

He was close to the center of the Gogi territory and could not wait to enact his plan.

The densely grown bushes and trees made it a little bit more difficult to observe every single detail, but that was not necessary in the first place. Following the actions of the shuttle-sized Lizard mother was already more than enough.

After completing all preparations for the attack on the Gogi Lord's territory, Michael sneaked out of his territory. The sun was not yet up at that time but using the Gloa Crystals it was possible to illuminate his surrounding area. He had made use of the same darkness to enter the lizard cave when the mother was asleep and had stolen her eggs.

After his thievery succeeded, Michael rushed to the Gogi Lord's territory where he killed the Gogis to drop the Lizard mother's eggs on their dead bodies.

The last two eggs were thrown in the direction of the territory center, where they burst open.

It had been less than half an hour since dawn, but the Lizard mother was already wide awake and overflowing with anger. She found the first few eggs on the dead Gogi bodies, before her eyes fell on the crumbled and broken shells of two of her eggs that were lying on the ground, burst open, exposing the premature embryo.

The next thing she saw was more Gogis, but living ones this time. Wrath and grief consumed her as a ball of acidic liquid was released through her mouth. It hit one of the Gogis, who began to scream in unbearable pain as his body began to corrode.

Merely a few seconds later, the Gogi was dead.

The corroded Gogi's comrades were shocked by the unexpected attack, but they began to move, nonetheless. One of them grasped the corroded body and rushed back to the territory while the other Gogis threw themselves at the Lizard mother.

Needless to say, the Gogis died.

It required only a single slash to cut through the Gogis' weapons and body, or a tail's swipe to smash the Gogis against the nearest tree, breaking most bones in their upper body.

'They weren't even able to reach her claws,' Michael mumbled to himself in slight surprise. He had expected the Lizard to be powerful and prove to be a great aid in his battle against the Gogi Lord, but she was a one-man army.

Maybe it was not even necessary for him to act.

It would be great if he could avoid facing danger head-on, but Michael was almost certain that it wouldn't be this easy. And as if on cue, an earth-shattering honk reverberated through the rainforest.

Following the honk, countless Gogis emerged from within their huts with a spear quiver slung around their back and a wooden mace in their hands.

Michael's attention was turned to their weapons at first. However, he grew more interested in something else by the second.

"How many are they?!?" He blurted out subconsciously.

Even if Michael wanted to count the Gogis, he wouldn't be able to. They looked mostly the same and moved around chaotically.

'Close to 200 Tier-1 Gogis with high physical strength and enough spears to turn the Lizard mother into a porcupine if they can penetrate her scales...' Michael concluded in awe and shock.

He was glad that he had lured the acid-spitting Lizard to the Gogi Lord's territory to cause destruction. She was either a Lowest Tier-2 Monster or a Peak Tier-1 Monster on the verge of breaking through. One way or another, the Lizard had a great natural defense with her metal-like scales and multiple means of attack.

If the Gogis wouldn't aim their attacks on her joints and unprotected areas such as her eyes, they would have a tough time using their maces to break the Lizard's scales. However, that was exactly what Michael expected them to do.

He expected them to throw a few spears before they would realize that their attacks were useless – and that was exactly what happened.

Close to 200 spears soared through the air near-simultaneously, but only a fifth hit their target. None out of 40 spears injured the Lizard upon impacting. The Lizard had closed her eyes and mouth when a few spears came dangerously close to those areas, only to be repelled upon hitting the lizard's eyelids.

After two more sets of spear throws that did nothing to harm the Lizard, the Gogis changed their tactic. They used the environment to their advantage and surrounded the Lizard while holding their maces tightly. Afterward, the Gogis charged at their enemy as if they were the suicide squad.

'I know that they're more muscle than brain, but shouldn't they wait before their Lord arrives?' Michael thought at this moment.

He was fairly sure that the Gogi Lord was stronger than the Starless, and 1-Star Gogis that were charging at the Lizard. The Gogi Lord could bind Artifacts to his War Rune, boosting his strength drastically, and he was in possession of a Soultrait, no matter how bad it was. Furthermore, as Lord of 200 Tier-1 Gogis, his War Rune should be at the 1st Tier with a decently high degree of refinement.

'Just what are they doing? The Gogi Lord wouldn't sacrifice his subjects to tire out the Lizard...or would he?'

Michael was really confused by the Gogi Lord's actions. He watched the Lizard spray a huge load of acid at the Gogis charging at her from the front.

The Lizard was hellbent on killing all who had taken the lives of her unborn offspring and continued her attack by smashing her tail into the closest Gogi. The Gogi was flung back and crashed into the comrades standing behind him. Afterward, the Lizard charged forward as well. She headed straight at the Gogis whom she had sprayed with her acid and ran over them brutally.

The Lizard clawed at some of them, tearing through their chests and abdomen before she escaped the encirclement easily.

Several Gogis sustained lethal injuries while a handful died. Meanwhile, the Lizard was unscathed.

It didn't take an expert to tell that the Lizard didn't feel like she was in danger either. She was attacking aggressively and faced the Gogis calmly without a single thought of escape flashing through her mind.

Michael felt weird while watching the ongoing battle.

The Lizard released more of her acid before she charged at the Gogis, who were already in unbearable pain after the acid hit them. The Gogis had broken two of her eggs, so they had to pay the price for their actions. That was what the Lizard mother thought as her claws viciously tore through her opponents' chests and abdomens.

The Lizard killed mercilessly, consumed by wrath and grief.

Meanwhile, Michael started to feel odd.

'I didn't expect the Lizard mother to be that sensitive. Is she that intelligent, and emotionally aware?' He wondered, unsure if the Lizard's behavior was related to her being that powerful, or if it was related to the type of monster she was.

Monsters of a higher Tier were said to be more intelligent, however, Michael had never seen that firsthand. But now that he watched the Lizard's behavior and fighting style, he felt like the door to a new world was opened to him.

'I should never take the monsters of the Origin Expanse lightly...'

Suddenly, something smashed loudly against one of the larger rainforest trees. The sound pulled Michael out of his thoughts, and his head flicked over to the origin of the noise.

A bulky, four-meter-tall Gogi appeared in his sight.

The Gogi Lord had arrived at last!

Chapter 42 Unyielding

The Gogi Lord was four-meter-tall and bulkier than the rest of his people.

He was wielding a huge mace in his right hand, which the Gogi Lord had smashed against the nearest tree to pull everyone's attention over to him.

The Gogi Lord shouted something in their native language, and his subjects retreated from the battlefield at once. They heed their Lord's command without hesitation, even if that turned into a deadly situation for some Gogis.

The Lizard ignored the Gogi Lord and continued attacking the Gogis in her vicinity. She tore them apart as they retreated before continuing her advance.

Suddenly, something big and heavy crashed onto the Lizard's head as she was about to clamp her jaw on a helpless Gogi. It was the Gogi Lord's mace, which he threw at the Lizard with all his might.

He roared out loudly and beat his chest loudly before he charged forward.

A huge two-bladed battle-axe and a Galea helmet materialized a moment later. The battle-axe was grasped tightly in the Gogi Lord's right hand while the Galea covered his head from all sides.

The moment the two Artifacts materialized, the atmosphere on the battlefield changed at once. The Gogis began to shout out their battle cries in a voice loud enough to make someone deaf and the Gogi Lord's high speed accelerated further.

He swung the heavy battle-axe at the Lizard without hesitation. The Gogi Lord ignored the acid ball that formed in the Lizard's mouth and viciously cleaved downward.

A moment later, the Lizard released the acid, and the battle-axe impacted upon her.

Chaos and mayhem ensued as the battlefield was stirred up and the Gogis' battle cries were overwhelmed by the roars of the Lizard and the Gogi Lord.

Blood splattered all around and the pungent smell of burned hair and flesh filled the air once again.

Meanwhile, Michael frowned deeply after seeing what happened.

'The Galea helmet cast a protection layer on the Gogi Lord, but it was too weak to repel the acid fully and protect him. Simultaneously, the battle-axe sunk deep into the Lizard's shoulder...a lot deeper than expected...'

Both combatants had grossly underestimated their opponent's attack power, causing severe injuries. But that was not all. The Gogi Lord could retreat now and order his warriors to aim their spear throws at the severe injury he had inflicted, while the Lizard didn't have this opportunity.

It injured the Gogi Lord, whose chest would continue to burn, and his flesh would sizzle as the aftermath of being hit by lethal acid, but that was already it.

Neither of them was in a mood to back off.

The Gogi Lord's muscles bulged, and his veins popped out as he used his full strength to pull the battle-axe out of the lizard. In the same instance, the Lizard pounced on the Gogi Lord.

