

Supreme Lord 471

Chapter 471 Second 6-Star

'50,308 SoulStar Fragments.'

Michael's eyes were shut and his attention was on the SoulStar Fragments residing in his consciousness. The Sphere of Light was right in front of him, and so was the Aethyr.

'How about Insert? It could invest some into Aethyr as well to strengthen our connection and enhance its power.'

There was a faint link between Insert and Extraction, but Michael didn't know enough about Insert yet. He didn't have any time to research the Soultrait in-depth. Therefore, he wouldn't be able to use the full power of Insert even if he was to upgrade it to 6-Star.

'Glacicle? No. If Glacicle doesn't evolve into something better, I will make a huge loss using Glacicle. Its utility is restricted to the freezing mist and creations related to icicles. My proficiency with Glacicle merely allows me to make bad replicas of arrows and Swords. Even if my proficiency were to increase, all I can do is create 'better' Swords and Arrows. Glacicle is not like Frozen Nova, or Frozen Kingdom...'

Michael liked ice elemental Soultraits but it was not like he could use it like an elemental manipulation ability. Something like Frederik Kolbenheim's Soultrait with the Ice element would be much better than Glacicle since Glacicle focuses on offense. It was rather fragile and thus not usable as a proper defense Soultrait.

Other than Insert and Glacicle, Michael discarded all thoughts of upgrading Taming, Mind Reader, and Soul Grimoire. Michael was not too sure why he was still in possession of Soul Grimoire, in the first place. Somehow, it bothered him that he didn't know how to use Soul Grimoire. But, he didn't remove it yet because his ego was in the way.

Reinforced Sword Qi was also not Michael's forte. Since he started to use Aethyr to wield all kinds of weapons, Reinforced Sword Qi was only occasionally extremely useful. Most of the time he used it to enhance the Glacicle Swords. If it evolved into Reinforced Qi and removed the Sword tag, that would be great. However, Michael didn't want to spend close to 30,000 SoulStar Fragments on a gamble.

That left three Soultraits, namely, Spirit Gaze, Eagle Eyes, and Enhancement. Enhancement was the most versatile Soultrait as it could be combined with all of his Soultraits. Michael could even enhance his body. Now that he possessed Insert, it was also possible to use Enhancement on his allies. It was an all-rounder.

Despite that, Michael wondered if it might not be better to upgrade Spirit Gaze and Eagle Eyes. They were tightly linked together and enhanced one another as their star rating increased. Once one of them was upgraded to 6-Star, the power of the other Soultrait would be amplified drastically as well. Their power would be like no other once both reached 6-Star. Spirit Disturbance was quite powerful, and so was being able to see the energies in his surroundings and within other people. Being able to see origin energy would help him a lot since it granted him the time needed to observe how his enemies circulated energy through their bodies to predict what they would do and where they would strike him.

Other than that, his eyesight would improve drastically. Upgrading Eagle Eyes and Spirit Gaze would strengthen Michael actively as well as passively.

'I have 50,000 SoulStar Fragments. I can upgrade Eagle Eyes immediately and create the outlines for Spirit Gaze. Killing 15-20 Tekur should be enough to upgrade Spirit Gaze to 6-Star afterward. That should work.'

With that in mind, Michael took a deep breath and began to channel SoulStar Fragments into the Symbol of Eagle Eyes. Thousands of SoulStar Fragments were consumed in the blink of an eye. The Symbol of Eagle Eyes began to hum. It vibrated and emanated dazzling radiance and as a result, Michael's entire consciousness was filled with radiance.

A piercing pain inflicted through searing blades assaulted his eyes. It took him by surprise and nearly pulled him out of his consciousness. But Michael was not yet done channeling more SoulStar Fragments into the Eagle Eyes Symbol. He couldn't stop now! Gritting his teeth, Michael endured the throbbing pain. His loud, pained groans attracted the attention of the teams around him.

Joseph called out for Michael, which attracted even more attention, however, Michael couldn't hear anything.

Kaleb, Lincoln, and Zeke appeared next to him. They checked on Michael, but all they could see was that their friend was bleeding from his eyes. He bled profusely, yet nobody had an idea why that was the case. The temperature around Michael increased all of a sudden. His body temperature rose enough to heat up his immediate surroundings.

Kaleb conjured ice walls around Michael to cool Michael and the vicinity. He wanted to do more but he had no idea what Michael was going through. Lincoln and Zeke were also clueless. All they could do was stare at Michael and check up on him.

Meanwhile, Michael continued to fight his little battle with...himself. He continued to channel into the Eagle Eyes Soultrait until 31,500 SoulStar Fragments had been consumed. The drawing on the Eagle Eyes Symbol began to change. The details on the drawing increased and the Eagle Eyes grew more intense. Information flooded Michael's mind, causing a headache alongside the searing pain that spread through his eyes.

Michael grit his teeth and clenched his fists tightly. He wanted to scream at the top of his lungs, but he suppressed it all. Upgrading Extraction to a 6-Star Soultrait hadn't been that painful. It might have enhanced his physique quite a bit, yet Extraction never caused that much pain before.

Eagle Eyes was different. It was a Soultrait that had affected Michael passively since he fused it to his War Rune, and now it changed his eyes forever.

As Michael opened his eyes again several hours had passed.

The first thing he saw was a rupture of energy – compressed purified energy that glimmered in a bright white light. The Dimensional Pillar collapsed at last. The 200 Alliance members had been tirelessly hacking and slashing at the Pillar. It released a shockwave of energy that swept through everyone. The energy accumulated within the Dimensional Pillar over the course of years was unleashed. It spread through the surroundings and merged with the ambient energy, amassing and purifying it.

Michael swallowed his saliva. He could sense the purified energy in his surroundings, of course. But...he could also see it now. The glimmering purified energy in the surroundings looked like tiny little stars that permeated the air all around him. Michael instinctively reached out to the stars, his energy absorption technique unleashed on pure instinct.

He absorbed the glimmering stars – the purest and most compressed energy he had ever sensed – and a bright smile blossomed on his face.

The sound of clattering chains rang through his body, followed by glass shattering. Michael broke through. He advanced to the Peak of the 2nd Tier!

"What is wrong with your eyes, Michael?" Kaleb asked, the ice walls around Michael shattering into tiny shards.

Michael glanced at Kaleb not understanding what his friend was talking about.

"You look like you have no clue what is going on with you. Your eyes are not black anymore," Zeke arrived next to Michael, his expression eerily serious. He stared deep into Michael's eyes – vigorous golden shimmering irises entering his sight.

Michael could see his eyes mirrored in Zeke's eyes, and it made him gasp in shock. His eyes were not dark, nearly black, anymore. They were radiant gold in color and overflowing with vigor.

"Can you explain to me why your eye color changed?" Zeke asked, sounding even more serious than before, "Do you even know why I have heterochromatic eyes?"

Michael had no answer to either of Zeke's questions.

"Because of my Soultrait, you idiot," Zeke declared, catching Michael by surprise.

"Idiot..." Lincoln mumbled, staring at Zeke, not sure what was going on with his childhood friend.

Of course, it was surprising to see that Michael's eyes turned golden, but it was not normal for Zeke to react like that.

"My Soultrait, Eye of Illusion, is not a Soultrait that focuses purely on Eyes since its priority is the creation of realistic Illusions. That is also why the eye color of one eye changed instead of both. After all, Soultraits related to the eyes can change the color of one's eyes...but only Soultraits with 6-Stars or above..."

'Ohhh fuck...' Michael cursed in his mind. He understood immediately what Zeke was trying to tell him.

Zeke explained that the change of his iris hue didn't make any sense – except if his Soultrait was suddenly upgraded to 6-Star. Adding the pool of his own blood around him and the dried blood on his face, Zeke could easily tell what must have happened – but it didn't make any sense.

Michael's Soultrait Hawk Vision advanced to a 6-Star Soultrait. If it had remained just Eagle Eyes, there might not have been a problem. Unfortunately, the link with Soul Stare stimulated a mutation. Eagle Eyes evolved to Roc Eyes as the upgrade to 6-Star was completed. Simultaneously, Spirit Gaze and Roc Eyes were pulled closer to each other inside the Sphere of Light. The connection between the two Soultraits intensified and they looked like they were about to touch each other.

Therefore, Michael tried to distract himself by using the remaining Star Shards to upgrade Spirit Gaze a little. Upgrading Spirit Gaze was not that painful. It hurt him, but Michael could keep his eyes open and maintain eye contact with Zeke at the same time.

He began to bleed from his sight again, a tinge of silver spreading through his pupil. Soul Stare began to fuse with Roc Eyes. However, the Spirit Gaze Symbol had yet to reach the requirement to complete the fusion. It was incomplete and ended with both Soultraits being attached to one another.

Michael could instinctively tell that he had to upgrade Soul Stare to 6-Star to complete the fusion, but he didn't have enough Star Shards to do so. The entire stockpile of 50,308 SoulStar Fragments had been used already.

Zeke was getting impatient, but Michael didn't feel pressured anymore. The pressure he'd usually feel from making eye contact with Zeke was no more. Resolution filled his heart and he smiled at his friend.

"I don't think I need to tell you what's going on."

Chapter 472 Hidden Benefits

Everyone had their own little secrets. Rarely anyone was an open book, revealing their deepest secrets to the outside world. Michael was no exception. The only difference about Michael was that he declared just now that he had a secret...and it caused Zeke to frown.

Zeke Lavita had a rough idea about what happened to Michael's eyes, but he couldn't believe it. It didn't make any sense. It made even less sense that a silver ring appeared around Michael's pupils. Why did his eyes change so suddenly? What was actually going on?

"Can't you tell me?" Kaleb asked, his eyes resembling that of a kicked puppy's.

Kaleb was interested in Michael's secret, but that was not because of the same reason as Zeke. In fact, Kaleb could ignore the fact that Michael had secrets. To him, it was more about the feeling that his first 'real' friend was keeping secrets from him. Kaleb was not sure how to feel about that. Was he not trustworthy enough? Did Michael even think of him as a real friend? Why did it hurt so much even though he knew that everyone had their little secrets?

Michael bit his lower lip after noticing the change in his friends' expressions. He didn't expect Kaleb to be this hurt from hearing that he wouldn't tell what was going on with his eyes.

"I...don't think I want the Zenovia family to know," He responded slowly after a few seconds, "I think I can tell you if you made a Soul Pact with me, but I don't think that the Zenovia family would want that. If they find out that their beloved Heavenly Chosen made a Soul Pact with me to hide something they would get suspicious, don't you think so?"

Now that he thought about it, Michael figured that he could tell Kaleb about his secret. He trusted his friend enough. The problem was that if some problem occurred in his family, Michael couldn't be 100% certain that Kaleb would keep his secret hidden. It was just a possibility – a low one – but it could happen that Kaleb would spill the beans. The same applied to Alice as well.

