

Supreme Lord 521

Chapter 521 Helping Hand

Giuliana Seraph left Michael with a few contracts and contacts if he ever felt like creating customized Soul Techniques for the Seraph family. The contracts were not only about Soul Techniques but also Soultraits and other stuff, but Michael didn't read through them properly. He skimmed through the texts and wished the mother-daughter pair a nice time together.

They left the office shortly after.

Alice stared at the door that closed behind the two women as they disappeared, her expression far from pleasant. Her mood had hit rock bottom and she felt like punching the wall. Kaleb was also frustrated.

Why was Maria transferring to the Sapphirelake Military Academy? Was that really necessary?

"Now that this problem has been solved, how about we move on?" Michael asked, picking up the tome with the Soul Energy Fusion technique.

He didn't think too much about Maria transferring to the Sapphirelake Military Academy. It was quite advantageous for him, and he didn't hate Maria. She was a nice girl with a great personality. Why would he have anything against her transfer?

Kaleb stared at Michael and shook his head, "I hope you stay single forever."

Michael raised an eyebrow, not sure why his friend was acting like that.

"Let us continue..." Alice said, but it was pretty obvious that her mood wouldn't improve anytime soon.

Michael decided not to mind the siblings. He had lots of work to do, and he wished to complete the Soul Energy Fusion technique as soon as possible. And that was exactly what he did.

Michael worked for the next 24 hours whereas the Zenovia siblings experimented with the different versions of his Soul Energy Fusion technique, determining which one was the most efficient for Michael.

Once he was done with the Soul Energy Fusion technique, Michael and the Zenovia siblings decided to go back to eat. Alice's mood was a little bit better than before but she was still not her usual self.

After a late afternoon lunch, it was about time for Michael to meet up with Kraft Viton. At least, that was what Michael planned to do before he received several messages on Starnet Messenger.

[Tritan Alliance(Official Account): Michael Fang, in recognition of your exceptional courage, unwavering dedication, and selfless actions, we proudly award you with the title of a True Warrior. Your commitment and efforts to the well-being of others has not gone unnoticed. Your deeds stand as a shining beacon for the entire Tritan Alliance.

The title, True Warrior, does not only symbolize your heroism but it is also a mark of distinction that reflects the noble character you embody. May it serve as a reminder of the positive impact you've had on the people around you. Let your title inspire others to follow in your footsteps.

With utmost respect and gratitude,

Tritan Alliance]

Michael frowned once he finished reading through the first half of the message from the Tritan Alliance's official account, but he was not done yet.

[Tritan Alliance(Official Account): According to the martial laws and based on the extraordinary achievements you have accomplished during the Interdimensional Flag War, you will be rewarded with 351 Military Merits. These merit points can be exchanged for invaluable treasures, unique techniques, and a wide variety of resources.]

"Are 351 Military Merits a lot?" Michael asked, unable to recall much about merit points, or the price of items in the shops that accepted military merits.

"It is a considerable amount, yes. A single Military Merit is usually enough to buy a few Inferior Energy Stones. Of course, nobody would use their Military Merits to purchase Energy Stones. You can only procure Military Merits from the Interdimensional Flag War and by completing missions related to Dark

Heavens and the Supreme Human Alliance. Most members of the military try to accumulate more than 1000 Military Merits to purchase Legendary Artifacts, or Growth Type Artifacts that can be bound to your Souls to grow alongside you," Alice answered somewhat absentmindedly.

'Participating in the Flag War rewarded this many Military Merits? I didn't even show them the corpses of all the Tekur I hunted, yet they rewarded this many?' Michael wondered why they'd given him the merits without verifying with him the total number of Tekur he'd hunted and if there were other contributors to the Tekur hunts that he got the sole credit for.

It sensed a little bit unfair, but Michael let it be for the time being. He had other stuff to focus on first.

[Jacqueline Orlando(Barbaric Couple): Michael, I don't know what I'm supposed to do. The Elders are pressuring me to leave the academy, and Frederik is not saying anything. Frederik has never been this cold to me. I have no idea what I'm supposed to do... Can you talk to him please? I really don't know what is going on. Does he hate me? Is he doing fine? Please ask him, okay?]

'I liked her better when she was feisty and arrogant. This gentle and docile behavior doesn't suit her, at all,' Michael thought, but his attention switched quickly to Frederik Kolbenheim, who'd also sent him a message.

[Frederik Kolbenheim(Barbaric Couple): I'm sorry for throwing all of this at you, but I really don't know who I'm supposed to speak to. As you might know, I don't really have any friends, and Jacqueline...well, I cannot talk to her right now. The Elders of her family told me that they will make sure that my father will die if I contact her. They also said that if I break up with Jacqueline in the worst possible way without leaving any loose ends behind...they will make sure that my father will be healed... I don't want to break up with Jacqueline. I love her. But...I don't want to lose my father either. He's all I have departed of my family. I cannot lose him...]

"Ah...fuck this shit," Michael cursed under his breath. Kaleb was just about to ask what was going on when he saw the anger in Michael's glowing eyes.

"The Orlando Family will get scratched from my list of clients. They won't get a Soultrait, Soul Technique, or their Soultraits strengthened prior to their higher-ups are replaced. Fuck these bastards," Michael continued to curse before he dialed a number on the crystal watch.

["I did not think that you would miss me already. Didn't we just meet?"] Giuliana Seraph's voice rang out from the crystal watch. Alice froze in her tracks and turned around to look at Michael.

"I didn't expect to be forced to call you this early as well. Can I ask for a favor?" Michael questioned straightforwardly. He didn't hear an answer for a few seconds; seconds that sensed like an eternity so he added, "I can create a customized Soul Technique for Archangel's Grace in the next three days if you help me out."

Creating a Common Class Soul Technique for Archangel's Grace was helpful for Maria, but Michael could use it as well. He would have to create a customized technique for the Soultrait, either way. Doing it a little bit earlier than planned did not change a lot.

["What do you want?"] Giuliana Seraph asked, her teasing voice replaced with a serious, formal tone.

"Can you dispatch someone to heal the patriarch of the Kolbenheim family, please? His name is Igor Kolbenheim and he just lost his territory and is in a coma. His son...is facing some troubles and is not in a position to help him. I want to reduce at least one of his worries for him," Michael requested, knowing damn well that Frederik would feel bad if he learned that his friend requested a favor for his sake once again.

However, Michael wanted to help Frederik. It was not that he loved Frederik, or that they were best friends. Michael just hated people who threatened others with the death of their beloved and put them in a tight spot. The Elders of the Orlando family deserved to be beaten up.

["Of all the things I would have expected from you, this does not even make it to the list. Are you sure that you want to ask for such a favor?"] The matriarch asked, but Michael had already made his decision.

"I am. The Soul Technique for Archangel's Grace will be my priority once you promise to give me a helping hand," He responded.

["There is no reason for me to reject such an offer. I just hope that you know what you're doing."]

With that, the matriarch of the Seraph family terminated the call.

"What are you doing?" Alice asked, her frown even deeper than before.

"I'm helping my friend. What else am I supposed to do?" He responded.

"Your actions might make him feel weak and miserable," Kaleb intervened in the discussion.

Michael could only agree to that, but there was already a plan that formed in his mind.

"It will be fine. That guy might seem like an extremely rude, bad-tempered brat, but he is a stubborn bull."

He then opened Starnet Messenger and typed a short message in his chat with Frederik.

[Michael Fang: Don't worry about your father. Someone will come over to tend to his wounds. You might not want my help right now, but I do want to help you and Jacqueline. That being said, you should sign a Link of Loyalty with me. I will help you grow stronger. Of course, I won't help you without getting my investment and interest back. You will have to sign a Soul Pact so that you can't wriggle out of the task of being my subordinate until you've paid back everything you have – and will – obtain from me.]

Since his powers had already been exposed, Michael might as well start with the creation of his Army of overpowered, loyal Awakened. Tiara and the Forest Elves didn't want to obtain more Soultraits for the time being, but Frederik was in dire need of strength and confidence. While confidence was something, Frederik would have to rebuild on his own, strength was certainly something Michael could deliver, whether it was through Soul Techniques, strengthening of existing Soultraits, or by handing out new Soultraits.

It was time to get started with his project, Awakened Army!

Chapter 522 Enticing Offer

Michael stood in the middle of an antique room. Various antiquities of tremendous value were displayed openly for visitors to observe and analyze. The floor was made of marbled oak, a rare type of wood

imported from the Origin Expanse. The marbled oakwood was highly energy dense and had a bright sheen to it. The area beneath Michael's feet released faint hues, attracting his interest, but just for a moment.

He was more interested in Kraft Viton and the old Aztec robe he wore.

"I was already waiting for you. To be honest, I was not sure when you would call. Everyone expected you to spend a few months in the Origin Expanse to grow stronger until you would feel comfortable returning from the Origin Expanse. But it looks like you realized that there is no way you can run away from the issues revolving around your power. That's a good thing. The Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs will like it," Kraft Viton said, smiling at Micheal like a proud grandfather.

"Running away was never an option. I hoped to hide my power until I advanced to Tier-4. As a Higher Lifeform, I would be much stronger and be able to use my Soultraits at full potential. After all, I have yet to reach a high mastery for any of my Soultraits. Unfortunately, hiding my power didn't work out. I realized that after my eyes turned golden."

Maybe, it would have been possible to hide his Soultraits and Extraction's power a little bit longer if Spirit Eyes hadn't transformed his eyes into bright golden globes, but at the end of the day, it was only a matter of time before Extraction was discovered.

"It was a good decision to hide your power since you have the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs on your side. They pressured High Society enough to pull more High Nobles and Supreme Families onto your side. Many families are actively switching sides as we speak because they want to obtain your power and the wealth of resources from the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs," Kraft Viton explained, clearing his throat before he switched to the more important topic.

"But I do not want to beat around the bush. I want to help you out. In fact, I want us to become partners in crime and benefit from one another. You should know how the Bartholomew Corporation works and behaves after providing a vast pool of valuable blueprints as a major partner in the Agriculture Project. I wish to create more projects with your help, right from the creation of Soul Techniques, to the auction and distribution of Soultraits and the means you use to strengthen Soultraits. Of course, we will also sell and auction your Mythic Scrolls, and other goods.

