

Supreme Lord 431

Chapter 431 Maria Seraph

After stepping inside the Colosseum, Michael's attention was pulled to the young woman surrounded by close to two dozen Awakened.

The Awakened were participants of the Battle Exchange and so was the young woman wearing white linen clothing. She had silky golden hair that cascaded down her back and ocean-blue eyes. Her presence commanded attention and praises – and that was something she was getting more than enough.

Michael could only see the two dozen Awakened fawning over her as if she was a precious treasure. But then again, Michael had to agree that the young woman was beautiful. Her beauty was on par with Alice's.

"Who is that?" He asked the Zenovia siblings out of curiosity, wondering what was up with this young woman.

"Who? Do you mean Maria Seraph?" Kaleb asked, pointing at the woman Michael had been talking about. Michael gave it a short nod, which rewarded him with confused gazes from both Kaleb and Alice.

"You really don't know her?" Alice asked, not quite believing what she heard just now.

"I know that you don't really care about politics and such, but you are very interested in Soultraits usually. You are one of the people who researched Soultraits the most, but you don't know the Seraph family, and their precious diamond, Maria Seraph?"

Michael could only smile as a response. Should he know the Seraph family? Well. He was pretty sure that he had heard about the Seraph family, but that was it. Michael didn't care about the nobility, large families and clans enough to start researching them and their family tree for hours together. He didn't have that much time to waste on such nonsense.

"As if..." Kaleb mumbled, shaking his head. Thankfully, Alice regained her composure faster than Kaleb. She realized that Michael was truly ignorant of the Seraph family, and Maria Seraph.

"To put it in very simple terms, the Seraph family is known for their healing Soultraits. They're among the best of the human race, and the Tritan Alliance. Maria Seraph is on a different level though. She is a Heavenly Chosen just like Kaleb," Alice explained.

"So...she has a 7-Star Soultrait like Kaleb?" Michael asked, only for Alice to lift her fingers and correct him.

"Maria has a 7-Star Soultrait but the Soultrait is far from ordinary. She has a healing-type Soultrait. The only 7-Star healing Soultrait all over the Tritan Alliance. If that's not enough for you to understand the importance of her Soultrait, I know of only two Lords with 6-Star Healing Soultraits. There are only two of them as far as I know, and both belong to the Seraph family!"

Kaleb listened intently and added, "Maria once said that she doesn't know the true extent of her own power. She mentioned that she might be able to bring someone back from the dead provided they didn't die more than 3 seconds ago. If her powers grow stronger – which they will – Maria might be able to go beyond that time constraint and resurrect someone several minutes after they died. That will change everything. Her potential and value is immeasurable. Thus, everyone is trying to get almost her."

Michael was quite surprised to see Kaleb praising someone else that much. He always thought that Kaleb had a hard time praising others because that might mean he accepted that others were better than him. Thus, it was even more surprising that Kaleb praised Maria Seraph to the stars and beyond.

Then again, Maria Seraph's Soultrait seemed far more special than any other 7-Star Soultrait of mankind's Heavenly Chosen.

'Healing Soultraits are that rare? Not that it affects me. In the future I will get my hands on a healing Soultrait, no matter the star rating.' Michael thought, not giving in to all the hype around the healer girl.

"Are you interested in her as well?" Alice asked, a faint frown appearing on her face. Michael smiled teasingly and responded, "If her Soultrait can regrow hair, maybe. If not, probably not."

Maria Seraph was beautiful, young, and extremely talented given that she was in possession of a 7-Star Soultrait with healing properties, but all Michael could think about when he heard about the uniqueness and rarity of her Soultrait was that he had yet to get hold of his own healing-type Soultrait.

"Hair? Well...I don't know if she can do that," Alice mumbled, suppressing a laugh as she looked at Michael's bald head once again.

"You don't know? So there is a possibility...Well, okay then. I can just ask her," Michael said right before walking over to Maria Seraph and the small group of people surrounding her.

Michael suppressed his presence and gave them a friendly smile as he approached them. He wasn't noticed until he moved two Awakened to the side. They were standing in his way, so they were removed on the spot.

The Awakened grumbled and were just about to start a fight with Michael when they noticed that Michael was already standing directly in front of Maria Seraph.

"I'm sorry for butting into your fan meeting, but I have a small question to ask you," Michael said, clearing his throat right before he got straight to the point, "Can your Soultrait accelerate hair growth as well, or is that impossible?"

Maria Seraph hadn't noticed Michael at first. But she sensed something from her right side that attracted her curiosity. First, Maria turned her head to look at Michael, only for her eyes to lock onto the crimson ring Michael wore.

Only after a second or two did her gaze move up to lock eyes with Michael. Maria tilted her head and raised an eyebrow. Michael's question didn't sound like the usual requests she received. His words weren't filled with the usual heaps of acclaim and flattery either. I think you should take a look at

"Is it possible to some extent at least, or not?" Michael repeated, but Maria Seraph didn't answer immediately.

"Who the hell are you to crash our lovely discussion?" Some hoodlum interfered in Michael's chat with Maria. It was a Descendant at the 3rd Tier, a second-year student from one of the Great Academies.

"You filthy brick. How dare you speak to our Saintess?!" Another Descendant joined the hoodlum's side.

However, Michael couldn't even hear him. He locked eyes with the vibrant ocean-blue eyes of Maria Seraph, the young woman whom many called Saintess, and smiled, waiting for her to answer.

Maria spent several seconds trying to escape the enchantment of Michael's dark – nearly black – eyes that seemed to trap her. However, once she regained her senses, Maria answered Michael's question at last.

"Even if it's possible, I wouldn't want to waste my power to regenerate hair," She said, gently touching one of her ears.

Her ears were oddly warm and they had a faint pinkish tint.

Michael could only concede with her reasoning. If Maria Seraph would use her power to regrow his hair many powerhouses would feel betrayed. First of all, the powerhouses would think she used her powers on trivial things. Meanwhile, others would demand her to use her powers to heal their small injuries as well. Therefore, it was only logical that Maria used her healing trait only for wounds nobody else could tend to.

But it was a shame for Michael. It would be great if he could use Maria as his personal hair growth expert.

"Alright then. Thanks for answering my question. Have a nice day," Michael said, not bothering to stay in Maria's circle of fans anymore. He ignored the two Descendants who were still staring at him and walked away.

Maria's eyes followed him, and she noticed that two people were already waiting for him a few meters ahead.

'Isn't that Alice Zenovia, and her brother? Weird.'

"Oi. Where do you think you are going?!" One of the Descendants who had been angered by Michael's interruption. He stepped forward, only for a young girl standing next to him to stop him from doing something stupid.

"Don't bother about him. He must like his hair, otherwise, he wouldn't have asked such a stupid question. He is not worth it." She said, right before seeing that Kaleb Zenovia patted Michael's shoulder and began laughing aloud.

The others noticed that as well, but only the Descendant, who had been ready to fight Michael, retaliated to the scenario in front of him.

"He belongs to the Zenovias?" He asked, looking at the girl next to him, who responded, "I don't know. Either way, it's a good thing that you didn't hurt him. Alice is way too overprotective of her people. Some even say that she is obsessed with their well-being and that she is willing to kill even Descendants if they do something to her people."

Kaleb continued to laugh at Michael and he said something that the group surrounding Maria didn't hear. Michael gave Kaleb a shrug and didn't bother about Maria Seraph anymore.

Meanwhile, Alice looked over to the group, staring straight at Maria Seraph.

'Hmm? What was that?'

Maria didn't shy away. She stared shoulders at Alice Zenovia, who locked eyes with the young healer for a few seconds before she turned around. Alice followed Michael and Kaleb, who walked away a little bit further before they sat down to talk and watch some official battles in the Colosseum.

Maria was confused, unsure if her eye contact with Alice had a deeper meaning. Her eye contact with Michael had been a little bit different. It had been more intense but less stressful and tense. Her eye contact with Alice on the other hand was extremely stressful.

'I must be imagining things,' Maria thought, the pinkish tint of her ears intensifying as she recalled her eye contact with the unknown Awakened, who strolled around Kaleb and Alice.

'What was his name again?'

Chapter 432 Bulk

After watching some battles, Michael was actually a little bit disappointed in his competition.

He fought against the Kitsun Lord and Haro Ki's subordinates for several days and spent weeks in the Origin Expanse to increase his strength rapidly so he had expected some worthy opponents here as well. Sadly, the combat prowess of the other participants of the Battle Exchange didn't increase by much. If anything, Michael felt that some of the Token Holders were a lot weaker than before.

But was that really the case, or did his strength increase to a higher extent than he predicted? Or maybe Michael was just better at pointing out the other participants' weaknesses after everything that happened in the last few weeks.

With Eagle Eyes and Spirit Gaze activated simultaneously, it allowed him to see far more and far better than ever. That allowed him to pinpoint his opponents' weaknesses and flaws without too many difficulties. Michael could, in fact, imagine several scenarios in which he fought the Token Holders in official battles, and he couldn't help but furrow his brows at the result of the imagined battles.

If it had been a few weeks ago, Michael would have lost against some of the Token Holders. To be precise, most of the second-year-students would have defeated him with a high probability. Their combat prowess was ranked either Elite or Superior and most of them were at the 3rd Tier.

But now that he obtained Spirit Gaze, which linked to Eagle Eyes, and that Glacicle was upgraded to a 5-Star Soultrait the situation changed. And that didn't even include the changes he underwent by refining his War Rune to the Mid rank of the 2nd Tier, in addition to the new experiences and fighting styles he got to know. Last but not least, there was also the heavy and intense training he obtained from the Immortal Knight.

While the official battles were a little bit disappointing, Michael was quite satisfied about his own strength. The fight against the Kitsun Lord had been quite fierce, and he was still irked about the loss of 1,500 Combat Summons, but the increase in strength he obtained from it was clearly notable.

Therefore, Michael decided to research the other Token Holders and find out more about the Descendants who had yet to bother challenging Token Holders. He could just challenge some other Token Holders, but Michael didn't want to obtain a Flag War Token with a low rating. If anything, Michael desired to obtain a Token with a good rank. He required far more resources than others to increase his strength rapidly. Therefore, he had to give his all to rank higher to obtain more resources.