Her tail coiled around the Gogi's legs tightly and the Gogi Lord crashed hard on the ground with the Lizard on top of him.

The Gogi Lord reacted quickly. He thrust the battle-axe between him and the Lizard before using his feet to push the monster away. However, the Lizard didn't budge in the slightest. Instead, more dark-greenish acid formed in her mouth, and she sprayed it all down on the Gogi Lord who was trying to move with all his might.

He couldn't avoid the acid fully and had to decide between sacrificing his shoulder and arm, or his head. The protection layer of the Galea Artifact had already been destroyed and the Gogi Lord knew that he needed his head to keep fighting. Thus, the only option he had was to allow the Lizard's acid to be showered on his left arm.

But while the acid gushed out of the Lizard's mouth, she was distracted. The Gogi Lord roared out and exerted strength beyond his natural capabilities. The adrenaline and energy surging through his body allowed him to tap into power he didn't know he possessed.

The burst of strength allowed the Gogi Lord to tilt the battle-axe and pierce the Lizard's abdomen with its razor-sharp edge. The Lizard noticed that something was amiss, and it stopped releasing acid, but it was already too late. The battle-axe's edge had already cut deep into the Lizard's abdomen.

After a short struggle, the Lizard rolled down from the Gogi Lord as a bolt of pain erupted from the injury. She was bleeding severely and took a few strides back to observe her surroundings thoroughly.

She was heavily outnumbered as more than a hundred Gogis surrounded her and the Gogi Lord. Their encirclement formed a large arena for them to battle in. Simultaneously, it was a cage to restrict the Lizard from escaping. Now that she had sustained multiple wounds, it was much easier to worsen her injuries with the spears each Gogi held tightly in their large hands.

The moment the Gogi Lord ordered his subjects to attack, spears would be thrown at her from every direction. Few would hit the Lizard's injuries, but it didn't require many to further deepen her wounds and gravely injure her.

However, the Gogi Lord didn't give such a command. He got up from the ground, looked at his left arm, and let out a blood-curdling growl. His battle-axe pressed against his shoulder, and he roared out in

anger. The next moment, the corroded and half-rotten arm fell to the ground, and a fountain of blood gushed out of the Gogi Lord's shoulder.

"Damn..." Michael blurted out.

He was impressed by the Gogi Lord who possessed an unyielding spirit and resolute attitude. Once again, Michael was glad that he didn't attack the Gogi Lord on his own, and that he was observing the fight from further away.

If he wanted to, he could run away at any time, and nobody would notice it. However, the opportunity that unveiled itself in front of him didn't come by easy. Michael was certain that he would have to clean up the mess he had created today.

The Gogi Lord lost one of his arms and the protection of the Galea Artifact was also destroyed. Meanwhile, the Lizard was bleeding severely, and surrounded by more than a hundred Gogis, who were more than willing to sacrifice their lives to deal the finishing blow.

'Should I start moving?' Michael thought at this moment. The Antler Bow manifested in his left hand, and he retrieved an arrow but stopped moving mid-way.

'No, not yet...'

Michael held himself back at the right time or he would have fallen victim to his greed. He wanted to kill all Gogis and land the finishing blow on both the Lizard and the Gogi Lord, hitting two birds with a stone. That way, he would receive the energy influx from everyone, which would increase his degree of refinement tremendously.

Refining his War Rune and advancing to the next Tier was important, that was a given, but Michael was currently not desperate to advance quickly. At least, he was not desperate enough to jump into the fight like a suicidal maniac.

Michael resumed his observation, but he didn't put the Antler Bow and arrow back inside his War Rune. He used his Eagle Eyes to watch the fight even more intently than before and nocked the arrow on the bowstring after a while.

The Gogi Lord and the Lizard continued to fight a terrific battle. It looked like they were becoming more vicious and feral the more injuries they sustained, but Michael knew that this was just a temporary thing. Both the Gogi Lord and the Lizard were overflowing with adrenaline, which had an increased potency upon encountering the churning energy of the Origin Expanse that circulated through their bodies.

However, being able to release more power than usual led to rapid consumption of stamina and the inability of their wounds to heal. Their bleeding showed no signs of stopping. No, it grew worse!

At last, when Michael thought it would be over soon, the Gogi Lord raised his right arm high in the air.

He gave a command, and the Gogis began to act.

A moment later, more than a hundred spears soared through the air.

Chapter 43 Michael, The Cleaning Fairy

The tide of the battle changed once again when the Gogis began to throw spears at the lizard.

After the Gogi Lord had inflicted three lethal injuries all over the lizard's body the spears' threat increased exponentially.

Not many spears hit the lizard, even fewer had been precise enough to pierce through the monster's open wound, but the few that hit caused considerable damage.

The spears that hit the targeted areas penetrated deep into the lizard's flesh where they remained stuck. The lizard's movements made the spears sink deeper into her flesh, worsening her injuries in the process.

The spears stuck in her body wouldn't kill the lizard immediately. However, they weakened her and enraged the monster even further.

Meanwhile, the Gogi Lord was barely hanging onto his life when he gave his subjects the command to join the battle. Initially, his pride didn't allow him to give up, but he did not want to die and leave his subjects behind while the lizard was still alive. He had to survive, even if it was just for his subjects!

More than a hundred Gogis were still standing, and they attacked the lizard with the remaining spears in their quivers. The lizard was further driven by wrath and used every ounce of strength in her body despite being exhausted and severely injured. She began to fight desperately, abandoning reason and logic. She charged at the most crowded areas and used her claws, tail, fangs, and acid spit to cripple and kill all Gogis.

Her desperate struggle was clear to see, but this only highlighted the immense power the monster could unleash through the stress she faced. The surges of adrenaline blocked her sensation of pain, turning the monster into a living slaughter machine.

The Gogi Lord took a step closer to the lizard and his subjects but stopped afterward. He began to tremble, and it grew increasingly difficult for him to move around. The Gogi Lord could only clutch at his corroded abdomen where remnants of the lizard's acid spit were still at work, burning his flesh and eating him away slowly.

The full potential of the lizard's acid spit came into effect at last. It restricted the Gogi Lord, preventing him from rejoining the battle. He was forced to witness the demise of his subjects as he limped helplessly, unable to do anything about it.

'Both are half-dead. Good thing I waited a little longer.'

Michael was sitting on the tree branch like a coiled wire, observing the battle intensely. However, now that the opportunity he was seeking finally appeared, he would be the last one to shy away from joining.

The first arrow was already nocked on the Bowstring of the Antler Bow, and he pulled it back slowly.

He lifted the Antler Bow slowly, aimed for a second with his Eagle Eyes fully activated, and shot.

Michael didn't have to follow the arrow's trajectory to know that his aim had been perfect. He retrieved the second arrow from his War Rune, which he nocked on the bowstring before he pulled it back once again.

He channeled bits of his energy into the Antler Bow to boost the power behind every shot and released the arrow after he aimed at his next target for a second.

Michael's arrow pieced through the left eye of his second target with a sickening crunch. The Gogi had been in the outermost circle where nobody noticed him. His death was quick and silent, piercing his eye and skull before he realized it.

Michael continued to attack the Gogis that were the furthest away from the battlefield. Everyone was too focused on the lizard's terrifying attacks and her desperate struggle for death. The Gogis were certain that the lizard would die soon, which increased the intensity of their attacks even further.

Nobody noticed him as the Gogis threw themselves at the lizard in the hopes of landing the finishing blow and ending her menace for once and all.

He didn't think highly of that tactic because most Gogis ended up killing themselves, but their idiotic behavior was an advantage for him. It was better if more of them died while tiring out the lizard!

Michael's focus diverted to the lizard whenever he eliminated a few Gogis. He continued to kill the Gogis all over the battlefield while staying well-hidden high up in the tree, using the thicket as a cover.

His aim was impeccable. Almost no arrow missed its target. That was something that surprised even Michael. In school, they had learned to wield all kinds of weapons, but Michael knew that he hadn't been an exceptional archer before.

All of that changed with Fenrir's memories.

Most memories of Fenrir using the bow had been deeply ingrained into his body and mind. One could say that Fenrir's memories and experiences had become a part of Michael. They became his memories and experiences.

Combining the aim, accuracy, and tricks that Fenrir had learned by using the bow for years with the Eagle Eyes Soultrait made it much easier for Michael to replicate Fenrir's exceptional archery skills.

The star ranking of their Soultraits was different, but Michael made up for the difference by keeping the distance to his targets short enough to hit them without flaws.

