

Supreme Lord 611

Chapter 611 Invincible Armor

After gaining Wind Mastery and Enhanced Wind, Frederik's range of control with Aeroan expanded drastically. The range of precise extended even further after Aeroan had been upgraded to a 5-Star Soultrait.

Nonetheless, Frederik didn't hide near the last row of defense. Instead, he used one of the presence distortion Artifacts, which the invaders from the Council of Xylon had used to invade the Untamed Jungle. He used the presence distortion Artifacts that were also known as Camea Artifact and positioned himself at the northernmost area of the battlefield.

Only a few monsters of the High Beast Horde passed by Frederik. Other than that, nobody paid attention to him or his position.

The one-meter-wide Invisible Wind Blades removed the biggest downside of Aeroan's great power. Under normal circumstances, Aeroan would cast a greenish hue around the winds it controlled. This made it much easier for the opponents to pinpoint Aeroan's winds and its creations.

Frederik's Legacy Arts solved that issue in exchange for heightened energy consumption.

Frederik had to consume one Energy Potion after another, but his killstreak continued until the High Lionhearts had enough of their underlings' deaths. They unleashed blazing flames all over the battlefield and controlled them precisely to spread further.

Frederik was quite unfortunate. The flames set only a few colossal trees on fire, but one of them was the tree he had been hiding. He was forced to change his position.

But that was fine as well. He changed to Plan B, coated his body in gales to accelerate, and crossed the distance to the Forest Elves quickly.

"The Speedy Arrow service has arrived!" He declared with a wink.

The Forest Elves frowned but they didn't say anything. Instead, they nocked arrows on the bowstrings and channeled energy into the bows to increase their pulling force as high as they could handle. In the next instance, the arrowheads were coated in hardened soil and razor-sharp ice shrapnels.

The Forest Elves pulled the bowstrings back, took aim, and released the arrows in one go. Hundreds of arrows soared through the air in beautiful arcs. They reached the highest point in the air and hailed down onto the Lionhearts who had already been waiting for the downpour.

The Lionhearts were prepared for the impact, but something changed all of a sudden.

Raging gales coated the arrows, casting a greenish hue around the hail of arrows. The arrows' top speed increased all of a sudden. They shot down to the ground like meteorites and tore through the enemies like a scythe cutting dry grass.

Frederik had been using Aeroan and his other Soultraits to enhance the arrows. He managed to double their speed for a short moment and increased their piercing force by compressing gales around the arrowheads.

A tremendous amount of energy had been consumed, leaving Frederik dry, but he was satisfied nonetheless. Opars appeared next to him. The Forest Elf pressed his hand against Frederik's back and used both Soothing Wave and Energy Imprint to ease Frederik's tension and replenish his dried-up energy storage.

Not all arrows managed to land a killing blow. The majority of incoming attacks were either blocked by the Lionhearts' shields or their armor. Nonetheless, the shields and armor pierces ended up damaged or they shattered into countless pieces. The Lionhearts stared into the treetops awaiting another attack. They sensed that something was wrong and waited. A second barrage of arrows arrived.

But this time the arrows weren't enhanced. They were ordinary arrows released without using a trace of energy.

The arrows impacted but the damage they inflicted was minuscule. It was almost as if the arrows were never supposed to cause any damage.

That was exactly what happened. The second barrage of arrows was a distraction. Stinger appeared above the masses of Tier-2 Lionhearts and used its special ability the moment the hail of arrows ended.

Stinger teleported outside the battle, Mekhaz and five other Warlock Centaurs replacing the Golden Stinger Wasp.

Mekhaz and the others sensed that Stinger wanted to switch positions with them. They had been marked before and felt the heat within the mark rising. Mekhaz and his comrades-in-arms were prepared for the teleportation and they wreaked havoc at once.

The distraction caused by the barrage of arrows had been initiated to create an opening for the ferocious monsters of the Untamed Jungle. A Wolf Pack of Tier-3 Vivarean Wolves charged into the masses of Lionhearts. Their leader pounced into the shield wall, clawed through the shields like they were made from paper, and ripped the closest Lionheart Shieldbearer's head from his shoulders.

The Vivarean Wolf Leader crushed the Lionheart's skull with a single bite and spit it out right after. The monster howled loudly, casting a gloomy sheen around the entire Wolf Pack. The white in the Vivarean Wolves' eyes was replaced by darkness and their speed increased. They accelerated and fought more ferocious. Every soul they reaped intensified the darkness that shrouded the entire Wolf Pack. They grew stronger.

Mekhaz and the others glanced at the Vivarean Wolf Pack once but they noticed that their Leader didn't even glance at them. The Vivarean Wolves pushed past them, weaved around the blazing flames that threatened to burn their shimmering fur, and continued their slaughter.

Mekhaz manifested the Living Armor and activated his new Soultraits right after. He didn't focus on his attack power when it came to purchasing new Soultraits from the Jungle Shop. Instead, Mekhaz desired to power up his Living Armor as much as possible. Therefore, he purchased Energy Absorption and Repel.

Energy Absorption was a very useful Soultrait due to two particular reasons. First of all, Mekhaz's innate talent improved right after fusing with Energy Absorption. He learned to absorb the surrounding energy more naturally and efficiently. However, that was only a minor gain compared to Energy Absorption's actual effect.

He could use the Soultrait on objects or other Soultraits to grant them the ability to absorb the surrounding energy naturally as well. It was only a temporary effect, but it was perfect for the Living Armor Soultraits and the 3rd Soultraits Mekhaz had fused with.

Living Armor's defense increased drastically as long as energy was infused into it. The Living Armor could even repair all kinds of damages as long as it possessed enough energy. That was exactly what Energy Absorption allowed.

Mekhaz's third Soultrait, Repel, completed the set of three highly compatible Soultraits.

Repel manifested an Ancient Rune with mystical power. It allowed Mekhaz to repel physical attacks and attacks of a magical nature to a certain extent. But that was not how Mekhaz used it. He used Repel on the Living Armor to cover it in Ancient Runes before using Energy Absorption on Repel. By doing this, Mekhaz managed to configure Repel a little bit. Repel wouldn't throw the incoming attacks back right away. Instead, it would absorb the energy within the physical and magical attacks before throwing everything back in one mighty blow.

Since Repel didn't block the attacks entirely, it wasn't a perfect Soultrait. However, combined with the Living Armor's extraordinary defense, Mekhaz didn't have to pay much attention to defending.

The incoming fireballs and fire spears lost a portion of their power upon reaching Repel's Ancient Runes. Energy Absorption stored the portion of energy that had been taken from the projectiles whereas the remaining power impacted on the Living Armor. Mekhaz was already trained to endure mighty blows from a Peak Tier-3 Berserker's mace. Weakened fireballs and firespears didn't hold a candle compared to that.

The Living Armor sustained little to no damage, and the little damage it sustained now and then was mended near-instantly as well.

Mekhaz acted as the meatshield that charged ahead into the masses of enemies. He wielded his double-bladed spear with determination and demonstrated with decisive attacks that meatshields could also transform into terrifying slaughter machines.

Mekhaz's spear swirled around his perfectly armored body with great velocity and precision. The spear blade sliced through the throat of a Lionheart next to him and he pierced the next Soldier a moment later. A third one fell victim a mere second later.

The other Warlock Centaurs didn't allow Mekhaz to take away all the glory. They joined the battle by unleashing their Soultraits as well.

One of the Warlock Centaurs manifested a massive spiked club. Another one accelerated all of a sudden, his legs coated in sparks and electricity currents. Everyone unleashed as much power as possible to obliterate hundreds of Lionhearts in an instant.

Lionheart Awakened and two High Lionhearts were about to change their targets to them, but the Warlock Centaurs disappeared from this part of the battlefield. It was almost like they had never been there, in the first place.

The Golden Stinger Wasp replaced them. Mekhaz and his comrades-in-arms reappeared in another part of the battlefield. Their Soultraits were already fully unleashed and it didn't matter where Stinger teleported them. All they had to know was that the Heart of the Blazing Lion army was their enemy and that they could beat them.

As Mekhaz and the Warlock Centaurs disappeared, the Vivarean Wolf Pack continued to charge ahead. All of a sudden, the fasted Holy Knights wielding daggers appeared next to them. They emerged from the thicket and pushed ahead, continuing where the Warlock Centaurs possessed stopped.

But instead from fighting alone, the Holy Knights unleashed the Holy Power and combined their powers alongside the Untamed Jungle's monsters.

Chapter 612 True Warfare

Hours passed in the blink of an eye on the battlefield. Corpses, blood, and body parts could be found wherever one looked. It was a terrifying experience...and it was not over yet, either.

Even though it looked like Michael and his subordinates suffered fewer casualties, the situation was not all that bright and sunny.

The Untamed Jungle's outer ring was no more. Everything had been burned to the ground, even the humongous trees that had been towering above all for decades. Michael and his people lost the environmental advantage on the battlefield with the disappearance of the outer ring. They were pushed back into the middle area where they couldn't retreat any further.

If the Zentika Empire's forces forced them to retreat any further, the settlement might get exposed. That was something they wanted to avoid if possible.

Michael and his people had various means of defense in and around the settlement, but it would be better for everyone if the settlement remained well hidden further back in the Untamed Jungle's middle area.

The greatest advantage was that more than 60,000 Lionhearts had been killed since they invaded the Untamed Jungle. Unfortunately, most of the dead were Tier-2 natives. The strongest Lionhearts were still alive.

Less than a third of the High Lionhearts deployed to invade the Untamed Jungle had been slaughtered.

The Lionheart Commanders were also still alive. They had sustained some more or less serious wounds from battling the strongest High Beasts after Michael used Enhancement on them, but their lives were not in danger just yet.

Most High Beasts had been killed at this point, and the Monster Horde was reduced to a third of their former might. Their corpses littered the battlefield, their bodies either gutted or burned until only shreds were left behind.

Michael had been on the battlefield the whole time. He was the cause for the death of most High Lionhearts. However, his main mission had been to support his people and rescue them when they couldn't protect themselves anymore.

To his misfortune and the misery of his subordinates, Michael couldn't be everywhere.

