

Supreme Lord 551

Chapter 551 War

"Is everyone ready?" Michael asked the group of combatants in front of him, a thin smile plastered on his face.

After careful consideration, Michael decided to send small combat troops into the Savannah Region. They wouldn't fight under the banner of his territory, or the Untamed Jungle. Instead, they would be considered the Trilance's reinforcement. Michael extended a helping hand to the Trilance's leaders and they readily agreed to accept his help, thanking him profusely. It didn't take long for them to decide that Michael and his people would receive a portion of the Trilance's revenue once everything was over. The Trilance owed him a big favor and would pay him handsomely if they survived thanks to his reinforcement..

"We are more than ready. Let us show everyone how strong we are!" Lokai thundered, raising her two short battle-axes in excitement. It was not long since they'd become Michael's subordinates but a large war had already erupted. How could he not be happy? "Demonstrate your prowess. That way the Trilance will understand that they cannot go against us once all of this is over. We should show them that we will always be stronger!" Mika added with a menacing smile on his face.

Michael raised an eyebrow when he heard what Mika said. He wondered for a moment if Mika was doing fine, or if something happened to the youthful Elf.

"Maybe, the Trilance will submit to Michael once they realize that they're mere peasants in front of his great power!" Pheli exclaimed. 'Are the members of the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team drunk?' Michael wondered, but he put aside these thoughts.

Their preparations were completed and they set off to join the Trilance without any more disturbances. They moved fast and followed Michael to the border of the Untamed Jungle where the Zynur's border settlement had been constructed not too long ago. Michael and his subordinates didn't slow down as the war horns rang through the surroundings.

Their steps didn't falter as they kept advancing toward the towering gate that opened to welcome the Trilance's reinforcement with open arms. Michael and his subordinates made an entrance into the Savannah Region, the Trilance's territory, their masks and cloaks fluttering in the warm gust that wafted past them.

Michael didn't think twice as he activated the Legendary Ring Artifacts' dragon might. He merged his presence with the dragon might and shrouded his subordinates with it. This seemingly simple move transformed the appearance of the Trilance's reinforcement significantly. The citizens had heard about the reinforcement that would arrive from the Untamed Jungle, but they never knew how strong the reinforcement would be. All they knew was that their leader had high hopes for the reinforcement. Now that the reinforcement arrived, the citizens realized that there was more to it.

There were more than a dozen cloaked men and women riding on monstrous war horses, and giants that were just as tall as the cavalry of the reinforcement. Little did they know that the Warlock Centaurs weren't riding on war horses. Their lower body just looked like that of a horse.

Michael's intent behind the masks and cloaks was not primarily to hide the Berserkers, Warlock Centaurs, or the Forest Elves. No one from the Savannah Region would bother what race their enemies belonged to. However, it was important to hide something else with the cloaks.

["Are we going to fight soon? I'm ready to rumble, and I know that my little creations are ready to go all-out as well!"] Zeroa, the Elemental Empress, exclaimed underneath Michael's cloak. Michael felt the warmth of her blazing body, but he just smiled.

"It won't take much longer. Just a little while. Be patient," Michael teased Zeroa, who grumbled quietly. Her impatience was apparent.

The Elemental Empress didn't think twice about participating in the battle when she heard that Michael would join the Trilance's reinforcement. She joined and told Michael that she would follow him identical if he would order her to stay behind. Zeroa didn't want to focus on establishing her Elemental Society for the rest of her life. She didn't want the Elemental Society to be her only task. Zeroa wanted to traverse the world, fight powerful enemies, and support Michael wherever she could. Even the Elemental Society was part of her means to help Michael on his path toward achieving great power.

As an Elemental Empress, Zeroa desired to create her own society, but while that was true, Zeroa was also Michael's companion. She had a strong taming bond with Michael and felt the instinctive drive to support him in every possible way. But then again, the Elemental Empress would want to help Michael even if he didn't ask her to do anything. Even without the taming bond, Zeroa would do everything in her power to support him.

That was also why the Elemental Empress, her nobility and the strongest Lesser Elementals joined the warfare against the quasi-kingdom of the Savannah Region. One Elemental was assigned to each member of the Trilance's reinforcement to fight and kill together.

The Elementals learned something specific after Michael and the Elemental Empress fused together. The fusion had been integrated into their essences. They knew how to transform their bodies to coat their allies' bodies, armors, and weapons.

It was not easy for Lesser Elementals to coat their companion's bodies, but it was possible for them to shroud their weapons with their elemental might. Other than that, the Lesser Elementals could aid their companions through different means as well.

'I should create a companion system once we're back. If enough Elementals are willing to join the military, we could equip several units with Elemental companions. Maybe they'll be able to do things like Zeroa and I.' Michael mused, liking the idea.

If some of his subordinates were highly compatible with the Elementals, they might be able to execute powerful attacks that exceed their rank. It would take a while to create special techniques to maximize their respective powers by combining them efficiently, but Michael liked the thought of having an Elemental Warrior combat unit. Or maybe a unit of Elemental Archers. It was certainly worth considering.

"Welcome to our humble territory," A familiar voice reached Michael's ears and his head flicked to the left where he found Zira, the daughter of the Valyr Lordess. She looked just like before. Two horns jutted out from the side of her head with a long purplish horn jutting from her forehead, bloody-red leathery wings that stretched far behind the young woman, and a black morningstar tail that swished left and right...in excitement?

Zira wore a set of armour that was drenched in the dried blood of her enemies. Michael detected lingering energy fluctuations from elemental attacks all around the young daughter of the Valyr Lordess.

"I didn't expect a celebrity to welcome us," Michael responded lightly, exchanging some pleasantries with Zira before he added in a more serious tone, "But I doubt that you came over for fun. I can also see that you were in a fight not too long ago."

Zira looked down at her body and smiled foolishly at the appearance of her armor. She didn't have enough time to clean her armor, or disperse the remnants of malleable energies dancing around her. "We've been pushed back. The Council of Xylon raided another settlement. They overwhelmed us with their numbers and didn't leave us a chance," Zira acknowledged, gritting her teeth.

The Council of Xylon was the name the Patchwork Kingdom gave themselves. Michael was not a fan of the name since 'Patchwork Kingdom' sounded much better, but who was he to judge them? It was not like his naming sense was any good.

"Where is the battlefield?"

Zira looked up, her eyes locking with Michael's vibrant golden eyes. Michael was overflowing with confidence. That was something Zira could tell, though most parts of his face were covered with a raven mask. The only exposed part of his face was his eyes. Zira's whole attention was naturally drawn to the vibrant glimmering eyes.

She swallowed hard and instinctively retreated. Michael's gaze was sharp and piercing.

'He has grown stronger,' Zira realized. She noticed and forced a smile on her lips.

"We currently have five locations with more-or-less active battles. Where do you want to go?" Michael shrugged, "The closest, obviously."

Zira gave him a curt nod and turned around. She gestured to Michael and his company to follow her and moved swiftly through the settlement. The Nightmare Horse, her companion, was already waiting for her.

"We can spare some Pyroma Horses for fast traveling. Maybe, we'll make it to the battlefield before the situation gets worse," She said, after speaking to someone via a communication crystal.

A small horde of Pyroma Horses, inferior versions to Zira's Nightmare Horse, was led to Michael and his companion.

"We will just run. There is no need for us to use these...things," Thaor said, and the other Berserkers agreed. They would much rather run than force themselves to jump onto these tiny horses. The Pyroma Horses looked like regular war horses, except for the blazing flames that oozed out of their hooves.

Michael and the others agreed to use the Pyroma Horses. They could save time by riding through the Savannah Region. Why wouldn't they use the Pyroma Horses? "Just try to keep up with us, and we will be fine," Michael said, hoping that the Berserkers wouldn't be much slower than the Pyroma Horses.

"The combat zone is not waiting for us. Let's go," Michael said, swinging himself up onto the back of the Pyroma Horse that had approached him.

["This is their leader. It's the fastest one!"] The Elemental Empress exclaimed in Michael's mind.

"You can talk to the horse?" Michael inquired in wonder.

["Yes. But no. I know what it wants to share and how it feels. It's prideful and doesn't want anyone but you to ride it. It can sense that you are the Leader. That you are our Lord."]

Michael patted the Pyroma Horse's mane and grinned faintly.

"In that case, how about you show me how fast you are?" Michael asked, his eyes locking onto the Pyroma Horse.

It neighed loudly and charged behind Zira's Nightmare Horse as they galloped forward.

Not identical two hours later they reached the northern combat zone in the Laprix Lord's territory. The sound of clashes of weapons and shrill cries rang through the surroundings, and the heartbeats of the Warlock Centaurs and Berserkers accelerated.

It was time for war.

Chapter 552 No Jam

The battlefield north to the Laprix Lord's territory was flooded with the Council of Xylon's army. The long-distance fighters such as their Archers, Mages, and Healers built a small camp at a hillside that bordered the flatlands inside the Laprix's territory.

They used the advantage of their altitude and the lack of hiding spots spread throughout the battlefield to hunt the defenders. The Trilance's forces were not necessarily weaker than the Council of Xylon. If anything, they could only survive this long because they were stronger than the average combatant of the Council's army.

The Valkyria, the elite force of the Valyrians, posed the biggest threat to the Council's army. Their racial trait granted them a minor fire affinity, allowing them to use a wide variety of techniques to overpower their enemies. Even the Valyr Summons were stronger than the average Summon. Their racial advantage was similar to the physical advantage of the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs. It provided them an edge in fights against beings without racial advantages.

"I want to fight them," Thaor announced, his eyes locked onto the Valyrians.

"They're your allies," Lokai slapped her brother on the back of the head with great force, "Your enemies are over there. They might seem weaker but look at their numbers. This will be a fun fight."

Lokai seemed excited just like the other Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs. Zira stared at them in disbelief but Michael could only smile. He was well aware of the Berserkers' and Warlock Centaurs' desire to fight and how much they loved to wage war, however, it was something new for Zira. "They're fine. Don't think too much about them," Michael said, "Do you want to join us, or will you join the Valyrians?" "How about you join me to fight alongside the Valyrians? Since almost everyone in your group is at the 2nd Tier or above, we should have a good chance to break through their defenses. It shouldn't be impossible to destroy their camp."