I, and the president of the Bartholomew Corporation, hope that you become a partner of the entire Bartholomew Corporation, not just the Agriculture Project."

Michael did expect to receive some sort of offer, but becoming the partner of the entire Bartholomew Corporation had not been his key expectations. But it did make sense the more he thought about it. The assets at Michael's disposal were invaluable. Becoming a part of the Bartholomew Corporation meant that the value of the corporation would increase significantly. However, that didn't sound too bad.

The Bartholomew Corporation was not closely associated with the High Society or the Supreme Families. The president and Kraft Viton were members of High Society but Michael had already researched and knew for a fact that they were not active members.

'Partner of the Bartholomew Corporation...'

"Your offer is appealing but I need more information before I can make a decision about something as important as this matter. To be honest, I think that no one knows the true value of the assets, knowledge and power I possess right now. Except Alice, and Kaleb Zenovia, maybe," Michael responded, retrieving the newest version of the Soul Energy Fusion technique he'd created.

The Soul Energy Fusion technique was still not perfect but it was good enough to be shown around as a sample of his prowess.

"I would like to consider this a prototype of a technique I call 'Soul Energy Fusion'. The technique is needed to create Soul Energy from fusing Soul Power and Origin Energy without any complications. The process can be done without a technique but just like martial arts and other combat techniques, it is much better to learn the production and utility of Soul Energy from a technique. As long as you follow the instructions you won't get hurt, which is something that can happen very easily if you try to create Soul Energy without any experience, or techniques."

Michael handed the tome to Kraft Viton, who opened the first page to start reading at once.

There was no need to exchange any further comments about the efficiency of the Soul Energy Fusion technique. It was all written inside the pages of the tome.

Kraft Viton spent fifteen minutes reading through the tome twice before he returned it to Michael.

"You're calling this a prototype? It may not be perfect, but for your first attempt, it's almost close to perfection. However, no technique is perfect as you may already know. Otherwise, there would be no need for instructors to teach Martial Arts with great focus on proper execution and energy circulation," Kraft Viton remarked and commended Michael for his efforts. His eyes locked onto Michael and he could swear that a shroud of mystery covered the deepest secrets locked in the depths of Michael's being.

"From what I can tell, you created the Soul Energy Fusion technique to mass produce it using the labor and networking system of the Bartholomew Corporation. The technique is extremely simple. That was probably a mechanism you installed to ensure that every practitioner would survive. There might be some impatient practitioners who will fail to execute the technique properly by rushing one or all the steps, but they will sustain minor to medium injuries at most.

Since you can create such a simple technique based on your knowledge about Soul Techniques, I guess that you can create more efficient Soul Energy Fusion techniques as well. They might be more complex, but it should be possible. Am I right?"

Kraft Viton could make a few more comments to analyze Michael's course of action, but there was no need to do so. Michael didn't hide his intentions in the first place.

"I can create more complex Soul Energy Fusion techniques, and it is also possible for me to create both neutral and customized Soul Techniques. Neutral Soul Techniques will be weaker because a wider variety of Soultraits can utilize them, but that is also why we can produce more of them to sell them for a decent price. The price will never be too low because the demand should exceed the supply as long as I remain the only one with extensive knowledge about Soul Techniques. However, all Awakened with a little bit of skill and ability to collect and manage their finances will be able to purchase neutral Soul Techniques in the near future. As for customized Soul Techniques, I can produce them as long as I know as much as possible about the Soultrait, personality, and combat style of the person who requested a technique that is several times stronger than the neutral Soul Technique."

Kraft manifested the holographic screen of the crystal watch to start noting down a few things Michael mentioned.

"Your concentration will be on earning for a long duration with mass-produced goods but also on attracting big fishes with the customized Soul Techniques. Most will hesitate to reveal the secrets of their fighting styles and Soul Techniques but with the Bartholomew Corporation vouching for you, there shouldn't be an issue. The Supreme families, High Nobles, and Great Clans will be satisfied with their

superior products and you can satisfy the masses with the neutral Soul Techniques at the same time. To put simply, you can satisfy all parties and increase mankind's combat prowess," Kraft commented.

"The Tritan Alliance you mean. The Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs will obtain the same offer," Michael added.

Kraft took a deep breath but he nodded, "Of course. We were hoping to tap into the market of the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs, but I didn't dare to mention it just now. By using Soul Techniques as our first product to enter the market of the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs, we can spread our network rapidly. That means the value of your techniques alone is already enough to expand our market to cater to two new races. No other corporation was able to deal with the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs until now. That means we can gain a fortune..."

Kraft Viton stared at Michael, his eyes widening ever so slightly. He couldn't be certain about it, but he presumed that Michael thought of all of these possibilities when he told him that both sides should know each other's value before they started negotiating the terms of their partnership.

"I presume that you want to concentration on the creation of more Soul Techniques, the improvement of the Soul Energy Fusion technique, and the customization of Soul Techniques for the wealthy. That means you either want to sell the copyright of your technique to the Bartholomew Corporation or that you want a big chunk of our profits."

"I prefer royalties," Michael acknowledged, "You can consider me a partner of the Bartholomew Corporation, but I prefer providing the resources to gain money for a long duration. That is also why I poured a lot in the Agriculture Project. I like the Bartholomew Corporation, but as we know...business is business..."

That being said, Michael and Kraft Viton engaged in a fierce session of negotiations. They spent close to two hours figuring out the fine details of their partnership and devised specific rules and conditions for various scenarios.

The Bartholomew Corporation and Michael benefited greatly from the contract they established after the tiresome negotiations. But all of that was just the start of something big.

They were about to gain a fortune.

Chapter 523 Teach

"Since you have a monopoly of all Soul Techniques right now, you'll receive 50% of all profits from mass-produced Soul Techniques. This includes the Soul Energy Fusion technique. Keep in mind that this offer is a one-time thing as your monopoly allows us to enter the market of the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs more easily," Kraft Viton pointed out at the end of their negotiation.

"We will take a commission for acting as your agency for all inquiries about customized Soul Technique, but the commission won't exceed 5% of the revenue. We haven't talked about anything else, but the Bartholomew Corporation is more than willing to have a proper talk about Soultraits and your means to strengthen Soultraits as well."

Michael had thought about this for a long time already, but he was still not certain what to do with the Soultrait Symbols. Should he sell some of them right now, or was it better to keep them for the time being?

The latter was quite dangerous, whereas the former meant that he had to pick someone to sell the Soultrait Symbol to. That was also why Michael made a certain decision.

He retrieved the emerald box containing all of his Soultrait Symbols. He opened the emerald box, causing Kraft Viton to retreat instinctively as his War Rune started to go crazy. Tens of white tentacles burst out of the back of his hand, trying to charge at the Soultrait Symbols to devour them all.

"Just so you know...you will die if you try to fuse with too many Soultraits," Michael remarked, resulting in Kraft Viton taking a large stride away from the emerald box.

"You just have to control your War Rune. Or put the Soultrait Symbols into another container that can be sealed properly. It's not that difficult."

Michael added as he retrieved six Soultrait Symbols with six different notes. Each of the Soultraits had been tested to find out their powers and characteristics. He handed them to Kraft Viton, who was having a hard time controlling his War Rune.

"These six Soultraits are all 1-Star, but I can strengthen them. Of course, for an upcharge. It won't be cheap either. I hope the Bartholomew Corporation can auction these Soultraits, two for each race. I do not care what offers they make, but I want each race to get two Soultraits. That is not negotiable. As for the commission fee, the Bartholomew Corporation can forget about it since I let them auction the items. I'm pretty sure you can agree with me when I say that the Bartholomew Corporation does not need a commission," Michael stated his conditions, forcefully pulling Kraft Viton out of his train of thought.

"No commission? I...see..." Kraft Viton wanted to say something but he had to acknowledge that the Bartholomew Corporation already obtained more than enough benefits from being the only distributor for Michael's Soultraits. Even if they might lose the monopoly over Soul Techniques far ahead in the future it was very unlikely that someone else with a power like Michael's would appear in the near future – if there would ever be someone like him again, in the first place. Michael's power was ancient and probably limited to a selected few all over the universe.

Michael had some other stuff to trade with Kraft Viton, but he didn't want to retrieve dozens of Tekur corpses, more than 40 Mythic Scrolls to trade for Ordinary Summoning Scrolls, or thousands of blueprints and monster corpses to sell. The timing was not that good, and it was not as if Kraft Viton was sitting idle. If anything, Kraft Viton was busier than ever.

"I will see what I can do about the Soultrait Symbols. Do you want to sign a contract for them? If not, why are you handing them over like they're worthless?" Kraft Viton asked, not quite sure what Michael was trying to achieve right now.

Michael smiled in response. It was hard to hide his smile.

"There is no need for a contract. I trust the Bartholomew Corporation, but even more so, I trust you. If you break my trust, the blame would be on me, not you. At least, I know where I stand in that case. Furthermore, I know that I'm using the Bartholomew Corporation as another shield to protect me from the greedy fangs and claws of High Society. It is only fair that I return my trust by giving the Bartholomew Corporation a helping hand," He pointed out.

"I hope that the Bartholomew Corporation can expand rapidly using the new connections you are going to make all over the Tritan Alliance."

Kraft Viton merely nodded. He was not even sure what he was supposed to reply to that. What could he say? Should he be angry at Michael for extorting the Bartholomew Corporation by using his monopoly

while simultaneously seeking protection from the very people he extorted? Was he truly extorting the Bartholomew Corporation? Not really.

Both sides would benefit from each other, and it was not impossible that the Bartholomew Corporation would gain far more from Michael instead. Michael was their ticket to become the most influential corporation of the entire Tritan Alliance!

"By the way, you don't have to worry about your safety. I talked with Alice Zenovia earlier and she went on and beyond to protect you. Apparently, she fought with her family to convince them that protecting you is mankind's utmost priority. Your existence will help mankind to overcome the threat posed by the Supreme Human Alliance. That's what she said, quite clearly at that."

