

Supreme Lord 661

Chapter 661 Put On Fire

In the Huglaiv's territory, a small settlement was set on fire. It burned to a crisp, destroying everything the Huglaiv had worked on tirelessly.

The civilians fled in all directions, their desperate screams reverberating through the wilderness. Zeroa rushed through the settlement and teleported from one location to another to collect some of the valuable goods and corpses before she left the settlement behind as well.

The Valyrs weren't focused on the treasures or corpses. Their attention lingered on the Summons and Awakened, with whom they engaged in a fierce battle. The Valyrs, led by Zira, slaughtered the Huglaiv mercilessly. They didn't even care whether the Huglaiv wielded weapons and were ready to engage in battle, or if they were unarmed and defenseless, running away from the burning settlement and the demonic foes.

Zeroa observed the Valyrs for a while, but she didn't join their mindless slaughter. Instead, she collected the corpses they left behind. It was quite difficult to ignore the Valyrs' anger toward the Huglaiv, but once most combat Summons and all Awakened had been slaughtered, Zeroa decided to use her right as the group's leader to teleport the Valyrs somewhere else.

She dragged the Valyrs out of their mindless slaughter and forced them to stop. They had other things to do than slaughtering defenseless Tierless and Tier-1 civilians. Powerful Awakened and Lords were waiting to be hunted down.

In another part of the Savannah region, Hiraku and the Warlock Centaurs traveled somewhere with Stinger. To be precise, Stinger was nowhere to be seen because he was already far ahead, taking care of the issue with the group's baggage. The baggage, also known as juvenile Awakened and the monster cubs, received something to quench their thirst and fill their stomachs.

One of the Warlock Centaurs had a Soultrait that soothed wounds. It didn't heal the wounded instantaneously, but it lessened the pain and accelerated the target's natural regeneration to a certain degree.

The juvenile Awakened and monster cubs were still afraid of the unknown future, yet they felt much better than before. Nobody shoved them into tiny cages. Their movements weren't restricted and nobody punished them unreasonably. They were given good food as well!

Unfortunately, the juvenile Awakened, and monster cubs' peace didn't last long. It was only a matter of hours before Hiraku and the carriages attracted the attention of a small army that was deployed nearby. The small army was a little bit bigger than the enemies Hiraku and the Warlock Centaurs fought before. There were more than 2,000 combat Summons to deal with.

A huge battle erupted.

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The main settlement of the Kaliveras burned brightly as well. Michael set the wooden manor in the center of the main settlement on fire and fueled the flames with more fire-attributed energy once his business was done. The spatial lock was deactivated, granting Michael full access to Cosmic Stride's power.

He jumped through space and appeared in front of the Kalivera Lord's Summoning Gate. A few guards and Awakened attracted his attention, but Michael didn't waste any time dealing with them. He used the Soul Icicle Bullet Soul Technique to conjure a few dozen compressed Icicle Bullets.

A powerful gust of wind shrouded the Icicle Bullets and sparks exploded right behind them as Michael released the elemental attack. The Icicle Bullets whizzed through the air much faster than the Glacicle Bullets. They impacted hard, hitting the target square in the chest. Some staggered back, but nobody died. The raging winds coating the Icicle Bullets had compressed at the tip of the bullets right before impact.

They drilled into the metal breastplates of the guards and Awakened, whereas the Icicle Bullet's freezing property spread throughout the armor.

Their armor cracked, but that was it. They were still alive and charged at Michael, who didn't even look at them. He sensed the targets around him precisely and conjured a dozen small Qi Swords instantaneously. The raging wind swirled around the Qi Swords, pushing them to top speed a quarter of a second after Michael released them.

The Qi Swords shattered the weakened and cracked armor and pierced deep into their targets.

Two Awakened managed to lift their weapons fast enough to block the Qi Swords, but Michael used his mental power to alter the Qi Swords' trajectory ever so slightly. The minor change was enough to brush past the Awakened's weapons and impale them.

'Tier suppression is shit, ain't it?' Michael mumbled in his mind. He heard a lot about Tier suppression and how much it affected the course of the battle. However, he rarely sensed the effect of Tier suppression. The only times he sensed it was when he was weak and didn't possess many powerful Soultraits, and when he encountered Oliver Zeus. Even the Peak Tier-4 Lionheart Commander didn't inflict the Tier suppression upon Michael.

The guards and Awakened in the vicinity died following a second wave of small Qi Swords. The small silver blades pierced the targets' throats or cut through their armor's seams before slicing their vital points.

Some silver blades poked some targets' eyeballs and brains in one go as well.

Michael didn't pay much attention to that. He was more focused on the Summoning Gate's hatch.

Since the Kalivera Lord was dead, the Summoning Gate lost a big portion of its power. It wasn't magically amplified anymore, thus reducing its durability.

Nonetheless, Michael had to use Enhancement on his body and execute the Heavenly Beast Physique Soul Technique to rip the Summoning Gate's hatch out of the frame.

A handful of Basic Summoning Cores entered his view, and a thin smile formed on his lips.

"Five Summoning Cores. Nice!" He mumbled, reaching out for the Summoning Cores to collect them.

They were not difficult to remove since the Lord Power didn't amplify the Summoning Gate anymore. Michael glanced at them for a second and stored them away right after.

"Who the hell are you?!?" A hoarse voice resounded, attracting Michael's attention.

He turned around to see a Kalivera approaching him from the other side of the summoning plaza. The tall Kalivera was an Awakened, a Higher Lifeform, and his presence was stronger than the Kalivera Lord's.

"I'm just someone," Michael shrugged, "But you seem to be someone special. You are stronger than your Lord had been. Why are you not the Lord of this territory?"

Michael wasn't interested in the answer to this question. Nonetheless, he was surprised when the tall Kalivera answered.

"I was unlucky. The Kalivera Lord tricked me. I was used and my power was exploited," The Kalivera uttered truthfully, "But now I'm free. I can finally claim my land and become a Lord once again!"

Michael scrunched his eyebrows a little when he heard what the Kalivera said, but he remained silent. The Kalivera noticed a subtle change in the atmosphere and flashed a hideous grin.

"Unfortunately, or maybe not, I have to kill you to achieve that, Lord of the Untamed Jungle!"

"So, you know who I am. Why act like you don't?" Michael asked, slightly curious about the Kalivera's reasoning.

However, the High Awakened didn't answer him. Instead, he manifested a large warhammer and kicked the ground hard enough to crack the stone underfoot. The High Awakened roared as he appeared in front of Michael. The warhammer crashed down with shocking velocity and was about to hit Michael when he used Cosmic Stride to change his position a few meters to the left.

The High Awakened raised one eyebrow but he didn't slow down. He pulled the warhammer out of the ground, ignoring the rubble and stone fragments that shot in all directions, and charged at Michael once again.

Despite wielding the several-hundred-kilogram heavy warhammer and wearing a heavy metal armor set, the High Awakened traveled swiftly. He appeared in front of Michael once again and executed a powerful technique. He swung the warhammer sideways, ready to smash Michael's bone into smithereens.

Michael was about to use Cosmic Stride once again when he noticed something. The High Awakened did something that affected his train of thought. A heavy weight smashed down on his mind, slowing down his thoughts. The Kalivera had used his Soultrait to attack Michael's mind and restrain his use of Soultraits and techniques slightly.

At full power, the Kalivera's Soultrait could slow down his enemies' train of thought and reaction speed.

It worked on Michael even though his mind refinement degree wasn't too bad. Despite that, Michael was fast enough to do something against the incoming attack. He unleashed a powerful, compressed gust toward the High Awakened, pushing both himself and the Kalivera away.

Michael regained control of his train of thought again and hurriedly channeled energy into his mind and Spirit Eyes. He didn't possess any fancy techniques that blocked mental attacks, but he could weaken their effect drastically by protecting his mind crudely with origin energy. The High Awakened's Soultrait was bound to make him weaker now that he knew what was about to happen.

The High Awakened glared at him deadly and charged again. His Soultrait affected Michael once again, but the effect was weaker than before. Michael ignored the effect or tried to, as he relied on the effect of Spirit Eyes' Prognosis to determine the High Awakened's next attack.

The corner of Michael's lip twitched when he determined what was about to happen next. He used Heavenly Beast Physique, several layers of Enhancement to strengthen both his physique and Spirit Eyes. He used Cosmic Stride a moment later to appear next to the Kalivera, whose head flicked to his new position right away.

The High Awakened was about to change his attack's trajectory, only to fall victim to Michael's trap. Michael unleashed Spiritual Domination at full power upon the Kalivera, momentarily stunning the High Awakened.

The warhammer was still far from hitting Michael as the Aethyr Blade shot toward the Kalivera.

A argent flash, a sting, and a fountain of blood were the last things the High Awakened saw before his vision dimmed.

His legs caved in as the strength left his body and he slumped to the ground. Regret filled his heart.

'If only...' He thought as darkness consumed him.

However, it was already too late. The opportunity to change his fate had been used up a long time ago.