Researching everything took quite a while, but Michael was not in a hurry. He had close to two weeks left before the Battle Exchange would end. If he entered the Origin Expanse until the end of the Battle Exchange Michael would have close to a month's time to grow even stronger and complete his research. Then again, Michael was not patient enough to wait until the end of the Battle Exchange before he would start challenging other Token Holders.

Two days passed in the blink of an eye. Michael was once again in the Colosseum observing a few official matches of the Token Holders he researched. Their fights were somewhat interesting, but the messages he received on that day were a little bit more important.

[Alice Zenovia(fierce beauty): A healer of the Holy Sun Guild accepted your request. The healer was already stationed in a military base located near the Saphirelake Military Academy. That was very fortunate for Frederik because the healer traveled to the Saphirelake Military Academy immediately and started to tend to his wounds. Apparently, he had been afflicted with a Minor Curse that would have killed him if not tended to in the next few days. It was a good thing that the healer's Soultrait can cure Minor Curses. The Curse was alleviated and Frederik woke up. There is only one downside...]

[Alice Zenovia(fierce beauty): The healer demands additional pay for curing the Minor Curse. Apparently, she can only cure Minor Curses once a month. Furthermore, Frederik's condition seems to be worse than stated in the medical report. She uttered that she would have to stay with Frederik for a month to make sure that his condition would improve and he would be back to its former peak. To put it simply; she wants 50 Mythic Summoning Scrolls or something of equal value...]

Michael didn't expect Frederik's condition to be that bad. All he had known was that Frederik was in a coma and that he sustained various injuries.

[Michael Fang: The payment is not a problem. Can you please tell the healer to focus on Frederik's condition and that she doesn't have to worry about the Mythic Summoning Scrolls?]

The price he had to pay was fairly expensive, even for someone like Michael. Procuring 500,000 Summoning Scroll Fragments to create 50 Mythic Scrolls wasn't that easy.

It was a relief that he had one particular advantage. He opened his chat with Kraft Viton since he was not sure where exactly the old man from the Bartholomew Corporation was and wrote him a message.

[Michael Fang: Hello Mr. Viton. I noticed a particular clause written in the special privileges provided to Diamond Members of the Bartholomew Corporation. Is it true that I can use the backlog of Summoning Scrolls from the last few months to boost my monthly purchase limit for one month?]

The purchase limit of Ordinary Summoning Scrolls was rather annoying for anyone interested in purchasing them in bulk. But given that the society was reigned by capitalists there would always be people with special rights and privileges. If not for the special privileges, it would be unlikely for Descendants of truly influential families to be so much stronger than anyone else.

At last, Michael could make use of such a special privilege as well. He never used the purchase limit for Ordinary Summoning Scrolls. Therefore, he could use his privilege to purchase the unused Scroll purchases and add the backlog to the current month. Therefore, he could exceed his purchase limit by the number of Summoning Scrolls he 'could have' purchased over the last few months.

This worked only for people with special privileges such as being a Diamond Member of the Bartholomew Corporation. I think you should take a look at

Michael didn't have to wait long before Kraft Viton sent him a reply.

[Kraft Viton: Do you want to boost your Soul Power for the Battle Exchange? If you don't have the capacity to keep the Summons alive and treat them well in your territory I advise you not to purchase too many Summoning Scrolls at once. Of course, you can do whatever you want, but I hope that you will listen to my advice.

If you still want to purchase the backlog of Summoning Scrolls that you haven't used in the last handful months, you can purchase a total of 684,650 Ordinary Summoning Scrolls for 3,500\$ a piece. That is the current market price. The Diamond-level discount happens to apply to Ordinary Summoning Scrolls as well. You don't have to pay an extra fee for bulk purchases as it would usually be the case when someone purchases a bulk of Summoning Scrolls either. Therefore each Summoning Scroll will cost you 2,800\$, or a total of 1,917,020,000\$.]

The price stupefied Michael a little bit, but it was not as if he couldn't have expected something like that.

'Almost two billion for 680,000ish Ordinary Summoning Scrolls!! No wonder that some Descendants are that powerful. Ordinary people won't ever be able to purchase that many Scrolls. They would never have that money to spare. Well...I can't either, but it's not like I have a choice.'

Michael would rather not buy the Scrolls from the Bartholomew Corporation and wait a handful weeks until his subordinates hunted enough monsters to extract Summoning Scrolls and Summoning Scroll Fragments. Unfortunately, Alice sent him a message just now – a message that forced Michael to spend far more money than he could afford.

["Alice Zenovia(fierce beauty): Apparently the healer won't continue until a deposit of 20 Mythic Scrolls has been paid. I told her that I can vouch for you...but she doesn't seem to care. That is rare, but it happens since not everyone trusts big families. It's not the first time that Descendants of Superior families have taken advantage of their family's influence and authority to get freebies from Guilds and their members. So...you would have to send 20 Mythic Summoning Scrolls to the Sapphirelake Military Academy in the next handful days, otherwise, Frederik's treatment won't continue..."]

Alice was trying to keep her cool but she was frustrated. She couldn't even help Michael. All the power and influence she possessed was rendered useless. She wasn't even capable of helping her only student to pay for his friend's medical treatment. Why? Because her family would notice and question her. They would notice her unusual behavior, take note of Michael, and pay more attention to him – attention she didn't want Michael to obtain just yet.

Michael was not yet ready to be thrown that deep into the politics of big families. If possible, Alice wanted him to stay out of it forever. Unfortunately, she knew that the Patriarchs of the Piedra and Lavita family had already taken note of Michael. Once the Flag War was over, Michael was likely to end up being pushed into the hell of high society. That was a shame, but it gave Alice enough time to prepare Michael at least a little bit. She couldn't afford to waste that time...even if that meant Michael would have to struggle a little bit to pay for Frederik's treatment.

[Michael Fang: No worries. I will be fine.]

Michael expected something similar. It was a shame, but it was also a good thing that his ties with Kraft Viton and the Bartholomew Corporation were fairly strong. Thus, he sent Kraft Viton a reply without wasting any time.

[Michael Fang: I will purchase everything, but can we deduct the bill from the profit I made with my percentages of the Agriculture Project? There should be some profits by now, so...if it's possible can we just deduct the 1,917,020,000\$ from the profits?]

He felt a little bit sorry for asking a big favor, but he felt that it was necessary. In the worst case, he could just harvest more Agriculture-type Blueprints and sell them on the spot. In fact, that was something Michael wanted to do in the first place. But the funds earned from selling the Agriculture-type Blueprints were something he wanted to invest into his territory – and not into Frederik.

That was why Michael hoped that Kraft Viton would allow him to use his portion of the profits from the Agriculture Project to purchase the Ordinary Summoning Scrolls.

[Kraft Viton: How did you know? I wanted to surprise you by saying that you don't have to pay anything since the Agriculture Project's first profits are about to get distributed. You really are a sly fox!]

Michael didn't expect such a reply. It was poles apart from Kraft Viton's serious character. But it was not a bad thing. On the contrary, Michael was happy about the message's content.

[Michael Fang: Does that mean my portion of the profit is close to two billion dollars, or even higher?]

"Damn!"

Chapter 433 Great Fortune

Michael didn't expect the first profits to come in so early. But now that he thought about it, Michael felt that it made sense.

It had been a while since he started to sell the Agriculture-type Blueprints to the Bartholomew Corporation. And even before he started doing that, they'd already started with the Agriculture Project. They progressed faster now that Michael provided enough blueprints, but it made sense that the first Human Lords in the Barren Lands started to develop and cultivate their land, building farms and all necessary devices to turn the barren lands into flourishing green plains with highly nutritious soil to grow special wheat and other plants.

Months passed by in the Origin Expanse since Michael first sold his blueprints. Therefore, the first harvest must have been completed, generating a lot more wealth than Michael could have fathomed.

If his first profit was already worth more than his purchase of 1.9ish billion dollars, how much would he earn once the entire barren lands had been conquered by the Bartholomew Corporation? Michael couldn't fathom the wealth he would earn in the next few months, and he realized for the first time that he lucked out with his contract.

But as realization struck Michael, confusion followed alongside his excitement.

'Why was the executive director willing to give me 18% of the profits? Wasn't she well aware that they were going to make so much money? Or were they scared that I would leave them? Maybe she thought that I would switch to the Olympus and that the Olympus would be able to develop much faster than them with my help? They were scared to lose the monopoly of the Barren Lands. In fact, they must still be uncertain if they can maintain their monopoly!'

[Michael Fang: Let's meet up somewhere. I have a large stash of blueprints to sell as well. There should be enough rare Agriculture-type blueprints to keep the Directors calm and happy for a while, if that's necessary, in the first place.]

Michael was bad at politics and the stuff related to it. However, he knew that humans were innately greedy beings. The best example would be himself. Michael was extremely greedy. He tried to suppress his greed most of the time, but he noticed often enough that his greed was growing. It began to grow since he became a Lord...since he tasted the addiction of power, the necessity of wealth, and the importance of influence. Everything combined together stimulated his greed even more. It would consume him if not for the people around him. Having Tiara, Lilica, Mika, and the other Forest Elves, Kaleb, Lincoln, and even Zeke around him calmed him a little bit.

Having them around him was enough to see that not everyone was greedy and that he shouldn't act like a selfish brat. He had important people around him, people he wanted to protect. Last but not least, Michael didn't want to make his brother sad. Danny always told him that being greedy is not abnormal, but that being excessively greedy would bring unhappiness and dissatisfaction to him. On the other hand, showing generosity and kindness would bring happiness. Making other people happy and being the cause of their satisfaction and joy was true happiness. Michael slowly realized that this was the truth. Watching his subordinates being happy was nice. Freeing the Bilrox Queen and her herd had made him feel nice as they flapped their small wings and strolled around, chirping excitedly.

Therefore, Michael swore to himself that he should never become too greedy. It was nice to grow strong by fusing more Soultraits to his War Rune and by using SoulStar Fragments on himself. However, he also knew that he would never be able to protect his territory on his own. He couldn't be everywhere, after all. As long as his territory expanded, Michael would need more trustworthy, and powerful people by his side. Therefore, Michael wanted to use the Soultrait Symbols and SoulStar Fragments in his possession to make that happen.

It would be expensive, and Michael was certain that he would hesitate often to invest large portions of his wealth into others, but if the results of his investment created wealth and happiness, what kind of monster would he be if he didn't invest in his people's dreams and hard work?