Continuously using Eagle Eyes' full power drained quite some energy but it was not worth mentioning compared to the energy influx he received now that he started killing the Tier-1 Gogis.

'I should slow down a little.'

Once the number of Gogis decreased to less than 50, Michael released fewer arrows. He noticed that some Gogis had started to look around as if they sensed that something was amiss.

They had yet to find the arrows stuck in some of their comrades' bodies, but that was only a matter of time. Even the densely grown rainforest couldn't hide everything.

Time passed eerily slowly as the fight continued. Michael had less than twenty arrows remaining while the number of opponents decreased slowly.

A few minutes had passed since he stopped shooting, but there were still 20 Gogis alive and fighting viciously.

The lizard monster was now close to death, but she perceived a ray of hope now that the number of opponents was so little.

Unfortunately, the Gogi Lord regained his ability to move at last.

'He is willing to sacrifice his life instead of continuing to watch his subjects' demise. What a great Lord,' Michael was getting increasingly impressed by the Gogi Lord and found himself respecting his actions.

Most Lords didn't even think of their summoned subjects as living beings. The Origin Expanse had resurrected them to obey their Lords. This turned them into mere puppets. That was what those Lords believed firmly.

However, the Gogi Lord was different. He seemed to treat his subjects like he himself wanted to be treated as well.

Under normal circumstances, having such a personality was great. Unfortunately, it may not be the best option for a Lord, who was responsible for ensuring the survival and safety of his territory and subjects.

'What a shame. I wonder if we could have become partners if not for the incident,' Michael wondered before he made a move.

One arrow after another cut through the air.

In the next instance, the first arrow drilled deep into the Gogi Lord's left eye.

Then the second and third arrows followed suit.

The Gogi Lord staggered after the first arrow pierced his head. When the second and third found their target, the Gogi Lord lost control of his body and crashed to the ground.

The lizard monster, who had turned over to the Gogi Lord to face him, saw the arrows when they pierced the Gogi Lord's eye.

She turned around and her gaze followed the direction in which the arrows had flown towards the Gogi Lord. She found Michael standing high up in the trees only seconds later.

At that moment, realization struck her, but it was already too late.

She roared out loudly with the last bits of strength in her body before a series of arrows pierced her eyes and her wide-open mouth.

Michael, the Cleaning Fairy, was about to complete his mission!

Chapter 44 Energy Flood

Michael released one arrow after another.

He was certain that the lizard monster was about to die the moment his first arrow pierced one of her eyes. However, the lizard didn't collapse even after the fourth arrow pierced her.

Only when the sixth arrow dug deep into the monster's vital points did it collapse.

The lizard continued to twitch, but Michael couldn't pay the monster any more attention. The Gogi Lord's energy share reached him. It felt like a bucket of boiling water had been simply upturned over his head before it entered his body by forcing its way through his pores.

His blood began to churn, and his muscles cramped. Michael could barely hold onto the Antler Bow before he lost control of his trembling arms.

His legs gave in due to the sheer intensity of the energy and he slumped to the ground.

However, it was not over yet. The lizard monster died just now, and her energy share reached Michael.

Michael's veins protruded and the muscles all over his body bulged when the lizard's energy share slammed into him, leaving Michael breathless.

If the energy influx of a Low Tier-1 Gogi could be compared to a bucket full of water, the Gogi Lord's energy influx would be a bathtub that had been filled to the brim. However, Michael would still be able to accept this much energy if given enough time.

But the energy influx of the lizard didn't wait for him to take a few breaths and ready himself. The energy influx crashed down on him like an avalanche, suffocating Michael with its sheer mass of energy.

Michael's body couldn't take in that much energy at once, yet the energy influx didn't care about that. It forced its way inside Michael's body, causing his skin to burst open and blood to spurt out.

He began to bleed from all seven orifices and coughed up even more blood. His blood was sticky, and it was boiling hot.

For an unknown amount of time, Michael was unable to sense anything in his surroundings. His eyes were covered in blood, he could only smell his own blood, and hear his wildly thumping heart.

Even his sense of touch was numb. Michael couldn't feel a thing, as if he had been isolated from the rest of the world.

'Focus on the War Rune. Channel every bit of energy inside the War Rune!' Michael told himself repetitively as if he was chanting a mantra.

The flood of energy spreading through his body was too much for him to handle in his current state. It was already surprising that his body didn't disintegrate into pieces. His muscles and veins were on the verge of rupturing, but they weren't. They barely contained the tremendous pressure inside his body.

At one point, Michael thought that he fainted. He regained his senses a few seconds later but worry plagued his mind from that moment onward.

Was he going to die?

Instinctively, he materialized Tigerfang. He channeled some of his excess energy inside the Artifact, easing the pressure weighing down on his entire being. Michael followed up by using as much energy as possible to unleash the full power of his Soultraits, further alleviating the pressure off him.

'That's better...'

The massive amount of energy spreading through him was easier to bear at last, and Michael's chaotic senses finally returned to normalcy, making him feel a bit relieved.

He wiped his eyes with his cloak and opened them once again.

'The most annoying foes are dead, but how many Gogis are left?'

Even if Michael wished that the battle was already over, that was not the case. Some Gogi were still alive.

Michael continued using both Soultraits and channeling energy into his three Artifacts while his War Rune was refined at a rapid speed. The refinement of his War Rune resulted in a proportional increase in his strength, which decreased the pressure caused by the energy influx.

A War Rune could be controlled manually, but it would naturally absorb the untamed energy of the Origin Expanse when it entered his body. Michael made use of that.

He slung the Antler Bow around his shoulder and looked down at the battlefield.

The survivors of the battle were a few Gogis. They had gathered around their Lord's dead body and were beating their chests while roaring out loudly.

'A few more Gogis doesn't really change anything...' Michael thought before jumping from one branch to another.

All opponents had to be killed before he could calm down and put his full focus on the untamed energy inside him.

He reached the ground after a few jumps and channeled more energy into the Boots of Taran when his feet touched the soft soil. The next moment, he turned into a flash.

The distance to the remaining Gogis decreased in the blink of an eye. Tigerfang arced through the air and cut down like a descending shooting star.

Michael felt the faint resistance of the Gogis' skin as Tigerfang's razor-sharp edge cut through it. The blade continued to hack and slash at the Gogis, severing their muscles and tendons with little to no resistance.

The first bits of resistance reached Michael when Tigerfang sliced through the Gogis' flesh and bones. However, Tigerfang was overflowing with energy, further enhancing the Epic Artifact's sharpness and durability. The enhancement was high enough for a Mid-level Tier-0 Lord who was overflowing with energy to cut through Tier-1 Gogis without feeling too much resistance.

Tigerfang was an exceptional Artifact, but so were the Boots of Taran. After Michael channeled enough energy into the Boots of Taran, he was able to overdrive the Swiftess enchantment. The power output of the enchantment was temporarily increased by 200%, further increasing his speed.

Using all of his means, Michael ended up taking the remaining Gogis by surprise. They had been grieving the loss of their Lord, only to end up with a sword thrust through their chest, or with the loss of their head, joining him in the afterlife.

The energy influx of the Tier-1 Gogis didn't worsen Michael's condition any further. The flood of the lizard monster's energy had been too massive for the Low Tier-1 Gogis energy to make a difference.

Once the remaining Gogis were dead, Michael felt a tinge of excitement surging up from the depth of his subconscious.

He was still forced to keep releasing his Soultraits and channeling energy into his Artifacts to make sure that he wouldn't die, but he came to realize that the battle had finally ended.

Michael had won the battle against the Gogi Lord by deceit!

Stealthily entering the lizard monster's cave to steal her eggs to lead her to the Gogi Lord's territory was not something a warrior would have done, but Michael was not a warrior in the first place, not yet.

He was a Lord, and ready to do everything necessary to ensure the survival of his territory and people. Thus, the Gogi Lord had to die, or he and his territory would have been annihilated in the following days. That was a fact.

"I really did it..." He mumbled, his gaze moving across the bloody battlefield.

The environment was either destroyed or dyed in the blood of the deceased along with the mangled and mutilated corpses of the Gogis scattered all around. It was a gory sight that caused Michael to retch.

However, he had to endure it. Michael was not allowed to close his eyes and turn away from the gory sight.

He was the reason why everyone on the battlefield died today. His action led to everyone's death, and he knew that he had to imprint the sight into his mind.

It was necessary to know what effect his actions had, otherwise, he would break down after doing something he couldn't forgive himself for doing.

Every action resulted in a consequence. That was something Michael had to understand.

For example, defeating the Gogi Lord meant that the territory of the Gogi Lord was not protected anymore and that a new Overlord would soon come to stake claim on it.