Michael raised an eyebrow. He had been with Alice and Kaleb not too long ago and didn't hear anything about a clash with her family. That was news to him.

Michael made a mental note to remember to thank Alice later.

"That's...good to know. But I don't think that my safety can be ensured. After all, I'm also in the Origin Expanse, in a quite dangerous area, to be entirely honest. It's not like I can avoid threats and obstacles. I am not undefeatable, my enemies are getting stronger by the day, and I still have loads to improve as a Lord. There are so many things I don't know, or have never learned," Michael revealed in all honesty.

"But haven't you been taught by your---..." Kraft Viton began, only to halt mid-sentence. He forgot that Michael was not from a prestigious family, a family who teaches their children how to behave and act in the Origin Expanse from a young age.

Most Descendants were given detailed lessons from a young age on what they had to do in the Origin Expanse, how to develop their territory, and how to train their soldiers and mind. They were not majorly self-taught like Michael. Their minds had been refined to become proper Lords, people who knew what to do in dangerous situations and how to digest the deaths of their subjects after a battle or war.

"I read various books about Lords and how they're supposed to act but the vast majority of books don't fit my persona."

Michael clicked his tongue reproachfully. He knew that he was not a perfect Lord. He was not bad, but there were too many things that could be done so much better. It was a shame.

Kraft Viton watched Michael for a while and burst into laughter. Michael stared at the old man in confusion until Kraft Viton couldn't hold it anymore. He laughed heartily for the next few minutes.

"You should know that you're a really weird guy"

"Hmm?" Michael was unsure what Kraft Viton was talking about. Was he really that weird? Probably.

Observing the way Michael's expression changed continuously, Kraft Viton started to chuckle once again. Michael was truly interesting to be around. Despite having this great power that allowed him to grow stronger rapidly, Michael was not arrogant either. In fact, sometimes it looked like Michael underestimated himself. As if the youthful Lord was not aware of the great achievements he attained within a mere year.

"You know, thousands of families asked me to become their childrens' teacher, but I never accepted their requests. No matter how much they offered me, I never even bat an eyelid. I don't like most families and the members of High Society. They're arrogant and difficult to handle. Their true selves are hidden underneath dozens of layers of lies and deceit. Teaching their children is not worth it," Kraft Viton revealed, slapping his thigh as he recalled some of the bad encounters with representatives of Supreme Families.

Over the last few years, so many people asked Kraft Viton to teach their children, yet the only one who could actually convince him to start teaching again didn't even know that he had the power and right to do so.

"I like you," He revealed, not shying away from speaking his mind, "If you want to learn something from an old Lord, I can teach you some stuff. In fact, I previously taught you some things, though I'm pretty certain it you thought I was just being kind when I taught you Whispering Energy. You should know that I don't teach someone such a technique easily. In fact, except you, only two more Awakened were taught Whispering Energy."

Michael's eyes widened. He previously had many teachers in multiple fields, but Kraft Viton seemed to be the wisest. His knowledge, business skills, and social contacts were extensive. Learning from Kraft Viton would be a great honor, especially when it came to knowledge about Lord-related stuff.

Michael understood it he had to learn how to overcome the grief pertaining to the deaths of his subjects, or rather, how to ensure that their deaths didn't affect him a lot. He was being too emotional about their deaths and he knew it.

Michael also knew it sure things would never change about him and that he would probably always finish up jumping into fiercely burning flames to rescue his people, if possible, but certain deaths couldn't be avoided.

The same could be said about war.

War was bound to happen in the Origin Expanse and some of his Soldiers would die. It was inevitable.

All Michael had to do was to prepare his heart and mind...

"Please teach me!"

Chapter 524 Mentor

Michael wanted to learn how to overcome the burden brought by the death of his people. To be precise, he had to learn how to ensure that deaths wouldn't degrade his mental strength and sanity.

Michael understood that he was too emotional about the deaths of his subjects. More subjects were bound to die in the future, and that the numbers would increase as the strength of his enemies increased exponentially. However, Michael knew that his instinct would always make him jump into the fiery pits of hell to rescue his people, even if they had a 0.1% shot at survival.

But he couldn't save everyone no matter what. Everyone understood that, and Michael had to learn to live with this understanding as well.

"Please help me to become a great Lord!" Michael requested Kraft Viton, his voice overflowing with determination.

He knew that he could become a better Lord. He had to be.

The old man smiled at the youthful Lord. Michael was a good guy. There was no reason to deny his request – even though Kraft Viton swore himself to never teach anyone ever again. Too many suffered from his tutelage no matter how good his intentions had been.

"My training will be painful. It will burden your mind and spirit. Your will has to grow stronger and you might have to do things that go against your principles. Are you willing to go against your principles and ideals to receive tutelage from me?" Kraft Viton asked, his voice deadly serious.

Michael's lips parted, but his mouth shut in the next moment. He looked at the old man for a while and furrowed his eyebrows.

"I won't go against my principles. All I want is to become a better Lord, and I will definitely not endanger my subjects for that purpose. My highest priority as a Lord ought to be to protect my people and strengthen everyone, including my subjects, NOT hurting them. If that's what you mean by going against my principles and ideals," Michael shook his head, rejecting Kraft Viton's condition.

There was no need to give it any second thoughts. Michael wanted to learn from Kraft Viton, but he was not going to let go of his principles and ideals for that sake. It was not worth it.

"Good."

Kraft Viton's serious expression softened and the corner of his lip curled upward.

"I wouldn't want that either."

Michael raised an eyebrow.

"Was that a test?"

Kraft Viton didn't say anything but the silence filling the office was an answer in itself. His 'condition' was definitely a test of his character., probably the first of many.

"I swore to myself to never pick up teaching again. That means I'm breaking my promise to mentor you," Kraft Viton said, taking Michael by surprise. Michael didn't even know that Kraft Viton had been a proper mentor before, though it did make sense.

"I..."

"There is no need for you to say anything. I will teach you because I think you should be taught properly. Maybe the Matriarch of the Seraph Family would give you some nice pieces of advice as well, but I would rather teach you myself. That way, I do not have to worry."

'Worry? About what?'

"Either way. The promise I made has nothing to do with you. However, I do hope that you can trust me a little bit more. I'm curious about your powers and I wish to support you in more than just one way. Maybe, I can help you make more use of your power," Kraft Viton requested.

Michael halted in his tracks.

"Will you not teach me if I decide to not tell you anything about my power?"

"No. My request is unrelated to the offer. I'm just curious."

Michael nodded his head slowly.

"In that case...let me think about it," He mumbled, "It should be fine if I tell you about my power, if and only if...you sign a Soul Pact with me."

Kraft Viton was not a Descendant. He wouldn't be interrogated by the higher-ups of his family, or...anyone. Signing a Soul Pact with an NDA with Kraft Viton shouldn't be a problem.

"That's great!" Kraft Viton exclaimed, slightly surprised that Michael was willing to reveal his powers that easily.

However, the negotiation about the Soul Pact's terms that followed after, made it clear that Michael was not a greenhorn anymore. It also showed that Michael valued the secrets of his Soultrait much higher than the facts that have already been exposed to High Society.

'How interesting!'

At the end of the day, the Soul Pact between Kraft Viton and Michael Fang had been established. It was a complex NDA Soul Pact that prevented Kraft Viton from revealing anything about Extraction and the other secrets Michael may or may not reveal in the future. Kraft Viton was forced to ensure that nobody would ever learn about their discussions and that none of their chats would be shared with anyone else.

If someone were to hear and forward information that Michael shared with Kraft Viton, the Soul Pact would determine Kraft Viton as the perpetrator and execute the punishment accordingly.

Under the circumstance that Kraft Viton broke the Soul Pact, Kraft Viton, as an individual, and everyone, and everything belonging to him would become part of Michael's possession. Kraft Viton would become his slave until the day he died. This included Kraft Viton's territory, the subordinates linked to Kraft Viton's Lord Power and so on.

"Done?" Kraft Viton asked rhetorically, his eyes glimmering. He retrieved a metal box with numerous intricate patterns and letters engraved on the surface and underneath. The box was triggered and thrown to the ground a moment later.

A semi-translucent dome spread out from the box, covering the entire room, momentarily deactivating all devices within the room. But that was not all the dome did. The dome acted as a sound-barrier as well.

"Tell me about your lovely power!" Kraft Viton requested, while Michael was engrossed in observing the intricate patterns of the box. The magical container and the dome's effect were quite interesting, after all.

Michael grinned at the old man after he diverted his attention from the metal box. Kraft Viton seemed much younger all of a sudden, the vigor in his eyes overflowing.

Michael gestured to Kraft Viton to wait a second. He retrieved a Mythic Summoning Scroll, 25 Summoning Scroll Fragments, an Artifact, a Memory Orb, a SoulStar Fragment and another Soultrait Symbol.

"To put it in very simple terms, my power allows me to extract additional loot from the enemies I've killed. It's already enough if I contributed to the battle, or if my subjects killed the entity. I can extract Summoning Scroll Fragments and combine them into Summoning Scrolls," Michael explained right before making a demonstration.

The Scroll Fragments shone brightly and transformed into a Summoning Scroll. He then pointed at the Mythic Summoning Scroll, "I can also create Mythic Summoning Scrolls...and other scrolls. By bartering Mythic Scrolls with Ordinary Scrolls, I can create an infinite loop to create more and more Mythic Scrolls. That might take a while but it should be possible with enough discretion and the right connections."

Michael pointed at the Memory Orb, the SoulStar Fragment, and the Soultrait Symbol, "Awakened provide special loot. This includes a portion of their War Rune's storage space, a Memory Orb containing parts of their memories – random memories to a certain extent –, Soulstar Fragments according to the power level of the target, and occasionally, Soultrait Symbols as well."

Kraft Viton's eyes widened but he was not the only one who was surprised. Michael shut his mouth the moment he finished giving the old man a quick summary of Extraction's uses. He didn't plan to disclose Kraft Viton this much, yet the words spurted out of his mouth like a waterfall. There was not much he left out.