Once their camp was destroyed, the Council of Xylon would be pushed back and forced to retreat to set up a new camp further in the back.

"Did you already cut their supply chains, or did you fail in destroying their supply convoys?" Michael asked, his eyes fixed on the campsite on the hill.

"Their supply chains are well protected. Our cavalry tried to take them by surprise and attack at night, but they must have Orbs of Hostility, or similar devices installed into their caravans. We were detected and blocked long before we could reach their supplies," Zira answered begrudgingly.

Michael nodded sharply and gathered his people around.

"I've got a plan," He said, waking up Stinger, the Golden Stinger Wasp, who had been sleeping soundly in his coat until now. Zeroa kept the little Golden Stinger Wasp warm. Stinger hummed happily as he saw Michael, who smiled back at the little monster.

Little Stinger was not as tiny as before. The Golden Stinger Wasp grew up well and some Tamers suspected that he was going to evolve pretty soon. Michael was looking forward to that. After all, Stinger was a valuable asset to his combat force.

"If you won't join us, you might as well return to the Valyrians," Michael advised Zira, who happened to be listening to Michael's plan, "We will take care of the rest."

"Eh. I might as well join you. I'm curious to find out how your plan will work out."

"Suit yourself," Michael said with a nod before he proceeded to tell everyone about his plan. It was simple but certain to work out. After all, the Trilance had yet to try something like that. They didn't have the means.

Once Michael was done sharing the plan, Stinger stung everyone one by one. He disappeared in the next moment, a spatial portal teleporting the Stinger to the peak of the hill. A quarter of a second later, Michael, Lokai, Thaor, Lilcia, and Tiara disappeared. The Golden Stinger Wasp reappeared in their spot. In the meantime, the five Awakened appeared on the peak of the hill, in the center of the enemy's camp.

They appeared in a large tent, on top of a large wooden table where the map of the Savannah Region had been spread out. The army's general and commanders were in a meeting, their bodies leaned over the map when a spatial portal suddenly manifested above them. A tiny wasp had emerged from the small spatial portal, only to be replaced by five large figures.

Lokai and Thaor crashed on top of two commanders. They reacted instinctively and executed their strongest techniques to take their enemies by surprise and end them with one swoop. Michael, Lilica, and Tiara weren't any slower. Tiara's body transformed as she exerted Silvarean Tiger, and her body lunged forward. A three-fold intertwined Spirit Whip lashed out at the closest enemy, her spear thrusting forward, piercing through the enemy's chest in one go.lights

Lilica, on the other hand, pulled back her bowstring and manifested an energy-condensed arrow to shoot at the Guards who were trying to run away to warn the others. Michael used Insert to apply Enhancement onto Lilica's bow and insert several layers of Enhancement onto Tiara. Simultaneously, Lokai's Burning Fury was unleashed, her Soultrait empowering her allies gradually.

Michael used his Soul Energy to empower Heavenly Beast Physique with several layers of Enhancement to overpower the general-in-command. He manifested the Aethyr Longsword and cleaved down on the General, whose eyes were widened in shock and disbelief.

The General was an Awakened at the Peak of Tier-3, and he was experienced enough to respond quickly. However, he was taken by surprise. He, just like everyone else, didn't expect enemy forces to appear in the commando tent, especially not at this moment.

Under normal circumstances, the entire camp should have received a warning if foreign energy fluctuations invaded their territory. The energy fluctuations would have been weakened, or completely dispersed. However, the minute spatial fluctuations of Zeroa's tiny spatial portal passed through the defensive mechanism by utilizing the tiny gap of overlapping energies in the center of the campsite. The overlapping energies in the campsite couldn't be sensed by ordinary beings. The interferences were minuscule and they didn't affect the efficiency of the devices that had been installed in the center of the camp to safeguard the campsite from invaders and long-distance attacks of all kinds.

In fact, even Zeroa could not sense the overlapping energies in the center of the campsite. Only Michael had been able to see the overlapping energies by channeling energy into his Spirit Eyes. His eyesight improved significantly and the energy fluctuations in his field of vision grew more vibrant. He noticed several dome-like structures that were invisible to the eyes of ordinary beings. The domes existed to warn the camp if an enemy invaded them from all sides, if foreign entities utilized energy within their ranks, and various other means to determine the extent of breach of their defenses by the enemies.

These means of defense and safeguard weren't uncommon. They were ordinary structures used by the majority of Lords since they were the most useful to prevent enemy forces from invading your territory. They were almost perfect. Almost.

The instruments utilized to create the domes and other structures that protected the campsite were installed in the center of the camp. However, some of these instruments were placed too close to each other, therefore, canceling out each other's effects, rendering the spatial interference useless in a tiny space. This speck of space was inconspicuous and it was way too small to allow the manifestation of an ordinary spatial portal.

However, it was big enough to create a miniature spatial portal that could battle a small entity, a Golden Stinger Wasp. And that was more than enough to initiate Michael's plan.

After Stinger grew stronger, its stinger effect lasted much longer. A single use of its racial trait could transport five entities simultaneously. Michael had been worried that the spatial interference would trouble Stinger's racial trait, but it was different from an ordinary spatial affinity. Stinger's racial trait was unique. It was not registered by the alarms and spatial interference, letting him do his job undetected!

Michael utilized his overwhelming strength and momentum to take leverage of the General's shock and disbelief. He beheaded the General after rendering him incapable of defending himself by utilizing a 6-layered Spiritual Domination. Michael used Prognosis to determine the General's path of retreat and cut cleanly through his head.

The others existed also quite fast. Nobody could escape their surprise attack. One of the generals and two commanders had been eliminated with their initial attack, and more would follow soon. But before that, they had to remove the camp's protective mechanisms. Those were a hassle.

To tackle that issue, Michael transformed The Aethyr Longsword into a Warhammer. Next, he moved to the instruments that had been installed next to the table with the Savannah Region's map and lifted the Aethyr Warhammer. He pulled the Warhammer high above his head and smashed down the heavy tool of destruction, crushing one device after another.

In less than half a minute, Michael had destroyed all devices. He retracted the Aethyr Warhammer into his body and waited for Zira and his subordinates to arrive. ["That was a bit fun. Not much, but a little bit."] Zeroa spoke into Michael's mind, and he agreed.

"The Tekur existed stronger."

That made sense. The battlefield north of the Laprix Lord's territory was smaller. Their General was strong, but he was not as strong as the Lords of the Council of Xylon. Michael doubted that anyone in the Savannah Region owned a Soul Technique either. Even if someone did, he was quite sure that their Soultrait was too weak to make full use of a Soul Technique. Otherwise, the Savannah Region would already be ruled by a single entity.

"But I think this is going to be quite fun. This is just one of the many battles that await us!"

Chapter 553 Soul Tears

The massacre began after the defensive devices were destroyed one after another. Zeroa opened a large spatial portal, allowing the others to infiltrate the campside as well.

The Warlock Centaurs and Berserkers emerged first. They readied their weapons and activated their Soultraits before charging out of the commando tent. The Forest Elven Adventurers followed next with the Holy Knights, Mages, and other Summons whose rank was Tier-2. In total, Michael barged into enemy territory with less than 100 people, excluding the Elementals, who stuck to their assigned partner. The Immortal Knight did not join their expedition. He was still wondering whether he should use the Bloodline Upgrade Token or not because he wasn't certain if he wanted to get back onto the battlefield, or if upgrading his bloodline would solve his health problem, in the first place. He didn't want to get his hopes up just to get disappointed once again.

Michael didn't push Siegfried. The Immortal Knight had to make a choice, and Michael didn't think that it was fair to pressure him. It was not like they were in a rush to begin with. Michael had temporarily abandoned his duties as a Lord to join the expedition into the Savannah Region. Who was he to rush others if he couldn't even focus on the expansion of his territories after procuring more wealth in a few hours than some procured in two lifetimes?

Michael stepped out of the commando tent once everyone had emerged from Zeroa's spatial portal. Zira had joined them, and her expression was filled with shock when she saw the corpses of the General and two Commanders.

"We tried to use portals but that didn't work. The spatial interference is way too strong. Only Grandmagus with a high-ranked spatial affinity can break through the spatial interference of a Basic Spacium Domain. Do you have a Grandmagus here?! How? Where?" She asked, her voice turning erratic as more words tumbled out of her mouth.

Michael raised his hand and Zeroa manifested a miniature figure of a blazing woman in his palm. The blazing figure was a miniature version of Zeroa. It was not her original form but it was the form she

chose to use primarily in Michael's territory. "I don't have a Grandmagus, but an Elemental Empress. Her spatial talent is not that extraordinary though. Fire is her primary element," Michael said nonchalantly following Zeroa urged him to tell more about her.

Zira had heard about the Elemental Empress. In fact, she had even seen her with Michael before. However, the energy fluctuations she sensed from the tiny figure were several times stronger than before. The Elemental Empress had grown stronger.

The Legendary Ring Artifact's dragon might masked Zeroa's presence while she was hiding underneath Michael's cloak, but her miniature figure was different. It fully revealed the true presence of a Pseudo-Mythical being.

"I understand. But how did you manage to bypass—..." Zira had more questions, but Michael lifted his hands.

His eyes glowed brightly and Spirit Eyes' Marks began to illuminate. Michael's right arm was covered in azure flames in an instant and three large blazing lances manifested around him. He furrowed his brows and released the blazing lances with a burst of energy. The lances pierced through the walls of the commando tent and hit their targets with great precision. Muffled screams escaped the targets' mouths but they ceased as quickly as they had emerged.

Three Soldiers at the 2nd Tier had overwhelmed one of his Holy Knights, and it was easy to tell that they would breach his defenses soon. The Holy Knight used his Holy Power with great precision to defend but it was his first time fighting a life-and-death battle against another humanoid race.

The Holy Knight didn't appraise the enemies before he charged into battle. He was confident of killing one of them within a few strikes before overpowering the others with his great skills.

Unfortunately, it was not that easy. The enemies were more experienced than the Holy Knight. They had participated in several smaller wars during the last several years. Compared to them, the Holy Knight was still a greenhorn. Even if his skillset and combat awareness was better, he was not yet experienced enough to deal with three well-trained enemies of the same rank.