It was impossible to protect everyone on a large-scale battlefield with three large armies spreading through the Untamed Jungle. They didn't even move together anymore. The three Commanders pushed their enemies back and spread in three directions to conquer the Untamed Jungle's middle area.

Three Untamed Awakened, Tier-3 Berserkers, who had been fighting valiantly against the forces of the Zentika Empire, had grown too confident in their strength. Their strength had skyrocketed after attaining new powers through the Soultraits and Soultrait Upgrades. They charged at a High Lionheart with confidence and highly advanced physical strength and delivered feisty blows to the High Lionheart.

At the end of the day, they managed to take down the High Lionheart after an arduous battle that lasted more than half an hour. It took the three Berserkers the combined efforts of their Soultraits and their tremendous physical strength, but they did it.

But the three Berserkers didn't live long enough to celebrate their victory. They died in exchange for killing the High Lionheart.

It was honorable to die on the battlefield, and it was an even greater glory to die after defeating a Higher Lifeform while being a mere Lesser Lifeform. It wasn't that bad for the Berserkers to die like that.

However, Michael didn't like that. He liked most parts of the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs' culture, but their acceptance of death and the fact that they charged into battles knowing that they couldn't emerge victorious was something that Michael would never be able to comprehend.

It didn't make any sense. Michael couldn't comprehend it.

Michael didn't even have enough time to mourn the dead.

Three members of the Untamed Awakened alongside more than one-fourth of his little army had been annihilated.

The worst was that Michael felt a tinge of relief when he sensed how few people died. The casualty rate was a lot lower than he had expected. If they were to fight enemies at a similar Tier, Michael wouldn't be like that, but the Heart of the Blazing Lion army was not just 'any' enemy. It was an Elite Army from the Zentika Empire.

Unfortunately, the warfare against the Zentika Empire's forces was not yet over.

Their forces continued to move ahead and kill everyone in their path.

The High Lionhearts were the biggest problem on the battlefield. Michael and the Untamed Awakened managed to kill most Awakened, the strongest forces among the Tier-2 and Tier-3 Lionhearts, swiftly. However, the Untamed Awakened were not strong enough to deal with the Higher Lifeforms.

Michael and Hiraku were the only ones who managed to deal with High Lionhearts without sustaining lethal injuries. The others would have to fight suicidally and sacrifice their lives to eliminate a dozen High Lionhearts before they would succumb as well.

'It would be much easier to deal with the Heart of the Blazing Lion army if the High Beasts didn't charge in so stupidly. Their death might cause—...Forget it!' Michael slapped his cheeks tightly.

At least, the strongest High Beasts were still alive. They were his means to defeat the Commanders, who were at the Peak of Tier-4. Without the strongest High Beasts, Michael didn't know how to win against the Commanders, not without losing everything. After all, they were also Awakened with powerful Artifacts.

The Commanders being Awakened turned the situation even worse than necessary. The only good thing about them was that their Soultraits weren't that great. One of the Commanders summoned a Sword with his Soultraits, but the Sword Soultrait was quickly replaced with a Weapon Artifact, indicating that the Sword Soultrait was of a low star rating.

Only one of the Commanders had a decent Soultrait. It allowed him to control blood to a certain degree.

The Blood Manipulation Soultrait had been enough to kill hundreds of ferocious monsters, Blessed Squires, Holy Knights, and others. Dozens of Forest Elves were struck with blood spears, their bodies exploding once the blood spears impacted.

The sight was gruesome, and the survivors were filled with rage. However, their wrath was swallowed whole to remain somewhat calm against the dangers that were waiting for them.

Hirak was one of the few Awakened whose presence was enough to calm down those around him. He utilized his physical prowess well and picked out the enemies that were unable to do anything against his humongous size, his physical prowess and the weapons he conjured from thin air.

Many Lionhearts focused on their Racial Trait. Their Minor Fire Affinity was the Lionhearts' strongest weapon alongside their above-average control of energy. The combination granted them great versatility with their Flames.

Therefore, most Lionhearts who desired to focus on their Minor Affinity refined their body to attune it more to energy and fire. Their aptitude toward the fire element boosted in response.

It was not uncommon for natives to be promoted to 2-Star Pyromancers or 3-Star Pyroxants. The latter was a unique profession that could only be chosen by the most talented natives. Some managed to become Magus of the Sacred Flame as well. It was a 4-Star Profession that was gifted to those devoted to the Sacred Flame, the never-extinguishing flame that resided in the Zentika Empire's capital.

Choosing one of those occupations boosted their control and affinity toward fire greatly. However, it didn't improve their physical strength a lot. That was usually not necessary, either way. All they had to do was unleash their blazing flames to burn their enemies to cinder. What else would they need?

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To their misery, that was not enough against Hiraku. His body might be coated in durable bark and vines as he transformed into the Titan of the Greater Nature Spirit, but that didn't mean he was helpless against flames. Hiraku's natural elemental resistance was already great due to the choice of his body refinement technique. However, there was more.

Hiraku's body was covered in the sheen of two Noble Elementals' Elemental Power. His body had been coated in soil by the Earthen Baron Elemental, he was shrouded in water from the Aqueous Baroness Elemental, and strong gales shrouded him, repelling a minority of the flames that ought to reach him.

Frederik conjured the gales to support his friend, who barged through the enemy rows with great strength and not an ounce of hesitation. Almost 10 Soultraits to enhance his prowess and block ailments and Curses from other Soultraits had been applied to his body. But that was not all. He had been further enhanced by the Holy Knights' formation.

The Immortal Knight lost the Lesser Behemoth as their scapegoat, but they found a much better target to protect; Hiraku.

'What a freak,' Michael murmured, the corner of his lips curling upward as he witnessed the tremendous force behind Hiraku's attacks.

He manifested Armaments out of thin air and utilized them to counter his enemies' attacks easily. Once he had taken advantage of his enemies, Hiraku changed from subtle defending against them into aggressive attacks.

His attacks were hard to block and even harder to predict. He weaved through the rows of enemies as if he wasn't a ten-meter-tall giant. His kill-count was incredible. He was only second to Michael.

Michael was glad to have Hiraku on his side. The casualties on their side would have been much worse without Hiraku's help. His colossal form kept the morale high and the tension as low as possible. Hiraku never faltered and he advanced swiftly, changing his targets when he perceived a tiny opening.

It was a great advantage that he obtained energy and lifeforce from the Greater Nature Spirit. However, the toll on his Soul, Body, and Mind couldn't be underestimated.

After battling for several hours without a break he was on the verge of death as well.

Fortunately, everyone showed signs of getting tired.

'How much longer can you afford to push forward?' Michael wondered, his eyes flicking to the Lionheart Commanders and their tired-out Soldiers.

He licked his lips and glanced at Stinger, who created his move the moment he brought attention that Michael glanced at him.

Chapter 613 Tactic Switch

The Untamed Awakened disappeared from the battlefield. The Forest Elves released several barrages of arrows and retreated deep into the Untamed Jungle as well. Frederik moved along with them whereas Hiraku's colossal body vanished into thin air.

The Holy Knights, Blessed Squires, and thousands of melee fighters retreated and merged with the Untamed Jungle, leaving the High Beast Horde to fend for themselves.

A sudden change in their tactic was required to turn the tides against the Heart of the Blazing Lion army.

Now that the armies of the Heart of the Blazing Lion split up to conquer the Untamed Jungle's middle area, Michael and his people could move forward with the next plan.

Everyone retreated suddenly, while Stinger used his unique racial ability to push Hiraku, Frederik, and the Untamed Awakened in the right direction.

Only a few minutes passed since the forces retreated when they congregated and attacked once again.

This time, however, they didn't split up to face the forces of the three Commanders. Instead, their target was only one of the three armies.

The frontline army, as Michael labeled them for being the only army that continued to push straight ahead into the Untamed Jungle, had to be eliminated,

Sun Demos and his Blood Oath Demon Monkey underlings waited until the frontline army pushed deeper into the middle area before they leaped onto them from the towering trees.

The remaining monsters of the High Beast Horde were struggling against the frontline army, but they distracted the enemy forces very well.

The distraction was more than enough for Sun Demos and the Demon Monkey Unit to cause considerable damage. They used their superior physical strength and axes to kill more than a hundred Lionhearts in the initial dive and continued to attack valiantly. After a fierce battle that lasted merely 30 seconds, Sun Demos disappeared into the thicket with his subordinates.

The Blood Oath Demon Monkeys climbed the towering trees once again and lurked in the shadows of the Untamed Jungle waiting patiently for the next opportunity to arise.

Contrary to the outer rings of the Untamed Jungle, the middle area's environment was much denser and richer in energy. The humongous trees that towered above everyone couldn't be destroyed that easily anymore, and even the thicket was far more resilient than before.

The pure energy that permeated the middle area had tempered the flora and fauna of the Untamed Jungle for tens of years. Ordinary flames wouldn't be enough to burn them down anymore.

Of course, the flames of High Lionhearts were far from ordinary. They didn't manage to turn the towering trees into ash the moment their blazing flames reached them, but the trees were not fully resistant to flames either.

Distracted by the remaining forces of the High Beast Horde and Sun Demos' surprise attack, the frontline army's Commander expected more attacks to follow up soon. That was exactly what happened. The Untamed Awakened emerged in the back of the frontline army with Hiraku leading them. His colossal figure merged perfectly into the surrounding environment. He emerged in front of the Untamed Awakened and issued an ear-deafening roar.

The Forest Elves had circled the frontline army and were hiding high up in the trees and thousands of Elementals moved into position as well. Instead of continuing to partner up with the Forest Elves and the other forces, the Elementals decided to make a move as well.

Splitting up their armies might have been a great tactic against other enemies, forcing them to split their armies to reduce the potential damage to their lands, but that was not important to Michael.

The Untamed Jungle's middle area could burn for all he cared for. As long as he could hide his settlement and territory while eliminating one of the Heart of the Blazing Lion's armies, Michael would be fine.

At first, Michael made it look like he cared about the actions of the three armies. He made it seem like it mattered whether the Untamed Jungle was invaded or not. Only now, after several hours had passed, did Michael stop paying attention to the other armies.

He focused his forces solely on one of the remaining forces with the intention to bulldoze them.

The High Beast Horde might be obliterated, which would be a feisty blow to Michael's plan, but he could do the same with the other army as well!