However, despite telling Kraft Viton much more than he told everybody else, Michael did not feel uneasy. He was mostly surprised at himself for letting someone in on his secrets, but there was also a tinge of relief. It was a good feeling to disclose someone this much about his powers.

"Your Soultrait generates more loot, and creates special loot from Awakened. That means events like the Interdimensional Flag War and large-scale wars in the Origin Expanse allow you to earn a tremendous amount of strength. That's amazing," Kraft Viton mumbled.

He didn't say anything else for the next five minutes, his train of thought leading to various conclusions and thoughts. The dots connected and various events and power-ups related to Michael started to make sense.

"I read reports about the last battle in the Interdimensional Flag War. Was that the same power?" Kraft Viton inquired at last.

"It was the same, yeah. I can use this ability in more than one way," Michael nodded, though he was not sure what exactly happened in the last fight against the Tekur. He had been too busy thinking about what to do with High Society, the human traitors, the Supreme Human Alliance, the Seraph family, and the Tritan Alliance, to clear his mind and think about the power residing within him.

Kraft Viton and Michael Fang spent the next ten minutes talking about his powers. There was no need for Michael to hide too many pieces of information, but it was not as if he revealed everything. Michael left enough secrets to himself to stay safe and sound.

After their short chat, it was about time to part ways. Kraft Viton was willing to instruct Michael immediately, but he had to finish some other tasks first. He had yet to initiate the Soul Energy Fusion Project, or set up a large-scale auction for Humans, Berserkers, and Warlock Centaurs respectively. There was a lot to do. Therefore, he gave Michael a few days off before their lessons would begin.

Once they separated, Michael went to his room. Various thoughts flashed through his mind. Most of them were about the issues at hand and possible solutions. However, Michael's mind was also back-pedaling to the ability he'd unleashed at the end of the Interdimensional Flag War.

Only now did he get the time to wonder about it as he scratched his head. What exactly happened during the final battle?

Chapter 525 Unwelcome Guests

Michael's memories of the final battle against the Tekur and the human traitors were still fresh in his mind. He recalled taking control of Archangel's Grace with brute force and how his skin and flesh were extracted, layer by layer. Everything in the range of Extraction had been extracted, one layer at a time.

It was a grotesque way to use Extraction. A brutish method, and certainly inefficient as it drained a tremendous amount of energy.

But it was also powerful. Powerful enough to kill Lords at the Peak of the 3rd Tier. No one could enter the dome of Extraction at some point. The closer the enemies, the stronger Extraction's power grew. The Stigmata that had manifested all over his body unleashed the Essence of Extraction. They strengthened Extraction's power and unleashed its latent potential. At least, that was Michael suspected.

Michael recalled that something deep within him had been unleashed after his arms had been cut off. He was certain that there was something hidden deep inside him, and that some sort of seal holding it inside broke when he went all out.

'Did I shatter Extraction's limiter? No. I cannot sense the tremendous power anymore. It's almost like the power appeared when I was in peril, just to disappear once again. I didn't unlock some sort of new power either. Also, Extraction feels a little bit stronger than before but there is no major change. Does that mean I can strengthen Extraction by jumping into more perilous situations, or was that just a one-time thing?'

Various questions formed in Michael's mind, but there was no answer. He didn't really plan to jump into a dangerous situation anytime soon, either. Michael's priority was to develop his territory, earn a fortune, and grow stronger. The last few months had been busy enough. Fighting with his life on the line shouldn't become a habit. Though...maybe, it was already too late for that.

'Did I unleash the full potential of Extraction that is sealed within me? Is that how strong Extraction can be at 6-Star?' Michael couldn't really believe it.

Fortunately, he had various other doubts and queries that tormented his mind. The questions revolving around the power he'd executed at the end of the Flag War were pushed aside. Meanwhile, a particular memory resurfaced in his mind. The memory showed Giuliana Seraph as she spoke to Michael...speaking about Hesta.

'The Matriarch of the Seraph Family knows that Hesta is my sister...' Michael understood at last, his heart skipping a beat.

He thought about his sister every now and then. It was not too often these days, but Michael had a bad feeling about it. He was unsure why, but in the last few weeks he would sense increasingly uncomfortable whenever his thoughts drifted to his family. His gut twisted and he felt like destroying something. Michael encountered a similar phenomenon before Danny died and right before his parents messaged him on Starnet Messenger as well. The timing had been so uncanny that now he was dreading two possibilities.

Either that meant his parents died, or they were about to message him again. Michael was not sure which option he preferred at this point.

One way or another, Michael figured that something was about to happen. Something related to his family. That made him feel sick in the stomach.

"Fuck this shit," He cursed, sensing that his good mood after his talk with Kraft Viton was now in the gutters.

'Just forget them. None of them are important anymore. They will never come back, either way.' He thought, choosing to distract himself by creating the customized Soul Technique for Maria's Soultrait.

Michael retrieved a few tomes and concentrated on the Mark of Fate. The shard of Archangel's Grace was embedded into it. He closed his eyes and exerted the Inferior power of Archangel's Grace that resided within his War Rune.

By spending the next eight hours analyzing Archangel's Grace in great detail, Michael found out various characteristics and elements of Maria's 7-Star Soultrait. Archangel's Grace was not a Healing-type Soultrait at its core. If anything, it was a mixture of a Transformation, Summon, and Domain Soultrait.

Each type was related to Angels, but there was a distinct and clear difference, separating them. The weakest power was the ability to Summon the Spirits of Angels. It had to be augmented by the Seraph family's Inheritance Technique to Summon more than one Angel Spirit in the Heavenly Realm – which is what Michael called the healing domain that coated the entire area in sacred healing power.

The strongest ability of Archangel's Grace was the power to transform into an Archangel. Maria was granted temporary access to all powers of the Archangel. The only issue was that she could not use all of them even though she had access to them. The transformation drained a considerable amount of energy to be set into motion, which was followed by a constant drain of energy until the transformation was complete.

As far as Michael could tell, Maria could decrease the energy demand as the Soul Power residing within Archangel's Grace increased. That was what she did upon utilizing Heaven's Descent. The more Soul Power she had, the lower her energy consumption to unleash the transformation into an Archangel.

That was also why Michael didn't want to focus on the transformation ability for Archangel's Grace's Soul Technique. Soul Techniques drained the user's Soul Power. Therefore, the energy consumption to maintain her form as an Archangel would increase drastically right after the Soul Technique was activated. The Soul Technique might augment the transformation's power but given the increase in energy to maintain the form, Maria wouldn't be able to use the augmented power, in the first place.

With that in mind, Michael decided to augment the Heavenly Realm power of Archangel's Grace using the Soul Technique. Michael used his extensive knowledge of Common Class Soul Techniques, coupled with the fact that he possessed several Healing-type Soul Techniques in addition to his personal experience with Archangel's Grace. Over the next 36 hours, he diligently crafted several drafts of the Heavenly Realm Soul Technique. He called the technique Heavenly Realm, just like the name he'd given to Maria's power, because he was the only one who called it such, either way.

"Urgh. Why does this take so long?" Michael complained, throwing the newest version of Heavenly Realm aside before he slumped onto the bed. Altering an existing Soul Technique to create Soul Glacicle Bullet had been so much easier.

'Maybe I went a little bit overboard. I should tell Kraft Viton to postpone auctioning the customization of Soul Techniques for the time being...'

It had been easier to customize Soul Glacicle Bullet because Michael knew it like the back of his hand. His proficiency with the 5-Star Soultrait was rather high. In comparison, his proficiency with Archangel's Grace was close to non-existent. Furthermore, Archangel's Grace was a 7-Star Soultrait. It was several times stronger than Glacicle – and tens of times more complex. Glacicle was extremely simple, after all.

Michael was still rather new in the Soul Technique business. It would take a while before he could create a handful of customized techniques in a short period. Fortunately, there was no need to rush anything.

He vowed Giuliana Seraph to create a Soul Technique for Archangel's Grace and that was exactly what he focused on doing. There was no need to accept any more customizations until the demand increased. That would naturally happen once neutral Soul Techniques hit the market in bulk.

Since he had some spare time now that he finished Heavenly Realm, Michael messaged the Matriarch of the Seraph household and Maria. They could pick up the technique and report issues – if there were any. He doubted that there would be any issues given that the technique was only a Common Class Soul Technique, but he might be wrong. It was not as if he was a perfectionist. Michael was just a human. And humans make mistakes. The only thing he could do was to minimize the mistakes and fix the remaining mistakes after Maria examined the technique and found some issues.

Michael's eyes were about to close, but he noticed something. Just as his eyelids were about to shut tightly, Michael noticed some faint flickers of energy from the corner of his eye. The flickers were minuscule and without Spirit Eyes being one of the strongest Soultraits in Michael's possession, he wouldn't have noticed them. The energy fluctuations beyond the walls of his room inched closer to his door before they came to an abrupt halt.

Michael channeled origin energy into Spirit Eyes and he added two layers of Enhancement to Spirit Eyes to get a better glance at what awaited him beyond the door.

He jumped up from the bed and swallowed difficult a moment later.

Three men and a woman shrouded in veils, stood in front of Michael's room. The veils shrouded their presence near-perfectly. All that exposed them were faint energy fluctuations that were increasingly difficult to notice. If not for Spirit Eyes, Michael would have never noticed them. But he possessed Spirit Eyes...and he did notice the four hidden Awakened.

Michael couldn't estimate the might of their power as they naturally restrained the power their bodies exuded, but he remembered having seen the faces of the three men and the woman.

They were Tier-5 Lords, each of them.

'I doubt that they came over for afternoon tea.' Michael joked in his heart, while his expression stiffened.

It was quite obvious what was going on. No one with good intentions would try to hide their presence like the four Lords by sneaking up to his room uninvited.

Michael understood at once that the four Lords were about to kidnap him. He opened Starnet Messenger in an attempt to send some messages to the people around him and to alarm the bodyguards that had been assigned to protect him, but Michael noticed several things simultaneously.

First, the energy fluctuations of the bodyguards located all around the building were extremely weak. They were not dead, but they had been knocked out and injured severely.