Fortunately, Michael was around to help. "Your defense is great, but your attacks lack decisiveness. I know that it's your first time to fight another race in a war so you make mistakes. Though, it's fine

because I'm here to protect you all. I promised the Immortal Knight that I will give my utmost to bring everyone home alive, but you should keep in mind that wars are cruel and merciless. Even I might not be able to protect everyone. You need to protect yourself. You need to kill your enemies to not be the one getting eliminated instead!" Michael advised the Holy Knight as he moved closer.

His head flicked to Zira for a moment.

"Let's not waste our precious time with small talk. We will be busy from now on," Michael uttered to Zira before he turned back to the Holy Knight once again, "Why didn't you use your partner's Elemental Might? I can sense the presence of a Lesser Earth Elemental on you. You could have easily dealt with them." Michael lectured the Holy Knight a little longer before he used the Taming Soultrait to fuse with Zeroa. Power Share was activated immediately, granting Michael minor mastery of all elements. His mastery of the fire element skyrocketed to the Intermediate rank, which Michael exploited instantaneously by manifesting three dozen azure blazing lances.

Spirit Eyes was fully activated and enhanced with one layer of Enhancement. That was enough to easily differentiate between his allies and enemies. Once that was done, Michael unleashed the azure lances. The blazing projectiles whizzed through the air, pierced through the tents – putting them on fire – and impaled their enemies with great precision.

Michael eliminated a bunch of Assassins and Elite Soldiers, who'd prepared to jump on his allies. His subordinates were already busy enough dealing with the enemies they could see. Thus, Michael reached out with a helping hand. That was his mission for today. His focus was not to fight as many enemies as possible. He was going to be more of a supervisor who would jump in whenever necessary. Michael's priority was to ensure that his subordinates were given enough time to adjust to the sensation of war, and that the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs would improve their teamwork with the Forest Elves and the Holy Knights.

Last but not least, his subjects should grow stronger. The energy influx and experiences they would gain in the Savannah Region ought to improve their combat prowess by leaps and bounds.

Michael kept an eye on the surroundings but he quickly noticed something that attracted his attention. There was something odd about four corpses. He'd eliminated a several dozen enemies using Zeroa's mythical flames, but four corpses were weird. Michael could see that something had gathered within the four corpses. It looked somewhat familiar, yet alien at the same time.

'Why does this remind me of Danny's Living Soul?' Michael wondered, channeling more origin energy into Spirit Eyes. His vision improved and it didn't take long before Michael could affirm that the gathering mass was similar to a Living Soul. Yet, it was different as well.

The four masses were white-silverish in color and only Michael could see them. That was something he could tell pretty clearly when the masses ascended into the air. They transformed into tiny wisps that moved around wildly, but no one seemed to be concerned about them. One of the wisps phased through the tent and shot past a Holy Knight, who didn't seem to notice anything. He didn't even flinch as the wisp traveled past his head.

With the ascension of the four tiny wisps something stirred within Michael simultaneously. The sensation was weak, at first, but it grew more apparent as the wisps moved closer to him. They were drawn in his direction.

Michael frowned in confusion but it didn't take him long to notice that the Soul Grimoire was wreaking havoc in the Sphere of Light. Understanding dawned upon him and he activated Soul Grimoire, summoning it at once.

The Soul Grimoire's cover was decorated with various intricate patterns and countless miniature runes. It was purple in color with a bluish hue, but it was not quite indigo. A lock kept the Soul Grimoire closed. At least, that was the case until now. The lock burst open, unleashing an indigo hue that shrouded the Soul Grimoire in its entirety as it opened, revealing hundreds of empty pages.

As if sensing the Soul Grimoire, the wisps accelerated. Their trajectory changed from Michael to the Soul Grimoire and they didn't slow down at all. They smashed into the Soul Grimoire where they disappeared inside as if they had never existed, in the first place. All that was left of the four tiny wisps was faint images that had been engraved onto the Soul Grimoire.

The images were of different sizes and had slight variations in color as well, just like the real deal. Michael was surprised how lifelike the images looked, but that was probably because the wisps were still the same as before. They didn't cease to exist all of a sudden. They simply disappeared into the Soul Grimoire.

'Right. I can store souls in Soul Grimoire. But why would Souls be naturally pulled toward it? Is it because they hope that the Soul Grimoire will preserve them? Is it their basic instinct to strive for survival?' Michael wondered, but before he could continue his train of thought, he was bombarded with a small influx of information.

In the same instance the Soul Grimoire glowed brighter. The lifelike images of the wisps, which were actually the Souls of the deceased, dimmed and a new image formed. The image of a purple tear. The image of one Soul dispersed following some time, and it was not long before a tiny wisp, a fraction of what it had been before, emerged from the Soul Grimoire. 'It doesn't devour the entire Soul, but it can drain a deceased Soul's power to create the Soul Tears before dispatching the soul to the afterlife.'

Michael's eyes fell onto the completed Soul Tear, the new information in his mind allowing him to understand some of the things he'd seen just now. Not everything made sense, but he could connect the dots and imagine what was going on and what he could do.

He tapped into the power of the Soul Grimoire and accessed the Soul Tear. Using the Soul Tear's accumulated power, Michael could strengthen his Soul, the other Souls that had been absorbed into the Soul Grimoire, or strengthen a Soultrait temporarily.

Yes. The Soul Tear could temporarily strengthen a Soultrait. As for how potent the enhancement would be... Michael was about to find out.

Chapter 554 Amazed

Michael used a Soul Tear on Glacicle as a small experiment and he noticed a huge difference at once.

Glacicle's potency increased by more than 30%, increasing Glacicle's power and characteristics drastically. It was much easier to manifest and shape Glacicles and various new notions to use Glacicle formed in his mind.

Michael decided to test out one of the ideas that had popped up in his Mind. He manifested a small azure flame and coated it in a Glacicle. Fusing the azure flame with the Glacicle was not supposed to work out but by strengthening Glacicle's inside to temporarily seal Zeroa's mythical flames, it was possible.

He decided to name the attack Pyrocle Spear, a blazing spear blade frozen in eternal ice, and released the attack into a group of enemies further away. The enemies numbered in the tens of thousand. There were more than enough targets to experiment with, especially since the majority of their combat power ranged from Peak Tier-1 to Low Tier-2. Dealing with them was not an issue, though their arithmetical advantage was a bit bothersome.

The Pyrocle Spear shot through the air with a terrific velocity. It was much faster than the azure lances and impacted heavily, or so one would think. Michael willed the ice sealing the mythical flames to shatter, bursting into countless tiny shrapnels, right before they impacted their target. The mythical flames that had been compressed and sealed into the Glacicle, erupted with tremendous power, pushing the glacicle shrapnels further ahead.

The ice shrapnels dug deep into the enemies, whereas the explosive mythical flames burned everyone who was too close to the center of the eruption. "That was decent, but not great," Michael analyzed his attack critically. It was okay for his first time, but the damage paled in comparison to what he could have done with ordinary azure lances. Nonetheless, the attack had potential. All he had to do was practice a lot and alter a few steps and characteristics to increase its lethality.

Oddly enough, Michael could instinctively tell what he had to improve to turn the Pyrocle Spear into an even more terrifying weapon. It was almost as if his understanding and mastery of Glacicle had improved significantly. Did he enter an enlightened state of existence all of a sudden? No. All he did was consume the Soul Tear with his primary target of enhancement being Glacicle.

"That's crazy. Soul Tears enhance a Soultrait's power, mastery, and understanding by nearly 30% for more than ten minutes. That means I can study my Soultraits in constant enlightenment as long as I have enough Soul Tears. That's awesome." Michael had yet to grasp everything about the Soul Tears, but he learned enough about it to understand one thing; Soul Grimoire was not useless anymore. It was not just a means to store and preserve Souls. No. Now that he found out another use of the Soul Grimoire, Michael could tell that the Soul Grimoire was far more powerful than he could have hoped for. All he had to do was accumulate more Soul Tears and use them properly. 'If they work on my Soul as well, can I accelerate the replenishment of my used-up Soul Power?' He wondered, waiting for the last Souls that had been stored in the Soul Grimoire to turn into Soul Tears. Once a Soul Tear had been completely formed, Michael used it on his soul. The result was even better than he could have hoped for. Not only did his Soul Power replenish much faster, but it was also much easier to produce Soul Energy. Even utilizing his Soul Techniques such as Soul Glacicle Bullet was much easier. 'I...can deepen my mastery of Soul Techniques and create better techniques using the mastery and enlightenment gained from Soul Tears...Maybe, I can create Elite Soul Techniques for myself!'

Just thinking about the possible uses of the Soul Tears was exciting. It provided even more reason to upgrade Soul Grimoire's star rating. Of course, it was not important to look for more reasons to do that since Danny's Living Soul was more than enough reason for Michael to upgrade Soul Grimoire as much as needed. Nonetheless, it was good to find more reasons to focus on Soul Grimoire's upgrades.

Michael smiled before using the last Soul Tears to temporarily strengthen Taming. His bond with Zeroa strengthened temporarily and his mastery of her mythical flames reached new heights. He created

dozens of azure lances and released them to kill those who were about to overwhelm his subordinates. The situation all over the battlefield was growing more intense as the moments passed by. The center of the camp had been claimed by Michael and his subordinates, but that didn't mean they had an easy time.

Lokai used her Soultrait, Burning Fury, to strengthen herself and everyone around her. Burning Fury's ability to strengthen others increased as the number and strength of the opponents around her increased. The more disadvantageous Lokai's situation, the stronger Burning Fury would be.

As Lokai charged into the masses of enemies, her strength increased. But she was not the only one. Thaor, Mekhaz, and the other Awakened barged into the crowd of Soldiers without an ounce of fear. Thaor used his unique constitution, Crimson Aura, combined with his Soultrait, Red Giant, expanding his body and gaining tremendous power that allowed him to fight three Tier-3 Summons at the same time. He fought valiantly and unleashed bursts of his strength to push his enemies away. Lokai's Burning Fury enhanced him, granting him more strength, and it was not long before the first Soldiers died at his hand.

