

## Supreme Lord 621

### Chapter 621 Honor

After the fight with the Heart of the Blazing Lion army everyone was tired, but nobody could rest soundly. There was no way that they could sleep like nothing happened.

Everyone was restless. They had felt the great power of their enemies and how big the gap in their strength had been. Clearly, the Untamed Army had been at a disadvantage. Their numbers didn't even reach one-tenth of the Heart of the Blazing Army and they didn't have a single Higher Lifeform in their rows.

Despite everyone's doubts and worries, Michael decided that everyone should rest a little bit.

He wasn't ready to rush his people from one major battle to the next. That would cause more harm than good.

Instead of rushing into the next battle, Michael decided to use the following days to honor those who died to protect the Untamed Jungle and his territory. Like many others, Michael didn't feel like celebrating the win against the Heart of the Blazing Lion army, but he decided that it was only fair to honor the dead.

They gave their lives to protect everyone.

Michael chose to keep a low profile in the next few days and allow his subjects to think about what had happened and to grieve as much as they had to. Michael didn't join them. Instead, he focused on the Savannah Region and the war between the Trilance " which struggled to survive now that they had only two Lords left " and the Council of Xylon with a massive pool of 106 Lords.

'I would rather fight those 106 Lords than the Heart of the Blazing Lion army...'

The Council of Xylon, as a whole, was unlikely to have more than 300 Higher Lifeforms. In fact, it would surprise Michael if their combined forces managed to get close to 100 Higher Lifeforms. However, the most important was that the Council of Xylon didn't have any Peak Tier-4 Awakened.

They could ask for reinforcement from their Clans and the Government, but it was not possible to bring true powerhouses to the Savannah Region. The Lords would have to be at a higher Tier than the reinforcement to transport them to the Savannah Region, after all.

Michael sighed deeply when he thought about the Council of Xylon. The movements in the Savannah Region had been quite confusing for a while now. Michael would much rather attack them before his opponents used dirty tricks to kill more of the Untamed Army's treasured powerhouses. Unfortunately, it was not like Michael's subjects were strong enough to deal with the forces of 106 established Lords.

Even if they didn't have many powerhouses, the 106 Lords were well-established and likely to have close to 100,000 combatants respectively. Their territories were also not small and certainly not easy to trespass.

'Most would be Tier-1 and Tier-2, though...' Michael thought before slapping his cheeks to calm down his nerves.

He would attack the Council of Xylon at some point, but his people had to rest first. Rushing into the next battle would cause more harm than good.

At the end of the day, Michael decided to analyze the movements of the High Beast Horde, or what was left of it. At least, that was the plan.

He found the whereabouts of the Crysalis Deer, but most of the other monsters had disappeared. They ran away as if they had joined the High Beast Horde merely to defend the Untamed Jungle.

'Using them against the Savannah Region won't be possible then. I should have expected that.'

He didn't want to be idle, but his Body, Mind, and Soul were too exhausted to do anything. Michael decided to rest for the first time in forever.

He went to sleep early and was still tired even after he woke up late the next day.

His entire body felt like a mess, but it was a little bit easier to walk around.

Michael left the wooden manor where he encountered Master Tigris with the other Silverfangs. They greeted him but avoided his eyes in discomfort.

Even if it was not their fault that so many people died, the Silverfangs felt responsible for the high casualty rate against the Heart of the Blazing Lion army.

The six Silverfangs had emerged from Legendary Scrolls, a Scroll that ought to summon powerful Legendary Summons that had the potential to help their Lord. At least two out of the six Legendary Summons would have been related to combat, granting them enough power to change the outcome of the battle.

That was how Legendary Scrolls usually worked. They would always give you something you want or need – even if you didn't know that you might need them.

But the six Silverfangs were either too weak to battle or just too bad at it.

Michael didn't think that they did anything wrong, but he wasn't going to play nanny and pamper to the Silverfangs. He had other business to attend. Their struggle against the Zentika Empire and the Council of Xylon was not yet over, after all.

It didn't take long for Michael to reach the warehouse where he picked up two spatial pouches. One pouch was filled with the Blazing Lion army's Soldiers whereas the other spatial pouch contained the bodies of 16,000ish monster corpses.

Michael retrieved the monster bodies first and began to loot them using Extraction.

Since he didn't have to focus on extracting SoulStar Fragments and the like, the removal process was rather simple and fast. Michael acquired a total of 464,239 Summoning Scroll Fragments, 11,680 Ordinary Summoning Scrolls, 9,633 blueprints, and 915 Artifacts.

Most Artifacts and plans were of low quality. Only two Artifacts were 4-Star Tier-3 and 3-Star Tier-4 Artifacts. They were worth a small fortune. Not a single blueprint was overly valuable for Michael. They were Agriculture-type blueprints, which was good for the Bartholomew Corporation.

'At least, I can earn a small fortune..I guess...'

Michael shrugged and retrieved the bodies of the Heart of the Blazing Lion army.

The Untamed Army and the High Beast Horde managed to eliminate a total of 85,249 members of the Heart of the Blazing Lion army. They killed 124 High Lionhearts and 853 Awakened.

It was slightly unfortunate that most Awakened they'd killed had a low Tier, but some of them had been at a higher Tier, just like the Commander.

Michael hadn't been fortunate enough to sight any intact bodies near the crater where the Zentika Empire's military camp had been located, otherwise, he would have more Lionheart corpses to extract.

He spent the next hour plundering as much loot as possible from the Lionheart corpses. The gains weren't too bad.

"1,619,731 Summoning Scroll Fragments, 45,182 Ordinary Summoning Scrolls, 25,575 blueprints, and 1442 Artifacts."

Procuring more than two million Summoning Scroll Fragments, 57,000ish Ordinary Scrolls, 35,000ish plans and more than 2,000 Artifacts from a single battle was a great haul, but Michael wasn't satisfied. They lost too much in yesterday's battle.

Not even the 57,345 SoulStar Fragments and 109 Soultrait Symbols he'd extracted were enough to brighten his mood.

He had extracted the Memory Orbs of the Lionheart Awakened as well, but Michael didn't want to see the death of his subjects through the eyes of his enemies at this moment. Michael knew that he would have to consume their Memory Orbs sooner or later to find out what the Zentika Empire had up to their sleeves, however, he was not ready to do this right now.

'Maybe, in a few days.'

Michael took a deep breath and forced a wry smile on his lips.

It was about time to reward his subjects for emerging victorious against the Zentika Empire.

#### Chapter 622 Rewards

Michael thought that it would be a good idea to reward everyone generously after they put their lives on the line to protect everyone.

First, he decreased everyone's debt to reward the Untamed Awakened for fighting against the Heart of the Blazing Lion army and surviving. Following that, Michael chose to give everyone an additional discount in the Jungle Shop and a bonus for killing powerful enemies.

All those gains might not be necessary, but Michael felt that fighting solely for the purpose of protecting their settlement wasn't enough long-term. Sure, it would be more than enough for a while, however, their enemies would grow stronger and the casualty rate in battles would increase.

Thus, Michael decided that it would be the best idea to give the combatants additional benefits for fighting against their enemies and for killing more powerhouses. It was not like Michael didn't gain anything in return either.

First and foremost, Michael's subordinates would grow stronger as they procure more Jungle Points and combat experience. Second, Michael would gain a lot more resources as his subordinates eliminated more enemies.

It was a win-win situation with Michael gaining the most.

The news of Michael's actions spread quickly. Everyone was glad about the additional benefits, the discounts in the Jungle Shop, and the fact that they had less pressure to pay the remaining Jungle Points that they'd loaned a few days ago.

Even the Holy Knights, Blessed Squires, and other Summons, who'd been participating in the ferocious fight against the Zentika Empire, received generous rewards from Michael.

Michael's wallet was bleeding, but he was glad that his subjects were doing better. Handing out generous rewards changed the atmosphere in the settlements a lot more than expected.

It was quite surprising.

Once he was done emptying his wallet, Michael approached Hiraku. The young Awakened had yet to ask for the termination of their Link of Loyalty, but it was quite obvious that it was only a matter of time before Hiraku would leave.

"We haven't been talking a lot, but I think that I owe you something. If you hadn't been here we would have probably lost against the Heart of the Blazing Lion army. Even if we had won we would have lost at least twice as many good men and women. You helped me protect my people, and I'm grateful for that," Michael said, smiling lightly.

"I would like to thank you. You can pick a Soultrait Symbol from the Jungle Shop and have it upgraded to 4-Star free of charge. Consider it as a gift for helping me protect those I hold dearly."

Michael was unwilling to let Hiraku go. He was hoping that Hiraku would stay in his territory and that he wouldn't terminate his Link of Loyalty anytime soon. Hiraku was a powerful ally. Strengthening him with more Soultraits and Soultrait Upgrades would turn him into a monstrosity among the Descendants, but Michael was not worried about getting betrayed.

Despite feeling like inviting Hiraku to his territory, he didn't throw the invitation out right away. He didn't want Hiraku to misunderstand his intentions. The gift and the invitation were separate matters. Michael didn't want Hiraku to think of the gift as a bait.

Hiraku raised an eyebrow and looked at Michael for a while, "I gained a lot already. You helped me escape the island and I fought for you in exchange. There is no need to give me anything."

Hiraku rejected the gift coldly, but Michael sensed a glimmer of hesitation in Hiraku's voice.

"Are you sure? How about you take a look at the list of Soultraits and decide then?" Michael offered.

Hiraku was about to deliver another rejection, but he didn't say anything.

"That's not a trick to show off the resources you grant your subordinates, right?" Hiraku asked in a neutral tone, but his sharp silver eyes landed on Michael, who could only shrug.

"I'm not here to brag, though I cannot deny that I would love to invite you into my territory. I am sincere when I say that you can pick any Soultrait Symbol listed in the Jungle Shop. I will give it to you after upgrading it to 4-Star. It won't cost you anything. As for inviting you to stay in my territory permanently, I hope you can think about it. HOWEVER, it has nothing to do with the Soultrait I want to give you! It's a gift."