[Kraft Viton: I am currently in the library. We can meet there if you want. If you want to exchange the Summoning Scrolls directly, I will have to return to the Origin Expanse for a while to collect the Summoning Scrolls. We could meet in your room – if you don't want anyone to find out about your mass purchase, which is what I think you would agree with. I will transfer the remaining 634,456,540\$ to the bank account linked to your Diamond membership card if you have nothing else to purchase.]

Michael was stunned once again. He realized that he never even asked how much profit the Agriculture Project made. Michael found out just now. For a moment, the young Lord felt a little bit stupid – though not for the first time in his life. It was definitely not the last time either.

'2.5 billion dollars...damn...and I have yet to sell the remaining blueprints in my possession. That is crazy.'

He spent a minute or two staring blankly at his chat with Kraft Viton before he began to write a message again.

[Michael Fang: I will return to the Origin Expanse to retrieve the designs as well. Let's meet in my room. As for the money...just add it to my bank account for the time being. I have many things to purchase. The remaining revenue in addition to the money made from selling the Agriculture-type Blueprints won't be enough to cover everything, so I have to scroll through the shopping catalog for a while before I can start my shopping spree.]

With that being said, Michael manifested the Runic Gate in the middle of the Colosseum. He disappeared and emerged in the Origin Expanse where he rushed to the warehouses to collect all blueprint duplicates, he didn't need anymore. It didn't matter whether they were Agriculture-type designs or blueprints of other things. Michael didn't need any of them anymore. They were all duplicates, either way. Selling them was their only use for him.

After his War Rune's storage was filled with blueprints, Michael reappeared in the Colosseum once again. He was eyed weirdly from the sides, but Michael ignored them. He walked out of the Colosseum, barely nodding toward Maria Seraph, who glanced in the direction of his Runic Gate as well.

A small crowd of annoying pests surrounded her once again.

"That must be tiring," Michael mumbled quietly enough for nobody to hear.

However, Maria had seen his lips move ever so slightly. "That must be...tiring." 'Is that what he said? What a weirdo.' I think you should take a look at

Michael ignored her after his nod and left the Colosseum in a rush, a bright smile plastered on his face.

"Does he think he is on a vacation? I researched this idiot a little bit, and it looks like he never challenged anyone. All he did was participate in the group battles. He teamed up with Kaleb Zenovia, two Berserkers, and a Warlock Centaur, and they entered the top 100. Other than Michael Fang, everyone from the group was able to become a Token Holder. The Berserkers are quite annoying because they keep challenging other Token Holders every day. But Michael Fang just disappeared. Now that he is back he seems to focus on fooling around and watching official matches of Token Holders like a child watches his favorite TV show," One of the Descendants uttered with a fair amount of disgust. He hated lazy people who didn't understand the importance of special events such as the Battle Exchange.

Were they fine being useless and lowly peasants? Did they not have any grand dreams? Was it fine to accept their fate and to allow others to trample upon them just because they were born into a better family and with better Soultraits?

The Descendant shook his head. He was also lucky to be born in a good family and with great Soultraits, but he respected those who were willing to give their utmost to fight against fate and carve new paths for themselves. Unfortunately, Michael Fang didn't seem to be someone like that. At least it didn't look like he was willing to fight his fate.

Maria Seraph didn't know about the Descendant to judge him. Nonetheless, she listened carefully.

'Michael Fang... is that his name? Something about him feels off. Is he really lazy?'

While the Descendant continued to rant about him, Michael Fang was oblivious to it and had already returned to his room. It didn't take long before Kraft Viton knocked on the door. Michael let him inside before removing more than 20,000 designs from his War Rune's storage space.

"Not all of them are Agriculture-type Blueprints, but half or more of them are. As I mentioned before, it should be enough to make the Directors not regret giving me such a big share of the Agriculture Project's profit," Michael half-joked as he saw Kraft Viton's expression.

"The Directors will definitely think twice before they complain to Helen Ascaln. Looks like she struck a great deal by giving you such a large profit share. Losing you to the Mount Olympus or some other big

family would have been a great loss for the Bartholomew Corporation," Kraft Viton revealed in all honesty.

"At the end of the day, it's all a give-and-take relationship. It's not like I'm not hoping to get anything from the exchange," Michael responded with a shrug. He knew that Kraft Viton praised him but he was not sure what to do with it. All he needed was money, and the Bartholomew Firm and the Agriculture Project had been a golden opportunity served on a silver platter.

Another great point for Michael was the influence and connections he obtained from the Bartholomew Corporation. Helen Ascaln and Kraft Viton were both very helpful connections. Kraft Viton was especially resourceful and ready to procure everything he needed at the drop of a hat.

Michael knew that Kraft Viton must have someone with higher authority than the head executive Helen Ascaln, but he never found out who exactly Kraft Viton was. Alice Zenovia never told him about Kraft Viton either – even though she definitely knew who he was.

That was as interesting as it was annoying.

"Sometimes I really wonder who you are. That might sound rude, but it doesn't feel like you belong to a small family without a major background. There have only been few cases of people like you appearing out of nowhere, and most of them either got married into big families at the end of the day, or they...well they disappeared or died."

Michael felt something sting him when he heard the last sentence. He recalled something and tilted his head.

"Since we're already talking about this topic. Can you give me access to the files of the War Empress?"

"The War Empress? Why would you ne—...Hesta Fang...Fang...Michael Fang...Is she your sister?!"

The first time since Michael got to know him, Kraft Viton was speechless. He stared blankly at Michael, unsure what to say.

"I guess she is" – 'or was'

Chapter 434 Achievements

Michael didn't really like talking about his family. It was one of the topics that caused him to feel a pang in his heart.

Just thinking about his family was enough to sour his mood. This had gotten even worse after Danny's death.

Nonetheless, Michael wanted to procure more information. Since the Bartholomew Network had some information about his sister, he might as well ask about it and try to find out something about his sister, and maybe even clues that connected the dots to her disappearance.

But Kraft Viton was surprised, even shocked upon finding out about Michael's lineage. The old man took a while to regain his senses, and he stared at Michael for a long time.

"To be honest...if she is your sister, everything makes a little bit more sense. I should have thought of that..." He murmured.

"But I have to disappoint you. I can send a special request to unlock the files for you to read, but if I remember correctly the files are not that interesting. If anything, the files show the tremendous power your sister possessed from a young age. Her family was unknown, yet someone as powerful as the War Empress emerged out of nowhere. That was something the Supreme Families, Great Clans, and High Nobles feared because their Descendants were defeated easily by someone without much wealth, great techniques, or influence. All the War Empress possessed was exceptional power – and that she knew how to use well.

The Supreme Families, Great Clans, and High Nobles were defeated over and over again. Their Descendants didn't learn from the mistakes of their peers and they began to challenge the War Empress to show everyone that they were better than her, and everyone she defeated with ease. Unfortunately, they failed, and created the first cracks in the so-called 'omnipotent foundation' of the higher society. A nobody – a peasant as some High Nobles might call 'commoner' – defeated those who ought to be the strongest, who ought to become humanity's pillar of support; their future rulers. Therefore, High Society

wiped away every single mention of the War Empress from the records when she disappeared; everything except the three files in our possession.

"You know, the founder of the Bartholomew Corporation was just like the War Empress. However, instead of being powerful in terms of combat prowess, his power lay elsewhere. He had the wits and the mind of a businessman. Even his Soultrait was related to business. Thus, he faced similar challenges as the War Empress. He was impressed with how she dealt with her enemies and even envied her. That is why her files are still there, mostly for the founder to read through if he ever felt that some other organization, or a member of High Society would try to take advantage of him or his people," Kraft Viton explained with ease as if everything happened merely a few days , or maybe a week ago.

It had been a while since he heard about his sister, so Michael listened intently. He made some mental notes about things he should pay attention to in the future, including the fact that he shouldn't beat up too many Descendants as long as he didn't want to come under the radar of the 'High Society'.

Michael recalled Alice having mentioned the High Society a while ago. Apparently it was the community of all higher authorities of the Supreme Families, Great Clans, High Nobles, and highly influential organizations. As long as the Descendants reached a certain amount of power, influence, or wealth they would be put to test and invited to the High Society if they passed the test.

Michael had never been too interested in politics, which was also why he didn't really care about the High Society. All he wanted from them was to leave him alone and never procure about his secret. Once found out, he would turn into a nameless testing subject, after all.

"Some members of the High Society were convinced that the War Empress' ancestor must have been a hidden powerhouse, who used up all of his achievements to bless his Descendants with great luck during the Soultrait Awakening ceremony. That was what many thought, in fact," Kraft Viton continued to speak, only to notice that Michael's expression changed a little, "You know how achievements work, right?"

Michael was engrossed in the old man's story and didn't expect him to ask him a question out of nowhere. He gathered his thoughts and tilted his head, "I do know some stuff, but I don't know everything about achievements since I'm only a freshman. I think the lecture about the basics of achievements is something only students in their 4th year are taught. In the first place, High Society seems to hide the most crucial pieces of information about achievements so that ordinary people cannot reach their level – ever."

"Ah right, you are just a freshman. I forgot about that. You don't really act like one, so I treated you...Well. Let's forget about that. It's not that important," Kraft Viton waved his hand in dismissal, "Since you don't know everything about achievements let me tell you a little bit about them. Achievements are pretty interesting, after all."

Michael nodded eagerly as he continued,

"To put it in simple terms everything is an achievement. Subjugating a Monster of a higher Tier or rank, killing X Monsters in Y amount of time. Defeating an Awakened stronger than you. Quite literally, everything can be considered an achievement by the Will. However, more important than acquiring all kinds of achievements is the difference in their value. Subjugation Achievements are usually ranked the lowest since the Will doesn't provide many achievement points for unlocking them. Of course, there are some exemptions such as hunting Mythical Creatures at the same rank and Tier, and achievements with similar difficulty. It's similar to Title Achievements and Ranking Achievements. Ranking includes how far your War Rune has been refined, and to what extent your territory has been developed. As long as your territory meets the requirements you will receive the Baron Title and Achievement from the Will of the Origin Expanse. Once your territory has developed further, the Will will consider you a Viscount, Earl, Duke, and so on.