Michael didn't possess the strength or resources to expand his territory that far yet. Thus, more monsters would gather in the Gogi Lord's territory and fight for it.

Meanwhile, Michael's War Rune received a large amount of energy from killing the Gogis and Gogi Lord. His War Rune was being refined but it couldn't be overcharged with energy. It would require some time before all energy would be absorbed and further used to refine his War Rune.

Thus, Michael had to continue to endure it. Fortunately, there was a lot to do. He could distract himself for quite a while, exploring the Gogi Lord's territory and extracting the corpses of more than 200 Gogis.

His storage space was much bigger than before, but he couldn't store 200 Gogis, to his misfortune. Nonetheless, the space was enough to store the corpses of the Gogi Lord and the Lizard monster.

He stored them inside his storage space before he turned his focus to the Gogi corpses.

"I cannot carry all corpses, but I can still extract the loot generated by the Origin Expanse!" Michael mumbled to himself. If he was already using his Soultraits to drain his energy, he might as well gain something out of it.

However, just as he was about to bend down to extract the drops of the first corpse, Michael's senses tingled.

He dived to the side, rolled on the ground, and jumped up to look back as something cutting through the air with horrifying velocity reached his ears.

What he saw caused his veins to pop.

'You fucking forest! Just leave me alone?!?!'

Three arrows pierced the ground where he had been standing just a moment ago, making him curse profusely.

Chapter 45 Elves

Michael nearly lost control of the untamed energy inside him when he flared up in anger.

However, it was hard for him to believe that he was attacked right after he got rid of his last enemy.

It was not as if enemies were queueing up to fight him...right?

One of the three arrows stuck in the ground had grazed Michael, ripping his clothes. A single glance was enough for Michael to tell that the arrow's tip had scratched his left leg. It cut him faintly.

'Who?'

Michael's head flicked in the direction where the arrows came from. His Eagle Eyes Soultrait was still fully activated, perceiving the faintest movements in his sight.

Thus, it only took a second or two until he found the perpetrators standing on a wide tree branch high up in a tree 100 meters away.

'What the...'

A group of five human-like creatures carrying bows entered his sight. They stood proudly on the large tree branch with their youthful and ageless appearance. They had fair skin, emerald eyes, and long golden hair that had been tied back in a bun, or ponytail.

They were Elves!

Their large, pointed ears were not hard to see with the Eagle Eyes activated. They attracted his attention almost immediately.

However, the arrows nocked on their fully drawn-out bowstring instantly made him feel wary about them.

'They have War Runes. Maybe, the group doesn't belong to another Lord...' Michael thought when he got a fairly good view of their War Runes.

It didn't take a genius to tell that their War Runes were more advanced than Tiara's War Rune. In fact, Michael was certain that the Elves' War Runes were more refined than that of the Gogi Lord's!

Michael's heart had been filled with joy and excitement before, but it began to beat wildly now that a new threat appeared. His positioning was bad, and he had to split his focus to continue consuming the untamed energy inside him. He didn't know much about the Elves either.

Were they also his enemies, or did they shoot him as a warning?

'They could have killed me easily. Five arrows shot at me when I was unguarded would have been more than enough!'

Michael could tell that the three arrows shot in his direction were not released using much force. They weren't stuck deep in the ground, and he had been able to evade them even though he had been focused on something else.

Despite feeling that the Elves might be easier to deal with by talking rather than fighting, Michael felt a small spark of anger rising from inside him.

'So...there are Elves in this annoying, deadly forest, and they're some Adventurers?! I swear, if they're Tier-2 Adventurers, I am going to search the Origin Expanse's Will and—...'

Michael couldn't finish his thought. His attention was locked on the Elven group. They continued to aim at him but didn't release a second barrage of arrows. Instead, their eyes moved across the Gogi Lord's territory.

They saw the mangled and mutilated Gogi corpses spread across the bloody battlefield and Michael standing in the midst.

'Were they the Gogi Lord's partners? Give me a break...please...'

Michael willed Tigerfang to return to his War Rune and lifted his empty hands to show he was not an enemy.

Beads of sweat trickled down his temples and the tension increased exponentially while the Elves continued to hold their bows aimed at him. They only kept staring at him without the slightest movement or uttering a single noise for the next few minutes, which worsened the worry in Michael's heart until he couldn't take it anymore.

'If you guys don't want to talk to me, then I am not going to stay here like a living target,' Michael thought, 'I am at a huge disadvantage here, either way. Don't even think that I will risk talking to you guys while your arrowheads are locked on me!'

The instance after he finished his train of thought, Michael retrieved a glass vial from his War Rune. He grasped it tightly and channeled a tremendous amount of untamed energy inside it. The next moment he threw the vial into the air.

Michael turned on his heels and he kicked his feet off the ground when an intense and bright flash of light filled the bloody battlefield. Simultaneously with the flash, the vial produced a loud bang as it burst open.

Michael could reach his top speed near-instantly with the Boots of Taran's Swiftiness enchantment.

He didn't look back to see the effectiveness of the dazzling light and how the Elves reacted to it, but he jumped through a bush and headed straight back to his territory.

If the Elves wanted to talk to him, they could have done so already instead of the tense standoff. Thus, Michael chose to take the worst-case scenario into consideration, which was that the Elves and the Gogi Lord were close business partners and that they wanted to capture and torture him to take revenge.

Even if the worst-case scenario was not right, it was weird that the Elves didn't utter a single word nor attempted to initiate communication but pointed their arrowheads at him which he took as a sign of hostility.

That was not beneficial, and more than enough reason for him to risk fleeing.

Michael retrieved a second glass vial from his War Rune while continuing to run for his life.

The glass vials had been filled with red viscous liquid before Blaire drank them. Michael and his subjects had toiled endlessly, to test out a few things and put those now-empty vials to good use.

Michael wanted to have a few means of escape since he had been wanting to fight the Gogi Lord alone. Too many steps in his plan could have gone wrong, which was why he made ample preparations to ensure his survival. That way, even if something had gone wrong, Michael wouldn't have necessarily died.

They ground the Gloa crystals and mixed them with the frail white crystal, which had properties like Magnesite. At the end of the night, Michael, the Scholar, and the craftsmen had created a flash powder that could be ignited with the dormant energy of the Origin Expanse.

The more energy was used, the brighter the flash and subsequent burst of light would be.

Fortunately enough, Michael was overflowing with a massive amount of untamed energy right now. It was no problem for Michael to create a dazzling flash of light.

The dazzling flash of light dispersed after a few seconds.

However, that was enough for him to increase the distance to the Elves. Michael sprinted swiftly through the rainforest. He jumped over a large root and charged through two bushes.

Michael's moves were nimble and the changes in his direction were instantaneous, almost like a cheetah. The moment the densely grown environment blocked the Elves' sight, Michael charged straight home.

He dashed through the bushes and thicket that did little to deter him. On the contrary, he could maintain his top speed while using the tree roots as launching pads and means to trick the Elves.

'Are they behind me?' Michael wondered after he ran for half a minute. The rainforest's noises, his ragged breathing, and the distraction caused by the untamed energy raging inside him prevented Michael from using his full focus on his escape.

However, the rustling leaves high up in the trees around him were enough to tell that someone was following him. The sounds came from behind him, but they inched closer with each passing second.

'Why are they tailing me but not attacking?'

The Elves traveled through the trees like monkeys, jumping from one branch to another. Meanwhile, Michael was already running as fast as he could while using the densely grown rainforest's vegetation to his advantage.

He could only make use of the only advantage he had- the Elves didn't know where he was going.

Because the Elves had no information about him, they couldn't be certain he was alone. His War Rune was still Tierless, and there had been more than 200 Gogi corpses at the 1st Tier. No matter what the situation may be, the Elves would never believe that Michael killed the Gogis on his own.

Thus, logically the Elves would be wary of him and try to keep some distance and stay vigilant. After all, Michael might be a bait to lure them into a trap!

The unknown was dangerous, and it was better to act carefully and slow down instead of walking into an obvious trap.

At least, that was what Michael believed the Elves thought about the current situation.

Nobody would believe that he obliterated the Gogi Lord by himself. It didn't make sense.

Fortunately, Michael had the help of a powerful Lizard mother.

But that was not something the Elves had to know!

Chapter 46 [Bonus]The Untamed Jungle

A second flare of dazzling light flooded the proximity when the protection barrier of his territory entered his sight.

He channeled enough untamed energy in the vial to release the most dazzling light before he threw it high in the air.

Michael heard the groans of a few Elves, which was all the more reason to use the last bits of strength within his body to run even faster.