Maybe things would change a little bit once he became a Higher Lifeform with dozens of Soultraits. His strength would be high enough to ensure that the Zenovia family, or any other family, would have difficulties causing problems in his life upon finding out about Extraction.

'It would be much easier if I knew more about the Zenovia family. Maybe I can tell Kaleb some things once I know for sure that the rest of the Zenovia family is like the siblings. If that's the case I might even be able to trade Soultraits and SoulStar Fragments with them in the future.'

But for now, Michael wanted to keep Extraction a secret, even if he believed that he couldn't keep the secret for long anymore. Maybe a year, two at most. He was changing too much, too fast, after all.

"But..." Kaleb didn't really know what to reply. He understood that the Zenovia family would want to know why he signed a Soul Pact – if he signed one. They would interrogate him and Michael until they found out the reason behind their secrecy. That was something Michael wanted to avoid. Nonetheless, it felt weird that Michael wouldn't share his secret with anyone without a Soul Pact. It meant that Michael was hiding something of utmost importance, something High Society would go crazy for.

"I am keeping my secrets hidden because I don't want to endanger those I care about by letting them in on the secret. I'm still new to this political stuff, and all I know is that everyone warns me to stay away from the High Society and how influential every big family is. So I hope you understand the reason why I won't tell you. It's to keep myself protected and those I would love to tell everything to. I really have nothing against you," Michael explained further.

He was sincere when he said that he had no idea how other families would react to his secret. If he told Lincoln, Zeke, and Kaleb, who knew what their families would do if they found out? Would they want Michael for themselves and obliterate each other to keep Michael's Extraction a secret from the rest of the world, or would they share him like a community slave? One way or another, Michael could only see himself as a marionette in the plays of High Society once they found out about Extraction.

Zeke was starting to get even more curious about Michael's secret, but he figured that he couldn't sign a Soul Pact to make Michael spill the beans. A Soul Contract might be fine, but a Soul Pact was simply too much. He was the heir of the Lavita household and couldn't afford to lose everything because of a Soul Pact. Knowing Michael to a certain degree, Zeke figured that his Soul Pact would be highly restrictive, granting no leeway to do anything with the information and secrets Michael might reveal.

Nonetheless, the pieces of information Zeke obtained just now were enough to understand certain things. He made a few mental notes and decided to keep Michael's words in mind. The information would probably help him in the future.

Lincoln was also curious about Michael's secret. He couldn't help but feel like signing a Soul Pact with Michael just to relieve himself of the curiosity that had been tormenting him for quite a while now. Unfortunately, he couldn't sign a Soul Pact without consulting the household. That was not something Lincoln or Zeke wanted to do because they figured that Michael wouldn't tell them about his secret anymore. Telling their families about Michael's secret and that he demanded a Soul Pact was like revealing it to the entire world that Michael had something very very important to hide. That was counterproductive.

He wouldn't be able to trust them anymore if they were to disclose their families. That was something Lincoln, Zeke, and Kaleb understood very well. They figured that Michael had already begun to test their loyalty. He trusted them enough to tell them that there was a secret, but that was all they would get from him for now.

"Is there something you can...or want to tell us then?" Zeke gave it another try. He didn't want to give up. Meanwhile, Kaleb added, "Anything..."

At this point, Kaleb sounded a little bit pitiful, a bit desperate even. He hoped that his friend could trust him wholeheartedly. On the other hand, Kaleb understood why Michael was careful. If it was really important to hide his secret from High Society for his own safety, or those he loved, it might be better not to tell anyone. It was like his brain and his heart were at war right now.

"Well. The only thing I hope from you guys is to stay the same even after becoming part of your family's higher-ups. I don't want you to change. Maybe you can influence your families in the future. You guys are strong enough. Or..." Michael didn't speak anymore but the vigor in his golden shimmering eyes intensified. His expression turned more serious.

The others expected Michael to continue, but he had no intention to add something.

He ended up breaking into a smile.

"Let's not think about such depressive things. I'm already torturing myself enough because I want to disclose everyone about it. But...Forget it. We shall wait and see what the future awaits," Michael looked troubled for a moment but the smile returned to his face.

He cleared his throat and decided to depart from the group of 200 Alliance members.

"Since I'm a variable, I shall do my job properly. I'll take my leave and search for more Alliance members," Michael announced to his friends, who could only nod.

One of Michael's missions was to gather astray groups of the Tritan Alliance to make sure that their fighting power was gathered. Simultaneously, he ought to collect information about the Tekur, and the location of the remaining Dimensional Pillars. He couldn't stay with the others to do so.

"Take care of yourself," Lincoln said lightly.

Meanwhile, Kaleb looked at him, his expression much better than before, "I don't think you need to think too much about your secret. Just disclose us when you're ready... Sorry for pressuring you..."

Michael grinned and patted Kaleb's shoulder.

'He has matured quite a bit, hasn't he?'

"Alright. See ya!"

Michael weaved energy into his body and kicked the ground. He left the group of Alliance members and paved his way through the empty plains.

On his way through the plains, many thoughts popped up in his mind. Most of them were worries about his talk with Kaleb and the others just now. Fortunately, he could put those thoughts aside when he sensed the drastic transformation upgrading Eagle Eyes to Roc Eyes brought.

Now that his Soultrait advanced to 6-Star, Michael sensed various changes. First of all, Michael sensed that his physique was sturdier and that the origin energy inside his body had been purified, even if it was just a tiny bit. The transformation was not extraordinary, but it would be notable as he continued to progress on the path as an Awakened.

Michael didn't expect his physique and origin energy to transformation as Eagle Eyes evolved into 6-Star Roc Eyes. However, he recalled a similar scenario with the exact same results. It was when Extraction had been upgraded to 6-Star. His physique changed a little bit as Extraction reached 6-Star and the origin energy within him became purer.

'Upgrading all of my Soultraits would strengthen my physique and purify my origin energy even more. Once all of my Soultraits are 7-Star...I will probably be as strong as an Awakened of a higher Tier even if I don't use my Soultraits. That is not overpowered at all...of course, not...'

Just like that Michael found out about the hidden benefits of possessing a 6-Star Soultrait or above.

Chapter 473 Alone

Other than the hidden benefits of upgrading 5-Star Eagle Eyes to 6-Star Roc Eyes, Michael obtained the normal benefits as well. And those were truly amazing!

First of all, his eye color changed to a vibrant gold. That may not seem like anything big, but the transformation of his eyes was accompanied by various benefits. Michael could now see the streams of energy in front of him at all times. The energy streams were vivid and extremely detailed.

Other than the streams of energy around him, Michael was now capable of seeing the energy within and around objects and other people as well. Michael could clearly tell that Lincoln possessed a little bit more energy than Zeke, but that the purity of the origin energy within him was a little bit lower. Both Zeke and Lincoln possessed less origin energy than Kaleb even though his War Rune's refinement degree was lower. Kaleb's origin energy had a higher purification degree as well.

'The alteration of everyone's origin energy is also pretty interesting. I can analyze everyone's origin energy and find out what their Soultrait is capable of, to a certain extent, at least. Nice.'

Every energy was a little bit different, whether it was the alteration, purity, potency, the amount of energy within an Awakened and so on. Being able to see everything clearly was a great means to measure the power of his enemies.

As for his eyesight, Michael was not even sure how far he could see at this point. Everything in his view looked crystal clear. He could pinpoint the faintest details far ahead without straining his eyesight.

'Two or three kilometers?'

Other than the benefits provided by the transformation of his eyes, Michael noticed that his eyesight could be further amplified by weaving origin energy into his eyes. An important factor about Roc Eyes was that channeling energy into them allowed him to see everything around him as if time itself had slowed down. It was not an extraordinary change but Michael was certain that it could be very useful in battle, both to predict the attacks of his enemies and to counter the enemies' attack patterns by moving even before they could initiate their movements and attacks.

Spirit Gaze's connection to Roc Eyes was the most impressive change though. It was easy to tell that Spirit Gaze would fuse with Roc Eyes in the future. Even now Spirit Gaze and Roc Eyes were already fused by a small margin. The fusion had already begun and all it took was upgrading Spirit Gaze to 6-Star. At least that was what Michael presumed.

Upgrading Spirit Gaze would require a 'bunch' of SoulStar Fragments. Therefore, it was about time to get moving. Michael released tendrils of Extraction outside his body to tap into the streams of energy. Simultaneously, he channeled more energy into his eyes, activating Roc Eyes' full power for the first time.

Information about the surrounding area entered his mind, including all the miscellaneous details that nobody needed to know. Michael discarded the useless pieces of information instantaneously and moved over to the fewer important details.

'A group of...four..no, five Tekur five kilometers to my right. Alright.'

Michael pinpointed a group of enemies and made his move at once. He released more tendrils of Extraction into the surroundings and activated Insert simultaneously. He inserted the tendrils of Extraction precisely into the streams of energy around him to increase the efficiency with which the golden tendrils extracted the energy from the surroundings.

He used the energy he'd absorbed immediately to create a compressed Glacicle Sword. The Glacicle Sword was compressed until Michael's mastery reached its limit and couldn't go any further. Michael then used Reinforced Sword Qi and Enhancement to coat the compressed Glacicle Sword. The third step was to create another layer of Glacicle Sword around the compressed Glacicle Sword which he...compressed again. Then the second layer of Reinforced Sword Qi and Enhancement was applied.

Michael didn't stop until the Glacicle Sword had been compressed thrice with three layers of Reinforced Sword Qi and Enhancement applied within and outside the triple-compressed Glacicle Sword. He then repeated the process four times until he had a total of five triple-compressed enhanced Qi Glacicle Swords.

The energy required to create each of the triple-compressed enhanced Qi Glacicle Swords was equivalent to almost 15% of his entire storage, yet Michael's energy storage was still field to the brim – all thanks to the tendrils of Extraction. Maintaining five of those terrific tendrils drained him mentally a little. However, it consumed more energy than it put a mental strain on him. Fortunately, the tendrils of Extraction were still activated.

Once the distance between him and the Tekur was less than a kilometer, one of them must have noticed him. They turned in his direction and charged at once. Michael realized that two of them were extremely fast. Therefore, he applied seven layers of Enhancement to his body. He weaved the Enhancement into his body in the same way he utilized origin energy to strengthen his physique temporarily.

His body felt like bursting apart as the seven layers of Enhancement took effect. However, Michael endured it all. He accepted the power that surged through his body and made his move. His feet sunk deep into the ground, creating spider web-like cracks all over the coarse surface. Loose soil was sprayed in all directions as Michael's feet kicked the ground with terrifying strength. He turned into a flash, the five triple-compressed enhanced Qi Glacicle Swords swirling around him.