Chapter 662 Move Forward

Michael saw the regret in the High Awakened's eyes before the last traces of life in them dispersed. The Kalivera was no more than a lifeless body now that he was dead.

'No matter what happens, I won't die with any regrets!' He swore in his mind.

In the first place, it was much better to regret what you have done than regret what could have been done. At least, that was what Michael thought.

It was not his motto, but he liked that mindset quite a bit. After all, it was much better to be proactive and give your best with everything you do than regretting having done too little, or nothing at all.

He collected the corpses around him, shaking his head lightly at the thought of missing the opportunity to resurrect his brother. Michael would give his utmost to resurrect his brother even at the risk of getting injured. Even if he was to fail, which wouldn't happen, Michael would always know that he had given his utmost. He would regret not being able to protect his brother, but the regret would be different from what he would feel if he wasn't even going to try, in the first place.

'I will rescue him, one way or another. What am I even thinking about?!?'

Michael cursed himself a little bit. His focus turned back to the surroundings. He had to find the warehouses and treasure troves, including a bunch of Awakened.

There was no hesitation in his actions. He used Cosmic Stride after pinpointing a few locations where more energy gathered. A small warehouse entered his view alongside a bunch of Summons and Awakened, who plundered their dead Lord's treasures.

Michael released a bunch of Icicle Bullets that pierced through their foreheads or the back of their heads, killing them instantly. He released his energy to store their corpses in the War Rune's storage and inspected the remaining goods stored in the warehouse.

"Why are they so fucking poor?" Michael scoffed, storing everything in his War Rune's storage with a simple wave.

Cosmic Stride teleported him to the next spot where even more Awakened and Summons looted their dead Lord's treasures. Michael killed them as well. However, instead of inspecting the goods in the slightly larger warehouse, Michael stored everything in one go.

He had already given up on finding any invaluable treasures in the Kalivera Lord's territory. The biggest gains he could make were certainly from the Awakened's SoulStar Fragments and Soultrait Symbols.

That was quite easy to achieve given that all Higher Lifeforms in the main settlement had been killed already. Michael could teleport to the locations where energy was amassed to kill everyone who was trying to plunder the dead Lord's treasures, while the others traveled through the settlement to slaughter Combat Summons and Awakened.

Frederik was going crazy at the barracks. He unleashed his Inheritance Technique alongside the Customized Soul Technique Michael had created for Aeroan, killing dozens of Combat Summons at a time.

His wind blades and aero lances as Frederik named them beheaded and impaled the Kalivera easily. That was no surprise given that Frederik paid much attention to controlling Aeroan to dispel the green hue shrouding the winds under his control. Maintaining the invisibility of his wind blades and aero lances was not easy, but Frederik managed it somehow. His mental power was drained rapidly, however, Frederik didn't even notice.

He felt a rush of adrenaline surge through his entire being as the enemies collapsed lifelessly in front of him. The sight of the destruction and deaths he caused with his tremendous power was addicting. It

made Frederik lose the last bits of reasoning. He retrieved his energy reserves and tapped into the last bits of mental power, ignoring the bad headache that crept up the back of his head. All he could pay attention to was the energy influxes that flooded his War Rune and the sight of the dying Combat Summons in front of him.

At some point, Thaor, and Lokai had to join the battle. They had to help Frederik, who'd killed more than 1000 Combat Summons before his sight grew hazy. He tilted left and right and could barely catch himself before fainting.

Fainting in the middle of the battlefield was a one-way ticket to hell. It was something Frederik had to prevent at all costs. He pulled back from the battlefield after Lokai dragged him away and replenished his used-up energy and mental power with potions.

Once Frederik was not in their way anymore, the Berserkers could go all-out against the remaining Combat Summons and Awakened in and around the barracks. The main settlement had several large barracks with hundreds of residents. There were more than enough enemies for the Berserkers to fight and struggle. They sought adrenaline, dangerous fights, and near-death situations. It was almost as if they were adrenaline junkies looking forward to dying shortly after.

Michael knew enough about the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs to know that the Berserkers were likely to die sooner or later. However, if they survived by chance, the Berserkers would transform into one of the strongest forces in Michael's army. Protecting his people was great, but Michael was also aware of the growth spurts provided by near-death situations.

He encountered such situations often enough to tell that they allowed him to tap into powers and potential he wasn't even aware he possessed. Taking such chances – life-threatening dangers – away from his people was similar to crippling their future potential and growth.

Of course, not everyone would survive, but those who overcame the ordeals would be stronger than ever.

Michael jumped to the barracks once to observe the Berserkers, but he moved away shortly. There was not much to see other than a bloody massacre.

The situation was very similar as Michael appeared near the Forest Elves to watch them for a minute. The only difference was that the Forest Elves didn't enter close combat. They utilized their Pseudo-Legendary Bow Artifacts and Soultraits to hunt their targets, picking them out one by one.

Only Tiara traveled alone through the settlement, her movements deadly, nimble, and unpredictable.

She disregarded the civilians and everyone who was fleeing from her but slain everyone obstructing her path with a single strike. There was no mercy in Tiara's movements. If anything, Tiara acted cruelly, slaughtering some idiots who charged at her thinking that she was about to kill their defenseless family.

Tiara didn't even think about leaving those people alive. They were a potential future threat. As a Silverfang, Tiara knew better than anyone that underestimating her enemies, as well as showing mercy, was never rewarded. The Silverfang Tigerfolk had been punished for being merciful to their enemies. It resulted in the death of many Silverfangs and their forced retreat into the Origin Expanse.

Thinking about the Silverfangs that were still waiting for her to rescue them, Tiara sped up once again. Her attacks transformed and got sharper with every passing second. Blood splattered all over her body, but she moved onward.

There was no way back anymore. Hesitation could kill her and those important to her. All Tiara could do was move onward and do her best to take care of her beloved.

She didn't want to lose anyone she loved ever again.

That wouldn't happen again.

NEVER!

Chapter 663 Next

Once the warehouses and treasure vaults were looted, and the Awakened and Combat Summons slain it was time to leave and move on.

Michael considered visiting the other settlements, but he decided against it because time played against them. Instead, Michael gathered his people and traveled to the Huglaiv Lord's main settlement.

They didn't invade the Huglaiv Lord's main settlement upon arriving and waited until Zeroa's group arrived at their meeting spot instead.

The Elemental Empress dashed to Michael and bombarded him with various thoughts and memories, revealing the events of the last few hours. Michael learned about everything the Valyrs did in the small settlement of the Huglaiv Lord and scrunched his nose. He glanced at the Valyrs, tilted his head slightly, and watched them approach him.

"What is your plan?" Zira asked lightly, not even thinking about telling Michael about the happenings of the last few hours.

He shrugged inwardly and moved onward.

"It's pretty simple," Michael said, "We destroy the wall and charge inside. Once inside, we split up and slaughter the Awakened and everyone who blocks our path. It's pretty simple. There is no need for mindless slaughter either. That's just a waste of time and energy."

Zira raised an eyebrow, her eyes drifting to Zeroa who looked away. Zira was pretty sure that she heard a 'hmpf!' from the Elemental Empress, but she didn't pay much attention to Zeroa. Her attention returned to Michael.

"That's it?" Zira asked, only for Frederik to join their conversation.

"I don't want to interrupt you guys, but I think your plan won't work out as intended," He said lightly, gesturing toward the gates of the main settlement.

Michael channeled energy into Spirit Eyes to see what was unfolding in the main settlement and its gates. Their current location was three kilometers away from the settlement. They were on a slight elevation, but that shouldn't have been enough to expose them.

'Even Advanced Orbs of Hostility cannot differentiate between monsters and Awakened well. Is there a Superior Orb of Hostility, or something with equal power in the main settlement?' Michael wondered,

only for his attention to drift to Zira and the Valyrs once again, 'Or they received a report about the destruction of their small settlement.'

One way or another, an army headed their way. They didn't travel toward them in a straight line, but it was only a matter of minutes before Michael and the others would be discovered.

But that was fine. It was perfect.

The spatial restrictions were weaker at the borders of the spatial lock dome. There would be no issue with jumping a short distance through space, especially with a Superior 5-Star Soultrait that could be further amplified and enhanced via Soul Tears and Enhancement.

Michael was confident that he could break through the low-quality spatial lock with brute force as long as he fused with Zeroa, used spatial energy, and had enough layers of Enhancement to reinforce Cosmic Stride. However, that didn't seem to be necessary since his targets served themselves on a silver platter.

The Huglaiv's army moved in a disciplined manner through the Savannah's grassland. Their cavalry rode on the outer ring of the formation while their infantry acted as the second layer of defense.

Dozens of Healers and hundreds of Sorcerers formed the core of the army. They were surrounded by more than a thousand Archers, who were protected by even more Warriors, Knights, Vanguard, Berserkers, and so forth.

The formation displayed by the army of 10,000+ Soldiers was a little bit odd. It looked like they expected to get attacked, yet at the same time, that didn't seem to be the case. Michael's eyes were sharp enough to pinpoint the lax attitude of the cavalry. The cavalymen were gossiping rather than paying attention to the surroundings.