The Elves couldn't be far from him if he was already able to hear their groans. Fortunately, the flare of dazzling light gave him some leeway.

It allowed him to inch closer to the protection barrier without getting caught.

However, Michael could only feel safe when he dived through the protection barrier.

The moment he landed inside the protection barrier, several thuds and smacks rang out behind and above him. Three of the five Elves pursuing him hadn't perceived the protection barrier. They charged into it at full speed and bumped into it.

"Urgh...I feel like I ran a marathon after feasting at an all-you-can-eat buffet..." Michael mumbled quietly.

He retched and gagged a few times, but he never vomited. It was just the untamed energy inside him that ravaged his body, causing mayhem.

Since Michael forcefully controlled the untamed energy to channel it inside his Artifacts, and the vials to create a dazzling flare of light, his entire body was slowly being wrecked.

The rapid refinement of his War Rune and his strong willpower were the only reasons why he had not yet fainted.

However, now that he had returned to his territory, the adrenaline coursing through him had finally ebbed. The tension all over his body had been dispelled the moment he knew that he was safe, and he felt like sleeping for an entire week.

Unfortunately, the Elves had yet to leave. They stared at him while three of them rubbed their noses.

'What am I supposed to do now?' Michael wondered. He tilted his head while looking at the Elves.

They didn't attack him when they could have, and it didn't look like they were angry either. On the contrary, they were simply staring at him with curiosity and confusion.

Michael was thankful for not being stuck with an arrow in his back, but he wouldn't let the Elves fool him. It might be great to befriend the group of Elves, but it was always tricky to get closer to Lords and Adventurers of other races. Nobody could tell if both sides were sincere, or if one side was slowly leeching off the other until it was sucked dry.

Even befriendng other Lords of the same race was quite difficult since greed and selfishness often led to betrayal.

But then again, Elves were known to be loyal once you earned their trust – even if that was said to be quite hard.

"Do you want to take revenge on me for killing the Gogi Lord?" Michael asked in the origin language.

One of the biggest reasons for him to attend one of the most prestigious high schools in the Golden Sun province was to join the Origin Language class. His brother was unable to join a prestigious school in the past. Thus, he had to spend most of his savings to attend a night class to learn the Origin language.

Not only was that extremely expensive, but the quality of the lesson was on a different level. Michael could speak the Origin language as fluently as the human language while his brother had attained the same skill level after spending several years inside the Origin Expanse, learning it the hard way.

The Elves looked at each other when they heard Michael and had a quick discussion in the Elven tongue before one of them stepped forward.

"We don't really care who eliminated the Gogi Lord if we get the Lord's corpse. Hand it over, and we'll leave silently," One of the Elves said. She was standing right in front of the protection barrier, unprotected and easy to target.

Michael could materialize Tigerfang and thrust out to kill the elven woman, however, that would only cause more problems. He didn't want to invite more trouble and he wouldn't be able to endure the energy influx from killing the elven woman, either way.

Michael had enough trouble with the energy influx of the lizard, the Gogi Lord, and dozens of Gogis. It was not necessary to worsen his condition any further.

"You want his corpse? Why? Did someone order you to kill the Gogi Lord?" He asked in return.

Now that he was inside his territory, Michael felt much more secure. He was not even nervous anymore.

'They're either Adventurers or Mercenaries.'

The elven woman looked at Michael intently. She pressed her palm against the protection barrier with some force and nodded her head.

"To think that another Lord appeared in the Untamable Jungle. But it's even more surprising to think that a Lord, whose grace period has yet to conclude, was able to take down the Gogi Lord," She mumbled quietly to herself before her focus returned to Michael.

"How did you do it? You're merely a Tierless Lord so you couldn't have done it alone. Most Gogi corpses on the battlefield were mauled and disfigured by something big."

The elven woman seemed intrigued, but Michael didn't answer even after the graceful elven woman stared at him with gleaming eyes.

'Is that how they interrogate people? By bewitching them with their beauty? Well...it doesn't seem like a bad plan to make use of their beauty that way...' Michael thought while keeping his mouth shut.

"We received the extermination mission from the Guild in Xiltra," The female Elf answered at last.

She didn't know the human Lord, but it was not difficult to tell that he was a tough nut to crack.

"Xiltra? Is that a city in the Untamed Jungle?" Michael asked curiously.

He didn't have much information about the region around him. Michael just found out that the rainforest region was called the 'Untamed Jungle'. Meanwhile, Xiltra sounded like the name of a city, which was why Michael made a guess.

This time it was the female Elf who remained quiet. Her lip curled up while Michael's face darkened.

'You're not going to tell me anything if I don't tell you anything?' Michael asked inwardly before letting out a sigh.

"Xiltra is one of the border cities of the Zentika Empire. It's the first line of defense against the monsters of the Untamed Jungle that often wreak havoc and lay waste in the empire. We're a E-Rank Adventurer team and accepted the mission to kill the Gogi Lord after the Gogi Lord kidnapped the Bilrox horde of a wealthy merchant. The merchant offered us a small fortune, so..." The female Elf trailed off, but it was enough for Michael to get the gist of it.

No matter how she looked at the situation, the human Lord was at an advantage. He could use the protection barrier to hunt them down or leave the Origin Expanse with the corpse of the Gogi Lord inside his War Rune's storage space if hunting down didn't work.

They were in dire need of money, and the human Lord was the only obstacle factor separating them from their fortune. If a few answers were enough to get on his good side, why wouldn't she reveal some commonly known facts?

'Zentika Empire? Xiltra is a border city...and the first line of defense against the Untamed Jungle...'
Michael thought, slowly trying to comprehend the bits of information he received. '...and my territory is in the Untamed Jungle that even an Empire doesn't seem to be able to conquer...great...'

Once again, Michael realized that he had no idea where he was and how dangerous the Untamed Jungle truly was. He sighed deeply and looked at the Elven Adventurer team.

"Let's make a deal."

Chapter 47 Deal

The deal was rather simple.

Michael would receive the information he wanted, and the Elves would receive the Gogi Lord's corpse. Both sides would benefit greatly.

"We accept the deal. Let us inside and we can talk all night!" The female Elf said generously giving him a faint smile.

However, Michael didn't move an inch. He frowned deeply and shook his head.

"That's not going to happen. We will talk here, with the barrier between us!" Michael announced, making his stance clear.

"Of course, if you remove your weapons, and allow me to tie your arms and legs, I will reconsider letting you guys inside. But I don't believe that anyone here wants to be tied up like a prisoner;" He added after a few seconds.

Michael sensed that the other Elves looked at him with discontent and ridicule, but he couldn't care less. They whispered to each other in the elven tongue, which Michael shrugged off. He didn't mind if they thought of him as a coward.

'Why should I trust you guys, in the first place? I don't know you, and you don't know me. I would rather stay alive than fall prey to stupidity.'

The Elves were as strong as the lizard mother, if not stronger. Michael couldn't even deal with the Gogi Lord without help. Dealing with the elven group was out of question.

"You can decide to leave with empty hands, I don't really mind," Michael said calmly, "It's not like I ask for a lot. All you have to do is spend ten or twenty minutes talking about the Untamed Jungle, where Xiltra is located, and some information about the places I should avoid when I travel to Xiltra, places in Xiltra I should visit, and even the places I should avoid in Xiltra."

Michael had nothing to lose if the Elves were not willing to accept the deal. In the worst case, he could preserve the Gogi Lord's corpse and hand it over to the Guild in Xiltra to receive the Elves' mission reward.

The reason Michael was willing to give up on the mission reward was pretty simple. He hoped the Elves would feel indebted to him, and that they would provide secret information. But most importantly, Michael didn't want to make new enemies now that he got rid of the Gogi Lord and the Lizard after tiring himself out for hours.

The group of five Elves was far more dangerous than the Gogi Lord given the fact that they were deemed mercenaries by the empire. It would be great if they could become friends. But even if that was not possible, it would be fine as long as their relationship remained neutral.

The female Elf from earlier nodded her head in response. Michael's comments were reasonable. Michael was the one to have defeated the Gogi Lord and Gogis. He deserved the reward, not them.

There would be some minor issues if Michael were to travel to Xiltra and demand the mission reward from the Guild, but these issues were not worth mentioning. And all Michael asked for was some information.

It didn't take an expert to determine that Michael was a Rookie Lord. His War Rune was Tierless, and the protection barrier was still up.

Considering these factors, Michael was either well-trained or in possession of a powerful Soultrait. Otherwise, he shouldn't have been able to kill the Gogi Lord and his subjects. Or...he was just suicidal, though the Elves didn't think that this was the case. The Rookie Lord seemed vigilant.