"You might think that your title doesn't matter if it's 'merely' the Will granting the title to you. But that is not true. Titles unlock special sections in the achievement shop, a function your War Rune unlocks upon advancing to Tier-4. Once the achievement shop is unlocked, your understanding of what I've just said

will improve drastically. You will notice that you can buy nearly everything you want using Achievement Points – as long as you unlock the items you desire with the specific titles. You can even purchase Curses and Blessings. Therefore, many assumed that Hesta received a Blessing because she was the first of her family, who possessed enough power to exceed the power level rank of a Mythical Being. Her lineage must have been hoarding countless achievements over the course of centuries, or something along the lines was what everyone presumed." I think you should take a look at

Kraft Viton's explanation ended at last. It had been a bit straining to listen to everything intently, but Michael was glad that he did.

'How many achievement points do I have?' He wondered as a thought flashed through his mind.

"Can you resurrect the dead? A literal resurrection, not just as a Summon, I mean..." Michael asked, not quite sure if that was something his parents wanted to do after Danny died.

His parents messaged him that they could bring back Danny...so using achievement points to achieve that might have been something they had wanted to do. Or was that a foolish thought? Their parents abandoned them. Would they be willing to use their achievement points to resurrect someone they left to die once?

"Resurrection...is a little bit difficult. I think I heard someone trying to resurrect their lover, but they could only Summon them at the end of the day. The resurrected woman was unable to leave the Origin Expanse, but she was brought back to life. But maybe a true resurrection would work with enough achievement points? But then again, if the person you want to resurrect was already summoned it wouldn't work anymore. Someone else tried that already – attempting to resurrect one of their ancestors to procure about the ancestor's secret technique, – only to find out that their ancestor had already been summoned somewhere else a long time ago. Their ancestor died as a Summon as well, making a second resurrection virtually impossible," Kraft Viton said, revealing some files an outsider wasn't supposed to know.

Michael sighed deeply. He was a little bit disappointed that he couldn't resurrect Danny, but he actually expected that. It was not as if he was delusional enough to think that the entire Universe revolved around him and that everything would go his way just because he wanted something to happen.

That would be ignorant, narcissistic, and an entirely new level of arrogance.

"The files won't help you that much, and I'm not sure if you want people to procure that you are the War Empress' brother. Many members of the High Society loathed her for her actions and ignorance. If I were to send the founder a special request to unlock the files for you, you might garner some unwanted attention," Kraft Viton revealed, giving Michael a lot to think about.

Since Kraft Viton told him a lot about his sister, Michael wondered what else could be written in the files about Hesta. However, attracting too much attention now that he was about to fight against Descendants in the Battle Exchange before fighting with the Descendants against the Tekur might not be the best decision.

The Interdimensional Flag War would already put him in the spotlight.

"Let me think about it for a bit. Maybe, I will request the files once the Flag War is over," Michael mumbled.

Kraft Viton nodded.

"In that case, here are your Summoning Scrolls. If you need me, I will be in the library. I found some books that piqued my interest!"

No sooner had he said that, stashes of Summoning Scrolls, hundreds of thousands of them, appeared in front of Kraft Viton.

They filled Michael's room to the brim.

Chapter 435 Scroll Mass-Production

Even though he was distracted by the news he obtained from Kraft Viton, Michael began to use Extraction on the piles of Summoning Scrolls filling his room.

Kraft Viton was already back in the library, leaving Michael alone with his thoughts and the Summoning Scrolls.

Michael used Enhancement on Extraction to accelerate the extraction process a little bit. Following that, Michael began a 'fun' night focused on Extracting as many Summoning Scroll Fragments out of 684,650 Summoning Scrolls as he could.

The next morning, Michael was exhausted but satisfied with the result of his work.

684,650 Ordinary Summoning Scrolls turned into a total of 1,026,975 Summoning Scroll Fragments, an average of exactly 1.5 Fragments per Summoning Scroll.

This reaffirmed Michael's theory that purchased Scrolls gave him less Summoning Scroll Fragments when extracted than the Summoning Scrolls of self-hunted monsters.

'Maybe it also depends how long the Scrolls have been stored away. Some Scrolls crumbled without rewarding me with even a single Fragment, whereas other Summoning Scrolls provided three Fragments when I extracted them.' Michael thought.

Of course, that was just a theory he came up with. It was not something he could say for sure, not without any further experiments. But that could wait for now. The most important fact was that he had more than one million Summoning Scroll Fragments in his possession.

Michael hesitated for a moment. One million Fragments meant that he could create another Legendary Summoning Scroll. But if he created a Legendary Summoning Scroll, he could only fuse two Mythic Summoning Scrolls. That was far from enough to pay the healer.

'The healer won't wait, and it's not like I'm in a rush. I can collect more Summoning Scrolls and Fragments to create a Legendary Summoning Scroll later.' He concluded, certain that Frederik's well-being was several times more important than fusing a second Legendary Scroll right now. The latter could be postponed for a few months without causing any harm. The former would result in Frederik's death in the worst-case scenario.

After he took everything into consideration, Michael created a total of 102 Mythic Summoning Scrolls. That was twice as much as he had to pay.

"102 Mythic Summoning Scrolls for nearly two billion dollars. Is that worth it? Maybe it's not, but I doubt many people can procure Mythic Scrolls as easily as I can. As for Legendary Scrolls, paying two billion for them would be a steal deal," Michael concluded, storing the Scrolls in his War Rune's storage before he left his room.

Michael headed to the library where he found Kraft Viton, who was surprised to see the young Awakened again so soon.

"Good morning, Mr. Viton. I forgot to ask a small favor yesterday," Michael scratched the back of his head, hoping that Kraft Viton would help him.

"Of course. How can I help you?"

"Well, I have these...and they need to be transported to the Saphirelake Military Academy. It's a payment for a healer from the Holy Sun Guild," Michael said, retrieving a total of 50 Mythic Scrolls from his War Rune.

Kraft Viton's eyes widened a little seeing that many Mythic Scrolls emerge in front of him. He had seen Descendants trade with Mythic Scrolls, the number sometimes being more than Michael had retrieved in one go. But Michael was in need of more subjects. Why would he give up on Summoning dozens of 2-Star Summons with a high chance of summoning several 3-Star Summons, and even the probability of obtaining a 4-Star Summon?

The old man felt like asking Michael if he was in trouble, but the clear shimmer in Michael's eyes was enough to tell that this was not the case.

"I don't know if you heard about it, but the Kolbenheim family is going through a tough time. Frederik, a friend of mine, was afflicted with a Minor Curse and various wounds. I didn't want him to die, and his father is...currently not in a situation that allows him to hire an experienced enough healer to take care of Frederik's wounds and the Minor Curse. So...I just hired a healer from the Holy Sun Guild. That's the payment the healer demanded because Frederik's situation seems to be worse than expected," Michael explained calmly after he saw Kraft Viton's expression.

It was obvious what the old man thought, but Michael made his decision already.

"You hired a healer from a guild? They're arrogant and think too highly of themselves. It makes sense that you have to pay this much if it's true what you said about your friend," Kraft Viton said, a warm smile forming on his lips, "You know that you are a really good friend, right? Not many would do the same, you know?"

Michael could only shrug his shoulders. He didn't expect the sudden compliments and had no idea how to respond.

"I am just trying to help him out a little. Frederik will have it hard enough without physical injuries and the Minor Curse. I didn't want to find out what would occur to him if the wounds of his battle torment him alongside everything else he'll have to carry on his shoulders in the future."

"Alright. I will send the Mythic Scrolls to the headquarters at once. Don't fret. The Scrolls can be collected by that healer of yours at once. Just message this greedy bastard, and everything will be fine." Kraft Viton said right before manifesting a Runic Gate next to him. He collected the Mythic Scrolls with a wave of his hands and disappeared in the Runic Gate. I think you should take a look at

Michael sighed heavily and opened Starnet Messenger to click on his chat with Alice.

[Michael Fang: The healer can pick up her Mythic Scrolls at the Bartholomew Shop in the academy.]

[Alice Zenovia(fierce beauty): That was much faster than I expected you to collect 20 Mythic Scrolls. Don't strain yourself too much to collect the rest. You should value your health a bit more!]

Michael chuckled upon reading Alice's message.

[Michael Fang: I already got everything. All 50 Mythic Scrolls. Hehe.]

After he finished the message and sent it over, Michael thought about something. He looked at his chat with Alice and pressed his lips together before he continued to type.

[Michael Fang: In fact, I got 52 Mythic Scrolls. Do you want to purchase two of them? Or better even, trade the Mythic Scrolls with Ordinary Summoning Scrolls? I want to increase the population of my territory to increase my Soul Power. I also got an Instructor and the Warrior Enlightenment Potion to promote my Starless Summons quickly. If you want the Mythic Scrolls, I would appreciate it if you could trade them with Ordinary Scrolls!]

'If I can start trading Scrolls with Alice, I should be able to mass-produce Mythic Scrolls and maybe produce a few more Legendary Scrolls within one year. As long as she provides enough Ordinary Scrolls for me to remove and turn into more Mythic Scrolls via Extraction and the fusion of Fragments, I should be able to create a small infinite cycle to make more money and summon more powerful Summons.'

As long as one Mythic Scroll was worth 10,000 Ordinary Scrolls, Michael should make a profit with an average extraction rate of 1.5 Fragments for every Ordinary Scroll he obtains. 10,000 Scrolls were currently worth 35,000,000\$. For some Lords that may exceed the price they could afford to purchase a Mythic Summoning Scroll, but that was not the case for someone at Alice's level.

Someone at Alice's level would probably pay a lot more if she could get hold of someone who sold a certain number of Mythic Scrolls every month.

[Alice Zenovia(fierce beauty): Wait, wait, wait. So you not only procured the 50 Mythic Scrolls for this bitch of a healer, but you got two more? Did you jump into a hive of Superior Tier-2 Death Curse Bees, or what?!?]

[Alice Zenovia(fierce beauty): And why do you want to sell Mythic Scrolls to me? I mean, I understand what you're trying to do, but you will only harm yourself if you hurry anything. Are you sure that you want to trade your last two remaining Mythic Scrolls with me? Of course, I will offer a good price...but...]

Alice didn't write anything else. She just trailed off, letting Michael wonder what she wanted to imply. While that confused Michael a little bit, he could only smile.

His smile died down when he recalled that he lied to Alice. He didn't really want to bait them with the Summoning Scrolls. All Michael wanted to do was to obtain more Scrolls to extract and form more Mythic Scrolls which he could trade again for more Summoning Scrolls.

Unfortunately, telling her that was rather stupid since it would reveal bits of his power; a power everyone would want to lay their hands on. But Michael couldn't get himself to lie to her with a straight face. Therefore, he added a small message.