It was almost as if they could never anticipate that someone would attack them.

"Maybe, they were deployed to find out what happened in the small settlement," Michael mumbled.

"Let's attack them then!" Thaor exclaimed, his eyes burning fiercely.

The passion in the Berserker's eyes was hard to ignore. A smug smile appeared on Michael's face.

"We will strike once they leave the dome of the settlement's spatial lock."

"But won't that expose us?" Lilica asked, gesturing to the settlement, "Won't it be much harder to reach the main settlement then?"

Michael's smug smile widened.

"Yeah, they will notice us," He nodded, "But they won't be able to do anything against us. I have a plan."

Lilica, like everyone else, trusted Michael. The Valyrs scoffed, feeling that Michael was too arrogant and that he ought to fall hard on his nose in the near future, but they didn't say anything. Instead, they waited patiently until the command to assault reached them.

The army left the range of the spatial lock dome. They passed by Michael and the others with a gap of no more than 500 meters. That distance could be crossed in no time in a full sprint.

"Charge," Michael commanded, watching the Berserkers dash forward instantaneously.

Tiara and the Valyrs followed right behind whereas Lilica, Opars, and Mika stayed behind to aim the Huglaiv from the little elevation.

"Are you not going?" Mika asked as the Wyvernwood Bow Artifact manifested in his hands. He noticed that Michael hadn't moved yet.

Instead of answering, Michael focused on fusing with the Elemental Empress. A tight blazing armor made from mythical flames coated his body. The armor connected every part of his body, turning into a part of his being.

Michael's mastery of the elements skyrocketed the moment he fused with Zeroa. Their experiences merged and their powers skyrocketed.

It was the first time that Michael used Taming's Fusion with the Elemental Empress after he attained the Spheres of Elements Soultrait. He expected a slightly different experience, but Michael didn't think that the difference would be like this.

All of a sudden, Michael sensed things he never noticed. These subtle differences were not only about the surroundings and the strands of elemental attributed energy that permeated the air but also his body's compatibility with the elements. The reinforced elemental mastery granted Michael enough insights into Cosmic Stride and Spheres of Elements that he managed to jump one kilometer through space with a single thought.

He used Cosmic Stride with spatial energy subconsciously and with a simple command. There was no need for any complicated utilizations. Michael just did it.

Michael appeared in the air above the Huglaiv Healers and Sorcerers. Their heads shot up, only to uncover a stranger levitating in the sky.

Powerful gusts swirled around Michael, keeping him in the air as he proceeded to eliminate everyone in his proximity.

He activated the three Cursed Seals, unleashing their tremendous power and terrifying presence to sweep through every corner of his body. The Cursed Seals manifested in his face and upper body, amplifying his senses, emotions, and Extraction's potency.

Michael manifested the Soul Grimoire to apply one Soul Tear to the Extraction Symbol and the Enhancement Symbol. Following that, he pushed the Soul Grimoire aside, allowing it to absorb the countless tiny wisps that would fill the sky in a few seconds. He applied ten layers of Enhancement on the Extraction Symbol and fused the Dome of Extraction with the Extraction Aura.

True Extraction erupted from Michael's body, coating the surroundings bright golden. The small domain expanded rapidly. It coated the Healers and Sorcerers in an instant and engulfed the Archers around as well.

Screams of fear and terror rang through Michael's ears but he didn't listen to them. His attention was on the True Extraction Domain and the tremendous amounts of origin energy and lifeforce that surged into his body.

He split the origin energy into two portions. One portion was used to maintain the True Extraction Domain and expand it whereas the other portion was used to form an azure fireball above Michael's head.

The surplus lifeforce was used to replenish Michael's mental fatigue. Once that was taken care of, Michael inserted the excessive lifeforce into a small, fragile bullet of light. He shot Lokai with the bullet. Lokai's eyes widened when she sensed that Michael attacked her, but she trusted him enough to understand that Michael wouldn't harm her.

The Light Bullet shattered, and Insert came into play, inserting the lifeforce stored within the bullet into Lokai. Lokai's entire being was overflowing with lifeforce suddenly, taking her by surprise. However, it didn't take long before she understood what happened. She smiled vibrantly and used Life Conversion, allowing her Soultrait to devour the inserted lifeforce in exchange for a burst of raw power.

Her power skyrocketed before she barged into the group of cavalrymen and Vanguards.

Lokai turned into the incarnation of a Warlord Berserker. She wreaked havoc and tore her enemies apart as if they were made of paper.

Michael did something similar. Since everyone in True Extraction Domain's range was an enemy, he didn't have to think about holding back.

The highly destructive power of True Extraction was unleashed, killing all Tier-1 and Tier-2 Summons in its range within seconds.

Their origin energy and lifeforce entered Michael's form where it was recycled and used to expand the True Extraction Domain, nourish the azure fireball overhead, or shoot at Lokai with lifeforce-inserted light bullets.

As the True Extraction Domain expanded, more and more Huglaiv were affected. A single touch of the True Extraction Domain was enough to drain the energy around them and extract their hair and skin. Countless tendrils of Extraction forced their way into the Huglaiv's bodies, draining their origin energy and lifeforce rapidly.

The stronger Summons and Awakened could prevent the Extraction tendrils' invasion, but most were not strong enough to overpower a 7-Star Soultrait that had been enhanced and amplified through diverse means, including three Cursed Seals.

They died miserably.

Chapter 664 Fireball

Michael's kill-count surpassed 1,000 in less than a minute and the count continued increasing rapidly. The azure fireball overhead expanded for a while before Michael willed it to compress.

But that was not the end of it. Michael utilized more fire-attributed origin energy to conjure mythical flames whenever he had some excessive energy stored up. The mythical flames merged with the fireball expanding it once again.

Michael compressed the fireball once again, repeating the cycle over and over again.

Many Huglaiv tried to attack Michael, but that was not as easy as it sounded. Most long-range combatants had already been killed, leaving little to no chance for most Huglaiv to reach Michael mid-air.

Michael had killed most Sorcerers and Archers with the True Extraction Domain the moment he arrived. Unfortunately, some Awakened had Soultraits that could be used against Michael. It was only fortunate that Lilica, Mika, and Opars bombarded them with arrows when they revealed their Soultraits and intention to harm their Lord.

To be precise, Mika bombarded everyone with Rapid Fire, and Pierce, killing various Tier-2 Awakened in no time. He could have used Arrow Duplication, but the Soultrait drained too much energy. Arrow Duplication was more useful against large numbers of enemies as well. It was not useful right now given that Michael was taking care of the masses of Low Tier Huglaiv.

Since his large-scale attack was not required, Mika focused on impaling the Awakened and Summons who didn't die instantaneously within Michael's True Extraction Domain. Pierce and Rapid Fire turned out to be a great combo, as expected. He struck several Awakened who'd been focused on blocking the tremendous power of the True Extraction Domain. They realized too late that a bombardment of arrows whizzed through the golden-coated landscape.

Long-range attacks worked decently fine in the True Extraction Domain. Their power deteriorated, but the projectiles weren't torn apart for the True Extraction Domain focused on the living.

But since the True Extraction Domain focused on the living, no one from Michael's team dared to enter the golden-coated domain. Unfortunately, there was always one idiot. One of the Valyrs wasn't smart enough to understand that Michael's True Extraction Domain didn't differentiate between friends and foes.

There was no friendly fire function given that Michael unleashed as much of True Extraction's power as possible right now.

The idiotic Valyr was ignorant enough to charge into the True Extraction Domain as she pursued a Huglaiv Awakened. Upon entering the golden-coated domain, the flames coating her extinguished immediately. She was drained of origin energy and life force, and her skin was pulled off. The Valyr was dissected alive.

The Valyr screamed at the top of her lungs and she was just about to turn around and escape the True Extraction Domain when her legs caved in. Lokai was forced to jump into the True Extraction Domain, grasp the idiot at her waist, and kick the ground with every bit of strength to escape the True Extraction Domain before it would affect her as well.

The woman wept in pain, but Lokai didn't pay any attention to her after she rescued her. Lokai returned to the battlefield, after making a big detour around the vibrant glowing center of the battlefield. The True Extraction Domain continued expanding, reaping more and more lives in the process.

Not even ten minutes passed before Michael and his subordinates finished dealing with more than 10,000 Huglaiv. The only powerful enemies had been two old-aged Higher Lifeforms. Just like any other Higher Lifeform in the Savannah Region, they were Low-ranked Tier-4 Awakened.

They were much weaker than the Lionheart Commanders.

True Extraction focused on the old Higher Lifeforms. Michael applied Insert as well, channeling the power of True Extraction inside the old Huglaiv, weakening them in the process. Lokai and the Valyrs used the distraction caused by Michael to land the killing blows.

Lokai's Life Conversion had been used more than two dozen times since the battle started. She was overflowing with raw power, nearly tearing her highly resilient body apart. The power she gained was enough to compete with a Lowest Tier-4 Awakened in terms of physical strength and overwhelm him. That was how strong Lokai had grown after using the life force Michael shot toward her now and then in the battle.