There was no need to hesitate anymore. Everyone had to go all out with their Soultraits and use their last bits of mental power to obliterate, at least, one of the three armies.

Michael observed his subordinates for a moment before he vanished from his spot. He appeared near a group of burly High Lionhearts and a huge deer. The deer was also known as Crysalis Deer due to its huge crystal antlers.

It was three meters tall and had highly elemental resistance fur covering its entire body. The crystal antlers were special because of their exceptional energy conductivity. They were highly durable, and possessed great elemental resistance. It was also said that the Crysalis Deer could absorb elemental spells into its antlers.

Michael witnessed the Crysalis Deer block and absorb the blazing flames that had been thrown at it. The High Lionhearts, probably the bulkiest Lionhearts Michael had seen until now, flipped from throwing flames at the Crysalis Deer to unsheathing their mighty broadswords. They brandished their weapons, circled the Crysalis Deer, and advocated ahead.

Meanwhile, the strongest of the High Lionhearts managed the blood that oozed out of minor wounds covering his body. The energy in the surroundings was sucked into the droplets of blood swirling around the High Lionheart, whose expression was a mixture of satisfaction and wrath.

He was satisfied with the Crysalis Deer's state. It was a High Beast with enough strength to pose a threat to him, the Commander of the frontline army. The Lionheart Commander had to combine his strength with the Pryar Guardians to weaken the Crysalis Deer and push it closer to death's door.

The wrath in his face didn't stem from the High Beast in front of him. The turn of events within the last minute or two was the source of the Lionheart Commander's wrath. He realized what was happening, but he was still too busy with the Crysalis Deer to obliterate his ignorant enemies.

The Crysalis Deer kicked one of the Pryar Guardians before he could swing his broadsword down to cut the High Beast. The kick possessed tremendous force and hurled the burly High Lionheart through the air. He crashed hard into the ground and demanded a moment to regain his senses.

However, when he looked up, the burly High Lionheart didn't see any treetops. Instead, he saw a human with vibrant eyes stare down at him.

Michael stared at the High Lionheart for a moment before he unleashed Heavenly Beast Physique. He manifested Aethyr in the form of Tigerfang, coated the blade in six layers of Enhancement, a layer of compressed Extraction, and Reinforced Sword Qi before he plunged it deep into the Pryar Guardians' throat.

Michael's position and momentum were at a great advantage. He was not slower than the High Lionheart either due to Heavenly Beast Physique and his naturally superior physical strength, reaction speed, and power.

A loud squishy noise resounded through Michael's ear but he didn't pay much attention to it. He twisted Aethyr Tigerfang in the High Lionheart's throat and ripped the blade out of the writhing body right after.

'Their body is a lot more resilient than the other High Lionhearts.' Michael noted when his eyes landed on the other Pryar Guardians. Most Lionhearts focused on their natural Fire Affinity. They trained their affinity and attuned their bodies to elevate their fire affinity's control to the next level.

However, the Pryar Guardians were a little bit different. They used their racial affinity to refine their physical strength and temper their bodies. Their fire affinity control was not exceptional, but their bodies were in great shape.

'No matter how great your physique is. If you cannot block my blade from piercing you...you'll die.'

The Lionheart Commander noticed Michael and how fast he'd killed a Pryar Guardian. The Pryar Guardian might have been stunned by the Crysalis Deer's kick and lying on the ground, but that didn't mean it should have been easy to kill him.

The Commander's gaze trailed across the battlefield and he noticed with a grim expression that his subordinates were slaughtered like livestock. Not many could deal with the High Lionhearts, but they were held back temporarily by a group of Awakened.

Mek haz, Lokai, and a few more Late Tier-3 Awakened gave their utmost to stall the High Lionhearts. Michael made sure to convince them that stalling time wasn't a dirty trick. It was not dishonorable, and they wouldn't lose face in their ancestor's eyes. Convincing the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs hadn't been easy, but Michael made sure that they comprehended that they couldn't gain anymore honor and glory if they died shortly after gaining new and powerful Soultraits.

Michael's plan worked out decently, however, the biggest asset in today's battle was certainly Hiraku. Hiraku stalled most High Lionhearts, blocking their paths from aiding their allies as they were slaughtered mercilessly.

'Hiraku can take care of them for a while.' Michael thought, understanding how much stronger Hiraku had grown through the various effects, techniques, and powers that had been used to boost his strength.

That meant he could give a helping hand to the Crysalis Deer as well. The Crysalis Deer was necessary to beat the shit out of the Heart of the Blazing Lion armies!

Chapter 614 Crysalis Deer

Michael joined the Crysalis Deer to fight against the Lionheart Commanders and the Pryar Guardians.

He used Insert to channel a tremendous amount of energy and lifeforce into the Crysalis Deer. The High Beast initially rejected Michael's help but sensing that the energy and lifeforce inserted into it wasn't hazardous, the High Beast accepted it.

Michael unleashed the Dome of Extraction to tap into the energy and lifeforce of the Soldiers that were about to charge at him. He drained their energy and activated one Cursed Seal to extract their lifeforce more easily as well. Michael followed up by continuing to insert more lifeforce and energy into the Crysalis Deer before exerting Archangel's Grace as well.

It required a few seconds and a lot of focus, but Michael managed to tend to the Crysalis Deer's wounds. The large gnashes all over its body healed swiftly and the exhaustion that tormented the High Beast was wiped away.

Michael didn't stop there. He unleashed Enhancement with Insert to apply several layers of Enhancement onto the Crysalis Deer. The High Beast's strength increased drastically, pressuring the Lionheart Commander to unleash the hidden properties of his Soultrait.

Michael's Spirit Eyes were fully unleashed, granting him great insights into the Commander's Blood Manipulation Soultrait. He learned a lot about the Soultrait's hidden properties and unique effects.

'His blood has been altered. It has a higher energy conductivity than most Artifacts. Blood Manipulation... It has great power but seems to be of a rather low star rating.'

The Lionheart Commander could control his blood with great precision. He could unleash it into the surroundings to drain the surrounding energy and retract the blood to enhance his physical strength temporarily. The excessive energy would replenish the used-up energy within his energy storage, therefore, granting him more means to continue using Blood Manipulation or switch to use his rapidly replenishing energy to empower his Artifacts.

Michael licked his lips as he continued to study the characteristics of Blood Manipulation. The corner of his lip curled up after a few seconds.

'That should be feasible.'

He manifested the Soul Grimoire and used several Soul Tears at once.

The Soul Tears amplified the potency and power of his Soul, Extraction, Enhancement, Reinforced Sword Qi, Glacicle, Insert, Taming, and Superior Constitution.

Michael felt a tuck in his chest as the Soul Tears' effect was fully displayed. His Soultraits grew stronger and something about his Soul changed “ though only temporarily.

Power surged through his entire being as he unleashed Heavenly Beast Physique and Enhancement simultaneously. Several layers of Enhancement were applied to his body and Superior Constitution, pushing his physical strength past the limit of a Lesser Lifeform. He turned into a flash and appeared behind another Pryar Guardian.

The Pryar Guardian noticed Michael, changed his stance in a smooth motion and brandished his broadsword in Michael's direction. The broadsword was coated in blazing flames as it plunged down with the intent to cleave Michael in two parts.

Michael summoned Aethyr in the form of a shield and used Enhancement twice to reinforce the Aethyr Shield. That didn't decrease the tremendous force flaming broadsword or its impact, but it provided Michael with everything he needed to initiate a counterattack.

He blocked the cleave which pushed his feet deep into the ground. Simultaneously, Zeroa's mythical flames erupted. Hundreds of blazing blades made from azure flames conjured around the Pryar Guardian.

The blades were shrouded in a silver aura, Reinforced Sword Qi, that compressed the azure flames and shaped them to look more like swords. Glacicle reinforced with Enhancement shrouded the Reinforced Sword Qi, only for another layer of Sword Qi to coat the Glacicle Swords that coated the compressed Qi Flame Swords.

Michael's energy was drained rapidly, but that problem was solved easily as he allowed the three Cursed Seals to erupt. The upper part of his face was covered in one Cursed Seal whereas the remaining two Seals covered his upper body and right arm.

Michael could tell that a portion of Extraction's limiter had been removed. However, alongside that Michael could tell that the emotions wreaking through him grew less stable. His emotional stability suffered greatly and he didn't have the means to control them precisely anymore.

Every single Link of Loyalty that had been cut in the last few hours pulled at Michael's Soul, and it was not like his enemies stopped killing his people either. More subjects died as he blocked the Pryar Guardian's attack...and more would die the longer the fight continued.

Something deep within Michael erupted and he unleashed True Extraction in the form of a half-controlled half-uncontrollable Dome of Extraction.

The Extraction Aura had fused into the Dome of Extraction, further enhancing True Extraction's power in Michael's proximity. The energy and lifeforce from every being in his surroundings were drained rapidly.

The Untamed Awakened and Michael's subordinates noticed what was going on as Michael's surroundings were shrouded in a vibrant golden hue. Immortal Knight called everyone back to retreat until no one was left in the range of the golden hue. Only then did they continue to attack once again.

They allowed Michael to let loose and consume his enemies without having to fear killing his people in the process.

'Don't you fucking dare to take control of my body! IT'S MY BODY!!!' Michael roared in his mind as his body was overflowing with energy and lifeforce. The power that erupted from True Extraction killed more than a thousand Lionheart in his proximity and thousands of enemies were still suffering from the power of Extraction that invaded their bodies.

The Elementals and Forest Elves attacked with long-range projectiles. They attacked the suffering Lionhearts and ended their lives. There was no mercy in war. Mercy was for the weak.

Michael sealed the Cursed Seals the moment he sensed that the energy and lifeforce in his body was more than enough to deal with the Pryar Guards. He controlled the Mythical Flame Qi Swords that had been encased with compressed Qi Glacicle Swords. The Swords burst forward at Michael's will and pierced and erupted, piercing through the Pryar Guardian at once.

The Qi Glacicle Sword shattered, unleashing a burst of compressed freezing mist that extinguished the flames in the environments at once – except for the Mythical Flame Qi Swords. They burned through the freezing mist thanks to being coated in compressed Reinforced Qi and killed the Pryar Guardian before they continued moving through the proximity, killing another Pryar Guardian.