Second, Starnet Messenger was not working. His signal was blocked.

Third, his access to the Runic Gate was capped temporarily as well.

Michael couldn't even seek protection in the Origin Expanse. He had nowhere to run or hide.

The four Lords came prepared.

Interestingly enough, Michael was not as nervous as he should have been. On the contrary, his heart palpated in excitement as a sly grin appeared on his face.

Chapter 526 Captured

The four human Lords had yet to barge into his room, but they began to move upon sensing that Michael tried to open the Runic Gate.

A burst of energy was all it took to break open the door and invade Michael's room. Yet, instead of finding Michael standing in the middle of the room, possibly cowering in fear, all they could see was freezing mist.

Michael filled the entire room with a burst of freezing mist. Simultaneously he retreated to the wall opposite the four Lords and executed Extraction to remove the wall blocking his path. Once the walls

were removed, a chilly gust wafted through the room. Michael ignored the gust of air and dashed outside.

As he hastily stepped through the hole in his room, the bright light of the afternoon sun greeted him. He stared at the vast expanse of the ancient city and kicked the ground hard to leap out of his room on the sixth floor. Michael twisted his body to look back at his room where he saw the four Lords peeking out of the hole in the wall. The corner of his lip curled upward, a dozen compressed Glacicles forming around him. The Glacicles shot in all directions and burst apart, attracting the attention of civilians and passersby.

Simultaneously, Michael manifested several Qi Swords beneath him. He turned his body back and kicked the Qi Sword under his foot. He propelled his body several meters ahead before his altitude started to decrease. Another Qi Sword manifested beneath him, allowing Michael to run in the air, further attracting the attention of the people watching him jump through the air.

'That should be enough to scare them away,' Michael thought, only to realize too late that the four Lords didn't care about the attention Michael attracted. Since they had already been exposed by Michael, they might as well finish their job.

The female Lord appeared in front of Michael all of a sudden. She didn't teleport in front of Michael. Instead, she used brute force and bits of energy to propel her body forward. All she had to do was kick the ground and turn herself into a human missile. The woman passed by Michael with ease and kicked the air underneath her lightly to come to an abrupt halt. She circulated energy through her body and turned to Michael with a faint smile on her lips.

Michael expected the woman to fall at any moment, but that never happened. She stayed afloat as if the air underneath her was solid ground.

He frowned but adapted rapidly. It took a quarter of a second for him to execute a ten-fold layer of Enhancement onto Spirit Eyes right before unleashing Spirit Domination in its strongest form. The woman raised an eyebrow in response, however, she was unaffected otherwise. It was like Michael's Spirit Domination was nothing more than a mosquito bite to her.

She raised her right hand, and in response a forcefield of energy condensed around her. Hundreds of violet strings shot out of her right hand. They burst forth much faster than Michael could react and coiled around the youthful Lords.

"Urgh," Michael groaned as the violet strings cut into his flesh. His arms were tightly pressed against his body and his legs were tied up. However, the most worrisome were the strings that coiled tightly around his neck. A single wrong move and his head would be separated from the rest of his body.

'So that's the power of a Tier-5 Lord?' Michael wondered, his heart beating wildly.

Spirit Eyes analyzed the properties of the violet strings rapidly, and it didn't take long before Michael coated his entire body with Extraction. He applied several layers of Enhancement onto Extraction and added Insert to insert the enhanced power of Extraction into the violet strings, draining their energy while also extracting their weakest properties.

The violet strings were extremely powerful, but once the weakest link in their structure had been removed, they turned much less threatening. Unfortunately, that didn't really apply in Michael's case. The violet strings were creations of a Tier-5 Lord's Soultrait. Even if the violet string would have been a low-ranked Soultrait – which it certainly was not – a Lord at the 5th Tier possessed a ridiculous amount of Soul Power. That was something Michael realized with a glaring clarity now that he encountered the power of a Tier-5 Lord.

Despite being overpowered and him being barely able to insert a massive amount of Extraction's power inside the violet strings, the woman's eyes widened in shock. She felt that her strings were being ripped apart from the inside and that energy was being sucked out of them. It was the first time a Lesser Lifeform was able to do something like that to her, but it was not uncommon for her prey to put up a fight against her Soultrait. Even mental attacks against her weren't anything new.

The woman exerted a technique that weakened Extraction's effectiveness against the violet strings drastically. Thereafter, she tightened the strings around his body even further. They cut deep into Michael's flesh, resulting in several deep cuts and eruptions of blood all over his body.

"I think you don't realize the predicament you're in. I might not be allowed to kill you, but I can still cripple you. As long as your War Rune is intact nothing else matters," The woman responded, crimson eyes peeking out from underneath the veil of invisibility.

Michael groaned in pain, his eyes gleaming brightly as he stared at the woman in anger.

The three male Lords appeared next to the woman at some point. They didn't seem particularly tense or alarmed as they looked around the ancient city with little to no interest in the happenings around them.

"To think that we're the first to take action. That's quite the surprise," One of them said nonchalantly, while another one chimed in.

"Right? I expected everyone to be after this idiot. He's a golden goose, yet nobody bothered to claim him. Morons!"

The woman's lips parted, and she was about to speak when she noticed something. Her eyes narrowed and her focus returned to her little prey. Michael's resistance grew stronger while they wasted time in chitchat. The power that had invaded her Soultrait grew stronger suddenly, and the resistance of her repulsion technique deteriorated with every passing second.

A golden gleam surfaced underneath the blood that gushed out from the numerous wounds over Michael's body, exposing faint stigmata.

Michael opened his mouth as if he wanted to say something, but no words escaped his lips.

"Stop resisting, you brainless id—...." The woman cursed, further tightening the violet strings around Michael. However, this time, Michael didn't groan in pain. All he did was grin as the string pierced deeper inside him.

Something deep inside him commenced to rumble violently, but he didn't focus on that sensation. All he did was smile at the woman in front of him.

'I think you're the brainless one.' Michael thought, not quite sure why the four Lords were so confident in their attempt to kidnap him. They were – quite literally – in the center of the ancient city, and it didn't look like they were in a rush to leave, at all.

Their 'meticulous' plan of arriving undetected to capture Michael might have worked out just fine, but who said that they were going to make it back?

"Do you like pain or what? Does it turn you on, you kinky bastard..." The woman asked, her expression turning into one of disgust. But just before she could finish her sentence, she noticed something again. Why were they still in the ancient city? Their plan succeeded so why were they still here?

Her head flicked to one of the other Lords, her eyes filled with confusion.

"Summon the motherfucking portal, you idiot!" She screamed at one of the Lords, but he didn't react. He didn't summon the portal that was supposed to safely transport them out of the ancient city, and he didn't turn around to her, or the others, either. In fact, he didn't action a single muscle in his body.

"What the hell is wrong with you, James?!" One of the other Lords asked, his laid back attitude replaced by a sense of worry. They had to leave as soon as possible, otherwise, they would be caught even before they could finish their mission.

The Lord grasped James' shoulder and pulled him back with some force, but James didn't move an inch. He utilized some greater force to shake his partner in crime out of the supposed trance, but James wouldn't turn. All he managed to do was tear out a piece of James' shoulder...his frozen shoulder when he grabbed it hard.

All of a sudden, James' body commenced to crack. Deep spider weblike cracks formed all over his body and clothes. Mere seconds later, James' body explosion into thousands of chunks, frozen to the bone.

James was dead – frozen to death long before the others could notice anything – and so was their easiest means of escape gone too.

It was only at this point that the three remaining Lords noticed how cold it was. The temperature around them had dropped below zero in an instant and it didn't look like the temperature would increase anytime soon. In fact, it was getting chillier by the second.

The three remaining Lords tensed up upon seeing their comrade die without any warning. Their heads flicked in all directions to find the culprit, and it didn't take long before they found her – Alice Zenovia.

She stared coldly at the three Lords, her whole being exuding a frightening killing intent that encompassed the center of the ancient city in its entirety.

An ice-armor coated her whole body and she was tightly gripping a lengthy glacier-blue longsword in her left hand.

She raised her longsword and slashed in the Lords' direction, releasing a crescent-shaped blade of compressed ice with fearsome velocity. The three Lords were forced to make their move. They evaded the blade of ice by a hair's breadth before their eyes locked on their new target.

"Let's deal with her first!"

Chapter 527 The Princess In Shining Armor

The three Lords were ready to fight Alice and finish her off quickly. She was only a Tier-5 Lord, just like them. However, given their age and combat experience, they ought to win without even breaking a sweat.

The woman with the violet string Soultrait, whom Michael named Violet, released her Soultrait through her other hand. Hundreds of violet strings shot out of the tip of her fingers with great velocity. They crossed the short distance to Alice in the blink of an eye and cut through the buildings and concrete around her.

The surrounding structures were cut apart and diced into small pieces, whereas the violet strings restrained Alice's movements. Simultaneously, the two other Lords unleashed their Soultraits. The body of one Lord expanded. His physique was reconstructed rapidly, his bones turning into metal and his flesh growing increasingly more resilient. The Lord's height increased to over four-meters and hair grew all over his body, further strengthening his defenses. The Lord's Soultrait turned him into a beast, therefore, granting him the name Beast.

Beast passed through the opening Violet left for him and emerged in front of Alice. Alice was just about to block Beast's attack when she lost control of the energy residing in her body. Alice required only a moment to realize that her energy veins had been sealed by the last Lord, preventing her from using her energy to reinforce her body physically, or to use her Soultrait.

Attempting to use the power inside her was painful and exerted a toll on his body. However, Alice was familiar with this Soultrait. She knew the owner of this Soultrait very well, and she was overly familiar

with the downsides of this Soultrait; the increasingly high energy consumption. Energy Seal was a Soultrait that required a tremendous amount of energy to be initiated and maintained. As long as the user possessed enough energy to maintain Energy Seal, it was near-impossible to break it. Unfortunately, with increasing resistance of the target, the user would have to use more energy to maintain the Energy Seal.