Hiraku nodded slowly. He could tell that Michael was agitated about his suspicion, but who wouldn't be suspicious about such a generous gift? It didn't make sense that Michael would gift him a Soultrait and upgrade it straight to 4-Star.

"I...will think about it."

That was good enough for Michael. He nodded lightly and chatted a little bit longer with Hiraku to find out more about Hiraku's Soultrait and his transformations. Hiraku was a little secretive, but it was also a rare occasion for him to talk about his powers with someone who was clearly stronger than him. Of course, there were many powerhouses in the Saphirelake Military Academy and the Lightweaver Academy where he had been before transferring to the Saphirelake Military Academy, but Michael was younger, at a lower Tier, and stronger as well.

After yesterday's battle, Hiraku's respect for Michael soared through the roof. He understood why his subjects trusted Michael. Their unbending loyalty and trust were the result of Michael's actions and his sacrifices in battle.

Hiraku's life had been in danger several times yesterday, but he had never been close to death. Michael always intervened when the tide of the battle was about to turn against them. Michael had been on the verge of death and seriously injured multiple times. It was a surprise that he was still able to stand and talk calmly.

If it was anyone else, they would have been forced to reside in bed for several days, if they recuperated fast, and for several weeks, if they were ordinary Low rank Tier-3 Lords.

However, Michael was anything but normal.

He was an anomaly, just like Hiraku. It was just that Michael was an even more abnormal anomaly than Hiraku.

In the end, Hiraku ended up revealing some information about his Soultraits to Michael. Hiraku didn't know how it turned out like that, but he revealed a lot. He wasn't sure how long it had been since he talked this much with anyone. It had been a while. That was for sure.

Michael was busy and had to leave at some point.

"Make sure to check the Jungle Shop. Don't forget to reconsider my invitation as well. I hope you can join my territory. We need someone like you!"

He disappeared right after saying those words, leaving Hiraku alone. But he wasn't alone for a long time. Frederik found Hiraku and rushed to his new friend with a smile.

"I reached the Late rank of Tier-2!! If I continue to improve like this, I will advance to Tier-3 in a few months! Ain't that amazing?!"

Frederik was a lot happier than he used to be. His sullen mood was no more. He was stronger.

Michael's action might seem simple, at first glance, but he could change the lives of his people forever. The most interesting was that Michael didn't even seem to realize what he was capable of. He treated everyone nicely and rewarded those who worked hard generously. At first glance, it felt like Michael was wealthy, but that wasn't the case.

He earned a lot from several sources of income, but his wealth was used up almost instantaneously to improve his subjects' living standards, expand his territory, and strengthen his people.

It was necessary to strengthen his people, but most Lords would focus on themselves. They would try to ascend to a Higher Lifeform to expand their lifespan as quickly as possible before dealing with their

enemies one by one. Michael didn't have that much time. He had enemies everywhere, but it looked like he didn't mind that.

On the contrary, Michael was relaxed and finished his tasks one by one.

'Is he calm, or just ignorant about the approaching dangers? Is he smart and calculative, or is it plain stupidity? But if he was stupid, he wouldn't have managed to make it this far.'

Hiraku didn't spend all his time in the Origin Expanse after he was teleported to the Untamed Jungle. He had been outside the Origin Expanse for a while to research Michael and his background. Hiraku could tell that Michael was a good guy, but Hiraku knew how fake people could be. He didn't know Michael for a long time. He couldn't trust him entirely right away.

'He wasn't always strong. It's his Soultrait that allowed him to grow stronger slowly but steadily. He gained more Soultraits and started upgrading them, therefore, granting him exponential gains. But reports also state that he had been on the verge of death quite often. His brother died, turning him into a living zombie for a while. And about his parents...his mother seems to be powerful, but there is no information about her. Is it a good idea to consider joining him, or should I reside away from him?'

Hiraku was not sure what to do. People like Frederik were grateful for Michael. They would follow him everywhere simply because he had the means to grant them more power. Frederik was probably a little bit different because he was Michael's friend, but Hiraku could tell that Frederik had fallen into a deep pit of greed.

"You ought focus on your own strength. If Michael could grant you Soultraits and Soultrait Upgrades, he can probably take them away as well. Increase your strength and don't even think of blindly relying upon your strength. You will die just like the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs who fell victim to their greed and desires!"

Frederik's smile froze. He stared at Hiraku, his lips pressed together.

"You really know how to kill my vibe, you know?"

Chapter 623 Insert

"I don't want any rewards," Tiara pressed her hands against her hips and stared intently at Michael.

"You gave me more than enough by summoning my kin with the Legendary Summoning Scrolls. I cannot ask for more things. My uncontrollable greed was probably the reason so many people died yesterday..."

Tiara nibbled on her lower lip as she spoke to Michael, whose expression changed slowly.

"You used your Achievements to bring the Silverfangs to my territory, didn't you?" Michael concluded, "But how is that possible? I thought you could only access the Achievement Records and the Ancient Market upon ascending to a Higher Lifeform."

Tiara smiled sadly at her Master, "My situation is a little bit different, Master. I can acquire Achievements, but I cannot use them. My Achievements are naturally used up to resurrect my Clan. There is no 'decision' or 'choice' to take. It happens naturally."

"But you're not at fault for anything that happened if that's the case. If it happens naturally and you cannot influence the Will's decision, it's not your choice that I summoned the Silverfangs instead of Legendary Summons."

Michael didn't think too much about the Silverfangs and the six Legendary Summons he didn't manage to summon. It happened in the past and he couldn't change it. There was no need to think too much about them.

"But--..."

Tiara was interrupted by Michael right away.

"Are you sure that you don't want anything?"

"Maybe...that you don't hate me for burdening you with my Clan's resurrection..." Tiara uttered quietly.

Michael chuckled and ruffled through Tiara's hair, disheveling it.

"I don't hate you. Everything is okay."

Tiara sighed in relief, and one could visibly see the tension in her body easing up. Her composure and expression improved at once and the little Princess of the Silverfang Tigerfolk broke into a bright smile.

Michael and Tiara chatted a little bit longer. To be precise, it was mostly Tiara talking about the Silverfangs and how excited she was about summoning more of them. She said that she would give her best to grow stronger and acquire as many Achievements as the Will required to bring her entire Clan to the Untamed Jungle.

Michael wondered where her uncertainty had gone, but he smiled as well.

Tiara was excited and overflowing with ambition. She was determined to resurrect her Clan. That was great. Michael was happy for her.

He accepted her rejection for additional benefits even though she was one of the Awakened with the biggest impact in the battle against the Heart of the Blazing Lion army. She didn't fight them head-on. Instead, Tiara killed tens of thousands with the support of Chaos Pills and overcharged elemental crystals.

Michael decided to make a mental note about Tiara's help and to reward her later. He would have to strengthen her sooner or later to ensure that the little Silverfang Princess would be safe and sound wherever she went.

But to be fair, everyone did a great job on the battlefield the day before. Everyone deserved to be praised and rewarded. That was far from cheap, but Michael wasn't stingy. His territory required more strength to stand strong against their future enemies. The Council of Xylon wouldn't wait for them to get stronger, either.

That led Michael to think about ways to acquire as much strength as possible in the shortest possible period. The answers were simple.

"Soultraits, Legendary Scrolls, and Artifacts are among the easiest ways to grow stronger. Even Ordinary Scrolls can be considered a way to grow stronger, but only for me as the Lord with all Links of Loyalty." Michael murmured deep in thought.

Powerful Artifacts were rather difficult to come by. He had still some Vouchers for customized Epic Tier-3 Artifacts, but he didn't need them. The Untamed Awakened could purchase the Vouchers at a big discount. They were better off with some mighty customized Epic Tier-3 Artifacts.

Legendary Scrolls were powerful, but they might not be that useful right now, either. Michael didn't have anything against the Silverfangs, but it was a fact that four – maybe five – out of six Silverfangs weren't suited for combat. And combat power was what he needed the most at this point.

'Should I combine the Scroll Fragments into Mythic Scrolls in the hope of summoning a few dozen 2-Star and 3-Star Summons with combat occupations? Or is it possible to do something else with the Scroll Fragments?'

Michael thought about Kraft Viton's proposal to use Insert in more versatile ways.

'I could try inserting Ordinary Scrolls into each other or insert Summoning Scroll Fragments into Ordinary Scrolls. Or insert them straight into Mythic Scrolls. Hmmm...'

Another thing was that Michael had yet to use Insert on Soultrait Symbols and other things. He hadn't even tapped into Insert's true potential. His utility of Insert didn't even scratch the Soultrait's surface. It was about time to change that.

Michael had hundreds of Soultrait Symbols sealed away, and he was a little excited to retrieve them to start experimenting. He knew that he could start experimenting with other things first, but Michael's interest in Soultrait Symbols and how they would react to Insert was the highest.

Thus, he retrieved a bunch of Soultrait Symbols from the sealed contained that he'd retrieved from his War Rune and began to play—...experiment.

"Use Insert on 1-Star Improved Sight, and 1-Star Inferior Energy Vision," Michael mumbled as he pressed two Soultrait Symbols together while exerting Insert on both.

Tendrils of energy shot out of the two Soultrait Symbols. The tendrils collided with each other and repelled one another at first. However, the clashing tendrils began to interweave and merge a few seconds into their 'fierce' battle. Michael with Spirit Eyes could see the clash of energies and the adaptability of the Soultraits.

The integration process of the two Soultraits didn't last long, but with Spirit Eyes fully activated, Michael was able to see the particles clashing, interweaving, and fusing slowly. He managed to record every single step in his head and he reviewed the whole show several times.

"The fusion of Soultraits is not that simple. 1-Star Improved Sight and 1-Star Energy Vision turned into Energy Sight. Does that mean it's Inferior Energy Vision without the Inferior prefix, or that something about the 'Vision' modified to turn it into Sight? And what happened to the 'Improved' prefix from Improved Sight?" Michael took a few notes on a piece of paper that he had retrieved from his War Rune and continued to test a few more things.

He retrieved a few more Soultrait Symbols and began to utilize Insert on them. However, this time, Michael didn't try to search for Soultrait Symbols that should be highly compatible with each other. Improved Sight and Energy Vision were highly compatible, but Energy Vision and Minor Demonic Aura weren't.