Michael's body acted instinctively. His eyes flicked left and right to pinpoint anymore potential threats and determine the course of actions of his enemies. They circulated a tremendous amount of energy through their bodies and moved. Yet, just as they were about to attack, Michael had already appeared in front of the closest Tekur. Aethyr manifested in his hands and formed into a scythe coated in a bright golden light.

Extraction had been applied to the scythe's blade. It devoured the energy in the surroundings which was then used to actively apply Insert onto the golden sheen of extraction that coated the Aethyr Scythe.

As the Aethyr Scythe collided with the highly durable claw of the closest Tekur, the power of Extraction invaded the Tekur. However, before he could notice anything, a triple-compressed enhanced Qi Glacicle Sword burst forth. It accelerated with a rush of energy and crossed the remaining distance to the Tekur in an instant. The Glacicle Sword collided with the Tekur.

Simultaneously, the remaining four triple-compressed enhanced Qi Glacicle Swords were released as well. Each Glacicle Sword targeted one enemy. Yet, instead of using the Glacicle Swords to obliterate his enemies with one attack, Michael willed the Glacicle Swords to burst apart. Each layer was released with a burst, whereas the Reinforced Sword Qi layer was released to spread the freezing mist into the surroundings.

The Glacicle Swords burst apart right before the four Tekur could block, or evade the attack. They were taken by surprise as the Glacicle Swords burst into a dense cloud of freezing mist. The Tekur intended to charge through the freezing mist but they realized too late that the freezing mist around them was moving.

Smaller Glacicle Swords formed within the freezing mist and burst in their direction from all sides. The Tekur couldn't even see the Glacicle Swords. All they could see was a blinding white light. As for their senses, they were overwhelmed by the freezing cold and the energy that permeated every bit of the freezing mist.

Michael was having a migraine trying to cope with the four Tekur that were a little bit further away as well as fighting the Tekur right in front of him. The Glacicle Sword that shot toward the Tekur in front of him didn't burst apart immediately. It impacted at first, nearly crushing the Tekur's head but at the last moment, he used his Soultrait to block the attack and step away.

The sword burst apart in the next moment. Michael was now fully aware of the Tekur's Soultrait and its power. Therefore, he could modify his fighting style if necessary. He willed the freezing mist to transform into Glacicle Swords and used Insert with Extraction to insert golden threads everywhere within the freezing mist.

After applying several layers of Enhancement onto Extraction, Michael began to bombard the Tekur with Glacicle Swords from all around him. Insert's duration didn't wear off immediately. It allowed Extraction to infiltrate the Tekur from several positions and debilitate him over time.

Michael retrieved the freezing mist around the closest Tekur in the next moment. He stared deep into the pitch-black eyes of the Tekur and used Spirit Disturbance in its strongest form. The Tekur froze in his tracks for a moment, his mental fortitude unable to do anything against Michael or the threads of Extraction inside it. Extraction's strength spread out and devoured both lifeforce and energy simultaneously.

Michael's head stopped aching as the lifeforce entered his body. Meanwhile, the energy was utilized to use a second Spirit Disturbance. This time, Michael used Enhanceemnt on the Aethyr Scythe. He struck out with all his mind and slashed through the Tekur's head, cutting it in half.

An energy influx reached Michael as the Tekur crashed onto the ground. The last remnants of lifeforce and origin energy entered Michael's body, filling his energy storage to the prime while also returning his mental state back to the peak.

'I just used more origin energy to kill one of those bastards than most Mid Tier-3 Awakened have. My energy consumption is really out of this world...

Chapter 474 Summons, Helmets, and a lot more

Michael realized quickly that using his Soultraits in such an extravagant manner was not acceptable. He overwhelmed the first Tekur and managed to insert a tendril of Extraction in the remaining four Tekur, but his mental power was drained rapidly. If not for being able to extract the life force of the first Tekur, Michael would have been forced to run away from the remaining four Tekur.

Fortunately, he could reset his mental power to its original peak before the four Tekur escaped the formation of Glacicle Swords and the freezing mist.

Michael dispelled the freezing mist and stopped utilizing most of his Soultraits for a moment. Only the tendrils of Extraction within the Tekur were in his focus other than Roc Eyes being fully unleashed to study the Tekurs' course of action.

The Tekur were usually confident and wouldn't shy away from attacking an enemy in the Interdimensional Flag War. However, seeing the upper half of their brethren's head lying next to the rest of the Tekur's body was enough reason to be more vigilant.

A Tekur used his Soultrait to summon a Fiery Bloodhound. The Fiery Bloodhound's shoulder height was one meter, he had sabertooth-like fangs and his entire body was coated in fiery flames. The Fiery Bloodhound charged ahead and opened his maw wide once it was only 20 meters away from Michael. The distance was just enough to release a crimson flame – a flame that used the Arts of Blood and Pyromancy simultaneously.

Michael's eyes glowed weakly as he analyzed the circulation of energy within the stream of crimson flames and within the Fiery Bloodhound.

'Zeroa's flames are worse.' He thought as the flames reached him.

However, Michael didn't do anything against it. He embraced the flames, felt the warmth and continued to smile.

Strengthening his taming bond with Zeroa had been worth it. Not only did he obtain a powerful ally such as the Elemental Empress but his natural resistance to Zeroa's strongest element increased manifold as well. The crimson flames of the Fiery Bloodhound were nothing against the terrific power of the Elemental Empress' mythical flames.

The Tekur stared at him, his mandibles clattered angrily and the energy within him swirled violently once again. He was about to summon another Fiery Bloodhound.

Thanks to Roc Eyes, Michael instantaneously noticed that summoning the second required far more energy than the first. The circulation of her energy was also different. She didn't summon the second Bloodhound as easily as the first. Instead, she first created a summoning circle on the ground in front of her before using her simple customized technique – or at least that was what Michael presumed she was doing – to summon the second Fiery Bloodhound.

Michael decided to call the bigger one Bloodwolf simply because it looked more like a big wolf rather than an obedient dog. Its fangs were thrice as long as that of the Fiery Bloodhound and its entire body was packed with dense muscles. The Bloodwolf was two-meters-tall in shoulder height and the flames it unleashed were far stronger as well.

Freezing mist burst from Michael's body to block the blazing crimson flames that burned everything in their path. The freezing mist melted rapidly but the full force of the flames never reached him. And the weakened flames that reached him eventually were not strong enough to harm him. His natural fire resistance was simply too high.

"I wonder if killing the Summoner will expel the Summons from this space as well," Michael murmured as the remaining three Tekur made their move. One had already appeared next to Michael by using the distraction caused by the Bloodwolf to strike him from the side.

A blue armor set covered his body and carapace. The Tekur was even wearing a helmet and wielded two lengthy blades that looked like the fangs of a dragon. The blades were special but they didn't attract Michael's interest. Instead it was the helmet that piqued Michael's curiosity. Roc's eyes allowed him to sense something special about the helmet. It was a helmet with small wings that fluttered weakly in the air. As the wings spread out, the Tekur's finesse increased rapidly.

The helmet was the Tekur's Soultrait, enhancing his Dexterity, Reaction speed and mental resistance.

Michael sensed instinctively that the tendril of Extraction within the Tekur in front of him was not of great use. It drained his energy slowly but the naturally heightened mental resistance of the Tekur prevented a drastic drain of energy. Extracting the Tekur's lifeforce in this state was not possible either.

But Michael just smiled. He dashed head first into the Tekur's blades. Summoning Aethyr happened instantaneously. Aethyr split up into two tiny shields with which Michael blocked the incoming blades. The Tekur tried to change his trajectory but a burst of freezing mist took the Tekur by surprise. Michael transformed the freezing mist into a large Glacicle that shrouded the Tekur's arms and blades. The Glacicle would break soon, but that was exactly what Michael wanted. He used Insert onto the Glacicle and configured it perfectly. The moment the Glacicle burst into countless shards, the freezing mist released from within the Glacicles would be inserted into the Tekur's arms and the blades.

Even if he couldn't kill the Tekur like that, Michael was certain that the Tekur's arms and blades would sustain some damage. Unfortunately, Michael couldn't focus too long on the Tekur. The Bloodwolf arrived behind him and released a crimson flame. Michael used seven layers of Enhancement for three seconds to dash behind the Tekur with the helmet, inflict a wound with Aethyr as it transformed into lengthy blades and push the Tekur into the crimson flames of the Bloodwolf.

The Tekur's reaction speed might be high as well as his Dexterity but the freezing mist was great at slowing down enemies. It didn't affect Michael but everyone else had to endure and overcome the adverse effects once the freezing mist hit them.

By now all Tekur had been hit by the freezing mist several times. They were slightly slower than usual, but didn't sense a major difference yet. In their opinion the biggest problem was the unknown human in front of them. He used too many Soultraits, which made it increasingly more difficult to find ways to counter him.

The Summoner ordered the Bloodwolf to stop releasing the crimson flames. The Tekur with the helmet was scorched at a few spots but the energy and vigor within him hadn't weakened much. He began to use his customized technique to heighten his reaction speed and Dexterity and dashed after Michael. Simultaneously, a ray of light encompassed the Tekur, healing his wounds rapidly.

'They have a healer as well,' Michael mumbled. He'd expected some Healer to participate in the Interdimensional Flag War on the Tekur's side, but even amid the Tekur race, healers were rather rare. Therefore, their numbers ought to be lower. But most importantly, their Soultraits were weak. No Tekur with a Healing Soultrait at and above 3-Stars would end up becoming a mere Soldier. They would be nurtured painstakingly.

That meant the Healer in the Tekur's group had a 2-Star Soultrait or was even weaker. It drained a tremendous amount of energy out of the Tekur to heal someone over a distance of more than 50

meters. That was the distance between the remaining two Tekur and the Melee Tekur. Michael's eyes drifted to the remaining Tekur. He pinpointed the Healer instantaneously and got to know the Soultrait of the other Tekur as well.

'A Soultrait like Opars' Energy Imprint. The customized technique is a lot stronger than Opars' Energy Imprint. Unfortunately, you seem to be using up a considerable amount of mental power. That's even worse than Opars using up his stamina to use Energy Imprint!'

Given that none of the Tekur had a Soultrait that allowed them to block attacks or move rapidly, Michael allowed his energy to erupt from within him. The tendrils of Extraction spread through the surroundings to tap into the energy streams around him whereas his biggest focus was on the creation of a thousand Glacicle needles. Michael used most of his energy storage to create the ice needles that were not enhanced but inserted with a trace of Extraction each.