Once Thaor, Mekhaz, and the others breached their foes' defenses, they gained more foothold in the campsite. The Holy Knights combined their strength by using special techniques that required the Holy Power of multiple Holy Knights. Together, they managed to defeat an Awakened whose Soultrait manifested a Warhammer that would have crushed them if not for their combined power.

Everyone fought valiantly. The Soldiers in the camp were desperate in their attempts to kill the invaders, but it didn't take long until they realized that the invaders were not that easy to deal with.

Most Awakened and stronger Soldiers were already busy fighting at the frontlines. Those who stayed back in the camp were either exhausted, or injured, or they had been working on different things. They never expected someone to be able to breach their spatial interference and attack them this brazenly.

Michael and his subordinates swept through the rows of tents, their attacks ferocious and merciless. The Holy Knights and other younger Summons who'd never participated in a large-scale battle, or massacre, were still hesitant, but they understood quickly enough that their lives were on the line. A single mistake was enough to kill them, or someone they cared about. Michael was glad that his subordinates worked well together. They listened to his orders and executed his plan with deadly precision. It was only a matter of time before they claimed the lives of every enemy who was still in the camp, leaving the remaining enemies on the battlefield with no place to retreat.

However, conquering the camp was not enough for the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs. They were overflowing with excitement and entered a frenzy. The Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs could barely distinguish their friends from foes at this point. They developed into killing machines that sought the deaths of their enemies to quench their thirst.

Michael didn't like that. Therefore, he intervened. He used the Links of Loyalty to command them to hold back a little, forcing the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs out of their frenzy. Their dissatisfaction and irritation proliferate through the Links of Loyalty and impacted heavily, however, Michael did not care. He had to control his subordinates to ensure their survival. 'It makes sense why so many Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs die on the battlefield. This will be troublesome once Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs start working closely with my Summons.' Michael realized.

He shook his head and sighed heavily. Their enemies numbered in the tens of thousands, yet the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs wanted to charge at them. They wanted to leave the relatively safe environment of the camp to dash onto the battlefield without a plan. They didn't even wait for their allies and moved out alone.

"You can join the battle again, but use your damn head, please. Your heads are not for decoration. You're allowed to use them!" Michael bellowed, using his presence as Lord and the Links of Loyalty to convey to everyone that he was not going to accept disobedience. He wouldn't train anyone who was going to get themselves killed for no reason. If that's what they wanted to do, they should do so alone without endangering their comrades-in-arms. 'You guys won't get any Soultraits from me if you act like this. I'm not giving those treasures to people who'll end up dead a month later, either way.' Conquering the camp was the most important goal to cut off the army from their pseudo-kingdom. The army of the Council of Xylon was surrounded by enemies and they didn't have a place to hide anymore. Charging mindlessly at them was stupid. It was much better to use proper tactics now that they gained a small advantage. Michael forwarded a few commands to his subordinates via Whispering Energy. He repetitively told them to be careful and to use Elemental Might with the help of their Lesser Elemental partner. Once all commands had been relayed, the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs moved out. They moved with great precision and...disappeared.

Stinger transported the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs to a different spot. They reappeared near a group of Mages, Supporters, and Healers. In the next instance, the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs did what they were best at. They fought and killed.

Chapter 555 Elemental Might

The battle against the Council of Xylon's army continued. The Valyrians and the other forces of the Trilance pushed forward whereas the Council of Xylon tried to retreat. Having lost contact with the commando tent and the camp on the hill, the council's Soldiers were uncertain about what happened. They changed into a defensive formation and used their numerical advantage to safeguard the Valyrians

and Trilance. Simultaneously, they ordered a few fast Assassins to check out what was going on in the camp.

However, before the Assassins reached the hill, they were already faced with unknown forces. Three-meter-tall beings packed with steel-like muscles and an even faster cavalry charged at them, wielding a wide variety of weapons that were coated in the power of elements. A handful of swords and halberds were covered in blazing flames, the spears and war axes were amplified from the wind elements coating them, and there were several shields and armors coated in water and earth elements. The Lesser Elementals hidden underneath the combatants' robes used their power at full display. They used Elemental Might to coat their partner's weapons and armor sets while simultaneously exerting their power to manifest earth spikes, water shields, wind blades, fire spears and more.

Combining their magical nature and the ability to fight long-distance battles with the physical advantage of the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs created an oddly suitable synergy. Their combined combat prowess was much higher than Michael had expected it to be. That way, he didn't have to pay much attention to the Awakened fighting for him. They were strong enough to protect themselves.

Thus, Michael joined the battle again. He had to help to outbalance the enemy's numerical disadvantage.

The Forest Elves moved rapidly. They held their bows tightly in one hand and moved fluidly as they nocked an arrow on the bowstring. They pulled the bowstring back in a nonchalant manner, aimed for a second, and released the deadly projectile.

There was no need to follow the trail left behind by their arrows. The Forest Elves could tell whether they hit their targets, or if they failed. Therefore, instead of observing the massive numbers of enemies that began to slowly retreat to the camp, Lilica and the others focused on their task ahead.

Their Elemental partners decided to guide them. They manifested a compressed elemental arrow on their bowstring, allowing the Forest Elves to pull back the bowstring right after releasing the last arrow. The crucial second they required to snatch an arrow and place it on the bowstring was no more necessary. The Elemental partners acted as a temporary upgrade, evolving the Forest Elves ordinary hunting tactic into a highly lethal weapon to all beings below the Mid ranks of the 2nd Tier.

Michael watched the Forest Elves for a while and smiled. The Lesser Elementals that partnered with the Forest Elves were great aids. They protected the Forest Elves from incoming projectiles and manifested

elemental projectiles on their own. Their merged strength played a huge role in hunting hundreds of enemies in no time.

The Trilance's forces regained their morale once they heard that the camp had been conquered and claimed. They had slowly begun to lose their confidence and morale before. However, hearing that reinforcement arrived and that the reinforcement managed to kill a General and two Commanders infused them with much required vigor. Their concerns dispersed, replaced by newfound strength and determination.

The Valkyria shot forward in unison. They seemed to expand and grow into terrifying monsters as ferocious flames burst from their bodies. Michael observed the Valkyria for a few seconds. His Spirit Eyes detected energy fluctuations from Soultraits and a sudden eruption of great power. The power of the Valyr's Soultraits and racial traits merged as they exerted the Valyr Martial Arts. Now that their morale was back at its peak, they didn't worry anymore. All they had to do was eliminate their enemies.

'She's quite impressive.' Michael thought as his eyes traveled to Zira. Her combat awareness and Martial Arts comprehension were highly profound. The young Valyr's only issue was her Soultrait. Zira's Soultrait was as trashy as before. There was no change. She was better off not using her Soultrait, at all.

At some point, the equation on the battlefield had changed. The council's army grew more restless and desperate whereas the Trilance gained more foothold on the battlefield.

Everything was going according to Michael's plan. The Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs were overflowing with excitement after Stringer transported them to the Mages, Supporters, and Healers. Michael gave the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs permission to go all out and relish themselves in the bloody battle as long as they didn't break their connection with Stinger.

The Golden Stinger Wasp used its unique spatial trait to move the frenzy Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs through the battlefield. Stinger unleashed the frenzy Awakened first in the back of the council's army before transporting them to the flanks where the Warlock Centaurs could act as cavalry to send the enemies to death. The Berserkers, on the other hand, were throwing into the middle of the battlefield with the Holy Knights and Michael.

Michael used Zeroa's spatial affinity to create several spatial portals for the Valkyria and other elite forces of the Trilance to join the battle.lights

Less than one hour after Michael and his subordinates joined the battle, the defenses of the Council were breached and their morale crushed into tiny bits. Michael didn't expect the council's army to crumble this fast. He had been prepared for a drawn-out battle of attrition, but he presumed that it made sense. The Council of Xylon was not actually a kingdom in a true sense. It was a patchwork kingdom that consisted of dozens of alliances, alliances that had been at war a few months ago.

The Council of Xylon had various internal problems and they were projected on their armies as well. The battlefield at the border to the Laprix Lord's territory was rather small, but one could still tell that the Council of Xylon hastily put together several smaller armies of former enemies. They loathed each other, yet they were forced to fight together against their common enemy – an enemy who they'd never fought before. However, their Lords ordered them to fight, so they did. The Council of Xylon's plan would have worked out. All they required was the vast numerical advantage to defeat an enemy with similar strength. The Trilance was only slightly stronger than the other alliances. But that didn't mean they could go up against a flood of enemies that were only slightly weaker. Fortunately, Michael and his subordinates were capable enough to do what others couldn't.

But even then, it was not like the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs escaped the fight unscathed. Almost all of them sustained heavy injuries, most warriors received more than one, but they were too excited and pumped with adrenaline to take note of their wounds.

Even if they could feel the pain that had been inflicted through severe wounds, the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs wouldn't care. They would be proud.

Tradition remarked that every enemy slain would increase their Warlan, which was part of a karmic system that determined how much impact a Warrior had on the people around them, the world in its entirety, and the universe. The more Warlan a Warrior accumulated, the higher was their impact. The higher their impact, the grander their welcome into the afterlife into the Sacred Halls of Wyrian. They wanted to be welcomed into the Halls of Wyrian as Great Warriors, and Warlocks. A few wounds were nothing in comparison!

The Holy Knights and Forest Elves were also feeling elated, even those who sustained injuries. They battled valiantly and found themselves in several near-death situations, but they survived. They experienced the threat of war and learned how warfare worked. Their combat experience increased, their techniques improved and the energy influxes they'd received from every slain enemy fortified them.

Last but not least, Michael distributed Jungle Points for killing Awakened and ordinary Soldiers. Jungle Points could be accumulated by both Summons and Awakened, and they could exchange them with

various treasures that would help them to grow even stronger in the future. "That wasn't too bad," Tiara said, appearing next to Michael.

Michael raised an eyebrow when he saw Tiara again. He saw Tiara once on the battlefield fighting among the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs, and he had to acknowledge that Tiara's wild instincts were not too different from the Berserkers' frenzy. The only differences were that Tiara could control herself much better than the Berserkers and that she only went ballistic upon transforming via the Silvarean Tiger Soultrait.

The longer she fought, the stronger the force of her wild instincts. Her combat awareness skyrocketed and she would subconsciously use her Soultraits. Once, Tiara blacked out mid-battle, only to regain her senses while being surrounded by a flock of corpses.