The Pryar Guardian's sight had been shrouded by the freezing mist and an additional use of Spiritual Domination was all Michael needed to kill him.

Three Pryar Guardians, the cream of the crop of the Zentika Empire's native forces, had been killed in no time.

Michael was overflowing with lifeforce and he didn't have a Soultrait to make use of it. He could infuse his lifeforce into others using Insert and use Archangel's Grace to accelerate the mending of their wounds, but he didn't have enough time to do so.

The accumulated power of Archangel's Grace was also nearing its end. Michael didn't spend much time with Maria in the last few weeks. He didn't have enough time to accumulate more power within the Mark of Fate.

That was bothersome right now, but it was not something Michael could change right now. He applied Taming to access Zeroa's spatial affinity and teleported to the Untamed Awakened.

He reached Lokai who stared at him with wide eyes when he inserted every bit of excessive lifeforce into her.

"Don't you want to kill some High Lionhearts? Go for it." Michael's lips curled upward into a devilish smile.

Lokai returned a bright smile and unleashed Life Conversion. She transformed the lifeforce Michael had just inserted into her body and applied the accumulated authority within Life Conversion to enhance her physical strength. The massive amount of lifeforce that had entered her body was more than enough to cross the threshold of a Lesser Lifeform.

For the next 15 minutes, Lokai's physical power reached the standards of a Higher Lifeform!

Michael moved back straight to the Crysalis Deer. He applied the massive pool of energy that surged through every inch of his body to eliminate the remaining Pryar Guardians one by one.

The Crysalis Deer protected Michael as if its life depended on it. It guarded Michael against the Lionheart Commander's erratic attacks and wrath.

Once the Pryar Guardians were dead, Michael's concentration landed on the Peak Tier-4 Awakened.

It was about time to kill the Lionheart Commander!

Chapter 615 Overwhelming a Powerhouse

After the initial display of power, only 25 High Lionhearts remained in the frontline army. Some sustained heavy injuries but the majority were tired, yet still capable of dealing fierce blows to their enemies.

Lokai, Hirak, and the other Untamed Awakened gave their utmost to hold the High Lionhearts back for some time. Unfortunately, they didn't manage to stall all of them. Sun Demos, the Demon Monkey Unit,

Immortal Knight, and the remaining monsters of the High Beast Horde fought desperately to restrain the High Lionhearts that the Untamed Awakened couldn't keep in check.

However, the price was heavy. Sun Demos' fur was burned, he was covered in deep gashes, and he was dead-tired. But he was still alive. That was something not all Demon Monkeys could say. Among the 1000ish Blood Oath Demon Monkeys under Sun Demos' wings, only a quarter was still alive. Even those who'd managed to survive until now were either wounded or too exhausted to move a single muscle.

Michael's army didn't fare much better. Immortal Knight and the Holy Knights were great at blocking physical blows whereas the Elementals, including Zeroa and the Noble Elementals could absorb and weaken most elemental attacks, the prowess of Higher Lifeforms was not something they could take lightly.

It was a great advantage that Immortal Knight's Holy Formations and the Elementals' Might could be used to strengthen Hiraku, Lokai, the other Untamed Awakened at the Late rank of Tier-3 as well as the last two High Beasts that were still standing in front of the High Lionhearts. They fletched their razor-sharp teeth and continued to struggle against the High Lionhearts' fierce flames.

Aided from the Healing Soultraits of Opars and others, Holy Formations and Elementals Might, the High Beasts recuperated a little bit. They gained an edge against the High Lionhearts and managed to attack more fiercely once again.

Nonetheless, it was only a matter of time before the High Lionhearts would kill the remaining High Beasts. The situation would turn from bad to worse once that happened. Michael had to kill the Lionheart Commander as soon as possible, otherwise, he wouldn't be able to help his people.

It was good that Michael knew everything he had to know about the Commander's Soultrait. He studied its strong points, its unique characteristics..., and the weak points of Blood Manipulation.

Some weak points had only been exposed when the Lionheart Commander used Blood Manipulation in front of Michael. It could be used as an attack Soultrait but the Lionheart Commander didn't use it as a weapon often. Instead, it was used to absorb the energy of the surroundings and replenish the Lionheart Commander's energy storage.

The Crysalis Deer fared well against the Lionheart Commander after the Pryar Guardians had been eliminated. It couldn't gain a tremendous advantage against the Lionheart Commander because he replenished his energy at all times, allowing him to exhibit the strongest powers of his mighty Artifacts.

However, that was about to change with Michael joining the battle.

But instead of pouncing at the Lionheart Commander, Michael prepared a proper attack, which exploited the weak spots in Blood Manipulation.

He unleashed Spirit Eyes and marked the Lionheart Commander's blood droplets. They swirled through the air and spread out further to absorb energy.

Michael didn't interfere in the process. On the contrary, he helped the blood droplets to absorb more energy.

But there was more to it. Michael retrieved a few small vials and used Extraction on them. One of the vials contained compressed Holy Power. Immortal Knight had spent several days compressing his Holy Power to create a few Holy Drops for Michael.

Michael could consume them to fill his body with Holy Power. It was a great means to dispel ailments and detrimental effects cast on him via Soultraits. He could have used the Holy Drops already, but he retrieved them via Extraction, splitting a single tear into hundreds of minuscule mots.

Michael's energy erupted and spread throughout the surroundings right before he unleashed Insert to insert the mots of Holy Drops into the Commander's blood droplets. The blood droplets were still absorbing energy when the Holy Drops were inserted into them.

Michael observed the Lionheart Commander's reaction intently, but it was just like he expected. The Lionheart Commander didn't react.

'Can he only sense the amount of energy in his blood, or can he not perceive anything about his blood while he controls it with Blood Manipulation?'

Even though Michael couldn't be certain about his guesses, it seemed to be the case that the Lionheart Commander had a hard time sensing what was going on inside his blood droplets. That was a great advantage and something Michael had been hoping for.

His physical strength and Tier were incomparably weaker than the Lionheart Commander's, but that didn't mean Michael was helpless. As long as the Crysalis Deer continued to stall the Commander, Michael was certain to come out victorious. He had a bunch of high-ranked Soultraits, after all!

He glanced at the other vials that contained blood from two sources. One of the vials was filled with darkish-red blood from the Blood Oath Demon Monkey King, whereas the other vial contained silver blood... blood of the Chaos Ants.

It had been a while since Michael used the Chaos Ants, but he figured that the Zentika Empire would be happy about getting seconds. After all, they loved the Chaos Ants, their blood, and the Chaos Pills concocted from it.

Michael focused entirely on the following procedure. He used Extraction to extract more than a hundred tiny portions of Sun Demos' blood and the Chaos within the Chaos Ant's blood. Controlling the tiny portions wasn't easy, but it was a great thing that his mind refinement degree was relatively high at this point.

The external enhancement from the Legendary Ring Artifact helped Michael a lot as well.

Once the tiny portions of Chaos and tarnished blood had been extracted, Michael used Insert to insert the portions into the Lionheart Commander's blood droplets.

Some droplets burst apart because of the incredibly high potency of Chaos. Thus, Michael had to split the Chaos even further with Extraction. He inserted the minuscule traces into the blood and watched with Spirit Eyes as the tarnished blood from Sun Demos mixed into the Holy Drops and Chaos. The three energies would soon react with each other and create a catastrophic event.

But for now... Michael filled the blood droplets of the Commander with his excessive energy using Insert.

It didn't take long to fill the droplets and his attention moved to the Commander, whose eyes widened. He didn't expect the blood droplets to be overflowing with energy this soon.

He retracted them back into his body and circulated the energies through the energy pathways.

To annex the energy properly, the Lionheart Commander had to distribute the recently absorbed energy through his body twice. That was exactly what he did, without realizing what he was doing to his body and energy paths.

Michael watched the Lionheart Commander with Spirit Eyes. A smirk blossomed on his face as he observed the tarnished blood, Chaos, and Holy Drops being dragged through the Lionheart Commander's body as they reacted with each other.

The Lionheart Commander's energy pathways were contaminated, and it was only a matter of seconds before the grand event occurred.

One very interesting question many Lords and Awakened asked themselves more often than one might think was how a Lesser Lifeform was supposed to kill a Higher Lifeform.

They ascended and broke through the limits of most mortal beings. Nothing about Higher Lifeforms could be compared to the weaklings they had been before ascending.

So...how was a Tier-3 Lord supposed to kill a Higher Lifeform at the Peak of Tier-4?

Michael could have attempted to extract the Commander's energy and inserted Chaos, tarnished blood, and the Holy Drops into it before re-inserting it into the Commander's energy system. However, the Commander would have sensed that. He would have been able to react swiftly, separating the properties of Chaos, tarnished blood, and Holy Drops long before they could react and harm him.

Thus, Michael had to use the Commander's biggest weakness and the only opening he managed to pinpoint.

Only a minuscule amount of Holy Power, Chaos, and tarnished blood circulated through the Commander, but it was enough to react with each other. The effect wasn't anything grand given that the Holy Power, tarnished blood, and Chaos didn't stem from Higher Lifeforms. However, the reaction was intense enough to affect the Lionheart Commander once it jumped into effect.

The Lionheart Commander's eyes widened as he lost the ability to convey energy into his Artifacts. The Crysalis Deer was charging at him, yet he couldn't erupt the enchantments on his Shield Artifact.

'What the...'

The Lionheart Commander had more than enough energy in his body to use his Artifact's strongest effect several times in succession, but his energy paths were disturbed. It felt like the paths were blocked even though he could sense that something like this wasn't the case.

Michael knew that it was only a temporary state and that the Commander would fix the issue in no time. However, losing the ability to strengthen his physique by channeling energy through his body, and being unable to use his Artifacts weakened the Commander greatly.

But that was not all. The Commander lost the ability to use his Soultrait and use any of his techniques. All of his techniques required energy, but he couldn't control a single trace of it.

He was too shocked to react to the Crysalis Deer's charge and was hurled through the air. He crashed into a towering tree with tremendous force and coughed up blood.

His stun was evident as he looked up only to see Michael appear in front of him with a highly compressed True Extraction Qi Sword.