Michael spent the next 10 minutes fusing ten 1-Star Soultraits into five 1-Star Soultraits. The results were both better than he had expected and...very confusing.

Energy Vision and Minor Demonic Aura fused into Minor Demonic Vision, Energy Bullet and Camouflage transformed into Improved Energy Camouflage, and so on.

The integration of Soultrait Symbols was very confusing, but as Michael continued to utilize Insert, he noticed a few things.

'The effect of Insert on Soultraits of the same rank is extremely high. The Soultraits do not consider one of them as the Main Soultrait, and the other one as the subsidiary. They fused and created something new with the aspects of each inserted Soultrait Symbol.'

That changed when Michael added another experiment. He upgraded one Soultrait Symbol to 2-Star and fused it with 1-

Star Soultraits.

"2-Star Conjure Arrow and 1-Star Improved Energy Camouflage fused into 2-Star Conjure Improved Arrow."

Michael did a few more tests like this with 2-Star and 1-Star Soultraits and quickly understood that the higher-ranked Soultrait was considered the Main Soultrait.

No major changes were applied to the Main Soultrait upon fusing. Instead, the lower-ranked Soultrait was employed as a supplement to add some of its power to the higher-ranked Soultrait.

That was very interesting, and it was something Michael could make utilize of.

By changing the star rating before combining Soultraits, it was easier to control the changes.

"That's good to know for Soul Grimoire," Michael noted, certain that he could utilize Insert on Soultraits that could aid Soul Grimoire to transform into something that was more suited toward the preservation of Living Souls and their nourishing.

But his new find was also great for something else, something that had been bothering him for quite a while. It was great to replace Glacicle.

Michael's compatibility with Glacicle was extremely high, which was also why he couldn't extract it without inflicting serious – permanent – harm on his soul. It was similar to his compatibility with Soul Grimoire, which had been anchored deep into his very existence.

However, now that he could combine Soultraits, Michael should be able to transform Glacicle into something more useful. It was too fragile and not very versatile. That could be changed!

'Glacicle's freezing property is crazy. Keeping that is a must. But other than that...Glacicle is rather weak. I'm pretty sure Glacicle won't be as powerful as Frozen Kingdom if I upgrade it to 6-Star, let alone Frozen Nova if I were to upgrade Glacicle to 7-Star. Glacicle is a rather weak Elementa Soultrait if not for the freezing property.'

Michael decided to do something risky. He employed Extraction on Glacicle and decreased its star rating to 1-Star. He gained more than 2,000 SoulStar Fragments in return...and a punishment.

Extracting SoulStar Fragments from his own Soultrait hurt like hell. Michael felt like he was about to lose his sanity.

For a moment, he pitied all those whose SoulStar Fragments and Soultrait Symbols he had extracted while they were still alive.

But his pity disappeared quickly. It was not like Michael kept innocent people alive to drain their SoulStar Fragments and Soultrait Symbols.

Only those who deserved to suffer received this kind of Soul-

torturing.

Chapter 624 Combine

Glacicle was reverted to a 1-Star Soultrait. The pain Michael felt when he extracted SoulStar Fragments from Glacicle had been horrifying, but he overcame it somehow.

'I spend a lot more than 2,000 Fragments to get you to 5-Star...What a nuisance.' He complained silently in his aching heart.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to upgrade his Soultraits and Extract the SoulStar Fragments whenever he wanted to without any losses. That was not how it worked. But it was a good thing that Michael didn't want to lower his Soultraits' star rating often. Doing so once was already enough.

Glacicle's freezing property was retained, though it was much weaker than ever. It would grow stronger as the Soultrait's star rating increased.

Glacicle couldn't be removed from the Sphere of Light without damaging his Soul and the Sphere. However, that didn't mean Michael couldn't integrate other Soultraits into Glacicle.

Michael had been putting aside certain Soultraits because he liked their powers and special properties. It was no wonder, but he liked using Elements. The more the merrier.

Fusing with the Elemental Empress opened a door to a much bigger world, which was why Michael considered integrating a bunch of Soultraits into Glacicle, in the first place.

Zeroa's Elemental Affinities weren't too bad, but the Mythical Fire Affinity was her only truly powerful affinity. That was not enough for Michael. He wanted more.

Michael understood that he greedy, but it was a fact that he had the means to satisfy his greed.

He spent the rest of the day sorting Soultrait Symbols, tapping into the memories of the Soultraits' former owners to learn more about their uses, special perks, and weak points and used Insert to combine a bunch of Soultraits. Michael was trying to integrate two compatible Soultraits before combining the results of the integration with one another.

The process of combining two Soultraits was neither fast nor slow. Some integrations required half an hour, others required Michael's attention and two hours to complete.

Michael was still tired from going all-out against the Heart of the Blazing Lion army, but integrating various Soultraits was very interesting. It was very helpful for future ordeals and the experience he gained from combining Soultraits was not to be taken lightly either.

He learned a lot about the processes during the day and digested the information and everything he was able to see through Spirit Eyes at night.

The next morning wasn't special in any way. Michael continued to combine Soultraits and experiments. He raked his mind and used Insert to its limit to create the most suitable Soultrait, but something was missing no matter how often Michael combined the Soultrait Symbols.

At some point, Michael realized that the Soultrait Symbol's name changed into something he didn't want. The Soultrait Symbols turned for the worse after he integrated too many Soultrait Symbols. It was a good thing that Michael had Extraction. He could fix his mistakes by reverting to the last step.

Extracting a Soultrait Symbol from another Soultrait Symbol was far from easy. Michael had to spend the rest of the morning and the whole afternoon until late evening finishing the job. It was exhausting and Michael hated himself a little bit for impatiently using Insert to combine the SoulStar Fragments.

However, he learned from his mistakes and decided that the Soultrait was strong enough as a 1-Star Soultrait. He used 4 SoulStar Fragments to upgrade the Soultrait that had formed out of 13 Soultrait Symbols only to freeze in place.

"Four Fragments is not enough? Usually, that's more than enough to upgrade a 1-Star Soultrait to 2-Star. Is it more expensive because the Soultrait is a high-quality Soultrait with great power?"

Some Soultraits, just like Extraction, required more SoulStar Fragments to be upgraded. Michael didn't think too much and continued to channel more SoulStar Fragments into the fused 1-Star Soultrait.

10 SoulStar Fragments.

20 SoulStar Fragments.

50 SoulStar Fragments.

80 SoulStar Fragments.

100 SoulStar Fragments.

Only after the newly fused 1-Star Soultrait had been nourished by 100 SoulStar Fragments did the second star form.

'Is that for real now?' Michael swallowed hard, but he continued upgrading the Soultrait to 3-Star.

400 SoulStar Fragments later, the fused Soultrait Symbol reached 3-Star.

"Oh...fuck me..."

Upgrading the newly fused Soultrait from 1-Star to 2-Star costs 25 times to 30 times more than it should have. Even upgrading the Soultrait from 2-Star to 3-Star was 20 times more expensive than it ought to be.

It was a matter of fact that the newly fused Soultrait replaced Glacicle in the Middle Area of the Sphere of Light since he integrated the Soultrait Symbols with Glacicle rightaway. The middle area forced Michael to spend 1.75x as many SoulStar Fragments to upgrade a Soultrait. Even though that was a lot...

it wasn't comparable to the exorbitant price to upgrade his newly fused Soultrait.

"It is because I fused Soultrait Symbols?" Michael wondered, sighing heavily.

It did make sense even, unfortunately.

He had noticed that upgrading Spirit Eyes was going to be a lot more expensive than upgrading Superior Constitution but didn't think too much about it first. It made sense that Spirit Eyes was more expensive because it was a Soultrait that had been fused from two Soultraits. It was a 2-in-1 set and thus more expensive to upgrade.

But a 20x multiplier – including the Sphere of Light's multiplier – for a single Soultrait...was a little bit over the top.

'I created a near-perfect Soultrait. It's far more useful than most Soultraits, in the first place. If only-...'

Michael halted in his tracks and decided to continue experimenting. He had been upgrading the newly fused Soultrait to 3-Star because he wanted to integrate more Soultraits into it. Michael did not plan to change the Soultrait's essence anymore, but instead fuse some properties of 1-Star Soultraits into it.

The only issue he had, now that he found out that the upgrade cost of the fused Soultraits was exorbitant, was that Michael couldn't be certain whether upgrading the Soultrait to 4-Star would be a feasible task. Michael had prepared 50 Soultrait Symbols with useful properties to consolidate into the newly fused 3-Star Soultrait. Would the upgrade cost increase to a 70x multiplier, or would it remain the same because he didn't change the essence of the Soultrait anymore?

There was only one way to find out.

Michael spend two more days inserting 1-Star Soultraits into the fused 3-Star Soultrait.

The 1-Star Soultraits integrated into the 3-Star Soultrait and improved it, subtly changing the Soultraits' properties, and enhancing them considerably.

The changes were very nice and pleasant to the eyes.

That left only one question: Could he upgrade the Soultrait to 4-Star by investing less than 5,000 SoulStar Fragments?

An ordinary 3-Star Soultrait required between 200-250 SoulStar Fragments to be enhanced to 4-Star. If his multiplier remained at 20x, the newly fused Soultrait shouldn't require more than 5,000 SoulStar Fragments to reach 4-Star.

'At least the multiplier includes the cost increase from the Sphere of Light's Middle Area. I don't think I could happily invest close to 9,000 SoulStar Fragments to upgrade a 3-Star Soultrait.' Michael half-complained.

The price was still exorbitant but if the result was remotely as amazing as Michael imagined, it would be worth it!

Michael closed his eyes and began channeling SoulStar Fragments into his newly fused Soultrait. The SoulStar Fragments were consumed like crazy. 1,000 Fragments disappeared just like that.

Michael nibbled on his lower lip once they reached the threshold of 5,000 SoulStar Fragments. They surpassed the threshold and Michael broke into cold sweat. He was about to curse when the 4th Star formed on the Soultrait Symbol.

He succeeded in upgrading the newly merged Soultrait to 4-

Star using 5,500 SoulStar Fragments.