The ice needles shot through the air with terrifying velocity. The Summoner ordered her Summons to block the Glacicle needles and burn them, but they couldn't block all of them. Dozens of Glacicle needles struck the two Summons, resulting in traces of Extraction entering their body. Insert pushed the traces of Extraction through their natural defenses and allowed the traces to invade their bodies and take root inside naturally. The Summons' flames burned down many Glacicles but hundreds of them still struck the two Tekur far in the back. They didn't cause any harm on their carapace but each of the Glacicles that hit their target resulted in one more trace of Extraction entering the bodies of the Healer and the Healer's Support.

Even though nobody could tell yet for sure what exactly the human was trying to do with the needles, it was obvious that he was satisfied with the result of his attacks.

It was only after a while that the healer's Supporter groaned in pain. Her mental power was already extremely weak due to the drainage caused by her Soultrait and the special customized technique. The Supporter's mental defense crumbled as the Power of Extraction ravaged through her entire body, draining her life force and energy rapidly.

A headache was creeping up Michael's head, but he could eradicate the pain due to the lifeforce that entered his body. The lifeforce refreshed the psychological power he'd utilized up just now. Meanwhile, the energy allowed him to concentration more on the tendrils of Extraction within the Healer. He focused on draining her energy, rendering the Tekur's healing Soultrait useless.

The Tekur in the back snapped their mandibles viciously, resulting in a sudden change of the Summoners and Melee Tekur's tactic.

It looked like they'd realized what Michael had been doing. Unfortunately, it was already too late for the Healer and the Supporter. The Healer's energy was being drained, and the Supporter's psychological defense couldn't even protect her lifeforce from being drained rapidly.

The Summoner used her remaining power to summon three ordinary Fiery Bloodhounds. Michael could sense that she was linked to them through the Summoner's energy fluctuations. She could control the Fiery Bloodhounds and the Bloodwolf as she pleased. But upon further inspection, Michael observed something interesting.

The Summoner was holding an Inferior Energy Stone in her hand. The compressed purified power within the energy stone entered her body, but instead of spreading through her until it entered the pillar of light, the Summoner's energy was split between the five Summons. The Summons utilized the Summoner's energy to release their crimson fire and channel energy through their body to enhance their physique temporarily.

'Looks like this will be a little bit more fun than expected.'

Chapter 475 Freezing and Cutting

The Melee Tekur was somewhat fast, but Jirah Loar was actually faster once he used his Soultrait and the inheritance technique, God Speed, together. Michael had to apply a six-fold layer of Enhancement to his body to surpass the Melee Tekur's speed.

Due to his Soultrait, the Tekur's reaction time was extremely short. However, Michael was almost on par with that by using Roc Eyes without any amplifications. Due to the connection between Roc Eyes and Spirit Gaze, Michael gained the upper hand in terms of reaction speed. The only issue for Michael was that the Tekur's mental fortitude and armor were quite hard to pierce through.

Michael spent a few seconds inserting tendrils of Extraction inside the Summoner's five Summons. The Monster Summons' instincts told them to block the tendrils from taking root inside their bodies, but Michael used Spirit Disturbance on them to crush their mental defenses in one go. Spirit Disturbance unleashed a spiritual attack within the minds of the targets Michael had aimed at. Since Roc Eyes advanced to 6-Star and Spirit Gaze was on the way to become a 6-Star Soultrait, Spirit Disturbance's lethality reached new heights. Even Awakened at the 3rd Tier had to focus on their mental fortitude and actively use a technique to protect their minds to ensure that Spirit Disturbance wouldn't affect them too much.

Nonetheless, they would feel a sharp sting in their mind. On the other hand, those who didn't block Michael's attack would feel like a thunderstorm had suddenly brewed up in their heads. As a result, their minds went blank and some even lost control of their bodies for a moment. Michael could have killed the Monster Summons – including the Bloodwolf – using Spirit Disturbance, compressed Glacicle Swords and some other Soultrait, but he didn't want to make it so easy for them. Michael desired to use the Monster Summons to replenish his energy and lifeforce while fighting the remaining Tekur.

The Melee Tekur with the Helmet Soultrait was the only one whose Soultrait supported him actively in combat. The Summoners, the Supporter and the Healer had Soultraits with other uses. However, that didn't mean they couldn't fight. They might not have a customized technique that strengthened their combat prowess, but they were trained in combat and could make use of their superior physique to pose a threat to Michael.

'Is it their body refinement technique or are they innately physically stronger than humans? Their carapace is highly resilient and thus perfect to block attacks, whereas their claws are razor sharp. Why does it feel like the Tekur were born to become killing machines?'

Michael took a deep breath to calm his raging mind. Next, he manifested a huge Glacicle around the Melee Tekur and applied Insert into it. Insert was configured to channel the cold and the freezing mist into the Tekur if he dared to destroy the Glacicle. That way, Michael could ensure that the Tekur would either be incapacitated for a few seconds, or that he would be weakened if he dared to break the fragile Glacicle around him.

But he didn't pay much attention to the Melee Tekur's actions. Instead he arrived behind the Bloodwolf, who'd released a crimson flame to burn Michael into cinder. Michael applied two more layers of Enhancement onto his body for five seconds to tear open the ground beneath him as he accelerated. He appeared next to the Bloodwolf and inflicted various injuries with the Aethyr Saber. The Aethyr Saber cut deep into the Bloodwolf's legs, severing its tendons cleanly. The Bloodwolf yelped in pain and slumped to the ground, blood spurting like a fountain out of the monster's legs. Michael didn't hurt the Fiery Bloodhounds that much. He pierced the Saber into their hind legs and severed them in one go.

Enhancing Aethyr with Reinforced Sword Qi and Enhancement was truly magnificent. It granted Aethyr tremendous power.

The Summoner's pets were rendered useless. They turned into Michael's assets as he continued to drain their energy and lifeforce. The three non-combat Tekur rushed toward Michael. Their intentions were

obvious. They wanted to kill Michael in close combat now that they realized that Michael could drain their energy and lifeforce. The Supporter was the most desperate. Her mental defense had already taken a hit due to the use of her Soultrait and customized technique. She couldn't even try to stop the tendrils of Extraction within her body that rapidly spread out to devour her lifeforce and energy.

She appeared in front of Michael and lashed out. Michael released tens of tendrils of Extraction as he backtracked. Insert was used in the next moment. Michael applied Insert on the tendrils of Extraction that lunged out to collide with the Supporter's body and armor.

Some tendrils infiltrated her armor, slowly extracting the molecules that held the armor together, whereas the remaining tendrils of Extraction took root all over her body. Unable to block the attacks due to her weakened mental fortitude, all the Tekur could do was perceive her energy storage drying out. Not long after her lifeforce reached a dangerously low level.

Meanwhile, Michael was brimming with vigor and energy. He used Enhancement on Roc Eyes, activated Spirit Gaze and used Enhancement on Spirit Gaze as well before unleashing Spirit Disturbance right as the Tekur's Healer was about to reach him. The Healer stared straight into Michael's vibrant golden eyes. The next moment his body stopped listening to him and his mind was assaulted from all directions.

He screamed at the top of his lungs, but that was all he could do before the Aethyr Longsword coated in several layers of Enhancement and Reinforced Sword Qi at full power pierced through his throat.

Michael twisted the blade once and was just about to pull out when he sensed something behind him. The Summoner and Melee Tekur had arrived. The Melee Tekur had destroyed the Glacicle, resulting in his arms being half frozen. Michael let go of Aethyr and retrieved it into his War Rune. He summoned Aethyr in its shield form again to block the Summoner's claws. The Melee Tekur's blades, on the other hand, didn't miss Michael this time.

The Melee Tekur closed the distance between them and slashed Michael's upper arm. Blood gushed out of the wound, but Michael didn't divert his full focus to the Melee Tekur. Instead, he allowed him to slash him twice in total while he pounced forward with the Aethyr Shield. He bashed the shield into the Summoner Tekur right before transforming the shield into two daggers. The Summoner was pushed back, one of his feet slipping into a small hole Michael had hurriedly excavated with Extraction. The hole was not deep enough to fall in, but it was more than enough for the Summoner's foot to get sucked in.

The Tekur lost his balance and fell to the ground. Michael was still towering above the Tekur and expected the enemy to fall. He used the momentum to drive the Aethyr Daggers through the Tekur's eyeballs, deep into his head.

The Summoner screamed but not for long. Michael pushed the Aethyr Daggers deeper into the Tekur's head before retrieving them into his War Rune. The moment the daggers disappeared, Michael released a series of compressed Glacicles through the Summoner's eyeballs. He willed the Glacicles to shatter once they reached the deepest part of the Tekur's head and kill him by freezing his head.

Michael rolled to the side the moment he sensed something from behind him. Roc Eyes located the Melee Tekur instantaneously. The Tekur was already behind him, ready to pierce his blades through Michael's head.

Michael used his ability to pinpoint and predict the exact movements of his enemies to twist his physique and move aside a little. However, the Melee Tekur was not slow either. He reacted rapidly and changed the trajectory of his dragon fangs. Michael had to make a decision now. He grit his teeth, lifted his arms, and summoned a large Aethyr Shield to protect his vitals. In the next moment, the Melee Tekur's blades pierced through Michael's thighs.

If he couldn't kill Michael in one go, he might as well weaken him and render him immobile!

Michael groaned in pain but he endured it well. He grit his teeth and stared deep into the Melee Tekur's eyes. Aethyr disappeared and Michael's hands shot forward. He caught the Tekur's wrist and broke into a smile.

"I got you!"

Then Michael unleashed freezing mist in the surroundings in an explosive manner. He used a bit of the Power of Energy Imprint stored within the Legendary Ring Artifact to unleash a ten-fold layer of Enhancement. He applied the ten-fold layer of Enhancement onto Glacicle to release a second burst of freezing mist around Michael and the Melee Tekur. His next move was to use Insert right before willing the freezing mist all around him to infiltrate the Melee Tekur's body.

"Freeze to death, bastard!"

The freezing mist around them began to stir. It intensified and swirled around the Tekur. From the outside, it looked like a snowstorm emerged out of nowhere, a beautiful shimmering snowstorm in a vast, empty expanse. The freezing mist was attracted to the Tekur. It was pulled to him and entered his physique upon touching him. At first, the suction force was weak. Only bits of freezing mist were pulled toward the Tekur.

But in a matter of ten seconds, the freezing mist bombarded the Tekur. It infiltrated him from all sides and froze his skin and carapace alongside. Michael tightened his grasp around the Tekur's wrists. He applied every bit of strength within his physique and heard a loud crackling sound in front of him. In the next moment, Michael saw himself holding two frozen claws in his hands.

The claws were still holding onto the dragon fangs but Michael drew them to make sure that the razor-sharp blades wouldn't cut deeper into him. A fountain of blood spurted out of his thighs.