All of a sudden, Michael's eyes glowed brightly and the Lionheart Commander, unable to control his energy to erupt with a mental shield, suffered great spiritual damage.

The next thing the Lionheart Commander recalled was a golden sword piercing through his neck.

It was also the last thing he remembered before the world around him turned dark.

He died. Just like that.

Chapter 616 Retreat

Michael managed to kill the Peak Tier-4 Commander.

He was lucky.

It was luck that the Crysalis Deer survived this long against the Lionheart Commander and the Pryar Guardians.

It was also a great fortune that he managed to pinpoint the biggest disadvantages of Blood Manipulation to exploit it properly.

However, killing the Peak Tier-4 Commander came with a heavy price.

Michael had to unleash the Cursed Seals, use 10-layered Enhancement on True Extraction, and compress the power of Extraction to conjure a True Extraction Qi Sword.

Michael's arm suffered greatly due to True Extraction's power that had been enhanced and compressed. His arms were dissected layer by layer. It was painful but killing the Peak Tier-4 Commander was worth the pain.

He was drained mentally and physically due to the additional use of Enhancement ten times on Spirit Eyes to unleash the strongest form of Spiritual Domination, and 10 layers of Enhancement on Superior Constitution to reach the Lionheart Commander the instant he crashed into the tree.

Michael micro-managed the utility of Enhancement, ensuring that the effect of Enhancement would last no longer than three seconds. That was as long as he managed to endure the continuous use of True Extraction, Spirit Eyes, and Superior Constitution at such a high level.

Even then, Michael felt like his body was about to tear apart.

Right now, he was out of energy and the lifeforce that had been residing within him with great vigor was reduced to a tiny flickering candlelight.

The Cursed Seals were retracted the moment the Peak Tier-4 Commander died. Extraction continued to drain the Commander's energy and bouts of lifeforce that disappeared a moment later, but it was just enough to release a small Dome of Extraction to drain the surroundings' life and energy.

Michael's head felt like splitting apart when he used Dome of Extraction too long. He was on the brink of collapsing, but he didn't give in.

Michael grit his teeth and used Archangel's Grace once again. This time, Michael had to use Insert to insert energy into Maria's Soultrait Shard, otherwise, he wouldn't have been able to use Archangel's Grace.

Archangel's Grace was not as efficient as before and Michael noticed that his body didn't respond as well as before to the Healing Soultrait's power.

That was annoying, but he endured it silently.

In his current situation, Michael wasn't able to use Heavenly Realm either. He was too drained, and he didn't have the means to keep replenishing his mental power. Absorbing the lifeforce in the surrounding plant life was helpful, but lifeforce was not a permanent solution to replenish his mental power.

He had been using his Soultraits too often and to an extent, most wouldn't be able to.

Despite the exhaustion, Michael knew that he had to join the battle again. There were still some High Lionhearts who fought valiantly against Hiraku and the Untamed Awakened. They couldn't deal with them alone.

The greatest advantage on Michael's side was that the death of the Lionheart Commander shattered the High Lionhearts' morale. Their fighting spirit was crushed and all they were hoping for was to defeat their opponent and run for their lives.

They had a bad feeling about this.

But Michael and the others felt similar. A bad feeling crept up their spines. Something in the surroundings changed.

Michael had already noticed it a little bit earlier but the pressure all around the Untamed Jungle had been growing more intense since the Heart of the Blazing Lion army invaded the middle area.

The Crysalis Deer shuddered and so did the remaining monsters that survived until now. Even the Greater Nature Spirit seemed to suffer. The Links of Loyalty shuddered.

Everyone was afraid.

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"What is going on here?!?" The Lionheart Commander of the southern army shouted into the Communication Crystal. He had two charms attached to his armor, but one of them disintegrated a few seconds ago. At the same time, he sensed heavy pressure weighing down wherever he and his subordinates stepped.

"Commander Xaar speaking. I don't know what is happening. We dealt with the High Beast Horde and haven't seen any enemies since then. What about you, Commander Liram?" The Commander of the northern army spoke in the Communication Crystal.

Commander Xaar was heavily wounded from fighting the Supreme Thunder Tigress, a High Beast with terrific speed, destructive power, and great intellect. The Supreme Thunder Tigress succeeded to kill the Pryar Guardians and heavily injure Commander Xaar before she succumbed to the dozens of injuries she sustained in the battle.

"Commander Liram?" The Commander of the southern army asked, his expression souring as he realized what happened.

"He must be dead."

Commander Xaar frowned deeply, "I didn't expect Commander Liram to die. But if the High Beast Horde and the Lord focused on Commander Liram and his subordinates...it is possible that they would die."

"Stupid fools. They left the Untamed Jungle for us to overcome only to kill Commander Liram. I'm pretty sure that he managed to deal enough damage for us to kill the remaining forces!"

"We managed to eliminate the High Beast Horde. I doubt that the Lord has anymore powerful allies. His subordinates were 18:37

already worn out when they retreated. We can stomp them to death!"

The remaining two Commanders of the Heart of the Blazing Lion armies decided to gather and seek a fight with the Lord of the Untamed Jungle.

They encountered some monsters on their way to Commander Liram's last position and it didn't take long until they stood face to face with the Crysalis Deer.

The Crysalis Deer wasn't injured anymore and it could have destroyed Commander Xaar in his current state easily. However, instead of attacking anyone, the Crysalis Deer withdrawn deeper into the Untamed Jungle alongside the last survivors of the High Beast Horde.

An ear-deafening roar rumbled through the surroundings and the afternoon sun disappeared all over the Untamed Jungle's middle area.

The heavy pressure that had been weighing on the Heart of the Blazing Lion armies intensified all of a sudden. From one moment to the next, the Lionhearts felt like their hearts were pulled apart. It was almost like they were about to be torn into shreds.

The Lionhearts were already mentally and physically drained. The weakest of them were unable to endure the heavy pressure alongside the sensation of death that approached them from all directions. They turned around and used their last bits of strength to escape.

The terror of the Untamed Jungle was tremendous. It was enough to shake the strongest Lionhearts. Even the High Lionhearts felt like they were about to die. It was almost as if their lives could end at any moment.

The Lionheart Commanders didn't want to retreat. However, they realized too late that the fear and terror in their subordinates' hearts had blossomed. It wreaked havoc in their hearts and minds, resulting in mass panic throughout the remaining forces of the Heart of the Blazing Lion army.

Most of the remaining natives at the 2nd Tier were either about to lose consciousness or were already on their way to the outer rings. They fled from the heavy pressure and the sensation of death that seemed to come from the depths of the Untamed Jungle.

The Commanders hadn't been talking a lot with each other, but the short time they spent talking was enough to spread the fear of an inevitable death all over the battlefield. The Lionhearts at the 3rd Tier began to flee. They weren't afraid of battling enemies that they could see. However, dealing with enemies they couldn't see was not possible.

They didn't even see the enemy yet the sensation that engulfed their very existence was enough to be certain about their death.

Even the Commanders' mentality suffered under the certainty of death that shrouded them. It was terrifying.

"Retreat!" Commander Xaar ordered after the shroud of certain death intensified once again. He was not sure what was about to attack them if they stayed here, but he could tell that they had to run for their lives.

Michael and his subordinates felt the heavy pressure just like the monsters of the Untamed Jungle.

However, the certainty of death never touched them. But that made sense.

Michael looked up and stared through the burning canopy of some towering trees. He used Spirit Eyes to enhance his eyesight and smiled wryly.

"Your punctuality is impeccable."

The mysterious winged serpent was gliding above the Untamed Jungle, its towering figure casting a humongous shadow across the jungle's middle area.

Chapter 617 Invasion & Chaos

?The mysterious winged serpent circled high above the battlefield, casting a shadow all over the Untamed Jungle's middle area. The Heart of the Blazing Lion armies ran for their lives. The intense feeling of instant death and the sudden darkness shrouding the surroundings was enough to evolve into a mass panic.

The remaining Commanders didn't want to retreat and run away from the fight. They knew what awaited them back in the Zentika Empire if they returned without any gains. The Heart of the Blazing Lion army might have burned down the northern part of the Untamed Jungle's outer rings, but they didn't claim anything yet. The Zentika Empire's scarcity of food had yet to be solved.

As the Heart of the Blazing Lion army retreated the huge shadow shrouding the middle area dispersed. The heavy pressure evaporated, allowing Michael, his people, and the High Beast Horde to relax for the first time in hours.

The mysterious winged serpent left after revealing its presence to the Zentika Empire's forces.

Was that good, or would it have been better if the serpent had released its ferocious flames to burn the remaining members of the Heart of the Blazing Lion army? Michael and the High Beasts managed to kill one Commander, but the others survived. Would he be fine with that?

Michael was not sure. He couldn't tell whether he was lucky, or if he would have managed to kill the two Commanders with the Crystals Deer's help. Michael had sensed that the remaining two Lionheart Commanders had been rather weak. The fight against the High Beast Horde weakened them. The Crystals Deer might have been strong enough to eliminate them.

"What a mess," Michael chuckled bitterly. His legs caved in as the last bits of energy left his body.

The High Beast Horde split up and separated. It looked like the war against the Heart of the Blazing Lion army was over for them.

However, the same couldn't be said for Michael and his people.

The following events were the most important, however, their success didn't depend on Michael. Instead, it all depended on whether Tiara managed to complete her mission, or if she failed.

It was a risky mission, but Michael deployed Tiara to invade the Zentika Empire's military camp before the battle started. He gave her several Artifacts that helped hide her scent, distort the vibrations she made from stepping, and an Artifact that shroud the sounds she made in silence. Tiara was camouflaged in another high-ranked magical device. She was camouflaged perfectly and managed to infiltrate the Zentika Empire's military camp without getting noticed by the Orbs of Hostility and other magical devices that were supposed to detect invaders.

The greatest advantage about Tiara was that she had yet to advance to Tier-3. Her energy fluctuations were weak enough to cover and distort them with the right Artifacts and magical devices.

It was a good thing that the Heart of the Blazing Lion army didn't expect anyone to be foolish enough to invade their military camp while they invaded the Untamed Jungle. Their security was lackluster and the few hundred Lionheart that had been left behind in the camp to guard it were weak and not very perceptive.