"We accept your deal. In fact, we will not report the appearance of a new Lord in the Untamed Jungle, either," The female Elf, who seemed to be the adventurer team's leader, said.

Michael didn't think much about that, so he nodded his head thankfully.

"It's not like his territory will remain standing long enough to be worth reporting, in the first place..."
Another Elf added in a low voice.

Michael heard the comment and tilted his head in confusion while looking at the youthful man for a while. After a second or two, Michael's gaze moved away from the youthful man. He looked at the other elves and noticed that they refrained from commenting on the youthful Elf's silent jibe at him.

'They think that I won't be able to hold my forte...is it that dangerous here? The Gogi Lord survived as well, so why can't I?'

It was a fact that Gogis were warriors and physically extremely strong. However, it was not as if their Tier was higher than others upon being summoned.

Michael felt that he shouldn't be too much at a disadvantage compared to the Gogi Lord.

"Don't take my comrade's comment to heart. Your territory is located a bit deeper inside the Untamed Jungle when compared to the Gogi Lord's territory. The Gogi Lord was already in a dangerous position on the outskirts of the Untamed Jungle, but you're already at the border to the middle zone," The Elf Leader explained when she saw how confused Michael was.

"Middle zone? My territory is only a few kilometers away from the Gogi Lord, and so far, I've only encountered Low Tier-1 Monsters, though their population is much higher than I expected...there are no Tierless Monsters either," Michael grumbled quietly, which caused the Elf Leader to add.

"That's the thing. The overpopulation of Tier-1 predators is the most common at the borders between the outer area and the middle zone. There should be some Tier-2 Monsters nearby, but you've probably not encountered them yet."

Michael recalled the lizard mother when the Elf Leader spoke about Tier-2 Monsters, and he kept his mouth shut. The only places he had visited outside the territory were the Lizard cave and the Gogi Lord's territory.

He didn't have to go deep inside the lizard cave and immediately encountered the lizard mother. Even if Michael had never encountered a Tier-2 Monster before, he was pretty sure that the lizard mother had been one. The energy share he received from her was more than ten times stronger than the energy share of the Gogi Lord.

'So, what if I'm in between the outer area and the middle zone?! I survived the Gogi Lord as well. I can deal with Tier-1 Monsters even though I'm only a Tierless Lord, and I have Tiara and my warriors. With enough time and effort, we'll be able to deal with Tier-2 monsters as well. In the first place, no Tier-2 monster seems to be running around mindlessly!'

Michae was a bit stubborn and zealous, but that was required to not let anxiety about his territory's location disadvantage get to him.

It was not as if Michael could change the location of his territory, in the first place. He had to accept the situation and progress, rather than lament about the inevitable.

That was also why Michael listened intently to the information provided by the Elven Adventurers.

"Where should I start? I think you're the most interested in the Untamed Jungle..." The Elven Leader began to share information.

She was meticulous and didn't seem to mind going into detail. Whenever Michael had a question, she would give him a satisfying answer.

The Elven Leader was quite knowledgeable, which made Michael feel as if he hit the jackpot.

Time passed quickly after the Elven Leader began sharing her knowledge about the Untamed Jungle and Xiltra.

More than half an hour passed before she stopped.

Meanwhile, Michael looked like his brain was melting. He couldn't absorb anymore information even if he wanted to. Fortunately, that was not necessary because he had learned most things, he wanted to know from her.

Even if he was not foolish enough to think that everything the Elven Leader said was true, the pieces of detailed information he had received would be quite helpful in the future.

"Thank you for sharing your knowledge about the Untamed Jungle and Xiltra. It was very interesting!" Michael said in a sincere voice. He cleared his throat, and added, "I will get the Gogi Lord's corpse. Please wait a moment."

Saying so, Michael turned around and disappeared in the thicket of the rainforest inside his territory.

The Elves looked at each other in confusion.

"Is he playing with us? We know that the Gogi Lord is in his War Rune's space!" The youthful Elf said, clenching his fist.

The other Elves nodded their heads feeling similarly confused. There shouldn't be a reason for the Rookie Lord to leave suddenly.

"I don't really care as long as we get the Gogi Lord's corpse," The Elf Leader answered with a shrug. She didn't think that Michael was foolish enough to betray them. The Rookie Lord seemed quite intelligent and vigilant. He wouldn't dare to anger them knowing that the protection barrier would disperse in a few days.

"That doesn't make sense...is he trying to fool us?!" The youthful Elf repeated, only for his head to snap forward when the Elven Leader slapped the back of his head lightly.

"Shut up and wait!"

What the Elves didn't know was that Michael was less than ten meters away from them. He retrieved the Gogi Lord's corpse once he was certain that the trees and bushes acted as privacy screens, shielding what he was going to do next.

Then his hands began to glow golden.

Before handing over the Gogi Lord's corpse, he had to extract his body.

After all, that was his loot to claim!

Chapter 48 Upgrade

It took only a minute to extract the most important loot, but Michael took his own sweet time to return.

Twenty minutes after he left, Michael returned to the Elves.

He dragged the Gogi Lord's corpse behind him and pushed it through the protection barrier without saying a word.

His face looked pale, and his expression was filled with confusion and doubts.

Michael was deep in thought and didn't even notice that the youthful Elf called him out to disappear for such a long time.

Even the Elven Leader had grown a little worried when Michael didn't return after ten minutes. The Elves were unable to figure out what had taken Michael so long when he merely had to access his War Rune to retrieve the Gogi Lord's corpse.

However, Michael's entire focus was on the loot he had received from extracting the Gogi Lord's body.

Some drops were expected while others were just too confusing.

He had obtained a Wisp of Memories, several SoulStar Fragments, a few blueprints, the Gogi Lord's Battle Axe Artifact, and hundreds of Bilrox feathers.

It was the first time he used Extraction on someone with a War Rune, and it was the second time he had extracted a Wisp of Memories and SoulStar Fragments.

SoulStar Fragments was the name Michael gave the translucent marbles with strands of purple energy inside. They could form into Soultraits, or enhance his Soultraits' star rating.

Interestingly enough, the SoulStar Fragments didn't form into a Soultrait upon getting extracted. But that was better.

Michael didn't want to collect hundreds of low-ranked Soultraits, in the first place. Instead, he desired to enhance the star rating of his existing Soultraits.

When Michael saw the SoulStar Fragments, he didn't wait long and willed the War Rune to absorb them. It was not difficult to enhance Extraction, which was upgraded to a 3-Star Soultrait at last.

The Soultrait Eagle Eyes may help him more in combat upon being upgraded, but Extraction increased his drop rate and strengthened the resources he extracted.

Thinking about his drop rate made him recall the Gogi Lord's territory where the corpses of more than 200 Tier-1 Gogis were scattered on the ground, waiting to be extracted by him.

That was also why Michael thought of upgrading Extraction, as the changes his first Soultrait underwent when he upgraded it from a 2-Star Soultrait to a 2.5-Star Soultrait were quite beneficial. Michael had yet to test it out, but he was certain that his drop rate increased even further now that Extraction was upgraded to a 3-Star Soultrait.

Being able to extract SoulStar Fragments and a Wisp of Memories had been great, but Michael had predicted that.

He was more interested in the extraction of the Gogi Lord's Battle Axe and the Bilrox feathers. The Gogi Lord's body was not covered in Bilrox feathers, but the storage space of his War Rune might Bilrox feathers stored in it!

This led to the question which tormented him the most right now- Could he use Extraction on War Runes as well?

The answer was pretty obvious. Michael extracted the Battle Axe Artifact that had been bound to the Gogi Lord's War Rune, and he extracted the Bilrox feathers that could only be stored in his War Rune's storage space. Gogis didn't eat chicken meat!

Finding out a new perk of his Soultrait was quite exciting. He didn't expect that he would be able to take the Artifacts of deceased Lords and Adventurers for himself and that he could even loot their War Runes' storage space.

However, this brought forth even more questions.

What was the limit of his Soultrait? Could he use his Soultrait on living Lords and Adventurers as well, or was it restricted? Michael could use extraction on the trees in the Untamed Jungle even though they were not dead. With that logic, it shouldn't be impossible to steal the Artifacts of other Lords and Adventurers.

Michael may even turn into a thief, capable of looting the storage space of War Runes!

Of course, Michael didn't plan to turn into a thief, but he wanted to find out the limit of his Soultrait. It could be useful for future purposes.

He had many more questions that were waiting to be answered, however, it was better to make mental notes and save those for later to ponder about when he had free time instead of throwing dozens of questions around. Most of them couldn't be answered easily, either way.