"Yes!!" Michael exclaimed, clenching his fists. He roared and broke into a bright smile. The newly merged Soultrait did not only advance to 4-Star but it attained a proper upgrade as well.

His newly merged Soultrait evolved and grew stronger...much stronger than Michael had been hoping for. Something within Michael transformed and a vast influx of information bombarded his mind. He consumed the information right away, resulting in his smile widening even further.

Small changes occurred inside his body, within the Pillar of Light, to be precise. His energy storage was being altered, tiny spheres of all colors forming within them.

The Spheres of Elements were given birth to.

Chapter 625 New Toys

?Shards of Elements was the Soultrait that Michael had created by combining more than ten 1-Star Soultraits. Upgrading Shards of Elements to 3-Star and integrating dozens of 1-Star Soultraits to further reinforce the Shards of Elements' perks had been enough to stimulate an evolution.

Shards of Elements evolved into Spheres of Elements upon reaching 4-Star.

Spheres of Elements possessed various great perks. One of them was that the Soultrait constructed tens of Elemental Spheres inside the Pillar of Light, therefore resulting in an expansion of his energy storage.

Expanding Michael's energy storage was only a byproduct of the creation of the Elemental Spheres. It was not one of the main effects, though it was a pretty amazing perk that had been granted from the 1-Star Energy Pocket Soultrait.

The Elemental Spheres' main task was to purify and alter origin energy. Circulating origin energy through the Sphere of Fire would create purified fire-attributed origin energy. Using the fire-attributed origin energy, Michael could replicate an innate fire affinity.

Of course, Michael was not yet certain how strong the replicated elemental affinities would be, but it was a fact that Michael gained the power to recreate all elements and use them.

It was similar to the Elemental Empress' power with one major difference being that Michael didn't have a particularly weak affinity like Zeroa.

The only downside was probably that he would have to study the elements he wanted to use to unleash their true potential. Fortunately, that was no problem given that he learned a lot about all elements from his fusions with the Elemental Empress.

Michael's Elemental Spheres weren't overwhelmingly strong. Spheres of Element was just a 4-Star Soultrait. It wasn't a 10-Star Soultrait or the like. However, the Soultrait's versatility made up for the lack of overwhelming power.

If Michael needed overwhelming power, he could always use a Soul Tear to amplify Spheres of Elements and apply a few layers of Enhancement on the Soultrait Symbol. That ought to be more than enough to produce some power.

If used properly and with some trickery, Michael was certain that 4-Star Spheres of Elements could become more valuable than various 6-Star Soultraits.

The Spheres of Elements were also very useful when he was fused with Zeroa. He could strengthen the Elemental Empress' Mythical Flames and her other affinities as well using his purified elemental energy.

That meant, Spheres of Elements expanded his energy storage, gave him access to all elements – with special properties such as the ice element's freezing perk –, and the Elementals Spheres could be used to strengthen Zeroa when they fused.

'Should I upgrade you to 5-Star right away?'

Michael shook his head. He was curious how much the Elemental Spheres would change upon upgrading Spheres of Elements to 5-Star, but he didn't have enough SoulStar Fragments to upgrade it.

That was not true. Michael had enough SoulStar Fragments to spend 45,000ish to upgrade Spheres of Light. However, Michael had to use his SoulStar Fragments for something else. He was not yet done improving his strength.

Michael still had a long way to go before he was truly powerful. Others might not agree with that sentiment, but Michael felt oddly weak. No matter how hard he worked and how much stronger he grew....he was always one step behind his enemies. Even his mother was countless times stronger than him.

Thinking about his mother, Michael cursed quietly. He didn't have the time – and intention – to talk to her, but it was quite obvious that his mother was not only powerful but also knowledgeable about the Cursed Seals, Cursed Children, and Curse Users.

There was also some sort of organization called 'Nest'. Michael was not sure what to think about the Nest, or that his mother seemed to have been restrained with a Geas...by a Divine Lifeform.

Michael was severely lacking information and that was getting on his nerves. Unfortunately, he didn't have much time to procure detailed pieces of information because he was busy fighting in the Origin Expanse. He was not sure if he was going to like the intel once procured.

He cursed quietly in his room and diverted his attention back to the main task. Three particular Soultrait Symbols appeared in front of him and Michael stared at them for a while.

[Distorted Portal], [Warped Steps], [Flicker]. Those were the names of the Soultrait Symbols, the Soultraits had once belonged to the Teleporters.

At first, Michael felt like integrating the Teleporters' Soultraits into the Spheres of Elements to strengthen its spatial affinity. However, Michael quickly realized that fusing Soultraits was not a perfect solution for every problem.

If he wanted a Soultrait specialized for a particular issue, he would have to create a Soultrait with a single power. Spheres of Elements created Elemental Spheres, granting him access to all elements. That was great.

However, it also meant that all of his elements were similarly powerful. The grand power of the Spheres of Elements was distributed equally among all elements. None was given an advantage other than specific advantageous perks.

But Michael wanted a Soultrait that focused specifically on space travel and teleportation. He hoped to create a powerful Space-type Soultrait that would evolve and grow even stronger as its star rating increased. Using purified space-attributed origin energy from the Spheres of Elements would further enhance the Space-type Soultrait's power. Michael didn't have to think much about his next step of action. He knew enough about the Teleporters' Soultraits to use Insert on them and combine them. It was possible that he would create something worse than the individual Soultraits by fusing them, but he could always extract them and try again.

Failure would help him to learn more about his Soultraits, adapt, and improve his mistakes.

Fusing the three Space-type Soultraits required longer than Michael expected. Completing the fusion process required the energy stored within several hundred Common Energy Stones. That was slightly surprising. After all, Michael didn't have to use that much energy to fuse his other Soultraits before. Even Spheres of Elements didn't require too much energy.

Once the Teleporters' Soultraits had been fused, Michael noticed golden mots glimmering within the Soultrait Symbol. It looked like tiny stars twinkled inside the Soultrait. His attention was naturally drawn to the Space-type Soultrait Symbol and it was not long before several tendrils of energy burst out of his War Rune. His War Rune lusted for the Space-type Soultrait. That took him by surprise.

It had been eons since Michael had a hard time controlling his War Rune. His War Rune was in contact with hundreds of Soultraits, yet it rarely reacted to them, at this point. However, that wasn't the case with his new Soultrait Symbol.

'Is it because the Soultrait is powerful, or because I'm highly compatible with this one?'

Michael was not sure but he took it as a sign.

He shut his eyes and accessed the Sphere of Light. Initially, Michael planned to create a Soul Socket in the middle area of the Sphere of Light for his new Soultrait. However, sensing that his new Soultrait was special to the War Rune, Michael changed his decision.

He created a Soul Socket in the inner area of the Sphere of Light using SoulStar Fragments.

Unfortunately, that wasn't cheap. Since his Sphere of Light had already expanded to hold and stabilize 10 Soultraits, the 11th Soul Socket wouldn't be cheap.

'Good thing I didn't upgrade Spheres of Elements to 5-Star at once. Missing out on the opportunity to create a Soul Socket and fuse my new Soultrait would be quite annoying.'

Michael had to spend a fortune of 30,000 SoulStar Fragments to create the 11th Soul Socket in the Sphere of Light. The cost was quite high, but it was nothing in comparison to his future expenses. It was impossible to tell how many SoulStar Fragments he would have to consume to create the 12th Soul Socket, but Michael felt that it would be a six-digit number.

Fortunately, Michael didn't plan to create the 12th Soul Socket anytime soon. He allowed the energy tendrils to coil around his new Soultrait and pull it inside his War Rune. Michael closed his eyes right after and observed the process of his newly acquired Soultrait connecting with the empty Soul Socket in the Sphere of Light's inner area.

The Soultrait attached to the empty Soul Socket right away and fused with Michael. A flood of information entered Michael's head, teaching him the Soultrait's name and a variety of uses.

"Cosmic Stride. What a beautiful name."

The corner of Michael's lip curled upward, and he didn't even have to think about the next course of action. He upgraded Cosmic Stride to 5-Star in an instant.

The first upgrade cost 14 SoulStar Fragments, the second was a bit pricier at 80 SoulStar Fragments. The third upgrade required 750 SoulStar Fragments and the fourth upgrade required 8300 SoulStar Fragments.

Upgrading Cosmic Stride was three times more expensive than upgrading other Soultraits. However, Michael didn't even consider cursing his 'back luck'. He was not unlucky, at all.

Cosmic Stride was powerful, and it grew exponentially more powerful after it had been upgraded to 5-Star.

The upgrade of Cosmic Stride changed something within Michael. However, the changes were minuscule compared to the alteration of his entire being caused by upgrading Extraction to 7-Star, or Superior Constitution to 6-Star.

But that didn't mean the changes were less insignificant. Michael's perception of the surrounding space skyrocketed and he could sense things he hadn't felt before. At first, it felt weird. But as he spent some time focusing on the space around him, Michael noticed a few things.

He kicked the ground lightly and dashed in a direction. Michael leaped on a tree branch and continued to move around with nimble strides.

All of a sudden, Michael used Cosmic Stride. He leaped through space and appeared several hundred meters ahead. However, instead of being demanded to look around to know where he was and how to move next, Michael was fully aware of everything in his surroundings.

He knew where he was about to land even before he used Cosmic Stride.

Michael didn't even have to see where he was going to transport to. He could feel it.

Chapter 626 Jealousy?

Sensing where he would land even before he jumped through space and being able to see the energies through objects with Spirit Eyes was a great combination. But then again, Michael didn't have to use Spirit Eyes for Cosmic Stride to work perfectly fine. It was just that Spirit Eyes gave him another edge when combined with Cosmic Stride.

Michael spread his senses and traveled through the Untamed Jungle quickly. He used Cosmic Stride to jump several hundred meters ahead, to change his trajectory without losing any momentum, and to change his positioning ever so slightly.

Cosmic Stride was several times stronger than Quinn Karta's Blink. Even after Quinn combined Blink with his other Soultrait, Mark of the Dragon, Cosmic Stride would be more efficient. It consumed only little energy for short-distance jumps through space and even the long-distance jumps through space were rather energy-efficient.