A single High Lionheart had been deployed to watch the military camp in the absence of the Commanders. However, the High Lionheart was already old. He was a Lowest Rank Tier-4 Native who managed to ascend to a Higher Lifeform as a 3-Star Native.

Tiara didn't intend to fight the High Lionheart, but a Higher Lifeform's perception made it difficult for her to complete Michael's plan successfully.

Fortunately, the Scouts with techniques that allowed them to pry into the Military Camp from a distance managed to discover the High Lionheart's weakness: He was always intoxicated.

She stalked through the Military Camp and killed a few low-ranked Lionhearts by utilizing her camouflaged presence and the fact that nobody expected her to be in the military camp to her advantage. Several Tier-2 and Tier-3 Lionhearts fell victim to Tiara's power. An intertwined Spirit Whip

followed up by a spear thrust to the enemies' hearts and throats was enough to eliminate potential threats easily.

The High Lionheart was bored and angry. He didn't work tirelessly on his Foundation for almost 60 years just to be deployed as a watchdog. That was not what he wanted. He was a Higher Lifeform. He was supposed to be at the frontlines!!

The old High Lionheart had been drinking since the Heart of the Blazing Lion army left the camp and he was dead drunk when Tiara arrived at the camp center - just like they'd expected.

Tiara considered piercing his neck with her spear, but she quickly recalled that neither her strength nor her weapon was good enough to injure Higher Lifeforms properly. As a Tier-2 Awakened, it was already near-impossible to pierce the tempered hide or skin of Peak Tier-3 powerhouses. Tiara had some gruesome experiences with that.

She recalled clearly how her spear blade had been repelled from her enemy's body.

The only areas Tiara could damage were the soft spots in the defense of stronger enemies.

'If I can reach his head, I can pierce his eyes or mouth. In the worst case, I go after his butt!' Tiara told herself, readying her weapon only to hesitate.

Michael trusted that she would manage to deal with this issue. He would be disappointed if she failed.

'Would he be sad if I die here?' She wondered at this moment but shook her head.

Maybe, it was important whether Michael would be said if she died here, but Tiara knew very well that she couldn't afford to die. Tiara was fully aware that she had to survive, otherwise, her people would never be able to return to her side.

The return of six Silverfangs motivated Tiara. Their return demonstrated that her hard work had been rewarded. However, she was feeling guilty as well. Michael had been in need of powerhouses to fight the Heart of the Blazing Lion army and the Council of Xylon.

Too many enemies approached them right now, yet the six Legendary Scrolls he'd used in the hope of summoning something useful...turned out to be six Silverfangs. Only Legion was somewhat powerful, but even his power required time to be nourished. He didn't gain the same benefits as other Legendary Summons and had to improve his War Rune's rank and Tier slowly because of certain restrictions.

Tiara calmed down and approached the High Lionheart. The drunken, old Lionheart had fallen asleep in his wooden chair. His head had rested calmly on the wooden table, and he snored loud enough to keep everyone in a radius of dozens of meters wide awake.

It was not yet late at night, but the drunken Lionheart didn't bother to stay awake. He was furious at the turn of events. Tiara could make use of that. However, she didn't attack him.

She retrieved three silver pills upon reaching the drunken Lionheart. The High Lionheart sensed something, but he was too drunk to understand what was happening. He didn't sense any threats...until it was too late.

Something entered his wide-open mouth.

Tiara channeled a tremendous amount of energy into the drunken Lionheart's mouth, pushing the silver pills deeper into his throat.

The High Lionheart swallowed the pills.

His eyes shot wide open, and he sobered up instantaneously. A fierce roar escaped his lips and blazing flames erupted in all directions.

Tiara groaned as the searing-hot flames reached her and retreated. The High Lionheart spun around and roared at Tiara, whose body expanded.

Tiara used her Silvarean Tiger Soultrait to the fullest. She was covered in silver-striped fur, claws grew from her fingers and her body expanded ever so slightly.

Her eyes turned into yellowish-golden slits, and she readied herself for a fierce fight. Though, she hoped that it wouldn't be necessary.

'A few seconds should be enough...right?'

A few seconds ought to be more than enough for the full effect of the silver pills to be triggered.

The High Lionheart didn't know that yet, but Tiara shoved Chaos Pills down his throat. She'd activated them to unleash their might as she pushed the Chaos Pills deeper down. It was only a matter of seconds before they would erupt within the High Lionheart.

Maybe, the High Lionheart would survive the explosion of the Chaos Pills, but they would occur inside him.

He should sustain heavy injuries and end up getting crippled. At least, that was what Tiara was hoping for.

The Lionheart was a Higher Lifeform and the Chaos pills had been concocted from the impure chaos of a Lesser Lifeform's blood. To the intoxicated Lionheart's misfortune, the Chaos Pills were about to explode within him.

The old Lionheart charged ahead in anger. He crossed the distance to Tiara in the blink of an eye, his entire body shrouded in blazing flames. However, all of a sudden, the flames around him died down. The blazing flames transformed into lightly flickering flames.

The Lionheart also lost control of the energy within him, and his legs caved in. The old Native of the Zentika Empire collapsed in front of Tiara.

Tiara wanted to attack the Lionheart, but she backed off instinctively. Loud crackling noises followed by thunderous explosions occurred in front of her...the Chaos Pills inside the High Lionheart exploded.

She retreated as fast as possible while her eyes lingered on the Lionheart. The old Lionheart's body turned black, the skin all over his body ruptured and black-silverish blood spurted out of him.

His eyeballs splattered all of a sudden and the Lionheart's fur turned silverish-black. Even the weakly flickering flames around the Lionheart turned black...and they began to burn the Lionheart as well.

It was almost as if the chaos itself was not in control of the flames.

Tiara was shocked to the core at the sight that unfolded in front of her. Her eyes widened and she swallowed hard.

'O fuck.'

Chapter 618 Boom - Chaos And Crystals

The High Lionheart's entire body was black. Blood gushed out of his ruptured skin and chaos spread was expelled from his pores.

But despite the inability to move or control the changes all over his body, the old Lionheart didn't die. Somehow, he survived the explosion of the three Chaos Pills inside him, the chaos oozing out of him, and the changes that affected his very existence.

However, the Lionheart was no better than a cripple at this point. His energy veins were torn into shreds, his eyeballs exploded, and his insides were infected by chaos.

Tiara retreated even further, her eyes still widened in terror. She knew that the Chaos Pills were highly potent and dangerous. Michael didn't want to use them after the first time he had been forced to use them against the Jungle Expedition because the Chaos Pills were so dangerous.

However, it was also Michael who used Extraction and Insert close to perfection to create hundreds of Chaos Pills now that they had to face powerful enemies left and right.

Even the most talented Alchemists in Michael's territory weren't confident at concocting more than a dozen Chaos Pills without failure. Failure was not acceptable in this case. Failing to concoct a Chaos Pill usually resulted in an explosion and the destruction of a large piece of land. The chaos spread by the explosion would infest the surrounding lifeforms and kill them slowly.

Michael didn't want his territory to be destroyed by experiments or the concoction of Chaos Pills. Unfortunately, he didn't have much of a choice. He joined the concoction of hundreds of Chaos Pills and prevented countless explosions, which would have resulted in the deaths of hundreds if not thousands of innocent people.

It was a scary experience, but Michael and his Alchemists did a great job at handling the situation. They concocted the Chaos Pills without any deadly explosions. But that was not all. Michael also joined Zeroa, who had been busy overcharging elemental crystals with her mythical flames.

They continued to use low-quality elemental crystals, but the Elemental Empress grew more adept at channeling her mythical flames into the elemental crystals. The overcharged elemental crystals' power was much greater than it used to be.

Michael didn't want to destroy the Untamed Jungle or everything around it, but he chose to create more Chaos Pills to eliminate his enemies even if that meant he would have to destroy much more than just the military camp bordering the Untamed Jungle.

Tiara watched the old High Lionheart for a few seconds until she was certain that he couldn't move anymore. She would have killed him, but Tiara didn't want to be exposed to the chaos that oozed out of the Lionheart. Tiara knew that she would die miserably if the chaos infected her.

She left the High Lionheart to die a lonely death and retrieved a few pouches. The pouches were filled with Chaos Pills and overcharged elemental crystals.

Tiara's mission was to invade the military camp and install the Chaos Pills and overcharged elemental crystals. She would leave right after completing her mission, leaving the military camp to its doom.

Installing the Chaos Pills and overcharged elemental crystals didn't take long. It was a simple procedure. Tiara coated the Chaos Pills and overcharged elemental crystals with energy to seal them temporarily. They wouldn't be triggered anytime soon.

It was necessary to kill a few more Lionhearts who'd been attracted by the old High Lionheart's commotion, but that was a simple task.

Tiara utilized the next 60 minutes to efficiently install the Chaos Pills and overcharged elemental crystals. The first seals were about to be removed and it was only a matter of time before they would explode. A little bit energy channeling into the Chaos Pills or overcharged elemental crystals was all it required to create a deadly chain reaction.

Tiara's eyes widened slightly when she saw the outlines of the first Lionhearts who were returning from the Untamed Jungle. Their eyes screamed fear and Tiara almost expected them to run past the military camp to return straight to the center of the Zentika Empire where they were safe and sound.

She left the military camp with a big detour to remain unnoticed as the masses of the Heart of the Blazing Lion army returned.

Tiara was baffled to see so many Soldiers return, yet all of them were scared to death. It was shocking.

'What the hell happened in there?' She wondered, staring at the Untamed Jungle, her home.

It didn't take long until Tiara discovered the answer. As she approached the Untamed Jungle, she sensed the increase in pressure. At first, it wasn't that noticeable, but that changed quickly.

The pressure continued to increase as she approached the Untamed Jungle.

All of a sudden, the pressure disappeared. Tiara returned to her home, whereas the pressure vanished into thin air. It was almost like it had never been there.

Meanwhile, the Heart of the Blazing Lion army returned to the camp.

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"What is going on here?!?" Commander Xaar roared, blood spilling out of his fresh wounds.

His eyes lingered on the dying High Lionheart, a deep frown covering his face. The High Lionheart deployed to protect the military camp smelled like alcohol, but that was the smallest issue.