After Michael came to a conclusion, his fogged mind cleared up at last. He realized that he had been rude to the Elves and wanted to apologize.

However, when he looked at the Elves, their body language indicated that they didn't really seem to mind too much. The youthful Elf glared at him, but the rest seemed unbothered.

'Are Elves not as difficult to deal with as everyone says?' He wondered.

Michael felt much better thinking that the Elves were nicer than expected and he recalled something when he was about to see them off.

"You might be able to earn a big fortune by bringing the Bilrox horde back to the merchant. If that merchant is not an idiot, he will give you a generous reward," He proposed with a faint smile.

The Elves had stored the Gogi Lord's corpse and were about to leave when they turned back to him. The Elven Leader returned a simple smile.

"If you need help in the future, you can ask for us in the Guild tavern. I am Lilica Balrean from the Tertan Woods. We belong to the Forest Elven, and I'm the leader of the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team," She introduced herself.

'Does that mean they'll take the Bilrox horde back to Xiltra, or not?' Michael asked himself. He was a little confused because it felt like the dynamic between him, and the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team had changed.

However, instead of dwelling on it unnecessarily, Michael chose to go with the flow.

"My name is Michael Fang, and I'm a human Lord. I won't allow the Untamed Jungle to devour me, so we'll probably meet each other in the future!" He introduced himself, which the Elves acknowledged with a nod before they departed for good.

Even if Michael wanted to make the Bilrox horde his, he didn't have the means to bring them over. Furthermore, If Michael would have somehow managed to bring them over, he did not have the resources to feed and raise the Bilrox. He didn't even have enough space to construct a Bilrox farm.

For the time being, raising a horde of Bilrox was out of question. The three Bilrox eggs from Blaire were already enough to start with.

Thinking about the Bilrox horde in the Gogi territory, Michael recalled once again, 'I have yet to extract their corpses...'

However, Michael couldn't return immediately.

Right now, he was trying to digest the Soultrait's upgrade and accept the changes in his body. Simultaneously, the lizard mother's energy share was still not fully digested either. It ravaged inside his body, just like the information he had received from Lilica Balrean.

He was not sure if everything she said was true, but the Wisp of Memories, which he had extracted from the Gogi Lord's corpse, would probably answer that.

Michael retrieved the white blob of light – which he labeled Wisp of Memories – from his War Rune. He pushed it lightly inside his head where the streams of light scattered.

Then, the Gogis' memories filled his mind.

Chapter 49 Loot

The memories of the Gogi Lord filled his mind.

It felt like waves crashing down on him, revealing various pieces of information about the Gogi Lord's combat experience, his life in the territory, and the Gogis' homeworld.

The extracted memories were of much higher quantity compared to Fenrir's memories. However, the memories of a Heroic Summon were qualitatively on a much higher level than the memories of a Lord, who had entered the Origin Expanse less than half a year ago. That was inarguable.

But Michael was satisfied, either way. He had been a little confused as to why he didn't receive any Summoning Scroll Fragments or Summoning Scrolls when he extracted the Gogi Lord's body, but the Wisp of Memories had been quite helpful, so he didn't mind it too much.

'The Gogi Lord's memories proved Lilica's information to be correct. That's good.'

He had been a little uncertain about the credibility of the information provided by Lilica. Michael didn't know the Elven Leader of the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team, and she could've provided wrong, or slightly tweaked information to him that would land him in trouble. Fortunately, that was not the case.

Now that he was alone and inside his territory, he could finally rest. Michael's entire body was still under massive pressure due to the energy share of the lizard mother and the Gogi Lord, but his War Rune was rapidly being refined. This resulted in a proportional increase in his body and mind's strength.

Thanks to that, Michael's body didn't seem like it was going to burst apart anymore. There was no need to keep using his Soultraits or infusing his Artifacts with untamed energy.

His Artifacts were retracted into the War Rune, and Michael retrieved the corpse of the Lizard body. His storage space seemed like it would crumble any moment since he had squeezed the Gogi Lord and the Lizard mother inside it without caring whether they fit inside or not.

The Gogi Lord was already four meters tall, and the Lizard mother hadn't been smaller either. She was three meters tall and seven meters long.

'How did they even fit inside, in the first place?' Michael wondered before he gave it a shrug.

Rather than wasting his time asking stupid questions, he could use extraction on the lizard corpse.

'Whatever...'

Ten minutes later, Michael had completed the extraction of the lizard's corpse. He had dissected her completely and stored everything possible inside his War Rune.

Afterward, he staggered back to the wooden manor before he crashed onto his bed. His mind was churning in the attempt to neatly absorb the memories of the Gogi Lord while his body endured the untamed energy inside him.

Michael was tired, and he didn't really care that it was only early afternoon.

'I still have the entire day for me to work tomorrow...I deserve some rest now that the Gogi Lord is dead...'

The moment he thought that exhaustion overtook him as his eyes felt heavy and his mind wanted to shut off. Michael was unable to escape his body's demand for rest and well-deserved sleep. The last few days had been too stressful, especially the last few hours.

He was only a Tierless Lord who had yet to get accustomed to the threats and pressure of the Origin Expanse.

One way or another, Michael was proud of himself. He had single-handedly removed a big threat while the protection barrier was still up and didn't lose a single subject. That was enough reason to be proud and satisfied.

Thus, Michael was able to sleep until the morning of the following day, feeling content with himself.

Dawn marked the beginning of his 8th day inside the Origin Expanse. Only 48 hours were left before the protection barrier would disappear, but Michael was not that worried anymore.

There were many tasks left to complete, yet Michael woke up with a calm heart.

The untamed energy inside him had been fully absorbed to increase the War Rune's degree of refinement, and the Gogi Lord's memories had also been completely digested.

Michael was full of vigor after sleeping for so long. He felt like he could move mountains!

'Now that the Gogi Lord is dead, we have to take care of the overpopulation of Tier-1 Monsters. Tiara and the three Warriors should be enough to tackle that though. If the monsters recognize us as the overlords of the territory, we'll be fine. They wouldn't attack us as long as they're not starving.' Michael concluded.

In the past week, he had learned quite a bit about the territorial behavior of the Monsters in the Origin Expanse. Just like no monster dared to enter the lizard cave, the monsters in the vicinity shouldn't be daring enough to get too close to his territory by now.

However, that was just Michael's assumption. He had to meet up with Tiara and the Warriors to prove the theory before he could adjust his plans accordingly.

Michael felt a little lazy today, but he understood that he couldn't stay in bed and do nothing. He had yet to return to the Gogi Lord's territory and use Extraction on more than 200 Gogi corpses.

Now that Extraction had been upgraded to a 3-Star Soultrait, Michael hoped that he would receive an average of 10 Summoning Scroll Fragments for every Tier-1 corpse. In addition, he would receive a Summoning Scroll every now and then.

That meant he might be able to expand the number of his subjects by 100 after today!

That thought provided him with enough motivation to jump out of bed and rush downstairs. He listened to the daily report, met up with Tiara and the warriors, and distributed the daily tasks. More treehouse complexes had to be constructed, and various necessities had to be provided if he would be able to turn the extraction of 200 Gogi corpses into 100 Summoning Scrolls.

To provide the required resources for the necessities, Michael dissected the monster that Tiara and the Warriors hunted the day before. They killed a total of 45 Tier-1 Monsters, which was a lot more than Michael expected according to the daily report he received.

Fewer monsters dared to approach the vicinity of his territory – the protection barrier, to be precise. It was just like Michael had theorized, which was great.

The loot he received from 45 monster corpses was far more than he initially expected. In total, he received three blueprints, nine Summoning Scrolls, and 459 Summoning Scroll Fragments.

Combined with the three Summoning Scrolls, 41 Summoning Scrolls Fragments he extracted from the lizard mother, and the daily Summoning Scroll of the Summoning Gate, Michael could summon 33 subjects!

Thus, he wasted no time and Michael summoned them at once. More helping hands were always welcome.

Out of the 33 summoned subjects, four were 1-Star Summons. There was one Cook, one Alchemist, a Librarian, and a Warrior. The rest were starless summons that were given tasks according to the territory's needs.

Meanwhile, 1-Star Summons were given the means to make use of their talent – if possible.

The Warrior was added to Tiara's group of Warriors, which was how Michael noticed for the first time that the other three Warriors had grown a bit stronger. They were ranked Low Tier-0 Warriors after advancing from the Lowest-grade!

In fact, Michael realized for the first time that his craftsmen and most of the older subjects had advanced from the Lowest grade to the Low grade! They worked so hard that their refinement degree progressed at a monstrous speed!

'Working hard allows Summons to absorb more dormant energy, I know...but isn't that too fast?' Michael wondered.