Michael groaned but the pain did not stop him from extracting the remaining lifeforce out of the enemies that were still alive. The Summoned Monsters died and so did the Supporter. As for the remaining enemies, Michael made sure that they were dead by conjuring several Glacicle Swords to pierce their bodies over and over again.

The Melee Tekur looked like a statue. His entire physique was frozen, his eyes staring loathingly at Michael. Michael only stared at him pointedly, manifested Aethyr in the longsword form, and sliced through his head. Only then did he receive the Tekur's energy influx.

"Ten energy influxes. That means all of them are dead...finally..." Michael slumped to the ground in relief, his legs quivering as the adrenaline rush died down. His breathing was labored, his chest heaving up and down heavily.

"These bastards are fucking strong..." Michael murmured to himself, but he broke into a faint smile.

"That's amazing. Their Soultraits were definitely not on par with any of my Soultraits yet their powers cannot be underestimated. I need their techniques!"

Chapter 476 Soul Technique

A faint halo manifested above Michael's head as he used the Soultrait Shard of Archangel's Grace for the first time to heal someone – himself. He used up some of the power that had accumulated within the

Soultrait Shard to heal the two gashes on his left arm and the deep wounds in his thighs. He had to make sure that his condition would be at the peak if he wanted to be ready to fight at all times.

"Marie's Soultrait is really overpowered. Even the weakened version is much stronger than the Tekur Healer's healing. It required much less energy as well," Michael mumbled, starting to wonder if the Healer's Soultrait was actually a mere 1-Star Soultrait, whose power was amplified with the use of the simple customized technique. Given how helpless the Healer had been once the Supporter's constant supply of energy deteriorated, that would make sense.

Michael's gaze roamed over to the battlefield, only to end up staring at his weapon. Aethyr was extremely powerful. If not for Aethyr, Michael was not sure if he would have won against the Tekur. Being able to switch between a wide variety of attack movements and means of defense had been crucial in the fight against the five Tekur.

Even though Aethyr was only a replica of Aether with a tiny, negligible trace of Aether, Aethyr was extremely versatile and powerful. It was definitely one of the best things he could have obtained from the Tritan Alliance as a gift of gratitude for the support he provided.

Michael released a few strands of Extraction in the surrounding area. The strands anchored themselves to the bodies of the fallen Tekur around him and began to extract their Soultrait Symbols and SoulStar Fragments.

He didn't rush the extraction process. Instead, Michael used Roc Eyes to keep an eye on the surroundings to ensure that nobody could approach him without his knowledge. Additionally, it also assured him that nobody observed him sneakily while he was busy extracting his enemies' Soultraits and SoulStar Fragments.

One SoulStar Fragment after another was extracted. They piled up in front of Michael and turned into a big stash. In less than half an hour, Michael completed the extraction process. He had been patient and double checked to make sure that he wrung the corpses dry until there was nothing left. He wanted to obtain as many SoulStar Fragments as possible, after all.

"A Memory Orb from each of them, four Artifacts in total, two Soultrait Symbols, and...2750 SoulStar Fragments. That's a lot more than I expected..." Michael murmured to himself as he finished calculating everything he procured.

He looked at the two Soultrait Symbols and realized that they originated from the Healer and Supporter. One thing attracted his attention as he looked at the two fragile Soultrait Symbols.

"These Symbols are more fragile than usual. They don't have a single star either. Usually that only happens when I extract Soultraits with low star ratings. But then why did I obtain so many SoulStar Fragments from the Healer and the Supporter? If I'm not mistaken both generated roughly 700 SoulStar Fragments while the others generated 450 respectively."

Michael had a rough idea about the SoulStar Fragment scenario. The theory that formed in his mind would also explain why the Berserk Minotaur and the Big Black Bear of the Tamer he'd killed a long time ago dropped SoulStar Fragments.

'What if extracting Soul Power generates SoulStar Fragments? Lords drop more SoulStar Fragments. That's something I already know. Or is it related to the number of Links of Loyalty and how much Soul Power the individual Links of Loyalty create?' Michael wondered.

He decided to find an answer to all of his questions by consuming the Memory Orbs dropped by the Tekur. Digesting each Memory Orb required roughly half an hour. Michael then spent another half an hour organizing the new memories properly, discarding the useless pieces of information, and making up his theories.

His focus was on two things when he digested the Memory Orbs: Find out how Individuals with weaker Soultraits can drop more SoulStar Fragments and the origin of their special customized techniques.

Michael found a lot about both. First of all the special techniques utilized Soul Power, something Michael possessed a lot. He tried to focus on the common points between the special customized techniques the Tekur were using and compared them with what he had seen using Roc Eyes. Roc Eyes allowed him to create various comparisons with the techniques' explanations and the Tekur's execution of the respective technique.

Only after spending close to an hour comparing everything did Michael understand something intriguing, "The techniques are not exactly customized. Well, they're altered but it's not a major alteration to be tailor fit 'perfectly' to each of the Tekur. It is merely tweaked a little according to the effects and requirements of each Soultrait."

'So if someone had an Elemental Soultrait such as Wind Manipulation, the Tekur would be given an Elemental Technique, altered to fit the wind element. If the Wind Manipulation Soultrait would use energy to manifest something simple such as wind blades, it wouldn't be altered a lot. But if origin energy was merely utilized to conjure winds and mental power was required to shape them, the technique would have to acquire more alterations...'

The customized techniques overclocked Soultrait several times by using up the Soul Power accumulated by the Soultrait. That way the Tekur could exhibit power up to fivefold their usual strength. That was what a Common Class technique – used by the Soldiers of the Tekur race – could achieve.

The Soul Power utilized to overclock a Soultrait would be 'used up' in the process of using the technique, but that was not permanent. The Soul Power would be emptied like a battery and could be charged again. As the Soul Power was drained, the Soultrait's power would weaken until the Soul Power was recharged. That was also why the Tekur's Soultrait seemed weaker after they utilized their Common Class technique. Their Soul Power was used up, thus their Soultrait's ordinary attack reverted to its original weaker prowess.

Given that the Soul Techniques churned through Soul Power, most Tekur didn't use their Common Class Soul Techniques often. They merely utilized them when they desired to overwhelm their enemy and finish him/her instantaneously.

"As long as I find something like an Elemental Soul Technique I can alter it to fit Glacicle. Hopefully, I can then use the same Soul Techniques that enable the Tekur to be so powerful. Well...that also means I would have to possess as much Soul Power as these mass-breeding insects."

Michael's words were certainly true, but one of the major reasons the Tekur were so overpowered and feared was their innate ability to recharge their used-up Soul Power rapidly. When they were still a fairly young race, they didn't know about this innate ability. They struggled to fight against powerful enemies and only got to know about Soul Techniques after being pushed closer to extinction than most races had ever been. The Tekur learned to use Soul Techniques, they found out about their Innate ability and began to rely on the Soul Techniques to overpower their enemies.

It took a long time before they collected other techniques and began to alter Soul Techniques, but once they commenced manufacturing their own techniques it was only a matter of decades before they possessed powerful Body, Mind, and Soul refinement techniques that were perfectly adjusted to their Soultrait. They learned how to nourish their Souls in the best possible way to execute the strongest force with their Soul Techniques whereas their body and mind refinement techniques reached new heights, allowing them to grow stronger than other races.

The biggest advantage of the Tekur race was quite obvious. They possessed the number to create full use of Soul Techniques. Even their Soldiers could use Soul Techniques that allowed their Soultraits to generate five times more power than usual.

Most Tekur participating in the Flag War were already Tier-3 Lords. Their body and mind refinement was extremely high as well, forcing Michael to use up to six layers of Enhancement to keep up with them. His refinement degree of the mind and body were already at the Peak of the peak...of the 2nd Tier. That posed a slight problem since using six layers of Enhancement at all times in combat taxed his body. The energy consumption was also quite high but Michael had various means to handle that.

His biggest problem was the toll exerted on his body and mind as he utilized Enhancement and several other Soultraits to a much higher degree than usual to keep up with the Soldiers of the Tekur race.

A huge hurdle in finishing them off sooner had been the Soldiers' Soul Techniques. They slowed down almost all Alliance Members and various other races that struggled to keep up with their movement speed. Soul Techniques were actually quite rare. They had been unique and limited for the Tekur as well – not anymore though.

Michael learned a lot about Soul Techniques. He understood that a tremendous amount of Soul Power was required and that not everyone could use every Soul Technique. That was also why he was certain that he could replicate most of them now that he had seen the Tekur using their Common Class Soul Techniques against him in battle. Roc Eyes showed him everything.

Unfortunately, he didn't have a Summon Soultrait to use the Summoning Soul Technique, nor an Armament Soultrait like the Feathered Helmet. Michael couldn't use the Supporter's Soul Technique either because he didn't possess Opars' Energy Imprint. Even then Michael would have to alter the technique to drain stamina instead of weakening mental fortitude.

Then there was the healing Soultrait, but Archangel's Grace was not his Soultrait. He only had a small shard of Archangel's Grace within his War Rune thanks to being Maria's Primal Amplifier. Michael could merely use bits of Archangel's Grace. It was powerful but it was not even like he could use the Soultraits' full power, let alone Soul Technique which required a terrific amount of Soul Power.

None of the Soul Techniques he'd acquired fit him.

But that was something Michael could change.

He could go out and hunt more Tekur, procure more Soul Techniques, and create his own Soul Techniques using the knowledge and information he deprived from the Tekur he'd killed.

Michael was certain that he could create a Soul Technique for each of his Soultraits, increasing his strength manyfold in the process.

All he required was a decent number of Soul Techniques, more time to study them, more guinea pigs to watch using Soul Techniques with Roc Eyes, and more Soul Power to use the Soul Techniques' full potential.

A new goal formed in his mind.

'The Hunt for techniques and SoulStar Fragments shall begin!'

Chapter 477 Stay Away

Michael used the SoulStar Fragments in his possession to upgrade Spirit Gaze. He would need several thousand more SoulStar Fragments to finish Spirit Gaze's upgrade to 6-Star, but Michael was slowly getting closer to his goal and making progress. That was good.

Michael shifted his attention back to the research he made before. He was still not 100% certain why so many SoulStar Fragments dropped from the Healer and Supporter but he had a rough idea. The Tekurs' memories showed quite clearly that both the Healer and Supporter had low-ranked Soultraits and that they required more subjects than the others. They had been in need of 1.5 million more subjects than the other Soldiers since their Soultraits required more Links of Loyalty to accumulate Soul Power!

They possessed as much Soul Power as everyone else but their Links of Loyalty numbered far more – roughly 50%. This percentage was about the same as the disparity in SoulStar Fragments Michael obtained from the Supporter and Healer-duo versus the other Tekur. The former dropped about 700 each and the latter 450 on average.