She was not proud of it at that time and worked on herself to learn more about her instincts and how to utilize them well without losing control.

"We did great for our first warfare with the Holy Knights and Awakened. But, as always, there is a lot we can improve," Michael said, only to hear Tiara snicker. Was it that hard to praise his people without finding faults for him?

Michael smiled lightly and shrugged, his attention moving to Zira and the Valkyria.

"Everyone did great," Michael remarked and a smile manifested on Tiara's smile.

"But we can do better!" "Urgh," Tiara groaned, staring at Michael, the corner of her lip still tilted upward.

Chapter 556 Politics and Compromises

The Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs pursued the last survivors of the enemy army before they returned to have someone tend to their wounds.

In the meantime, Michael was given the corpses of all Awakened that had been killed in today's battle. That was one of the terms Michael had given to the Trilance. If they wanted his support, the Trilance had to separate the corpses of all Awakened slaughtered in the Regional War and hand it over to him. It was one of the major reasons Michael contemplated helping the Trilance, in the first place.

Their help was substantial, so it was no wonder that Michael and his subordinates were permitted to collect the corpses of the enemies they'd killed as well. It was not like Michael was in dire need of their corpses, but he would be stupid not to take them. Summons might drop less loot than most monsters, but with Extraction, Michael could still plunder a considerable amount of goods nonetheless.

The aftermath of the battle wasn't that bad. Two of the strongest Blessed Squires in Michael's team died, and one Holy Knight lost his weak arm. Michael was a bit bothered about the deaths but he knew that he had never forced anyone to join him. He told the Blessed Squires to rethink their decision and to be careful because they were only 1-Star Summons without decades of experience.

Unfortunately, that was not enough of a warning. Too many Summons who'd been promoted to 1-Star or 2-Star Summons were excited to test their powers in a real battle. They didn't act foolish but their imagination was wildly different from the cruel reality.

Unfortunately, that was not enough of a warning. Too many Summons who'd been promoted to 1-Star or 2-Star Summons were excited to test their powers in a real battle. They didn't act foolish but their imagination was wildly different from the cruel reality.

Michael thought a bit about the deceased, but his mind drifted swiftly to the occurrences on the battlefield and the effect of actions of his subordinates, the Trilance's forces, and the Council of Xylon's small army.

Since he could see much more than others through his Spirit Eyes, Michael had an easier time connecting the dots and concluding the actions of every party in addition to their reasoning.

'I can still enhance a lot,' He mumbled in his mind, comprehending the mistakes he committed and how to use the unique characteristics of the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs to his advantage. Michael was certain that he couldn't change the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs. Their traditional values were sacred to them. Forcing changes upon them through the Links of Loyalty might be possible, but it would shatter their trust and it might harm their souls because he certainly knew that they would fight against any order that went against their principles.

Pulling them out of their frenzy and battle-rush once was already frowned upon, and Michael did not really want to repeat the same procedure over and over again.

Instead, it would be better if he studied the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs intently and guided them in the right direction to use their full potential. There was no need to impose anything upon them. Michael could show them what they had to do to get stronger and they would naturally adapt. In the worst case, Michael would allow the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs to let loose where they could cause the least chaos. He would give them what they desired the most by throwing them into the battlefield with Stinger's help. freeΩη.çο6Π

Michael had a lot to think about and he was given some time for himself, to recall everything about the battle to analyze and to study the Soul Grimoire.

His presence on the battlefield hadn't been as obvious as usual, but Michael was still an active participant. In fact, Michael had the highest contribution in today's battle. He killed close to 2,500 enemies while experimenting with the Pyrocle Spear, Soul Glacicle Bullet, and various other attempts to make full use of the Soul Grimoire's Soul Tears.

As a Tier-3 Lord fused with a Peak Tier-2 Pseudo-Mythical Elemental Empress that had a lesser affinity with all elements, and a mythical fire affinity, Michael didn't need to put much effort into his attacks to kill Summons and Awakened at a lower rank. He wasn't in an all-in fight against Superior Races such as the Tekur with tremendous power and Soul Techniques. His adversaries were a small army, a fraction of a messed-up kingdom with hundreds of small territories. The territories had been squashed together to gather enough numbers to fight against the Trilance. Yet, the Trilance didn't crumble even after several weeks of constant fighting against a very large horde of attackers. The Trilance might have lost a big portion of their territory, but their military might was still standing strong. That uttered more than enough about the Council of Xylon and their lack in military might. They had the numbers to threaten the Trilance but not the power to conquer them. "How did they even survive this long? If I was that weak, I would have been crushed by the monsters of the Untamed Jungle the moment the beginner protection barrier lifted," Michael mumbled even though he knew the answer.

"It's politics. Most of these smaller territories border four, if not more, other territories. Attacking one of them means that you leave an opening for the other Lords to stab you in the back. That's also why none of their armies have thousands of Peak Tier-3 Awakened in their rows, and why their numbers don't surpass 100,000 Soldiers either. Even though the Council of Xylon works together, none of the Lords trust each other enough to dispatch their strongest forces to overwhelm us," Zira explained to Michael, who nodded absentmindedly.

He figured that the Council of Xylon would crumble the moment the Trilance perished. One Lord would attack his neighbors the day the Trilance ceased to exist. Thereafter the Council of Xylon would be destroyed and the intensity of the Regional War would elevate to a completely new height.

Michael didn't care about the smaller territories, but he was unwilling to let the Trilance perish. His bond with them was not exactly strong, but Michael would rather have familiar neighbors who could be reasoned with than new neighbors, who may or may not attack his territory at any given time. The Trilance knew how strong he was, and after today's battle, they would understand that the military might of his territory had been reinforced. Michael and his subordinates were not the same as before. They couldn't be played with anymore. Plus, they were still in the game only because of his generous help.

"You mentioned that this is one of the smaller battlefields. How much larger are the other battlefields?" Michael asked, still deep in thought.

"Most battlefields are a little bit larger, but they're not as massive as you think. The dispatched forces of the council usually reach 30,000 to 50,000 Soldiers. Most of them are 1-Star Summons who have already advanced to Tier-2, but they have a considerable number of Tier-3 Summons and Awakened as well. Most Tier-3 Summons have special abilities, and their Awakened are also a little bit annoying," Zira explained.

"There are many battlefields along our borders these days. My mother and the other Lords concluded that the Council of Xylon was trying to claim our lands to cut off our supplies and finances. Once we lose most of our territory, they will siege our main settlements, create an indomitable Gate Blockade to block all attempts to leave the Origin Expanse through the Runic Gates, and let us starve to death." The plan of the council was not extraordinary, but for a temporary coalition of more than a hundred smaller territories, it was feasible. There was no need for special tactics that relied heavily on the combat prowess of individuals or teamwork with the numbers of the Council of Xylon.

If Michael's memories of the Kitsun Lord and others were not failing him, the smaller territories had more than two settlements with more than 100,000 citizens. Most smaller territories had a population crossing 300,000, which, in retrospect, meant that Michael's territory was tiny with a population below 150,000 citizens. He was not even close.

But then again, Michael could initiate a massive population expansion at any point. It was just that he didn't think it was necessary right now. He focused on the quality of his subjects rather than quantity. That was also why he hoped that the Advanced Sacred Knight Temple, the Hunter Academy, and a few more places would be completed before he began expanding his territory a bit more.

One way or another, the Trilance was in a tricky situation. Since the patchwork kingdom had the numerical advantage while also maintaining a decent quality of soldiers that rivaled the Trilance's forces, it was easier to spread their armies across the borders, forcing the Trilance to compromise.

If the Trilance wanted to protect their entire territory including every single inch of it, they would have to spread their forces equally along the borders. However, they didn't do that. The Trilance chose to protect certain parts of their territory while giving up other parts. It was a painful decision, but also the reason they survived this long.

Michael discussed the Regional War with Zira for a while. Listening to the young Valyr provided a massive influx of information. It was enough to decide that it was about time to join the next battle when Zira received a notification about another attack near the Laprix Lord's border. Only six hours passed since the last fight ended. That was not a lot, especially with the additional work everyone had to complete after the battle. Most couldn't rest for more than three hours, yet another wave of adversaries was about to arrive near their border. Fortunately, three hours of rest was enough to replenish most of their stamina. Being at the 2nd and 3rd Tier decreased the need for rest. They could fight again, though their mental power was still drained.

But that was hardly an issue for Michael and his subordinates. They were well-rested and could fight for quite a while before exhaustion would take them out.

"Lead the way to the battlefield!"

Chapter 557 Lucrative

A week full of ferocious battles ended at last.

Michael and his subordinates joined the Trilance's forces to defeat and successfully pushed back the forces of the Council of Xylon seven times. They succeeded every time and never sustained many casualties and injuries. Of course, it was not possible for Michael to save everyone, but he gave his utmost to rescue his subordinates once they had been pulled into a situation that they couldn't escape on their own. Michael's main priority was to keep his subordinates safe and pinpoint fragile spots in the enemy's defenses. Other than that, Michael observed the battlefields and watched his subordinates go wild. But that didn't mean he avoided fighting. Michael focused on experimenting with the Soul Tears that had accumulated in the Soul Grimoire. There were hundreds of Soul Tears and using them in the midst of a fierce battle seemed like one of the most efficient ways to boost his combat prowess and comprehend new things for the future.freewm.com

After a full week of fighting had passed, Michael's subordinates were dead-tired. Even the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs had to take a break. It was good that the Warlock Centaurs and Berserkers weren't as foolish as they seemed to be. They rested when they had to rest and they avoided enemies they couldn't deal with. Of course, they would never openly acknowledge that they avoided a certain enemy, but it made sense to focus on the foes you could deal with rather than fighting above your weight class. Dealing with a Peak Tier-3 Awakened while being at the Peak of the 2nd Tier was not something everyone could do. It was even more difficult for an ordinary Adventurer whose Soultrait didn't do much to strengthen him in combat.

Despite that, everyone's combat prowess increased significantly. Michael's Holy Knights gained more combat experience in one week than they'd accumulated over the last few months. Their rank improved as well after they'd received countless energy influxes from eliminating so many foes.