With that in mind, Alice resisted the Energy Seal with all her might, while dealing with Beast as well. Beast's claws swept down, sinking into her shoulder, and tearing her frozen armor apart. Alice didn't expect the brute force of Beast's attack to be that high, but she allowed the attack to impact. In exchange, her longsword cut through the highly resilient fur and hide of Beast's leg. The longsword cut into Beast's leg but it didn't cut deep enough to inflict serious damage.

This left Alice with no other choice but to pull the sword back and struggle a battle of attrition. She had to stall time until the Energy Seal on her would break. She retracted the sword and retreated, only for dozens of violet strings to cut into her frozen armor, slicing it apart piece by piece. Beast pushed closer to Alice, acting like the cut in his leg didn't bother him. In fact, that was not far from the truth. After transforming into a beast, Beast's natural regeneration increased rapidly. His wound stopped bleeding and it was only a matter of minutes before the wound would heal completely.

The Lord using Energy Seal focused on his Soultrait. He didn't jump into the battle with Beast. Instead, he allowed Beast and Violet to focus on inflicting damage and stalling time. The three Lords required time. Just like Alice, they had an ace up their sleeves. Initially, they wanted to capture Michael and escape using the spatial-type Soultrait of James. Unfortunately, Alice killed James before he could move them out of the city. Therefore, they had to resort to Plan B.

The Lord using the Energy Seal retrieved a golden crystal and a dozen Common Energy Stones from his War Rune's spatial storage. He crushed the Common Energy Stones, resulting in a spontaneous explosion of power to fill the air around them. The highly purified, compressed energy swept through the surrounding for a moment until the Lord tapped into the compressed energy. He channeled the energy into the golden crystal, slowly filling it with energy.

The golden crystal began to glow dimly as the highly purified power filled it, bright sparks illuminating the sky.

'Spatial energy!' Michael realized, his eyes narrowing the moment he discovered the golden sparks the golden crystal manifested.

The golden crystal generated spatial energy. It required a tremendous amount of energy, but that hardly seemed like an issue given the purified energy that permeated the air.

Michael had no idea how much control the Lord had over the spatial energy, but Spirit Eyes allowed him to see that the golden crystal established a faint link to the Lord.

'Can he create spatial portals according to his will?' He wondered, his expression souring.

It was only fortunate that the violet strings around Michael grew weaker as Violet's focus remained on Alice. Michael used the opportunity and unleashed Extraction in a compressed and overclocked state, destroying the violet string with some effort.

Violet noticed that some of her strings were destroyed, slowly ripped apart from within, but all she had to do to fix the issue was to create new violet strings. They coiled around Michael's body, and cut into his flesh. Michael's flesh felt much harder to cut through than before but its resilience was weaker. Oddly enough, it lacked energy.

Despite being unable to divert her attention from Alice, it wasn't further difficult for Violet to keep Michael in check. He was merely a Lesser Lifeform, after all.

The Energy Seal restrained Alice a lot but the effect wouldn't last much longer. It was only a matter of time before the Energy Seal would be too weak to contain Alice. The Frozen Duchess was a pain in the ass. She was a natural combat expert and dealing with her was much more difficult than the three Lords had anticipated. Even though her energy was sealed, restraining her usage of Frozen Kingdom, her Inheritance Technique and the vast majority of her other martial art techniques could be used to tackle Beast and Violet.

She had yet to sustain any serious injuries, whereas Beast had been inflicted with a few wounds.

Violet's patience was waning so she decided to end the battle.

She executed her Inheritance Technique, Storm of Bladed Strings, putting more pressure on Alice as the lethality of her strings increased by leaps and bounds. Violet transformed her strings into highly flexible blades with razor-sharp edges.

The strings cut through Alice's frozen armor and sliced into her flesh. Alice uttered a muffled scream before cutting through the strings. The longsword swirled around her body with deadly precision, severing the strings just before they could inflict severe injuries. However, the attack was not yet over. It had just begun.

Alice's eyes narrowed and her focus increased instantaneously as hundreds of bladed strings filled her peripheral view. Her body moved instinctively, the longsword in her hand dancing wildly, cutting through the majority of bladed strings. Only a few strings managed to reach her body.

Unfortunately, each string that managed to evade her sword-dance cut deep into her flesh, some even reaching her bones. Two bladed strings managed to cut into her bone, nearly severing her wrist in a single go.

As Alice was busy dealing with the Storm of Bladed Strings, while the energy in her body was still sealed, Beast didn't hesitate to attack either. He required a few moments to execute his Inheritance technique, but once his preparations had been completed, he initiated a terrific attack.

His monstrous body was like a bullet-train as he charged at Alice, flinging her through the air like a feather. Alice smashed hard into the nearest building. She crashed through the walls of the old, traditional building, which collapsed on top of her right after.

"How much longer do you need, Esmald?" Violet asked the Lord with the Energy Seal Soultrait.

She turned her attention back to Michael, who was supposed to be tied up like a lovely christmas present. But he was not there anymore. Her violet strings were coiled around a corpse...the corpse of a Tekur. Somehow, the corpse of a Tekur had replaced Michael in the tied knot of violet strings.

Michael managed to escape Violet's confinement of strings when she executed her Inheritance Technique. Storm of Bladed Strings required her entire focus, and a massive amount of energy. She executed the Inheritance Technique using her full mastery to eliminate Alice Zenovia before they could run away. By doing so, Violet created a small opening for Michael to escape, and he took it.

He made use of her distraction and escaped. However, instead of running for his life, Michael emerged in the old, collapsed building where he found Alice.

Her entire body looked like a hundred people had stomped over her. She was bruised black and blue and dozens of deep gashes decorated her fair skin. Michael had never seen Alice so beaten up. In fact, she had never been beaten, or so he thought.

The Energy Seal on her body was still intact.

Michael disregarded that and exerted Extraction to remove the Energy Seal as swiftly as possible. Thereafter, he used his newest creation, Heavenly Realm, with the Shard of Archangel's Grace inside him. His Soul Power was quickly drained but the wounds all over his body and that of Alice healed rapidly.

Alice opened her eyes and looked at Michael. The golden stigmatas covering his body grew dimmer and they were about to disappear entirely. Alice groaned and got up from the ground.

"I didn't expect you to come to rescue me. They're here to kidnap you, you know?" She joked lightly, knowing damn well that there was no time to joke right now.

"How about you beat them up a little bit?" Michael asked, ignoring her bad joke.

Instead, he used the energy he'd extracted from the air around him to apply several layers of Enhancement onto Alice's body.

"That should be enough," He mumbled,

"Go, rip them apart!"

Chapter 528 Castle Of Eternal Ice

Michael checked his signal on the crystal watch, but quickly realized that he was still unable to message anyone. It was a hassle.

'Someone should arrive soon, right?' He wondered, his eyes drifting through the surrounding area to pinpoint some powerhouses. Oddly enough all he could find were Guards and other Awakened at the 4th Tier or lower.

The ancient city might be the capital of the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs, but that was namesake. It was the oldest city of the two war-loving races, thus becoming their capital. The retired Elders of the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs lived in the ancient city, but most of them had been forced into retirement after suffering severe injuries in battle. They were not strong enough to deal with the three human Lords even if they were to try to aid Alice.

Of course, that didn't mean the ancient city's protection was insignificant. The capital's defenses were extremely strong. The only issue was that the defensive mechanisms were highly destructive. Violet, Beast, and the other Lord were already in the center of the city. Therefore, other Awakened would have to deal with them since the capital's defensive mechanisms would destroy far more structures and injure more innocent citizens than attacking the perpetrators.

'Where are the powerhouses when you need them?' Michael cursed under his breath, wondering where the other human powerhouses were and what was going on with the Chieftain and War Priestess. Did they disappear into the Origin Expanse? They wouldn't leave the capital unprotected...right?

It was a little bit frustrating, but Michael guessed that he couldn't rely on the protection or aid of other Awakened. He unleashed the Dome of Extraction to annex the highly compressed, purified energy in the surroundings. The energy flooded his body, only to be channeled through his veins before he used Insert to provide Alice as much energy as possible.

Now that several layers of Enhancement had been applied onto Alice, she felt much stronger than ever. The broken armor around her body regenerated and expanded. Her entire body, except her face, was covered in a highly compressed frozen armor, protecting her from harm. But that was not all. The frozen armor was a Legacy Technique derived from the Zenovia family's Inheritance technique. It possessed several unique traits that aided Alice in battle.

For one, the frozen armor blocked environmental effects. It regulated her body temperature near-perfectly, insulating her from the changes in the temperature outside. This allowed her to swim in lava and traverse through Eternal Ice. Second, and most important, the frozen armor blocked various effects that would affect Alice under normal circumstances. Curses and malleable effects of Soultraits were weakened. The effects wouldn't be nullified but they wouldn't influence Alice too severely.

Michael added a few layers of Enhancement onto the frozen armor. Right after that, he used Insert combined with Extraction and Reinforced Sword Qi onto Alice's longsword, further strengthening it.

Alice noticed the changes in her frozen armor and longsword, and she glanced at Michael for a second, the corner of her lip curling upward.

"Your Soultraits are too amazing. Maybe, I should kidnap you?" She said in a teasing voice.

Michael scoffed and patted her back, "Yes, yes. Kidnap me all you want after you beat up these idiots."

Alice's focus returned to the three Lords who had been looking for Michael. They found him next to Alice shortly after, but quickly realized that the pressure around Alice had intensified.

The Lord with the Energy Seal frowned deeply, "I think Michael drained the purified energy in the proximity. The golden crystal is still not full. I'll need one more minute. Let's catch him and then leave!"

His earlier confidence was now replaced with a tinge of worry as he understood the dangers of their mission and felt that the pressure weighing down on him increased with every passing second. After all, spending more time in the center of the capital increased the chances of the failure of their mission. It was only a matter of time before the powerhouses hiding in the ancient capital would arrive and hunt them down.

Taking a deep breath, the old Lord tapped into his lifeforce and executed the strongest form of his Inheritance technique, Reverser Energy Seal. His Soultrait sealed the energy within the targets under normal circumstances. However, by reversing Energy Seal one could turn the seal into a Support-type Soultrait. The Lord used Reverse Energy Seal onto Violet, Beast, and himself right before retrieving several hundred Inferior Energy Stones.