It was not a perfectly accurate calculation but something Michael could take into consideration to make up a theory.

'So the star rating of a Soultrait, the number of their Links of Loyalty, and the total Soul Power they've accumulated play important roles in calculating how many SoulStar Fragments I can extract with Extraction? Those could be three major factors out of...who knows how many...' Michael tried to come up with some numbers and he felt like he was going somewhere.

Lords usually dropped more SoulStar Fragments than Awakened. Meanwhile Awakened with Soultraits of a high star rating usually dropped more than Awakened with lousy Soultraits. And last but not least, the disparity in drops from using Extraction on the Tekur was also an additional factor to consider.

Each of those situations could be researched more in-depth, but Michael did not think that it was necessary. He was quite certain that his theory was correct.

With all corpses stored securely inside his War Rune's storage, Michael continued his journey. He traveled through the empty plains for a good hour until he found a group of humans far to his left.

Michael weaved a little bit of energy into his body with Leviathan Diffusion and charged ahead. Roc Eyes was activated, allowing him to accurately assess the strength and condition of the human group. None of them was injured and they seemed strong enough to deal with a few Tekur on their own. As long as they weren't overwhelmed by the Tekur's Soul Techniques that is.

Even 1-Star Soultraits acquired the power of 5-Star Soultraits in the hands of the Tekur – without the use of Soul Techniques. The mass of millions of Links of Loyalty was enough to achieve that as long as the Awakened were still Lesser Lifeforms.

Once they used their Soul Techniques, the 1-Star Soultrait with the power of a 5-Star Soultrait used up their accumulated Soul Power to put the Soultrait on an equal footing with an Apex Tier-6 Soultrait used by a Peak Tier-3 Lord.

Michael knew a bunch of Awakened with 6-Star Soultraits but none of them could unleash the same power as the Tekur. Even Kaleb had to use the Legendary Ice Staff and every bit of Frozen Nova's proficiency to battle the Tekur head-on. That was mostly because he was not yet a Tier-3 Lord, but his lack of control of Frozen Nova played a major role as well. After all, low-ranked Soultraits were much easier to control than Soultraits with a higher star rating.

Therefore, the advantage of the Tekur race was even greater.

Michael shook his head to dispel the thoughts that tormented his mind. He reprimanded himself for thinking too much about the Tekur's power. If anything, Michael should be thinking about ways to counter them with more ease than relying on Insert, Extraction, Enhancement, and Roc Eyes.

"Hello, Michael. I didn't expect to see you so soon," A somewhat familiar voice that he couldn't quite recall the owner of, rang out from within the group of humans.

Michael had already seen everyone in the group and recognized Fernando Jochez's voice a second later. He looked at the somewhat familiar young man and nodded his head.

"Hello Fernando," Michael greeted, resulting in a smile in return from Fernando.

'What is with that guy? Didn't he think of me as a filthy peasant before?' He wondered, noticing the drastic difference in Fernando's attitude.

"We have yet to encounter any Tekur. It looks like they're either gathering somewhere, or everyone was spread out further than usual. Given the longer period of this year's Flag War, I presume that the dimension's space must have expanded quite a bit. It will be harder to gather the Alliance members, and to find a Dimensional Pillar," Fernando stated in a gentle tone.

Michael raised an eyebrow but didn't comment on Fernando's attitude. The attitude felt wrong, somewhat forced. But that didn't matter correct now. Michael decided to forward the information he had.

"200 Alliance Members spawned together in front of a Dimensional Pillar, alongside a dozen Tekur. We killed them but lost roughly 15 members on our side. The Dimensional Pillar was destroyed as well. There are only a total of four Pillars departed by now."

"You guys destroyed a pillar already?" Another Descendant asked. He was a Mid Tier-3 Awakened – a perfect example to explain the high mortality rate in the Interdimensional Flag War.

Not only was the Descendant not a Lord anymore, but he was not even at the Peak of the 3rd Tier. In fact, more than 70% of the Alliance Members participating in the Flag War were not at the Peak of Tier-3. They were still stronger than the vast majority of prodigies in the Tritan Alliance but that didn't mean they held an advantage against the Tekur, 90% of whose participants were at the Peak of the 3rd Tier.

'Our strongest prodigies can barely handle a single Soldier of the Tekur race if they're at the Peak of Tier-3 and have a decent mastery of their Inheritance Technique. That's everything but fun.' Michael thought, looking at the Descendant before he answered.

"Yup. Are you guys heading somewhere special? If not, how about teaming up with the other Alliance Members? They're in that direction," He pointed behind himself, his attention pulled to Fernando.

Fernando was staring at Michael for quite a while now. The color change in Michael's eyes surprised Fernando quite a bit, but it was even more surprising that Michael's presence was completely different compared to before. He felt like...a threat, a force to reckon with.

It was not that Fernando believed Michael would pounce on him and rip him apart at any moment. No. It was merely the fact that Fernando could instinctively tell that he had no chance to win against Michael. A single glance in Michael's eyes was all he needed to understand that clearly.

Michael was on his guard. It was evident that he was ready to jump into battle at any point in their conversation. He wouldn't allow a Tekur to take them by surprise.

At that moment, Fernando felt relieved that Michael was on their side. Even if he was a filthy peasant, Michael was everything but weak.

"We will follow your advice," Fernando said, "If you want to find more groups you should go departed from here. We encountered Killian earlier...but that guy is just crazy. I really don't like to say this out loud since Killian is from the Zeus family, but it might be better if you don't get too close to him. His Soultrait is weird, and his personality is...well let's just leave it at that."

"You don't have to worry about him either. His combat prowess is terrifying. Killian has at least two Legendary Artifacts and his mastery of the Zeus family's Inheritance Technique reached the Enlightenment realm. He is a decade ahead of everyone else to reach that realm in the Zeus family!"

Michael never planned to fight Killian in the first place. He didn't really desire to get too close to that idiot either. His impression of Killian was not really great, after all.

"Alright. I'll leave then. Killian can do whatever he wants. If he can kill some Tekur everyone would benefit from that. That's good, isn't it?" Michael said, weaving energy into his body before kicking the ground. He departed Fernando and his group behind with fast steps.

"Is it just me, or is this guy oddly strong despite being merely at the Peak of the 2nd Tier? The energy within him is even purer than my brother's and he might as well have more energy than me..." The Mid Tier-3 Descendant from earlier murmured to himself, but everyone around him could hear the young man clearly.

"Well, he has more Soultraits than most people can dream of. I don't understand how he did that but some say that he procured two Soultraits from a Lord Rift. He is a quintuple Awakened with five Soultraits or more in total. Of course, he has more origin energy than others," A female Descendant with short brown hair and thick glasses revealed as she pushed the glasses back up her nose.

Michael was one of the few people she'd researched with all her might, eventually using her Soultrait and even Inheritance Technique to analyze Michael's combat prowess and every single probability related to his Soultraits powers, star rating, and how they might influence Michael's physique, mind, and soul.

"Rebecca. You're usually nuts and one of the few high nobles I loathe, but I kinda began liking you now," Fernando Jochez joked, only to hear the young woman retch and act like she was going to die from vomiting.

"Are you trying to kill me with your lame attempts at flirting, you disgusting pig? Stay away from me!"

Chapter 478 Power of Zeus

A group of three Tekur entered Michael's sight. But the group was not anything like the other Tekurs he had seen before.

Their silver carapaces were charred and cracked in various spots, and two of them were missing an arm. One Tekur lost his mandibles and the wings sprouting from his back were broken and twisted.

It was obvious that the Tekur had been fighting someone, but Michael couldn't see anyone around that could be an enemy to them.

'They don't look like they won. Maybe they fled?' Michael predicted, his eyes narrowing. Analyzing their condition, he wondered if they'd been fighting Killian. The wounds would fit the destructive power of Killian's Soultrait.

'Whatever.'

Michael used 8-layered Enhancement on himself and executed Leviathan Diffusion to weave a considerable amount of energy through his body. He turned into a flash as he dashed toward the group of injured Tekur. Michael crossed the distance to them in no time and unleashed Spirit Disturbance once the Tekur took note of him. Spirit Disturbance was a spiritual attack that could be used over a long distance as long as the targets looked into his eyes. The only downside was that the lethality of the spiritual attack deteriorated with an increase in distance.

Michael utilized Spirit Disturbance at full power, momentarily stunning the three injured Tekur. The energy circulating within and around the Tekur stirred. It was weak and fragile, unable to block Michael. He appeared in front of the Tekur, whom he deemed the weakest given his weak aura and the minuscule amount of energy remaining inside him. The next moment, Aethyr manifested in his hands. It transformed into a longsword, coated in several layers of Enhancement and Reinforced Sword Qi as he slashed out. The Aethyr Sword cut through the air and cut horizontally through the Tekur's head, cleanly severing it.

The upper part of the Tekur's head flung through the air, but Michael didn't even take note of that. He was already moving ahead, summoning dozens of Glacicle Swords around the next target. Each Glacicle Sword was shrouded in silver Sword Qi as they burst toward the one-armed Tekur from all sides. The Tekur was just about to use the last remnants of energy within his body to do something when Michael used Spirit Disturbance from a close distance. The Tekur lost control of the origin energy within him for a moment, which was enough for the Glacicle Swords to pierce through the cracked spots in the Tekur's carapace with eerie precision.

Once the Glacicles pierced through the Tekur's carapace, Michael used Insert on all Glacicle Swords before shattering them. They transformed into freezing mist that was inserted deep into the Tekur's body. The Tekur froze and turned into a statue before a Qi Sword manifested in front of the Tekur's heart – and pierced it.

The last Tekur was a little bit more annoying. It had some more energy left, which Michael countered by using Spirit Disturbance six to seven times in a row. The mental state of the Tekur was already extremely bad after fleeing from a fight it would have certainly lost. His confidence was shaken as well. Therefore, each Spirit Disturbance application hit harder and harder until the seventh spiritual attack knocked out the weak and injured Tekur. Michael pierced the Tekur's heart with the Aethyr blade and looked around.

A heavy sigh escaped his lips.

"When you guys lack the needed energy to use your Soul Techniques, you're actually not that annoying anymore. If anything, this is a nice snack for the time in between."

The battle against the three Tekur was over long before Michael could insert tendrils of Extraction inside them. He didn't drain their energy nor their lifeforce, leaving him with a mild headache and little to no energy reserves. Using his Soultraits in such an extravagant manner granted him great power, but it left him with little to no origin energy to use after the battle.