His eyes were no more, and both his skin and fur were dyed silverish-black. Chaos oozed out of him. The Medics of the Blazing Lion army tried to tend to the dying High Lionheart, but they were infected by chaos even before they reached the High Lionheart.

The Medics were affected by the chaos infection almost immediately. Their energy sensors suffered, and they had a hard time perceiving anything.

It was only a matter of time before they suffered worse symptoms.

The Commanders roared in anger and fury. Not only were they forced to retreat because of the ginormous winged serpent that had appeared out of nowhere, but their camp had also been invaded. They didn't even know what the invaders did, other than killing a High Lionheart and dozens of Soldiers.

A few minutes of rage-filled shouts and commands passed in the blink of an eye. A young Lionheart, a Tier-2 Ashen Knight, arrived at the commando tent to report a find.

"I found an elemental crystal filled with highly potent flames. The flames are really easy to contro—..." The Ashen Knight's voice was cut off.

Mythical Flames were anything but easy to control. It was just that the Ashen Knight believed that it was easy to control because the Elemental Empress wanted her enemies to think they were easy to control. The Ashen Knight fell victim to the Elemental Empress' trap and channeled too much energy into the overcharged elemental crystal.

The Commanders sensed that something was wrong the moment the Ashen Knight arrived. However, they were too focused on the chaos oozing from the High Lionheart's body that they noticed the elemental crystal's danger too late.

They were merely a quarter of a second too late to react, but that was enough.

The Ashen Knight's energy activated the overcharged elemental crystal and exploded. The mythical flames that had been compressed into the overcharged elemental crystal ignited and spread outward, triggering the Chaos Pills and overcharged elemental crystals throughout the military camp.

Dozens of overcharged elemental crystals and Chaos Pills were triggered at once, but that was only the beginning. The deadly chain reaction had been triggered.

Hundreds of explosions erupted. The ferocious might of a hundred Chaos Pills and just as many overcharged elemental crystals had been unleashed.

Countless azure pillars of fire ignited throughout the entire camp, but it didn't take long before they were swallowed. The mythical flames and chaos merged. A ferocious inferno, silver and azure in color formed, burning and decaying everything that obstructed their path.

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Michael didn't smile when the humongous silver inferno erupted. The Chaos Inferno was between 100 and 150 meters in height and it wreaked havoc wherever it passed. A shockwave reverberated through the surroundings, uprooting the trees, bushes, and other plant life that had been burned in today's battle.

The northern outer rings of the Untamed Jungle had been set ablaze and burned to cinder. It was only a matter of time before the Untamed Jungle would take back what they lost, but Michael couldn't help but feel a bit sour.

He really didn't like Chaos Pills, yet he unleashed them onto the Zentika Empire once again. A humongous crater could be seen where the military camp had been. No structure of the camp had been left intact.

Everything had been destroyed.

However, the struggle of Michael and his subordinates was not yet over. There was still another problem they had to solve.

It was something that accompanied the use of Chaos Pills...the power of chaos that dispersed in all directions.

A hundred Chaos Pills had been unleashed simultaneously. It was only obvious, that the chaos energy would dispersed through the surroundings and annihilate everything in their path. The power of chaos would fuse with the surroundings and destroy everything living.

It was great that the majority of the chaos dispersed deeper into the Zentika Empire. However, Michael knew that it was impossible to avoid the flood of chaos that was about to reach them.

That was, if Michael didn't have Extraction and Insert, Frederik, hundreds of Lesser Wind Elementals, and thousands of subordinates whose energy he could temporarily drain to ensure that their home would remain safe and sound.

The power of chaos was about to reach the Untamed Jungle.

Everyone tensed up.

A different type of fight was about to start.

Chapter 619 Gales And Clouds

Everyone was dead-tired at this point, but it was impossible to stop now. A dense silver cloud shrouded the northern border to the Zentika Empire, and it was getting closer.

Chaos erupted from the silver inferno and spread in all directions. The majority pushed deeper into the Zentika Empire, but the remaining Chaos was more than enough to bother Michael and the rest.

They survived against the Heart of the Blazing Lion army. They couldn't give up now that they were so close to overcoming the final hurdle from today's battle!

"Frederik!" Michael called his friend, who arrived next to him within seconds.

Frederik didn't enter close combat until the end of the battle. He merely sustained minor injuries. However, his mental power was drained, and his energy storage was empty. There was no way that Frederik could use his Soultraits again today.

"You have to use Aeroan to push the Chaos away," Michael pointed at the humongous silver cloud that was about to swallow the Untamed Jungle's outer rings.

Frederik stared at his friend, his eyes widened in shock as he realized that Michael wasn't joking.

"Iâ€“..."

"You have to. The Elemental Empress and Lesser Elementals will help you, but nobody has as much control of the winds as you. You have three Soultraits related to the wind attribute and your body has been attuned to Aeroan near-perfectly as well. Please!"

Michael was pretty sure that he could solve the problem as well. However, not only would he have to unleash the three Cursed Seals, but Michael could tell that he would have to give in to the insanity exposed by activating the Cursed Seals to swallow the silver cloud in its entirety.

But that wasn't even the worst. To swallow the silver cloud as a whole, Michael would probably end up killing hundreds of wounded soldiers...his soldiers. He wouldn't be able to control True Extraction once he lost the battle against the Cursed Seals' power.

He stared intently at Frederik who swallowed hard.

"I...will give it a try."

"You can do it!"

Opars appeared next to Frederik and used Energy Imprint. The Forest Elf was exhausted and burned heavily in various spots but he was still alive and able to use his Soultrait.

Michael stared at the silver cloud and grit his teeth firmly. He forced his Body, Mind, and Soul to go beyond their limits as well.

Michael accessed his War Rune and retrieved 1,000 Energy Crystals. They were spread out around him to provide easy access. Exactly 1,000 Extraction tendrils burst out of Michael in the next moment. He attached the Extraction tendrils to the Energy Crystals and began to extract the compressed energy within.

Michael forwarded the extracted energy to Frederik right away with Insert.

Frederik's eyes bulged in surprise at the burst of energies that entered him through Opars and Michael. However, instead of saying anything, Frederik turned around and used Aeroan.

First, he commanded the winds in the surroundings to submit to him. Then, he used the massive amount of energy that flooded him to manifest more winds.

Raging gales swept through the outer rings of the Untamed Jungle.

The Lesser Wind Elementals and the Elemental Empress aided Frederik in controlling the raging gales. It was difficult, seemingly impossible to do so, but they gave their utmost either way.

They didn't have to do a lot, in the first place. Their mission was not to disintegrate the silver cloud. All they had to do was push it back and change its movements.

The bushes at the border to the middle area were uprooted and the towering trees creaked loudly as the raging gales smashed against them. Frederik groaned in pain, blood spurted from his nose and eyes, and he felt like collapsing on the spot. However, a wide smile blossomed on his face.

Frederik never felt this much power. It was the first time he felt truly powerful.

He could instinctively tell that his power was nothing like it used to be and that the raging gales that swept through the surroundings were strong enough to knock out Awakened at the 3rd Tier. Frederik felt true power.

A mighty roar escaped his lips as he summoned the last bits of mental power from every inch of his body. He combined his power with the hundreds of Lesser Wind Elementals that had appeared to aid Frederik and hurled the raging winds against the silver cloud.

The raging winds collided with the silver cloud.

At first, Michael didn't see much. He could only tell that the raging winds forced the silver cloud into stagnation. It didn't move further ahead, but it was not pushed back either.

That was not great, but it wasn't too bad either.

Michael apologized inwardly to Frederik as he pressed his palm against his friend's back. He closed his eyes and tried to sense Frederik's Soultraits and used Enhancement with Insert on his Soultraits. Frederik's pained groan worsened as he recognized that his strength surged even higher.

Frederik was overflowing with energy, but both his Mind and Soul couldn't take it anymore. His bleeding nose and eyes worsened, and blood squirted from his ears as well. He unleashed Aeroan in its strongest form once more before he collapsed to the ground.

Frederik was writhing on the ground even as he lost consciousness, but it was great that Opars was there. He used Soothing Wave to tend to Frederik's condition.

Meanwhile, Frederik's last burst of power showed effect. The silver cloud was pushed back by the raging gales and changed trajectory. It was pushed deeper into the Zentika Empire where the remaining Chaos was headed to as well.

'He used Soul Energy.' Michael noted as he looked at Frederik.

He didn't teach Frederik a lot about Soul Energy, but he'd given him a copy of the Soul Energy Fusion technique. Frederik studied it, but he never managed to produce Soul Energy.

That was until today.

Frederik used Soul Energy for the first time, and he suffered the aftermath of being deprived of Soul Power while being eerily low on mental power.

"It looks like I underestimated your willpower," Michael commented to Frederik, who'd stopped writhing on the ground.

Frederik was still unconscious, but his life was not in danger. A few days of rest was all he needed to get better.

Michael trembled and experienced like he was about to collapse as well when his body was about to ease up. The adrenaline that had been surging through him dispersed and he could feel every inch of his body. It was almost as if his entire being was in unbearable pain.

He lifted his gaze and stared at the disappearing silver cloud. Of course, not everything had been solved with this, but Michael could easily extract the Chaos that infested the land near the Untamed Jungle later. That was no problem.

Opars left Frederik's side after reinsuring that the young Awakened was fine. He offered to use Soothing Wave on Michael, who could only decline.

Even Opars' Healing Soultrait wouldn't change anything about Michael's condition. There was a limit to how much one could heal at a time. Michael went already beyond that limit today...

by a lot, at that.

'I didn't even do that much, yet I'm feeling like I'm about to die.' He cursed himself.

Opars and the others were also dead tired, but they could move, nonetheless. Michael couldn't even do that. He was able to tell that his body would collapse the moment he tried to move. He had to rest for a bit.

'I ended up like that just to kill some Higher Lifeforms. Most of them weren't even Awakened.'

Michael ended up ridiculing himself. Most enemies in today's battle had been natives. They wouldn't provide any Soultrait Symbols or SoulStar Fragments. That was a shame.

But it was good that they were dead. The energy influxes and energy shares he had obtained today were also quite huge. His War Rune was bound to progress a little bit after today's battle.