Everyone who had been at the Peak of Tier-1 advanced to Tier-2, and the Awakened who were stuck at the Peak of Tier-2 advanced as well. At last, they advanced to Tier-3.

Michael received a share from everyone's energy influx, but he was not even close to refining his War Rune to the next rank. He was lowkey stuck at the Lowest rank of Tier-3, and it would take a while before he would reach the Low rank as well.

Fortunately, he didn't have to rush his advance to the next Tier. He was not in a rush, after all.

Other than the energy influxes and the experience everyone had accumulated, Michael obtained a lot more. After helping the Trilance to exterminate five armies and force two more into retreating, they went out of their way to thank Michael.

The deal with Michael demanded that he would be given the corpses of the Awakened that had been killed on the battlefields where Michael and his subordinates participated. However, instead of keeping it at that, the Trilance send him the corpses of all Awakened they had killed in the last seven days.

The Trilance didn't know why Michael was so focused on corpses, but the Lords knew that there were many Soultraits that required certain materials and conditions to be used. Those Soultraits were usually quite powerful. Therefore, they went out of their way to aid Michael. The Trilance was hoping that it would be enough to keep Michael by their side and that he would use the corpses to empower himself and his subordinates to keep fighting for them.

Michael didn't plan on telling the Trilance about Extraction but it didn't matter if they knew that he had good use for Awakened corpses. Therefore, he accepted the Awakened corpses without hesitation, totaling the number of Awakened corpses in his possession to 1,225.

That was a little bit less than what Michael had been hoping for, especially since the Awakened corpses were Adventurers with little Soul Power, and most of them weren't even close to the Peak of Tier-3. But he was not completely dissatisfied.

Last but not least, Michael understood that Extraction didn't work that well on people who hadn't been killed by him or his people.

Nonetheless, he made huge gains. His subordinates eliminated 7,300 enemies on average on the different battlefields, totaling the number of corpses in their possession at 51,100. That meant Michael and his squadron of less than 100 subordinates eliminated a little more than one-tenth of the enemy troops they'd faced.

The number was a little unexpected, but it didn't seem too odd, at the same time. Michael's trials were intense and it was no wonder that he killed close to 2,000 opponents on every battlefield. It didn't seem odd to anyone. If anything, the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs expected this from Michael.

Their Lord had to be a monstrosity to manage them.

"I've known that wars, especially Regional Wars, will be treasure troves for you, but I didn't expect this," Mekhaz said to Michael, whose eyes turned to the Warlock Centaur.

"I mean. You haven't told the public how you procure Soultraits and what you have to do to strengthen a Soultrait, but now that I think about it, it's quite obvious," He added, the corner of his lip curling upward.

"It makes sense that you hide the mysteries of your power. I don't even want to imagine what some crazy powerhouses would do to please you. Maybe, some would go insane and commit genocide both in the Origin Expanse and outside to collect the corpses of Awakened to exchange with you for a Soultrait

Symbol, or some Soultrait upgrades." Michael smiled sadly. He'd already imagined what would happen if he'd requested the right to perform the punishment for all awakened criminals. On one hand, Michael could harvest thousands, if not tens of thousands of SoulStar Fragments a week, but the downside was that everyone would get to know about one of the few remaining mysteries of Extraction. For now, it was merely a suspicion, but Michael knew that some older powerhouses were crazy enough about his Soultraits to consider kidnapping him. Since that failed once, some families decided to shower him with gifts. Kraft Viton accepted the gifts for Michael, but he never sent a response or let them try to approach Michael. It was obvious that these families were trying to gain his favor, and Michael couldn't really do anything against that. But what would happen once he told everyone that he procured Soultraits and SoulStar Fragments straight from Awakened? He would turn the suspicion into a fact, therefore giving the crazy powerhouses more reason to shower him with the bodies of Awakened instead of cheap gifts. After all, Awakened corpses were more valuable than some Inferior Energy Stones or the like.

"Yeah...I can already see the Zeus family gifting me the captives from Tartarus just to please me. And the worst is, I would probably feel guilty if I didn't return the favor. That's why I should keep my mouth shut and keep the suspicion just that. A suspicion. Otherwise, everyone will throw bodies at me, hoping that I will jump around happily before upgrading their Soultraits," Michael responded, earning a scoff from Mekhaz.

"That's a luxurious problem you have right there. Good thing we had to sign a super tight NDA to never tell anyone about anything you don't want to leave your territory," The Warlock Centaur added, tending to his wounds.

Mekhaz had been injured a little bit over the last few days, but that was not a big surprise. Michael was, in fact, one of the few people who didn't sustain any injuries. Even Lilica and the other Forest Elves couldn't avoid injuries.

"But you might displease some Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs if you don't change your Jungle Points System a little bit. I don't know how many Soultraits you acquire from the Awakened we kill, but once the others find out that they're basically slaving away for you, they might demand more Jungle Points. Currently, we would have to kill close to 300 Peak Tier-2 Awakened to exchange a single 1-Star Soultrait Symbols, one of the weakest, at that."

Since Mekhaz had no idea how high the probability of procuring a Soultrait Symbol was, he couldn't make any demands. However, he doubted that it required 300 Peak Tier-2 Awakened to acquire one or two Soultrait Symbols.

"Don't worry. I am still working on adjusting the Jungle Point system. I will change the prices pretty soon. The first Soultrait Symbol bought from the Jungle Shop will be a lot cheaper. However, the price scale for Soultrait Symbols will increase drastically as you purchase more Soultrait Symbols. I'm not a Soultrait factory, after all."

Michael figured that it should be easy to purchase one or two Soultrait Symbols and that it shouldn't be a problem to upgrade them to 4-Star either. However, the price for every subsequent upgrade and Soultrait Symbol would increase exponentially. There was no need to upgrade the Soultraits of his subordinates further than 4-Star, or for anyone to have more than 3 Soultraits. Michael didn't have enough Soultrait Symbols to give away 6-7 Soultraits to every Awakened just like that, in the first place.

"There is no need to change it just because I told you about it. I just wanted to talk to you about the Jungle System and some possibilities since you are still new to the nature of Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs," Mekhaz explained, smiling gently, but the words that escaped his lips were far from gentle, "We despise dishonesty."

"Eh...okay..."

Chapter 558 Path of Evolution!

After losing almost half a million soldiers over seven days, the Council of Xylon was forced to change their tactic. They had been so busy with their internal strifes and establishing political connections with the Lords from other regions that they'd forgotten about the Trilance. In their opinion, the Trilance was as good as destroyed and no more a headache for them. However, the arrival of no more than 100 people changed everything. The Trilance's reinforcement arrived. At first, the reinforcement didn't seem like a big problem, but underestimating Michael and his subordinates was a grave mistake. Five armies had been bulldozed and only a few thousand soldiers of two more armies managed to retreat. Those who managed to survive weren't in good mental condition anymore, either.

On the other hand, the Trilance's reinforcement didn't even lose 10 members. None of the casualties was an Awakened either.

Since the Council of Xylon couldn't afford to lose more soldiers needlessly, they stopped dividing their armies into smaller units. Small settlements were under construction near the border to the Trilance's territory, and it didn't take long before news reached them. The Council of Xylon changed to a passive tactic and created small skirmishes to keep the tension within the Trilance at an all-time high. The Trilance wanted to retaliate and counterattack but their forces were worn out as well. Their equipment wasn't well-maintained and sustained considerable damage over the last few weeks. Overall, the Trilance's morale was low despite Michael's intervention, and the Awakened working for the Trilance's Lords considered leaving the Origin Expanse. They would break their contract, but it could be solved by

paying an exorbitant fee. Surviving was more important than wealth. Michael's Soul Pacts couldn't be broken that easily. Everyone who'd been willing to become Michael's subordinate knew that it would be difficult to leave him. The Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs were still allowed to leave, but the price to leave him was not only wealth. The memories of their time in the Untamed Jungle would be wiped away and everything they'd procured from the Jungle Shop would be taken away.

The terms of the contract would become even more binding once they fused their first Soultrait from Michael's Jungle Shop. Nobody would be allowed to leave anymore, not without paying an even heavier price. Michael was not willing to nurture anyone just to see them leave after they got their fill of his powers. It was only obvious, but he came up with a tight-locked Soul Pact to ensure that he couldn't be betrayed easily.

After the Council of Xylon changed their tactic, Michael decided to return to the Untamed Jungle with his subordinates. Everyone was tired, and it was easier to rest in Michael's territory. The Untamed Jungle's ambient energy, the effect of the Nature Spirit, and the Forest Pixies' presence made it easier to calm down, release the tension within the body, and rest.

But what Michael didn't expect to see once he returned was Sun Demos and an envoy of his subordinates. Sun Demos and his Blood Oath Demon Monkeys didn't reside in the settlement. They had a habitat in Michael's territory but it was not right next to the settlement. Sun Demos and his subordinates wanted a bit of solitude and were not keen to mingle with the rest of his subordinates. They were a close-knit group that way and didn't allow strangers in their army.

["Did you abandon us?"] Sun Demos asked the moment he saw Michael. The Demon Monkey King's eyes landed on the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs, their fresh wounds speaking volumes about the happenings over the last few days.

[Abandon you? Why would I do that?] Michael responded through Whispering Energy.

["If you didn't abandon us why did you not take us to the battlefield alongside them?"] Sun Demos didn't have to point at the Berserkers to make Michael understand who he meant by 'them'.

Michael smiled sensing the Demon Monkey King's jealousy. Or was he just worried that he and his subordinates would be abandoned and thrown aside?

["We want to join the battle as well!"] Sun Demos declared, but Michael shook his head almost instantaneously.

[I never forbid you to come with us to the Savannah, but I don't think that's a good idea. You and your kind have a great advantage in the Untamed Jungle. Your movements in the Untamed Jungle are extremely fast, and deadly silent. You can move smoothly and change your trajectory at any moment by using the dense forest to your advantage. But the Savannah is not like that. You and your little friends will be exposed at all times. There are little to no hiding spots, and you cannot get close to the enemies easily.]

Michael didn't want to say this aloud, but the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys weren't organized enough to be useful in a large-scale battle outside the Untamed Jungle. Inside the Untamed Jungle, the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys and their King were extraordinary, but outside they were just like any other Superior Monster at the early ranks of the 2nd Tier.