Interestingly enough, Michael's jumps through space released little to no spatial fluctuations. As long as he learned how to control Cosmic Stride, Michael was certain that he could cover his traces near-perfectly.

However, one of the most important aspects of Cosmic Stride was a function called 'Return to the Origin'. Michael could set an anchor that allowed him to return to his territory with Cosmic Stride wherever he was, and at all times.

Of course, it wouldn't work if the space around him was locked or if he didn't have any access to his energy storage, but Michael could return to his territory in an instant using the Return of the Origin function.

That was extremely helpful as it allowed Michael to change his tactics and move more openly against his enemies. There was no need to worry about someone attacking his territory during his absence. He could trash his enemies far away from the Untamed Jungle and return at once if needed.

'I can go to the Savannah Region!' Michael clenched his fists tightly, a devilish smile blossoming on his face.

He could fight the Council of Xylon like crazy without having to worry about his territory. A simple use of Cosmic Stride and he would be back in his territory, ready to defeat whatever opponent was daring enough to attack his lovely little settlement.

'It seems like I can bring other people with me using Cosmic Stride, but the energy consumption increases tremendously. The heavier the targets the higher the energy consumption.'

Michael sensed that it was possible to bring two or three dozen people with him using Cosmic Stride. In the worst case, Michael would have to ask Zeroa to help a little bit. Stinger was also present to stretch out its helpful stinger. Bringing people onto the battlefield with him wouldn't be a big issue.

He set up an anchor using Cosmic Stride with that in mind. There was no need to hesitate any longer. Setting up the anchor took up a few hours, but it worked perfectly fine once he was done.

Once he was done, Michael encountered Lilica and the others. Most of their debts in the Jungle Shop had been paid off. Michael considered that as he approached them.

"I'm planning to initiate a counteroffensive against the Council of Xylon soon. If you want to join..." Michael was unable to say anything else as the Forest Elven Adventurers spun in his direction. They stared intently at him and exclaimed near-simultaneously.

"I'm ready!" Lilica declared.

"Let's go kill them all!" Mika joined.

Even Opars didn't hold back at this moment, "I'm lusting for blood."

Opars surprised him the most, and Michael required a few seconds to get back to his senses.

"I was going to ask if you guys want me to upgrade your Soultraits since you guys are not yet at the 3rd Tier. But...I guess you want to fight like this..." Michael forced a smile on his lips as he stared at the ambitious Forest Elven Adventurers.

"We don't have anymore Jungle Points and cannot afford the more expensive upgrades anytime soon. There is no way â€œ..."

This time it was Michael who was interested in the Forest Elf.

"I didn't plan to ask you for Jungle Points. I'm just making sure that everyone will be well-armed for the fight against the Council of Xylon."

Michael was not too worried about the Forest Elves' combat prowess. However, he learned that even Awakened with three well-suited 4-Star Soultraits were not invincible. Despite spending a small fortune to strengthen the Untamed Awakened, ten of them died against the Heart of the Blazing Lion army.

The Council of Xylon was weaker overall, but their numbers made up for the lack of great powerhouses.

Michael did not want to take any risks. He was hoping to strengthen the Awakened working for him, and most importantly, his friends. It might be important to have some rules in his territory, but Michael would rather invest his fortune freely to strengthen those important to him than see them die just because they 'couldn't afford it'.

Michael couldn't afford to see more dear people die. Thus, he decided to invest the remaining 14,945 SoulStar Fragments in his possession to strengthen Lilica, Opars, Mika, Thaor, Lokai, Tiara, and Frederik.

It would be great to throw a few Soultraits at Hiraku as well, but Michael figured that Hiraku had a very careful personality. Hiraku would doubt Michael's actions if he treated him too well.

But, then again, Michael's reasoning was simple. Investing more in his dear people increased their survivability and strengthened them. They would survive head-on fights against powerful enemies and have a higher chance of defeating them. Their kills would strengthen Michael due to the influx of their energy shares and he would get to loot the corpses of stronger enemies.

There were no downsides to his intention to strengthen his friends if one excluded the jealousy of other Untamed Awakened and the low possibility of his friends taking Michael's Soultraits and Soultrait Upgrades for granted. The latter was not something he was worried about. Instead, Michael worried that his friends would grow too confident in their powers, therefore, attacking enemies that were too

much to handle.

But that potential issue was something Michael could restrain. All he had to do was beat up his friends and crush their arrogance repeatedly until they stayed humble.

'How am I going to ensure that nobody is going to be jealous? Is that even possible, in the first place?

Was jealousy something that could be prevented? Not really. In life, everyone has a different starting point. Some were born into a wealthy family with a great background, whereas others were not as fortunate. They were poor and had to give up their dreams to start earning money early on just to survive.

Michael had been very jealous in the past as well. Whenever he saw happy families roaming through the markets and shopping centers, Michael had been jealous of their lives. He had Danny, but even his brother was a busy man. Daniel Fang had always given his best to take care of Michael's health, and well-being. He even neglected his studies to ensure that Michael could enter a promising school in the Golden Sun Province.

Michael knew that he owed Danny a lot. He often felt guilty in the past, knowing that his brother sacrificed a lot to ensure that Michael would grow up with the best teaching and training. That wouldn't have been necessary if his family never abandoned them, and Michael found himself hating his family for that...but also envying everyone else for having a family to rely on.

Michael had his brother...but who could Danny rely on?

Thinking about his brother and his youthful jealousy, Michael could only sigh in regret. There were many things he regretted about his childhood, but one of the things was that he never made it easy for his brother.

'I will get you back. It's my turn to accept care of you now!' He caressed the Miniature Coffin Keychain gently and pressed his lips together.

Michael understood that he couldn't prevent jealousy. The only good thing was that Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs were open and straightforward.

'How about I add some competition? The winner obtains a Soultrait Upgrade?'

It was worth considering competitions and tournaments. He would strengthen his friends for now and allow everyone else to compete in competitions later. The competitions would force everyone to strive for more strength. They would train more and use their competitive spirit to grow stronger to obtain more Soultrait Symbols and Soultrait Upgrades.

Their jealousy would be consumed by their battle spirit.

'Good thing I don't have many Human Awakened working for me yet.' Michael joked lightly.

Humans were far more complex than the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs. They were harder to handle, a lot greedier, and they were more likely to accept someone else's kindness and generosity for granted much faster than the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs.

'Humans are annoying now that I think about it.' Michael thought like he was not a human himself. He chuckled lightly and diverted his focus back to his friends.

Lilica, Mika, Opars, Tiara, Thaor, Lokai, and Frederik gathered in the office after he ordered a gathering.

"I can upgrade six Soultraits to 5-Star right now. I'm intending to attack the Council of Xylon soon and I want to strengthen you guys as much as possible. Everyone present is very important to me, and I want to ensure that all of you survive. But I can only strengthen six Soultraits to 5-Star right now. That means one of you guys will possess to take a step back until—..."

Michael was not even done speaking when Frederik raised his hand.

"You've helped me a lot already. I possess yet to pay you back. There is no way, I can accept another Soultrait Upgrade from you right now." he said.

Michael was about to nod, only to see that the others had also taken a step back.

"I yield," Thaor uttered briskly.

"I don't deserve another Soultrait Upgrade right now." Lokai shook her head.

"I haven't paid you back for everything you've given me..." Tiara mumbled quieter than the rest.

"Our Elders wouldn't want us to accept advantage of you." Lilica pointed out, and both Mika and Opars nodded.

"I was told to stop taking advantage of your generosity. I would love to get dozens of Soultraits and possess all of them upgraded to 10-Star right away, but I was told to hold back and focus on my current Soultraits." Mika looked ashamed to the ground.

"Mika and Lilica are right. We gained a lot already, and we possess yet to comprehend more about our new powers." Opars explained.

Michael frowned at his friends and rubbed his temples in frustration.

'What the hell is wrong with them?!?'

Chapter 627 Michael, The Mad Scientist

His whole plan had been destroyed.

Everyone rejected his offer, leaving him with almost 15,000 SoulStar Fragments to use. Michael wanted to strengthen his friends and he had no clear way to use the remaining SoulStar Fragments right now.

It was possible to upgrade one of his Soultraits a little, but none of them could receive a complete upgrade. They wouldn't advance to the next star rating.

'What about fusing more Soultrait Symbols? Blood Manipulation should suit Superior Constitution quite well.'

Using Insert with a bunch of Soultraits to provide his other Soultraits with unique perks would strengthen them tremendously. Furthermore, given his experiments, inserting low-ranked Soultraits into Soultraits of a higher star rating would increase the upgrade cost only a little. The Essence of the Soultrait wouldn't be changed, after all.

"But wouldn't it be a waste to fuse Blood Manipulation as a sub-Soultrait?"

Michael felt that Blood Manipulation was a decently powerful Soultrait. Maybe, combining it with Superior Constitution once upgraded to 6-Star would create a Soultrait that combined the strongest perks of Superior Constitution and Blood Manipulation.

But then again, Michael couldn't be certain that fusing Blood Manipulation and Superior Constitution would result in a stronger Soultrait. It was merely his gut feeling that told him so.

Some Soultraits would lose certain powerful perks when their essence fused with other Soultraits, therefore, losing some of their unique power in the process.

The only major downside of fusing Soultraits “excluding the increased upgrade cost” was that Soultraits had only one main power. Spheres of Elements was a good example. The 4-Star Soultrait had various special perks and unique characteristics, but its main power was to create Elemental Spheres inside the Pillar of Light.

The result of that main power was that he gained control of all elements and the expansion of his energy storage, but it was a matter of fact that the power of his elemental affinities was not that great.

He was better than the Elemental Empress, excluding her mythical fire affinity, but overall, his affinity with the other elements was rather average.

Even Frederik's Aeroan, a Soultrait that focused solely on the control and shaping of the Winds, was much stronger and more potent than Michael's Sphere of Wind.

That was also why Michael ended up fusing the three Space-type Soultraits without any other Soultraits rather than fusing them into the Spheres of Elements. He wanted a Soultrait that focused solely on spatial control and teleportation.