He knew that Warriors absorbed more energy from killing Monsters and that Summons with occupations amplified the absorption of energy by doing tasks in accordance with their occupation, but that didn't explain how 14 Starless Summons were able to reach the Low refinement degree.

'Did they practice the Sun Soldier's Breathing, or had they attained enlightenment somehow? No...enlightenment is not that easy to attain...'

Michael was baffled but he shook his head to dispel the doubts in his mind. He could think about the reason for his subject's fast growth once he collected more information. He would put his brain to much better use by focusing on other tasks to complete for the time being.

Thus, he stored some meat and Tiatcha in his War Rune and left the protection of his territory.

On his way to the Gogi Lord's territory, Michael took a look at the remaining objects he obtained from extracting the lizard mother's corpse.

He ignored the scales, and meat, and focused on the two pieces of paper he had obtained. Michael retrieved them from the War Rune and took a proper look at them.

"A forging blueprint with detailed steps to follow. Even a Blacksmith Apprentice should be able to forge the Blade," Michael mumbled to himself before he noticed something written down at the bottom of the blueprint, "It can easily cut through the hide of High Tier-1 Monsters and is highly durable...that's amazing!"

The forging blueprint was already amazing, so Michael's expectations were a tad bit higher for the other piece of paper in his hand.

However, what he saw confused him more than he expected.

'Isn't that...'

Chapter 50 Devourer

The second paper was a tattered parchment. The topography of the Untamed Jungle was drawn on it.

It was a map! A part of a map, to be precise.

'Why does it look so familiar?'

Michael was certain that he had seen a map of the Untamed Jungle before. He accessed his War Rune's storage space and retrieved a similar-looking parchment.

"It's not the same," Michael concluded quickly. The maps were far from detailed, and one could mostly see green dots indicating the treetops of the Untamed Jungle, but it was easy to tell that the maps were not similar. Certain marks and spots on both maps were different.

Michael put the maps next to each other and tilted his head.

'They should be fragments of the same map...probably...' He guessed.

Right now, he was more confused than excited. The map could be a treasure map, but then why was there no red cross marking the position of the treasure?

The red cross – if there was one – was etched on one of the missing parchments.

'Even if I had the map with the marked spot, the map barely has any details to pinpoint an exact position.' Michael grumbled before he put the parchments back inside the War Rune.

It would have been great if the map was drawn in detail. That way, he would be able to pinpoint his own position, the position of the Lizard cave, the Gogi Lord's territory, and the habitats of the overlords in the Untamed Jungle's outer area and middle zone. He and his subjects would have a much easier time evading dangerous areas and coming up with precise strategies against most kinds of threats using a detailed map.

'Treasure map or not...it's a little sad.' He thought with a tinge of regret.

Fortunately, the regret quickly dispersed when he got closer to the Gogi Lord's camp. He got excited and further accelerated his steps.

Michael paved his way through the Untamed Jungle's outer area while avoiding the monster habitats. It took him less than an hour to reach the Gogi Lord's territory with excitement spreading through his entire being.

Unfortunately, this excitement died down the moment he reached the bloody battlefield – or where the bloody battlefield was supposed to be.

"Not even a complete day passed..." Michael mumbled. His eyes shot wide open.

He was stunned and had a tough time processing what happened.

Not even twenty-four hours passed but the entire bloody battlefield had disappeared into thin air. He couldn't find a single splatter of blood, forget about the corpses or the remains of the dead. It looked like there had never been a battle, in the first place.

"Did I take a wrong turn? Maybe, I am at the wrong place..." He scratched his head in confusion.

A moment later, Michael began to climb up one of the large trees near him. He activated his Eagle Eyes and scanned the vicinity once he found a large branch to stand on. He was more than twenty meters above the surface and could see far in every direction. The Untamed Jungle was densely grown but the vegetation was scarcer at a higher altitude.

Thus, Michael quickly figured that the Gogi Lord's manor and Summoning Gate were not too far away. They were roughly as far away as they had been the day before. The angle at which he could see the wooden manor and the Summoning Gate were also the same. He was at the right position. This place was the bloody battlefield!

"How can that be?" Michael was utterly dumbfounded. He couldn't comprehend the situation. It was as if somebody cast a spell on the surrounding landscape to make everything disappear. But that was far from the truth, and he was faced with a mystery to solve.

Thus, Michael jumped down from the tree while his hands began to glow golden. He used extraction in the vicinity while walking around. He recalled the rough position of a few Gogi corpses from the day before because they had been torn apart near a cluster of several densely grown trees. The trees were still there but the corpses, organs and all the blood had disappeared.

Using his Soultrait on the same spot, Michael wanted to find out one thing; Were the traces of the bloody battlefield just hidden, or had they been removed altogether?!

Extraction allowed him to extract everything in a targeted object. He targeted the trees, bushes, and soil with the intention of extracting every last trace of blood.

'Either someone took the corpses and cleaned up the mess, the Will of the Origin Expanse removed the existence of the Gogi Lord's subjects, or the Untamed Jungle devoured everything.'

Michael came up with three theories, and it was fairly easy to get closer to the truth using his Soultrait. The Will of the Origin Expanse had nothing to do with this phenomenon if he could extract the blood from the ground. If there was none, the Will of the Origin Expanse was the perpetrator.

However, what if blood was not the only remnant of the bloody battlefield?

The moment Michael used his Soultrait to extract the blood from the ground, a fountain of crimson liquid manifested in his golden glowing hands.

His eyes shot wide open, and he stopped utilizing Extraction for a moment.

'....w-what was that?'

Michael gulped nervously and subconsciously took a step back. He stared at the crimson blood he had extracted and tilted his head. Goosebumps sprang up on his body, but Michael forced himself to stay calm.

Taking a breath to calm his jittery nerves, he manifested the golden streams of his Soultrait once again. However, this time, Michael focused on the vast variety of substances he could extract from the roots, soil, and bark around him.

"This..."

It was at this moment when Michael realized the truth behind Lalica's words and the Forest Elves' warning.

The Untamed Jungle was dangerous. Michael understood that now.

He understood that it was more than just a forest inhabiting ferocious monsters.

It was a living entity...a devourer...

Michael shuddered the moment he sensed the remains of the first Gogi in the ground. His Soultrait may not be able to tell him detailed information about the Gogi, but he could extract the remains of the corpse if he wanted to.

However, the Gogi corpse had already been torn apart and digested by a great deal, and he wouldn't receive the drops created by the Will of the Origin Expanse either.

'This is insane...'

Michael had been a little bit confused why the Zentika Empire didn't conquer the Untamed Jungle to acquire more resources. The Jungle's trees were very resilient, and he had spent hours getting them extracted. Even a full blow of the Gogi Lord's battle axe wouldn't have been strong enough to cut deep into their trunks. That was also what made it so difficult for Michael's Tierless subjects to cut down the trees.

But now that he found out that the Untamed Jungle was not just a home to many living beings but was also alive, and not just as an ordinary lifeform.

That made him feel oddly fascinated.

It also meant that the Untamed Jungle was sentient, with a certain degree of intelligence, and could devour its inhabitants, which made Michael understand their reasoning.

The Untamed Jungle was a habitat for very powerful existences, according to Lalica. If the Zentika Empire wanted to conquer the Untamed Jungle, they would have to kill, subdue, or drive away the mighty monsters.

However, if the sentient Untamed Jungle lashed out and devoured the armies of the Zentika Empire while they fought the mighty monsters, it would be near impossible to conquer the Untamed Jungle without destroying it.

Did that mean the Untamed Jungle was on the side of the monsters? But it didn't attack the Gogi Lord's subjects when they were alive!

Was the Untamed Jungle unwilling to devour living beings, or was it unable to do so? If either of them was the case, why would the Zentika Empire be afraid to conquer the Untamed Jungle?

'Is it possible that the Untamed Jungle doesn't consider Lords as its enemies?' Michael wondered, but he quickly shook his head.

The Lords killed countless monsters and brutally cut down the trees and hampered the environment for their personal gains. It was hardly possible that the Untamed Jungle didn't consider Lords its enemies – if it was truly sentient enough to sense the difference between Lords and monster habitats.

'What if the entire ecosystem around the Untamed Jungle is just a symbiotic relationship between the inhabitants and the Untamed Jungle?

...

Michael felt that he was slowly getting nearer to the truth. However, he didn't really like that feeling. His heart was beating wildly, his throat felt tight, and a thousand thoughts were wreaking havoc in his brain.

'What would happen to the Lords, who dare meddle with the symbiotic relationship of the Untamed Jungle and its inhabitants?!