[Michael Fang: I want to trade my Mythic Scrolls with you. Just know that I won't hurry anything. I have a plan. I won't use your Scrolls to summon thousands of Starless Summons mindlessly without thorough preparations.]

[Alice Zenovia(fierce beauty): Alright. I will send you an offer later and you can think about it. For now, you should focus on the Battle Exchange. I heard that you haven't challenged anyone yet. Isn't it about time that you got moving? Practical experience gained by challenging the Token Holders will help you a lot more than merely observing them. You are not fighting a life-and-death battle against them. Nobody will die. So don't worry and get some practical experience against strong Token Holders to learn as much as possible. Then get your own Token. That's my order as your teacher!]

"Calm down. I have a plan, 'teacher'," Michael mumbled, closing the chat with a smile.

Now that the Kitsun Lord was overpowered and the Battle Exchange was slowly moving toward the end, it was about time to do one thing; Train.

There were still a bunch of days left before he had to fight someone, and Michael was not really in the mood to rush.

If anything, he was quite happy with how things were right now. It was enjoyable and opened up quite a lot of possibilities.

That made him happy.

Chapter 436 Analysis

Michael still had 12 days left before the Battle Exchange would end. Alice and Kaleb urged him to start challenging Token Holders before the easiest picks were taken by others, but Michael didn't even think about that, not even after Lincoln and Zeke met up with him to watch some official battles.

Both Lincoln and Zeke were surprised to see how far Michael's War Rune had been refined because their own War Rune was at the same rank. Lincoln wanted to challenge him to a fight to find out how much Michael progressed since their last battle, but Michael didn't take the bait. He didn't have to since he was not in possession of a Flag War Token. Zeke, on the other hand, eyed Michael with great curiosity.

If Michael had been the same as before he would never reject a spar with Lincoln. On the contrary, Michael would have proposed the spar long before it was Lincoln's turn to do so. That made Zeke believe that Michael had changed. No. He was in the midst of a change. Michael's eyes were locked on the combatants in the Colosseum arena, moving left and right along with them. He followed the movements of the Tier-3 Lords with ease and analyzed their combat prowess, the power of their Soultraits, their strong points and their flaws.

Most Descendants didn't have a lot of flaws. Their foundation was great as they had been taught the basics of fighting from a young age. However, everyone had some bad habits, whether it was a flick of their wrist, a subtle move with their legs, or their eyes subtly locking onto the area they wanted to target. Everything in Michael's sight was devoured, consumed, organized and put to good use.

The pieces of information he gathered were not necessarily helpful for the Battle Exchange, but they would certainly allow Michael to grow stronger, learn more techniques and how to counter his opponents in the future. After all, Michael was bound to encounter a bunch of Descendants in the future, whether he wanted it or not.

Even if it was not the Descendants, Michael could learn a lot about the Inheritance methods used by their families. Close to a thousand – if not more – different Inheritance techniques were served on a golden plate right in front of him. How could Michael neglect this opportunity and not study the 1,500 human participants of the Battle Exchange?

Michael might be a little bit foolish, maybe even gullible and naive. But he didn't fall on his head when he was an infant.

Michael might not be able to reproduce the Inheritance techniques, however, he was confident that using Eagle Eyes and Spirit Gaze together would allow him to find some similarities and common points. And that he did. Michael found several common points in the Inheritance methods used by everyone. He wouldn't be able to use these common points just yet, but Michael noted them down to make sure that he had everything ready when it was time for him to create his own Inheritance technique – or a series of techniques that replicated existing Inheritance techniques.

Of course, now was not the time to do something like that. Michael's weapon mastery was not that high, and his theoretical understanding was lacking. But that was even more reason to watch others fight. He analyzed them with his theoretical understanding, improving where he was lacking and traveled back to the Origin Expanse where he could use the time dilation to refine his body, mind, and absorb energy to deepen his War Rune's refinement degree alongside training in martial arts using various weapons with the Immortal Knight and his subordinates.

Michael spent a whole week doing nothing but studying, and training. On the last day he was finally too tired to move and fell asleep on the training ground next to the construction site of the Sacred Knight Temple. Michael woke up half a day later in his bed. He took a nice, rejuvenating bath, put on the combat clothing Alice had prepared for him a few days ago and he left the Origin Expanse – after reminding everyone that he would soon purchase everything they needed for the Beast Ranches, more building inventions, and other expansions that would cost a fortune in every possible section of his territory.

Over the last few days, Michael had been wondering if he should invest some SoulStar Fragments into his Soultraits to increase their star-rating by a quarter or half a star. This would be enough to increase the power of his Soultraits considerably. But Michael decided against doing so because he began to understand that he relied too much on his Soultraits. His Soultraits made him strong, and they allowed him to become the person he was right now, but they shouldn't be the major reason for his exceptional combat prowess. He shouldn't be helpless without Soultraits.

Another reason was that Michael wanted to increase his subordinates' combat prowess. However, they had a very good reason to reject his Soultraits even if he had yet to offer them anything. Lilica, Tiara and the others uttered that the energy they require to refine their War Rune increased drastically after they obtained their second 4-Star Soultrait. They didn't want to rush into fusing more Soultraits to their War Rune since they were not Lords anymore. They were Awakened and would only acquire energy from absorbing it actively, or by killing monsters on their own. In fact, even if they killed monsters, a portion of their energy inflow would be split and transferred to Michael.

Michael understood their reasoning, he supported it, and to be entirely truthful, their reasoning was also enough to convince Michael that he shouldn't rush upgrading his Soultraits. The further he upgraded his Soultraits the more energy he would require to refine his War Rune. If each of his Soultraits was to reach 6-Star, Michael might end up getting stuck as a Tier-2 Lord for decades. That was definitely not something Michael wanted to happen.

Therefore, refining his body, mind and War Rune was more important than upgrading his Soultraits.

If he should enhance anything it was the methods he used.

Michael was still using the basic technique, Sun Soldier's Breathing, for his breathing, and his martial arts was an inferior version of the Immortal Knight's most basic Sacred Sword Style. The technique didn't even suit Michael's combat style with the Wyverntooth Spear. The weapon was not even the same!

Fortunately, Michael had already picked a Token Holder to challenge in the Colosseum. Whether it was a coincidence or fate, Michael had chosen one of Maria Seraph's fanboys as his opponent. It was the young Descendant, who had insulted him several times, to be precise. But it was not Fernando Jochez.

The Descendant was called Jirah Loar, a second-year student of the Ascending Phoenix Academy, which was one of the Great Academies of the human race. Jirah Loar had the 23rd Token of the Duo competition. He procured it from a Berserker in one of the many unofficial battles Maria's group had held in Piloq.

Michael was surprised how Jirah Loar was still able to hold such a high-ranked Flag War Token even though the Battle Exchange was about to end. Jirah Loar might already be a Tier-3 Lord with a decently powerful Soultrait, but his analysis pinpointed that there were a bunch of stronger Battle Exchange participants who had yet to procure a Flag War Token. Jirah Loar's token was perfect for them.

Thus, Michael did some research to find out why nobody challenged Jirah Loar.

The answer was pretty simple even if it was a little bit hard for Michael to understand- Nobody wanted to get on Maria Seraph's bad side.

Jirah Loar was Maria Seraph's childhood friend. At least that was what he called himself. But since Maria Seraph never denied this claim, everyone believed Jirah Loar's words. Michael would be just like them. However, there was only one difference; He didn't care whether Maria Seraph liked him or not.

So what if she disliked him? Was he supposed to cry a river because the most prestigious family of healers didn't like him? Michael needed the Seraph family as little as they needed him. In the worst case, he would actively seek enemies with healing Soultraits and become a better healer than them to show them who the boss was – that was if they started to stir trouble.

There was only one thing Michael had to avoid; challenging Maria Seraph. Michael actually thought about challenging her because she had the number one Flag War Token of the Support competition. It was a good thing that he didn't do something as stupid as challenging her. He wouldn't survive this foolishness.

Michael was certain that he would win against her, but he would die facing the wrath and hatred of her loyal fan club. He might actually die if he didn't play it right.

One way or another, Michael picked the perfect target – someone with a high-ranked Flag War Token: an opponent whom he could go all-out against to make an example of him. That would not allow the majority of them to be daring enough to challenge him in the last few days of the Battle Exchange. Of

course, there could still be someone who could challenge him, but Michael didn't plan to fool around. The healers appointed by the Tritan Alliance, and Maria Seraph's presence were more than enough to ensure that his opponents would survive.

Holding back was not an option.

With that in mind, Michael entered the Colosseum and walked up to Maria Seraph's group. Everyone noticed his approach and got into position to avoid the repetition of a faux pas like before. They wouldn't allow a random nobody to talk to their Saintess, not anymore!

However, Michael didn't even glance once at Maria. He eyed Jirah Loar and smiled at him.

"I'm not here for the Saintess, don't worry," Michael said, a faint golden glow emerging in his eyes.

"Get ready to fight. I'm challenging you!"

Chapter 437 Speedster

"Get ready to fight. I'm challenging you!" Michael said, his eyes trained on Jirah Loar.

Jirah Loar didn't say anything at first. It took him a few seconds to register what happened.

"Are you perhaps drunk, or maybe even suicidal?" He asked upon realizing that Michael was talking to him, and that he was foolish enough to challenge him.

"Suicidal or not, get ready. We will fight in the Colosseum arena in ten minutes," Michael responded, "Or you can just give up without fighting and hand over the Flag War Token. That would be even better."

Jirah's eyes narrowed upon hearing that. However, it was not until he noticed that Maria and the rest of her loyal fan club were waiting for his reaction that he reacted.

"You are a fool to dream that you can win against me. Don't even think about getting off lightly. I will beat the shit out of you!" Jirah bellowed, but Michael merely shrugged.

"In ten minutes be in the arena. Don't be late."

Michael left right after his words reached the Saintess fan club. Jirah grit his teeth but didn't say anything else. He merely glanced over to Maria, whose eyes trailed Michael for a moment. After a moment, her attention moved back to the arena as if nothing happened.

Jirah was perplexed with his childhood friend's reaction – or the lack of reaction, to be precise. Were they actually friends? Did she ever see him as a friend, or was he just one of her many marionettes, an easy-to-control servant?