He accessed the Legendary Ring Artifact to use bits of the Power of Energy Imprint stored within to refill his energy storage a little bit. It was just enough to release dozens of Extraction tendrils that tapped into the streams of energy all around him. The tendrils' range was over 50 meters at this point. The only downside was that Michael had to focus on each of the tendrils a little bit. Splitting his focus to control each tendril was quite bothersome. It added onto the already high toll being exerted on his mind, which was not exactly what Michael wanted. Fortunately, he didn't have to control the Extraction tendrils too long. The energy within the isolated dimension was as dense and pure as the energy within the Untamed Jungle. It was just enough to replenish his used up energy in 10 minutes using Extraction and Leviathan Diffusion to annex the absorbed energy.

Once his energy storage was filled to the brim, Michael used the last remnants of excessive energy to start extracting the three Tekur. He extracted 1400 SoulStar Fragments – roughly 465 Fragments from each Tekur –, and a Soultrait.

In addition to that, Michael extracted a portion of the Tekur's innate spatial storage, some of their Artifacts and their Memory Orbs as well.

Michael was curious about the enemy the Tekur fought before encountering him. Thus, he consumed the three Memory Orbs in quick succession. Memories flooded him and he began to witness everything shown to him as if he was the one who experienced it all.

Like usual, Michael learned a lot about the Tekur's caste system, their laws and living standards. He got to know how the Tekur were trained and what martial arts techniques the ordinary Soldiers were taught.

By now, Michael could replicate the Tekur Soldier's basic martial arts as if he'd been practicing it for decades. Given that he experienced training the martial arts techniques in the memories of ten Tekur, a decade of experience was nothing. Interestingly enough, Michael didn't learn much about the three Tekur's Soul Techniques. All he got to know – or feel, to be precise – was the Tekur using their Soul Techniques against Killian Zeus.

The three Tekur had been a group of seven when they encountered Killian Zeus. They were confident to obliterate Killian Zeus in no time, but the reality was different. Killian used his highly destructive Soultrait to coat his entire body in thunder. He then summoned a thundercloud and created a thunderstorm. The thunderstorm gathered electricity currents by absorbing the energy in the surroundings. Tremendous power condensed within the thunderclouds until humongous lightning crackled in the sky and poured down from heaven. The lightning bolts intertwined and formed one ginormous lightning bolt that struck all seven Tekur simultaneously.

The Tekur survived the first attack since two of them used their Soul Techniques with their Soultraits to erupt an earthen dome that was further reinforced. However, the two Tekur who'd blocked the attack were rapidly drained of energy and Soul Power. Their Soul Technique failed them even before the ginormous lightning strike dispersed. They were struck by the last remnants that stunned them. Stunned and frozen due to the surprise attack for a second, the two Tekur could barely watch Killian disappear from the distance. Killian appeared in front of them in the subsequent second. Their heads fell to the ground with loud thuds and their bodies followed soon after.

Killian released several thunder bolts from all over his own body. It felt like the lightning armor covering his body was alive. It struck the Tekur, who wanted to attack him from behind and charred his arm. Thereafter, Killian continued to slaughter the Tekur as if they were enemies that weren't worth his attention.

At last, three Tekur retrieved a white talisman from their War Runes. They tore the white talisman and disappeared from the battlefield.

The memories ended as they encountered Michael. The terror the Tekur felt the moment Michael charged at them was evident. It lingered in Michael's heart even after he was pulled out of the Tekur's memories.

He finished digesting everything and sighed heavily.

"I really look like a humanoid monster once I've activated all those Soultraits. Even I wouldn't want to face myself like that," Michael said half-jokingly and half-serious, but his own attention was quickly drawn to the memories showing Killian Zeus' combat prowess.

"He has only one Soultrait, but it enhances his speed drastically. He can summon a semi-sentient armor that attacks living beings inside a certain range, and he can deliver long-range attacks," He murmured, "And then there is still this thundercloud. It's a K.O attack. His Soultrait and the wide variety of techniques he uses allows him to generate more than enough power to obliterate the advantage of the Tekur race...something I need six to seven Soultraits for..."

Kaleb once told him that most Inheritance Techniques had various Unique Martial Arts that could only be used once their mastery of the Inheritance Technique reaches a higher mastery degree. Killian was definitely one of the few people who reached a high enough mastery to learn several Unique Martial Arts – Arts that unleashed the potential of the Zeus family's Soultraits.

"Now that I'm strong enough to defeat my peers and deal with Tekur...you really had to show me Killian's combat prowess...was that really necessary?" Michael grumbled, cursing the Memory Orbs for a moment.

Killian was two years older than Michael, and he would have advanced to a Higher Lifeform a year ago had he not been obsessed with the Interdimensional Flag War so much. He desired to find powerful enemies to kill and according to rumors, he obsessed over Maria Seraph as well. Apparently, she was part of the reason why Killian Zeus decided to participate in the Flag War.

Killian's body, mind, and soul refinement degree had already reached the Peak of Tier-3 a year ago, just like his own War Rune. Therefore, Killian spent the entire year training his Unique Martial Arts and deepening his understanding of the Zeus family's Inheritance technique. It was part of the reason why he'd grown this powerful.

Once he became a Higher Lifeform he would grow even stronger and he would progress at an even faster speed than before.

Michael did not really care about that.

However, he realized one particular thing now that he thought about it a little bit.

"If he is obsessed about Maria, and I have her Mark of Fate...does that mean..."

Michael began to shudder, wild thoughts flashing through his own mind.

'Fuck me...Why is my life so complicated?'

Chapter 479 Break

Michael tried to forget about the possibility that Killian Zeus would want to tear him into shreds and focused on the tasks ahead.

He used the SoulStar Fragments in his possession to upgrade Spirit Gaze a little bit more, resulting in the intensity of the silver hue in his eyes to increase. The outlines of the 6th Star were long since drawn, meaning that Spirit Gaze required merely 6000 or 7000 more SoulStar Fragments until the upgrade was completed.

Michael looked forward to that, not only because he could clearly sense that the power of Roc Eyes and Spirit Gaze was increasing exponentially as both Soultrait neared 6-Star, but more because of the fact that they were likely to fuse into a single Soultrait. Michael wanted to know whether Roc Eyes and Spirit Gaze would turn into an Apex 6-Star Soultrait, if the Soul Power the two Soultraits had accumulated would fuse, and how the fusion would proceed exactly.

It was something he'd never heard before, and attracted his curiosity therefore.

The Tekur's memories showing some Soul Techniques were also enough to attract his curiosity. Unfortunately, none of them were compatible with him. But that was fine. Michael was getting to know more about Soul Techniques. He felt like he was making significant progress the more he watched and

experienced the Tekur using their Soul Techniques. The same could be said about their body and mind refinement techniques.

Michael actually procured a body refinement tome from the War Rune's storage of one Tekur. Michael could decipher it despite never having studied the mother tongue of the Tekur race. That was mostly owed to the vast amount of experience he gained from witnessing the memories of the Tekur race as if he was present when the incidents occurred. He learned the Tekur race's language to a certain extent without studying anything.

Michael's only issue about the Tekur race's body refinement technique was that he couldn't be certain if the technique was suitable to him. Did he have to alter the technique to fit it to the human anatomy, or could he use the Tekur race's body refinement technique just like that? The former was likely to be a necessity since most races had a vastly different anatomy.

Other than the body refinement tome, Michael procured a large quantity of Inferior Energy Stones as well as Artifacts. The loot was actually quite intriguing because Michael never expected ordinary Soldiers to own so many Inferior Energy Stones.

'Maybe they have an Energy Stone mine? If Inferior Energy Stones are not rare for them it would make sense why all of those Soldiers are at the Peak of Tier-3 despite being so young.'

Michael was intrigued by so many things. However, he decided to spend some more time testing the Soul Techniques and stored the loot inside his storage space right away. Instead of doing nothing while roaming around the dimension, Michael chose to test out more about the Soul Techniques and experiment a little bit with his already existing techniques and Soultraits. He wanted to alter some of his techniques with small components out of the Soul Techniques he extracted from the Tekur to test how difficult it was to create his own Soul Technique and how deep his understanding of Soul Techniques was at this point.

Despite extracting Lifeforce from his enemies whenever possible Michael noticed quickly that his mind was not in its best state. He'd used his Soultraits too recklessly, too often, and too many simultaneously to deal with the Tekur.

Roc Eyes, Spirit Gaze, and Enhancement had to be activated at all times against the Tekur to be on par with their physical capabilities – to some extent. 6-layers of Enhancement applied to his body were needed to compete with the Tekur, and origin energy weaved into his physique with great precision was required to decrease the toll Enhancement put upon his body.

Meanwhile, Roc Eyes and Spirit Gaze had to be kept at their peak as well to analyze his opponents' movements by seeing everything, including their energy circulation. Therefore, his eyes, mind, and body were already highly stimulated by those few Soultraits, yet Michael had to use more Soultraits and increase the intensity of his Soultraits accordingly to deal with multiple powerful enemies at once.

Aethyr and the fact that it could shapeshift at any moment was not exactly helpful in decreasing the toll exerted on his mind.

Of course, Aethyr was powerful. It was part of the reason he could defeat the Tekur with considerable 'ease'. Nonetheless, Michael needed a little break after three fights and digesting nearly a dozen Memory Orbs. Eagle Eyes upgraded to Roc Eyes not too long as well, altering his body permanently.

Hence, it was a relief when several hours passed in the blink of an eye without him encountering a single enemy or ally. Not a single group of Tekur or the Alliance arrived his view. That was great but also confusing. Was the isolated dimension really that big, or were people avoiding the area he walked through?

Michael had no idea, however, he was grateful. He received half a day's break to think about all kinds of things and experiment with Soul Techniques and his own techniques. Michael tried to alter some techniques he had learned and test them to see if he could create his own technique. It was something he had never done before.

He never expected to enjoy it this much.

Unfortunately, half a day was not enough to create his own technique. It would have been weird if Michael ended up creating his own Soul Technique in such a short duration. He was not a heavenly prodigy, after all.

Just as Michael was about to decide whether he wanted to end his break and start searching for some Tekur to hunt, a few Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs arrived his sight.

They were still a few kilometers away from his current position but crossing that distance was hardly an issue.

Michael ran in their direction, temporarily teaming up with their merged groups.

"I presume that you're Michael Fang. You don't look as strong as the rumors say;" The Warlock Centaur leading the merged group spoke to Michael first. His hoarse voice conveying his judgment reached Michael with no delay.

The leading Warlock Centaur smashed his heavy broadsword to the ground right next to Michael, who didn't move an inch. The only thing Michael did was to gaze back at the Warlock Centaur, his eyes glowing vibrantly as the tension around them increased.

"No, forget that. Your eyes look intense and you look like you've fought some Tekur. Did you kill some of them?" The Warlock Centaur added, the left corner of his mouth curling upward.