Now that the battle was over and the Huglaiv army had been obliterated, Michael changed his target to the settlement. Not much time had passed since they charged at the army. The defenders shouldn't have had enough time to activate all the defense mechanisms yet.

The main settlement's defense was bound to be far from perfect.

Even if it was 'perfect' in the Huglaiv Lord's opinion, Michael didn't see a reason to be worried. Michael had used half of the energy he'd absorbed from close to 10,000 people into a humongous fireball that had been conjured from mythical flames.

He retracted the True Extraction Domain and retrieved the 10 layers of Enhancement used on it before removing the Cursed Seals to lift the severe mental strain. A wave of energy surged out using the remaining energy that hadn't been used up by the True Extraction Domain. All corpses on the battlefield vanished into Michael's War Rune.

Only a moment later, Michael turned to the settlement, his entire focus on the three-story-tall azure fireball. He applied two layers of Enhancement to it and paid attention to the next course of action.

Michael neared the settlement with fast strides. Once he closed the gap to the massive walls guarding the settlement from invaders, he lobbed the humongous azure fireball through the air. The fireball whizzed through the air in a beautiful arc and smashed into the walls right next to the southern gate.

A fierce explosion erupted, tearing the settlement walls alongside the southern gate apart. Huge chunks of stone and other construction materials were flung in all directions right before a deadly heatwave swept through the surroundings. The rubble was propelled forward and transformed into deadly projectiles as they smashed into the surrounding buildings. The building collapsed and transformed into ruins within seconds, whereas the fireball's heatwave reaped countless lives. The wooden structures were burned to a cinder, destroying more of the surrounding area.

Not a single building in the proximity of the southern gate survived the azure fireball's explosion. Everything was destroyed, either burned to cinder, or utterly devastated.

The settlement was in chaos and the southern wall collapsed, leaving a huge hole for Michael and his subordinates to use.

The Berserkers were the first to charge. Lokai, specifically, was the first to move. She was the fastest right now and had still a few minutes of Life Conversion's power-up remaining. She kicked the ground, pushing the soil underfoot aside to reach top speed in no time.

Lokai crossed the distance to the broken wall in no time. She overlooked the searing heat that menaced to burn her hair and skin and leaped through the gaping hole to invade the Huglaiv's main settlement. Hundreds of corpses, mostly of Combat Summons who'd been prepared to face Michael and his people, littered the ground. Some were still alive, but they'd sustained heavy injuries. Lokai took care of them swiftly. She slain them without a shred of mercy. After all, there was no mercy in war.

Chapter 665 Fun In The Wooden Manor

The invasion inside the Huglaiv Lord's main settlement worked out a lot better than expected. Seeds of fear had been instilled in the hearts of the defenders as the humongous azure fireball exploded, and their mentality didn't recuperate from the damage in the following minutes either.

The Huglaiv's morale kept deteriorating as the Berserkers barged through the gaping hole in the southern wall. They moved swiftly through the wide streets and utilized their superior combat prowess, advanced physical strength, and Soultraits advantage to eliminate as many opponents as possible in the shortest period.

The combat prowess advantage of Michael's team played a huge role. It allowed the Berserkers, Frederik, Tiara, and the Forest Elves to move around independently, without having to worry about each other's safety.

And then there was Michael. He didn't barge into the main settlement without a plan. Instead, he used Cosmic Stride for a short-distance teleportation before shrouding his body in raging winds. He exerted the Heavenly Beast Physique and enhanced his physical strength even further with several layers of Enhancement.

His first target was the center of the main settlement, the spatial lock, to be precise. He kicked the ground and reached top speed in no time. A few guards and Awakened blocked his path, but none of them were Higher Lifeforms. Their strength was not even close to a Descendant either. They were taken care of swiftly, their bodies riddled with deep cuts, burns, and holes.

Michael released a wave of energy to collect their corpses as he passed through the wide main street. He reached the settlement center in no time and headed straight into the wooden manor where he found two Higher Lifeforms alongside a dozen Awakened.

"Today must be my lucky day," Michael mumbled, a devilish smile blossoming on his face.

The Huglaiv Lord and the High Awakened standing next to him were probably the only Higher Lifeforms in the entire settlement. After all, Michael had yet to encounter a Lord in the Savannah with more than two Higher Lifeforms in their territory. The sole reason the Trilance managed to block the Council of Xylon's advances was the fact that they had more Higher Lifeforms than any other Lord.

The Valyr Lordess had been the strongest. She might not have the largest army, but her people were the strongest with five Higher Lifeforms serving her. By now, the Valyr Lordess was not the strongest anymore. Only two High Valyrs remained from her strongest subordinates. However, that was enough to stall most enemies or slaughter their enemies as long as no Higher Lifeform would block their paths.

Michael was more than willing to get rid of the Higher Lifeforms and Awakened standing around the table in the wooden manor's living room.

The Huglaiv Lord turned to Michael, a faint smile on his lips.

"You must be the Lord of the Untamed Jungle," He said politely, "Let me introduce myself—..."

Michael couldn't be bothered listening to the Huglaiv Lord. The raging winds around Michael burst forth, propelling him ahead as he kicked the wooden planks underneath him. The wooden planks burst apart from the tremendous force, but Michael was not in the same position anymore. He didn't notice the destruction his movements caused.

He appeared before the Huglaiv Lord, a Qi Extraction Sword manifesting from his right palm.

"Why should I listen to dead people?" Michael asked quietly, the Qi Extraction Sword descending rapidly, cutting through several thick energy shields that manifested in front of the Huglaiv Lord.

The Qi Extraction Sword managed to inflict a deep cut into the Huglaiv Lord's breastplate, but he didn't draw any blood.

Michael clicked his tongue and manifested a few dozen Qi Swords before coating them in Zeroa's mythical flames. The temperature in the living room skyrocketed all while the azure armor around Michael's body flared up. The Qi Swords shot in all directions, impaling a few Awakened while missing others by a hair's breadth. The mythical flames erupted and jumped over to set the walls, floor, and ceiling on fire.

Michael used some fire-attributed energy to fuel the mythical flames, pushing them to spread faster. The Huglaiv Lord frowned deeply, but he wasn't done speaking. He retrieved a large one-handed saber and charged at Michael. The muscles in his legs flexed and inflated as a faint membrane shrouded his lower body. He accelerated and reached top speed in the narrow living room near-instantly.

To the Huglaiv Lord's misfortune, he didn't pay as much attention to his surroundings as Michael. He used Spirit Eyes' Prognosis to determine where the Huglaiv Lord was headed and what moves he was about to make. In response to Prognosis' analyzation, Michael created several paths to eliminate his enemy.

Michael's physical strength was as high as the Huglaiv Lord's, and even his speed rivaled the Huglaiv Lord's shocking top speed thanks to the raging winds shrouding him. Adding Spirit Eyes' Prognosis and his other Soultraits to the fray, it was no surprise that the Huglaiv Lord found himself impaled by dozens of Qi Extraction Swords that had been further reinforced by mythical flames and raging winds.

The Mythical flames and raging winds acted as accelerators, adding burst speed to the Qi Extraction Swords as Michael released them. The Huglaiv Lord might have been fast enough to evade the attacks, but he didn't have much space to move. The spatial lock blocked all spatial movements whereas the confinement of the wooden manor's living room prevented the Huglaiv Lord from changing his trajectory and darting to safety.

No place was safe and sound in the wooden manor at this point. It was burning down, the crackling of the burning wood resounding through the vicinity. Michael appeared near the last surviving Awakened. He ignored the dying Huglaiv Lord and the other Higher Lifeform for a moment and stretched his hands out. His hands coiled around the necks of two Awakened, who were frozen in fear.

Michael applied some force and broke their necks in a way too simple manner. The crackling sound of breaking bones rang through his ears, but Michael's attention was already elsewhere. He eyed the Higher Lifeform who pulled the Qi Extraction Swords out of the Huglaiv Lord to use his Soultrait and heal the deep gashes.

The Huglaiv Lord was not yet dead, but it was only a matter of seconds before he would faint. After that, the Huglaiv Lord's energy and lifeforce would be sucked dry in less than a minute.

Michael appeared behind the Higher Lifeform, his attention lingering on the Healing Soultrait.

"Healing someone while your enemy is still present doesn't seem like the smartest thing to do," Michael said lightly, but he noticed that something about the Higher Lifeform was off, "Oh. Nevermind. You don't look like you want to heal him right now, in the first place. Looks like the Soul Contract with this idiot forces you to tend to his wounds no matter the situation."

Big beads of sweat trickled down the Higher Lifeform's temples and his hair stood up to its end with Michael behind him. However, even if he wanted to, he couldn't stop nurturing the Huglaiv Lord. That was what the Soul Contract demanded from him, just like Michael had guessed.

"That's unfortunate," Michael mumbled, "For you."