["I don't want to be useless. The monsters in the surroundings are getting stronger, yet our strength doesn't increase. We're stagnating. We will die, or be forced to rely on our Master, aka you, to protect us. We don't want that. We need to grow stronger. We want to evolve!"]

Michael had noticed a while ago that Sun Demos was quite intelligent. His intelligence seemed to have improved quite a bit over the last few months as well. Was that because of the taming bond? The taming bond grew firmer, yet Michael was not sure if Sun Demos' increasing intelligence was related to that. It would be interesting to find out.freemn.com

Putting aside that thought, Michael focused on Sun Demos' issue. The Blood Oath Demon Monkey King and his kind desired to grow stronger. Their personality and attitude wouldn't allow them to depend on the protection of others to survive, but that was exactly what might happen if the dangers in the Untamed Jungle increased while their strength remained the same.

Michael understood why Sun Demos wanted to evolve. He had to exceed his racial limitations to grow stronger and evolving was the easiest way to do so, for a monster that is. Initiating a mutation was also possible, but that was rather problematic since it was not easy to determine the direction of a mutation. Certain items could stimulate mutations but it was uncertain how the mutation would affect other beings. That was also why Michael didn't touch these items until now. He didn't want to give Sun Demos hope just to stimulate a mutation that weakened him instead of breaking his racial limit. Therefore, evolution was the only way to ensure a positive outcome. The problem with that was on a whole different level.

First of all, it was important to know that every monster could evolve. Their inborn talent determined how many times a monster could evolve, but it was proven that all monsters could evolve. It was just that some monsters had an simpler time while others were faced with more difficulties along the path of ascension.

It was important to know that Monsters had to unlock a Path of Evolution before they could evolve.

[Did you already unlock a Path of Evolution?] Michael asked, his curiosity ignited, [If you did, can you feel what grade the unlocked Path of Evolution is?]

Even after unlocking a Path of Evolution, it wouldn't be easy to evolve. Unlocking a Path of Evolution merely meant that the Will of the Origin Expanse acknowledged your achievements and that you met the requirements to evolve into that particular monster.

The Path of Evolution was more like a feeling. A monster that unlocked a Path of Evolution could sense that they unlocked 'some' evolution path. However, they were unable to tell the exact details of their evolution path. It was not like a Soultrait that provided an influx of information upon fusing, after all.

["I unlocked three Paths of Evolution. One should permit me to achieve the same state of existence as the flaming bit—... witch."] Sun Demos said, pointing at Zeroa.

'A path that increases his Superior form into a Pseudo Mythical Existence. That's pretty nasty!'

Most monsters would want to choose the Path of Evolution with the greatest benefits. However, it was not easy to comprehend the information hidden within the Paths of Evolution. The better the path, the higher the difficulty to procure pieces of information.

Sun Demos would have to learn more about himself, his accomplishments, and his state of being to find out what items he would have to procure to initiate the evolution. He would be able to find out more details about the extent of his evolution as well. But that was incredibly difficult for most monsters. It was also the reason why most monsters would never evolve. Many strong monsters met the

requirements for a Common Path of Evolution, but only a few learned what they needed to evolve. Interestingly enough, it was more likely that a monster would evolve by chance after stumbling upon rare ingredients and energy-dense regions. They would evolve before they realized that they had already met the evolution requirements. [I can research a bit about your kind and read through reports related to monster evolutions. Since you are a demonic beast, I can procure some objects for you to inspect. If they're suitable for one of your evolutions, you will be able to sense it.] Michael told Sun Demos before he added.

[Either way. I want you to solve the problem of overpopulation in the Untamed Jungle. Since you want to join me in the Savannah region because you want to be of help, help me with the Untamed Jungle instead. That's your turf, so make use of it. Become the Guardians of my region and get rid of the ever increasing number of monsters!]

It was only a matter of time before more powerful monsters would roam around his territory. His region was too attractive and it would grow even more attractive to High Beasts once the Domain of Natura was installed. Sun Demos and his little fellas could solve that problem and possibly break their racial limit naturally by fighting slightly above their weight class.

Michael believed that they could achieve it. Even if they did not, he was more than willing to give them a light push in the right direction.

He hoped that Sun Demos and his kind could evolve soon. Michael felt like he needed as much strength as possible.

The next few weeks were bound to be tiresome.

Chapter 559 Complaints

559 Complaints

Sun Demos was not the only one who complained to Michael. The Blood Oath Demon Monkey King was merely the first of his many subordinates.

Following Sun Demos' departure to act as the future guardian of his master's territory, complaints from the Lesser Elementals and the members of the Sacred Knight Temple reached Michael.

["The Lesser Elementals want to join the war in the Savannah Region. They heard about the heroic tales of their brethren and they desire to create their own heroic tales."] Zeroa informed him. She forwarded a few more comments from the Lesser Elementals, making it clear that the Elementals didn't want to rot away in their society underground. They wanted to help Michael and their Empress to protect and expand their territory, while also seeing the breathtaking scenery in the outside world.

"My students hope that you can allow them to join the next battle as well. I know that you're worried about their well-being, but there is no need for that. Each and every single one of them knows what might happen on the battlefield. Thus, you cannot pull them away from all battles. They need to learn how to fight life-and-death battles and the Savannah's Regional War is the most suitable to achieve that. There are no Higher Lifeforms on the battlefield, after all," Siegfried Dragoon said as he approached his Lord.

Michael turned to the Immortal Knight and nodded, "I know that I shouldn't restrain them. They can leave with the Awakened once everyone has recuperated.

"But tell them that I won't return to the Savannah Region for the time being. That means they have to rely on their own combat prowess, tactical understanding and situational awareness to survive," Michael added. He wanted to keep fighting in the Savannah's Regional War but he had put aside his job and responsibilities as a Lord long enough.

More than enough time had passed since he obtained the treasures from the Bartholomew's Soultrait Symbol Auction, but he had yet to extract the impurities within the Summoning Cores. He had been so busy that he didn't even install the Cores yet!

He had to tell the Immortal Knight a few more things but that didn't take long. Once their discussion was over – with Michael allowing everyone who wanted to join the Regional War to do that – Michael retrieved a small obsidian token. Thick crimson veins passed through the token, creating intricate patterns all over the obsidian's surface.

"Take this. It's a Bloodline Upgrade Token. Once you break the token, your bloodline will be upgraded. I don't know how painful that will be but considering that you sustained some major injuries which decayed a portion of your body, I guess it will be very painful," He explained.

"It will probably take a while as well, and consume a tremendous amount of resources. So, take this as well!" Michael added, while retrieving piles of Inferior Energy Stones and Intermediate Nutrient Pills to support Siegfried's bloodline upgrade.

"I...I don't know what to say. This is...unbelievable," Siegfried responded after a while. He'd been speechlessly staring at the Bloodline Upgrade Token and he couldn't believe what was happening. The Immortal Knight had already accepted his fate. He accepted that he would never be able to join his students onto the battlefield. The day he was summoned, he knew that all he could do was share his knowledge, train students to become stronger and fend for themselves, and to recreate the Sacred Knight Temple.freewm.com

It was not a boring life. Training his ambitious learners was entertaining, and it felt great to witness the reappearance of the Sacred Knight Temple. However, none of that was the same as being out on the battlefield, feeling the electrifying tension spreading all over the battlefield, and fighting with his life on the line.

The Immortal Knight was thirsty for action. He wanted to fight again, but he knew that he would never be able to do so. His battle spirit remained but his youth and fighting powers had been taken from him.

But the Bloodline Upgrade Token could change everything. Siegfried Dragoon could tell from the bottom of his heart that the Bloodline Upgrade Token was the solution to all of his problems.

He couldn't believe that his master was willing to give him something like this. Just like that. Michael didn't even request anything in return. If anything, Michael gave Siegfried more than that. He provided the Immortal Knight with everything he could possibly need to initiate the bloodline upgrade and overcome it without any difficulties.

"There is no need to say anything. But if you want to say something, how about 'Thank you'? That's all there is to say," Michael shrugged, "At the end of the day, actions reveal more about someone than words. So if you're really thankful, keep doing what you have been doing. That's all I wish for."

The Immortal Knight observed at his Lord, his expression softening.

"Thank you." He said from the bottom of his heart. "Thank you very much!"

Michael nodded back at Immortal Knight's heartfelt expression of gratitude. He didn't know what to say. Instead, he cleared his throat and wished Immortal Knight good luck and a successful bloodline upgrade.

Afterward, they went their separate ways. The Immortal Knight retreated to upgrade his bloodline. He looked ahead to it, excitement filling his heart.

Michael was ready to dive into his to-do list of things he'd pushed aside for over a week, but there was something else he had to do before he got started.

He had to integrate some changes into the Jungle Point System. Mekhaz's words and his piece of advice might not be entirely correct, but his sneaky comments were not wrong either. It was not like Michael wanted to restrain his subordinates in some way. Now that he had given it some thought, it would help Michael if his subordinates managed to collect enough Jungle Points to purchase a Soultrait Symbol and Soultrait Upgrades without having to kill hundreds of powerful Awakened. Nonetheless, it was a fact that Michael didn't want to turn Soultrait Symbols into something 'ordinary'. He hoped that the Soultrait Symbols from the Jungle Point Shop could remain special. Therefore, the prices couldn't be too low.

'The price for everyone's first Soultrait Symbol will be heavily discounted. The second Soultrait Symbol won't have a discount, and the price from the 3rd Soultrait onward will increase exponentially. I should do the same with SoulStar Fragments.'

'The price for the first three upgrades, which is equivalent to roughly 500 SoulStar Fragments, will be cheap and easy to procure, but the following upgrades will cost a lot more. Most won't be able to increase their Soultrait to 5-Star anytime soon, which gives me enough time to harvest more Soultrait Symbols and SoulStar Fragments to upgrade my strength as well...'

Michael implemented the changes without further delay. It was a good thing if his subordinates grew stronger. His subordinates were part of his territory's military force, after all. Stronger subordinates were harder to kill as well. Nourishing a small elite force by giving each of them several Soultraits sounded much more pleasant than hiring thousands of Awakened in bulk. After all, he didn't have the means to nourish thousands of Awakened.