Jirah didn't know. All he knew was that he had to teach a lesson to Michael, and that he could release the stress and anger that had built up deep inside him.

Ten minutes passed in the blink of an eye. Michael was already waiting in the Colosseum arena, stretching his body to prepare for what lay ahead.

Jirah Loar was a little late, but he showed up. That was all that mattered.

"Let's get over this quickly," He said, his eyes filled with fury.

The corner of Michael's lip tilted upward right before he nodded his head. The two combatants then moved to the opposite ends of the arena and manifested their weapons.

While Michael manifested his Spirit Armor Set, the Wyverntooth Spear, and the Legendary Ring Artifact, Jirah manifested a leather armor, a sapphire-blue rapier and a set of boots.

Both combatants changed into their combat stance and awaited the starting signal from the referee. The referee glanced left and right to see if the combatants were ready to fight and raised his left hand.

"3...2...1...Fight!!"

As the referee's words resounded in the Colosseum, Jirah kicked the ground. He moved quickly and crossed a large distance in the blink of an eye. Michael was just about to move as well when Jirah's body turned into a flash. He disappeared from the spectator's sight and appeared right beside Michael, the tip of the sapphire-blue rapier eerily close to his neck.

The rapier was thrust forward with terrific velocity, but Michael was already on the move to evade the attack. The moment the battle began, Michael utilized both Spirit Gaze and Eagle Eyes. He applied a few layers of Enhancement on his eyes as well. Therefore, only Michael and the referee had been able to follow Jirah's movements. Michael even predicted how Jirah would move, creating an opportunity for him to evade the rapier thrust.

But Jirah was too fast. The rapier shot past Michael and scratched his neck a little. A drop of blood trickled to the ground, but that was already it. Michael's counterattack was simple. He twisted the Wyverntooth Spear the moment he noticed the direction from which Jirah was going to attack. Therefore, the Wyverntooth Spear lunged forward threateningly right after the rapier was thrust toward Michael's neck.

Jirah's eyes narrowed when he noticed that his rapier didn't pierce through Michael's neck. A wave of confusion followed right after as Michael's spear blade threatened to cut off one of his arms. Jirah changed his trajectory with one of his movement techniques and increased his distance to his enemy once again.

He then canceled the use of his Soultrait [Speedster] to save some energy and observe Michael. His initial plan to defeat Michael in a dominant manner had failed. However, Jirah was not too sure why. He researched only bits and pieces about Michael Fang before, but none of the pieces of information he collected could be the cause for Michael's blindingly fast reaction.

Meanwhile, Michael smiled lightly. Jirah Loar's Soultrait was related to his Agility. Using his Soultrait enhanced his Agility drastically. It was a tremendous enhancement. The Speed Soultrait was also one of the few reasons why only a handful of people dared to face him since it was too dangerous to fight an enemy whom you could not even follow with your eyes.

But Michael had long since analyzed Jirah Loar's Soultrait, including its downside. First of all, the Soultrait would put a heavy burden on the body. Using it for a long duration would damage Jirah's legs and lower body. Furthermore, it drained lots of energy. But the worst was that Jirah had to wield a weapon that could utilize the tremendous agility the best. He had to wield a weapon that didn't slow down his movements speed and attacks due to the increased air resistance upon activating his Soultrait. At least that was what Michael guessed.

There was also something else that made Michael feel like Jirah was forcing himself to wield the rapier instead of other weapons that may suit him better, but it was not like Michael was a professional when it came to weapon masteries.

He never fought an enemy like Jirah, a Tier-3 Descendant with a Speed-type Soultrait.

But that was exactly what made it interesting.

Even with Eagle Eyes, Spirit Gaze, and Enhancement utilized to reinforce his eyesight as much as possible, Michael could barely make out Jirah's movements after he reached top speed. Being able to see Jirah's movements meant that Michael could predict his movement path and where he wanted to attack. Once all of that was known, reacting in time to face Jirah with all of his Soultraits would be an easy task.

But Michael wanted to know something else first.

After training without the use of Soultraits for so long, Michael wanted to know if he was strong enough to fight Jirah with Eagle Eyes, Spirit Gaze, and Enhancement to strengthen his eyes and body. He didn't want to use Spirit Disturbance or any other unique attack, or Soultrait to gain a huge advantage against Jirah. All Michael desired was to see and predict Jirah's movements and to be able to respond fast enough to them.

Therefore, Michael ended up applying four layers of Enhancement to his entire body – not just his eyes.

Jirah noticed the silverish-golden shine in Michael's eyes and the white hue that shrouded Michael's body and activated Speedster again. He kicked the ground, turned into a flash, and appeared in front of Michael a quarter of a second later. Michael's eyes followed Jirah's movements with ease and his body responded to the attack. Michael lifted his Wyverntooth Spear and thrust it right where Jirah was heading.

Jirah noticed that Michael's movements accelerated. However, Michael was still way too slow to even think about catching up to him. All Michael did was react to the movements he saw in front of him. But what if Michael couldn't see his attack?

Jirah changed his movement path at once. His feet kicked the ground to push his body to the left and change his trajectory. Thereafter, Jirah appeared behind Michael, his rapier lunging forward even faster than before.

Michael was already in motion to turn around when he noticed what Jirah was going to do. Being slower than his enemy had many disadvantages, and it was easy to tell that Jirah was adept at making use of his exceptional speed. He quickly adjusted his fighting style when he noticed that Michael could see his movements and react to them just in time.

'Should I use the Energy Imprints within the Legendary Ring?' Michael asked himself for a moment. Since Opars and the others had returned from the Forest Elven Tribe's home, Michael had been requesting Opars to fill the Legendary Ring Artifact with the Power of Energy Imprint.

Michael could use an Energy Imprint to apply eight layers of Enhancement to his body for nearly two minutes. That would certainly be enough to move fast enough to deal with Jirah's speed. But Michael was unwilling to use Opars' power just now. He hadn't even used his other Soultraits, so why would he resort to someone else's power now?

Wanting to stick to his earlier decision, Michael applied another layer of Enhancement to his body. The increase in his physical strength and agility was notable. It was enough to take Jirah by surprise. He didn't expect Michael to move faster all of a sudden. Michael's response was now fast enough to twist his body and push the Wyverntooth Spear against the rapier, narrowly escaping getting poked by the floppy stick.

Michael then pushed forward. He knew that Jirah couldn't change his movement trajectory too easily. Jirah had to generate enough momentum to change his movement path, or forcefully change it. However, by forcefully changing his movement path, he put a heavy toll on his ankles. That was why his family customized Boots Artifacts. After all, everyone in the Loar family had similar issues with their ankles.

Jirah was just about to kick the ground and retreat when something pulled his attention to Michael's eyes. The silverish-golden shimmer intensified. It seemed to turn into a swirl that sucked him inside. In the following instance, Michael used Spirit Disturbance at full power.

"Are you done already? Is that all you can do? Come on, that's boring. Show me the Inheritance technique you and your family are so proud of!"

Chapter 438 Fighter a Speedster

Jirah was forcefully pulled out of the trance and thrown into hellish pain. His head felt like splitting apart and a guttural scream escaped his lips.

Then Michael's spear thrust forward.

"You fucking bastard!!!" Jirah roared inhumanly.

Following the humiliation he faced, the young Descendant began to use his Inheritance Technique – at full power at that.

'Are you finally warmed up? Me too!'

There was something interesting Michael noticed whenever Descendants fought against each other. They were trying to hide their Inheritance techniques' true power from others. The Descendants were taught several martial arts techniques to use in a battle. The Inheritance technique was the strongest, but it was also easier to counter if one had studied the respective families for a long time. It happened often enough that rivaling Descendants studied their enemies for weeks to counter their Inheritance techniques and defeat their opponents. Thus powerful techniques were invented to prevent the enemy from the use of an Inheritance technique and to potentially overwhelm those who planned to counter one's Inheritance technique.

That was how it usually worked. It was a hassle and not something Michael would be bothered about under normal circumstances. However, he learned a lot in the last two weeks. Observing and analyzing the Descendants made him realize one thing; All the Descendants tried to hide their Inheritance techniques from others. They didn't want to show others how far they had progressed with their Inheritance technique.

In future events held by the High Society, they might have to fight each other again. Therefore, it was better to hide their power during events such as the Battle Exchange. That was fine as long as the Descendants, who'd been ordered to claim a Flag War Token and participate in the Interdimensional Flag War, would obtain their Token.

Michael also learned that some students didn't participate in the Battle Exchange to claim a Flag War Token. Instead, they had been ordered to get to know other Descendants, befriend them, and interact with the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs. Their mission was mostly to mingle socially rather than exposing their powers.

Michael thought that it made sense. Not everyone had to participate in the Interdimensional Flag War like him. In fact, most first-year students participating in the Battle Exchange merely joined to befriend the Descendants and prodigies of other Academies and Universities. A freshman was not someone who could deal with a Tekur easily after all. It would already be a wonder if they could survive fighting a Tekur on the same rank and Tier.

But Michael's situation was a little bit different. He had to win.

Though he was quite certain that nothing major would happen to him if he failed to meet the requirements to participate in the Interdimensional Flag War, Michael didn't want to risk it. He was interested in the Tekur as well because he saw them as a challenge and a golden opportunity to learn more about powerful races, mankind's enemies, and to earn a decent number of Soultraits and SoulStar Fragments.

It would be dangerous, but with the increase in danger came opportunities to grow stronger much faster than everyone else. And that was something Michael was in dire need of.

'Descendants usually hide their Inheritance technique. Jirah is done hiding and waiting. Looks like I enraged him enough,' Michael thought as he pulled the Wyverntooth Spear back. It narrowly missed Jirah's neck after the young Descendant of the Loar family had been struck with a Spirit Disturbance.

Jirah had subconsciously retreated right after Spirit Disturbance struck him. This made Michael wonder whether Jirah was subjected to a stressful and unbearable training session to artificially create this type of protection mechanism, or if the Descendant had developed this particular mechanism to protect himself after getting struck by a mind, or spiritual attack.

The answer didn't really matter, but Michael was glad that Jirah had such a protective mechanism. It allowed him to go all out against a Descendant who used the full extent of his Inheritance technique.

Jirah moved back, activated Speedster, and used his Inheritance technique, God Speed, to gather the power of his Soultrait and charge ahead. The moment Jirah shot forward with the use of God Speed, the young Descendant created ripples in the space around him. An explosion resounded where he kicked the ground and the foundation of the arena began to tremble.