'Combining Blood Manipulation and Superior Constitution sounds like fun, but I don't have enough resources to fuse them properly.' Michael complained inwardly.

He didn't have enough SoulStar Fragments to upgrade Blood Manipulation to 6-Star and he couldn't lower the star rating of Superior Constitution without breaking his body apart, either.

That was the downside of Soultraits that altered your Body, Soul, or Mind at a certain star rating.

Michael couldn't downgrade them or remove them from the Sphere of Light without tearing his body apart. He would end up getting crippled if he was lucky. Or was it a misfortune if he ended up crippled for life rather than dying quietly? Well...it didn't matter. Michael wouldn't put his life in danger merely to continue experimenting.

Michael was probably the only person who would complain about being unable to lower the star rating of his high-ranking Soultrait. Nobody would want to lower their Soultraits star rating. That was just nonsense “ for people other than Michael.

'I can always lower the Soultrait Upgrade costs for the next few upgrades in the Jungle Shop. Let's give everyone some benefits.' Michael thought with a shrug.

If his friends didn't want to get anymore freebies, he might as well improve everyone's benefits a little bit.

Once he increased the discount for Soultrait Upgrades in the Jungle Shop, Michael was back to focus on experimenting.

This time, however, Michael wasn't going to experiment with Soultrait Symbols. He had a lot more resources to experiment with.

He retrieved a bunch of Ordinary Summoning Scrolls and Summoning Scroll Fragments from his War Rune and used Insert.

First, Michael inserted one Ordinary Summoning Scroll into another Ordinary Scroll. The result was minor changes to the appearance of the Ordinary Scroll. A letter formed on the Ordinary Scroll's seal. However, it was incomplete.

'It probably needs a few more Scrolls?' Michael wondered, tilting his head lightly as he used Insert to integrate more Ordinary Scrolls.

Upon integrating 10 Ordinary Summoning Scrolls, Michael received a pleasant surprise.

"A Named Summoning Scroll." He mumbled, staring at the Carpenter Summoning Scroll that had formed in front of him.

A Carpenter Scroll might not be too valuable for Michael, but it was a 1-Star Occupation. Being able to form Named Scrolls with Insert was amazing!

Michael's hair stood up to its end as various possibilities flashed through his head.

'Can I create higher-ranked Named Scrolls if I integrate Named Scrolls? What about integrating Mythic Scrolls? And what happens when I use Insert to integrate Scroll Fragments with Named Scrolls? Will their star rating increase naturally?

Michael swallowed hard, the corner of his lips curling upward. He could tell that he was onto something big.

He used Insert on more Ordinary Scrolls to see what was going to happen. In a matter of minutes, Michael ended up with more than a dozen Named Summoning Scrolls and a much better understanding of the rules that apply to integrating Summoning Scrolls.

The minimum number required to create a Named Scroll was 10 Ordinary Scrolls. However, it was possible to integrate more Ordinary Scrolls. Integrating more Ordinary Scrolls didn't improve the Named Scroll's star rating, but it allowed him to influence the Named Scroll in another way.

Michael could influence the type of Summon that would emerge from a Named Scroll if the initial result didn't suit his demands. The Named Scroll conjured from integrating 10 Ordinary Scrolls was random, but the subsequent integrated Ordinary Scrolls allowed Michael to make minor changes.

Following that, Michael tried focusing on the creation of Archer Scrolls. He decided to use and integrate 2500 Ordinary Scrolls to create 129 Archer Scrolls. The result wasn't extraordinary, but Michael's control of the influence he had on the creation of Named Scrolls improved rapidly.

He was certain that he could create Archer Scrolls more easily and with far fewer Ordinary Scrolls than before.

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However, now that he had 129 Archer Scrolls, Michael used Insert to combine the 1-Star Named Scrolls. He was curious about something.

He combined exactly 100 Named Scrolls before the Archer Scroll changed once again. The parchment turned black with a silver seal keeping the Scroll locked. The Scroll looked similar to a Mythic Summoning Scroll, but it had words engraved on the seal.

"Sharpshooter."

The 1-Star Named Scroll had been upgraded to a 2-Star Named Scroll. Archer evolved into Sharpshooter!

Michael nibbled on his lower lip. He had a hard time suppressing a vibrant smile. Taking a deep breath, Michael repeated the same process once again. However, this time, Michael didn't use Named Scrolls of the same Occupation.

He used the remaining 29 Archer Scrolls and created 71 Named Scrolls randomly. Once he was done, Micheal integrated them, creating another 2-Star Named Scroll.

"Enchanter. That's interesting," Michael murmured, "I used only one Enchanter Novice Scroll, yet it gave me the 2-Star version. Is the creation of the 2-Star Named Scroll random, or is it based on probability?"

Michael had been sure that it was the latter, but that would mean the probability of receiving the upgraded version of Enchanter Novice had only been 1%. He should have received another Sharpshooter Scroll since he used 29 Archer Scrolls.

"It could have been luck."

Michael repeated the test once again but with a slight change. He utilized 71 Warrior Scrolls and another batch of 29 Archer Scrolls. If it was probability-based, Michael should obtain a Great Warrior or Sharpshooter Scroll.

The result was pretty straightforward. Michael combined the Named Scrolls and obtained a Great Warrior Scroll.

"Okay..." He made a record in the back of his head right before his attention flicked to the Summoning Scroll Fragments.

"It should have been a little bit wasteful to use Named Scrolls to enhance their star rating like this. Summoning Scroll Fragments should be more than enough to do the same...

right?"

Michael retrieved tens of thousands of Summoning Scroll Fragments, several Named Scrolls, and Ordinary Scrolls.

First, he began using Insert to integrate Scroll Fragments into an Ordinary Scroll. Unexpectedly enough, 9,975 Summoning Scroll Fragments were drained before the Ordinary Scroll transformed into a Mythic Scroll.

That was something Michael expected, but it was still necessary to test out. He didn't want to miss any anomalies that may or may not allow him to cheat the system.

He glanced at a Warrior Summoning Scroll and a bunch of Scroll Fragments.

"I utilized 71 Warrior Scrolls and 29 Archer Scrolls to combine them into Great Warrior. Combining these 100 Named Scrolls required 1421 Ordinary Scrolls which is equivalent to...

14,000ish Summoning Scroll Fragments." Michael mumbled, only to shake his head, "If I buy these Summoning Scrolls from the Bartholomew Corporation, I would only obtain 1800ish Summoning Scroll Fragments."

That factor made things a little bit more complicated. If he purchased Summoning Scrolls from somewhere it might be more valuable to use Insert and merge them to form Named Scrolls and enhance them further through a second integration. Meanwhile, the Summoning Scrolls procured through his effort, and the effort of his army, should be extracted and turned into Summoning Scroll Fragments to upgrade Named Scrolls...IF the upgrade was not more expensive than the creation of a Mythic Scroll.

But that was something Michael tested out...and the result was just like he had expected.

Upgrading the 1-Star Warrior Scroll to the 2-Star Great Warrior Scroll required exactly 10,000 Summoning Scroll Fragments.

"Interesting," Michael murmured, his golden eyes shining brightly.

"But...what happens if I integrate more Fragments into the Great Warrior Scroll?"

Chapter 628 Human Experiments 1.0

Michael was very curious about new ways to use Insert and Extraction together to gain as many benefits as possible. It was very interesting and it taught him a lot about his Soultraits and the reason Extraction and Insert had such great synergy.

Michael continued integrating Summoning Scroll Fragments into the Great Warrior Scroll.

This time, he wasn't sure how many Scroll Fragments would be used up to upgrade the 2-Star Named Scroll to a 3-Star Named Scroll. He continued to integrate more Scroll Fragments while growing more impatient by the minute.

"Finally!" He murmured once the Named Scroll changed after 100,000 Scroll Fragments had been integrated.

The Great Warrior Scroll had been upgraded to the 3-Star Warlord Scroll!

"100,000 Fragments is equivalent to 10 Mythic Scrolls. The chance to summon a 3-Star Summon from a Mythic Scroll is close to 10%. That means the probability would provide me with one 3-Star Summon out of 10 Mythic Scrolls," Michael mumbled, his eyes lingering on the 3-Star Warlord Scroll, "That leaves nine Mythic Scrolls with the potential to summon 2-Star, 3-Star, or even 4-Star Summons."

Upgrading the Great Warrior Scroll to the 3-Star Warlord Scroll wasn't really worth it if he cared only about the probability.

However, the advantage of spending Scroll Fragments to upgrade the Named Scrolls was that he could freely decide what Summons he was going to summon. If he needed high-ranked Architects, he could create a 1-Star Architect Scroll and upgrade it using Scroll Fragments instead of hoping to summon a high-ranked Architect with a stroke of luck.

Using Insert allowed him to take 'luck' out of the equation. That was going to be pretty useful if applied it properly.

"I still have close to two million Scroll Fragments and almost 15,000 SoulStar Fragments left. That's more than enough to experiment...like a lot!"

Michael's smile turned devilish. Many questions flashed through his mind, and he had too little knowledge to answer most of them.

'Can I insert SoulStar Fragments into people to awaken their latent potential? Or is it possible to use Summoning Scroll Fragments into Summons to upgrade their star rating even after they've been summoned?'

He tested out the latter with a nearby attendant. He tried to integrate a Summoning Scroll Fragment into the Summon, but it did not work out, unfortunately.

However, Michael wasn't too sad about that. Integrating a Summoning Scroll Fragment into the Summon might not have worked, but he clearly sensed that Insert might be capable of doing something similar in the future. It was merely too low-ranked for now.

That was good to know.

"I heard that you can give Awakened Soultraits. I...do know that it doesn't work with Summons, but I also heard that you have unique abilities...so I was wondering if we can grow stronger as well." That question was something Michael heard countless times until now. He lost count of how many times he had been asked by his subjects how they could grow stronger as fast as possible.

Many were not satisfied by being 'mere' Starless or 1-Star Summons, but they were simply not talented enough to become higher-ranked Summons. Others were just lazy, whereas a third group of Summons had yet to find what they were truly good at.