Michael's hands transformed, claws of Aethyr coating his fingers. He gazed at the Huglaiv for a second and finished his business. He pierced the Aethyr Claw deep into the Higher Lifeform's throat before twisting his hand. The Huglaiv's gaze widened and he twitched twice but the life in his eyes dispersed quickly. His eyes dimmed and turned hollow within seconds before a large energy influx arrived at him.

Since he was at war, Michael couldn't afford to leave any Combat Summons or Awakened alive. He had to tear all buds of potential future threads apart to ensure that they couldn't nourish and grow into powerhouses to endanger him or his people in the future.

Sometimes, that feeling wasn't great, but it would be more concerning if Michael loved war and bloodshed.

He turned to the Huglaiv Lord and transformed the Aethyr Claw into a saber and beheaded the Huglaiv Lord without any mercy.

Michael stored the lifeless bodies after making sure that everyone was dead. He proceeded to the second floor right after to deactivate the spatial lock and store everything of value in his War Rune.

Next, he burned down the wooden manor and proceeded to the Summoning Gate where he retrieved the Summoning Cores.

In the following ten minutes, Michael took care of the remaining Awakened in the settlement using the fusion with Zeroa to slay the weakest Awakened with a single strike, Cosmic Stride to jump through space, Spirit Eyes to pinpoint the Awakened's location, and Superior Constitution's Heavenly Beast Physique to overwhelm the strongest enemies with brute force.

The Huglaiv Lord was dead and his Links of Loyalty terminated. Some Awakened residing in the main settlement tried to flee, but Tiara and the others were faster. They targeted them and hunted them down long before the Huglaiv Awakened could decide whether they should flee away to anchor their Runic Gate outside the main settlement or if they should run right now.

Their decision-making skills were too slow, and they ended up wasting precious time, which could have saved their lives. But they were too slow and were killed, eliminating more potential future threats.

The main settlement was conquered in no time. After the Huglaiv Lord died it was only a matter of time before Michael and his people plundered all treasures and killed everyone holding a weapon.

They left soon after. After all, there was a much more to do. There was no time for breaks!

Chapter 666 10%

72 hours passed in the blink of an eye.

Everyone was beyond exhausted. Their muscles felt like tearing apart and their legs jiggled wildly, threatening to cave in at any moment.

Even Michael, who could replenish his lifeforce and origin energy easily, could tell that he was at his limits. He could barely use his Soultraits at this point. It was almost like his Soultraits were muscles that had been used way too much. They were overexerted and on the verge of tearing apart.

It was time that they retreated to take a break.

He chose to use his Soultraits to the extreme one more time by applying a Soul Tear to Cosmic Stride and Enhancement before enhancing and overclocking Cosmic Stride.

The combined effects of Enhancement and Soul Tear were enough to coat his subordinates in a golden hue and exert Cosmic Stride's special function. They disappeared in a golden hue and were transported to Cosmic Stride's anchor back in the Untamed Jungle.

A large portal opened near the Summoning Gate, revealing Michael and the exhausted Untamed Awakened. Michael's entire being was void of energy and he nearly fainted the moment they returned to Arx, but he managed to force his body to stay awake.

The others weren't that lucky. The tension within the Untamed Awakened eased up once they realized that they were back in the Untamed Jungle, in Arx, to be precise. They collapsed and slumped to the ground without warning.

Michael was greeted by his attendants and some subjects, but he barely noticed them. His sight was hazy and his senses were dull. It was almost as if his body was forced into energy-saving mode. He

swayed left and right as he staggered to his room and barely managed to reach his bed before he collapsed.

The world around him turned dark as the embrace of the long-awaited sleep consumed him.

He had no idea how much time had passed when he woke up. A yawn escaped his lips and he got up stretching his body a little.

"I'm not sore?"

That was a little surprising.

'How long did I sleep?' He wondered, certain that a long time must have passed because he felt perfectly fine. It was almost as if he didn't spend three days fighting and overexerting his Soultraits until he could barely move.

Michael left the room and looked for the others to find out how long he was knocked out, but he didn't find anyone. He resorted to using Spirit Eyes and pinpointing the Untamed Awakened, only to find all of them sleeping soundly. None of them was awake. Not even Tiara or Hiraku, who were usually the first to get up.

"Hey," Michael said to one of the Starless Summons as he passed by. The young man was startled and greeted his Lord respectfully. Michael dismissed the unnecessary politeness and went straight to business.

"How long has it been since the Untamed Awakened and I returned to Arx?"

He almost expected a few days to have passed, but the Starless Summons lifted one finger.

"O-one day, M-my Lord..."

Michael was not sure why the Starless Summon was afraid of answering his question, but he didn't think too much about it. Instead, he gestured for the youth to proceed and do whatever he had been doing.

'Only one day passed? Seems like Superior Constitution is a lot more versatile than expected,' Michael figured, glad that Superior Constitution accelerated his natural regeneration drastically. He fought with his life on the line for 72 hours without a proper break, but he was the first to wake up fully recuperated.

Michael felt better than ever. That was not only owed to Superior Constitution but also by his War Rune. Michael gained countless energy shares and energy influxes in the last few days. Every bit of it had to be digested to refine his War Rune properly.

"If I continue to progress like that, I should reach the Mid-

rank of Tier-3 once the Regional War ends," Michael concluded, a faint grin emerging on his lips.

His progress was fast. If he continued progressing at such a rapid pace, he might even reach Tier-4 before turning 21. That would be rather fast among the prodigies of the Tritan Alliance, even more so given that he owned so many powerful Soultraits.

'I wonder how strong I'll be once I'm a Higher Lifeform. The ascension should be a game changer, right?'

Michael smiled lightly at the thought of ascending to a Higher Lifeform. He was looking forward to it. However, before ascending, Michael would have to solve lots of issues. His brother was still waiting for him, Michael had some questions about the Nest and other things, and he was more than willing to participate in the Interdimensional Flag War once again.

This time, he would be prepared to beat the shit out of the Tekur to make more gains, whether that was about procuring Elite Class Soul Techniques or procuring countless SoulStar Fragments and Soultrait Symbols.

He was looking forward to it.

But before that, he would have to finish dealing with the Council of Xylon. The Regional War was not yet over. In fact, the Regional War was just about to turn into a real nuisance. After all, Michael inflicted some real damage to the Council of Xylon at last.

The Trilance had been forced to focus on defending because they had been at a disadvantage all along. On the other hand, the Council of Xylon had been offensive the whole time, yet they attacked way too slowly. It indicated that the Council of Xylon wasn't decisive sufficient to make any grand decisions and that the council was bad at communicating.

That suggestion was also why Michael chose to act fast. He struck the territories in the center of the Savannah Region and killed their Lords, transforming the Savannah center into unoccupied land.

Michael was not overly satisfied with his achievement, but he was not displeased either. He managed to kill 11 Lords and slaughter 1245 Awakened, after all.

Most Awakened had been reinforcement that had been deployed by the higher-ups, Clans, and government of the Lords to serve them. Unfortunately, they died long before anyone noticed that something was off.

The 72 hours of his attacks had been a mess, but the earnings were tremendous. Simultaneously, the chaos spread throughout the Savannah Region and the cracks inflicted on the foundation of the Council of Xylon couldn't be underestimated either.

The seed of fear had been instilled into the hearts of the Savannah's Lords.

All Michael had to do now was to make use of the earnings made in the last few days, grow stronger, and wait for the next opportunity to strike the council as hard as possible.

"Let's see what we can acquire from you guys," Michael mumbled, his attention lingering on the corpses stored within his War Rune's storage.

Since everybody else was still asleep, Michael walked over to the largest warehouse where he retrieved the corpses of the 11 Lords and 1245 Awakened.

His eyes glimmered brightly as the power of Extraction erupted from within him.

Countless tendrils of Extraction erupted from the surroundings. They pierced into the lifeless bodies and plundered their SoulStar Fragments, Soultrait Symbols, and Memory Orbs, forming several piles of invaluable treasures.

Michael's smile widened.

"I think I can work with that!"

Chapter 667 In The Name Of The War Goddess

The Extraction tendrils completed their work swiftly and thoroughly. Not even half an hour passed before Michael told his subjects to take the bodies and distribute them throughout the Untamed Jungle's outer ring. The Untamed Jungle would consume the corpses and turn them into fertilizer.

The outer ring would recuperate from the damage caused by the Heart of the Blazing Lion army soon if Michael provided enough 'fertilizer' in the next few weeks.

He didn't pay much attention to the subjects storing the corpses in small spatial satchels and focused on the piles of treasures instead.

One of the piles contained a bunch of Artifacts, which belonged to the Lords and Awakened from the Savannah. Some of them were High Artifacts being at the 4th Tier, thus increasing their value tremendously. It was a little unfortunate that their star rating was not that high, but Michael didn't expect to earn a shocking fortune from the Awakened's Artifacts, in the first place.

It was a decent side income.

Since he focused on plundering the corpses of Awakened, Michael didn't receive many Summoning Fragments, Scrolls, or the like. The Will decreased the drop rate for those goods drastically since Michael could extract a portion of Awakened's War Rune storages, their Artifacts, Memories, and both SoulStar Fragments and Soultrait Symbols.