He crushed the Inferior Energy Stones and let loose the effects of Reverse Energy Seal, sucking every ounce of energy within the Inferior Energy Stones from the air. The three Lords didn't have to pay attention to the energy in the proximity as Reverser Energy Seal sucked everything into their bodies. The Reverse Energy Seal annexed the energy, allowing the three Lords to use the energy that had entered their bodies at once.

Beast unleashed his Inheritance technique once again. His body expanded further and he charged at Alice. Simultaneously, Violet released close to 1,000 Bladed Strings toward the collapsed building, turning the structure into a mountain of tiny dice.

Michael could only frown as he readied to dash to the side and disappear from the center of the battlefield, but he was too slow. Violet's bladed strings were everywhere. There was no opening for Michael. He was confined in the encirclement of bladed strings. He was fortunate that Alice was by his side.

After Michael healed her using Heavenly Realm, and strengthened her body, frozen armor, and longsword, Alice's power skyrocketed. She released her Soultrait, amplified with her Inheritance Technique.

The Duchess' Frozen Kingdom had been unleashed.

The temperature in the entire capital dropped rapidly, and a towering castle made of ice manifested out of thin air. A throne of ice conjured behind Alice. She took a step back and sat down, her frozen armor connecting to the throne of her Frozen Kingdom. Alice pierced her longsword in the ground next to her, allowing the power that resided within the sword to connect to the remaining parts of the Castle of Eternal Ice.

The effects inserted into her sword traversed through the Castle of Eternal Ice as well. The white hues of Enhancement, the silver threads of Reinforced Sword Qi, and the golden shimmer of Extraction swept through the Castle of Eternal Ice, further enhancing its power.

Violet and the other Lords frowned deeply but they didn't stop their attacks. Beast barged into the throne hall of the Castle of Eternal Ice and he accelerated using his movement technique the moment he found Alice sitting on the throne. Her blue eyes stared coldly at Beast, enraging the Lord even further. He tapped deep into his pool of power and erupted. He kicked the ground and turned his body into a cannonball to crush Alice's body with a single attack.

However, long before Beast could reach Alice, thick pillars of Eternal ice formed in front of Beast. Beast had already started running at full speed and the pillars of Eternal Ice were too close to avoid. Therefore, Beast decided in a fraction of a second. He decided to barge through the pillar of ice. The Legacy technique of the Sacred Beast's Inheritance Technique reinforced the endurance of his body while also granting him more destructive power. It ought to be enough to destroy mere ice pillars!

Alice raised an eyebrow as she observed Beast's actions with mild interest. Beast crashed into the pillar of eternal ice. The impact created a shockwave that reverberated throughout the entire castle, and cracks formed all around the pillar of eternal ice.

Michael realized quickly that Beast was strong enough to crush the pillar of eternal ice. It shouldn't be much of a problem for the Lord to destroy the pillar. Unfortunately, there was not only one pillar at this point. Alice manifested dozens of pillars around the first pillar of Eternal Ice, but that was not all. Alice sealed the cracks all over the first pillar of Eternal Ice the moment they appeared. She didn't even give Beast a fraction of a second to believe that he had the upper hand. If anything, Alice utilized her Frozen Kingdom to control the surroundings as if it was her domain – which was the case, to a certain extent.

Alice's Frozen Kingdom was far from simple. It was partially a Domain-type Soultrait that allowed her to control everything in her Frozen Kingdom's range. Therefore she could slow down Beast with tens of pillars of Eternal Ice. Alice made Beast believe that he could manage to break through the first pillar of Eternal Ice and let him willingly walk into her trap before quickly creating dozens of pillars around the first. She then sealed the destruction caused by Beast by trapping him in the Eternal Ice.

Beast might not be dead, and he could escape the confinement of Eternal Ice, but Alice was confident that her power and technique were strong enough to keep Beast in check for a while. His transformation Soultrait was not strong enough to overcome the tremendous power of Alice's Frozen Kingdom.

Michael witnessed Alice and her powers intently. It was the first time he saw her unleash this kind of power. In fact, it was the first time he saw powerhouses go all-out against each other. He had always been certain that his power was grand and that it was only a matter of time before he could defeat the powerhouses of the human race. However, he was utterly mistaken.

Alice was only in possession of one 6-Star Soultrait, yet her proficiency and techniques were extraordinary. She was on a whole different level than the other Lords. It was terrifying and beautiful at the same time.

Michael doubted that he could inflict any harm on Alice even if he were to give his all to beat her.

In fact, even if he were to unleash the hidden power of Extraction, he wouldn't be strong enough to reach Alice. Not yet, at least.

Chapter 529 Trap

The moment Alice's Castle of Eternal Ice manifested in the center of the ancient capital, Violet and the other Lord figured that they had to go all out, otherwise, they might not only fail their mission but die as well.

Failure was still acceptable. They could try capturing Michael once again at a later point in time. However, death was permanent. Neither Violet nor Beast, or the Lord of the Energy Seal wanted to die.

Violet retrieved dozens of Common Energy Stones and crushed them into pieces, resulting in a burst of energy to flood the surroundings. The Reverse Energy Seal placed on her sucked in a tremendous amount of the compressed, purified energy, allowing her to relieve the Storm of Bladed Strings with several thousands violet strings. She then added a Legacy Technique to further reinforce the power of her Soultrait. As a result, the bladed strings cut deep into the Castle of Eternal ice, slowly breaking the structure apart.

Unfortunately, Alice didn't stay idle as the Castle of Eternal Ice was being attacked. She manifested thousands of Ice Swords and by tapping into the power that had temporarily merged with the Castle of Eternal Ice, Alice could strengthen the compressed Ice Swords by applying a trace of Enhancement, Reinforced Sword Qi, and Extraction on them.

Alice's precise control of her Soultrait permitted her to control thousands of Ice Swords with great precision. She transformed the swords into an ice storm of Swords, which she threw toward the Storm of Bladed Strings.

Due to the amplification caused by Enhancement, Reinforced Sword Qi, and Extraction, Alice's Sword Ice Storm was strong enough to cut through Violet's bladed strings.

"How can you be this strong?!?" Violet screamed at the top of her lungs, unable to understand how a young woman such as Alice could be stronger than her. She was dozens of years older than Alice, yet the disparity in their power level was this vast. How could that be?

"Being old doesn't automatically mean that you're strong. You've grown rusty after acquiring enough power to be on par with other races. Your wealth and the strength of your territory might be

exceptional, but you stopped practicing your Soultrait. I can tell that you haven't participated in a real battle of life-and-death for decades. All you do is exploit others with your dominance and wealth," Alice shouted, her voice thundering through the Castle of Eternal Ice, "That's also why your own people have begun to loathe you, Veronica Park."

Violet, or Veronica Park, frowned deeply. The veil of invisibility shrouded her expression and identity, yet all Alice required to find out the real identity of her opponent was her Soultrait, Inheritance Technique and the Legacy she used. Veronica Park was far from weak. She was a powerhouse at the Peak of the 5th Tier. She had a territory after attaining the rank of a Duchess with thousands of Awakened following her commands. But despite all of that, Veronica Park was weaker than Alice Zenovia.

Alice was one of the youngest Tier-5 powerhouses of the human race. She was the youngest Duchess and it was only a matter of time before she acquired the title of a Queen. Her territory was expanding rapidly, and the Will of the Origin Expanse acknowledged this.

Veronica Park grit her teeth and was just about to unleash a barrage of ten thousand Bladed Strings when the Lord of the Energy Seal appeared next to her. His right arm was coated in spatial energy, a portal forming to his left.

"We failed. Let's leave for now," He urged, ignoring Veronica Park's struggle as his left arm coiled around her waist. He pulled her toward him and was just about to jump into the spatial portal that was supposed to transport them to a safe spot when the scene around the ancient capital changed.

The fabric of space and time twisted and everything that had been destroyed in the battle of the Lords was repaired at once. Alice's Castle of Eternal Ice dispersed, revealing Alice and Michael smiling from ear to ear.

"I was already wondering when you guys would appear..." Michael complained lightly, his vibrant eyes staring at a spot behind Veronica and the other Lord.

Just as Michael's voice reverberated through the vicinity, the spatial portal burst apart, destroying the two Lords' last means of escape.

Veronica and the Lord of the Energy Seal turned around, their eyes widened in shock as a crowd of close to 100 powerhouses emerged out of nowhere.

The War Priestess and the Berserker's Chieftain were leading the group of powerhouses, their expressions filled with anger and disgust.

Two old men stepped forward. They walked through the air and stopped next to the Chieftain and War Priestess, their eyes overflowing with disappointment.

"It's just like you predicted," One of the old men said to the other, who was none other than Kraft Viton. He could only sigh deeply.

"If someone knows about the greed of our race...then it's me," He mumbled, "It's not something to be proud about, Hugo."

Hugo, the other old man, could only agree, "A certain degree of greed is good. It motivates us to grow stronger and exceed our limits. Unfortunately, too few can handle the greed that is growing in the core of their hearts. The stronger they grow the more they desire."

Veronica and the other Lord stared blankly at the crowd of powerhouses, realization dawning upon them.

"All of this..." Veronica mumbled, clearly at a loss of words. lights

"All of this was a trap, yep," Kraft Viton said, patting Hugo's back, "His Illusions have grown much stronger than before. Don't you think so?"

"We never had a chance to escape with Michael...did we?" The Lord of the Energy Seal asked rhetorically.

Kraft Viton didn't pay any attention to him. He merely shrugged and glanced over to Michael.

'To think that he managed to escape without our help. He stayed calm throughout the entire incident and didn't even think once about waiting for us to rescue him.'

It had been quite a while since Kraft Viton came up with a simple plan to capture those who lost the fight against the greed that had accumulated in their hearts. Kraft Viton gave Michael an emergency crystal, which used a different frequency than the crystal watch and the Runic Gate. Crushing the emergency crystal alerted Kraft Viton, who forwarded the emergency situation to the Chieftain and War Priestess. And both of them had already been waiting for this moment.