For the first time since he became a Lord, Michael witnessed the real power of an Inheritance technique in a fierce battle. His heart was beating wildly, and he thought he would be too stunned to do something. But the opposite was the case.

The cogs in Michael's brain moved much faster than usual and his perception reached new heights as the tension in the arena increased. Michael held his breath so long that his lungs cried for air, but his eyes shimmered brightly. His pupils dilated and he saw a glimpse of Jirah charging at him too fast for Michael to respond with his body. Not even eight layers of Enhancement would be enough to increase his Agility enough to evade Jirah's straightforward charge. His physique was simply not enough against God Speed.

But that was fine.

Jirah's speed might be exceptional after being boosted by both Speedster and the Inheritance technique, God Speed, and his reaction speed might have been trained to a terrific degree as well. Despite that, Jirah's reaction speed was not faster than Michael's. That was something Michael tested in his first clashes against Jirah.

He was fast and reacted quickly, but Michael reacted faster. Therefore, no matter how fast Jirah was, Michael could react. Theoretically, at least.

And that was where the distance reaction calculation came into play. The distance Jirah passed before he could react was determined by his current speed and his reaction time.

Given his extraordinary speed that allowed him to cross 100 meters per second for a short instance and his reaction time being around 50-70 milliseconds, Jirah would cross a distance of roughly 5 meters before he could react to Michael's attacks.

lightsnovel.com Of course, God Speed was likely to reduce Jirah's reaction time since it was a powerful Inheritance technique, but Michael already took that into consideration when he came up with his plan

to defeat Jirah in an overwhelming and destructive manner – which was something Michael had planned to do when he first decided to pick Jirah as his target.

Using Spirit Gaze and Eagle Eyes to perceive Jirah's movement path and the exact moment of his arrival, Michael received just enough time to prepare for his attack and go all-out. Michael conjured a total of 12 Glacicle Swords in front of him. He coated them in Reinforced Sword Qi and further enhanced them to boost their resilience, and acceleration as Michael released them with a burst of energy the immediate he finished conjuring the Enhanced Qi Glacicle Swords.

The dozen Swords shot through the air to Michael's left, shining in vibrant colors of silver, white, and glacier blue just as Jirah was about to arrive next to Michael – to his left.

Just as Jirah propelled forward to pierce a hole into Michael's neck, the dozen Enhanced Qi Glacicle Swords manifested and shot toward him.

Jirah wanted to react in time, but the Glacicle Swords were already right in front of him, giving him no leeway to move aside. All Jirah could do was channel his momentum and release the Speedster's Rapier Style all while God Speed enhanced his movement speed. The Rapier pierced through the air. It moved around in flashes, drawing sapphire-blue pictures in Jirah's vicinity as the rapier collided with the dozen Enhanced Qi Glacicle Swords.

Four of a dozen Glacicle Swords burst apart, releasing a tremendous amount of freezing mist that Michael willed to move around Jirah, obstructing his sight from the next attacks that were just about to follow.

Michael used Spirit Disturbance with four layers of Enhancement applied and he created a second batch of a dozen Enhanced Qi Glacicle Swords.

His energy storage was slowly drained, but that was of no concern for Michael. He unleashed the freezing mist compressed within the first batch of Glacicle Swords and shrouded Jirah with them. Right after the second batch pierced through the freezing mist, the freezing mist transformed into thousands of tiny icicles. The freezing mist turned into solid Glacicles, uncovering the frightening sight that lay behind the shroud of the freezing mist.

Jirah's chest was impaled by six Glacicle Swords, his neck was hanging by a thread as one of the Glacicle Swords must have cut cleanly through his neck, and his left leg had been severed. Meanwhile, his right leg was impaled with the remaining Glacicle Swords.

The sight was hideous but even more frightening was the irresistible fear and disbelief in Jirah's eyes. The last thing he could remember was tremendous pain in his head and that his feet seemed to have been frozen to the ground. He couldn't move no matter how much he wanted.

Then it all ended. The Enhanced QI Glacicle Swords impacted. They pierced through his skin and bone and nearly killed Jirah in an instant.

But Michael was not yet done. There were still a thousand small Glacicles ready to conclusion Jirah's life painfully.

"Stop!!" The referee bellowed loudly. He released some of his energy to destroy the Glacicles and appeared next to Jirah. Then he released some of his energy to keep his body intact. A strand of his energy picked up Jirah's leg as the referee looked around to call for the medics.

Michael looked at Jirah and the state of his body and nodded.

'That should be sufficient to ensure that nobody will bother me until the conclusion of the Battle Exchange,' He thought right before turning to Maria Seraph and her group.

"I went a little bit overboard. Could you heal him, please?" Michael asked Maria nonchalantly.

He didn't force a smile on his face nor did he fake interest in whatever she was going to do. If Maria didn't want to rescue her childhood friend that was on her. All Michael did was fight with all he had. That was exactly what the Battle Exchange was being held for, after all.

Maria's expression changed for the first time. Michael literally had no interest in her. He looked at her like she was some side character, an unimportant extra.

That was new. Refreshing.

Chapter 439 Value

Michael chose to observe Maria Seraph as she saved Jirah Loar's life.

As Maria arrived in front of Jirah, her hair fluttered in the soothing aura that emerged from her body. The soothing aura was warm and comfortable. It suppressed pain and stimulated the natural regeneration process of all targets. Maria shrouded Jirah Loar with the soothing aura before a bright light emanated from her hands.

The pain in Jirah's eyes dispersed as the bright light shone onto his weary body. The essence of life seemed to fill Jirah as color returned to his wounded face, and deathly pale cheeks as a glimmer of vigor manifested inside his eyes.

"Dispel the blades," Maria ordered in a low voice.

The referee was about to release his energy to crush the Glacicle Swords, but Michael was faster. He transformed the Glacicle Swords into freezing mist which he pulled away from Jirah instantaneously. The freezing mist swirled around Michael before it disappeared inside him.

Fountains of blood gushed out of Jirah's wounds as the Glacicle Swords dispersed, however, Jirah didn't sense anything amiss. The vigor in his eyes never wavered. All he did was glance at Maria, whose entire body emanated bright light. A white, glowing halo had manifested above her head and the outlines of semi-translucent, whitish wings formed right behind her.

The power of Maria's Soultrait increased significantly. The gaping wound on Jirah's neck healed rapidly as thousands of tiny flesh tendrils shot out to stitch back the flesh and close the gaping wounds once again. The injuries visibly mended as if Maria reversed time itself. The deep gashes closed with a shimmering seam, which disappeared as well. Not even a scar was left behind once Maria finished mending the wounds. It was as if Jirah had never been injured.

However, what interested Michael the most was how easily Maria reattached Jirah's leg. A single wave of her hand was enough to stimulate the severed ends of the leg. She gestured to the referee to put the leg down next to the leg stump and to step away afterward. The referee didn't say anything as he followed her commands. He knew better than to talk back to a healer, even if the healer in front of him was still a fledgling compared to him.

The severed bones reconnected with a soft, almost musical chime while the nerves, veins and flesh rejoined with slick noises. Regaining the feelings in his severed leg, the ache and suffering Jirah had been feeling before Maria arrived dissipated from his memories. His emotions were replaced by a profound sense of relief. He wouldn't be a cripple!

Jirah felt a rush of strength surge through him. He felt blessed and happy.

'Interesting.' Michael thought, getting slightly interested in the ability of Maria's Soultrait.

Not only was Maria able to mend the wounds easily and much faster than any other healer Michael had ever seen working, but she could also block pain and manipulate emotions in a way. Maria's Soultrait healed the body, soothed the soul, and dispelled the darkness of afflictions such as ill-intentions and Curses, replacing the negative emotions with the joy of life and renewal.

It was truly wondrous.

'Yup. I should definitely get my hands on such a Soultrait in the future. Did she use her Inheritance technique to heal Jirah near-instantaneously or was that only her Soultrait's tremendous power' He wondered, unsure if the halo and the semi-translucent wings were related to her Soultrait, or if they were the manifestation of Maria utilizing her Inheritance technique. One way or another, the halo and wings further accelerated the restoration of Jirah's body. They allowed Maria to ensure that Jirah wouldn't have to face any mental trauma after today's battle.

Michael stared at Maria. She didn't break into a sweat and it looked like the young woman hadn't used a large amount of her energy either. This, combined with how easily Maria healed Jirah's wounds, gave him a good idea of Maria's power and her value. It was understandable why so many Descendants and people from the High Society tried to get in her good books.

If something were to happen to them and they were to be on the verge of death, or afflicted with a major Curse, they would want to receive Maria Seraph's help. As long as Maria happened to be close to the patients or their family, or owe them a favor, there was a big chance that she would help out. Her powers were especially useful for old patriarchs and the elders hailing from the big families. They probably hoped that her Soultrait could rejuvenate them, or ensure their lifespan extended for a few more years.

'That must be annoying,' Michael thought, looking at Maria with pity, "But it's a good thing that she was born in the Seraph family. I don't want to imagine how she would be treated if such a Soultrait manifested in a nameless family."

If a young woman from an ordinary household had appeared Maria's Soultrait, the big families would have invited that woman to join their families. The moment she rejected, she would have been kidnapped and abused as a pawn by the big families. She would have turned into an asset whose ability was sold to others at the highest price.

Michael shuddered at the thought.

Maria was lucky to have been born in the Seraph family, a family full of medics, and healers that nobody would dare to harbor ill intentions toward. All they could do was to try their utmost to please her and get close to her.

Maria Seraph heard what Michael mumbled quietly to himself. She glanced over to him, only to notice that Michael had already diverted his attention from her. He looked at the Flag War Token D#23, which the referee handed to him. With the Flag War Token, Michael would receive a tremendous amount of resources once the Battle Exchange was over. He would be able to spend the months training until the Flag War started, increasing his strength drastically.

As for the goal he wanted to achieve; he wanted to advance to Tier-3 until the Interdimensional Flag War started. If that was not possible due to a lack of resources, money, or enough enemies in the Origin Expanse to hunt and procure energy shares, Michael would be fine advancing to the Peak of the 2nd Tier as well.

That was already enough of a challenge given that he possessed nine Soultraits with seven being 5-Star or higher. But where was the fun without a real challenge?

Michael would have a hard time in the Interdimensional Flag War even if he advanced to the 3rd Tier, but that was fine. Michael was already prepared for this.