Micheal didn't mind that. He was more focused on the 1000ish Memory Orbs, the piles of goods he'd extracted from the War Runes of the 11 Lords and 1245 Awakened, their Soultrait Symbols, and the huge pile of SoulStar Fragments.

'First the goods. This mess is tormenting to look at,' Michael thought, prioritizing cleaning up the mess created by the portion of War Rune storages he'd extracted.

It was a good thing that Michael had various spatial rings, bracelets, necklaces, and spatial satchels to store various things. He ordered some subjects to focus on storing specific items while he organized everything. That way, Michael could mark the spatial rings and other devices to know what's inside without accessing them once they were stored in the warehouse.

Once the warehouse was a little bit more organized, Michael could finally pay more attention to the stash of Soultrait Symbols and SoulStar Fragments.

He had yet to research the name, powers, and special attributes of all newly acquired Soultrait Symbols, but he was not in a rush. It would take some time to research the pile containing 99 Soultrait Symbols.

Michael stored the Soultrait Symbols in the sealed container where the remaining Soultrait Symbols were stored securely and eyed the pile of SoulStar Fragments with greed in his vibrant golden eyes.

He allowed the War Rune to consume the humongous pile of SoulStar Fragments. The War Rune didn't hesitate and burst forth with dozens of white tendrils emerging from the back of his hand. The tendrils shot out of his War Rune and devoured the SoulStar Fragments faster than most Tierless subjects could watch.

The huge pile of 126,934 SoulStar Fragments was there one moment and vanished into thin air only one second later.

"That's a lot," Michael whistled.

He expected to procure a large batch of SoulStar Fragments given that he defeated 21 Higher Lifeforms, but it was still a bit surprising. Defeating 11 more-or-less weak Lords from the Savannah Region granted him enough SoulStar Fragments to upgrade multiple Soultraits to 6-Star!

Some of his Soultraits were more expensive than the norm, but that hardly mattered given the gains he made within a few days.

'I shouldn't rush anything.' Michael reminded himself, 'I should think carefully about my next moves. The Untamed Awakened should receive some Soultrait Upgrades and new Soultraits as well. They worked hard, but some situations were too dangerous. If we continue like this, some of them will die before they can tap into the true potential of their Soultraits!'

Michael considered upgrading Soul Grimoire instantaneously, but he held back. Right now, it was better to refine his War Rune, using the energy influxes and energy shares he obtained in the last few days.

He killed the excitement bubbling inside him and focused on the consolidation of his War Rune. The techniques Leviathan Diffusion and Pantheon's Dawn aided the process, accelerating the War Rune's refinement considerably.

A few days passed in the blink of an eye. Michael digested the last energy influxes and met up with his subordinates. He was still a Low Tier-3 Lord, but he was now certain that the Regional War would push him to the Mid rank as long as he didn't boost too many Soultraits to 6-Star.

An attendant rushed toward Michael the moment he reached the large roundtable in the wooden manor. A clipboard with the Scouts' reports, Arx's development, and some high-

priority requests landed in his hands.

Tiara, Hiraku, Frederik, and the others greeted Michael, who nodded back without lifting his head. His eyes were glued to the reports.

He sat down on his designated chair, his attention drifting to the high-priority requests.

"Since the juvenile Awakened and monster cubs have already been examined, there is no need to be vigilant. They're not marked and don't have any devices that share their location installed either. It shouldn't be a problem to give the juvenile Awakened a place in the orphanage and raise the monster cubs in one of the ranches. Tajana can find out additional about the monster cubs, whereas Hannah

from the Silverfangs Tigerfolk can treat the juvenile Awakened. The kids seem to be more comfortable around her," Michael stated after he gave it some thought, "Don't hesitate to point out any flaws."

Despite saying so, nobody raised a hand to say anything. Tiara knew that Hannah was a good girl and that she would take care of the juvenile Awakened as if they were her cubs.

Tatjana was gentle as well. Her personality was a bit brusque, but it wasn't bad enough to scare some monster cubs.

"As for the requests made by the Untamed Awakened... Most accumulated enough Jungle Points to repay your loans. Given that I offered additional Jungle Points for participating in the large-scale attack against the Council of Xylon, I give everyone permission to pick another Soultrait."

"If you do not wish to expand your repertoire of Soultraits, you can also come to me for a Soultrait Upgrade. An upgrade to 5-Star is expensive but since we're at war with the Council of Xylon I can give everyone a discount."

Michael sensed generous with the large stash of SoulStar Fragments in his possession. Upgrading the Soultraits of the Untamed Awakened might be better than continuously upgrading his own Soultraits. He was already strong enough to deal with the strongest Higher Lifeforms in the Savannah Region. Therefore, it was about time for his subordinates to grow just as powerful.

Tiara and the others were slightly surprised. They had been granted various benefits in the battle against the Heart of the Blazing Lion army and didn't expect that Michael would give them even more benefits. It was almost as if he was throwing gifts their way.

Was he trying to suffocate them with presents?

"I swear in the name of the War Goddess..." Zeron Polik's voice thundered through the large office all of a sudden, "...that I will never betray Michael Fang. I will fight by his side and heed his commands until my mortal shell breaks apart!"

Michael had no idea about what was going on, but the other Warlock Centaurs and Berserkers seemed to understand Zeron Polik's words better than anyone. They were baffled, but their astonishment lasted

only for a moment. They understood why Zeron Polik made an oath in the name of the War Goddess and broke into vibrant - hideous - smiles.

A moment later, the remaining Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs made an oath as well.

Michael was still unsure what the hell was going on, but it didn't take long before he sensed that something was changing. His War Rune heated up until it sensed like the War Rune had been set on fire.

However, there was no fire around his palm. It was chilly in the office, to be precise.

Michael raised an eyebrow and decided to close his eyes to seek the source of heat inside him. It didn't take long to discover it.

The Links of Loyalty with the Warlock Centaurs and Berserkers were changing. The Soul Pacts disintegrated. The Pacts' fragments merged into the Links of Loyalty and altered their essence.

The Links of Loyalty evolved. They became more

Chapter 668 Oath Of Loyalty

The Links of Loyalty of the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs evolved into something bigger. Grander.

They transformed into something even more powerful than the True Link of Loyalty.

Michael could instinctively tell the changes in his bond with the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs. It would be impossible for them to betray Michael, and they would die alongside him.

That was a terrifying restriction. Nobody would want to die just because their Lord died. However, the 'sacrifice' of their safety came with a drastic increase in power. The Vassals of the Lord were given access to a portion of their Lord's Soul Power.

Despite being Awakened, their Soultrait's power would skyrocket and reach new thresholds.

They weren't mere Awakened anymore. The Warlock Centaurs and Berserkers subordinate to Michael evolved into more than that.

The more strength they gained from being Michael's Vassals the more responsibilities weighed upon them. Once their gains crossed a certain threshold, they would have to pay even more attention to their Lord and his territory.

Losing the power they attained through their Lord's Soul Power would be fatal. That also meant that they would suffer greatly if their Lord were to lose his Lord Powers. In the best case, they would end up in a weakened state for a short period. If they were not that fortunate, they would suffer permanent injuries. However, the worst-case scenario was death. It happened rarely, but the annals of the Berserkers hinted at the death of dozens of Vassals after their Lord lost his territory. The power that nourished inside them had been ripped out by force, leaving a gaping hole in their Souls.

It was an incredibly rare scenario, but one had to pay attention to it, nonetheless.

So, why did Zeron Polik, the Berserkers, and Warlock Centaurs initiate the Oath of Loyalty if it was so dangerous? Was it merely for the boost in power granted through Michael's Soul Power, or was there more?

The answer was simple, yet far more complex than it was supposed to be.

First, Michael granted the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs too many benefits in such a short period. That was enough to meet one of the requirements to initiate the Oath of Loyalty. The benefits they received were great, but it wasn't acceptable. Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs were prideful beings. They could accept small gifts and benefits in exchange for their services, but it was nearly impossible to pay back everything Michael had given to them.

Their lives, bodies, and eternal loyalty were all they could offer.

That was what they felt like. Michael had given them various Soultrait Symbols, the opportunity to upgrade their Soultraits, granted them access to various resources that were hard to access at home, and most importantly, Michael pushed them onto the battlefield, allowing them to go crazy and live the lives they had always dreamed about.

It was perfect.

However, with perfection came the guilt. The guilt of being unable to repay Michael for everything he had done for them.

Since the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs were prideful beings, they could not accept owing favors. Their hatred towards debts “ their debts “ was enormous.

Therefore, Zeron Polik considered initiating the Oath of Loyalty. He trusted Michael and knew that he was going to stay with Michael, in his territory, forever either way. That was what their Soul Pact decreed when they accepted the first Soultrait Symbol from Michael. The Oath of Loyalty didn't change a lot about that principle. The Oath of Loyalty might have destroyed the Soul Pact, but it actually reinforced the Soul Pact's rules, while removing the restraining conditions and toll put on the soul.