Usually, Michael said that he couldn't help Summons to grow stronger in the same way he could help Awakened to grow stronger. He couldn't implant Soultraits into Summons, after all.

But did that also mean that he couldn't insert SoulStar Fragments into Summons with stronger Souls? Michael found a few candidates with powerful Souls. They were a selected few who managed to start refining their Soul, which was a rare sight among Summons.

Michael wanted to test out whether he could insert a single SoulStar Fragment into them and how their Souls would react. Was it possible to integrate more SoulStar Fragments into them in the near future, or would their bodies reject the SoulStar Fragments? Would they regain the Soultraits from their past lives, or would they not awaken any power? If the latter was the case, why was it possible for the Masked Saber – Daniel Fang – to use the silver qi of his Reinforced Sword Qi Soultrait even after he died as an Awakened?

Was that really because he was a Cursed Child, or was the reason even simpler?

The Summons with stronger Souls than their peers had been willing to undergo certain human experiments. Michael didn't plan to kill them, but he inserted SoulStar Fragments into them. Each of them received exactly one SoulStar Fragment to ensure that the pressure wouldn't be too high right from the start.

Michael also summoned the Soul Grimoire and used Insert to apply Soul Tears to the Summons' souls. Furthermore, he added a few layers of Enhancement to make sure that his Summons wouldn't tear apart all of a sudden.

Michael was not sure what he expected from the Summons, but the results of the first human experiments were...not that great. Half of the Summons nearly died seconds after the SoulStar Fragments had been inserted. Their Energy Veins were blown apart and Michael had to remove the SoulStar Fragments right away to ensure that the Summons wouldn't die.

The bodies of the remaining Summons didn't repel the SoulStar Fragments as aggressively as their friends. One of the Summons didn't notice a alter in his body or soul. Unfortunately, the SoulStar Fragment didn't react with the Summon. It didn't integrate and fuse with the Summon.

Michael could extract the SoulStar Fragment once again without any problems.

The others, on the other hand, showed some reaction. Three Summons could sense something. They felt that something within them was changing. However, before the change commenced properly, their bodies showed signs of falling apart. Michael had to react swiftly to extract the SoulStar Fragments before they could cause further harm.

It was a good thing that Opars and some Priests were present to tend to the injured Summons. Michael joined them by using Archangel's Grace by inserting the light-attributed energy within the Elemental Spheres to empower and enhance Archangel's Grace.

'The three Summons with the greatest comprehension and progress of the Soul refinement techniques were about to comprehend something. Their bodies were about to change. Does that mean it will be

possible to integrate SoulStar Fragments into them once they advanced their Tier and Soul Refinement Technique?'

Michael couldn't be certain about that, but he guessed that his brother's Soul was naturally extremely powerful and sturdy, which is why he managed to use his Soultrait's power even after he resurrected as the Masked Saber.

As a Cursed Child, his Mind, Body, and Soul had been tempered since birth. Even after death and his resurrection, Danny must have been able to retain tiny glimpses of his former prowess.

Thinking about that, Michael was impressed, but he also felt a little bit confused.

He touched the Miniature Coffin Keychain, closed his eyes, and tried to sense his brother's Living Soul inside the Miniature Coffin Keychain. Now that he had done this dozens of times, it was much easier for Michael to access the Miniature Coffin Keychain. He didn't have to use Extraction to access the inside of the keychain.

Sensing his brother's Living Soul warmed Michael's heart. Of course, Michael couldn't be certain what his brother would think if he were to tell him that he was going to resurrect him, but he hoped that his brother wouldn't hate him for that.

'He shouldn't hate me for trying to resurrect him...right? Why would he?' Michael asked himself in doubt, 'But what if he doesn't like that I go against fate? Maybe he's thinking that he was fated to die, so he accepted it... Danny was always weird when it came to destiny. He wants to go back, right?'

Michael couldn't say anything for sure, but he felt Danny's will to live in the Living Soul. The Soul clung onto the last remnants of life to prevent losing everything...to prevent being pushed into the cycle of reincarnation. That was what Michael felt when he sensed Danny's Living Soul.

He was also certain that his brother's will to live was also the reason why the Nest was so interested in Living Soul. It was probably also the reason the Hellbound Cataclysm was bound to happen as long as nothing changed.

"Once I removed his Living Soul from the keychain and put it safely into the Soul Grimoire I should be able to tell whether he wants to move onto the afterlife, or if he doesn't want to leave. Don't think too much, Michael!"

Michael cursed himself a little bit for overthinking. There was no need to think so much.

It was much better to keep his mind calm and to do a few more human experiments!

## Chapter 629 Human Experiments 2.0

?Since it was not yet possible to insert SoulStar Fragments into his Summons without killing them, Michael decided to try something else.

He had various Artifacts stored in his War Rune and the warehouse. They collected dust and were better off being used instead.

Michael began a few experiments using Insert on Artifacts to merge them with Monsters and Summons. The first Artifacts he retrieved for that job were Accessory Artifacts. He inserted Tierless Earring Artifacts into the earlobes of his Tier-1 Summons and some Tier-1 Bilrox to observe their bodies' reaction to the integration of Artifacts.

The external enhancement from the Tierless Earring Artifacts was low, but that was fine. The Earring Artifacts focused on amplifying the hearing sense instead.

Once the Earring Artifact had been integrated into the targets' earlobes, Michael made them undergo a few tests. They had been examined a few minutes ago and repeated the same process once again to test if the effects of the Earring Artifacts were still active, or if integrating them damaged the Artifacts.

Interestingly enough, the Artifacts worked like usual. They enhanced the Summons and Bilrox's hearing sense while also granting a minor external enhancement. Their senses improved as well.

That was a little unexpected. Only Awakened were supposed to be able to use Artifacts. It shouldn't be possible for the Summons and Bilrox to gain the external enhancement of an Artifact alongside their special perk.

'So Integrating Artifacts with Summons and Monsters does work, but they feel uncomfortable. They cannot convey what's wrong with them, but their bodies tell them that something is wrong. Does that mean anything or is it merely because a foreign object entered their bodies?'

If it was the latter, the problem could be solved rather easily. Desensitizing someone might not be easy, but it was possible. However, if the discomfort originated from the Summons and Bilrox's souls, it would be a little bit more complicated.

'I integrated 2-Star Tierless Artifacts into Tier-1 Summons and Bilrox. Is that still too much for them to bear?'

Michael fell into deep thought and called for some Tier-2 Summons and the Tier-1 Summons whose Souls were stronger than the rest. The trio with the highest progress in the Soul Refinement Technique was also present. Michael had extracted the SoulStar Fragment early enough to ensure that their bodies and souls didn't sustain any major injuries.

They were willing to continue experimenting.

He inserted more 2-Star Tierless Artifacts into the Tier-2 Summons and the Summons with strengthened soul. Their bodies' responses were similar to the others, but there was a major difference. The discomfort was present within everyone, but the Summons whose souls were strengthened said that it didn't affect them.

On the contrary, the Tier-2 Summons felt only a little bit less uncomfortable than the Tier-1 Summons.

Michael made notes about everything and continued the experiments. He changed some Artifacts, improved their star rating, and continued writing down notes. Michael observed everything in great detail and learned a lot.

'Ordinary Summons can endure the potency of Low-Tier Artifacts. However, the higher the Artifact's star rating the higher the pressure on the Summons' souls. Only Summons whose souls have been strengthened won't have any issues with Low-Tier Artifacts.'

The soul-strengthened Summons wouldn't be able to use Rare Tier-2 Artifacts while being at the 2nd Tier, but it should be feasible to use Tier-1 Artifacts on Tier-2 Summons as long as their progress with the Soul Refinement Technique didn't stagnate. As they deepen their refinement degree it might even be possible to use Artifacts with higher star-rating.

That was an amazing find, and it shocked Michael quite a bit. It was not every day that Michael learned about ways to turn a minority of his Summons into little powerhouses.

'Does that mean I can integrate both SoulStar Fragments and Artifacts into the soul-strengthened Summons as long as they practice their Soul Refinement Technique diligently? Or maybe, they'll have to choose between Artifacts and the SoulStar Fragment.'

Michael was quite satisfied with his findings. He used Extraction to remove the integrated Artifacts once again and rewarded everyone with a few Jungle Points for their great help in today's experiments. Michael felt like experimenting a little bit more, but he didn't want to go overboard. He didn't want to kill his Summons by accident.

"It won't be too difficult to find the Summons who can refine their souls. Testing everyone might take a while, but that's only a matter of time. But...how can I create more soul-strengthened Summons?"

Michael had been hopeful before. He was hoping that integrating SoulStar Fragments into the Summons would not only awaken their past life's Soultrait but he could strengthen their Souls as well. Unfortunately, that wasn't feasible.

He needed something else to strengthen his Summons' Souls to integrate Artifacts and SoulStar Fragments into them.

The human experiments had been quite interesting, but Michael was still not done experimenting. He had yet to use insert on multiple Artifacts to upgrade them, if that was possible, and he was planning to do the same with the Blueprints.

Michael possessed 35,208 Blueprints in his War Rune and more than 80% were duplicates of blueprints he possessed already. After putting aside more than 5,000 blueprints to store in the warehouse, Michael was left with roughly 30,000 blueprints to use in his experiments.

He began using Insert on blueprints of a similar type, but he mixed random blueprints as well. Michael possessed a strategy up to his sleeves, but it wasn't anything special. All he had to do was to check a few things. If they operated out as intended, it would be great. If not, it was also fine.

Micheal used Insert and fused a bunch of blueprints. However, oddly enough, Michael never managed to procure what he presumed to obtain.

1,000 ordinary blueprints fused into a single blueprint of higher quality whereas 10,000 blueprints transformed into an Exotic blueprint.

While that seemed nice at first, Michael couldn't find any logical reason why the integration of 10,000 blueprints led to the creation of that particular structure blueprint. It felt like the integration of blueprints resulted in random blueprints of a higher quality. While that was still fine, Michael could tell that he could gain more by selling ordinary Agriculture blueprints to the Bartholomew Corporation rather than scrapping them by integrating them into a random Exotic blueprint.