That was great, but Michael couldn't be happy about it.

Once he experienced that he could move again, Michael dragged his weary body through the outer rings.

The northern outer rings of the Untamed Jungle were nothing like they used to be. All life had been destroyed. The ground was charred, and the only thing Michael could see was death and destruction.

The Chaos had been restrained but Michael knew that he would have to tend to the land at some point, otherwise, the infested land bordering the burned-down outer rings would affect the surroundings, including the Untamed Jungle.

Fortunately, he didn't have to solve that issue right at this instant.

Michael and his people tried to ignore the exhaustion that swept through every bone in their bodies. They tended to the living and collected the dead. They collected the corpses of their enemies, the monsters from the High Beast Horde, and the bodies of their fallen comrades-in-arms.

The monsters that had survived the battle against the Heart of the Blazing Lion army had already left. They distributed and disappeared.

It was unsure how the situation in the Untamed Jungle would change after today's battle, but Michael was certain that something was about to change. The same applied to the Zentika Empire.

The silver cloud that had threatened to devour the Untamed Jungle caught up to the remaining Chaos and formed a much larger cloud. It moved deeper into the Zentika Empire.

'Will the Zentika Empire's council charge into the Untamed Jungle to obliterate us, or will they...leave us alone?'

Too many people died today. 10 Awakened had been killed, and more than 15 Awakened had been wounded seriously. 3,500 members of the Untamed Army had been slaughtered mercilessly...and the number would have been much higher if the mysterious winged serpent hadn't arrived after the first Commander was slaughtered.

'Without Hiraku...or the addition of dozens of Soultraits that enhanced the Untamed Awakened...'

Michael sighed heavily. He knew that today's battle could have ended differently really fast. Almost everything could have ended much worse than it did.

Nonetheless, Michael never lost that many people before.

He didn't feel good about that.

But that was war.

War was not supposed to make you feel good, and the Zentika Empire was not to be taken lightly, either.

It had never been.

Chapter 620 Debts

Michael knew that he was not strong enough to deal with Tier-5 powerhouses. He was already lucky enough to defeat the Peak Tier-4 Commander with the Crysalis Deer. If the Crysalis Deer hadn't protected Michael, he would have been seriously injured or even killed.

He was also not sure if the other High Lionhearts and the remaining Commanders of the Heart of the Blazing Lion army died in the Chaos Inferno. It was likely that they died, but Michael couldn't be certain.

The Zentika Empire must have given the High Lionhearts special items to escape various traps. The Council of Xylon's Awakened had such items as well. It wasn't far-fetched to think that the Zentika Empire gave their armies similar items.

"At least, the Tier-2 and Tier-2 Natives should have been killed." Michael nodded to himself.

'I hope they'll report everything about the mystic serpent. If the mystic serpents react like this with the invasion of Commanders, it should be more violent and erratic if Tier-5 powerhouses managed to invade the middle area.'

Michael couldn't be certain that the mystic winged serpent would protect him and his people at all times, but he sincerely hoped that the Zentika Empire's higher-ups would be too scared to attack the Untamed Jungle.

His people were either dead or dead-exhausted. Nobody wanted to jump from one battle to the next. Even the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs were on the brink of collapsing – if they didn't collapse already.

Michael knew that he and his people weren't weak. The problem was that their enemies were too powerful. It was a miracle that they survived this long without any major setbacks. He and his people were not yet strong enough to deal with the Zentika Empire...yet.

But soon... Soon that would change! Time was all he needed!

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A heavy hand smashed down on the large onyx table, creating cobweb-like cracks all over the well-polished surface.

"The invasion failed?!? How can that be???" A Lionheart thundered, bright flames erupting from his mane.

The flames erupted and threatened to sweep through the humongous hall, but a Jeglaw raised his hand and released a burst of energy to restrain the flames.

"Calm down, Senator."

"You want me to stay calm after reading this ridiculous report?!" The Lionheart Senator retorted in fury.

The Jeglaw stared deep into the wrathful eyes of the Lionheart and nodded.

"What's the use of being angry? If you are that angry, how about you shut up and find a solution to our problems? The faster we find a solution the earlier you can plan your revenge to the Untamed Jungle and that Lord."

Even though the Lionheart Senator wanted to respond in anger once again, he kept his mouth shut. He growled deeply and sat down back on his little throne.

The Senators of the Zentika Empire gathered shortly after the Commanders used their Lifeline Charms to escape certain death.

The Commanders of the Heart of the Blazing Lion army were on the brink of death, infected by Chaos, and would have to spend months recuperating due to the detrimental effect of having used the Lifeline Charm, but they were still alive.

They managed to report what happened in the Untamed Jungle before falling into a coma.

"The Untamed Jungle seems off the limit for the time being. I don't think anyone can deal with this winged serpent, or am I mistaken?" The Jeglaw Senator, a rather young Native, who has gotten to power through his father and other connections in the Zentika Empire, asked.

"For the Commanders to feel the deep-rooted sensation of instant death.... It must have been a Peak Tier-5 High Beast, or maybe a Tier-6 High Beast?"

"It's the Azure Quetzalcoatl. I've encountered the Azure Quetzalcoatl once when I was young and ambitious. It was during the time we expanded the Zentika Empire...and it was also the reason why we had to stop our conquest into the True Untamed Jungle. The Azure Quetzalcoatl obliterated our armies. It killed millions and forced us to retreat," An old, hoarse voice reverberated through the chamber, "But I haven't heard about the Azure Quetzalcoatl for several centuries."

Silence filled the chamber.

"I thought I was mistaken when the reports stated the appearance of a winged serpent in the clouds above the Untamed Jungle. I never expected the Azure Quetzalcoatl to be this interested in such a small part of the Untamed Jungle. It was never bothered when our Adventurers entered this tiny abnormal portion of the jungle."

The abnormal portion of the Untamed Jungle was the protruding part of the Untamed Jungle that bordered the western part of the Zentika Empire and the eastern portion of the Savannah Region.

It was just a small part of the Primal Untamed Jungle that was also considered the real version of the Untamed Jungle, the True Untamed Jungle.

"The Azure Quetzalcoatl? I thought that this monster was a legend. A Divine Beast from fairytales..." The young Jeglaw Senator mumbled, but the old voice rang out again. A chuckle escaped the old head of the Senate.

"It would be great if it was a mere fairytale, but I witnessed its prowess."

"Even if it is the Azure Quetzalcoatl, why would such a beast be interested in the abomination of the Untamed Jungle? There is no reason—..."

The Senate's Head interrupted the youngsters again, "Maybe,

there is a reason."

He sighed heavily, only to glance at a Zantur who raised his

hand lightly.

"What is it, Senator Lirat?"

"The appearance of the Divine Beast was unexpected, but I'm not sure if the Heart of the Blazing Lion army would have won against the High Beast Horde and this Lord dwelling in the Untamed Jungle. From what I gathered, this Lord has at least six Soultraits. Each of them is very powerful with two of them being special Soultraits that can be utilized to strengthen the other Soultraits...and others. It was not a coincidence that they managed to kill one of the Commanders."

The Lionheart Senator jumped up again and was about to say something when Senator Keltos, growled quietly. The Lionheart Senator calmed down instantly and sat down, ignoring the gazes lingering on him and Senator Keltos.

"I think I'm one of the Senators who wants to get rid of the Lord in the Untamed Jungle the most. We can deploy some assassins to get rid of him, but that's it. We have other issues to solve first."

Senator Keltos hated that he had to divert his attention away from the Untamed Jungle once again. He thought that he could finally get rid of the Lord residing in the Untamed Jungle. However, the Lord's prowess surpassed their expectations. That wasn't the first time the Lord in the Untamed Jungle did this, but his reported combat prowess was several times higher than they had expected. Even his subordinates were incredibly powerful, most being Dual or Triple wielders, Awakened with two or three Soultraits! That was totally beyond their expectations.

"That's right. We have other problems," The old Head of the

Senate acknowledges, his voice heavy and weary, "We have debts to pay."

Being reminded about their debts, the Senators shuddered.

"What if they come?" One of them asked, his voice filled with fear.

The Zentika Empire's foundation was built upon debts. It was difficult for Natives to gain enough strength to contend against Awakened and other Lords. Natives didn't have the means to summon Summons or awaken Soultraits. They were not much different than Summons if one excluded the fact that Natives were born in the Origin Expanse. They hadn't been resurrected.

The greatest advantage of Natives was that they were exposed to origin energy from birth. Their control of origin energy was

much higher than the norm. That made it easier for them to receive enlightenment and receive promotions to occupations with a higher star rating.

Nonetheless, acquiring power required time, but their enemies didn't wait for them. The Zentika Empire's enemies desired their lands. They lusted for the treasures hidden underneath the surface.

The Zentika Empire retaliated, but they couldn't do everything on their own. They required help...financial support as well as military support.

Most citizens of the Zentika Empire didn't know what happened in the initial years of the empire's founding. The truth had been erased from all historical records, leaving only faint memories of the truth everyone wanted to hide.

However, the oldest members of the Senate remembered.

They had been alive at that time, and they knew what would

happen if they couldn't pay their debts.

The Senate was afraid.

Their armies' state was a mess and no more Soldiers could be

deployed to the Untamed Jungle. Their finances didn't look

any better.

"How about we ask for another loan from the –..."

"ARE YOU INSANE?!?"

The Senate of the Zentika Empire entered a verbal battle.

They discussed their situation for a long time and it looked

like they would never be able to conclude.

Their situation was desperate, and they didn't know how to

solve all the issues at once.

Interestingly enough, the Heart of the Blazing Lion army

wasn't referred again. Their conquer was treated like it never happened, and no one spoke about the Untamed Jungle again.

For the time being, they had other things to worry about. The resistance from the Untamed Jungle had been too strong, resulting in even more losses than they could accept. Invading the Untamed Jungle to claim riches and sufficient food to solve them.

But now they had to seek other solutions since they couldn't leave the capital to charge into the Untamed Jungle either.

First of all, the Azure Quetzalcoatl might kill them if they invaded the Untamed Jungle.

Second...the Untamed Jungle was not their only border.

They had far more enemies and far fewer resources to deal with all of them than they wanted to acknowledge.

The Zentika Empire's situation was far from good.