The other Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs considered Zeron Polik's opinion and joined him after they witnessed his Oath of Loyalty. Since they wouldn't be able to leave Michael either way, they might as well make the best out of it.

The Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs were totally loyal to him “ not that they weren't before. In exchange for their 'sacrifice' of never being able to revert the changes of the Oath of Loyalty, and the high potential to end up crippled if Michael were to lose his territory at some point, they had to be treated with utmost care.

Michael would always be able to sense their dissatisfaction and desires. It was much stronger than the emotions he could sense from his ordinary subjects. Even Tiara, whose Link of Loyalty had transformed into a True Link of Loyalty couldn't convey her emotions and desires as well as the Warlock Centaurs and Berserkers.

That was interesting, but it could also transform into a nuisance. Michael was also curious about a new feeling that swept through his body. He felt more inclined to provide the Warlock Centaurs and Berserkers with more benefits. That was caused by the symbiotic relationship that had been established through the Oath of Loyalty.

Michael was still at the top of the relationship, but he benefited from the Vassals as much as they benefited from him. Therefore, Michael felt inclined to provide the Vassals with more benefits after they provided him with various gains.

Michael might have gained more than a dozen Vassals at once, but his Soul Power didn't improve. The gains he made were of another nature.

The Oath of Loyalty seemed to increase Michael's physical strength rather than supplying him with more Soul Power, which was usually the case if a Link of Loyalty grew firmer. The influx of Soul Power whenever a Link of Loyalty transformed into a True Link of Loyalty was even more apparent. However, nothing like that happened when the Vassal's Links of Loyalty transformed into the Oath of Loyalty.

Interestingly enough, his physical strength was not the only thing that improved. Several factors about his physique changed. His muscles grew denser and he could instinctively tell that he could unleash more of the Heavenly Beast Physique's Soul Technique. It was almost as if the limit of his physical strength had been lifted.

His natural regeneration improved as well.

"What is happening?" Michael asked Lokai, who had been smiling for a while now.

"Seems like you can sense the changes already," Lokai said with mystery in her voice, "The Oath of Loyalty grants you a tiny portion of our Essence. It's not much, just a tiny fraction. However, since you are human without any special racial perks, you must have noticed the difference."

"Your Essence? So, I have the Essence of a bunch of Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs inside me now?" Michael asked.

'Is that why my War Rune sensed like it had been put on fire?'

"Basically, that's correct. But it is not as weird as it sounds. The Essence doesn't change your race or anything like that. It implants a tiny portion of our racial trait inside you. There are no catches. Well...except the desire to give us more resources and the like. But that is because you will realize that

the fraction of our Essences will grow inside you as our strength increases. That is why you will be naturally inclined to give us more resources."

That answered many questions, but it wasn't as if Michael understood everything right away. This was far more important than he could have anticipated when he offered the Untamed Awakened to pick more Soultrait Symbols and upgrade their Soultraits.

"So, to put it in simple terms, a fraction of your Essence is attached to the Oath of Loyalty. It will grow stronger as you grow stronger, and my physical attributes, basically everything related to my physique, will improve alongside."

"Yep," Lokai nodded, whereas Mekhaz added, "The Essence nourished in the Oath of Loyalty will fuse with you if we die. That means you don't forfeit anything even if we die. In exchange, the Oath of Loyalty might 'nag' you to give us more benefits. The Oath of Loyalty is not sentient but it desires to grow stronger, which happens when the Essence fused into it grows stronger."

"Damn. Okay..."

Frederik raised his hand, his eyebrows furrowed.

"What the hell happened just now? What did you guys do?" He asked, only for Hiraku to glimpse at the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs with intrigue.

"I would like to know more about what happened just now as well."

"Same here," Tiara entered alongside the Forest Elven Adventurers.

Mekhaz smiled lightly. He scratched the back of his head.

"To be honest, I don't know how it ended up like that. I think some of us did the Rite of the War Goddess on a whim."

He didn't mention if he did it on a whim, or if he had been serious about the Oath of Loyalty. Nobody asked him either.

"We initiated the Rite of the War Goddess. It's a special rite for Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs, stimulating an evolution in the Link of Loyalty."

Thaor appeared next to Mekhaz, laughing lightly.

"And it's a huge thing. Usually, we would have to report to the Chieftain and ask for permission before we initiate the Rite of the War Goddess."

"But you didn't do that," Hiraku figured.

"Nope. We didn't"

Everyone glanced at Michael, who sighed deeply.

"Let's just hope that the Chieftain and the War Priestess won't tear me apart," Michael said, while Mekhaz gestured him not to worry too much.

"It won't be that bad."

Chapter 669 Soultrait Upgrades

The boost in his physical strength was refreshing.

It was not a major augment in power, but Michael felt that it would be a lot easier to refine his physique using the Consirat of War body refinement technique. The technique seemed near perfect for him now that his physique had been altered slightly.

"Is it possible for others to initiate the Rite of the War Goddess, or are there some restrictions?" Michael asked Mekhaz.

"We've tried it with Berserker Summons and foreign Awakened, but it doesn't work like that," Mekhaz shook his head.

Michael fell deep in thought.

'So, the Oath of Loyalty can only be used by Awakened and Berserkers or Warlock Centaurs. Is that because of their Essence? Maybe, the Rite of the War Goddess is based on their beliefs, but that shouldn't be how the Oath of Loyalty came into existence. There has to be some sort of technique that stimulates the Link of Loyalty's evolution. There has to be a logical explanation!'

There was a lot to research if he wanted to use the Oath of Loyalty more often in the future. For now, Michael could only shrug and accept the situation.

"Alright," Michael nodded, "I won't ask for your reasons to initiate the Rite of the War Goddess out of nowhere. It's your decision and I'm pretty sure that most of you carefully considered the pros and cons before the final decision."

Some Berserkers looked at each other with a wry smile. They didn't think about what they were doing as thoroughly as Michael was hoping for. However, that was fine. Now that they made a decision, the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs wouldn't back off – not that they could, either way.

"How about we focus on Soultraits and Soultrait Upgrades for now?" Michael intercepted the deep thoughts of the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs. They nodded subtly and moved on.

Michael retrieved the sealed container that contained all Soultrait Symbols. He unsealed the container's lock and handed it to Rebecca Zauber. She used her Soultrait, Greater Analyzation, alongside the Inheritance Technique, Perfect Appraisal, to appraise the Soultrait Symbols, old and new, and determined their value and growth potential.

She created a price list with her friend in less than 20 minutes. Michael and the Untamed Awakened spent those 20 minutes talking about the Council of Xylon and their future actions.

"Is it possible to decline any benefits from conquering the Savannah Region in exchange for a Soultrait Upgrade to 5-Star?" Lilica asked, only to see some Untamed Awakened tilt their head at her question,

"What I mean is that I don't need anymore Jungle Points for killing Awakened and Combat Summons in the Regional War. Instead, I would like to upgrade one of my Soultraits to 5-Star before we return to fight these bastards again."

Michael nodded his head slowly, "You want an advance, which you'll pay back with the gains made in the Savannah."

"Seems fair to me."

Everyone liked Lilica's suggestion. 'Advance pay' in this case was like a loan because the Untamed Awakened wouldn't receive any Jungle Points until the benefits procured from the advance pay had been repaid. However, it didn't feel the same. The feeling about asking for advance pay and taking a loan was completely different. It was not that burdensome.

Taking that into consideration, everyone asked for their Soultraits to be upgraded to 4-Star before they inspected the list of Soultraits, which Rebecca handed out. The majority of Untamed Awakened inspected the list to search for suitable Soultraits. Only some, like Lilica, asked for a Soultrait Upgrade to 5-Star right away.

Michael upgraded her 4-Star Soultrait, Precise Aim, to 5-Star using 2600 SoulStar Fragments. Enhancing her Soultrait resulted in a change. Precise Aim evolved to Bullseye.

He offered to upgrade one more Soultrait to 5-Star but Lilica told him to use the upgrades on others.

That was what Michael did.

He upgraded Opars' Herculean Arms Soultrait to 5-Star, evolving it to Herculean Strength. Only Mika's Arrow Duplication didn't evolve into a stronger version upon upgrading it to 5-Star

Frederik's Enhanced Wind and Wind Mastery were upgraded to 4-Star. He was certain that he did not deserve another Soultrait or a Soultrait Upgrade to 5-Star. Therefore, he rejected Michael's proposal to take a bigger advance pay.

Frederik's look was filled with guilt and frustration. He owed Michael too much at this point, and the gap seemed to widen. It felt like it was impossible to repay Michael for everything he had done for him. All he could do was stay living and combat for Michael with his life on the line.

Thaor's Red Giant Soultrait and Mekhaz Living Armor were upgraded to 5-Star. Simultaneously, Lokai's Recuperation and Life Conversion were upgraded to 4-Star. Once Recuperation reached 4-Star, Lokai had it upgraded to 5-Star. It evolved into Rapid Recovery

The others asked for alike benefits. Only Hiraku dismissed the advance pay or any other benefits. He said that he had already received enough benefits from Michael. After all, he would still be stuck on a petite island in the middle of nowhere if it had not been for Michael.