Michael raised an eyebrow and used Enhancement on Roc Eyes and Spirit Gaze three times before he bombarded the Warlock Centaur with a single use of Spirit Disturbance.

"I fought some Tekur and killed them. That's indeed correct," Michael replied as Spirit Disturbance impacted hard upon his target.

The leading Warlock Centaur expected Michael to do something, but he wasn't prepared to face a spiritual attack, even less an attack with such lethal force.

The Warlock Centaur's grip around his heavy broadsword loosened and he nearly let go of it as a wave of destruction swept through his mind. He groaned in pain and blood began to trickle from his nose, yet the Warlock Centaur didn't move. His legs didn't cave in and neither did he retreat. All he did was stare at Michael, the corners of his lips tilting further to transform into a bright smile.

"What a cocky bastard. I like you!" The Warlock Centaur shattered into a hearty chuckle, "How about joining our team for a while? We could make use of someone like you!"

"Of course. I'll make sure you survive," Michael responded, flashing a crafty smile.

"That's what I wanted to say," The Warlock Centaur said, patting Michael's shoulder with great force.

The other Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs looked at their exchange with mild interest. It was intriguing that their leader accepted Michael so easily but everyone had listened about Michael already. It was well-known what Michael had done for their people in the Colosseum, and how he nearly attacked his own people for their sake, as well as the great service he provided to the entire Tritan Alliance.

The Chieftain and War Priestess had already informed them not to disregard Michael in the Flag War and to support him as long as he didn't do anything dishonorable and disrespectful.

"I just want to make one thing clear," Michael said, his gaze flitting across the faces of Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs, "I don't care if you guys want to fight a head-on battle against the Tekur alone. I will join the battle, either way. If you don't like someone interfering in your Sacred individual battles, I have no problems with leaving either."

Michael knew that the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs were too honorable for their own good. Against the Tekur, that was extremely problematic. The Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs wouldn't attack the Tekur if their brethren were already in a head-on battle against them.

That was also why 15 Alliance members died in the first battle against the Tekur. Michael did not want a repeat of that.

"We will see whether you're fast enough to join our battles, or if we finish them long before you can lift your finger to act," The leading Warlock Centaur boasted with great confidence in his voice.

Michael accepted that answer and indicated to their left. Far away from their current position, a group of eight Tekur were traveling through the plains.

"We will see about that. Eight Tekur on your west. Prepare for battle!"

Chapter 480 Teamwork

Michael didn't rush to the Tekur like a mindless puppet. He observed the Tekur using Roc Eyes and kept on weaving through the charging masses of the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs.

There were less than 20 members in their team but a total of seven Tekur. Under normal circumstances, it would be suicidal to charge at so many Tekur with a group as small as theirs, but none of the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs seemed to care.

Armament Soultraits, Constitution Soultraits, Reinforcement Soultraits, and Aura Soultraits were utilized simultaneously, giving the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs an advantage in close combat. They used the Heritage Techniques they'd been taught by their Tribes to unleash their hidden potential and attain the highest possible combat prowess, even if it was only for a short time.

The Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs were fast. Their rapid movements were even faster than Michael could move with six-fold Enhancement applied to his body.

While Michael was a little surprised about the burst of power oozing out of each of the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs, the Tekur seemed unimpressed. Their Artifacts manifested and their Soultraits erupted.

One of the Tekur summoned a large golden bell. The bell hovered in the air and chimed loudly. Michael's ears rang and he felt a sudden wave of disorientation sweep through him. The Tekur didn't have to use his Soul Technique to affect all enemies simultaneously. The thunderous chiming did not affect the other Tekur, at all. On the contrary, their coordination and teamwork seemed to reach new heights as they began to move simultaneously.

The second Tekur unleashed his Soultrait as well. However, instead of holding back, she used her Soul Technique instantaneously. Michael could tell at a glance that something big was about to happen. Crimson energy burst from the Tekur's body in the form of lengthy threads. The threads connected to the other Tekur and engulfed their bodies, creating a dark and gloomy atmosphere around them. The crimson energy was dark, almost black. It was ominous and increased the tension all over the battlefield instantaneously. It also enhanced the strength, pressure, and energy circulation of the Tekur.

It was an Infernal Aura that inflicted fear in the enemies while also strengthening all designated allies.

The Golden Bell and Infernal Aura were already enough to stir some trouble. The Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs were drastically restrained. Disorientation was already enough hassle, yet the Infernal Aura cranked it up further - it was extraordinary. It intimidated the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs and slowed down their energy circulation, therefore weakening the efficiency of their Heritage Techniques.

Other than the two Tekur, there were five more Tekur with strong Soultraits and even stronger Soul Techniques.

One of the Tekur manifested a Shadow replica of himself, another Tekur conjured close to a hundred light spheres around his body, and the third Tekur manifested a staff that emanated a soothing warmth. Once power was channeled into the staff, healing currents would spread through the surroundings, invigorating all those who were in need of vigor, and origin energy.

The fourth Tekur seemed to disappear from one moment to the next. He used his Soultrait and immediately utilized his Soul Technique to turn invisible to his enemies. Meanwhile, the fifth Tekur circulated origin power through his body in a unique way, enhancing his physical might even further. His muscles bulged and he created a small crater beneath his feet the moment he kicked the ground.

The physically strengthened Tekur was the forerunner. He emerged in front of the leading Warlock Centaur and engaged in a fierce battle. Thunderous sounds reverberated through the surroundings as their weapons collided and the leading Warlock Centaur was pushed back rapidly. His high-ranked armor set artifact was torn into shreds and his thick skin was pierced through with ease.

It was already a wonder that the Warlock Centaur survived more than five seconds against the tremendous power of the physically strengthened Tekur.

Michael observed their first encounter from a distance but didn't rush forward at once. He weaved energy into his brain and shut his eyes using energy to negate the effect of the Golden Bell upon himself. Knowing how exactly the Tekur using the Infernal Aura spread fear and gloominess through the surroundings was also helpful in minimizing the intimidation effect of the Internal Aura to a bearable degree.

This only left the Shadow Doppelganger, the Light Spheres, a Staff, an Invisible enemy, and the Tekur with tremendous physical strength to counter.

Michael used Insert and Enhancement together. He applied two layers of Enhancement on every Berserker and Warlock Centaur in his group. A faint hue of Extraction coated his body to pull the surrounding power in his direction and devour it to replenish his used-up energy as quickly as possible. He used Roc Eyes with several layers of Enhancement to pinpoint the location of the invisible Tekur.

Once enhanced, Roc Eyes rendered the Invisibility Soultrait of the Tekur useless. That was great, but it was also something Michael had to play out well.

He manifested Aethyr in the Swordform and used Reinforced Sword Qi with a handful of layers of Enhancement to strengthen it. Michael then watched the remaining Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs clash with their enemies.

The first encounter was disastrous.

The Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs were not physically weaker than the others – other than the Tekur with the Soultrait that reinforced his physique – but they weren't stronger either. The effect of the Golden Bell and the Infernal Aura were enough to strengthen the Tekur, whereas the Mysterious Staff invigorated them.

Michael was about to jump into the fight when his eyes flicked to the not-so-invisible Tekur. The Tekur stealthily sneaked up behind the leading but oblivious Warlock Centaur, who was still engaged in a desperate battle with the physically-enhanced Tekur and was just about to drill his claws through the Centaur's neck when warm blood was sprayed on the Warlock Centaur's back. The leading Warlock Centaur's entire back was drenched in blood in seconds. Startled, the Warlock Centaur turned around just to see a Tekur struggling against a silvery longsword that impaled its chest.

Michael was standing near the Warlock Centaur's rear, looking down at the Tekur and the Warlock Centaur alongside.

"Sorry for jumping on you. I had to deal with this little pest," Michael said lightly, his golden eyes glimmering as he used Spirit Disturbance on the Tekur. He transformed Aethyr into a dagger while his left hand shot forward to catch the Tekur mid-air. The Aethyr Dagger pierced through the Tekur's neck in the next moment, killing the enemy before the Mysterious Staff could invigorate the Invisible Tekur to close his wound and heal him.

The next moment, Aethyr transformed into a guard that was thrown past the Warlock Centaur's head to protect him from the physically enhanced Tekur's attack. The Aethyr shield was pierced through in one go. Its shape dispersed and Michael had to recall it into his War Rune before summoning it once again. Aethyr transformed into a spear, which Michael coated in layers of Enhancement and Sword Qi to aid the Warlock Centaur in the battle against the physically enhanced Tekur.

It took him a while, but the Aethyr Spear scratched the Tekur. It was not enough to make him bleed profusely but it was certainly enough to insert several Extraction tendrils in one go. Michael used the Power of Energy Imprint stored within the Legendary Ring Artifact to refill his energy storage just enough to use Insert on the leading Warlock Centaur to reinforce his might by inserting several layers of Enhancement. He increased the Peak Tier-3 Warlock Centaur Lord's strength with six layers of Enhancement, allowing him to stand on equal footing with the Tekur.

Michael conjured close to a hundred Glacicles the size of tiny needles to bombard the Tekur and use Insert with Extraction tendrils on him more often before he decided that it was time to leave. He rushed to the two Tekur in the back with a dozen compressed Glacicle Swords appearing around him. The Glacicle Swords shot forward, but the Tekur evaded them with ease. Their movements were graceful as they moved around the Glacicle Swords.

What they didn't expect, however, was the Glacicle Swords to burst apart and turn into freezing mist. The freezing mist transformed into hundreds of compressed Glacicles that shot toward the two Tekur from all directions.

The Glacicles were extremely fast, but interestingly enough only one of them hit the Tekur. The Tekur reacted swift enough to evade the Glacicles and move around majestically. Even Michael was a little stupefied watching the Tekur evading each compressed Glacicle. It was not as if the Glacicles could actually do any significant harm to them. The only harm was caused by the freezing effect, the freezing mist, and the traces of Extraction inserted into Glacicle.

'Can they sense the Extraction traces, or were they taught to evade all attacks?' Michael wondered. He used Spirit Disturbance on the Tekur with the Golden Bell and focused on that one for a while. Hundreds of Glacicles shot toward him from all directions, leaving no space for the Tekur to move.

Finally, some more Glacicles ended up hitting the Tekur, which Michael used to insert both freezing mist and traces of Extraction into the Tekur's body. Unfortunately, Michael was not allowed to move freely all this while. He couldn't strike all the time without receiving some sort of retribution in exchange. Dozens of Light Spheres came flying at him with an incredible velocity.

The real battle was just about to start.

Fortunately, the leading Warlock Centaur gained the edge over the physically enhanced Tekur now that six layers of Enhancement reinforced him.

The downside, however, was that every Tekur unleashed the full power of their Soultraits along with their Soul Techniques.