It was also a good thing that Micheal integrated a special clause into the Soul Pact of his subordinates. Once they purchased a Soultrait Symbol, their Soul Pact would tighten, preventing the Awakened from

betraying Michael even if he were to surrender his Lord power. Furthermore, the Awakened would be forced into fusing with the Soultrait Symbol they'd purchased.

Michael added this clause to the Soul Pact to prevent his Awakened from selling Soultrait Symbols to other forces, or to exchange them with others. They would have to fuse the Soultrait Symbol they'd purchased, or their Soul Pact would shatter, bursting the Awakened's heart and insides in one go.

It might sound cruel, but Michael couldn't think of a better clause to prevent other forces from procuring his Soultrait Symbols for a cheap price. He didn't want his generosity to come back to bite him.

Once he was done altering the Jungle Point System, Michael checked how many Awakened were already close to purchasing their first Soultrait Symbol. Since they'd returned a while ago, the dashboard inside the Jungle Shop had been updated. Everyone's Jungle Points were listed, and their achievements were neatly written down in the Jungle Shop's log.

Bureaucracy was an annoying thing that had to be done properly in every territory, but the paperwork for certain tasks didn't seem like a big problem. In fact, most people liked paperwork that given them benefits. Therefore, everyone who had been fighting in the Regional War finished their report swiftly. They provided hard evidence to back their claims, completed their reports, and were given Jungle Points not long after.

"Thaor is doing much better than expected, but Mekhaz is much faster. That's not unexpected. But then again, none of the newcomers can retain up with Tiara and the EmeraldLeaf Adventurer team. They'll have to procure their 2nd Soultrait Symbol and upgrade it to 4-Star before they can desire to keep up with them," Michael snickered lightly.

He turned away from the dashboard before he gestured to his attendant.

"Make a list and tell everyone that they have to hand over an official application if they want to join the Savannah's Regional War. I want to know their strengths, weaknesses, rank, and the reason they want to join the Regional War. If their rank is too low, or their reasoning seems off, reject them," Michael ordered heartlessly.

"I don't want anyone who endangers their comrades. If they're too weak or their reasoning is not serious, they should focus on growing more durable and changing their attitude by training hard in a secure environment. It won't do them any good if they move out and fight desperately, just to surrender their lives at the end of the day."

Chapter 560 We Want War!

560 We Want War!

Many Blessed Squires, and Holy Knights applied for the expedition into the Savannah Region. The number of applications crossed 1000 within a few hours.

Michael didn't expect everyone to be this interested in the Regional War, but he guessed that it was mostly the internal rivalry between his subordinates that resulted in the massive flood of official applications.

Since their colleagues gained tremendous strength, confidence, and combat experience on the battlefield all while they had been safe and sound in their homes, they wanted to invade the enemy's territory as well. After all, nobody wanted to lose out against their rival!

In the first place, every Starless Summon who'd joined the Sacred Knight Temple did so to grow stronger. Their reasoning was pretty simple. They either wanted to protect their friends and the people they learned to love in Michael's territory, or they desired to use the second opportunity they'd been granted by resurrecting in Michael's territory to change their fate. They didn't want to stay the same names they'd been before they died. Everyone wanted to be something.

Michael supported them. He didn't reject many applications. However, since he was not going to join them, Michael decided to reject every application from Summons below Late Tier-1. As long as they were at the Peak of the 1st Tier, they should be able to manage to hold the fort against some foes. Furthermore, at the Peak of Tier-1, a Summon could advance to the next Tier pretty quickly.

As long as his subjects fought in their formation and didn't charge mindlessly at their enemies, it would be fine.

Other than the 1000 official applications, Zeroa told Michael that she would join the battle with an equivalent number of Lesser Elementals. Her Lesser Elementals and the Noble Elementals weren't that

powerful yet, but they could support the Blessed Squires, Holy Knights, and Awakened with their variety of elemental attacks.

Zeroa would become Tiara's temporary partner whereas the nobility of the Elementals partnered up with Thaor, Lilica, and Mekhaz.

["Please accept the low-ranked Lesser Elementals as well. They want to join, and their elemental powers can be used to protect your subjects, amplify their attacks, and aid them physically in various ways!"] Zeroa requested via telepathy. Michael sighed heavily but he agreed reluctantly.

Zeroa was responsible for her society. If she deemed the low-

ranked Elementals strong enough to pose a threat to the Council of Xylon and strengthen his subjects in battle, he wouldn't reject her request.

At the end of the day, Michael recalled what happened last time his subjects asked him to join the battle. That was when the incident in the Elementals Cave occurred. Nonetheless, Michael allowed most subjects to join this fight. It was their decision and responsibility. The only reason he rejected some was because he felt that they might endanger their comrades. It was fine if they took responsibility for their own lives, but Michael wouldn't allow anyone to harm their allies by being too weak, or reckless.

It annoyed him a little bit that he wasn't going to be present for the next few battles in the Savannah's Regional War, but he had too much other stuff to do. Michael couldn't run away from his responsibilities any longer. It wouldn't do him any good.

Michael realized his foolishness a few days ago. After fighting in the Savannah Region for a while, Michael understood that he shouldn't keep postponing important tasks any longer, not if that came at the expense of the people he loved.

That was also how Michael understood that his brother might suffer tremendously just because he was unwilling to talk to his mother. That wasn't fair.

However, before Michael was going to jump into the dragon's nest to talk to his mother, he had a few other things to do. He was responsible for the development of his land as well, after all!

The first thing he did was obtain the Summoning Cores he'd procured in the Soultrait Symbol Auction. Those were four Basic Berserker Summoning Cores and four Basic Warlock Centaur Summoning Cores. They were incredibly valuable even though their purity level was among the worst. Fortunately, something like that was not a problem for Michael.

He summoned the Soul Grimoire and used two Soul Tears to amplify Enhancement and Extraction. The potency of the two Soultraits increased and it was not much later that Michael used eight layers of Enhancement to amplify Extraction's power exponentially.

Thereafter, Michael began to extract the impurities within the eight Basic Summoning Cores. It would have been even better if he could stack the effect of the Soul Tears because Enhanced Extraction removed a terrifically high amount of impurities from the low-quality Summoning Cores, but the effect was already shocking enough.

The amount of impurities extracted was even larger than the impurities he'd managed to extract from the remaining 11 Summoning Cores he possessed. Taking that into consideration, Michael used Enhanced Extraction with the amplification of Soul Tears to remove more impurities from the other Summoning Cores in his possession.

Once the mess caused by the disgusting mass of impurities splattered everywhere around the Summoning Gate had been cleared, Michael installed the new Summoning Cores in the remaining vacant sockets. Only a single opening was left empty now.

"I should look for an Intermediate Summoning Core," Michael mumbled, staring at the last empty socket before he closed the hatch of the Summoning Gate. A smile crept up on his face. He felt good now that his first Summoning Gate was slowly approaching its limit. It was about time to upgrade his Summoning Gate to the Intermediate rank!

The next thing he did was to move over to the Architect's main office where he retrieved 162 Intermediate-ranked Blueprints of Exotic and Extraordinary Rarity, and 75 Advanced Blueprints with core edifices like a Hunter's Academy, an Advanced Hospital and tens of devices that could be used for advanced farming, land protection, and a significant improvement of life throughout the territory.

"Since I'm not as knowledgeable about architecture, and the overall construction process, I hope you guys can meet up with the construction workers to create a priority list for all blueprints. I recommend

constructing the Hunter Academy and the Advanced Hospital with its designated medical devices as soon as possible. However, I've also been given enough resources to start the construction of the Intermediate Sacred Knight Temple," Michael dropped the bombastic news in front of his subjects nonchalantly, however, they could only stare blankly at him.

The Basic level of the Sacred Knight Temple could be renovated as long as the necessary resources were put aside. The only problem was that they would have to expand the temple, build a second floor, and expand into the second basement as well. In fact, calling it a problem was exaggerated. The only issue was the time and manpower required to renovate the Sacred Knight Temple.

The sudden influx of workload stunned the architects, but rummaging through the Intermediate and Advanced Blueprints ignited their excitement. The flame of excitement burned fiercely in their hearts at the sight of some highly advanced buildings that used incredible techniques, runic engravings, and devices to construct some of those magnificent structures.

Michael felt like an outsider the moment the architects' focus switched to the blueprints. It took the architects several minutes to recall that their Lord was still in the room, waiting for their response.

"We'll create a priority list and come back to verify the list with you. As you might know, we will require resources...lots of resources, if you want us to focus on several construction sites simultaneously. It will be cost-intensive and it will take a while before the first edifices are completed. Most Advanced Blueprints have large structures and our workforce is already busy expanding the residencies for more Summons and Awakened," One of the Architects responded.

Michael expected that response and retrieved one of his rings. He removed the seal of his energy frequency and placed the ring in the Architect's palm.

"The materials required to upgrade the Sacred Knight Temple to intermediate level and a batch of other materials are inside the spatial ring. It should be enough to get started with a few projects. More materials will follow soon."

Michael had yet to sell the remaining treasures he'd obtained from the three Tier-5 Lords who'd attacked him, and that didn't even include the treasures he had obtained from the Soultrait Symbol Auction and the gains he would make once he finished extracting the corpses of the enemies they'd slain in the Regional War.

The Architects eyed him weirdly, confused about how their Lord procured so many precious materials in such a short amount of time, but Michael didn't linger in their office for long. He told them to finish the priority list and come find him to discuss the following steps of their plan. Once that was done, Michael traveled to the Alchemist's Lair to repeat what he'd done with the Architects.

He retrieved a large batch of formulas for various sought-after potions and elixirs before telling the Alchemists to create a priority list. However, he also added another request. The Alchemists were told to research more potions, the Warrior Enlightenment Potion, to be precise. If the Alchemists could create their own set of Promotion Potions for other occupations, their land would find another source to generate a massive fortune.

'Should I use some of the Vouchers for Customized Epic Tier-3 Artifacts already? No. I don't really need them right now.' Michael shook his head. He might have enough space left for external amplifications, especially after his physique improved drastically thanks to Superior Constitution, but there was no need to rush.

He was not sure what type of Customized Epic Tier-3 Artifact he needed. Did he need something like that, in the first place?