Michael didn't think that he did much, but he wasn't going to force Hiraku into doing, or accepting anything. There was no need for that.

Tiara inquired Michael to upgrade Spirit Whip to 5-Star. Michael didn't think twice about upgrading her Soultrait. He saw her eying a specific name on the Soultrait Symbol list and collected an orb.

"I saw you eying this," Michael said, pointing at the Soultrait Symbol 'Thrust'.

The Soultrait's name wasn't special, but Michael could tell that Tiara was very interested in that Soultrait. Silvarean Tiger transformed her body partially, augmenting her physical strength, speed, and flexibility tremendously. Inner Force allowed her to execute surprise attacks and execute a wide variety of attacks in an unpredictable manner, whereas Spirit Whip slowed her enemies by weakening their minds.

Tiara didn't have an offensive Soultrait that augmented her attack power drastically for a moment. She was having a hard time defeating enemies of a higher rank. Thrust could solve that issue.

Tiara eyed the Soultrait Symbol for a while. She hesitated and didn't move. Michael's lips curled into a smile and he upgraded the Soultrait Symbol to 4-Star before planting it into her hand.

"Take it. Survive, grow stronger, and ensure you accumulate enough achievements to rescue your Clan."

Tiara looked up and stared deep into Michael's eyes. A stream of emotions flooded Michael through Tiara's True Link of Loyalty, filling him with warmth. He continued smiling and ruffled lightly through her hair when she said nothing.

"Everything is fine as long as you don't die. Don't make me regret giving you Spirit Whip and Thrust."

Michael was sincerely hoping that his Soultrait Symbols and Soultrait Upgrades wouldn't transform the Untamed Awakened into arrogant brats, who are full of themselves. He needed confident Awakened, but they shouldn't cross the line. Arrogance would kill them a lot faster than fear. After all, fear would make them combat defensively and against weaker or equally powerful enemies rather than enemies above their weight class.

'It should be fine.' Michael told himself in a whisper.

'In the worst case, I will beat everyone into a pulp until they don't know how arrogance is spelled.'

Chapter 670 Trading Cycle

After most of the Untamed Awakened fused with another Soultrait Symbol or upgraded their existing Soultraits, they left for the training ground to get used to the changes.

Nobody knew how many days they had to prepare for the next battles and everyone wanted to be as prepared as possible.

Michael liked that about his subordinates. They worked hard to grow stronger. If their training regimen was lackluster, or they ended up idling around, Michael would regret providing Soultrait Symbols and Upgrades to strengthen them. Fortunately, that was not the case.

The only downside was that he used more than half of the 126,000ish SoulStar Fragments he procured until now.

He didn't have enough SoulStar Fragments to upgrade Soul Grimoire to 6-Star, but that was okay. He had 90ish Lords, their Awakened, and Reinforcement to kill. There was no way that he wouldn't have enough SoulStar Fragments to upgrade some of his Soultraits once the Regional War was over.

Fortunately, the following days passed in silence. Michael focused on training. He practiced the body and mind refinement techniques Consirat of War and Wisdom Breaker as often as possible to ensure that his mind and body would be ready for the upcoming battles.

However, he paid lots of attention to the soul refinement technique, Sanctum of Life, as well. Michael relied on his physical strength and mental power a lot in battle, but it was a fact that his overwhelming power derived from the use of his Soultraits. Refining his soul as much as possible granted him better access and augmented control of his Soultraits.

The Sanctum of Life ensured that his Soultraits wouldn't break no matter how much he used them. At least, that was supposed to be one of the technique's biggest benefits.

Michael could use Extraction to replenish his energy and mental power fast. However, he couldn't use Extraction to mend his Soul once it was exhausted from using too many Soultraits, too often, and too long.

Therefore, Michael had to practice the Sanctum of Life soul refinement technique more often, ensuring that his Soul could keep up with his mind and body.

He considered leaving the Origin Expanse for a while to finish some business in the Sapphirelake Military Academy, but he assigned Rebecca Zauber and her friend to take care of that. Rebecca was deployed to take care of the Awakened Agency's business and some deals with Kraft Viton and the three Awakened who'd managed to pass the Awakened Agency's first test.

Since the Valyr Lordess lost her territory, she had to seek asylum in Arx. Therefore, she didn't have the means to produce resources anymore. The Valyrs' progress slowed down and their debt to Michael increased as they asked for more and more resources to recuperate from their wounds and obtain some equipment to fight.

The Valyrs asked for Energy Stones, Nutrition Serums, Artifacts, and various potions to regain their full strength. Michael never considered gifting them everything. He was not some charity organization. He was a Lord and a businessman.

The Valyrs owed him several favors. That made it much easier to convince the Valyr Lordess and her people to act as mediators with her Clan and people.

Michael desired to trade with the Valyr.

He already had some business with the Forest Elves and supplied them with as many weapons and other armaments as he could spare. The Forest Elves exchanged the weapons and armaments with Agriculture-type Blueprints that were sold to Kraft Viton with a decent profit.

Michael planned to add the Valyr into the trading cycle alongside the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs. It had been some time since he requested a list of items that were regularly harvested in the Sacred Desert, the Frozen Tundra, and the Barren Lands. Some goods from the Sacred Desert and the Frozen Tundra were very valuable to the Valyr. The Frozen Tundra's materials were exceedingly rare for them given that the Valyrs spawned in warm regions. Not many survived in cold regions for a long time.

It was hard to procure goods from cold regions for a low price because most partners of the Valyr race knew that they had difficulties procuring them without any help. That was what Michael made use of.

He offered the Valyr a good price. In exchange for the goods procured in the Frozen Tundra, Michael asked for Magma Stones, Blood Essences, and corpses of monsters that could only be found in regions with large amounts of lava and magma.

The Magma Stones, Blood Essences, and monster corpses were then sold to the Warlock Centaurs and Berserkers, who required Blood Essences to refine their physique using an ancient technique. The monster corpses and Magma Stones, on the other hand, were required to forge powerful Artifacts.

Michael demanded a wide variety of ores, forging blueprints, and other materials from the Warlock Centaurs and Berserkers, providing enough resources to expand the Underground Forging Hall.

The expansion of the Underground Forging Hall made it easier to supply more weapons to the Forest Elves, which meant that Michael would obtain more Agriculture-type Blueprints. More schemes meant more materials from the Frozen Tundra and the Sacred Desert. More materials would elevate his gains from the Valyrs, which would widen his profit margin from the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs once again.

The cycle would continue to grow until one of the parties procured enough resources. However, it would take a long time before the supply exceeded the demand. Until then, Michael was bound to generate more profit than most Lords earned in their careers.

It wasn't easy to create a perfect commerce system with so many parties involved, but Michael thought that he was doing a good job.

Unfortunately, the trade with the Valyr was among the most important. The Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs paid a hefty price for the Blood Essences, the Magma Stones, and the monster corpses, which was how Michael could generate the most profit.

He was very fortunate to be the only Lord in contact with the Valyr Lordess and her subordinates. The Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs were loyal to him and wouldn't even think about taking away their Lord's business model by secretly commerce with the Valyrs. They might have considered doing that with the Soul Pacts, but the opportunity was taken away with the Oath of Loyalty.

Thanks to the Oath of Loyalty, the Berserkers and Warlock Centaurs wouldn't dare to take away a margin of his profit, not even for their race's gains.

Of course, Frederik, Hiraku, or the two Descendants, who joined his territory alongside the Untamed Awakened, could approach the Valyrs to trade with them, but the Valyr Lordess signed a Soul Contract that she wouldn't backstab him out of nowhere. She would approach him and offer a proposal if Humans or other people from his territory were to approach the Valyrs for business matters.

That was one of Michael's biggest advantages. He helped the Valyrs and ensured that they would be forced to repay some of their favors, thus establishing a commerce route and a Soul Contract with them.

Once the commerce cycle had been established, Michael waited patiently to generate the first profits. He didn't feel rushed when the Scouts returned to report about the Council of Xylon.

Instead, Michael suppressed the impatience boiling deep inside him and waited for their response to his surprise attack in the center of the Savannah Region.

What is their response to his domination in the Savannah center?

Would they gather their masses to barge into the Untamed Jungle to destroy his territory, or would Michael's interception in the internal affairs of the Council of Xylon create a rift?

Was it enough to kill 11 Lords in the Savannah center to stir trouble?

Michael was not sure about that, but he could tell that the Lords were afraid to leave their territory now that they were aware of his ability to travel long distances without getting detected.

He could appear in the center of the Savannah region without anyone noticing. What would happen if they gathered their forces to barge into the Untamed Jungle only to lose their territory when The Lord of the Untamed Jungle executed another swift attack? Michael was likely to have the means to make a detour around their forces and invade their territories while they were busy entering the Untamed Jungle.

They couldn't leave their territory and main settlement unprotected.

Losing their Lord Powers was what most of them were worried about. After all, Michael was not their only enemy. The other members of the Council of Xylon were also their rivals!