'One Tekur is roughly as strong as six Berserkers at the same rank. However, they don't possess a versatile combat style. Their Soultraits are the foundation of their combat style, and they build their strength around their Soultrait as the foundation. So, I should either create a team and pinpoint Tekur with weaker Soultraits, or Soultraits that are not good against me and my team. That way, we can deal with them one by one...probably.'

Instead of worrying about the last few days of the Battle Exchange, Michael was already thinking about the Interdimensional Flag War. But that was quite obvious since Michael was not worried about losing his Flag War Token.

The probability of someone challenging him after his battle against Jirah was low. It was not nil, but Michael had the means to use even more ability against his enemies. He had yet to use the Power of Energy Imprint that Opars had stored in the Legendary Ring Artifact over the last few days.

Michael wanted to continue storing Opars' Energy Imprint in the Legendary Ring Artifact until the Interdimensional Flag War started. That way, he would never lack the energy to fight even if his War Rune's refinement degree would be stuck at the Mid rank. Having more energy than others was crucial for someone like Michael. He could let himself loose a little and wreak havoc, killing everything in his path.

At least, that was the plan.

Unfortunately, Michael's plans tended to fail miserably. That was exactly what happened right now.

lightsNovel.com Michael was just about to leave the Colosseum now that he obtained what he desired when he heard a commotion from outside.

"The Tritaenus returned!" A Warlock Centaur announced loudly to his colleagues.

"The Tritaenus? The War Priestess said that they would be out in space to explore the cosmos for the next five years. Why are they already back?" Another Warlock Centaur responded, sounding more confused than excited.

"Are you an idiot, or are you just trying to garner attention? The Tritaenus must have returned because they found something! That means we have a new solar system to explore, new planets to colonize, new enemies to fight with our lives on the line, or new friends to create trading routes with!" The first Warlock Centaur exclaimed, his excitement clearly evident.

Michael didn't like one out of the four possibilities announced by the Warlock Centaur but his curiosity was piqued.

'Is the Tritaenus a spaceship? Since they're talking about the exploration of space it should be a spaceship.'

Michael was just about to walk to the Warlock Centaurs to ask some questions when his perception picked up something weird. His eyes moved to the ceiling of the Colosseum and he narrowed his eyes.

In the next moment, a thunderous explosion resounded through the Colosseum. No. It did not only resound through the Colosseum. Thunderous explosions reverberated throughout Piloq.

Following the thunderous explosion, the Colosseum began to tremble wildly. The ceiling collapsed where Michael was looking at with Eagle Eyes and Spirit Gaze, which activated instinctively, yet all Michael could pay attention to was the metallic, elongated cylinder with a pointed tip that burst through the ceiling.

It was a missile – a high-destructive Perses Missile used in large spaceships.

No. It was not just one missile either. It was just the first Michael saw.

And the next moment, all hell broke loose.

[End of Volume 7]

Chapter 440 Under attack

As the Perses Missile impacted, chaos and destruction followed alongside.

The first Perses Missile crashed into the ground where the Warlock Centaurs had been talking excitedly about the expedition ship, Tritaenus. The Warlock Centaurs were torn into shreds in an instant. They couldn't even react as their bodies disintegrated, the shreds of their bodies shot through the surroundings by the shockwave caused by the missile's impact. Then the missile exploded with a powerful burst of energy. The highly explosive contents of the missile released a tremendous amount of heat and erupted, creating a second shockwave that radiated outward. Whereas the first shockwave was not that loud, the second shockwave was ear-deafening and highly destructive.

It tore apart the Colosseum, turning the majestic building into a huge pit of dirt, debris and corpses. Rubble poured down on the young participants of the Battle Exchange as the Colosseum's ceiling collapsed on top of them. The referee – as shocked as he might have been – reacted quickly. He stirred his energy storage and released a burst of energy outward to conjure a dome of protection around the young Awakened and Lords near him. Large parts of the Colosseum collided onto the energy dome, causing the energy to ripple through the shield. However, it didn't break – at first.

As more Perses Missiles shot through the open roof of the Colosseum, the referee's eyes widened. He grit his teeth and channeled more energy into the dome to protect the youngest generation. But it was all for naught as two Perses Missiles smashed into the energy dome soon after. The content of the missiles was released at once, causing a humongous explosion that ravaged through the entire arena of the Colosseum. The explosions ruptured through the energy dome, tearing it open to make way for the remaining force of the explosion to wreak through the referee and the young generation alongside.

Screams of terror and groans of unbearable pain resounded through the Colosseum – or what was left of it – after the third Perses Missile impacted. The third missile seemed to have been the last missile fired at the Colosseum, but that was already more than enough. It caused enough destruction, death, and terror in the hearts of those who were lucky enough to survive.

When the dust settled, the Colosseum's grand and imposing structure was nowhere near the same as before. The walls were blown apart, the roof was no more and even the ground had huge cracks as some parts of it caved in due to the weight of the rubble. Debris was scattered inside and outside the Colosseum and scorch marks could be seen everywhere. The corpses of two Berserkers were torched and horribly mangled to a point where no one would be able to recognize them. Their bodies were still burning, and so were some of those who had been lucky enough to survive the missiles' impact. But now they were burning like oil-coated torches.

More thunderous explosions echoed through the entire city, but the Colosseum was spared from further attacks. That was the biggest fortune of those who survived.

Michael moaned in pain. His left arm hung down his shoulders, unmoving. It was half-burned, half-frozen. When the first Perses Missile impacted, Michael tried to use Extraction to extract the shockwave and explosive contents that were discharged with a terrific burst of energy. That didn't work as well as intended, forcing Michael to use seven layers of Enhancement on himself and Glacicle as he created walls of ice in front of him.

Michael tried to continue using Glacicle and Extraction to extract parts of the explosion and block the rest with the Glacicle walls. He had lifted his left hand to use his body to control his Soultraits with ease. Unfortunately, the impact was too heavy. Perses Missiles were not something ordinary people could block simply. They were weapons of destruction used in spaceships, to fight other spaceships and enormous monsters residing in space. It had been years since someone dared to use space weapons to attack a planet. At least, Michael hadn't heard any news about something like that happening recently. Everyone knew that using space weapons against civilians would end up in retaliation of the same kind, if not worse. Nobody wanted their kind to cease to exist, after all.

So why did someone attack Piloq, especially during a time like this when the youngest generation of the Tritan Alliance had gathered? Was there an unknown race attacking them with ill intentions? But if that was the case the space defensive mechanism would have reacted, enveloping the City of Piloq with huge Protection Spheres as well as the other cities long before the enemy forces could reach the attack range to fire Perses Missiles. The Perses Missiles would have damaged the City Protection Spheres rather than passing by all the defensive mechanisms before impacting innocent civilians and destroying everything in its path.

'But if an unknown race attacked us, why would there be Perses Missiles? Only large-scale spaceships engineered by humans would use them...or the Tritan Alliance...The Tritaenus?'

The only spaceship close enough to Piloq and equipped with Perses Missiles was the Tritaenus. But what did that mean? Did some other race capture the Tritaenus...or was there something else?

Michael didn't know and he figured that he wouldn't be able to find out more for now, either way. He could make up theories but that was not very helpful. However, there was something else he could do. Michael could get his act together and help the wounded.

His injury was not that bad. His arm was limply hanging down his shoulder, but consuming some potions and circulating energy through his arm would heal it in no time. In the worst case, a healer could take a look at it for a second and snap everything back in place. He was not in a rush.

Retrieving a healing potion from his War Rune, Michael removed the lid and swallowed the content. He then looked around the Colosseum and made some quick calculations.

He remembered where some Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs had been seated before, but everything around them was buried under large rocks and debris. The walls and the ceiling had collapsed on top of some of them. With a grim look, Michael recovered another potion, this time, an energy vial. He swallowed the contents and rushed to the walls where he used Extraction to remove the collapsed walls with ease. He closed his eyes and tried to listen to the sounds around him, but that was easier said than done. It looked like his eardrums burst when the shockwaves impacted.

Michael opened his eyes again and discharged tendrils of energy from his body. He hoped that the tendrils of energy would help him find some of those who had been buried. Sensing some vibrations through his feet, Michael noticed that someone knocked against the fell wall from beneath. He quickly removed the wall via Extraction and found a group of injured Berserkers underneath. One Berserker had thrown himself on top of his comrades to protect them from the impact of the Perses Missile and the aftermath of the attack. His back was now a mangled blob of flesh and several metal pipes had impaled him. Moving the Berserker to the next healer without killing him would be increasingly difficult.

Michael frowned and used Extraction to remove the metal pipes. Fountains of blood gushed out of the wounds, which Michael sealed temporarily by channeling freezing mist into the holes right before turning the mist into Glacicles. Michael knew that freezing wounds like this was dangerous. His act could block the Berserker's cells, potentially killing him. However, the Berserker was already as good as dead with the metal pipes impaling him. Therefore, Michael chose the second best option – freezing the wounds until a healer could take a look at them.

Michael used every bit of force in his body to throw the Berserker over his shoulder and carry him through the hall. Carrying a four-meter-tall Berserker as a human with average height was not easy, but it was not as if Michael expected it to be an easy task, in the first place.

He looked toward the center of the Colosseum and found Maria. She was unscathed other than the droplets of blood oozing out of her ears. The same couldn't be said about the people around her. Maria's loyal followers looked even worse than the Berserker who had been scorched and impaled several times. Not all of them looked that bad, but they must have jumped in front of Maria to block the majority of the explosion's force to protect her. No matter how bad Michael's opinion of Maria's followers was, they were certainly not cowards. They made sure that the future's strongest healer of the Tritan Alliance would survive the two Perses Missiles that exploded near her.

Michael pulled the Berserker to the arena – or what was left of it. He put the Berserker down and noticed her staring at him for a second. Her gaze flicked to the wounded Berserker for a moment before returning to him once again. Her lips parted, but Michael didn't understand anything.

He pointed at his ears and the fresh blood that was trickling out of it. Maria nodded in understanding and took a few steps forward. Her hands began to glow brightly and a soothing sensation surrounded Michael.

Maria's hands cupped Michael's face. Her soft and warm fingers ran across his face gently, stunning Michael momentarily.

Then her lips parted again.

"I thought you were dead. You did well surviving," Maria said, her eyes locked with Michael's, "Now help me out a little."