Everyone knew that some households of the High Society would be unwilling to leave Michael alone. They wanted him for themselves, and planned to use him as their personal asset to grow stronger. It was only a matter of time before the first families grew impatient.

Despite that, nobody expected Michael to be strong enough to be able to escape the confinement of four Lords that easily. Alice did an exceptional job distracting the Lords, even finishing one of them, but it was still not easy to escape the violet strings of Veronica Park, as a Lowest Tier-3 Lord, at that.

"That was intense," Michael mumbled, tapping his chest lightly.

His heartbeat was erratic and the excitement still hadn't died down. For a moment he had grown worried amid the battle because Kraft Viton and his reinforcement had been nowhere in his range of sight, but the worries dispersed when he witnessed the true extent of Alice's power. Her display of power was terrifying, to put simply. It demonstrated quite easily how strong Alice was and that the disparity in strength between Higher Lifeforms was tremendous.

Michael was not certain how strong the Soultraits of the four attacking Lords had been but he knew that each of them was a Tier-5 Lord. Alice was currently a Tier-5 Lord as well, however, her attacks had been several times stronger than theirs.

"Your Soultraits are pretty powerful. No wonder you're stronger than Killian at this point," Alice remarked. She wanted to sound nonchalant but the astonishment in her voice exposed her true feelings.

She was certain that she hadn't been as strong as Michael when she was 19-years-old. It took her years to study Frozen Kingdom and reach her current level. Alice studied her Soultrait for years and she had

yet to find its true potential. Yet, Michael was in ownership of half a dozen or more powerful Soultraits while being so young.

Even if he didn't procure more Soultraits for himself, studying the Soultraits he possessed was already more than enough to become one of the strongest powerhouses of the human race. That was scary, and it showed the potential of Michael's first Soultrait.

If he could produce more powerhouses like himself that meant he could create his own High Society. It was dangerous...and an opportunity.

Alice understood why some households of the High Society would want to kidnap Michael. Getting hold of Michael and his powers meant that a household could reach the top of the High Society within years. In fact, one might be able to overthrow the High Society and become the sole rulers of the entire Tritan Alliance.

No matter how Alice looked at it, Michael's power was too unique and tempting.

"I should be stronger than Killian since I've advanced to Tier-3 recently. But I think he will advance to a Higher Lifeform in a few weeks. He's been postponing his advancement to reach a higher mastery of his Soultrait and Inheritance Technique. Well...and to participate in the Interdimensional Flag War," Michael responded with a shrug.

"He will be stronger than me once he advances to a Higher Lifeform. Meanwhile, my power level won't increase drastically for the next few months. I have other things to take care of. I need to earn a fortune, after all."

Michael was not in a rush to grow stronger than Killian. If anything, Michael hoped that Killian Zeus would grow much stronger. That way, he had another sparring partner who was willing to go all-out against him.

That sounded interesting...right?

Chapter 530 Proposal

"Your injuries are pretty grave. Don't strain yourself much and dissolve the frozen armor slowly," Giuliana Seraph, matriarch of the Seraph household, told Alice upon arriving next to her.

Giuliana released her Soultrait, coating Alice in a dense miasma of holy power. Upon using her Soultrait to heal Alice, the matriarch noticed something.

"You're not injured anymore? I was told that your wrists were nearly severed and..." Giuliana's head flicked to Michael, whose wounds had also healed, an expression of understanding dawning upon her.

"I tended to our wounds," Michael affirmed the matriarch's suspicion, "But I focused on the severe injuries. Maybe, I missed out on healing some cuts."

Michael had been in a rush to heal Alice mid-battle. He was also not that proficient with Archangel's Grace, let alone Heavenly Realm. It was the first time he used a Healing-type Soul Technique. Giuliana should take a look at Alice ensuring that he didn't miss anything.

"You did a pretty good job," The matriarch commended Michael, eying him with a raised eyebrow, "I didn't expect your proficiency at controlling Archangel's Grace to have reached such a high level already. It must have been quite difficult."

Michael grinned at the words of appreciation and retrieved the Heavenly Realm Soul Technique.

"My mastery with Archangel's Grace is horrendous. Fortunately, I managed to finish customizing Maria's Soul Technique before the four Lords attempted to kidnap me," He explained, handing the tome to Giuliana, completing his mission, at last.

"You're already done? And you managed to exert the technique as well? That is...impressive," The matriarch mumbled to herself before opening the tome. She continued to tend to the minor wounds all over Alice's body as the frozen armor dispersed, and she got engrossed in reading.

Michael studied her as Giuliana read through the tome. her expressions changed dozens of times. At first, she was intrigued, and shock replaced her curiosity, only to be intrigued again about the strategy Michael had used to customize the Soul Technique.

It was the first time she saw a fully translated version of a Soul Technique, and the matriarch quickly realized how valuable the technique was.

No. It was not only the customized Soul Technique that was valuable. The most valuable was the creator of the customized Soul Technique and the speed with which he completed his job was outstanding.

Giuliana Seraph read through the tome thrice before she closed it. One eyebrow raised, she stared at Michael, not uttering a single sound.

"Soul Techniques use up Soul Power so I didn't want to create a Soul Technique for the transformation part of Maria's Soultrait. Heaven's Descent focuses on the Summoning portion in Archangel's Grace as well. Therefore, I figured that the healing domain should be enhanced. If you, or Maria, want to change Heavenly Realm I can do that, but I don't think that the Common Class Soul Technique can be improved."

Maybe that sounded a bit arrogant but Michael was certain that he created the best possible Common Soul Technique for Archangel's Grace. It might be possible to create better Elite Class Soul Techniques for Archangel's Grace, but Michael had yet to finish studying the few Elite Class Soul Techniques he'd procured from the Tekur and the traitorous Descendants. He would have to spend some time and focus on studying the technique before he could create some on his own.

Heavenly Realm was already the best he could create.

"No, no. It's fine. Heavenly Realm is great. Don't worry," Giuliana waved her hand, trying to console Michael, who chuckled lightly seeing that the matriarch of the Seraph family seemed flustered. That was truly unexpected.

Giuliana's eyes locked onto Michael. She analyzed the youthful Lord for a while.

According to the report she read about Michael, Maria's statements, and her encounters with him, Michael seemed like a loyal man. He was kind, trustworthy, and far from arrogant. His desire to support his friends was a great trait. Unfortunately, that could also be used against him.

It hadn't been all that long since Giuliana accepted Michael's request to help Frederik Kolbenheim's father. The matriarch researched the Kolbenheim family and their connection to Michael, but all she found contradicted their relationship. Their first encounter was in a shopping center where the Barbaric Couple ended up in a small scuffle with Michael. After that, they attended the Sapphirelake Military Academy together.

Giuliana was not sure how their friendship developed into a bond strong enough for Michael to give away a highly valuable customized Soul Technique in exchange for Igor Kolbenheim's recuperation, but she loved this about Michael. Almost everything she read about Michael was positive. There was no particular red flag in sight. If anything, Michael was a human being overflowing with green and golden flags. Consequently, her respect for him increased.lights

"Do you like Maria?" She thus asked the smiling youth.

"Huh? Where did that question come from?" Alice jumped into the conversation. She yanked Michael behind her and stared daggers at Giuliana Seraph.

"Why are you butting in our conversation, Alice Zenovia? I doubt that you're in a relationship with Michael, so how about you drop the act of a possessive girlfriend?" The matriarch asked sharply, however, Alice didn't move an inch.

Michael peeked out from behind Alice, not quite understanding why the two mature women stared at each other like mortal enemies.

"I do like Maria. She is a nice girl. It's refreshing to see that the soon-to-be strongest healer of the Tritan Alliance has a good personality. She is different from most Descendants and treats everyone equally. Well, almost everyone," He responded to Giuliana, whose gaze landed on him again. The corner of her lip curled upward.

The matriarch was not exactly satisfied with the answer but it was better than nothing. They were not in a rush. Not yet, at least. Alice saw a glimmer in Giuliana's eyes and cleared her throat to pull Michael's attention toward her.

"Doesn't the same apply to Kaleb and your other friends?" She asked.

Michael thought about it for a moment before he nodded, "It's not exactly the same because I had to beat some sense into Kaleb, but Kaleb, Zeke, and Lincoln are good guys. I do like them. Frederik and Jacqueline are fun as well, though they have some trouble these days."

"But then again. I like you as well, Alice. I got to know you even before I manifested my War Rune. You helped me unconditionally and today you tried to protect me while putting yourself in danger. You might look like a cold person to others, but to me, you're a nice and caring person. Your personality is great, your strength is unrivaled among your peers, and you are drop-dead gorgeous. I'm pretty sure that everyone would agree with me if they were to see your true self!" Michael added, complimenting Alice.

He grinned vibrantly at Alice, who was too astounded to respond. She fluttered a few times and stared at Michael before her ears turned beet-red. Her lips parted but she couldn't say anything. No word escaped her lips. Alice flushed red and she subconsciously used Frozen Kingdom to cool down her rising body temperature.

Giuliana Seraph observed the two, her eyes narrowed.

'That's going to be harder than expected.'

She cleared her throat and dropped a bomb, "If you like Maria, what do you think about marrying her?"

"HUHHH?!?" The embarrassment Alice felt just a moment ago dispersed, shock and disbelief replacing it.

Michael was also stupefied. Had the matriarch of the Seraph family lost her mind?!

"What do you say? I'm pretty sure Maria likes you, and you have nothing against her either. You said that you like her. Romantic feelings can be developed as long as you and Maria grow closer. The next few years in the Saphirelake Military Academy can solve that easily. Growing closer to her will help you accumulate more of Maria's power inside you, and you might be able to strengthen the Shard of Archangel's Grace within your War Rune as well. You and Maria can live happily together while your powers grow stronger. That sounds nice, doesn't it?" Giuliana Seraph added.

"Are you...serious right now?" Michael asked, still pretty sure that Giuliana Seraph was joking.

However, the seriousness and determination in the matriarch's eyes revealed the truth pretty easily. The matriarch reaffirmed his suspicion as well.

"I am dead serious."