The Exotic blueprint might not even be useful to him, or anyone else.

"Maybe, I can control the creation of particular blueprints once Insert is at a higher star rating?" Michael wondered.

It should be possible, but he couldn't be certain.

He decided to stop using Insert on blueprints, for the time being. There was no way that he would continue to waste his precious resources now that he knew that it wouldn't bring any benefits.

Michael's attention drifted to the Artifacts spread around him. He had a little more than 2300 Artifacts from the battle against the Heart of the Blazing Lion army and he was more than willing to use them to keep experimenting.

Michael chose to use Insert to integrate a bunch of similar Artifacts and watched as they merged. It was weird to see the density of some Weapon Artifacts increase as they fused. It felt like he was able to create heavy alloys by merging the Artifacts, but it was a little bit more complex than that. Michael

created upgraded versions of low-ranked Artifacts by merging them. The weight of the Artifacts assimilated, just like the Artifacts' special perks.

Merging Artifacts was almost as energy-draining as fusing Soultraits. He possessed to retrieve dozens of Energy Stones to replenish his used-up energy as he experimented with the wide variety of Artifacts in his possession.

"This is fun."

Michael licked his lower lip as he spent tens of hours integrating Artifacts. However, it didn't end with using Insert. Michael added Extraction into the equation by extracting certain properties of a few particular Artifacts before applying Insert to integrate the extracted properties into another Artifact.

Michael never learned how to create Artifacts. He was not a blacksmith or anything like that. But by combining Insert and Extraction, Michael could create his own Artifacts – specialized works with customized effects.

There were many things to pay attention to, including the Artifacts' material limit and the potency of external enhancements and special properties. However, by consulting the Blacksmith from the Underground Forging Hall and using the Relic of Draka to his advantage, Michael managed to upgrade Natural Artifacts and add special properties from customized Artifacts.

Michael turned into an Artificer...and more than that. He could not only turn ordinary weapons into extraordinary Artifacts, or alter natural Artifacts by engraving special enchantments on them.

No.

As long as Michael was given the necessary resources, he could upgrade ordinary Artifacts into extraordinary tools.

He could use Insert to merge Artifacts and upgrade their star rating and it was also possible to create customized Artifacts using Natural Artifacts as the foundation.

One of the best results after experimenting for tens of hours was an Epic Tierless Artifact. The Artifact might not be useful for Michael or the Untamed Awakened, but the Epic Tierless Artifact he possessed created was special. Not only performed it possess an extremely high external enhancement, but it had a protection enchantment that was strong enough to protect the Artifact wielder from the attacks of a Late Tier-1 Awakened.

Creating the Artifact hadn't been easy. It possessed been extremely pricey as well.

However, Michael was satisfied. He utilized Insert for the first time on Artifacts and created such an excellent piece of Artifact right away.

The next time, Michael would be able to create an even better Artifact without wasting any precious resources.

It was only a matter of time before he created Legendary Artifacts for Higher Lifeforms!

Chapter 630 Brawl In The Arena [1]

Michael could have continued to experiment, but he was more curious about how much money he could earn from his experiments.

He never researched the price for some Named Scrolls, and he had never seen a 3-Star Named Scroll either. He wondered if he could earn more from selling 2-Star and 3-Star Named Scrolls than by trading Mythic Scrolls for more than 10,000 Ordinary Scrolls.

"The anonymous trades should have been completed a long time ago. Did Kraft Viton forget about them?" Michael wondered, his voice a whisper.

He couldn't blame Kraft Viton if he forgot about the Mythic Scrolls since he forgot about them as well, but that would change now.

'I should produce a few more Mythic Scrolls to earn more Ordinary Scrolls,' Michael nodded slowly.

He retrieved the remaining Scroll Fragments and combined them into Mythic Scrolls. Michael used Extraction on the remaining Ordinary Scrolls and combined the extracted Scroll Fragments into more Mythic Scrolls.

"One Sharpshooter Scroll, one Enchanter Scroll, one Great Warrior Scroll, one Warlord Scroll, and 195 Mythic Scrolls. That, 16,363 Agriculture-type blueprints, and 1524 Artifacts should be more than enough to earn...a little bit." Michael chuckled lightly, a bright smile blossoming on his lips as he opened the Runic Gate.

He could have given everything to Rebecca to forward the goods to the Bartholomew Corporation outside the Origin Expanse, but Michael wanted to check on his friends in the Sapphirelake Military Academy as well. Using his trades with Kraft Viton and the Bartholomew Corporation as an excuse to leave the Origin Expanse was pretty useful. It ensured that Michael wouldn't stay in the Origin Expanse all the time – though that was something he felt like doing more often these days.

The troubles within the Origin Expanse were simple. All he had to do was to kill his enemies. The problems would disperse with the death of his foes.

However, the issues outside the Origin Expanse were different. They were more problematic.

But Michael felt that he was capable enough to solve the issues outside the Origin Expanse soon as well. He continued to smile and stepped through the Runic Gate.

Once he emerged on the other side of the Runic Gate, Michael found himself in front of the training hall where he found Frederik and Hiraku. Recalling his first encounter with Hiraku, Michael smiled lightly.

Hiraku was a bit cold and hard to approach, but he was a good guy. If Hiraku hadn't been there to help him, the territory and the Untamed Army would have suffered more casualties. Michael didn't even want to imagine how much worse the situation would have ended without Hiraku.

'I hope he stays.'

Hiraku didn't mention that he wanted to leave the Untamed Jungle anytime soon. That was great since Michael had no idea when the Council of Xylon would attack again. Michael deployed more than enough

Scouts in the Savannah Region to check on everything, so he wasn't too worried about being away from his territory for a short while, but he was not sure what awaited him and his people in the future.

'How do I convince him to stay and fight for me?'

It felt like Hiraku wasn't too interested in Michael's offer to give him another Soultrait Symbol and upgrade it. That was unexpected and it left Michael with little to offer.

'Maybe, he wants some Soul Techniques? No. He doesn't seem like a materialistic guy. I cannot read him at all!'

Hiraku was a bit frustrating. It was near-impossible to read people like him.

Michael sighed deeply and called Kraft Viton to see if he was in his office, or if he was busy in the Origin Expanse. The call didn't go through, at first, but less than ten minutes later, Michael received a message from Kraft Viton.

[Kraft Viton: I'm busy until evening. These idiots of the High Society are as stubborn as ever. Now they won't even accept my generous help when I offered them to send reinforcement into the Sacred Desert. These arrogant snobs think that I want to get a piece of their cake. Foolish bastards!]

Michael raised an eyebrow when he finished reading Kraft Viton's message. It was clear that the old man was angry.

That was a rare sight and it surprised Michael quite a bit.

'Why does he care so much about the Sacred Desert? He is even more obsessed with it than...I am...'

Michael wanted to know more about Danny's death in the Sacred Desert, the incident in the Primedival Pyramid, and the betrayal. He'd been thinking about his brother's death a lot since the Zan Twins provoked him. Their provocations never made any sense, which was even more reason for him to recall what they said at that time. He had been thinking a lot more about his brother after he found out that his Living Soul was preserved in the Miniature Coffin Keychain, but Michael didn't feel the same

uncontrollable anger anymore. He was still angry at those who killed his brother, but he didn't feel like exploding. Instead, his ice-cold wrath was contained and waiting patiently until the culprit was discovered.

Michael was not yet sure what he was going to do once he found out who ordered his brother's death, but that wasn't going to happen anytime soon either way. For now, rescuing his brother was of a higher priority. It was more important than the fate of the Sacred Desert as well.

Michael glanced at his chat with Kraft Viton and typed a message.

[Michael Fang: That's fine. Let's meet up in the evening. There is no rush.]

He thought about something and decided to add a second message.

[Michael Fang: I'm not sure if my Mythic Scrolls have already been traded for Ordinary Scrolls, but I would like to retrieve them later. I'm also considering taking you on the offer about the Bartholomew Corporation managing my threads. That includes my research for workaholics Awakened with remarkable personally, who're looking for a new Lord to power-boost them.

I also have a bunch of interesting goods to sell, including Agriculture blueprints, a load of Artifacts, and special Scrolls. That includes a 3-Star Warlord Summoning Scroll and 195 Mythic Scrolls. Yes, 195 Mythic Scrolls. You didn't see wrong! \*devilish-laugh\*]

After he had experimented with Insert and Extraction for a few days, Michael sensed a lot better. The death of his subordinates was not easy to overcome, but it was a good thing that nobody blamed him this time. Some Starless Summons – the laziest of the batch, at that – stated something, however, they were quickly suppressed by the Untamed Army who'd witnessed how much Michael had sacrificed in a desperate attempt to protect as many people as possible.

Michael was not a God. He was not invincible either. He bled just like any other mortal, yet, he continued to combat even on the verge of death to protect his people.

Michael didn't think of it as anything special, but his subjects contemplated differently. They knew that Michael put himself in far more danger than necessary to ensure that their casualty rate would be as low as possible.

Michael was glad that his subjects protected him from the lazy Summons that were only there to complain. It was helpful to have someone on his side to stop riots long before they erupted.

His subjects began to work even harder to grow even stronger after their last battle against the Heart of the Blazing Lion army. That was reassuring, and it gave Michael the piece of mind – something he definitely needed.

"Should I return and come back later?" Michael wondered, shaking his head after a second.

It was not like he had to return to the Origin Expanse just because Kraft Viton wasn't free until evening.

'I can clarify my criteria for the Awakened search later. For now...I should relax a little bit.'

Michael couldn't believe that he thought about relaxing, but the corner of his lip curled upward when he sensed the location of a bunch of Links of Loyalty.

Frederik, Hiraku, Thaor, and Lokai appeared nearby.

Their Links of Loyalty flickered.

Michael utilized Cosmic Stride with a trace of energy and disappeared on the spot. He reappeared several hundred meters further ahead, closed his eyes, and used Cosmic Stride three more times.

In the blink of an eye, Michael appeared in a large arena, where he discovered his friends.

Even Kaleb, Lincoln, and Zeke appeared present.

Even better.

Everyone was fighting in the arena!

'What the hell is going on here?'